

CHAPTER VIII.

"Not yet," replied Nat, returning her effusive kiss.

"A lucky escape for you, my dear engaged at it for a couple of hours, and has written only two lines, and scratched them out again-I peeped

But no neither Nat nor I knew temple was an him. We had heard of Major Consta- er-cut. ble often enough since the evening was grave and the little gate in the park palings and ore I had heard his deep kind voice, told me about him; but he had not or seen how his eyes and face lighted called at Chavasse or so far come in when he spoke. in our way elsewhere. I said so, ad-

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mustard-plasters. Come along, and I'll introduce him to you, Nat. You will be able to help me to entertain

"I didn't know you ever wanted help at that sort of thing," Nat said. laughing, as we followed Miss Deepsermon in his study. He has been ing's green-and-white muslin skirts round the corner of the house-for the rectory grounds lay chiefly at the

Alice's gypsy tea-table was placed his left empty coat-sleeve slung

"A battle-scarred veteran," Yorke disturb her, and had tea taken out had called him, and the title did not y streaked y

> ets. Even Nat forgot to be shy, as iful golden-black eyes of hers cast were keen eyes. Quick as though so many awed and sympathetic glanes at the major's empty coat-sleeve that he broke off presently in something he was saying, and asked her FREE ADVICE f she was scared at it, and if she would like to know how he lost his

Nat said "Yes" eagerly, and so did although I had not been asked. Major Constable had been through good deal, all sorts of dangers, escapes, and adventures, and he knew how to relate them. He had been through the Ashantee War, too, where se had been wounded twice slightly and once almost to death, and had lost his arm into the bargain.

Listening to his graphic talk, the time sped away upon wings, and I do not know which of us, three listeners started the most when the church clock struck seven. The major laughhis enormous mastiff. He had pre- their files will attest. viously asked me to come to the Lodge whenever I felt inclined, and had asked him to call at Chavasse.

The two girls lingered a minute or two by the gate, laughing about the oughear mademoiselle, Alice saying that she meant to come up to the Mount the next day to see her. Then she ran in-doors, and I put Nat up on her horse again.

A very serious little face she had as we rode slowly along in the High Street, so serious that I presently asked her what was the matter.

"Thinking of mademoiselle, Nat?" "Mademoiselle?" she repeated starting. "No. Why?

like Major Constable, Ned?" way as Yorke himself. Don't you like we reached Chavasse.

"Very much. But what a pity it is about his arm!" said Nat, pityingly, staring meditatively between her

he loss. He doesn't seem to miss the arm. It's lucky it's the left one.' "Oh, yes; still I was not thinking

his exactly! But there-I dare say Alice won't mind." "Alice!" I echoed, astonished. What has Major Constable arm or

ack of arm to do with Alice?" When they are married, I meant said Nat. lookinig at me seriously.

'Eh?" I ejaculated, bewildered

What are you driving at, Nat?" Only that I should think you could see-I can. It's rather odd, isn't it. for Alice, who is always laughing and so grave as Major Constable? But

Five minutes after Alice's introduc- but you're a goose. I suppose, if you ion, we were chatting away as we weren't a goose, you wouldn't be ; sipped our tea, the liveliest of quar- boy. You will see how things turn out. Mind you don't say anything." I did not say anything even in repl he usually was at first with stran- to her. Alice and Major Constable ers, and let her tongue run almost I could not so understand it, and yet is fast as Alice's own. Those beau- knew by experience that Natalie's eves

came to me the memory of Roger

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"You looked solemn enough to be Yorke, and the gossip with which thinking of a dozen governesses." Whittlesford had been amusing itself. Poor old boy, I thought-poor old Roger! It would be hard with "Rather!" I said, heartily. "He's a rector's daughter. I do not think w jolly fellow, I think—as jolly in his had spoken a dozen words more when

> and I to mine, knowing that there was barely time to get ready for dinnercrime never condoned at Chavasse Hastily changing my coat and hurry had been as quick as I. I caught sight of her little figure in its pretty gow py-red standing at the drawing-room door. She came tiptoeing toward me and slipped her hand within my arm making an impressive grimace.

"Come in with me. Ned." she whis pered, eagerly. "I've been waiting hoping that you would come. You haven't seen anything of her, have sional French "turn" of the words.

"Mademoiselle?" I whispered back. "Hush! Yes." "Not a glimpse. Perhaps she hasn't

"Oh, ves, she has-Virtue told me She says she looks old. That means horrid, in plain English, of course Ugh! I do wish it were over!'

"We sha'n't get it over, as you call it, by standing out here on the man don't wonder a bit that he is in love like a couple of children waiting to be put in the corner." I suggested practically. I was not particularly nervous, after all; and, since ther was no getting rid of her, I was rather curious to see Mile. Lucille Vai-

Nat shrugged her shoulders and gave her favorite little pout.

"Oh, it's all very well for you, sir! The isn't going to plague the life out f you! W there is no help for it suppose; so here goes!"

We went in, to find that we had Colonial and Foreign Markets they tormed the den when the lion was supply; ot at home. Only madame's stately gure turned toward us as we enterd. Nat threw a rapid glance round, they sail, and indicating the approxind regained her courage with marellous celerity.

"Oh, madame, isn't she coming down o dinner?" she cried. "How jolly!

"My dear, hush!" madame said, adionishingly. "You may be heard. Mademoiselle is coming;" and indeed as she spoke, there was a rustle of trafling skirts across the hall, a little tuse, and then the door opened slowand Mile. Valdini entered the draw-

CHAPTER IX.

Many as are the portraits which I rave had to sketch since I commenced my story, I must certainly add one more before my gallery is complete. As well as I can I wish to describe what Mile. Lucille Valdini looked like as I saw her on that first evening when she entered the drawing-room at Chavasse. I shall have to be careful, for she is not an easy fig-Looking at her, it seemed to me

that she was made up, so to speak, of negatives. She was neither tall nor short, neither stout nor thin, neither fair nor dark. Her features were commonplace; her brown hair was of an ordinary tint; her complexion was neither noticeably pale nor noticeably blooming. A figure with a certain trained style and grace, clad in a plain dress of exquisite taste, a pale, grave, composed face, and a manner neither too assured nor too diffidentthat was the formidable mademoiselle as she appeared in my eyes, as she responded with an easy, almost deprecating grace to madame's introduction of Nat and myself.

Something was wrong in the kitchen, I suppose Baterbin's rheuma-tism perhaps; but, at any rate, dinner was nearly a quarter of an hour late. Nat moved off to the fire, after her omewhat ungracious reception of the ranger's greeting, and stood there, oking down into it, and now and hen stealing a glance at me over madame's point-lace head-dressglances expressive of intense despair

which I was not very able to reciprocate; so I went over to the window, look out, listened to the conversation between my mother and the new governess-a very polite and charming conversation, and most gracious upners and unobtrusive style of mademoiselle had evidently appealed to the

fastidious fancy of the mistress of

Had mademoiselle had a pleasant ourney? Mademoiselle had found it And dusty? Oh, yes, and dusty a certainty-even very dusty! Was demoiselle familiar with England? Mademoiselle was not-in fact, this of to-day was her first experience of it. Had it so far made a favorable impression? Ah, altogether charming: Mademoiselle failed to express the delight with which-the heat and the her. Mademoiselle had made up her bulary the term "La Belle France," and to substitute in future the phrase 'La Belle Angleterre." Nothing less could possibly express the extent of mademoiselle's admiration. And Cha-If mademoiselle was charmed with chateaus: but- Ah, bah-mademois

first, that Mile. Valdini knew how to started by making the best of her hand, second, that, but for the occahad never heard better English in my life; third, that I was not by any means sure whether I liked made moiselle or the reverse.

(To be continued.)

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