

LIGHT AND SHADE.

BY H. C. C.

All time is told, star-measured space is spanned.
Life's web is woven but of light and shade;
Heaven's fire-gems brodered on night's robe are scanned;
Each choiring sphere twist gloom and glare is swayed.
Shades tell the life and death of every day;
Shades show the year's soft wing-beats fleeting fast;
Fashioned each form of light and shadow's play,
And earth's dead rock-writ pageant of the past.
Life's colouring is but a charm that wanes;
Dim-veiled truth in black and white abides.
So graver's work outlasts the limner's hues.
As in a storied scroll, whose fallow plains
Bear fruit of variation that provides
Past wit for future ages to pursue.

Thro' life's wide tract we press in one long line,
Each shouldering each, yet o'er our several ways,
Close tho' we be, unequal shadow plays.
Yet light and shade in one great picture twine.
Some 'neath the mountains tread the vale of death,
Some where their jagged outlines fret the plains,
Some where tree-shadows stir at every breath
Of chance, some where continuous sl een remains;
Yet those shall find the limit of their night,
And these shall know how transient is their day.
These walk in summer, those in winter's clime.
Some are aye looking to a future bright,
Some, glancing back to glories pass'd away,
Stumble, pressed onwards in the march of time.

A GOLDEN LINING.

BY EMMA W. PHILLIPS.

I.

A LAST APPEAL.

The City clocks had not struck four, yet the dull December afternoon was already so dark that the street lamps were being lighted, while the gas for some time had been burning in Fordyce's outer office, where a number of clerks were busily writing.

"Happy the bride that the sun shines on!" laughed one of the latter, glancing through the window up at the murky sky. "The weather must alter considerably, or, if the adage be true, her ladyship is not to be envied."

"What signifies the weather," was the retort, "when one marries nearly a million of money! Hush! there's the governor's bell."

Springing from his stool, the speaker advanced to a green baize door, tapped, and entered a room luxuriously furnished, yet with many indications of business about it. Before the bright, glowing fire, in a study chair, sat John Fordyce, the merchant, or, as he was called by some, the merchant prince.

A handsome, tall, well-preserved, well-dressed man of over fifty, yet looking so much younger than his age that you would feel inclined to believe that, so far, he had found his road through life very easy travelling.

But, in reality, that had not been so, for his had been a very up-hill road to success; and now, ambitious and proud, the consciousness that he was a self-made man haunted him almost as if it had been a crime.

When a junior clerk in the wealthy firm of Venner, Venner, and Company, he had resolved one day to be the "Company," if nothing more, and an indomitable energy, defying all obstacles, had been crowned with success.

The Venners, widowers and childless, one after the other had retired, John Fordyce buying them out, so that at the present moment the firm stood in his name alone.

As the merchant's social position improved, the more like a haunting nightmare became the recollection of his antecedents and the knowledge that he possessed somewhere a younger brother, who, to use his own terms, "had gone to the bad," and was always turning up to bring the blush of shame to the prosperous merchant's cheek; for fate seemed to have decreed that as one brother increased his riches, the other should grow poorer and poorer.

For over five years, however, the merchant had neither heard nor seen anything of this brother. Their last interview had ended angrily.

Charles Fordyce's pride had been aroused and cruelly stung by his elder brother's words, and he had left, declaring that he would never again cross his threshold; and John Fordyce hoped that he would keep his word.

And John Fordyce wished it more than ever when Lady Hannah Belliston, the widow of a poor nobleman, graciously condescended to accept him and his wealth.

That day was the proudest in the merchant's life.

If anything could make society forget his antecedents, surely such a union would!

Lady Hannah Fordyce sounded equally as well as Lady Hannah Belliston, while Lady Hannah Fordyce's balls and receptions should be the talk of the town.

Apparently, there was not a cloud on the merchant's horizon. Only the one old speck—Charles Fordyce. To think of him sent a chill through the elder brother, who had given his aristocratic betrothed to understand, or rather had implied, that he had no relations.

How possibly could he confess to her the existence of ever shabby, impecunious Charles, much more let her see him!

"Tut!" muttered the merchant, moving irritably in his study chair, as this idea for the fiftieth time had recurred to him. "Why do I frighten myself with shadows! Charles is dead. He must be, or surely I should have heard something of him during these long years!"

To be rid of such troubling thoughts, John

Fordyce had rung his bell, asked for certain papers, and prepared to occupy himself with them until the hour for leaving the office.

Hardly had the clerk resumed his seat at the desk when the outer door opened, admitting a man of middle age. Tall, slender, or, rather, thin; his features were not only good, but refined, their wan, worn appearance adding to their delicacy. His scanty hair was more than iron-gray, his shoulders slightly stooped, while the seedy, but well brushed coat, buttoned over the chest, was but poor protection against the wintry weather.

He entered in a hesitating, almost apologetic manner, while the voice was low and weak in which he inquired whether he could see Mr. John Fordyce.

"What name?" asked the clerk, curtly.

"Stride—Arthur Stride," replied the man, after a moment's hesitation, and nervously fidgeting the buttons of his coat.

The clerk went into the private office, then returning, bade the visitor enter.

The nervous movement extending to his lips, Arthur Stride crossed to the baize door, passed through, and closed it quickly after him.

As he advanced into the warm, bright light, the merchant glanced up. A paleness overspread his features, which changed to a frown of anger, blended with surprise, as he sprang to his feet.

"You here!" he ejaculated, hoarsely.

Again!

"You are astonished. I suppose you have a right to be," replied the other in his low, weak voice. "Perhaps you thought me dead! Perhaps,"—he hesitated, then added, "you wished it!"

The merchant checked the response which rose to his lips, and said, coldly, "After what passed between us at our last meeting, Charles Fordyce, I certainly did not expect to see you here again. Neither would I have permitted it had I known who was my visitor. How dared you," with contracted brows, "send in a false name?"

"Because had I given my own, you would have refused to see me."

"Your own!" and the merchant turned scarlet with indignation and alarm, as he regarded the shabby man before him. "You would never have dared to disgrace me!"

"By sending in that of Charles Fordyce!" put in the other with a faint, wan smile. "No; I meant the one I assumed when—"

"You threw up your last hold upon respectability by becoming a strolling actor," concluded the merchant through his teeth.

"You use harsh words, John!" said Charles Fordyce.

"It was an honest living when no other offered. I might have succeeded, but for my voice failing me." And he laid his hand on his chest. "Misfortune seemed to adopt me, as fortune did you. All you touched turned to gold; that which I handled became dead leaves. Even my health was my enemy. But,"—and he drew his thin figure erect,—"though poor—though often in bitter need—I have never disgraced you, John, nor myself!"

The merchant gave a scoffing laugh.

"Are you not a disgrace to yourself at this moment?" he said,—"a disgrace to me! We both started with the same chances. If you refused to work, is that any reason why you should hang always upon me?"

Charles Fordyce's white cheek glowed faintly. He bit his lip, evidently to suppress the reply that rose to it.

"John, don't be hard upon me," he said. "I have suffered much, and—I am ill. You and I are the only two left."

But the merchant was in no humour to be mollified. What a relation to present to Lady Hannah! Would not she hold it sufficient cause to break off the match?

Shame, fear, mastered all better feelings. He felt himself most deeply injured, and rejoined, with a sneer, "Pray, don't be sentimental. As a man makes his bed he must lie upon it. Because yours is hard, you have no right to make mine so. Of course, you come for money?"

"No!" and once more the colour rose to the speaker's face. "When we parted last, John, I said I would never ask you for another shilling. I believed then, as you did, that we should never meet again; but what a man will not do for himself he will do for others. I have a child.

When a man's own future is past hope, he will use his best efforts, if he be worth anything, to brighten that of his children. I want work. I don't care how small, but something that will be steadily regular."

"Why come to me?"

"Because I hoped, with your influence, you might procure it for me. I'll prove worthy."

"I will do nothing of the sort. But the offer I formerly made to you I renew; I will pay your passage to America or Australia, there giving you a start, on condition that you retain the name you have assumed, entirely renouncing that of Fordyce."

"No!" responded the younger brother, quietly but firmly. "I answer again, John, 'No!' I have never disgraced my father's name, and will not abandon it. I have said I have a child."

"Stop!" said the merchant, as the other moved towards the door; "reflect again. I offer you comfort."

The baize door closed; he was gone!

"Farewell!"

John Fordyce, seizing the poker, stirred the fire violently, having nothing nearer to vent his rage upon.

"The offer was generous; more than he had

a right to expect," he muttered, dropping back into his chair. "He alone is to blame."

He said so; but knew that he had acted harshly, even meanly. It was far more noble of Charles to wish for work than to live by another's aid. And how easy would it have been for the merchant to have got him what he desired!

He had said truly—by no dishonest act had he disgraced their name; while he had always been a generous, upright, just-thinking fellow from his boyhood. Generous—there had been his fault; ever willing to give his time or money to help a friend. And how proud he had always been of him, John, his senior by ten years!

Why did the recollection of what Charles had been—a bright, frank, merry, handsome lad—come back to him now, comparing itself with the careworn, shabby, yet not ungentlemanly man who had just left him?

Even for his own sake it would have been wiser to have procured his brother what he needed.

The merchant pressed the gong on the table, and a clerk entering announced that the carriage was waiting.

"Has Mr.—Mr. Stride left yet?" inquired John Fordyce.

"Yes, sir; went at once."

"See if you can overtake him! Ask him to return; say there was something I omitted to tell him. Quick!"

But the dark winter's afternoon had grown darker still, and though the clerk ran some yards to the right, then to the left, jostling the stream of pedestrians, he saw no sign of the thin figure of Charles Fordyce.

"Never mind," reflected the merchant, as he was driven home: "he is sure to come again!"

He endeavoured to throw off the recollection, but in vain.

Those two faces, the boy's and the man's, haunted him, even when sitting in Lady Hannah Belliston's box at the Opera.

Of all evenings, her ladyship had selected this one to bring her children—a good-looking boy of twelve, and a little dark-eyed maiden of ten.

The merchant fancied the boy was something like Charles.

By the way, his brother had said he had a child. Was it a boy or girl?

That night John Fordyce found it a relief even to leave Lady Hannah.

He could not go to his lonely home, though. He would drive to his club.

It was late when he prepared to quit the latter.

As he reached the top of the handsome staircase, a gentleman spoke to him, and he turned to reply.

There was a flush on his face. His brain felt dull and weary.

The brief conversation concluded, he made a step back.

"Take care, Fordyce!" exclaimed the other—"you are on the top of the stairs!"

The warning came too late.

The merchant lost his footing, fell, and rolled heavily down the stone steps to the bottom, where he lay insensible.

He was raised quickly by his alarmed friends, and carried into the smoking-room, where they placed him on a sofa, one of the waiters hastening for a doctor. But before he came, the awestruck group, conversing in whispers, knew that John Fordyce was dead.

After the first startling shock, the natural query arose as to who would succeed to his wealth, for John Fordyce had left no will.

Surely he had some relations!

The fact was after a while elicited that the merchant had had a brother, but whether now alive or dead no one knew.

The solicitors put the usual advertisements in all the papers: "FORDYCE.—Wanted, the next-of-kin of John Fordyce, *deceased*; but nothing came of them; and, after a while, people ceased to talk of the "Fordyce property," and the over half a million of money wanting an owner.

II.

MAURICE WALN'S PREDICTION.

It was a glorious day near the end of August. The slight breeze there was failed to disturb the glassy surface of the Bristol Channel, across which a small dark line, rather as a haze than a substance on the horizon, indicated the Welsh coast.

The tors and doones of Devon, stretching away to Exmoor, lost something of their weird, gnome-like grandeur in the brilliant sunshine, while the splendid sweeps of golden gorse and heather quivered in the light like beds of topaz and amethysts.

"When such lovely spots as these exist,—and there are hundreds of them in England—can you explain, Waln, why people rush abroad?"

"Just for the same reason, dear boy, that some people cannot eat a chop or a plate of soup without it has a foreign name. But I fancy I have heard your remark before."

"And will again, while some have eyes and some have not," was the response.

"True. Still, if there be a thing I like more than another, my dear Hal, it is originality."

"A fact that I ought to have learned by this time, you growling old bear!" retorted the other, with a hearty laugh that echoed pleasantly among the hills.

The speakers both artists, were descending the steep path leading from Brendon to Watermeet, Lynmouth. Knapsacks were on their backs, their tourist hats were tilted over their sun-burnt foreheads, while each carried an alpenstock, the hilly country necessitating such assistance.

The elder by more than a quarter of a century was a broad shouldered, middle-sized man, wearing a large iron-gray beard and moustache, and possessing clear, intelligent gray eyes, while his attire, not of the newest, sat on him with a picturesque ease rather than grace.

His companion's, of the knickerbocker style, was very different, fitting exactly to his tall, well-made, well-carried figure; whilst his felt hat, placed with an artistic jauntiness on a mass of fair, silky hair, showed a handsome, fair Saxon countenance, having a pair of merry blue eyes, harmonizing with the pleasant mouth, not wholly hidden by the long moustache and pointed beard.

"As to originality," proceeded the younger, a trifle sententiously, "I don't believe in it. What can be original in a world that is so very old!"

"Then because Eve was beautiful, is no other woman to be so, most sapient Hal!"

"There you have it. Beauty itself is not original."

"And never will be to you, Master Hal, rejoined the elder, "until you meet her who will be so in your eyes. Let others call her what they may, you will never believe she has had, or has, or will have, an equal."

"Until I meet her," laughed the young artist, lightly; "until then, my art will be my mistress, my love!"

"Bosh!" growled his companion. "But here's the bridge, and there comes a flock of tourists."

"Tourists or not, I intend to take that sketch a little farther down," said Halbert Vane. "I can't miss the glorious light of to-day. And you?"

"Shall seize the same glorious light to finish my seascape on the shore. So good-bye until dinner."

"Ta, ta, old fellow!"

They had been proceeding along the narrow path; but now, with a wave of the hand, they separated.

Halbert Vane found the best spot from whence to take the sketch he desired, arranged his easel and materials near the whirling, flashing Lyn, and soon, humming beneath his breath as was his custom, was rapidly throwing in the splendid effects of light and shadow made by the hanging trees, and the sun's rays falling through the branches on the river, and its rugged, fern-festooned banks.

Time wore on. The stream of irrepressible tourists had ceased, the lights were beginning to shift, when, as Halbert Vane, pushing his hat off his forehead, leaned back critically to examine his work, a voice so musical that it thrilled him like an Eolian harp brushed by the wind, exclaimed behind him, "ah, papa, this is the best of all. Is it not like?" Then as Halbert turned his head quickly, the voice added so innocently, so prettily apologetic, "I beg your pardon; I fear I was very rude. But I really could not help it."

Halbert Vane had already risen to his feet. Now, lifting his hat, he murmured a confused response, the recollection of which later made him flush with annoyance at his stupidity. "She was a young girl of about eighteen, so charming, so bewitching of feature, so graceful of form, looking altogether so dainty as she stood archly raising her dark eyes to his; a smile, probably at his confusion, hovering about her red lips, and her little gloved hand grasping her alpenstock, that had it not been for her fashionable toilet, the artist might have taken her for a nymph of the sparkling Lyn, or a fairy that had sprung from the ferns at her feet."

In his life Halbert Vane had never beheld so exquisite a picture.

An elderly gentleman, fresh of complexion, genial of expression, his red-brown beard streaked with gray, was standing a little way behind her.

"My dear Gertrude," he smiled, advancing a step, "how can you be so impulsive! Really, you owe this gentleman no end of apologies, though an artist will, I am sure, readily excuse an enthusiast in art."

Halbert would have excused the pretty girl before him anything. Having, however, recovered himself, he answered, "That my poor attempt should have elicited such spontaneous praise I hold to be the highest compliment I could receive."

"There, sir, you are right," remarked the old gentleman, inspecting the sketch, Gertrude peeping over his shoulder; "for whatever my stepdaughter's opinion may be worth, it is honest and genuine."

"Would I could always command such a critic!" said Halbert, regarding the pretty countenance.

"She might not always be so favourable a one," laughed the girl, archly, "if she cared to preserve her reputation for honesty."

She leaned forward, perceiving the name scratched on the colour-box.

"Halbert Vane!" she read. "Surely not the Halbert Vane who painted the charming picture 'A Summer Dream' in this year's Academy?"

"Yes; the same," said Halbert.

"Here is the strangest of strange coincidences!" cried the girl, clapping her hands.

"Why, papa, here, bought it!"