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[CONTINUED.] CHAPTER VIII

DIGRESSES SOMEWHAT. In London meanwhile Mr. Reginald Hesslegrave, to use his own expressive phrase, was "going it." And few young men with an equally exiguous income knew how to "go it" at the same impetuous pace as Mr. Reginald Hesslegrave. That very same evening indeed, as he walked down the Strand arm in arm with his chum, Charlie Owen-the only other fellow in the office who fulfilled to the letter Mr. Reginald's exalted ideal of "what a gentleman ought to be"-he stopped for a moment opposite the blushing window of a well known sporting paper to observe the list of winners in the first race of the season. Mr. Reginald, as is the wont of his kind, had backed the favorite. He drew a long breath of disappointment as he scanned the telegram of results. "Amber Witch wins in a canter," he murmured, with marked disgust to his sympathizing "A rank outsider!" "Pipped again?" Charlie Owen inquired

in the peculiar dialect at which they were both experts. And Reginald Hesslegrave answered: "Pipped again! For a tenner!" with manly resignation. He was sustained under this misfortune indeed by the consoling reflection that the "tenner" he had risked on Yorkshire Lass would come in the end out of Kathleen's pocket. It's a thing to be ashamed of for a gentleman, of course, to have a sister who is obliged to dabble in paint for a livelihood, but from the practical point of view it has its advantages also. And Reggie found it a distinct advantage during the racing season that he was able to draw upon Kathleen's earnings for unlimited loans, which were never repaid, it is true, but which were described as such in order te save undue wear and tear to Mr. Reginald's delicate feelings. It doesn't "look well" to ask your sister point blank for a present of a £10 note, but a loan of that amount from time to time to meet a pressing temporary emergency is a form of advance that never

grates for a moment upon the most refined susceptibilities. "That's a nuisance," Charlie Owen responded, with a sympathetic, wry face, for I suppose you counted upon it. Now, this was exactly what Mr. Reginald had done, after the fashion of the city clerk who fancies himself as a judge of

horseflesh, but he wasn't going to acknowl-"It never does to count upon anything in the glorious uncertainty of racing," he answered, with a bounce, swallowing his disappointment in that resigned spirit which is born of a confident belief that your sister, after all, will have in the end te good the deficit. Though to he sure, I was in need of it, for I've asked Florrie Clarke and her mother to run round to the Gaiety for an hour with me this evening, and I can tell you it comes heavy on a fellow, and no mistake, to settle for the grub for Florrie's mother! She is a

dab at lobster salad!" 'Then you're taking them to supper afterward?" Charlie inquired, with admiration. One young fool invariably admires another for his courage and nobility in spending the money he hasn't got, to somebody else's final discomfort and detriment.

Reginald nodded a careless assent. "To Romano's," he answered, with justifiable pride in the background of his tone. When I do the thing at all, I like to do it properly, and Florrie's the sort of girl, don't you know, who's accustomed to see things done in the very best style, so I mean to go it."

"What a fellow you are!" Charlie Owen exclaimed, with heartfelt admiration. "After a knock down blow like this, that would dishearten most chappies!"

Mr. Reginald smiled a deprecatory smile of modest self approval. "Well, I flatter myself I am a bit of a philosopher," he admitted, with candor, like one who glides lightly over his own acknowledged merits. "Why don't you come too? There'd be room in my box for you."

"Does it run to a box, then?" Charlie Owen asked, open eyed. And Reggie answered, with an expansive wave of his neatly gloved hand: "Do you suppose I'd ask Florrie and her mother to go in the pit? I imagine I know how to do the thing like a gentleman."

"Well, of course, if you've got a box," Charlie assented, with alacrity, "one more or less doesn't count. But still-there's the supper!"

Mr. Reginald dismissed the sordid suggestion with another dainty wave of his well gloved left. "When a gentleman asks another gentleman to sup with him," he observed, with sententious dignity, isn't usual for his guests to make inquiries beforehand as to the cost of the entertainment." After which noble rebuke Charlie Owen felt it would be positively bad manners not to accept with effusion and was lost in wonder, delight and awe, as Reg-gie intended he should be, at the magnanimity of a chappie who after a loss like that could immediately launch out into fresh extravagance by inviting a friend to a quite unnecessary and expensive banquet. What a splendid creature the fast young man really is, after all, and how nobly he dispenses unlimited hospitality to all

and sundry times on his relations' money! So that evening at 8 saw Mr. Reginald Hesslegrave in full evening dress and a neat hired brougham stopping at the door of the Gaiety theater to deposit Mrs. Clarke and her daughter Florrie. The party, to be sure, was nothing if not correct. for mamma was there to insure the ut-most proprieties, and Miss Florrie herself, who was a well conducted young lady, had no idea of doing anything more decided than accepting a box for nothing as affection's gift from the devoted Reggie. Miss Florrie's papa was an eminently respectable west end money lender, and Miss Florrie and her mamma were practically used, in the way of business, partly as de coy ducks for unwary youth and partly as a means of recovering at once in pres ents and enetrtainments a portion of the money advanced by papa on those famil-iar philanthropic principles of "note of hand at sight, without inquiry, and no security," which so often rouse one's profound esteem and wonder in the advertise ment columns of the daily papers. Unfortunately, however, it is found for the most part in this hard business world of

ours that philenthropy like this can only be made to pay on the somewhat exorbitant terms of 60 per cent, deducted before-hand. But Mr. Reginald, as it happened, was far too small game for either Miss Florrie or her papa to fly at. His friendship for the young lady was distinctly a platonic one. She and her mamma used him merely as an amiable young fool who could fill in the odd evenings between more serious engagements, when pape's best clients took her to the opera with mamma and presented her with a brooch or an amethyst bracelet out of the 40 per cent which alone remained to them from papa's munificence. Not that Miss Florrie's conduct was ever anything but the pink of ropriety-with a connection like papa's t was always on the cards that she might end, with good luck, by becoming my lady

in lieu of accumulated interest on bills renewed, and was it likely that Miss Florrie was going to fling away a first rate chance in life like that by ill timed entanglements with a penniless clerk in a stockbroker's office? Miss Florrie thought not. She knew her market worth too well for such folly. She might flirt, but she perfectly understood where to stop flirtaiton. Meanwhile she found Mr. Reginald Hesslegrave an agreeable and harmless companion and an excellent wedge of an unobtrusive sort for attacking the narrow opening into certain grades of society. It "looks well" to be seen about with mamma in the company of an excellently connected young man of no means at all. People can never accuse

you, then, of unmitigated fortune hunting. Miss Florrie and her mamma were most charming that evening. Mrs. Hesslegrave herself would have been forced to admit they were really most charming. The mamma was as well dressed as could reasonably be expected—that is to say, not much more overdressed than in the nature of things a money lender's wife must be, and her diamonds, Charlie Owen remarked with delight, were greatly noted and commented upon by the feminine occupants of neighboring boxes. As for Reginald Hesslegrave, he felt the evening was what he would himself have described as "a gigantic success." "It's all going off pride, to Charlie Owen as they paced the corridor, cigarette in mouth, during the interval between the acts.

And Charlie Owen, patting his back, made answer emphatically: "Going off very well, man! Why, it's a thundering triumph! What a fellow you are, to be sure! Ices in the box and everything! Clinking, simply clinking! The eldest son of a duke couldn't have done the thing better. It's made a distinct impression upon the Clarkes, I can tell you." "You think so?" Reggie asked, with a

proud flush of satisfaction. "Why, I can see it with half a glance. Florrie's gone on you, that's where it is. Visibly to the naked eye, that girl's clean

Mr. Reginald returned to the box feeling half an inch taller. He knew himself a lady killer, and he noticed with pride that Miss Florrie and her mamma were on terms of bowing acquaintance with a great many people in the stalls and dress circle, the very best people, gentlemen for the most part, it is true, but still a sprinkling of ladies, including among them Mrs. Algy Redburn, who ought by rights to be Lady Axminster. And though ladies returned Miss Florrie's bows and smiles with a tinge of coldness and seemed disinclined to catch the eagle eye of her mamma, who was a stoutish matron of a certain age and uncertain waist, it was an undeniable fact that those who did catch it were for the most part women of title and of social distinction in the fastest set, so that Mr. Reginald felt him-



Charlie ran his eye over the telegram. As they were leaving the theater, while Mrs. Clarke and Florrie went off in search of their wraps from the ladies' cloakroom, Reggie drew Charlie Owen mysteriously aside for a moment. "Look here, old fe low," he said coaxingly in a whispered undertone, buttonholing his friend as he spoke, "you're coming on to supper with us. Could you manage to lend me a couple of sovereigns for a day or two?" Charlie looked glum. He pursed his un-

der lip. Like Bardolph's tailor, he liked not the security. "What's it for?" he asked dubiously. Reggie made a clean breast of it. "Well, the brougham and things have run into a

little more than I expected," he answered, with a forced smile, "and of course we must open a bottle of cham, and if Mrs. Clarke wants a second—she's a fish at fizz, know_it'd be awkward, don't you see, f I hadn't quite cash enough to pay the "It would so," Charlie responded, screw-

ing up a sympathetic but exceedingly doubtful face. "Do you happen to have a couple of quid about you?" Reggie demanded once

the straw. "It's all square, I assure you. I've remittances coming." Where from?" Charlie continued, not wishing to be hard, but still anxious for 'the collateral,'' as Florrie's papa would They crossed over partly in Mortimer's have put it. own private gondola, partly in a hired bar-

"Oh, I've telegraphed today to my people at Venice," Reggie responded airily. But "my people" of course was a euphonism for "my sister" "And got an answer?" Charlie insisted.

He didn't want to seem mean, but business is business, and he desired to know on what expectations precisely he was risking his money. Yes, here it is," Reggie replied, draw-

ing it out somewhat sheepishly from the ses of his pocket. He didn't like to show it of course, but he saw too well that on no other terms could he be spared the eternal disgrace of having to refuse Florrie Clarke's mamma a second bottle of Veuve Clicquot, should she choose to demand it.

Charlie ran his eye over the telegram. It was short, but satisfactory: Entirely disapprove. Am sending the money. This is the last time. Remember.

KATHLEEN. "She always says that," Mr. Reginald interposed in an apologetic undertone.
"Oh, dear, yes, I know, it's a way they have," Charlie responded, with a tolerant smile, as one who was well acquainted with the strange fads of one's people How much did you ask her for?"

"A tenner," Mr. Reginald responded. Charlie Owen drew the coins with slow feliberation from his dress waistcoat pock "Well, this is a debt of honor," he said in a solemn voice, handing them over impressively. "You'll pay me off of course before you waste any money on paying bills or landlords and such like."

Reggie slipped the two sovereigns into his trousers pocket with a sigh of relief.
"You are a brick, Charlie!" he exclaimed, turning away quite happy and prepared, as is the manner of such young gentlemen in general, to spend the whole sum reckessly at a single burst on whatever first offered, now he was relieved for the monent from his temporary embarrassment. For it is the way of your Reggies to treat a loan as so much cash in hand, dropped lown from heaven, and to disburse it freely on the nearest recipient in light hearted

anticipation of the next emergency. The supper was universally acknowledged to be the success of the evening. It often is, in fact, where the allowance of Veuve Clicquot is sufficiently unstinted.

Mrs. Clarke was most affable, most increasingly affable, and as to Miss Florrie. a pretty little round faced ingenue, with a vast crop of crisp black hair, cut short and curled, she was delightful company. It was her role in life to flirt, and she did it for the love of it. Reginald Hesslegrave was a distinctly good looking young man, very well connected, and she really liked him. Not of course that she would ever very well," he observed, with nervous for a moment have dreamed of throwing herself away for life on a man without the means to keep a carriage but Miss Florrie was one of those modern young ladies who sternly dissociate their personal likes and dislikes from their matrimonial talk with and to flirt with she really liked Master Reggie-nay, more, she admired rie's eyes the prince of the virtues. It was toxicated with her. She played her crisp curls at him with considerable effect and was charmed when he succumbed to them. 'Twas a pity he wasn't the heir to £100, 000. If he had been, Miss Florrie thought, she might have got papa to discount it offhand on post obits and have really settled down to a quiet life of balls and the-

aters in his agreeable society. So much smitten was Reggie, indeed, that before the end of the evening, under the expansive influence of that excellent Veuve Clicquot, he remarked chaffingly to Florrie at a moment when Mrs. Clarke was deep in talk with Charlie Owen, "I day you and I will have to make a match grace, instead of her majesty.

Miss Florrie did not resent this somebroaching an important and usually seri- ten in cipher." ous subject. On the contrary, being an easy going soul, she accepted it as a natural compliment to her charms and smiled at it good humoredly. But she answered at it good humoredly. But she answered any man should be able to decipner such a none the less, with a toss of the crisp black curls: "Well, if we're ever to do that, Mr. Hesslegrave, you must find the wherewithal first, for I can tell you I want for granted, since I found it in Italy, the a carriage, and a yacht, and a houseboat. The man for my heart is the man with a houseboat. As soon as you're in a position to set up a houseboat, you may invite me to share it with you, and then"-she looked at him archly, with a witching smile-"I may consider my answer."

She was a taking little thing—there was no denying it. "Very bad style," so the ladies in the stalls remarked to one another as they scanned her through their opera es, "but awfully taking!" And Regnald Hesslegrave found her so. From that moment forth it became his favorite day dream that he had made a large fortune at a single stroke—on the turf, of at once to secure the large fortune. And how? By working hard day and night and saving and investing? Oh, dear me, no! Such bourgeois methods are not for the likes of Mr. Reginald Hesslegrave, who prided himself upon being a perfect gen-tleman. By risking Kathleen's hard earned money on the Derby favorite and accepting "tips" as to a "dark horse" for the Leger!

CHAPTER IX. BY THE BLUE ADRIATIC. April in Venice, young ladies aver, is just too lovely for anything." And Rufus Mortimer utilized one of its just too lovely days for his long deferred project

of a picnic to the Lido.

Do you know the Lido? "Tis that long natural bulwark, "the bank of sand which breaks the flow of Adria toward Venice." as Shelley calls it. It stretches for miles and miles in a narrow belt along the mouth of the lagoons. On one side lies the ocean and on one the shallow pool of mud banks and canals. This is the only place near Venice, indeed, where a horse can find foothold, and on that account as well as. for the sake of the surf bathing it is a favorite resort of Venetians and visitors in quid about you?" Reggie demanded once more, with an anxious air.

Charlie Owen melted. "Well, I have," he answered slowly. "But mind you, I shall want them on Saturday without fail, to pay my landlady. She's a demon for her rent. Raises blazes if it runs on. Will insist on it weekly. Can you promise me faithfully to let me have the oof back by Saturday?"

Reggie drew a sigh of relief. "Honor bright!" he answered, clutching hard at one bright April morning when with seaweed. Here and firm and strewn with seaweed. Here and there a curled seahorse lay tossed up by the tide, and innumerable tiny shells glistened bright like pearls on the line of high water.

Kathleen felt a little shy with him. She guestes on its wrinkled face the thunderous billows of that uncertain main. Horse's "turbulent Hadria." Hither, then, Rutus Mortimer brought his guests and friends one bright April morning when visit us?" spring and summer. The side toward the

the treacherous sea was sleeping calmly like a child and no breath of wind from the Dalmatian hills disturbed the tranquil rest of its glossy bosom.

ca—a hencoop, as Arnold Willoughby ir-reverently called it—from the steps of the Molo. As they passed out of the harber the view behind them rose even lovelier than usual. That is the way to see Venice. Its front door is the sea-it breaks upon one full face as one looks at it from the Lido. We who arrive at it nowadays by the long and tedious railway embankent over the shallow lagoon hardly realize that we are entering the city of the doges by its back door. We come first upon the slums, the purlieus, the Ghetto. But the visitor who approaches the Bride of the Adriatic for the first time by sea from Trieste or Alexandria sees it as its makers and adorners intended he should see it. As he draws nigh shore the great buildings by the water's edge rise one after another before his enchanted eyes. He sees Fortuna on her golden ball above the Dogana di Mare, he sees the doge's palace with its arcade and its loggia, he sees the clustered cupolas and spires of St. Mark's, he sees the quaint volutes and swelling domes of Santa Maria della Salute. Then as he nears the Molo the vast panorama of beauty bursts upon him at once in all its detail—the Bridge of Sighs, the famed Lion Column, St. Theodore on his crocodile, St. Mark on his airy pinnacle, the Piazzetta, the Piazza, the Campanile, the Clock Tower. He lands by the marble steps and finds himself face to face with the gorgeons pilasters of Sansovino's library, the facade of the great church, the porphyry statues, the gold alabaster, the blaze of mosaics, the lavish waste of sculpture. With a whirling head he walks on through it all, amazed, conscious of nothing else we a phantasmagoria of glory and thanking heaven in his heart that at last he has

seen Venice. This was the view upon which the occupants of Rufus Mortimer's gondola looked back with delighted eyes that April morning. But this was not all. Behind and above it all the snow capped chain of the Tyrolese Alps and the hills of Cadore rose fairylike in a semicircle. Their penciled hollows showed purple, their peaks gleamed like crystal in the morning sun. Cloudless and clear, every glen and crag pinked out by the searching rays, they stood silhouetted in pure white against the solid blue sky of Italy. In front of them St. Mark's and the Campanile were outlined in dark hues. 'Twas a sight to rejoice a painter's eyes. Arnold Willoughby and Kathleen Hesslegrave sat entranced

as they looked at it. Nothing rouses the emotional side of a man's nature more vividly than to gaze at beautiful things with a beautiful woman. Arnold Willoughby sat by Kathleen's side and drank it all in, delighted. He half made up his mind to ask her that very day whether, if he ever could succeed in his profession, she would be willing to link her life with a poor marine painter's. He didn't-mean to make her Lady Axminster. That was far from his mind. He schemes, and as a person to sup with, to would not have cared for those "whose mean ambition aims at palaces and titled names," as George Meredith has phrased him, for he knew how to "go it," and it. But he wanted to make her Mrs. Arability for "going it" was in Miss Flornold Willoughby.

As they crossed over to the Lido he was the one that enabled a man, however poor full of a new discovery he had made a few in reality, to give her the greatest amount days before. A curious incident had hapof what she lived for amusement. So pened to him. In hunting among a bun-Florrie flooded Reggie with the light of die of papers at his lodgings which his her round black eyes till he was fairly in- landlady had bought to tie up half kilos of rice and macaroni, he had come, it appeared, upon a wonderful manuscript. He hardly knew himself at the time how important this manuscript was to become to him hereafter, but he was full of it, all the same, as a singular discovery.

"It's written in Italian," he said to Kathleen-"that's the funny part of it, but still it seems it's by an English sailor, and it's immensely interesting—a narra tive of his captivity in Spain and his trial by the inquisition, for standing up like a man for her grace's claim to the throne of England."
"What's the date of it?" Kathleen ask-

tell you what it is, Miss Clarke-or rather | ed, not knowing or not catching the spe-Florrie-I shall call you Florrie-some cial Elizabethan tinge of that phrase her "Oh, Elizabeth, of course," Arnold an swered lightly. "Such a graphic story!

what abrupt and inartistic method of And the queerest part of it all is it's writ-"Then how did you make it out?" Kath. leen asked admiringly. To her mind it seemed a perfectly astonishing feat that any man should be able to decipher such a

> ways made use of the most simple ciphers almost foolishly simple. Any child could read them." Kathleen looked up at him with profound admiration. For her own part, she couldn't imagine how on earth it could be done. "How wonderful!" she exclaimed. "You must show it to me some day. And it's interesting, is it? I should love

> language was Italian, so I soon spelled it out. Those sixteenth century people al-

to see it." "Yes, it's interesting," Arnold answered. "As interesting as a novel. A perfect romance. Most vivid and amusing. The writer was a man named John Collingcourse—and married the owner of the crisp ham of Norfolk, the owner and skipper of lack curls. So deep rooted did this ideal become to him indeed that he set to work Spaniards off Cape Finisterre and thrown an English bark. He was taken by the into prison for six months at Cadiz. Afterward he escaped and made his way to Venice, where he wrote this memorial in cipher to the council of ten, whom he desired to employ him, but what became of him in the end I haven't yet got to. It takes some time to decipher the whole of it."

That was all for the moment. More important concerns put the manuscript afterward for a time out of Kathleen's head, though in the end she had good reason indeed to remember it. However, just then, as soon as they landed, Rufus Mortimer hurried her off to admire the view from the top of the Lido, and he took excellent care she should have no other chance that day of private conversation with Arnold

Willoughby.

They lunched al fresco on the summit of the great bank, looking down on the sea to the right, and the long stretch of the shallow lagoon to the left, with the distant towers of Venice showing up with all their spires in the middle distance, and the jagged range of snowy Alps gleaming white in the background. As soon as they had finished Rufus Mortimer managed to get Kathleen to himself for a quiet stroll along the sea beach. The sand was hard

Mortimer gazed at her with a comic litde look of quizzical surprise. He had got away alone with her after no small struggle, and he meant to make the best of this solitary opportunity. "Have I heard that Canon Valentine and his wife are coming?" he asked, with a sort of genial satire in his voice. "Now, do you think, Miss here for nothing else but to talk about that bore, Canon Valentine, and that stick of a wife of hig?"

"I-I really don't know," Kathleen faltered out demurely. Mortimer gazed at her hard. "Yes, you do," he answered at last after a long "You know it very well. You pause. know you're playing with, me. That isn't what I want, and you can see it, Miss Heslegrave. You can guess what I've come here for. You can guess why I've brought you away all alone upon the sands." rembled with emotion. It took a good deal to work Rufus Mortimer up, but when once he was worked up his feelings ran away with him. He quivered visibly. "Oh, Miss Hesslegrave," he cried, gazing wildly at her, "you must have seen it long since! You can't have mistaken it. You must have known I loved you! I've as good as told you so over and over again, both in London and here, but never till today have I ventured to ask you. I didn't dare to ask, because I was so afraid you'd say me nay. And now it has come to this, I must speak. I must! I can't keep it back within myself any longer."

Every woman is flattered by a man's asking for her love, even when she means to say "no" outright to him, and it was something for Kathleen to have made a conquest like this of the American millionaire whom every girl in Venice was cager to be introduced to. She felt it as such. Yet she drew back, all tremulous "Please don't, Mr. Mortimer," she pleaded as the American tried hard to seize her vacant hand. "I—I wish you would not. I know you're very kind, but-I don't want you to take it.

"Why not?" Mortimer asked, drawing back a little space and gazing at her ear-

nestly. "Because." Kathleen answered, finding it hard indeed so to phrase her feelings as not unnecessarily to hurt the young man's, "I like you very much—as a friend—that to say-but I could never love you." "You thought you could once," Mortimer replied, with a face of real misery.

I could see you thought it once. In Ven ice here last year you almost hesitated and if your mother hadn't shown herself so anxious to push my interest with you I really believe you would have said 'yes' then to me. What has made the difference now? You must-you must tell me." "I hardly know myself," Kathleen an-

wered truthfully. "But I must hear it," the American answered, placing himself in front of her in an eager attitude. He had all the chivalrous feeling of his countrymen toward women. Rich as he was, he felt, and rightly felt, it was a great thing to ask such a girl as Kathleen Hesslegrave for the gift of her heart, and having wound himself up to make what for him was that fatal plunge he must know the worst forthwith. He must learn once for all then and there whether or not there was any chance left for him. So he stood with clasped hands, repeating over and over again: "You must tell me, Miss Hessle-grave. I have a right to know. The feelknow it."

"I can't tell you myself," Kathleen replied, a little faltering, for his earnestness touched her, as earnestness always touches "I shall always like you very women. much, Mr. Mortimer, but I can never love

"Do you love somebody else-will you tell me that?" the young man asked almost fiercely. Kathleen hesitated and was lost. "I-

I don't know myself, Mr. Mortimer," she answered feebly. Mortimer drew a long breath. "Is it Willoughby?" he asked at last, with a empire. I just love the pigeons." sudden turn that half frightened her. Kathleen began to cry. "Mr. Mortimer," she exclaimed, "you have no right



"I shall always like you very much, Mr.

Mortimer. never told yet to anybody—hardly even to myself. Mr. Willoughby is nothing more han a friend and a companion to me." But the American read her meaning through her words for all that."Willoughby!" he cried-"Willoughby! It's Willoughby who has supplanted me. I was half afraid of this." He paused irresolute for a moment. Then he went on much lower. "I ought to hate him for this. Miss Hesslegrave, but somehow I don't. Perhaps it isn't in my blood. But I like him and admire him. I admire his courage. I admire your courage for liking him. The worst of it is I admire you, too, for having the simple honesty to prefer him to me under all the circumstances. I know you are doing right. I can't help have answered the exact opposite in perfect admiring it. That penniless man against good faith if only she perceived the canon American millions! But you have left my heart poor oh, so poor, so poor! There was one thing in life upon which I had was one taing in the upon which I had fixed it, and you have given that to Willoughby, and, Miss Hesslegrave, I can't even quarrel with you for giving it!"

Kathleen leaned forward toward him anxiously. "Oh, for heaven's sake," she cried, clasping her hands, "don't betray me, Mr. Mortimer. I have never breathed

It was uncanny of you to find it out. I ask you as a woman, keep it—keep it sa-cred, for my sake, I beg of you!" Mortimer looked at her with the intensest affection in his eyes. He spoke the plain truth. That woman was the one object in life on which he had set his heart. and without her his wealth was as worth-less dross to him. "Why, Miss Hessle-grave," he answered, "what do you think am made of? Do you think I could surprise a woman's secret like that and not keep it more sacred than anything else on earth? You must have formed indeed a

a single word of this to him, nor he to me.

nestly, seriously. He was one of those rare men who rise far above jealousy. Kath-leen was touched by his attitude—what woman would not have been? For a moment she half regretted she could not answer him "yes." He was so genuinely in love, so deeply and honestly grieved at her inability to love him. Of her own accord Hesslegrave, I planned this picnic to the Lido today and got off with you alone said truthfully, "I like you better this here for nothing else but to talk about minute than I have ever liked you. You have spoken like a friend. You have spoken like a gentleman. Few men at such a moment could have spoken as you have Believe me, indeed I am deeply grateful for it.

"Thank you," Mortimer answered. brushing his tears away shamefacedly. Americans are more frank about such matters than we self restrained Britons "But, oh, Miss Hesslegrave, after all, what poor comfort it is to a man who asks your love, who loves you devotedly!"

They turned with one accord and wandered back along the sands in silence to-ward the rest of the party. So far as Rufus Mortimer was concerned, that picnic had been a dead failure. 'Twas with an effort that he managed to keep up conversation the rest of the afternoon with the mammas of the expedition. His heart had received a very heavy blow, and he hardly sought to conceal it from Kathleen's observant vision

Sad that in this world what is one man's loss is another man's gain. Arnold Willoughy, seeing those two come back silent from their stroll along the sands together, looked hard in Kathleen's face and then in Mortimer's-and read the whole history. He felt a little thrill of pleasure course through his spine like a chill. "Then he has asked her," Arnold thought, "and she -she has refused him. Dear girl, she has refused him! I can trust her after all. She prefers the penniless sailor to the rich-

est man this day in Venice!" It is always so. We each of us see things from our own point of view. Any other man would have taken it in the same way as Arnold Willoughby. But Kathleen went home that evening very heavy at heart for her American lover. He was so kind and true, so manly and generous, she felt half grieved in her heart she couldn't have said "yes" to him.

CHAPTER X.

VISITORS IN VENICE. Canon Valentine stared about him in the midst of the Piazza with a stony British stare of complete disapprobation. He rejected it in toto. "So this is modern Venice?" he exclaimed, with the air of a man who revisits some painful scene he has known in its better days. "This is what emancipated Italy has made of it! Dear me, Mrs. Hesslegrave, how altered it is, to be sure, since the good old times of the Austrian occupation!"

"Ah, yes," Kathleen interposed, not entering into his humor, "ne doubt you see great changes, canon. You haven't been here before since united Italy. How much lovelier it must look to you, how

it's really and truly Italian!" The canon gazed at her, full face, in the blankest astonishment. "Quite the contrary," he answered curtly. "I see very great changes, but they're all for the worse. These pigeons, for example, the were always a nuisance, flying about pr were always a nusance, and der one's feet and getting in one's way at times as many of them new as there ever used to be "

used to be."
"Why, I love the pigeons," Kathleen oried, all amazed. "They're so tame and familiar. In Egland the boys would throw stones at them and frighten them, but here under the shadow of St. Mark's they seem to feel as if they belonged to the place and as if man was a friend of theirs. Besides, they're so characteristic, and they're historically interesting, too, don't you know. They're said to be the descendants of the identical birds that brought Doge Dandolo good news from friends on shore, which enabled him to capture Crete and so lay the foundations of the Venetian

> "I dare say you do," the canon answered testily, "but that's no reason why they should be allowed to stroll about under people's heels as they walk across the Piazza. In the good old Austrian days, I'm sure, that was never permitted. Into ble, simply! And then the band! What very inferior music! When the Austrians were here, you remember, Amelia, we had a capital bandmaster, and everybody used to come out to listen to his German tunes in the evening. The square was always gay with bright uniforms then—such beau-tiful coats—Austrian hussar coats—deep braided on either side and flung carelessly open. The officers looked splendid by the tables at Florio's. Venice was Venice in those days, I can tell you, before all this onsense cropped up about united Italy."
> "But what could be lovelier," Kathleen exclaimed, half shocked at such treason, than the Italian officers in their pictursque blue cloaks, the Bersaglieri esp ly? I declare I always fall quite in love with them '

> "Very likely," the canon answered. He was never surprised for his part at any aberration of feeling on the part of young girls since this modern education craze. t had unsexed women for him. "But the place is speiled for all that. You should have seen it at its best, before it was vulgarized. Even St. Mark's is gilded and furbished up now out of all recognition. It's not fit to look at. Amelia, my dear, don't you agree with me, the place was far more picturesque when the Austrians had

"Oh, very much more picturesque!" Mrs. Valentine echoed dutifully. She was a meek looking old lady, in a long, black cloak, absolutely overborne by 50 years of the canon's individuality, and she would expected it. Irreverent young men in their cathedral town were wont to speak of her familiarly as "the prophet's donkey,

The canon examined critically the fa-cade of St. Mark's—that glorious composite facade of no particular time or style or fashion, which Kathleen admired so fervently, with its fantastic mixture of all elements alike—byzantine, oriental, ro-manesque, gothic, renaissance, "Very mixed," the canon murmured, holding his head on one side, "very mixed indeed. I can't say I care for it. It's so low and squat. And how the mosaics disfigure it!"
In answer to criticism like that poor Kathleen had nothing to say, so she wisely held her tongue. She knew when to be ilent. The canon strolled on, with Mrs. Hesslegrave by his side, past Leopardo's bronze sockets, which still hold aloft the great flagstaffs of the republic in front of great nagstans of the republic in front of the marvelous church; past the corner of St. Mark's, where stand the square pillars from St. Saba at Ptolemais; past the main gate of the palace, with its sculptured de-sign of Doge Francesce Foscari, in cap and robes, kneeling in submission before the keep it more saured.

keep it more saured indeed a earth? You must have formed indeed a very low opinion of me. I can use, this sign of Doge Francesce Foscari, in cap and robes, kneeling in submission before the lion of St. Mark; past the noble arcades and loggias of the Piazzetta; past the two huge columns in the seaward square and down by slow degrees to the steps of the Molo. Kathleen listened in wonder, half incredulous: to his criticisms as he passed.