

spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change," she broke off suddenly.

It had cost her many a pang to arrive at this decision.

"When do you go?" asked David.

"Early next week, we have not settled the day."

For some cause or other Deborah saw no more of David before she and Mrs. Menzies started for Boscombe Hall. She wondered a little within herself that he did not come, but promptly stifled the thought. She hated exacting people, she said. Once at the Hall she was so immersed in business that she had no time to think of anything else. It was on a lovely sunny evening in July that looking down the weed-grown drive, she saw a man's figure advancing towards the house rapidly, with set purpose in every firm decided foot-step. She needed no second glance to tell her that it was David Russell who was coming. Her mother was upstairs packing china, and Deborah advanced slowly, shyly, to the open hall door.

"I've come, you see," said David. "I, too, wanted to have another look at the old place. I've taken a room at the Inn for the night, the inn where I put up as a lad so many years ago, and now—I'm a middle-aged man. Come out, Deborah, come for one turn with me."

And Deborah went, swinging her garden hat in her hand, the sunlight resting on her dusky hair.

"Shall we go and have a look at the dell?" she said, laughing, "where you first found me, playing with fir-cones, and where Miss Laing lies buried."

"Miss Laing," echoed David, with a start.

Then Deborah laughed again. "They say confession is good for the soul; I've a great mind to confess to you, here and now, a sin, no, scarcely a sin, of my childhood, which lay heavy on my heart for many years of my life. I wonder if you will be very angry with me?"

"I think not; nothing you could do or say, Deborah, would make me really angry."

Then Deborah told him, rather falteringly, the story of her being hidden in the dell, and overhearing his proposal to Monica, and how Monica's utter heartlessness had filled her girlish soul with disgust. At first David listened gravely; it gave him a curious thrill, the history of that dead past told him by another, but when it came to the funeral of the doll, he burst into peal after peal of laughter.

"You were always quaint, Deborah, not a bit like any other girl. And do you mean to say that you have kept that story to yourself and never told anybody, not even your mother, from that day to this?"

"Of course not, it was not mine to tell," said Deborah, simply.

"Which proves, if I wanted proof, the appropriateness of the present I have chosen for your twenty-first birthday. I could not get the order done in time for the day, I came down therefore, to deliver it in person."

As he spoke he drew from his pocket a little leather case and handed it to Deborah. Inside was a narrow bracelet, one row of pearls set in a plain band of gold, and on the inside of the bracelet was engraved in tiny letters, "To a faithful friend." Underneath were Deborah's initials, and the date of her twenty-first birthday.

"Do you like it?" he asked, gently. Deborah lifted sweet, true eyes to his face. "Immensely, I like you to think me that."

"May I fasten it on then?"

Deborah stretched out her small hand and David fumbled a little clumsily over the clasp of the bangle, bending his head lower and lower over the dainty wrist. Almost before he knew what he was doing the wrist was clasped quite tightly in his hand and he was covering it with kisses. Then he caught the other hand and was looking straight into Deborah's blushing face.

"I want them both, darling, I want you, you with your sweet face and lovely soul, my dearest faithful friend of so

many years standing, I want you to be my wife, to go back with me to my life in India. Will you trust yourself to my keeping, my darling?"

"Yes," said Deborah, under her breath. She was not a girl of many words, and she was absolutely certain that the man who stood before her was the one and only love of her life. How long she rested in David's arms after the first intoxicating assurance of his love she did not know, but finally with rather trembling lips, and a little smile, she withdrew herself from them.

"You mustn't really go on like this. Shall we go back to mother?"

"Not now, not yet," pleaded David. "We have not got half way to the dell. You promised to show me Miss Laing's grave. How little I knew that day in my bitter disappointment and mortification the happiness that awaited me in the years to come?"

"Are you sure that you'd rather marry me?" asked Deborah a little archly.

"I'd rather marry you than any woman in the world, Deborah, my dear," and she felt the words were true.

In another moment they were clambering down the dell, which was sadly overgrown with briars and brambles, but Deborah had no difficulty in guiding her lover to the spot where her doll lay buried. He looked down at it with a smile; then slipped his arm round Deborah's waist.

"Shall we say, 'Peace to Miss Laing's ashes?'" he said with a smile.

A quarter of an hour later Mrs. Menzies standing at the Hall door, and shading her eyes with her hand from the rays of the setting sun, saw two figures approaching slowly, with lingering steps over the park. The two were David and Deborah walking hand in hand.

"So that's it, is it?" she said to herself, and she hastened out to greet them.

[THE END.]

VARIETIES.

A WELL-FOUNDED BELIEF.

"It isn't true, is it?" asked Maggie, as she finished reading *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*; "it isn't true, is it, that he could play on his pipe so that the rats would go off and drown themselves?"

"Well," replied Maggie's father, "I don't know about that. I think it may be true. Your uncle George can play the flute so that it will scare a cow into the river and drive all the dogs in the street howling crazy. Yes, I guess the poem is true."

WHEN TIME SHALL BE NO MORE.—"What then are we? We endure," says Carlyle, "but for an hour, and are crushed before the moth. Yet in the being and in the working of a faithful man or woman is there already (as all faith from the beginning gives assurance) a something that pertains not to this wild death-element of time; that triumphs over Time and is, and will be, when Time shall be no more."

THE FIRST CHINESE PUPPET SHOW.

The origin of Chinese puppet-shows forms the subject of a singular tradition.

A lady named Oh was besieging a town about B.C. 260. Its defenders, knowing her to be of a jealous disposition, "invented a puppet in the shape of a wooden woman which was made by strings and springs to dance on the battlements."

Alarmed at the idea of so fascinating a creature falling into her husband's hands and becoming an addition to his seraglio, Oh raised the siege.

Since that time puppets of a similar kind but smaller have amused the Chinese mind.

A KNOWING FARMER.—An American paper tells of a farmer in the State of Maine who hired two boys to help him to cut his hay, and when the job was finished gave each of them a cent for the work they had performed, and then offered to harness his team and haul the boys home for a cent apiece.

WHAT RELATION WAS HE?

They were looking at a portrait.

"Whom does it represent?" some one asked.

Then a man in the company said in answer—

"Sisters and brothers have I none, Yet that man's father is my father's son."

What relation was the speaker to the person depicted in the portrait?

It is remarkable how often the answer is given that the portrait represents the speaker himself. As a matter of fact it represents the speaker's son.

ILL-BRED SCENERY.

"Mamma, the scenery abroad must be very ill-bred."

"Scenery ill-bred, child. What do you mean?"

"This book on Alpine climbing says, 'A terrible abyss yawned before them!'"