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## AN ILLUSTRIOUS BRITISH EXILE.

### AN AUSTRALIAN SKETCH.

A few years ago, I made the acquaintance of an elderly lady, whose husband was far back as 1799, held an official position, both civil and military, in the colony of New South Wales. Many anecdotes she told me of celebrated characters who had in words of one of them, "left the country for their country's good." With most, if not with all, of these celebrities, the old lady had come in contact personally.

"One morning," she began, "I was sitting in my drawing-room with my two children, who are now middle-aged men with large families, when a gentleman was announced. I gave the order for his admission; and on his entering the door of the apartment, I rose from my chair, and greeted him with a bow, which he returned in the most graceful and courteous manner imaginable. His dress was that of a man of fashion, and his bearing that of a person who had moved in the highest circles of society. A vessel had arrived from England a few days previously, and passengers, and I fancied that this gentleman was one of them. I asked him to be seated. He took a chair, opposite to me, and at once entered into conversation, making the first topic the extreme warmth of the day, and the second the healthful appearance of my charming children—as he was pleased to speak of them. Apart from a mother liking to hear her children praised, there was such a refinement to the stranger's manner, such a seeming sincerity in all he said, added to such a marvellous neatness of expression, that I could not help thinking he would form a very valuable acquisition to our list of acquaintances, provided he intended remaining in Sydney, instead of settling in the interior of the colony."

"I expressed my regret that the major (my husband) was from home; but I mentioned that I expected him at one o'clock, at which hour we took luncheon; and I further expressed a hope that our visitor would remain and partake of the meal. With a very pretty smile (which I afterwards discovered had more meaning in it than I was at the time aware of), he bowed he could not have the pleasure of partaking of the hospitality of my table, but with my permission, he would wait till the appointed hour—which was then near at hand. Our conversation was resumed; and presently he asked my little ones to go to him. They obeyed at once, albeit they were shy children. This satisfied me that the stranger was a man of a kind and gentle disposition. He took the children, seated them on his knees, and began to tell them a fairy story, (evidently of his own invention, and extemporized,) to which they listened with profound attention. Indeed, I could not help being interested in the story so fanciful was the ideas, and so poetical the language in which they were expressed."

"The story ended, the stranger replaced the children on the carpet, and approached the table on which stood, in a porcelain vase, a bouquet of flowers. These he admired, and he began to discourse on floriculture. I listened with intense earnestness, so profound were all his observations. We were standing at the table for at least eight or ten minutes; my boys hanging on the skirt of my dress, and every now and then compelling me to beg of them to be silent."

"One o'clock came, but not the major. I received, however, a note from him, written in pencil on a slip of paper. He would be detained at Government House until half-past two."

"Again I requested the fascinating stranger to partake of luncheon, which was now on the table in the next room; and again, with the same winning smile, he declined. As he was about, as I thought, to depart, I extended my hand; but, to my astonishment, he stopped back, made a low bow, and declined taking it."

"For a gentleman to have his hand refused when he extends it to another is embarrassing enough; but for a lady! Who can possibly describe what were my feelings? Had he been the heir to the British throne, visiting that royal settlement in disguise, (and from the stranger's manners and conversation, he might have been that illustrious personage,) he could scarcely have, under the circumstances, treated me in such an extraordinary manner. I scarcely knew what to think. Observing as the stranger might have done the blood rushed to my cheeks, and being cognizant, evidently of what was passing through my mind he spoke as follows:—"

"Madam, I am afraid you will never forgive me the liberty I have taken already. But, truth is, the passion seized my whole soul, and I could not resist the temptation, of satisfying myself that the skill which made me so conspicuous in the southern country still remained to me in this convict land."

"I stared at him, but did not speak."

"Madame," he continued, "the penalty of sitting at the table with you, or taking the hand you paid me the compliment to proffer me—yourself in ignorance of the fact I am about to disclose—would have been the forfeiture of my ticket-of-leave, a hundred lashes, and employment on the roads in irons. As it is, I dread the Major's wrath; but I cherish a hope that you will endeavor to appease it, if your advocacy be only a return for the brief amusement I afforded your beautiful children."

"You are a convict?" I said, indignantly, my hand on the bell-rope."

"Madame," he said with an expression of countenance which moved me to pity, in spite of my indignation, "hear me for one moment."

"A convicted felon, how dared you enter my drawing-room as a visitor?" I asked him, my anger again getting the better of all my other feelings."

"The Major, madam," said the stranger, "requested me to be at his house at the hour when I presented myself; and he bade me wait if he were from home when I called. The Major wishes to know who was the person who received from me a diamond necklace which belonged to the Marchioness of Dorrigton, and came into my possession at a state ball some four or five years ago—a state ball at which I had the honor of being present. Now, Madam, when the orderly who opened the front door informed me that the Major was not at home, but that you were, that indomitable impudence which so often carried me into the drawing-room of the aristocracy of our country, had possession of me, and warmed as I was with generous animosity, I determined to tread once more on a lady's carpet, and enter into conversation with her. That much I felt the Major would forgive me; and, therefore, I requested the orderly to announce a gentleman. Indeed, madam, I shall make the forgiveness of the liberties I have taken in this room on the condition of my giving that information which shall restore to the Marchioness of Dorrigton the gem of which I have been guilty. A gem which is still unpledged, and in the possession of one who will restore it on an application, accompanied by a letter in my hand-writing."

"Again I kept silence." "Madam," he exclaimed, somewhat impatiently, and rather proudly, "I am no other man than Barrington, the illustrious pickpocket; and this is the hand which in its day has gently plucked from ladies of rank and wealth, jewels which realized, in all, upwards of thirty-five thousand pounds, irrespective of those which were in my possession, under lock and key; when fortune turned her back upon me."

"Barrington, the pickpocket!" Having heard so much of this man and of his exploits (although, of course, I had never seen him), I could not help regarding him with curiosity; so much so, that I could scarcely be angry with him any longer."

"Madam," he continued, "I have told you that I longed to satisfy myself whether that skill which rendered me so illustrious in Europe still remained to me in this country, after five years of disuse. I can conscientiously say that I am just as perfect in the art, that the touch is just as soft, and the nerve as steady as when I sat in the dress-circle at Drury Lane or Covent Garden."

"I do not understand you, Mr. Barrington," I replied. (I could not help saying *Mister*.)

"That you will, madam, in one moment."

"Where was your key?"

"I felt my pocket, in which I fancied they were, and discovered that they were gone."

"And your thumb and pencil-case, and your smelling-salts? They are here!" (He drew them from his coat-pocket.)

"My anger was again aroused. It was indeed, I thought, a frightful liberty for a convict to practise his skill upon me, and put his hand into the pocket of my dress. But, before I could request him to leave the room and the house, he spoke again; and as soon as I heard his voice and looked in his face, I was mollified, and against my will, as it were, obliged to listen to him."

"Ah, madam, he sighed, such is the change that often comes over the affairs of men! There was a time when ladies boasted of having been robbed by Barrington. Many of whom I had never robbed gave it out that I had done so; simply that they, might be talked about. Alas! such is the weakness of poor human nature that some people care not by what means they associate their names with the name of any celebrity. I was in power then not in bondage. Barrington has my diamond earrings; once exclaimed the old Countess of Kettibank, clasping her hands. Her ladyship's statement was not true. Her diamonds were paste, and she knew it; and I caused them to be returned to her. Had you not a pair of very small pearl-drops in your ears this morning, madam?"

"I placed my hands to my ears, and discovered that the drops were gone. Again my anger returned, and I said, How dared you, sir, place your fingers on my face?"

Upon my sacred word and honor, madam, he replied, placing his hand over his left breast, and bowing, I did nothing of the kind! The ear is the most sensitive part of the human body to the touch of another person. Had I touched your ear my hope of having these drops in my waistcoat-pocket would have been gone. It was the springs only that I touched, and the drops fell into palm of my left hand. He placed the earrings on the table, and made another low bow."

"And when did you deprive me of them?" I asked him."

"When I was discoursing on floriculture, you had occasion several times to incline your head towards your charming children and gently reprove them for interrupting me. It was on one of those occasions that the deed was quickly done. The dear children were the unconscious confederates in my crime; if crime you still consider it—since I have told you, and I spoke the truth, that it was not for the sake of gain, but simply to satisfy a passionate curiosity. It was as delicate and difficult an operation as ever I performed in the whole course of my professional career."

"There was a peculiar quaintness of humor and of action thrown into this speech; I could not refrain from laughing. But, to my great satisfaction, the illustrious pickpocket did not join in the laugh. He regarded me with a look of extreme humility, and maintained a respectful silence, which was shortly broken by a loud knocking at the door. It was the Major, who, suddenly remembering his appointment with Barrington, had contrived to make his escape from Government House, in order to keep it. The Major seemed rather surprised to find Barrington in my drawing-room; but he was in such a hurry, and so anxious, that he said nothing on the subject."

"I withdrew to the passage, whence I could overhear all that took place. Now, look here, Barrington, said my husband, impetuously, I will have no more nonsense. As for a free pardon, given a conditional pardon, at present, it is out of the question. In getting you a ticket-of-leave, I have done all that I possibly can; and, as I am a living man, I give you fair warning that if you do not keep faith with me, I will undo what I have already done. A free pardon? What? Let you loose upon the streets of England again? The Colonial Secretary would scout the idea, severely censure the governor for recommending such a thing. You know as I do, that if you returned to England to-morrow, and had an income of five thousand a year, would never be able to keep those fingers of your quiet."

"Well, I think you are right, major, said the illustrious personage. I will write the letter at once?"

"I will. But on one condition."

"Another condition."

"Yes."

"Well, what is that condition? You have so many conditions that I begin to think the necklace will not be forthcoming after all."

"And, if it be not, by—"

"Do not excite yourself to anger, major. I give you my honor."

"Your honor! Nonsense! What I want is, the jewel restored to its owner."

"And it shall be, on condition that you will not be offended, grievously offended with me for what I have done this day."

"What is that?"

"Summon your good wife, and let her bear witness both for and against me."

"My husband opened the drawing-room door, and called out Bessie."

"As soon as I had made my appearance, Barrington stated the case—all that had transpired—with minute accuracy; nay, more, he acted the entire scene in such a way that it became a little comedy in itself; the characters being himself, myself, and the children, all of which characters he represented with such humor that my husband and myself were in fits of laughter. Barrington, however, did not even smile. He affected to regard the little drama (and this made it the more amusing) as a very serious business."

"This play over, my husband again put to Barrington the question:—Will you write that letter at once?"

"Yes, he replied, I will for I see that I am forgiven the liberty I was tempted to take."

"And seating himself at the table, he wrote:—"

"Mr. Barrington presents his compliments to you, and requests that a sealed packet, marked D.N. No. 27, be immediately delivered to the bearer of this note. In the event of this request not being complied with, Mr. Barrington will have an opportunity of long explaining to Mr. — in Sydney, New South Wales, that he (Mr. —) has been guilty of an act of egregious folly."

"I placed my hands to my ears, and discovered that the drops were gone. Again my husband received a letter from

a gentleman, in the Colonial Office. He clasped his hands, cried 'Bravo!' and read to me as follows:—"

"My DEAR MAJOR:—This great pickpocket has been as good as his word. My lady is again in possession of her brilliants. Do whatever you can for Barrington in the colony; but keep a sharp eye on him, lest he should come back and once more get hold of that necklace."

"My husband sent for Barrington to inform him of the result of his letter, and he took an opportunity of asking the illustrious man if there were any other valuables which he would like to restore to the original owners."

"Thank you—not I was the reply. There are it is true, sundry little articles in safe custody at home; but as it is impossible to say what may be in the future, they had better for the present stand in my own name."

**Wearing Mourning Apparel.**

The propriety of adopting sombre apparel when a near and dear relative or friend dies is a theme upon which much has been said and written. The advocates of the custom have always been the great majority, and consequently anything which may be said in opposition to such a course, is interesting if only for the novelty of the argument advanced. Recently the Rev. Dr. Butler, of Trinity Church, Washington, addressed his congregation upon this subject, urging that if our religion is joyful, this objectionable uniform of woe ought to be discarded. The reversed gentleman's remarks are so interesting that we append them substance. He said:—

"Our life is sorrowful enough in our sorrows as they pass, without bringing them and holding them up to the world and creating conspicuous monuments over them in the lives of others, to perpetuate them after they are dead and buried. It is a Christian duty to trouble others as little as we can with our griefs. We may be sure that the world has enough for its own discipline. And it is from this view I object to a custom which to my mind is never good, but which in the excess to which it is carried seems to me to be an element of gloom, which no persons least of all—those who are called into this ready to shadowed light. I feel that I shall offend the sacred sentiment and feeling of many who cherish it as a 'Christian' custom, when I announce my decided objection to the practice of putting on mourning for the dead. You will permit me, with all respect to the sentiments of others, to utter my very long and matured convictions upon it. It looks like a uniform of organized rebellion against the Providence of God. It sheds gloom over the streets, through the churches, and in the houses. It creates an impression in the world of the absence of comfort and consolation. It helps to perpetuate sorrow, when the Christian duty is to cultivate peace and joy. Children or Christian friends die and they go to Heaven and we very properly lay them amid fragrant flowers, with white lilies upon their breast. All around them is the light of Christian hope and consolation, and then we come in a dark cloud shading night over the scene. This is not a Christian but a heathen custom."

"The early Christians forbade cries of agony the rending of garments, and the black emblems of despair which the heathen practiced and adopted, and deposit their dead with sorrowing gratitude; for they sorrow without hope. Indeed evidence is not wanting to prove that they adopted first the opposite custom to that of mourning; that they wore white and bright colors, emblematic of their Christian joy, when the dead were buried out of their sight. I have sometimes thought whether the habit, which will be in the memory of some of you of wearing white scarfs at funerals was not derived from this primitive custom. It is not I think, a Christian sentiment which prompts this gloomy habit. It converts women, and saddest of all, little children, into walking emblems of despair."

"Black! Why, it is the symbol of sin, of woe, of wrath and of despair, not of the comfort and gladden sorrow of the Christian. And then, to see it elaborately interwoven, enmeshed in its adjustments, going to places of amusement, covering the gay and gaily, it has a sort of fantastic masquerade appearance, and seems incongruous to the gloom. I respect the sentiment which leads those who are bereaved to put away colors, and wear those which are gloomier. But let not the fancied respect for the dead, or fear that one may not seem to mourn enough, lead us into the most mistaken conviction that sorrow is a duty. When it is a duty, let grace convert it into a peaceful joy. Let it lead us into the equanimity of wisdom, trading out sorrow into the world, and a wrong against Christianity by making it wear a liver of despair and a wrong to the world by being objects of gloominess, when our present peace should be a perpetual testimony to the High joys and the sufficient consolation to a Christian faith. Black!—What is it? It is that into which the light cannot come. It is the absence of light."

"Why should it drape the children of light and of hope? Why should it be used in the case of those the memory of whose departed and peaceful rest is a sacred joy? I may run counter to your feelings and prejudices upon this subject. You may say it corresponds to your own feelings to wear this gloomy material; but is it that feeling which corresponds to the credit of God, and to the mercies of redeeming love? If the custom is in harmony with just conception, then have our green sweet cemeteries, so full of joyful reflection, whose emblems are all in conflict with it altered. Our graves should be placed in rugged places, and have no tree but the cypress and the nightshade; no monuments but those of black marble. If our religion is joyful, it does seem to me that this objectionable uniform of woe would be soon discarded."

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