

UNCLE DICK;

Or, The Result of Diplomacy and Tact.

CHAPTER XI.—(Cont'd).

Masters reached the steps which led up from the sands to the seat. Standing at their base, he looked away in the direction of the sea. It was easy to mark the spot where Gracie had worked so hard with spade and pail.

He thought of the child with a pang of pity. For his heart had gone out to her; he had been captivated by her loving, winsome ways. Even now his eyes rested on where Gracie had built her last castle. He could mentally see her gleefully swatching the water overflowing the moat and gradually sweeping down the castle's inverted pail-shaped turrets.

Gracie! Poor little soul! And so she, whom he had mistaken for the governess—this woman—was the mother of that incarnation of innocence and purity! What of the child's future? He shuddered to think of it; it was horrible; all horrible in the extreme.

Well, he would go home to his lodgings. First he would look again—for the last time—on that portion of the sands. For he felt that he would never be able to come there again. He would have been thankful for a breeze just then; his brow was so fevered.

Perhaps there was more air on the sea-wall; he would test it, pass up the steps. There was the seat to avoid looking at; the seat where on they had both sat reading—heart reading heart. Where had been born to him the happiest moment in life; love's awakening.

There was other history about the seat too: pencil created. Thereon, before that meeting, had been born heroes and heroines, wicked men and wicked women. All to be bound together and pressed between covers later on to gladden or sadden readers' hearts.

Living a romance is less alluring than writing one: Masters found it so. He had been wont to believe in the parts he cast his characters for. He was leaning!

Stumbling up the steps on to the wall, he started to walk home. But he halted, suddenly, before he had taken half-a-dozen paces. No drill sergeant's command ever brought up an absent-minded beggar on parade as did the words which fell on his ear.

"I thought that was you, Mr. Masters!"

Her voice! The voice of his shattered idol! The same voice; just as fresh and soft and kind as ever! Her voice, speaking to him! Could it be? Or was it a dream, simply a chimera of his brain? Or was this voice—this voice ringing, singing in his ears now—the result of his fevered imagination only?

He feared to turn his head to see. To know whether it was in reality the woman for whom he had been ready to lay down his life—whom he had considered a princess among women; chaste, pure, modest; whose de-thronation had been so recent. Whom he had come to think of as soiled.

Yes! She was there before him in the flesh! This perfidious parody of perfection, this transmuted ideal. He waited for a moment motionless; then raised his cap—a merely mechanical act.

Besides, being a woman, whatever else she might be, she was exempt from rudeness at his hands. Her sex protected her.

CHAPTER XII.

"Aren't you going to sit on Our Seat? Or don't you need a rest?"

It was said archly; the significant inference to Our Seat, subtly conveyed. She seemed to have shaken off the depression of yesterday. Was herself; her own blithe, bright self again.

Mechanically Masters accepted the implied invitation; sat. There ensued silence; a silence which told more than speech. Not the silence which breathes of sweet accord between two understanding hearts.

She, on her part, was filled with wonder—expectancy—an undefined sense of something being wrong. He was not insensible of the fact that the plumage of his dove was rustling. No woman could, of course, endure such treatment.

The need for speech on his part was plain; but, somehow, he was at a loss for words. Was yet alive to the fact that she would read him

down as guilty of caddish behaviour. The silence became tense; the strain was fast becoming unlearnable.

But little time passed; she got to her feet—being the kind of woman quick to take offence. The insult was felt the more acutely because, she told herself, she was alone to blame; had courted it, brought it on herself.

She had wanted to meet this man. Had hurried on to the para'e with the feeling in her heart that it would be good to meet him. Had sat on the seat for a minute's rest and a faint sense of grief that she had not encountered him on her walk. Had been thinking disconsolately of walking home, when she was rendered joyful by his presence.

And then—then he was treating her like that! Had she offended him? Such a possibility passed rapidly through her mind; was as rapidly rejected as a theory untenable. Did he disapprove of her coming there alone, at that time? Some men were punctilious in regard to such matters. But he—natural, unconventional as he was himself—surely it could not be that.

His voice interrupted her reflections. In a husky, strained tone, looking neither right nor left, but aimlessly in front of him, he said—

"Nice, fine evening, isn't it?"

Another credit note to our fickle climate! But the utter incongruity of his remark, the exceedingly strange tone of his voice, caused her to wheel round and look at him. Then she saw. The moon chanced to be free from clouds just then; its pale beams accentuated the lividity of Master's face.

"Oh, my God! you are ill! What has happened—an accident? What can I do for you?"

As she was quick of thought so she was quick of movement. In a moment was kneeling beside him—all the annoyance and hastily-aroused temper gone to the winds. Only her helpful woman's instinct aching to be of service to him: to the man she loved.

"It is nothing. Don't—please, worry yourself."

Impulsively her arms went up to his shoulders in sheer sympathy and kindness. All the stiffness, all the resentment, left her. She was just plainly and simply a woman.

That being the case, her womanly pride was relegated to a back seat. Her precious dignity went down in value; right down to nil. It was not in the question at all—that question she asked as she gave herself to the needs of the moment; asked with real anxiety—

"Tell me—what to do?"

The light was there on her face, in her eyes! Oh, unmistakably there! The light which yesterday he had prayed he might see; that he had yearned for with his heart and soul. Her soft beautiful radiant eyes were looking with eager, tearful anxiety into his own.

For a moment—the influence of the moment and forgetfulness in combination—he felt that he must grasp, grip, strain her to him. Hold her in one long, lasting embrace. Then—he remembered! That an hour back she had been clinging to, looking into another man's face with the same tearful eyes! Oh! the excellence, super-excellence, of her acting! He would have given a king's ransom for the ability to laugh just then—at himself.

Could it be—could it? For a brief instant he doubted. The next moment blamed himself for being a fool. But not a blind fool—oh, no! He had the evidence of his own eyes: the evidence for the prosecution.

Most of us, under such circumstances, willingly take upon ourselves the threefold responsibility of witness, jury and judge. It is instinctive in most men; the desire to ladle out justice. But the appeal court sometimes oversets the decisions; Justice is not infallible—perhaps her blindness has something to do with it.

Few of us betray modesty when wearing the ermine. The more rigorously we silence the opposing counsel—the evidence of our own hearts—the more we pride ourselves on our impartiality, our exemplary Roman-fatherly administration of justice. We are apt to ignore any talk of a Court of Appeal; arrogate to ourselves supreme wisdom.

Curiously enough, the more severe the sentence we pronounce, the more we rise in our estimation. The rise may not be permanent—seldom is; but while we are at the high water mark of self-assurance we generally make the most of the tide. The sailing along on it is helped by the wind of serene self-complacency; we sun ourselves in vanity of our prowess. Forgetfulness is there; that the tide—like the proverbial lane or worm—has a knack of turning.

The dominant note in Masters at the moment was anger. That such a woman should have power over men. He mentally thanked God that her power over him was of the past. Laid the flattering unction to his soul that perhaps he was cleaner-minded than his fellows. Man applies curious ointments to his wounds!

But that thankfulness did not arrest his anger; made it the greater perhaps. He was hardly in a state of that judicial calm which should characterize dispassionate inquiry. Being angry, he spoke—after the manner of the angry man—foolishly; said brutally—

"This has been a busy evening with you. Don't you get tired of hugging men? I am the second in one hour."

For a moment she made no movement, no sound—save of the quick indrawing of her breath. It was as if some icy blast had suddenly assailed and frozen her to the spot. Her face retained the same look; she was too amazed—not understanding—too astonished to do more than look. He went on—

"I saw the parting at your back door; I was passing. Saw your slobbering over a man there as you seem inclined to slobber over me."

It was if he had struck her! She drew in her breath to that it sounded whistle-like. Fell back; extending her arms, seemed as if she would push him from her as something unclean. In colorlessness her face rivalled his.

"How dare you—"

Those words were shaped on her white lips. Then she stopped. The lips trembled, tightened. Rising to her feet, the indignation in her eyes as she looked down at him completed the sentence.

He laughed; that laugh with the underlying sobbing catch in it, for his laughter was not born of merriment. Said, righteous indignation shining in his own eyes too—

"Dare! What do you mean? The witnessing of it, or telling you of it?"

She scorned reply; he was really too contemptible! Yet the woman in her bubbled to the surface; she could not resist an effort to hurt him—

"And you—you played the spy?"

A raising of his shoulders, a lowering of his eyes, as he answered—

"Call it so if you wish."

He really did not care what she thought of him; plainly showed that. The indifference roused her; she tried again. Spoke with forced quietness—standing a little way from him—her voice full of contempt—

"There is a man bearing your name in the High Street; a blacksmith. I could understand such behaviour on his part. But—a gentleman!"

Her satisfaction came then; she had hurt. A deep flush streamed over his face, then faded altogether away, except for two red streaks.

"Am I not behaving as one?"

Keenly sensitive to her rebuke, he spoke half-apologetically. The bitterness of the incident was making him more himself. Brought home to him, forcefully, the irony of things.

"Pray pardon me." He rose and stepped towards. "Allow me to see you home."

"Don't touch me!"

There seemed an absolute fire burning in her eyes, so intense was her scorn. She could not have shrunk from him, or found him more repellent, had he been a leper. Her eyes seemed to scorch him.

He knew himself to be in the right; knew it perfectly well; beyond the shadow of a doubt. But standing before that searing indignation, it was he who appeared to be in the wrong, even to himself—his inmost self.

Such treatment hurt. Thought of the gross unfairness of it too was positively stinging. He who was suffering—the victim—to be put in the wrong! To be arraigned by the victimizer.

His blood, his forehead, seemed to be burning hot, the while he was con-

strong—strong and just. But he realized the hardness of the task he set himself. It was man's work; he would prove himself worthy of it.

She did not deign him another word; the wound to her pride was too severe for that. Her blue eyes blazed, as perhaps only blue eyes can. She would have given worlds for tears to soften their burning heat, but no tears came. Without another glance at him she turned and walked away—assumed an every-day gait; he should not think she was excited.

He did not attempt to stop her. Why should he? It was better so. Better that the sharp severing blow had been struck then than later; clean cuts heal quickest. He would let her get well on her way home before he moved. She must not think he was trying to follow.

Standing on the edge of the wall he looked out to sea. The water wore an appearance of invitation; that dangerous aspect which has proved irresistibly attractive to so many. Right out too, it looked so—so away from everything.

The tide was receding; was going out and away—to the Great Beyond. He knew that if he chose he could go with it. It would be so easy an act, if he stepped off the rocks further down—into the water that was always deep.

Then he pulled himself up with a jerk. Pride came to the rescue. Was he to cave in, go under, just because of a woman? What a fool he was! What an unmitigated, arrogant fool! Was there a woman in the world—the whole world—worth caring so much for? No. Not one!

But his heart contradicted. He remembered that anxious look on her face, the loving attitude, the feel of her arms as they rested on her breast, his shoulders. His, too, was the remembrance of the warmth of the sweet human breath; her eyes that had looked into his. Then he looked out to sea again; mentally out to the Great Beyond. Asked himself the old, old question: Was life worth living?

Bathos saved the situation. He remembered that a character in one of his stories had asked the same question: Was life worth living? The comic doctor had replied that it depended—depended on the liver!

He walked home. (To be continued.)

The Farm

FEEDING VALUE OF SKIM MILK.

Farmers who are feeding young stock and particularly hogs, realize in a general way the value of skim-milk for feeding them, but they may not be so well informed as to the most profitable method of feeding it. Skim-milk in itself is an unbalanced ration and unsuitable for any kind of young stock as a sole feed. It can be fed more advantageously in connection with some other feed that is unbalanced in the opposite direction. The best balance for skim-milk on the average farm is corn, or other highly carbonaceous grains, and the best balance for these, when fed to young stock is skim-milk.

Professor Henry, of the Wisconsin Experiment Station, has gone into this subject with great thoroughness, and gives details not merely of his own experiments, but a tabulation of the Danish experiments, which are of very great value. The profit of feeding skim-milk with corn or corn meal depends very largely on the proportions in which they are fed. Professor Henry's conclusions are that when feeding one pound of corn meal with one to three pounds of separator skim-milk, 327 pounds of skim-milk will save 100 pounds of meal. When three to five pounds of skim-milk is fed to one pound of corn meal it requires 446 pounds to save 100 pounds of meal. When five to seven pounds are fed to one of meal it requires 574 pounds, and when seven to nine pounds are fed to one of corn meal 552 pounds. On an average 475 pounds of skim-milk equal 100 pounds of corn meal.

Therefore to get the most value out of skim-milk, one should feed it in the proportion of one, two or three pounds of milk to one of corn remembering that we can re-duce the milk as weighing two is to the quart or eight is to the gallon. This is not at all accurate, but nearly so for practical purposes, twenty-one gallons of milk to a bushel. Even better results would be secured if a smaller quantity of milk was fed.

In short, if you want to get the full value of skim-milk, don't feed your hogs altogether on it. To do so is to waste it. If you want to get the full value of corn, don't feed your young pigs altogether on it. To do so is to waste it. By combining the two in the proportions above given you get the full value of the skim-milk and the full value of the corn.

On this basis Professor Henry figures that when corn is worth 50 cents a bushel and fed at the rate of one pound of corn to one to three of skim-milk, it is worth 28 cents a cwt.; but that fed at from seven to nine pounds to one of corn it is worth only 16 cents a cwt. When corn is 28 cents a bushel, fed in the first-mentioned quantities skim-milk is worth 15 cents a cwt., but when fed in the larger quantities is worth but 9 cents.

LIVE STOCK NOTES.

Bean pods and oats straw make a good ration for sheep once a day. For the other meals give clover, or nice clean timothy, with some grain feed up to the lambing time.

The ducks have quit laying, and will not begin again until next February, although it is not unusual for early hatched ducklings to begin in January, and keep on laying until the last of August. Any ducks not intended for next year's breeding, should be marketed now, when prices are still good.

As a rule, the largest annual milk yield is derived from cows that come fresh in the fall. They then receive a strong stimulus to their lacteal glands and, with good treatment, will continue a good flow of milk through the winter; then, with fresh grass in the spring, a still further stimulus is received. On the other hand, the cow that is fresh in the spring receives all the stimulus at once, then as fly time comes she begins to shrink and when she goes on winter feed she falls off rapidly.

Hogs may be fed most healthfully in the winter if a part of their food consists of roots, of which mangels are the best, being soft, tender and nutritious. With a peck of these roots four pounds of corn daily a store hog of 150 pounds should gain a pound a day if it is provided with a clean and comfortable pen. Any other grain may be used in place of the corn, and potatoes will answer instead of mangels, but they should be cooked, as the starch of the potato is not digestible in a raw state. Well cured, early cut clover hay will be eaten very readily by swine, and if wetted and sprinkled with ground corn, oats, buckwheat and bran mixed, this food will keep pigs growing well all the winter.

ENGLISH EXTRAVAGANCE.

Women of All Classes Said to Spend Too Much on Clothes.

A dozen years ago the simplicity of dress, not to say tastelessness, of the average English woman was so marked that she was held up before the women of the whole world either as a model of nobility or hideousness. One served the same purpose as the other, for underlying both was the fact that English women expended less money on dress than others.

The tradesman's wife could never by any chance escape detection. Her clothes gave her away. The shopgirl paid no attention whatever to dress so long as she was warmly clad in the winter and had a white cotton dress or two in the summer. As for the factory girl, she was completely satisfied if she had plenty of feathers to stick in the front of her great hat.

What has happened in the meantime to English women? asks a London correspondent. They have developed a tendency in dress which has made them conspicuously eager for self-adornment and increased their spending capacity tenfold.

The woman of fashion no longer thinks of dressing as she did formerly. The advent of French dress-makers was simultaneous with the new inclinations.

Fashionable dressmakers used to starve in London. Now they become millionaires. I could name a dozen or more fashionable establishments of this sort which are now the vogue merely because English women insist on spending unwonted sums on their clothes. The shopgirl, too, no longer looks like a frump, but dresses, if not so elegantly, far beyond her limited means.

Perhaps one reason why a loan shark has so few friends is not because he's always lending money, but because he insists on getting it back.

THIS ARTICLE REMOVED