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AILEY MOORE;

A TALE OF THE TIMES.

CHAPTER XIX.—(Continued.)—HOW CECILY TYRELL MET GERALD MOORE; MOREOVER, THE CASE OF LUCY NEVILLE.

It is hard to get used to London. We have travelled a good deal; we have smoked a pipe among the Germans, and discussed politics with the French; we have luxuriated in an Italian autumn, and looked or felt for our nose at the Labrador; we have loitered about Biarney, and jostled our way through New York, Hans towns, Scotch towns, Swiss towns, Belgic and Flemish towns; we have poked ourselves into, and profited by, and, after a time, sympathised with and homogenised in—but we have been now a long portion of our life laboring vainly to get used to London; it is out of the question—London and ourselves must continue strangers.

Everything—the out-of-the-way number of houses, the gigantic, grotesque, and absurd monuments, the eternal rattle of every kind of machine and vehicle—the barrow, 'bus, buggy, brougham, cab, calashe, carriage, car, cart, and all the other 'B.'s and 'C.'s innumerable—with the headlong drive and mad energy of man and beast, running and rushing along the streets in endless line and apparently inextricable confusion. Ah! save us from London!

Worse than the world-like spread and countless numbers of London, however, is the look of the population thereof. They seem all crazed. Every man's soul seems screwed up and his resolution taken to do something quite decisive as to himself and all mankind. His eyes are fixed, and his shoulders stoop to the angle most favorable to locomotion, and he drives, and he looks at you—if you be endeavoring to drag yourself in a contrary direction—as though you were one who might be an enemy of his. His looks—as plain as looks can speak—say to you, 'Take care you don't run in my way.' Alas! for the men of London! And the women! do not speak of them! nor of the poor little children. Is it Mr. Thackeray says that we have now no childhood, nor the young womanhood so odorous of childhood's sweet memories, and bright with its dear sunshine? If so, Mr. Thackeray is right; and what a sum of pure bliss has been sacrificed! What scenes of beauty have been blotted out of existence! and, oh! what an unpurchasable inheritance has been dissipated upon the poor—Good God! we have taught them to run—rush—and struggle for—Money! and they are mad. The heaven-enlightened reason rules no more—only the beastly appetite; and if ever they shall find themselves unable to get the money, they will pay us back. We, the teachers, by work and word; we have robbed the poor of what money cannot buy, and time may come when they will show us they have learned our bad lesson, at our own cost—if money can be found only in our coffers, they will have it.

What a gulf gaps between modern society in England and the security of progressive reason! But who knows?

There is a quiet street as you turn up for the 'Bank,' at least, if not quiet, it is less noisy than the way down to Cheapside, from which it is an escape; and along it, the day of which we write, two females were rather rapidly passing. The elder was aged, and might be called very aged, if her active gait did not contradict the wrinkles in her face; and the younger was about nineteen, fair, soft, innocent, and genteel-looking.—The old lady carried a band-box before her, and a light bundle in her right hand; the girl carried a light bundle also, but was not otherwise burdened. We should say that the young person was handsome; indeed, very handsome, and evidently an object of care and solicitude to her more aged companion.

'Mag,' said the young lady, when they arrived in a quiet, very quiet street in the neighborhood of Moorfields; 'Mag, do not distress yourself, we have enough of time, this hour to come.'

'Oh, I am strong and hearty, Miss,' replied the elder, 'an' 'tis better be sure than sorry, as the sayin' is.'

'Poor Mag, I am a sad weight upon you,' said the young lady, with a sigh.

'Your mother's daughter is more to me than the light o' the sky, agra,' answered Mag.—'Little I can do for my darlin', but the heart is there, God knows.'

'I am sorry I ever came here,' said the young girl, 'everything is so queer and so strange, and I feel so uneasy.'

'A bad, black town,' said Mag, 'is London, an' on'y the devil is known there. Many a heart it broke, an' many a soul it murdered. Och, Miss Lucy, you don't know, thank God, you don't know, but the poor little girls come here from Cork, an' Galway, an' ever so many places; an' then they have no one, the poor angashores; an' they go to a lodgin', an' they think 'places,

an' money will come for askin'. Ah, I'll go bail they see an' hear what they never heard afore, an' —, och, where's the use in talkin'?' 'Well, Mag, you saved me from 'lodging houses,' and from danger.'

'Good right I had, *afra gall* (fair love.) I earned my first wages from your grandmother, an' I looked at your angel-face in your cradle, an' I nursed you, *asthore*.'

'I wish I had died then, Mag.'

'Oh, Miss Lucy, oh, a *lanar*, (child) is't there 'Our Father who art in Heaven,' an' 'our darlin' Lady,' an' our Guardian Angel, an' all the Saints. Oh, have spirit, *agra*! My young mistress—your mother, miss, and poor Mag's voice was not quite clear as she spoke, 'is an angel, an' mamma will ask God to let her hear you, and to watch you.'

Lucy shed a tear, turned her eyes upon old Mag, with an expression of deep affection.

'Oh, I'll see my Miss Lucy a happy lady yet,' said Mag, gaily, and drying up her tears. 'Sure, on'y, I know that, she should 'never leave my hole of a room.'

'Little I could do for you, Mag,' said the young woman.

'Do for me! Och, glad, an' happy, an' proud I'd be to rise in the dark o' the mornin' and to watch the long night, for the love o' you. Do for me, *ma cushla*! (my pulse.) I wouldn't feel the years in my heart, and my hands would grow strong, wihin I thought I was workin' fur you; an' good right I have, for my young mistress was an angel, and so were you.'

'Well, Mag, God is good.'

'God is good? To be sure He is, a *lanar*; but God keep our little girls from London!—Och, murder,' she cried in a whisper, and she drew Lucy up close to her; 'Take care, agra, she said, as a well-dressed girl passed by.'

'What is the matter?' cried Lucy in alarm.

'Hush, that's one o' em.'

'One of whom?'

'Oh, yea, of our poor little girls. There now, Miss Lucy, they send 'em over here, and they are very often not fit for service at home, although the service here is a thousand times harder to be done!'

Mag spoke indignantly.

'Well, Mag?'

'Well, they can't get service, and one aftir another their little rags is pawned, for their bread, an' then they are goin' to be turned out o' the lodgin', an' they have no where to go, and

'Oh, Mag, that young woman.'

'Sorrow word o' lie in id, Miss Lucy. Hundreds go to ruin that a-way.'

'And their religion?'

'They stay away from Mass for a Sunday or two, because they see no one goin'; they give up their prayers, because they see no one prayin'—they begin to think on'y of themselves, and atin', and wearin', because they see no one thinkin' of anything else, and then they are hungry, may be, an—'

'God protect us!'

'An', darlin'?'

'Well, Mag?'

'Mind yourself; thrust no one in London—thrust no one.'

The companions here found themselves near a fashionable-looking office. Of course we don't care to mention the street. Great quantities of polished brass shoes outside, as protecting bars to the window—a large one—and two large plates were hanging on either post of the entrance.

'This is the place,' said Mag, taking out a note. 'Come in, in the name o' God.'

The young person called Lucy approached the young man who did business at the counter, and seemed to have been immediately recognised as having been there before. The companions were both introduced to a private apartment on the right hand side of the entrance.

'Please wait here a little,' the young man said, and retired.

In the course of half an hour, during which Mag gave her protegee a number of sound advices, and also a number of illustrative facts, a lady and gentleman entered the room. The lady appeared about fifty, and the gentleman ten years older. Both were well dressed, and wore a profusion of jewellery. The gentleman was florid, fat, and gray; the lady had heavy eyes and eyebrows, a heavy chin, and big hands.—Neither of them was very loveable. The lady bowed distantly, the gentleman more cordially, and both looked sharply at the old woman and her charge.

'You are 'L. N.,' demanded the gentleman, again examining the young girl.

'Yes,' answered Lucy.

'You have been a *gouvernante* before?' asked the lady, looking at Lucy through a gold-mounted glass.

'Deed, then, she hasn't,' answered Mag. 'She's a born lady, your ladyship,' said the old

woman, ardently; 'an' no one that went before her was in service.'

'Oh, indeed,' remarked the strange lady.

'You play?' again demanded the fat lady.

'Yes, madam.'

'And speak French?'

'Yes.'

'Oh, yes, my lady; and may the Lord watch your own, as you watch over the orphan. Och—no, my darlin', are you goin' from me?'

The gentleman smiled, and the lady turned away a little disgusted.

'We shall take care of her, my good woman,' said the gentleman; 'and Lady Petrail here will make her fortune.'

'The Lord bless your honor, sir,' said poor Mag.

Things so far went on satisfactorily, and, after some few additional questions and answers, the gentleman called a cab. The old woman grew more vociferous as the moment of parting approached, and the young one herself began to feel alone and lonely. Her heart beat violently, and the whole world seemed to darken. London looked hideous—it was dirty November—the whole city wore the aspect of a monster jail.—How the poor young woman prayed!

Well for those that in hours like that of Lucy can turn into the heart, and stretching forth their hands, accept the chalice of God as a chalice of love!

A last embrace! a last blessing! Lucy flung her arms around the neck of her old servant, and fervently kissed her. At the same moment she felt poor Mag's purse drop into her bosom.

'No, no, no, a *lanar*,' she whispered, seeing Lucy going to draw forth the purse; 'you are Miss Lucy, and my own mistress, and you shan't be askin' money of any one till 'tis due, and your own.'

'Ah, Mag?'

'There, now—that's a *shore* now; sure you'll have enough to give every one, and the poor old servant, Mag, too, with the help o' God?'

And Lucy was obliged to yield. She entered the cab with the lady; the gentleman sat outside.

'The riot is gone,' said Mag, to herself; 'but the landlord is a good man, on'y he's English—an' at any rate, poor Miss Lucy isn't dependin' upon the fat lady.'

And so poor Mag went home to a cold room in St. Giles's, and like a good Christian and a friend, Mag offered up 'a rosary' for her 'darlin' Miss Lucy.'

Meanwhile the cab drove rapidly—or as rapidly as it was possible, through the city. After various turns, various chances of 'locks,' and curses at 'crossings,' and at mishaps, the carriage drew up, before a fine house in a large square. The gentleman descended, and knocked at the door; the lady who had spoken little remained in the vehicle.

Lucy looked out for a moment, and saw a servant in livery open the hall. There were, four young ladies in the drawing-room window.

In a short time the young woman found herself in a really magnificent apartment. Gorgeous chandeliers—immense mirrors—Ottomans and sofas, covered with rich silks—and superb window hangings, which gave an air of regal comfort to the whole *salon*, proclaimed the reign of gold and golden hours.

The four young ladies left the room on the entrance of Lucy Neville and her companions; one of them smiled at her in a most sinister way, and she heard a roar of laughter a little after.

Lucy's heart beat fast and she did not know why.

'You would like to see your own room,' asked the lady, as amiable as possible.

'If you please,' was the answer.

'Oh, time enough,' said the gentleman.—'Ring for some refreshment for Miss—'

'Neville.'

'For Miss *Nay-ville*.'

'Oh, I thank you; I do not wish any.'

'Oh, but you must,' replied the gentleman.—'By the bye,' he added, 'your name is a charming name—and otherwise it would not suit you,' he said.

Then he rang, and sat very near her, at which she was distressed.

She moved away to give him room, at which he hemmed a couple of times.

In a short while the servant in livery appeared—bearing cloth and tray, magnificently furnished for lunch. Lucy observed that this man looked at her, too, in a most sinister way, and that he spoke to the fat lady with unbecoming familiarity. She grew more and more anxious—painfully—painfully so—and though she did not know why, she would give the universe to be in the garret of old Mag.

'Hail, Mary, full of grace!' she cried to herself. 'Mary, protect me,' she cried in her soul.

'Come, you really must take some refreshment.'

'You will excuse me, if you please sir.'

'Why, girl, that is absurd,' said Lady Petrail, in a most unladylike way. 'You must eat and drink.'

The voice was so coarse, the manner so rude, and the face of the fat lady was so beastly, that Lucy Neville trembled from head to foot. She asked herself who was Lady Petrail?

Poor girl, she was pale, and the seal of deep anguish was on her brow, but her heart was strong, and still she murmured interiorly, 'Hail, Mary!'

Well for her—well for Lucy Neville she had died before that minute.

Poor people run to town to put their little capital into business which they do not know; artizans to compete with skill and roguery; scholars to dream of eminence, and starve in misery; servants to seek places where crowds are quarrelling for shelter; Irish maidens to look for patronage where their country and religion would more than counterbalance the perfections of an angel—and all, or nearly all go to perdition.

In the name of God, and by the virtue of your mothers, do not go to the metropolis, young girls of Ireland. You are not fitted for its industry, its iniquity, its prejudices, its calculating libertinism. You will have few of the guards of virtue, and you will be compelled to witness vice, until its ugliness become familiar. Slow it may be, but secure is the approach of cold indifference, bringing the curse of insensibility by the hand. The honest mother's child will there know the richest treasures of her youth only as 'folly,' and the religion of her father's fireside as 'scandal.' The life of a reprobate, and the death of the unhoping and hopeless have been the fate of many a girl who thought London was a fine place to get a situation.

Keep away from the large towas; but above all if you have no sure friend before you, keep away from London.

The young girl Lucy was allowed to go to her room with a full heart and a frightened imagination. The room was like the mansion, richly furnished, but too gaudy for true taste.—She looked around, half in wonder, half in terror, her little bundles and band-box were laid by in a modest corner, and looked as little at home as herself.

She thought of bolting the door, but became afraid of the fat lady; and, to some dreamy idea of escape, or the possible necessity of an escape, she found the height of the window from the ground, and the fact that the window looked into a high walled yard, opposing an unsurmountable obstacle.

Lucy crept into a small dressing-room of the chamber, and she knelt down to pray.

And how she prayed then! The whole of her young life was in one thought, and God's presence all along through it; and all her little frailties and her supposed transgressions, and her father's happy look, and her mother's gentle look and the 'old house at home,' and its companions and pleasures, and trials—they were all concentrated in an indivisible instant; and Providence was among them, arranging, moulding, directing and assuring, and the girl began to feel confidence. Then her mother seemed to stand near her, and her heart beat rapidly, and she thought of Mag's saying, that her mother would 'ask God for leave to come and watch her,' and her tears began to flow, and she said 'Mother!—' And then she was recalled, by this expression, to the light of her supernatural life, and she raised her eyes to heaven, while her soul seemed to expand in the sight of the Eternal, and she cried, 'Hail, holy queen!

A sigh—a sigh not loud, but still a sigh of agony, just beside her, startled and filled her with new terror. She suddenly rose.

Lucy was not deceived. A girl, not much older than herself, stood near, a little behind.—She was pale—beautiful, and richly attired, and as Lucy, shaming with fear, was about to exclaim the stranger placed her finger on her mouth, and pointing to the door, warned Lucy to be on her guard.

Lucy stood petrified.

'Do not fear me,' the strange girl said; 'but look and listen—listen as if heaven and hell depended on every word—hush! She said suddenly, 'There's a ring! it is nothing—we have a moment. Listen.'

'My God—'

'Hush, girl, hush—by the God that made you and the cross that redeemed you, neither eat nor drink in this house.'

'Neither eat nor drink?'

'Listen. Everything you will get is drugged—deep drugged.'

'Drugged—drugged! How—why?'

'Hush, again I say. Drugged, to wither up the life of your life; to blacken the sun-light, and send you into corruption to rot; to make you curse the day you were born, and make God

and man your enemy. Look at that bed—look at this furniture—look at my apparel! You are in a house of ill-fame?'

Lucy heard no more—she fainted; but she must have been recovered, for she found herself lying in the stranger's arms, and the stranger's tears fell hot and fast upon her neck.

'Oh can I not leave this? Can I not—can I not. For God Al—'

'Hush! by your mother's soul? Hush, or we are undone. You may as well think of flying from the earth and air.'

'But the law?'

'Poor bird—the patrons of this house. But no matter—'

The sentence was broken by the sudden entrance of Lady Petrail. She looked for a moment angrily and suspiciously.

'How, Bellinda!' she said; 'what's to do here?'

'Oh, only Miss is crying after her mamma,' said Bellinda.

'And you were comforting her, I hope,' said she.

'Yes, she's pious, and I an engaging never to go to church without her—eh, Miss Neville? she added, touching Lucy under the chin.

Lucy was astounded at the sudden transformation.

'But I believe Lucy belongs to the Pope, Bellinda,' said the fat lady. 'It is surprising how people can be so absurd,' said lady Petrail.

'Oh, our religion cures them of all such nonsense,' answered Bell.

'The fat lady laughed immoderately, and appeared reassured.

'We'll give Lucy the first lesson now at dinner,' said her fat ladyship.

Lucy shuddered, and she thought she should have dropped down.

'Yes,' answered Bell, 'the wild Irish don't understand that argument as well as the English, but if you succeed with Miss Neville as well as you have with me, she'll make a great saint—will she not?'

Here there was another laugh.

A few minutes found the party sitting at table in a fine room, but not in the grand saloon.—There were two additional females, but no gentlemen present. Lady Petrail asked Bellinda for 'grace.' Bellinda promised a great deal of grace at the next ball. Lady Petrail then helped all—commencing with Lucy.

But Lucy declared she could not eat.

Bellinda asked her to try a little wine and the other ladies kindly filled her glass—all wished to take wine with Lucy.

But Lucy would not drink.

Every possible mode of persuasion was used, and rallery, and some anger, and some threats.

But Lucy, though deadly pale, was firm.

Dinner went on, and Lucy was the butt of the evening; occasionally she was told she would be glad to eat, perhaps, before long; that many of her 'country' got something to eat in London—but remarks like the latter were instantly suspended by a 'no more of that,' peremptorily from Bellinda—she was called a 'hoity toity,' a 'minx,' a 'fine lady,' and at last lady Petrail said she should leave the house.

Instantly Lucy started to her feet and made for the door.

There was a roar of laughter then; and the laughter was very much increased when Lucy, yielding to the evident necessity of the case, was led back by the whole four to the chair from which she had escaped.

About ten minutes elapsed; Bellinda had gone away for a moment, as she said; there was an ominous silence, so that the tick of a small clock on the mantelpiece was sharply audible; the servant in livery lowered the gas in the chandelier; the fat lady moved away from the table a little, and one of the young ladies remaining rang, or turned the ivory bell-handle; the servant in livery again entered, looked at the fat lady, and retired.

In five minutes afterwards Lucy felt her arms held back by—as she saw on looking round, shrieking—the gentleman who had engaged her at the registry office.

'Your life or yourself, now!' exclaimed the ruffian.

Lucy gave shriek upon shriek.

'D—n your Irish throat!' he said. 'The adhesive plaster!' he cried.

'What's here?' cried Bellinda, rushing in through the folding-doors of the grand saloon, and letting in a full flow of gaslight. 'What is this?'

'D—n you, shut that door.'

Shriek, shriek, shriek!

The man in livery came to, say that the 'adhesive' had been all spoiled.

Shriek, shriek, shriek!

'Get the waistcoat!' cried the gentleman

'give me a rolling-pin—anything! and b—'

her, the—, she's nearly bit off my finger!