

There was a pause. The clergyman seemed as if unable to comprehend the words.—'Mrs. Chavasse, I hope you are under a mistake,' he said at last. 'I think you are.'

'No; it was all settled yesterday with old Winninton. Caroline told me so herself; she and Mr. Castonel are both here now.'

'I am grieved to hear it! Mr. Castonel is not the man I would give a child to.'

'That's just what I said. Will you walk in?'

'Not now. I will call for Ellen by-and-by.'

'Not before nine,' said Mrs. Chavasse.

There were those in Ebury who had called Mr. Castonel an attractive man, but I think it would have puzzled them to tell in what his attractions lay. He was by no means good-looking; though perhaps not what could be called plain; one peculiarity of his, was that he hated music; and in society he was silent, rather than otherwise. Yet he generally found favor with the ladies; they are pretty certain to like one who has the reputation of being a general admirer.—Had a stranger that evening, been present in the drawing-room of Mrs. Chavasse, he would not have suspected Mr. Castonel was on the point of marriage with Miss Hall, for his gallant attentions to Frances Chavasse and Ellen Leicester—his evident admiration for both, were inconsistently apparent—especially considering the presence of Caroline. What she thought, it is impossible to say.—She left early, and Mr. Castonel attended her as far as her home.

Mr. Leicester had taken his way to the house of Mr. Winninton. The surgeon was cowering over the fire, as Caroline had described. He shook hands with Mr. Leicester without rising, and pointed in silence to a chair. He looked very ill; scarcely able to speak.

'I have heard some tidings about Caroline' began the rector.

Mr. Winninton groaned. 'Oh, my friend, my pastor,' he said, 'I have need of strong consolation under this affliction.'

'You disapprove, no doubt, of Mr. Castonel?'

'Disapprove!' he repeated, roused to energy; 'believe me, I would rather Caroline went before me, than leave her the wife of Gervase Castonel.'

'Then why have you consented?'

'I had no help for it,' he sadly uttered.—'They were before me, in this room both of them, and they told me they only cared for each other. Mr. Castonel informed me that if I refused my consent it was of little consequence, for he should take her without it. She is infatuated with him; and how and where they can have met so frequently, as it appears they have done, is a wonder to me. Oh, he is of mean, dishonorable spirit! And I have my doubts about his liking her, liking her, even.'

'Then why should he seek to marry her?' cried the rector, in surprise.

'I know not. I have been thinking about it all night and all day, and can come to no conclusion. Save one,' he added, dropping his voice, 'which is firm upon me, and will not leave me: the conviction that he will not treat her well. Would you,' he asked, suddenly looking up, 'would you give him Ellen?'

'No,' most emphatically replied Mr. Leicester. 'I believe him to be a bad, immoral man. My calling takes me continually amongst the poor, and I can tell you Mr. Castonel is much more warmly welcomed by the daughters than the parents. But nothing tangible has hitherto been brought against him. He is a deep man.'

'His covert behaviour as to Caroline proves his depth. What about that strange person who followed him to Ebury, and took the little lodge? You know what I mean.'

'I can learn nothing of her,' answered Mr. Leicester. 'She lives on, there, with that female attendant. I called once, but she told me she must beg to decline my visits, as she wished to live in strict retirement. I suppose I should not have seen her at all, but the other person was out, and she came to the door.'

'I met her once,' said Mr. Winninton.—'She is very handsome.'

'Too handsome and too young to be living in so mysterious a way,' remarked the rector, significantly. 'She has evidently been reared as a gentlewoman; her accent and manner are perfectly lady like and refined. Did you mention her to Mr. Castonel?'

'I did. And he answered in an indifferent, haughty manner, that the lady was a connection of his own family, who chose,

for reasons of her own, good and upright, though they were kept secret, to pass her days just now in retirement. He added, that her character was unimpeachable, and no one, to him, should dare impugn it.—What could I answer?'

'Very true. And it may be as he says; though the circumstances wear so suspicious an appearance.'

'Oh, that he had never come to Ebury!' exclaimed the surgeon, clasping his hands with emotion. 'Not for the injury he has done to me professionally; and I believe striven to do, for there was room for us both; I have forgiven him this with all my heart, as it becomes a Christian near the grave to do. But my conviction tells me he is a bad man, a mysterious man—yes, my friend, I repeat it, a mysterious man—I feel him to be so, though it is as uncertain I cannot explain; and I feel that he will assure Caroline's misery instead of happiness.'

Still, unless he is attached to her, I do not see why he should wed her,' repeated the rector. 'She has no fortune to tempt his cupidity.'

'Nor do I see it,' replied Mr. Winninton. 'But it is so.'

throughout Ebury. An upright, portly, kindly-looking woman, of four or five-and-twenty, with an auburn 'front,' whose curls were always scrupulously smooth. She had for many years held the important situation of housekeeper at the Hall: but changes had occurred there, as they do in many places. On the death of Mr. Winninton's sister, she had accepted the post of housekeeper to him, and had been there ever since. Hannah, a damsel of twenty, being under her.

'Well, was it the baker?' she demanded, as Hannah returned to the kitchen.

'No, ma'am. It was another wedding present for Miss Caroline, with Mrs. Major Acre's compliments. I took it up to her: she's in the drawing-room with Mr. Castonel.'

'Ah!' groaned the housekeeper. 'Look at the dust on those glasses, Hannah. I thought you said you had wiped them.'

'And what harm, ma'am, either?' returned Hannah, who understood very well the nature of the groan. 'She'll be his wife to-morrow.'

'Who said there was harm?' sharply retorted Mrs. Muff. 'Only—my poor master! he is so lonely, and it is the last evening she'll be here. Where are you running off

'I'll do what I can, sir,' she said. 'But when Miss Caroline has left here, that will be but little.'

'You can go where she goes, Muff.'

'Perhaps not, sir.'

'Perhaps yes. Will you promise to do so if you can—if any possible way is open? Promise me,' he added, eagerly and feverishly.

'Well, sir,' she answered, to humor him, 'if it shall be agreeable to all parties, yes, I will.'

'And you will shield her from him, as far as you can?'

'Yes,' repeated the housekeeper, most imperfectly understanding what Caroline was to be shielded from.

'Now, Mrs. Muff,' he concluded, in a solemn tone, 'that's a death bargain. Remember it.'

'You don't seem well, sir,' was Mrs. Muff's rejoinder. 'Shall I call Miss Caroline to you?'

'No,' he sadly answered. 'Let her be.'

She was in the drawing-room with Mr. Castonel, as had been stated; laughing, talking, joking, unmindful of her fond uncle, who was dying underneath. Her dress was a cool summer muslin, very pretty, with its open sleeves, her dark hair was worn in bands, and her dark eyes were animated. She began showing him some of the presents she had received that day, and slipped a bracelet on her arm to display it.

'That is an elegant bracelet,' observed Mr. Castonel. 'Who is it from?'

'Ellen Leicester.'

'Oh,' he hastily rejoined, 'I heard it said to-day that she is not going to church with you—that the parson's starch will not let her.'

'It is true,' said Caroline. 'I did not tell you of it, Gervase, because I thought it might annoy you, as it had done me.'

'Annoy me! Oh dear no. Let me hear what his objections were: what he said.'

'I only gathered the substance of them from Mrs. Leicester. You know my uncle does not approve our union, though he did give his consent. So on that score, I believe, Mr. Leicester declined to allow Ellen to be one of my bridesmaids—that he would not directly sanction what he was pleased to call an undutiful measure.'

'I wonder he condescends to marry us,' remarked Mr. Castonel, with that peculiar sneer, cunning and malignant, on his face, which even Caroline disliked to see.

'That he could not refuse. It is in his line of duty. Ellen is so vexed. We three had always promised each other that the two left would be bridesmaids to whichever was married first, I, Ellen, and Frances Chavasse.'

Mr. Castonel laughed, a strange, ringing laugh, as if something amused him much; and Caroline looked at him with surprise.

The wedding-day dawned, not too promisingly. In the first place, the fine, brilliant weather had suddenly changed, and the day rose pouring wet. In the second, Mr. Winninton, who, however, had never intended to go to church with them, was too ill to rise. Miss Chavasse was bridesmaid, and by half-past ten, Gervase Castonel and Caroline Hall had been united for better, for worse, until death did them part. Next came the breakfast, the Rev. Mr. Leicester, who had officiated, declining to go and partake of it, and then the bride and bridegroom started off in a carriage-of-four to spend a short honeymoon. Before they returned, Mr. Winninton was dead.

A very singular remark was made by Mr. Castonel, on his return, when he was informed of his former rival's death. It was the tiger, John, who mentioned it.

'Dead, is he!' said Mr. Castonel thoughtfully. 'I did not want him to die—just yet.'

What did he mean by 'just yet?'

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

LITERARY NOTICES.

A GLANCE AT THE VICTORIA BRIDGE AND THE MEN WHO BUILT IT.—By Charles Legge, Esq., Civil Engineer. Published by John Lovell, Montreal.

We give on this page a portrait of Robert Stephenson the eminent Civil Engineer, son of the still more eminent George Stephenson, projector, constructor, and father-in-science of the locomotive engine and railway system.

Too much has been claimed for Robert Stephenson as the originator of iron tubular bridges in general, and in particular of that at Montreal. Mr. William Fairbairn of Manchester, and one of his assistants, Mr. Edwin Clarke, were practically the originators of tubular bridges. Mr. Fairbairn wrote to the present Editor of the Canadian Illustrated News in 1860, saying: 'I thank you for taking care of my reputation in Canada on the subject of tubular bridges.' Then he



ROBERT STEPHENSON, CIVIL ENGINEER.

SKETCHED FOR THE CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

Mr. Leicester sat there an hour, and then proceeded to visit some cottages. On his return, he cut across the fields, a near way for he found it was getting dusk, and close upon the time he intended to call for Ellen. As he passed the corner of Beech Wood, a retired spot just there, near to the pretty, but very small lodge originally built for a game-keeper, who should he suddenly encounter but its present inmate the lady he and Mr. Winninton had been speaking of. Her arm was within Mr. Castonel's and she was talking rapidly, in a tone as it seemed, of remonstrance. The gentlemen bowed as they passed each other; both coldly; and had Mr. Leicester turned to scan the doctor's face, he would have seen on it a sneer of malignant triumph.

'I never saw a case more open to suspicion in my life,' muttered the clergyman to himself. 'And he just came from the presence of his wife, that is to be!'

CHAPTER III.

OF THE OLD MAN'S PRESENTMENTS, AND OF SOME MYSTERIOUS REMARKS OF THE YOUNGER MAN.

'Come, Hannah, look alive,' cried Mrs. Muff, some two months subsequent to the above details; wash those decanters first: there's one short, but I'll see to that. Now, you need not touch the knives: Jem will clean them all in the morning. Do as I bid you, and then get-out and dust the best china.'

'There's the door bell,' said Hannah.

'Go and answer it, and don't be an hour over it. I dare say it's the man with the potted meats. Tell him the rolls must be here in the morning by ten o'clock.'

A most valuable personage was Mrs. Muff in her vocation, and highly respected

to, now? I told you to finish the decanters.'

'Master called out for some coal as I passed the parlor,' answered Hannah. 'The puzzle to me is, how he can bear a fire this sultry August weather.'

'Ah, child, you'll come to the end of many puzzles before you arrive at my years. Master's old and chilly, and breaking up as fast as he can break. I'll take the coal in myself.'

Mr. Winninton did not look up, as the housekeeper put the coal on. But afterwards, when she was busy at the sideboard, he called out in a sudden, quick tone—'Mrs. Muff.'

'Sir?' she answered.

'What are you doing there?'

'I am changing the sherry wine, sir, into the odd decanter. We want this one to put ready with the others.'

'For the show to-morrow?' he went on.

'To be sure, sir. For nothing else.'

'Ah, Muff, put every thing in order,' he continued. 'Don't let it be said that I opposed any of their wishes; an old man like I am, whom they would be glad to see out of the world. And you need not trouble yourself to put things up afterwards: they will be wanted again.'

'For what purpose, sir?' she inquired.

'For the funeral.'

Mrs. Muff, as she said afterwards, was struck all of a heap. And Mr. Winninton resumed:

'After a wedding comes a burying. She is beginning the cares of life, and I am giving them up forever. And some thing tells me she will have her share of them. I shall not be here to stand by her, Muff, so you must.'

The housekeeper trembled as she heard these words. He had a queer look on his face that she did not like.