

Choice Literature.

One Life Only.

CHAPTER IV.—Continued.

"Don't speak to me of that iron man," she said, "I cannot command my feelings when he is mentioned; but Hervey is an uncommonly good fellow, I like him very much."

"I think Miss Orlington quite charming," said Una.

"She is the dearest little thing in the world," said Miss Northcote, "but awfully slow."

"Very slow indeed," said Rupert, composedly, "she does not talk slang."

"Since you object to my style of conversation, Ru, I will leave you to enjoy that of our respected elders. Miss Dyer, do come out and let me show you our fernery." She did not wait for her visitor's consent, but quietly turning round, she said, "Miss Dyer wishes to go out, mother, we shall not come back for some little time," and then lightly dancing down the steps which led from the window, she held out her hand to Una who joined her with great goodwill; Rupert was following, but Will stopped, and in a very decided manner, ordered him to remain where he was.

"At least, you do not come with us," she said; "I mean to find out what sort of a person Miss Dyer is quite by myself." Rupert laughed, and went back as if he knew it was no use to dispute her authority, and she drew Una rapidly on by a shady walk which led to the river.

"That was rather a terrific announcement of yours," said Una, as they almost ran along together; "perhaps you will be very much dissatisfied with the discoveries you may make in my character."

"I do not expect I shall, I think you will suit me; anyhow, I simply want a jolly talk by ourselves. Of course we are not going to the fernery, I hate ferns."

"Where are we going then?"

"To a little nook by the river-side, which is a favourite hiding-place of mine, and where they will not be able to find us, if they send for you before I am ready to let you go. There now," she said as they reached their destination, "is not this perfect?"

It was a pleasant spot, certainly, a mossy bank carpeted at this season with primroses and violets, and drooping willow-trees all around them, whose branches, just tinged with tender green, touched the sparkling waters of the swiftly-rushing river that rolled past them, making music in the still soft air. Miss Northcote flung herself down at once on a bed of flowers, and Una very willingly took a place beside her.

CHAPTER V.

It was not difficult for the two new acquaintances to find topics for conversation. Miss Northcote seemed to be inquisitive on every subject under the sun, and begged Una to understand at once, that she had an inquiring mind, which it was absolutely necessary she should satisfy by every means in her power, and notably by the present opportunity for enlightenment, which Miss Dyer's visit afforded her. For instance, she had a weakness for Hot-tentots. Would Una be kind enough to tell her whether she had found them agreeable companions at the Cape? and especially had she been able to discover whether it was pleasant to have a Hottentot mother? and how about the sailors on board ship; had she fraternized with them much? and had she ever succeeded with their assistance in being mast-headed? which was the object of her own highest ambition, as she should then at least feel free for one half-hour from all the terrible rules and restrictions of this monotonous civilised life. Oh! that she were a man; or could even look like one; then would she not go straight off to sea, and never come back again to be proper and polite. And so Will rambled on, talking the most ineffable nonsense, but letting gleams of shrewd common sense occasionally appear through it all, which showed that she had some sterling qualities under her quaint absurdity, and that her vehement independence of mind covered a good deal of feminine softness and kindness. At last, after she had insisted that Miss Dyer should give her some idea of the opinion she had formed of the British nation, from the specimens she had seen in that neighbourhood, she suddenly said—

"Now tell me, have you become acquainted with the county mystery?"

"The county mystery! I do not understand."

"The county hero then, he is as much one as the other."

"I cannot at all tell who you mean."

"I mean Humphrey Atherstone, of Atherstone; hero and mystery, certainly, and either almost a saint—or almost a demon—no mortal in this part of the world at least can say which."

"No, indeed, I do not know him; though I heard of him as possessing a splendid old place, which took my fancy immensely when I saw it from the hillside. But I had no idea he was anything half so remarkable as you seem to imply. What a wonderful contradiction of terms you have used in describing him!"

"Only such as would accurately convey the county sentiments on the subject; there is an extraordinary conflict of opinion; some people believe him to be everything that is most terribly wicked—capable of all manner of crimes, and having committed not a few; whilst others think there never was any one half so good, so noble, so generous, so public-spirited. For instance, to show you I am not speaking at random, my mother and the rector are convinced that he is nothing less than an iniquitous monster; while my father and Rupert are disposed to be mildly charitable, and Dr. Burton, and Mr. Knight, doctor and lawyer, consider that he is endowed with every imaginable virtue; my own acute judgment is still at fault respecting him, but I incline to the worst."

"All this is very bewildering, but of course you have excited my curiosity to an unendurable extent, and you must really do your best to satisfy it now by all the explanations you can give. Please to be-

gin systematically. You said he was a hero, a mystery, and a saint or a demon. Now, first of all, why a hero?"

"Because a man who, in the prime of life, with wealth sufficient to gratify the most luxurious and extravagant tastes, with undoubted talent, a stately presence, and a strong self-controlled character which would make him a power among his equals, chooses to shut himself out from the public stage of the world, from every channel of pleasure and ambition, and devote his fortune, his intellect, his whole existence, and the improvement of his estates, and the care of his tenantry, and the numerous poor people connected with him, is surely a hero in the strictest sense of the word."

"I should think so certainly, if he does it really with a view to benefit his people, and not simply from some eccentric fancy."

"There can be no doubt on that point, because before he came into possession of the property few men enjoyed life more than he did. But it is impossible that he can find any personal pleasure in the hard, austere, laborious existence he leads now. His whole energies are devoted to improving the condition of his labourers, and turning his land to good account; he has built model cottages, converted public-houses into temperance clubs, restored the parish church which stands on his ground, built a mission chapel for the outlying hamlets, and founded all manner of industrial and charitable institutions. He is at work early and late on these matters, and says he has no time to go into society. The only relaxation he seems to allow himself is an occasional gallop on a huge black horse, for which he has an especial affection."

"Well, you have certainly made out his claim to be a hero—at least in the nineteenth century; it is not exactly the description of a mediæval knight; but how is he a mystery?"

"Do you not think that a man living in a county absolutely replete with charming young ladies, and who yet announces publicly, that he never means to marry, is a decided mystery?"

"I am not quite sure of that; many men remain unmarried."

"But not under such circumstances. Humphrey Atherstone is the last of his race; if he were to die unmarried, there would be no heir to a property which has passed from father to son for ages upon ages. And it is the more extraordinary, because he has the most deeply-rooted attachment to the old home of his ancestors, and has always been noted for his intense family pride. It seems almost incredible that he should be willing to let the ancient Abbey pass to strangers in name and blood."

"Perhaps he may change his mind, as men often do, when the right woman comes in their way."

"I do not think he will. Mr. Knight, who is his lawyer, told my father that Mr. Atherstone had asked him to make it as public as he could, that it was his inviolable determination to remain single, and he said also that he had made a will in accordance with this resolution, which was of a very extraordinary nature. Of course he revealed nothing of its contents, and I suppose it was rather a breach of honour in a lawyer to say as much as he did; but it was perfectly plain, from the way he spoke, that he thought there was some strange secret lying at the root of this predilection for a single life, which was as much hid from him, in spite of his having drawn up the will, as from every one else."

"Well, I admit you have proved Mr. Atherstone to be a mystery, and your description of his good deeds shows why he might be considered a saint by some people; but why should any one think him a demon?"

"Partly from a species of instinct which affects many people with regard to him, myself included; partly because the extraordinary change which came over him at the time of his uncle's death gave rise to rather uncomfortable suspicions respecting him."

"Not that he murdered him, surely?"

"Oh no, people are never expected to go so far as that in these moderate days; besides, Humphrey Atherstone was passionately attached to his uncle; but there is no doubt that the old man's death took place from the bursting of a blood-vessel, caused by the agitation of a violent quarrel between himself and his nephew. He was quite well before it took place, and dead an hour after. Of course, this alone was startling, but it was the change which was observed in Mr. Atherstone from that very day which made people take a prejudice against him. He had not been even a hero before that, though he had always taken an interest in the tenantry, and he was not in the least a mystery. He went into society like every one else, and he seemed quite to intend being married some day. I believe my prophetic mother intended him for me in due course, but he never had the advantage of seeing me, as I was unhappily not out of the schoolroom. Ah! if he had! do you not think it would have affected his whole career?" and Will half closed her merry black eyes with a sentimental air.

Una laughed, but she was too much interested in the strange story she was hearing to encourage an interruption to it. She went on eagerly with her questions. "Was the cause of the quarrel between the uncle and nephew ever known?"

"Yes, that all came out, for there was both an inquest and a trial."

"A trial of Mr. Atherstone?"

"Oh no, of a man of the name of Edwards, concerning whom the dispute arose. I must go back a long way to make you understand it all. You must know that old Maurice Atherstone, the uncle, had in his day, quarrelled with his father, for a passionate temper is the invariable characteristic of all the members of this family, and in his rage he declared he would go abroad, and never come back till the old man was dead, and he kept his word. His only brother, younger than himself, had died just before, but the widow and child he left, the Humphrey of the present day, were living at Atherstone, and the old man in his anger against his eldest son, declared he wished to have no other heir than this grandchild, and always brought him up as the future possessor of Atherstone. In due time this choleric old gentleman also died, and Maurice came back, after an absence

of some years, to enter on his inheritance. He brought with him a great many curious animals and birds from the Mauritius, and as part of the live stock a dark-faced, foreign-looking little boy, who talked some strange language, and wore a very picturesque costume. Maurice Atherstone explained that he was a little Malay to whom he had taken a fancy, and he let him run wild about the place, and used to play with him as if he were a tame kitten, or I should rather say a little tame tiger, for as the boy grew older he developed many of the qualities of that interesting beast of prey. Mr. Atherstone took care that Edward, by which name he said the child had been baptised, should have a good education, and he became thoroughly Europeanised. As he grew up, he proved to be excessively clever, but with a subtle, cunning sort of cleverness which made him really dangerous, for he seemed besides to have the most singularly evil disposition, which no amount of training in good principles could counteract. He was deeply false, cruel to an extent which made him as a child torture every animal that was weaker than himself, and later he seemed to have but one motive in all that he did, and that was to gratify his own vicious inclinations at any cost of suffering to those who might stand in his way. The only person he deceived as to the real depravity of his character was his master, Mr. Atherstone, who showed him from first to last an extraordinary favour, and on whom he was always fawning with a semblance of the most devoted affection. The old man employed him as a sort of secretary, and besides the high salary he received, Edward managed to get an immense deal of money out of him, which he squandered in secret transactions on the turf, and in gambling and betting and all sorts of wickedness far beyond mere extravagance. He used to go and spend weeks in London on the plea of transacting business for Mr. Atherstone, and there is not the least doubt that he appropriated to his own use sums of money entrusted to him by his master for other purposes. The only difference of opinion Maurice Atherstone ever had with his nephew, to whom he was really much attached, was on the subject of this wickedness. I believe Humphrey simply abhorred him, and naturally enough, for he saw through the outward mask of deceit which blinded the old man, and was perfectly aware of all the nefarious proceedings which Edward carried on under it,—in fact, the two men had always been in a collision from the time that they had been children together at the Abbey. As a boy, Humphrey was perpetually interfering between Edwards and his victims, rescuing miserable dogs and cats from his cruel hands; and he used, I believe, to get into continual disgrace with Maurice Atherstone for inflicting summary punishment on the horrible little Malay, who invariably succeeded in persuading his master that he was the sufferer by an unprovoked assault. When Edwards's crimes became more serious, later in life, Humphrey tried in vain to open his uncle's eyes to the real nature of the man in whom he trusted so implicitly, but if he ever succeeded in proving any of his evil deeds so completely that Mr. Atherstone could not deny them, he still always condoned the offence, and persisted in retaining the Malay in his service. At last the climax came, and it proved fatal to Maurice Atherstone. Humphrey suddenly discovered that Edwards had forged his master's name to a cheque, for a very considerable sum, and the whole circumstances were so iniquitous that he did not suppose his uncle could possibly refuse to let the law take its course, and to avoid any attempt at escape on the part of Edwards, he had him taken into custody before he communicated the facts to his uncle. This was the cause of the terrible quarrel which resulted in Mr. Atherstone's death; his fury and indignation against his nephew for this act were so violent that he ruptured a blood-vessel, and lived only one hour afterwards. What passed between Humphrey and the dying man that hour no one knows, but it seems certain that there lies the key to the mystery which surrounds him now. The very few facts that are known as to Mr. Atherstone's last moments were told by Dr. Burton, who was called in when the fatal attack came on, but who found the case so completely hopeless that he plainly told the old man he could do nothing for him, as his life was ebbing away swiftly and surely. Mr. Atherstone at once intimated that he wished to be left alone with his nephew; and Dr. Burton went out of the room, but remained within call. He could hear the low murmur of voices, but distinguished no words, till suddenly after a little time there came a stifled cry from Humphrey. The doctor rushed in, and saw him standing up, rigid, with his hands clenched together, beside the couch on which his uncle was laid, and his face so ghastly a hue, that he looked almost more death-like than the dying man himself. Maurice Atherstone was looking up at his nephew with a haggard, half-despairing glance, and struggling almost with his last breath to utter some words. By a supreme effort he managed to gasp out, in broken syllables, 'Humphrey!—see justice done; promise—and then sank back and died.'

To be Continued.

Men's lives should be like the day—more beautiful in the evening; or the summer—aglow with promise; and like the autumn—rich with golden sheaves, whose good deeds have ripened in the field.

In vain do they talk of happiness who never subdued an impulse in obedience to principle. He who never sacrificed a present to a future good, or a personal to a general one, can speak of happiness only as the blind do of colors.—*Horace Mann.*

When faith gets a view of the unsearchable riches of God's grace in, by, and through Jesus Christ, then the believer longs to be in heaven, to behold the Fountain-head of all grace and glory. Faith longs to cease to be faith. This is a strange and strong act of faith, a strange desire in a believer. O! when shall I cease to be a believer, and become a seer? When shall the glass be done away, and the full-eyed vision of glory succeed? When shall both faith and hope cease, and love fill their room?—*Travis.*

The Lesson of the Leaves.

As, one by one, these Autumn leaves de-cending
To drop and die,
In rustled murmurs, breathe one soft unending
Sad threnody,
Till branch and bough, whereon no vestige lingers
Of Summer bloom,
Trace out upon the sky, with watered tingers,
Their wintry doom.

So, one by one, these earthly hopes we cherish—
More dearly prized,
Perchance, than Heaven's own fall on us will perish
Unrealized
And leave us, with life's Winter on us stealing
And skies o'er-cast,
With bare and outstretched arms for help
Appealing to Heaven at last.

Wolves in Russia.

A most curious and interesting pamphlet has lately been published at St. Petersburg as an appendix to the government official paper. It consists of statistics of the damage done by wolves in Russia, with remarks on the habits of these destructive animals and on the means for destroying them. The amount of property destroyed by wolves, according to the data given, is something appalling.

In forty-five Russian governments, exclusive of the Baltic Provinces and Poland, 74,000 head of cattle were destroyed in one year, making a loss to the country of over 7,500,000 rubles, or more than a million sterling.

Russia is a thinly populated country, and perhaps the above loss appears even more striking when considered in reference to area. Putting aside eight out of the forty-five governments, the loss on the remaining thirty-eight amounts to three coopeks on every diatchina of 27 acres. The report assures us that the figures are for several reasons rather under than overstated. It contains much that is interesting as regards the natural history of the wolf, illustrated by anecdotes—as, for example, to show the strength of these beasts, it relates that one fell into a trap and lost its right fore-foot; on three legs it ran out of the wood and seized a smoking pig tied by hunters to the rear of the sledge, received a bullet through the left leg, and, nevertheless, ran 20 versts further, and was killed running. The amount wolves will eat is enormous. In two or three hours a pair will eat the half of a horse weighing 350 kilograms. A dangerous peculiarity is their trick of appearing to be dead. A peasant found a wolf apparently dead on the ground, beat him with a cudgel and took him home on his sledge for the sake of his skin. In the night he heard a noise and found the animal on the table. It jumped at his throat, and his wife, who rushed for help, found him dead on her return.

The report states that the number of wolves in the country cannot be less than 170,000, and that they eat of feathered game alone 200,000,000 head. In 1875 no less than two hundred people were destroyed by wolves, and many and various are the means suggested for suppressing these injurious animals, such as forming regular hunts, giving premiums for every one killed, poisoning them, etc. A comparison is instituted between the losses occasioned by cattle plagues and fires as against those caused by wolves, and extraordinary as it may seem, the proportion of damage done by wolves as compared with cattle plagues is as 200 to 240, and it must further be taken into consideration that while the epidemic may leave the peasant the skin of his cow, the wolf carries away the prey irreclaimably. And even in a contest with devouring element for the supremacy in destruction, the wolf is hardly left behind.—*London Times.*

The China Mania.

From time to time among our occidental races has sprung up a fashion, almost a rage, for pottery and porcelain; and some fools have become more foolish than before in the pursuit. Still, among "the wise and the good" the subject has been one of great interest, and the collection, study, and illustration of pottery has resulted in as much satisfaction as can be got from any pursuit, even fox-hunting or money-getting.

To those who are ignorant of this, and who cannot comprehend why it is, a few words may not be out of place by way of explanation.

The making of pottery is one of the oldest industries of man, one of the most necessary, and it has been made one of the most delectable. It has from the commonest material—the dust under our feet—made some of the most delicate and beautiful things we know of. It uses the most plastic of all substances, which obeys fully, minutely, the wish or the sense of the potter; it may therefore be stamped with his individual perception of the useful and beautiful more than any other material man can use. The perfect forms of the Greek potter, the exquisite colours of the Persian and Arabian and Chinese potters, the brilliant lustres of the Moorish and Italian decorators, are here displayed and are in a sense imperishable. The paintings of Egyptians and Greeks and Romans have perished; their pottery remains. The antiquarian and the historical student have sought here for many things and have found many. The artistic sensibility has also seen much to enjoy. That we in this country are so little able to comprehend all this is partly owing to that necessity which has compelled us to pass our lives in hewing down trees, damming rivers, killing bears, cheating Indians; and partly to the fact that we have had no examples of pottery or porcelain in the country. We are now doing something to overcome this, and the private collections of Messrs. Prime, Hoe, Avery, Wales, Prayn, and others will soon give the opportunity to see and learn which many may seek.—*G. W. Elliott, in November Atlantic.*

Never yet did there exist a full faith in the Divine Word, by whom light as well as immortality was brought into the world, which did not expand the intellect while it purified the heart; which did not multiply the aims and objects of the understanding while it fixed and simplified those of the desires and passions.—*Coleridge.*

Scientific and Useful.

LEMON CUSTARD.

Beat the yolks of eight eggs with a half pound of sugar, add a pint of boiling water, rinds of two lemons, grated, and the juice of same; boil until it thickens, and then add a large wine-glass of white wine and half a glass of brandy; boil a few minutes, strain into glasses—eat when cold.

APPLE CHARLOTTE.

Butter an ordinary pie-dish and place in it, in alternate layers—first, bread and butter with the crust cut off; then apples peeled, cored, and sliced; a little sugar, and the juice and thinly chopped rind of a lemon; repeat till the dish is full. Cover with the peel of the apples, and bake in a brick oven. When ready, serve with sifted sugar. This is a cheap and excellent dish.

PUDDING PIE.

To make pudding pies, boil for fifteen minutes five ounces of ground rice in one quart of new milk; when taken from the fire, stir in an ounce and a half of butter, four ounces of sugar, add four well beaten eggs, a pinch of salt, and half a small nutmeg. When nearly cold, line some saucers with thin puff paste, fill three parts full, strew thickly with currants, and bake gently from fifteen to twenty minutes.

SALT AND SURVEY.

A Dublin chemist, who has been investigating the subject, claims to have discovered that salt is not the cause of sourness, as has so long been the received opinion. He considers the true cause to be the absence of potash, which substance is washed out of meat by the application of brine, and proposes as a preventative to add to the food of seamen and others using salt meat, phosphate of potash, to be used like common salt.

DROWNED PERSONS.

A French physician makes the remarkable statement that one-half at least of the so-called drowned persons are buried alive, and that they may be brought to life by proper treatment after having been "several hours in the water." His remedy is to get out of the water, pour in and inject alcoholic stimulants, and use a whip energetically, or hot irons in bad cases. His statement has been partially confirmed by the resuscitation of a man after he had been under water in one of the Seine baths for more than twenty minutes.

SUN LIGHT IN THE SICK-ROOM.

Never shut the air or the light from the sick-room unless the light pains the eyes, as it does in the measles. An observation of both will do as much good as some medicines, and more far than whiskey. Both are absolutely necessary to all, especially to the sick. In fevers they will do at least half of the cure, certainly with free bathing. Both are abundant, cost nothing, were intended by the good Father for our use. We are stupid if we do not use them.

MILK PUDDINGS.

In making puddings with milk and eggs the milk must always be boiled, as this prevents curdling. Lump sugar is now so cheap that it may be used instead of brown, and it certainly is better, especially for delicate puddings. It is a very good plan to boil the sugar with the milk, and pour it upon the eggs. Puddings that have custard should always be baked very slowly; if quickly baked the custard becomes watery, and is not nearly as rich as it should be.

INDIAN DOWDIE.

Take a three quart pan and out it not quite full of quartered apples, sprinkle a little salt over, pour in water till they are not quite covered, then make ready a "batch" of johnny-cake or brown bread dough and cover the apples, heaping up a little. Set in the oven and bake till the crust is done and the apples soft, then take out, break up the crust, and stir all in among the apple, mixing and mixing till both are well incorporated. Cover close and keep warm, not hot. Then take a plateful and pour over it milk (or cream) and with a bit of cheese, you will have "a dish fit for a king."

UNPLEASANT DREAMS.

To avoid unpleasant dreams, live simply, be regular in habits, cheerful in mind, hopeful in spirit, placid and even in temper, and in a quiet frame of mind at bed-time. Above all, take no lunch at bed-time, not even a hearty meal at tea-time; the more simple the better. A quarter of a mince pie, a generous slice of rich cake, a full meal of pork and cabbage, with cold cheese, nuts and raisins for the dessert,—if they do not "show you your deceased grandfather," they will, with a remarkable certainty, disturb your sleep, give you "horrid dreams," and make the whole supper a poor investment.—*Watchman.*

The announcement is made that telegrams have been received in London announcing the discovery of a survivor of the "Bella," and also of the real veritable Arthur Orton. Mr. Guildford Unslow, some time back offered a reward of £2,500 for the discovery of Orton. Mr. Lock, a solicitor who defended Orton in Australia on a charge of horse-stealing, and knows him well, is said to have found him fifteen miles from Sidney, at a lunatic asylum, where he had been an inmate for many years under the name of Alfred Smith. This is supposed to account for his not coming forward when his presence was so much needed. Should this statement turn out to be correct, it will considerably complicate a subject already sufficiently intricate. It seems strange that so many should testify that he is Tichborne, and it is not improbable that, somehow or other he has a modicum of Tichborne blood in his veins. That he should forget every word of French he had learned, and even forget his native language is only what has occurred in many instances before. But that a young man grown up to four or five and twenty, who had been well educated, should ever come to use the word "howsomdever," or to write the first personal pronoun with a small letter, seems absolutely impossible.