

Family Circle.

Some of the Foreign Capitals.

Great London is the capital of all our English cities. Renowned for many a stirring tale in ancient lays and ditties.

Fair Edinburgh, Scotland's pride, thy treasured names we greet Of Holyrood and Calton Hill and lofty Arthur's Seat.

And Dublin on the Liffey's shore—the greatest Irish town, Where many a jaunting outside car is driving up and down.

And Paris is the city prized by all the land of France, Where people love to sit outdoors, and laugh and sing and dance.

And Berlin is the capital of all the federation. Which makes the German empire strong, a brave and mighty nation.

In Austria Vienna stands, above the rushing wave, Her mansions and her palaces the Danube's waters lave.

And grand Madrid's a stately town, the Spaniards love it well, The proud Castilians walk its streets with many a dark eyed belle.

And Lisbon on the Tagus's shore, of Portugal the boast, Its outlook on the crested wave, its seat the Atlantic coast.

At Amsterdam the gallant Dutch have bade the waters flee, Their dykes and dams have checked the waves of foaming Zuyder Zee.

Gay Brussels in the Belgian's land may art and pleasure woo, While hearts of English travelers glow at thought of Waterloo.

THE DARK HORSE;

OR,

A MONTH IN AN AMERICAN COUNTRY HOUSE.

BY GEORGE A. HIBBARD.

(Continued.)

Several prandial stages had been accomplished before Wrexford entered the dining-room. He had arrived not five minutes after dinner was announced; had been taken immediately to his room; had dressed hastily and then he had descended to join the party at the table. His host shook hands with him most cordially, presented him to Mrs. Kerneval and made him known to the other guests. Wrexford sank into a place made for him on Mrs. Kerneval's left, between herself and Miss Ashwin. Kerneval had asked him when he arrived in the country. Mrs. Kerneval had expressed her pleasure at knowing at last her husband's old friend; Miss Ashwin had remarked that it became dark very early; and then conversation resumed its former course, now flowing in general and equable tide, now stirred or broken in episodic eddies.

"Do you ride, Wrexford?" asked Kerneval suddenly. As it happened, the question broke into one of those little, placid, silent places the swirl of rapid talk so often leaves, and all could hear the answer. "As a rule," replied Wrexford slowly, "it's wiser for a man to say he doesn't."

"Then you'd never get on," said Bobby Chatto; "to be a Roman here you must be a rider, or—you're—"

"Not the man for Galway."

"I was about to add," said Wrexford, smiling good naturedly at Bobby, and turning to Kerneval, "that if you'll risk a horse's bones, I'll risk mine."

"But," continued Kerneval, "have you ever ridden to hounds, across country, you know?"

"If he hasn't," whispered Bobby Chatto to Mrs. Trevor, "and tries it, he'll have a new sensation. The first time I ever took a fence, I felt as if I did the first time I stole a kiss—I was so frightened I didn't know whether I liked it or not."

"Not for a long time," said Wrexford, answering Kerneval's question.

"It couldn't have been so very long," said Everest precisely and a little suspiciously. "The hounds haven't been going here so very many years."

Wrexford looked up quickly, and the eyes of the two men met.

"It wasn't in this country," said Wrexford, "it was in England."

"Indeed," responded Everest.

"I've done it a little over there myself," said Etheridge. "Where were you?"

"With Sir Redvers Hope, in Leicestershire. I broke my collar-bone there, and he was good enough to keep me for several weeks."

"I hope no such accident will happen to you here," continued Etheridge civilly. "But you'll find some stiffish things."

"I think," said Wrexford, again turning to Kerneval, "I'd like to try it if you'll trust me with a horse."

"Of course," said Kerneval.

Wrexford turned to Mrs. Kerneval.

"Is not Hardy Granthorne somewhere?" he asked. "He wrote me he was to be here."

"Yes," answered Mrs. Kerneval, "he has been here a week or more, with his horses. You know him?"

"He's a cousin of mine, in a way," replied Wrexford.

Mrs. Kerneval looked at her guest with something very like astonishment. To be known to Hardy Granthorne was more than creditable; to be his cousin was distinction.

"Why, Mr. Wrexford," exclaimed Mrs. Trevor from across the table. "Then you are a relative of mine. I'm his cousin, too. Haven't you ever heard of me?"

"Often," answered Wrexford. "But I should have hesitated before advancing my claim to kinship. We Southerners all feel a little like poor relations, since the war."

"How very stupid of me," continued Mrs. Trevor in petulant half-anger towards herself, and with even more heartiness than usual in her generous manner. "Of course. You are Dick Wrexford's son. How very stupid of me not to have thought of it before. Your father was always very kind to me—I remember that he gave me the first pearls I ever had—and you were not going to say anything to me—you, Dick Wrexford's son! How strangely things turn out."

"Yes," said Wrexford. "I feel as if I had been stolen by gypsies and just found again, at last."

"Where's the meet-to-morrow?" asked Everest suddenly feeling that the evident interest in what had been said by Mrs. Trevor and Wrexford was rather too strong.

"At the Seven Gullies," answered Kerneval.

"That sounds formidable," said Wrexford.

"It is," responded Kerneval. "That's where Granthorne's best hunter broke his neck. The horse turned a somersault, you know, and—"

"Nonsense," interrupted Everest almost roughly. "I have heard that sort of thing before, but no one ever saw a horse really go over on his back."

"I think," said Wrexford quietly, "that I have seen it happen."

"Really," said Everest, "and may I ask where?"

"It was hardly in a hunt," said Wrexford, dismissing Everest from out of his field of vision, "but it was certainly in a chase. It was in Bulgaria, and just before the opening of the Turco-Russian war."

The Turks were in the very height of the season for the exciting little sport that they had found so pleasant, and which they were carrying on in what they had come to regard as their own preserves. One day three or four of them were engaged in the pastime peculiar to that part of the world at that particular time, and the game took to flight. It was a 'hot scent,' and they came on at full speed, shouting a sort of infernal 'viewhalloo.' A ditch and a thick hedge were in the way. The pursued, on an old English hunter that had in some way got out there, went over like a bird. But the first Turk it sounds like 'first murderer' in a play; he was a cut-throat and a thief, but he was a plucky fellow to try it on a 'green horse'—the first Turk came to grief. His horse stumbled, and over he went square on his back with his rider under him. There probably was joy, beside mine, somewhere else, over the death of that unrepentant sinner. Since then I have been convinced that a horse can really turn a somersault."

"But," objected Everest, "you said you saw it."

"So I did," said Wrexford, in puzzled wonder as to what might be meant.

"You were there."

"Certainly."

"But I do not understand—"

"Oh," laughed Wrexford. "I was the game in default of better. They, in very complimentary fashion, took me for a Christian and I hope a gentleman, and I ran away."

"But didn't they follow you after that?" asked Miss Marling, who had been listening most intently.

"No," replied Wrexford, turning and speaking directly to her. "The performance of their friend didn't seem to encourage *les autres*. They didn't care to try the jump, which was fortunate for me, as my horse couldn't have held out much longer."

"Had you gone so far?" asked Etheridge with real interest.

"A mile or so."

"But you're not exactly a heavy weight."

"I weigh more than you think,—Kerneval's horse will find out that," and he turned to speak to Mrs. Kerneval.

"Come," said Mrs. Trevor, "what's the mystery? Tell us all about it. Why couldn't your horse have held out?"

"For one reason," answered Wrexford, "that I wasn't alone."

"Not alone," said Mrs. Trevor.

"I had a miserable little Bulgarian—a boy of ten or so—with me. He didn't weigh much,—he hadn't eaten much of an' thing for nearly a week; but he handicapped both the horse and myself."

"And you saved his life," almost exclaimed Miss Marling.

"I hardly did that; he died the next day."

"Still," observed Etheridge, always ready in his placid good humor, to say a good word for anybody, "it must have been preferable to die in a bed, —if there was such a luxury out there, Mr. Wrexford,—and not be pitchforked on bayonets, as such people had a way of doing with such small game just then."

"Don't," cried Mrs. Trevor; "you make me feel as if I did the first time I ever saw the hounds kill."

Later in the evening, as Kerneval left the men in the smoking-room, he met Mrs. Kerneval crossing the hall.

"Well," said Kerneval, "what do you think of him?"

"Think!" said Mrs. Kerneval. "I think—I don't like him?"

"He's good looking?" said he.

"Yes."

"Well-mannered?"

"Certainly."

"Unquestionably."

"Interesting?"

"Without doubt."

"Well born?"

"Of course."

"Then why don't you like him?"

"I think I'll telegraph Kitty's mother."

"You think he's dangerous?"

"He's a mixture of Archibald Forbes and Laurence Oliphant. He has courage and dash, and a style and tone of his own. There'll be trouble."

"Nonsense," said Kerneval, with complacent self-reliance. "You'll see them in three days as indifferent to each other as two people with their family fortunes in the same stocks, and who have been destined for each other from their cradles."

Mrs. Kerneval shook her head doubtfully.

"You know that when you're very clever you're always very stupid," she said. "Did you see how Kitty listened to his story? How much reclamation was there in it?"

"I am sure we had to drag it out of him as if it was 'mired,'" said Kerneval. "He's the most modest fellow in the world. I believe he blushed—I do, indeed."

"Blushed!" said Mrs. Kerneval contemptuously. "a newspaper man blush!"

"You are unjust and ungenerous," said Kerneval.

"That's what a man always says when you don't agree with him," retorted his wife. "I haven't any confidence in any of you, and if he goes on recounting any more of his little adventures, I will certainly telegraph Kitty's mother. Do you suppose I am going to have Kitty marry an unsettled creature, more in love with his career than he could be with her? I don't believe in careers. Marry a man who'll never do anything very great or very small, would be my advice to a girl."

Later still, Kerneval went to Wrexford's room, and found him smoking the profound cigar of the day's final summing up.

"You don't look worn,—travel-stained," said Kerneval.

"That isn't the modern pilgrim's style," responded Wrexford. "Besides, we are all pilgrims really. Staying at home nowadays is like sitting in a car at a standstill while another train is passing. You seem to be moving yourself."

"I always look out of the other window."

"You always had a taste for the other window."

"Yes, looking at the landscape or the street,—not at the hurrying, busy freightcars, with their lading, human or otherwise."

"Don't you ever get tired of it?"

"Frankly, no. I was born without ambition, and being born without ambition is equivalent to being born with all ambition can give."

"Yes—if you have what it can give," said Wrexford, moving uneasily.

"But you are you never tired, though you are doing just what at Harvard you hoped to do."

"No," answered Wrexford slowly. "I'm not tired I think: impatient now and then; feverish, perhaps. It's vague work travelling towards no end. I wonder if I could do as you do if I had the chance. I'll never have it, though."

They always had talked freely to each other, as in the days when they lay upon the grass in front of Folwirthy—that bit of turf where more dreams are dreamed, more plans made, more folly talked, than upon any other greensward in the land, no matter how narrow its space or how wide its acreage.

"Your place is charming," continued Wrexford; "and as I drove from the station, dark as it was, I couldn't help seeing how fine the country is. If there's any sedative to quiet human restlessness, it's such a place as this."

"Take care," said Kerneval, "or you'll catch a 'cropper' that'll quiet you. It's a relaxed, languid, unstrung condition that invites illness big or little. What do you think of Miss Ashwin?"

"I can't furnish enthusiasm to order,—and somehow, in her case, it seems to be demanded,—it's as ludicrous as court-mourning. Miss Marling's a pretty girl?"

"Not bad-looking," said Kerneval, instantly rushing to meet such danger, "but she's the last girl in the world you'd like. She's the quietest little town mouse you ever saw,—not at all the woman of the world you used to admire. A simple little thing, although she's such an heiress."

Wrexford said nothing.

"No," continued Kerneval, "little Kitty Marling, with her quiet ways, her straightforward eyes, and her 'repousse' nose, won't please you at all."

As Kerneval made his way down the darkened corridor there ran through his complacency a slight thread of distrust. But he reassured himself in a moment. What he had said had been so skillfully said. How could quiet Kitty Marling, after such explicit warning as he had given her, feel interest in this lawless free-lance, however brilliant he might be? And Wrexford,—a man of continents and capitals, and, after his fashion, of courts and brilliant coteries,—how could he give a second thought to gentle Kitty Marling? But—bu—was Kerneval turning traitor to his cause—the cause of Mrs. Kerneval and "Kitty's mother"? He liked Kitty and Wrexford so much. And it would be so really advantageous for both of them. As he