

THE TRIUMPHS OF DUTY.

CHAPTER XX.
THE ARBITRATION.

On Arthur's return to London he was agreeably struck with the happy look of his grandfather. Was it merely the affectionate feeling that the one he most loved was again beside him, or did the arrival of the letters reassure his hopes? Arthur could not determine the point, and began to question his lordship on the confidence he still felt in the issue of the arbitration; but Lord Charleton, placing his finger on his lips, said that more than strong hope would be premature, and our hero became for the next hour absorbed in a letter from Lady Clara Moorland.

"My dear cousin—I risk what may appear superfluous to the sympathy of our friendship, a renewed assurance of that which you must claim through life, fidelity in my regard for you, which no accident can diminish. Should the arbitration deprive you of you, title and position as head of your long line, the wise precaution of Lord Charleton in creating a new branch to his house in your person, and your accession to the family property by purchase, keeps you among the landed gentry who are, for the most part, younger branches of the nobility, or sufficiently ancient to be termed the untitled aristocracy. I am too much of an artist not to agree with your grandfather, that there exists between you certain family characteristics that are unmistakable to one who can distinguish between modelling and coloring. Therefore you will ever be the 'Arthur Bryce' of our first meeting to your faithful friend and cousin,

CLARA MOORLAND."

This was the first time she had ever traced a line to him. His adversity had caused them to flow thus gracefully from her generous heart. Lady Clara had not requested any information, direct from himself, of the result of the arbitration; but as he folded up her first letter and placed it near his heart, he felt that, should the decree be adverse, he could reveal it the sooner to her.

On the important day our hero was not required to be present. The investigation of whether he was the future Earl of Charleton or Leon Bauvin could not be assisted by a witness who, at the date in question, was ten months old. The present earl, accompanied by his two most anxious friends, the Marquis of Seaham and the Duke of Peterworth, arrived at the appointed room in Somerset House, just after Mr. Gerard Woolton and his party, among whom were Colonel Whynne and the two eldest sons of the marquis of Penzance. The witnesses for the plaintiff recounted their several experiences of the artful substitution of one infant for the other by the Countess de Courtrai, in which the daughter, if not active, was a passive participant. The counsel for the defence then read the letters of the accused passive participant. They produced a marked effect, but were soon nullified by the assertion of the chief witness—the former lady's maid—that the young Lady Stanmore, at the time of her infant's death, was so bewildered with grief, that her mother could persuade her to anything, and actually did induce her to believe that she had had a brain fever, the effect of which remained to make her mistake one child for the other. Thus, the letters being written by an innocently deceived person, instead of a participant in the plot, rendered them insufficient to overthrow the testimony of the three former servants, that on the 9th of February, 1833, at the town of Dieppe, in Normandy, at the turn of the morning, died Arthur Philip Dieudonne Bryce Woolton, Viscount Stanmore, aged ten months; and that a false certificate was written by his maternal grandmother, and sent to the

authorities by the man-servant, one of the present witnesses, mentioning the death in her house, by fever, of Leon Bauvin, foster-brother of her grandson, son of Jules Bauvin, soldier of the regiment of Zouaves in Algiers, and of Sophie Muscat, his wife, aged eleven months. The chief witness, Lucille Brontel, former lady's maid, further deposed that she watched Madame de Courtrai take the coarse linen off the little living child, and place on him the fine cambric and lace, saying, "Nothing henceforth but what is choicest and best for the little Arthur Dieudonne." To this last statement, however, the counsel for defence begged to remind the arbitrators that they just heard mentioned, in the letters of Lady Stanmore, that during the raging fever of the little Leon, he was given the softer linen of the foster-brother, which might, very probably, have left the infant viscount with no resources but to be supplied with the coarser wardrobe of the little peasant. There was now a pause. One of the arbitrators then said:

"Has the defendant anything to produce that can overbalance this strong circumstantial evidence?"

The Earl of Charleton then arose and said:

"My lords and gentlemen, you have heard in the defence of the accusation brought against the Countess de Courtrai, that the nurse of her grandchild and mine was seized with a dangerous and contagious fever, from which, leaving her under efficient care, the whole family fled, the two ladies and their servants bearing with them to the sea-side, not only their own precious infant, but also the little child of the nurse, who soon became the chief object of their tender care and painful anxiety. You have heard passages in the letters, which give the opinion of the medical man at Dieppe, that one child having caught the fever, while the other escaped, was to be accounted for by the circumstance, that the nurse's infant always slept with its mother: the little viscount always in the room of his own mother, Lady Stanmore, in a little crib, close to her bed. Both infants were partially weaned. These circumstances, my lords and gentlemen, although to be duly considered, you have not deemed sufficient to outweigh the preponderating evidence given on the side of the plaintiff. I have been prepared for this, because, extraneous of the knowledge I possess of the character of Madame de Courtrai, they would not have sufficiently satisfied my own mind. I have, therefore, had recourse to anatomical science, to place beyond a doubt that the child interred in the cemetery at Dieppe was not my grandson. Much has been said of the likeness between the two infants; but, with the exception of the eyes, it was more likeness of age and coloring, than of feature and form. I could never have mistaken them beyond an instant. I had perceived each month certain characteristics to develop more strongly, which would, in after life, have rendered easy their immediate recognition. I, therefore, invited the visit of our eminent surgeon and publisher on anatomy, Sir Bentley Burder, and to meet him, one of the most celebrated artists for the *Illustrated News*, Mr. Otway; of whom I had been told that he could, at a glance, retain and place accurately on paper, every characteristic of a form and face. These two gentlemen met three weeks ago at my house in Carlton Gardens, and were introduced to my grandson, Viscount Stanmore. Mr. Otway made a full-length sketch of Lord Stanmore, and then, under the minute direction of Sir Bentley, a careful anatomical drawing of the face and of the hand. This letter was to me especially valuable as a test. Through the interest of my friend, the Marquis of Seaham, now Minister for Foreign Affairs, I obtained the permission of the French

government to exhume the skeleton of the infant in the cemetery at Dieppe. Two English surgeons, selected for their profound anatomical knowledge by Sir Bentley Burder, and the chief surgeon of Dieppe, made their observations together, and also the following attestation, to which they have affixed their names; and which Mr. Caldwell, one of two English surgeons, now present, will read aloud:

"We, the undersigned, charged with the secret confidential commission from the Earl of Charleton, and, under the protection of the English and French governments, arrived in Dieppe on the third of May, 1854. We proceeded, by appointment, to the house of the Sous-Prefect, where the police officers, having previously arranged everything, accompanied us to the chapel of the cemetery. Monsieur Foulet, the chief surgeon, and his assistant, had already arrived. Some formularies were gone through, to prove that the skeleton before us was the child buried on the 9th of February, 1833, as Leon Bauvin. We then proceeded to the anatomical examination of the face and hands, as follows: the head, a well-formed, full oval, the orbit of the eye large, the cheek-bones high, the lower jaw bone short and square, the hand thick and strong, the bones perfect, the wrist large.

(Signed,)

WILLIAM CALDWELL,
THOMAS HENRY NEEDHAM,
ANTOINE FOULET."

The one then present of the three surgeons, read the following testimony of Sir Bentley Burder, on the anatomical examination of the head and hand of Viscount Stanmore:

"The head, a well-formed long oval, the eyes large, the nose Grecian, the cheek-bones small, the lower jaw bone delicate, and rather long and narrow, the hand long and slender, the wrist small.

(Signed,)

BENTLEY BURDER."

Mr. Caldwell then came forward, and mentioned that the written testimony of Sir Bentley had not been shown to either himself or Mr. Needham, previous to their journey; and was then further proceeding to point out the peculiarities distinct in the two formations, when Sir Bentley, in evident haste and excitement, entered the room; and, after having bowed right and left, and all round, took the sign from Mr. Caldwell, that his presence was opportune, all preliminaries having been duly despatched.

CHAPTER XXI.
THE WITNESSES.

Sir Bentley then commenced:

"My lords and gentlemen present, in addition to the testimonial just read, I have to mention some particulars relating to the visit paid last month to the Earl of Charleton, when the examination was made of the head and hand of Viscount Stanmore. The gentleman artist who accompanied me was so much struck with the resemblance in profile of the grandfather and grandson, that, while he was awaiting his instructions, he drew, for his own amusement, the two profiles, side by side, and wrote beneath, 'twenty and sixty.' Lord Charleton, on seeing it, said, 'add eleven years to the sixty, sir, and your sketch is wonderfully correct.' His lordship then made to us both the same comment you have heard of the likeness in eyes and general coloring between Lord Stanmore, when an infant, and his little foster-brother: each being, in these respects, like his mother; but that there were marked characteristics of form and expression belonging to his father's face in Lord Stanmore, which time had, as he expected, more fully developed; but which, even from his birth, were, to Lord Charleton, distinguishable from those of the other child. I noted, in my pocket-book, precisely as Lord Charleton enumerated to me, these hereditary characteristics, and I now draw them forth for the first time, to compare them with those just made by

our scientific gentlemen on the little skeleton at Dieppe: first mentioning, that on parting, the earl risked these remarkable words: 'Should the gentlemen whom you have selected testify that, in the infant skeleton at Dieppe, they have found the head a longer oval, the cheek-bones smaller, the chin more pointed, and the hand and foot more slender than those of Lord Stanmore, I may then begin to doubt.'

Sir Bentley now, taking from Mr. Caldwell the paper signed by the three surgical anatomists, proceeded to compare the structure of the two infants: first informing the arbitrators and the rest of the select assembly, that the circumstance of one of these infants having grown up to manhood, threw no difficulty in the way of the experienced anatomist. The two papers were handed round to all who had any responsibility in the utterance of their judgment; after which Sir Bentley thus resumed:

"Seeing, therefore, my lords and gentlemen, that, by the test of art and science, the little skeleton at Dieppe bears no resemblance to the Earl of Charleton, while, on the contrary, the young gentleman, called Viscount Stanmore, does bear the very facial lines of that nobleman, and the slender family hand and foot, we, scientific men, enter our protest against the sentence sought to be pronounced, that the infants were changed."

Lord Charleton then requested to put some questions to the three former servants of Madame de Courtrai, which was granted; and, with visible reluctance, they stood at length before him. His lordship first spoke to the nurse, saying, in French:

"My good Sophie, I recognize you perfectly well. I remember you as a warm-hearted, industrious, and faithful creature; also as very fond of play when work was over,—another good feature in a character. The only thing I cannot satisfactorily make out in the part you are given now to play, is, your character of witness. A witness is a person who has seen something; and the meaning is stretched to a person who has heard something. Now, the scene of this supposed plot, to change your living child into my dead grandson, was the seacoast town of Dieppe, where you never were. Consequently, as you could neither see nor hear from Versailles what was passing at Dieppe, at what part of the history do you start forth as witness?"

Here Lucille, the lady's maid, reminded her thus:

"When the ladies came back."

"Oh! yes," said Sophie. "When the ladies came back, my lord, I saw that the live child they brought back was my child."

"Now, listen, Sophie, and you, my lords and gentlemen, to a few short extracts from the letters already referred to:—'The worst is now over, dear papa, of all our late affliction—the announcement to poor Sophie that her little Leon was really dead; for, of course she had been prepared for the event by being informed that the child had already caught the disease from her, and carried the seeds of it to Dieppe, to the great danger of us all. Mamma saved me, as she had promised, the agony of telling her the worst. When she had relieved herself by tears, I went to her with the beautiful locks I had cut off at the commencement of the fever; also with a miniature I had painted of him surrounded by clouds, to show he had become an angel. She knows not which to prize the most—the hair or the likeness. At length I ventured to fetch our little Arthur, telling her she should always look on herself as his other mother. She almost devoured him with kisses, but then began to weep again; and showed her grief in a way so poetical, that I must relate it:—She caught up the locks of hair I had brought, and, placing them on Arthur's head, bent her lips on them, that she