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LUCY GRAHAM'S SECRET

(Continued.)

She came skipping through the hall to meet him, and, shaking her golden ringlets, buried her bright head on her husband's breast.

"So the last of our visitors is gone dear, and we're all alone," she said. "Isn't that nice?"

"Yes, darling," he answered fondly, stroking her bright hair.

"Except Mr. Robert Audley. How long is that nephew of yours going to stay here?"

"As long as he likes, my pet; he's always welcome," said the baronet, and then, as if remembering himself he added, tenderly: "But not unless his visit is agreeable to you, darling; not if his lazy habits, or his smoking, or his dogs, or anything about him is displeasing to you."

Lady Audley pursed up her rosy lips and looked thoughtfully at the ground.

"It isn't that," she said hesitatingly. "Mr. Audley is a very agreeable young man, and a very honorable young man; but you know, Sir Michael, I'm rather a young aunt for such a nephew, and—"

"And what, Lucy?" asked the baronet, fiercely.

"Poor Alicia is rather jealous of any attention Mr. Audley pays me, and—and I think it would be better for her happiness if your nephew were to bring his visit to a close."

"He shall go to-night, Lucy," exclaimed Sir Michael. "I am a blind, neglectful fool not to have thought of this before. My lovely little darling, it was scarcely just to Bob to expose the poor lad to your fascinations. I know how hard he is as good and true-hearted a fellow as ever breathed, but—but—he shall go to-night."

"But you won't be too abrupt dear? You won't be rude?"

"Rude! no Lucy. I left him smoking in the lime-walk. I'll go and tell him that he must get out of the house in an hour."

So in that leafless avenue, under whose gloomy shade George Talboys had stood on that thunderous evening before the day of his disappearance, Sir Michael Audley told his nephew that the Court was no home for him, and that his lady was too young and pretty to accept the attentions of a handsome nephew of eight-and-twenty.

Robert only shrugged his shoulders and elevated his thick, black eyebrows as Sir Michael delicately hinted all this.

"I have been attentive to my lady," he said. "She interests me; and then with a change in his voice, and an emotion not common to him, he turned to the baronet, and grasping his hand, exclaimed, 'God forbid, my dear uncle, that I should ever bring trouble upon such a noble heart as yours! God forbid that the slightest shadow of dishonor should ever fall upon your honored head—least of all through agency of mine.'"

The young man uttered these few words in a broken and disjointed fashion in which Sir Michael had never heard him speak before, and then turning away his head, fairly broke down.

He left the court that night, but he did not go far. Instead of taking the evening train for London, he

went straight up to the little village of Mount Stanning, and walking in to the neatly-kept inn, asked Phoebe Marks if he could be accommodated with apartments.

AT THE CASTLE INN. CHAPTER XVII.

The little sitting-room into which Phoebe Marks ushered the baronet's nephew was situated on the ground floor, and only separated by a lath-and-plaster partition from the little bar-parlor occupied by the innkeeper and his wife.

It seemed as though the wise architect who had superintended the building of the Castle Inn had taken especial care that nothing but the fairest and most flimsy material should be used, and that the wind, having a special fancy for this unprotected spot, should have full play for the indulgence of its caprices.

To this end pitiful woodwork had been used instead of solid masonry, and rickety ceilings had been propped up by fragile rafters, and beams that threatened on every stormy night to fall upon the heads of those beneath them; doors whose speciality was never to be shut, yet always to be banging; windows constructed with a peculiar view to letting in the draft when they were shut, and keeping out the air when they were open. The hand of genius had devised this lonely country inn; and there was not an inch of woodwork or trowelful of plaster employed in all the rickety construction that did not offer its peculiar weak point to every assault of its indefatigable foe.

Robert looked about him with a feeble smile of resignation.

"It was a change, decidedly, from the luxurious comforts of Audley Court, and it was rather a strange fancy of the young barrister to prefer loitering at this dreary place to returning to his snug chambers in Figtree Court."

But he had brought his Lares and Penates with him, in the shape of his German pipe, his tobacco canister, half a dozen French novels, and his two ill-conditioned, canine favorites, which sat shivering before the smoky little fire, barking shortly and sharply now and then, by way of hinting for some slight refreshment.

While Mr. Robert Audley contemplated his new quarters, Phoebe Marks summoned a little village lad who was in the habit of running errands for her, and taking him into the kitchen, gave him a tiny note, carefully folded and sealed.

"You know Audley Court?"

"Yes, mum."

"If you'll run there with this letter to-night, and see that it's put safely in Lady Audley's hands, I'll give you a shilling."

"Yes, mum."

"You understand? Ask to see my lady; you can say you've a message—not a note, mind—but a message from Phoebe Marks; and when you see her, give this into her own hand."

"Yes, mum."

"You won't forget?"

"No mum."

"Then be off with you."

The boy waited for no second bidding, but in another moment was scudding along the lonely high road, down the sharp descent that led to Audley.

Phoebe Marks went to the window and looked at the black figure of the lad hurrying through the dusky winter evening.

"If there's any bad meaning in his coming here," she thought, "my lady will know of it in time, at any rate."

Phoebe herself brought the neatly arranged tea tray and the little covered dish of ham and eggs which had been prepared for this unlooked-for visitor. Her pale hair was as smoothly braided and her light gray dress fitted as precisely as of old. The same neutral tints pervaded her colored ribbons or rustling silk gown proclaimed the well-to-do innkeeper's wife. Phoebe Marks was a person who never lost her individuality. Silent and self-constrained, she seemed to hold herself within herself and take no color from the outer world.

(To be continued.)

Billiards

As sung by Mr. S. A. Smith at the Western Union Smoker.

Now, gentlemen all, I would like to declaim

In a general manner on billiards; For you know that on earth there is no other game

With the great fascination of billiards.

And although you may travel o'er land and o'er sea,

Whomsoever you ask will be sure to agree

That none under heaven can play it like me—

This billiards, that billiards, those billiards.

I started the game long before I could talk—

And the first word I uttered was "billiards."

I will play it as long as I'm able to walk—

Swift billiards, fast billiards, great billiards!

When I last was in England I played with a duke,

But the crusty old beggar did nothing but fluke,

And in great indignation I had to rebuke

The sort of a thing he called billiards.

My technic is perfect, my style is superb;

I'm the marvel of nations at billiards.

My nerves are so steady no noise can disturb

My amazing, marvellous billiards.

My opponents regard me with wonder and dread;

I have all the best shots figured out in my head;

I can carom, or pot, or go in off the red,

And ten-shots abound in my billiards.

Now listen: I taught Dr. Pritchard to pot;

I taught Edward Ulph to play billiards;

I taught Mr. Fraser this six-cushion shot;

Now he seldom gets beaten at billiards.

John Bishop knew nothing till he learned from me;

Art George without my help would never get three;

Jack Kiely and Hambling and Wilson agree

That I taught them what they know of billiards.

'Twas I put the cunning in Russell's old cue,

That wins for him always in billiards.

I showed many players the great follow-through

Now used by the Doctor in billiards.

I spent eighty years showing points to George Butt,

And you'll soon understand why so proudly I strut

When I say that in Egypt I taught old King Tut,

And he was a wizard at billiards.

I remember the time when I played the world's champ

At his own game, his speciality, billiards.

With cold perspiration his forehead was damp,

For he knew I could beat him at billiards.

I potted his white and he groaned out aloud,

And a great shout of triumph went up from the crowd,

For I had defeated the champion, McLeod,

And now he comes second in billiards.

When my journey is done and at last I am through!

With all worldly affairs except billiards,

I wish to be buried along with my cue

For my use in celestial billiards.

In the glorious Valhalla where dead heroes meet,

I know they've reserved the most prominent seat

For one who has never gone down to defeat

In the noblest of all the games—billiards.

Some men endeavor to reach Success by shrewdness and cunning, and by the push of a bully and tyrant, but the results of his work generally crumbles to dust.

Build a little fence of trust Around to-day;

Fill the space with loving work, And therein stay;

Look not through the sheltering bars Upon to-morrow,

God will help thee bear what comes, Of joy or sorrow.

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Success is no whim of the moment, no crown for the indolent brow. You must battle and try for it, offer to die for it. Lose it yet win it somehow.

The Pathway to glory is rugged, and many the heart-aches you'll know. He who seeks to be master must rise from disaster. Must take as he giveth the blow.

There's no royal highway to splendour, no short cut to fortune or fame. You must fearlessly fight for it, dare to be right for it. Failing, yet playing the game.

The test of man's merit is trouble, the proof of his work is distress. Much as you long for it, man must be strong for it. Work is the door to success.

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To Owners and Masters of British Ships

The attention of Owners and Masters of British Ships is called to the 74th Section of the "Merchant Shipping Act, 1894."

75.—(1) A Ship belonging to a British Subject shall hoist the proper national colors—

(a) on a signal made to her by one of His Majesty's ships, including any vessel under the command of an officer of His Majesty's navy or full pay, and

(b) on entering or leaving any foreign port and

(c) if of fifty tons gross tonnage or upwards, on entering or leaving any British Port.

(2) If default is made on board any ship in complying with this section the master of the ship shall for each offence be liable to a fine not exceeding one hundred pounds.

At time of war it is necessary for every British Ship to hoist the colours and heave to if signalled by a British Warship; if a vessel hoists no colours and runs away, it is liable to be fired upon.

H. W. LeMESSURIER,

Registrar of Shipping

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