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THE FAMILY HONOUR.

BY MRS. C. L. BALFOUR.

Continued from page 117.

Gertrude was innocently unconscious of the reason why of late she had read the biographies of several scientific men with such great interest; why German literature was so increasingly absorbing, or that anything but admiration for Rupert Griesbach's scholarship, and gratitude for his help, made her reserve passages that puzzled her, for his solution. If Marian had been one of those young ladies who, rallied their female friends on incipient predilections, she might have indulged in a little jesting at Gertrude's expense when that young lady recently was expressing her compassion for Rupert's having never known a mother's care, as she had learned from what Ella Griesbach had told her of the family history. But Marian never jested on the subject of the affections, and, indeed, sought by study to absorb Gertrude's mind in those pursuits in which it was her office to assist her; so that without a thought beyond the present, as far as Rupert Griesbach was concerned, Gertrude had yielded unreservedly to the pleasure which she occasionally enjoyed at the parsonage in his society. To him—a shy, absorbed student, Gertrude's beaming, spiritual face had come like an embodiment of his ideal of beauty. Her sylphlike grace and childlike frankness, combined with her taste for poetry and her many acquirements, rendered her a paragon of perfection in his eyes—the one guiding star, as he told himself, of his destiny. But what was he that she should ever be won to love him in return? Would her father ever consent to give her to him, when she might surely look above him in worldly station? Would his own father, for years to come, approve of his wooing any bride but science? These were questions that troubled the course of his love; and while they did not prevent its stream flowing in an everdeepening channel, checked its rising as yet to sight above the banks that bounded it. Meanwhile youth and hope had made the days at both Hall and parsonage delightful for the last six weeks to all. And here they were now on the breezy knoll, a happy company, whose joy was by no means diminished by finding Harriet and Mysie there, who, in good truth, had both been amusing themselves by running races down the knoll, when their childish amusement was put an end to by the arrival of spectators. Gertrude, who had a prescience of their sport, was not a little amused to see how Mysie, who was just on the scamper, suddenly brought herself up, and, swinging round, regained her equilibrium by dropping a low courtesy to Allan. It seemed so oddly ceremonious that the laugh was general. And certainly neither Mysie's grace nor beauty suffered in Allan's estimation by her elaborate stateliness of welcome—for what with the recent exercise and the little confusion, the brilliancy of her look last night, which Allan had thought could not be surpassed, was exceeded by the flush of this morning, which not only added to the rich bloom of her cheek, but deepened the glowing light that kindled in her rich brown eyes. They all stood in a group looking at the scene before them.

"It is certainly fine," said Mr. Nugent, calmly critical.

"Fine! I never saw anything more beautiful in my life!" cried Allan, with enthusiasm, but not looking at the distance.

"This brother of mine always talks in superlatives," cried Gertrude, apologetically.

"Do I? I spoke as I felt," said Allan. Perhaps it was not the prospect that had caused his exuberant exclamation.

How they rambled about, tried to talk of history, and how Norman William had depopulated places in the district; tried to talk of science, and the geological strata, and really succeeded only in talking merry nonsense—need not be said. They all enjoyed themselves rarely, and, returning from their walk, parted at the lodge gates, with the promise of all meeting at tea at the parsonage, perhaps next evening.

Marian, who wished to return home early, had left them on the road.

Gertrude and Allan, as they strolled in pleasant, youthful fatigue—how different from other kinds of weariness!—up to the Hall, were both silent, and enjoyed their reverie; for each had pleasant matter for reflection. They were startled by the voice of Miss Austwicke, who was on the lawn, with an open letter in her hand, and came up to them gloomily, with the words—

"Your father, Allan, sends me word that he comes down to-morrow evening, and will stay till Monday."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" said Gertrude.

"He has some trouble; some unpleasant news from Scotland. He would have come down at once, but he waits for your mamma to join him."

"What, from Scarborough?" said Allan.

"Yes; she will travel thence to London to-day."

"Dear me! mamma will not like that, I fear," said Gertrude, the smile vanishing from her face, and an indefinable sense of impending evil settling on her mind, and even Allan laughed rather blankly, as he said—

"Well, the more the merrier, dear True."

But, cheerily as he spoke, they two went into the house in very different spirits from their setting out that morning; and, if they had known all, with good reason.

CHAPTER XLV. EXHUMED.

"Some peasant then shall find my bones
Whitening amid disjointed stones."

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

Whether it was that Miss Austwicke's presence at the dinner-table was not exhilarating, or Allan and Gertrude had expended too much animation in their morning's walk, certainly they were neither of them very cheerful over the meal. In truth, the conversation was not interesting, for Miss Austwicke only spoke to utter a complaint.

"I understand, Gertrude, you have given Ruth a holiday to-morrow."

"Yes, aunt; is there any harm in that? You can, of course, countermand it if you choose."

"And put myself in the unpleasant character of a sort of domestic tyrant?—preventing relaxations that would otherwise be allowed. I think, since Martin has been so taken up with other duties that I have had to put up with inefficient people, if I choose to employ Ruth I might be consulted about her."

"Dear aunt, if I had thought that you cared to be troubled about such a matter I would have told you. I'll speak to Ruth."

"No, no; I tell you, I will not have that done. I can surely speak to you, True, as to the future."

Allan interrupted the conversation by saying—

"Of all co-partnerships, defend me from sharing a servant with any one. If the services are good, neither employer gets enough; and if bad, both are bored."

"Ruth nursed me very well, and that made Aunt Honor take notice of and employ her."

"I don't know, True, about taking notice of her," said Miss Austwicke, quickly. "I was in want of some one, I suppose."

"Doubtless, aunt," replied Gertrude, feeling inwardly that everything she said seemed to be wrong, and annoyed on Allan's account that the peevishness of one should make them all uncomfortable. She was therefore glad when her aunt rose from the table, and they left Allan to sit over the dessert and amuse himself with a newspaper. Gertrude would not have been sorry if her aunt, in her present temper, had betaken herself to her own domain; but as she intimated her intention of taking her coffee in the drawing-room with Gertrude, the young lady was fain to accompany her there. She was surprised at Miss Austwicke returning again to the subject the moment they were alone.

"Remember, Gertrude, I will not have you say a word to Ruth about what we have been speaking of."

"I'm not in the habit of talking to servants about our conversation, aunt," was the comment, in a surprised tone, of Gertrude. And then came the hasty, nervous rejoinder—

"No, no, of course not; excuse me, True."

There was a fluttering sigh, so painful to hear, as Miss Austwicke spoke, that Gertrude was