

[Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.]

LIVER VERNUS LOVE.

BY A MIDDLE-AGED DYSPEPTIC.
(Dedicated to all fellow-sufferers.)

Last week I felt gloomy and horribly ill. And I longed for a something my blank heart to fill. So I fell deep in love, and I failed to *dislike*. That instead of true love, it was nothing but liver.

I maundered. I spooned, like an idiot I acted. When away from the loved one I felt quite distracted. And it took a whole fortnight of physio to prove That I suffered from liver instead of from love.

I believe I proposed, though I really can't say. But I feel very thankful she didn't say yes. So though I'm rejected, I freely forgive her. For my love is all gone now. I'm right in my liver.

Moral.

Now, you middle-aged sufferers who suffer like this. And coddle your agony as though it were bliss. Just list to my maxim, and what I propose is: You, of your complaint, make a strict *diagnosis*.

Take two or three pills every night for a week. And during that time to the loved one don't speak. Take a long walk each day, though it rain, hail or freeze. And you'll find that the liver's the seat of disease.

W. H. F.

Montreal, 20th Nov., 1872.

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THE NEW MAGDALEN.

BY WILKIE COLLINS.

SECOND SCENE—*Mablethorpe House.*

CHAPTER VIII.—(Continued.)

With that frank avowal, he left the lunch-table, and took a chair near Mercy.

"You will naturally be anxious," he went on, "to know what my offence was. Do you understand Political Economy and the Laws of Supply and Demand?"

Mercy owned that she did not understand them.

"No more do I—in a Christian country," he said. "That was my offence. You shall hear my confession (just as my aunt will hear it) in two words."

He paused for a little while; his variable manner changed again. Mercy, shyly looking at him, saw a new expression in his eyes—an expression which recalled her first remembrance of him as nothing had recalled it yet.

"I had no idea," he resumed, "of what the life of a farm-labourer really was, in some parts of England, until I undertook the rector's duties. Never before had I seen such dire wretchedness as I saw in the cottages. Never before had I met with such noble patience under suffering as I found among the people. The martyrs of old could endure, and die. I asked myself if they could endure, and live, like the martyrs whom I saw round me?—live, week after week, month after month, year after year, on the brink of starvation; live, and see their pining children growing up round them, to work and want in their turn; live, with the poor man's parish-prison to look to as the end, when hunger and labour have done their worst! Was God's beautiful earth made to hold such misery as this? I can hardly think of it, I can hardly speak of it, even now, with dry eyes!"

His head sank on his breast. He waited—mastering his emotion before he spoke again. Now, at last, she knew him once more. Now he was the man, indeed whom she had expected to see. Unconsciously, she sat listening, with her eyes fixed on his face, with her heart hanging on his words, in the very attitude of the by-gone day when she had heard him for the first time!

"I did all I could to plead for the helpless ones," he resumed. "I went round among the holders of the land to say a word for the tillers of the land. 'These patient people don't want much' (I said); 'in the name of Christ, give them enough to live on!' Political Economy shrieked at the horrid proposal; the Laws of Supply and Demand veiled their majestic faces in dismay. Starvation wages were the right wages, I was told. And why? Because the labourer was obliged to accept them! I determined, so far as one man could do it, that the labourer should not be obliged to accept them. I collected my own resources—I wrote to my friends—and I removed some of the poor fellows to parts of England where their work was better paid. Such was the conduct which made the neighbourhood too hot to hold me. So let it be! I mean to go on. I am known in London; I can raise subscriptions. The vile Laws of Supply and Demand shall find labour scarce in that agricultural district; and pitiless Political Economy shall spend a few extra shillings on the poor, as certainly as I am that Radical, Communist, and Incendiary—Julian Gray!"

He rose—making a little gesture of apology for the warmth with which he had spoken—and took a turn in the room. Fired by his enthusiasm, Mercy followed him. Her purse was in her hand when he turned and faced her.

"Pray let me offer my little tribute—such as it is!" she said, eagerly.

A momentary flush spread over his pale

cheeks as he looked at the beautiful compassionate face pleading with him.

"No! no!" he said, smiling, "though I am a parson, I don't carry the begging-box everywhere." Mercy attempted to press the purse on him. The quaint humour began to twinkle again in his eyes as he abruptly drew back from it. "Don't tempt me!" he said. "The frailest of all human creatures is a clergyman tempted by a subscription." Mercy persisted, and conquered; she made him prove the truth of his own profound observation of clerical human nature by taking a piece of money from the purse. "If I must take it—I must!" he remarked. "Thank you for setting the good example! thank you for giving the timely help! What name shall I put down on my list?"

Mercy's eyes looked confusedly away from him.

"No name," she said in a low voice. "My subscription is anonymous."

As she replied, the library door opened. To her infinite relief—to Julian's secret disappointment—Lady Janet Roy and Horace Holm-croft entered the room together.

"Julian!" exclaimed Lady Janet, holding up her hands in astonishment.

He kissed his aunt on the cheek. "Your ladyship is looking charmingly."

He gave his hand to Horace. Horace took it, and passed on to Mercy. They walked away together slowly to the other end of the room. Julian seized on the chance which left him free to speak privately to his aunt.

"I came in through the conservatory," he said. "And I found that young lady in the room. Who is she?"

"Are you very much interested in her?" asked Lady Janet, in her gravely ironical way.

Julian answered in one expressive word. "Indescribably!"

Lady Janet called to Mercy to join her.

"My dear," she said, "let me formally present my nephew to you. Julian, this is Miss Grace Roseberry—"

She suddenly checked herself. The instant she pronounced the name, Julian started as if it was a surprise to him.

"What is it?" she asked sharply.

"Nothing," he answered, bowing to Mercy, with a marked absence of his former ease of manner. She returned the courtesy a little restrainedly on her side. She too had seen him start when Lady Janet mentioned the name by which she was known. The start meant something. What could it be? Why did he turn aside, after bowing to her, and address himself to Horace, with an absent look in his face, as if his thoughts were far away from his words? A complete change had come over him; and it dated from the moment when his aunt had pronounced the name that was not her name—the name that she had stolen!

Lady Janet claimed Julian's attention, and left Horace free to return to Mercy.

"Your room is ready for you," she said. "You will stay here of course?"

Julian accepted the invitation—still with the air of a man whose mind was pre-occupied. Instead of looking at his aunt when he made his reply, he looked round at Mercy, with a troubled curiosity in his face, very strange to see. Lady Janet tapped him impatiently on the shoulder.

"I expect people to look at me when people speak to me," she said. "What are you staring at my adopted daughter for?"

"Your adopted daughter?" Julian repeated—looking at his aunt this time, and looking very earnestly.

"Certainly! As Colonel Roseberry's daughter, she is connected with me by marriage already. Did you think I had picked up a foundling?"

Julian's face cleared; he looked relieved. "I had forgotten the Colonel," he answered. "Of course the young lady is related to us, as you say."

"Charmed, I am sure, to have satisfied you that Grace is not an impostor," said Lady Janet, with satirical humility. She took Julian's arm, and drew him out of hearing of Horace and Mercy. "About that letter of yours?" she proceeded. "There is one line in it that rouses my curiosity. Who is the mysterious 'lady' whom you wish to present to me?"

Julian started, and changed colour.

"I can't tell you just now," he said in a whisper.

"Why not?"

To Lady Janet's unutterable astonishment, instead of replying, Julian looked round at her adopted daughter once more.

"What has she got to do with it?" asked the old lady, out of all patience with him.

"It is impossible for me to tell you," he answered gravely, "while Miss Roseberry is in the room."

CHAPTER IX.

NEWS FROM MANNHEIM.

LADY JANET'S curiosity was by this time thoroughly aroused. Summoned to explain who the nameless lady mentioned in this letter could possibly be, Julian had looked at her adopted daughter. Asked next to explain

what her adopted daughter had got to do with it, he had declared that he could not answer while Miss Roseberry was in the room.

What did he mean? Lady Janet determined to find out.

"I hate all mysteries," she said to Julian. "And as for secrets, I consider them to be one of the forms of ill-breeding. People in our rank of life ought to be above whispering in corners. If you must have your mystery, I can offer you a corner in the library. Come with me."

Julian followed his aunt very reluctantly. Whatever the mystery might be, he was plainly embarrassed by being called upon to reveal it at a moment's notice. Lady Janet settled herself in her chair, prepared to question and cross-question her nephew—when an obstacle appeared at the other end of the library, in the shape of a manservant with a message. One of Lady Janet's neighbours had called by appointment to take her to the meeting of a certain committee which assembled that day. The servant announced that the neighbour—an elderly lady—was then waiting in her carriage at the door.

Lady Janet's ready invention set the obstacle aside without a moment's delay. She directed the servant to show her visitor into the drawing room, and to say that she was unexpectedly engaged, but that Miss Roseberry would see the lady immediately. She then turned to Julian, and said, with her most satirical emphasis of tone and manner, "Would it be an additional convenience if Miss Roseberry was not only out of the room, before you disclose your secret, but out of the house?"

Julian gravely answered, "It may possibly be quite as well if Miss Roseberry is out of the house."

Lady Janet led the way back to the dining-room.

"My dear Grace," she said, "you looked flushed and feverish when I saw you asleep on the sofa a little while since. It will do you no harm to have a drive in the fresh air. Our friend has called to take me to the committee meeting. I have sent to tell her that I am engaged—and I shall be much obliged if you will go in my place."

Mercy looked a little alarmed. "Does your ladyship mean the committee meeting of the Samaritan Convalescent Home? The members, as I understand it, are to decide to-day which of the plans for the new building they are to adopt. I cannot surely presume to vote in your place?"

"You can vote, my dear child, just as well as I can," replied the old lady. "Architecture is one of the lost arts. You know nothing about it; I know nothing about it; the architects themselves know nothing about it. One plan is no doubt just as bad as the other. Vote, as I should vote, with the majority. Or as poor dear Dr. Johnson said, 'Shout with the loudest mob.' Away with you—and don't keep the committee waiting."

Horace hastened to open the door for Mercy.

"How long shall you be away?" he whispered confidentially. "I had a thousand things to say to you, and they have interrupted us."

"I shall be back in an hour."

"We shall have the room to ourselves by that time. Come here when you return. You will find me waiting for you."

Mercy pressed his hand significantly and went out. Lady Janet turned to Julian, who had thus far remained in the background, still, to all appearance, as unwilling as ever to enlighten his aunt.

"Well?" she said. "What is tying your tongue now? Grace is out of the room; why don't you begin? Is Horace in the way?"

"Not in the least. I am only a little uneasy."

"Uneasy about what?"

"I am afraid you have put that charming creature to some inconvenience in sending her away just at this time."

Horace looked up suddenly with a flush on his face.

"When you say 'that charming creature,' " he asked sharply, "I suppose you mean Miss Roseberry?"

"Certainly," answered Julian. "Why not?"

Lady Janet interposed. "Gently, Julian," she said. "Grace has only been introduced to you hitherto in the character of my adopted daughter."

"And it seems to be high time," Horace added haughtily, "that I should present her next in the character of my engaged wife."

Julian looked at Horace as if he could hardly credit the evidence of his own ears. "Your wife!" he exclaimed, with an irrepressible outburst of disappointment and surprise.

"Yes. My wife," returned Horace. "We are to be married in a fortnight. May I ask," he added, with angry humility, "if you disapprove of the marriage?"

Lady Janet interposed once more. "Nonsense, Horace," she said. "Julian congratulates you, of course."

Julian coldly and absently echoed the words. "Oh, yes! I congratulate you, of course."

Lady Janet returned to the main object of the interview.

"Now we thoroughly understand one another," she said, "let us speak of a lady

who has dropped out of the conversation for the last minute or two. I mean, Julian, the mysterious lady of your letter. We are alone, as you desired. Lift the veil, my reverend nephew, which hides her from mortal eyes! Blush, if you like—and can. Is she the future Mrs. Julian Gray?"

"She is a perfect stranger to me," Julian answered, quietly.

"A perfect stranger! You wrote me word you were interested in her."

"I am interested in her. And, what is more, you are interested in her, too!"

Lady Janet's fingers drummed impatiently on the table. "Have I not warned you, Julian, that I hate mysteries? Will you, or will you not, explain yourself?"

Before it was possible to answer, Horace rose from his chair. "Perhaps I am in the way?" he said.

Julian signed to him to sit down again.

"I have already told Lady Janet that you are not in the way," he answered. "I now tell you—as Miss Roseberry's future husband—that you too have an interest in hearing what I have to say."

Horace resumed his seat with an air of auspicious surprise. Julian addressed himself to Lady Janet.

"You have often heard me speak," he began, "of my old friend and schoolfellow, John Cressingham?"

"Yes. The English consul at Mannheim?"

"The same. When I returned from the country I found among my other letters, a long letter from the consul. I have brought it with me, and I propose to read certain passages from it, which tell a very strange story more plainly and more credibly than I can tell it in my own words."

"Will it be very long?" inquired Lady Janet, looking with some alarm at the closely written sheets of paper which her nephew spread open before him.

Horace followed with a question on his side.

"You are sure I am interested in it?" he asked. "The consul at Mannheim is a total stranger to me."

"I answer for it," replied Julian, gravely, "neither my aunt's patience nor yours, Horace, will be thrown away if you will favour me by listening attentively to what I am about to read!"

(To be continued.)

Varieties.

Dr. Hall tells the story of a Scotchman who sang most piously the hymn,

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small."

and all through the singing was fumbling in his pocket to make sure of the smallest piece of silver for the contribution-box.

A member of the late university crew at Yale was trying the other day, with questionable success, to smoke an asthmatic pipe, when he remarked that it blew better than it pulled. "Yes," replied a scientific, "I have known some people who blew better than they pulled." Member of university crew was silent.

A local paper says that at the North Wits election some time ago, a voter who resides in a small country town not far from Corsham was applied to several times for his vote. This, however, he resolutely refused to give. "Far," said he, "directly after I voted last time the bread rose, and I made up my mind from that time that I'd never vote any more."

What shall we say of that benighted bachelor who, being called on for a toast, gave "Our Future Wives—distance lends enchantment to the view?" And that other one, if possible a shade more reprehensible, who proposed, "Woman—the morning star of infancy, the day star of manhood, the evening star of age; bless our stars, and may they always be kept at a telescopic distance!"

The Titusville Press chronicles the following event with modest pride: "Titusville was not the birthplace of 'the Father of his country,' but we have a man residing here who slipped up on a muddy crossing, this forenoon, and sat down on a roll of butter which he was carrying home, and instead of swearing, he simply rose, scraped the butter from his pants into the paper again, and went on again as if nothing had happened."

An itinerant musician has created some excitement in the streets of Waterford and Tramore during the past few days by walking about with a really excellent grinding organ placed in a donkey cart. It has been found out that the wanderer is a gentleman of some property in one of the central counties in Ireland, who has wagered £5,000 that he will support himself and his donkey for six months by grinding his organ.

A lady who had received a severe bite on her arm from a dog went to Dr. Abernethy, but hearing of his aversion to hear the statement of particulars, she merely uncovered the injured part and held it before him in silence. After examining it he said, in an inquiring tone, "Scratch?" "Bite," said the lady. "Cat?" Inquired the doctor. "Dog," rejoined the lady. So delighted was the doctor with the brevity and promptness of the lady's answers that he exclaimed, "Zounds, madam, you are the most sensible woman I have met with in all my life!"

FORGIVEN WITH A VENGEANCE.—A couple ran off to get married, and came back to the