

Choice Literature.

MISS GILBERT'S CAREER.

CHAPTER IX.—Continued.

The story of the subsequent interviews between the authoress and her gentle critic would be tedious, and need not be told. With the tact of a truly kind heart, Miss Hammett praised the excellencies of the book and pointed out its defects. When alone, Fanny often quarrelled with the judgment that had been rendered—rebelled against it—but ended by adopting it, and profiting by it. Many pages she rewrote entirely, but her self love was grievously wounded during the process, and it was only by the severest self-discipline that she was kept from entertaining bitter and unworthy thoughts of the kind woman who had humiliated her. It was not pleasant to think that the book was better for Miss Hammett's ministry. It was not agreeable to remember that her own good judgment had been called in question, and that she had been obliged, as a rational woman, to yield the point.

But there was another ordeal lying between Miss Hammett and the public. Her father had not heard the book read, and she knew that he would not allow it to be published until he should become acquainted with its contents in some way. Though shaken by the arguments and the sentiments of the schoolmistress, she had never for a moment relinquished the idea of publication. Her overweening desire for public applause had slept at intervals, but it had only slept to awake with new vigour. As she passed out from Miss Hammett's immediate personal influence, the old dream of fame and a career filled her and enveloped her.

She was shrewd enough, and knew enough of her father's character, to detect the real gratification he felt when, with assumed coolness, he received the announcement that her book was concluded. It belonged to a class of books, he said, that he never read, and he felt himself incompetent, in many respects, to judge of its merits. Would it not be well to invite in Mr. and Mrs. Wilton? Both were people of taste and culture, and he should rely much upon their judgment.

Fanny declared herself ready for any arrangement, and the doctor walked over to the parsonage and talked up the matter with the good pastor and his wife. They were ready for the proposition of the doctor. They always were ready for any proposition of the doctor. He ruled the parish, and they had a profound respect for him, partly from that fact and partly from the fact that he was honestly worthy of it.

Fanny approached this ordeal without a particle of trepidation. Miss Hammett had helped her to a more just appreciation of her book than she had before possessed. She knew where it was strong, and she felt, furthermore, that those who would listen to her were more in sympathy with the motive which actuated her than Miss Hammett had been. The evening for the reading was set, and at the appointed hour Miss Fanny Gilbert had her audience about her. Aunt Catharine, who had heard it all piecemeal, wished to hear it entire, and was in her seat. Fanny began, and as occasionally she looked out upon her auditors, the eager look, the expression of undisguised interest, filled her with proud satisfaction. Mr. Wilton gave frequent exclamations of delight, and the reader gathered new excitement with every page. Her eyes flashed, her cheeks glowed, her voice grew round and full and flexible, and her audience looked on and listened in astonishment. Dr. Gilbert, as he became aware of the impression produced upon the others, forgot his resolution to be cool and reserved, and took pains to conceal his gratification. Mr. Wilton was amazed. Mrs. Wilton was overwhelmed. The voice of the reader flowed on and on, never faltering, never pausing.

The little clock with its tiny bell struck the hours, but no one heard it. "Eight—nine—ten—eleven—twelve—" articulated with silver sound the silver-sounding revelation, and then the last page was tossed from Miss Gilbert's hands. Mrs. Wilton threw her arms around Fanny's neck, and kissed her again and again. Mr. Wilton, inspired about equally with the book and the pretty scene enacted between his wife and Fanny, jumped to his feet and clapped his hands wildly. Ah, Dr. Gilbert! Dr. Gilbert! Why can you not sit still? What are you doing? Shaking hands with Aunt Catharine and laughing like a madman to keep yourself from crying! Ah, Dr. Gilbert! what a fool!

And what did Fanny do? What did Fanny say? Nothing, but she thought this: "If I could only get the ear of the world as I have got the ears of these! If I could only get the praise of the world as I get the praise of these!" The evening's triumph was only significant to her as an earnest of a prouder triumph to come, and an assurance of the co-operation of her father in her schemes. She received his congratulations amiably, but in that queenly kind of way which showed that she regarded them as her right, rendered to her as a matter of course.

"It's getting rather late," said the doctor, pulling out his watch and winding it, "but you would oblige us very much, Mr. Wilton, by advising us with relation to a publisher."

Fanny smiled at her father's ready assumption of partnership, and recalled the scene in which he played so different a part in the early history of her enterprise; but she said nothing, while Mr. Wilton rubbed the spot on his head where he had apparently laid aside a list of publishers, and prepared his opinion of their respective merit.

"There's the great house of the Kilgores," suggested Mr. Wilton. "They have a larger list of publications, and a larger correspondence than any other house in the country."

Dr. Gilbert frowned, and drummed on the arms of his chair.

"Is it not possible," said he, "that, in consequence of such a range of business, they would fail to give to the work that degree of consideration which our interest, no, to say anything of its merits, demands?"

"Possibly," responded the pastor, adding, "then there is the enterprising house of Kapp and Demigh. They are famous, you know, for advertising freely, and pushing

things. I should say the Kilgores, if you can get them, and Kapp and Demigh if the Kilgores decline—an event which, I confess, does not seem very likely to take place."

"I have no fears," said Fanny, proudly, "if they will read the book."

"I'm sure you need not have any, my dear," responded Mrs. Wilton, warmly.

"Well, perhaps we had better write to both," said the doctor, with a shrewd twinkle of the eye, "and if they should both want the book it may help us to get more favourable terms."

So it was settled, and the Wiltons took their leave. The doctor then advanced to the table, and copied into his notebook the name of the volume which he had decided to offer through the mail to the great publishing firms of Kilgore Brothers and Kapp & Demigh, and this was the record:

TRISTRAM TREVANION;

OR THE HOUNDS OF THE WHIPPOORWILL HILLS:

A Novel,

By Everard Everest, Gent.

"Why do you choose the name of a gentleman for your *nom de plume*, Fanny?" inquired the doctor, spelling over the name slowly, to see if he had got it right.

"Oh! a fancy," replied Fanny, languidly. "Besides, it seems to me to be written in a masculine style."

"But I—I should think you would like to have your own name associated with the book," suggested the doctor.

"If it should prove to be a success," replied Fanny, "there are ways enough, I suppose, for securing such an association. Meantime, a little mystery will hurt nothing, and may help a great deal."

The doctor, wholly unsophisticated in matters of authorship, did not see through the whole of his daughter's plan, but he saw that she had a plan with which she was satisfied, and thought better to trust her. Fanny gathered up her manuscript, and bidding her father "good-night," retired to her room.

It was impossible, of course, for Dr. Gilbert to go to bed with work undone that it was possible to do. So he took his pen, and addressed to the great publishing house of the Kilgores, in New York, the following letter, a duplicate of which he also wrote and addressed to Messrs. Kapp & Demigh:

"GENTLEMEN,—Will you allow me to call your attention to a novel, just completed by my daughter, Miss Fanny Gilbert, entitled, 'Tristram Trevanion; or, The Hounds of the Whippoorwill Hills, by Everard Everest, Gent.' I am not, perhaps, a reliable judge of its merits. Paternal partiality and exclusive devotion to scientific and business pursuits may, in a degree, unfit me to decide upon the position in the world of art and the world of popular favour it is calculated to achieve. In fact, I have not relied upon my own judgment at all. The book has been read to competent literary friends, and their voice is unanimous and most enthusiastic in its favour. My impression is that it cannot fail to be a great success. With your practical eyes, you will recognize, I doubt not, in the title of the book, the characteristic poetic instincts of the writer, and her power to clothe her conceptions in choicest language. We have concluded to offer this book to your celebrated house for publication. It is our desire that it may come before the public under the most favourable auspices—such, in fact, as your imprint alone would give it. I think I can promise you the undivided support of the local press, as I certainly will pledge all the personal efforts on behalf of the volume which my relations to the writer will permit me to make. I may say to you, in this connection, that I have a large medical practice, extending throughout the region, and that I know nearly every family in the county. Please reply at once, and oblige, etc., etc.

THEOPHILUS GILBERT, M.D.

"P.S. How shall we send the manuscript to you?"

"T. G."

Dr. Gilbert re-read his twin epistles carefully, folded and sealed them, and went to bed.

CHAPTER X.—DR. GILBERT AMONG THE NEW YORK PUBLISHERS.

It seemed an age to Dr. Gilbert and his daughter before the responses from the New York publishers reached the Crampton post office. When, at last, both letters were delivered at the wicket, the doctor confessed to himself a greater degree of excitement than he had felt for many a day. As he walked home with them in his pocket, he bustled himself with framing an apology to Kapp and Demigh for giving the book to the Kilgores, for he could hardly doubt that both had accepted his proposition.

"I've got something for you, Fanny," said he, as he entered the house. Fanny followed him into his office, and took a seat. Then the doctor broke the seal of one of the letters, unfolded it, and read:

"Dr. G.:

"DEAR SIR,—Yours about book Tristram, etc., rec'd. Novels, except by well-known writers, not in our line and we must decline.

"Permit us to call your attention to catalogue of professional books which we mail with this. Shall be happy to file any orders. Yours respectfully,

"KILGORE BROTHERS,

"per RUDDOCK."

"Impertinent cub!" exclaimed the doctor, as he finished this brief and business-like production, his face swollen with sudden wrath. "You may depend on it, Fanny," said he, without venturing to look in her face, "that not one of the Kilgores has ever seen my letter—not one—no, not one. Thus understrapper, Haddock, or Hemlock, or—Ruddock, or whatever his name is, has not only replied on his own responsibility, but has had the impudence to stick his catalogue in my face."

While the doctor was excitedly delivering himself of these words, his daughter sat perfectly silent, with cheeks as pale as ashes, and a heart that thumped so violently against its walls that her whole frame was shocked by it. He sat for a minute, and looked at the letter of Kapp & Demigh,

hardly daring to take it up. At length he opened it, and read it silently. Fanny watched him, and assured herself that its contents were no more favourable than those of its predecessor.

"We are disappointed here again, Fanny," said the doctor, with a mollified tone, "but these fellows are gentlemen, and attend to their own business. Will you hear it?"

Fanny said, "Of course," and her father read:

"TO DR. THEOPHILUS GILBERT:

"MY DEAR SIR,—Your favour, relating to the manuscript novel of your daughter is at hand, and has been carefully considered. The title of the book seem to us to be exceedingly attractive, and, in a favourable condition of the market, could not fail of itself to sell an entire edition. Unfortunately, the market for novels is very dull now, and, still more unfortunately for us, our engagements are already so numerous, that were the market the best we should not feel at liberty to undertake your book. We could not possibly make room for it and do it justice. Thanking you for your kind preference of our house, we remain yours faithfully,

"KAPP & DEMIGH.

"P.S.—Have you tried Ballou & Gold?"

Father and daughter sat for some time in reflective disajointment, but neither was discouraged. It was not the habit of Dr. Gilbert to undertake an enterprise and fail of carrying it through; but he comprehended the fact at once that he could do nothing by mail. The process was too slow and indirect. He must attend to the matter personally. He must go to New York.

Fanny had great respect for her father's personal power and efficiency, and received the announcement with evident satisfaction. The preliminary arrangements for the journey were entered upon by both with much spirit. Fanny, with unusual readiness, took upon herself the preparation of her father's wardrobe, while he and the little black pony busily attended to such affairs as were necessary to be looked after out of doors. It was quite an event in the history of Crampton—this departure of everybody's family physician, and his indefinite period of absence. The postmaster had duly reported to the villagers the arrival of two important-looking letters, and they had found it very difficult to decide whether he had been summoned to some great case in consultation, or whether he had been invited to a chair in one of the medical colleges. As father and daughter kept their own counsels on the subject, the question was open for discussion during his entire absence. All agreed that Dr. Gilbert was a man who knew what he was about, and had a distinct comprehension of the side upon which his bread was buttered.

The day set for his departure came at length, and the little Crampton mail-coach started out from the little Crampton tavern for the doctor's door, and the little driver blew his little horn to inform the doctor that it was time for him and his baggage to be ready. The coach came up to the gate with a pretentious crack of the whip, and a rate of speed which the reputation of the establishment upon the road did not at all warrant. In fact, the doctor found that the fiery little pair of horses that made the coach rattle so merrily about Crampton underwent a serious change of character immediately after leaving the village.

The Crampton line of public travel and mail carriage was only one of the many tributaries to the great trunk lines that traversed the Connecticut valley from the northernmost point to the commencement of steam navigation at Hartford; and it was not until late in the afternoon that the Crampton basket was emptied into the trunk line bin that came along behind six smoking horses, covered with passengers and piled with baggage. The doctor was obliged to take an outside seat. It was an unwelcome shock to the gentleman's dignity, and as he was a heavy man the seat was reached by an outlay of physical exertion that cost some temper and more breath. His state of mind was not improved by the stimulus supplied to his efforts by an irreverent young man in sea costume, who reached down his hand, and shouted: "Now, old feller! Yo-heave, O!"

The stage-coach started off with a fresh team at a smashing speed, and the doctor felt that he was getting into the whirl of the great world. There was something in the thought that exhilarated him. Floating along in one of the arteries of business life, it seemed to Dr. Gilbert, as a business man, a very splendid thing; but his satisfaction was marred by the fact that the broader the stream of life grew along which, and into which, he was gliding, the smaller grew Dr. Gilbert. Out of Crampton, the great man of Crampton was of no more account than anybody.

At the next grand station of the route, the passengers had accumulated in such numbers that another coach was put on, and the doctor was favoured with an inside seat. He left Greenfield at nightfall, the coach plunging down the hill upon which the town stands at what he thought to be a dangerous rate of speed, rattling over Deerfield River bridge, and sweeping along the skirts of Deerfield meadows. It was a glorious evening, and the fresh phase of life which it presented to our Crampton passenger would have been refreshing beyond expression if the burden of care which he had taken on could have been lifted. As he realized, more and more, the great and crashing interests of the world, the little bundle of manuscript in his trunk seemed to lose its importance. What would this great world care for a country physician? What, particularly, would it care for the productions of a country physician's daughter?

(To be continued.)

BISMARCK AT HOME.

The Chancellor's wife, a tall, aristocratic-looking woman, with decided but pleasing features, and in a elegant though simple toilet, received each guest as he arrived with gracious affability. Standing close beside the open portieres, past which the eye glanced into the family living rooms, she was a true type of the position she holds both in home and public life. A noble wife and mother, she has faithfully stood by her husband's side from the very commencement of his political career. A Chicago paper declares that Bismarck's wife is her husband's private secretary! How far