AS IN A LOOKING GLASS.

Synopsis of Preceding Chapters. The story is in the form of a diary kept by Miss Lena Despard, an adventuress with a shady record, who is endeavoring to rehabilitate herself by a brilliant marriage. She breaks off by a series of falsehoods and intrigues the engagement between Algernon Balfour, the man she wishes to marry, and Miss Vyse. She introduces Capt. Jack Fortinbras, a black-leg and card-sharper, with whom she was associated, to Miss Vyse, and agrees in the event of his not marrying her to pay him for the amount of the money he may win; also secures Balfour, as the price of his silence concerning the past. Mrs. Despard, after having made a conquest of Sir Thomas Gage, an elderly gentleman of wealth, who assists her financially, goes over to the Continent. She is followed to Paris by Sir Thomas Gage who declares himself madly in love with her. Lord Adolpho Daysey, a young Englishman, seeks interviews with her, but Mrs. Despard discreetly keeps him at a distance. She joins Algernon Balfour at Monte Carlo and on the way there makes the acquaintance of a mysterious Russian, Paul Dromiroff, who subsequently turns out to be the head of the Russian secret police. Mrs. Despard tries her luck at the gaming table and wins a large sum.

CHAPTER XIV.—*(Continued.)*

"Thirteen," says the croupier impassively. *"rien impair et manque."*

Hurrah! I have won six thousand francs. It is a pretty little strike enough, but, unfortunately, or fortunately, as the case may be, it has filled me with an insane confidence in my inspiration. The fever is on me now. I will work out the number.

I pick up my winnings, and repeat the operation with No. 1. I win see, as 13 was brought to my notice *three* times, I cannot do less than try it in every way. I am moved by the spirit, therefore, to divide the figures, and try 1, with the full determination to follow it up with No. 3, if I am lucky enough to win.

My star is in the ascendant; I do win. I am so excited that it requires all my hard-earned self-control to prevent me from shouting out loud, or cutting a caper.

With the utmost calmness, however, I gather up the wad of notes that I have won, and again stake the maximum, this time upon the 3.

My neighbors are almost as excited as myself. But there is a dead silence as the ball is flung into the well, and the fatal words, "Nothing goes now," sound through the room ...

"The three wins!" Glorious, magical words! I have won again.

I now proceed to back the colors. Sometimes I go on red and sometimes on black. But I always stake the maximum (six thousand francs), and my inspiration is never at fault.

I have made my fortune!

But what is more—I have broken the bank. For after he has paid me my last *coup* the croupier rises and says ... *"Messieurs et mesdames,* we play no more to-night."

Even when it is a *night* that breaks the bank, the sensation is immense, it furnishes conversation for at least a couple of days after. But when it is a *female* woman! The sensation becomes a nine days' wonder. I find that I am the centre of an admiring—very much too admiring throng. Notoriety is a great thing, no doubt; but it has its disadvantages. To begin with, I am distinctly being hustled, which I greatly object to; secondly, I do not wish to be recognized, and I feel morally certain that some evil fate will waft Algy hither before I can get out, although by this time he ought to be tripping in at Lady Carshalton's; thirdly, I have a very large sum of money in my hands, and I am horribly afraid somebody will take a fancy to it.

Just at that moment a voice sounded in my ear.

"Do not be alarmed, Mrs. Despard," it whispers: "I will take care of you, if you will allow me. Let us get out of the crowd through the gardens. I have an attendant here who will see that we are not followed."

I look round and recognize my bearish traveling companion, and the Russian Ambassador's friend, Monsieur Paul Dromiroff. Behind him stands the attendant he has just mentioned, a stalwart, swarthy foreigner of a pronounced Kalmuck type. He certainly looks quite able and willing to keep off any obnoxious followers, and I feel, somehow, that my new robes are safe for the present. True, I do not know this Dromiroff from the proverbial Adam, but, somehow, I have confidence in him. True, I have seen him in intimate conversation with a diplomatic magnate of the first water; but it is not that; somehow I feel intuitively that I may trust the man—that he is destined in some way to influence my future life.

So I bow a graceful assent, and take his proffered arm. Presently we are standing together in the moonlight, in a secluded part of the pleasaunce.

"And now," says M. Dromiroff, "my charming Mrs. Despard, to decide what we shall do with these three hundred thousand francs of yours."

"What we shall do with it?" I repeat, aghast.

"Yes, my dear madam,' he replies imperturbably; "what shall we do with it?"

"I know what I am going to do with it,' I answer; "take very good care of it. It is not every day that one gets a strike of this sort. I shall lock it up in my room to-night, and take it over to Nice in the morning and get some banker there to send it to England. I am not going to trust myself. I might be tempted to lose it all back"

"There you are wise," said the old man. "I thoroughly commend your prudence, but you are simply insane if you leave a sum of money of that magnitude in your room all night *Grand Dieu!* Have you not seen enough of the denizens of Monte Carlo to realize the danger of such a course?"

What does the old gentleman mean? He surely does not intend to suggest that I should give my winnings to him to take care of? By Heaven! he does so, for almost immediately he says ...

"Be guided by me, my dear young lady. Let me have charge of your money until to-morrow when I will hand it over to you again; and if you will permit me I will escort you to Nice and see it placed in safe custody.

Somehow or other this speech makes me feel suspicious. I ... reposed every confidence in the old Bear hitherto; but now I am filled with doubt with regard to the honesty of his intentions. After all, I know nothing of him, and the apparent interest he takes in me, and his solicitude for the safety of my money may very possibly be only a cloak to conceal some felonious intent. No, the money is safer with me than with anybody else.

"It is quite too kind of you, I say, "offering to put yourself to so much trouble, but I assure you that the money will be quite safe with me. I always lock my door at night and I am certain that no one is in the least likely to rob me

"Be it so, dear Madame Despard," he answers, "but recollect that I warned you."

He leaves me on the top of the steps at the hotel, and I must confess that at first I am troubled with an uneasy misgiving, but that soon passes away and I go to bed

Félice has heard of my good fortune, and although she does not know the enormous sum I have won, guesses that it is something considerable, and congratulates me effusively.

The reaction has now set in, and I feel worn and tired from the anxiety, excitement, and the tension of the nerves to which I have been subjected, so I soon dismiss her and, having carefully locked up my money in my dressing-case and my dressing-case in the chest of drawers, I put the keys under my pillow and jump into bed. Although I am so fatigued, yet somehow or other I find that I cannot sleep. I light the candles and begin to read thro de Maupassant's "Une Vie," which is too interesting and exciting to help me to court any success the God of Slumber, and so I turn to Henri Greville's "L'Ingénue," which is dull and stupid enough to speedily effect the object I have in view. But it is all to no purpose. Sleep I cannot. Well, there is nothing for it but my dear chloral; and so, helping myself to a good dose, I drink violently, and, in a few minutes, I leave the whole of the officials of the hotel in my room. Some dozen individuals go as many different explanations; the manager expresses regret that I did not leave the money with him, and from his manner appears to doubt whether I have lost it at all. At least, that is the impression he conveys to my mind. However, there is nothing that can be done, and after a time they all leave me. Félice, who is in floods of tears, attempts to comfort me between her sobs, but this has only the effect of irritating me still more, and I soon send her away. I go down stairs, and almost the first person I meet is Algy Balfour. He has heard the news, and bothers me with fifty stupid questions and as many idiotic suggestions. Bored to death, I get rid of him by begging him to lose no time and to leave no stone unturned, in endeavoring to trace the money. He asks the amount, but there I equivocate, as I don't wish him to know as much as you, my diary, and I am quite aware that he can do so earthly good, and that I serve no good purpose by supplying him with the exact facts.

Then he goes, and, cursing my fate, I walk quietly down towards the town of Monaco. I have not got far before I see a well known figure coming in my direction. Yes, it is the Russian. I wonder if he can be of any use in this awful emergency.

"Well, Madame Despard—not gone over to Nice with your money?"

"For the best reason in the world—I have no money to go with. I have been robbed of every cent."

"I am not in the least surprised, madame; it is exactly what I foresaw. You will do me the justice to say that it is precisely what I foretold"

How maddening it is after a shock of this description for a person to preach "I told you so!"

"Yes; you were certainly a true prophet of evil," I say, sharply.

"Well, now I will be a prophet of good. I prophesy that you will recover your money."

"Do you really think that there is the least chance?" I ask, regaining some slight hope from his positive manner.

"I do, he says, "and I will assist you."

"But how can you help me? and what experience have you in such matters?"

"I have had some slight experience," he replies "I am the head of the Russian secret police."

"Head of the Russian secret police!" exclaim "That is the last thing I should have taken you for. And yet why not? Ever since I met you I have been racking my brain with fruitless conjectures as to your individuality. You have now solved the riddle, and at a singularly opportune moment. I have the utmost faith in your

power to assist me ... I do rashly believe in you.

"You flatter me, Madame Despard," he says, all that he answers.

"It is too cruel to make such a strike, I go on ... and then to lose the fruit of one's marvellous fortune. It is once in a million of chance as I did last night ... I played like a true gambler, and boldly backed my luck, and was, as I deserved to be rewarded for my courage and now to lose all—it is too screwing"

"It will teach you a lesson, Madame Despard' replies the Russian, "one that is, not to imagine that you can go through this world independent of all assistance Now I placed my services at your disposal last night, but you would not avail your self of them, and you see the terrible result Self-dependence is not a bad attribute, but it may be carried too far. You are a most intelligent woman: you have great powers of intuition You ought to have been able to have seen that I was to be trusted"

"My dear friend, I know that I ought; but forgive me, and help me if you can. Surely I have been sufficiently punished

"I think you have, my dear lady," he says "here is your money'"

Then he produces at ast pocket-book, and in it are my lost bank-notes

"Count them," he says, "and tell me if they are correct."

I do so mechanically, and reply in the affirmative I am almost speechless with surprise and excitement, but oh, so glad! It is almost worth while to have gone through the agony of the loss to experience the joy of the restoration. When I am myself again, and have sufficiently recovered from the shock and strain on my nerves, I ask for an explanation

"How does it signify, dear Madame Despard, in what way you have again become the mistress of your little fortune? There is the fact, and you are only to be congratulated.'

"Yes, I know; but think of my curiosity. You, who have been such a benefactor, will, I am sure, add to the vast obligation under which you have placed me by telling me how you have so wonderfully come to my rescue."

"I have possibly been your benefactor at any rate, that has been my intention," he replies "but in a way that you little imagine. You wish to know how, in spite of all your precautions, your money was abstracted last night, and how it has been recovered by me? "Yes!"

"The latter portion of your inquiry is solved by my answer to the former. I gave orders for your apartment to be visited last night, and your property has always remained in my charge."

"How dare you do such a thing? How dare you play such a cruel practical joke on me?" I say, justly indignant.

"Pray calm yourself, charming Madame Despard," answers the old Russian, coolly; it was all done for your good. I merely wanted to show you in a practical form the power that we fellows possess, and that for an important object."

"And the object?"

"Merely that I want you to join our ranks It will be a good thing for us and a good thing for you. I am not a philanthropist. I am not actuated solely by a desire to benefit you, but I fully recognize the value of the services of a woman of your type, and I want to secure them'

"I could not entertain such a proposition for a single instant," I reply.

"Not if it was made very tempting!"

"Under no circumstances could I do so"

"Reflect; there is no hurry for your decision.

"If I reflected until Doomsday, my decision would be the same. No, no, no!"

There is nothing the least derogatory in accepting such a position," he argues. "Many members of our order belong to many individuals with historical names, are enrolled in our fraternity Do as I ask, and existence will at last have some interest for you. Your life is being wasted. You are capable of great things, and should like to assist in moulding your destiny."

"I am quite content with things as they are," I answer; "I have had quite enough intrigue in the world, and all I want now is quiet and peace of mind '

"How little you know yourself!" he says. "Imagine you tolerating a bourgeois existence for six months. I could as well imagine a hawk mating with a dove, a cat with a mouse."

"It is useless saying anything more about it," I reply. "My mind is made up."

"You will alter your mind one day," he says, "and then you had better write to me. This will always find me," he continues, giving me a card with an address at St. Petersburg on it.

I take it and bid him good-by Then I make my way to the station as quickly as possible, and take the train to Nice, where I deposit my money with a banker with instructions to remit it to England. I am not going to give Monsieur Blanc's successors the chance of getting it back from me. I meet Algy at the Nice Station when I am returning to Monte Carlo He appears rather cool in his manner, and so I treat him with corresponding disdain He asks why I have come over to Nice, and I tell him. He questions me most minutely with reference to the recovery of my money, but I merely say that the police have succeeded in tracing it and restoring it to me.

I don't want Algy to know too much about my old Russian. Poor Algy is very unsuspicious, and accepts all my statements with a faith that is positively touching He warms a little before we reach Monte Carlo, and we arrange to dine at eight in the restaurant of the Hôtel de Paris.

It is past that hour when we walk into the room, and, large as it is, every table seems crowded I make up my mind I finds us a place, and a ... I notice. It is indeed a strange mixture there is one of those women elbowing a money-lender a tout ...

dining with a peer, my old Russian did his friend the Ambassador and a lot of genteous nous of all tongues, nations and languages, people with reputations and people without, a babel of voices chiefly discussing the recent successes and failures at the tables and the plans and systems for breaking the bank, and there is good Heavens—at the table just behind me, with beaming countenance and eyes full of mischief, the man I least of all wished to meet in Monte Carlo the man of all others that is expedient for me to avoid at any rate for the present al though I am dying to speak to him Yes, there is no mistaking him—it is Lord Adolpho Daysey'

There is no doubt about it It is Lord Adolpho Daysey, and no other man 'as large as life and twice as natural And I do think that an apparition of his Satanic Majesty himself, horns, hoofs, brimstone and all, would be a less perturbing sight to me just now than the presence of the extremely handsome young aristocrat at yonder table

I do not mean to say that the impression his unexpected appearance produces upon me is wholly disagreeable Far from it. I have already confessed to you, my old gossip, that I conceived a sort of sneaking kindness for the "noble bird at first sight, despite myself Under other circumstances I should be delighted to see him If Algy Balfour were not here. I should most undoubtedly afford him every opportunity of making acquaintance with me But Algy is here, and there is no knowing what Lord Dolly might not be able to let out, and there certainly is no knowing how Algy might take the information For I expect that Algy has under his blasé exterior a very hot temper of his own; and I quite believe that after having been jilted so cruelly (as he thinks), by Miss Vyse, he would not hesitate to throw aside Lena Despard like a rotten apple if he chanced to find anything wrong at the core. My role with him is that of the faithful friend who can sympathize with his troubles, having herself been hardly dealt with. Let him but suspect one-quarter of the truth, and my chance with him is ruined for ever "There is many a slip between the cup and the lip" I know; but it would be cruel indeed to have got the tempting cup so near one's dry lips, and to have it snatched away just as one opened them to drink. Is it not Shakespeare who says in one place, "He ten times pines that pines beholding food," and in another, "Tis double death to drown in ken of shore? Well, then, there's my sentiments, and a great deal better put than people talk now-a-days.

All this flits through my mind in the space of about a second. It takes me just a second to deliberate as to whether I shall boldly accept Lord Dolly's challenge and acknowledge his acquaintance, or whether I shall brave his wrath and look at him as if I had never seen him before. But Algy has caught sight of him.

"Do you know that fellow?" he says at last, fumbling for his eye-glass, which he always losing; "he is staring at you as if he expected you to bow to him."

"Oh, is he? I answer, carelessly fanning myself, and lying back in my chair with easy coolness. "The face is familiar enough to me—I suppose I have seen him in the Park, or Hurlingham, or somewhere; but I am quite sure I don't know the man's name."

Algy has found his glass by this time, and is fixing it in his eye, preparatory to glaring at his compatriot in the aggressive way which Englishmen affect in looking at each other. It is certainly not so offensive as the withering contempt with which they snub a foreigner; but it is decidedly hostile, nevertheless.

"Why, it's Dolly Daysey," he exclaims "I met him at Cowes last August aboard old Hornblower's yacht. Don't you know him? Most people do, I fancy '

I proceed to deny the soft impeachment, and this time with some vigor, for I notice that Algy has nodded to my dangerous admirer My well meant efforts are, however, in vain The astute Dolly has seized upon his opportunity, and is sending his way towards us through the crowded tables.

"Hullo, Balfour!" he cries heartily "Whoever would have thought of finding you here, so early in the season?"

And he nearly shakes Algy's hand off, as if Algy were his best friend, and he were meeting him again after an absence of ten years at the very least.

"I might return the compliment I think," says Algy, extricating his hand and smoothing it down. "Thought you went in for nothing but hunting, you know. You ought to be at Melton Mowbray, or somewhere like that, by rights."

"Why on earth do men nearly always say "huntin'" and "yachtin'," I wonder? They don't talk of somethin'" and "nothin'," or complain of a horse's "kickin'," or praise a partner's "valsin". But I an "dapcin'".

"I don't know where I ought to be," laughs Dolly. "I only know that I'm precious glad I'm here, as I understand it's freezing hard in the shires. And I may add"—looking straight into my eyes—"that I am all the gladder, as I fancy I have the pleasure of this lady's acquaintance."

Algy, who has already repented his ill-advised nod, frowns and shakes his head "She says she don't know you," he whispers gruffly.

"Introduce me, then," whispers Dolly, persistently

"Perhaps she wouldn't like it' returns Algy, getting quite annoyed "Better wait till after dinner. Well, good-by for the present We can't stop whispering here, you know."

All this time I am sipping at my champagne, and nibbling at some chestnut ice, with the greatest "coolth." I am all over, under whose legs he crawls Snobbery and flunkeydom will endure as long as social inequality exists, but it is a dead weight against us, which cannot resist the Archimedean lever of Socialism, destined to overturn this rotten society, and bury all such refuse beneath the debris.

SNOBS AND FLUNKEYS.

INGRAINED SNOBBERY AND TOADYISM THE GREATEST OBSTACLE TO PROGRESS

The Result of Social Inequality is to Breed Grovellers and Mammon Worshippers

(Rose. Watt in Labour Leader.)

The apostles of culture have obstacles to surmount in gaining converts to Social ism, even greater than ignorance and prejudice. The one may be to overcome the other expelled; but there are qualities so ingrained in the souls of a great mass of our fellowmen that they are ineradicable at least in the present generation, and they render the possessors invulnerable to our arguments, and secure against conviction of the righteousness of our claims Snobbery and flunkeydom are more prevalent here than among any other people of all the nations of the earth Matthew Arnold points out that our class distinctions have materialized the upper class, vulgarized the middle class and brutalized the lower class It is certain that they have engendered a race of

SNOBS AND FLUNKEYS.

To preach equality to them ... to throw pearls before swine grubbing for cabbage stumps To talk about universal brotherhood to the snob is to ask the man who, as Thackeray defines him, "meanly admires mean things," to accommodate to his ... pot mental capacity a quart measure of wisdom. The task of the Socialist lecturer is hard enough when he sets himself to instil into a street corner audience, or a middle class debating society, with our principles, but he would break his heart over the futile task if he had to preach to an audience of powdered and knee-breeched flunkeys gathered from the precincts of Park lane But these, whose garb proclaims their office, are no worse than the crowd of flunkeys who wear no uniform, but are hangers-on to the skirts of the well-to-do classes, and make a living by pandering to their wants. The average Howell and James young man, the city clerk masher who submits to be bullied by his superior, but takes his revenge by bullying the lodging-house slavey, are but types of the flunkey class repeated in various personalities They do not follow the apostolic precept "Honor all men," but they hold in the greatest respect those who metaphorically kick them downstairs. Such they regard as

"REAL GENTLEMEN,"

and to gain in a minor degree the same distinction for themselves they bully and unlucky wight who may chance to be dependent on their favor. The snob abounds everywhere, in all classes. You find him at the fashionable garden party, or "drum" in the same majority as at Roaherville Gardens or the Crystal Palace on Bank Holiday, though he proclaims his presence less blatantly at one place than at the other. He is to be found at the universities and in club-land in as great abundance as in Hoxton bar-parlors or Ratcliffe evening hops. He's the mean-souled creature who admires mean things, and is incapable of raising his thoughts to any higher ideal—though it may be a different one—than that of the beggar in rags, plenty to eat and drink, and a comfort able house to live in

Every man has his ideal, and it is the business of the Socialist, who is the missionary of culture, not the kind understood by those who pronounce it "culchaw," to waken men to the consciousness of some worthy ideal, and to act before them

TRUE AND LOFTY STANDARDS

Culture means the "educing or drawing forth all that is potentially in a man," the training all the worthy and capable tissues of his being to the highest pitch, and directing them to their true ends It is doubtful whether there is anything potentially in the snob or the flunkey worth educing If the Sermon on the Mount had been preached to such as these, sniggers and ribald jests are all it would have provoked. The Socialist religion is a broad one, and he who learns and takes to heart its creed, gains culture, not of the sham sort, as evidence there is in plenty. What potentiality unsuspected by any, unsuspected by the man himself, has been drawn forth from many of those who have enlisted in our ranks, whose thoughts have been raised to the highest of all—to the Socialist ideal. But when we consider the elements which go to make up society to-day, we recognize that while the old order endures culture cannot be general; for this we must wait the realization of what we strive for. In the meantime it is foolish to complain that we gain recruits by tens and twenties, instead of hundreds and thousands, that our active force is so small It will prove strong enough to accomplish its task. You cannot make a silk purse

OUT OF A SOW'S EAR.

You cannot transform the snob or the flunkey into a Socialist. We are not organizing a buccaneering expedition, we have nothing to offer those who sell their services. Those who join us must be actuated by something of the spirit of the old Crusaders But they went forth to win from the Paynim the sepulchre of the founder of their faith. We go forth to win good life, not for ourselves but for those who come after us, in the world our deeds will have founded. In such enterprise how can these have part the snob whose cult is "getting on," who respects only those who have "got on"; the flunkey, who creeps about the world, a Lilliputian to whom every rich man is a Gulliver, under whose legs he crawls Snobbery and flunkeydom will endure as long as social inequality exists, but it is a dead weight against us, which cannot resist the Archimedean lever of Socialism, destined to overturn this rotten society, and bury all such refuse beneath the debris

(To be continued)