

# UNCLE DICK;

Or, The Result of Diplomacy and Tact.

## CHAPTER I.—(Cont'd).

Observation was a trick of Masters' trade. The practice of it enabled him to paint a picture in a paragraph. What he saw in one glimpse of Miss Mivvins' face was eloquence itself. But of that gentle, outward-going radiance in her eyes the merest layman would have been sentient. It was the kind of which one felt even a blind man must be conscious.

Details appealed to Masters' just then. He happened to be engaged at the moment on the description of a heroine. When he saw Miss Mivvins his difficulty about shaping the book-woman vanished. In flesh and blood she stood before him. All he needed was to describe what he saw; she would fit in all respects. Save her name. He was not particularly struck with that.

## CHAPTER II.

Proverbially women love men's approbation. Something of the feeling within him must have evidenced itself to Masters' eyes. His attentive scrutiny—despite all there was of respect in it—did not, apparently, please Miss Mivvins. Possibly, she was inclined to consider his admiration rudeness. Anyway she called—

"Come, Gracie!" Taking the child's little hand in her own neatly gloved one as she spoke, the woman turned, evidently intent on walking back in the direction whence she had come.

That brought Masters to his feet in a moment—cap in hand, and apology in mouth. Full of crudities as was his character, he possessed an instinctive courtesy. In all the arrangements for his breaches of Society's unwritten laws, impoliteness had never figured. He spoke; said—

"Pray do not let me drive you away! Possession may be nine points of the law, but we may consider ourselves beyond the pale of its practise here. If, as I hear—from lips the truth of which it would be absurd to doubt—that this is considered your seat—his smile was not an unpleasing one—"I should never forgive myself if trespass of mine interfered with the owner's use of it."

"Is that pen you are using," inquired Gracie suddenly, a propos of nothing, "one of those you put the ink in at the wrong end, and trickle it out of the other?"

A softness blended with the smile of Masters' face, merged into that kindly expression of the strong for the weak. It was the successful catching of just such tenderness which made Landseer's name figure so prominently in the world of Art. As the author looked down at the mite from his six-foot altitude, the look on his face was an irresistible reminder of a St. Bernard's kindness to a toy terrier.

"You have accurately described it, little woman," he answered. "But it does not always trickle when you want it to—though it generally does when you don't."

The child looked mystified; evidently deemed further explanation necessary. Miss Mivvins was still standing, waiting to go. Masters hesitated; looked from one to the other. Politeness made him say—

"I am leaving—pray be seated." But the woman saw through that. Would have been very high up the fool grade indeed had she failed to do so. It really was quite too transparent an utterance. When truth is sacrificed on the altar of politeness the ceremony needs skill, otherwise the lie becomes ever more offensive than the act it was to cover.

His little speech induced her to take a step forward; made her say—

"Oh, no! Do not let me drive you away!" She spoke impulsively; hurriedly. Masters thought with everything in the tone that was desirable in a woman's voice. He smiled as he expostulated—

"But you remember, surely—it is not many moments ago—you were quite willing to allow me to drive you away."

Then she smiled too. Smiles which brought into play mouth and eyes and the dimples in her cheeks. From his own face the gravity—some people called it austerity—had already departed. There was

a peculiarly softening influence about Miss Mivvins. Perhaps his own relaxing was the result of that.

"It is a long seat." He indicated its measurement with a sweep of his hand as he spoke; continued—

"Let its length be our way out of the difficulty—it is a long lane that has no turning. How will it be if we make it large enough for both?"

It was a tentative sort of invitation. An invisible olive branch to which her hand went out. Again she smiled. A moment's hesitation—then seated herself.

From a bag depending by silken cords from her wrist she drew a book. Having given the little girl sundry directions as to the assumption of preternatural virtue, the woman commenced to read.

Masters resumed his place at the other end of the seat. Had book in hand too; manuscript book. He had come out with intent to write; told himself that fulfilment was necessary. But he had Grace to reckon with.

The sharp eyes of that four-year-old little maid were furtively fixed on the magic pen. She was trying hard to fulfil the injunction—to be good—from the adult standpoint. But gradually the admonition was fading from her mind—she was very human.

After a while—a courage-summoning period—the little hands were laced behind her, and boldly facing the owner of the attraction, the little one addressed him, in a kind of I dare you voice—

"I could write with a pen like that!" For a second time the child's voice brought the man's attention away from his work.

"Could you?" He smiled as he spoke. Looked up from his book as he did so. Then infusing a note of doubt in his voice enquired—

"Are you sure?" "Y—yes. Quite!" Then, as an afterthought, possibly by way of redemption of the hesitation, the child continued—

"If I had one!" Finding her first venture had not roused the lion, but fearing him a little still, she went on defiantly—

"I saw a man fill one once!" Such a statement as that surely could not fail to crush a mere user of the pen! Seeing that astonishment was expected of him Masters assumed an appropriate look of surprise. His wearing of it pleased her mightily.

"Perhaps," he said, "you would like to make quite sure you could write with one, eh? Would you like to try with this?"

The blue eyes brightened; she was at his side in a moment. Shyness is readily overcome when our summers have not numbered five. Trustfulness at that age has rarely been shocked.

Therein, perhaps, lay the secret of the attraction children had for Masters—the sweetness of their suspicionless existence. Viewed from the standpoint of the after life, when—if we act up to the anxieties of the world we live in—we trust no man, it is apt to brush across us as refreshingly as a gust of country air.

Turning the leaves of his book till he came to a blank page, Masters twisted and rested the cover on his knee. So the open leaf was level with the intending-eyes-sparkling-with-excitement-writer. Then he gave the child his pen.

She drew a capital G—a bright little point of tongue protruding the while. The head, too, seemed to follow the movements of the hand. Her intent was plain—to write her own name.

That was compassed. It took a little time—entailed a huge expenditure of concentrated energy—but she got through with it at last. There figured on the paper the words—

Gracie Seton-Carr.

The child's glance came off the page; she moved away a pace. Looked up into his eyes, her own flashing like diamonds. Such little things please in the time of happiness when we are little ourselves. After drawing a long breath she ejaculated triumphantly—

"There!"

Once more Masters gladdened the

little one, by acting as he was expected to act. No man on that coast could have worn a larger-sized look of astonishment; he cried—

"Won—der—ful!" A clapping of hands in her glee, and the child danced along to the other end of the seat.

"I've written my name with one of those funny squitter pens, Miss Mivvins! What do you think of that?"

"I think you have a funny way of keeping your word, Gracie. You professed anxiety to finish your castle on the sands, yet you are spending your time on the wall!"

"Oh-h-h!"—prolonged and drawn out—"I had forgotten all about it!" Attention diverted from the pen, the child ran down the steps on to the beach. A few minutes after, Masters, looking up, saw her busily at work with a spade and pail. The implements had evidently been left there in the morning.

That rather proved the excellence of the estimate the author had made of Wivernsea out of the season. Castle builders could leave their tools uncared for and find them when they returned. Not because of a superabundance of honesty around; rather because of the lack of thieves.

The castle creator continued her work; the pail-shaped battlements increased in number. She handled bucket and spade with the same earnestness, eagerness and engrossment with which she had fingered the pen.

Those were methods which appealed to the story-creator. But just now as he was not working with his own accustomed engrossment, eagerness and earnestness. A disturbing element had crept in.

From time to time he glanced towards the other end of the seat. There the disturbing element lay—or rather sat. It seemed that there was something magnetic about that presence there. He experienced a difficulty in keeping his eyes away. Noting the neatness of the dress worn by the woman, he could not fail to note too its sombre hue—mourning evidently. His lively imagination was busily at work in a moment.

For him to weave a complete story with such material, was an easy task. A pretty girl occupied the stellar part in it. He portrayed her as a motherless girl forced to face a hard, cold world. Depicted her seeking a living in it as a governess.

That imagination of his had a habit of running away with him. Perhaps that was a reason why his fiction had so good a run. His books were mostly all of the many-editions kind. So, neglecting his own story for fiction of another kind, the time came of the going down of the sun. The tint of the vastly-deep changed; the sea grew greyer. His heroine presumptively closed her book and rose; cried—

"Gracie!" Seeing that the child's attention had been attracted, she turned, bowing slightly, smilingly wished Masters—

"Good-day!" From the sands, the little girl waved a vigorous cumbered-with-bucket-and-spade good-bye to him. She evidently preferred jumping the breakwaters on the way home to the more easy path of the sea wall. The two passed altogether from the author's sight. Not altogether from his mind.

Good-day! Yes, he felt it had been—distinctly good. Till he looked at clean pages, where writing should have been. Even then, despite the unfinished chapter, he made no alteration in his verdict. It had been a good day.

(To be Continued.)

## HE KEPT AT IT.

A gentlemanly-looking pedler entered a business man's office and coughed slightly to attract attention. The occupant of the office kept at his work until he reached a convenient stopping-place, and then turned abruptly to his caller.

"Well," he asked, "what can I do for you?"

"I am introducing," the pedler began, "a patent electric hair-brush—"

"What do I want with a hair-brush?" growled the business man. "Can't you see I'm bald?"

"Your lady, perhaps—"

"Bald, too, except when she's dressed up."

"Yes, sir. But you may have at home a little child—"

"We have. It's one month old and quite bald."

"Of course, at that age," said the pedler. "But," he persisted, "may-be you keep a dog?"

"We do," said the business man. "A hairless Chinese dog." The pedler dived into another pocket.

"Allow me," he said, "to show you the latest thing in fly-paper."

## LIONS TURN MAN EATERS

### HUNGER MAKES THEM PREY ON AFRICAN NATIVES.

#### Scourge in British Colony of Nyasaland Due the Scarcity of Game.

A new terror has befallen some of the districts of Nyasaland, the British colony lying along the western shore of Lake Nyasa. In this region game has never been plentiful and the supply has been still further depleted by excessive hunting in the last few years. The result is that the natural food of lions is becoming scarce and they have been driven by hunger to prey upon the natives.

Fortunately lions are not so numerous there as they are in British East Africa. But the natives are in terror, owing to the fact that the animals now look upon them as an excellent source of food supply. The evil at present is greatest in the district which lies between the Government stations of Ngara and Dowa in the high country west of Lake Nyasa.

In this locality during the last year the lions have become a scourge. These natives have surrounded all their villages with stockades at least fifteen feet high, the tops of which are thickly woven with thorns.

These precautions seem to afford no security. Lions have repeatedly climbed over the stockades.

#### BROKEN INTO THE HUTS,

usually by tearing away the roof thatch, and carried off natives. Even those not attacked are usually too terrorstricken to offer resistance.

A party of whites travelling through this region in May last observed many small villages deserted by their inhabitants, although the huts were still quite new. On asking the reason the answer was invariably the same: "The people could no longer remain. The lions have become so bad that we are all afraid we will be killed."

At one village three women had been killed and eaten by these animals; at another a man and two girls, and so on.

The lions that are committing these ravages are believed to have been driven to prey upon human beings only by hunger, for man-eating lions have not often terrorized this region. Most lions are not the ferocious beasts they have been thought to be. They run off into the jungle at the sight of a human being and never attack a man unless wounded or hunted. But with the man-eating lion it is different. He lies in hiding all day, and at night fires, guns and noise will not keep him off. He springs into

#### A GROUP OF NATIVES

and carries one off before the others have time to make resistance.

He enters tents without fear, clawing away the fastenings. When the man eaters attacked the laborers on the Uganda railroad everybody built platforms and slept on them at least twenty feet from the ground.

All that is necessary to turn an ordinary lion into one of the man-eating sort is for him to acquire a taste for human flesh. He may first feed on the remains of a human body that a man eater has left and as soon as he learns that the human kind is easy to kill he is likely to attack men, women or children in preference to any of the game that has been his food. Then he becomes a man eater, a terrible evil.

This is the gravest feature in the present situation in Nyasaland. The lions are being turned into man eaters. Of course this state of affairs has incited the colonial authorities to make every effort to destroy the lions.

## RUSSIAN EGGS.

France has always been a great producer of poultry and eggs, but lately millions of eggs have been imported from other countries, especially for consumption in Paris. Of these importations by far the largest proportion comes from Russia. In 1907 about 9,000,000 pounds of Russian eggs were eaten in Paris. Austria-Hungary in the same year furnished only about 1,200,000 pounds, and other countries less. Among these Egypt contributed 250,000 pounds.

## UNPROFITABLE.

Kind Old Lady—Why, my dear little boy, what is the use of crying like that?

Little Boy—Taint no use. I've been cryin' like this all mornin' an' nobody ain't give me a cent.

# The Farm

## SUGGESTION FOR BUTTER-MAKERS.

Butter-making is the important thing in dairying in the United States. While a great deal of attention has been given to this branch of dairying in that country there are many complaints as to the quality of butter produced. Many suggestions for improvement have been made. One of them is that butter-makers should organize and get together more than they do. Mr. C. W. Polton of Wisconsin, writing to the Chicago Dairy Produce, on this point says:

"It is a well known fact that we are not making as good butter as we did ten years ago and who is to blame? I say the buttermakers, why? Because they are not organized. There should be a buttermakers' association in every county that would get together as often as twice a year and make rules and each one positively refuse to take cream more than three days old, winter and summer.

"My rule has been three times a week in summer and twice a week in winter, but my experience has been that I can make better butter from cream delivered twice a week in summer than I can from cream delivered twice a week in winter. In summer the cream is usually cooled in water and kept where the air is fresh; but in winter it is left where it is most likely not to freeze, but if it does freeze it is taken to the kitchen stove and thawed out before being taken to the creamery.

"Four of my patrons quit and took their cream to a neighboring creamery where they could go once a week, but they got dissatisfied and wanted to know if I would take their cream twice a week if they returned. I declined, and they came back bringing their cream three times a week until we had the first cool night and since then I have seen them but twice a week.

"We often hear of certain cows that do not give enough butterfat to pay for their feed and I believe the time will come when butter will be so cheap that the best cows will not pay, and the farmers will be forced out of the dairy business, and the buttermaker looking for a job in some other line of work, unless we get together and correct our faults."

## POULTRY NOTES.

Busy hens are not only the best egg producers; but their eggs show the best fertility. In order to keep them at work strow the floor of the pen with hay or straw and scatter the grain in this.

Another word about the chicks in regard to early roosting. Get them to roost as early as possible. Do not make rough roosting poles. The smoother they are the easier it is to keep them free from lice.

Chickens cannot be healthy that are cuddled up in a tiny bit of a brood coop, sweltering in the heat of the atmosphere, as well as that of their own bodies. Nothing will or twice a week, but they get dissatisfied.

Given good care, just sensible care, as common sense will ordinarily dictate poultry will return a good profit on the time and money expended thereon. Neglected, they will produce nothing but loss and disappointment, as they should.

Good layers will always be found among the hustlers. If they are active they are almost invariably healthy. Exercise creates in them an appetite, develops bone and muscle, stimulates healthy circulation and promotes digestion.

Make arrangements for fattening all birds, either cockerels or old hens, before they are marketed. If you have not a feeding crate or two, rig up an old packing box, or better still have a good solid crate which will last you for years.

Give the fowls plenty of fresh water. It is surprising how much fowls will drink if they have it fresh and where they know right where to find it whenever they want it. This is especially true of the laying hens. Eight times out of ten a hen when coming off the nest after laying will go direct to the water and drink long and deep. This thirst is produced by the muscular effort put forth in delivering eggs. During the effort great combustion takes place to produce the energy, thus depleting the tissues of water. So do not neglect the water.

Potatoes, after being soaked in acids and pressed hard, are now being used for the manufacture of billiard-balls.