

flutter; ambition had already begun its insidious whispers, for the Earl was known to be still a bachelor.

Pauline, who read her aunt so thoroughly, felt the mockery of this maternal deference. She told herself that there was something dreary and horrible about a state of human worldliness which could thus idolize mere rank and place. She knew well enough that so long as Lord Glenartney were not a complete idiot, and so long as his moral character escaped the worst depravity, he would be esteemed a magnificent match for her cousin.

The Earl remained at Sallie's side all through the succeeding act. When the curtain again fell he still remained, while other gentlemen took the places of those now departing. And among these, to her surprise and pleasure, was Ralph Kindelon.

She almost rose as she extended her hand to her friend. A defiant satisfaction had suddenly thrilled her. She pronounced Kindelon's name quite loudly as she presented him to her aunt. Instead of merely bowing to Mrs. Poughkeepsie, Kindelon, with effusive cordiality, put forth his hand. Pauline saw a startled look creep across her aunt's face. The handsome massive-framed Irishman was not clad in evening-dress. He towered above all the other gentlemen; he seemed, as indeed he almost was, like a creature of another species. His advent made an instant sensation, a universal stare was levelled upon him by these sleek devotees of fashion among whom he had the air of pushing his way with a presumptuous geniality. He carried a soft "wide awake" hat in one hand; his clothes were of some dark gray stuff; his neatly but heavily booted feet made dull sounds upon the floor as he now moved backward in search of a chair. There was no possible doubt regarding his perfect self-possession; he had evidently come to remain and to assert himself.

"Who on earth is he?" Mrs. Poughkeepsie found a chance to swiftly whisper in the ear of her niece. There was an absolutely dramatic touch in the agitation which went with her questioning sentence.

Pauline looked steadily at her aunt as she responded: "A very valued friend of mine."

"But, my dear!" faltered Mrs. Poughkeepsie. The fragmentary little vocative conveyed a volume of patrician dismay.

By this time Kindelon had found a chair. He placed it close to Pauline.

"I am so very glad that you discovered me," said Pauline. She spoke in quite loud tones, while everybody listened. Her words had the effect of a distinct challenge, and as such she intended them.

"I am flinging down a gauntlet," she thought, "to snobbery and conservatism. This slight event marks a positive era in my life."

"I saw you from the orchestra," now said Kindelon, in his heartiest tones. "The distance revealed you to me, though I cannot say it lent the least enchantment, for that would surely be impossible." He now looked towards Mrs. Poughkeepsie, without a trace of awe in his mirthful expression. "You must pardon my gallantry, madam," he proceeded. "Your niece and I, though recent friends, are yet old ones. We have crossed the Atlantic together, and that, in the winter season, is a wondrous promoter of intimacy, as you perhaps know. Perhaps Mrs. Varick has already done me the honour of mentioning our acquaintance."

"Not until now," said Mrs. Poughkeepsie, with a smile that had the glitter of ice in it.

IV.

THE orchestra had not yet re-commenced, and the curtain would not re-ascend for at least ten good minutes. A vigorous babble of many voices rose from the many upstairs boxes. In some of these Kindelon's appearance might not have created the least comment. Here it was a veritable bombshell.

The "Poughkeepsie set" was famed for its rigid exclusiveness. Wherever Miss Sallie and her mother went, a little train of courtiers invariably followed them. They always represented an ultra-select circle inside of the larger and still decidedly aristocratic one. Only certain young men ever presumed to approach Sallie at all, and these were truly the darlings of fortune and fashion—young gentlemen of admitted ascendancy, whose attentions would have made an obscure girl rapidly prominent, and who, while often distinguished for admirable manners, always contrived to hover near those who were the sovereign reverse of obscure. They would carry only her bouquets, or those of other girls who belonged to the same special and envied clique; they would "take out in the German" only Sallie and her particular intimates. Bitter jealousies among the contemplating dowers were often a result of this determined eclecticism. "Why is it that my Kate has to put up with so many second-rate men?" would pass with tormenting persistence through the mind of this matron. "Why can't my Caroline get any of the great swells to notice her?" would drearily haunt

another. And between these two distressed ladies there might meanwhile be seated a third whose daughter, for reasons of overwhelming wealth or particular attractiveness, always moved clad in a nimbus of the holy of holies.

Pauline was perfectly well aware that the coming of her friend had seemed an audacity, and that his unconventionally garrulous tongue was now regarded as a greater one. Courtlandt may have told her that the rival factions had cemented their differences and that all society in New York was more democratic than formerly. Still, it was unimaginable that her aunt Cynthia could ever really change her spots. Where she trod there, too, must float the aroma of an individual self-glorification. Pauline was as much delighted by Kindelon's easy daring as by the almost glacial answer of her stately kinswoman; and she at once hastened to say, while looking with a smile at the unembarrassed Kindelon himself:

"I have scarcely had a chance to tell either my aunt or my cousin how good you were to me on the *Bothnia*." Then she lifted her fan, and waved it prettily toward Sallie, "This is my cousin, Miss Poughkeepsie," she went on; she did not wait for the slow accomplishment of Sallie's forced and freezing bow, but at once added: "and here is Lord Glenartney, here Mr. Fyshkille, here Mr. Van Arsdale, here Mr. Hackensack. Now, I think you know all, Mr. Kindelon."

As she ended her little speech she met Mrs. Poughkeepsie's eyes, fixed upon her in placid consternation. Of course this wholesale introduction, among the chance occupants of an opera box, was a most unprecedented violation of usage. But that was precisely Pauline's wish—to violate usage, if she could do it without recourse to any merely vulgar rupture. They had all stared at Ralph Kindelon, had treated him as if he were some curious animal instead of a fellow-creature greatly their own superior, and they should have a chance, now of discovering just how well he could hold his own in their little self-satisfied assemblage.

Kindelon bowed and smiled in every direction. He appeared unconscious that everybody did not bow and smile with just the same reciprocal warmth.

"This is the most luxurious way of enjoying the opera," he exclaimed, with an upward gesture of both hands to indicate the walls of the commodious box. "But, ah! I am afraid that it possesses its drawbacks as well! One would be tempted to talk too much, here—to discountenance the performance. Now, I am an irreclaimable talker, as Mrs. Varick can testify; she has hardly done anything but listen since the beginning of our acquaintance. And yet I should like to feel that I had my tribute of silence always ready for the great musical masters. Among these I rank the Italian composers, whom it has now become fashionable to despise. Pray, Mrs. Poughkeepsie, are you—or is your daughter?—a convert to what they term the new school?"

There was no ignoring the felicitous, rhythmic voice that pronounced these hurried and yet clearly enunciated sentences, unless by means of an insolence so direct and cruel that it would transgress all bounds of civil decency. Mrs. Poughkeepsie was capable of not a little insolence at a pinch; her ramparts were spiked, and could deal no gentle hurts to those who sought anything like the scaling of them. But here the overtures made were alike too suave and too bold. She felt herself in the presence of a novel civility—one that assumed her rebuff to be impossible.

"I have always preferred the Italian music," she now said. "But then my knowledge of the German is limited."

(To be continued.)

READINGS FROM NEW BOOKS.

AN AGITATOR.

MR. O'DOOLY can hardly remember the time when he was not a conspirator. Even as a boy he has done his scout duty by watching the outgoing and return of the patrol from the police barracks, and reporting "all clear" for the men who, from time to time, struck a blow for Ireland. On that wild, wet night, long years ago, when Constable Davis, of the Irish Constabulary, returned to the barracks, accompanied by the two sub-constables, with whom he had plodded along the roads and into the by-lanes for four hours, and duly entered in his patrol-books that he had found everything quiet, he would not have gone to rest so free from care had he seen little Martin Dooly start away from the shelter of the neighbouring hedge, under which he had patiently waited, blowing upon his half-frozen fingers to chase away the pain that made each finger-nail feel like red-hot iron, until the cautious challenge from the barrack guard was followed by the opening of the door, and he saw in the glare of light the three drenched figures of the patrol re-enter the barracks. Next morning when the report reached the constable that Michael Traynor was forcibly taken from his house, past which the patrol had gone only three hours before, and