

up briskly and poked him in the ribs, roaring out, "How do, Chawls Augustus?" And then, as it was raining and all that, you might have got off neatly, *juvat ire sub umbras*.—that is, under the umbrella, you know. Now why didn't you quote that waggishly, you classical dog,—hey?"

This pleasantry failed to fathom the depths of Evans' melancholy; but as he thought of Dekker, whom Wiley used to speak of as "a mild, offensive young man," his disconsolate look changed of itself to a wrathful one, which afforded his friend still greater amusement.

"If you'd only stalk across the room, now," he suggested, "and scowl, like Othello! You're black enough in the face already, and I can let you have a superior article in blank verse."

"I'd need blank verse," Evans answered, "to tell what I think of that slim little sap-headed dude!"

"You'll challenge him, of course; pistols for two, coffee for one. I'm not a military man myself—like the flowers that bloom in the spring, tra-la, I've nothing to do with the K's—but I'll act as your second, and try to do my best, you know."

Evans' wrath, however, had not carried him to the point of wishing to blow out young Mr. Dekker's hypothetical brains; indeed, he seemed most angry with himself. We could wish to be able to analyze his feelings, and weigh everything that went to make up his regret for having offended Elsie Fraine; "it were not unprofitable, too," as Tenfeldroch would say, "could we look into Wiley's mind, where, in all likelihood, we should see unexpected things. But I have neither microscope nor skill in its use, and it strikes me now and again that even my spectacles, though an heirloom not to be parted with, and without which I should boggle dreadfully, are not to be trusted at all times. "It may be," Wiley once said to me, *moi qui vous parle*, as we talked together late into the night, "It may be that you think yourself resting in the fairy pavilion of a mid-summer eve, gazing upwards at the moonlit tracery of the tremulous screens that seem hovering over such slender graceful pillars, entwined around with the wreathed flowers that bloom only in fancy,"—and, pleased with the author of all this imagery, he paused to pat himself on the back mentally; "your friend sees you smoking Pace's twist in a long pipe. And you, when you would look through the smoke cloud to your friend, puffing his pipe in the midst, are at a loss to see him as clearly as you could wish, and cannot wipe the perplexity from your spectacles."

"There are faces," he went on, after an interval, "which, like that of a stopped clock, tell you no more than that they are not now betraying the secret workings of their inner mechanism; but even so obstinately reticent a clock as the one that does not move its hands at all, does tell the true hour at least once in the day. Did you ever notice how at that time the blank clock-face takes on a more conscious blankness, not unlike that queer uneasy easiness of expression,—which seems too subtle and fleeting to be transferred to a face on canvas,—by which you can tell that the eyes of a person, who is now perhaps looking another way, have been watching you closely until a moment ago?"

However, we have allowed ourselves to be led away from the metaphor of the spectacles and pipes, by which was meant, no doubt, that it is not such an easy matter, after all, for one person to read from another's face what is passing in his mind. You will doubtless have observed the art with which Wiley introduced pipes and the herb *Nicotiana*; thereby setting aside all question of reading the thoughts that have shelter behind fair brows and bright eyes. This he pronounced immeasurably more difficult than reading a Greek play without the crib.

But the bell of Residence has rung while we have been lost in these ill-timed, aimless musings, and Evans and Wiley have left together. We have missed their talk, and now there is an end of it; for after having dropped into Evans' room for a short time, they go on their way to tea speechless.

The two images were squatting, with complacent ugliness, on the open pages of Evans' Greek lexicon!

## VI

The extremity of dire mishap!

*Comedy of Errors.*

Evans was staggered at the sight of the images, and altogether at a loss to make anything out of their so unaccountable return. But that they had come back to him, and were there staring

him in the face, was not to be denied, however puzzling it might be. He was dumb-founded; and even Wiley admitted that though at all times prepared to explain the obvious and make clear the evident, this was a problem beyond his powers.

After striving vainly for the greater part of the evening to unravel the mystery, Evans gave it up hopelessly. He had now come to regard the images with a sort of uneasy dislike for their uncanny ugliness, and a very unpleasant evening he passed, with his Greek lexicon still open at the same pages, and his other books untouched; after which it is not to be wondered at that, having written the following afternoon on a Greek honour paper, he left the Hall in what is commonly spoken of as "a state of mind." It was the last day of the examinations. "Think of my being plucked," he said gloomily to Wiley, "after my stand last year, and after taking two courses this year!"

The noisy rejoicings in Residence that evening accorded ill with his dull dejection. He sat dismally alone, in continued depression of spirits, and conscious of the change in himself,—for of old he would have lightly thrown it all aside, as something unpleasant and annoying; until now he had been a very Drysdale for mental gymnastics.

On the night the lists were made public his evident wincing under being plucked, as though it were something disgraceful and humiliating, was indeed a source of undisguised wonder to his friends. In Residence, a little *contretemps* of this kind was in those days very far from being generally looked on as bad form.

The following morning—it was now the first week in June—he saw by the papers, where the results of the examinations were given in detail, that Elsie Fraine was starred in History. He had just put down the *World* when Wiley came in, and seemed to find a change for the better.

"You're a great deal more cheerful this morning," he said. "Why, you'd cast merely a slight passing gloom over a small funeral."

"Well," Evans answered, "I'm expecting a letter to-day. I wrote to Elsie Fraine on Monday. You know she left the city after the exams were over."

Wiley said that the morning mail was in. "How did you address the letter?" he asked suddenly.

Evans answered that, with an exaggerated sense of what was fit and proper, he had addressed it to Miss Elizabeth Fraine. "Isn't Elsie short for Elizabeth?" he asked.

"I'm not sure," returned Wiley. "But Elizabeth is her aunt's name, you know."

"Her aunt went with her, I think."

"And you are the old lady's pet aversion," said Wiley, laughing. But Evans had hastened to the janitor's room in great alarm. One of the two letters for him bore, on its corner, the name of the firm from whom he obtained his sartorial habiliments. In reply to several notes, such as this, he had written a few days before, intimating that an immediate settlement of the bill would be attended with great inconvenience to himself. Leaving this then till the last, when he at length tore open the envelope, it was with no great interest, you may be sure.

He groaned and turned pale when he saw it enclosed the letter he had written to Elsie Fraine, so carefully composed, five others having perished before it was evolved, a masterpiece! It was plain now that he had directed the envelope at cross-purposes—and to think that his excuse to his tailor had gone to her!

Four hours of that summer day were to him as an intolerable eternity, while he roamed about desperately, counting the passing minutes until the afternoon mail came in. He seized the one letter addressed to him, and fiercely tore it open.

I do not know (*thus read the letter of the maiden aunt*) whether I owe it to your stupidity or your impertinence, that the enclosed letter was addressed to me.

Though I should properly take no notice of it or of you, I return it. You will please to not favour me with a reply.

ELIZABETH FRaine.

Here was a model of brevity, penned in a prim, angular hand, and like all Gaul of old, divided into three parts!

(*To be continued.*)