

room door opens, and Kathleen comes slowly in, halts directly under the chandelier, where her hostess is standing, and says with a deprecating little gesture, "So sorry Lady Austen; but Sir Charles would show me the birds, though I knew dinner would be waiting."

Every one present thinks, rarely have they seen Kathie look lovelier than to-night. As for Sir Guy, he has but time to be presented, and someone comes and carries her off to dinner.

Pretty Clare Hamilton falls to him; but somehow he fails to appreciate her, after the brilliant vision that sits opposite him, strive as he will, he cannot keep his eyes off her, he is insanely jealous of her neighbor, a handsome young captain of the R. I. R. Kathie is not wholly unconscious of this strange scrutiny, and every gesture was for his benefit.

The gentlemen are not long behind the ladies in the drawing-room to-night, and Sir Guy makes a direct path for the east window whence he catches a glimpse of her silken draperies. "Prenez garde," Sir Guy, danger lurks 'neath those soft glances. They get to be great friends those two; and Dick Austen wonders with a miserable pang what there is about this fair young girl that bewitches all his friends, it seems

"To know her is to love her,
And to love but her forever;
For nature made her what she is
And ne'er made such another."

She is telling Sir Guy about the gay time they are to have on Christmas Eve, when somebody comes up requesting Miss Vane to sing, and pray give us something Irish, says Lady Austen, who is a true daughter of Hibernia; Sir Guy wonders can it be that old song he is listening to, when Kathleen's rich young voice rings out with a world of pathos,

"Ne'er forget, Kathleen, etc. etc."

Forget her! ah; could he? In those few short hours she had already become dearer to him than all else beside.

The last notes have died away, and a little hum of approbation follows; but the voice she is waiting to hear alone is silent and strange to say she felt a thrill of disappointment. If she but knew, his silence was far greater compliment than any words he could have uttered. How those halcyon days slipped by, Kathleen never knew, walking or skating Sir Guy is her constant escort. The girls wondered what had come over their friend, no longer the life of the party; and as for flirting, that was a thing of the past. Did they but know she too was caught in the net!

"Love that hath us in his net
Can he pass, and we forget? Ah! no, no."

Kathleen was in constant fear lest the foolish threat uttered in the ball-room should reach his ears. What will he think of her? Would he pass it over as a girlish jest, or think it a bold unmaidenly scheme? So incessantly did she brood over this, that her manner to Sir Guy underwent a rapid change. Poor fellow, he could not account for it, he only wondered in what he had offended. This cold, haughty young beauty, was indeed a contrast to the bright girl he had learned to love better than himself.

'Tis Christmas Eve, and the inmates of Omberleigh are dressing for the ball, when Miss Vane's maid brings her a few sprays of rare ivy that grows miles from the Manor, attached is Sir Guy's card bearing a few pencilled words, in which he begs Miss Vane if she has any regard for the donor to wear it for his sake.

The guests have nearly all arrived; but some of the house party have not yet put in an appearance. Oh how anxiously Sir Guy Travers watches the door, and when at last he catches a glimpse of Kathleen, his keen anxiety gives away to a sense of unutterable joy.

To-night she is looking peerlessly beautiful in a dress of soft white tulle, her sole ornaments, sprays of sombre ivy. Her altered manner, her fits of coldness are all forgotten in the intoxicating thought that she is wearing his gift. Soon he is bending before her asking for the first waltz, then they are gliding round to the dreamy strains of "Toujours Fidèle." It seems to him like a glimpse of Paradise; but he is brought back to a stern reality when Kathleen thanks him in icy tones for his thoughtfulness in sending the ivy, she tells him it is just what she wished for, and that she had divided it with Gladys Austen. She calmly ignores any sentiment attached to the gift. To him it is a shock; but he determines he will know the reason of this strange manner, and that at once. In rather in unsteady voice, he asks her to accompany him to the conservatory; the divines what is coming—now she thinks of the hour of her triumph, she can show that the foolish speech about winning him was indeed a jest, with a cool nod of assent she takes his arm and they leave the ball-room.

In a voice he strives in vain to render steady, he asks why she has grown so cold, then without waiting for an answer, he pours out a tale of such passionate love and heartfelt tenderness that few could have resisted. But the demon of perversity enters her heart, and with a white face, and drawn lips, she thanks him for the honor, and at the same time begs to decline. She gives no reason for her answer, but every syllable stabs her listener.

Can she ever forget that scene! the dull splash of the fountain, the faint strains of distant music, the white despairing face, and as she turns to meet him, she meets one deep, reproachful glance, that haunts her long after.

Kathleen Vane is undeniably the belle of the ball, and Sir Guy wonders can this siren have any heart, as he sees her the gayest of that gay group. He is not the only one that suffers, for Kathie finds little consolation in the thought that she has sent from her the man she loves as few girls ever love, and for what—a mere nothing—but pride comes to her aid, few could have guessed that her mirth was forced, and of all that brilliant throng she was the most miserable.

Thursday morning she awoke with the feeling that something was wrong. What was it? Yes! she remembers, it is Sir Guy's last day at

Omberleigh. When the others were mourning at breakfast about his speedy departure she alone was silent, and with a feeling akin to despair, she watched the preparations for his journey. Late in the afternoon she stole away to the library, at least she would spare them both the pain of parting. Sir Guy has made his adieux to all, to his host, whom he expects to find in the library. But when he opens the door a different sight from grim Sir Charles Austen meets his eye, by the bright glow of the fire he sees the well-known form of Kathleen, and, as she raises her eyes to gaze at the intruder, he knows they are eloquent with sorrow. His first impulse is to turn and flee; on second thought he approaches the fire to say Good-bye, but somehow he cannot leave her thus; perhaps he takes hope from her averted face. Oh! my darling, he goes on, I cannot live without you, something tells me that you care for me, do not send me from you. He must read his answer in her dewy eyes and quivering lips, for straightway she is in his arms, they do not speak, their happiness is too great for words. But an hour later, when someone in quest of Sir Guy enters the room, their radiant faces tell the tale.

Before the gay party left the Manor, it was known that a rebellion had broken out in the North-West of Canada, and Sir Guy is to cross the Atlantic and aid the brave Canadian volunteers in defeating the rebel leader Riel, and when all is quietness in that lone land, and Louis David a Riel trouble no more, there is to be a brilliant wedding at "Omberleigh" in Surrey, for so Lady Austen wills it, and they are far too grateful for many happy days they have spent there to resist her wishes.

MARIE-LOUISE.

Windsor, N. S.

[FOR THE CRITIC.]

IMPERIAL FEDERATION.

To most people this name conveys but a dim and hazy idea. Who are the advocates of Imperial Federation, and what do they want? are questions which, we doubt not, many a Nova Scotian has asked without getting an answer that left him much the wiser. They are answered in the Christmas Number of THE CRITIC by the Revd. Principal Grant, one of the apostles of this political doctrine, which is not as new as it seems, which was expounded by Howe nearly thirty years ago, and was not even new with Sam Slick twenty years earlier.

"Who, then, are Federationists? All who favor the maintenance of our connection with the Empire, who are willing to do all the duties that are implied in that connection, and who in opposition to those who favor disruption or revolution plead for a closer union than we have at present, a union in which for every privilege there shall be a corresponding responsibility, for every burden and danger a corresponding share of power, and for every right a corresponding duty. Then, the Empire shall have attained to the stable political equilibrium to which the great Federations of Germany, Austro-Hungary and the United States have, in our time, attained after long and longer periods of instability."

What is the meaning of this answer translated into the language of every day life? Many a colonist fought and bled to maintain connection with the mother country—not in those days an empire—who had never heard the term Imperial Federation, and who had never heard of the theory which the name stands for. So that a man might be a friend of British connection and yet not be an Imperial Federalist. The "closer union than we have at present, a union in which for every privilege there shall be a corresponding responsibility, for every burden and danger a corresponding share of power, and for every right a duty," would seem to be a system under which, for some small voice in the management of Imperial affairs, Canada should give up a portion of her present right of self-government and assume her share of the Imperial expenditure upon the army and navy. I do not think that to most practical men this proposal is a very attractive one, and the number of such men in Canada who favor the scheme is small. This cannot be doubted by any one who notices that the leading newspapers of both political parties condemn it, and that independent journals like the *Toronto Week* for once agree with the great party organs.

The first questions naturally asked as to any great political change are, "Who calls for it?" and "What deeply felt public want will it supply?" When we learn that the popular demand is made, and the urgent need felt almost exclusively by a few gentlemen with leisure for political and philosophical speculation, and that the people at large are altogether unaware of any longing for any such change, we can insist that those who ask our support in securing it shall show us clearly its necessity and its advantages. We are told that Federation is the only thing to hinder the coming of independence or annexation at an early day. As for myself I am skeptical as to its necessity for this purpose. We have managed to get along very well on the whole, so far as regards our connection with England, for over a hundred years; although there have been many things that needed improvement. Are we to believe that now, when nearly everything that could cause friction or constraint has been removed, we shall sever ourselves from the mother country unless bound to her by this glittering but weighty and galling chain of Imperial Federation? What would this new system give to England and what to us that she and we have not now? It might give us representation in one or the other of the Imperial Houses of Parliament; but, would such representation be able to deal as satisfactorily with such portions of Canadian business as would be placed within Imperial jurisdiction as our Parliament does now? Clearly not; because the voice of Canada in the Imperial Parliament would be far from strong or potential. And of what special value to England would that representation be? I fail to see. What we want is that England shall not legislate for us ignorantly, as she has often done in the past. If our High Commissioner does his duty,