

UNCLE DICK;

Or, The Result of Diplomacy and Tact.

CHAPTER XVII.

The eastern sky was painted rosy at sunrise; day broke. Still the sleepers slept, and the watcher watched. Never moved he except when need arose to feed the fire. Seven o'clock. Eight o'clock. Then Gracie woke. Gracie, save for weakness, her own bright, clear-headed, intelligent little self. He was once more making up the fire. Turned round at the sound of her voice, to find her sitting up in bed laughing at him.

"Prince Charlie! I'm ashamed of you! You dirty boy! Don't you know what tongs are made for?"

Then she laughed at him again! A faint little laugh though, and so exhaustive that after it she fell back on the pillows, scant of breath.

The laugh aroused the mother, trained by love to awaken at the least sound. She sprang to her feet and hastened to the bedside. When she saw the change for the better in her child, the smile on the little face, thankfulness overwhelmed her.

Never had waking moments been more sweet. It was less like waking than like a dream itself. She hugged Gracie to her bosom; just escaped crying over her.

Masters smilingly humored the child—a little tyranny is a welcome sign in a patient; said, suiting the action to the word—

"Well, I'll use the coal scap, as you object so to my hands."

"Look at your fingers! Isn't he a dirty boy, mamma? I mustn't let him touch my clean nightgown, must I?"

It was a challenge! Masters saw through the ruse. Her desire was that he should make pretence he wanted to catch hold of her. Then she would struggle to escape him. It was a game she was very fond of—he was to catch her after a long while—and then the game would begin all over again. Fearing to excite her, he took no notice of the thrown-down glove; merely remarked—

"Well, you look all the better for your sleep." Added, with a smile: "Both of you."

The mother's heart was too full to speak. Her child was hers once more. Had come back to her from out the Valley of the Shadow of Death. After a long pause she managed to look up at him, tears bedewing her eyes, and inquire—

"Are you?"

"Don't worry about me! I am as right as right can be. Just let me go to your bath room, will you? I shall emerge from it as fresh as the proverbial lark."

"You will stop to breakfast?"

Gracie caught the suggestion in a moment; interposed eagerly—

"Oh, yes, Prince Charlie! You will! Won't you? Have breakfast with me—out of my own tea service."

"Very well. I'll have a bath, and then come and breakfast with you, Gracie—out of your very own cups and saucers and plates. That's understood."

He went to the bath-room. His maternal cold water sponge was a thing he would have missed dreadfully. During his absence, the doctor paid an early morning visit.

Masters was pleased when he returned to the sick room to see the happy look on the mother's face. Gracie was out of danger the doctor had said. Was going on splendidly—thanks, she said, to—

about the room. In ten days, well wrapped up, was playing—literally skipping—on the sun-lit sands. And during the ten days? The author and the mother drifted apart! As the child's convalescence became assured his visits grew less in number; shorter in length.

From visiting three times a day his calls came down to once. His usual hour's visits were curtailed. He stayed but a quarter of that time.

When the child asked a reason, he was busy, he said. But the mother, listening, was not for a moment deceived. Read in his eyes that there had been no removal of his doubt of her. Her pride rose—rose higher and higher and higher by day.

Her struggle was a hard one, to keep the bitter resentful feeling down. She endeavored to stifle it with thought of the gratitude she owed him. But it was hard, terribly hard. She was not of a lachrymose temperament at all, but her eyes often tear-filled when she thought of him.

He was cold to her; grew more so; coldly courteous and reserved. Instinctively he feared his own weakness. Kept so close a guard upon himself, so firm a brake upon his feelings, that intercourse with him became depressing and wearying.

There was no longer the old easy flow of talk; words came with difficulty; conversation was an effort on both sides. Forced conversation is usually a failure.

She saw clearly that but for his love for the child—and that, she knew, was genuine—he would not have come to the house at all. She felt that all the while he spoke to her courteously and politely, he was suspicious of her. She showed nothing of her indignation; that would have been acknowledgment of the hit.

Suspicious of what? she asked herself. Asked not once, but a hundred times a day. Her pride would not allow her to put the question to him; so they drifted further and further apart. To her it seemed as with Ichabod; the glory had departed.

Sorry? She was heart-broken over it. She had not learned to love him; she had cared for him all along. More even than she had known, more than she knew even now. The sweet helpful gentleness of his care for her child when sick, had shown him in a light in which few women would have failed to admire—nay, more than that: to love him.

He was a veritable prince to her; she could have worshipped him. Her soul had gone out to him—his and his to her—so naturally she had scarce noticed his passage. She felt she had known him all her life; so perfectly their thoughts and views seemed to dovetail one another.

There had been no shaping and moulding and rubbing off corners; no making of rough edges to fit evenly; all that is usually the work of time. It is said that there is no soul but somewhere on this crowded earth another soul responds unto its needs. The meeting is still a rarity, but kindly old Time goes on with his everlasting pruning and polishing and planing down to suit mutual requirements.

He has the man with the scythe and hour glass—in his workshop; hundreds and thousands of young couples. He lets them rub along together, Fate having joined them, until the roughnesses are all worn away and it is scarcely noticeable—certainly not by the young people themselves—that they were not expressly made for each other.

The manufactured article produced in that workshop of Old Time is durable and generally gives satisfaction. Looks so much like the real thing that most people want nothing better. Some people prefer it even, take more pride in it.

Besides, the Merchandise Marks Act is not in force in regard to this particular class of goods, so there is not much loss. It all bears the same label and there is no penalty for deceiving the public. It is all marked—hail marked: Love.

Sometimes, however, it happens that two souls come together whom Nature has really designed and moulded each to each. It is fraught with much sweetness, such a meeting; sweetness as of music. The harmonies are so perfect and so pure, it seems no power on Heaven or earth could destroy the enduring melody by a parting note.

The swelling tones would rise and fall and echo, long after the discordance had subsided. Real love is very rare, rarer than gold and diamonds, but it is found sometimes. In out-of-the-way places,

too; wholly unsought, conjoining the hearts of man and woman by the closeness and perfection of their union and coincidence.

She had come to think, and he had thought so, too, that God had framed them so, the one to the other. Fight the idea as she would, in her woman's weakness she thought so still. He, in his manly strength, endeavored to crush the thought as it rose in his bosom. But it was there to crush.

CHAPTER XIX.

When the child had passed all the sign-posts on the road of convalescence had reached perfect health, Masters ceased his visits to the bungalow. His interest in Gracie induced him not to avoid meeting her on the front.

The child was all warmth and affection and love for the man she was going to marry. The mother hid her aching heart behind a smile; a woman's usual veil. It was not what a novelist describes as a sad sweet smile; it had degenerated into an hysterical, jerky, clattering, little laugh.

The weather continued fine; the author prolonged his stay. For that reason—anyway, for his own satisfaction he sat down that as the cause—he stayed on at Wivernsea.

Not a day passed but he met his little sweetheart. Not a day passed but the breach between the man and woman widened. Soon the conventional greeting at meeting and parting to be dreaded by each.

They dared not look into each other's eyes. As hands met for those two brief moments, each involuntarily looked away from the other. Fingers were clasped limply; fell away awkwardly. Heartiness even of the faintest description was lacking in the shake.

One morning he had a letter from his lawyers. It called for his attendance in London; a question of making an affidavit over some copyright infringement. He resolved to catch the fast train up, and so being able to get back by the fast evening train down.

He was at the station early, having enquired to make. A parcel of books sent down to him had, by reason of the railway company's vagaries, not reached him. Those inquiries made and satisfied, he purchased newspapers.

Messrs. Smith and Son occupied a space in the booking office. As he dealt with the juvenile representative of the great Strand firm, he was standing with his back to the ticket pigeon-hole. He was presently startled by hearing a voice he recognized, saying—

"First-class, return, London, please."

He turned round sharply, expecting to see the mistress of Ivy Cottage; he could have sworn to her voice anywhere. A woman plainly dressed, almost shabbily, with a long thick veil, stood purchasing the ticket. She repeated the demand; the ticket seller had not caught the words.

Hearing it a second time, Masters had no shadow of doubt about the voice's owner. There were no two voices like it in the world. But the costume amazed him; could only be explained one way.

Not a pleasant way, either. It was a disguise! Masters felt certain of it. She had always been well, expensively dressed. Now, by reason of that, the change was the more striking.

There were three minutes before the train was due; five minutes passed before it arrived. The shabbily-dressed woman paced the platform. Masters watched her from the waiting room window; five minutes of utter misery.

The station bell rang a second time, the train came in. The veiled woman hurried to a first-class carriage in front of the train. The guard opened a door and she entered one of its compartments. A moment after Masters had entered another.

His purchases at the bookstall lay on the seat beside him all the way to London; he did not read a line of them. For two whole hours he sat stonily looking out of the window, thinking. Thinking as well as the numb feeling of wretchedness and horror holding him would allow.

It was the first really cold day of the approaching winter. With a view to travelling in comfort, Masters had unpacked, and was wearing a long heavy ulster. It changed his appearance altogether. He knew that, and bred of the knowledge, there came a desire to track the woman in the other compartment.

With his coat-collar up, she would not be likely to recognize him. It would be possible to follow her and see what this mysterious disguise and flight to London meant, whether she was really as black as his suspicion painted her, as appearances represented her.

Was it a gentlemanly thing to do? He did not pause to answer his own question. Curiosity, either set at rest or confirm his fears outweighed everything. Any certainty is known.

His mind was quickly made up to follow her. Besides, how could he tell what she might have used of her disguise led to the tracing of such a possibility. Masters was a fertile brain; a dozen such possibilities entered his

mind at once. Disguise very frequently meant danger. If that were the case it was his duty, as a man, to shield her.

He would not fail her—so he urged with himself. A desire to do any particular thing causes us to find reasons for its justification; excellent reason. He had made up his mind to follow her.

(To be continued.)

TROUBLES OF DIPLOMATS

CHILDISH SQUABBLES THAT ALARM NATIONS.

Times When Foreign Ministers Should be Very Discreet in Their Language.

Newspapers are sometimes accused of bringing about wars, but there are instances in which journalists have averted war and steadied Foreign Ministers who had lost their heads.

Some Italians were charged with murder in New Orleans, and a furious mob broke into the gaol and lynched the prisoners. The Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Marquis di Rudini, had just been appointed to the office, and, being new to the delicate business of guiding the ship of State, he steered wildly. He ordered the Italian Ambassador at Washington to demand immediate repatriation, and to threaten that, unless prompt measures were taken, the Italian Fleet would bombard New Orleans.

The London Times correspondent in Rome heard of the affair, and hurried to the Ministry. He pointed out that the threat not only might provoke war, but that the Italian warships could not possibly go to New Orleans, as the Mississippi did not admit ships of their draught. The warning braced the Minister's nerves.

MAD MINISTER'S MENACE.

Probably the most notable of these occasions was the time when the Duc Decazes begged M. de Blowitz, the London Times Paris correspondent, to announce to the British Premier that he would "pay for it"—a plain declaration of war.

The Duke was the French Foreign Minister, and Blowitz with several others had been dining with him, and had gone into the billiard-room.

A lady was playing with the Duke when a Cabinet attache entered with a telegram. The Duke read it. He flushed red, then paled, then wiped his temples, moist with perspiration. The guests stared at him in amazement. Then he lost all self-control. Maddened, he snatched up a billiard-club, snapped it across his knee, and flung the pieces in the air.

He walked quickly, menacingly up to Blowitz.

"Do you know what I have just heard? Lord Derby has bought the Khedive's Suez Canal shares after carefully concealing from me the fact that they were for sale. It is an infamy! It means that Great Britain seizes the Isthmus. I authorize you to say what you say to me—I even beg you to say it—and add that Lord Derby will have to pay for it!"

Muttering "Yes, I swear that he shall pay for it!" the infuriated Minister rushed from the room.

It is, of course, a matter of history that Blowitz did not publish this terrible message, and when the Duke had recovered his equilibrium he had the good sense to thank the journalist.—Pearson's Weekly.

TASMANIAN RICHES.

Mineral Deposits are Money-Producing and Varied.

The mining industry of Tasmania is exceedingly important. From seven shillings to ten shillings a day are the usual wages earned by working miners on the mining fields and boundless opportunities lie within the reach of the persevering prospector. For its size, the island may claim to be the richest country in the world in regard to mineral wealth. Within the space of about thirty years Tasmania, with the population of an English provincial town, has actually produced minerals to the value, according to the latest official figures, of twenty-six million, two hundred and thirty-five thousand, and more than half the quantity has been obtained within the last ten years. The total for the year 1906-7 has been two million, three hundred and thirty-eight thousand, two hundred and fifty-two pounds. The list of minerals worked includes gold, silver, tin, copper, lead, zinc, wolfram, bismuth, iron, coal and asbestos—practically all of the most commercially valuable minerals that the world requires. In tin and copper the island is particularly rich, and the Tasmanian production of the former metal will most likely within the next twenty-five years equal that of the Straits Settlements. Large coal fields and enormous bodies of first-class iron ore are known to exist, but difficulties of transport prevent their utilization. If but a fraction of the British capital invested in Argentina and on the Rand were directed here both shareholders at home and colonists abroad would be equally benefited.—Chambers' Journal.

It is not sufficient to set the vessel containing the cream in the cold air. It must be set in cold water, and frequently stirred, until the temperature is reduced to 60 degrees, or lower. The quicker the cooling, the better for the cream.

I have talked of ripening cream, but it is not necessary to ripen it; sweet cream may be churned, and a mild, creamy-flavored butter produced. My experiments have shown very little, if any greater, loss in the buttermilk from churning sweet cream. The majority of people like the higher aroma and more pronounced flavor obtained by ripening the cream.

To get good butter, the cream should be churned at least twice

a week in summer, and three times in two weeks in winter.

Cream ready for the churn should have a mild, pleasant, acid smell and taste, should pour smooth, velvety and free from lumps, and contain in the neighborhood of 25 per cent. butter-fat, or make about three pounds of butter to the gallon. This, of course, is for farm-dairy butter-making.—Laura Rose, in Farmers' Advocate.

A LIE THAT LOST A FORTUNE.

Some of Our Boys Should Take This Story to Heart.

There has never been, so far as we know, a more remarkable instance of a tangible and yet a fugitive wealth than of a fortune that evaded the grasp of a relative of a friend of the writer's. He was, many years ago, at school at Harrow, England, and returning along the road by the bathing-place to Harrovians "ducker"—politely went to the assistance of a stout farmer on horseback, in difficulties with a gate-lock. He opened the gate, and held it back for the rider to pass.

"Thank you, my boy," said the farmer, one of the wealthy Middlesex graziers who own large tracts of the Harrow and Pinner rich meadow lands. "What may your name be?"

"My name's Green," returned the boy, with an ill-timed burst of the imagination.

"And what is your father?"

"Oh, my father's a cheesemonger," said the smart scholar, chuckling internally at his ready wit, "and he lives in London at the Theobald's Road, rather a small shop, with two steps leading down out of the street."

"I'm very much obliged to you," replied the farmer, by no means—as it afterwards appeared—a man of straw. "You're a capital young chap. I sha'n't forget you."

"Don't," was the scholar's final thrust. "Remember Green, and a cheesemonger in Theobald's Road."

Then up the hill he went, almost as much pleased with himself as if he had been asked to play against Eton at Lord's.

What his feelings may have been when, ten years later, a young gentleman of the name of Green was advertised for, whose father kept a cheesemonger's shop in the Theobald's Road, and who, in return for politely opening a gate at Harrow, in the year 1857, was left a large legacy, a quiet country gentleman, recently deceased—what his feelings were then none of his relatives cared to inquire too closely; but it was observed by all that from that hour the unhappy young man never lost an opportunity of insisting on the incalculable blessings of the most rigid adherence to truth; of the disasters invariably incident to even a momentary deviation from which virtue he himself was a most marked and melancholy example.

For neither was his name Green nor anything approaching it, nor had his father, a quiet country gentleman, ever, even in the remotest fashion, been interested in cheese; indeed, as his son has been heard pathetically to remark, in the smallest quantity it invariably disagreed with him.

BEAT THE POLICEMAN.

A certain policeman on duty at the gates of one of the London docks has the name of being one of the sharpest among his comrades. No person could ever boast of getting any excisable goods, such as tobacco or cigars, out of the dock whilst he was on duty, and he was proud of the fact. If he was offered a bribe he always took it, and had the offender arrested afterwards in the act.

One day, however, a ship arrived from India, and the skipper, a cute, hard-headed Scotsman, came ashore in the evening and proceeded to the gates. Walking up boldly to the policeman, he whispered in his ear, "I've got some rare tobacco and some valuable cigars which the Customs folks have overlooked, and I want to smuggle them out th' morn'g night. It'll be a right, I suppose?" and at the same time slipped half a crown into the policeman's hand. The redoubtable Robert smiled a malignant smile and said it would be all right, and the merry skipper passed out of the gates and went on his way rejoicing.

The next night the skipper was walking boldly out of the dock-gates when he was seized by the policeman and taken into the watch-box, where he was confronted by a sergeant and underwent a thorough search. Much to the officer's chagrin, however, neither tobacco, cigars, nor anything of excisable nature was found on his person, and he asked the skipper what he had done with them.

"Oh!" said the skipper, quite innocently, "I had them on me last night when I gave you the half-crown, and I just thought I'd better tak' them out there and then, which I did."

It was remarkable how much that policeman aged during the next twenty-four hours.

"This," remarked Mr. Cane, "is my photograph with my two French puddles. You recognize me, eh?"

"I think so," said Miss Sofie. "You are the one with the hat on, are you not?"