

FROM AN ALBUM.

Wed not with one of those whose only loves
Are fits of jealousy or fits of gloves.

Wed not for gold, it cannot purchase balm
To ease the heart-ache, and restore the calm.

Wed not for beauty, for time's long embrace
Pinches up wrinkles in the fairest face.

Wed not position, lest the world should laugh
At six feet six, and four feet and a half.

Wed not for love, which often turns to gall,
Therefore I pray thee wed not thou at all.

Montreal, 1877.

BARRY DANE.

LADDIE.

COMPLETE IN TWO NUMBERS.

CHAPTER I.

"Third-class forward! Here you are, mum. Plenty of room this way! Now then! that ain't third, that's first. Come, look alive! All right behind there?"

Doors bang, a whistle—and the train is off. The guard had thrust into a third-class carriage, already nearly full, a bandbox with a blue spotted handkerchief round it, and a bunch of Michaelmas daisies, southernwood, and rosemary tucked under the knot at the top; a marketing-basket, one flap which was raised by a rosy-cheeked apple emitting a powerful smell; a bundle done up in a handkerchief of the same pattern as that round the bandbox, only bright yellow; a large cotton umbrella of a pale green colour, with a decided waist to it, and a pair of pattens. Anything else? Oh yes, of course! there was an old woman who belonged to the things, but she was so small and frightened and overwhelmed that she appeared quite a trifle beside her belongings, and might easily have been overlooked altogether. She remained just where the guard had pushed her, standing in the carriage clutching as many of her things as she could keep hold of, and being jerked by the motion of the train, now against a burly bricklayer, and now against his red-faced wife who sat opposite, while her dazzled, blinking eyes followed the hedges and banks that whirled past, and her breath came with a catch and a gasp every time a bridge crossed the line, as if it were a wave coming over her. Her fellow-travellers watched her, in silence at first, having rather resented her entrance, as the carriage was already sufficiently full; but when a sudden lurch of the train sent her violently forward against a woman, from whom she cannoned off again, the bricklayer and flattened her drawn black satin bonnet out of all shape, the man found his tongue, which was a kind one, though slow in moving.

"Hold hard, missus!" he said, "we don't pay nothing extra for sitting down, so maybe you could stow some of them traps of yours under the seat, and make it kind of more comfortable all round. Here, mother, lend a hand with the old lady's things, can't you? That's my missus, mum, that is, my better arf, as the saying is, and no chap needn't wish for a better, though I say it as shouldn't."

This remark produced a playful kick, and a "Get along with you!" from the red-faced wife, which did not show it was taken amiss, but that she was pleased with the delicate compliment, and she helped to arrange the various baskets and bundles with great energy and good-nature.

"Now that's better, ain't it? Now you can just seat yourself down. Lor bless the woman! whatever is she frightened at?"

For the bustling arrangements were seriously alarming to the old woman, who was not sure that a sudden movement might not upset the train, or that, if she let go of anything in an unguarded moment, she might not fall out and be whirled off like those hurrying blackberry-bushes or patches of chalk on the embankment, though, indeed, it was only her pattens and umbrella that she was clutching as her one protection. The first thing that roused her from her daze of fear was the bricklayer's little boy beginning to cry, or, as his mother called it, "to feller," in consequence of his mother's elbow coming sharply in contact with his head; and, at the sound, the old woman's hand let go of the umbrella and felt for the marketing-basket, and drew out one of the powerful, yellow apples, and held it out towards the sufferer. The "bellerin" stopped instantaneously at such a refreshing sight, even while the mouth was wide open and two tears forcing their way laboriously out of the eyes. Finding that she could accomplish this gymnastic feat without any dangerous results, the old woman seemed to gain more confidence, seated herself more comfortably, straightened her bonnet, smiled at the bricklayer, nodded to the little boy, and, by the time the train stopped at the next station, felt herself quite a bold and experienced traveller.

"This ain't London, I take it?" she asked, in a little, thin, chirrupy voice.

"London? bless you! no. If you're bound for London you'll have another five hours to go before you can get there."

"Oh yes, I know as it's a terrible long way off, but we seemed coming along at such a pace as there wasn't no knowing."

"You ain't used to travelling, seemings?"

"Oh! I've been about as much as most folks. I've been to Martel a smartish few times

when Laddie was there, and once I went to Bristol when I was a gal keeping company with my master, but that ain't yesterday, you'll be thinking."

"Martel's a nice place, I've heard tell."

"So it be; but it's a terrible big place, however."

"You'll find London a pretty sight bigger."

"I know London pretty well, though I haven't never been there, for Laddie, he's been up there nigh about fifteen years, and he's told me a deal about it. I know as it's all rubbish what folks say about the streets being paved with gold and such like, though the young folks do get took in; but Laddie, he says to me, 'mother,' says he, 'London is paved with hard work like any other town, but,' he says, 'good honest work is worth its weight in gold any day,' so it's something more than a joke after all."

The old woman grew garrulous as the train rushed along. Laddie was a subject, evidently, upon which her tongue could not help being eloquent.

"An old hen with one chick," the bricklayer whispered to his wife; but they listened good-naturedly enough to the stories of the wonderful baby, who had been larger, fatter, and stronger than any baby before or since, who had taken notice, begun teething, felt his feet run off and said "daddy," at an incredibly early period.

Mrs. Bricklayer nodded her head and said, "Really now!" and "Well then!" inwardly, however, reserving her fixed opinion that the infant bricklayers had outdone the wonderful Laddie in every detail of babyhood.

Father Bricklayer could not restrain a mighty yawn in the middle of a prolonged description of how Laddie's gums were lanced; but at this juncture they reached the station which was the destination of the bricklayer and his family, so the old woman was not wounded by the discovery of their want of thorough interest, and she parted from them with great regret, feeling that she had lost some quite old friends in them. But she soon found another listener, and a more satisfactory one, in a young woman, whom she had hardly noticed before, as she sat in the opposite corner of the carriage with her head bent down, neither speaking or being spoken to. She had a very young baby wrapped in her shawl, and as one by one the passengers left the carriage and she was left alone with the old woman, the two solitary creatures drew together in the chill November twilight, and, by and by, the wee baby was in the old woman's arms, and the young mother, almost a child herself, was telling her sad little story and hearing Laddie's story in return. There never had been such a son; he had gone on so wonderfully at school, and had been a favorite with everyone—parson and schoolmaster; "such a headpiece the lad had!"

"Was Laddie his real name?"

"Why no! he were christened John Clement, after his father and mine, but he called himself 'Laddie' before ever he could speak plain, and it stuck to him. His father was for making a schoolmaster of him, but Laddie he didn't take to that, so we sent him into Martel to the chemist there, to be shop-boy, and Mr. Stokes, the gentleman as keeps the shop, took to him wonderful, and spoke of him to one and another, saying how sharp he were, and such, till at last one of the doctors took him up and taught him a lot; and when he went up to London he offered to take Laddie, and said he'd take all the expense, and as he'd make a man of him. He come to see me himself, he did, and talked me over, for I was a bit loth to let him go, for 'twas the year as the master died; he died just at fall and Laddie went at Christmas, and I was feeling a bit unkind and lonesome."

"Were that long ago?"

"Yes; 'twere a goodish time. Fifteen year come Christmas."

"But you'll have seen him many a time since?"

"Well, no, I ain't. Many's the time as he's been coming down, but something always come between. Once he had fixed the very day and all, and then he were called off on business to Brighton or somewhere. That were a terrible disappointment to the boy; my heart were that sore for him I nearly forgot how much I'd been longing for it myself."

"But he'll have wrote?"

"Bless you, yes! he's a terrible one for his mother, he is. He've not written so much of late, maybe; but then folks is that busy in London they hasn't the time to do things as we has in the country; but I'll warrant he've written to me every time he'd a spare moment; and so when I sees old Giles the postman come up, and I says, 'Anything for me, master?' and he says 'Nothing for you to-day, mum' (for I were always respected in Sunnybrook from a girl up), I thinks to myself, thinks I, it ain't for want of the will as my Laddie hasn't wrote. And then the presents as he'd send me, bless his heart! Bank-notes it were at first, till he found as I just paid 'em into the bank, and left 'em there; for what did I want with bank-notes? And then he sent me parcels of things, silk gownds fit for a duchess, and shawls all the colours of the rainbow, till I almost began to think he'd forgot what sort of an old body I be. Just to think of the likes of me in such fine feathers! And there were flannel enough for a big family, and blankets; and then he sent tea and sugar, I don't know how many pounds of it; but it were good and no mistake, and I'd like a cup of it now for you and me, my dear."

"And have he sent for you now to come and live with him?"

"No, he don't know nothing about it, and I mean to take him all by surprise. Old Master Heath, as my cottage belongs to, died this summer, and the man as took his farm wants my cottage for his shepherd, and he give me notice to quit. I felt it a bit and more, for I'd been in that cottage thirty-five year, spring and fall, and I knows every crack and cranny about it, and I fretted terrible at first; but at last I says to myself, 'Don't you go for to fret, go right off to Laddie, and he'll make a home for you and glad;' and so I just stored my things away and come right off."

"He've been doing well in London?"

"Well? my Laddie's a gentleman! He's a regular doctor, and keeps a carriage, and has a big house and servants. Mr. Mason, our parish doctor, says as he's one of the first doctors in London, and that I may well be proud of him. Bless me! how pleased the boy will be to see his old mother! Maybe I shall see him walking in the streets, but if I don't I'll find his house and creep in at the back door so as he sha'n't see me, and tell the gal to say to the doctor (doctor, indeed! my Laddie!) as some one wants to see him very particular. And then—" The old woman broke down here half-sobbing, half-laughing, with an anticpation too tenderly, ecstatically sweet for words. "My dear," she said, as she wiped her brimming eyes, "I've thought of it and dreamt of it so long, and to think as I should have lived to see it!"

The expectations of her traveller companion were far less bright, though she had youth to paint the future with bright hopes, and only nineteen winters to throw into the picture, dark shadows of foreboding. She had been well brought up and gone into comfortable service, and her life had run on in a quiet, happy course, till she met with Harry Joyce.

"Folks say all manner of ill against him," said the girl's trembling voice, "but he were always good to me. I didn't know much about him except as he liked me and I liked him dearly, for he come from London at fair-time and he stopped about the place doing odd jobs, and he come after me constant. My mistress were sore set against him, but I were pretty near mad about him, so we was married without letting any folks at home know nought about it. Oh yes! we was married all right. I've got my lines, as I could show you as there wasn't no mistake about it; and it were all happy enough for a bit, and he got took on as ostler at the George; and there wasn't a steadier, better behaved young feller in the place. But, oh dear! it didn't last long. He come in one day and said as how he'd lost his place and was going right off to London to get work there. I didn't say never a word, but I got up and begun to put our bits of things together; and then he says as he'd best go first and find a place for me, and I must go home to my mother. I thought it would have broke my heart, I did, to part with him; but he stuck to it and I went home. Our village is nigh upon eight miles from Merfield, and I'd never heard a word from mother since I wrote to tell them I was wed. When I got home that day I almost thought as they'd have shut the door on me. A story had got about as I wasn't married at all, and had brought shame and trouble on my folks, and my coming home like that made people talk the more, though I showed them my lines and told my story truthful. Well, mother took me in, and I bided there till my baby was born, and she and father was good to me, I'll not say as they wasn't; but they were always uneasy and suspicious-like about Harry, and I got sick of folks looking and whispering, as if I ought to be ashamed when I had nought to be ashamed of. And I wrote to Harry more than once to say as I'd rather come to him if he'd a hole to put me in; and he always wrote to bid me bide a bit longer, till baby come; and then I just wrote and said I must come anyhow, and so set off. But oh! I feel skeered to think of London, and Harry maybe not be glad to see me."

It was dark by this time, and the women peering out could often only see the reflection of their own faces in the windows or ghostly puffs of smoke flitting past. Now and then little points of light in the darkness told of homes where there were warm hearths and bright lights, and once, up above, a star showed, looking kindly and home-like to the old woman. "Every bit as if it were that very same star as comes out over the elm-tree by the pond, but that ain't likely all this way off."

But soon the clouds covered the friendly star, and a fine rain fell, splashing the windows with tiny drops and making the lights outside blurred and hazy. And then the scattered lights drew closer together, and the houses formed into rows, and gas-lamps marked out perspective lines; and then there were houses bordering the line on either side instead of banks and hedges, and then the train stopped, and a damp and steaming ticket-collector opened the door, letting in a puff of fog, and demanded the tickets, and was irritated to a great pitch of exasperation by the fumbling and slowness of the two women, who had put their tickets away in some place of extra safety and forgotten where that place was. And then in another minute the train was in Paddington; gas, and hurry, and noise, porters, cabs, and shrieking engines—a nightmare, indeed, to the dazzled country eyes and the deafened country ears.

CHAPTER II.

In a quiet old-fashioned street near Portman Square there is a door with a brass plate upon it, bearing the name "Dr. Carter." The door is not singular in possessing a brass-plate, for almost every house in the street displays one, being inhabited nearly entirely by doctors and musical professors. I do not attempt to explain why it is so, whether that part of London is especially unhealthy, and so requires constant and varied medical advice, or whether there is something in the air conducive to harmony; or whether the musical professors attract the doctors, or the doctors the professors, I leave to more learned heads to discover; only hazarding the suggestion that, perhaps, the highly-strung musical nerves may be an interesting study to the faculty, or that music may have charms to soothe the savage medical breast, or drive away the evil spirits of the dissecting-rooms. Anyhow, the fact remains that North Credition Street is the resort of doctors and musical men, and that on one of the doors stands the plate of Dr. Carter.

It was an old-fashioned, substantially-built house, built about the beginning of the last century, when people knew how to build solidly, if not beautifully; it had good thick walls, to which you might whisper a secret without confiding it to your next-door neighbour, and firm, well-laid floors on which you might dance, if you had a mind to, without fear of descending suddenly into the basement. There were heavy frames to the windows, and small squares of glass, and wooden staircases with thick, twisted bannisters—a house, altogether, at which housemaids looked with contempt as something infinitely less "genteel" than the "splendid mansions" of lath and plaster, paint and gilding, which are run up with such magic speed nowadays. We have no need to ring the bell and disturb the soft-voiced, deferential manservant out of livery, from the enjoyment of his evening paper in the pantry, for we can pass uninvited and unannounced into Dr. Carter's consulting-room, and take a look at it and him. There is nothing remarkable about the room; a book-case full of medical and scientific books, a large writing-table with pigeon-holes for papers, and a stethoscope on the top; a reading lamp with a green shade, and an india-rubber tube to supply it with gas from the burner above; a side-table with more books and papers and a small galvanic battery; a large india-rubber plant in the window; framed photographs of eminent physicians and surgeons over the mantel-piece; a fire burning low in the grate; a thick Turkey carpet; and heavy leather chairs; and there you have an inventory of the furniture to arrange before your mind's eye if you think it worth while.

There is something remarkable in the man, John Clement Carter, M.D., but I cannot give you an inventory of him, or make a broker's list of eyes and forehead, nose and mouth. He is not a regularly handsome man, not one that a sculptor would model or an artist paint, but his is a face that you never forget if you have once seen it; there is something about him that makes people move out of his path involuntarily, and strangers ask, "Who is that?" Power is stamped in his deep-set eyes and the firm lines of mouth and chin, power which gives beauty even to an ugly thing, throwing a grandeur and dignity round a black, smoky engine, or a huge, ponderous steam-hammer. Indeed, power is beauty, for there is no real beauty in weakness, physical or mental. His eyes had the beauty of many doctors' eyes, kind and patient, from experience of human weakness and trouble of all sorts; keen and penetrating, as having looked through the mists of pain and disease, searching for hope, ay, and finding it too sometimes where other men could only find despair; brave and steady, as having met death constantly face to face; clear and good, as having looked through the glorious glass of science, and seen, more plainly the more he looked, the working of the Everlasting Arms; for surely when science brings confusion and doubt, it proves that the eyes of the beholder is dim or distorted, or that he is too ignorant to use the glass rightly. But there is a different look in his eyes to-night; pain, and trouble, and weakness are far from his thoughts, and he is not gazing through the glass of science, though he has a *Medical Review* open before him, and a paper-knife in his hand to cut the leaves; his eyes have wandered to a bunch of Russian violets in a specimen glass on the table, and he is looking through rose-coloured spectacles at a successful past, a satisfactory present, and a successful future.

I need not tell my readers that this Dr. John Clement Carter was the Somersetshire boy whom good Dr. Savile had taken by the hand, and whose talents had made the ladder which carried him up to eminence. The kind old doctor liked to tell the story over a glass of port-wine to the friends round his shining mahogany (he was old-fashioned, and thought scorn of claret and dinners *à la Russe*). "I was the making of the man," he would say, "and I'm as proud of him, by Jove, sir! as if he were a son of my own."

It is quite as difficult to rise in the world gracefully as to come down, but everyone agreed that John Carter managed to do it, and just from this reason, that there was no pretence about him. He did not obtrude his low origin on everyone, forcing it on people's attention with that fidgety uneasiness which will have people know it if they are interested in the subject or not, which is only one remove from