

"I want your advice, doctor," she said, as he entered her apartment.

"I hope you are not ill," said the house-surgeon, trying to smile and seem at ease.

"No," answered the widow, sharply; "but I want to know what you are going to do. I had a visitor last night when you were, I suppose, visiting your mother and Miss Keane. Can you guess who it was?"

"No," said the doctor; and his pale skin grew a dusky red.

"Mr. Bingley," said Mrs. Carnaby, looking keenly at the doctor. "He came to me to make a proposal."

"Of marriage?" said the doctor, trying feebly to be jocular.

"No," said Mrs. Carnaby. "You know well enough whom he wishes to marry; and if his story is true, I think this girl who has so wonderfully interested you behaved very badly. But this is not to the point. You know I'm a poor woman, don't you, and that I have to depend upon my own exertions, for the present at least, for my daily bread?"

"He offered to bribe you, I suppose," said Dr. James Hay.

"You need not put it so coarsely," answered the widow, "nor need you speak to me, for that matter, in such a tone! But he did offer me money to tell him where this Miss Keane now is—and so large a sum that only under one condition would a poor woman like myself be justified in refusing it."

"And that condition is—" said the doctor.

"You know quite well," continued the widow, as the doctor paused. "I helped this girl to escape from Mr. Bingley—who has, I think an undoubted claim to her—to please you—for your sake, in deed—and it was understood between us that if I did this you would—"

"Well—do what?" asked the doctor, driven to desperation.

"Oh, you know well enough that I consented to help this girl, and run the risk of losing my situation, because I believed that you would marry me!"

For a moment or two the doctor was silent after this announcement. He saw that if he did not marry this widow she would betray the girl whom he had learned to love to a vindictive, disappointed man, who would show her no mercy.

Doctor James Hay thought all this over, and resolved to sacrifice himself for Laura's sake.

And so he said, "Well, if you wish it, I am ready to marry you."

Mrs. Carnaby advanced towards him, about to precipitate herself into his arms.

But the doctor drew back. "And now," he said, "will you be good enough to inform Mr. Bingley that you know nothing of Miss Keane's whereabouts; that you are not afraid, and that neither is your future husband afraid; and that we care nothing about what he may or may not do!"

"I will tell him," said the widow. And then she and the doctor shook hands upon their bargain.

Mrs. Carnaby went bustling about her duties all the rest of the day with an air of satisfaction; but the doctor attended to his with a heavy step and a languid look.

He did not go to see his mother nor Laura all that day.

But he went on the following afternoon.

Laura was sitting up, and flushed and brightened when she saw her kind friend approaching.

He was almost repaid for what he had done, he thought, as he sat and looked at her. He had saved this dear girl from a choice between two shameful fates, he told himself, and what mattered his feelings, after all!

But the day did not pass without a cruel blow falling upon him. The afternoon was fine, and as the sun came shining into the windows, he asked Laura to go out for a little drive with him. "It will do you good," he said; and if you wear a thick veil, there can be no danger that anyone will recognize you."

Laura saw that the doctor wished to go, and so she went. And as they drove on, having got a cab with a good horse, she really began to enjoy the air, and to look around with some interest.

They drove through Battersea Park, and in returning passed through some of the streets of Pimlico. Suddenly the doctor felt Laura grasp his arm, and saw that she was very pale.

"What is the matter?" he asked, anxiously.

"Look!" said Laura, and pointing to the door of a registry-office for governesses and servants, upon the threshold of which three persons were standing.

"That is Maud, my little sister," she said, in trembling accents, still grasping the doctor's arm, "and—and Mr. Glyndford. They must be searching for me!"

"Do you wish," the doctor faltered, "that I should speak to that gentleman?"

"No," answered Laura—"no! I can be nothing to him now. It is better that he should forget me—better he should think that I am dead, for I should bring him trouble and shame!"

Laura's voice broke, and she commenced sobbing as she said these last words; and, stifling his own emotion, Doctor James Hay did his best to comfort her.

"It may all come right," he said, gently. "Do not distress yourself, Laura."

He had never called her by her Christian name before, and did so now with an aching heart and a dull weariness of all earthly things.

But he made very little sign of this. He took Laura safely home, and after resisting his mother's earnest entreaties that he would stay the evening with them, he went away, feeling utterly miserable.

Laura was greatly startled when, one morning, Doctor Hay suddenly and abruptly said to her, "I have been a fool!"—with strange pathos. "Laura, knowing that you care for another man, I have learnt to love you! But I suppose there is no hope for me?"

"Oh, Doctor Hay," said Laura, putting out her hand, "I am so sorry—so grieved! I—I never thought that you cared for me in this way!"

He pressed her hand and left her.

Three days passed away very quietly in the little house in Bismarck Place, and on the fourth day a cab drove to the door, and, pale, almost staggering, James Hay once more entered his mother's house.

He had been taken ill in the country, he told them.

His mother got him to bed, and sent for a medical friend of his who lived in their neighbourhood, and who declared that James Hay was suffering from typhus fever of a very malignant kind.

And he was right; for ere many days had passed, poor James Hay was no more.

Laura, entering one morning the parlour of Mrs. Hay's house, was startled to behold Bingley there.

"I have found you at last," he said, "and will be trilled with no longer! Will you be my wife? Say 'Yes' or this instant I give you into custody!"

"Do your worst!" cried Laura. "I will never become yours!"

"Then, as there's a heaven above us," cried Bingley, in a loud voice, and trembling with rage, "I'll give you in charge!"

But here his tongue failed him, and the next moment, struck with apoplexy, he fell forward a helpless log.

Laura flew from the room to summon assistance, and encountered William Glyndford.

"Laura, Laura! why have you hidden yourself away so long?"

Laura did not answer, but led him into a little back sitting-room, where poor James Hay used to smoke.

"Now tell me all, Laura!" he said.

And, after some persuasion, she told the wretched story.

And when William Glyndford had heard all, he put his arms round the poor girl, and drew her to his breast. Bingley recovered speech and consciousness just before he died, and told the real truth concerning these notes.

Bingley had gone to Fearney's, the broker's, in the vague hope of finding some clue, or, at least, of learning if Laura had spoken truth about the portmanteau in which she said she had found the notes.

Fearney, the broker, remembered the portmanteau on being reminded of it—remembered selling it to Laura; and then proceeded to tell Bingley how he had got it.

He had bought it, he said, at the same time that he had bought the clothes of a young man they called Watson, who had been a shopman in Bingley's employment. This young man had died suddenly of heart disease, and his friends, who belonged to the south, had sold his effects, among them the portmanteau.

Thus Bingley knew who had been the robber in his establishment—who had stolen his notes and his gold. The man was dead; consequently Bingley could not punish him, and had therefore kept the secret. When he accused Laura of stealing his notes, he knew perfectly well that she had not been the thief.

The fair young wife of William Glyndford returned with him to Farnham a month or two after Mr. Bingley's death.

The bereaved mother of Doctor James Hay resides near Laura, who is as a loving daughter to her.

Poor little Maud has ceased to exist. Mrs. Keane still lives, but rarely goes to her daughter's house.

All Mr. Bingley's wealth went to his sister, Mrs. Glyndford, who is now one of the greatest women in Farnham.

William Glyndford and Laura love each other with a love that lightens every ill.

"As long as we are together I do not care what happens," he tells her; and this assurance is very precious to her heart.

THE END.

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MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

THE Viennese composer, Johann Strauss, is writing an opera-comique for a libretto written by Hennequin. He is also arranging one of his old scores for a libretto by William Busnach called "Le Prince Charmant."

MISS GENEVIEVE WARD has gone to the United States, not to appear in "Forget-Me-Not," as was at first announced, but to regulate the *mise en scene* of "Anne Mel," which is to be produced in America by Mr. and Mrs. McKee Rankin.

MADAME MARIE ROZE, the prima donna, asserts that of the great singers of to-day not one is Italian, and predicts that English will be the medium of the opera in future. Nilsson thinks the same, and Patti, the diva, prefers to sing in English.

NOTE-WRITING IN LONDON.

In writing and answering notes, we observe, says the *London Queen*, how closely particular sets of words and expressions are followed by the generality of people; they accept a model and adhere to it; but the etiquette of polite phrases in force in letter writing changes as everything else changes, and what was strictly polite and proper to write under given circumstances some twenty or thirty years ago, is not quite the thing to say to-day.

Formerly a note written in the third person invariably commenced with "Mrs. A. presents her compliments to Mrs. B.," but now the words "presents compliments" have fallen very much into disuse, and whenever any other opening phrase can be substituted, it is in better taste to employ it. Indeed, it may be taken as a rule that compliments are only presented to a complete stranger, or officially, or professionally speaking; but whenever an acquaintanceship exists, even of the slightest possible character, other expressions are used in preference to the words "presents her compliments." The nature of the note itself would probably determine the most appropriate expression wherewith to commence it, thus:—"Mrs. A. would be greatly obliged if Mrs. B., etc.," or "Mrs. A. would be greatly indebted to Mrs. B. if she would kindly forward the inclosed letter to," etc., or "Mrs. A. much regrets that she is unable to give Mrs. B. the desired information," etc., or "Mrs. A. begs to thank Mrs. B. for her kind note," etc., or "Mrs. A. is very sorry to say that she did not receive Mrs. B's note in time," etc., or "Mrs. A. incloses two tickets, according to Mrs. B's request, and will be happy," etc. Notes such as these are of the most ceremonious order.

Notes of invitation to slight acquaintances are generally written in the third person when it is not thought necessary to issue invitation cards, and the answers are couched in a like form, it not being strictly polite to answer a note of invitation, however formal, by a card of acceptance, or of refusal, as the case may be. Of course, in town, these cards are invaluable to those who entertain largely and receive a corresponding number of invitations; but when a circle of acquaintances is but a small one, the use of cards of acceptance or refusal would appear pretentious. Thus a ceremonious note of invitation would probably run "Mr. and Mrs. A. requests the pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. B's company at dinner on Thursday, June 16, at eight o'clock," etc. The answer to this style of note would be "Mr. and Mrs. B. have much pleasure in accepting Mr. and Mrs. A's kind invitation for Thursday, the sixteenth instant," or "Mr. and Mrs. B. much regret that a previous engagement will prevent their having the pleasure of dining with Mr. and Mrs. A. on the sixteenth instant."

Many people, however, prefer to write even the most ceremonious and formal of invitations and notes in the first rather than in the third person. Thus Mrs. A. would write: "Dear Lady B., will you and Sir George B. give us the pleasure of your company at dinner on Thursday, June sixteenth?"

An invitation note less formal would perhaps run: "Dear Lady B., would you and Sir George B. dine with us on Thursday, the sixteenth instant, to meet Lord and Lady X., who have promised to dine with us on that day?" This would be said in the event of Lord and Lady X. being intimate friends of Sir George and Lady B., otherwise it would be in very bad taste to allude to their being expected at dinner on account of their rank only. On the other hand, if Lord and Lady X. were celebrities or lions in their way, it would be quite correct to refer to them in the note of invitation, it being considered a privilege to meet prominent or distinguished persons apart from mere rank. In writing formal letters or notes in the first person it is not unusual to conclude with compliments. Thus Mrs. A. writing to the Countess of C., would say: "Dear Lady C., Lady Mary D. has asked me to send you a few things for your stall at the Harefield Bazaar. I therefore venture to send you the accompanying box of work and china. With compliments, believe me sincerely yours," etc.

Another class of note between acquaintances not strictly intimate would run thus from Mrs. A. to the Marchioness of D.: "Dear Lady D., my daughters are getting up some tableaux for the benefit of our local hospital. The Duchess of E. has kindly promised to help us, and the Ladies Caroline and Emily G. are to take part in them. I thought that you would perhaps also assist us, and that your daughter, Lady Jane H., might be persuaded to sing for us between the tableaux, etc. With kind regards to yourself and Lord D., believe me very truly yours."

In writing to a total stranger in the first person—and it not unfrequently happens that circumstances bring about such communications—it is usual to commence between equals with "Dear Mr. A. or Dear Mrs. A.," in preference to "Dear Sir" or "Dear Madam," which is now an old-fashioned style of commencing a letter.

With regard to writing to persons of rank, if Mrs. A. were writing to a marquis, earl, viscount, or baron, she would address them as "Dear Lord A. B. C., or D.," as the case might be but if she were writing to a duke she would address him as "Dear Duke," and if writing to a prince of the blood royal she would commence her letter "Dear Sir;" but if Mr. A. were writing to a marquis, earl, viscount, or baron, it would depend upon the extent of his acquaintance with them how he addressed them; if on

ceremonious or formal terms or if writing in an official or professional capacity, he would say, "My Dear Lord;" if slightly acquainted he would say, "Dear Lord A. B. C. or D.;" if intimate, he would say, "Dear A. B. C. or D."

If Mrs. A. were writing to a duchess, whether she were intimate with her or only slightly acquainted, she would address her "Dear Duchess," or if writing to her officially she would address her in the third person in the manner before mentioned. If Mrs. A. were writing to a marchioness, countess, viscountess, or the wife of a baron, she would address them as "Lady A. B. C. or D."

If writing to the daughter of either duke, marquis, or earl, she would, if not well acquainted, commence her letter with "Dear Lady Mary B.," but if well acquainted she would write "Dear Lady Mary." If Mrs. A. were writing to a baronet, whom she knew but slightly, she would commence her note with "Dear Sir John B.," or "Dear Sir Charles C.," but if intimate she might write "Dear Sir John," or "Dear Sir Charles," if she were too friendly to use the surname, she would doubtless have reached the stage when she might with propriety write "Dear Johnny," or "Dear Charley."

If Mr. A. were writing to a baronet, unless he were intimate enough to say "Dear B.," or "Dear C.," he would write "Dear Sir George B.," or "Dear Sir Charles C." Of course, if Mr. A. had known Sir John B. or Sir Charles C. at school or college, he would probably write "Dear Jack," or "Dear Charlie;" but as a rule, men do not address each other by their Christian names, unless the friendship dates from boyhood; but on the other hand, men do not address each other as Mr. B. or Mr. C., but at once fall into the use of the surname B. or C. unless it is desirable to maintain the acquaintance on a very stiff and formal footing. Again, all due reverence is paid to age, and a very young man would continue to write "Dear Mr. B." to one considerably his senior. "If Mrs. A. were writing to a general, colonel, major, or captain, she would write "Dear General B.," or "Dear Colonel C.," as to write "Dear Colonel," or "Dear Major," would be more than a trifle vulgar.

With regard to writing letters none but school girls now cross and recross a sheet of writing paper; two sheets of paper are invariably used if one sheet will not contain all that is to be said. If half the second sheet of paper is left blank it is not torn off, a whole sheet being more convenient to hold and to fold than is half a sheet of paper. If a few last words are necessary to complete a letter they are written on the margin and not across the writing on the face of the pages.

In addressing envelopes the address should be written legibly in the center of the envelope, and not run off into a corner, leaving a third of the envelope blank. Many people write their initials or name in full in one corner of the envelope; this is quite a matter of inclination. In writing to an honorable the abbreviation of hon^{ble} should be written in a line above that in which the name is written. The prefix "the" placed before a title is also written in a line above the name, as would be "his" or "her grace" when writing to a duke or duchess.

The word "to" placed before a title or a name is a matter of inclination; when used before a name it is written in a line above the name.

A STORY is told of Van Amburgh, the great lion-tamer, now dead. On one occasion while in a bar-room he was asked how he got his wonderful power over animals. He said: "It is by showing them that I'm not the least afraid of them and by keeping my eye steadily on theirs. I'll give you an example of the power of my eye." Pointing to a loutish fellow who was sitting near by, he said: "You see that fellow? He's a regular clown. I'll make him come across the room to me and I won't say a word to him." Sitting down he fixed his keen, steady eye on the man. Presently the fellow straightened himself gradually, got up and came slowly across to the lion-tamer. When he got close enough he drew back his arm and struck Van Amburgh a tremendous blow under the chin, knocking him clear over the chair, with the remark: "You'll stare at me like that again, won't you?"

A CORRESPONDENT (a widow) writes to the *San Francisco News Letter*: "My heart is steeped in woe, but it is certainly very consoling to find that black crape and affliction are so becoming to my Grecian cast of features. And by the way, dear, I have a new powder which is quite incomparable. It must have been made expressly for tear-stained faces of widows. I was a good deal disappointed that I could not get my mourning out-fit from Paris, but there was not time, dear Joe took me so by surprise. He was always fond of surprises, and he went off very suddenly at the last. There is really no mourning like that of the French—so suggestive, so expressive. They understand so perfectly how to delineate every degree of grief, from abject woe to tender melancholy and passive resignation. But my dress was quite satisfactory, the crape cost ten dollars a yard (which always tends to soothe the mourning heart) and a sweeping veil, for I insisted upon it being several inches longer than Lelia Snowdon's. Ornaments, black onyx. Ma suggested garnet as less expensive, but I was firm. No sordid, economical ideas shall ever interfere to prevent the proper manifestations of my woe."