

Mr. Featherstone had asked for a loan of one thousand pounds on the strength of his daughter's engagement, from Mr. Hannaway, the lawyer and manager of Sir George Hamilton's estates, and that that gentleman (Mr. Hannaway) had actually been induced to advance five hundred.

"Perhaps it is all true," said Isabel, laying down the letter on the dressing-table after she had finished reading it.

"It is not true!" said the Squire, again raising his voice. "It is a base tissue of lies written for a purpose, but it will have no effect upon me. Whoever wrote it may tremble," continued Mr. Trevor, glaring wrathfully at Isabel, "for if it were my own child I would expose and punish the offender."

Just as the Squire concluded this threat Sir George came into the dressing-room.

"Mr. Trevor!" he said in surprise, holding out his hand.

Then Mr. Trevor, almost choking with rage, began his story again. He had received this shameful letter. He had been insulted. The person who wrote the letter must have some motive. Mr. Trevor was determined to discover who that person was.

He jerked out these sentences literally white with rage. Then, Sir George held out his hand for the letter, and as he read it, he also could scarcely forbear to smile, until he came to the imputations cast upon Lucinda and Patty. Then, when he had read these, and finished the letter, he handed it back to the Squire.

"It is a shameful letter," he said. "The best way to come to the end of it is to send for Hannaway at once. If he has lent this money to Mr. Featherstone he will know to whom he has mentioned the fact, and if he has not done so, he will certainly tell us the truth."

"Well, send for him at once, then," said the Squire.

"At least, let us dine first," said Isabel, with a little shrug of her shoulders. "And, gentlemen," she added, "pray will you go away, and allow me to finish my toilet?"

"I will send for Hannaway," said Sir George, as he left the dressing-room.

"I will find out who has done it," said Mr. Trevor, determinately, as he also disappeared.

Sir George, before he dressed for dinner, did send for Hannaway. He wrote as follows:

"My dear Hannaway,—Mr. Trevor is here, and wishes to see you this evening. Some person has been ill-natured enough to write him an anonymous letter. Your name is mentioned in it as having advanced a certain sum of money to Mr. Featherstone on the strength of his daughter's engagement. If this is true, and you can remember (and choose to tell) to whom you mentioned the fact, Mr. Trevor hopes to trace his anonymous correspondent. If it is not true, I doubt his being able to do so.

"Come over as soon as it is convenient to you.

"Yours, very truly,

"G. HAMILTON."

Sir George dispatched this letter to Combe Lodge by one of the grooms about half-past seven o'clock, and Mr. Hannaway received it just as he was sitting down to his well-cooked and luxurious dinner. Before the meal was ended another note was brought to him, which another groom had conveyed from the Park. This was from Isabel, and had been written in her dressing-room after her father and husband had left it, and then entrusted to her maid. The lawyer opened this second epistle and read these words:—

"Dear Mr. Hannaway,—Papa is here, and is in a terrible rage. He is going to ask you whom you told that Mr. Featherstone had borrowed the money of you, and he thinks through this to trace his friendly correspondent. I depend upon you completely. Decline to tell him, and of course, I know nothing. It will all end in nonsense, if you are true.—Yours most sincerely,

I. H."

CHAPTER XXVII.

ISABEL'S FRIEND.

Mr. Hannaway always took pains with his personal appearance. He liked to be considered what he really was, a good-looking, well-dressed man, but he took extraordinary pains to look well before he started for Massam, after receiving Sir George and Lady Hamilton's letters.

He smiled to himself as he stood arranging his brown whiskers, and reddish-brown moustache, before the glass. It tickled his sense of humour to think of the encounter that was coming. The vain old man (as he mentally designated Mr. Trevor), wounded in his tenderest feelings, was no match he thought for him. Mr. Hannaway was a vain man, also, but he knew the world too well to show this openly. He was generally called "a good fellow," and deserved in many things this appellation. That is, he was generous, courteous, and agreeable. But he loved Mr. Hannaway well. His very conscience was satisfied with his own life, and he meddled very little, and cared less for the lives of others. He was so prosperous and self-satisfied, indeed, that he could afford to speak good-naturedly generally of his neighbours.

So he ordered his carriage, and drove to Massam. The family were at dessert, the butler told him when he arrived there, but without ceremony he desired that functionary to announce him.

Sir George rose courteously to receive him when he was ushered into the small dining-room, and Isabel extended her slender hand in welcome. But Mr. Trevor only pompously bowed

his white head. He felt in such a rage that he could have been civil to no one; and somehow he felt that Mr. Hannaway was mixed up with his anonymous letter.

"Have you dined, Hannaway?" asked Sir George.

"Thanks, I have," he replied. "I was just sitting down to dinner when your note arrived," and Mr. Hannaway smiled.

Sir George smiled also. The butler had now left the room, and Isabel, her husband, her father, and Mr. Hannaway only were present. So Sir George began:

"I wrote to you about this anonymous letter that Mr. Trevor has received," he said, addressing Hannaway.

"Yes, indeed!" said Mr. Trevor, putting on his double gold eye-glasses with a jerk.

"Yes!" said Mr. Hannaway inquiringly, as if he wished to hear further.

"Your name is mentioned in it, it seems," continued Sir George. "You are stated to have told the writer that you had just lent Mr. Featherstone five hundred pounds."

"Yes," again said Mr. Hannaway, with much calmness.

"Is this true, sir?" asked Mr. Trevor, unable to control himself further. "Have you lent Mr. Featherstone five hundred pounds, and if you have, whom have you told that you have done so?"

"Do you think that I should be justified in answering either of these questions, Mr. Trevor?" said Mr. Hannaway.

"Do I think so?" said Mr. Trevor, in a loud voice. "Yes, I do think so. I have received a disgraceful letter, a shameful letter, and your name is mentioned in it as having given the miscreant who wrote it certain information. Did you, I ask, give that information? And to whom?"

Mr. Trevor asked these two last questions in his most magisterial manner. But the severe dignity that imposed on the country folk round Sanda, had no effect on Mr. Hannaway. He did not smile, but he looked as if he would have liked to do so.

"You have never been a professional man, Mr. Trevor," he said, after a moment's pause, "therefore, perhaps, you do not know the rule of honour among us poor men who have to make our bread out of people's secrets. For a lawyer or a doctor to tell what he knows would be most inexcusable. If I had lent Mr. Featherstone money, I should be most unlikely to tell it."

"But you did tell it!" said Mr. Trevor, very indignantly.

"To whom?" asked Mr. Hannaway, with provoking calmness.

"Sir," shouted Mr. Trevor, rising from his seat. "I am not accustomed to be spoken to in this manner. Unless you tell me, I shall conclude you have some motive for shielding the cowardly miscreant who has tried to stab Mr. Featherstone in the back. Nay, I shall think that you yourself—"

"Hush, Mr. Trevor," said Sir George interrupting the angry old man. "I cannot sit here and allow such words as those to be applied to Mr. Hannaway at my table. I have known him for years, and have ever found him a strictly honourable man."

A faint colour passed over Mr. Hannaway's clear skin, and a faint twinge of conscience through his heart at these words of Sir George. He, however, made no acknowledgment but a slight bow.

"Really, papa," said Isabel the next minute, rising from her place at the table also. "I'm fairly tired of the subject. Most probably Mr. Featherstone in some 'jovial hour,' as I believe he calls a known weakness of his, which we might designate by a harder name, has himself told that Mr. Hannaway has been kind enough to lend him this money—at least, if Mr. Hannaway has?" she added looking smilingly at the lawyer.

Mr. Hannaway smiled in reply. He thought that this was clever of Isabel, so he returned her lead.

"I am sorry to offend you, Mr. Trevor," he said, speaking respectfully but firmly, "but I am not at liberty to repeat the details of any business transactions which have passed between myself and Mr. Featherstone. If Mr. Featherstone chooses to make confidants of his boon companions, that is no affair of mine."

"And you mean to tell me, sir—" continued Mr. Trevor, glaring at Mr. Hannaway.

"I mean to tell nothing," said Mr. Hannaway, with great gravity. "Sir George here would indeed have a right to mistrust his confidential lawyer if I were to do so."

It was now Sir George's turn to colour, which he did all over his usual pale face. Then he at once sharply stopped the conversation.

"Mr. Trevor," he said, addressing his father-in-law, "Isabel has probably given you the true explanation of this loan of five hundred pounds. Mr. Featherstone is an involved man, as I suppose you know, and he is also a very convivial one. He has boasted, most likely, of this money, which Mr. Hannaway is fairly justified in declining to give any information about. I would advise you to question Mr. Featherstone himself and in the meantime we may as well talk on some pleasanter subject."

So Mr. Trevor was forced to be silent, and sat down again, and tried to speak with calmness about other things. He hated this cool, easy lawyer who sat there smiling just as if nothing disagreeable had passed. Nothing disagreeable had passed to Mr. Hannaway's ideas, for it would have taken many Mr. Trevors to disturb Mr. Hannaway's serenity.

"When he rejoined Isabel in her drawing-room, he said a few words to her very quietly.

"What a clever little lawyer you would have made, Lady Hamilton," he said, and he smiled.

"I thank you," replied Isabel. "Always be my friend," she added, and for a moment she put out her slender hand, which the lawyer took.

"I will," he answered fervently, and looked straight into her face. Nothing more passed between them. Sir George came up and talked to Hannaway; talked about leases and politics, and Mr. Trevor sat pretending to read the *Times* in an easy chair, but in reality he was nursing his wrath. He would be at the bottom of this business yet, he determined. This cool-headed, impudent lawyer might refuse to answer his questions, but he would force Mr. Featherstone to do so. He would go over to Featherstone the first thing in the morning, and he would learn the truth at any rate about this money.

Poor Mr. Trevor! He retired to bed early, thinking that he would hear everything from Mr. Featherstone in the morning. Mr. Hannaway did not retire to bed early, and before he did so, he wrote a little note to graceless Antony, which was as follows:—

"Dear Featherstone,—Your proposed son-in-law, Mr. Trevor, has received an anonymous letter from some person or persons ill-disposed to you and your family, and in it a certain monetary transaction that has lately passed between us is related. I fear that in some of your merry hours you must have told this, for the old gentleman attacked me this evening with great fury on the subject. Of course I told him nothing, and I advise you to be equally reticent. 'Some enemy has done this.'

"Yours faithfully,

"W. F. HANNAWAY."

"P.S.—You may (if I am any judge of character) expect a storm to-morrow, in the early morning."

This note was lying on Mr. Featherstone's breakfast table when he came down to breakfast the next morning, so that by the time Mr. Trevor arrived at Featherstone, both Antony and his daughters were fully prepared to receive him.

Antony had a touch of humour in his composition and he got himself up as the respectable paterfamilias, to the best of his ability, for the occasion. He had been an adept at making fishing flies in his youth, and he brought out the old paraphernalia, and laid some half-made flies, that had been begun twenty years ago, on a newspaper before him. Alas! the shaking hands could not now have finished them, so as to gull the most unwary trout that ever meandered in a stream. But the whole thing had a piscatorial and rural appearance, and Antony felt that they added to the virtuous effect of the tableau. Then Patty brought her work, and sat down by her father; but Lu was restless and could not settle in the family scene. There was in truth an innate honesty about this girl that made her hate deceptions of all sorts, and though she was going to marry an old man for his money, she meant to be a good wife to him and act honestly all her days.

In his heart Antony fully believed that he had been the delinquent about repeating the story of the five hundred pounds. So many things had he told and totally forgotten that he had done so in the morning, that why not this? He sat there with his fishing flies before him, trying to remember who it was likely that he had made a confidant of. He had been very "jolly," as he called it, on the strength of this very five hundred pounds and his daughter's engagement combined, and his evening conversations were, therefore, mostly a blank to him.

"But it was a confounded ill-natured thing, whoever wrote to old Trevor about it," he decided. That Mr. Hannaway had something to do with it, he never for a moment suspected. Presently a carriage was heard approaching the house, and then the door bell rang, and a few minutes later Mr. Trevor was ushered in on the family scene.

"Mr. Trevor!" exclaimed Antony, as the Squire was announced, jumping up, and extending his hand, as if in great surprise.

"You did not tell us you were coming," Lu faltered out, as she also shook hands with her betrothed.

"I have come on a most painful business," said the Squire hesitatingly.

"A painful business! My dear sir, whatever is the matter?" said Antony.

"I have received a letter," explained Mr. Trevor, rather nervously, "a shameful letter—anonymous of course, abusing you and your family, and as a voucher of the writer's good faith, it is affirmed that you—it's a most unpleasant thing to say, Mr. Featherstone, particularly before ladies." And Mr. Trevor bowed to the girls.

"Nay, my dear sir, out with it!" cried Antony, with an assumption of good-natured ease. "Hard words don't break bones, you know."

"Well, then," continued Mr. Trevor, "as a voucher of good faith, the writer affirms that on sure information he knows that you asked Mr. Hannaway, the lawyer here, to lend you a thousand pounds since your daughter's engagement, and that he did lend you five hundred?"

"No such good luck," said Antony, shaking his head and smiling. "Hannaway is a rich fellow, and I heartily wish he would take it into his head to be as generous as your anonymous correspondent makes out."

"Then am I to understand—" hesitated Mr. Trevor.

"That I've not got it," answered Antony, with a laugh. "In truth, my dear sir," he continued, "though this is a fine property" (and he looked out of the window at his mortgaged acres as he spoke), "what with one expense and another, I couldn't lay my hand on five hundred pounds hard cash at this moment. No, indeed, I couldn't," went on Antony, and he shook his head thoughtfully, as if he were considering where he could get it.

The Squire hummed and hawed. A father-in-law without five hundred pounds in hard cash was not exactly a pleasant prospect; but still Mr. Featherstone was evidently such an honest, open fellow, thought the Squire. Reckless perhaps, but honest. Yes, that was a great thing, decided Mr. Trevor, and so his brow cleared.

"Then I suppose," he said, "all the other information that the letter contains is equally false as this story about the five hundred pounds?"

"I dare say, I dare say," answered Antony, jauntily, "it's as easy to tell a dozen lies as one, you know."

"Perhaps you had better read it," said Mr. Trevor, and he put the letter into Antony's hand, who read it through with an unabashed countenance (though he knew that a great deal of what was in it was true), but with many exclamations of wonder and contempt.

"I could not have believed it," he said, after he had finished its perusal. "Unless my own eyes had seen it, I could not have believed that anyone could have invented such a tissue of falsehoods."

Then Lu put out her hand. "Let me read it, papa," she said, and as she did so tears rose in her eyes.

"It is a cruel letter," she said, indignantly. "Patty and I don't deserve it. We may have had to do things that rich girls do not do, but we have never—I don't care who says it or who believes it—we have never done anything to be ashamed of." And this was strictly true.

"My dear girl!" said Mr. Trevor, advancing to her and taking her hand, "do you think I would believe anything against you? The reason that I have made this inquiry is, that I am so indignant that anyone dare attack your good name. But do not think that an anonymous scribbler could influence me. I chose you to be my future wife from my own judgment of your amiable and attractive character, and that judgment I can rely upon."

"You are very good," said Lu, and she put her hand softly into the old man's. She felt grateful to him for trusting her, and gratitude, after all, is not a bad foundation for the beginning of love.

(To be continued.)

LITERARY.

"LA Pitié Suprême," is the title of a poem which, it is said, Victor Hugo intends publishing at the end of this month.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES is said to have used but one pen for all his literary works from 1857 till last September.

THE demand for Welsh books and periodicals is quite large in the United States, and one weekly paper printed in that language has a circulation of 8,000 copies and a good line of advertising.

THE *Life of the Prince Consort* will be completed in five instead of four volumes, as originally intended. Three volumes have been already issued, and Mr. Martin expects that the concluding two will be published together towards the close of the year.

QUEEN VICTORIA likes Dickens's novels, and some little of George Eliot, but her chief favourites are Wilkie Collins and William Black. Scott she reads and re-reads. She does not particularly like the novels of Beaconsfield, Thackeray, and Lord Lytton.

IN an antiquarian bookstore at Baireuth, Bavaria, has been found an original document pertaining to the American war of independence. It is the manuscript diary of a Hessian officer who served in the British army, and covers the period from January, 1778, to March, 1779. It contains a daily record, not only of events on the field, but of other news and rumors of the time.

JULES VERNE, the celebrated French novelist, is reported to have visited Spencer, Mass., lately, registered at the Massasoit Hotel, and expressed himself desirous of witnessing the process of manufacturing boots by machinery. He said that he had recently come from Montreal, and was travelling quietly through the country. His identity was at first questioned, but the signature on the hotel register was found to correspond with that of the novelist in his published works.

CONSUMPTION CURED.

An old physician, retired from practice, having placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy, for the speedy and permanent cure for consumption, bronchitis, catarrh, asthma, and all throat and lung affections, also a positive and radical cure for nervous debility and all nervous complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive, and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send, free of charge, to all who desire it, this recipe, with full directions for preparing and using, in German, French, or English. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. W. Sherar, 149 Powers' Block, Rochester, N. Y.

NOTICE TO LADIES.

The undersigned begs respectfully to inform the ladies of the city and country that they will find at his Retail Store, 196 St. Lawrence Main Street, the choicest assortment of Ostrich and Vulture Feathers, of all shades; also, Feathers of all descriptions repaired with the greatest care. Feathers dyed as per sample, on shortest delay. Gloves cleaned and dyed black only. J. H. LEBLANC. Works: 547 Craig St.