

## A Transformation.

The lecture is once more in full swing. The lights are a little lower than before, and the vengeance in Geoffrey's breast is growing stronger. Unfortunately, the means to gratify it are in his grasp. Some misjudged person had given him an orange on his way through the village, and this he now presses into the service. Under cover of the darkness he leans forward, and by the aid of a long piece of cord fastens it securely to one of the ribbons hanging at the back of his enemy's cap.

Terry, happening to glance in his direction, sees him leaning forward suspiciously close to the old lady's back. A sudden misgiving seizes her: she knows Geoffrey and his capabilities. What is he doing? A thrill of fear shoots through her: she too leans forward. Almost her hand is on his when, looking up, he sees her intention, and sees, too, the coming destruction of his hopes. Quick as lightning he draws back, lifts his arm, and sends the orange shooting into space.

Late space goes Miss Gabbett's cap with it. There is a wild fit smothered shriek on her part; up go her two hands to her bald head. There is one awful moment. Even Miss Gabbett's head carries all before it. Then, derry, sheltered by the providential gloom, dashes forward, picks up the cap, and pushes it down once more upon Miss Gabbett's head, then sinks half fainting on her seat.

The lecturer has seen nothing: he has gone on with his prosing. Miss Gabbett is muttering and snoring with wrath. "Go home, Geoffrey," says poor Terry, in a low but terrible voice; and Geoffrey, disgraced but unrepentant, moves down three yards or so on the empty bench and there sits out the remainder of the performance. Terry pretends not to see him.

And now the first half of the lecture is at an end. Trefusis, rising, goes up the steps to the little platform, and Mrs. Connor, a friend of Fanny's, who has offered to accompany him, strikes the first chords of his song.

### CHAPTER VII.

His singing is a revelation to Terry. Passionately susceptible to the delights of music, her whole soul seems to thrill within her as his rich voice resounds through the room, filling it with melody. The tender waves rise and fall; the words come to her distinctly; not one of them is lost. He has said he would sing to her; and what is it he is singing?

Oh, touch that rose-bud, it will bloom,  
My lady fair,  
A passionate red in dim green gloom,  
A joy, a splendour, a perfume,  
That sleeps in air.

You touched my heart, it gave a thrill,  
Just like a rose  
That opens at a kiss;  
Its bloom is always yours until  
You bid it close.

Mortimer Collins' charming verses, set to some charming sounds! But the sounds are even more, to this girl whose heart is not awake, than the words. She is entranced. She leans forward, watching him, listening, delighted. She had not known he could sing like that. She has forgotten everything; the people, her dread of their observation, even Larry-Larry, who is standing, his back against the side of the small platform, glowering at her.

"You touched my heart," the girl, looking at Trefusis, finds his eyes fixed earnestly on her. This gives her a little shock, but the power of his singing is so great that she does not draw back from that deep gaze, and even when it is over she still looks at him and smiles faintly. It is the vaguest smile, born altogether of her joy in his singing, not at all of her joy in him, and Trefusis is strong enough to acknowledge this to himself and keep away from her. Yet because of that smile there is high hope in his heart as he goes back to his seat.

Ah me! ah me! what frugal cheer  
My love doth feed upon!

Miss Anson pushes her skirts aside and greets him as he returns to where she sits. She is a tall girl, with handsome, with fine shoulders, and a fine nose, too, remarkably Roman. She had heard a little of the new engagement during the day, but had chosen to disregard it as an unimportant accomplishment. She had indeed desired to engage herself to him, and was therefore unwilling to believe that that little ill-dressed girl Miss O'More had spoiled her chance. But she had watched him as he sang, and, being by no means a fool, had understood the look he had bent on Terry. To make assurance doubly sure, however, she had, during the pause after the first verse, asked Fanny more directly about it, and received a full account at once.

"I must congratulate you," says she now, when Trefusis has seated himself beside her, his heart full of Terry and that last strange smile she had given him. "You have heard?" says Trefusis, pleasantly. "Yes, you may congratulate me, indeed."

"Well, I have done it," she pauses and looks at him. "She is very clever," says Miss Anson.

Something in her tone nettles him. "What do you mean by that?" he asks, quickly.

"That—sweetly—she is very clever," he says. "Very charming" would describe her better.

"You think," lifting her brows, "that she isn't clever, then?"

"No. Certainly not. What I think is, that she is both."

"Ah! Portentous," with a shrug of her shapely shoulders—such beautiful shoulders, and so exquisitely white and rounded—a trifle too rounded, perhaps, too matured, but very handsome for all that; and she is so perfectly dressed too. His eyes turn quickly to where Terry sits, in her dark plain little frock, with her slender figure, her high-bred air. How impossible to compare them! "Perhaps so," says Miss Anson, smiling doubtfully. "But certainly she is clever."

"You mean something," says Trefusis. "Well, since you will have it," laughing, "I think you will find that the girl, who, without a penny, captures the man with many pennies, will always be called by the world—clever."

"She has not captured me, in the sense you mean," says Trefusis, warmly. "No," she laughs again. "You have captured her, then?"

"I object to the word altogether," says Trefusis, who has now regained his usual cool manner. "It does away with freedom—the freedom of choice."

"Ah! Freedom!" Miss Anson twirls her fan meaningly. "Is she free?"

"Free?" What does she mean? Trefusis regards her curiously: what strange suggestion would she make? He knows Terry is not in love with him, but he has her word for it that she loves no other man.

"Oh, don't look so horrified," says Miss

Anson, in a delightfully amused tone. She has been studying his face, and has perhaps drawn some amusement out of it, though of a rather bitter description. "I know nothing of a rival: I was only wondering—very stupidly, no doubt—whether any girl could be free, circumstanced as she is: free to choose, I mean. A girl so poor, she is not always bound and fettered, compelled, as it were, to accept any chance that Heaven—or the other place—may send her."

"You misjudge her. Miss O'More would be a difficult person to compel," says Trefusis coldly. "And," with a still colder smile, "you are not very flattering to me." "Oh, you! Is it good for you! You have had too much flattery all your days!" says Miss Anson, with a quick little glance that has coquetry in it. Unfortunately, the magic-lantern being once more required, the lights are at this moment abruptly lowered, so that the glances are unseen. There are few things ruder than a magic-lantern entertainment. The lecture is again in full swing. More hectic grow the lights of Jerusalem. Standing out as they do, from the surrounding gloom, they positively glow.

Max O'More, much pleased with their effect, looks round for Geoffrey, and perceiving that in his disgraced corner he can see but little of the joys spread out for the parish, even though he should crane his long young neck to the uttermost, is filled with pity and quick rage. Poor old Geoff! After all, what had he done? Only given that old cat her deserts. Well, if Geoffrey is to be punished for nothing, he will be punished too. A fond but unfortunate desire to share Geoffrey's trouble leads him to regard with a thoughtful eye the huge board on which is written in big letters the programme for the evening:

Lecture by the REV. H. DORMER, M.A.  
Magic-Lantern. . . . . HOD'S CURE.  
SONG.  
"Oh, touch that rose-bud!" . . . . . Mr. Trefusis.

And so on, until it comes to "What are the wild waves saying?" . . . . . MRS. BARRY AND MRS. DORMER.

Alas! when Max's eyes come to this, they stay there. They dwell upon it; in the darkness a broad smile lights up his youthful lips; in the darkness he creeps towards that programme. There is a little scrape-scrape to be heard—nothing more; and now Max creeps back to his seat by Geoff, who has not noticed his going or coming.

(To be Continued.)

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## THE PEOPLE'S FORUM.

The City Council and the Street Railway. To the Editor of the ADVERTISER:

It seems to us that the action of the street railway company in refusing a percentage and mileage to the city in return for the privilege they already have, together with the use of electricity and more streets which they want, is a straightforward attempt to rob tax-payers and taxpayers alike of their property in the city streets. It is in effect saying to the people of London, "Gentlemen, we have the use of your streets as a means of making money for ourselves. It is true we got that twenty years ago when there was no thought and but little knowledge of the rights of the public in any commercial enterprise, but whether it was granted ignorantly or no is of no consequence, we mean to keep all we have and get more if we can. The private owner of the building which we rent as a stable is commonly conceded a right to interest on his investment in the land and building, to payment for any time he may spend in looking after the premises, and to the return with interest of the taxes he may pay on the property which we use; but the public owners of the streets on which our tracks are laid for the convenience of ourselves and of such as happen to be in a position to be our customers, these public owners have no right whatever to mileage or rent in any other form for the use of the city streets, and you must just take our word for it that our profits are too low to admit of any payment for wear and tear of streets or any other inconvenience. Neither do we intend to concede you any right of partnership whatever in our enterprise, either by percentage or any other division of profits. We are well satisfied that our tracks on your streets are often the cause of a broken wheel, slipped shafts or a bent axle; the presence of our tracks and the right of way of our cars also impels traffic to the sides of the streets, which are consequently in proportion much more in need of repairs than if the whole of the streets could be used. We are also persuaded of the increase of this inconvenience and wear and tear of streets after the introduction of electricity, as the different shape of the rails, with the increased frequency and rapidity of car service, will prevent altogether the use of the space occupied by the track, as is the custom now. Nevertheless we are now asking a much greater mileage for a greater inconvenience given no increased taxation, and we intend to refuse altogether any concession of right on your part to a share of the profits we thus make at your expense. We intend also to bribe the unemployed to our support by promises of work, that will, when completed, leave them just a little worse off than before, and our customers also by offers of cheaper fares coupled with conditions that will leave them at the end not quite so well off as at present."

There is a weapon, Mr. Editor, which might be used with this company, but is not just now at the command of the citizens, and our chances lie in the possibility of getting it for use. I refer to the refusal of their request for the use of electricity and more streets, and also to the possibility that the city may obtain permission to occupy all other convenient streets with electric lines of their own. It is not probable that we could induce the present City Council to move in the matter of building a city street railway, but judging from the manner in which the laboring people of the city are organizing for general political purposes, we may hope that the personnel of the next or the following council will be men willing to work for the use of this weapon. Were such a council elected to-morrow the street railway company would next day be offering both a percentage and mileage, and there would be no question of finding materials, repairing streets or of removing snow. This is all the business of the corporation, and corporation laborers should perform the work and receive the pay. The street railway company should put down their rails, leaving the streets, with the exception of the rails, as they find them. The gas company is doing at present. They should also pay a fair mileage for the privilege and a fair percentage for their inconvenience they cause to the general traffic and the extra work they entail on the city in street repairing.

It will easily be seen that the inconvenience to traffic and the greater taxation for all citizens, which are burdens laid upon all citizens, while returning to the form of cheaper fares advantage only customers of the street railway company. The business of the City Council is not to conserve the interests of the company and its customers, but the interests of all citizens, irrespective of relation to the railway or the company. For the above reasons, Mr. Editor, we would advise that the proposition to grant the street railway company the use of electricity and more streets be tabled until a council can be elected that will, if need be, build a city railway for the use of citizens. We should not have to wait longer than Jan. 1, 1895, for such a council. Yours truly, J. M. and A. S. JOHNSON.

The Electric Railway Franchise.

To the Editor of the ADVERTISER:

I am pleased to see that the mayor has called a public meeting to discuss the above subject. It will now be in order for the kicker and the stay-at-home-absorbed-in-his-own-affairs ratepayer to come out and do his kicking or learn what is going on, in opinion as to whether the council should hurry or close at all, or perhaps that wait for the next 31 years be kept by the present and next generation, and not, after it is too late or all settled, find fault with the council or give his children the chance to say what they would have done had they been here at that time. I claim every ratepayer should be there, and if the measure is a good one support its approval, or, if it is considered such, to state his reasons and object to its acceptance. Otherwise interested parties may secure control of the object of the meeting and thus secure a lever in urging the council that it is all right, the public are with you, go ahead. Every mechanic in the city and every ratepayer has a direct interest in this matter and should be present. Yours truly, JOHN M. PARSONS.

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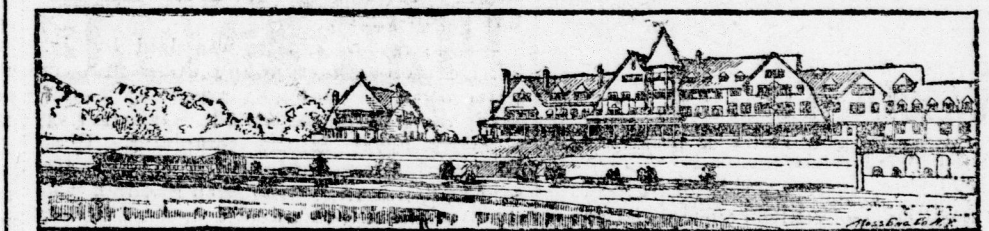
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