

"I am sorry mamma isn't here to bid you good bye," said the girl in a dry voice, without turning her head. "For my part I hate leave-takings."

The flame flickered a little and then went out; it seemed somehow to Beesly, gazing dully into the fire as if with it his hope went too.

"You don't hate saying good-bye more than I," he murmured, as he dashed his hand across his face.

Then he got up and took possession of her hands.

"There are moments," he said looking with a kind of fierceness into her eyes, "when we cannot ask ourselves what we like; we only know what with heaven's help we must try to do."

The next moment the door was shut and he was gone.

CHAPTER III.

On Elliott Beesly's arrival in London he was greeted by a thick yellow fog. Driving to his rooms in Gray's Inn, he remembered he had had no time to send word of his coming, so that he was prepared to find Gretton out. Turning the key of his door he found the carpets up, the blinds down, and a general unaired dampness pervading their rooms. "Gretton is still away, then," thought Beesly. "When shall I get this intolerable business off my mind?"

"Make a fire," he said to the servant. "Were there any letters? Yes, a number on the mantle-piece for both gentlemen."

Beesly picked the bundle hurriedly up; perhaps there would be a line from Gretton saying he was coming back. Nothing but long blue envelopes—unmistakable bill and small square epistles from Gretton's train of admirers. Ah! there at last was Andrew's writing.

Gretton hailed from Scotland, and wrote a long letter, describing his various visits, and the invariable success of his voice and acting connected therewith. He ended up by asking after the Woods, saying that, as he should not be in town for another fortnight, Beesly was to say all sorts of imaginable pretty things for him. "Pretty things!" The letter made him wince more than once. What was the fellow doing comfortably in Scotland, when Miss Wood was coming to London? Would he be content, Beesly asked himself, to be tuning his pipe in the Hebrides while there was a Violet Wood in the South?

He threw the letter aside, and resolved to dine at his club. The fog was thicker than ever in the street, but on arriving at his destination he was hailed by a number of his friends.

"What have you been doing, old fellow? Haven't seen you. Paris, eh?" exclaimed one of them, as the dinner went on.

"What did you do there?"

"Usual sort of thing, I suppose," said Beesly, with no great show of interest in the topic.

"Ah," exclaimed a rubicund and beaming old gentleman, the jovial man of the club, "you should stay in London—nothing like it, weather is always nice and seasonable."

"So it is," said Beesly, gazing out through the window into an ocean of pea-soup.

"Yes," exclaimed the old gentleman, casting round for some statistics which he had nearly, but not quite, got right; "London is the most healthy; Berlin—"

"So sorry I have to go to the theatre," said Beesly, getting up and wondering why the whole thing seemed such an intolerable bore.

The Frivolity Theatre, however, proved little more amusing than the statistics. Beesly lounged back in his stall, and wondered what all the large audience about him found worth coming to see.

He turned his eyes from the stage and glanced round the theatre. In the second box from the stage there was a lady whose turn of neck reminded him of Violet. His eyes kept wandering to that box, until the young lady turned round and revealed a face of unredeemed homeliness. Beesly seized his hat and hailed the first hansom. There was the same discomfort in the chambers when Beesly got back. He lighted a pipe, and then, with an unaccountable feeling of restlessness, wandered from room to room. He lounged almost unconsciously into Gretton's bedroom, when suddenly something on the wall attracted his eye.

It was the photograph of a slim young girl in a white dress. Stuck into the cord that held the frame was a bunch of faded roses. How well he remembered the night that Andrew had begged that nosegay. He wondered that it had seemed of so little importance then. He unhooked the portrait gently, and as he did so the roses fell all dusty and shivering to the ground. It was a photograph of Violet Wood. How true to life it was. There was her trick of hand-clasp—there her frank, open brow, her clear, direct gaze, in which you seemed to see her very soul. The hair was thrown a little back, and the lips just parted for a smile.

"My darling, this is all I may ever be to you," and he stopped and kissed the portrait on the lips.

Then he hung it up on its hook, and came out and locked the door. It was as if he had just buried the best piece of his life.

The next day, in the more hopeful morning light, he resolved to give himself another chance. Why should he not appeal to Gretton? He wrote to Andrew and told him all that had passed. He did not conceal for one moment the fact he was in love with Miss Wood; he considered that he owed it to his friend to be open and direct. He knew, of course, the ugly light in which his conduct might be viewed; but he assured him that he had made no sort of proposal to Violet. Beesly conjured him finally, by all that he held most sacred to tell him if he were serious in his attachment, so that they might come to an understanding at once.

In answer to this letter came an unmitigated attack from Gretton. He considered that he, Beesly, had betrayed a trust, that all intercourse from that moment had better cease between them, and further, that he should not dream of entering into the question of his attachment with a man who had proved himself to be deficient in the commonest sentiment of honor.

In the meantime Mrs. Wood had been much perplexed by Violet's behaviour in Paris. First of all the girl evinced a strange desire to go back to London at once, and when the mother demurred on account of unfinished finery, and the thing was put off for a day or two, Violet expressed a wish to winter abroad. This last idea gained ground as the time went by, and no sort of word came from Elliott Beesly.

"What is there in me that he should care for me?" she often said to herself, dreadingly. "He must, I suppose, have seen that I cared for him, and thought it best to go away. Of course he could not do anything else." She made up her mind to carry off her mother, there and then to Italy, so that Mrs. Wood found herself that winter, somewhat to her surprise, in Rome.

It was in Rome that they first heard through mutual friends of Beesly's departure from Australia; and it was in Rome

that Violet grew seriously ill. She was ordered change of scene and air; so that Mr. Cadbury—who had joined them in Italy—managed to get them a charming villa on the heights above Florence, where they passed the spring and early summer months.

It will be wondered, in the face of Elliott Beesly's departure for Australia, why Andrew Gretton did not again come forward on the scene. But that which is without let or hindrance is, to men of Gretton's stamp, often enough devoid of charm. His grievance once removed, he slipped comfortably into his old mode of life. He had honestly felt himself an aggrieved man in reading Beesly's letter. He was as much in love with Miss Wood as it was given him to be in love with any one; but, after all, Mr. Gretton's emotions were not of the kind that outbalance prudential considerations. In Violet's absence he reflected that she was the most charming of women, to whom he should infallibly propose one day, but he could not shut out the vision of an inseparable mother-in-law, who was not immaculate in the matter of aspiration, and who was liable to wear too much jewelry.

It was, therefore, with a feeling of hurt pride and profound astonishment that Gretton read one morning in the *Times* the following announcement:—

"At the British Embassy, in Paris, Violet, only daughter of the late Tobias Wood, Esq., to Richard Cadbury, of Cromwell Road, S. W."

Mr. Gretton's self-love received a severe blow; but he was not one who sighs long after the unattainable. Violet, then, had married the respectable middle-aged gentleman, and before many months had elapsed Andrew managed to shrug his shoulders over the affair.

As for Beesly, who did not get the news for months afterwards, his friends say he has become a changed man. They wonder what could have happened to him on that voyage round the world, or why he suddenly gave up studying law. His health seemed about this time to have completely broken down, and now, though nearly seven years have passed, he rarely, if ever, comes to London. He wanders about the Continent, seldom staying long in one place, telling himself that it is his business to forget one incident in his life.

Perhaps the perseverance with which he pursues this end is suggestive that he is not one who easily forgets.—*All the Year Round*.

Bathing.

It is important to recognize that the only virtues of water as used by the bather are two—namely, its value as a cleansing agent, and as a surface stimulant. In this last capacity it simply acts as a medium affecting the temperature of the part to which it is applied, or which is immersed in it. Right views of fact in reference to this matter are important, because there can be no question that some persons overrate the uses of cold water, and run considerable risks in their pursuit of them. Every beneficial action that can be exerted by a bath is secured by simply dipping in the sea, or a moderate effusion of cold water! Except in cases of high fever, when it is desired to reduce the heat of the body by prolonged contact with cold, a bath of any considerable duration is likely to be injurious. Then, again, it is necessary to recognize the risk of suddenly driving the blood from the surface in upon the organs. The "plunge," or "dip," or "shower," or "douche," is intended to produce a momentary depression of the temperature of the surface in the hope of occasioning a reaction which shall bring the blood back to the surface with increased vigor, and almost instantly. If this return does not take place; if, in a word, redness of the skin is not a very rapid consequence of the immersion, it is impossible that the bath can have been useful, and in nine cases out of ten when the surface is left white or cold it does harm. The measure of value is the redness which ensues promptly after the bath, and this reaction should be produced without need of much friction, or the bath is not worth taking. The rubbing employed to recover the circulation lost by the bath would probably have done more good without it! Another effect of the bath when it acts properly is to stimulate the nervous system, through the vast series of its terminal fibers which are distributed in the skin. In this way also the action must be very rapid, or it is not efficacious. Unless the vigor of energy is quickly called out, the agent is useless; and if it produces either drowsiness or depression it acts mischievously, and lowers the power it is intended to stimulate and augment.

Bathers should bear these facts in mind, and be warned by them not to trifle with an agency which, if it is not of value, is worse than useless, and can scarcely fail to do harm.—[*Lancet*.]

A TIDY ROOM.—Do you ever observe that a tidy room is invariably a cheerful one? It is cheering to come into one's breakfast room and find it spotlessly tidy; but still more certainly will cheerfulness come if tidiness is the result of our own exertion; and so we counsel you, friend, if you are ever disheartened, vexed or worried about something that has gone wrong with you in the world, to have resort to the great refuge of tidiness. Don't sit brooding and bothering. Go to work and make everything tidy about you and you cannot fail to recover cheerfulness.

Homes.

The clustering meanings that gather about our dear Saxon word "home" are numerous. It suggests to us a temple of love and truth, of peace, consolation, and rest; the centre of joy and harmony, of all that is beautiful and desirable; and so we come to regard Heaven as a home, differing from our earthly ones only in its perfection.

Of every reality in the world we can in our minds form an ideal, of none a more beautiful than of a home. There should be all that tends to cultivate and refine the taste. Books to invite one to scan their contents; music to soothe and cheer; well chosen pictures, an artistic and harmonious blending of plants, since in each swelling bud and blossoming flower lessons of love and trust may be found.

This is our ideal home—but, sad to say, an ideal too seldom realized. "Every home is a happy one until you see beneath the roof," said a writer in the olden time, and grievous it is that the peaceful-looking roofs so frequently cover disharmonies and indifference, or gathering storms. In these uncongenial abodes, each member of the household has his or her opinion of every subject, if they are strong characters. Each one tenaciously advocates his side of the question; bitter, grieving words ensue, anger and coldness creep into the hearts, till home becomes dreaded, and only a meeting-place for food and lodging, where wearily drag the hours and days. So important are the seemingly little things in a house-life, so many are the causes which produce these sad results, that it is difficult to know on which to descant, or how to make the weight of their importance felt.

Our homes should be the strongholds of our country, since in their influence are the minds of our future citizens and statesmen formed, and girls are nurtured who will raise up other homes fashioned after the models of those they have known.

Every vocation in life requires years of preparation. A life work demands a life study. But a woman whose mission and whose work it is to make the home, too often enters upon her duties wholly unfitted and unprepared, having given no thought to the weight her influence will have there. She neglects her mind, forgetting that the impetus to improvement and culture must emanate from her. She neglects her body, forgetful that good health alone begets good temper. She neglects her manners, forgetting that hers will leave their impress upon every inmate, while she overlooks no fault in others. She descends to idle gossip, too little mindful of a woman's home life, and forgetting that, as in old Rome the Lares made the home, so she now is the presiding and conferring deity.

The training of boys also is rarely that which will fit them to be loving and thoughtful. If mothers would realize this, and educate their sons for husbands, and to be gentlemen indeed, half the sorrow of home life would be avoided. Were boys taught to be courteous, kind, and attentive to their sisters, and were they made to understand that they have a duty to fulfil in the home, we need no longer say as now, that husbands are also greatly responsible for the too universal wretchedness.

They too often address to their wives sharp, discourteous words, "Which they forget and we remember," a young wife sadly said to us the other day. Fully absorbed in their own pursuits, oblivious to the trials and needs of their wives, they offer no word of cheer to those who have labored wearily in dull monotony all day. They give no aid in the education of children, but deem their sole duty lies in providing pecuniary support; failing to read in the careworn, patient face, from which the girl-bloom has too soon faded, silent pleading for a little thoughtful tenderness, a little loving aid. True, they love their wives devotedly; but love, without the nameless little tender acts which it should engender, is as the flower bereft of its perfume; and, alas! too often such love drives away devotion from the grieved heart, while cold duty takes its place.

All must realize this need of our country, all must grieve over the wretched lives and hopes of many households; but to women the sorrow must be keenest, for the fault in greatest degree is theirs, theirs alone the power to rectify it. Let them make it their glory so to fill their appointed place, that from their abodes may emanate and descend influences that for revolving years shall bless other households.