

JOHN MALLISON'S CHARGE.

(Concluded.)

"Why not, John?"

"For many reasons. I am no fit mate for Marcia—no, do not contradict me; remember that yours are partial eyes. A girl sees differently. That is inevitable, and I am wedded to my books." He had often said this before, but never with such a sinking of the heart. "And then it would seem as if I had broken this matter to Sir Owen Vaughan for my own purposes. He is rich—very rich. He is sure to leave his granddaughter a considerable slice of his wealth. People would set me down as a schemer. She—Marcia—might come to think it. No; the lines of my life are shaped and settled. It is too late to harbour romantic fancies. Do not let us discuss this subject again."

"Very well, John."

But there was obstinate unbelief in the set of the genial old mouth in spite of the acquiescence in words.

It was an ordeal which he would have shirked, but for his strong sense of duty, that which now faced John Mallison. He had to acquaint his ward with his discovery of the secret of her mother's rank. The interview took place in the drawing-room, and Mrs. Mallison found a speedy excuse to leave them alone together.

Marcia listened very quietly to the account of how her father's orders came to be infringed, and the results which had followed on the infringement. She did not once interrupt from beginning to end.

The silence was at first welcomed at the occasional breaks in the tale. It afforded John Mallison a chance of getting his sentences in order and of smoothing emotion out of his voice. But as the conclusion was reached it perplexed and harassed him that the girl was so impassive. What thoughts were passing behind the soft veil of those dark and beautiful eyelashes? Was he blamed? Were the girl's sympathies wholly with her father? Or did Marcia feel that the old man at Holm Manor had been hardly used in the rejection of his previous overtures for peace? It was impossible to divine.

"This is all. You know as much as I do now," he said at last, with an odd touch of asperity in his accents. "How it may affect your intentions, Marcia, I am at a loss even to guess, but of course I should like to hear."

Marcia was blushing furiously.

"It will be better that I should go away. You have been very kind, and I must have been a great nuisance, I am sure. You will be as blithe again when I am really gone."

Not a syllable had reference to Holm Manor. But John Mallison did not notice the strangeness of the omission. A madness seized him. He was not his own master. No words could have been more cunningly calculated to destroy his self-possession than these as they fell from Marcia's lips, and their challenge was supported by a glance at once shy, sorrowful, and mischievous.

"That is the reverse of the truth, and surely you must know it," he said in hoarse, vibrating tones. "You have been my winter sunbeam, Marcia; to lose you is to lose almost everything."

Any girl could have read in that moment John Mallison's secret.

Then in a sudden terror of his own weakness he feebly changed front, and sought to put a different face on his appeal.

"And my mother will miss you greatly," he said.

"You told me once that I must be a daughter to her," murmured Marcia musingly.

Somehow as she spoke her eyes flashed with all the power of pathos up to her companion's. They drooped as quickly. But their work was done, their message delivered.

John Mallison's pulses were beating like muffled drums. He rose and took a step forward.

"Marcia, is it possible that there is hope for me—that you can care for a grave and almost middle-aged student? My love has been yours these many days, but I never thought to confess it. All that is in my heart I cannot say—nor the half. Do not laugh at me; do not trifle with me, I beg. If I have blundered, forgive and forget the error."

"You have not blundered."

"And you will be my wife?"

"I will be a daughter—if you will let me, John—to Mrs. Mallison."

Instead of Marcia's returning to Africa, her father came to England, and an old family feud was happily and finally buried. Austin Vaughan solaced himself with a daughter of the house of Marchant, and when everything was amicably arranged confided to John Mallison that he had all the while feared that he was not in the running with such a clever fellow as Marcia's guardian. But it is the latter's strong opinion that he owes the happy issue of the romance that swept him into its irresistible current unawares to the skill and quiet diplomacy of his mother. Marcia and he are very happy together, and very, very glad that the misapprehension occurred which led to the healing of an ancient wound in two true and noble though proud hearts.

CONSUMPTION CURED.—An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure of 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, in German, French or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. A. Noyes, 520 Powers' Block, Rochester, N. Y.

MY AUSTRALIAN COUSIN.

CHAPTER I.

"Ye're my freen, Wilson," says Mactavish, who always grows particularly Scotch after a certain number of tumblers, and invariably when going to say anything disagreeable. "Ye're my freen, mon, an' a'm goun' to speak oot!"

I looked at him with much disfavor, for I well know this exordium means something very unflattering to my self-love. But as he is six feet high, broad in proportion, and a leading man at his athletic club, where in my opinion, he bestows on his violent pursuits all the attention which a deluded Government imagines is given to his official duties at the Waste Paper Office, I say nothing.

He refills his big pipe, leans back in his chair, and surveys me critically, with a stolid indifference to my sensitiveness of disposition which makes me secretly furious—but, as I have said, he is such a big man.

"Wilson," he says coolly, "ye're not much to look at."

Confound him! he is handsome—disgustingly so, and doesn't he know it!—though in a fair-haired, blue-eyed, gigantic, Gothic style which I do not appreciate. So I cannot use that *tu quoque* reply which is so soothing to one's feelings.

"Ye're no much to look at, and ye've little in the way of muscle, mon," he goes on, feeling his own huge biceps approvingly; "and I doubt ye're no much on a horse, are ye?"

"Oh nothing, of course, in comparison with you," I answer sarcastically.

"Of course not," he replies complacently. "I've been a rider ever since I was a wee bairn; but I doubt if ye can sit a horse, unless it were a very quiet one, at all. And ye don't like shooting—shooting, mon, which is the joy of my life. Eh! the miles of heather I've tramped in Inverness from sunrise to sunset," he soliloquises rapturously and mixes himself more toddy.

"I dare say I can use a gun as well as most men of intellectual tastes," I say sulkily. "At any rate, I can handle a cue as well as most."

"Deed ye can that," he responds, "as well most of us know when ye've cleaned us out"—what an offensive way of putting it!—"and if everything else fails in your intellectual pursuits ye can earn a comfortable living as a billiard-marker."

I should not sit so placidly under this insult if I were not in Mactavish's own rooms, drinking his whisky, and possibly if there were not so enormous a difference between us physically. I bottle up my wrath, however, and smile a sickly smile.

"Well," he resumes, "ye're as regards feezeek"—by which I assume in his detestable accent he means physique—"nothing to speak of. There's no denying that, laddie—eh?"

"You are very flattering," I say bitterly.

"Nae, nae mon, I'm your freen"—friend indeed!—"and I no flatter ma freens. I'm speakin' candidly for your ain gude." I write under this disgusting phrase, always hateful, and all the more so from the detestable Scotch accent he moults it in; but Mactavish goes on as if I were as pachydermateous as a rhinoceros. "I'm of opinion that ye'll find ye've made a mistake. Ye're a conceited body, though why yoursel' best knows. But ye've some good points I'm free to admit," he adds magnanimously. "Still it's a great thing for ye to attempt to go to your uncle—a big man your uncle, mind ye, noo he's settled down at hame and pit his siller made in Australian cattle runs intil a braw English estate—and try to mak' him tak' ye as a son-in-law."

This grows intolerable.

"I don't know," I say somewhat warmly, for I too have had my share of the whisky, "that I asked you for your advice, Mactavish, but you are very kind in so handsomely giving it to me. I was under the impression that I merely told you I was going to make acquaintance with my Australian uncle, who has lately settled down in Devonshire, and that he has a pretty daughter."

"Preccesely," says Mactavish, sipping his toddy with much deliberation; "that is what ye did say. Nor did ye ask my advice, but knowing ye to be a slighty sort of fellow, wi' no too much brains or ballast, I thoct I'd gie ye some sound matter for reflection. Nor hae I dune yet," here he hiccups, which slightly spoils his philosophic air, but at these points he sometimes gets furious at being opposed, and he is so big that I perforce sit silent.

"Ye'll find y' uncle and 's niece fond of the fresh air, devoted to field-sports, and as much at home on horseback as ye are in an armchair composing the rubbish ye call violets"—I suppose the barbarian means triolets—"for the silly magazines that print your rhymes. But what good are you, sir, tell me that, in open-air muscular exercise; what sort of a figure would ye cut on a buck-jumper?" And he bursts into a roar of Gargantuan laughter.

"What has that to do with the question?" I say snappishly.

"Everything, ye daft body, everything! The sort of nephew your uncle would like is a man who would appreciate the free Australian life, and the rough beauty of violent exercise."

"Like yourself, *par exemple*!" I say politely sneering.

"Yes, Jimmy Wilson, like myself," answers the huge Scotchman complacently. His conceit is as great as his thickness of skin. "More than that, I can see with half an eye ye think—for your self-love, Jimmy, is inordinate, inordinate, sir—that your Australian cousin is going to fall in love with your handbox graces. But I'll hold ye a pound to a bawbee she'll turn up her pretty little nose at ye!" and he again laughs uproariously.