

"It was but a slight service," I said, scarcely knowing what words I stammered out; "I have to thank you for the pleasure of allowing me to do it for you."

In another moment she was gone, with a kindly "good-night," and I tried in vain to persuade myself that it was possible for her to take my answer as anything but a piece of ordinary politeness. Yet I had meant it with all my heart. What else could I have said? I thought. What else could I have done? Of course, my words had only the sound of a courteous answer, and as such she took them, thinking not of poor John Gildern, but of her rescued treasure.

In the morning I wished in vain for one sight of that fair, simple-hearted girl, that had so unconsciously robbed me of my own heart's peace, and of my ordinary unromantic, business-like frame of mind. More—I confess I loitered unnecessarily long over breakfast and departure; and I took many a side glance as the shabby servant led me to the door, and then it was not by the shortest route that I made my way to the high road. But there was no help for it; I left Elmsmere without seeing my little enchantress again.

III.

Four years passed to be added to John Gildern's thirty. I was fortunate enough to have a rich relative, and I gave up the service of Messrs. Copal and spent the best part of those four years travelling with him in Italy; and it must be admitted that I thought but seldom of Elmsmere after the first few months, though there were certain memories connected with the place which might any day or hour have filled my time-tried heart as full of romance as was ever a boy of half my years. These memories I put out of my mind permanently as useless and disturbing; but I had no other romance, though there were ample opportunities for such indulgence both at home and when we were on our travels. At the end of those four years we returned to London, and I took up my former employment, but at a different house, which I may call here the house of Messrs. Easelby & Sons. One morning I was laughing over the pages of *Punch* in an idle hour—there were many idle hours at Messrs. Easelby's—when a fellow-clerk said in his usual off-hand way of throwing work on me: "You might open that parcel and attend to those letters which the late post has just brought in, Gildern."

I made some remarks more forcible than courteous about the parcel and letters, adding: "I shall attend to them this time, but it is none of my business." It was in this mood that I opened the first letter. Had my fellow-clerk been a student of physiognomy he would have seen my annoyance suddenly change to a feeling very different. But my comrade had no such gift of insight; and, even if he had, there were deeper feelings awakened by that letter which my face did not betray. It was addressed to Messrs. Easelby, and the writing was light and unfinished in character, much like a school-girl's, with a u and a like. It was in after readings—days and months after that—I noted all this, and then it was in no spirit of criticism. At the time I only saw that it was from a young lady, asking if water-colour drawings of hers, done at her former country home, would be acceptable for sale, adding that any price would be taken, as she was anxious to part with them, and the name signed was Marian—. Even here I cannot break the sacred secrecy of that second name, but it was the same as that of the owner of Elmsmere, and I no longer doubted who the writer was, even before I opened the thin, flat parcel and took out sketches of parts of the well-remembered garden, the avenue of elms and the shallow, reedy widening of the little river that bounded one part of the grounds and gave the name to the house. The letter was dated from a shop that I happened to know, a stationer's in City road. I knew also that this was merely an address for correspondence, and not the residence of the writer. Unfortunately, there would not be the smallest hope in offering the drawings to my employers. But it was impossible for one who knew the would-be artist, and guessed the history of their coming, to return them to her as a failure. At least it was impossible for me, with pictures of the past rising in my mind and sympathy roused until it was pain. I enclosed a trifling sum, letting it appear to come from Messrs. Easelby, and signing my name in my accustomed illegible manner; and that night I took the parcel of drawings to my own home.

Day after day I spent in plans for coming into actual communication with her. I built castles in the air then, indeed, imagining how I would come to know her again; how her grandfather, who doubtless had by this time fallen lower in the world, would accept me as her suitor; and how life would run for the rest of our days like a fairy tale. At the same time, every week that went by in hesitation added to my anxieties, and at last I was positively suffering from suspense, all my old ardor roused and my sympathies quickened by the thought of this young girl, so unfit for the world's trials, obliged to do stern battle with them and perhaps alone. My surmises were true. When about a month had passed, the clerk who had attended to the correspondence came to me one day laughing at a poor attempt at water-colour drawing. I took the cardboard out of his hand, touched to the quick, and gave some awkward explanation, ending with: "I shall attend to it." So I did attend to it by sending to the girl's address a

poor price, but the best I could afford and taking home with me the worthless drawing. This happened twice again; and being now on the watch, I myself managed to receive the parcels and letters, and each time I did what any man on earth would have done—had he been placed as John Gildern was—sent my own money with my useful illegible signature and appropriated the poor child's work. Then, fearing the repetition of my pardonable ruse might lead to some awkward discovery, I desired the sender of the water-colour drawing to leave them in future at an address which I gave in the city, and merely to mark them, "Messrs. Easelby & Co.—to be called for."

The result of this step proved that I was right in relying on her small knowledge of the business world. But what was my dismay to find, when I first called at this city address, a package, which, when opening it at my rooms, I found to contain—ah, now well remembered!—the picture of Marian's mother. A voice came to me out of the past; "I am so glad: I would not part with it for the world." But some overruling power had doubtless compelled it otherwise. And what a tale the parting told. I glanced at the accompanying letter. It stated with the most unbusiness-like simplicity, that the writer greatly valued the picture, but she needed money at the moment. If Messrs. Easelby would send part of its price and leave her the chance of buying it back again at some future time, she would be most grateful. But if they never did business on those terms, she would sell the picture for whatever they thought it worth.

"Poor child! Poor Marian!" I exclaimed with Heaven knows how sad and burning a heart, "she is sorely tried somewhere in this great, hard world of London—sorely tried, and perhaps without a friend." I paced up and down for a few moments with the open letter in my hand, thinking what could be done, and haunted by every soul-stirring memory that the sweet young face and trustful blue eyes had left me. I wrote a hurried note and sent it on its way, delaying only to inclose a check for the picture, and to explain that it would be safely kept, and might at any time be repurchased by the sender. Then I wrote another letter, taking care that it would arrive a post later than the business communication, purporting to be from Messrs. Easelby's clerk of the unknown signature. The second letter ran:

DEAR MISS N.—I have hitherto corresponded with you only in your business affairs in relation to Messrs. Easelby; but strangely enough I once had the honor—far from forgotten—of meeting you at Elmsmere, when I was acting agent for Messrs. Copal & Co. I have not forgotten your kindness and confidence in allowing me then to do you a slight service in connection with a picture which has to-day passed through my hands. If you send a word in answer to this note to John Gildern at the above address, I shall take it as a sign that you will do me the great favor of permitting me to renew that chance acquaintance. If I receive no answer, I shall do my best to be resigned to the greatest disappointment of my life; and in either case your business relations with Messrs. Easelby will continue exactly as if I had never ventured to send you this letter.

I took care to write my name with clearness in the body of the letter, but to sign it as usual at the close. After a day or two of the utmost anxiety, a few words came in answer. Poor Marian explained that her grandfather was ill, but that he would be glad to receive me, and that she hoped I would not be surprised at finding that they had suffered great losses and misfortunes, for I would visit a very different home from Elmsmere. At the head of this letter was an address in a street in Finsbury, a quiet, dull corner, not far from the city road. Thither I made my way the very first evening after receiving the letter, and I still recollect how dull the street looked in the twilight, all the houses alike as if each row had been cast in a mold. As I looked up and down for the house, I wondered if the people who lived there had to make sure of the number every time they went home. The number I sought led me to a house where in the lower room there was but dim firelight, and bright light only in the top window. After a long delay I was admitted to the room distinguished in those houses as the "front parlor." The stout landlady, who seemed particularly untidy and in a hurry, poked up the fire before she left me, and I could see distinctly the worn furniture, the glass shades of wax fruit and the old lace curtains that I still recollect in one vague dream when I think of that room. The fire was bright, flashing white on the wall, when there came in a fair girl, pale and altered, but blue-eyed Marian still. But how strange she looked—tearful and without a smile. She stretched out her hand with the sorrowful words on her lips, "Poor grandpapa!" She could utter no more; but I understood the rest. The poor, broken-down man was dead in that bright room upstairs.

I would have gone away at once, feeling my presence an intrusion just then; but she asked me to stay, adding most simply, with her face hidden in her thin white hands: "You won't mind my crying a little? But don't go just awhile. It is kind of you to come, and I shall be able to talk to you soon. But I'm so—so nervous and shaken."

We did not meet as strangers. Sorrow and sympathy became friends at once, and there is no barrier of ceremony between them. Somehow she trusted me; why I cannot tell, except perhaps, because she knew nothing of the

world, and I had once shown some little kindness to her about that picture at Elmsmere.

There is but little more to tell. I accompanied her a few days after to the old man's grave. It was a sad, lonely funeral; we were the only mourners.

I let but little time pass until I won Marian and made her my own; for loneliness and grief were telling upon her, and I could afford to despise the tattlers who talked of my unbecoming haste. Ah! it was well to make haste, for little did I suspect then that my new-found treasure was already hastening away from me. She busied herself gaily in our new home; she laid plans of all she would do to make it "a little paradise, John," when she would be well and strong; but there was a dark look under my little wife's blue eyes, a hollowness of the cheek once so fair and smooth, a husky cough that drove me wild with increasing fears. There was for me a deepening beauty in her looks; but more and more I felt the hand of fate upon us as I watched her face and delicate form from day to day, seeing but too plainly

Something faint and fragile in the whole.
As though 'twere but a lamp that held a soul.

At last the day came—dreaded, oh! how long!—when, raising her fair head from her pillow, my poor Marian whispered to the watcher in his constant place beside it, "Dear heart, tell me, am I dying?"

Oh! how the words cut into my very soul—"Am I dying?" from the sweet flower of Elmsmere, and the same question from troubled blue eyes that had so charmed me long ago. "Not dying, darling," I could only say, "don't call it dying, it is only going home."

Then she laid her head upon my arm, looking up at me with those pure, child-like eyes. "Don't grieve and fret, dear heart. Ah! I'm afraid you will. He will bring you home too, you know, into his bosom."

When I sat beside my lonely hearth, I took courage from those words to bide my time and work out my life bravely. My grief has not driven me into selfish seclusion, and I have found interest in covering the walls of my home with art treasures of my choice. Among these is the picture of Juliet, which, with a pardonable artifice of love, I pretended to buy back for my poor girl before her marriage. As to her own drawings, I kept them hidden, and she never knew my secret. The revelation would only have taken from her the pleasure of thinking that her work had supported her ruined grandfather. But when she was with me no more I filled my own room with those worthless sketches—priceless to me, and it is among them now that I have gone back through those old years, and raised again the memories of Elmsmere and of Marian as I saw her first, before her frail life was broken on the hard world's wheel.

EXTRAVAGANCE IN EATING.

"It is probable," Mr. Ernest Hart writes in the *British Medical Review*, "that in these hard times and in the bad times yet to come during the winter of distress with which we are threatened that the question of conveniently feeding our population will assume a growing importance. It is one on which medical men are able to speak with some authority as practical physiologists, physicians, and travelled men of the world. The extravagance of our people in their feeding is well known to us all—notably, their extravagant excess in flesh food, their ignorant neglect of nitrogenous vegetables and unskillful waste in cooking. At this moment Sir Henry Thompson's excellent articles on Food and Diet in the *Nineteenth Century* are very opportune, and medical men generally may usefully serve their country at what threatens to be a period of widespread distress and critical suffering by inculcating sound principles in respect to the economy of meat, the attention to all kinds of beans, lentils, green vegetables, common fish (now neglected), rice, cheese, macaroni, and hominy. In a great number of the houses of the middle and all of the upper classes it is the practice to indulge the servants and the masters in meat meals twice, and often thrice a day. There can be no doubt that this is wasteful, and in all probability it is for the majority unwholesome. To repeat the now well-known figures which represent the high food value of all kinds of peas, beans, and lentils is trite to persons who have any extended knowledge of life elsewhere than in England, or who have any elementary knowledge of dietetics and of the composition and value of food. Yet the fallacy that meat alone can give strength for hard work and beer alone give adequate stimulus to its digestion are fallacies so deeply founded, and which underlie so many extravagances and follies of the poor and of the well-to-do, that a campaign against dietetic fallacies would be as patriotic as it is well founded. The first step is a widening of our list of *legumes*. The first immediately available resources are peas, beans, and rice, haricot beans, lentils, and the varied beans of India; the second is the introduction of the pipkin and the stew-pot. Until the English housewife learns how wasteful is the roasting-jack, how costly the gridiron, and how unnecessary the "clear fire" and the blazing mass of coals, without which she can at present usually neither cook a cutlet nor boil a cup of coffee, the first lessons of household economy are still unknown to her. But it cannot be very difficult, if anything like a general effort be made to popularize

the art of making an appetising, nourishing soup with a few bones, a crust of bread, and half a cabbage, a *croustade au pot*, such as every peasant can make, and such as every epicure falls back upon from time to time. It cannot be difficult to naturalize in England the wholesome, delicious, and nutritive breakfast "hominy porridge," on which peasant and millionaire alike delight in America, and which may be seen as often at the breakfast-table in the Fifth Avenue at New York as in the cottage in New England; the art of stewing over a few embers in a pipkin which converts scraps of meat, onions, carrot, and bread-crusts into a savoury stew cannot be unattainable. At any rate, the time is suitable for a renewed effort to impress upon rich and poor the costliness, the waste, and the national evil of our present disregard of the wealth of *legumes* which is at hand, but little used; of the desirability of inquiring into the alleged trade combinations by which the price of fish is kept up and the take limited in order to preserve a system of limited sales and large profits. The habitual excess of flesh-eating probably leads also to the excess of beer and wine drinking; the digestion is fatigued by excess of nitrogenous food, and then stimulated by alcohol to dispose of it. More and more the medical profession is happily assuming the duty of instructing the people in the means of health and the art of avoiding and preventing disease. Dietetic regulation, in health as in disease, is one of the most useful of medical functions."

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

SIMS REEVES is on an operatic tour through the English provinces.

MUSIC teachers in New York have been compelled to come down in their prices.

THE new operetta, upon which Offenbach is at work, is entitled "La Fille du Tambour Major."

SLEEPY HOLLOW, Maretzek's new opera, is to be done into French for an early production in Paris.

It is said that Mme. Adelina's Patti's great amusement is fishing for trout. She is now in Wales, enjoying that sport.

TENNYSOON has finished his new drama, "Thomas à Becket," which Mr. Irving is to put before the public during the season.

MR. GEORGE VANDENHOFF, whose Dickens Mornings were so popular last year, will give another series of similar readings during the month of January.

MRS. SCOTT-SIDDONS will make a final tour of the States, commencing October 16, at Boston. She will visit all the large cities with a farewell programme of new readings.

BARRY SULLIVAN will probably come to America in January or February, and will act his way across the continent to San Francisco, whence he will sail for Australia.

WAGNER, in his second paper on the "Work and Vision of My Life," announces that he was far from satisfied with the result of the great Bayreuth festival of 1876, and that he has planned greater things for the future.

upon Anna Dickinson to write a new play for her. An odd fact in this connection is that Miss Davenport has cut her hair off, and now wears it after the Dickinsonian method.

It is said of Buttons, the new comic opera, that while in Fintona there are but twenty-four, in the Chimes of Normandy twenty-three, Pinafire twenty-four, and Maretzek's Sleepy Hollow eighteen musical numbers, in Buttons there are forty-three.

THE most important and interesting theatrical news that has reached us in many a day is the news that Edwin Booth intends to act in London, and that negotiations are even now in progress between Henry Irving and himself, with a view to his appearance in that city.

It has been finally arranged that Ullman shall bring Bernhardt to this country, although not until the little Frenchwoman had broken a contract with another manager. Under this contract Mlle. Bernhardt will come to this country in September next, and remain for six months. H. J. Sargent will probably have charge of the tour, as Mr. Ullman does not propose coming himself.

GEORGE MACDONALD and members of his family are appearing in England in a dramatization of the Pilgrim's Progress. Moncure D. Conway writes that, while generally quaint to the verge of the grotesque, there is much about the performance which had to his mind solemn significance. But the audience smile over the most serious passages, even when "Christian" cries, "What shall I do to be saved?"

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, with full direction for preparing and using, in German, French, or English. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. W. Shear, 149 Powers' Block, Rochester, N.Y.

A CARD.

To all who are suffering from the errors and indiscretions of youth, nervous weakness, early decay, loss of manhood, &c., I will send a recipe that will cure you, FREE OF CHARGE. This great remedy was discovered by a missionary in South America. Send a self-addressed envelope to the REV. JOSEPH T. INMAN, Station D, New York City.