

THE ACADIAN AND KING'S CO. TIMES.

HONEST, INDEPENDENT, FEARLESS...DEVOTED TO LOCAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

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Helps passed again.
"You speak in the past tense," said

POETRY.
Growing Old.
The fairest lilies droop at eventide,
The sweetest roses fall from off the stem.
The verest things on earth cannot abide,
And we are passing, too, away like them.
We're growing old.
We had our dreams—those rosy dreams of youth—
They faded, and 'twas well. This afternoons
I had a thought as I sat there, and yet
I drop a tear now in this latter time
To think we're old.

We smile at those poor fancies of the past—
A saddened smile almost akin to pain,
Those high desires, those purposes so vast,
Ah, poor hearts, they cannot come again!
O! Well, the heavens are old; this earth is, too,
Old wine is best, matured fruit most sweet,
Much have we lost, much gained, al- though 'tis true,
We tread life's way with most uncertain feet.
We move along and scatter, as we pass,
Soft grass, tender hopes on every hand,
At last, with gray streaked hair and hal- ley face,
We step across the boundary of the land
Where none is old.

SELECT STORY.
A Life for a Love.
BY L. T. MEADE.

CHAPTER XXI.—Continued.
"And she's beautiful, Mr Wyndham. Ah, there's her curse. Beautiful and ambitious and not a lady, and dying to be one. You understand, Mr Wyndham—you must understand."
Wyndham said nothing.
"Well, a month or so ago I found out there was a gentleman—at least a man who called himself a gentleman—walking with her, and filling her head with nonsense. His name was Herriot, a captain in the Hussars. I told her she was to have ought to say to him, but I soon found that she disobeyed me. Then I had to spy on her—you may think how I felt, but it had to be done. I found that she walked with him, and met him at all hours. I made inquiries about his character, and I found he was a sounder, a had fellow out and out. He'd be sure to break my Esau's heart if he did no worse. Then I was in a taking, for the girl kept everything in, and would scarcely brook me so much as to look at her. I was that upset that I took Cherry into my confidence. She's a very good girl, is Cherry—the Lord hasn't cursed her with no beauty. Last week she brought me word that Esther was going to the Gaisty with Captain Herriot, that he had taken two stalls and they were to have a fine time. She said Esther was almost out of her mind with delight, as it was always her dream to be seen at the theatre, beautifully dressed, with a real gentleman. She had shown the tickets to Cherry, and Cherry was smart enough to take the numbers and keep them in the back of her head. She told me, and I can tell you, Mr Wyndham, I was fit to kill someone. I went straight off to the Gaisty office, and with good luck or the grace of God, I found there was a vacant stall next to Esther's—just one, and no more. I paid for that stall, here's the ticket in my pocket."
"Yes," said Wyndham. "And you mean to go with Esther to night? A very good idea—excellent. But how will she take it?"
"How will she take it, Mr Wyndham? I feel fit to pull my grey hairs out. How would she have taken it, you mean? For it's all a thing of the past, sir. Oh, I had it all planned. I was to wait until she and that fellow had taken their places, and then I'd come in quite natural, and sit down beside her, and answer none of her questions, only never leave her, no, not for a quarter of a minute. And if he spoke, the fellow, I had my reply for him. I'd stay quiet enough till he got outside, and then just one blow in the middle of his face—yes, just one, to relieve a father's feelings. Then home with my girl, and I think it's more than likely we wouldn't have been troubled with no more of Captain Herriot's attentions."
Helps passed again.
"You speak in the past tense," said

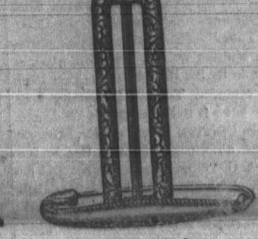
Gerald. "Why cannot you carry out this excellent programme?"
"That's it, sir, that's what about maddens me. I came to the office this morning, and what has happened hasn't happened this three months past. There's business come in of a nature that no one can tackle but myself. Business of a private character, and yet what may mean the loss or gain of thousands. Oh, I can't explain it, Mr Wyndham, even though you are a partner; there are things that confidential clerks know that are hid from junior partners. I can't leave here till eleven o'clock to-night, Mr Wyndham, and if you don't help me Esther may be a lost girl. Yes, there's no minding matters—lost, beyond hope. Will you help me, Mr Wyndham? I'll go mad if my only girl, my beautiful girl, comes to that."
"I? Can I help you?" asked Wyndham. There was hesitation and distress in his voice. He saw that he was going to be asked to do something unpleasant.
"You can do this, sir. You can make it all right. Bless you, sir, who's there to see? And you go with the best intentions. You go in a noble cause. You can afford to risk that much, Mr Wyndham. I want you to take my place at the Gaisty to-night; take my ticket and go there. Talk pleasant to Esther; not much, but just a little, nothing to rouse her suspicions. Let her think it was just a coincidence your being there. Then, just at the end, give her this letter from me. I've said a thing in it that will startle her. She'll get a fright and turn to you. Put her into a cab then, and bring her here. You can sit on the box if you like. That's all. Put her into my arms and your task is done. Here's the ticket and the letter. Do it, Mr Wyndham, and God will bless you. Yes, yes, my poor young girl—it'll bless you."

"Don't talk of God when you speak of me," said Wyndham. "Something has happened which does the door of religion for me. The door between God and me is closed. I am still open, however, to the call of humanity. You want me to go to the Gaisty to-night to save your daughter. It is very probable that if I went I should save her. I am engaged, however, for to-night. My sister is a town. We are going to make a party to the Haymarket."
"Oh, sir, what of that? Send a telegram to my girl to have an engagement. Think of Esther. Think what it means if you fall on now."
"I do think of it, helps. I will do what you want. Give me the letter and the theatre ticket."

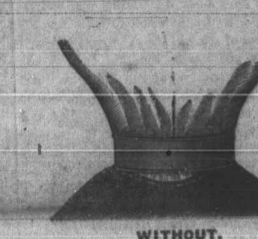
CHAPTER XXII.
Valentine was delighted to have Lillias as her companion. She was an excellent spirits just now, and Lillias and she enjoyed going about together. They had adventures which pleased them both, such simple adventures as come in greater girl every day—a ride in an omnibus to Kow, an excursion up the river to Buttersea in a penny steamer, and many other mild intoxicants of this nature. Sometimes Gerald came with them, but often they went alone. They laughed and chatted at these times, and people looked at them, and thought them two particularly merry good-looking school-girls.
Valentine was very fond of going to the theatre, and of course one of the principal treats in store for Lillias was a visit to the play. Valentine decided that they would go to some entertainment of a theatrical character nearly every evening. On the day of Helps strange request to Wyndham they went to see 'Captain Swift' at the Haymarket. Mr Paget had taken a box for the occasion, and Valentine's last injunction to her husband was to beg of him to be home in good time so that they might have dinner in peace, and reach the Haymarket before the curtain rose.
Lillias and she trotted about most of the morning, and at last she was in the pretty drawing-room in Park Lane, slipping their shoes, examining their packages, or chattering about dress, and sundry other trivial matters after the fashion of light-hearted girls.
Presently Valentine pulled a tiny watch out of her belt.
"Gerald is late," she said. "He

promised faithfully to be in to tea, and it is now six o'clock. We dine at half-past. Had we not better go and dress, Lillias?"
Lillias was standing on the hearth-rug, she glanced at the clock, then into the ruddy flames, then half-impatiently towards the door.
"Oh, wait a moment or two," she said. "If Gerald promised to come he is safe to be here directly. I never met such a painfully conscientious fellow; he would not break his word even in a trifle like this for all the world. Give him three minutes longer. You surely will not take half-an-hour to dress."
"How solemnly you speak, Lillias," responded Valentine. "If Gerald is late, that could scarcely be considered a breaking of his word. I mean in a promise of that kind one never knows how one may be kept. That is always understood, of course."
There came a pealing ring and a double knock at the door, and a moment after the page entered with a telegram which he handed to his mistress. Valentine tore the yellow envelope open, and read the contents of the pink sheet.
"No answer, Masters," she said to the boy. Then she turned to Lillias. "Gerald can't go with us to-night. He is engaged. You see, of course, he would not break his word, Lillias. He is unavoidably prevented coming. It is too bad."
Some of the brightness went out of her face, and her spirits went down a very little.
"Well, it can't be helped," she said, "only I am disappointed."
"So am I, awfully disappointed," responded Lillias.
Then the two went slowly upstairs to change their dresses.
When they came down again, Mr Paget, who was to dine with them, was waiting in the drawing-room. There was a suppressed excitement, a suppressed triumph in his eyes, which, however, only made him look more particularly bright and charming.
When Valentine came in in the pure white which gave her such a girlish and even pathetically innocent air, he went up and kissed her almost fiercely. He put his arms round her waist and drew her close to him, and looked into her eyes with a gaze of passion which frightened her. For the first time in all her existence she had struck from the father whom she idolized. She was seriously conscious of her own

shrinking, of the un-feminine something which made her not herself free, and stand on the hearth-rug by Lillias' side.
"I don't see your husband, my pet," said Mr Paget. "He ought to have come home long before now, that is, if he means to come with us to-night."
"But he doesn't, father," said Valentine. "That's just the grief. I had a telegram from him, half-an-hour ago; he is unavoidably detained."
Mr Paget raised his eyebrows. "Not at the office," he said, in a markedly grave voice, and with another significant raise of his brows. "That I know, for he left before I did. Ah, well, young men will be young men."
Neither Valentine nor Lillias knew why they both flushed up, and left a wider space between them and Valentine's handsome mother.
He did not take the least notice of this movement on both their parts, but went on in a very smooth, cheerful voice.
"Perhaps Gerald does not miss me so much as he thought," he said. "Since I saw you this morning, Val, our programme has been completely altered. We go to 'Captain Swift' to-morrow night. I went to the office and exchanged the box. To-night we go to the Gaisty. I have been fortunate in securing one of the best boxes in the whole house, and Monte Christo Junior is well worth seeing."
"I don't know that I particularly care for the Gaisty, father," said Valentine. "How very funny of you to change our programme."
"Well, the fact is, some business friends of mine were just passing through town were particularly anxious to see 'Captain Swift', so as I could oblige them, I did. It is all the better for your husband, Valentine; he won't miss this fine piece of drama."
"No, that is something to be thankful for," responded Valentine. "But I'm sorry you selected the Gaisty as an exchange. I don't think Lillias will care for 'Monte Christo'. However, it can't be helped now, and dinner waits. Shall we go downstairs?"
Mr Paget and his party were in good time in their places. Valentine took a seat rather far back in the box, but her father promptly coaxed her to come to the front, supplied both her and Lillias with opera glasses, and encouraged both girls to look about them, and watch the different people who were gradually filing into their places in the stalls.



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LE BON MARCHE, HALIFAX, N. S.
HALIFAX, N. S.

Mr Paget himself neither wore glasses nor aided his vision with an opera glass. His face was slightly flushed, and his eyes, keen and bright, travelled round the house, taking in everything, not passing over a single individual.
Valentine was never particularly curious about her neighbors, and as Lillias knew no one, they both soon least back in their chairs, and talked softly to one another.
The curtain rose, and each girl bent forward to see and enjoy. The rest of the house was now comparatively dark, but just before the lights were lowered, Mr Paget might have been heard to give a faint quick sigh of relief.
A tall girl in cream color and soft furs walked slowly down the length of the stalls, and took her place in such a position that Valentine could scarcely look down without seeing her. This girl's beauty was so marked that many eyes were turned in her direction as she appeared. She was very regal looking, very quiet and dignified in manner. Her features were classical and pure in outline, and her head, with its wealth of raven black hair, was splendidly set.
She was accompanied by a tall, fairly good-looking man who sat next to her.
When the curtain rose and the lights were lowered the stall at her other side was vacant.
CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.

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