

"WHO BREAKS, PAYS!"

BY M. W. S. G.

The time was evening—the pleasant close of a pleasant summer day, the place, the tastefully and even luxuriously furnished drawing-room of a pretty villa at Fulham; the actors, a magnificently handsome, athletic man of middle age, and a lady some fifteen years his junior—not handsome, it is true, but with a face that was full of power and expression, and whose mobile and changing interest won upon the heart of the beholder as more soulless beauty has no power to do. She had had her triumphs, in spite of her lack of regular loveliness—this woman, with the sparkling face and the deep, bewildering gray eyes. Many a man had thrown his love and fortune at her feet, in the course of her successful career as an actress, against whose fair fame no word of scandal had ever been breathed. She had accepted no such offering, however, but had gone on her lonely yet triumphant way, and there were those who said that she knew not how to love.

They would have acknowledged their mistake could they have looked upon her on this evening, as she stood there in the twilight with those soft gray eyes resting upon the face of her companion with a look of passionate yearning and of passionate pain. For her time, though long delayed, had come at last. With all the force of her strong and fiery nature she loved this man, who alone, out of all the many with whom she had been on terms of friendly intimacy, loved her not.

"It is settled, then," she said, in a low tone. "We part. You leave me—and for her!"

"Nay, my dear Agatha," he began, in a soothing way.

"Hush!" she said imperatively. "Do not try to deceive me. I know all, Edward. I know that you are about to marry a pretty little schoolgirl, whose two attractions are her wax-doll beauty and her wealth. Beauty like that I could not have given you; but wealth and fame and love, such as your schoolgirl never even dreamed of, might have been yours with me. But you have chosen. I say no more. Farewell, Edward!"

Why could he not love this woman? She was young, famous, and wealthy. Above all, she loved him better than he had ever been loved before—far better than he would ever be loved again, if he married as he intended to do.

Oh, reader, that was just the reason. She loved him too well! Had she been indifferent, he would have been at her feet. "It spoils a man to marry her; it spoils a woman to love her!" says the old proverb. Change the noun and pronoun in the last clause of the sentence, and I, for one, will subscribe most heartily to its truth.

Agatha Beaumont's color rose high between the doubling, questioning glance those bright blue eyes were fixing on her face. With a woman's keen instinct she read her companion's thought, and resented it as only a proud and loving woman could do.

"Never mind discussing the question with yourself at this late day, Mr. Edward Poyning," she said, sarcastically. "Your fate and mine are fixed now. Once more—good-bye!"

"Why need it be good-bye, Agatha?" said Edward Poyning, in his lowest, deepest tone. Now that it had come to the actual farewell, he found that this woman had taken a stronger hold upon his life than he knew. "Why need it be good-bye, dear Agatha? Cannot we be friends still, even though—"

"Even though you give another woman the love I once hoped to win! Even though you come to me, for a few brief moments, when you grow tired of her pretty face and childish ways! Even though you leave me and go back to her, and leave me loving you, hating you, almost loathing you still!" she cried wildly.

"But, Agatha—"

"Take care!" she cried, with a dark glance. "You have broken my heart. Who breaks, pays! Take care that no evil befalls you through all this; and that you may be safe from such, leave me in peace—now and for ever!"

She pressed his hand convulsively. She glanced through fast gathering tears, and for the last time, at the grandly beautiful face that had been so fatal to her. She half-listed his hand, as if she would have raised it to her lips; but the next moment she dashed it aside, and with a proud toss of the head turned away, and left the room.

Thenceforth, whatever she might feel or suffer in secret, the rule of Edward Poyning over her life and love was, to all outward appearance, at an end.

Mr. Poyning married in due course of time, and returning home with his youthful bride, was just in time to witness the debut of Agatha Beaumont in a new piece which had been written expressly for her.

Her success was a magnificent one. The whole house rose to greet her as she was led before the curtain after the last act. She was nearly smothered with bouquets. And the very next day one of the richest men in the metropolis offered her his hand and heart, and was refused.

All this Mr. Edward Poyning heard in silence.

She had seen him at the theatre; she had glanced at him in the very moment of her triumph, but only as she might have glanced at a stranger. He went home in a fever of re-

morse and jealousy, and wrote to her that night before he slept. No answer was vouchsafed to his letter, though he felt sure that she had read it. He called at the villa, and Agatha's confidential servant, who had admitted him for six months or more to the boudoir, now looked him coolly in the face, and said that her mistress was "engaged."

Six months went by, and he had never seen Agatha except in public. One evening she did not appear at the theatre, as usual. The manager, coming forward, announced that she was "indisposed," but soon hoped to greet her friends again. The same announcement was made for a week, and other pieces were put upon the stage. At the end of the week the whole theatrical world was in mourning over the news of Agatha's sudden death.

The physicians avowed that she had died of disease of the heart, which had existed unsuspected for many years, and developed itself at the last with frightful and fatal rapidity. And one man, hearing this, smote his breast in secret, and called himself a murderer!—as indeed he was. They buried her in one of the shadiest and sunniest nooks of that shady and sunny cemetery where so many of our brightest stars repose. The whole world, literary and artistic, followed the coffin to its resting-place, and there were few dry eyes looking on as it was lowered into the grave.

Only one mourner was wanting in that funeral cortege. Edward Poyning had left town, with his young wife, the day after Agatha's death. Many remarked upon his absence. Some approved of it; some—and those the kinder hearted—openly condemned.

But none knew what I know—that at ten o'clock that night a stately figure knelt beside that new-made grave, and a face, handsome even in its sorrow and despair, was raised to the calm night sky, wet with tears that flowed, alas! too late.

"Agatha, my love, my darling!" moaned the trembling lip.

But the quiet sleeper beneath a sod was, for the first time, deaf and silent, and gave no answer to the once beloved voice.

"Who breaks, pays!" And Edward Poyning, amid all the splendor and luxury of his daily life, is a sad and lonely man. His heart—what there is of it—lies in the grave of the woman whom his coldness grieved and killed—the woman whose death alone had power to teach him that he loved her.

FASHIONABLE DECEPTIONS.

Life, viewed from before the footlights, is a very different thing to life regarded from behind the scenes. People, when they have on their company manners, their company clothes, and deliver themselves of their company sentiments are not at all like what they are when they are in their natural habiliments and speak freed from constraint. It is a remarkable and, at the same time, a significant fact as indicating the incomprehensibility of human nature, that most persons are far more careful not to injure themselves in the estimation of mere acquaintances than in that of those whom they may reasonably be supposed to love the best in all the world. This is exemplified almost every day they live. In polite circles, however bitter may be the feelings of a husband and wife, they will address each other in tones of honeyed sweetness, and smile upon those by whom they are surrounded in a scrupulous manner as it is possible for mere mortals to attain. But for certain indications, apparent to the keen observer, one might be led to the conclusion that it would be impossible for clouds to gather on some beaming countenances and completely change their aspect. Even those who are most careless about their personal appearance as completely metamorphose themselves as possible when they imagine there is any likelihood of their being brought in contact with those whom they call friends, but of whom they know comparatively little. The ordinary small-talk of a drawing-room is illustrative in the same direction. Those who converse affect a knowledge of what they imagine is the correct thing for them to know, and profound ignorance regarding many of the realities of life, and upon which they are, or should be, well adapted to give an opinion. They discuss and profess great admiration for the works of authors which they have never read, they go into ecstasies over pictures which are to them little more than so much paint and canvases, they use hyperbolic language in reference to singers and musical performers when the fact is that high-class music is to them so much empty sound and nothing more. They would be ashamed to own that they know how to make a shirt or a pudding, or the precise process by which a leg of mutton is prepared for table. Their great fear seems to be that they shall be credited with ability to do anything that is useful; their great desire that they shall be deemed proficient in things that can by no stretch of the imagination be considered of practical utility. They appear to be continually haunted by the dread that they shall be considered vulgar; and so to escape this fate they sacrifice their own individuality and become mere reflexes of those who possess sufficient self-assertion and influence to lead the fashion. There is ever a constraint upon their words and actions; they are continually playing a part which is most irksome; they are always treading in the bewildering and painful paths of deceit.

Systematic deception is always evil, even when the end sought is a good one. But in the present instance not only the means but the object in view are alike bad. It is, perhaps, only

natural that a lady should, upon a visitor being announced, hastily throw aside the French novel or sensational tale in which she is so greatly interested, and snatch up a volume of poetry in its place, and that she should not like to be discovered while she is engaged in the homely but useful occupation of knitting. It is no doubt much more satisfactory to be found trifling with an elegant piece of embroidery work than such common-looking articles of every day use as stockings. Nor is it to be wondered at that a woman, when she is unexpectedly called upon to receive guests, should make herself and her surroundings as presentable as possible, and pose herself in what she imagines to be her most striking and picturesque attitude. Of all such weaknesses as these a merciful view may well be taken. But the same feeling which prompts such acts induces others which are much more serious in their consequences. It is a common thing for a certain class of people to make it a point of appearing richer than they are. All their conversation, and most of their acts, tend to the same conclusion—that they are far removed above the common herd. They live in an atmosphere of ultra-refinement; they are beings of such extremely delicate organizations that they can do nothing of a plebeian character, they appear as if they would never dream that there are such things as dirt, and squalor, and misery in the world. They clothe themselves in fine raiment, and they make a point of implying that the main object of their life is to "kill time." They will lead you to the conclusion that they are ignorant concerning the domestic arrangements of their own house, and that they are not much concerned therein. A peep behind the scenes, however, shows a very different state of things. It is discovered that those people have tongues which can wag very freely and make use of phrases more remarkable for their forcibleness than anything else. It transpires that they are very far from millionaires; that they have difficulties with such vulgar and matter-of-fact people as butchers, bakers, and the like; and that they have sometimes to indulge in transactions, in order to keep themselves afloat, the honesty of which is very questionable. Unless they too frequently are, both in public and private, but they do not always display that superlative refinement and delicacy of feeling which they so much affect before the world. Poetry is, at certain times, discarded for prose; the matter-of-fact takes the place of the ideal when they are left entirely to themselves. It is shown that their splendid homes are not all gold, but that there is a good deal of scantiness and shabbiness in them which is hidden from the gaze of guests by a flimsy veil of tinsel. It is a fact that there is generally much confusion, untidiness, and, if the truth must be told, occasionally considerable dirt in the mansions of these people who are too refined to do anything for themselves, or, indeed, to order things to be done. The wonder is that such folk, whose whole life is one of deception, are still very easily deceived themselves. Yet such is the case. They implicitly accept the outward semblance as the sign of the real substance. Display on the part of others is accepted as an indicative of their true position. The spirit of rivalry being engendered, people vie with each other frequently to such an extent that often some of the parties come to a premature breakdown.

All this is undoubtedly extremely foolish, if it is nothing worse. It is perfectly right that a host should put before a guest the best that he has; but men and women are little better than idiots in pretending that they eat off gold plates when the fact of the matter is that they dine from earthen platters. The unsatisfactory state of things indicated has its origin in the extent to which mammon is nowadays worshipped. Wealth, or reputed wealth, which is almost the same, is the universal passport. Naturally, then, men and women who have it not pretend otherwise, and go to the most extravagant lengths in carrying out their deceptions. Feeling the insecurity of their position, they leave no stone unturned which they imagine will place them above suspicion. They are very frequently engaged in an unequal contest. Of what use is it of people with an income of £500 per annum pitting themselves against persons with £1,000 a year? Which must in the end suffer most in such a trial? The fact is, however, that a large section of the middle class has set up before itself a false ideal of life, and it is in worshipping this ideal that they do damage to themselves, and, such is the contagion of example, to the world generally.—*Liberal Review.*

MR. CALCRAFT.

Mr. Calcraft, it seems, made quite a sensation at Dundee the other day, and was honored, on taking his seat in the railway carriage, as a person of high importance. The inhabitants of the enterprising Scottish town may be sorry to hear that their favorite is about to retire into private life. He has been for upwards of forty years engaged in the public administration of justice, has accumulated a comfortable independence, has lived to see some of his children grown up and married, and now being between 70 and 80 years of age he proposes—at least so it is said—to retire into private life and to devote himself to the cultivation of roses and tulips. It would be only reasonable to suppose that there must be something very exceptional in the circumstances which would induce a man to engage in such an occupation. With Mr. Calcraft this does not appear to have been the case. In the early part of his married life, he

felt, as a great many other men have felt in a corresponding period of their career, that his income was a trifle too slender to be comfortably relied upon. In all probability he would not have thought of it by hanging his fellow-sinners but for the fact that he happened to be personally acquainted with his predecessor when he was about to relinquish the post. This was in 1820. Mr. Calcraft at that time was engaged in the proprietary management of an open-air café at the corner of Flinbury Square. This, perhaps, may have tended to engender a misanthropical turn of mind. Such, at any rate, must be the tendency of a calling which compels a man to turn out into the dreary streets before the early risers, and which is most lucrative when the world is most miserable. However this may be, it was while tending his stall that he bespoken the vacancy at Newgate, which he has filled ever since. "The old man came along one morning looking uncommon queer," said Mr. Calcraft, "and he said he thought he should be obliged to give up his berth. His health was very bad, and it was getting too much for him. 'Well,' I says, 'when you gives it up, I'll take it.' I says, 'just like that.' This appears practically to have settled the matter. A few days after he was sent for by the authorities, and was forthwith engaged. Men less happy in their matrimonial relations might have experienced considerable domestic opposition in this mode of getting on in the world. Mr. Calcraft met with no such discouragement. It affords a pleasing evidence of the entire unanimity subsisting between the newly appointed executioner and his spouse that the engagement met with cordial approbation, and on the first occasion on which his services were required they were duly rendered. "Who showed you how to do it?" he was asked in the course of a conversation with him. "Nobody," was the prompt reply. "You really had nothing in the way of instruction?" "Nothing at all." "And weren't you very nervous the first time?" "Not a bit." "But of course your first job upset you a little?" "Not a bit in the world. Why should it? I was only doing my duty, why should I feel upset?" Looking into the face of the veteran hangman, one cannot but admit that this is very possibly literally true. It is a stern, relentless face, indicative of the utmost possible firmness and resolution, and as it clouds a little with this last utterance, a stranger can hardly repress a shudder as he thinks of the wretches who have looked there and found only the inflexible rigidity of the law. One cannot but regard the man with curiosity; any betrayal of it, however, is to him altogether inexplicable. What in the world there is about him that people should feel any curiosity or interest with regard to him he is at a loss to comprehend. Very gently, you perhaps endeavor to explain that to people of less nerve and firmness of purpose, the duty devolving on the public executioner would be impossible. You, for instance, couldn't kill a man without—

"Kill a man!" breaks in Calcraft, with something like indignation gleaming through his gold-rimmed spectacles, "who kills a man? I never killed anybody." It is of course evident you have been somewhat unfortunate in your mode of expression, but you cannot help looking a little puzzled at this very unexpected denial. "I never killed anybody," he repeats. "They kill themselves; it's their own weight as does it." This is a refinement of reasoning for which you are totally unprepared. You cannot exactly deny it, and for one or two reasons you are not altogether disposed to do so, but it does seem a little hard to bind a criminal hand and foot, and cover his face, tie a rope around his neck, knock away the stage beneath him, and then charge him with suicide. On the whole, however, it is a little exercise of sophistry for which one feels grateful. One cannot but think the better of the veteran executioner for the decided and no doubt the genuine repugnance with which he regards the imputation of having taken life, even in the fulfilment of the decrees of justice. A conversation with a Newgate executioner of forty years' standing is suggestive of untold horrors. From Mr. Calcraft, however, there are no horrors to be had. Very wisely, no doubt, he steadily refuses to recollect anything in the past. He keeps no records, he says, of any kind, and declares that as soon as he has done his duty, it goes from him, to use his own expression, like a puff of tobacco smoke. On the whole, Mr. Calcraft may be said to be a very creditable specimen of his craft. So long as his melancholy functions must be discharged, no one can discharge them better than he has done; while, as a very old resident in a modest street in Hoxton, he appears to have acquired the character of an upright and respectable man. In retiring from public life—if indeed this oft-repeated report is this time founded on fact—it is a pity that he cannot do so with entire satisfaction. He has long entertained a hope that he might have occasion to perform on a newspaper reporter, but has never yet been gratified. He retires, therefore, to some extent, a disappointed man. As an old servant of the public he seems to think it rather a wrong done to him that his cherished wish has not been gratified.—*Globe.*

NAMES FOR TEA.—Congou is simply a corruption of Kungie, which signifies labor. Souchong means "Little Sprouts;" Pekoe, "White Down." The Wubei Hills, on which Eohes is produced, give it its name. Oolong signifies "Black Dragon;" Hungnoey, "Red Plum;" Hyson, "Fair Spring;" and Twanky, "Deacon Brook." Young Hyson is called by the Chinese Yutsee, or "Before the Rain."