

plain, hoping to meet her, and failing, wandered about disconsolately, foregoing even luncheon for her sake. She meanwhile was reading Greek in the drawing room with commendable attention, and listening to George Arnold's disquisitions on the text; yet who could say that the sunbeams which danced in and out, so joyously solicitous, carried no stray thoughts from the bright-haired reader to the plain, where she thought it just possible Philip might be? If Philip were only reading Greek too, or the weather wet, and she not so "almost sure" he was out there listening to the larks!

The next day she devoted herself to her uncle; read with him in the evening, and was altogether satisfied with herself; yet so unsatisfied. With that restlessness that would not be stilled, that weary unsatisfied longing, that constant expectation of something that would not come! At last something did come—a servant from Beechlands with a note from Mrs. Aylmer, enclosing one from Julia. Both contained pressing invitations. Would Miss Verschoyle go to luncheon there the next day, and would she spend from Monday till Wednesday with them? Miss Verschoyle showed the letter to her uncle, announcing her intention of declining both invitations. However, as to the first, he overruled her decision, and without again bringing up that for-ever-to-be-avoided subject of her dress she could not get out of going. It was less formidable than she had expected. They had asked her that day because the whole party, save Mrs. Aylmer, Julia, Mr. Chalmers and Philip, had gone to Boldrewood. Her dress was therefore a matter of less concern to her. In truth the luncheon was summed up for her in the fact that Philip was there.

"I am distressed and disappointed that you won't come on Monday," he said. "I had hopes of overcoming your scruples about the ball."

"I can't dance. How absurd it would be for me to go to a ball!"

"People don't go to balls to dance; at least, you and I wouldn't." We could have sat so comfortably and talked.

"You would have told me how I can help you with your mother and Edith."

"I should, indeed."

"Can't you now?"

"Not so well. Things depend on circumstances so much. I must wait till they are here."

"Well, I'm sorry; especially, too, that I shouldn't see you in your uniform. So selfish of me, I know!" with a half smile.

"Not at all. But you shall see me, if it pleases you. If you will be, early to-morrow morning, by the stile close to the tree where we had luncheon that day, I will come to you there, got up in all my cogger."

"O Philip, will you really?" her eyes going up in a rapture to his face. "But the trouble—"

"Is no trouble—for you. I don't say I would do it for Julia, mind," with a gay smile.

"But if it rains?" anxiously.

"Some propitious deity forbid! But it won't."

"It always does if one wants to do anything nice. So few nice things have come to me in my life."

"Poor little thing!"

"But so sure as I wanted to go anywhere with Mattie it rained."

"Things will turn out unluckily at times. But we're safe for this once, I think. There is not a sign of a change."

"Still there's no knowing. Of course, if it does rain, you won't come; it would spoil your uniform."

"You think my uniform was made to keep in a glass case? No; the rain wouldn't hurt me; but on no account would I have you come out in it. Suppose it should be ill-natured enough to serve us such a trick, we will defer our visit to the stile till the next morning."

It did not rain. Never was morning more glorious than that which flattered the tree-tops with sovereign eye, and broke into Georgie's room as she lay, watching its advance, too anxious and happy to sleep, on the auspicious day on which she was to meet her cousin.

"At any rate, it won't rain before ten, with such a sunrise; and after that—" After that! Farther her thought did not follow. Let come what come might, if it kept fair till she had seen Philip, she would have had her day.

Earth and air were again vocal as she went out, herself fresh as the blushing morning, all the lovely light of happiness in her eyes. Diamond dewdrops were on every leaf and spray, gossamer webs hanging on the trees; birds were chirping on all sides for that worm which the lark had long since devoured, before he was up and away with the dew on his breast to that never-ending song of his. The ponies were nibbling all about, and swishing their long tails to keep off the forest flies, busy even at that early hour. Early! early! What could Philip have meant by early! Seven, half-past, eight, and he did not come. Georgie's heaven-born happiness was giving place to black despair. Could it possibly be raining at Beechlands and not at the Lodge?

"Georgie, I thought I saw you the other side of the fir plantation." And George Arnold's self stood before her.

Embarrassment, surprise at seeing him (what had induced him to take to morning walks?), blank disappointment at not seeing Philip, rendered her absolutely dumb for a second or two.

"Uncle George!" she faltered then.

"Has anything happened? what is it?" he asked anxiously, his thoughts recurring to Mattie's gipsy fears.

"Nothing—nothing has happened; only I am surprised. You came so suddenly. I didn't expect you." In confusion.

"Apparently not; nor did I you." And a shadow crossed his face. He was not sarcastic, but grave and troubled-looking, and her confusion was fast becoming painful, when suddenly, from out the shadow of the trees, striding rapidly along, like one who is making up for lost time, came a tall imposing figure—Philip himself, gorgeous in scarlet and gold, his sword clinking most martially, his face almost hidden under his bearskin, all in regulation order. Just for the moment Georgie didn't recognize him.

"My dear Georgie," he exclaimed, as he jumped quickly over the stile, "I'm grieved at being so late; but my miscreant of a fellow—"

His apologies came to a sudden stop when, instead of Miss Verschoyle alone—brilliant, expectant, blushing through her radiant smiles of welcome—he found her covered with confusion, looking as if an earthquake would be a welcome diversion; and George Arnold, with an aspect of executioner-like severity. "Confound him! why isn't he bigger! He's so small that a fellow can't see him," thought Colonel Verschoyle, from his magnificent height of nearly six feet. "I've put my foot in it, and no mistake, this time," he went on mentally; "convicted her out of my own mouth of having come to meet me. Well, there's nothing for it but to go boldly on."

So on he went—i.e., with a glance at Georgie, half encouraging, half playful, he drew himself up, and, undeterred by his gravity, gave George Arnold a military salute. Miss Verschoyle's face was already rivaling her cousin's coat in its hue. She stood rooted to the spot with astonishment at his audacity, and yet with a convulsive desire to laugh at the absurd contrast between the two men, and the utter ludicrousness of the scene: Philip, in full regimentals, big, stately, nevertheless carrying it all off with that airy grace—her uncle, looking smaller, more terrier-like, than ever. To her infinite surprise he returned Philip's salute with a similar one—like, yet how unlike, she thought. Then, the corners of his mouth going up, he turned to her:

"A case of poppies and nightingales again, I see, Georgie. Well, child, well." And shaking his head, he was about to leave them, when she seized his arm.

"Uncle George, uncle George, don't go! Don't, don't be angry! This is Philip Verschoyle, my cousin."

"I divined as much," casting a somewhat contemptuous glance over that gallant warrior's stalwart proportions. "You told me you were looking for poppies; this sort is rare, I own, and I won't suggest a doubt as to whether they are worth gathering. I have already warned you to beware of the songs of such nightingales as you go to hear."

"Mr. Arnold, you are strong, be merciful," said Philip, coming forward and holding out his hand, with a genial respect and grace which won the old man in spite of his prejudices. "Appearances are very much against us, I own; but—"

"No, Philip," interrupted Georgie, a world of girlish dignity in her voice and manner, "there is nothing against us, nothing wrong at all, nothing to apologize for. As I couldn't go to the ball, I wanted to see you in your uniform, and you good-naturedly said you would come here this morning in it if I could meet you; and I came. There is nothing wrong in that."

*Qui s'excuse, s'accuse*, thought Philip, feeling nonplussed. He had meant to defend her, to take the whole blame on himself, but this adorable candour, as he considered it, put the matter at once on another footing.

"And I regret that I kept you waiting," he said in an almost reverential tone. "My servant made a mistake."

"I made a mistake too," said Mr. Arnold, "in appearing so inopportunely. It is one easily remedied, however, by my withdrawing; you can then inspect your cousin at your leisure, Georgie; and when you have satisfied yourself, perhaps you will bring him to breakfast, if he will come."

"O uncle George, uncle George, you are good!" embracing him with effusion. "You will come, Philip; and then Mattie and Nellie can see you too."

"You will be as good as a travelling show in this retired part of the country," remarked Georgie, turning dryly to Philip. "You might stand him on the horseblock, Georgie, for the better display of his proportions."

"Is he like my father, uncle George?" she asked in a low voice. "Do tell me."

He looked at the young man steadily, and there was more augury for her future happiness than she at all understood in his answer, though it disappointed her for the moment.

"No, child, I don't see much likeness. Your father was a less powerful man in every way."

Despite the sweeping moustaches and heavy bearskin, which all but hid the face, the old man deserved the intellectual refinement in the countenance of the younger one, and his heart was won.

"He will care for something more than riding after a fox and firing off a gun," he said to himself as he was walking home; "and if she is to have a toy, perhaps she couldn't have a better one. She will be happy now, showing him off to Mattie; and, after all, what do they dress soldiers up for?"

Colonel Verschoyle was sitting writing, already dressed for dinner, in Julia Aylmer's boudoir, when the door opened and Georgie Verschoyle, looking somewhat shy in her unaccustomed finery, came hesitatingly into the room. She wore an evening dress of cloudy white material, trimmed with delicate scarlet ribbons and flowers; a small bunch of scarlet geraniums was in her hair, a similar one in front of her dress. Philip rose, shyly too. He had not seen her before in review order, and was abashed at her exceeding loveliness.

"I didn't know any one was here," she said, hesitating.

"Nor is there, except me," he returned, still standing in a deferential attitude.

"Do you know me in this fine gown?" she said, laughing. "I don't know myself."

"I should know you anywhere," tender admiration in his face as he went forward to shut the door.

"Your dress is beautiful," he continued, standing before her to gaze.

"Oh, I'm glad you like it! Out of compliment to you, sir," pointing to the red ribbons and flowers.

"I see and appreciate, believe me, and feel more honored than I can say. How did you manage it all so well?"

"I told Julia my idea, and she advised me what to get."

"Have you seen my mother lately—since you were dressed, I mean?"

"No; why?"

"Nothing. I hardly know why I asked."

"But he did know. She taunted him with throwing himself away on this penniless forest-flower. Had she seen Georgie now she must at least have acknowledged her loveliness."

"You have heard the news?" he asked after a pause.

"Julia's engagement to Mr. Chalmers? Yes; she told me herself. You won't want my help with your mother and Edith now. What do they say?"

"I don't know; I don't care. Georgie," quickly, a sudden excitement in his tone, "you say I won't want your help. I want it now and always," putting his arm round her. "You told your uncle you would never throw him over, and you needn't. I wouldn't ask you; but you can let me be a son to him as you are a daughter—will you?"

Her violet eyes went up to his face.

"You know, Philip, I would do anything for you; but your mother wishes you to marry money, and I have none," shaking her head.

"My mother's wishes don't weigh one straw with me," he made answer disrespectfully.

"She will say you have picked up a wild flower in the forest," giving him her hand, or rather letting him take it.

"She may say what she pleases," his dark face going down to meet her fair one.

"And so, Philip, you have actually engaged yourself to this girl, without knowledge of the world, without a farthing, and with nothing but a moderately pretty face to recommend her," said Mrs. Verschoyle to her offspring on the following morning. She was a tall, stately dame, and gifted with the power of steeping her slightest words in gall.

"I have, mother; so the less said about it the better. I told you I could never marry for money."

"You might at least have married some one who had a little knowledge of the world."

"Intercourse with you, madam, will speedily correct that defect in my niece's character," said George Arnold sarcastically, as he suddenly joined the pair. He and Georgie were staying at Beechlands. "Nor need you apprehend that she will be a portionless bride. She has chosen your son—I have nothing to say against the choice," holding out his hand to Philip. "Herr, Georgie," calling to the young lady, who was walking on the terrace outside, "come and tell this lady that the day you marry Philip you will have thirty thousand pounds down; further I will not bind myself."

"Uncle George!" cried the girl, throwing her arms round him, while Colonel Verschoyle twirled his moustache nervously. "Mr. Arnold, believe me, I had no idea of this."

"And the antagonism between you and money?" said Georgie, peeping at him out of her long lashes.

"Is at an end, Miss Verschoyle, when the money comes in such a charming shape."

Mrs. Verschoyle senior was never weary of singing the praises of her daughter-in-law.

## ECHOES FROM LONDON.

LONDON, February 15.

It is proposed to hold a chess tournament, with living pieces, under Royal and distinguished patronage, in aid of the West-end Hospital, Welbeck street, as soon as preliminaries can be arranged.

THE Viceroy of London is the title which the Liberals have suggested for the great chief who is to take superior command over the Lord Mayor of London, under the new corporation scheme.

THERE is a possibility that some pretty kiosks will be erected in Hyde Park at last. The idea was broached three or four years ago, but there was a fear then that something strong to take,

and not merely flowers, ices and papers, might be sold. The site of the enterprise is naturally along Rotten-row.

IT is reported that Fred Archer, the famous jockey, has amassed in ten years a fortune of considerably more than £100,000. These figures should be taken *cum grano salis*. We believe that his earnings have been as much. As to savings, we have not seen his savings-bank book.

A NOTICEABLE fact is the increase of the fashion of sealing letters. It is the universal custom now amongst distinguished correspondents, though it has always been adhered to when a communication requiring strict etiquette has been made.

THE Duke of Edinburgh has presented Mme. Marie Roze with a handsome gold brooch, in the form of a crown, being the insignia of the Royal Amateur Society, of which His Royal Highness is President. The brooch is intended as a *souvenir* of the recent concert at Liverpool, given in aid of the Royal College of Music, on which occasion Mme. Marie Roze sang Gounod's *Ace Marie*, accompanied on the violin by the Duke.

A VACANT plot of land, closely contiguous to the Savoy and on the Embankment, is being bargained for for the purposes of building a theatre of more than ordinary splendor, about half as big again as the Lyceum; but the price asked for the land would be a distressing item to even large funds. The Embankment should be a good place for theatres and clubs. The approach to it from the West is excellent, but might be bettered from the Strand.

NOT a bad idea has at last entered the mind of the Metropolitan Board of Works, namely, to get powers from Parliament to compel the owners of houses next to theatres to sell their property at a reasonable price. It is quite clear that without some such arrangement the safety of the public cannot be secured by creating sufficient exits, and the only alternative would be—that not to be thought of—closing the theatres.

THE financial condition of the Crystal Palace Company is for once most flourishing, as there has been sufficient profit made to return the full dividends to two classes of shareholders; and even the pioneer shareholders of the grand old idea may some day receive what they well deserve and have long in vain waited for. This happy condition has come about in a great measure through the skill and management of the new secretary, Mr. R. Mackey. His future efforts will be watched with interest, and for interest by the shareholders.

MR. GLADSTONE, we are assured, received recognition at Nice on Carnival day, and the ovation of *confetti*, which made him bloom white from head to foot like a "flower"—not on account of his being Prime Minister of England, or even the G.O.M., but in consequence of his immense hat, which caused a cry to ring through the excited crowd, "*Où, le joli chapeau!*" and the subsequent attention to that article in particular first, and then to what was under it.

IN Alderman Knight the city possess a Lord Mayor who is not a man of second-rate ability. In the speech he has just delivered at the twenty-eighth annual dinner of the Warehousemen and Clerks' School, he has certainly shown himself to be a man of more than ordinary ability, for rarely have the claims of a deserving charity been more practically commended to business men than they were by his lordship. He has an abundant supply of words, they come freely, and fit into their right places, while his thought is that of the robust public man.

NORTHUMBERLAND avenue, the grand new street from Trafalgar Square to the Embankment, will soon be the hotel-quarter of London. The two immense new hotels, the Hotel Metropolitan and the Avenue Hotel, are not yet far advanced. The foundations of the latter are being dug to a great depth—twenty to thirty feet below the level of the roadway; steam-cranes hoisting up great iron buckets full of grey-blue London clay, the foundation in days long gone by of the marshes on which Westminster Abbey was built. Geologists should be on the watch for the bones of pre-historic monsters.

SCIENCE seems to be making sure its claim to be prophetic. Mr. F. W. Cory says he has proved by experiment that it is possible to predict the weather by means of the spectroscope. He takes his observation in the direction of the wind, and according to the rain band on the spectrum, so he tells us what the weather is to be. The width of the band indicates the rainfall, not, of course, accurately to a fraction, but sufficiently well, and making some allowances for misses. Are the meteorological people using the spectroscope? At all events some of the public are already doing so, for one London instrument maker sells these foretellers of rain in "pocket editions."