

running before him to open the garden gate and present him with a full-blown marigold for a button-hole.

How differently things always turn out from what one expects! For years I have wondered at times how and where and when I should meet him; and to-day, looking out of my window, I saw my old friend walking calmly up the garden path to pay me an afternoon call, as though we had parted only yesterday.

I little thought who the gentleman who won my boy's gratitude by saving a poor dog from a beating would turn out to be! "Such a kind old man, mother!" Cecil said, describing what had taken place. Children have strange ideas of age. Certainly Mr. Evelyn has turned gray—from ill-health, I should fancy—and he is not nearly so erect as he used to be; but no one would dream of calling him old.

He must find me greatly changed. I remember poor Cecil used to tell me often that he never knew a woman lose her good looks as quickly as I lost mine—and it used to hurt me to hear him say so; though of course one cannot always expect to remain a girl. Anxiety—particularly anxiety that one wishes to hide and cannot share—plays sad havoc with one's appearance.

Still I think, in his quiet way, Mr. Evelyn was pleased to see me; and I—Well, the whole of my old happy life seemed to rise up before me as I listened to his familiar voice and watched him sitting opposite to me with his back to the small vine-wreathed window of our sitting room, and his fingers toying as he talked with a little pair of scissors of mine shaped like a stork. That is an old habit of his; I remember it well; he has handled those same old scissors, which I have had ever since I was twelve years old, in just the same way scores of times at Grantham.

Of course he has long since forgiven me for what he must always have considered my refusal of him. Probably he is thankful now that he never formed any ties; for he seems to have settled down into a regular bachelor-existence and to get a fair amount of enjoyment out of life in his own calm meditative fashion.

I am glad of it; and I should not care to think of him with a wife and half dozen children like everybody else, for one thing, I should lose my friend if he were married—for he is a friend, I am sure—and, when one has so few, and has dropped out of the way of making any more, each friend is of great consequence. Then too there is no impertinent curiosity about him; he asks no questions, makes no attempt to pry into the past, seems to think it the most natural thing in the world that I should be living solitary here in this poor little house, with no English servants or luxuries about me. He has seen enough of the world to know that when one has not been very successful in life one's former friends and relatives generally contrive to ignore one's existence altogether. Still my present position must strike him as strange, I think. Some day perhaps I may be able to tell him my story—tell him of the sad memories associated with a quiet grave in the English churchyard here, where in early spring Cecil and I planted roots of primroses and blue and white violets sent to us from the woods at home.

Yes—some day; but not now! It is good to rest a little sometimes—to live on in a quiet leafy solitude like this, vexed with no deeper cares than whether the one peach-tree in our little garden will bear fruit or no, whether the strawberry plants put in so carefully by Baptiste in the sunny border beneath my bed-room window will fail or flourish in foreign soil as they used to flourish at Grantham years ago.

His Story.

Beau Sejour, September 2, 18—.

I have seen her—not once, but several times. At first, when she came to me in the little vine-shaded room of the cottage in her straight black gown and heavy crape, I thought her terribly changed; yet now in my eyes she is more lovely—more lovable than ever. True, the roundness and freshness of early girlhood are gone; but there is beauty in the delicate outline of the pale fair cheeks and a sweet pathos in the shadows beneath the lovely blue eyes.

The little house on the Tarbes road was easy enough to find—a small detached cottage, two storeys high, with a vine clambering about its dingy white front and shabby green shutters, sun blistered and sadly in need of paint, but the small garden in front gay with common autumn flowers, and one goodly plane-tree which threw a blessed shade across the narrow windows and under the branches of which my small acquaintance Cecil was playing with an ugly fat yellow puppy when I presented myself at the door to pay my first call.

She must have suffered terribly—of that there can be no doubt.

Everywhere, but most of all in a small place like this, particulars of one's past, in versions more or less garbled, always leak out by degrees; and in Freda's case the sad death of her husband so soon after their arrival naturally set all the gossips' tongues wagging.

From Mostyn, the English chaplain here, a worthy fellow enough, whose kind-hearted wife showed Mrs. Gresley the warmest sympathy in her trouble, I gather that Gresley turned out an utterly incurable gambler, that his own family helped him out of his difficulties once or twice, but finally refused to have anything more to do with him; that he squandered all his wife's money with the exception of a small sum, which was so secured that he fortunately could not touch it; lastly, that poor old Sir John Grantham, broken-hearted at his son-in-law's reckless conduct, offered Freda and her boy a home at the Manor just before his death, provided she would consent to a separation from her husband—which condition she refused to comply with.

(To be continued.)

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