

without a quarter's notice; the Dower House was let to a retired Monkhampton grocer; and Sir Andrew entrusted the collection of his rents and the drawing up of leases and agreements to Mr. Bain, an attorney at Monkhampton. This gentleman, shrewd, active, conciliating, and indefatigable, speedily contrived to establish a powerful influence over his employer. The Lincoln's Inn lawyers were ousted from their hold on the Perriam estate,—the title-deeds, leases, and covenants wrested from their unwilling hands, and all the business that Sir Andrew had to give was given to Mr. Bain. When Sir Andrew made his will, it was Mr. Bain who drew up that document, Mr. Bain's clerk who witnessed its signature.

The uneventful years went by, and Sir Andrew slept the sleep of his forefathers, very well satisfied to his last hour with Mr. Bain's administration of the estate. Ten years after the death of his patron—the man who, in Monkhampton parlance, had made him—Mr. Bain was also gathered to his fathers, in their unpretending resting place in the cemetery at Monkhampton. His son, a man of thirty, succeeded to the Perriam stewardship, and Sir Aubrey who, with something of his father's love of money, had not inherited his father's business capacity, was glad to put his trust in an administrator whose management seemed always profitable to his employer. Shadrack Bain, the son, was if anything, a better administrator than his father; for, from the time he left the Monkhampton Grammar School, at fourteen years of age, the Perriam estate had been the one all-absorbing thought of his mind. He knew it was the chief heritage to which he was to succeed. He knew that whatever his father might have saved out of his income had to be divided among a family of five, two sons and three daughters, while the Perriam stewardship was to descend, intact, to him the eldest. There could be no division of that stewardship. Peter, the younger son, had been educated at a local college for Baptist preachers, was an advanced Baptist, and aspired to the honourable position of minister in the little chapel in Water lane, one of the bye streets of Monkhampton. The Bains had been Baptists almost from the establishment of that sect.

Shadrack Bain knew every rood of ground within the boundary of Sir Aubrey's land. From the summit of a distant hill he could point with his whip-handle to every bush, or knoll, or bank, or poplar that indicated the dividing line between the property of Sir Aubrey and his neighbouring landowners. "My father negotiated the purchase of yonder fallow," he would say proudly; "sixteen acres two roods and three perches, and bought it uncommonly cheap. You see the three poplars at the corner? That's our boundary. Nothing like poplars to mark your line—grow quick and cast very little shadow."

He was a good farmer, Mr. Bain, though his direct and personal experience of agriculture was confined to the cultivation of a neat kitchen garden, orchard, and meadow in the rear of his square, substantial dwelling house in High street of Monkhampton. But he had read all the best books upon agriculture; before he was twenty he had made himself thoroughly acquainted with every improvement in agricultural implements; he had surveyed every farm within a day's journey of Monkhampton; had gone the round of the Perriam estate with his father as often as opportunity permitted; and, in keenness of vision, and clearness of comprehension and knowledge of the subject, was as good a farmer as he was a lawyer.

This man was now, for all practical purposes, master of the Perriam Manor.

Sir Aubrey knew about as much of farming or the capabilities of the estate, as he knew of the buried relics of Troja. So long as there was no fluctuation or falling off in his income, he was tolerably satisfied. His eye was pleased with the neat and picturesque appearance of the estate, as he rode his brown cob splinter between the green banks of those sheltered lanes which intersected his domain. In one thing only did he and Mr. Bain differ. Sir Aubrey forbade the cutting down of a single tree, while Shadrack was, in his heart of hearts, for the stabbing up system, and grumbled sorely at those fine old oaks and spreading beeches which made the beauty of the landscape, and soiled the land beneath their dense leafage.

Things had gone well with Shadrack Bain. He had married young, and eminent to his own advantage; though the Bain family affected to consider that Shadrack had condescended somewhat when he married Miss Dawker, eldest daughter of William Dawker, the Monkhampton grocer and provision dealer, who supplied all the surrounding unions and public institutions, and whose trade was altogether rather wholesale than retail.

Mr. Dawker had died shortly after his daughter's marriage, and Mrs. Bain inherited her portion of six thousand pounds sterling; which, judiciously invested in cottage property, produced five hundred a year. Shadrack was, therefore, in some measure, an independent man, and Monkhampton esteemed him accordingly. His house was one of the best in the town; his garden a pattern of neatness; his dog-cart fresh and bright as if newly come from the coachbuilder's, his horses—he never drove the same two days running—were well groomed and cared for. His servants stayed with him year after year; his children were well dressed, in a plain, substantial style, but with small regard to the mutations of fashion. His family pew in the Water Lane Chapel presented a picture of which Monkhampton Baptists were proud.

Now, when Sir Aubrey Perriam thought of Shadrack Bain, with his hard, common-place method of coming at things, his rooted objection to the Ornamental, his utter indifference to the Beautiful, and thought how such a man would receive the tidings of an intended marriage between a gentleman of fifty-seven years of age and a young lady of nineteen, whose sole distinction, for vulgar minds, was her lovely face, his heart sank within him, and he felt that he would have a disagreeable business to go through when he announced to Mr. Bain the fact of his engagement with Sylvia Carew.

Yet, it would be necessary to acquaint his steward and solicitor with that fact before the marriage took place. Some kind of settlement there must be, though Sylvia was penniless. Mr. Bain was the person to draw up that settlement.

Jean Chaplain, the valet, was another individual who exercised a stronger influence over the mind of his master than Sir Aubrey would have cared to admit. An elderly bachelor, who keeps very little company, and passes some months of every year in the close quarters of a Parisian *entresol*, is apt to make his body-servant something of a companion. Chaplain's education was in advance of his position. He had read a good deal, in a desultory way, took a warm interest in European politics, and was, on the whole, a good deal better informed than his master. If Sir Aubrey wanted to talk he could hardly

talk to any one better worthy to be honoured with his conversation than the valet.

Thus, for the last twenty years, Jean Chaplain and his master had lived in close companionship. Into Jean's sympathetic ears Sir Aubrey had poured the elderly bachelor's philosophical reflections upon life and humanity. To Jean he had declared not once, but many times, that he valued the privileges of a single man far too well to barter them for the unknown joys of married life. Jean and he had laughed together at the folly of elderly Benedicts, the cynical laugh of men who had both drawn their views of life from that deep well of worldly wit and worldly wisdom, the writings of the most brilliant worlding the light ever shone upon, Voltaire.

To confess to Jean Chaplain that he had fallen in love and was going to marry the object of his affection, would be more humiliating even than to make the same confession to Shadrack Bain.

But happily, reflected Sir Aubrey, Chaplain need know nothing of the marriage till it was an accomplished fact. He could hardly grumble much then.

CHAPTER XXV.

A SERIOUS CONVERSATION.

Not a word did Sylvia say to her father all through that Sunday. He was at church almost all day with the school, so the two saw very little of each other in private. Indeed, under the pretext of a severe headache, Sylvia escaped the usual Sunday-school teaching, and afternoon and evening church, and contrived to spend the greater part of the day in the solitude of her own bedroom. There she could think in quiet; think, perhaps, very much as Judas may have thought before he went and hanged himself.

It is a kind of fate in some natures to betray. Falsehood is written in the stars that rule their destiny.

Sylvia thought of Mrs. Standen's indignation, and was angry with the lady for a conduct which certainly appeared inconsistent.

"She ought to have thanked me for her son's release, instead of turning upon me like that," the girl said to herself, as she meditated upon that unpleasant scene with the lady who was to have been her mother-in-law.

After all, it was something to have got the interview over—to have cleared the ground for her new engagement. Who could tell how soon Hedingham might know of that wondrous change in her position? It would be her desire to keep the affair a secret as long as possible. But would Sir Aubrey or her father be likely to indulge this fancy of hers?

There remained the letter to be written to Edmund—the cruel, treacherous letter, in which, masking self-interest under an affectation of generosity, she was to give him up. His first letter to her had breathed only deepest trust and purest love. Her first letter to him would deal a death-blow to his dearest hopes.

Even though she was born to betray, it pained her to write that letter.

The composition was a work of art. It would have been difficult to read between the lines that told only of womanly forethought, and self-abnegation, and to discover the mercenary spirit which prompted that renunciation. The letter seemed almost heroic. And here, truth assisted falsehood. The pangs with which Sylvia surrendered her lover were real enough. She did not forsake him without bitterest pain, harder to bear than the sorrow of an unselfish soul, which out of pure magnanimity, forgoes its dearest joy.

The letter was written, and it was a relief to think that some time must elapse ere it reached Edmund Standen's hands. The mail would only leave Southampton two days hence. The passage of the letter to Demerara would take three weeks. There was breathing time therefore.

"Perhaps, being so entirely separated from me, and having leisure for reflection, he may have begun to regret his folly; and my letter may come to him almost as a relief," thought Sylvia, self-excusingly.

On Monday evening, the schoolmaster smoked his pipe in his favourite seat in the doorway—a narrow bench inside the latticed porch. The day had been rainy, and the garden breathed the freshness and perfume that follow summer rain—sweet as incense rising from old Greek altars, when man knew no higher Giver of Good than Zeus and Demeter.

Sylvia had left her chair by the window, and had come, work in hand, to the doorway. She stood there, looking at her father curiously, as if doubtful whether to speak or be silent.

"Papa," she said at last, "you don't wish me to marry Mr. Standen?"

"Wish you to marry him!" exclaimed Mr. Carew, impatiently; "why you know that I have set my face against such a marriage, and that so far as a father can forbid anything in these days of infatuation to a father's wishes, I forbid you to marry Edmund Standen."

"Even if Mrs. Standen were inclined to relent, Papa, and to give a reluctant consent to the marriage, and leave Edmund half her fortune?"

"Is she inclined to do that?"

"Yes, Papa. She called here yesterday, and told me so."

Mr. Carew grew thoughtful.

"That might have altered the case considerably a week ago," he said; "but it only adds a perplexing element to the business now. I see a much more brilliant chance before you—if—if—the prospect is not delusive."

"So do I, Papa, looking at things from a worldly point of view."

"From what other point of view need you look at things? We don't live in the stars!"

"Sir Aubrey Perriam has asked me to be his wife, Papa."

Mr. Carew started up from the little bench in the porch, and, for the first time within Sylvia's memory, dropped his pipe. It was a small meerschaum, coloured by himself, and he regarded it with an affection which he did not often bestow upon sentient things. He picked it up carefully, looked to see if he had chipped the bowl, and then stood staring at his daughter in silent amazement for some moments.

"Sir Aubrey asked you to marry him?" he said at last. "In serious, sober earnest? It wasn't one of those senseless speeches which elderly gentlemen make to young ladies—mere old-fashioned gallantry—eh, Sylvia?"

"No, indeed, papa. I think Sir Aubrey was very much in earnest. His hand trembled a little when he took mine."

"And you accepted him?" said the father, sharply.

To be Continued.

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In a former number we expressed our opinion, after a careful examination of the elementary volumes of the series of German educational works now being brought out by Mr. E. Steiger, of New York. We have since received the above mentioned works, which complete the series, and are happy to be able to speak of them as favourably as of their predecessors. The system upon which they are based has long been well known on both continents as the best in use. In this system, however, there were many inaccuracies and much that is calculated to be a fog to the student. In the volumes before us we find Ahn's system practically reproduced, but with many corrections and emendations that will materially assist the scholar in his interpretation of the grammarian's meaning. Another feature in this edition, in so far as the Method is concerned, is that the editors have abandoned the beaten track of elementary words to which Ahn so persistently confined his followers, and by increasing the stock of words employed in the exercises greatly enlarge the pupil's vocabulary. This, as we pointed out on another occasion is always desirable; due moderation, of course, being observed at the outset. Furthermore new rules have been added which were not to be found in the original and the whole has been thoroughly revised and adapted to the mode of instruction pursued in the country. Between the two methods before us we are extremely unwilling to judge, as each one has its own merits. Thus, while Oehlschlager offers the advantage of pronunciation, Fischer is the most desirable as regards the first, or practical, course, especially for beginners. The explanations and directions given by the latter are at greater length than are those by Oehlschlager, who is almost laconic in the manner in which he conveys his instructions. On the other hand Oehlschlager gives by far the larger stock of words, and a more comprehensive Reader. There are of course many minor differences, not to say discrepancies, between the two works, but we merely signalize the more salient features of each. Perhaps the best way would be to put the pupil through Fischer first, and then, when he has thoroughly mastered the difficulties of the grammar, to place Oehlschlager in his hands, and allow him to extend his vocabulary and increase his reading-practice. In a case of private study without the aid of a teacher, however, Oehlschlager's aid to pronunciation would be extremely useful. Either of these works are admirably adapted to the purpose they are intended to serve, but employed together, in the manner we have suggested, they will be found invaluable. Of the Reading charts we have already had occasion to speak. The volume of German Handwriting forms an indispensable companion to the grammars and methods. It contains nearly sixty pages of exercises in neat German script, commencing with simple fables and narrations and gradually progressing up to the higher styles of correspondence, extracts from Humboldt, &c., the whole elucidated, where necessary, by brief notes and explanations. The course set down in this volume is not only important as giving exercise in German penmanship, but further in that it accustoms the eyes to the small German text. The Conversation Book—a most essential unit in the series—we have found wonderfully correct and as near as a book of its kind and size can be, complete. It is divided into two parts, the first of which gives, under appropriate headings, the names of common objects of daily life, followed first by easy conversational phrases, and then by familiar conversations. The second part contains a long list of idiomatic phrases—a feature one seldom finds satisfactorily brought out in the mass of manuals of the German language, (than which there is hardly a European tongue containing more idioms)—a number of proverbs and proverbial phrases, and finally, forms of invitory cards, bills of exchange, and promissory notes. For the narrow compass of the book the field it covers, in a manner that leaves little or nothing to be desired, is something remarkable. The volume of German Readers contains a wide selection of graduated exercises in prose and verse, with occasional tests in script. In the preface the editor states that any student of German who has gone through its pages diligently and thoroughly, will be competent to read any classical author, so as to enjoy the rich treasures of German Literature. We cannot give a better expression of our estimate of the merit of the book than by heartily endorsing this opinion. The amount of poetry in the volume might perhaps be increased with advantage to the scholar, but with this exception we do not see that the book is capable of improvement. The whole of Mr. Steiger's series is excellent, deserving of all praise. By its aid any diligent student may obtain an all but perfect knowledge of the German language. The way may at times be rough and the progress slow, notwithstanding all that has been done to lighten the obstacles to be overcome, but the goal once reached he will confess that the field of beauties that lies before him will well repay the trouble he has taken.