

A TRUE STORY.

I thought that few water-places were more amusing than Ryde when I visited it in the summer of 1854 for the first time. True, it is not as aristocratic as Cowes, for the snob of either sex riots in the wildest luxuriance on that long pier which extends so far into the sea. Without a doubt, the wealthy tradesman feels himself at home as he walks the pier-head, and complacently surveys his yacht riding at anchor hard by. The sea breeze which flutters out the gaudy petticoat of his wife or daughter, appears to blow from his memory his man-of-war origin and intense vulgarity. But in spite of this Maritime and Elysian division, Ryde held claim, and I suppose does so now, to being considered a fashionable seaside place. At any rate, during the time I was there, there were a number of people to whom the existence of a grandfather was a fact, and the proper pronunciation of the letter "h" not an impossibility.

Among that number none shone to more advantage than a little blonde, whose real patronymic of course I cannot tell, but whom I will call Adele (her Christian name) instead of hiding her under the cosmopolitan appellation of Jones or Smith. Adele was quite young, and had made her debut into fashionable society that season, heaving wheeled her husband into breaking through old habits by coming up to town for the spring. She was very pretty, and possessed manners so agreeable that before the month of May elapsed she had been quite able to dispense with the kind offices of the great lady under whose patronage she had been launched into fashionable society. Indeed, her success was so great that nine out of ten of her male acquaintances voted her charms, and as a natural consequence, exactly that proportion of her own sex were envious of her.

Her husband was a great many years older than herself; an old man who had married so late in life as to drive a nephew, in the entail, out of his seven senses, and whom the prospect of their being no son and heir was slowly bringing back to sanity. It had been a marriage de convenience on her side, for she had not a sixpence, and he was very rich. In these practical days Adele did what my girl of the period would have done under similar circumstances. If she ever had any scruples on that score, the spectacle of her mother, cursed with a large family and an attenuated income, had long driven them out of her head, especially as that worthy lady had never lost an opportunity of dining into her child's comprehension that matrimony without money was worthy of a life-long residence in Bedlam.

Adele, when I first met her in society, looked happy enough, in spite of the ill-natured remarks of her best friends, who accused her of having sold herself for pounds, shillings and pence, and in all human probability would have continued so to the end of the chapter had she not met with a misfortune.

The contrivance was making the acquaintance of Arthur S., for in spite of all the worthy teaching she had been subjected to, her heart had taken the bit between her teeth and bolted.

Few men could have known Arthur S. and not have agreed that he was a real good fellow. Handsome, and always made much of, he possessed the rare attribute of being natural and unadorned. I was fortunate enough to share his friendship largely, and his being appointed first lieutenant of a ship lying at Spithead was the reason of my going to Ryde, instead of turning my face towards the Downs. I do not yet recall as well as if it were but yesterday handling from the Portsmouth steamboat within an ace of being senesick, and clambering up some steps the receding tide had left very slippery, suddenly to encounter S.—talking so earnestly to a lady as not to notice my arrival. As they turned, I recognized Adele, whom I had always thought pretty when faded and worn by being out night after night, but at that moment, listening with pleasure to something her companion was saying, she looked quite lovely. The fresh breeze which helped to flow to much advantage the neatest pair of feet, had brought back to her cheeks the color that hot rooms and late hours had driven away.

I felt confident S. was very fond of me, but I saw at a glance, when I accosted him, that he wished me anywhere else. I do not mean to say at the bottom of the sea, but on it, and far away too. He introduced me to Adele as a great friend, and on that recommendation I met with a cordial reception; but, on the plea of securing rooms at the Pier Hotel, I relieved them of my presence, which I felt was a little out of place.

S.—and myself dined together that evening, and to my surprise, from the jolly fellow I had hitherto found him, he had become as stupid and unresponsive a companion as I had ever sat down to a table with. "Hit at last," I thought to myself, as I surveyed my friend; and I found before many days had passed that this conclusion was not erroneous. So much so that the flirtation between S. and Adele marched so rapidly, that it soon reached the phase when friends began to wonder why the husband was so blind as not to see it, or such an ass as not to mind it. To give the devil his due—and by the devil I mean this wicked world—there were a few that believed there was really nothing in it—a limited number who knew how often a weak woman tarnishes her good name foolishly but not entirely; whilst on the other hand a cleverer wiser by far more genuine whose virtue is a thing of by-gone days is valued as spotless by the people she hoodwinks.

Poor Adele had found out that money and position, advantageous as they are, could not fill up the dreary blank her new position had stretched before her, or still the pulse that would beat quicker when S.—approached. She soon perceived that many of her friends began to look shyly at her; but instead of taking this as a warning, like a thorough woman, she became defiant, rebelling against the world which she felt was judging her too harshly.

Why is it that the back of a poor, feeble woman should bear all the weight? Why should the stronger animal carry his share? S.—was envied by his male acquaintances for being *aux mains* with so pretty a woman, as they good naturedly imagined; and what is still more sad, their wives and daughters did not consider him one whit the worse for it; their anger was vented upon her, and not upon him.

There lived in those days—she is dead now—a certain old lady D., who owned a very pretty villa in the neighborhood, and was very fond of giving balls, and to one of them both myself and S.—were invited. Lady D.—had the character of being a most selfish individual, but whether that was the case or not, she had the happy knack of making her parties go off most pleasantly. On that night there were several pretty women in her rooms; nevertheless Adele, in spite of an anxious look, distanced them all far and away. S.—danced with and spoke to her but little, for he knew well that their names had been coupled together, and being a gentleman, was above that vulgar, selfish vanity that leads a man to flaunt his success before the world, regardless of the cost the wo-

man incurs. And, after all, there is more in one glance than in a long string of words.

It was a lovely night, and not being what is termed a dancing man, though I can go through a waltz creditably enough, particularly if my partner does not want to go too fast, I strolled out into the garden, and, gaining the sea wall, sat myself down to gaze at the long silvery beam a summer moon so often lays across the ocean. There was not a breath of wind, as I watched, to move the fishing boat that lay in this ray of light so stationary as to attract my attention.

I was leaning against the trunk of a tree, so that any one walking along the path from behind could not possibly detect my presence, and the two people I had heard approaching stopped close to where I was sitting. There are occasions when events happen so suddenly, that unless endowed with great presence of mind, one does not know how to act for the best; and thus it fared with me, for I was unable to decide whether to cough or keep quiet.

"Will you or will you not fly with me?" I heard S.—say.

"Oh, do not ask me to do that," pleaded Adele, in tremulous tones.

"As you like," he replied angrily; "but I will not be made a fool of any longer."

She clung to his arm, and murmured,—

"Oh, I cannot part with you."

"Then when will you come?" asked S.—

Division, he told me we should be able to see a great deal of each other, as the Naval Brigade, with which he was doing duty, was quartered in the same camp. S.—appeared in such good spirits that I congratulated myself on his having quite forgotten poor Adele and her blue eyes; but I soon discovered that I had reckoned without my host, for beneath the wild, rollicking spirits that made him so agreeable a companion during those long winter evenings, I could discern some thought, some memory ever at work, ever restless. I was never on duty with him, being employed on another "attack," but his brother officers assured me that there was no one in the brigade so reckless of his life as he was. Again, from being abstemious, S.—had become a hard and habitual drinker, and that pernicious habit had begun to tell upon his health.

One evening—it was the 10th of March, 1855, I recollect—I was sitting in my tent, having just returned from the advanced trench, watching hungrily my servant preparing the usual dinner of cold pork and poited beef, when the flap of my tent was pushed back, and S.—'s handsome face peeped in.

"Hallo, old man, is that you? Come in," I exclaimed.

"He did so, and on taking the hand held out to him, I perceived with surprise that he was very pale. He sat himself down at the foot of my

when I went in at the Crook Battery with the light company of my regiment, for I had determined to confess the whole truth, how basely I had acted with regard to her letter.

Adele was sitting by the fire when I was announced, and the color fled from her cheeks as she rose to greet me.

"I have brought a letter which I promised the writer I would myself place in your hands," I said.

She did not ask from whom it came, but I saw by the fright that tears were glistening in her eyes.

"Tell me all about his sad end," she said, laying first her small hand upon my arm, and then pointing to a chair, towards which she drew her own.

I did poor S.—justice, for I told her how changed he had grown, how reckless he had become, and how certain I was that this was all owing to the love he had borne her.

"Then why did he not answer my letter?" she sobbed, more to herself than to me, as I finished speaking.

"Will you ever forgive me? Will you not always look upon me as the basest of men?" I exclaimed, passionately.

"I do not understand you," she replied, opening her large blue eyes.

"He never got your letter. I tore it up," I continued, my ears tingling with shame.

"You tore it up?" she repeated, with increasing surprise.

"Yes, I tore it up into atoms, in a moment of pique for your husband. Your letter arrived after Arthur had gone." She sank back into her chair; and, seizing my hat I rushed from the room. I reached the hall, but she had followed me to the head of the stairs, and called me back.

"Captain F.—, one word before you go," she cried, and when I returned she added, holding my hand, "I not only forgive you, but thank you most heartily, and so does poor Arthur now."

I have seen often since her bright, happy face, and the sight of it softens not a little my remorse.

JAPANESE MATRONS.—Just at this time much interest is felt in the customs of the Japanese, and the more we learn of them the more we find to admire. They never smoke opium. They have small pipes that will hold three quarts of water, and of the mildest Turkish tobacco. They have a club-house in Yokohama, of which the high officials are members. They have none at Yoddo, the capital. They have the games of chess, cards and dominoes. Their cards are different from ours, but the essential principles of the game are the same. Latterly they have become importers of billiard tables, and the game is fast assuming there high rank. They are great wrestlers, and every year the champion wrestler wins the embroidered sash, which he is allowed to wear one year. No Japanese is allowed to cut down a tree unless he plants another. Under the law the mother is held responsible for the good conduct of her children. If a trouble occurs in the street the parties living opposite are held responsible for the result. Their idea is that citizens must be their own policemen. How would that plan do with us? We call upon the police, and the police are equal to the task of self-government. All married women have their eyebrows shaved. Married men have no distinctive mark which is a pity. The Japanese have their illustrated "Punch," besides that sixteen newspapers, with three English—the "Herald," the "Mail," and the "News"—published in Yokohama. The present Emperor is the one hundred and twenty-fourth in regular line. In those generations there have been eight females. The present Emperor, Montsohito, is six feet high, twenty-two years of age, and a fine specimen of a man.

A HINT TO MOTHERS.—How many times one hears a mother exclaim and weep, "How could I have done this!" Ordinarily the baby sees the one word of his vocabulary, and he is not in company before when he is being displayed makes him bashful or diffident, and he does not say it when first asked. This is the time for the mother to stop. If she urges him in such a case, when he is not inclined to talk, it will only induce a habit of setting his will in opposition to hers; a habit that will grow with his growth, and strengthen with his strength, and will become obstinacy.

Now, of course, she cannot reason with him; and there is no more moral wrong in his refusal than in refusing his milk when he is not hungry. But this, like all childhood, is good-time. Much may be done almost from earliest infancy, by inducing, unconsciously to the child, habits of obedience, and preventing their opposites—thus making the after-work easier for both child and mother. A content with a child can generally be prevented, and ought to be. Temporal and external obedience may be obtained by it, in some cases—though not always even that—but at what a fearful cost! Not only suffering, but affection and confidence between child and parent, are never the same as without it, and "breaking the will," as it is called, instead of training it, is a dire mistake. There can be no self-governing, and no stability of character, without resolution, well-directed will. The young tree, you know, must be pruned—never broken. The soil must be trained by gentle firmness, not severity. And immortal souls and human hearts need no less care and watchfulness.

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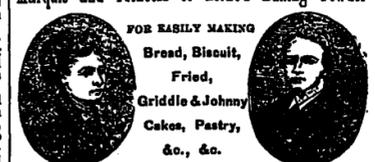
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FEEDING POLLY.

"I cannot think now, but will write to-morrow," she sobbed.

As an excuse—a feeble one, I fear, for my subsequent conduct—I must relate, before proceeding with my story, that I had received much hospitality from Adele's husband during my stay at Ryde. I was, therefore, heartily sorry for him, and my pique was enhanced by having remarked how utterly unconscious he was of the calamity so near his threshold.

The next morning I was awakened by S.—entering my room at an early hour, and informing me that he was going over to Portsmouth to arrange about getting a month's leave. "This is a sudden resolution of yours," I said, keeping my face half hid by the bedclothes.

"Yes, it is," he replied, as he left the room, and added, shutting the door, "don't forget to forward my letters." Later in the day I was sitting staring out of the window of my sitting-room, when the waiter brought a letter in and laid it on the table. I took it up and read S.—'s name on the envelope, penned by Adele's hand. With a heavy heart I re-directed it, for I could not help feeling for the man she was so cruelly taking in. I rose to place the note in the mantle-piece, when, all of a sudden, in an ungovernable impulse, I tore it into little bits.

In less than twenty-five seconds I would have given all my worldly goods and chattels to have been able to recall that action. From that hour I began to imagine that every one I met guessed I had been up to some blackguardly act. To make matters worse, I heard from S.—inquiring if any letter had arrived for him. I answered in the negative, and my hand trembled when I did so.

I was on the point of leaving Ryde, for it was quite out of the question my meeting my friend again, when the letter welcome news arrived that his ship had been ordered to sail at once. No reproach to an inmate of a condemned cell could be more grateful than the sight of that frigate vanishing in the distance was to me. Many months elapsed before we met again, and when we did, the place of meeting was many a weary mile from dear old England. We shook hands, standing up to our ankles in mud in that long truck which led from Balaklava to the "front."

"Nice, this, isn't it?" he remarked, laughing at my disconsolate appearance. "But you must rough it here."

I replied that I had spent a week in a tent on a slope of a hill overlooking Balaklava harbor; and that as regarding "roughing" it, I considered I was on the high road to it, for the bell tent, which let in the rain in a dozen places, held myself, two ensigns, and a pon of fowls which had accompanied us from aboard ship. Poor things, I remember well how emaciated they were, and how few the feathers were that covered them.

On hearing that we were to join the Third

bed, and did not speak till my servant had left the tent.

"What has happened?" I asked, with more fear than curiosity, for my conscience began to prick me.

"Do you believe in presentiments, Fred?" he began.

"Well, I have never given the matter a thought," I replied.

"Neither did I till last night," he said; and added, in a husky voice, "but now I do, and firmly believe that my end is very near."

"What on earth has put this nonsense into your head?" I remarked.

"I can't tell you," he replied, "but so convinced am I that my death is at hand, that I have written these two letters, one to my poor mother, the other to Adele."

On mentioning her name he hid his face in his hands, and I am glad he did so, for I had turned as red as a turkey-cock.

"Take them," S.—continued, after a time; "the one for my mother you can send, but the other you must give yourself to Adele, and I have told my cousin that you had such a letter, in case anything should happen to you, old fellow."

I solemnly declare that I would then and there have confessed everything to him, had not a brother officer entered the tent that minute. S.—rose and wished me good-by, wringing my hand with warmth; and as he went out I remarked he was going into the trenches, for from beneath his pea-jacket peeped the leathern case of his revolver.

Two days later I was strolling about the camp, when a staff officer rode up and asked me the way to my own tent.

"I am Captain F.—," I replied.

"Then why on earth were you not at the funeral this morning?" he demanded hoily.

"Whose funeral?" I asked, as my heart began to sink within me, for it dawned upon me that S.—'s cousin was on the staff.

"Why, poor Arthur's. He was buried this morning."

"When was he killed?" I exclaimed, staggering as if from a blow.

"Just as he was entering the trenches on Monday night," replied his cousin.

He had fallen within an hour of leaving my tent.

I wrote to break the sad intelligence to his mother, and inclosed his letter, and the last thing I did before leaving the Crimea was to pay a farewell visit to his grave. I am sure neither Russ nor Tartar would injure that white marble cross that marks the spot, if they only knew what a good fellow was placed beneath it.

On my return to England, after peace was declared, I got leave and ran up to town, and was lucky enough to find Adele at home on her way through, for it was in autumn, and Grosvenor Square looked desolate. As I walked up the staircase my heart beat quicker than it did