

"Ha! Well, perhaps, you are right. At any rate, I am much pleased to find you are yourself possessed by such a loyal spirit. I am placed in a difficult and painful position, as the future son-in-law of the Marquis of Seaham; and I think you felt this when you assured me that after this day's conversation the name of Lord Edwin Fitzjames should never be intruded on me."

"Yes, my lord; it was exactly from that feeling I made the promise."

"One point more, Temple. Family secrets become known, and the more painful, alas! the more widely spread the scandal. But other secrets are divulged—other scandals occupy public attention, till the old story is but faintly remembered. I therefore think it the duty of every one who believes himself my friend to act as if the painful event of former years in the Seaham family had never occurred."

"I perfectly understand—perfectly agree with you, my lord," responded Mr. Temple.

CHAPTER XXXIV.  
THE VISITORS AT MARSDEN PARK.

The London season is truly considered to be the most open demonstration of the world, the flesh and the devil; but there is a private world still more dangerous to a mind and heart that, not rising above the claims of earth, must feed on earthly excitement. The young beauty is less fatally engaged in following with enthusiasm the strains of vocal genius at the opera, or enjoying the festive scene and exercise of a ball-room, than in wandering in sylvan bowers, with a romantic tendency towards the companion of her solitude, however worthless he may be. In the country there is more liberty, more private means of escape from worldly trammels, the which trammels act usefully when a higher restraint is ignored; therefore, the country mansion, containing a "select coterie," who can discuss the past London season, can lounge about, read enervating poetry, act charades, lose themselves by couples in charming labyrinths and copse wood—that country mansion becomes a more dangerous ally to the enemy of souls than all the squares, streets and parks of the polite end of London, to the refined, tender and unsuspecting female heart. Thus fell the young Marchioness of Seaham, the hitherto pearl of the aristocracy, and thus fall many, entangled in the snares laid for hearts, in these arcadian bowers; losing the first instinctive perception of wrong by the scales of the sanctuary, making heroic sacrifices for the creature, while forgetting the Creator, till a false conscience supervenes, and all is lost, save bitterness. Ah, bitterness—bitterness.

During the August last past, while Lord Stanmore was in the south of France, Marsden Park was full of visitors, who, with the exception of Sir Henry and Lady Clara Moorland, might fitly represent the "select coterie" described above; comprising also a few statesmen who, amid the more serious and absorbing interests of guiding England, were not insensible to the attractions of lovely amateurs in all the softening influences of the fine arts, 'mid balmy weather, luxurious living, constantly varying amusement, and good news from the Crimea.

Lady Violet, like her aunt, lived unharmed amid these scenes. She had received permission to decline any active part in the sometimes doubtful amusement of the passing hour. On her arm constantly hung her conscience beads, unsuspected, in their brilliancy, to be what, to her, they were—a silent record of the failings or self conquest of the day. She had the privilege of some minutes each morning with Lady Clara: these were happy interviews; but not to last. General Sir Henry Moorland was summoned to attend an important court-martial, and left Marsden, with his devoted wife and attendants, some days before the return of Miss Champion from a visit to

her own family; the marquis had already been compelled to meet the primo minister at a spot conveniently found between their country residences, so that the Lady Violet was left, with all her father's fair guests, in the false position of being considered too young to exercise any authority. The cleaver of the reveals was a certain Lady Cecily, commonly called Lady Cis-Dorel—unfortunately a near cousin to the marquis, who, like the father of St Theresa, could not "handsomely" refuse the self-invited visits of his kinswoman. The "momsa," Lady Violet, shrank from the eager advances of her lively relative; but not so the temporary inmates of Marsden Park. To the passive lovers of excitement Lady Cis-Dorel, as the personification of active excitement, was a treasure to be hailed; and the departure of Lady Clara Moorland, within a few hours of the arrival of her cousin, seemed to emancipate from all restraint the followers of the latter wild, witty and mischievous lady; so that the lord of misrule was rapidly gaining the ascendant at Marsden Park.

To whom should the young Violet return? Not even the near expected arrival of Miss Champion would avail her, except as a personal companion and protectress. She would be powerless to stay the torrent of folly that was each hour increasing in the house. Violet prayed long and earnestly; and on rising from her knees, requested an interview with the family chaplain and her esteemed confessor, Dr. Rollings. The reverend gentleman was happily soon found; and responding instantly to the invitation, received the first outpourings of her confidence.

"Oh! Dr. Rollings," she added, "this house has known such sorrow, that if joy and merriment are again to be heard within its walls, it ought to be a joy sanctified by Heaven. My cousin and the rest never come into the chapel for Mass, or the night prayers. Lady Cecily ought to sing sometimes for God, she has so beautiful a voice. Dr. Rollings, you know that the Church forbids that women should be dressed in men's clothes; yet my cousin has brought with her an equipment of armor, to act as Tancredi, in the gardens of Armida. They teased me to be Armida, which I have to repeat to you out of confession, and I received your consent and support to refuse everything of the kind. Oh! Dr. Rollings, you are so wise and full of expedients, as well as of hope, that I have, under God, confidence only in you."

"Go and pray, my dear child, and I will act," was the reply of the venerable chaplain.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Washington E. Irving, a nephew of the famous author, was supposed to have died at Escondido, Cal., and his funeral was held. With the close of the service, after friends had passed the casket, a knocking was heard from within, and the lid having been hastily removed, Irving got up in a dazed condition, but soon regained his senses fully and was taken home.

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