

FATHER DE LISLE.

By Miss Taylor

(A Tale of fact in fiction's garb.)

CHAPTER XVI.

Doctor—What a sigh is there? The heart is sorely charged.

Gentlewoman—I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.—Macbeth.

One of the finest houses in the Strand belonged to the Beauville family. It was kept in a state of splendor, for, under the present Earl, there was a far greater expenditure than under the former, though he had been considered liberal. The principal rooms in the mansions were those which looked out on the river, and the long garden ran sloping down to the banks, where a boat-house and convenience for landing and embarking were to be found, as well as the barge in which the Earl and the Countess were wont to sail. We need hardly have said the Countess, for of late years she had borne little part in the festivities, and withdrawn into a retirement which it seemed strange, indeed, should be the choice of a young and beautiful woman, possessed of rank and wealth. It was said by some that the disappointment of having no family preyed upon the Countess's spirits. For the first time for many centuries, had the house of Beauville failed in an heir, and the world said his mortification had done much to estrange the Earl from his wife, and render him, as he was, conspicuous for his gallantries, even in an age and in a court where the license was most free.

One large apartment in a house we speak of had been called for many years the Countess's bower, and had been occupied by successive noble ladies of Beauville. In this chamber sat Isabel, Countess of Beauville. The aspect of the "bower" had changed under her reign. There was neither lute nor embroidery frame, nor were there the young ladies of rank, who generally were the companions of a noble lady's solitary hours. The present Countess loved to be alone, and the quantities of books piled up against the wall, the large table covered with writing materials, near which she was sitting, showed plainly a taste cast in different directions. It was true Isabel devoted herself entirely to study, and endeavored in such a pursuit to find some solace for her great unhappiness.

Ten years have strangely altered this beautiful creature; for though her beauty had truly ripened since she has passed from girl to woman there are lines on the countenance which tell of much endured; there is a depth of grief in those large lustrous eyes which speak of tears—hot, blinding tears. At the moment we are describing, the Countess was sitting at her writing-table and holding in her hand a manuscript, evidently of age and value. She was giving her whole attention to deciphering it; at length she laid it down, and looking around the room as if to relieve her eyes, sighed deeply; it was not only the sigh of the overtaken student.

At this moment the arras which formed the doorway was pushed aside and Rachel entered; the same faithful Rachel, who looked more than ten years older, and whose face wore also a look of sadness—but it was of a different kind to that of her mistress—there was peace and resignation mingled with the grief of the simple-minded and faithful servant.

"An' it please you, my lady," said Rachel, "a gentleman without craves to speak to you."

"On what business, and who is he?" said Isabel, sharply.

"I do not know my lady; but he is one of noble birth, I am certain from his bearing;—as he did not give his name, I did not like to ask."

"Well, you must admit him, I suppose; perhaps," and she smiled scornfully, "he has a favor to beg

of the Earl, and seeks my intercession, poor soul."

Rachel waited till her mistress had finished, and then departed. In another minute she returned, ushering in a gentleman whose dress, though plain, showed him of gentle blood. Isabel scarcely glanced at him; she had risen and bowed with a stiff and haughty manner, which had become habitual to her; now reseating herself, she motioned her visitor also to a seat, and then said:

"What would you of me, sir?"

The stranger's eyes were fixed on Isabel, and he answered in a voice whose gentle and clear tones made her heart give a sudden thrill.

"I am come, madam, to ask your alms towards the necessities of our poor persecuted fellow-Catholics. You know well, I doubt not, the distress they endure for the sake of our holy faith."

Isabel felt her heart stop beating for a moment; but her face did not change,—her mask was worn too well. Her tone was more haughty and cold still, as she replied:

"You mistake, sir, and I marvel the times teach you not more caution. The Earls of Beauville have been for many years Protestants."

"Yes, madam," again replied the thrilling voice, "the Earls, but not the Countesses. Surely I mistake not now in thinking I address a daughter of De Lisle, a line which has remained faithful to their God!"

For a moment Isabel turned pale but she recovered herself quickly. She rose from her seat—

"You are taking a liberty which I consider unwarrantable in a stranger. Your errand here will, however be safe with me; but depart instantly, sir, I entreat you, and leave me in peace."

"In peace," Isabel, said the stranger, in a low and altered tone as he rose and came nearer to her; "and 'could I leave you in it I would go joyfully."

Isabel started; she looked up into his face with a sudden glance of recognition, which changed into agony, and then sank on the ground, crouching at his feet.

"Have pity on me," she gasped. "Walter have pity."

"Pity!" said he stooping over her and speaking in tones of the utmost tenderness. "My sister, my Isabel, I have not come to speak harsh words, but to bid you look to peace, and hope, and life. Ah, how miserable are you, my Isabel; I see it written on your face, and hear it in your voice; the reed on which you leant has pierced your hand; come back then to Him who will never fail you; on whom if you lean He will carry you through all sorrow. Come to the good Shepherd, my Isabel."

"No, no, Walter," she answered, raising her head, "it is impossible; I am lost, I know it. I dare not face my husband's anger. I will not leave him; I will not tear myself away even from the mocking shadow of his love. No," her voice grew calm and hard, "I have chosen, we both have chosen. You cast aside every hope of life to follow the Cross of Christ; I cast away faith and my hopes of heaven for earthly love, let us abide by our choice; verily we shall both have our reward."

"And our mother, Isabel," he answered,—"have you forgotten her? have you forgotten her dying bed, and her last words, and her burial day and Father Gerard? He is dead now, Isabel—dead for love of Christ, he died in my arms, praying for you. Have you forgotten Castle de Lisle and the days of your happy, holy youth?"

"No, I have not forgotten," she answered; "I can see each leaf on the trees that line the terraced walk; I can almost count the blades of grass; I can hear in the still night the ripple of the brook and

the song of the passing bird. You have not brought back those memories, they haunt me ever, ever! Have pity on me, Walter, you have done your best; now leave me, for truly it is not safe to tarry long."

Walter drew back, and his face changed—changed from the tender yearning with which he had looked on her, to the stern and yet sweet expression of one whose office is to rebuke.

"I have spoken to you, as brother to sister, as children of one mother, as those bound together with a tender human love; but I speak now as a priest to sinner, as shepherd to a lost and wandering sheep. Not in ignorance have you sinned, but with the full light shining in your eyes. You sold your birthright for a mess of this world's miserable joys, and if you do not repent great and awful will be the punishment. Oh, think you well, have you really chosen? When we sin wilfully, we say we are lost, 'tis a common speech; think you we know what we mean? In flames forever: in unutterable torments; to have the face of God forever turned in wrath upon us,—God in whom we live, and move, and have our being. We fancy in this world we can hide from God. No such thing. He is around us, even the most sinful. His breath is our life. Isabel, do you choose death, eternal death where the fire is not quenched?"

Isabel rose from the ground. Her face was pale, but determined.

"You have done your duty, Walter, and now farewell. I have chosen my own path, and will bear my own risks. Spare me the agony of seeing you again, or worse, bidding my servants turn you from my doors. We 'have' chosen; you for heaven—I for earth. Let me at least enjoy, as best I may, my share of the compact."

She stood waiting for his answer—hard, cold and resolute. Walter's eyes did not seek hers; they were raised to heaven. He said, as if speaking to himself, "Yes, it is the last time, for the way must be long." He roused himself. "Farewell, my poor sister! May God in His great mercy have pity on you ere it is too late."

(To be continued.)

ENGLISH AND AMERICAN SPORT.

A good deal is being written just now about the excessive fondness of the Briton for sport as contrasted with the American's strict attention to business. Our view of the matter is that they take their sport in different ways. The pleasure which Mr. Arthur J. Balfour finds in beating an opponent fairly on the golf-links, Mr. J. Ogden Armour finds in beating a number of opponents in the wheat market, incidentally perhaps raising the price of the poor man's barrel of flour by half a dollar. It cannot be for money that Mr. Armour is striving for he already has more than he knows what to do with. It must be purely for the sake of "playing the game" "and beating the other fellows." And in this commercial warfare there are no rules of fair play. English business men probably live longer than their American cousins, get more genuine enjoyment out of life, and do less harm to their fellow-men.—The Casket.

BOY'S ESSAY ON THE HEN.

A boy who was required to write an essay on hens produced the following: Hens is curious animals; they don't have no nose nor no teeth nor no ears. They swallow their whistles whole and chew it up in their crops inside of 'em. The outside of hens is generally put into pillers and into leather dusters. The side of a hen is sometimes filled with marbles and shirt buttons and sich. A hen is very much smaller than a good many other animals, but they'll dig up more tomato plants than anything that ain't a hen. Hens is very useful to lay eggs for plum puddings. Hens have got wings and can fly when they get frightened. I cut off a hen's head with a hatchet, and it frightened her to death.—Michigan Catholic.

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One of the pictures is called

"Heart Broken"

We will not let the reader into the secret of what has happened, but one of the merry little companions of the woeful little maid who has broken her heart is laughing already, and the other hardly knows what has happened. Cut flowers nod reassuringly at them, and a bright bit of verdure covered wall stands in the background. There is something piquantly Watteauesque about one of the petite figures, suggesting just a touch of French influence on the artist.

The other picture presents another of the tremendous perplexities of childhood. It is called

"Hard to Choose"

As in the other picture, we will not give away the point made by the artists before the recipients analyze it for themselves. Again there are three happy girls in the picture, caught in a moment of pause in the midst of limitless hours of play. One of the little maids still holds in her arms the toy horse with which she has been playing. Flowers and butterflies color the background of this, and an arbour and a quaint old table replace the wall.

The two pictures together will people any room with six happy little girls, so glad to be alive, so care-free, so content through the sunny hours amidst their flowers and butterflies, that they must brighten the house like the throwing open of shutters on a sunny morning.

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