

"Hard down it is, John!"

Then the rattle again of sheets and sails; and as she swings round again on the other tack, what is that vague, impalpable shadow one sees—or fancies one sees—on the starboard bow?

"Is that the land, John?" Angus Sutherland asks, as the skipper comes aft. "Oh, ay," says he, with a chuckle. "I was thinking to myself it was the loom of Duart I saw once or twice. And I was saying to Hector if it was his sweetheart he will look for, he will see better in the night."

Then by and by this other object, to which all attention is summoned: the fog grows thinner and thinner, some one catches sight of a pale glimmering light on our port quarter, and we know that we have left Lismore light-house in our wake. And still the fog grows thinner, until it is suffused with a pale blue radiance; then suddenly we sail into the beautiful moonlight, with the little hills along the horizon all black under the clear and solemn skies.

It is a pleasant sail into the smooth harbour on this enchanted night; the far windows of Castle Osprey are all aglow; the mariners are to rest for awhile from the travail of the sea. And as we go up the moonlit road, the laird is jocular enough, and asks Mary Avon, who is his companion, whether she was prepared to sing "Lochaber no more" when we were going blindly through the mist. But our young doctor remembers that hour or so of mist for another reason. There was something in the sound of the girl's voice he cannot forget. The touch of her hand was slight, but his arm has not even yet parted with the thrill of it.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HIS LORDSHIP.

Miss Avon is seated in the garden in front of Castle Osprey, under the shade of a drooping ash. Her book lies neglected beside her on the iron seat; she is idly looking abroad on the sea and the mountains, now all aglow in the warm light of the afternoon.

There is the clanging of a gate below. Presently up the steep gravel-path comes a tall and handsome young fellow, in full shooting accoutrement, with his gun over his shoulder. Her face instantly loses its dreamy expression. She welcomes him with a cheerful "Good evening!" and asks what sport he has had. For answer he comes across the greensward, places his gun against the trunk of the ash, takes a seat beside her, and puts his hands around one knee.

"It is a long story," says the Youth. "Will it bore you to hear it? I've seen how the women in a country house dread the beginning of the talk at dinner about the day's shooting, and yet give themselves up, like the martyrs and angels they are, and—and it is very different from hunting, don't you know, for there the women can talk as much as anybody."

"Oh, but I should like to hear, really," says she. "It was so kind of a stranger on board a steamer to offer you a day's shooting."

"Well, it was," says he, "and the place has been shot over only once—on the 12th. Very well, you shall hear the whole story. I met the keeper by appointment down at the quay. I don't know what sort of a fellow he is—Highlander or Lowlander—I am not such a swell at those things as my uncle is—but I should have said he talked a most promising mixture of Devonshire, Yorkshire, and Westmoreland—"

"What was his name?"

"I don't know," says the other, leisurely. "I called him Donald on chance; and he took to it well enough. I confess I thought it rather odd he had only one dog with him—an old retriever, but then, don't you know, the moor had been shot over only once; and I thought we might get along. As we walked along to the hill, Donald says, 'Dinna tha mind, sir, if a blackcock gets up, knock un ower, knock un ower, sir.'"

At this point Miss Avon most unfairly bursts out laughing.

"Why," she says, "what sort of countryman was he if he talked like that? That is how they speak in plays about the colliery districts."

"Oh, it's all the same," says the young man, quite unabashed. "I gave him my bag to carry, and put eight or ten cartridges in my pockets. A few mowers, sir—a few mowers, sir," says Donald, and crams my pockets full. Then he would have me put cartridges in my gun even before we left the road; and as soon as we began to ascend the hill, I saw he was on the outlook for a straggler or two, or perhaps a hare. But he warned me that the shooting had been very bad in these districts this year, and that on the 12th the rain was so persistent that scarcely anybody went out. Where could we have been on the 12th?—surely there was no such rain with us?"

"But when you are away from the hills you miss the rain," remarks this profound meteorologist.

"Ah! perhaps so. However, Donald said: 'His lordship went hout for an hour, and got a brace and a'lf. His lordship is no keen for a big bag, ye ken; but is just satisfied if he can get a brace or a couple of brace afore luncheon. It is the exercise he likes.' I then discovered that Lord — had had this moor as part of his shooting last year; and I assured Donald I did not hunger after slaughter. So we climbed higher and higher. I found Donald a most instructive companion. He was very great on the ownership of the land about here, and the old families, don't you know, and all that kind of

thing. I heard a lot about the MacDougalls, and how they had all their possessions confiscated in 1745; and how, when the Government pardoned them, and ordered the land to be restored, the Campbells and Breadalbane, into whose hands it had fallen, kept all the best bits for themselves. I asked Donald why they did not complain. He only grinned. I suppose they were afraid to make a row. Then there was one MacDougall an admiral or captain, don't you know; and he sent a boat to rescue some shipwrecked men, and the boat was swamped. Then he would send another, and that was swamped too. The Government, Donald informed me, wanted to hang him for his philanthropy; but he had influential friends, and he was let off on the payment of a large sum of money—I suppose out of what the Dukes of Argyll and Breadalbane had left him."

The Youth calmly shifted his hands to the other knee.

"You see, Miss Avon, this was all very interesting; but I had to ask Donald where the birds were. 'I'll let loose the dog now,' says he. Well, he did so. You would have thought he had let loose a sky-rocket! It was off and away—up hill and down dale—and all his whistling wasn't of the slightest use. 'He's a bit wild,' Donald had to admit; 'but if I had kent you were a-goin' shootin' earlier in the morning, I would have given him a run or two to take the freshness haff. But on a day like this, there's no scent; we will just have to walk them up; they'll lie as close as a water-hen.' So we left the dog to look after himself, and on we pounded. Do you see that long ridge of rugged hill?"

He pointed to the coast-line beyond the bay.

"Yes."

"We had to climb that, to start with; and not even a glimpse of a rabbit all the way up."

"Ave a care, sir," says Donald; and I took down my gun from my shoulder, expecting to walk into a whole covey at least. "His lordship shot a brace and a'lf of grouse on this very knoll the last day he shot over the moor last year." And now there was less talking, don't you know; and we went cautiously through the heather, working every bit of it, until we got right to the end of the knoll. "It's fine heather," says Donald; "bees would dae well here." So on we went; and Donald's information began again. He pointed out a house on some distant island where Alexander III. was buried. "But where are the birds?" I asked him at last. "Oh," says he "his lordship was never greedy after the shootin'. A brace or two afore luncheon was all he wanted. He bain't none o' your greedy ones, he bain't. His lordship shot a hare on this very side last year—a fine long shot." We went on again. You know what sort of morning it was Miss Avon?"

"It was hot enough, even in the shelter of the trees."

"Up there it was dreadful: not a breath of wind: the sun blistering. And still we plowed through that knee-deep heather, with the retriever sometimes coming within a mile of us; and Donald back to his old families. It was the MacDonnells now; he said they had no right to that name; their proper name was MacAlister—Mack Mick Alister, I think he said. 'But where the dickens are the birds?' I said. 'If we get a brace afore luncheon, we'll do fine,' said he. And then he added, 'there's a brow cold well down there that his lordship aye stopped at.' The hint was enough, we had our drum. Then we went on, and on, and on, and on, until I struck work, and sat down and waited for the luncheon basket."

"We were so afraid Fred would be late," she said; "the men are all so busy down at the yacht."

"What did it matter?" the Youth said resignedly. "I was being instructed. He had got further back still now, to the Druids, don't you know and the antiquities of the Gaelic language. 'What was the river that ran by Rome?' 'The Tiber,' I said. 'And what,' he asked, 'was Tober in Gaelic but a spring or fountain?' And the Tamar in Devonshire was the same thing. And the various Usks—uska, it seems, is the Gaelic for water. Well I'm hanged if I know what that man did not talk about!"

"But surely such a keeper must be invaluable," remarks the young lady, innocently.

"Perhaps. I confess I got a little bit tired of it; but no doubt the poor fellow was doing his best to make up for the want of birds. However, we started again after luncheon. And now we came to place after place where his lordship had performed the most wonderful feats last year. And, mind you, the dog wasn't ranging so wild now; if there had been the ghost of a shadow of a feather in the whole district, we must have seen it. Then we came to another well where his lordship used to stop for a drink. Then we arrived at a crest where no one who had ever shot on the moor had ever failed to get a brace or two. A brace or two! What we flushed was a covey of sheep that flew like mad things down the hill. Well, Donald gave in at last. He could not find words to express his astonishment. His lordship had never come along that highest ridge without getting at least two or three shots. And when I set out for home, he still sticks to it; he would not let me take the cartridges out of my gun; he assured me his lordship never failed to get a snipe or a blackcock on the way home. Confound his lordship!"

"And is that all the story?" says the young lady with her eyes wide open.

"Yes, it is," says he, with a tragic gloom on the handsome face.

"You have not brought home a single bird?"

"Not a feather—never saw one."

"Not even a rabbit?"

"Nary rabbit."

"Why, Fred was up here a short time ago wanting a few birds for the yacht."

"Oh, indeed," says he with a sombre contempt. "Perhaps he will go and ask his lordship for them. In the meantime I'm going in to dress for dinner. I suppose his lordship would do that too, after having shot his thirty brace."

"You must not, anyway," she says. "There is to be no dressing for dinner to-day; we are all going down to the yacht after."

"At all events," he says, "I must get my shooting things off. Much good I've done with 'em!"

So he goes into the house, and leaves her alone. But this chat together seems to have brightened her up somewhat; and with a careless and cheerful air she goes over to the flower borders, and begins culling an assortment of varied-hued blossoms. The evening is becoming cooler; she is not so much afraid of the sun's glare; it is a pleasant task; and she singing or humming snatches of song of the most heterogeneous character.

"Then fill up a bumper?—what can I do less than drink to the health of my Bonny Black Bess!"

—this is the point at which she has arrived when she suddenly becomes silent, and for a second her face is suffused with a conscious color. It is our young doctor who has appeared on the gravel-path. She does not rise from her stooping position; but she hurries with her work.

"You are going to decorate the dinner-table, I suppose?" he says, somewhat timidly.

"Yes," she answers without raising her head. The fingers work nimbly enough; why so much hurry?

"You will take some down to the yacht, too?" he says. "Everybody is quite ready now for the start to-morrow."

"Oh yes," she says. "And I think I have enough now for the table. I must go in."

"Miss Avon," he says; and she stops, with her eyes downcast. "I wanted to say a word to you. You have once or twice spoken about going away. I wanted to ask you—you won't think it is any rudeness. But if the reason was—if it was the presence of any one that was distasteful to you—"

"Oh, I hope no one will think that!" she answers quickly; and for one second the soft, black, pathetic eyes met his. "I am very happy to be amongst such good friends—too happy, I think. I—I must think of other things—"

And here she seems to force this embarrassment away from her; and she says to him, with quite a pleasant air:

"I am so glad to hear that the *White Dove* will sail so much better now. It must be so much more pleasant for you, when you understand all about it."

And then she goes into the house to put the flowers on the table. He, left alone, goes over to the iron seat beneath the ash-tree, and takes up the book she has been reading, and bends his eyes on the page. It is not the book he is thinking about.

(To be continued.)

HEARTH AND HOME.

LIFE is divided into three terms: That which was, which is, and which will be. Let us learn from the past to profit by the present, and from the present to live better for the future.

It is evident that the most worthy efforts often fail, while the worst succeed. That fact alone ought to show the folly of basing an estimate of character on a superficial reckoning of results.

"WHAT would I give," said Charles Lamb, "to call my dear mother back to earth for a single day, to ask her pardon upon my knees, for all those acts by which I grieved her gentle spirit?"

THE way to avoid evil is not by maiming our passions, but by compelling them to yield their vigour to our moral nature. Thus they become, as in the ancient fable, the harnessed steeds which bear the chariot of the sun.

THE man who waits for what he desires takes the course not to be exceedingly grieved if he fails of it. The man, on the contrary, who labours after a thing too impatiently thinks the success, when it comes, is not a recompense equal to all the pains he has been at about it.

MEN admire, respect, adore, but never flatter in love. That is reserved for the benefit of those for whom they have but little feeling and regard, and with whom they can afford to make free, whose esteem is not felt and valued, and whose love is neither appreciated nor desired.

THE best part of one's life is the performance of one's daily duties. All higher motives, ideals, conceptions, sentiments, in a man, are of no account if they do not come down and strengthen him for the better discharge of the duties which devolve upon him in the ordinary affairs of life.

CHARACTER will always operate. There may be little culture—slender abilities—no property—no position in society; still, if there be a character of sterling excellence, it will command influence. It will secure respect, and produce an impression. Besides, who knows in what it may result? therefore, let all pay the utmost

attention to character; nothing is more important.

THE RIGHT WAY.—Better be able to do one thing well than half a dozen imperfectly. There is true economy of time in it; for the one thing well learned and thoroughly mastered will be kept up for pleasure, and room will be made for the next acquisition, while the time consumed in getting only a smattering of many things is utterly lost when they are given up in disgust, at their practical inefficiency.

WHILE welcoming all external aids, we must ever bear in mind that their office is not to mould us into their own image, but to feed our life, to stimulate our originality, to inspire us to think our own thoughts, to bear our own burdens, to live our own lives. We may indeed purify, sweeten, and expand them; but it must be through the wholesome and life-giving process of growth, not by any effort to cut ourselves out by some one else's patterns.

FRIENDSHIP.—Many have talked in very exalted language of the perpetuity of friendship—of invincible constancy and inalienable kindness; and some examples have been seen of men who have continued faithful to their earliest choice, and whose affections have predominated over changes of fortune and contrariety of opinion. But these instances are memorable because they are rare. The friendship which is to be practiced or expected by common mortals must take its rise from mutual pleasure, and must end when the power ceases of delighting each other.

PRaise AND APPRECIATION.—There are persons in this world—and the pity is that there are not more of them—who care less for praise than for appreciation. They have an ideal after which they are striving, but of which they consciously fall short, as every one who has a lofty ideal is sure to do. When that ideal is recognized by another, and they are praised or commended for something—let that something be important or not—in its direction, they are grateful, not for the praise, but for appreciation. An element of sympathy enters into that recognition, and they feel that they have something in common with the observer who admires what they admire, and praises what they think is most worthy of praise.

LOVING-KINDNESS.—It is well to distinguish clearly between what we owe to others and what they have a right to claim of us. The former comprises a far larger sphere than the latter. For, while every one has certain rights which he justly demands, he can make no such claim for kindness, sympathy, forbearance, or charity. If he enjoys these at all, it must be as free gifts, favours to be grateful for, but never to be required. Yet benevolence in its many branches is a duty which we cannot withhold from one another with impunity. Kindness is a debt which, though no one may demand, our own conscience must ever enforce. It is true that we should be just before we are generous, but this consideration by no means diminishes the duty of generosity. There it becomes a matter of serious inquiry whether we have any right to put off the kind or loving or merciful acts and attentions that our hearts suggest and our better natures plan.

BRELOQUES POUR DAMES.

To waltz more than nine times is one of the ten-dances of the young lady of the period.

AN old bachelor will shriek for a better half when a counterfeit fifty-cent piece is shoved on to him.

SOME women were evidently "born to blush unseen"—at least they are never seen to blush.

THE young man who has proposed and has been neither accepted nor rejected knows how exciting it is to live in a doubtful state.

A SAIL boat upset on Lake Huron a few days ago, and the first person saved was a dressmaker. Survival of the fittest, as usual.

"Tis sweet to dye for those we love," exclaimed a young man when his best girl asked him why he didn't wear a black instead of a light moustache.

A DANBURY young man bought an accordion and took lessons. A month later his wife presented him with an heir. Not being able to hold its own the accordion is offered for sale.

FREDDY MILES, of Cleveland, aged four, accompanied his parents to church. On entering they knelt and bowed low. As they resumed their seats thus spoke Master Fred: "Is you 'traid 'cause God is here?" "Why, no, child?" "Then what makes you hide?"

CAN'T PREACH GOOD.

No man can do a good job of work, preach a good sermon, try a law suit well, doctor a patient, or write a good article when he feels miserable and dull, with sluggish brain and unsteady nerves, and none should make the attempt in such a condition when it can be easily and cheaply removed by a little Hop Bitters. See "Truths" and "Proverbs," other column.

DRUNKEN STUFF.

How many children and women are slowly and surely dying, or rather being killed, by excessive doctoring, or the daily use of some drug or drunken stuff called medicine, that no one knows what it is made of, who can easily be cured and saved by Hop Bitters, made of Hops, Buchu, Mandrake, Dandelion &c., which is so pure, simple and harmless that the most frail woman, weakest invalid or smallest child can trust in them. Will you be saved by them? See other column.