

posed to alter the arrangement of it. The groom went on.

"May I ask, sir, why I should care about a father and mother who deserted me? Mind what you are about, my lady!" he cried, suddenly addressing my aunt. "There's a cat in the folds of that curtain; she might frighten you."

He had barely said the words, before the housekeeper's large tabby cat, taking its noon-day siesta in the looped-up fold of the curtain, leaped out and made for the door. In spite of the warning, Lady Catherine was frightened. A faint cry escaped her; she sank into the nearest chair. "Let the creature out," she whispered to me. "This will not happen again," she added, reassuring the General by a faint smile. "The housekeeper shall give up her cat, or give up her situation."

She rose, and advancing to the table, addressed herself to the groom for the first time. Towards her inferiors in social position her manner was perfect; always considerate and kind, without ever touching the objectionable extremes of undue familiarity on one side, or of undue condescension on the other. When she spoke to the groom she amazed me. She was so haughty and so ungracious that I declare I hardly recognized her!

"Did you see the cat?" she asked.

"No, my lady."

"Then how did you know the creature was in the curtain?"

For the first time since he had entered the room, the groom looked a little confused. "It's a sort of presumption for a man in my position to be subject to a nervous infirmity," he answered. "I am one of those persons (the weakness is not uncommon, as your ladyship is aware) who know by their own unpleasant sensations when a cat is in the room. I believe the 'antipathy,' as the gentlefolks call it, must have been born in me. As long as I can remember—"

The aunt turned to the General, without attempting to conceal that she took no sort of interest in the groom's remembrance. "Haven't you done with the man yet?" she asked. The General started at the unusual abruptness in her tone, and gave the groom his dismissal. "You shall hear from me in three days. Good morning."

Michael Bloomfield looked at my aunt for a moment with steady attention, and left the room.

V.

"You don't mean to engage that man?" said Lady Catherine, as the door closed.

"Why not?" asked my uncle, looking very much surprised.

"I have taken a dislike to him."

This short sharp answer was so entirely out of the character of my aunt, that the General took her kindly by the hand, and said, "I am afraid you are not well."

She irritably withdrew her hand. "I don't feel well. It doesn't matter."

"It does matter, Catherine. What can I do for you?"

"Write to the man—!" She paused and smiled contemptuously. "Imagine a groom with an antipathy to cats!" she said, turning to me. "Write," she resumed, addressing her husband, "and tell him to look for another place."

"What objection can I make to him?" the General asked helplessly.

"Good heavens! can't you make an excuse? Say he is too young."

My uncle looked at me in expressive silence—walked slowly to the writing-table—and glanced at his wife, in the faint hope that she might change her mind. Their eyes met—and she seemed to recover the command of her temper. The famous smile that fascinated everybody made its appearance again. She put her hand caressingly on the General's shoulder. "I remember the time," she said softly, "when any caprice of mine was a command to you. Ah, I was younger then!"

The General's reception of this little advance was thoroughly characteristic of him. He first kissed Lady Catherine's hand, and then he wrote the letter. My aunt rewarded him by a look, and left the library.

"What the deuce is the matter with her?" my uncle said to me, when we were alone. "Do you dislike the man too?"

"Certainly not. So far as I can judge, he appears to be just the sort of person we want."

"And knows thoroughly well how to manage horses, my dear. What can be Lady Catherine's objection to him?"

As the words passed her lips, Lady Catherine opened the library door.

"I am so ashamed of myself," she said sweetly. "At my age I have been behaving like a spoiled child. How good you are to me, General! Let me try to make amends for my misconduct. Will you permit me?"

She took up the General's letter, without waiting for permission; tore it to pieces, smiling pleasantly all the while; and threw the fragments into the waste paper basket. "As if you didn't know better than I do!" she said, kissing him on the forehead. "Engage the man by all means."

She left the room for the second time. For the second time my uncle looked at me in blank perplexity—and I looked back at him in the same condition of mind. The sound of the luncheon bell was equally a relief to both of us. Not a word more was spoken on the subject of the new groom. His references were verified;

and he entered the General's service in three days' time.

VI.

Always careful in anything that concerned my welfare, no matter how trifling it might be, my uncle did not trust me alone with the new groom when he first entered our service. Two old friends of the General accompanied me at his special request, and reported the man to be perfectly competent and trustworthy. After that, Michael rode out with me alone; my friends among young ladies seldom caring to accompany me, when I abandoned the Park for the quiet country roads, on the north and west of London. Was it wrong in me to talk to him on these expeditions? It would surely have been treating a man like a brute never to take the smallest notice of him—especially as his conduct was uniformly respectful towards me. Not once, by word or look, did he presume on the position which my favour permitted him to occupy.

Ought I to blush, when I confess (though he was only a groom) that he interested me?

In the first place, there was something romantic in the very blankness of the story of his life. He had been left, in his infancy, in the stables of a gentleman living in Kent, near the high-road between Gravesend and Rochester. The same day, the stable-boy had met a woman running out of the yard, pursued by the dog. She was a stranger and was not well dressed. While the boy was protecting her by chaining the dog to his kennel, she was quick enough to place herself beyond the reach of pursuit. The infant's clothing proved, on examination, to be of the finest linen. He was warmly wrapt in a beautiful shawl of some foreign manufacture, entirely unknown to all persons present, including the master and mistress of the house. Among the folds of the shawl there was discovered a letter, without date, signature, or address, which it was presumed the woman must have forgotten.

Like the shawl, the paper was of foreign manufacture. The handwriting presented a strongly marked character; and the composition plainly revealed the mistakes of a person imperfectly acquainted with the English language. The contents of the letter merely related to the means supplied for the support of the child. Instead of paying the money by instalments, the writer had committed the folly of enclosing a sum of a hundred pounds in one remittance. At the close of the letter, an appointment was made for a meeting, in six months' time, on the eastward side of the London Bridge. The stable-boy's description of the woman who had passed him showed that she belonged to the lower class. To such a person a hundred pounds would be a fortune. She had, no doubt, abandoned the child, and made off with the money. No trace of her was ever found. On the day of the appointment the police watched the eastward side of London Bridge without making any discovery. Through the kindness of the gentlemen in whose stables he had been found, the first ten years of the boy's life were passed under the protection of a charitable asylum. They gave him the name of one of the little inmates who had died; and they sent him out to service before he was eleven years old. He was harshly treated, and ran away; wandered to some training-stables near Newmarket; attracted the favourable notice of the head-groom, was employed among the other boys and liked the occupation. Growing up to manhood, he had taken service in private families as a groom. Such was the record of twenty-six years of his life!

Taking him apart from his story, there was something in the man himself which attracted attention, and made one think of him in his absence.

For example, there was a spirit of resistance to his destiny in him, which is very rarely found in serving men of his order. I might never have known this, if the General had not asked me to accompany him in one of his periodical visits of inspection to the stables. He was so well satisfied that he proposed extending his investigations to the groom's own room. "If you don't object, Michael," he added, with his customary consideration for the self-respect of all persons in his employment. Michael's colour rose a little; he looked at me. "I am afraid the young lady will not find my room quite so tidy as it ought to be," he said as he opened the door for us.

The only disorder in the groom's room was produced, to our surprise, by the groom's books and papers. Cheap editions of the English poets, translations of Latin and Greek classics, handbooks for teaching French and German "without a master," selections from the great French and German writers, carefully written "exercises" in both languages, manuals of shorthand, with more "exercises" in that art, were scattered over the table, round the central object of a reading-lamp, which spoke plainly of studies by night. "Why, what is all this?" cried the General. "Are you going to leave me, Michael, and set up a school?" Michael answered in sad submissive tones. "I try to improve myself, sir—though I sometimes lose heart and hope." "Hope of what?" asked my uncle. "Are you not content to be a servant? Must you rise in the world, as the saying is?"

The groom shrank a little at that abrupt question. "If I had relations to care for me and help me along the hard ways of life," he said, "I might be satisfied, sir, to remain as I am. As it is, I have no one to think about but myself—and I am fool enough sometimes to look beyond myself." So far, I had kept silence;

but I could no longer resist giving him a word of encouragement—his confession was so sadly and so patiently made. "You speak too harshly of yourself," I said; "the best and greatest men have begun like you by looking beyond themselves." For a moment our eyes met. I admired the poor lonely fellow trying so modestly and so bravely to teach himself—and I did not care to conceal it. He was the first to look away; some suppressed emotion turned him deadly pale. Was I the cause of it? I felt myself tremble as that bold question came into my mind. The General, with one sharp glance at me, diverted the talk (not very delicately, as I thought), to the misfortune of Michael's birth. "I have heard of your being deserted in your infancy by some woman unknown," he said. "What has become of the things you were wrapped in, and the letter that was found on you? they might lead to a discovery one of these days." The groom smiled. "The last master I served thought of it as you do, sir. He was so good as to write to the gentleman who was first burdened with the care of me—and the things were sent to me in return." He took up an unlocked leather bag, which opened by touching a brass knob, and showed us the shawl, the linen (sadly faded by time), and the letter. We were puzzled by the shawl. My uncle who had served in the East, thought it looked like a very rare kind of Persian work. We examined with interest the letter, and the fine linen. Then Michael quietly remarked, as we handed them back to him, "They keep the secret, you see." We could only look at each other, and own there was nothing more to be said.

(To be continued.)

ABOUT PRETTY WOMEN.

Highly important is the part played by eyes and nose in the living drama of a woman's face. A pair of lovely eyes, whether darkest brown or softest grey, go far to atone for a little eccentricity on the part of other features; and the nose, according to a great authority on such matters, is the surest guide to a judicious choice in affairs of the toilet. The eyes, too, should have their color taken into consideration in the selection of color in dress. There is usually a certain uniformity observable between their tint and that of the hair. When the latter is fair the eyes are generally blue or grey; when it is dark, the eyes are hazel, brown, or (an exceedingly rare color) black. Sometimes, however, dark eyes are found with fair hair, which is very often a most piquant and attractive combination. It is also, at present, fashionable. Occasionally, light blue eyes accompany dark hair. This union may be observed among the peasants of the South of Ireland. It is not often pleasing. The pale tint of the iris becomes almost colorless when contrasted with the dark color of the hair, and the want of harmony is distasteful and disappointing to the eye of the gazer. When the cheeks are very rosy, the effect is decidedly vulgar. Only the softest apple-blossom tints on cheek and lip can make hair and eyes tolerable. The various colors of the eyes may be roughly summed up as blue, grey, brown, green and black, but the varieties of these are infinite. Were ever two pairs of eyes seen exactly alike? They may resemble each other closely, but there will always be some point of difference more or less marked. Blue eyes are in many different shades of that color, from the darkest violet to the pale blue with white lights that goes with the bleached hair of the negative and colorless blonde.

There have been many theories as to the disposition shown in the color of the eyes; but as every man or woman has constructed his theory—and naturally enough—from his own peculiar experience, and as that has necessarily been limited, no trustworthy deductions can be drawn from the impressions that have thus been given to the world. Prominent eyes generally indicate that the possessor is (or would be, if taught) clever in music and in languages. For beauty the eyes should neither be deeply sunken nor prominent. There is a medium which they should happily touch. Much depends on their position in this respect. The glance is one of the tests of true culture: a furtive, shrinking glance is as "bad form" as a bold stare. True breeding shows itself in the smile, too; but as this belongs to the mouth as much as to the eyes, I will wait to discuss it till I reach that feature in a future paper.

The approach of age shows itself first about the eyes. Lines come, faintly at first, then deeper and deeper, until the incipient crow's-feet are indicated, developed, revealed. The woman who, looking in her glass, perceives these fatal lines diverging from the outer corners of her eyes, knows that she has reached an era in her life. She recognizes it with a sigh, if she be a vain, a lovely, or a worldly woman; with a smile, perhaps, if she has children in whom she can live her own youth over again. But it can never be a gay smile. None of us, men or women, like to feel youth—that precious possession—slipping away from us. But we should never be on the look-out for crow's-feet or grey hairs. Looking for them is sure to bring them, for thinking about them brings them. Tears form a part of the language of the eye, which is eloquent enough when sparingly used, and which should be sparingly used for other reasons than that of adding to their mute eloquence. Tears are a disgusting expression of emotion, and those who get into the habit of weeping over every small vexation do much towards acquiring a careworn, miserable expression, and

are sure to look old before their time. Excessive weeping has been known not only to injure, but actually to destroy the sight. Few women look pretty, or even interesting, in tears, though it has long been a pleasant fiction in poetry and romance to suppose that they do. Many women, some men, and most children make most disfiguring and distorting grimaces while crying; and the lady who thinks she can work upon a man's feelings by a liberal display of tears should carefully study a becoming mode of producing them before her looking-glass. Grimaces soften no hearts, and tears accompanied by the usual distortion have a hardening effect, if not a visible one. The picture of "Ginx's Baby" is well known, and aptly illustrates my meaning. The mouth is opened to its widest capacity (and the extent to which the small, rosebud mouth of a child can be opened is simply surprising.) In a prettily-written book, now probably out of print, purporting to be the story of the life of one of Milton's wives, the author makes that poet say of his wife's eyes after crying that they resembled "the sun's clear shining after rain"—a very pretty natural object indeed, but during the rain itself the observer is not inclined to be so complimentary.

AMERICANS NOT ADMITTED TO FRENCH SOCIETY.

The relations between French society of any sort and the American colony in Paris appear to be anything but close. There was a time when Americans were supposed to mingle with Parisians—when you heard of American beauties at the Tuileries, and when a certain part of our colony had the *grandes entrées*, if nothing more, at the palace. When the Empire broke up, and when these ornaments of American civilization became convinced that there was little hope of either a Bonapartist or a Bourbon restoration, many of them sadly shook off the dust of their aristocratic feet against the city, thus abandoned to mere Republicanism, and went home. They thought that if they must live under Republican rule, as well live at home as abroad. Into the more or less humiliating memories of that period it may be as well not to penetrate too far. Everybody knows that the American residents of Paris under the Empire supplied not a few of the staunchest partisans of the Imperial régime. They crawled eagerly to the steps of a throne which Monarchists refused to approach.

But not even then was there any real fusion between the Americans and French—even French of the Bonapartist sort. If you read American letters from Paris in those days, public or private, you might well fancy that our dear countrymen were in the centre and height of fashion. The real truth is that they were received in a narrow circle, and of few could it be said that they were very cordially received. They were tolerated, hardly more. If they gave balls—well, there are several ways of giving balls, and one is to ask somebody to ask your guest for you. Perhaps one more quotation from a French source will be enough to show how the French regarded it:

"Well, yes, they are Americans. They have made a fortune in cotton, in tallow, indigo, niggers, whatever you like. But does it matter to us? And then, the Americans nowadays are excepted—for my part, when people give balls all I ask of them is not to belong to the police and to give a good supper. On these terms I am perfectly willing to send out cards for them, with the compliments of the Baroness de Lermont at the bottom."

From the enumeration of the sources of American wealth above given you may judge how old the book is I am citing—nothing to be heard of petroleum or bonanzas. Whether there be still any truth, or anything like truth, in the picture—whether on either side people can be found to enter into such singular engagements, I had rather not undertake to say. In any case, that is not society. It is no more society than Lady X's ball in London last season was society, or gave Lady X herself a passport to society. I mean the too famous ball for which a certain Duchess agreed to issue the invitations on condition that the debts of the Duchess' husband were paid; as they were. Take the testimony of an American resident in Paris; of the best social position at home; rich, accomplished, speaks French perfectly, knows not a few of the very best French people, and so on. Said he: "I have lived here twenty years. At one time I really wanted to go into French society, in the same way and on the same terms as I should go into society in New York. I tried. I had every advantage an American could well have, and I gave it up. It is useless. It cannot be done." (Of course there are people who will tell you they are received, whoever else is not. What they mean is that they are asked to the crushes at the Elysée; that they know certain celebrities with whom they exchange cards, and perhaps, once a year, dinner; that they have beyond this a circle of personal acquaintances whom they visit on fixed days; and that is about all. Making all allowance for this, it remains true that the society in which Americans in Paris mingle is American society.)

THE Times says Lord Derby and Sir Charles Dilke will enter the Imperial Cabinet after Christmas, and Mr. Gladstone probably retire before the end of next session, Lord Hartington assuming the Premiership.