

that your guesses were not quite correct? And what has become of Dr. Sutherland now?"

His hostess is not in this gay humour. She answers, with a touch of reserve:

"If I made any mistake, it was about Mary. And I had no right to suspect anything, for she never took me into her confidence; and I do not approve of elderly people prying into the affairs of young people."

"Pry?" says the Laird, loftily and graciously. "No, no; no prying. But judgment?—is there any harm in one keeping one's eyes open? And did I not tell ye, ma'am, to be of good heart—that everything would go properly and smoothly?"

"And has it?" she says, sharply, and looking up with a glance of indignation.

The Laird, however, is so wrapped up in his own thoughts that he does not notice this protest.

"She is a fine lass, that," he says, with decision. "Did ye ever hear a young girl speak such clear common-sense as she spoke about that very doctor? There is no affected sentiment—there is nothing of your Clarinda and Philander novel-writing—about that lass; did ye ever hear such good, sound, clear common-sense?"

"I heard her," says his hostess, shortly.

By this time we had weighed anchor and the *White Dove* was slowly sailing down the loch before a light northerly breeze. Then Mary Avon came on deck, followed by the attentive Youth. And while everybody on board was eagerly noticing things ahead—the seals on the rocks at the mouth of the loch, the windy gray sea beyond, and the blue mountains of Jura—Mary Avon alone looked backward to the low lines of hills we were leaving. She sat silent and apart.

The Laird stepped over to her.

"We have just been talking about the doctor," says he, cheerfully. "And we were saying there was plenty of good common-sense in what ye said yesterday about his duties and his prospects. Oh, ay! But then, ye ken, Miss Mary, even the busiest and the wisest of men must have their holiday at times; and I have just been thinking that if we can get Dr. Sutherland to come with us next year, we will maybe surprise him by what ye can do wi' a steam-yacht. Why, during the time we have been lying here, we might have run across to Ireland and back in a steam-yacht. It is true, there would be less enjoyment for him in the sailing; but still there are compensations."

His hostess has overheard all this. She says, in her gentle way, but with a cold and cruel clearness:

"You know, sir, that is quite impossible. Angus will not be in Scotland for many a day to come."

The girl's face is hidden; apparently she is still gazing back on those slowly receding hills.

"Toots! toots!" says the Laird, briskly. "The lad is not a fool. He will make an occasion if he considers it desirable; there is no compulsion that he must remain in Ectaly. I think I would even lay a wager that we will have just the same party, and the doctor included, on that steam-yacht next year, and in this very place. Is it a wager, ma'am?"

"I am afraid you must leave us out," she remarks, "at all events. And as for Angus Sutherland, I shall be surprised if ever he sees West Loch Tarbert again."

Why had not Mary Avon spoken? The Laird went a step nearer her, and put his hand gently on her shoulder.

"Well, Miss Mary," said he, "what are we to do to show these people their folly and wickedness—eh? I think I will leave it to you."

"Oh no, sir." This, or something like this, she was understood to say, in a low voice. But at the same moment she rose quickly, crossed the deck, put a trembling hand on the companion-way, and went below. Just as she disappeared, she could not quite conceal her face, and there was a look on it that startled the Laird. Had the girl been stealthily crying all the time she had been looking back at those distant hills?

The Laird was greatly disturbed. He said nothing, for he would not have it understood that anything had happened; but any one could see by his pre-occupied manner that he was seriously troubled. He had directed a quick, sharp glance of surprise and inquiry at his hostess, but just then she was stepping aside to get out of the way of Captain John. The Laird sat down by himself, and remained in a profound silence. He seemed to pay no attention to what was going on.

But there was brisk work all over the yacht. For now we had got clear of the long promontory and its islands; and out here in the open there was a pretty heavy sea running, while the wind began to freshen up a bit. There was a squally look about the sea and sky; it was considered prudent to lower the topsail. Now and again there was a heavy shock at the bows, and then a dipping of heads to dodge the flying shreds of spray. In the midst of all this Miss Avon appeared again.

"I thought we should catch it," said she, in the blithest of tones; and she addressed herself particularly to the Laird. "And it is better to be prepared. But, oh, dear me! what a nuisance a water-proof is!"

And indeed the wind was blowing that hooded and caped garment all about her head, so that her dark hair was becoming considerably disheveled. The Youth came to her assistance; put a cushion and a shawl for her just beside her hostess, under the lee of the weather bul-

warks; then she snugly ensconced herself there, and seemed to be very merry and happy indeed.

"Don't you often wish you were a fish, when the weather is wet," she says, gaily, to her friend, "so that you might be perfectly indifferent?" And here she cries, "Oh!" again, because a drop or two of spray has come flying past the keel of the gig and just caught her on the crown of her water-proof.

Nothing can exceed her talk, her laughter, her cheerfulness. She nestles close to her friend; she is like a spoiled child; she makes fun of the Youth's attempts to steer. And the Laird is regarding her with a grave wonder—perhaps with some dark suspicion—when she lightly addresses herself to him again:

"But what about that strong man, sir? You were going to tell us the story yesterday, when you were interrupted."

It was a cunning device. How could a professed story-teller refuse to rise to the bait? The watchfulness disappeared from the face of the Laird; in its place a sort of anticipatory laughter began to shine.

"But it was Tom Galbraith heard of that man," said he, in a deprecating way. "Did I not tell ye? Oh, ay! It was Tom Galbraith heard of him when he was in Ross-shire; and it was he told me of the wonderful things that man could do, according to the natives. Did not I tell ye of his rolling an enormous stone up a hill, and of the stone being split into nine pieces, yet not any one man could roll up one of the nine pieces? But I was going to tell ye of his being in Prince's street, Edinburgh, and a coach and four was coming whirling along; the horses had run away, and no one could stop them. McKinlay was walking along the street, when the people called to him to look out, for the four horses were running mad; but the Ross-shire Samson was not afraid. No, no—"

Here a wisp of spray somewhat disconcerted the Laird; but only for a moment. He wiped the salt-water from the side of his neck, and continued, with suppressed laughter bubbling up in his eyes.

"The man that told Tom Galbraith," said he, "was a solemn believer, and spoke with reverence. 'McKinlay,' says he, 'he will turn to the street, and he will grab at the four horses and the coach, and he will took them up in his two hands—shist like a mace.'"

"Shist like a mace." The Laird preserved a stern silence. The humour of this story was so desperately occult that he would leave the coarse applause to us. Only there was an odd light in his eyes, and we knew that it was all he could do to prevent his bursting out into a roar of laughter. But Mary Avon laughed—until John of Skye, who had not heard a word, grinned out of pure sympathy.

"He must have been the man," said Miss Avon, diffidently—for she did not like to encroach on the Laird's province—"whom Captain John told me about, who could drink whisky so strong that a drop of it would burn a white mark on a tarred rope."

But the Laird was not jealous.

"Very good—very good!" he cried, with extreme delight. "Excellent—a real good one! 'Deed I'll tell that to Tom Galbraith.'"

And the high spirits and the facetiousness of these two children continued through lunch. That was rather a wild meal, considering that we were still saving across the boisterous Sound of Jura, in the teeth of a fresh northerly breeze. However, nothing could exceed the devotion of the Youth, who got scarcely any luncheon at all in his efforts to control the antics of pickle jars, and to bolster up bottles. Then when everything was secure, there would be an ominous call overhead, "Stand by forward, boys!" followed by a period of frantic revolution and panic.

"Yes," continued the Laird, when we got on deck again; "a sense of humour is a great power in human affairs. A man in public life without it is like a ship without a helm; he is sure to go and do something redeelous that a smaller man would have avoided altogether. Ay, my father's sense of humour was often said by people to be quite extraordinary—quite extraordinary. I make no pretensions that way myself."

Here the Laird waved his hand, as if to deprecate any courteous protest.

"No, no; I have no pretensions that way; but sometimes a bit joke comes in verra well when ye are dealing with solemn and pretentious asses. There is one man in Strathgovan—"

But here the Laird's contempt of this dull person could not find vent in words. He put up both hands, palm outward, and shook them, and shrugged his shoulders.

"A most desperately stupid ass, and as loquacious as a parrot. I mind fine when I was giving my earnest attention to the subject of our police system. I may tell ye, ma'am, that our burgh stretches over about a mile each way, and that it has a population of over 800 souls, and a vast quantity of valuable property. And up till that time we had but two policemen on duty at the same time during the night. It was my opinion that that number was quite inadequate, and I stated my opinion at a meeting of the Commissioners convened for that purpose. Well, would ye believe it, this meddlesome body, Johnny Guthrie, got up on his legs, and preached and preached away, and all that he had to tell us was that we could not add to the number of police without the consent of the Commissioners of Supply and the Home Secretary. Bless me! what bairn is there but

knows that? I'll be bound Miss Mary there, though she comes from England, would know as much about public affairs as that!"

"I—I am afraid not, sir," said she.

"No matter—no matter. Live and learn. When ye come to Strathgovan, we'll begin and teach ye. However, as I was sayin', this bletherin' poor crature went on and on, and it was all about the one point, until I got up, and, 'Mr. Provost,' says I, 'there are some human beings it would be idle to answer. Their loquacity is a sort of function; they perspire through their tongue—like a dog.' You should have seen Johnny Guthrie's face after that!"

And here the Laird laughed and laughed again at Johnny Guthrie's discomfiture.

"But he was a poor bletherin' crature," he continued, with a kind of compassion. "Providence made him what he is; but sometimes I think Johnny tries to make himself even more ridiculous than Providence could fairly and honestly have intended. He attacked me most bitterly because I got a committee appointed to represent to the postmaster that we should have a later delivery at night. He attacked me most bitterly; and yet I think it was one of the greatest reforms ever introduced into our burgh."

"Oh, indeed, sir?" says his hostess, with earnest attention.

"Yes, indeed. The postmaster is a most civil, worthy, and respectable man, though it was a sore blow to him when his daughter took to going to the Episcopal Church in Glasgow. However, with his assistance, we now get the letters that used to be delivered in the forenoon delivered late the night before; and we have a mail made up at 10 p.m., which is a great convenience. And that man Johnny Guthrie gabbling away as if the French Revolution were coming back on us! I am a Conservative myself, as ye know, ma'am; but I say that we must march with the times. No standing still in these days. However, ye will get Johnny Guthrie everywhere; poor bletherin' cratures who have no capacity for taking a large view of public affairs—bats and blind-worms as it were. I suppose there is a use for them, as it has pleased Providence to create them; but it would puzzle an ordinary man to find it out."

With much of the like wise discourse did the Laird beguile our northward voyage; and apparently he had forgotten that little incident about Mary Avon in the morning. The girl was as much interested as any one; laughed at the "good one;" was ready to pour her contempt on the Johnny Guthrie who opposed the projects of the Laird's statesmanship. And in this manner we fought our way against the stiff northerly breeze, until evening found us off the mouth of Loch Crinan. Here we proposed to run in for the night, so that we should have daylight and a favourable tide to enable us to pass through the Doris Mohr.

It was a beautiful, quiet evening in the sheltered bay; and after dinner we were all on deck, reading, smoking, and what not. The Laird and Mary Avon were playing chess together. The glow of the sunset was still in the western sky, and reflected on the smooth water around us, though Jura and Scarba were of a dark, soft, luminous rose-purple.

Chess is a silent game; the Laird was not surprised that his companion did not speak to him. And so absorbed was he with his knights and bishops that he did not notice that, in the absolute silence of this still evening, one of the men forward was idly whistling to himself the sad air of Lochaber:

"Lochaber no more. And Lochaber no more!
We'll may be return to Lochaber no more!"

It was the old and familiar refrain; Hector of Moidart was probably not thinking of Lochaber at all.

But suddenly the Laird, staring down at the board, perceived some little tiny thing drop on the farther edge from him, and he quickly looked up. The girl was crying. Instantly he put out his great hand and took hers, and said, in a low voice, full of gentleness and a tender sympathy:

"Dear me, lassie, what is the matter?"

But Mary Avon hastily pulled out her handkerchief, and passed it across her eyes, and said, hurriedly,

"Oh, I beg your pardon! it is nothing. I—I was thinking of something else. And is it your move, or mine, sir?"

The Laird looked at her, but her eyes were cast down. He did not pay so much attention to the game after that.

(To be continued.)

HEARTH AND HOME.

ECCENTRICITY.—Eccentricity is harmless, but it never can be commendable; it is one of the children of that prolific failing—vanity. And whether it shows itself in singular manners or peculiarities of dress, it is clearly acted upon from the presumptuous supposition that the many are in the wrong, the individual in the right.

SYMPATHY.—The slightest thing we do sends a thrill vibrating along the endless chains of cause and effect to the utmost limit of time, through the whole grand machine of future existence. Man dies, but not one of his acts ever dies. Each is perpetuated and prolonged for ever by interminable results, affecting some beings in every age to come.

CORRECT SPEECH.—Correct speech is such an indisputable mark of a lady or gentleman that it cannot be too often repeated that the true

standard of pronunciation is one in which all marks of a particular place of birth and residence are lost, and in which nothing appears to indicate any habits of intercourse other than with the well-bred and well-informed wherever they may be found.

COURTESY.—Courtesy is due to others. It is helpful to others. Treat even a base man with respect, and he will make at least one desperate effort to be respectable. Courtesy is an appeal to the nobler and better nature of others to which that nature responds. It is due to ourselves. It is the crowning grace of culture, the stamp of perfection upon character, the badge of the perfect gentleman, the fragrance of the flower of womanhood when full blown.

FEELING.—Feelings are a most important and necessary part of human nature. Out of them spring the joy and the beauty of life. But they never can yield their best results unless they are under the control of reason. Pope says, "The ruling passion, be it what it will, the ruling passion conquers reason still." He who succumbs to this rule within his breast must part with reason, manliness, independence, and must forfeit the happiness, and the power of conferring the happiness, which comes from well-regulated social intercourse.

GOOD ADVICE.—It is generally thought that there is nothing easier than to give good advice. It is so abundant and so cheap, it is said, because it costs nothing. Now this may be applicable to much of the trite counsel and most of the well-worn maxims that live upon the lips, but do not come from the heart; it may be true concerning such exhortations as we have been in the habit of hearing from one generation and passing on to the next, without much reference to their applicability; but it is not true of anything which honestly bears the name of good advice. This is not plentiful or easy to give.

DON'T FRET.—One fretter or despairer can destroy the peace of a family, can destroy the harmony of neighbours, can unsettle the councils of cities, and hinder the legislation of nations. He who frets or desponds is never the one who mends, who heals, who repairs evil; more, he discourages, enfeebles, and too often disables those around him, who, but for the gloom and depression of his company, would do good work and keep up brave cheer. The effect upon a sensitive person in the mere presence of such a being is indescribable. It is to the soul what a cold, icy mist is to the body—more chilling than the bitterest storm.

SILENCE.—You have trouble, your feelings are injured, your husband is unkind, your wife frets, your home is not pleasant, your friends do not treat you fairly, and things in general move unpleasantly. Well, what of it? Keep it to yourself. A smouldering fire can be found and extinguished; but, when coals are scattered, you can't pick them up. Bury your sorrow. The place for sad and disgusting things is under the ground. A cut finger is not benefited by pulling off the plaster and exposing it to somebody's eye. Charity covereth a multitude of sins. Things thus covered are cured without a scar; but, once published and confided to meddling friends, there is no end to the trouble they may cause. Keep it to yourself. Troubles are transient; and, when a sorrow is healed and passed, what a comfort it is to say, "No one ever knew till it was over!"

THE IDLE MAN AND THE BUSY ONE.—To do increases the capacity of doing; and it is far less difficult for a man who is in an habitual course of exertion to exert himself a little more for an extra purpose than for the man who does little or nothing to put himself into motion for the same end. This is owing to a principle of our moral nature, which is called the *vis inertia*;—literally, the strength of inactivity. To set a common child's hoop rolling requires a smarter stroke at starting than to keep it in motion afterwards. There is a reluctance in all things to be set moving; but, when that is over, everything proceeds smoothly enough. Just so it is with the idle man. In losing the habit, he loses the power of doing; but a man who is busy about some regular employment for a proper length of time every day can very easily do something else during the remaining hours; indeed the recreation of the weary man is apt to be busier than the perpetual leisure of the idle.

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