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URIEL; Or, the Chapel of the Holy Angels.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE AUSTRALIAN DUKE; OR, THE NEW UTOPIA," ETC.

CHAPTER XXII.

A WALK WITH PAXTON. The morning had come, bright and cheery, and the sportsmen had all set forth to the woods, a lively party of men and dogs, whilst Geoffrey, indifferent to the surprise excited by his whimsicality in declining a day's shooting in the best pleasant covert of Cornwall, was conducting Paxton over the broad open downs that stretched along the coast in the direction of Tremadoc.

"You are a bold man, Mr. Houghton," said Paxton; "those remarks of yours last night about the gentlemen poulterers were rather home-thrusts to some of the party."

"Were they?" said Geoffrey. "Well, so much the better; I have no taste for indiscriminate slaughter. I like to see the wild creatures on the wing, without feeling it my duty at once to knock them over."

"Then it won't exactly be a love of wild sport," said Paxton, "that is taking you to Manitoba?"

Geoffrey laughed. "Oh, Manitoba is only a castle in the air," he said; "I fancy sometimes, when the mood is on me, that a log-hut in the woods and a brush with the bears would be a pleasant way of beginning life over again."

"I should say now," said Paxton, "that one who has begun life so well and kept it up as successfully as you, Mr. Houghton, would make a mistake in thinking of beginning it over again."

Geoffrey sighed. "I don't know much about the success," he said; "life, after all, is a heavy sort of business."

"To some, no doubt, but surely not to you," said Paxton. "Perhaps you won't believe me serious if I say that my three days at Laventor, the year before last, have left a picture on my mind that I don't care to forget—a picture of real unmistakable home-happiness."

"Ah, but there have been a precious lot of changes," said Geoffrey. "Laventor is not now exactly what you remember it. My two sisters have married, and left us."

"Then I should say," said Paxton, stopping with great deliberation to light his cigar, "that the best thing you could do would be to follow their example."

Geoffrey shook his head. "I'm not the man to succeed in that class of adventure," he said; "I should be more at home with the bears, I fancy."

"In other words," said Paxton, "you are going to Manitoba to build a log-hut, shoot bears—and get rid of yourself, if you can; but that last, my dear Mr. Houghton, is a matter difficult of accomplishment."

"I didn't quite mean that," said Geoffrey; "I was only thinking that there are some days in one's life when one feels as a poor brute of a horse must feel that has to pull its load, with the collar chafing its galled neck, and the roads heavy."

"And what advice would you give the animal under such unpromising circumstances?"

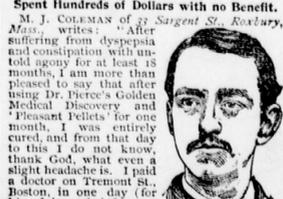
"I suppose," replied Geoffrey, "one would have to tell him that there's nothing for it but to pull on, and look forward to the stable."

"That might do well enough for a horse," said Paxton; "if a man were in the shafts, something more would be needed."

"I don't know, really," said Geoffrey; "it does not seem a very sublime sort of doctrine; but, on my word, at such times, I think the only thing is to trudge on blindly and doggedly. But it's grim, hard work, if you keep to it, I can tell you; and at such times, you see, I think of Manitoba."

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CHAPTER XXIII. COMING HOME. On his return to Laventor Geoffrey

"You are quite right in principle, I am sure," said Paxton; "the hours you speak of everyone knows. Even in Scripture, if I mistake not, there is notice of 'the dark and cloudy day.' At those times one has just nothing for it but to suffer, and to go on suffering; that is the business to which life is reduced. But there are just two things a man should bear in mind, which a draught horse could not precisely be made to comprehend—first, that sooner or later the bad bit is sure to end; and, secondly, that when it is ended he will find it to have been a time of progress."

"After a plodding, trudging sort of way," said Geoffrey.

"Pardon me," said Paxton, "after the way of a winged eagle, of an up-soaring flame, after anything you do choose as a comparison to express what is noble, strong, lofty, and enduring. I say again, times like those are times of progress. I hate the word, and would use another if I could find one, for as it is commonly used it is just caat. What national progress is I don't pretend to say; as far as I see, the progress of nations is mostly crab-fashion. But that there is a growth of human souls, I take it, is undeniable, and believe me, it is in those grim, suffering hours that it is wrought out and perfected."

"I say," said Geoffrey, "where did you learn all that? Is that what they mean by poetry?"

Paxton laughed. "As you like to consider," he said; "every man has a book inside him, called a heart: one may learn a good deal by studying its pages. But, talking of poetry, tell me something of the Pendargons. Their story was the nearest thing to a living poem I ever remember alighting on. This Uriel—you and I, you know, had something to do with his restoration—was he worth all the trouble we took about him?"

Geoffrey sighed. "Uriel is worth anything we could have done for him," he said; "a noble fellow; but, poor lad, his day is over. His life boat service finished him off, and in his last expedition he got a terrible blow, which injured the lungs, as they fear now, past remedy."

"Ah, that is sad," said Paxton;—"and the beautiful Aurelia, is she really to be a duchess?"

"I know nothing about it," said Geoffrey, "beyond what you heard last night. Julian told me, in one of his letters, that the duke had taken Uriel for a cruise in his yacht, and that they hoped that it would benefit him. Quite possible."

"I see," said Paxton. "So the spirit of change has invaded Merylin, no less than Laventor."

"Ay, indeed," said Geoffrey, "that it has. You know what it was, as you remember it. People were fond of calling it gloomy and melancholy. It was never so to me. From my boyhood I had been used to the old place, and loved every tree in the pine-woods and every stone in the walls; there was not so much as a shadow in the courtyard that did not seem to me as a familiar friend. Now the place is shut up and deserted. I never pass it without a chill, as though it were a grave where something lay dead and buried."

"I see," said Paxton again, and indeed he was seeing far more than Geoffrey guessed or intended. "Yes, it is quite true; the world is all over full of places, where such graves lie hidden; graves of the past, graves of our hopes, graves of our affections. The world, no doubt, is just a big cemetery; still, Mr. Houghton, we must plant it and cover it over, and bury our dead out of our sight; else, you know there would be no living in it. But I was asking about the Pendargons; if this poor Uriel dies, the family becomes extinct, does it not, and the old prophecy turns out to be a humbug?"

"No, not extinct," said Geoffrey; "there is his son—the little Uriel, as they call him—a lovely little fellow enough, chatters French like a monkey. His mother, you see, was a Breton peasant-girl, whom Uriel married at St. Florian."

"A peasant girl!—his mother!" cried Paxton. So there it is, the prophecy complete! What a strange, bewitching story! So, after all, it will not be the 'fallen heir' who rebuilds the house, but his son, the 'peasant-born,' Uriel."

They had come to the end of their walk by this time, and were returning to Swinburne.

"It has been a splendid walk, and a splendid talk," said Paxton; "though I'm half afraid I've taken on me too much of the spiritual director. I even felt prompted not to leave you without a parting word, if you would not be offended."

"Oh, no fear of that," said Geoffrey. "Fire away;—no one is offended with his director."

"Well, only this," said Paxton, "don't fling the best years of your life away over shadows, Mr. Houghton. If a fair lady has a mind to be a duchess, were I in your place I would let her, and give her my blessing."

Geoffrey laughed. "Oh, it's not that," he said; "duchess or no duchess makes no odds to me. That is not my difficulty."

"I am glad to hear it," replied Paxton; "then there is less reason for you going to Manitoba. Take my advice, Mr. Houghton, sit under the shadow of your own vine and your own fig-tree at Laventor, and leave the backwoods to our young scapegraces. Home life among your own people is the life for you."

CHAPTER XXIII. COMING HOME. On his return to Laventor Geoffrey

found awaiting him a letter from Julian. It gave news of the party at Naples, and was written in his usual style of animation. "All the world is here," he wrote; "and all the world is trying hard to enrol Mary and me among its wicked company. I have my fears they may succeed with Mary; she likes it all so amazingly. She carries me off to receptions and dances, and tries to persuade me that I like it as much as she does, whereas, I regard it all as an abomination. We have the best of society here (as they would say in Swinburne); you can't indulge in a quiet donkey ride without meeting half Belgravia, including, as, of course, you know, the Duke. He and Uriel have come back from the cruise, and are pretty often together. Our three golden haired friends, by-the-by, are quite the rage; you know what fair hair is in the eyes of the Neapolitans. The boy can't set out with his nurse without being mobbed, and I hear the changes on till one is tired of it. I fear poor Uriel is not yet much the better for the change, and Aurelia tells me he is counting the hours till he can return to Merylin."

This was the resume of most of the letters which reached him through the winter, whether from Julian or Mary. They told them of their joyous life together; they described their excursions by sea and land; they seldom wrote without speaking also of Uriel and his sister; and the burden of what they said was generally the same, Uriel was fading fast; they sometimes feared he would never return to Merylin.

At last, towards the end of March, came a letter in another handwriting, and, opening it hastily, Geoffrey's heart beat fast as he glanced at the signature. It was brief, and ran as follows:

"My dear Mr. Houghton:—My poor brother is considerably worse; and it is but too evident that his climate has been of no real benefit to him. He is longing to be at home again, and though I feel it is a risk for him to encounter an English spring; yet, alas! the risk of staying here may be yet greater. His own anxiety is lest he may remain until return is impossible, and with that longing which is the character of his complaint, he has set his heart on dying at Merylin. So that we propose coming back about a fortnight hence, and I write to ask if you would undertake to see that everything is as it should be. I should dread the journey more than I can say, but when Julian and Mary heard what we had decided, with their usual kindness they offered to accompany us. Julian will take on himself the management of the journey. It is so like him; I never can be sufficiently grateful. Yours ever, Aurelia Pendargon."

There was also a note from Julian.

"Dear Geoffrey:—Uriel is dying; he cannot live many months—perhaps, not many weeks longer. His one thought is to be at home, and Aurelia has ceased to oppose it. Mary and I have made up our minds to travel with them, as it will be a business getting him to England, and we have not the heart to leave Aurelia to face it all alone. So we shall be back before we intended. Can you take us in at Laventor? Somehow I should like to be near the dear fellow to the last; and I suppose you'll put up with Mary for a bit. By-the-by, I had a letter from Paxton the other day. He spoke of you and Manitoba, and said we ought not to allow it. What's in the wind, old fellow? Wait to see us before you pack up. Mary says its dumps, but that she'll cure you. Yours ever, Julian."

"Mary home again; that will be splendid!" Such was Geoffrey's exclamation over the breakfast-table, uttered with an animation which took his mother by surprise.

"My dear boy, how you startle one," she said; "and what do you mean? I thought they meant to stay abroad till June; are they really coming directly?"

"Yes, all of them," said Geoffrey, swallowing his tea with great vehemence, "and I must go to the castle and see about it." Then rising he bestowed on his mother a most affectionate caress, and left the room, saying: "You'll think about everything else, mother. Mary home again; my word, but that will be jolly!"

It had been his first thought, and the immediate effect on his spirits had been like the sudden darting of the sun's rays from behind a dark bank cloud. But as he toiled up the hill towards the castle, and remembered what it was that was bringing them back, his feelings speedily sobered, and he could not but think with dismay of the sorrowful time that lay before them, and the untimely end of the young and hapless Sir Uriel.

We shall not dwell on the fortnight's preparations; they kept Geoffrey busily employed, for he desired to make the old place smile a welcome on Aurelia and her brother, and was at the same time continually receiving fresh inspirations as to something that Mary would like to see done at Laventor. Between the two subjects of solicitude his time was pretty well engaged, and he had succeeded in working off a fair proportion of the dumps.

It was a gleamy, fitful, bewitching April day when the carriage bearing the travellers entered the gates of Merylin, and ascended slowly through the pine woods to the castle. The pines and larches were beginning to bud and send forth their exquisite perfume, the ground beneath them was bright with primroses and bluebells, and the birds were clamoring their joyful notes on every branch. There was a sound in the air of tri-  
ing rills of running water, and further off the deeper, more solemn undertone of the sea. Uriel leaned from the window to drink it all in with eye and ear. "Home! home!" he murmured, "home as I remember it in our childish days, Aurelia; every scent, every sound the same. Those young larches, how sweet they are, and the thrushes—there are no thrushes like those in Italy!" He sank back with such a light on his faded cheeks that a ray of hope darted through Aurelia's heart.

"It will do you good, dear Uriel!" she said; "after all, there is no place like home."

He smiled, but did not speak again till the carriage stopped at the entrance of the castle, and Geoffrey appeared ready to greet them. He was not alone, for Julian and Mary had driven on before, that they too might be there to receive the invalid and his sister.

The tall, wasted form descended from the carriage and leant on Geoffrey's strong arm for support. So leaping they led him into the antique chamber, as bright and cheery as Geoffrey's utmost care had been able to make it; and one and all gathered round him as he sank into the easy chair placed ready to receive him, to bid him "welcome home."

Then for the first time Geoffrey looked well at him and beheld the change. Every trace was gone of the iron frame and stalwart bearing for which Uriel Pendargon had once been so distinguished. The face which Julian had depicted in its glorious youth, almost terrible in its majestic strength, bore only one expression now—that of surpassing sweetness. The golden hair, indeed, was unchanged, and fell in thick masses over the thin transparent features, making the large eyes look larger still, as they rested on one or other of those who clustered around him. "So glad," he said, "so happy to be back; all right now, Aurelia."

At the sound of her name Geoffrey turned his gaze toward her, and thought that she, too, was altered. Something of the calm cold majesty was gone, and a softer, less exalted character was distinguishable in her beautiful countenance. In fact, two influences had been at work in Aurelia's heart, and had entirely absorbed it: a tender, anxious solicitude for her brother, on every change in whose condition she hung with suspense; and a mother's care for the little Uriel.

When they had seen the invalid fairly settled, Julian and Mary took their leave, and delivered themselves over to Geoffrey to be carried back in triumph to Laventor. On their home greetings we need not enlarge, but leave it to the reader to imagine with what feelings Geoffrey that evening surveyed his family circle, and the immense content with which he once more beheld "old Mary" in her place beside him.

Next morning she found her way into his study, and was received with renewed assurances on Geoffrey's part that it was "simply splendid."

"So it is," said Mary; "but now, Geff, prepare to have your conscience examined. We saw Mr. Paxton in London, you know, and he has been telling tales."

"I doubt he has been inventing them, then," said Geoffrey; "it's the way of those poet gentlemen. He had no tales to tell."

"Yes, but he had; all about your giving; the pheasant-shooters a slice of your mind; and of a tremendous walk you had together, and all he thought of you."

"And what was he pleased to think?" growled Geoffrey; "much I care."

"He thought, of course, that you were a delicious old bear, as you always were, you know; but I gathered from his words that you had been decidedly dumpy."

"And whose fault was that?" said Geoffrey; "whilst you have been gallivanting it at Naples, and I don't know where, I have had nothing to comfort me but the pigs and the mill—we've new roofed it, by-the-by; Jones did it, and you'll say it's capital."

"But mamma has told me of a lot besides the pigs and the mill," said Mary; "that you never let her half hour's constitutional alone, that you looked after her hyacinth bulbs, aired her shawl, I think she said, and read to her in the evenings. Really, Geff, that is the most wonderful part of all to me: what did you read—was it 'Challoner'?"

"Never your mind what we read," said Geoffrey; "we hadn't you or Gertrude to pick holes, so we got along famously. But now, look here, Mary, what do you really think of Uriel?"

Mary's face at once became grave. "There is but one thing to think," she said, "he may linger, you can never tell how long, in that complaint, but he will never see another winter."

Geoffrey was silent for a minute or two. "And Aurelia?" he said.

"I am afraid," said Mary, "she clings to hope against hope, and against her own judgment. She is rapt up in him and in the child, and has not a thought beyond them."

"Indeed," said Geoffrey, a little gruffly, "we heard—I was told—she had some very decided views beyond them. Was there not something going on with the duke? They told me so at Swinburne."

"Oh, that got to Swinburne, did it?" said Mary, whose quick woman's intuition was not slow in perceiving that the report, and probably also Geoffrey's way of receiving it, had not escaped Paxton's notice. "Small blame to the duke if it came to nothing; I believe he did his best in the matter, but, as Julian phrased it, he was nowhere from the beginning."

"You mean that Aurelia did not encourage it?" said Geoffrey. "Yet he's a Catholic, and a good sort of a body, I am told."

"Oh, yes," replied Mary, "good enough in his way, but if he were not a duke no one would think anything about him; and you know that sort of thing is no recommendation to Aurelia. If she is ever to be won, it will be by something better than a duke's coronet."

"I see," said Geoffrey; "Swinburne gossip. So now, Mary, put on your thing-a-me jig—I can't call it a bonnet—and let us go out and look about us. You'll like to see the mill."

TO BE CONTINUED.

AN ANGEL OF CHARITY.

BY MARION ROSE TAYLOR.

A few years previous to the bloody contest between the North and South, there lived in a town in New England a wealthy family by the name of Wilbern. Their interests and fortune were centered in a large factory, which brought annually a comfortable income and gave employment to hundreds of the poorer inhabitants of the place.

The family of Charles Wilbern consisted of his wife, two daughters and several sons. In principle he was a bitter Puritan, cherishing the severe tenets of his forefathers, and each Sunday found him an attentive worshipper at the meeting-house of his creed. By a strange direction of Providence the man who, like his ancestors, tolerated no other religion, married a fervent Catholic, one professing a belief exactly opposite to his own. The daughters were brought up according to the doctrine of the mother, while the sons followed the steps of the father.

The elder daughter, Maud, a haughty and disagreeable young woman, was a Catholic in name only; for the respect she bore her mother and the fear of incurring her displeasure alone prevented her from forsaking the religion in which she had been baptized. Angela, the younger girl, possessed all the good qualities in which her sister was deficient. She loved her religion and practiced it faithfully. Hers was a hard life. A mighty sorrow filled her heart at the indifference of her brothers and sister, and all her actions were offered to the Heavenly Father for the conversion of her family. She was the sole comfort of her invalid mother, who depended on her and placed upon the young shoulders the care of the entire household. Never a word of complaint fell from her lips, nothing was a burden, no duty irksome to the gentle girl. When death visited the home and took from it the mother, the grief of the family was intense. They were prostrated; and upon Angela fell the performance of all the last sad duties. With a countenance strangely white and drawn, lips devoid of color, and a heart bursting with a grief too deep for expression in tears, she closed the eyes which never again would look lovingly upon her, smoothed the brown hair, kissed the waxen brow and lips, and folded the lifeless hands, twining a rosary around the slender fingers. She then knelt by the coffin and resting her head upon the cold, unresponsive bosom of her mother, vowed that henceforth she would serve God in the religious life.

She attained her twenty-first birthday the following year, and it was shortly after this that she spoke of her intention to her sister. The blow deprived Maud of speech for some moments, but when she recovered from the shock, a torrent of abuse, ridicule, threats, fell upon the ears of Angela.

When the father next became aware of the step she meditated, his fury knew no bounds, and every obstacle was placed in her way, but without changing her mind. At length, exasperated at her persistence, he summoned her to his library, and, after telling her what he had learned, said:

"You have your choice, and I have called you to give you the opportunity of making the selection this morning. Remain here, performing your duties as you have done heretofore, or leave this house forever. Choose!"

She paused a few moments; then upon her soul fell a heavenly balm as the words of our Divine Saviour came to her mind: "Whosoever loveth father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me," and she quietly replied, lifting her pleading eyes to his face:

"Father, I have chosen. I shall enter the religious life. Henceforth I belong to God alone."

Livid with passion, he started from his chair and said, in a tone full of menace and fury:

"Go, then! You are no longer my daughter! My everlasting hate shall always follow you. You are from this moment disinherited. Never, while life lasts, enter these doors. You are forever an exile from me and mine—go!"

Angela stepped forward.

"Father," she began, but he interrupted her by saying:

"I will not listen. You have made your choice; abide by it."

Sorrowfully she turned to obey, and at the door paused to look once again on her unforgiving father. His head, covered with iron gray hair, rested upon the mantel, and his back was turned toward her. Above him hung the portrait of her mother. The mild eyes seemed to smile down on her, while the parted lips appeared to breathe earnest benediction on the suffering daughter. Angela's eyes filled with tears, but the thought that her course was marked out by the Divine Wisdom consoled the troubled heart. She left her parental home on the eve of her sister's marriage without telling them where she was going, and in due

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