



The First Cloud.—W. Q. ORCHARDSON, R. A.

"It is the little rift within the lute,
That by-and-by may make the music mute."

A VALENTINE.

(By Ethel Grey.)

Well, yes, of course it must be so;
No argument can shake it—
If one will offer up a heart,
The other need but take it.
The truth of proverbs thus we learn,
The notion's far from new:
"Il y en a toujours l'un qui baise,
Et l'autre qui tend la joue."
You may not think it fair, perhaps;
Indeed, it does seem funny,
That bees should have to do the work
For drones to eat the honey;
And yet in love 'tis just the same,
It is the "rule of two,"—
"Il y en a toujours l'un qui baise,
Et l'autre qui tend la joue."
Perhaps 'tis this unequal yoke
That keeps our love from dying;
One only listens to the sighs,
The other does the sighing.
He gives his love, his life, his hopes,—
She gives her smiles,—a few . . .
"Il y en a toujours l'un qui baise,
Et l'autre qui tend la joue."
Still, I would be content to know
My love had small returning;
If I could hope to warm your heart,
I would not grudge mine burning!
In fact, you see, it comes to this
(Which proves I care for you)
"Je veux être toujours l'un qui baise,
Et tu me tends la joue!"

The Old Boy and the New.

It was all over. Christmas had come and gone, and the year had veritably leaped past, and I had called upon the old gentleman, as usual, to talk things over. It was natural, I reflected, that he should be somewhat out of humour. His part of the play was over for twelve months, and when a man's appearance on the stage is limited in time, of course he likes to make as good and as lasting an impression as possible.

Conditions had been against him this year. Fogs had rendered his short stay disagreeable to the world in general, while even he had been compelled to use his respirator. We had indeed experienced all the cold of the bitterest Christmas without its snow and accompanying jollity. But, prepared as I was to find the departing guest sad, not to say a little jaundiced, I was amazed to see the dear old fellow in such utter dejection, looking the picture of misery, and, be it said sotto voce, ill-temper.

"Good evening, father," I said in my cheerfullest tone; "I have just stepped in to say good-bye, and wish you a happy—"

"Now don't go on, there's a good fellow," was the curt rejoinder. "I hate the very sound of that grinning formula."

"Why, what is the reason for this sudden change?"

"Oh, I'm getting old—not in body, you

know, but in mind. I'm getting out of date."

"Surely good wishes and geniality are never out of date!"

"Look here, my young friend," was the impatient reply, "I see you are going to relapse into the Christmas card 'copyright' style of language. Let me implore you, if you've come in for a friendly chat, to refrain from that sort of thing."

He was very "tetchy." I had never found him so before; but knowing that this crust must be very thin, I refused to take offence.

"I fear you have been out of health," said I.

"No, no, not that," he returned, though even now I think the denial did not include his liver; "but when you feel that your time is past and that you yourself are neither understood nor appreciated, you cannot be all smiles and sweetness."

"But how do you apply this to yourself?"

"Oh, come now, you know as well as I. You know that neither young nor old are what they were. Take yourself, for instance; what are your feelings about Christmas? Oh, you needn't answer. And as for the youngsters—"

"What! don't they at least enjoy it?"

"Perhaps. But not in my old way, and not in the right way."

"For instance?"