

Charley did not say much to his friend on their way home; to tell the truth, being now a married man, he had begun to look more severely on "little amusements," such as it was pretty evident Tremayne was carrying on. He wanted to say so too, but like most men, hung back; the imputation of being called a "preacher" is a thorough-going bugbear, and shuts many a mouth that would fain speak words of caution and wisdom. Harry on his side said equally little; he had an unpleasant suspicion of the truth, as regarded what was going on in Sutton's mind; and, what was worse, his own mind was misgiving him, and a certain small still voice was whispering at his heart. The walk home was not a conversational one, and the restraint even at the end of it was flagrant enough to excite little Mrs. Sutton's curiosity.

Young husbands are apt to be confiding, and young wives hear a good deal more of the private lives of their bachelor friends than is always good for either. Tremayne had been Charley's chum in his wild days; when Charley came to confession, Harry Tremayne's sins were exposed likewise, and when Mrs. Sutton forgave her husband, and sighed over the temptations and loneliness of a young man's lot, Harry, being still in the midst of dangers, still knocking about on the ocean, unpiloted by a loving wife, and at the mercy of the syren songs, came in for a large share of pity, and had no notion why the clear blue eyes of his friend's wife became so plaintive and earnest when she gave him little covert lectures upon the wickedness of the world, or why she took such trouble to get him to go to church with them every Sunday.

Tremayne was not very deep, nor yet very conceited, so he neither fathomed the true state of the case, nor fancied he had made an impression. Mrs. Sutton looked very pretty when she got earnest, and he thought if he could find such a wife he would not object to going to church twice a day; especially, too, when he saw Charley keep as jolly as ever, and that he did not refuse all his bachelor invitations, or close his doors against his old friends; and that once, when he went home decidedly tipsy, Nelly did not sulk next day, but insisted upon his going up to mess that he might get quit of "that stupid headache."

"Your wife's an angel," said Tremayne, as they walked away from the lodgings that day. Charley nodded, and his eyes looked watery, though that might have been the effects of the headache. Neither of them said more upon the subject, but Charley never got drunk again, and Tremayne never asked him to join another bachelor carouse.

Tremayne was a reckless, headlong fellow; but neither vicious nor yet more than ordinarily selfish in his pursuits and pleasure. He went pretty much after the counsel in the song:—

In work or pleasure, love or drink,
Your rule be still the same—
Your work not toil, your pleasures pure,
Your love a steady flame;
Your drink not madd'ning, but to cheer,
So may your joy not pall;
For little fools enjoy too much,
And great ones, not at all.

He preferred a handsome face to an ugly one, and liked to chaff a pretty girl, whether she spoke well-bred English or not. He had been taken by Effie Dennistoun's eyes as she glanced up below the strap that helped to support her creel; and as Effie had to pass Piershill nearly every day on her road to Edinburgh, there was no lack of opportunities to indulge in the flirtation, very harmless as far as Tremayne went, but dangerous enough to Effie, who was one of those imaginative, dreaming girls, who, gaining only a distant glance of the great world to which Tremayne belonged, thought, like poor "Hetty Sorrel," that it would be the height of human bliss to "be a grand lady, and ride in her own coach, and dress for dinner in a brocaded silk, with feathers in her hair, and her dress sweeping the ground.

Effie had seen great ladies going to the assemblies in Edinburgh, and knew very well that nature had made her as pretty as any of them. Effie was very eager to be a lady, and tried hard to speak like those she had heard speak, as well

as to keep her hair bright, and her dress clean and smart. People often turned and looked after her as she followed her mother to the market, and more than one fine gentleman had spoken to her, and told her how pretty she was. Effie quite believed them, but was wise enough to make no signs of the same. The truth was, Effie's heart was safe; vanity was the ruling passion as yet. But after a few meetings with Harry Tremayne, things took a new turn; Effie had a queer dream, in which Tremayne figured, and then she had her fortune told, and the lover who was, as is the fashion with prophets of the class, to make a lady of her was evidently Tremayne. After that, Effie made no demur about it; she thought of him continually; repeated over and over every word he said to her, trying to catch the very accent of his voice. She spent every spare minute getting up the dainty bright-coloured "bedgowns," as they are called, which form the upper portion of the costume worn by fisherwomen, and brushed her hair until it shone and sparkled like gold threads. Her hopes were very bright for a time; then there came a cloud; Effie saw Tremayne walking with a lady in Edinburgh; and Effie came home sick at heart that night, but the heart sank deeper still, and jealous rage and disappointment rose rampant, when one evening she met him again; this time the lady had hold of his arm; and watching she saw him take her to a grand carriage, and whisper and smile with her for a long time before he could say good-bye, and bid the coachman drive on.

Effie, poor little jealous soul, had told him all this on the Musselburgh beach, and in so doing laid bare her heart. And Harry as we have seen, went back to barracks in a very repentant mood.

"Are you game for a steeple-chase?" said Major Clinton coming into Tremayne's room early next day; "and will you take a seat on my drag? I am going to tool my four spears to Gillon, where a steeple-chase comes off to-day. I hear there's a lot of country fellows going, and I mean to do a little horse dealing."

Tremayne was glad enough to say "Yes," and thus get away from his own thoughts. He had been making up his mind to see Effie and ask her to forgive him,—a plan, the prudence of which was, to say the least, doubtful; and by accepting the seat on the drag he would avoid the immediate necessity for this.

"We'll start from the stable-yard," said Clinton, looking in again; "the leaders may be troublesome, but with the Portobello Road before us, we'll do, I think."

Accordingly the start took place from the stable; the conduct of the leaders doing much to prove Clinton's wisdom in choosing such open ground. They displayed a strong inclination to become bipeds in place of quadrupeds, but not finding that feasible, wheeled about and looked at their driver, until a well-directed cut from the heavy-thonged whip brought them to the fore, and sent the team down the turnpike at a slapping pace, and with the reins as taut as fiddle-strings.

"By Jove!" said the man on the box seat, drawing a long breath, "you did that business cleverly, Clinton; that brute with the big star on his forehead is an ugly customer, I won't forget the look he gave us in a hurry."

"Don't abuse him Dick, I am going to ask fifty for him to-day. I bought them all on spec at Falkirk, and a worse set of screws I never saw. I only gave ten a piece, and what with feeding, physicing, and grooming I mean to get fifty a-piece. Look how they step out now, as they settle down! They'll be as quiet as lambs before we reach Musselburgh. Hallo! that's a pretty girl; whom did she nod to?"

They had just whirled past a group of fisher-girls—amongst them Effie, who, seeing Tremayne, blushed and hung back.

"Fetch her a fairin' from the races, Captain," shouted one of the girls, and Tremayne saw Effie fly at her and a regular scuffle was going on as the drag turned out of sight.

"A friend of yours, Tremayne? I always thought you were a sly fellow, and that there was something else at Portobello besides playing looker-on at domestic felicity; but what a beauty

the little girl is! What'll you take I don't cut you out in a week?"

"Take him, Tremayne," cried Clinton, who was an inveterate speculator, and never let slip an opportunity of booking a bet; "I'll back Tremayne for a pony."

"Done with you," replied Sir Hugh Joclyn, the man who had offered the bet.

Two or three more bets were registered, and when Joclyn put his book back into his pocket, he had backed himself pretty heavily to win.

Tremayne had taken the challenge, but he was regretting it already. Joclyn, he knew, would stop at nothing; and a more heartless thorough-paced *roué* did not disgrace the service. Thinking thus, the meeting was a failure as far as he was concerned. Clinton made a success, and sold two of his team, and as some of the others had won their money, they were in right humour.

Sir Hugh had avoided Tremayne all day, but he was next him on the drag, and as they neared Musselburgh, he said.

"You must tell me where your beauty lives, Tremayne. What, you don't know! Oh! well, never mind, I am always luck in such things. There, what do you say to that?" he pointed to a cottage where, sitting upon a form, mending a herring-net, was Effie herself.

Tremayne did not sleep any better for the second look at Effie's face, and went down to Portobello early in the day, fully determined to make a clean breast of it, and take Charley into his confidence. Unfortunately Charley's wife's mother had been taken ill, and Charley's wife having been sent for, he, of course, had gone too; so Tremayne returned to barracks and mooned away the afternoon in his quarters. Next day he walked to Portobello again: he was not sure whether he expected Charley to have returned, or whether it was not a sort of hope that fate might decide his best course by letting him meet Effie, in which case he would certainly tell her the whole story; and "I only hope she'll think me as great a blackguard as I do myself," was his mental reservation. But he saw neither Charley Sutton, nor yet Effie, and was very bitterly inclined when he went to mess. Joclyn was in great force, too great to be altogether clean-handed. Every one in the regiment knew and recognised the sort of feline propensity he had to pur when game was afoot.

"You've been on the water to-day," said Captain Farrier, as they stood in the anteroom after mess.

"I believe you; I've been fishing all day."

"Caught much?"

"Yes, secured a couple of hundred."

"What do you mean?"

"Only that the fish were a little shy at first; but I found out the right sort of bait, and tried it so successfully that I'll make a couple of hundred out of my day on the water."

Tremayne was close to, and heard, as he knew he was meant to do, every word. Starting up, he strode forward, his lips white, and a very lamp of rage blazing in his eyes.

"He's drunk," cried Clinton, taking his arm. "Get hold of him, Farrier," and by main strength he turned Tremayne's face away from Joclyn, and led him out of the ante-room.

But Tremayne was not drunk, only sick at heart—disgusted with himself, and mad with the inuendo spoken by Joclyn; and if Major Clinton had not been a little bit sore in the same cause, he would certainly have quarrelled with him, for Tremayne was in a queer way, and ready for anything.

Another day slipped by; nothing apparent was done; Tremayne was waiting, so he told himself, for the return of the Suttons; he kept away from barrack pretty much all day, but not in places likely to fall in with Effie; and so the fifth day after the bet was made came, and not one word he had spoken to her, or one step taken either to save her or win the bet he was so thoroughly ashamed of. He went down in a sort of despair to look for Charley, and, as luck would have it, found them just returned.

"Is there anything the matter?" was Mrs. Sutton's first question, for, woman-like, she had seen the signs upon Harry's face.