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AFTER THE LESSONS; OR, TRUE LOVE REQUIRED.

CHAPTER III.—(CONTINUED.)

She was beside me again, the lamp-light falling full upon her bright flushed face and thick dark hair.

'Would they have made way for me, do you think, mademoiselle?'

'You used to do that for yourself,' she replied.

'I am older now, Miss Souve, and not so expectant.'

'I am sorry,' said she. 'Hope is a good companion for us all. How did I sing my song?'

'Better; you were more attentive to my instruction than in the old time.'

'Now, this is extraordinary!' said she. 'I expected you to be filled with remorse for having judged unfairly of my singing, and ready with abject apologies; and here you are attributing my success to a few angry words of your own.'

'You seem to be appreciating your success,' I said.

'I am revelling in the voice of public applause,' she replied. 'Do you think there will be anything in the newspapers about a certain talented young Frenchwoman? Don't you hate the French?'

'You are very happy to-night, mademoiselle,' I said, 'and very indifferent to your Fatherland.'

'The world is the fatherland I claim, monsieur. It seems to me,' she said, with her saucy smile, 'that it was made for me to enjoy.'

'Not more,' said I, as the cab drove up to the door, 'than for me to enjoy; and if that is harder to me for your sake, it is my own fault.'

As I went down the steps, I could hear that some one had sought and claimed her, and her soft rich voice was lost to me as I drove away in the darkness.

CHAPTER IV.

Christmas came, and I spent the usual two days at home, as I always called my mother's cottage; then the old life went on, with its daily work. I rose higher and higher in my profession, and I took my first voluntary rest—surely a painful one for the first—in order to be with my mother in her illness.

Even as I cried, God took the power from me, in just punishment for my rebellion, and answered in His own time to my thankless question: For seven weeks from that day I lay in my lonely room, ill and helpless. They said that I had taken serious cold on that hasty night journey from Liverpool.

So each day I came down and sat at my window, too ill to read, thinking, thinking of hopeless, far-away things, spite of my kind physician's warning.

One day as I sat thus, with my back to the door, looking out over the glistening rows of trees to the spring sky beyond, my servant quietly announced 'Miss Souve.'

In my bewilderment I fancied it was one of

the hallucinations of my illness, and I did not turn. Then the soft, rustling step gave it a reality: and my only feeling was that I dare not show the paleness of my face.

'Invalids, I know, have a horror of bonnets,' she said, 'especially this shape; so, if you please, I will dispense with mine while I stay.'

The childish, unaffected greeting, the old frank shake of the hand, put me at my ease a little, though now the red had flushed in my cheeks, and made me long to hide my face, while I could not take my eyes from her.

'You are less handsome than you were, monsieur,' she continued.

I don't know whether she knew it, but if she had been tender and pitying in her words, I should have broken down in those first few moments; but when she came to me as the dear old pupil of six years ago, with the old, pretty, wilful ways, I met her on her own ground, and grew strong and happy in her presence.

'You are less handsome than you were, monsieur,' she repeated.

'Yes, mademoiselle,' said I, 'that was the first thing I discovered when I began to think about myself again.'

'And what was the second?' she asked.

'That I was changed in nothing else,' was my reply.

'And so you have now begun to think about yourself again,' said Marie. 'Is there any one else to do that too?'

'Several kind friends came to see me,' I replied, 'and I am well taken care of—too well I have sometime thought.'

'But you do not think so now,' she said.

'No, not now,' I replied.

'Ah!' said she, 'your smile makes you look young again.'

'But take away the smile, and I am a very old looking man, mademoiselle.'

'I should grow very wan and haggard with a two months' illness, and bear it very badly, too,' she said, touching her smooth cheek with her little white hand.

'Do you know much of either?' I asked.

'More than you think, monsieur,' she replied; 'more than you will ever know.'

'It is very hard to believe this, Miss Souve; you have always seemed so gay and radiant.'

'Don't say "seemed," please, as if I hid a breaking heart behind a laughing face,' she replied; 'I never did that, believe me, I always had hope; and, as you say, Hope agrees with me. Why do you look so comical?'

'I was wondering how you managed to make her, or any one, agree with you so entirely.'

'Because I am provoking?' said she. 'Thank you, monsieur—complimentary as usual.'

'Miss Souve, tell me how to do it,' I said; 'how to make my life pleasant and bright like your own.'

Gently turning aside my question she touched her black dress.

'My life,' said she, 'has had a shadow too since I saw you.'

'But you looked up,' I said, 'and found the brightness then.'

'Yes, I hope so,' she replied; 'but my father's death was a sore trial, monsieur.'

away. My sunny France knows me no more, monsieur.'

'And—where—?'

'Where am I living?' she interpreted. 'With old friends at present—this is not long ago, you know—very happily; more happily than most penniless girls.'

'Oh, mademoiselle, that is not true!'

'That I am penniless,' said she. 'Indeed it is. Why not?'

'I cannot realize this,' I said.

'Is it so hard,' she asked.

My heart was beating with a wild joy that I could scarcely hide, and a trembling, thankful prayer went up.

'Sir Robert Winter is very kind to me,' she continued; 'though he is only my step-mother's father—my grandfather once removed, as I called him—and I shall be very sorry to leave him.'

'And when do you leave him,' I asked.

'Oh, I don't stop to think,' said Marie. 'Why should I distress myself by fears for the future. Time enough when it comes.'

'You will marry, I suppose, mademoiselle.'

'Perhaps I may.'

'They used to call you the heiress at Miss Berry's, if you remember.'

'Did they?' she laughed her old merry laugh; 'there is no dependence to be placed on human prospects. But I too always thought I was an heiress, and at this moment I am penniless. No, not that; I have a few small coins. How is the mighty Roman empire fallen! I dare say you will contradict me if I say I do not care; but I do not.'

I had risen, and was leaning against the window, looking down upon her, and I spoke at last.

'In a few minutes,' said I, 'when you have left me, and my room is dark and cheerless again, I will for ever put my dreams away, out of sight, through all the years to come. But now, Marie, while you are here beside me, I must speak at last. For so many years have I loved you with a deep, undying love; for so many years have I loved you in spite of sense and reason; for so many lonely years have I loved you as a man can never love but once; for so many long and hopeless years have I loved you only, as I must love you still through all the years to come; that—Marie, it has overpowered me at last—strong as I thought myself. Marie, look up and stop me, for I dare not tell you all the strength and passion of my love, though the thought that you are lonely too has drawn it from me. Pity me! dearest and best in all the world, look up and tell me you forgive me.'

But her head drooped lower and lower as I poured out my burning, passionate love. Quietly at last she covered her face with her hands, and remained so minute after minute—so pitiful; I thought, to see my hopeless, useless earnestness.

'Marie,' I said, very slowly, for each word was drawn from me in very pain, 'do not speak if you would rather not. I understand, and will not vex you more. The love I give to you cannot be thrown away, and I am only sorry I have pained you by telling you of it. I do not fear the life before me, though spent alone. Dear Marie, many men have suffered more than I.—Do not grieve for me. You have often said that men ought to be able to bear anything, and I am ready to bear this as a man should. I can stand my own, but not your sorrow, dearest.'

She was crying with low, stifled sobs, and I felt as if my heart would break to see her pitying me so.

'Miss Souve,' I said, in an unnatural trembling voice, 'there is a carriage at the door, waiting of course for you. Shall I send word you are coming presently?'

I left the room to prevent the servant from coming in, and crept in again slowly—wondering vaguely whether I really was growing strong, and well as I had thought; Marie had not stirred, and I stood beside her and gently laid my hand on hers; then she looked up, her eyes soft and bright through her tears.

'You wish me to go,' she said.

'Would I willingly shut out the sunshine,

Marie? Only in the darkness grief is easier to bear.'

'One question, monsieur; would you have told me this had I been rich?'

'Never,' I replied.

'Why,' said she; 'would it not have been in that case too?'

'Poverty is proud—and hopeless,' I replied.

'I am not proud nor hopeless,' she said; 'so of course I am not poor, because, dear monsieur, you have given me such a wealth of love. How can I give you wealth for poverty?'

She had risen and stood before me, most winning in her shy and gentle earnestness.

'Will the same gift satisfy you?' she said; 'the same love from me?'

I dared not answer, for I dared not believe.—I only gazed into her eyes with intense eagerness.

'If so,' she said you have it all; you have had it all for a long time.'

'Oh, Marie!' It was all I could say as I held her to me in a long and close embrace that gave me strength and hope and courage for a life to come. 'God sent you to me on this day, my love, and Him I thank.'

Some minutes after that the silence was broken by the impatient stamping of the horses below.

'Why don't you remind me that the horses are waiting?' said Marie, starting. 'I had forgotten them. I have been here a long time, and you have asked me nothing.'

'Nothing, Marie,' I said.

'No—nothing practical and sensible,' she replied.

'I will now,' said I. 'How did you know I was ill?'

'By the announcement made at St. James Hall, when you were too ill to play as advertised.' 'Go on.'

'When shall I see you again, dearest?'

'That is not practical,' said she, 'so I don't answer.'

'May I call upon Sir Robert?'

'Yes,' said she. 'Good-bye. I am afraid I have not forwarded your recovery.'

'More than that, darling,' I replied.

My first drive was to—Square, and I was ushered into the room where I had written in my loneliness that night that seemed so long ago. I told my story frankly and humbly to Sir Robert Winter. The change my darling's love had made in me must have been very evident, for he began to speak of it once or twice, then corrected himself. He heard me patiently, then warmly shook me by the hand.

'I have perfect faith in Marie's judgment and taste,' he said, 'and am confident of her happiness and your own.' After some further conversation he said, rather suddenly, 'You know of course that Mademoiselle Souve will be very rich.'

'I know how rich she will be,' I smiled. 'She told me her father left her penniless.'

'So he did, of course,' replied Sir Robert.—'Everybody knew he would; but she is my heiress, and will be a wealthy little woman at my death. Did she not tell you this?'

My heart had sunk as I replied, 'Indeed she did not.'

'The little jade!' said he. 'Still, it is but right that you should know; not, I'm sure, that either of you will wish to hasten the time of her inheritance. I will call her.'

He was kind to leave me then. My brain was throbbing, and I had hardly realized my position when Marie came gently up to me.

'Oh Marie,' said I, 'you should have told me this. I dared not have—'

'You dared not have taken my love, for fear that you should have had to take my great expectations, too,' said she; 'then let us both go.'

'We have got into our old quarrelsome ways again,' said I.

'You mean we have fallen out,' said Marie.

'Mademoiselle,' said I, 'I shall be calling you to your music lesson if you defy me so.'

'You will not inspire awe into my timid nature, as in those old times,' she replied.

'But I made a fruitless effort then,' I replied; 'but hard words were my only safeguard, Marie. You shall hear no more so long as we are spared to each other.'

I whispered the words in my deep thankfulness; but she answered quickly 'Never mind promising me that. With all this new happiness, I cannot afford to lose my dear old master—dear even then, monsieur.'

'Mademoiselle Souve is a long name,' I sighed.

'The old "monsieur" comes so naturally,' she laughed back at me. 'Anything else seems strange to me just yet, George.'

The pretty little hesitating lips were caught. 'If the "old monsieur" comes so naturally to you, Marie, you ought to come very naturally to the "old monsieur." Is he very old?'

'Just your old way of misinterpreting my words,' said Marie. 'Now I will confess you looked like about eighty-two when I came to you.'

'And now?'

She looked up at me quizzically.

'Well, not so ancient now; but they must have been very deluded when they said here that you had a beautiful face.'

I laughed a proud little laugh, for I knew that she did not care that they were wrong.

MARKHAM HOWARD.

THE TREACHEROUS GUIDE.

On a fine evening in spring, a stranger, mounted on a noble-looking horse, passed slowly over the snow-white lime-stone road leading through the Black Forest in Baden, from the village of Glasherete to Neustadt.

Although the horse champed his bit, and showed by the quick flashing of his eye that he was more than anxious to quicken his pace, his master held him to a slow walk. When the rider was not speaking to his horse, he spent his time in observing critically every little footpath which wound through the forest, and every rushing brook which swept by, and although he seemed to have a very sharp look-out for these things, it was noticeable that neither the great trees, nor the golden rays of the setting sun, attracted his attention.

As he rode along, he looked thoughtfully at the ground, but his meditations, judging from the expression of his face, were not brought about by the grandeur of the scene, or the strange and awful stillness of the place.

Just as the sun was going to rest, the stranger found himself on the summit of 'Hoehche,' a spot famous for being the highest cultivated land on the face of the globe. Down the opposite side of this hill he passed, when, finding himself within a few rods of a dilapidated building, standing alone by the roadside, and bearing a weather-beaten sign board, upon which were scrawled the 'Gasthaus zum Hirsch' (Deer Hotel), he drew rein as he said:

'This must be near the spot, surely, I'll stop here for a while, and see what I can learn from "wierth," (landlord).'

He thereupon dismounted and entered the parlor of the inn, where he sat down before a small table. He had no sooner taken his seat than the landlord made his appearance, with what was intended to be a bland smile upon his countenance. He rubbed his hands good-humoredly too, but somehow or other those appendages played a trick upon him also, for in chafing each they gave the beholder an unpleasant sensation of choking in the throat. His face and his hands belied him, however, for nobody but an honorable, upright innkeeper could bow so low, and with such becoming grace as he did when he entered the stranger's presence and said:

'How can I serve you, meinher?'

'See to my horse outside,' replied the guest