

THE NAUGHTY BOY.

(From H. C. Andersen's Tales, written for the "C. I. News.")

I.

A good old poet sat by his hearth,
While the wind and rain were raging abroad;
And he thought of the poor who roamed through the
earth,
Without a home or a friend but God,
While he was as snug as he could desire,
Roasting his apples before the fire.

II.

And just with the thought came a voice outside:
"Oh, pray, let me in, I am wet and cold."
In a second, the door had been opened wide,
And there standeth a boy with ringlets of gold.
"Come in, my boy, there is warmth for thee here;
Come in, and take share of my frugal cheer."

III.

So the boy came in, and in spite of the storm,
A cherub he seemed who had come from the skies,
With his curly locks and his graceful form,
And the sparkling beauty that lit his eyes.
But the bow that he bore was so spoilt with the rain,
One would say he could never have used it again.

IV.

Then the good old poet nursed the boy,
And dried him and warmed him, and gave him wine,
Till his heart grew glad, and the spirit of joy
Frolicked and danced o'er his face divine.
"Light of heart thou seemest and light of head,
Pray, what is thy name?" the old poet said.

V.

"My name is Love; dost thou know me not?
Look, yonder my bow and my arrows lie;
And I'd have you beware—I'm a capital shot."
"But your bow is spoilt." "Never mind; I'll try."
And he bent his bow and he aimed a dart,
And the good old poet was shot through the heart.

VI.

And he fell from his chair and he wept full sore:
"Is this my reward for my apples and wine?"
But the Naughty Boy could be seen no more;
He was forth again, for the night grew fine.
"Bah! I'll warn all the boys and the girls I know,
If they play with this love, they'll have nothing but
woe."

VII.

So the good old poet, he did his best
To make others beware of a fate like his;
And he shewed them the arrow that pierced his breast:
"Now, you see what a terrible boy he is!
But an archer who's never two moments the same,
Like Proteus, 'tis hard to keep clear of his aim."

JOHN READE.

MR. HARDCASTLE'S FRIENDLY ATTENTIONS,
AND WHAT CAME OF THEM.

CHAPTER II.—Continued.

The explanation seemed at least reasonable, so Mr. Surbiton was persuaded to drop his defence and take his seat upon it—a pacific movement which satisfied the bystanders that there was nothing the matter; so they moved off, and an apparently promising scandal was nipped in the bud.

"The gentleman will tell you, I dare say, if you ask him," said Mrs. Surbiton severely to her husband, "what he means by the advertisement."

"Well, what do you mean?" said Mr. Surbiton, sulkily.
"I mean the announcement which appeared on Friday in the 'Southdown Reporter,'" said Mr. Shorncliffe, taking from his pocket the paragraph in question, which he had taken the precaution to cut out.

Mr. Surbiton read the advertisement with amazement; then he handed it to Mrs. Surbiton, who read it and looked scandalized; then Mrs. Surbiton handed it to Miss Surbiton, who read it—and laughed.

The latter lady was the first to express her views on the subject.

"If it relates to us, mamma, it must be intended as a piece of fun—though not such fun as a friend would practise upon us. I certainly dropped one of my gloves as we were going out; but nobody could suppose that we should advertise for such a thing as that; and I, at any rate, saw nobody pick it up."

"I had that honour," said Mr. Shorncliffe, not quite so assuredly as before, and addressing himself still to Mr. Surbiton, though with reference to the young lady, "and seeing the advertisement, I was naturally under the impression that—that—there was a desire to communicate with me."

"Then your impression was mistaken," said Mr. Surbiton, recovering his self-possession as he began to understand the question at issue. "We know nothing about the advertisement here; somebody has been making a fool of you."

Mr. Shorncliffe began to think that he had at least been making a fool of himself, and sincerely wished that he had left Doncaster to perform his legitimate part in the affair.

"Shall I at least perform the commission which I have so innocently undertaken, and restore—"

Mrs. Surbiton here interposed, and stopped the movement which the speaker was making towards his pocket.

"On no account—such a proceeding could not be permitted in public—with the eyes of the world upon us—and nobody here requires the glove."

"If the gentleman had found the little ring I lost the same evening I should be obliged to him," said Miss Surbiton.

But Mr. Shorncliffe had unfortunately not found a ring. "At least," said that gentleman, as he made a movement to depart, "I hope that I shall be acquitted of having taken a part in what seems to be a very silly hoax."

My name—which I dare say is not unknown to Mr. Surbiton—should be some guarantee of my honourable motives."

And here Mr. Shorncliffe handed his card to the gentleman whom he addressed. The latter glanced at it, and his manner changed immediately.

"Bless me!—Mr. John Shorncliffe! Are you of the house of Grampus, Shorncliffe, and Co., of Lombard Street?"

"I am a partner in that firm."

"My bankers. Then you are at least a respectable person. My dear sir, I am very glad to see you. This business of the advertisement is evidently a mistake—some foolery of those military coxcombs. I am very sorry that you have been imposed on. Grampus, Shorncliffe and Co.—first-rate house—know some of the partners. You don't know me, I dare say."

"Your name, I have no doubt, is known to me," replied Mr. Shorncliffe, with renewed confidence at the turn which the conversation had taken.

"My name is Surbiton, sir. Do you know me now? I have had an account at your bank—and, I flatter myself, never an unsatisfactory balance—for the last twenty years."

"There is no name I know better—none more honoured in the firm—than yours. I am proud to make your acquaintance, Mr. Surbiton."

"And I am proud to make yours; though I must confess I thought at first you were a swindler. Never mind—mistakes will happen. And now I know who you are let me introduce you to my wife and daughter."

The wife and daughter duly acknowledged the introduction—neither of them, however, with any unnecessary graciousness; for Mrs. Surbiton, now that her husband had retired, "did not approve of people in business," and Miss Surbiton did not find herself taking much interest in the person upon short notice. However, Shorncliffe had gained his point, and, attaching himself sagaciously to the quarter where he had made an impression, he talked "City" to Mr. Surbiton with such success as to fairly win that gentleman's heart.

The afternoon, which was young when they entered the gardens, had been middle-aged for some time past, and now showed signs of growing old. On every side people were seeking social safety in flight. Chairs—that sure test of the Zoological market—which had been so lately at a high premium, were now at a miserable discount. There had been no transactions in seats indeed, except in leaving them, for the last half-hour, and those comforting securities exhibited not only a downward tendency, but a rapid state of decline. I am indebted for this playful metaphor to Mr. Shorncliffe, who employed it in his conversation with Mr. Surbiton with such effect as to make that gentleman regard him as the most witty person he had ever met in the whole course of his life. Mrs. Surbiton, whose sympathies were wedded to the West-End, scarcely disguised her disgust at this kind of pleasantry; while Miss Surbiton, with whom the West-End was an open question, had a very small opinion of the wit, for the young-lady-like reason that she did not care about the individual.

"And now, my boy,"—it was my boy this time—said Mr. Surbiton to his new acquaintance, "you are leaving this place of course. Which way are you going? Westward, of course—everybody goes westward. Take a seat in our carriage. You have your own? Never mind—may as well drive with us—just room—tell your man to follow—take my wife out like a good fellow."

So Mr. Shorncliffe gave his escort to Mrs. Surbiton, and Mr. Surbiton followed with his daughter.

It was at this juncture that Mr. Matthew Hardcastle and Captain the Hon. Harry Doncaster encountered the party—just in time to be too late.

Harry was disgusted at the perfidy of his friend.

"Never mind," said his genial companion; "they have not seen us, and we shall have plenty of time to give him checkmate to-morrow. If we do not castle his queen—Hardcastle his queen I may say, ha! ha! ha!—never believe me again."

CHAPTER III.

RIDING, DINING, AND LOVE MAKING.

Mr. Hardcastle, who was a bachelor—all these genial old boys are bachelors—occupied one of the best suites of chambers in the Albany—I will call it A 1, which it was in all respects but its local classification. Thither Captain Doncaster went to breakfast with him on the Monday morning succeeding the Sunday afternoon at the Zoological; and breakfast concluded, the pair arranged their plans for the coming campaign. These were not very elaborate, being limited to paying a visit at Mr. Surbiton's house, and enabling Harry to make what way he could with the ladies.

"There is no occasion," remarked Mr. Hardcastle, "to make the attack look premeditated, and that is why I proposed to introduce you in a public place; but nothing can be more natural than that I—an old ally of the family—should take a friend with me when I happen to call; and I should say nothing if I were you about the advertisement in the paper, which is not likely to have come from the Surbitons, and is most probably some joke concocted at Brighton with which they have nothing to do."

There was no end to the friendly attentions of Mr. Hardcastle. He suggested that, as they had nothing else to do after breakfast, they should have a ride in the Row; and when he found that Harry had no horse in town, he said it didn't matter, he could mount him, and he did so in a most satisfactory manner, and told Harry always to consider the horse at his disposal as long as he remained in London. Harry was anxious, too, about another point. He told Mr. Hardcastle that he did not feel safe in such a public place as the Park, where he had not been for months; but his new friend told him to be quite easy on that score. "If anything happens," said he, "I will settle the thing for you; it is only for a short time that you

need incur the danger. I hope very soon to see you a free man—now, no thanks—I assure you I take a selfish pleasure in obliging anybody to whom I take a liking—it is my way."

The first person they met in the Row was a gentleman who was also fond of friendly attentions—a gentleman in humble life who followed a pursuit not unknown in the neighbourhood—that of warning persons in Harry's predicament, with a view to half-crowns, of enemies being in the vicinity. He gave an intimation of the kind to Harry, which made that gentleman wince, especially when he heard that the enemy in question had "walked off with a swell only on Saturday, while he was riding with a lady." But Mr. Hardcastle treated the matter so lightly, and renewed his assurances of support with such evident sincerity, that Harry was soon reassured, and felt almost as free as he did on what Fielding calls "that happy day of the week when profane hands are forbidden to contaminate the shoulders of the unfortunate."

The next person they met was Miss Surbiton herself. She came upon Harry Doncaster like a vision—only I doubt if any vision ever sat a horse half so well, or managed it with such ease and grace. A vision, I fancy, would ride more in the style of the lady in the picture advertisement, who sits sideways upon an agreeably rearing steed, holding the reins as if they were the handle of a tea-cup, while the skirt of her habit, which is about twelve feet long, meanders gracefully among the animal's legs. This was not Miss Surbiton's style you may be sure, or Harry would not have gone into such absurd raptures about her equestrian performance. He had never, too, he thought, seen anybody who looked half so well in a riding dress, though it is perhaps the *safest* costume for all styles of beauty, and most styles which are not beauty for that matter.

Mr. Surbiton, who accompanied his daughter, could not ride, but he did. He pulled up upon seeing Mr. Hardcastle, and the two immediately entered into conversation upon some sordid business in which they were both concerned. Meanwhile the younger pair, having no social licence to talk, felt rather in the way, until Mr. Hardcastle presently introduced his companion, and the rest was plain sailing. The party first rode abreast, and then in pairs, and after a canter or two together Harry Doncaster and Blanche Surbiton found themselves intimate friends.

Three days afterwards Captain Doncaster dined with Mr. and Mrs. Surbiton at their house in Hyde Park Gardens. Mr. Surbiton did not much care about asking him, but Mrs. Surbiton did, which was decisive. That lady never neglected an opportunity to cultivate fashionable and well-connected acquaintances—they were such a relief, she said, from her husband's horrible City friends—and she treated the latest on the list with great distinction, as being no more than the due of a person who was a possible viscount—the present one being childless—and who might—the lady had already great ideas in the way of an alliance for her daughter.

Among the guests bidden to the hospitable board of Mr. Surbiton was Mr. Shorncliffe. Harry Doncaster and he had not met since the memorable night at Brighton, and had their meeting now taken place been elsewhere, Harry would have quarrelled with him, for he could not doubt the means by which that gentleman had made the acquaintance of the Surbitons. It was clear that he must have dropped the glove in the coffee room, and that Mr. Shorncliffe must have appropriated it. However, the house they were in was no place in which to settle a question of the kind; and having once let it pass, Harry thought he would say no more about it, contenting himself with the amiable revenge of making Mr. Shorncliffe particularly uncomfortable by taking no notice of him, and leaving him uncertain what kind of greeting he had to expect until the evening was well nigh over.

Harry Doncaster indeed was far better employed; for he had Blanche Surbiton in charge at dinner, and enjoyed the lion's share of her society afterwards. Shorncliffe was powerless to interfere with this monopoly during the meal, for although placed opposite to the lady, there was a bar between them in the shape of a senseless contrivance of fruit and flowers, which, as he said afterwards, was all very well in its way, but a bore beyond bearing when it got in the way of one's observation. He could quite sympathise with the Frenchman who said that he detested the beauties of nature; and he hated the scent of roses as much as did Hood's flower-girl who associated them with so much sorrow. The object who filled his thoughts was almost shut out from his vision by these wretched representatives of grace and beauty. It was only, indeed, by a dive of a most undignified character that he could manage to address his *vis-à-vis*, and I need scarcely say that a remark across a dinner-table must be of a special character not always at command to warrant a process of the kind. From his proper position the young banker could obtain nothing more satisfactory than the sight of a bit of blue *corsage*—blue was evidently Miss Surbiton's colour—and the glimpse of an occasional arm. This was the more exasperating as he was able to see and hear quite enough to know that Harry Doncaster was making his way in a triumphant manner, and thoroughly engrossing the girl's attention; while those more happily seated could place but one interpretation upon the manner in which, as she listened to or addressed her neighbour, the pink coral continually combated with the ivory of her complexion.

Poor Shorncliffe, too, had the additional mortification of being placed next to Miss Mankillen—a lady of undecided age but decided manners, arrayed for fascination in a style which ought to amount to conspiracy in law; who had no features to speak of, and thought therefore that her force lay in expression; who said the smallest things with the largest emphasis, and whenever she talked—which she always did—twisted her face into maniacal grimaces, and gave to her too agile form the contortions of a mermaid. She was called, indeed, the mermaid among the more ribald and insulting of her acquaintances; and one of these noticing the manner in which she was disporting her-