

...of men amongst whom you live. A few ought to have some thing more than a good coat and die in manners, to be worthy of your regard, and you do like me, Mrs. Douglas? Tell me so again. It is all right to much happiness for me to believe."

"I don't like the question. If I hated any body very much, do you think I would ask him to come and walk with me in Kensington Park at an hour when all respectable people are brooding in the Park?" said she with one of her winning laughs. "You're wrong, though, about the people in good coats. What I call a gentleman is—well, I can't think of any King Arthur, for instance, in Guinevere."

"Not I, I am sure," he asked. "I thought you liked Launcelot best."

"There are plenty of Launcelots," she answered dreamily, "and always will be. Not Launcelot, nor another, except it be my General."

"Could he do less than take her arm and press it fondly to his side?"

They had entered into the seclusion of a forest glade, that might have been a hundred miles from London. The little boy had vanished with his hoop, the nursery maids and their charges were pervading the broad gravel walks and more frequented lawns of this sylvan paradise; not a soul was to be seen threatening the stems of the tall trees but themselves, and an enthusiastic thrush straining its throat in their ears, seemed to ensure them from all observation less tolerant than its own.

"Now or never!" thought Satanolla. "It must be done; and its no use thinking about it!"

Turning round on her companion, she crossed her slender hands over his arm, looking caressingly in his face and murmured—

"General, will you do me a favor?" Pages could not have conveyed the ratiocination expressed by his monosyllable, "Try!"

She looked about, as if searching for some means of escape, then said hurriedly—

"I am in a difficulty. I want money. Will you help me?"

Watching his face, she saw it turn very grave. The most devoted of lovers, even while rejoicing because of the confidence reposed in him, cannot but feel that such a question must be approached with caution—that to answer it satisfactorily will require prudence, fore-thought, and self-sacrifice. To do the General justice, which Satanolla at the moment did not, his circumspection was far removed from hesitation; he had no more idea of refusing, than the gallant horse who shortens his stride, and draws himself together, for a larger fence than common, that he may collect his energies, and cover it without a mistake.

For one delightful moment Miss Douglas felt a weight lifted from her heart, and was already beginning to unsay her words as gracefully as she might when he stopped her, with a firm, deliberate acquiescence.

"Of course I will! And you ought to know by this time nothing can make me so happy as to be of use to you in any way. Forgive me, Miss Douglas—business is business—how much?"

Her face fell; she let go of his arm, and her lips were very dry, while she whispered, "Three thousand!"

He was staggered, and showed it, though he tried hard not to look surprised. Few men can lay their hands on three thousand pounds of hard money, at a moment's notice, without some personal inconvenience. Now the General was no capitalist, though in easy circumstances, and drawing the half-pay of his rank; to him such an outlay meant a decreased income for the rest of his life.

She was quite right about his being a gentleman. In a few seconds he had recovered his composure; in half a minute he said quietly—

"You shall have it at once. I am only so glad to be able to oblige you, that I wish it was more difficult. And now, Miss Douglas, you always say I'm a sad fidget, I'll go about it directly; I'll only ask you to come with me to the end of the walk."

She was crying beneath her veil; he saw the tears dropping on her hands, and would have liked to kiss them away on any other occasion but this.

ways of the world, he argued the question with his own heart, till he dared not think about it any longer, subsiding at last into composure, with the cavalrous reflection, that, come what might, if he could but minister to the happiness of Blanche Douglas, he would grudge no sacrifice, even the loss of his money—struck from no disappointment, even the destruction of his hopes.

Satanolla meanwhile had selected a Hansom cab, in which to make her homeward journey, characteristically choosing the best-looking horse on the stand. To be seen, however, spanking along, at the rate of twelve miles an hour, in such a vehicle, she reflected, might be considered fast in a young unmarried lady, and originate, also, surmises as to the nature of her expedition, for it is quite a mistake to suppose that people in London are either blind or dumb, because they have so much on hand of their own, that they cannot devote all their attention to the business of their neighbors. With commendable modesty, therefore, she kept her parasol well before her face, so as to remain unrecognized by her friends, while she scanned everything about her with the keen, bright glances of a hawk. Bowling past Kingston House, then, and wondering whether it would not be possible, in time, to raise a domestic pedestal for General St. Joseph, on which she might worship him as a hero, if she could not love him as a Cupid, her Hansom cab passed within six inches of another, moving rapidly in the opposite direction; and who should be seated therein, smoking a cigar, with a white hat and light-colored gloves, but ruined, reckless, never-to-be-forgotten Daisy!

She turned sick, and white even to the lips. In one glance, as women will, she had taken in every detail of his face and person, had marked that the one seemed devoid of care, the other well-dressed, as usual. Like a stab came the conviction, that ruin to him meant only a certain amount of personal inconvenience, irrespective of any extraneous sorrow or vexation; and in this she misjudged him, not quite understanding a nature who had unwittingly chosen for the god of her idolatry.

Though they passed each other so quickly, she stretched her arms out and spoke his name, but Daisy's whole attention was engrossed by a pretty horse-breaker in difficulties on his other side. Satanolla felt, as she rolled on, that he had not recognized her, and that if she acted up to her own standard of right, this miserable glimpse must be their last meeting, for she ought never to see him again.

"He'll be sure to call, poor fellow!" she murmured, when she reached her own door. So it is fair to suppose she had been thinking of him for a mile and a quarter. "I should like to wish him good-bye, really for the last time. But no, no! Honor, even among thieves. And I'm sure he deserves it, that kind, noble, generous old man. Oh! I wish I was dead! I wish I was dead!" Then she paid the cabman (more than his fare), told her servant, in a strange, hoarse voice, that "she was at home to nobody this afternoon—nobody, not even Mrs. Lushington!" and so ran fiercely upstairs, and locked herself into her room.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### "SOLDIER BILL."

Daisy placidly smoking, pursued the even tenor of his way, thinking of the pretty horse-breaker more than anything else; while disapproving, in a calm, meditative mood, of her habit, her habit, her bridle, and the leather tassels that danced at her horse's nose.

The particular business Mr. Walters had at present on hand in London, or rather Kensington, must be explained.

Perhaps it may be remembered how, in a financial statement made by this young officer during the progress of a farce, he affirmed that, should he himself "burst-up," as he called it, a certain "Soldier Bill" would become captain of that troop which it was his own ambition to command. With the view of consulting this rising warrior in his present

of larks, steeplechases, broken bones, etc., was more proud of Bill in his heart than of all his ancestors and all his other sons put together.

They were a distinguished race. Each had made his mark in his own line. It was "Soldier Bill's" ambition, to attain military fame; every step in the ladder seemed to him, therefore, of priceless value. And promotion was as the very breath of his nostrils.

But a man who delights in personal risk is rarely of a selfish nature. In reply to Daisy's statement, made with that terseness of expression, that total absence of circumlocution, complimentary or otherwise, which distinguishes the conversation of a mess-table, Bill ordered his visitor a "brandy and soda" on the spot, and thus delivered himself.

"Troop be d—d, Daisy! It's no fun soldiering without your 'pals.' I'd rather be a 'Serrafle' for the rest of my life, or a 'bantam,' or a trumpeter, by Jove! than command the regiment, only because all the good fellows in it had come to grief. Sit down. Never mind the dog, she's always smelling about a strange pair legs, but she won't lay hold, if you keep perfectly still. Have a weed, and let's see what can be done!"

The room in which their meeting took place was characteristic of its occupant. Devoid of superfluous furniture, and with an uncarpeted floor, it boasted many works of art, spirited enough, and even elaborated, in their own peculiar line. The series of prints representing a steeplechase, in which yellow jacket cut out all the work, and eventually won by a neck, could not be surpassed for originality of treatment and fidelity of execution. Stataettes of celebrated acrobats stood on brackets along the walls, alternating with cavalry spurs, riding-whips, boxing-gloves, and basket-hilted sticks, while the place of honor over the chimney-piece was filled by a portrait of Mendoza in fighting attitude, at that halcyon period of the prize-ring,

"When Humphreys stood up to the Israelite's thumps, In kerseymer breeches, and 'touch-me-not' pumps."

"It's very pleasant this," observed Daisy, with his legs on a chair, to avoid the attentions of Venus, an ill-favored lady of the "bull" kind, beautiful to connoisseurs as her Olympian namesake, but for the uninitiated an impersonation of hideous ferocity and anatomical distortion combined.

"Jolly little crib, isn't it?" replied Bill; "and though I'm not much in 'fashionable circles,' suits me down to the ground. Wasn't it luck, though, the small-pox and the regimental steeplechase putting so many of our captains on the sick-list, that they detached a subaltern here to command? We were so short of officers, my boy, I thought the Chief would have made you 'hark back' from Ireland. Don't you wish he had? You'd better have been in bed on the 17th; though, by all accounts, you rode the four miles truly through, and squeezed the old mare as dry as an orange!"

"Gammon!" retorted Daisy. "She had five pounds in hand, only we got jostled at the run-in. I'll make a match to-morrow with Shanee for any sum they like, same course, same weights, and— But I'm talking nonsense! I couldn't pay if I lost. I can't pay up what I owe now. I'm done, old boy; that's all about it. When a fellow can't swim any farther, there's nothing for it but to go under."

His friend pulled a long face, whistled softly, took Venus on his lap, and pondered with all his might.

"Look here, Daisy," was the result of his cogitations; "when you're got to fight a cove two stone above your weight, you don't blunder in at him, hammer-and-tongs, to get your jolly head knocked off in a couple of rounds. 'No; if you have the condition (and that's everything), you keep dodging, and waiting, and out-fighting, till your man's blown. Then you tackle to, and finish him up before he gets his wind again. Now this is just your case. Ask for leave; the Chief will stand it well enough, if he knows you're in a fix. I'll do your duty, and you must get away somewhere, and keep dark, till

Limmer's! Never mind; the waiter is easily squared. Now look here, Daisy, you're not supposed to be in London. Is there no retired spot you could dodge back to in Ireland, where you can get your health, and live cheap? Who's to know you ever left it?"

His friend Denis occurred to Daisy at once.

"There's a farm up in Roscommon," said he, "where they'd take me in and welcome. The air's good, and living must be cheap, for you can't get anything to eat but potatoes! I shouldn't wonder if they hunted all the year round in those hills, and the farmer is a capital fellow, never without a two-year-old that can jump!"

"That sounds like it," responded the other, with certain inward longings of his own for their favored spot. "Now, Daisy, will you ride to orders, and promise to be guided entirely by me?"

"All right," said Daisy; "fire away." "Barney!" shouted his friend, in a voice that resounded over the barracks, startling even the sergeant of the guard. "Barney! look sharp. Tell them to put a saddle on Catamount, and turn him round ready to go out; then come here."

In two minutes a shock-headed batman, obviously Irish, entered the apartment, and stood at "attention," motionless, but for the twinkling of his light blue eyes.

"Go to Limmer's at once," said his master; "pay Mr. Walter's bill. Breakfast and B. and S., of course? Pack his things, and take them to Euston Station. Wait there till he comes, and see him off by the Irish mail. Do you understand?"

"I do, sir," answered Barney, and vanished like a ghost.

"You've great administrative powers, Bill," said his admiring friend. "Hang it! you're fit to command an army."

"I could manage the Commissariat, I think," answered the other modestly; "but of course you're only chaffing. I'm not a wise chap, I know; never learnt anything at school, and had the devil's own job to pass for my cornetcy. But I'll tell you what I can do. When a course is marked out, and the stewards have told me which side of the flags I'm to go, I do know my right hand from my left, and that's more than every fellow can say who gets up for a flutter in the pig-skin. And now I'm off to headquarters to see the Chief, and ask leave for you till muster, at any rate."

"You won't find him," observed Daisy. "It must be two o'clock now."

"Not find him!" repeated the other. "Don't you know the Chief better than that? He gets home-sick if he is a mile from the barrack-yard. It's my belief he was born in spurs, with the 'state' of the regiment in his hand. Besides he's ordered a parade for fitting on the new nose-bags at three. He wouldn't miss it to go to the Derby."

"You are a good chap," said his friend. "It's a long ride, and a beastly hard road." Bill was by this time dressing with inconceivable rapidity, and an utter disregard of his comrade's presence.

"A long ride," he repeated, in high scorn, while he dashed into a remarkably well-made coat. "What do you call a long ride with a quad, like Catamount? F.v.-and-forty minutes is what he allows me from gate to gate; and it takes Captain Armstrong all his time, I can tell you, to keep him back to that. The beggar ran away with me one night from Ashbourn to the Royal Barracks in Dublin; and though it was so dark you couldn't see your hand, he never made a wrong turn, nor let me get a pull at him, till he laid his nose against his own stable door. Bless his chestnut heart! he's the worst mouth and the worst temper of any horse in Europe. Look at him now. There's a pair of iron legs, and a wicked eye. It's rather good fun to see him directly I'm up. But I've never had such a lack, and I wouldn't part with him to be made Commander-in-Chief."

Daisy could do no less than accompany his host to the door, and see him mount this redoubtable animal, the gift of a trainer at the Curragh, who could do nothing with it, and opined that even Soldier Bill's extraordinary nerve would be unequal to compete with so restive a brute. He had miscalculated, however, the influence utter fearlessness can establish over the beasts of the field.

his friend to share his purse, while he wished him "good-bye." "If I'd more, you should have it. Nonsense! I don't want it a bit. Keep your courage up and fight high. Write a line if anything turns up. I'll go on working the job here, never fear. We won't let you out of the regiment. What is life, after all, to a fellow who isn't a light dragoon?"

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### DELILAH.

In consoling his friend, *Anthias Phoccur*, for the result of a little flirtation, in which that Roman gentleman seems to have indulged without regard to station, Horace quotes for us a triad of illustrious persons whose brazen-plated armor, and bullet-hide targets were of no avail to fence them from the shaft of love. If neither petulant Achilles, nor Ajax, son of Telamon, nor the king of men himself, could escape, it is not to be supposed that a young cavalry officer in her Majesty's service, however simple in his habits and frank in his demeanor, should be without some weakness of the same nature, unacknowledged perhaps, yet none the less a weakness on that account.

"Soldier Bill," notwithstanding his kindly disposition and fresh comely face, seemed the last man in the world to be susceptible of female influence, yet "Soldier Bill" felt, to a certain extent, in the same plight as Agamemnon. Though in dress, manners, and appearance, anything but what is usually termed a ladies' man; he was nevertheless a prime favorite with the sex, on such rare occasions as threw him in their way. Women in general seem most to appreciate qualities not possessed by themselves, and while they greatly admire all kinds of courage, find that which is mingled with good-humored hap-hazard recklessness, perfectly irresistible. They worship their heroes too, and believe in them, with ludicrous good faith. Observe a woman in a pleasure boat. If there comes a puff of wind, she never takes her eyes off the boatman, and trusts him implicitly. The more frightened she feels, the more confidence she places in her guardian, and so long as the fancied danger lasts, clings devotedly to the pilot, be he the roughest, hairiest, tarriest son of Neptune that ever turned a quid.

Now the converse of this relation between the sexes holds equally good. To live entirely with men and horses; to rough it habitually; from day to day enduring hardships, voluntary or otherwise, in the pursuit of field-sports; to share his studies with a dog, and take his pastime with a prize-fighter, does not necessarily unfit a man for the society of gentler, softer, sweeter, craftier creatures. On the contrary, in many natures, and those, perhaps, the strongest, such habits produce a longing for female society deeper and keener, that it has to be continually repudiated and repressed.

When he had started Daisy for the station, Bill renewed his toilet with peculiar care, and in spite of a few years on his face, some the effects of falls, others, alas! of fights, a very good-looking young gentleman he saw reflected in his glass. Smoothing a pair of early moustaches, and sleeking a close-cropped head, he searched about in vain for a scent-bottle, and actually drew on a pair of kid gloves. Obviously, "Soldier Bill" was going to call on a lady. He could not help laughing, while he thought how the cornets would chaff him. Nevertheless, with a farewell caress to the badger, fresh, radiant, and undaunted, he sallied forth.

It was quite in accordance with the doctrine of opposites, propounded above, that Bill should have experienced a sensation of refreshment and repose, in the society of a charming married woman, very much his senior, who made light of him no doubt, but amused, indulged, and instructed him while she laughed.

### [TO BE CONTINUED.]

In some parts of Australia the wild horses have increased to such an extent, and do so much damage, that in their own behoof the settlers have to shoot them as they do other wild beasts.