

which, had he been a child, would have called a stamp.

"I am tired of being a link," he says, petulant; "I will not be a link any longer! it sounds as if I were a high-class ape! when—in how much time—shall I stand upon my own merits? in how many months—years—will you be glad to see me because I am I, and for no tedious second reasons?"

"Ah! when?" she echoes, playfully; and so, with no further good-by, quietly eludes him, and, slipping through the gate and into the house, disappears.

CHAPTER XII.

The next day is Sunday—a day to which Joan has been looking forward with some dread, as it is to witness her *début* at the Helmsley garrison church, which her cousins weekly frequent with pious regularity, winter and summer, come rain, come shine. For the first four Sundays of her stay with them she had succeeded in avoiding this ordeal: firstly, by a headache; secondly, by an ostentatiously-displayed cold; thirdly, by a wet day, and the plea of easily-spoiled crape; and, fourthly, by feigned over-fatigue from a long walk on the previous day. But this morning all these pretexts fail her. She has plainly no cold, nor would it be possible for any one with such clearly bright eyes and such delicately healthy cheeks to lay claim to a headache. It is not raining, and she took no walk yesterday.

Three miles there and three back, and for all that distance no more shade than you could cover with a penny-piece. A hot May sun brazenly stiring, and a graceless wind catching up the dust in its spiteful hands, and thrusting it down your reluctant throat and into your winking eyes.

They have reached the haven at length, and are deposited in a pew, three in a row; Joan, more in accordance with their wishes than her own, between her two cousins, a pew with a first-rate prospect. From it one can see soldiers in profile, soldiers in rear, soldiers in three-quarter.

From the moment of their establishment in the pew she is subject to an alternate nudging and loud whispering into her reluctant ears till the entrance of clergy and choir causes a slight lull in the conversation. Everybody stands up; in this position many new discoveries, as to who is in church and who is not, are made. The organ plays, the exhortation is read. By-and-by they reach the Litany. With face down sunk on her slender black-clad hands, Joan is joining with more heart-felt earnestness than ever in her life before in the congregational cry of "Good Lord deliver us!" She has a vague feeling that it is from Portland Villa, from Bell, from little sordid trials and mean afflictions that she is begging to be delivered. As she so pitifully and yearningly prays, she lifts her face, and her sad look wanders idly round the strange, unfriendly church, and over the many strange, unfriendly faces—they are so many, and not one friend among them all. Her eyes move indifferently, inattentively, from one to the other in lack-lustre survey, when suddenly they stop, and a little flash of clear bright joy darts into their dolorous blue depths.

Is not that a friend who, so far away, so almost out of sight, is leaning his sunshiny head against a stone pillar in abstract meditation or sleep? One can see nothing of him but his back—a good, vigorous flat back—and the satiny sweep of his straight, brown locks—it is Wolferstan! No sooner has she recognized him than she stoops again, and hides the cheeks that she feels have grown suddenly warmly pink, on her open prayer-book, while above the drone of the clergyman and the monotonous choir voices she hears the beating of her own loud heart.

"I am too glad!" she says to herself, shrinking frightened from the unused sensation of joy—"much too glad. Why should I be! there is no reason—none!"

Anon she steals another look. He has turned his profile toward her and his roving eye is wandering over the bent heads of the kneeling worshippers in evident search. There is no doubt that it is he; that broad grey eye, bold and mirthful, the clear window to such a goodly prosperous house, the *décompé* nostril, the *débonnaire* lips, the shorn square chin.

"There is no doubt that I am dreadfully glad," she says to herself remorsefully, "and why in Heaven's name should I be?"

So she resolutely and ruthlessly keeps her eyes hidden and averted from that pleasant sight, nor takes one other glance. That is, not till the very end; not till—at the signal of the benediction—all, both wakeful and sleepful, have sprung alertly to their feet. Then she lets her looks stray hastily once again to the distant pillar. Has he seen her? Probably not. His part of the church is drained by a distant door. He will probably depart without ever having been aware of her neighborhood.

"So much the better," she says, inwardly; but, even while so thinking, her fingers fidget uneasily with her prayer-book. Tall as she is, she raises herself furtively a little on her toes—her one chance of being discovered lies in her height and her black weeds.

At length—at length—in the wake of many red tunics, they leave the church and reach the porch, only to find it filled with a discomfited crowd. For the face of the day is changed; the brazen sun, the sickly glare, are gone—ef-

aced by one giant rain-cloud, which has swept over the sky and is angrily hurling its watery load to earth: the wind, lowered, but not yet sunk, and still spiteful as ever, is drifting the heavy drops into the faces and against the Sunday clothes of the shrinking towns-folk in the porch.

Joan's eyes are directed—not toward the hostile weather—but toward the people still issuing from the church. Alas! they have all come forth now: even the galleries and organ-loft are emptied, and he is not among them. Her prognostic is fulfilled—he has departed without ever suspecting her nearness. As she so thinks, with a private sigh, her attention and her eyes are both recalled by a hasty, breathless voice in her ear. It is Micky, who stands before her with a large umbrella in his hand.

"Miss Dering—you have no umbrella!—I saw that you had not—I have been to fetch one for you—sexton's house—sexton's wife—hold it over you—no chance of its clearing—set off at once!"

"My aunt has no umbrella either," answers Joan, coldly, shrinking back farther into the shelter of the porch.

"What does he care for that?" says Mrs. Moberley, with a good-humored chuckle. "Never mind, my dear, I am not sugar or salt either."

"But Bell—Di—the alpacas!" cries Joan, looking round with hasty wistfulness, and greedily snatching at the nearest excuse.

"I am sorry that I cannot divide myself and my umbrella by three!" says Micky, jocosely, "but, as I cannot, I must repeat my offer."

"Never mind us!" says Diana stoically, winking away a very small tear, which had been called into being by the callous indifference to her fate displayed by her old friend. "He is quite right; you are of much more consequence."

"Get along with you!" says Mrs. Moberley, heartily, giving her a little friendly push, never doubting that a compunctious delicacy is the only motive for her niece's hanging back, "we must take our chance, and as to the alpacas—why, your crape would buy them over and over again!"

Thus urged and encouraged by her relatives, what remains for Joan to do but to step out into the large, resolute rain under theegis of the sexton's wife's rosy umbrella? She does it as loathly as a cat would. Up the swimming church-path, through the church-gate, out into the swimming road.

Through the bleak suburbs between the scaffolding poles and the forlorn brick-heaps they are passing, when another noise mixes with that of the rain and the wind in their ears. A noise of wheels coming up behind them—some happy person who has a carriage, and presumably has not a Micky, bowling safely and dryly home from church. As the wheels come up with them their noise ceases. The happy person is apparently stopping beside them. In quick wonder, just flavored with an unlikely hope, Joan looks round in time to see Wolferstan throwing the reins to his groom, and jumping down out of his phaeton into the mud; on his figure is a wet great-coat, and on his face a rather displeased expression of pleasure.

"Miss Dering, will you allow me to take you home? at least, you will be able to keep yourself drier—may I help you in at once? that is, of course, unless" (with a slight sulky glance at Micky) "you prefer walking."

"Is it likely?" she answers, with a smile all sunshine—not mixed with sunshine and rain like his; "am I quite a fish, to be so fond of the water?" and so gives him her hand; and setting her light foot on the step springs gaily in, leaving Micky unthanked, alone, with his giant umbrella, in the mire.

How one's point of view changes! Five minutes ago, Joan was ready to maintain that there were nearer four than three miles between Helmsley and Portland Villa; now she is prepared to swear that there are not more than two, and of those two, one, through her ill-advised hasty striding, is already overpast.

"You never walked with me under an umbrella!" is Wolferstan's reproachful observation, as through the storm they merrily fly.

"It was always fine weather when I was with you," replies Joan; nor, until she has uttered it, does she see the double meaning of the answer.

"What a pace you must have walked at!" continues the young man, still chafing; "whose fault was that—yours or his?"

"Mine."

"You must have run."

"I did nearly."

"I should have overtaken you long ago," says Anthony, with an air of irritation, "only I was fool enough to wait at the church—I forgot all about that other door."

"You saw me in church, then?"

"Yes, but not till the sermon" (in an aggrieved voice).

"Ah! I saw you in the Litany" (with a soft tone of superiority).

How quickly the horse is trotting! At this rate in five minutes they will be at Portland gate. How smartly they pass through the slackening rain, while the boisterous wind sings with uncouth jollity in their ears!

"What a long time it seems I was here last!" says Wolferstan, presently, looking affectionately at the wet May gardens in the hedges—at the roadside trees—at the flat green fields.

"Exactly a month—four weeks yesterday," answers Joan. Then, seeing on his face more

complacency at the accuracy of her memory than she thinks either wholesome or desirable, she hastens to add: "I have a wonderful memory for small incidents; it is a month since you were here; three weeks since the piano-tuner; ten days since the sweeps."

The complacency disappears as she had meant it. The greatest coxcomb cannot be too much exalted by being bracketed with a piano-tuner and sweeps.

"Four weeks, instead of the one that I meant," reflectively. "Do you know why it has been four weeks instead of one?"

"Yes," she answers, sedately, "I know."

"Why?"

"Because you were better amused where you were."

He shakes his head.

"Wrong. No, but that I was very much amused too," he adds, conscientiously; "for the matter of that, I mostly am. For my part" (with a light laugh), "I should like to live forever; the longer my innings are the better I shall be pleased; but that was not the reason."

She is silent.

"Why do not you ask me what it was?" he asks in a sort of a pet—"when you see I am longing to be questioned? You might have the civility to oblige me."

"Suppose I do not care to hear?" she says with a small, fine smile.

"Then you ought to care," he answers, gaily.

They have reached the gate, through the bars of which six black *retroussé* faces are gravely regarding them. The rain has ceased, the great sun is blithely shouldering aside the sulky clouds, the gutters run less madly down the road, the stooped flowers and the lashed grasses begin to think of raising themselves again.

"See how fine it is," says Wolferstan, directing her attention to the young laugh which is beginning to break out over earth's face. "Why may not we lengthen a little our drive?"

"On the other hand, why should we?" she answers.

There is that in her voice which makes him feel that further pressing would be useless; her tone is so low that it is almost drowned by the voices of the dogs, who by this time have issued from the gate, and, thankful for anything which is likely to disperse the *canari* attendant on Sunday, are giving a hideous out-door concert round the ill-starred vehicle.

In silence Wolferstan lifts his young companion down to earth. He is following her into the house. Becoming aware of his intention, she turns and faces him.

"You are coming in?" she says, doubtfully, standing in the gateway as if to hinder his entrance.

"I think so," he answers, modestly; "am I not?"

For an instant she stands irresolute; the bluff wind making her heavy gown and her lithe body sway a little, like a tall, pale flower, and the blood sending crimson messages up into her cheeks. Then she speaks.

"If you like, and on one condition."

"What condition?" (laughing); "that it is the last offer of the kind?"

"No, not that."

"What then?"

"You may come," she says, turning her very much-in-earnest eyes and her face swept by a great carnation flush to his, "on condition that you promise not to stay to luncheon."

He looked surprised.

"I promise."

"However much they may press you?"

"Yes."

"Not pie-crust promise—mind—a real, solemn, binding oath?"

"A real, solemn, binding oath!"

She draws a long breath of relief.

"Then you may come and welcome!"

He laughs dryly.

"You are very hospitable?"

"It is the truest hospitality!" she answers.

CHAPTER XIII.

The drawing-room is undoubtedly unchanged since before she went to church, but yet it seems to her a far tawdrier little desert than it did then; the woolly antimacassar more faded, the spar Bohemian glass more flimsily gimerack, the dust on the carpet a fathom deeper. She sits dejectedly down on the music-stool. After all though the music-stool gives one some frights, it is really more dependable than most of the other chairs. He stands on the hearth-rug racking his brains for something complimentary, and at the same time not flagrantly untruthful, to say about the apartment.

"This is your only sitting-room, then?" in a voice out of which he tries to keep the disguised surprise.

"The only one."

"You all sit in it always? Mrs. Moberley, the two Misses Moberley, and you?"

"Yes."

"If I came I should find you all here?"

"Yes."

A little pause, Wolferstan's eyes uncomfortably taking in the full meanness, threadbare-ness of the little room. Then he speaks, in a low and almost awe-struck key:

"Every day and all day for the last month, and every day and all day for the next month, and the month after that, and the month after that again—"

"Not all day," she interrupts, gently; sometimes—often—I sit in my bedroom."

"Is this to go on forever?"

"Nothing goes on forever," she answers gravely. "It is this thought that I think would keep me from being ever too glad, and that now saves me from being ever too dismal."

He has thrown himself on the little sofa, and, with head down-bent and hands thrust disconsolately through his hair, is staring blankly at the carpet.

"Sometimes," continues Joan, in her soft, sad voice, while her eyes wander idly out through the window to the grass-plot, and the hedge ablaze in new green in the stormy sunshine—"sometimes I wish that I had come here long ago, when I was a child. Sometimes one seems old at twenty; to change all one's likes and dislikes; all one's points of view and habits of thought; but then, again" (shaking her head slowly), "I think that—no, it is best as it is; I have those years always to the good; they are my money that I live upon now in this my winter."

THE GLEANER.

THE Italian Government has forbidden Henri Rochefort to live in Italy.

It is ordered that the words, "Victoria, Empress," be substituted for "Victoria, Queen," on the Indian coinage.

THERE were sold in Paris for New Year's Day consumption 50,000 head of poultry, 20,000 patés de foie gras, 550,000 lobsters, and 70,000 oysters.

IN Paris the weather has not been so mild as at present for nearly a century. The famous chestnut tree in the Tuilleries Garden has already green buds upon it.

A MONSTER barometer has been erected in the Paris Central Markets. It may be said to rule prices; for, when the hands point to rain, meat, fish, game, &c., are sold at an immense sacrifice, as they would not keep.

MR. EDWARD JENKINS, the member for Dundee, is in such a critical state of health that his medical advisers have given him notice that residence in the south of France for the next three months must be endured if he wishes to shake off what at present has all the appearance of an insidious and dangerous illness.

JEAN FOURNAL, the soldier who seized Louis Napoleon in 1836, during his attempt to seduce the army of Strasbourg from their allegiance, died lately. The Prince offered him promotion, money, a cross, and a pension, but Fournal replied only by keeping his bayonet pointed at his prisoner's breast until others came to secure him.

M. GIFFARD, the celebrated aeronaut, is constructing a small steamboat for service from Pont Royal, Paris, to the Exposition Grounds, a distance of three miles. The steamer is designed to realize the velocity of 43 miles per hour, and to run the course mentioned in four or five minutes. She will be 90 feet long and 10 feet wide.

IT is under contemplation to break up a very historical vessel at Sheerness, a vessel that did good service for his Majesty King James II., in helping him to escape from England to France. This vessel for many years past has been used as a Government lighter at Sheerness, and occasionally as a landing stage for the *Great Eastern* steamship. It has been patched many times. The vessel is named the *Royal Escape*.

WHEN the Marquis of Salisbury first went to Constantinople, the Turks, believing he had come to deliver them from Muscovite clutches, called him "Tehal supurgi"—the "new broom." Now that they find he echoes the sentiments of their enemies, they term him "Salt Bourou"—"only a trumpet." As for General Ignatieff, he is known as "Inad-Effendi" or the "obstinate gentleman."

SCIENTIFIC.

DR. PETERMANN has been notified that the Portuguese Government has appropriated £100,000 to aid the proposed great scientific expedition for the exploration of Central Africa. The expedition is organized and will start without delay for the Congo river.

MR. MENIER has invented a new contrivance for the steering of balloons. The mechanism is placed behind the car, and by a clever arrangement of network acts upon a belt which encircles the body of the balloon, extending about four or five degrees above and below a horizontal plane through its centre—its equator, so to say. The rudder is plane, and can be used as a sail. The balloons are said to move obliquely upwards and downwards and also sideways, according to the position of the rudder.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *English Mechanic* insists that musical sounds stimulate the growth of plants. He gives an instance in point. In a barren section of Portugal he built a small conservatory, and endeavored to cultivate roses and other flowers under shelter, but in spite of his precautions and industry, they did not flourish. One day he took a harmonium into the greenhouse, and played for several hours. The practice he maintained for several months, and was surprised to see a gradual but rapid recovery of health on the part of his plants. He attributes their improvement to the influence of music, and unfolds the theory that the singing of birds is conducive to vegetable life.

FASHION NOTES.

THE new glove, *le gant Béatrice*, is warranted not to soil by squeezing.

AMONG the most *recherché* of Paris novelties is the bouquet fan, a marvel of delicate work and mechanical ingenuity, as it can become at the ennuing pull of a silken string a beautiful bouquet or a tiny fan of flowers.