

THE VICAR'S GOVERNESS.

"Were you raking your walks?" asks Clarissa, idly, leaning on the gate, and gazing down the trim gravelled path that leads to the ivy-clad cottage beyond. "Nobody's walks are ever as clean as yours, I think. And your roses are something too delicious, far better than our outdoor flowers at Gowran. And so late in the season, too!"

"May I give you one?" says Ruth, dimpling prettily at her praise.

"Thank you. How sweet they are! No, no, Horace, that is altogether too large for your coat. Ruth, will you give Mr. Branscombe a tiny bud? That one over there, for instance."

"I don't think I see it," says Ruth quietly. She has grown pale again, and her lips have lost a little of the childish petulant pout that characterizes them.

"Just over there. Don't you see? Why, you are almost looking at it, you stupid child."

"I am stupid, I am afraid,"—with a faint smile. "Come in, Miss Peyton, and gather it yourself." She opens the gate, with a sort of determination in her manner, and Clarissa, going up to the rose-tree, plucks the delicate blossom in dispute. Horace has followed her inside the gate, but, turning rather more to the left, falls apparently in love with an artless white rosebud that waves gently to and fro upon its stem, as though eager to attract and rivet admiration.

"I think I prefer this flower, after all," he says, lightly. "May I ask you to give it to me, Ruth?" His manner is quite easy, very nearly indifferent, and his back is turned to Clarissa. But his eyes are on Ruth; and the girl, though with open reluctance and ill-repressed defiance, is compelled to pick the white rose and give it to him.

"Well, I really don't think you have shown very good taste," says Clarissa, examining the two flowers. "Mine is the most perfect. Nevertheless, wilful man must have his way. Let me settle it in your coat for you."

Almost as she speaks the flower drops accidentally from her fingers; and, both she and Horace making a step forward to recover it, by some awkward chance they tread on it, and crush the poor, frail little thing out of shape. It lies upon the gravel broken and disfigured, yet very sweet in death.

"You trod on it," says Horace, rather quickly, to Clarissa.

"No, dear; I really think—indeed, I am sure—it was your foot," returns she, calmly, but with conviction.

"It doesn't matter; it was hardly worth a discussion," says Ruth, with an odd laugh. "See how poor a thing it looks now; and, yet, a moment since it was happy on its tree."

"Never mind, Horace; this is really a charming little bud," says Clarissa, gaily, holding out the rose of her own choosing; "at least you must try to be content with it. Good-by, Ruth; come up to Gowran some day soon, and take those books you asked for the other day."

"Thank you, Miss Peyton. I shall come soon."

"Good-by," says Horace.

"Good-by," returns she. But it is to Clarissa, not to him, she addresses the word of farewell.

When the mill has been left some distance behind them, and Ruth's slight figure, clad in its white gown, had ceased to be a fleck of coloring in the landscape, Clarissa says, thoughtfully,

"What a pretty girl that is, and how refined! Quite a little lady in manner; so calm, and so collected,—cold, almost. I know many girls, irreproachably born, not to be compared with her, in my opinion. You agree with me?"

"Birth is not always to be depended upon nowadays."

"She is so quiet, too, and so retiring. She would not even shake hands with you, when we met her, though you wanted her to. Did you remark that?"

"Sometimes, I am dull about trifles, such as that."

"Yes. By the bye, she did not seem surprised at seeing you here to-day, although she thought you safe in town, as we all did,—you deceitful boy."

"Did she not?"

"No. But then, of course, it was a matter of indifference to her."

"Of course."

They have reached the entrance to the vicarage by this time, and are pausing to say farewell for a few hours.

"I shall come up to Gowran tomorrow morning first thing, and speak to your father; is that what you wish me to do?" asks Horace, her hand in his.

"Yes. But, Horace, looking at him earnestly, "I think I should like to tell it all to papa myself first, this evening."

"Very well, dearest. Do whatever makes you happiest," returns he, secretly pleased that the ice will be broken for him before he prepares for his mauvais quart d'heure in the library. "And if he should refuse his consent, Clarissa, what then? You know you might make so much a better marriage."

"Might I?"—tenderly. "I don't think so; and papa would not make me unhappy."

"A generous friendship no cold medium bows," Pope.

Mrs. Redmond is sitting on a center ottoman, darnning stockings. This is her favorite pastime, and never fails her. When she isn't darnning stockings she is always scolding the cook, and as her voice, when raised, is not mellifluous, her family, in a body, regard the work-basket with reverential affection, and present it to her notice when there comes the crash of broken china from the lower regions, or when the cold meat has been unfairly dealt with.

She is of the lean cadaverous order of womankind, and is bony to the last degree. Her nose is aquiline, and, as a rule, pale blue. As this last color also describes her eyes, there is a depressing want of contrast about her face. Her lips are thin and querulous, and her hair—well, she hasn't any hair, but her wig is flaxen.

As Clarissa enters, she hastily draws the stocking from her hand, and rises to greet her. A faint blush mantles in her cheek, making one at once understand that in bygone days she had probably been considered pretty.

"So unexpected, my dear Clarissa," she says, with as pleased a smile as the poor thing ever conjures up, and a little weakness at the knees, meant for a courtesy. "So very glad to see you,"—as, indeed, she is.

In her earlier days she had been called a belle,—by her own people,—and had been expected, accordingly, to draw a prize in the marriage-market. But Penelope Proud had failed them, and by so doing, had brought down eternal condemnation on her head. In her second season she had fallen foolishly but honestly in love with a well-born but impecunious curate, and had married him in spite of threats and withering sneers. With one consent her family cast her off and consigned her to her fate, declaring themselves incapable of dealing with a woman who could willfully marry a man possessed of nothing. They always put a capital N to this last word, and perhaps they were right, as at that time all Charlie Redmond could call his own was seven younger brothers and a tenor voice of the very purest.

As years rolled on, though Mrs. Redmond never, perhaps, regretted her marriage, she nevertheless secretly acknowledged to herself a hankering after the old life, a longing for the grandeur and riches that accrued to it (the Prudes for generations had been born and bred among the nobles of the good line), and hugged the demoralizing thought to her bosom that a little more trade and a little less blue blood would have made her husband a degree more perfect.

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To-day, Clarissa's visit, being early, and therefore unconventional, and for that reason the more friendly, sweetened all her surroundings. Mrs. Redmond might have put in an appearance twice in the day later on, yet her visits would not have been viewed with such favor as this maternal call.

"Cissy is out; she has gone to the village," says Mrs. Redmond, scarcely thinking Clarissa has come all the way from Gowran, to spend an hour alone with her.

"I am sorry; but it is you I most particularly wanted to see. What a delicious day it is! I walked all the way from Gowran, and the sun was rather too much for me; but how cool it always is in the vicarage! The air seems so stuffy or overheated, as other rooms do."

"It is a wretched place, quite wretched," says Mrs. Redmond, with a deprecating glance directed at a distant sofa that might indeed be termed patriarchal in its appearance.

"What are you doing?" asks Clarissa, promptly, feeling she cannot with any dignity defend the sofa. "Darning? Why can't I help you?—I am sure I could darn. Oh, what a quantity of socks! Are they all broken?" looking with awe upon the overflowing basket that lies close to Mrs. Redmond's feet.

"Every one of them," replies that matron, with unctious. "I can't think how they do it, but I assure you they never come out of the wash without innumerable tears. Whether she is alighting, in her graceful fashion, to her children or their socks, seems at present doubtful. "I sometimes fancy they must take their boots off and dance on the sharp pebbles to bring them to such a pass; but they say they don't. Yet how to account for this?" She holds up one bony hand, decorated with a faded sock, in a somewhat triumphant fashion, and lets her emancipated fingers start to life through the toe of it.

"Do let me help you," says Clarissa, with entreaty, and, stooping to the basket, she rummaged there until she produces a needle, and thimble, and some thread. "I dare say I shall get on splendidly, if you will just give me a hint now and then and tell me when I am stitching them up too tightly."

This hardly sounds promising, but Mrs. Redmond heeds her not.

"My dear, do not trouble yourself with such uninteresting work," she says, hastily. "It really makes me unhappy to see you so employed; and that sock of all others,—it is Bobby's, and I'm sure there must be something wrong with his heels. If you insist on helping me, do try another."

"No, I shall stitch up Bobby, or die in the attempt," says Miss Peyton, valiantly. "It is quite nice work, I should think, and so easy. I dare say after a time I should love it."

"Should you?" says Mrs. Redmond. "Well, perhaps; but for myself, I assure you, though no one will believe it, I abhor the occupation. There are moments when it almost overcomes me,—the perpetual in and out of the needle, you will understand,—it seems so endless. Dear, dear, there was a time when I was never obliged to do such menial service, when I had numerous dependents to wait on me to do my bidding. But then,—with a deep sigh that sounds like a blast from Boreas—"I married the vicar."

"And quite right," says Clarissa with a cheerful little nod seeing Mrs. Redmond has mounted her high horse and intends riding him to death. "If I myself shouldn't hesitate about it, if I only got the chance. And indeed where could any one get a more charming husband than the dear vicar?"

"Well, well, it was a foolish match notwithstanding," says Mrs. Redmond, with a smile and was sort of blush; "though certainly at that time I don't deny he was very fascinating. Such a voice, my dear, and then his eyes were remarkably fine."

"Were—are, you mean," says the crafty Clarissa, knowing that praise of her husband is sweet to the soul of the faded Penelope, and that the surest

means of reducing her to a pliant mood is to permit her to maugler on unintermittently about past glories and dead hours rendered bright by age. To have her in her kindest humor, before mentioning the real object of her visit, must be managed at all risks. "Yours was a love-match, wasn't it?" she says, coaxingly. "Do tell me all about it." (She had listened patiently to every word of it about a hundred times before.) "I do so like a real love-affair."

"There isn't much to tell," says Mrs. Redmond, who is quite delighted, and actually foregoes the charm of darning, that she may the more correctly remember each interesting detail in her own "old story"; "but it was all very sudden,—very like a tornado, or a whirlwind, or those things in the desert that cover one up in a moment. First we met at two croquet parties,—yes, two,—and then at dinner at Ramsays', and it was at the dinner at the Ramsays' that he first pressed my hand. I thought, my dear, I should have dropped it, but I was so nervous, I couldn't. He got over our sort of squeeze. Dear me, I can almost feel it now," says Mrs. Redmond, who is blushing like a girl.

"Yes, do go on," says Clarissa, who in reality, is enjoying herself intensely.

Well, then, two days afterward, to my surprise, he called on me, and then my mamma being of a suspicious turn; but he was young in those days, my dear, and well favored, no doubt. So we got married."

"That is the proper ending to all pretty stories. But is it true," says Clarissa, with a will, "that just at that time you refused a splendid offer, all for the vicar's sake?"

"Splendid is a long word," says Mrs. Redmond, trying to speak carelessly, but unmistakably elated, "yet I must confess there is some truth in the report of which you allude. Sir Hubert Fitz-Hubert was a baronet of very ancient lineage, came over with the Conqueror, or King Alfred, I quite forget which, but it was whichever was the oldest; that I know. He was, in fact, a trifle old for me, perhaps, and not so rich as I should have known, but I rejected him upon the spot with scorn, though he went on his knees to me, and swore, in an anguished frenzy, that he would cut his throat with his razor if I refused to listen to his suit! I did refuse, but I heard nothing more about the matter until he died. Sir Hubert put some restraint upon his maddened feelings and refrained from inflicting any injury upon himself."

"Poor fellow!" says Clarissa, in a suspiciously choky tone.

"Then I espoused the vicar," says Mrs. Redmond, with a certain pride. "One does foolish things sometimes."

"That, now, was a wise one. I would not marry a king if I loved a beggar. Altogether, you have behaved beautifully, and just like a novel."

"Feeling that the moment for action has arrived, she now, in a glow of pride and vanity well mixed, Clarissa goes on sweetly: "I have some news for you."

"For me?"

"Yes, for you. I know how delicate you are, and how unable to manage two or three children you have at home. And I know, as you have been looking out for a suitable governess for some time, but you have found a difficulty in choosing one, have you not?"

"Indeed I have."

"Well, I think I know one who will just suit you. She was at school with me, and though she is now married, she is both father and mother, is of a very good family, and well connected."

"But the salary?" says Mrs. Redmond, with some hesitation. "The salary is the thing. I hear of no one now who will come for less than sixty pounds a year, and she is young, and with Henry at school, and Rupert's college expenses, forty pounds is as much as we can afford to give."

"Miss Broughton will, I think, be quite content with that; she only wants to be happy, and at rest, and she will be all that with you and Cissy and Mr. Redmond. She is young, and it is her first trial, but she is very clever; she has a really lovely voice, and paints excessively well. Ethel has rather a taste for painting, has she not?"

"A decided talent for it. All my family were remarkable for their artistic talents, so she, doubtless, inherits it; and—yes, of course, it would be a great thing for her to have some one on the spot to develop this talent, and train it. Your friend, you say, is well connected?"

"Very highly connected on her mother's side. Her father was a lieutenant in the navy, and very respectable too, I believe; though I know nothing of him."

"That she should be a lady is, of course, indispensable," says Mrs. Redmond, with all the pride that ought to belong to soft-goods people. "I need hardly say that, I think. But why does she not appeal for help to her mother's relations?"

"Because she prefers honest work to begging from those who up to this have taken no notice of her."

"I admire her," says Mrs. Redmond, warmly. "If you think she will be satisfied with forty pounds, I should like to try what she could do with the children."

"I am very glad you have so decided. I know of no place in which I would rather see a friend of mine than here."

"Thank you, my dear. Then will you write to her, or shall I?"

"Let me write to her first, if you don't mind; I think I can settle everything."

"Mind?—no, indeed; it is only too good of you to take so much trouble about me."

"Do not put it in that light; there is no pleasure so keen as that of being able to help one's friends."

"Then she rises, and, having left behind her three socks that no earthly power can ever again draw upon a child's foot, so hopelessly has she brought heel and sole together, she says good-by to Mrs. Redmond, and leaves the room."

Outside on the avenue she encounters the vicar, hurrying home.

"Turn with me," she says, putting her hand through his arm. "I have something to say to you."

"Going to be married?" asks he, gayly.

"Nonsense!—blushing, in that he has so closely hit the mark. "It is

not of anything so paltry I would unburden my mind."

"Then you have nothing of importance to tell me," says the vicar; "and my work will not, as in a great hurry: old Betty Martin—"

"Must wait. I insist upon it. Dying! nonsense! she has been dying every week for three years, and you believe her every time. Come as far as the gate with me."

Your command, I obey," says the vicar, with a sigh of resignation, walking on beside his pet parishioner. "But if you could only understand the trouble I am in with those Batesons you would know some pity for me."

What! again? says Clarissa, showing and feeling, deep compassion.

Even so, this time about the bread. You know what unpleasant bread they bake, and how Mrs. Redmond objects to it; and really it is bad for the children."

"It is poison," says Clarissa, who never does anything by halves, and who is nothing but a coquette. "Well, so I said; and when I had expostulated with them, mildly but firmly, and suggested that better flour might make better dough, and they had declined to take any notice of my protest,—why, just ordered my bread from below the hill."

The vicar pauses.

"And you have been happy ever since?"

"Well, yes, my dear. I suppose in a way I have; that is, I have ceased to miss the inevitable breakfast lecture on the darkness and the coarseness of the bread; but I have hardly gained on other points, and the Batesons are a perpetual scourge. They have decided on never again darkening the church door" (their own words, my dear Clarissa), because I have taken the vicarage custom from them. They prefer the settling their souls to giving up the chance of punishing me. And now the question is, whether I should consent to the slow poisoning of my children, rather than drive my parishioners into the arms of the Methodists, who I keep open house for all comers below the hill."

I don't think I should poison the children," says Clarissa.

"But what is to become of my choir? Charlotte Bateson has the sweetest voice in it, and now she will not come to church. I am at my wits' end when I think of it all."

"What a libel!" says Clarissa. "I shouldn't malign my own teaching if I were you. I am perfectly certain I could say it all now, this very moment, from start to finish, questions and all, without a mistake. Shall I?"

"No, no, no, my dear. Your word for it," says the vicar, hastily. "The fact is, I have just been listening to it at the morning school in the village, and when one has heard a thing repeated fourteen times with variations, one naturally is not ambitious of hearing it again, no matter how profitable it may be."

"When I spoke of filling Charlotte's place," says Clarissa, "I did not allude in any way to myself, but to— And now I am coming to the news."

"So glad!" says the vicar; "I may overtake old Betty yet."

"What a good thing a governess for Mrs. Redmond. Such a dear little governess! And I want you to promise me to be more than usually kind to her, because she is so young and friendless and it is her first effort at teaching."

"So that question is settled at last," says the vicar, with a deep—if carefully suppressed—sigh of relief. "I am rejoiced, if only for my wife's sake, who has been worrying herself for weeks past, trying to replace the inestimable—if somewhat depressing—Miss Proude."

"Has she?" says Clarissa, kindly.

"Worry is a bad thing. But to-day Mrs. Redmond seems much better than she has been for a long time. Indeed, she said so."

"Did she?" says the vicar, with a comical, transient smile. Mrs. Redmond's maladies being of a purely imaginary order.

"What are you laughing at now?" asks Clarissa, who has marked this passing gleam of amusement.

"At you, my dear, you are so quaintly humorous," replies he. "But go on; tell me of this new acquisition to our household. Is she a friend of yours?"

"Yes, a great friend."

"Then of course we shall like her."

"Thank you," says Clarissa. "She is very pretty, and very charming. Perhaps, after all, I am doing a foolish thing for myself. How shall I feel when she has cut me out at the vicarage?"

"Not much fear of that, were she Aphrodite herself. You are much too good a child to be liked lightly or by halves. Well, good-by; you won't forget about the flannel for the Batley twins?"

"I have it ready,—at least, half of it."

"What would I tell she was going to have twins?" says Clarissa, apologetically.

"It certainly was very inconsiderate of her," says the vicar, with a sigh, as he thinks of the poverty that clings to the Batley menage from year's end to year's end.

"Well, never mind; she shall have it all next week," promises Clarissa, soothingly, marking his regretful tone; and then she bids him farewell, and goes up the road again in the direction of her home.

She is glad to be alone at last. Her mission successfully accomplished, she has now time to let her heart rest contentedly upon her own happiness. All the events of the morning—the smallest word, the lightest intonation, the most passing smile, that claimed Horace as their father—are remembered by her. She dwells fondly on each separate remembrance, and repeats to herself how he looked and spoke at such-and-such moments.

She is happy, quite happy. A sort of wonder, too, mixes with her delight. Only a few short hours ago she had left her home, free, unbetrothed, with only hope to sustain her, and now she has her "bride day." She chafed hardly believed his love for her was so strong, so earnest; even she (how could she? with tender self-reproach) had misjudged him,—had deemed him somewhat cold indifferent; unknowing of the

deep stratum of feeling that lay beneath the outward calm of his demeanor.

Dear, dearest Horace! She will never disbelieve in him again; he is her own now, her very own, and she loves him with all her heart, and she loves him with the same, and—Oh, if every woman in the world could enjoy as happy as she is to-day, what a glorious place it would be!

Not that it is such a bad place, by any means, as some people would lead one to imagine. (Here the tears are bidden in her eyes.) Oh, surely not; he understood her thoroughly; for had he not smiled upon her afterward?

So he will always smile. There shall never be any cross words or angry frowns to chill their perfect love! Their lives will be a summer dream, a golden legend, a pure, fond idyl. This beguiling time with beliefs too sweet for earthly power to grant, she hastens home, with each step building up another story in her airy house, until at length she carries a castle, tall and stately, into her father's house.

(To be continued.)

FEAT IN HORSEBACK RIDING.

From St. Petersburg to Siberia, a Distance of 5,000 Miles.

The Russian Kogak officer, Kenike, who in June last undertook to ride on horseback from Krasnoe Selo, a suburb of St. Petersburg, to Chitta, in Eastern Siberia, a distance of about 5,000 miles, has, according to the "Novoe Vremya," accomplished a third of his journey, having arrived at Uffa. Kenike's enterprise is interesting not only on account of the great distance to be covered and the speed at which he is riding, but also because of the simplicity with which he is accomplishing his self-imposed task. The motives which prompted him to undertake the ride are as follows: Having exchanged his regiment for one quartered in Chitta, Kenike was for a long time exercised in his mind as to the means by which he should reach his new and remote headquarters. To travel by sea to Vladivostok, on the Pacific coast, and of Siberia, appeared to him inconvenient, as the distance from Vladivostok to Chitta would have to be covered by post horses, and his six months' furlough would not have sufficed for such a journey. The ordinary direct route by rail and afterwards by post horses was too costly an undertaking for his purpose. An opportunity presented itself of acquiring a horse, on which he at once determined to undertake the long and difficult journey. The horse is an Anglo-Arab, a descendant of the famous Count Rostopchin's stud. He is not a young horse, but has all the qualities necessary to accomplish the task laid upon him. The saddle which he carries is of the ordinary rough type of the Cossack. The kit consists only of absolute necessities for rider and horse and an extra set of horsehoes, with a strong implement. He has a groom, who cleans and shoes him himself when necessary. Kenike expects to complete the entire distance in 150 days, thirty of which he reserves for halts. The horse and rider are reported to be in capital condition.

ON THE CATTLE RANCHES.

Raising of Cattle a Very Profitable Business.

The fact that nearly 20,000 fat cattle averaging \$40 a head have been shipped from the western ranges this season establishes cattle raising for the old country markets as the leading industry of the Territories, says the Calgary Herald. Compared with grain-growing or any other branch of farming, cattle ranching stands out pre-eminently as the safest, easiest and most profitable thing that a man can turn his hand to. There is in fact no occupation or industry in Canada that to the industrious man of small capital offers such advantages.

The 4,000 head of stockers that have been shipped in from the east this season furnish an indication of the possibilities open to the rancher. Two year-old stockers were laid down in Calgary this fall at \$23 to \$25 a head. Many of these were sold in small lots to men with bands of twenty-five, fifty, or a hundred or two head. These eastern cattle being unaccustomed to wintering out will have to be fed during a part of the winter at a cost of a few dollars a head, but next season they will be in shape to be sold as three-year-olds at \$40 each. Yearlings can be bought for \$16 to \$17 now, and after running on the range for a couple of years can be cashed at \$40 each; and all this, be it noted is done by the grass of Southern Alberta, which for its remarkable fattening properties in both winter and summer is peculiar to this section of the North-West.

Punishments in Early Days.

The following extracts from early records give us a glimpse of some of the singular punishments in vogue in old New England:

"In 1639 Dorothy Brown, for beating her husband, is ordered to be bound and chained to a post."

"In 1643 the assistants ordered three Stoneham men to sit in the stocks on lecture day for traveling on the Sabbath."

"In 1651 Anna, wife of George Ellis, was sentenced to be publicly whipped for reproving the magistrates."

"In 1655, for scolding the elders, she had a cleft stick put on her tongue for half an hour."

He who brings ridicule to bear against truth finds in his own hand a blade without a hilt.—Lander.

CHAPTER IX.

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"It is a wretched place, quite wretched," says Mrs. Redmond, with a deprecating glance directed at a distant sofa that might indeed be termed patriarchal in its appearance.

"What are you doing?" asks Clarissa, promptly, feeling she cannot with any dignity defend the sofa. "Darning? Why can't I help you?—I am sure I could darn. Oh, what a quantity of socks! Are they all broken?" looking with awe upon the overflowing basket that lies close to Mrs. Redmond's feet.

"Every one of them," replies that matron, with unctious. "I can't think how they do it, but I assure you they never come out of the wash without innumerable tears. Whether she is alighting, in her graceful fashion, to her children or their socks, seems at present doubtful. "I sometimes fancy they must take their boots off and dance on the sharp pebbles to bring them to such a pass; but they say they don't. Yet how to account for this?" She holds up one bony hand, decorated with a faded sock, in a somewhat triumphant fashion, and lets her emancipated fingers start to life through the toe of it.

"Do let me help you," says Clarissa, with entreaty, and, stooping to the basket, she rummaged there until she produces a needle, and thimble, and some thread. "I dare say I shall get on splendidly, if you will just give me a hint now and then and tell me when I am stitching them up too tightly."

This hardly sounds promising, but Mrs. Redmond heeds her not.

"My dear, do not trouble yourself with such uninteresting work," she says, hastily. "It really makes me unhappy to see you so employed; and that sock of all others,—it is Bobby's, and I'm sure there must be something wrong with his heels. If you insist on helping me, do try another."

"No, I shall stitch up Bobby, or die in the attempt," says Miss Peyton, valiantly. "It is quite nice work, I should think, and so easy. I dare say after a time I should love it."

"Should you?" says Mrs. Redmond. "Well, perhaps; but for myself, I assure you, though no one will believe it, I abhor the occupation. There are moments when it almost overcomes me,—the perpetual in and out of the needle, you will understand,—it seems so endless. Dear, dear, there was a time when I was never obliged to do such menial service, when I had numerous dependents to wait on me to do my bidding. But then,—with a deep sigh that sounds like a blast from Boreas—"I married the vicar."

"And quite right," says Clarissa with a cheerful little nod seeing Mrs. Redmond has mounted her high horse and intends riding him to death. "If I myself shouldn't hesitate about it, if I only got the chance. And indeed where could any one get a more charming husband than the dear vicar?"

"Well, well, it was a foolish match notwithstanding," says Mrs. Redmond, with a smile and was sort of blush; "though certainly at that time I don't deny he was very fascinating. Such a voice, my dear, and then his eyes were remarkably fine."

"Were—are, you mean," says the crafty Clarissa, knowing that praise of her husband is sweet to the soul of the faded Penelope, and that the surest

means of reducing her to a pliant mood is to permit her to maugler on unintermittently about past glories and dead hours rendered bright by age. To have her in her kindest humor, before mentioning the real object of her visit, must be managed at all risks. "Yours was a love-match, wasn't it?" she says, coaxingly. "Do tell me all about it." (She had listened patiently to every word of it about a hundred times before.) "I do so like a real love-affair."

"There isn't much to tell," says Mrs. Redmond, who is quite delighted, and actually foregoes the charm of darning, that she may the more correctly remember each interesting detail in her own "old story"; "but it was all very sudden,—very like a tornado, or a whirlwind, or those things in the desert that cover one up in a moment. First we met at two croquet parties,—yes, two,—and then at dinner at Ramsays', and it was at the dinner at the Ramsays' that he first pressed my hand. I thought, my dear, I should have dropped it, but I was so nervous, I couldn't. He got over our sort of squeeze. Dear me, I can almost feel it now," says Mrs. Redmond, who is blushing like a girl.

"Yes, do go on," says Clarissa, who in reality, is enjoying herself intensely.

Well, then, two days afterward, to my surprise, he called on me, and then my mamma being of a suspicious turn; but he was young in those days, my dear, and well favored, no doubt. So we got married."

"That is the proper ending to all pretty stories. But is it true," says Clarissa, with a will, "that just at that time you refused a splendid offer, all for the vicar's sake?"

"Splendid is a long word," says Mrs. Redmond, trying to speak carelessly, but unmistakably elated, "yet I must confess there is some truth in the report of which you allude. Sir Hubert Fitz-Hubert was a baronet of very ancient lineage, came over with the Conqueror, or King Alfred, I quite forget which, but it was whichever was the oldest; that I know. He was, in fact, a trifle old for me, perhaps, and not so rich as I should have known, but I rejected him upon the spot with scorn, though he went on his knees to me, and swore, in an anguished frenzy, that he would cut his throat with his razor if I refused to listen to his suit! I did refuse, but I heard nothing more about the matter until he died. Sir Hubert put some restraint upon his maddened feelings and refrained from inflicting any injury upon himself."

"Poor fellow!" says Clarissa, in a suspiciously choky tone.

"Then I espoused the vicar," says Mrs. Redmond, with a certain pride. "One does foolish things sometimes."

"That, now, was a wise one. I would not marry a king if I loved a beggar. Altogether, you have behaved beautifully, and just like a novel."

"Feeling that the moment for action has arrived, she now, in a glow of pride and vanity well mixed, Clarissa goes on sweetly: "I have some news for you."

"For me?"

"Yes, for you. I know how delicate you are, and how unable to manage two or three children you have at home. And I know, as you have been looking out for a suitable governess for some time, but you have found a difficulty in choosing one, have you not?"

"Indeed I have."

"Well, I think I know one who will just suit you. She was at school with me, and though she is now married, she is both father and mother, is of a very good family, and well connected."

"But the salary?" says Mrs. Redmond, with some hesitation. "The salary is the thing. I hear of no one now who will come for less than sixty pounds a year, and she is young, and with Henry at school, and Rupert's college expenses, forty pounds is as much as we can afford to give."

"Miss Broughton will, I think, be quite content with that; she only wants to be happy, and at rest, and she will be all that with you and Cissy and Mr. Redmond. She is young, and it is her first trial, but she is very clever; she has a really lovely voice, and paints excessively well. Ethel has rather a taste for painting, has she not?"

"A decided talent for it. All my family were remarkable for their artistic talents, so she, doubtless, inherits it; and—yes, of course, it would be a great thing for her to have some one on the spot to develop this talent, and train it. Your friend, you say, is well connected?"

"Very highly connected on her mother's side. Her father was a lieutenant in the navy, and very respectable too, I believe; though I know nothing of him."

"That she should be a lady is, of course, indispensable," says Mrs. Redmond, with all the pride that ought to belong to soft-goods people. "I need hardly say that, I think. But why does she not appeal for help to her mother's relations?"

"Because she prefers honest work to begging from those who up to this have taken no notice of her."

"I admire her," says Mrs. Redmond, warmly. "If you think she will be satisfied with forty pounds, I should like to try what she could do with the children."

"I am very glad you have so decided. I know of no place in which I would rather see a friend of mine than here."

"Thank you, my dear. Then will you write to her, or shall I?"

"Let me write to her first, if you don't mind; I think I can settle everything."

"Mind?—no, indeed; it is only too good of you to take so much trouble about me."

"Do not put it in that light; there is no pleasure so keen as that of being able to help one's friends."

"Then she rises, and, having left behind her three socks that no earthly power can ever again draw upon a child's foot, so hopelessly has she brought heel and sole together, she says good-by to Mrs. Redmond, and leaves the room."

Outside on the avenue she encounters the vicar, hurrying home.

"Turn with me," she says, putting her hand through his arm. "I have something to say to you."

"Going to be married?" asks he, gayly.

"Nonsense!—blushing, in that he has so closely hit the mark. "It is

not of anything so paltry I would unburden my mind."

"Then you have nothing of importance to tell me," says the vicar; "and my work will not, as in a great hurry: old Betty Martin—"

"Must wait. I insist upon it. Dying! nonsense! she has been dying every week for three years, and you believe her every time. Come as far as the gate with me."

Your command, I obey," says the vicar, with a sigh of resignation, walking on beside his pet parishioner. "But if you could only understand the trouble I am in with those Batesons you would know some pity for me."

What! again? says Clarissa, showing and feeling, deep compassion.

Even so, this time about the bread. You know what unpleasant bread they bake, and how Mrs. Redmond objects to it; and really it is bad for the children."

"It is poison," says Clarissa, who never does anything by halves, and who is nothing but a coquette. "Well, so I said; and when I had expostulated with them, mildly but firmly, and suggested that better flour might make better dough, and they had declined to take any notice of my protest,—why, just ordered my bread from below the hill."

The vicar pauses.

"And you have been happy ever since?"

"Well, yes, my dear. I suppose in a way I have; that is, I have ceased to miss the inevitable breakfast lecture on the darkness and the coarseness of the bread; but I have hardly gained on other points, and the Batesons are a perpetual scourge. They have decided on never again darkening the church door" (their own words, my dear Clarissa), because I have taken the vicarage custom from them. They prefer the settling their souls to giving up the chance of punishing me. And now the question is, whether I should consent to the slow poisoning of my children, rather than drive my parishioners into the arms of the Methodists, who I keep open house for all comers below the hill."

I don't think I should poison the children," says Clarissa.

"But what is to become of my choir? Charlotte Bateson has the sweetest voice in it, and now she will not come to church. I am at my wits' end when I think of it all."

"What a libel!" says Clarissa. "I shouldn't malign my own teaching if I were you. I am perfectly certain I could say it all now, this very moment, from start to finish, questions and all, without a mistake. Shall I?"

"No, no, no, my dear. Your word for it," says the vicar, hastily. "The fact is, I have just been listening to it at the morning school in the village, and when one has heard a thing repeated fourteen times with variations, one naturally is not ambitious of hearing it again, no matter how profitable it may be."

"When I spoke of filling Charlotte's place," says Clarissa, "I did not allude in any way to myself, but to— And now I am coming to the news."

"So glad!" says the vicar; "I may overtake old Betty yet."

"What a good thing a governess for Mrs. Redmond. Such a dear little governess! And I want you to promise me to be more than usually kind to her, because she is so young and friendless and it is her first effort at teaching."

"So that question is settled at last," says the vicar, with a deep—if carefully suppressed—sigh of relief. "I am rejoiced, if only for my wife's sake, who has been worrying herself for weeks past, trying to replace the inestimable—if somewhat depressing—Miss Proude."

"Has she?" says Clarissa, kindly.

"Worry is a bad thing. But to-day Mrs. Redmond seems much better than she has been for a long time. Indeed, she said so."

"Did she?" says the vicar, with a comical, transient smile. Mrs. Redmond's maladies being of a purely imaginary order.

"What are you laughing at now?" asks Clarissa, who has marked this passing gleam of amusement.

"At you, my dear, you are so quaintly humorous," replies he. "But go on; tell me of this new acquisition to our household. Is she a friend of yours?"

"Yes, a great friend."

"Then of course we shall like her."

"Thank you," says Clarissa. "She is very pretty, and very charming. Perhaps, after all, I am doing a foolish thing for myself. How shall I feel when she has cut me out at the vicarage?"

"Not much fear of that, were she Aphrodite herself. You are much too good a child to be liked lightly or by halves. Well, good-by; you won't forget about the flannel for the Batley twins?"

"I have it ready,—at least, half of it."

"What would I tell she was going to have twins?" says Clarissa, apologetically.

"It certainly was very inconsiderate of her," says the vicar, with a sigh, as he thinks of the poverty that clings to the Batley menage from year's end to year's end.

"Well, never mind; she shall have it all next week," promises Clarissa, soothingly, marking his regretful tone; and then she bids him farewell, and goes up the road again in the direction of her home.

She is glad to be alone at last. Her mission successfully accomplished, she has now time to let her heart rest contentedly upon her own happiness. All the events of the morning—the smallest word, the lightest intonation, the most passing smile, that claimed Horace as their father—are remembered by her. She dwells fondly on each separate remembrance, and repeats to herself how he looked and spoke at such-and-such moments.

She is happy, quite happy. A sort of wonder, too, mixes with her delight. Only a few short hours ago she had left her home, free, unbetrothed, with only hope to sustain her, and now she has her "bride day." She chafed hardly believed his love for her was so strong, so earnest; even she (how could she? with tender self-reproach) had misjudged him,—had deemed him somewhat cold indifferent; unknowing of the