

IN MEMORIAM.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI, EARL OF BEACONSFIELD.

Born, December 21, 1804. Died, April 19, 1881.

Disraeli dead! The trappings of late days,
The Coronet, the Garter, slip aside,
The Peer's emblazonment, the Victor's bays,
The pageantry of pride.

Triumph's mere symbols, badges of success,
Who weighs, who marks them now when all is said
In simple words, low-breathed in heaviness?
Disraeli's dead!

So all have known him from that earlier time
Of meteoric and all-daring youth,
And through the season of his dazzling prime:
And so to-day, in sooth.

'Tis Benjamin Disraeli all will mourn,
Nor be the less unfeignedly whose lance
Against that shield and crest full oft had borne
In combat & outrage.

The fearless fighter and the flashing wit,
Swordless and silent! 'Tis a thought to dim
The young Spring sunshine, glancing, as was fit,
Bright at the last on him.

Who knew no touch of winter in his soul,
Holding the Greek gift yet in mind and tongue,
And who, though faring past life's common goal,
Loved of the gods died young.

Like the Enochstess of the Nile, unstaled
By custom as uncoloured by creeping years,
A world-compeller, who not often failed
In fight with his few peers.

Success incarnate, self-inspired, self-raised
To that proud height whereat youth's fancy aimed
Whom even those who doubted whilst they praised,
Admired, e'en whilst they blamed.

No more that fine invective's flow to hear,
That buoyant wisdom or that biting wit!
To see him and his one sole battle-peer
Sharp counter hit for hit.

No more to picture that impassive face,
That unbetraying eye, that fadless curl!
No more in plot or policy to trace
The hand of the great Earl!

How strange it seems, and how unwelcome! Rest,
Not least amidst our greatest! Who would dare
Deny thee place and splendour with the best
Who breathed our English air?

Peace, lasting Peace that strife no more shall break,
With honour none may challenge, crown thee now
Where'er laid, not Faction's self would shake
The laurel from thy brow.

And England, who for thy quenched brightness grieves,
Garlands the sword no more to leave its sheath,
And, turning from thy simple gravestone, leaves
A tear upon the wreath.

Punch.

The Professor's Darling.

AN ORIGINAL NOVEL.

CHAPTER XVII.

SETTLED DOWN IN WIRSTADT.

It was fortunate for Stannie that Herr Richter set her to work almost the very hour that she was left alone. She had no leisure to sit down and fold her arms and brood.

By dint of much squeezing and altering of hours, he had contrived to give her the best part of every forenoon, Saturdays and Sundays excepted.

He also, at Madame Berg's suggestion, mapped out a course of practical study for her. Of spare time she soon found that she had none, every hour being filled up until evening.

She was enthusiastic and diligent to a greater extent than even he had looked for.

If two or three years' hard work would bring her up to Madame Berg's standard, she was determined not to fail. So she practised the monotonous scales early and late; devoted whole days to the mastering of the minutest inflection or turn of a trill; spared no trouble, begrudged no effort, that might help her to reach perfection. No master ever had a more docile or earnest pupil, and no pupil ever had a more painstaking instructor than Carl Richter.

Perhaps her fair Saxon beauty had something to do with the almost reverential feeling which he entertained towards her. Her talents were undoubted, and alone would have commanded his best services; but combined with beauty of the highest type, such as he had rarely seen except in picture galleries in old Italian palaces, it was no wonder that he looked upon her as something which, although he could daily see and hear, and even touch, would one day vanish from his sight, and go where he could hear her clear soprano notes no longer.

She had no companions, and wished for none; they would have proved a hindrance to her.

Herr Richter had taken an early opportunity of introducing her to several stars of the first magnitude, who were that winter in Wirstadt; and charmed with her appearance and frank simplicity, they had tried to improve the slight acquaintance; but she declined their invitations so firmly, and yet so pleasantly, that instead of feeling hurt, they endorsed Herr Richter's testimony that she was little short of an angel.

"Some day I hope that I shall know you better," she would say, when urged to join some little festivity or other; "but you must not ask me now, I have not time."

Of Mrs. Hall she saw comparatively little. That worthy lady proved a faithful enough guardian, and was always ready and delighted

to chaperone her to theatre or concert, but she was unobtrusive and retiring; taken up with her housekeeping, and the training of her two maids, who were raw importations from the Black Forest, and her little card-parties in the evenings.

She glided about with noiseless step, in soft dresses which never rustled, looking the very picture of calm old age and tranquil self-satisfaction.

She rarely went into Stannie's rooms, would have considered that she was taking an unwarrantable liberty in doing so, unless her presence had been absolutely required there or asked for.

At the same time she exercised a rigid surveillance over the young girl's comfort, anticipating and supplying every want before it was even felt.

In her unobtrusive way she loved Stannie, and often thought if her parents had been alive how proud they would have been of her; but anything bordering on intimacy or even ordinary friendship she had not attempted, and would never approach, not if Stannie had been an inmate of her house for a dozen years.

Wirstadt was not without the usual gossips and busybodies, who lie in wait at every street corner seeking and thirsting for information which concerns everyone but themselves.

It pleased such to invest Stannie with a mantle of mystery. Some affirmed that she was a Scotch princess, who had run away from her palatial home to escape an uncongenial marriage, and was studying for the stage in order to earn a livelihood some day when her present funds were exhausted; the said funds having been realized by the sale of certain of the crown jewels which she had appropriated. It would have been worse than useless to inform these people that Scotland was no longer an independent monarchy, and could boast of no native and exclusive royalty.

They knew better! The blood of the Stuarts coursed in her blue veins (ah me! the handsome, brave, vanished Stuarts!); hence the retirement in which she lived. Except the inmates of the Ducal Palace, who was there in Wirstadt with whom she could possibly associate?

Others declared her to be Madame Berg's eldest daughter, who, inheriting her mother's musical talents, was one day to electrify the musical world. Others insisted that she was a Polish refugee, whose parents were in exile for grave political offences. Others that she was an English heiress who was music mad, but sane enough on other points.

True to his promise, Gordon appeared every three months upon the scene, escorting her to theatre and promenade.

He was too polite, it was said, for a brother; too assiduous in his attentions to be her husband; he must be a lover; then what was his social grade in that white-cliffed England across the Channel. Conjectures were rife, and wildly wide of the mark. He might be a prince or a duke, but he looked quite as like a provincial actor or a circus rider.

He spent money freely, and an inspired authority in the form of a banker's clerk proclaimed him to be the son and heir of a wealthy London pawnbroker, who had been to school and college, and on that ground assumed the airs and manners of a gentleman; evidently quite unaware that education is the surest of all grounds on which a plebeian can build his hopes of ulterior social advancement. At any rate, whether prince or broker, one thing was clear to everybody but Stannie herself; he was a lover.

To her it seemed the most natural thing on earth that he should come over occasionally and see her, and bring her all the home news. He had gone to St. Breda on his previous return to England, and remained there a fortnight.

He had made the acquaintance of the Mactavish family, who invited him to a festival of great pomp and solemnity, fondly imagined by them to be a most successful dinner-party. The church beadle had officiated in his funeral garments; and the bellringer had acted as his underling, his horny palms encased for the day in white woollen gloves.

Mrs. Mactavish had spoken of Miss Ross in accents of the deepest pity, looking askance at the Professor all the while. The girls hoped she was well, and sent their love.

Mrs. Macpherson had sighed considerably, and hoped that Stannie would not find the winter too trying. She had heard that there was a good deal of snow in Germany, and asked if she was teaching music.

The Professor overheard her, and his hair nearly stood on end with righteous indignation.

Mrs. Macpherson laboured under a defective comprehension, and rarely understood anything quite clearly beyond the range of her nursery and housekeeping.

Mr. Graem had asked Gordon to supper, had shown him Stannie's piano, and listened in a transport of delight to the description of Herr Richter's little entertainment, and his wild, soul-touching music.

"Dear, good old Carl!" he exclaimed. "How I should like to see him again! Mr. Hunter, when you get to Rome you will see me there. I shall go first to Wirstadt, and see Stannie and old Carl; then call on Lily Myer at her old schloss; then on to Milan. There's a little grave there I should like to see again before I die. Alan, will you come too? What are you going to do with yourself next summer in the holidays? Can't you go to Wirstadt?"

The Professor smiled, and spoke vaguely of scientific meetings, possibly in Manchester. He might as well have said at John-o'-Groat's.

He would not go to seek the child he loved; but in the old house would await her coming to him.

"How was my uncle looking?" Stannie had asked eagerly on Gordon's first visit, before she had even asked how he was himself. "Was he looking well?"

"As I never saw him before, I can scarcely be a fair judge," answered Gordon; "but I should say that he was looking very well. What a handsome man he is!"

"Isn't he?" said Stannie, smiling radiantly. "I think I never saw anyone quite so good-looking!"

"He is just a trifle too grave," continued Gordon; "but that, I suppose, is the correct thing in his position. It would never do for a man of his attainments to be frisky and hilarious; nor ought his nose to resemble a scarlet blossom, like old Mactavish's."

"The Principal is a dear old man. You mustn't laugh at him or his nose—that's indignation," said Stannie, gravely. "What are they all doing at Cumrie Chase?"

"My father is exciting himself about the coming election. The county consider that he is as worthy to represent them in Parliament as were his ancestors; and he has doubts about his own fitness; thinks he's more comfortable at home, draining the meadows on the most scientific principles, than shouting to a mob from the hustings, with a yellow rosette pinned on his coat, and sitting listening to a pack of men abusing each other in the House of Commons."

"And Alice—is she at home?"

"No; I drove her to the Blennerhassets' before I left. She is to be there a week. Tom met me in London. How very handsome the youngster is growing! I declare I felt quite proud of him."

"He was always handsome," said Stannie.

"And all the rest?"

"Bill's at Oxford, grinding away like a mill. Mother is well, and has sent you a letter"—(producing a thick envelope as he spoke from an inner pocket); "and Elma is just the same—doesn't seem to grow an inch! She goes often to the monastery, sometimes twice a week. I would rather she did not go to that dismal hole so much, but it amuses her, so I don't like to forbid it. I always insist that young Holmes, the butler's son, drives her there. He is devoted to her, and doesn't allow her to go into the monastery; it's in such a shaky condition that a mouse running up the walls would bring them down."

"Is her portrait finished?"

"Not quite. I think it will be a good likeness. I have been from home a good deal lately, and neglected it."

"Shall you go to Rome this winter?"

"I scarcely think so. If my father is fortunate—or, as he will consider it, unfortunate—enough to be sent to Parliament it will necessitate his being in London a good deal, and some one must look after things at home. Neither he nor I believe in trusting everything to a bailiff on such a large place as ours. Do you think Herr Richter would like me to call and pay my respects to him?"

"He will be heart-broken if you do not go at two o'clock. He dines then, and it is the only time he is ever in until very late."

"I suppose you give him satisfaction?"

"He never scolds me; that looks well. I really think I am getting on. There is one thing I should like to ask you," she said, after a slight pause.

"What is it?" he asked, struck by her sudden seriousness. "Don't ask me to reveal any important secret, or turn anything that I may say to my disadvantage afterwards. Be merciful!"

"It's nothing; only this—do you think that Uncle Alan misses me very much? Tell me truly what you think."

"Candidly, I think he is very contented without you. He misses you, of course; but that estimable old lady—Miss Scott, I think her name is—ministers to his comforts admirably. Besides, he is always busy; people are often visiting him also; and the students are as much at home in his study as in the college. He isn't dull, certainly."

In equally harmless conversation, interesting only to themselves, and at the theatre, and English church on Sundays, the hours of Gordon's short visits here were passed. He generally arrived on a Friday and left on the following Monday. Never did he utter one word of love, nor betray in any way that Stannie was more to him than an intimate and dear friend, in whose welfare they were all deeply interested.

Stannie regarded him as she would have done an elder brother had she possessed one. She liked him, and was glad to see him, and showed it openly. She admired his well-made figure, faultless features, and crown of golden hair, as she admired Tom's manly, good looks, but had no thought of him as a lover. Her mind was too full of her work to admit of such irrelevant fancies. She deemed love and lovers' talk only fit for idle folks, of whom there are plenty, in all conscience, in the world.

Perhaps at that particular time, if Gordon had been aware of her real feelings towards him, he might, in the first bitterness of his disappointment, have agreed with an unknown writer, who once gave it as his solemn conviction and experience that golden and yellow-haired women were as cold as fishes.

"Never trust a pale-skinned, fair-haired

woman," wrote the eloquent unknown. "They are passionless, treacherous, cat-like, and always unreliable in a case of desperate emergency."

The precise meaning of the last two words leaves a vast field for the fancy. They might refer to almost anything, from a railway accident to a proposal in a conservatory—both scenes presenting emergencies which demand prompt action.

Brunette beauties possibly obtained higher favour in his sight than blondes, but an emergency would be required to prove their superiority.

The year rolled on rapidly to its close, bringing but slight change to Stannie.

Gordon came and went. The studio in Rome was given up for the present, or rather the idea was, and the family at the Chase were divided. Colonel Hunter had been elected by a majority of eight hundred, and had made his appearance quietly and unostentatiously in the House of Commons. Alice had accompanied him to London, while Mrs. Hunter, Gordon and Elma remained at home.

Lotty was still a visitor at Madame Berg's stately palace on the Danube, and had landed herself in a perfect slough of trouble; but her experience shall have a separate and distinct chapter.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"LOVE CAN LOVE BUT ONCE A LIFE."

Lotty was sitting alone in the little tower-room, the window of which overlooked the grounds and park of Altberg Schloss. Far down below on the smooth shaven lawn the younger children were playing and disagreeing with considerable animation over the rules of some exciting game.

Looking across the wide stretch of park-land, you beheld the glittering river winding in a circuitous band of broad silver, and were held in a spell with its wondrous beauty. But Lotty from her lofty eyrie looked down neither on the children nor on the river. She was too busy weeping to observe anything—crying, she would have called it herself.

Any one who knew Charlotte Hunter might well have been astonished at such an uncommon spectacle; but within the last fortnight genuine tears had often dimmed the brightness of her soft blue eyes, and left their traces on her cheeks.

Had Madame Berg lured the unsuspecting girl to her stronghold upon the Danube, only to immure her in a cold turret-room, and otherwise ill-treat her? Or had Herr Von Berg turned out to be a villain of the deepest dye, who kept her a prisoner, and fed her on brown bread and muddy water?

If unhappy, why did not she go back to England!—surely, she was a free agent! Were questions which would naturally have suggested themselves to an uninitiated observer of Lotty's movements that afternoon. She drew her furlined cloak closer around her, and opening the window, leant out with difficulty, for the aperture was very narrow. One of the children happening to glance up, observed her, and shouted up some laughing words, which were lost in space before they reached her.

It was not, moreover, better to observe their movements that she had outbraved the crisp, cold air, but to crane her neck, and look in the direction of what, to a casual observer, would appear like the ruin of an old castle. And it was, in reality, little more—not above five rooms within it being inhabitable; but to Lotty it represented Paradise. Some people have strange ideas concerning that undefined locality; and if transplanted to a very Paradise, overflowing with milk and honey, would declare the milk to be sour, and the honey bitter, their notions of Paradise being very different. Perhaps their idea of Paradise is an old red-brick farm-house, with creepers trailing over the outer walls; a prim garden in front, stocked with old-fashioned flowers; and beyond, rich meadows, where the cattle stray knee-deep in rosy clover.

Or it might be a city tenement barely furnished, and, to others, unlovely in sight, but hallowed and glorified to them by the presence of a loved and cherished object. It is the idols within that make our Paradise; without them the most gorgeous palace would be but a gilded cage; and the smallest cottage on the moor a noble mansion if it held our treasures.

Lotty had found her heart at last, and her Paradise as well, in a gloomy old tower, with a ruined keep upon the Danube; but the course of true love in her case, alas! was running very tortuously.

Heinrich Von Geoler was a cousin of Herr Von Berg, about twenty-six years of age, and a handsome specimen of the Teuton race, with an intelligent if not an intellectual visage. He was simple in his ways and habits, and devoted to field-sports. His knowledge of books was certainly limited, his reading being confined to the local *Tageblatt* and the *Racing Calendar*. In his dealings, whether on his little farm with his labourers, or upon the turf, where he rode his own horses, he was strictly honourable and gentlemanly. He lived alone in the remnant of what had once been a stately schloss, which kings and courtiers had delighted to honour with their presence. But the palmy days when the Counts Von Geoler had held their own with king and palatine were in the remote past. Wars and misfortunes had swept over the land, and wrested their farms and acres from them, until only a few fields remained, upon which