

GRANTLEY MANOR.

A TALE

LADY GEORGINA FULLERTON, Author of "Lady Bird," "Ellen Middleton," &c

CHAPTER I.

It had rained all day. Towards five o'clock the sun was making a desperate effort to shine for a moment before his final disappearance behind the grassy hill which rises in front of Grantley Manor. A heavy mass of clouds, just tinged at the edge by a line of purple light, was slowly rolling along the sky, overhanging the Abbey Woods, Heron Castle, and the ridge of murrink which extends far up the valley of the Grant. The red maples and the yellow beeches in the park wore their gaudiest autumnal hues, though many of their bright-colored leaves were strewn on the grass beneath, or floated down the rapid stream, as it made its way through the valley to a tide river some twenty miles farther to the south. A fine November day has an indescribable mildness peculiar to itself, a calm and mournful beauty which prevades the soul and soothes it into a deep tranquillity. On the day and at the hour of which I am speaking, two persons were standing together by the stone balustrade which separates the flower-garden of the manor-house from the park beneath it. One of these was an elderly woman, whose set features and vacant gaze might have indicated either a total absence of thought, or an absorbing pre-occupation. She seemed to be either pensive or sleepy. By her side was a girl, half-sitting, half-leaning on the parapet, in a fur pelisse, which hung about her in heavy folds, her arms were crossed on her breast, her eyes sometimes fixed on the ground, sometimes raised towards the road across the park, and then hastily withdrawn. Now and then she snatched a China rose from the bush beneath her, and scattered its leaves about with reckless profusion.

Margaret Leslie was a beautiful girl. Her eyes were of that peculiar color which varies from iron-gray to the deepest violet; her nose was small and aquiline, and her mouth admirably formed, but slightly curved downwards at the corners, so that when she did not smile there was something perhaps not quite agreeable in its expression, but the smile was so enchanting and so frequent, that there was hardly time to miss it before it beamed again in all its brightness. Her eyelashes were black and long, and her hair fell, not in stiff ringlets, but in rich brown flakes round her white and slender neck. As she watched the flying rose-leaves, and vainly attempted to guide their descent into the basin of a small fountain under the terrace, her narrow, delicately pencilled and arched eyebrows contracted into a frown which might have kept in order any thing less unmanageable than flying rose-leaves. Indeed, to expect that they would not blow about in the breeze, which was just getting up as the sun sank behind the hill, was sanguine; but Margaret's expectations were rather apt to be unreasonable. For instance, she was at that moment almost provoked that Mrs. Dalton, her governess, did not perceive by a kind of intuition that she was tired of watching for the travelling carriage, which according to her calculations ought to have brought her father to the gates of the avenue an hour before, and which had not yet made its appearance.

"Really, dear Mrs. Dalton," she said at last, "I cannot stay here any longer. As my father is not yet arrived, I am sure he will not come in time for dinner." "My dear, it is only six o'clock."

"How short the days are getting, then! What a blazing fire they have made in the hall!" Margaret exclaimed, as she threw open the entrance door. "Is Mr. Sydney arrived?" she inquired as she crossed the billiard-room, and rolled the balls about in an impatient manner. As they tumbled headlong into the pockets, she said, half aloud and half to herself, "I shall never love my father as much as Walter Sydney!"

"Oh, but my dear, you ought," suggested Mrs. Dalton. Margaret turned suddenly round, and while she untied the strings of her black lace bonnet, and pushed back from her cold cheeks the curls that hung heavily about them, she replied, "When will you learn, dear Mrs. Dalton, that you ought is no argument at all?" "When will you learn, Margaret, that you ought should be the most powerful argument in the world?"

It was not Mrs. Dalton who had ventured on this reply. It was made by one who always spoke the truth to Margaret, and from whom she was always willing to hear it, for she loved and respected Walter Sydney, and had often been heard to assert that he was the only person she knew who made the truth agreeable, and on this particular occasion she was so glad to see him, that even had the remark displeased her, she would still have held out her hand to him as she passed through the room. After closing the door, she opened it again, and said to him with a smile, "If you knew the subject of our dispute, you would not, perhaps, have taken Mrs. Dalton's part. But you always think it right to assume that I am in the wrong."

He shook his head, but she was gone; and he heard her on the stairs and in the passages, carolling away like a bird on the wing. This Walter Sydney was a man of about thirty-five or thirty-six. He was tall and thin; his complexion, however, some might have thought that the beauty in his pale high forehead, the lines of his face, and in the expression of his eyes; but the awkwardness of his figure, and a want of ease in his manner, generally destroyed that impression, and the usual remark of those who saw him for the first time was, "What a strange-looking man Mr. Sydney is!" To Margaret Leslie he had always appeared the personification of goodness and of wisdom, and she looked up to him with the strongest affection. He had been very intimate with her father from an early age. Heron Castle, the gray turreted house which stood in the midst of what were called the Abbey Woods, on the hill opposite to Grantley, was his father's

place, and he and Henry Leslie had been friends and companions from the days of their boyhood. Leslie was the older of the two, and when Walter, a shy and awkward youth, who had been entirely educated at home, and who, with a passionate love of study, had an insuperable dislike to new scenes and new associates, joined him at Oxford, he welcomed him with a warmth and a joy which excited the surprise of his own gay and dissipated friends.

Before his first departure for Oxford, Henry Leslie had determined in his own mind to marry his cousin, Mary Thornton, a gentle quiet girl, whose father was the clergyman of the village, and who had been his and Walter Sydney's constant companion ever since they could remember. He had called her in play his little wife, and she had taken it so much for granted that they were to be married as soon as they were old enough (for he had told her so whenever they had parted with fresh tears, or met with fresh joy at each successive holiday), that when he, one day, seriously asked her if she would indeed be his wife, she looked at him with unaffected surprise. Their engagement seemed to her only the continuation of a state of things to which she had never anticipated any interruption; their relations approved, their friends congratulated; they corresponded during the university terms, and spent the vacations together at Grantley. They sat in the gardens, they strolled in the woods. He taught her to ride, and she sketched for him his favorite hunters. He made her read Walton's "Angler," and while he fished, she sat patiently for hours by his side, holding in her breath lest she should frighten the trout away. In the autumn many a time did she walk across the turnip-fields to meet him, and to hear how many brace of partridges he had killed, and how well Juno had pointed; and on many a misty morning in winter did she ride on the white pony he had given her, to see the hounds meet, and to watch for the distant view-hallo! In the evening they sat in the old library, and examined together the map of his estates! She learned the name of every village, and planned new roads and new plantations. They retired to the billiard-room, that he might knock the balls about, and make all sorts of hazards before her wondering eyes; or to a recess in the drawing-room, that he might conquer her at chess; or to the pianoforte, to sing together sundry duets, while Walter Sydney, then a shy and silent youth laid down his book and listened; and his mother (who, having found nothing but disappointment in her own marriage, watched a love-affair with that tender interest which the sight of happiness, understood but not experienced, awakens in a gentle and subdued spirit) invariably grew absent at whilst and re-voiced, an enormity which her husband gently resented, though he bore it, in his own opinion, with truly angelic patience, only suddenly putting down his cards, and sipping in a mild, impressive manner, "Pray, Mrs. Sydney, may I be allowed to ask, are you playing at whilst, or are you not?"

This produced a start, a readjustment of the spectacles on her nose, and a renewed attention to the game, coupled with the ejaculation, "Dear children! They seem made for each other!" And so these dear children seemed to think, for they troubled their heads singularly little about any one else.

And thus the course of their true love ran on as smooth as if Shakspeare had not pronounced against the existence of such a case. And there was true love in spite of Shakspeare, in spite of approving parents, in spite of the easy channel which favorable circumstances had wrought for it. True happiness it was when, on a lovely summer day, Henry Leslie and his bride went to the village church, and pledged their faith to each other in the eyes of their delighted families, and of a rejoicing tenantry; when the bells rang their loudest peal of joy, and heartfelt acclamations rent the air, as they walked down the narrow pathway towards their home.

And there was happiness in that home, for they tasted that bliss of paradise, which alone, Cowper says, has survived the fall. Neither temper nor neglect shed one bitter drop into their crystal cup; while it lasted, it was unimpaired and pure. A child was born to them, the Margaret of our story; and when she was carried to the village church, and the sacred waters of baptism poured on her infant head by the same hand which had joined theirs in marriage, Mary looked at her husband, and in that look there was, perhaps, too much happiness for this world of ours. Two years later a grave was dug under the yew-tree in the old churchyard, and to it was conveyed all that remained on earth of the blooming bride, of the young mother, of the Mary who had so often played as a child on that spot, and who had chosen it herself for her grave, when a few days before her death, supported by her husband, she had reached the place where their first words of love had been spoken, and where she now wished to be buried, that he might never look upon that view, or sit under that tree, without a thought of her.

"Who in her springtime died." At her request no boasting inscription, no pompous memorial was placed on her tomb; the date of her birth, of her marriage, and of her death, and a simple stone cross, alone marked the spot. Henry Leslie had flung himself on the ground in an agony of grief on the day of her funeral, and when Walter Sydney spoke words of comfort to him, he shook his head despairingly, and bade him be silent, for life had lost for him all the bright hues with which youth and hope had gilded it. Truly he had loved his wife, and truly had he mourned for her; but what is true is not always deep, and what is vehement is not always lasting. After many days had come and gone, his grief grew calm; and then new hopes and interests arose, and other joys and other pains, the various alternations of misery and of bliss visited him in the course of fifteen years which he spent partly in Italy, partly in the Peninsula, where he served as a volunteer, and subsequently in long voyages by sea and land. Meanwhile there was one at home who visited, day by day the grave where the friend of his childhood and of his youth was buried, and who treasured and gathered up in secret the spring flowers that grew there; and there was one blooming flower which he watched with unremitting love and care. Walter Sydney's affections were few and deep; for the child of Henry and of Mary Leslie he would willingly have laid down his life.

(To be continued.)



Auction Sales of Manitoba School Lands.

NOTICE is hereby given that auction sales of School Lands will be held at the following points in the Province of Manitoba to the further specification of its members: Morden—Wednesday, 25th January, 1893. Pilot Mound—Friday, 27th January, 1893. Deloraine—Monday, 30th January, 1893. Neudorf—Thursday, 2nd February, 1893. Minnedosa—Wednesday, 8th February, 1893. Portage la Prairie—Saturday, 11th February, 1893. Brandon—Tuesday, 14th February, 1893. Winnipeg—Thursday, 16th February, 1893. Terms of Sale.—One-fifth in cash and the balance in four equal successive annual instalments, with interest at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum. Payments must be in cash; scrip or warrants will not be accepted. For further information, list of lands, &c., apply to the Secretary, Department of the Interior, Ottawa, the Commissioner of Dominion Lands, Winnipeg, or to any Agent of Dominion Lands in the Province of Manitoba. By order, JOHN R. HALL, Secretary.

Department of the Interior, Ottawa, Jan'y 9th 1893.



SEALED TENDERS addressed to the undersigned, and endorsed "Tender for Post Office, Calgary, N. W. T." will be received at this office until Friday, 3rd February, for the several works required in the erection of Post Office, &c., at Calgary, N. W. T. Plans and specifications may be seen at the Department of Public Works, Ottawa, and at the office of H. S. Johnson, Calgary, on and after Friday, 13th January, and tenders will not be considered unless made on form supplied and signed with actual signatures of tenderers. An accepted bank cheque payable to the order of the Minister of Public Works, equal to five per cent. of amount of tender, must accompany each tender. This cheque will be forfeited if the party declines the contract, or fails to complete the work contracted for, and will be returned in case of non-acceptance of tender. The Department does not bind itself to accept the lowest or any tender. By order, E. F. E. ROY, Secretary.

Department of Public Works, Ottawa, 7th January, 1893.



Tenders for a Permit to cut Timber on Dominion Lands in the Province of Manitoba.

SEALED TENDERS addressed to the undersigned and marked on the envelope "Tenders for a Permit to cut Timber," will be opened on the 30th January, 1893, will be received at this Department until noon on Monday, the 30th instant, for a permit to cut timber on the south half of township 19, range 1, east of the 1st Meridian, in the said Province. The regulations under which a permit will be issued may be obtained at this Department or at the office of the Crown Timber Agent at Winnipeg. Each tender must be accompanied by an accepted cheque on a chartered Bank in favour of the Deputy of the Minister of the Interior, for the amount of the bonus which the applicant is prepared to pay for the permit. It will be necessary for the person whose tender is accepted to obtain a permit within sixty days from the 30th instant, and to pay twenty per cent. of the dues on the timber to be cut under such permit, otherwise the berth will be cancelled. No tender by telegraph will be entertained. JOHN R. HALL, Secretary.

Department of the Interior, Ottawa, 5th Jan'y., 1893.



Tender for a Permit to cut Cord-wood on Dominion Lands in the Province of Manitoba.

SEALED TENDERS, addressed to the undersigned, and marked on the envelope "Tender for a permit to cut cord-wood," will be opened on the 23rd of January, 1893, will be received at this Department until noon on Monday, the 23rd of this month, for a permit to cut cord-wood on that portion of township 12, range 13, east of the 1st Meridian, not covered by Bertie's "G" and "H," in the said Province. The regulations under which a permit will be issued may be obtained at this Department or at the office of the Crown Timber Agent at Winnipeg. Each tender must be accompanied by an accepted cheque on a chartered Bank in favour of the Deputy of the Minister of the Interior, for the amount of the bonus which the applicant is prepared to pay for the permit. It will be necessary for the person whose tender is accepted to obtain a permit within sixty days from the 23rd of this month, and to pay twenty per cent. of the dues on the timber to be cut under such permit, otherwise the berth will be cancelled. No tender by telegraph will be entertained. JOHN R. HALL, Secretary.

Department of the Interior, Ottawa, 1th Jan'y., 1893.

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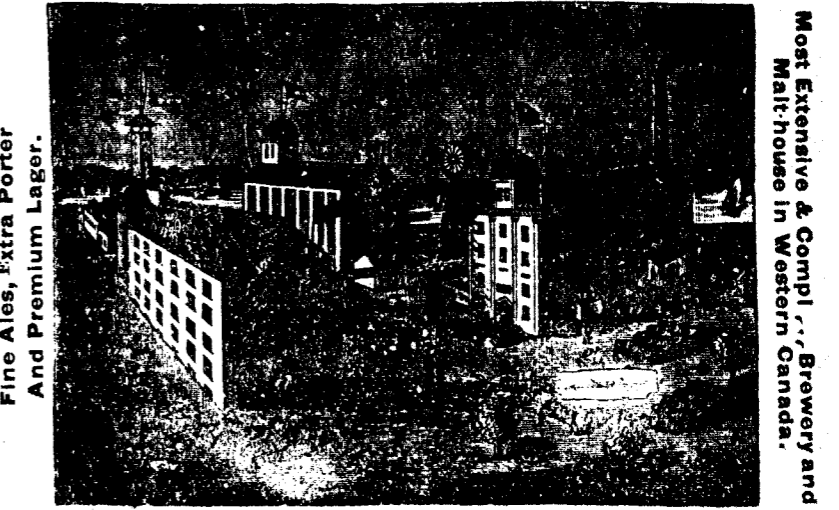
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