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CHAPTER XVII. A HAPPY MOMENT.

Geoffrey felt the task which lay be fore him was not an easy one. communicate bad tidings is a hard matter; but there are cases, and this was one, in which it is almost as hard

ones.

ow how to communicate good To tell Sir Michael that his son

was living, that son whose name for years had never crossed his lips; to announce to Aurelia that the cloud had been lifted, which since her childish days had rested upon her houseall this poor Geoffrey thought within himself seemed to need a graceful, elo quent, sympathetic tongue; whereas he had no gift to say more than that 'the thing is so, and I thank God for it." So the old feeling of bashful awkwardness came back upon him very strongly as he presented himself at the castle, and begged for an interview with Miss Pendragon. He was shown into the room already known to our readers, that very room where some eight months previously he had stood on the occasion of Julian's first visit to Merylin, and had watched the courteous bearing of his friend, at the same time catching a glimpse of his own reflection in the mirror. All the shame and misery of that most miser able moment rushed back upon his heart, and to his own consciousness

down to his very finger ends he was

the same stupid, awkward simpleton that mortified self-love and a sharp

touch of jealousy had depicted him on

that memorable morning.

Meanwhile Aurelia had not been without her anxieties. In the retired life she led rumors were long in reach ing her, and false rumors equally long in receiving their correction. She had heard a confused account of the fray with the smugglers, and of Mr. Hough ton's presence on the occasion; and messenger who had summonded Father Segrave to the scene of action had left behind a general, but not very distinct, impression of blood shed and danger. So that the an-nouncement that Geoffrey was waiting below and wished to speak to her con veyed to Aurelia the first certain assurance of his safety, and in her joy she entered his presence with a warmer cordiality than was her wont. "I am so glad," she exclaimed, holding out both her hands. "I have been fearing and fancying all kinds of things There were rumors of killed and wounded."

"The rumors were true," said Geof-rey; "some of the fellows got a scratch or two, but nothing serious, with one exception. Poor Clara's father was badly hurt, and died this morning.

"Poor unhappy man," said Aurelia he was a bad fellow, I am afraid. Clara always seemed in terror of him You must let me see after her now, Mr. Houghton, you must indeed."

"You shall see after her as much as you please," replied Geoffrey, "pro-vided you will listen to what I have to tell you about that man, for it conerns you nearly. You knew him as Bill Fagan, but that was only an alias, of which he had plenty. His real name was Joseph Martin, and he was the son of one of your father's former tenants.'

'Martin!" said Aurelia, putting her hand to her forehead, as if trying to remember. "Joseph Martin; I seem surely to have heard that name.'

"Yes," said Geoffrey, "it was the name of a trooper in your poor brother's regiment. At the time of the trial there was a suspicion on the part of some that he might really have been the guilty party; for he was not un-like your brother, and in the dark

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they might have been mistaken for one

"I remember," said Aurelia; "and did that suspicion hang over him and injure him? If so, it is a double reason for being kind now to the poor daughter."

No, Aurelia," replied Geoffrey, "That was not my meaning. You must try and bear it, for it will come like a shock, as it were ; but Joe Martin was the real criminal, and your poor brother was innocent.

"Innocent! Uriel innocent!" exclaimed Aurelia. For a moment she covered her face with her hands, but the next instant she looked up quickly. But if it is only suspicion, almost worse, and the poor man dead,

"It is not suspicion," said Geoffrey, "it is certainty. See here," and he drew a paper from his breast. "Last "Last night, when he knew that he was dying, he confessed all to me, in the presence of witnesses. Here are their signatures, and his own cross to the name I wrote for him. After he had done that, he saw Father Adrian. I believe, poor fellow, that he died penitent.

Aurelia took the precious paper in her hands, and tried to read, but her tears blinded her. "How did it come about?" she said; "how could you have guessed? And, oh! my poor father!

'It was about six months back, said Geoffrey, "that I first heard the suspicion started, and it took me that time to track him out. You see, he was a big fellow, and so easier to fol-low. But, now, that's not all, there's more to hear. You remember the cartoon, Julian's cartoon? toon, Julian's cartoon? well, you were right; it was really Uriel. He is living, and Julian has found him."

For a minute or two it really seemed as if Geoffrey's fears were justified, as it deonreys lear and the shock of the great joy more than Aurelia could bear. She sat motionless with her head buried in her hands; then rising suddenly, she ex-claimed: "Oh, how cruel we are to keep him waiting! Come, Geoffrey, come to my father -come and help me to tell him all-we must not delay a

Geoffrey hesitated. "Father Adrian, perhaps—"he said.
"Yes, by and by," said Aurelia,
"but not now; it is your doing, and
you yourself must tell him."

She did not wait for answer or remonstrance, but led the way to her father's apartment. She opened the door gently, and as Geoffrey's eyes fell on the figure of the white-haired old man, with his look of suffering and his attenuated form and features, his heart sank within him lest the great joy he

for the feeble brain. Aurelia approached her father, and. kneeling beside his chair, she took his hand. "Geoffrey has come to see you, dear papa," she said, "and he has good news to tell, good and joyful news; will you listen?"

A weak hollow voice answered her almost in the words of Tobias; "Joy-ful news, Aurelia?" it said. "What manner of joy is there any more for me, who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death? God's holy will be done. I submit ; but do not speak to me of joy." Then turning to Geoff-rey, whom Aurelia had motioned to take a seat near him. "I have heard, Geoffrey Houghton," he continued, in the same unearthly tones, as one who spoke seldom and with difficulty, "I have heard of the fight yonder, and that you did your duty as a brave gentleman. This is as it should be."

"I did little enough," said Geoffrey, the men who have been 40 long a terror to this neighborhood are taken, and one was killed in the struggle-the son, Sir Michael, of a former tenant of yours, Joseph Martin."

"Ay, was it Martin?" said Sir Michael, with something more of animation in his tone; they told me some other name.'

"Yes," replied Geoffrey, "he had borne a dozen, but he was really Martin, Joe Martin, once a trooper in the -the dragoons, as you may perhaps remember.

The old man sat more upright in his chair, and grasping its arms in both his hands fixed his gleaming eyes on Geoffrey ; but he did not speak.

"Martin was in your son's regiment," continued Geoffrey, "and last night, before he died, he owned the truth. Have courage, Sir Michael, and hear what he bade me tell you; it was he who committed the crime with which your son is charged; Uriel Pendragon was innocent.'

There was a faint cry, and the old man fell back on his pillows, convulsed with an emotion that seemed to stop with an emotion that seemed to stop his breath. Geoffrey sprang to his side, and supported his head on his arm, while Aurelia still held his hand and tried to soothe his agitation by a few gentle words. Gradually Sir as to the issue. But, before I set to Michael regained his power of speach work. I must state my conditions." few gentie words. Gradually Sir Michael regained his power of speech, but his mind seemed confused and wandering. "Was any one speaking of my son?" he said, "Was I dream-

ng, or did I hear his name?"
"No, no dream," said Geoffrey; he is living and innocent. mourned him as dead, but he is living as a brave and noble man."

unhappy father came broken words of thanksgiving and blessing. Geoffrey stood beside him, still supporting him, stood beside him, still supporting him, and from time to time repeating the same tidings, or joining in his words of murmured thanks. A gentle and loving mother could not have been more patient or more tender with a suffering child. Aurelia felt it. "It has been all Geoffrey's doing, papa,"

ment of the affair to me."

Geoffrey gladly assented to so gener ous a proposal, and having been speedily transferred from his hotel to the residence of his illustrious friend, the latter set about in good earnest to secure the legal acknowledgment of uriel's innocence.

Instant, said Ladd, said Ladd, set Ladd,

she said; "we owe everything to Geoffrey."
"And Julian," added Geoffrey, even

in that moment mindful of his fidelity to his friend.

"God bless them both," said Sir Michael. "God bless you, Geoffrey Houghton; in the hour of my anguish you did a son's part to me, and I shall never forget it.

"You did, indeed," said Aurelia, turning her eyes toward Geoffrey, as he stood there, with her father's white head resting trustfully on his arm, looking like the strong, brave, honest friend he truly was.

Geoffrey gazed down on the grateful countenance that beamed on him through its tears. It was, perhaps, the very happiest moment of his life. Gradually all was told, and Julian's letter read, which conveyed the happy, almost incredible tidings, that the dead was living, and the lost was found. Then Aurelia proposed that Father Adrian should be summoned, and that her father should be left with him awhile.

"I will fetch him," said Geoffrey "he knows about Martin's confession, of course; but not this other matter which Julian had to tell.

So leaving Sir Michael to his daugh ter's care, he hastened to seek the chaplain, and making known to him the contents of Julian's letter, begged him at once to go to the old man, on whom the effects of so much agitation could not fail to be serious. joyful wonder, Father Adrian hastened to comply with this request; and Geof frey was preparing to leave the castle when a quick step behind him made him look back.

It was Aurelia, who, leaving her father on the chaplain's entrance, had hastened to find Geoffrey, and bid him farewell. "You must not go without a word," she said; "if I only knew how to thank you!

There is no need," said Geoffrey 'my thanks will be to see you happy But there is plenty yet to do."
"How so?" asked Aurelia.

"Why, we must get this con-fession of Martin's acknowledged by the proper authorities," replied Geofand the sentence reversed something formal and regular, you Nothing else will satisfy Uriel, or put him straight in the eyes of the

"I see," said Aurelia; "and how is that to be done?"

"Oh, I must see about it," said Geoff-ay. "I have been thinking of Paxrey. He knows everybody, and has a world of power, I understand, with all the bigwigs. I think he'd help us in the proper quarters."
"Of course, he would," said Aurelia;

had to communicate might be too much and how you do think of everything, Geoffrey! You will write to him at once, will you not ?"

"Why, no," said Geoffrey; "I'm no great hand at letters. I must write to Julian to night, and tell him what has turned up, and get him to make Uriel turned up, and get min to make Crief reasonable, you see. And then, to-morrow morning, I think I'll just go up to London. There I can see Paxton and find out what has to be done. It will save time, and a lot of letters, which always bother me. The right words never seem to come.

"O Geoffrey!" said Aurelia, "how little you know! And just now, with papa, I kept wondering all the time now you seemed to be always finding the right thing to say, and how you could soothe him, and keep his thoughts clear and steady. I could not have done it

"Well, but I wasn't writing, you,"

"Then I have only to say good bye, and God speed you," said Aurelia, as she held out her hand, "and thanks—but that I can never say. O Geofrey, how right Mary was in choosing St. Raphael for your angel! Truly, you have been like him, and brought us

Geoffrey took the offered hand, and tried to speak, but something choked his utterance, and he turned away. Joy, indeed! his heart was full of it; yet mingled with it was something that found expression in a sigh.

CHAPTER XVIII.

GEOFFREY'S LONDON SEASON.

No welcome could possibly have been warmer than that which Geoffrey received from Mr. Paxton, when, senting himself at that gentleman's elegant little house, in the most aristocratic quarter of the great metropolis, he told his tale and stated the purpose of his coming.
Paxton entered heart and soul into

the business, and promised that no time should be lost in putting it into the proper hands. "Make yourself quite

work, I must state my conditions."

"By all means," said Geoffrey; "I am in your hands altogether."

"Very good," said Paxton.
"Then, to begin with, you take up

your quarters here. I have not for gotten my delightful three days a nourned him as dead, but he is living as brave and noble man."

Then at last the full heart found relief, and from the white lips of the l

"Now, that is good as far as it goes," said Paxton, as they sat together, after the labors of the day were over; "but one half of the business remains yet to

"And what is that?" said Geoffrey 'if seems to me things are in a fair way of being settled, and that far quicker than I had hoped."

"Well, now," said Paxton, "if we let the matter rest here, what, think you, would come of it? You'd get your papers and your legal documents, reversal of sentence and what not, sure enough; and there might chance to appear a paragraph in the corner of a paper certifying as much. But, the public would never hear of it, and out of twenty men who have known of the disgrace of the Pendragons, not nineteen would learn of the restoration of their good name. No, my dear sir, this is a matter which has to do with the world and its ways, and we must take it after a worldly fashion. We must advertise you a little.'

"Advertise me!" said Geoffrey why, God bless my soul, what have to do with the matter?—and how will you set about it?"

You will see," replied Paxton.

'In the first place, the singular narra tive, put in a telling sort of way, in one or two of the most popular papers, including the discovery of the real criminal, and wonderful sagacity and presence of mind displayed throughout the difficult business by Geoffrey Houghton, Esq., of Laventor, a country gentleman of the good old English stamp. Then, a leader or two, with a good shake of pepper and spice; and, perhaps, an article in the forthcoming number of The Present Century, on 'Our Modern Causes Celebres,' in which the fortunes of the Pendragons shall be handled picturesquely, and the blood of King Arthur made the most of. Stop a bit, I haven't half finished," he continued, seeing an insurrectionary movement threatening in Geoffrey's countenance and gestures; "we must run you through a drawing-room or Let me see, there's Lady Annael Abbott's reception to-morrow eveninff; you're a friend of the family, I know; we'll begin with her.

"Thank heaven," cried Geoffrey, that is impossible; I didn't bring a fit out of that sort with me; and, I presume, you wouldn't have me attend her ladyship's reception precisely in the costume in which I walk over my

fields at Laventor?" "Didn't bring anything with you!" aid Paxton; "why, so much the

said Paxton; "why, so much the better." I'll take you to Tiglath, Pileser & Co., first-rate artists, or what in the vulgate would be called tailors and one magic word from me will secure you their best cut, and a suit fit for an empress' drawing room, delivered at your door by half-past seven to-morrow evening.

Geoffrey gasped and attempted remonstrance; but he was in the grasp of a more powerful will than his own. Paxton kept his word, and so did Tiglath, Pileser & Co.; and at a suitable hour the master of Laventor, arrayed as he, at least, had arrayed before, found himself ascending the brilliantly-lighted staircase of Holmes Abbott's London mansion, in which the magnificent state apartments were that evening thrown open to an illustrious assemblage.

Under some circumstances to have found himself in such a position would have proved to our hero nothing short of acute mental, one might almost say physical, suffering. The pangs of mauvais honte would have seized him see," said Geoffrey; "that is the bother. So I'll be off to-morrow—there shuffled himself away in a corner, and fearful night the life boat was ordered awaited in slow anguish the moment. of deliverance. But guarded and led on by his distinguished friend the case was different.

Wherever Paxton appeared he secured a deferential notice; whatever Paxton said was listened to; those whom Paxton delighted to honor were at once credited by the indiscriminating world as being somehow or other " remarkable persons;" and so the un-known individual introduced that evening to the Duke of Windermere and the Marchioness of Brighton, and a dozen lesser stars of fashion, by an other star of indisputably the first magnitude, was received with respect, con sideration, and no small curiosity. The whole thing suited Paxton's whim, and pleased his sense of humor. He had taken good care that the morning papers should that very day have contained a powerful resume of the "Remarkable Case" in process of investi gation, and a word from him, dropped here and there, was enough to send a whisper through the room that the grave, square headed man standing by Paxton's side, was no other than

so favorably. Lady Annabel was charmed and delighted at the favorable reception given to "my old Cornish friend, Mr. Houghton," as she called him. o grateful to you for bringing him, he said to Paxton ; "there is some thing piquant about him; he is hav

the Mr. Houghton, therein spoken of

ing quite a success."
"Yes," replied Paxton; "he is
doing well, I think. You must help the good cause, Lady Annabel; no one

"What is the last cause you have taken up, Mr. Paxton?" said Lady Annabel:—"is it the Poles, or the Albanians, or the Bulgarians? And how is it you want me to help ?"

"Nothing of the sort, my dear madam," said Paxton; "it is simply

said Lady Annabel. "I hear every- appearance at St. James's.

body talking of it ; and Mr. Houghton is an advertisement in himself.

"Yes," said Paxton, "I think he'll do it. I intend to get him presented before he leaves London, and then, if he makes his appearance in some half. dozen places, judiciously chosen, the intellect of the metropolis will gradually take in the bearings of the great Pendragon case."

"And you want me to aid and abet you in your designs?" said Lady Annabel; "there will fortunately be no difficulty in that. Any one who makes his first appearance under Mr. Pax ton's introduction-

"Ah!—ah!—I understand," said that gentleman, "that is the voice of the syren, which forces a man to close his ears with wax. But you see what I want ; just give him a first-rate fortnight.

So a first rate fortnight Geoffrey had, and if he did not greatly enjoy it his hospitable entertainer did. To a man who, all the year through, was thrown among the rounded pebbles of conventional society, all pretty much the same shape and color, and differing only in their size, this bit of original rock, struck sharp and fresh from its Cornish quarry, was a delicious study.

Geoffrey's appreciation of all he saw and heard, his simplicity and shrewdness, and, above all, the clear ringing note of truth, which ran through all he said and did, were to his companions sources of genuine delight. When the fortnight was happily over, Geoffrey found himself provided with all he wanted, and rejoiced with exceeding great joy that his London season had come to an end, and the day of deliver ance had dawned.

"Yes, " said Paxton, "I believe I must let you go now; and I think I may say we've done your business pretty fairly. Perhaps I may find my way down to Swinburne again in the course of winter, and if so prepare for an invasion: I should like heir of the Pendragons, and inspect that wonderful cartoon of which you speak. And your sisters, too, and Julian, I should like hugely to see them all again. But what is it I hear about Julian? is there any truth in the report of his approaching marriage with the young French countess?"
"None that I know of, "said Geoff-

rey; "Lady Annabel quoted you as her authority.

"Pshaw, man, " said Paxton, "he only dropped a sentimental word or two about 'looking forward to the fulfilment of his fordest hopes '; but that, you know, is a cap that might fit any head. I confess I thought his fancy had elsewhere alighted.

"I believe you are right," said Geoffrey; "but men puzzle one, and women, too, for the matter of that. I suppose, however, time will show.

Meanwhile, he had waited day by day, with no small impatience, for a reply from Julian. It came at last. having been delayed by its transmission through Laventor. But it contained, together with Julian's expressions of congratulations and delight one drop of disappointment. As soon as he had received the letter which announced the tidings that the truth was known at last, and that Uriel's fair fame was entirely vindicated, he had rushed off to St. Florian, to communicate the glad intelligence, and in sist on the young man's instant pre paration to return with him to his family

'Alas!" wrote Julian, "I found him stretched on a bed of sickness, nursed by a saur grise, and suffering out to rescue the crew of a foundering vessel. They succeeded in doing so, but with great difficulty; and some of the brave fellows were sadly knocked about. Among the rest Uriel, who, as usual, distinguished himself by his daring courage, received a blow on the chest from a falling spar, which they fear has hurt one of the lungs. It would be a serious matter to some men; but he serious matter to some men; out ne has the strength of a giant, and, in a week or so, will battle through it, and be on his feet again. Meantime, I stay here, till he is fit to move, and then we steer straight for Falmouth.

This was the news which Geoffrey brought to the little home circle, on his return to Laventor. For a moment Aurelia debated whether she would not hasten to her brother's bedside, but at Geoffrey's earnest entreaty she abandoned the notion. The extreme feebleness of her father, whose shattered strength had been severely tried by the excitement of the last few weeks, seemed to render it impossible for her to leave him. There was nothing for it but to wait in patience, and leave the care of the sick man in Julian's hands; and meanwhile, to prepare at Merylin to give a joyful reception to the long-lost heir, and in-stal him with loving welcome in the home that had been left for years so

sad and desolate. In the meantime, Geoffrey had to stand a severe cross examination from the home authorities, as to all particulars of his "London Season." Mary wanted to know what he had eaten at the great dinners; Gertrude was curious to know if he had danced, and was answered by a decided negative. Mrs. Houghton wondered how the late hours had agreed with him; one and all were lost in admiration at his having been presented at Court. Poor Geoffrey felt very much ashamed of all his distinctions, especially the last, and returned with renewed vigor to the old habit of putting his hands in his pockets, and talking in his own domestic language. "Oh, it's all domestic language. "Oh, it's all fiddlesticks," he said, in reply to some very urgent questions regarding his

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