

THE COMET OF A SEASON

By JUSTIN MCCARTHY, M. P.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—Continued.

Only one human creature, besides wretched old Matthew Starr, himself, was known to have perished in the fire. The flames found Starr's body still perfectly recognizable, in the room which he had converted into a little magazine of combustibles. Outside the door of this room, on its threshold, divided from the body of Starr only by the remains of the half-burnt door, was found a dead woman. She was dead rather from suffocation than from fire. She was gayly dressed, and seemed young. Some professed to recognize her, and said it was Matthew Starr's daughter. Whether, in some fit of penitence, she had gone to the Church of Free Souls and found that her father was there, and when the fire broke out tried to get at him and so perished, was never known. But those who professed to identify her were positive that it was she; and it is certain that Fanny Starr was not seen any more from that day. Starr's streak of vengeance would seem to have wholly missed its mark; it struck himself and the daughter for whose sake he sought revenge. To be sure, it struck the Church of Free Souls. The temple was gone. It never rose from his ashes a simple again. The site was soon occupied and turned to profitable account. On the ruins of the Church of Free Souls there stands a stately gilt-palace. Somewhere about the square from which Montana poured forth his streams of a regenerate existence for men and women, and where Geraldine saw him standing erect and holding Melissa's hand, a pump and sany bar-maid now works a beer-engine and smiles on all comers.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

LADY VANESSA'S BENEVOLENT INTERVENTION.

MONTANA'S popularity lighted up again after the events on Tower Hill. The fire was the talk of London for days after. The waning season flickered up once more into a sort of animation as society discoursed of that eventful evening. People who had given up all idea of meeting their friends any more that season got up little improvised dinner-parties to discuss the whole affair. The various versions of the night's events kept curiosity and ostentation alive by their conflicting authorities and assurances. The first report that spread through London was that the Church of Free Souls had been set on fire by a hostile and organized band, and that Montana was actually killed in the struggle which followed. Then there came a legend that Montana had lost his life in rescuing a girl from the burning. This presently softened down to the story that he had nearly lost his life, but had succeeded in rescuing the girl and himself. Rumors differed widely as to the rescued damsel. Some who, of course, were not in society, said it was a fashionable and great lady, daughter of the Duchesses of Magdali; that Montana had, with superhuman strength and daring, succeeded in carrying her from the burning building, climbing heights and making descents in the midst of flames which Amodeus himself could hardly have braved. Society, however, knowing Lady Vanessa Barnes, was sceptical about this, even from the first. Lady Vanessa was rather too tall and nobly built to be easily carried in the arms even of a hero of romance. Of course Barnes was not inquisitive as to the Montana deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice. Some stories would have it that he was attacked by numbers of men and women whom he had deceived and whose hopes he had blighted, and that so far from showing any courage, he had made an exhibition of the white feather. There were whisperings about an injured husband having taken part in the turmoil, and made out of it an opportunity for avenging his own personal wrongs. But the important thing for Montana seemed to be that it set him up again as the hero of the hour; that every one talked of him and read about him; that the papers were full of paragraphs, leading articles, and letters concerning him; and that the police were busily at work to find out the nature of the organization through whose action the Church of Free Souls had been destroyed. Latest of the period was, any enterprising hostess might have counted on filling her rooms to excess if she could have only made it known that the company were invited to meet Montana.

Montana himself looked at the event with very different eyes. He saw in it nothing heroic, or gratifying, or exciting, but only a degradation to his life and a menace to the future of his career. After all that he had done to exalt himself in England to the position of unchallenged leader of a great movement—to the position, indeed, of lay priest and prophet—his efforts had only resulted in a vulgar street riot, in a personal attack on himself, from which he had to save himself by the sheer physical strength of a friendly mob. However the newspapers or any ordinary observers might look on it, this sequel to his labor was to Montana a cruel anticlimax and bitter humiliation. Many said with a tinge of malice in his bitterness that he had not sacrificed himself in the burning ruins of the Church of Free Souls. It was a mistake, he kept saying to himself over and over again. If he had known what was to come of it, he would have resigned within the burning house and brought his career to a close then and there. From his boyhood his worship had been for his career rather than for himself. What was to become of himself personally, he cared comparatively little. The great thing was to have a brilliant career; and if he must disappear suddenly, to disappear as a comet does, not to be put out like the gas-get, or to flicker ignobly into darkness like the candle. He found himself, in the midst of all his little Indian summer of revived popularity, brooding constantly over the next chapter of his career—thinking and thinking what he was to do to recover from his late humiliation, and to redress the balance of the anticlimax.

Something he was resolved to do. If he had, at any moment during that short time when he still believed he was to marry Geraldine Bowen, some thought of settling into a calm, secluded life of happiness, he had not had now. His one purpose now was to find some way of ending with dignity. He cared not little for the death of Matthew Starr. As he had often said, he felt no regret for people's deaths. Men and women had to die some time, and it seemed to him a matter of stuporously little consequence whether they died to-day, or next year, or in ten years to come. This was his measure for himself as well as for others. He hardly bestowed two minutes thought on the fate of old Starr, and when he had once expressed a sort of oblique and formal regret for his former lover he alluded to the subject no more.

Montana's revived popularity had the effect of bringing him again into frequent companionship with Lady Vanessa Barnes. Through him Lady Vanessa became drawn into sudden intimacy with Captain Marlon and his group. She visited them at all times.

Her ponies were seen standing for hours together at Captain Marlon's door. She brought Mr. Barnes there more often perhaps than he cared for, but he bore it with manly patience, and talked a great deal to Sydney Marlon, who felt therefore intensely grateful to him. He seemed to like her society, she thought; and she was one of the few women who appeared to do so, and it was only in keeping with her nature that she should be a married man, and married to a great lady. Lady Vanessa was greatly interested in the whole group. She concerned herself much with the approaching marriage and the marriage arrangements of Montana and Melissa. She was charmed with Geraldine. She pronounced Captain Marlon bold, daring, and said he was just the man with whom a pretty niece ought to enter a drawing-room. She persisted in regarding him as Geraldine's uncle, and at last Geraldine dropped all further protest. Marlon and Geraldine had not yet mentioned to any one but Montana the fact of their engagement, and they were not likely to begin their confidences with Lady Vanessa. Every one in the group liked Lady Vanessa but Melissa. Melissa could not forgive her for even having been supposed at one time to have won the admiration of Montana. Geraldine frankly liked her, and, in familiar phrase, "took to her."

"I never knew a great lady before," she said to Sydney Marlon, "and I always thought there would be something distant and haughty about them. In America we have a kind of idea that all English aristocrats are terribly haughty; that they keep everybody else at a distance. But I don't find her so. I find it hard to remember when I was with her that she is any higher in class than myself. She seems to me to be older, although I don't believe she is; but that is about all the difference I see."

Lady Vanessa was quite happy in having discovered the Marions, and Geraldine, and Melissa, and having some new group in whom to interest herself. This was partly out of genuine good-nature. She was a high-spirited, happy, genial creature—a sort of compound of tomboy and beneficent busybody—clever, shrewd, and courageous; ignorant as a school-boy, but unlike a school-boy, not devoid of tact. It must be owned that part of the interest she felt in her new friends was owing to the fact that all her old friends had left town. The season was over for her and her set; but Mr. Barnes could not leave London just yet. He had business engagements to which he stuck as closely as though he had not married the daughter of a duke. Lady Vanessa was really fond of him, enjoyed his society, and would not leave town without him; and so she had perforce to stay. Therefore the Marions, and Geraldine, and Melissa were as welcome to her as a new toy or a new play-fellow to a child who is left at home while his family are away, and who does not at first know what to do with himself. "Ain't odd," Lady Vanessa would say sometimes, "how we are left alone in London? We are the sole survivors. We ought to do all we can for each other, and try to make the place as bearable as it may be, for there is nobody else to talk to. I do believe I shall have to stay with Mr. Barnes in town until well-nigh on to Christmas, and you will be gone long about that, Miss Rowan; so what on earth am I to do with myself then?"

She was likewise much interested in Clement Hope, and asked Geraldine a great many questions about him. She said she was sure he was in love with somebody, and that things had gone wrong with him. She offered the opinion, which made Geraldine feel for a moment inclined to be angry, that Clement was remarkably like the man who fell out of the balloon—that is to say, that he wasn't in it. She opined that he was in love with Sydney Marlon.

Geraldine smiled so genuine a smile at this that Lady Vanessa gave up that theory. Then she was sure he was broken-hearted about Melissa; and Geraldine said, with some hesitation, unsweetly only for the purpose of getting rid of the whole subject if possible, that she fancied he had at one time been a little taken with Melissa, but she was sure there was nothing serious in it, and that he did not think of it now.

"Then I tell you what," said Lady Vanessa, "if he is not a lover of yours, Miss Rowan, I am sure if I was he I should be just that."

Geraldine became so evidently embarrassed, not to say distressed in manner, that Lady Vanessa's quick eyes saw in a moment that she had struck on a painful truth of some kind, and she had the politeness and good-nature to turn the talk away in a moment, and go on in the easiest way to some other conjecture about Clement, leaving Geraldine to believe that she had not formed the faintest suspicion as to the real state of the case. But Lady Vanessa had made up her mind all the same that Clement was in love with Geraldine, and either that Geraldine was not in love with him, or that some obstacle stood between them. Her restless good-nature determined at once to find out what the actual condition of things was, and see if she could not lend a helping hand to somebody. She was an excellent *camarade*—probably she would have described herself as a good "pal"—and she felt convinced that something was amiss between Geraldine and Clement; that they were a pair of lovers, or would be if they could, and that it would be a glorious stroke for her if she could somehow intervene and make two lovers happy.

To whom would any fearless intermeddler in such a case naturally address herself but to the eldest of the party? Had there been a Mrs. Marlon, Lady Vanessa would have gone for her straightaway and asked her a series of direct questions, and got at the truth of the matter. But there was no Mrs. Marlon, and therefore Lady Vanessa's quick interest directed her at once to Captain Marlon. To Lady Vanessa Captain Marlon was simply "a dear old thing," "a charming old man." Three-fourths of her time at least she regarded Geraldine as his niece, and in any case it would not have occurred to her to think that Geraldine was likely to be his wife.

It was a soldier and a traveller, who liked the society of women, and could always make himself agreeable. "What a darling girl your Geraldine is!" Lady Vanessa said, "and that handsome young fellow, Clement Hope, who is he? Now tell me something about him, won't you? He interests me greatly. There is a picture exactly like him in Venice, I think, or Florence, or somewhere; a picture of a young Venetian painter, I think—just the same kind of eyes, with a figure like that, a figure that gives you the idea somehow of a tall young tree a little bending to the wind, don't you know? Does it strike you so, Captain Marlon?"

"He is a charming young fellow," Captain Marlon said, earnestly. "He has plenty of talent; but he has led too lazy a life up to this; not his fault, I should say—not his fault at all. He is going to turn to now, and do something to make his life useful in some way."

"Strikes me he is crossed in love," said Lady Vanessa.

"Captain Marlon smiled. 'Well, I believe there was something of the kind,' he said. 'I hear that he was very fond of Melissa Aquitaine.'"

"Not a bit of it," Lady Vanessa answered. "Don't you believe a word of that."

"Oh, but there was something, I assure you."

"Was something?" said Lady Vanessa. "Yes, there may have been half a dozen some things. I don't say there were. A young man like that does not get to his time of life without having had a good many some things. But there is nothing now. He does not care about her now, I can assure you."

"How do you know?" asked Marlon, in wonder. "Well, I don't know how I know—by looking at him—I knew by observing things. When she comes into the room he hardly looks up, hardly observes her. Oh, no, it is not that. I have quite other ideas, Captain Marlon, about your young friend. You make your mind easy. It is not the future wife of our dear Montana he cares about—oh no!"

CHAPTER XXXV. MELISSA'S HONEY-MOON.

The crowning event of Melissa's life had come off. She had attained what ought to have been the very height of her happiness. The wildest dream of her fond fancy had been fulfilled. She was married to Montana. The marriage took place in a church near her father's home, in the Northern city, and after the customary Montana and his wife stayed for a few days at a quiet watering-place forty or fifty miles away. It was not any of the usual resorts of couples on their honeymoon, but a steady-going, rather out-of-the-way place, which fashion had not yet found out. There they remained for a few days, but for a few days only. Montana had his preparations to make for his voyage across the Atlantic, and time was running short.

It seemed strange to Melissa to find herself thus alone with her idol, and stranger still to find that after all there was less of the wonderful and more of the commonplace about it than she might have imagined. Montana seemed to her to be always in a cloud or in a dream. He was kindly to her in every way. He seemed anxious to attend to all her wishes, and even to fore-fall them. But there was nothing about him of the genial, playful way which her father always had, and which made life so pleasant for her with Mr. Aquitaine, if she could only have known it at the time. She was married to Montana, and yet she did not seem to have approached any nearer to him in spirit than when they walked round Tower Hill that day together and she conversed with him for the first time. A curious fact is that until the moment when he signed himself "Edmund Montana" on the occasion of their marriage, she did not even know what his Christian name was. Montana walked with her constantly while they were staying alone on what ought to have been their honeymoon trip, a honeymoon of three or four days. He conversed with her a great deal, but it was only conversing with her. There was nothing of the fond, close talk of the young husband and of the lover. He told her a good deal about his plans with a cold sniveling of tone that seemed somehow to convey to her the idea that he did this as a matter of propriety and duty. His manner seemed to say, although nothing could be more gracious and kind, "I don't suppose, Melissa, you really understand much about this; but we are now husband and wife, and I think it is part of the duty of a properly-minded husband to explain all his plans and purposes to his wife, even though she may not understand them. So I tell you all this, Melissa, but if you do not quite understand it does not matter. I have performed my proper part in telling, and you have performed yours in seeming to listen."

Yet the girl was happy. She was sometimes rapturously, ecstatically happy. She could sit and gaze at him through a whole evening. When they walked together she could look away from the sea, and the sky, and the sunlight, or the stars, and only turn her eyes on him, her one star. It was enough to be with him, and to lean her head upon his arm, and to hear his voice, and to know that she was married to him and bore his name. A flood of glad, too mingled in her joy, a flood full of dread lest anything might intervene, even now, to take him from her or to make him forget her. She dreaded the prospect of being left behind—left alone in the house that once was so pleasant to her but now would be so dreary, where she could only spend the days in thinking of her absent husband and fearing for something to happen. She would have been glad to take her with him to America, but on this point he had already declared his purpose, and she had not the courage even to expostulate. Her love and her recent suffering seemed to have washed all the petulance and all the high spirit away from her, and left her submissive, languid, almost broken down. Mr. Aquitaine, too, had thought at first it would be better she should go with Montana across the ocean, but Montana seemed to have given some reasons

which satisfied him: "It would be rough work at first, and if Melissa did go she would have to be left behind in some great hotel in New York, or at the furthest in Chelsea, while her husband 'laid out the lines of his colony.' Mr. Aquitaine agreed that this would not do, and that Melissa, on the whole, would be safest and happiest in her father's house until her husband could return for her. When the days of their short holiday had passed, they returned to Aquitaine's home. Montana was not to go back to London for the present, but was to leave for America without seeing the metropolis again. Montana was anxious to get away. If it had ever been his nature to show impatience he would have shown it now. He was surprised one day to receive a letter from Clement Hope, in which Clement told him that he was getting sick of the Old World, and longing to begin his project in America; that he had changed his mind about waiting a little longer, and that he would leave Europe by the same steamer which carried Montana westward. Montana showed the letter to Mr. Aquitaine, and asked if Aquitaine could suggest any explanation of Clement's sudden determination.

"Surely," Aquitaine said, "you and he had better put your heads together and combine your projects. What can you want of two separate colonies at the same time? You don't want to run in rivalry, and besides, Clement Hope knows nothing about these things. His resources will run out before he has made a satisfactory start. He had much better go in with you. I will write and tell him so."

"I should be very glad," Montana answered, coldly, "if his helping hand, if it were to be a help at all, I should be glad to take use of him, and to assign him a place that would be useful, but I don't admit partnerships in plans like mine. I don't like explaining my ideas to any one until the moment comes for putting them into action, and I don't always care to explain them even then. I want men to believe in me, and to work with me, and to take orders and to ask no questions. I am afraid Clement Hope has got it into his head that he can do something great upon his own account. Let him do so, by all means. The more of us who have faith in ourselves, and can put our faith into action, the better. But I could have nobody working with me who was not willing to work on my inspiration—to take it on trust, and do as he was ordered."

"I should think Hope would be delighted to work under you."

"I don't know. Some change has come over him lately. He seems odd and cold, and he has kept away from me. I am glad to find by this letter that he offers his friendship again. I shall take it just as it is offered. I owe him a good turn, as I have said; and I never look for offence, so I never receive any—or seldom, at least," he said, slowly, as some recollection of Treascoe came into his mind. "And I never answer coldness by coldness."

Aquitaine gave vent to something almost like a sigh. "I only wish you would answer warmth by warmth," he said to himself, as he looked into Montana's impassive, handsome face, and thought of poor Melissa, her quick, impatient temper, her wild love, her sudden little gusts and changes of emotion, her longing for affection, even the fitful pointings with which she sometimes met the affection when it was offered; and he wondered what sort of life would be before her in the long future with this strange husband, who had taken her, not for love, but only out of caprice.

Montana and Melissa often walked together these bright evenings of early autumn. Sometimes they wandered along, apparently without purpose, through suburbs on which every day warehouses were making fresh ravages, along patches of strand by the river which were menaced every week by new experiment in dock and warehouse, and through greenwoods which had already the shadow of their destination to building lots cast over them. Now and then, coming to some particular spot, Montana struck quite away from the direction in which hitherto they had been going, and brought Melissa through tortuous windings of suburban streets and roads as if he were looking for some particular place, and then apparently having failed to find it, or having found it and seen enough of it, turned back again and resumed their old track. She could not help asking him once whether he knew the place long ago, and he answered that he did; that he had been there when a boy, but there were so many changes it was not easy to know any place again.

One evening they came to a bank just above the river. It was on the verge of sunset, and they were looking westward. Montana stood for a moment in silence. Then it seemed to him that the arm of his companion leaned heavily on his, and looking down to Melissa he saw that she was fatigued.

"You are tired," he said. "Let us sit down here for a moment."

Looking around, he had seen that there was a wooden bench under a decaying tree not far from them. He brought Melissa to it, and they sat there. For all that Montana could do, he could not bring his thoughts to fix themselves on Melissa. It did not seem as if he were really married to her, as if she had become a part of his life. He could not think of her and her as living on together through years. He was not a man given to regrets. Things that were past were done with him, as with Mark Antony, and when once he made up his mind that it would be well for him to marry Melissa he never went back upon the subject. It was settled, and there was an end of it. But the conditions under which they had been married seemed to prevent him from entirely realizing the fact, and from admitting it as part of his life and of his thoughts. He found his mind wandering away from her, and his eyes turned vaguely westward. Perhaps he was thinking at first that his own course would soon bear him westward. Suddenly, however, another thought, a memory, came into his mind. The scene, the place, were not indeed the same as those which he now remembered with a shock of dread, and even of pain. But there was resemblance enough to cheat the mind for a moment into the idea that it was the same place; and at all events Montana and his young wife were so sitting that their eyes naturally turned toward the setting sun. Suddenly he rose to his feet.

"No," Melissa answered, "I only care about people, and not about many of them either. Don't you remember telling me once that in this world we must live in the present, and for the present, and not in the past?"

"Did I tell you that? Where was that?" "Oh, don't you remember? But of course you don't; you would not remember it as I remember it; you have no reason to. Well, it was that day—the first day that ever I talked to you—when we were walking together on Tower Hill. You said 'we both agreed in opinion, although I don't think I had any opinion at all. I think only meant that I was not troubling myself about the past, because I was only troubling myself about you.'"

Montana turned and looked into her wistful face, and the eyes seeking his own. The sight brought the old memory back to him.

"Well, let us go, dear," he said; "I don't care about nature either, and I don't want to have much to do with the past. I had rather shut it out from me if I could. But anyhow I don't like this place. It makes me uncomformable. Let us go."

"So they went, and she leaning on his arm, could hear him murmuring some words to himself. He murmured them again and again, till at last she caught the sound.

"What is the comet of a season?" she asked.

"What? Montana asked in turn, looking for him, almost confused.

"The comet of a season? You have been saying that over and over again. What does it mean?"

"It is only a quotation from a poem, Melissa. I am not certain really what poet it is. I think it is Byron. I have not read much poetry, but I remember these words."

"They are pretty words," said Melissa; "I wonder what they mean?"

"I don't know. They came into my mind somehow. I heard them long ago in a place like this."

"All comets are of a season, are they not?" Melissa asked, seized for once with a desire to acquire exact knowledge. "I have seen ever so many comets. They come for a while, and shine all over the sky, don't they, and then they go away?"

"Yes," said Montana, "that is so, exactly." "But they come back again," Melissa persevered; "I am sure the same comets come back again, after a long time, perhaps." "They do," Montana gravely answered. "That happens in the sky, Melissa—with the comets that appear in the sky. But I think those words I have been saying mean human comets, and such comets of a season don't always go away. When they go out they are not gone any more, and it is much better that it should be so—much better."

CHAPTER XXXVI. "THE POWER THAT MADE ROY AND GIRL."

Never were there more miserable days than those which Clement Hope was now passing. He suffered intensely, and all the more because it seemed to him that he had no right to complain. His idle and transient passion for Melissa, that unreal, boyish affection of love, had been foolishly cherished by him, and ostentatiously exhibited and proclaimed after the fashion of youth, when if it pleased to fancy itself in love, and is proud of its own sham and self-delusion. He hated to think of this now. He looked back with shame and anger upon his former rhapsodies, and ravings, and attitudes of the hopeless lover of poor Melissa. Such folly, he felt, took away from him now all right to complain. Why should Geraldine think for a moment of one like him, whom she had seen only the other day apparently steeped in love for another girl—a girl far beneath her own level in intellect and in heart, and how could she now be expected to regard him in any serious light? She could but laugh at him and despise him. Only for his colonization scheme and its incessant demands and details, Clement sometimes felt as if his life could not go on—as if he must have ended all the difficulty by going out of his senses. The nights, above all, were trying to him. He came home late and tired to the lonely house looking on the dismal canal, and he could not sleep. He mounted the little observatory on the roof, and looked abroad over the trees and grass of the park, and saw the sky reddened by the lights of the great city. He out-watched the Bar and the "sun of the sleepless," the "melancholy star," and only fell into a fitful sleep at last when morning had come and the roads and streets began to be alive again. Sometimes he went out before dawn, and wandered about the roads, and climbed a little hill in the neighborhood, from which he had a confused view of London shining somewhere in the near distance, like a mass of glow worms in a hollow. He hated the lonely, ghostly house, and yet he would not leave it to live anywhere else. He would not leave it even for a night. He felt a kind of savage, self-torturing pleasure in condemning himself to its loneliness, and its shadows and its memories. Day and night the one feeling possessed him. He had found out his love too late, and had found out at the same time that he was not worthy of such a love.

Sometimes he regretted at Geraldine, and told himself that she was marrying only for money, for a house, for position; that she was throwing away her youth and her beauty and her intellect on a man old enough to be her father—selling herself, as many another girl was doing, for mere worldly advantage. Such a thought, filling him for the time with an angry feeling against the girl, gave him the momentary courage of resentment. But he soon found that courage bought at such a cost is not worth having even to a disappointed lover. It is only like the courage supplied by the maddening stimulus of some strong drink. It is factitious and unwholesome, and leaves its dismal hours of reaction and depression, its lonely, wasting heartache, instead of the headache which the other excitement bequeaths in dying. And, besides, Clement was not in his right mind when he allowed such a thought to possess him, even for a moment. He "knew" this. He never could believe anything evil of Geraldine. Let her motive be what it would, it must be a good one and worthy of her. He could only suppose that she either did love Captain Marlon—after all such things had happened—or that she felt she could care for no one else in the sense of deepest love; and was therefore willing to marry a man for whom she had a sincere respect and affection. Anyhow, it was all the same to Clement. She was lost to him. She never could ever know how truly he loved her, and how fully he appreciated her. That bitter, unimpassioned remembrance with which she had the "disappointed lover" makes, "if she could only know" "if she could only understand all" that "regret" was always in Clement's heart, "if not on his lips." He himself had rendered this impossible. "She never could know that she really was never could understand that his love for her was deep and real, and even in his sufferings he could not hope for kindly

sympathy. Nothing was left for him but to go away, and never to come back again. On this he was resolved, and he would not return to England.

While in this mood he received one day a few friendly lines from Montana, thanking him for the part he had taken in the rescue on Tower Hill, and expressing a regret that they could not meet again before Montana left for America. At once the thought came into Clement's mind, "Why wait any longer? Why not go to America at once, and in the vessel with Montana?" The thought became a resolve. He wrote to Montana, and told him of his determination.

"The thought that he was to leave England so soon gave Clement new strength and courage. 'Say what we will, we can none of us in our souls believe that in changing our skies we do not change our hearts. It is impossible not to indulge in the fond fancy that every grief is cured, that every disappointment is redressed and repaired, by the simple process of going away. Peace always seems to be beyond the other side of yonder purpling mountains; peace, too, and refreshment to every weary heart will always seem to lie in the shadowy land of gold across the sea. The thought of going away is almost like the knowledge of coming death; it pacifies wild emotions, makes disappointment seem a trivial thing, and vaguely promises a renewal of love and hope and youth. So Clement began to feel, now that his going away from England was but a question of days. Willingly would he, with Bryan's help, have told the vessel that was to carry him that he cared not what land they bearst to, so not again to jailme.' Such were Clement Hope's feelings; and for the hour they were as strong and as sincere as human feelings well can be. He was in the true exile mood—unless things should change."

Meanwhile Lady Vanessa's words had sounded a note of alarm in Captain Marlon's mind. The alarm was the more keen because the impression given from outside only corresponded, after all, with a certain impression that had long been forming itself within. In order to continue even moderately satisfied with himself, Marlon had had to assure himself many times of late that he was doing the best thing he could for Geraldine in marrying her. He sometimes found himself looking at her with a certain tender and pitying glance, contrasting for the moment her bright youth with his advancing years, and wondering to himself whether a girl, however high-minded and devoted, could be happy with a husband so much older than herself. "It is all very well," he used to think, "for the present"—used to think, that is to say, in his moments of doubt and despondency—"It is all very well for the present—or not all very well; but how will it be ten years hence, when she is little more than thirty (and a married woman is only in her prime) and I shall be far on the shady side of sixty? Am I doing wrong to the girl? She is only marrying me to please me. Am I doing a man and a shabby thing? Then, again, as Geraldine brightened up when he talked to her, he told himself that it was all for the best, that he would make her happy, that he would be perhaps more devoted to her than a younger man might be; and he looked around the circle of those whom he loved, and he saw no young man worthy of her whom he could suppose Geraldine would marry. Many a time the idea came to his mind that if Clement Hope had not been so absurd as to fall in love with Melissa, he would have been a young man whom Geraldine might have cared for. For a time Captain Marlon could always remind himself that he was saving Geraldine from the influence of Montana, and at Geraldine's own request. How unlucky, he thought again and again, that Montana should ever have come among them! Who could have supposed that the influence of any one man could be so strangely disturbing to a whole group of people? Nothing was the same since Montana came. Marlon's daughters were not the same to him, Katherine and her husband were not the same. Melissa was not the same. Mr. Aquitaine was thrown together strangely in a manner hardly welcome to either, utterly unexpected, and all because of Montana's coming. This mood of occasional doubt and occasional reassurance prevailed until Montana's offer of marriage to Melissa and her acceptance. Then Captain Marlon's position became one of still greater doubt. Now that Geraldine was free from the importunity of Montana, and from what she seemed to think the dangerous spell of his influence over her, how could she feel with regard to her engagement to marry Marlon?

(To be Continued.)

"ROUGH ON RATS," Clears out rats, mice, roaches, ants, bed-bugs, stunks, chipmunks, gophers. 15c. Druggists.

At Tel-el-Kabr, First and oldest Irish setter belonging to the First Battalion Gordon Highlanders, bravely "mashed" the intercomers at the head of the Highlanders, and displayed a coolness, dash and courage which elicited universal applause, no more minding the rain of bullets than if she was out anti-shooting. She has long been a pet of the regiment. When the order came to proceed to Egypt, every one said that Juno must go, too, and go she did, very much to the delight of the men.

"Wells' Health Renewer" restores health and vigor, cures Dyspepsia, Impotence, Sexual Debility. \$1.

THE MANITOBA ELECTIONS.

WINNIPEG, Nov. 23.—Premier Norquay issued an address to his constituents, which is regarded as an address to the people of Manitoba on the eve of dissolution. He advocates the transfer of the ungranted lands within the Province to the Province, and the representation of Manitoba in the Dominion Cabinet. Upon the question of disallowance, the Premier says, in effect, that while he recognizes the immense benefits that have accrued to the Province from the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, he thinks the Dominion Government is justified in protecting the road in the interest of the whole Dominion. He, however, maintains that the Province has a right to authorize purely provincial roads, and will assert that right.

EPH'S COCOA—GRATEFUL AND COMFORTING—

"By a thorough knowledge of the natural laws which govern the operations of digestion and nutrition, and by a careful application of the fine properties of well-selected Cocoas, Mrs. Epps has provided our breakfast tables with a delicately flavored beverage which will save us many heavy doctors' bills. It is by the judicious use of such articles of diet that a constitution may be gradually built up until strong enough to resist every tendency to disease. Hundreds of subtle maledias are floating around us, ready to attack wherever there is a weak point. We may escape many a fatal shaft by keeping ourselves well fortified with pure blood, and a properly nourished frame."—Civil Service Gazette. Made simply with boiling water or milk. Sold only in packets and tins (4lb and 1lb) by Grocers, labelled "EPPS' COCOA." Homeopathic Chemists, London, England. Also makers of EPPS' CHOCOLATE ESSENCE."