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Mr. Calvert's Frailty. (From Belgravia.) CHAPTER I. The attention which Mr. Calvert paid to Mary Faber when he met her at Eastbourne was to a certain extent excusable; because, though nothing had resulted from their acquaintance originally being of a serious kind...

CHAPTER II. Among the means of emolument open to the young fellow of Merton was work as an examiner. He was one of the moderators of the Honour School, and had recently been appointed classical examiner at Magdalen College, Mansfield House.

CHAPTER III. When he found himself again alone Mr. Calvert sat down to collect his thoughts, which were slightly confused by the unexpected events which had just occurred. The suddenness and strangeness of the interview would of themselves have been sufficient to disconcert Mr. Calvert, but it was the nature of the promise he had made which was disturbing him most.

CHAPTER IV. The first stage of his bewilderment had passed by, it would be hard to say whether he was more surprised at Miss Faber for having made a request, or at himself for having granted it. Although reflection did not place his promise in a more favorable light, he did not propose to retract it.

CHAPTER V. In becoming a candidate for the headmastership of Canonbury, you were doubtless unaware that in two important particulars you are really ineligible. "I was certainly not aware of the fact," replied Mr. Calvert, supposing that his age must certainly be one of the objections found to him.

CHAPTER VI. "Very good," replied the master blandly. "One of the objections of which I spoke is therefore removed." The master gazed into the fire for a little while in silence, in an abstracted manner which he had. At length he said: "I did not suppose the objections were insurmountable, and he gazed into the fire again in a tantalizing way."

CHAPTER VII. "The electors are of opinion," he continued after a little, "that the head-master of Canonbury should be a married man. He has the domestic care of a number of boys, who reside in his house; he must instruct the masters, and in some cases the parents or guardians of the pupils; and these things he cannot do satisfactorily unless he has a wife. What is your opinion on this point, Mr. Calvert?"

"Oh, yes, a great deal," was the quickly spoken reply. "Pray sit down, Miss Faber." "Oh no," replied the girl, "I must stay; and I do hope you'll forgive me for coming, as I know that what I am doing, and an going to ask you, is wrong, dreadfully wrong. Nothing believe me, Mr. Calvert, but necessity would have brought me here. I can't explain everything; but if you only know—Will you please help me?"

"You promise?" since she had expressed the room, the old tender expression that had haunted Mr. Calvert so often during the winter had come into her eyes, and now at his kindly spoken words they were filled with tears. As she looked at her he fervently hoped that she should be able to do her service which she had come to seek.

"I promise," he answered emphatically; "I shall aid you in whatever way lies in my power." "Then," rejoined Mary eagerly, "I wish you to pass me?" "To do what?" asked Mr. Calvert in a calm but bewildered manner. "To pass me," repeated the girl, and then she quickly proceeded to explain: "I am a student at St. Margaret's, and have known for some time that you were to examine in Latin in the school, first in English, which I am afraid, as I have not been studying it so long as the other subjects, and much depends on my getting through in all. So, having accidentally heard to-night where you were staying, it suddenly occurred to me to come to you and ask this favor."

"Thank you so much," and ere he had time to say anything more she had hidden his good-bye, touched his hand, and hurriedly left the room. CHAPTER III. When he found himself again alone Mr. Calvert sat down to collect his thoughts, which were slightly confused by the unexpected events which had just occurred.

"I was certainly not aware of the fact," replied Mr. Calvert, supposing that his age must certainly be one of the objections found to him. "You are not in orders," said the master, "and it is necessary that the head-master of Canonbury should be a clergyman. It is true that there is no statutory regulation to this effect; but the head masters have hitherto invariably been in orders, and the electors decline to form a new precedent by appointing a layman."

"For some time I have intended to enter the Church; and I certainly could not conceive of Canonbury having a head-master who was not in orders." "Very good," replied the master blandly. "One of the objections of which I spoke is therefore removed." The master gazed into the fire for a little while in silence, in an abstracted manner which he had. At length he said: "I did not suppose the objections were insurmountable, and he gazed into the fire again in a tantalizing way."

"The electors are of opinion," he continued after a little, "that the head-master of Canonbury should be a married man. He has the domestic care of a number of boys, who reside in his house; he must instruct the masters, and in some cases the parents or guardians of the pupils; and these things he cannot do satisfactorily unless he has a wife. What is your opinion on this point, Mr. Calvert?"

Mary's ignorance of Latin, he remembered how clever and well-read she was, and thought it not impossible that he should see her name. He began about the middle of the list and read downwards until he reached that which he sought. It was most with a feeling of satisfaction that he noted the absence of her name, as he was thus relieved from the self-reproach of having aided her unfairly to attain a place of distinction. When he reached the end of the list, Mr. Calvert began to read upwards from the point at which he had started. At last, when he reached the top, he breathed a sigh of relief; but this was quickly followed by a startled exclamation of surprise and consternation, for there, standing apart from the others, was the name of Mary Faber as the first student of her year, and the winner of the Brackenbury scholarship of a hundred guineas, which had been presented to St. Margaret's, by a well-known manufacturer. Then Mr. Calvert read in the remarks appended to the list that the student who had gained the valuable prize, though she had barely succeeded to pass in Latin, had been first in mathematics, first in English, first in French, and third in German. Mr. Calvert's hand trembled slightly as he laid down the paper, and his pale face wore an expression of pain.

He was harassed by conflicting emotions, as love and his admiration for the girl's talents alternated with detestation of the deceit in which he had shared. In any circumstances, he told himself, it was bad enough to have given her an undeserved certificate of proficiency; but to have enabled her unfairly to carry off this valuable prize from the other competitors seemed almost like felony, even though he had unwittingly brought about this grave result.

If he had trifled with Miss Faber's affections when he met her at Eastbourne, the remorse he was now enduring was almost sufficient punishment. If he could have acknowledged his own fault, without betraying her confidence, he would have done so; but this was impossible. So it only remained for him to forget her and to avoid in the future any conduct which might produce such regrettable consequences.

It was chiefly owing to the solicitations of his friends that Mr. Calvert a few months later became a candidate for the headmastership of Canonbury, where he was the first of his brilliant career at Oxford he had conferred additional renown upon the old school. He was also known to be a skilful teacher, and to possess rare powers of organization. All this was of course to his advantage; but, on the other hand, his youthfulness seemed to militate against his chance of success. Many, however, who were well qualified to judge, believed that he would be the successful candidate, as it was understood that the electors were anxious, if possible, to appoint a young man who would devote the best years of his life to the work, and who, having a proper sense of the widening scope of modern studies, would be free from old-fashioned prejudices.

The master of Joseph's College, Oxford, was in virtue of his office one of the governors of Canonbury School. When, therefore, Mr. Calvert one morning received a note requesting him to call on the electors, he knew that he must be one of those appointments was being contemplated, and that the master of Joseph's had been deputed to ascertain his views on certain points, or to obtain some pledge from him regarding his policy should the choice fall upon him.

Nor was Mr. Calvert mistaken. After a few commonplace observations, the master of Joseph's said to him:—"In becoming a candidate for the headmastership of Canonbury, you were doubtless unaware that in two important particulars you are really ineligible." "I was certainly not aware of the fact," replied Mr. Calvert, supposing that his age must certainly be one of the objections found to him.

"You are not in orders," said the master, "and it is necessary that the head-master of Canonbury should be a clergyman. It is true that there is no statutory regulation to this effect; but the head masters have hitherto invariably been in orders, and the electors decline to form a new precedent by appointing a layman."

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TO BE CONTINUED.