Choice Literature.

The Bridge Between.

CHAPTER XXI.—DOROTHY ENGAGED.

I cannot bear September; there is always something very sad about it," Dorothy said, wearily, as she sat with her betrothed beneath the boughs of the sycamore-tree.

She never had anything to talk to him about—or very seldom, at any rate—and when he talked to her of a hundred things she neither cared for nor understood, she quietly sailed off in a day-dream.

He used to think she would awake some day to the realities he saw so keenly, and so he waited patiently till the time should come.

"Yes, dear," he said, quietly, in answer to her remark, but without the slightest shade of curiosity in his voice, or even looking up from his book.

"It is the month in which the leaves begin to fall, you know, just as if they were trying to make a pall for the dead summer."

"Yes, dear," in the same tone.

"I hate being called 'dear!'" she broke out, passionately.

He looked up then.

"My dear child," he said, kindly, "what is the matter with you?" and he put down his book on the end of the seat, and, taking her hands in his, looked at her face, and at the two brown eyes into which the tears were slowly stealing.

"Don't call me 'child' either," she said.

It used to be Adrian Fuller's term of endearment, and now she could not bear that he should use it.

"Then I'll call you my little girl," he said, tenderly; "and so tell me what is the matter."

"Nothing," she answered; only the summer has gone, or nearly so, and I feel as if all the past summers belonged to me, and I lived in them, but the future ones will belong to others, and I may look on, but shall never feel they are mine any more."

"Where did you get your strange fancies from, Dorothy?"

"I don't know."

"You must read more, and learn to think more, on hard, healthy subjects, and get all those miserable ideas out of your head. You should learn to occupy yourself."

"That is what you always say," she answered. "But what *can* I do?"

"I'll find some work for you by-and-by. We will study together, dear. You shall write for me sometimes, too; you write such a nice hand, Dorothy."

"Yes," she said, not at all delighted with the prospect or propitiated by the praise. "Shall you always work?" she asked, after a minute or two.

"Yes, I hope so."

And then, seeing that the tears had vanished from her eyes, he absently he opened his book again, and she sat thinking.

She had been engaged a month, and she was so tired of it. It was like being in school, she thought, though school was a thing she had never known. She thought when she accepted George Blakesley, too, that after all Adrian Fuller would be sorry, and even his sympathy would be grateful to her; but no, he had only seemed a little surprised—that was all. And Netta had been delighted; it was a step towards the prosperity of the family, she considered; and her mother and father had been pleased also, and kissed her, and told her that now she must leave off her wild roving habits, and behave like a young lady; and her rebellious spirit rose at the speech. As for Tom, he had chaffed her in no sparing terms, and it had fretted and worried her; and Will and Sally seemed to think that as she was engaged she was no longer one of themselves, and so they left her to her own devices; and the old happy life went for ever.

George Blakesley was always with her—always bringing her books to read, and talking to her of things she could not and would not understand or like, and she got impatient, and angry, and fretful. He was always kind, always affectionate and patient, and willing to explain things, but still she shrank from him. She was grateful to him; for, did he not love her? Yet she was not satisfied, and longed—oh, how wildly she longed!—to be free; but she felt chained and bound.

He shut his book presently. "It is getting dusky," he said. "Get your hat, dear, and let us go a little way."

She meekly obeyed him; and they sauntered out at the garden gate, and on through the dim lanes.

"Dorothy," he said, presently, "will you come to tea to-morrow at my house. You have never seen it yet, you know, and I want you to meet my aunts. We have been engaged a month, and they have not seen you yet."

She had always put it off.

"Oh no, no!" she answered, shrinkingly.

"Why not? You shall come to early tea, with your mother, in the afternoon. My aunts are nice old ladies, and they will be so fond of my little girl. We'll invite Netta too."

"Not to-morrow," she pleaded.

"Yes, dear; I have asked them already, so you must manage it. I saw them today, and they were so anxious to see you." Then there came a dead silence, and they walked on. "Don't you think we might be married this year?——" he began.

"Oh no, no!"

"Why not, dear!"

"Oh please don't!" she broke out; "oh pray let me off! I don't want to be married, and I shall never do—indeed I shall not! I am not half clever enough; and I would give the world to be free again. Oh, George, do let me off! I am not old enough yet, and want to be by myself a little longer!"

"My dear child!" he said, when a pause came, and reverting in his surprise to the old phrase, "you mustn't go on like this. You quite distress me. It is all strange to you yet, dear."

"Oh no—it is not that," she said, sadly; "but I shall never be reconciled to it. Won't you let me off?" she pleaded.

He looked at her with a long, long grave look.

"No, dear," he answered. "I could not bear to do that now. You will get reconciled in time. I cannot let you off."

CHAPTER XXII.—DOROTHY A HYPOCRITE.

It came about that Tom escorted Dorothy to her lover's tea-party the next day. Mrs. Woodward was not well, and, to Dorothy's relief, Netta excused herself, on the plea of expecting visitors at home. A change had come over Tom lately. What it was Dorothy did not know; but he seemed more taken up with himself, and a little preoccupied, and almost selfish. He used to be so very unselfish at one time—ready to buy her anything he could afford out of his pocket-money, and to help her in a bit of fun, or sympathise with her in any of the trifling troubles that came to her, in the old happy days.

"I suppose as we get older we get more selfish, all of us," she thought, as they trudged along, "and more taken up with our own individual troubles and pleasures. I am. I used to think of all sorts of things once, and now all my time is taken up in thinking how much I would give if my life were different."

"What an awful 'gig' you look, Dorothy!" said her hopeful brother, arousing her with a start from her reverie, and recalling her to the terrible ordeal before her—*i.e.*, the first visit to her future home (as she supposed it would be), and the meeting of the maiden aunts.

"Do I?" she exclaimed, ruefully; "and I have got on all my best things. Netta made me put them on, and they are so uncomfortable."

"Made you do it on purpose, you may depend. This is Blakesley's house, Doll. Awfully prim-looking crib, isn't it? and you have no idea what it's like inside—all spider-legs and crockery, chairs you can't sit upon, and clocks that won't go—a get-up which he calls Old Style. He'll make *you* get up like a Dresden china image when you are married, to complete the picture."

It *was* a prim-looking house—a square, squat little place, standing under the shelter of a much larger house which was next to it, and enclosed on three sides with a neatly-kept garden. There was a rustic porch—"so make-believe countrified," she thought, as they entered. A middle-aged servant opened the door, and showed them into a peculiar-shaped drawing-room, which was reached by ascending a steep little staircase, lighted by a diamond-paned window. It was a quaint room—only a man of culture and refinement could have collected and arranged the things in it—and yet it had a hard uncomfortable look everywhere, save in one corner by the fire, where there was a large old-fashioned easy chair, into which Dorothy longed to creep and hide herself.

"The old cats haven't arrived, that's evident," said Tom, with his usual want of politeness.

There was no one in the drawing-room when they entered.

"Oh Tom, don't——" she began; but George Blakesley entered, and Dorothy stood shyly before him, awkward with the weight of her best clothes and the shining glory of the bracelet Netta had given her long ago, and some additional ornaments which the beauty had insisted upon lending her (to do her justice, Netta had tried to make her sister look nice, and had succeeded), and shrinking from the ordeal of meeting strangers as the acknowledged *fiancée* of the master of that house.

"How pretty we look!" he said.

The words would have given such new pleasure to her once, no matter from whose lips they fell, but now she hardly cared. The faint sound of a door-bell was heard, then a rustle of silk, and Dorothy retreated into an uncomfortable arm-chair in a corner (there were lots of arm-chairs), just half a second before the door opened, and three ladies entered. From her corner and the arm-chair, from which she suddenly realized that it was impossible to rise, Dorothy first looked at her future relations. Tom was perhaps the only self-possessed person in the room for a moment.

"Aunt Milly" George Blakesley said, when he had saluted the elderly spinsters, "this is Dorothy, and this is your Aunt Milly, dear."

She was the eldest of the three—a kind old lady, with a bright sunshiny smile, and a voice as crisp and clear and sweet as the chirp of a bird.

"I am very glad to see you, my dear," she said; but Dorothy hung her head, and had nothing to say in reply to her.

"I feel such a dreadful hypocrite!" she thought.

"This is Aunt Josephine."

And the second lady (she could not be called old yet) came forward; but she only bowed. A handsome woman still was Josephine; she had been a beauty in her day, and she carried the conscious remembrance of it about with her. She was not a sunshiny happy-faced thing, like her elder sister, nor was she as gentle, though her heart was every bit as kind, perhaps. But she was stiff and proud, and sometimes perhaps a little hard when she meant to be only just. Then Dorothy was introduced to the third aunt, Minnie, who was not more than forty-five; she was a smaller woman than the others, and had a nervous little laugh. She came forward and kissed Dorothy.

"I am so glad to see you, dear," she said; and Dorothy sank back into the ugly chair again, relieved.

Tea was brought up, and some more people arrived. George Blakesley had quite a party, and every one looked at Dorothy, who felt herself getting more and more frightened.

"I only wish I dared make a face at that man sitting on the sofa!" she thought. The man on the sofa was handsome, but looked miserable (it was a way he had Dorothy found out afterwards); "and I would give all the world to do something outrageous, and horrify every one. Of course, they all think I'm dreadfully in love, and I'm not—not a bit; I'd give the world to go away and never see any one as long as I live!" Then a half sad, a half comic train of thoughts came floating through her brain. Never to see any one again! why, she must be a Robinson Crusoe to accomplish that! And she thought of Mr. Fuller, and the summer day on which he had told her, carelessly enough, that she should be "Man Friday," and the tears came into her eyes. "I shall never be so happy again," she thought; "never, never, as long as I live!"

"I have brought you some tea dear," a low voice said; and she looked up.

It was the man to whom she was engaged, whom she ought to love more than any one in the world, and whom, oh sorrowful thought! she did not love even the least bit. Presently the miserable young man rose, and went, and the other visitors followed his example, all but the aunts, each pointedly shaking hands with her, to show that they recognized her position.

"Tom," said George Blakesley, "I want to show you some fossils I have in my study." Dorothy rose to her feet also, but he went over and put his hand upon her shoulder, and wondered why she trembled so. "I dare say she is nervous, poor little thing," he thought. "No, dear," he said, in the kind voice her ungrateful heart would not answer; "you stay and talk to our aunts a little while."

And he vanished with Tom, and left her to their tender mercies.

CHAPTER XXIII.—TABBY, TORTOISESHELL, AND BLACK-AND-WHITE.

So they gathered round her—those three stiff spinsters, in their old-fashioned rustling silk gowns; the youngest (Minnie) did not wear silk either, but something soft and clinging, with a dead-white collar about her throat.

"And are you very happy, my dear?" began the eldest, in her purring sort of way.

"Yes—I don't know—I suppose so, Miss Mil—" stammered Dorothy, feeling that she was about to undergo a cross-examination, and fearing lest she should betray what a rank imposter she was.

"You must call us all aunts, my dear; I am Aunt Milly," you know," the old lady said, kindly.

"You must let me tell you, Dorothy," said Josephine, grandly, "you have every reason to congratulate yourself. I can assure you I do not know a more worthy young man than our nephew George. A most clever, upright, conscientious——"

But Minnie (among their friends they were always addressed by their Christian names, preceded by the title of Miss) interrupted her sister with a nervous little laugh. "You mustn't frighten her, dear Josephine," she said; and then, feeling it was her turn to put a question, she asked, "and when do you think it will be, Dorothy?" They all carefully called her Dorothy to show that she was considered a future member of the family.

But Dorothy only looked still more afraid, and said she didn't know, but "not for a long time she hoped;" and they thought it only natural that she should be shy.

Then they asked her if she was musical, and if she was fond of reading, and how long she had known George, and all sorts of questions, which poor Dorothy answered to the best of her ability till Tom and the hero of the occasion appeared, and the aunts got up to go.

"You must let us see you often, Dorothy," Josephine said; "I dare say George will bring you to dine with us one evening next week," and she swept grandly out of the small room, ruffling a tiger's skin, and nearly upsetting a valuable and singularly ugly old china vase on her way.

"Good-bye, dear!" said Miss Milly, kindly, and she whispered, "Be a good little wife to my George; he has always been my boy since he lost his mother, and now you must belong to me, too," and when she looked up, surprised at receiving no answer, she saw two wistful brown eyes, and so sad an expression on the sweet girl-face, that it haunted and puzzled her for many a day afterwards. She stooped and kissed her, and the third sister followed her example, and then they vanished, and the dreadful tea-party was over.

The September days were drawing in when Dorothy and her brother and George Blakesley left the prim cottage.

"We'll go and make Netta sing to us in the twilight," the latter said, as an excuse for returning with them; and then he asked, "well, how did my little girl like the aunts?"

"They were very kind," she began.

"Nice old cats!" said Tom, approvingly.

"Tom!" exclaimed Dorothy, horrified.

"Well, so they are; I don't mean it disrespectfully, do I, Blakesley?"

"No, of course not!" he answered.

"Do you know," continued the youth, blithe at finding himself encouraged, "the eldest makes me think of a nice kind old purring tabby. I like cats," he added; "so does Dolly; I remember she blubbered like anything over Venus's funeral two or three years ago."

"I'm sure I didn't, Tom!" said his sister, indignantly; and then she added, "do you know, I think Aunt Minnie is something like what Venus was—so very gentle and soft, and all black-and-white."

"And what is Aunt Josephine?" asked Blakesley.

"Tortoiseshell, of course!" said Tom. "She's handsome and grand, and wags her tail just like a tortoiseshell."

"Very well then, we'll call them Tabby, Tortoiseshell, and Black-and-white, in future," he said; and thus, without one spark of disrespect, and in no uncomplimentary spirit, the aunts were generally spoken of afterwards.

"Now I shall trudge on," said Tom, obligingly, and give you two a chance to spoon in the twilight."

Dolly tried to hold him back (being alone with her *fiancée* always distressed her), but he said he wanted to get on faster, and left them to their fate.

CHAPTER XXIV.—"DOROTHY."

"We might take a walk," George Blakesley said.

"No," she pleaded, humbly.

"Yes, come a little way," he said, and went on under the dim trees. "I want to ask you something. Can't it really be this year, Dorothy?"

"No, no! oh no!"

"Why not?"

"I don't know; I can't tell you. Let me be free a little longer. And I must go in. Turn back, oh do turn back, George!"

She had hardly ever called him by his Christian name before, and he gave in to her immediately on hearing it. Yet when they reached the house he was still loath to enter.

"Will you come into the garden and talk there?" he added.

"Yes, if you will let me go in and speak to them all first," she answered.

She wanted to see what they were doing.

"Then I will wait for you under the sycamore-tree;" and he passed through the house and out into the garden.

Dorothy opened the door of the sitting-room, and walked in. It was dark, and yet there was the sound of some one within.

"Netta," she said.

"It is I," said a voice, that in her present mood made her almost shiver. "Come in Dorothy." It was Mr. Fuller. "I am alone," he said. "Your father is in the study, and has called Netta to him for a minute or two, and your mother has a headache, and is lying down. Come in, child, and don't stand like a frightened ghost by the door!"

"It is so dark," she said; "and I am going into the garden; Mr. Blakesley is waiting for me."

"Never mind him," he answered, impatiently; "I want to know how you like your new relations?"

"Very much," she said, awkwardly, thinking how strange his manner was.

"Come in," he said again, impatiently; "do you think I am going to eat you? Or are you afraid Blakesley will if he catches you talking to me?"

"No," she answered; "I am not a bit afraid."

"Well then," he said; and going up to her, he took her hand, and drew her further into the room, till in the grey light he saw her pale face and flashing eyes. "Come and tell me how you got on with your new relations. You have quite forgotten me; I said Blakesley would cut me out, you know, dear."

"No, he never did, never!" she exclaimed. "You forgot *me*, and liked Netta better because she was beautiful and——"

"No," he said," remember how I kept your rose."

"I don't care," she answered, proudly; "that was no sign you remembered me; perhaps you merely forgot to throw it away, and afterwards, you know, you liked Netta."

"How can you be so silly, child! I only wanted her to sit for me because she was pretty. You were always my friend. Don't you remember what chums we used to be, Dorothy? You were quite fond of me till the interloping Blakesley came and cut me out."

He had roused the fire sleeping in the girl's nature at last, and she turned round and faced him.

"I was very fond of you when I was a child!" she exclaimed. "You were very kind to me, and the dearest friend I ever had, and I shall never forget you as you were *then*." Her voice softened as she spoke of the old days; but she put her hand to her throat for a moment, as if to steady it, and then went on as hard as before. "But when you came back, though I was the same, you had changed. I had the old feeling still, and you pretended to be the same, though you were not. And then you told, or as good as told me, that I was in love with you, and you told Netta so as well, and tried plainly to make me understand that it was hopeless. I wonder you dared! If it *had* been true!"—she could not say that it had not been; but this he never guessed—"if it had been true you should have died rather than said so—it was mean and cowardly and contemptible!"

"Dorothy!"

"So it was. I have never forgiven you for it. I never shall! I shall never like you again as long as I live; I could not; and you have given me the bitterest remembrance of my life. It has spoilt my world too; for I used to think you such a hero, Mr. Fuller; and when I lost my faith in you I lost it in all others as well; you dragged down everything in your fall."

"Why did you tell me this to-night? I have——"

"Why, because you dared to talk to me in a manner to which you had no right, forgetting that I am engaged too, and perhaps shall be married soon;" she felt cold at the very thought; "and that you are in love with my sister."

"No——"

"Yes you are, you are, and engaged too, I believe!"

"Dorothy, your sister will be married to Sir George Finch in less than a month, and is going to India. She told me so to night, and I am waiting here to say good-bye to her."

"Netta going to be married, and going to India!" exclaimed Dorothy, the meaning of his strange manner flashing on her now.

She stood dumb with surprise.

"Yes."

"But she doesn't care for him. Why, I heard——" she hesitated. She did not like to confess what she had overheard.

"He is rich," he said, scornfully; "and she cares for that." It was such a pained voice in which he spoke, though he tried to steady it; and the girl before him understood his feelings better than he imagined.

Things had been altogether rough on Adrian Fuller that evening.

"I so sorry for you, Mr. Fuller," she said, simply.

"You need not be, child. I dare say it is much better. She will be here again directly, to say good-bye to me, Dorothy; you won't see me again for many a long day. I shall go abroad for a couple of months, or a couple of years, if I can get anything to do."

"Good-bye," she said, the old feeling rushing back for a minute; "I am sorry I told what I did to-night; but I didn't know of this then."

"No, Dolly, of course not," he answered, using the old pet name, which only Tom gave her now, "I have been a great scoundrel to you. Perhaps we shan't see each other again; good-bye;" and he shook her hands, and then, unable to say more, Dorothy turned and went; but when she got to the hall he spoke, and she stopped, and he came out. "I shall keep the rose," he whispered; "I shall keep it as long as I live, Dorothy."

And all this time George Blakesly was in the garden waiting for her.

(To be continued.)

Scientific and Useful.

CHOCOLATE PASTE.

One cup milk boiled, and when boiling stir in it two tablespoonfuls corn starch dissolved in half cup cold water; then add two ounces Baker's favorite chocolate grated, the yolk of an egg beaten, twelve teaspoons vanilla; stir this over the fire, and when a little cool add one cup powdered sugar. This will make a thick paste to spread between the layers of cake.

GOLD CAKE.

Take the yolks of six eggs, beat them to a froth and mix them with a cup of sugar; three-fourths of a cup of butter, previously stirred to a cream; add two cups of sifted flour, and a half teaspoonful of soda, dissolved in a cup of milk; when well mixed, add a teaspoonful of cream of tartar. Flavor with the extract of peach or lemon, and bake in square tins.

REMEDY FOR SORE-BACKED HORSES.

Prepare a wash of vinegar, one quart; laudanum, half an ounce; sugar of lead, four drachms; mix, and apply three or four times a day. The bruised part should be washed with warm water and carbolic soap every morning, and well dried before the lotion is applied. The saddle should not be put on his back until the wounded part is healed.

WHY POTATOES DEGENERATE.

Everybody knows that when a new variety of potatoes makes its appearance, the yield is large. The reason is that seed potatoes cost from two to five dollars a bushel, and, out of motives of economy, we plant scientifically. We cut a potato into small bits, with not more than two eyes in a piece. When these potatoes become cheap, we plant whole potatoes, big and little, generally little, and the result is just the same as if we planted from ten to twenty grains of corn in a hill.

SOFT GINGER BREAD.

One and one-half cups molasses, one egg, one-half cup shortening, three-fourths cup of boiling water, one teaspoon soda, dissolved in the boiling water, two cups flour, one tablespoon ginger, a little pinch of salt if the shortening is fresh. This one is probably a little the better: Two-thirds cup molasses, one tablespoon lard, one tablespoon butter, the lard and butter melted together; one teaspoon ginger, one large teaspoon soda, one-half cup sour milk. For ginger snaps, leave out the milk, and roll thin.

SLICED TOMATO PICKLES.

To one gallon of sliced tomatoes that are just turning white, and have been scalded in salt and water sufficient to make them a little tender, mix a tablespoonful of ground pepper, one of mace, one of cloves, one of ground mustard, one of cinnamon, four of white mustard seed, two of celery seed or celery salt, one pod of grean peppers, four onions chopped fine, half pint grated horse radish. Mix all together, and put a layer of each alternately; add one pound of sugar, and cover with vinegar.

EXERCISE FOR CONSUMPTIVES.

The *Herald of Health* answers the question, What form of exercise is best for consumptives? "Riding on horseback will probably suit most cases best. Rowing on quiet waters with an easy-going boat is also very excellent. Swinging is very good, too, as when the body is supported by the hands it raises the shoulders up, gives more room to the lungs, and more air is absorbed. Hunting and fishing are good. Gymnastic exercise with light dumb-bells, wands, clubs, and rings, are all good if wisely used—bad if improperly used. Walking is good, but not so good as the other exercises.

WHITEWASH.

For outside work the following can scarcely be surpassed: Slack one peck of new white lime with boiling water, covering during the process to keep in as much of the steam as possible. Strain the liquid, and add to it half a peck of salt previously dissolved in hot water; one to one and a half pounds of rice paste, and half a pound of finely ground whiting. Add two and a-half gallons of hot water; stir well and apply quite hot; half a pound of glue dissolved and stirred in will be a great improvement. For barns, and, indeed, any sort of buildings, and whether inside or outside, the foregoing is very superior. The only objectionable ingredient is the salt, which has the property of attracting sheep, cattle, etc., causing no little annoyance. As the salt is not an essential ingredient, it were wise, perhaps, in such instances, to omit it.

ALCOHOL AS A MEDICINE.

There is a large and increasing number of physicians in this country who entirely discard alcohol from their prescriptions, while there are thousands more who bind themselves by no positive rule. In England the subject has been submitted to the test of experiment. A "Temperance Hospital" was opened in London in 1873, the rule in which is that alcohol is not to be prescribed. Latterly, even alcoholic tinctures have been ruled out. At the opening the power of prescribing alcohol as a drug was reserved to the visiting medical staff, but it is stated that only in one instance has this permission been used. Up to the end of April the number of in-door patients received was 325, of whom 185 were discharged cured, and 121 relieved, and 18 had died. The out-door patients numbered 2,906, and the ratio of cured and relieved (about 80 per cent.) was the same. These data are very imperfect, since the character of the disease treated is not given, and every one knows that there are diseases in which no practitioner would prescribe alcohol in any form. As remarked above, the census of American physicians would show a large majority who practically exclude alcoholic prescriptions, while they leave themselves discretion to resort to them when necessary. The danger is that one disease may be replaced by another. This danger physician and patient must estimate as best they may.