

"She is very well," answered Hayward gravely.

"Ah—well, good-bye, Master Ned. He looks as if he wanted feeding up, doesn't he? So, Mr. Hayward, mind you give him plenty to eat." And with a smile Isabel waved her driving whip, and the next moment had driven on, while Hayward proceeded—rather thoughtfully—again to lead Master Ned's pony.

The next day Isabel absolutely drove up to Combe Lodge. Ned, who was gazing out of the library window, announced her arrival to Hayward.

"Here's Lady Hamilton, sir," he cried. "And oh! my, what a big hamper one of the grooms is dragging out!"

On hearing this Hayward at once went to the hall door, and found Ned's information had been substantially correct. A big hamper was standing on one of the mats outside the vestibule, and to this Lady Hamilton pointed with a smile.

"That's for Master Ned Marston," she said. "It contains grapes, port wine, and jelly, and all sorts of things to make him fat. Don't be offended; I don't suppose you starve him," she added, as Hayward's face, perhaps naturally, assumed a look of not very agreeable surprise. "Boys, you know, require stuffing, so, please let him stuff himself."

"Your ladyship is very good," said Hayward, hesitatingly, and turning very red.

"Yes, I thought it was good of me," answered Isabel, with a little laugh. "But, you see, I knew the child long ago, and was sorry to see him look so thin. It was good of you, too," she added, "to have him down here. And now I mean to be very good," she went on, "and to take you and Master Ned out for a drive."

"Thank you,—but I think,"—said Hayward, endeavouring to make an excuse.

"Don't think—but come," said Isabel, and she looked into his face in her old, bright way. Oh, weak man! Hayward had sworn to be on his guard against this woman; had sworn to be true and loyal in look, and thought, and deed, to his friend Sir George, yet he yielded to that siren glance. He seated himself by Isabel's side; Master Ned taking his place by the groom. He sat and listened while Isabel strove to resume her old sway over him. She ignored their stormy meeting at Massam, before Hayward went to town. She ignored that she had been found out, and that Hayward knew that he had once worshipped a pale idol. She was beautiful, and she depended on the power that beauty gave her over the hearts of men. Hayward felt he was being made a fool of, and yet he did not take himself away.

Presently they passed Sir George on the road, who was walking with his head cast down, and when he looked up and his eyes met Hayward's, Hayward felt his face flush.

"Are you not going to stop?" he said to Lady Hamilton, quickly. "Don't you see Sir George?"

"Of course I see him," answered Isabel, "but I see no necessity for stopping." And with a little careless nod, she passed her husband, while Hayward felt excessively uncomfortable to be in the position in which he found himself.

Isabel, on the contrary, was rather gratified that Sir George had seen them. He had humiliated her so deeply, that she longed to humiliate him. He had brought Hayward here—her old lover—and had made a confidant of this young man about her, and so Isabel had vowed that she would win Hayward over to her side. So she was very gracious to him, but Hayward was uneasy after this meeting with Sir George. He began thinking of Hilda Marston, even as he sat by Isabel, and wishing that he had known of her pure love long ago. Hayward, in fact, was not a man who could be happy in any crooked or unlawful path.

"Master Ned," said Lady Hamilton presently, looking round, and addressing Ned Marston, "would you like to see your sister here?"

"Hil?" said Ned. "Yes, of course, but I can't."

"I've been thinking of something," continued Lady Hamilton, now speaking to Hayward. "I always liked Miss Marston. I think I shall ask her to stay with me a little while."

Hayward was silent.

"It would be a change for her, wouldn't it?" proceeded Isabel. "And also relieve you of the responsibility of looking after our young friend there? What is her address? I will write to her to-day."

Hayward gave Hilda's address, and then said with some hesitation:

"I should tell you, perhaps, that Miss Marston is engaged to be married."

"Indeed! To whom, then? If it's to some common man, I don't think I could quite stand that."

"It is to a Mr. Jervis. He is a clergyman and a gentleman—and the best man I ever knew," answered Hayward, gravely.

"Oh, indeed! Miss Hilda hasn't done badly for herself then?" said Isabel.

"No," said Hayward briefly.

"In that case there can be no objection to my asking her," continued Isabel. "I will ask her to stay—let me see—two months."

Isabel meant until the baby she expected was born. Ned Marston had put Hilda into her head, and she had been thinking that she would like to have her old companion beside her when she was ill. Hilda was sensible and agreeable, she remembered, and would not mind

sitting all day in a sick room, and this was the treat that she intended for her old friend.

Hayward heard of this proposed invitation with very mingled feelings. He would be glad to see Hilda again, and yet—

"She may not come," he reflected the next moment, but he was not angry when he heard that Hilda had accepted Lady Hamilton's invitation.

Hilda, in truth, was glad to do so. She shrank from fulfilling her engagement at once, and living in lodgings meant money and wearing anxiety. Her old friend, Miss May, still dare not ask her to stay with her on account of her school-girls, and Hilda was lonely without little Ned. So she wrote and accepted Lady Hamilton's invitation, and her sister Marian, when she heard of this, thought that there never was such a lucky girl as Hilda. To be engaged to be married, and to go and stay at Massam Park, seemed two very grand things so poor Marian, toiling in her close schoolroom. Yet, Hilda was anything but happy. She was conscience-stricken because she could not love her lover. Horace Jervis used to wonder at the humility of her manner to him; at the subdued and touching gentleness with which she obeyed his slightest wish. All except one. She would not yet fix the time of her marriage, and Jervis felt that it would be selfish to urge her do so against her will.

Thus Hilda went to Massam. She could not help thinking as she travelled there of her last visit—of the Squire's proposal, and Hayward's despair. Everything was so changed now. Isabel was a wife, the Squire was married, she was engaged, and Hayward—Hilda sighed deeply when she thought of Hayward. His life had been so full of trouble. Had things been different he might have been happy now. Did Hilda find herself picturing that happiness? The pleasant country home was his, and the fond wife to watch his coming! With a deeper sigh she tried to turn away from the contemplation of that forbidden scene. Life (as she had told Hayward) was for her very difficult and hard to understand.

Lady Hamilton received her kindly. Isabel wished Hilda to stay some time with her, and she was also, in a certain cold way of her own, glad to see her old companion. She drove her ponies to the station to meet Hilda, and altogether received her more agreeably than Hilda had expected.

"You have heard about my father's absurd marriage, of course?" said Isabel, after the first greetings between the two ladies were over, and Hilda found herself seated by Lady Hamilton's side.

"Yes," answered Hilda with a smile. "I was furious about it," continued Isabel, "and indeed for that matter I am still. Ridiculous old man! I have got into no end of trouble too about it."

"How is that?" asked Hilda.

"Well, I was in such a rage," replied Isabel. "that I tried to prevent it, and wrote an anonymous letter to my father to tell him about the Featherstones. I told Mr. Hannaway this—you remember Mr. Hannaway, don't you? And he kept some foolish letters about it, and when he was killed Sir George found these letters, and he and I have hardly spoken since." Hilda cast down her eyes. She, in fact, knew not what to say. It was a new experience in her life to hear a wife speak as Isabel did.

"And how do Mr. Trevor and his young wife get on?" presently asked Hilda.

"I'm told it's simply sickening," answered Isabel. "It's 'My dear Lucinda,' 'My dearest Lucinda,' every time he speaks to her."

"Well, that is very well at any rate," said Hilda.

"Can't say I agree with you," said Isabel, "I would forgive the girl for marrying an old man, as they were so horribly poor, but to pretend to love him is really too much."

"Perhaps she is grateful to him," said Hilda, slowly. She was thinking of her own engagement; was thinking that Lucinda Featherstone had not acted very differently to herself.

"And Patty?" she asked presently. "Is she at home?"

"She's at Sanda. She lives apparently at Sanda, and Mr. Featherstone too. Truly a nice family to be connected with!" And Isabel lashed her ponies in her irritation.

Mr. Trevor and his daughter had in fact never met since his second marriage. Socially, Isabel now held herself far above the Featherstones, and she had rejected all advances made by Mr. Featherstone and Patty with the scantiest courtesy. But the old man and his young wife were on better terms than Isabel and her husband. When Mr. Trevor said he would marry Lucinda Featherstone in defiance of all anonymous enemies, Lucinda promised herself that the Squire should never repent his generosity. And he never had. Lucinda was a quick girl, and she did her best to make him happy. Mr. Trevor was proud of his handsome young wife, and the old Hall at Sanda was by no means an unhappy home.

At Massam, on the contrary, Hilda Marston was shocked to find the terms on which the husband and wife lived. Sir George, proud, reserved, and at one time passionately enamoured of Isabel, now regarded her apparently with contempt and indifference. She had wounded him in his tenderest feelings. He had given up so much for her; he had cast his whole heart at her feet, and all the while (as he told himself) she had been mocking and jibing at him to a man of totally inferior position to himself! Truly the iron had entered his soul

on the day when he had read her letters to Mr. Hannaway.

Had he loved her less, he could have forgiven her more easily. As it was, he could sometimes scarcely restrain the burning words of anger which rose on his lips when he met her careless and defiant glances.

So there was no love in the house, but the "stalled ox and contention." Isabel was bitterly indignant with Sir George for humiliating her in the eyes of Hayward, and made no attempt at reconciliation, even if it had been possible. But she tried (as we have seen) to win back Hayward. She could do this more easily when she had Hilda staying with her, as little Ned served as a connecting link between Combe Lodge and the Park.

Thus it happened that Hayward was constantly thrown into very dangerous company. Had Hilda accepted him, he told himself, he need not have been afraid, but Hilda had not accepted him. Nay, the poor girl was now trying hard to do her duty. She had no soft looks for Hayward; no confidential words. She was at war with her own heart, and even unnecessarily cold in her manner to her old friend.

She saw, too, that the former infatuation with which he had regarded Isabel Trevor was not quite ended. This made her miserable, jealous, and uneasy, coquetting and toying with her flowers. Presently Hilda saw her give a rose to Hayward, and saw also the manner in which he received it. Then, by and by, Hayward approached Hilda, plucking another rose held it towards her.

"Will you have it, Hilda?" he said.

"No!" she answered, sharply, turning her flushed face round, and looking at him: "why do you offer it to me?"

"Beause—" began Hayward.

"Mr. Hayward," interrupted Hilda, with heaving breast and flashing eyes, "I had a friend once that—that I believe would have died sooner than he would have acted as you are doing now!"

"What do you mean?" asked Hayward, glancing at Isabel, who, however, was too far from them to hear what they were saying.

"I have not forgotten," continued Hilda, passionately, "when the woman you are so friendly and familiar with to-day, drove you from here miserable and broken-hearted! Yes, you know what she is—a wife—a married woman—and yet—"

"Hilda, you are an old friend," said Hayward, with some sternness, "but if anyone else had said such words to me—"

"You know they are true," retorted Hilda, in her jealous passion and indignation.

But at this moment Lady Hamilton called out to them.

"What are you two quarrelling about?" she cried from the end of the conservatory. "You remind me of Snap and Jerry over a bone, your expressions are both so warlike."

"Miss Marston is taking the privilege of an old friend, and giving me a lecture," answered Hayward, trying to speak lightly, and approaching Lady Hamilton; but, with an indignant glance Hilda turned away and left the conservatory.

"What has the young woman been saying?" asked Isabel, when she saw that she and Hayward were alone. "Ah!—you need not tell me," she continued laughingly. "Poor Hayward! so she has been scolding you, has she, because you have still some little friendship and regard for me?"

(To be continued.)

HEARTH AND HOME.

THE great warriors of life are the so-called "little things" which are from day to day left unadjusted, till they fasten their victims like a net. The men who die of "over-work" are not so much destroyed by their great useful labours as by the vexatious trifles which accumulate till they produce a chronic fever and unrest.

ONE'S LEVEL.—During the slow process of finding one's level, there is not only mortification but bewilderment in the discovery that the highest gifts are by no means the most acceptable, at least not the most readily acceptable. No doubt unusual gifts excite immediate admiration, but that very admiration tends to keep its object at arm's length, for a while at any rate. And, if the superiority be at all real and extensive, it does necessarily prove, even in the long run, more or less isolating. An exceptionally gifted person will perhaps have many points of sympathy with a large number of other minds; but the people with whom such a one can be altogether at home will be very few.

GOSSIP.—Within certain easily-defined limits gossip is agreeable and essential to the carrying on of polite intercourse. If all gossip were strictly eliminated from conversation, conversation would cease to be. We could not always engage in metaphysical discussions. We cannot always throw ourselves with animation into the political changes of the world. The gossip on which we should frown, which we should not tolerate within our hearing, or allow to pass without indignant protest, is that which concerns the motives and characters of others, that which maligns the absent, and that which is in feeling and purpose unkindly. Slander should be put down resolutely; and that sort of insinuation which tends towards slander should meet determined opposition. A lie which is half a truth is ever the worst of lies.

"OLD men for counsel, young men for action," is a time-honoured axiom. It is founded on the consideration that the aged who have seen much of the world may be presumed to have profited by their long observation, and to have grown cautious and wise; while to the hot blood of youth action is natural. But in many of the affairs of life the young are called to act without convenient opportunity to consult their elders, and, not unfrequently, in reference to matters of much moment. It is desirable that in such cases they should act wisely. We answer in a single word—"Think." Think—not afterwards—not when it is too late—not when the action is past,—but think beforehand. "Look before you leap," as Franklin quaintly expressed it, having derived the lesson from an unsuccessful attempt to leap over a ditch, which a look at its width beforehand would have prevented.

PRESCRIPTION.—For a Fit of Passion: Walk out in the open air. You may speak your mind to the winds without hurting anyone, or proclaiming yourself to be a simpleton.—For a Fit of Illness: Count the ticking of a clock. Do this for one hour, and you will be glad to pull off your coat and work like a man.—For a Fit of Extravagance: Go to the workhouse, or speak to the inmates of a gaol, and you will be convinced.—For a Fit of Ambition: Go to the churchyard and read the gravestones. They will tell you the end of man in his best estate.—For a Fit of Repining: Look about for the halt and blind, and visit the bedridden, the afflicted, and the deranged, and they will make you ashamed of complaining of your light afflictions.—For a Fit of Envy: Go and see how many who keep their carriage are afflicted with rheumatism, gout, and dropsy, how many walk abroad on crutches, or stay at home wrapped in flannel, and how many are subject to epilepsy and apoplexy.

EXERCISE AND DIGESTION.—When exercise is properly conducted, the effect on the digestive system is very marked. The appetite is increased, and more food is taken in order to supply the force necessary for the maintenance of the mechanical force. This increase of appetite is especially noted when the exercise is taken in open air. When exercise is undertaken however without due preparation, or the bodily powers are exhausted by fatigue, the power of being able to take food is diminished. This condition, if the exercise is continued and the power of taking food remains impaired, is one of considerable danger, and the health is often greatly affected, the force of the heart being much reduced. It is of great importance, moreover, when great fatigue has been undergone, to see that the bodily powers are thoroughly recruited by rest before an attempt is made to take food, otherwise there will be no inclination to take it, and if forced down it will not digest. An hour's rest with a cup of warm tea will do much towards restoring appetite in these cases. Indeed it should be a rule in all cases that a period of rest should intervene between work and food.

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The undersigned begs respectfully to inform the ladies of the city and country that they will find at his Retail Store, 196 St. Lawrence Main Street, the choicest assortment of Ostrich and Vulture Feathers, of all shades; also, Feathers of all descriptions repaired with the greatest care. Feathers dyed as per sample, on shortest delay. Gloves cleaned and dyed black only. J. H. LEBLANC. Works: 547 Craig St.

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