

EFFECT OF A FALSEHOOD.

'Are you returning immediately to Worcester?' said Lady Leslie, a widow residing near that city, to a young officer who was paying her a morning visit.

'I am. Can I do anything for you there?'

'Yes. You can do me a great kindness. My confidential servant, Baynes, is gone out for the day and night; and I do not like to trust my new footman, of whom I know nothing, to put this letter in the post-office, as it contains a fifty-pound note.'

'Indeed! that is a large sum to trust to the post.'

'Yes; but I am told that it is the safest conveyance. It is, however, quite necessary that a person whom I can trust should put the letter in the box.'

'Certainly,' replied Captain Freeland. Then, with an air that showed he considered himself as a person to be trusted, he deposited the letter in safety in his pocket-book, and took his leave; promising he would return to dinner next day, which was Saturday.

On the road Freeland met some of his brother officers, who were going to pass the day and night at Great Malvern; and as they earnestly pressed him to accompany them, he wholly forgot the letter entrusted to his care; and, having despatched his servant to Worcester, for his *sac de nuit* and other things, he turned back with his companions, and passed the rest of the day in that sauntering but amusing idleness that *dolce far niente*, which may be reckoned comparatively virtuous, if it leads to the forgetfulness of little duties only, and is not attended by the positive infringement of greater ones. But, in not putting this important letter into the post, as he had engaged to do, Freeland violated a real duty; and he might have put it in at Malvern, had not the encounter with his brother officers banished the commission given him entirely from his thoughts. Nor did he remember it, till, as they rode through the village the next morning, on their way to Worcester, they met Lady Leslie walking in the road.

At sight of her, Freeland recollected, with shame and confusion, that he had not fulfilled the charge committed to him; and vain would he have passed her unobserved; for, as she was a woman of high fashion, great talents, and some severity, he was afraid that his negligence, if avowed, would not only cause him to forfeit her favor, but expose him to her powerful sarcasm.

To avoid being recognized was, however, impossible; and as soon as Lady Leslie saw him, she exclaimed:

'Oh! Captain Freeland, I am so glad to see you! I have been quite uneasy concerning my letter since I gave it to your care; for it was of such consequence. Did you put it in the post yesterday?'

'Certainly,' replied Freeland, hastily, and in the hurry of the moment—'certainly. How could you, dear madam, doubt my obedience to your commands?'

'Thank you! thank you!' cried she.—'How you have relieved my mind!'

He had so; but he had painfully burdened his own. To be sure, it was only a white lie—the lie of fear. Still he was not used to utter falsehood; and he felt the meanness and degradation of this. He had yet to learn that it was mischievous also; and that none can presume to say where the consequences of the most apparently trivial lie would end. As soon as Freeland parted with Lady Leslie, he bade his friends farewell, and putting spur to his horse, scarcely slackened his pace till he had reached a general post-office, and deposited the letter in safety.

'Now, then,' thought he, 'I hope I shall be able to return and dine with Lady Leslie, without shrinking from her penetrating eye.'

He found her, when he arrived, very penitent and absent; so much so that she felt it necessary to apologize to her guests, informing them that Mary Benson, an old servant of hers, who was very dear to her, was seriously ill, and painfully circumstanced; and that she feared she had not done her duty by her.

'To tell you the truth, Captain Freeland,' said she, speaking to him in a low voice, 'I blame myself for not having sent for my confidential servant, who was not very far off, and despatched him with the money, instead of trusting it to the post.'

'It would have been better to have done so, certainly!' replied Freeland, deeply blushing.

'Yes; for the poor woman to whom I sent it, is not only herself in a delicate state of health, but she has a sick husband, unable to be moved; and as, but owing to no fault of his, he is on the point of bank-

ruptcy, his cruel landlord has declared that, if they do not pay their rent by to-morrow, he will turn them out into the street, and seize the very bed they lie on! However, as you put the letter into the post yesterday, they must get the fifty-pound note to-day, else they could not; for there is no delivery of letters in London on a Sunday, you know.'

'True, very true,' replied Freeland, in a tone which he vainly tried to render steady.

'Therefore,' continued Lady Leslie, 'if you had told me, when we met, that the letter was not gone, I should have recalled Baynes, and sent him off by the mail to London; and then he would have reached Somerstown, where the Bensons live, in good time; but now, though I own it would be a comfort to me to send him, for fear of accident, I could not get him back again soon enough; therefore, I must let things take their chance; and, as letters seldom miscarry, the only danger is, that the note may be taken out.'

She might have talked an hour without answer or interruption; for Freeland was too much shocked, too much conscience-stricken to reply; as he found that he had not only told a falsehood, but that, if he had had moral courage enough to tell the truth, the mischievous negligence, of which he had been guilty, could have been repaired; but now as Lady Leslie said, it was too late!

But, while Lady Leslie became talkative, and able to perform her duties to her friends, after she had unburdened her mind to Freeland, he grew every minute more absent, and more taciturn; and, though he could not eat with appetite, he threw down, rather than drank, repeated glasses of hock and champagne, to enable him to rally his spirits; but in vain. A naturally ingenuous and generous nature cannot shake off the first compunctious visitings of conscience for having committed an unworthy action, and having also been the means of injury to another. All on a sudden, however, his countenance brightened; and as soon as the ladies left the table, he started up, left his compliments and excuses with Lady Leslie's nephew, who presided at dinner; said he had a pressing call to Worcester; and, when there, as the London mail was gone, he threw himself into a post-chaise, and set off for Somerstown, which Lady Leslie had named as the residence of Mary Benson. 'At least,' said Freeland to himself with a lightened heart, 'I shall now have the satisfaction of doing all I can to repair my fault.'

But, owing to the delay occasioned by want of horses and by finding the ostlers at the inns in bed, he did not reach London and the place of his destination till the wretched family had been dislodged; while the unhappy wife was weeping, not only over the disgrace of being so removed, and for her own and her husband's increased illness in consequence of it, but from the agonizing suspicion that the mistress and friend, whom she had so long loved, and relied upon, had disregarded the tale of her sorrows, and had refused to relieve her necessities! Freeland soon found a conductor to the mean lodging in which the Bensons had obtained shelter; for they were well known; and their hard fate was generally pitied; but it was some time before he could speak, as he stood by their bedside; he was chuked with painful emotions at first—with pleasing emotions afterward; for his conscience smote him for the pain he had occasioned, and applauded him for the pleasure which he came to bestow.

'I come,' said he, at length, while the sufferers waited in almost angry wonder, to hear his reason for thus intruding on them—'I come to tell you, from your kind friend, Lady Leslie—'

'Then she has not forgotten me!' screamed out the poor woman, almost gasping for breath.

'No, to be sure not; she could not forget you; she was incapable—' Here his voice wholly failed him.

'Thank Heaven!' cried she, tears trickling down her pale cheeks. 'I can bear anything now; for that was the bitterest part of all!'

'My good woman,' said Freeland, 'it was owing to a mistake—pshaw; no, it was owing to my fault, that you did not receive a fifty-pound note by the post yesterday.'

'Fifty pounds?' cried the poor man, wringing his hands; 'why that would have more than paid all we owed; and I could have gone on with my business, and our lives would not have been risked nor disgraced!'

Freeland now turned away, unable to say a word more; but, recovering himself, he again drew near them; and, throwing his purse to the agitated speaker, said:

'There! get well! only get well! and whatever you want shall be yours! or I shall

never lose this horrible choking again while I live!'

Freeland took a walk after this scene, and with hasty, rapid strides—the painful choking being his companion very often during the course of it—for he was haunted by the image of those whom he had disgraced; and he could not help remembering that, however blameable his negligence might be, it was nothing, either in sinfulness or mischief, to the lie told to conceal it; and that, but for that lie of fear, the effects of his negligence might have been repaired in time.

But he was resolved that he would not leave Somerstown till he had seen these poor people settled in a good lodging. He therefore hired a conveyance for them, and then superintended their removal that evening to apartments full of every necessary comfort.

'My good friends,' said he, 'I cannot recall the mortification and disgrace which you have endured through my fault; but I trust that you will have gained in the end, by leaving a cruel landlord, who had no pity for your unmerited poverty. Lady Leslie's note will, I trust, reach you to-morrow; but if not, I will make up the loss; therefore be easy! and when I go away, may I have the comfort of knowing that your removal has done you no harm?'

He then, but not till then, had courage to write to Lady Leslie, and tell her the whole truth: concluding his letter thus:

'If your interesting proteges have not suffered in their health, I shall not regret what has happened; because I trust that it will be a lesson to me through life, and teach me never to tell even the most apparently trivial white lie again. How unimportant this violation of truth appeared to me at the moment! and how sufficiently motivated! as it was to avoid falling in your estimation; but it was, you see, overruled for evil; and agony of mind, disgrace, and perhaps risk of life, were the consequences of it to innocent individuals; not to mention my own pangs; the pangs of an upbraiding conscience. But forgive me, my dear lady Leslie. Now, however, I trust that this evil, so deeply repented of, will be blessed to us all; but it will be long before I forgive myself.'

Lady Leslie was delighted with this candid letter, though grieved by its painful details, while she viewed with approbation the amends which her young friend had made, and his modest disregard of his own exertions.

The note arrived in safety; and Freeland left the afflicted couple better in health, and quite happy in mind; as his bounty and Lady Leslie's had left them nothing to desire in a pecuniary point of view.

When Lady Leslie and he met, she praised his virtue, while she blamed his fault; and they fortified each other in the wise and moral resolution, never to violate truth again, even on the slightest occasion; as a lie, when told, however unimportant it may at the time appear, is like an arrow shot over a house, whose course is unseen, and may be unintentionally the cause, to some one, of agony or death.

The London Times office employs three hundred and seventy persons, every branch and department being managed with the most systematic precision and discipline. The paper has now a daily circulation of sixty-five thousand copies, requiring eleven tons of paper per day. The paper used is of linen. The large cylinder on which the paper is printed turns out eight papers every second and a half, or allowing for stoppages, about twelve thousand five hundred per hour, equal to one thousand every four minutes. After the type is set for the day's paper stereotype copies are made of it, in order to supply forms from which to print a sufficient issue for the day. No papers are issued to subscribers directly from the office—they being supplied by the newsmen.

MALE DRESS MAKERS.—The Rev. H. A. Stern, an Abyssinian missionary, writes:—'Fond as the Abyssinian women are of embroidered garments and other fineries, it is strange that they should never try to gain even a slight acquaintance with the use of the needle. High and low alike depend upon their male friends for every stitch in their dress. Tastes, of course, vary in different countries; but I confess that it always provoked me to see a tall, bearded fellow acting the dress-maker, and a slender girl performing the functions of the groom.'

LIFE.—At best life is not very long. A few more smiles, a few more tears, some pleasure, much pain, sunshine and song, clouds and darkness, hasty greetings, abrupt farewells—then our little play will close, and injured and injurer will pass away.

MEN are never so easily deceived, as when they are plotting to deceive others.

HOW TO PROCURE A HUSBAND.

The following true story might, perhaps, furnish matter for a little comedy, if comedies were still written in England. It is generally the case that the more beautiful and the richer a young female is, the more difficult are both her parents and herself in the choice of a husband, and the more offers they refuse. The one is too tall, the other too short, this not wealthy, that not respectable enough. Meanwhile one spring passes after another, and year after year carries away leaf after leaf of the bloom of youth, and opportunity after opportunity.—Miss Harriet Selwood was the richest heiress in her native town; but she had already completed her twenty-seventh year, and beheld almost all her young friends united to men whom she had at one time or other discarded. Harriet began to be set down for an old-maid. Her parents became really uneasy, and she herself lamented in private a position which is not a natural one, and to which those to whom nature and fortune have been niggardly of their gifts are obliged to submit; but Harriet, as we have said, was both handsome and very rich.—Such was the state of things when her uncle, a wealthy merchant in the north of England, came on a visit to her parents. He was a jovial, lively, straight-forward man, accustomed to attack all difficulties boldly and coolly.

'You see,' said her father to him one day, 'Harriet continues single. The girl is handsome; what she is to have for her fortune you know; even in this scandal-loving town, not a creature can breathe the slightest imputation against her; and yet she is getting to be an old-maid.'

'True,' replied the uncle; 'but look you, brother, the grand point in every affair in this world is to seize the right moment; this you have not done—it is a misfortune; but let the girl go along with me, and before the end of three months I will return her to you as the wife of a man as young and wealthy as herself.'

Away went the niece with the uncle. On the way home, he thus addressed her:

'Mind what I am going to say. You are no longer Miss Selwood, but Mrs. Lumley, my niece, a young, wealthy, childless widow. You had the misfortune to lose your husband, Colonel Lumley, after a happy union of a quarter of a year, by a fall from his horse while hunting.'

'But, uncle—'

'Let me manage, if you please, Mrs. Lumley. Your father has invested me with full powers. Here, look you, is the wedding-ring given you by your late husband. Jewels, and whatever else you need, your aunt will supply you with; and accustom yourself to cast down your eyes.'

The keen-witted uncle introduced his niece everywhere, and the young widow excited a great sensation. The gentleman thronged about her, and she soon had her choice out of twenty suitors. Her uncle advised her to take the one who was deepest in love with her and a rare chance decreed that this should be precisely the most amiable and opulent. The match was soon concluded, and one day the uncle desired to say a few words to his future nephew in private.

'My dear sir,' he began, 'we have told you an untruth.'

'How so? Are Mrs. Lumley's affections—'

'Nothing of the kind. My niece is sincerely attached to you.'

'Then her fortune, I suppose, is not equal to what you told me?'

'On the contrary; it is larger.'

'Well, what is the matter, then?'

'A joke, an innocent joke, which came into my head one day when I was in a good humor—we could not well recall it afterward. My niece is not a widow.'

'What! is Colonel Lumley living?'

'No, no; she is a spinster.'

The lover protested that he was a happier fellow than he had conceived himself; and the old-maid was forthwith metamorphosed into a young wife.

RICH JOKE.—A chap out west named Barnes, who had made a speech at a war meeting, was criticised in the village paper, which said it was a very patriotic address, but the speaker slandered Lindley Murray awfully. The next day Barnes wrote a note to the editor, declaring that he never knew such a man in his whole life as Lindley Murray, and therefore could not have slandered him. Mrs. Barnes, the wife, being at a tea-party, also took up the cudgels for her husband, when the matter was discussed, by declaring that Murray began it by abusing her husband, and got as good as he gave.