

ANNABEL OR THE TEMPTATION.

CHAPTER XVII.

JOSEPH LANGTON IS UNEXPECTEDLY DELIVERED FROM HIS DIFFICULTIES.

"No, she will tell us when she arrives, although I have a guess myself that it has been consumption."

"Consumption! Annabel did not look consumptive. She had the appearance of being a healthy girl, and there never was consumption in her family."

"I thought her parents had died of something like it."

"Certainly not. They died of misfortune, of adversity, but these are not hereditary, and in Annabel's case she had escaped them. I cannot conceive what is the disease which has cut her off."

"What does it matter?" rejoined the lawyer. "Whatever it may have been it has cut her off, and Augusta says that everything was done that possibly could be done for her. You have nothing to reflect on—nothing to regret."

"Yes I have, Hayes. I did not see her and that I shall never cease to lament."

"Suppose you had seen her you could have done her no good."

"But it would have been a satisfaction—to her, perhaps, poor dear—to myself and to Philip. Oh, I wish, I do wish I had been there."

"No use wishing that now; rather think of what is to be done, and set about it. You are going to Dover, of course?"

"Yes, certainly, I must meet them there—Augusta asks me, and—let me see—oh, yes, arrange for going on to Rockstone. Won't you go with me, Hayes? I am so shaken I could not well manage it myself. Can you manage to accompany me?"

"I'll try—in fact I resolved on it before I came. Augusta asks me in her note."

"I am glad of this, for really I am much shaken, though it will take my mind a little from other troubles—troubles which you know of, Hayes, and which get worse and worse every day."

"But which are at an end now," said Hayes, with pointed significance.

"At an end!" echoed the merchant. "Alas, no, they are rapidly increasing. In fact, a crisis cannot long be averted."

"My dear Langton, what are you talking about? Does not this event put an end to all your fears?"

"This event, said the other, failing altogether to understand his meaning."

"Yes, of course, this event."

"Annabel's death, you mean?"

"Exactly."

"How should it end these troubles?"

"Good gracious, don't you see how?—Rockstone is yours now, and the thirty thousand in the funds."

Mr. Langton dropped back in his chair in speechless amazement, and went red and pale by turns.

"I never thought of that," he gasped.

"Didn't you?"

"No, never."

"Well, it should have been about the first thing that should have occurred to me. Think of it now, and see how completely it relieves you of the strain that was crippling and threatening to crush you. The girl's death alters everything, or rather brings everything back to its former position. It matters nothing now whether Weston finds Jerry just or not, for the proof of the marriage is of no consequence."

"It does indeed alter everything," repeated the merchant, whose mind was now taking in those momentous personal consequences which flowed from Annabel's death, yet which had never dawned upon him till Hayes had drawn his attention to them.

"And alters everything in a highly satisfactory direction," remarked the lawyer. "Not only will you and Augusta come in for the estate, but the money will increase your capital, and enable you to realise the full benefit of your business extensions. By Jove, Langton, this may make you a millionaire."

The merchant drew a long sigh.

"And yet, Hayes," he said—"and yet, God knows that I would rather that Annabel had lived. Her death benefits me as much as you say; but think of the woe it brings to poor Weston. Gladly would I take all my troubles back if the doing so would restore her to life and to him."

Hayes looked at the speaker steadily to see if he was really in earnest in what he said, and by the expression of Mr. Langton's countenance he saw that he was. The lawyer turned away to the window, and mentally ejaculated—

"He means it—he actually means it—the unmitigated fool."

PROHIBITION VS. LICENSE.—The Lewis-ton (Me.) Gazette says: "We sometimes hear it said that there is more liquor drunk now in Maine, under prohibition, than there was forty years ago under license. But every candid man knows better. Indeed, a comparison of Maine today with license States shows that there are not one-fourth as many places in Maine where intoxicating liquors are sold as a beverage as there are in license States, and not one-eighth as much liquor sold per inhabitant. The last report of the Attorney-General in Maine shows ninety per cent. of our criminals are made by the liquor traffic, and gives us some interesting statistics of the decrease of crime in this State, growing out of prohibition and its enforcement. During the year 1866 the prison, jail and reform school received 264 criminals. The number sentenced in 1867 was 157; in 1868, 114; in 1869, 186; in 1870, 150; in 1871, 152; and in 1872, only 100. Estimating the average of commitments for the seven years under review, we find it 152. This result indicates the remarkable fact that crime during the last year (1872), in which the reform movement had gone hand in hand with prohibition) is thirty-three per cent. less than the average of the last seven years. It should be noticed, moreover, that the number convicted and sentenced last year, is fifty per cent. less than in 1866, and thirty-three per cent. less than in 1871.

ADULTERATION OF FOOD.—The citizens of Dundee, Scotland, were recently moved to investigate the quality of the food supplied to them by their purveyors. They found it rather bad. There was lard in the butter, and *erra alba* in the flour; the tea was full of chips and iron filings, the coffee penetrated with pungencies of chicory; every article of Dundeean diet seemed to have been tampered with. But when they came to sample the beverages they were found to be of irreproachable quality. The analytic chemists who conducted this part of the investigation testified, with tears in their eyes and aural flushes playing about their noses, that no better lard or sugar-baugh was to be found in the known world. It is from this to be conjectured that the current Scotchman is far more critical in his beverages than in his food, and that, when duly warned by the former, he is apt to pass over without notice serious imperfections in the latter.

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