

FIVE YEARS AFTER.

What! this little maid
I last saw five years ago,
When I left my dear old home
And sailed to the westward—ho!
This queenly, tall, this radiant creature
With beauty stamped on every feature.

Impossible! As yet
I can scarce believe it true.
Why, I left a little girl
Now I find a woman, who
In her divine sweet form has gathered all
That beauty gives, when grace and goodness call.

Rarely five years ago
I remember one spring day,
When a white face pressed my own
And cried when I went away:
But hold! I dream—no that could never be.
Fancy those grand eyes dimmed with tears for me!

Ah! I wonder if now
She forgets those early days,
Our scrambles through brush and furze,
Our friendships and little frays;
Was it she that pleaded, beseeched
To fish with me when the stream was reached?

Does she forget those tales
We read in the window seat?
When our young hearts' blood was stirred,
And our pulses quickly beat?
Those tales of noble deeds in days gone by,
When men braved death, and thought it nought to die.

And has she forgotten
As we read those dear old books,
As we bent over their pages,
How we'd stop with ardent looks,
And vow, while blood beat high, and eye gleamed
bright,
She would be my love, I her valiant knight!

I wonder if she still
Remembers that childish vow?
The pledge made those years ago,
Is it recollected now?
Ah! I need but gaze on her steadfast eyes,
My queen, my love, my dearest earthly prize!

DAVID BREWEN.

DAWLEY'S DODGE.

This is what my brother calls it when he narrates the story to his numerous admirers. Story! why, there is absolutely no story at all, and I should never have thought of writing about it had it not been for his vulgar exaggeration.

To begin at the beginning, I was surprised one morning to receive an invitation from Mr. Bardett to spend a few days with him at Hunterstone, his place in Leicestershire. We had never met, but I knew him to be a person of considerable importance and popularity, holding in his county a similar position to what I did in mine. He was a very large landholder, yet, curiously enough, professed the same advanced (or more properly speaking, "eccentric") views in politics as my brother Robert. I cannot attempt to account for this, but so it was. There could be no doubt, however, that the "old Squire," as he was affectionately termed, was deservedly well beloved, and people said he even took a personal interest in the welfare of his numerous tenants. His invitation was couched in very friendly terms:—

"DEAR MR. STONNOR,

"Will you kindly waive a more ceremonious introduction than this, and give me the pleasure of welcoming you at Hunterstone for a few days? If your engagements would permit your coming here next Tuesday, my carriage will meet you at the Hunterstone station, at four o'clock. I am sorry my old house is so small, but if you can manage without your own valet, I have no doubt my people will make you comfortable.

"Yours faithfully,

"THOMAS BARDETT.

"P.S.—You will meet an old friend."

Now it was not only on personal grounds that I wished to make his acquaintance, I was also anxious to show him that my brother's dangerous principles were not shared by the head of the house. I even thought I might be able to induce him to modify his own views about the land question, so accepted the invitation, and was duly deposited at the Hunterstone station at the time named. A servant in dark brown livery was waiting for me on the platform.

"Master told me to wait upon you, sir, and see that you were quite comfortable," he said, touching his hat and grinning rather too familiarly, I thought. "My name is James, sir, and father is here with the carriage."

The carriage was a well-appointed mail phaeton, with a pair of dark thoroughbreds. James's father grinned, too, as I took my seat.

"Glad to see you, sir," he said; "master's gone hunting to-day with Mr. Dawlish and Dr. Boyd, or he would have come himself; but James will see you all comfortable like."

"What Mr. Dawlish is this?" I asked as we drove off.

"Oh, a fine young gentleman!" he replied, "and a fast-rater across country; goes as straight as a dart, and nothing can stop him. He's the Honorable Mr. Dawlish, Lord Forton's brother, from your parts, sir."

How my heart sickened as I remembered the ball scandal! Presently I said, "What brings him here?"

"Oh, the hunting, sir! He and his friend, Dr. Boyd, are just come from Canada, and master will mount them as long as they like to stop. But I'm thinking Mr. Dawlish ain't likely to go as long as Miss Clara's with us."

"Indeed! and who is Miss Clara?"

"Ah, I forgot you was a stranger, sir. Miss Clara is Mrs. Carew's daughter, and Mrs. Carew

is master's sister. They are paying us a visit, and will be expecting you, I'm sure. Ah, Mr. Dawlish! he's a real good 'un, he is. Such a free-spoken gent! He was telling us you was fond of your joke, sir."

"Fond of my joke! What do you mean?"

"Oh! how he made us laugh about the way you circumvented that conjuring chap! Then the fun you made at some grand ball! Eh, James!"

Here they both went into fits of laughter. Evidently I was being mistaken for my brother Robert. Whether Dawley had purposely misled them or not, I cannot say; but could anything be worse than making an old country family the subject of conversation among menials? I knew to my cost he was wild, but it never entered my head for one moment that he would dare to hold up any of the Stonnors to ridicule. Not to encourage any further familiarity, I kept a rigid silence till we reached Hunterstone. It was a long rambling house, which had evidently been added to by various proprietors, and at last made picturesque by the addition of a handsome clock tower. The trees were so near on all sides as to seem to grow out of it, and rooks built and clattered among the branches, as at my Grange. A gentlemanly-looking old man was feeding five or six peacocks at the front door.

"Welcome to Hunterstone, sir," he said, assisting me to alight.

"I am pleased to make your acquaintance, Mr. Bardett," I replied, shaking his outstretched hand.

"Master will be back directly, sir," he said; "I am the butler."

Here was another annoyance! But, as I have often remarked to my brother, what can you expect from an establishment where the pernicious doctrines of liberty and equality are fostered? The man, too, like those who met me at the station, seemed to put on a curious grin, as if I meant it for a joke. He led me across the hall, and down three steps into the drawing-room. I nearly went headlong down this inconvenient entrance, which Mr. Parsons (so the butler was named) seemed to take as another good joke. The room was low and capacious. It was crammed quite full of books, pictures, water-colour drawings, and old china, and looked very cosy and comfortable, with large wood fires blazing at either end. After a cup of tea from the hands of Mrs. Carew, I felt quite at home. She was a very agreeable person, and though middle-aged still retained some of her youthful fascinations. Her figure was abundant, but carried with such majestic grace as to be the reverse of unattractive. The complexion was singularly beautiful; indeed, so pink and white that it appeared almost unnatural; the eyes were dark and eloquent; and all crowned by a mass of jet-black hair, without a single grey streak amongst it.

Miss Carew, who presently appeared dressed for walking, was a tall, slim young lady, with her mother's dark hair and eyes, but without the remarkable complexion. Both ladies dressed with great care and taste; and, at Miss Carew's suggestion, we started to meet the hunting party. After discussing ordinary topics for a time, the elder lady observed:—

"I'm afraid you will find Hunterstone rather dull after the gaieties of Stonnor Hall."

"Impossible to feel dull here," I replied, as gallantly as possible; "besides, Stonnor Hall is always dull. I am quite alone."

"But Mr. Dawlish tells us you are so gay! Balls, tennis parties, and I don't know what beside. He says you are the life of the country."

"Nay, he must know very well that his brother, Lord Forton, is the principal man in the county. Both he and Lady Forton are very popular, and entertain a great deal."

"Is it true that he has lately had a fortune left him?"

"Quite true, and I believe it is as much as £100,000."

"And tell me, Mr. Stonnor, does poor Dawley, as we call him, get none of this? It seems a shame that it should all go to the rich brother."

"The fortune came from the late Lady Bowmaster, so I am pretty sure our friend would not participate. I wish with all my heart he did, for he has nothing but what Lord Forton allows him."

"And that is little enough in all conscience!" she cried. "Dawley is an old, old friend of ours, Mr. Stonnor, and I know he is very anxious to get this miserable pittance enlarged. He is going to consult you about it."

"To consult me!"

"Yes; what he wants is some mutual friend, some gentleman of position like yourself, to represent his case to Lord Forton. He is very fond of you, Mr. Stonnor, and says you are so good-natured, and amusing. Poor fellow, he has been very low-spirited lately; in fact, really depressed. We have been a little anxious. He quite looks forward to your visit, and you'll cheer him up, for he says you are so fond of practical joking that we must all take care of ourselves."

"Upon my word, this is too bad," I exclaimed hastily. "I am flattered by his good feeling for me, but he has misled everybody here. My brother Robert is, I am sorry to say, given to practical joking; I never joke."

"But you gave a great ball, and there was some joking at that," said Miss Carew shyly. "Mr. Dawlish told us all about it."

"I certainly gave a ball, but, considering the part Dawlish took in it, I should have thought he would have kept silent on the subject. I must call him to account for so misrepresenting me here."

"He always speaks most kindly of you," she observed demurely, "and looks upon you as one of his best friends."

"Indeed he does!" chimed in the mother; "and you know, Mr. Stonnor, Dawley's friends are ours."

"When I say I shall call him to account," I replied, "I didn't mean that I am going to quarrel. I like him too well for that. If he consults me I've no doubt I can give him some good advice."

"And will you see Lord Forton for him?" asked Mrs. Carew.

"Well, that requires great tact and discrimination," I said. "At the same time, if anybody can manage it, I can. You see, Lady Forton must be approached very delicately."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Miss Carew, "I believe he has met with an accident!"

A sudden turn of the road had confronted us with rather a sad cavalcade. Dawley in a gig, with his head supported by another young gentleman, whom I rightly guessed to be his friend Dr. Boyd, the old Squire riding by his side, and a groom leading two hunters behind. The gentlemen were in scarlet, and it was evident from Dawley's woe-begone look that he had, as Miss Clara feared, met with an accident.

"I am very glad indeed to see you, Mr. Stonnor," said the Squire, riding forward and shaking my hand heartily. He was a tall, distinguished-looking man, reminding one very forcibly of the late Lord Palmerston. "Our friend Dawley has had a spill. I didn't see it, but don't think it is much. He'll be all right presently."

"Pin my sawl, Stonnor, you've just come in time to take my corpse home," said Dawley from the gig. Then to Miss Carew "Clara, don't give way."

Apparently she had no intention of giving way. She put her handkerchief to her eyes, and said softly, "Oh, Dawley! how did it happen?"

"I'll tell you," said Dr. Boyd. "I came to grief at that gap in Three-stone Bottom. Dawley was so close to my heels, and the pace so big, that all he could do was to ram his horse at the side fence. I believe he would have got through, if an overhanging bough had not caught him on the head and knocked him clean into the quick-set. Saved my life, I believe." Here he patted Dawley on the back, and put his head in a more comfortable position by way of showing his gratitude.

"Dawley's the only man I know who would have gone for that fence," said the Squire. "Come along, Mr. Stonnor. Let us go home. We are half-famished; and after dinner you must tell us the last good joke. Dawley has been quite hipped lately, and you'll cheer him up. He says you are a capital raconteur, and a first-rate authority on joke-making."

Here it was again. Of course I could say nothing to Dawlish just then, but took the opportunity, while we were walking home, of disabusing the Squire's mind. I did not succeed. He smiled incredulously, and throughout the dinner was continually on the look-out for a joke. Indeed the whole party seemed to expect something funny from me, while all the time the author of the foolish hoax sat opposite me, looking very sorry for himself, with a silk handkerchief bound round his head.

The Squire was an admirable host, and Mrs. Carew seemed quite in her right place in assisting him to dispense his profuse hospitality. She had the happy knack of making every one feel at home, and of leading the conversation back to agreeable grounds when it strayed into uncongenial channels.

We got into little differences almost as soon as she and Miss Clara left us. I happened to ask if there were many pheasants in the coverts.

"None compared to what you have in your famous Hertford coverts," he replied. "But then, you know, I don't preserve."

"You don't preserve?" I said slowly, scarcely believing my ears.

"Ah, it sounds dreadful to you, Mr. Stonnor, but it is nevertheless quite true. I gave it up for two reasons. First, because I didn't think I ought to flout such a temptation before the eyes of gentlemen who are fond of nocturnal rambles; and, second, because I don't think there is any sport in your big battens. Do you remember when we shot the home coverts last, Dawley?"

"Remember!" said Dawley; "Why, I shall never forget it! Beastly foggy day. Birds wouldn't rise. We drove and drove, and at last, if they didn't all run through the gardens, slap into the kitchen. Cook and servants been in the habit of feeding 'em, you know. 'Pin my sawl, it was one of the best things I ever saw in the whole course of my life!"

"Well, I gave it up from that day, Mr. Stonnor; and now my tenants take the shootings with their farms."

"Then you have no game? I no sport for your friends?" I cried, quite agast at these disclosures.

"I believe there is more game for honest sport than there ever was," he replied; "and, if you are for a day's shooting, there is not one of my tenants but would be glad to see you. Do you know, I actually rent the shooting of one of my own farms, and the farmer himself looks after it. What do you think of that? A curious arrangement, isn't it? but it works well."

"I should call any such arrangement reprehensible," I said, "because it is one that puts too much power in the hands of the tenant. What right has a farmer to go popping about

my land with his gun? Quite enough for him to have an occasional run with the hounds!"

"Bravo, Stonnor! Stick up for your rights," cried Dawley, starting up. "Bravo! Yoicks! Yoicks! tallyho!"

Having given the view halloo loud enough to set all the glasses on the table ringing, he sank back, holding his bandaged head with both hands.

"I'll tell you what it is, Dawley," said Dr. Boyd; "If you don't keep quiet after that crack on the head, you'll have an attack of fever."

"In for a penny, in for a pound!" Dawley said, tossing off a full bumper of port and refilling his glass.

"That's about the worst thing you can take," said Boyd.

"What is it to you, sir, what I take or don't take?" asked Dawley loudly, suddenly facing him.

"You got your spill, old man, trying to save me, and I don't want to see you run the risk of fever—that's all."

"And I don't want to be preached to by a Pill!" roared Dawley.

"My dear Dawley," I interrupted, "you must not speak like that. Dr. Boyd is quite right in cautioning you after your accident."

He put his hand to his head in a wild sort of way, then said—"I'm awfully sorry if I lost my temper! Boyd, old fellow, I beg your pardon. If you'll excuse me, Bardett, I'll join the ladies."

"I am glad you seem to have some command over him," said Dr. Boyd to me when he had gone, for, to tell you the truth, I'm rather afraid of his head. He has been depressed lately about money and other matters, and that was an ugly crack he got to-day. He ought to keep quiet."

He was quiet enough when we entered the drawing-room, seated on a low stool at Miss Clara's feet; but immediately she commenced the song we had begged for, he stopped her abruptly, saying the noise made his head spin. Then he became restless for the rest of the evening, finally at bed-time obstinately refusing to go up-stairs till he had had his cigar. Mrs. Carew beckoned me out of the room. "I am anxious about Dawley, Mr. Stonnor," she whispered on the stairs. "Please see if you can get him to bed. I am sure he ought not to smoke."

"One cigar won't hurt him," said the Squire over the balusters. "Go and join them, Mr. Stonnor; Parsons will give you a good Cabana."

"This way, sir," said Parsons, who had come behind me while I was wishing them good-night. I followed him to a snug little room, hung round with portraits of prize cattle, famous hunters, and county maps, and here I found Dawley smoking in the depths of an easy-chair, his feet on the mantel-piece, and Boyd bathing his head. He gave me a wink and sign as I entered, as much as to say, get him up-stairs if you can.

"Bed is the proper place for you, Dawley," I said.

"So Boyd has been saying," he replied; but "I told him I wouldn't go till I had seen you."

"Rest is imperative after such an accident," said Boyd.

"Well, if you fellows will smoke half a cigar with me, I'll go."

"All right," and the doctor lit his cigar.

"I seldom smoke," I said excusingly.

"Bother it!" exclaimed Dawley, jumping up and throwing off the wet rags. "Everybody seems bent on annoying me. Why can't you take two or three whiffs?" he asked, glaring at me.

"Humor him," whispered Boyd.

I was on the horns of a dilemma. Smoking never agrees with me, but then was it advisable to cross him in his present mood? Of two evils I chose the less, and lighted the Cabana with considerable trepidation.

"What good is sleep to do me?" Dawley said, getting more mollified after a time. "It is only so much time wasted."

"The blood circulates slower through the brain during sleep," said the doctor, "and so the vessels are relieved. I remember a fellow who got an ugly tumble tobaggoning in Quebec. He wouldn't keep quiet, and wouldn't go to sleep. Well, he went as mad as a March hare. He fancied himself a tobaggan and insisted on sliding down everybody's stairs.—Awful case!"

"I feel slightly inclined myself," put in Dawley.

"There was another fellow we trepanned for depression from the kick of a horse. He too wouldn't keep quiet—went stark staring mad—fancied himself a horse and kicked the bed to pieces."

"I fancy I'm going at that fence again!" Dawley burst out, springing up from his seat. "Yoicks forward! Have at it, my beauty!" With that he began jumping the chairs, knocking them here and there in the most reckless fashion. After some fruitless endeavors to stop him, Boyd at last lit the candles and said in a low tone to me, "We must get him to bed—see what you can do."

He evidently had no power in managing him. I simply laid my hand on his shoulder and he was quiet in an instant.

"Come to bed like a good fellow," I said soothingly.

"Yes, I'll go with you, Stonnor," he said, taking my arm. "Give us the lead, Boyd, I'm off to bed."

We saw him to his room; Boyd, who slept next door, saying he would look after him, and give him some morphia if he was restless. "You can't miss your room," he said as we parted; "first turning to the left up the little passage."

(To be continued.)