

POETRY.

DON'T YOU THINK SO?

Some women complain of their husbands To all their "best friends"...

SELECT STORY.

AN UNBROKEN PROMISE.

A CASTAWAY.

PART II.

CHAPTER X.

"P.S.—I had almost forgotten to tell you a curious thing which happened yesterday. We have a new clerk on the counter, and it appears he refused to take a message because it was written in cipher; the person delivering it, insisted on its being forwarded, and as he refused to go away, higher authority was appealed to, and I was sent for. Directly I set eyes upon the man who wished the telegram forwarded, I recognised him at once. Don't you recollect, at short time before the close of the season at Worcester, I came one morning to fetch you after a rehearsal and as we walked away from the theatre, we were followed for a long distance by a short, stout man, whose hands were covered with blinding diamond rings, and who kept on dogging our footsteps, to my great amusement? But you were in a tremendous rage about it, and at last you stopped dead, and turning round, looked the man up and down as though you could have killed and eaten him on the spot, and then he, in a far more gentlemanly manner than we either of us could have given him credit for, raised his hat and went away."

ed, but this joy was dashed with keen regret at the thought that the woman to whom he owed so much had acted so wickedly towards her sister, and that, even at the time of her narration, she did not express, and probably did not feel, the slightest remorse for the crime she had committed, and the misery which she had brought about. A great difficulty presented itself to the young man. He felt it to be of paramount importance that his mother's memory should be at once cleared from the stain, which, as his father believed, had so long rested upon it; and that though reparation was of course impossible, Sir Geoffrey might be able to recall the associations of his married life without regret, and to believe in the assertions of his innocence which his wife had made on parting from him.

To bring about this result successfully would, however, be no easy matter. In the first place, Gerald knew that Mrs. Entwistle's state of health was such as to render her extremely susceptible to any sudden emotion; and he dreaded the effect which the expression of his determination to reveal to his father the real circumstances regarding Mr. Yeldham, and the error under which that unfortunate man's life had been sacrificed, might have upon her. Then again, even supposing that he were enabled to break his promise to Mrs. Entwistle, without causing her much suffering and to obtain her consent to the steps which he proposed to take, Gerald felt more than doubtful of the reception he might meet with at his father's hands. Even with his small experience of Sir Geoffrey's temper, Gerald felt it probable that the old general would not merely discredit the information which his son sought to convey to him, but that he would possibly regard the whole affair as a scheme concocted by Gerald, with a view to his reinstatement as his father's heir.

However, the young man had made up his mind that the difficulties, of whatever nature they might happen to be, must be surmounted; and when he rose on the morning after Mrs. Entwistle's confession, it was with the full determination of taking prompt action towards the vindication of his mother's memory, even though his aunt might choose to withhold the consent which he intended to ask of her.

Whatever effect the narration of those dark passages in her early career may have had upon Mrs. Entwistle, she had been sufficiently under control to prevent the manifestation of any outward sign; and when Gerald entered the boudoir, he found her lying on her sofa, in her usual position by the window, and in her usual state. She received him with her ordinary affectionate greeting; asked of his intended movements for the day, and chatted on indifferent topics, never making the smallest allusion to the occurrences of the previous evening, even when Gerald inquired, with what he intended to be special emphasis, after her health.

"I feel just as usual, my dear boy," she said, with a faint smile, "and if I continue as I am now, I shall almost bring myself to believe that Doctor Asprey is wrong, and that I, as it were, exist upon my illness. That was a sharp attack that I had last night, but it seems to have left no special ill-effect behind it, as I am in my normal state of lassitude and weariness."

certained that his father was living, and make an effort to see him. He was sufficiently acquainted with the violence of Sir Geoffrey's temper, to appreciate fully the difficulty of his task, and he allowed to himself, that even if he succeeded in obtaining admission into his father's presence, he would yet be far from attaining the object of his visit. Once admitted to an audience, much doubtless rested with him, and his success would greatly depend on his power of holding himself in check, and rendering himself invulnerable to the taunts, with which he was likely to be greeted. Looking at the motives which influenced him, the restitution of his mother's good name, and the reparation of the wrong which had been done to her during her lifetime, and to her memory since her death, the young man felt that he would be enabled to fulfil his self-imposed task in the spirit in which he had conceived it. It would be a difficult task, no doubt, but it should be undertaken in a proper spirit, and would, he hoped, be carried out successfully.

Gerald did not purpose going to Springside until next morning. He did not think it would be kind to leave Mrs. Entwistle until he had seen whether the access of illness, which had induced her to send for Dr. Asprey, gave any signs of appearance, and, moreover, he had something else to do that morning. Some thing particular, apparently, so attentive was he to a second toilet, which he seemed to think it necessary to perform after quitting his usual presence, and at the conclusion of which he left the house and struck across the park towards Kensington Gardens.

The broad walk, which had been lately filled with fashionable promenaders, was now almost deserted, and the turf paths of the long green alleys were already dotted with freshly fallen leaves. In many spots the grass had been worn away entirely, in more it was brown, brittle, and starchy; the leaves lay where they fell, being not yet sufficiently numerous, in the gardener's opinion, to be worth the trouble of collection. The children usually found there, taking in the best fatimation of fresh air under the circumstances, had gone to the seaside, accompanied by their nursemaids and even the shabby-genteel people, whose business in life seems to be to sit on the extreme edges of the seats and eat captains' biscuits, had forsaken their haunts, and the contrast between the gaily wholed scene had presented on the last occasion of his visiting it, and the desolation which then characterized it, Gerald Harding stopped and looked around, then, with a shiver, was turning away, when he caught sight of a figure, with his back towards him, some little distance off.

A female figure, trim, neat, and lissom, strolling along with some evasive languid steps, and idly pushing up the grass with her parasol. Just the sort of a figure to induce a wish to see the face belonging to it. No wonder, then, that Gerald Harding, after a minute's hesitation, started in pursuit.

"I am going blind, I fancy," he said to himself as he hurried along. "It was by the merest chance that I saw her, and yet I felt certain she would not neglect my summons. How wonderfully graceful she looked, in more it was brown, brittle, and starchy; the leaves lay where they fell, being not yet sufficiently numerous, in the gardener's opinion, to be worth the trouble of collection. The children usually found there, taking in the best fatimation of fresh air under the circumstances, had gone to the seaside, accompanied by their nursemaids and even the shabby-genteel people, whose business in life seems to be to sit on the extreme edges of the seats and eat captains' biscuits, had forsaken their haunts, and the contrast between the gaily wholed scene had presented on the last occasion of his visiting it, and the desolation which then characterized it, Gerald Harding stopped and looked around, then, with a shiver, was turning away, when he caught sight of a figure, with his back towards him, some little distance off."

And, to take my name when," he added with a touch of bitterness, "when it is decided under what name the remainder of my life is to be passed? What answer do you give me, Rose?"

"She gave him none beyond what was conveyed in the momentary upward glance of her large eyes, and in the slight pressure from the little hand that trembled on his arm. It was, however, apparently enough for Gerald, who, after glancing hastily around to see that there were no observers in sight, bent down and touched her forehead with his lips.

"Thank you, dearest one," he said, "you are taking a leap in the dark, and have not the slightest idea what fate may have in store for you. But, whatever it is, I shall be by your side to share its troubles. Another twenty-four hours will determine whether I am to remain an outcast under a false name, or to resume my position as my father's son."

"You are determined then, to see your father, Gerald?"

"I am. It is my duty to tell him what I have heard, and to endeavor to satisfy him with the expression of my hope, or whether I succeed, all I should ask of him would be the permission to bear his name. I want no money from him. I would take none."

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