GENA.

BY SARAH TYTLER, AUTHOR OF "CITOYENNE JACQUELINE," "SISTERS AND WIVES," "THE HUGUENOT FAMILY IN THE ENGLISH VILLAGE," ETC., ETC.

(CONTINUED.)

The Paulets were thoroughly satisfied; in spite of any word to the contrary, that the world, and the Maker of the world with all its creatures, could do very well without the Paulets' service; that what was demanded of them was to serve and please themselves under certain legal and conventional restrictions. The Paulets had no great temptation to enjoy themselves in anylow or gross fashion; they had inherited the artistic nature, which had been enhanced by cultivation until the love of the beautiful was to them another gospel. In their exquisite refinement they were even mildly benevolent, because the pains and penalties of their fellow creatures offended their sense of harmony, and disturbed that happy tranquility of mood which was essential to the full appreciation of, and consistent to, beauty, sensuous and intellectual in all its phases.

Gena had known a little of this life with her father and uncle, but at Clifford Farm it was such a life subdued and chastened, curbed and fettered. At Clifford Manor she looked and listened in spell-bound fascination to the unlimited indulgence of every elegant taste and dainty whim. Sir Francis thought nothing of lavishing a hundred pounds on an orchid any more than thousands of pounds on a picture—and where would have been the harm if he had also cared to spend his hundreds of pounds on a brother man, and his thousands for the public good? He would shut himself up whole days painting, or, when the fancy took him, he would play whole nights on his organ. He would set to music his own words and sing them; and very graceful, if not very original words they were. Withal he was not in the least effeminate, but would tramp from sunrise to sunset, when the tramping fit was on him, as he said, after wild ducks among the reeds and alders of a fenny corner of the Manor; or he would cast off his coat, and set himself to fell a tree with his own forester's axe, and having succeeded in felling it, would have the wood carried to his tool-house, and carve brackets and screens out of it like an amateur Gibbons. And the pity of it was that he might have done it with so much benefit, spiritual and physical, and with an enjoyment far keener as well as truer, if he had not made his own satisfaction his sole aim—if he had but first girded himself, and fought the battle of truth and mercy.

Clemency, too, could sketch, could sing, could act splendidly in private theatricals: and though she was constitutionally indolent, rarely counted time wasted, or stayed to spare it in these directions. Her dress, while it was studiously simple, was indeed a study; it was the most beautiful dress, in arrangement of colour and choice of fabrics, which Gena had ever imagined, not to say beheld. How could it be otherwise, when Clemency, in addition to her own fine taste and that which her father freely condescended to make of avail to her, thought nothing of giving fifty or eighty pounds for a dress that, according to Gena's primitive calculation—for which she felt dreadfully shame-faced afterwards—might have cost ten guineas? Clemency's ponies, with their little carriage, her dogs, her birds, were so many gems in their respective lines, and stood for as much uncounted expenditure as her father's possessions.

Supposing a nature ingenuous, susceptible, and art-loving, it may be, there is not a more subtle and dangerous element with which that nature can come in contact than the stifling sweetness, the crushing indulgence of such a life as the Paulets led. A life all enjoyment, such as it was, from morning till night; every day spent in devising and following out some new pleasure, if sufficient new pleasures would only present themselves. At first Gena joined in it inadvertently as it were, and with pure uncalculating enjoyment; in time she was more and more drawn into it, and carried away with it, though not without misgivings of conscience and sharp mental reminders that such a life might do very well for Clemency Paulet, but it could not suit Gena Clifford, even though she were born to its privileges. But why need she stint herself in its wealth of beauty and its deliberately-balanced excitement, lest she should miss them in that future for which Al Woodruffe had so little consideration? She could be as oblivious as he, and with better reason.

Just after Sir Francis had decided on not going to town for the season this year, but had sent his daughter for a few weeks to her sister, and had himself taken a yacht voyage to Norway instead; when both father and daughter had returned, at the very time that Gena was most engrossed with them—while secretly stung, and with an unconfessed craving to deaden the pain of the sting, there arose a discrepancy in the treatment which she received from Sir Francis and Clemency Paulet. Sir Francis was kinder than ever, with a kindness becoming marked in his interest in Gena's tastes and occupations (if Gena had possessed knowledge of the world to detect such signs), and in his addiction to her society. Correspondingly, as it seemed on reflection, to the time that Sir Francis became assiduous in his cares for Gena—and let it be seen clearly that she was his special object—his daughter Clemency began to drop Gena as her protegee; and not content with dropping her, proceeded to sneer a little at her, to put all that she said and did in a disparaging light, and cast adroitly a malicious suspicion upon her motives.

Gena was slow to see the change in her friend, and regarded it with doubting, hurt eyes; but when the incredulity was forced to give way, the pain and pique quickly followed it, and in their places arose a mischievous, half-diverted, half-shy, giddy sense of power and triumph—a feverish inclination to assert herself and her victory. Al Woodruffe might hold lightly what Gena now felt indignantly he had won too lightly, Mrs Woodruffe might snub Gena, Clemency Paulet might show herself to have a small and mean enough nature—with all her polish and grace, to be spiteful to Gena as were Cinderella's sisters to the heroine of the fairy tale, but it mattered little when the prince was at Cinderella's feet. The prince could afford to please himself, and throw the opinion of the world, even if it were expressed in his daughter Clemency, to the winds. In fact, Sir Francis was eccentric and very independent in his aestheticism, and rather enjoyed stealing a march on the world, and did not at all mind vexing Clem for a space, and for her own good in the end. Gena Clifford would prove a very charming sisterly step-mother. Where could Clem look for a better? He had no intention of remaining a widower, when he felt disposed to marry again, in order to flatter the prejudices of any child of his. As for Frank and Dora, after the first not quite agreeable surprise at the news, he was sure it would not cost them more than a shrug of the shoulders and an elevation of the eyebrows.

It required but a word, and Sir Francis would bring back a Clifford to be mistress for the time of Clifford Manor, and of his own seat of Dutton. Gena might queen it where her often-talked-of grandmother and remoter ancestresses had queened it, and Gena was by no means indifferent to that fact. She might set the hearts of her father and uncle at rest about her future—nay, gladden the men with the renewed prosperity of their race. And the best of it was that in Gena's eyes Sir Francis was no middle-aged, used-up man, but the gayest and most gallant, as well as the handsomest cavalier she had ever known. Al Woodruffes's irregular features and bushy eyebrows could bear no comparison with Sir Francis's Norman perfection of profile and trim silken moustache. Al's student's slouch and slight clumsiness of limb were at a discount beside the erect carriage and perfectly developed frame of his rival. Al's temper was for less gay and far more uncertain than that of the man who ignored every care and trouble save what he could cure by a word of his mouth. Al had been too intent on serious studies and tremendously-important questions to leave him leisure to master a host of elegant accomplishments.

CHAPTER III—THE MEETING.

Sir Francis had hinted to Mr. Clifford, with all the grace which might have been expected from Sir Francis, that he wished to do himself the honour of enrolling himself among Miss Clifford's suitors. It was not the first time that a Paulet had confessed the irresistible attractions of a Clifford, and he was happy to think not unsuccessfully. Mr. Clifford replied with equal suavity, and with the delicate fencing used on such state occasions, that the Paulets had been as irresistible to the Cliffords as the Cliffords to the Paulets, and from his own experience he did not wonder at it. His little girl was too young—had been kept too much out of the world, and, as Sir Francis ought to be well aware, was too portionless to have had many suitors; but there had been one—a worthy youth of his class, the good vicar's son, with whom there had been a boy-and-girl affair, (Mr. Clifford quite believed what he said,) which he, Mr. Clifford, considered had come to a natural conclusion. However, he should like, for the satisfaction of his own mind and comfort of all concerned, to have it out with this shockingly rash young curate before any further steps were taken.

Sir Francis assented, being far too wise as well as too cool a gentleman, lover though he was, to be disturbed by jealousy on account of this trifling obstacle in the eyes of an over-scrupulous old Bayard like Clifford.

Mr. Clifford wrote by the very next post to Al Woodruffe, calling Al Mr. Clifford's young friend, and supposing, in the most amiable if slightly gratuitous manner, that Al, as, indeed, it appeared from his behaviour, had lived to see, what had always been clear to Mr. Clifford, the folly of Al, with all his merit, in his position, proposing for Miss Clifford. Mr. Clifford did not hesitate to admit that he had now other and more suitable views for his daughter, in which he believed she saw it fit to acquiesce. Finally, Mr. Clifford begged to remind Al, in the gentlest and most polite fashion, that the small encouragement which he, Mr. Clifford, had given to Al's suit had been conditional on the couple's remaining of one mind on the subject. As this was not so, Mr. Clifford requested that he might be permitted to withdraw his conditional encouragement, while he asked to be allowed to wish his young friend every success and happiness in his profession and in his more private and personal interest.

This letter fell like a thunderbolt on Al, as he was at last setting out for Fordham to spend his Christmas at home. In place of retarding him in fulfilling his intention, the communication winged his feet. A great wrong was about to be done to him and to others, and it was for Al Woodruffe to prevent it—for him, who by nature was not only qualified to hold the scales of justice, but to act as the avenger. It never entered Al's head to stand aside, waive his claims, and leave Gena to those splendidly superior prospects over which her father was gently elated. There was no room for false and morbid delicacy in Al Woodruffe's morality any more than for maxims of the world, worldly. He knew his rights and Gena's duty, and that if the first were forfeited and the second trampled down, then—setting himself aside—farewell for Gena, not to true happiness merely, but to the higher, nobler life which he had hoped and prayed she might share with him. Was he to remain passive, and see his best earthly possession wrested from him, and Gena Clifford lost to herself, even more than to him?

It was Christmas Eve when Al Woodruffe, at the Fordham Station, and without so much as turning aside to his father's house, set off to walk the half mile straight to Clifford Farm. The depth of winter was scarcely the time to see to advantage that most picturesque of habitations—an old farmhouse dignified and embellished into something between a cottage ornee and a circumscribed and inconvenient, but ancient enough to be very quaint, almost stately, gentleman's mansion. But even in mid-winter, with frost on the pane and the ground hard as iron, Clifford Farm did credit to its landscape gardener. Bad taste had not levelled its hillocky paddock, thinned its elms, or the lilacs, thorns and hollies in its court, meddled with its orchard, or transmogrified its old-fashioned garden with the terrace and the walk between high privet hedges into a flat, dreary wilderness in winter and a glaring patchwork in summer. Good taste had preserved what was in keeping and worthy of preservation, and had enhanced what it found by apt touches and the introduction of new and suitable favorites among the old honeysuckles and lilies.

Seen under the stars and powdered by the hoar-frost, some of the trees and bushes looked like great plants of white coral from South Sea lagoons; others which birds had not denuded of their black and purple berries, like the jewel-laden trees of Alladin's garden, with the jewels half veiled by a gossamer veil. Inside the porch, where Mr. Bevil sheltered his more delicate transferable shrubs, he had also competed, in the simplest materials, but not altogether unsuccessfully, with the gardener at the Manor in the costliest treasures of his conservatory. Mr. Bevil's porch and the hall behind, with its cosy fire, were ablaze with gold and silver crocuses, lit up with tapers of white Roman hyacinths, starred with lily of the valley and perfumed with violets. But Al Woodruffe saw none of the attractions of the place; he did no more than perceive that there was company with the family, as there was wont to be on Christmas Eve.

The Cliffords were fond of maintaining old customs, and making a travesty of old festivals. Al Woodruffe, who had more of his mother's than his father's temper, had called the performance, in these altered days with their altered fashions, and in the Cliffords' changed circumstances, a travesty and parody, and had been a little impatient and contemptuous of what was to him more ludicrous than anything else. You see he was not sentimental or romantic, this Al, though he was heroic, which, after all, is the quality that holds the germs of the highest romance. To-night, however, with the slender resources of the Farm backed by the ample resources of the Manor, there was no falling short either in the entertainment or its guests. For if the county had been loyal in standing by the Cliffords in their adversity, it was, no doubt, not less loyal in its allegiance when it was commonly reported and believed that Gena Clifford, instead of making the stupid additional descent of bestowing herself on the Vicar's son—the abrupt, uncompromising fellow of a curate in Bristol—was about to climb back to the highest step of the social ladder, by being married to Sir Francis Paulet.

Into the company Al Woodruffe, uninvited and in his worse-for-wear though travelling coat, of course known to and admitted by the servants, boldly and unhesitatingly entered.

There had been charades, in which Gena, dressed up in one of her grandmother's brocades, with the relics of the Cliffords' old lace and pearls, had looked inexpressibly high-bred and dainty, while she had played a chief part, well supported by Sir Francis, as aristocratic and still more handsome in his way, while, as it happened, he had been called on to invest himself in the plain green coat of a pseudo-forester. The riddle was just guessed, and the forester was leading the noble maiden, who had forsaken all for the forest glades, to the piano—a somewhat jingling instrument it must be confessed, though its wood was satin-wood, and there was much inlaying and tarnished gilding about its frame—to sing in her clear, soft treble with his deep bass accompaniment, "Alice Brand,"

"Oh, merry it is in the good green wood,
When the mavis and merle are singing,
When the deer sweep by, and the hounds are in cry
And the hunter's horn is ringing."

Then the door opened, a servant announced "Mr. Woodruffe," and Al, with his unconsciously stern, accusing face making the undoffed travelling coat look like a garment of camel's hair, walked into the room. There was a stir and rustle of surprise and consternation. Gena, who caught the first glimpse of the intruder, grew red as a rose, then paled through pink to a sickly white, like the same rose nipped by a sudden frost, within two seconds, as she stopped short in the commencement of her song without any explanation to Sir Francis, and without turning aside to greet her old lover.

"You here, Al!" cried the happily oblivious vicar; "where have you sprung from? But I need not ask. Better late than never, my good fellow."

"Al!" remonstrated his mother, "why did you not send for, instead of following, us, if you had arrived at home and found us absent?"

"Because I was on no ceremony, mother," said Al, in a loud, firm voice. "I had a right to count on my welcome."

"So you had, Mr. Al," said Mr. Clifford, with prompt courtesy, disengaging himself from a whist table to which he had just sat down; though I must confess I did not expect you to answer my letter in person," he added, in an undertone for Al's ear, as the host grasped the guest's hand. "All our friends are always welcome when they like to take us at our fire-side, above all on this night."

"Thanks," returned Al, curtly: "any night with my friends is much the same to me, but I did not mean from you, Mr. Clifford, no, nor from Mr. Bevil," and the impatiently rude young man actually waived aside Mr. Bevil's courteous greeting; "I meant from Gena." He still spoke quite loudly, with a rough freedom, so that all around heard him; and when Gena, cold and colourless, and trembling like a leaf in her fantastic grandeur, was forced to come forward, every one saw how he grasped her hand and held it tightly, whether with her will or no, and, preventing her going back to the piano, led her to a seat and took the chair next her as if it were his and he intended to keep it.

The entertainment went on as before, after that disturbing interlude, because the company were well-bred company, and well up in the practice of self-control. But there was an all-pervading sense of a warring element in the night's pleasure, and in the great good fortune on which everybody had been silently congratulating the Cliffords. Telegraphic looks innumerable passed on all sides.

How far had poor little Gena Clifford committed herself in times past with that brutally defiant young curate, and how barbarously he was going to serve her out, either keep her to her word, or expose its forfeiture! What a savage the fellow was, without a sense of delicacy or chivalry (and yet we have heard of knights who did not hesitate to take extreme vengeance on their horror-stricken, faithless mistresses, and that in the most orthodoxly chivalrous times—but men and women's standards of chivalry have changed with the changing generation; for my part I give nothing for chivalry, unless it have truth for its beginning and end.

Sir Francis was not a boy, to fret and fume, to rage in an unmannerly way, and expose the huff—to speak in plain terms, he might be justifiable in taking. Neither was he at all likely to give way to claims, however boldly made by another, without making some fight for his own. Sir Francis pulled his moustache and stared surreptitiously and pondered, but he also approached Gena repeatedly during the rest of the evening and attempted to re-establish his position as her acknowledged partner. In vain. Al Woodruffe could not keep her to himself all the evening, but at every crisis he turned up, authoritatively took posession of Gena, and had his way. It was his songs she sang; he sat by her side, obdurate and iron-faced, at the supper which she made the poorest pretence of tasting. Gena, who ought to have taken the initiative in repulsing him, was weak with shame, vexation and a sort of chocking fear of Al and disgust with herself, with Sir Francis, with the whole world; and she was not a little hypocrite to mask her feelings. Luckily for her, Al seemed satisfied to keep her to himself. He was almost as silent as she was; he did not ask her to be friendly and confidential, to chat and be bright and blessed in the renewal of their bonds. He relieved himself by one statement, which sounded almost sardonically in its unsmiling fervour.

"I am now done with my bachelor's life in curate's lodgings, Gena, and have come, as you appointed me, to summon my wife to share my home. It is but a poor one, but what of that? there are millions poorer; and we can endure hardship."

Gena did not—could not contradict him even here, she only shivered and quaked the more.

The Messrs. Clifford could do nothing; Cousin Lucy was a cipher. The guests generally, who had an honest regard for the Cliffords and desire for their restoration, really regretted the *contretemps*, while they suffered in sympathy an eclipse to pass over the gaiety of the evening. Only one person, and it certainly was not the offender, was joyous—elated, and that was Clemency Paulet. She went about whispering how delicious it was that Mr. Woodruffe should "turn up,"—to use an old English, instead of a French, phrase—so pat, that they should all get a good look at him. What a charming young couple they were; she doted on young couples; she even begged her dear Gena to introduce her to Mr. Woodruffe, who heard her doggedly till he could hear no more, and then turned his back upon her like a fiercer bear than he was.

Strange to say, of all the people there, it was Mrs. Woodruffe who came effectually to Gena's assistance, and broke up the party early, insisting on carrying off her son, while she said good night kindly to Gena.

"I never thought it of you, Al," she broke out, indignantly, on the first opportunity; "to turn upon any young girl, and expose and affront her so. It is but right you should suffer for it. You have pledged yourself to her anew, and you must stand by the pledge, if she choose to accept it, after interfering to ruin what the world, her friends, and doubtless she herself, poor foolish young thing, held her great prospects."

"I came here to save my word and hers," responded Al, with his gloomy fire unabated.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

HIS WORD IS AT STAKE.

Grandly did the old Scottish believer, of whom Dr. Brown speaks in his "Horæ Subsecivæ," respond to the challenge of her pastor regarding the ground of her confidence. "Janet," said the minister, "what would you say if, after all he has done for you, God should let you drop into hell?" "E'en's (even as) He likes," answered Janet. "If He does, He'll lose mair than I'll do." At first sight Janet's reply looks irreverent, if not something worse. As we contemplate it, however, its sublimity grows upon us. Like the Psalmist, she could say, "I on thy word rely" (Psalm cxix. 114, metrical version.) If His word were broken, if His faithfulness should fail, if that foundation could be destroyed, truly He would lose more than His trusting child. But that could never be. "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations." Well, then, might Janet encourage herself in the Lord her God and say, "God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice." All the promises of God are absolutely sure and certain in Jesus Christ, who is freely offered to all in the Gospel. Embracing Christ in the promises, or the promises in Christ, we hold the Almighty by an indissoluble bond. The two immutable things, God's oath confirming God's promises, are pledged to us; and if God has thus spoken, should not believers rejoice? How confidently men can rely on the word of each other! And if sinful men can be thus trusted, O, how much more should we firmly embrace, and hopefully expect the fulfillment of the promises of God's loving kindness!

"He has power and can fulfill;
He has truth and therefore will!"

A person once said to his minister, the Rev. Mr. C——, that it was impossible for a man to cary on business in this imperfect world, and be honest, and get a living. "Die, then!" was the emphatic reply.

British American Presbyterian FOR 1873.

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GRAND TRUNK EAST

	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.
Depart	5.37	12.07	6 22	7.05
Belleville Train	...	....	5.37	....
		A.M.		
Arrive	9.37	10.07	6.53	11.07

GRAND TRUNK WEST.

	A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.
Depart	11.35	7.30	11.45	3.45	6.30
	A.M.				A.M.
Arrive	5 25	10.15	1.05	6.00	12.30

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.

	A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.
Depart	7.00	11.20	4.00	5.30	8.00
Arrive	1.10	11.00	1.15	5.00	9.30

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NORTHERN RAILWAY

	A.M.	P.M.			
Depart					
Arrive	7.00	3.50	....	....	....
	10.35	9.30	....	....	....

TORONTO AND NIPISSING RAILWAY.

	A.M.	P.M.			
Depart	8.00	3.30	....	....	....
Arrive	10.46	6.22	....	....	....