

PRAYER FOR THE NEW DOMINION.

God bless the new Dominion!
God bless the Nation young!
May the shadow of Thy pinion
O'er her ho buzz;
Ever to protect her,
In the way of nation's set;
Never to neglect her,
She, never to forget
Thee God! her King and Ruler,
Favor'd of Thy hand;
In wisdom's lore deep school her,
Till she can it command!

O make her value honor
As strong men value life;
The world's eyes are upon her;
Give her no cause of strife;
Then she will gain a station
Out of pure and true respect;
A young and ardent nation
Any older ones correct;
And may she love her mother,
Old Britain still the Great;
Become just such another,
And let others imitate.

COLONEL BENYON'S ENTANGLEMENT.

BY MISS M. E. HILDON.
CHAPTER I.

"Thou see'st, we are not all alone unhappy;
This wide and universal theatre
Presents more woeful pageants than the scene
Wherein we play in."

It was late in July when Herbert Benyon, colonel of a Bengal cavalry regiment, landed Southampton from one of the P. and O. steamers, homo from India on sick-leave. The Colonel had been very ill indeed with jungle fever; very close to the shadowy boundary which divides us from that unknown country, whither we are all journeying with steady footsteps on the separate roads of life. The fresh sea-breeze and idle steamboat life had done a good deal for him, but he still bore the traces of that desperateness. The sunburnt face was wan and haggard, and there were lines of premature age about the mouth and dark shadows under the large lustrous grey eyes. These eyes of Colonel Benyon's had been wont to strike terror to the souls of defaulting soldiers, conscious of a deficiency in the way of piety or a laxity as to drill; the gray seemed to change to black when the Colonel was angry, and at such times his men were apt to say that their commanding officer looked a very devil. He was not exactly a martinet either, and was known to be as particular about the comfort and well-being of his soldiers as he was about their appearance on parade; but he was a hard master, and his men feared him.

The Colonel gave a sigh, that was the next thing to a groan, as the express from Southampton slackened its pace at Waterloo. He had a first-class carriage all to himself, and had littered all the seats with an accumulation of newspapers, despatch-boxes, dressing-bags, and such light luggage. He had tramped to and fro the narrow space, like some restless lion in its den, during that rapid journey; had taken up one newspaper after another, and tossed it aside again with an air of weariness nigh unto death. And now, at the end of his journey, during which he had seemed devoured by impatience, he grunted aloud from very heaviness of spirit.

He was nine-and-thirty years of age, something over six feet in height, broad-shouldered, strong-limbed, and, if not exactly handsome, at least distinguished-looking; his military career had been one continued success, and the man who knew him best prophesied for him distinction in the future. He had been eleven years away from England, and had passed through the fiery furnace of the Indian Mutiny, reaping a harvest of laurels from that most bloody field. And now he came homo with two years' furlough, a handsome balance at his English bankers', and not a creature in the world with a claim upon his purse or his care.

A more thoroughly independent man than Herbert Benyon never hauled upon British soil. He had occupied the rocks and shoals of matrimony by what his brother officers called a fluke. In plain words, he had been fished at the outset of his career by a high-born and penniless flirt, who had thrown him over at the last moment in favour of a wealthier suitor. In all outward seeming he had borne his disappointment gallantly enough; but from that hour he became as a man hewn out of granite in relation to all womanly fluctuations. The prettiest girls in Calcutta, the most dangerous young matrons in the Indian military world, had flashed their brightest glances upon him with no more effect than the rising sun has nowadays upon the head of Memnon. He was one of the best writers in English India, and was wont to declare that writing was an intellectual exercise; but in all the giddy mazes of a dozen seasons, Colonel Benyon had never been known to entangle himself. There were women who were said to have been in the graceful phyllogogy of the junior officers, "down any amount of a pill," or "up no oval of a tree," on the subject of the Colonel; but the Colonel himself had never been known to smile upon a woman with anything warmer than the conventional smile demerited of him by society, since the hour when Lady Julia Darsay had written to tell him that she had looked into her own heart, and found that it was better for both of them that they should break an engagement which could never result in happiness to either.



"MR. HAMMERSLEY WAS ABROAD," THE PORTER TOLD HIM.

He had taken life pleasantly enough withal, and was eminently popular among his brother officers: a great billiard-player, a most implacable and insurmountable opponent at the whist-table; and a mighty hunter of those larger animals which enliven the jungle by their existence. He had sent home innumerable tiger-claws mounted in silver, as labels for his English friends' decanters, and had more skins of wild-beasts than he knew what to do with.

Indeed, Herbert Benyon excelled in all those accomplishments which win a man the respect of his fellow-men, and the admiration of the softer sex.

Yes, there was some pleasure for the Colonel in the thought of meeting Fred Hammersley. He deposited his goods and chattels at the British, in Cocks-pur-street, and went straight to his friend's club, the respectable Athenaeum. The London season was over, and passers-by stared a little at the Colonel's tall figure, with its unmistakable military air. There were some changes in the aspect of things even at this end of the town since those days before the Indian Mutiny, but the Colonel did not take the trouble to notice them; "on the Corinthian pillars of a renovated club-house, or a new shop-front here and there, seemed trivial objects to a man fresh from the natural splendours of Cashmere; or it may be that Herbert Benyon was uninterested in these things for lack of any personal association that went home to his heart. When he came to the Athenaeum, where he had eaten many a pleasant dinner with his old friend, the familiar look of the hall stirred something in his breast that was almost emotion.

He was doomed to encounter a disappointment here. "Mr. Hammersley was abroad," the porter told him, "on the Continent." The porter could not tell where; "but he had been absent for a long time; ever since—ever since—last spring was a twelvemonth," the porter said, pulling himself up, as if he had been about to say something else.

"And his letters?" asked the Colonel—"what becomes of them?"

"We don't get many," answered the man; "but any that do come here for him are sent to Contis." He's always on the move, they say, and nobody but his bankers knows where to find him."

There was something in the man's face that impressed Colonel Benyon with the idea that

he could say more, if he pleased. He lingered on the threshold of the strangers' room with a dubious meditative air, and slipped half a sovereign into the porter's hand, almost as if from pure absence of mind.

"Thank you, sir; you're very kind, sir. I'm sure I'm sorry enough Mr. Hammersley has left us. It was always a pleasure to do anything for him. Not that he ever gave me any trouble—wanting handsome frocked when it's rinking cats and dogs, or anything of that kind. He was always quiet in his ways and affable in his manners. I wish there was more like him. And it do seem a hard thing that he should have to turn his back upon his country like that."

The Colonel stared at the speaker.

"But he travels for his own pleasure, I suppose?" he exclaimed. "He had no particular reason for leaving England?"

"Well, yes, sir; there was unpleasant circumstances connected with his going away; of course at the West-end those things get talked of, and a person in my position can't shut his ears to such reports. I should be the last in the world to talk, but there's nothing going that don't come to my hearing somehow."

Colonel Benyon stared on. What did it mean? Had Frederick Hammersley, the most conscientious and devoted of Anglians, committed forgery? What was the meaning of this enforced exile? Then a light suddenly flashed on the Colonel's mind.

"His wife is with him, I suppose?" he said interrogatively.

"No, sir; Mrs. Hammersley is not with her husband. In fact his going abroad arose from circumstances connected with that party. She turned out a bad lot, sir. I should be the last to speak disrespectfully of a lady, and of a lady connected with ourselves, as I may say; but I have heard our gentlemen say that Mrs. Hammersley's conduct was very bad."

"She left him, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir; ran away from him, after they'd been married little better than six months, with a gentleman they say she was engaged to before she kept company with Mr. Hammersley. The marriage was her father's doing, so I've heard; and when this gentleman, who was a captain in the army, came home from India, she ran away with him. They went to Ostend and staid a piece together, but two months

afterwards the captain was found dead early one September morning, shot through the heart, on the sands at Blankenburg. There was a great piece of work. Every one thought it was done and that Mr. Hammersley had killed him; but he was supposed to be in London at the time, so one had seen him or heard of him in Belgium, and they never tried to bring it home to him. The matter dropped after a little while, Mr. Hammersley got a divorce soon after, and left England directly his case was decided."

"And what became of the lady?" asked the Colonel, curious to know the fate of a creature so lost.

"I've never heard, sir. She made no defence in the Divorce Court. It would go rather hard with her, I should think, the captain being dead unless her friends took her back, which don't seem likely."

"Poor wretch! Do you remember the man's name?"

"What, the captain, sir? I've heard it times and often. He was a Junior-Officer gentleman. Let me see—was it Clambos? No, Clambury—Captain Clambury."

Colonel Benyon remembered the name, but not the man; he was in a fine regiment, altogether an obscure person compared with the dashing colonel of Belgian cavalry. He had not even heard of the scandal connected with the poor fellow's death. He had never been an eager devotée of English newspapers, unless they had some bearing on the politics of martial India; so whatever mention there had been of Clambury's death and Hammersley's divorce had escaped him.

He left the Athenaeum and strolled into his own Club, the Senior United Service, very much cast down. He ordered his dinner; it was growing dusk by this time; and the coffee-room had an empty and even sepulchral look, with lamps glimmering here and there in the twilight, like the religious gloom of some Egyptian temple. Modern architects have a knack of giving an air of Carthage or Babylon to their public-dining-rooms.

After dinner the Colonel wrote to his old friend an honest straight-forward epistle, touching lightly upon Frederick Hammersley's trouble, but with a full and unfeigned sympathy for such a flowery misdeed as the crimes of a French novel would have addressed to his Py-ades under the like circumstances, but a thorough English letter. If Hammersley were within any accessible distance, the Colonel proposed to join him as soon as he was strong enough for the journey.

"I am on leave for my health, and for that alone," he wrote; "and I do not see why I should not get well as fast, or perhaps faster, abroad than I should in England. I have sincerely an association in this country that I care to renew. I am not even eager to visit that stern old Scottish barrack where you and I once hunted the Caledonian bear or stag, in an autumnal holiday, and which now belongs to me. In short, I have outlived most of the illusions of life, and have nothing left save a belief in friendship where you are concerned. Let me come, my dear Hammersley, unless you would be your fixed humour; but do not say yes if inclination says no."

Colonel Benyon addressed this letter to his friend under cover to Messrs. Contis; and having done this he felt as if he had no more to do until the wanderer's reply came. The waiters at the United Service told him that London was empty—in a fashionable sense a veritable desert. Yet no doubt there were people he knew to be found in that great city, and there were theatres enough open for his amusement had he cared to visit them; but he had lost his relish for the drama fifteen years before; so he went home to the British, read the papers, and drank the wicker destruction of sherry-and-brandy until an hour or so after midnight.

He had a little business to transact with his army agent next day, and an interview with a stockbroker in Warrent court, to whom he had entrusted the investment of those moneys which had accumulated during his absence. On the day after he made a round of calls at the houses of his old acquaintances; and had reason to acknowledge the truth of the waiter's assertion as to the barrenness of civilized London. Every one he met was busy with a way. There were two or three business men, who professed themselves the most interesting of diversions, but that mill which is always grinding everything into money, here and there, at that obscure region beyond Eaton square he found a hourly man who lamented her inability to take the dear children to the seaside until Edwin or Augustus should be able to leave that tiresome office in the City, and who seemed unmercifully rejected to see the Colonel; but the chosen spirits among his old circle—the *dansants du quater*—were away yachting off Cowes, or jaunting in Germany. Altogether the day was a dreary one. Colonel Benyon was glad to return to the solitude of his hotel and the intellectual refreshment of the evening papers.

After this he killed away a week in revisiting such familiar haunts of his early manhood as he cared to see again. The contemporary of them gave him very little pleasure; that one brief letter of Julia Darsay's seemed to have taken all the sunshine out of his nature. There was a settled bitterness in his mind—a sense that outside his profession there was nothing in the world worth living for.

Nearly a fortnight went by before there came any answer from Mr. Hammersley; and the Colonel felt that he could shape no plan for his holiday till he received his friend's reply. The letter came at last—a letter that went to Herbert Benyon's heart; for it told him in a few words how dire a deathblow had shattered his friend's life.

"No, my dear Benyon," wrote the exile, whose letter was dated from a small town in Norway, "you must not join me. The day may come, God only knows when, in which I may be better for a friend's companionship; but at present I am too miserable a creature to let my society upon any one I care for. I have been roughing it in this country for the