

ron, with three rosy-checked daughters devoted to croquet. There were a clergyman and his wife, from the neighbourhood—very pleasant people, with nothing stilted or unduly professional about them, both vicar and vicar's wife past masters of loose croquet, the vicar playing a severely mathematical game: and there was a young squire, of sporting tendencies, whose estate lay some forty miles off, and whose income was said to be something like fifteen thousand a year; a frank, blue-eyed young man, with a predilection for gorgeous neckties, and a loud, jolly laugh.

The Dashwoods were to arrive early next day. I heard the county people speak of them once or twice in the course of the evening with that languid tone of indulgence with which it is the fashion to talk of those who are received into a world which fancies itself above them.

"The Dashwoods visit a great deal," Mrs. Melton, the county matron, said to me. "They are received everywhere, though I believe he began life quite as a working man. And people really like them. Mr. Dashwood is very fond of society, and entertains people at his own place in a most sumptuous manner. I have never been there myself, but some people like that kind of thing. Rather a florid style of hospitality, you know. These newly rich people are apt to err in that direction."

CHAPTER III.

"Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky."

I WAS CURIOUS to see Miss Dashwood, after what Hugh had told me, and was really concerned about my friend's difficulties. The book for the Leger did not inspire me with much hope, for I had a rooted abhorrence of the turf. But I did hope something from Damer's attachment to Miss Dashwood, and I thought my friend's fortunes might be mended by such a marriage, without derogation to his honour. If the lady had wealth, Hugh had at least a good old name wherewith to endow her, and a position in the county which must needs be a considerable elevation for the manufacturer's daughter. It did not seem to me that the alliance would be an unequal one.

I was on the terrace, in front of the house, when the Dashwoods arrived at noon next day, and I saw the young lady alight from her carriage. She was very pretty, very graceful and elegant, too, manufacturer's daughter though she was. She was fair, with a radiant bloom, and the loveliest blue eyes I ever beheld: not grey, or any one of those numerous vague tints which pass for blue; but a real azure—the perfect blue of a summer sky, or a forget-me-not blossom. Nor was their colour the greatest charm of Miss Dashwood's eyes. That lay in their expression—the innocent, girlish trustfulness, the sunny brightness of eyes that had never tried to hide or simulate an emotion. She was very young—eighteen, I should say, at most—and had a bewitching youthfulness and freshness of manner. I did not wonder that Hugh Damer loved her.

They came along the terrace, Miss Dashwood leaning on her father's arm, Hugh walking by her side. It was their first visit to Churleigh, and the manufacturer was eager to explore the house and grounds. Hugh lost no time in presenting me to his friends, and I accompanied them round the blooming gardens, where all the bright early autumn flowers grew luxuriantly; and through the ancient panelled rooms, and corridors and galleries lined with dingy old pictures.

Mr. Dashwood appeared delighted with everything he saw, and exhibited no small amount of intelligence and good taste.

"Now, this is the kind of thing I like," he said, heartily; "this is something like a house. A man can fancy this a home. That's the worst of a new place—let a man spend what money he will upon it, it looks only so much bricks and timber. Money won't buy the home-look, and no architect knows how to give it. Now, there's my house at Dedham—a very fine house in its way, I daresay, and so it ought to be, considering what it has cost me; but at its best it looks like a public institution; and I've no doubt strangers who see it from the train put it down for an asylum for idiots, or lunatics, or something of that kind. It's cold, and stony, and cheerless somehow, though it's warmed with hot water pipes from garret to cellar, and there isn't a modern invention in the way of comfort or luxury that has been omitted. Yet the place gives me the shivers whenever Laura and I happen to be alone there; and I'm never comfortable unless we've got a houseful of people. Now, I could live in a corner of this place, and feel myself snug and cosy. There's that cedar-wood parlour, for instance, with the blue-tiled fireplace—a man might spend his life there."

"You really like Churleigh, then, Mr. Dashwood?" said Hugh, smiling a little at the manufacturer's enthusiasm, but not with a joyous smile.

"Like it! I should think I do, indeed. If there were only such a place as this in the market, Dedham Park would soon be to let on lease."

"You may have Churleigh itself, if you like," Hugh said with an indifferent air. "A

place nearer London would suit me much better. I should scarcely care to sell the old house to a stranger, but to a friend it's a different thing."

"What, Mr. Damer!" Laura Dashwood exclaimed, wonderingly; "you would really sell a house that has been in your family so long?"

"Why not, Miss Dashwood, if this particular member of my family doesn't happen to want it?"

"Are you in earnest, Mr. Damer?" asked George Dashwood.

"Entirely so."

"And you will sell the place as it stands—pictures and old oak cabinets, tapestries and hangings complete?"

"As it stands—with every stick, and every rag."

He sighed, and his face darkened for a moment. Perhaps he was thinking that among those "rags" there were draperies which his mother's hands had embellished.

"Well, sir," said the manufacturer, with an air of undisguised elation, "I can only say that when you have quite made up your mind to sell, you have but to name your price, and George Dashwood is your purchaser. I don't think there'll be much bargaining between us."

I asked Hugh afterwards what made him talk of selling Churleigh.

"Why, you see, dear boy, if things go against me in the Leger week, I should have to part with the old place, and to do it quickly, in order to meet my engagements; so I thought it would be wise to take advantage of Dashwood's fancy. Besides, if Churleigh must go, I would rather sell it to him than to any one else. There'd be a kind of mournful pleasure in fancying Laura happy in the home of my childhood—happy with a husband, perhaps, and a brood of children. I can fancy her walking in the dear old gardens or sitting under the cedar, yonder, with the little ones at her knees—while I am a lonely battered exile, fighting the battle of life somewhere beyond the sea. It's hard, isn't it, Fred? But it isn't inevitable yet. Who knows that the Leger won't bring me a small fortune? No man's ill luck can go on for ever, and I've been losing steadily for the last two years."

"I wish you had something better than the Turf to trust to for your deliverance, Hugh," I said. "I wish you would confide in Miss Dashwood's love, and her father's generosity. He seems to me a man capable of taking a liberal view of things."

He shook his head gloomily.

"No, Fred; it isn't possible for a Damer to become a dependent upon his wife."

After this I heard no more of my friend's troubles. He gave himself up utterly to the delight of Laura Dashwood's society, and seemed to enjoy life with a reckless, boisterous kind of happiness in that brief ten days of bright autumnal weather—a season in which there still remained much of the warmth and glory of summer.

Churleigh was a very pleasant house to stay in—the servants numerous and well-trained, the cool, shadowy gardens delicious at all times, the billiard and smoking rooms the perfection of comfort, and the old-world air of the place a perpetual soothing influence, which gave a vague, indescribable charm to everything. But for me there was a sadness brooding over all things, and I could not but remember how speedily this fair heritage might pass into the keeping of a stranger.

Many times during those gay idle days, for every one of which some new pleasure was devised by the Master of Churleigh, I saw a cloud upon Hugh Damer's brow; but it was only a transient shadow; and, however gloomy his thoughts may have been in those fitful moments of care, Laura Dashwood had the power to chase the dark shadow from the face I knew so well. Hugh's high spirits were noticed and admired by every one. It was impossible not to enjoy life in his company, people said; his gaiety was infectious.

"That fellow can never have known a care in his life," one of his friends remarked to me; "and yet I never knew a man drop his money more persistently than he did last year. But then, you see, the fellow is so confoundedly rich."

We had picnics and water parties; carpet dances night after night in the long low drawing-room, with the six French windows set wide open, and the scent of the flowers, and all the cool, dewy odours of the night wafted in upon us as we danced. We had moonlit waltzes on the lawn sometimes, when it was very pleasant to see Miss Dashwood's aerial form revolving in the strong grasp of Hugh Damer's powerful arm, and to hear her musical laughter ring out upon the still night air. What a delicious life, if it could have gone on for ever!

"Yes, Fred, if it could only go on for ever!" he said to me on the night before the first race day, as we stood together on the deserted lawn, where we had been dancing till after midnight, while the servants were extinguishing the lights in the drawing-room, one by one. "But to-morrow will see the beginning of the end, I daresay. Unless my luck changes. There was a time when I thought it must change—that fortune must take a sudden turn in my favour. But, somehow, as the hour

draws near, I have a feeling that my fate is fixed—that there's no such thing as a turn of the tide for me—that the river of life can only drift me one way—steadily down to the dark sea of ruin!"

"That's all nonsense, old fellow," I answered, cheerily; "mind you, I am the last of men to hope much from the fortune of the Turf; but still there is no reason why you should not be a winner for once in a way!"

"No reason, perhaps, Fred," but I have a rooted conviction that my ill-luck will pursue me to the last. I have been too happy in that sweet girl's society—madly, recklessly happy. Oh, God, old friend, where shall I be in a week's time?"

His tone went to my heart—I could see his face in the moonlight, deadly pale, and the lips working convulsively.

"Let the worst come to the worst, Hugh, you will face misfortune like a man—I am sure of that!"

"Face it like a man. That means to drag on the remnant of one's days somehow—to turn adventurer and live by one's wits, or to descend to gentlemanly beggary and live upon one's friends. Of course it is unmanly to blow out one's brains and make a clean finish of it—and yet that's the most convenient end for one's self and society!"

"For God's sake, Hugh Damer, don't let me hear you talk like that!"

"It's wicked, I suppose. But then, you see, the whole course of my life has been wicked. If my mother could have known what that life was to be when she nursed me through my childish illnesses, and prayed all night long for the passing of the danger, don't you think that she would rather I had died in her arms, a child, innocent, untarnished—than that I should live to be what I am!"

"It is never too late to mend, Hugh. With such a wife as Miss Dashwood you might become as good a man as your mother ever hoped you might be, in her fondest dreams of your future."

"I might—I might, with such a wife. Yes, Fred; but that is too bright a fate for me. I had my chance and lost it. If I had known Laura Dashwood sooner, perhaps—but it's the idlest folly to talk of what might have been—and to-morrow makes me or unmakes me quite. Come, light up another regalia, Fred, and we'll have no more of this dreary talk."

(To be continued.)

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(Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.)

TALES OF THE LINKS OF LOVE.

BY ALEXANDER SOMERVILLE.

LILLYMERE.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CAPTAIN CONEY AND EMILY INKLE'S GRAND WEDDING AT CONWAY—THE STATES, GREAT BRITAIN AND CANADA REPRESENTED.

DURING the day while the rescued castaways reposed, and Clapper Hayvern's people unrigged the complex apparatus, the captain himself searched around for the youth who had so bravely and well accomplished the perilous division of the work; in mind annoyed at the lad's disappearance before he had learned his name, and vowed lasting friendship. But the captain also required repose; and so the day of the rescue passed.

Next morning he settled accounts with people who had sold or loaned tackle and material.

To the Hon. Mrs. Pensyldine, who overflowed with gratitude at recovery of her daughter, and would have paid all costs and ten thousand dollars besides, Clapper Hayvern replied: "La! bless your heart, Madam! We ben't pirates in Canada; no more be we poor. In a hundred townships along the lake shore, any one of their Reeves, or Deputy Reeves, or private gentlemen such as I would esteem payment of ten times the costs in such a cause an honour. As a man-of-war retired with some private fortune of my own, the opportunity to do a service to a friendly power comes as a fair wind to a ship becalmed. If I found that gallant lad, who performed the hazardous share of the work, to render unto him his dues for giving me so much help, happiness and long life; for long life feels like coming to bide with me in consequence of being privileged to assist in giving this here country the honour of doing a neighbourly turn to that there country—meaning you, Honourable Madam; meaning my Gracious Sovereign the Queen, by this here country—God bless her! God bless you, Madam! And bless this and that land; your shore of the lakes and our shore;—well, what was I saying? If that brave lad were found that I might compensate him for this real gift of long life and gladness, I'd go aboard my craft—a steam yacht for experiments and service of friends—down at Swush Point she lies—the 'Black-

Eyed Susan' her name, and give you, Madam, and daughters, and friends, hearty welcome on arrival. May I pray the honour?"

"Be assured we shall do ourselves the honour of a visit to the 'Black-Eyed Susan,' Captain Hayvern, when Sylva is a little stronger, and the Senator has rested a day. The Senator arrived in the night, harrassed by anxiety for Sylva, wearied by travel, and by a long and excited session of Congress. No? not know I had a husband? Didn't know he was a Senator? Naturally not. How should you, in all this turmoil? The Senator will be happy to become acquainted with you, Captain, rest assured; my daughters also."

Bowing, and retiring backward, bowing many times, the Captain arrived outside the Pensyldine tent. It had been medically advised that Sylva should remain under that temporary shelter the first night, instead of being conveyed by carriage to the Cataract Hotel, fifteen or more miles away, over intricate and crowded roads. Outside the tent the veteran put on his hat, looked to the sky as he had a way of doing every second minute, and talked with himself, thus:

"He be honest and true as Niagara that boy; bold and true as a sailor. Yet, now, as I hear this morning, after the brave work of yesterday, he is spoken of by Junkyn the Swush Point Justice, as loafer and gaol sparrow! To disappear before I've written and folded his name in this here heart, is like unto losing a glimpse of the sun when one would find the latitude."

Clapper Hayvern was more annoyed at losing sight of Toby than troubled on his own account to hear people—not personally knowing him—tell in his hearing that some one else had incurred the costs and performed the great work of deliverance. Junkyn of Swush Point was named. Being one of the most unselfish of men a thought of present popularity did not enter the Captain's mind. Or, if thinking on the matter an instant, the thought was cut adrift with such aphorism, made for the occasion, as:

"Public opinion is a sieve in motion, letting fall the smut of the lie, keeping the wheat of the truth at top." He had not seen in his simplicity, that it depends on reed of the sieve, on bias given by the sifter, which way the lie goes, which way the truth. In this special instance the sieve of opinion went right, after publication at Toronto, New York, and Philadelphia; the latter the home of the Pensyldines so closely concerned in the occurrences.

The witnesses being numerous and various, and the incidents romantic, involving in their sequences touches of nature which made the whole world kin—kin for a moment—the sieves of story and of thought oscillated in Canada and the States, simultaneously; soon also in Europe; ultimately along the earth's zone of English language; Asia, Australasia, Western Africa, retaining some of the heroes in, leaving others out; spilling over the rim Junkyn of Swush—blown away in a breath of the reporter, Tipper Drednuffin.

But, I repeat, a man of Clapper Hayvern's mental nature never learns. Flushed with success at the moment of a good work done, or carried away in earnestness of effort, he does not think of self until the mice of mankind have nibbled up every crumb that was his. Even one of the great dogs of high society may snap at, growl, and get away with the due of such enthusiastic simpleton as Hayvern. He may have been momentarily disturbed, hearing people say Junkyn of Swush had done everything in rescuing the castaways, yet silently permitted the mouse to nibble and steal.

Not silent could the Captain remain when hearing another reviled; and that person the brave youth who nobly dared the descent of the precipice, rescuing the lost ones, his name as yet unknown. Hayvern heard the Squire say:

"Guess I'll be like to give that loafing vagrant three months at oakum and the stone hammer, for insult offered a young lady and carriage party, as soon's he is found, and they prosecute. Yes, Siree, it was in my jurisdiction, in my own county."

"Look ye here, Squire Junk, or Skunk, or whatever thy name be; you put a constable on that youth at thy peril. Molest him, and it is at hazard of that worm-eaten timber heart of yours."

The Squire felt the Captain's eye, and did not further trouble Toby.

But that youth, coming upon Tom Inkle, the Conway banker's son, in vicinity of the Clifton House—the same who had assailed him with a cane for responding to a signal made by Emily Inkle, might have forgotten that he was a man and Tom another thing, had not a confluence of parties, persons, official and unofficial; male and female; American, British, and British-American, happened to flow up as a tide to the doors of the Clifton, all about the same minute, though from different sources.

The Inkles were there like other wealthy people, enjoying the beginning of a summer of tourist pleasures. Mrs. Inkle, however, differed from most ladies in the manner of her enjoyments. She moved in high state; had a superb chariot and pair of bays in silver-mounted harness; a coachman always in state