

LADY TOMLINSON'S ART.

WHEN I first knew Gwendoline Gilbert I very nearly fell in love with her, Gwendoline Gilbert was Hygeia herself. She was a parson's daughter; she hadn't a penny in the world. Sir John Tomlinson was the member for Ratcliff Highway and had made pots of money by the adulteration of the poor man's beer. He came, he saw, he conquered; of course he did. They were married, they started on their honeymoon; and I went to Herne Bay for a fortnight in a huff.

In spite of her beauty and her husband's millions Gwendoline was not altogether a social success.

"Look here, Lady Tomlinson," said Sir John (he always called her Lady Tomlinson), "you don't shine in society; you're not a dancing woman, nor a talking woman, nor a political woman, and you ain't literary. I wish to heaven you'd develop some sort of individuality of your own, Lady Tomlinson."

Lady Tomlinson retired instantly to her boudoir and had a good cry. For three whole days did Lady Tomlinson brood and meditate, and then she sent for Mr. Pargiter, the painter.

Mr. Pargiter hastened to present himself at Palatial Crescent.

"Mr. Pargiter," said Lady Tomlinson, "I want to paint—I want to paint in oils."

"Oh, certainly, Lady Tomlinson," said Mr. Pargiter, and he smiled and rolled his eyes and rubbed his hands and bowed. Mr. Pargiter was too much of a gentleman ever to contradict a lady, besides being a popular art teacher with a highly aristocratic connection. Therefore he would have said "Oh, certainly," if Lady Tomlinson had wanted to learn to dance on the slack wire.

"I want you to give me lessons, Mr. Pargiter," said Lady Tomlinson. "I mean to exhibit at the Royal Academy," said Lady Tomlinson. "I mean to be a distinguished amateur and I want you to show me how and give me lessons, Mr. Pargiter."

"Oh, certainly," said Mr. Pargiter.

"Pray name your terms," said Lady Tomlinson. "Expense is no object, but I want the whole thing to be a secret from my husband and my friends."

Next day, at 10 precisely, a four-wheeled cab containing Mr. Pargiter, a large easel, several canvasses, numerous brown paper parcels and a lay figure, drew up at the Tomlinsons' house in Palatial Crescent. Mr. Pargiter was shown at once into her ladyship's boudoir.

"Now, Mr. Pargiter," said Lady Tomlinson when she had welcomed the artist, "I should like you to paint me an ideal head."

Mr. Pargiter stared at Lady Tomlinson and suggested that the usual way was to begin by drawing from what he called "the round" in charcoal.

"Mr. Pargiter," said Lady Tomlinson, "you wouldn't refuse to oblige a lady. I'm sure I shall learn much more easily by seeing you work. My idea, you know, was that you should paint and I should look on—just at first, you know, till I get my hand in."

So Mr. Pargiter, began to paint the head of a rustic. Mr. Pargiter was accustomed to dispose of heads of this description to Wiggles, the framemaker and picture dealer.

"I want you to leave the background till the very last," said Lady Tomlinson.

"Oh, certainly," replied the artist.

It took Mr. Pargiter four "sittings" to finish that rustic head. When it was quite done he remarked to Lady Tomlinson that there was nothing more to do than to smudge in a background of burnt sienna.

"That's where I come in," said Lady Tomlinson. "If you'll do the edge of the background in all the little in-and-out places round the edge, I'll finish it."

They carried out that simple programme.

"Now there's nothing left but to sign it, I suppose?" said her ladyship.

"Exactly so," said Mr. Pargiter; and he took a little squeeze of ivory black on the point of a small brush and was about to affix the magic name of Pargiter.

"Let me try," said her ladyship. She took the brush from Mr. Pargiter's hand and in great sprawling letters she wrote in the right hand corner of the picture, 'Gwen Tomlinson.'

"Madam," said Mr. Pargiter, with a low bow, when she had finished, "you are a genius."

And then she placed an envelope in the artist's hand. "I can trust you, Mr. Pargiter?" she said, in those soft, purring tones of hers.

Mr. Pargiter laid his hand upon his heart, gave Lady Tomlinson what looked very like a wink and assured her, in solemn accents, that she could.

Two days afterward, Lady Tomlinson was "at home." I was there; I am an art critic by profession, you know. On a green plush stood the rustic head in an eight-inch gilt frame.

"What do you think of it, Mr. Scorcher?" bleated that innocent lamb, Lady Tomlinson, to me. "I've just got it home from my framemakers and it's the first of my efforts that I've had the hardihood to show to my friends."

I compared it to Greuze. I said it reminded me of Mme. Vigee le Brun and various other artists. Next spring they hung it at Burlington house; they hung that Pargiter, and we all went into ecstasies at the private show.

Sir John Tomlinson is justly proud of

his wife. She is an artistic light now. She has only got to take a young artist by the hand and his fortune's made.

"I'm very fond of Lady Tomlinson," said Mr. Pargiter to me the other day; "she throws a good deal of work in my way."

A RAILROAD ROMANCE.

When Penelope got into the car she became immediately aware of the fact that there was but one seat vacant in it. She breathed a sigh of relief when she discovered that the other occupant was a really handsome young man. He had a sort of melancholy cast of countenance, and Pen assumed that he was romantic, a disposition that she admired not only in herself, but in others. So she tripped up to the seat, said: "Excuse me" as sweetly as you please, and prepared to sit down. Just as she did so, however, an extremely rough-looking man who was sitting in the seat opposite, rose awkwardly, and, taking off his hat, said: "Perhaps you would prefer my seat, miss?" Penelope gave him a look that meant very plainly both "Certainly not," and "How dare you?" and deposited herself by the side of the good looking young man. She felt hurt that such a rough looking man should attempt to flirt with her. However, she felt that the romantic occupant of the other half of her seat would protect her if the worse came to worst.

That he was a perfect gentleman she knew at once, because he did not try to even stare at her, but, on the contrary, turned slightly away, and dropping his arm to his side, looked out of the window. She knew also that a number of people in the car had smiled when the rude man had offered her his seat. But she didn't care. She had acted with great propriety and knew that the sympathies of men are always with good-looking and lonely young women.

It was insufferably warm in the car. Penelope became extremely thirsty. At first she was afraid that the good-looking man would try to speak to her. After half an hour of oppressive silence she became awfully afraid that he would not. She sighed a little once in a while, but he barely noticed it. At length she could stand the combined heat, silence and thirst no longer. Turning to him she said in her most dignified manner:

"Would you be kind enough to find the train boy for me? I'm very thirsty." She was, to use the popular phraseology of the day, "paralyzed" when he answered, "I can't sissy, Deyse got de shackles on me feet."

And she blushed like a peony when the rude man lifted his hat again and said: "I'd go and find him for you, miss, but I don't dare to leave this fellow for a minute. He's going up for ten years, and he's dangerous."