

will again be able to say with the same great Apostle—"am I become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"—men like the well-instructed scribe unto the kingdom of God who will be able to bring out of their treasures things new and old.

Family Department.

Over The Sea Wall.

CHAPTER V. (CONTINUED.)

Guy was at home before we were, very hot, rather dirty, empty-handed, but not daunted in the least.

"Miss Sea-Gull, listen. They wouldn't come and be caught to-day; but you needn't mind, because I've got lots and lots of plans in my head, and I'll get you ever such a lot another day. I'm going to invent a machine for it. But I shall have to think whether it shall be a steam thing or one that goes by electricity. I think I like electricity best, 'cause it doesn't make such a puffing, and they might be frightened of a noise. I don't think they're very brave birds. They were frightened of me; and I wasn't going to hurt them—only to catch them in my net—only they always would fly away first!"

"Yes, I was afraid they would. You're such a big man, you see; they were afraid you would get the best of it with them."

"Well, but listen! I'm going to have a machine. I haven't quite settled what, but it'll be something like this. I shall get some electricity shut up in a box—you can, you know—you can get it in bottles for bells; the man at the hotel showed me them. And I shall open the bottle and pour some into my net, and then send it after the sea-gulls and catch them. One can do anything with electricity. I've heard lots of people say so. And I'm going to catch sea-gulls and stock your house."

Guy was catching sea-gulls all that month, going out every day with some fresh device. Never daunted by failure—a thorough little British bulldog, quite unable to recognize the fact that he was beaten, full of some grand new idea which he would detail to us with the most perfect good faith as we sat at lunch, and always absolutely certain that he should succeed next time. It was a very happy temperament to possess, and his animation and brightness quite enlivened the house. There was no helping it; he was a perfect little king there before he had been with us a week. Upstairs and down it was all one. If we missed him from our rooms, he would be found in the butler's pantry or the housekeeper's room, or even in the stables, sitting on the back of one of the stout carriage-horses, instructing coachman in better methods of grooming and harness cleaning; or ventilating some new discoveries of his own as to how carriages may be run without horses at all, and how horses might be put on to roller-skates so that they could go about four times as fast as they did naturally.

"I don't know that he ought to be so much with the servants," Aunt Lois would say, half amused, half perplexed by his will-o'-the-wisp proclivities. "He doesn't seem to take any harm; and they are all trustworthy and respectable; and I suppose boys are always different in their ways from girls. I never had much to do with the bringing up of boys."

"Guy is such a thorough little gentleman I don't think you need be afraid, and I'm sure he will learn no harm from the people on the place," I answered warmly. It was evening, and Maudie had gone to bed. Aunt Lois and I were sitting by the open window, discussing them. It was wonderful how we had drawn together since the children had come into the

house. At first I had intended, in my original plan, to keep them all to myself, and not let anybody have anything to say about them; but I found myself appealing at every turn to Aunt Lois for advice, or sympathy, or appreciation and as she was always ready with whatever I asked, I had long ceased to remember that I had ever planned anything different. "I think he is made of quicksilver. He cannot sit still, like Maudie. And he is so quick and clever; it would be impossible to keep him from making friends wherever he went. Aunt Lois they have been a week here, and I don't think I was ever happier, I mean—well, you understand me, don't you?"

"I do understand you, dear. What you mean is that you have been losing the sense of your own trouble in trying to lighten that of others. It is the best medicine for sorrow that was ever made, and I am only too glad you have found it so."

"You mustn't talk as if I was being good and unselfish, Aunt Lois," I said, feeling somehow half ashamed at anything so like praise, "for really I'm afraid I only thought of myself at first. I was dull and wanted something to amuse me. But I do love those children with all my heart now; and I don't know what I shall do when Mr. Douglas comes and takes them away."

Aunt Lois looked grave and shook head.

"I shall miss them dreadfully myself, I do not deny it, dear. But I'm afraid there will be no way for it; they will have to go."

"Yes, Aunt Lois, I'm afraid of that myself; but if you would back me up, I think we might still do something. I've thought about it a great deal, and really it doesn't sound unreasonable to me. I wonder what you would think."

"If you will tell me the plan, I can soon answer, my dear."

"Well, I suppose they will be sent to school, probably to different schools; but I want to ask if they may spend the holidays here—have it for a sort of home where they can always meet. You know what Maudie feels about being separated from Guy. I don't think Mrs. Marks was far wrong in saying it would kill her. And of course, in the natural order of things, they must soon be separated, if not at once. Mr. Douglas will go back to India, of course. There will be no home for them to meet at. But if we always had them here all the holidays they would see each other then, and have something to look forward to. Oh, Aunt Lois, don't you think we might propose it? I can't see why they shouldn't do that, if we cannot keep them altogether."

"Well, really, it might perhaps be done. It is rather unusual to make proposals like that; but Mr. Douglas is such a complete stranger to the children, that perhaps he will hardly realize that we are strangers too, or were till a little while back. Their mother died in this place. Most likely he will fancy that we knew her, and took to the children in that way. Young men don't go into detail in the way women do; they take facts for granted much more. Certainly I should be quite ready and willing to look after them for a while, poor little dears. But you know, my dear, if you begin this sort of thing, you will be saddling yourself, whether you realize it or not, with a very considerable responsibility. We cannot take up these offices of kindness for others and lay them down at will without doing more harm than good. We must not show vacillation and caprice in our kindness. If you teach these children to look to you for love and kindness, and to regard your house as a sort of home, you will not be able to cast them off, even if you should grow weary of the whole thing by-and-by."

"Aunt Lois! as though I should!"

She smiled very kindly, but rather doubtfully too.

"Ah, my dear, that is what we all think at starting; but we find to our cost that there is

often a heavy price to pay, and that our experiments in philanthropy do not always turn out as we hope. We think we know people well; but they develop in a different way from what we expected, and then we are disappointed, and wish we had left them alone. Or we begin some good work when our time is our own, and we have plenty of energy and leisure to spare; and then new ties and new duties spring up around us, and we wish we had not saddled ourselves with these other offices, which we yet do not feel it right to lay down. In your case, my dear, the danger will be that if in the days to come you should marry and have family ties of your own, you and yours may feel it something of a tax and trial to have other people's children looking to you (as these little ones would soon learn to look) for care and guidance that you may scarcely have leisure or inclination to give."

A little while ago I should have scouted this notion as farfetched and absurd, but I had learnt to respect Aunt Lois' opinion by this time, and to recognize in her a vein of shrewd common sense that I sometimes wished I shared.

"I see what you mean; but I do not think I could ever be tired of Maudie and Guy. And, after all, they would grown up in time, and then I suppose they would not want me."

"One can never tell. Their brother might die suddenly; and if they had got into the way of looking to you, and you had grown increasingly fond of them——"

"Well Aunt Lois, I am going to be a rich woman, and I think I will risk it," I answered, with a smile; "that is, if we can persuade the brother to let us have a finger in the pie. I don't want to act from impulse, or to do what is foolish; but I do feel as though those little orphan children, orphaned so nearly when I was, had been in a sense sent to me. You see for yourself what good they have done me, and it seems to me as though there would be something almost wrong and selfish in letting a fear of what happen afterwards stand in my way of befriending them now."

"Well, my dear, you are, as you say, a rich woman, and you can afford to make experiments that would be unwarranted in others differently circumstanced. I am a little distrustful of the general rule of adopted duties and vocations, taken up without real cause or warrant, but I do sympathize with you in the feeling that perhaps this has been a work sent you to do; and if you feel it strongly yourself, my love, you may be sure that I shall not try to stand in your way of trying to do what seems right and best."

As I kissed Aunt Lois at bedtime that night, I felt I had never liked her half so well before.

CHAPTER VI. GUY'S BIRTHDAY.

"Miss Sea-Gull!"

"Yes, Guy."

"What do you think it would feel like to wake up in the morning quite a different person than you went to sleep the night before? Not one bit of you the same?"

"I should think it would feel very funny, Guy; but I never did it myself."

"Oh yes, you did. But I think people forget. Maudie must have done it, but she forgets; and so does Mary—and she must have done it a lot of times. But I'm going to do it next Wednesday, and I don't mean to forget."

"I don't think I quite understand what you mean, Guy."

"Well, listen, and I'll tell you. I read it in a book once, so I know it's true. Once every seven years people change every bit of them the same as they had before. It seems queer, but I suppose it's true; and it will happen to me on Tuesday night, I suppose, because on Wednesday it's my birthday. I shall be seven."