

scarred face in the picture-gallery—broke the entail and sold all but the house and park, and the next heir but one entailed what was left. I believe I would sell the whole place to-morrow and emigrate, but my heir, who is about my fifty-second cousin, you know, won't hear of smashing the entail; so there's no way, that I can see, of raising a farthing, and what we are to do Heaven only knows."

"Yes, but if that rambling ancestor of mine had not sold his paternal acres, we should be vastly better off to-day. The soil has run out, but it only needs a little doctoring to be as good as any in the kingdom; and if I had it now, and a few thousands to lay out on it, I should make my fortune in a few years. However, it's no use speculating what I would do." And my poor boy stifled a sigh.

Steven entered and removed the dinner-things, with a pomp and dignity which were truly ludicrous. Charlie sat over the fire, deep in meditation; and I wandered around the room, looking at the faded old "Books of Beauty," with their pictures of simpering females in décolleté dresses; and stopping to draw my hand over the yellow keys of the old spinnet, on which Charlie's great-great-grandmamma might have performed her prime pieces of music to the admiration of some attendant cavalier, who probably did not laugh disrespectfully as I did at the faint jingle.

Presently I grew tired, and wandering to the fireplace, I threw myself down by Charlie's feet. He put his arm around me, and we stared together into the red coals.

"Charlie," I said, at last, resting my head against the brow velvet sleeve that was growing so very shabby, "Charlie, Mrs. Susan made rather an odd remark to-day. She said the Beaucourts would hold up their heads again when once the Treasure was found. What in the world did she mean?"

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

Charlie absently ruffled my hair with his hand. "I suppose she meant the old tradition that she and most of the people about here believe in, that there is treasure hidden somewhere," said he, rather indifferently, for he was busy slipping my wedding-ring—the only ring I had—up and down my finger. "A tradition!" I cried, starting up. "Oh, tell me, that's a dear good boy; you know I love stories."

"Very well," said he: "but you must not expect anything romantic: it is only an old tale. The story runs that Charles de Beaucourt, when he went to join the Royalist army under Charles the First—"

"De Beaucourt, Charlie?" I asked.

"Oh, yes; didn't you know we de Beaucourts till the Civil Wars, and only lost the 'de' in the Commonwealth? Well, this fellow went to join the Cavaliers, and before he went he hid all his immense wealth—there had been some freebooting with the Spaniards a generation or two back; where, I forgot, I'm sure—and the family jewels in a secret hiding-place known only to himself; and getting killed at Edge Hill, and the estates passing to another branch of the family, it has remained hidden ever since. They say that we Beaucourts will never prosper, and that there will never be a direct succession, until the Treasure is found; and certainly we have come down-hill at a gallop, and the place has never gone from father to son, but skipped about wildly. It came to me from my great-uncle, and it's going, as far as I see at present, to my fifty-second cousin, my dear."

"Then you believe the story," said I, in great haste, "you believe it, Charlie?"

"Not I! I believe it's only a delicate way of saying that he melted it all down and sent it to whatever was the equivalent of his 'uncle' in those benighted days, particularly as the great punch-bowl which Edward the Third bestowed upon Brabant de Beaucourt, and which he holds in his picture, disappeared about the same time. There is an idea among the people, however, that Cavalier Charles hid the treasure in one of the rooms at the Court."

"Oh, Charlie, which room? I have never seen it, have I?"

"No, because it is a room in the old part of the Court—the oldest part of all, where the Norman keep was. It is shut up now, and falling to bits for want of the repair we can't give it."

"Oh, my dearest boy! why has nobody ever looked for it?"

"Ah! but they have; scores of times. Everybody looked, and the furniture in the room was half smashed, and lately that part has been said to be haunted, and so is shut up. I don't think it's been open these twenty years. I never remember to have seen it, and I've been here every holiday time since I was born."

"But we might find it. Do let us look, anyway. Promise that you'll show me the room to-morrow—promise, Charlie, do promise."

"Very well, if you like. I have known where the key has been kept ever since I knew anything; though I don't know what good it will do you."

"If we only could find it!" I sighed, pressing my hot cheek against his knee. "What wouldn't we do with it? We'd buy back Holme Beaucourt and all the old lands."

"And repair the Court, and do it all up swell."

"Yes, and travel, and have no end of servants, and horses, and everything jolly. Is there no clue to the place where it is hid?—no papers or anything?"

"Not the least thing, except an old rhyme that may have something to do with it; it's certainly very enigmatic—"

"When the doe and the wolf shall come together, Then shall be found Court Beaucourt's Treasure."

"What do you suppose that means? It's a very bad rhyme, 'together' and 'treasure.' I should think

the ancestor who invented that must have pronounced it 'together.'"

"I always looked upon it as a bit of the severest sarcasm, the doe and the wolf coming together being like the lion lying down with the lamb or the stars falling—in other words, never. I fancy the stars falling may have something to do with the wolf's head being the Beaucourt crest."

"And oh, Charlie! you must remember that a white doe is one of the charges on papa's coat-of-arms—the Aslington coat-of-arms. Doesn't it seem to mean that we are fated to find it? The doe and the wolf have come together, don't you see? I am sure it is predestination."

"If you put it like that," said Charlie, "I quite agree with you and believe in it at last. The doe and the wolf have come together, and the treasure of Court Beaucourt has been found!" and, stooping down, he gathered me up into his strong young arms, and I clung to him closely, though I whispered that he was a silly boy, and for a little while we forgot even "the Treasure."

But as we slowly climbed the great oaken stairs on our way to bed I looked down and saw Mrs. Susan in the hall beneath, followed by Steven, who bore a farthing rushlight. I snatched the candle from Charlie and waved it above my head, as I leaned over the banisters and shouted—

"Wish me good luck, Mrs. Susan, I'm going to look for the Treasure!"

She looked up, startled. Then all the sternness died out of her old face, and an eager flush made it look almost young. She clasped her hands together, and cried out—

"Heaven bless ye, Mrs. Charles, dear! Heaven bless ye!"—then actually burst into tears, and fled.

"Now, Charlie," said I the next morning, directly breakfast was over, "remember what you promised. I'm quite ready to begin hunting for the Treasure."

"Oh, you insatiable child! what are you getting up from his chair, 'will you never be satisfied? Come along then."

And opening the carved desk in the corner, he took a key from one of its drawers, and led the way, through halls and corridors and up staircases, to the oldest part of the house: led the way at first, but only at first, for when we got into the regions that were new to me I was rather awed by the eerie look of half-open doors and glimpses of disused rooms: so that I was not content with following, but preferred clinging to the sleeve of the brown velvet coat, and thereby retarding its owner's movements.

At last we stopped before a low arched door, heavily studded with great clumsy nails and crossed with bands of rusty iron. Charlie looked at me with a smile, but said not a word, and began fitting his key into the huge lock.

I left his arm, to stare with fascinated eyes at the wonderful door which, unused for so long to be swung on its hinges, resisted all efforts to open it. At last, however, it gave way and swung open, almost flinging Charlie headlong into the room.

He gave a little cry, and rushed in after him; then stopped short, and gazed about me. I saw a low, rather large room, the walls and ceiling of oak, worm eaten and dusty; the floor of uneven stones. The walls were panelled, and carved with rude representations of beasts, birds, and flowers. The furniture, which was of the darkest description, consisted of a low oak bedstead, also carved, three or four wooden settles, a broken table, and an open oak chest, all of quaint and antique workmanship, very much the worse for age and hard usage, and brown with accumulated dust, which rose up in a cloud at our abrupt entrance.

Charlie, with an exclamation of disgust, rushed to the little arched window, flung open its casement of lead panes, and thrust out his head and shoulders, vowing that he was on the verge of suffocation; while I pounced upon the furniture, which had so evidently been thoroughly examined over and over again in years gone by, and pulled it about till I was tired. Certainly the search had been very long, and by the time the dust had settled again I had come to the conclusion that nothing bigger than a sixpence could be hidden in that room, far less Cavalier Charles's immense treasure.

"I might have known somebody would have found it along ago if it had been hidden here, where every one has looked for it so often," I said, at last, sinking exhausted on the edge of the bedstead—in which Charles de Beaucourt's whole family might have slept, it was so big—and sighing bitterly. "Come along, Charlie; it's a horrid sell! I mean to ask Mrs. Susan where she thinks it is—she'll be sure to know. I vote we go down again. Come, Charlie."

But Charlie had just espied a hare crossing the wild tangle—which was once the pleasure garden—and was still boy enough to find such a sight completely engrossing. So I began to study the carved panels and admire the remarkable figures.

"What a lot of wolves and wolves' heads there are on the walls, Charlie!" I said, speaking much more to myself than to him, however, as his head being far out of the window, he could not possibly hear me; "and what fierce creatures they are! How ghastly to sleep in a room with so many wolves about, isn't it? or rather wasn't it? I wish you'd come, Charlie, dear. And here are snakes and eagles—a perfect 'Zoo' of wild beasts and reptiles—and here's a wolf, an immense one, on the panel, just ready to spring on an unfortunate creature in the wreath of leaves on the next—a pig, I think; but they really carved so peculiarly in those days that I won't be certain. No, I fancy it's meant for a stag; but it is not a correct likeness, it has no horns; it must be a doe!—yes, that's it, a doe. Why, Charlie!"—and my words died away on my lips as, with a shock like a thunderbolt, there flashed through my mind the words of the quaint old rhyme—

"When the doe and the wolf shall come together, Then shall be found Court Beaucourt's Treasure!"

And the truth burst upon me with a sudden rush that took away my breath.

I gave one frightened gasp, and flung myself against the wall, with both hands outstretched, and then—I don't know how, for it all happened in a moment—the two panels seemed to slide together, and the figures carved on them to meet, leaving a great deep cupboard in the wall, where I could see dimly through the darkness the outlines of bulky forms, and then—then I gave one choking cry of "Charlie!" and as my young husband, startled, drew in his head and turned hastily, I dropped down on the dusty floor at his very feet!

I opened my eyes again by-and-by, to find myself in his arms, and his dear anxious face close to mine. But joy does not kill, whatever people may say, and before long I was able to stand up and cry on my dear boy's shoulder the happiest tears I ever shed in all my life.

Presently I grew calmer, and we looked in at the secret hiding-place that had kept its treasures so faithfully all these years; at the great iron-bound chests and the worn old bags, some of which had burst and showered their golden contents out upon the floor: at the small iron box which Charlie said must hold the renowned old family jewels; and, wonderful to relate, at something that lay near the entrance, black with age, but round and bulky as ever—nothing less than Brabant de Beaucourt's silver punch-bowl! We looked at them in silence, and then, without a word, we looked at each other, and still clasped in each other's arms, we knelt down on the dust-carpeted floor and thanked God humbly and earnestly that it had pleased Him, after so many years, to reveal to us its hiding-place, and to grant to us—the last of all the race—at last, in our dire need, to find Court Beaucourt's Treasure.

That was two years ago—two such happy, beautiful years as seldom fall to any woman's lot; and it is just six months since my baby, my bonny wee boy, was born. Such a boy as he is!—exactly like his father (though his father vows he can't see it) and the best little thing that ever filled a cradle. He lies beside me now, while Mrs. Susan, promoted from maid-of-all-work to head-nurse, is singing to him softly some endless ballad of a somebody de Beaucourt who fought and bled at Poitiers.

I am writing by a fire in the old blue boudoir, which is so dear to me from its memories of the time when Charlie and I were poor, that when the Court was being done up my dear boy had it renovated and improved for my morning-room. We are fonder of it even now than of any of the grander rooms, and I like best to sit here alone with Charlie and talk of those past days, so hard and yet so dear.

As I look from my window the whole country round as far as I can see is once more Beaucourt estate. Once more the "Beaucourts hold up their heads with the proudest in the land," as Mrs. Susan used to say when she exasperated me by telling me I was not one of them.

There is Charlie's step on the stairs: he is coming to sit with me till the dressing-bell rings. This is our cosy half-hour together—the happiest half-hour in the day. "Take baby to the nursery, Mrs. Susan, please; and, Charlie dear, let Charles the younger go, and don't smother him beforehand. No, I didn't say you might look over my shoulder, you rude boy! I'll come directly; I have only half a dozen more words to write to finish the true, complete, authentic history of Court Beaucourt's Treasure, and how it was lost and found."

THE CARE OF THE HANDS.—With cool weather comes the liability to chapped hands, and the discomfort of these is more trying than their unsightliness. With care the hands may be kept smooth even by those who handle the dish-cloth. For cleansing the hands use oatmeal, instead of soap, or a little ammonia or borax in the water they are washed in. Be careful to dry them thoroughly every time they are washed, and then to apply a little vaseline or cold cream, wiping the hands after the application. Oxalic acid in a weak solution will remove stains, or what is better, a bit of lemon, for oxalic acid is poison and must not be permitted to touch an abraded part of the skin. At night rub oatmeal over the hands and wear a pair of kid gloves a size or two too large. This is especially for those who, after their housework is done, sit down to the piano, or occupy themselves with fine sewing or silk embroidery.

Pearls of Thought.

The greatest evils in life have had their rise from something which was thought of too little importance to be attended to.

Many persons fancy themselves friendly when they are only officious. They counsel not so much that you should become wise as that they should be recognized as teachers of wisdom.