

with tearful reproach. "You are here, aren't you?"

"Yes; well, go on," unfeelingly. "And Mrs. Desmond was good enough to ask me, and town was getting quite too beastly all smoke and smells, and no-bodies. So," airily "I got up one morning, looked out of my back window, said 'Alien, alien, my native sewer' to the unpleasant drain beneath it, and after a bit found myself here."

"Very graphic," murmurs Mr. Mannerling, who detests Dicky Browne.

"I wonder where Vera is," says Lady Clontarf, presently. "I want to show her to you; she left me only a moment since, to get—Ah—" with a glad, pleased smile, "here she is."

The door has opened, and now every one is looking toward it. On its threshold stands a little, slight, childish figure, motionless. Seeing so many unexpected strangers, she has naturally come to a standstill, but, without showing any signs of awkwardness or embarrassment, rather with the unconscious curiosity of a child, she gazes at them in a friendly fashion, and then walks straight up to her sister.

Doris in speaking of her had often told them she was seventeen, or perhaps nearer eighteen, but there is something so wonderfully youthful about Vera that when one looks her age is forgotten. One would never dream of saying "she must be this age or that," but only "how young she is!"

Her eyes are large, and blue—a very distinct blue, without the slightest tinge of violet. Her head is covered with little short curls of "haire, sheen as gold," that tumble in a careless fashion over her low white forehead.

"Her mouth is short, and shut in little space, frowning a deal, not over red I mean,"

And there is a charming touch of innocence in her soft smile.

She is dressed in a little white frock rather short waisted and with no sleeves; there are high puffs on her shoulders, and a big terra cotta sash of Indian silk is tied round her waist. She is as pretty as an angel, and looks half a baby, half a woman. As she reaches Doris she slips her hand confidently into hers.

"This is Vera," says Lady Clontarf to Monica; and "this is Mrs. Desmond, dearest," to the girl. Then every one is made known to her, and she smiles with equal friendliness on all.

On entering the room, she had been followed by Lord Clontarf, and a tall dark young man of about twenty-six, with a very earnest face. This latter is addressed as "Gerald" by all in the room except Mannerling, who calls him "Mr. Burke."

Every one is in the gayest spirits; Monica is laughing merrily with Lord Clontarf; Kit is saying something in her bright vivacious way to the little fair beauty who is listening to her, with her eyes now on Mr. Burke, now on Dicky Browne, now on Neil Brabazon.

"Who is Mr. Browne?" she says, at last, looking into Kit's eyes with the frankest curiosity in her own.

"Dicky? I—really, except that he is Dicky Browne, I don't know," says Kit, rather puzzled. "He has a home somewhere in England, but he never stays there."

"He looks as if he hadn't a mother," says Vera, quaintly.

"Well, he hasn't, either," says Kit, "nor a brother nor a sister, only a father."

"He doesn't look as if he had any profession either, does he?" says Vera, smiling sweetly.

"No. He idles generally. He will have some money, and the place, and that, when his father dies, but it isn't much, I think," says Kit, regretfully. "Still, it will be enough for Dicky."

"And it doesn't matter a bit about being poor, if one is nice, does it?" says Vera, with a little gay laugh that is one of the prettiest things about her.

"No, indeed," says Kit, with much fervor, and an unconscious glance at Brabazon.

"Mr. Brabazon is very handsome, I think," says Vera, leaning forward to press her lips to a sprig of heliotrope on Kit's shoulder.

"Is he?" says Kit, indifferently.

"You ought to think so," with an innocent glance, "oughtn't you?"

"Why?"

"Because he thinks you so handsome; that's a very good 'why' isn't it?" The little questions at the end of each speech

are becoming so constant that now Kit absolutely looks for them. There is a monotony about them that is ridiculously attractive.

"I don't suppose he does think that," she says, amused in spite of herself.

"Oh, yes, he does. One can see," says Vera, and again the soft rippling laugh makes itself heard.

Something else, too, at this moment makes itself heard, something that strikes every soul in the room dumb. They all turn and look at each other in a sort of terrified doubt. Then comes the sound again—the sound of a harsh feminine voice—and the doubt resolves itself into a painful certainty.

"It is!" murmurs Clontarf, in a ghastly whisper.

"My aunt!" continues Doris, faintly.

"Let us run for it!" exclaims Dicky Browne, energetically, fired with a noble desire for the public good—to say nothing of his own private weal, Mrs. Costello being the one woman in the world who regards him with a settled loathing only second to that she entertains for the Marquis of Dun deady.

No sooner said than done. The words have scarcely passed Mr. Browne's lips, before they are unanimously acted upon. Pell-mell they rush for the windows, and never cease their flight until the house, and the jarring discord of Mrs. Costello's voice, are left far behind.

Presently they come to anchor in a little soft shady nook of a place, all over which the moonbeams are running riot. Some beds of flowers are cut in the closely shaven turf; tall shrubs of many sorts inclose it round. Here and there are dotted garden-seats.

"Now we are safe," says Lady Clontarf, sinking breathless into one of them, with a sigh of relief.

"I am cold," says Vera, suddenly.

"I'll get you a shawl," says Mr. Burke, directly she says it, and is gone before she can even tell him where to find one.

"You've been abroad so long, I suppose you feel the climate here rather miserable," says Dicky Browne, who can't take his eyes off her. Now, at last, he tells himself, he has found his fate! His doom is sealed! He is henceforth love's slave! He has said all this to himself about fifty times before, but that makes no difference. His nature is of the fond and trusting order.

"I don't know; this was a charming day, wasn't it? such a warm sun, and such a dear little chill!" says Vera. "The flowers last longer here than I should have thought likely."

"You are fond of flowers? You ought to be," says Dicky, rapturously. "You are a perfect one yourself. You look as if you were only born to live among them."

Vera opens her large eyes.

"It would be a little slow, don't you think?" she says, with a placid smile.

"Listen to Dicky! he is going fearfully mad," says Brian Desmond, at this moment. "He is growing poetical; he is making the most thrilling remarks about flowers. Positively, his hair is beginning to stand on end."

"Here will, if he isn't soon removed," says Mr. Brabazon, prophetically.

"Well, so it would," says Dicky to Vera, totally unabashed by her last speech. "Awful rubbish, I think, you know, going in for solitude, and sentiment of that sort. Give me the world. How did you like being in Switzerland, by the bye?"

"I wasn't there all the time," says Vera. "I made some friends at Berne, who took me to Paris with them a good deal. I, with a tranquil glance at Dicky, "liked that."

"You would, you know," says Mr. Browne, appreciatively.

"Then Doris wrote me of her marriage, and said I was to come to her. I liked the thought of that, too—when I was there. The journey was very long. Mr. Burke met me in London and brought me the rest of the way. He was very kind."

Here Mr. Burke appearing with the shawl, she turns her beautiful little face up to his with a tender smile.

"I am telling Mr. Browne how good you were to me all the way from London here," she says, with a flush of childish gratitude.

Gerald Burke's hands tremble slightly as he wraps the soft white shawl round her slender shoulders.

"That journey will always seem to me like a happy dream," he says, in a clear pleasant voice, but with an earnestness underlying the carelessness not to be mistaken.

"Dreams are charming because they are so idle," says Vera, with an airy laugh.

Monica and Lady Clontarf have strolled away together a little distance; somebody has gone to tell one of the servants where their coffee will find them; Clontarf is talking in a desultory fashion to Brian Desmond.

"It was such a deuce of a bore having to be away all last month," he is saying, "and I hear the shooting was exceptionally good. However, a honeymoon is a sort of thing that must be done, I suppose."

"Different fellows think differently, of course," says Brian, knocking the ash off his cigar, and trying not to look surprised. "I confess," laughing, "I was rather sorry when my wedding-trip came to an end."

"Well, catch me doing another!" says Clontarf, with a shrug.

"My dear fellow, I hope you won't have the chance," returns Desmond, lightly. Seeing Lady Clontarf and Monica drawing near again, he changes the subject. Kit and Mr. Brabazon have withdrawn to a considerable distance, which perhaps accounts for Mr. Mannerling's dark mood; Dicky Browne, as usual, is in the gayest spirits.

"Try a cigarette, Miss Costello," he is saying just now to Vera, holding out to her a very pretty case made of Panama grass. Doris laughs.

"You mustn't mind Mr. Browne, darling," she says, caressingly.

"I don't," says Vera, sweetly. Then she glances plaintively at the already stricken Dicky. "As you offer it to me I think I should like to try one," she says, nodding at the cigarette-case.

"Oh no, dearest," says Doris hurriedly. "It will make you feel so ill."

"Will it! Let me try," says the little beauty, with a capricious persistency that somehow suits her. She turns to Dicky and with her slender white fingers draws a cigarette from his case.

"Will you light it for me?" she says to Mr. Burke, and, having placed the cigarette between her rosy lips, turns her face up to his. Silently he obeys. Removing his cigar from his mouth, he applies it to her cigarette, and watches her, as she contentedly inhales the fragrant smoke and sends it forth again in little curling rings. His face, as she does so, is a study, it is so entirely expressive of amazement. Not that a woman should smoke, he has known many a good and pretty woman who took mild delight in that masculine enjoyment; his surprise arises from the fact that Vera looks so awfully unlike that sort of thing.

"Throw it away soon," says Dicky Browne, anxiously. "Do now; you won't like it, I'm sure."

"No?" says Vera, simply; with her first and second fingers she removes the cigarette to ask the question.

"No, you won't, I'll be bound," says Dicky. "My first cigar brought me to the point of death; I'll never forget it."

"Happy cigar," says Brian.

"The first of anything is always a mistake, isn't it?" says Vera, replacing the cigarette between her pearly teeth.

"They're very mild, certainly," goes on Dicky, still absorbed with the fearful thought that Vera's childish determination to get through a cigarette—just because he offered it to her, dear little thing—will cause her unpleasantness; "a little of one can't do you much harm, I think," he says. "But do throw it away now. I should never forgive myself if it gave you a headache."

"Still, as I have begun, perhaps I may as well finish it," says Vera, prettily, lifting her large, blue, baby eyes to his for an instant.

"Well," says Dicky, hopefully, seeing she still holds on, and shows no deadly symptoms, "perhaps it won't hurt you; it is an excellent brand, at all events."

Vera shakes her head; and as she does so all her pretty silken curls shake too.

"I think I have smoked better!" she says, with a little confidential nod.

Tableau! Every one stares a little, and Lady Clontarf grows rather pink.

"Did Madame allow you to smoke?" she asks, just a little severely.

"No; oh, no! But whenever I went to Paris, with my friend the Comtesse de Polignac, we, she and I, used to smoke a little, to—keep away the flic," she said. Dear Paris! she smiles involuntarily, as at some happy recollection, and, turning again to Mr. Browne, puts out her hand and runs her fingers caressingly over the case he is still holding.

"What a sweet little affair," she says, absently.

"Do you like it? Will you have it? Please do," says Dicky, eagerly.

"Oh, may I? Really? You are sure? Oh, thank you," she says, rapturously. She actually laughs with pleasure at the gift.

Hearing her, Clontarf laughs too.

"You will spoil your pretty teeth, Vera, if you smoke too much," he says.

"Yes? I should hate that," says Vera. She glances at him thoughtfully. "You haven't spoiled yours," she says; "they are quite white."

"I give in," says Clontarf, laughing again, and shrugging his shoulders.

Kit and Brabazon having reappeared before this, Mr. Mannerling now sees fit to come from behind his cloud.

"What a romantic little spot this is," he says, with his very best manner, glancing sentimentally at Kit—"with its moon, and the distant glimpse of the sleeping sea down there in the hollow, and—and everything!"

This, it must be confessed was a lame ending to what was meant to be a good beginning. Plainly, every one thinks so, as dead silence follows his remark—broken, however, by Dicky Browne.

"Sort of place where a murder would be committed, I shouldn't wonder," he says, with the utmost cheerfulness.

"Oh, Dicky, don't!" says Monica, edging a degree closer to her husband. "It's horrid of you! Nobody, I am sure," glancing nervously over her shoulder, "wants to shoot any of us. There is no danger to-night, is there, Brian?"

"No more than at any other time," says Brian. "One never knows when a bullet may find its home nowadays."

"What a charming country this is!" says Mr. Browne, with enthusiasm.

"Well, I really think it is, you know," says Brabazon—"the most charming country in the world, in many ways." He makes this questionable assertion, not with a hypocritical desire to please Kit, who is an advanced patriot, but from a settled conviction that it must be so because she belongs to it.

"It's not bad," says Mr. Mannerling, drawlingly. This kindly concession is received by Miss Beresford in extremely bad part.

"Ah! there you are wrong," she says, purposely misunderstanding him, with a view to his future confession. "It is about as bad as it can be. If you don't call a country bad that is literally swarming with murderers, I can't think, I'm sure, what you would call it. But you needn't be satirical about it!"

"Eh?" says Mannerling. He is not a quick young man, and, though sincerely and indeed miserably in love with Kit, there are moments when she surprises him to the verge of terror. "I assure you," he says, anxiously, "I meant nothing—nothing at all."

"I know," returns Kit, nodding her head pleasantly; "you never do! I wronged you."

"It's eleven o'clock," says Brian, suddenly. "I'm going home. Any one coming with me?"

"They all rise."

"We'll see you as far as the gate," says Doris. "It seems a pity to go in this lovely night. I suppose," with a sigh, "it is our last memory of summer."

"There will be other summers" puts in Neil Brabazon, quickly.

"But never this one again," says Doris

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Enthusiasm is one of the most powerful engines of success. When you do a thing, do it with a will, do it with your might, put your whole soul into it, stamp it with your own personality. Be active, be energetic, be enthusiastic and faithful, and you will accomplish your object. Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.

The Port Hope Weekly Guide has now entered on the fifty fifth year of its existence, and is therefore one of the oldest journals in Canada. The Guide has long been an influential paper, but it never gave better indication of prosperity and success than it now does. It begins its new volume enlarged and much improved in other respects. Under the management of its present publishers, Messrs. George Wilson & Son, the Guide has proved very successful. They have one of the best appointed publishing offices in Canada.