

Written for The Ladies' Journal.

## UPS AND DOWNS.

A CANADIAN STORY.

BY MISS L. A. R.

## CHAPTER VI.

Edgar Atheling was a self-made man. He began by pushing his young face into the whirlpool of business as a newsboy on the streets of Toronto, and, though coppers were all that touched his thin fingers, his active young brain, pre-naturally sharpened by competition, was ever on the alert for an opening to change the metal's color.

Meanwhile the refining influence of his mother made him the pride of the street Arabs, with their strange mixture of generosity as they also give no quarter to the backslider.

And then Edgar's wheel of fortune commenced slowly revolving on its axis, the first spoke being the office of "printer's devil." Many a day the mother's fair faced boy came all bespattered with ink, and she brushed the silken curls with gentle hands and still more gentle words of encouragement to persevere in what would help to make a respectable citizen; for she was not less sanguine of her child's dream of riches.

Up-hill work it was for many a year, but with the steady tenacity of his English nature he fought against heavy odds, and ended by being one of the weightiest writers on one of the papers he called on the streets.

It is surprising how helping hands are stretched out to the successful man when he no longer needs assistance, like honors to the memory of genius cut short by starvation.

Single handed Edgar carved his way, and now at every turn were scattered golden opportunities as the rich man trusted his business to the rich man.

His early training in indigence taught him how to value money, as also to "do unto others as he would be done by." Many a young fellow owed his success to Edgar's sound advice, backed by a more necessary bank note.

As to the newsboys, he bought more daily papers than would supply a score of public libraries, and the young boys, knowing his weakness, invariably headed to his office with all-rasol papers. He was to them only second to their heir Alderman Baguler.

Three years ago on the death of the editor of a leading journal in the Limestone City, he accepted the post, and with his mother took up their residence, enjoying in each other's company the comforts of an elegant home, as only those can who have had a hard battle to keep the wolf from the door.

He soon made his mark there, and though a strong Tory, the great wave of labor reform sweeping over the country, found a valiant support in his paper.

It is whispered around that he will be brought out by the Conservatives at the next Parliamentary election, with the chance of carrying the day; for the working men will vote for him to a man. If questioned himself he could truthfully assert his indifference to his nomination; but let him once accept, and the opposite will have a hard man to fight.

## CHAPTER VII.

"If you please, ma'am, Mr. Johns wants to know if you can pay him his bill and I will receipt it?"

Louise Sheridan took the bill out of the grocer boy's red hand, and, turning it over saw an ugly total of twenty dollars staring her in the face.

It was the second account received that morning, with only two dollars to meet them.

Mechanically she ran her eyes over the items, perhaps to see if that already too frugal grocery fare might be lessened, or, in the faint hope of discovering a mistake in her favor; but the tea and sugar could not be diminished, no more than the severely correct book-keeping.

Just then a carriage rolling easily along stopped.

Raising her head at the rare sight, Louise saw a couple of ladies, one of whom she had seen at the commencement! Telling the boy she would call to see his master that evening, she stood with the "bill" crushed tightly in her hand, to receive her elegant caller, who swept up asking if she were addressing Miss Sheridan.

Louise bent her head, and courteously inviting her within, led the way to her combination room, which, being the afternoon, was the parlor.

Whilst Louise was reading Mrs. Souvestre's curl, the owner threw a swift glance

around the apartment with its unmistakable signs of a low pocket, yet, touched here and there with refined girlish taste. But she was too well bred to be caught inspecting, so she answered Louise's eyes.

"That she understood Miss Sheridan was open to elocutionary engagements in private houses, and as it was too warm for dancing, she was having private theatricals before leaving for Muskoka, and would be so pleased," she added confusedly, "if she would come."

Something in the bearing of the young girl with her delicate fingers clasped round a bit of white paper, caused the lady of fashion to solicit the presence of this one, in strange contrast to the imperious arrangement made an hour previous with the hired orchestra.

Mrs. Souvestre was on the point of leaving, when, as if it were of no account she asked:

"How about the terms, Miss Sheridan?"

"Five dollars an evening is my charge," the young woman replied.

The rich lady elevated her eyebrows, paused, and acceded, thinking, "my pet poodle must do without a new collar this week." Whilst the other inwardly reflected:

"That will quiet Mr. Johns, and something may turn up, eh, Pluto?" stooping to pat the black, sraggy head of her canine friend, and receiving a sympathetic look from his great, brown eyes, as he rubs his cold nose into the caressing hand.

## CHAPTER VIII.

On her way to fulfil her engagement, Louise opened the gate of "Alloway," and following up the gravel walk, came upon the usual group of friends to be found around the helpless George Frazer and his charming wife, the latter hastening with her ever ready words of warm welcome.

"Just in time, Miss Sheridan," she is saluted in Langtry's boyish voice, as he holds out a plate of red rosy harvest apples which are considerably lessened by every meeting of his strong white teeth.

After shaking hands with the master of the house, she takes the proffered seat by Beverleigh Romayne.

"Who always manages that kind of thing," Lolly grumbles to Mrs. Morrey. "Sour grapes," she consolingly rejoins.

"I cannot remain long," Louise is telling them, "for I am on the bill boards at Mrs. Souvestre's," and she is cheered by their hearty congratulations on her growing popularity. But Beverleigh Romayne as he watches the sensitive face, smiling so brightly back at her friends, sees something more, and a fancy of regret for "what might have been," makes the rather languidly elegant Beverleigh rise hastily from his chair, but before he has taken a dozen steps the foolish thought has passed away, and, stooping, he plucks a calla lily and gives it to Louise as a forerunner of her coming laurels.

He is rewarded with a smile from the wondrous eyes, (for she is pleased at his ever gentle courtesy), that makes Lolly Langtry feel like pulling up a young poplar near, if by such a waste of strength he might reap the same.

"By the way," Arthur Karnagh asks, "is not the daughter of Croesus Heatherleigh, and that clever fellow Atheling going to join hands?"

"I met her," chimes in susceptible Lolly, "she is a little angel, and swears by your Miss Sheridan. 'I beg your pardon,' with a deep bow to his right. 'She speaks of our honored friend with the reverence of a Catholic for his patron saint.'"

## CHAPTER IX.

Mrs. Souvestre's guests had gathered and were seated in the sumptuous theatre. The long drawing room served for the pit, the folding doors, a secure curtain between the conservatory, which was a seal green room, and the stage, sheltering the confused performers who were in a more nervous state over appearing before their intimate friends, than would be their professional brothers before all the crowned heads of Europe.

To one side are the hirelings of the evening, Professor B. and his magnificent band who are thoroughly amused at the excited actors in their arranging the draperies of the transformed soldiers in "Princess Ida."

Gazing out on the beautiful grounds is Louise Sheridan. She can hear the low voices of gently reared women, intermingled with little ripples of laughter, making a charming woman's fascination to the man by her side foolishly complete. And as she listens, wonders if she will meet any familiar face among this assembly of Toronto "upper ten."

The curtain is drawn back, and the stars have gone forth to shine before their good humouredly tolerating audience. Then follows, "Hus sorrow thy young days shad-

ed," drifting into "Alice," and as the last deep chords are dying away, there stands a realization of the music.

The audience remain strangely quiet, each one feeling the mesmerism of those Irish gray eyes, as she throws one shyly direct glance; then the faithful zashes come to the rescue, as she musters courage for her work.

The elaborately arranged ladies wonder how that simple black nun's veiling falls so gracefully, and how "sweet" that calla lily nestles among the beautiful brown tresses.

With a slight bend of the dark head she commences the old but ever feeling tale of the "Curfew Bell." The men as they listen to the flute like voice, growing intense in its pleading with the immovable old sexton, and see the rich blood coming and going, experience an innate desire to be in the doomed lover's danger!

In the rear, yet having a good view of the stage, sits a gentleman listening with close attention to the reading, and also with invaluable tact appreciating the languishing glances of his fair companion which grow actually mellow when words of endearment are echoed pure and clear from Louise's fresh lips.

As she finishes, black coats are ruthlessly stripped of their floral ornaments, and many a beautiful corsage flower finds its way to her feet.

Then comes the questions "who is she?" "Where did you discover such a treat, Mr. Mrs. Souvestre?"

Edgar Atheling behind his beard smiles, as he hears his hostess promising to bring in her treasure-trove after the closing and turning to his lady friend, Miss Hale, of Philadelphia, asks, "What do you think of this innovation?"

The one he addresses is tall and faultless in form, but with a face too small for her magnificent size, and behind the heavy bevelled glasses are eyes that confuse one at first, one being a blue, and the other an unmistakable brown. At his question those illy assorted ocular gleam like "your teeth on edge," and the thin lips part with an effort as she answers, with a drawl, "I presume that she is passable," whilst under her breath she keeps repeating "Louise Sheridan, was there ever such bad luck? But I must make no sign, but try and avoid her. If Mrs. Souvestre would only not persist in her silly would-be coup of parading my poverty-stricken cousin."

Behind the curtain the "poverty-stricken cousin" was arranging her flowers, thinking there was one who did not rob himself for her. She had seen Edgar the moment of her appearance, and noted the scornful air of the woman by his side. And now Mrs. Souvestre is inviting her to come within the sacred precincts of her patrician drawing-room.

Her head goes up with that ominous toss, and she is about to answer she was not engaged for any further exhibition than whilst reading; but poverty's heavy chain drags down her pride, for night she not find favor before those proud dames, and in consequence pay the balance of Mr. John's bill.

With a bright red spot on either cheek, she is bowing and running the gauntlet of the wives and daughters of Toronto's nobility. The old saying of being alone in a crowd is hers, as she stands before them with inimitable grace listening to their mingling praise, and seeing their cold curious stare, whilst her young heart cries for the right to her true place among the highest there.

"Mr. Atheling, a great admirer of elocution," and the tired girl once more bends her head, when she is startled, as also those around at seeing the elegant Mr. Atheling reach out his hand, saying eagerly: "We have met before if Miss Sheridan will only try and remember, with her friend Miss Heatherleigh."

Her mobile face changes at that name, and she gives her hand with a bright, sweet smile, which makes the haughty guests give one in sympathy.

Edgar knows society well, and by his own action and the name of their golden-haired pet, restored the dignity poor Louise thought she had left outside that drawing-room door.

But the indefatigable hostess misses her chief guest, Clarice Hale, and finds her on a side verandah, as it had become too warm for her—which in truth it had on the entrance of the dead Louise's child. There was no escape now, she must submit to the inevitable.

For the first time Louise looked on a relation, but only recognized the supercilious woman who had monopolized Mr. Atheling's attention. Perhaps it was the key-note to the instinctive dislike she took to the same blood as flowed in her own veins. "Hale," and she had heard some one call her Clarice, and as their two heads acknowledged the introduction, their eyes flashed mutual recognition, but not the consequences.

Then Louise's employer signified her dis-

missal by "the servant will hand your envelope at the side hall."

And again the favorite knight of the drawing proves his manliness by courteously offering his arm to the "side hall."

"Pardon me, Miss Sheridan, but have you anyone to accompany you home?"

"Oh, yes; my escort is lying out under the trees awaiting my pleasure."

He looks rather shocked, expecting something different from her escort, and asks coldly, "Shall I tell him you are ready?"

"By no means. I will go on the street and he will jump the fence at my voice."

Her face is partly turned away, and he cannot see her eyes as he ironically compliments the agility of her gentlemanly friend, and then hopefully:

"Your brother cannot have any rheumatic tendency."

"He is not my brother, though very dear to me."

"I presume so," and then she is gone, and he esconced in a gable window, waiting angrily for the signal, "over the garden wall."

"Pluto, Pluto dear old fellow," comes in sweetest of modulations, and over the high fence Mr. Atheling sees a huge black dog spring with a lightness that makes his sarcastic words rebound in an uncomfortable manner.

"Dear Aunt Hannah,"

"What you feared might occur during my visit, has taken place to-night. I have met your niece Louise Sheridan, and know that she saw in me one of her dearly beloved cousins."

"She is apparently as poor as a church mouse, with lots of the O'Kelly pride to comfort her, actually bestowing on me a condescending nod."

"I think I will return home soon lest any evil genius should reveal my relationship with this pauper."

"I do not think we need apprehend any trouble from this girl, but I promised to let you know if I met her."

"Tell mother that I have not time to write her, as I must rest when not engaged."

"CLARICE HALE."

## CHAPTER X.

"Neil, what is to be done? Philip is off work, his holidays, though needed, are not welcome, the rent is due, and you ask me to lend you money. O! Neil," and the sister ends up by a little heart broken wail.

"I only want your loan for a few days, Lou, and I will pay you back with compound interest."

"What is it for?"

"Don't be curious, sis, 'tis bad form," and it seemed to the anxious girl, that he turned uneasily away under cover of a light laugh.

"If that be the case, money is too scarce Neil, for not to be able to account for every cent."

"Well, just this time, Louise; I promise you it will be the last."

It was hard to look into the handsome face and say him nay. How she both despised and loved him, and lest the latter feeling triumph, she knew that Philip was the only one he feared. Myles the eldest being absent so much, could afford to be agreeable.

"I will ask Philip if he has any to spare."

"The shot went home."

"Why need you consult him? He is always interfering."

Louise's face reddened. Since the night of her reading at Mrs. Souvestre she had been wearied out with business and making ends meet, her only help being Philip, old beyond his years, and upon whom she had never lavished the wealth of affection as upon this good looking young scape-grace. And her voice quivered with indignation as she answered.

"He has the right of one who is clothing you and keeping body and soul together, whilst you are spending as if we were millionaires."

"And are we not in prospective?" She smiled. He had gained his point by his allusion to her illusive prospects.

"It might be as well for you, Neil, if it always remained so."

"No money, sis?" in that soft persuasive voice.

Drawing out her worn little purse, she emptied it into his hand. He counted it, eight ten cent pieces, and kept it. Both left the room, he to wander to the pool-table, she to persuade the mill man to wait another week.

## CHAPTER XI.

"The money is ours by right, Mr. Romayne."

"That may be, but to prove it is the difficulty. You had better consult Arthur Karnagh, and if there be any point to work upon, he is the man to do it. You may rely