THE BATTLE WON

CHAPTER I.

"SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER."

The Lecture Hall and Literary Institute, Monkton—a long, rectangular room, lit with six gas jets on hanging T-shaped fit-tings; the drab walls decorated with half a dozen maps; the coloured with har a dozen maps; the coloured with har a setionological chart; and other instructive works of art. At one end a small stage, opening 14 ft. x 8 ft., flanked by red cur-tains, and furnished with ix footlights and a drop scene, showing Athens, the worse for many falls; a grand piano below the pro-scenium by way of orchestra. The body of the hall ranged in parallel lines with red cushioned rout seats, on which are closely pressed the relations and friends of pupils connected with Mrs. Vicary Shepherd's High School and Academy for the daughters of gentlemen. An overflow of bashful youths line the walls right and left. Three very warm-looking gentlemen, each with a pack et of programmes in his hand and a white favour in his buttonhole, are endeavouring with smiling assiduity, to find places for a gang of late comers; while two more, similar ly distinguished, are striving at the entrance to make an honest working man, slightly en maps; the coloured representation in

"It's a High School, you know. Mrs. Vicary Shepherd's will certainly ruin Mrs. Vicary Shepherd's she's not here ; she is indisposed, I'm told— I hope it's nothing contagious—is a lady of the most advanced modern views, and this entertainment has been got up to demonstrate the advantage of the elocution and deport-"Oh, I see." "Oh, I see."

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single out for that purpose; and when it came to describing the read to Quagmire Marsh, she put a particular emphasis on the words, "A damned long, dark, boggy, dirty, dangerous way," as if "very dark, etc.," as Mrs Vicary Shepherd had written it, was not good enough!

The act is finished, and Athens is once

and the walls right and left.
Ine the walls right and left.
warm-looking gentlemen, each with a pack of oprogrammes in his hand and a white favour in his butonhole, are endeavouring with smilling assiduity, to find phaces for gang of late comers; while two more, similar the worse for liquor, understand that be cannot possibly be admitted without a tick.
the same rest professors, who "have kindly volunteered their services as steward on this occasion."
There is a general inspection of pink pro-grammes, and a buzzing is heard. Even the professors speak in hushed tones, for the scenes by the net stage.
"Ha a High School, you know. Mrs.
"It a a High School, you know, Has til a bear in the oprogrammee, it is
"It a a High School, you know. Mrs.

vanises the audience into life. The entrance is clearly unrehearsed, for Mrs. Hardcastle incontinently forgets her part. What does is but though she is lauging and full of fun, Nessa is neither hoylonish nor vulgar. Thave only seen his form on eschool to into the version of the seen her before to night when I have been moved from one school to into the version of the seen her before to night when I have been moved from one school to into the version of the seen her before to night when I have been moved from one school to into the version of the seen her before to night when I have been moved from one school to into the version of the seen her before to night when I have been moved from one school to into the version of the seen her before to night when I have been moved from one school to into the version of the seen seen to the version seen the seen seen to the version of the seen seen to the version of the seen seen to the version of the seen seen to the version seen the seen seen to the version seen the seen seen to the version seen to the version seen the version seen the version seen the version seen the version s

patiently and heaving her breast with a long, fluttering sigh ; "and now its all over, I wish I hadn't done it. I like Mrs. Vie and old Tinkleton. Oh, Hoveyouall, and there's noone else in the world I care anything at all for, or any one who cares for me. I'm glad you have come. I've been trying to think what each of you would like best for a keepsake. Now you shall choose for yourselves. I know you like that pearl set, Dolly." She rose in her quick, impulsive way to get the trinkets, but Dolly restrained her, and clinging to have core of remonstrance. "You're not going away, dear," she said. "Yes, I am," said Nessa; "that's why I'm

'Yes, I am," said Nessa; "that's why I'm

such a goose. I can't bear to think of saying good-bye, it has been such a jolly term, hasn't it ?"

"Do you think Mrs. Vic will be so very angry?" "Of course she will. Tinkleton says I've "When I received this," said she, folding up the paper with unction. I wrote to Mr. "Of course she will. Tinkleton says I've ruined the reputation of the school."

"Oh, but you can make some excuse." "I never did in my life." Nessa said, bristling up. "I will tell her I am very sorry—and so I am; but that isn't making

young eyes were not learned enough to see her weakness and vanity, or the faults which are inseparable from every character. She was not unconscious of their admiration

then here with unction, I wrote to Mr. Redmond, saying that I desired to leave school, and asked what arrangement would school, and assed what arrangement worm be convenient to him to make for my accommodation during the three years that I was stil nominally to be under his authority—for I am eighteen, you know. "Lie was his walv."

"And some cousins," hinted a third. "Oh, they don't count," said Nessa. "I cannot remember my papa, and I don't know that I have a single relative in all the world." (IV) to court," said Nessa. "I actor she had seen Ha, ha! thought I, we will see if you are going to keep me at Eagle House, or some similar establishment, Mr. James Redmend. If I am expelled from

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him in possession of six hundred pounds, be-sides the use of my house, Grahame Tow-ers." The girls were lost in admiration of the heiress and her wonderful romance. It was quite like a story, and the part of heroine became her so well, with ker pale face, her dark, fearless eyes, the soft hair flowing loosely over her well-shaped head, her beau-tiful young figure, and noble carriage ! Their young eyes were not learned enough to see and kissing her, "for your sweet love of me; but, oh, you are awfully mistaken if you think that fear would keep me from getting into difficulties."



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(as the stage with an unseen wink to Mrs. Hardcastle, and a quickly-withspered line that she is to take up. As he goes of bat-ting stoutly with Mrs. Hardcastle at the end of the scene, every one in the audience consults the programme, and (in whispered consults the programme) is the programme (in the action of the scene, every once in the scond floor of Eagle House. Among the many duities of a meak played, and in defiance of Mrs. Vicary Shepherd's express injunction that she should not disfigure herself, has painted her pretty face—and especially her dainty mose—with ochre and rouge, and hidden her pretty waing chesnut hair with a red wig sent down with the costumes from Boo Street. What is more, she has go thold die termined to say every word of it, big D's and all. The second scene is set, and Tony is then found at the head of the table with a leng transme the white-roled by children. Five and all.

and all. The second scene is set, and Tony is then found at the head of the table with a long churchwarden pipe in his mouth. It is a real pipe and real tobacco that Miss Grahame smokes, too, puffing out the smoke in a cloud, and never choking once—though she was giddy and sick enough after it when she went off at the end. And here, to the ter-er of Miss Tinkleton at the pipen she intro the wraps thown over their shoulders with crossed hands on their bosoms, and made their way noiselessly towards the end room on a visit to their heroine, Nessa. With in-finite precaution, one turned the handle, while the rest clustered together for common support, and did their best to keep from tit-tering audibly. But they creased to gized which on a the branch at the piano, she intro-duced the second verse in the song of the "Three Jolly Pigeons," which Mrs. Vicary tering audibly. But they ceased to giggle altogether when the door was opened, for there before them was the most unexpected spectacle to be found in this world of sur-prises. Nessa, who had never before been "Three Jolly Pigeons," which Mrs. Vicary Shepherd had cut out, without a moment's hesitation; and also restored the vulgar word "jorum" in the third verse, which had been changed to "goblet" by the careful lady. Moreover, she introduced a step dance in the final chorus of "Torroddle, torroddle, formed "as if "unable to cortain the combar mestation, and and the third verse, which had been changed to "goblet" by the careful lady. Moreover, she introduced a step dance in the final chorus of "Torroddle, torroddle, torrol," as if unable to contain the exuber-ance of her spirits. But that was not the Bet Bonncer, and here she slapped her leg and winked roguishly at the Rev. Mr. Wholeforth, whom she seemed specially to

thrust out: then the white-robed young ladies, seeing the course clear, crept out, treading on their soft, bare toes, clasping the wraps thown over their shoulders with crossed hands on their bosoms, and made their way noiselessly towards the end room on a visit to their heroine. Nessa. With in-

"Your poor mamma could not have loved him, or she would have left him some money, wouldn't she, dear?" said Dolly, "Of course she would : but how is it that

leaving nothing to him in the will, she leaves me to his tender mercies in the codicil Can you explain that, any of you ?" None of them could.

None of them could. "I can explain it," said Nessa, raising her voice in excitement above the low whisper-ing tone in which it had previously been pitched; "this codicil is a forgery !" (Sen-

b) terms lime in terms the grins fortunes.
Her title was not unmerited.
The girls gathered about her prepared for some new sensation in the romance of this night. Nessa alone seemed to be unawed.
"What's the matter, you little goose? Is there anything dread'ul in giving presents?"
"Don't don't !" pleaded the little witch, without removing her hands. "It's like Naomi, my sister. When she was going to die she made us take things."
"But I am not going to die. Look at me —do I look like it?"
"You don't know all," said the girl, shivering, and whispering so low that her words were scarcely audible. "Not all that I know. I would not tell you, while it might do you harm to know, but I must now that it may save you. Oh, you must not go."
She raised herself suddenly, and threw her arms about Nessa's neek : "you, so beauti-ful and kind," she added, nestling herself.

"Why dear, why?" whispered Nessa, coaxingly. "You are in danger. Your life is not safe. There is going to be a great change, and there is peril in your path. I have seen it whenever I have looked—in the cards, in your hand. Your line of life is broken in the nineteenth year." Nessa was the only one of all the little group who was not terrified into silence by the little witch's prophecy. "Oh, come, this is too bad, after promis-ing me last week that I should have riches and long life," she murmured, playfully, as she smoothed her cheeks upon the girl's sleek hair. "Two things can't be true, you know, and of the two I would prefer to be-lieve your first promise.





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