

THE TRIUMPHS OF DUTY.

CHAPTER XLIA
PROMOTION, REUNION, AND OTHER CONSOLATIONS

Viola's solitude was cheered by visits from Leonora; and she soon became vividly interested in a scientific competition, communicated to her by her friend, in which Captain Gelliot received the prize, for a greater extension of light. On Viola's next return of visit to Gelliot Manor, however, she found that a scientific gentleman, who had expected to receive the prize, and who possessed great interest, was exerting himself to have the awardment annulled, as a mere pretended improvement on that which he himself invented. Captain Gelliot very naturally vented his indignant feelings in letters to his wife, who communicated them to her friend; and the two young, but intelligent heads, combined to frustrate the plot. Viola drove home, and that night commenced an earnest correspondence with her father, which, in the end, procured a full acknowledgment of the genius and signal services of Captain Gelliot, by the both houses of parliament.

But the interest which the Marquis of Seaham had taken in the intelligent young officer, did not terminate in a vote of thanks: he sent for Captain Gelliot; the anterooms were filled with greater people, but the secretary came forth from the inner focus of excitement, and, guided by the groom of the chambers, approached the outer door, near which sat the patient and modest young officer.

"Captain Gelliot, I believe,"

On receiving the bow of assent, the secretary said, that instead of returning through the rooms, he would conduct him by the private door to the minister.

"Captain Gelliot," said the Marquis of Seaham, "colonels and majors do not die off to oblige the friends of a young subaltern officer, whom they wish to promote. You cannot expect to rise, under our present system, except by purchase into another regiment. Perhaps you are too justly proud of your present corps, to desire to take that step?"

"Very true, my lord," was the reply.

"Your father, Mr. Gelliot of Gelliot Manor, is, I understand, of very ancient family, and is naturally proud of the happy accident of birth?"

"He is my lord."

"You are married to a young lady, who, although not herself titled, is closely allied to the first nobility of England?"

A wondering "yes," was the sole reply.

"She is, by the mother, granddaughter to the late Duke of Peterworth; by the father, granddaughter to an ancient baronet, Sir Howard Waltham Whyne. Her sister will be Marchioness of Seaham."

An excellent silence was all the young officer could bestow.

"Antiquity of family," pursued the marquis, "is deservedly considered; and when merit and distinguished talent are combined to demand a recompense from a grateful country it facilitates the bestowal of honor. We offer you, Captain Gelliot, a baronetcy."

"My lord marquis, I feel most truly grateful," at length replied the astonished young officer. "I have followed your arguments. I am aware that the noble relations of my wife wish for my exaltation, for her sake, or, more correctly speaking, for their own sake; but I am not the less obliged to you, my lord."

"Then you do not refuse to become Sir Willoughby Gelliot?"

"I should prefer that it were offered to my father, my lord marquis."

"Well, write to the old squire," said the marquis, with an approving look, "although I know what his answer

will be. In the first place, he did not invent the Gelliot light. In the second place, he is antagonistic to all new creations; not considering that to those placed above pecuniary recompense, her gracious Majesty has but the reward of elevation to bestow. When you shall have received the reply from Gelliot Manor, write to me, or rather come and dine with me. My dinner-hour is seven o'clock."

In a few days Captain Gelliot, with his father's reply, presented himself, rather before the rest of the guests, in St. James's-square. He was immediately shown into Lord Seaham's private study, to whom, with a smile, he handed his father's letter, saying:

"Your lordship predicted rightly; almost to the very letter."

"DEAR WILLOUGHBY—These new titles are very well for naval and military men, especially when they have deserved them. I have deserved nothing, either by warlike exploit, or scientific discovery. Do not, from filial piety, wish me to accept the offered baronetcy, and to keep it merely hovering over your head for, perhaps, many years. To my mind, it will be only a pretty second title to the lords of the Manor of Gelliot. Lands held from father to son during eight hundred years: the round tower, that first stood on the lands, for our crest to this day, with the two owls for supporters. The right to supporters cannot be lightly granted. All this will be yours some day; and if, in addition, you like to be Sir Willoughby, why, in your case, 'tis well enough. My little bird, Leonora, is the blessing of my life. We are together nearly all the day long. I tell her that I am the best husband she has; but she looks significantly towards a packet of your letters, smiles, and shakes her head."

"Your affectionate father,

JOHN HILDEBRAND GELLIOT"

The marquis looked at the seal.

"Ah! truly a fine specimen of armorial bearings. Call on me this day week, and I shall then greet you as Sir Willoughby."

This took place just before the Easter recess, and was the last of the London dinners given by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, before the holidays.

Directly he was free, by the departure of his chief, Lord Stanmore faithful to his promise, passed rapidly into Westmorland, to fetch his wife and child to Marsden Park. Amid smiles and tears, Lady Violet departed with husband and infant from Woolton Court, while the aged couple watched the retreating carriage with resignation.

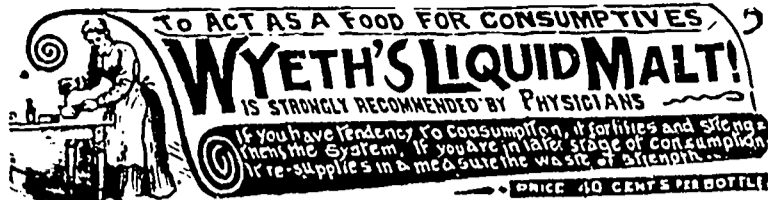
"Thank you, Emma," said Lord Charleton, "for sharing my solitude. We shall, please God, welcome them back in July or August; and Philip Henry will then be a stout little champion."

The venerable nobleman's hopes were fulfilled. Early in August, the whole family of Woolton Court were again assembled in cheerful and loving greetings, the circle being agreeably enlarged by the arrival from the manor-house of Sir Willoughby and Lady Gelliot.

Philip Henry, now ten months old, stood unaided in the centre of the group, looking steadfastly at his great-grandfather, whom he at length recognized by a smile.

"Ah!" said the earl, "he is, thank God, loving, beautiful and intelligent, as he ought to be with such parents; and such prayers, ever ascending to throne of grace, for the heir of Woolton Court!" (THE END.)

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