

(For the Canadian Illustrated News.)

OVER THE SEA.

A lover knelt at a maiden's side
In the flush of his Manhood, his young life's pride;
And smiling through tears, she strove to hide
She murmured "It may not be!
For what you would I cannot give,
And lone and lone I must ever live :-
My heart is over the sea."

When the Ocean lies like a glassy plain,
Or when it moans like a soul in pain :
When the storm wind howls o'er the raging main :
In the castle on the sea
A face at the casement, pale and grave
Gazes, with patience true and brave,
While the hot calm broods, or the tempests rave,
Over the boundless sea.

And the maiden gazed for many a year,
With a faith that overwhelmed her fear,
Yet never might tidings reach her ear :-
Not dead but false was he.
Till, kissing her cheek with a chilling breath,
On the Tempest's wing rode the Angel of Death
Over the angry sea.

The casement looms dark o'er the Ocean wave
While the hot calm broods, or the tempests rave,
But it frames no fair face, pale and grave,
In the castle on the sea :
And the breakers murmur a ceaseless refrain,
And the surf sobs and moans like a soul in pain,
And the winds lament. For she looks not again
Over the sea.

NEO P. MAH.

[REGISTERED according to the Copyright Act of 1868.]

TAKEN AT THE FLOOD.

A NEW NOVEL,

By the Author of "Lady Audley's Secret," "Strangers and Pilgrims," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—(Continued.)

Edmund went into the churchyard, climbed the low wall, and seated himself on the top of it. From this position he could survey the Italian garden, and the south front of Perriam Place, whose lighted windows showed dimly in the summer dusk. He lighted his cigar. Let the smoker's disappointment be ever so bitter, he mechanically seeks consolation from tobacco. He sat smoking, and looking dreamily at those faintly shining windows.

"Is she happy, I wonder," he mused. "She has a new source of happiness, the mother's joy, which should be very deep. A new life begins for her from to-day; a new life in which self must needs be but secondary in all her thoughts. She will taste her child's innocent joys, suffer his baby sorrows, forget her own desires in his. And thus she will be more further away from me than ever. Until to-day there may have been some faint regret for me still lingering in her heart; after to-day I shall be the most insignificant atom in creation in comparison with that new-born child. Happy privilege, to succeed to a new inheritance of hope, new capacities for joy."

He thought, and with deepest compassion, of the afflicted husband and father, the clouded brain which this new light of home could hardly brighten. The particulars of Sir Aubrey's sad condition were tolerably well known in the neighbourhood. Mr. Stimpson, the surgeon, affected to be reserved upon this point, but by nods and frowns and shrugs, and confidential admissions to particular friends, had made the state of the case known far and wide. The servants also had tongues and knew how to use them.

While Edmund Standen sat looking at the windows, and smoking, a man, who also had a cigar in his mouth, came with a brisk step along the Italian terrace, and planted himself, leaning with folded arms upon the stone balustrade, a few paces from the spot where Edmund was seated. In this new comer Mr. Standen recognized Mr. Bain, the solicitor, with whom he had frequent dealings in his professional capacity. Mr. Bain would as certainly recognize him. It was best therefore to accost the agent, Edmund thought, lest there should appear anything surreptitious in his occupation of that particular spot.

"A nice evening for a country ramble, Mr. Bain," he said, cheerfully.

"Bless me, is it you, Mr. Standen?" exclaimed the agent, "I shouldn't have expected to see you so far from Dean House after dinner."

"That's because you don't know my habits. There's nothing I like better than an evening ramble, with no company except my cigar."

"Isn't that a rather misanthropical turn of mind for so young a man as you are, Mr. Standen?"

"I don't know about misanthropy—but I know it's pleasant to be able to think one's own thoughts now and then—instead of making conversations."

"And you've chosen such a nice spot for your evening's meditations," replied Mr. Bain. "Now I suppose that old churchyard, lying under the shadow of this terrace, with its balustrade and antique vases and statues and so forth, is a scene which poets and that sort of people would call romantic?"

"I think one need hardly be a poet or a painter to admire this old churchyard."

"Really now?" asked Mr. Bain, with an incredulous air. "You see it's out of my way as a man of business. If I were owner of yonder house, I should object to a burial ground so near my water supply. I should fancy everything I eat and drank was flavoured with the ashes of my ancestors. Have you heard the bells ringing?"

"It would be rather difficult to avoid hearing them," answered Edmund, with well assumed carelessness.

"This is a great day for Perriam," said Mr. Bain, between two puffs of his cigar.

"You consider the birth of an heir a great advantage?"

"Yes, in this case, certainly. The estate would have gone to a distant cousin if Sir Aubrey had died childless. And I know how anxiously he desired an heir."

"Is he pleased at the accomplishment of his desire?"

"As pleased as he can be at anything, poor man."

"His capacity for joy of any kind is limited, I imagine from your tone."

Mr. Bain sighed and shook his head with a melancholy air. "That's a subject I don't care much about discussing," he replied, after a brief silence. "Fortunately," he added, with a keen glance at the young man's face, just visible to him in the twilight, "whatever decay there may be in Sir Aubrey's mental state, his bodily health is remarkably good. Indeed, I shouldn't wonder if he were to live as long as you or I."

"Starting with a disadvantage of twenty years or so," said Edmund.

"Yes, but we live fast—wear our brains and fatigue our bodies to the utmost. He lives like a baby—neither thinks nor labours—sleeps as placidly as an infant in its cradle, and as he has very little memory, he lives almost without care. I see no reason why he should not live to be ninety."

Not once did Edmund Standen inquire about Lady Perriam. He knew not how near she might have been to the gates of death—knew not if her hour of peril were ended. Was she not dead to him already? Could death remove her farther from him—or divide him more completely than her falsehood had divided them.

Yet he would have given much in that hour to know how she fared. It was but his fear of compromising her that prevented his questioning Mr. Bain as to her welfare.

He spoke a little of indifferent matters, finished his cigar, and wished the agent good night. Shadrack Bain leaning with folded arms upon the broad stone balustrade, watching the departing figure till it vanished in the narrow lane.

"This rather confirms my notion," he said to himself; "I thought there'd been something more than a passing flirtation between those two. Mr. Standen was deeply hit at any rate, though he contrives to carry it off pretty well. But she doesn't take matters quite so easily. The lightest mention of his name brings the blood into her cheek, and leaves it ashy pale a minute after. You'd better make haste and cure yourself of that fancy, Lady Perriam, for if ever you become a widow I don't think you'll find it to your advantage to marry Edmund Standen."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MR. BAIN MAKES HIMSELF USEFUL.

Sylvia's babe grew and flourished, and for the rest of that glorious summer time it seemed to her as if life had a new zest. The infant was such a novel plaything, and its existence gave her so much additional importance. The servants were more reverential than before. The mother of Perriam's future lord was a much grander person than Sir Aubrey's young wife. Sir Aubrey, being in a measure civilly dead, the household worshipped at the shrine of the heir, as if that unconscious infant were already master and ruler.

A motherly countrywoman, the childless widow of a small tenant farmer who had failed and gone to the dogs untimely, had been engaged as nurse. Mr. Bain, who knew everybody, had found this person, and brought her to Lady Perriam, with a recommendation so strong as to be almost a command. Sylvia would have rejected the woman solely, to resist an interference which she resented as a species of tyranny, but Sir Aubrey, who was present at the discussion and who always sided with Shadrack Bain, insisted that Mrs. Tringfold should be engaged. Mrs. Tringfold was accordingly introduced into the household a few weeks before the birth of the heir.

Sir Aubrey forgot all about the business within an hour of the argument, but his influence had enabled Mr. Bain to have his own way, which Sylvia considered no small hardship.

"Why do you always take Mr. Bain's part against me?" she asked when the steward had left them.

"Very sensible man is Bain, my love," answered Sir Aubrey, in his senile way; "can't do better than take Bain's advice. If Bain recommends nurse, nurse must be good."

"I'd rather have chosen for myself," said Sylvia, pouting.

"What can you know about servants, my dear? You're too young to decide properly. Very good servant is Bain—a faithful servant."

"Faithful to his own interests, I daresay," muttered Sylvia.

Sylvia did not know that it was through Mr. Bain's influence her future income had been made five thousand instead of three thousand a year; but perhaps even had she been aware of this important fact it would hardly have reconciled her to that ever watchful influence which she considered a kind of tyranny.

There was no one in that house, the mother not excepted, to whom that infant stranger seemed to give such heartfelt pleasure as to the sick nurse, Mrs. Carter. She deemed it her sweetest privilege to nurse him for an odd half hour, when Master Perriam's own special attendant, Mrs. Tringfold, was in an amiable humour, and disposed to permit such a liberty with her nursing. She hung over his cradle with a fondness which, if assumed, was the perfection of acting. The servants declared this show of affection was assumed, and condemned Mrs. Carter as a time server and sycophant.

"She's always been able to get the blind side of my lady," said Mrs. Spicer, the housekeeper, "and now she thinks she'll get more of a favourite than ever if she makes believe to worship that blessed child."

Although this was the uncharitable opinion of the servants' hall, nothing could be more quiet and unobtrusive than Mrs. Carter's love for the infant. It was when for a few blessed moments she was left alone beside the cradle, or with the baby in her arms, that her soul overflowed, and she shed tears, the sacred tears of the repentant sinner over that unconscious little one, or breathed a heartfelt prayer that his path might be far from the sin and misery that had beset her footsteps.

The time came, but too soon, when the charm of novelty wore off this last blessing as it had worn off the splendour of her stately home, and Sylvia began to lose her first delight in the baby. He was a troublesome plaything at best, and if his mother allowed herself to take the sole charge of him for half an hour she was apt to find that half hour the longest in the day. She was glad to hand him over to Mrs. Tringfold or Mrs. Carter, and to admire his infantine graces at a distance.

Sir Aubrey liked to have the babe paraded up and down his room now and then; seemed proud of him; and caressed him with a senile fondness occasionally; but at other times forgot his existence, and sometimes even moaned and bewailed his want of an heir. At first Mrs. Carter would bring him the child, and show him the folly of these complainings, when Providence had already blessed him with so fair a son. But after a little while she discovered how vain this was, and allowed him to utter his useless lamentations as often as he pleased, without endeavouring to demonstrate their foolishness. As time wore on, and the babe became advanced in months, Lady Perriam found him more and more troublesome.

With every tooth he cut there was the same fuss and anxiety. He had innumerable small ailments and peevish fits, and squalling fits which Mrs. Tringfold put down to his teeth, until it seemed to Sylvia that he could scarcely have been worse had he had teeth sprouting out all over him like the almonds on a tippy cake.

"I shall be fonder of him when he is a little older, I dare say," the mother thought, self-excusingly, when she found the heir of Perriam more than usually troublesome.

So, little by little, as the months wore on, the child ceased to be the new delight and amusement of her life, and the burden of her monotonous existence weighed upon her as heavily as of old.

She was in some measure more free to do as she liked since Sir Aubrey's illness. He, who had been so completely her master, was now little more than a cipher in the house. Dead in life he occupied a place upon this earth, yet was no more than a blank in the sum of its inhabitants.

Sylvia visited his sick room almost as she might have visited his grave, and was as little likely to be called to account by that unremembering questioner, as if her husband's lips had been sealed for ever in the last silence.

Weary as she felt her attendance upon Sir Aubrey, she contrived to be tolerably kind to him—schooled herself to a passive amiability which was the very reverse of her vivid nature. She read to him, and sang to him, and answered the same questions again and again with a patience which seemed almost sublime. But she restricted the performance of these duties to about two hours a day—an hour in the morning and an hour in the evening. More she declared would have killed her.

For the rest of his time Sir Aubrey was dependent upon Mordred Perriam, Mrs. Carter, and Jean Chapelain for society, cheered only by the doctor's daily visit, or by Mr. Bain, who came about twice a week, and went over the business of the estate with his employer as seriously as if the baronet had been in the fullest possession of his faculties.

Lady Perriam had now almost unlimited command of money. Sir Aubrey still kept his cheque book, and signed all cheques for the maintenance of his household. He was quite conscious of each amount which he so dispensed, and invariably bewailed the largeness of the sum demanded from him, but his brain had lost the power to remember or multiply the figures of previous cheques, and he might have been induced to sign three or four for the same purpose and amount in one day, had his land steward asked him to do so. All cheques were written at the instigation of Shadrack Bain. He alone could obtain money from Sir Aubrey, and thus all sums required by Lady Perriam passed in a manner through the agent's hands.

Sylvia felt humiliated by Mr. Bain's mediation but was fain to submit, for if she ventured to ask Sir Aubrey for money he always replied in the same manner. What could she want with so many cheques? She had plenty of gowns to wear; he was always seeing her in some new finery. She had a house to live in, and a carriage to ride in. What more could she require?

Sylvia would suggest that there were bills to be paid, and that some one must pay them.

"Let Bain bring me the bills and I'll write the cheques," was Sir Aubrey's invariable answer, "Bain knows what I ought to pay. He is a sharp man of business, and won't see me imposed upon. You'd ruin me, Sylvia, if I allowed you to manage matters."

Lady Perriam submitted therefore, and received all cheques from the hands of Shadrack Bain. He gave her ample funds to gratify her own caprices as well as to pay household bills. Sir Aubrey signed a cheque for sundries about once a fortnight, and sundries meant pocket money for Sylvia. She was now able to gratify her taste for fashionable dresses, rich laces, delicate-hued ribbons, at Mr. Ganzlein's, new books and new music without stint, to crowd her dressing table with the latest inventions in perfumery, to send her father a bank note now and then, and to add an occasional bonus to Mrs. Carter's liberal wages. If the possession of money could have made Sylvia Perriam happy she might now have tasted the fulness of joy; but however pleasant it was to buy fine dresses it seemed a hardship not to be able to wear them before admiring eyes. She might be pleased with the reflection of her beauty when she stood before her mirror dressed in the style which Mr. Ganzlein assured her was the last Parisian fashion, as worn by the Empress Eugenie. But she turned away from the glass with a dismal sigh, remembering that hardly anyone but her sick husband and Mr. Bain would be likely to behold her splendour. Thus after a brief period of extravagance, she grew tired of buying fine dresses.

She might have gone to Hedingham Church every Sunday, and shown off her finery among people who had known her in her poverty, but this she did not care to do. That one scornful look from Edmund Standen had been almost more than she could bear. She could not hazard its recurrence. Better never to see his face again than to see it with that expression. Yet when she dreamed of the dim unknown future—and all her dreams were of the future—she did not despair of winning her forsaken lover once again, were she but free to attempt the winning.

There was one person at Perriam Place in whom Sir Aubrey's altered state had worked a change almost as melancholy as the change in Sir Aubrey himself. This was Mordred Perriam, who had taken his brother's affliction deeply to heart; so deeply that it seemed as if the very main spring of his life were broken, and the vigour of the man so wasted and decayed that in the dismal journey to the grave the young brother was likely to go before the elder. Mordred made no complaint of illness, though to any ear that would harken he did occasionally bewail those sharp, shooting pangs which afflicted his internal being; now striking the heart, now assailing the head. He shuffled about very much as usual; shambled up and down his accustomed walks in the kitchen garden, but all his joy in life seemed gone. He had never stirred out of his own room since his brother's attack save to go to Aubrey's room, or for his constitutional walk in the kitchen garden. He couldn't bear the sight of the dining room without Aubrey, he said; so, at his request, all his meals were taken to him in his own littered chamber, and he sat among his dingy brown-backed folios, and quartos, and octavos, and mumbled his solitary meal, indifferent, or hardly conscious what he eat.

He bought no more books; corresponded no more with second-hand booksellers; studied no more catalogues of book sales; and this in him meant the relinquishment of his share in life. Not Charles V., when he shut himself up in the Mo-