

VARIOUS

LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE
OF POPULAR
LITERATURE AND
SCIENCE, OCTOBER,
1877. VOL XX - NO. 118

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Lippincott's Magazine of
Popular Literature and Science,
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Chester And The Dee

Two Papers.—I

The history of Chester is that of a key. It was the last city that gave up Harold's unlucky cause and surrendered to William the Conqueror, and the last that fell in the no less unlucky cause of the Stuart king against the Parliamentarians. In much earlier times it was held by the famous Twentieth Legion, the *Valens Victrix*, as the key of the Roman dominion in the north-west of Britain, and at present it has peculiarities of position, as well as of architecture, which make it unique in England and a lodestone to Americans. Curiously planted on the border of the newest and most bustling manufacturing district in England, close to

the coalfields of North Wales, the mines of Lancashire, the quays of its sea-rival Liverpool and the mills of grimy, wealthy Manchester, it still exercises, besides its artistic and historic supremacy, a *bonâ fide* ecclesiastical sway over most of these new places. It is the first ancient city accessible to American travellers, many of whom have given practical tokens of their affectionate remembrance of it by largely subscribing to the fund for the restoration of the cathedral, a work that has already cost some eighty thousand pounds.

The neighborhood of Chester is as suggestive of antiquity and foreigners as the city itself. Volumes might be written about the quaint, Dutch-like scenery of the low rich land reclaimed from the sea; the broad, sandy estuary of the Dee, with the square-headed peninsula, the Wirrall, which divides this quiet river from the noisy Mersey; the Hoylake, Parkgate and Neston fisher-folk on the sandy shores, with their queer lives, monotonous scratching-up of mussels and cockles, a never-failing trade, their terms of praise—"the biggest scrat," for instance, "in all the island," being the form of commendation for the woman who can with her rake at the end of a long pole scratch up most shellfish in a given time; the low, fertile green pastures, the creamy cheese and the eight yearly cheese-fairs. The city itself is the most foreign-looking in all England, and the inhabitants have the good taste to be proud of this. The river Dee—Milton's "wizard stream"—celebrated both by English and Welsh bards, is not seen to as much advantage under the walls of the Roman

"camp" (*castra*=Chester) as elsewhere, but its bridges serve to supply the want of fine scenery, especially the Old Bridge, which crosses the river just at its bend, and whose massive pointed arches took the place, when they were first built, of a ferry by which the city was entered at the "Ship Gate," whence now you look over "the Cop" or high bank on the right side of the stream, and view, as from a dike in Holland, the reclaimed land stretching eight miles beyond Chester, though the resemblance ceases at Saltney, where behind the iron-works tower the Welsh hills—Moel-Famman conspicuous above the rest—that bound the Vale of Clwyd.

The Dee is more a Welsh than an English river. It rises in the bleak mountain-region of Merionethshire, the most intensely Welsh of all counties, above Bala Lake, which is commonly but incorrectly called its source. Thence it flows through the Vale of Llangollen, famous in poetry, and waters the meadows of Wynnestay, the splendid home of one of Wales's most national representatives, Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, and only beyond that does it become English by flowing round and into Cheshire. On a very tiny scale the Dee follows something of the course of the Rhine: three streamlets combine to form it; these unite at the village of Llanwchllyn, and the river flows on, a mere mountain-torrent, past an old farmhouse, *Caer-gai*, lying on a desolate moor at the head of Bala Lake, and through the lake itself, after which its scenery alternates, like the Rhine's below Constance, between rocky gorges and flat moist meadows dotted with hamlets,

churches and towns. Bala—otherwise Lin-Jegid and Pimblemere ("Lake of the Five Parishes")—has some traditional connection with the great British epic, or rather with its accessories—the *Morte d'Arthur*—of which Tennyson has availed himself in *Enid*, mentioning that Enid's gentle ministrations soothed the wounded Geraint

As the south-west that blowing Bala Lake,
Fills all the sacred Dee.

Arthur's own home, according to Spenser, was at the source of the Dee: Vortigern's castle was near by on the head-waters of the Conway; and "under the foot of Rauran's mossy base" was the dwelling of old Timon, where Merlin came and gave to his care the wonderful infant who was to become the Christian Hercules of Britain. "Rauran" is the mountain which in Welsh is Arran-Pon-Llin, and which with its rocky shelves overlooks the yews of Bala's churches and the unaccustomed shade trees which the little town boasts in its principal streets. The lake, quiet and hardly visited as it is now, has great resources which are likely to be called upon in the future, and a survey was made ten years ago with a view of supplying Liverpool, Manchester, Blackburn, Birkenhead, etc. with water whenever a fresh demand for it should arise. This would imply the building of a breakwater at the narrow outlet of the lake, the damming up of a few mountain passes, and the "impounding" of a tributary of the Dee below the

lake—the Tryweryn, which has an extensive drainage-area; but these works are still only projected.

There is scarcely an English brook that has not some historical associations, some poetical reminiscences, some attractions beyond those of scenery. Wherever water, forest and meadow were combined, an abbey was generally planted. Bala Lake, with its fishing-rights, once belonged to the Cistercian abbey of Basingwerk, while the Dee just above Llangollen was the property of the abbey of Valle Crucis, whose beautiful ruins still stand on its banks. Before we reach them we pass by the country of the Welsh hero, Owen Glendower, from whom are descended many of the families of this neighborhood and others—the Vaughans, for instance; by Glendower's prison at Corwen, and the Parliament House at Dolgelly, where he signed a treaty with France, and where the beautiful oak carving of the roof would alone repay a visitor for his trouble in getting there. The Dee is for the most part wanting in striking natural features, but here and there steep rocks enclose its foaming waters; deep banks covered with trees break the rugged shore-line; a village, such as Llanderfel with a tumbledown bridge, lies nestled in the valley; and coracles shoot here and there over the stream. These primitive boats, basketwork covered with hides, or, as used now, canvas coated with tar, are propelled by a paddle, and are much used for netting salmon. Near Bangor the fishermen are so skilful that they generally win in the coracle-races got up periodically by enthusiastic revivalists of old national sports.

Llangollen Vale has a beauty of its own, the family likeness of which to that of all valleys in the hearts of mountains makes it none the less welcome. The picturesqueness of thatched houses and a dilapidation of masonry which only age makes beautiful marks the difference between this valley and the Alpine ones with their trim, clean toy houses, or the Transatlantic ones with their square, solid, black log huts and huge well-sweeps; otherwise the fresh greenery, the purple mountain-shadows, the subdued sounds, no one knows whence, the sense of peace and solitude, are akin to every other beautiful valley-scene of mingled wildness and cultivation. A traveller can hardly help making comparisons, yet much escapes him of the peculiar charm that hangs round every place, and is too subtle to disclose itself to the eye of a mere passer. You must live at least six months in one place before its true character unfolds: the broad beauties you see at once, but it needs the microscope of habit to find out the rarest charms. Therefore it is much easier to descant on the tangible, striking beauty of Valle Crucis Abbey than on the aggregate loveliness of Llangollen Vale; and perhaps it is this lack of familiarity that leads novelists, poets and others to dwell so much more and with such detail on buildings than on natural scenery. It may not be given them to understand upon how much higher a plane of beauty stands a bed of ferns on a rocky ledge, a clump of trees even on a flat meadow, and especially a tangled forest-scene or a view of distant mountains in a sunset glow, or the surface of water undotted by a sail, than the highest effect of man-made

beauty, be it even York Minster or the Parthenon. What man does has value by reason of the meaning in it, and of course man cannot but fall short of the perfection of his own meaning; whereas Nature is of herself perfection, and perfection in which there is no effort. Valle Crucis is hardly a rival of Fountains or Rivaulx. The Cistercians in the beginning of their foundation were reformers, ascetic, and essentially agriculturists. Their great leader, Bernard of Clairvaux, the advocate of silence and work, once said, "Believe me, I have learnt more from trees than ever I learnt from men." But decay came even into this community of farmer-monks, and the praise and panegyric of the abbey, as handed down to us by a Welsh poet, betray unconsciously things hardly to the credit of a monastic house, for the abbot, "the pope of the glen," he tells us, gave entertainments "like the leaves in summer," with "vocal and instrumental music," wine, ale and curious dishes of fish and fowl, "like a carnival feast," and "a thousand apples for dessert."

The river-scenery changes below Llangollen, and gives us first a glimpse of a wooded, narrow valley, then of the unsightly accessories of the great North Wales coalfield, after which it enters upon a typically English phase—low undulating hills and moist, rich meadows divided by luxuriant hedges and dotted with single spreading trees. The hedgerow timber of Cheshire is beautiful, and to a great extent makes up for the want of tracts of wooded land. This country is not, like the Midland counties and the great Fen district, violently or exclusively agricultural,

and these hedges and trees, which are gratefully kept up for the sake of the shade they afford to the cattle, show a very different temper among the farmers from that utilitarianism which marks the men of Leicester shire, Lincoln, Nottingham, Norfolk, or Rutland. There even great land-owners are often obliged to humor their tenants, and keep the unwelcome hedges trimmed so as not to interpose two feet of shade between them and the wheat-crop; and as often as possible hedges are replaced by ugly stone walls or wooden fences. It is only in their own grounds that landlords can afford to court picturesqueness, and in this part of the country the American who is said to have objected to hedges because they were unfit for seats whence to admire the landscape, might safely sit down anywhere; only, as matters are seldom perfectly arranged, there is very little to admire but a flat expanse of wheat, barley and grass. This part of Cheshire has hardly more diversity in its river-scenery, but the mere presence of trees and green arbors makes it a pleasant picture, while here and there, as at Overton (this is Welsh, however, and belongs to Flintshire), a church-tower comes in to complete the scene. Here the Dee winds about a good deal, and receives its beautiful, dashing tributary, the Alyn, which runs through the Vale of Gresford and waters the park of Trevallyn Old Hall, one of the loveliest of old English homes. Its pointed gables and great clustering stacks of chimneys, its mullioned and diamond-paned windows, its finely-wooded park, all realize the stranger's ideal of the antique manor-house. This neighborhood

is studded with country-houses in all styles of architecture, from the characteristic national to the uncomfortable and cold foreign type. Houses that were meant to stand in ilex-groves under a purple sky and a sun of bronze look forlorn and uninviting under the gray sky of England and amid its trees leafless for so many months in the year: home associations seem impossible in a porticoed house suggestive of outdoor living and the relegation of chambers to the use of a mere refuge from the weather. For many of these places are no more than villas enlarged, and might be set down with advantage to themselves in the Regent's Park in London, the very acme of the commonplace. On the other hand, all the traditional associations that go with an English hall presuppose a national style of architecture. Even florid Tudor, even sturdy "Queen Anne," can stand juxtaposition with groups of horses, dogs and huntsmen; Christmas cheer and Christmas weather set them off all the better; leafless trees are no drawback; the house looks warmer, cozier, more home-like, the worse the blast and rush without. A roaring fire is natural to the huge hall fireplace, while in a mosaic-paved "ante-room" or a frescoed "saloon" it looks foreign and out of place. Many an odd Welsh and English house has unfortunately disappeared to make room for a cold, unsuccessful monstrosity that reminds one of a mammoth railway-station or a new hotel; and when Welsh names are tacked on to these absurd dwellings the contrast is as painful as it is forcible. Such, for instance, is Bryn-y-Pys, on the Dee—a house you might guess to belong to a Liverpool merchant

who had trusted to a common builder for a comfortable home. Overton Cottage, on the other side, fills in with its walks and plantations an abrupt bend of the river, and the view from the up-going road at its back is very lovely, though the scene is purely pastoral. Overton Churchyard is one of the "seven wonders" of North Wales: it has a very trim and stately appearance, not that ragged, free if melancholy, outspreadedness which distinguishes many country cemeteries, that unpremeditated luxuriance of creepers and flowers, blossoming bushes and grasses, that make up at least half of one's pleasant reminiscences of such places. How much more interesting to find an old tomb or quaint "brass" under the temple of a wild rosebush or in the firm clasp of an ivy-root than to walk up to it and read the inscription newly scraped and cleaned by the voluble attendant who volunteers to show you the place! The great elms by Overton Church and the half-timbered and thatched houses crowding up to its gates somewhat make up for the splendor of the coped wall and new monuments in the churchyard. A scene wholly old is the Erbistock Ferry, which one might mistake for a rope-ferry on the Mosel. The cottage looks like the dilapidated lodge of an old monastery, and here, at least, is no trimness. Two walls with a flight of steps in each enclose a grass terrace between them, and trees and bushes straggle to the edge of the river, hardly keeping clear of the swinging rope. Coracles are sometimes used for ferrying—also punts. Bangor is a familiar name to students of church history, and to those who are not, the startling tale of the massacre of

twelve hundred British monks by the Saxon and heathen king of Northumbria, who conquered Chester and invaded Wales in the seventh century, is repeated by the local guides. At present, Bangor is interesting to anglers and to lovers of curiosities—to the former as a good salmon-ground, and to the latter for the quaint verses, which, though trivial in themselves, borrow a value from the date of their inscription and the "laws" to which they refer. They are on the wall of the lower story of the bell-tower:

If that to ring you would come here,
You must ring well with hand and ear;
But if you ring in spur or hat,
Fourpence always is due for that;
But if a bell you overthrow,
Sixpence is due before you go;
But if you either swear or curse,
Twelvepence is due; pull out your purse.
Our laws are old, they are not new;
Therefore the clerk must have his due.
If to our laws you do consent,
Then take a bell: we are content.

Farndon Bridge and Wrexham Church (the latter looks like a small cathedral to the unpractised eye) are the last Welsh points of attraction before the Dee becomes quite an English river. Malpas (*mauvais pas* = "bad step"), on the English bank, is significantly so-called from its situation as a border town: the

rector, too, might consider it not ill named, as regards the odd partition of the church tithes, which has been in force from time immemorial, and has given rise to an explanatory legend concerning a travelling king whom the resident curate wisely entertained in the absence of the rector, receiving for his guerdon a promise of an equal share in the income, not only for himself, but for all future curates. In the upper rectory (the lower is the curate's house) was born Bishop Heber in 1783, and in the early years of this century, before missionary meetings were as common as they are now, the young clergyman wrote on the spur of the moment, with only one word corrected, the well-known hymn, "From Greenland's Icy Mountains." A missionary sermon was announced for Sunday at Wrexham, the vicarage of Heber's father-in-law, Shirley, and the want of a suitable hymn was felt. He was asked on Saturday to write one, and did so, seated at a window of the old vicarage-house. It was printed that evening, and sung the next day in Wrexham Church. The original manuscript is in a collection at Liverpool, and the printer who set up the type when a boy was still living at Wrexham within the last twenty years.

The river now makes a turn, sweeping along into English ground and making almost a natural moat round Chester, the great Roman camp whose form and intersecting streets still bear the stamp of Roman regularity, and whose history long bore traces of the influence of Roman inflexibility mingled with British dash. The view of the city is fine from the Aldford road

(or Old Ford, where a Roman pavement is sometimes visible in the bed of the stream), with the cathedral and St. John's towering over the peaks and gables that shoot up above the walls. The mention of the ford brings to mind a famous crossing of the river during the civil wars. It was just before the battle of Rowton Moor, which Charles I. watched from the tower that now bears his name; and Sir Marmaduke Langdale, one of his leal soldiers, wishing to send the king notice of his having crossed the Dee at Farndon Bridge and pressing on the Parliamentarians, bade Colonel Shakerley convey the message as speedily as possible. The latter, to avoid the long circuit by the bridge, galloped to the Dee, took a wooden tub used for slaughtering swine, employed "a batting-staff, used for batting of coarse linen," as an oar, put his servant in the tub, his horse swimming by him, and once across left the tub in charge of the man while he rode to the king, delivered his message and returned to cross over the same way.

Eaton and Wynnestay are the grandest of the Dee country-seats, though not the most interesting as to architecture. The former, like many Italian houses, has its park open to the public, and is an exception to the jealously-guarded places in most parts of England, but its avenues, rather formal though very magnificent, are approached by lodges. The Wrexham avenue leads to a farmhouse called Belgrave, and here is the christening-point of the new, fashionable London of society, of novelists and of contractors. Another like avenue leads to Pulford, where there is another lodge: a third leads from Grosvenor Bridge to

the deer-park, and a fourth to the village of Aldford. The hall is an immense pile, strikingly like, at first glance, the Houses of Parliament, with the Victoria Tower (this in the hall is one hundred and seventy feet high, and built above the chapel), and the style is sixteenth-century French, florid and costly. The plan is perhaps unique in England, and comfort has been attained, though one would hardly believe it, such size seeming to swamp everything except show. The description of the house, as given by a visitor there, reads like that of a palace: "The hall is an octagonal room in the centre of the house about seventy-five feet in length and from thirty to forty broad: on each side, at the end farthest from the entrance, are two doors leading into anterooms—one the ante-drawing-room, and the other the ante-dining-room; each is lighted by three large windows, and is thirty-three feet in length: they are fine rooms in themselves, and well-proportioned. From these lead the drawing-room and the dining-room respectively, both exceedingly grand rooms, ingenious in design and shape, each with two oriel windows and lighted by three others and a large bay window: this suite completes the east side. The south is occupied by the end of the drawing-room and a vast library—all *en suite*. The library is lighted by four bay windows, three flat ones and a fine alcove, and the rest of the main building to the west is made up of billiard- and smoking-rooms, waiting-hall, groom-of-chambers' sitting- and bed-rooms, and a carpet-room, besides the necessary staircases. This completes the main building, and a corridor

leads to the kitchen and cook's offices: this corridor, which passes over the upper part of the kitchen, branches off into two parts—one leading to an excellently-planned mansion for the family and the private secretary, and another leading to the stables, which are arranged with great skill. The pony stable, the carriage-horse stable, the riding horses, occupy different sides, and through these are arranged, just in the right places, the rooms for livery and saddle grooms and coachmen. The laundry, wash-house, gun-room and game-larder occupy another building, which, however, is easily approached, and the whole building, though it extends seven hundred feet in length, is a perfect model of compactness. Great facilities are given to any one who desires to see it." The mention of a "mansion for the family" shows how the associations of a home are lost in this wilderness of magnificence: indeed, I remember a remark of a person whose husband had three or four country-houses in England and Scotland and a house in London, that "she never felt at home anywhere."

The farms in this neighborhood are mostly small, the average being seventy acres, and some are still smaller, though when one gets down to ten, one is tempted to call them gardens. Grazing and dairy-work are the chief industries. Farther inland, beyond the manufacturing town of Stockport, is a house of the Leghs, an immense building, more imposing than lovely in its exterior, but one of the most individual and pleasant houses in its interior as well as in its human associations. It has been altered at various

times, and bears traces, like a corrected map, of each new phase of architecture for several hundred years. The four sides form a huge quadrangle, entered by foreign-looking gateways, and the rooms all open into a wide passage that runs round three sides of the building, and is a museum in itself. Old and new are just enough blended to produce comfort, and the stately, old-English look of the drawing-room, with its dark panelling and tapestry, is a reproach to the pink-and-white, plaster-of-Paris style of too many remodelled houses. Outside there is a garden distinguished by a heavy old wall overrun with creepers, dividing two levels and making a striking object in the landscape; and beyond that, where the country grows bleak and begins to remind one of moors, there are the last survivors of a unique breed of wild cattle, which, like the mastiffs at the house, bear the name of the place. The name of another Cheshire house, formerly belonging to the Stanleys, and now to Mr. Gladstone, is probably familiar to American readers—Hawarden Castle. The present house must trust entirely to associations for its interest, having been built in 1809, before much taste was applied to restore old places, but the old castle in the park dates from the middle of the thirteenth century. The park is not unlike that of Arundel, but the views from the ruin are finer and more varied. The counties of Caernarvon, Denbigh, Flint, Cheshire and Lancashire are spread out around it, and the ruin itself is beautiful and extensive.

The road from Hawarden to Boughton is exceedingly grand: we come upon one of the widest panoramas of the Dee and

one of the most typical of English country scenes. A vast sweep of country unsurpassed in richness spreads along the river on the Cheshire side: sixty square miles of fields and pastures are in sight, with elms, sycamores and formal rows of Lombardy poplars. Wherever the trees cluster in a grove they usually mark the site of a country-house or a cherished ruin, like this one of old Hawarden, where one enormous oak tree sweeps its branches on the ground on every side, and forms a canopy whence you can peer out, as through the delicate tracery of a Gothic window, at the landscape beyond. The mouth of the Dee is visible from this road, whence at low water it seems reduced to a huge sandbank, through which the tired river trickles like a brook. The dun sky and yellow sands and gray sea, with the island of Hilbree, a counterpart of Lindisfarne both in its legend of a recluse and its continual alternation twice a day between the state of an island and a peninsula, make a picture pleasant to look back upon. Hence too come the shoals of cockles and mussels that go to delight Londoners. Then the open-sea fishing, the lithe boats that seem all sail, the wide waste of waters, with the point of Air and the Great Orme's Head walling it in on the receding Welsh coasts, the remembrance of the shipwreck a little beyond the mouth of the Dee which led to Milton's poem of *Lycidas* (containing the phrase "wizard stream" which has become peculiar to the Dee),—all claim our notice, and it seems impossible that we are so few miles from Manchester and so far from the historic, romantic times of old.

Lady Blanche Murphy.

For Another

Sweet—sweet? My child, some sweeter word than sweet,
Some lovelier word than love, I want for you.
Who says the world is bitter, while your feet
Are left among the lilies and the dew?

Ah? So some other has, this night, to fold
Such hands as his, and drop some precious head
From off her breast as full of baby-gold?
I, for her grief, will not be comforted.

S.M.B. Piatt.

Among The Kabyles

Concluding Paper

Few countries twenty-five leagues long by ten wide have such an assortment of climates as Grand Kabylia. From the Mediterranean on the north to the Djurjura range on the south, a distance of two hours' ride by rail if there were a railway, the ascent is equal to that from New York Bay to the summit of Mount Washington. The palm is at home on the shore, while snow is preserved through the summer in the hollows of the peaks. This epitome of the zones is more condensed than that so often remarked upon on the eastern slope of Mexico, although it does not embrace such extremes of temperature as those presented by Vera Cruz and the uppermost third of Orizaba. The country being more broken, the lower and higher levels are brought at many points more closely together than on the Mexican ascent. It happens thus that semi-tropical and semi-arctic plants come not simply into one and the same landscape, but into actual contact. Each hill is a miniature Orizaba, so far as it rises, and hundreds of abrupt hills collected in a space comparatively so limited so dovetail the floras of different levels as in a degree to cause them to coalesce and effect a certain mutual adaptation of habits. Good neighborhood has established

itself rather more completely among the vegetable than with the human part of the inhabitants.

What more amiable example of give-and-take than the intertwining of birch and orange, the thin ghostly sprays of the hyperborean caressing the fragrant leaf and golden globes of the sub-tropical? This, and other conjunctions less eloquent of contrast, may be seen on the headland of Zeffoun or Cape Corbelin. They stand out from a prevailing background of the familiar forest trees of temperate Europe and America—the ash, elm, beech, oak, fir and walnut. The orchards, above those of oranges and lemons, are of figs and olives. The cork-oak covers considerable tracts, but is less attended to than in Spain. A non-European aspect is imparted by the tufts of cactus and aloes which abound in the most arid localities.

Wherever intelligent farming is met with in Northern Africa it is a safe assertion that the Kabyles are either on the spot or not far off. Like other farmers, they are conservative and adhere to old rules or fancies, which in some cases verge upon superstition. The practice of fertilizing fig trees by hanging them with fruits of the wild fig is one of those which it is difficult to class—whether with the visionary or the practical. Be that as it may, people who know nothing about figs except to eat them have no right to a say in the matter. Tradition and experience are in favor of the Kabyle. He does what has been done since Aristotle, Theophrastus and Pliny, all of whom insist on "caprification" as essential to a large crop of figs adapted to drying. He will

go or send many miles to procure the wild fruit if it does not grow in his neighborhood, and the traffic in it reaches a value of some thousands of dollars annually, trains of thirty, fifty and sixty mule-loads passing from one tribe to another. As with other valuable things, this inedible fruit is food for quarrelling. The tribe which is rich in the *dokhar*, or wild fig, is fortunate, and especially so if its neighbors have none or if their crop of it fails. It is then able to "bull the market," and proceeds to do so with a promptness and vim that would turn a Wall street operator blue with envy. But it is compelled to take account of troubles in its path unknown at the Board. The party who is "short" on *dokhar* may be "long" on matchlocks. If so, the speculation is apt to come to an unhappy end. A sudden raid will capture the stock and at once equalize the market. To many communities figs are at once meat and pocket-money. To lose the harvest is not to be thought of. The aspect of the means of preventing such a disaster is altogether a secondary consideration. *Dokhar* at all hazards is the cry of men, women and children. The comparative cessation of fig-wars is one of the blessings due to French rule.

What we deem the fruit of the fig is, it will be remembered, only the husk, the apparent seeds being the true fruit and—before ripening—the blossom. A small fly establishes itself in the interior of the wild fig, escaping in great numbers when the fruit is ripe. This happens before the ripening of the improved fig, and the fly is supposed to carry the wild pollen to the flowers of the latter. A single insect, say the Kabyles, will perfect ninety-

nine figs, the hundredth becoming its tomb. Some varieties of figs do not need caprification, but they are said to be unsuitable for drying or shipment.

The Italian practice of touching the eye of each fig, while yet on the tree, with a drop of olive oil seems opposed to the African plan; since the oil would certainly exclude the insect. And there are no better figs in the world than those of the Southern States of the Union, which are not treated in either way, and receive the least possible cultivation of any kind. Those States, if it be true that the difference in the yield of a "caprified" and non-caprified tree is that between two hundred and eighty and twenty-five pounds, cannot do better than borrow a leaf from the Kabyle book, should it only be a fig-leaf to aid in clothing the nakedness of bare sands and galled hillsides. The United States Department of Agriculture should by all means introduce the dokhar. Some of our agricultural machinery would be an exchange in the highest degree beneficial to the other side.

Long before the French occupation the Kabyles had maintained a regulation which is, we believe, peculiar in Europe to France—the *ban*, or legally-established day for the beginning of the vintage and the harvest of other fruits. The cultivator may repose under his own vine and fig tree, but he shall not until the word is given by the proper authority put forth his hand to pluck its luscious boon, though perfectly mature or past maturity. Exceptions are made in case of invalids and distinguished guests, and doubtless the hale schoolboy decrees

an occasional dispensation in his own favor. The birds share his defiance of the law, and both are abetted by a third group of transgressors, the monkeys.

Africans of this last-named race are in some localities extremely numerous, and they do not restrict their foraging parties to succulent food. Grain is very acceptable to them, and has the advantage of keeping better than fruit, the art of drying which they have not yet mastered any more than the Bushmen or the Pi-Utes. They establish granaries in the crevices of the rocks; and these reserves of provision are sometimes of such magnitude as to make exploring expeditions on the part of the plundered Kabyles quite remunerative.

These most ancient of all the devastators which have successively descended upon Barbary are baboons of small size. They have no tails, that ancestral organ having dwindled to a wart the size of a pea. This approach to the form of man is aided by another point of personal resemblance—long whiskers. That the tail should have been worn off against the rocks, or in climbing the fences to get at orchards and melon-patches, is easily conceivable. How the evolutionists account for the retention of the beard does not yet appear. The females carry their young as adroitly and carefully as do the Kabyle women, and ascend the rocks with them with much greater activity. A young monkey has a less neglected look than a young Kabyle. His ablutions cannot be less frequent. Tourists complain that all Kabylia does not boast a single bath-house—a privation the more

striking to one who has to pick his way often for miles among the ruins of Roman aqueducts, tanks and baths, the great basin in cut stone at Djema-Sahridj, which gives name to the place, being a noted example of these works.

As the vultures, dogs, negroes, Jews and jackals keep exact memoranda of the market-days, so the baboons are always on hand at harvest. Ranged in long ranks on an amphitheatre of cliffs, stroking gravely their long white beards like so many reverend *episcopi* or "on-lookers" confident of their tithes, they calmly contemplate the toilers in the vale below. Swift was not more certain of his "tithes-pig and mortuary guinea." Sunset comes sooner below than above. The reapers are early home, and the peaks are still purple when the marauders pour down upon the fields, and their share of the work is done with a neatness unsurpassable by reiver, ritter or kateran. The monkey-tax thus collected is quite a calculable percentage of the crop, and few taxes are more regularly paid. As it goes to non-producers, its reduction is an object constantly kept in view. The wretched guns of the natives are, however, but a feeble instrument of reform. The chassepot may succeed after having finished the rest of its task, and dispose of the baboons after the settlement of the men. The former, though not incomparably smaller than the French conscript after a protracted war, will never be made to bear arms. He is therefore useless to modern statesmen, and needs to be got rid of.

While the barn is defrauded by these little vegetarians, the

barnyard is laid under tribute by a family of equally unauthorized flesh-eaters—the panthers. If this large spotted cat, known in other parts of the world as ounce, jaguar, leopard and chetah, has any choice of diet, it is for veal. But his appreciation of kid is none the less lively. Lamb, in season, comes well to him also. As there are many panthers, each of them of "unbounded stomach," and they can find little to eat in the way of wild quadrupeds, the destruction they must cause among domestic animals is seen to be serious. In the Mokuéa neighborhood each village has its panther-killer, an enterprising man set apart for a profession which sometimes becomes hereditary. One of these boasts of having killed thirty-six panthers. His father before him had bagged seventy-five, and he hoped before pulling his final trigger to have done as well. This expectation was a just one, as at twenty-eight he had already nearly halved the paternal count. The method of hunting is very simple. The sportsman fixes a bleating little victim from the herd at the foot of a tree, and climbs with his flint gun into the branches. Had the North African beast the arboreal habits of the South African tree-leopard or the American jaguar, this proceeding would be less effectual with him. But he can neither climb nor reflect like his countryman the monkey, and is picked off like a beef. One finds it difficult to get up sympathy for an animal so little able to take care of himself, or to suppose that panthers could have furnished a particularly high-spiced ingredient to the enjoyments of the Roman arena. An English bull-dog, if less picturesque, would have been far more

fruitful of fighting.

Products edible neither to the wild beast nor the tooth of time are the Kabyle vases in clay. The amphoræ in common use by the women for carrying water are generally of graceful forms, comparing well in design with many of the archaic vases of Greece and the Levant. The patterns vary somewhat with the locality, but there is a resemblance which speaks of a common origin and taste. Those of the Beni-Raten all come to a blunt point at the bottom, and will not stand unsupported. The jar is made to rest upon the girdle of the bearer, while she supports it upon her back by one or both of the handles. Among the tribes nearer the Djurjura the jar has a broader and hollowed bottom, fitted to rest upon the head of the woman. It must therefore be less elongated and more rotund to admit of her reaching the handles for the purpose of balancing it. These jars weigh, filled with water, sixty pounds. In carrying one of them a Kabyle woman, it may easily be supposed, is not in a condition to study lightness of step or grace of carriage. Yet this heavy task, to which she begins to accustom herself at the age of twelve, does not appear to injure her figure or health. Such a result is more often due to violent and exceptional strains than to habitual exertion even greater in extent. The muscles are not less susceptible of education than the mind. Whatever brings out the full power of either without suddenly overtasking is healthy and beneficial.

It has been remarked that the most usual size of the Kabyle

water-jar is as nearly as possible identical with the amphora kept for a standard measure in the Capitol at Rome. This coincidence may well be due rather to a correspondence in the average strength of the carriers than to a common system of authorized measures. In decoration the Kabyle vases approach the Arabic more than the Roman style. But the feeling, both in form and coloring, is decidedly more artistic than in the similar ware of Northern Europe.

Very ancient influences are manifest, too, in the work of the Kabyle silversmiths. Their diadems, ear-drops, bracelets and anklets remind one of the forms unearthed at Hissarlik and in Cyprus. In outline and chasing the rectangular, mathematical and monumental rules at the expense of the flowing and floriated. A certain pre-Phidian stiffness of handling seems to hamper the workman, as though twenty-three hundred years had been lost for him.

That there should be so much of hopeful force left in the Kabyle, artisan, agriculturist or adventurer, is creditable to him, and suggests "an original glory not yet lost." He obstinately refuses to accept the sheer professional vagabondism of the Arab, confident, as it were, that the world has in reserve better use for him than that. "Day-dawn in Africa" will probably gild his hills sooner than the tufted swamps of Guinea or the slimy huts of the Nile. A class of missionaries quite different from the Livingstones and the Moffatts have devoted themselves to his improvement. They approach him in a different way, and

begin on his commercial and industrial side, not on the spiritual. The latter does not appear to be by any means so accessible. Unlike the Ashantees, the Kafirs and the M'pongwe, he was a Christian once, and may become one again. But he is not going to be evangelized on the hurrah system; and that fact his new rulers, with all their alleged defects as reformers and colonizers, have sense enough to recognize. The new faith must push its way in the rear of works. Peace, good government, good roads, better implements and methods of labor will promote the enlightenment necessary to its success.

Bougie, the port of Eastern Kabylia, lying under Cape Carbon, has one Catholic church, standing in the midst of new streets, squares and public constructions indicative of prosperity wrought by the French régime. It is still in need of easy communication with the interior, having but one road—one more than in the time of the Turks. Wax is the chief commodity traversing that line of traffic. That circumstance has, however, nothing to do with the name of the town. The name was there when the French came, as was the wax, and very little else but ruins. If the present state of improvement has been effected with so little aid from good roads, what would not a number of them accomplish? A railway running to the other end of the province longitudinally through its centre would have but one ridge to overcome, and would find a very fair business ready for it. The railway and vandalism, in the proverbial sense of the word, could not coexist. When the Vandals buy railway-tickets and ship fat oxen on fast stock-trains

the African world will move. Nobody ever heard of chronic war between two adjacent railroad-stations, or of a gang of raiders dressed only in shirts and armed with spears and matchlocks going out on the morning mail for a day's shooting among their fellow-countrymen in the next county.

Let us quote a sketch of the region lying a few leagues west and north-west of Bougie:

"Near Tarourt we found thermal springs. An open park-like country, beautiful with trees and turf, is defaced only by charred spots where the cork-woods have been burned by the natives to effect clearings much less in extent than the space thus denuded. Ten acres of cork trees will be thoughtlessly burned to make one of fig-orchard. And this evil rather increases than lessens, prevention being difficult by reason of the want of good roads for reaching the delinquents.... In six hours' march we reached Toudja, at the foot of Mount Arbalon, in the most delicious oasis imaginable. The soil, threaded by clear and cool rivulets which spring in abundance from the rocks forming the base of the mountain, is wonderfully fertile. We are surrounded by more than a square league of tufted verdure, composed in great part of orange and lemon groves, mingled with some palms and immense carob trees. The houses are well built, and even show fancy in their designs. Vines bending with enormous clusters of grapes festoon themselves from tree to tree, tasselling the topmost branches with fruit and tendrils. It is not uncommon to see four or five large trees taken possession of by a single vine,

its trunk as large as the body of a man. The grapes are mostly of a light-red color, large and sweet."

All this indicates that France did not deceive herself as to the capabilities of Algeria, and that her conquest of it was inspired by considerations more solid than the glory she has been accused of recognizing as an all-sufficient motive. She has made the country much more valuable to the commerce of the world than any other part of Barbary. Had she done nothing more with it than hold it prostrate and put an end to its existence as a den of pirates, she would by that alone have earned the gratitude of the nations. She has done a great deal more. European civilization has discovered a penetrable spot in the dense armor of African barbarism. It has effected a lodgment in the darkest and most hopeless of the continents. Should the movement fail, like so many before it, to extend itself, and become localized after a period of promise, the cause must be sought mainly in natural obstacles almost impossible to be overcome.

To have lifted the dead, brutal weight of Ottoman tyranny from any corner of the broad territory it blasts is to deserve well of humanity. Still stronger is the case when the rescued territory is fertile, beautiful, and inhabited by a race worthy of a better fate than the bondage against which it had never ceased to struggle.

France has not been guiltless of acts of severity, always attendant, in a greater or less degree, on violent political changes. It is not doubtful, nevertheless, that by repressing the endless turbulence of the tribes and driving out a foreign rule that

knew no law but force, she has saved many more lives than she has taken. A genius for organization was never denied her. Organization was the first thing wanted in Algeria.

Edward C. Bruce.

"For Percival."

Chapter I

Thorns And Roses

It was a long, narrow and rather low room, with four windows looking out on a terrace. Jasmine and roses clustered round them, and flowers lifted their heads to the broad sills. Within, the lighted candles showed furniture that was perhaps a little faded and dim, though it had a slender, old-fashioned grace which more than made amends for any beauty it had lost. There was much old china, and on the walls were a few family portraits, of which their owner was justly proud; and in the air there lingered a faint fragrance of dried rose-leaves, delicate yet unconquerable. Even the full tide of midsummer sweetness which flowed through the open windows could not altogether overcome that subtle memory of summers long gone by.

The master of the house, with a face like a wrinkled waxen mask, sat in his easy-chair reading the *Saturday Review*, and a lady very like him, only with a little more color and fulness, was knitting close by. The light shone on the old man's pale face and

white hair, on the old lady's silver-gray dress and flashing rings: the knitting-pins clicked, working up the crimson wool, and the pages of the paper rustled with a pleasant crispness as they were turned. By the window, where the candlelight faded into the soft shadows, stood a young man apparently lost in thought. His face, which was turned a little toward the garden, was a noteworthy one with its straight forehead and clearly marked, level brows. His features were good, and his clear olive complexion gave him something of a foreign air. He had no beard, and his moustache was only a dark shadow on his upper lip, so that his mouth stood revealed as one which indicated reserve, though it was neither stern nor thin-lipped. Altogether, it was a pleasant face.

A light step sauntering along the terrace, a low voice softly singing "Drink to Me only with Thine Eyes," roused him from his reverie. He did not move, but his mouth and eyes relaxed into a smile as a white figure came out of the dusk exactly opposite his window, and singer and song stopped together. "Oh, Percival! I didn't know you had come out of the dining-room."

"Twenty minutes ago. What have you been doing?"

"Wandering about the garden. What could I do on such a perfect night but what I have been doing all this perfect day?"

She stood looking up at him as she spoke. She had an arch, beautiful face—the sort of face which would look well with patches and powder. Only it would have been a sin to powder the hair, which, though deep brown, had rich touches of gold, as if a happy sunbeam were imprisoned in its waves. Her eyes were

dark, her lips were softly red: everything about Sissy Langton's face was delicate and fine. She lifted her hand to reach a spray of jasmine just above her head, and the lace sleeve above fell back from her pretty, slender wrist: "Give it to me. Percival! do you hear? Oh, what a tease you are!" For he drew it back when she would have gathered it. Mrs. Middleton was heard making a remark inside.

"You don't deserve it," said Percival. "Here is my aunt saying that the hot weather makes you scandalously idle."

"Scandalously idle! Aunt Harriet!" Sissy repeated it in incredulous amusement, and the old lady's indignant disclaimer was heard: "Percival! Most unusually idle, I said."

"Oh! most unusually idle? I beg your pardon. But doesn't that imply a considerable amount of idleness to be got through by one person?"

"Yes, but you helped me," said Sissy.—"Aunt Harriet, listen. He stood on my thimble ever so long while he was talking this afternoon. How can I work without a thimble?"

"Impossible!" said Percival. "And I don't think I can get you another to-morrow: I am going out. On Thursday I shall come back and bring you one that won't fit. Friday you must go with me to change it. Yes, we shall manage three days' holiday very nicely."

"Nonsense! But it *is* your fault if I am idle."

"Why, yes. Having no thimble, you are naturally unable to finish your book, for instance."

"Oh, I sha'n't finish that: I don't like it. The heroine is so dreadfully strong-minded I don't believe in her. She never does anything wrong; and though she suffers tortures—absolute agony, you know—she always rises to the occasion—nasty thing!"

"A wonderful woman," said Percival, idly picking sprays of jasmine as he spoke.

Sissy's voice sank lower: "Do you think there are really any women like that?"

"Oh yes, I suppose so."

She took the flowers which he held out, and looked doubtfully into his face: "But—do you *like* them, Percival?"

"Make the question a little clearer," he said. "I don't like your ranting, pushing, unwomanly women who can talk of nothing but their rights. They are very terrible. But heroic women—" He stopped short. The pause was more eloquent than speech.

"Ah!" said Sissy, "Well—a woman like Jael? or Judith?"

He repeated the name "Judith." "Or Charlotte Corday?" he suggested after a moment.

It was Sissy's turn to hesitate, and she compressed her pretty lips doubtfully. Being in the Old Testament, Jael must of course come out all right, even if one finds it difficult to like her. Judith's position, is less clear. Still, it is a great thing to be in the Apocrypha, and then living so long ago and so far away makes a difference. But Charlotte Corday—a young Frenchwoman, not a century dead, who murdered a man, and was guillotined in those

horrible revolutionary times,—would Percival say *that* was the type of woman he liked?

"Well—Charlotte Corday, then?"

"Yes, I admire her," he said slowly. "Though I would rather the heroism did not show itself in bloodshed. Still, she was noble. I honor her. I dare say the others were too, but I don't know so much about them."

"What a poor little thing you must think me!" said Sissy. "I could never do anything heroic."

"Why not?"

"I should be frightened. I can't bear people to be angry with me. I should run away, or do something silly."

"Then I hope you won't be tried," said Percival.

She shook her pretty head: "People always talk about casting gold into the furnace, and it's coming out only the brighter and better. Things are not good for much if you would rather they were not tried."

Her hand was on the window-frame as she spoke, and the young man touched a ring she wore: "Gold is tried in the furnace—yes, but not your pearls. Besides, I'm not so sure that you would fail if you were put to the test."

She smiled, well pleased, yet unconvinced.

"You think," he went on, "that people who did great deeds did them without an effort—were always ready, like a bow always strung? No, no, Sissy: they felt very weak sometimes. Isn't there anything in the world you think you could die for? Even if you

say 'No' now, there may be something one of these days."

The twilight hid the soft glow which overspread her face. "Anything in the world you could die for?" Anything? Anybody? Her blood flowed in a strong, courageous current as her heart made answer, "Yes—for one."

But she did not speak, and after a moment her companion changed the subject. "That's a pretty ring," he said.

Sissy started from her reverie: "Horace gave it me. Adieu, Mr. Percival Thorne: I'm going to look at my roses."

"Thank you. Yes, I shall be delighted to come." And Percival jumped out. "Don't look at me as if I'd said something foolish. Isn't that the right way to answer your kind invitation?"

"Invitation! What next?" demanded Sissy with pretty scorn. And the pair went off together along the terrace and into the fragrant dusk.

A minute later it occurred to Mrs. Middleton to fear that Sissy might take cold, and she went to the window to look after her. But, as no one was to be seen, she turned away and encountered her brother, who had been watching them too. "Do they care for each other?" he asked abruptly.

"How can I tell?" Mrs. Middleton replied. "Of course she is fond of him in a way, but I can't help fancying sometimes that Horace—"

"Horace!" Mr. Thorne's smile was singularly bland. "Oh, indeed! Horace—a charming arrangement! Pray how many more times is Mr. Horace to supplant that poor boy?" His soft

voice changed suddenly, as one might draw a sword from its sheath. "Horace had better not cross Percival's path, or he will have to deal with me. Is he not content? What next must he have?"

Mrs. Middleton paused. She could have answered him. There was an obvious reply, but it was too crushing to be used, and Mr. Thorne braved it accordingly.

"Better leave your grandsons alone, Godfrey," she said at last, "if you'll take my advice; which I don't think you ever did yet. You'll only make mischief. And there is Sissy to be considered. Let the child choose for herself."

"And you think she can choose—*Horace?*"

"Why not?"

"Choose Horace rather than Percival?"

"I should," said the old lady with smiling audacity. "And I would rather she did. Horace's position is better."

Mr. Thorne uttered something akin to a grunt, which might by courtesy be taken for a groan: "Oh, how mercenary you women are! Well, if you marry a man for his money, Horace has the best of it—if he behaves himself. Yes, I admit that—*if he behaves himself*"

"And Horace is handsomer," said Mrs. Middleton with a smile.

"Pink-and-white prettiness!" scoffed Mr. Thorne.

"Nonsense!" The color mounted to the old lady's forehead, and she spoke sharply: "We didn't hear anything about that when

he was a lad, and we were afraid of something amiss with his lungs: it would have been high treason to say a syllable against him then. And now, though I suppose he will always be a little delicate (you'd be sorry if you lost him, Godfrey), it's a shame to talk as if the boys were not to be compared. They are just of a height, not half an inch difference, and the one as brave and manly as the other. Horace is fair, and Percival is dark; and you know, as well as I do, that Horace is the handsomer."

Mr. Thorne shifted his ground: "If I were Sissy I would choose my husband for qualities that are rather more than skin-deep."

"By all means. And still I would choose Horace."

"What is amiss with Percival?"

"He is not so frank and open. I don't want to say anything against him—I like Percival—but I wish he were not quite so reserved."

"What next?" said Mr. Thorne with a short laugh. "Why, only this morning you said he talked more than Horace."

"Talked? Oh yes, Percival can talk, and about himself too," said Mrs. Middleton with a smile. "But he can keep his secrets all the time. I don't want to say anything against him: I like him very much—"

"No doubt," said Mr. Thorne.

"But I don't feel quite sure that I know him. He isn't like Horace. You know Horace's friends—"

"Trust me for that."

"But what do you know of Percival's? I heard him tell Sissy he

would be out to-morrow. Will you ever know where he went?"

"I sha'n't ask him."

"No," she retorted, "you dare not! Isn't it a rule that no one is ever to question Percival?"

"And while I'm master here it shall be obeyed. It's the least I can do. The boy shall come and go, speak or hold his tongue, as he pleases. No one shall cross him—Horace least of all—while I'm master here, Harriet; but that won't be very long."

"I don't want you to think any harm of Percival's silence," she answered gently. "I don't for one moment suppose he has any secrets to be ashamed of. I myself like people to be open, that is all."

"If I wanted to know anything Percival would tell me," said Mr. Thorne.

Mrs. Middleton's charity was great. She hid the smile she could not repress. "Well," she said, "perhaps I am not fair to Percival, but, Godfrey, you are not quite just to Horace."

He turned upon her: "Unjust to Horace? *I?*"

She knew what he meant. He had shown Horace signal favor, far above his cousin, yet what she had said was true. Perhaps some of the injustice had been in this very favor. "Here are our truants!" she exclaimed. She and her brother had not talked so confidentially for years, but the moment her eyes fell on Sissy her thoughts went back to the point at which Mr. Thorne had disturbed them: "My dearest Sissy, I am so afraid you will catch cold."

"It can't be done to-night," said Percival. "Won't you come and try?" But the old lady shook her head.

"All right, auntie! we won't stop out," said Sissy; and a moment later she made her appearance in the drawing-room with her hands full of roses, which she tossed carelessly on the table. Mr. Thorne had picked up his paper, and stood turning the pages and pretending to read, but she pushed it aside to put a rosebud in his coat.

"Roses are more fit for you young people than for an old fellow like me," he said, "Why don't you give one to Percival?"

She looked over her shoulder at young Thorne. "Do you want one?" she said.

He smiled, with a slight movement of his head and his dark eyes fixed on hers.

"Then, why didn't you pick one when we were out? Now, weren't you foolish? Well, never mind. What color?"

"Choose for him," said Mr. Thorne.

Sissy hesitated, looking from Percival's face to a bud of deepest crimson. Then, throwing it down, "No, you shall have yellow," she exclaimed: "Laura Falconer's complexion is something like yours, and she always wears yellow. As soon as one yellow dress is worn out she gets another."

"She is a most remarkable young woman if she waits till the first one is worn out," said Percival.

"Am I to put your rose in or not?" Sissy demanded.

He stepped forward with a smile, and looked darkly handsome

as he stood there with Sissy putting the yellow rose in his coat and glancing archly up at him.

Mr. Thorne from behind his *Saturday Review* watched the girl who might, perhaps, hold his favorite's future in her hands. "Does he care for her?" he wondered. If he did, the old man felt that he would gladly have knelt to entreat her, "Be good to my poor Percival." But did Percival want her to be good to him? Godfrey Thorne was altogether in the dark about his grandson's wishes in the matter. He tried hard not to think that he was in the dark about every wish or hope of Percival's, and he looked up eagerly when the latter said something about going out the next day. He remembered which horse Percival liked, he assented to everything, but he watched him all the time with a wistful curiosity. He did not really care where Percival went, but he would have given much for such a word about his plans as would have proved to Harriet, and to himself too, that his boy *did* confide in him sometimes. It was not to be, however. Young Thorne had taken up the local paper and the subject dropped. Mr. Thorne may have guessed later, but he never knew where his roan horse went the next day.

Chapter II

"Those Eyes Of Yours."

Not five miles away that same evening a conversation was going on which would have interested Mrs. Middleton.

The scene was an up-stairs room in a pleasant house near the county town. Mrs. Blake, a woman of seven or eight and forty, handsome and well preserved, but of a high-colored type, leant back in an easy-chair lazily unfastening her bracelets, by way of signifying that she had begun to prepare for the night. Her two daughters were with her. Addie, the elder, was at the looking-glass brushing her hair and half enveloped in its silky blackness. She was a tall, graceful girl, a refined likeness of her mother. On the rug lay Lottie, three years younger, hardly more than a growing girl, long-limbed, slight, a little abrupt and angular by her sister's side, her features not quite so regular, her face paler in its cloud of dark hair. Yet there was a look of determination and power which was wanting in Addie; and at times, when Lottie was roused, her eyes had a dark splendor which made her sister's beauty seem comparatively commonplace and tame.

Stretched at full length, she propped her chin on her hands and looked up at her mother. "I don't suppose you care," she said, in a clear, almost boyish voice.

"Not much," Mrs. Blake replied with a smile. "Especially as I rather doubt it."

Addie paused, brush in hand: "I really think you've made a mistake, Lottie."

"Do you really? I haven't, though," said that young lady decidedly.

"It can't be—surely," Addie hesitated, with a little shadow on her face.

"Of course no. Is it likely?" said Mrs. Blake, as if the discussion were closed.

"I tell you," said Lottie stubbornly, "Godfrey Hammond told me that Percival's father was the eldest son."

"But it is Horace who has always lived at Brackenhill. Percival only goes on a visit now and then. Every one knows," said Addie, in almost an injured tone, "that Horace is the heir."

Lottie raised her head a little and eyed her sister intently, with amusement, wonder, and a little scorn in her glance. Addie, blissfully unconscious, went on brushing her hair, still with that look of anxious perplexity.

"This is how it was," Lottie exclaimed suddenly. "Percival was just gone, and you were talking to Horace. Up comes Godfrey Hammond, sits down by me, and says some rubbish about consoling me. I think I laughed. Then he looked at me out of his little, light eyes, and said that you and I seemed to get on well with his young friends. So I said, 'Oh yes—middling.'"

"Upon my word," smiled Mrs. Blake, "you appear to have

distinguished yourself in the conversation."

"Didn't I?" said Lottie, untroubled and unabashed: "I know it struck me so at the time. Then he said something—I forget how he put it—about our being just the right number and pairing off charmingly. So I said, 'Oh, of course the elder ones went together: that was only right.'"

"And what did he say?"

"Oh, he pinched his lips together and smiled, and said, 'Don't you know that Percival is the elder?'"

"But, Lottie, that proves nothing as to his father."

"Who supposed it did? I said 'Fiddlededee! I didn't mean that: I supposed they were much about the same age, or if Percy were a month or two older it made no difference. I meant that Horace was the eldest son's son, so of course he was A 1.'"

"Well?" said Addie.

"Well, then he looked twice as pleased with himself as he did before, and said, 'I don't think Horace told you that. It so happens that Percival is not only the elder by a month or two, as you say, but he is the son of the eldest son.' Then I said 'Oh!' and mamma called me for something, and I went."

Mrs. Blake and Addie exchanged glances.

"Now, could I have made a mistake?" demanded Lottie.

"It seems plain enough, certainly," her mother allowed.

"Then, could Godfrey Hammond have made a mistake? Hasn't he known the Thornes all their lives? and didn't he say once that he was named Godfrey after their old grandfather?"

Mrs. Blake assented.

"Then," said the girl, relapsing into her recumbent position, "perhaps you'll believe me another time."

"Perhaps," said Mrs. Blake: "we'll see when the other time comes. If it is as you say, it is curious." She rose as she spoke and went to the farther end of the room. As she stood by an open drawer putting away the ornaments which she had taken off, the candlelight revealed a shadow of perplexity on her face which increased the likeness between herself and Addie. Apparently, Lottie was right as to her facts. The estate was not entailed, then, and despotic power seemed to be rather capriciously exercised by the head of the house. If Horace should displease his grandfather—if, for instance, he chose a wife of whom old Mr. Thorne did not approve—would his position be very secure? Mrs. Blake was uneasy, and felt that it was very wrong of people to play tricks with the succession to an estate like Brackenhill.

Meanwhile, Lottie watched her sister, who was thoughtfully drawing her fingers through her long hair. "Addie," she said, after a pause, "what will you do if Horace isn't the heir after all?"

"What a silly question! I shan't do anything: there's nothing for me to do."

"But shall you mind very much? You are very fond of Horace, aren't you?"

"Fond of him!" Addie repeated. "He is very pleasant to talk to, if you mean that."

"Oh, you can't deceive me so! I believe that you are in love

with him," said Lottie solemnly.

The color rushed to Addie's face when her vaguely tender sentiments, indefinite as Horace's attentions, were described in this startling fashion. "Indeed, I'm nothing of the kind," she said hurriedly. "Pray don't talk such utter nonsense, Lottie. If you have nothing more sensible to say, you had better hold your tongue."

"But why are you ashamed of it?" Lottie persisted: "I wouldn't be." She had an unsuspected secret herself, but she would have owned it proudly enough had she been challenged.

"I'm not ashamed," said Addie; "and you know nothing about being in love, so you had better not talk about it."

"Oh yes, I do!" was the reply, uttered with Lottie's calm simplicity of manner: "I know how to tell whether you are in love or not, Addie. What would you do if a girl were to win Horace Thorne away from you?"

Pride and a sense of propriety dictated Addie's answer and gave sharpness to her voice: "I should say she was perfectly welcome to him."

Lottie considered for a moment: "Yes, I suppose one might say so to her, but what would you do? Wouldn't you want to kill her? And wouldn't you die of a broken heart?"

Addie was horrified: "I don't want to kill anybody, and I'm not going to die for Mr. Horace Thorne. Please don't say such things, Lottie: people never do. You forget he is only an acquaintance."

"No; I don't think you are in love with him, certainly." Lottie

pronounced this decision with the air of one who has solved a difficult problem.

"What are you talking about?" Mrs. Blake inquired, coming back, and glancing from Addie's flushed and troubled face to Lottie's thoughtful eyes.

"I was asking Addie if she didn't want Horace to be the heir. I know you do, mamma—oh, just for his own sake, because you think he's the nicest, don't you? I heard you tell him one day"—here Lottie looked up with a candid gaze and audaciously imitated Mrs. Blake's manner—"that though we knew his cousin *first*, he—Horace, you know—seemed to drop *so* naturally into *all* our ways that it was quite *delightful* to feel that we needn't stand on *any* ceremony with him."

"Good gracious, Lottie! what do you mean by listening to every word I say?"

"I didn't listen—I heard," said Lottie. "I always do hear when you say your words as if they had little dashes under them."

"Well, Horace Thorne *is* easier to get on with than his cousin," said Mrs. Blake, taking no notice of Lottie's mimicry.

"There, I said so: mamma would like it to be Horace. Nobody asks what I should like—nobody thinks about me and Percival."

"Oh, indeed! I wasn't aware," said Mrs. Blake. "When is that to come off? I dare say you will look very well in orange-blossoms and a pinafore!"

"Oh, you think I'm too young, do you? But a little while ago you were always saying that I was grown up, and oughtn't to want

any more childish games. What was I to do?"

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mrs. Blake. "I'll buy you a doll for a birthday present, to keep you out of mischief."

"Too late," said Lottie from the rug. She burst into sudden laughter, loud but not unmelodious. "What rubbish we are talking! Seventeen to-morrow, and Addie is nearly twenty; and sometimes I think I must be a hundred!"

"Well, you are talking nonsense now," Mrs. Blake exclaimed. "Why, you baby! only last November you would go into that wet meadow by the rectory to play trap-and-ball with Robin and Jack. And such a fuss as there was if one wanted to make you the least tidy and respectable!"

"Was that last November?" Lottie stared thoughtfully into space. "Queer that last November should be so many years ago, isn't it? Poor little Cock Robin! I met him in the lane the day before he went away. They will keep him in jackets, and he hates them so! I laughed at him, and told him to be a good little boy and mind his book. He didn't seem to like it, somehow."

"I dare say he didn't," said Addie, who had been silently recovering herself: "there's no mistake about it when you laugh at any one."

"There shall be no mistake about anything I do," Lottie asserted. "I'm going to bed now." She sprang to her feet and stood looking at her sister: "What jolly hair you've got, Addie!"

"Yours is just as thick, or thicker," said Addie.

"Each individual hair is a good deal thicker, if you mean that.

'Blue-black, lustrous, thick like horse-hairs!' That's what Percy quoted to me one day when I was grumbling, and I said I wasn't sure he wasn't rude. Addie, are Horace and Percival fond of each other?"

"How can I tell? I suppose so."

"I have my doubts," said Lottie sagely. "Why should they be? There must be something queer, you know, or why doesn't that stupid old man at Brackenhill treat Percival as the eldest? Well, good-night." And Lottie went off, half saying, half singing, "Who killed Cock Robin? I, said the Sparrow—with my bow and arrow." And with a triumphant outburst of "*I* killed Cock Robin!" she banged the door after her.

There was a pause. Then Addie said, "Seventeen to-morrow! Mamma, Lottie really is grown-up now."

"Is she?" Mrs. Blake replied doubtfully. "Time she should be, I'm sure."

Lottie had been a sore trial to her mother. Addie was pretty as a child, tolerably presentable even at her most awkward age, glided gradually into girlhood and beauty, and finally "came out" completely to Mrs. Blake's satisfaction. But Lottie at fifteen or sixteen was her despair—"Exactly like a great unruly boy," she lamented. She dashed through her lessons fairly well, but the moment she was released she was unendurable. She whistled, she sang at the top of her voice, and plunged about the house in her thick boots, till she could be off to join the two boys at the rectory, her dear friends and comrades. Robin Wingfield,

the elder, was her junior by rather more than a year; and this advantage, especially as she was tall and strong for her age, enabled her fully to hold her own with them. Nor could Mrs. Blake hinder this friendship, as she would gladly have done, for her husband was on Lottie's side.

"Let the girl alone," he said. "Too big for this sort of thing? Rubbish! The milliner's bills will come in quite soon enough. And what's amiss with Robin and Jack? Good boys as boys go, and she's another; and if they like to scramble over hedges and ditches together, let them. For Heaven's sake, Caroline, don't attempt to keep her at home: she'll certainly drive me crazy if you do. No one ever banged doors as Lottie does: she ought to patent the process. Slams them with a crash which jars the whole house, and yet manages not to latch them, and the moment she is gone they are swinging backward and forward till I'm almost out of my senses. Here she comes down stairs, like a thunderbolt.—Lottie, my dear girl, I'm sure it's going to be fine: better run out and look up those Wingfield boys, I think."

So the trio spent long half-holidays rambling in the fields; and on these occasions Lottie might be met, an immense distance from home, in the shabbiest clothes and wearing a red cap of Robin's tossed carelessly on her dark hair. Percival once encountered them on one of these expeditions. Lottie's beauty was still pale and unripe, like those sheathed buds which will come suddenly to their glory of blossom, not like rosebuds which have a loveliness of their own; but the young man was struck

by the boyish mixture of shyness and bluntness with which she greeted him, and attracted by the great eyes which gazed at him from under Robin's shabby cap. When he and Horace went to the Blakes' he amused himself idly enough with the school-girl, while his cousin flirted with Addie. He laughed one day when Mrs. Blake was unusually troubled about Lottie's apparel, and said something about "a sweet neglect." But the soul of Lottie's mamma was not to be comforted with scraps of poetry. How could it be, when she had just arraigned her daughter on the charge of having her pockets bulging hideously, and had discovered that those receptacles overflowed with a miscellaneous assortment of odds and ends, the accumulations of weeks, tending to show that Lottie and Cock Robin, as she called him, had all things in common? How could it be, when Lottie was always outgrowing her garments in the most ungainly manner, so that her sleeves seemed to retreat in horror from her wrists and from her long hands, tanned by sun and wind, seamed with bramble-scratches and smeared with school-room ink? Once Lottie came home with an unmistakable black eye, for which Robin's cricket-ball was accountable. Then, indeed, Mrs. Blake felt that her cup of bitterness was full to overflowing, though Lottie did assure her, "You should have seen Jack's eye last April: his was much more swollen, and all sorts of colors, than mine." It was impossible to avoid the conclusion that Jack must have been, to say the least of it, unpleasant to look at. Percival happened to come to the house just then, and was tranquilly amused at

the good lady's despair. It was before the Blakes knew much of Horace, and she had not yet discovered that Percival's cousin was so much more friendly than Percival himself; so she made the latter her confidant. He recommended a raw beefsteak with a gravity worthy of a Spanish grandee. He was not allowed to see Lottie, who was kept in seclusion as being half culprit, half invalid, and wholly unpresentable; but as he was going away the servant gave him a little note in Lottie's boyish scrawl:

"Dear Percival: Mamma was cross with Robin and sent him away do tell him I'm all right, and he is not to mind he will be sure to be about somewhere It is very stupid being shut up here Addie says she can't go running about giving messages to boys and Papa said if he saw him he should certainly punch his head so please tell him he is not to bother himself about me I shall soon be all right."

Percival went away, smiling a little at his letter and at Lottie herself. Just as he reached the first of the fields which were the short cut from the house, he spied Robin lurking on the other side of the hedge, with Jack at his heels. He halted, and called "Robin! Robin Wingfield! I want to speak to you."

The boy hesitated: "There's a gate farther on."

Coming to the gate, Percival rested his arms on it and looked at Robin. The boy was not big for his age, but there was a good deal of cleverness in his upturned freckled face. "I've a message for you," said the young man.

"From her?" Robin indicated the Blakes' house with a jerk of

his head.

"Yes. She asked me to tell you that she is all right, though, of course, she can't come out at present. She made sure I should find you somewhere about."

Robin nodded: "I did try to hear how she was, but that old dragon—"

"Meaning my friend Mrs. Blake?" said young Thorne. "Ah! Hardly civil perhaps, but forcible."

"Well—Mrs. Blake, then—caught me in the shrubbery and pitched into me. Said I ought to be ashamed of myself. Supposed I should be satisfied when I'd broken Lottie's neck. Told me I'd better not show my face there again."

"Well," said Percival, "you couldn't expect Mrs. Blake to be particularly delighted with your afternoon's work. And, Wingfield, though I was especially to tell you that you were not to vex yourself about it, you really ought to be more careful. Knocking a young lady's eye half out—"

"Young lady!" in a tone of intense scorn. "Lottie isn't a *young lady*."

"Oh! isn't she?" said Percival.

"I should think not, indeed!" And Robin eyed the big young man who was laughing at him as if he meditated wiping out the insult to Lottie then and there. But even with Jack, his sturdy satellite, to help, it was not to be thought of. "She's a brick!" said Cock Robin, half to himself.

"No doubt," said Percival. "But, as I was saying, it isn't exactly

the way to treat her.—At least—I don't know: upon my word, I don't know," he soliloquized. "Judging by most women's novels, from *Jane Eyre* downward, the taste for muscular bullies prevails. Robin may be the coming hero—who knows?—and courtship commencing with a black eye the future fashion.—Well, Robin, any answer?"

"Tell her I hope she'll soon be all right. Shall you see her?"

"I can see that she gets any message you want to send."

Robin groped among his treasures: "Look here: I brought away her knife that afternoon. She lent it me. She'd better have it—it's got four blades—she may want it, perhaps."

Percival dropped the formidable instrument carelessly into his pocket: "She shall have it. And, Robin, you'd better not be hanging about here: Lottie says so. You'll only vex Mrs. Blake."

"All right!" said the boy, and went off, with Jack after him.

Percival, who was staying in the neighborhood, went straight home, tied up a parcel of books he thought might amuse Lottie in her imprisonment, and wrote a note to go with them. He was whistling softly to himself as he wrote, and, if the truth be told, had a fair vision floating before his eyes—a girl of whom Lottie had reminded him by sheer force of contrast. Still, he liked Lottie in her way. He was young enough to enjoy the easy sense of patronage and superiority which made the words flow so pleasantly from his pen. Never had Lottie seemed to him so utterly a child as immediately after his talk with her boy-friend.

"Here are some books," said the hurrying pen, "which I

think you will like if your eye is not so bad as to prevent your reading. Robin was keeping his disconsolate watch close by, as you foretold, and asked anxiously after you, so I gave him your message and dismissed him. He especially charged me to send you the enclosed—knife I believe he called it: it looks to me like a whole armory of deadly weapons—which he seemed to think would be a comfort to you in your affliction. I sincerely hope it may prove so. I was very civil to him, remembering that I was your ambassador; but if he isn't a little less rough with you in future, I shall be tempted to adopt Mr. Blake's plan if I happen to meet your friend again. You really mustn't let him damage those eyes of yours in this reckless fashion. Mrs. Blake was nearly heartbroken this morning."

He sent his parcel off, and speedily ceased to think of it. And Lottie herself might have done the same, not caring much for his books, but for four little words—"those eyes of yours." Had Percival written "your eyes," it would have meant nothing, but "those eyes of yours" implied notice—nay, admiration. Again and again she looked at the thick paper, with the crest at the top and the vigorous lines of writing below; and again and again the four words, "those eyes of yours," seemed to spring into ever-clearer prominence. She hid the letter away with a sudden comprehension of the roughness of her pencil scrawl which it answered, and began to take pride in her looks when they least deserved it. Only a day or two before she had envied Robin the possession of sight a little keener than her own, but now she

smiled to think that Percival Thorne would never have regretted injury to "those eyes of yours" had she owned Robin's light-gray orbs.

Her transformation had begun. The knife was still a treasure, but she was ashamed of her delight in it. She breathed on the shining blades and rubbed them to brightness again, but she did it stealthily, with a glance over her shoulder first. She went rambling with Robin and Jack, but not when she knew that Percival Thorne was in the neighborhood. She was very sure of his absence on the November day to which her mother had alluded, when she had insisted on playing trap-and-ball in the rectory meadows. Mrs. Blake did not realize it, but it was almost the last day of Lottie's old life. At Christmas-time they were asked to stay for a few days at a friend's house. There was to be a dance, and the hostess, being Lottie's godmother, pointedly included her in the invitation; so Mrs. Blake and Addie did what they could to improve their black sheep's appearance.

Lottie, dressed for the eventful evening, was left alone for a moment before the three went down. She felt shy, dispirited and sullen. Her ball-dress encumbered and constrained her. "I hate it all," she said to herself, beating impatiently with her foot upon the ground. Something moving caught her eye: it was her reflection in a mirror. She paused and gazed in wonder. Was this slender girl, arrayed in a cloud of semi-transparent white, really herself—the Lottie who only a few days before had raced Robin Wingfield home across the fields, had been the first over

the gap and through the ditch into the rectory meadow, and had rushed away with the November rain-drops driving in her face? She gazed on: the transformation had its charms, after all. But the shadow came back: "It's no use. Addie's prettier than I ever shall be: I must be second all my life. Second! If I can't be A 1, I'd as soon be Z 1000! I won't go about to be a foil to her. I'd ten times rather race with Robin; and I will too! They sha'n't coop me up and make a young lady of me!"

She caught the flash of her indignant glance in the glass and paused.

"Those eyes of yours!"

Must she be second all her life? Had she not a power and witchery of her own? Might she not even distance Addie in the race? "I've more brains than she has," mused Lottie.

Her heart was beating fast as they came down stairs. They had only arrived by a late train, which gave them just time to dress; and Mrs. Blake had rather exceeded the allowance, so that most of the guests had arrived and the first quadrille was nearly ended as they came in. Lottie followed her mother and Addie as they glided through the crowd, and when they paused she stood shy and fierce, casting lowering glances around.

She heard their hostess say to some one, "Do let me find you a partner."

A well-known voice replied, "Not this time, thank you: I'm going to try to find one for myself;" and Percival stood before her, looking, to her girlish fancy, more of a hero than ever in

the evening-dress which became him well. The perfectly-fitting gloves, the flower in his coat, a dozen little things which she could not define, made her feel uncouth and anxious, fascinated and frightened, all at once. Had he greeted her in the patronizing way in which he had talked to her of old, she would have been deeply wounded, but he asked her for the next dance more ceremoniously, she knew, than Horace would have asked Addie. Still, she trembled as they moved off. They had scarcely met since her note to him. Suppose he alluded to it, asked after her black eye, and inquired whether she had derived any benefit from the beefsteak? Nothing more natural, and yet if he did Lottie felt that she should *hate* him. "I know I should do something dreadful," she thought—"scratch his face, and then burst out crying, most likely. Oh, what would become of me? I should be ruined for life! I should have to shut myself up, never see any one again, and emigrate with Robin directly he was old enough."

Percival did not know his danger, but he escaped it. The fatal thoughts were in his mind while Lottie was planning her disgrace and exile, but he merely remarked that he liked the first waltz, and should they start at once or wait a moment till a couple or two dropped out?

"I don't know whether I *can* waltz," said Lottie doubtfully.

"Weren't you over tortured with dancing-lessons?"

"Oh yes. But I've never tried at a party. Suppose we go bumping up against everybody, like that fat man and the little lady in pink—the two who are just stopping?"

"I assure you," said Percival gravely, "that I do not dance at all like that fat man. And if you dance like the lady in pink, I shall be more surprised than I have words to say. Now?"

They were off. Percival knew that he waltzed well, and had an idea that Lottie would prove a good partner. Nor was he mistaken. She had been fairly taught, much against her will, had a good ear for time, and, thanks to many a race with Robin Wingfield, her energy was almost terrible. They spun swiftly and silently round, unwearied while other couples dropped out of the ranks to rest and talk. Percival was well pleased. It is true that he had memories of waltzes with Sissy Langton of more utter harmony, of sweeter grace, of delight more perfect, though far more fleeting. But Lottie, with her steady swiftness and her strong young life, had a charm of her own which he was not slow to recognize. She would hardly have thanked him for accurately classifying it, for as she danced she felt that she had discovered a new joy. Her old life slipped from her like a husk. Friendship with Cock Robin was an evident absurdity. It is true she was angry with herself that, after fighting so passionately for freedom, she should voluntarily bend her proud neck beneath the yoke. She foresaw that her mother and Addie would triumph; she felt that her bondage to Mrs. Grundy would often be irksome; but here was the first instalment of her wages in this long waltz with Percival. She fancied that the secret of her pleasure lay in the two words—"with Percival." In her ignorance she thought that she was tasting the honeyed fire of love, when in truth it

was the sweetness of conscious success. Before the last notes of that enchanted music died away she had cast her girlish devotion, "half in a rapture and half in a rage," at her partner's feet, while he stood beside her calm and self-possessed. He would have been astounded, and perhaps almost disgusted, had he known what was passing through her mind.

Love at sixteen is generally only a desire to be in love, and seeks not so much a fit as a possible object. Probably Lottie's passion offered as many assurances of domestic bliss as could be desired at her age.

Percival was dark, foreign-looking and handsome: he had an interesting air of reserve, and no apparent need to practise small economies. His clothes fitted him extremely well, and at times he had a way of standing proudly aloof which was worthy of any hero of romance. No settled occupation would interfere with picnics and balls; and, to crown all, had he not said to her, "Those eyes of yours"? Were not these ample foundations for the happiness of thirty or forty years of marriage?

Percival, meanwhile, wanted to be kind to the childish, half-tamed Lottie, who had attracted his notice in the fields and trusted him with her generous message to Robin Wingfield. The girl fancied herself immensely improved by her white dress, but had Thorne been a painter he would have sketched her as a pale vision of Liberty, with loosely-knotted hair and dark eyes glowing under Robin's red cap. He was able coolly to determine the precise nature of his pleasure in her society, but he knew

that it was a pleasure. And Lottie, when she fell asleep that night, clasped a card which was rendered priceless by the frequent recurrence of his initials.

Her passion transformed her. Her vehement spirit remained, but everything else was changed. Her old dreams and longings were cast out by the new. She laughed with Mrs. Blake and Addie, but under the laughter she hid her love, and cherished it in fierce and solitary silence. Yet even to herself the transformation seemed so wonderful that she could hardly believe in it, and acted the rough girl now and then with the idea that otherwise they *must* think her a consummate actress morning, noon and night. For some months no great event marked the record of her unsuspected passion. It might, perhaps, have run its course, and died out harmlessly in due time, but for an unlucky afternoon, about a week before her birthday, when Percival uttered some thoughtless words which woke a tempest of doubt and fear in Lottie's heart. She did not question his love, but she caught a glimpse of his pride, and felt as if a gulf had opened between her and her dream of happiness.

Percival was calling at the house on the eventful day which was destined to influence Lottie's fate and his own. He was in a happy mood, well pleased with things in general, and, after his own fashion, inclined to be talkative. When visitors arrived and Addie exclaimed, "Mrs. Pickering and that boy of hers—oh bother!" she spoke the feelings of the whole party; and Percival from his place by the window looked across at Lottie and shrugged his

shoulders expressively. Had there been time he would have tried to escape into the garden with his girl friend; but as that was impossible, he resigned himself to his fate and listened while Mrs. Pickering poured forth her rapture concerning her son's prospects to Mrs. Blake. An uncle who was the head of a great London firm had offered the young man a situation, with an implied promise of a share in the business later. "Such a subject for congratulation!" the good lady exclaimed, beaming on her son, who sat silently turning his hat in his hands and looking very pink. "Such an opening for William! Better than having a fortune left him, I call it, for it is such a thing to have an occupation. Every young man should be brought up to something, in my opinion."

Mrs. Blake, with a half glance at Addie and a thought of Horace, suggested that heirs to landed estates—

"Well, yes." Mrs. Pickering agreed with her. Country gentlemen often found so much to do in looking after their tenants and making improvements that she would not say anything about them. But young men with small incomes and no profession—she should be sorry if a son of hers—

"Like me, for instance," said Percival, looking up. "I've a small income and no profession."

Mrs. Pickering, somewhat confused, hastened to explain that she meant nothing personal.

"Of course not," he said: "I know that. I only mentioned it because I think an illustration stamps a thing on people's memories."

"But, Percival," Mrs. Blake interposed, "I must say that in this I agree with Mrs. Pickering. I do think it would be better if you had something to do—I do indeed." She looked at him with an air of affectionate severity. "I speak as your friend, you know." (Percival bowed his gratitude.) "I really think young people are happier when they have a settled occupation."

"I dare say that is true, as a rule," he said.

"But you don't think you would be?" questioned Lottie.

He turned to her with a smile: "Well, I doubt it. Of course I don't know how happy I might be if I had been brought up to a profession." He glanced through the open window at the warm loveliness of June. "At this moment, for instance, I might have been writing a sermon or cutting off a man's leg. But, somehow, I am very well satisfied as I am."

"Oh, if you mean to make fun of it—" Mrs. Blake began.

"But I don't," Percival said quickly. "I may laugh, but I'm in earnest too. I have plenty to eat and drink; I can pay my tailor and still have a little money in my pocket; I am my own master. Sometimes I ride—another man's horse: if not I walk, and am just as well content. I don't smoke—I don't bet—I have no expensive tastes. What could money do for me that I should spend the best years of my life in slaving for it?"

"That may be all very well for the present," said Mrs. Blake.

"Why not for the future too? Oh, I have my dream for the future too."

"And, pray, may one ask what it is?" said Mrs. Pickering,

looking down on him from the height of William's prosperity.

"Certainly," he said. "Some day I shall leave England and travel leisurely about the Continent. I shall have a sky over my head compared with which this blue is misty and pale. I shall gain new ideas. I shall get grapes and figs and melons very cheap. There will be a little too much garlic in my daily life—even such a destiny as mine must have its drawbacks—but think of the wonderful scenery I shall see and the queer, beautiful out-of-the-way holes and corners I shall discover! And in years to come I shall rejoice, without envy, to hear that Mr. Blake has bought a large estate and gains prizes for fat cattle, while my friend here has been knighted on the occasion of some city demonstration."

Young Pickering, who had been listening open-mouthed to the other's fluent and tranquil speech, reddened at the allusion to himself and dropped his hat.

"At that rate you must never marry," said Mrs. Blake.

Percival thoughtfully stroked his lip: "You think I should not find a wife to share my enjoyment of a small income?"

"Marry a girl with lots of money, Mr. Thorne," said the future Sir William, feeling it incumbent on him to take part in the conversation.

"Not I." Percival's glance made the lad's hot face yet hotter. "That's the last thing I will do. If a man means to work, he may marry whom he will. But if he has made up his mind to be idle, he is a contemptible cur if he will let his wife keep him in his idleness." He spoke very quietly in his soft voice, and leaned back

in his chair.

"Well, then, you must never fall in love with an heiress," said Mrs. Blake.

"Or you must work and win her," Lottie suggested almost in a whisper.

He smiled, but slightly shook his head with a look which she fancied meant "Too late." Mrs. Pickering began to tell the latest Fordborough scandal, and the talk drifted into another channel.

Lottie had listened as she always listened when Percival spoke, but she had not attached any peculiar meaning to his words. But an hour or so later, when he was gone and she was loitering in the garden just outside the window, Addie, who was within, made some remark in a laughing tone. Lottie did not catch the words, but Mrs. Blake's reply was distinct and not to be mistaken: "William Pickering, indeed! No: with your looks and your expectations you girls ought to marry really well." Lottie stood aghast. They would have money, then? She had never thought about money. She would be an heiress? And Percival would never marry an heiress—he could not: had he not said so? How gladly would she have given him every farthing she possessed! And was her fortune to be a barrier between them for ever? Every syllable that he had spoken was made clear by this revelation, and rose up before her eyes as a terrible word of doom. But she was not one to be easily dismayed, and her first cry was, "What shall I do?" Lottie's thoughts turned always to action, not to endurance, and she was resolved to break down

the barrier, let the cost be what it might. Her talk with Godfrey Hammond gave a new interest to her romance and new strength to her determination. Since her hero was disinherited and poor, and she, though rich, would be poor in all she cared to have if she were parted from him, might she not tell him so when she saw him on her birthday? She thought it would be easier to speak on the one day when in girlish fashion she would be queen. She would not think of her own pride, because his pride was dear to her. She could not tell what she would say or do: she only knew that her birthday should decide her fate. And her heart was beating fast in hope and fear the night before when she banged the door after her and went off to bed, sublimely ready to renounce the world for Percival.

Chapter III

Dead Men Tell No Tales—Alfred Thorne's Is Told By The Writer

Mr. Thorne of Brackenhill was a miserable man, who went through the world with a morbidly sensitive spot in his nature. A touch on it was torture, and unfortunately the circumstances of his daily life continually chafed it.

It was only a common form of selfishness carried to excess. "I don't want much," he would have said—truly enough, for Godfrey Thorne had never been grasping—"but let it be my own." He could not enjoy anything unless he knew that he might waste it if he liked. The highest good, fettered by any condition, was in his eyes no good at all. Brackenhill was dear to him because he could leave it to whom he would. He was seventy-six, and had spent his life in improving his estate, but he prized nothing about it so much as his right to give the result of his life's work to the first beggar he might chance to meet. It would have made him still happier if he could have had the power of destroying Brackenhill utterly, of wiping it off the face of the earth, in case he could not find an heir who pleased him, for it troubled him to think that some man *must* have the land after him, whether he wished it or not.

Godfrey Hammond had declared that no one could conceive the exquisite torments Mr. Thorne would endure if he owned an estate with a magnificent ruin on it, some unique and priceless relic of bygone days. "He should be able to see it from his window," said Hammond, "and it should be his, as far as law could make it, while he should be continually conscious that in the eyes of all cultivated men he was merely its guardian. People should write to the newspapers asserting boldly that the public had a right of free access to it, and old gentlemen with antiquarian tastes should find a little gap in a fence, and pen indignant appeals to the editor demanding to be immediately informed whether a monument of national, nay, of world-wide interest, ought not, for the sake of the public, to be more carefully protected from injury. Local archæological societies should come and read papers in it. Clergymen, wishing to combine a little instruction with the pleasures of a school-feast, should arrive with van-loads of cheering boys and girls, a troop of ardent teachers, many calico flags and a brass band. Artists, keen-eyed and picturesque, each with his good-humored air of possessing the place so much more truly than any mere country gentleman ever could, should come to gaze and sketch. Meanwhile, Thorne should remark about twice a week that of course he could pull the whole thing down if he liked; to which every one should smile assent, recognizing an evident but utterly unimportant fact. And then," said Hammond solemnly, "when all the archæologists were eating and drinking, enjoying their own theories and picking holes in their neighbors'

discoveries, the bolt should fall in the shape of an announcement that Mr. Thorne had sold the stones as building materials, and that the workmen had already removed the most ancient and interesting part. After which he would go slowly to his grave, dying of his triumph and a broken heart."

It was all quite true, though Godfrey Hammond might have added that all the execrations of the antiquarians would hardly have added to the burden of shame and remorse of which Mr. Thorne would have felt the weight before the last cart carried away its load from the trampled sward; that he would have regretted his decision every hour of his life; and if by a miracle he could have found himself once more with the fatal deed undone, he would have rejoiced for a moment, suffered his old torment for a little while, and then proceeded to do it again.

For a great part of Mr. Thorne's life the boast of his power over Brackenhill had been on his lips more frequently than the twice a week of which Hammond talked. Of late years it had not been so. He had used his power to assure himself that he possessed it, and gradually awoke to the consciousness that he had lost it by thus using it.

He had had three sons—Maurice, a fine, high-spirited young fellow; Alfred, good-looking and good-tempered, but indolent; James, a slim, sickly lad, who inherited from his mother a fatal tendency to decline. She died while he was a baby, and he was petted from that time forward. Godfrey Thorne was well satisfied with Maurice, but was always at war with his second

son, who would not take orders and hold the family living. They argued the matter till it was too late for Alfred to go into the army, the only career for which he had expressed any desire; and then Mr. Thorne found himself face to face with a gentle and lazy resistance which threatened to be a match for his own hard obstinacy. Alfred didn't mind being a farmer. But his father was troubled about the necessary capital, and doubted his son's success: "You will go on after a fashion for a few years, and then all the money will have slipped through your fingers. You know nothing of farming."—"That's true," said Alfred.—"And you are much too lazy to learn."—"That's very likely," said the young man. So Mr. Thorne looked about him for some more eligible opening for his troublesome son; and Alfred meanwhile, with his handsome face and honest smile, was busy making love to Sarah Percival, the rector's daughter.

The little idyl was the talk of the villagers before it came to the squire's ears. When he questioned Alfred the young man confessed it readily enough. He loved Miss Percival, and she didn't mind waiting. Mr. Thorne was not altogether displeased, for, though his intercourse with the rector was rather stormy and uncertain, they happened to be on tolerable terms just then. Sarah was an only child, and would have a little money at Mr. Percival's death, and Alfred was much more submissive and anxious to please his father under these altered circumstances. The young people were not to consider themselves engaged, Miss Percival being only eighteen and Alfred one-and-twenty. But if they were

of the same mind later, when the latter should be in a position to marry, it was understood that neither his father nor Mr. Percival would oppose it.

Unluckily, a parochial question arose near Christmas-time, and the squire and the clergyman took different views of it. Mr. Thorne went about the house with brows like a thunder-cloud, and never opened his lips to Alfred except to abuse the rector. "You'll have to choose between old Percival and me one of these days," he said more than once. "You'd better be making up your mind: it will save time." Alfred was silent. When the strife was at its height Maurice was drowned while skating.

The poor fellow was hardly in his grave before the storm burst on Alfred's head. If Mr. Thorne had barely tolerated the idea of his son's marriage before, he found it utterly intolerable now; and the decree went forth that this boyish folly about Miss Percival must be forgotten. "I can do as I like with Brackenhill," said Mr. Thorne: "remember that." Alfred did remember it. He had heard it often enough, and his father's angry eyes gave it an added emphasis. "I can make an eldest son of James if I like, and I will if you defy me." But nothing could shake Alfred. He had given his word to Miss Percival, and they loved each other, and he meant to keep to it. "You don't believe me," his father thundered: "you think I may talk, but that I sha'n't do it. Take care!" There was no trace of any conflict on Alfred's face: he looked a little dull and heavy under the bitter storm, but that was all. "I can't help it, sir," he said, tracing the pattern of the carpet with the toe of

his boot as he stood: "you will do as you please, I suppose."—"I suppose I shall," said Mr. Thorne.

So Alfred was disinherited. "As well for this as anything else," he said: "we couldn't have got on long." He had an allowance from his father, who declined to take any further interest in his plans. He went abroad for a couple of years—a test which Mr. Percival imposed upon him that nothing might be done in haste—and came back, faithful as he went, to ask for the consent which could no longer be denied. Mr. Percival had been presented to a living at some distance from Brackenhill, and, as there was a good deal of glebe-land attached to it, Alfred was able to try his hand at farming. He did so, with a little loss if no gain, and they made one household at the rectory.

He never seemed to regret Brackenhill. Sarah—dark, ardent, intense, a strange contrast to his own fair, handsome face and placid indolence—absorbed all his love. Her eager nature could not rouse him to battle with the world, but it woke a passionate devotion in his heart: they were everything to each other, and were content. When their boy was born the rector would have named him Godfrey: at any rate, he urged them to call him by one of the old family names which had been borne by bygone generations of Thornes. But the young husband was resolved that the child should be Percival, and Percival only. "Why prejudice his grandfather against him for a mere name?" the rector persisted. But Alfred shook his head. "Percival means all the happiness of my life," he said. So the child received his

name, and the fact was announced to Mr. Thorne in a letter brief and to the point like a challenge.

Communications with Brackenhill were few and far between. From the local papers Alfred heard of the rejoicings when James came of age, quickly followed by the announcement that he had gone abroad for the winter. Then he was at home again, and going to marry Miss Harriet Benham; whereat Alfred smiled a little. "The governor must have put his pride in his pocket: old Benham made his money out of composite candles, then retired, and has gas all over the house for fear they should be mentioned. Harry, as we used to call her, is the youngest of them—she must be eight or nine and twenty; fine girl, hunts—tried it on with poor Maurice ages ago. I should think she was about half as big again as Jim. Well, yes, perhaps I am exaggerating a little. How charmed my father must be!—only, of course, anything to please Jim, and it's a fine thing to have him married and settled."

Alfred read his father's feelings correctly enough, but Mr. Thorne was almost repaid for all he had endured when, in his turn, he was able to write and announce the birth of a boy for whom the bells had been set ringing as the heir of Brackenhill. Jim, with his sick fancies and querulous conceit, Mrs. James Thorne, with her coarsely-colored splendor and imperious ways, faded into the background now that Horace's little star had risen.

The rest may be briefly told. Horace had a little sister who died, and he himself could hardly remember his father. His time was divided between his mother's house at Brighton and

Brackenhill. He grew slim and tall and handsome—a Thorne, and not a Benham, as his grandfather did not fail to note. He was delicate. "But he will outgrow that," said Mrs. Middleton, and loved him the better for the care she had to take of him. It was principally for his sake that she was there. She was a widow and had no children of her own, but when, at her brother's request, she came to Brackenhill to make more of a home for the school-boy, she brought with her a tiny girl, little Sissy Langton, a great-niece of her husband's.

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