THE DEAN AND HIS DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

One day at a country house is for all the world like another. There is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Every well appointed country house has, or ought to have, its sun-dial; and the life of the house is that of the dial. At the exact hour it tells the exact time. You know what everybody is doing, you know where they are, and you know where to find them. It is as much matter of entire certainty as is life on board an ocean liner. This particular man will be for a certainty at the kennels or the stables, or in the billiard room; this or that particular lady with or without the particular man, whom she may affect, will be in the shrubberies, or at the home farm.

I was seated one morning very pleasantly under the awning of the marquee. October in the valley of the Thames is often the most delightful month in the year. In September it rains. In October there is an equipoise. It is not till November that you get what sailors call dirty weather. The woods and plantations are turning a rich russet—a dull, pleasant color upon which it does the eye good to rest. Practically, and as a matter of fact, it is the exact tint of stewed Normandy pippins. But are not primroses the very color of flowers of sulphur? And does not the mere mention of flowers of sulphur recall the memory of Mrs. Wackford Squeers and the brimstone and treacle?

It is a strange fact but a true one, that at the most critical moments of your life, the memories and recollections that crop up and force themselves upon you are the most incongruous.

Lord Ashell came sauntering up, apparently unprepared. As a matter of fact, I could see at once that he was dressed for the occasion. He wore the I Zingaria uniform, which in its way is as much a distinction as is the uniform of the Royal Yacht Squadron. He had then, so to say, hoisted his colors, trebleshotted his guns, and was now sailing down under full top-sails, conquering and to conquer. Once again! What a contrast to George Sabine!

"It is a surprise to find you here, Mrs. Gascoigne," he said (what very unskilful liars men are). "I strolled down intending to be alone, and here I find you."

"Then," said I, "it would be cruel of me to disappoint so laudable an intention. I was just about to return to the house, and I will so leave you to your solitude and its valuable results."

He turned as red as a turkey cock, and, like that ridiculous bird, began to gobble or gabble—I wonder which is the correct etymology—in an incoherent fashion.

"This is a beastly dull place," he said. "Of course there are such things as white lies. There's no harm in a white lie. Very much the contrary. It does you good, and it saves a lot of trouble, especially for a fellow like myself, who hasn't got the gift of the gab. 'Gift of the gab' is beastly vulgar I know, but it is just what I mean. If I only had the gift of the gab like my beast of a younger brother has, I should be sitting for the county now. I know what I mean as well as any man, but I can't bring it out."

"I think I know what you mean," I answered, "and I think—I am sure you will understand me—that I can help a lame dog over a stile. You are very kind, and you have come down here to talk to me because I am alone. Now, as it happens, I came down here myself because I wanted to be alone, and as that is so, I am sure you can easily find or invent something else to do. A man in the country has every advantage over a woman. There is always some amusing occupation to which he can turn. A woman has literally nothing. I am at this moment engaged in doing nothing. It is a very delightful pursuit, and I shall be very grateful to you if you will let me continue it uninterruptedly."

He was no match for me. Look what a training I had had. Again he flushed from white to red, and then paled from red to white, and then began to stammer and stutter inarticulately.

"You are too clever for me," he said. "You are laughing at me, and twisting me round your little finger. You are as merciless as the famous tennis player who gives you half-forty with a bisque, and as he steps into the service side, asks you which is your favorite chase. What on earth is the good of torturing me? I know what I mean, and you know what I mean. It's cruelty to animals to worry me in this way. I can stand a facer as well as any man. If one is to come, do pray for goodness sake let me have it and have done with it."

"You are talking in parables," I replied. "I assure you I have not the least idea of what you mean."

"You must have," he answered. "What I mean is that I love you, that I would be shot for you, or die for you in any way, or do anything for you. Surely you know what that means. And surely you can give me a 'Yes' or a 'No' to it. Yes or no is not a very difficult matter. I know how to take an answer." "You have paid me the greatest compliment a man can pay a woman; I am very grateful to you for it. I know you are sincere, but—apres—the thing is out of the question. Let us remain the very best of friends, Lord Ashwell, and be sure that should you ever need my friendship you will have it to the utmost."

He took his answer like a man. He did not attempt to argue. "Leg-before-wicket," he said, with a cheerful laugh, although a little forced. "Umpire says so, and umpire is always right, or, at all events, there is no appeal. I won't argue Mrs. Gascoigne. You have been very kind and straightforward and fair. I am quite sure you have meant to do me a good turn; and if ever I can do you a good turn you may be quite sure that I will. But look here, we needn't draw the stumps yet. On my word of honor, I don't want to worry you. Think it over. We shall have another opportunity of talking about all this; and you may trust me not to vex you unnecessarily, or push myself into your way between now and then. Look, the book is closed for the present; but it isn't locked, and I shall most certainly not give up hope until you tell me it is locked, and until I am sure that you are doing so in downright earnest."

What on earth is one to do with a boy like this? I know what I should have liked to do for I felt old enough and fond enough of him, and, for the matter of that, proud enough of him and proud enough of his love for myself, to seize his head by the curls, and tell him he was a dear good boy—as, indeed, he was—and kiss him as he deserved. But that kind of thing was, of course, out of the question.

CHAPTER XL.

That evening, after the ladies had retired, I adjourned to Ethel's room, and we talked over the events of the day. Ih ad no secrets from my friend, and I told her everything.

"I cannot understand," she said, "why you did not accept him then and there. Of course you mean to have him. And, in my opinion, you are unwise in running any risk. These young men never know their own minds. He may be devoted to you to-day, and madly in love with me to-morrow."

As I looked at Ethel, who, by-the-way, was not at her best en deshabille, I felt that, so far as she herself was concerned, my risk was almost infinitesimal.

"Give me a middle-aged man," she continued. "When they love, it is love and no mistake. I hate boys as a rule, but I am bound to admit that your young gentleman is an exception. He will be immensely rich. Old Cambridge owns half the country, and hasn't a farthing under eighty thousand a year. You had better make hay while the sun shines. Otherwise our young friend will be running np to town and falling in love with some chorus girl, or dancer, or person of that kind who will know how to play her cards. Those kind of women have unbounded experience, and seem to know how to manage these young men. For my part I cannot understand it. I am told they are very stupid. They are certainly not better looking than we are, nor are they, I believe, a bit more wicked."

"My dear Ethel, I don't care whether he goes to town or whether he doesn't. I don't care if I never set eyes on him again. The fact is I am not a scrap in love with him, and I am more than doubtful whether I shall accept his offer."

"Then I think you are mad. Are you waiting for a Crown Prince to propose to you?"

"I am not waiting for any one to propose. To tell you frankly, I am sick of the whole business. Look at my frightful luck. Nothing succeeds with me. If I were to accept Lord Ashwell, I should have to tell him the truth. There is no help for that, and even if there were I should not avail myself of it."

"Of course, you must tell him the truth; but you don't imagine that will make any difference if he is really in love."

"I don't know. Look at Mr. Meadowsweet."

There are very few Mr. Meadowsweets about, my dear Miriam. His knowledge of the truth did not diminish Captain Maltby's affection, now did it?"

"No, that is true," I answered; "but I will reply in your own fashion and say that there are very few Captain Maltby's about."

CHAPTER XLI.

Four days later came a big ball, the invitations for which had been sent out, and all the other arrangements made before our arrival. The rooms were, as far as possible, thrown en suite, and decorated by an eminent London firm not far from St. Mary Axe. There were immense clumps of exotics, and choice stands of orchids from the neighborhood of West Kensington. The supper was looked after by a pastrycook in Berkeley Square, whose name is a household word; and the band was simply a perfect. I remember that the groundsand shrubberies and summer houses glistened with many colored lamps, and here and there were lit up with the electric light, which Mrs. Fortescue declared to be a mixed blessing, pleasant and pretty in itself, but trying to the complexion, and apt at times to burst upon you when you least needed it.

To give a list of the company is out of the question. Half the county were there, from the Lord Lieutenant and the High Sheriff down to the Rectors and small Squires. Arrangements had been made by which a train from Paddington brought down several saloon carriages filled with guests from London, and stopped at Windsor to take in a detachment from the garrison there. Without multiplying details, it can only be said that everything had been admirably planned, and that in no single point did there occur the least breakdown or even delay.

If, as Ethel afterwards said, it had been the old Duke of Buckingham himself entertaining the crowned heads of Europe at Stowe, the thing could not possibly have been better done.

I had what I suppose young girls call a fairly good time of it. I danced as often as I pleased, and more especially walked solemnly through a quadrille with Sir Bridgman Hale, the distinguished wearer of the ermine, who was staying with the Fox's.

Lord Ashwell did not talk twaddle either on the stairs, or during supper, but he was evidently filled with the design of talking, and when I declined further galantine, or mayonnaise, or champagne cup, he somehow managed to get me out into the grounds and into a smaller marquee, where refreshments of a somewhat lighter order were being served. To avoid refusing to stop, I allowed him to procure me an ice. He, I noticed, steadied himself with a tumbler of champagne. We were practically alone.

The hired waiters and maids were neither listening nor caring to listen. They were probably counting the minutes to the happy hour when they should have supper on their own account.

There were a few other people in the tent, but they were all busy with themselves; and thus it came about that Lord Ashwell and I were as much alone as if we had been hidden in the deepest shadows of the shrubberies.

He began what he most evidently was going to say, with a clear determination to take the lead at the start, and to keep up the pace to the very finish—if the metaphor be permissible in a contest where, unless it be Time himself, the young champion has no competitors.

"I hope," he said, "you have been thinking over what we talked about the other day. In fact you promised me you would do so, and so I am sure you have. Of course I want to know what you have to tell me. If it is what I am longing to hear, I don't exactly know what I shall do or say, although I need hardly promise that I shall do nothing silly. But I do want to say this—" I was looking at the ground, and he, I could feel was looking hard at me—"that I am determined in no case to rest until you say 'yes' at last. Of course this is very pesumptuous in me, but I can stay; and if I have to stay, I will, and I only hope"—and here his voice dropped quite naturally from a tone of determination, into something almost like the accents of a child, asking for something it covets and of which its chances are problematical—"I only hope that I shall not have to wait. Waiting is always terrible work."

"But I have hardly had time to think the thing over," I pleaded. "It is so very sudden."

"That isn't fair," he answered. "You have had five days. Surely that is quite long enough, I do really believe, to exhaust the catalogue of my demerits many times over. Merits I have none to be considered. Surely then the court need not any longer defer its judgment. Do, pray Mrs. Gascoigne, kindly let me know what I have to look forward to in life at once, and then I will take you back directly to where the lights are brightest."

"Well then, Lord Ashwell, I like you very much, and I will do all that I can to try and love you. I daresay it will not be a very difficult task."

"You mean yes?" he asked half in doubt.

"I suppose so," I replied.

"It is very good of you," he answered. "It's more than I deserve. It's more than any man in the world deserves. But I will try and prove myself worthy of it anyhow."

Then we both sat for a few minutes in silence. We could hear the sound of the river, and the more or less distant murmur of voices, and even the rustle of the foliage overhead. And then suddenly the band burst out in full force. It was the Myosotis Valse.

"This valse is mine, I hope," he said, "unless you are tired."

"Not at all tired. I shall enjoy it." And in a moment almost we were whirling round to the music. The band played to perfection. Lord Ashwell was far more than a good dancer, in the ordinary acception of the term. He kept pace with the music unconsciously, as if it some way took possession of him, and made him move without effort or even volition. And on the other hand he almost carried his partner, although you could scarcely feel even the touch of his hand, so light was it. It was the perfection of dancing.

Round we circled, quicker went the music, quicker still. There was a rest of about a couple of bars, and then the full strength of the orchestra brought us to a standstill with one great final crash. And once again arose the pleasant babel of happy voices and bright laughter.

As I turned into bed that morning fairly tired out, and in fact almost half asleep, I could hardly help feeling certain that from every point of view I had done the right thing, and the best thing. And with this comforting reflection and happy consciousness I soon fell asleep, although is some bushes immediately under my window a more than usually persistent nightingale was filling the air with his notes.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

"No!"

"The great trouble with you, John, is," said a lady to her husband, who was suffering from the effect of the night before, "you cannot say 'No.' Learn to say 'No,' John, and you will have fewer headaches. Can, you let me have a little money this morning?"

"No," said John, with apparent ease.

Solved the Problem.

Miss Strongmind—"Pardon me, but if I am not mistaken you are one of the poor underpaid working-girls whom our Emancipation Society tried to benefit—or at least you were two years ago."

Fair Stranger—"That is true."

"Then our society has evidently not been without influence, for you look very prosperous now."

"I have everything I want, and never was so happy in my life."

"Thank heaven! You must have solved the Woman Problem."

"I have."

"Glorious! Tell me how you managed."

"I married a nice young man."

Caught.

Mr. Slimpurse—"Do you know that ice-cream, instead of making one cooler, make' one warmer?"

Pretty Girl—"When did you hear that?"

"I have known it for years."

"Hump! Strange that you did not think to mention it last winter."

Well Secured.

"Don't be hard on the boy, James," said the young profligate's mother. "I know he's been wild, but he gives promise now of doing better in the future."

"Yes," groaned the father, "and I'm paying 6 per cent. on most of his promises."

Implying a Doubt.

Debtor—"I'd like for you to give me more time on that bill I owe you."

Creditor—"But, my dear sir, I have no time to waste."

AT COREA'S CAPITAL.

Much to Interest one in the Trip From Shanghai to Seoul.

Seoul it must be confessed, is a mean-looking town for the capital of an ancient kingdom, but it is a town which anyone making the grand tour of the world should by no means neglect to visit. Possibly, when this war is over, we shall hear of the organization of a personally conducted tour. From Shanghai the journey to Seoul is pleasant enough. The traveler skirts the Chinese coast in a comfortable little steamer renowned for its excellent table, makes a call at the balmy little watering place Chefoo, the health resort of jaded Anglo-Celestials, and thence crosses to the West Corean port of Chemulpo. Then a choice of ways is open to him. He may sail up the Han in a junk as far as Ma-Po, the river port of the capital, he may make the journey of thirty miles in a Corean sedan-chair borne on the shoulders of coolies, or he may ride in a procession of pack-horses. The pack-horse is, however, on the whole, the preferable mode of progression. The river is extremely tortuous, and the journey by water long and comfortless; and the sedan chair is a barbarous invention centuries behind its prototype in China. It has no seat, and one is compelled to squat tailor-fashion on the floor.

The traveler by pack-horse finds much to interest him on the journey. The land is undulating and picturesque; the road lies amid well-cultivated fields and plants covered with wild flowers. At the village are quaint groups of natives, looking, after the dirt and rags of China, refreshingly clean and neat in their long spotless tidy, cotton robes and their curious open-work horse-hair hats, shaped like that of Mistress Winifrid Price, and in their transparency revealing the curious knotted bunch of hair on the top of the male Corean head. The little children, too, in quaint summer costume of a little cotton jacket reaching not quite down to the waist, gaze at one smilingly. There is no begging, no abuse, no calling out of "foreign devils," or flinging stones, such as one may have experienced in China; and the inns, if not to be compared with the tea-houses of Japan, are decidedly superior in point of cleanliness to the squalid hostelries of the Celestial Empire.

So eight hours slow riding brings the traveller to the picturesque little port of Ma-Po, and here he passes over the very spot where a quarter of a century ago Bishop Berneux and three other French missionaries were tortured to death by command of the still living father of the present King of Corea. Another hour brings him to the western gate of the mother city, and after a further half-hour of winding in and out among narrow, ill-smelling lanes the great broad thoroughfare is reached, which stretches in a perfectly straight line from the eastern gate to the entrance of the royal palace. Near by may be seen the famous bell which for over four hundred years has given the signal for the closing of the city gates at dusk and their opening at dawn, and which has nightly rung the curfew warning all citizens, under pain and penalties, to keep within their doors.

Apart from the palace and the bell, and the little knot of consulates and European residences which is springing up, there is little of interest to be seen beyond the people themselves. Corea possesses no arts beyond a poor imitation of the arts of China and Japan. There are few, if any, curios to be picked up beyond specimens of bamboo work superior even to those of Japan in the fineness of workmanship but inferior in art. The houses are, almost without exception, little better than mud huts; and there are a few shops for whose whole stock in trade one would care to offer a dollar. Yet there are no signs of extreme poverty such as stare one in the face in China. Every man carries in his girdle a pouch of tobacco and a long straight-stemmed pipe: and rags are rare. Occasionally a court procession passes by, the courtiers in wonderful head-dress and gorgeous raiment—strongly reminiscent of the characters one may have seen on the native stage in China, and the maids of honour with well-plaited chignons of enormous size; or a mandarin may pass by on pony back, or in a flat-bottomed sedan chair, with latticed windows of oiled paper.

From Seoul the tourist may make a journey right across the neck of the continent to Gensan, and there find a steamer bound for Japan, or he may return the way he came. For variety he may travel by night, preceded by relays of villagers lighting the way with torches and paper lanterns, and cheered by the most inharmonious singing of his guides.

Some Gigantic Enterprises.

With the advent of the twentieth century the world will probably see many enterprises undertaken and accomplished which now seem so gigantic that all but their projectors regard them as ridiculous and chimerical. Schemes for making waterways through vast sections of territory, and for making direct routes by means of immense tunnels or bridges, are in these days planned and brought forward so frequently that to make a mental note of each and all is by no means easy. Two ship-canal schemes have lately been projected in Europe, the commercial benefits resulting from the accomplishment of which would be vast. The great Siberian railway is being constructed with great rapidity by the Russian Government, and it is now said that a canal connecting the Baltic and the Black Sea by way of the Rivers Dneiper and Dwina is contemplated. There would thus be a direct way by which the Russian navy could reach the Black Sea, for with the closing of the Straits of the Dardanelles by treaty the passage can only now be made by way of the Mediterranean. The other canal the construction of which has been proposed is the Bordeaux-Narbonne. It is to cross Southern France between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, and would make the Straits of Gibraltar of comparatively small importance.

GEN. WOLFE'S SWORD.

CURIOUS HISTORY OF THE RELIC OF CANADA'S HERO.

The Last Hours of the Victor of Quebec—Significance of the Trophy to Canadians the Sword to the Dominion.—Hon. J. C. Patterson Will Present

Concerning the sword of Gen. Wolfe, which the Minister of Militia, Hon. J. C. Patterson, has purchased to present to Canada, some interesting details are given by the Illustrated London News. It is inaccurate, however, in two details. The reference to the monument on the Plains of Abraham as commemorating the bravery of French and English alike is obviously wrong, since the monument is to Wolfe alone. The dual obelisk is on Dufferin terrace. Again, the statement that the sword was used by Major Dunn at Balaclava is made on inaccurate information, since the 100th Regiment was not organized until 1858. The observations of the News are as follows.—"Whatever may be the future of the North American continent, the conquest of Quebec will always remain one of the world's historical landmarks, in that it put an end once and for all to dreams of a French dominion on transatlantic soil. Very naturally, therefore, the Canadians are congratulating themselves at this moment upon having secured a reminder of that great event in the sword which was carried by the immortal Wolfe on the Heights of Abraham. For some time past this sword has been in the hands of Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge and has now been bought by Hon. J. C. Patterson, Dominion Minister of Militia, to be placed, no doubt, among other trophies of the kind in the library of the Dominion Parliament at Ottawa. It is an excellent specimen of an officer's sword of the period, with a hilt of silver, and a three-cornered blade.

A CURIOUS HISTORY.

"The history of the relic is a curious one. It appears from documents which have been preserved that for nearly a century it lay buried just beneath the ground on the very spot on the Plains of Abraham where Wolfe fell mortally wounded on Sept. 13, 1759. It was, it will be remembered, in the very heat of the engagement with the French troops under Montcalm that Wolfe received his mortal wound. Of two previous wounds he had taken no heed, though one was in the groin. Hastily covering the trace of them with his handkerchief, and bidding those about him say nothing on the subject lest his soldiers should grow faint-hearted, he again led his favourite Grenadiers to the charge. But a third ball completely overcame him; he was led a little to the rear, and disencumbered of his arms and accoutrements by his attendants and servants, and when the welcome cry had come "They run! They run!" the lifeless corpse was borne away to the flagship in the St. Lawrence below, without a thought of the sword, which had been hastily thrown down on the damp earth. The heavy tramp of battalions and the planting of artillery to complete the demolition of the citadel which formed the French headquarters completely hid the weapon from sight, and there it lay for ninety years or so, until the foundations were dug of the monument which marks in one obelisk the bravery of the French and English alike. It was taken to a Montreal gunsmith, and by him sold to Mr. Stewart Derbishire, for many years Queen's printer in Canada. Shortly afterwards the 100th Regiment was raised in Canada to proceed to the Crimea, and it was then presented to Major Dunn in the hope that he would, to use Mr. Derbishire's own words, 'again make it terrible to the enemies of our own country.' It is believed to have been used by Major Dunn in the terrible charge of the Six Hundred at Balaclava, and it is fitting that the Victoria Cross which that gallant officer received at the hands of his Sovereign should pass with the sword and other medals into the proud care of the Canadian people.

THE SWORD'S SIGNIFICANCE.

"Things have greatly changed since the terrible struggle which exchanged the French for the English flag on the ramparts of Quebec, and there is no more significant proof of the healing power of time than the reception of this relic by the French-Canadians of to-day. It is, of course, a souvenir which recalls to their minds one of the bitterest pages of French history—the violent separation of Canada from her first Motherland—but they realize quite as fully as Parkman, the historian, did, that subsequent events have made the conquest of Quebec as precious to French-Canadians as to their English fellow-citizens. For evidence of this we need only turn to the columns of such a journal as La Minerve, of Montreal, which, speaking of the addition of this sword to Canada's collection of historical relics, says:—'The treaty of 1763 secured to us the free exercise of our religion, the enjoyment of our properties, the benefit of our civil jurisprudence. It is still the most sacred duty to fight unyieldingly for the preservation of our rights; but, despite all, we have nothing to complain of. There is not a small nation in the world which enjoys a greater amount of liberty than the French-Canadians, and they know how to accept the situation, The British Crown is justified in reckoning upon them as upon its most loyal subjects.' No one who remembers the gallant and loyal conduct of De Salaberry at Chateauguay, and others like him, will doubt the sincerity of this protestation, so far as the majority of the French-Canadian people are concerned. There is only one thing needed to complete the satisfaction of English and French-Canadians alike. It is that the sword of the French commander, Montcalm, should now be discovered, and be placed side by side in one casket with that of the English General, to record for all time the fact that the combatants of yesterday have become the partners and co-workers of to-day."