

THE VICAR'S GOVERNESS.

CHAPTER XII

"The snow is on the mountain,
The frost is on the vale,
The ice hangs o'er the fountain,
The storm rides on the gale."
—Ousley.

Clarissa's letter to Georgie Broughton receives a most tender response,—tender as it is grateful. The girl writes thankfully, heartily, and expresses almost passionate delight at Clarissa's instantaneous and ready sympathy.

The letter is short, but full of feeling. It conveys to Clarissa the sad impression that the poor child's heart is dry and barren for lack of that gracious dew called love, without which not one of us can taste the blessedness of life.

"Nothing is true but love, nor ought of worth;
Love is the incense which doth sweeten earth."

So sings Trench. To Clarissa, just now, his words convey nothing less than the very embodiment of truth. That Georgie should be unhappy for want of this vital essence cuts her to the heart,—the more so that Georgie persistently refuses to come to Gowran.

"Dearest Clarissa,—Do not think me cold or ungrateful,—so she writes,—but were I to go to you and feel again the warmth and tenderness of a home, it might unfit me for the life of trouble and work that must lie before me. Summer is when we love and are beloved, and, of course, such summer is over for me. I know my task will be no light or easy one; but I have made up my mind to it, and indeed am thankful for it, as any change from this must of necessity be pleasant. And, besides, I may not be a governess forever. I have yet another plan in my head,—something papa and I agreed upon before he left me,—that may put an end to my difficulties sooner than I think. I will tell you of it some time, when we meet."

"Poor darling," says Clarissa, "what a wretched little letter!" She sighs and folds it up, and wonders vaguely what this other plan of Georgie's can be. Then she writes to her again, and describes Mrs. Redmond as well as is possible.

"Accept her offer by return of post," she advises, earnestly. "Even if, after a t. i. l. y. o. u. d. o. n. o. t. k. s. h. e. r, s. i. l. t. h. i. s. w. i. l. l. b. e. an opening for you; and I am glad in the thought that I shall always have you near me,—at least until that mysterious plan of yours meets the light. Mrs. Redmond is not, of course, everything of the most desirable, but she is passable, and very kind at heart. She is tall and angular, and talks all day long,—and all night, I am sure, if one would listen—about her ailments and the servants' delinquencies. She is never without a cold in her head, and a half darned stocking! She calls the children's pinafores 'pinbefore,'—which is quite correct, but very unpleasant; and she always calls terrible 'turrible,' but beyond these small failings she is quite bearable."

And so on. When Miss Broughton receives this letter in her distant home, she is again sole mistress of a sick-room. Her aunt—the hard taskmaster assigned to her by fate—lies on her bed stricken to the earth by fever. To come to Pullingham now will be impossible. "Will Mrs. Redmond wait for a month, or perhaps two?" She entertains Clarissa to do what she can for her; and Clarissa does it; and the worried wife of the vicar, softened by Miss Peyton's earnest explanations, consents to expound Pinnock and "Little Arthur" to the small Redmonds until such time as Miss Broughton's aunt shall be convalescent.

The inaudible and noiseless foot of Time creeps on apace, and Christmas at last reaches Pullingham. Such a Christmas morning, full of light and life, snow-crowned on every side. The glinting sunbeams lie upon the frozen hills, kissing them with tender rapture, as though eager to impart some heat and comfort to their chilly hearts. "Now trees their leafy hats do bare
To reverence Winter's silver hair."
The woods are all bereft of green; the winds sigh wearily through them; "No grass the fields, no leaves the forests wear;" a shivering shroud envelops all the land.

But far above, in the clear sky, Sol shines triumphant. Nor ice, nor snow, nor chilling blast has power to deaden him to-day. No "veil of cloud involves his radiant head." He smiles upon the earth, and ushers in the blessed morn with unexpected brilliancy. Innumerable sounds swell through the frosty air; sweet bells ring joyously. All the world is astir.

Except Clarissa. She lies, still sleeping,—dreaming, it may be, that first glad dream of youth in which all seems perfect, changeless, passion-sweet! Upon her parted lips a faint soft smile is lingering, as though loath to depart. Her face is lightly tinged with color, as it were a "ripened rose." Upon one arm her cheek is pillowed; the other is thrown, with negligent grace, above her head.

"Half-past eight, Miss Peyton, and Christmas morning too," says a voice more distinct than musical, and rather reproachful. It rushes into Clarissa's happy dream like a nightmare, and sends all the dear shades she has been conjuring to her side back into their uncertain home.

The maid pokes the fire energetically, and arranges something upon the dressing-table with much unnecessary vigor. Clarissa, slowly bringing herself back from the world in which Hester, however admirable, in every respect, bears no part, sighs drowsily, and sits up in her bed.

"Really that hour!" she says. "Quite too disgracefully late! A happy Christmas, Hester!"

"Thank you, miss. The same to you, and very many of them!"

"Is it a cold morning?" asks Clarissa with a little shiver. She pushes back the soft waving masses of her brown hair from her forehead, and gazes at Hester entreatingly, as though to implore her to say it is as warm as a day in June.

But Hester is adamant. "Terrible cold, miss," she says, with a sort of gusto. "That frosty it would petrify you where you stand."
"Then I won't stand," declares Clar-

issa, promptly sinking back once more into her downy couch. "I decline to be petrified, Hester,"—tucking the clothes well round her. "Call me again next week."

"The master is up this hour, miss," says the maid, reprovingly; "and see how beautifully your fire is burning." "I can't see anything but the water over there. Is that ice in my bath?" "Yes, miss. Will you let me throw a little hot water into it to melt it for you? Do, miss. I'm sure them miserable cold oblations is bitter bad for you." Nobody knows. And Clarissa, though consumed with a desire to know, dares not ask. Hester is standing a few yards from her, looking the very personification of all pathos, and is plainly angry at the frozen bath.

"Well, then, Hester, yes; a little—a very little—hot water, just for once," says Clarissa, unable to resist the woman's pleading, and her own fear of the "bitter chill" that awaits her on the other side of the blankets. "My courage has flown; indeed, I don't see how I can get up at all," willfully, snuggling down even more closely into the warm sheets.

"Oh, now get up, miss, do," implores her maid. "It is getting real late, and the master has been up asking for you twice already."

"Is papa dressed, then?" "An hour ago, miss. He was standing on the door-steps, feeding the sparrows and robins, when I came up."

"Dear papa!" says Clarissa, tenderly, beneath her breath; and then she springs out of bed, and gets into her clothes by degrees, and presently runs down-stairs to the great old hall, where she finds her father awaiting her.

He is standing at the upper end, with his back to the huge central window, through which "Gleams the red sun athwart the misty haze."

Which veils the cold earth from its loving gaze."

A calm, clear light illumines the hall, born of the "wide and glittering cloak of snow" which last night flung upon the land. At its other end stand all the servants,—silent, expectant,—to hear what the master shall say to them on this Christmas morning.

That George Peyton should refuse to address them on this particular day is out of all hearing. His father, grandfather, and great-grandfather had done it before him to the then servants; therefore (according to the primitive notions of the county) he must do the same. Yet it is undeniable that to the present proprietor this task is a terrible one, and not to be performed at any price, could escape from it be shown.

Eloquence is not Mr. Peyton's forte. To find himself standing before an expectant audience, and to know they are prepared to hang upon his accents, is not sweet to him,—in fact fills him with terrors fast and deep. Yet here they are awaiting his speech, in a goodly row, with all their eyes fixed on his, and their minds prepared to receive anything he may say.

He breathes a small sigh of relief as he sees Clarissa approaching, and gives her his customary morning kiss in a rather warmer fashion than usual, which has only the effect of raising mirth in Clarissa's mind. She smiles in an unfilial fashion, and slipping her hand through his arm, awaits what fate may have in store.

Her father, when he has cast upon her one reproachful glance, turns to the servants, and, with a heightened color and somewhat lame delivery, says as follows:

"I am very glad to see you all again here he checks himself, and grows a degree redder and more embarrassed. It occurs to him after all, he saw them yesterday and the day before, and that it is on the cards he will see them again to-morrow. Therefore why express exuberant joy at the fact that he can see them at this present moment?"

He glances, in his despairing fashion, at Clarissa; but she is plainly delighted at his discomfiture, and refuses to give him any assistance, unless a small approving nod can be accounted such.

Feeling himself, therefore, unsupported, he perforce, returns to the charge. "It is a great pleasure to me to know that no changes have taken place during the past year. I hope"—(long pause)—"I hope we shall always have the same story to tell."

This is fearfully absurd, and he knows it, and blushes again.

"Well, at least," he goes on, "I hope we shall not part from each other without good cause,—such as a wedding, for instance."

Here he looks at the under-housemaid, who looks at the under-gardener, who looks at his boots, and betrays a wild desire to get into them forthwith.

"There is no occasion for me, I think, to make you a speech. I—the fast is, I—couldn't make you a speech, so you must excuse me. I wish you all a happy Christmas! I'm sure you all wish me the same. Eh?—and—"

Here he is interrupted by a low murmur from the servants, who plainly feel it their duty to let him know, at this juncture, that they do hope his Christmas will be a successful one.

"Well, eh?—thank you—you know," says Mr. Peyton, at his wits' end as to what he shall say next. "You are all very kind, very kind indeed—very—Mrs. Lane,"—desperately,—"come here and take your Christmas-box."

The housekeeper advances, in a rounded stately fashion, and, with an elaborate courtesy and a smile full of benignity, accepts her gift and retires with it to the background. The others have all performed the same ceremony, and also retired. Mr. Peyton draws a deep sigh of relief, and turns to Clarissa, who, all through, has stood beside him.

"I think you might have put in a word or two," he says. "But you are a traitor; you enjoyed my discomfiture. Bless me, how glad I am that 'Christmas comes but one a year!'"

"And how sorry I am!" says Clarissa, making a slight grimace. "It is the one chance I get of listening to eloquence that I feel sure in unsurpassable."

They are still standing in the hall. At this moment a servant throws open the hall door, and Dorian and Horace Branscombe, coming in, walk up to where they are, near the huge pine fire that is roaring and making merry on the hearthstone; no grate defiles the beauty of the Gowran hall. They are flushed from the rapidity of their walk, and are looking rather more like each other than usual.

"Well, we have had a run for it," says Dorian. "Not been to breakfast, I hope! If you say you have finished that most desirable meal, I shall drop dead; so break it carefully. I have a wretched appetite, as a rule, but just now I feel as if I could eat you, Clarissa."

"We haven't thought of breakfast yet," says Clarissa. "I'm so glad I was lazy this morning! A happy Christmas, Dorian!"

"The same to you!" says Dorian, raising her hand, and pressing it to his lips. "By what luck do we find you in the hall?"

"The servants have just been here to receive their presents. Now, why were you not a few minutes earlier, and you might have been stricken dumb with joy at papa's speech?"

"I don't believe it was half a bad speech," says Mr. Peyton, stoutly. "Bad! It was the most enchanting thing I ever listened to—in fact, faultless,—if one omits the fact that you looked as if you were in torment all the time you were going to say next."

"James, is breakfast ready?" says Mr. Peyton, turning away to hide a smile, and making a strenuous effort to suppress the fact that he has heard one word of her last betrayal. "Come into the dining-room, Dorian," he says, when the man has assured him that breakfast will be ready in two minutes; "it is ever so much more comfortable in there."

Branscombe goes with him, and so, presently, Clarissa and Horace find themselves alone.

Horace, going up to her, as in duty bound, places his arm round her, and presses his lips lightly, gently to her cheek.

"You never wished me a happy Christmas," he says, in the low soft tone he always adopts when speaking to women. "You gave all your best wishes to Dorian."

"You knew what was in my heart," replies she, sweetly, pleased that he has noticed the omission.

"I wonder if I have brought you what you like," he says, laying in his little palm a large gold locket, oval-shaped, and with forget-me-nots in sapphires and diamonds, on one side. Touching a spring, it opens, and there, staring up at her, is his own face, wearing its kindest expression, and seeming—to her—to breathe forth love and truth.

For a little minute she is silent; then she says softly, with lowered eyes, and a warm, tender blush,—

"Did you have this picture taken for me, Dorian?"

It is evident the face in the locket is even dearer to her than the locket itself.

"For you, alone," says Horace, telling his lie calmly. "When it was finished I had the negative destroyed. I thought only of you. Was not that natural? There was one happy moment in which I assured myself that it would please you to have my image always near you. Was I wrong?—presumptuous?"

Into his tone he has managed to infuse a certain amount of uncertainty and anxious longing that cannot fail to flatter and do some damage to a woman's heart. Clarissa raises her trustful eyes to his.

"Please me!" she repeats, softly, tears growing beneath her lids: "it pleases me so much that it seems to me impossible to express my pleasure. You have given me the thing that, of all others, I have most wished for."

She blushes vividly, as she makes this admission. Horace, lifting her hand, kisses it warmly.

"I am fortunate," he says, in a low tone. "Will you love the original, Clarissa, as you love this senseless picture? After long years, how will it be?" There is a touch of concern and doubt,—and something more, that may be regret—in his tone.

"I shall always love you," says the girl, very earnestly, laying her hand on his arm, and looking at him with eyes that should have roused all tenderness and devotion in his breast;

"For at each glance of those sweet eyes a soul looked forth as from the azure gates of heaven."

He is spared a reply. Dorian, coming again into the hall, summons them gayly to breakfast.

In the little casement window of the tiny chamber that calls her mistress, sits Ruth Annersley, alone.

The bells are ringing out still the blessed Christmas morn; yet she, with downcast eyes, and chin resting in her hand, heeds nothing, being wrapped in thought, and unmindful of aught but the one great idea that fills her to overflowing. Her face is grave—nay, almost sorrowful—and full of trouble; yet underlying all is gladness that will not be suppressed.

At this moment—perhaps for the first time—she wakes to the consciousness that the air is full of music, borne from the belfries far and near. She shudders slightly, and draws her breath in a quick unequal sigh.

"Another long year," she says, wearily. "Oh that I could tell my father!"

She lifts her head impatiently, and once more her eyes fall upon the table on which her arm is resting. There are before her a few opened letters, some Christmas cards, a very beautiful Honiton lace handkerchief, on which her initials "R. A." are delicately worked, and—apart from all the rest—a ring, set with pearls and turquoises.

Taking this last up, she examines it slowly, lovingly, slipping it on and off her slender finger, without a smile, and with growing pallor.

A step upon the stairs outside! Hastily, and in a somewhat guilty fashion, she replaces the ring upon the table, and drops the lace handkerchief over it.

"Miss Ruth," says a tall, gawky country-girl, opening the door, "the maister he be waitin' breakfast for you. Do ee come down now." Then, catching sight of the handkerchief, "La! now," she says, "how fine that be! A beauty, surely, and real lace too! La! Miss Ruth, and who sent you that, now? May I see it?"

She stretches out her hand, as though about to raise the dainty fabric from its resting-place; but Ruth is before her.

"Do not touch it," she says, almost roughly for her. Then, seeing the effect her words have caused, and how the girl shrinks back from her, she goes on, hurriedly and kindly, "You have been in the dairy, Margery, and perhaps your hands are not clean. Run away and wash them, and come to attend table. Afterward you shall come up here and see my handkerchief and all my pretty cards."

She smiles, lays her hand on Margery's shoulder, and gently, but with determination, draws her toward the door.

Once outside, she turns, and locking the door, carefully puts the key in her pocket.

Slowly, reluctantly, she descends the stairs,—slowly, and with a visible effort, presses her lips in gentle greeting to her father's care-worn cheek. The bells still ring on joyously, merrily; the sun shines; the world is white with snow, more pure than even our purest thoughts; but no sense of rest or comfort comes to Ruth. Oh, dull and heavy heart that holds a guilty secret. Oh, sad (even though yet innocent) is the mind that hides a hurtful thought! Not for you do Christmas bells ring out their happy greeting! Not for such as you does sweet peace reign triumphant.

(To Be Continued.)

WILLIAM JOB'S ROMANCE.

He and His Bride Each Journeyed 3,000 Miles to Wed.

William Job was married to Miss Sarah Ann Ennis, in the parsonage of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Morristown, N.J., on Wednesday afternoon, the Rev. George P. Eckman officiating.

There have been numberless marriages in quaint and staid old Morristown, but the Job-Ennis ceremony, in some respects, differed from all the weddings on record in that town. In the first place the home of the bridegroom is near Helena, Mont., and he travelled nearly 3,000 miles to meet his bride, who journeyed even a greater distance from her home in Cornwall, England. Sweethearts, betrothed and faithful, they had not seen each other in seventeen years.

William Job was born in a village of Cornwall just thirty-six years ago. His father was a miner, and the boy grew up in the mines. But he found time to study, and he stored his mind with valuable knowledge of mines and minerals. He fell in love with pretty, black-haired, rosy-cheeked, brown-eyed Sadie Ennis, a neighbor's child. Poverty frowned on William's hopes, but he was brave at heart, and at 19 years of age William told Sarah of his love.

Did she love him? Would she be true and wait? Her answer was satisfactory. So on a gloomy morning, seventeen years ago, William Job stood on the deck of an ocean steamer and watched the hills of his native land fade below the horizon. He landed in New York and proceeded direct to the copper mines at Lake Superior, where he got work. It was not the kind of that he was looking for, nor what his studies had fitted him for, so he soon drifted West. British pluck and native ability won, and Mr. William Job's check for \$250,000 would be honored in Helena to-day, it is said.

About two months ago Sarah received a letter from her lover asking her to meet him in Morristown, N. J. Their waiting was ended, he said. He would come to claim her. She has a brother, William Ennis, in Morristown, and she had the brave Cornish woman came, reaching there on Nov. 23. Mr. Job arrived on Monday last, and drove to 26 Harrison street, where William Ennis lives. There the meeting took place.

A newspaper reporter saw the couple on Wednesday night. Mr. Ennis's cottage was aglow with light, and of good cheer there was an abundance.

Mr. Job modestly told the story of his long courtship, and then a Mr. Dade came into the room, and Mr. Ennis and two more men, and they beamed upon Mr. Job, who beamed in return. When asked if he had made a fortune in Montana, the bridegroom replied: "Well, I've saved a tidy bit, and have some investments which are paying rather well."

"What is your occupation?" "Miner, sir; just a plain miner, and proud of it, too. At present I'm superintendent of the Ontario mine, which is owned by English capitalists. Yes, I'm also interested."

"Don't you mind him," said Mr. Dade. "It's true he's rich. Why, at the close of the ceremony he kissed Sarah and at the same time crushed a check into her hand. For how much, do you suppose? Ten thousand dollars, as true as I'm sitting here."

The comely bride nodded assent when Mr. Job said: "We go to New York on Thursday, and on Saturday we shall leave for our new home in Helena."

The bridegroom admitted that he had reached the age of 36 years, and that he had been in love with Sarah for thirty-four.

A FLOATING HOME.

Wealthy Mrs. Carson is a Steady Boarder on a Steamship.

For the third time since she began to make her trips in 1893 the Cunard ship *Lucania* arrived in New York on Friday without having Mrs. Carson on board, and it was an event in the history of the steamer. It did not seem like the same vessel with this strange boarder absent.

Any one in search of a good boarding house might get some good points from Mrs. Carson—address the North Atlantic Ocean. Mrs. Carson has her home on the sea, and only goes ashore for business or pleasure. Her present floating home is the steamship *Lucania*, and she is greatly attached to it.

For just how many years Mrs. Carson has been making her home on the North Atlantic nobody seems to know exactly, but she was going back and forward between New York and Liverpool before the *Lucania* set forth for the first time.

When the big Cunarder was launched Mrs. Carson inspected her and concluded to take board on her. She selected a roomy cabin, and setting up her laces and penates therein, settled down comfortably to enjoy her new home.

The *Lucania* is now in her twenty-sixth round trip; that is, she has crossed the ocean 51 times. Only twice before the present trip has Mrs. Carson been absent from the steamer when she plunged "the ocean blue." Therefore she has crossed the ocean 46 times on the *Lucania*. For two years the ship has been her floating home.

His Last Resort.

Why has DeQuartz taken up the study of geology as a profession? He needs the rock.

HEALTH.

Knock-Knee.

This deformity, in which the knee is bent inward, is rarely if ever congenital; that is to say, the person is not born with it, though of course, like many another peculiarity, it may be inherited. Its usual cause is to be found in rickets, muscular weakness combined with bad habits in standing, excessive standing, or the carrying of heavy burdens.

The nature of knock-knee and the manner of its inception and growth may be briefly stated.

First, there is weakness at the knee joints, weakness which, as we have seen may be due to any one of various causes. Then, the tendency to deformity having been established, every movement and action of the body, as in the case of all deformities, only serves to augment the difficulty, never to remedy it.

The bones themselves grow in such a way as constantly to increase the deformity. The inside edges of the ends of the bones of the thigh and leg grow faster than the outside edges, and thus the leg is canted outward. As may easily be seen by experiment with the proper apparatus, the muscles, served by their influence to keep it so now tend by the same influence to bend it further out of line.

There are two methods of treating and remedying knock-knee; for it is possible nearly or entirely to remedy the trouble.

In early age the severest of cases can usually be cured by the judicious and persistent use of splints, irons, elastic force, or other apparatus, combined with massage and electricity. Nor must we forget in these cases to look well to the cause of the weakness, and to supply the constitution with tonics, and to use other measures of hygienic importance.

In cases where the bones have become hardened and "set," however, an operation is imperative. The more common form of operation is to take a wedge-shaped piece of bone from the inner edge of the thigh-bone, or to chip off the edge entirely, and so allow the leg to come back into its natural position. Then the leg is bound tightly until the cuts made by the operation have entirely healed and the ligaments and muscles have become thoroughly accustomed to their new position.

As the operation is usually performed, there is no danger of stiff leg, and the effect gained is sometimes remarkable and permanent if the growth of the bone has entirely ceased. Operation before this time is of course useless.

Low Spirits.

"Low spirits" is a common excuse for a great deal of selfishness. It is certainly a matter of doubt whether anyone has the right to be melancholy in a world so full of the graciousness and generosity of Providence, and it is a miserable piece of egotism to thrust one's low spirits upon others. Melancholia is undoubtedly a disease, but it is one of those diseases which are largely, if not wholly, under control of the will, contradictory though the statement may seem.

There are many diseases recognized by physicians as brought about purely by patients allowing themselves to drift into morbid conditions of mind. Even dreaded scourges, like typhus fever and cholera, are known to be induced by morbid fear. Constant brooding over some fancied wrong or imaginary slight, showing an exaggerated state of selfishness, which is too often considered supersensitiveness, will readily induce that condition of mind known as melancholy.

The selfish idler is condemned by everyone; but the one who wastes his time in this much more foolish manner, groaning and complaining until he becomes a chronic hypochondriac, often passes for a hard worker from the very excess of trouble he takes to find trouble. As a matter of fact, such persons accomplish very little real work in the world. They are greater wasters of time than the most flippant idler of the world, because they take away from the nerve force and the life of others. Minus quantities, they represent much less than nothing, or they reduce the working power of all around them, enervating them by their continuous dole and plaint.

Strange as it may seem, a disposition to melancholy often appears in children, and, if not discouraged, may develop into a fixed habit in later life. There is no cure better for such morbid tendencies than some method by which the individual can get outside of himself and forget his own selfish interests and desires. Peevishness in a young child should be treated as a serious fault, yet in nine cases out of ten the fretful child is petted, and so rewarded for his fretfulness; and the fretful child, makes the complaining, melancholy man or woman.

A Headache Plaster.

When the beating, thumping sensation begins in the head, take equal quantities of pure cayenne pepper and flour; mix them up with water to form a smooth paste thick enough to spread like a salve. Put this upon a piece of soft paper and apply it to the back of the neck just below the edge of the hair. In warm weather it is best to wash the neck with a cloth wet with soap and water, as the oily perspiration may interfere with the action of the plaster. One great advantage of cayenne pepper plaster over mustard is that while the latter frequently blisters, the former never does so, no matter how strong it is applied. In the use of mustard, if the skin is broken all treatment must cease until it heals but with pepper when the plaster loses its effect another may be applied without unpleasant consequences.

A Stayer.

She (looking at the clock)—Dear me! He (tenderly)—Are you surprised to find it so late? She (yawning)—No. I am surprised to find that it is so early.