

FATE'S INSTRUMENTS.

CHAPTER I.

The Nestons, of Tottlebury Grange in the county of Suffolk, were an ancient and honourable family, never very distinguished or very rich, but yet for many generations back always richer and more distinguished than the common run of mankind. The men had been for the most part able and upright, tenacious of their claims, and mindful of their duties; the women had respected their betters, exacted respect from their inferiors, and educated their brothers' wives in the Neston ways; and the whole race, while confessing individual frailties, would have been puzzled to point out how, as a family, it had failed to live up to the position in which Providence and the Constitution had placed it. The other side in one or two cases, like the other side in one or two cases, like the last owner of the Grange, a gay old bachelor had scorned the limits of his rents and his banking-account, and added victories on the turf to the family laurels at a heavy cost to the family revenues. His sudden death had been mourned as a personal loss, but silently acknowledged as a dynastic gain, and ten years of the methodical rule of his brother Roger had gone far to efface the ravages of his merry reign. The younger sons of the Nestons served the State or adorned the professions, and Roger had spent a long and useful life in the Office of Commerce. He had been a valuable official, and his merits had not gone unappreciated. Fame he had neither sought nor attained, and his name had come but little before the public, its rare appearances in the newspapers generally occurring on days when our Gracious Sovereign completed another year of her beneficent life, and was pleased to mark the occasion by conferring honour on Mr. Roger Neston. When this happened, all the leaders looked him up in "Men of the Time," or "Whitaker," or some other standard work of reference, and remarked that few appointments would meet with more universal public approval, a proposition which the public must be taken to have endorsed with tacit unanimity.

Mr. Neston went on his way, undisturbed by his moments of notoriety, but quietly pleased with his red ribbon, and when he entered into possession of the family estate, continued to go to the office with unabated regularity. At last he reached the pinnacle of his particular ambition, and as Permanent Head of his Department, for fifteen years took a large share in the government of a people almost unconscious of his existence, until the moment when it saw the announcement that on his retirement he had been raised to the peerage by the title of Baron Tottlebury. Then the chorus of approval broke forth once again, and the new lord had many friendly pats on the back he was turning to public life. Henceforth he sat silent in the House of Lords, and wrote letters to the Times on subjects which the cares of office had not previously left him leisure to study.

But fortune was not yet tired of smiling on the Nestons. Lord Tottlebury, before accepting his new dignity, had impressed upon his son Gerald the necessity of seeking the wherewith to gild the coronet by a judicious marriage. Gerald was by no means loth. He had never made much progress at the Bar, and felt that his want of success contrasted unfavorably with the growing practice of his cousin George, a state of things very unfitting, as George represented a younger branch than Gerald. A rich marriage, combined with his father's improved position, opened to him prospects of a career of public distinction, and what was more important, of private leisure, better fitted to his tastes and less trying to his patience; and, by an unusual bit of luck, he was saved from any scruples about marrying for money by the fact that he was already desperately in love with a very rich woman. She was of no high birth it is true, and she was the widow of a Manchester merchant; but this same merchant, to the disgust of his own relatives, had left her five thousand a year at her absolute disposal. The last fact outweighed the two first in Lord Tottlebury's mind, while Gerald rested his action on the sole ground that Neera Witt was the prettiest girl in London, and, by Jove, he believed in the world; only, of course, if she had money too, all the better.

Accordingly, the engagement was an accomplished fact. Mrs. Witt had shown no more than a graceful disinclination to become Mrs. Neston. At twenty-five, such a mere episode as her first marriage had been was neither to be desired nor expected, and Neera was very frankly in love with Gerald Neston, a handsome, open-faced, strapping fellow, who won her heart mainly because he was so unlike the late Mr. Witt. Everybody envied Gerald, and everybody congratulated Neera on having escaped the various chasms that are supposed to yawn in the path of rich young widows. The engagement was announced once, and contradicted as premature, and then announced again; and, in a word, everything pursued its pleasant and accustomed course in these matters. Finally, Lord Tottlebury in due form entertained Mrs. Witt at dinner, by way of initiation into the Neston mysteries.

It was for this dinner that Mr. George Neston, barrister-at-law, was putting on his white tie one May evening in his chambers off Piccadilly. George was the son of Lord Tottlebury's younger brother. His father had died on service in India, leaving a wife, who survived him but a few years, and one small boy, who had developed into a rising lawyer of two or three-and-thirty, and was at this moment employed in thinking what a lucky dog Gerald was, if all people said about Mrs. Witt were true. Not that

George envied his cousin his bride. His roving days were over. He had found what he wanted for himself, and Mrs. Witt's beauty, if she were beautiful, was nothing to him. So he thought with mingled joy and resignation. Still, however much you may be in love with somebody else, a pretty girl with five thousand a year is luck, and there's an end of it! So concluded George Neston as he got into his hansom and drove to Portman Square.

The party was but small, for the Nestons were not one of those families that ramify into bewildering growths of cousins. Lord Tottlebury of course was there, a tall, spare, rather stern-looking man, and his daughter Maud, a bright and pretty girl of twenty and Gerald in a flutter of ill-concealed by the very extravagance of nonchalance. Then there were a couple of aunts and a male cousin and his wife, and George himself. Three of the guests were friends, not relatives. Mrs. Bourne had been the chosen intimate of Lord Tottlebury's dead wife, and he honoured his wife's memory by constant attention to her friend. Mrs. Bourne brought her daughter Isabel, and Isabel had come full of curiosity to see Mrs. Witt, and also hoping to see George Neston, for did she not know what pleasure it would give him to meet her? Lastly, there towered on the rug the huge form of Mr. Blodwell, Q.C., an old friend of Lord Tottlebury's and George's first tutor and kindly guide in the law, famous for rasping speeches in court and good stories out of it, famous, too, as one of the tallest men and quite the fattest man at the Bar. Only Neera Witt was wanting, and before Mr. Blodwell had got well into the famous story about Baron Samuel and the dun cow Neera Witt was announced.

Mrs. Witt's widowhood was only two years old, and she was at this time almost unknown to society. None of the party, except Gerald and his father, had seen her, and they all looked with interest to the door when the butler announced her name. She had put off her mourning altogether for the first time, and came in clothed in a gown of deep red, with a long train that gave her dignity, her golden hair massed low on her neck, and her pale, clear complexion just tinged with the suspicion of a blush as she instinctively glanced round for her lover. The entry was, no doubt, a small triumph. The girls were lost in generous admiration; the men were startled; and Mr. Blodwell, finishing the evening at the House of Commons, remarked to young Sidmouth Vane, the Lord President's private secretary (unpaid), "I hope, my boy, you may live as long as I have, and see as many pretty women; but you'll never see a prettier than Mrs. Witt. Her face! her hair! and Vane, my boy, her waist!" But here the division-bell rang, and Mr. Blodwell hastened off to vote against a proposal aimed at deteriorating, under the specious pretence of cheapening, the administration of justice.

Lord Tottlebury, advancing to meet Neera, took her by the hand and proudly presented her to his guests. She greeted each gracefully and graciously until she came to George Neston. As she saw his solid jaw and clean-shaven keen face, a sudden light that looked like recollection leaped to her eyes, and her cheek flushed a little. The change was so distinct that George was confirmed in the fancy he had from the first moment he had seen that somewhere before he had seen that golden hair and those dark eyes, and that combination of harmonious opposites that made her beauty no less special in kind than in degree. He had advanced a step, his hand held half out, exclaiming—

"Surely—"

But there he stopped dead, and his hand fell to his side, for all signs of recognition had faded from Mrs. Witt's face, and she gave him only the same modestly gracious bow that she had bestowed on the rest of the party. The incident was over, leaving George sorely puzzled, and Lord Tottlebury a little startled. Gerald had seen nothing, having been employed in issuing orders for the march in to dinner.

The dinner was a success. Lord Tottlebury unbent; he was very cordial and, at moments, almost jovial. Gerald was in heaven, or at least sitting directly opposite and in full view of it. Mr. Blodwell enjoyed himself immensely; his classic stories had never yet won so pleasant a reward as Neera's low rich laugh and dancing eyes. George ought to have enjoyed himself, for he was next to Isabel Bourne, and Isabel heartily recognising that she was not to-night, as to her justice, she often was, the prettiest girl in the room, took the more pains to be kind and amusing. But George was ransacking the lumber-rooms of memory, or to put it less figuratively wondering and growing exasperated as he wondered in vain, where the deuce he'd seen the girl before. Once or twice his eyes met hers, and it seemed to him that he had caught her casting an inquiring apprehensive glance at him. When she saw that he was looking, her expression changed into one of friendly interest, appropriate to the examination of a prospective kinsman.

"What do you think of her?" asked Isabel Bourne in a low voice. "Beautiful, isn't she?"

"She is indeed," George answered. "I can't help thinking I've seen her somewhere before."

"She is a person one would remember, isn't she? Was it in Manchester?"

"I don't think so. I haven't been in Manchester more than two or three times in my life."

"Well, Maud says Mrs. Witt wasn't brought up there."

"Where was she brought up?"

"I don't know," said Isabel, "and I don't think Maud knew either. I asked Gerald, and he said she probably dropped down from heaven a few years ago."

"Perhaps that's how I come to remember her," suggested George.

openly regretted that his years prevented him fighting Gerald for his prize. Gerald listened with the complacent happiness of a secure lover, and Neera gravely apologised for not having waited to make her choice till she had seen Mr. Blodwell.

"But at least you had heard of me!" he urged.

"I am terribly ignorant," she said. "I don't believe I ever did."

"Neera's not one of the criminal classes, you see, sir," Gerald put in.

"He taunts me," exclaimed Mr. Blodwell, "with the Old Bailey!"

George had come up in time to hear the last two remarks. Neera smiled pleasantly.

"Here's a young lady who knows nothing about the law, George," continued Blodwell. "She never heard of me—nor of you either, I dare say. It reminds me of what they used to say about old Dawkins. Old Daw never had a brief, but he was Recorder of some little borough or other—place with a prisoner once in two years, you know—I forget the name. Let's see—"

"Peckton!" exclaimed George Neston, loudly and abruptly.

Neera made a sudden motion with one hand—a sudden motion suddenly checked—and her fan dropped with a clatter on the polished boards.

Gerald dived for it, so did Mr. Blodwell, and their heads came in contact with such violence as to drive all reminiscences of Recorded Dawkins out of Mr. Blodwell's brain. They were still indulging in recriminations, when Neera swiftly left them, crossed to Lord Tottlebury, and took her seat.

George went and opened the door for her. She looked at him curiously.

"Will you come and see me, Mr. Neston?" she asked.

He bowed gravely, answering nothing.

The party broke up, and as George was seeing Mr. Blodwell's bulk fitted into a four-wheeler, the old gentleman asked.

"Why did you do that, George?"

"What?"

"Jump, when I said Peckton."

"Oh, I used to go sessions there, you know."

"Do you always jump when people mention the places you used to go sessions at?"

"Generally," replied George.

"I see," said Mr. Blodwell, lighting his cigar. "A bad habit, George; it excites remark. Tell him the House."

"Good-night, sir," said George. "I hope your head is better."

Mr. Blodwell snorted indignantly as he pulled up the window, and was driven away to his duties.

(To Be Continued.)

HOLDS 40,000 PEOPLE.

The Crystal Palace, in England, the Largest Permanent Building.

The building holding the largest number of people is the Crystal Palace, Sydenham, England. The Crystal Palace on its ground floor and galleries has a floor space of over 800,000 square feet, and assuming that three fourths of this is occupied by stalls, exhibits, &c., the remaining fourth would be capable of holding more than 100,000 people. If the building were cleared of all but the necessary supports of galleries and roof, it would hold about 400,000 people. St. Peter's, at Rome, is so large that St. Paul's Cathedral could so easily stand inside it. It occupies a space of 240,000 square feet; its front is 400 feet broad, rising to a height of 180 feet; the length of the interior is 600 feet; its breadth 442 feet; and is capable of holding 54,000 people. Its piazza in its widest limit holds 624,000. It has been stated that the Mormon Tabernacle, at Salt Lake City, will accommodate 25,000. This is not correct, as its seating capacity is 8,000 comfortably and 10,000 crowded, while 4,000 or 5,000 people make it uncomfortable for every one. The largest temporary accommodation ever provided under one roof was in the Hall of Arts and Building Section in the Chicago Exhibition. It covered an area of 391-2 acres, and, including upper galleries, 40 acres; 11 acres of the roof was glazed. One million of men could stand at one time upon its floor.

HORSE SENSE.

Equines That Can Play Cards and Understand Language.

Next to the elephant the horse is the most intelligent animal. His appreciation of kindness and his love for his own health are characteristics that are well known to all who are familiar with him. That the horse can be trained to perform acts almost human in their cleverness was proved recently in London, when one of them entertained crowds of people nightly by writing his name on a slate, performing on the harmonium, and playing a game at nap. Last year, at the Aquarium, London, a remarkably clever horse, named Alpha, gave a performance which included all these items. Some time ago at the Crystal Palace a horse was shown capable of understanding two languages, French and German, and by means of signs was able to answer any question put, such as the number of persons occupying each seat in the audience, and the number of each sex; it could also add up with ease a sum marked on a blackboard, and state the exact time indicated by the hands of a watch.

MERE SYMPATHY.

Augustus (after the ordeal)—"Now that we are engaged, I want to ask you a question. Why did you rush out of the room when I began to propose?"

Elvira—It—it made me feel sorry for the two girls down in the kitchen, whose lovers are too bashful and too awkward to propose; so I hurried down and invited the two couples up into the back parlor where the men could hear how the thing is done."

"Eh? Then they must have heard every word?"

"That doesn't matter, dear. There is no danger of any breach of promise suit between us, you know."

Lucy—Mamma, may I go over there to the bridge? Mamma—Why do you want to go over there, dear? Lucy—Oh, just want to gargle my feet in the brook.

HEALTH.

HIP-DISEASE.

The common form of hip-disease is that caused by tubercular inflammation.

Children in all conditions of life are subject to it. The delicate and the weak suffer the most frequently, as would be expected, but occasionally it attacks those of ruddy and well-nourished appearance.

It occurs as a sequel to weakness of the system, let the cause of the weakness be what it may. Attacks of acute infectious diseases, convalescence from surgical operations, and even prolonged subjection to unhealthy conditions are among its predisposing causes.

The hip-joint, as well as the lungs, is therefore to be regarded as fertile soil for disease to flourish in as soon as the vitality of the body reaches a low ebb.

Indeed, convalescence from children's diseases should be regarded as a period still fraught with danger, rather than as a time for the relaxation of vigilance. The vital powers are for a time handicapped after every illness.

Almost every case of hip-disease is ascribed by the mother to a fall. It is true that a fall may be the immediate occasion of the trouble, but behind it in every instance is a lowered vitality. As is true of other grave disorders, the external evidence of hip-disease is at first slight. Pain in the knee is often complained of, though the disease is in the hip. Usually pain is slight or absent.

The first and most important evidence of the disease is a limp, which may be slight or more noticeable. When such a symptom is noticed in a child, treatment should be sought at once, since the chance of complete recovery is lessened every time the weight of the body is thrown upon the leg.

A suitable apparatus will render the joint motionless, and at the same time remove the tension of the surrounding muscles. Several weeks, or even months, of this treatment are required to effect a cure, which may be complete and leave no stiffness of the joint; but in almost all neglected cases, and even in some that receive prompt attention, marked deformity results.

It should be borne in mind, then, that even a slight limp in a child calls for immediate action. In any case, absolute rest of the joint is to be recommended until the cause of the difficulty is discovered.

HYDROPHOBIA.

Rabies, or hydrophobia, is caused by the introduction into the blood of a special poison derived from the mouth of an animal suffering from the same disease. This animal is commonly a dog, although cats, wolves, skunks and other animals may become affected.

Hydrophobia in man differs little in its course and symptoms from hydrophobia in animals. The first stages of the disease are marked by a vague restlessness, and strong irritability and excitability. The well-known dread of water, sensitiveness to light and sound, sleeplessness, frothing at the mouth and spasms follow in rapid succession. Exhaustion is the inevitable result of this alarming train of evils, and thus the sufferer is relieved from his agonies.

There is an indisputable resemblance between hydrophobia and lockjaw, though there is no doubt that the two diseases have a separate and distinct origin both arise from germ infection. Lockjaw is a disease which may follow any injury. Its germ is particularly common in dust and about stables. The muscular spasms and excessive irritability are often confusing, and many authorities have asserted that most cases of supposed hydrophobia are lockjaw.

Now that it is possible to separate the germ, all doubt as to the character of either disease may be easily settled. Death by lockjaw occurs from suffocation—the spasms of the muscles about the chest constricting it to such a degree as to prevent breathing.

Signs of hydrophobia rarely develop under four weeks, and sometimes a year may elapse after the original injury. The proportion of the bitten cases which eventually succumb is variously estimated from one in two to one in twenty.

Since the recently inaugurated Pasteur treatment offers the only positive escape from this terrible malady, and since also it is necessary to inoculate the system thoroughly with the remedy within two or three weeks of the time of the bite at the longest, it is customary to treat every case with equal care. The Pasteur method consists in injecting a concentrated hydrophobia poison, very much as vaccine virus is injected for the prevention of smallpox.

It is believed by many that immediate cauterization of the injured part greatly lessens the chances of subsequent trouble, and this should always be done by way of precaution.

BANANA DIET IN TYPHOID FEVER.

A Southern doctor had a patient, a woman, who has been for ten days suffering from a severe case of typhoid fever. He had prescribed the regulation course of treatment, and had kept her on milk and fluid food diet. She did not do as well under the treatment as he desired and he watched the case with more than ordinary care.

On the tenth day the patient, whose condition was serious, said:

"Well, doctor, I just can't take any more milk. I would rather die than try it. And the broths I have been fed on fairly gag me. I will starve myself rather than try to force any more down."

The doctor realized that his patient must take nourishment in order to successfully combat the disease. But just what to suggest puzzled him. He thought for a while, and the story of how useful the bananas was came to his mind. He determined to try a banana diet on his patient, whose stomach rebelled at the mere mention of liquid nourishment.

The physician asked her if she could

eat a banana. She looked surprised, but with alacrity said:

"Eat one? Why, doctor, I could eat a dozen!"

The physician had decided to give the banana a trial, and sending out procured some choice fruit, not over-ripe. The patient eagerly ate one. It was not long before she wanted another. It was given her. The doctor remained an hour, and during that time she had eaten four bananas.

When he left he gave orders that she be given all she wanted. But all other fruit and solids were strictly prohibited. The patient took kindly to the diet, and would eat as many as a dozen during the day.

Typhoid fever must necessarily run the twenty-one days, and at the end of ten days after beginning the fruit diet his patient was convalescent. Then the advantages were even more apparent. The remarkable nourishment of fruit had not permitted her vitality to be so greatly exhausted as is the case when liquid nourishment is strictly adhered to, and she gained strength with unusual rapidity.

The splendid results attained in this case persuaded the physician to adopt similar treatment in other cases and in no instance have any evil effects been manifested.

THE SUN'S DISTANCE.

Would Take 500 Years to Cover it at a Swift Steamer's Pace.

"The sun is about ninety-three millions of miles distant from the earth," writes Alden W. Quimby. "It varies through the year because the earth's orbit is elliptical, and the sun is at one focus of the ellipse. The earth is more than three millions of miles nearer the sun in December than in June, at which time the latitudes south of the equator receive his direct rays and experience the great heat of their summer."

"Let us try to comprehend the figures stated. The other day two racers of the sea proudly lowered the record of trans-Atlantic passage. Could they turn their prow to the sun, and drive their great engines day and night in the crossing of the ether main, it would be five hundred years before they could reach harbor."

"Most persons have noticed the appreciable interval of time between the stroke of an axe at a distance and the resultant sound; could we hear the sound of a solar explosion we would know that the explosion had occurred fourteen years before. Perhaps the most striking illustration is that which imagines a little child to have an arm long enough to reach the sun. The child might trust its fingers into the seething fires, but it would grow up to maturity and calmly descend into the valley of extreme old age, blissfully unconscious of any pain from the burning; in fact it would require another such a lifetime to bring the news to the brain."

ORIGIN OF PEERAGES.

In commenting on the sneers which have greeted some recently created peers, Henry Labouchere gives the following list of Lord Mayors of London who founded illustrious houses: Lord Aveland, from Sir Gilbert Heathcote, 1711; Lord Bacon, from Sir Thomas Cooke, dry-goods merchant, 1557; the Marquis of Bath, from Sir Rowland Heyward, clothworker, 1570; Lord Braybrooke, from Sir John Gresham, grocer, 1547; the Earl of Warwick, from Sir Samuel Dashwood, vintner, 1702; the Duke of Buckingham, from Sir John Gresham, grocer, 1547; Lord Compton, from Sir Wolston Dixie, tanner, 1585; the Earl of Denbigh, from Sir Godfrey Feilding, merchant, 1452; the Earl of Fitzwilliam, from Sir Thomas Cooke, dry-goods merchant, 1557; Lord Palmerston, from Sir John Houberton, grocer, 1695; the Marquis of Salisbury, from Sir Thomas Cooke, dry-goods merchant, 1557.

PRESENCE OF MIND.

How a German Officer Saved the Life of a Child.

A person who knows exactly the right thing to do in a sudden emergency, without stopping to think at all, deserves to have his presence of mind noticed and commended. A German drum-major has lately attained such distinction with good reason.

A regiment of the imperial army, resting on a country road, was appalled to see a great bull madly pursuing a little child in a field which was near by, and yet so far away that the child could not be reached in time to save it, nor yet saved by the shooting of the animal.

The bull had his horns down, and all the soldiers were horrified to see that in another moment the child must be gored to death. For an instant no one seemed to know what to do, and then the drum-major shouted to the buglers of the band, who stood near with their instruments in their hands, to sound a loud blast. They looked aghast.

"Sound, I say, for God's sake, to save the child!" he repeated.

Then the buglers blew a blast at the top of their lungs. The drum-major knew that animals of the cow kind are so much affected by strange and high-pitched musical sounds that they seem compelled to imitate them. The bull proved to be no exception to the rule.

As soon as he heard the bugle blast he paused in his pursuit of the child, glanced toward the band, raised his head, and began to bellow madly. The buglers kept up as high and discordant a tumult as they could, and meantime soldiers were running to the rescue of the child.

Before the bull had finished his attention to the bugles the child was in a place of safety.

ANCIENT FLOWERS.

The oldest and most curious herbarium in the world is in the Egyptian Museum at Cairo. It consists of crowns, garlands, wreaths and bouquets of flowers, all taken from the ancient tombs of Egypt, most of the examples being in excellent condition, and nearly all the flowers have been identified. They cannot be less than 3,000 years old.