

TWO KISSES.

BY HENRY DRYER.

Mary Robertson had been married six years, and on this particular morning was washing up the dishes in the large kitchen of Drumshaltie farm-house, and singing away like any mavis on the banks of a cool-shaded stream. It was a "grand hair-storm," and Charles, her husband, who had already done a good spell of work in the field with the hands, had had breakfast, and was standing in the door with his great straw hat on, drinking in the grain-scented air with great gusto, and, while anxious to get set to work again, would not help listening to Mary as she sang:

"A body meet a body
Comin' through the rye,
Gin a body kiss a body,
Need a body cry?"

"I say, Mary," said he, coming in, "there's surely something out o' the ordinar' when you're liltin' awa' at that rate; and, although you're not just comin' through the rye, ye ken, I'll tak' it as an invitation, a' the same."

Saying which he took her around the neck and gave her a good hearty smack.

"Man Charles!" exclaimed Mary, stopping short with the wet dish-clout in one hand and a porridge plate in the other, "you're an ungrateful, forgetfu' wretch!"

"Ay, an' that's the gey language to use to your lord and master," said he, holding her scarlet face between his hands, and looking anything but concerned, "an' I'll have to fine you for it," and fined she was accordingly. "A' the same, hoo dah you mak' that out? I'll hear mere curiosity sake, ye ken, I'll hear what you've to say. See ca' awa'."

"An' dae ye stan' there, Charles Robertson, an' tell me that we've been six years married an' ye canna mind what day this is?"

"Good gracious, Mary!" exclaimed he, guiding her, somewhat raveled like, "is this no' Tuesday, the second Tuesday o' the month, in fact, two days before the market, when I'm expectin' to sell thae starks o' oors, and get a score or sae o' sheep?"

"Charles, you're a great big, stupid sheep yourself, that's what you are!" burst out Mary, sitting down in a chair with a despairing look on her face, the dish-clout and plate still in her hands "no to mind that this is oor wedding day—six years this very morn since we cam' thigither, Charles, and that's the regard you have fo' me noo!"

And she was very nearly breaking down over it, she was so vexed. But Charles was all repentance, and apologies, and consolation at once.

"To be sure, Mary, to be sure," exclaimed he; "what a gomerall was no to mind a' about it before ye tellt me. But for a' that and a' that," added he, chuckling, while he dived into his trousers pocket and produced a small packet, which he proceeded to open, "I wisna just sae unmindfu' ten days ago, whatever I am the noo; for, there, you see—what dae ye think o' that, eh?"

He displayed as he spoke a nice gold and pebble brooch, on which the word "Mary" was artistically brought out in relief.

"I bocht this to gie ye it in this very morn, but that hairst work, I suppose—Will ye hae it noo?"

It was Mary's turn now to apologize. "Oh, Charles," cried she, flinging her arms about his neck, "to think ye had it in your head a' the time, and I was supposin' ye had forgotten a' about it."

"In my hairt, Mary," said he, "an' that's the richt place to put onything, after a', for

"The hairt's aye the pairt eye
That mak's us richt or wrang."

Ye may be sure o' that. I think I'll mak' a note in my diary that this day two months in our weddin' day, so that I dinna forget it again. But I maun be aff; you're hindrin' me, awful, Mary."

Charles seized her in his arms, gave her a parting salute, and was off, Mary threatening all sorts of things at the insinuation. But he had only got outside the door when he was met by a man apparently of the tramp order, with bent shoulders and haggard look. Now, there was not a kinder disposition in the whole country than that of Charles Robertson, but his pet aversion was the genus tramp, and he was on the point of using plain language, when something in the man's face seemed to hold him back.

"Weel, what ist' you want?"

"Something to eat and something to do, if you don't mind."

Charles looked at him with some curiosity, for two reasons, if not three. First, tramps were about the last beings on earth to mention work; and, second, this one did not seem likely to be of much account even if he got it, particularly work in a harvest field; and he could not help noticing in the third place, that this fellow, notwithstanding his shabby dress, had something about him that did not agree with the general idea of his class.

"Been out a' night?"

"Oh, ay; walked from Aberfeldy since two o'clock this morning, for I could not sleep where I was, and wanted to get on here."

Aberfeldy was about eighteen miles from Drumshaltie.

"Had ony breakfast yet?"

"The man gave a shrug of his shoulders."

"Haven't had a bite since the night before last, sir."

"It's surely a hungry country you've come through," remarked Charles; "but come in, an' see what we hae to gie ye."

The man up to this point had been standing in the rustic porch and could neither see nor be seen by Mary; but she could hear him distinctly, and at the first sound of his voice an expression of alarm, almost terror, came into her face, and she had been waiting

anxiously a chance to say something unobserved to Charles. This she had not managed, and retreated before him as he preceded the stranger into the kitchen.

"I say, Ma—"
Before he could utter the word, Mary's own hand had stopped his mouth.

"Hoots, what's the matter?"

"Naething, Charles, naething, naething," said Mary, hurriedly, but unable to say more, as the man entered, and she turned away to put up some dishes on the rack. "Tak' a seat there, till I mak' something for you," said she, without turning around.

"Thank you, missus," said the man, seating himself, and very glad to do so, apparently.

"You'd better put on some bacon and eggs, Ma—"

She was barely in time, but managed to let one of her best broth-plates—the more's the pity, as it belonged to a set given by her mother on her marriage day—fall smash on the stone floor before Charles could get the whole word out.

"Now if I had done that, eh!"

"Oh, it doesna matter much," said Mary, gathering up the bits, and with her face still concealed as much as possible from the stranger, taking them to the scullery.

"I'd better cut the bacon for you," said Charles, taking a shoulder down from the roof, "and let you get it on; I should say the man's ready for something after thirty-six hours' fast."

He followed her into the scullery when the purpose of getting a knife, when a most unexpected thing occurred. He had no sooner entered than she caught hold of him, dragged him to the farthest corner, and pulling down his head, whispered, hurriedly, in his ear: "Dinna ca' me Mary, Charles. Ca' me Annie."

"Guid save us, Ma—!" exclaimed Charles, dumfounded, and, but for her hand again, very nearly committing the blunder he was asked to avoid; "what dae ye mean?"

"Dinna ask the noo, Charles," whispered Mary, breathlessly; "dae what I tell ye, will ye no? Ca' me Annie while he's here."

"Him? What about him?"

"Whisht, man—he'll hear ye. Just ca' me Annie, as I tellt ye, and she stamped her foot and rattled the dishes to enforce her demands."

"Weel, weel, then, Ma—Annie!" exclaimed Charles, giving the puzzle up, "but it doesna sound richt."

"Ay," said he, stepping into the kitchen again, addressing the man, and wishing to say something, "an' hae ye been about the district before?"

"It is nine or ten years since I left, replied he, hesitatingly, "but I was born and brought up in the parish."

"Man, dae ye tell me sae?" exclaimed Charles. "Dae ye hear that—Annie?"

It was some trouble to pronounce the last word. But the party addressed was too busy with the bacon that was now frizzling away on the fire to overhear any more than the monosyllable, "Ay."

"An' ye be fong to the parish," said Charles; "an' what may they ca' ye then?"

"You are a stranger here yourself?" asked the man, by way of reply.

"Weel, hardly that, seeing I've been some eight years in Drumshaltie; and I come frae Dunkeel, only five miles frae here. An' what were ye sayin' yer name was?"

"Douglas, sir; James Douglas."

"Douglas, Douglas," repeated Charles, trying to recall the name; "I surely mind something about somebody o' that name. Douglas—I say, Annie, dae ye mind onybody o' the name o' Douglas that used to be hereabouts?"

"I canna just sae the noo; maybe there was, for a' that; but it's no easy mindin' everybody that comes and goes in the parish. I'm sure you're hungry," said she, placing a tempting dish of bacon and eggs before the man, who could not help giving Mary a furtive look occasionally; "see an' mak' a guid breakfast when you're at it. It's a' the same price, ye ken."

Charles rubbed his chin and looked at her, lost.

"What hae ye been daein' wi' your face—Annie?" asked he, for, somehow, Mary had got her face dreadfully smudged during the cooking operations, which was unusual for her, to say the least.

But, before she could reply, if she intended to their guest interjected "Annie—Annie what?"

"Robertson, of course," answered Charles, wondering what next.

"Sure—but I must be mistaken," said the man, gazing closely at Mary; "yet you resemble another I knew so much. But," as the new idea struck him, "is Robertson not your married name?"

"What else would it be?" asked Charles; "her maiden name was Meldrum. Is that what ye want?"

"I knew it, I knew it!" exclaimed the stranger, as he rose from the table; "you must be the sister in London I used to hear her speak about as so like her. Tell me about your sister, will you? Is she still in the parish? How is she?"

Something in Mary's throat prevented her replying at once, so that it fell to Charles to answer.

"Oh, she's dead," said he, thinking all the while of Annie, a deceased sister of Mary's; "she died about three years syne, in London."

"Dead!" and he sank back in the chair again.

"Ay," said Charles, "ye kent her, I suppose. She was a fine lassie, too."

"And I have returned to find her dead, after all!" moaned the man; "dead, and I, poor wretch, still permitted to crawl this earth. My last hope gone now, the only hope that has given me life and strength for months past, that I should see Mary again, hear her speak again, even were it to repeat what I knew was true, although I once forced her to say other things—James Douglas, you're the last man in the parish I would think of marryin'!"

"Mary?" blurted out Charles, more hopelessly lost than ever. But a look from Mary herself staided him. "And so you were a sweetheart o' hers? Wha would hae thoct it?"

"I cannot eat anything, friends," said this strange being, making for the door, "and cannot stay here any longer. I thank you both for your kindness, and you?" turning to Mary, "as the sister of one who was very dear to me, although I never was more than a scorn to her, most of all, I had only one wish in coming here; it has been in vain, and I leave my native village never to return."

"Tuts, man," exclaimed Charles,

catching hold of his arm, "take something to eat there, an' let's see ye out in the field on the morn, or the next day if ye dinna feel inclined for work the day. Ye'll be a' richt after a night's rest, depend on't."

But the returned prodigal only disengaged himself from the friendly detention, and turned down the road, muttering to himself:

"Poor Mary, poor Mary!"

Charles gazed after him for a moment with an expression bordering on idiocy.

"Mary, Annie—Annie, Mary! What does it a' mean?"

He turned into the kitchen, and was met at the door by Mary, who flung her arms around his neck and burst out crying.

"Oh, Charles, what hae I done this day! I am surely the hardest-hearted woman alive."

"You're not that, whatever you are," said Charles, stroking her head; "but for the life o' me, I can mak' neither head nor tail o' this mornin's work. What is it a' about, Mary?—but can I ca' you Mary yet?"

Then Mary, having been quieted down a little, dried her eyes and washed her face, and let in the daylight upon Charles' dark understanding.

James Douglas had been one of Mary's many sweethearts before she had met Charles. But it was courtship all on one side; for Douglas, who was the son of the parish school-master, was regarded as the wildest lad in three parishes, and Mary both disliked and dreaded him. He was sent to Edinburgh University, and on his return for vacation, it was plain to every one, except his fond old father, perhaps, that he had been learning more than was good for him there, and Mary detested him more than ever. Yet James Douglas had good points about him, and one of these was his love for Mary, which was the purest feeling he was capable of.

One summer evening about ten years before this peculiar day, Mary, who would be about eighteen at the time, met Douglas as he came from Dunkeel, where she had been on some errands, to meet her, and Mary's concern as she saw him approach was certainly not alloyed when she perceived that he was tipsy. She did all she could to be frank to him, but this seemed only to encourage a certain rudeness of bearing he had shown at their meeting, and which reached a climax when they entered upon a rather lonely bit of the road above Inver, with wood on both sides, and he threw his arm around her neck and attempted to kiss her.

"Let me go, James Douglas," cried she, struggling with him, and shaking all over with terror; "you know I have told you a dozen times I would not marry you."

"See here then," exclaimed he, with a fierce look in his eyes, "I swear I will not let you leave this spot till you promise. Are you to marry me, Mary?—I won't have anything but one answer, and that the right one."

The road was lonely. It was getting dark, and she was in the hands of an unprincipled fellow, half-mad with drink and half with love; besides, it could be no compact under such coercive conditions. What more natural, therefore, than that she should give the required promise?

This Mary did, and from that day to this had never told a soul about the matter.

Douglas left for college the day after, and wrote frequently, but Mary took no notice of his letters, and when about three months later, his father died, and Douglas came home to attend the funeral and realize the little effects he had, Mary managed to be absent on a visit to a friend. Back to Edinburgh went the squire, and up to the morning of our story, had never been seen in the village again. Wild stories of his career, however, had reached it at intervals, but by and by these ceased, and for many years even his whereabouts, or whether he was dead or alive, was unknown.

When last heard of he was in Australia. "That's a' I have to tell you, Charles," concluded Mary, "and you may say what you like about me for what I have done. I kent his voice whenever I heard it, an' was that frightened at the sound I managed to have run awa' if I could hae managed it. When he cam' in, I thoct he would hae discovered who I was, an' tried to hold me to my promise. I might hae kent better than to put about wi' you here, Charles, but I hardly kent what I was about."

"Dinna bother yourself' about it, about it, Mary," said Charles. "He's been a bad lot, that's plain. But I maun be aff; I should hae been among the workers an' oor syne."

When he returned for dinner, it was with the news that the man Douglas had got the length on of Marl-hall farm, about a mile farther on, when he collapsed, and had to be taken into a barn, where he was now lying. It was clear to every one that his illness was numbered. Old Doctor M'Dougal pronounced him a "dune cratur," and gave him till morning, but only with a struggle. Mary heard it all, but made no sign.

That night, however, when Charles was busy giving his rounds among the beasts, she slipped out with a basket over her arm, her face set for Marl-hall. Arrived there, she made straight for the barn. Stretched on some straw in a corner, comfortable enough so far as that went, but gasping for dear breath, lay her old sweetheart, James Douglas. Old Jean M'Naughton was just coming out as Mary entered.

"How is he?" asked Mary, in a whisper.

"Slippin' awa' fast, puir fellow. Dae ye ken onything about him?"

"That's James Douglas, the schule-master's son," said Mary, putting down her basket and gazing at the poor wreck in the corner with a soft look in her eyes.

"Your auld sweetheart, Mary! I thoct I kent the face, but sic' a change. Weel, weel, he's nearin' for last ane, an' only hope we'll hear of it. Are ye to bide awa' wi' him, Mary?"

"I canna stay lang," said she; "but I just thoct I might bring along twa or three tasty things he might hae ta'en."

"I doot hee's past that. But try him wi' a wee thing wine, an' I'll be back in a minute or twa."

The sound of voices, or, perhaps, the approaching end, aroused the dying man, and as Mary went over to him, his eyes were wide open and fixed upon her face. There was that other world look in his eye to be seen once only in a lifetime, and once too often for those who see it; and as Mary

kneelt down beside him, the last rays from a rich autumn sunset, streaming through a little window in the barn, fell upon her face, causing it, beautiful at any time, but charged now with the tenderness of human sympathy and compassion to glow like an angel's.

The eyes grew larger that were fixed upon her; there was an effort to raise himself on his elbow, and a hand stretched out as if to assure himself of her reality.

"Mary! is that you?"

"Yes, James, it is me, Mary. Can I do anything for you?"

"Mary—will you not—kiss me—once—"

And Mary, with calm, sweet, pitying face, leaned over and kissed him, and he fell back with a sigh.

The sun was set.

SOMETHING ABOUT JAPAN

WHAT SHE MAY BE AT THE END OF THE CENTURY.

Notes of a Thoughtful Observer of the "Nation With a Future"—Rapidly Getting Their Business Into Their Own Hands.

A visitor to Japan will still find it a most interesting country, even if he confines his tour to the beaten tracks, and the beaten tracks of to-day are the unbeaten tracks of yesterday. It is true that much of the picturesque so far as the people are concerned has departed, never to return. No daimios, with their escorts of retainers, are to be seen, no swords are worn, harikari is extinct, and the feudal barons of yesterday are the dapper men in European clothes of to-day.

Much of the glamour has gone, the treaty ports have been or are being vulgarized, but Japanese scenery still remains, with its rich vegetation, noble groves, mountainous sections, and varied outlines. Besides this, the common people away from the railroads and beaten tracks are still agreeable and interesting, and the most unlimited extension of the passport system following treaty revision affords opportunities for travel but lately within the reach of the ordinary tourist. As a matter of fact, Japan can be said to be open in all parts to any tourist who will accept Japanese modes of travel and the fare and life afforded by the native tea houses. Japan is prosperous now as probably never before. Imports, relatively considered, are being reduced and exports increased. The manufacture of articles for home and foreign consumption is steadily increasing, both in quantity and range, and though many articles hitherto beautified

JAPANESE TASTE AND ART

are being cheapened in quality and appearance in answer to the demands of foreign buyers anxious for large profits, still Japanese art and artists yet exist in the higher forms, and the Japanese Government and royal household do very much to stimulate and reward their creations. The foundation and development of the museum in Ueno Park in Tokio will alone do much to revive and sustain the ancient artistic skill in many directions. The Japanese were in excellence the decorators of the world, and in my opinion, they still remain so.

Though prosperous, Japan has had its share of misfortunes this past summer. Formosa is still unassimilated, and absorbs much in the way of life and money from Japan, while the late tidal wave in the north of Japan has cost Japan much more in the way of life than did the China war directly and indirectly.

Politically, Japan is still in transition. Universal education will in time bring a demand for universal suffrage, and at present all child Japan is going to school. The traditional exaltation of the Mikado and the reverence for his throne still render an irresponsible Ministry a possibility, but the existence of a Parliament, with a ruler and without a parliamentary Government and Ministry, is an anomaly, which will not have much longer duration. Already signs of its change, arising from questions of budget and taxation, are in the air.

It has been said not inaptly that Japan is the child of the old age of civilization. With this statement in view, it is not reasonable to call the Japanese mere

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of civilization. The good things of the civilized world, inaccessible to Japan from its long isolation, and requiring careful choice, adaptation, and assimilation. This will employ the Japanese for many years, and invention and original progress will come in due time and later.

Modern warlike appliances and methods have proven a great success in Japanese hands, and the stimulus extends to the use of such methods in more peaceful directions. The genius for organization is an element of self-esteem seems to have reached its maximum just now, it does not prevent a continued reaching out for the good things of the civilized world. Here a danger lies. If Japan desires to play the part of a great power in the game going on in the extreme Orient she may find a setback which will place her in strength and unsettled conditions with the South American republic—a future prophesied for her by the shrewd Sir Harry Parkes.

But, fortunately, a middle class is being formed in Japan from the mercantile and commercial classes—classes which formerly were rated among the lowest, both socially and for integrity. With the increased prominence and influence of these classes will come a greater unshakable for peace and against useless war.

The Japanese are rapidly getting all of the threads of administration, both private and public life, into their own hands. This is wise for many reasons. They need all the employment they can get, and though they can underwrite the European, with his coarser and stronger fibre, the European is the more masterful and can overtake, as Lafcadio Hearn puts it, the less vigorous Japanese. Few Europeans now remain in the Government service, and comparatively few in the employ of the great railway and steamship lines or industrial works in Japan.

ROUND THE WHOLE WORLD.

WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE GLOBE.

Old and New World—Events of Interesting Character Briefly—Interesting Happenings of Recent Date.

Japan is preparing to build a big harbor at Osaka.

Koch, the bacterius expert, has been sent to South Africa by the German Government to investigate the causes of the rinderpest.

Victoria, Australia, has caused out 586,512 ounces of gold during the last nine months, an increase of 31,000 ounces over last year.

Seventy-one persons died of starvation in London during 1895, according to official reports, nearly double the number the year before.

Plague and pestilence, in addition to famine, are impending over British India. There have been 438 cases of bubonic plague, with 282 deaths, so far in Calcutta and Bombay.

The Daunt's Rock lightship off Queenstown harbor, which was believed to have gone adrift in last month's gales, foundered at her moorings, carrying down her crew of eight men, as the divers recently discovered.

Dr. Nansen has received \$50,000 from the publishers for his coming book. This statement has sworn to in a suit they brought recently to prevent the Daily Chronicle from printing a long account of his explorations written by him.

The Rev. Carr John Glynn, brother of the first Lord Wolverton and senior member of the Glynn family of bankers, has just died at the age of 98 years. He had the two family livings of Hinton Parva and Witchampton for sixty-eight years.

On All Souls' Day, when Paris turns out to decorate the graves of its dead with wreaths, many mourners this year went to the cemeteries on bicycles, carrying their flowers with them. At the Pere Lachaise cemetery policemen were detailed to look after the wheels left at the gates.

M. Barriere believes that he has discovered a new chemical element in the course of his investigations in monazite sand and has named it actinium. It does not form insoluble salts when coming into contact with either sodium or potassium sulphate. Its spectrum resembles somewhat that of erbium. M. Barriere thinks it may be useful for incandescent gas lights.

Lord Salisbury's luck in the matter of high ecclesiastical patronage is holding out. In fifteen months he has had to appoint an Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishops of Winchester, Rochester, Chichester, Newcastle, Peterborough and London, a fifth of the whole bench. Twenty-four of the present Bishops, about three-fourths of the total number have been appointed by him.

Gen. Venukoff, head of the geological survey connected with the Trans-Siberian Railroad reports to the Paris Academie des Sciences that he has found fifty-four deposits of coal or of lignite, along the line of the road, none of them, however, in the region between the Ural and the Altai mountains, in western Siberia. The survey has extended to the shores of the sea of Ochotsk, where coal and gold have been found.

British Guiana intends soon to disestablish the Church. At present it has two established religions, the Anglican and the Scotch Presbyterian, while the Government also helps the Methodist and the Roman Catholics. The colonists think that \$100,000 a year is too high a price to pay for what they receive. The Legislature has extended the present system for eighteen months only, instead of the usual seven years.

Prof. Krafft-Ewing, who holds the chair of mental diseases at the University of Vienna, enjoyed his instruction recently by allowing a madman, one of his patients, to lecture in his stead. The man, during which he is much more clever and witty than when sane. His lecture on "The mental condition of the maniac in periodical attacks of madness" was a brilliant success. After it was over he was shut up again.

Oxford men won fifty-six and Cambridge men twenty-six out of ninety-four Indian and home civil service places open to public competition in England. One result of making it easier for university men to enter the public service is a falling off in the number of candidates for the university honor examinations. The civil service candidates give up their last year to cramming for the special examination instead of attending to their college work, contenting themselves with past degrees.

An "adventurer's share" in the New River Company was sold recently in London for \$625,000. This company was started in 1169 by Sir Hugh Myddleton to supply London with water from the Hertfordshire hills forty miles away. Half the shares went to James I. as the King's moiety, the others to the thirty-six adventurers. Myddleton was ruined by the speculation, but the company owns a great deal of property in the city of London and the counties of Middlesex and Hertford. The interest on a share is about \$13,000 a year.

Tiburzi the famous brigand who for years had ruled the district around Viterbo, was recently shot by the carabinieri near Ortole, having been betrayed by one of his band. He had been a brigand for forty years. When he appeared with his followers near Viterbo the Government engaged in a miniature war against him, employing a whole regiment of infantry and a hundred carabinieri, but as the country people were on his side he was able to baffle the soldiers. Though hundreds of peasants were arrested for aiding him, none dared to betray him to the police. Tiburzi kept order in the district, permitting no robberies or crimes against the persons under his protection, levied regular taxes, and in the Parliamentary contest of 1893 managed the election, and saw that his candidate was successful. During the past few months he frequently visited Rome and Florence and even went to Paris without molestation.

Mr. Ewell—Isn't it strange but true, nevertheless, that the biggest fools always marry the prettiest girls? Mrs. Ewell—Oh, now go on, you flattert.