

DARE HE?

OR, A SAD LIFE STORY

CHAPTER XXXI.—(Continued).

As the hour of seven approaches, ever graver and graver doubts upon this head assail his mind, both when he reflects upon how much it is a habit with the better sort of travelling English to dine in their own rooms, and also when he calls to mind the extremely retired character of Elizabeth's and her mother's habits. Even if she does appear in the public room—and the more he thinks of it, the less probable it seems—it is most unlikely that he will be placed near her. But he might possibly intercept her in the hall on the way to the salle a manger.

In pursuance of this project he takes up his position before the bell, tingling so longingly as to reach the ears of the deafest and most distant, has summoned the company together; and it is several minutes before enough are assembled to justify, according to the etiquette prevailing at the Grand Hotel, a move to the dining-room. These, at that hotel, although in a very distinct minority—as when, indeed, are they not?—are yet not quite the same choice rarities as at some of the Swiss and Italian ones. But the younger of the one sex are perennially interesting to the other; and Burgoyne, as "the new man," is an object of some attention to half a dozen young girls, and more to two or three sprightly-hearted old ones. His eyes are eagerly shining as each opening door, each step on the staircase, raises his hopes afresh. But neither door nor staircase yield the form he seeks, and he is at last obliged, under penalty of exciting remark, reluctantly to follow the band that go trooping hungrily down a flight of steps to the whitewashed dining-room. He finds himself placed between a bouncing widow who is too much occupied in fondling an old valetudinarian on her other side to have much notice to spare for him; and a sparkling creature of five-and-thirty in a red skirt, who, before dinner is over, confides to him that she fears she has not got a nice nature, and that she cannot get on at home because her mother and the servants insist upon having cold supper instead of dinner on Sunday. When she tells him that she has not a nice nature, he absently replies that he is very sorry for it, and her confidence about the Sunday supper provokes from him only the extremely stupid observation that he supposes she does not like cold meat. It is a wonder that he can answer her even as rationally as he does. It is more by good luck than good management that there is any sense at all in his responses. And yet he may as well give his full attention to his neighbor, for now every place at the E-shaped table is filled up, and travel as his eye may over those who sit, both at the long and cross-boards, it fails to discover any face in the least resembling that which lifted itself from the dusk terrace into his candlelight.

Was it her little ghost, then, that he had seen, her dainty delicate ghost? But why should it appear to him here? Why haunt these unfamiliar shores? The only places in the room which still remained untenanted are those at a round table laid for three, in the embrasure of a Moorish window, not very distant from where he sits. On first catching sight of it his hopes had risen, only immediately to fall again, as he realizes that it is destined for a trio. Why should three places be laid for Elizabeth and her mother?

With a disheartened sigh he turns to his neighbor, intending to put to her a question as to the habitual occupants of the empty table; but she is apparently affronted at his lepidness, and presents to him only the well-frizzled back of her expensive head. He is reduced to listening to the conversation of his vis-a-vis, an elderly couple, who have been upon some excursion, and are detailing their experiences to those around them. They have been to Blidah apparently, and seen real live monkeys hopping about without organs or red coats on real palm-trees. He is drawn into the conversation by a question addressed to him as to his journey.

It is five minutes before he again looks towards the table in the window. His first glance reveals that the three persons for whom it is destined have at length arrived and taken their seats. Idiot that he is! he had forgotten Mr. Le Marchant's existence.

"They are nice-looking people, are they not?" says his neighbor in the red skirt, apparently repenting of her late austerity, and following the direction of his eyes; "but they give themselves great airs; nobody in the hotel is good enough for them to speak to. M. Cipriani evidently thinks them people of importance; he makes twice as much fuss about them as he does about anyone else. Look at him now!"

And in effect the obsequious little host may be seen hanging anxiously over the newcomers, evidently asking them with solicitous civility whether the not particularly appetizing fish (the strongest point of the blue Mediterranean does not lie in her fishes, of which some are coarse, and some tasteless, and some even lie under the suspicion of having

poisonous qualities), whether it is not to their liking.

At something M. Cipriani says they all laugh. Elizabeth, indeed, throws back her little head, and shows all her perfect teeth, in a paroxysm of the most genuine mirth. It gives Burgoyne a sort of shock to see her laugh.

Not a day, scarcely an hour, has passed since he last saw her in which he has not pictured her as doing or suffering or living through something; he has never pictured her laughing. It seems to him now but a moment since he was reading her broken-hearted, tear-stained note; since he was seeing Byng groveling in all the utter collapse of his un-governed grief on the floor of the little Florentine entresol. What business has she to laugh? And how unchanged she is! How much less outwardly aged than he himself is conscious of being! Sitting as she now is, in her simple white tea-gown, with one slight elbow rested on the table, her eyes all sparkling with merriment and laughter, bringing into prominence that one enchanting dimple of hers, she does not look more than twenty. But a few moments later he forgives her even her dimple. However expressive may be the little landlord, he has to move away after a time; and the merriment moves away, too, out of Elizabeth's face. Jim watches it decline, through the degrees of humorous, as she pushes the coarse white fish about her plate, without tasting it (she was always a very delicate eater), into a settled gravity. And now that she is grave he sees that she is aged, almost as much as he himself, after all. Her eyes had ever had the air of having shed in their time many tears; but since he last saw her, it is now evident to him that the tale of those tears has been a good deal added to.

There is no pleasing him. He was angry with her when he thought her gay, now he quarrels with her for looking sad. As if, in her unconsciousness of his neighborhood, she was yet determined to give him no cause of complaint, she presently again lays aside her sorrowful looks, and, drawing her chair confidentially near to her mother's, makes some remark of an evidently comic nature upon the company into her ear.

They sloop, their heads together—what friends they always were, she and her mother!—and again the blue twinkle comes into her eyes; the dimple's little pitfall is dug anew in her white cheek. Was there ever such an April creature? Mr. Le Marchant appears to take no part in the jokes; he goes on eating his dinner silently, and his back, which is turned toward Burgoyne, looks morose.

How is it that Elizabeth's roving eye has not yet hit upon himself? He sees presently that the cause lies in the fact of her look alighting more upon old and known objects of entertainment, than going in search of new ones. But it must sooner or later embrace him in its range. The fond fat widow beside him must surely be one of her favorites, and, in point of fact, as he feverishly watches to see the inevitable moment of recognition arrive, he perceives that Miss Le Marchant and her mother are delightedly—though not so openly as to be patient to the rest of the room—observing her. And then comes the expected careless glance at him, and the no less expected transformation. Her elbows have been carelessly resting on the table, and she has just been pressing her laughing lips against her tightly-joined hands to conceal their merriment. In an instant he sees the right hand go out in a silent desperate clutch at her mother's, and the next second he knows that she also has seen him. They both stare helplessly at him—at least, the one at him, and the other beyond him! How well he remembers that look of hers over his shoulder in search of someone else. But yet it is not the old look, for that was one of hope and real expectation. Is there any hope or expectation lurking even under the white dread of this one? His jealous heart is afraid quite to say no to this question, and yet an indisputable look of relief spreads over her face as she ascertains that he is alone. She even collects herself enough to give him a tiny inclination of the head—an example followed by her mother; but they are, in both cases, so tiny as to be unperceived, save by the person to whom they are addressed.

He would not have been offended by the minuteness of their salutations, even had he not divined that it was dictated by a desire—however futile—to conceal the fact of his presence from their companion. His heart goes out in all the profundity of his former pity towards them, as he sees how entirely that one glance at him (for she does not look again in his direction) has dried the fountain of Elizabeth's poor little jests; of bow white and grave and frightened, and even shrunk, his mere presence has made her. Now that they have detected him, good breeding, and even humanity, forbid his continuing any longer his watch upon them. The better to set them at ease he turns the back of his head towards their table, and compels the reluctant widow to relinquish her invalid booty for fully ten minutes in his favor.

Perhaps when Elizabeth can see only the back of his head she may resume her jokes. But all the same he knows that, for her, there will be no more mirth today.

"That is what they always do!" cries a voice on Burgoyne's left hand—the voice of his other neighbor, who begins to think that his attention has been usurped long enough by her plump rival. "That is what they always do—come long after dinner has begun, and go out long before it is ended. Such swagger!"

There is a tinge of exasperation in both words and voice, nor is the cause far to seek.

The table in the window is again empty. In the meantime the "swaggernig" Elizabeth is clinging tremblingly about her mother's neck in the privacy of their own little salon. The absence of the husband and father for the moment in the smoking-room has removed the irksome restraint from both the poor women.

"Did you see him?" asks Elizabeth breathlessly, as soon as the door is safely closed upon them, flinging herself down upon her knees beside Mrs. Le Marchant, who has sunk into a chair, and covering close to her as if for shelter. "What is he doing here? Why has he come? When first I caught sight of him I thought that of course—"

She breaks off, sobbing; "and when I saw that he was alone I was relieved; but I was disappointed too! Oh, I must be a fool—a bad fool—but I was disappointed! Oh, mammy! mammy! how seeing him again brings it all back!"

"Do not cry, dear child! do not cry!" answers Mrs. Le Marchant apprehensively; though the voice in which she gives the exhortation is shaking too. "Your father will be in directly; and you know how angry—"

"I will not! I will not!" cries Elizabeth, trying, with her usual extreme docility, to swallow her tears; "and I do not show it much when I have been crying; my eyes do not mind it as much as most people's; I suppose—with a smile—because they are so used to it!"

"Perhaps he will not stay long," murmurs the mother, dropping a fond rueful kiss on the prone blonde head that lies on her knees; "perhaps if we are careful we may avoid speaking to him."

"But I must speak to him!" breaks in the girl, lifting her head, and panting "I must ask him; I must find out why we do not even know whether Willy is dead or alive!"

"He is not dead," rejoins the elder woman, with melancholy common-sense; "if he had been, we should have seen it in the papers; and, besides, why should he be? Grief does not kill; nobody, Elizabeth, is better able to attest that than you and I."

Elizabeth is now sitting on the floor, her hands clasped round her knees.

"He is aged," she says presently; and this time it is evident that the pronoun refers to Burgoyne.

Mrs. Le Marchant assents. "He must have cared more for that poor creature than we give him credit for. Get up, darling; dry your eyes, and sit with your back to the light; here comes your father!"

(To be continued).

DON'T TAKE THEM OFF.

Don't take them off. Don't shed them now. Cling to them for a while longer. We believe that we know just how you feel, and that we can enter into your feelings. But don't take them off at present whatever you do.

AT INTERVALS.

Pat—Is Casey th' boss in his own house?
Mike—Only when he's drinkin' in Dolin's saloon.

HAD HELPED ONCE.

"Oh, Mr. Milyuns!"
"Well?"
"Do you think a rich man can go through the eye of a needle?"
"I don't know, my boy. However, I will say that my lawyers have dragged me through some very small loopholes."

SAVES MONEY.

"Do you find it more economical to do your own cooking?"
"Oh, yes. My husband doesn't eat half so much as he used to!"

OUR FRIENDS THE ENEMY

GREAT BRITAIN IS A GENEROUS CONQUEROR.

General Botha Led the Boers, But Is Now Premier of the Transvaal.

When peace was signed at Vereeniging in the late spring of 1902, how many people would have prophesied that General Botha, the most daring, skillful and stubborn of our foes, would in less than five years have become the first Premier of the Transvaal? Yet so it is; and this is ever Great Britain's way with her conquered enemies, says a London paper. The terms of peace were generous enough. As Mr. Chamberlain said in his interview with Botha, Delarey and De Wet at the Colonial Office, "There is no parallel in history for conditions so generous being granted by a victorious belligerent to his opponents."

BOERS WERE WELCOMED.

Most people can remember the enthusiastic reception given by the English people to the Boer generals on their visit. Received at Southampton by Lords Roberts and Kitchener, with Mr. Chamberlain, they were invited on board the King's yacht at Cowes, and their greeting in London was cordial to an astonishing degree. Cheering crowds pursued them everywhere, and their appearance in a place of amusement was the signal for a wild outburst of applause.

Nothing like this had been seen in the British Isles since the visit of Cetewayo in 1882. Only three years before, the British had been compelled to wage a sanguinary war against the arrogant Zulu king. Thousands of gallant Britons fell; beneath the assaigis of the savage warriors of Cetewayo, and over four millions of money was spent in the brief campaign. The Prince Imperial of France was slain fighting on England's side.

Yet the Zulu monarch no sooner showed his dusky face on British soil than he became a popular hero. Quarters were taken for him and his attendants in Melbury Road, Kensington, where the artists live.

SHOWN THE SIGHTS.

He was shown all the sights of the metropolis, and invitations literally hailed upon him from society people. Cetewayo was the great sensation of the hour.

Arabi Pasha was the cause of one of England's biggest "little" wars, but to British clemency he owed his life itself, not to mention an existence of leisureed ease on a comfortable allowance in one of the beauty spots of the earth. After the tiny British army had scattered the Arabists at Tel-el-Kebir and Kassassin, crossed the desert at night and entered Cairo in triumph, the rebel was brought to trial. He pleaded guilty to some vague charges of rebellion, and was sentenced to death. The sentence was immediately commuted, and the Egyptian Ministry were so disgusted that they resigned in a body. Arabi was exiled to Ceylon, whither he was no doubt followed by the blessings of the sorrowing people in England who had lost dear ones under the rifles of the rebel's deluded followers.

ALWAYS THE WAY.

This has always been the way of the British with a beaten foe, ever since Marshal Soult, on his visit to London, was acclaimed by the people wherever he went. At a Guildhall banquet Wellington and his ancient foe were toasted together, and it is said that the biggest round of applause went to our old enemy of the Peninsula.

When Cronje surrendered at Paardeberg, it will be remembered that he was given the only bottle of champagne in camp. That was symbolic. Great Britain always hands bottles of champagne to her beaten enemies.

CLOSE MOUTHED.

Mother: "I told you I'd spank you if you ever stuck your tongue out again."
Willie: "I was just airing it, mother."

LONDON'S WATER SUPPLY

SOME REMARKABLE FACTS AND FIGURES.

The Londoners Have Every Inducement to be a Clean and Temperate People.

If a Londoner is not a perfect model of temperance and cleanliness it is certainly not through lack of facilities as the figures just published in the annual report of the Metropolitan Water Board abundantly testify. Indeed, these statistics are so amazing that they well make the least impressionable of men gasp with astonishment. Here are a few startling figures suggested by them—

Raze every building in London within the circle of the four-mile radius from Charing Cross, and convert this vast area, on which all the world's inhabitants could find standing room, into a reservoir, of over fifty square miles, to a depth of 7 feet 2 inches, we shall have the quantity of water supplied to Greater London last year.

COLOSSAL RESERVOIR.

Similarly, if we throw Hyde and Regent Parks, with Primrose Hill, into one enormous park, and on this base of 850 acres construct a gigantic cistern, 345 feet high, London's twelve months' water supply will fill it to the brim; and it will be so deep that if we sink the London Monument upright in it, and on the top of the Monument pose Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square, the great admiral's feet will be less than a yard above the water. In this colossal reservoir the warships of all the world's navies could ride at anchor.

If we now (and the work is easy enough in fancy) dig a canal 100 feet wide across Europe, from the extreme north to the south, and empty our cistern into it, we shall find that the water in our canal, which is 2,400 miles long, will rise to a uniform height of 10 feet; and every drop of it is consumed by the inhabitants of Greater London within a year; while each man, woman and child living to-day throughout the world could draw fifty gallons from it without exhausting its contents.

16 TONS OF GOLD.

The mains through which these hundreds of millions of tons of water flow for the use of London are almost long enough to stretch a quarter of the way round the earth at the Equator, while it would take a locomotive, travelling at the rate of sixty miles an hour, more than four days and nights to race from one end of them to the other. The people to whom this water is supplied outnumber the combined populations of Scotland and Wales, with the county of Worcester thrown in; and the average supply to each individual would allow him thirty-three gallons for his daily bath the year round, his full year's supply making a heavy burden for forty horses.

And to crown these startling pictures, the sum paid annually by Londoners for their water supply represents over sixteen tons of gold, a weight of the precious metal which 300 stout porters would not find it an easy matter to walk off with.

HE WONDERED.

Jock had been having a night out, and had done himself exceedingly well. After sundry rests on the way, he reached home in the sma' hours of the morning. Crawling carefully upstairs on hands and knees, he was accosted by the wife of his bosom, "Is that you, Jock?"

"Aye!" said Jock. Then, after a pause, "Wis you expecting onybody else?"

TOO MUCH TO EXPECT.

"You must get up and investigate, John," she repeated. "I heard that noise again, and I'm convinced it's a burglar!"

"Huh!" he grunted sleepily; "you don't expect me to have the courage of your convictions, do you?"

