

DELAYED AT LAS PALMAS.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

I was on my way home from South Africa, where I had been living for nearly three years, looking after the affairs of the mercantile firm of which I am a junior partner. Things had been getting into a muddle out there, and it was suspected that our manager was acting—not exactly on the square. It was desirable, therefore, that some responsible person should go out to investigate, and if needful, remain for some time, until that branch of our business was put on a more satisfactory basis. I had been admitted to the counting-house some years before by my uncle, who was one of the principal partners; and if I proved myself to be possessed of sufficient energy and business capacity, it was understood that I might eventually be taken into the firm.

"Robert," said my uncle, "if you are worth your salt, this should be a capital opening for you. It rests entirely with yourself whether you succeed or not."

I had no special claims on my mother's brother, who, though a bachelor, had many other relations; and since I could bring no capital into the business, I felt that the offer was a very generous one. I had the ball at my foot, so to speak, and resolved to exert myself to the utmost; and am proud to say that during the four years I was in the employment of the firm both partners were convinced that I was certainly worth my salt. As yet, however, there had been nothing further said as to my promised share in the business. Then came the proposal that I should go to Africa; and it was intimated to me that if I was successful in the management of that difficult and delicate piece of work, I should at once receive a junior partnership in the firm.

I was rather glad on another account to leave London at that particular time, for I had met with a bitter disappointment, of which I did not care to speak, and of which no one knew but myself. It was nearly a year before that I had met Louie Moir, whose sweet face and lovely dark-blue eyes haunted my dreams both by day and night. In short, I fell deeply in love with her. We met pretty frequently; played tennis together, danced together; and though I had not spoken of love, I had some reason to believe that she knew and understood my feeling; and I cherished the blissful hope that I was not indifferent to her. I had hitherto refrained from speaking, because, though my salary was pretty good, it was hardly sufficient to entitle me to ask Miss Moir to share it. Of course my prospects were good; but I thought it would be better to have an assured position before asking Mr. Moir for the hand of his daughter.

One evening in June I went to a fete at the Botanic Gardens, where I expected to meet Louie. Presently I saw her with her mother bending over a stand of orchids. A gentleman whom I did not know accompanied them, and was gazing through a pair of eye-glasses at the elegantly dressed crowds passing and repassing. I walked up and shook hands, prepared to saunter round with them as usual, to admire the exquisite groups of plants and flowers. I observed that Louie was pale and weary-looking, but this might have been due only to the heat. The other fellow—who was introduced to me as Mr. Bremner—kept close beside her. As we could not walk about four abreast, I was compelled to drop behind with Mrs. Moir. She had hitherto treated me with cordiality and kindness; but to-day there was a marked change in her manner. She was cold and distant, and when she encountered a group of acquaintances, she joined them, and coolly bowed me off. I tried but ineffectually, to get a few words with Louie, and hung about the gardens, perplexed and miserable, till I saw the Moirs leave, and I departed immediately afterwards. I spent a sleepless night; but I resolved that next day I would call and explain my position to Mr. or Mrs. Moir, and ask their consent to speak to Louie.

As luck would have it, that very morning my uncle called me into his private room and told me they had just received advices from the Cape which made it imperative that somebody who could be trusted should go out without delay.

"Now, I know that we can trust you, Robert," he said; "and if you have no objection, we should wish you to start next week."

I expressed my perfect willingness to go at the time indicated; and some further conversation ensued, when I heard of something to my own advantage.

I was therefore in capital spirits when I started to make my call at Mrs. Moir's, for the promise I had just received from the firm was what I had been waiting for, and I could now approach Louie's parents with more confidence. I found only Mrs. Moir in the drawing-room. Miss Moir I was told was out. After a few commonplace remarks, I was considering how I could best introduce the subject nearest my heart, when the lady startled me by saying in her blandest voice: "I think, Mr. Grahame, that you as a friend will be pleased to hear of anything which concerns the happiness of our dear Louisa. She is likely to be married before very long to Mr. Bremner, the gentleman who was with us last night."

My heart almost stood still with surprise and dismay. I could not speak for a minute; but Mrs. Moir talked serenely on about her dear child's prospects and Mr. Bremner's excellent qualities.

I managed at last to stammer out a few words of congratulation, but of course said nothing of my own blighted hopes. I mentioned that I was going to South Africa; and she made some inquiries about my purpose in going, the time when I proposed to start, and so on. She said she hoped I would call to see them again before leaving. I replied that I had a great deal to do, and might not have time and she did not press me.

A week later I sailed without having seen Louie, for I could not bear to meet her under such altered circumstances. I was glad to turn my back on England—glad that I had the opportunity of seeking oblivion among new scenes and strange faces.

In due time I reached my new field of labour, and found that the affairs of the firm were even in a worse condition than had been feared. I set to work, however, with zeal and energy, and by-and-by was able to bring things into better order. I was highly complimented by both partners, and received the promised reward. I might have returned to England in little more than a year, had I cared to do so; but there was no object in returning, and as my presence was desired out there, I willingly agreed to

remain some time longer. At length my health began to break down; and I was compelled to take passage by the *Coomassie*, and return home.

When out at sea, we encountered a violent storm; and some of the machinery was damaged, and the ship was so much disabled that we were obliged to put in to the nearest port for repairs, which happened to be Las Palmas in the Grand Canary. We were likely to be detained there for several days, and some of the passengers grumbled a good deal at being delayed; but I was quite indifferent. The island was pretty, the temperature mild and genial after the great heat I had been accustomed to; and I thought a short sojourn there would be rather pleasant. I took up my quarters at Quiney's Hotel, where I found between thirty and forty guests were already located.

"This seems rather a jolly sort of a place," said Dick Preston, a fellow-voyager with whom I had become rather intimate on board ship. "I have just been having a look round, and there is an uncommon nice garden, with a lot of jolly comfortable-looking chairs, where one could lounge about and smoke for hours; and I saw a couple of rather nice-looking girls sitting in a place all covered with vines and creepers. I wish somebody would introduce me. I should like to make their acquaintance. I am told that splendid cigars can be had for very little. So I think, old man, that we shall be able to put in a few days here pretty decently."

"Not a bad-looking collection," said Preston in a low voice as we seated ourselves at the dinner table some hours later. His remark referred to the company, who were dropping in in little groups of twos and threes and seating themselves at the table with nods and smiles to other groups, or friendly remarks to those near them.

"Yes," I said; "a very pleasant-looking party, and apparently very friendly with each other—quite *en famille*."

As I spoke, I caught sight of a figure on the opposite side of the table, a little farther down—a slight girlish figure; and as I looked at her, a pair of lovely blue eyes met mine for an instant and then were bent on her plate. I observed her face flush and turn pale, and the hands which unfolded her *serviette* trembled. My own heart was beating painfully, and I answered Preston's remarks at random. Yes, it was she—it was Louie. I had no right to think of her by that name. She must be Mrs. Bremner now; and oh, wretched fool that I was, that sudden meeting had revealed to me the fact that I loved her as devotedly as ever! She was accompanied by an old lady whom I did not know; but I heard her say, "Yes, aunt," in reply to a question addressed to her by her companion. Two seats on the other side of her were still vacant. Would her husband be with her? I wondered. Presently a young lady and gentleman came in and took the vacant seats, evidently only acquaintances. No—Mr. Bremner was not there.

I hardly understood what was going on around me. A gentleman sitting next me was asking questions about the accident to the steamer, and I scarcely think my replies were very coherent, for I was straining my ears to listen to the tones of a sweet low voice which thrilled through every nerve of my being.

"I say, look here, Grahame. Are you well enough?" said my friend, turning to me. "You look a bit shabby, don't you know?"

"Oh, I am all right," I replied. "You don't look it. But I suppose you have not quite recovered from your illness." "I did feel just a bit queer; but it is nothing. I shall be all right when I get outside. I shall just go and take a turn in the garden."

But Dick's politeness would not suffer him to let me go alone. It was useless for me to protest, although I would have given anything for a few minutes' solitude to collect myself. We paced the moonlit garden, fragrant with the scent of roses and orange flowers; and then, as dinner was finished and other visitors came out to smoke, I suggested that we might take a turn down to the town. As we emerged from the hotel we were assailed by a collection of ragged urchins, who held out their hands clamouring for *cuartitos*.

"Get along, you troublesome little rascals," cried Preston, accompanying his, to them, unintelligible remark by gestures which were sufficiently expressive. He succeeded in driving them all off except two, who persisted in constituting themselves our escort. Wherever we went they went; if we stopped, they squatted on the ground till we were ready to move on again, when they instantly jumped up and resumed their march. But the funniest thing was that the little ragamuffins had produced from the recesses of their tattered garments the materials for a cigarette, which they deftly rolled and smoked after the orthodox fashion.

The diversion created by the cigar-smoking vagrants had given me time to recover my composure, and I was now able to express some degree of interest in what was going on around me.

"Look here," cried Dick, laughing. "Here is love-making under difficulties. Look at this fellow, craning his neck up to a first-floor window, and the girl leaning out talking to him, or listening to his amorous speeches; and, by Jove! if there is not an old lady, the mother very likely, sitting inside and listening to every word. Poor beggar! It is hard lines for him. Great Scott! just imagine making soft speeches in the hearing of a prospective mother-in-law!"

It was impossible to help laughing. "What a lot of nonsense I have talked to the girls in my day," he went on reflectively; "but if I had to spon on under these circumstances, I should very soon dry up." "Yes; I should think it would be an effectual barrier to flirtation. A man must surely be in downright earnest when he will stand making a public exhibition of himself like that," I observed.

"Why, here is another at the same old game," cried Preston as we turned a corner and almost ran into another fellow, whose neck was bent back to a most uncomfortable-looking angle, and who had no eyes for anything but the dark-eyed beauty who was bending down to him from the window. "When I write a book on 'The Canaries,'" said Dick, as he took the cigar from his lips, sending the smoke curling upwards, and regarding the red spark at the end meditatively—"when I write a book on these sunny and salubrious islands, I shall not recommend for universal imitation the manners and customs of the natives in the matter of courtship."

Next morning about seven o'clock the attendant knocked at my door, bringing me a cup of tea, in accordance with the usual

custom. He had scarcely left the room when Preston entered fully dressed. "What! not up yet?" he cried; "and sipping your tea like an old lady?"

"Have they not given you a cup?" I asked.

"No; thank you. A glass 'bitter' is more in my line, only it is so confoundedly dear in these happy climes. A few oranges are not a bad substitute, however.—But come; are you not going to get up?"

"What's the good?" I said lazily. "What are you going to do?"

"Oh, just have a look round."

"Well, you can tell me about it when you come back," I said. "I am not going to stir for a good hour yet; the days are quite long enough as it is."

"Just as you like," he said. "I'll leave you to your repose; and I heard his cheery whistle as he crossed the square, and I was left to my gloomy reflections."

During my residence abroad I had as a matter of course been in constant communication with my relatives and friends at home; but it so happened that nobody had ever mentioned Miss Moir's name in any of their letters. Indeed, there was no reason why they should, for the fact of my love for her was a secret I had kept to myself; and my attentions to her had not been so conspicuous as to excite general remark. From the hour when I had left her mother's presence, nearly three years ago, I had never heard one word about her, nor did I know if her marriage had taken place. I had scanned the columns of the *Times* diligently, but without meeting what I sought, yet dreaded to find. It did not follow that she was not married, though I had seen no announcement of the event. Only, of course, it was uncertain; and I was at a loss how to address her, for I had made up my mind to speak to her. But the shock of surprise had deprived me for the time of my self-control. I lay and ruminated, unconscious of the flight of time, till I heard Dick's voice talking to some one outside. I sprang up, and hastily proceeded to dress, and in a few minutes my friend entered.

"It's a glorious morning," he said putting down his hat and mopping his forehead; "only rather warm. I have been down to Elder & Dempsters's office, and they tell me it is doubtful if the *Coomassie* will be ready to put to sea again for four or five days. Desperately annoying; but what can't be helped must be put up with."

"Spoken like a philosopher," I remarked "and after all it might have been worse. We might have been landed somewhere where there was nothing but birds' eggs and crabs to live on."

"True enough.—But do you know I met with such a nice-looking girl, of the fair-haired, blue-eyed sort. Perhaps you may have noticed her last night. She was sitting at the other side of the table beside an elderly lady, who turns out to be a spinster aunt. I made the acquaintance of the old lady this morning. Her name is Miss Brown and she has informed me that she came to the islands to take charge of her niece, who has been in rather delicate health. They have been staying at Tenerife for three weeks, and came here ten days ago. Her niece came out to meet her while we were talking, and she was good enough to introduce me. I intend to cultivate the niece. She is as pretty a girl as I have seen for many a day. Her name is Miss Moir."

"What did you say her name was?" I asked, for my senses were all tingling at the sudden assurance that she was still Louie Moir.

"Moir—Miss Moir. The aunt's name is Brown."

As we came down to breakfast we met the two ladies coming in from the garden. "How do you do, Miss Moir?" I said. "I hope you have not forgotten me?"

"How do you do, Mr. Grahame?" she replied coldly.

Preston stared at me, but did not speak. "You have been some days on the island, my friend here tells me," I remarked.

"We came about ten days ago," she answered in the same cold constrained voice. "May I introduce you to my aunt?" and she performed the brief ceremony, and immediately turned to Preston and chatted to him freely, leaving me to converse with Miss Brown, with whom I exchanged a few remarks as we entered the breakfast room.

"Grahame, you sinner," said Preston as he took his place beside me at the table, "you never told me that you knew Miss Moir."

"I was not sure it was her you meant."

"You must try a better lie than that if you want it to pass for truth," said he dryly. "Well," I replied, "I understood she was married; but I was not sure."

"Hum," he said, looking at me sharply; "you saw her last night. I wonder if her presence had anything to do with your loss of appetite? I believe you were spoons on her at one time, and that she threw you over."

"Don't! there's a good fellow," I said; "I will tell you about it afterwards."

"All right," he answered with a slight nod, glancing across at Miss Moir, who was talking to the gentleman on the farther side of her, and never looking in our direction.

When the meal was over, she rose and left the room, going straight upstairs. I hung about in the hope of seeing her again, for I was anxious to find out if possible how it really stood with her, and if she was cognisant of the information her mother had imparted to me. It could hardly be that Mrs. Moir had intentionally deceived me, yet, if Louie knew that I had been told that she was about to be married, she could not be surprised that I did not see her again. But if she did not know, I reflected with bitterness and despair that my abrupt departure, without one word of farewell, must have wounded her feelings and her pride terribly, if it was as I had once fondly hoped, and that she was not engaged to Mr. Bremner. If I could only get a chance to speak to her, all might be explained; but she seemed determined to avoid me.

She came down-stairs at last, and was passing me without a look or a sign of recognition. I stepped forward and would have spoken; but she only gave me a haughty bow as she passed out. At the luncheon table it was just the same—she persistently ignored me.

I wandered listlessly about the town, accompanied by Preston, who proved himself to be of a real good sort. He neither chafed me nor worried me with questions, though he saw plainly enough that something was wrong. He rattled on with the kindly intention of cheering me up, for I was about as lively as a mule at a funeral. We strolled into the Museum, and inspected the mummified remains of the dead and gone Gurnoches, the ancient inhab-

itants of the island; and some old red pottery and other articles, which may have been the work of the hands which have for ages been folded under these queer mummy ornaments. But we soon had enough of the ancient relics. Leaving the square where the Museum is situated, we walked along one of the narrow streets which have such a gloomy deserted appearance, with the windows all covered with green shutters. These shutters, which are called "postigos," have a habit of flying suddenly open when those within wish to get a view of what is passing in the street. We were rather startled by a "postigo" flying open just in front of us, and a dark-eyed damsel appeared at the window, the object of whose curiosity was evidently our humble selves. Preston courteously raised his hat to her and said, "Bonita muchacha," which was all the Spanish he knew. The "pretty girl" thus addressed withdrew her head with a coquettish toss and a smile, half closing the *postigo*; but we had not gone far when she peeped out again, when Preston smiled and waved his hand to her. He was quite proud of his knowledge of the language, and again murmured "Bonita muchacha" as we passed a girl with a white lama shawl arranged over her dark locks in the form of a mantilla. The young lady smiled, showing all her pearly teeth.

The natives are very tolerant of the eccentric vagaries of foreigners; nevertheless, I thought it just as well to warn my friend that the Spaniards are a jealous race, and that it might be wiser to deny himself the pleasure of making his usual remark as we passed a lady in a black lace mantilla whom we saw approaching. However, he had another chance, for, as we neared the lower part of the town, many hands were stretched out to us, begging for *cuartitos*. My friend selected one of the nicest-looking girls he could see, and bestowed a few coins upon her with his usual remark. She was delighted, and made some voluble expressions of thanks, which were of course meaningless to us, and then ran off, returning in about a minute with another girl, whose hand she held up, pointing to herself and then to the other girl, whom she called "Carina." We understood her to mean that since she had found favour in our sight, she desired us to extend our generosity to her friend also, which we could hardly refuse to do. Our liberality, however procured for us the undesirable distinction of a numerous escort all the way back to the hotel, all holding out their hands at intervals and keeping up an irregular chorus of "Cuarto, cuarto."

"Hang me if I won't learn some more Spanish this very night," said Preston; "but it shall be the equivalent for some strong phrases that shall send these rascals scattering."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

AMONG THE ANIMALS.

Cats continue growing until they are a year old.

San Francisco has a cat that is a confirmed toper. He drinks whiskey in preference to water.

Ground squirrels scattered wheat over the country in Lane county, Kansas, and now it is coming up on the raw prairie.

At a lumber camp near Cheboygan, Mich., a deer was killed by the boys with rocks in the absence of firearms.

A baby sperm whale about fifteen feet long was shot last week by the surfmen of life-saving station, Stone harbor, near Avalon, N. J.

A black fish whale, fourteen and one-half feet long, was washed ashore on Monday at Fathom beach, near Townsend's inlet. It is to be sent to the Smithsonian institution.

Robert Shaw, of Snow's Falls, Me., went to sleep in a field the other day, and when he awoke he was minus a good pair of trousers. Field mice, which swarm in Oxford county, had gnawed the garment into shreds and carried it away.

A friendship between a rat and a dog is the latest curious story of animal attachments. The dog, which lives in Northamptonshire, England, is a sworn enemy of all rats except one, and has made a good record for riding his master's premises of them.

A German journalist has brought electricity into use for taming wild beasts and preparing them for the circus. The invention consists of a wire whip and a metal footplate which extends nearly over the floor of the cage, both being connected with a powerful battery. It is possible by this contrivance to give the animal with every stroke a sharp electric shock. A few shocks are said to be enough to tame any beast. The electricity can be thrown off at any time, so that the whip becomes nothing more than ordinary.

From Favorite Authors.

Hope is a lover's staff.
Love is full of jealousy.
Care is an enemy to life.
Better a witty fool than a foolish wit.
Time is the nurse and breeder of all good.
In the sweetest bud the eating canker dwells.
Unheeded vows may heedfully be broken.
Love sought is good, but given unsought better.
Thanks often are turns shuffled off with such uncurrent pay.
Oh time most curst! 'mongst all foes that a friend should be the worst.

Experience is by industry achieved, and perfected by the swift course of time.
For women are as roses whose fair flower, being once displayed, doth fall that very hour.

Cease to lament for that thou canst not help and study help for that thou lamentest.

Where there is no great love in the beginning, heaven may decrease it upon better acquaintance.

Were man but constant he were perfect; that one error fills him with faults, makes him run through all sins.

In love the heavens themselves do guide the state,
Money buys lands, wives are sold by fate.

To be generous, guiltless and of free disposition, is to take those things for bird bolts that you deem cannon bullets.

There is no harm in being respected in this world, as I have found out; and if you don't brag a little for yourself, depend on it there is no person of your acquaintance who will tell the world of your merits and take the trouble off your hands.

THE HORROR OF KILLING A MAN.

A Soldier Tells of One of the Things Required in the Line of Duty.

They do not call it murder when men meet to slaughter each other in battle. They simply report so many dead, wounded and missing. When you fire into the smoke concealing the other battle line you fire in hopes to kill or wound. It is your duty. Battles cannot be won without killing. You load and fire—load and fire—move to the right or left—advance or retreat, and when the battle is over you may have fired fifty rounds and yet you have not had a near sight of the enemy; have simply fired at him, and you cannot vouch that a single one of your bullets has found a living target.

Here is a brigade of us in battle line across an old meadow; our right and left join other brigades. We have thrown down the rail fence, gathered logs and brush and sod, and erected a breastwork. It is only a slight one, but enough to shelter us while lying down. A division of the enemy breaks cover half a mile away and comes marching down upon us. The field pieces behind us open on their solid columns, but they are not checked. Under the smoke we can see the work of the shells, but they cannot halt that mass of men. The grape and canister do awful execution, but there should be a dozen instead of six.

They are going to charge us. The guns cannot prevent that. Orders run along the line and we are waiting until every bullet, no matter if fired by a soldier with his eyes shut, must hit a foe. I select my man while he is yet beyond range. I have eyes for no other. He is a tall, soldierly fellow, wearing the stripes of a sergeant. As he comes nearer I imagine that he is looking as fixedly at me as I am at him. I admire his coolness. He looks neither to the right nor to the left. The man on his right is hit and goes down, but he does not falter.

I am going to kill that man! I have a rest for my gun on the breastwork and when the order comes to fire I cannot miss him. He is living his last moments on earth! We are calmly waiting until our volley shall prove a veritable flame of death. Now they close up the gaps, and we can hear the voices of their officers as they make ready to charge. My man is still opposite me. He still seems to be looking at me and no one else. I know the word is coming in a few seconds more and I aim at his chest. I could almost be sure of hitting him with a stone when we get the word to fire. There is a billow of flame—a billow of smoke—a fierce crash, and 4,000 bullets are fired into that compact mass of advancing men. Not one volley alone, though that worked horrible destruction, but another and another, until there was no longer a living man to fire at.

The smoke drifts slowly away—men cheer and yell—we can see the meadow beyond heaped with dead and dying men. We advance our line. As we go forward I look for my victim. He is lying on his back, eyes half shut and fingers clutching at the grass. He gasps, draws up his legs and straightens them out again, and is dead as I pass on. I have killed my man! My bullet alone struck him, tearing that ghastly wound in his breast, and I am entitled to all the honor. Do I swing my cap and cheer? Do I point him out and expect to be congratulated? No! I have no cheers. I feel no elation. I feel that I murdered him, war or no war, and that his agonized face will haunt me through all the years of my life.

BURIED ALIVE.

Strange Power of Indians to Simulate Death.

The powers of the fakirs, or faqueers, of India and Persia of simulating death are marvellous and almost incredible. Several sects in these countries regard the art of apparent death as a part of their religious ritual, and practice assiduously. In their ancient books it is described as *puranayam* or stopping the death. Many cases in which these Indian fakirs have allowed themselves to be buried alive for long periods have been verified by British officials in India, and attested by evidence which dispels all doubt of their truth.

This impersonation of death continues for as long as six, and even ten months. The way the fakirs go to work to produce this condition is to have the little ligature under the tongue cut, whereby they are enabled to stretch this organ out to a great length. Then they turn it back, inserting the end in the throat, and closing up at the same time the inner nasal apertures. The external apertures of the nose and ears are closed with wax and the eyes covered to exclude the light.

Long preliminary practice is, however, needed in holding the breath and a long course of fasting before burial. The fakir then sinks into a condition resembling death and the body is wrapped in linen placed in a box and buried. When the box is taken up at the expiration of the long-continued, death-like sleep, and opened, the fakir is found cold and stiff; no pulsation can be felt; the heart, the wrists, the temples are stiff; the body is not cold as a corpse would be, but is colder than that of other living men, except over the seat of the brain. All the secretions are fully stopped; the nails, hair, and beard have ceased growth. After being resuscitated the fakir feels great dizziness, and for a few hours can not stand up without support, but gradually he recovers strength and enjoys amazingly the wonder he has excited.

Owned by the Crown.

In China all the land belongs to the State, and a trifling sum per acre, never altered through long centuries, is paid for it by the occupier as rent. The soil in China is so rich that the holdings are generally very small, and it has been estimated that a square mile is capable of supporting 3,840 persons. In this country, nominally, owners of the land hold it of the Crown.

Although, however, as admitted by Lord Bramwell in letters to the *Times* this is technically true, yet it is most misleading, as owners of a fee simple estate in land in this country have for all practical purposes an absolute ownership in the land they hold. If an owner dies intestate without heirs his land reverts to the Crown, though the owner had the power of disposal had he so wished. Under similar circumstances a man's personal property, as well as his land, if he dies intestate with no next of kin, goes to the Crown.

Poets of England are free from arrest for debt, as being the queen's hereditary counsellors.