

# SIR GUY'S WARD.

A THRILLING STORY OF LOVE AND ADVENTURE.

## CHAPTER II.

"Be not over-exquisite  
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils."  
—MILTON.

Through the open windows the merry-making sun is again dancing, its bright rays making still more dazzling the glory of the smoky table-cloth. The great silver urn is hissing and fighting with all around, as though warning his mistress to use him, as he is not one to be trifled with; while at the lower end of the table, exactly opposite Sir Guy's plate, lies the post upon a high salver, ready to the master's hand, as has been the custom at Chetwoode for generations.

Evidently the family is late for breakfast. As a rule the Chetwoode family always is late for breakfast,—just sufficiently so to make them certain everything will be quite ready by the time they get down.

Ten o'clock rings out mysteriously from the handsome marble clock upon the chimney-piece, and precisely three minutes afterwards the door is thrown open to admit an elderly lady, tall and fair, and still beautiful.

She walks with a slow, rather stately step, and in spite of her years carries her head high. Upon this head rests the faintest of morning caps, all white and delicate ribbon-bows, that match in color her trailing gown. Her hands, small and tapering, are covered with rings; otherwise she wears no adornment of any kind. There is a benignity about her that goes straight to all hearts. Children adore her, dogs fawn upon her, young men bring to her all their troubles,—the evil behavior of their tailors and their mistresses are alike laid before her.

Now, finding the room empty, and knowing it to be four minutes after ten, she says to herself, "The first!" with a little surprise and much pardonable pride, and seats herself with something of an air before the militant urn. When we are old it is so sweet to us to be younger than the young, when we are young it is so sweet to us to be just vice versa. Oh, foolish youth!

An elderly butler, who has evidently seen service (in every sense of the word), and who is actually steeped in respectability up to his port-wine nose, hovers around the breakfast, adjusting this dish affectionately, and straightening that, until all is carefully arrayed, when he leaves the room with a sigh of satisfaction.

Perhaps Lady Chetwoode's self-admiration would have grown beyond bounds, but that just at this instance voices in the hall distract her thoughts. The sounds make her face brighten and bring a smile to her lips.

"The boys" are coming. She draws the tea-cups a little nearer to her and makes a gentle fuss over the spoons. A light laugh echoes through the hall; it is answered, and then the door once more opens, and her two sons enter, Cyril, being the youngest, naturally comes first.

On seeing his mother he is pleased to make a gesture indicative of the most exaggerated surprise.

"Now, who could have anticipated it?" he says. "Her gracious majesty already assembled, while her faithful subjects—Well," with a sudden change of tone, "for my part I call it downright shabby of people to scramble downstairs before other people merely for the sake of putting them to the blush."

"Lazy boy! no wonder you are ashamed of yourself when you look at the clock," says Lady Chetwoode, smiling fondly as she returns his greeting.

"Ashamed! Pray do not misunderstand me. I have arrived at my twenty-sixth year without ever having mastered the meaning of the word. I flatter myself I am a degree beyond that."

"Last night's headache quite gone, mother?" asks Sir Guy, bending over her chair to kiss her; an act he performs tenderly, and as though the doing of it is sweet to him.

"Quite, my dear," replies she; and there is perhaps the faintest, the very faintest, accession of warmth in her tone, an almost imperceptible increase of kindness in her smile as she speaks to her eldest son.

"That's right," says he, patting her gently on the shoulder; after which he goes over to his own seat and takes up the letters lying before him.

"Positively I never thought of the post," says Lady Chetwoode. "And here I have been for quite five minutes with nothing to do. I might as well have been digesting my correspondence, if there is any for me."

"One letter for you; five, as usual, for Cyril; one for me," says Guy. "All Cyril's." Examining them critically at arm's length. "Written evidently by very young women."

"Yes, they will write to me," returns Cyril, receiving them with a sigh, and regarding them in turn with careful scrutiny. "It is nothing short of disgusting," he says, presently, singling out one of the letters with his first finger. "This is the fourth she has written to me this week, and as yet it is only Friday. I won't be able to hear it much longer; I shall certainly make a stand one of these days."

"I would if I were you," says Guy, laughing.

"I have just heard from Lillian Chesney," suddenly says Lady Chetwoode, speaking as though a bombshell had fallen in their midst. "And she is really coming here next week!"

"No!" says Guy, without meaning contradiction, which at the moment is far from him.

"Yes," replies his mother, somewhat faintly.

"Another?" murmurs Cyril, weakly,—he being the only one of the three who finds any amusement in the situation. "Well, at all events, she can't write to me, as we shall be under the same roof; and I shall dismiss the very first servant who brings me a billet-doux. How pleased you do look, Guy! And no wonder,—a whole live ward, and all to yourself. Lucky you!"

"It is hard on you, mother," says Guy, "but it can't be helped. When I promised I made sure her father would have lived for years to come."

"You did what was quite right," says Lady Chetwoode, who, if Guy were to commit a felony, would instantly say it was the only proper course to be pursued. "And it might have been much worse. Her mother's daughter cannot fail to be a lady in the best sense of the word."

"I am sure I hope she won't then," says Cyril, who all this time has been carefully laying in an uncommonly good breakfast.

"If there is one thing I hate, it's a young lady. Give me a girl."

"But my dear, what an extraordinary speech! Surely a girl may be a young lady."

"Yes, but unfortunately a young lady isn't always a girl. My experience of the former class is, that, no matter what their age, they are as old as the hills, and know considerably more than they ought to know."

"And just as we had got rid of one ward so successfully we must needs get another," says Lady Chetwoode, with a plaintive sigh. "Dear Mabel! she was certainly very sweet, and I was excessively fond of her, but I do hope this newcomer will not be so troublesome."

"I hope she will be as pleasant to talk to and as good to look at," says Cyril. "I confess I missed Mabel awfully. I never felt so down in my life as when she declared her intention of marrying Tom Steyne."

"I never dreamed the marriage would have turned out so well," says Lady Chetwoode, in a pensive tone. "She was such an unreasonably girl. But it is wonderful how well she gets on with a husband."

"Flirts always make the best wives. You forget that mother."

"And what a coquette she was! If Lillian Chesney resembles her, I don't know what I shall do. I am getting too old to take care of pretty girls."

"Perhaps Miss Chesney is ugly."

"I hope not, my dear," says Lady Chetwoode, with a strong shudder. "Let her be anything but that. I can't bear ugly women. No, her mother was lovely. I used to think—relapsing again into the plaintive style—" that one ward in a lifetime would be sufficient, and now we are going to have another."

"It is all Guy's fault," says Cyril. "He does get himself up so like the moral Pecksniff. There is a stern and dignified air about him would deceive a Machiavelli, and takes the hearts of parents by storm. Poor Mr. Chesney, who never even saw him, took him on hearsay as his only child's guardian. This solitary fact shows how grossly he has taken in society in general. He is every bit as immoral as the rest of us, only—"

"Immoral! My dear Cyril—" interrupts Lady Chetwoode, severely.

"Well, let us say frivolous. It has just the same meaning nowadays, and sounds nicer. But he looks a 'grave and reverend,' if ever there was one. Indeed, his whole appearance is enough to make any passer-by stop short and say, 'There goes a good young man.'"

"I'm sure I hope not," says Guy, half-offended, wholly disgusted. "I should be inclined to shoot any one who told me I was a 'good young man.' I have no desire to pose as such: my ambition does not lie that way."

"I don't believe you know what you are saying, either of you," says Lady Chetwoode, who, though accustomed to them, can never entirely help showing surprise at their sentiments and expressions every now and then. "I should be sorry to think everybody did not know you to be (as I do) good as gold."

"Thank you, Madam. One compliment from you is worth a dozen from any one else," says Cyril. "Any news, Guy? You seem absorbed. I cannot tell you how I admire any one who takes an undivided interest in his correspondences. Now I—gazing at his five unopened letters—" cannot get up the feeling to save my life. Guy—reproachfully—"don't you see your mother is dying of curiosity?"

"The letter is from Trant," says Guy, looking up from the closely-written sheet before him. "He wants to know if we will take a tenant for 'The Cottage.' A lady"—reading from the letter—"who has suffered much, and who wishes for quietness and retirement from the world."

"I should recommend a convent under the circumstances," says Cyril. "It would be the very thing for her. I don't see why she should come down here to suffer, and put us all in the dumps, and fill our woods with her sighs and moans."

"Is she young?" asks Lady Chetwoode, anxiously.

"No,—I don't know, I'm sure. I should think not, by Trant's way of mentioning her. 'An old friend' he says,—though, of course, that might mean anything."

"Married?"

"Yes. A widow."

"Dear me!" says Lady Chetwoode distastefully. "A most objectionable class of people. Always in the way, and—er—very designing, and that."

"If she is anything under forty she will want to marry Guy directly," Cyril put in, with an air of conviction. "If I were you, Guy, I should pause and consider before I introduced such a dangerous ingredient so near home. Just fancy, mother, seeing Guy married to a woman probably older than you!"

"Yes,—I shouldn't wonder," says Lady Chetwoode, nervously. "My dear child, do nothing in a hurry. Tell Colonel Trant you—do not care about letting 'The Cottage' just at present."

"Nonsense, mother! How can you be so absurd? Don't you think I may be considered proof against designing widows at twenty nine? Never mind Cyril's talk. I dare say he is afraid for himself. Indeed, the one thing that makes me hesitate about obliging Trant is the knowledge of how utterly incapable my poor brother is of taking care of himself."

"It is only too true," says Cyril, resignedly. "I feel sure if the widow is flouted by you she will revenge herself by marrying me. Guy, as you are strong, be merciful."

"After all, the poor creature may be quite old, and we are frightening ourselves unnecessarily," says Lady Chetwoode, in all sincerity.

"At this both Guy and Cyril laugh in spite of themselves.

"Are you really afraid, mother?" asks Cyril, fondly. "What a goose you are about your 'boys'! Are we always to be children in your eyes? Not that I wonder at your horror of widows. Even the immortal Weller shared your sentiments, and warned his 'Samivel' against them. Never mind, mother; console yourself. I for one swear by all that is lovely never to seek this particular 'widow' in marriage."

False oath!

"You see he seems to take it so much for granted, my giving 'The Cottage' and that, I hardly like to refuse."

"It would not be of the least consequence, if it was not situated actually in our own woods, and not two miles from the house. There lies the chief objection," says Lady Chetwoode.

"Yes. Yet what can I do? It is a pretty little place, and it seems a pity to let it sink into decay. This tenant may save it."

"It is a lovely spot. I often fancy, Guy," says his mother, somewhat sadly, "I should like to go and live there myself when you get a wife."

"Why should you say that?" says Guy, almost roughly. "If my taking a wife necessitates your quitting Chetwoode, I shall never burden myself with that luxury."

"You don't follow out the Mother's argument, dear boy," says Cyril, smoothly. "She means that when your sylvan widow claims you as her own she must leave, as of course the same roof could not cover both. But you are eating nothing, mother; Guy's foolish letter has taken away your appetite. Take some of this broiled ham!"

"No, thank you, dear, I don't care for—"

"Don't prejure yourself. You know you have had a positive passion for broiled ham from your cradle up. I remember all about it. I insist on your eating your breakfast, or you will have that beastly headache back again."

"My dear," says his mother, entreatingly, "do you think you could be silent for a few minutes while I discuss this subject with your brother?"

"I shan't speak again. After that severe snubbing consider me dumb. But do get it over quick," says Cyril. "I can't be a mute forever."

"I suppose I had better say yes," says Guy, doubtfully. "It looks rather like the dog in the manger, having 'The Cottage' idle and still refusing Trant's friend."

"That reminds me of a capital story," breaks in the irrepressible Cyril, gayly. "By Jove, what a sell it was! One fellow met another fellow—"

"I shall refuse, of course, if you wish it," Guy goes on, addressing his mother, and scoring to notice this brilliant interruption.

"No, no, dear. Write and say you will think about it."

"Won't you listen to my capital story?" asked Cyril, in high disgust. "Very good. You will both be sorry afterwards,—when it is too late."

Even this awful threat takes no effect. "Unfortunately, I can't do that," says Guy answering Lady Chetwoode. "His friend is obliged to leave the place she is now in, immediately, and he wants her to come here next week,—next—glancing at the letter—" Saturday."

"Misfortunes never come single," remarks Cyril; "ours seem to crowd. First a ward, and then a widow, and all in the same week."

"Not only the same week, but the same day," exclaims Lady Chetwoode, looking at her letter; whereupon they all laugh, though they scarcely know why.

"What! Is she too coming on Saturday?" asks Guy. "How ill-timed! I am bound to go to the Bellairs on that day, whether I like it or not, to dine or sleep, or spend my time generally. The old boy has some dogs of which he is immensely proud, and has been tormenting me for a month past to go and see them. So yesterday he seized upon me again, and I didn't quite like to refuse, he seemed so bent on getting my opinion of the pups."

"Why not go early, and be back in time for dinner?"

"Can't, unfortunately. There is to be a dinner there in the evening for some cousin in who is coming to pay them a visit, and I promised Harry, who doesn't shine in conversation, to stay and make myself agreeable to her. It's a bore rather, as I fear it will look slightly heathenish my not being at the station to meet Miss Chesney."

"Don't put yourself out about that: I'll do all I can to make up for your loss," says Cyril, who is eminently good-natured. "I'll meet her if you wish it, and bring her home."

"Thanks old man; you're awfully good! It would look inhospitable neither of us being on the spot to bid her welcome. Take the carriage and—"

"Oh, by Jove, I didn't bargain for the carriage. To be smothered alive in July is not a fascinating idea. Don't you think, mother,—in an insinuating voice,—Miss Chesney would prefer the dog-cart or the—"

"My dear Cyril! Of course you must meet her in the carriage," says his mother, in the shocked tone that usually ends all disputes.

"So be it. I give in. Though when I arrive here in the last stage of exhaustion, reclining in Miss Chesney's arms, you will be to blame," says Cyril, amiably, "but, to return to your widow, Guy: who is to receive her?"

"I dare say by this time she has learned to take care of herself," laughing. At all events, she does not weigh upon my conscience, even should I consent to oblige Trant"—looking at his mother—"by having her at 'The Cottage' as a tenant."

"It looks very suspicious, her being turned out of her last place," Cyril says, in an uncomfortable tone. "Perhaps—"

Here he pauses somewhat mysteriously. "Perhaps what?" asks his mother struck by his manner.

"Perhaps she is mad," suggests Cyril, in an awesome whisper. "An escaped lunatic!—a maniac!"

"I know no one who borders so much on Innacy as yourself," says Guy. "After all what does it matter whether our tenant is fat, fair, and forty, or a lean old maid? It will oblige Trant, and it will keep the place together. Mother, tell me to say yes."

Thus desired, Lady Chetwoode gives the required permission.

"A new tenant at 'The Cottage' and a young lady visitor,—a permanent visitor! It only requires some one to leave us a legacy in the shape of a new-born babe, to make up the sum of our calamities," says Cyril, as he steps out of the low French window and drops on to the sward beneath.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

There are few uncracked walls in Essen, Germany. The testing of the big guns manufactured by Krupp has shaken the foundations of most of the houses, and keeps glaziers busy.

In the Austrian army suicides average 10,000 a year. This does not include failed attempts, and it represents 20 per cent of the general mortality among the Austrian soldiers.

## THE RUSSIAN CRAW'S GREAT ARMY.

He Can Put Many More Men Into the Field Than Either Germany or France.

In spite of financial difficulties and peaceful intentions the Russian Government spares neither pains nor money in its efforts to keep the army on a level with those of France and Germany, or rather to outdo them; and the results—so far as they can be verified in times of peace—are in the highest degree reassuring. As far as mere numbers go the Russian War Minister can put about half a million more armed men in the field than Germany or France. The latter country can reckon on 4,053,000, while Russia has 4,550,000. Considering the question from the financial point of view one cannot help wondering how it comes that an empire whose finances are so disorganized and for the needs of whose famine-stricken population contributions were solicited this year and last year in foreign countries, is in a position to spend more money on its army every year than such a fairly prosperous State as Austria-Hungary. And yet this is the fact.

Austria-Hungary's finances are in so satisfactory a state the forced paper circulation is now making place for a metallic currency on a gold basis and government credit is such that the 4 per cent. loans are being converted without slightest difficulty. And yet the Austria-Hungary in spite of exceptional conditions which would certainly warrant and actually seem to call for increased military expenditure; lays out a considerably smaller annual sum on her army than poverty-stricken Russia, whom no European State would ever dream of attacking.

Foreigners in general have no adequate conception of the changes which, in the course of a few years have contributed to metamorphose and regenerate the Russian army. The process may be truthfully described as a new birth. Formerly marvelous powers of endurance and a courage which knew no fear of death were the main characteristics of the Russian soldier, who, when abandoned to himself, had no more initiative than a log of wood. At present he is carefully taught, trained, and drilled, knows as much about military technical matters as the average European soldier can assimilate, and still cultivates the old qualities which alone would give him a vast superiority over some of the most highly-enlightened troops of at least one great power. Then as to the numbers. A few years ago the infantry consisted of twelve regiments of the guard, sixteen regiments of grenadiers, and 165 regiments of the line.

Gen Vannoffsky, the enterprising War Minister, has within a comparatively short time added seventy-four reserve cadre battalions, which are to serve as the nucleus round which as many reserve regiments of two battalions each are to be formed. As a matter of fact this has already been done with twenty-three of the reserve battalions. It is still being continued, and a few days ago a ukase was published ordering the formation of four more reserve regiments of two battalions each. The words "two battalions each" have a somewhat mild sound to the ears of military men who know that the ordinary Russian infantry regiment consists of four battalions; but the sound is delusive and misleading, for these reserve regiments contain each 1,555 common soldiers and forty officers, so that they are practically equal in numbers to the regiments of four battalions (the latter possessing 340 men more, in other words, 1,895 instead of 1,555), a difference which, in case of need, could be made good without the slightest difficulty. These facts should be continually borne in mind by those who accuse Germany and Austria-Hungary of taking the initiative in imposing unbearable burdens on the tax-paying populations. Russia, whom no other power would or could attack, and who can scarcely pay her way, is actually compelling her neighbors to equalize their chances against her in war.

## WOMEN AS CRIMINALS.

They Are More Cruel and Deliberate Than Men in Their Crimes.

"While man is undoubtedly as a rule the more prominent in crime, woman, on the other hand, is at once more cruel and cunning in what she does," says a well-known detective.

"From the circumstance that a considerable less number of women than men are convicted of crime the inference is drawn that in woman the criminal propensities are weaker or under better control. Such a conclusion is, however, not borne out by the facts, for when crimes have been traced to women it has been found, in the majority of cases, that the guilty deeds had been committed not only with systematic cunning, but also with a coolness and cruelty which have seldom been attributed to men."

"There are several reasons," continues the detective "why so few women have been convicted of crime. Man's natural sympathy for her often causes him to overlook important points against her. If there are men in this profession who are not susceptible to a woman's piteous, I, in my experience of twenty-six years, have failed to find them."

"Another thing: It is seldom considered that girls are watched more carefully than boys, and are under greater restraint. Neither is it taken into account that older females spend more of their time at home, while males of their own age are on the street or mingling with persons whose habits are not always of the best. Many of the temptations to crime come from business complications in which women have little or no share, as they spend most of their time at home with their children and female companions. Most homicides, you know, are the results of anger excited when persons are away from their homes and families, as violent quarrels generally take place in the street or bar room, and not in the parlor or sitting room."

"Now as to the cruelty and deliberation of the female criminal. The history of crime shows that most of the murders committed by women are those perpetrated by the administration of poison. They show careful preparation and great deliberation. In almost every instance treachery is employed, the victim being invited to partake of refreshment supplied by one who is presumed to be a friend. Murder by the administration of poison is considered the most foul and the darkest of all the crimes, but it is the one that women have been addicted to more generally than men in all ages and countries."

"Another very remarkable fact," continues the detective, "has recently been men-

tioned in a London paper by the chaplain of Clerkenwell jail. It is that some criminals are practically incurable. From a table prepared by him it was shown that during last year there were committed to the prisons and jails of England and Wales 5696 men and 9764 women who had been convicted no less than ten times previously. You see the force of the comparison.

"A partial explanation of this strange state of things may be found in the fact that women are more thorough-going in all things good, bad or indifferent, than the men. They do nothing by halves. Be the matter the construction of a shortcoat, the making of a crazy quilt, or the poisoning of a rival, woman devotes all her time, knowledge and talent to what she has in view."

"Then again a woman has less chance of reformation than a man. The latter can go to a distant land, raise whiskers or shave those he had, assume a different name and commence life anew. He can generally find employment; but with the woman it is more difficult. Disguise is not so easy, and if she goes to a different place some one is liable to recognize her."

"A strange woman is always looked upon with suspicion, as it is presumed that she would prefer to live in the town where she was brought up and where her old acquaintances are. A man gets credit for his enterprise if he goes to a new country and engages in a business for himself, but such is not the case with a woman. If she is once discovered her own sex are the first to point their fingers at her, turn up their noses and refuse to associate with her, the result of which is that she becomes hardened and callous and is again driven to crime."

"It is so easy to forever ruin a woman. Listen to the stories of some of our demimonde, women who at the beginning had families, friends and social standing. The tempter comes, ruin follows, then fruitless efforts to hide their disgrace. Society discharges them, shame forces them to seek places where they are unknown. Want follows, and finally, almost inevitably, a life of public and brazen shame."

## GLADSTONE AND THE QUEEN.

How the "Grand Old Man" is Regarded by England's Ruler.

"Member of Parliament" writing from London says:—"At the time of my writing Gladstone is just concluding a visit to Windsor Castle. The Queen, with her usual tact, has taken good care to give no cause for offense even to the most jealous of politicians with regard to the way she has dispensed hospitality. Some of the new men of the Ministry, who now, for the first time, enter upon official life, have already received special invitations to the castle. She still shows a personal like for Salisbury, but Gladstone is, outwardly, at least, placed upon the same footing. The court is too wise these days to take an active side in party politics. There are no favorites. The Queen herself may have private preferences, but they are not visible beyond the circle of her home. Salisbury and Gladstone are both most interesting men personally and their conversation upon any topic would always be worth listening to. Of course, in the presence of the Queen they can not start any subject. They must follow the lead that is given them, but there is no question of the day, foreign or domestic, upon which the Queen is not so well informed that she has nothing to learn from the wisest of her guests. As for the various forces that go to make up public life Gladstone himself has not more intimate knowledge of them. The advantage of this position at the present day, alike to Crown and country, is immense. No jealousies can be excited where no marked preferences are shown. Men are coming to the front whose avowed object is to wreck existing institutions. Most of them want to begin with the monarchy, but they find no responsible statesman to lead them. Gladstone has always paid the profoundest deference to the Queen as well as to the royal family generally. The Prince of Wales, like his mother, shuns committing himself to any party. It would not do for any one to attack Gladstone or Salisbury in his presence. Privately his leanings are supposed to tend in the direction of Liberalism. Once it was whispered that he was in favor of home rule under proper checks, but he has very few confidants in these matters. He has never given any one the right to say what his opinions really are. One thing certain is that all of our leading public men concur in praising his sound common sense, good judgment and right feeling. Gladstone indulges in some tall talk when out of office, but depend upon it he is never going to lead a revolution. He must keep up his influence over all sections of his party, but when it comes to carrying out the views of the extremists he is not there. He is a pretty good Conservative as soon as he gets into power, and even forwards are wonderfully cooled down under his influence. There is Asquith, the new Home Secretary, who was supposed to be another Robespierre. He has been twice to Windsor Castle, and now goes around hurrying over the place like a tame cat. No doubt if we had a tyrant on the throne all these gentlemen would rush to arms and become so many Cromwells, but under the present circumstances what is the use of threatening to let out anybody's blood? There are no longer any tyrants in high places, though there are a good many to be found if you look lower down. See how few are the changes even contemplated. Instead of abolishing the House of Lords Gladstone is rewarding personal friends with peerages. Egypt is not to be evacuated, and even Uganda may be kept under one pretext or another. The Government will send out a commission of inquiry of its own. What does that mean? Simply that we shall stay where we are. It is the old story. The more you change the more it is the same thing. Offices and honours go to one side instead of to the other, but the essential principles remain unchanged. Of course, there is the Irish difficulty. Gladstone thought it would keep for at least another year, and now we seldom hear it mentioned. The old man is King while Parliament is not sitting, and that gives him three months' breathing time, during which anything may happen."

## Those Automatic Boxes.

A three-year-old boy was given a penny one Sunday by his mother to put into the offertory.

When the box was handed to him he dropped in his penny, and looking up in his mother's face said audibly:

"Muvver, what do you think will come out, tocolate or callamela?"