

KERSHAM MANOR.

CHAPTER XXIX.—(CONTINUED).

"What a fool I am!" she exclaimed. "As if it mattered a scrap to me what other people did! If the world is so miserable for them, let us get as much pleasure out of it as possible for ourselves. Isn't that the true philosophy? Where was I in my story? Oh, I told you that my grandmother died. I stayed on in the room which we had shared, and it was there that one day my father found me. He was not quite a stranger to me. I had seen him at Woodbury now and then, but I thought that he was dead. He came in one evening when I was there alone; he came—in a state which I won't describe. I wonder that I escaped with my life. It was the beginning of an attack of Jellium tremens. Well, I helped to nurse him through that; and then we agreed to take up our abode together. I got a theatrical engagement in Manchester for a time, and we drifted about the country, first with one company and then with another, steering clear of London—I hate London!—until we got stranded here. And here we have been for the last three years or more. I'm four-and-twenty, and I dare say I shall live for fifty years to come." Inexpressible weariness marked her words.

"You mean to stay here at present?" Phillis's eyes grew sullen. "I don't know. I've got good work, and I mean to stay as long as I could. But—"

She made a long pause. "I hope you will stay," said Esther. "I am living in Dunross, and I want to see more of you."

"Do you?" the girl said, rather oddly. "Ah well, it's not very likely."

"Not likely that I shall see more of you?" Phillis flashed round at her. "You have heard my history; do you think I am a fit companion for you?"

"Why not?" "I have told you where I lived and how I worked and starved. You don't half understand. It was a low, vile street, a miserable wretched house; I met low, vile people and got used to them. I have seen all kinds of misery and wickedness, and you have been living in comfort and luxury; you don't know what it is to be poor. I know what being poor really means; it means being wicked."

"Phillis, there is no sin in being poor. And there are plenty of other sorrows in the world; I have had my share of that. And even I—I am not rich," said Esther with the glimmer of a smile.

There was a moment's silence, in which there came the sound of a single knock at the outer door. Phillis jumped up. Esther also rose as if to go.

"Don't go," said Phillis abruptly. "I'm just going to make a cup of tea. Unless you think it too dreadful to come into the kitchen—"

"I like kitchens." "Because you've not had much to do with them, I suppose. I should like you to have a cup of tea before you go. Father's out. You need not be afraid of meeting him." The single knock sounded once again. "I must go to the door. Wait one minute, please—I know who it is." And Phillis hastened away, while Esther sat down again.

The door was left open, and she could not help hearing what followed. "Oh, it's you, is it?" So Phillis addressed some person unseen, in her abrupt way. "What have you come for, I should like to know?"

A small infantile voice made answer. "It's maist five o'clock." Then came a funny little giggle of delighted laughter.

"But I've got a lady here, a visitor. What will you do?" "I'll no look at her."

"But she'll look at you." Then there was a little silence, and Esther heard the sound of a closing door, and of several kisses. "Come in then," said Phillis's voice, in a much softer key. What! I'm to carry you? Jump up!"

Esther caught a glimpse of her as she passed the half-opened door, with a child of six or seven in her arms. The little face hidden on her shoulder. The two went into the kitchen, and Esther was left alone; but in a few minutes Phillis returned with a cup of tea in one hand and a plate of "cookies" in the other.

"I won't trouble you to come into the kitchen," she said indifferently. "There's a wretched little brat there who comes to warm herself at the fire sometimes, and to ask for what they call in this part of the world 'a jelly-piece.' Do you like Scotland?"

A few trivial questions and answers followed, and then Esther thought it best to go. As she left the room, she could not but notice that the kitchen door was wide open, and she had a good view of a fair-haired little girl, who was sitting on a wooden chair, with a piece of bread and jam in her hand, swinging her bare feet idly to and fro.

"What a pretty child!" said Esther impulsively.

Phillis looked at her. "Yes, from this point of view," she said dryly. Then she laid her hand on Esther's wrist. "Come here for a moment. Beenie, the lady wants to say good-day to you."

Esther followed as desired, into the kitchen. Beenie, looked up and smiled. Then Esther saw that one side of her face was terribly disfigured—seamed and scarred, and of a strangely lividly-purple hue. The other side, which Esther had seen first, was delicate and beautiful.

"Scalded," said Phillis in an undertone. "Marked for life, and lamed too. Her mother did it. Well, Beenie, do you want another 'piece'?"

Little Beenie scrambled down from her chair and ran to her friend. Phillis was obliged to sit down and let the child climb on her knee and put her arms round her neck.

"Want some more bread?" said Phil lightly.

"Na."

"What do you want then?" "A kiss."

Phillis laughed, and threw a half-shy glance at Esther. But she was not able, seemingly, to resist the clasp of those tiny arms. She pressed her lips to the soft cheeks and kissed it time after time. All the hardness had passed out of her face, and the sadness from her eyes. She laughed and played with the child for a moment or two with a whimsical teasing tenderness, which made her wonderfully like the Phillis that Esther had known of old. But when the stranger spoke, Beenie hid her face and would not look round. She was at home

only with Phil, and would not be put down even when Esther moved toward the door, Phillis came with her—the child still in her arms.

"When will you come to see me?" Phillis was silent; the shadows deepened in her eyes.

"You will come soon?" "No."

"Why not? Dear Phil, do come. I want you."

Phillis stood silent, pressing the scarred cheek of the child close to her own. She seemed irresolute.

"I am often lonely," said Esther. "I have not many friends in Dunross. It will do me good if you will come sometimes."

It was the right argument to use with Phillis. But she was not conquered yet.

"Why," she said abruptly, "why didn't you speak, to me in the office, instead of waiting till I went into the street?"

"I did not know you, Phil."

"You were looking at me all the time. It was that that put me into such a rage. I knew you; I saw you as soon as ever you came into the room. You were ashamed to speak to me."

"No, no, indeed. I was puzzled that was all. I knew your face, and could not remember whose it was until your name was spoken afterward. Then I knew."

Phil shook her head. "That wasn't it," she said determinedly. "You knew me and you wouldn't speak. You were ashamed."

"Phil, you know you are wrong."

"Would you walk down the High Street with me if I asked you?"

"Of course I would."

"And if any of your fire friends spoke to you, wouldn't you feel ashamed of me?" with dangerous lighting of her eyes.

"Not one bit. Why should I?" "You wouldn't explain to them afterward that I was a—poor girl, a young person that you wanted to be kind to, not a friend of your own choice, of course—"

Esther laughed, but was indignant. "Phillis, how can you be so silly? Of course I should not."

"I don't believe you," said Phillis; but some day I'll try you and see whether you speak the truth. Good-afternoon, Miss Denison."

Her words breathed suspicion and defiance but her eyes were soft as they rested on her visitor from behind the shelter of poor Beenie's spoiled, scarred face.

CHAPTER XXX.

PHIL'S STRUGGLE.

There had not been a word about Jack Drummond. It was just as well, thought Esther. At some other time she could get to know what Phillis thought of him. She remembered with sudden shrinking the words that Phillis had said about some one, some man, who wanted to give her all she wanted "if she would run away with him." Could it be Mr. Drummond of whom she spoke?

He came to her in her little room at the office one day as she sat writing, and carefully closed the door behind him.

"So you have been to see her?" he began.

"Yes. Did she tell you?" Drummond nodded. "She was pleased by your coming."

"I should hardly have thought it."

"Oh, it is Phil's way to be disdainful. You won't be discouraged by that? It all comes of her soreness of heart, poor child? That father of hers is a heavy burden to bear. Did you see Beenie?"

"Yes."

"Beenie comes from the flat below. Her mother has six strong, healthy boys and girls, who all torment and tease that little one. She creeps up to Phillis every day for protection—and petting."

"It is very difficult to understand her," said Esther, speaking of Phillis. "She is at once so hard and so soft—"

"She is not hard," said Jack decisively. "No she is not hard. You will understand her better by-and-by, though I confess she is incomprehensible except to people who love her—"

Then he blushed, and gave Esther a guilty look, as if to see whether he had betrayed himself. He went on hurriedly.

"Shall I tell you how I got to know her?—I was walking through the Norgate one day—it is the lowest part of the town—when I saw a crowd of people before me and heard the noise of shouts and cries. There was a fight between two women—and one of them had a child in her arms; fancy the child's plight! There was a ring of people round them, but nobody was interfering; and of course no policeman was in sight. I confess I don't know whether I should have interfered or not; it is a risky matter to throw one's self between two disputants, Miss Denison. But there was someone who did not stop to consider that point. I saw to my horror, a girl make her way resolutely through the crowd and actually throw herself between those two viragoes and snatch the child out of the woman's arms. It was the pluckiest thing I ever saw, and I believe it saved the child's life. She got a bad knock or two before any one could protect her; she was considerably hustled and jostled, and would have been more so, perhaps, if I had not pushed through the crowd to her side; but she stopped the fight."

"It was very like her," said Esther warmly.

"Hear the end," said Jack, laughing. "She marched off with the baby in her arms, and would not give it up to anybody. The mother pursued her with a good deal of bad language, and wanted to get the child back; and what do you think Miss Phil did? 'You're not fit to touch it,' she said, facing round upon the woman with that indignant white face of hers, 'you will kill it if you take it now. Come for it when you are sober.' And then she gave her address and coolly walked away. I went with her, for I was afraid that she would be hurt; the Norgate folk are rather rough, you know; but to my surprise the woman seemed quite cowed, and only followed humbly at a distance."

"And did Phil give her the baby?"

"In an hour's time," said Jack, laughing again. "The mother had to wait on the stairs while Miss Phillis fed the baby and washed it, and felt all the limbs to see whether they were all right—and kissed it and cried over it, I believe," Jack added, his face softening, "though I could not

swear to that; but I extracted the other detail from her afterward. Then she brought the child out to its mother—I was there on the stairs listening out of curiosity—and she gave the woman the most tremendous rating you can imagine about her duty to her child."

"Miss Denison, if you know her you will soon learn to love her."

It was the end of June, and the summer sunlight was pouring down on the stone-built town, the broad glancing river, the distant purple hills, with a radiance which was positively exhilarating. Esther found her friend behaving like a school-girl.

"I am having a party," she said. "You mustn't interfere with my guests." She had suddenly dropped all formality, and looked just like the mischievous Phil with whom Esther had played at Woodbury.

"I'm Panch, I'm Panch's wife, and the policeman and the undertaker and the dog. Will you sit down and see me act?"

And without waiting for an answer, she caught up a red table-cloth which had been serving her as a cloak, and dashed into a wild extravagant version of Mr. Panch's adventures, taking first one character and then another, imitating the cries of various animals, speaking in different voices, singing and gesticulating by turns, in a way that seemed marvellous to Esther, and made her laugh almost as unrestrainedly as the children themselves.

Suddenly Phil stopped, panting. "That's the first act; now for the second. Follow me! This way, audience."

She caught up Beenie in her arms and ran out of the room. Esther found her ascending a flight of narrow steps, which led to an opening in the roof. Half in wonder, half in alarm, she followed, leading the boy-visitor by the hand. Phillis had led the way to the roof, which was flat and surrounded by a balustrade.

The leads were grimy; but Esther did not mind the griminess; she took little Beenie from Phillis's arm and asked with a smile what was to be done next.

"A performance on the house-tops! Don't I act well?" said Phillis. "If old Macalister had seen me just now, he would have promised to make my fortune. But I did still better the other day—when I went to Miss Denison's house—didn't I, Beenie? I acted the young lady; the well-behaved young lady who had never been near a music-hall nor heard of break-downs and ballet girls! And Miss Denison can tell you whether I acted it well or not."

She had tied a red and yellow handkerchief fantastically about her head, and began to dance as she talked. Presently she hummed a tune and twirled round and round. Esther noticed that she was quite visible from the neighboring houses and even from the streets, and that people were beginning to raise their heads and look to her from below.

"Phillis!" she cried. "Phillis, you must leave off dancing. This is not the proper place for a dance; people can see you—"

"I'm used to that," said Phil. "They see every night at the theater. I like to be looked at. I often come up here and dance," she laughed. "But if you don't like it, I'll do something else." And to Esther's horror, she sprang up on the stone balustrade, and tripped round it, holding her dress wide and prouetting on her toes as she went. A false step and she would have fallen fifty feet to the granite stones below. Persons stopped in the street and pointed to her; she was too far up to be recognizable, but it was plain that she was in danger. One or two made for the door of the house in which she lived.

"There, that will do," said Phillis. "Have I frightened you? Oh, what white cheeks! The people in the street think that I am a lunatic; isn't that funny, Beenie? Come, I'll carry you down the steps."

She insisted on preceding Esther. By the time Esther had reached the sitting-room, she found Phillis without her fantastic head-dress, and with a peculiarly demure expression of countenance, assuring an inquirer at the door that nobody was walking on the roof, and that he must be subject to optical delusions.

"Phil, dear! you should not do these things!"

"Shouldn't I? But it is such a relief to one's feelings to be wild sometimes. Now, you little kiddies, you can go home. Good-by. I'll give you a cookie and some sweeties, and put you out at the door. Take care of each other and don't tumble downstairs."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

GONE OUT OF FASHION.

The Art of Conversation No Longer Understood in English Society.

Another thing which has gone out of fashion is the art of conversation, says the Pall Mall Gazette. It has of late years been so neglected that it is the rarest chance to meet with a young man who can converse at all in the real sense of the word. Among his own set he can babble about mutual acquaintances, the new singer, the next race or the last scandal. But throw him among strangers and he is silent and dull, perhaps making short remarks in a jerky and confused manner, but certainly betraying no intelligent interest if a new discovery be mentioned, a piece of important political news told or some information given about a subject of real value. As a consequence he is not only bored, but he shows it, because he has never cultivated that polite interest in his fellow creatures which would enable him to respond sympathetically. One of the old French noblesse was lately heard to remark that when he first went into society his father used to impress upon his mind that at a party he was bound to insure its success so far as he was individually concerned. To make himself agreeable was a duty not to be neglected without a grave breach of courtesy, both to the guests and the friends who invited him. In a modern gathering no such antiquated sentiment would find a disciple. Young people, if they do not meet some one to flirt with, will ostentatiously proclaim their boredom, and would stare in astonishment if it were suggested that at the friend's house it was the duty toward the hostess to pay attention to those who seemed neglected, or who found themselves among strangers. To hint that old ladies and ugly girls should have a little share of consideration would be to subject one's self to the charge of being old-fashioned.

A. B. Myers, of Hanover, Pa., lost both his hands in an accident years ago. He was recently married, and signed his marriage certificate with a pen held in his teeth. His penmanship is fine.

PHANTOM OF THE PLAINS.

Weird Experience of a Cavalry Troop on the Staked Plains.

The Cry as of a Lost and Dying Woman Which Set Men and Horses to Quaking With Fear—A Platoon Shot into the Darkness and Its Mysterious Result—Foreboding Laying a Specter—An Old-Time Tradition of the Desert Beyond the Pecos River.

As we leave the Pecos river and journey northward toward the great sand hills of the staked plains our Indian scouts and guides look about them as if expecting to see an enemy at any moment, and as the summer day draws to a close we notice them whispering together and exhibiting signs of uneasiness. They are speaking of the phantom of the desert. From the year 1868 to that of 1873 strange tales were told at the frontier posts and around the campfires regarding that phantom. Hunters, soldiers, and Indians believed them, and hunters and Indians were driven away from the headwaters of the Concha river by their fears of something they had never seen.

We make our camp amid the sands—sands so dry and deep that they would absorb the waters of the Mississippi and scarcely feel damp to the touch. The cactus, the rattlesnake, the vulture, and the sands! Nothing else, unless it be the bones our horses' feet throw to the surface as they dig for water to cool their tongues. The rosy hues die out of the west and evening comes. Evening finally gives place to solemn night. It is a starlight night, but a mist rises from the sands to make the stars look small and pale and far away. There are no tents, no fires. At 10 o'clock nearly all the command are asleep. The sleepers are lying as I saw the dead lie when awaiting burial at Gettysburg. Each face is uncovered and upturned to the night, and you feel a chill as you look at them. You know they sleep and yet fear they are dead—a camp of dead men on desolate and accursed ground. The men are hardly asleep before the horses become quiet. Some lie down to sleep and sigh; others remain on their feet, and weave to and fro, and arouse themselves at intervals to look about in a dazed, queer way. Loneliness and night and desolation affect a horse as much as a man. He cannot sleep and forget the situation as his rider can. Only the sentinels are alert now. The Indians are at peace with us, and no danger need be feared, but they have heard of the desert phantom and are nervous and wakeful.

Eleven o'clock, and all is quiet. But for the faint crunch of the footsteps of the sentinels it would be the stillness of a tomb. On the plains you will hear an occasional cry from some night bird, the howl of the coyote, the chirp of the crickets. Here is blankness—darkness—silence so deep that you are afraid of it.

THE LONG WAIL AT MIDNIGHT.

Midnight, and the sergeant of the guard is about to arouse the relief guard and march them out when a strange, weird sound comes to his ears from the north. It is the cry of a human being—of a woman—such a cry as a woman might utter as she tottered about and sunk down to die of hunger and thirst. It is the cry of the phantom. It has been heard a hundred times before, and no man has ever smiled in contempt at the sound.

"The phantom! The phantom! The phantom!" So whisper the three sentinels on that side of the camp as they desert their posts and hasten in.

"Fools! Cowards! Get back or I will report you!" answers the sergeant, but they move timidly and look to the right and left.

Now comes the cry from the east side of the camp—not a shriek nor a scream but a long-drawn, quivering cry, full of anguish and desolation. Was it fancy? Then why did every horse on the ground leap to his feet and point his ears at the first cry? Was it the cry of some lost and confused vulture flying heavily over camp as it searched for the flock? If so why did the second cry arouse every sleeping man and cause him to turn his face to the east—men who would have slept on amid the howling of wolves?

"What is it, sergeant?" "The phantom of the desert, sir!"

The officer had heard the legends many times, but smiled in pity on those who related them. An officer of the regular army a believer in phantoms! A troop of regular cavalry, most of the men in service for a dozen years, panic-stricken because of a cry from the darkness beyond!

"Sergeant, give me the names of those men who deserted their posts and I'll—"

The cry came again—this time from the west—a cry in which there were more anguish and desolation than before. It quavered on the night air for ten long seconds and when it ceased every man's heart was beating so he could hear the sound. Many of the horses stamped and snorted, and the men crowded together and reached for their carbines. Four parties of three men each were pushed out into the darkness, and candles were lighted and men ordered to shout a welcome to the poor wanderer.

THE LAST OF THE PHANTOM.

After an interval of five minutes we heard the cry again, but it was farther away this time and we thought it had changed, too. There was a note of anger and disappointment in it. A long ten minutes passed away, and then we got the cry for the last time—a wailing, petulant cry which might be uttered by a tired and sleepy child.

Men and horses slept again, but with a sort of nightmare upon them. When daylight came we scoured the desert for signs and found them in plenty—the footprints of naked feet all about our camp. Some said they were those of a woman, but all were mystified. The phantom of the desert had come and gone—come from no one could say where—vanished in what direction we could not say. We were yet stooping over the footprints when they seemed to melt away in the sand. One night a year later that wild, weird cry aroused a camp of soldiers almost on the same spot. The Indians had become hostile again, and thinking it the signal for an attack the sentinel fired into the darkness. The cry was not repeated, but in place of it came a scream of pain and terror. Nothing was found next morning, but a day or two later still another party came across a dead body on the sands. They did not ride close enough to disturb the vultures. Some said

it was the body of a woman clothed in rags, with tangled hair falling to the knees; and some thought it that of a deserter who had become a wandering lunatic. From that time on the phantom of the desert has not been heard of. The soldier's bullet sent through the darkness had found its life.

AN ALUMINUM YACHT.

A Frenchman Experimenting With That Metal.

Yachtsmen in this country are watching with considerable interest the career of the yacht *Venedesse*, built for Count Chabannes, and launched at St. Denis, France, on Dec. 6. The yacht is built of aluminum, and it is a matter of opinion just now whether she will be a success. This is not the first aluminum yacht that has been built, there having been two small steam launches on Lake Geneva now for two seasons, and so far these boats have been a success. The boat, though, is a small one, and the steam launch is not likely to prove the benefits of using aluminum for boat-building. Particulars of the *Venedesse* have not reached this country yet, but the boat is supposed to be a small sailing craft.

An idea has been put forward that she would be too buoyant, meaning that she would be too lively in a seaway. That is ridiculous. A 40-footer built of aluminum would weigh just the same as a 40-footer built of steel, only that the aluminum boat would have more of her weight concentrated in her lead keel, and consequently would carry a larger sail plan. Another thing, although the yacht launched in France is the first sailing vessel built of aluminum, there are two steam launches in use on the Swiss lakes wholly constructed of that metal.

Aluminum will withstand the action of the salt water as well as Tobin bronze. The metal is remarkable for its resistance of oxidation. Any metal that will stand exposure to damp atmosphere without discoloring will not corrode in water. The metal is remarkable for its lightness, and for that reason it has been thought that using it for the hull of a boat would be an immense advantage. The boat would be so light that all the ballast would be concentrated at one point—down in the keel. Much more lead would have to be put there than on a boat built of wood, iron or steel, and with this additional lead and all the ballast concentrated, the craft would be able to carry a very large sail spread and, if modeled rightly, the craft should be a very fast sailer. The *Vigilant* is a lightly constructed boat, with her ballast low down and concentrated. She is able to carry 12,000 feet of canvas, and everyone knows how fast she can sail. Now, if a boat of her size could be built to put on 15,000 feet of canvas, it stands to reason, with the additional driving power, she would go much faster.

The trouble with aluminum, though, is, that it is very costly, and the metal is very brittle. Without figuring closely, if a boat built of steel cost \$60,000, one of aluminum of the same size would cost \$180,000, or three times as much. Cost is an important item in yacht building nowadays. Yachting is becoming every year more expensive. The metal is so brittle that a sharp blow will break a plate just like glass. It would go badly with an aluminum boat if it struck a rock or if in collision. On account of this brittleness there would be danger of the plates breaking under the strain of the spars and the pounding of the sea. If they can succeed in putting an alloy with it that would make it tougher and more durable, and at the same time keep it slight then it may be used extensively in yacht building.

GENES OF THOUGHT.

We forgive just as long as we love.

Happiness does not consist in things, but in thoughts.

It is but the littleness of man that seeth no greatness in trifles.

Time flies, flowers fade, the body decays—character alone is immortal.

One is not sufficiently fortified against a doctrine when only acquainted with its weak sides.

It is not so much the being exempt from faults, as the having overcome them, that is an advantage to us.

Human nature is so constituted that all see and judge better in the affairs of other men than in their own.

Mark the man or woman who seeks and sees something good in everybody; there goes a magnificent soul.

The firmest friendships have been formed in mutual adversity, as iron is most strongly united by the fiercest flame.

Sorrows are often like clouds, which though black when they are passing over us, when they are past become as if they were the garments of God, thrown off in purple and gold along the sky.

The best way to live is to cast away troubles and contentions which cannot be cured by fretting. In justice to the requirements of the present, you should not look back and make yourself wretched over things that cannot be undone.

Misfortune is never mournful to the soul that accepts it, for such do always see that every cloud is an angel's face. Every man deems that he has precisely the trials and temptations which are the hardest of all afflictions for him to bear; but they are so simply because they are the very ones he most needs.

The modest deportment of those who are truly wise when contrasted with the assuming air of the young and ignorant, may be compared to the different appearance of wheat, which, while its ear is empty, holds up its head proudly, but as soon as it is filled with grain, bends modestly.

Mr. Felix Geoffron, who was Minister of the Interior in the Mackenzie Government, is dangerously ill.

An intelligent cat is a pet in the house of Mrs. Mary Brownell, at Wilmington, Del. When the animal desires to be let out of the cellar, it rings a bell.

A colony of five hundred Italian grape-growers will soon settle near Yuma, Arizona, and there begin the cultivation of the wine fruit on a large scale.

The Gammel brothers, Samuel and Simms, of Hickory Flats, Simpson County, Ky., are the heaviest twins in the United States. Their aggregate weight is 542 pounds.