KERSHAM MANOR.

CHAPTER XLV.

KERSHAM MANOR.

Six months later, June, with its glories of leaf and blossom, of south wind and of sunshine, brought brightness even to the dwellers in dim and murky Whitechapel; it enlivened even the dingy buildings of the Mile End Road. What it was like in the country, where bosky dell and hillside were all illumined by its presence, the townsfolk thought it wiser not to picture to themselves.

Esther was in Phillis's house. It had been impossible for her to go back to Dunross, where every one knew the history of her misfortunes, and—as she sometimes unjustly phrased it to herself—"of her shame." Neither maid, wife, nor widow, was she now. She could not go back to those who had not only known her in the days of her happy independence but also in those blissful months of her Fool's Paradise. She could bear Phillis's knowledge and sympathy; but that was another thing. Besides, Sebastian had wished her to be with Phillis.

She began to work amongst these people to whom Phillis was trying to bring a little light and joy; and it was good for her to come face to face with the terrible realities of their existence, to think of their struggles for mere bread, of the miseries of continued toil, of the wasting sicknesses of childhood and the heart-breaking infirmities of age.

She was not working for the poor this morning, however, but at a letter for one of the Dunross papers, when Philis sought her out. She had just succeeded in tearing her mind away from the hyacinths and the sun-flecked woodpaths for which she pined, and was writing busily, almost too busily to heed the opening of the door or the advance of Phillis to the table.

"Was I so absorbed that I did not hear you?" she said. "I have almost finished now. Do you want me, Phil dear?"

"No," said Phillis absently. She was studying Esther's face; it was sharper in outline, paler, graver, but it was also a far nobler face than it once had been. Yes, Phil decided; Esther could bear a trial—a shock, if need be, now; she had suffered so much, conquered so much already, that to no heights of heroism might she not attain. And Phillis had come to ask what she thought would be a hard thing for her to do.

"Esther," she said, bringing out an envelope from her pocket, "I've had a letter this morning which concerns you. You need not turn white; it is not bad news—at least, it is not what you think. My letter is from Sebastian Malet."

It was useless to tell Esther not to turn white now; she was pale to the very lips.

"He is well and you need not be afraid," said Phil, "but he wants you to do something for him, and he asks me to—to—persuade you."

"Did he think I should need persuading?"

"It is something hard, Esther. Nina wants to see you. He writes to ask me to go down to Kersham Manor with you. It would be easier for you to go with me than quite alone. Nina is ill; she has begged so hard to see you that he could not refuse to write. I think it was perhaps natural that he should write to me."

Esther's eyes seemed fastened to Phillis's face. She said "Well?" with a sort of gasp when Phillis paused.

"And Nina herself has written. Nina sends you this note."

"DEAR ESTHER:—I have been very ill all the spring, and the doctors say I shall never be better. Would you mind very much coming to see me once again? There are some things I must say to you before I die. I am sure that you will come to me if you can. NINA."

"Will you go?" Phil asked.

"Oh yes." Esther rose as if she would start at once. "I suppose I ought. I can not refuse."

Suddenly she put out her hands and grasped at Phillis's arms, as if to save herself from falling.

"You don't think," she said almost inaudibly, "that Nina wants to reproach me, because I loved her husband?"

"You are not fit to go at all if you talk in that silly way," Phillis said resolutely. "Who can reproach you, when you were not to blame? Would even Nina Malet send for you to do such a foolish thing as that? Esther, you are growing morbid; I have seen it coming on for a long time, and you must cure yourself."

"I don't think I am morbid," Esther said patiently, "but I am sometimes very weak. Do you think that I ought to go?"

"Yes, I do," Phil answered decidedly. "She will not be at peace until she has seen you, Sebastian says. He has sent me word about trains and carriages and all the rest; and if you are willing to go, and will trust yourself to me, we will start at five minutes to four from Charing Cross this afternoon."

And thus, at four o'clock, Esther found herself in the train that whirled her through the familiar country between London and Kersham.

She was very calm and still during the journey, scarcely saying a word unless when Phillis spoke to her. Phil had taken charge of her completely, and, though Esther was by no means helpless, she was glad to be spared the trouble of thinking about arrangements.

At the station a man in livery came up to Phillis and touched his cap. "Beg pardon, ma'am, Mrs. Drummond, ma'am?" he said respectfully.

"Yes; are you from Mr. Malet?" Phillis asked, rather sharply.

"Yes, ma'am, and the carriage is waiting outside for you, please, ma'am."

"So this is a sample of Sebastian's tastes," said Phillis, looking at the soft cushions and rich furnishings of his equipage with great disdain. "I thought better of him. How I do hate people who have nothing better to do than to amuse themselves, and cry out if their rose-leaves are crumpled, while our East End poor are starving in their garrets! Do these luxury-loving people call themselves Christians, Esther? Do they ever read the parable of Dives and Lazarus, should you suppose?"

"Of course they do," Esther made shift to answer with a little smile.

Then she sat silent, her lips compressed into the old fixity of line, her brows bent angrily over her bright, observant eyes. When the carriage swept rapidly in at the Manor gates, and the horses were pulled up at the entrance of the stately old house, she pulled Esther suddenly by the arm and choked over her next sentence:

"They lived here while my father and mother were famishing," Phillis said vindictively. "I hate them."

The ladies were shown into the library, which was empty. But after a moment's waiting an angular figure in a black dress, with widow's streamers floating far and wide from the cap perched oddly sideways on a yellow head, made its appearance at the door of an inner room. Esther rose from her chair. She had recognized Mrs. Stephen Malet, and now she put back her veil. Her face was rather white.

The Squire's widow did not hesitate. She precipitated herself at once into Esther's arms and gave her a noisy, heartfelt kiss.

"Bless you, my poor dear, for coming," she said. "I knew that you would, though some as shall be nameless had the audacity to say that you would stop away. I knew you better, my dear. I said, like comes of like; and if Miss Esther is like her poor dear pa and ma, she won't refuse a dying woman's request."

"A dying woman, Mrs. Malet? Oh, surely not," said Esther.

Mrs. Malet shook her head. I'm afraid so, my dear. And as I've always said, you're the last person that would be glad to hear of it. You've got your friends in this house, my dear, if also you have your foes."

"I don't think Esther wants to hear about either," said Phillis. "She came to see Nina."

"Why, you must be Phillis!" cried Mrs. Malet, with unfaltering cordiality. "That's just the sort of thing I should have expected to hear you say, my dear, from all I've been told of you. You were my poor dear husband's cousin, weren't you! And glad I am to see you down here after all this long time."

She kissed Phillis warmly, although Phil's face was not very responsive; and then she pushed her guests into the softest chairs and rang for tea and cake and strawberries, and did all that she could to make them feel comfortable and at home. But while they were still drinking tea, her attention was caught by a sound in the hall; and with no apology for withdrawing, she suddenly rose and bustled out, accidentally leaving the library door ajar.

"You're coming into tea, aren't you?" Phil and Esther heard her say in an anxious voice to some person unseen. "They're here," with a mysterious lowering of her tones.

"Thank you, no," Phillis did not know the speaker's voice with its rather over-refined accents and silvery inflections, but she saw that Esther started and flushed deeply at the sound. "I regret to disappoint you, Mrs. Malet; but I really do not feel it my duty to reopen an acquaintance with that person. Her conduct has been the cause of great unhappiness to my daughter; and I disapprove entirely of Nina's desire to see her again. But my dear child's sweet and tender nature—"

"Why, good gracious, Cousin Selina," said Mrs. Malet brusquely, "you talk just as if Esther had done something wrong! And you know that she was as innocent as a child."

"I know," said Mrs. La Touche, very primly, "that if Mr. Sebastian Malet had waited until a decent period of time had elapsed after my daughter's reputed death before entering upon a connection of any sort with Miss Denison, this unhappy complication of affairs could never have taken place. Good-afternoon, Mrs. Malet. I will come in again this evening, if you will kindly let me know when Miss Denison and her friend have gone back to London.

Her voice died away as she went down the garden path, still talking in a lofty condescending way to poor Mrs. Malet, who seemed distressed and annoyed.

Phil's face was scarlet with rage; she almost shook her fist at the fine lady whose parasol darkened the window for a moment as she passed.

"Oh, you wicked, hard-hearted old wretch; how I should like to wring your neck—and your heart too!" she ejaculated, setting her teeth, and stamping her foot, without regard as to whether she could be overheard through the open window or not.

"Never mind, Phil," said Esther quietly. "That is not the sort of thing that hurts."

But she stood up with a weary, wounded look in her pale face; and when Mrs. Malet returned, she begged to know whether she might not see Nina at once, as she and Phillis wished to reach home before nightfall.

"Certainly, my dear, if you wish it," said Mrs. Malet, who was flustered and out of breath, and perhaps a little afraid of Mrs. La Touche's opinion after all; "certainly, but it's no wish of mine that you should hurry; mind that. Nor yet of Nina's. She's expecting you, I know; and I'll go up with you to her room, if you like. While you're talking to her, I'll take Phillis round the garden a bit, and she shall tell me about her doings in London amongst those poor folk that I'm always worrying my head about. She may find some way of making use of the fruit and flowers that we have such a plenty of, amongst her London people. Come, Esther, my dear."

And as they turned to the door, she let Esther pass before her, and whispered loudly into Phil's ear—evidently for Esther's benefit—

"Sebastian's away for a day or two. He had business in London—about his book, I believe, so we shan't see him back until to-morrow morning."

And then, after a significant look and nod, she left Phillis in the oak-paneled hall, and went upstairs with Esther to Nina's room.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The mania for giving a large number of Christian names to one and the same person is particularly prevalent in Italy. An Italian gentleman named Campagna, who has just been naturalised a Frenchman, has given some little trouble to the French Foreign Office clerks in registering his full designation. Here it is: Vincendo Salvatore Maria Gennaro Francesco Sales Francesco-d'Assisi Francesco de Paolo Rocca Michele Crocifisso Emiddio Pasquale Giovan Giuseppe Geltrude Carlo Gaetana Alfonso Ciro Andrea Luigi Gioran Antonio-di-Para Antonio-Abatte Campagna.

HOW BUFFALO WAS TAKEN.

ITS PECULIAR "DEFENCE" AGAINST BRITISH.

The Easy Work of the Canadian Attacking Force in 1813 as Told in the Buffalo Express—How the Merchant "Soldiery" Tried to Make Some Show of Resistance.

Here is the story, taken from the Buffalo Express, of the capture and destruction of the Bison City by 800 British troops and 200 Indians 80 years ago:

"There are to be found in the history of almost every large city events which stand forth as fixed and prominent as lofty mountains. In the life of Buffalo such an event occurred 80 years ago—December 30, 1813.

"To those who know only the Buffalo of these years, with its miles of asphalted streets, its beautiful homes, its Parkside, Kensington, Kenmore, Central Park, and other residence districts remote from the business centres, its innumerable streets and avenues stretching out in all directions, its enormous aggregation of marine, railroad and manufacturing interests, it is difficult to convey, by written words, a vivid and intelligent conception of its appearance at the time British and Indian foes swept through its streets with fire and sword 80 years ago. Within its limits were perhaps 100 buildings and a population of about 600 souls.

TO 'CAPTURE' CANADA.

"The strained relations arising from various causes which had existed for a long time between the Governments of Great Britain and the United States culminated in a declaration of war in June, 1812, and Buffalo, from its geographical position, became at once one of the military centres. The war continued through 1812 and 1813, a series of brilliant failures on land, and a series of brilliant victories on the high seas, including the capture of the British fleet on Lake Erie by Commodore Perry on September 10, 1813. Towards the close of that year all of British soil in this vicinity that remained in possession of the American troops, after repeated attempts to 'capture' Canada, was Fort George at the mouth of Niagara river. This the American commander, Gen. McClure, was obliged to evacuate early in December and retreat to Fort Niagara opposite, on the American side of the river. In effecting this movement Newark, an adjoining village, where Niagara now is, was set on fire and destroyed by McClure's orders. It was a cruel, unnecessary and barbaric action, and revenge was taken shortly after by marauding expeditions along the frontier. This disgrace was followed on December 19 of the same year by the capture of Fort Niagara, by which the whole western frontier was exposed to the enemy.

THE CONCENTRATION OF TROOPS.

"A concentration of troops was made at once at Buffalo and Black Rock. On the 26th of December the forces were as follows: Brig.-Gen. Amos Hall, commander; 129 mounted men under Lieut.-Col. Boughton; 433 Ontario county (N. Y.) volunteers, Lieut.-Col. Blakeslie; 136 Buffalo militia, Lieut-Col (Dr.) Chapin; 97 Canadian volunteers, Lieut.-Col Mallory; 382 Genesee county militia, Major Adams, all stationed in Buffalo; and 382 militia, Brig.-Gen. Hopkins; 39 mounted infantry, Capt. Ransom; 83 Indians, Lieut.-Col. Granger; and one field piece and 25 men, Lieut. Seely, all stationed at Black Rock. On December 29, Lieut.-Col. McMahon with 329 Chatauqua country militia reported. This swelled the total force to a little over 2,000, but it consisted mainly of raw, undisciplined troops, poorly armed and equipped.

THE EARTHWORKS.

"Of earthworks and other defensive positions the following were constructed in and around Buffalo and Black Rock during the war, but it is not clear from the reports whether all were in condition or available at the time of which we write. On the south side of the Scajaquada Creek, near its mouth, the Sailors' battery with three long 32-pounders; on the site of the home of the late Col. William A. Bird (long president of the Erie County Savings Bank), a three-gun battery; where the power house of the Niagara street railway stands, Fort Tompkins, six or seven heavy pieces of artillery; further south, not far from the water works, a mortar battery with one eight-inch mortar, nicknamed the Old Sow; on the northerly corner of Fort Porter grounds a light earthwork with one 24-pounder; and a breastwork near the north-east corner of the Terrace and Pearl street.

THE BRITISH ARRIVE.

"During the evening of December 29 about 800 British troops and 200 Indians crossed over and took possession of the Sailors' battery. Gen. Hall ordered the troops at Black Rock to dislodge them, but the militia became disordered and scattered almost at the first fire. Lieut.-Col. Chapin and Major Adams were ordered forward with their commands, but after a short skirmish the men fled and did not rally. The Ontario county (N. Y.) volunteers, under Lieut.-Col. Blakeslie, were then sent up and proved that they were made of much sterner stuff than the average militiamen of that era. Before reaching the ground day had begun to dawn and revealed a British detachment, forming the enemy's centre, crossing to this side in the rear of Gen. Peter B. Porter's house on Niagara steet, near Auburn avenue, while their right at the same time was approaching Fort Tompkins. Major-Gen. Riall, a veteran English officer, was in command.

THE COLONEL'S DEPLOY.

"The line of action of the enemy having thus been revealed, Gen. Hall promptly made a new disposition of his forces, and Lieut.-Col. Blakeslie, with the Ontario county volunteers, was ordered to attack the enemy's centre at the water's edge. Meanwhile the enemy's left had been moving up from Scajaquada Creek upon the American right. Lieut.-Col. Granger's Indians and the Canadian volunteers under Lieut.-Col. Mallory, were sent to meet this move, and Lieut. Seely with his six-pounder and two heavier guns were also brought into service. Lieut.-Col. Blakeslie's men made a most determined fight, but the right rapidly melted away. Lieut.-Col. McMahon's Chautauqua corps was ordered up, but that broke and scattered almost before getting under fire. Only Lieut.-Col. Blakeslie's men stood fire, and finally, outnumbered and outflanked, they were obliged to retire along the beach to avoid capture. By this time the remainder of the American forces were flying in all directions. A few courageous ones, among them Lieut.-Col. Chapin and Lieut. Seely, retired slowly along Niagara street towards Buffalo. Lieut. Seely had then but seven men and one horse left, and, mounting the horse, dragged the gun with him, firing back at the enemy as occasion offered.

THE MERCHANTS.

"Meanwhile a party, consisting of the merchant Seth Grosvenor, Elijah D. Efner, James Sweeny, Robert Kaene, Elisha Foster, a sailor named Johnson, and Capt. Hull and his brother Absalom, had secured an iron nine-pounder from one of Perry's vessels on the beach, and, mounting it on a ship's truck, planted it on Main street, near Church, pointing down Niagara street, resolved that some show of resistance should be made. Three shots had been fired when one of the wheels broke. At this juncture Lieut.-Col. Chapin went forward under a flag of truce to meet the enemy, who were in the woods where the City Hall now stands, and after some parley, surrendered the town. The British commander refused subsequently to recognize the act, claiming that Lieut.-Col. Chapin was not in command and therefore had no authority to do as he did.

"The Indians had not kept with the main body of the British troops but swarmed through the woods, emerging on Main street, near Tupper. A house near the corner of Tupper and Delaware streets, occupied by a man named Dill, was soon seen to be in flames. The torch was applied to other houses as the Indians passed into and down Main street.

THEY LEFT TOWN.

"Most of the houses in the village were destroyed at this time. A large proportion of the inhabitants fled at the first news of disaster at Black Rock, taking the Batavia, Seneca and Hamburg roads and many the Main street road to Williamsville. In the mad rush for safety families were separated, household goods and wearing apparel were left behind, sometimes cooking stoves and bedding were dumped indiscriminately into waggons, public stores were left for the enemy to some extent, although the larger portion was saved by a prompt removal into the interior, and the plundering of the houses made the destruction of the village almost complete. It was indeed a desolate holiday season.

"In the afternoon of the same day the invading force, surfeited with victory and plunder, and wearied by the continued marching and fighting, retired to Black Rock and thence back to Canada. The few villagers remaining breathed easier, and some who had fled returned. To their great horror, on New Year's day, 1814, another force of British and Indians suddenly appeared in the midst of them. The houses that had escaped destruction on the 30th were fired with three exceptions, and then, seemingly content with this, the invaders disappeared as quickly as they had come. The three houses in all Buffalo that thus escaped destruction were Mrs. St John's, Rees's blacksmith shop, and the county jail. A few days after this Capt. James Sloan and Judge Wilkeson passed up Main street and reported that the only living thing they saw between the Pratt ferry and Cold Spring was a solitary cat prowling around its old home. The embryo city was a mass of blackened ruins and forsaken habitations.

"In the winter and early spring of 1814 the inhabitants commenced to return, others floated in, newcomers turned their steps Buffaloward, and the onward and upward march towards that magnificent development which has fallen to our lot to enjoy was commenced. May its shadow never be less.—[George D. Emerson.

Mrs. Croaker:—Now children, that stupid looking creature with its head hanging over the bank is known as the ornithorhynchus paradoxus or duck-billed platypus. It—

Mr. Beaver:—Wh-a-a-t?

A dynamite petard was exploded on Friday near the church in Funterrebello, district of Segovia, Spain, and the Mayor of the village and the sexton of the church were killed.

NOTES ON EUROPE'S WAR SCARE.

Figaro Causes a Little Panic in France—A Wonderful New Rifle by a French Inventor.

The recently Figaro created a little panic of its own in France by the announcement that the forts of the southeastern frontier were insufficiently guarded and poorly supplied with guns and munitions. In a recent report to the Army Commission, the War Minister, Gen. Mercier, admitted that there was some ground for the statement, and declared that the defects referred to were being remedied as rapidly as possible.

Further alarm was created by a comparison between the forces of the Germans on the frontier and those of the French destined to meet them in case of war. It was said that the Germans were in a position to hurl vastly superior numbers against the French immediately upon the outbreak of hostilities. This impression Gen. Mercier corrects, and gives facts and figures showing that the advantage of numerical strength is on the side of France, and that nothing is needed to increase it still further except money. Additional subsidies for the army should be voted as soon as possible.

In his comparison of the troops massed on both sides of the eastern frontier and ready to march at the first signal, Gen. Mercier says that to the Fifteenth and Sixteenth German army corps he has opposed the Sixth and Seventh French army corps, one of which has four divisions of infantry, and each of which is about to be re-enforced by eight battalions. These two corps are joined one to the other by that splendid division of the Vosges, whose centre is at Epinal, and which was created by Gen. Varraigne, by whom it is commanded. Formerly in the Sixth French Army Corps there were only two divisions and two regiments of artillery garrisoned at Chalons; but now Gen. Jamont of the Sixth Corps has four divisions under his orders, and all these divisions, except the Twelfth, are stationed side by side with the six batteries of artillery destined to accompany them upon the fields of battle. Even in cavalry, notwithstanding the enormous mass of squadrons accumulated on the other side of the Vosges, the comparison of forces gives France the advantage.

Gen. Mercier recommends an increase of the military strength of the army on a peace footing, and speaks of the danger of releasing from duty one class before another is completely formed. In the southeast all the forts are about to receive a permanent and amply sufficient garrison.

It is further stated that when Freycinet entered the War office France was away ahead of Germany in artillery, but during his term the gap was rapidly closed up, and now Germany is believed to be in the lead.

In the debate on the war budget in the Belgian Parliament Gen. Brialmont spoke of the defences of the Meuse, which he characterized as insufficient. The invasion of Belgium on both sides, he said, was more than probable, in case of war between France and Germany. The Germans would invade Belgium through the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg and the Ardennes. It was absolutely necessary to strengthen the fortifications of the Meuse and to increase the Belgian army. It should be remembered that, if France and Germany respected Belgian neutrality in 1870, their interest in crossing the frontier at that time was by no means so great as it would be at present, if war should break out.

A new rifle surpassing all the others in every particular is reported in the Figaro to be brought out by a French inventor. It is a magazine gun, extremely light, and can fire one hundred cartridges without overheating the barrel. Its recoil is so slight that the soldier is never troubled with it, and its hundred cartridges, which are less than half the weight of the same number of cartridges of any other rifle, can be fired without taking the weapon from the shoulder. The effects of its little bullets are said to be terrific.

A Buffalo Stampede.

Mr. F. L. Hewgill, of Brandon, tells an interesting story with regard to the buffaloes in the early days of the North West Territories. In 1873 the international boundary commission was marking the line which separates Canada from the United States. Suddenly the commissioners discerned an immense cloud of dust approaching them One of the scouts declared it was the dust caused by a herd of buffaloes. Forty mounted men were sent out to try and turn the animals, but they were unsuccessful. The men were then ordered to halt and fire into the herd. In consequence, the column was split, one herd going to the north-east and the other to the north-west. The waggons were at once stopped on the line of march. Some of the buffalo broke ranks, and charged headlong into the waggons. One on being shot switched his tail round and caught his assailant fair across the cheek, knocking him down. The head of this buffalo is now in Montreal, in the possession of Sir William Dawson.

A Steamship on Lake Titacaca.

A triumph in engineering is reported from the mountains of Peru, where a twin-screw steamer of 540 tons, 170 feet long and 30 feet wide, has been successfully launched on Lake Titacaca, the highest navigable waters in the world, more than 13,000 feet above the sea. This steamer, which belongs to the Peruvian Government and is to be used for freight and passenger traffic, was built on the Clyde, then taken apart in more than a thousand pieces, and shipped to Mollendo by sea. It was then carried to Puno by railway and transported over the mountains on the backs of llamas and mules, and put together by a Mr. John Wilson, a Scotch engineer, with great skill and success.

The journeys of the Emperor of Germany cost him a great deal of money. According to an article recently published in a German paper, over 800,000 marks, or $200,000, were spent on the trip to Italy and Austria undertaken soon after he ascended the throne. A heavy trunk in charge of a privy councillor on that occasion contained eighty diamond rings, 150 decorations, many of them jewelled, fifty scarf-pins, thirty necklaces with diamond pendants, six handsome sabres, three large photographs of the Emperor and his family framed in gold, thirty gold watches, and 100 cigar-holders with diamond ornaments. The Emperor pays his own expenses when travelling on German railways.