AS GOOD AS GOLD.

CHAPTER XXIX.—Continued.

It being now what people call the "Pinkin in" of the day, that is, the quarter-hour just before dusk, he did not at first observe the result of his words upon her.

"If it were anything else," she began, and the dryness of her lips was represented in her voice.

"But it is such a little thing!" he said, with a deep reproach. "Less than you have offered—just the beginning of what you have so lately promised! I would have told him as much myself, but he would not have believed me."

"It is not because I won't—it is because I absolutely can't," she said, with rising distress.

'You are provoking!" he burst out. "It is enough to make me force you to carry out at once what you have promised."

"I cannot!" she insisted desperately.

"Why? When I have only within these few minutes released you from your promise to do the thing off-hand."

"Because——he was a witness!"

"Witness! Of what?"

"If I must tell you——Don't, don't upbraid me!"

"Well? Let's hear what you mean?"

"Witness of my marriage—Mr. Grower was."

"Marriage?"

"Yes. With Mr. Farfrae. Oh Michael, I am already his wife. We were married this week at Port-Breedy. There were reasons against our doing it here. Mr. Grower was a witness because he happened to be at Port-Breedy at the time."

Henchard stood as if idiotised. She was so alarmed at his silence that she murmured something about lending him sufficient money to tide over the perilous fortnight.

"Married him?" said Henchard at length. "My good—what, married him whilst—bound to marry me?"

"It was like this," she explained, with tears in her eyes and quavers in her voice; don't—don't be cruel! I loved him so much, and I thought you might tell him of the past—and that grieved me. And then, when I had promised you, I learnt of the rumour that you had—sold your first wife at a fair, like a horse or cow. How could I keep my promise after hearing that? I could not risk myself in your hands; it would have been letting myself down to take your name after such a scandal. But I knew I should lose Donald if I did not secure him at once—for you would carry out your threat of telling him of our former acquaintance, as long as there was a chance of keeping me for yourself by doing so. But you will not do so now, will you, Michael; for it is too late to separate us?"

"Then this racket they are making is on account of it, I suppose?" said he.

"Yes—I think he has told them, or else Mr. Grower has. . . May I leave you now? My—he was detained at Port-Breedy, to-day, and sent me on a few hours before him."

"Then it is his wife's life I have saved this afternoon."

"Yes—and he will be for ever grateful to you."

"I am much obliged to him. . .Oh, you false woman!" burst from Henchard. "You promised me!"

"Yes, yes. But it was under compulsion, and I did not know all your past——"

"And now I've a mind to punish you as you deserve! One word to this brand-new husband of how you courted me, and your precious happiness is slown to atoms."

"Michael—pity me, and be generous."

"You don't deserve pity. You did; but you don't now."

"I'll help you to pay off your debt."

"A pensioner of Farfrae's wife—not I! Don't stay with me longer—I shall say something worse. Go home."

CHAPTER XXX.

Farfrae's words to his landlady had referred to the removal of his boxes and other effects from his late lodgings to Lucetta's house. The work was not heavy, but it had been much hindered on account of the frequent pauses necessitated by exclamations of surprise at the event, of which she had been briefly informed by letter a few hours earlier.

At the last moment of leaving Port-Breedy Farfrae, like John Gilpin, had been detained by important customers, whom, even in the exceptional circumstances, he was not the man to neglect. Moreover, there was a convenience in Lucetta arriving at her house. Nobody there as yet knew what had happened; and she was best in a position to break the news to the inmates, and give directions for her husband's accommodation. He had, therefore, sent on his two-days' bride in a hired brougham, whilst he went across the country to a certain group of wheat and barley ricks a few miles off, telling her the hour at which he might be expected the same evening. This accounted for her trotting out to meet him after their separation of four hours.

By a strenuous effort, after leaving Henchard, she calmed herself in readiness to receive Donald at High Street Hall when he came on from his lodging. One supreme fact empowered her to this, the sense that, come what would, she had secured him. Half-an-hour after her arrival he walked in, and she met him with a relieved gladness, which a month's perilous absence could not have intensified.

"There is one thing I have not done; and yet it is important," she said earnestly, when she had finished talking about the adventure with the bull. "That is, broken the news of our marriage to my dear Elizabeth-Jane."

"Ah, and you have not," he said thoughtfully. "I gave her a lift from the barn homewards; but I did not tell her either; for I thought she might have heard of it in the town, and was keeping back her congratulations from shyness, and all that."

"She can hardly have heard of it. But I'll find out; I'll go to her now. And, Donald, you don't mind her living on with me just the same as before? She is so quiet and unassuming."

"Oh no, indeed I don't," Farfrae answered with, perhaps, a faint awkwardness. "But I wonder if she would care to?"

'Oh yes," said Lucetta eagerly. "I am sure she would like to. Besides, poor thing, she has no other home."

Farfrae looked at her, and saw that she did not suspect the secret of her more reserved friend. He liked her all the better for the blindness. "Arrange as you like with her, by all means," he said. "It is I who have come to your house, not you to mine."

"I'll run and speak to her," said Lucetta.

When she got upstairs to Elizabeth-Jane's room, the latter had taken off her out-door things, and was resting over a book. Lucetta found in a moment that she had not as yet learnt the news.

"I did not come down to you, Miss Templeman," she said simply. "I was coming to ask you if you had quite recovered from your fright, but I found you had a visitor. What are the bells ringing for, I wonder? and the band, too, is playing. Somebody must be married; or else they are practising for Christmas."

Lucetta uttered a vague "Yes," and seating herself by the other young woman, looked musingly at her. "What a lonely creature yyou are," she presently said; "never knowing what's going on, or what people are talking about everywhere with keen interest. You should get out, and gossip about as other women do, and then you wouldn't be obliged to ask me a question of that kind. Well, now I have something to tell you."

Elizabeth-Jane said she was so glad, and made herself receptive.

"I must go rather a long way back," said Lucetta; the difficulty of explaining herself satisfactory to the pondering one beside her growing more apparent at each syllable. "You remember that trying case of conscience I told you of some time ago—about the first lover, and the second lover." She let out in jerky phrases a leading word or two of the story she had told.

"Oh yes—I remember; the story of your friend," said Elizabeth drily, regarding the irisis of Lucetta's eyes as though to catch their exact shade. "The two lovers—the old and the new; how she wanted to marry the second, but felt she ought to marry the first; so that the good she would have done she did not, and the evil that she would not, that she did—exactly like the Apostle Paul."

"Oh no; she didn't do evil!" said Lucetta hastily.

"But you said that she—or as I may say you"—answered Elizabeth, dropping the mask, "were in honour and truth bound to marry the first."

Lucetta's blush at being seen through came and went again before she replied anxiously, "You will never breathe this, will you, Elizabeth-Jane?"

"Certainly not, if you say not."

"Then I will tell you the case is more complicated—worse in fact—than it seemed in my story. I and the first man were thrown together in a strange way, and felt that we ought to be united, as the world had misrepresented us. He was a widower, as he surposed. He had not heard of his first wife for many years. But the wife returned, and we parted. She is now dead; and the husband comes paying me addresses again, saying, "Now we'll complete our purpose." But, Elizabeth-Jane, all this amounts to a new courtship of me by him; I was absolved from all vows by the return of the other woman."

"Have you not lately renewed your promise?" said the younger with quiet surmise. She had divined Man Number One.

"That was wrung from me by a threat."

"Yes it was. But I think when one gets coupled up with a man in the past so unfortunately as you have done, she ought to become his wife, if she can, even if she were innocent."

Lucetta's countenance lost its sparkle. "He turned out to be a man I should be afraid to marry," she pleaded. "Really afraid. And it was not till after my renewed promise that I knew it."

"Then there is only one course left to honesty. You must remain a single woman."

"But think again. Do consider——"

"I am certain," interrupted her companion hardily. "I have guessed very well who the man is. My father; and I say it is him or nobody for you."

Any suspicion of lack of respectability was to Elizabeth-Jane like a red rag to a bull. Her craving for correctness of environment was, indeed, almost vicious. Owing to her early troubles with regard to her mother, a semblance of irregularity had terrors for her which those whose names are safeguarded from suspicion know nothing of. "You ought to marry Mr. Henchard or nobody—certainly not another man," she went on with a quivering lip, in whose movement two passions shared.

"I don't admit that," said Lucetta passionately.

"Admit it or not, it is true."

Lucetta covered her eyes with her right hand, as if she could plead no more, holding out her left to Elizabeth-Jane.

"Why, you have married him!" cried the latter, jumping up with pleasure after a glance at Lucetta's fingers. "When did you do it? Why did you not tell me, instead of teasing me like this? How very honourable of you! He did treat my mother badly once, it seems, in a moment of intoxication. And it is true that he is stern sometimes. But you will rule him entirely, I am sure, with your beauty and wealth and accomplishments. You are the woman he will adore, and we shall all three be happy together now."

"Oh, my Elizabeth-Jane!" cried Lucetta distressfully. "'Tis somebody else that I have married! I was so desperate—so afraid of being forced to anything else—so afraid of revelations that would quench his love for me, that I resolved to do it off-hand, come what might, and purchase a week of happiness at any cost."

"You—have—married Mr. Farfrae!" cried Elizabeth Jane, in Nathan tones.

Lucetta bowed. She had recovered herself.

"The bells are ringing on that account," she said. "My husband is downstairs. He will live here till a more suitable house is ready for us; and I have told him that I want you to stay with me just as before."

"Let me think of it alone," the girl quickly replied, corking up the turmoil of her feeling with grand control.

"You shall. I am sure we shall be happy together."

Lucetta departed to join Donald below, a vague uneasiness floating over her joy at seeing him quite at home there. Not on account of her friend Elizabeth did she feel it; for of the bearings of Elizabeth-Jane's emotions she had not the least suspicion; but on Henchard's alone.

Now the instant decision of Susan Henchard's daughter was to dwell in that house no more. Apart from her estimate of the propriety of Lucetta's conduct, Farfrae had been so nearly her avowed lover that she felt she could not live there.

It was still early in the evening when she hastily put on her things and went out. In a few minutes, knowing the ground, she had found a suitable lodging, and arranged to enter it that night. Returning and entering noiselessly she took off her pretty dress and arrayed herself in a plain one, packing up the other to keep as her best—for she would have to be very economical now. She wrote a note to leave for Lucetta, who was closely shut up in the drawing-room with Farfrae; and then Elizabeth-Jane called a man with a wheel-barrow; and seeing her boxes put into it she trotted off down the street to her rooms. They were in the street in which Henchard lived, and almost opposite his door.

Here she sat down and considered the means of subsistence. The little annual sum settled on her by her step-father would keep body and soul together. A wonderful skill in netting of all sorts—acquired in childhood by making seines in Newson's home—might serve her in good stead; and her studies, which were pursued unremittingly, might serve her in still better.

By this time the marriage that had taken place was known throughout Casterbridge; had been discussed noisly on kerbstones, quietly behing counters, and jovially at the King of Prussia. Whether Farfrae would sell his business and set up for a gentleman on his wife's money, or whether he would show independence enough to stick to his trade in spite of his brilliant alliance, was a great point of interest.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The retort of the furmity-woman before the magistrates had spread; and in four-and-twenty hours there was not a person in Casterbridge who remained unacquainted with the story of Henchard's mad freak at Weydon Priors Fair, long years before. The amends he had made in after life were lost sight of in the dramatic glare of the original act. Had the incident been well known of old and always, it might by this time have grown to be lightly regarded as the rather tall wild oat, but the single one, of a young man with whom the steady and mature, if somewhat headstrong, burgher of to-day had scarcely a point in common. But the act having lain as dead and buried ever since, the interspace of years was unperceived; and the black spot of his youth wore the aspect of a recent crime.

Small as the Court incident had been in itself, it formed the edge or turn in the incline of Henchard's fortune. On that day—almost at that minute—he passed the ridge of prosperity and honour, and began to descend rapidly on the other side. It was strange how soon he sank in esteem. Socially he had receeived a startling fillip downwards; and, having already lost commercial buoyancy from rash transactions, the velocity of his descent in both aspects became accelerated every hour.

New events combined to undo him. It had been a bad year for others besides himself, and the heavy failure of a debtor whom he had trusted implicitly completed the overthrow of his tottering credit. And now, in his desperation, he failed to preserve that strict correspondence between bulk and sample, which is the soul of commerce. For this, one of this men was mainly to blame; that worthy, in his great unwisdom, having picked over the sample of an enormous quantity of second-rate corn which Henchard had in hand, and removed the pinched, blasted, and smutted grains in great number. The produce, if honestly offered, would have created no scandal; but the blunder of misrepresentation, coming at such a moment, dragged Henchard's name into the ditch.

The details of his failure were of the ordinary kind. One day Elizabeth-Jane was passing the Golden Crown, when she saw people bustling in and out more than usual when there was no market. A bystander informed her with some surprise at her ignorance, that it was a meeting of the Commissioners under Mr. Henchard's bankruptcy. She felt quite tearful, and when she heard that he was present in the hotel she wished to go in and see him, but was advised not to intrude that day.

The room in which debtor and creditors had assembled was a front one, and Henchard, looking out of the window, had caught sight of Elizabeth-Jane through the wire blind. His examination had closed, and the creditors were leaving. The appearance of Elizabeth threw him into a reverie; till turning his face from the window, and towering above all the rest, he called their attention for a moment more. His countenance had somewhat changed from its flush of prosperity; the black hair and whiskers were the same as ever, but a film of ash was over the rest.

"Gentlemen," he said, "over and above the assets that we've been talking about, and that appear on the balance sheet there be these. It all belongs to ye, as much as everything else I've got, and I don't wish to keep it from you, not I." Saying this, he took his gold watch from his pocket, and laid it on the table; then his purse—the yellow canvas money-bag, such as was carried by all farmers and dealers—untying it, and shaking the money out upon the table beside the watch. The latter he drew back quickly for an instant, to remove the hair-guard made and given him by Lucetta. "There, now you have all," he said. "And I wish for your sakes 'twas more."

The creditors, farmers almost to a man, looked at the watch, and at the money, and into the street; when Farmer James Everdene spoke.

"No, no, Henchard," he said warmly. "We don't want that. 'Tis honorable in ye; but keep it. What do you say, neighbors—do ye agree?"

"Ay, sure; we don't wish it at all," said Grower, another creditor.

"Let him keep it, of course," murmured another in the background—a silent, reserved young man, named Boldwood; and the rest responded unanimously.

"Well," said the senior Commissioner, addressing Henchard, "though the case is a desperate one, I am bound to admit that I have never met a debtor who behaved more fairly. I've proved the balance-sheet to be as honestly made out as it could possibly be; we have had no trouble; there have been no evasions and no concealments. The rashness of dealing which led to this unhappy situation is obvious enough; but as far as I can see every attempt has been made to avoid wronging anybody."

(To Be Continued.)

CONCERNING CALLS.

Fashion is mending her ways in the direction of sense and sincerity in lines of social intercourse. The woman who designates upon her visiting card an "at home" day must always, whatever temptation may arise to be elsewhere, be tastefully gowned and ready to receive her friends at the appointed time. The hostess who does not restrict the visits of acquaintances to any day may still retain their good-will and her own self-respect. She is no longer "not at home," but more truthfully "regrets that she is engaged," by this message protecting her own conscience and that of her servants as well. The well-bred visitor will accept this graciously, knowing from experience how impossible it often proves under existing circumstances to set aside pressing duties for the chance caller. Formal visiting is now limited to afternoon hours as less liable to conflict with necessary appointments of daily life. The latch-string of hospitality still remains out for close friends, who drop in at all times according to impulse and convenience.

A fine line of courtesy leads the visitor not to offer her card to the servant, but to enquire if Mrs. Blank is receiving. If answered to the affirmitive, asks if she will see Mrs. S—. If in the negative, then the card in left in evidence of the call. Cards are in a measure falling into disuse, the English method of announcing guests being very generally accepted in the best circles of society, a pasteboard only left when the lady is out or not receiving. At social functions aside from the dinner of ceremony, guests are not expected to take leave of host and hostess when departing, a card left on the hall table covering this point of civility. This method is the outcome of afternoon teas and evening receptions at which people go and come constantly between the hours prescribed by invitation, keeping the hostess occupied in receiving from first to last. These affairs afford opportunity to entertain twice the number of guests without the discomfort of a crowd when the service in the dining room is continuous. Perfect independence is granted each hostess in the matter of menu and decorations, light refreshments and a few cut flowers now regarded as true hospitality in the same degree as the more elaborate efforts of florist and caterer. The woman who "can not afford to entertain" in the present day is hindered by pride and ignorance of society's ways rather than light pocket-book. We have much to thank our sisters across the water for in this matter, so surely but certainly are the charming little functions of foreign life asserting themselves in this country.

HOW TO SLEEP WELL.

Sleeplessness is a most distressing complaint, and one which ages a woman quickly; therefore "insomnia," as it is called, should be attended to at once. When night after night, a person lies awake for hours together, serious results are sure to follow. It may arise from various causes.

Disordered liver will often cause sleeplessness. When this is the case, the patient feels heavy and drowsy after meals, and may fall asleep at once on going to bed, only to awaken soon after and lie awake for hours, perhaps just dropping off for a few minutes before morning, and waking again, feeling tired and irritable. In such a case, treat yourself much as you would for a bilious attack. Take some aperient medicine; be very careful in your diet, take gentle exercise in the open air, and avoid all worry and excitement.

Irregularity in the hour of retiring will cause restlessness, and should be avoided if possible. Regular hours are much the best.

An afternoon nap is not always a desirable thing to indulge in, but if late hours have been kept the night before, and the requisite number of hours of sleep been curtailed, it is well to take a short rest during the day. The corsets and shoes should be taken off before lying down.

WAS HE A RENEGADE?

Two Irishmen, differing in political opinions, were discussing in an impassioned way their respective creeds. At last, ardor overcoming good nature, one accused the other of being a renegade to party and family tradition.

This accusation the second man stoutly denied, averring that his political views were based upon his own convictions rather than on an accident of birth. Still his accuser insisted that he was a turncoat.

You call yourself Daly! he cried, scornfully. You call yourself Daly, and everybody knows that when you first struck this country you had an O on your name big enough for a life-preserver!

AIR IN THE ARCTICS.

The air is so clear in the Arctic regions that conversations can be carried on easily by persons two miles apart. It has also been asserted on good authority that at Gibraltar the human voice has been distinctly heard at a distance of 10 miles.

WALKING ON BROKEN LEGS

ASTONISHING RESULTS OF A NEW PROCESS IN SURGERY.

By it Patients Are Able to Be Up and About Within Twenty-Four Hours After Sustaining a Fractured Limb—A Practical Test of the Ambulatory Bandage.

That a man is unlucky enough to fall and break a leg doesn't any longer have to spend weeks imprisoned in bed waiting for the fractured limb to mend but may be up and about sometimes within twenty-four hours after the accident, was made plain to the doctors assembled the other night in the surgical section of the New York Academy of Medicine. A workman who had fallen off a scaffold a fortnight before walked about the room without the aid of crutches and with only the slightest perceptible limp, although his left leg, which had been broken, was still done up in plaster paris.

He was one of two patients introduced to the surgeons as visible proof tem of setting broken legs, which sysetm of setting broken legs, which system was presented as a vast advance on the old method of treating such fractures by keeping the unfortunate victim in bed until the fractured bones reunited. The subject of the up-to-date treatment was presented in a paper by Dr. James Porter Fiske of the staff of attending physicians of Roosevelt Hospital. He gave the result of 250 operations in which

THE AMBULATORY SPLINT

had been used successfully in the hospitals. The problem that confronted the surgeon in such cases, he said, was to get injured patients up and about their business just as soon as possible, and by the new method flattering results had been attained, particularly in the case of disabled professional men. Its efficacy in the case of laboring men was a little less apparent. In the nature of their occupation the full use of fractured limbs was not so readily attained. If the injury was treated promptly the recovery was very rapid, excepting in the case of alcoholic patients, in which the danger of delirium tremens setting in after the fracture was the obstacle. In healthy persons, male or female, the method had secured admirable results.

The ambulatory system has been in use in Berlin for some time. It is quite simple. In the case of the fracture of either of the bones of the lower leg the patient is placed in a recumbent position and the injured bones are set in place and bound securely with an ordinary muslin roller bandage. No cotton is used in the binding. Outside of this roller a plaster of Paris gauze bandage is wound. This hardens and leaves the limb incased in a plaster cast which generally extends from the toe tip to the knee joint. It holds the broken parts of the limb immovable, and hardens rapidly. The best quality of cast and bandage is always employed, and the patient is encouraged to walk without crutches after

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.

Care is taken, of course, to avoid all possibility of inflammation settng in. The reason the patient can walk so soon is that the weight of the body is supported upon the upper part of the ambulatory cast, which acts as a crutch.

Dr. Fisk cited a case where a patient 72 years old had been able to walk within eight days after the application of the ambulatory splint. The healing of the bones goes on while the patient is walking about just as if he were lying down, as the fractured limb is in no way disturbed by the exercise. In fact, the reuniting of the fractured parts is hastened, and the stiffness of joints resulting from the old method of keeping a patient in bed and quiet is greatly reduced. Within six weeks, often sooner, the bones will have united, and then the limb is subjected to hot and cold douche baths and to brisk massage to restore it to its normal condition. The avarage time the ambulatory splint was worn in the 250 cases quoted was from twenty-eight to thirty-five days, and many of the patients were able to go about much the same as usual during this period.

Dr. John M. Woodbury of Roosevelt Hospital said that in none of the cases cited by Dr. Fiske had any patient returned to the hospital for treatment for malformation of the limb. Even in the case of serious double oblique fracture, where the weight of the body is liable to dislocate the set limb and drive the bone through the flesh, the process had worked successfully. This was important from a medico-legal standpoint, for it protected the surgeon from the risk of damage suits for faulty surgery.

GREAT ICE AVALANCHE.

A mass of ice comprising 4,000,000 cubic feet broke away on the 11th of September, 1896, from the lower part of the Altels Glacier on the Gemmi Pass, in Switzerland. With the velocity acquired in its descent this river of ice rushed across the pasturage and up the western slope of the valley to a height of 1,300 feet along the rocky wall of the Weissflugrat. Not being able to completely surmount this barrier, the main mass came surging back—like a vast seawave recoiling from the cliffs—with such force that some of it returned to a height of 100 feet up the eastern side. Isolated blocks of ice were hurled clear over the ridge into the adjoining valley. The avalanche was preceded by a terrific blast of wind, which swept away chalets, trees, men and cattle, as though they had been feathers. These sudden avalanches of ice or snow form one of the special dangers of Alpine climbing.

SERVES THE PURPOSE.

Does your wife ever tie a string around your finger to make you remember things?

Yes, often.

How does it work?

Well, when I get into the city it reminds me to telegraph to her and ask her what it was she wanted me to remember.