AS GOOD AS GOLD.

CHAPTER XXXIV. (Continued.)

"Is it so—and is it so?" said Farfrae, looking down. "Why should he do it?" added the young man bitterly; "what harm have I done him that he should try to wrong me?"

"God only knows," said Joyce, lifting his eyebrows. "It shows much long-suffering in you to put up with him, and keep him in your employ."

"But I cannot discharge a man who was once a good friend to me. How can I forget that, when I came here, 'twas he enabled me to make a footing for myself? No, no. As long as I've a day's wark to offer he shall do it if he chooses. 'Tis not I who will deny him such a little as that. But I'll drop the idea of establishing him in a shop till I can think more about it."

It grieved Farfrae much to give up this scheme. But a damp having been thrown over it by these and other voices in the air, he went and countermanded his orders. The then occupier of the shop was in it when Farfrae spoke to him, and feeling it necessary to give some explanation of his withdrawal from the negotiation, Donald mentioned Henchard's name, and stated that the intentions of the Council had been changed.

The occupier was much disappointed, and straightway informed Henchard, as soon as he saw him, that a scheme of the Council for setting him up in a shop had been knocked on the head by Farfrae. And thus out of error enmity grew.

When Farfrae got indoors that evening the tea-kettle was singing on the high hob of the semi-egg-shaped grate. Lucetta, light as a sylph ran forward and seized his hands, whereupon Farfrae duly kissed her.

"Oh!" she cried playfully, turning to the window. "See—the blinds are not drawn down, and the people can look in—what a scandal!"

When the candles were lighted, the curtains drawn, and the twain sat at tea, she noticed that he looked serious. Without directly inquiring why, she let her eyes linger solicitously on his face.

"Who has called?" he absently asked. "Any folk for me?"

"No," said Lucetta. "What's the matter, Donald?"

"Well—nothing worth talking of," he responded sadly.

"Then never mind it. You will get through it. Scotchmen are always lucky."

"No—not always!" he said, shaking his head gloomily as he contemplated a crumb on the table. "I know many who have not been so! There was Sandy Macfarlane, who started to America to try his fortune, and he was drowned; and Archibald Leith, he was murdered! And poor Willie Dunbleeze and Maitland Macfreeze—they fell into bad courses, and went the way of all such!"

"Why—you old goosey—I was only speaking in a general sense, of course. You are always so literal. Now when we have finished tea, sing me that funny song about high-heeled shoon and siller tags, and the one-and-forty wooers."

"No, no. I couldna sing to-night! It's Henchard—he hates me; so that I may not be his friend if I would. I would understand why there should be a wee bit envy; but I cannot see a reason for the whole intensity of what he feels. Now can you, Lucetta? It is more like old-fashioned rivalry in love than just a bit of rivalry in trade."

Lucetta had grown somewhat wan. "No," she replied.

"I give him employment—I cannot refuse it. But neither can I blind myself to the fact that with a man of passions such as his, there is no safeguard for conduct!"

"What have you heard—oh Donald, dearest?" said Lucetta in alarm. The words on her lips were "anything about me?"—but she did not utter them. She could not, however, suppress her agitation and her eyes filled with tears.

"No, no—it is not so serious as ye fancy," declared Farfrae soothingly; though he did not know its seriousness as well as she.

"I wish you would do what we have talked of," mournfully remarked Lucetta. "Give up business, and go away from here. We have plenty of money, and why should we stay?"

Farfrae seemed seriously disposed to discuss this move, and they talked thereon till a visitor was announced. Their neighbour Alderman Vatt came in.

"You've heard, I suppose, of poor Dr. Chalkfield's death? Yes—died this afternoon at five," said Mr. Vatt. Chalkfield was the councilman who had succeeded to the Mayoralty in the preceding November.

Farfrae was sorry at the intelligence, and Mr. Vatt continued: "Well, we know he's been going some days, and as his family is well provided for we must take it all as it is. Now I have called to ask ye this—quite privately. If I should nominate ye to succeed him, and there should be no particular opposition, will ye accept the chair?"

"But there are folk whose turn is before mine; and I'm over young, and may be thought pushing!" said Farfrae after a pause.

"Not at all. I don't speak for myself only, several have named it. You won't refuse?"

"We thought of going away," interposed Lucetta, looking at Farfrae anxiously.

"It was only a fancy," Farfrae murmured. "I wouldna refuse if it is the wish of a respectable majority in the Council."

"Very well, then, look upon yourself as elected. We have had old men long enough."

From this evening onward Lucetta was very uneasy. If she had not been imprudence incarnate, she would not have acted as she did when she met Henchard by accident a day or two later. It was in the bustle of the market, when no one could readily notice their discourse.

"Michael," said she, "I must again ask you what I asked you months ago—to return me any letters or papers of mine that you may have—unless you have destroyed them. You must see how desirable it is that the time at Jersey should be blotted out, for the good of all parties."

"Why, bless the woman—I packed up every scrap of your handwriting to give you in the coach—but you never appeared."

She explained how the death of her aunt had prevented her taking the journey on that day. "And what became of the parcel then?" she asked.

He could not say—he would consider. When she was gone he recollected that he had left a heap of useless papers in his former dining-room safe—built up in the wall of his old house—now occupied by Farfrae. The letters might have been amongst them.

A grotesque grin shaped itself on Henchard's face. Had that safe been opened?

He, in the meantime, festering with indignation at some erroneous intelligence of Farfrae's opposition to the scheme for installing him in the little seed-shop was greeted with the news of the municipal election (which, by reason of Farfrae's comparative youth and his Scottish nativity—a thing unprecedented in the case—had an interest far beyond the ordinary).

The next morning he went to the corn-yard as usual and about eleven o'clock Donald entered through the green door, with no trace of the worshipful about him.

"I was going to ask you," said Henchard, "about a packet that I may possibly have left in my old safe in the dining-room."

"If so, there it is now," said Farfrae. "I have never opened the safe at all as yet; for I keep my few securities at the bank, to sleep easy o' nights."

"It was not of much consequence—to me," said Henchard. "But I'll call for it this evening, if you don't mind."

It was quite late when he fulfilled his promise. Farfrae invited him into the dining-room, where he at once unlocked the iron safe built into the wall, his, Henchard's safe, made by an ingenious locksmith under his direction. Farfrae drew thence the parcel, and other papers, with apologies for not having returned them.

"Never mind," said Henchard drily. "The fact is they are letters mostly. Yes," he went on, sitting down and unfolding Lucetta's passionate bundle, "here they be. That ever I should see 'em again! I hope Mrs. Farfrae is well after her exertions of yesterday?"

"She has felt a bit weary; and has gone to bed early on that account."

Henchard returned to the letters, sorting them over with interest, Farfrae being seated at the other end of the dining-table. "You don't forget, of course," he resumed "that curious chapter in the history of my past, which I told you of, and that you gave me some assistance in? These letters are, in fact, related to that unhappy business. Though, thank God, it is all over now."

"What became of the poor girl?" asked Farfrae.

"Luckily she married, and married well," said Henchard. "So that these reproaches she poured out on me do not now cause me any twinges, as they might otherwise have done. . . Just listen to what an angry woman will say!"

Farfrae, willing to humor Henchard, though quite uninterested, and bursting with yawns, gave well-mannered attention.

"For me," the letter went on, "there is practically no future. A creature too unconventionally devoted to you—who feels it impossible that she can be wife of any other man; and who is yet no more to you than the first woman you meet in the street—such am I. I quite acquit you of any intention to wrong me, yet you are the door through which wrong has come to me. That in the event of your present wife's death you will place me in her position is a consolation so far as it goes—but how far does it go? Thus I sit here, forsaken by my few acquaintances, and forsaken by you."

"That's how she went on to me," said Henchard; "acres of words like that, when what had happened was no fault of mine."

"Yes," said Farfrae absently, "such is the way of women."

Henchard unfolded another letter, and read it through likewise, stopping at the subscription as before. "Her name I don't give," he said blandly. "As I didn't marry her, and another man did, I can scarcely do that in fairness to her."

"Tr-rue, tr-rue," said Farfrae. "But why didn't you marry her when your wife Susan died?" Farfrae asked this, and the other questions, in the comfortably different tone of one whom the matter very remotely concerned.

"Ay—well, you may ask that," said Henchard, the new-moon-shaped grin adumbrating itself again upon his mouth. "In spite of all her protestations, when I came forward to do so, as in generosity bound, she was not the woman for me."

"She had already married another—I presume?"

Henchard answered "Yes."

"The young lady must have had a heart that bore transplanting very readily."

"She had, she had," said Henchard, emphatically.

He opened a third and fourth letter, and read. The truth was that, as may be divined, he had quite intended to effect a grand catastrophe at the end of this drama by reading out the name; he had come to the house with no other thought. But sitting here in cold blood he could not do it. Such a wrecking of hearts appalled even him.

CHAPTER XXXV.

As Donald stated, Lucetta had retired early to her room because of fatigue. She had however, not gone to rest but sat in the bedside chair reading, and thinking over the events of the day. At the ringing of the door-bell by Henchard she wondered who it should be that would call at that comparatively late hour. The dining-room was almost under her bedroom; she could hear that somebody was admitted there, and presently the indistinct murmur of a person reading became audible.

The usual time for Donald's arrival upstairs came and passed, yet still the reading and conversation went on. This was very singular. At last she left the room, and descended the stairs. Her own words greeted her, in Henchard's voice, like spirits from the grave.

Lucetta leant upon the bannister with her cheek against the smooth hand-rail, as if she would make a friend of it in her misery. Rigid in this position, more and more words fell successively upon her ear.

"One word," he was saying, "Is it quite fair to this young woman's memory to read at such length to a stranger what was intended for your eye alone?"

"Well, yes," said Henchard. "By not giving her name I make it an example of all womankind, and not a scandal to one."

"If I were you I would destroy them," said Farfrae, "As another man's wife it would injure the woman if it were known."

"No, I shall not destroy them," murmured Henchard, putting the letters away. Then he arose, and Lucetta heard no more.

She went back to her bedroom in a semi-paralysed state. For very fear she could not undress, but sat on the edge of the bed, waiting. Would Henchard let out the secret in his parting words? Her suspense was terrible.

The door slammed; she could hear her husband bolting it. After looking round in his customary way he came leisurely up the stairs. Her gaze hung doubtful for a moment, then to her joyous amazement she saw that he looked at her with the rallying smile of one who had just been relieved of a scene that was irksome. She could hold out no longer, and sobbed hysterically.

When he had restored her Farfrae naturally enough spoke of Henchard. "Of all men he was the least desirable as a visitor," he said, "but it's my belief that he's just a bit crazed. He has been reading to me a long lot of letters relating to his past life; and I could do no less than indulge him by listening."

This was sufficient. Henchard, then, had not told. Henchard's last words to Farfrae, in short, as he stood on the door-step, had been these: "Well—I'm much obliged to ye for listening. I may tell more about her some day."

Next morning Lucetta remained in bed, meditating how to parry this incipient attack. The bold stroke of telling Donald the truth, dimly conceived, was yet too bold.

She decided to employ persuasion—not with Donald, but with the enemy himself. Having laid her plan, she rose, and wrote to him who kept her on these tenterhooks:

"I overheard your interview with my husband last night, and saw the drift of your revenge. The very thought of it crushes me. Have pity on a distressed woman. If you could see me you would relent. You do not know how anxiety has told upon me lately. I will be at the Ring at the time you leave work—just before the sun goes down. Please come that way. I cannot rest till I have seen you face to face, and heard from your mouth that you will carry this horse-play no farther." If ever tears and pleadings have served the weak to fight the strong, let them do so now!

With this view she made a toilette which differed from all she had ever attempted before. She had not slept all the previous night, and this had produced upon her naturally pretty though slightly worn features, the aspect of a countenance ageing prematurely from extreme sorrow. She selected—as much from want of spirit as design—her, poorest, plainest, and longest discarded attire.

To avoid the contingency of being recognised she veiled herself, and slipped out of the house quickly. She was not disappointed in the fearful hope with which she awaited him. Henchard came over the top, descended and Lucetta waited breathlessly.

His manner as he had come down had been one of cynical carelessness; but he now put away his grim half-smile, and said, in a kindly subdued tone, "Good night t'ye. Of course I'm glad to come if you want me."

"Oh, thank you," she said apprehensively.

"I am sorry to see you looking so ill," he stammered, with unconcealed compunction.

"How can you be sorry," she asked, "when you deliberately cause it?"

"What?" said Henchard, uneasily, "Is it anything I have done that has pulled you down like that?"

"It is all your doing," said she. "I have no other grief. My happiness would be secure enough, but for your threats. Oh, Michael, don't wreck me like this! You might think that you have done enough! When I came here I was a young woman; now I am rapidly becoming an old one. Neither my husband nor any other man will regard me with interest long."

Henchard was disarmed. His old feeling of supercilious pity for womankind in general was intensified by this suppliant appearing here as the double of the first.

"Well, what do you want me to do?" he said gently. "I am sure I shall be very willing. My reading of those letters was only a sort of practical joke, and I revealed nothing."

"To give me back the letters and any papers you may have that breathe of matrimony or worse."

"So be it. Every scrap shall be yours. . . But between you and me, Lucetta, he is sure to find out something of the matter, sooner or later."

"Ah!" she said with eager tremulousness; "but not till I have proved myself a faithful and deserving wife to him, and then he may forgive me everything."

"H'm—I hope so," he said. "But you shall have the letters without fail, and your secret shall be kept. I swear it."

"How good you are!—how shall I get them?"

He reflected, and said he would send them the next morning. "Now don't doubt me," he added. "I can keep my word."

(To be Continued.)

BOYS THE BEST COOKS.

A cooking school teacher says that she finds it much easier to teach boys to cook than to teach girls. The boys learn more quickly, and are more interested and attentive at the lessons. This, of course, ought not to be so, but others than this cooking teacher have said the same thing. Boys, too, learn to sew very readily, and sew extremely well when they make the effort to learn at all.

ENLIGHTENED FRANCE.

TORTURE USED BY THE JUDICIARY TO EXTRACT CONFESSIONS.

Instances of the Brutal Conduct of French Judges—Through Trickery Innocent Men Are Sentenced to Terms of Imprisonment.

The widespread scandle in France created by the dismissal from office of the Juge d'Instruction, M. Duc at Bayeux, for having pommelled prisoners into confessing the crimes of which they were accused—in one instance actually breaking the nose of a man—has served to fix the attention of the public on an almost incredible abuse of power by the magistrates who conduct the preliminary investigations into criminal cases.

Recruited from among the lawyers who have failed to secure remunerative practice, miserably underpaid and with their prospects of promotion dependent entirely upon the number of convictions they secure, the French Juges d'Instruction literally stop at nothing to obtain admissions of guilt from the accused.

The methods which magistrates of this class adopt savor of the old system of torture. Some of the Juges d'Instruction adopt methods of persuasion to compel confessions that are suggestive of the Inquisition. They will have a prisoner fed almost exclusively upon salt fish and given only a minimum ration of water. Then the poor wretch is introduced into the presence of the magistrate; a bottle of clear spring water is placed temptingly just beyond his reach. He begs for a drink. "Not before you have answered my questions," replies his tormentor.

Another method is to hint that the prisoner's wife, whom he may not have seen for months, is waiting in a private room of the court, and that if he is amenable to "reason" he may be permitted to see her.

TO FORCE A CONFESSION.

There is literally no limit to the powers which the Juge d'Instruction possesses over unconvicted prisoners. The unfortunate Marquis de Nayve was kept for two years in solitary confinement and subjected once or twice each month to examination by the magistrate before the taller finally consented to send him up for trial, which resulted in his acquittal.

Recently in Paris the brother of a lunatic was accused by the latter of murder, and, although a married man with a family, was compelled to spend four months in prison before he was tried, when his innocence was so patent that the presiding judges said that the investigating magistrate had broken the record of all his fellows for asinine obstinacy and prejudice.

A short time ago a man and his wife were executed at Blois for parricide on the evidence of their six-year-old daughter. The latter had been taken to the private room of the Juge d'Instruction, and by means of candy, cakes and toys cajoled into making the replies necessary to convict her parents.

Another murderer, Gamehut, was induced by the magistrate to confess on being assured that it was his widowed mother's desire that he should do so, and that it was by complying with her wish in the matter that he could obtain his pardon. There assurances were backed up by a letter purporting to have been written by the old woman. She had never opened her lips on the subject. The letter was a forgery.

BETRAYED BY A STOOL PIGEON.

At Versailles Pierre Lance, charged with murder, was sent to the guillotine on evidence obtained by first keeping him in solitary confinement a year and then by allowing him to take exercise in an inclosure where there was a hole in the wall. On peeping through Pierre found himself face to face with another prisoner. An intimacy sprang up between the two men, and the murderer ended by giving the fullest details of the crime to his friend, unaware that every word he uttered was being taken down by the Juge d'Instruction, who was seated against the wall, out of sight.

Perhaps the best-known case is that of the celebrated Radical leader, Raspail, who was falsely accused of being implicated in a conspiracy to upset the Government. The examining judge, unable to obtain a particle of evidence, at length summoned M. Raspail to his private office and addressed him as follows:

"My dear Mr. Raspail, try to forget for a moment that I am a Judge, and let us talk freely like two men of the world. Supposing I were to attempt to upset the existing Government and you were in my place, what would you do with me?"

"It would be such a hare-brained attempt," replied Raspail, "that I should at once have you locked up in the lunatic asylum at Charenton."

The Judge broke off the conversation there and then, and on the following day Raspail, without being allowed an opportunity of explaining matters, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for having insulted a magistrate while in the exercise of his judicial functions.

HE KNEW BETTER.

I think, said the minister's wife, that you ought to cultivate more vehemence in your elocution.

You mean that I ought to make more noise?

I believe that might help to make your sermons more popular.

I doubt it very much. In fact, I'm afraid that method would have the opposite effect and send some members of the congregation away with an unfavorable impression.

I don't see why.

You know, my dear, that most people are liable to be ill-natured when they have just been awakened from a sound sleep.

STRANGE VISION.

How It Saved a Woman in India From a Cobra's Bite.

An English woman of assured social position in every way was recently paying a visit to some friends in Hartford, Conn. Some months previously she had been in India from which far-off country she brought with her a most remarkable story—so remarkable, indeed, that only the personal reputation of the narrator and the one other person concerned entitle it to consideration. The occurrence took place in the house of the narrator's sister at Meerat, Northwestern India. Two sisters are connected with families of undoubted repute, both in India and England. The narrator's sister was seated at a table reading one evening when, happening to lift her eyes from her book, she was astonished to see seated in a chair before her, and between herself and the door to the bathroom, a man, a stranger to her, who calmly regarded her. It was too great a surprise for her to speak and demand who was thus intruding unbidden upon her privacy, and what was wanted. She remained for a moment in silent astonishment. Then it gradually dawned upon her that the figure was not that of a person of

REAL FLESH AND BLOOD,

but a visitor from the unseen world of life. She remembered having once, as a child, seen a similar figure, under circumstances which seemed to preclude the idea that it was any person still in the body, and in later years, in revolving those circumstances, she had remembered how the apparition had after a little while faded away into invisibility.

Concluding that this visitor also was not a person of flesh and blood, she sat silently gazing at the silent object, while the intruder, whoever or whatever he was, sat also in silence, steadily regarding her. Just how long this state of things lasted the lady did not accurately know, but it was probably not very long, when the mysterious stranger began to vanish into a thinner and thinner personal presence, until in a moment or two he had vanished quite away.

She had been vaguely conscious that in a minute or so after she had first seen the strange visitor her two pet dogs had begun to bark furiously in another room. It had been her invariable custom to take a bath at this time in the evening, after which she liberated the dogs. As the animals on this evening were making such a tremendous and unwonted ado she opened the door of the adjoining room to see what was exciting them. They at once darted to the door of the bathroom. This their mistress opened in time to see a huge cobra on the floor—the snake whose bite is certain death. The reptile raised its head angrily, but apparently became afraid of the dogs and wriggled through a hole in the floor and escaped. But for the appearance of the supernatural visitor she would undoubtedly have gone directly to her bath from the reading table and would with equal certainty have been bitten by the snake.

WONDERFUL DOG ACTORS.

Some of the Remarkable Tricks Which They Are Taught to Perform.

A dog which expects to play an important role on the stage these days is obliged to be a very skillful actor. The taste of the public has become very exacting and only a very advanced grade of dog tricks are in demand. There was a time when a somersault-turning dog, dressed as a clown was considered a novelty.

The training of dogs for the modern variety stage has come to be one of the fine arts. The acts on sketches in which the best dog actors of the day appear must present some striking novelty and the various parts must be cast and rehearsed and staged with the greatest care.

The Russian dogs have been found to show a peculiar talent for acting. Iwan Tchernoff, a woman trainer, has recently, the London Sketch says, introduced a dog steeplechase. The horses were represented by terriers of various kinds and a number of puppies in the bright costumes of ordinary huntsmen occupied the saddles and jockeyed their mounts through the race with skill.

The most elaborate bit of canine acting in the world is, however, probably that done by Mme. Lucy Kolzowa's troupe, who represent the life of a Russian farm. A troupe of a dozen dogs are dressed as peasants and realistically perform every part of the work of the ordinary farm. The dogs go through the long act without prompting and the work seems to be entirely voluntary. The offspring of these remarkable dogs are in turn to be trained in the hope that these talents may be found to be transmitted. If this is found to be the case the possibilities of the feats which dogs may perform in the future are almost limitless.

TALLEST RAILROAD.

The Peruvian Central Transandine, or Oroya Railroad, is the tallest railroad in the world. From Lina, eight miles ahead and 500 feet higher, it winds up the narrowing valley of the Rimac, past great haciendas and forgotten ruins. At Chosica, 33 miles from the seat, it has gained but 2,800 feet in elevation, but within the yard limits of that station begins the 4 per cent. grade, which is steadily maintained for 73 miles. The Rimac's gorge becomes deeper and more contracted, the little bays and benches of arable lands scarcer. Not to confine the matter to single points, where the road has to give five miles to gain one, the total percentage is astonishing. From Callao to Orova the length of the track is 221 1-2 kilometers; of these 76 1-2 (one mile in every three) are consumed in overcoming the rise—and this besides the unprecedented maintaining of such a maximum grade.