CONFUSION OF CASTE.

Or Gentility Vs. Nobility of Soul.

CHAPTER XV.

We often try so hard and long to keep our secrets hidden, building barricades around them, telling or acting lies to guard them, setting a watch at the door behind which they stand concealed; and then suddenly some accident on which we have never reckoned, some chance so unlikely that we had never feared it, makes, perhaps, in one moment, all our efforts vain. For seventeen years poor Letty had kept her secret hidden from her daughter, and it happened all at once at the end of that time that a stranger told it to her in a dozen careless words.

The revelation was made one day soon after Mrs. Markham's visit ended. It chanced that day that Dorcas, coming along the village street, was caught in a sudden summer shower; she had come out in the sunshine, not expecting rain, and, beginning to run to find some shelter, a woman standing at an open door asked her to come into her cottage.

"It's going to be a regular downpour, miss," she said; "you'd best come in and stop till it's gone past."

She was an old woman—a Mrs. Cameron, whom Dorcas knew but slightly, but the rain was heavy, so she was glad to accept her invitation. She went into the cottage and sat down, and presently the old woman sat down too, and began to talk to her—about her rheumatism, and how the rain had been coming through the roof, and how times were so bad that she had a deal of trouble to make both ends meet.

"And I've got my daughter here too, because she's been sickly," she went on, after a time; "she's here with her baby; and her husband—he's half his time out of work, and it's a bad look-out for them. I was telling her yesterday that your mother might be willing to do something for her, and, if you'd mention it, miss, you'd be doing a kindness. If you'd just tell her it was Martha, as was fellow-servant with her at Mr. Trelawney's before she married."

She said this quite quietly, and the words passed into Dorcas' ears, filling her mind with only a kind of vague confusion. As she heard them first, they did not even so much as startle her; she merely thought, a little puzzled, that surely the old woman had expressed herself oddly, or that she herself was stupid not to be able to understand her.

"As was fellow-servant with her at Mr. Trelawney's before she married," she repeated slowly to herself, making an instinctive but vain effort to take the meaning of the statement in.

"Yes—that is many years ago, miss, and times is changed since then," the old woman went on wearily. "Martha didn't stop after your mother was married—she gave warning to Mrs. Markham the very day she heard about the wedding; but they all parted good enough friends—and I think it wouldn't be more than my daughter might look for if Mrs. Trelawney was to give a little help to her now—for Martha never grudged her her good luck, I'm sure—and there's many in her place would have done it, and have made mischief—there's not a bit of doubt about that. But Martha—she wasn't that sort, miss."

Was the old woman in her senses? Dorcas rose from her seat trembling, with the color going and coming in her face.

"I—I think I had better go home. It is not raining so very much. I will tell mamma about your daughter," Dorcas said hurriedly, in a strange, nervous voice. She was trembling as she spoke; she felt as if she could bear her position no longer; there were a hundred questions on her lips, but they would have choked her if she had tried to ask them of this woman.

Without paying any regard to Mrs. Cameron's efforts to detain her she bade her good morning and went out into the street again, and ran homewards through the rain that was still falling fast. She hurried through the village, and only paused to take breath when the last house was left behind her. Wet as it was, she struck into a path across the fields, where it was least likely that, in such weather, she should meet any passer-by, for a miserable instinct of shrinking from the sight of any face she knew had already taken possession of her.

Her mind was all in confusion as yet: she had made no connected story so far out of the facts that had been told her; gaunt and separate, they only stood up like isolated spectres before her, filling her with terror and shame. For this girl, you see, was but seventeen, and at that age the humbling of our pride seems such a bitter thing. Was it possible—she went along crying to herself—could it be possible that her father had done this dreadful thing?

She had hoped to get, unseen, into the house, but poor Letty, as she came up the garden path, was standing at the open door looking for her.

"Oh, my darling, how wet you are!" she cried innocently, and she hurried forward to meet Dorcas with hands already stretched out to unfasten her dripping cloak; but the girl, with an involuntary spasm of anger, shrank back as she would have touched her."

"I can take it off; you will only get yourself wet too. I will change all my things; you need not come upstairs with me," she said quickly and imperatively; and without a word of kindness threw down her hat and mantle in the porch, and ran up to her own room.

She was hard, she knew, but yet it seemed to her that she would not help being hard; had not her mother deceived and cheated her all her life? The sight of the gentle little woman had roused no tenderness in Dorcas' heart; instead of that it had only seemed to quicken her to a keener and fiercer sense of the wrong done to herself. She had no pity in these first hours—not one grain of pity—for the poor mother who had suffered much more than she would ever do.

Dorcas had no pity for her mother as she sat brooding over this thing that she had heard. When Letty came to the door a couple of hours after her daughter had returned to the house, and gently opened it and looked in, with her anxious, wondering face, it was not pity at all, but an unreasonable flame of anger that sprang up in the girl's heart.

"My dear, I thought you must be lying down. You have been such a long time here—and so quiet," Letty said.

And then Dorcas gave an annoyed and hasty answer to her.

"I have just been sitting down—resting. What is the use of looking after me? You need not fear that I have not taken off all my wet things; there they all are," she said.

The clothes she had changed were still lying on the chair where she had flung them, and Letty, without speaking again (only perhaps disturbed and wondering a little), came forward and began to lay them straight.

"Your poor frock is so draggled; it will need to be washed," she said. "Oh, dear, just look how wet it is! I can't think why you came all through the rain, my dear? I made sure you would shelter somewhere."

"I did shelter," the girl said shortly. "I went to Mrs. Cameron's."

"Mrs. Cameron's?" Letty paused in her occupation for a moment, and—to Dorcas' imagination, at least—an uneasy look passed over her face. "What—the old woman living near the little bridge? I didn't think you knew her, Dorcas?"

"Oh, yes—I have often spoken to her."

And then Letty made no answer, and in silence went on folding up the clothes.

"I stayed in her cottage till I was tired," Dorcas said, after a minute. And then she added hastily—"She told me to tell you that her daughter was here, and that she wants you to do something for her."

"What—Martha?" Letty asked quickly, and now the color really rose to her cheek.

"Did you see her?" she said, after a moment's pause.

"No—she was out. But Mrs. Cameron told me to tell you that she was very poor."

"Oh, I'll see and do something for her." Letty said this quickly too, and then gave a hasty, uneasy glance at the girl's face. What did she know? What had been told to her? She folded up the remaining clothes in silence; with a poor, timid effort to win a touch of kindness from her daughter before she went away, she put her hand upon her shoulder.

"Are you coming downstairs, Dorcas," she said. "Don't sit up here so long alone. Your head is not aching, is it, my dear?"

"You know I never have headaches, Dorcas answered testily, and made a movement almost as if she would shake off the caressing hand.

And then poor Letty went away, and the girl, as she closed the door, knew that she had been very hard and cruel, and yet she was too angry and bitter to repent.

Had not her mother done wrong? Would her father ever have married her, or thought of marrying her, if somehow the fault at first had not been hers?

She had begun painfully to link the few facts that had been given her together, and to make something like a connected story out of them. Her mother and Martha Cameron had been fellow-servants here together: was not that what Mrs. Cameron had said? Mrs. Markham must have got her brought here; she must have got her brought here, and then somehow, they must have made him promise to marry her. Had Martha Cameron had anything to do with it, she wondered?—or was it Mrs. Markham who had managed it all? For it must have been managed somehow—it must! the girl passionately reiterated; left to himself, her father would never have lowered himself to do this thing.

Dorcas' check was burning as she sat thinking and weaving her cruel story. Oh, how hard it was!—how hard for her! If only it could have been kept from everybody's knowledge!—if, after his marriage, he had gone to live in some new place!—but to think that, of all the people she had lived amongst all her life, there was not one who did not know this thing that she had never known—that they must have talked it over a thousand times—that there was no one she ever spoke to who did not know what her mother had been! Poor little Dorcas, who had held her head till now so high! This trouble of hers was a very unsubstantial trouble, perhaps, yet, coming as it did, it seemed to her to be very hard to bear.

She suffered in silence for three days, and then, at the end of that time, the truth came out.

"Are you not well, Dorcas?" her father had said to her more than once; and Letty had watched her hour after hour—not innocently, and in the dark, as to the cause of the change in her, and as Mr. Trelawney was, but with timid and increasing fear and pain—with fear that made her shy and constrained in the girl's presence, and almost checked all expression of anxiety or tenderness.

"She is angry with me, and she will not tell me why she is angry," poor Letty said, sadly, to her husband. "I think she has heard something in the village, and that that is what has vexed her."

"What should she hear in the village?" he replied quickly, not understanding her meaning for a moment, and then she told him how Dorcas had been at Mrs. Cameron's, and how she had been "strange" to her ever since.

"Mrs. Cameron is an old mischief-maker if she has been telling her anything," he said, after a little silence; "but if she has we had better find it out. I will speak to Dorcas. That is all I can do. Perhaps she was sure to hear the stony sooner or later. We cannot help it, Letty. You must not fret about it. And he drew her to his side and took her hand. "It will make no real difference," he said hopefully. "She loves us both too well to mind such a thing—except for the moment. She has too much good sense. Believe me, dear, she will not mind it."

It was late in the evening—after sunset. He had finished his work for the day, and thrown himself back in his easy chair, as if to rest; and it was then, in the dusk, that he called her to him.

She had been sitting in the window seat, reading, for a good while. She got up when he told her to come to him, and went to his side unsuspiciously. He merely meant to talk for a little, she supposed, before he lighted his lamp. But when she sat down near him he took her hand, and then the first grave words that he spoke startled her.

"Dorcas, you have let something come between us during these last days," he said. "What is it? I want you to tell me. Perhaps your mother and I both guess what it may be, but we cannot be sure until you tell us that we have guessed right. I think you have heard something this week that has vexed you. Is this not so?"

Her hand almost unconsciously, as he began to speak, had made a spasmodic effort to escape from his, but he held it tight, and after a moment it lay impassive again in his clasp. But when he asked his question she hung her head, and made no answer to it, and he had to repeat it before, in a low voice, she said the one word—"Yes."

"Where did you hear it? Was it in the village—at Mrs. Cameron's?"

And then she said "Yes" again, almost below her breath, with her heart beating in great throbs.

There was a pause after this, but only for a moment or two, after that he said, very quietly—

"She told you something about your mother before her marriage? Was that it?"

"Yes," Dorcas said for the third time; and then he felt her hand quiver, and heard her begin to sob.

No doubt it was hard for him too. Perhaps in past years he had suffered at times pretty sharply on account of his marriage, but no doubt the keenest suffering he had ever known was what he endured now, as he sat here with his daughter at his side, knowing that the thing which had been told her had come like a sword between them, and shaken the faith and trust in him that she had had all through her life.

To be Continued.

DR. A. W. CHASE'S CATARRH CURE ... 25c.

is sent direct to the diseased parts by the Improved Blower. Heals the ulcers, clears the air passages, stops droppings in the throat and permanantly cures Catarrh and Hay Fever. Blower free. All dealers, or Dr. A. W. Chase Medicine Co., Toronto and Buffalo.

BABY'S BIRTHRIGHT

Is Health and Happiness.—How Mothers Can Keep Their Little Ones Well.

Health is the birthright of all little ones. It is a mother's duty to see that her baby enjoys it. Mother's greatest aid in guarding children's health is Baby's Own Tablets—a medicine which can be given with perfect safety to the youngest baby. Among the many mothers who have proved the value of this medicine is Mrs. J. W. Booth, Bar River, Ont. She says:—"My baby suffered greatly from sore mouth and bad stomach. Several doctors prescribed for her, but nothing seemed to benefit her in the least till I began giving her Baby's Own Tablets, and then in a short time my little one was fully restored to health. I would not be without the Tablets in the house, and would advise all mothers to use them when their children are ailing."

Baby's Own Tablets are used in thousands of homes in Canada and always with beneficial results. They contain absolutely no opiate or other harmful drug; are mild, but sure in their action and pleasant to take. The very best medicine for all troubles of the stomach and bowels, curing colic, indigestion, constipation diarrhoea and simple fever. They give relief in teething troubles, dispel worms, promote healthful sleep and cure all the minor ailments of children. Price 25 cents a box at all druggists, or sent by mail post paid, by writing direct to The Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont., or Schenectady, N.Y.

WORDS OF HOPE.

TO ALL WHO SUFFER FROM A RUN DOWN SYSTEM.

Mrs. Harriet A. Farr, Fenwick, Ont., Tells How She Obtained a Cure After Suffering for Two Years.

Thousands throughout this country suffer seriously from general debility—the result of impoverished blood and shattered nerves. To all such the story of Mrs. Harriet Farr, widow of the late Rev. Richard Farr, Fenwick, Ont., a lady well known throughout the Niagara district, will point the means of renewed health. Mrs. Farr says:—"For a couple of years prior to 1899 I was a great sufferer from a run down system. My digestion was bad; I had little or no appetite and was in a very poor state; I suffered from heart palpitation and a feeling of continual exhaustion. Doctors' treatment failed to benefit me and I gradually grew worse until I was finally unable to do the least work. I then began using Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and from the very first I noted an improvement in my condition. The severity of my trouble gradually lessened and by the time I had taken eight boxes I was again enjoying the best of health despite my sixty years. I believe that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills saved my life and would strongly urge all sufferers to give them a trial, believing they will be of great benefit."

When your blood is poor and watery, when your nerves are unstrung, when you suffer from headaches and dizziness, when you are pale, languid and completely run down, Dr. Williams' Pink Pills will promptly restore your health by renewing and enriching the blood. They are a prompt and certain cure for all troubles having their origin in a poor and watery condition of the blood. But only the genuine cure and these bear the full name, "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People," on the wrapper around every box. Solk by all dealers in medicine or sent post paid at 50 cents a box or six boxes for $2.50, by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

BEST PARTED.

A lady, talking of the servant problem, relates the following incident: After giving a trial to many servants—ranging from bad to very bad—the lady at last secured what she described as "a treasure." For six short weeks mistress and servant were perfectly satisfied with each other. Then, early one morning, Mary met her mistress with the dreaded:

"Very sorry, ma'am, but I'll have to give you a month's notice."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the mistress. "How is this, Mary? It was only yesterday that you told me you liked the place!"

"So I does, ma'am," returned Mary. "I likes the place all right, an' I likes you!"

"Then why leave me?"

"Well, you see, ma'am, your dog doesn't like my young man, an' my young man doesn't like your dog. They can't agree nohow, so they're best parted!"

EXCUSED HIM.

A lady travelling by rail sat facing a gentleman who, with one eye at least, seemed to be staring fixedly at her. She became indignant and said:

"Why do you look at me so, sir?"

He said he was not aware of having done so, but she insisted.

"I beg your pardon, madam, but it's this eye, is it not?" lifting his finger to his left optic.

"Yes, sir, that's the eye."

"Well, madam, that eye won't do you any harm. It's a glass eye. I hope you'll excuse it. But I'm not surprised that even a glass eye should feel interested in so charming a woman."

The explanation and the compliment combined to put the lady into good humor.

Old People's Favorite.

A Medicine that Invigorates the Kidneys and Liver, Takes Away the Pains and Aches, and Regulates the Action of the Bodily Organs---Strong Recommendation for Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills.

The experience of Mr. Brown as stated in his letter below, is similar to that of scores of men and women who feel old age creeping in upon them. The kidneys grow weak and inactive, the back aches, there are deposits in the urine, and pain and smarting in passing water. The legs swell, and there come pains and aches not unlike rheumatism.

Under such circumstances old people turn to Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills for relief and cure, and are not disappointed. They have learned by repeated trial that they can depend on Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills every time, and consequently they have become known as the old people's favorite medicine.

Mr. John Brown, 66 Nelson street, Ottawa, Ont., states:—"I am getting up in years, and having been a hard worker all my life, I am beginning to fail. For some time past I have thought there was something wrong with my kidneys. I seemed to bloat up, was very short of breath, and feared heart disease, although I was told there was nothing wrong with my heart. I got so bad that I had to do something.

"Hearing of Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills, I began using them, and by the time I had used up the first box I felt considerably improved. I continued using this medicine, and to-day feel ten years younger. I am strong and hearty, and do not suffer from my former ailments. I consider Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills an excellent medicine for old people."

There are people in nearly every town, village, and country side road who have proven the merits of Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills. Ask your friends or neighbors about them. One pill a dose; 25 cents a box. At all dealers, or Edmanson, Bates and Co., Toronto.

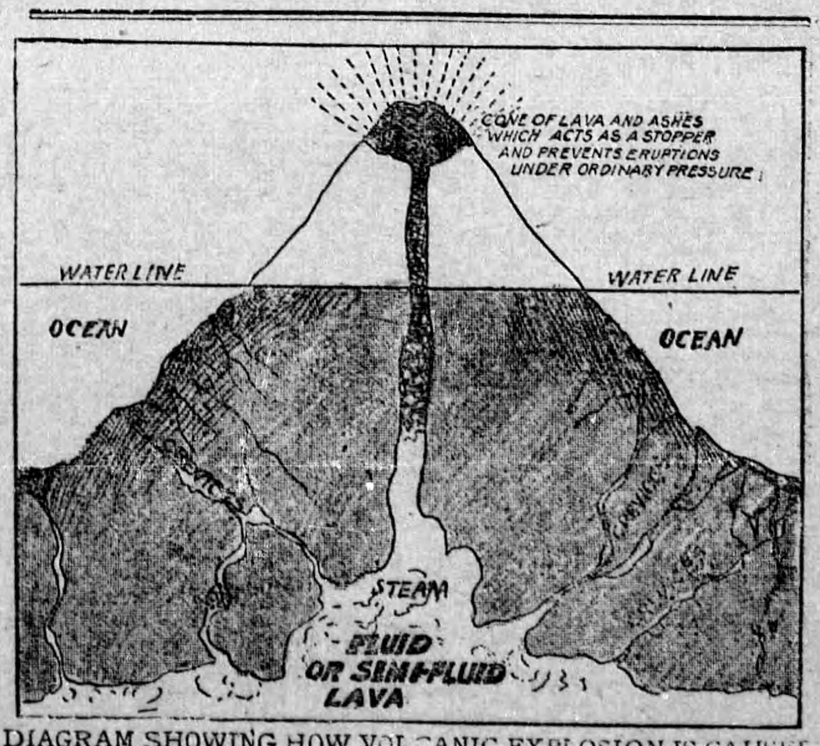

DIAGRAM SHOWING HOW VOLCANIC EXPLOSION IS CAUSED

A study of the above picture will show how the molten mass in the mountain's interior met the water, and how the steam generated thereby, following the line of least resistance, blew off the top of the volcano.