CONFUSION OF CASTE.

Or Gentility Vs. Nobility of Soul.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"Yes, you might be very sure that I should be willing to wait," Dorcas was saying, in her clear, low voice. "As far as I am concerned, two years are nothing; only, when they come to an end" — with a little tremor—"you need not trouble yourself about me, Frank. Then, or before then, if you like, you may give yourself to some other woman."

"Now what do you mean by that?" he answered.

They had met, as they had agreed to do yesterday, near the village, and he had told her of his interview with his mother as they walked along the field path that was little used by passers-by in winter. There was a stile that crossed this path in one place, and they were standing still there now, lest, by going further without pausing, their walk should end too soon.

"I only mean that I will not have you bound to me," she said. "I may be content to bind myself, because to marry you would be nothing but gain to me; but for you, you ought to forget me, if you can. That is what your mother hopes you will do; and do you think I blame her? If I had a son, I should do the same as she is doing," the girl said steadily.

"Yes, I can quite believe that you would; I don't credit you by any means with having no hard places in your heart," he answered, with a laugh. "But never mind that part of the business; we are talking of whether or not you mean to consider that I am engaged to you. Now, as to this, I have simply to say that, as you have accepted me, you have no further voice in the matter. I am your promised husband, as you are my promised wife; that is how things stand, and how they must continue to stand."

"But I want to have you free."

"I daresay you do. I daresay you want that and all kinds of other unreasonable things." He was leaning over the stile, and looking up with laughing eyes into her face. "When we are married, it is my belief I shall have pretty hard work to break you in."

"Ah, Frank, we shall never be married!"

"We shall be married in exactly two years."

"I do not believe it."

"No; you prefer to believe that I shall be a scoundrel, without either honor or constancy in me."

"I will never blame you, though you change your mind. Just listen a moment to me; I am very reasonable. I think, perhaps, if we were to go on seeing one another, you might not tire of me, or want things to be different, but consider, we are never to meet, and you are never to hear of me for two whole years! Do you think, leading the kind of life you will lead, seeing many people, going to many places, coming across other girls who will be so much fitter for you to care for than me—do you think that these three little weeks will not come presently to seem like a dream, and that you will not want to forget them, and—the foolish thing you did before they ended?"

"I only say that, if I do, I may cry 'Ichabod' over my life, for the glory will have departed from it."

"Ah, my dear, you will not think that when the time comes."

"I shall think it, you may be sure, sooner or later. When I lie on my death-bed, if I never do before. Perhaps you will be an old woman then, and I shall ask you to come and give me your forgiveness, and when we meet we probably sha'n't know one another. That would be hard. I shouldn't like it, Dorcas. Thank God it will never be! Look here," and he began suddenly to feel his waistcoat pocket—"I rode all the way to Worcester this morning, to get this for you. I daren't ask you to wear it now, I suppose, but you will have to wear it one day over your wedding ring. I set my heart upon getting opals, for opals, you remember, given by a lover, always lose their color when the lover becomes faithless; and I thought—as we were not to hear from one another, and as I suspected you were given to incredulity—you would like to have an infallible way of finding out whether I was behaving as I ought. There, you see the stones are bright enough at this moment, but in two years' time I suppose you will find them all as dull as ditch water."

"I think you ought not to give me this; I think I ought not to take it from you," the girl said softly.

"Take off your glove, and let me put it on your finger," was his only answer.

And then she hesitated for a moment, but after that moment she obeyed him.

He put on her ring, and then took her hand and kissed it.

"I have married you now," he said. "Remember you are my wife now, and you will commit bigamy if you ever let another hand put a ring there again."

"Ah, Frank, don't talk such nonsense!"

"I won't have you call it nonsense. I am in dead earnest in every word I say. Look, this is just the least trifle small, but I am glad of that. I want it to stick close. When I am going away I will trust you to no loose fetters. Dorcas, I wish you could wear it?"

"Yes, but I cannot."

"Well, I suppose you cannot. It would set people asking questions. Let me take it off then. There, what will you do with it? Could you put a ribbon through it and wear it round your neck?"

"Yes, I could do that."

"Do it then. And how often will you look at it to see if I have forgotten you?"

"I don't know" — with a little laugh.

"You will be doing it pretty often, I suspect. You will be bringing me up two or three times a day for judgment. By the way, you don't happen to have another opal about you, I suppose? I think it would rather suit me to receive one too."

"You don't need one. You know very well—"

"What do I know?"

"That you have nothing to be afraid of,"—said very softly.

"And ought you not to know that too?"

But to this fair question she would not give him an answer.

They saw some figure in the distance presently, and began to walk on.

"I will agree to whatever your mother asks," she had already said quietly. "You may tell her so; and if you like you may tell her too that I do not wonder she is angry. I think we have done wrong and foolishly. The only thing is that it seemed so hard to help it. But it is no more than reasonable, at any rate, that we should suffer for being foolish. I almost think I should like her to understand that I felt that."

"And about my own people—" she had said. "It may seem wrong to have all this go on while they know nothing; but I have been thinking of it ever since you were here yesterday, and the more I think the more I feel that it would do more harm than good to let them know I know that you are very generous and good, dear, and that at this moment if you thought it would bind us more surely to one another, you would go willingly and tell my father what there is between us; but if you were to do that it would only make him unhappy—and perhaps he will never need to be unhappy about this. At any rate, I want him to live these two years in peace. It could do no good to disturb him; and if—if you ever come back to me, Frank, he will understand why I told him nothing as long as there was nothing certain to tell."

"In fact, mother, she holds with you a great deal more than she does with me," the young man told Mrs Harcourt, with a half laugh, when he talked to her later in the day. "She agrees to everything you wish. She would have agreed to three years, I strongly suspect, if you had been shrewd enough to resolve to make terms with her instead of with me. Only remember," he added eagerly, "it is too late to do that now."

"I was a fool not to do it, though," Mrs. Harcourt thought to herself quickly.

And then she sat for a good while meditating on what her son had said.

"She appears to be a right-minded girl in some respects," she thought. "She may be disinterested enough; she may really love him (how, indeed, could any woman he wooed help doing that?)—and even at the two years' end, possibly, if she could be made to understand that a marriage with her would injure him— Yes, I am sorry I did not go and speak to her," she repeated, with a feeling of regret. "It cannot be done now; only, if by possibility Frank should retain his feeling for her to the two years' end, then, if she were generous—" thought Mrs. Harcourt, and suddenly broke off her silent sentence. Perhaps she was half ashamed of the plan that began to form itself in her mind.

It was only for six days after their engagement that Frank and Dorcas continued to see one another—six strange days, sweet and unreal, as she seemed to her afterwards. She had time enough to think them all over when they were gone, but at the moment she seemed to be hurried through them, breathless. The present, in its exquisite happiness, in its exquisite pain, had become the world to her. To see him was the object of each day that dawned; to remember each word that he had spoken to her, the effort of every hour that followed their brief meetings and partings. One day, when he had known beforehand that they could only be together for a few moments, he wrote to her and gave her his letter, the first and only love letter that she had from him. When he put it in her hand he told her to answer it, and so she answered it in a dozen half-shy, half-passionate lines. "Is this all?" he said, when he received the little note from her; but when he came back next day he said some words of thanks and blessing to her, that made the color come to her face.

"You have given me what I would not part with for a king's ransom!" he said.

"Will you keep it?" she asked him a little tumultukusly. "And, Frank, when you want to be free, will you send it back? I want you to keep it—that it may come back when you change. I shall understand, if you send it to me without a word."

She had told him already, more than once, that the only thing she asked from him was to let her know when he wished to be free. "Let me have the certainty that you will do that," she had said, "and I shall be quite calm and happy. I can trust you while you give no sign, if I may be certain, when you begin to forget me, that the sign will come."

"And how soon will you begin to look for it?" he had asked her, when she said that. "I can picture you perfectly—expecting the postman to deliver it to you every morning. You will set up a system of daily watching for the letters in about a week, I should say, from the time I say good-bye to you. That's your notion of the way to trust a fellow!"

And then she laughed; but she hardly denied that what he said was likely to be true.

They had to scheme and plan to achieve their daily interviews, and sometimes she knew that people in the village saw them together, but even at the risk of being seen with him she could not bear to refuse to meet him. Twice again he came to the house and saw her there, and the second of these occasions was the last time they met. He came on that day openly to say good-bye to them, and Letty was in the room nearly all the time he stayed, full of regret about his going.

"Though we have not seen very much of you this time, yet it has been so nice to think that you might drop in any day," she said, in her simple warmth and kindness. "And you can't think what a pleasure it has been altogether to have you here again. I hope, now you have come back once, you won't let such a long time pass before we see you next."

"No—that I will not, if I live!" he answered to this speech, with an emphasis that made the conscious color come to Dorcas's face. "Unfortunately, I don't see my way of returning next year; but the year after that I mean to come, if I am in the world at all."

It was a mild winter day, and when he rose to go he asked Dorcas frankly to come down to the gate with him. And then he said good-by to Letty, and, to the amazement of that simple woman, instead of bidding her farewell in the usual way, took both her hands in his, and kissed her.

"He quite made me jump, my dear," Letty said afterwards; "and if you could have felt how he squeezed my hand, too! But he always had that kind of hearty way—bless him! He's a dear fellow — that's what he is—and I feel like a goose when I think he's gone away." And as she said this she gave a little half sob, half laugh, that was almost more than Dorcas could bear.

For the girl by this time had parted finally from her lover, and was very desolate, feeling as if all the romance and all the glory of her life had passed away. She had borne up bravely to the end, but in the last moments she had put her arms about his neck, and wept bitterly. She knew that he meant to come back, but yet she believed that he would never come back. It was something almost like despair that rose in her heart as she took his last kiss, and blessed him, and let him go.

They had parted at the gate, and she stood there watching him till he turned on the summit of a little rising ground, and waved back a final greeting to her. The church clock had just struck five; the sky was golden behind the trees where the sun had gone down. "And my life is ended," the girl said to herself, thinking, girl-like, that to live for her lover was the only life worth leading. And then she went back to the house, quietly, wearily, even with her eyes dried already. For it was all ended; even the passion and the agony seemed over for the moment. The day was gone, she thought to herself—the little day that had been so bright and brief.

(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.

FREE MEDICAL ATTENDANCE.

FREE MEDICAL ATTENDANCE.

Under an insurance law enacted in Germany several years ago, 30,000,000 people receive in return for a return a nominal sum free medical attendance. The theory was that suffering humanity would receive cheap and effective relief from its bodily ills, but in practice there are many drawbacks. The doctors hired by the State hold that they are expected to do too much for the pay they get. In order to keep down expenses some doctors are inclined to impress upon the patients that nothing is the matter with them.

A PRETTY SIGHT.

One of the most beautiful sights in the world is the annual migration of butterflies across the Isthmus of Panama. Toward the end of June a few scattered specimens are discovered flitting out to sea, and as the days go by the number increases, until about July 14th or 15th the sky is occasionally almost obscured by myriads of these frail insects.

Wife—"Was that man ever a farmer ?" Husband—"No." Wife—"But he's always talking about the delights of living in the country." Husband—" Exactly. That's what shows he never was a farmer."

BABY'S OWN TABLETS.

A Positive Cure for Hot Wheather Ailments.

In the hot weather the little ones suffer from bowel troubles, are nervous, weak, sleepless and irritable. Their vitality is lower now than at any other season. Prompt action at this time often saves a valuable little life. Baby's Own Tablets is the best medicine in the world for little ones at this time. They speedily relieve, promptly cure, and give sound, refreshing sleep. The Tablets should be in every home where there are little ones during the hot weather months. Mrs. P. Ferguson, 105 Mansfield street, Montreal, says :—"I have found Baby's Own Tablets the best medicine I have ever used for children. My baby was attacked with dysentery and was hot and feverish. I gave him the tablets and they promptly cured him. Before this he had been rather delicate but since using the Tablets, he has been much better in every way. I can sincerely recommend the Tablets to all mothers with ailing children."

Baby's Own Tablets are guaranteed to be absolutely free from opiates and harmful drugs. Children take them readily, and crushed to a powder they can be given to the youngest infant with perfect safety. They are sold at all drug stores or will be sent post paid at 25 cents a box by writing direct to the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont., or Schenectady, N.Y.

A LIFE IN PERIL.

STORY OF A GIRL SAVED BY A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE.

She Suffered From Headaches, Dizziness and Night Sweats—Her Friends Feared She Was Going Into Consumption.

From L'Avenir, St. Jerome, Que.

Among the thousands of young girls who bless Dr. Williams Pink Pills for safely carrying them through that most perilous period of their lives when they step from girlhood into the broader realm of womanhood, there is none more enthusiastic than Miss Gabrielle Thomas, a young lady known to most of the residents of St. Jerome, Que., and greatly esteemed by all her acquaintances. To a reporter of L'Avenir du Nord, Miss Thomas said : "From the time I was fourteen until I was eighteen years of age my health was very bad. I was very weak ; had no appetite and could do no work. At night I perspired greatly and frequently slept but little. I suffered from headaches, dizziness and could scarcely move about without becoming breathless and I finally reached a stage when my friends feared I was going into consumption. I was under the care of doctors, but their treatment did not help me. I then tried several advertised medicines, but with the same poor results and I had come to think I could not get better. One day I read in a newspaper the statement of a young girl whose symptoms were almost identical with my own, who was cured by the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I then decided to try this medicine and have reason to bless the day I did so. I had only used the pills a few weeks when I began to get better, and in a couple of months every symptom of my trouble had disappeared and I was as strong and healthy as any girl of my age. I have since always enjoyed the best of health, and I shall be glad indeed if my experience proves helpful to some other suffering girl."

The happiness of health for both men and women lies in the timely use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, which act as a nerve tonic and supply new blood to enfeebled systems. They have cured many thousands of cases of anaemia, "decline," consumption, pains in the back, neuralgia, depression of spirits, heart palpitation, indigestion, rheumatism, sciatica, St. Vitus' dance and partial paralysis. But substitutes should be avoided if you value your health ; see that the full name "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People" is on every box. Sold by all dealers or sent post paid at 50 cents a box or six boxes for $2.50, by addressing The Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

TORONTO FIGURES.

Professional Men, Bankers Schools, Colleges, Etc.

According to the city directory Toronto has 409 disciples of Blackstone.

For her 225,000 inhabitants there are 383 physicians to administer to their physical needs.

Of druggists there are 146, all proprietors of stores well stocked and well kept—not like the apothecary of old with needy shop and a beggarly account of empty boxes.

There are 117 artists, some noted. The others hope to be.

Of banks and bankers there are 34 having several million dollars not theirs.

Architects number just 60, all willing to submit you "plans and specifications" on short notice.

There are 216 barber shops and perhaps four times as many barbers.

Dressmakers number 522.

There are 59 Public Schools and nearly 800 teachers. There are five special free schools in connection with orphan homes; 19 Separate Schools; two Industrial Schools under Public School auspices and two under Roman Catholic auspices; one Technical and three High Schools.

Toronto also has six schools and colleges for women; one art school one language school; three colleges of music; 17 colleges and universities and seven business colleges.

There are 11 libraries, not including college libraries.

Of churches and religious institutions of all denominations there are 267. Of these 43 are Anglican, 21 Baptist, 9 Congregational, 41 Methodist, 32 Presbyterian, 15 Catholic, 45 miscellaneous denominations 53 missions and 9 convents.

HOUSE OF TWELVE TWINS.

A Chicago paper gives an amusing history of a comfortable farm dwelling situated between Stonybrook and Campbell's Station, near York, Pa. It is known throughout the township as the House of Twelve Twins, because six sets of twins have been born under its roof in eleven years. The house was originally known as the Rudy Homestead, and it was to Mr. and Mrs John Rudy that the first two pairs of the twelve little visitors came. The Rudys sold the homestead, and it became the abode of David Stiles and his family. The Stileses were not long in their new home when twins arrived. Then they moved out and the family of A. L. Thomas moved in and was blessed with twins.

Could Scarcely Straighten Up

On Account of Severe Pains in Small of Back—Deranged Kidneys the Cause of Trouble.

DR. CHASE'S KIDNEY-LIVER PILLS

A great many people who suffer from backache, lame back and pains in the limbs think they have rheumatism and that there is no cure for them. At least nine cases in every ten can be cured by the use of Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills. Mrs. Lessard was badly crippled before she began the use of this great kidney medicine. Here is her letter :—

Mrs. J. Lessard, 150 Aqueduct street, Montreal, Que., states :—"My main trouble was with my back, which was very weak, and whenever I stooped I could hardly straighten up again on account of the severe pains which would catch me in the small of the back. Believing that my ailment was caused from deranged kidneys I began a course of treatment with Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills, and to-day I am all right again. This medicine seemed to act directly on the kidneys and as a result improved my health generally. The distressing pains in my back have entirely disappeared and I feel real strong and well."

Mrs. Ross, 100 Manitoba street, St. Thomas, Ont., states :—"I had a very weak back, and at times suffered very much from severe pains across the small of my back. Believing these to be caused by derangements of the kidneys, I began the use of Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills. This treatment seemed to be exactly what I required, for it was not long before the pains entirely left me, and I was quite strong and well again. We have also used Dr. Chase's Syrup of Linseed and Turpentine for the children when they had coughs and colds, and I never knew it to fail to relieve the trouble at once."

Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills, one pill a dose, 25 cents a box, at all dealers, or Edmanson, Bates & Co., Toronto.