CONFUSION OF CASTE.

Or Gentility Vs. Nobility of Soul.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Often, as she talked to Dorcas, Mrs. Harcourt would mention her son's name; she would even speak of him freely, and when letters came from him she would read parts of them aloud, but she never for a long time made the most distant reference to the terms on which he and Dorcas stood together, nor gave her any message from him, nor almost spoke as if she so much as recognized that they had ever met.

This ignoring of her position was a relief to the girl at first, but presently she began to wonder a little when it would cease, and then at last there came to her almost a longing that it would cease. "Does she want to make terms with me?—and has she not courage to do it?" she began to think.

"Does she wish to keep me because she thinks she may gain an influence over me, and make me do what she desires, and give Frank up?"

And she could not tell. Sometimes, during these days, her love made her suspicious, so that at moments it seemed to her as if, perhaps, Mrs. Harcourt was playing a cruel game, and trying to weave a web about her. She thought this sometimes, and then again she became ashamed of her suspicions.

"Only—why will she not speak to me?" she began at last to ask herself, almost passionately. "I am so weary of this silence. Is she not cruel to let all these days pass, and never to tell me the one thing that concerns me most?"

"Yes, I am tired," she said to Mrs. Harcourt quickly one night, speaking with a sudden impatient impulse, in answer to a question that the other asked. "I have been doing nothing, I know, but even living seems to tire one sometimes."

"You ought not to feel that — at your age," Mrs. Harcourt answered; and then Dorcas laughed rather sadly.

"Do you think age has anything to do with it?" she said. "I think it is only want of food that has to do with it. Whether we are old or young, if we cannot get bread we starve."

And then she thought she had said too much, and colored, and rose hastily from her seat.

"Child, is it I, do you mean, who will not give you bread?" Mrs. Harcourt suddenly asked. She was lying on her sofa, and Dorcas was not near to her, but she half raised herself as she spoke, and held out her hand. "Come here, I want you to sit beside me. Come here, and let us talk together," she said.

Dorcas came, half ashamed, and sat down at her side.

"Forgive me for being impatient," she said, abruptly. "I ought not to have said what I did."

"Well—if you felt it, it was as well to say it, perhaps."

"No, I hardly think that. One may feel many things, but it is generally foolish to speak them."

"Is that your experience?" And Mrs. Harcourt looked at Dorcas with an amused smile. "You are a very reserved woman, my dear."

"Are we not both reserved, perhaps?"

"Well—possibly; but that is not the question, for I am not talking now of myself. I am talking of you. I think you are unusually reserved. Or, at least, I should say, you are reserved in general—to me—to most people. Hardly, perhaps, altogether to—everybody?" — in rather a dry tone, that brought the color in a rush to Dorcas's face.

"That is not unnatural. One is instinctively more reserved to one person than to another," she answered, half defiantly.

"Exactly. And I think in your case I have heard that you make very marked differences indeed. Between two members of the same family, for instance?" And then, with something very like laughter in her eyes, Mrs. Harcourt looked at Dorcas, and Dorcas, with an expression very far indeed removed from laughter, returned the look.

"My dear I am making you angry," the elder woman said the next moment, "and I did not mean to make you angry, but sometimes, you know, we jest when our hearts are rather bitter and sad. And I am bitter and sad to-night, Dorcas, for I am going to make a sacrifice, and all the natural woman within me is shrinking from making it. Bear with me a little, my dear. I have been fighting with myself all these weeks—more than you know."

And then she became suddenly silent, and the silence lasted—for Dorcas, with her heart upon her lips, could not break it—for several minutes.

"You see, I am a woman who has cared for this world," Mrs. Harcourt began again at last, abruptly, after that pause. "I have cared, I hope, for other things as well—but for that I have cared too. I have set store by the good things that the world has been able to give me, and I have tried to get a large measure of those good things for—my only son. Perhaps I think that there are, on the whole, some worse things than worldliness. I have known many worldly people who are better than some who call themselves saints; but still I allow that, when life seems about to end—as mine, you know, I believed was ending two months ago—the worldly successes we have striven for most appear small things to us. Dorcas, I make this admission frankly. I confess to you honestly that if I had not supposed I was dying a little while ago I hardly think you would be sitting by my side tonight."

She paused again here for a little while, but Dorcas made no answer. There was nothing that she could say. She sat quite still, and without even lifting her head until her companion chose to go on speaking.

"My dear," Mrs. Harcourt recommenced, after this second silence, "it was no objection to yourself personally that made me try to oppose my son when he told me first that he wanted you to be his wife. I thought from the first time I saw you that you had a sweet face. I could have loved you, and have been glad that he should love you, from the beginning, if (you must forgive me for speaking plainly)—if your position had been different from what it is. I had no fault at all to find with you except that one—that you were beneath him socially. I wanted him to marry some girl who should be at least his equal; perhaps I thought (for I have been proud of him, Dorcas—I have almost believed that no woman he cared for could help loving him)—perhaps I thought it not unlikely that he might even make what is called a great marriage, and I should have liked him to do this. But you came in his way, and upset all my hopes."

"Was that my fault?" Dorcas asked, in a low, quick voice.

"No—I do not think it was your fault; I blame you for nothing. I only say that it was so, and I ask you (for I think you have a frank, fair mind)—I ask you if you do not understand my feeling in the matter?—if you do not think my opposition was natural?f'

"Quite natural," Dorcas said.

"I thought and hoped that his affection for you would pass away. I was sorry for you, Dorcas; you may not believe me, but I did think of you too, even though I would have sacrificed you for my son. I trusted that you would each forget the other. But when I was ill—" She began this sentence, and then stopped, and only resumed it after several moments. "When I was ill I found that—as far as he was concerned—it was not to be so."

"We spoke about you one night," she said again, presently, "when I thought I had not many more days to live. My son had been with me all through my illness. You don't know how good he is to have with you when you are suffering—what a tender nurse he can be. We have loved each other, you see, Dorcas, he and I—we have been a great deal to one another. It was not a light thing, even from the first, to think that any other woman had come between us. But—I was going to tell you—we both believed we were about to part, and I spoke to him of you. We had never spoken of you before for many months. I asked him if his feeling for you had changed. I hardly know whether or not I hoped that it had changed, but I had made up my mind that, if it had not, I would buy his last love from him by telling him to go to you when I was gone; and, my dear, I did tell him so; I told him, when he had laid me in the earth, to go back to you, and to say to you that I had sent him. Only, unfortunately, you see, Dorcas, after all this had been done, I did not die; and after a week had passed, I found myself in a very awkward and unexpected position."

She said these last words suddenly, almost with a laugh, and then paused for a moment or two before she went on.

"Let my case be a warning to you," she began again, "never to be too sure of anything that is only going to happen. I expected, you perceive, to make a very edifying end, leaving nothing but peace and blessing behind me; but I made a serious blunder. I enacted my little parting scene a trifle before the due time came—for it was very odd that, almost as soon as I had made all my pious preparations for departure, I began to get hold of life again. I don't know how Frank felt about it, but I am afraid that, when I knew I was getting better, what I had said troubled me a good deal.

"For, you see, my dear, I had not quite the conscience to draw back from it. I suppose I would have drawn back from it if I could, but we are sometimes virtuous against our will, and perhaps—well, perhaps in my heart I thought at that time, when I was still very weak, that my boy's gratitude was sweeter than any other earthly thing; so one day, when Dr. Haswell said I was out of all danger, I asked Frank what we were to do now, since he had not been able to put me under the sod; and it was this talk that ended in the suggestion upon which I acted presently, when I wrote to you and asked you to come here. I promised Frank that I would ask you to come if he would go away, and so he went away—and I have kept my word. And now—now, my dear, what is to be the end of it?"

She turned to the girl all at once, and put her hand on hers. There was a little color in her face, a very little tremor on her lips.

"Dorcas, do you love my boy as well as he loves you?" she said, suddenly.

"Do you think I should be here now if I did not love him?" Dorcas answered, with hot cheeks, and almost below her breath.

"Do you mean that you have found it so hard to remain here?"

"I mean it has been hard to come where I know I have been looked down upon, and have not been thought worthy of him."

"So hard that you could only have done it if—you loved him?"

"Yes."

"Is that your true answer? Well, I can believe it, for your face is more eloquent than your words, my dear. There, turn it away, child; we need not talk any more. Only, stoop down, if you will, before you go, and kiss me. I have never kissed you yet. I suppose" — and she gave a sudden laugh — "I suppose the queen that is abdicating ought to salute the queen that is to be."

"What can I say to you?" the girl began to murmur, in a trembling voice. "I never wished to marry him if it would do him harm. If you will tell me I am selfish to hold to him, I will go away now, and never trouble him or you again."

"My dear," said Mrs. Harcourt, quietly, "from here to Shepton is but a four hours' railway journey. Do you think you could prevent Frank from going to Shepton to look for you, if, when he comes back next week, he should find you gone?"

"Is he coming back next week?" she said, quickly.

"He tells me so."

"And he knows that I am here?"

"Yes."

"Then you must tell me what to do." Dorcas spoke nervously and quickly. "You must tell me if I am to go or stay."

"My dear, you are to stay," the elder woman gravely said.

She took the girl's hand, and held it, though with a half-reluctant clasp.

"You are to stay, and take—what I cannot keep from you," she said. "That is the truest way of putting it, I suppose."

She rose suddenly up from her sofa.

"Are you tired, Dorcas?" she asked, abruptly. "If you are not tired—look, the sun has hardly set yet, and I think we have each had as much of the other's company for the present as will do us good. You can get half an hour's walk before night comes." She put her hand on Dorcas's shoulder, with a moment's half laugh. "Go and dream your dream. Go and be happy, my dear," she said.

(To Be Continued).

A Great Cure in Welland.

An Old and Highly Respected Resident Cured of Kidney Disease and Liver Troubles by Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills.

Mr. John Wilson, a retired carpenter who has lived in Welland, Ont., for 30 years, writes :—"Some years ago I was attacked with kidney trouble, and I became so run down and emaciated that my entire appearance was suggestive of physical decline. As time went on the complaint grew worse and became complicated with liver trouble. I had bad pains across the back and up the spinal column, bad spells with my heart, pain under the right shoulder, bilious headache about half the time, indigestion, fever and restlessness at night and depression of spirits.

"At times I was incapacitated for work, and had spent probably one hundred dollars in different medicines with no perceivable results. Doctors' advice proved likewise of no avail.

"Finally on the advice of a friend I began taking Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills, and in a short time the bad symptoms began to gradually disappear, and by the time I had used five or six boxes I was enjoying better health than I had in many years, all of which is due to the virtues of Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills.

"Since my recovery I have advised others to profit by my experience. Some have done so and are well, while others did not and have succumbed to this dreadful disease. I am a living witness to the value of this great medicine, and I am full of enthusiasm in imparting the good news to others who are afflicted as I was."

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

BABY'S OWN TABLETS.

For Weak and Sickly Children During the Hot Weather.

Thousands of children die during the hot weather months, because summer complaints and stomach troubles come suddenly, and mothers do not have the means at hand to promptly check and cure them. In homes where Baby's Own Tablets are used these precious little lives can be saved, and no homes where there are infants and young children should be without them.

Baby's Own Tablets will promptly cure all stomach and bowel troubles, and are a great relief to teething children. The Tablets are sold under a positive guarantee that they contain neither opiate nor harmful drug. Crushed to a powder they can be given with absolute safety to a new born babe. Mrs. R. Ferguson, 105 Mansfield street, Montreal, says :—"I have used Baby's Own Tablets and have found them the best medicine I have ever given my children. My baby has always been small and delicate and suffered so much last summer with his teeth that I did not think he would live. Then he was attacked with dysentry, a feverish skin and cough. As the doctor's medicine did not help him, I sent for Baby's Own Tablets and they did him a wonderful amount of good, and he is now getting on splendidly. I gladly give my experience for the benefit of other mothers." If your druggist does not keep these Tablets they will be sent by mail post paid at 25 cents a box by writing direct to the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont., or Schenectady, N.Y.

JOHN BULL'S FARM.

Britain may be viewed as one farm extending from county to county, interrupted by towns it is true, but surrounding them like the ocean surrounds an archipelago of islands. Great Britain possesses a total area of 32,437,389 acres of cultivated land, of which 7,325,408 acres are under wheat, the rest being in permanent pasture, temporary pasture, root crops, fodder crops, and so on. It includes over 51,000 acres of hops, 73,000 acres of fruit, and 308,000 acres of bare fallow. The capital employed is enormous, and may be roughly estimated at $1,135,000,000, while the amount paid in wages is estimated at $150,000,000 per annum. There are at least 1,000,000 men, women, and boys employed in agricultural pursuits in Great Britain who not only cultivate the ground, but attend to 1,500,000 horses, 6,805,000 cattle, 26,500,000 sheep, and 2,381,000 pigs, besides countless poultry. Such is John Bull's farm.

Piles To prove to you that Dr. Chase's Ointment is a certain and absolute cure for each and every form of itching, bleeding and protruding piles, the manufacturers have guaranteed it. See testimonials in the daily press and ask your neighbors what they think of it. You can use it and get your money back if not cured. 60c a box, at all dealers or EDMANSON, BATES & CO., Toronto.

Dr. Chase's Ointment

SPONGE COLLECTING.

This industry, which is one of the largest in the State of Florida, is carried on almost entirely by negroes. The sponges are gathered by means of a long pole, with a hook attached to the lower end, with which the sponge fisherman is very expert. He lies prone upon his stomach in the stern of a boat, looking through an ordinary water bucket with a glass bottom, which does away with the glare from the water and allows him to survey the bottom leisurely while the boatman rows or sculls the boat. A schooner lies at anchor near by, from which a half-dozen or more of these small boats fish, which returns to port when it is loaded or at night, as the case may be. The men all share and share alike of the cargo, the captain receiving a larger portion and the owner of the vessel one-quarter of the profit.

DON'T BATH TOO MUCH.

"I used to take a bath every morning, but two a week is my limit now," says a well-known athlete. "Instead, I use a flesh-brush every morning for an hour, and I've never been in better condition in my life. I start at the top of my head with a hair brush, then take the flesh-brush—it is made specially for the purpose—and finish the job down to my feet until my skin is nearly the color of a boiled lobster. It keeps the pores free and open, clears away the dead cuticle, doesn't enervate the system like a bath, and, above all, is the finest exercise you can get. Rubbing the body vigorously with the brush, changing from hand to hand as the muscles of the arm tire, will keep you supple and nimble. It's a great thing."

BURN WOOD TO KEEP IT.

Best Manner to Preserve Its Durability.

In spite of the substitution of iron and steel for wood in house and bridge building, and in the construction of ships, piers, and other structures, the consumption of wood increases yearly. All wood decays, and its value depends chiefly upon its durability.

The simplest method of preserving is charring. Every old farmer knows that if he burns the end of a post in the fire until it is covered with a thin coat of charcoal it will last from ten to thirty years longer when set in the ground than if put there in its normal condition.

Next to this are the paints, which do excellent work in cold and temperate climates. A piece of wood painted every two or three years will last centuries; but this does not apply to wood employed on ships or in the piles of wharves and bridges. Marine animals bore through the paint, and attack the wood beneath it.

When you reach the tropics, paint is almost worthless so far as preventing the attacks of white ants is concerned. They bore a hole through the paint, go into the interior of the log of lumber, and eat out all the tissue without disturbing the paint skin on the outside. The only process which seems absolutely efficient is to charge the wood with some poisonous fluid, which is antiseptic, non-volatile, and permanent.

Solutions of zinc, iron, copper, arsenic, and mercury have been tried, and have all given good results. The best were obtained by forcing through the pores of the wood a strong solution of the double chloride of ammonia and mercury. After the wood was charged it was laid aside to dry, during which operation the ammonia and the water evaporated, leaving the corrosive sublimate uniformly distributed through the tissue.

ORANGE RIVER COLONY.

A General Scheme of Small Farms Is Proposed.

The question of the settlement of British farmers on the land in Orange River Colony has now entered the sphere of practicability. The subject is one which presents many difficulties. Pastoral farming, which is there the staple type, necessitates huge farms, and also encourages a state of idleness among the farmers themselves. By placing settlers on large farms their influence is practically nil, since there is necessarily little opportunity for intercourse with their neighbors. Sir H. J. Goold-Adams, the Lieutenant-Governor, has therefore decided on a policy of small farms in cases of settlers taking up Government lands. He has at his disposal nearly 300,000 acres, which he is increasing by purchase and by the lapse of leases of Government farms.

At present there exist altogether 160 settlers, comprising those belonging to the Scottish association, colonials from over sea, and others who served in the late campaign. They are being given an opportunity of studying the new features of farming in South Africa, pending their taking up farms permanently. Subject to the approval of the home authorities, farms will be given to such settlers (if approved) on lease or on purchase terms, the purchase price being equivalent to thirty years' rent.

The difficulty now arises that small farms are unable to feed sufficient stock to pay a fair profit, but the Government's intention is to encourage agriculture. In order to further this end an engineer has been appointed to survey the Government property for the purpose of devising a scheme of irrigation, whereby a great proportion of the land can be brought under cultivation. The scheme is one which promises success.

There is no doubt that the slipshod methods of farming generally adopted by the Boers have resulted in a vast amount of land being left practically unproductive. It is to be hoped that British enterprise will help to remedy this state of things and signs are not wanting that such enterprise is likely to be applied. Three thousand applications for farms have been received from intending British settlers, nearly all with capital. One of the most enthusiastic supporters of the scheme of settling British emigrantsnnnnnn of settling British immigrants on the land, Mr. Abe Bailey, is desirous of furthering the scheme by purchasing land both in the Orange River Colony and in the Cape Colony with the object of placing such indigent settlers on it. Everything will be provided for them until they are able to support themselves, and they will be allowed to purchase their farms on easy terms.

BRITAIN'S OLDEST JUDGE.

The oldest judge in the United Kingdom is Sir William Drinkwater who is now in his ninety-first year. When he retired from his deemstership of the Isle of Man, in 1897, he had the right to celebrate his jubilee of office, and had created a record for judicial tenure. He has seen five Sovereigns on the English throne and retains sufficient activity to serve on the Isle of Man hospital committee, to manage his estate of Kirby, near Douglas, and to resume the horse exercise which an accident some years ago compelled him to abandon for a time.