CONFUSION OF CASTE.

Or Gentility Vs. Nobility of Soul.

CHAPTER XXV.

A few hours' journey on a summer day brought Dorcas at its close to a quiet country station. As she stepped on the platform, a servant in livery came up to her and touched his hat. "For Mrs. Harcourt's, ma'am ?" he said. "The carriage is here." And Dorcas took her seat, and in half an hour more had reached the house.

"How shall we get on together ? What will she say to me ? How will it all end ?" she had been questioning with herself a hundred times ; and her heart was beating in great throbs as the servant led her up the stairs, and opened the door of the room in which Mrs. Harcourt was. But when she entered that room, Mrs. Harcourt merely half rose from the sofa on which she was lying, and received her as she might have received the most ordinary guest.

"I am glad you have come," she said, quietly, and put out her hand. "I have been very ill, or I would scarcely have asked you."

"Yes, I understand that," Dorcas answered, in a low voice. And then in another moment they were talking about quite common things.

"Are you tired ?" Mrs. Harcourt said. "I think you must be tired, for the day is so hot. You must rest a little, and my maid will show you your room, and then we will have some tea. Do you mind falling in with my invalid hours ? I dine at one o'clock, now that I am alone, and take tea at six."

How strange it seemed to the girl, after all her tremors, to be sitting at last by Mrs. Harcourt's side, listening to her talk about the hours at which their meals were to be served, as if they had no deeper subject of interest between them in the world ! Girl-like, she had supposed that their meeting would be marked by some show of emotion, but it had been marked by no show of emotion; it had been wholly commonplace and quiet.

"If she will but go on treating me like this I shall not be afraid of her —I shall know how to get on with her," she thought presently to herself, with no small relief.

For Dorcas herself disliked the display of emotion, and—except perhaps in the one great case of her love for Frank, where, it is true, she had broken at one bound through half the rules that had guided her in her common life—was always most at ease with those who were reticent on the subject of their feelings—the Quaker element in her leading her to sympathize most with a certain amount of outer coldness—to find satisfaction in a film of ice.

"Can you be contented, do you think, to spend a few weeks here with very little to amuse you ?" Mrs Harcourt asked her, after an hour or two had passed. "You will have no society, you know, because I am not strong enough to see my friends. There are plenty of books in the library, and there are some pretty places near, where you can walk or drive—and if you care for flowers you will find a garden full of them ; but unless you can make yourself happy amongst such things as these I am afraid you will be dull with me."

"I am in no danger of being dull," Dorcas replied. "I have always lived a very quiet life."

"That is fortunate for me, then," and Mrs. Harcourt smiled. "Will you bear with me too if I am sometimes irritable ? I have not been an ill-tempered woman hitherto, yet perhaps I may try you a little now."

"I am not afraid of you trying me," the girl said, quickly, with the color coming to her face.

"Well, I should think you were patient. I expect you have quiet ways. An invalid wants soothing people near her, you see, and I can imagine that you will be soothing."

"I will try to be."

"You need not try to be, my dear. If you are naturally soothing I shall soon find it out; if you are not, trying will not make you so—and we will keep apart. At the best I am not going to make a martyr of you. I will not ask you to spend more than a little while each day with me."

"Not if—you should come to like my being with you ?" Dorcas said, quietly; and then Mrs. Harcourt laughed.

"If that should happen, you think —very justly—that the chances are I shall become selfish ?" she said. "Well, you may be right—but that will settle itself presently. In the meantime, we know too little of one another to make us wish to pass a great deal of time together....I am going to say good-by to you to-night very soon, for I go to bed at nine, and I like to be quiet for an hour before I try to sleep."

Was Dorcas happy as she laid her own head on its strange pillow presently ? The last week at home had been a hard one, but it was past now, and there seemed to be rest here, and escape from self-reproach—and was there not hope and the expectation of a great gladness far off ? Surely she might be happy ? And yet the tears came to her eyes before she fell asleep, as the thoughts went back to the lonely house that she had left behind her.

"Oh, why are things so hard ?" she asked herself for the hundredth time. "Why is it made to seem selfish and wrong in me to love him ? I have only done what other girls do, and yet I feel as if I was guilty and wicked."

"Father, ought I never to have let myself care for him ?" she had said to Mr. Trelawney, sadly, one day.

He had tried, after she had made her confession to him, to shut his heart against her, and his coldness, and reserve, and silent suffering had cut her to the quick. From her mother she had had sympathy, but from her father none. Day after day he had sat alone with his sorrow, scarcely speaking to her, refusing help from her, trying to go on with his solitary work with a desolate, impotent patience.

"Father, do you think I should never have let him care for me ?" she said to him at last. "Surely you must think that, or you would never punish me as cruelly as you are doing. Ought I never to have thought of marrying at all ? Either I ought not, and you have cause to be angry with me, or I have only done what—what it is ungenerous to blame me for."

And then she put her hand upon his shoulder for a minute, and after that minute, suddenly and closely, she clung about his neck.

"Oh, my dear, I never did it willingly. It came before I knew—I could not help it," she began to cry. "I want you to love me still—I want you to be good to me still—as much as you ever did, when I had nobody else to care for in the world."

She melted him for the moment, and made him kiss and bless her.

"I have no right to be angry—none—none," he told her, gently. "You have gone away from me, that if all; but I shall bear it better presently. My little Dorcas !" he said, suddenly and pathetically—"my little dear child !"

They sat together again for an hour or two that day, and they both tried to bring back the likeness of the days that used to be; but they could not do it. The familiar talk would not come again; there was a shadow between them; the old union that had lasted so long had become broken.

"Oh, Gilbert, it will be right for the child, I think, but what will you do without her ?" Letty ventured to say to her husband on one of these dark days.

She had been hovering about him, yearning to speak to him, and yet afraid; she came to him at last, and stole her hand into his as she asked her question.

"God knows !" he answered her bitterly.

His passive fingers hardly closed round hers; after a moment, he turned away from her. She was nothing to him in his sorrow; her sympathy could not touch nor her love comfort him, though she had been his faithful wife for one and twenty years.

"So you are going to these people ?" he said to Dorcas, when the morning for her journey came.

He had made no opposition to her going. "Settle it as you wish," he had only said to her, when she had asked him what answer she should send to Mrs. Harcourt's note. And then, when the time for her departure came, before they left the house together, he kissed her, and told her that he hoped she would be happy.

"And you need not think of me. Do not consider me at all," he said, grimly, "nor let me spoil your pleasure."

"Do you suppose that I can help thinking of you ?" she answered quickly to that speech. And then, half with sadness, half with anger—"You might as soon bruise me, and tell me not to feel the hurt," she said.

She was angry for a moment, but after she had let herself utter these words she reproached herself for having spoken them, and she hastily took his two hands and kissed them.

"Oh, my darling, forgive me for being impatient," she cried, penitently. "I think we have both been very miserable. Forgive me if you can before I go."

Then he took her in his arms, and held her to his heart for a long time in silence. "My Dorty !" he only said, at last, calling her by her old childish name in a passionate, broken voice.

So the week had been a hard one, and, though it was ended now, the girl's tears came again as she lay tonight on her fresh pillow, and thought of it; and the sorrow and loneliness sqe had left behind still seemed to follow her to this new place, and make her heart heavy as she fell asleep.

They called Mrs. Harcourt's house the Dower House. It stood in the midst of a rich country, with pleasure grounds about it, and beyond the garden on one side lay a long stretch of undulating pine woods.

"My husband's father bought this place for his mother when he married. It will be my home too when Frank marries," Mrs. Harcourt said, quietly. "A pretty house—is it not? I have always liked it—and I like the mild climate too. I think it is a good thing to live in the south when one is growing old."

She was very feeble still after her illness, and only drove out a little each day, or sat sometimes for an hour in her invalid-chair in the sunshine under the veranda. She looked very fragile, Dorcas often thought. One evening, after a few days had passed, the girl, as they were sitting together, ventured to touch her hand with a half-murmured pity.

"How thin it is !" she said, and stroked the fingers softly for a moment.

It was the first caress, or approach to a caress, that had passed between them.

"Yes—it is thin now," Mrs. Harcourt replied, "but it was as strong and firm as yours once, my dear."

They had fallen with curious quietness into their life together. Before she had come to her Dorcas had been afraid of this unknown woman, but when no more than only a couple of days had passed it seemed to her that she was fast forgetting that she had been afraid.

"She is cold," the girl thought, "but I do not mind her coldness. She is watching me too, I know ; but if she will be only just to me and act honestly, I am not afraid of her watching—and I think—I cannot help believing—that she will be just."

"Are you contented to stay with me ?" Mrs. Harcourt asked her, at a week's end, and Dorcas answered instantly—"Yes."

She said "Yes ;" and then she paused for a moment, and after that pause her color rose a little, and she looked into the other's face, and "Are you content to let me stay?" she asked.

"Quite content," Mrs. Harcourt answered, with a half smile. "I am a great deal too well off with you to wish to be alone again."

For a day or two she had addressed the girl as "Miss Trelawney;" then, without any remark, she quietly dropped the formal name, and called her "Dorcas."

"It is a quaint old name ; how did you come by it ?" she presently one day asked her; and then Dorcas, with her heart beating a little quickly, bravely answered—

"I was called after a grand-aunt—Dorcas Markham—a good woman, who had been like a mother to mamma."

"I think I have heard of her," Mrs. Harcourt answered; and then said nothing more. Perhaps she had winced a little too, as well as Dorcas.

"I do not mean to let you spend much of your time with me," Mrs. Harcourt had said to her on the evening when she first came, and accordingly for two or three days at the beginning they did not spend a great deal of their time together, but gradually after that they came to be together more and more. "I think I must tire you," Mrs. Harcourt sometimes said; but Dorcas answered, quietly—"You never tire me." Nor, in truth, did she; for, curiously and to her own surprise, a strange kind of liking for this cold, unimpulsive woman was awakening in her : somehow—she scarcely knew how or why—she felt at home with her; she felt as if she might be hard, but not false or treacherous—that she might end by becoming her enemy, but that, if she did, it would be with an open enmity.

"I can trust you," she said to her by chance one day, in reference to some slight matter they had been speaking of, and suddenly Mrs. Harcourt answered—

"The more we trust one another the better we shall understand each other—in every thing, Dorcas. Be sure of that."

"I am sure of it," Dorcas replied, quickly.

On some days they talked together a great deal, and Mrs. Harcourt's talk soon came to have a great charm for the country-bred girl, for it was quiet, but yet clever, full of point and high breeding—very unlike the sort of talk that she was used to, she sometimes rather sadly thought.

"If I tried for a hundred years I could never imitate her, nor acquire her manner. No wonder she thinks that I am no fit wife for Frank," she often said to herself.

The elder woman used to tell her stories of the world in which she lived, and it seemed to Dorcas so far away from her world—so unlike it—so separated from it. "Could I ever take my place there ?" she would often think. "Would they not always see that I was not one of them, and look down upon me, and make Frank ashamed ?"

(To Be Continued.)

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Study These Symptoms and see if You Are in Need of the Great Nerve Restorative

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Restless, languid, weak and weary, no life, no energy, tired all the time, throbbing, palpitating heart, heart asthma, sleepless nights, sudden startings, morning languor, hot flushes, brain fag, inability to work or think, exhaustion on exertion, general numbness, dead all over, cold hands and feet, flagging appetite, slow digestion, food heavy, easily excited, nervous, muscles twitch, strength fails, trembling hands and limbs, unsteady gait, limbs puff, loss of flesh, loss of muscular power, irritable, despondent, hysterical, cry or laugh at anything, settled melancholia, steady decline, complete prostration.

Mrs. Cline, 49 Canada street, Hamilton, states :—"For a number of years I have been a great sufferer from nervous headache and nervous dyspepsia. I had no appetite, and my whole nervous system seemed weak and exhausted. I have found Dr. Chase's Nerve Food very helpful. It seemed to go right to the seat of trouble, relieving the headache, improving digestion and toning up the system generally."

Mrs. Symons, 42 St. Clair street, Belleville, Ont., states :—"Some weeks ago I began a course of treatment with Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, and found it a very satisfactory medicine. I was formerly troubled with nervous exhaustion and a weak, fluttering heart. Whenever my heart bothered me I would have spells of weakness and dizziness, which were very distressing. By means of this treatment my nerves have become strong and healthy, and the action of my heart seems to be regular. I can recommend Dr. Chase's Nerve Food as an excellent medicine."

Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, 50 cents a box, at all dealers, or Edmanson, Bates & Co., Toronto.

POOR MR. TIFF.

"Is there anything in the paper?" asked Mrs. Tiff of her husband, who had been monopolizing the 'Evening Bugle.'

"No," replied Mr. Tiff.

"It seems to me that you are taking a long time to read nothing. Suppose you hand it to me; perhaps I can find something in it."

"Well, here is something which may interest you. A man refused to pay his wife's funeral expenses, and the undertaker sued him for the money. The court decided that a husband must pay for his wife's burial. What do you think of taking a case like that to court ?"

"I should think the mean man ought to be ashamed of himself," declared Mrs. Tiff, emphatically.

"So should I," assented Mr. Tiff. "The idea of a man not wanting to pay for his wife's funeral ! I should have thought he would have been perfectly delighted to——"

"John Henry Tiff, what are you saying ?" demanded the gentleman's wife.

"Oh, of course, I didn't mean that, you know. I mean that he should consider it a sacred duty to give his wife respectable burial, and pay for the same cheerfully——"

"Mr. Tiff, do you really mean that he—that you, for instance, would pay my funeral expenses cheerfully ?"

"That isn't exactly what I mean, my dear. You don't understand what I am trying to say."

"I understand perfectly what you are saying, Mr. Tiff. You tell me that you wish I were dead ; that you would pay my funeral expenses cheerfully; that you would be perfectly delighted to have the opportunity—'perfectly delighted' were your words, John Henry Tiff, and I think you are a wicked man."

"Oh, now, look here," protested Mr. Tiff, "you know very well that what I said wouldn't bear any such construction if you weren't so ready all the time to find occasion to scold me."

"You needn't try to defend yourself, for you can't do it. You said you'd think that a man ought to be delighted to have the chance to pay for his wife's funeral. It's enough to make any self-respecting woman go and commit suicide, so it is. And I'd go, too, much to your satisfaction. Oh, why, oh, why, did I ever think that I could love such a wretch as you ?"

At this point Mrs. Tiff burst into tears, and Mr. Tiff put on his hat and walked out of the house.

PING-PONG, NOT PUGILISM.

"I called on Perkins last evening," remarked Mr. Brown.

"Did you have a pleasant time ?" inquired Mrs. Brown.

"Very. Perkins was beating his wife when I went in."

"What ?"

"I said Perkins was beating his wife ; but, of course, he stopped when I went in."

"Well, I should hope so."

"I begged him to go on, but he said some other time would do as well."

"You begged him to go on ?"

"Why, yes ; I didn't want to spoil the fun, you know."

"Oh, you brute !"

"Eh ?"

"Do you mean to say that you could have looked calmly on while he beat his wife ?"

"Certainly ! Why not ?"

"I thought you had at least a spark of manhood left. I suppose you will be beating me next ?"

"Yes. I think I could if you would play ping pong with me."

"Play ping pong ?"

"Yes. That is what Perkins and his wife were doing."

"You horrid brute !"

NEDDY DRAGGED A BIT.

At a prominent railway station in Ireland a farmer was waiting for a train, which a donkey he had purchased. On the arrival of the train at the station he asked the guard where he should put the donkey. The guard, who was in a hurry, said :

"Put it behind," meaning that he ought to put it in a horse-box, which was at the rear of the train.

The Irishman, not knowing the use of horse-boxes, tied the donkey to the buffer, and then got into the carriage himself.

Soon the train started, and ere long was running at a speed of over fifty miles an hour. Turning to a companion, Pat said :

"Shure, Moike, won't Neddy be footing it now ?"

SCOTCH.

One of the French mail steamers calling in at Rio de Janeiro, having a slight derangement of the machinery in the engine room, sent for the representative of an engineering firm on shore to give some help in the necessary repairs.

The representative had no knowledge of French, but could converse freely in the Portuguese language. The chief engineer of the liner, on the other side, knew a little Spanish but no Portuguese. Explanations under the circumstances, were a trifle confused, until the shore engineer, in despair, exclaimed :

"Hech, sirs, this is a dreich job I wish ye kent a few words in braid Scotch."

"I hev ye noo, ma freend," replied the chief engineer ; "I hev ye noo."

Mother (reprovingly to little girl just ready to go for a walk)—"Dolly, that hole was not in your glove this morning." Dolly (promptly)—"Where was it, then, mamma?"

HOT WEATHER AILMENTS.

Careful Mothers Should Keep at Hand the Means to Check Ailments That Otherwise May Prove Fatal.

When the weather is hot the sands of the little life are apt to glide away before you know it. You can't watch the little one too carefully at this period. Dysentery, diarrhoea, cholera infantum and disorders of the stomach are alarmingly frequent during the hot moist weather of the summer months. At the first sign of any of these, or any of the other ailments that afflict little ones, give Baby's Own Tablets. These Tablets will speedily relieve and promptly cure all hot weather ailments. Keep them in the house—their prompt use may save a precious little life. Mrs. Herbert Burnham, Smith's Falls, Ont., says :—"When my eldest child was six weeks old he had an attack of cholera infantum and was at death's door. My doctor advised me to use Baby's Own Tablets, and in twenty-four hours baby was better; the vomiting and purging ceased and he regained strength rapidly. I have used the Tablets for other ailments of children since and always with the happiest results. I can sincerely recommend them to mothers as a medicine that should always be kept in the house."

Little ones thrive, are good natured and grow plump and rosy in homes where Baby's Own Tablets are used. Children take them as readily as candy, and crushed to a powder they can be given to the youngest infant with the best results. Sold at drug stores or you can get them post paid at 25 cents a box by writing direct to The Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont., or Schenectady, N.Y.

POWDERED HERRINGS NOW.

Fish-powder is the very latest addition to the list of foods, and it is said by physicians to be the best and most nutritive food-product in condensed form that has been discovered. It can be made in the home, with very little trouble and expense. Any kind of fresh fish will do. First steam them in their own moisture, then, after cooling and drying the mass obtained, expose it to the air for a short time. The next step is to shred the fish, and then treat it to a bath of alcohol and citric acid, that all fat, glue, and mineral matter is removed. After drying, it must be again boiled, dried, and ground. The result is a kind of meal or flour, which can be utilized in a great variety of ways—as, for instance, mixing in soups, frying oysters, and making omelets.

There are no less than 3,262 different species of fish inhabiting the waters of America north of the Isthmus of Panama.