A WOMAN'S LOVE

OR, A BROTHER'S PROMISE

CHAPTER V.

Hector's light-heart foot took him to "Balgownie's black wa'!" He leaned on the parapet and sent his memory back to the by-gone. In the black waters he sought remembrance of the time when he was an undergraduate at King's, living greatly with poets and romancers in a couple of small rooms off College Bounds, and filling the hours spared from them and necessary lectures with matchless wanderings over the country roads, rare rambles on the sea-blown links and the levels of Scotstown Muir, and midnight foregatherings with chosen comrades.

Little by little, on the mirror of the pool grew one silver night of clear frost and cold starshine, when with a half a dozen brethren of the red gown, he had come here, to the Brig, and rang the Gaudeamus, that great song of unconquerable youth and sound philosophy, over the lower reaches of the Don.

What a night that was! They had been to the play. As they had come to the Spital, on the homeward road, song and laughter arose. They were outside the iron pale of the New Toon laws; be it remembered, this was before the evil day when the "greater" municipal spirit seized New Toon and Aul' Toon and fused them into one. Song and laughter arose mightily in the Spital, echoing from King's Crescent to Powis. Gray, that melancholy-mad merry-mad fellow, threw off his black mood, engendered by the penny-dreadful performance at the little theatre in Guild Street, and began to wake the lieges with "Baim in Gilead" and "When Johnnie comes marching home." Henderson, sedatest of the sedate, flung pebbles at certain windows, and requested "grinders," who came reproachfully to the call, to declare if they did not think it was high time she were going home. What would mamma say? MacIan, wild Argyllshire cateran, albeit he came from a manse, spouted Ossian in the original with ecstatic lilt and stiff flailing of arms. Who that saw him would say that he was a "deeveenity"? And so on by Powis and King's.

For a moment they halted by the Crown, lifted magically into the silver shine, and then, in spite of the awe that seemed to fall on them from the grey-white majesty of it, there broke spontaneously from the young throats, the well-loved chant of "Glory, glory to the University!" (O! the rich heart of youth! that has a song for every hour of the day and night—every song gladder and more rousing than the last.) By Stables' (happy hostel!—closed, alas! at that hour), by the Toon House, by Old Machar Cathedral, they took the road to the Brig, the old grey Brig o' Balgownie.

And there, on the highest rise of the single arch, at one of a morning white with glittering frost and divinely silver, with such a moon as surely never shone since Endymoin was struck—there they stood in a sudden hush. There was no sound but the unceasing, soothing ripple of the water, now and again hardened to a crystal tinkle.

Gaudeamus ignitur
Juvenes dum sumus.
Post jucundum juventutem,
Post molestam senectutem
Nos habebit humus.

Now, on this morning, he Hector Chisholm Grant, would rejoice—by all the gods! he would rejoice while he was yet young. He could hardly forgive himself for the past three years of fat dulness and inanition in London. They had really been busy years, but—— His life had not been true to the traditions of his fathers: it had not even been true to the ideal of that gay comradeship of gownsmen. Yet how had the others fared? Had they gained their hearts' desires? Gray, the dreamer, was a solicitor in Glasgow; Henderson was the low comedian of a travelling melodrama company; when last heard of MacIan was trading in Java; Stuart, who declared that the blood of Prince Charlie warmed his heart, was a schoolmaster; Somerled Cameron, terror of mammas, and champion nap-player of the Cloak-room (what King's man has ever forgotten the Cloak-room, when all was blue with bogie smoke?)—Cameron was a Free Church minister in Skye, terror of evil-doers, and most notable of extempore Gaelic preachers. Was Romance with them, or had they sorrowfully seen her luring skirts trail away into the grey distance?

And himself? Well, he had just waked. He looked down into the black pool of the Don, and there he saw his future stretch before him like a road, now straight, now curving, up hill and down dale, through green passes and dark defiles—on and on, shining and glittering, until it came to a great castle whose battlements blazed with a thousand cressets. The brazen gates swung wide, and he entered the courtyard. There, at the threshold of the hall, stood Queen Maddalena, crowned and in royal raiment, with a smile all sunshine, and an outstretched hand of snow. If only this were true! By God! he would make it true; for, surely, he loved her, this Queen without a crown.

He threw his head back and laughed; and, leaning on the parapet, he sang the old march of victorious youth—

"Gaudeamus igitur juvenes dum sumus."

"I didn't know you were a singer, Mr. Grant."

Hector turned sharply.

He raised his hat to the speaker, a thin little lady who might be any age from forty to sixty. She was attired in a plain black costume, somewhat the worse for time, but carefully brushed and neatly kept, as if the wearer had not too many dresses. On her greying hair sat dowdily the inevitable straw hat of working British spinsterhood, and in her hand she held an ostentatiously serviceable umbrella. Her face was pale; her mouth a little hard yet a little wistful; her nose not unpleasantly sharp, and her eyes were of a curious soft hungry blue.

"You, Miss Frere?"

"Even I, Judith Frere, woman journalist and—at the moment, anyway—unmitigated bore."

"You couldn't be a bore, Miss Frere."

"Don't perjure yourself, Mr. Grant. You were enjoying yourself, you were happy with your own thoughts. I intrude—I must be a bore. An angel from heaven would be a nuisance under the circumstances." She placed both hands on the knob of her umbrealla, and leaned heavily on it.

"What strange current has drifted you to this Ultima Thule?"

"The desire of a much taiked-about woman to be more talked about. You know the Duchess of Kincardine?"

"Everybody knows her. The Band of Beauty, the Society for Suppressing 'Society,' the Association for the Rescue of Destitute Dukes, the League of the Lord knows what—do they not all acknowledge her as their founder? President of the Dolly Dimple Lodge of little Helpers, Vice-President of the Simple Simon Society of Students of Bacon's Plays, Captain of the Kincardine Fire Brigade, Patroness of all the guinea-a-year learned societies—is not all this written in the book of Adam and Charles Black?"

"Even so, and more also," laughed Miss Frere, a little bitterly, it must be confessed. "She is a clever woman, Mr. Grant, and" (here she looked round cautiously) "a damned mean one. Have I scared you? I don't often use language, but sometimes I am driven to it. I have been interviewing her Grace this morning for the Happy Home. She wrote to Malleson, inquiring indignantly why she had been omitted from the series of 'Model Duchesses.' Everybody is out of town, that's how the task fell to me. If it weren't August some of the younger generation would have been sent."

"Have you enjoyed the experience?"

"Wait a minute! She wrote Malleson a second time, offering to do the article herself for a guinea! However, I had been commissioned before her offer reached him. And that's why for the last hour I have been noting down here" (she tapped her pocket-book "how much a certain elevated personage esteems her; what the dear Prince remarked when a bundle of her tracts arrived in his sick-room; how President Loubet thanked her for an illuminated Scripture text; and the creature never asked me if I would sit muown, although I told her I had walked out from Aberdeen. It's three miles to Don Vale, and I couldn't afford a cab."

"So altogether you have been gathering experiences."

"Mr. Grant, at fifty a woman doesn't want to gather experiences—she is ready to sell them; and at that age a woman ought to have enough experiences to keep her in comfort for the rest of her life But I'll take my revenge on her Grace by writing an extra sweet, read-between-the-lines sort of article. She'll squirm if she can see any farther than the end of her nose."

"Vimdictiveness is vulgar," said Hector, half mockingly.

"Not half so vulgar as some duchesses. Listen! She entered the room. I bowed. 'You are the interviewer person?' 'I am the interviewer person.' 'You are a Christian, I hope'? 'I hope I am.' 'I make it a rule only to be interviewed by Christians.' 'May I mention that, your Grace?' 'Yes, you may mention that; in fact, I should like it particularly.' I could have killed her."

"Hasn't long custom blunted your feelings to that kind of thing?"

"It hasn't, and it never will. O! journalism is detestable. Yet I can't do anything else. It's vile and it's ill-paid. What do you think Malleson gives me for coming all this distance to be patronised by that female?"

"First-class expenses and six guineas?"

"Third class! And thirty shillings for a three-page article! I have to pay all expenses over my train fare."

"I call that sweating, downright sweating."

"No indeed, it's not. It's nice, clean, up-to-date, wholesome journalism; and I trust there is a nice, clean, up-to-date, wholesome furnace, with forced draught and patent telescopic pokers, waiting ready for a few of my editors. I often wonder why I go on doing work for them. I suppose I've got to live—the great argument, though sometimes I don't see the absolute necessity for living. O! my dear Mr. Grant, I'm afraid I am like most women, after all: I want pretty frocks, I want diamonds, I want silver toilet ornaments, I want good dinners and good wine, I want a carriage. I had them all once, and I believ. I shall have them again. I'd do anything short of murder to be rid of this scrape and struggle—it's all so ugly, so demoralising."

The little woman paused for a moment almost out of breath, while Hector wondered at her vehemence.

"Ah! well!" she sighed, "here I've been ranting like a Democratic Federationist. Please forget what I've been saying. You're on holiday, I suppose?"

"No, I'm on business."

"That's all right. The Week Illustrated does things in style."

"This is private business."

"Pardon."

"In fact, Miss Frere, I've left The Week Illustrated."

"You've left! Why, you are the paper."

"O! dear me, no! There's none of us indispensable. Besides, I've got something far more congenial in prospect."

"Congratulations! You'll tell me, won't you? You're big enough for a couple of paragraphs."

Hector was moved by an impulse of pity for this old maid, slaving day and night for a sore-wrung pittance. He would let her into the secret, and she could make it known when the time came. Some of the evening papers, ever on the hunt for "scoops," would give her a small fortune for the news.

"Yes," he said, "I'll tell you, you mustn't use it until I give you the word."

They had been walking towards the town during this conversation, and now they found themselves in the Castlegate, the old square where another Duchess had raised a regiment with the King's shilling between her teeth. The sign of a restaurant caught Hector's eye. The class supper of his Tertian year had been held there: that was another famous night. He had the whim to revisit the place.

"If you will honor me at luncheon, Miss Frere," he said, "I'll give you the story."

"I'll pay my own share, then," she said sharply. Even if she was poor, she was not going to be patronised.

"As you will," Hector answered laughingly. "But if you insist on that, I shall not speak."

She gave in.

Luncheon was over, and the story was finished as the coffee came. Miss Frere leaned forward with sparkling eyes and whispered, "I should like to meet your Queen."

"And so you shall," laughed Hector. "And so you shall, You shall interview her, if you like, but you must not publish it until the glorious end. Then you can make a little fortune."

"Mr. Grant, how can I thank you, how——?"

"By not saying another word."

Hector looked at his watch.

"I must hurry, I'm afraid. I've just half an hour to catch my train. Waiter."

Hector paid the bill, sent a word of compliment to the proprietor on the excellence of the luncheon, and bade good-bye to Miss Frere, whom he left to finish her coffee at leisure.

As he walked up Union Street he still hummed the Gaudeamus. His project was prospering, he had done a good turn to a tired woman, he had lunched well. And so—"Let us rejoice, therefore, while we are young."

(To be Continued.)

FUR-BEARING ANIMALS.

The fur-bearing animals are more persistently hunted than any other, since many people depend for a living on their capture. When it is shown that in one year there are brought to the market the fur of 180,000 pine-martens, 400,000 stone martens, 600,000 polecats, 400,000 ermines, 160,000 minx, 55,000 otters, and from America alone 150,000 beavers and 100,000 chinchillas, it will be seen that their extermination is a question of a short time. The sea-otter is now to be found only in the Northern Pacific, on the northern coast of California, and thence along the coast of America and of Asia. To-day fewer than 2,000 sea-otter furs are sent to the market annually.

MILK ALWAYS FRESH.

An invention which is described as about to revolutionize the milk trade is being worked in France. The milk is not "condensed" in the ordinary sense, but the water is extracted from it by a patent process. The powder that remains contains all the essential elements, and is converted back to milk by the simple addition of seven parts of water to one of the milk extract. It is claimed that it is always possible to have fresh milk by this process, which is the invention of Dr. Just, of Boston, and a German engineer.

PEOPLE AND THINGS.

Items of Interest From the Worlds Four Corners.

Mexico produces more silver than any other country.

There are 2,242 foreign students in the technical schools of Germany.

The Magyars rule Hungary, although they number but 6,000,000 or 7,000,000 in a total of 43,000,000.

A project is on foot in Geneva for the establishment of aerial excursions to view the summit of Mont Blanc.

To-day the Empire of Japan has a population of 49,000,000. This means more than 300 people within a square mile.

Rules for the more careful handling of furniture by State railway employees have just been issued at all German stations.

An English railway train on December 4th ran from Marylebone to Manchester, a distance of 206 miles, in 219 minutes.

The pictorial post-card craze still rages in Europe. More than 41,000,000 were delivered by the Swedish post-office last year.

In 1870 the German people barely exceeded 40,000,000; in 1885 they had risen to nearly 47,000,000, and in 1900 the census returns gave 56,345,014.

No less than 111 officers of the British Army have qualified as interpreters in the Russian language, eighty-three of whom belong to the Indian service.

In Wales there are 500,000 people who cannot speak English; in Ireland there are 30,000 who speak only Irish; and in Scotland there are 40,000 who speak only Gaelic.

A regulation has been made in Vienna that all electric lights must be raised to sixteen feet above the pavement, as otherwise they are calculated to injure the eyesight of passengers.

A French Apiculturist has been experimenting with bees as messengers. He has discovered that they will return to their hives from a distance of four miles in about twenty minutes, bearing despatches, after the manner of homing pigeons.

Diseases of the heart have greatly increased in Germany in recent years one person in every seven being now afflicted. Influenza, alcoholism, and excessive addiction to bicycling and other sports are named by Dr. Steckel as the chief causes.

Shorthand is not a modern invention. There were schools of shorthand in Egypt in the third century of our era. A recently discovered papyrus shows a contract between a shorthand teacher and a gentleman who wished the art taught to one of his slaves.

The cigar-makers' unions of New York City have organized a camera corps to take snapshots of every union man who is discovered smoking a non-union cigar. Every guilty wretch who smokes a non-union cigar will be fined or otherwise punished.

Viscount Hayashi, the new Japanese Ambassador to Great Britain, is a man of fine culture. He speaks English with merely the trace of a foreign accent. His reading has been wide, and has led him to translate many notable foreign works into Japanese.

Portugal is the most illiterate country in Europe; nearly sixty-eight per cent. of her population cannot write. In Italy the proportion of illiterates is fifty-three per cent.; in Russia, thirty-six per cent.; in Spain nine per cent., and in Britain, not quite four per cent.

"Another step forward in the federation of the nations," suggests the Paris Figaro, would be made by the adoption of a universal postage stamp. Such a stamp, with the title of "the postage stamp of peace," is to be proposed at next year's International Post Congress

One of the most fascinating dreams of the engineer is the project, frequently mooted, to turn the sea into the Sahara Desert and create a new Mediterranean. The scheme rests on the fact that large tracts in the Sahara lie below the level of the sea. A canal would do the business say French engineers.

A double succession of very late marriages brought the Hon. Lovel Coke, now ten years old, into this world 140 years after the birth of his grandfather. This was William Coke, who was born in 1754 and became first Earl of Leicester. He married in 1822, being sixty-eight years old, and left three sons. One of them, the present Earl, now eighty-one years of age, became the father of the Hon. Lovel when he was seventy-one years old.

The Russian Liberal Review, Osvobozhdenie, says that Russia has made and is making "enormous and senseless expenditures of men and money in order to create an accursed yellow Russia," which has no real value for the Russian people. "The Russian cost of the Chinese was was $210,000,000," says this journal. "We have acquired a place where, from the economic point of view, Japan, America, and England may conveniently dispose of their surplus products, and as a place where we may become involved with Powers whose combined strength is great enough to defeat us on the Pacific as badly as we were at Sebastopol."

DISTILLED DRINKS.

Alcoholic beverages are distilled from bananas, the milk of cocoanuts, rice, and peas. The Japanese distil spirit from plums, peaches, and the flower of the motherwort. The Chinese make an alcoholic drink from plums.

KINGS IN DOCTOR'S HANDS

GERMAN EMPEROR TAKES ILLNESS WITH BAD GRACE.

King Edward Is a Model Patient and Likes Cheerful People About Him.

Very seldom in his interesting career has the Kaiser been placed so much at the mercy of the doctors as during the past few weeks, and there is every reason to believe that the state of affairs which so unfortunately happened is intensely disagreeable to His Majesty in particular. He, like the late Queen Victoria, has a considerable belief in his own powers of staving off illness through sheer force of will, and when these methods have failed is inclined to receive the medical men with somewhat bad grace.

Yet one of these physicians describes him as being a "good and even enthusiastic patient"; that is to say, when once he sees there is nothing for it but a thorough course of treatment and a calm submission to whatever is ordered, he carries out instructions to the smallest detail and with the most scrupulous regard for being thorough. But he is so inquisitive, one of his doctors said some time ago, that he is at times somewhat embarrassing. His Majesty cross-examines everybody in attendance on the intricacies of his ailment, and winds up be sending for a book about it, which he studies with the utmost care. The next time the doctors come he, with a smile, often suggests an alternative treatment, "as in the case of So-and-so, with which, of course, you are familiar, doctor." If the Kaiser finds himself laid up for a day or two the first thing which

OCCUPIES HIS ATTENTION.

after his treatment is settled, is the rearrangement of his plans of work and the division of his time, so that as little of it as possible shall be wasted. Of course, hitherto the ailments which have afflicted him have been comparatively trifling.

The Kaiser and King Edward are undoubtedly the two best patients, from the doctors' point of view, amongst the monarchs of Europe. The latter, whose brave bearing during his severe illness eighteen months ago will for ever be remembered, always persists in regarding any indisposition from which he is suffering as of the most trifling character possible. When completely in the doctors' hands he encourages them in every way to treat his case with that same lack of hesitation which they would display if he were not King, but merely a subject. He carries out all their orders to the letter, and, desiring to take as pleasant a view as he can of the circumstances, insists on having only cheerful people about him. Sir Francis Laking, whose optimism and cheerful good-nature are notorious, is a great favorite of his.

The King of Italy is generally regarded by the medical profession of his native country as an excellent patient too, and his ailments are few nowadays, notwithstanding his very weakly youth. Both these happy circumstances his doctors attribute in a large measure to the very rigorous treatment to which his military tutor submitted him as a boy, though surprise is sometimes expressed that this treatment did not kill him.

QUEEN WILHELMINA

of Holland gives her doctors a lot of trouble. She says she "hates doctors," and she will never endure their attentions except when absolutely obliged, and then they have to take unusual precautions to see that their instructions are carried out. The story is told that one time, when the Queen had evinced a marked disinclination to see a doctor on a certain occasion, and on his entering the room under pressure from the Queen-Mother had exclaimed that if he advanced she would scream, the medical man's calm answer was that he could not help her screaming while he was advancing, but he humbly begged to say that out of regard for his duty to his Sovereign and his own reputation it would be necessary for him to administer something which would make screaming impossible as soon as he reached her.

Both the Czar of Russia and the Sultan are bad patients, the one being anxious and timid and very easy in giving way to indisposition and the other so suspicious as to make the lot of his doctors almost intolerable. He has even gone the length of demanding that the phisic ordered by one doctor should be analyzed and tasted by another.

A FRENCH GRACE DARLING.

An inspiring story of the bravery of a French fisher-girl of Ushant Island comes from Calais. The steamer Vesper, a vessel of 5,000 tons, built at Newcastle, was conveying a cargo of wool and other goods to Dunkirk when it struck on some rocks near Ushant in a thick fog, and sank almost immediately. Fortunately the thirty-three men composing the crew launched the boats in time. One of the craft got into difficulties among the dangerous rocks, and the seamen were only saved eventually by the girl, whose name is Rose Here, swimming out to the boat and piloting it to the shore. The fourteen seamen who owe her their lives are full of enthusiasm over the girl's heroism, saying they were quite worn out, helpless, and hopless until she entered the boat.