THE HEIR OF SANTLEIGH

OR

THE STEWARD'S SON

CHAPTER II.

The Earl of Arrowdale was beautiful to look at, beautiful to listen to and as highly polished as the Koh-i-noor. He had been known for years as the modern Chesterfield and society was proud of him, as an instance of what noble rank and high breeding can produce.

He was tall and thin, with a face in which every feature was as clearly and cleanly cut as if it had been done by a Grecian sculptor, and on which a beard or moustache had never been allowed even to suggest itself.

At this period his hair was nearly white, but otherwise the face was almost without a wrinkle, and the figure was so well preserved that it was at once the admiration and astonishment of all who were privileged to gaze upon it.

In speech, Howard, Lord Arrowdale, was, so it was said, a model of grace and eloquence for these degenerate times; his voice soft, and yet distinct and capable of any modulation. In manners—but the pen falters in its endeavors to convey an idea of Lord Arrowdale's manners. Lord Palmerston, who had employed him in foreign service, had been heard to declare that Arrowdale's voice would melt a Red Indian and his manners move a Tartar.

No one had ever seen him in that vulgar frame of mind known as a "temper." When angry—and even he had been angry at some periods of his polished existence—his voice usually grew softer and his smile sweeter. Once, when a young man, a woman had struck him across the face—with or without cause, probably with—and in the presence of others. They had waited to see what he would do, and were moved to admiration when he caught the hand that had struck him and, raising it to his lips, murmured with a smile: "Rather a blow from you than a kiss from another," and in their admiration the onlookers probably forgot that he had wronged the woman or as probably considered that his exquisite manners had more than atoned.

As a young man the noble earl had been wild and reckless, with a society polished wildness; but of late years he had subsided into the middle-aged but ever youthful man of retired habits and studious tastes.

And he was still the model to which parents pointed when they wished to impress upon their sons a type of what a man should be who was made by manners.

It is true that there were ribald individuals who had been known to jeer at him and even to go as far as to call him the Superfine Earl; but if he was aware of these—and it was very little that he was not aware of—Lord Arrowdale went on his way serene, smiling and unmoved.

On the evening of the day after that on which Mr. Petherick had paid his visit to Cliff Cottage, Norton, the earl had a small dinner party.

He had asked the guests before he had received the letter from Catherine Hayes, and, notwithstanding it was the day upon which he was to receive the daughter he had not yet seen, he had not postponed his little party.

"Never put off a dinner, however unimportant, unless there be a death in the family or smallpox in the house," was one of his maxims.

And exactly at a quarter to eight o'clock he left the hands of his valet, exquisitely dressed, upright as a dart with every white hair in place, without a crease in his shirt front or scarcely a wrinkle in his face, and with the clean-cut lips just curved with the smile which, if he had labeled his smiles, would probably have been numbered "No. 2, Smile for the reception of one's guests."

Santleigh Court was as old and as unimpeachable in the way of ancestry as its owner. Originally the residence of a Norman baron—of course an Arrowdale—it had been transformed by successive owners into one of the most magnificent of English palace mansions.

It would have been a show place like Chatsworth or Eaton Hall if the noble earl could have brought himself to endure the thought of the presence of plebeian tourists in the lofty corridors and stately hall; but the mere idea caused him to shudder, and the guide books always put to their descriptions of the place a footnote, "Strangers are not permitted to pass the park gates."

The earl made his way down the broad stairs—up which one might have driven a coach and four with ease, so far as breadth goes—with the slow and stately grace peculiar to him, and was passing into the drawing room when the footman approached and in subdued tones said:

"Mr. Petherick has arrived, my lord."

"Thank you. In the library?"

"In the library, my lord."

The earl turned aside and entered the oak-paneled library and held out his white and delicately shaped hand.

"Ah, Petherick, a safe journey, I trust. You will be in time for dinner. We do not dine until a quarter past, and I have a few friends. The heat has subsided a little, has it not? I fear you must have suffered much inconvenience from it."

"Thank you, my lord; yes, it has been hot. I have returned, my lord, and—and Lady Norah has accompanied me."

"Norah. Do you spell it with the 'h' or without?" he asked blandly.

"Er—with the 'h,' I believe my lord."

"Ah, yes. It's a musical name; Irish—or Celtic, at any rate."

"I do not think we have had the name in the family before. Norah! Yes, it is not unmusical. I am infinitely obliged to you for all the trouble you have taken, Petherick, and, believe me, I quite realize how excessive it must have been."

"Not at all, my lord," said Mr. Petherick. "I may say that it has afforded me much pleasure. Lady Norah——"

"Pardon me," he said, interrupting him. "Would you kindly ring the bell."

Mr. Petherick did so and a footman entered.

"My compliments to Lady Norah and I shall be gratified if she will dine with me a quarter past eight."

"Eh—ahem—I beg a thousand pardons, my lord, but—I—I—am afraid Lady Norah will be tired and scarcely—that is—I think you said, my lord, that you had a dinner party?"

"Take my message to Lady Norah please," then he turned to his companion.

"Thank you for your consideration, Petherick. I see you desire to spare me a—shall I say a shock?—but, believe me, I am quite prepared. I am not exacting, and I do not expect grapes from thistles. I am also resolved that as Lady Norah is here under my roof, my acknowledged daughter, I will not permit myself to be—it is an ugly word, but I find no other—ashamed of her."

"I hope you will have no cause to be ashamed of Lady Norah, my lord," he said slowly.

"Thank you very much. I trust not. But, as I said, I am prepared for the worst. A girl brought up as she has been——" He stopped. "But, my dear Petherick, I am detaining you and will cause you to hurry your toilet."

Mr. Petherick bowed and left the room without another word, but when he reached the hall he looked round and suffered himself to mutter his favorite ejaculation, "Bless my soul!"

The earl went into the drawing room, a magnificent salon, richly decorated with gold upon ivory white by Inigo Jones, and stood in a graceful attitude awaiting his guests.

If he felt any curiosity respecting this daughter upon whom his eyes were to rest for the first time certainly no trace of it was to be seen in his face as he took up an orchid from a vase and examined it with a pleased and devoted attention as if his mind were entirely free from any more pressing matter.

Presently some of the guests arrived.

The footman announced Lord Ferndale, whose estate joined Santleigh, an old and genial man with a loud voice, which made Lord Arrowdale's sound the sweeter and softer by contrast; Mr. Parfleet, a neighboring squire, and the rector. Lord Arrowdale always attended church every Sunday morning, subscribed to all the local charities and, as he would have put it, "supported the clergy."

He shook hands with them, murmured a few graceful words of welcome, then glanced at his watch.

"We are waiting for two others. I expect Guildford Berton."

"Ah, well, he is always punctual," said the rector with the chuckle which accompanied nearly every remark; and, indeed, as he spoke, the door opened and the footman announced the gentleman alluded to.

He was a tall, thin young man, with a sallow face and hair and eyes of a darkness seldom found in an Englishman. They were fine eyes, seemed to light up his face and render its sallowness almost unnoticeable, and they flashed for a moment round the room and from face to face before he uttered a word. Then he came forward and greeted the earl, and his voice was almost as soft and sweetly pitched as his host's.

The earl's glance rested upon the dark face and carefully attired figure with a momentary approval, and there was a touch of cordiality and familiarity in his voice as he spoke to him which had been absent when he addressed his other guests.

"Ah, Guildford. We were lauding your punctuality. The air is somewhat cooler this evening, I trust?"

"Yes," said Guildford Berton. "But I walked somewhat slowly. I hope I have not kept you waiting."

"No," said the earl, "we are waiting now for Lady Norah."

Lord Ferndale, who was standing near, regarding the young man with a not altogether approving countenance, turned to the earl with surprise.

"Lady—Norah!" he said.

It was a bachelor's party and the announcement of a guest of the other sex startled him. The rector and Mr. Parfleet stopped suddenly in the middle of their gossip and also turned toward the earl.

He stood bland and smiling, looking at them, one white hand touching caressingly the flower in his buttonhole, the other hanging gracefully at his side, and only the black eyes of Guildford Berton were acute enough to detect something malicious and self-torturing beneath the smile and the veneered case.

"I beg your pardon. I ought to have said 'my daughter, Lady Norah.'"

Lord Ferndale started and the rector and Mr. Parfleet exchanged glances. They remembered the ear's marriage and the quickly following separation, but they had known nothing of the daughter.

The earl seemed, in a courteous fashion, to enjoy their surprise.

"You are astonished, Guildford?" he said, addressing the young man, whose eyes were fixed upon him. "You were not aware that I was even married. Our good friends could have told you the story"—and he waved his hand slightly toward the three other silent men. "Not at all a new or original one, but not without its touch of romance. A foolish and high-flown youth and an unsophisticated girl." He spoke as calmly and blandly as if he were talking of some one else's marriage rather than his own. "Romantic, but disastrous. It may serve as a warning to you, my dear Guildford. We will not go into details; suffice it that the foolish youth and the unsophisticated girl speedily discovered that the god Love is more mortal and less lasting than poor humanity, and—they parted. Really, I think it was the wisest thing they could do. You agree with me, rector?"

The rector bowed and colored, and the earl, after delicately wiping his lips with his exquisitely fine handkerchief, went on on the same bland smooth voice:

"They parted. It was very sad and very—disappointing. But—what would you have? Life is too short to permit of two persons spending it in quarreling." He shuddered palpably.

"But—but your daughter?" said Lord Ferndale.

"Ah, yes, pardon me, I had forgotten! Yes, I have a daughter, born after the separation; consequently I have not seen her. But her mother and her nurse and, I believe, most attached and devoted servant being dead, her care devolves upon me."

There was a pause. Everybody tried to find something to say and failed, though Lord Ferndale did murmur inaudibly, "Poor girl."

"I may say," said the earl, quite pleasantly, "that I have not seen her yet and that I am sharing your curiosity. She arrived this afternoon."

The men exchanged glances, all but Guildford Berton, who kept his dark eyes fixed on the floor.

"I cannot even tell you what she is like, but I trust you will find her charming," and he spoke the words as if he had added "and I am quite sure you won't."

There was a painful silence, broken by the entrance of Mr. Petherick.

"We will not wait," he said suavely.

"I expect Lady Norah is too tired."

The earl smiled upon him and motioned Lord Ferndale to lead the way.

They entered the dining room and the earl walked straight to the bottom of the table, waved his guests to their seats and the rector said grace.

He had scarcely resumed his seat when the two footmen ranged themselves on either side of the door and Norah entered.

She wore the soft white dress with the black sash and shoulder ribbon in which Mr. Petherick had first seen her; her face was pale, but that and the faintest quiver of the beautiful lips were the only signs that she felt the ordeal which her exquisite father had compelled her to undergo.

The men started and rose, looking at her in breathless silence. The earl was the first to gain his feet, and he, too, stared for a moment, as silent as the rest.

He had expected to see a shy, timid, underbred girl, half dairy maid, half—he scarcely knew what. At any rate, something that would try all his self-possession and immovable serenity.

Instead——!

For a moment a faint color rose to his face and all his boasted impassiveness broke down before this graceful young creature with the lovely face and wealth of red-gold hair, who stood waiting like the princess for homage. Then he left the table and taking her hand with a bow turned to his dumfounded guests:

"Gentlemen, permit me to introduce you to my daughter."

And still holding her hand he conducted her with stately but ice-like courtesy to the head of the table.

(To be Continued.)

ARM TATTOOED WITH DATES.

The arm of a well-known London gentleman might well be described as a genealogical tree, for it is rapidly being covered with dates. In addition to his own and his wife's birth dates and the record of their marriage, he has the name and date of the birth of each of his children.

HARD ON MRS. JONES.

"My wife solemnly affirms that she will never speak to me again if I say anything about it," said Jones, with a smile. "But it is too good to keep, so here goes. Mrs. Jones had been ailing for some time, and, falling into the hands of one of the neighbors who is a faith curist, she became imbued with that peculiar belief. I laughed at her; but she remained firm, and said she was convinced that she could be cured only through faith. As her illness was not serious, I said nothing more.

"Things went on for some time, while my wife continued to get better, and at last she announced that she was fully cured.

"'Now then, John Henry,' said she, 'I never again wish to hear you say anything about mind cure being all imagination. I am sure that I should have been a dead woman if I hadn't taken the treatment I did. And to think that he never set eyes on me!'

"'He never what?' I gasped.

"'Set eyes on me! I took the absent treatment. I sent Professor Fake $5 to treat me by his famous method.'

"'Do you mean to say,' said I, 'that you sent a quack $5 to treat you?'

"'That's just what I did! And to think the most wonderful thing about it was that I was aware the moment that he received my letter and opened it, although he was hundreds of miles from me! Why, I commenced getting right from that moment! It is simply wonderful! You can't deny that I am now quite well, and all through the wonderful treatment that I received.'

"I should have said something then and there had I not heard the postman's knock and gone to the door to get my letters. There was one for my wife from the Returned Letter Office, and when she opened it out dropped her letter to Professor Fake. She had misdirected it, and the quack had never received it. She says—but on second thoughts I hadn't better tell you what she says."

CHARITABLE NOVELTIES.

Germany is ahead in novelties of a charitable nature. In the town of Haschmann prizes are offered yearly for the men who will marry the ugliest and most crippled women, and for the women over forty years who have geen jilted at least twice. The money was left by a big financier, who, realizing that beauty is an attraction hard to overcome, made a provision in his will that out of the income of the fund not less than $80 shall go with the ugliest girl in any year, and the cripple shall receive $60. The poor women over forty who have been jilted by a lover receive, when the funds permit, $50 each, but the trustee can vary this amount, and, at his own discretion, offer a larger prize to someone who will marry an unusually ugly girl, or one to whom Nature has been specially unkind.

LIVING SUN-DIAL.

An interesting specimen in the way of sun-dials may be seen in the gardens of Stainboro' Castle, near Barnsley. The dial here is laid on the flat garden ground, the Roman figures and lines being formed of closely-cropped box borderings. One of the thickest of yew trees cut into exact shape forms the pin of the dial which in the summer months is covered from the ground to the apex with a thick growth of leaves, and stands about 12 feet high. In spite of the fact that this unique sundial has been growing for nearly 200 years, it is still in excellent condition, and, moreover, compares favorably with those of modern construction so far as its time-keeping propensities are concerned.

SMOKING MOURNERS.

A very curious old custom is associated with interments in the cemetery of Labruck, Connemara, Ireland. A box of pipes—short clays—is brought with the coffin, and a pipe with tobacco is served out to each mourner. The pipes are smoked in silence after the earth has been filled in and and a mound of stones raised above the grass, the ashes are solemnly knocked out on the top, and the pipes broken or left behind.

COLOR BLINDNESS.

The most common form of color blindness is an inability to distinguish red. Last year thirty-four officers and would-be officers of the British Mercantile Marine failed on their color test, twenty-three being red blind and the remainder unable to distinguish green. The 4,600 candidates for certificates were also submitted to the form vision tests, and twenty-two of them failed to distinguish the form of the object submitted

$20,000 PRIZE.

Among the prizes offered by the Paris Academy of Science to inventors is one of $20,000, founded by Pierre Guzmarn, which is to go to the person who finds a way of communicating with the inhabitants of another planet. Another prize—the Breant—awaits anyone who discovers an infallible remedy against Asiatic cholera.

YOUNG FOLKS

PRINCESS PRETEND.

In the winoow sat Doris, watching the rain, and her face was all puckered and unhappy. "I'm tired staying in this old house!" she said.

"Dear me," said mother, folding up her work, "we'd better get on our things and go to see a new friend of mine! Run off and get ready."

Doris unpuckered her forehead a little, and hurried on her rainy-day hat and her long coat, and took her little umbrella; then she and mother started.

"This isn't a nice street," she said, discontentedly, as they turned down a narrow street, and, O mother, are we going in this ugly house?"

"Yes," said mother, and they went up some shabby steps and in through a shabby door, and then up two dark flights of stairs. A woman was scrubbing half-way up.

"Can't you mind where you're stepping?" she asked, crossly, as Doris hit her pail in the darkness.

"I'm sorry," said Doris, but her voice did not sound as if she cared very much.

When they had reached the top of the house mother said, "Here we are," and knocked on a door at the head of the stairs.

"Come in!" called a little girl's voice, and mother opened the door into a room not nearly as big as Doris's play-room, or nearly as light, either, for it had only one window. In the middle of the room was quite a big bed, and in it propped up among pillows, lay a little girl with a pale face and shining eyes.

"How do you do, princess?" said mother, making a courtesy, and the little girl's eyes shone brighter.

"I'm very well, all but a part of me that's under the bedclothes and so doesn't matter," said the little girl in the bed, gaily. She held out a thin little hand and shook hands with mother and Doris.

"How kind you were to come to the palace to see me!" she said. "Was the witch on the stairs?"

"Yes, indeed," said mother, while Doris opened her eyes wide, "she was there with her fairy pail, making things clean in the darkness."

"I knew she would be," said the little girl. "She's a kind witch, you know," she said, turning to Doris, "but her words are sometimes disguised so you might think she was cross."

"I did," said Doris, opening her wide eyes.

"Oh, no, indeed!" said the little girl. "Why, she looks after me while my mother, the queen, is away at the Castle of the Books every day. It was she who shut the casement so the gray knights cannot get in to harm me, no matter how hard they try. Hear them dash against the window and then see them fall down! Nothing really hurts them, so I love to watch."

"You mean the rain?" asked Doris.

The little girl in the big bed nodded, with mischief in her eyes.

"Things have different names here in the palace," she whispered, "just for fun, you know, because I have to stay here all the time. Wouldn't you like to see the greenhouses? Take the first turn to your left."

The first turn to the left was between two old chairs; the greenhouses were below the window on a small table—one flower-pot with grass growing in it, and one with a little geranium, not such a very pretty geranium, with a red blossom. Doris stood for a long time, looking at them and winking hard every little while.

"The court physician says it may be only one year more before the queen mother can take me out into the world again," she heard the little girl say to mother. "Oh, it's nearly three years since that day I slipped on the stairs. But that's all gone."

"Doris, if you've really seen the greenhouses we must go home now," said mother, at last.

"Sometimes when the palace seems very quiet and just a speck lonesome, I shall shut my eyes and play you are here visiting me," said the little girl in the bed, as she held out her hand again. "I shall see you just as plain!"

"O mother," said Doris, "couldn't I bring Angelina here, so she needn't pretend all the time? Couldn't I? I could make believe sunshine here in the palace. Couldn't we come, mother? Angelina and I?"

"Why, yes, I think you could," said mother.

BOYS, THINK THESE OVER.

One of our great men says a boy should learn:

To let cigarettes alone.
To be kind to all animals.
To be manly and courageous.
To ride, row, shoot and swim.
To build a fence scientifically.
To fill the woodbox every night.
To be gentle to his sisters.
To shut a door without slamming.
To sew on a button.

One of the hardest things is not to believe your own lies.

The hand that cooks the meals is the hand that rules the world's digestion.