DARE HE?

OR, A SAD LIFE STORY

CHAPTER XXVII.—(Continued).

After she is gone, he rages about the garden, and passes beyond it to where—still sunlight-smitten—the blue Mediterranean is breaking in joyous foam.

He sits down on the shelly strand, and, in futile anger, huls back the wet pebbles into the sea's azure lap. Away to the left, the three-cornered town swarms candescent up the hill, and the white light-house stands out against the lapis-colored air.

How sharp-cut and intense it all is?—none of our dear undecided grays. Here, if you are not piercing blue, you are dazzling white or profound green. There is, indeed, something less sharp-cut and uncompromising—a something more of mystery in that glory that—bright, too, but not making its full revelation—envelops the long hill range that, ending in Cape Matifou, stretches away to the far right. Round the corner, to the right too, a party of Arabs, sitting sideways on little donketys, white draped, with their haik-swathed heads, are disappearing on their small beasts in the clear air. It is like a page out of the Bible—a flight into Egypt—and they are going towards Egypt too.

Jim's eye follows the placid Easterns, but without catching the infection of their tranquility. "Whenever I see her, I stick a knife into her! It is impossible! There is no use trying! I will give up the attempt. It is out of the question to have any happy relations with a woman who has a past!"

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After all, Mr. Le Marchant does not like Hammam Rhira. He thinks the hotel cold and the roads bad. Jim overhears him telling someone this, and his own heart leaps. It is true that he takes it to task for doing so. Perhaps, after all, Elizabeth's removal would have been the best solution of his problem. Had she left Algiers, he could scarcely have followed her, and she would have been freed from the chance of his clumsy stabs.

But all the same, his heart leaps. It leaps yet higher a day or two later when he discovers that, though Hammam Rhira has not met with Mr. Le Marchant's approbation, yet that, by his trip to it, he has been bitten with a taste for travel, the outcome of which is his solitary departure on an expedition to Constantin, Tunis, etc., which must occupy him at least a week. His wife accompanies him to the station, but his daughter is not allowed to go beyond the hotel steps.

Jim surreptitiously watches her hovering with diffident affection round her father, unobtrusively and unthanked, fetching and carrying for him. He sees the cold kiss that just brushes her cheek and hears the chill parting admonition to look well after her mother and see that she does not overtire herself.

It is accepted with ready meekness, but leaves the recipient so crestfallen, as she stands looking after the departing vehicle, that Burgoyne cannot forebear joining her, with some vague, and, as he knows, senseless vallelty of champinonship and consolation.

"He is gone for a week, is not he?" is the form that his sympathy takes, in a tone in which he is at but small pains not to render congratulatory.

"Yes, quite a week."

"Are you"—he is perfectly conscious while asking it that he has not the slightest right to put the question—"are you glad or sorry?"

She starts perceptibly.

"Why should I be glad? Do you mean"—with an unconquerable streak of satisfaction in her own voice—"because I shall have mammy all to myself? You must not think"—with an obvious rush of quickly-following compunction—"that I am not fond of him, because he sometimes speaks a little roughly to me." After a pause, in a lowered voice: "You see, when you have broken a person's heart, you can scarcely blame him for not having a very high opinion of you."

So saying, she suddenly leaves him as she had left him in the Jardin d'Essai. He does not again approach her that day, but at dinner-time he has the answer to his question as to her being glad or sorry at her father's departure. She is apparently in the best of spirits, sitting nestled close up to her mother for the better convenience of firing a series of little jokes and comments into that parent's appreciative ear.

"They make fun of the whole hotel," observes Miss Strutt with exasperation. "I do not believe that one of us escapes! When he is not here to check them, there is no holding them!"

No holding Elizabeth! The phrase recurs to him several times during the next few days, as not without its justness, when he sees its object flitting about the house, gay as a linnet; when he meets her singing subduedly to herself upon the stairs; when he watches her romping with the French children, and mischievously collecting flowers of Clapham eloquence from their governess, which she is good enough to retail for his own and her mother's benefit when evening unites the three in the retirement of their little salon. For, strange and improbably blissful as it seems, he has somehow, ere three days are over, effected an entrance into that small and fragrant sanctuary.

Mrs. Le Marchant's first fears that the meeting with him again would re-open sorrow have disappeared in the light of her daughter's childish gaiety, and are even exchanged for a compunctious gratitude to him for having been in part the cause of her new light-heartedness. The weather has again broken, a fact which he alone of the whole hotel does not deplore, since it was his own ostentatiously displayed wet-day dreariness that was the cause of his first admission within the doors that are closed upon all others. Moreover, had it not been wet weather, could he have held an umbrella over Elizabeth's head when he met her in the eucalyptus wood, and they walked among the naked trunks, while the long, loose, pale foliage waved like dishevelled hair, in the rain, and the pungent asphodels grew thick about their feet in the red earth? And when, by-and-bye, the clouds disperse again, and there comes a fair day, bracketed between three or four foul ones—the usual Algerian proportion—it has grown quite natural to all three that he should sit opposite to them in their drives; that he should haggle with Arabs for them, and remonstrate with the landlord, and generally transfer all the smaller roughnesses of life from their shoulders to his own. Brought into more intimate communion with them than he has ever been before, Burgoyne realizes how much they belong to the kneeling, leaning, spoiling type of womankind. Elizabethe would be the easiest woman in the world to manage. How is it that in her ten years of womanhood no man has been found to undertake the lovely facile task? He himself knows perfectly the treatment that would befit her; the hinted wishes—her tact is too fine and her spirit too meek to need anything so coarse as commands—the infinitesimal rebukes and the unlimited—oh! limitless—caresses:

"Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears
and smiles."

Every day he finds himself repeatng Wordsworth's line, and every day, in his fancied guidance of her, he tells himself that the blame should be less and the kisses more.

. . . . . .

Mr. Le Marchant has been gone more than a week, and February has come wetly in, with rain wildly weeping against the casements, and angry-handed rain boxing the unlucky orange-trees' ears. It has rained for forty-eight hours without a break. The Grand Hotel is at the end of its resources. Uncle Toby, his struggle ended, lies vanquished in the widow's net; and there is murder in the lurid eye which Miss Strutt turns on the votary of Whiteley.

Jim alone, outdoor man as he habitually is, looking upon a house merely in the light of a necessary shelter, has no quarrel either with the absent sun or the present deluge; for are not they the cause of his having spent two whole afternoons in the company of Elizabeth and her mother? To-day has not Elizabeth been singing to him, and cutting him orange-flower bread-and-butter, when Fritz brought in the afternoon tea, and set the real English kettle fizzing over its spirit-lamp? And, in return, has not he now, after dinner, been helping her to weed out her own and her mother's photograph-books? As he does so the idea strikes him of how very meagre her own collection of acquaintances seems to be. From that weeding have they not, by an easy transition, at her suggestion, passed to the more playful and ingenious occupation of amputating the heads of some of the rejected friends and applying them to the bodies of others? Each armed with a pair of scissors, and with Mrs. Le Marchant for Umpire, they have been vying with each other as to who can produce the most startling results by this clever process.

The palm has just been awarded to Elizabeth for a combination which presents the head of an elderly lady, in a widow's cap, mounted upon the cuirass and long boots of a Life Guardsman. Jim's application of the cornet's discarded head to the body of a baby in long clothes, although allowed to be a pretty conceit, commands but little real admiration—an instance of nepotism which he does not allow to pass without protest.

Elizabeth, elated by her triumph, has flown out of the room to examine her private stores for fresh material, and Jim and her mother—for the first time as it happens, since that early meeting, when her anxious eye had so plainly implored him to leave Algiers—are tete-a-tete. Her changed aspect towards him as she sits, with a lingering laugh still on her face, beside the wood fire—which, after having twice gone out, as it almost always does, the souches being invariably wet, burns brightly and crackly—strikes him with such a feeling of warm pleasure that he says in a voice of undisguised triumph:

"What spirits she is in, is not she?"

"Yes; is not she?" assents the mother, eagerly. "Oh, I cannot say how grateful I am to you for having cheered her up as you have done! "Oh," with a low sigh that seems to bear away on its slow wings the last echoes of her late mirth, "if it could only last!"

"Why should not it last?"

"If nothing fresh would happen!"

"Why should anything fresh happen?"

She answers only indirectly:

"'Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
The life-blood seemed to sip.'

Sometimes I think that Coleridge wrote those lines expressly for me." After a pause, in a voice of anxious asking: "She has not mentioned him to you lately, has she?"

"No."

"That is a good sign. Do not you think that that is a good sign? I think that she is getting better; do not you?"

For a moment he cannot answer, both because he is deeply touched by the confidence in him and his sympathy evidenced by her appeal, and for a yet more potent reason. Little she guesses how often, and with what heart-searchings and spirit-sinkings, he has put that question to himself.

"I do not know," he replies at last, with difficulty; "it is hard to judge."

"You have not told hm that we are here?" in a quick, panic-struck tone, as of one smitten with a new and sharp apprehension.

"Oh, no!"

"You do not think that he is at all likely to join you here?"

"Not in the least!" with an almost angry energy, which reveals to himself how deeply distasteful the mere suggestion of Byng's reappearance on the scene is to him.

Mrs. Le Marchant heaves a second sigh. This time it is one of relief.

"Then I do not see," with a sudden bound upward into sanguineness which reminds him of her daughter, "why we should not all be very comfortable."

Jim is pondering in his mind upon the significance of this "all," whether it is meant to include only Mr. Le Marchant, or whether, under its shelter, he himself may creep into that promised comfort, when she of whom they have been speaking re-enters. She has a packet of photographs, presumably suitable for amputation, in her hand, in which is also held a telegram, which she extends to Burgoyne.

"I met M. Cipriani bringing you this. It seems that you ought to have had it two days ago, but by some mistake, it was put into another gentleman's room—a gentleman who has never arrived—and there it has remained. He was full of apologies, but I told him what culpable carelessness it showed. I do trust,' with a sweetly solicitous look, "that it is not anything that matters."

"It cannot be of much consequence," replies Jim indifferently, while a sort of pang darts through him at the thought of how strangely destitute he is of people to be uncomfortably anxious about, and so tears it open.

An English telegram transmitted by French clerks often wears a very different air from that meant to be imparted to it by the sender, which is, perhaps, the reason why Jim remains staring so long at his—so long that the two women's good manners prompt them to remove their sympathetic eyes from him, and to attempt a little talk with each other.

"I hope you have no bad news?"

The elder one permits herself this inquiry after a more than decent interval has elapsed, during which he has made no sign.

He gives a start, as one too suddenly awakened out of deep sleep.

"Bad news?" he repeats in an odd voice—"what is bad news? That depends upon people's tastes. It is for you to judge of that: it concerns you as much or more than it does me."

So saying, he places the paper in her hand and, walking away to the little square window—open, despite the wildness of the weather—looks out upon the indigo-colored night.

Although his back is turned towards them, he knows that Elizabeth is reading over her mother's shoulder—reading this:

"Bourgouin,
"Grand Hotel,
"Algiers.

"Have heard of Le Marchants. If you do not wire to the contrary, shall cross to-morrow.—BYNG, Marseille."

He is not left long in doubt as to their having mastered the meaning of the missive.

"He is coming!" says Mrs. Le Marchant with a species of gasp; "and you told me—not five minutes ago you told me"—with an accent of reproach—"that there was not the remotest chance of it. Oh, stop him! stop him! Telegraph at once! The office will be open for two or three hours yet! There is plenty, plenty of time! Oh, telegraph at once—at once!"

"It is too late," replies Jim, retracing his steps to the table; "you forget that it is two days old. You see, they have spelt my name wrong; that accounts for the mistake. Bourgonin! It looks odd spelt Bourgouin, does not it?"

He hears himself giving a small, dry laugh, which nobody echoes.

"He must have sailed yesterday," contirues the young man, wishing he could persuade his voice to sound more natural; "he may be here at any moment. If the weather had been decent, he would have arrived ere now."

"Then there is nothing to be done!" rejoins Mrs. Le Marchant in a tone of flat desperation, sitting down again on the chair out of which she had instinctively risen at the little stir of the telegram's arrival.

Elizabeth is dead silent. Though there is no direction by the eye to show that Jim's next remark is aimed at her, there can be no doubt that it is awkwardly thrown in her direction.

"If this had not been delayed—if it had not been too late, would you have wished, would you have decided to stop him?"

"What is the use of asking me such a question now that it is too late?" replies she, with more of impatience, almost wrath in her voice than he has ever before heard that most gentle organ express.

But besides the ire and irritation, there is another quality in it which goads him to snatch a reluctant glance at her. She is extremely agitated, but underlying the distress and disturbance of her face there is an undoubted light shining like a lamp through a pale pink shade—a light that, with all her laughter and her jokes, was not there half an hour ago. He had often reproached himself that, by his clumsiness, he had stuck a knife into her tender heart. She is even with him to-night. To-night the tables are turned. It is she that has stuck a knife into him. It is clear as day that she is glad it is too late.

(To be continued).

THE EMPIRE'S OUTER RIM

HOW BRITISH RULE IS ENFORCED IN FAR-OFF LANDS.

Emir of Hadeija Struck British Messenger and What Happened Shortly Afterward.

Interesting details of the campaigns near Sokoto and at Hadeija, in Northern Nigeria, in the spring of 1906, are given in a report from Sir Frederick Lugard, British High Commissioner, just made public in London.

A Madhi arose at Satiru, a village fourteen miles south of Sokoto, in February, and a fanatical outbreak, directed against the Emir as well as against British rule, followed. The company of mounted infantry at Sokoto, under Lieut. F. E. Blackwood, immediately advanced on Satiru and formed a square. The rebels charged and broke the square, routing the company with a loss of twenty-five killed, including Lieutenant Blackwood, Mr. H. R. Preston-Hillary, the Acting Resident, and his assistant, Mr. A. G. M. Scott.

Within twenty-four days of the disaster a force of twenty-one officers and 526 men

ADVANCED ON SATIRU,

which, as Sir F. Lugard observes, "under the circumstances is a performance of which the Northern Nigeria regiment may justly be proud."

The enemy charged the square repeatedly, and the village was finally taken at the point of the bayonet. On the conclusion of this expedition the Emir of Hadeija required attention. His leaders assumed a boastful and independent attitude, and a band of fanatical leaders preached a Jehad with disastrous results. When the Emir was called on to surrender the principal agitators, he struck the British messengers, and contemptuously invited the commanding officers to come and take the persons himself.

He did so. A force of over 700 men and two guns at once moved on Hadeija. A mesenger was sent three times to warn the people in the capital that if they laid down their arms and came out they had nothing to fear, and Colonel Cole, who commanded the expedition, was preparing to send a fourth mesenger when the column was suddenly charged by a body

OF NATIVE MOUNTED SPEARMEN.

They were dispersed, but despite the heavy fire they reformed and charged again. Then the British troops forced their way into the town, where the streets were guarded by the enemy.

It required about one and a half hours' fighting to reach the Emir's enclosure. Here the resistance was very stubborn, but the entrance was at length forced, and the defenders killed or captured.

The fighting men were armed with swords, spears, bows and arrows, and a few firearms. Many wore shirts of mail. The Emir and his son were shot when charging boldly at a few yards' distance. The heat was intense—115 degrees in the shade.

ALWAYS DISAPPOINTING.

"Tompkins is one of the most interesting liars I ever met."

"So?"

"Yes. His stories are always so interesting that I am invariably disappointed when I find they aren't true."

FLOWER OF THE FAMILY.

"Uncle 'Rastus, how old are you?"

"Pas' 79, boss. I'll soon be a octogeranium."

HAD NO KICK COMING.

"I hate work," said Languid Lewis.

"I don't see why," rejoined Humble Harry. "It's a safe bet dat work never done youse no harm."

Mrs. Startuppe: "Ah, professor! And how is my daughter getting on with her music? Do you think she will ever become a great singer?" Professor: "Madam, it is very hard to say." Mrs. Startuppe: "But surely she posseses some of the qualifications?" Professor: "Ach! Yes, madam; she has a mouth."

Roberts (of very doubtful commercial standing): "As Shakespeare says, 'What's in a name?'" Jenkins: "Well, if you want to know, why don't you ask your wife?" Roberts: "My wife? What has she got to do with it?" Jenkins: "Why, everything you have is in your wife's name, isn't it?"

A GREAT PEACE PICNIC

MEETING TO BE HELD ON THE SUMMIT OF THE ANDES.

Argentina and Chili Will Celebrate Their Seven Years of Peace.

The Argentine Republic and Chili are planning a big picnic, to be held 14,000 feet above the sea. Some time before the summer wanes—the date has not yet been fixed—the people of these two republics will wend their way to the great Peace Monument at Puente del Inca, on the Andean boundary between Chili and Argentina, and there, at the feet of the huge statue of Christ, will hold a brief religious service, commemorative of the cessation of hostilities. Again, before the statue of Christ of the Andes these two nations will renew their pledge of brotherhood.

After the service and official formalities lunch boxes will be unpacked and games started on the ground which seven years ago was disputed territory.

Chilians and Argentinians who were building war vessels and drilling their soldiers for a hot fight for a slice of land will join hands in a rollicking

SOUTH-AMERICAN DANCE,

and when night falls kneel for blessing at the feet of the statue cast from cannon given over for the purpose by each republic when peace was declared.

Seven years ago these two prosperous and high-spirited republics of South America were on the verge of war. They were increasing their armaments to the utmost of their ability and were spending incredible sums of money upon preparations for war, amounting, as was reported at the time, to $5 annually per capita of their population. But war did not break out. Through the instrumentality of the leading churchmen of both countries, the dispute—over some 80,000 square miles of territory along the border—was submitted to arbitration by King Edward of Great Britain, and his decision was accepted by both sides. That was in 1900.

Much gratified with the outcome of the arbitration, and urged forward by a powerful popular movement, the two Governments then went further, and in June, 1903, concluded a treaty by the terms of which they pledged themselves for a period of five years to submit all controversies arising between them to arbitration, the first general arbitration treaty ever concluded. In a further treaty they agreed to

REDUCE THEIR ARMIES

to the proportions of police forces, to stop the building of the great battleships then under construction, and to diminish the naval armaments which they already possessed.

The provisions of these treaties, which have now been in force nearly four years, were carried out as fast as practicable, the land forces have been reduced, the heavy ordnance taken off the war vessels, and several of the vessels of the marine turned over to the commercial fleets. Work on the four great warships was immediately arrested, and some of them have been sold. The results of this disarmament—for it is a real disarmament—have been most remarkable. With the money saved by the lessening of military and naval expenses, internal and coast improvements have been made. Good roads have been constructed. Chili has turned an arsenal into a school for manual training. She is building a much-needed breakwater in the harbor of Valparaiso, and has commenced systematically the improvement of her commercial facilities along the coast.

Greater London's population is now rapidly approaching the seven million mark.

The Cynic: "What are you thinking of, Mary?" Mary: "I am dreaming of my youth." The Cynic: "I thought you had a far-away look in your eyes."

There are many things that are sacred to a Scotsman. Donald and Sandy were spending a merry evening over a dram. "Seeing that a bumble-bee has more than twa legs," says Donald, "would ye say it was a bir-rd or a quadruped?" "Man, Donald," said Sandy, reproachfully, "why will ye begin a theological discussion over a dram?"

Clara: "Father, George says he isn't half good enough to be my husband." Father: "H'm! He talked to me as if he was quite good enough to have me for a father-in-law."

Mrs. Flynn: "An' phwat's yer son, Moike, doin' now, Mrs. Casey?" Mrs. Casey: "Shure, Moike ain't doin' anything, Mrs. Flynn. He's got a Government job."

He was one of the smart men who like to show their cleverness. "Watch me take a rise out of him," he said, as the tramp approached. Then he listened solemnly to the tale of hard luck. "That's the same old story you told me the last time you accosted me," he said, when the vagrant had finished. "Is it?" was the answering question. "When did I tell it you?" "Last week." "Maybe I did, maybe I did," admitted the tramp. "I'd forgotten meeting you. I was in prison all last week."

Doman: "Can you tell what ails my wife?" Doctor: "She does not take enough out-door exercise." "She says she does not feel equal to it." "True. She needs toning up." "What have you prescribed?" "A new bonnet."