

NOTTIE'S FATHER.

CHARLOTTE M. YONGE.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THREE YEARS LATER.

...something rotten in the State."—Hamlet.

...east-windy afternoon in March... Nugent emerged from the School of...

...one of the few... for everybody. It is... to teach him...

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drum—a very beautiful child, with a striking resemblance to his mother, quite startling to Mr. Dutton, especially in the last, which was coloured, and showed the likeness of eyes and expression.

"Nuttie always sends me one whenever he is taken," said the old lady. "Dear Nuttie! It is very good for her. She is quite a little mother to him."

"I was sure it would be so," said Mr. Dutton. "Yes," said Mary, "he is the great interest and delight of her life. Her letters are full of his little sayings and doings."

"Is she at home now?" "No; at Brighton. Her father seems to have taken a dislike to Eidgefield since his brother's death, and only goes there for a short time in the shooting season. He has taken a lease of a house in London, and spends most of the year there."

"An!" as she showed him the address, "that is near the old house where I used to stay with my grand-aunt. We thought it altogether in the country then, but it is quite absorbed now, and I have dazzling offers from building companies for the few acres of ground around it. Have you seen her?"

"Oh no; I believe she is quite necessary to her father. I only hear of her through Lady Kirkaldy, who has been very kind to her, but, I am sorry to say, is now gone with her Lord to the East. She says she thinks that responsibility has been very good for Nuttie; she is gentler and less impetuous, and a good deal softened by her affection for the child."

"She was certain to develop. I only dreaded what society her father might surround her with."

"Lady Kirkaldy says that all has turned out better than could have been expected. You see, as she says, Mr. Egremont has been used to good women in his own family, and would not like to see her in a slangy fast set. All her own gaities have been under Lady Kirkaldy's wing, or that of Mr. William Egremont's relations, and only in a quiet moderate way. Her father gets his own old set about him, and they have not been very choice, but they are mostly elderly men, and gentlemen, and know how to behave themselves to her. Indeed, her cousin Blanche, who was here in the winter, gave us to understand that Ursula knows how to take care of herself, and gets laughed at as rather an old maidish model of propriety, if you can believe it of your little Nuttie."

"I could quite believe in her on the defensive, unprovoked as she is."

"What did that young lady—Miss Blanche—tell us about that gentleman, Mary?" asked Miss Headworth, hearing and uttering what Miss Nugent hoped had passed unnoticed.

"Oh, I think that was all gossip!" returned Mary, "and so I am sure did the Mark Egremonts. She said there was one of Mr. Egremont's friends, Mr. Clarence Fane, I think she called him, rather younger than the others, who she was pleased to say, seemed smitten with Nuttie, but I have heard nothing more about it, and Mrs. Mark scouted the idea," she added in haste, as she saw his expression vary in spite of himself.

"Do you see much of your neighbours?" "We are both too busy to see much of one another, but we have our little talks over the wall. What a buoyant creature she is. It seems as if playfulness was really a sustaining power in her, helping her to get diversion out of much that others might stumble at. You know perhaps that when she arrived the work-people had got up a beautiful parasol for her, white, with a deep fringe and spray of rowan. Little Susie Gunner presented her with it, and she was very gracious and nice about it. But then what must Mr. Goodenough do but dub it the Annabella sunshade, and blazon it, considerably vulgarized, in all the railway stations, and magazines."

"I know! I had the misfortune to see it in the station at Melbourne; and my mind misgave me from that hour."

"Her husband was prepared to be very angry, but she fairly laughed him out of it, made all sorts of fun out of the affair, declared it her only opening to fame, and turned it into a regular joke; so that indeed the Greenleafs, who were vexed at the matter, and tried to apologise, were quite perplexed in their turn, and not, at all sure that the whole concern was not being turned into ridicule."

"I wonder it did not make him out the connection," said Mr. Dutton, muttering "I only wish it had."

"Mrs. Greenleaf is very funny about her," added Mary, "proud of the Honourable Mrs. Egremont, as they insist on calling her, yet not quite pleased that she should be the junior partner's wife; and decidedly resenting her hardly going into society at all, though I really don't see how she could; for first there was the Canon's death, and then just after the boy was born came Lady Ronnigsen's accident, and for the next year and a half there was constant attendance on her. They fitted up a room on the ground floor for her, the one opening into your drawing-room, and there they used to sit with her. I need to hear them reading to her and singing to her, and they were always as merry as possible, till last autumn, when something brought on erysipelas, and she was gone almost before they took alarm. The good little daughter, was beaten down then, really ill for a week; but if you can understand me, the shock seemed to tell on her chiefly bodily, and though she was half broken-hearted when her husband in a great fright brought me up to see her, and say whether her sister should be sent for, she still made fun of him, and described the impossible advice they would bring on themselves. I had to take care of her while he went away to the funeral in Scotland, and then I learnt indeed to like her and see how much there is in her besides laughter."

America. You were gone, old Mr. Greenleaf has been past attending to business ever since he had that attack, and George Greenleaf has been playing the country squire at Horton Bishop, and not looking after the office work, and Mr. Egremont was inexperienced. One could see, of course, that the whole character of the business was changed—much more advertising, much more cheap and flashy work—to be even with the times, it was said, but the old superior hands were in despair at the materials supplied to them, and the scamped work expected. You should have heard old Thorpe mourning for you, and moralising over the wickedness of this world. His wife told me she really thought he would go melancholy mad if he did not leave the factory, and he has done so. They have saved enough to set up a nice little shop at Monks Horton."

"I must go and see them! Good old Thorpe! I ought never to have put those poor things into the firm when I ceased to have any control over it. I shall never forgive myself."

"Nothing could seem safer than! No one could have guessed that young Mr. Greenleaf would be so careless without his father to keep him up to the mark, nor that Mr. Goodenough should alter so much. Is it very bad? Is there worse behind? Speculation, I suppose."

"Of course. I do not see to the bottom of it yet; poor George seemed to reckon on me for an advance, but I am afraid this is more than a mere temporary depression, such as may be tided over, and that all that can be looked to is trying to save honourable names by an utter break up, which may rid them of that—that—no, I won't call him a scoundrel. I thought highly of him once, and no doubt he never realized what he was doing."

Before the evening was far advanced Mark Egremont knocked at the door, and courteously asked whether Mr. Dutton could be spared to him for a little while. Mary Nugent replied that she was just going to help Miss Headworth to bed, and that the parlour was at their service for a private interview, but Mark answered, "My wife is anxious to hear. She knows all that I do, and is quite prepared to hear whatever Mr. Dutton may not object to saying before her."

So they bade good-night to Mary, and went on together to the next house, Mr. Dutton saying "You have much to forgive me, Mr. Egremont; I feel as if I had deserted the ship just as I had induced you to embark in it."

"You did not guess how ill it would be steered without you," returned Mark, with a sigh. "Do not fear to speak out before my wife, even if we are sinking. She will hear it bravely, and smile to the last."

The room which Mr. Dutton entered was not like the cabin of a sinking ship, nor, as in his own time, like the well-ordered apartment of a bachelor of taste. Indeed, the house was a great puzzle to Monsieur, who entered by invitation, knowing his way perfectly, and then missing his own particular mat, and sniffing round at the furniture. It was of the modified aesthetic date, but arranged more with a view to comfort than anything else, and by the light of the shaded lamp and bright fire was pre-eminently home-like, with the three chairs placed round the hearth, and bright-haired Annaple rising up from the lowest with her knitting to greet Mr. Dutton, and find a comfortable lair for Monsieur.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Reclaiming Waste Lands.

Nearly all the agricultural lands in the country, that are at present available, have been taken up. There is no doubt that before many years large areas of swamp and other unproductive lands will be reclaimed by processes that many years ago turned similar lands in Europe into fertile fields. A late geological survey estimates that there are 50,000 square miles of swamp lands east of the Mississippi that can easily be drained. We are only beginning to reclaim our large area of comparatively arid lands by irrigation, and our future enterprises of this sort will dwarf all our past undertakings. Prof. Powell believes that an enormous region in the Northwest now lying untouched may profitably be fitted for the farmer by utilizing a portion of the Missouri and its tributaries.

A number of notable projects for reclaiming waste areas are now in progress in various parts of the world. In her sturdy fight against the ocean, Holland has added a million acres of tillable land to her territory; and she now proposes the greatest feat her engineers have ever undertaken, the draining of the Zuyder Zee, and this, if accomplished, will add a new province to the kingdom. The scheme involves the long and costly operation of separating the bay from the ocean by great dykes, and then pumping out the water, a work which, in spite of its colossal proportions, is said to be feasible both in its engineering and its financial aspects.

The Australians dream of a day when a large part of the great barren districts of their continent will be reclaimed by irrigation. Inner Australia is a desert only for lack of water, and it is asserted that the reclamation of large parts of these waste lands by irrigation is feasible. The Governments of Victoria and South Australia are making experiments in this direction, and they have recently let a contract to a Canadian firm to irrigate 500,000 acres by water drawn from the Murray River. It will be interesting to watch the efforts that will be made to reduce the inhospitable areas in that great southern continent.

Perhaps the most remarkable of recent attempts to reclaim valueless lands are the oases which the French are developing on the Northern borders of the Sahara. Tapping an underground river which is found to flow with a deep, swift current from north to south, they have, by means of many borings, transformed a strip of the burning desert sixty miles long into a scene of lovely verdure. They proudly call these oases along the Wady Kir a little Egypt fertilized by a subterranean Nile, whose waters unceasingly spring to the surface, wherever outlet is afforded, to cover the face of the desert with beauty and gladness. About 800,000 date palms are now growing there, which nearly 500 artesian wells have supplied with the only element needed for vegetation.

"She."

"Pa," said Bertie the other day, "why do you call a ship 'she'?" "Because, my son, she is always on the lookout for some of the boys."

Putting it in Another Light.

Energetic Mother—"You should do your best to impress Mr. Featherly, Clara. He is awfully rich and very, very good."

Clara—"I know that, mother; but he is too good. I hate good men."

Mother—"Yes, but think, my dear, the good is the young."

Clara promises to consider the matter.

She Knew Better. He came in very late, and to keep Mrs. P. quiet narrated a trumped-up story of a narrow escape he had had on his way home of being run over by a fire engine.

"A second (hic) sooner and I should (hic) have been a dead man. It fairly (hic) took my breath away."

"No, it didn't," she said, turning her face to the wall.

So He Paid And Went. Patient—"Then you think it's all up with me, doctor?"

Doctor—"I'm afraid so."

P.—"Well, we must all die once and I may as well go now as afterward. You're sure I'm going?"

D.—"Yes."

P.—"Then let me have your bill."

D.—"My bill! My dear sir, that is very unkind. You should give your thoughts to more serious matters."

P.—"My motto has always been 'pay as you go,' and now that I am going I want to pay."

So he paid and went.

Bachelor Quarters. GOING TO PROPOSE. Jack (to his chum)—"Gus, I'm going to ask Clara Smith to-night to be my wife, and I may not be in until late. Better leave the gas burning a little."

Pastour and the Rabbits.

Scientists and agriculturists are alike interested in the mission of the Pastour delegates who have recently set out for the Australian colonies to try conclusions with the now famous rabbit pest of the antipodes. A quarter of a century ago the rabbit was practically an unknown animal in Australia; to-day the question of how best to deal with the millions of rabbits by which the country is overrun, is taxing the ingenuity of the wisest statesmen in the country. The experience of the Australian colonists ought to be a valuable warning against all efforts to acclimatize animals or other fauna that cannot under any circumstances be a blessing, but may possibly prove to be a heavy curse so the country that tries to introduce them.

About twenty-five years since several acclimatization societies were formed in the antipodes, mainly for the purpose of introducing hares and rabbits, the destruction of which forms a considerable feature in Old Country sports. They were only too successful. The imported rabbits not only increased enormously in size, they became phenomenally prolific; instead of producing four or five young, as in England, they produce as many as eight or ten litters in the year, each litter containing eight or ten rabbits of a size and voracity unknown in the Old Country. They increased and multiplied by millions; efforts were made to confine them to particular localities by rabbit-proof wire fences, but they burrowed under them or learned the art of leaping over them, and taught it to their young ones. The sober, matter-of-fact official statement of their depredations is absolutely appalling; one large land owner spent not less than \$200,000 in a vain effort to drive them from his sheep walk, but was at last obliged to give up the unequal contest and abandon farming; his extensive territory is now a wilderness, every blade and root of grass and every other vegetable growth being totally destroyed by the voracious rabbits. The Governments of the colonies made the pests a national question, a bonus was offered for the destruction of the "vermin," and in 1886 this one item cost the New South Wales Cabinet \$730,000; for 1887 the cost was computed to be \$1,250,000, and rapidly increasing—it is estimated that in the next six months they will have to pay for the destruction of at least fifteen millions of rabbits. It has been proposed to separate the more densely populated districts from the dreaded invasion by a fence 400 or 500 miles long, at a cost of \$3,850,000; but those who know their habits best affirm that it would be useless.

At length science has come forward. M. Pasteur some time ago discovered that the microbe which causes the cholera des poules is fatal to the rabbit also but to no other animal. In response to an advertisement of the New South Wales Government offering \$125,000 for a remedy, he has sent out two of his assistants, who will scatter a supply of the new microbe in the rabbits' feeding-ground and thus introduce the disease, which is expected to spread rapidly and soon destroy the pest. It remains to be seen whether the experiment will succeed in Australia as well as it has in France. In the meantime a good many people have protested against such a treacherous method of destruction; but the colonists reply that it has become a question whether they shall have to "go" or the rabbits. All other means of combating the plague have failed and it is urged that Pasteur's method of inflicting death is a rapid and painless one.

His Own Diagnosis. Mother—And do you really feel so very bad, Bobby?

Bobby—Yes, ma. I ain't quite sick enough to need any medicine, but I'm a little bit too sick to go to school.

Lovey Dovey. A woman weighing something like two hundred pounds, came into the Union Station the other day clinging to the bony arm of a little man who probably tipped the beam at ninety in his winter clothing.

He led the way to the ladies' waiting-room, deposited the lady in two chairs, and started out.

"You won't be gone long, will you?" dearie?" she gasped out. "I feel so timid."

"No darling; I'll be right back. Don't worry about me."

"Oh, I shall, dearie, I can't help it, and I dread being left alone."

"Well, I'll be back in ten minutes."

"Oh, do; I feel so nervous."

He was gone fifteen minutes, and when he reached her side again she tried to tumble into his arms, and said sweetly and childishly, "Oh, Harry! You were gone an age. I was so frightened! Ah, Harry, I fear that you will find you have married a very, very silly little girl."

Somewhat Puzzled. Dumley—Brown and I have entered into a compact not to drink for a month under a forfeit of \$50.

Featherly (with a puzzled look)—But how will you know if either breaks the compact? Dumley—Why, if Brown takes a drink, he will tell me of it, of course. Featherly (still puzzled)—Yes, of course, Brown is all right; but how in the world will he know if you take a drink?

Returning from the Wedding Tour. Then the newly wedded couple was returning from the wedding tour.

"George," said the bride, as she suddenly straightened up and patted down her frizzes, "there's a wrinkle or something on the shoulder of your coat that hurts my ear."

"There ain't any wrinkle there, darling."

"Then it's some horror padding or something in your coat."

"There ain't any padding either, little one."

"Well, I know it's something, 'cause my ear's 'bout cut off."

"It's jus' like it always was, Jule."

"I know better, and I ain't going to lay my head on your shoulder any more!"

"Mebby it never hurt your ear none to lay it on Hen Ford's shoulder?"

"W'y—no, it didn't; so there!"

"Mebby you'd like to lay your head on Hen's shoulder now?"

"Well—I'd rather than on your old shoulder!"

"Wouldn't be very healthy for Hen!"

"Hen's jes' as big as you are, George Smith!"

"Mebby you wish you'd married Hen in place of me?"

"If I had I wouldn't 'a' had a big c-r-o-w-bar for a husband, so-so-o, G-G-orge, I didn't mean to!" And George looked sheepish but relieved, and drew her head down on the objectionable shoulder, and she never moved till they reached Lost river, where they got off and rode away home in a wagon with a red box and four new spokes in one hind wheel.

The Life of a Car-Wheel. By means of careful records most of the railway companies are enabled to know exactly the work done by every car-wheel in the service. Some recent accidents in New England, attributed to the breaking of wheels, have brought out some interesting information as to the life of a car-wheel. Upon some roads steel wheels are expected to run 50,000 miles, but, as a rule, they are taken off before the maximum is reached.

Too Much Liberty. First Servant Girl—"How do you like your last missus?"

Second Servant Girl—"I don't like her at all."

First Servant Girl—"Doesn't she give you enough liberty?"

Second Servant Girl—"She gives me too much; she discharged me yesterday."