

NUTTIE'S FATHER.

BY CHARLOTTE M. YONGE.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—(CONTINUED.)

Mark's *tele-a-tele* had been with his sister May, to whom he had much to tell of his wife and her gallant patience and energy, and how curious it was that now the incubus that had weighed on his uncle's household was removed, the prejudice had melted away, and he had grown so fond of her that, next to Ursula, she was his best comforter.

"I hope that will lead to more," said May. "I don't see how," said Mark. "The more we rely only on a blessing on our own fortunes the better."

"Even when Annaple works within an inch of her life?"

"Now that she is on a right tack about the baby, that will be easier. Yes, May, I do feel sometimes that I have brought her down to drudgery and narrowness and want of variety such as was never meant for her, but she will never let me think so. She says that it is living in realities, and that it makes her happier than toiling after society, or rather after the world, and I do believe it is true! I'm sure it is with me."

"But such work as yours, Mark?"

"Nonsense, May. I enjoy it. I did not when I was in the Greenleaf firm, with an undeveloped sense that Goodenough was not to be trusted, and we were drifting to the bad, yet too green to understand or hinder it; but this thoroughly like. What does one want but honest effective work, with some power of dealing with and helping those good fellows, the hands, to see the right and help themselves?"

May sighed. "And yet, now that poor child is gone, I feel all the more how hard it is that you should be put out of the rights of your name."

"I never had any rights. It was the bane of my life to be supposed to have them. Nothing but this could have made a man of me."

"And don't you have regrets for your boy?"

"I don't think I have—provided we can give him an education—such as I failed to make proper use of, or Annaple might be luxuriating at Pera at this moment."

"Well!" said May, pausing as she looked up the vista of trees at the great house; "I can't bear it to go out of the old name."

"Names may be taken!"

"You don't mean that there's any chance of—Oh! not that horrid Mr. Fane?"

"Certainly not."

"Oh!" as a trim black figure appeared walking down the open square. "That man!"

"I am not authorized to tell any one so, May."

"Yes, I understand. The wretch, he is taking stock of the place already!"

"For shame, May, no one has deserved so well of them."

"I don't care, he got you into that horrid concern."

"And got me out of it, and found my work for me. I tell you, May, it is the best thing that could possibly happen to your parish, or the estate, or my poor uncle either! And you will soon come to a better mind."

"Never, while he is to get into your place! Turn back before he comes within hailing distance."

Before Mark could do anything towards bringing his sister to a better mind he was seized on by his stepmother to propound a scheme she had hatched, namely that as a mutual benefit, Nurse Poole should be allowed the consolation of bringing her chief comforter, his little daughter, down with her on the visit Mrs. Egremont had invited her to pay at Redcastle. He was very grateful, though doubtful whether Annaple would accept the offer, for she was missing her children's company, though they were only at Springfield House, and she had been with them part of every day. And, sad as this month had been, it had been such a rest from sheer physical toil that she had gained almost as much by it as the little one.

There was a general assembly and coffee-drinking on the verandah.—Mr. Condamine, Blanche, and her two young sisters were all there,—and May had to be duly civil to Mr. Dutton, though he came back with some water-lilies that he had fished out of the lake for Nuttie, and she thought it taking possession. Then the Londoners set forth for the station, and there Mark, having perhaps had a hint from his wife, saw Nuttie and Mr. Dutton safely bestowed by Broadbent in an empty carriage and then discovered a desire to smoke, and left them to themselves.

They had not been alone together for more than a second since the evening of Alwyn's return, and there was a great shyness between them, which lasted till the first station was past without any irruption of newcomers. Nothing had been said but a few comments on the arrangements and the attendants, but probably both were trying to begin to speak, and at last it was Ursula who crossed over so that her face could not be seen, and said in an odd tone—

"Mr. Dutton—"

"Yes," and he turned instantly on the alert.

"Did you mean it—what I thought you meant that evening?"

"Can you doubt it?" he said earnestly.

"But even then I was surprised into the avowal, and I would have held it back if possible, if I had guessed what was going to happen."

"Ah! but then I should not have had that drop of comfort through it all," and she laid hold of his hand, which returned the pressure strongly, but he sedulously guarded both words and tone as he said:

"Listen, Ursula, before you speak again. How dear you must always be to me, I cannot tell you, but when I then spoke, it was with the sense that on every account, I should meet with strong opposition from your father and family. And now your position is altered, so that the unsuitability is doubled. I am not a young man, remember, and my thoughts must be for you above all. I want you to consider whether, in the present state of affairs, you would not do better to look on what then passed as unsaid, or only as the ebullition of gratitude towards your old friend. Let me go abroad, and give you full opportunity for—for some fresh beginning likely to be fitter for you—"

"Mr. Dutton, how can you say such horrid things? As if a dukedom would make any difference."

"Yes," he said, turning towards her. "If it is only the old-friend feeling, then it is better dropped, but if your heart is in it,

child, then we go on, come what may. It is due to you."

She raised her face towards him now, and he gave a grave look to her forehead. She drew a long breath, and said after a little pause, "And now I have something to say. One does think of such things even in these sad times, and you can help me. I am so glad it is you, because I know you will, and be rejoiced to do so. You know when Mark found us out first, dear mother and I always felt that it was a great pity he should not have the estate he had been brought up to expect. I believe dear mother thought it would have been the right thing for me to marry him, but I always did mean to give it back to him, even when I didn't like him. Well, then, you know it all seemed settled otherwise, but now, it is so lucky you spoke to me while that dear little fellow was with us, because now you will help me to persuade my father that it is the only satisfactory thing to do to let it go in the male line to Mark and his Willy."

"I see! I see!" said Mr. Dutton eagerly.

"It would be an infinite relief if it could be carried out."

"I believe my father would like it," said Nuttie. "He cares for the name; and now no one prevents it; he is fond of Mark, and still more of Annaple! And you! Oh, Mr. Dutton, if he will only take it in the right way, I think you will make me able to do what I grieved dear mother to have brought about for my poor father."

"My whole self is yours to aid you," he said. "You know of course that I could not ask you to detach yourself from one to whom you are so necessary. If he will permit us, we will watch over him together as doing her work."

"Thank you," was all Nuttie's lips could utter, though her hand said much more.

And before they reached London they had arranged something of a plan of action for propitiating Mr. Egremont, and bringing the future prospects to be available so as to save Annaple from being worked to death in the meantime.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

ANNAPLE'S AMBITION FULFILLED.

"Well, how did you get on, Annaple?"

"Oh! very well, poor old man, on the whole, though it made one pity him doubly that he chose to make as if he forgot everything, and you were all gone on a picnic, taking me out for a long drive in the afternoon—where we were least likely to meet any one—that I will say for him."

"Forgetting is not the best for him."

"As if he could forget! But he was very nice and friendly, and put on his best, most courteous self. I think he looks on me rather as a protector from the solemn Mr. Edsall."

"Surely Edsall treats him well. He was excellently recommended. You know I saw his master's daughter."

"Oh! only too well. He takes the management of him as if he were three years old, or a lunatic. He simply will not be offended any more than if he had to do with a baby."

"What should offend him?"

"That Mr. Egremont greatly resents being allowed nothing but by what Edsall calls medical sanction. He is too blind, you know, to venture to pour out anything for himself, and besides, Edsall has all the drugs under lock and key, and is coolness itself about any amount of oburgations, such as I fancy go on sometimes."

"Do you think he will stand it?"

"Who? Your uncle? Yes, I think he will. This man really makes him more comfortable than poor Gregorio did."

"Yes; Nuttie said she was sure that there was neglect, if not bullying flatterly. But he must miss Gregorio terribly. They have been together for at least five-and-twenty or thirty years, and had plenty of gossip together."

"Whereas the present paternal despotism and appalling dignity and gravity will keep him more dependent on his right congeners."

"If they are of the right sort, that's all."

"He has been making me read him a whole heap of letters; indeed, as you know, I have been doing that all along, when he could not get Nuttie. There were some from Mr. Bulfinch. Do you know that bailliff of his must be next door to a swindler."

"Bulfinch is coming up to see him tomorrow."

"And, Mark, do you know, he has been putting out feelers as if to discover whether we would do—what he asked us to do five years ago."

"Would you?"

"If it were not for the children, and—sometimes the extreme pinch, I should say it was more like *life* to work yourself up as a City man," said Annaple. "If you were the Squire, with all his opportunities, it would be a different thing, but there's no outlet there, and I have often admired the wisdom of the Apocryphal saying, 'Make not thy self an underling to a foolish man.'"

"Well, it is lucky you think so, Nannie, for though Dutton is certainly not a foolish man, he will not want an underling. And what do you say to my mother's proposal of having poor Poole to stay at Redcastle, and borrowing baby to comfort her till she goes out again."

"I hate it," said Annaple energetically.

"It is very horrid, but is awfully good of the Canoness; and I suppose we will have to let it come to pass, and miss all that most charming time of babyhood which is coming. But most likely it will quite set the little woman up, and be a real kindness to poor Poole."

"Yes, we could only keep her for good."

"Yes, and then our children would not be half so much our own. I do not want to be away with them in our own quarters. I wonder when Nuttie can spare us, but I should like to see her through the great crisis with her father."

"That crisis was to involve more than Annaple in the least expected. Nuttie found that the momentous confusion could not possibly take place before the interview with Mr. Bulfinch, at which her presence was needed to help her father with his papers. The principal concern was to show the full enormity of the bailliff, and decide upon the steps to be taken, the solicitor being anxious for a prosecution, while a certain tenderness for poor Gregorio's memory, or perhaps for the exposure of his own carelessness, made Mr. Egremont reluctant. There was also a proposal, brought forward with much diffidence from Mr. Condamine's mother, to rent Bridgefield House, but on this, as well as respecting a successor to the bailliff, Mr. Egremont was to give his answer the next day, when Mr. Bulfinch would call again."

Nuttie was thankful for the business that

had filled up the hour after luncheon, when Alwyn used to play in the drawing-room and delight his father; but she was feeling desperate to have the crisis over, and resolved to speak when she went out driving with him. It was he, however, who began. "I sounded Mark's wife yesterday, Ursula. She is a nice little thing enough, and a good wife in her way."

"A very good wife."

"Except when she persuaded him to turn up his nose at the agency. Dye think he would take it now, since he has tasted the sweets of his umbrella business?" then, as Nuttie paused, taken by surprise; "Five hundred a year and the Home Farm would be better than, what is it, a hundred and fifty and a floor over a warehouse! I don't like to see old Will's son wearing himself out there, and the lad is a good honest lad, with business habits, who would do justice to you after I am gone."

"Father," said Nuttie, trembling with the effort, "I want you to do something better than that. I want you to let Mark take the agency with a view to himself—not me. Let him be as he would have been if he had never hunted us up at Micklethwayte, and put me in his place."

"Eh!" said Mr. Egremont. "It is not entailed—worse luck; if it had been, I should not have been bound to dance attendance at the heels of such an old sinner as the General."

"No, but it ought to go to the heir male, and keep in the old name. Think—there have been Egremonts at Bridgefield for four hundred years."

"Very pretty talk, but how will it be with you, Miss. We shall have Fane, and I don't know how many more, coming after the scent of Bridgefield now," he said a heavy sigh, ending with a bitter "Hang them all!"

"And welcome," said Nuttie, answering the thought rather than the words "Father, I wanted to tell you—"

"You don't mean that any one has been after you at such a time as this!" he cried.

"It was before—I mean it was the evening when we were all so glad, before we began to be afraid."

"The umbrella man! By Jove!"

"And now," went on Nuttie, in spite of the explosions, "he would hardly have ventured to go on with it but for this—I mean," as her father gave a little laugh of his unpleasant sort, "he said it would be the greatest possible relief, and make it all right for the property to go to the heir male."

"Hein! You think so, do you? See how it will be when I come to talk to him! A shrewd fellow like that who got out of the Micklethwayte concern just in time. Catch him giving up a place like that, though he may humbug you."

"Then you will see him, father?"

"If you turn him in on me, I can't help it. Bless me! umbrellas everywhere! And here you mean to turn me over to the mercies of that solemn 'idiot, Edsall. I should have been better off with poor Gregorio."

"No, father; Mr. Dutton would not take me from you. We would both try all we could to make you comfortable."

"Convert the old reprobate? Is that his dodge?"

"Don't father," for the sneering tone returned.

"Come now," he added, in a much more fatherly manner, for her voice had struck him. "You don't mean that a well-looking girl like you, who could have her pick of all the swells in town, can really be smitten with a priggish old retired umbrella-monger like that. Why, he might be your father."

"He has been getting younger ever since I knew him," said Nuttie.

"Well, he plays as good a game of what as any man in England," muttered Mr. Egremont, leaving his daughter in actual doubt whether he meant this as a recommendation, or as expressing a distrust of him, as one likely to play his cards to the best advantage. She had to remain in doubt, for they overtook Clarence Fane, who came and spoke to them in a very friendly and solicitous manner, and showed himself willing to accept a lift in the carriage.

Mr. Egremont, willing to escape from perplexities as well as to endeavour to drive away if possible the oppression of his grief, invited him in, and he had some gossip to impart, which at first seemed to amuse the hearer after this time of seclusion, but the sick and sore heart soon wearied of it, and long before the drive was over, Mr. Egremont was as much bored as his daughter had been from the first.

When Mr. Fane got out, he paused a moment to hold Ursula's hand in a tender manner, while he told her that he had not ventured to intrude the had left a card of inquiry every day; but that if ever he could be of the least use in amusing Mr. Egremont, he was at her service, and would give up any engagement.

"Hein! my fine fellow! No doubt you would!" said Mr. Egremont, when his daughter had uttered her cold thanks, and they had driven on. "I see your little game, but it is soon to begin it. We may as well let them know that she is booked before the running begins."

It was a remarkable intimation of his acceptance of her engagement, but Ursula was contented to take it as such, and be thankful.

Mr. Dutton had his interview as soon as Mr. Egremont had rested after his drive, and the result was satisfactory.

No doubt much was due to the Egremont indolence and want of energy, which always preferred to let things take their course. And now that Gregorio was no longer present to amuse, and take all trouble off his hands, Mr. Egremont could hardly have borne to part with his daughter; and, despite of umbrellas and religion, was not sorry to have a perfectly trustworthy son-in-law in the house, able to play at cards with him, manage his household, and obviate all trouble about suitors for the heiress. Moreover, his better feelings were stirred by gratitude to his poor little son's account, and he knew very well that a more brilliant match for his daughter would not have secured for his old age the care and attention he could rely upon here. He was obliged likewise to believe in the disinterestedness, which disclaimed all desire for the estate, as involving care and duties for which there had been no training; and he was actually glad to keep the property in the direct line. The old liking for Mark, and sense of the need now by regard for Annaple; together with the present relief from care obtained by making him manager of the estate.

When once brought to a point, Mr. Egremont was always sudden and impetuous, chiefly for the sake of having it over and being unmolested and at rest again. So that

very evening, while Nuttie only ventured out sharing with Annaple the glad tidings that Mr. Dutton was understood, and in his marvelous goodness, undertook to make his omen with her father, Mark was almost stunned by the news, confirmed to him by Mr. Dutton as well as his uncle, that he was to be acknowledged as heir of Bridgefield Egremont, and in the meantime manage the estate with an income suitable to an eldest son.

Presently he came upstairs by himself, and beckoned to Nuttie, rather to the alarm of his wife.

"Ursula," he said, and took both her hands, "I cannot have you do this for me."

"Can't you, Mark? You can't prevent it, you see. And don't you know it is the beginning of all my happiness?"

"But indeed, I cannot feel it right. It is a strained sense of justice. Come and tell her so, Nannie."

"What?" said Annaple coming forward. They paused a moment, then Nuttie said: "Only that the estate ought to go into the male line."

"Oh, is that all?" said Annaple, I was afraid Mr. Egremont had a fit!"

"Ah. Don't you see what it means," said Mark. "They want it to be as if there were an entail—to begin treating me as an eldest son at once. It is Ursula's doing, putting herself out of the succession."

"I always hated being an heiress," said Nuttie. "It would be more dreadful than ever now. Annaple, do be sensible! Don't you see it is the only right thing to do?"

"Billy" was the one word Annaple said.

"Yes, Billy and Jenny and all," said Nuttie, "before you've all died of your horrid place. Oh you haven't heard that part of it. Of course Mark will have to go down to Bridgefield and look after the place, and live like a gentleman."

"Eight hundred a year," murmured Mark, "and the house at the Home Farm."

"Oh dear," gasped Annaple, "I wanted you to be Lord Mayor, and now you'll only be a stupid old country squire. No, no, Nuttie, it's—it's—the sort of thing that one only laughs at because otherwise one would have to do the other thing."

And she gripped Nuttie tight round the waist, and laid her head on her shoulder, shaking with a few little sobs, which might be one thing or the other.

"It will save her youth, perhaps her life," whispered Mark, lifting Nuttie's hand to his lips for a moment, and then vanishing, while Annaple recovered enough to say, "I'm tougher than that, sir. But little Jenny! Oh, Nuttie, I believe it has come in time. I've known all along that one straw more might break the camel's back. We've been very happy, but I am glad it is over before Mark got worn down before his time. Grinding is very wholesome, but one may have too much; and I haven't Mark's scruples, Nuttie dear, for I do think the place is more in his line than yours or Mr. Dutton's."

"Yes," said Ursula, "you see he was always happy there, and I never was."

The next thing was for Mr. Dutton and Ursula to keep Mr. Egremont up to the point of making his long deferred will; nor did they find this so difficult as they expected, for having once made up his mind, he wished to have the matter concluded, and he gave his instructions to Bulfinch the next day. Of course Mark had to give full notice to his employers; but the allowance was to begin at once, so that Annaple only went back to the warehouse to pack up, since she was to occupy No. 5, while Mr. Egremont and his daughter were going under Mr. Dutton's escort to the Baths in Dauphine, an entirely new resort, free from the associations he dreaded, for he could not yet bear the sight of little Willy—the rival "boy of Egremont." But the will was safely signed before he went, to the great relief of Nuttie, who, according to the experience of fiction, could hardly believe his life safe till what she called justice had been done.

After all Mr. Egremont became so dependent on Mr. Dutton, during this journey, that he did not like the separation at its close, and pressed on the marriage even sooner than either of the lovers felt quite reverent towards the recent sorrow. He insisted on Bulfinch having the settlements ready for them on their return, and only let them wait long enough to keep their residence, before there was a very quiet wedding in their parish church, with the cousins for bridesmaids. Then Mark and Annaple took care of Mr. Egremont for the fortnight while Mr. Dutton showed his wife his old haunts in France, returning to Springfield House, where there was plenty of room for Mr. Egremont to make his home with them.

Said Annaple to Miss Nugent, "I never saw Nuttie so youthful and bright. She is more like a girl than I ever saw her since the first."

"Yes," said Mary, "she has some one to rest on now."

Mr. Egremont lived between three and four years, more contented and peaceful than he had ever been, though frequently suffering, and sometimes giving way to temper and impatience. But Mr. Dutton understood how to manage on these occasions, and without giving up his own extensive usefulness, could give him such care, attention, and amusement as beguiled his discomforts, and made his daughter's task an easier one.

How far the sluggish, enfeebled nature was capable of a touch of better things, or whether his low spirits were repentance, no one could judge. At any rate sneers had ended, and when he was laid beside his wife and boy at Bridgefield, Ursula stood by the grave with a far more tender and hopeful feeling than she could have thought possible when he had rent her away from her old home. She looked up at her husband and said, "Is not her work done?"

[THE END.]

Eggs for Hatching.

I have watched my hens carefully during the laying season, and I am satisfied that it pays well to select eggs for hatching with care. I always take eggs of medium size as my experience teaches me that they produce the strongest and best formed chicks. I would as soon set a pointed egg as an oval one, provided there was no decided irregularity in the shape. I have found that very large eggs or those badly shaped, always produce badly shaped chicks. I can't see that pointed eggs indicate weakness or a tendency to disease, for the reason that some of my best hens always lay pointed eggs. I have noticed from time to time, rules for selecting eggs that will produce pullets. They have all failed in my practice. I have noticed, however, that where the cocks are exceptionally vigorous, there is a proportion of males.—[E.]

Tact and Tactics.

Mrs. Matchmaker—"Edit, if you ever expect to catch Mr. Richey you must use fewer sharp things. Skirmishing drives the men away. A little more tact and a little less tactics, my dear."

Edit—"You good mamma! Your tact is so much better than your tactics. Don't you know that every engagement is preceded by a skirmish?"

Moving Rapidly.

Policeman (to citizen charging a man with being a Citizen—Move (hic) on! You're a citizen, I'm (hic) makin' fifty miles an hour now.

Pipes for Anybody.

Citizen (to stranger)—What are you doing with those pipes? Stranger—I have no politics this year. I'm leader of a brass band.

Strange Enough to Hold Two.

Young Lady (to dealer)—I want to buy two hammocks. Dealer—Yes, miss. You want one for your own use? Young Lady—Ye-es, partly; but it seems very strong.

An Appreciative Listener.

What was the text this morning, that inquired a druggist's wife who had been unable to attend church. "To err is human," replied the sermons; and it was a mighty sensible sermon.

Mars the General Effect.

Salesman (to young lady)—You will find these stockings of excellent quality, and the colors are fast. Young Lady—Haven't you any within the manufacturer's name stamped along the top? That doesn't look very well. Salesman—Ahem—but nobody will see it, ma'am.

He Wanted Somebody to Be Sorry.

Dying Benedict. "I bequeath every dollar to my wife. Have you got that down?" Lawyer. "Yes." Dying Benedict. "On condition that she marries within a year." Lawyer. "But why insist upon that?" Dying Benedict. "Because I want somebody to be sorry that I died."

What Came First.

Anxious Father—"You are of age now, and I want to give you a little pointed advice as to how to keep money. You—Matter-of-fact-son—" "But wouldn't it be proper first to advise me how to get it?"

Why He Was a Little Vexed.

"Adolphus, I've known that I'm a little vexed at Miss Simmons?" "What happened, Arthur, old boy?" "Well, you know I pride myself on my singing. We were at the piano. I sang one more song and then go home, I said."

Why He Didn't Strike.

"Dennis, why don't you strike?" "An' phat should I do that for?" "The work's too hard for the pay you get. The idea of going up that ladder all day long!"

After the Waltz.

Miss Whirligig (rather plain)—"Oh, Mr. Firefly, I cannot express to you how indebted I am for the pleasure of that waltz." Jack Firefly (wishing to be pleasant)—"Don't mention it, Miss Whirligig. I'm sure the pleasure was all on your side."

He Thought He Could.

Her Parent—"Do you think, Mr. Filkins, that you could support my daughter in the style to which she is accustomed?" Bright Young Man—"I think I could if you would let us board with you."

An Overdose.

Brown—"You don't look well, Robinson; what's the matter, sick?" Robinson—"Yes, smoked too many cigars to-day."

Sisters Enough.

She had promised to be a sister to him. He thanked her coldly, but said that he already had five sisters. "Why, Mr. Sampson," said the girl, "I thought you were an only child."

His Preference.

"Is there anything more lovely in all this world," said a gushing young mother to a bachelor who had been victimized into holding the baby. "Now tell me," she went on, as he stood mute and helpless, "is there anything more delightful to have about you than a dear, little innocent creature like this?"

An Errand to Make a Boy.

Minister (taking seat at table)—"A little out of breath, Bobby." Bobby—"Yes, sir; just before you put on ma said she was afraid I wouldn't be enough, so she told round the corner to the baker's."

A Change of Treatment.

Young Sissy (to Crowley's girl)—"What do you give Mr. Crowley a cold, aw?" Guardian—"When it's not a give him flaxseed tea."

An Extended Experience.

With a well-known chemist, who had putnam's Painless Cure for colds. It makes no sort of difference, and consequently is particularly adapted to get Putnam's Cold Cure for sale by medicine dealers.

A Stupid Mistake.

Customer (in restaurant)—A broiled spring chicken, waiter, and a small bottle vintage 74. Waiter—Yes, sir. (Later)—Find every thing right, sir? Customer—No; you've made a mistake. You've brought me spring wine and a vintage chicken.

WHAT WILL YOU BET?

Some Historical Wagers and What They May Be Broadly Divided into

—those which are either thoughtless or merely mischievous or cruel. We exclude, of course, all consideration of sporting and of the extraordinary doctrinal proposed by Pascal, which was to proposed finite against an unassured infinite. Among wagers which may be finite, the harmless but foolish category of the county gentleman near Shrewsbury betted that he had the hand of the kingdom, and backed his bet by the stake of a large estate. He was a man and a picture is still extant in his mansion representing the family name.

MEASURING OF THE LEGS

of the different competitors, although not informed who was the arbiter