

THE THREAD OF LIFE

OR,
SUNSHINE AND SHADE.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—(CONTINUED)

When the hired man from the mews behind flung open the drawing-room door in his lordly way and announced in a very loud voice, "Mrs Bouverie Barton and Mrs. Hugh Massinger," neither Warren nor Edie was in the front room to hear the startling announcement, which would certainly for the moment have taken their breath away. For on communications between the houses of Relf and Massinger had long since ceased. But Warren and Edie were both up-stairs. So Winifred and her hostess passed idly in (just shaking hands by the doorway with good old Mrs. Relf, who never by any chance caught anybody's name) and mingled shortly with the mass of the visitors. Winifred was very glad indeed of that, for she wanted to escape observation. Sir Anthony's report had been far from reassuring. She preferred to remain as much in the background as possible that afternoon: all she wished was merely to observe and to listen.

As she stood there mingling with the general crowd and talking to some chance acquaintance of old London days, she happened to overhear two scraps of conversation going on behind her. The first was one that mentioned no names; and yet, by some strange feminine instinct she was sure it was of herself the speakers were talking.

"Oh Yes," one voice said in a low tone, with the intonation that betrays a furtive side-glance; "she's far from strong—in fact, very delicate. He married her for her money—of course: that's clear. She hadn't much else, poor little thing, except a certain short-lived *beauté du diable*, to recommend her. And she has no go in her; she won't live long. You remember what Galton remarks about heiresses? They are generally the last decadent members, he says, of a moribund stock whose strength is failing. They bear no children, or if any, weaklings: most of them break down with their first infant; and they die at last prematurely of organic feebleness. Why, he just sold himself outright for 'the poor girl's property; that's the plain English of it; and now I hear, with his extravagant habits, he's got himself after all into monetary difficulties."

"Agricultural depression?" the second voice inquired—an old man's and louder.

"Worse than that, I fear; agricultural depression and an encroaching sea. Besides which, he spends too freely.—But excuse me, Dr. Moutrie, in a very low tone: "I'm afraid the lady's rather near us."

Winifred strained her ears to the utmost to hear the rest; but the voices had sunk too low now to catch a sound. Even as she did so, another voice, far more distinct, from a lady in front, caught her attention with the name "Miss Challoner." Winifred pricked up her ears incontinently. Could it be of her Elsie that those two were talking?

"Oh, yes," the second lady addressed made answer cheerfully; "she was very well when we last saw her in April at San Remo. We had the next villa to the Relfs on the hillside, you know. But Miss Challoner doesn't come to England now; she was going as usual to St Martin de Lantosque to spend the summer, when we left the Riviera. She always goes there as soon as the San Remo season's over."

"How did the Relfs first come to pick her up?" the other speaker asked curiously.

"Oh, I fancy it was Mr. Warren Relf himself who made her acquaintance somewhere unearthly down in Suffolk, where she used to be a governess. He's always there, I believe, lying on a mudbank, yachting and sketching."

Winifred could restrain her curiosity no longer. "I beg your pardon," she said, leaning forward eagerly, "but I think you mentioned a certain Miss Challoner. May I ask, does it happen by any chance to be Elsie Challoner, who was once at Girton? Because, if so, she was a governess of mine, and I haven't heard of her for a long time past. Governesses drop out of one's world so fast. I should be glad to know where she's living at present."

The lady nodded. "Her name's Elsie," said he with a quiet inclination, "and she was certainly a Girton girl; but I hardly think she can be the same you mention. I should imagine, indeed, she's a good deal too young a girl to have been your governess."

It was innocently said, but Winifred's face was one vivid flush of mingled shame and humiliation. Talk about *beauté du diable* indeed; she never knew before she had grown so very plain and ancient. "I'm not quite so old as I look, perhaps," she answered hastily. "I've had a great deal to break me down. But I'm glad to learn where Elsie is, anyhow. You said she was living at San Remo, I fancy?"

"At San Remo. Yes. She spends her winters there. For the summers, she always goes up to St Martin."

"Thank you," Winifred answered with a throbbing heart. "I'm glad to have found out at last what's become of her.—Mrs Barton, if you can tear yourself away from Dr. and Mrs. Tyacke, who are always so alluring, suppose we go up-stairs now and look at the pictures."

In the studio, Warren Relf recognised her at once, and with much trepidation came up to speak to her. It would all be out now, he greatly feared; and Hugh would learn at last that Elsie was living. For Winifred's own sake—she looked so pale and ill—he would fain have kept the secret to himself a few months longer.

Winifred held out her hand frankly. She liked Warren; she had always liked him; and besides, Hugh had forbidden her to see him. Her lips trembled, but she was bold, and spoke. "Mr Relf," she said with quiet earnestness, "I'm so glad to meet you here to-day again—glad on more than one account. You go to San Remo often, I believe. Can you tell me if Elsie Challoner is living there?"

Warren Relf looked back at her in undisguised astonishment. "She is," he answered. "Did my sister tell you so?"

"No," Winifred replied with bitter truthfulness. "I found it out." And with that one short incisive sentence, she moved on coldly, as if she would fain look at the pictures.

"Does—does Massinger know it?" Warren asked all aghast, taken aback, rise, and unwittingly trampling on her tie feelings.

Winifred turned round upon him with an angry flush. This was more than she could bear. The tears were struggling hard to rise to her eyes; she kept them back with a supreme effort. "How should I know, pray?" she answered fiercely, but very low. "Does he make me the *confidante* of all his loves, do you suppose, Mr. Relf?—He said she was in Australia.—He told me a lie.—Everybody's combined and caballed to deceive me.—How should I know whether he knows or not? I know nothing. But one thing I know: from my mouth at least he shall never, never, never hear it."

She turned away stern, and hard as iron. Hugh had deceived her; Elsie had deceived her. The two souls she had loved the best on earth! From that moment forward, the joy of her life, whatever had been left of it, was all gone from her. She went forth from the room a crushed creature.

How varied in light and shade the world is! While Winifred was driving gloomily back to her own lodgings—solitary and heart-broken, in Mrs. Bouverie Barton's comfortable carriage—revolving in her own wounded soul this incredible conspiracy of Hugh's and Elsie's—Edie Relf and her mother and brother were joyfully discussing their great triumph in the now dismantled and empty front drawing-room at 128 Bletchingly Road, South Kensington.

"Have you totted up the total of the sales, Warren?" Edie Relf inquired with a bright light in her eye and a smile on her lips; for the private view—her own inception—had been more than successful from its very beginning.

Warren jotted down a series of figures on the back of an envelope and counted them up mentally with profound trepidation. "Mother," he cried, clasping her hand with a convulsive clutch in his "I'm afraid to tell you; it's so positively grand. It seems really too much.—If this goes on, you need never take any pupils again.—Edie, we owe it all to you.—It can't be right, yet it comes out square. I've reckoned it up twice and got each time the same total—Four hundred and fifty!"

"I thought so," Edie answered with a happy little laugh of complete triumph. "I hit upon such a capital dodge, Warren. I never told you beforehand what I was going to do, for I knew if I did, you'd never allow me to put it into execution; but I wrote the name and price of each picture in big letters and plain figures on the back of the frame. Then, whenever I took up a person with a good, coinly, solvent expression of countenance, and a picture buying crease about the corners of the mouth, to inspect the studio, I waited for them casually to ask the name of any special piece they particularly admired. 'Let me see,' said I. 'What does Warren call that? I think it's on the back here.' So I turned round the frame, and there they'd see it, as large as life: 'By Stormy Seas—Ten Pounds'; or, 'The Haunt of the Sea Swallow—Thirty Guinea.' That always fetched them, my dear. They couldn't resist it.—Warren, you may give me a kiss, if you like. I'll tell you what I've done: I've made your fortune."

Warren kissed her affectionately on the forehead, half abashed. "You're a bad girl, Edie," he said good-humouredly; "and if I did only know it, I'd certainly have taken a great big cake of best ink-eraser and rubbed your plain figures all carefully out again.—But I don't care a pin in the end, after all, if I can make this dear mother and you comfortable."

"And marry Elsie," Edie put in mischievously.

Warren gave a quiet sigh of regret. "And marry Elsie," he added low. "But Elsie will never marry me."

"You goose!" said Edie, and laughed at him to his face. She knew women better than he did.

And all this while, poor lonely Winifred was rocking herself wildly backward and forward in Mrs. Bouverie Barton's comfortable carriage, and muttering to herself in a mad fever of despair: "I could have believed it of Hugh; but of Elsie, of Elsie—never, never!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.—THE STRANDS DRAW CLOSER.

"I feel it my duty to let you know," Sir Anthony Wraxall wrote to Hugh a day or two later—by the hand of his amanuensis—"that Mrs Massinger's lungs are far more seriously and dangerously affected than I deemed it at all prudent to inform her in person last week, when she consulted me here on the subject. Galloping consumption, I regret to say, may supervene at any time. The phthisical tendency manifests itself in Mrs Massinger's case in an advanced stage; and general tuberculosis may therefore on the shortest notice carry off with startling rapidity. I would advise you, under these painful circumstances, to give her the benefit of a warmer winter climate: if not Egypt or Algeria, then at least Mentone, Catania, or Malaga. She should not on any account risk seeing another English Christmas. If she remains in Suffolk during the colder months of the present year, I dare not personally answer for the probably consequences."

Hugh laid down the letter with a sigh of despair. It was the last straw, and it broke his back with utter despondency. How to finance a visit to the south he knew not. Talk about Algeria, Catania, Malaga! he had hard enough work to make both ends meet anyhow at Whitestradd. He had trusted first of all to the breakwater to redeem everything: but the breakwater, that broken reed, had only pierced the hand that leaned upon it. The sea shifted and the sand drifted worse than ever. Then he had hoped the best from "A Life's Philosophy"; but "A Life's Philosophy," published after long and fruitless negotiations, at his own risk—for no firm would so much as touch it as a business speculation—had never paid the long printer's bill, let alone recouping him for his lost time and trouble. Nobody wanted to read about his life or his philosophy.

Of Winifred's health, Hugh thought far less than of the financial difficulty. He saw she was ill, decidedly ill, but not so ill as everybody else who saw her imagined. Wrapped up in his own selfish hopes and fears, never really fond of his poor small wife, and now estranged for months and months by her untimely discovery of Elsie's

watch, which both he and she had entirely misinterpreted, Hugh Massinger had seen that frail young creature grow thinner and paler day by day without at any time realising the profundity of the change or the actual seriousness of her failing condition.

He went out into the drawing-room to join Winifred. He found her lying lazily on the sofa, pretending to read the first volume of Besant's last novel from Mudie's. "The wind's shifted," he began unadvisedly. "We shall get it warmer, I hope soon, Winifred."

"Yes, the wind's shifted," Winifred answered gloomily, looking up in a hopeless and beggared way from the pages of her story. "It blew straight across from Siberia yesterday; to-day it blows straight across from Greenland."

"How would you like to go abroad for the winter, I wonder?" Hugh asked tentatively, with some faint attempt at his old kindness of tone and manner.

His wife glanced up at him with a sudden and strangely suspicious smile. "To San Remo, I suppose?" she answered bitterly.

She meant the name to speak volumes to Hugh's conscience; but it fell upon his ears as flat and unimpressive as any other. "Not necessarily to San Remo," he replied, all unconscious. "To Algeria, if you like—or Mentone, or Bordighera."

Winifred arose, and walked without one word of explanation, but with a resolute air, into the study, next door. When she came out again, she carried in her two arms Keith Johnston's big Imperial Atlas. It was a heavier book than she could easily lift in her present feeble condition of body, but Hugh never even offered to help her to carry it. The day of small politenesses and courtesies was long gone past. He only looked on in mute surprise, anxious to know whence came this sudden new-born interest in the neglected study of European geography.

Winifred laid the Atlas down with a flop on the five o'clock tea table, that staggered with its weight, and turned the pages with feverish haste till she came to the map of Northern Italy. "I thought so," she gasped out, as she scanned it close, a lurid red spot burning bright in her cheek. "Mentone and Bordighera are both of them almost next door to San Remo.—The nearest stations on the line along the coast.—You could run over there often by rail from either of them."

"Run over—often—by rail—to San Remo?" Hugh repeated with a genuinely puzzled expression of countenance.

"Oh, you act admirably!" Winifred cried with a sneer. "What perfect bewilderment! What childlike innocence! I've always considered you an Irving wasted upon private life. If you'd gone upon the stage, you'd have made your fortune; which you've scarcely succeeded in doing, it must be confessed, at your various existing assorted professions."

Hugh stared back at her in blank amazement. "I don't know what you mean," he answered shortly.

"Capital! capital!" Winifred went on in her bitter mood, endeavouring to assume a playful tone of unconcerned irony. "I never saw you act better in all my life—not even when you were pretending to fall in love with me. It's your most successful part—the injured innocent—much better than the part of the devoted husband. If I were you, I should always stick to it.—But it's very abrupt, this sudden conversion of yours to the charms of the Riviera."

"Winifred," Hugh cried, with transparent conviction in every note of his voice, "I see you're labouring under some distressing misapprehension; but I give you my solemn word of honor I don't in the least know what it is you're driving at. You're talking about somebody or something unknown that I don't understand. I wish you'd explain. I can't follow you."

But he had acted too often and too successfully to be believed now, for all his earnestness. "Your solemn word of honor!" Winifred burst out angrily, with intense contempt. "Your solemn word of honour, indeed! And pray, who do you think believes now in your precious word or your honour either?—You can't deceive me any longer, thank goodness, Hugh. I know you want to go to San Remo; and I know for whose sake you want to go there. This solicitude for my health's all a pure fiction. Little you cared for my health a month ago! Oh no, I see through it all distinctly. You've found out there's a reason for going to San Remo, and you want to go there for your own pleasure accordingly."

An idea flashed suddenly across Hugh's mind. "I think, Winifred," he said calmly, "you're labouring under a mistake about the place you're speaking of. The gaming tables are not at San Remo, as you suppose, but at Monte Carlo, just beyond Mentone. And if you thought I wanted to go to the Riviera for the sake of repairing our ruined estate at Monte Carlo, you're very much mistaken. I wanted to go, I solemnly declare, for your health only."

Winifred rose, and faced him now like an angry tigress. Her sunken white cheeks were flushed and fiery indeed with suppressed wrath, and a bright light blazed in her dilated pupils. The full force of a burning indignation possessed her soul. "Hugh Massinger," she said, repelling him haughtily with her thin left hand, "you've lied to me for years, and you're lying to me now as you've always lied to me. You know you've lied to me, and you know you're lying to me. This pretence about my health's a transparent falsehood. These prevarications about the gaming tables are a tissue of fictions. You can't deceive me. I know why you want to go to San Remo! And she pushed him away in disgust with her angry fingers.

The action and the insult were too much for Hugh. He could no longer restrain himself. Sir Anthony's letter trembled in his hands; he was clutching it tight in his waistcoat pocket. To show it to Winifred would have been cruel, perhaps, under any other circumstances; but in face of such an accusation as that, yet wholly misunderstood, flesh and blood—at least Hugh Massinger's—could not further resist the temptation of producing it. "Read that," he cried, handing her over the letter coldly; "you'll see from it why it is I want to go; why, in spite of all we've lost and are losing, I'm still prepared to submit to this extra expenditure."

"Out of my money," Winifred answered scornfully, as she took the paper with an inclination of mock-courtesy from his tremulous hands. "How very generous! And how very kind of you!"

She read the letter through without a single word; then she yielded at last, in spite of herself, to her womanly tears. "I see it all, Hugh," she cried, flinging herself

down once more in despair upon the sofa. "You fancy I'm going to die now; and it will be so convenient, so very convenient for you to be near her there next door at San Remo!"

Hugh gazed at her again in mute surprise. At last he saw it—he saw it in all its naked hideousness. A light began gradually to dawn upon his mind. It was awful—it was horrible in its cruel Nemesis upon his unspoken crime. To think she should be jealous—of his murdered Elsie! He could hardly speak of it; but he must do so. "Winnie," he cried, almost softened by his pity for what he had done, "I understand you, I think, after all. I know what you mean.—You believe—that Elsie—is at San Remo."

Winifred looked up at him through her tears with a withering glance. "You have said it!" she cried in a haughty voice, and relapsed into a silent fit of sobbing and suppressed cough, with her poor wan face buried deep once more like a wounded child's in the cushions of the sofa.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

"IN THE SOUP."

Two Theories as to the Origin of this Latest Bit of Popular Slang.

Everybody who is running for office, to gether with every party that is running a candidate, is, according to one statement or another, "in the soup." Outside of politics, the same fact is observable. Everything and everybody that doesn't just suit everybody else is sure to be consigned by somebody or other to "the soup." The world, in fact, seems to have become an immense tureen, and all its inhabitants are floating around like chopped vegetables in a julienne. Why this should be so, and why the "in the soup" idea should be uppermost now in the mind of every citizen who wants to say something funny, is not more apparent than was, awhile ago, the reason for every one being inclined to tell every one else to "Let her go, Gallagher." The origin of both expressions is involved in obscurity.

"In the soup" first achieved classic authority, so far as can now be ascertained, in one of the picturesque stories of what are called "sporting" events. The event was the arrival in America last fall of Kilrain, the pugilist. The situation was that the big Cusarder Etruria, with the pugilist aboard, lay in the darkness off Quarantine, waiting for morning, and a tug with Kilrain's friends aboard, was hovering about, anxious to get Kilrain off and bring him up to the city. The Captain of the Etruria had announced with a severity that seemed unnecessary that no such drunken crew should come anywhere near his vessel. The disconsolate but not unhappy crowd on the tug had to content itself with howling greetings to Kilrain across a watery gulf that separated the two vessels. One of the men on the tug, Johnston by name, was so anxious to get as near Kilrain as possible that he tumbled overboard. One of his companions, witnessing this act, instead of assailing the still depths of the darkness that brooded over the waves by shouts of help, or shocking the calm stars overhead with frantic cries for a rope, simply balanced himself against the rail and called out:

"Ho! Johnston's fell in de soup!"

The sublime audacity of the comparison of the great Atlantic to a plate of soup was wasted on the drunken crew that heard it, but the waves chuckled gleeful ripples against the tug's sides, the stars twinkled merrily, and next morning, when people read about it, it tickled the public fancy so that the new slang became quickly the pet expression of the day, and by this time it has attained just about ripeness enough to make it ready to pick any lay away along with Mr. Gallagher and other slang once of repute.

Nobody knows just where this "in the soup" expression came from, but two ingenious theories have been broached to a reporter who attempted to trace the "soup" to its lair—to its kettle, as it were. Mr. Gaffney, who is the language sharp of the "Police Gazette," says that the expression first became current in sporting circles about eight or ten months ago, but that for long before that he remembered to have heard the street gamins cry after a drunkard man that he was "full o' soup" and he also thinks that among criminals the expression "he's got in soup" was used to express the idea that a person has fallen into the hands of the law, and was locked up. From using "soup" to express the idea of drunkenness the step was to make it cover the misfortune to which drunkenness led, and so to convey the idea of any misfortune, so that "in the soup" came to have its present significance.

The police, on the other hand, say that they never heard of the expression "in soup" being used by criminals to mean imprisonment. They derive the phrase, "in the soup," from an entirely different source, the theatre, and make his original spelling "supe." "He's the supe," according to this theory, was first a contemptuous designation of an actor's place, classing him among the supernumeraries, and then a general expression of contempt for anything, so growing naturally into its present significance.

Neither of these theories of the derivation of the slang may be right. They fit suspiciously well, and have a "made to order" air about them. But any body who thinks he has a better theory is welcome to try it on.

The effects of the defunct Gladstone Club, in Kingston, were sold by auction on Friday.

Professor Chandler Roberts estimates the weight of the smoke cloud which daily hangs over London at about 50 tons of solid carbon, and 250 tons of carbon in the form of hydrocarbon and carbonic oxide gases. Calculated from the average result of tests made by the Smoke Abatement Committee, the value of coal wasted from domestic grates reaches, upon the annual consumption of 5,000,000 people, to £2,257,500. The cost of cartage on this wasted coal is calculated to be £268,750, while the passage of a large number of horses through the streets in drawing it adds considerably to the cost of street cleaning and repairing. There is also the cost of taking away the extra ashes, £43,000 a year. Summing it all up, the direct and indirect cost of the wasted coal is set down at £2,600,000, plus the additional loss from the damage done to property caused by the smoky atmosphere, estimated by Mr. Chadwick at £2,000,000—the whole amounting to £4,600,000 or \$23,000,000.—[Ex.]

STATISTICS.

All the money which the world possesses to-day would only purchase one-third of its railways, since to-day the railways of the world are worth nearly \$30,000,000,000 of about one-tenth of the total monetary wealth of the civilized nations, and over one quarter of their invested capital. In comparison with this sum the amount of money invested in banking throughout the entire world is but a trifle. The railroad business is one which is increasing at an almost incredible rate of speed. In 1875 the world's railways aggregated 185,000 miles, while in 1885 there were over 300,000 miles of railroad, thus showing an increase of 115,000 miles in ten years, or, on an average, upward of 11,000 miles a year. When it is considered that this would mean the laying each year of railway enough to reach nearly half around the earth the magnitude of the increase can be in a measure appreciated.

No better illustration of the wonderful wealth of the United States is furnished than the figures which David T. Day, of the division of mining statistics of the United States geological survey, gives regarding the immense mineral output of the country for the past year. They show that the total value of all minerals raised that year amounted to \$538,000,000. This is \$70,000,000 more than the output during the previous year, and more than \$100,000,000 greater than that of 1885. The last year's output is not only the greatest ever raised in the United States, but is at least \$100,000,000 greater than the output of any other country, and leaving out England is greater than that of all Europe put together. Verily we are living in a marvellous country, which the ready ingenuity of the people is doing more and more to develop.—*Springfield Republican*.

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A NEW YORK ELECTION.—A ROUGH ESTIMATE OF WHAT TUESDAY'S FIGHT COST THE CITY.

Whole expense at polls.....	\$620,500
Majority fight.....	273,000
Ballot printing.....	60,000
Banners.....	24,000
Parades.....	350,000
Three aldermanic candidates in each of the twenty-four districts at \$1,000 each.....	72,000
Three candidates for Congress in each of the nine districts at \$2,500 each.....	67,500
Three candidates for sheriff at \$20,000 each.....	60,000
Three candidates for county clerk at \$20,000 each.....	60,000
Three candidates for president of the Board of Aldermen at \$5,000 each.....	15,000
Ten candidates for coroner at \$500 each.....	50,000

Cost of the election in the city—\$1,724,060

The statistical returns of the export trade of India during the last ten years show a very considerable and gratifying increase in almost all the chief products of the country. The amount of raw cotton exported has risen from 93,800,000 to 134,700,000 rupees, wheat from 28,700,000 to 86,200,000 rupees, and rice from 69,500,000 to 88,300,000 rupees. In cotton twist and yarn there has been a largely increased export—from 7,400,000 to 34,100,000 rupees. The only marked falling off is in opium which declined from 123,700,000 to 110,700,000 rupees. The tables further show that the growth indicated has been steady and is still kept up, the total export trade of India which has increased about 35 per cent in the ten years, having been larger last year than in any year preceding. The figures respecting cotton and wheat are particularly suggestive. They point to undeveloped possibilities which have a serious meaning for America, no less than for Europe. But increased abundance of food and clothing must be in direct line with the world's well-being.

A sensation has been created in Woodstock by a sermon preached by Rev. Mr. Farthing, of the Episcopal church there, in denunciation of gambling. Mr. Farthing condemns the practice as tending to deprave the community and to divert men from honest toil to speculative means of making a living. The practice is a tremendous deception in more ways than one. Whenever a man falls a victim to the gamblers the popular feeling for him is one of regret. But a due regard for the circumstances will show that the man has really made a fool of himself by deliberately walking into a trap. Nobody but the professional makes money at gambling. The games of chance are not devised with a view to giving the greenhorn an equal opportunity with his gambling acquaintance. Even if the appliances are not fixed so as to prevent the novice from winning, the superior knowledge of the game possessed by the professional renders loss to the beginner a certainty.

The degree of civilization which a country has reached may be fairly gauged by its freedom from bigotry and intolerance. Judged by this standard, Russia must be a semi-barbarous country, another anti-Semitic crusade having been started in the Czar's dominions. Foreign Jewish farmers have been ordered to quit Poland, and it is expected an edict of expulsion will be pronounced against the foreign Jews in Southern Russia. There was a time when the Jews were persecuted in every country in Europe, but the unreasoning prejudice against them has in most cases been weakened or removed altogether by the spread of civilizing influences among the masses. As the probabilities are that of the European nations Russia will be the last to obtain free institutions, it may be expected that persecution will there find its last stronghold.