

SIR GUY'S WARD.

A THRILLING STORY OF LOVE AND ADVENTURE.

CHAPTER X.—(CONTINUED.)

Heavier and heavier fall the drops. A regular shower comes pattering from the heavens right upon their devoted heads. The skies grow black with rain.

"You will get awfully wet. Do go into the house," Cyril says, anxiously glancing at her bare head.

"So will you," with hesitation, gazing with longing upon the distant arbor, towards which she is evidently bent on rushing.

"I dare say,"—laughing,—but I don't much mind even if I do catch it before I get home."

"Perhaps"—unwillingly, and somewhat coldly—"you would like to stand in the arbor until the shower is over?"

"I should," replies Mr. Chetwoode, with alacrity, "if you think there will be room for two."

"There is room for two, but undoubtedly not for three. The little green bower is pretty but small, and there is only one seat."

"It is extremely kind of you to give me standing-room," says Cyril, politely.

"I am very sorry I cannot give you sitting-room," replies Mrs. Arlington, quite as politely, after which conversation languishes.

Cyril looks at Mrs. Arlington; Mrs. Arlington looks at Marshal Niel, and apparently finds something singularly attractive in his appearance. She even raises him to her lips once or twice in a fit of abstraction: whereupon Cyril thinks that, were he a marshal ten times over, too much honor has been done him.

Presently Mrs. Arlington breaks the silence.

"A little while ago," she says, "I saw your brother and a young lady pass my gate. She seemed very pretty."

"She is very pretty," says Cyril with a singular want of judgment in so wise a young man. "It must have been Lillian Chesney, my brother's ward."

"He is rather young to have a ward," "He is, rather."

"He is older than you?" "Unfortunately, yes, a little."

"You, then, are very young?" "Well, I'm not exactly an infant,—rather piqued at the cool superiority of her tone: "I am twenty-six."

"So I should have thought," says Mrs. Arlington, quietly, which assertion is as balm to his wounded spirit.

"Are your brother and his ward much attached to each other?" asks she, idly, with a very palpable endeavor to make conversation.

"Not very much,"—laughing, as he remembers certain warlike passages that have occurred between Guy and Lillian, in which the former has always had the worst of it.

"No? She prefers you, perhaps?" "I really don't know: we are very good friends, and she is a dear little thing."

"No doubt. Fair women are always to be admired. You admire her very much?" "I think her pretty: but—with an indescribable glance at the "nut-brown locks" before him, that says all manner of charming things—"her hair, to please me, is far too golden."

"Oh, do you think so?" says Mrs. Arlington, surprised. "I saw her distinctly from my window, and I thought her hair very lovely, and she herself one of the prettiest creatures I have ever seen."

"That is strong praise. I confess I have seen others I have thought better worthy of admiration."

"You have been lucky, then,"—indifferently. "When one travels, one of course sees a great deal, on becomes a judge on such matters."

"I didn't travel far to find that out." "To find what out?"

"A prettier woman than Miss Chesney." "No?" with cold unconcern and an evident want of interest in the subject. "How lovely the flowers look with those little drops of rain in their hearts!—like a touch of sorrow in the very centre of their joy."

"You like the country?" "Yes, I love it. There is a rest, a calm about it that to some seems monotonous, but to me it is peace."

A rather troubled shade falls across her face. An intense pity for her fills Cyril's breast, together with a growing conviction (which is not a pleasing one) that the dead and gone Arlington must have been a king among his fellows.

"I like the country well enough myself," he says, "but I hardly hold it in such esteem as you do. It is slow,—at times unbearable. Indeed, a careful study of my feelings has convinced me that I prefer the strains of Albany or Nilsson to those of the sweetest nightingale that ever warbled at eve, and the sound of the noisiest cab to the bleating of the melancholy lamb; while the most exquisite sunrise that could be worked into poetry could not tempt me from my bed. Have I disgusted you?"

"I wonder you are not ashamed to give way to such sentiments,"—with a short but lovely smile.

"One should never be ashamed of telling the truth, no matter how unpleasant it may be."

"True!" with another smile, more prolonged, and therefore lovelier, that lights up all her face and restores to it the sweetness and freshness of a child's.

Cyril, looking at her, forgets the thread of his discourse, and says impulsively, as though speaking to himself, "It seems impossible."

"What does?" somewhat startled.

"Forgive me; I was again going to say something that would undoubtedly have brought down your heaviest displeasure on my head."

"Then don't say it," says Mrs. Arlington, coloring deeply.

"I won't. To return to our subject: the country is just now new to you, perhaps. After a while you will again pine for society."

"I do not think so. I have seen a good deal of the world in my time, but never gained anything from it except—sorrow."

She sighs heavily; again the shadow darkens her face and dims the beauty of her eyes.

"It must have caused you great grief losing your husband so young," says Cyril, gently, hardly knowing what to say.

"No, his death had nothing to do with the trouble of which I am thinking," replies Mrs. Arlington, with curious haste, a quick

frown overshadowing her brow. Her fingers meet and clasp each other closely.

Cyril is silent, being oppressed with another growing conviction which completely routs the first and leads him to believe the dead and gone Arlington a miserable brute, deserving of hanging at the very least. This conviction, unlike the first, carries consolation with it.

"I am sorry you would not let my mother call on you," he says, presently.

"Did Sir Guy say I would not see her?" asks she, with some anxiety. "I hope he did not represent me as having received her kind message with ingratitude."

"No, he merely said you wished to see no one."

"He said the truth. But then there are ways of saying things, and I should not like to appear rude. I certainly do not wish to see any one, but for all that I should not like to offend your mother."

There is not the very smallest emphasis on the word "your," yet somehow Cyril feels flattered.

"She is not offended," he says, against his conscience, and is glad to see his words please her. After a slight pause he goes on: "Although I am only a stranger to you, I cannot help feeling how bad it is for you to be so much alone. You are too young to be so isolated."

"I am happier so."

"What! you would care to see no one?" "I would care to see no one," emphatically, but with a sigh.

"How dreadfully in the way you must have found me!" says Cyril, straightening himself preparatory to departure. "The rain, I see is over." (It has been for the last ten minutes.) "I shall therefore restore you to happiness by taking myself away."

Mrs. Arlington smiles faintly.

"I don't seem to mind you much," she says, kindly, but with a certain amount of coldness. "Pray do not think I have wished you away."

"That is the first kind thing you have ever said to me," says Cyril, earnestly.

"Is it? I think I have forgotten how to make pretty speeches," replies she, calmly.

"See the sun is coming out again. I do not think, Mr. Chetwoode, you need be afraid any longer of getting wet."

"I am afraid—I mean—I am sure not," says Cyril, absently. Thank you very much for the shelter you have afforded me. Would you think me very exigent if I asked you to give me that rose you have been ill-treating for the last half-hour."

"Certainly not," says Mrs. Arlington, hospitably; "you shall have it if you care for it; but this one is damaged: let me get you a few others, fresher and sweeter."

"No, thank you. I do not think you could give me one either fresher or sweeter. Good evening."

"Good-by," returns she, extending her hand; and, with the gallant Marshal firmly clasped in his hand, Cyril makes a triumphant exit.

"He has hardly gone three yards beyond the gate that guards the widow's bower when he finds himself face to face with Florence Beauchamp, rather wet, and decidedly out of temper. She glances at him curiously, but makes no remark, so that Cyril hopes devoutly she may not have noticed where he has just come from."

"What a shower we have had!" he says, with a great assumption of geniality and much politeness.

"You do not seem to have got much of it," replies she, with ladylike irritability, looking with open disfavor upon the astonishing dryness of his clothes.

"No,"—amiably,—"I have escaped pretty well. I never knew any such cloth resist rain like this,—doesn't even show a mark of it. I am sorry I cannot say the same for you. Your gown has lost a good deal of its pristine freshness; while as for your feather, it is, to say the least of it, dejected."

No one likes to feel oneself looking a guy. Cyril's tender solitude for her clothes has the effect of rendering Miss Beauchamp angrier than she was before.

"Oh, pray don't try to make me more uncomfortable than I am," she says sharply.

"I can imagine how unlovely I am looking. I detest the country: it means simply destruction to one's clothes and manners," pointedly. "It has been raining ever since I came back from Shropshire."

"What a pity you did come back just yet!" says Cyril, with quite sufficient pause to throw an unpleasant meaning into his words. "As to the country, I entirely agree with you; give me the town: it never rains in the town."

"If it does one has a carriage at hand. How did you manage to keep yourself so dry, Cyril?"

"There is plenty of good shelter round here, if one chooses to look for it."

"Evidently; very good shelter, I should say. One would almost think you had taken refuge in a house."

"Then one would think wrong. Appearances, you know, are often deceitful."

"They are indeed. What a beautiful rose that is!"

"Was, you mean. It has seen its best days. By the by, when you were so near the Cottage why didn't you go in and stay there until the rain was over?"

"I shouldn't dream of asking hospitality from such a very suspicious sort of person as this Mrs. Arlington seems to be," Miss Beauchamp replies, with much affectation and more spitefulness.

"You are right,—you always are," says Cyril, calmly. "One should shun the very idea of evil. Extreme youth can never be too careful. Good-by for the present, Florence; I fear I must tear myself away from you, as duty calls me in this direction."

So saying, he turns into another path, preferring a long round to his home to a further tete-a-tete with the charming Florence.

But Florence has not yet quite done with him. His supercilious manner and that last harmless remark about "extreme youth" rankles in her breast; so that she carries back to Chetwoode with her a small stone carefully hidden in her sleeve wherewith to slay him at a convenient opportunity.

The same shower that reduces Miss Beauchamp to sullen discontent behaves with equal severity to Lillian, who reaches home, flushed and laughing, drenched and out of breath, with the tail of her gown over her shoulders and a handkerchief round her

neck. Guy is with her; and it seems to Lady Chetwoode (who is much concerned about them) as though they had rather enjoyed than otherwise their enforced run.

Florence, who arrives some time after them, retires to her room, where she spends the two hours that must elapse before dinner in repairing all dilapidations in face and figure. At seven o'clock precisely she descends and gains the drawing-room as admirably dressed as usual, but with her good humor still conspicuous by its absence.

She inveighs mildly against the evening's rain, as though it had been specially sent for the ruin of her clothes and complexion, and says a good deal about the advantages to be derived from a town life, which is decidedly gracious, considering how glad she has been all these past years to make her home at Chetwoode.

When dinner is almost over she turns to Cyril and says, with deliberate distinctness,—

"Until to-day I had no idea you were acquainted with—the widow."

There is no mistaking whom she means. The shot is well fired, and goes straight home. Cyril changes color perceptibly and does not reply instantly. Lady Chetwoode looks at him with marked surprise. So does Lillian. So does Sir Guy. They all await his answer. Miss Beauchamp's petty triumph is complete.

"Had you not?" says Cyril. "I wonder so amazing a fact escaped your knowledge."

"Have you met Mrs. Arlington? You never mentioned it, Cyril," says Lady Chetwoode.

"Oh, yes," says Miss Beauchamp, "he is quite intimate there: aren't you Cyril? As I was passing the Cottage to-day in a desperate plight, I met Cyril coming out of the house."

"Not out of the house," corrects Cyril calmly, having quite recovered his self-possession; "out of the garden."

"Was it? You were so evasively dry, in spite of the rain, I quite thought you had been in the house."

"For once your usually faultless judgment led you astray. I was in an arbor where Mrs. Arlington kindly gave me shelter until the rain was over."

"Was Mrs. Arlington in the arbor too?" "Yes."

"How very romantic! I suppose it was she gave you the lovely yellow rose you were regarding so affectionately?" says Miss Beauchamp, with a low laugh.

"I always think, Florence, what a fortune you would have made at the bar," says Cyril thoughtfully; "your cross-examinations would have had the effect of turning your witnesses gray. I am utterly convinced you would have ended your days on the woollack. It is a pity to see so much native talent absolutely wasted."

"Not altogether wasted," sweetly: "it has at least enabled me to discover how it was you eluded the rain this evening."

"You met Mrs. Arlington before to-day?" asks Guy, who is half amused and half relieved, as he remembers how needlessly jealous he has been about his brother's attentions to Lillian. He feels also some vague doubts as to the propriety of Cyril's losing his heart to a woman of whom they know nothing; and his singular silence on the subject of having made her acquaintance is (to say the least of it) suspicious. But, as Cyril has been in a chronic state of love-making ever since he got into his first tall hat, this doubt causes him but little uneasiness.

"Yes," says Cyril, in answer to his question.

"Is she as pretty as Sir Guy says?" asks Lillian, smiling.

"Quite as pretty, if not more so. One may always depend upon Guy's taste."

"What a good thing it was you knew her! It saved you from that dreadful shower," says Lillian, good-naturedly, seeing intuitively he is vexed. "We were not so fortunate: we had to run for our lives all the way home. It is a pity, Florence, you didn't know her also, as, being so near the house, you might have thrown yourself upon her hospitality for a little while."

"I hardly think I see it in that light," draws Florence, affectedly. "I confess I don't feel exactly ambitious about making the acquaintance of this Mrs.—er—"

"Arlington is her name," suggests Cyril, quietly. "Have you forgotten it? My dear Florence, you really should see some one about your memory: it is failing every day."

"I can still remember some things," retorts Miss Beauchamp, blandly.

By this time it has occurred to Lady Chetwoode that matters are not going exactly smoothly; whereupon she glances at Miss Beauchamp, then at Lillian, and finally carries them both off with her to the drawing-room.

"If there is one thing I detest," says Cyril, throwing himself back in his chair, with an impatient movement, when he has closed the door upon them, "it is a vindictive woman. I pity the man who marries Florence Beauchamp."

"You are rather hard upon her, are you not?" says Guy. "I have known her very good-natured."

"Lucky you! I cannot recall many past acts of kindness on her part."

"So you met Mrs. Arlington?" says Guy, carelessly.

"Yes, one day I restored to her her dog, and to-day she offered me shelter from the rain, simply because she couldn't help it. There our acquaintance rests."

"Where is the rose she gave you?" asks Guy, with a laugh, in which, after a moment's struggle, Cyril joins.

"Don't lose your heart to her, old boy," Guy says, lightly; but Cyril well knows he has meaning in what he says.

CHAPTER XI.

"They were two cousins almost like to twins: And so they grew together, like two flowers Upon one stem."—SHELLY.

"It was a babe, beautiful from its birth."—SHELLY.

The next day awakes calm and fair, and full of the rich ripeness that belongs to August. Lillian, opening her blue eyes upon the world at half-past seven, calls her nurse, and being dressed rushes forth into the garden to drink in all the first sweet freshness of the day.

The dew still lingers upon lawn and blossom; the spiders' webs glisten like jewelled nets in the dancing sunbeams; the exquisite opal flush of the morning sky has grown and spread and deepened, until all the heavens are tinged with warmest carmine.

There is "splendor in the grass," and "glory in the flower," and Lillian, fitting

from bush to bush, enjoys everything to its utmost; she plucks two pale roses for her own bosom, and one, deep red and richly perfumed, to lay beside Lady Chetwoode's plate. This is a usual morning offering not to be neglected.

Just as she has made a careful choice, the breakfast-bell rings loudly, and, running at her quickest—most recklessly—speed through the hall, she barely succeeds in stopping herself as she comes up to Sir Guy at the door of the morning-room.

"Oh!" cries she, with a little gasp, "another moment and I should have been in your arms. I never saw you. Good-morning, Guardy," gayly.

"Good-morning, my ward. I beg you to understand I could have welcomed that other moment. Why, what an early little bird you are! How long have you been abroad?"

"For hours and hours, half a day, while you—lazy man—were sound asleep. See what spoil I have gathered," pointing to the heavy roses at her breast.

"Lovely indeed," says Guy, who is secretly of opinion that the wild-rose complexion she has snatched from the amorous wind is by far the loveliest spoil of the two.

"And is this not sweet?" she says, holding up to his face the "red, red rose," with a movement full of grace.

"Very," replies he, and stooping presses his lips lightly to her white hand.

"I meant the rose, not the hand," says she, with a laugh and a faint blush.

"Did you? I thought the hand very much the sweeter of the two. Is it for me?"

"No!" says Miss Chesney, with much emphasis; and, telling him he is quite too foolish to be listened to any longer, she opens the door of the breakfast-room, and they both enter it together, to find all the others assembled before them, and the post lying in the centre of the table. All, that is, that remains of it,—namely, one letter for Lillian and two or three for Guy.

These latter, being tinged with indigo, are of an uninteresting description and soon read. Miss Chesney's, on the contrary, is evidently full of information. It consists of two whole sheets closely covered by a scrawling handwriting that resembles nothing so much as the struggles of a dying fly.

When she has read it twice over carefully—and with considerable difficulty—she lays it down and looks anxiously at Lady Chetwoode.

"Auntie," she begins, with a bright blush and a rather confused air.

"Yes, dear?"

"This letter"—touching it—"is from my cousin."

"Yes,—from your cousin? The lad who grew up with you at the Park?" says Lady Chetwoode, with a kindly nod of comprehension.

Then ensues a pause. Somehow every one has stopped talking, and Lady Chetwoode has set down the tea-pot and turned to Lillian with an air full of expectancy. They all feel that something yet remains to be said.

Possessed with this idea, and seeing Lillian's hesitation, Lady Chetwoode says, in her gentlest tones,—

"Well, dear?"

"He is unhappy," says Lillian, running one of her fingers up and down the tablecloth and growing more and more embarrassed: "every year he used to come to the Park for his holidays, and now—"

"And now he cannot go to the Park: is that it?"

"Yes. A little while ago he joined his regiment, and now he has leave of absence, and he has nowhere to spend it except at Colonel Graham's, who is his guardian and his uncle, and he hates Colonel Graham," says Lillian, impressively, looking at Lady Chetwoode with appealing eyes.

"Poor boy," says that kindest of women, "I do not like to hear of his being unhappy. Perhaps, Lillian, you would wish—"

"I want you to ask him here," says Lillian, quickly and boldly, coloring furiously, and fixing her great honest eyes on Lady Chetwoode. He said nothing about it, but I know he would like to be where I am."

"My dear, of course," says Lady Chetwoode, with most unusual briskness for her, "ask him instantly to come here as soon as you like, to stay as long as you like."

"Auntie Nannie," says Lillian, rising tumultuously from her chair, "you are the dearest, kindest, best of women!" She presses her lips gently, although rapturously, to her auntie's cheek, after which she returns to her seat. "Now I am thoroughly content," she says, naively: "I could not bear to picture Taffy wretched, and that old Colonel Graham is a downright Tartar!"

"Taffy! what an extraordinary name!" says Florence. "Is it a fancy name?"

"No; it is, I am ashamed to say, a nickname. I believe he was christened James, but one day when we were both almost babies he stole from me my best doll and squeezed the eyes out of it to see what lay behind, and I was very angry, and said he was a regular 'Taffy' to do such a thing. You know the old rhyme?" turning to Lady Chetwoode with a blush and a light laugh:

"Taffy was a Welshman,
Taffy was a thief,
Taffy came to my house
And stole a piece of beef."

There is a good deal more of it, quite as interesting, but of course you know it. Nurse laughed when I so christened him, and after that he was always called 'Master Taffy' by the servants, and nothing else."

"How nicknames do cling to one?"

"I don't believe I should know him by any other now. It suits him much better than his own, as he doesn't look the least in the world like a James."

"How old is your cousin?" asks Florence, with an eye to business.

"A year older than I am."

"And that is—?"

"Nineteen."

"Indeed! I should have thought you older than that."

"He is very like me, and he is a dragon!" says Lillian, proudly. "But I have never seen him since he was gazetted."

"Then you have not seen him in his uniform?" says Guy.

"No. But he tells me," glancing at her letter, "he looks 'uncommon jolly' in it."

They all laugh. Even Florence condescends to be amused.

"When may we expect this hero?" asks Guy, kindly.

"His leave begins next week," answers Lillian, looking at Lady Chetwoode. "If he might come then, it would be such a comfort to him."

"Of course he must come then," says

Lady Chetwoode. "Do not let him lose a day of his precious leave. I remember when Guy was in the army how stung they were about granting him a few days now and then."

"The Mater's 'few days' always meant eight months out of the twelve," says Cyril, laughing, "and anything like the abuse she used to shower upon the colonel because he didn't see it in the light that she did, was never heard. It is unfit for publication."

"Archibald Chesney is coming here on the twenty-ninth," says Guy. "So you will be able to make choice between your two cousins."

"Is Archibald coming?" surprised.

"But my choice is already made. No one shall ever get inside Taffy in my affections."

"Thrice-blessed Taffy," says Cyril. "See what it is to be a young and gallant plunger!"

"That wouldn't weigh with me," says Lillian, indignantly.

"Would it not?" asks Guy. "I was hoping otherwise. I was a plunger once. What is the renowned Taffy's other name?"

"Musgrave," says Lillian.

"A very pretty name," remarks Miss Beauchamp, who has received an unexpected cheque by the morning's post, and is consequently in high good humor.

"I think so too," returns Lillian.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Enjoy the Winter.

Those who spend the season of winter in complaining about its discomforts and longing for the advent of spring, show great lack of wisdom. For human life is short enough at best, and instead of wasting about one-fourth of the year in grumbling about its peculiarities, the thing to do is to adjust ourselves to these peculiarities that we may extract from the season, forbidding as it may seem, the full measure of happiness.

"The wine of life keeps oozing drop by drop. The leaves of life keep falling one by one."

How senseless, therefore, to cast aside, as not worth the having, so large a percentage of our precious deposit, because as now, perhaps, we shiver with cold, or because in summer we shall swelter with the heat. Moreover, a love of winter ought to be our birthright, as children of the North; and if our feverish and overheated civilization has made us degenerate in this respect, then civilization has not been an unmixed blessing. The son of the North has abundant reason to sing the praises of winter, for it has given him that mental, moral and physical stamina which has made him the dominant force to-day in the world's civilization and progress. His cloudless vision of right and wrong, his almost godlike tenacity of purpose, his intellectual, no less than his physical, strength, and his gift of leadership in the government of the world, have all been marvellously strengthened and developed by the tonic vigors of winter. The viking of old who set out in his frail craft on a voyage to glory or death, he little cared which, in the teeth of the winter's raging storm, exultant because he was permitted to encounter its fury, seems a strange and even uncanny figure to his descendants to-day, as they curl themselves around a coil of steam pipes, and lament because they will presently have to walk a few blocks in the ozone-charged atmosphere. Rude and barbarous, too, seem to our super-refined senses the stirring lyrics of the old Norsemen scalds, celebrating the coming of the Storm King, and the frost-laden breath of the winter's blasts. Actually they seemed to find an inspiration in the theme. How these mighty old sea kings would have scorned a race which listen only to poets who handled a lute, and whose only strains were the limpid and sometimes limping triquet and rondeau. And then scorn would be deserved. We cannot with impunity, grow away from the habits which made our forefathers strong and great. The growing custom of avoiding winter as we would avoid a pestilence, by migrating to the tropics, or by living in houses having a worse than tropical temperature, is one fraught with danger both to the individual and the Canadian people. Only by retaining our love for the Norseman's winter can we hope to retain the Norseman's sturdy virtues.

Is Cholera Coming?

The reappearance of cholera within the last few days at several points in Europe is regarded by health authorities in the United States as a sure indication of a revival of the scourge and its spread westward with the coming spring. The worst of the threatened invasion is that, speaking in military terms, the invader can keep up communication with its base of supply. By the construction of the Caspian railway, connecting Western Asia and Eastern Europe, a journey is now made in a single day that the old time caravan would have taken several weeks to accomplish, and, therefore, the cholera germ may leave the plague nursery in the morning and fasten on its victim hundreds of miles away in the evening. In fact people must now accustom themselves to the thought that visitations of Oriental plagues are likely to be annual and not at intervals of years. This has been pointed out by an eminent medical authority, who based his opinion on the facilities for the spread of such diseases as cholera afforded by railways and fast steamships. The time has, therefore, arrived when international legislation, by treaty or otherwise, should be adopted for the protection