

SIR GUY'S WARD.

A THRILLING STORY OF LOVE AND ADVENTURE.

CHAPTER XI.—(CONTINUED.)

"Five distinct blushes, and all about Taffy," says Cyril, meditatively. "Happy Taffy! I have counted them religiously. Are you very much in love with him, Lillian?"

"In love! nonsense! laughing. "If you only saw Taffy! (But," with a glad smile, "you soon will.) He never remembers anything half an hour after he says it, and besides," scornfully, "he is only a boy."

"Only a boy! Was there ever such willful waste! Such reckless, extravagant, woful waste! To throw away five priceless, divine blushes upon 'only a boy! Oh that I were a boy! Perhaps, Lillian, when you come to know me longer I shall be happy enough to have one whole blush all to myself."

"Be consoled," says Miss Chesney, sanily: "I feel assured the longer I know you, the more reason I shall have to blush for you!"

All through the day Miss Chesney's joy makes itself felt. She is thoroughly happy, and takes very good care every one shall know it. She sings through the house, "up-stairs, down-stairs, and in my lady's chamber," gay as any lark, and inundates her nurse with vain conjectured and interrogations: as for example, whether she thinks Taffy will be much changed,—and whether twelve months could possibly produce a respectable moustache,—and if she really believes the fact of his being a full-blown dragon will have a demoralizing effect upon him.

"An' no doubt it will, hinny," says nurse shaking her ribbed head very solemnly. "I have no opinion of those soldiering ways myself. I fear he will be growing wilder an' wilder every day."

"Oh! if that's all!" says Miss Lillian, with a relieved sigh. "I am only afraid he will be growing staid and staid; and Taffy would be ruined if he gave himself airs. I can't endure dignified young men."

"I don't think you need fret about that, my dear," says nurse with conviction. "I never yet saw much signs of it about him."

Having used up all nurse's powers of conversation, Lillian goes on to Lady Chetwoode's boudoir, and finds out from her the room Taffy will be likely to occupy. Having inspected it, and brought up half the servants to change every article of furniture in the room into a different position, and given as much trouble as possible, and decided in her own mind the precise flowers she will place upon his dressing-table the morning of his arrival, she goes back to her auntie to tell her all she has done.

In fact, any one so busy as Miss Chesney during all this day can scarcely be imagined. Her activity is surprising, and draws from Cyril the remark that she ought to go as hospital nurse to the wounded Turks, as she seems eminently fitted for an energetic life.

After luncheon she disappears for a while, so that at last—though not for long—something like repose falls upon the house, which sinks into a state of quietude only to be equalled by that of Verne's "Van Tricasse."

Miss Beauchamp is in her room, studying art; Cyril is walking with a heart full of hope towards the Cottage; Lillian is absent; Guy is up-stairs with his mother relating to her a new grievance against poachers.

The lad now in trouble is an old offender, and Guy is puzzled what to do with him. As a rule all camps have something interesting about them, and this Heskett is an unacknowledged favorite of Sir Guy's.

"Still I know I ought to dismiss him," he says, with a rather troubled air, and an angry, disappointed expression upon his face.

"He is young, poor lad," says Lady Chetwoode.

"So he is, and his mother is so respectable. One hardly knows what to do. But this last is such a flagrant act, and I swore I would pack him about his business if it occurred again. The fact is, I rather fancy the boy, and his wild ways, and don't like driving him to destruction. What shall I do, mother?"

"Don't do anything, my dear," replies she, easily.

"I wish I could follow your advice,"—smiling,—but, unfortunately, if I let him off again I fear it will be a bad example to the others. I almost think—"

But what he thinks on this particular subject is never known.

There is a step outside the door,—a step well known to one at least of those within,—the "soft froutron and rustle" of a woman's gown,—and then the door is pushed very gently open, and Lillian enters, with a curious little bundle in her arms.

"See what I've got!" she cries, triumphantly, going over to Lady Chetwoode, and kneeling down beside her. "It's a baby, a real live baby! Look at it, auntie: did you ever see such a beauty?"

"A baby," says Lady Chetwoode, fearfully, putting up her glasses, and staring cautiously down upon the rosy little fellow who in Lillian's encircling arms is making a desperate effort to assert his dignity, by sitting up and glaring defiantly around him.

"Yes, indeed; I carried him away when I found him, and have been playing with him for the last ten minutes in my own room. Then I began to think that you might like to see him, too."

"That was very nice of you, my dear," with some hesitation. "It is certainly a very clean baby, but its dress is coarse. Whose baby is it?"

"He belongs to the laundress, I think," says Lillian, "but I'm not quite sure. I was running through the kitchen when I saw him; isn't he a rogue?" as baby puts up a chubby hand to seize the golden locks so near him: "look at his eyes, as big as saucers."

She laughs delightedly, and baby laughs back at her again, and makes another violent jump at her yellow hair. Sir Guy, gazing intently at the pretty picture, at Lillian's flushed and lovely face, thinks he has never before seen her look half so sweet. Gay, merry, fascinating she always is, but with this new and womanly tenderness within her eyes, her beauty seems trebled. "See, he wants my hair: isn't he not a darling?" she says, turning her fair face, rosy with pleasure, up to Sir Guy.

"The laundress's child,—Lillian my dear!" says Lady Chetwoode, in a faint tone of astonishment.

"Wall, Jane was holding it in her arms, but it can't be hers decidedly, because she hasn't got one."

"Proof positive," says Guy.

"Nor can it be cook's, because hers is grown: up so it must be the laundress's. Besides, she was standing by, and she looked so glad about it and so pleased when I took it that I am sure she must be his mother. And of course she is proud of you, you bonny boy; so should I be, with your lovely face. Oh! look at his little fists! he is doubling them up just as though he were going to fight the world. And so he shall fight it, if he likes, a darling! Come; your mammy is pining for you."

As she speaks she rises, but baby is loath to go yet awhile. He crows so successfully at Lady Chetwoode that he makes another conquest of her, and receives several gentle pats and a kiss from her, to Lillian's great gratification.

"But he is too heavy for you," says her ladyship, addressing Lillian. "Guy, ring the bell for one of the servants to take him down."

"And offend his mother mortally. No indeed, Auntie. We should get no clothes fit to wear next week if we committed such a betise. As I brought him up, so I shall carry him down, though, to do him justice, he is heavy. No servant shall touch him, the sweet boy—this to baby in a fond aside.

"I will carry him down for you," says Guy, advancing slowly from the window where he has been standing.

"You! Oh, Sir Guy, fancy your condescending to touch a baby. Though I forgot," with a quick, mischievous look at him from her azure eyes, "I believe there once was a baby you even professed to be fond of; but that was long ago. By the by, what were you looking so stern about just as I came in? Were you passing sentence of death on any one?"

"Not quite so bad as that," says Lady Chetwoode. "It is another of those tiresome poachers. And this Heskett is certainly a very naughty boy. He was caught in the act last night, and Guy doesn't know what to do with him."

"Let him off; forgive him," says Lillian, lightly, speaking to her guardian. "You can't think how much pleasanter you will feel if you do."

"I believe you are right," says Guy, laughing, "and I daresay I should give him a last chance, but that I have passed my word. Give me that great heavy child: he looks as though he were weighing you down to the ground."

"I think she holds him very prettily," says Lady Chetwoode: "I should like to have a picture of her just so."

"Perhaps some day she will gratify you," returns Guy, encouragingly. "Are you going to give me that infant terrible, Miss Chesney before you expire?"

"I am stronger than you think. And are you quite sure you can hold a baby?—that you won't let it fall? Take care, now, and don't look as though you thought he would break. That will do, Auntie, don't you think he would make a capital nurse?"

"I hope that child will reach its mother alive," says auntie, in a tone suggestive of doubt, after which Guy, escorted by Lillian, leaves the room.

Half-way down the stairs this brilliant procession meets Florence coming up.

"What is that?" she asks, stopping short in utter amazement, and staring blankly at the baby, who is blinking his eyes in a most uncompromising fashion and is evidently deriving much refreshment from his little fat, red thumb.

"A baby," says Guy gravely.

"A real live baby," says Lillian, "a real small duck," giving the child's plump cheek a soft pincen over Guy's shoulder. "Don't be frightened, Florence; it has don't bite: you may give him a kiss in all safety."

"Thanks," says Florence, drawing her skirts closer round her, as though the very idea has soiled her garments. "I don't care about kissing promiscuous babies. Really, Guy, if you only knew how ridiculous you look, you would spare yourself the humiliation of being so seen by your servants."

"Blame Lillian for it all," returns Guy. "I know I shall blush myself to death if I meet any of the women."

"I think Sir Guy never before looked so interesting," says Miss Chesney, who is making frantic play all this time with the baby; but its mood has changed, and now her most energetic efforts are received—not with smiles—but with stolid indifference and unblinking contempt by the young gentleman in arms.

"I cannot say I agree with you," Miss Beauchamp says with much subdued scorn, "and I do not think it is kind to place any one in a false position."

She lets a little disdainful angry glance fall upon Lillian,—who unfortunately does not profit by it, as she does not see it,—and sweeps up the stairs to her aunt's apartments, while Guy, (who is not to be sneered out of his undertaking) stalks on majestically to the kitchen, followed by Lillian, and never pauses until he places the chubby little rogue he carries in his mother's arms,—who eventually turns out to be the laundress.

"I am not a judge," he says to this young woman, who is cursing profusely and is actually consumed with pride, "but Miss Chesney has declared your son to be the loveliest child in the world, and I always agree with Miss Chesney,—for reasons of my own."

"Oh! thank you, Sir Guy; I'm sure I'm much obliged to you, Miss Chesney," says the laundress, turning the color of a full-blown peony, through excitement.

"What is his name?" asks Lillian, giving the boy a last fond poke with her pretty slender finger.

"Abram, miss," replies the mother, which name much displeases Lillian, who would have liked to hear he was called Alric, or Lancelot, or any other poetical appellation suitable for the most beautiful child in the world.

"A very charming name," says Guy, gravely; and having squeezed a half-sovereign into the little fellow's fat hand, he and Lillian go through the passages into the open air.

"Guardy," says Lillian, "what is a 'promiscuous baby?'"

"I wish I knew," replies he: "I confess it has been puzzling me ever since. We must ask Florence when we go in."

Here they both laugh a little, and stroll on for a time in silence. At length, being

prompted thereto by her evil genius, Lillian says,—

"Tell me, who is the Heskett you and auntie were talking about just now?"

"A boy who lives down in the hollow beneath Leigh's farm,—a dark boy we met one day at the end of the lawn: you remember him?"

"A lad with great black eyes and a handsome face? with just a little soupçon of wickedness about him? of course I do. Oh! I like that boy. You must forgive him, Sir Guy, or I shall be unhappy forever."

"Do you know him?"

"Yes, well. And his mother, too: she is a dear old thing, and, but that she has an undeniable penchant for tobacco, would be perfection. Guardy, you must forgive him."

"My dear child, I can't."

"Not when I ask you?" in a tone of purest astonishment.

"Not even then. Ask me something else—in fact, anything,—and I will grant it, but not this."

"I want nothing else," coldly. "I have set my heart on freeing this poor boy, and you refuse: and it is my first request."

"It is always your first request, is it not?" he says smiling a rather troubled smile. "Yesterday—"

"Oh, don't remind of what I may have said yesterday," interrupts Miss Chesney, impatiently: "think of to-day! I ask you to forgive Heskett—for my sake."

"You should try to understand all that would entail," speaking the more sternly in that it makes him positively wretched to say her nay: "if I were to forgive Heskett this time, I should have every second man on my estate a poacher."

"On the contrary I believe you would make them all your devoted slaves. The quality of mercy is not strained. It droppeth as the gentle dew from heaven. Upon the place beneath; it is twice blessed. You are straining yours. Why not pardon the boy generously and make him happy?"

"I have said I would not, and even you can hardly think it right that I should break my word."

"No, you would rather break his mother's heart!" By this time the spoiled Lillian has quite made up her mind to have her own way, and is ready to try any means to gain it. "Your word!" she says, disdainfully: "if you are going to emulate the Medes and Persians, of course there is no use of my arguing with you. You ought to be an ancient Roman: even that detestable Brutus might be considered soft-hearted when compared with you."

"Sneering, Lillian, is a habit that should be confined to those old in sorrow or worldly wisdom: it sits badly on such lips as yours."

"Then why compel me to indulge in it? Give me my way in this one instance, and I will be good, and will probably never sneer again."

"I cannot."

"Then don't!" naughtily, made exceeding wroth by (what she is pleased to term) his obstinacy. "I was foolish in thinking I could influence you in any way. Had Florence asked you, you would have said yes instantly."

"Florence would never have asked me to do anything so unreasonable."

"Of course not! Florence never does wrong in your eyes! It is a pity every one else does not regard her as favorably as you do."

"I think every one thinks very highly of her," angrily.

"Do you? It probably pleases you to think so. I, for one, do not."

"There is a certain class of people whose likes and dislikes cannot possibly be accounted for," says Guy, somewhat bitterly. "I think you would find a difficulty in explaining to me your vehement antipathy towards Miss Beauchamp. You should remember 'unfounded prejudices bear no weight.'"

"That sounds like one of Miss Beauchamp's own trite remarks," says Lillian, with a disagreeable laugh. "Did you learn it from her?"

To this Chetwoode makes no reply, and Lillian, carried away by resentment at his open support of Florence and by his determination not to accede to her request about young Heskett, says, passionately,—

"Why should you lose your temper about it? (It is her own temper that has gone astray.) It is all not worth a quarrel. Any one may plainly see how hateful I am to you. In a thousand ways you show me how badly you think of me. You are a petty tyrant. If I could leave your house, where I feel myself unwelcome,—at least so far as you are concerned,—I would gladly do so."

Here she stops, more from want of breath than eloquence.

"Be silent," says Guy, turning to confront her, and thereby showing a face as pale as hers is flushed with childish rage and bafflement. "How dare you speak like that!" Then, changing his tone, he says, quietly, "You are wrong; you altogether mistake. I am no tyrant; I do what is just, according to my own conscience. No man can do more. As to what else you may have said, it is impossible you can feel yourself unwelcome in my house. I do not believe you feel it."

"Thank you," still defiant, though in truth she is a little frightened by his manner; "that is as much as to say I am telling a lie, but I do believe it all the same. Every day you thwart and disappoint me in one way or another, and you know it."

"I do not, indeed. It distresses me much that you should say so. So much that against my better judgment I give in to you in this matter of Heskett, if only to prove to you how you wrong me when you say I wish to thwart you. Heskett is pardoned."

So saying, he turns from her abruptly and half contemptuously, and, striking across the grass, makes for a path that leads indirectly to the stables.

When he has gone some yards it occurs to Miss Chesney that she feels decidedly small. She has gained her point, it is true, but in a sorry fashion, and one that leaves her discontented with her success. She feels that had he done rightly he would have refused to bandy words with her at all upon the subject, and he would not have pardoned the reprehensible Heskett; some thing in his manner, too, which she chooses to think domineering, renders her angry still, together with a vague, uneasy consciousness that he has treated her throughout as a child and given in to her merely because it is a simpler matter to surrender one's judgment than to argue with foolish youth.

This last thought is intolerable. A child, indeed! She will teach him she is no child, and that women may have sense although they have not reached the admirable age of six-and-twenty.

Without further thought she runs after him, and, overtaking him just as he turns the corner, says, very imperiously, with a view to sustaining her dignity,—

"Sir Guy, wait: I want to speak to you."

"Well," he says, stopping dead short, and answering her in his iciest tones. He barely looks at her; his eyes, having once met hers, wander away again without an instant's lingering, as though they had seen nothing worthy of attention. This plain ignoring of her charms is bitter to Miss Chesney.

"I do not want you to forgive that boy against your will," she says, haughtily. "Take back your promise."

"Impossible! You have made me break my word to myself, nothing shall induce me to break my word to you. Besides, it would be unfair to Heskett. If I were to dismiss him now I should feel as if I had wronged him."

"But I will not have his pardon so."

"What!"—scornfully,—"after having expended ten minutes in hurling at me some of the severest eloquence it has ever been my fate to listen to, all to gain this Heskett's pardon, you would now have it rescinded! Am I to understand so much?"

"No; but I hate ingraciousness."

"So do I,"—meaningly,—"even more than I hate abuse."

"Did I abuse you?"

"I leave you to answer that question."

"I certainly," with some hesitation, "said you were a tyrant."

"You did," calmly.

"And that—"

"Do not let us go over such distasteful ground again," interrupts he, impatiently: "you said all you could say,—and you gained your object. Does not even that satisfy you?"

"I wish I had never interested myself in the matter," she says angrily, vexed with herself, and with him, and with everything.

"Perhaps your wisdom would have lain in that direction," returns he, coolly. "But as you did interest yourself, and as the victory lies with you, you should be the one to rejoice."

"Well, I don't," she says impulsively. And then she looks at him in a half-defiant, half-penitent, wholly charming way, letting her large soft eyes speak for her, as they rest full upon his face. There is something in her fresh young beauty almost irresistible. Guy, with an angry sigh, acknowledges its power, and going nearer to her takes both her clasped hands in his.

"What a bad-tempered little girl you are!" he says, in a jesting tone, that is still full of the keenest reproach. "Am I as bad as Brutus and all those terrible Medes and Persians? I confess you made me tremble when you showered upon me all those awful comparisons."

"No, no, I was wrong," she says hastily, twining her small fingers closely around his; then very softly, "You are always forgiving me, are you not? But yet—tell me, Guardy—are you not really glad you have pardoned that poor Heskett? I cannot be pleased about it myself so long as I think I have only wrung your promise from you against your will. Say you are glad if only to make me happy."

"I would do anything to make you happy,—anything," he says, in a strange tone, reading anxiously her lovely riant face, that shows no faintest trace of such tenderness as he would fain see there; then, altering his voice with an effort, "Yes, I believe I am glad," he says, with a short laugh: "your intercession has removed a hateful duty from my shoulders."

"Where is the boy? Is he locked up, or confined anywhere?"

"Nowhere. I never incarcerate my victims," with a slight trace of bitterness still in his manner. "He is free as air, in all human probability poaching at this present moment."

"But if he knows there is punishment in store for him, why doesn't he make his escape?"

"You must ask him that because I cannot answer the question. Perhaps he does not consider me altogether such a fiend as you do, and may think it likely I will show mercy at the last moment."

"Or perhaps," says Lillian, "he has made his escape long ago."

"I don't think so. Indeed, I am almost sure if you look straight along that field"—pointing in a certain direction—"you will see the young gentleman in question calmly smoking the pipe of peace upon a distant wall."

"It is he," says Lillian, in a low tone, after a careful examination of the youthful smoker. "How little he seems to fear his fate!"

"Yes; just fancy how lightly he views the thought of falling into the clutches of a monster!" remarks Chetwoode, with a mocking smile.

"I think you are a little hard on me," says Lillian, reproachfully.

"Am I?" carelessly, preparing to leave her. "If you see that promising protégé of yours, Lillian, you can tell him from me that he is quite at liberty to carry on his night games as soon as he pleases. You have no idea what a solace that news will be to him; only, if you have any regard for him, advise him not to be caught again."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

She Could Not Plough.

A story is told of a bashful young Georgia swain, who called on his sweetheart to propose. Here is a sample of the conversation.

"Miss Addie, can you sweep the floor?"

"Why, yes; of course I can."

"Can you cook?"

"Yes."

"Can you wash?"

"Yes, I can wash, too."

"And scour?"

"Yes."

"Well, can you cut wood?"

"I have cut wood, too."

"Did you ever hoe?"

"Sometimes."

"Pick cotton?"

"Yes, pick cotton also."

"Can you plough?"

"No, I can't plough."

"Well, then, I can plough for both of us."

He got her.

A special cable despatch from Paris says that there is a general desire for a change of Government, and that the dissatisfaction with President Carnot's negative policy is increasing. The dissatisfaction is said to extend to the younger army officers, and that their vote would be given at a moment's notice in favor of a dictatorialship.

PECULIARITIES OF GREAT MEN.

Oddities of Writers, Statesmen and Others of Ancient and Modern Times.

Swift liked to write in bed.

Tamerlane was an eminent chess player. Bach's favorite pastime was gardening. Roscoe Conkling was an excellent amateur boxer.

Danton was the most noted card player of his day.

Socrates was said to be the ugliest man of his time.

Dr. Johnson drank immoderate quantities of tea.

Queen Victoria, during her youth, was fond of archery.

Hesiod hated women, and took no pains to conceal the fact.

Emerson declared that he composed best when walking.

Charles II. spent much time in his chemical laboratory.

Fox, the orator, found his greatest pleasure in gambling.

Robespierre was fond of reading poetry aloud to his friends.

Vicino could not listen to the sound of a flute without fainting.

Virgil, during the summer season, filled his house with butterflies.

Nero was fond of music, and attained great proficiency in the art.

Francis I. was known as the most skillful joustier of his country.

Balzac, when not at work at his novels, entertained himself sketching.

Frederick the Great was a musician and devoted much time to the flute.

Charlemagne was said to be the best player at checkers of his century.

Thomas Carlyle's most congenial recreation was smoking in his garden.

Gladstone is fond of wood cutting, and often amuses himself in this way.

Henry VII. of England had the reputation of being an inveterate miser.

Ivan the Great was fond of torturing animals and seeing their blood run.

More's "Utopia" was written as an amusement and to divert his friends.

Napoleon's favorite dainty was blood pudding made with plenty of tallow.

Queen Elizabeth was profane, and when angry would kick and cuff her maids.

John Wesley never took any form of diversion, but utilized every moment.

Shelley was fond of boating and finally lost his life in an accident to his boat.

Blackmore, the novelist, is fond of gardening, and has made it his profession.

Aristotle found amusement in walking on the seashore and collecting specimens.

Mirabeau loved dogs, and had a famous pet, Chico, to which he was much attached.

Mrs. Radcliffe ate raw pork before going to work on a particularly thrilling chapter.

Voltaire was afraid to sleep in the dark, and invariably woke if his candle went out.

Henry IV. of France had the "cat ague," or trembled whenever a cat was in sight.

Queen Anne detested the smell of roses, and became sick when they were in the room.

William the Conqueror was immoderately devoted to dog fighting and bear baiting.

Mary Stuart had a lap dog that followed her to the scaffold, and soon after died of grief.

Washington was devoted to fox hunting and in the season usually hunted twice a week.

Socrates was found of playing with children, and was often seen busy with them at their games.

Mme. de Staël carried a bit of stick in her hand and played with it as an aid to conversation.