

# THE NEW INMATE OF HILFONT.

A THRILLING STORY OF OLD ENGLAND.

## CHAPTER XI.

This scene continued to go on still for a few days longer; Lucy was less liberal of her music, but quite ready to talk with anybody, and particularly with Mr. Sedgewick, and I can not say that Mr. Sedgewick neglected Clara. When he spoke to her, the very tone of his voice was tender; I caught his eye following her light steps about the room many times, and he never passed by her chair without a caressing look or word. But this thing was certain, that he did not seek her society; that he chatted with Lucy by the hour, about subjects quite out of Clara's range, it is true but by no means beyond her intelligence, looking very much as though the child belonged to him and he was fond of her, yet never expecting that there could be companionship between them. And it is quite true that when the sisters burst into my dressing-room to tell me of the wonderful event which had startled their youth, Clara was quite a child; but these days were aging my little girl. This week would count for more in the history of her life than many years, and I do not think she was such a child now.

"Derwent" said I, one morning, when my patience was near giving way "do you think you have any influence with Lucy Crofton?"

Derwent, who was in his dressing-gown, came forward to me, swinging in his hand the tassels of his girdle. "Have I any influence with Lucy Crofton? A very odd question, Clara. Not so much as you have, I dare say. But why do you ask?"

"I have no influence whatever over her" said I, "but she is making great unhappiness, or I am very much deceived."

My husband repeated over my words again, in amazement. "Making great unhappiness? Good little Lucy Crofton! My love, what do you mean?"

"I mean that," said I; "she draws Hugh Sedgewick to her side constantly, they are never apart, and I tremble for my dear little girl."

Derwent opened his eyes wide, stared at me, and then laughed.

"Do you think her artful and deigning, Clara?" he said, "These are the words you ladies use when you suspect one of your number; come don't be unjust. I dare say Lucy likes to talk with Sedgewick he's a clever fellow, and has seen a great deal of the world. But what has that to do with your dear little girl?"

"Is it possible you can see what passes every night in your own house," said I, "and yet ask me that question?"

"Upon my word, it is quite possible; what passes every night in my own house I don't know," said Derwent. "I dare say it is some invention of Mrs. Roberts. When little girls are so ambitious, Clara, they must take the risks. How can Sedgewick talk to that child?"

I had almost said "she is worth ten such as Lucy;" but paused in time; for Mr. Crofton had a warm heart to his own blood. So I did not say anything, but remained looking a little sullen, as I supposed Derwent thought.

"You ask if I have any influence with Lucy. Do you mean that I should use it to prevent her from talking to Mr. Sedgewick?" said Derwent gravely.

"No; certainly that is not what I mean. There is nothing to be done, I perceive," said I. "It must be left to time and providence; you are quite right."

"I am very glad to hear it, Clara," said my husband, laughing, "though I am not aware that I said anything about time or providence. Come to breakfast. At any rate, there is not the slightest reason for being out of temper with me."

That was true, certainly, and no advantage to be got out of it either, for Derwent was imperturbable, and never gave one the least satisfaction in getting angry; so we went to breakfast, and Lucy kissed me, and we were all as harmonious and friendly as possible downstairs.

That day the young ladies chose to gather in a cluster round the fire in the breakfast room. It was wet, and there was nothing to be done or seen out of doors. The gentlemen were playing billiards, or reading newspapers, or at least doing something which carried them out of our society; only Bertie lingered among the girls by the fire. Bertie displayed an unusual liking for female society just at present. I could not say that my match-making scheme made decided progress; but certainly Bertie kept most perseveringly in the vicinity of the young ladies, and I thought—hoped—began to address himself to Alice more than to any of the rest. But then, being anxious for this result, I believe I gave undue importance to words which meant but little. Alice was unusually grave, as she had been for some time. Clara, on the contrary, was in high spirits, and I could not help thinking that if she ever had been troubled, something must have occurred this morning to reassure her heart.

Mary Crofton of Stoke had been reading a novel which she held open in her hand. She was inveighing against the hero, whom she could not tolerate. "If I had been Julia," cried this young lady, "I should never have married him!—never, if he had gone on his knees twenty times a day! And as for breaking his heart! A man who forgot his first love, and went and fell in love with a second lady, I don't believe he had a heart to break!"

"Some people," said the other Mary, sensibly, "not only fall in love twice, but many times. He was not so bad as that." "But why should he not fall in love twice?" asked Lucy.

"Lucy Crofton! ah, I suppose it's because you have lived so long abroad," said the first speaker. "I only know that I should never marry a man who had been in love before. I should always suppose he was thinking of the other lady! I would not for all the world!"

"I think every man has been in love before," said Lucy.

"Oh, how shocking! I never would marry anybody if I thought so," cried the novel reader. "Mr. Nugent, is it true?"

Now Bertie was generally bold enough of speech. In the present instance, however, whether it was that he stood alone, the sole representative of the lords of creation, whether it was the eyes of so many girls upon him that confused him, or whether it was some secret sentiment in the young gentleman's heart, I can not tell; but Bertie stammered, hesitated, blushed, and made final answer with a nervous laugh, that "really he had so little experience on the subject, he could not say."

Whereupon my niece, Mary, a merry-hearted girl, began to "tease" Bertie, and under covert of this, to my utter amazement, I overheard Lucy say—"You know Mr. Sedgewick, Mary; he looks just like a hero doesn't he? Do you know I heard a lady tell Aunt Clara that she had refused him. So he you see can fall in love again."

"The more shame for the lady to say anything about it!" said Mary Crofton, indignantly, throwing an anxious glance back at Clara; "but perhaps he might even fall in love three times, and I hope nobody would care?"

And Mary rose and changed her seat, full of virtuous resentment, but comforted by the thought that she had discharged her last arrow smartly, and to the point. Had any one else overheard the aside but me?

I could not be sure. Clara was playing with the little Fortescue, cutting out pretty things in paper to amuse them. Her face was very much flushed, and she turned her head away, but was so busy, and worked away so quickly with her scissors that I was rather at a loss to know. Yes, Alice had heard! Her cheek, too, was red, her eyes shining, her whole face beaming with indignation and pity.

Lucy Crofton had meant it for their benefit, and not for Mary's. Had Clara heard it, too?

But I found it quite impossible to decide upon this. Clara sat between the two little girls, merrier than ever—talking to them, laughing with them, cutting out dogs and cats, children and flowers, to the intense admiration of the little ones—but never by any chance looking at me or at her sister, and, indeed, avoiding both eyes and speech of any one in the room. I was greatly distressed what to do. If I explained to her the real story, perhaps she had not heard Lucy's words, and would find in the explanation only an incomprehensible intention of giving her pain; and if she heard it, what must the child think? Not that Hugh Sedgewick's first love was a school-boy's fancy, but perhaps that it was a sad disappointment, out of which pique and wounded pride had driven him to seek her own innocent heart and make it sad. I was anxious to speak to Alice too, yet afraid to leave that poor child alone, perhaps to hear something further insinuated against her peace. At last, to my great comfort, little Mary Fortescue dragged Clara off in triumph to show mamma her achievements on paper, and I seized the opportunity to call Alice also out of the room. Alice followed with a proud step; she had always been a serious child. She felt herself outraged and insulted, as well as her sister; and Alice began to look stately and majestic, as she had never looked before, and as I did not think it was possible for her to look; she was rather tall, and her hair had darkened since she became a woman, and though there was a certain swell of youthful heroics in her demeanor, it became her well enough. "What is wrong?" said Bertie, with a sudden perception of something which must have happened, as she passed him; but I hastened her out before she could answer. I could see that Alice was bitter in her own heart, and classing all those happier young people together; I did not choose she should reply to Bertie now.

"My dear, do you think she heard it?" cried I, anxiously, when we were out of the room. "I do not know," said Alice, slowly and sadly, "she never kept her face away from me before; but she had better know it. I do not think it can come too soon."

"It is entirely a misrepresentation," said I. "I might almost use strong words, and it was certainly said with malice and evil intention. Listen, Alice, the lady who refused Hugh Sedgewick was—But never mind who she was. It occurred when he was a boy at school."

To my utter amazement, Alice answered, "Then it is really true—you say it? Ah, Clara ought to know, if she did not hear!" "Alice," I exclaimed, "it was a piece of nonsense on the part of a school-boy—a boy of sixteen or seventeen; do you not understand what I mean?"

"Oh, please, Mrs. Crofton, do not be angry; I am very miserable. I would die to save her any pain," said Alice; then gradually calming down to her dignified expression—"Clara is only seventeen," she said, quietly.

Here was a pretty business! Clara was only seventeen, and Hugh Sedgewick's boyish presumption was a serious love and disappointment in the eyes of Alice—doubtless in the eyes of Clara also. I could have laughed, and I am not sure that I could not have cried also, with sheer vexation and helplessness; for I might preach to them forever without being able to move these children from the unreason of their youth.

"At all events, say nothing to Clara," I exclaimed at last, in despair. "I am not in the least afraid of Hugh Sedgewick's second love."

"But he might fall in love three times," said Alice with meaning. "Oh, Mrs. Crofton, I am very unhappy; I wish we had not come to Hilfont. I know very well what they all mean, and why he does not seek Clara now—and I almost think she knows too; but she will not speak to me. Oh, it is cruel, cruel—Clara will die!"

"Hush, Alice!" I said peremptorily, not another word—it is mere fancy, and you must not tell her. If you do I shall be very much displeased."

Alice consented with reluctance, and we had to separate hastily, as some one sud-

denly appeared. The sisters were scarcely seen again that day; even I could not find them in their own apartment. They came down to dinner arm-in-arm, both somewhat flushed, and both as stately as wounded pride and youthful spirit could make them. But I could not help remarking that Clara, though she was the youngest, had less of the heroic and more of the real in her youthful assumption of dignity than Alice could boast. We ladies bestowed upon them both a good deal of secret observation; nothing was said, but one after another of the matrons among us pitied the poor child, and the two Marys took possession of her, and spent their whole impetuous, girlish energies in attempts to amuse her—everybody saw that a crisis approached.

Everybody but Mr. Sedgewick, who spoke to her with the same playfulness, and passed her by with the same affectionate, careless nod as usual, to hear Lucy's music, and join in Lucy's talk about foreign parts. I could not feel otherwise than out of patience with this man—a man who prided himself upon his knowledge of the world and of human nature, yet who was blind as a mole to the troubled heart and racking mind of the poor little girl whom he professed to love. And looking at Clara's face and at his, I began to make up my mind that this brief engagement was to come to an end immediately, and had been nothing more than a fancy so far as he was concerned. Very well. Poor little Clara supposed it would break her heart; but, at all events, it would cover Hugh with contempt, and give everybody a right to despise him, with which thought I comforted myself.

That evening passed like the former evening. Lucy played, and Hugh Sedgewick stood behind her chair. Lucy left the piano, and by and by, quite naturally and simply, it came about that Hugh Sedgewick was called to her table, laughingly appealed to about something which nobody else knew. But the drama by this time had become painfully interesting to the women present. None of us spoke to Lucy except in the slightest manner, and the two Mrs. Croftons, I could see, had even come so far as to confide to each other their disapproval of her. But Bertie and Mr. Sedgewick, sometimes Derwent, made up to Lucy for our withdrawal; and poor little Clara, out of sight, looked on and watched, with a strange change upon her child's face—perhaps a strange on her tender little heart.

## CHAPTER XII.

Next morning, still somewhat excited and nervous about this matter, and having it much in my thoughts, I went to a little inner room within the library to write some letters. Both Clara and Alice knew me to be there, and I had given them some little matters to do for me, which I supposed would occupy them till I was at liberty, for I wished to keep them as much as possible out of the society of Lucy.

Knowing this, I was much surprised, a few minutes after, to hear Clara's voice in the library. My door was open, and I could hear what she said. I rose suddenly, that I might not be a clandestine listener, when I remembered that Clara knew where I was, and took my seat again. It was, I suppose, an innocent artifice of her own, poor child, to let me know what she was about to do. But I started painfully when I heard the other voice.

"Clara, don't run away, child," said Mr. Sedgewick, in a tone of pleased surprise. "Submit, you little rebel, and tell me what you mean by keeping away from me. I did not see you all yesterday; you shall stay now."

"I mean to stay," said Clara's soft young voice, trembling yet strangely firm. "But please don't speak, Mr. Sedgewick; I am going to speak, please."

"And so you shall, sweetheart, as much and as long as you will; you could not please me better," cried the lover and certainly in a voice so lovely that I could scarcely even be provoked with him for appearing so totally unconscious of his own misdeeds.

"No, no! Let me stand here," said Clara her voice trembling more and more. "Oh, don't say anything! Let me speak. Oh, Mr. Sedgewick, it is all a mistake. I would not believe it for a long, long time; but I see it plain now. Perhaps you were fond of me a little, for I know you would not say anything that was not true. You were fond of me, as if I were your little sister; but all the rest was wrong—all a mistake. Oh, do not say anything, Mr. Sedgewick! I know it now."

"What was all a mistake? Clara, you must not trifle with me," said Mr. Sedgewick, with the tone of a man injured and superior, who is determined to check at once an unwarrantable caprice.

"And you must not trifle with me," cried Clara with a sudden inspiration. "You are a man, and you know everything better than I do; but you asked me to be with you all my life—you asked me to be your wife. You said you were happy when I was with you, and would be happy anywhere with me. You said so; it is not my fancy, though sometimes I almost think it must have been. You said so, and because you said it I was sure it was true. That is only a month ago," said Clara, her voice breaking and falling once more.

"But now we are both in the same house and in the same room, and whether you are happy or not I cannot tell; but you are not happy because of me."

"Clara, what does this mean?" cried Sedgewick; and for the first time there was a little of conscience in his voice.

"It means—oh, I am not angry—I am not surprised—not very, when I come to think," said Clara, one sudden sob interrupting her against her will. "It means—it is not anybody's fault, and just a mistake—all a mistake; and I cannot let it go on any longer. Though I am only seventeen," said Clara with a pathetic girlish dignity, "I am a woman, and nobody must be fond of me and do me disrespect; nobody must want me for a wife, and somebody else for a companion. You think I am little and young, and do not mind; but I do mind, and you would despise me if I did not. Oh, Mr. Sedgewick, I am not angry—I am not blaming anybody; but only it is all a mistake."

There was a little silence—a time of great anxiety and trembling to me; for I knew that silence was the very thing to overpower Clara, by leaving her free to the recoil of her own feelings. I have no doubt it was to her also the hardest time of the whole interview, for I heard one sob and then another extorted from her by the violence of nature, while still her lover paused, and did not speak.

"Clara," he said after a time, "Clara, Clara! do you mean to cast me away and forsake me so? Clara! you whom I called my own!"

He to make such an appeal! as if the innocent child did it out of caprice and perverseness! But I dare say he knew it was good for his own end. She could not bear it. The sobs came faster, and whether or not she yielded in resolution, she had beyond question yielded already to tears.

You did not expect me to be faintless," he cried again. "Yes, I am older than you; I am stained with the world. But, Clara, Clara, is my angel to forsake me as soon as I do wrong?"

I rose from my chair in impatience longing, I confess it, to interfere and convict him. Could Clara be satisfied with this?

"Mr. Sedgewick," she said, with a steadier voice, regaining courage, "it is not proper to say 'when you do wrong.' If you did wrong—real wrong—I should be very sorry—more sorry than for anything in the world; but I never would forsake you. But oh, this is so different! You are not doing wrong; it was only a mistake. And please say good-bye to me now, and let me go."

"Good-bye? I defy you," said Hugh Sedgewick, suddenly adopting some violent means or other, which of course my cavedropping concealment could not pry into. "Yes, go by all means, if you can—go! I shall let my life go sooner. Go! when I only begin to know, a dolt that I am, the treasure I have got. Don't speak—it is my turn! Yes, Clara, you are right, I have made a mistake; I looked to you only for love, comfort, the secret spring and joy of my life. I did not look to you for everything. It was all a mistake—but I too have found it out now."

"Oh, Mr. Sedgewick I don't understand you," said Clara; but she did not say, Let me go.

"Yes, you do," said this disrespectful lover. "You understand everything about it better than I can tell you. You understand this as thought himself wiser than you and expected that only by-and-by years after this, you would begin to care about his tastes and enter into his pleasures. Yes, Clara you were right, my darling, but not as you suppose. It is all a mistake. I was taking but the half of what God has given me—but now you shall find to your cost, you rash little girl, if anything will content me that is a hair's-breadth less than the whole."

"Oh, Mr. Sedgewick, don't speak so—I do not know what you mean," cried poor Clara. Poor little Clara, she was a bad pretender; though she tried to keep it up and meant it, resolution and reality were faltering together out of her voice.

Then I bethought me of my concealment. Hugh Sedgewick was proceeding in a manner which was not adapted for the hearing of a third party, and I did not suppose that my known presence was any longer comfortable to Clara. Accordingly, with great boldness, I made a noise at the door, and issuing hence a minute or two after, found Mr. Sedgewick flushed with excitement, embarrassment, and momentary anger at this interruption, and Clara, trembling and tearful, trying to look as sad and as suffering and as resolute as she was this morning, but looking only a perfect little cheat and a sham—a masquerading happiness in tears.

"I must beg you to forgive me," said I; "I thought Clara knew I was here in the first place, and then I found it impossible to interrupt you. Mr. Sedgewick; Clara will forgive her oldest friend."

He hesitated for a moment—only a moment—and then held out his hand frankly. "Congratulations!" he said. "We have had a quarrel and found each other out."

"I am very glad. Be merciful to my breach of honor for the sake of it," said I; and stooping to kiss my poor Clara's cheek, I was hastening away, when Mr. Sedgewick stopped me again.

"You are her oldest friend," he said.

"You give her to me heartily, do you not?" For a moment I hesitated. Alas for Clara's resolution! I saw her shy, wistful, deprecating look—the glance of a moment. She no longer thought it was all a mistake. Then I looked into Hugh Sedgewick's eyes—into his eyes; my reason was urgent. And then I said, heartily, "I do."

Yes, he had made a mistake; but, thanks to Clara's courage and his own candor, he had found it out; and I do not think he was likely ever to make such a mistake again.

In the drawing room I found Alice, restless, wandering about, going from window to window, and from table to table. Nobody else was in the room. Her whole face grew crimson with anxiety and excitement as I entered. She made a choking pause, to command herself, evidently thinking that Clara would follow me; but when Clara did not follow me, and I sat down quietly in my usual seat, Alice could no longer control herself. She came to me, and dropped on her knees by my side. "Clara, our Clara!" cried Alice. "Oh, Mrs. Crofton, do you know?"

"Take comfort, my dear," said I; "Clara is very well and very happy. Don't be afraid."

"Do you mean it is all over?" cried Alice, gazing at me with her astonished eyes.

"It is all over," said I. "It was only partly his fault, at worst, and he sees his mistake."

Alice got up quietly from her knees when I said that, and went about the business I had committed to her. She was happy and pleased, and satisfied in her heart; but still a little, just a little, disappointed. "Clara had been a sad and lofty heroine, 'sacrificing' herself half an hour ago in the imagination of her sympathetic sister; now she was a happy little bride again, much beloved and better understood, and self-sacrifice of any kind was totally unnecessary. I am not sure that Clara, happy as she was, did not feel the downfall even in her own person. Alice was extremely happy too, and very soon recovered her entire pride and pleasure in her sister's prospects; but she was beyond question disappointed when she rose from my side.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

D. A. Buck, a resident of Waterbury Conn., once made a perfect steam engine that was so small that the engine, boilers, governors and pumps all stood on a space only one-fourth of an inch in diameter and less than seven-sixteenths of an inch high. The engine had 148 distinct parts, held together by fifty-two screws. The diameter of the cylinder was but one-twenty-sixth of an inch, and the whole affair, not including the base plate, weighed but three grains.

## COLOSSAL BRITISH FORGINGS.

The Immense Sums of Money Lent for Rent by British Landlord.

The Earl of Derby draws from his tenant farmers upwards of \$850,000 a year. This is supplemented by his Liverpool property. This fortunate family owns nearly all the town of Bury. The total income of the Earl of Derby is close on \$1,750,000 a year. The Earl of Sefton's is another family which has done well out of Liverpool, for, in addition to estates producing \$250,000 a year, and ground rents \$350,000 more, they received \$1,250,000 for 370 acres of land required by the corporation for a public park. Mr. Gladstone, in addition to \$500,000 left him by his father, has the rent-roll of the Hawarden estate, which came into the possession of his wife on the death of the last male Glynn. Add to the estate, which is worth \$90,865 a year, another \$10,000 for royalties and \$25,000 as Prime Minister, and you have in round numbers \$125,000 a year. Earl Vane has \$500,000 a year, in addition to his coal royalties, which extend over 12,000 acres. Coal is worth to the Earl of Fitzwilliam \$500,000 a year, in addition to another \$630,000, the value of his estates in Yorkshire and Ireland. The Marquis of Londonderry, who sells his coal wholesale and retail, has, with land, a rent-roll of \$915,000 a year. The Marquis of Salisbury's London property in the neighbourhood of St. Martin's lane and the Strand is said to bring him \$350,000 a year. The Marquis' other estates produce \$165,000 per annum. As the Duke of Devonshire owns 193,315 acres of land, producing a revenue of \$865,000 a year, he is not likely to accept the million which has been offered for Devonshire house and grounds at Piccadilly.

The Duke of Hamilton's mining royalties amount to no less than \$570,000 a year. His other estates bring in \$365,000 per annum. Lord Burton, of Bass fame, is worth over \$500,000 a year, and the family of the late Mr. Crawshaw, the Welsh iron-monger, has the handling of \$10,000,000. When the iron trade was brisk, the Earl of Dudley netted yearly \$150,000. The Dudley diamonds are worth \$2,500,000. The Duke of Norfolk has an income of \$1,845,000 a year, the Duke of Northumberland \$880,000, and Earl Rosebery \$180,000, to say nothing of \$10,000,000 his wife brought him.

## DEATH'S CARNIVAL IN CHINA.

Scenes in the Path of the Pestilence—The Thief in the Plague-stricken House.

The reports of the plague at Hong Kong and Canton show the deadly effect of a disease that seems to be due mainly to filth and insanitary conditions. From private letters from Canton it is learned that the plague broke out in the old inner city in the Mohammedan quarter, and that as many as 100 dead a day were taken out.

For some time little attention was paid to the deaths from the disease, but when the supply of coffins ran out and orders had to be sent to other places, then the alarm spread. The disease followed the alarm very speedily, and soon deaths from it occurred in all parts of Canton, and even in the suburban villages, where the wealthy residents had fled.

The old Mohammedan quarter of Canton, where the disease first appeared, is probably as filthy and crowded as the worst parts of Bombay or Calcutta. No attempt is made to remove night soil or the debris from kitchens. Huge heaps of decaying refuse may be seen on every corner, the stench from which is fearful. According to all medical laws no one ought to be able to live in such an atmosphere, but those people not attacked by the plague appear to be vigorous. Now signs of death are seen on every hand. It is estimated that 60,000 have died in the native quarter of Canton. One big charitable dispensary announces that it has given away 2,000 coffins.

No attempt is made to provide coffins for children. The little victims are wrapped in pieces of matting and thrown into the grave.

Usually a funeral is the scene of noisy mourning, and white and blue lanterns are the symbols that death has visited a house. Now the lanterns are frequently absent, and many bodies are buried without any of the customary ceremonies.

From Hong Kong reports are very discouraging. The latest news says thirty-five deaths occur daily, and that the malady is spreading to all parts of the native city, and now threatens the foreign quarter. The slaughter of pigs has been prohibited, as well as the catching of fish, for fish are said to be infected by the disease. So virulent is the plague that many have been struck down as they were being borne through the streets in sedan chairs. The physicians attribute the disease to foul smells, and the death of these people in chairs would go far to bear out this theory.

A native paper gives a curious incident showing the lawlessness that prevails in the infected quarter. All of a rich Chinaman's household had succumbed to the plague except one daughter. She was sitting in the lonely house, but felt too ill to go out and buy coffins for her dead. Suddenly a thief, who had broken into the premises, appeared. She offered him money to buy coffins and promised if he fulfilled the commission to let him take any article he wished.

He soon returned only to find the girl dead. He set to work to loot the premises, but was seized by the plague and died before he could get out of the house.

## Colors from Coal Tar.

Coal tar, formerly considered a waste and a regular nuisance to gasworkers, is now utilized as one of the most valuable color producers. Chemists have extracted from it sixteen shades of blue, the same number of various tints of yellow, twelve of orange, nine of violet, besides numerous other colors, shades and tints. A late magazine writer in summing up an article on "Uses of Coal Tar," says: "The amount of coloring matter stored in coal is so great that one pound of the common bituminous variety will yield sufficient magenta to cover 500 yards of flannel, aurine for 120 yards, vermilion for 2,560 yards and alizarine for 255 yards of turkey red cloth."