

CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued.)

"She is as like her mother as possible," he mused, as soon as he was clear of the house. "It might have been Hilda herself, only she is twice as beautiful as Hilda was. I shall have another bad night after this. I know I shall. I must get rid of that girl somehow. I cannot bear her about me; she is a daily reminder of things I dare not remember, and whenever she stares at me with those great eyes of hers, I feel as though she were looking through me. I wonder if she knows the story of Maria Lee!"

And then dismissing, or trying to dismiss, the matter from his mind, he took his way across the fields to Isleworth Hall, a large white brick mansion in the Queen Anna style, about two miles distant from the abbey, and, on arrival, asked for his cousin George, and was at once shown into that gentleman's presence.

Years had told upon George more than they had upon Philip, and, though there were no touches of gray in the flaming red of his hair, the bloodshot eyes, and the puckered crow's-feet beneath them, to say nothing of the slight but constant trembling of the hand, all showed that he was a man well on in middle-life, and who had lived every day of it. Time, too, had made the face more intensely unpleasant and vulgar-looking than ever. Such Caresfoot characteristics as it possessed were year by year, giving place, in an increasingly greater degree, to the kitchen-maids strain introduced by the mother. In short, George Caresfoot did not even look a gentleman, whereas Philip certainly did.

"You don't seem very well, George. I am afraid that your travels have not agreed with you."

"My dear Philip," answered his cousin, in a languid and affected voice, "if you had lived the life that I have for the last twenty years, you would look a little knocked up. I have had some very good times; but the fact is, that I have been too prodigal of my strength, not thought enough about the future. It is a great mistake, and one of the worst results is that I am utterly blasé of everything; even la belle passion is played out for me. I haven't seen a woman I care twopence about for ten years."

"Ah you should sell this place, and take a house in town; it would suit you much better."

"I can do that without selling the place. I don't intend to sell the place—in fact, nothing would induce me to do so. Some day I may marry; and want to transmit it to some future Caresfoot; but I confess I don't mean to do that just yet. Marry when you want a nurse, but never before; that's my maxim. Marriage is an excellent institution for parsons and fools, the two classes that Providence has created to populate the world; but a wise man should as soon think of walking into a spring trap. Take your own case, for instance, my dear Philip; look what marriage led to."

"At any rate," answered his cousin, bitterly, "it led to your advantage." "Exactly; and that is one of the reasons why I have such a respect for the institution in the abstract. It has been my personal benefactor, and I worship it accordingly—at a distance. By the way, talking of marriage reminds me of its legitimate fruits. Bellamy tells me that your daughter, Angela, if I had a daughter I should call her Diabola, it is more appropriate for a woman, has grown uncommonly handsome. Bring her to see me; I adore beauty in all its forms, especially its female form. Is she really so handsome?"

"I am no judge, but you will soon have an opportunity of forming an opinion—that is, I hope so. I propose coming with Angela to make a formal call on you to-morrow."

"Good. Tell my fair cousin that I shall be certain to be in, and be prepared, metaphorically, to fall at the feet of so much loveliness. By the way, that reminds me, you have heard of Bellamy's, or, rather, Mrs. Bellamy's, good fortune, I suppose?"

"No." "What—not? Why, he is now Sir John Bellamy, knight."

"Indeed! How is that?" "You remember the bye-election six months back?"

"Oh, yes! I was actually badgered by Mrs. Bellamy into promising to vote, much against my personal convenience."

"Exactly. Well, just at the time old Prescott died, you may remember that Mr. Showers, the member of the government, was unseated on petition from some borough or other, and came down here post-haste to get re-elected. But he had Sir Percy Vivyan against him, and, as I know to my cost, this benighted country is not fond of those who preach the gospel of progress. Bellamy, who is a stout Radical, as you know—chiefly, I fancy, because there is more to be got out of that side of politics—got the jobs Showers' agent. But three days before, it became quite clear that his cause, cabinet minister or not, was hopeless. Then it was that Mrs.—I beg her pardon, Lady—Bellamy came to the fore. Just as Showers was thinking of withdrawing, she demanded a private interview with him. Next day she posted off to old Sir Percy, who is a perfect fool of the chivalrous school, was desperately fond of her, and, mirabile dictu, that evening Sir Percy withdraws on the plea of ill-health, or some such rubbish, and Showers walks over. Within three months Mr. Bellamy becomes Sir John Bellamy, nominally for his services as town clerk of Roxham, and I hear that old Sir Percy is now perfectly rampant, and goes about cursing her ladyship up hill and down dale, and declaring that he has been shockingly taken in. How our mutual friend worked the

ropes is more than I can tell you, but she did work them, and to some purpose."

"She is an uncommonly handsome woman."

"Ah! yes, you're right there, she is a beauty; but let us stroll out a little; it is a fine evening for the 30th of April. To-morrow will be the 1st of May, so it will, a day neither of us is likely to forget."

Philip winced at the allusion, but said nothing.

"By the way," George went on, "I am expecting a visitor, my ward, young Arthur Heigham, who is just back from India. He will be twenty-five in a few days, when he comes of age, and is coming down to settle up. The fact is, that ten thousand of his money is on that Jotley property, and both Bellamy and myself are anxious that it should stop there for the present, as, if the mortgage were called in it might be awkward."

"Is he well off?" "Comfortably; about a thousand a year; comes of an old family, too. Bellamy and I knew his father, Captain Heigham when we were in business. His wife, by the way, was a distant cousin of ours. They are both dead now; the captain was wiped out at Inkerman, and, for some unknown reason, left me the young gentleman's sole guardian and joint trustee with a London lawyer, a certain Mr. Borley. I have never seen him yet—my ward, I mean—he has always been at Eton, or Cambridge, or in India, or somewhere."

Here Philip began to manifest signs of considerable uneasiness, the cause of which was sufficiently apparent; for while they were talking, a very large and savage-looking animal of the sheep-dog order had emerged from the house, and was following him up and down, growling in a low and ominous undertone, its nose being the while glued to his calves as they alternately presented themselves in his line of vision.

"Would you mind calling off this animal, George?" he said at length. "He does not look amiable."

"Oh! that's Snarleyow; don't mind him, he never bites unless you stop." Philip instinctively quickened his pace. "Isn't he a beauty? He's a pure bred Thibet sheep-dog, and I will back him to fight against any animal of his own weight. He killed two dogs in one morning the other day, and pulled down a beggar-woman in the evening. You should have heard her holler."

At that moment, fortunately for Philip's calves, which were beginning to tingle with an unwholesome excitement, Mr. Snarleyow's attention was diverted by the approach of a dog-cart and he left to enjoy the amusement of snapping and barking at the horse. The cart pulled up at the door, and out of it emerged a tall and extremely gentlemanly looking young fellow, followed by a very large red bull-dog.

"Mr. Caresfoot, I believe," said the young gentleman to George, taking off his hat.

"Yes, Mr. Heigham, at your service. I am very glad to see you. My cousin, Mr. Philip Caresfoot."

CHAPTER XVIII.

"I must apologize for having brought Aleck, my dog, you know, with me," began Arthur Heigham; "but the fact was that at the very last moment the man I was going to leave him with had to go away, and I had no time to find another place before the train left. I thought that if you objected to dogs he could easily be sent somewhere into the village. He is very good-tempered, though appearances are against him."

"Oh! he will be all right, I dare say," said George, rather sulkily; for with the exception of Snarleyow, in whose fiendish temper he found something refreshing and congenial, he liked no dogs. "But you must be careful, or Snarleyow, my dog, will give him a hammering. Here, good dog," and he attempted to pat Aleck on the head, but the animal growled savagely and avoided him.

"I never knew him to do that before," ejaculated Arthur, in confusion, and heartily wishing Aleck somewhere else. "I suppose he has taken a dislike to you. Dogs do sometimes you know."

Next second it struck him that this was one of those things that had better have been left unsaid, and he grew more uncomfortable than ever. But at this very moment the situation was rendered intensely lively, by the approach of the redoubtable Snarleyow himself, who, having snapped at the horse's heels all the way to the stables, had on his return to the front of the house spotted Aleck from afar. He was now advancing on tiptoe in full order of battle, his wicked-looking teeth gleaming, and his coat and tail standing out like an angry bear's.

Arthur, already sufficiently put out about the dog question, thought it best to take no notice; and even when he distinctly heard George quietly "sah" on his dog as he passed him, he contented himself with giving Aleck a kick by way of a warning to behave himself, and entered into some desultory conversation with Philip. But presently a series of growls behind him announced that an encounter was imminent. Looking round, he perceived that Snarleyow was standing over the bull-dog, of which he was more than twice the size, and holding on to the skin of his neck with his long teeth; while George was looking on with scarcely suppressed amusement.

"I think, Mr. Caresfoot, that you had better call your dog off," said Arthur, good-temperedly. "Mine is a peaceable animal, but is an awkward customer when he does fight."

"Oh! better let them settle it; they will be much better friends afterward. Hold him, Snarleyow."

Thus encouraged, the big dog seized the other and fairly lifted him off the ground, shaking him violently—a proceeding that had the effect of thoroughly rousing Aleck's temper. And then began a most Homeric combat. At first the bull-dog was dreadfully mauled; his antagonist's size, weight and length of leg and jaw, to say nothing of the thick coat by which he was protected, all telling against him. But he took his punishment very quietly, never so much as uttering a growl, in strange contrast to the big dog's vociferous style of doing business. And at last patience was rewarded by his enemy's fore-paw finding its way into Aleck's powerful jaw, and remaining there till Snarleyow's attentions to the back of his neck forced him to shift his hold. From that time forward the sheep-dog, had to fight on three legs,

which he found demoralizing. But still he had the advantage, and it was not until any other dog of Aleck's size would have retreated half killed that the bull-dog's superior courage and stamina began to tell. Quite heedless of his injuries and the blood that poured into his eyes, he slowly but surely drove the great sheep-dog, who by this time would have been glad to stop, back into an angle of the wall, and then suddenly pinned him by the throat. Down went Snarleyow on the top of the bull-dog, and rolled right over him, but when he staggered to his legs again his throat was still in its cruel grip.

"Take your dog off!" shouted George, seeing that affairs had taken a turn he very little expected.

"I fear that is impossible," replied Arthur, politely, but looking anything but polite.

"If you don't get it off, I will shoot it."

"You will do nothing of the sort, Mr. Caresfoot; you set the dog on, and you must take the consequences. Ah! the affair is finished."

As he spoke, the choking Snarleyow whose black tongue was protruding from his jaws, gave one last convulsive struggle and ceased to breathe. Satisfied with this result, Aleck let go, and having sniffed contemptuously at his dead antagonist, returned to his master's side, and, sitting quietly down, began to lick such of his numerous wounds as he could reach.

George, when he realized that his favorite was dead, turned upon his guest in a perfect fury. His face looked like a devil's. But Arthur, acting with wonderful self-possession for so young a man, stopped him.

"Remember, Mr. Caresfoot, before you say anything you may regret, that neither I nor my dog is to blame for what has happened. I am exceedingly sorry that your dog should have been killed, but it is your own fault. I am afraid, however, that, after what has happened, I shall be as unwelcome here as Aleck; so, if you will kindly order the cart for me again, I will move on. Our business can no doubt be finished off by letter."

George made no reply; it was evident that he could not trust himself to speak, but, turning sullenly on his heel, walked toward the house.

"Wait a bit, Mr. Heigham," said Philip, who had been watching the whole scene with secret delight. "You are perfectly in the right. I will go and try to bring my cousin to his senses. I am very thankful to your dog for killing that accursed brute."

He was away for about ten minutes, during which Arthur took Aleck to a fountain there was in the center of a grass-plot in front of the house, and washed his many wounds, none of which, however, were, thanks to the looseness of his hide, very serious. Just as he had finished that operation a gardener arrived with a wheelbarrow to fetch away the deceased Snarleyow.

"Lord, sir," he said to Arthur, "I am glad to have the job of tucking up this here brute. He bit my misus last week, and killed a whole clutch of early ducks. I seed the row through the bushes. That 'ere dog of yours, sir, he did fight in proper style; I should like to have a dog like he."

Just then the re-arrival of Philip put a stop to the conversation. Drawing Arthur aside, he told him that George begged to apologize for what had occurred, and hoped that he would not think of going away.

"But," added Philip, with a laugh, "I don't pretend that he has taken a fancy to you, and, if I were you, I should cut my visit short."

"That is exactly my view of the case. I will leave to-morrow evening."

Philip made no further remarks for a few moments. He was evidently thinking. Presently he said: "I see you have a fishing-rod among your things; if you find the time heavy on your hands to-morrow, or wish to keep out of the way, you had better come over to Bramham Lake and fish. There are some very large carp and perch there, and pike, too, for the matter of that, but they are out of season."

Arthur thanked him, and said that he should probably come, and having received instructions as to the road, they parted, Arthur to go and shut up Aleck in an outhouse pointed out to him by his friend the gardener, and thence to dress for a dinner that he looked forward to with dread, and Philip to make his way home. As he passed up through the little flower garden at the Abbey House, he came across his daughter, picking the blight from her shooting rose-trees.

"Angela," he said, "I am sorry if I offended your prejudices this afternoon. Don't let us say anything more about it; but I want you to come and pay a formal call with me at Isleworth to-morrow. It will only be civil that you should do so."

"I never paid a call in my life," she answered doubtfully, "and I don't want to call on my cousin George."

"Oh! very well," and he began to move on.

She stopped him. "I will go, if you like."

"At three o'clock, then. Oh! by the way, don't be surprised if you see a young gentleman fishing here to-morrow."

Angela reflected to herself that she had never yet seen a young gentleman to speak to in her life, and then asked, with undisguised interest, who he was.

"Well, he is a sort of connection of your own, through the Prestons, who are cousins of ours, if any of them are left. His mother was a Preston, and his name is Arthur Preston Heigham. George told me something about him just now, and, on thinking it over, I remember the whole story. He is an orphan and George's ward."

"What is he like?" asked Angela, inquisitively.

"Really, I don't know; rather tall. I think—a gentlemanly fellow. It really is a relief to speak to a gentleman, again. There has been a nice disturbance at Isleworth," and then he told his daughter the history of the great dog fight.

"I should think, Mr. Heigham was perfectly in the right," and I should like to see his dog," was her comment on the occurrence.

As Arthur dressed himself for dinner that evening, he came to the conclusion that he disliked his host more than any man he ever saw, and to say

the truth, he descended into the dining room with considerable misgivings. Just as he entered, the opposite door opened, and Sir John Bellamy was announced. On seeing him, George emerged from the sulky silence into which he was plunged and advanced to meet him.

"Halloo, Bellamy! I must congratulate you upon your accession to rank."

"Thank you, Caresfoot, thank you," replied Mr. Bellamy, who, with the exception that he had grown a size larger, and boasted a bald spot on the top of his head that gave him something of the appearance of a jelly little monk, looked very much the same as when we last saw him as a newly married man.

"A kind Providence," he went on, rubbing his dry hands, and glancing nervously under the chairs, "has put this honor into my hands."

"A Providence in petticoats, you mean," broke in George.

"Possibly, my dear Caresfoot; but I do not see him. Is it possible that he is lurking yonder behind the sofa?"

"Whom on earth do you mean?"

"I mean that exceedingly fine dog of yours, Snarleyow. Snarleyow, where are you? Excuse me for taking precautions, but last time he put his head under my chair and bit me severely, as I dare say you remember."

Arthur groaned at hearing the subject thus brought forward.

"Mr. Heigham's dog killed Snarleyow this afternoon," said George, in a savage voice.

At this intelligence Sir John's face became wreathed in smiles.

"I am deeply delighted—I mean grieved—to hear it. Poor Snarleyow! he was a charming dog; and to think that such a fate should have overtaken him, when it was only last week that he did the same kind office for Anne's spaniel. Poor Snarleyow, you should really have him stuffed. But, my dear Caresfoot, you have not yet introduced me to the hero of the evening, Mr. Heigham. Mr. Heigham, I am delighted to make your acquaintance," and he shook hands with Arthur with gentle enthusiasm, as though he were the last scion of a race that he had known and loved for generations.

Presently dinner was announced, and the three sat down at a small round table in the centre of the big dining-room, on which was placed a shaded lamp. It was not a cheerful dinner. George, having said grace, relapsed into moody silence, eating and drinking with gusto but in moderation, and savoring every sip of wine and morsel of food, as though he regretted its departure. He was not free from gluttony, but he was a judicious glutton. For his part, Arthur found a certain fascination in watching his guardian's red head, as he bobbed up and down opposite to him, and speculating on the thickness of each individual hair that contributed to give it such a spiky effect. What had his mother been like, he wondered, that she had started him in life with such an entirely detestable countenance? Meanwhile, he was replying in monosyllables to Sir John's gentle babblings, till at last even that gentleman's flow of conversation ran dry, and Arthur was left free to contemplate the head in solemn silence. As soon as the cloth had been cleared away, George suggested that they had better get to work. Arthur assented, and Sir John, smiling with much sweetness, remarked profoundly that business was one of the ills of life, and must be attended to.

"At any rate, it is an ill that has agreed uncommonly well with you," growled George, as, rising from the table, he went to a solid iron safe that stood in the corner of the room, and, unlocking it with a small key that he took from his pocket, extracted a bundle of documents.

"That is an excellent deed box of yours, Caresfoot," said Sir John carelessly.

"Yes; that lock would not be very easy to pick. It's made on my own design."

"But, don't you find that small parcels, such as private letters, are apt to get lost in it? It is so big."

"Oh, no. There is a separate compartment for them. Now, Mr. Heigham—"

And, then, with the able and benign assistance of Sir John, he proceeded to utterly confuse and mystify Arthur till stocks, preference shares, consols, and mortgages were all whirling in his bewildered brain. Having satisfactorily reduced him to this condition, he suddenly sprang upon him the proposal he had in view with reference to the Jotley mortgage, pointing out to him that it was an excellent investment, and strongly advising him "as a friend," to leave the money upon the land.

Arthur hesitated a little, more from natural caution than anything he could urge to the contrary, and George, noticing it, said:

"It is only right that, before you come to any decision, you should see the map of the estate, and a copy of the deed. I have both in the next room, if you care to come and look at them."

To Be Continued.

POOR HERRING CATCH THIS YEAR.

The herring fishery on the Atlantic coast, has, this year, been almost a complete failure. There were practically no herrings caught in July, although possibly some good catches may yet be taken. Last year herrings were taken as late as December, but if the same conditions prevail this year there is little likelihood that the catch will equal that of 1896. Codfishing has been fairly good. Considerable quantities of Newfoundland fish have been landed at Halifax as well as large quantities of French fish in bond. Of late years the larger proportion of the Newfoundland catch has been marketed in Halifax instead of St. John's, N.F.

GHOST OF CURRAGHMORE.

WEARS A BLACK RIBBON TIED ROUND THE LEFT WRIST.

Strange Story of the Haunted Ancestral Seat of the Beresford Family—The Ghost Is in the Form of a Lady.

The marriage of young Lord Waterford to the daughter of the Marquis of Lansdowne calls attention to the fact that a ghost is supposed to haunt Curraghmore, the ancestral seat of the Beresford family, of which Lord Waterford is now the head. The ghost is in the form of a lady dressed in the garb of the beginning of the last century, with fair hair and with a broad black ribbon tied around the wrist of her left arm.

She is supposed to be the wife of Sir Tristram Beresford and the ancestress of the present Marquis of Waterford. It seems that as a child she was brought up with Lord Tyrone in the doctrines of Deism. When they reached the years of discretion they became filled with doubts and fears as to the value of their religious opinions, and made a solemn promise to one another that whoever of the two died first should, if permitted by the Almighty, appear to the survivor for the purpose of declaring which form of creed was most acceptable to the Creator.

THE BLACK RIBBON.

Fifteen years later, Lady Beresford, who had married Sir Tristram, came down one morning for breakfast looking very much agitated, and with a black ribbon tied around her wrist.

Her husband asked her if she had hurt her arm, whereupon she earnestly entreated him not to enquire as to the cause of her wearing the ribbon, saying, "You will never see me again without it." She then eagerly and anxiously asked whether any letters had arrived, and on being questioned by her husband remarked that she expected to hear of Lord Tyrone's death which she declared had taken place on the previous Tuesday. Her husband laughed at her, but half an hour later a letter was brought in stating that Lord Tyrone had died on Tuesday morning at Dublin. To the astonishment of Sir Tristram, Lady Beresford, instead of manifesting grief, showed feelings of relief and exclaimed, "I can now give you a most satisfactory piece of intelligence; I am going to become a mother. It will be a boy and an heir to your estates." A son was born more than half a year afterwards, who in course of time, inherited the property.

REVEALING THE REASON.

Not until her death, fully 40 years afterwards, did Lady Beresford reveal the reason of her wearing the ribbon. She told her son and Archbishop King of Dublin, who was her intimate friend, of the engagement which she contracted with Lord Tyrone when a young girl, and declared that during the night which preceded the arrival of the letter notifying her of the Earl's death, he had appeared to her sitting by the side of her bed.

On her screaming with fright he exclaimed, "Have you then forgotten our promise to each other? I died on Tuesday morning at 4 o'clock. I have been permitted thus to appear to assure you that the revealed religion is the true and only one by which we can be saved. I am also suffered to inform you that you will seven months hence become a mother of a son, who will marry my heiress, and that you will die in your 68th year."

THE SHRUNKEN SINEWS.

Lady Beresford continued: "I begged him for some convincing sign or proof so that when the morning came I might be able to know that his appearance had been real and not merely the phantom of my imagination. He thereupon laid his hand, which was as cold as marble, on my wrist, and where the fingers touched it the sinews shrank up and the nerves withered."

"Now," said he, "let no mortal eye while you live ever see that wrist."

After Lady Beresford's death, which occurred as had been predicted in her 68th year, her two children and the Archbishop untied the black ribbon and found the wrist exactly as she had described it, with every sinew shrunken.

She lies buried in the Cathedral of St. Patrick, in Dublin, and periodically makes her appearance whenever any family event is about to take place which touches a birth or a death or a marriage in the Beresford family.

SPREADS LEPROSY.

How pleasant is this bit of information from the Berlin leprosy conference. In one sense it relieves the mind to be told that that horrible malady is not contagious, and also that it is gradually but surely dying out, but one of the terrors of life is to know it can be communicated by the bite of a mosquito. If one of these insects has the bad taste to bite a leper, and happens next to attack a non-infected person, the latter may become inoculated with the germs of the disease. Therefore, it behooves the authorities to put an end to the mosquito before he bites, for should he be killed in the very act the danger is augmented 100 per cent. The day is surely near when science will make war against this pestiferous insect with a view to his extermination. What is the good of the mosquito, anyhow?

GIVING HIM TIME.

Judge—Fifty dollars and costs. Prisoner—But it is impossible for me to raise that amount at once, your honor. Judge—Then take your time—six months.