DAWN.

CHAPTER XXVII.

George's recovery when the doctors had given up all hope was sufficiently marvelous to suggest the idea that a certain power had determined—on the hangman's principle, perhaps,—to give him the longest of ropes; but it could in reality be traced to a more terrestrial influence—namely, Lady Bellamy's nursing. Had it not been for this nursing, it is very certain that her patient would have joined his forefathers in the Bratham churchyard. For whole days and nights she watched and tended him, scarcely closing her own eyes, and quite heedless of the danger of infection; till in the end she conquered the fever and snatched him from the jaws of the grave. How often has not a woman's devotion been successful in such a struggle!

On the Monday following the events narrated in the last chapter, George, now in an advanced stage of convalescence, though forbidden to go abroad for another fortnight, was sitting down-stairs enjoying the warm sunshine, and the sensation of returning life and vigor that was creeping into his veins, when Lady Bellamy came into the room, bringing with her some medicine.

"Here is your tonic, George; it is the last dose that I can give you, as I am going back to my disconsolate husband at luncheon-time."

"I can't have you go away yet; I am not well enough."

"I must go, George; people will begin to talk if I stop here any longer."

"Well, if you must, I suppose you must," he answered sulkily. "But I must say I think you show a great want of consideration for my comfort. Who is to look after me, I should like to know? I am far from well yet—far from well."

"Believe me," she said, softly, "I am very sorry to leave you, and am glad to have been a help to you, though you have never thought much about it."

"Oh, I am sure I am much obliged, but it is not likely that you would leave me to rot of fever without coming to look after me."

She sighed as she answered:

"You would not do as much for me."

"Oh, bother, Anne, don't get sentimental. Before you go, I must speak to you about that girl, Angela. Have you taken any steps?"

Lady Bellamy started.

"What, are you still bent upon that project?"

"Of course I am. It seemed to me that all my illness was one long dream of her. I am more bent upon it than ever."

"And do you still insist upon my playing the part you had marked out for me? Do you know, George, that there were times in your illness when, if I had relaxed my care for a single five minutes it would have turned the scale against you, and that once I did not close my eyes for five nights? Look at me, how thin and worn I am; it is from nursing you. I have saved your life. Surely you will not now force me to do this unnatural thing?"

"If, my dear Anne, you had saved my life fifty times, I would still force you to do it. Ah! it is no use your looking at that safe. I have no doubt that you got my keys and searched it whilst I was ill, but I was too sharp for you. I had the letters moved when I heard that you were coming to nurse me. They are back there now, though. How disappointed you must have been!" And he chuckled.

"I should have done better to let you die, monster of wickedness and ingratitude that you are!" she said, stamping her foot upon the floor, and the tears of vexation standing in her eyes.

"The letters, my dear Anne; remember that you have got to earn your rletters. I am very much obliged to you for your nursing, but business is business."

She was silent for a moment and then spoke in her ordinary tone.

"By the way, talking of letters, there was one came for you, this morning in your cousin Philip's handwriting, and with a London postmark. Will you read it?"

"Read it—yes; anything from the father of my inamorata will be welcome."

She fetched the letter and gave it him. He read it aloud. After a page of congratulations on his convalescence, it ended:

"And now I want to make a proposal to you—viz., to buy back the Isleworth lands from you. I know that the place is distasteful to you, and will probably be doubly so after your severe illness; but, if you care to keep the house and grounds, I am not particularly anxious to acquire them. I am prepared to offer a good price," etc., etc.

"I'll see him hanged first, was George's comment.

"How did he get the money?"

"Saved it and made it, I suppose."

"Well, at any rate, he shall not buy me out with it. No, no, Master Philip; I am not fond enough of you to do you that turn."

"It does not strike you," she said, coldly, "that you hold in your hands a lever that may roll all your difficulties about this girl out of the way."

"By Jove! you are right, Anne. Trust a woman's brain. But I don't want to sell the estates unless I am forced to."

"Would you rather part with the land, or give up your project of marrying Angela Caresfoot?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Because you will have to choose between the two."

"Then I had rather sell."

"You had better give it up, George. I am not superstitious, but I have knowledge that you do not understand, and I foresee nothing but disaster in this plan."

"Once and for all, Anne, I will not give it up whilst I have any breath left in my body, and I take my oath that unless you help me, and help me honestly, I will expose you."

"Oh! I am your very humble servant, you may count on me. The galley-slave pulls well when the lash hangs over his shoulders," and she laughed coldly.

Just then a servant announced that Mr. Caresfoot was at the door and anxious to speak to his cousin. He was ordered to show him into the drawing-room. As soon as he had gone on his errand, George said:

"I will not see him; say I am too unwell. But do you go, and see that you make the most of your chance."

Lady Bellamy nodded, and left the room. She found Philip in the drawing-room.

"Ah! how do you do, Mr. Caresfoot? I come from your cousin to say that he cannot see you to-day; he has scarcely recovered sufficiently from the illness through which I have been nursing him; but of course you know all about that."

"Oh! yes, Lady Bellamy, I have heard all about it, including your own brave behavior, to which, the doctor tells me, George owes his life. I am sorry that he cannot see me, though. I have just come down from town, and called in on my way from Roxham. I had some rather important business that I wanted to speak about."

"About your offer to repurchase the Isleworth lands?" she asked.

"Ah! you know of the affair. Yes, that was it."

"Then I am commissioned to give you a reply."

Philip listened anxiously.

"Your cousin absolutely refuses to sell any part of the lands."

"Will nothing change his determination? I am ready to give a good price, and pay a separate valuation for the timber."

"Nothing, he does not intend to sell."

A deep depression spread itself over her hearer's face.

"Then there go the hopes of twenty years," he said. "For twenty long years, ever since my misfortune, I have toiled and schemed to get these lands back, and now it is all for nothing. Well, there is nothing more to be said," and he turned to go.

"Stop a minute, Mr. Caresfoot. Do you know, you interest me very much."

"I am proud to interest so charming a lady," he answered, with a touch of depressed gallantry.

"That is as it should be; but you interest me because you are an instance of the truth of the saying that every man has some ruling passion, if only one could discover it. Why do you want these particular lands? Your money will buy others just as good."

Why does a Swiss get home-sick? Why does a man defrauded of his own wish to recover it?"

Lady Bellamy mused a little.

"What would you say if I showed you an easy way to get them?"

Philip turned sharply round with a new look of hope upon his face.

"You would earn my eternal gratitude—a gratitude that I should be glad to put into a practical shape."

She laughed.

"Oh! you must speak to Sir John about that. Now listen; I am going to surprise you. Your cousin wants to get married."

"Get married! George wants to get married?"

"Exactly so; and now I have a further surprise in store for you—he wants to marry your daughter Angela."

This time Philip said nothing, but he started in evident surprise and uncomfortable astonishment. If Lady Bellamy wished to surprise him, she had certainly succeeded.

"Surely you are joking," he said.

"I never was further from joking in my life; he is desperately in love with her, and wild to marry her."

"Well?"

"Well, don't you now see a way to force your cousin to sell the lands?"

"As the price of Angela's hand?"

"Precisely."

Philip walked up and down the room in thought; though as the reader may remember he had himself, but a month before, been base enough to suggest that his daughter should use her eyes to forward his projects, he had never, in justice to him, be it said, dreamed of forcing her into a marriage in every way little less than unnatural. His idea of responsibility toward his daughter was, as regards sins of omission, extremely lax, but there were some of commission that he did not care to face. Certain fears and memories oppressed him too much to allow of it.

"Lady Bellamy," he said, presently, "you have known my cousin George intimately for many years, and are probably sufficiently acquainted with his habits, of life to know that such a marriage would be an infamy."

"Many a man who has been wild in his youth makes a good husband," she answered, quietly.

"The more I think of it," went on Philip, excitedly, after the fashion of one who would lash himself into a passion, "the more I see the utter impossibility of any such thing, and I must say that I wonder at your having undertaken such an errand. On the one hand, there is a young girl who, though I do not, from force of circumstances, see much of myself, is, I believe, as good as she is handsome——"

"And on the other," broke in Lady Bellamy, ironically, "are the Isleworth estates."

"And on the other," went on Philip, without paying heed to her remark—"I am going to speak plainly, Lady Bellamy—is a man utterly devoid of the foundations of moral character, whose appearance is certainly against him, who I have good reason to know is not to be trusted, and who is old enough to be her father, and her cousin to boot—and you ask me to forward such a marriage as this! I will have nothing to do with it; my responsibilities as a father forbid it. It would be the wickedest thing I have ever done to put the girl into the power of such a man."

Lady Bellamy burst into a low peal of laughter; she never laughed aloud. She thought that it was now time to throw him a little off his balance.

"Forgive me," she said, with her sweetest smile, "but you must admit that there is something rather ludicrous in hearing the hero of the great Maria Lee scandal talking about moral character, and the father who detests his daughter so much that he fears to look her in the face, and whose sole object is to rid himself of an incumbrance, prating of his paternal responsibilities."

Philip started visibly at her words.

"Ah! Mr. Caresfoot," she went on, "I surprise you by my knowledge, but we women are sad spies, and it is my little amusement to find out other people's secrets, a very useful little amusement. I could tell you many things——"

"I was about to say," broke in Philip, who had naturally no desire to see more of the secrets of his life unveiled by Lady Bellamy, "that even if I did wish to get rid of Angela, I should have little difficulty in doing so, as young Heigham, who has been stopping at the Abbey House for a fortnight or so, is head over ears in love with her; indeed, I should think it highly probable that they are at this moment engaged."

It was Lady Bellamy's turn to start now.

"Ah!" she said, "I did not know that; that complicates matters." And then with a sudden change of tone: "Mr. Caresfoot, as a friend, let me beg of you not to throw away such a chance in a hurry for the sake of a few nonsensical ideas about a girl. What is she after all, that she should stand in the way of such grave interests as you have in hand? I tell you he is perfectly mad about her. You that can make your own terms and fix your own price."

"Price! ay, that is what it would be—a price for her body and soul."

"Well, and what of it? The thing is done every day, only one does not talk of it in that way."

"Who taught you, who were once a young girl yourself, to plead such a cause as this?"

"Nonsense, it is a very good cause—a cause that will benefit everybody, especially your daughter. George will get what he wants; you, with the recovery of the estates, will also recover your lost position and reputation, both to a great extent an affair of landed property. Mr. Heigham will gain a little experience, whilst she will bloom into a great lady, and, like any other girl in the same circumstances, learn to adore her husband in a few months."

"And what will you get, Lady Bellamy?"

"I!" she replied, with a gay laugh. "Oh! you know, virtue is its own reward. I shall be quite satisfied in seeing everybody else made happy. Come I do not want to press you about the matter at present. Think it over at your leisure. I only beg you not to give a decided answer to young Heigham, should he ask you for Angela, till I have seen you again—say, in a week's time. Then, if you don't like it, you can leave it alone, and nobody will be a penny the worse."

"As you like it; but I tell you that I can never consent;" and Philip took his leave.

"Your cousin entirely refuses his consent, and Angela is by this time probably engaged to your ex-ward Arthur Heigham," was Lady Bellamy's not very promising report to the interesting invalid in the dining-room.

After relieving his feelings at this intelligence in language more forcible than polite, George remarked that, under these circumstances matters looked very bad.

"Not at all, they look very well. I shall see your cousin again in a week's time," when I shall have a different tale to tell."

"Why wait a week with that young blackguard making the running on the spot?"

"Because I have put poison into Philip's mind, and the surest poison works slow. Besides, the mischief has been done. Good-bye. I will come and see you in a day or two, when I have made my plans. You see I mean to earn my letters."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

With what degree of soundness our pair of lovers slumbered on that memorable Saturday night, let those who have been so fortunate or unfortunate as to have been placed in analogous circumstances form their own opinion. It is, however, certain that Arthur gazed upon the moon and sundry of the larger planets for some hours, until they unkindly set, and left him, for his candle had burned out, to find his way to bed in the dark. With his reflections we will not trouble ourselves; or, rather, we will not intrude upon their privacy. But there was another person in the house who also sat at an open window and looked up on the heavens—Angela to wit. Let us avail ourselves of our rightful privilege and look into her thoughts.

Arthur's love had come upon her as a surprise, but it had found a perfect home. All the days and hours that she had spent in his company, had, unknown to herself, been mysteriously employed in preparing a habitation to receive it. We all know the beautiful Bible story of the Creation, how first there was an empty void, and the Spirit brooding on the waters, then light, and then life, and last, man coming to turn all things to his uses. Surely that story, which is the type and symbol of many things is of none more so than of the growth and birth of a perfected love in the human heart.

The soul is made ready in the dead winter and receives the seed into its bosom. Then comes the spring, and it is clothed with verdure. Space is void till the sun shoots its sudden rays athwart it, and makes it splendid; the heart is cold and unwitting of its ends till the spirit broods upon it, as upon the waters, and it grows quick with the purposes of life. And then what a change is there! What has the flower in common from the seed from whence it sprung, or the noonday sky with the darkness before the dawn?

Thinking in her chamber with the night air playing on her hot brow, and her hand pressed upon her heart, as though to still the tumult of its joy, Angela grew vaguely conscious of these things.

Was she the same in heart and mind that she had been a month ago? No a thousand times no. Then what was this mysterious change that seemed to shake her inmost life to its foundations? What angel had troubled the waters into which she had so newly plunged? And whence came the healing virtue that she found in them, bringing rest after the vague trouble of the last two weeks, with sight to see the only good—her love, with speed to follow, and strength to hold? Oh, happy, happy world! oh, merciful Creator, who gave her to drink of such a living spring! oh, Arthur, beloved Arthur!

On Sunday mornings it was Pigott's habit to relax the Draconian severity of her laws in the matter of breakfast, which, generally speaking, was not till about half past eight o'clock. At that hour precisely on the Sabbath in question, she appeared as usual—no, not as usual, for it being Sunday, she had on her stiff black gown—and, with all due solemnity, made the tea.

A few minutes elapsed, and Angela entered, dressed in white, and very lovely, in her simple tight-fitting robe but a trifle pale, and with a shy look upon her face.

She greeted her nurse with a kiss.

"Why, what is the matter with you, dearie?" ejaculated Pigott, whose watchful eye detected a change she could not define; "you look different somehow."

"Hush! I will tell you by and by."

At that moment Arthur's quick step was heard advancing down the passage together with a pattering noise that announced the presence of Aleck. And as they came, Angela, poor Angela, grew redder and redder, and yet more painfully red, till Pigott watching her face, was enabled to form a shrewd guess as to what was the cause of her unaccustomed looks.

On came the steps and open flew the door, more and more ready to sink into the earth looked Angela, and so interested grew Nurse Pigott that she actually poured some hot tea on her dress, a thing she could never remember having done before.

The first to enter was Aleck, who following his custom, sprung upon Angela and licked her hand, and behind Aleck, looking somewhat confused, but handsome and happy—for his was one of those faces that become handsome when their owners are happy— came Aleck's master. And then there ensued an infinitesimal but most awkward pause.

On such occasions as the present, namely, the first meeting after an engagement, there is always—especially when it occurs in the presence of a third person—a very considerable difficulty in the minds of the parties to know what demeanor they are to adopt toward one another. Are they to treat the little affair of the previous evening as a kind of confidential communication, not to be alluded to except in private conversation, and to drop into the Mr. and Miss of yesterday? That would certainly be the easiest, but then it would also be a decided act of mutual retreat. Or are they to rush into each other's arms a becomes betrothed lovers? This process is so new that they feel that it still requires private rehearsal. And, meanwhile, time presses, and everybody is beginning to stare, and something must be done.

(To Be Continued.)

SKI-RUNNING.

A Switzerland Sport More Exciting Than Tobogganing.

Tobogganing is very well till one has tried ski-running—pronounced, by the way, she-running.

A person sails majestically along with nothing to help him but a spiked bamboo pole and long narrow sandals on his feet. Dr. Conan Doyle is the pioneer of the sport in Switzerland where the English people enjoy the run every season to the surprise of the natives. For a beginner the difficulties are much greater than in learning to toboggan. Let any one tie a board six feet long by three inches broad to each foot and try to walk about a lawn. He may shuffle along, but let him turn a corner, go down a slope or alter his course in the slightest and he will realize the difficulties to be met with. The sport is practiced on the natural snow-covered hills at an angle of 45 degrees or more. The fun of sliding about 20 yards a second can be imagined. Skating cannot for a moment compare with either snowshoeing or tobogganing.

INDIA'S SACRED FIRES.

The sacred fires of India have not all been extinguished. The most ancient which still exists was consecrated 2 centuries ago in commemoration of the voyage made by the Parsees when they emigrated from Persia to India. The fire is fed five times every 24 hours with sandal wood and other fragrant materials combined with every dry fuel. This fire in the village of Oodwada, near Bulsar, is visited by Parsees in large numbers during the months allotted to the presiding genius of fire.

IT WAS LEAP-YEAR.

Teddy and His Friends Consulted the Wrong Almanac.

At the time when, in England, the punishment for overstaying a furlough was flogging, a poor soldier who had, or thought he had, overstayed his time was seated on the top of a stage-coach prepared to return to his post. His mother, brother and sweetheart, vainly entreated him to remain. The scene is depicted by a looker-on, who truthfully adds that it reflects credit upon Teddy.

"Come down wid ye, Teddy!" cried his mother. "Come down, now, to your old mother! Sure it's flog ye they will, and strip the flesh off the bones of yez. Come down, Teddy, darlint."

"It's honor that won't let me, mother, dear," the soldier said, as he set his teeth.

"Teddy, come down, ye fool of the world!" said his brother, "Come along down wid ye!"

"It's honor, brother, it's honor," replied Teddy, sturdily.

"Oh, Teddy," cried his sweetheart, "come down! Sure it's me, your own Kathleen, that bids ye. Come down, or ye'll break the heart of me, Teddy. Come down!"

"It's honor, Kathleen; it's honor bright that tells me to go," said Teddy, fixing his eyes steadily before him.

"Come down, Teddy, honey!"

"Teddy, ye fool, come down!"

"O, Teddy, come down to me!" was the chorus from mother, brother and sweetheart.

"Would you have me lose my honor?" exclaimed the soldier, not daring to look at his dear ones, whose words moved him so deeply.

The next moment the whip cracked and the coach was off, bearing the gallant Teddy with it. Then a gentleman who sat beside him spoke up.

"When does your furlough expire?" he asked.

"The first of March, sir, bad luck to it of all the black days of the world! And some way it come sudden on me, like a shot."

"The first of March! Why, my good fellow, you have a day to spare, then. To-morrow is the first of March; it is leap-year, and February has twenty-nine days."

"Twenty-nine days, is it?" cried Teddy, his countenance illumined with hope. "Say it again! You're sure of that same?"

The next moment he leaped from the coach and ran back to his lamenting friends.

"O mother, mother, it's your almanac that deceived us!" he exclaimed, and in the exuberance of his joy he hugged mother, brother and Kathleen. "My word's saved, and it's a happy man I am! But plague to the old almanac!"

They had consulted the previous year's calendar.

THE GALLEY FIRE.

Customs Aboard Ship Concerning It—Sawing and Splitting the Kindlings.

The galley stove has a rack around the top to keep the pots and kettles from sliding off when the ship pitches and rolls. Some stoves are provided also with iron straps which can be secured to the rack across the top of the stove, over the pots and kettles, so that they can't slide at all, but are held down to one spot. As far as the fire itself is concerned that is kept just as it wold be in a stove ashroe.

On American deep water ships the common custom is to burn hard coal and the fire is built anew every day. It is to let go out after supper has been prepared, and is built up again in the morning. The cook is an early riser for on these ships it is customary to give the watch on deck coffee at half-past 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning. On some ships the men get a little snack of something to eat with it. For the preparation of this early coffee the cook makes a wood fire. When the coffee has been made he puts on coal and starts up the fire for the day.

The wood used is usually cord wood sawed and split. When a ship is at sea it is not convenient to run out and get a bundle of kindling wood at the store, and an ample supply of firewood is taken aboard at the outset. The customs as to this wood vary. Some ships take aboard regular cord wood, which is both sawed and split aboard; some have the wood sawed into lengths ashore and take it aboard in that shape to be split up as needed on the ship. There may at times be some wood that has been used for dunnage, and can be sawed up.

As to who saws and splits the wood on the ship, customs vary also. Oftenest, probably, the cook does, sawing and splitting enough to last, perhaps two or three days at a time. If there are boys on the ship they are likely to saw the wood. On some ships the sailors saw it and split it and stack it up for the cook, who is supposed to have enough to do in his regular duties.

GREAT STEEL WORKS.

The steel works in course of erection at Saratov, on the Volga, Russia, covers 92 acres, and are so arranged that the raw material is delivered by rail at the highest part, descending gradually during the process of manufacture until the finished products are deposited in the warehouse on the river bank. A model village is being built for the workmen, each family having a separate dwelling.