

A Scourge of Doubt.

OR.....

THE ERROR OF LADY BLUNDEN.

CHAPTER VII.

Kitty's engagement makes little difference in the household. Sir John has been coming and going so incessantly for weeks that now his more frequent visits cause no change, and hardly any comment. Every one treats him as though he were a second Brandy; and Brandy treats him as though he were indeed a brother,—giving it as his opinion that Blunden is a "jolly good fellow all round." Mr. and Mrs. Tremaine are quite satisfied on all points. Gretchen is sympathetic, and even Flora has been graciously pleased to say a few cautious words in his favor.

It is now October,—dreary, damp and cold.

"When great leaves fall, then winter is at hand," and now in truth the leaves are falling, and flowers are dead, and the cruel cutting wind speeds madly over barren lawns and loveless woods and colorless plains, striking terror to the hearts of shivering birds.

Dugdale has made several faint efforts to leave his present kindly quarters and go home, but the attempts have been pooh-poohed and set aside with determination by every member of the family. He has had rather a troublesome cough of late, and Mrs. Tremaine has nursed him tenderly herself, and done for him all that much might do for him. Indeed, so much has been his helplessness—and perhaps his beauty—gained on all hearts at the Towers that his talk of departure had been mended down by them with a will.

It may be that they had not found a very difficult task to persuade him to remain. Long since he has discovered, and confessed to his inmost self, that to be where Gretchen is, to him is happiness. But keenest pleasure borders on pain; and for all the hours of sweetness gained when in her presence he pays an exorbitant price when her absence makes itself felt. And when night falls, and silence reigns, and hopes bleed,—when all things stand out plainly as they are, and kind deception flies, and the barrenness and loneliness of his life betray themselves in all their hideous nakedness,—then it is that despair conquers him, and his heart cries aloud in its passionate vain regret.

As love has been forbidden him, why has he been permitted to love,—to centre every thought upon one object with all the fervor and intensity of a happier man? Each hour of the day he sees her, hears her voice, feels, it may be, the cool touch of her beloved hand as she arranges his pillows, and marks with greedy eyes the gentle smile that always lights her face as she draws near him.

There is another, even a deeper grief than the knowledge that he can never be more to her than he now is, that lies hidden in his breast, and that he hardly dares to drag from its hiding-place or let his secret love dwell upon. It is a belief he shrinks from, although hour by hour it grows stronger within him. Why had she blushed yesterday when he made that little foolish speech, half lawful, half tender? Why had that faint look of distress crossed her face last Monday when he spoke again of his return to Laxton? Can it be possible that, had fate proved less unkind, she might—

It is the 31st of October, All-hallow e'en,—and Flora's birthday. Flora (according to Brandy) had been born at least half a century behind her time, and is eminently old-fashioned,—a small being devoted to by-gone ways and manners, one holding in highest reverence the games and customs of our forefathers.

"Expect an avalanche presently," says Gretchen, entering the library, where Dugdale lies, and going up to the fire. Dinner is over, and Flora's festivities are about to begin. "We are all coming to celebrate Flo's birthday—and All-hallow e'en—by

burning nuts here." She smiles at him through the semi-darkness that encloses her slight figure as though it were a veil.

"Are you the herald?" "Yes. Presently they will follow. There was a preliminary dispute between Brandy and Flora, so I slipped away.

"It was good of you to slip in this direction."

"Shall we all be too much for you? You know how Flora laughs, and how impossible it is for Brandy to be silent for two minutes together. Do you think you will be able to bear their noise?"

"I love their noise," replies he, honestly. And then they all come trooping in. Sir John and Kitty a little in the rear, as may be imagined,—because of a tender hand-pressure, or it may be, a caress, the sweeter because stolen.

"Mamma is reading 'Ariadne,' and is so entranced she could not be induced to stir," says Kitty, generally.

"Never mind: I'll chaperon Flora," declares Brandy. "It is her own night; so I shall lay myself out to take care of her and see she does not fall into the fire, or otherwise injure her little self. Children are so careless!"

As Flora scorns to take notice of this leading remark, silence ensues.

Everyone feels it is Flora's turn to speak, and her refusal to take up the gauntlet so delicately thrown, leads them to believe she has at last "caved in."

"Flora's and Gretchen's birthdays come almost together," says Kitty,—yours on the 31st, Flo, and Gretchen's on the following 7th. It is funny, is it not?"

"Is it?" says Brandy. "I always think it is rather hard upon the governor. Now, you and I, Kitty, behaved more respectably; we allowed him time to forget one misfortune before reminding him of another."

"Never mind," says Flora, gayly. "I am determined to enjoy myself in spite of everything. I hate going to bed early, and mamma says I may sit up to-night until I have burned every nut on this dish; so I shall have a real lovely time."

"I should think you would," says Dimont, gazing expressively at the huge dish of hazel-nuts indicated by Flora. "And all to yourself, too! You'll be up all night, I shouldn't wonder."

"I shall have even a better time on my birthday," says Gretchen: "I shall go to a ball. I must say, Kitty, I think it was a very delicate attention on the part of the Potter's to give their dance on the 7th."

"Who are the Potters?" asks Dug-

dale, suddenly rousing himself from a reverie.

"A very shoddy people who have settled in the county, and who are going to entertain it, with a view to compelling 'its good word,'" says Brandy. "They aren't much, you know and they haven't a grandfather between 'em; but that's rather fashionable nowadays, and don't count much. The old chap declares he is a Conservative (though any one can see at a glance that he isn't) so the governor says that we are to go to his ball,—as a support, I suppose, to the good cause."

"I am very much obliged to papa," says Gretchen. "A ball is a ball, and I love dancing."

"Do you?" says Kenneth, who is listening to her. "You dance well?" "Beautifully," returns she, with a low, soft laugh,—like a sylph, or like Terpsichore herself, or anything else full of grace and vivacity."

"I can believe it," says Dugdale, with all sincerity. "By the bye, be-

fore you start, on the night of the ball, will you let me have a peep at you? I am a devout believer in 'beauty adorned' and I should like to see how you look when robed for conquest."

"Very well, you shall see," says Gretchen. That is a promise; and one—"smiling—"I shan't ask you to absolve me from this time."

"Now let us begin," says Blunden, picking carefully two of the largest nuts and placing them on the bar.

"Only one minute allowed in which to make up one's mind as to who is to burn with who. I have a wonderful amount of brain-power,—as I am sure you will admit when I tell you mine is made up already. Here is I, and here is her! Let no one come within a quarter of a mile of me and my beloved, or I shall dispense punishment with a poker."

"Are we to tell the names of those we choose?" asks Brandy.

"Certainly not,—under pain of death."

"That's the worst of being engaged," says Flora, regarding Sir John with a pitying eye. "Now, every one knows exactly who you are burning yourself with. There is no secret about your nuts."

"So much the better: I hate under-hand ways."

At this moment Parkins enters with the tea, and looks longingly at the unlighted lamps.

"No, Parkins, not yet," says Kitty, answering his unspoken thought. "Lay the tea-things over there, and we will ring when we want more light."

"Captain Scarlett is in the drawing-room, miss. Shall I—"

"Oh, yes, send him in here," says Gretchen. Tell Captain Scarlett we are in the library, Parkins, and that we shall be very pleased to see him."

"Thank you very much," says Scarlett himself, emerging from the gloom that surrounds the door-way.

"It is good of you to admit me to these solemn rites at all; but it is doubly good of you, Gretchen, to say you will be pleased to see me."

"Oh, the treacherous darkness!" says Gretchen, laughing and blushing, though nobody can see the soft color of her cheeks except Kenneth, who is nearest to her.

"Kitty, how badly you are behaving!" says Sir John at this moment, pointing to Kitty's nut, which is blazing, but has jumped away a little from its companion and is now emitting angry scolding noises.

Even as he speaks, the flame dies away, and the splintered nut with a final leap returns to its lover's side and settles down there comfortably.

"That means quarrels and separations, and a grand making up at the end," says Flora, oracularly. "It isn't as bad as if she had gone off altogether."

"Well, no, it is not," acquiesces Sir John, meekly.

"Look at me: am I not an example?" says Gretchen discontentedly. "See how I have burned away, slowly, methodically, without a single break, in a most exemplary and—with a sigh—"humdrum fashion."

"Mark how Gretchen pines for the turmoils of married bliss," says Brandy. "I really think she has a hankering for the roses and rapture of vice as well as the worst of us. Never mind, Meg; you'll get 'em, my dear, take my word for it."

"I don't think so," replies she. "Such extreme tranquility denotes, I am sure, a life of single blessedness. I shall probably die an old maid. And that will be horrid; won't it?" says Gretchen, feelingly.

No one answers her, but two pairs of eyes rest upon her simultaneously as she ceases to speak,—one pair with deep sadness, the other with rising hope.

"I wish some one would tell a story," exclaims Flora, vivaciously, who is now tired of burning and eating her nuts; "a nice story."

"All about bogies, and blood and murder, and ghosts coming to one's bedside at night and laying a clammy hand upon one's brow, and telling one to 'come along o' me' like the bobbies: that's the sort of thing Flora loves," says Brandy.

"No, no," cries Flora, hastily, casting a nervous glance behind her. Anything but that. Not that it frightens me: only I don't think that I quite like it. Besides, they are all nonsense and quite untrue, those stories."

"Hear my story," says Kitty. "There was once a teapot, and in it was tea—"

"You're joking," interrupts Brandy, with a bland smile. "Now, are you sure it was tea?"

"Quite sure. And moreover," says

POOR DIGESTION.

RENDERS THE LIFE OF THE DYSPEPTIC MISERABLE.

Food Becomes Distasteful and a Feeling of Weariness, Pain and Depression Ensues.

From LeSorelois, Sorel, Que.

Of the diseases afflicting mankind dyspepsia is one of the worst to endure. Its victims find life almost a burden. Food becomes distasteful; they suffer from severe pains in the stomach; sometimes excessive heart palpitation, and a general feeling of weakness and depression. Though this disease is one of the most distressing, it is one which, if the proper remedy is employed, can be readily cured. Thousands throughout this country bear testimony to the efficacy of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills as a never failing cure. Among them is Mrs. Adolphe A. Latrousse, a well known and highly esteemed lady residing at Sorel, Que. She says:—

"For two years I was a constant sufferer from bad digestion and its accompanying symptoms. Food became distasteful and I grew very weak. I suffered much from pains in the stomach and head. I could not obtain restful sleep and became unfit for all household work. I tried several medicines without finding the least relief and I continually grew worse until in the end I would vomit everything I ate. I had almost given up hope of ever being well again when one day I read of a case similar to mine cured through the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I determined to give these pills a trial and am happy to-day that I did so, as by the time I had taken eight or nine boxes my strength had returned, the pains which had so long racked me disappeared, my stomach would digest food properly and I had fully regained my old time health, and have not since had any return of the trouble."

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are a purely tonic medicine and unlike all purgatives, do not weaken the system, but give life and energy with every dose. They are a certain cure for

anæmia, dizziness, heart troubles, rheumatism, sciatica, indigestion, partial paralysis, St. Vitus' dance and the functional ailments that make the lives of so many women almost constant sources of misery. Sold by dealers in medicine, or sent postpaid at 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50 by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

Kitty, rising, "I am sure it will be cold tea if we don't get it soon. Ring the bell, Brandy, for Parkins to light the lamps."

"I'll light them," says Brandy, who would rather do anything sometimes than sit still.

So the lamps are lit, and simultaneously they all rise and move towards the table whereon lies the tea.

As Gretchen is passing Kenneth's sofa, he by a slight gesture detains her.

"Whom did you burn yourself with to-night?" he asks, with an uncertain smile.

"Why, that would be telling," returns she; "and you know if I declare my secret I shall not get what I wish for."

"What did you wish for?—Scarlett?"

"No," says Gretchen, blushing as red as the name he has just mentioned. "How absurd!"

"And yet you blush."

"That you could accuse me of such a thing, and because of the question generally."

"You are sure?"

"Quite sure. Though perhaps"—with a little shrug—"if it were not the truth I should say just the same. Shall I bring you some tea?"

She brings him a cup of tea with her own hands, and one for herself, and, sinking again into the seat beside him, tells him sweetly she is going to keep him company. The old phrase falls with quaint tenderness from her lips, and her eyes as they rest on his gleam kindly.

Kitty, at the other end of the room, seeing her, frowns. A little shadow grows within her dark eyes. A sense of uneasiness for the first time touches her. She marks Gretchen's beautiful face, on which at this instant rests an expression of keenest content, and Kenneth's handsome one, fuller of pleasure than it is wont to be, and a sharp pang rends her bosom. If it should be! But no, it is impossible. It would be too terrible. Surely of all people on earth her gentle "bonny Meg" must be meant for happiness. Her own folly has bred the thought. It is only that Gretchen dreads his feeling neglected, poor fellow. She is ever thinking of others and their comfort, and how best to please them, dear angel! And yet—if it should be—

Some hours later, Kitty, having dismissed her maid, walks leisurely into Gretchen's room and up to the fire-place, where she stands gazing meditatively into the glowing coals.

"Good child," says Gretchen; "sit down in my chair Kitty, and talk to me while I undress."

"How strange Tom Scarlett should have come in to-night!" says Kitty, rather absently. The apparent want of meaning in this speech is very well done indeed, and might have deceived older people than Gretchen.

"Very strange, wasn't it? But I was glad of it. It is always so easy to amuse Tom; and his presence gave

quite the air of a party to Flo's entertainment."

"He is good-looking, too."

"Very handsome, I think, don't you?"

"Ye-es. Kenneth is better to look at: isn't he?"

"Is he?"

"Don't you think so, dear?"

"Well, yes, perhaps his features are more regular."

"Much more regular. What a pity he should be as he is!—such a hopeless invalid. He will never be any better; every one says that."

"It is very sad,"—slowly.

"He is so charming,—so desirable in every way,—so much to be liked."

"Very much."

"He is one of the most agreeable men I ever met in my life," says Kitty, growing warmer in her praise as Gretchen proves cold and impassive.

"Sometimes," replies Gretchen, who cannot conquer the desire to appear indifferent.

"True," says Kitty, suddenly and treacherously shifting her ground. I have noticed how on occasions he can be morose enough, almost sulky. To-night he would not speak after Tom's arrival. I am sure he dislikes him; and that is very unreasonable."

"My dear Kitty," says Gretchen, quickly, "what a curious idea for you to form! Why should he dislike Captain Scarlett? I am sure he does not. He is not in the least unreasonable; and as to being morose and sullen, how can you so misjudge him, poor fellow!"

Kitty laughs faintly.

"What a partizan you are!" she says. "And yet a moment since you sang his praises coldly. It reminded me of the 'faint praise that damns.' You really like him, Meg?"

"Yes,—very much," replies Gretchen, and speaking in her coldest tones.

Kitty rises.

"I must go," she says, kissing Gretchen tenderly on either cheek.

"Good-night, Meg." Then as she reaches the door she turns and says, slowly, "Don't let yourself like him too much, my dearest."

To be Continued.

IN A COURT OF JUSTICE.

A judge had a wealthy brother who, for a long time took a commanding position in the business interests of one of the big manufacturing towns. While the judge was seated on the bench of the court one day in the town where the brother's business was, the latter appeared, and in his bluff, fraternal way, said: "How are you, John? I have been summoned to act as grand juror."

Said the Judge—"When I am on the bench I am addressed as 'Your Lordship.'"

"Don't be a silly fool, John," said the business man.

"Fine Mr. Turner \$100," said the Judge, and he was forthwith fined.

THE BLOOM OF HEALTH.

How to Keep Little Ones Bright, Active and Healthy.

Every mother knows that little children need careful attention—but they do not need strong drugs. When baby is peevish, cross or unwell, it is an unfortunate fact that too many mothers dose them with so-called "soothing" medicines which stupefy and put the little one into an unnatural sleep, but do not remove the cause of the trouble. What is wanted to make the little one bright, cheerful and well, is Baby's Own Tablets, which will promptly cure

colic, sour stomach, indigestion, constipation, diarrhoea, simple fevers and teething troubles. They give children sound, refreshing sleep, because they remove the cause of the trouble. These tablets are guaranteed to contain no opiate or other harmful drug. Mrs. James Found, Valentin, Ont., says:—"Before I got Baby's Own Tablets, my baby was very pale and delicate, and so peevish that I had to walk the floor with him day and night. The first tablet I gave him helped him, and that night he slept soundly. Since then the tablets have made him perfectly well, and he is now a fine, healthy looking baby, and is getting quite fat. I would not be without the tablets if they cost a dollar a box."

Baby's Own Tablets are good for children of all ages and are taken as readily as candy. Crushed to a powder, they can be given with absolute safety to the youngest, weakest baby. Sold by all druggists or sent postpaid at 25 cents a box, by addressing the Dr. Williams Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

SWEARING A GIFT.

Thomas Nelson Page once told this story to illustrate the gift of after-dinner speaking, which gift he said he envied, but did not possess: "An English bishop was traveling in a third-class carriage with an individual who was swearing most tremendously, originally and picturesquely. Finally, the bishop said to him: 'My dear sir, where in the world did you learn to swear in that extraordinary manner?' The latter replied: 'It can't be learned, it is a gift.'"

Between June and September last year 140 tourists reached the summit of Mont Blanc.

The earth weighs 5,852 trillions of tons. This number contains 54 noughts.

Old People's Favorite.

A Medicine that Invigorates the Kidneys and Liver, Takes Away the Pains and Aches, and Regulates the Action of the Bodily Organs—Strong Recommendation for Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills.

The experience of Mr. Brown as stated in his letter below, is similar to that of scores of men and women who feel old age creeping in upon them. The kidneys grow weak and inactive, the back aches, there are deposits in the urine, and pain and smarting in passing water. The legs swell, and there come pains and aches unlike rheumatism.

Under such circumstances old people turn to Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills for relief and cure, and are not disappointed. They have learned by repeated trial that they can depend on Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills every time, and consequently they have become known as the old people's favorite medicine.

Mr. John Brown, 66 Nelson street, Ottawa, Ont., states:—"I am getting up in years, and having been a hard worker all my life, I am beginning to fail. For some time past I have thought there was something wrong with my kidneys. I seemed to blow up, was very short of breath, and feared heart disease, although I was told there was nothing wrong with my heart. I got so bad that I had to do something.

"Hearing of Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills, I began using them, and by the time I had used up the first box I felt considerably improved. I continued using this medicine, and to-day feel ten years younger. I am strong and hearty, and do not suffer from my former ailments. I consider Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills an excellent medicine for old people."

There are people in nearly every town, village, and country side road who have proven the merits of Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills. Ask your friends or neighbors about them. One pill a dose; 25 cents a box. At all dealers, or Edmanson, Bates and Co., Toronto.