

Face to Face

OR, GERVASE RICKMAN'S
AMBITION.

CHAPTER II.—(Continued).

"They all goos the same way," continued the man, "ne after t'other, nothin caint stop 'em. There was no pearter mayda about than our Eln a year ago come Middlemass, a vine-growed mayde she was as ever I zeen," he repeated in a rough voice, through which the very breath of tragedy sighed; "zing she 'ood like a thrush, and her chakes like a hrose. A pearl mayde was our Eln, I warnt she was."

"She is very happy; she is willing to go," said Alice, trying to comfort him. "Ah! they all goos off asy. My mis-sus she went fust; a vine figure of a ooman, too. Vive on 'em lies down Churchlytten there, Miss Lingard, and all in brick graves, buried comfortable. They've got to goo and they goos. Heuben here, he'll hae to go next. There's the bred in 's chakes, and he coughs terble already."

Reuben smiled pensively; he was a handsome lad, with dark eyes and a delicate yet brilliant pink-and-white complexion.

"Nonsense," interposed Paul. "Reuben's well enough. You shouldn't frighten the boy, Gale. Give him good food, and his cough will soon go. Don't you believe him, Reuben. You are only growing fast."

"He'll hae to goo long with t'others," continued the father; "dacters ain't no good agen a decline. A power of dactler's stuff ben inside of they that's gone. They've all got to goo, all got to goo."

"Reckon I'll hae to goo," added Reuben, in a more cheerful refrain to his father's melancholy chant.

Alice tried in vain to reason the pair into a more hopeful frame of mind, and then scolded them, and finally bid them good-night, and they parted, the heavy boots of the two Gales striking the road in slow funeral beats as they trudged wearily uphill, the lighter steps of the gentlefolk making swift and merry music downward.

"Oh, Paul!" said Alice, turning to him after a backward glance at the father and son, "we must save Reuben; we can not let him die!"

"My dear Alice, you must not take all the illness in the parish to heart," interrupted Gervase; "the boy will be all right, as Annesley told him. Why try to deprive Gale of his chief earthly solace? The old fellow revels in his own miseries. It is a kind of distinction to that class of people to have a fatal disease in their family."

"Hereditary, too," added Paul; "as respectable as a family ghost in higher circles."

"Or the curse of Gledesworth. I am glad the curse does not blight the tenants as well as the landlord," continued Gervase. For Arden Manor belonged to the Gledesworth estate.

"Or the Mowbray temper," laughed Paul. "Nay, dear Miss Lingard, do not look so reproachful. I am doing my best for Reuben. But he is consumptive, and I doubt if he will stand another winter, though his lungs are still whole. We must try to accept facts. Why, we poor doctors would be fretted to fiddle-strings in a month if we did not harden our hearts to the inevitable."

"But is this inevitable?" asked Alice, with an earnest gaze into his dark-blue eyes that set his heart throbbing. "Need this bright young life be thrown away? I know how good your heart is, and how you often feel most when you speak most roughly. But if Reuben were Gervase, you know that he would not have to die."

"You mean that I should order Gervase to the south?"

"Doubtless."

"Very well. And if we set our wits to work we may expatriate Reuben. We must. Gervase, you are great at schemes. Scheme Reuben into a warm climate before next winter."

"We have received our orders, Annesley," replied Gervase, laughing, as they turned up a broad lane, at the end of which the gray manor house, with its gables and mullioned windows, loomed massive in the dusk—a dusk deepened on one side by the row of wind-bowed firs.

Paul accompanied them, as a matter of course, though he had turned quite out of his homeward way; while his servant, without asking or receiving orders, drove the dog-cart round to the stable-yard, whither the cob would have found his way alone, so accustomed was he to its welcome hospitality.

Through the gale-way, with its stone piers topped by stone globes, and up the drive bounded by the velvet turf of a century's growth, the three walked in the deepening dusk, and saw a ruddy glow in the uncurtained windows of the hall, round the porch of which myrtle grew mingled with ivy and roses. Gervase opened the door, and they entered a spacious hall wainscoted in oak, carved about the door-ways and the broad chimney-piece, beneath which, on the open hearth, burned a fire of wood. The leaping flames danced merrily on the polished walls; on a broad staircase shining and slippery with bees-wax and the labor of generations; on a few old

pictures, some trophies of armor and some oaken settles and chairs of an old quaint fashion; and upon a table near the hearth, on which a tea-service was set out.

An elderly lady sat by the fire, knitting, and occasionally talking, for want of a better listener, to a cat sitting bolt upright in front of the fire, into which it stared, as if inquiring of some potent oracle, and sometimes turning its head with a blissful wink in response to its mistress's voice. This lady was small and slight, with a rosy, unlined face and gray hair, and an expression so innocent and sweet as to be almost child-like, yet she resembled Gervase sufficiently to prove herself his mother. Mrs. Rickman's grammar was hazy and her spelling uncertain; she was not sure if metaphysics were a science or an instrument; she habitually courted to the new moon, and did nothing important on a Friday (which sometimes caused serious domestic inconvenience); but her manners were such as immediately put all who addressed her at their ease, and her pleasant unceremonious smile encouraged, even invited, people to tell her their troubles and confess their misdoings.

"Come, children," she said, cheerily, rising when the door opened, to busy herself at the table, "here is tea just made. What, Paul? I did not see you in the dusk. We have not seen you for an age, three days at least. Gervase, throw me on a fresh log, my dear."

"We certainly deserve no tea at this time of night," said Alice, who was busy laying aside her hat and furs. "Come, Hubert, leave the doctor alone and lie down by Puss."

The deer-hound, who had been fawning on Paul, stretched himself on the rug on one side of the fire, not daring to take the middle, since Puss disdained to move so much as a paw to make way for the new-comer.

Alice took the chair Gervase placed for her, and began showing Mrs. Rickman her two bunches of violets, one of which she put in water, and the other (Paul observed with a thrill that it was his) in her dress, where the soft rise and fall of her breath rocked it in an unconscious Elysium.

"And where are Mr. Rickman and Sybil?" he asked, flushing with a secret joy, while Gervase was deeply pondering the disposition of the violets, and persuading himself that his bunch was the more cherished, since it was secured from fading, and yet not quite sure on the point.

"Sybil is at the parsonage practicing with the choir," said Mrs. Rickman. "Mr. Rickman is on the downs examining some barrows which have just been opened, and no one knows when he will be back. Alice, my dear child, what a fearful state your hair is in!"

Alice put up her hands with a futile attempt to smooth the rich braids, which were roughened into little rings on the surface by the wind.

"Never mind, auntie," she replied. "Doctor Annesley will forgive me this once, and you and Gervase are used to it. And it doesn't matter in the fire-light."

"That is how Alice abuses our long-suffering," growled Gervase, thinking how pretty the tumbled hair was, in which Paul agreed silently with him.

"Miss Lingard is quite right about the fire-light," said Paul, in his stately manner. "An elegant negligence suits best with this informal meal in the dusk. Yes, if you forgive me saying so, Alice, you make a delightful picture on that quaint settle, with the hound at your knee, and the armor above your head, and the hearth blazing beneath that splendid old chimney near."

He did not add what he thought, that the grace with which she sat half reclined in the cross-legged oaken seat, and the sweet expression of her face lighted by the varying flames, made the chief charm of the picture.

"Doctor Annesley," replied Alice, meeting his gaze of earnest and respectful admiration, "you are becoming a courtier. I do not recognize my honest old friend, Paul, with his blunt but wholesome rebuffs."

"It is I who am rebuffed now," he replied, singularly discomposed by the gravity of her manner.

"Nonsense, Paul," interrupted Mrs. Rickman; "Alice can only be honored by such a pretty compliment. You ought to be of Gervase's profession."

"Yes; I always maintained that Annesley would make a first-rate lawyer," added Gervase.

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Annesley, with a fervor that was almost religious. Gervase laughed and rose to settle a half-burned log which threatened to fall when burned asunder, thus ruining a fire-landscape that Alice had been dreamily gazing upon.

"How cruel you are—you have shattered the most romantic vision of crags and castles!" she said. "And you have destroyed the poetry of the hour, for I must light these candles."

"Were you seeing your future in the

fire?" Paul asked, as he lighted the candles she brought forward, thrilling with delicate emotion when he touched her hand accidentally, and caught the play of the newly-kindled flame on her features.

Gervase watched them narrowly, though furtively, with a secret pity for Paul, for a vision less keen than his might detect a total absence of response on her part to the young doctor's unspoken feeling; and then he thought of his own future, which he read in the dull red glow of the fire, while the others kept up a desultory conversation in which their thoughts did not enter.

He had drifted, he scarcely knew how, into the office of Whewell & Son, solicitors. His mind in those early days had taken no bent sufficiently strong to make him resist his father's desire that he should follow law, since he declined the paternal profession of physic, a profession which Mr. Rickman, a London physician with a fair practice, had early left because he said he could not endure the whims of sick people, but really because, having a competency, he wished to pursue his favorite studies in the quiet of Arden, where Sybil was born when Gervase was about nine years old.

But once in the office, he found much to interest him, and after making progress from a desire to do his duty and please his parents, whose hopes all rested on their only son, ambition awakened in him, and he decided to make himself the head of the firm, and the firm the head of the profession in the county. This, at eight-and-twenty, he had accomplished. Whewell & Son was now Whewell & Rickman. The younger Whewell had renounced a profession that wearied him, and the elder was at an age when love of ease is stronger than love of power, and it was well known that the junior partner was the soul of the business, which daily increased.

As far as a country solicitor could rise, Gervase Rickman intended to rise, and then he intended to enter Parliament, where he felt his powers would have an opportunity of developing. This purpose he had as yet confided to no one, though he was daily feeling his way and laying the foundations of local popularity. A man who makes himself once heard in the House of Commons has, he knew, provided he possesses the genius of a ruler of men, a destiny more brilliant than that of any sovereign in the civilized world, and Gervase, looking at the consuming brands and listening to the harmonious blending of Paul's deep voice with Alice's pure treble, saw such magnificent prospects as the others did not dream him capable of entertaining. And through all those princely visions Alice moved with an imperial grace.

"But what has become of your cousin all this time?" Alice was asking of the doctor.

"Over the downs and in Medington by this time. We don't dine till half-past seven, so my mother will have a good hour to purr over the fellow and make much of him. Ned always was a lucky fellow, if you remember, Mrs. Rickman. He had the knack of making friends."

"He was a winning and well-behaved boy, I remember," she replied. "How fond Sybil was of him!"

"It is just the same now, or rather it was at school. Whatever Ned did, people liked him. If he neglected his lessons, he always got off in class by means of lucky shots. Other fellows' shots failed. Born under a happy star."

"Yet he must inherit the curse of Gledesworth!" Alice said.

"Oh! that is at an end. Reginald Annesley being in a lunatic asylum fulfills the conditions of the distich:

"Whanne ye lorde ys mewed in stonen celle,
Gledesworth tharne shalle brake
hys spele."

"Facts seem against the theory," Gervase said, "since the estate can not now pass from Reginald Annesley to his son. By the way, have you not heard, Paul? Young Reginald is dead, killed while elephant-hunting in South Africa?"

"Captain Annesley? Reginald? Dead?" cried Paul, with excitement. "We heard he was in Africa, and his wife and baby came home. Are you sure? Is it not some repetition of poor Julian's story?"

"It is perfectly true," replied Gervase, who was agent to the Gledesworth estate; "the news arrived yesterday."

Paul Annesley's father was first cousin to the Annesley who owned the estate, and who was only slightly acquainted with him. Paul did not even know any of those Annesleys, and the mad Annesley having had three sons, one of whom was married, and all of whom had grown to manhood, the prospect of inheriting the family estates had never entered his wildest dreams. But now only two lives stood between him and that rich inheritance; the life of an elderly maniac and that of an infant. No one knew better than he how large a percentage of male infants die.

"It is awfully sad," he said. "Oh! it does seem as if the curse was a reality, and worked still."

"I never believed in the curse," said Mrs. Rickman; "and I disbelieve it still. People die when the Almighty sees fit; it is not for us to ask why."

But Alice was a firm believer in the curse of Gledesworth, and defended its morality stoutly. Why, if blessings attached to birth, should not pains and penalties? she asked. Was it worse to be a doomed Annesley than the offspring of a criminal or the inheritor of fatal disease, like the family at the Traveller's Rest?

"I think I would rather be an Annesley," she added, turning to Paul with a smile that seemed to reach the darkest recesses of his heart, and kindle a glow of vital warmth within him.

Then they fell to discussing the Gledesworth legend. In the days of King John a lord of Gledesworth died, leaving one young son, and his brother, not content with seizing the lands, drove the widow and orphan from his door. One day in the hard winter weather, the widow appeared in want at the usurper's gates and begged bread for the starving child. And because she was importunate, the wicked baron set his hounds upon them and they killed the heir. Then the widow cursed the cruel baron, fled into the forest and was seen no more. But from that hour Gledesworth lands never descended to the eldest son; so surely as a man owned Gledesworth, sorrow of some kind befell him; the land was a curse to its owner, as was the Nibelungen Hoard to whomsoever possessed it.

The morally weak point in the curse, as Gervase often observed, when beguiled to discuss the tragic stories of that fated line, was that there appeared to be no chance of expiating the wicked baron's misdeeds, while the number of innocent victims who suffered from the curse was appalling.

"You are a hardened sceptic," Paul said. "Besides, you forget the 'stonen celle.'"

"Worse still. Because no owner of Gledesworth likes to exchange it for a stonen celle, are all his descendants to be doomed?"

"You can not measure a retribution which for good and for ill extends into the infinite, by the events of a rudimentary and finite world," Alice said.

"Quite so," replied Paul; "I confess to a great affection for the family curse. It keeps the idea of God before men's minds, though only a God of retribution," an observation which cheered Mrs. Rickman's kind heart, troubled as it was by sad rumors of Annesley's scepticism, and led on to a discussion in which they all lost themselves in the old interminable puzzles of the origin of Evil, the limits of Fate and the bounds of Will, till the hall clock gave musical warning of the hour, and Paul took hasty leave, finding himself belated.

When he was gone, Alice drew a chair to her adopted mother's side, and began to tell her what she had done all the afternoon, and was duly scolded for various lapses of memory. She had lived in that house from her thirteenth year, being an orphan placed there by her guardians, that she and Sybil might benefit from each other's society, and they had studied and grown up together so happily, that Alice hoped, on becoming the mistress of her own little fortune, a year hence, to remain with them.

"Stay a minute, Alice," Gervase said, when a few minutes later she was about to follow Mrs. Rickman upstairs. "If you are not tired, I should like you to let me rehearse my speech for the Liberal meeting next week."

Alice willingly acquiesced, but asked if it would not be better to wait for Sybil's return.

He laughed, and said that Sybil had already been treated to two rehearsals; so Alice took up her station in the corner of the hall furthest from the staircase, which Gervase ascended till he reached the landing, behind the ballustrade of which he stood beneath a lamp and looked down into the wide, echoing hall, the dark paneling of which was but faintly lighted by a swinging lamp in its centre, and by the flitting fire-glow. Alice was scarcely seen; but not a gesture or look of Gervase could escape her, and she was surprised when, taking a roll of notes from his pocket and striking an attitude, his form dilated, his eyes kindled as they took a commanding glance of the wide space before him, and he sent his voice, which was in conversation harsh, echoing through the hall with a power which she had never suspected, and invested the political commonplaces which he uttered with a certain dignity. The cat sprang up in alarm; Hubert rose and sat listening at his mistress's feet with a critical air; Alice clapped her hands and cried: "Hear, hear!" and "No, no!" at intervals, for a good half hour. Then the door opened, and Sybil returned from her choir practice and made an addition to the audience.

"And did you ever hear such rubbish in your life, Sybil?" Alice asked, laughing.

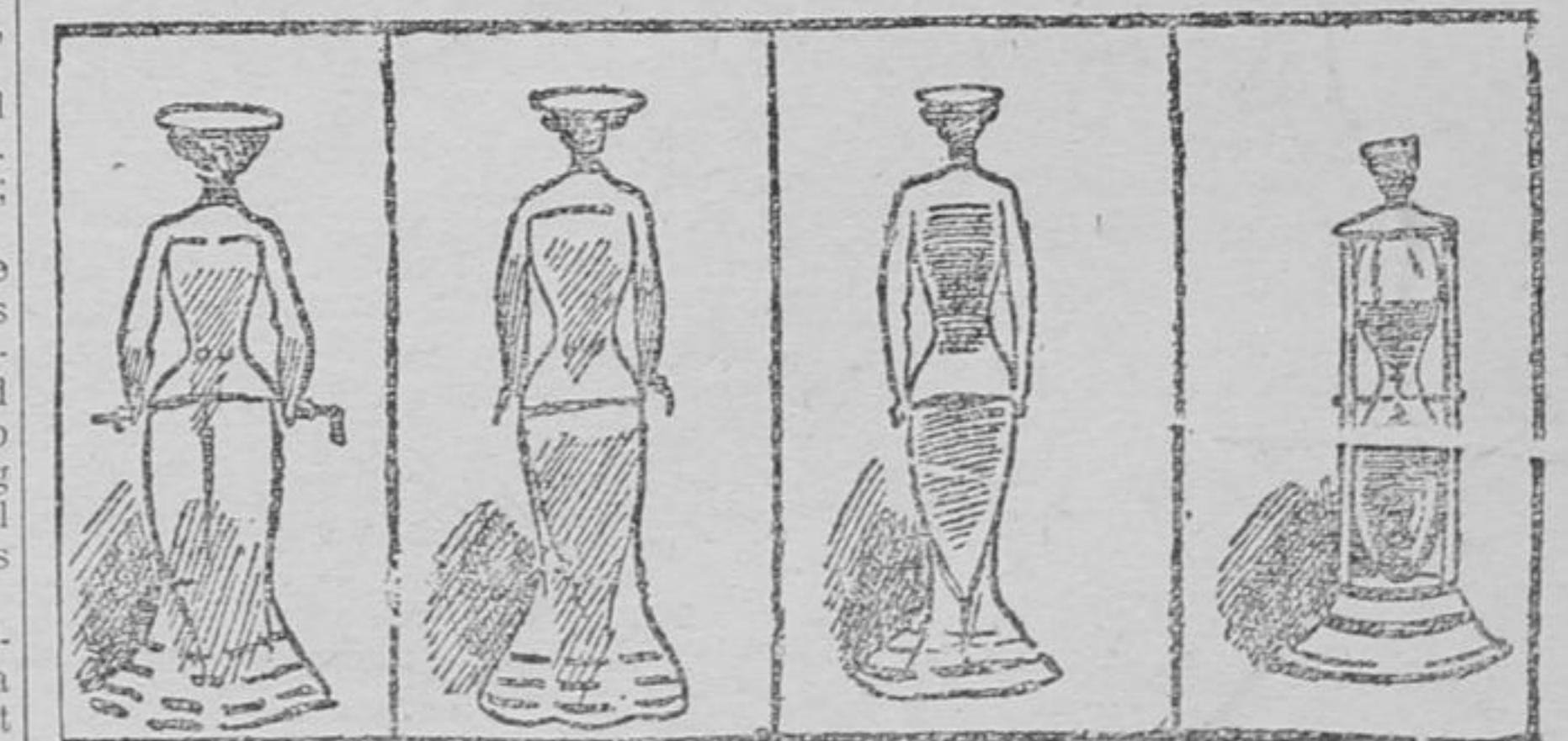
"No," she replied, "I was never at a political meeting before."

(To be continued).

CURBING HIS RAPTURE.

Ardent Lover: "Blanche, you are the loveliest girl in the world!"

His Intellectual Sweetheart: "While I realize that such a remark as that, Gerald, is based on inadequate knowledge, I am disposed to regard it as indicating the full measure and scope of your acquaintance with the world thus far, and as such I accept it and hasten to express my grateful appreciation."



THE EVOLUTION OF A MODERN GIRL.

About the Farm

SILQ ECONOMY:

Up to 1895 I had been feeding my dairy herd clover and timothy hay, slover, straw, etc., and pasturing during summer with corn meal, wheat bran and middlings, oil meal, etc., and had found that the greater the variety of feeds employed the better, writes Mr. J. P. Gearhart. But about that time my attention was attracted to silage and after studying the question well, I built a round silo 14x22 feet, located beside the barn floor and 8 feet below the level of this floor. It cost \$42 and \$40 for work and lumber which I furnished.

I have never had any trouble keeping the silage, except the trilling amount that spoils around the sides of the stone wall at the top and bottom. From this experience, I suggest that the stone work be as little exposed internally as possible; it is not as good as wood. I usually feed 20 pounds to each cow, morning and night, with hay at noon and about 8 pounds bran and middlings mixed half and half for cows in full milk.

In contrasting silage with other feeds I believe the former produces about one-fifth more milk than dry feed, but will not make any more butter, the milk being thinner. The same result is noticeable when pasture is compared with dry feed. The cattle are, however, kept in nicer condition, their coats being softer and smoother and their digestions better. I can save at least three cents a day on each cow fed silage.

The only difference in managing corn for silage and for grain is that the seeding is more liberal. The same kind of land is selected; its preparation and management the same. Barnyard manure is preferred as a fertilizer, six tons to the acre; a surface dressing of 25 bushels lump is also given. The variety of corn chosen is a large fodder variety, such as leaming, which matures before frost. It is planted with a corn planter, ten quarts to the acre about May 10. When the kernels reach the glazed state the cutting begins.

Each of two men cuts two rows at a time and throws the stalks in small armfuls. Two low down wagons with one team and two men do the drawing, economy since it can be pushed when necessary; a smaller size cannot. One team and eight men can harvest and store 20 tons a day if the haul is not very long.

Experience teaches me that deep, small silos are much better than large, shallow ones. Round silos are cheaper and more satisfactory than square ones, because there is less wall space and upper surface to the size.

BRISTLES.

The sows should be bred early so that the pigs will come in time to make good growth.

Which of your brood sows farrowed a large litter last spring. She always has a big litter.

She is an old standby; she is the kind that makes the pig business certain; she is the kind that pays her board.

When you select young sows for breeding purposes, pick out her pigs; there is lots of "good luck" in doing that sort of thing.

Exercise is necessary for breeding stock, and they should be allowed to run in the open fields and lots until the cold weather, when they can be brought to the pens and allowed to run in roomy yards on fine days.

They should be largely fed on nitrogenous foods, such as promote growth and stamina.

Wheat bran and middlings, fed in moderate quantities, together with skim and buttermilk, should be fed, and growth and frame rather than fat produced.

Some corn-stalks, roots, pumpkins, etc., fed in limited quantities, will also be relished and tend to balance the ration. A little corn and oats fed at times also make a good feed, but the less expensive foods should be used, if possible.

The fattening hogs should be fed liberally on corn, roots, pumpkins, etc.

When fed on corn alone the ration is too carbonaceous. There is more danger of cholera and disease.

Correctives in the way of charcoal, ashes, salt and sulphur should be kept in the feeding pens and yards.

When engaged before killing, hogs usually bring better prices than when taken to market at the mercy of the buyers.

The pens for the "store" hogs should be put in order, cleaned, whitewashed if necessary, where lice may be.