

Face to Face



OR, GERVASE RICKMAN'S
AMBITION.

CHAPTER VI.—(Continued).

Here John Nobbs, who was at the head of the table, working steadily away at a mighty sirloin, observed that both parties had done better in the matrimonial lottery than if that wedding had taken place. "Missel," he said, "I never give my consent to that match. They'll never goo in double harness; I ses to missel, many a time when I zeen 'em together."

"Ah, Master Nobbs, I don't go with you," said Jacob Gale. "Mr. Gervase have a looked too high. 'Tis agen nature for a man to look up to his wife. Lady Sharlett comes of one of the highest families in the land, and I war'n't she'll make en mind that."

"Mis'able proud is Lady Sharlett," said the gardener. "She was out in the garden a good hour one day, and she took no more 'count of me than if I'd a ben a mallyshag."

Here the discussion of Lady Charlotte's peculiarities was cut short by the entrance of Mr. Rickman and Sibyl, accompanied by Edward Annesley and Alice, the latter carrying the two-year-old heir of Gledesworth, whose birthday was being celebrated by a visit to Arden Manor, and a great drinking of healths ensued, accompanied by speech-making, in which Raysh Squire outdid himself, and the bridegroom endured a purgatory of stammers, blushes, and breakdowns.

"I can not imagine," Sibyl remarked, when the ceremony was over and the family had left the kitchen for the garden, where they disposed themselves on various seats beneath the apple-trees, now in bloom, "why men, however sensible they may be, always look so foolish when being married."

"Don't you think they have cause, Sibyl?" Edward asked; "that a secret consciousness of their own folly—"

"Folly, indeed!" laughed Sibyl. "Now the brides would do well to look silly or else sad. Yet they never do. The shyest girl in the humblest class always wears a subdued air of triumph at her marriage. Human beings certainly are the oddest creatures."

Here Mr. Rickman expressed a wish, after a long dissertation concerning the gradual evolution of marriage rites from primitive times till now; with some remarks upon such customs as the bride presenting the bridegroom with a whip and the throwing of rice, to see this triumphant look upon Sibyl's face before long.

"My dear papa, don't you think I look triumphant enough as it is?" she replied. "I exult in freedom; let others hug their chains. Besides, I have you to tyrannize over, so what do I want with a husband to plague?"

She looked radiant enough, if not triumphant, as she stood beneath the crimson apple blossoms, with the dappled sunlight dancing over her, tossing the laughing boy above her curly head, her dark eyes sparkling and the rich tints glowing in her cheeks. "Marriage," she would sometimes say, in answer to such observations as this of Mr. Rickman's, "is not one of my foibles. I like my brother-men and cannot bring myself to make any of them miserable. And I like Miss Sibyl Rickman and her peace of mind, and I like to write what I think, which I could not do if married. Besides, what in the world would people do if there were no old maids?"

Edward and Alice knew that they would have been the poorer for her marriage, though they often wished it. Both were certain that she had conquered the early feeling which at one time threatened to make shipwreck of her happiness, and this certitude made their constant intercourse with Sibyl very happy.

Alice had wished not to live at Gledesworth. She did not care for the state and circumstance of the great house, and was oppressed by its traditions. She would rather have left the property with Paul, to be absorbed by his community, or passed it on to the next brother, but Edward soon convinced her that such schemes were impracticable, that responsibilities can not be evaded, and finally that it was his duty to live, as much as his military life permitted, at Gledesworth, which had now become a charming home, the resort of a wide circle of friends and kinsfolk.

What with the provision for Paul's mother, and the slice taken out for the Dominican's, the Gledesworth estate was so diminished that they were not overburdened with riches, and had to use economy to meet the charges entailed by the possession of land. As to the hereditary curse, Annesley laughed that to scorn, and had many a merry battle of words with Sibyl upon the subject. The distich—

"Whanne ye lord ys mewed in slonen celle,
Gledesworthe thanne shall brake his spelle."

He argued, proved, if anything, its own falsity, since Reginald Annesley's affliction ought to have broken the spell, which nevertheless continued to work upon two successive heirs after him. But Sibyl maintained that Paul had broken the spell in the Dominican convent. Very likely Reginald had been im-

mured in a brick building, she would affirm with profound gravity.

"Your godson, Sibyl," Edward said, taking the boy from her arms, "will die when it pleases God, not before. And if he does not live to inherit Gledesworth, it will not be because a widow cursed his ancestors centuries ago. It may be from his own fault or folly, indeed, though he is too like his mother to have many faults. Poor Reuben's children, I grant you, may inherit a curse." And so he thought, will Gervase's, but theirs will be the curse of a crooked nature.

Gervase Rickman was then actually walking along the gray-green ridge of down which rose behind the Manor against the pale April sky. Business had called him unexpectedly to Medington, which he still represented, and, leaving his carriage in the high-road, with instructions to wait at the Traveller's Rest, he descended the slope and walked over the springy turf, looking down upon Arden and its familiar fields and trees, and upon the very garden where Alice and Sibyl were making cowslip-balls for the baby Annesley. The changeable April day clouded over as he walked and gazed; the blush of vivid green died from the trees and copses; the plain darkened and the shadows in the hill-sides deepened. The song-birds were silent; the melancholy wail of a plover drew his attention to a single bird, fluttering as if wounded before him, and trying in its simple, pathetic cunning to draw his attention away from the nest which that very cry betrayed.

On the bleak March day when he waited on that down outside the Traveller's Rest for Alice, he had thought much of the omnipotence of human will, and purposed to mould mankind to his own ends. Then he was an obscure country lawyer, nursing an unsuspected ambition in the depths of his heart. Now his name was in every one's mouth; he had climbed more than one step toward the height he intended to scale. The minister whose patronage had so early been his was now in office. He had approved himself to his party as a useful and almost indispensable instrument, particularly by the services he had rendered in the last general election which restored the Liberals to power. His financial skill was beginning to be recognized, his name had weight in financial society, which he affected. Everything he touched turned to gold. By his marriage with Lady Charlotte he was connected with half the peerage and was son-in-law to a minister. Lady Charlotte, it is true, was neither so young as she had been, nor so beautiful as she might have been, nor was she well dowered. She was known to have a tongue and suspected of having a temper; but she was a woman who knew the world both of politics and of society, and was the most useful wife a man in his position could possibly have. His ambition, great as it was, was being more rapidly gratified than even he had expected. He had gained the world, and lost his soul.

But to-day he no longer believed in the omnipotence of will and energy. He looked down upon the roofs of Arden and thought of the severe check his will had received there; he thought, too, of the unexpectedly favorable conjunction of affairs for him in other respects, and acknowledged another power, which he called destiny. What would the first Napoleon have done, he mused, in peaceful England at this end of the nineteenth century? If he had missed the Crimea and the Mutiny, he might have risen to be a half-pay officer; had he been in time for those crises, he might have been reckoned an excellent general, nothing more.

Beyond the unseen sea behind the hills rising before Rickman's eyes lay a country occupied by a hostile army and torn by revolution. Why had not destiny placed him there, where the hour was come, but not the man to rule it? An eager fancy could almost hear the far-off thunder of the war fitfully raging beyond that little strip of sea, over whose quiet waters he actually heard the boom of English guns, fired only in peaceful practice, not at masses of living men. There, in the world's beautiful pleasure city, an agony beyond all the agonies of war was slowly wearing itself out through these pleasant spring months, an agony then hidden within the walls of Paris beleaguered by her own children, and never fully to be known. Gervase Rickman gave a passing thought to that tragedy and foresaw the flames and indiscriminate slaughter in which it was before long to terminate, when the Seine literally ran with French blood shed by French hands, the tragedy of an unbridled mob swayed fitfully by one or two fanatics in possession of a great city, and he wondered at the weakness of those who ought to have ruled.

Though he still believed more in men than in institutions, and scorned weakness above everything, he did not believe as he had done that day by the Traveller's Rest; his ambition had now risen from the vague of golden visions into the clearness of reality, and he could see how low was the highest summit with-

in his reach. Yet it was the sole object of his life, he cared for nothing else. The human side of his character was paralyzed on the day when he lost Alice. It was not only that all his life was cut off from all tender feelings and sundered from the purer influences of hers, but in losing her he had to a certain extent lost Sibyl, and drifted away from those earlier and stronger ties which begin with life itself. Sibyl, the second good genius of his life, was never again on the old terms with him. Whenever they met there was an invisible, impassable barrier between them; perhaps she knew all and despised him, as, he knew, Alice despised him.

All his life long, through wealth and power and gratified ambition, he was to bear about the heavy pain of having lost not Alice only, but her respect, of having won not her love but her bitter scorn. He looked down upon the Manor, where she was so frequent a guest that he never went there himself without a previous intimation, lest they should meet, as it was tacitly understood they could not, and he yearned for the old days to live again, that he might act differently. Since he was fated not to win her heart, which he saw clearly now was beyond human volition, he might still have been able to look in her face and see the old tender, friendly look in her eyes; and yet had he remained true to his better self, he could never have succeeded as he was to succeed when freed from scruples and rid of the importunities of conscience. He would have lost the world and saved his soul alive.

For some moments the old yearning returned with such force at the sight of the pleasant paths in which they had wandered together, that he thought he would have been content to remain all his life in that quiet spot, an obscure country lawyer, with Alice by his side, with his old father to care for and Sibyl to take pride in. Not that he did not now take great pride in Sibyl and her increasing literary reputation, but it would have been different if the dark shadow had not come between them. But Lady Charlotte, who had been his wife four months, did not like Arden. Mr. Rickman bore her, she was afraid of Sibyl, and looked down upon them all; he knew that she would put them further asunder and himself further and ever further from his nobler nature.

He leaned upon the gate by which he was standing with Alice on that summer evening, when he uttered those two fatal words, "quite right," and reviewed all that episode in his life, the inclination first springing from a sordid thought of Alice's fortune, then fostered by the charm of her daily society, and strengthened by the strong purpose with which he pursued every aim, until it became a ruling passion, the frustration of which tore away one half of his character. He had played skillfully and daringly, and he had lost through no folly, for who could dream that a man would rise from the dead to frustrate him? Will, skill, and fate were to him the sole rulers of things human. He did not recognize that nothing can stand which is not built upon the eternal foundations of truth and justice.

Nevertheless, as he continued to gaze on the old paternal fields in which he had passed his boyhood and youth, a vague regret for what might have been, had he been only true to himself, rose and mingled with the piercing sense of loss and moral humiliation, which never wholly left him, and he turned from Arden and walked on. Now his face was towards Gledesworth, which lay unseen behind the down, and he gave one jealous passionate thought to the life Alice was living there with Edward Annesley, who was now no more shunned or shadowed by the reproach of an unproved accusation, and yet another thought to the strange death in life of Paul Annesley.

And just then the coast guns boomed over the peaceful waters again, recalling his thoughts to the tragedy beyond the sea. The group in the garden below heard the same low thunder, and Sibyl made some jesting allusion to the Annesley gun, which had just been triumphantly tested at Shoeburyness; and Edward thought of the deadly earnest with which French cannon were being fired on the other side of that sunny sea.

They did not know that, just then, under the walls of Paris, while some men wounded after a repulse were being placed in an ambulance, a shot from the fort behind them struck a friar who was in the act of lifting the last man, and killed him on the spot.

The wounded man groaned when his living support gave way, but other hands raised him, and the ambulance moved away from the dangerous spot, leaving the dead man behind in their haste. He was one of those Dominicans, who, from the first outbreak of the war, had been in the field with the French armies. In disengaging the slain friar from the man he was lifting, they had turned him so that he lay face upwards, his arms outstretched as in the restful slumber of youth, his white dress stained crimson over the breast, his eyes closed to the spring sunshine, his scarred face wearing the sweet and peaceful smile so often seen in the soldier killed in battle.

Thus Paul Annesley's troubled soul passed heroically to its rest. Though they could not know what was happening beyond the sea, a vague sadness in keeping with the sudden overclouding of the spring day filled the hearts of those to whom the slain man had been dear, a sadness which passed like the cloud itself.

Even Gervase Rickman felt the passing gloom, and shaking off the gentler memories of his life, and walking quickly over the sunny turf where the scattered sheep were feeding, he reached the sign-post beneath which he was standing when Edward Annesley came singing by years ago. There his carriage was waiting by the Traveller's

Rest, and he sprung into it and was quickly whirled out of sight.

The little group at Arden Manor were tranquilly sitting beneath the apple-trees. Mr. Rickman, forgetful of coins and antiquities, was patiently weaving daisy-chains for little Paul, who called him grandfather, and whom he loved more than the little Rickman's who came after him; Alice was relating the family news—the expected visit of her mother-in-law and Harriet to Gledesworth, the probability that Major Melvray and Eleanor would follow them; Wilfrid's chances of promotion and his intention to marry; the appointment of Jack, the youngest Annesley, to a ship, and the recent visit they had paid to Mrs. Walter Annesley, who was growing weaker day by day; the probability of Edward's retiring from active service.

The shadows lengthened and the Annesleys went back to their pleasant home. Sibyl returned to the wedding-party, led the dancing, and listened to the singing, and saw the bride and bridegroom start for their new home at the falling of the dusk.

When she was sitting by the hearth with her father that night she mused on the different ways in which human lives are ordered. As days of brilliant sunshine and blue skies are rare in England, so are lives of full and unclouded happiness in this world; but there are many sweet neutral-tinted days full of peace, in which plants grow and birds sing, and the clouds break away into soft glory at sunset. Sibyl's life was like one of these serene days; it was happy and by no means unfruitful.

THE END.

"DONALD."

Pet Deer of the Famous Forty-Second Highlanders.

A regimental pet or a company "masco" plays a worthy and wholesome part in army service. It provides an object on which the soldier can expend affection and personal care, and binds the men in a common interest. In the long list of the various animals devoted to the camp and barracks, "Donald," the deer, holds a gallant place. Mr. Archibald Forbes gives his history in "The Black Watch."

Donald was adopted by the Royal Highlanders when they were ordered to Edinburgh Castle in 1836. He was a youngster with tiny antlers, which did not have to be cut then, as they were later.

When the regiment went to Glasgow, Donald-marched with them. Soon he began to develop mischievous propensities. He objected strongly to intruders when the company was exercising on Glasgow Green.

In 1838 Donald discovered his true role. Without any previous training he took his place at the head of the regiment, along side of the sergeant-major. Whether marching for exercise, out-marching in winter, or at guard-mounting, Donald was never absent. He accompanied the regiment on all garrison field-days, roaming off to feed while the manoeuvres were going on; wandering sometimes a mile away, but always back at his post in time for the march, except on one occasion.

He mistook his regiment and trotted along ahead of the 79th. He presently discovered his error, and became uneasy and arrogant. When the company turned off to their barracks Donald refused to accompany them, and the colonel ordered six men to hand their muskets over to their comrades, and to escort the deer back to his own Royal brigade. He never made a similar mistake.

When the regiment was on guard duty at the castle Donald always went with it, making his way easily through the crowd in the streets. If any one interfered with him he gave chase.

One sad day Donald's regiment went abroad, and the deer was handed over to a new company. These successors did not understand him. They did not give him litter for his bed or oats for his dinner, and he soon declared war against the whole regiment. A brigade trooper hardly dared cross the square if Donald was in sight. At last he became so ill-tempered it was decided to turn him loose in a park. His lordship who owned the state promised to look well after Donald's comfort.

Twenty-two years later the lieutenant-colonel of Donald's old regiment returned to Glasgow, and one of the first things he did was to inquire after the company's deer. The story which was told him was a melancholy one. From the day he was set free in the park he declined to have anything to do with man or beast. He became so fierce, and so many complaints were entered against him, that at the end of two years he was shot.

THEY REMEDY DISEASE.

Certain Occupations Practically Cure Some Kinds of Disease.

"It is a curious thing," said a scientist to the writer recently, "but certain occupations are practically the remedies of certain diseases."

"Shepherds enjoy remarkable health. The peculiar odor noticeable about sheep seems to drive away disease."

"The men and women who work among lavender, gathering it or distilling it, seldom have neuralgia or nervous headache. Lavender, moreover, is good for giving tone to the system."

"Employees in breweries, tanneries and printing-ink factories are immune from consumption. Turpentine works and rope works are a protection from rheumatism." And, in conclusion, workers in copper mines need not fear typhoid."

The population of the United States will apparently be double its present proportions by the year 1942.

About the Farm

STARTING AN ORCHARD.

The ground for an orchard should be well and deeply cultivated, and free from weeds, well drained, if the soil requires it, and moist soils are better for draining, except sandy or light gravelly soils with a light subsoil. Such land may not require draining, but in every case it should be well worked and pulverized and enriched. Therefore preparation must be done during the summer so as to be ready for fall or spring planting. Planting in the spring is preferred, which will enable the trees to take firm hold of the earth and to resist the frost of next winter; but planting may become successful in the autumn by protecting the trees so as to prevent the frost from heaving or misplacing them.

Select young, healthy and vigorous trees, and from a reliable nurseryman, and, if possible, from a soil similar to that in which you intend to plant your orchard. The different kinds of apples will depend upon your own choice and the suitability of soil and climate. Advise that the selection be made from the old, tried and reliable kind.

The distance apart should not be less than thirty feet, so as to allow the trees room to spread their branches and to form a low and spreading head. Close planting has a tendency to force trees to run up, and prevent the fruit from obtaining its proper color from the sun, and making it more difficult to gather the fruit. At the distance of thirty feet apart it will require twenty-nine trees to the acre. Before planting the tree remove all bruises and broken roots by cutting clean with a sharp knife. Lay out your ground in straight lines, so that your trees will be in line each way and at equal distances, thirty feet apart.

ORCHARD COVER CROPS.

The value of a cover crop of some kind, in the orchard, is now pretty generally recognized by all up-to-date fruit growers. The most successful fruit growers give their orchards clean cultivation from the early spring till about the middle or end of July, when tree growth should cease. A cover crop of some kind is then shown immediately after the last cultivation. Such a crop benefits the orchard by affording protection to the roots if the ground is bare of snow in winter, in holding snow as an additional cover when it comes, in checking a late growth of trees in the fall, in taking up plant food from the soil which might otherwise be lost by leaching, and above all, by adding to the fertility and friability of the soil when the crop is turned under in the spring.

FARM NOTES.

When a man wants to use his horse, and has to chase him all over his farm in order to catch him, it is evident that either the man or the horse was not brought up right.

In the rush of summer work, we often neglect the poultry on the farm. The hens help themselves to the grain that is handy, eat more than they need, and the result is that a number suddenly die of apoplexy.

Sprinkling lime in a water tank will prevent scum from forming on the water. When the lime loses its strength, and scum begins to gather, wash out the tank and renew the lime. Twice in a season will suffice to keep the water pure and wholesome.

The women folks of the family should steer clear of the many face powders and washes that are made these days to make one look young. They are all frauds, and many of them worse than that. The pure air and water of the farm, with the right kind of diet, will keep the complexion far more beautiful than will any of the mixtures sold for this purpose.

It is impossible to urge too strongly upon the breeder who would meet with the greatest measure of success, the practice of a rigid and judicious selection of both sire and dam, but more particularly of the sire, as it has often been said, and rightly, that he forms half of the herd. First, decide upon the type of animal you wish to produce; second, get your ideal well fixed in mind, keeping it constantly before you, and finally, breed so as to gain that ideal animal by selecting breeding animals that come as near to it as it is possible to get. Any abnormal peculiarities of the animal organization constituting disease, whether of structure or function, are liable to be transmitted from parent to offspring.

FOR ARMORIAL BEARINGS.

There are sufficient people in England and Scotland paying an annual tax imposed by the inland revenue upon the use of armorial bearings to produce a sum of \$350,000 each year. The great bulk of this sum is paid by the people who care not an atom either about their family or their arms, but pay the tax regularly simply because they have carriages or plate heraldically decorated. The really old families of the realm, however, use armorial emblems for decorative purposes to an extent almost incredible in the eyes of these familiar with them only on note paper, table silver and carriage panels.

A hog is a four-legged animal that doesn't know better than to act like some human beings do.