

AS GOOD AS GOLD.

CHAPTER XXIV. (Continued.)

He turned to go away. Then something seemed to occur which his step-daughter fancied must really be a hallucination of hers. A murmur apparently came from Henchard's lips in which she detected the words, "You refused to see me!" reproachfully addressed to Lucetta. She could not believe that they were uttered by her step-father; unless, indeed, they might have been spoken to one of the yellow-gaitered farmers near them. Yet Lucetta seemed silent; and then all thought of the incident was dissipated by the humming of a song, which sounded as though from the interior of the machine. Henchard had by this time vanished into the market-house, and both the women glanced towards the corn-drill. They could see behind it the bent back of a man who was pushing his head into the internal works to master their simple secrets.

The hummed song went on:— "Tw—s on a s—m—r after—n A wee be—re the s—n w—nt d—n When Kitty wi' a brow n—w g—wn C—me ow're the n—lls to Gowrie."

Elizabeth-Jane had approved the singer in a moment and looked guilty if she did not know what Lucetta next recognized him, and more mistress of herself, said archly, "The Lass of Gowrie" from the inside of a seed-drill—what a phenomenon!

Satisfied at last with his investigation, the young man stood upright, and met their eyes across the summit. "We are looking at the wonderful new drill," Miss Templeman said. "But practically it is a very stupid thing—is it not?" she added, on the strength of Henchard's information.

"Stupid? Oh no!" said Farfrae gravely. "It will revolutionise sowing hereabout. No more sowers flinging about their seed broadcast, so that some falls by the wayside, and some among the thorns, and all that. Each grain will go straight to its intended place, and nowhere else at all!"

"Then the romance of the sower is gone for ever," observed Elizabeth-Jane, who felt herself at one with Farfrae in Bible-reading at least. "He that observeth the wind shall not sow," so the Preacher said; but his words will not be to the point any more. How things change."

"Yes, yes—it must be so!" Donald admitted, his gaze fixing itself on a small point far away. "But the machines are already very common in the east and north of England," he added apologetically.

Lucetta seemed to be rather outside this train of sentiment, her acquaintance with the Scriptures being somewhat limited. "Is the machine yours?" she asked of Farfrae.

"Oh no, madam," said he, becoming embarrassed and deferential at the sound of her voice, though with Elizabeth-Jane he was quite at his ease. "No, no—I merely recommended that it should be got."

In the silence that followed Farfrae appeared only conscious of her; to have passed from perception of Elizabeth into a brighter sphere of existence than she apprehended to. Lucetta, discerning that he was much mixed that day—partly in his mercantile mood and partly in his romantic one—said gaily to him—

"Well, don't forsake the machine for us," and went indoors with her companion.

The latter felt that she had been in the way, though why was unaccountable to her. Lucetta explained the matter somewhat by saying, when they were again in the sitting-room—

"I had occasion to speak to Mr. Farfrae the other day, and so I knew him this morning."

Lucetta was very kind towards Elizabeth that day. Together they saw the market thicken, and in course of time thin away with the slow decline of the sun.

Lucetta and Elizabeth looked out upon this, for though it was night, and the street lamps were lighted, they had kept their shutters unclosed. In the faint blink of the fire they spoke more freely.

"Your father was distant with you," said Lucetta.

"Yes." And having forgotten the momentary mystery of Henchard's seeming speech to Lucetta, she continued, "It is because he does not think I am respectable. I have tried to be so more than you can imagine, but in vain! My mother's separation from my father was unfortunate for me. You don't know what it is to have shadows like that upon your life."

Lucetta seemed to wince. "I do not—of that kind precisely," she said; "but you may feel a sense of disgrace—shame—in other ways."

"Have you ever had any such feeling?" said the younger innocently.

"Oh no," said Lucetta quickly. "I was thinking of—what happens sometimes when women get themselves in strange positions in the eyes of the world from no fault of their own."

"It must make them very unhappy afterwards."

"It makes them anxious; for might not other women despise them?" "Not altogether despise them. Yet not quite like or respect them. Lucetta winced again. Her past was by no means secure from investigation, even in Casterbridge. For one thing, Henchard had never returned to her the cloud of letters she had written and sent him in her first excitement. Possibly they were destroyed; but she could have wished that they had never been written.

her as Elizabeth-Jane was beginning to do. Lucetta passed on and closed the street door.

A seer's spirit took command of Elizabeth, impelling her to sit down by the fire, and divine events so surely from data already her own that they could be held as witnessed. She followed Lucetta thus mentally—saw her encounter Donald somewhere as if by chance—saw him wear his special look when meeting women, with an added intensity because this one was Lucetta. She depicted his impassioned manner; beheld the indecision of both between their lothness to separate and their desire not to be observed; depicted their shaking of hands; how they probably parted with frigidity in their general contour and movement, only in the smaller features showing the spark of passion, thus invisible to all but themselves. This discerning silent witch had not done thinking of these things when Lucetta came noiselessly behind her, and made her start.

It was all true as she had pictured—she could have sworn it. Lucetta had a heightened luminousness in her eye over and above the advanced color of her cheeks.

"You've seen Mr. Farfrae," said Elizabeth demurely.

"Yes," said Lucetta. "How did you know?"

She knelt down on the hearth and took her friend's hands excitedly in her own. But after all she did not say when or how she had seen him or what he had said.

That night she became restless; in the morning she was feverish; and at breakfast-time she told her companion that she had something on her mind—something which concerned a person in whom she was interested much. Elizabeth was earnest to listen and sympathize.

"This person—a lady—once admired a man much—very much," she said tentatively.

"Ah," said Elizabeth-Jane. "He did not think so deeply of her as she did of him. But in an impulsive moment, purely out of gratitude, he proposed to make her his wife. She agreed. But there was an unexpected hitch in the proceedings; though she had been so far compromised with him that she felt she could never belong to another man, as a pure matter of conscience, even if she should wish to. After that they were much apart, heard nothing of each other for a long time, and she felt her life quite closed up for her."

"Ah—poor girl!" "She suffered much on account of him; though I should add that he could not altogether be blamed for what had happened. At last the obstacle which separated them was providentially removed; and he came to marry her."

"How delightful!" "But in the interval she—my poor friend—had seen a man she liked better than him. Now comes the point. Could she in honor dismiss the first?"

"A man she liked better—that's bad!" "Yes," said Lucetta, looking pained at a boy who was swinging the town pump-handle. "It is bad! Though you must remember that she was forced into an equivocal position with the first man by an accident—that he was not so well educated or refined as the second, and that she had discovered some qualities in the first that rendered him less desirable as a husband than she had at first thought him to be."

"I cannot answer," said Elizabeth-Jane, thoughtfully. "It is so difficult. It wants a Pope to settle that."

"You prefer not to, perhaps?" Lucetta showed in her appealing tone how much she leaned on Elizabeth's judgment.

"Yes, Miss Templeman," admitted Elizabeth. "I would rather not say. Nevertheless, Lucetta seemed relieved by the simple fact of having opened out the situation a little, and was slowly convalescent of her headache. "Bring me a cooling-glass. How do I appear to people?" she said languidly.

"Well—a little worn," answered Elizabeth, eyeing her as a critic eyes a doubtful painting; fetching the glass, she enabled Lucetta to survey herself in it, which Lucetta anxiously did.

"I wonder if I wear well, as times go," she observed after a while.

"Yes—fairly."

"Where am I worst?" "Under your eyes—I notice a little brownness there."

"Yes. That is my worst place. I know. How many years more do you think I shall last before I get hopelessly plain?"

There was something curious in the way in which Elizabeth, though the younger, had come to play the part of experienced sage in these discussions. "It may be five years," said she judicially. "Or, with a quiet life, as many as ten. With no love you might calculate on ten."

CHAPTER XXV.

The next phase of the supercession of Henchard in Lucetta's heart was an experiment in calling on her, performed by Farfrae with some apparent trepidation. Conventionally speaking, he conversed with both Miss Templeman and her companion; but in fact it was rather that Elizabeth sat invisible in the room. Donald appeared not to see her at all, and answered her wise, homely little remarks, with curly indifferent monosyllables, his looks and faculties hanging on the woman who could boast of a more Protean variety in her phrases, moods, opinions, and also principles, than could Elizabeth. Lucetta had persisted in dragging her into the circle; but he had remained like an awkward third point which that circle would not touch.

She stoically looked from her bedroom window, and contemplated her fate as if it were written on the top of the church-tower hard by. "Yes," she said at last, bringing down her palm upon the sill with a pat: "He is the second man of that story she told me!"

All this time Henchard's smouldering sentiments towards Lucetta had been fanned into higher and higher inflammation by the circumstances of the case. Day after day proved to him, by her silence, that it was no use his thinking of bringing her round by holding aloof; so he gave in, and called upon her again, Elizabeth-Jane being absent.

He crossed the room to her with a heavy tread of some awkwardness, his strong, warm gaze upon her—like the sun beside the moon in comparison

with Farfrae's modest look—and with something of a hail-fellow bearing, as indeed, was not unnatural.

"Why, of course, I have called, Lucetta," he said. "What does that nonsense mean? You know I couldn't have helped myself if I had wished—that is, if I had any kindness at all. I've called to say that I am ready, as soon as custom will permit, to give you my own return for your devotion, and what you lost by it, in thinking too little of yourself and too much of me; to say that you can fix the day or month, with my full consent, whenever in your opinion it would be seemly; you know more of these things than I."

"It is full early yet," she said evasively.

"Yes, yes; I suppose it is. But you know, Lucetta, I felt directly my poor ill-used Susan died, and when I could not bear the idea of marrying again, that after what had happened between us it was most just not to let any unnecessary delay occur before putting things to rights. Still, I wouldn't call in a hurry, because—well, you can guess how this money you've come into made me feel."

"Upon my life I didn't know such furniture as this could be bought in Casterbridge," he said.

"Nor can it be," said she. "Nor will it till fifty years more of civilization have passed over the town. It took a wagon and four horses to get it here."

"How! The fact is, your setting up like this makes my bearing towards you rather awkward."

"Why?" "An answer was not really needed, and he did not furnish one. "Well," he went on; "there's nobody in the world I would have wished to see enter into this wealth before you, Lucetta; and nobody, I am sure, who will become it more." He turned to her with congratulatory admiration so fervid that she shrank somewhat, notwithstanding that she knew him so well.

"I am greatly obliged to you for all that," said she, rather with an air of speaking ritual.

"You may be obliged or not for't. Though the things I say may not have the polish of what you've lately learnt to expect for the first time in your life, they are real, my lady Lucetta."

"That's rather a rude way of speaking to me," pouted Lucetta, with stormy eyes.

"Not at all!" replied Henchard hotly. "But there, I don't want to quarrel with you. I come with an honest proposal for silencing your Jersey enemies, and you ought to be thankful."

"How can you speak so!" she answered, firing foolishly. "Knowing that my only crime was that of indulging in a foolish girl's passion for you, with too little regard for appearances, and that I was what I call innocent all the time they called me guilty, you ought not to be so cutting! I suffered enough at that worrying time, when you wrote to tell me of your wife's return, and my consequent dismissal, and if I am a little dependent now, surely the privilege is due to me?"

"Yes, it is," he said. "But it is not by what is, in this life, but by what appears, that you are judged; and I therefore think you ought to accept me—for your own good name's sake. What is known in your native Jersey may get known here."

"How you keep on about 'Jersey. I am English.'"

"Yes, yes. Well, what do you say to my proposal?"

"For the first time in their acquaintance Lucetta had the move; and yet she was backward. "For the present let things be," she said with some embarrassment. "Treat me as an acquaintance; and I'll treat you as one. Time will—"

she stopped; and he said nothing to fill the gap for a while, there being no pressure of half-acquaintance to drive them into speech if they were not minded for it.

"That's the way the wind blows, is it?" he said at last grimly, nodding an affirmative to his own thoughts.

"I shouldn't have thought it of woman!" he said, emphatically and by and by, rising and shaking himself into activity; while Lucetta was so anxious to divert him from any suspicion of the truth, that she asked him to be in no hurry. Bringing him some apples, she insisted upon paring one for him.

He would not take it. "No, no; such is not for me," he said dryly, and moved to the door. At going out, he turned his eye upon her.

"You come to live in Casterbridge entirely on my account," he said. "Yet now you are here you won't have anything to say to my offer!"

He had hardly gone down the staircase when she dropped upon the sofa, and jumped up again in a fit of desperation. "I will love him!" she cried passionately, "as for him—his hot-tempered and stern, and it would be madness to bind myself to him, knowing that I won't be a slave to the past!"

Yet having decided to break away from Henchard, one might have supposed her capable of aiming higher than Farfrae. But Lucetta reasoned nothing; she feared hard words from the people with whom she had been earlier associated; she had no relatives left; and with native lightness of heart took kindly to what fate offered.

(To be Continued.)

STRAWBERRIES AS FOOD.

In an address on "Horticulture and Health," before the American Association for the advancement of Science, Prof. W. R. Lazenby discussed the nutritive value of various fruits, and showed that an average man who should undertake to live on strawberries alone, would have to consume eighty-eight pounds of them in a day in order to obtain a sufficient quantity of one of the most important elements of food, protein. But while he was getting the proper amount of protein from the strawberries, they would give him seven times too much of another necessary compound, namely, carbohydrates. Forty-four pounds of tomatoes a day would supply nearly the right quantity and proportion of protein, carbohydrates and fat, the three most essential constituents of food. The chief value of fruit consists in its acids, which are important to health.

A FALSE REPORT.

They say that you are working on a flying machine, Genus. Not me. I have no time to waste on such foolishness. I'm getting up a perpetual motion.

EXCAVATIONS IN ENGLAND.

Human Remains Dug Out of the Grave Near Horncastle.

An interesting discovery has been made near Horncastle, England, says a correspondent. In the outskirts of the town Mr. G. W. Smith, seedsman and greengrocer, was employing a laborer to dig gravel on his premises. About 2 feet below the surface the man's "pick" struck against something hard, which on investigation, proved to be a leaden coffin. It was embedded in the gravel and in a fairly good state of preservation. The sides and ends, however, had lost cohesion between themselves and with the lid, the latter being also broken in the process of uncovering it. Owing to this want of cohesion the upper soil had fallen in and filled the interior. This was carefully removed, when there was disclosed to view a perfect skeleton, since pronounced by medical experts to be that of a female. The coffin was 5 feet 2 inches in length, the body, of course, being rather shorter. Last week, as the gravel digging was continued, a second leaden coffin was exhumed about a yard to the north of the former. This was in very much the same condition, the lid only being rather more broken in extricating it. This coffin was 5 feet 7 inches in length. The bones were larger, and are pronounced to be those of a man. Some twenty-four years ago three leaden coffins were found within 100 yards of the same site while workmen were digging with a view to laying the foundations of a Nonconformist chapel. No care was taken of these, and they were disposed of as old lead. Several Roman cinerary urns have been dug up at different times near the same locality, as well as many Roman coins and other antiquities. The main question is, Were these lead coffins Roman or Christian? On the same side of the town there is a public recreation ground called the "Wong," an old Saxon word for "field." Were they Saxons? From their lying east and west the correspondent is inclined to consider them Christian. Their somewhat rude construction, as well as the absence of any kind of inscription, also incline him to suppose that they were originally inner "shells" inclosed in a wooden exterior, but no trace of decayed wood was perceptible.

JENNY LIND AND THE QUEEN.

There is a pretty story told of Queen Victoria and Jenny Lind. It belongs to the year 1848, and shows how the modesty of two women, the Queen of England and the queen of song, made a momentary awkwardness which the gentle tact of the singer overcame.

It was on a night when Jenny Lind was to sing at Her Majesty's Theatre that the queen made her first public appearance after the memorable Chartist day. For the great artist, too, this was a first appearance, for it was the beginning of her season at a place where, the year before, she had won unparalleled fame.

It happened that the queen entered the royal box at the same moment that the prima donna stepped upon the stage. Instantly a tumult of acclamation burst from every corner of the theatre. Jenny Lind modestly retired to the back of the stage, waiting till the demonstration of loyalty to the sovereign should subside.

The queen, refusing to appropriate to herself that which she imagined to be intended for the artist, made no acknowledgment, either from the stage or the royal box.

At length, when the situation became embarrassing Jenny Lind, with ready tact, ran forward to the footlights and sang "God Save the Queen," which was caught up at the end of the solo by the orchestra, chorus and audience. The queen then came to the front of her box and bowed, and the opera was resumed.

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100 ACRES—Con. 7, Melancthon, 50 acres cleared, balance bush, good frame house and frame stables. Easy terms.
100 ACRES—Con. 1, S. W. Artemesia, 73 acres cleared, balance standing hardwood and slash. Watered by good well and spring, good frame buildings, good orchard, good soil. Level farm, 6 miles from Dundalk. Close to school and church, on splendid road. Very cheap.
150 ACRES—Con. 11, Nottawasaga, 90 acres cleared, balance bush, good frame house and barn, orchard, wells, etc. A capital farm.
100 ACRES—Con. 4, N. E. Melancthon, 70 acres cleared, balance bush, frame house and log outbuildings, good well. Farm is new and extra cheap.
100 ACRES—Range 4, S. W. Proton, 50 acres cleared, balance bush, well, good soil, small log house and stables, well and spring. Easy terms.

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