

AS GOOD AS GOLD.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

At this date there prevailed in Casterbridge a convivial custom—scarcely recognised as such, yet none the less established. On the afternoon of every Sunday a large contingent of the Casterbridge journeymen—steady church-goers and sedate characters having attended service, filed from the church doors across the way to the King of Prussia Inn. The rear was usually brought up by the choir, with their bass-voils, fiddles, and flutes under their arms.

The great point, the point of honour, on these sacred occasions, was for each man to strictly limit himself to half-a-pint of liquor. This scrupulosity was so well understood by the landlord, that the whole company was served in cups of that measure. They were all exactly alike—straight-sided, with leafless lime-trees done in ell-brown on the sides—one towards the drinker's lips, the other confronting his comrade. To wonder how many of these cups the landlord possessed altogether, was a favourite exercise of children in the marvellous. Forty at least might have been seen at these times in the large room, forming a ring round the margin of the great sixteen-legged oak table, like the monolithic circle at Stonehenge in its pristine days. Outside and above the forty cups came a circle of forty smoke jets from forty clay pipes; outside the pipes the countenances of the forty church-goers, supported at the back by a circle of forty-chairs.

The conversation was not the conversation of week days, but a thing altogether finer in point and higher in tone. They invariably discussed the sermon, dissecting it, weighing it, as above or below the average—the general tendency being to regard it as a scientific feat or performance which had no relation to their own lives, except as between critics and the thing criticised. The bass-viol player and the clerk usually spoke with more authority than the rest on account of their official connection with the preacher.

Now the King of Prussia was the inn chosen by Henchard as the place for closing his long term of dreamless years. He had so timed his entry as to be well established in the large room by the time the forty church-goers entered to their customary cups. The flush upon his face proclaimed at once that the vow of twenty years had lapsed, and the era of recklessness begun anew. He was seated on a small table, drawn up to the side of the massive oak board reserved for the churchmen, a few of whom nodded to him as they took their places and said, "How be ye, Mr. Henchard? Quite a stranger here."

Henchard did not take the trouble to reply for a few moments, and his eyes rested on his stretched-out legs and boots. "Yes," he said at length; "that's true. I've been down in spirit for weeks; some of ye know the cause. I am better now; but not quite serene. I want you fellows of the choir to strike up a tune; and what with that and this brew of Stannidge's I am in hopes of getting altogether out of my minor key."

"With all my heart," said the first fiddle. "We've let back our strings, that's true; but we can soon pull 'em up again. Sound A, neighbours, and give the man a shove." "I don't care a curse what the words be," said Henchard, "Hymns, ballads, or rantipole rubbish; the Rogue's March or the cherubim's warble—'tis all the same to me if 'tis good harmony, and well put out." "Well—eh, eh—it may be we can do that, and not a man among us that have sat in the gallery less than twenty years," said the leader of the band. "As 'tis Sunday, neighbours, suppose we raise the fourth Psalm, to Samuel Wakely's tune, as improve by me?" "Hang Samuel Wakely's tune!" said Henchard. "Chuck across one of your psalters—old Wiltshire is the only tune worth singing—the psalm-tune that would make my blood ebb and flow like the sea when I was a steady chap. I'll find some words to fit 'em." He took one of the psalters, and began turning over the leaves.

Chancing to look out of the window at that moment he saw a flock of people passing by, and perceived that it was the congregation of the upper church, now just dismissed, their sermon having been a longer one than that of the lower parish was favoured with. Among the rest of the leading inhabitants walked Mr. Councillor Farfrae, with Lucetta upon his arm, the observant and imitated of all the smaller tradesmen's womankind. Henchard's mood changed a little, and he continued to turn over the leaves. "Now, then," he said, "Psalm the Hundred-and-Ninth, to the tune of Wiltshire: verses ten to fifteen. I give ye the words:—

"His seed shall orphans be, his wife A widow plunged in grief; His vagrant children beg their bread Where none can give relief. "His all-got riches shall be made To usurers a prey; The fruit of all his toil shall be By strangers borne away. "None shall be found that to his wants Their mercy will extend, Or to his helpless orphan seed, The least assistance lend. "A swift destruction soon shall seize On his unhappy race; And the next age his hated name Shall utterly deface. "I know the Psalm—I know the Psalm," said the leader hastily; "but I would as lief not sing it. 'Twasn't made for singing. We chose it once when the gipsie's stole the pa'son's

mare, thinking to please him, but he were quite upset. Whatever Servant David wer thinking about wher sing made a Psalm that nobody can sing without disgracing himself. I can't fathom! Now, then, the fourth Psalm, to Samuel Wakely's tune, as improve by me."

"Od seize your sauce—I tell ye to sing the Hundred-and-Ninth, to Wiltshire, and sing it you shall!" roared Henchard. "Not a single one of all the rooming crew of ye goes out of this room till that Psalm is sung, and the table seized his back against it. "Now, then, go ahead, if you don't wish to have your cust pates broken!" "Don't be, don't be take on so!—'tis the Sabbath-day, and 'tis Servant David's words and not ours, perhaps we don't mind for once, hey?" said one of the terrified choir, looking round upon the rest. So the instruments were tuned and the comminatory verses sang.

"Thank ye, thank ye," said Henchard in a softened voice, his eyes growing downcast, and his manner that of a man much moved by the strains. "Don't ye blame David," he went on in low tones, shaking his head without raising his eyes. "He knew what he was about when he wrote that. If I could afford it, he hanged if I wouldn't keep a church choir at my own expense to play and sing to me at these low, dark times of my life. But the bitter thing is that when I was rich I didn't need what I could have, and now I'm poor I can't have what I need!"

While they paused, Lucetta and Farfrae passed again this time homeward, it being their custom to take, like others, a short walk out on the highway, and back, between church and tea-time. "There's the man we've been singing about," said Henchard.

The players and singers turned their heads, and saw his meaning. "Heaven forbid!" said the bass player. "'Tis the man," repeated Henchard doggedly. "Then, if I'd known," said the performer on the clarionet solemnly, "that 'twas meant for a living man, nothing should have drawn out of my wynd-pipe the breath for that Psalm, so help me!"

"Nor from mine," said the first singer. "But, thought I, as it was made so long ago, and so far away, perhaps there isn't much in it, so I'll oblige a neighbour: for there's nothing to be said against the tune."

"Ah, my boys, you've sung it," cried Henchard, triumphantly. "As for him, it was partly by his songs that he got over me, and heaved me up like that—and yet could double him up like that—and yet I don't." He laid the poker across his knee, bent it as if it were a twig, flung it down, and came away from the door. It was at this time that Elizabeth-Jane, having heard where her stepfather was, entered the room with a pale and agonised countenance. The choir and the rest of the company moved off in accordance with their half-pint regulation. Elizabeth-Jane went up to Henchard, and entreated him to accompany her home.

By this hour the volcanic fires of his nature had burnt down, and having drunk no great quantity as yet, he was inclined to acquiesce. She took his arm, and together they went on. Henchard walked blankly like a blind man, repeating to himself the last words of the singers: "And the next age his hated name Shall utterly deface."

At length he said to her, "I am a man to my word. I have kept my oath for twenty years; and now I can drink with a good conscience. . . . If I don't do for him—well, I am a fearful practical joker when I choose. He has taken away everything from me, and by heavens, if I meet him I won't answer for my deeds!"

These half-uttered words alarmed Elizabeth—all the more by reason of the still determination of Henchard's mien. "What will you do?" she asked cautiously, while trembling with disquietude, and guessing Henchard's allusion only too well.

Henchard did not answer and they went on till they had reached his cottage. "May I come in?" she said. "No, no; not to-day," said Henchard; and she went away feeling that to caution Farfrae was almost her duty as it was certainly her strong desire.

As on the Sunday, so on the weekdays, Farfrae and Lucetta might have been seen flitting about the town like two butterflies—or rather like a bee and a butterfly in league for life. She seemed to take no pleasure in going anywhere except in her husband's company; and hence when business would not permit him to waste an afternoon she remained indoors, waiting for the time to pass till his return, her face being visible to Elizabeth-Jane from her window aloft. The latter, however, did not say to herself, that Farfrae should be thankful for such devotion, as he was not yet reading, she cited Rosalind's exclamation: "Mistress, know yourself; down on your knees and thank heaven fasting for a good man's love."

She kept her eye upon Henchard also. One day he answered her inquiry for his health by saying that he could endure Abel Wiltshire's trying eyes, upon him while they worked together in the yard. "He is such a fool," said Henchard, "that he can never get out of his mind the time when I was master there."

"I'll come and wibble for you instead of him, if you will allow me," said she. Her motive in going to the yard was to get an opportunity of observing the general position of affairs on Farfrae's premises now that her stepfather was a workman there. Henchard's threats had alarmed her so much that she wished to see his behaviour when the two were face to face.

For two or three days after her arrival Donald did not make any appearance. Then one afternoon, the green door opened, and through came, first Farfrae, and at his heels Lucetta. Donald brought his wife forward without hesitation, it being obvious that he had no suspicion whatever of any antecedents in common between her and the now journeyman hay-trusser. Henchard did not turn his eyes towards either of the pair, keeping them fixed on either of the bond he twisted as if that alone absorbed him. A feeling of delicacy, which even prompted Farfrae to avoid anything that might seem like triumphing over a fallen rival, led him to keep away from the hay-barn where Henchard and his daughter were working, and to go on to the corn department. Meanwhile, Lucetta, never having been informed that Henchard had

entered her husband's service, rambled straight on to the barn, where she came suddenly upon Henchard, and gave vent to a little "Oh!" which the happy and busy Donald was too far off to hear.

Henchard, with withering humility hat to her as Whittle and the rest had done, to which she breathed a dead-alive "Good afternoon," said "I beg your pardon, ma'am?" said Henchard, as if he had not heard. "I said good afternoon," she faltered.

"Oh yes, good afternoon, ma'am," he replied, touching his hat again. "I am glad to see you, ma'am." Lucetta looked embarrassed, and Henchard continued: "For we humble workmen here feel it a great honour that a lady should look in and take an interest in us."

She glanced at him entreatingly; the sarcasm was too bitter, too unendurable. "Can you tell me the time, ma'am?" he asked.

"Yes," she said hastily; "half-past four."

"Thank ye. An hour and a half longer before we are released from work. Ah, ma'am, we of the lower classes know nothing of the gay leisure times such as you enjoy."

As soon as she could do so Lucetta left him, nodded and smiled to Elizabeth-Jane, and joined her husband at the other end of the enclosure where she could be seen leading him away by the outer gates, so as to avoid passing Henchard's again. That she had been taken by surprise was obvious.

The result of this casual encounter was, that the next morning a note was put into Henchard's hand by the postman.

"Will you, said Lucetta, with as much bitterness as she could put into a small communication, "will you kindly undertake not to speak to me in the biting undertones you used to-day, if I walk through the yard at any time? I bear you no ill-will, and I am only too glad that you should have employment of my dear husband; but in common fairness treat me as his wife, and do not try to make me wretched by covert words, or have committed no crime, and done you no injury."

"Poor fool!" said Henchard with fond savagery, holding out the note. "To know no better than commit herself in writing like this! Why, if I were to show that to her dear husband—pooh!" He threw the letter into the fire.

Lucetta took care not to come again among the hay and corn. She would rather have died than run the risk of encountering Henchard at such close quarters a second time. The gulf between them was growing wider every day. Farfrae was always considerate to his fallen acquaintance; but it was impossible that he should, not by degrees, cease to regard the ex-employer as more than one of his other workmen. Elizabeth saw this, and concealed his feelings under a cover of stolidity, fortifying his heart by drinking more freely at the King of Prussia every evening.

Often did Elizabeth-Jane, in her endeavours to prevent his taking other liquor, carry tea to him in a little basket at five o'clock. Arriving one day on this errand, she found her stepfather measuring up clover-seed and rape-seed in the corn-stores on the top floor, and she ascended to him. Each floor had a door opening into the air under a cat-head, from which a chain dangled for hoisting the sacks.

When Elizabeth's head rose through the trap she perceived that the upper door was open, and that her stepfather and Farfrae stood just within it in conversation; Farfrae being nearest the dizzy edge, and Henchard a little way behind. Not to interrupt them she remained on the steps. While raising her head any higher, she saw, for she had a terror of feeling certain, her stepfather slowly raise his hand to a level behind Farfrae's shoulders, a curious expression taking possession of his face. The young man was quite unconscious of the action, which was so indirect that, if Farfrae had observed it, he might almost have regarded it as an idle outstretching of the arm. But it would have been possible, by a comparatively light touch, to push Farfrae off his balance, and send him head over heels into the air.

Elizabeth felt quite sick at heart on thinking of what this might have meant. As soon as they turned she mechanically took the tea to him, left it, and returned. Reflecting she endeavoured to assure herself that the movement was an idle eccentricity, and no more. Yet, on the other hand, his subordinate position in an establishment where he once had been master might be acting on him like a mortal poison; and she finally resolved to caution Donald.

CHAPTER XXXIV. Next morning, accordingly, she rose at five o'clock, and went into the street. It was not yet light; a dense fog prevailed, and the town was as silent as it was dark. She moved on to the bottom of Corn street, and, knowing his time well, waited for a few minutes before she heard the familiar bang of his door, and then his quick walk towards her. She met him at the point where the last tree of the engirdling avenue flanked the last house in the street.

He could hardly discern her till, glancing inquiringly, he said, "What is that?" Henchard—and are ye up so early?"

She asked him to pardon her for waylaying him at such an unseemly time. "But I am anxious to mention something," she said. "And I wished not to alarm Mrs. Farfrae by calling, 'Yes?' said he, and what may it be? It's a superior kind of ye, I'm sure."

She now felt the difficulty of conveying to his mind the exact aspect of possibilities in her own. But she somehow began, and introduced Henchard's name. "I sometimes fear," she said with an effort, "that he may be betrayed into some attempt to—insult you, sir."

"Or to play some practical joke upon you, sir. Remember that he has been hardly used."

"But we are quite friendly." "Or to do something—that would injure you—hurt you—wound you." Every word cost her twice its length of pain. And she could see that Farfrae was still incredulous.

Farfrae, happy, and thinking no evil, persisted in making light of her fears. Thus they parted, and she went homeward, journeymen now being in the street, waggons going to the harness-makers for articles left to be repaired, farm-horses going to the shoeing-smiths, and the sons of labour being generally on the move. Elizabeth being generally unhappily, thinking she had done no good, and only made herself appear foolish by her weak note of warning.

But Donald Farfrae was one of those men upon whom an incident is never absolutely lost. The vision of Elizabeth's earnest face in the rimey dawn came back to him several times during the day. Knowing the solidity of her character, he did not treat her hints altogether as idle sounds.

But he did not desist from a kindly scheme on Henchard's account that engaged him just then; and when he met Lawyer Joyce, the town-clerk, latter in the day, he spoke of it as if nothing had occurred to damp it. "About that little seedsman's shop," he said; "the shop overlooking the churchyard, which is to let. It is not for myself I want it; but for our un-lucky fellow-townsmen, Henchard. If I would be a new beginning for him, if a small one; and I have told the Council that I would head a private subscription among them to set him up in it—that I would be fifty pounds, if they would make up the other fifty among them."

"Yes, yes; so I've heard; and there's nothing to say against it for that matter," the town-clerk replied, in his plain, frank way. "But, Henchard hates see what you don't; and 'tis right that ye—ay, hates ye; and 'tis right that ye was at the King of Prussia last night, saying in public that about you which a man ought not to say about another."

(To be Continued.)

BIGGEST BOY IN THE STATES.

A Lad of Remarkable Stature—Interesting Incidents About Him.

The biggest boy for his age in the United States lives at Oxford, Warren County, N.J. His name is Edward Scharrer, he is 16 years old, and his height is already six feet two and a half inches without his shoes. If he should keep on growing at the ordinary rate from now until he is 21 years old, he would then be over seven feet in height. He himself believes that when he reaches that age he will stand fully seven feet four inches.

It is usually the case when phenomenal growth takes place in childhood that the subject is physically a weakling. The tremendous strain upon the vitality resulting from such unusual growth generally enfeebls the entire system; it amounts to a disease, and is so regarded by physicians.

NEVER KNEW SICKNESS.

Scharrer, however, has never seen a sick day in all his sixteen years. He is as strong and healthy as a young animal, and has an appetite commensurate to his size. Just at present, he weighs 100 pounds, and is gaining at the rate of about a pound a week. He is not at all ill-proportioned, and his face is only in the boyishness of his age that his lack of years is noticeable. He has the stride and carriage usual in a man at the age at which such height and weight are not extraordinary.

This phenomenon in the way of growth is the youngest of a family of eight children. Every one of his brothers and sisters are of good height, perfectly formed, bright and healthy. None of them have developed any signs of anything abnormal, and they look upon their big brother with as much astonishment as is felt by strangers.

HIS WORK IS PLAY.

This extraordinary youth is well fitted to perform the work of a stout farm hand in every particular. There is no one in the neighborhood who can beat him pitching hay, and when it comes to breaking a horse, his strength makes him a master hand. In fact, most of the tasks that are considered onerous because of the strength required to perform them are child's play to this overgrown boy.

Even as a baby he was unusually large; by the time he had reached the age of 5 years he was as tall and well formed as the ordinary boy of 8, and at 10 he had attained the growth and the general appearance of a boy of 16.

Mentally, he is all that could be expected of a boy of his age. He is a good student, and has made the most of his rather limited opportunities for education.

The question of a calling in life is not bothering Scharrer at all. He says he will remain a farmer, and a farmer he will remain. Nothing else has any attraction for him whatever; he seems to have an inborn love for the soil.

Unless, however, nature presently calls a halt, New Jersey will furnish the legitimate successor to Chang, the Chinese giant, and the late lamented Captain Bates.

GUN THAT NEEDS NO POWDER.

One of the most remarkable of war inventions is attributed to the ingenuity of a Frenchman, Paul Giffard. His "miracle gun" is a repeating rifle which employs no gunpowder. Liquefied air, obtained under pressure at a temperature hundreds of degrees below zero, and thus representing an enormous expansive power, is the projecting force. This rifle is described as being much lighter in weight than an ordinary rifle. The steel carriage, nine inches long, and as thick as one's thumb, contains 300 bullets, which may be discharged as quickly or as slowly as desired. There is no smoke and no flash, only a sharp and low report. As soon as one cartridge is empty, another can be screwed on instantly, 300 shots costing but two and a half cents.

HONEY FROM APPLES.

In Chile they let nothing in the apple go to waste. There, after making cider and wine from their apples, they extract from the refuse a white and finely flavored spirit, and by another process they procure a sweet treacle, or, as they term it, honey.



Fifty Years Ago.

This is the way it was bound to look when grandfather had his "pictor took." These were the shadows cast before the coming of Conjurer Daguerre. And his art; like a girl in a pinafore some day to bloom to a goddess fair. Men certainly were not as black, we know, as they pictured them, 50 years ago.

Ayer's Sarsaparilla

began to make new men, just as the new pictures of men began to be made. Thousands of people fronted the camera with skins made clean from blotch and blemish, because they had purified the blood with Ayer's Sarsaparilla. It is as powerful now as then. Its record proves it. Others imitate the remedy; they can't imitate the record:

50 Years of Cures.

It was ten minutes after the Warden had all the members took the exception of Messrs. Sizer came in latter on.

MURRAY & LANMAN'S FLORIDA WATER

THE SWEETEST MOST FRAGRANT MOST REFRESHING AND ENDURING OF ALL PERFUMES FOR THE HANDKERCHIEF, TOILET OR BATH.

ALL DRUGGISTS, PERFUMERS AND GENERAL DEALERS.

Farmers, Threshers and Millmen

AT THE BRICK FOUNDRY -- WE MAKE --

Furnace Kettles, Power Staw Cutters, Hot Air Furnaces, Shingle Machinery, Band Saws, Rotary Machines, hand or power; Coasting Farmers' Kettles, Columns, Church Seat Ends, Bed Fasteners, Fencing, Pump-Makers' Supplies, School Desks, Fanning Mill Castings Light Castings and Builders' Supplies, Sole Plates and Points for the different ploughs in use. Coasting repairs for Flour and Saw Mills.

-- WE REPAIR --

Steam Engines, Horse Powers, Separators, Mowers, Reapers. Circular and Cross-Cut Saws Gummed, Filed and Set. I am prepared to fill orders for good shingles.

CHARTER SMITH, DURHAM FOUNDRYMAN

LADIES! THE LUXURY OF SECURITY

Dr. LeRoy's Female Pills. The only reliable and trustworthy preparation known. Safest, surest, and most effective remedy ever discovered for all irregularities of the female system. Sealed circular free. Price \$1 per box of 60 pills, or by mail securely sealed on receipt of price. LeRoy Pill Co. Victoria St., Toronto, Can.

Wanted—An Idea

Who can think of some simple thing to patent? Write JOHN WEDDERBURN & CO., Patent Attorneys, Washington, D. C. for their \$1.00 prize offer and list of two hundred inventions wanted.

The Chronicle is the most widely read newspaper published in the County of Grey.

The County

(Continued from last page) Reports were read for the County Property, Report Committee recommended that book case be put in the accordance with the request of the County Council. The County Council, having received the report of the County Council, had a session, and committee of the matter be referred to the County Council. The County Council, having received the report of the County Council, had a session, and committee of the matter be referred to the County Council.

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