

AS GOOD AS GOLD.

CHAPTER XXXIV. (Continued.)

"Is it so—and is it so?" said Farfrae, looking down. "Why should he do it?" added the young man bitterly; "what harm have I done him that he should try to wrong me?"

"God only knows," said Joyce, lifting his eyebrows. "It shows much long-suffering in you to put up with him, and keep him in your employ."

"But I cannot discharge a man who was once a good friend to me. How can I forget that, when I came here, 'twas he enabled me to make a footing for myself? No, no. As long as I've a day's work to offer he shall do it if he chooses. 'Tis not I who will deny him such a little as that. But I'll drop the idea of establishing him in a shop till I can think more about it."

It grieved Farfrae much to give up this scheme. But a damp having been thrown over it by these and other voices in the air, he went and countermanded his orders. The then occupier of the shop was in it when Farfrae spoke to him, and feeling it necessary to give some explanation of his withdrawal from the negotiation, Donald mentioned Henchard's name, and stated that the intentions of the Council had been changed.

The occupier was much disappointed, and straightway informed Henchard, as soon as he saw him, that a scheme of the Council for setting him up in a shop had been knocked on the head by Farfrae. And thus out of error enmity grew.

When Farfrae got indoors that evening the tea-kettle was singing on the high hob of the semi-egg-shaped grate. Lucetta, light as a sylph ran forward and seized his hands, whereupon Farfrae dily kissed her.

"Oh!" she cried playfully, turning to the window. "See—the blinds are not drawn down, and the people can look in—what a scandal!"

When the candles were lighted, the curtains drawn, and the tawin sat at tea, she noticed that he looked serious. Without directly inquiring why, she let her eyes linger solicitously on his face.

"Who has called?" he absently asked. "Any folk for me?"

"No," said Lucetta. "What's the matter, Donald?"

"Well—nothing worth talking of," he responded sadly.

"Then never mind it. You will get through it. Scotchmen are always lucky."

"No—not always!" he said, shaking his head gloomily as he contemplated a crumb on the table. "I know many who have not been so! There was Sandy Macfarlane, who started to America to try his fortune, and he was drowned; and Archibald Leith, he was murdered! And poor Willie Dunbleeze and Maitland Macfreeze—they fell in to bad courses, and went the way of all such!"

"Why—you old goosey—I was only speaking in a general sense, of course. You are always so literal. Now when we have finished tea, sing me that funny song about high-heeled shoes and silver tags, and the one-and-forty wipers."

"No, no. I couldna sing to-night! It's Henchard—he hates me; so that I may not be his friend if I would. I would understand why there should be a wee bit envy; but I cannot see a reason for the whole intensity of what he feels. Now can you, Lucetta? It is more like old-fashioned rivalry in love than just a bit of rivalry in trade."

Lucetta had grown somewhat waxy.

"I give him employment—I cannot refuse it. But neither can I blind myself to the fact that with a man of passions such as his, there is no safeguard for conduct!"

"What have you heard—oh Donald, dearest?" said Lucetta in alarm. The words on her lips were "anything about me"—but she did not utter them. She could not, however, suppress her agitation and her eyes filled with tears.

"No, no—it is not so serious as ye fancy," declared Farfrae soothingly; though he did not know its seriousness as well as she.

"I wish you would do what we have talked of," mournfully remarked Lucetta. "Give up business, and go away from here. We have plenty of money, and why should we stay?"

Farfrae seemed seriously disposed to discuss this move, and they talked thereon till a visitor was announced. Their neighbour Alderman Vatt came in.

"You've heard, I suppose, of poor Dr. Chalkfield's death? Yes—died this afternoon at five," said Mr. Vatt. Chalkfield was the councilman who had succeeded to the Mayoralty in the preceding November.

Farfrae was sorry at the intelligence, and Mr. Vatt continued: "Well, we know he's been going some days, and as his family is well provided for we must take it all as it is. Now I have called to ask ye this—quite privately. If I should nominate ye to succeed him, and there should be no particular opposition, will ye accept the chair?"

"But there are folk whose turn is before mine; and I'm over young, and may be thought pushing!" said Farfrae after a pause.

"Not at all. I don't speak for myself only, several have named it. You won't refuse?"

"We thought of going away," interposed Lucetta, looking at Farfrae anxiously.

"It was only a fancy," Farfrae murmured. "I wouldna refuse if it is the wish of a respectable majority in the Council."

"Very well, then, look upon yourself as elected. We have had old men long enough."

From this evening onward Lucetta was very uneasy. If she had not been imprudence incarnate, she would not

have acted as she did when she met Henchard by accident a day or two later. It was in the bustle of the market, when no one could readily notice their discourse.

"Michael," said she, "I must again ask you what I asked you months ago—now to return me any letters or papers of mine that you may have—unless you have destroyed them. You must see how desirable it is that the time at Jersey should be blotted out, for the good of all parties."

"Why, bless the woman—I packed up every scrap of your handwriting to give you in the coach—but you never appeared."

She explained how the death of her aunt had prevented her taking the journey on that day. "And what became of the parcel then?" she asked.

He could not say—he would consider. When she was gone he recollected that he had left a heap of useless papers in his former dining-room safe—built up in the wall of his old house—now occupied by Farfrae. The letters might have been amongst them.

A grotesque grin shaped itself on Henchard's face. Had that safe been opened?

He, in the meantime, festering with indignation at some erroneous intelligence of Farfrae's opposition to the scheme for installing him in the little seed-shop was greeted with the news of the municipal election (which, by reason of Farfrae's comparative youth and his Scottish nativity—a thing unprecedented in the case—had an interest far beyond the ordinary).

The next morning he went to the corn-yard as usual and about eleven o'clock Donald entered through the green door, with no trace of the worshipful about him.

"I was going to ask you," said Henchard, about a packet that I may possibly have left in my old safe in the dining-room."

"If so, there it is now," said Farfrae. "I have never opened the safe at all as yet; for I keep my few securities at the bank, to sleep easy o' nights."

"It was not of much consequence— to me," said Henchard. "But I'll call for it this evening, if you don't mind."

It was quite late when he fulfilled his promise. Farfrae invited him into the dining-room, where he at once unlocked the iron safe built into the wall, his Henchard's safe, made by an ingenious locksmith under his direction. Farfrae drew thence the parcel, and other papers, with apologies for not having returned them.

"Never mind," said Henchard drily. "The fact is they are letters mostly. Yes," he went on, sitting down and unfolding Lucetta's passionate bundle, "here they be. That ever I should see 'em again! I hope Mrs. Farfrae is well after her exertions of yesterday?"

"She has felt a bit weary; and has gone to bed early on that account."

Henchard returned to the letters, sorting them over with interest, Farfrae being seated at the other end of the dining-table. "You don't forget, of course," he resumed "that curious chapter in the history of my past, which I told you of, and that you gave me some assistance in? These letters are, in fact, related to that unhappy business. Though, thank God, it is all over now."

"What became of the poor girl?" asked Farfrae.

"Lucky she married, and married well," said Henchard. "So that these reproaches she poured out on me do not now cause me any twinges, as they might otherwise have done. Just listen to what an angry woman will say!"

Farfrae, willing to humor Henchard, though quite uninterested, and bursting with yawns, gave well-mannered attention.

"For me," the letter went on, "there is practically no future. A creature too unconventionally devoted to you—who feels it impossible that she can be wife of any other man; and who is yet no more to you than the first woman you meet in the street—such am I. I quite acquit you of any intention to wrong me, yet you are the door through which wrong has come to me. That in the event of your present wife's death you will place me in her position is a consolation so far as it goes—but how far does it go? Thus I sit here, forsaken by my few acquaintances, and forsaken by you."

"That's how she went on to me," said Henchard, "acres of words like that, when what had happened was no fault of mine."

"Yes," said Farfrae absently, "such is the way of women."

Henchard unfolded another letter, and read it through likewise, stopping at the subscription as before. "Her name I don't give," he said blandly. "As I didn't marry her, and another man did, I can scarcely do that in fairness to her."

"Tr-rue, tr-rue," said Farfrae. "But why didn't you marry her when your wife Susan died?" Farfrae asked this, and the other questions, in the comfortably different tone of one whom the matter very remotely concerned.

"Ay—well, you may ask that," said Henchard, the new-moon-shaped grin adumbrating itself again upon his mouth. "In spite of all her protestations, when I came forward to do so, as in generosity bound, she was not the woman for me."

"She had already married another—I presume."

Henchard answered "Yes."

"The young lady must have had a heart that bore transplanting very readily."

"She had, she had," said Henchard, emphatically.

He opened a third and fourth letter, and read. The truth was that, as may be divined, he had quite intended to effect a grand catastrophe at the end of this drama by reading out the name; he had come to the house with no other thought. But sitting here in cold blood he could do it even. Such a wrecking of hearts appalled even him.

CHAPTER XXXV.

As Donald stated, Lucetta had retired early to her room because of fatigue. She had however, not gone to rest but sat in the bedside chair reading, and thinking over the events of the day. At the ringing of the door-bell by Henchard she wondered who it should be that would call at that comparatively late hour. The dining-room was almost under her bedroom; she could hear that somebody was admitted there, and presently the indistinct murmur of a person reading became audible.

The usual time for Donald's arrival upstairs came and passed, yet still the reading and conversation went on. This was very singular. At last she left the room, and descended the stairs. Her own words greeted her, in Henchard's voice, like spirits from the grave.

Lucetta leant upon the bannister with her cheek against the smooth hand-rail, as if she would make a friend of it in her misery. Rigid in this position, more and more words fell successively upon her ear.

"One word," he was saying, "is it quite fair to this young woman's memory to read at such length to a stranger—what was intended for your eye alone?"

"Well, yes," said Henchard. "By not giving her name I make it an example of all womankind, and not a scandal to one."

"If I were you I would destroy them," said Farfrae. "As another man's wife it would injure the woman if it were known."

"No, I shall not destroy them," murmured Henchard, putting the letters away. Then he arose, and Lucetta heard no more.

She went back to her bedroom in a semi-paralysed state. For very fear she could not undress, but sat on the edge of the bed, waiting. Would Henchard let out the secret in his parting words? Her suspense was terrible.

The door slammed; she could hear her husband bolting it. After looking round in his customary way he came leisurely up the stairs. Her gaze hung doubtful for a moment, then to her joyous amazement she saw that he looked at her with the rallying smile of one who had just been relieved of a scene that was irksome. She could hold out no longer, and sobbed hysterically.

When he had restored her Farfrae naturally enough spoke of Henchard. "Of all men he was the least desirable as a visitor," he said, "but it's my belief that he's just a bit crazed. He has been reading to me a long lot of letters relating to his past life; and I could do no less than indulge him by listening."

That was sufficient. Henchard, then, had not told Henchard's last words to Farfrae, in short, as he stood on the door-step, had been these: "Well—I'm much obliged to ye for listening. I may tell more about her some day."

Next morning Lucetta remained in bed, meditating how to parry this inopportune attack. The bold stroke of telling Donald the truth, dimly conceived, was yet too bold.

She decided to employ persuasion—not with Donald, but with the enemy himself. Having laid her plan, she rose, and wrote to him who kept her on these tenterhooks:

"I overheard your interview with my husband last night, and saw the shift of your revenge. The very thought of it crushes me. Have pity on a distressed woman. If you could see me you would relent. You do not know how anxiety has told upon me lately. I will be at the Ring at the time you leave work—just before the sun goes down. Please come that way. I cannot rest till I have seen you face to face, and heard from your mouth that you will carry this horse-play no farther. If ever tears and pleadings have served the weak to fight the strong, let them do so now!"

With this view she made a toilette which differed from all she had ever attempted before. She had not slept all the previous night, and that you produced upon her naturally pretty though slightly worn features, the aspect of a countenance ageing prematurely from extreme sorrow. She selected—as much from want of spirit as design—her poorest, plainest, and longest discarded attire.

To avoid the contingency of being recognised she retied herself, and slipped out of the house quietly. She was not disappointed in the fearful hope with which she awaited him. Henchard came over the top, descended and Lucetta waited breathlessly.

His manner as he had come down had been one of cynical carelessness; but he now put away his grim half-smile, and said, in a kindly subdued tone, "Good night 't'ye. Of course I'm glad to come if you want me."

"Oh, thank you," she said apprehensively.

"I am sorry to see you looking so ill," he stammered, with unconcealed concern.

"How can you be sorry," she asked, "when you deliberately cause it?"

"What?" said Henchard, uneasily. "Is it anything I have done that has pulled you down like that?"

"It is all your doing," said she. "I have no other grief. My happiness would be secure enough, but for your threats. Oh, Michael, don't wreck me like this! You might think that you have done enough! When I came here I was a young woman; now I am rapidly becoming an old one. Neither my husband nor any other man will regard me with interest long."

Henchard was disarmed. His old feeling of supercilious pity for womankind in general was intensified by this suppliant appearing here as the double of the first.

"Well, what do you want me to do?" he said gently. "I am sure I shall be very willing. My reading of those letters was only a sort of practical joke, and I revealed nothing."

"To give me back the letters and any papers you may have that breathe of matrimony or worse."

"So be it. Every scrap shall be yours. But between you and me, Lucetta, he is sure to find out something of the matter, sooner or later."

"Ah!" she said with eager tremulousness; but not till I have proved myself faithful and deserving wife to him, and then he may forgive me everything."

"H'm—I hope so," he said. "But you shall have the letters without fail, and your secret shall be kept. I swear it."

"How good you are!—how shall I get them?"

He reflected, and said he would send them the next morning. "Now don't doubt me," he added. "I can keep my word."

(To be Continued.)

BOYS THE BEST COOKS.

A cooking school teacher says that she finds it much easier to teach boys to cook than to teach girls. The boys learn more quickly, and are more interested and attentive at the lessons. This, of course, ought not to be so, but others than this cooking teacher have said the same thing. Boys, too, learn to sew very readily, and sew extremely well when they make the effort to learn at all.

DARE-DEVIL CAPT. GORDON.

The Ambitious Second Mate Found Out What the Skipper Was Made Of.

The Old Skipper set down his glass, and, drawing his knurly hand across his frothy beard, emitted a growl of displeasure.

"Mere bilge-water," he said, in a lower-hold voice that had done service in a Cape Horn gale. "Nothing seems as it was in the old days."

The company did not dispute the grizzled shellback. They knew that there was a yarn coming, and they simply sat still and looked expectantly at him.

"The best tasting liquor I ever hoisted aboard," the old fellow said, "was when I was on the clipper Memnon. I shipped as second mate to Capt. Gordon. He had a reputation as a driver second to no other skipper then afloat. He had lost the packet Anglo-Saxon, and, being young and ambitious, was desirous of redeeming himself. It was blowing fresh one day and we had the ship down to gullant sail, while the wind abeam and a devil of a cross-sea running. I had the middle watch, and, as the Captain went below for a short snooze, he says to me, 'Keep her a-going, and if it freshens any and you get scared give me a call.'"

"The old craft was then a-boiling along, and the deck was as wet as a half-tide rock. Thinks I to myself, 'I'll see what you're made of—ship and skipper, both.' I wanted to make a reputation, and, besides, I had very little to risk."

"Ay, ay, sir, I'll keep her a-going," was my reply to the skipper, and I did crack it to her. The watch was about half out, and the ship was jumping and diving like a porpoise, and her masts springing like whips. I began to get a little nervous, and finally concluded that it was time to ease her a little, particularly as some of the crew were looking at me, and the wind was heading the ship off. I dived below. The Captain was on the transom in his clothes.

"Capt. Gordan," I says, 'the ship is laboring some, the wind is veering, and I fear we'll jump the foremost out. 'Tis time to shorten sail, I think, for the water on the main deck is up to your knees.' Turning over with his back toward me, he says, nonchalantly: "When it gets up to your chin give me another call."

"I jumped up on deck quicker than I came down, dumfounded at such an exhibition of recklessness. I took the responsibility, however, of swinging the ship off some, and, the water smoothing a little, we began to make better weather."

"Then I went below and took a nip of that good whiskey to settle my nerves."

IMPORTANCE OF RESTING.

There are beautifiers by the legion advertised daily, and there is no doubt but that many of them are very good. Certain baths and certain lotions with vigilant care will keep the wrinkles at bay and the skin soft and smooth for a longer time than if nature were unaided. And yet there is one simple beautifier—something that every house-keeper can have. As a rule women either stand or sit too much; they stand when they could sit and sit when they could lie down. If every woman who could would make a hard couch or the floor her habitual resting place when off duty, she would have less crow's-feet and not wear that jaded look so often.

Absolute repose comes to reclining muscles, and absolute repose comes to the overstrung nerves when the muscles are relaxed. If this rest is only for five minutes it will be of great benefit; but the mind should be freed from care and worry to have best results. Such rests are worth a dozen of the so-called rests in rocking-chairs or arm-chairs. Many of the weary house-keepers could woo back some of their lost freshness by such daily lapses into "nothingness." Out of the long stretch of weary hours from sunrise to sunset, ten to fifteen minutes, or even a half hour would never be missed, and it would do so much good.

BREAKING THE NEWS GENTLY.

The doctor came into the room rubbing his hands and smiling.

Everything all right? asked the man who was anxiously waiting for him.

Couldn't do better, returned the doctor.

Good, said the man, with a sigh of relief. Then, when he saw that the doctor intended to say nothing more, he asked with some hesitation: "Er—ah—boy or girl?"

The doctor stopped rubbing his hands and looked a trifle uneasy, as if the task before him were not just to his liking.

Well, he said at last, you'll need a tandem wheel for it.

NEEDLE MACHINES.

Needs are all made by machinery. The piece of mechanism by which the needle is manufactured takes the rough steel wire, cuts it into proper lengths, files the point, flattens the head, pierces the eye. Then sharpens the tiny instrument and gives it that polish familiar to the purchaser. There is also a machine by which needles are counted and placed in the papers in which they are sold, these being afterward folded by the same contrivance.

A WONDERFUL WATERPOUT.

On the night of the 25th of November last a waterpout burst over the city of Povoacao, on the island of Saint Michael, one of the Azores, and according to the report accompanying a petition for aid, which has been sent abroad, almost in an instant the deluge of water rose above the roofs of the low houses. The homes of thousands were destroyed, a bomees of thousands curred, and on its way to the sea the water plowed a broad, deep channel nine miles long.

Sarsaparilla Sense.

Any sarsaparilla is sarsaparilla. True. So any tea is tea. So any flour is flour. But grades differ. You want the best. It's so with sarsaparilla. There are grades. You want the best. If you understood sarsaparilla as well as you do tea and flour it would be easy to determine. But you don't. How should you? When you are going to buy a commodity whose value you don't know, you pick out an old established house to trade with, and trust their experience and reputation. Do so when buying sarsaparilla.

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TRAVERTON.

Miss Nellie Parker, of York is spending this week among pupils and friends. Johnnie Dave are not likely to rest nights, nor yet be very chatty. Everybody is pleased to see Nelson, Jr., who is up from a fortnight's holidays. Among the big gals, Thursday, we noticed Ryan and wife were as usual and fine-looking a wedding can be found. R. Cook, of Escherton's gone into stock-deal. He was down here on Saturday. Mr. A. Cook has been the most of the winter. Messrs. Wright and slicing up the logs of late Goodfellow's. Business at the mills now. Last week was a territorial to neighbor John McNall. He had to sleep alone, being the old home in Her brother Dan drove Saturday, so Mac was Sunday. Mr. and Mrs. T. Cook of last week with Norman. The boys are wild over Hill pie social. They've all the particulars and are the champion pastry. Parsons and priests rate and belabor the liquor evils. Well, that's a we'd suggest that they of the rut and denounce evils just as paramount when farmers, laborers are struggling might and honest, don't accuse them for gold. That's pure. No wonder townspeople sometimes about dilapidators. We saw a pile yard of lower tower gulls the ribbles of a Moss Lake "detests" ion," but fairly detest Poor dear! I feel so cause the members of are not very choice acular, and the backs are green with jealousy, outspoken preference, trust your influence amend our grievous. Rev. Mr. Isaacs of a favorable impression Sunday. His mission was good. Rev. Mr. Grey, of on the C. P. R. train is visiting his daughter Banks. Misses Lizzie B. McKinnon of your the entertainment lining. Miss Susie Kenne up with the Grippe, but is better now. The entertainm school last Friday a success and was nearly all the success. Mr. Irwin Dixon was one of the speaking. Mr. Dixon the much credit for the children trained to The proceeds, with purpose of buying children, amounting Mr. and Mrs. Holstein paid the Mr and Mrs. T. Tuesday. Mr Ad subscriber and real icle. DOR... Mr. Donald Blaw Bentinck died at A. G. Black on W last. The decas respected. The red at Latona Ce The Rev. Fath ed the service in Sunday last. Mr. and Miss guests of Mr. home recently. Mr. R. Mills a week for their n Miss Lizzie I worth spent Su the village whil Friday and Satu Traverston. The debating auized in Stewa important meet when the follow lected for the st Riddle Sec. R. D. Stewart, J. On Wednesday inst. Mr. Timot stock was unite Mary Agnes Q Quirk of this v was solemnized Paul's church orated for the Father Bucke groom was hel ing ordeal by l