THREE FEATHERS

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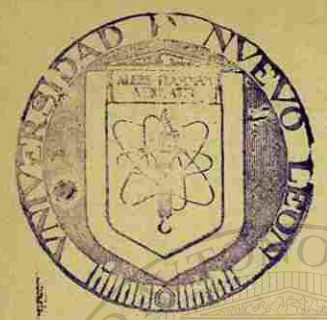

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"It's a nice house to go into, ain't it?" said the boy, with a rude laugh. "Look at it!"

It was, indeed, a nice house,—a quaint, old-fashioned, strongly-built place, that had withstood the western gales for some hundred and fifty years. And it was set amid beautiful trees; it overlooked a picturesque little valley; and from this garden-terrace in front of it you could catch a glimpse of a tiny harbour on the Cornish coast, with its line of blue water passing out through the black rocks to the sea beyond.

"And why shouldn't the blinds be down?" said the old lady. "It's the anniversary of your father's death."

"It's always the anniversary of somebody's death," her grandson said, impatiently flicking at a standard rose with his riding-switch. "And it's nothing but snivel, snivel from morning till night, with the droning of the organ in the chapel, and the burning of incense all about the place, and everybody and everything dressed in black, and the whole house haunted by parsons. The parsons about the neighbourhood ain't enough,—they must come from all

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parts of the country ; and you run against 'em in the hall ; and you knock them over when you're riding out at the gate ; and just when you expect to get a pheasant or two at the place you know, out jumps a brace of parsons that have been picking brambles."

"Harry, Harry, where do you expect to go to, if you hate the parsons so ?" the old lady said ; but there was scarcely that earnestness of reproof in her tone that ought to have been there. "And yet it's the way of all you Trelyons. Did I ever tell you how your grandfather hunted poor Mr. Pascoe that winter night ? Dear, dear, what a jealous man your grandfather was at that time, to be sure ! And when I told him that John Pascoe had been carrying stories to my father, and how that he (your grandfather) was to be forbidden the house, dear me, what a passion he was in ! He wouldn't come near the house after that ; but one night, as Mr. Pascoe was walking home, your grandfather rode after him, and overtook him, and called out, 'Look here, sir ! you have been telling lies about me. I respect your cloth, and I won't lay a hand on you ; but, by the Lord, I will hunt you till there isn't a rag on your back !' And sure enough he did ; and when poor Mr. Pascoe understood what he meant he was nearly out of his wits ; and off he went over the fields, and over the walls, and across the ditches, with your grandfather after him, driving his horse at him when he stopped, and only shouting with laughter in answer to his cries and prayers. Dear, dear, what a to-do there was all over the country side after that ; and your grandfather durstn't come near the house,—or he was too proud to come ; but we got married for all that—oh yes ! we got married for all that."

The old lady laughed in her quiet way.

"You were too good for a parson, grandmother, I'll be bound," said Master Harry Trelyon. "You are one of the right sort, you are. If I could find any girl, now, like what you were then, see if I wouldn't try to get her for a wife."

"Oh yes !" said the old lady, vastly pleased, and smiling a little ; "there were two or three of your opinion at that time, Harry. Many a time I feared they would be the death of each other. And I never could have made up my

mind, I do believe, if your grandfather hadn't come in among them to settle the question. It was all over with me then. It's the way of you Trelyons ; you never give a poor girl a chance. It isn't ask and have,—it's come and take ; and so a girl becomes a Trelyon before she knows where she is. Dear, dear, what a fine man your grandfather was, to be sure ; and such a pleasant, frank, good-natured way he had with him ! Nobody could say No twice to him. The girls were all wild about him ; and the story there was about our marriage ! Yes, indeed, I was mad about him too, only that he was just as mad about me ; and that night of the ball, when my father was angry because I would not dance, and when all the young men could not understand it, for how did they know that your grandfather was out in the garden, and asking nothing less than that I should run away with him there and then to Gretna ? Why, the men of that time had some spirit, lad, and the girls, too, I can tell you ; and I couldn't say No to him ; and away we went just before daylight, and I in my ball-dress, sure enough, and we never stopped till we got to Exeter. And then the fight for fresh horses, and off again ; and your grandfather had such a way with him, Harry, that the silliest of girls would have plucked up her spirits ! And oh ! the money he scattered to get the best of the horses at the posting-houses ; for, of course, we knew that my father was close after us ; and if he overtook us, then a convent in France for me, and good-bye to George Trelyon——"

"Well, grandmother, don't stop !" cried the lad before her : he had heard the story a hundred times, but he could have heard it another hundred times, merely to see the light that lit up the beautiful old face.

"We didn't stop, you booby !" she said, mistaking his remark ; "stopping wasn't for George Trelyon. And oh ! that morning as we drove into Carlisle, and we looked back, and there, sure enough, was my father's carriage a long way off. Your grandfather swore, Harry—yes, he did ; and well it might make a man swear. For our horses were dead beat, and before we should have time to change, my father would be up to claim me. But there ! it was the luckiest thing that ever happened to me, for who could have expected to find old Lady MacGorman at the door of the

hotel, just getting into her carriage; and when she saw me she stared, and I was in such a fright I couldn't speak; and she called out, 'Good heavens, child, why did you run away in your ball-dress? And who's the man?' 'His name, madam,' said I, 'is George Trelyon.' For by this time he was in the yard, raging about horses. 'A nephew of the Admiral, isn't he?' she says; and I told her he was; and then quick as lightning what does she do but whip round into the yard, get hold of your grandfather, my dear, and bundle both of us into her own carriage! Harry, my father's carriage was at the end of the street, as I am a living woman. And just as we drove off, we heard that dear, good, kind old creature call out to the people around, 'Five guineas apiece to you if you keep back the old gentleman's carriage for an hour!'—and such a laughing as your grandfather had as we drove down the streets, and over the bridge, and up the hill, and out the level lanes. Dear, dear, I can see the country now: I can remember every hedge, and the two rivers we crossed, and the hills up in the north; and all the time your grandfather kept up the laugh, for he saw I was frightened. And there we were wedded, sure enough; and all in good time; for Lady MacGorman's guineas had saved us, so that we were actually driving back again when we saw my father's carriage coming along the road—at no great speed to be sure, for one of the horses was lame, and the other had cast a shoe—all the result of that good old creature's money. And then I said to your grandfather, 'What shall we do, George?' 'We shall have to stand and deliver, Sue!' says he; and with that he had the horses pulled up, and we got out. And when my father came up he got out, too, and George took me by the hand—there was no more laughing now, I can tell you, for it was but natural I should cry a bit—and he took off his hat, and led me forward to my father. I don't know what he said, I was in such a fright; but I know that my father looked at him for a minute—and George was standing rather abashed, perhaps, but then so handsome he looked, and so good-natured!—and then my father burst into a roar of laughter, and came forward and shook him by the hand; and all that he would say then, or at any other time to the day of his death, was only this—'By Jupiter, sir, that was a devilish good pair that took you straight on end to Exeter!'"

"I scarcely remember my grandfather," the boy said; "but he couldn't have been a handsomer man than my father, nor a better man either."

"I don't say that," the old lady observed, candidly. "Your father was just such another. 'Like father, like son,' they used to say when he was a boy. But then, you see, your father would go and choose a wife for himself in spite of everybody, just like all you Trelyons, and so——"

But she remembered, and checked herself. She began to tell the lad in how far he resembled his grandfather in appearance, and he accepted these descriptions of his features and figure in a heedless manner, as of one who had grown too familiar with the fact of his being handsome to care about it. Had not every one paid him compliments, more or less indirect, from his cradle upwards? He was, indeed, all that the old lady would have desired to see in a Trelyon—tall, square-shouldered, clean-limbed, with dark grey eyes set under black eyelashes, a somewhat aquiline nose, proud and well-cut lips, a handsome forehead, and a complexion which might have been pale, but for its having been bronzed by constant exposure to sun and weather. There was something very winning about his face, when he chose to be winning; and when he laughed, the laughter, being quite honest and careless and musical, was delightful to hear. With all these personal advantages, joined to a fairly quick intelligence and a ready sympathy, Master Harry Trelyon ought to have been a universal favourite. So far from that being the case, a section of the persons whom he met, and whom he shocked by his rudeness, quickly dismissed him as an irreclaimable cub; another section, with whom he was on better terms, considered him a bad-tempered lad, shook their heads in a humorous fashion over his mother's trials, and were inclined to keep out of his way; while the best of his friends endeavoured to throw the blame of his faults on his bringing up, and maintained that he had many good qualities if only they had been properly developed. The only thing certain about these various criticisms was that they did not concern very much the subject of them.

"And if I am like my grandfather," he said, good-

naturedly, to the old lady, who was seated in a garden-chair, "why don't you get me a wife such as he had?"

"You? A wife?" she repeated, indignantly; remembering that, after all, to praise the good looks and excuse the hot-headedness of the Trelyons was not precisely the teaching this young man needed. "You take a wife? Why, what girl would have you? You are a mere booby. You can scarcely write your name. George Trelyon was a gentleman, sir. He could converse in six languages——"

"And swear considerably in one, I've heard," the lad said, with an impertinent laugh.

"You take a wife? I believe the stable-boys are better educated than you are in manners, as well as in learning. All you are fit for is to become a horse-breaker to a cavalry regiment, or a gamekeeper; and I do believe it is that old wretch, Pentecost Luke, who has ruined you. Oh! I heard how Master Harry used to defy his governess, and would say nothing to her for days together, but

'As I was going to St. Ives,
I met fifty old wives.'

Then, old Luke had to be brought in, and Luke's cure for stubbornness was to give the brat a gun and teach him to shoot starlings. Oh! I know the whole story, my son, though I wasn't in Cornwall at the time. And then Master Harry must be sent to school; but two days afterwards Master Harry is discovered at the edge of a wood, coolly seated with a gun in his hand, waiting for his ferrets to drive out the rabbits. Then Master Harry is furnished with a private tutor; but a parcel of gunpowder is found below the gentleman's chair, with the heads of several lucifer matches lying about. So Master Harry is allowed to have his own way; and his master and preceptor is a lying old gamekeeper; and Master Harry can't read a page out of a book, but he can snare birds, and stuff fish, and catch butterflies, and go cliff-hunting on a horse that is bound to break his neck some day. Why, sir, what do you think a girl would have to say to you if you married her? She would expect you to take her into society; she would expect you to be agreeable in your manners, and be able to talk to people. Do you think she would care about your cunning

ways of catching birds, as if you were a cat or a sparrow-hawk?"

He only flicked at the rose, and laughed; lecturing had but little effect on him.

"Do you think a girl would come to a house like this,—one half of it filled with dogs, and birds, and squirrels, and what not, the other furnished like a chapel in a cemetery? A combination of a church and a menagerie, that's what I call it."

"Grandmother," he said, "those parsons have been stuffing your head full of nonsense about me."

"Have they?" said the old lady, sharply, and eyeing him keenly. "Are you sure it is all nonsense? You talk of marrying,—and you know that no girl of your own station in life would look at you. What about that public-house in the village, and the two girls there, and your constant visits?"

He turned round with a quick look of anger in his face.

"Who told you such infamous stories? I suppose one of the cringing, sneaking, white-livered—Bah!"

He switched the head off the rose, and strode away, saying, as he went—

"Grandmother, you mustn't stay here long. The air of the place affects even you. Another week of it, and you'll be as mean as the rest of them."

But he was in a very bad temper, despite his careless gait. There was a scowl on the handsome and boyish face that was not pleasant to see. He walked round to the stables, kicked about the yard while his horse was being saddled, and then rode out of the grounds, and along the highway, until he went clattering down the steep and stony street of Eglosilyan.

The children knew well this black horse: they had a superstitious fear of him, and they used to scurry into the cottages when his wild rider, who seldom tightened rein, rode down the precipitous thoroughfare. But just at this moment, when young Trelyon was paying little heed as to where he was going, a small, white-haired bundle of humanity came running out of a doorway, and stumbled, and fell right in the way of the horse. The lad was a good rider, but all the pulling up in the world could not prevent

the forefeet of the horse, as they were shot out into the stones, from rolling over that round bundle of clothes. Trelyon leapt to the ground, and caught up the child, who stared at him with big, blue, frightened eyes.

"It's you, young Pentecost, is it? And what the dickens do you mean by trying to knock over my horse, eh?"

The small boy was terrified, but quite obviously not hurt a bit; and his captor, leading the horse with one hand and affixing the bridle to the door, carried him into the cottage: "Well, Mother Luke," said young Trelyon, "I know you've got too many children, but do you expect that I'm going to put them out of the way for you?"

She uttered a little scream, and caught at the boy.

"Oh! there's no harm done; but I suppose I must give him a couple of sovereigns because he nearly frightened me out of my wits. Poor little kid! It's hard on him that you should have given him such a name. I suppose you thought it was Cornish because it begins with *Pen*."

"You knaw 'twere his vather's name, Maäster Harry," said Mrs. Luke, smiling as she saw that the child's chubby fingers were being closed over two bright gold pieces.

Just at that moment, Master Harry, his eyes having got accustomed to the twilight of the kitchen, perceived that among the small crowd of children, at the fireside end, a young lady was sitting. She was an insignificant little person, with dark eyes; she had a slate in her hand; the children were round her in a circle.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Miss Wenna!" the young man said, removing his hat quickly, and blushing all over his handsome face. "I did not see you in the dark. Is your father at the inn?—I was going to see him. I hope I haven't frightened you?"

"Yes, my father has come back from Plymouth," said the young lady, quietly, and without rising. "And I think you might be a little more careful in riding through the village, Mr. Trelyon."

"Good-morning," he said. "Take better care of Master Pentecost, Mother Luke." And with that he went out, and got into the saddle again, and set off to ride down to the inn, not quite so recklessly as heretofore.

CHAPTER II.

JIM CROW.

When Miss Wenna, or Morwenna, as her mother in a freak of romanticism had called her, had finished her teaching, and had inspected some fashioning of garments in which Mrs. Luke was engaged, she put on her light shawl and her hat, and went out into the fresh air. She was now standing in the main street of Eglosilyan; and there were houses right down below her, and houses far above her; but a stranger would have been puzzled to say where this odd village began and ended. For it was built in a straggling fashion on the sides of two little ravines; and the small stone cottages were so curiously scattered among the trees, and the plots of gardens were so curiously banked up with walls that were smothered in wild flowers, that you could only decide which was the chief thoroughfare by the presence there of two greystone chapels—one the Wesleyans' Ebenezer, the other the Bible Christians'. The churches were far away on the uplands, where they were seen like towers along the bleak cliffs by the passing sailors. But perhaps Eglosilyan proper ought to be considered as lying down in the hollow, where the two ravines converged. For here was the chief inn; and here was the overshot flour-mill; and here was the strange little harbour, tortuous, narrow, and deep, into which one or two heavy coasters came for slate, bringing with them timber and coal. Eglosilyan is certainly a picturesque place; but one's difficulty is to get anything like a proper view of it. The black and mighty cliffs at the mouth of the harbour, where the Atlantic seethes and boils in the calmest weather; the beautiful blue-green water under the rocks and along the stone quays, the quaint bridge, and the mill, are pleasant to look at; but where is Eglosilyan? Then if you go along one of the ravines, and get among the old houses, with their tree-fuchsias, and hydrangeas, and marigolds, and lumps of white quartz in the quaint little gardens, you find yourself looking down the chimneys of one portion of Eglosilyan, and looking up to the doorsteps of another—

everywhere a confusion of hewn rock, and natural terrace, and stone walls, and bushes, and hart's-tongue fern. Some thought that the Trelyon Arms should be considered the natural centre of Eglosilyan : but you could not see half a dozen houses from any of its windows. Others would have given the post of honour to the National School, which had been there since 1843 ; but it was in a by-street, and could only be approached by a flight of steps cut in the slate wall that banked up the garden in front of it. Others, for reasons which need not be mentioned, held that the most important part of Eglosilyan was the Napoleon Hotel—a humble little pot-house, frequented by the workers in the slate-quarries, who came there to discuss the affairs of the nation and hear the news. Anyhow, Eglosilyan was a green, bright, rugged, and picturesque little place, oftentimes wet with the western rains, and at all times fresh and sweet with the moist breezes from the Atlantic.

Miss Wenna went neither down the street nor up the street, but took a rough and narrow path leading by some of the cottages to the cliffs overlooking the sea. There was a sound of music in the air; and by-and-by she came in sight of an elderly man, who, standing in an odd little donkey-cart, and holding the reins in one hand, held with the other a cornopean, which he played with great skill. No one in Eglosilyan could tell precisely whether Michael Jago had been bugler to some regiment, or had acquired his knowledge of the cornopean in a travelling show ; but everybody liked to hear the cheerful sound, and came out to the cottage-door to welcome him, as he went from village to village with his cart, whether they wanted to buy suet or not. And now, as Miss Wenna saw him approach, he was playing "The Girl I left behind Me ;" and as there was no one about to listen to him, the pathos of certain parts, and the florid and skilful execution of others, showed that Mr. Jago had a true love for music, and did not merely use it to advertise his wares.

"Good-morning to you, Mr. Jago," said Miss Wenna, as he came up.

"'Marnin, Miss Rosewarne," he said, lowering his cornopean.

"This is a narrow road for your cart."

"'Tain't a very good way ; but bless you, me and my donkey we're used to any zart of a road. I dü believe we could go down to the bache, down the face of Black Cliff."

"Mr. Jago, I want to say something to you. If you are dealing with old Mother Keam to-day, you'll give her a good extra bit, won't you ? And so with Mrs. Gesweth-erick, for she has had no letter from her son now for three months. And this will pay you, and you'll say nothing about it, you know."

She put the coin in his hand—it was an arrangement of old standing between the two.

"Well, yü be a good young lady ; yaas, yü be," he said, as he drove on ; and then she heard him announcing his arrival to the people of Eglosilyan by playing, in a very elaborate manner, "Love's Young Dream."

The solitary young lady who was taking her morning walk now left this rugged road, and found herself on the bleak and high uplands of the coast. Over there was the sea—a fair summer sea ; and down into the south-west stretched a tall line of cliff, black, precipitous, and jagged, around the base of which even this blue sea was churned into seething masses of white. Close by was a church ; and the very gravestones were propped up, so that they should withstand the force of the gales that sweep over those windy plains.

She went across the uplands, and passed down to a narrow neck of rock, which connected with the mainland a huge projecting promontory, on the summit of which was a square and strongly built tower. On both sides of this ledge of rock the sea far below roared into gigantic caves ; but when once you had ascended again to the summit of the tall projecting headland, the distance softened the sound into a low continuous murmur, and the motion of the waves beneath you was visible only in the presence of that white foam where the black cliffs met the blue water.

She went out pretty nearly to the verge of the cliff, where the close, short, wind-swept sea-grass gave way to immense and ragged masses of rock, descending sheer into the waves below ; and here she sat down, and took out a book, and began to read. But her thoughts were busier than her eyes. Her attention would stray away from the page before

her to the empty blue sea, where scarcely a sail was to be seen, and to the far headlands lying under the white of the summer sky. One of these headlands was Tintagel; and close by were the ruins of the great castle, where Uther Pendragon kept his state, where the mystic Arthur was born, where the brave Sir Tristram went to see his true love, La Belle Isoulde. All that world had vanished, and gone into silence: could anything be more mute and still than those bare heights out at the end of the world, those voiceless cliffs, and the empty circle of the sea? The sun was hot on the rocks, where the pink quartz lay encrusted among the slate; but there was scarcely the hum of an insect to break the stillness; and the only sign of life about was the circling of one or two sea-birds, so far below her that their cries could not be heard.

"Yes, it was a long time ago," the girl was thinking, as the book lay unheeded on her knee. "A sort of mist covers it now, and the knights seem great and tall men as you think of them riding through the fog, almost in silence. But then there were the brighter days, when the tournaments were held, and the sun shone out, and the noble ladies wore rich colours, and every one came to see how beautiful they were. And how fine it must have been to have sat there, and have all the knights ready to fight for you, and glad when you gave them a bit of ribbon or a smile! And in these days, too, it must be a fine thing to be a noble lady, and beautiful, and tall, like a princess; and to go among the poor people, putting everything to rights, because you have lots of money, and because the roughest of the men look up to you, and think you a queen, and will do anything you ask. What a happy life a grand and beautiful lady must have, when she is tall, and fair-haired, and sweet in her manner; and every one around her is pleased to serve her; and she can do a kindness by merely saying a word to the poor people! But if you are only Jim Crow? There's Mabyn, now; she is everybody's favourite because she is so pretty; and whatever she does, that is always beautiful and graceful, because she is so. Father never calls *her* Jim Crow. And I ought to be jealous of her; for every one praises her, and mere strangers ask for her photograph; and Mr. Roscorla always writes to

her; and Mr. Trelyon stuffed those squirrels for her, though he never offered to stuff squirrels for me. But I cannot be jealous of Mabyn—I cannot even try. She looks at you with her blue, soft eyes, and you fall in love with her; and that is the advantage of being handsome, and beautiful, for you can please every one, and make every one like you, and confer favours on people all day long. But if you are small, and plain, and dark—if your father calls you Jim Crow—what can you do?"

These despondent fancies did not seem to depress her much. The gloom of them was certainly not visible on her face, nor yet in the dark eyes, which had a curious and winning earnestness in them. She pulled a bit of tormentil from among the close warm grass on the rocks, and she hummed a line or two of "Wapping Old Stairs." Then she turned to her book; but by-and-by her eyes wandered away again, and she fell to thinking.

"If you were a man, now," she was silently saying to herself, "that would be quite different. It would not matter how ugly you were—for you could try to be brave or clever, or a splendid rider, or something of that kind—and nobody would mind how ugly you were. But it's very hard to be a woman, and to be plain; you feel as if you were good for nothing, and had no business to live. They say that you should cultivate the graces of the mind; but it's only old people who say that; and perhaps you may not have any mind to cultivate. How much better it would be to be pretty while you are young, and leave the cultivation of the mind for after years; and that is why I have to prevent mother from scolding Mabyn for never reading a book. If I were like Mabyn, I should be so occupied in giving people the pleasure of looking at me and talking to me that I should have no time for books. Mabyn is like a princess. And if she were a grand lady, instead of being only an innkeeper's daughter, what a lot of things she could do about Eglosilyan! She could go and persuade Mr. Roscorla, by the mere sweetness of her manner, to be less suspicious of people, and less bitter in talking; she could go up to Mrs. Trelyon and bring her out more among her neighbours, and make the house pleasanter for her son; she could go to my father and beg him to be a little more con-

siderate to mother when she is angry; she might get some influence over Mr. Trelyon himself, and make him less of a petulant boy. Perhaps Mabyn may do some of these things, when she gets a little older. It ought to please her to try at all events; and who can withstand her when she likes to be affectionate and winning? Not Jim Crow, any way."

She heaved a sigh, not a very dismal one, and got up and prepared to go home. She was humming carelessly to herself—

> "Your Polly has never been false, she declares,
> Since last time we parted at Wapping Old Stairs;"

—she had got that length when she was startled into silence by the sound of a horse's feet, and, turning quickly round, found young Harry Trelyon galloping up the steep slope that reaches across to the mainland. It was no pleasant place to ride across, for a stumble of the animal's foot would have sent horse and rider down into the gulfs below, where the blue-green sea was surging in among the black rocks.

"Oh! how could you be so foolish as to do that?" she cried. "I beg of you to come down, Mr. Trelyon. I cannot——"

"Why, Dick is as sure-footed as I am," said the lad, his handsome face flushed with the ride up from Eglosilyan. "I thought I should find you here. There's no end of a row going on at the inn, Miss Wenna, and that's a fact. I fancied I'd better come and tell you; for there's no one can put things straight like you, you know."

A quarrel between her father and her mother—it was of no rare occurrence, and she was not much surprised.

"Thank you, Mr. Trelyon," she said. "It is very kind of you to have taken the trouble. I will go down at once."

But she was looking rather anxiously at him, as he turned round his horse.

"Mr. Trelyon," she said, quickly, "would you oblige me by getting down and leading your horse across until you reach the path?"

He was out of the saddle in a moment.

"I will walk down with you to Eglosilyan, if you like," he said, carelessly. "You often come up here, don't you?"

"Nearly every day. I always take a walk in the morning."

"Does Mabyn ever go with you?" His companion noticed that he always addressed her as Miss Wenna, whereas her sister was simply Mabyn.

"Not often."

"I wonder she doesn't ride. I am sure she would look well on horseback: don't you think so?"

"Mabyn would look well anywhere," said the elder sister, with a smile.

"If she would like to try a lady's saddle on your father's cob, I would send you one down from the Hall," the lad said. "My mother never rides now. But perhaps I'd better speak to your father about it. Oh! by the way, he told me a capital story this morning that he heard in coming from Plymouth to Launceston in the train. Two farmers belonging to Launceston had got into a carriage the day before, and found in it a parson, against whom they had a grudge. He didn't know either of them by sight; and so they pretended to be strangers, and sat down opposite each other. One of them drew up the window; the other put it down with a bang. The first drew it up again, and said, 'I desire you to leave the window alone, sir!' The other said, 'I mean to have that window down, and if you touch it again I will throw you out of it.' Meanwhile, the parson at the other end of the carriage, who was a little fellow and rather timid, had got into an agony of fright; and at last, when the two men seemed about to seize each other by the throat, he called out, 'For Heaven's sake, gentlemen, do not quarrel. Sir, I beg of you, I implore you, as a clergyman I entreat you, to put up that knife!' And then, of course, they both turned upon him like tigers, and slanged him, and declared they would break his back over the same window. Fancy the fright he was in!"

The boy laughed merrily.

"Do you think that was a good joke?" the girl beside him asked, quietly.

He seemed a little embarrassed.

"Do you think it was a very manly and courageous thing for two big farmers to frighten a small and timid clergy-

man? I think it was rather mean and cowardly. I see no joke in it at all."

His face grew more and more red.

"I don't suppose they meant any harm," he said, curtly; "but you know we can't all be squaring every word and look by the Prayer-Book. And I suppose the parson himself, if he had known, would not have been so fearfully serious but that he could have taken a joke like any one else. By the way, this is the nearest road to Trevenna, isn't it? I have got to ride over there before the afternoon, Miss Rosewarne; so I shall bid you good-day."

He got on horseback again, and took off his cap to her, and rode away.

"Good-day, Mr. Trelyon," she said, meekly.

And so she walked down to the inn by herself, and was inclined to reproach herself for being so very serious, and for being unable to understand a joke like any one else. Yet she was not unhappy about it. It was a pity if Mr. Trelyon were annoyed with her; but then, she had long ago taught herself to believe that she could not easily please people, as Mabyn could; and she cheerfully accepted the fact. Sometimes, it is true, she indulged in idle dreams of what she might do if she were beautiful, and rich, and noble; but she soon laughed herself out of these foolish fancies, and they left no sting of regret behind them. At this moment, as she walked down to Eglosilyan, with the tune of "Wapping Old Stairs" rocking itself to sleep in her head, and with her face brightened by her brisk walk, there was neither disappointment, nor envy, nor ambition in her mind. Not for her, indeed, were any of those furious passions that shake and set afire the lives of men and women; her lot was the calm and placid lot of the unregarded; and with it she was well content.

CHAPTER III.

RES ANGUSTA DOMI.

When George Rosewarne, the father of this Miss Wenna, lived in eastern Devonshire, many folks thought him a fortunate man. He was the land-steward of a large estate,

the owner of which lived in Paris, so that Rosewarne was practically his own master; he had a young and pretty wife, desperately fond of him; he had a couple of children and a comfortable home. As for himself, he was a tall, reddish-bearded, manly-looking fellow; the country folks called him Handsome George as they saw him riding his rounds of a morning; and they thought it a pity Mrs. Rosewarne was so often poorly, for she and her husband looked well together when they walked to church.

Handsome George did not seem much troubled by his wife's various ailments; he would only give the curtest answer when asked about her health. Yet he was not in any distinct way a bad husband. He was a man vaguely unwilling to act wrongly, but weak in staving off temptation; there was a sort of indolent selfishness about him of which he was scarcely aware; and to indulge this selfishness he was capable of a good deal of petty deceit and even treachery of a sort. It was not these failings, however, that made the relations of husband and wife not very satisfactory. Mrs. Rosewarne was passionately fond of her husband, and proportionately jealous of him. She was a woman of impulsive imagination and of sympathetic nature, clever, bright and fanciful, well-read and well-taught, and altogether made of finer stuff than Handsome George. But this passion of jealousy altogether overmastered her reason. When she did try to convince herself that she was in the wrong, the result was merely that she resolved to keep silence; but this forcible repression of her suspicions was worse in its effects than the open avowal of them. When the explosion came, George Rosewarne was mostly anxious to avoid it. He did not seek to set matters straight. He would get into a peevish temper for a few minutes, and tell her she was a fool; then he would go out for the rest of the day, and come home sulky in the evening. By this time she was generally in a penitent mood; and there is nothing an indolent sulky person likes so much as to be coaxed and caressed, with tears of repentance and affectionate promises, into a good temper again. There were too many of such scenes in George Rosewarne's home.

Mrs. Rosewarne may have been wrong, but people began to talk. For there had come to live at the Grange a certain

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Mrs. Shirley, who had lately returned from India, and was the sister-in-law, or some such relation, of George Rosewarne's master. She was a good-looking woman of forty, fresh-coloured and free-spoken, a little too fond of brandy-and-water, folks said, and a good deal too fond of the handsome steward, who now spent most of his time up at the big house. They said she was a grass-widow. They said there were reasons why her relations wished her to be buried down there in the country, where she received no company, and made no efforts to get acquainted with the people who had called on her and left their cards. And amid all this gossip the name of George Rosewarne too frequently turned up; and there were nods and winks when Mrs. Shirley and the steward were seen to be riding about the country from day to day, presumably not always conversing about the property.

The blow fell at last, and that in a fashion that need not be described here. There was a wild scene between two angry women. A few days afterwards a sallow-complexioned, white-haired old gentleman arrived from Paris, and was confronted by a red-faced fury, who gloried in her infatuation and her shame, and dared him to interfere. Then there was a sort of conference of relatives held in the house which she still inhabited. The result of all this, so far as the Rosewarnes were concerned, was simply that the relatives of the woman, to hush the matter up and prevent further scandal, offered to purchase for George Rosewarne the "Trelyon Arms" at Eglosilyan, on condition that he should immediately, with his family, betake himself to that remote corner of the world, and undertake to hold no further communication of any sort with the woman who still (with some flourish of rhetoric, which probably meant nothing) swore that she would follow him to the end of the earth. George Rosewarne was pleased with the offer, and eventually accepted it. He might have found some difficulty in discovering another stewardship, after the events that had just occurred. On the other hand, the "Trelyon Arms" at Eglosilyan was not a mere public-house. It was an old-fashioned, quaint, and comfortable inn, practically shut up during the winter, and in the summer made the head-quarters of a few families who had discovered it, and who

went there as regularly as the warm weather came round. A few antiquarian folks, too, and a stray geologist or so, generally made up the family party that sat down to dinner every evening in the big dining-room; and who that ever made one of the odd circle meeting in this strange and out-of-the-way place, ever failed to return to it when the winter had finally cleared away and the Atlantic got blue again?

George Rosewarne went down to inquire. He found in the inn an efficient housekeeper, who was thoroughly mistress of her duties and of the servants, so that he should have no great trouble about it, even though his wife were too ill to help. As for his daughters, he resolved that they should have nothing whatsoever to do with the inn; but, on the contrary, be trained in all the ordinary accomplishments of young ladies; for he was rather a proud man. And so the Rosewarnes were drafted down to the Cornish coast; and as Mrs. Rosewarne was of Cornish birth, and as she had given both her daughters Cornish names, they gradually ceased to be regarded as strangers. They made many acquaintances and friends. Mrs. Rosewarne was a bright, rapid, playful talker; a woman of considerable reading and intelligence, and a sympathetic listener. Her husband knew all about horses, and dogs, and farming, and what not; so that young Harry Trelyon, for example, was in the habit of consulting him almost daily.

They had a little parlour abutting on what once had been a bar, and here one or two friends sometimes dropped in to have a chat. There was a bar no longer. The business of the inn was conducted overhead, and was exclusively of the nature described above. The pot-house of Eglosilyan was the Napoleon Hotel, a dilapidated place, halfway up one of the steep streets.

But in leaving Devonshire for Cornwall, the Rosewarnes had carried with them a fatal inheritance. They could not leave behind them the memory of the circumstances that had caused their flight; and ever and anon, as something occurred to provoke her suspicions, Mrs. Rosewarne would break out again into a passion of jealousy, and demand explanations and reassurances, which her husband half-indolently and half-sulkily refused. There was but one

hand then—one voice that could still the raging waters. Wenna Rosewarne knew nothing of that Devonshire story, any more than her sister or the neighbours did; but she saw that her mother had defects of temper, that she was irritable, unreasonable, and suspicious, and she saw that her father was inconsiderately indifferent and harsh. It was a hard task to reconcile these two; but the girl had all the patience of a born peacemaker; and patience is the more necessary to the settlement of such a dispute, in that it is generally impossible for any human being, outside the two who are quarrelling, to discover any ground for the quarrel.

"Why, what's the matter, mother?" she said on this occasion, taking off her hat and shawl as if she had heard nothing about it. "I do think you have been crying."

The pretty, pale woman, with the large black eyes and smoothly-brushed dark hair, threw a volume on to the table, and said, with a sort of half-hysterical laugh: "How stupid it is, Wenna, to cry over the misfortunes of people in books, isn't it?"

That pretence would not have deceived Miss Wenna in any case; but now she was to receive other testimony to the truth of Mr. Trelyon's report. There was seated at the window of the room a tall and strikingly handsome young girl of sixteen, whose almost perfect profile was clearly seen against the light. Just at this moment she rose and stepped across the room to the door, and as she went by she said, with just a trace of contemptuous indifference on the proud and beautiful face: "It is only another quarrel, Wenna."

"Mother," said the girl, when her sister had gone, "tell me what it is about. What have you said to father? Where is he?"

There was an air of quiet decision about her that did not detract from the sympathy visible in her face. Mrs. Rosewarne began to cry again. Then she took her daughter's hand, and made her sit down by her, and told her all her troubles. What was the girl to make of it? It was the old story of suspicion, and challenging, and sulky denial, and then hot words and anger. She could make out, at least, that her mother had first been made anxious about something he had inadvertently said about his visit to

Plymouth on the previous two days. In reply to her questions he had grown peevishly vague, and had then spoken in bravado of the pleasant evening he had spent at the theatre. Wenna reasoned with her mother, and pleaded with her, and at last exercised a little authority over her; at the end of which she agreed that, if her husband would tell her with whom he had been to the theatre, she would be satisfied, would speak no more on the subject, and would even formally beg his forgiveness.

"Because, mother, I have something to tell you," the daughter said, "when you are all quite reconciled."

"Was it in the letter you read just now?"

"Yes, mother."

The girl still held the letter in her hand. It was lying on the table when she came in, but she had not opened it and glanced over the contents until she saw that her mother was yielding to her prayers.

"It is from Mr. Roscorla, Wenna," the mother said; and now she saw, as she might have seen before, that her daughter was a little paler than usual, and somewhat agitated.

"Yes, mother."

"What is it, then? You look frightened."

"I must settle this matter first," said the girl, calmly; and then she folded up the letter, and, still holding it in her hand, went off to find her father.

George Rosewarne, seeking calm after the storm, was seated on a large and curiously carved bench of Spanish oak placed by the door of the inn. He was smoking his pipe, and lazily looking at some pigeons that were flying about the mill and occasionally alighting on the roof. In the calm of the midsummer's day there was no sound but the incessant throbbing of the big wheel over there and the plash of the water.

"Now, don't bother me, Wenna," he said the moment he saw her approach. "I know you've come to make a fuss. You mind your own business."

"Mother is very sorry—" the girl was beginning in a meek way, when he interrupted her rudely.

"I tell you to mind your own business. I must have an end of this. I have stood it long enough. Do you hear?"

But she did not go away. She stood there, with her quiet, patient face, not heeding his angry looks.

"Father, don't be hard on her. She is very sorry. She is willing to beg your pardon if you will only tell her who went to the theatre with you at Plymouth, and relieve her from this anxiety. That is all. Father, who went to the theatre with you?"

"Oh, go away!" he said, relapsing into a sulky condition. "You're growing up to be just such another as your mother."

"I cannot wish for anything better," the girl said, mildly. "She is a good woman, and she loves you dearly."

"Why," he said, turning suddenly upon her, and speaking in an injured way, "no one went with me to the theatre at Plymouth! Did I say that anybody did? Surely a man must do something to spend the evening if he is by himself in a strange town."

Wenna put her hand on her father's shoulder, and said: "Da, why didn't you take me to Plymouth?"

"Well, I will next time. You're a good lass," he said, still in the same sulky way.

"Now come in and make it up with mother. She is anxious to make it up."

He looked at his pipe.

"In a few minutes, Wenna. When I finish my pipe."

"She is waiting now," said the girl, quietly; and with that her father burst into a loud laugh, and got up and shrugged his shoulders; and then, taking his daughter by the ear, and saying that she was a sly little cat, he walked into the house and into the room where his wife awaited him.

Meanwhile, Wenna Rosewarne had stolen off to her own little room, and there she sat down at the window, and with trembling fingers took out her letter and began to read it. It was certainly a document of some length, consisting, indeed, of four large pages of blue paper, covered with a small, neat, and precise handwriting. She had not got on very far with it, when the door of the room was opened, and Mrs. Rosewarne appeared, the pale face and large dark eyes being now filled with a radiant pleasure. Her husband had said something friendly to her; and the quick, imaginative

nature had leapt to the conclusion that all was right again, and that there were to be no more needless quarrels.

"And now, Wenna," she said, sitting down by the girl, "what is it all about?—and why did you look so frightened a few minutes ago?"

"Oh, mother," the girl said, "this is a letter from Mr. Roscorla, and he wants me to marry him."

"Mr. Roscorla!" cried the mother, in blank astonishment. "Who ever dreamed of such a thing? And what do you say, Wenna? What do you think? What answer will you send him? Dear me, to think of Mr. Roscorla taking a wife, and wanting to have our Wenna, too!"

She began to tell her mother something of the letter, reading it carefully to herself, and then repeating aloud some brief condensation, to let her mother know what were the arguments that Mr. Roscorla employed. And it was, on the whole, an argumentative letter, and much more calm, and lucid, and reasonable than most letters are which contain offers of marriage. Mr. Roscorla wrote thus:—

"Basset Cottage, Eglosilyan, *July* 18, 18—.

"My dear Miss Wenna,—I fear that this letter may surprise you, but I hope you will read it through without alarm or indignation, and deal fairly and kindly with what it has to say. Perhaps you will think, when you have read it, that I ought to have come to you and said the things that it says. But I wish to put these things before you in as simple a manner as I can, which is best done by writing; and a letter will have this advantage, that you can recur to it at any moment, if there is some point on which you are in doubt.

"The object, then, of this letter is to ask you to become my wife, and to put before you a few considerations which I hope will have some little influence in determining your answer. You will be surprised, no doubt: for though you must be well aware that I could perceive the graces of your character—the gentleness and charity of heart, and modesty of demeanour, that have endeared you to the whole of the people among whom you live—you may fairly say that I never betrayed my admiration of you in word or deed; and that is true. I cannot precisely tell you why I should be

more distant in manner towards her whom I preferred to all the world than to her immediate friends and associates for whom I cared much less ; but such is the fact. I could talk, and joke, and spend a pleasant afternoon in the society of your sister Mabyn, for example ; I could ask her to accept a present from me ; I could write letters to her when I was in London ; but with you all that was different. Perhaps it is because you are so fine and shy, because there is so much sensitiveness in your look, that I have almost been afraid to go near you, lest you should shrink from some rude intimation of that which I now endeavour to break to you gently—my wish and earnest hope that you may become my wife. I trust I have so far explained what perhaps you may have considered coldness on my part.

"I am a good deal older than you are ; and I cannot pretend to offer you that fervid passion which, to the imagination of the young, seems the only thing worth living for, and one of the necessary conditions of marriage. On the other hand, I cannot expect the manifestation of any such passion on your side, even if I had any wish for it. But on this point I should like to make a few observations which I hope will convince you that my proposal is not so unreasonable as it may have seemed at first sight. When I look over the list of all my friends who have married, whom do I find to be living the happiest life ? Not they who as boy and girl were carried away by a romantic idealism which seldom lasts beyond a few weeks after marriage, but those who had wisely chosen partners fitted to become their constant and affectionate friends. It is this possibility of friendship, indeed, which is the very basis of a happy marriage. The romance and passion of love soon depart ; then the man and woman find themselves living in the same house, dependent on each other's character, intelligence, and disposition, and bound by inexorable ties. If, in these circumstances, they can be good friends, it is well with them. If they admire each other's thoughts and feelings, if they are generously considerate towards each other's weaknesses, if they have pleasure in each other's society—if, in short, they find themselves bound to each other by the ties of a true and disinterested friendship, the world has been good to them. I say nothing against that

period of passion which, in some rare and fortunate instances, precedes this infinitely longer period of friendship. You would accuse me of the envy of an elderly man if I denied that it has its romantic aspects. But how very temporary these are ! How dangerous they are too ! The passion of a young man as I have seen it displayed in a thousand instances, is not a thing to be desired. It is cruel in its jealousy, exacting in its demands, heedless in its impetuosity ; and when it has burned itself out—when nothing remains but ashes and an empty fireplace—who is to say that the capacity for a firm and lasting friendship will survive ? But perhaps you fancy that this passionate love may last for ever. Will you forgive me, dear Miss Wenna, if I say that that is the dream of a girl ? In such rare cases as I have seen, this perpetual ardour of love was anything but a happiness to those concerned. The freaks of jealousy on the part of a boy and girl who think of getting married are but occasions for the making of quarrels and the delight of reconciliation ; but a life-long jealousy involves a torture to both husband and wife to which death would be preferable."

At this point Wenna's cheeks burned red ; she was silent for a time, and her mother wondered why she skipped so long a passage without saying a word.

"I have used all the opportunities within my reach," the letter continued, "to form a judgment of your character ; I know something of my own ; and I sincerely believe that we could live a happy and pleasant life together. It is a great sacrifice I ask of you, I admit ; but you would not find me slow to repay you in gratitude. I am almost alone in the world ; the few relatives I have I never see ; I have scarcely a friend or acquaintance except those I meet under your father's hospitable roof. I cannot conceal from myself that I should be by far the greater gainer by such a marriage : I should secure for myself a pleasant, intelligent, and amiable companion, who would brighten my home, and in time, I doubt not, soften and sweeten those views of the world that are naturally formed by a middle-aged man living alone and in privacy. What can I offer you in return ? Not much —except the opportunity of adding one more to the many good deeds that seem to be the chief occupation of your life.

And I should be glad if you would let me help you in that way, and give you the aid of advice which might, perhaps, temper your generosity and apply it to its best uses. You are aware that I have no occupation—and scarcely a hobby; I should make it my occupation, my constant endeavour and pleasure, to win and secure your affection—to make the ordinary little cares and duties of life, in which you take so great an interest, smooth and pleasant to you. In short, I should try to make you happy; not in any frantic and wild way, but by the exercise of a care, and affection, and guardianship by which I hope we should both profit. May I point out, also, that, as a married woman, you would have much more influence among the poorer families in the village who take up so much of your attention; and you would be removed, too, if I may mention such a thing, from certain unhappy circumstances which I fear trouble you greatly at times. But perhaps I should not have referred to this; I would rather seek to press my claim on the ground of the happiness you would thereby confer on others, which I know to be your chief object in life.

"I have not said half what I intended to say; but I must not fatigue you. Perhaps you will give me an opportunity of telling you personally what I think of yourself, for I cannot bring myself to write it in bald words; and if you should be in doubt, give me the benefit of the doubt, and let me explain. I do not ask you for a hurried answer; but I should be glad if, out of the kindness of all your ways, you would send me one line soon, merely to say that I have not offended you.

"I am, my dear Miss Rosewarne,

"Yours most sincerely,

"RICHARD ROSCORLA."

"Oh! what must I do, mother?" the girl cried. "Is it all true that he says?"

"My dear child, there is a great deal of common sense in the letter," the mother replied, calmly. "But you needn't decide all at once. Take plenty of time. I suppose you don't dislike Mr. Roscorla?"

"Oh, not at all—not at all! But then, to marry him——!"

"If you don't wish to marry him, no harm is done," Mrs. Rosewarne said. "I cannot advise you, Wenna. Your own feelings must settle the question. But you ought to be very proud of the offer, any way; and you must thank him properly; for Mr. Roscorla is a gentleman, although he is not as rich as some of his relatives; and it is a great honour he has done you. Of course, Wenna, if you were in love with any one—if there was any young man about here whom you would like to marry—there would be no need for you to be frightened about what Mr. Roscorla says of young folks being in love. It is a trying time, to be sure. It has many troubles. Perhaps, after all, a quiet and peaceful life is better; especially for you, Wenna, for you were always quiet and peaceful; and if any trouble came over you it would break your heart. I think it would be better for you if you were never tried in that way, Wenna."

The girl rose, with a sigh.

"Not that it is my advice, Wenna," said the mother, anxiously. "But you are of that nature, you see. If you were in love with a young man, you would be his slave. If he ceased to care for you, or were cruel to you, it would kill you, my dear. Well, you see, here is a man who would be able to take care of you, and of your sister Mabyn, too, if anything happened to your father or me; and he would make much of you, I have no doubt, and be very kind to you. You are not like other girls, Wenna——"

"I know that, mother," she said, with a strange sort of smile that just trembled on the verge of tears. "They can't all be as plain as I am."

"Oh, I don't mean that! You make a great mistake, if you think that men only care for doll-faces: as Mr. Roscorla says, that fancy does not last long after marriage; and then men begin to ask whether their wives are clever, and amusing, and well-informed, and so on. What I meant was, that most girls could run the gauntlet of that sort of love that Mr. Roscorla describes, and suffer little if they made a mistake. But there's no shell about you, Wenna. You are quite undefended, sensitive, and timid. People are deceived by your quick wit, and your cheerfulness, and your singing. I know better. I know that a careless word may cut you deeply. And dear, dear me, what a terrible time

that is when all your life seems to hang on the way a word is spoken!"

The girl crossed over to a small side-table, on which there was a writing-desk.

"But mind, Wenna," said her mother, with a return of anxiety, "mind, I don't say that to influence your decision. Don't be influenced by me. Consult your own feelings, dear. You know I fancy sometimes you undervalue yourself, and think that no one cares about you, and that you have no claim to be thought much of. Well, that is a great mistake, Wenna. You must not throw yourself away through that notion. I wish all the girls about were as clever and good-natured as you. But at the same time, you know, there are few girls I know, and certainly none about here, who would consider it throwing themselves away to marry Mr. Roscorla."

"*Marry Mr. Roscorla!*" a third voice exclaimed; and at the same moment Mabyn Rosewarne entered the room.

She looked at her mother and her sister with astonishment. She saw that Wenna was writing, and that she was very pale. She saw a blue-coloured letter lying beside her. Then the proud young beauty understood the situation; and with her to perceive a thing was to act on its suggestion there and then.

"Our Wenna! Marry that old man? Mother! how can you let her think of such a thing?"

She walked right over to the small table, with a glow of indignation in her face, with her lips set firm, and her eyes full of fire; and then she caught up the letter, that had scarcely been begun, and tore it in a thousand pieces, and flung the pieces on the floor.

"Oh, mother! how could you let her do it! Mr. Roscorla marry our Wenna!"

She took two or three steps up and down the room, in a pretty passion of indignation, and yet trying to keep her proud eyes free from tears.

"Mother, if you do I'll go into a convent! I'll go to sea, and never come back again! I won't stop in the house—not one minute—if Wenna goes away!"

"My dear child," said the mother, patiently, "it is not my doing. You must not be so headstrong. Mr. Roscorla

is not an old man—nothing of the sort; and, if he does offer to marry Wenna, it is a great honour done to her, I think. She ought to be very grateful, as I hope you will be, Mabyn, when any one offers to marry you——"

Miss Mabyn drew herself up; and her pretty mouth lost none of its scorn.

"And as for Wenna," the mother said, "she must judge for herself——"

"Oh, but she's not fit to judge for herself!" broke in the younger sister impetuously. "She will do anything that anybody wants. She would make herself the slave of anybody. She is always being imposed on. Just wait a moment, and *I* will answer Mr. Roscorla's letter!"

She walked over to the table again, twisted round the writing-desk, and quickly pulled in a chair. You would have thought that the pale, dark-eyed little girl on the other side of the table had no will of her own—that she was in the habit of obeying this beautiful young termagant of a sister of hers; but Miss Mabyn's bursts of impetuosity were no match for the gentle firmness and patience that were invariably opposed to them. In this instance Mr. Roscorla was not to be the recipient of a letter which doubtless would have astonished him.

"Mabyn," said her sister Wenna, quietly, "don't be foolish. I must write to Mr. Roscorla—but only to tell him that I have received his letter. Give me the pen. And will you go and ask Mrs. Borlase if she can spare me Jennifer for a quarter of an hour, to go up to Basset Cottage?"

Mabyn rose, silent, disappointed, and obedient, but not subdued. She went off to execute the errand; but as she went she said to herself, with her head very erect: "Before Mr. Roscorla marries our Wenna, I will have a word to say to him."

Meanwhile Wenna Rosewarne, apparently quite calm, but with her hand trembling so that she could hardly hold the pen, wrote her first love-letter; and it ran thus:—

"TRELYON ARMS, *Tuesday Afternoon.*

"DEAR MR. ROSCORLA,—I have received your letter, and you must not think me offended. I will try to send

you an answer to-morrow; or perhaps the day after, or perhaps on Friday; I will try to send you an answer to your letter.

"I am yours sincerely,
"WENNA ROSEWARNE."

She took it timidly to her mother, who smiled, and said it was a little incoherent.

"But I cannot write it again, mother," the girl said. "Will you give it to Jennifer when she comes?"

Little heed did Miss Wenna pay to the beautiful golden afternoon that was shining over Eglosilyan as she left the inn and stole away out to the rocks at the mouth of the little harbour. She spoke to her many acquaintances as she passed, and could not have told a minute thereafter that she had seen them. She said a word or two to the coastguardsman out at the point—an old friend of hers; and then she went round to the seaward side of the rocks, and sat down to think the whole matter over. The sea was as still as a sea in a dream. There was but one ship visible, away down in the south, a brown speck in a flood of saffron haze.

When the first startled feeling was over—when she had recovered from the absolute fright that so sudden a proposal had caused her—something of pride and pleasure crept into her heart to know that she was not quite the insignificant person she had fancied herself to be. Was it true, then, what he had said about her being of some use to the people around her? Did they really care for her? Had she really won the respect and approval of a man who had hitherto seemed to her suspicious and censorious?

There flashed upon her some faint picture of herself as a matron; and she found herself blushing to think of herself going round the cottages as Mrs. Roscorla. If marriage meant no more than that, she was not afraid of it; on the contrary, the prospect rather pleased her. These were duties she could understand. Marriage, in those idle day-dreams of hers, had seemed to her some vague, and distant, and awful thing; all the romance, and worship, and noble self-surrender of it being far away from a poor little plain person, not capable of inspiring idealism in anybody. But

this, on the other hand, seemed easily within her reach. She became rather amused with the picture of herself which she drew as Mrs. Roscorla. Her quick fancy put in humorous touches here and there, until she found herself pretty nearly laughing at herself as a tiny married woman. For what did the frank-spoken heroine of that sailor-ballad say to her lover? If he would be faithful and kind,

"Nor your Molly forsake,
Still your trousers I'll wash, and your grog, too, I'll make."

As for his grog, would she mix the proper quantities, as they sat together of an evening, by themselves, in that little parlour at Basset Cottage? And would she have to take his arm as they walked of a Sunday morning to church, up the main street of Eglosilyan, where all her old friends, the children, would be looking at her? And would she some day, with the serious airs and counsels of a married woman, have to receive Mabyn's hushed confidences, and bid her have courage, and listen to all the story of the new and strange love that had come into the younger sister's heart? And would she ask Mabyn to describe her lover; and would she act the ordinary part of an experienced adviser, and bid her be cautious, and ask her to wait until the young man had made a position in the world, and had proved himself prudent and sensible, and of steady mind? Or would she not rather fling her arms round her sister's neck, and bid her go down on her knees and thank God for having made her so beautiful, and bid her cherish as the one good thing in all the world the strong and yearning love and admiration and worship of a young and wondering soul?

Wenna Rosewarne had been amusing herself with these pictures of herself as a married woman; but she was crying all the same; and becoming a little impatient with herself, and perhaps a trifle hysterical, she rose from the rocks and thought she would go home again. She had scarcely turned, however, when she met Mr. Roscorla himself, who had seen her at a distance, and followed her.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LAST LOOK BACK.

Mr. Roscorla may be recommended to ladies generally, and to married men who are haunted by certain vague and vain regrets, as an excellent example of the evils and vanity of club-life. He was now a man approaching fifty, careful in dress and manner, methodical in habit, and grave of aspect, living out a not over-enjoyable life in a solitary little cottage, and content to go for his society to the good folks of the village inn. But five-and-twenty years before he had been a gay young fellow about town, a pretty general favourite, clever in his way, free with his money, and possessed of excellent spirits. He was not very wealthy, to be sure; his father had left him certain shares in some plantations in Jamaica; and the returns periodically forwarded to him by his agents were sufficient for his immediate wants. He had few cares, and he seemed on the whole to have a pleasant time of it. On disengaged evenings he lounged about his club, and dined with one or other of the men he knew, and then he played billiards till bed-time. Or he would have nice little dinner-parties at his rooms; followed by a few games at whist, and perhaps finishing up with a little spurt of unlimited loo. In the season he went to balls, and dinners, and parties of all sorts, singling out a few families with pretty daughters for his special attentions, but careful never to commit himself. When every one went from town he went too; and in the autumn and winter months he had a fair amount of shooting and hunting, guns and horses alike and willingly furnished him by his friends.

Once, indeed, he had taken a fancy that he ought to do something, and he went and read law a bit, and ate some dinners, and got called to the Bar. He even went the length of going on Circuit; but either he travelled by coach, or fraternized with a solicitor, or did something objectionable; at all events his circuit mess fined him; he refused to pay the fine; threw the whole thing up; and returned to his club, and its carefully-ordered dinners, and its friendly game of sixpenny and eighteen-penny pool.

Of course he dressed, and acted, and spoke just as his fellows did, and gradually from the common talk of smoking-rooms imbibed a vast amount of nonsense. He knew that such and such a statesman professed particular opinions only to keep in place and enjoy the loaves and fishes. He could tell you to a penny the bribe given to the editor of the *Times* by a foreign Government for a certain series of articles. As for the stories he heard and repeated of all manner of noble families, they were many of them doubtless true, and they were nearly all unpleasant; but then the tale that would have been regarded with indifference if told about an ordinary person, grew lambent with interest when it was told about a commonplace woman possessed of a shire and a gaby crowned with a coronet. There was no malice in these stories; only the young men were supposed to know everything about the private affairs of a certain number of families no more nearly related to them than their landlady.

He was unfortunate, too, in a few personal experiences. He was a fairly well-intentioned young man, and, going home one night, was moved to pity by the sobbing and exclamations of a little girl of twelve, whose mother was drunk and tumbling about the pavement. The child could not get her mother to go home, and it was now past midnight. Richard Roscorla thought he would interfere, and went over the way and helped the woman to her feet. He had scarcely done so when the virago turned on him, shouted for help, accused him of assaulting her, and finally hit him straight between the eyes, nearly blinding him, and causing him to keep his chambers for three weeks. After that he gave up the lower classes.

Then a gentleman who had been his bosom friend at Eton, and who had carried away with him so little of the atmosphere of that institution that he by-and-by abandoned himself to trade, renewed his acquaintance with Mr. Roscorla, and besought him to join him in a little business transaction. He only wanted a few thousand pounds to secure the success of a venture that would make both their fortunes. Young Roscorla hesitated. But his friend sent his wife, an exceedingly pretty woman; and she pleaded with such sweetness and pathos that she actually carried away a

cheque for the amount in her beautiful little purse. A couple of days afterwards Mr. Roscorla discovered that his friend had suddenly left the country; that he had induced a good many people to lend him money to start his new enterprise; and that the beautiful lady whom he had sent to plead his cause was a wife certainly, but not his wife. She was, in fact, the wife of one of the swindled creditors, who bore her loss with greater equanimity than he showed in speaking of his departed money. Young Roscorla laughed, and said to himself that a man who wished to have any knowledge of the world must be prepared to pay for it.

The loss of the money, though it pressed him hardly for a few years, and gave a fright to his father's executors, did not trouble him much; for, in company with a good many of the young fellows about, he had given himself up to one of the most pleasing delusions which even club-life has fostered. It was the belief of those young men that in England there are a vast number of young ladies of fortune who are so exceedingly anxious to get married, that any decent young fellow of fair appearance and good manners has only to bide his time in order to be amply provided for. Accordingly Mr. Roscorla and others of his particular set were in no hurry to take a wife. They waited to see who would bid most for them. They were not in want; they could have maintained a wife in a certain fashion; but that was not the fashion in which they hoped to spend the rest of their days, when they consented to relinquish the joys and freedom of bachelorhood. Most of them, indeed, had so thoroughly settled in their own mind the sort of existence to which they were entitled—the house, and horses, and shooting necessary to them—that it was impossible for them to consider any lesser offer; and so they waited from year to year, guarding themselves against temptation, cultivating an excellent taste in various sorts of luxuries, and reserving themselves for the *grand coup* which was to make their fortune. In many cases they looked upon themselves as the victims of the world. They had been deceived by this or the other woman; but now they had done with the fatal passion of love, its dangerous perplexities, and insincere romance; and were resolved to

take a sound commonsense view of life. So they waited carelessly, and enjoyed their time, growing in wisdom of a certain sort. They were gentlemanly young fellows enough; they would not have done a dishonourable action for the world; they were well-bred, and would have said no discourteous thing to the woman they married, even though they hated her; they had their cold bath every morning; they lived soberly, if not very righteously; and would not have asked for or accepted ten points at billiards if they fairly thought they could have played you even. The only thing was that they had changed their sex. They were not Perseus, but Andromeda; and while this poor masculine Andromeda remained chained to the rock of an imaginary poverty, the feminine Perseus who was to come in a blaze of jewels and gold to the rescue, still remained afar off, until Andromeda got a little tired.

And so it was with Mr. Richard Roscorla. He lounged about his club, and had nice little dinners; he went to other people's houses, and dined there; with his crush-hat under his arm he went to many a dance, and made such acquaintances as he might; but somehow that one supreme chance invariably missed. He did not notice it, any more than his fellows. If you had asked any of them, they would still have given you those devil-may-care opinions about women, and those shrewd estimates of what was worth living for in the world. They did not seem to be aware that year after year was going by; and that a new race of younger men were coming to the front, eager for all sorts of pastimes, ready to dance till daybreak, and defying with their splendid constitutions the worst champagne a confectioner ever brewed. A man who takes good care of himself is slow to believe that he is growing middle-aged. If the sitting up all night to play loo does him an injury such as he would not have experienced a few years before, he lays the blame of it on the brandy-and-soda. When two or three hours over wet turnips make his knees feel queer, he vows that he is in bad condition, but that a few days' exercise will set him right. It was a long time before Mr. Richard Roscorla would admit to himself that his hair was growing grey. By this time many of his old friends and associates had left the club. Some had died; some had made the best of a bad

bargain, and married a plain country cousin; none, to tell the truth, had been rescued by the beautiful heiress for whom they had all been previously waiting. And while these men went away, and while new men came into the club—young fellows with fresh complexions, abundant spirits, a lavish disregard of money, and an amazing enjoyment in drinking any sort of wine—another set of circumstances came into play which rendered it more and more necessary for Mr. Roscorla to change his ways of life.

He was now over forty; his hair was grey; his companions were mostly older men than himself: and he began to be rather pressed for money. The merchants in London who sold for his agents in Jamaica those consignments of sugar and rum, sent him every few months statements which showed that either the estates were yielding less, or the markets had fallen, or labour had risen—whatever it might be, his annual income was very seriously impaired. He could no longer afford to play half-crown points at whist: even sixpenny pool was dangerous; and those boxes and stalls which it was once his privilege to take for dowagers gifted with daughters, were altogether out of the question. The rent of his rooms in Jermyn Street was a serious matter; all his little economies at the club were of little avail; at last he resolved to leave London. And then it was that he bethought him of living permanently at this cottage at Eglosilyan, which had belonged to his grandfather, and which he had visited from time to time during the summer months. He would continue his club-subscription; he would still correspond with certain of his friends; he would occasionally pay a flying visit to London; and down here by the Cornish coast he would live a healthy, economical, contented life.

So he came to Eglosilyan, and took up his abode in the plain white cottage placed amid birch trees on the side of the hill, and set about providing himself with amusement. He had a good many books, and he read at night over his final pipe; he made friends with the fishermen, and often went out with them; he took a little interest in wild plants; and he rode a sturdy little pony by way of exercise. He was known to the Trelyons, to the clergymen of the neighbourhood, and to one or two families living farther

off; but he did not dine out much, for he could not well invite his host to dinner in return. His chief friends, indeed, were the Rosewarnes; and scarcely a day passed that he did not call at the inn and have a chat with George Rosewarne, or with his wife and daughters. For the rest, Mr. Roscorla was a small man, sparely built, with somewhat fresh complexion, close-cropped grey hair and iron-grey whiskers. He dressed very neatly and methodically; he was fairly light and active in his walk; and he had a serious good-natured smile. He was much improved in constitution, indeed, since he came to Eglosilyan; for that was not a place to let any one die of languor, or to encourage complexions of the colour of apple-pudding. Mr. Roscorla, indeed, had the appearance of a pleasant little country lawyer, somewhat finical in dress and grave in manner, and occasionally just a trifle supercilious and cutting in his speech.

He had received Wenna Rosewarne's brief and hurriedly-written note; and if accident had not thrown her in his way, he would doubtless have granted her that time for reflection which she demanded. But happening to be out, he saw her go down towards the rocks beyond the harbour. She had a pretty figure, and she walked gracefully; when he saw her at a distance some little flutter of anxiety disturbed his heart. That glimpse of her—the possibility of securing as his constant companion a girl who walked so daintily and dressed so neatly—added some little warmth of feeling to the wish he had carefully reasoned out and expressed. For the offer he had sent to Miss Wenna was the result of much calculation. He was half aware that he had let his youth slip by and idled away his opportunities; there was now no chance of his engaging in any profession or pursuit; there was little chance of his bettering his condition by a rich marriage. What could he now offer to a beautiful young creature possessed of fortune, such as he had often looked out for, in return for herself and her money? Not his grey hairs, his asthmatic evenings in winter, and the fixed, and narrow, and oftentimes selfish habits and opinions begotten of a solitary life. Here, on the other hand, was a young lady of pleasing manners and honest nature, and of humble wishes as became her station,

whom he might induce to marry him. She had scarcely ever moved out of the small circle around her; and in it were no possible lovers for her. If he did not marry her, she might drift into as hopeless a position as his own. If she consented to marry him, would they not be able to live in a friendly way together, gradually winning each other's sympathy, and making the world a little more sociable and comfortable for both? There was no chance of his going back to the brilliant society in which he had once moved; for there was no one whom he could expect to die and leave him any money. When he went up to town and spent an evening or two at his club, he found himself almost wholly among strangers; and he could not get that satisfaction out of a solitary dinner that once was his. He returned to his cottage at Eglosilyan with some degree of resignation; and fancied he could live well enough there if Wenna Rosewarne would only come to relieve him from its frightful loneliness.

He blushed when he went forward to her on these rocks, was exceedingly embarrassed, and could scarcely look her in the face as he begged her pardon for intruding on her, and hoped she would resume her seat. She was a little pale, and would have liked to get away, but was probably so frightened that she did not know how to take the step. Without a word she sat down again, her heart beating as if it would suffocate her. Then there was a terrible pause.

Mr. Roscorla discovered at this moment—and the shock almost bewildered him—that he would have to play the part of a lover. He had left that out of the question. He had found it easy to dissociate love from marriage in writing a letter; in fact he had written it mainly to get over the necessity of shamming sentiment; but here was a young and sensitive girl, probably with a good deal of romantic nonsense in her head, and he was going to ask her to marry him. And just at this moment, also, an alarming recollection flashed in on his mind of Wenna Rosewarne's liking for humour, and of the merry light he had often seen in her eyes, however demure her manner might be; and then it occurred to him that if he did play the lover, she would know that he knew he was making a fool of himself; and would laugh at him in the safe concealment of her own room.

"Of course," he said, making a sudden plunge, followed by a gasp or two—"Of course—Miss Wenna—of course you were surprised to get my letter—a letter containing an offer of marriage, and almost nothing about affection in it. Well, there are some things one can neither write nor say—they have so often been made the subject of good-natured ridicule that, that——"

"I think one forgets that," Wenna said timidly, "if one is in earnest about anything."

"Miss Wenna," he said, "you know I find it very difficult to say what I should like to say. That letter did not tell you half—probably you thought it too dry and business-like. But at all events you were not offended?"

"Oh no," she said, wondering how she could get away, and whether a precipitate plunge into the sea below her would not be the simplest plan. Her head, she felt, was growing giddy; and she began to hear snatches of "Wapping Old Stairs" in the roar of the waves around her.

But he continued to talk to her, insisting on much he had said in his letter, and that with a perfect faith in its truth. So far as his own experience went, the hot-headed romanticism of youth had only led to mischief. Then the mere fact that she allowed him to talk was everything; a point was gained in that she had not straightway sent him off.

Incidentally he spoke of her charitable labours among the poorer folk of Eglosilyan; and here he speedily saw he had got an opening, which he made use of dexterously. For Miss Wenna's weak side was a great distrust of herself, and a longing to be assured that she was cared for by anybody, and of some little account in the world. To tell her that the people of Eglosilyan were without exception fond of her, and ready at all moments to say kind things of her, was the sweetest flattery to her ears. Mr. Roscorla easily perceived this, and made excellent use of his discovery. If she did not quite believe all that she heard, she was secretly delighted to hear it. It hinted at the possible realisation of all her dreams, even though she could never be beautiful, rich, and of noble presence. Wenna's heart rather inclined to her companion just then. He seemed to her to be a

connecting link between her and her manifold friends in Eglosilyan; for how had he heard those things, which she had not heard, if he were not in general communication with them? He seemed to her, too, a friendly counsellor on whom she could rely; he was the very first, indeed, who had ever offered to help her in her work.

"It is far more a matter of intention than of temper," he continued, speaking in a roundabout way of marriage. "When once two people find out the good qualities in each other, they should fix their faith on those, and let the others be overlooked as much as possible. But I don't think there is much to be feared from your temper, Miss Wenna; and as for mine—I suppose I get vexed sometimes, like other people, but I don't think I am bad-tempered, and I am sure I should never be bad-tempered to you. I don't think I should readily forget what I owe you for taking pity on a solitary old fellow like myself, if I can only persuade you to do that, and for being content to live a humdrum life up in that small cottage. By the way, do you like riding, Wenna? Has your father got a lady's saddle?"

The question startled her so that the blood rushed to her face in a moment, and she could not answer. Was it not that very morning that she had been asked almost the same question by Harry Trelyon? And while she was dreamily looking at an imaginative picture of her future life, calm and placid and commonplace, the sudden introduction into it of Harry Trelyon almost frightened her. The mere recalling of his name, indeed, shattered that magic-lantern slide, and took her back to their recent parting, when he had left her in something of an angry fashion; or rather it took her still further back—to one bright summer morning on which she had met young Trelyon riding over the downs to St. Gennis. We all of us know how apt the mind is to retain one particular impression of a friend's appearance, sometimes even in the matter of dress and occupation. When we recall such and such a person, we think of a particular smile, a particular look; perhaps one particular incident of his or her life. Whenever Wenna Rosewarne thought of Mr. Trelyon, she thought of him as she saw him on that one morning. She was coming along the rough

path that crosses the bare uplands by the sea; he was riding by another path some little distance off, and did not notice her. The boy was riding hard; the sunlight was on his face; he was singing aloud some song about the Cavaliers and King Charles. Two or three years had come and gone since then. She had seen Master Harry in many a mood, and not unfrequently ill-tempered; but whenever she thought of him suddenly, her memory presented her with that picture; and it was the picture of a handsome English lad riding by on a summer morning, singing a brave song, and with all the light of youth, and hope, and courage shining on his face.

She rose quickly, and with a sigh, as if she had been dreaming for a time, and forgetting for a moment the cares of the world.

"Oh, you asked about a saddle," she said in a matter-of-fact way. "Yes, I think my father has one. I think I must be going home now, Mr. Roscorla."

"No, not yet," he said in a pleading way. "Give me a few more minutes. I mayn't have another chance before you make up your mind; and then, when that is done, I suppose it is all over, so far as persuasion goes. What I am most anxious about is that you should believe there is more affection in my offer than I have actually conveyed in words. Don't imagine it is merely a commonplace bargain I want you to enter into. I hope, indeed, that in time I shall win from you something warmer than affection, if only you give me the chance. Now, Wenna, won't you give me some word of assurance—some hint that it may come all right?"

She stood before him, with her eyes cast down, and remained silent for what seemed to him a strangely long time. Was she bidding good-bye to all the romantic dreams of her youth—to that craving in a girl's heart for some firm and sure ideal of manly love, and courage, and devotion to which she can cling through good report and bad report? Was she reconciling herself to the plain and common ways of the married life placed before her? She said at length, in a low voice:

"You won't ask me to leave Eglosilyan?"

"Certainly not," he said, eagerly. "And you will see

how I will try to join you in all your work there, and how much easier and pleasanter it will be for you, and how much more satisfactory for all the people around you."

She put out her hand timidly, her eyes still cast down.

"You will be my wife, Wenna?"

"Yes," she said.

Mr. Roscorla was conscious that he ought at this high moment in a man's life to experience an ecstatic thrill of happiness. He almost waited for it; but he felt instead a very distinct sense of embarrassment in not knowing what to do or say next. He supposed that he ought to kiss her, but he dared not. As he himself had said, Wenna Rosewarne was so fine and shy that he shrank from wounding her extreme sensitiveness; and to step forward and kiss this quiet and gentle creature, who stood there with her pale face faintly flushed and her eyes averted—why, it was impossible. He had heard of girls, in wild moments of doubt and persuasion, suddenly raising their tear-filled eyes to their lover's face, and signing away their whole existence with one full, passionate, and yearning kiss. But to steal a kiss from this calm little girl? He felt he should be acting the part of a jocular ploughboy.

"Wenna," he said at length, "you have made me very happy. I am sure you will never repent your decision; at least I shall do my best to make you think you have done right. And, Wenna, I have to dine with the Trelyons on Friday evening; would you allow me to tell them something of what has happened?"

"The Trelyons!" she repeated, looking up in a startled way.

It was of evil omen for this man's happiness that the mere mention of that word turned this girl, who had just been yielding up her life to him, into a woman as obdurate and unimpressionable as a piece of marble.

"Mr. Roscorla," she said, with a certain hard decision of voice, "I must ask you to give me back the promise I made. I forgot; it was too hurried; why would you not wait?"

He was fairly stupefied.

"Mr. Roscorla," she said, with something almost of petulant impatience in her voice, "you must let me go now; I am quite tired out. I will write to you to-morrow or next day, as I promised."

She passed him and went on, leaving him unable to utter a word of protest. But she had only gone a few steps when she returned, and held out her hand and said—

"I hope I have not offended you? it seems that I must offend everybody now; but I am a little tired, Mr. Roscorla."

There was just the least quiver about her lips; and as all this was a profound mystery to him, he fancied he must have tired her out, and he inwardly called himself a brute.

"My dear Wenna," he said, "you have not offended me—you have not really. It is I who must apologize to you. I am so sorry I should have worried you; it was very inconsiderate. Pray take your own time about the letter."

So she went away, and passed round to the other side of the rocks, and came in view of the small winding harbour, and the mill, and the inn. Far away up there, over the cliffs, were the downs on which she had met Harry Trelyon that summer morning, as he rode by, singing in the mere joyousness of youth, and happy and pleased with all the world. She could hear the song he was singing then; she could see the sunlight that was shining on his face. It appeared to her to be long ago. This girl was but eighteen years of age; and yet, as she walked down towards Eglosilyan, there was a weight on her heart that seemed to tell her she was growing old.

And now the western sky was red with the sunset, and the rich light burned along the crests of the hills, on the golden furze, the purple heather, and the deep-coloured rocks. The world seemed all ablaze up there; but down here, as she went by the harbour and crossed over the bridge by the mill, Eglosilyan lay pale and grey in the hollow; and even the great black wheel was silent.

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CHAPTER V.

THROWING A FLY.

HARRY TRELYON had a cousin named Juliott Penaluna, who lived at Penzance with her father, an irascible old clergyman, who, while yet a poor curate, had the good fortune to marry Mrs. Trelyon's sister. Miss Juliott was a handsome, healthy, English-looking girl, with blue eyes and brown hair, frank enough in her ways, fairly well-read, fond of riding and driving, and very specially fond of her cousin. There had never been any concealment about that. Master Harry, too, liked his cousin in a way, as he showed by his rudeness to her; but he used plainly to tell her that he would not marry her; whereupon she would be angry with him for his impertinence, and end by begging him to be good friends again.

At last she went, as her mother had done before her, and encouraged the attentions of a fair, blue-eyed, pensive young curate, one who was full of beautiful enthusiasms and idealisms, in which he sought to interest the mind of this exceedingly practical young woman, who liked cliff-hunting, and had taught herself to swim in the sea. Just before she pledged away her future, she wrote to Harry Trelyon, plainly warning him of what was going to happen. In a fashion she asked for his advice. It was a timid letter for her to write, and she even showed some sentiment in it. The reply, written in a coarse, sprawling, schoolboy hand, was as follows:—

"TRELYON HALL, *Monday Afternoon.*

"DEAR JUE,—All right. You're a fool to marry a parson. What would you like for a wedding present? Affectionately yours,

"HARRY TRELYON."

Posts don't go very fast in Cornwall; but just as soon as a letter from Penzance could reach him, Master Harry had his answer. And it was this:—

"THE HOLLIES, PENZANCE, *Wednesday.*

"DEAR HARRY,—I am glad to receive a letter from you in which there is no ill-spelling. There is plenty of ill-temper, however, as usual. You may send your wedding presents to those who care for them: I don't.

"JULIOTT PENALUNA."

Master Harry burst into a roar of laughter when he received that letter; but, all the same, he could not get his cousin to write him a line for months thereafter. Now, however, she had come to visit some friends at Wadebridge; and she agreed to drive over and join Mrs. Trelyon's little dinner-party, to which Mr. Roscorla had also been invited. Accordingly, in the afternoon, when Harry Trelyon was seated on the stone steps outside the Hall door, engaged in making artificial flies, Miss Penaluna drove up in a tiny chariot drawn by a beautiful little pair of ponies; and when the boy had jumped down and gone to the ponies' heads, and when she had descended from the carriage, Master Harry thought it was time for him to lay aside his silk, rosin, feathers, and what not, and go forward to meet her.

"How are you, Jue?" he said, offering to kiss her, as was his custom. "And where's your young man?"

She drew back, offended; and then she looked at him, and shrugged her shoulders, and gave him her cheek to kiss. He was only a boy, after all.

"Well, Harry, I am not going to quarrel with you," she said, with a good-natured smile; "although I suppose I shall have plenty of cause before I go. Are you as rude as ever? Do you talk as much slang as ever?"

"I like to hear you talk of slang!" he said. "Who calls her ponies Brandy and Soda? Weren't you wild, Jue, when Captain Tulliver came up and said, '*Miss Penaluna, how are your dear Almonds and Raisins?*'"

"If I had given him a cut with my whip, I should have made him dance," said Miss Juliott, frankly; "then he would have forgotten to turn out his toes. Harry, go and see if that boy has taken in my things."

"I won't. There's plenty of time; and I want to talk to you. I say, Jue, what made you go and get engaged down

in Penzance? Why didn't you cast your eye in this direction?"

"Well, of all the impertinent things that I ever heard!" said Miss Juliott, very much inclined to box his ears. "Do you think I ever thought of marrying *you?*"

"Yes I do," he answered, coolly. "And you would throw over that parson in a minute, if I asked you—you know you would, Jue. But I'm not good enough for you."

"Indeed, you are not," she said, with a toss of the head. "I would take you for a gamekeeper, but not for a husband."

"Much need you'll have of a gamekeeper when you become Mrs. Tressider!" said he, with a rude laugh. "But I didn't mean myself, Jue. I meant that if you were going to marry a parson, you might have come here and had a choice. We can show you all sorts at this house—fat and lean, steeples and beer-barrels, bandy-legged and knock-kneed, whichever you like—you'll always find an ample assortment on these elegant premises. The stock is rather low just now,—I think we've only two or three; but you're supplied already, ain't you, Jue? Well, I never expected it of you. You were a good sort of chap at one time; but I suppose you can't climb trees any more now. There, I'll let you go into the house; all the servants are waiting for you. If you see my grandmother, tell her she must sit next me at dinner—if a parson sits next me, I'll kill him."

Just as Miss Juliott passed into the Hall, a tall, fair-haired, gentle-faced woman, dressed wholly in white, and stepping very softly and silently, came down the staircase, so that, in the twilight, she almost appeared to be some angel descending from heaven. She came forward to her visitor with a smile on the pale and wistful face, and took her hand and kissed her on the forehead; after which, and a few words of inquiry, Miss Penaluna was handed over to the charge of a maid. The tall, fair woman passed noiselessly on and went into a chamber at the further end of the hall and shut the door; and presently, the low, soft tones of a harmonium were heard, appearing to come from some considerable distance, and yet filling the house with a melancholy and slumberous music.

Surely it could not be this gentle music which brought to Master Harry's face a most un-Christian scowl? What harm could there be in a solitary widow wrapping herself up in her imaginative sorrow, and saturating the whole of her feeble, impressionable, and withal kindly, nature with a half-religious, half-poetic sentiment? What although those days which she devoted to services in memory of her relatives who were dead—and, most of all, in memory of her husband whom she had really loved—resembled, in some respects, the periods in which an opium-eater resolves to give himself up to the strange and indescribable sensations, beyond which he can imagine no form of happiness? Mrs. Trelyon was nothing of a zealot or devotee. She held no particular doctrines; she did not even countenance High Church usages, except in so far as music and painting and dim religious lights aided her endeavours to produce a species of exalted intoxication. She did not believe herself to be a wicked sinner; and she could not understand the earnest convictions and pronounced theology of the Dissenters around her. But she drank of religious emotion as other persons drink in beautiful music; and all the aids she could bring to bear in producing this feeling of blind ecstasy she had collected together in the private chapel attached to Trelyon Hall. At this very moment she was seated there alone. The last rays of the sun shone through narrow windows of painted glass, and carried dim colours with them into the dusk of the curiously-furnished little building. She herself sate before a large harmonium; and there was a stain of rose-colour and of violet on the white silk costume that she wore. It was one of her fancies that, though black might well represent the grief immediately following the funeral of one's friends, pure white was the more appropriate mourning when one had become accustomed to their loss, and had turned one's eyes to the shining realms which they inhabit. Mrs. Trelyon never went out of mourning for her husband, who had been dead over a dozen years; but the mourning was of pure white; so that she wandered through the large and empty rooms of Trelyon Hall, or about the grounds outside, like a ghost; and, like a ghost, she was ordinarily silent, and shy, and light-footed. She was not much of a companion for the rude, impetuous, self-willed

boy whose education she had handed over to grooms and gamekeepers, and to his own very pronounced instincts.

The frown that came over the lad's handsome face as he sate on the door-step, resuming his task of making trout-flies, was caused by the appearance of a clergyman, who came walking forward from one of the hidden paths in the garden. There was nothing really distressing or repulsive about the look of this gentleman; although, on the other hand, there was nothing very attractive. He was of middle age and middle height; he wore a rough brown beard, and moustache; his face was grey and full of lines; his forehead was rather narrow; and his eyes were shrewd and watchful. But for that occasional glance of the eyes, you would have taken him for a very ordinary, respectable, commonplace person, not deserving of notice, except for the length of his coat. When Master Harry saw him approach, however, a diabolical notion leapt into the young gentleman's head. He had been practising the throwing of flies against the wind; and on the lawn were the several pieces of paper, at different distances, at which he had aimed, while the slender trout-rod, with a bit of line and a fly at the end of it still dangling, was close by his hand. Instantaneously he put the rod against the wall, so that the hook was floating in front of the door just about the height of a man's head. Would the Rev. Mr. Barnes glance at the door-steps, rather than in front of him, in passing into the house, and so find an artificial fly fastened in his nose? Mr. Barnes was no such fool.

"It is a pleasant afternoon, Mr. Trelyon," he said, in grave and measured accents, as he came up.

Harry Trelyon nodded, as he smoothed out a bit of red-silk thread. Then Mr. Barnes went forward, carefully put aside the dangling fly, and went into the house.

"The fish won't rise to-night," said Master Harry to himself, with a grin on his face. "But parsons don't take the fly readily; you've got to catch them with bait; and the bait they like best is a widow's mite. And now, I suppose, I must go and dress for dinner; and don't I wish I was going down to Mrs. Rosewarne's parlour instead!"

But another had secured a better right to go into Mrs. Rosewarne's parlour.

CHAPTER VI.

THE —— AMONG THE TAILORS.

This other gentleman was also dressing for Mrs. Trelyon's dinner-party, and he was in a pleased frame of mind. Never before, indeed, had Mr. Roscorla been so distinctly and consciously happy. That morning, when his anxiety had become almost painful—partly because he honestly liked Wenna Rosewarne and wanted to marry her, and partly because he feared the mortification of a refusal—her letter had come; and, as he read the trembling, ingenuous, and not-very-well-composed lines and sentences, a great feeling of satisfaction stole over him, and he thanked her a thousand times, in his heart, for having given him this relief. And he was the more pleased that it was so easy to deal with a written consent. He was under no embarrassment as to how he should express his gratitude, or as to whether he ought to kiss her. He could manage correspondence better than a personal interview. He sate down and wrote her a very kind and even affectionate letter, telling her that he would not intrude himself too soon upon her, especially as he had to go up to Trelyon Hall that evening; and saying, too, that, in any case, he could never expect to tell her how thankful he was to her. That she would discover from his conduct to her during their married life.

But, to his great surprise, Mr. Roscorla found that the writing and sending off of that letter did not allay the extraordinary nervous excitement that had laid hold of him. He could not rest. He called in his housekeeper, and rather astonished that elderly person by saying he was much pleased with her services, and thereupon he presented her with a sovereign to buy a gown. Then he went into the garden, and meant to occupy himself with his flowers; but he found himself staring at them without seeing them. Then he went back to his parlour and took a glass of sherry to steady his nerves—but in vain. Then he thought he would go down to the inn, and ask to see Wenna; but again he changed his mind, for how was he to meet the rest

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of the family without being prepared for the interview? Probably he never knew how he passed these two or three hours; but at length the time came for him to dress for dinner.

And, as he did so, the problem that occupied his mind was to discover the probable reasons that had induced Wenna Rosewarne to promise to be his wife. Had her parents advised her to marry a man who could at least render her future safe? Or had she taken pity on his loneliness, and been moved by some hope of reforming his ways and habits of thinking? Or, had she been won over by his pictures of her increased influence among the people around her? He could not tell. Perhaps, he said to himself, she said yes because she had not the courage to say no. Perhaps she had been convinced by his arguments that the wild passion of love, for which youth is supposed to long, is a dangerous thing; and was there not constantly before her eyes an example of the jealousy, and quarrelling, and misery that may follow that fatal delirium? Or, it might be—and here Mr. Roscorla more nearly approached the truth—that this shy, sensitive, self-distrustful girl had been so surprised to find herself of any importance to any one, and so grateful to him for his praise of her, and for this highest mark of appreciation that a man can bestow, that her sudden gratitude softened her heart, and disposed her to yield to his prayer. And who could tell but that this present feeling might lead to a still warmer feeling under the generous influence of a constant kindness and appreciation? It was with something of wonder and almost of dismay—and with a wholly new sense of his own unworthiness—that Mr. Roscorla found himself regarding the possibility of his winning a young girl's first love.

Never before in his life—not even in his younger days, when he had got a stray hint that he would probably meet a duchess and her three daughters at a particular party—had he dressed with so much care. He was, on the whole, well pleased with himself. He had to admit that his grey hair was changing to white; but many people considered white hair, with a hale complexion, rather an ornament than otherwise. For the rest, he resolved that he would never dress again to go to any party to which Miss Wenna Rosewarne was not also invited. He would not decorate himself for mere strangers and acquaintances.

He put on a light top-coat and went out into the quiet summer evening. There was a scent of roses in the air; the great Atlantic was beautiful and still; it was a time for lovers to be walking through twilit woods, or in honeysuckle lanes, rather than for a number of people, indifferent to each other, to sit down to the vulgar pleasures of the table. He wished that Wenna Rosewarne had been of that party.

There were two or three children at his gate—bright-cheeked, clean, and well-clad, as all the Eglosilyan children are—and when they saw him come out, they ran away. He was ashamed of this; for, if Wenna had seen it, she would have been grieved. He called on them to come back; they stood in the road, not sure of him. At length a little woman of six came timidly along to him, and looked at him with her big, wondering, blue eyes. He patted her head, and asked her name, and then he put his hand in his pocket. The others, finding that their ambassador had not been beheaded on the spot, came up also, and formed a little circle, a cautious yard or two off.

"Look here," he said to the eldest; "here is a shilling, and you go and buy sweetmeats, and divide them equally among you. Or, wait a bit—come along with me, the whole of you, and we'll see whether Mrs. Cornish has got any cake for you."

He drove the flock of them into that lady's kitchen, much to her consternation, and there he left them. But he had not got half-way through the little garden again, when he returned, and went to the door, and called in to the children—

"Mind, you can swing on the gate whenever you like, so long as you take care and don't hurt yourselves."

And so he hurried away again; and he hoped that some day, when he and Wenna Rosewarne were passing, she would see the children swinging on his gate, and she would be pleased that they did not run away.

"Your Polly has never been false, she declares—"

he tried to hum the air, as he had often heard Wenna hum

it, as he walked rapidly down the hill, and along a bit of the valley, and then up one of the great gorges lying behind Eglosilyan. He had avoided the road that went by the inn; he did not wish to see any of the Rosewarnes just then. Moreover, his rapid walking was not to save time, for he had plenty of that; but to give himself the proud assurance that he was still in excellent wind. Miss Wenna must not imagine that she was marrying an old man. Give him but as good a horse as Harry Trelyon's famous Dick, and he would ride that dare-devil young gentleman for a wager to Launceston and back. Why, he had only arrived at that period when a sound constitution reaches its maturity. Old, or even elderly? He switched at weeds with his cane, and was conscious that he was in the prime of life.

At the same time, he did not like the notion of younger men than himself lounging about Mrs. Rosewarne's parlour; and he thought he might just as well give Harry Trelyon a hint that Wenna Rosewarne was engaged. An excellent opportunity was offered him at this moment; for as he went up through the grounds to the front of the Hall, he found Master Harry industriously throwing a fly at certain bits of paper on the lawn. He had resumed this occupation, after having gone inside and dressed, as a handy method of passing the time until his cousin Juliott should appear.

"How do you do, Trelyon?" said Mr. Roscorla, in a friendly way; and Harry nodded. "I wish I could throw a fly like you. By-the-bye, I have a little bit of news for you —for yourself alone, mind."

"All right, fire away," said Master Harry, still making the fine line of the trout-rod dart through the air.

"Well, it is rather a delicate matter, you know. I don't want it talked about; but the fact is, I am going to marry Miss Rosewarne."

There was no more aiming at those bits of paper. The tall and handsome lad turned and stared at his companion as if the latter had been a maniac; and then he said—

"Miss Rosewarne? Wenna Rosewarne?"

"Yes," said Mr. Roscorla, distinctly conscious that Harry Trelyon was regarding his white hair and general appearance.

The younger man said nothing more, but began to

whistle in an absent way; and then, just as if Mr. Roscorla had no existence whatever, he proceeded to reel in the line of his rod, he fastened the fly to one of the rings, and then walked off.

"You'll find my mother inside," he said; and so Mr. Roscorla went into the Hall, and was soon in Mrs. Trelyon's drawing-room, among her six or eight guests.

Harry Trelyon did not appear until dinner was announced; and then he was just in time to take his grandmother in. He took care, also, to have his cousin Juliott on his other side; and, to both of these ladies, it was soon apparent that something had occurred to put Master Harry into one of his most ungovernable moods.

"Harry?" said his mother, from the other end of the table, as an intimation that he should say grace.

There was no response, despite Miss Juliott's appealing look; and so Mrs. Trelyon had to turn for assistance to one of the clergymen near her, who went through the prescribed form.

"Isn't it shocking?" said Miss Penaluna, across the table, to Harry's grandmother, who was not nearly so severe on him, for such conduct, as she ought to have been.

"Grace before meat takes too much for granted," said the young man, unconcernedly. "How can you tell whether you are thankful until you see what sort of dinner it is? And what's the use of keeping a dog, and barking yourself? Ain't there three parsons down there?"

Miss Juliott, being engaged to a clergyman, very naturally resented this language; and the two cousins had rather a stormy fight; at the end of which Master Harry turned to his grandmother and declared that she was the only woman of common sense he had ever known.

"Well, it runs in the blood, Harry," said the old lady, "that dislike to clergymen; and I never could find out any reason for it, except when your grandfather hunted poor Mr. Pascoe that night. Dear, dear! what a jealous man your grandfather was, to be sure; and the way he used to pet me when I told him I never saw the man I'd look at after seeing him. Dear, dear!—and the day he sold those two manors to the Company, you know, he came back at night and said I was as good a wife as any in England—he did,

indeed—and the bracelet he gave me then, that shall go to your wife on your wedding-day, Harry, I promise you, and you won't find its match about this part of the country, I can tell you. But don't you go and sell the lordship of Trelyon. Many a time your grandfather was asked to sell it; and he did well by selling the other two; but Trelyon he would never sell, nor would your father, and I hope you won't either, Harry. Let them work the quarries for you—that is fair enough—and give you your royalty; but don't part with Trelyon, Harry, for you might as well be parting with your own name."

"Well, I can't, grandmother, you know; but I am fearfully in want of a big lump of money, all the same."

"Money? what do you want with a lot of money? You're not going to take to gambling or horse-racing, are you?"

"I can't tell you what I want it for—not at present, any way," said the lad, looking rather gloomy; and, with that, the subject dropped, and a brief silence ensued at that end of the table.

Mr. Tressider, however, the mild and amiable young curate to whom Miss Juliott was engaged, having been rather left out in the cold, struck in at this moment, blushing slightly:

"I heard you say something about lordships of manors," he observed, addressing himself rather to Trelyon's grandmother. "Did it ever occur to you what a powerful thing a word from William the Conqueror must have been, when it could give to a particular person and his descendants absolute possession of a piece of the globe?"

Mrs. Trelyon stared at the young man. Had a relative of hers gone and engaged herself to a dangerous Revolutionary, who, in the guise of a priest, dared to trifle with the tenure of land? Mr. Tressider was as innocent of any such intention as the babe unborn; but he was confused by her look of astonishment; he blushed more violently than before; and only escaped from his embarrassment by the good services of Miss Penaluna, who turned the whole matter into ridicule, and asked what William the Conqueror was about when he let a piece of the world come into the hands of Harry Trelyon.

"And how deep down have you a hold on it, Harry?" she

said. "How far does your right over the minerals extend? From the surface right down to the centre?"

Mr. Tressider was smiling vaguely when Master Harry's eye fell upon him. What harm had the young clergyman, or any other clergyman present, done him, that he should have felt a sudden dislike to that ingenuous smile?

"Oh no," said Trelyon, with a careless impertinence; "William the Conqueror did not allow the rights of the lord of the manor to extend right down to the middle of the earth. There were a good many clergymen about him; and they reserved that district for their own purposes."

"Harry," said his cousin to him, in a low voice; "is it your wish to insult me? If so, I will leave the room."

"Insult you!" he said, with a laugh. "Why, Jue, you must be out of your senses. What concern have you in that warmish region?"

"I don't appreciate jokes on such subjects. My father is a clergyman, my husband will be a clergyman——"

"Worse luck for you," he observed, frankly, but so that no one could hear.

"Harry," she said, "what do you mean by your dislike to clergymen?"

"Is that a conundrum?" said the unregenerate youth.

For a moment, Miss Penaluna seemed really vexed and angry; but she happened to look at Master Harry, and, somehow, her displeasure subsided into a look of good-natured resignation. There was the least little shrug of the shoulders; and then she turned to her neighbour on the right, and began to talk about ponies.

It was certainly not a pleasant dinner-party for those who sate near this young gentleman, who was more outrageously capricious than ever, except when addressing his grandmother, to whom he was always courteous, and even roughly affectionate. That old lady eyed him narrowly, and could not quite make out what was the matter. Had he been privately engaged in some betting transaction that he should want this money?

When the ladies left the room, Trelyon asked Mr. Roscorla to take his place for a few minutes, and send round the wines; and then he went out and called his mother aside into the study.

"Mother," he said, "Mr. Roscorla is going to marry Wenna Rosewarne."

The tall, fair, pale lady did not seem much startled by the news. She had very little acquaintance with the affairs of the village; but she knew at least that the Rosewarnes kept the inn; and she had, every Sunday morning, seen Mrs. Rosewarne and her two daughters come into church.

"That is the elder one, is it not, who sings in the choir?"

"It's the elder one," said Master Harry, who knew less about the choir.

"It is a singular choice for Mr. Roscorla to make," she observed. "I have always considered him very fastidious, and rather proud of his family. But some men take strange fancies in choosing a wife."

"Yes, and some women take precious strange fancies in choosing a husband," said the young man, rather warmly. "Why, she's worth twenty dozen of him. I don't know what the dickens made her listen to the old fool—it is a monstrous shame, that's what I call it! I suppose he's frightened the girl into it, or bought over her father, or made himself a hypocrite, and got some person to intercede, and scheme, and tell lies for him."

"Harry," said his mother, "I don't understand why you should interest yourself in the matter."

"Oh! well, it's only this—that I consider that girl to be the best sort of woman I've met yet—that's all; and I'll tell you what I mean to do, mother—I mean to give her five thousand pounds, so that she shan't come to that fellow in a dependent way, and let him give himself airs over her because he's been born a gentleman."

"Five thousand pounds!" Mrs. Trelyon repeated, wondering whether her son had drunk too much wine at dinner.

"Well, but look here, mother," he said, quite prepared for her astonishment. "You know I've spent very little—I've never spent anything like what I'm entitled to; and next year I shall be of age; and all I want now is for you to help me to get a release, you know. I am sure I shall be able to persuade Colonel Ransome to it; for he'll see it is not any piece of extravagance on my part—speculation, or anything of that sort——"

"My dear child," said Mrs. Trelyon, startled, for once, into earnestness, "you will make people believe you are mad. To give five thousand pounds to the daughter of an innkeeper, a perfect stranger, as a marriage dowry—why, Harry, what do you think people would say of such a thing? What would they say of her?"

He looked puzzled for a moment, as though he did not understand her. It was but for a moment. "If you mean what one of those parsons would say of her," he said, impetuously, while a sudden flash of anger sprang to his face, "I don't care; but my answer to it would be to kick him round the grounds and out at the gate. Do you think I'd care a brass farthing for anything these cringing sneaks might say of her, or of me, or of anybody? And would they dare to say it if you asked her here, and made a friend of her?"

"Make a friend of her!" repeated Mrs. Trelyon, almost mechanically. She did not know what length this terrible son of hers might not go.

"If she is going to marry a friend of yours, why not?"

"Harry, you are most unreasonable: if you will think it over for a moment, you will see how it is impossible. If Mr. Roscorla marries this girl, that is his own affair; he will have society enough at home, without wishing to go out and dine. He is doing it with his eyes open, you may be sure: he has far more knowledge of such affairs than you can have. How could I single out this girl from her family to make her a friend? I should have to ask her parents and her sister to come here also, unless you wish her to come on sufferance, and throw a reflection on them."

She spoke quite calmly, but he would not listen to her. He chafed and fidgeted, and said, as soon as she had finished—

"You could do it very well, if you liked. When a woman is willing she can always smooth matters down."

Mrs. Trelyon flushed slightly, and said, with clear emphasis:

"I presume that I am best fitted to say what society I

shall keep; and I shall have no acquaintance thrust upon me whom I would rather not recognize."

"Oh, very well," said the lad, with the proud lips giving evidence of some sudden decision. "And you won't help me to get that five thousand pounds?"

"I will not. I will not countenance any such folly."

"Then I shall have to raise the money myself."

He rang a bell, and a servant appeared.

"Tell Jakes to saddle Dick and bring him round directly."

His mother let him have his own way, without word or question; for she was deeply offended, and her feeble and sensitive nature had risen in protest against his tyranny. He went off to put on a pair of riding-boots and an overcoat; and by-and-by he came down into the hall again, and went to the door. The night was dark, but clear; there was a blaze of stars overhead; all the world seemed to be quivering with those white throbs of fire. The horse and groom were just visible, their dusky figures being scarcely blacker than the trees and bushes around. Harry Trelyon buttoned up the collar of his light overcoat, took his switch in his hand, and sprung into the saddle. At the same moment the white figure of a lady suddenly appeared at the door, and came down a step or two, and said—

"Harry, where are you going?"

"To Plymouth first," the young man answered, as he rode off; "to London afterwards, and then to the devil!"

CHAPTER VII.

SOME NEW EXPERIENCES.

When the first shock of fear and anxiety was over, Wenna Rosewarne discovered to her great delight that her engagement was a very pleasant thing. The ominous doubts and regrets that had beset her mind when she was asked to become Mr. Roscorla's wife seemed to disappear like clouds from a morning sky; and then followed a fair and happy day, full of abundant satisfaction and calm. With much inward ridicule of her own vanity, she found herself nursing a notion of her self-importance, and giving herself airs as if

she were already a married woman. Although the engagement was kept a profound secret, the mere consciousness that she had attained to this position in the world lent a new assurance to her as she went about the village. She was gifted with a new authority over despondent mothers, fractious children, and selfish fathers, as she went her daily rounds; and even in her own home Wenna had more attention paid to her, now that she was going to marry Mr. Roscorla.

There was but one dissentient, and that was Mabyn Rosewarne, who fumed and fretted about the match, and sometimes was like to cry over it, and at other times grew vastly indignant, and would have liked to have gone and given Mr. Roscorla a bit of her mind. She pitied her poor weak sister for having been coaxed into an engagement by this designing old man; and the poor weak sister was much diverted by her compassion; and was too good-natured to laugh at the valiant protection which this courageous young creature of sixteen offered her. Wenna let her sister say what she pleased about herself or her future, and used no other argument to stop angry words than a kiss, so long as Mabyn spoke respectfully of Mr. Roscorla. But this was precisely what Miss Mabyn was disinclined to do; and the consequence was that their interviews generally ended by Wenna becoming indignant, drawing herself up, and leaving the room. Then Mabyn would follow, and make up the quarrel, and promise never to offend again; but all the same she cherished a deadly animosity towards Mr. Roscorla in her heart; and, when her sister was not present, she amused her father and shocked her mother by giving a series of imitations of Mr. Roscorla's manner which that gentleman would not in the least have appreciated.

The young lady, however, soon invented what she considered a far more effectual means of revenging herself on Mr. Roscorla. She never left Wenna's side. No sooner did the elder sister prepare to go out, than Miss Mabyn discovered that she, too, would like a walk; and she so persistently did this that Wenna soon took it for granted that her sister would go with her wherever she went, and invariably waited for her. Accordingly Mr. Roscorla never by any chance went walking with Wenna Rosewarne alone;

and the younger sister—herself too sulky to enter into conversation with him—used to enjoy the malicious pleasure of watching him shape his talk to suit the presence of a third person. For of course Miss Mabyn had read in books of the beautiful fashion in which lovers speak to each other, and of their tender confidences as they sit by the sea or go rambling through the summer woods. Was not the time opportune for these idyllic ways? All the uplands were yellowed with tall-standing corn; the sea was as blue and as still as the sky overhead; the gardens of Eglosilyan were sweet with honeysuckle and moss-roses; and in the evenings a pale pink mist hung around the horizon, while the silver sickle of the moon came up into the violet sky, and the first pale stars appeared in the east.

"If our Wenna had a proper sort of lover," Miss Mabyn used to say to herself, bitterly, "wouldn't I scheme to have them left alone! I would watch for them like a watch-dog, that no one should come near them; and I should be sa proud of him as Wenna herself; and how happy she would be in talking to me about him! But this horrid old wretch—I wish he would fall over Black Cliff some day!"

She was not aware that, in becoming the constant companion of her sister, she was affording this dire enemy of hers a vast amount of relief. Mr. Roscorla was in every way satisfied with his engagement; the more he saw of Wenna Rosewarne, the more he admired her utter self-forgetfulness, and liked a quaint and shy sort of humour that interfused her talk and her ways; but he greatly preferred not to be alone with her. He was then beset by some vague impression that certain things were demanded of him, in the character of a lover, which were exceedingly embarrassing; and which, if he did not act the part well, might awaken her ridicule. On the other hand, if he omitted all those things, might she not be surprised by his lack of affection, begin to suspect him, and end by disliking him? Yet he knew that not for ten thousand worlds could he muster up courage to repeat one line of sentimental poetry to her.

As yet he had never even had the courage to kiss her. He knew that this was wrong. In his own house he reflected that a man engaged to a woman ought surely to

give her some such mark of affection—say, in bidding her good-night; and thereupon Mr. Roscorla would resolve that, as he left the inn that evening, he would endeavour to kiss his future bride. He never succeeded. Somehow Wenna always parted from him in a merry mood. These were pleasant evenings in Mrs. Rosewarne's parlour; there was a good deal of quiet fun going on; and if Wenna did come along the passage to the door with him, she was generally talking and laughing all the way. Of course he was not going to kiss her in that mood—as if, to use his own expression, he had been a jocular ploughboy.

He had kissed her hand once. That was on his first meeting her after she had written the letter in which she promised to be his wife, and Mrs. Rosewarne had sent him into the room where she knew her daughter was alone. Wenna rose up to meet him, pale, frightened, with her eyes downcast. He took her hand and kissed it; and then after a pause, he said, "I hope I shall make you happy." She could not answer. She began to tremble violently. He asked her to sit down, and begged of her not to be disturbed. She was recalled to herself by the accidental approach of her sister Mabyn, who came along the passage, singing, "Oh, the men of merry, merry England," in excellent imitation of the way in which Harry Trelyon was used to sing that once famous song as he rode his black horse along the highways. Mabyn entered the room, stared, and would have gone out, but that her sister called to her and asked her to come and hold down a pattern while she cut some cloth. Mabyn wondered that her sister should be so diligent when a visitor was present. She saw, too, that Wenna's fingers trembled. Then she remained in the room until Mr. Roscorla left, sitting by a window and not overhearing their conversation, but very much inclined to break in upon it by asking him how he dared to come there and propose to marry her sister Wenna.

"Oh, Wenna," she said, one evening some time after, when the two sisters were sitting out on the rocks at the end of the harbour, watching the sun go down behind the sea, "I cannot bear him coming to take you away like that. I shouldn't mind if he were like a sweetheart to you; but he's a multiplication-table sort of sweetheart—everything so

regular, and accurate, and proper. I hate a man who always thinks what he's going to say ; and always has neat sentences ; and he watches you ; and is so self-satisfied ; and his information is always so correct. Oh, Wenna, I wish you had a young and beautiful lover, like a Prince ! "

"My dear child," said the elder sister, with a smile, "young and beautiful lovers are for young and beautiful girls, like you."

"Oh, Wenna, how can you talk like that ! " said the younger sister. "Why will you always believe that you are less pretty than other people, when every one knows that you have the most beautiful eyes in all the world ! You have ! There's not anybody in all the world has such beautiful and soft eyes as you—you ask anybody and they will tell you, if you don't believe me. But I have no doubt—I have no doubt whatever—that Mr. Roscorla will try to make you believe you are ugly, so that you mayn't think you've thrown yourself away."

Miss Mabyn looked very indignant, and very much inclined to cry at the same time ; but the gentle sister put her hand on hers, and said—

"You will make me quarrel with you some day, Mabyn, if you are so unjust to Mr. Roscorla. You are continually accusing him of things of which he never dreams. Now he never gets a chance that he does not try to praise me in every way ; and if there were no looking-glasses in the world, I have no doubt he would make me believe I was quite beautiful ; and you shouldn't say those things of him, Mabyn—it isn't fair. He always speaks kindly of you. He thinks you are very pretty, and that you will grow up to be very handsome when you become a woman."

Mabyn was not to be pacified by this ingenuous piece of flattery.

"You are such a simpleton, Wenna," she said, "he can make you believe anything."

"He does not try to make me believe anything I don't know already," said the elder sister, with some asperity.

"He tries to make you believe he is in love with you," said Mabyn, bluntly.

Wenna Rosewarne coloured up, and was silent for a minute. How was she to explain to this sister of hers all

those theories which Mr. Roscorla had described to her in his first two or three letters ? She felt she had not the same gift of expression that he had.

"You don't understand—you don't understand at all, Mabyn, what you talk of as love. I suppose you mean the sort of frantic madness you read of in books—well, I don't want that kind of love at all. There is a quite different sort of love, that comes of respect and affection and an agreement of wishes, and that is far more valuable and likely to be lasting. I don't want a lover who would do wild things, and make one wonder at his heroism, for that is the lover you get in books ; but if you want to live a happy life, and please those around you, and be of service to them, you must have a very different sort of sweetheart—a man who will think of something else than a merely selfish passion, who will help you to be kind to other people, and whose affection will last through years and years."

"You have learnt your lesson very well," said Miss Mabyn, with a toss of her head. "He has spent some time in teaching you. But as for all that, Wenna, it's nothing but fudge. What a girl wants is to be really loved by a man, and then she can do without all those fine sentiments. As for Mr. Roscorla——"

"I do not think we are likely to agree on this matter, dear," said Wenna, calmly, as she rose, "and so we had better say nothing about it."

"Oh, I am not going to quarrel with you, Wenna," said the younger sister, promptly. "You and I will always agree very well. It is Mr. Roscorla and I who are not likely to agree very well—not at all likely, I can assure you."

They were walking back to Eglosilyan, under the clear evening skies, when whom should they see coming out to meet them but Mr. Roscorla himself. It was a pleasant time and place for lovers to come together. The warm light left by the sunset still shone across the hills ; the clear blue-green water in the tiny harbour lay perfectly still ; Eglosilyan had got its day's work over, and was either chatting in the cottage gardens or strolling down to have a look at the couple of coasters moored behind the small breakwater. But Mr. Roscorla had had no hope of

discovering Wenna alone; he was quite as well content to find Mabyn with her, though that young lady, as he came up, looked particularly fierce, and did not smile at all when she shook hands with him. Was it the red glow in the west that gave an extra tinge of colour to Mr. Roscorla's face? Wenna felt that she was better satisfied with her engagement when her lover was not present; but she put that down to a natural shyness and modesty which she considered was probably common to all girls in these strange circumstances.

Mr. Roscorla wished to convoy the two young ladies back to the inn, and evidently meant to spend the evening there. But Miss Wenna ill-requited his gallantry by informing him that she had intended to make one or two calls in the evening, which would occupy some time: in particular, she had undertaken to do something for Mrs. Luke's eldest girl; and she had also promised to go in and read for half an hour to Nicholas Keam, the brother of the wife of the owner of the Napoleon Hotel, who was very ill indeed, and far too languid to read for himself.

"But you know, Mr. Roscorla," said Mabyn, with a bitter malice, "if you would go into the Napoleon and read to Mr. Keam, Wenna and I could go up to Mother Luke's, and so we should save all that time, and I am sure Wenna is very tired to-day. Then you would be so much better able to pick out the things in the papers that Mr. Keam wants; for Wenna never knows what is old and what is new; and Mr. Keam is anxious to learn what is going on in politics, and the Irish Church, and that kind of thing."

Could he refuse? Surely a man who has just got a girl to say she will marry him, ought not to think twice about sacrificing half an hour to helping her in her occupations, especially if she be tired. Wenna could not have made the request herself; but she was anxious that he should say yes, now it had been made, for it was in a manner a test of his devotion to her; and she was overjoyed and most grateful to him when he consented. What Mabyn thought of the matter was not visible on her face.

CHAPTER VIII.

WENNA'S FIRST TRIUMPH.

THE two girls, as they went up the main street of Eglosilyan (it was sweet with the scent of flowers on this beautiful evening), left Mr. Roscorla in front of the obscure little public-house he had undertaken to visit; and it is probable that in the whole of England at that moment there was not a more miserable man. He knew this Nicholas Keam, and his sister, and his brother-in-law, so far as their names went; and also they knew him by sight; but he had never said more than good-morning to any one of them; and he had certainly never entered this pot-house, where a sort of debating society was nightly held by the *habitués*. But, all the same, he would do what he had undertaken to do, for Wenna Rosewarne's sake; and it was with some sensation of a despairing heroism that he went up the steps of slate and crossed the threshold.

He looked into the place from the passage. He found before him what was really a large kitchen, with a spacious hearth, and with heavy rafters across the roof; but all round the walls there was a sort of bench with a high wooden back to it; and on this bench sat a number of men—one or two labourers, the rest slate-workers—who, in the dusk, were idly smoking and looking at the beer on the narrow tables before them. Was this the sort of place that his future wife had been in the habit of visiting? There was a sort of gloomy picturesqueness about the chamber, to be sure; for, warm as the evening was, a fire burned flickeringly in the grate; there was enough light to show the tin and copper vessels shining over the high mantel-piece; and a couple of fair-haired children were playing about the middle of the floor, little heeding the row of dusky figures around the tables, whose heads were half hidden by tobacco-smoke.

A tall, thin, fresh-coloured woman came along the passage; and Mr. Roscorla was glad that he had not to go in among these labourers to make his business known. It

discovering Wenna alone; he was quite as well content to find Mabyn with her, though that young lady, as he came up, looked particularly fierce, and did not smile at all when she shook hands with him. Was it the red glow in the west that gave an extra tinge of colour to Mr. Roscorla's face? Wenna felt that she was better satisfied with her engagement when her lover was not present; but she put that down to a natural shyness and modesty which she considered was probably common to all girls in these strange circumstances.

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A tall, thin, fresh-coloured woman came along the passage; and Mr. Roscorla was glad that he had not to go in among these labourers to make his business known. It

was bad enough to have to speak to Mrs. Haigh, the landlady of the Napoleon.

"Good evening, Mrs. Haigh," said he, with an appearance of cheerfulness.

"Good evenin', zor," said she, staring at him with those cruelly shrewd and clear eyes that the Cornish peasantry have.

"I called in to see Mr. Keam," said he. "Is he much better?"

"If yü'd like vor to see 'n, zor," said she, rather slowly, as if waiting for further explanation, "yü'll vind 'n in the rüm"—and with that she opened the door of a room on the other side of the passage. It was obviously the private parlour of the household—an odd little chamber with plenty of coloured lithographs on the walls, and china and photographs on the mantelpiece; the floor of large blocks of slate ornamented with various devices in chalk; in the corner a cupboard filled with old cut crystal, brass candlesticks, and other articles of luxury. The room had one occupant—a tall man who sate in a big wooden chair by the window, his head hanging forward between his high shoulders, and his thin white hands on the arms of the chair. The sunken cheeks, the sallow-white complexion, the listless air, and an occasional sigh of resignation told a sufficiently plain story; although Mrs. Haigh, in regarding her brother, and speaking to him in a loud voice, as if to arouse his attention, wore an air of brisk cheerfulness strangely in contrast with the worn look of his face.

"Don't yü knaw Mr. Roscorla, brother Nicholas?" said she. "Don't yü look mazed, when he's come vor to zee if yü're better. And yü be much better to-day, brother Nicholas?"

"Yes, I think," said the sick man, agreeing with his sister out of mere listlessness.

"Oh yes, I think you look much better," said Mr. Roscorla, hastily and nervously, for he feared that both these people would see in his face what he thought of this unhappy man's chances of living. But Nicholas Keam mostly kept his eyes turned towards the floor, except when the brisk, loud voice of his sister roused him and caused him to look up.

A most awkward pause ensued. Mr. Roscorla felt convinced they would think he was mad if he offered to sit down in this parlour and read the newspapers to the invalid; he forgot that they did not know him as well as he did himself. On the other hand, would they not consider him a silly person if he admitted that he only made the offer in order to please a girl? Besides, he could see no newspapers in the room. Fortunately, at this moment, Mr. Keam himself came to the rescue by saying, in a slow and languid way—

"I did expect vor to zee Miss Rosewarne this evenin'—yaäs, I did; and she were to read me the news; but I suppose now——"

"Oh!" said Mr. Roscorla, quickly, "I have just seen Miss Rosewarne—she told me she expected to see you, but was a little tired. Now, if you like, I will read the newspapers to you as long as the light lasts."

"Why don't yü thank the gentleman, brother Nicholas?" said Mrs. Haigh, who was apparently most anxious to get away to her duties. "That be very kind of yü, zor. 'Tis a great comfort to 'n to hear the news; and I'll send yü in the papers to once. Yü come away with me, Rosana, and yü can come agwain and bring the gentleman the newspapers."

She dragged off with her a small girl who had wandered in; and Mr. Roscorla was left alone with the sick man. The feelings in his heart were not those which Wenna would have expected to find there as the result of the exercise of charity.

The small girl came back, and gave him the newspapers. He began to read; she sate down before him, and stared up into his face. Then a brother of hers came in, and he, too, sate down, and proceeded to stare. Mr. Roscorla inwardly began to draw pictures of the astonishment of certain of his old acquaintances if they had suddenly opened that small door, and found him, in the parlour of an ale-house, reading stale political articles to an apparently uninterested invalid and a couple of cottage children.

He was thankful that the light was rapidly declining; and long before he had reached the half-hour he made that his excuse for giving up.

"The next time I come, Mr. Keam," said he, cheerfully, as he rose and took his hat, "I shall come earlier."

"I did expect vor to zee Miss Rosewarne this evenin'," said Nicholas Keam, ungratefully paying no heed to the hypocritical offer; "vor she were here yesterday marnin', and she told me that Mr. Trelyon had zeen my brother in London streets, and I want vor to know mower about 'n, I dü."

"*She* told you?" Mr. Roscorla said, with a sudden and wild suspicion filling his mind. "How did she know that Mr. Trelyon was in London?"

"How did she knaw?" repeated the sick man, indolently. "Why, he zaid zo in the letter."

So Harry Trelyon, whose whereabouts were not even known to his own family, was in correspondence with Wenna Rosewarne, and she had carefully concealed the fact from the man she was going to marry? Mr. Roscorla rather absently took his leave. When he went outside a clear twilight was shining over Eglosilyan, and the first of the yellow stars were palely visible in the grey. He walked slowly down towards the inn.

Now if Mr. Roscorla had any conviction on any subject whatever, it was this—that no human being ever thoroughly and without reserve revealed himself or herself to any other human being. Of course he did not bring that as a charge against the human race, or against that member of it from whose individual experience he had derived his theory—himself; he merely accepted this thing as one of the facts of life. People, he considered, might be fairly honest, well-intentioned, and moral; but inside the circle of their actions and sentiments that were openly declared there was another circle only known to themselves; and to this region the foul bird of suspicion, as soon as it was born, immediately fled on silent wings. Not that, after a minute's consideration, he suspected anything very terrible in the present case. He was more vexed than alarmed. And yet at times, as he slowly walked down the steep street, he grew a little angry, and wondered how this apparently ingenuous creature should have concealed from him her correspondence with Harry Trelyon; and he resolved that he would have a speedy explanation of the whole matter. He was too shrewd

a man of the world to be tricked by a girl, or trifled with by an impertinent lad.

He was overtaken by the two girls, and they walked together the rest of the way. Wenna was in excellent spirits, and was very kind and grateful to him. Somehow, when he heard her low and sweet laughter, and saw the frank kindness of her dark eyes, he abandoned the gloomy suspicions that had crossed his mind; but he still considered that he had been injured; and that the injury was all the greater in that he had just been persuaded into making a fool of himself for Wenna Rosewarne's sake.

He said nothing to her then, of course; and, as the evening passed cheerfully enough in Mrs. Rosewarne's parlour, he resolved he would postpone inquiry into this matter. He had never seen Wenna so pleased herself, and so obviously bent on pleasing others. She petted her mother, and said slily sarcastic things of her father, until George Rosewarne roared with laughter; she listened with respectful eyes and attentive ears when Mr. Roscorla pronounced an opinion on the affairs of the day; and she dexterously cut rolls of paper and dressed up her sister Mabyn to represent a lady of the time of Elizabeth, to the admiration of everybody. Mr. Roscorla had inwardly to confess that he had secured for himself a most charming and delightful wife, who would make a wonderful difference in those dull evenings up at Basset Cottage.

He only half guessed the origin of Miss Wenna's great and obvious satisfaction. It was really this—that she had that evening reaped the first welcome fruits of her new relations in finding Mr. Roscorla ready to go and perform acts of charity. But for her engagement, that would certainly not have happened; and this, she believed, was only the auspicious beginning. Of course Mr. Roscorla would have laughed if she had informed him of her belief that the regeneration of the whole little world of Eglosilyan—something like the Millennium, indeed—was to come about merely because an innkeeper's daughter was about to be made a married woman. Wenna Rosewarne, however, did not formulate any such belief; but she was none the less proud of the great results that had already been secured by

—by what? By her sacrifice of herself? She did not pursue the subject so far.

Her delight was infectious. Mr. Roscorla, as he walked home that night—under the throbbing starlight, with the sound of the Atlantic murmuring through the darkness—was, on the whole, rather pleased that he had been vexed on hearing of that letter from Harry Trelyon. He would continue to be vexed. He would endeavour to be jealous without measure; for how can jealousy exist if an anxious love is not also present? And, in fact, should not a man who is really fond of a woman be quick to resent the approach of any one who seems to interfere with his right of property in her affections? By the time he reached Basset Cottage, Mr. Roscorla had very nearly persuaded himself into the belief that he was really in love with Wenna Rosewarne.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RING OF EVIL OMEN.

One of Wenna's many friends outside the village in which she lived was a strange mis-shapen creature who earned his living by carrying sand from one of the bays on the coast to the farmers on the uplands above. This he did by means of a troop of donkeys—small, rough, light-haired, and large-eyed animals—that struggled up the rude and steep path on the face of the cliff, bearing on their backs the bags that he had laboriously filled below. It was a sufficiently cheerless occupation for this unfortunate hunchback, and not a very profitable one. The money he got from the farmers did not much more than cover the keep of the donkeys. He seldom spoke to any human being; for who was going to descend that rough and narrow path down to the shore—where he and his donkeys appeared to be no bigger than mice—with the knowledge that there was no path round the precipitous coast, and that nothing would remain but the long climb up again?

Wenna Rosewarne had some pity for this solitary wretch, who toiled at his task with the melancholy Atlantic before

him, and behind him a great and lonely wall of crumbling slate; and, whenever she had time, she used to walk with her sister across from Eglosilyan by the high-lying downs until they reached the indentation in the coast where a curve of yellow sand was visible far below. If this poor fellow and his donkeys were to be seen from the summit, the two girls had little fear of the fatigue of descending the path down the side of the steep cliff; and the object of their visit used to be highly pleased and flattered by their coming to chat with him for a few minutes. He would hasten the filling of his bags so as to ascend again with them; and, in a strange tongue that even the two Cornish girls could not always understand, he would talk to them of the merits of his favourite donkeys, of their willingness, and strength, and docility. They never took him any tracts; they never uttered a word of condolence or sympathy. Their visit was merely of the nature of a friendly call; but it was a mark of attention and kindliness that gave the man something pleasant to think of for days thereafter.

Now, on one of these occasions, Mr. Roscorla went with Wenna and her sister; and although he did not at all see the use of going down this precipitous cliff for the mere purpose of toiling up again, he was not going to confess that he dreaded the fatigue of it. Moreover, this was another mission of charity; and, although he had not called again on Mr. Keam—although, in fact, he had inwardly vowed that the prayers of a thousand angels would not induce him again to visit Mr. Keam—he was anxious that Wenna should believe that he still remained her pupil. So, with a good grace, he went down the tortuous pathway to the desolate little bay where the sand-carrier was at work. He stood and looked at the sea while Wenna chatted with her acquaintance; he studied the rigging of the distant ships; he watched the choughs and daws flying about the face of the rocks; he drew figures on the sand with the point of his cane; and wondered whether he would be back in time for luncheon if this garrulous hunchback jabbered in his guttural way for another hour. Then he had the pleasure of climbing up the cliff again, with a whole troop of donkeys going before him in Indian

file up the narrow and zigzag path, and at last he reached the summit. His second effort in the way of charity had been accomplished.

He proposed that the young ladies should sit down to rest for a few minutes, after the donkeys and their driver had departed; and accordingly the three strangers chose a block of slate for a seat, with the warm grass for a foot-stool, and all around them the beauty of an August morning. The sea was ruffled into a dark blue where it neared the horizon; but closer at hand it was pale and still. The sun was hot on the bleak pasture-land. There was a scent of fern and wild thyme in the air.

"By the way, Wenna," said Mr. Roscorla, "I wonder you have never asked me why I have not yet got you an engagement-ring."

"Wenna does not want an engagement-ring," said Miss Mabyn, sharply. "They are not worn now."

This audacious perversion of fact on the part of the self-willed young beauty was in reality a sort of cry of despair. If Mr. Roscorla had not yet spoken of a ring to Wenna, Mabyn had; and Mabyn had besought of her sister not to accept this symbol of hopeless captivity.

"Oh, Wenna," she had said, "if you take a ring from him, I shall look on you as carried away from us for ever!"

"Nonsense, Mabyn," the elder sister had said. "The ring is of no importance; it is the word you have spoken that is."

"Oh no, it isn't," Mabyn said earnestly. "As long as you don't wear a ring, Wenna, I still fancy I shall get you back from him; and you may say what you like, but you are far too good for him."

"Mabyn, you are a disobedient child," the elder sister said, stopping the argument with a kiss, and not caring to raise a quarrel.

Well, when Mr. Roscorla was suddenly confronted by this statement, he was startled; but he inwardly resolved that, as soon as he and Wenna were married, he would soon bring Miss Mabyn's interference in their affairs to an end. At present he merely said, mildly—

"I was not aware that engagement-rings were no longer

worn. However, if that be so, it is no reason why we should discontinue a good old custom; and I have put off getting you one, Wenna, because I knew I had to go to London soon. I find now I must go on Monday next; and so I want you to tell me what sort of stones you like best in a ring."

"I am sure I don't know," Wenna said, humbly and dutifully. "I am sure to like whatever you choose."

"But what do you prefer yourself?" he again said.

Wenna hesitated, but Miss Mabyn did not. She was prepared for the crisis. She had foreseen it.

"Oh, Mr. Roscorla," she said (and you would not have fancied there was any guile or malice in that young and pretty face, with its tender blue eyes and its proud and sweet mouth), "don't you know that Wenna likes emeralds?"

Mr. Roscorla was very near telling the younger sister to mind her own business; but he was afraid. He only said, in a stiff way, to his betrothed—

"Do you like emeralds?"

"I think they are very pretty," Wenna replied, meekly. "I am sure I shall like any ring you choose."

"Oh, very well," said he, rather discontented that she would show no preference. "I shall get you an emerald ring."

When she heard this decision, the heart of Mabyn Rosewarne was filled with an unholy joy. This was the rhyme that was running through her head:

"Oh, green's forsaken,
And yellow's forsworn,
And blue's the sweetest
Colour that's worn!"

Wenna was saved to her now. How could any two people marry who had engaged themselves with an emerald ring? There was a great deal of what might be called natural religion in this young lady, to distinguish it from that which she had been taught on Sunday mornings and at her mother's knee: a belief in occult influences ruling the earth, unnameable, undefinable, but ever present and ever active. If fairly challenged, she might have scrupled to say that she believed in Browneys, or the Small People, or in any

one of the thousand superstitions of the Cornish peasantry. But she faithfully observed these superstitions. If her less heedful sister put a cut loaf upside down on the plate, Mabyn would instantly right it, and say "Oh, Wenna!" as if her sister had forgotten that the simple act meant that some ship was in sore distress. If Wenna laughed at any of these fancies, Mabyn said nothing; but all the same she was convinced in her own mind that things happened to people in a strange fashion, and in accordance with omens that might have been remarked. She knew that if Mr. Roscorla gave Wenna a ring of emeralds, Wenna would never be Mr. Roscorla's wife.

One thing puzzled her, however. Which of the two was to be the forsaken? Was it Wenna or Mr. Roscorla who would break this engagement that the younger sister had set her heart against? Well, she would not have been sorry if Mr. Roscorla were the guilty party, except in so far as some humiliation might thereby fall on Wenna. But the more she thought of the matter, the more she was convinced that Mr. Roscorla was aware he had the best of the bargain, and was not at all likely to seek to escape from it. It was he who must be forsaken; and she had no pity for him. What right had an old man to come and try to carry off her sister—her sister whose lover ought to be "young and beautiful like a prince"? Mabyn kept repeating the lines to herself all the time they walked homewards; and if Wenna had asked her a question just then, the chances are she would have answered—

"Oh, green's forsaken,
And yellow's forsworn,
And blue's the sweetest
Colour that's worn!"

But Wenna was otherwise engaged during this homeward walk. Mr. Roscorla, having resolved to go to London, thought he might as well have that little matter about Harry Trelyon cleared up before he went. He had got all the good out of it possible, by nursing whatever unquiet suspicions it provoked, and trying to persuade himself that as he was in some measure jealous he must in some measure be in love. But he had not the courage to take these

suspicions with him to London: they were not pleasant travelling companions.

"I wonder," he said, in rather a nervous way, "whether I shall see young Trelyon in London."

Wenna did not appear to be disturbed by the mention of the name. She only said, with a smile—

"It is a big place to seek any one in."

"You know he is there?"

"Oh yes," she answered directly.

"It is odd that you should know; for he has not told any one up at Trelyon Hall; in fact, no one appears to have heard anything about him but yourself."

"How very silly of him," Wenna said, "to be so thoughtless! Doesn't his mother know? Do you think she would like to know?"

"Well," said he, with marked coldness, "doubtless she would be surprised at his having communicated with you in preference to any one else."

Wenna's soft dark eyes were turned up to his face with a sudden look of astonishment. He had never spoken to her in this way before. She could not understand. And then she said, very quickly, and with a sudden flush of colour in her face—

"Oh! but this letter is only about the dog. I will show it to you. I have it in my pocket."

She took out the letter and handed it to him; and he might have seen that her hand trembled. She was very much perturbed—she scarcely knew why. But there was something in his manner that had almost frightened her—something distant, and harsh, and suspicious; and surely she had done no wrong?

He smoothed out the crumpled sheet of paper, and a contemptuous smile passed over his face.

"He writes with more care to you than to other people; but I can't say much for his handwriting at the best."

Wenna said nothing; but Mabyn remarked, rather warmly—

"I don't think a man need try to write like a dancing-master, if he means what he says, and can tell you that frankly."

Mr. Roscorla did not heed this remarkably incoherent

speech, for he was reading the letter, which ran as follows :—

"NOLAN'S HOTEL, LONDON, *July* 30, 18—.

"DEAR MISS ROSEWARNE—I know you would like to have Rock, and he's no good at all as a retreaver, and I've written to Luke to take him down to you at the Inn, and I shall be very pleased if you will accept him as a present from me. Either Luke or your father will tell you how to feed him ; and I am sure you will be kind to him, and not chain him up, and give him plenty of exersise. I hope you are all well at the Inn, and that Mabyn's pigeons have not flowne away. Tell her not to forget the piece of looking-glass.

"Yours faithfully,
"HARRY TRELYON.

"P.S.—I met Joshua Keam quite by accident yesterday. He asked for you most kindly. His leg has been ampitated at last."

Here was nothing at which a jealous lover might grumble. Mr. Roscorla handed back the letter with scarcely a word, leaving Wenna to puzzle over what had happened to make him look at her in that strange way. As for Miss Mabyn, that young lady would say nothing to hurt her sister's feelings ; but she said many a bitter thing to herself about the character of a gentleman who would read another gentleman's letter, particularly when the former was an elderly gentleman and the latter a young one, and most of all when the young gentleman had been writing to a girl, and that girl her sister Wenna. "But green's forsaken," Mabyn said to herself, as if there was great comfort in that reflection—"green's forsaken, and yellow's forsworn !"

And so Mr. Roscorla was going away from Eglosilyan for a time, and Wenna would be left alone.

Certainly, if this brief separation promised to afflict her grievously, it had not that effect in the meantime ; for once she had gone over the matter in her mind, and sketched out, as was her wont, all that she ought to do, she quickly recovered her cheerfulness, and was in very good spirits indeed when the small party reached Eglosilyan. And here

was a small and sunburnt boy—Master Pentecost Luke, in fact—waiting for her right in the middle of the road in front of the inn, whom she caught up, and kissed, and scolded all at once.

"Whatever are you doing down here, sir, all by yourself ?"

"I have tum to see you," the small boy said, in no way frightened or abashed by her rough usage of him.

"And so you want Mr. Trelyon to ride over you again, do you ? Haven't I told you never to come here without some of your brothers and sisters ? Well, say 'How do you do ?' to the gentleman. Don't you know Penny Luke, Mr. Roscorla ?"

"I believe I have that honour," said Mr. Roscorla, with a smile, but not at all pleased to be kept in the middle of the road chattering to a cottager's child.

Miss Wenna presently showed that she was a well-built and active young woman, by swinging Master Penny up, and perching him on her shoulder, in which fashion she carried him into the inn.

"Penny is a great friend of mine," she said to Mr. Roscorla, who would not himself have attempted that feat of skill and dexterity, "and you must make his acquaintance. He is a very good boy on the whole, but sometimes he goes near to breaking my heart. I shall have to give him up, and take another sweetheart, if he doesn't mind. He *will* eat with his fingers, and he will run out and get among horses' feet ; and as for the way he conducts himself when his face is being washed, and he is being made like a gentleman, I never saw the like of it."

Master Penny did not seem much ashamed ; he was, in fact, too proud of his position. They marched him into the inn, where, doubtless, he received all the petting and other good things he had been shrewdly expecting.

Mabyn said her prayers that night in the ordinary and formal fashion. She prayed for her father and mother and for her sister Wenna, as she had been taught ; and she added in the Princess of Wales on her own account, because she liked her pretty face. She also prayed that she herself should be made humble and good, desirous of serving her fellow-creatures, and charitable to every one. All this was done in due order.

But in point of fact her heart was at that moment far from being meek and charitable; it was, on the contrary, filled with bitterness and indignation. And the real cry of her soul, unknown to herself, went out to all the vague, imaginative powers of magic and witchcraft—to the mysterious influences of the stars and the strange controllers of chance; and it was to these that she looked for the rescue of her sister from the doom that threatened her; and it was to them that she appealed, with a yearning far too great for words or even for tears. When she was but a child playing among the rocks, she had stumbled on the dead body of a sailor that had been washed ashore; and she had run, white and trembling, into the village with the news. Afterwards she was told that on the hand of the corpse a ring with a green stone in it was found; and then she heard for the first time the rhyme that had never since left her memory. She certainly did not wish that Mr. Roscorla should die; but she as certainly wished that her sister Wenna should be saved from becoming his wife; and she reflected with a fierce satisfaction that it was she who had driven him to promise that Wenna's engagement-ring should be composed of those fatal stones.

CHAPTER X.

THE SNARES OF LONDON.

If Mr. Harry Trelyon was bent on going to the devil, to use his own phrase, he went a quiet way about it. On the warm and close evening of a summer day he arrived in London. A red smoke hung about the western sky, over the tops of the houses; the thoroughfares that were in shadow were filled with a pale blue mist; the air was still and stifling—very different from that which came in at night from the sea to the gardens and cottages of Eglosilyan. He drove down through these hot and crowded streets to an hotel near Charing Cross—an old-fashioned little place much frequented by west-country people, who sometimes took rooms there, and brought their daughters up for a month or so of the season, at which time no other guests could obtain admission. At ordinary times, however,

the place was chiefly tenanted by a few country gentlemen and a clergyman or two, who had small sitting-rooms, in which they dined with their families, and in which they drank a glass of something hot before going to bed at night after coming home from the theatre.

Harry Trelyon was familiar with the place, and its ways, and the traditions of his father and grandfather having invariably come to it; and, following in their footsteps, he, too, obtained a private sitting-room as well as a bedroom, and then he ordered dinner. It was not much in the way of a banquet for a young gentleman who was determined to go to the devil. It consisted of a beefsteak and a pint of claret; and it was served in a fairly-sized, old-fashioned, dimly-lit room, the furniture of which was of that very substantial sort that is warranted to look dingy for a couple of generations. He was attended by a very old and shrunken waiter, whose white whiskers were more respectable than his shabby clothes. On his first entrance into the room he had looked at the young man who, in a rough shooting-suit, was stretched out at full length in an easy-chair; and, in answering a question, he had addressed him by his name.

"How do you know my name?" the lad said.

"Ah, sir, there's no mistaking one o' your family. I can remember your grandfather, and your uncle, and your father—did you never hear, sir, that I was a witness for your father at the police-court?"

"What row was that?" the young gentleman asked, showing his familiarity with the fact that the annals of the Trelyons were of a rather stormy character.

"Why, sir," the old man said, warming up into a little excitement, and unconsciously falling into something like the provincial accent of his youth, "I believe you was in the hotel at the time—yes, as well as I can recollect, you was a little chap then, and had gone to bed. Well, maybe I'm wrong—'tis a good few years agone. But, anyhow, your father and that good lady your mother, they were a-coming home from a theatre; and there was two or three young fellers on the pavement—I was the porter then, sir—and I think that one of 'em called out to the other, 'Well, here's a country beauty,' or some such cheek. But, anyhow,

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your father, sir, he knocks him aside, and takes his good lady into the door of the hotel, and then they was for follerin' of him, but as soon as she was inside, then he turns, and there was a word or two, and one of 'em he ups with a stick, and says I to myself, 'I can't stand aby and see three or four set on one gentleman;' but lor! sir—well, you wouldn't believe it—but before I could make a step, there was two of 'em lyin' on the pavement—clean, straight down, sir, with their hats running into the street—and the other two making off as fast as they could bolt across the square. Oh, lor, sir, wa'n't it beautiful! And the way as your father turned and says he to me, with a laugh like, 'Tomlins,' says he, 'you can give them gentlemen a glass of brandy and water when they ask for it!' And the magistrate, sir, he was a real sensible gentleman, and he give it hot to these fellers, for they began the row, sir, and no mistake; but to see the way they went down—lor, sir, you can't believe it!"

"Oh, can't I, though?" Master Harry said, with a roar of laughter. "Don't you make any mistake. I say, what did you say your name was?"

"My name, sir," said the old man, suddenly sinking from the epic heights which had lent a sort of inspiration to his face, down to the ordinary chastened and respectful bearing of a waiter, "my name, sir, in the hotel is Charles; but your good father, sir, he knowed my name, which is Tomlins, sir."

"Well, look here, Tomlins," the boy said, "you go and ask the landlady to give you a holiday this evening, and come in and smoke a pipe with me."

"Oh, lor, sir," the old waiter said, aghast at the very notion, "I couldn't do that. It would be as much as my place is worth."

"Oh, never mind your place—I'll get you a better one," the lad said, with a sort of royal carelessness. "I'll get you a place down in Cornwall. You come and help our butler—he's a horrid old fool. When I come of age, I mean to build a house there for myself. No, I think I shall have rooms in London—anyhow, I'll give you £100 a year."

The old man shook his head.

"No, sir, thank you very much, sir. I'm too old to begin again. You want a younger man than me. Beg your pardon, sir, but they're ringing for me."

"Poor old beggar!" said Trelyon to himself, when the waiter had left the room. "I wonder if he's married, and if he's got any kids that one could help. And so he was a witness for my father? Well, he shan't suffer for that."

Master Harry finished his steak and his pint of claret; then he lit a cigar, got into a hansom, and drove up to a street in Seven Dials, where he at length discovered a certain shop. The shutters were on the windows, and a stout old lady was taking in from the door the last of the rabbit-hutches and cages that had been out there during the evening.

"You're Mrs. Finch, ain't you?" Trelyon said, making his way into the shop, which was lit inside by a solitary jet of gas.

"Yes, sir," said the woman, looking up at the tall young man in the rough shooting-costume and brown wideawake.

"Well, my name's Trelyon, and I'm come to blow you up. A pretty mess you made of that flamingo for me—why, a bishop in lawn sleeves couldn't have stuffed it worse. Where did you ever see a bird with a neck like a corkscrew?—and when I opened it to put it straight, then I found out all your tricks, Mrs. Finch."

"But you know, sir," said Mrs. Finch, smiling blandly, "it ain't our line of business."

"Well, I'd advise you to get somebody else next time to stuff for you. However, I bear you no malice. You show me what you've got in the way of live stock; and if you take fifty per cent. off your usual prices, I'll let the corkscrew flamingo go."

A minute thereafter he was being conducted down some very dark steps into a subterranean cellar by this stout old woman who carried a candle in front of him. Their entrance into this large, dismal, and strangely filled place—at the further end of which was a grating looking up to the street—awoke a profound commotion among the animals around. Cocks began to crow, suddenly-awakened birds fluttered up and down their cages, parroquets and cockatoos opened their sleepy eyes and mechanically repeated "Pretty

Polly!" and "Good night! good night!" Even the rabbits stared solemnly from behind the bars.

"What have you got there?" said Trelyon to his guide, pointing to a railway milk-can which stood in the corner, nearly filled with earth.

"A mole, sir," said Mrs. Finch; "it is a plaything of one of my boys; but I could let you have it, sir, if you have any curiosity that way."

"Why, bless you, I've had 'em by the dozen. I don't know how many I've let escape into our kitchen-garden, all with a string tied to their leg. Don't they go down a cracker if you let 'em loose for a second! I should say that fellow in there was rather disgusted when he came to the tin, don't you think? Got any cardinals, Mrs. Finch? I lost every one o' them you sent me."

"Dear, dear me!" said Mrs. Finch, showing very great concern.

"Ay, you may well say that. Every one o' them, and about forty more birds besides, before I found out what it was—an infernal weasel that had made its way into the rockwork of my aviary, and there he lived at his ease for nearly a fortnight, just killing whatever he chose, and the beggar seemed to have a fancy for the prettiest birds. I had to pull the whole place to pieces before I found him out—and there he was, grinning and snarling in a corner. By Jove! didn't I hit him a whack with the stick I had! There were no more birds for him in this world."

At this moment Mrs. Finch's husband and two of her small boys came downstairs; and very soon the conversation on natural history became general, each one anxious to give his experiences of the wonderful things he had observed, even if his travels had carried him no further than Battersea Reaches. Master Harry forgot that he had left a hansom at the door. There was scarcely an animal in this dungeon that he did not examine; and when he suddenly discovered that it was considerably past eleven o'clock, he found himself the owner of about as much property as would have filled two cabs. He went upstairs, dismissed the hansom, and got a four-wheeler, in which he deposited the various cages, fish-globes and what not, that he had bought; and then he drove off to his hotel, getting all the waiters in the

place to assist in carrying these various objects tenderly upstairs. Thus ended his first evening in London, the chief result of which was that his sitting-room had assumed the appearance of a bird-catcher's window.

Next morning he walked up into Hyde Park to have a look at the horses. Among the riders he recognized several people whom he knew—some of them, indeed, related to him—but he was careful to take no notice of them.

"Those women," he said to himself, in a sensible manner, "don't want to recognize a fellow who has a wide-awake on. They would do it, though, if you presented yourself; and they would ask you to lunch or to tea in the afternoon. Then you'd find yourself among a lot of girls, all with their young men about them, and the young men would wonder how the dickens you came to be in a shooting-coat in London."

So he pursued his way, and at length found himself in the Zoological Gardens. He sat for nearly an hour staring at the lions and tigers, imagining all sorts of incidents as he looked at their sleepy and cruel eyes, and wondering what one splendid fellow would do if he went down and stroked his nose. He had the satisfaction, also, of seeing the animals fed; and he went round with the man, and had an interesting conversation with him.

Then he went and had some luncheon himself, and got into talk with the amiable young lady who waited on him, who expressed in generous terms, with a few superfluous *h*'s, the pleasure which she derived from going to the theatre.

"Oh, do you like it?" he said, carelessly; "I never go. I always fall asleep—country habits, you know. But you get somebody to go with you, and I'll send you a couple of places for to-morrow night, if you like."

"I think I could get some one to take me," said the young lady, with a pretty little simper.

"Yes I should think you could," he said, bluntly. "What's your name?"

He wrote it down on one of his own cards, and went his way.

The next place of entertainment he visited was an American bowling-alley, in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden, a highly respectable place to which gentlemen

resorted for the purpose of playing a refined sort of skittles. Master Harry merely wanted to practise, and also to stretch his arms and legs. He had just begun, however, to send the big balls crashing into the pins at the further end of the long alley, when the only visitor in the place—a sailor-looking person, with a red face, who was smoking a very elaborate meerschaum—offered to play a game with him.

"All right," said Trelyon.

"For a couple of bob?" suggested the stranger.

"Do you mean two shillings?" asked the young man, calmly looking down upon the person with the red face; for, of course, Harry Trelyon never used slang.

"Yes," said the other, with much indifference, as he selected one of the balls.

They played a game, and Trelyon won easily. They played another, and again he won. They played a third, and still he won.

"Oh, let's play for a sovereign," said the stranger.

"No," said the young man; "I'm going."

Well, this did not at all seem to suit his opponent, who became rather demonstrative in manner. He did not like gentlemen coming in to win money, without giving a fellow a chance of winning it back. At this, Trelyon turned suddenly—he had not yet put on his coat—and said:

"What do you mean? I won't play any more; but I'll knock the head off you in two minutes, if that'll suit you better."

The gentleman with the red face paused for a minute. He was evidently in a nasty temper. He looked at the build of the young man: he also observed that one of the assistants was drawing near; and still he said nothing. Whereupon Master Harry quietly put on his coat, lit a cigar, gave a friendly nod to his late opponent, and walked out.

In this wise he lounged about London for a day or two, looking in at Tattersall's, examining new breechloaders in shops in St. James's Street, purchasing ingenuities in fishing-tackle, and very frequently feeding the ducks in the Serpentine with bread bought of the boys standing round. It was not a very lively sort of existence, he discovered. Colonel Ransome had left for Scotland on the very day before his

arrival in London, so that peaceable and orderly means of getting that dowry for Wenna Rosewarne were not at hand; and Master Harry, though he was enough of a devil-may-care, had no intention of going to the Jews for the money until he was driven to that. Colonel Ransome, moreover, had left his constituents unrepresented in the House during the last few days of the session, and had quietly gone off to Scotland for the 12th, so that it was impossible to say when he might return. Meanwhile young Trelyon made the acquaintance of whatever birds, beasts, and fishes he could find in London, until he got a little tired.

All of a sudden it struck him one evening, as a happy relief, that he would sit down and write to Wenna Rosewarne. He ordered in pens, ink, and paper with much solemnity; and then he said to the old waiter, "Tomlins, how do you spell 'retriever'?"

"I ain't quite sure, sir," Tomlins said.

Whereupon Master Harry had to begin and compose that letter which we have already read, but which cost him an amount of labour not visible in the lines as they stand. He threw away a dozen sheets of paper before he even mastered a beginning; and it was certainly an hour and a half before he had produced a copy which more or less satisfied him. Mr. Roscorla noticed at once the pains he had taken with the writing.

Then in due course came the answer; and Master Harry paused with much satisfaction to look at the pretty hand-writing on the envelope—he did not often get letters from young ladies. The contents, however, did not please him quite so much. They were these:—

"Eglosilyan, *August* 3, 18—.

"Dear Mr. Trelyon,—Thank you very much for giving me your beautiful dog. I shall take great care of him, and if you want him for the shooting you can have him at any time. But I am surprised you should write to me when I hear that you have not written to your own relatives, and that they do not even know where you are. I cannot understand how you should be so careless of the feelings of others. I am sure it is thoughtlessness rather than selfishness on

your part; but I hope you will write to them at once. Mr. Barnes has just called, and I have given him your address. I am, yours sincerely,

"WENNA ROSEWARNE."

Harry Trelyon was at once vexed and pleased by this letter; probably more vexed than pleased, for he threw it impatiently on the table, and said to himself, "She's always reading lectures to people, and always making a fuss of nothing. She was meant for a Puritan—she should have gone out in the *Mayfly* to America."

Mayfly for *Mayflower* was perhaps a natural mistake for a trout-fisher to make: but Master Harry was unaware of it. He passed on to more gloomy fancies. What was this parson about that he should come inquiring for his address of Wenna Rosewarne? How had he found out that she knew it?

"Come," said he to himself, "this won't do. I must go down to Cornwall. And if there are any spies pushing their noses into my affairs, let 'em look out for a tweak, that's all!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE TWO PICTURES.

"OH, Mabyn," Wenna called out in despair, "you will have all my hair down! Have you gone quite mad?"

"Yes, quite," the younger sister said, with a wild enjoyment in her eyes. "Oh, Wenna, he's gone, he's gone, and he's gone to get you an emerald ring! Don't you know, you poor silly thing, that green's forsaken, and yellow's forsworn?"

"Well, Mabyn," the elder sister said, laughing in spite of herself, "you are the wickedest girl I ever heard of, and I wonder I am not angry with you."

At this moment they were returning to Eglosilyan along the Launceston highway; and far away behind them, on the road that crosses the bleak and lofty moors, the dogcart was faintly visible which was taking Mr. Roscorla on his first stage towards London. He had driven the two sisters

out for about a mile, and now they were going back; and Mabyn was almost beside herself with delight that he was gone, and that her sister had shown no great grief at his going. Their parting, indeed, had been of a most unromantic kind, much to the relief of both. Mr. Roscorla was rather late; and Wenna devoted her last words to impressing on him that he must have something to eat in Launceston before going down to the Plymouth train. Then she bade him make haste, and said good-bye with a kindly smile on her face, and away he went.

"Mabyn," she said in a mysterious voice, which stopped her sister's pulling her about, "do you think—now do you really think—Mr. Pavy would lend us his boat?"

"Oh, Wenna," the other one cried, "do let us have the boat out! Do you know that the whole air seems clear and light since Mr. Roscorla has gone? I should like to thank everybody in the world for being so kind as to take him away. Wenna, I'll run you to the gate of Basset Cottage for half-a-crown!"

"You!" said the elder sister, with great contempt. "I'll run you to the mill for a hundred thousand pounds."

"No, Wenna—Basset Cottage, if you like," said Mabyn, sturdily: and with that both the girls set out, with their heads down, in a business-like fashion that showed there was very little the matter with their lungs.

"Oh, Mabyn!" said Wenna, suddenly; and then both of them found that they had very nearly run into the arms of a clergyman—an elderly, white-haired, amiable-looking gentleman, who was rather slowly toiling up the hill. Mabyn looked frightened, and then laughed; but Wenna, with her cheeks very red, went forward and shook hands with him.

"Well, girls," he said, "you needn't stop running for me—a capital exercise, a capital exercise, that young ladies in towns don't have much of. And as for you, Wenna, you've plenty of work of a sedentary nature, you know—nothing better than a good race, nothing better."

"And how is your little granddaughter this morning, Mr. Trewhella?" said Wenna, gently, with her cheeks all flushed with the running.

"Ah! well, poor child, she is much about the same; but

the pin-cushion is nearly finished now, and your name is on it in silver beads, and you are to come and have tea with her as soon as you can, that she may give it to you. Dear, dear! she was asking her mother yesterday whether the beads would carry all her love to you, for she did not think it possible herself. Well, good-bye, girls; don't you be ashamed of having a race together," and therewith the kindly-faced clergyman resumed his task of ascending the hill, while the two girls, abandoning their racing, walked quickly down to the harbour, to see if they could persuade the silent and surly Mr. Pavy to let them have his boat.

Meanwhile Mr. Roscorla drove along the silent highway in George Rosewarne's dog-cart, and in due time he reached Launceston, and took the train for Plymouth. He stayed in Plymouth that night, having some business to do there; and next morning he found himself in the *Flying Dutchman*, tearing along the iron rails towards London.

Now it was a fixed habit of Mr. Roscorla to try to get as near as possible to an accurate and definite understanding of his relations with the people and things around him. He did not wish to have anything left vague and nebulous, even as regarded a mere sentiment; and as this was the first time he had got clear away from Eglosilyan and the life there since the beginning of his engagement, he calmly set about defining the position in which he stood with regard to Wenna Rosewarne.

The chief matter for discontent that he had was the probable wonder of his acquaintances over the fact that he meant to marry an innkeeper's daughter. All the world could not know the sufficient reasons he had advanced to himself for that step; nor could they know of the very gradual way in which he had approached it. Every one would consider it as an abrupt and ludicrous act of folly; his very kindest friends would call it an odd freak of romance. Now Mr. Roscorla felt that at his time of life to be accused of romance was to be accused of silliness; and he resolved that, whenever he had a chance, he would let people know that his choice of Wenna Rosewarne was dictated by the most simple and commonplace arguments of prudence, such as would govern the conduct of any sane man.

He resolved, too, that he would clearly impress on Harry Trelyon—whom he expected to see at Nolan's—that this project of marriage with Miss Rosewarne was precisely what a man of the world placed in his position would entertain. He did not wholly like Master Harry. There was an ostentatious air of youth about the young man. There was a bluntness in his speech, too, that transgressed the limits of courtesy. Nor did he quite admire the off-handed fashion in which Harry Trelyon talked to the Rosewarnes, and more especially to the girls; he wished Miss Wenna Rosewarne, at least, to be treated with a little more formality and respect. At the same time, he would endeavour to remain good friends with this ill-mannered boy, for reasons to be made apparent.

When he arrived at Nolan's Hotel he took a bed-room there, and then sent in a card to Harry Trelyon. He found that young gentleman up on a chair, trying to catch a Virginian nightingale that had escaped from one of the cages; and he nearly stumbled over a tame hedgehog that ran pattering over the carpet, because his attention was drawn to a couple of very long-eared rabbits sitting in an easy-chair. Master Harry paid no attention to him until the bird was caught; then he came down, shook hands with him carelessly, and said—

"How odd you should stumble in here! Or did Wenna Rosewarne tell you I was at Nolan's?"

"Yes, Miss Rosewarne did," said Mr. Roscorla. "You have quite a menagerie here. Do you dine here or downstairs?"

"Oh! here, of course."

"I thought you might come and dine with me this evening at my club. Five minutes' walk from here, you know. Will you?"

"Yes, I will, if you don't mind this elegant costume."

Mr. Roscorla was precisely the person to mind the dress of a man whom he was taking into his club; but he was very well aware that, whatever dress young Trelyon wore, no one could mistake him for anything else than a gentleman. He was not at all averse to be seen with Master Harry in this rough costume; he merely suggested, with a smile, that a few feathers and bits of thread might be

removed; and then, in the quiet summer evening, they went outside and walked westward.

"Now this is the time," Mr. Roscorla said, "when Pall Mall looks interesting to me. There is a sort of quiet and strong excitement about it. All that smoke there over the club chimneys tells of the cooking going forward; and you will find old boys having a sly look in at the dining-room to see that their tables are all right; and then guests make their appearance and smooth out their white ties, and have a drop of sherry and Angostura bitters while they wait. All this district is full of a silent satisfaction and hope just now. But I can't get you a good dinner, Trelyon; you'll have to take your chance, you know. I have got out of the ways of the club now; I don't know what they can do."

"Well, I'm not nasty particklер," Trelyon said, which was true. "But what has brought you up to London?"

"Well, I'll tell you. It's rather an awkward business one way. I have got a share in some sugar and coffee plantations in Jamaica—I think you know that—and you are aware that the emancipation of the niggers simply cut the throat of the estates there. The beggars won't work; and lots of the plantations have been going down and down, or rather back and back into the original wilderness. Well, my partners here see no way out of it but one—to import labour, have the plantations thoroughly overhauled and set in good working order. But that wants money. They have got money—I haven't; and so to tell you the truth, I am at my wits' end as how to raise a few thousands to join them in the undertaking."

This piece of intelligence rather startled Harry Trelyon. He instantly recalled the project which had brought himself to London; and he asked himself whether he was prepared to give a sum of £5,000 to Wenna Rosewarne, merely that it should be transferred by her to her husband, who would forthwith embark in speculation with it. Well, he was not prepared to do that off-hand.

They went into the club, which was in St. James's Street, and Mr. Roscorla ordered a quiet little dinner, the *menu* of which was constructed with a neatness and skill altogether thrown away on his guest. In due time Master Harry sat

down at the small table, and accepted with much indifference the delicacies which his companion had prepared for him. But all the same he enjoyed his dinner—particularly a draught of ale he had with his cheese; after which the two strangers went up to a quiet corner in the smoking-room, lay down in a couple of big easy-chairs, and lit their cigars. During dinner their talk had mostly been about shooting, varied with anecdotes which Mr. Roscorla told of men about town.

Now, however, Mr. Roscorla became more communicative about his own affairs; and it seemed to Trelyon that these were rather in a bad way. And it also occurred to him that there was perhaps a little meanness in his readiness to give £5,000 direct to Wenna Rosewarne, and in his disinclination to lend the same sum to her future husband, whose interests of course would be hers.

"Look here, Roscorla," he said. "Honour bright, do you think you can make anything out of this scheme; or is the place like one of those beastly old mines in which you throw good money after bad?"

Roscorla answered, honestly enough—but with perhaps a trifle unnecessary emphasis, when he saw that the young man was inclined to accept the hint—that he believed the project to be a sound one; that his partners were putting far more money into it than he would; that the merchants who were his agents in London knew the property and approved of the scheme; and that, if he could raise the money, he would himself go out, in a few months' time, to see the thing properly started.

He did not press the matter further than that for the present; and so their talk drifted away into other channels, until it found its way back to Eglosilyan, to the Rosewarnes, and to Wenna. That is to say, Mr. Roscorla spoke of Wenna; Trelyon was generally silent on that one point.

"You must not imagine," Roscorla said, with a smile, "that I took this step without much deliberation."

"So did she, I suppose," Trelyon said, rather coldly.

"Well, yes. Doubtless. But I dare say many people will think it rather strange that I should marry an innkeeper's daughter—they will think I have been struck with a sudden fit of idiotic romance."

"Oh no, I don't think so," the lad said, with nothing visible in his face to tell whether he was guilty of a mere blunder or of intentional impertinence. "Many elderly gentlemen marry their housekeepers, and in most cases wisely, as far as I have seen."

"Oh! but that is another thing," Roscorla said, with his face flushing slightly, and inclined to be ill-tempered. "There is a great difference: I am not old enough to want a nurse yet. I have chosen Miss Rosewarne because she is possessed of certain qualities calculated to make her an agreeable companion for a man like myself. I have done it quite deliberately and with my eyes open. I am not blinded by the vanity that makes a boy insist on having a particular girl become his wife because she has a pretty face and he wants to show her to his friends."

"And yet there is not much the matter with Wenna Rosewarne's face," said Trelyon, with the least suggestion of sarcasm.

"Oh! as for that," Roscorla said, "that does not concern a man who looks at life from my point of view. Certainly, there are plainer faces than Miss Rosewarne's. She has good eyes and teeth; and besides that, she has a good figure, you know."

Both these men, as they lay idling in this smoking-room, were now thinking of Wenna Rosewarne, and indolently and inadvertently forming some picture of her in their minds. Of the two, that of Mr. Roscorla was by far the more accurate. He could have described every feature of her face and every article of her dress, as she appeared to him on bidding him good-bye the day before on the Launceston highway. The dress was a soft light-brown, touched here and there with deep and rich cherry colour. Her face was turned sideways to him, and looking up; the lips partly open with a friendly smile, and showing beautiful teeth; the earnest dark eyes filled with a kindly regard; the eyebrows high, so that they gave a timid and wondering look to the face; the forehead low and sweet, with some loose brown hair about it that the wind stirred. He knew every feature of that face and every varying look of the eyes, whether they were pleased and grateful, or sad and distant, or overbrimming with a humorous and malicious fun. He

knew the shape of her hands, the graceful poise of her waist and neck, the very way she put down her foot in walking. He was thoroughly well aware of the appearance which the girl he meant to marry presented to the unbiassed eyes of the world.

Harry Trelyon's mental picture of her was far more vague and unsatisfactory. Driven into a corner, he would have admitted to you that Wenna Rosewarne was not very good-looking; but that would not have affected his fixed and private belief that he knew no woman who had so beautiful and tender a face. For somehow, when he thought of her, he seemed to see her, as he had often seen her, go by him on a summer morning on her way to church; and as the sweet small Puritan would turn to him, and say in her gentle way, "Good morning, Mr. Trelyon," he would feel vexed and ashamed that he had been found with a gun in his hand, and be inclined to heave it into the nearest ditch. Then she would go on her way, along between the green hedges, in the summer light; and the look of her face that remained in his memory was as the look of an angel, calm, and gracious, and never to be forgotten.

"Of course," said Mr. Roscorla, in this smoking-room, "if I go to Jamaica, I must get married before I start."

CHAPTER XII.

THE CHAIN TIGHTENS.

Once, and once only, Wenna broke down. She had gone out into the night all by herself, with some vague notion that the cold, dank sea-air—sweet with the scent of the roses in the cottage-gardens—would be gratefully cool as it came around her face. The day had been stormy, and the sea was high—she could hear the waves dashing in on the rocks at the mouth of the harbour—but the heavens were clear, and over the dark earth the great vault of stars throbbed and burned in silence. She was alone, for Mr. Roscorla had not returned from London, and Mabyn had not noticed her slipping out. And here, in the cool, sweet darkness, the waves seemed to call on her with a low and

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melancholy voice. A great longing and trouble came somehow into her heart, and drove her to wander onwards as if she should find rest in the mere loneliness of the night, until at length there was nothing around her but the dark land, and the sea, and the white stars.

She could not tell what wild and sad feeling this was that had taken possession of her; but she knew that she had suddenly fallen away from the calm content of the wife that was to be—with all the pleasant sensation of gratitude towards him who had honoured her, and the no less pleasant consciousness that her importance in the world, and her power of helping the people around her, were indefinitely increased. She had become again the plain Jim Crow of former days, longing to be able to do some indefinitely noble and unselfish thing—ready, indeed, to lay her life down so that she might earn some measure of kindly regard by the sacrifice. And once more she reflected that she had no great influence in the world, that she was of no account to anybody, that she was plain, and small, and insignificant; and the great desire in her heart of being of distinct and beautiful service to the many people whom she loved, seemed to break itself against these narrow bars, until the cry of the sea around her was a cry of pain, and the stars looked coldly down on her, and even God himself seemed far away and indifferent.

"If I could only tell some one—if I could only tell some one!" she was saying to herself wildly, as she walked rapidly onwards, not seeing very well where she was going, for her eyes were full of tears. "But if I tell Mabyn she will say that I fear this marriage, and she will go straight to Mr. Roscorla; and if I tell my mother she will think me ungrateful to him, and to every one around me. And how can I explain to them what I cannot explain to myself? And if I cannot explain it to myself, is it not mere folly to yield to such a feeling?"

The question was easily asked, and easily answered; and with much show of bravery she proceeded to ask herself other questions, less easily answered. She began to reproach herself with ingratitude, with vanity, with a thousand errors and evil qualities; she would teach herself humility; she would endeavour to be contented and satisfied in the

position in which she found herself; she would reflect on the thousands of miserable people who had real reason to complain, and yet bore their sufferings with fortitude; and she would now—straightway and at once—return to her own room, get out the first letter Mr. Roscorla had written to her, and convince herself once more that she ought to be happy.

The climax was a strange one. She had been persuading herself that there was no real cause for this sudden fit of doubt and wretchedness. She had been anticipating her sister's probable explanation, and dismissing it. And yet, as she turned and walked back along the narrow path leading down to the bridge, she comforted herself with the notion that Mr. Roscorla's letter would reassure her and banish these imaginary sorrows. She had frequently read over that letter, and she knew that its ingenious and lucid arguments were simply incontrovertible.

"Oh, Wenna!" Mabyn cried, "what has been troubling you? Do you know that your face is quite white? Have you been out all by yourself?"

Wenna, on getting home, had gone into the little snuggery which was once a bar, and which was now George Rosewarne's smoking-room. Mabyn and her father had been playing chess—the board and pieces were still on the table. Wenna sate down, apparently a little tired.

"Yes, I have been out for a walk," she said.

"Wenna, tell me what is the matter with you!" the younger sister said, imperatively.

"There is nothing the matter. Well, I suppose you will tease me until I tell you something. I have had a fit of despondency, Mabyn, and that's all—despondency, over nothing; and now I am quite cured, and do you think Jennifer could get me a cup of tea? Well, why do you stare? Is there anything wonderful in it? I suppose every girl must get frightened a little bit when she thinks of all that may happen to her—especially when she is alone—and of course it is very ungrateful of her to have any such doubts, though they mean nothing, and she ought to be ashamed——"

She stopped suddenly. To her dismay she found that she was admitting to Mabyn the very reasons which she

expected to have to combat. She saw what she had done in the expression of Mabyn's face—in the proud, indignant mouth and the half-concealed anger of the eyes. The younger sister was silent for a minute; and then she said passionately—

"If there's any one to be ashamed, it isn't you, Wenna. I know who it is. As for you, I don't know what has come over you of late—you are trying to be meeker, and more humble, and more grateful—and all for what? What have you to be grateful for? And you are losing all your fun and your good spirits; and you are getting to be just like children in the story-books, that repeat texts and get gooder and gooder every day until they are only fit for Heaven; and I am sure I am always glad when the little beasts die. Oh, Wenna, I would rather see you do the wickedest thing in all the world if it would only bring you back to your old self!"

"Why, you foolish girl, I am my old self," the elder sister said, quietly taking off her bonnet and laying it on the table. "Is Jennifer up-stairs? Who is in the parlour?"

"Oh, your sweetheart is in the parlour," said Mabyn, with badly-concealed contempt. "He is just arrived from London. I suppose he is telling mother about his rheumatism."

"He hasn't got any rheumatism—any more than you have," Wenna said, with some asperity.

"Oh yes, he has," the younger sister said, inventing a diabolical story for the mere purpose of provoking Wenna into a rage. She would rather have her in a succession of tempers than the victim of this chastened meekness. "And gout too—I can see by the colour of his nails. Of course he hasn't told you, for you're such a simpleton, he takes advantage of you. And he is near-sighted, but he pretends he doesn't need spectacles. And I am told he has fearful debts hanging over his head in London; and that he only came here to hide; and if you marry him you'll see what will come to you."

Mabyn was not very successful in making her sister angry. Wenna only laughed in her gentle fashion, and put her light shawl beside her bonnet, and then went along the passage to

the parlour in which Mr. Roscorla and her mother were talking.

The meeting of the lovers after their temporary separation was not an impassioned one. They shook hands; Wenna hoped he was not fatigued by the long journey; and then he resumed his task of describing to Mrs. Rosewarne the extraordinary appearance of Trelyon's sitting-room in Nolan's Hotel, after the young gentleman had filled it with birds and beasts. Presently, however, Wenna's mother made some pretence for getting out of the room; and Mr. Roscorla and his betrothed were left alone. He rarely got such an opportunity.

"Wenna, I have brought you the ring," said he; and with that he took a small case from his pocket, and opened it, and produced a very pretty gypsy ring studded with emeralds.

Now, on the journey down from London he had definitely resolved that he would put an end to that embarrassment or shamefacedness which had hitherto prevented his offering to kiss the girl whom he expected to marry. He was aware that there was something ridiculous in his not having done so. He reflected that scarcely any human being would believe that he could have been such a fool. And it occurred to him, in the train, that the occasion of his giving Wenna her engaged ring would be an excellent opportunity for breaking in upon this absurd delicacy.

He went across the room to her. She sate still, perhaps a little paler than usual. He took her hand, and put the ring on, and then——

Then it suddenly occurred to him that there was something devilish in the notion of his purchasing the right to kiss her by giving her a trinket. Not that any such scruple would otherwise have affected him; but he was nervously sensitive as to what she might think; and doubtless she was familiar with the story of Gretchen and Faust's casket of jewels. So he suddenly said, with an air of carelessness—

"Well, do you like it? You can't quite tell the colour of the stones by lamplight, you know."

Wenna was not thinking of the colour of the stones. Her hand trembled; her heart beat quickly; when she did

manage to answer him, it was merely to say, in a confused fashion, that she thought the ring very beautiful indeed.

"You know," he said, with a laugh, "I don't think men like engaged rings quite as well as girls do. A girl generally seems to take such a fancy for an engaged ring that she won't change it for any other. I hope that won't be in your case, Wenna; and, indeed, I wanted to talk to you about it."

He brought a chair close to her, and sate down by her, and took her hand. Now, ordinarily Wenna's small, white, plump hands were so warm that her sister used to say that they tingled to the very tips of her fingers with kindness, and were always wanting to give away something. The hand which Mr. Roscorla held was as cold and as impassive as ice. He did not notice it: he was engaged in preparing sentences.

"You know, Wenna," said he, "that I am not a rich man. When I might have taught myself to work I had just sufficient income to keep me idle; and now that this income is growing less, and when I have greater claims on it, I must try something. Well, my partners and myself have thought of a scheme which I think will turn out all right. They propose to wake up those estates in Jamaica, and see if they can't be made to produce something like what they used to produce. That wants money. They have it: I have not. It is true I have been offered the loan of a few thousand pounds; but even if I accept it—and I suppose I must—that would not put me on an equal footing with the other men who are going into the affair. This, however, I could do: I could go out there and do all in my power to look after their interests and my own—see, in fact, that the money was being properly expended, before it was too late. Now, I might be there a very long time."

"Yes," said Wenna, in a low voice, and rather inappropriately.

"Now, don't let me alarm you; but do you think—do you not think, in view of what might be rather a long separation, that we ought to get married before I go?"

She suddenly and inadvertently withdrew her hand.

"But don't make any mistake, Wenna," he said; "I did not propose you should go with me. That would be asking

too much. All I wish is to have the bond that unites us already made fast before I go, merely as a comfortable thing to think of, don't you see?"

"Oh, it is too hasty—I am afraid—why should we be in such a hurry?" the girl said, still with her heart beating so that she could scarcely speak.

"No," he argued, "you must not make another mistake. Before this scheme can be matured, months must elapse. I may not have to go out before the beginning of next year. Now, surely another six months would make a sufficiently long engagement."

"Oh, but the pledge is so terrible," she said, and scarcely knowing what she said.

Mr. Roscorla was at once astonished and vexed. That was certainly not the mood in which a girl ought to look forward to her marriage. He could not understand this dread on her part. He began to ask himself whether she would like to enjoy the self-importance that her engagement had bestowed on her—the attentions he paid her, the assistance he gave her in her charitable labours, and the sort of sovereignty over a man which a girl enjoys during the betrothal period—for an indefinite time, or perhaps with the hope that the sudden destruction of all these things by marriage might never arrive at all. Then he began to get a little angry, and rose from his chair, and walked once or twice up and down the room.

"Well," said he, "I don't understand you, I confess. Except in this way, that our relations with each other have not been so openly affectionate as they might have been. That I admit. Perhaps it was my fault. I suppose, for example, you have been surprised that I never offered to kiss you?"

There was something almost of a threat in the last few words; and Wenna, with her cheeks suddenly burning red, anxiously hastened to say—

"Oh, not at all. It was my fault. I am sure if there was too great reserve it was my fault; but I do not think there has been. It is not that at all; but your wish seems so sudden, and so unnecessary——"

"Don't you see," he said, interrupting her, "that if our relations at present are not sufficiently frank and confiden-

tial, nothing will mend that so easily as our marriage? And this that I ask of you ought to be as agreeable to you as to me—that is to say——"

He stopped, with a look of impatience on his face. There was some one coming along the passage. He knew who it was, too; for a young girl's voice was doing its best to imitate in a burlesque fashion a young man's voice; and Mr. Roscorla had already heard Harry Trelyon, as he rode or drove carelessly along, bawling to himself, "Oh, the men of merry, merry England!" He knew that his old enemy Mabyn was at hand.

That very clever imitation of Harry Trelyon was all the warning that the young lady in question condescended to give of her approach. She opened the door without ceremony, marched into the middle of the room, and proudly placed a bird-cage on the table.

"There," said she, "can either of you tell me what that bird is?"

"Of course I can," said Wenna, rising with a sensation of great relief.

"No you can't," her sister said dogmatically. "It is sent you with Mr. Harry Trelyon's compliments; and it is something very wonderful indeed. What is it, ladies and gentlemen? Don't answer all at once!"

"Why, it is only——"

"A piping bullfinch—that's what it is," said Mabyn, triumphantly.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN UNEXPECTED CONVERT.

NEXT morning was Sunday morning; and Wenna, having many things to think over by herself, started off alone to church, some little time before the others, and chose a circuitous route to the small building which stands on the high uplands overlooking the sea. It was a beautiful morning, still and peaceful, with the warmth of the sunlight cooled by a refreshing westerly breeze; and as she went along and up the valley, her heart gradually forgot its cares, for she was listening to the birds singing, and picking up an occasional wild-flower, or watching the slow white clouds cross the blue sky. And as she walked quietly along in this way, finding her life the sweeter for the sweet air and the abundant colour and brightness of all the things around her, it chanced that she saw Harry Trelyon coming across one of the meadows, evidently with the intention of bidding her good-morning; and she thought she would stop and thank him for having sent her the bullfinch. This she did very prettily when he came up; and he, with something of a blush on his handsome face, said—

"I thought you wouldn't be offended. One can use more freedom with you now that you are as good as married, you know."

She quickly got away from that subject by asking him whether he was coming to church; and to that question he replied by a rather scornful laugh, and by asking what the parsons would say if he took a gun into the family pew. In fact, he had brought out an air-cane to test its carrying powers; and he now bore it over his shoulder.

"I think you might have left the gun at home on a Sunday morning," Miss Wenna said, in rather a precise fashion. "And, do you know, Mr. Trelyon, I can't understand why you should speak in that way about clergymen, when you say yourself that you always avoid them, and don't know anything about them. It reminds me of a stable-boy we once had who used to amuse the other lads by being impertinent to every stranger who might pass, simply because the stranger was a stranger."

This was a deadly thrust; and the tall young gentleman flushed, and was obviously a trifle angry. Did she mean to convey that he had acquired his manners from stable-boys?

"Parsons and churches are too good for the likes o' me," he said, contemptuously. "Morning, Miss Rosewarne," and with that he walked off.

But about three minutes thereafter, when she was peacefully continuing her way, he overtook her again, and said to her, in rather a shamefaced fashion—

"I hope you don't think I meant to be rude to you, Miss Wenna. I'll go to church with you if you like. I've stuck my air-cane in a safe place."

Wenna's face brightened

"I shall be very glad," she said, with a smile far more frank and friendly than any she had ever yet bestowed on him. "And I am sure if you came often to hear Mr. Trewhella, or if you knew him, you would think differently about clergymen."

"Oh, well," Trelyon said, "he's a good sort of old chap, I think. I find no fault with him. But look at such a fellow as that Barnes—why, that fellow's son was with me at Rugby, and wasn't he a pretty chip of the old block—a mean, lying little beggar, who would do anything to get a half-crown out of you."

"Oh, were you at Rugby?" Wenna asked, innocently.

"I don't wonder at your asking," her companion said, with a grin. "You think it doesn't look as if I had ever been to any school? Oh yes, I was at Rugby; and my career there, if brief, was not inglorious. I think the records of all the eight Houses might be searched in vain to find such another ruffian as I was, or any one who managed to get into the same number of scrapes in the same time. The end was dramatic. They wouldn't let me go to a ball in the town-hall. I had vowed I should be there; and I got out of the House at night, and went. And I hadn't been in the place ten minutes when I saw the very master who had refused me fix his glittering eye on me; so, as I knew it was all over, I merely went up to him and asked to have the pleasure of being introduced to his daughter. I thought he'd have had a fit. But that little brute Barnes I was telling you about, he was our champion bun-eater. At that time, you know, they used to give you as many buns as ever you liked on Shrove-Tuesday: and the Houses used to eat against each other, and this fellow Barnes was our champion; and, oh Lord! the number he stowed away that morning. When we went to chapel afterwards, he was as green as a leek."

"But do you dislike clergymen because Master Barnes ate too many buns?" Wenna asked, with a gentle smile, which rather aggrieved her companion.

"Do you know," said he, "I think you are awfully hard on me. You are always trying to catch me up. Here am I walking to church with you, like an angel of submission, and all the thanks I get—— Why, there goes my mother!"

Just in front of them, and a short distance from the church, the road they were following joined the main highway leading up from Eglosilyan, and along the latter Mrs. Trelyon's brougham was driving past. That lady was very much astonished to find her son walking with Miss Wenna Rosewarne on a Sunday morning; and still more surprised when, after she was in church, she beheld Master Harry walk coolly in and march up to the family pew. Here, indeed, was a revolution. Which of all the people assembled—among whom were Miss Mabyn and her mother, and Mr. Roscorla—had ever seen the like of this before? And it was all the greater wonder, that the young gentleman in the rough shooting-coat found two clergymen in the pew, and nevertheless entered it, and quietly accepted from one of them a couple of books.

Mrs. Trelyon's gentle and emotional heart warmed towards the girl who had done this thing.

And thus it was, on this same day, just before luncheon, when she found her son in the library, she said to him, with an unusual kindliness of manner—

"That was Miss Rosewarne, Harry, wasn't it, whom I saw this morning?"

"Yes," he said, sulkily. He half expected that one or other of his friends, the parsons, had been saying something about her to his mother.

"She is a very quiet, nice-looking girl; I am sure Mr. Roscorla has acted wisely, after all. And I have been thinking, Harry, that since she is a friend of yours, we might do something like what you proposed, only not in a way to make people talk."

"Oh," said he, "I have done it already. I have promised to lend Roscorla 5000*l.* to help him to work his Jamaica estates. If you don't like to sanction the affair, I can get the money from the Jews. I have written to Colonel Ransome to tell him so."

"Now why should you treat me so, Harry?" his mother said.

"I took you at your word—that's all. I suppose now you are better disposed to the girl merely because she got

me to go to church this morning. If there were more people like her about churches, in the pulpits and out of them, I'd go oftener."

"I was not quite sure who she was," Mrs. Trelyon said, with a feeble air of apology. "I like her appearance very much; and I wish she or anybody else could induce you to go to church. Well now, Harry, I will myself lend you the 5000*l.* till you come of age. Surely that will be much better; and, if you like, I will make Miss Rosewarne's acquaintance. You might ask her to dinner the first time Mr. Roscorla is coming; and he could bring her."

Master Harry was at last pacified.

"Make it Thursday," said he, "and you will write to her, won't you? I will take down the letter and persuade her; but if she comes she shan't come under the wing of Mr. Roscorla, as if he were the means of introducing her. I shall go down for her with the brougham, and fetch her myself."

"But what will Mr. Roscorla say to that?" his mother asked, with a smile.

"Mr. Roscorla may say whatever he particularly pleases," responded Master Harry.

CHAPTER XIV.

"SIE BAT SO SANFT, SO LIEBLICH."

"To dine at Trelyon Hall?" said George Rosewarne to his eldest daughter, when she in a manner asked his consent. "Why not? But you must get a new dress, lass; we can't have you go among grand folks as Jim Crow."

"But there is a story about the crow that went out with peacock's feathers," his daughter said to him. "And, besides, how could I get a new dress by Thursday?"

"How could you get a new dress by Thursday?" her father repeated mechanically, for he was watching one of his pet pigeons on the roof of the mill. "How can I tell you? Go and ask your mother. Don't bother me."

It is quite certain that Wenna would not have availed herself of this gracious permission, for her mother was not very well, and she did not wish to increase that tender

anxiety which Mrs. Rosewarne already showed about her daughter's going among these strangers; but that this conversation had been overheard by Mabyn, and that young lady, as was her habit, plunged headlong into the matter.

"You can have the dress quite well, Wenna," she said, coming out to the door of the inn, and calling on her mother to come too. "Now, look here, mother, I give you warning that I never, never, never will speak another word to Wenna if she doesn't take the silk that is lying by for me and have it made up directly: never a single word, if I live in Eglosilyan for a hundred and twenty-five years!"

"Mabyn, I don't want a new dress," Wenna expostulated. "I don't need one. Why should you rush at little things as if you were a squadron of cavalry?"

"I don't care whether you want it or whether you don't want it; but you've got to have it, hasn't she, mother? Or else, it's what I tell you: not a word—not a word, if you were to go down before me on your bended knees." This was said with much dramatic effect.

"I think you had better let Mabyn have her own way," the mother said, gently.

"I let her?" Wenna answered, pretending not to notice Mabyn's look of defiance and triumph. "She always has her own way; tomboys always have."

"Don't call names, Wenna," her sister said, severely; "especially as I have just given you a new dress. You'll have to get Miss Keam down directly, or else I'll go and cut it myself, and then you'll have Harry Trelyon laughing at you; for he always laughs at people who don't know how to keep him in his proper place."

"Meaning yourself, Mabyn," the mother said; but Mabyn was not to be crushed by any sarcasm.

Certainly Harry Trelyon was in no laughing or spiteful mood when he drove down on that Thursday evening to take Wenna Rosewarne up to the Hall. He was as pleased and proud as he well could be; and when he went into the inn he made no secret of his satisfaction and of his gratitude to her for having been good enough to accept his mother's invitation. Moreover, understanding that Mrs. Rosewarne was still rather ailing, he had brought down for her a brace of grouse from a hamper that had reached the Hall from

me to go to church this morning. If there were more people like her about churches, in the pulpits and out of them, I'd go oftener."

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Yorkshire that morning; and he was even friendly and good-natured with Mabyn instead of being ceremoniously impertinent towards her.

"Don't you think, Mr. Trelyon," said Wenna, in a timid way, as she was getting into the brougham, "don't you think we should drive round for Mr. Roscorla?"

"Oh, certainly not," said Mabyn, with promptitude. "He always prefers a walk before dinner—I know he does—he told me so. He must have started long ago. Don't you mind her, Mr. Trelyon."

Mr. Trelyon was grinning as he and Wenna drove away.

"She's a thorough good sort of girl, that sister of yours," he said; "but when she marries won't she lead her husband a pretty dance!"

"Oh, nothing of the sort, I can assure you," Wenna said, sharply. "She is as gentle as any one can well be. If she is impetuous, it is always in thinking of other people. There is nothing she wouldn't do to serve those whom she really cares for."

"Well," said he with a laugh, "I never knew two girls stick up so for one another. Don't imagine I was such a fool as to say anything against her. But sisters ain't often like that. My cousin Jue has a sister at school, and when she's at home, the bullying that goes on is something awful; or rather it's nagging and scratching, for girls never go in for a fair stand-up fight. And yet when you meet these two separately, you find each of them as good-natured and good-tempered as you could wish. But if there's anything said about you anywhere that isn't positive worship, why, Mabyn comes down on the people like a cart-load of bricks; and she can do it, mind you, when she likes."

"Remember," he said, after a word or two, "I mean to take you in to dinner. It is just possible my mother may ask Mr. Roscorla to take you in, as a compliment to him; but don't you go."

"I must do what I am told," Wenna answered, meekly.

"Oh no, you mustn't," he said. "That is merely a girl's notion of what is proper. You are a woman now; you can do what you like. Don't you know how your position is changed since you became engaged?"

"Yes, it is changed," she said; and then she added quickly: "Surely that must be a planet that one can see already?"

"You can be much more independent in your actions now and much more friendly with many people, don't you know?" said this young man, who did not see he was treading on very delicate ground, and that of all things in the world that Wenna least liked to hear spoken of, her engagement to Mr. Roscorla was the chief.

Late that night, when Wenna returned from her first dinner-party at Trelyon Hall, she found her sister Mabyn waiting up for her; and, having properly scolded the young lady for so doing, she sat down and consented to give her an ample and minute description of all the strange things that had happened.

"Well, you must know," said she, folding her hands on her knees as she had been used to do in telling tales to Mabyn when they were children together: "you must know that when we drove up through the trees, the house seemed very big, and grey, and still, for it was getting dark, and there was no sound about the place. It was so ghost-like that it rather frightened me; but in the hall we passed the door of a large room, and there I got a glimpse of a very gay and brilliant place, and I heard some people talking. Mr. Trelyon was waiting for me when I came down again, and he took me into the drawing-room and introduced me to his mother, who was very kind to me, but did not seem inclined to speak much to any one. There was no other lady in the room—only those two clergymen who were in church last Sunday, and Mr. Trewhella, and Mr. Roscorla. I thought Mr. Roscorla was a little embarrassed when he came forward to shake hands with me—and that was natural, for all the people must have known—and he looked at my dress the moment I entered the room; and then, Mabyn, I did thank you in my heart for letting me have it; for I had forgotten that Mr. Roscorla would regard me as being on my trial, and I hope he was not ashamed of me."

"Ashamed of you!" said Mabyn with a sudden flash of anger. "Do you mean that *he* was on his trial?"

"Be quiet. Well, you must know, that Mr. Trelyon was in very high spirits, and I never saw him so good-natured, and he must needs take me into dinner, and I sat on his

right hand. Mrs. Treylon told me it was only a quiet little family party; and I said I was very glad. Do you know, Mabyn, there is something about her that you can't help liking—I think it is her voice and her soft way of looking at you; but she is so very gentle and ordinarily so silent, that she makes you feel as if you were a very forward and talkative, and rude person——"

"That is precisely what you are, Wenna," Mabyn observed, with school-girl sarcasm.

"But Mr. Trelyon, he was talking to everybody at once—all round the table—I never saw him in such spirits; and most of all he was very kind to Mr. Trewhella, and I liked him for that. He told me he had asked Mr. Trewhella because I was coming; and one thing I noticed was, that he was always sending the butler to fill Mr. Trewhella's glass, or to offer him some different wine, whereas he let the other two clergymen take their chance. Mr. Roscorla was at the other end of the table—he took in Mrs. Trelyon—I hope he was not vexed that I did not have a chance of speaking to him the whole evening; but how could I help it? He would not come near me in the drawing-room—perhaps that was proper, considering that we are engaged; only I hope he is not vexed."

For once Miss Mabyn kept a hold over her tongue, and did not reveal the thoughts that were uppermost in her mind.

"Well, after dinner Mrs. Trelyon and I went back to the drawing-room; and it was very brilliant and beautiful; but oh! one felt so much alone in the big place that I was glad when she asked me if I would play something for her. It was something to think about; but I had no music, and I had to begin and recollect all sorts of pieces that I had almost forgotten. At first she was at the other end of the room, in a low easy-chair of rose-coloured silk; and she looked really very beautiful and sad, and as if she were dreaming. But by and by she came over and sat by the piano; and it was as if you were playing to a ghost, that listened without speaking. I played one or two of the 'Songs without Words'—those I could recollect easily—then Beethoven's 'Farewell;' but while I was playing that I happened to turn a little bit, and, do you know, she was

crying in a quiet and silent way. Then she put her hand gently on my arm; and I stopped playing; but I did not turn towards her, for there was something so strange and sad in seeing her cry that I was nearly crying myself, and I did not understand what was troubling her. Then, do you know, Mabyn, she rose and put her hand on my head, and said, 'I hear you are a very good girl: I hope you will come and see me.' Then I told her I was sorry that something I had played had troubled her; and as I saw she was still distressed, I was very glad when she asked me if I would put on a hood and a shawl and take a turn with her round some of the paths outside. It is such a beautiful night to-night, Mabyn; and up there, where you seemed to be just under the stars, the perfumes of the flowers were so sweet. Sometimes we walked under the trees, almost in darkness; and then we would come out on the clear space of the lawn, and find the skies overhead; and then we would go into the rose garden; and all the time she was no longer like a ghost, but talking to me as if she had known me a long time. And she is such a strange woman, Mabyn—she seems to live so much apart from other people, and to look at everything just as it affects herself. Fancy a harp, you know, never thinking of the music it was making; but looking all the time at the quivering of its own strings. I hope I did not offend her; for when she was saying some very kindly things to me—of course Mr. Trelyon had been telling her a heap of nonsense—about helping people and that, she seemed to think that the only person to be considered in such cases was yourself, and not those whom you might try to help. Well, when she was talking about the beautiful sensations of being benevolent—and how it softened your heart and refined your feelings to be charitable—I am afraid I said something I should not have said, for she immediately turned and asked me what more I would have her do. Well, I thought to myself, if I have offended her, it's done and can't be helped; and so I plunged into the very thing I had been thinking of all the way in the brougham—"

"The Sewing Club!" said Mabyn; for Wenna had already spoken of her dark and nefarious scheme to her sister.

"Yes; once I was in it, I told her of the whole affair; and what she could do if she liked. She was surprised, and I think a little afraid. 'I do not know the people,' she said, 'as you do. But I should be delighted to give you all the money you required, if you would undertake the rest.' 'Oh, no, madam,' said I (afterwards she asked me not to call her so), 'that is impossible. I have many things to do at home, especially at present, for my mother is not well. What little time I can give to other people has many calls on it. And I could not do all this by myself.'"

"I should think not," said Mabyn, rising up in great indignation, and beginning to walk up and down the room. "Why, Wenna, they'd work your fingers to the bone, and never say thank you. You do far too much already—I say you do far too much already—and the idea that you should do that! You may say what you like about Mrs. Trelyon—she may be a very good lady; but I consider it nothing less than mean—I consider it disgraceful, mean, and abominably wicked, that she should ask you to do all this work and do nothing herself!"

"My dear child," said Wenna, "you are quite unjust. Mrs. Trelyon is neither mean nor wicked; but she was in ignorance, and she is timid, and unused to visiting poor people. When I showed her that no one in Eglosilyan could so effectively begin the Club as herself—and that the reckless giving of money she seemed inclined to was the worst sort of kindness—and when I told her of all my plans of getting the materials wholesale, and making the husbands subscribe, and the women sew, and all that I have told you, she took to the plan with an almost childish enthusiasm; and now it is quite settled; and the only danger is that she may destroy the purpose of it by being over-generous. Don't you see, Mabyn, it is her first effort in actual and practical benevolence; she seems hitherto only to have satisfied her sense of duty or pleased her feelings by giving cheques to public charities; and she is already just a little too eager and interested in it. She doesn't know what a slow and wearisome thing it is to give some small help to your neighbours discreetly."

"Oh, Wenna," her sister said, "what a manager you are! Sometimes I think you must be a thousand years of age; and at other times you seem so silly about your own affairs that I can't understand you. Did Mr. Roscorla bring you home?"

"No, but he came in the brougham along with Mr. Trelyon. There was a great deal of joking about the conquest—so they said—I had made of Mrs. Trelyon; but you see how it all came about, Mabyn. She was so interested in this scheme——"

"Oh, yes; I see how it all came about," said Mabyn, quite contentedly. "And now you are very tired, you poor little thing, and I shan't ask you any more about your dinner-party to-night. Here is a candle."

Wenna was just going into her own room, when her sister turned and said—

"Wenna?"

"Yes, dear?"

"Do you think that His Royal Highness Mr. Roscorla condescended to be pleased with your appearance, and your manners, and your dress?"

"Don't you ask impertinent questions," said Wenna as she shut the door.

CHAPTER XV.

A LEAVE-TAKING OF LOVERS.

WENNA had indeed made a conquest of the pale and gentle lady up at the Hall, which at another time might have been attended with important results to the people of Eglosilyan. But at this period of the year the Trelyons were in the habit of leaving Cornwall for a few months; Mrs. Trelyon generally going to some continental watering place, while her son proceeded to accept such invitations as he could get to shoot in the English counties. This autumn Harry Trelyon accompanied his mother as far as Etretât, where a number of her friends had made up a small party. From this point she wrote to Wenna, saying how sorry she was she could not personally help in founding the Sewing Club, but offering to send a handsome subscription. Wenna answered the letter in a dutiful spirit, but firmly declined the offer. Then nothing was heard of the

Trelyons for a long time, except that now and again a hamper of game would make its appearance at Eglosilyan, addressed to Miss Wenna Rosewarne in a sprawling schoolboy's hand, which she easily recognized. Master Harry was certainly acting on his own theory, that now she was engaged he could give her presents, or otherwise be as familiar and as friendly with her as he pleased.

It was a dull, slow, and dreary winter. Mr. Roscorla was deeply engaged with his Jamaica project, and was occasionally up in London for a fortnight at a time. He had got the money from young Trelyon, and soon hoped to set out—as he told Wenna—to make his fortune. She put no obstacle in his way, nor yet did she encourage him to go; it was for him to decide, and she would abide by his decision. For the rest, he never revived that proposal of his that they should be married before he went.

Eglosilyan in winter time is a very different place from the Eglosilyan of the happy summer months. The wild coast is sombre and gloomy. The uplands are windy, and bleak, and bare. There is no shining plain of blue lying around the land, but a dark and cheerless sea, that howls in the night time as it beats on the mighty walls of black rock. It is rather a relief, indeed—to break the mournful silence of those projecting cliffs and untenanted bays—when the heavens are shaken with a storm, and when the gigantic waves wash into the small harbour, so that the coasters seeking shelter there have to be scuttled and temporarily sunk in order to save them. Then there are the fierce rains, to guard against which the seaward-looking houses have been faced with slate; and the gardens get dank and wet; and the ways are full of mire; and no one dares venture out on the slippery cliffs. It was a tedious and a cheerless winter.

Then Mrs. Rosewarne was more or less of an invalid the most of the time, and Wenna was much occupied by household cares. Occasionally, when her duties indoors and in the cottages of her humble friends had been got over, she would climb up the hill on the other side of the mill-stream to have a look around her. One seemed to breathe more freely up there among the rocks and furze than in small parlours or kitchens where children had to be laboriously

taught. And yet the picture was not cheerful. A grey and leaden sea—a black line of cliffs standing sharp against it until lost in the mist of the south—the green slopes over the cliffs touched here and there with the brown of withered bracken—then down in the two valleys the leafless trees, and gardens, and cottages of Eglosilyan, the slates ordinarily shining wet with the rain. One day Wenna received a brief little letter from Mrs. Trelyon, who was at Mentone, and who said something about the balmy air, and the beautiful skies, and the blue water around her; and the girl, looking out on the hard and stern features of this sombre coast, wondered how such things could be.

Somehow there was so much ordinary and commonplace work to do that Wenna almost forgot that she was engaged; and Mr. Roscorla, continually occupied with his new project, seldom cared to remind her that they were on the footing of sweethearts. Their relations were of an eminently friendly character, but little more: in view of the forthcoming separation he scarcely thought it worth while to have them anything more. Sometimes he was inclined to apologise to her for the absence of sentiment and romanticism which marked their intimacy; but the more he saw of her the more he perceived that she did not care for that sort of thing, and was, indeed, about as anxious to avoid it as he was himself. She kept their engagement a secret. He once offered her his arm in going home from church; she made some excuse; and he did not repeat the offer. When he came in of an evening to have a chat with George Rosewarne they talked about the subjects of the day as they had been accustomed to do long before his engagement; and Wenna sat and sewed in silence, or withdrew to a side-table to make up her account-books. Very rarely indeed—thanks to Miss Mabyn, whose hostilities had never ceased—had he a chance of seeing his betrothed alone, and then, somehow, their conversation invariably took a practical turn. It was not a romantic courtship.

He considered her a very sensible girl. He was glad that his choice was approved by his reason. She was not beautiful; but she had qualities that would last—intelligence, sweetness, and a sufficient fund of gentle humour to keep a man in good spirits. She was not quite in his own sphere

of life; but then, he argued with himself, a man ought always to marry a woman who is below him rather than above him—in social position, or in wealth, or in brain, or in all three; for then she is all the more likely to respect and obey him, and to be grateful to him. Now, if you do not happen to have won the deep and fervent love of a woman—a thing that seldom occurs—gratitude is a very good substitute. Mr. Roscorla was quite content.

"Wenna," said he, one day after they had got into the new year, and when one had begun to look forward to the first indications of spring in that southern county, "the whole affair is now afloat, and it is time I should be too—forgive the profound witticism. Everything has been done out there; we can do no more here; and my partners think I should sail about the fifteenth of next month."

Was he asking her permission, or expecting some utterance of regret that he looked at her so? She cast down her eyes, and said, rather timidly—

"I hope you will have a safe voyage—and be successful."

He was a little disappointed that she said nothing more; but he himself immediately proceeded to deal with the aspects of the case in a most businesslike manner.

"And then," said he, "I don't want to put you to the pain of taking a formal and solemn farewell as the ship sails. One always feels downhearted in watching a ship go away, even though there is no reason. I must go to London in any case for a few days before sailing, and so I thought that if you wouldn't mind coming as far as Launceston—with your mother or sister—you could drive back here without any bother."

"If you do not consider it unkind," said Wenna, in a low voice, "I should prefer that. For I could not take mamma further than Launceston, I think."

"I shall never consider anything you do unkind," said he. "I do not think you are capable of unkindness."

He wished at this moment to add something about her engagement ring, but could not quite muster up courage. He paused for a minute, and became embarrassed, and then told her what a first-class cabin to Jamaica would cost.

At length the day came round. The weather had been bitterly cold and raw for the previous two or three weeks; though it was March the world seemed still frozen in the grasp of winter. Early on this bleak and grey morning Mr. Roscorla walked down to the inn, and found the waggonette at the door. His luggage had been sent on to Southampton some days before; he was ready to start at once.

Wenna was a little pale and nervous when she came out and got into the waggonette; but she busied herself in wrapping abundant rugs and shawls round her mother, who protested against being buried alive.

"Good-bye," said her father, shaking hands with Mr. Roscorla carelessly, "I hope you'll have a fine voyage. Wenna, don't forget to ask for those cartridge-cases as you drive back from the station."

Mabyn also came up.

"Good-bye," she said to him, with a certain coldness, "I hope you will get safely out to Jamaica."

"And back again?" he said, with a laugh.

Mabyn said nothing, turned away, and pretended to be examining the outlines of the waggonette. Nor did she speak again to any one until the small party drove off; and then, when they had got over the bridge, and along the valley, and up and over the hill, she suddenly ran to her father, flung her arms round his neck, kissed him, and cried out—

"Hurrah! the horrid creature is gone, and he'll never come back—never!"

"Mabyn," said her father, in a peevish ill-temper, as he stooped to pick up the broken pipe which she had caused him to let fall, "I wish you wouldn't be such a fool."

But Mabyn was not to be crushed. She said, "Poor dadda, has it broken its pipe?" and then she walked off, with her head very erect, and a very happy light on her face, while she sang to herself, after the manner of an acquaintance of hers, "Oh, the men of merry, merry England!"

There was less cheerfulness in that waggonette that was making its way across the bleak uplands—a black speck in the grey and wintry landscape. Wenna was really sorry that this long voyage, and all its cares and anxieties, should lie before one who had been so kind to her; it made her

miserable to think of his going away into strange lands all by himself, with little of the buoyancy, and restlessness, and ambition of youth to bear him up. As for him, he was chiefly occupied during this silent drive across to Launceston in nursing the fancy that he was going out to fight the world for her sake—as a younger man might have done—and that, if he returned successful, her gratitude would be added to the substantial results of his trip. It rather pleased him to imagine himself in this position. After all he was not so very elderly; and he was in very good preservation for his years. He was more than a match in physique, in hopefulness, and in a knowledge of the world that ought to stand him in good stead, for many a younger man who, with far less chances of success, was bent on making a fortune for the sake of some particular girl.

He was not displeased to see that she was sorry about his going away. She would soon get over that. He had no wish that she should continually mope in his absence; nor did he, indeed, believe that any sensible girl would do anything of the sort.

At the same time he had no doubt about her remaining constant to him. A girl altogether out of the way of meeting marriageable young men would be under no temptation to let her fancies rove. Moreover, Wenna Rosewarne had something to gain, in social position, by her marriage with him, which she could not be so blind as to ignore; and had she not, too, the inducement of waiting to see whether he might not bring back a fortune to her? But the real cause of his trust in her was the experience of her uncompromising sincerity and keen sense of honour that he had acquired during a long and sufficiently intimate friendship. If the thought of her breaking her promise ever occurred to him, it was not as a serious possibility, but as an idle fancy, to be idly dismissed.

"You are very silent," he said to her.

"I am sorry you are going away," she said, simply and honestly; and the admission pleased and flattered him.

"You don't give me courage," he said, laughingly. "You ought to consider that I am going out into the world—even at my time of life—to get a lot of money and come back to make a grand lady of you."

"Oh!" said she in sudden alarm—for such a thought had never entered her head—"I hope you are not going away on my account. You know that I wish for nothing of the kind. I hope you did not consider me in resolving to go to Jamaica!"

"Well, of course, I considered you," said he, good-naturedly. "But don't alarm yourself; I should have gone if I had never seen you. Naturally, though, I have an additional motive in going when I look to the future."

That was not a pleasant thought for Wenna Rosewarne. It was not likely to comfort her on stormy nights, when she might lie awake and think of a certain ship at sea. She had acquiesced in his going, as in one of those things which men do because they are men and seem bound to satisfy their ambition with results which women might consider unnecessary. But that she should have exercised any influence on his decision—that alarmed her with a new sense of responsibility; and she began to wish that he could suddenly drop this project, have the waggonette turned round, and drive back to the quiet content and small economies and peaceful work of Eglosilyan.

They arrived in good time at Launceston, and went for a stroll up to the fine old castle while luncheon was being got ready at the hotel. Wenna did not seem to regard that as a very enticing meal when they sat down to it. The talk was kept up chiefly by her mother and Mr. Roscorla, who spoke of life on shipboard, and the best means of killing the tedium of it. Mr. Roscorla said he would keep a journal all the time he was away, and send instalments from time to time to Wenna.

They went on foot from the hotel down to the station. Just outside the station they saw a landau, drawn by a pair of beautiful greys, which were being walked up and down.

"Surely those are Mrs. Trelyon's horses," Wenna said; and as the carriage, which was empty, came nearer, the coachman touched his hat. "Perhaps she is coming back to the Hall to-day."

The words were uttered carelessly, for she was thinking of other things. When they at last stood on the platform, and Mr. Roscorla had chosen his seat, he could see that she looked more anxious and troubled than ever. He spoke in

a light and cheerful way, mostly to her mother, until the guard requested him to get into the compartment, and then he turned to the girl and took her hand.

"Good-bye, my dear Wenna," said he. "God bless you! I hope you will write to me often."

Then he kissed her cheek, shook hands with her again, and got into his place. She had not spoken a word. Her lips were trembling: she could not speak: and he saw it.

When the train went slowly out of the station, Wenna stood and looked after it with something of a mist before her eyes, until she could see nothing of the handkerchief that was being waved from one of the carriage windows. She remained quite still, until her mother put her hand on her shoulder, and then she turned and walked away with her. They had not gone three yards when they were met by a tall young man who had come rushing down the hill and through the small station-house.

"By Jove!" said he, "I am just too late. How do you do, Mrs. Rosewarne? How are you, Wenna?"—and then he paused, and a great blush overspread his face; for the girl looked up at him, and took his hand silently, and he could see there were tears in her eyes. It occurred to him that he had no business there; and yet he had come on an errand of kindness. So he said, with some little embarrassment, to Mrs. Rosewarne—

"I heard you were coming over to this train; and I was afraid you would find the drive back in the waggonette rather cold towards evening. I have got our landau outside, closed, you know—and I thought you might let me drive you over."

Mrs. Rosewarne looked at her daughter. Wenna decided all such things, and the girl said to him, in a low voice—

"It is very kind of you."

"Then just give me a second, that I may tell your man," Trelyon said, and off he darted.

Was it his respect for Wenna's trouble, or had it been his knocking about among strangers for six months, that seemed to have given to the young man (at least in Mrs. Rosewarne's eyes) something of a more courteous and considerate manner? When the three of them were being rapidly whirled along the Launceston highway in Mrs. Trelyon's

carriage, Harry Trelyon was evidently bent on diverting Wenna's thoughts from her present cares; and he told stories, and asked questions, and related his recent adventures in such a fashion that the girl's face gradually lightened, and she grew interested and pleased. She, too, thought he was much improved—how, she could not exactly tell.

"Come," said he, at last, "you must not be very downhearted about a mere holiday trip. You will soon get letters, you know, telling you all about the strange places abroad; and then, before you know where you are, you'll have to drive over to the station, as you did to-day, to meet Mr. Roscorla coming back."

"It may be a very long time indeed," Wenna said; "and if he should come to any harm I shall know that I was the cause of it; for if it had not been for me, I don't believe he would have gone."

"Oh, that is quite absurd!—begging your pardon," said Master Harry, coolly. "Roscorla got a chance of making some money, and he took it, as any other man would. You had no more to do with it than I had—indeed, I had something to do with it—but that's a secret. No; don't you make any mistake about that. And he'll be precious well off when he's out there, and seeing everything going on smoothly, especially when he gets a letter from you, with a Cornish primrose or violet in it. And you'll get that soon now," he added, quickly, seeing that Wenna blushed somewhat; "for I fancy there's a sort of feeling in the air this afternoon that means spring-time. I think the wind has been getting round to the west all day; before night you will find a difference, I can tell you."

"I think it has become very fresh and mild already," Wenna said, judging by an occasional breath that came in at the top of the windows.

"Do you think you could bear the landau open?" said he, eagerly.

When they stopped to try—when they opened the windows—the predictions of the weather prophet had already been fulfilled, and a strange, genial mildness and freshness pervaded the air. They were now near Eglosilyan, on the brow of a hill, and away below them they beheld the sea

lying dull and grey under the cloudy sky. But while they waited for the coachman to uncover the landau, a soft and yellow light began to show itself far out in the west; a break appeared in the clouds; and a vast comb of gold shone down on the plain of water beneath. The western skies were opening up; and what with this new and beautiful light, and what with the sweet air that awoke a thousand pleasant and pathetic memories, it seemed to Wenna Rosewarne that the tender spring-time was at length at hand, with all its wonder of yellow crocuses and pale snowdrops, and the first faint shimmerings of green on the hedges and woods. Her eyes filled with tears—she knew not why. Surely she was not old enough to know anything of the unspeakable sadness that comes to some when the heavens grow clearer and more clear, when a new life stirs in the trees, and the world awakes to the fairness of the spring. She was only eighteen; she had a lover; and she was as certain of his faithfulness as of her own.

In bidding them good-bye at the door of the inn, Mr. Harry Trelyon told them that he meant to remain in Eglosilyan for some months to come.

CHAPTER XVI.

SPRING-TIME.

THE spring-time had indeed arrived—rapidly and imperceptibly; and all at once it seemed as if the world had grown green, and the skies fair and clear, and the winds sweet with a new and delightful sweetness. Each morning that Wenna went out brought some further wonder with it—along the budding hedgerows, in the colours of the valley, in the fresh warmth of the air, and the white light of the clouds. And at last the sea began to show its deep and resplendent summer blue, when the morning happened to be still, and there was a silvery haze along the coast.

"Mabyn, is your sister at home? And do you think she could go up to the Hall for a little while, for my mother wants to see her? And do you think she would walk round by the cliffs—it is such a splendid morning—if you came with her?"

"Oh yes, Mr. Trelyon," said Mabyn, readily, and with far more respect and courtesy than she usually showed to the young gentleman. "I am quite sure Wenna can go; and I know she would like to walk round by the cliffs—she is always glad to do that—and I will tell her to get ready instantly. But *I* can't go, Mr. Trelyon—I am exceedingly busy this morning."

"Why, you have been reading a novel!"

"But I am about to be exceedingly busy," said Mabyn, petulantly. "You can't expect people to be always working—and I tell you I can't go with you, Mr. Trelyon."

"Oh, very well," said he carelessly, "you needn't show your temper."

"*My* temper!" said Mabyn; but then recollecting herself, and smiling derisively, she went away to fetch her sister.

When Wenna came outside into the white sunlight, and went forward to shake hands with him, with her dark eyes lit up by a friendly smile, it seemed to him that not for many a day—not certainly during all the time of her engagement with Mr. Roscorla—had he seen her look so pleased, and happy, and contented. She still bore that quiet gravity of demeanour which had made him call her the little Puritan; and there was the same earnestness in her eyes as they regarded any one; but there was altogether a brighter aspect about her face that pleased him exceedingly. For he was very well disposed to this shy and yet matter-of-fact young lady; and was alternately amused by the quaintness of her motherly ways in dealing with the people about her, and startled into admiration by some sudden glimpse of the fine sincerity of her nature. He had done more to please her—he had gone to church several times, and tried to better his handwriting, and resolved to be more careful of speaking of parsons in her presence—than he ever thought he could have done to please any woman.

So these two set forth on this bright and cheerful morning; and one would have said, to see them as they went, that two happier young folks were not within the county of Cornwall at that moment. Wenna had a pleasant word for every one that passed; and when they had gone

lying dull and grey under the cloudy sky. But while they waited for the coachman to uncover the landau, a soft and yellow light began to show itself far out in the west; a break appeared in the clouds; and a vast comb of gold shone down on the plain of water beneath. The western skies were opening up; and what with this new and beautiful light, and what with the sweet air that awoke a thousand pleasant and pathetic memories, it seemed to Wenna Rosewarne that the tender spring-time was at length at hand, with all its wonder of yellow crocuses and pale snowdrops, and the first faint shimmerings of green on the hedges and woods. Her eyes filled with tears—she knew not why. Surely she was not old enough to know anything of the unspeakable sadness that comes to some when the heavens grow clearer and more clear, when a new life stirs in the trees, and the world awakes to the fairness of the spring. She was only eighteen; she had a lover; and she was as certain of his faithfulness as of her own.

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by the mill, and reached the narrow path by the tiny harbour, where no more neighbours were to be seen, she appeared to transfer her abounding sympathy to all the objects around her, and she spoke to them, and laughed to them, so that all the world seemed to be friendly with her. Her sister used to say that her fingers tingled to the very tips with kindness; and at this moment she seemed as though she could have kissed her hand to all the birds and animals around, and wished them joy that they had so fine a morning.

"Ho, ho! Mr. Porpoise," she laughed and said, as she saw far below her a big fish slowly heel over in the blue water of the harbour; "don't you come too far up, or you won't like the stones in the stream, I know!"

There was a hawk hovering high in the air over Blackcliff —Trelyon was watching it keenly.

"Oh, go away, you bad bird," she cried, "and let the poor little things alone!" And sure enough, at this moment, the motionless speck up there began to flutter its wings, and presently it sailed away over the cliff, and was seen no more.

"Mother Sheep," she said to the inattentive custodian of two very small lambs with very thick legs and uncertain gait, "why don't you look after your children?—you'll have them tumbling down the rocks into the sea in about a minute: that's about what you'll do!"

"Boom!" she said to a great humble-bee that buzzed along; and to a white butterfly that fluttered this way and that over the warm grass on the hill-side she called out, "My pretty lady, aren't you glad the summer is coming?"

She talked to the white and grey gulls that were wheeling over the sea, and to the choughs flying hither and thither about the steep precipices of the cliff. They did not answer her; but that was no matter. From her childhood she had believed that she knew them all, and that they knew her; and that even the rocks, and the sea, and the clouds regarded her, and spoke to her in a strange and silent fashion. Once she had come back from the mouth of the harbour on a sultry afternoon, when as yet the neighbours had heard nothing of the low mutterings of the distant and coming storm; and when her mother asked the child why she was so silent, she said, "I have been listening to God walking on the sea."

Well, they sat down on a seat which fronted the wide opening in the cliffs and the great plain of the Atlantic beyond, that was this morning of a light and sunny sea-green, with here and there broad purple stains of shadow as the summer clouds passed rapidly over the sky from the west. In the warm sunshine, the gorse on the hill behind them, and the grass on the pasture-land, sweetened the air. The wind blew fresh in from the sea; and as the surging waves broke white along the rocks beneath them, the brisk breeze carried with it a flavour of salt from the fine clouds of the spray. The spring-time seemed to have given life and colour to the sea as well as to the land, for all the world was brilliant with the new brightness of the skies.

"And isn't it first-rate," said Master Harry, wishing to say something very pleasant to his companion, "that Mr. Roscorla is having such fine weather on his outward voyage? I am sure you would have been very anxious if there had been any storms about. I hope he will be successful; he's a good sort of fellow."

No one who was not acquainted with this young gentleman could have guessed at the dire effort he had to make in order to pronounce these few sentences. He was not accustomed to say formally civil things. He was very bad at paying compliments; and as for saying anything friendly of Mr. Roscorla, he had to do it with a mental grimace. But Wenna was very familiar with the lad and his ways. At another time she would have been amused and pleased to observe his endeavours to be polite; and now, if she hastened away from the subject, it was only because she never heard Mr. Roscorla's name mentioned without feeling embarrassment and showing it. She murmured something about a hope that Mr. Roscorla would not find the voyage to Jamaica fatiguing; and then, somewhat hastily, drew her companion's attention to another porpoise which was showing itself from time to time outside the rocks.

"I wish Roscorla had made me your guardian in his absence," said this blundering young man, who was determined to be on his best behaviour. "I quite agree with

Mabyn that you overwork yourself in doing for other people what the lazy beggars ought to do for themselves. Oh, I know more than you think. I'd wake some of them up if I had the chance. Why, they look on you as a sort of special Providence, bound to rescue them at any moment. I was told only yesterday of old Mother Truscott having said to a neighbour, 'Well, if Miss Wenna won't help me, then the Lord's will be done.'"

"Oh yes, I know," said his companion, with some impatience; "she is always saying that. I said to her the other day, when I got out of temper, 'Why, of course the Lord's will will be done; you don't suppose He wants your permission? But if you'd only look after your own house, and bestir yourself, and keep it smart, your husband wouldn't go on as he does.' There's nothing I hate worse than that sort of pretended piety. Why, when Abiathar Annot's boy died, I thought he'd be out of his senses with grief, and I went up to see if he was all right about the house, and to say a friendly word to him; and directly I went inside the door he said to me, quite complacently, 'Well, Miss Rosewarne, you know we must bow to the will of the Lord, and accept his chastenings as mercies.' 'Oh,' said I, 'if you take it that way, I've no more to say,' and I left the place. I don't believe in all that sort of——"

She suddenly stopped, recollecting to whom she was speaking. Were these proper confessions to be made to a young man who had such a godless hatred of parsons, and churches, and all good things; and whose conversion to more respectable ways she had many a time wished to attempt? She dropped the subject; and Master Harry was so resolved to be proper and virtuous on this auspicious morning that he took no advantage of what she had said. He even, in an awkward fashion, observed that all religious people were not hypocrites; one had to draw distinctions. Of course there were pious people who were really sincere. He hoped Miss Wenna would not suspect him of being so prejudiced as not to know that. Miss Wenna was a little inclined to smile; but she controlled her lips; and Master Harry, having paid these ingenuous compliments to piety and virtue, rose with a frank sigh of relief, proposed that they should continue their walk up the hill, and was soon

engaged in telling her—with a much gayer tone in his voice and with a return to his old impertinent carelessness—of some wild adventure in cliff-hunting which he and his faithful Dick had encountered together.

They seemed to be in no great hurry, these two. It was a morning that invited toidleness. They chatted about all sorts of things, or were silent, with equal and happy indifference: he watching the seabirds, she stooping from time to time to pick up some tiny flower of pale yellow or purple. In this fashion they made their way up to the summit of the cliffs; and there before them lay the great plain of the windy sea, and the long wall or precipice running down into the south-west, and the high and bleak uplands marked by the square towers of small and distant churches. They struck across the fields to one of those churches—that which Master Harry had been persuaded to visit. The place was now silent and deserted enough; two jackdaws sat on the slender weather-cock; the sunlight was warm on the silvery grey tower, and on the long green grass in the churchyard, in which the first daisies of the spring had already appeared. Then they went down through some narrow lanes towards the higher portion of Eglosilyan; and under the hedges were masses of pale primroses, and the purple blossoms of the ground-ivy, and the golden stars of the celandine. They drew near some of the cottages; and in the gardens the flowering currant was in bloom, and everywhere there was a scent of wallflower. They crossed the main thoroughfare of the village; it was empty but for the presence of a small boy, who, with a slate slung on one side and a bag made of carpet slung on the other, had apparently been sent home from school for some reason or other. The youthful scholar most respectfully took off his cap to Miss Wenna as she gave him a kindly greeting.

"They say all that is owing to you," Trelyon remarked.

"All what?"

"The good manners of the people in this village. The women bob you a curtsey as you pass; the girls say good-morning or good-evening; the boys take off their caps, even if you are a perfect stranger. But you don't suppose that happens in every village in Cornwall? My mother was speaking about it only this morning."

Wenna was sufficiently surprised to know that she had got the credit of the courtesy shown to strangers by the Eglosilyan folks; but even more surprised to learn that Master Harry had deigned to engage in conversation with his mother. He also seemed to be taking his first lessons in civility.

"Oh," she said, "that boy ought to pay me every attention to make up for his bad conduct. He was once a sweetheart of mine, and he deceived me. He sold me for sixpence."

She sighed.

"It is true. He adopted me as his sweetheart, and every time I saw him he promised to marry me when he grew up. But there came a change. He avoided me, and I had to catch him, and ask him why. He confessed. I wasn't his sweetheart any more. His elder brother, aged ten, I think, had also wanted me for a sweetheart; and he had a sixpence; and sixpence was the price of a new sort of spinning-top that had just been put into the window at the Post-office; and the elder brother proposed to the younger brother to take the sixpence and buy the top, and hand me over. 'So yü baint my sweetheart anny mower,' said that young gentleman, forgetting his good English in his grief. But I think he has a tender recollection of me even now."

"I'd have thrashed the little brute for his meanness, if I had been you," said her companion, in his off-hand way.

"Oh no," she answered, with a meek sarcasm; "wasn't he only doing as a child what grown-up gentlemen are said to do? When there is money on the one hand and a sweetheart on the other, is not the sweetheart ordinarily thrown over?"

"What can you know about it?" he said bluntly. "In any case, *you* don't run any danger. Mr. Roscorla is not likely to be tempted by bags of gold."

Mr. Roscorla—always Mr. Roscorla. Wenna, who crimsoned deeply at the slightest reference to the relations between herself and her absent lover, began to be somewhat angry with this thoughtless lad, who would continually introduce the name. What was his object in doing so? To show her that he never failed to remember her position, and that that was his excuse for talking very frankly to her, as he would have done to a sister? Or merely to please her by speaking of one who ought to be very dear to her? She was not indebted to him for this blundering effort of kindness; and on any less cheerful morning might have visited him with one of those fits of formal politeness or of constrained silence with which young ladies are accustomed to punish too forward acquaintances.

But Miss Wenna had it not in her heart to be reserved on this pleasant forenoon; she good-naturedly overlooked the pertinacious mistakes of her companion; and talked to him—and to the flowers, and birds, and trees around her—with a happy carelessness, until the two of them together made their way up to the Hall. Just as Master Harry opened the gate at the end of the avenue, and turned to let her through, he seemed for the first time to notice her dress. He made no scruple of stopping her for a moment to look at it.

"Oh, I say, I wish you could get my mother to dress like you!"

The burst of admiration was so genuine that Miss Wenna—being only a girl—was very much pleased indeed; and blushed a little, and would rather have passed on. There was nothing, indeed, remarkable about her costume—about the rough light grey dress with its touches here and there of blue, nor yet about the white hat with its forget-me-nots and big white daisies—except that it seemed to fit well a very pretty figure, and also that the blue suited the dark and clear complexion and the dark eyes and hair.

"I'm sick of her stalking about the house in the guise of a ghost—she all white, everything else black. I say, Wenna, don't you think you could get her to dress like a human being?"

"But if it is her wish, you ought to respect it."

"It's only a craze," he said impatiently.

"It may seem so to you," his companion said; "but she has her own reasons for it, and they deserve your sympathy, even though they may not convince you. And you ought not to speak in that harsh way of one who is so very good and gentle, and who is so considerate towards you."

"Oh, you always find excuses for people," he said roughly. "Everybody should be considered, and respected, and have

their fine feelings praised and coddled, according to you. Everybody is perfect, according to you."

"Oh dear, no," she said quite humbly. "I know one or two people whose conduct and habits, and their manners, too, might be very much improved indeed."

"I suppose you mean me?" he said.

"And if I did?" she said boldly. "Don't you think, when you want your mother to be just as you would have her to be, that she might turn round and say that there was a great deal more in you that she might wish to have altered? You know her manner of life is not necessarily wrong merely because you can't understand it. As for yours——"

"Go ahead!" he cried, with a loud and suddenly good-natured laugh. "Heap up all my sins on my head! I'm getting used to be lectured now. Please, Miss Puritan, would you like me to get a surplice and come and sing hymns in the choir?"

Miss Puritan did not answer. There was no look of annoyance on her face—only a certain calm reserve that told her companion that he had somehow wounded the friendly confidence that had sprung up between them during this pleasant morning ramble. And at this moment they reached the front of the Hall, where Mrs. Trelyon came forward to greet her visitor; so that Master Harry had no further opportunity just then of asking her whether he had offended her, and of making an apology. He followed them into the drawing-room and listened for a few minutes to his mother talking to Wenna about the Sewing Club. He became impatient with himself, and vexed, for Wenna seemed in no wise to recognize his presence; and of course his mother did not ask his advice about the purchase of flannel. He tossed about the books on the table; he teased an Angola cat that was lying before the fire until it tried to bite him, and then he put its nose into the water of a flower-vase. With the feather of a quill dipped in ink he drew a fox on one of the white tiles of the fireplace; and then he endeavoured to remove that work of art with the edge of a scarlet and gold footstool. These various occupations affording him no relief, he got up, stretched his legs, and said to his mother—

"Mother, you keep her here for lunch. I shall be back at two."

"Oh, but I can't stay so long," Wenna said, suddenly. "I know I shall be wanted at home."

"Oh no, you won't," the young gentleman responded, coolly. "I know you won't. Mabyn told me so. Besides, I am going down now to tell them you will be back at four."

And so he went away, but his walk down to the inn was not as pleasant as that roundabout ramble up to the Hall had been.

CHAPTER XVII.

ONLY A BASKET OF PRIMROSES.

"WHAT a busy life you must lead," said Mrs. Trelyon, looking with a gentle wonder at the young lady before her. "You seem to know how to do everything."

Miss Wenna coloured a little, and said something about having had to help her mother for many years past.

"And such a knowledge of the world as you have!" Mrs. Trelyon continued, unconsciously staring at the girl as if she were some strange phenomenon. "Where did you get it?"

"That I am sure I have not got," Wenna said, brightening considerably, "for the strangers who come to the inn of course don't speak to me, except one or two of the very old ladies sometimes, and all they talk about is the scenery. But Mabyn and I read the remarks in the Visitors' Book; and these are very amusing, especially the poetry that the young gentlemen write; and indeed, Mrs. Trelyon, if one were to judge by that book, one would think that the world was very silly. The elderly gentlemen generally praise the cooking; the elderly ladies generally say something nice about the cleanliness of the bedrooms and the good attendance; and the young ladies write about anything, recommending other visitors to go to particular places, or saying what they think of the Cornish peasantry. I am sure they are all very good-natured to us; and say very nice things of the inn; but then it looks so silly. And the young gentlemen

are far the worst—especially the University young gentlemen, for they write such stupid poetry and make such bad jokes. I suppose it is that the fresh air gives them very good spirits, and they don't care what they say, and they never expect that their friends will see what they have written. I have noticed, though, that the walking gentlemen never write such things when they are leaving; for they are always too anxious about the number of miles they have to get over on that day; and they are always anxious, too, about the heels of their stockings. If you would like to see the book——"

Wenna stopped. Mrs. Trelyon had been very good in extending a sort of acquaintance to her, and now proposed to help her in a way with her work. But she was going too far in expecting that this reserved and silent lady should become a visitor at the inn, or interest herself in its commonplace affairs. At this moment, indeed, Mrs. Trelyon was so very much reserved, that she did not notice either Wenna's tentative invitation or her embarrassment when she cut it short.

"I wish," she said absently, showing what she had been thinking about, "I wish you could get Harry to go to one of the Universities."

It was now Wenna's turn to stare. Did the mother of that young man seriously think that this stranger-girl had such an influence over him?

"Oh, Mrs. Trelyon," Wenna said, "how could I——?"

"He would do anything for you," the gentle lady said, with much simplicity and honesty. "He pays no attention to anything I say to him; but he would do anything for you. His whole manner changes when you are in the house. I think you are the only person in the world he is afraid of. And it was so good of you to induce him to go to church."

"I am sure it was not I," said Wenna, getting rather afraid.

"But I know," said Mrs. Trelyon, quite affectionately, "for I have seen everybody else try and fail. You see, my dear, you are in a peculiar position. You are young, and a pleasant companion for a young man; and as you are no relation of his he is courteous to you. And then, you see, your being engaged to be married enables him to speak

freely to you and treat you as a friend; and I think, besides, you have acquired some means of keeping him in check, and having authority over him, and I am sure he would do more for you than for any one I know. As for me, I have never had any control over him; but he is at least civil to me when you are in the room."

Wenna rose.

"Mrs. Trelyon," she said, "don't you think it is a pity to stay indoors on such a beautiful morning? The air is quite mild and warm outside."

She was glad to get out. There was something in this declaration of her responsibility for the young man's conduct which considerably startled and frightened her. It was all very well for her to administer an occasional sharp reproof to him when he was laughing and joking with herself and Mabyn: but to become the recognized monitress of so wild a pupil as Master Harry—to have his own mother appeal to her—that was quite a different affair. And on this occasion, when Mrs. Trelyon had got a shawl, and come outside with her guest, all her talk was about her son, and his ways, and his prospects. It was very clear that with all her lamentations over his conduct, Mrs. Trelyon was very fond of the young man, and was quite assured too that he had the brains to do anything he might be induced to undertake. Wenna listened in a vague way to all these complaints, and speculations, and covert praises; she did not find her position so embarrassing in the open air as in that close drawing-room. They walked through the leafy alleys of the garden, unconsciously regarding the beautiful colour of the new spring flowers, and listening to the larks singing high up in the blue. From time to time, as they turned, they caught a glimpse of hills all ablaze with gorse; and near the horizon a long line of pale azure with a single white ship visible in the haze. On the other side of the valley a man was harrowing; they could hear him calling to the horses, and the jingling of the chains. Then there was the murmur of the stream far below, where the sunlight just caught the light green of the larches. These, and the constant singing of the birds around them, were the only sounds that accompanied their talk, as they wandered this way and that, by brilliant garden plots or through shaded

avenues, where the air was sweet with the fresh scents of the opening summer.

And at last they came back to the proposal that Wenna should try to persuade Master Harry to go to Oxford or Cambridge.

"But, Mrs. Trelyon," the girl said earnestly, "I am quite sure you mistake altogether my relations with your son. I could not presume to give him advice. It would not be my place to do so even if we were on the footing of friends, and that, at present, is out of the question. Don't you see, Mrs. Trelyon, that because Mr. Trelyon in coming about the inn was good-natured enough to make the acquaintance of my father, and to talk to us girls, it would not do for any of us to forget how we are situated. I don't anyway—perhaps because I am proud—but, at all events, I should not presume on Mr. Trelyon's good nature. Don't you see, Mrs. Trelyon?"

"I see that you are a very practical, and sensible, and plain-spoken young lady," her companion said, regarding her with a kindly look. "But I think you don't do my son justice. It is not thoughtlessness that made him make your acquaintance. I don't think he ever did a more prudent thing in his life before. And then, dear Miss Rosewarne, you must remember—if I may speak of such a thing—that you will soon be the wife of one of the very few friends we have about here; and you must excuse us if we claim you as a friend already, and try to take advantage of your friendship. Surely you understand?"

Wenna was not persuaded; but she was, at all events, very pleased to see that occasionally Mrs. Trelyon could forget her brooding sentimental fancies, and become comparatively bright and talkative.

"Now will you say a word to him when he comes home for lunch?"

"Oh no, I can't do that, Mrs. Trelyon," Wenna said; "it would be quite rude of me to do that. Besides, if you would not be displeased with me for saying so, I don't think going to a University would do him any good. don't think—I hope you won't be vexed with me—that he has had sufficient schooling. And isn't there an examination before you could get in? Well, I don't know about that; but I

am quite sure that if he did get in, he would be too proud to put himself in competition with the other young men who were properly prepared for study, and he would take to boating, or cricket, or some such thing. Now, don't you think, Mrs. Trelyon, he would be as well occupied in amusing himself here, where you might gradually get him to take an interest in something besides shooting and fishing? He knows far more things than most people fancy, I know that. My father says he is very clever and can pick up anything you tell him; and that he understands more about the management of an estate, and about the slate quarries, and about mining, too, than people imagine. And as for me," added the girl bravely, "I will say this, that I think him very clever indeed, and that he will make a straightforward and honourable man, and I should like to see him in Parliament, where he would be able to hold his own, I know."

"Oh, my dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Trelyon, with a joyful face, "I am so grateful to you. I am so proud to know you think so highly of him. And won't you say a word to him? He will do whatever you please."

But Miss Wenna had somehow been startled into that confession; and the sudden burst of honesty left her considerably ashamed and embarrassed. She would not promise to intermeddle in the matter, whatever she had been induced to say about the future of the young man. She stooped to pick up a flower to cover her confusion; and then she asked Mrs. Trelyon to be good enough to excuse her staying to lunch.

"Oh, no, I dare not do that," Mrs. Trelyon said; "Harry would pull the house down when he found I had let you go. You know we have no visitors at present; and it will be such a pleasure to have him lunch with me; he seldom does; and never at all if there are visitors. But really, Miss Rosewarne, it is so inconsiderate of me to talk always of him, as if you were as much interested as myself. Why, the whole morning we have not said a word about you and all you are looking forward to. I do hope you will be happy. I am sure you will be, for you have such a sensible way of regarding things, and all is sure to go well. I must say that I thought Harry was a little more mad than usual

when he first told me about that money; but now I know you, I am very, very glad indeed, and very pleased that I could be of some little service to Mr. Roscorla for your sake."

The girl beside her did not understand; she looked up with wondering eyes.

"What money, Mrs. Trelyon?"

"I mean the money that Harry got for Mr. Roscorla—the money, you know, for those Jamaica estates; is it possible Mr. Roscorla did not tell you before he left?"

"I have not heard anything about it, Mrs. Trelyon, and I hope you will tell me at once," Wenna said, with some decision in her tone, but with a strange sinking at her heart.

"You don't know, then?" Mrs. Trelyon said, suddenly fearing she had been indiscreet. "Oh, it is nothing, a mere business arrangement. Of course, gentlemen don't care to have these things talked over. I hope you won't mention it, dear Miss Rosewarne; I really thought you might have overheard them speaking of the matter."

Wenna said nothing. The soft dark eyes looked a little troubled, but that was all. And presently, up came young Trelyon, full of good spirits, and noise, and bustle; and he drove his mother and Wenna before him into the house; and hurried up the servants, and would open the wine himself. His mother checked him for whistling at luncheon; his reply was to toss the leg of a fowl on to the hearthrug, where a small and shaggy terrier immediately began to worry it. He put the Angola cat on the table to see if it would eat some Cornish cream off his plate. His pigeons got to know of his being in the house, and came flying about the windows and walking jerkingly over the lawn; he threw up the windows and flung them a couple of handfuls of crumbs.

"Oh, Miss Wenna," said he, "would you like to see my tame fox? I am sure you would. Matthews, you cut round to the stables and tell old Luke to bring that fox here—off you go—leave the claret this side."

"But I do not wish to see the fox; I particularly dislike foxes," said Wenna with some asperity; and Matthews was recalled.

Master Harry grinned to himself; it was the first time he had been able to get her to speak to him. From the beginning of luncheon she had sat almost silent, observing his vagaries and listening to his random talk in silence; when she spoke it was always in answer to his mother. Very soon after luncheon she begged Mrs. Trelyon to excuse her going away; and then she went and put on her hat.

"I'll see you down to the inn," said Master Harry, when she came out to the hall door.

"Thank you, it is quite unnecessary," she said, somewhat coldly.

"Oh," said he, "you may be as ill-tempered as you please, but I shall conquer you by my extreme politeness."

At another time she would have laughed at the idea of this young gentleman complimenting himself on his politeness; now, as she walked quietly down the gravelled path to the gate, she was very grave, and, indeed, took no notice of his presence.

"Wenna," said he, after he had shut the gate, and rejoined her, "is it fair to make such a fuss about a chance word? I think you are very hard. I did not mean to offend you."

"You have not offended me, Mr. Trelyon."

"Then why do you look so—so uncomfortable?"

She made no answer.

"Now look here, do be reasonable. Are you vexed because I called you Wenna? Or is it because I spoke about singing in the choir?"

"No," she said, simply, "I was not thinking of anything of that kind; and I am not vexed."

"Then what is the matter?"

For another second or two she was silent, apparently from irresolution; then she suddenly stopped in the middle of the road, and confronted him.

"Mr. Trelyon," she said, "is it true that you have given Mr. Roscorla money, and on my account?"

"No, it is not," he said, considerably startled by her tone. "I lent him some money—the money he wanted to take to Jamaica."

"And what business had you to do anything of the sort?" she demanded, with the shame in her heart lending a strangely unusual sharpness to her voice.

"Well," said the young man, quite humbly, "I thought it would be a service both to you and to him; and that there was no harm in it. If he succeeds he will pay me back. It was precious silly of him to tell you anything about it; but still, Miss Wenna—you must see—now don't be unreasonable—what harm could there be in it?"

She stood before him, her eyes cast down, her pale face a trifle flushed, and her hands clasped tight.

"How much was it?" she said in a low voice.

"Now, now, now," he answered her, in a soothing way, "don't you make a fuss about it; it is a business transaction; men often lend money to each other—what a fool he must have been to have—I beg your pardon——" and then he stopped, frowning at his own stupidity.

"How much was it?"

"Well, if you must know, five thousand pounds."

"Five thousand pounds?" she repeated absently. "I am sure my father has not so much money. But I will bid you good-bye now, Mr. Trelyon."

And she held out her hand.

"Mayn't I walk down with you to the village?" said he, looking rather crestfallen.

"No, thank you," she said quietly, and then she went away.

Well, he stood looking after her for a few seconds. Now that her back was turned to him and she was going away, there was no longer any brightness in the fresh spring woods, nor any colour in the clear skies overhead. She had been hard on him, he felt; and yet there was no anger or impatience in his heart, only a vague regret that somehow he had wounded her, and that they had ceased to be good friends. He stood so for a minute or two, and then he suddenly set out to overtake her. She turned slightly just as he got up.

"Miss Wenna," he said, rather shamefacedly, "I forgot to ask you whether you would mind calling in at Mrs. Luke's as you go by. There is a basket of primroses there for you. I set the children to gather them about an hour ago; I thought you would like them."

She said she would; and then he raised his cap—looked at her just for one moment—and turned and walked away.

Wenna called for the basket, and a very fine basket of flowers it was, for Mrs. Luke said that Master Harry had given the children sixpence apiece to gather the finest primroses they could get, and everyone knows what Cornish primroses are. Wenna took away the flowers, not paying any particular attention to them; and it was only when she got into her own room—and when she felt very much inclined to sit down and cry—that she noticed lying among the large and pale yellow primroses a bit of another flower which one of the children had, doubtless, placed there. It was merely a stalk of the small pink-flowered saxifrage, common in cottagers' gardens, and called in some places London-pride. In other parts of the country they tenderly call it *None-so-pretty*.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONFIDENCES.

MEANWHILE, during the time that Wenna Rosewarne had been up at Trelyon Hall, her place in the inn had been occupied by a very handsome, self-willed, and gay-hearted young lady, who had endeavoured, after a somewhat wild fashion, to fulfil her sister's duties. She had gone singing through the house to see that the maids had put the rooms right; she had had a fight with Jennifer about certain jellies; she had petted her mother and teased her father into a good humour; after which she went outside in her smart print dress and bright ribbons, and sat down on the bench of black oak at the door. She formed part of a pretty picture there; the bright April day was still shining all around, on the plashing water of the mill, on the pigeons standing on the roof, and on the hills beyond the harbour, which were yellow with masses of gorse.

"And now," said this young lady to herself, "the question is, can I become a villain? If I could only get one of the persons out of a story to tell me how they managed to do it successfully, how fine that would be! Here is the letter in my pocket—of course it has his address in it. I burn the letter. Wenna doesn't write to him. He gets angry, and writes again and again. I burn

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each one as it comes ; then he becomes indignant, and will write no more. He thinks she has forsaken him, and he uses naughty words, and pretends to be well rid of her. She is troubled and astonished for a time ; then her pride is touched, and she won't mention his name. In the end, of course, she marries a handsome young gentleman, who is really in love with her, and they are so very happy—oh, it is delightful to think of it !—and then a long time after, the other one comes home, and they all find out the villain—that's me—but they are all quite pleased with the way it has ended, and they forgive me. How clever they are in stories to be able to do that ! "

She took a letter out of her pocket, and furtively looked at it. It bore a foreign postmark. She glanced round to see that no one had observed her, and concealed it again.

" To burn this one is easy. But old Malachi mightn't always let me rummage his bag ; and a single one getting into Wenna's hands would spoil the whole thing. Besides, if Wenna did not write out to Jamaica he would write home to some of his friends—some of those nice, cautious, inquiring clergymen, no doubt, about the Hall—to let him know ; and then there would be a pretty squabble. I never noticed how the villains in the stories managed that ; I suppose there were no clever clergymen about, and no ill-tempered old postman like Malachi Lean. And oh ! I should like to see what he says—he will make such beautiful speeches about absence, and trust, and all that ; and he will throw himself on her mercy, and he will remind her of her engagement ring."

Mabyn laughed to herself—a quiet, triumphant laugh. Whenever she was very down-hearted about her sister's affairs, she used to look at the gipsy-ring of emeralds, and repeat to herself—

" Oh, green's forsaken
And yellow's forsworn;
And blue is the sweetest
Colour that's worn ! "

—and on this occasion she reflected that perhaps, after all, it was scarcely worth while for her to become a villain in order to secure a result that had already been ordained by Fate.

" Mab," said her father, coming out to interrupt her

reflections, and speaking in a peevishly indolent voice ; " where's Wenna ? I want her to write some letters and go over to the Annots'. Of course your mother's ill again, and can't do anything."

" Can't I write the letters ? " said Mabyn.

" You ? you're only fit to go capering about a dancing academy. I want Wenna."

" Well, I think you might let her have one morning to herself," Mabyn said, with some sharpness. " She doesn't take many holidays. She's always doing other people's work, and when they're quite able to do it for themselves."

Mabyn's father was quite insensible to the sarcasm ; he said, in a complaining way—

" Yes, that's sure enough ; she's always meddling in other people's affairs, and they don't thank her for it. And a nice thing she's done with those Annots. Why, that young Hannabel fellow was quite content to mind his own bit of farm like any one else, until she put it into his head to get a spring-cart, and drive all the way down to Devonport with his poultry ; and now she's led him on so that he buys up the fish, and the poultry, and eggs, and butter and things from all the folks about him, to sell at Devonport ; and of course they're raising their prices, and they'll scarcely deal with you except as a favour, they've got so precious independent. And now he's come to the Tregear farm, and if Wenna doesn't put in a word they'll be contracting with him for the whole of the summer. There's one blessed mercy, when she gets married she'll have to stop that nonsense, and have to mind her own business."

" Yes," said Mabyn, with some promptitude, " and she has been left to mind her own business pretty well of late."

" What's the matter with you, Mabyn ? " her father carelessly asked, noticing at length the peculiarity of her tone.

" Why," she said, indignantly, " you and mother had no right to let her go and engage herself to that man. You ought to have interfered. She's not fit to act for herself ; she let herself be coaxed over ; and you'll be sorry for it some day."

" Hold your tongue, child," her father said, " and don't talk about things you can't understand. A lot of experience you have had ! If Wenna didn't want to marry

him, she could have said so ; if she doesn't want to marry him now, she has only to say so. What harm can there be in that ? "

" Oh, yes ; it's all very simple," the girl said to herself, as she rose and went away ; " very simple to say she can do what she pleases ; but she can't ; and she should never have been allowed to put herself in such a position, for she will find it out afterwards if she doesn't now. It seems to me there is nobody at all who cares about Wenna except me ; and she thinks I am a child, and pays no heed to me."

Wenna came in ; Mabyn heard her go upstairs to her own room, and followed her.

" Oh, Wenna, who gave you this beautiful basket of primroses ? " she cried, guessing instantly who the donor was. " It is such a pretty present to give to any one ! "

" Mrs. Luke's children gathered them," Wenna said, coldly.

" Oh, indeed ; where did the basket come from ? "

" Mr. Trelyon asked them to gather me the primroses," Wenna said, impatiently. " I suppose he got the basket."

" Then it is his present ? " Mabyn cried. " Oh, how kind of him ! And see, Wenna—don't you see what he has put in among the primroses ? Look, Wenna—it is a bit of *None-so-pretty !* Oh, Wenna, that is a message to you ! "

" Mabyn," her sister said, with a severity that was seldom in her voice, " you will make me vexed with you if you talk such nonsense. He would not dare to do such a thing—why, the absurdity of it ! And I am not at all well-disposed towards Mr. Trelyon at this moment."

" I don't see why he shouldn't," said her sister humbly, and yet with a little inadvertent toss of the head. " Everyone knows you are pretty except yourself ; and there can be no harm in a young man telling you so. He is not a greater fool than anybody else. He has got eyes. He knows that everyone is in love with you—everyone that is *now* in Eglosilyan, anyway. He is a very gentlemanly young man. He is a great friend to you. I don't see why you should treat him so."

Mabyn began to move about the room, as she generally

did when she was a trifle excited, and indignant, and inclined to tears.

" There is no one thinks so highly of you as he does. He is more respectful to you than to all the people in the world. I think it is very hard and unkind of you."

" But, Mabyn, what have I done ? " her sister demanded.

" You won't believe he sent you that piece of *None-so-pretty*. You won't take the least notice of his friendliness to you. You said you were vexed with him."

" Well, I have reason to be vexed with him," Wenna said, and would willingly have left the matter there.

But her sister was not to be put off. She coaxed for a few minutes ; then became petulant, and affected to be deeply hurt ; then assumed an air of authority, and said that she insisted on being told. And at last the whole truth came out. Mr. Trelyon had been lending to Mr. Roscorla a sum of money which he had no business to lend. Mr. Trelyon had somehow mixed her up with the matter, under the impression that he was conferring a service on her. Mr. Trelyon had concealed the whole transaction from her, and, of course, Mr. Roscorla was silent also. And obviously Mr. Trelyon was responsible for Mr. Roscorla going away from his native land to face all manner of perils, discomforts, and anxieties ; for without that fatal sum of money he might still have been living in peace and contentment up at Basset Cottage.

" Well, Wenna," said the younger sister candidly, and with a resigned air, " I never knew you so unreasonable before. All you seem able to do is to invent reasons for disliking Mr. Trelyon ; and I have no doubt you used him shamefully when you saw him this afternoon. You are all affection and kindness to people who have no claim on you —to brats in cottages, and old women ; but you are very hard on people who l——who respect you. And then," added Miss Mabyn, drawing herself up, " if I were to tell you how the story of that money strikes me, would it surprise you ? Who asked Mr. Roscorla to have the money and to go away ? Not Mr. Trelyon, I am sure. Who concealed it ? Whose place was it to come and tell you—you who are engaged to him ? If it comes to that, I'll tell you what I believe, and it is that Mr. Roscorla went

and made use of the regard that Harry Trelyon has for you to get the money. There!"

Mabyn uttered the last words with an air which said, "*I will speak out this time, if I die for it.*" But the effect on her sister was strange. Of course, she expected Wenna to rise up indignantly and protest against her speaking of Mr. Roscorla in such a way. She was ready to brave her wrath. She fully thought they were entering on the deadliest quarrel that had ever occurred between them.

But whether it was that Wenna was too much grieved to care what her sister said, or whether it was that these frank accusations touched some secret consciousness in her own heart, the elder sister remained strangely silent, her eyes cast down. Mabyn looked at her, wondering why she did not get up in a rage: Wenna was stealthily crying. And then, of course, the younger sister's arms were round her in a minute, and there was a great deal of petting and soothing and tender phrases; finally Mabyn, not knowing otherwise how to atone for her indiscretion, pulled out Mr. Roscorla's letter, put it in Wenna's hand, and went away.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE FIRST MESSAGE HOME.

WENNA was glad to have the letter at that moment. She had been distracted by all this affair of the money; she had been troubled and angry—with whom she could scarcely tell; but here was something that recalled her to a sense of her duty. She opened it, resolved to accept its counsels and commands with all due meekness. For such kindness as he might choose to show, she would be grateful; and she would go back to her ordinary work more composed and confident, knowing that, whatever business affairs Mr. Roscorla might transact, her concern was only to remain loyal to the promises she had made, and to the trust which he reposed in her.

And the letter was in reality a kind and friendly letter, written with a sort of good humour that did not wholly conceal a certain pathetic confession of distance and loneliness. It gave her a brief description of the voyage; of

the look of the place at which he landed; of his meeting with his friends; and then of the manner in which he would have to spend his time while he remained in the island.

"My head is rather in a whirl as yet," he wrote; "and I can't sit down and look at the simple facts of the case. Every one knows how brief, and ordinary, and commonplace a thing a voyage from England to the West Indies is; and of course, looking at a map, I should consider myself as only having run out here for a little trip. And yet my memory is full of the long nights and of the early mornings, and of the immeasurable seas that we were always leaving behind; so that now I feel as if England were away in some other planet altogether, that I should never return to. It seems years since I left you at Launceston Station; when I look back to it I look through long days and nights of water, and nothing but water; and it seems as if it must be years and years before I could see an English harbour again, all masts, and smoke, and hurry, with posters up on the walls, and cabs in the streets, and somewhere or other a railway-station where you know you can take your ticket for Cornwall, and get into your old ways again. But I am not going to give way to home-sickness; indeed, my dear Wenna, you need not fear that; for, from all I can make out, I shall have plenty to look after, and quite enough to keep me from mooning and dreaming. At present I cannot tell you how things are likely to turn out; but the people I have seen this morning are hopeful; and I am inclined to be hopeful myself, perhaps because the voyage has agreed with me very well, and has wonderfully improved my spirits. So I mean to set to work in good earnest, with the assurance that you are not indifferent as to the results of it; and then some day, when we are both enjoying these, you won't be sorry that I went away from you for a time. Already I have been speculating on all that we might do if this venture turns out well; for of course there is no necessity why you should be mewed up in Eglosilyan all your life, instead of enjoying change of scene and of interests. These are castles in the air, you will say; but they naturally arise in the mind when you are in buoyant health and spirits; and

I hope, if I return to England in the same mood, you will become infected with my confidence, and add some gaiety to the quiet serenity of your life."

Wenna rather hurried over this passage; the notion that she might be enabled to play the part of a fine lady by means of the money which Harry Trelyon had lent to her betrothed was not grateful to her.

"I wish," the letter continued, "that you had been looking less grave when you had your portrait taken. Many a time, on the voyage out, I used to fix my eyes on it, and try to imagine I was looking at it in my own room at home, and that you were half a mile or so away from me, down at the inn in the valley. But these efforts were not successful, I must own; for there was not much of the quiet of Eglosilyan around you when the men were tramping on the deck overhead, and the water hissing outside, and the engines throbbing. And when I used to take out your photograph on deck, in some quiet corner, I used to say to myself, 'Now I shall see Wenna just as she is to-day; and I shall know she has gone in to have a chat with the miller's children; or she is reading by herself out at the edge of Black Cliff; or she is contentedly sewing in her little parlour.' Well, to tell you the truth, Wenna, I got vexed with your photograph; I never did think it was very good—now I consider it bad. Why, I think of you as I have seen you running about the cliffs with Mabyn, or romping with small children at home; and I see your face all light and laughter, with your tongue just a little too ready to say saucy things when an old fogy like myself would have liked you to take care; but here it is always the same face—sad, serious, and preoccupied. What were you thinking of when it was taken? I suppose some of your *protégés* in the village had got into mischief."

"Wenna, are you here?" said her father, opening the door of her room. "Why didn't Mabyn tell me? And a nice thing you've let us in for, by getting young Annot to start that business of going to Devonport. He's gone to Tregear now."

"I know," Wenna said, calmly.

"You know? And don't you understand what an inconvenience it will be to us; for of course your mother

can't look after these things; and she'll expect me to go and buy poultry and eggs for her."

"Oh no," Wenna said, "all that is arranged. I settled it both with the Annots and the Tregear folks six weeks ago. We are to have whatever we want just as hitherto; and Hannabel Annot will take the rest."

"I want you to write some letters," said Mr. Rosewarne, disappointed of his grumble.

"Very well," said Wenna; and she rose and followed her father.

They were met in the passage by Mabyn.

"Where are you going, Wenna?"

"She is going to write some things for me," said her father, impatient of interference. "Get out of the way, Mab."

"Have you read that letter, Wenna? No, you have not. Why, father, don't you know she has got a letter from Mr. Roscorla, and you haven't given her time to read it? She must go back instantly. Your letters can wait—or I'll write them. Come along, Wenna!"

Wenna laughed, and stood uncertain. Her father frowned at first, but thought better of what he was about to say, and only remarked as he shrugged his shoulders and passed on—

"Some day or other, my young lady, I shall have to cuff your ears. Your temper is getting to be just a little too much for me; and as for the man who may marry you, God help him!"

Mabyn carried her sister back in triumph to her own room, went inside with her, locked the door, and sat down by the window.

"I shall wait until you have finished," she said; and Wenna, who was a little surprised that Mabyn should have been so anxious about the reading of a letter from Mr. Roscorla, took out the document again, and opened it, and continued her perusal.

"And now, Wenna," the letter ran, "I must finish; for there are two gentlemen coming to call on me directly. Somehow I feel as I felt on sending you the first letter I ever sent you—that I have said nothing of what I should like to say. You might think me anxious, morbid, un-

reasonable, if I told you all the things that have occupied my mind of late with regard to you; and yet sometimes a little restlessness creeps in that I can't quite get rid of. It is through no want of trust in you, my dear Wenna—I know your sincerity and high principle too well for that. To put the matter bluntly, I know you will keep faith with me; and that when I get back to England, in good luck, or in ill luck, you will be there to meet me, and ready to share whatever fate fortune may have brought us both. But sometimes, to tell you the truth, I begin to think of your isolated position; and of the possibility of your having doubts which you can't express to any one, and which I, being so far away from you, cannot attempt to remove. I know how the heart may be troubled in absence—mistaking its own sensations, and fancying that what is in reality a longing to see some one is the beginning of some vague dissatisfaction with the relations existing between you. Think of that, dear Wenna. If you are troubled or doubtful, put it down to the fact that I am not with you to give you courage and hope. A girl is indeed to be pitied at such a time; she hesitates to confess to herself that she has doubts; and she is ashamed to ask counsel of her relatives. Happily, however, you have multifarious duties which will in great measure keep you from brooding; and I hope you will remember your promise to give me a full, true, and particular account of all that is happening in Eglosilyan. You cannot tell how interesting the merest trifles will be to me. They will help me to make pictures of you and all your surroundings; and already, at this great distance, I seem to feel the need of some such spur to the imagination. As I say, I cannot appeal to your portrait—there is no life in it; but there is life in my mental portrait of you—life and happiness, and even the sound of your laughing. Tell me all about Mabyn, who I think is rather jealous of me; and about your mother and father, and Jennifer, and everybody. Have you any people staying at the inn yet; or only chance-comers? Have the Trelyons returned?—and has that wild schoolboy succeeded yet in riding his horse over a cliff?"

And so, with some few affectionate phrases, the letter ended.

"Well?" said Mabyn, coming back from the window.

"Yes, he is quite well," Wenna said, with her eyes grown distant, as though she were looking at some of the scenes he had been describing.

"I did not ask if he was well," Mabyn said. "I asked what you thought of the letter. Does he say anything about the borrowing of the money?"

"No, he does not."

"Very well, then," Mabyn said, sharply. "And you blame Mr. Trelyon for not telling you. Does a gentleman tell anybody when he lends money? No; but a gentleman might have told you that he had borrowed money from a friend of yours, who lent it because of you. But there's nothing of that in the letter—of course not—only appeals to high moral principles, I suppose; and a sort of going down on his knees to you that you mayn't withdraw from a bargain he swindled you into——"

"Mabyn, I won't hear another word! This is really most insolent. You may say of me what you please; but it is most cruel—it is most unworthy of you, Mabyn—to say such things of any one who cannot defend himself. And I won't listen to them, Mabyn—let me say that once and for all."

"Very well, Wenna," the younger sister said, with two big tears rising to her eyes, as she rose and went to the door. "You can quarrel with me if you please; but I've told you the truth; and there's those who love you too well to see you made unhappy; but I suppose I am to say nothing more——"

And she went; and Wenna sat down by the window, thinking, with a sigh, that it seemed her fate to make everybody miserable. She remained there for a long time with the letter in her hand; and sometimes she looked at it; but did not care to read it over again. The knowledge that she had it was something of a relief; she would use it as a talisman to dispel doubts and cares when these came into her mind; but she would wait until the necessity arose. She had one long and argumentative letter to which she in secret resorted whenever she wished to have the assurance that her acceptance of Mr. Roscorla had been the right thing to do; here was a letter which would exorcise all

anxious surmises as to the future which might creep in upon her during the wakeful hours of the night. She would put them both carefully into her drawer, even as she put a bit of camphor there to keep away moths.

So she rose, with saddened eyes, and yet with something of a lighter heart; and in passing by the side-table she stopped—perhaps by inadvertence—to look at the basket of primroses which Harry Trelyon had sent her. She seemed surprised. Apparently missing something, she looked around and on the floor, to see that it had not fallen; and then she said to herself, "I suppose Mabyn has taken it for her hair."

CHAPTER XX.

TINTAGEL'S WALLS.

WHAT was the matter with Harry Trelyon? His mother could not make out; and there never had been much confidence between them, so that she did not care to ask. But she watched; and she saw that he had, for the time at least, forsaken his accustomed haunts and ways, and become gloomy, silent, and self-possessed. Dick was left neglected in the stables; you no longer heard his rapid clatter along the highway, with the not over-melodious voice of his master singing "The Men of merry, merry England" or "The Young Chevalier." The long and slender fishing-rod remained on the pegs in the hall, although you could hear the flop of the small burn trout of an evening when the flies were thick over the stream. The dogs were deprived of their accustomed runs; the horses had to be taken out for exercise by the groom; and the various and innumerable animals about the place missed their doses of alternate petting and teasing, all because Master Harry had chosen to shut himself up in his study.

The mother of the young man very soon discovered that her son was not devoting his hours of seclusion in that extraordinary museum of natural history to making trout-flies, stuffing birds, and arranging pinned butterflies in cases, as was his custom. These were not the occupations which now

kept Harry Trelyon up half the night. When she went in of a morning, before he was up, she found that he had been covering whole sheets of paper with careful copying out of passages taken at random from the volumes beside him. A Latin Grammar was ordinarily on the table—a book which the young gentleman had brought back from school pretty well free from thumb-marks. Occasionally a fencing foil lay among these evidences of study; while the small aquaria, the cases of stuffed animals with fancy backgrounds, and the numerous birdcages, had been thrust aside to give fair elbow-room. "Perhaps," said Mrs. Trelyon to herself, with much satisfaction, "perhaps, after all, that good little girl has given him a hint about Parliament, and he is preparing himself."

A few days of this seclusion, however, began to make the mother anxious; and so, one morning, she went into his room. He hastily turned over the sheet of paper on which he had been writing; then he looked up, not too well pleased.

"Harry, why do you stay indoors on such a beautiful morning? It is quite like summer."

"Yes, I know," he said indifferently. "I suppose we shall soon have a batch of parsons here: summer always brings them. They come out with the hot weather—like bluebottles."

Mrs. Trelyon was disappointed; she thought Wenna Rosewarne had cured him of his insane dislike to clergymen—indeed, for many a day gone by he had kept respectfully silent on the subject.

"But we shall not ask them to come if you'd rather not," she said, wishing to do all she could to encourage the reformation of his ways. "I think Mr. Barnes promised to visit us early in May; but he is only one."

"And one is worse than a dozen. When there's a lot you can leave 'em to fight it out among themselves. But one—to have one stalking about an empty house, like a ghost dipped in ink! Why can't you ask anybody but clergymen, mother? There are whole lots of people would like to run down from London for a fortnight before getting into the thick of the season—there's the Pomeroy girls as good as offered to come."

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"But they can't come by themselves," Mrs. Trelyon said, with a feeble protest.

"Oh yes, they can; they're ugly enough to be safe anywhere. And why don't you get Juliott up? She'll be glad to get away from that old curmudgeon for a week. And you ought to ask the Trewhellas, mother and daughter, to dinner—that old fellow is not half a bad sort of fellow, although he's a clergyman."

"Harry," said his mother, interrupting him, "I'll fill the house, if that will please you; and you shall ask just whomsoever you please."

"All right," said he; "the place wants waking up."

"And then," said the mother, wishing to be still more gracious, "you might ask Miss Rosewarne to dine with us—she might come well enough, although Mr. Roscorla is not here."

A sort of gloom fell again over the young man's face.

"I can't ask her: you may if you like."

Mrs. Trelyon stared.

"What's the matter, Harry? Have you and she quarrelled? Why, I was going to ask you, if you were down in the village to-day, to say that I should like to see her."

"And how could I take such a message?" the young man said, rather warmly. "I don't think the girl should be ordered up to see you as if you were conferring a favour on her by joining in this scheme. She's very hard-worked; you have got plenty of time; you ought to call on her, and study her convenience, instead of making her trot all the way up here whenever you want to talk to her."

The pale and gentle woman was anxious not to give way to petulance just then.

"Well, you are quite right, Harry; it was thoughtless of me. I should like to go down and call on her this morning; but I have sent Jakes over to the blacksmith's, and I am afraid of that new lad."

"Oh, I will drive you down to the inn! I suppose among them they can put the horses to the waggonette," the young man said; and then Mrs. Trelyon went off to get ready.

It was a beautiful, fresh morning; the far-off line of the sea still and blue; the sunlight lighting up the wonderful

masses of primroses along the tall banks; the air sweet with the resinous odour of the gorse. Mrs. Trelyon looked with a gentle and childlike pleasure on all these things, and was fairly inclined to be friendly with the young gentleman beside her. But he was more than ordinarily silent and morose.

He spoke scarcely a word to her as the carriage rolled along the silent highways. He drove rapidly and carelessly down the steep thoroughfare of Eglosilyan, although there were plenty of loose stones about. Then he pulled sharply up in front of the inn; and George Rosewarne appeared.

"Mr. Rosewarne, let me introduce you to my mother. She wants to see Miss Wenna for a few moments, if she is not engaged."

Mr. Rosewarne took off his cap, assisted Mrs. Trelyon to alight, and then showed her the way into the house.

"Won't you come in, Harry?" his mother said.

"No."

A man had come out to the horses' heads.

"You leave 'em alone," said the young gentleman. "I shan't get down."

Mabyn came out, her bright young face full of welcome.

"How do you do, Mabyn?" he said, without offering to shake hands.

"Won't you come in for a minute?" she said, rather surprised.

"No, thank you. Don't you stay out in the cold; you've got nothing round your neck."

Mabyn went away without saying a word, but thinking that the coolness of the air was much less apparent than that of his manner and speech.

Being at length left to himself, he turned his attention to the horses before him; and eventually, to pass the time, took out his pocket-handkerchief and began to polish the silver on the handle of the whip. He was disturbed in this peaceful occupation by a very timid voice, which said, "Mr. Trelyon."

He turned round and found that Wenna's wistful face was looking up to him, with a look in it partly of friendliness, and partly of anxiety and entreaty.

"Mr. Trelyon," she said, with her eyes cast down, "I

think you are offended with me. I am very sorry. I beg your forgiveness."

The reins were fastened up in a minute, and he was down in the road beside her.

"Now look here, Wenna," he said. "What could you mean by treating me so unfairly? I don't mean in being vexed with me; but in shunting me off, as it were, instead of having it out at once. I don't think it was fair."

"I am very sorry," she said. "I think I was wrong; but you don't know what a girl feels about such things. Will you come into the inn?"

"And leave my horses? No," he said, good-naturedly. "But as soon as I can get that fellow out, I will; so you go in at once, and I'll follow you directly. And mind, Wenna, don't you be so silly again; or you and I may have a real quarrel. And I know that would break your heart."

The old familiar smile lit up her face again as she turned and went indoors; while he proceeded to summon an ostler by shouting his name at the pitch of his voice.

Meantime the small party of women assembled in the parlour were a trifle embarrassed; it was the first occasion on which the great lady of the neighbourhood had honoured the inn with a visit. She herself was merely quiet, gentle, and pleased; but Mrs. Rosewarne, with her fine eyes and her sensitive face quickened by the novel excitement, was all anxiety to amuse, and interest, and propitiate her distinguished guest. Mabyn, too, was rather shy and embarrassed; she said things hastily, and then seemed afraid of her interference. Wenna was scarcely at her ease, because she saw that her mother and sister were not; and she was very anxious, moreover, that these two should think well of Mrs. Trelyon and be disposed to like her.

The sudden appearance of a man, with a man's rough ways and loud voice, seemed to shake the feminine elements better together, and to clear the air of timid apprehensions and cautions. Harry Trelyon came into the room with quite a marked freshness and good-nature on his face. His mother was surprised: what had completely changed his manner in a couple of minutes?

"How are you, Mrs. Rosewarne?" he cried, in his off-hand fashion. "You oughtn't to be indoors on such a

morning, or we'll never get you well, you know; and the doctor will be sending you to Penzance or Devonport for a change. Well, Mabyn, have you convinced anybody yet that your farm labourers with their twelve shillings a week are better off than the slate-workers with their eighteen? You'd better take your sister's opinion on that point, and don't squabble with me. Mother, what's the use of sitting here? You bring Miss Wenna with you into the waggonette, and talk to her there about all your business affairs, and I'll take you for a drive. Come along! And, of course, I want somebody with me: will you come, Mrs. Rosewarne, or will Mabyn? You can't?—then Mabyn must. Go along, Mabyn, and put your best hat on, and make yourself uncommonly smart, and you shall be allowed to sit next the driver—that's me!"

And indeed he bundled the whole of them about until they were seated in the waggonette just as he had indicated; and away they went from the inn-door.

"And you think you are coming back in half an hour?" he said to his companion, who was very pleased and very proud to occupy such a place. "Oh no, you're not. You're a young and simple thing, Mabyn. These two behind us will go on talking now for any time about yards of calico, and crochet-needles, and twopenny subscriptions; while you and I, don't you see, are quietly driving them over to Tintagel——"

"Oh, Mr. Trelyon!" said Mabyn.

"You keep quiet. That isn't the half of what's going to befall you. I shall put up the horses at the inn; and I mean to take you all down to the beach for a scramble to improve your appetite; and at the said inn you shall have luncheon with me, if you're all very good and behave yourselves. Then we shall drive back just when we particularly please. Do you like the picture?"

"It is delightful—oh, I am sure Wenna will enjoy it!" Mabyn said. "But don't you think, Mr. Trelyon, that you might ask her to sit here? One sees better here than sitting sideways in a waggonette."

"They have their business affairs to settle."

"Yes," said Mabyn, petulantly, "that is what every one says: nobody expects Wenna ever to have a moment's

enjoyment to herself! Oh! here is old Uncle Cornish—he's a great friend of Wenna's—he will be dreadfully hurt if she passes him without saying a word."

"Then we must pull up and address Uncle Cornish. I believe he used to be the most thieving old ruffian of a poacher in this county."

There was a hale old man, of seventy or so, seated on a low wall in front of one of the gardens; his face shaded from the sunlight by a broad hat; his lean grey hands employed in buckling up the leather leggings that encased his spare calves. He got up when the horses stopped, and looked in rather a dazed fashion at the carriage.

"How do you do this morning, Mr. Cornish?" Wenna said.

"Why, now, to be sure!" the old man said, as if reproaching his own imperfect vision. "'Tis a fine marnin, Miss Wenna, and yü be agwoin for a drive."

"And how is your daughter-in-law, Mr. Cornish? Has she sold the pig yet?"

"Naw, she hasn't sold the peg. If yü be agwoin thrü Trevalga, Miss Wenna, just yü stop and have a look at that peg; yü'll be mazed to see en; 'tis many a year agone sence there has been such a peg by me. And perhaps yü'd take the laste bit o' refrashment, Miss Wenna, as yü go by; Jane would get yü a coop o' tay to once."

"Thank you, Mr. Cornish, I'll look in and see the pig some other time; to-day we shan't be going as far as Trevalga."

"Oh, won't you?" said Master Harry, in a low voice, as he drove on. "You'll be in Trevalga before you know where you are."

Which was literally the case. Wenna was so much engaged in her talk with Mrs. Trelyon that she did not notice how far away they were getting from Eglosilyan. But Mabyn and her companion knew. They were now on the high uplands by the coast, driving between banks which were starred with primroses, and stitchwort, and red dead-nettle, and a dozen other bright and tender-hued firstlings of the year. The sun was warm on the hedges and the fields, but a cool breeze blew about these lofty heights, and stirred Mabyn's splendid masses of hair as they drove rapidly along. Far over on their right, beyond the majestic

wall of cliff, lay the great blue plain of the sea; and there stood the bold brown masses of the Sisters Rocks, with a circle of white foam around their base. As they looked down into the south, the white light was so fierce that they could but faintly discern objects through it; but here and there they caught a glimpse of a square church tower, or of a few rude cottages clustered on the high plain, and these seemed to be of a transparent grey in the blinding glare of the sun.

Then suddenly in front of them they found a deep chasm, with the white road leading down into its cool shadows. There was the channel of a stream, with the rocks looking purple amid the bushes; here were rich meadows, with cattle standing deep in the grass and the daisies; and over there, on the other side, a strip of forest, with the sunlight shining along one side of the tall and dark green pines. As they drove down into this place, which is called the Rocky Valley, a magpie rose from one of the fields and flew up into the firs.

"That is sorrow," said Mabyn.

Another one rose and flew up to the same spot.

"And that is joy," she said, with her face brightening.

"Oh, but I saw another as we came to the brow of the hill, and that means a marriage!" her companion remarked to her.

"Oh no!" she said, quite eagerly. "I am sure there was no third one. I am certain there were only two. I am quite positive we only saw two."

"But why should you be so anxious?" Harry Trelyon said. "You know you ought to be looking forward to a marriage, and that is always a happy thing. Are you envious, Mabyn?"

The girl was silent for a moment or two. Then she said, with a sudden bitterness in her tone—

"Isn't it a fearful thing to have to be civil to people whom you hate? Isn't it?—when they come and establish a claim on you through some one you care for. You look at them—yes, you can look at them—and you've got to see them kiss some one that you love; and you wonder she doesn't rush away for a bit of caustic and cauterize the place, as you do when a mad dog bites you."

"Mabyn," said the young man beside her, "you are a most unchristian sort of person this morning. Who is it whom you hate in such a fashion? Will you take the reins while I walk up the hill?"

Mabyn's little burst of passion still burned in her cheeks, and gave a proud and angry look to her mouth; but she took the reins all the same; and her companion leaped to the ground. The banks on each side of the road going up this hill were tall and steep; here and there great masses of wild flowers were scattered among the grass and the gorse. From time to time he stooped and picked up a handful; until, when they had reached the high and level country again, he had brought together a very pretty bouquet of wild blossoms. When he got into his seat and took the reins, he carelessly gave the bouquet to Mabyn.

"Oh, how delightful!" she said; and then she turned round. "Wenna, are you very much engaged? Look at the charming bouquet Mr. Trelyon has gathered for you."

Wenna's quiet face flushed with pleasure when she took the flowers; and Mrs. Trelyon looked pleased, and said they were very pretty. She evidently thought that her son was greatly improved in his manners when he condescended to gather flowers to present to a girl. Nay, was he not at this moment devoting a whole morning of his precious time to the unaccustomed task of taking ladies for a drive? Mrs. Trelyon regarded Wenna with a friendly look, and began to take a greater liking than ever to that sensitive and expressive face, and to the quiet and earnest eyes.

"But, Mr. Trelyon," said Wenna, looking round, "hadn't we better turn? We shall be at Trevenna directly."

"Yes, you are quite right," said Master Harry. "You will be at Trevenna directly, and you are likely to be there for some time. For Mabyn and I have resolved to have luncheon there; and we are going down to Tintagel; and we shall most likely climb to King Arthur's Castle. Have you any objection?"

Wenna had none. The drive through the cool and bright day had braced up her spirits. She was glad to know that everything looked promising about this scheme

of hers. So she willingly surrendered herself to the holiday; and in due time they drove into the odd and remote little village, and pulled up in front of the inn.

As soon as the ostler had come to the horses' heads, the young gentleman who had been driving jumped down and assisted his three companions to alight; then he led the way into the inn. In the doorway stood a stranger—probably a commercial traveller—who, with his hands in his pockets, his legs apart, and a cigar in his mouth, had been visiting those three ladies with a very hearty stare as they got out of the carriage. Moreover, when they came to the doorway he did not budge an inch, nor did he take his cigar from his mouth; and so, as it had never been Harry Trelyon's fashion to sidle past any one, that young gentleman made straight for the middle of the passage, keeping his shoulders very square. The consequence was a collision. The imperturbable person with his hands in his pockets was sent staggering against the wall, while his cigar dropped on the stone.

"What the devil——!" he was beginning to say, when Trelyon got the three women past him and into the small parlour; then he went back.

"Did you wish to speak to me, sir? No, you didn't—I perceive you are a prudent person. Next time ladies pass you, you'd better take your cigar out of your mouth, or somebody'll destroy that two-pennyworth of tobacco for you. Good-morning."

Then he returned to the little parlour, to which a waitress had been summoned.

"Now, Jinny, pull yourself together and let's have something nice for luncheon—in an hour's time, sharp—you will, won't you? And how about that Sillery with the blue star—not the stuff with the gold head that some abandoned ruffian in Plymouth brews in his back garden. Well, now, can't you speak?"

"Yes, sir," said the bewildered maid.

"That's a good thing—a very good thing," said he, putting the shawls together on a sofa. "Don't you forget how to speak, until you get married. And don't let anybody come into this room. And you can let my man have his dinner and a pint of beer—oh! I forgot, I'm my own

man this morning, so you needn't go asking for him. Now, will you remember all these things?"

"Yes, sir; but what would you like for luncheon?"

"My good girl, we should like a thousand things for luncheon such as Tintagel never saw; but what you've got to do is to give us the nicest things you've got; do you see? I leave it entirely in your hands. Come along, young people."

And so he bundled his charges out again into the main street of the village; and somehow it happened that Mabyn addressed a timid remark to Mrs. Trelyon, and that Mrs. Trelyon, in answering it, stopped for a moment; so that Master Harry was sent to Wenna's side, and these two led the way down the wide thoroughfare. There were few people visible in the old-fashioned place; here and there an aged crone came out to the door of one of the rude stone cottages to look at the strangers. Overhead the sky was veiled with a thin fleece of white cloud; but the light was intense for all that; and, indeed, the colours of the objects around seemed all the more clear and marked.

"Well, Miss Wenna," said the young man, gaily, "how long are we to remain good friends? What is the next fault you will have to find with me? Or have you discovered something wrong already?"

"Oh no!" she said, with a quiet smile. "I am very good friends with you this morning. You have pleased your mother very much by bringing her for this drive."

"Oh, nonsense!" he said. "She might have as many drives as she chose; but presently you'll find a lot o' those parsons back at the house; and she'll take to her white gowns again, and the playing of the organ all the day long, and all that sham stuff. I tell you what it is: she never seems alive—she never seems to take any interest in anything—unless you're with her. Now you will see how the novelty of this luncheon-party in an inn will amuse her: but do you think she would care for it if she and I were here alone?"

"Perhaps you never tried?" Miss Wenna said gently.

"Perhaps I knew she wouldn't come. However, don't let's have a fight. I mean to be very civil to you to-day—I do, really."

"I am so much obliged to you," she said meekly. "But pray don't give yourself unnecessary trouble."

"Oh," said he, "I'd always be civil to you if you would treat me decently. But you say far more rude things than I do—in that soft way, you know, that looks as if it were all silk and honey. I do think you've awfully little consideration for human failings. If one goes wrong in the least thing—even in one's spelling—you say something that sounds as pleasant as possible, and all the same it transfixes you just as you stick a pin through a beetle. You are very hard, you are—I mean with those who would like to be friends with you. When it's mere strangers, and cottagers, and people of that sort, who don't care a brass farthing about you, then I believe you're all gentleness and kindness; but to your real friends—the edge of a saw is smooth compared to you."

"Am I so very harsh to my friends?" the young lady said, in a resigned way.

"Oh, well," he said, with some compunction; "I don't quite say that; but you could be much more pleasant if you liked, and a little more charitable to their faults. You know there are some who would give a great deal to win your approval; and perhaps when you find fault they are so disappointed that they think your words are sharper than you mean; and sometimes they think you might give them credit for trying to please you, at least."

"And who are these persons?" Wenna asked, with another smile stealing over her face.

"Oh," said he, rather shamefacedly, "there's no need to explain anything to you. You always see it before one need put it in words."

Well, perhaps it was in his manner, or in the tone of his voice, that there was something which seemed at this moment to touch her deeply; for she half turned, and looked up at his face with her honest and earnest eyes, and said to him in a kindly fashion—

"Yes, I do know without your telling me; and it makes me happy to hear you talk so; and if I am unjust to you, you must not think it intentional. And I shall try not to be so in the future."

Mrs. Trelyon was regarding with much favour the two

young people walking on in front of her. Whatever pleased her son pleased her; and she was glad to see him at once so light-hearted and attentive and considerate. Those two were chatting to each other in the friendliest manner; sometimes they stopped to pick up wild flowers; they were as two children together, under the fair summer skies.

They went down and along a narrow valley, until they suddenly stood in front of the sea, the green waters of which were surging in upon a small and lonely creek. What strange light was this that fell from the white skies above, rendering all the objects around them sharp in outline and intense in colour? The beach before them seemed of a pale lilac, where the green waves broke in a semicircle of foam. On their right some masses of ruddy rock jutted out into the water; and there were huge black caverns into which the waves dashed and roared. On their left and far above them towered a great and isolated rock, its precipitous sides scored here and there with twisted lines of red and yellow quartz; and on the summit of this bold headland, amid the dark green of the seagrass, they could see the dusky ruins—the crumbling walls, and doorways, and battlements—of the castle that is named in all the stories of King Arthur and his knights. The bridge across to the mainland has, in the course of centuries, fallen away; but there, on the other side of the wide chasm, were the ruins of the other portions of the castle, scarcely to be distinguished in parts from the grass-grown rocks. How long ago was it since Sir Tristram rode out here to the end of the world, to find the beautiful Isoulte awaiting him—she whom he had brought from Ireland as an unwilling bride to the old King Mark? And what of the joyous company of knights and ladies who once held high sport in the courtyard there? Trelyon, glancing shyly at his companion, could see that her eyes seemed centuries away from him. She was quite unconscious of his covertly staring at her; for she was absently looking at the high and bare precipices, the deserted slopes of dark seagrass, and the lonely and crumbling ruins. She was wondering whether the ghosts of those vanished people ever returned to this desolate headland, where they would find the world scarcely altered since they had left it. Did they come at night, when the land was

dark, and when the only light over the sea was that of the stars? If one were to steal hither at night, alone, and to sit down by the shore, might not one see strange things far overhead, or hear some sound other than the falling of the waves?

"Miss Wenna," he said—and she started suddenly—"are you bold enough to climb up to the castle? I know my mother would rather stay here."

She went with him mechanically. She followed him up the rude steps cut in the steep slopes of slate, holding his hand where that was necessary; but her head was so full of dreams, that she answered him when he spoke only with a vague Yes or No. When they descended again, they found that Mabyn had taken Mrs. Trelyon down to the beach, and had inveigled her into entering a huge cavern, or rather a natural tunnel, that went right through underneath the promontory on which the castle is built. They were in a sort of green-hued twilight, a scent of seaweed filling the damp air, and their voices raising an echo in the great hall of rock.

"I hope the climbing has not made you giddy," Mrs. Trelyon said, in her kind way, to Wenna, noticing that she was very silent and *distraite*.

"Oh no!" Mabyn said promptly. "She has been seeing ghosts. We always know when Wenna has been seeing ghosts. She remains so for hours."

And, indeed, she was rather more reserved than usual all during their walk back to luncheon, and while they were in the inn; and yet she was obviously very happy, and sometimes even amused by the childlike pleasure which Mrs. Trelyon seemed to obtain from these unwonted experiences.

"Well, now, mother," Master Harry said, "what are you going to do for me when I come of age next month? Fill the house with guests?—yes, you promised that—with not more than one parson to the dozen. And when they are all feasting, and gabbling, and missing the targets with their arrows, you'll slip quietly away; and I'll drive you and Miss Wenna over here; and you'll go and get your feet wet again in that cavern; and you'll come up here again, and have an elegant luncheon, just like this. Won't that do?"

"I don't quite know about the elegance of the luncheon; but I am sure our little excursion has been very pleasant. Don't you think so, Miss Rosewarne?" Mrs. Trelyon said.

"Indeed I do," said Wenna, with her big, dark eyes coming back from their trance.

"And here is another thing," remarked young Trelyon. "There's a picture I've seen of the heir coming of age—he's a horrid, self-sufficient young cad, but never mind—and it seems to be a day of general jollification. Can't I give a present to somebody? Well, I'm going to give it to a young lady, who never cares for anything but what she can give away again to somebody else; and it is—well, it is—why don't you guess, Mabyn?"

"I don't know what you mean to give Wenna," said Mabyn, naturally.

"Why, you silly, I mean to give her a dozen sewing-machines—a baker's dozen—thirteen—there! Oh! I heard you as you came along. It was all, '*Three sewing-machines will cost so much, and four sewing-machines will cost so much, and five sewing-machines will cost so much. And a penny a week from so many subscribers will be so much, and twopence a week from so many will be so much;*' and all this as if my mother could tell you how much twice two was. My arithmetic ain't very brilliant; but as for hers—— And these you shall have, Miss Wenna—one baker's dozen of sewing-machines, as per order, duly delivered, carriage free; empty casks and bottles to be returned."

"That is very kind of you, Mr. Trelyon," Wenna said—and all the dreams had gone straight out of her head so soon as this was mentioned—"but we can't possibly accept them. You know our scheme is to make the Sewing Club quite self-supporting—no charity."

"Oh, what stuff!" the young gentleman cried. "You know you will give all your labour and supervision for nothing—isn't that charity? And you know you will let off all sorts of people owing you subscriptions the moment some blessed baby falls ill. And you know you won't charge interest on all the outlay. But if you insist on paying me back for my sewing-machines out of the overwhelming profits at the end of next year, then I'll take the money. I'm not proud."

"Then we will take six sewing-machines from you, if you please, Mr. Trelyon, on those conditions," said Wenna, gravely. And Master Harry—with a look towards Mabyn which was just about as good as a wink—consented.

As they drove quietly back again to Eglosilyan, Mabyn had taken her former place by the driver, and found him uncommonly thoughtful. He answered her questions, but that was all; and it was so unusual to find Harry Trelyon in this mood, that she said to him—

"Mr. Trelyon, have you been seeing ghosts, too?"

He turned to her and said—

"I was thinking about something. Look here, Mabyn; did you ever know any one, or do you know any one, whose face is a sort of barometer to you? Suppose that you see her look pale and tired, or sad in any way, then down go your spirits, and you almost wish you had never been born. When you see her face brighten up, and get full of healthy colour, you feel glad enough to burst out singing, or go mad; anyhow, you know that everything's all right. What the weather is, what people may say about you, whatever else may happen to you, that's nothing: all you want to see is just that one person's face look perfectly radiant and perfectly happy, and nothing can touch you then. Did you ever know anybody like that?" he added, rather abruptly.

"Oh yes!" said Mabyn, in a low voice. "That is when you are in love with some one. And there is only one face in all the world that I look to for all these things: there is only one person I know who tells you openly and simply in her face all that affects her: and that is our Wenna. I suppose you have noticed that, Mr. Trelyon?"

But he did not make any answer.

CHAPTER XXI.

CONFESSION.

THE lad lay dreaming in the warm meadows, by the side of a small and rapid brook, the clear waters of which plashed and bubbled in the sunlight as they hurried past the brown stones. His fishing-rod lay near him, hidden in the long

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grass and the daisies. The sun was hot in the valley—shining on a wall of grey rock behind him, and throwing purple shadows over the clefts; shining on the dark bushes beside the stream, and on the lush green of the meadows; shining on the trees beyond, underneath which some dark red cattle were standing. Then, away on the other side of the valley rose gently-sloping woods, tremulous in the haze of the heat; and over these again was a pale blue sky with scarcely a cloud in it. It was a hot day to be found in spring-time; but the waters of the brook seemed cool and pleasant as they gurgled by; and occasionally a breath of wind blew from over the heights. For the rest, he lay so still on this fine, indolent, dreamy morning that the birds around seemed to take no note of his presence; and one of the large woodpeckers, with his scarlet head and green body brilliant in the sunshine, flew close by him and disappeared into the bushes opposite, like a sudden gleam of colour shot by a diamond.

"Next month," he was thinking to himself, as he lay with his hands behind his head, not caring to shade his handsome and well-tanned face from the light, "next month I shall be twenty-one, and most folks will consider me a man. Anyhow, I don't know the man whom I wouldn't fight, or run, or ride, or shoot against, for any wager he liked. But of all the people who know anything about me, just that one whose opinion I care for will not consider me a man at all, but only a boy. And that without saying anything. You can tell, somehow, by a mere look what her feelings are; and you know that what she thinks is true. Of course it's true—I am only a boy. What's the good of me to anybody? I could look after a farm—that is, I could look after other people doing their work, but I couldn't do any myself. And that seems to me what she is always thinking of—what's the good of you, what are you doing, what are you busy about? It's all very well for her to be busy; for she can do a hundred thousand things; and she is always at them. What can I do?"

Then his wandering day-dreams took another turn.

"It was an odd thing for Mabyn to say, '*That is when you are in love with some one.*' But those girls take everything for love. They don't know how you can admire almost to worshipping the goodness of a woman, and how you are anxious that she should be well and happy, and how you would do anything in the world to please her, without fancying straight away that you are in love with her, and want to marry her, and drive about in the same carriage with her. I shall be quite as fond of Wenna Rosewarne when she is married; although I shall hate that little brute with his rum accounts and his treacle accounts—the cheek of him, in asking her to marry him, is astonishing! He is the most hideous little beast that could have been picked out to marry any woman; but I suppose he has appealed to her compassion, and then she'll do anything. But if there was anybody else in love with her—if she cared the least bit about anybody else—wouldn't I go straight to her, and insist on her shunting that fellow aside! What claim has he on any other feeling of hers but her pity? Why, if that fellow were to come and try to frighten her—and if I were in the affair, and if she appealed to me even by a look—then there would be short work with something or somebody!"

He got up hastily, with something of an angry look on his face. He did not notice that he had startled all the birds around from out of the bushes. He picked up his rod and line in a morose fashion, not seeming to care about adding to the half-dozen small and red-speckled trout he had in his basket.

While he was thus irresolutely standing, he caught sight of a girl's figure coming rapidly along the valley, under the shadow of some ash-trees growing by the stream. It was Wenna Rosewarne herself, and she appeared to be hurrying towards him. She was carrying some black object in her arms.

"Oh, Mr. Trelyon," she said, "what am I to do with this little dog? I saw him kicking in the road and foaming at the mouth—and then he got up and ran—and I took him——"

Before she had time to say anything more the young man made a sudden dive at the dog, caught hold of him, and turned and heaved him into the stream. He fell into a little pool of clear brown water; he spluttered and paddled

there for a second; then he got his footing and scrambled across the stones up to the opposite bank, where he began shaking the water from his coat among the long grass.

"Oh, how could you be so disgracefully cruel!" she said, with her face full of indignation.

"And how could you be so imprudent?" he said, quite as vehemently. "Why, whose is the dog?"

"I don't know."

"And you catch up some mongrel little cur in the middle of the highway—he might have been mad——"

"I knew he wasn't mad!" she said. "It was only a fit; and how could you be so cruel as to throw him into the river?"

"Oh," said the young man, coolly, "a dash of cold water is the best thing for a dog when it has a fit. Besides, I don't care what he had, or what I did with him, so long as you are safe. Your little finger is of more consequence than the necks of all the curs in the country."

"Oh! it is mean of you to say that," she retorted, warmly. "You have no pity for those wretched little things that are at every one's mercy. If it were a handsome and beautiful dog, now, you would care for that; or if it were a dog that was skilled in getting game for you, you would care for that."

"Yes, certainly," he said. "These are dogs that have something to recommend them."

"Yes, and every one is good to them; they are not in need of your favour. But you don't think of the wretched little brutes that have nothing to recommend them—that only live on sufferance—that every one kicks, and despises, and starves."

"Well," said he, with some compunction, "look there! That new friend of yours—he's no great beauty, you must confess—is all right now. The bath has cured him. As soon as he's done licking his paws, he'll be off home, wherever that may be. But I've always noticed that about you, Wenna—you're always on the side of things that are ugly, and helpless, and useless in the world; and you're not very just to those who don't agree with you. For after all, you know, one wants time to acquire that notion of yours—

that it is only weak and ill-favoured creatures that are worthy of any consideration."

"Yes," she said, rather sadly; "you want time to learn that."

He looked at her. Did she mean that her sympathy with those who were weak and ill-favoured arose from some strange consciousness that she herself was both? His cheeks began to burn red. He had often heard her hint something like that; and yet he had never dared to reason with her, or show her what he thought of her. Should he do so now?

"Wenna," he said, blushing hotly, "I can't make you out sometimes. You speak as if no one cared for you. Now, if I were to tell you——"

"Oh, I am not so ungrateful," she said, hastily. "I know that two or three do—and—and, Mr. Trelyon, do you think you could coax that little dog over the stream again? You see he has come back—he can't find his way home."

Harry Trelyon called to the dog; it came down to the river's side, and whined and shivered on the brink.

"Do you care a brass farthing about the little beast?" he said to Wenna.

"I must put him on his way home," she answered.

Thereupon the young man went straight through the stream to the other side, jumping the deeper portions of the channel; he caught up the dog, and brought it back to her: and when she was very angry with him for this mad performance, he merely kicked some of the water out of his trousers, and laughed. Then a smile broke over her face also.

"Is that an example of what people would do for me?" she said, shyly. "Mr. Trelyon, you must keep walking through the warm grass till your feet are dry; or will you come along to the inn, and I shall get you some shoes and stockings? Pray do; and at once. I am rather in a hurry."

"I'll go along with you, anyhow," he said, "and put this little brute into the highway. But why are you in a hurry?"

"Because," said Wenna, as they set out to walk down

the valley, "because my mother and I are going to Penzance the day after to-morrow, and I have a lot of things to get ready."

"To Penzance?" said he, with a sudden falling of his face.

"Yes. She has been dreadfully out of sorts lately, and she has sunk into a kind of despondent state. The doctor says she must have a change—a holiday, really, to take her away from the cares of the house——"

"Why Wenna, it's you who want the holiday; it's you who have the cares of the house!" Trelyon said, warmly.

"And so I have persuaded her to go to Penzance for a week or two, and I go with her to look after her. Mr. Trelyon, would you be kind enough to keep Rock for me until we come back?—I am afraid of the servants neglecting him."

"You needn't be afraid of that; he's not one of the ill-favoured; every one will attend to him," said Trelyon; and then he added, after a minute or two of silence: "The fact is, I think I shall be at Penzance also while you are there. My cousin Juliott is coming here in about a fortnight, to celebrate the important event of my coming of age, and I promised to go for her. I might as well go now."

She said nothing.

"I might as well go any time," he continued, rather impatiently. "I haven't got anything to do. Do you know, before you came along just now, I was thinking what a very useful person you were in the world, and what a very useless person I was—about as useless as this little cur. I think somebody should take me up and heave me into a river. And I was wondering, too,"—here he became a little more embarrassed and slow of speech—"I was wondering what you would say if I spoke to you, and gave you a hint that sometimes—that sometimes one might wish to cut this lazy life if one only knew how, and whether so very busy a person as yourself mightn't, don't you see, give one some notion—some sort of hint, in fact——"

"Oh! but then, Mr. Trelyon," she said, quite cheerfully, "you would think it very strange if I asked you to take any interest in the things that keep me busy. That is not a man's work. I wouldn't accept you as a pupil,"

He burst out laughing.

"Why," said he, "do you think I offered to mend stockings, and set sums on slates, and coddle babies?"

"As for setting sums on slates," she remarked, with a quiet impertinence, "the working of them out might be of use to you."

"Yes, and a serious trouble, too," he said candidly. "No, no—that cottage business ain't in my line. I like to have a joke with the old folks, or a romp with the children; but I can't go in for cutting out pinafores. I shall leave my mother to do my share of that for me; and hasn't she come out strong lately, eh? It's quite a new amusement for her; and it's driven a deal of that organ-grinding stuff out of her head; and I've a notion some of those parsons——"

He stopped short, remembering who his companion was; and at this moment they came to a gate which opened out on the highway, through which the small cur was passed to find his road home.

"Now, Miss Wenna,"—said the young man—"by the way, you see how I remember to address you respectfully ever since you got sulky with me about it the other day?"

"I am sure I did not get sulky with you, and especially about that," she remarked, with much composure. "I suppose you are not aware that you have dropped the 'Miss' several times this morning already?"

"Did I, really? Well, then, I'm awfully sorry—but then you are so good-natured you tempt one to forget; and my mother she always calls you Wenna Rosewarne now in speaking to me, as if you were a little school-girl instead of being the chief support and pillar of all the public affairs of Eglosilyan. And now, Miss Wenna, I shan't go down the road with you, because my damp boots and garments would gather the dust; but perhaps you wouldn't mind stopping two seconds here; for I'm going to go a cracker and ask you a question: What should a fellow in my position try to do? You see, I haven't had the least training for any one of the professions, even if I had any sort of capacity——"

"But why should you wish to have a profession?" she

said, simply. "You have more money than is good for you already."

"Then you don't think it ignominious," he said, with his face lighting up considerably, "to fish in summer, and shoot in autumn, and hunt in winter, and make that the only business of one's life?"

"I should, if it were the only business; but it needn't be, and you don't make it so. My father speaks very highly of the way you look after your property; and he knows what attending to an estate is. And then, you have so many opportunities of being kind and useful to the people about you, that you might do more good that way than by working night and day at a profession. Then you owe much to yourself; because if every one began with himself, and educated himself and became satisfied and happy with doing his best, there would be no bad conduct and wretchedness to call for interference. I don't see why you should be ashamed of shooting, and hunting, and all that; and doing them as well as anybody else, or far better, as I hear people say. I don't think a man is bound to have ambition and try to become famous; you might be of much greater use in the world even in such a little place as Eglosilyan than if you were in Parliament. I did say to Mrs. Trelyon that I should like to see you in Parliament, because one has a natural pride in any one that one admires and likes very much——"

He saw the quick look of fear that sprang to her eyes—not a sudden appearance of shy embarrassment, but of absolute fear; and he was almost as startled by her blunder as she herself was. He hastily came to her rescue. He thanked her in a few rapid and formal words for her patience and advice; and, as he saw she was trying to turn away and hide the mortification visible on her face, he shook hands with her, and let her go.

Then he set out for home. He had been startled, it is true, and grieved to see the pain her chance words had caused her. But now a great glow of delight rose up within him; and he could have called aloud to the blue skies and the silent woods because of the joy that filled his heart. They were chance words, of course. They were uttered with no deliberate intention; on the contrary, her

quick look of pain showed how bitterly she regretted her mistake. Moreover, he congratulated himself on his rapid piece of acting, and assured himself that she would believe he had not noticed that admission of hers. They were idle words. She would forget them. The incident, so far as she was concerned, was gone.

But not so far as he was concerned. For now he knew that the person whom, above all other persons in the world, he was most desirous to please, whose respect and esteem he was most anxious to obtain, had not only forgiven him much of his idleness, out of the abundant charity of her heart, but had further, and by chance, revealed to him that she accorded him some little share of that affection which she seemed to shed generously and indiscriminately on so many folks and things around her. He, too, was now in the charmed circle. He walked with a new pride through the warm, green meadows, his rod over his shoulder; he whistled as he went; or he sang snatches of "The Rose of Allandale." He met two small boys out bird's-nesting; he gave them a shilling apiece; and then inconsistently informed them that if he caught them at any time, with a bird's-nest in their hands, he would cuff their ears. Finally he walked hastily homeward; put his fishing-rod away; and shut himself up in his study with half a dozen of those learned volumes which he had brought back unsoiled from school.

CHAPTER XXII.

ON WINGS OF HOPE.

When Trelyon arrived late one evening at Penzance, he was surprised to find his uncle's coachman awaiting him at the station.

"What's the matter, Tobias? Is the old gentleman going to die? You don't mean to say you are here for me?"

"Yaäs, zor, I be," said the little old man, with no great courtesy.

"Then he is going to die, if he sends out his horse at

this time o' night. Look here, Tobias; I'll put my portmanteau inside and come on the box to have a talk with you—you're such a jolly old card, you know—and you'll tell me all that's happened since I last enjoyed my uncle's bountiful hospitality."

This the young man did; and then the brown-faced, wiry, and surly little person, having started his horse, proceeded to tell his story in a series of grumbling and disconnected sentences. He was not nearly so taciturn as he looked.

"The maäster he went sün to bed to-night—'twere Miss Juliott sent me to the station, without tellin' en. He's gettin' worse and worse, that's süre; if yü be for giving me half-a-crown, like, or any one that comes to the house, he finds it out and stops it out o' my wages; yes, he does, zor, the old fule."

"Tobias, be a little more respectful to my uncle, if you please."

"Why, zor, yü knaw en well enough!" said the man, in the same surly fashion. "And I'll tell yü this, Maäster Harry, if yü be after dinner with en, and he has a bottle o' poort wine that he puts on the mantelpiece, and he says to yü to let that aloän, vor 'tis a medicine-zart o' wine, don't yü heed en, but have that wine. 'Tis the real old poort wine, zor, that yür vather gied en; the dahmned old Pagan!"

The young man burst out laughing, instead of reprimanding Tobias, who maintained his sulky impassiveness of face.

"Why, zor, I be gardener now, too; yaäs, I be, to save the wages. And he's gone clean mazed about that garden; yes, I think. Would yü believe this, Maäster Harry, that he killed every one o' the blessed strawberries last year with a lot o' wrack from the bache, because he said it wüd be as good for them as for the 'sparagus?"

"Well, but the old chap finds amusement in pottering about the garden——"

"The old fule," repeated Tobias, in an undertone.

"And the theory is sound about the seaweed and the strawberries; just as his old notion of getting a green rose was by pouring sulphate of copper in at the roots."

"Yaäs, that were another pretty thing, Maäster Harry, and he had the tin labels all printed out in French, and he waited and waited, and there baint a fairly güde rose left in the garden. And his violet glass for the cücumbers—he burned en up to once, although 'twere fine to hear 'n talk about the sunlight and the rays, and such nonsenses. He be a strange mahn, zor, and a dahmned close 'n with his penny pieces, Christian and all as he calls hissen. There's Miss Juliott, zor, she's goin to get married, I suppose; and when she goes, no one 'll dare speak to 'n. Be yü going to stop long this time, Maäster Harry?"

"Not at the Hollies, Tobias. I shall go down to the Queen's to-morrow; I've got rooms there."

"So much the better; so much the better," said the frank but inhospitable retainer; and presently the jog-trot old animal between the shafts was pulled up in front of a certain square old-fashioned building of grey stone, which was prettily surrounded with trees. They had arrived at the Rev. Mr. Penaluna's house; and there was a young lady standing in the light of the hall, she having opened the door very softly as she heard the carriage drive up.

"So here you are, Harry; and you'll stay with us the whole fortnight, won't you? Come into the dining-room—I have some supper ready for you. Papa's gone to bed, and he desired me to give you his excuses, and he hopes you'll make yourself quite at home, as you always do, Harry."

He did make himself quite at home; for, having kissed his cousin, and flung his top-coat down in the hall, he went into the dining-room, and took possession of an easy chair.

"Shan't have any supper, Jue, thank you. You won't mind my lighting a cigar—somebody's been smoking here already. And what's the least poisonous claret you've got?"

"Well, I declare!" she said; but she got him the wine all the same, and watched him light his cigar; then she took the easy chair opposite.

"Tell us about your young man, Jue," he said. "Girls always like to talk about that."

"Do they?" she said. "Not to boys."

"I shall be twenty-one in a fortnight. I am thinking of getting married."

"So I hear," she remarked, quietly.

Now, he had been talking nonsense at random—mostly intent on getting his cigar well lit; but this little observation rather startled him.

"What have you heard?" he said, abruptly.

"Oh! nothing—the ordinary stupid gossip," she said, though she was watching him rather closely. "Are you going to stay with us for the next fortnight?"

"No; I have got rooms at the Queen's."

"I thought so. One might have expected you, however, to stay with your relations when you came to Penzance."

"Oh, that's all gammon, Jue!" he said; "you know very well your father doesn't care to have any one stay with you—it's too much bother. You'll have quite enough of me while I am in Penzance."

"Shall we have anything of you?" she said, with apparent indifference. "I understood that Miss Rosewarne and her mamma had already come here."

"And what if they have?" he said, with unnecessary fierceness.

"Well, Harry," she said, "you needn't get into a temper about it; but people will talk, you know; and they say that your attentions to that young lady are rather marked considering that she is engaged to be married; and you have induced your mother to make a pet of her. Shall I go on?"

"No, you needn't," he said, with a strong effort to overcome his anger. "You're quite right—people do talk; but they wouldn't talk so much if other people didn't carry tales. Why, it isn't like you, Jue. I thought you were another sort. And about this girl of all girls in the world——"

He got up and began walking about the room, and talking with considerable vehemence, but no more in anger. He would tell her what cause there was for this silly gossip. He would tell her who this girl was who had been lightly mentioned. And in his blunt, frank, matter-of-fact way, which did not quite conceal his emotion, he revealed to his cousin all that he thought of Wenna Rosewarne, and what

he hoped for her in the future, and what their present relations were, and then plainly asked her if she could condemn him. Miss Juliott was touched.

"Sit down, Harry; I have wanted to talk to you, and I don't mean to heed any gossip. Sit down, please—you frighten me by walking up and down like that. Now I'm going to talk common sense to you, for I should like to be your friend; and your mother is so easily led away by any sort of sentiment that she isn't likely to have seen with my eyes. Suppose that this Miss Rosewarne——"

"No; hold hard a bit, Jue," he said, imperatively. "You may talk till the millennium, but just keep off her, I warn you."

"Will you hear me out, you silly boy? Suppose that Miss Rosewarne is everything that you believe her to be. I'm going to grant that, because I'm going to ask you a question. You can't have such an opinion of any girl, and be constantly in her society, and go following her about like this, without falling in love with her. Now, in that case, would you propose to marry her?"

"I marry her!" he said, his face becoming suddenly pale for a moment. "Jue, you are mad. I am not fit to marry a girl like that. You don't know her. Why——"

"Let all that alone, Harry; when a man is in love with a woman he always thinks he's good enough for her; and whether he does or not he tries to get her for a wife. Don't let us discuss your comparative merits—one might even put in a word for you. But suppose you drifted into being in love with her—and I consider that quite probable—and suppose you forgot, as I know you would forget, the difference in your social position, how would you like to go and ask her to break her promise to the gentleman to whom she is engaged?"

Master Harry laughed aloud, in a somewhat nervous fashion.

"Him? Look here, Jue; leave me out of it—I haven't the cheek to talk of myself in that connection; but if there was a decent sort of fellow whom that girl really took a liking to, do you think he would let that elderly and elegant swell in Jamaica stand in his way? He would

be no such fool, I can tell you. He would consider the girl, first of all. He would say to himself, 'I mean to make this girl happy; if any one interferes, let him look out!' Why, Jue, you don't suppose any man would be frightened by that sort of thing!"

Miss Juliott did not seem quite convinced by this burst of scornful oratory. She continued quietly—

"You forget something, Harry. Your heroic young man might find it easy to do something wild—to fight with that gentleman in the West Indies, or murder him, or anything like that, just as you see in a story; but perhaps Miss Rosewarne might have something to say."

"I meant if she cared for him," Trelyon said, looking down.

"Granting that also, do you think it likely your hot-headed gentleman would be able to get a young lady to disgrace herself by breaking her plighted word, and deceiving a man who went away trusting in her? You say she has a very tender conscience—that she is so anxious to consult every one's happiness before her own—and all that. Probably it is true. I say nothing against her. But to bring the matter back to yourself—for I believe you're hot-headed enough to do anything—what would you think of her if you or anybody else persuaded her to do such a treacherous thing?"

"She is not capable of treachery," he said, somewhat stiffly. "If you've got no more cheerful things to talk about, you'd better go to bed, Jue. I shall finish my cigar by myself."

"Very well, then, Harry. You know your room. Will you put out the lamp when you have lit your candle?"

So she went, and the young man was left alone, in no very enviable frame of mind. He sat and smoked, while the clock on the mantelpiece swung its gilded boy, and struck the hours and half-hours with unheeded regularity. He lit a second cigar, and a third; he forgot the wine; it seemed to him that he was looking on all the roads of life that lay before him, and they were lit up by as strange and new a light as that which was beginning to shine over the world outside. New fancies seemed to awake with the new dawn. For himself to ask Wenna Rosewarne to be his wife?—could he but win the tender and shy regard of her eyes he would fall at her feet and bathe them with his tears! And if this wonderful thing were possible—if she could put her hand in his and trust to him for safety in all the coming years they might live together—what man of woman born would dare to interfere? There was a blue light coming in through the shutters. He went to the window—the topmost leaves of the trees were quivering in the cold air, far up there in the clearing skies, where the stars were fading out one by one. And he could hear the sound of the sea on the distant beach; and he knew that across the grey plain of waters the dawn was breaking, and that over the sleeping world another day was rising that seemed to him the first day of a new and tremulous life, full of joy, and courage, and hope.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LOVE-MAKING AT LAND'S END.

"ARE you dreaming again, child?" said Mrs. Rosewarne to her daughter. "You are not a fit companion for a sick woman, who is herself dull enough. Why do you always look so sad when you look at the sea, Wenna?"

The wan-faced, beautiful-eyed woman lay on a sofa, a book beside her. She had been chatting in a bright, rapid, desultory fashion about the book and a dozen other things—amusing herself really by a continual stream of playful talk—until she perceived that the girl's fancies were far away. Then she stopped suddenly, with this expression of petulant but good-natured disappointment.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, mother," said Wenna, who was seated at an open window fronting the bay. "What did you say? Why does the sea make one sad? I don't know. One feels less at home here than out on the rocks at Eglosilyan; perhaps that is it. Or the place is so beautiful, that it almost makes you cry. I don't know."

And, indeed, Penzance Bay, on this still, clear morning, was beautiful enough to attract wistful eyes and call up vague and distant fancies. The cloudless sky was intensely

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"Oh, I beg your pardon, mother," said Wenna, who was seated at an open window fronting the bay. "What did you say? Why does the sea make one sad? I don't know. One feels less at home here than out on the rocks at Eglosilyan; perhaps that is it. Or the place is so beautiful, that it almost makes you cry. I don't know."

And, indeed, Penzance Bay, on this still, clear morning, was beautiful enough to attract wistful eyes and call up vague and distant fancies. The cloudless sky was intensely

dark in its blue ; one had a notion that the unseen sun was overhead and shining vertically down. The still plain of water—so clear that the shingle could be seen through it a long way out—had no decisive colour ; but the fishing-smacks lying out there were jet-black points in the bewildering glare. The sunlight did not seem to be in the sky, in the air, or on the sea ; but when you turned to the southern arm of the bay, where the low line of green hills runs out into the water, there you could see the strong clear light shining—shining on the green fields and on the sharp black lines of hedges, on that bit of grey old town with its cottage-gardens and its sea-wall, and on the line of dark rock that formed the point of the promontory. On the other side of the bay, the eye followed the curve of the level shore, until it caught sight of St. Michael's Mount rising palely from the water, its sunlit greys and purple shadows softened by the cool distance. Then beyond that again, on the verge of the far horizon, lay the long and narrow line of the Lizard, half lost in a silver haze. For the rest, a cool wind went this way and that through Mrs. Rosewarne's room, stirring the curtains. There was a fresh odour of the sea in the air. It was a day for dreaming, perhaps ; but not for the gloom begotten of languor and an indolent pulse.

"Oh, mother—oh, mother!" Wenna cried, suddenly, with a flush of colour in her cheeks. "Do you know who is coming along ? Can you see ? It is Mr. Trelyon, and he is looking at all the houses ; I know he is looking for us."

"Child, child!" said the mother. "How should Mr. Trelyon know we are here ?"

"Because I told him," Wenna replied, simply and hurriedly. "Mother, may I wave a handkerchief to him ? Won't you come and see him ? he seems so much more manly in this strange place ; and how brave and handsome he looks!"

"Wenna!" her mother said severely.

The girl did not wave a handkerchief, it is true ; although she knelt down at the open bay-window, so that he must needs see her ; and sure enough he did. Off went his hat in a minute ; a bright look of recognition leapt to his eyes, and he crossed the street. Then Wenna turned, all in a

flutter of delight, and quite unconscious of the colour in her face.

"Are you vexed, mother ? Mayn't I be glad to see him ? Why, when I know that he will brighten up your spirits better than a dozen doctors ! One feels quite happy and hopeful whenever he comes into the room. Mother, you won't have to complain of dulness if Mr. Trelyon comes to see you. And why doesn't the girl send him up at once ?"

Wenna was standing at the open door to receive him when he came up-stairs ; she had wholly forgotten the embarrassment of their last parting.

"I thought I should find you out," he said, when he came into the room, and it was clear there was little embarrassment about him ; "and I know how your mother likes to be teased and worried. You've got a nice place here, Mrs. Rosewarne ; and what splendid weather you've brought with you!"

"Yes," said Wenna, her whole face lit up with a shy gladness, "haven't we ? And did you ever see the bay looking more beautiful ? It is enough to make you laugh and clap your hands out of mere delight to see everything so lovely and fresh!"

"A few minutes ago I thought you were nearly crying over it," said the mother, with a smile ; but Miss Wenna took no heed of the reproof. She would have Mr. Trelyon help himself to a tumbler of claret and water. She fetched out from some mysterious lodging-house recess an ornamented tin can of biscuits. She accused herself of being the dullest companion in the world, and indirectly hinted that he might have pity on her mamma and stay to luncheon with them.

"Well, it's very odd," he said, telling a lie with great simplicity of purpose, "but I had arranged to drive to the Land's End for luncheon—to the inn there, you know. I suppose it wouldn't—do you think, Mrs. Rosewarne—would it be convenient for you to come for a drive so far ?"

"Oh, it would be the very best thing in the world for her—nothing could be better," said Wenna ; and then she added meekly, "if it is not giving you too much trouble, Mr. Trelyon."

He laughed.

"Trouble! I'm glad to be of use to anybody; and in this case I shall have all the pleasure on my side. Well, I'm off now to see about the horses. If I come for you in half-an-hour, will that do?"

As soon as he had left, Mrs. Rosewarne turned to her daughter, and said to her, gravely enough—

"Wenna, one has seldom to talk to you about the proprieties; but, really, this seems just a little doubtful. Mr. Trelyon may make a friend of you; that is all very well, for you are going to marry a friend of his. But you ought not to expect him to associate with me."

"Mother," said Wenna, with hot cheeks, "I wonder how you can suspect him of thinking of such foolish and wicked things. Why, he is the very last man in all the world to do anything that was mean and unkind, or to think about it."

"My dear child, I suspect him of nothing," Mrs. Rosewarne said; "but look at the simple facts of the case. Mr. Trelyon is a very rich gentleman; his family is an old one, greatly honoured about here; and if he is so recklessly kind as to offer his acquaintanceship to persons who are altogether in a different sphere of life, we should take care not to abuse his kindness, or to let people have occasion to wonder at him. Looking at your marriage and future station, it is perhaps more permissible with you; but as regards myself, I don't very much care, Wenna, to have Mr. Trelyon coming about the house."

"Why, mother, I—I am surprised at you!" Wenna said, warmly. "You judge of him by the contemptible things that other people might say of him. Do you think he would care for that? Mr. Trelyon is a man, and like a man he has the courage to choose such friends as he likes; and it is no more to him what money they have, or what their position is, than the—than the shape of their pocket-handkerchiefs is! Perhaps that is his folly—recklessness—the recklessness of a young man. Perhaps it is. I am not old enough to know how people alter; but I hope I shall never see Mr. Trelyon alter in this respect—never, if he were to live for a hundred years. And—and I am surprised to hear you, of all people, mother, suggest such things of him. What has he done that you should think so meanly of him?"

Wenna was very indignant and hurt. She would have continued further, but that a tremulous movement of her under lip caused her to turn away her head.

"Well, Wenna, you needn't cry about it," her mother said gently. "It is of no great consequence. Of course every one must please himself in choosing his friends; and I quite admit that Mr. Trelyon is not likely to be hindered by anything that anybody may say. Don't take it so much to heart, child; go and get on your things, and get back some of the cheerfulness you had while he was here. I will say that for the young man—that he has an extraordinary power of raising your spirits."

"You are a good mother after all," said Wenna, penitently; "and if you come and let me dress you prettily, I shall promise not to scold you again—not till the next time you deserve it."

By the time they drove away from Penzance, the forenoon had softened into more beautiful colours. There was a paler blue in the sky and on the sea, and millions of yellow stars twinkled on the ripples. A faint haze had fallen over the bright green hills lying on the south of the bay.

"Life looks worth having on such a day as this," Trelyon said; "doesn't it, Miss Wenna?"

She certainly seemed pleased enough. She drank in the sweet fresh air; she called attention to the pure rare colours of the sea and the green uplands; the coolness of the woods through which they drove, the profuse abundance of wild flowers along the banks—all things around her seemed to have conspired to yield her delight; and a great happiness shone in her eyes. Mr. Trelyon talked mostly to Mrs. Rosewarne; but his eyes rarely wandered away for long from Wenna's pleased and radiant face; and again he said to himself, "*And if a simple drive on a spring morning can give this child so great a delight, it is not the last that she and I shall have together.*"

"Mrs. Rosewarne," said he, "I think your daughter has as much need of a holiday as anybody. I don't believe there's a woman or girl in the county works as hard as she does."

"I don't know whether she needs it," said Miss Wenna, of herself, "but I know that she enjoys it."

"I know what you'd enjoy a good deal better than merely getting out of sight of your own door, for a week or two," said he. "Wouldn't you like to get clear away from England for six months, and go wandering about all sorts of fine places? Why, I could take you such a trip in that time! I should like to see what you'd say to some of the old Dutch towns, and their churches, and all that; then Cologne, you know, and a sail up the Rhine to Mainz; then you'd go on to Basle and Geneva, and we'd get you a fine big carriage, with the horses decorated with foxes' and pheasants' tails, to drive you to Chamounix. Then, when you had gone tremulously over the Mer de Glace, and kept your wits about you going down the Mauvais Pas, I don't think you could do better than go on to the Italian lakes—you never saw anything like them, I'll be bound—and Naples, and Florence. Would you come back by the Tyrol, and have a turn at Zurich and Lucerne, with a ramble through the Black Forest in a trap resembling a ramshackle landau?"

"Thank you," said Wenna, very cheerfully. "The sketch is delightful; but I am pretty comfortable where I am."

"But this can't last," said he.

"And neither can my holidays," she answered.

"Oh, but they ought to," he retorted vehemently. "You have not half enough amusement in your life—that's my opinion. You slave too much, for all those folks about Eglosilyan and their dozens of children. Why, you don't get anything out of life as you ought to. What have you to look forward to? Only the same ceaseless round of working for other people. Don't you think you might let some one else have a turn at that useful but monotonous occupation?"

"But Wenna has something else to look forward to now," her mother reminded him gently; and after that he did not speak for some time.

Fair and blue was the sea that shone all around the land when they got out on the rough moorland near the coast. They drove to the solitary little inn perched over the steep cliffs; and here the horses were put up and luncheon ordered. Would Mrs. Rosewarne venture down to the great rocks at the promontory? No, she would rather stay indoors till the young people returned; and so these two went along the grassy path by themselves.

They clambered down the slopes, and went out among the huge blocks of weather-worn granite, many of which were brilliant with grey, green, and orange lichens. There was a low and thunderous noise in the air; far below them, calm and fine as the day was, the summer sea dashed and roared into gigantic caverns, while the white foam floated out again on the troubled waves. Could anything have been more magical than the colours of the sea—its luminous greens, its rich purples, its brilliant blues, lying in long swathes on the apparently motionless surface? It was only the seething white beneath their feet, and the hoarse thunder along the coast, that told of the force of this summer-like sea; for the rest the picture was light, and calm, and beautiful. Out there the black rocks basked in the sunlight, the big skarts standing on their ledges, not moving a feather. A small steamer was slowly making for the island further out, where a lighthouse stood. And far away beyond these, on the remote horizon, the Scilly Isles lay like a low bank of yellow fog, under the pale blue skies.

They were very much by themselves, out here at the end of the world; and yet they did not seem inclined to talk much. Wenna sat down on the warm grass; her companion perched himself on one of the blocks of granite; they watched the great undulations of the blue water come rolling on to the black rocks, and then fall backward seething in foam.

"And what are you thinking about?" said Trelyon to her gently, so that she should not be startled.

"Of nothing at all—I am quite happy," Wenna said frankly. Then she added, "I suppose the worst of a day like this is, that a long time after you look back upon it, and it seems so beautiful and far away that it makes you miserable. You think how happy you were once. That is the unfortunate side of being happy."

"Well," said he, "I must say you don't look forward to the future with any great hope, if you think the recollection of one bright day will make you wretched."

He came down from his perch and stood beside her.

"Why, Wenna," said he, "do you know what you really need? Some one to take you in hand thoroughly, and give you such an abundance of cheerful and pleasant days that you would never think of singling out any one of them. Why shouldn't you have weeks and months of happy idling, in bright weather, such as lots of people have who don't deserve them a bit? There's something wrong in your position. You want some one to become your master, and compel you to make yourself happy. You won't of yourself study your own comfort; some one else ought to make you."

"And who do you think would care to take so much trouble about me?" she said, with a smile; for she attached no serious meaning to this random talk.

Her companion's face flushed somewhat, not with embarrassment, but with the courage of what he was going to say.

"I would," he said, boldly. "You will say it is none of my business; but I tell you I would give twenty thousand pounds to-morrow, if I were allowed to—to get you a whole summer of pleasant holidays."

There was something about the plain-spoken honesty of this avowal that touched her keenly. Wild and impossible as the suggestion was, it told her at least what one person in the world thought of her. She said to him, with her eyes cast down:

"I like to hear you speak like that—not for my own sake—but I know there is nothing generous and kindly that you wouldn't do at a mere moment's impulse. But I hope you don't think I have been grumbling over my lot, on such a day as this? Oh no; I see too much of other people's ways of living to complain of my own. I have every reason to be contented and happy."

"Yes, you're a deal too contented and happy," said he, with an impatient shrug. "You want somebody to alter all that, and see that you get more to be contented and happy about."

She rose; he gave her his hand to help her up. But he did not surrender her hand then, for the path up the slopes was a steep and difficult one; and she could fairly rely on his strength and sureness of foot.

"But you are not content, Mr. Trelyon," she said. "I always notice that, whenever you get to a dangerous place, you are never satisfied unless you are putting your life in peril. Wouldn't you like to ride your black horse down the face of this precipice? Or wouldn't you like to clamber down blindfold? Why does a man generally seem to be anxious to get rid of his life?"

"Perhaps it isn't of much use to him," he said coolly.

"You ought not to say that," she answered, in a low voice.

"Well," he said, "I don't mean to break my neck yet awhile; but if I did, who would miss me? I suppose my mother would play half-a-dozen a day more operas or oratorios, or stuff of that sort, and there would be twenty parsons in the house for one there is at present. And some of the brats about the place would miss an occasional sixpence—which would be better for their health. And Dick—I suppose they'd sell him to some fool of a Londoner, who would pound his knees out in the Park—he would miss me too."

"And these are all," she said, "who would miss you? You are kind to your friends."

"Why, would you?" he said, with a stare of surprise; and then, seeing she would not speak, he continued, with a laugh, "I like the notion of my making an object of general compassion of myself. Did the poor dear tumble off a rock into the sea? And where was its mother's apron-string? I'm not going to break my neck yet awhile, Miss Wenna; so don't you think I'm going to let you off your promise to pay me back for those sewing-machines."

"I have told you, Mr. Trelyon," she said, with some dignity, "that we shall pay you back every farthing of the price of them."

He began to whistle in an impertinent manner. He clearly placed no great faith in the financial prospects of that Sewing Club.

They had some light luncheon in the remote little inn, and Mrs. Rosewarne was pleased to see her ordinarily demure and preoccupied daughter in such high and careless spirits. It was not a splendid banquet. Nor was the chamber a gorgeous one, for the absence of ornament and the enormous

thickness of the walls told of the house being shut up in the winter months and abandoned to the fury of the western gales, when the wild sea came hurling up the face of these steep cliffs and blowing over the land. But they paid little attention to any lack of luxury. There was a beautiful blue sea shining in the distance: the sunlight was falling hotly on the greensward of the rocks outside: and a fresh, cool breeze came blowing in at the open window. They let the time pass easily, with pleasant talk and laughter.

Then they drove leisurely back in the afternoon. They passed along the moorland ways, through rude little villages built of stone, and by the outskirts of level and cheerless farms, until they got into the beautiful woods and avenues lying around Penzance. When they came in sight of the broad bay, they found that the world had changed its colours since the morning. The sea was of a cold purplish grey; but all around it, on the eastern horizon, there was a band of pale pink in the sky. On the west again, behind Penzance, the warm hues of the sunset were shining behind the black stems of the trees. The broad thoroughfare was mostly in shadow; and the sea was so still that one could hear the footsteps and the voices of the people walking up and down the Parade.

"I suppose I must go now," said the young gentleman, when he had seen them safely seated in the small parlour overlooking the bay. But he did not seem anxious to go.

"But why go?" Wenna said, rather timidly. "You have no engagement, Mr. Trelyon. Would you care to stay and have dinner with us—such a dinner as we can give you?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, I should like it very much," he said.

Mrs. Rosewarne, a little surprised, and yet glad to see Wenna enjoying herself, regarded the whole affair with a gentle resignation. Wenna had the gas lit, and the blinds let down; then, as the evening was rather cold, she had soon a bright fire burning in the grate. She helped to lay the table. She produced such wines as they had. She made sundry visits to the kitchen; and at length the banquet was ready.

What ailed the young man? He seemed beside himself with careless and audacious mirth; and he made Mrs. Rosewarne laugh as she had not laughed for years. It was in vain that Wenna assumed airs to rebuke his rudeness. Nothing was sacred from his impertinence—not even the offended majesty of her face. And at last she gave in too, and could only revenge herself by saying things of him which, the more severe they were, the more he seemed to enjoy. But after dinner she went to the small piano, while her mother took a big easy-chair near the fire; and he sat by the table, apparently looking over some books. There was no more reckless laughter then.

In ancient times—that is to say, in the half-forgotten days of our youth—a species of song existed which exists no more. It was not as the mournful ballads of these days, which seem to record the gloomy utterances of a strange young woman who has apparently wandered into the magic scene in "Der Freischütz," and who mixes up the moanings of her passion with descriptions of the sights and sounds she there finds around her. It was of quite another stamp. It dealt with a phraseology of sentiment peculiar to itself—a "patter," as it were, which came to be universally recognized in drawing-rooms. It spoke of maidens plighting their troth, of Phyllis enchanting her lover with her varied moods, of marble halls in which true love still remained the same. It apostrophized the shells of ocean; it tenderly described the three great crises of a particular heroine's life by mentioning successive head-dresses; it told of how the lover of pretty Jane would have her meet him in the evening. Well, all the world was content to accept this conventional phraseology; and, behind the paraphernalia of "enchanted moonbeams," and "fondest glances," and "adoring sighs," perceived and loved the sentiment that could find no simpler utterance. Some of us, hearing the half-forgotten songs again, suddenly forget the odd language, and the old pathos springs up again, as fresh as in the days when our first love had just come home from her boarding-school; while others, who have no old-standing acquaintance with these memorable songs, have somehow got attracted to them by the mere quaintness of their speech and the simplicity of their airs. Master Harry Trelyon was no great critic of music. When Wenna Rosewarne sang that night "She wore a wreath of roses," he fancied he had never listened to

anything so pathetic. When she sang "Meet me by moonlight alone," he was delighted with the spirit and half-humorous, half-tender grace of the composition. As she sang "When other lips and other hearts," it seemed to him that there were no songs like the old-fashioned songs, and that the people who wrote those ballads were more frank, and simple, and touching in their speech than writers now-a-days. Somehow, he began to think of the drawing-rooms of a former generation; and of the pictures of herself his grandmother had drawn for him many a time. Had she a high waist to that white silk dress in which she ran away to Gretna; and did she have ostrich feathers on her head? Anyhow, he entirely believed what she had told him of the men of that generation. They were capable of doing daring things for the sake of a sweetheart. Of course his grandfather had done boldly and well in whirling the girl off to the Scottish borders; for who could tell what might have befallen her among ill-natured relatives and persecuted suitors?

Wenna Rosewarne was singing "We met; 'twas in a crowd; and I thought he would shun me." It is the song of a girl (must one explain so much in these later days?) who is in love with one man, and has been induced to marry another: she meets the former, and her heart is filled with shame, and anguish, and remorse. As Wenna sang the song, it seemed to this young man that there was an unusual pathos in her voice; and he was so carried away by the earnestness of her singing, that his heart swelled and rose up within him, and he felt himself ready to declare that such should not be her fate. This man who was coming back to marry her—was there no one ready to meet him and challenge his atrocious claim? Then the song ended; and, with a sudden disappointment, Trelyon recollected that he at least had no business to interfere. What right had he to think of saving her?

He had been idly turning over some volumes on the table. At last he came to a Prayer-book, of considerable size and elegance of binding. Carelessly looking at the fly-leaf, he saw that it was a present to Wenna Rosewarne, "with the very dearest love of her sister Mabyn." He passed his hand over the leaves, not noticing what he was doing: suddenly he saw something which did effectually startle him into attention.

It was a sheet of paper with two slits cut into it at top and bottom. In these a carefully-pressed piece of None-so-pretty had been placed, and just underneath the flower was written in pencil "From H. T. to W. R., May 2nd, 18—." He shut the book quickly, as if his fingers had been burned; and then he sate quite silent, with his heart beating fast.

So she had kept the flower he had put in the basket of primroses. It had carried its message; and she still remained his friend.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE CUT DIRECT.

"Well, mother," Miss Wenna said deliberately, after he had gone, "I never did see you so thoroughly enjoy a whole day."

"I was thinking the same about you, Wenna," the mother answered, with an amused look.

"That is true enough, mother," the girl confessed, in her simple way. "He is so good-natured, so full of spirits, and careless, that one gets quite as careless and happy as himself. It is a great comfort, mother, to be with anybody who doesn't watch the meaning of every word you say—don't you think so? And I hope I wasn't rude—do you think I was rude?"

"Why, child, I don't think you could be rude to a fox that was eating your chickens. You would ask him to take a chair and not hurry himself."

"Well, I must write to Mabyn now," Wenna said, with a business-like air, "and thank her for posting me this Prayer-book. I suppose she didn't know I had my small one with me."

She took up the book, for she was sitting on the chair that Harry Trelyon had just vacated. She had no sooner done so than she caught sight of the sheet of paper with the dried flower and the inscription in Mabyn's handwriting. She stared, with something of a look of fear on her face.

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"Mother," she said, in quite an altered voice, "did you notice if Mr. Trelyon was looking at this Prayer-book?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," Mrs. Rosewarne said. "I should think he went over every book on the table."

The girl said nothing; but she took the book in her hand and carried it up to her own room. She stood for a moment irresolute; then she took the sheet of paper with the flowers on it, and tore it in a hundred pieces, and threw them into the empty grate. Then she cried a little—as a girl must; and finally went down again and wrote a letter to Mabyn, which rather astonished that young lady.

"My dear Mabyn"—so the letter ran—"I am exceedingly angry with you. I did not think you were capable of such folly—I might call it by a worse name if I thought you really meant what you seem to mean. I have just torn up the worthless scrap of flower you so carefully preserved for me into a thousand pieces; but you will be glad to know that in all probability Mr. Trelyon saw it on the paper, and the initials, too, which you put there. I cannot tell you how pained and angry I am. If he did place that flower intentionally among the primroses, it was most impertinent of him; but he is often impertinent in joking. What must he think of me that I should seem to have taken this seriously, and treasured up that miserable and horrid piece of weed, and put his initials below it, and the important date? You put thoughts into my head that cover me with shame. I should not be fit to live if I were what you take me to be. If I thought there was another human being in the world who could imagine or suspect what you apparently desire, I would resolve this moment never to see Mr. Trelyon again; and much harm that would do either him or me! But I am too proud to think that anyone could imagine such a thing. Nor did I expect that to come from my own sister, who ought to know what my true relations are with regard to Mr. Trelyon. I like him very much, as I told him to his face two days before we left Eglosilyan, *and that will show you what our relations are.* I think he is a very frank, generous, and good young man, and a clever and cheerful companion; and my mother has to-day to thank him for about the pleasantest little trip she has ever enjoyed. But as for your wishing me to preserve a flower that he sent, or that you think he sent to me, why, I feel my face burning at the thought of what you suggest. And what can I say to him now, supposing he has seen it? Can I tell him that my own sister thought such things of me? Perhaps, after all, the simplest way to set matters right will be for me to break off the acquaintance altogether; and that will show him whether I was likely to have treasured up a scrap of London-pride in my Prayer-book. I am, your loving sister,

"Wenna Rosewarne."

Meanwhile, Harry Trelyon was walking up and down the almost empty thoroughfare by the side of the sea; the stars overhead shining clearly in the dark night, the dimly-seen waves falling monotonously on the shelving beach.

"To keep a flower that is nothing," he was saying to himself. "All girls do that, no matter who gives it to them. I suppose she has lots more, all with the proper initials and date attached."

It was not an agreeable reflection; he returned to other matters.

"If she were to care for me a little bit, would it be mean of me to try to carry her off from that man? Is it possible that he has the same regard for her that I have? In that case it would be mean. Now, when I think of her, the whole world seems filled with her presence somehow, and everything is changed. When I hear the sea in the morning, I think of her, and wonder where she is; when I see a fine day, I hope she is enjoying it somewhere; the whole of Penzance has become magical. It is no longer the same town. I used to come to it, and never see it, in the old days, when one was busy about stables, and the pilchard-fishing, and the reports of the mines. Now the whole of Penzance has got a sort of charm in it, since Wenna Rosewarne has come to it. I look at the houses, and wonder if the people inside know anybody fit to compare with her; and one becomes grateful to the good weather for shining round about her and making her happy. I suppose the weather knows what she deserves."

Then he began to argue the question as to whether it

would be fair and honourable to seek to take away from another man the woman who had pledged herself to marry him; and of course an easy and definite decision is sure to be arrived at when counsel on both sides, and jury, and judges sitting *in banco*, are all one person, who conducts and closes the case as it suits himself.

He began by assuming such facts as suited his arguments, and ended by selecting and confirming such arguments as suited himself. Wenna Rosewarne cared nothing for Mr. Roscorla. She would be miserable if she married him; her own sister was continually hinting as much. Mr. Roscorla cared nothing for her except in so far as she might prove a pretty housewife for him. The selfishness that would sacrifice for its own purposes a girl's happiness was of a peculiarly despicable sort which ought to be combated, and deserved no mercy. Therefore, and because of all these things, Harry Trelyon was justified in trying to win Wenna Rosewarne's love.

One by one the people who had been strolling up and down the dark thoroughfare left it; he was almost alone now. He walked along to the house in which the Rosewarnes were. There was no light in any of the windows. But might she not be sitting up there by herself, looking out on the starlit heavens, and listening to the waves? He wished to be able to say good-night to her once more.

How soon would she be up and out on the morrow? Early in the morning, when the young day was rising over the grey sea and the sea-winds coming freshly in as if they were returning from the cold night? If he could but see her at daybreak, with all the world asleep around them, and with only themselves to watch the growing wonders of the dawn, might not he say something to her then that she would not be vexed to hear, and persuade her that a new sort of life lay before her if she would only enter it along with him? That was the notion that he continually dwelt on for self-justification, when he happened to take the trouble to justify himself. The crisis of this girl's life was approaching. Other errors might be retrieved; that one, once committed, never. If he could only see her now, this is what he would say:—"*We can only live but once, Wenna; and this for us two would be life—our only chance of it. Whatever else may happen, that is no matter; let us make sure of this one chance, and face the future together, you full of sweetness and trust, I having plenty of courage for both. We will treat objectors and objections as they may arise—afterwards: perhaps they will be prudent and keep out of our way.*" And, indeed, he convinced himself that this was Wenna Rosewarne's one chance of securing happiness for her life, assuming, in a way, that he had love, as well as courage, sufficient for both.

He was early up next morning, and down on the promenade; but the day was not likely to tempt Wenna to come out just then. A grey fog hung over land and sea; the sea itself being a dull, leaden plain. Trelyon walked about, however, talking to everybody, as was his custom; and everybody said the fog would clear and a fine day follow. This, in fact, happened; and still Wenna did not make her appearance. The fog over the sea seemed to separate itself into clouds; there was a dim, yellow light in the breaks. These breaks widened; there was a glimmer of blue. Then, on the leaden plain, a glare of white light fell, twinkling in innumerable stars on the water. Everything promised a clear, bright day.

As a last resource, he thought he would go and get Juliott Penaluna, and persuade that young lady to come and be introduced to the Rosewarnes. At first Miss Penaluna refused point-blank. She asked him how he could expect her to do such a thing. But then her Cousin Harry happened to be civil, and indeed kind in his manner to her; and when he was in one of those moods there was nothing she could refuse him. She went and got ready with an air of resignation on her comely face.

"Mind, Harry, I am not responsible," she said, when she came back. "I am afraid I shall get into awful trouble about it."

"And who will interfere?" said the young man, just as if he were looking about for some one anxious to be thrown from the top of the tower on St. Michael's Mount.

"I shall be accused of conniving, you know; and I think I am very good-natured to do so much for you, Harry."

"I think you are, Jue; you are a thoroughly good sort

of girl when you like to be—that's a fact. And now you will see whether what I have said about Miss Rosewarne is all gammon or not."

"My poor boy, I wouldn't say a word against her for the world. Do I want my head wrenched off? But if any one says anything to me about what I may do to-day, I shall have to tell the truth; and do you know what that is, Harry? I do really believe you are in love with that girl, past all argument; and there never was one of your family who would listen to reason. I know quite well what you will do. If she cares ever so little for you, you will marry her in spite of everybody, and probably against her own wish; if she doesn't care for you, you will revenge yourself on the happy man of her choice, and probably murder him. Well, it isn't my fault. I know what your mother will say——"

"Ah, you don't know, Jue, what my mother thinks of her," he said confidently.

"Oh yes; mothers think very well of a girl until they discover that she is going to marry their son."

"Oh, stuff! why, the inconsistency——"

"It is the privilege of women to be inconsistent, Harry. Your mother will detest that girl if you try to marry her."

"I don't care."

"Of course not. No man of your family cares for anything that interferes with his own wishes. I suppose there's no use in my trying to show you what a fearful amount of annoyance and trouble you are preparing for yourself?"

"None; I'll take it as it comes—I'm not afraid."

They got down to the promenade; the forenoon was now bright and cheerful: a good many folks had come out to enjoy the sunlight and the cool sea-breeze. Miss Juliott was not at all disinclined to walk there with her handsome cousin, though he had forgotten his gloves, and was clearly not paying her very special attention.

"Jue," he said, suddenly, "I can see Miss Rosewarne—right at the end of this road—can't you?"

"I haven't got the eyes of a hawk, you stupid boy," his cousin said.

"Oh, but I can recognize her dress a dozen times as far away. These are her pet colours at present—a soft cream-colour and black, with bits of dark red—can you see now?"

"I never before saw you pay the least attention to a lady's dress."

"Because you don't know how *she* dresses," he said, proudly.

She was coming along the parade, all alone.

"Well, it *is* a pretty dress," Miss Juliott said, "and I like the look of her face, Harry. You can't expect one girl to say any more than that of another girl, can you?"

"This is a very nice way of being able to introduce you," he said. "I suppose you will be able to chaperon each other afterwards, when her mother can't go out?"

Wenna was coming quietly along, apparently rather preoccupied. Sometimes she looked out, with her dark, earnest, and yet wistful eyes, at the great plain of water quivering in the sunshine; she paid little heed to the people who went by. When, at length, she did see Harry Trelyon, she was quite near him, and she had just time to glance for a moment at his companion. The next moment—he could not tell how it all happened—she passed him with a slight bow of recognition, courteous enough, but nothing more. There was no especial look of friendliness in her eyes.

He stood there, rather bewildered.

"That is about as good as the cut direct, Harry," his cousin said. "Come along—don't stand there."

"Oh, but there's some mistake, Jue," he said.

"A girl never does a thing of that sort by mistake. Either she is vexed with you for walking with me—and that is improbable, for I doubt whether she saw me—or she thinks the ardour of your acquaintance should be moderated, and there I should agree with her. You don't seem so vexed as one might have expected, Harry."

"Vexed!" he said. "Why, can't you tell by that girl's face that she could do nothing capricious or unkind? Of course she has a reason; and I will find it out."

CHAPTER XXV.

NOT THE LAST WORD.

As soon as he could decently leave his cousin at home, he did ; and then he walked hastily down to the house in which Mrs. Rosewarne had taken rooms. Miss Rosewarne was not at home, the small maid-servant said. Was Mrs. Rosewarne ? Yes ; so he would see her.

He went upstairs, never thinking how his deep trouble about so insignificant an incident would strike a third person.

"Mrs. Rosewarne," he said, right out, "I want you to tell me if Wenna wishes our acquaintance to end. Has she been speaking to you ? Just now, she passed me in the street as if she did not wish to see me again."

"Probably," replied Mrs. Rosewarne, amused as well as surprised by the young man's impetuosity, "she did not see you then. Wenna often passes people so. Most likely she was thinking about other things ; for she had another letter from Jamaica just before she went out."

"Oh, she has had another letter from Jamaica this morning ! " Trelyon said, with an angry light appearing in his eyes. "That is it, is it ? "

"I don't understand you," Mrs. Rosewarne was saying, when both of them heard Wenna enter below.

"Mrs. Rosewarne," he said, with a sudden entreaty in his voice, "would you mind letting me see Wenna alone for a couple of minutes ? I want to ask her if she is offended with me—you won't mind, will you ? "

"Not in the least," she said, good-naturedly ; and then she added at the door, "Mind, Mr. Trelyon, Wenna is easily hurt. You must speak gently to her."

About a minute afterwards, Wenna, having laid her hat and shawl aside, came into the room. When she found Trelyon there, alone, she almost shrank back, and her face paled somewhat ; then she forced herself to go forward and shake hands with him, though her face still wore a frightened and constrained look.

"Wenna," he said, "don't go away. I want to speak to you for a minute. You are offended with me about something, and I want you to tell me why. If you wish our friendship to cease, say so, and I will obey you ; but you must tell me why first."

"I am not offended with you, Mr. Trelyon," she said, in a low and nervous voice. "Do not think that. But—but I think it will be better if you will let our friendship cease, as you say."

For a second he stared : then something of firmness came about his mouth.

"Oh, no," he said, "I will not, in this fashion. You've got to tell me what is the matter first. Now remember this. Not very long ago you chose to quarrel with me about nothing—absolutely about nothing. You know quite well that I meant no harm to you by lending Mr. Roscorla that money ; yet you must needs flare up and give it me as hot as you could, all for nothing. What could I do ? Why, only wait until you saw what a mistake you had made."

"It was very wrong of me," she said. "I ask your forgiveness. But now it is quite different. I am not angry with you at all. I should like to remain your friend ; and yet I think it better not. I—I cannot explain to you, Mr. Trelyon ; and I am sure you won't ask me, when I say so."

He looked at her for a moment, and then he said, gently and yet firmly—

"Look here, Wenna. You think I am only a boy. That may or may not be ; but I am going to talk reasonably to you for once. Come over to this chair by the window, and sit down."

She followed him in passive obedience. She took the one chair, he the other.

"Perhaps I am only a boy," he said ; "but I have knocked about a good deal, and I have kept my eyes as wide open as most folks. I suppose ill-natured people might say that, as I had nothing to do at Eglosilyan, I wanted to have a flirtation with the only girl who was handy. I know better. Year after year I saw more and more of you, bit by bit ; and that after I had been abroad or living in other places in England from time to time. I got to believe that I had never seen anywhere any girl or woman who was so honest as you are, and good in a dozen

secret ways that needed a deal of discovering. I found out far more about you than you imagined. I heard of you in cottages that you never knew I was in; and everything I heard made me respect you more and more. Mind this too, I had no sort of personal liking for the sort of thing you were doing. I don't admire muggy little rooms, and poverty, and sick people, as appealing to a fine sentiment. There never was anything of the parson or of the benevolent old lady about me. I would rather give half-a-crown to an impertinent little schoolboy who had just whopped another boy bigger than himself, than give a halfpenny tract to a sickly infant in its mother's arms; that's original sin in me, I suppose. But all that squalid sort of work you were in only made the jewel shine the more. I used to think I should like to marry a very grand woman, who could be presented at Court without a tremor, who would come into a drawing-room as if she was conferring a favour on the world at large; and I certainly never thought I should find the best woman I had ever seen in back-kitchens sewing pinafores for children. And then, when I found her there, wasn't it natural I should put some store by her friendship? I suppose you didn't know what I thought of you, Wenna, because I kept chaffing you and Mabyn? I have told you something of it now; and now I want you to say whether you have a right to shunt me off like this without a word of explanation."

She sate quite still, silent and nervous. The rude and impetuous eloquence of his speech, broken by many a hesitating stammer, had touched her. There was more thoughtfulness and tenderness in this wild lad than she had supposed.

"How can I explain?" she burst out, suddenly, "I should cover myself with shame!"

"And what have you to be ashamed of?" he said, with a stare.

The distress she was obviously suffering was so great that he had almost a mind to take her at her word, and leave the house without further ado. Just at this moment, when he was considering what would be the most generous thing to do, she seemed to nerve herself to speak to him, and in a low and measured voice she said—

"Yes, I will tell you. I have had a letter this morning from Mr. Roscorla. He asks me if it is true that you are paying me such attention that people notice it; and he asks me if that is how I keep my promise to him."

Something like a quiver of rage passed through the young man at this moment, but his teeth were kept firmly together. She did not look up to his face.

"That is not all. I must tell you that I was deeply shocked and grieved by this letter; but on looking back over the past six weeks I think a suspicious person might have been justified in complaining to Mr. Roscorla. And—and—and, Mr. Trelyon, did you see that dried flower in my Prayer-book last night?"

Her resolution was fast ebbing away; he could see that her hands were clasped piteously together.

"Yes, I did," he said, boldly.

"And oh! what could you have thought of me!" she cried, in her distress. "Indeed, Mr. Trelyon, it was all a mistake. I did not keep the flower—I did not, indeed. And when I thought you had seen it, I could have died for shame."

"And why?" he said, in a way that made her lift up her startled eyes to his face. There was a strange look there, as of a man who had suddenly resolved to dare his fate. "For you have been frank with me, and so will I be with you. Why should you not have kept that flower? Yes, I sent it to you; and with all the purpose that such a thing could carry. Yes, you may be as angry as you please; only listen, Wenna. You don't love that man whom you are engaged to marry; you know in your heart that you do not believe in his love for you; and are you surprised that people should wish to have you break off an engagement that will only bring you misery?"

"Mr. Trelyon!"

"Wenna, one minute—you must hear me. Do with my offer what you like—only here it is: give me the power to break off this engagement, and I will. Give me the right to do that! Don't mind me in the matter. It is true I love you—there, I will say it again: there is nothing I think of from morning till night but my love for you; and if you would say that some time I might ask you to be my

wife, you would give me more happiness than you could dream of. But I don't wish that now. I will remain your friend, if you like, Wenna; only let me do this thing for you; and when you are free, you can then say Yes or No."

She rose, not proud and indignant, but weeping bitterly.

"I have deserved this," she said, apparently overwhelmed with mortification and self-reproach. "I have earned this shame, and I must bear it. I do not blame you, Mr. Trelyon—it is I who have done this. How many weeks is it since the man left England to whom I promised to be faithful? and already—but this I can do, Mr. Trelyon: I will bid you good-bye now, and I will never see you again."

Her face was quite pale. She held out her hand.

"No," he said firmly. "We do not part like that, Wenna. First, let me say that you have nothing to accuse yourself of. You have done nothing, and said nothing, of which any man, however mean and suspicious, could complain. Perhaps I was too hasty in speaking of my love for you. In that case, I've got to pay for my folly."

"And it is folly, Mr. Trelyon!" she said, passionately, and yet with nothing but tenderness in her face. "How could you have thought of marrying me? Why, the future that ought to lie before you is far more than you can imagine yet; and you would go and hamper it by marrying an innkeeper's daughter! It is folly, indeed; and you will see that very soon. But—but I am very sorry all this has occurred; it is another grief to me that I have troubled you. I think I was born to bring grief to all my friends."

He was anxiously debating what he should do; and he needed all his wits at that moment, for his own feelings were strong within him, and clamouring for expression. Would he insist? Would he bear down all opposition? Happily, quieter counsels prevailed; for there was no mistaking the absolute truthfulness of what the girl had said.

"Well, Wenna." he said, "I will do anything you like, only to remain your friend. Is that possible? Will you forgive all that I have said if I make you a promise not to repeat it, and never again to mention your engagement to Mr. Roscorla?"

"No, we must part now altogether," she said slowly.

Then, by haphazard, she glanced up at his face for a moment, and there was a great sadness in her eyes. "It is a hard thing to part. Perhaps it will not be necessary that you should never come to see me. But we must not be friends as we have been; for I have my duty to do towards him."

"Then I may come to see you sometimes?"

She hesitated.

"You may come to see my mother sometimes. And I will always think of you as a dear friend, whether I see you or not."

He went outside, and drew a long breath.

"I had to keep a tight grip on the reins that time," he was thinking to himself; "a precious tight grip; but I did it."

He thought of the look there was in her eyes when she finally bid him good-bye. His face grew the happier as he thought of it. He was clearly not at all down-hearted about his rejection; on the contrary, he went and told his Cousin Juliott that the little affair of the morning had been quite satisfactorily arranged; that Miss Wenna and he were very good friends again; and that it was quite a mistake to imagine that she was already married to Mr. Roscorla.

"Harry," said his Cousin, "I strictly forbid you to mention that gentleman's name."

"Why, Jue?" he said.

"Because I will not listen to the bad language you invariably use whenever you speak of him; and you ought to remember that you are in a clergyman's house. I wonder Miss Rosewarne is not ashamed to have your acquaintance; but I dare say you amend your ways when you are in her presence. She'll have plenty to reform if ever she takes you for a husband."

"That's true enough, Jue," the young man said, penitently. "I believe I'm a bad lot; but then, look at the brilliant contrast which the future will present. You know that my old grandmother is always saying to me, 'Harry, you were born with as many manners as most folks; and you've used none; so you'll have a rare stock to come and go on when you begin.'"

CHAPTER XXVI.

A PERILOUS TRUCE.

THE very stars in their courses seemed to fight for this young man.

No sooner had Wenna Rosewarne fled to her own room, there to think over in a wild and bewildered way all that had just happened, than her heart smote her sorely. She had not acted prudently. She had forgotten her self-respect. She ought to have forbidden him to come near her again—at least, until such time as this foolish fancy of his should have passed away and been forgotten.

How could she have parted with him so calmly, and led him to suppose that their former relations were unaltered? She looked back on the forced quietude of her manner, and was herself astonished. Now her heart was beating rapidly; her trembling fingers were unconsciously twisting and untwisting a bit of ribbon; her head seemed giddy with the recollection of that brief and strange interview. Then, somehow, she thought of the look on his face when she told him that henceforth they must be strangers to each other. It seemed hard that he should be badly used for what was, perhaps, no intentional fault. If anybody had been in fault, it was herself, in being blind to a possibility to which even her own sister had drawn her attention; and so the punishment ought to fall on her.

She would humble herself before Mr. Roscorla. She would force herself to be affectionate towards him in her letters. She would even write to Mabyn, and beg of her to take no notice of that angry remonstrance.

Then Wenna thought of her mother, and how she ought to tell her of all these things. But how could she? During the past day or two Mrs. Rosewarne had been at times singularly fretful and anxious. No letter had come from her husband. In vain did Wenna remind her that men were more careless of such small matters than women, and that it was too soon to expect her father to sit down and write. Mrs. Rosewarne sat brooding over her husband's

silence; then she would get up in an excited fashion and declare her intention of going straight back to Eglosilyan; and these fitful moods preyed on the health of the invalid. Ought Wenna to risk increasing her anxiety by telling her this strange tale? She would doubtless misunderstand it. She might be angry with Harry Trelyon. She would certainly be surprised that Wenna had given him permission to see her again—not knowing that the girl, in her forced composure, had been talking to him as if this avowal of his were of no great moment.

All the same Wenna had a secret fear that she had been imprudent in giving him this permission; and the most she could do now was to make his visits as few, short, and ceremonious as possible. She would avoid him by every means in her power; and the first thing was to make sure that he should not call on them again while they remained in Penzance.

So she went down to the small parlour in a much more equable frame of mind, though her heart was still throbbing in an unusual way. The moment she entered the room she saw that something had occurred to disturb her mother. Mrs. Rosewarne turned from the window, and there was an excited look in her eyes.

"Wenna," she said, hurriedly, "did you see that carriage? Did you see that woman? Who was with her? Did you see who was with her? I know it was she—not if I live a hundred years could I forget that—that devil in human shape!"

"Mother, I don't know what you mean," Wenna said, wholly aghast.

Her mother had gone to the window again, and she was saying to herself, hurriedly, and in a low voice—

"No, you don't know; you don't know—why should you know? That shameless creature! And to drive by here—she must have known I was here. Oh, the shamelessness of the woman!"

She turned to Wenna again.

"Wenna, I thought Mr. Trelyon was here. How long has he gone? I want to see him most particularly—most particularly, and only for a moment. He is sure to know all the strangers at his hotel, is he not? I want to ask

him some questions—Wenna, will you go at once and bid him come to see me for a moment?"

"Mother!" Wenna said—how could she go to the hotel with such a message?

"Well, send a note to him, Wenna—send a note by the girl downstairs. What harm is there in that?"

"Lie down then, mother," said the girl calmly, "and I will send a message to Mr. Trelyon."

She drew her chair to the table, and her cheeks crimsoned to think of what he might imagine this letter to mean when he got the envelope in his hands. Her fingers trembled as she wrote the date at the head of the note. Then she came to the word "Dear," and it seemed to her that if shame were a punishment, she was doing sufficient penance for her indiscretion of that morning. Yet the note was not a compromising one. It merely said, "Dear Mr. Trelyon,—If you have a moment to spare, my mother would be most obliged to you if you would call on her. I hope you will forgive the trouble.—Yours sincerely, Wenna Rosewarne."

When the young man got that note—he was just entering the hotel when the servant arrived—he stared with surprise. He told the girl he would call on Mrs. Rosewarne directly. Then he followed her.

He never for a moment doubted that this note had reference to his own affairs. Wenna had told her mother what had happened. The mother wished to see him to ask him to cease visiting them. Well, he was prepared for that. He would ask Wenna to leave the room. He would attack the mother boldly, and tell her what he thought of Mr. Roscorla. He would appeal to her to save her daughter from the impending marriage. He would win her over to be his secret ally and friend; and while nothing should be done precipitately to alarm Wenna or arouse her suspicions, might not these two carry the citadel of her heart in time, and hand over the keys to the rightful lord? It was a pleasant speculation; it was at least marked by that audacity that never wholly forsook Master Harry Trelyon. Of course, he was the rightful lord; ready to bid all false claimants, rivals, and pretenders beware.

And yet, as he walked up to the house, some little tremor of anxiety crept into his heart. It was no mere game of

brag in which he was engaged. As he went into the parlour, Wenna stepped quietly by him, her eyes downcast; and he knew that all he cared to look forward to in the world depended on the decision of that quiet little person with the sensitive mouth and the earnest eyes. Fighting was not of much use there.

"Well, Mrs. Rosewarne," he said, rather shame-facedly, "I suppose you mean to scold me?"

Her answer surprised him. She took no heed of his remark, but in a vehement, excited way, began to ask him questions about a woman whom she described. He stared at her.

"I hope you don't know anything about that elegant creature?" he said.

She did not wholly tell him the story, but left him to guess at some portions of it; and then she demanded to know all about the woman and her companion, and how long they had been in Penzance, and where they were going? Master Harry was by chance able to reply to certain of her questions. The answers comforted her greatly. Was he quite sure that she was married? What was her husband's name? She was no longer Mrs. Shirley? Would he find out all he could? Would he forgive her asking him to take all this trouble; and would he promise to say no word about it to Wenna?

When all this had been said and done, the young man felt himself considerably embarrassed. Was there to be no mention of his own affairs? So far from remonstrating with him and forbidding him the house, Mrs. Rosewarne was almost effusively grateful to him, and could only beg him a thousand times not to mention the subject to her daughter.

"Oh, of course not," said he, rather bewildered. "But—but I thought from the way in which she left the room that—that perhaps I had offended her."

"Oh no, I am sure that is not the case," said Mrs. Rosewarne, and she immediately went and called Wenna, who came into the room with rather an anxious look on her face, but she immediately perceived the change in her mother's mood. The demon of suspicion and jealousy had been as suddenly exorcised as it had been summoned. Mrs.

Rosewarne's fine eyes were lit by quite a new brightness and gaiety of spirits. She bade Wenna declare what fearful cause of offence Mr. Trelyon had given; and laughed when the young man, blushing somewhat, hastily assured both of them that it was all a stupid mistake of his own.

"Oh yes," Wenna said, rather nervously, "it is a mistake. I am sure you have given me no offence at all, Mr. Trelyon."

It was an embarrassing moment for two, at least, out of these three persons; and Mrs. Rosewarne, in her abundant good-nature, could not understand their awkward silence. Wenna was apparently looking out of the window at the bright blue bay and the boats; and yet the girl was not ordinarily so occupied when Mr. Trelyon was present. As for him, he had got his hat in his hands; he seemed to be much concerned about it, or about his boots; one did not often find Harry Trelyon actually showing shyness.

At last he said, desperately—

"Mrs. Rosewarne, perhaps you would go out for a sail in the afternoon? I could get you a nice little yacht, and some rods and lines. Won't you?"

Mrs. Rosewarne was in a kindly humour. She said she would be very glad to go, for Wenna was growing tired of always sitting by the window. This would be some little variety for her.

"I hope you won't consider me, mother," said the young lady quickly, and with some asperity. "I am quite pleased to sit by the window—I could do so always. And it is very wrong of us to take up so much of Mr. Trelyon's time."

"Because Mr. Trelyon's time is of so much use to him," said that young man, with a laugh; and then he told them when to expect him in the afternoon, and went his way.

He was in much better spirits when he went out. He whistled as he went. The plash of the blue sea all along the shingle seemed to have a sort of laugh in it; he was in love with Penzance and all its beautiful neighbourhood. Once again, he was saying to himself, he would spend a quiet and delightful afternoon with Wenna Rosewarne, even if that were to be the last. He would surrender himself to the gentle intoxication of her presence. He would get a glimpse, from time to time, of her dark eyes when

she was looking wistfully and absently over the sea. It was no breach of the implied contract with her that he should have seized this occasion. He had been sent for. And if it was necessary that he should abstain from seeing her for any great length of time, why this single afternoon would not make much difference. Afterwards, he would obey her wishes in any manner she pleased.

He walked into the hotel. There was a gentleman standing in the hall, whose acquaintance Master Harry had condescended to make. He was a person of much money, uncertain grammar, and oppressive generosity; he wore a frilled shirt and diamond studs, and he had such a vast admiration for this handsome, careless, and somewhat rude young man, that he would have been very glad had Mr. Trelyon dined with him every evening, and taken the trouble to win any reasonable amount of money of him at billiards afterwards. Mr. Trelyon had not as yet graced his table.

"Oh, Grainger," said the young man, "I want to speak to you. Will you dine with me to-night at eight?"

"No, no, no," said Mr. Grainger, shaking his head in humble protest, "that isn't fair. You dine with me. It ain't the first or the second time of asking either."

"But look here," said Trelyon, "I've got lots more to ask of you. I want you to lend me that little cutter of yours for the afternoon; will you? You send your man on board to see she's all right, and I'll pull out to her in about half-an-hour's time. You'll do that, won't you, like a good fellow?"

Mr. Grainger was not only willing to lend the yacht, but also his own services, to see that she properly received so distinguished a guest; whereupon Trelyon had to explain that he wanted the small craft merely to give a couple of ladies a sail for an hour or so. Then Mr. Grainger would have his man instructed to let the ladies have some tea on board; and he would give Master Harry the key of certain receptacles, in which he would find cans of preserved meat, fancy biscuits, jam, and even a few bottles of dry Sillery; finally he would immediately hurry off to see about fishing-rods. Trelyon had to acknowledge to himself that this worthy person deserved the best dinner that the hotel could produce.

In the afternoon he walked along to fetch Mrs. Rosewarne and her daughter, his face bright with expectation. Mrs. Rosewarne was dressed and ready when he went in; but she said—

"I am afraid I can't go, Mr. Trelyon. Wenna says she is a little tired, and would rather stay at home."

"Wenna, that isn't fair," he said, obviously hurt. "You ought to make some little effort when you know it will do your mother good. And it will do you good too, if only you make up your mind to go."

She hesitated for a moment; she saw that her mother was disappointed. Then, without a word, she went and put on her hat and shawl.

"Well," he said, approvingly, "you are very reasonable, and very obedient. But we can't have you go with us with such a face as that. People would say we were going to a funeral."

A shy smile came over the gentle features, and she turned aside.

"And we can't have you pretend that we forced you to go. If we go at all, you must lead the way."

"You would tease the life out of a saint!" she said, with a vexed and embarrassed laugh, and then she marched out before them, very glad to be able to conceal her heightened colour.

But much of her reserve vanished when they had set sail, and when the small cutter was beginning to make way through the light and plashing waves. Wenna's face brightened. She no longer let her two companions talk exclusively to each other. She began to show a great curiosity about the little yacht; she grew anxious to have the lines flung out; no words of hers could express her admiration for the beauty of the afternoon and of the scene around her.

"Now, are you glad you came out?" he said to her.

"Yes," she answered shyly.

"And you'll take my advice another time?"

"Do *you* ever take any one's advice?" she said, venturing to look up.

"Yes, certainly," he answered, "when it agrees with my own inclination. Who ever does any more than that?"

They were now a good bit away from land.

"Skipper," said Trelyon to Mr. Grainger's man, "we'll put her about now, and let her drift. Here is a cigar for you; you can take it up to the bow and smoke it, and keep a good look-out for the sea-serpent."

By this arrangement they obtained, as they sat and idly talked, an excellent view of all the land around the bay, and of the pale, clear sunset shining in the western skies. They lay almost motionless in the lapping water; the light breeze scarcely stirred the loose canvas. From time to time they could hear a sound of calling or laughing from the distant fishing-boats; and that only seemed to increase the silence around them.

It was an evening that invited to repose and reverie; there were not even the usual fiery colours of the sunset to arouse and fix attention by their rapidly changing and glowing hues. The town itself, lying darkly all around the sweep of the bay, was dusky and distant; elsewhere all the world seemed to be flooded with the silver light coming over from behind the western hills. The sky was of the palest blue; the long mackerel clouds that stretched across were of the faintest yellow and lightest grey; and into that shining grey rose the black stems of the trees that were just over the outline of these low heights. St. Michael's Mount had its summit touched by the pale glow; the rest of the giant rock and the far stretches of sea around it were grey with mist. But close by the boat there was a sharper light on the lapping waves and on the tall spars; while it was warm enough to heighten the colour on Wenna's face as she sat and looked silently at the great and open world around her.

They were drifting in more ways than one. Wenna almost forgot what had occurred in the morning. She was so pleased to see her mother pleased, that she talked quite unreservedly to the young man who had wrought the change, and was ready to believe all that Mrs. Rosewarne said in private about his being so delightful and cheerful a companion. As for him, he was determined to profit by this last opportunity. If the strict rules of honour demanded that Mr. Roscorla should have fair play—or if Wenna wished him to absent himself, which was of more consequence than Mr. Roscorla's interests—he would make his

visits few and formal; but in the mean time, at least, they would have this one pleasant afternoon together. Sometimes, it is true, he rebelled against the uncertain pledge he had given her. Why should he not seek to win her? What had the strict rules of honour to do with the prospect of a young girl allowing herself to be sacrificed, while here he was able and willing to snatch her away from her fate?

"How fond you are of the sea and of boats!" he said to her. "Sometimes I think I shall have a big schooner yacht built for myself, and take her to the Mediterranean, going from place to place just as one took the fancy. But it would be very dull by yourself, wouldn't it, even if you had a dozen men on board? What you want is to have a small party all very friendly with each other, and at night you would sit up on deck and sing songs. And I think you would like those old-fashioned songs that you sing, Miss Wenna, all the better for hearing them so far away from home—at least, I should; but then I'm an outer barbarian. I think you, now, would be delighted with the grand music abroad—with the operas, you know, and all that. I've had to knock about these places with people; but I don't care about it. I would rather hear 'Norah, the Pride of Kildare,' or 'The Maid of Llangollen'—because; I suppose, these young women are more in my line. You see, I shouldn't care to make the acquaintance of a gorgeous creature with black hair and a train of yellow satin half a mile long, who tosses up a gilt goblet when she sings a drinking-song, and then gets into a frightful passion about what you don't understand. Wouldn't you rather meet the 'Maid of Llangollen' coming along a country road—coming in by Marazion over there, for example, with a bright print dress all smelling of lavender, and a basket of fresh eggs over her arm? Well—what was I saying? Oh yes! don't you think if you were away in the Adriatic, and sitting up on deck at night, you would make the people have a quiet cry when you sang 'Home, sweet home'? The words are rather silly, aren't they? But they make you think of such a lot if you hear them abroad."

"And when are you going away this year, Mr. Trelyon?" Wenna said, looking down.

"Oh, I don't know," he said cheerfully; he would have no question of his going away interfere with the happiness of the present moment.

At length, however, they had to bethink themselves of getting back, for the western skies were deepening in colour, and the evening air was growing chill. They ran the small cutter back to her moorings; then they put off in the small boat for the shore. It was a beautiful, quiet evening. Wenna, who had taken off her glove and was allowing her bare hand to drag through the rippling water, seemed to be lost in distant and idle fancies not altogether of a melancholy nature.

"Wenna," her mother said, "you will get your hand perfectly chilled."

The girl drew back her hand, and shook the water off her dripping fingers. Then she uttered a slight cry.

"My ring!" she said, looking with absolute fright at her hand and then at the sea.

Of course, they stopped the boat instantly; but all they could do was to stare at the clear dark water. The distress of the girl was beyond expression. This was no ordinary trinket that had been lost; it was a gage of plighted affection given her by one now far away, and in his absence she had carelessly flung it into the sea. She had no fear of omens, as her sister had; but surely, of all things in the world, she ought to have treasured up this ring. In spite of herself, tears sprang to her eyes. Her mother in vain attempted to make light of the loss. And then at last Harry Trelyon, driven almost beside himself by seeing the girl so plunged in grief, hit upon a wild fashion of consoling her.

"Wenna," he said, "don't disturb yourself! Why, we can easily get you the ring. Look at the rocks there—a long bank of smooth sand slopes out from them, and your ring is quietly lying upon the sand. There is nothing easier than to get it up with a dredging-machine—I will undertake to let you have it by to-morrow afternoon."

Mrs. Rosewarne thought he was joking; but he effectually persuaded Wenna, at all events, that she should have her ring next day. Then he discovered that he would be just in time to catch the half-past six train to Plymouth

where he would get the proper apparatus, and return in the morning.

"It was a pretty ring," said he. "There were six stones in it, weren't there?"

"Five," she said; so much she knew, though it must be confessed she had not studied that token of Mr. Roscorla's affection with the earnest solicitude which most young ladies bestow on the first gift of their lover.

Trelyon jumped into a fly, and drove off to the station, where he sent back an apology to Mr. Grainger. Wenna went home more perturbed than she had been for many a day, and that not solely on account of the lost ring.

Everything seemed to conspire against her, and keep her from carrying out her honourable resolutions. That sail in the afternoon she could not well have avoided; but she had determined to take some opportunity of begging Mr. Trelyon not to visit them again while they remained in Penzance. Now, however, he was coming next day; and whether or not he was successful in his quest after the missing ring, would she not have to show herself abundantly grateful for all his kindness?

In putting away her gloves, she came upon a letter of Mr. Roscorla, which she had not yet answered. She shivered slightly; the handwriting on the envelope seemed to reproach her. And yet something of a rebellious spirit rose in her against this imaginary accusation; and she grew angry that she was called upon to serve this harsh and inconsiderate taskmaster, and give him explanations which humiliated her. He had no right to ask questions about Mr. Trelyon. He ought not to have listened to idle gossip. He should have had sufficient faith in her promised word; and if he only knew the torture of doubt and anxiety she was suffering on his behalf——

She did not pursue these speculations further; but it was well with Mr. Roscorla that she did not at that moment sit down and answer his letter.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FURTHER ENTANGLEMENTS.

"MOTHER," said Wenna, that night, "what vexed you so this morning? Who was the woman who went by?"

"Don't ask me, Wenna," the mother said, rather uneasily. "It would do you no good to know. And you must not speak of that woman—she is too horrid a creature to be mentioned by a young girl ever."

Wenna looked surprised; and then she said, warmly—

"And if she is so, mother, how could you ask Mr. Trelyon to have anything to do with her? Why should you send for him? Why should he be spoken to about her?"

"Mr. Trelyon!" her mother said, impatiently. "You seem to have no thought now for anybody but Mr. Trelyon. Surely the young man can take care of himself."

The reproof was just; the justice of it was its sting. She was indeed thinking too much about the young man, and her mother was right in saying so; but who was to understand the extreme anxiety that possessed her to bring these dangerous relations to an end?

On the following afternoon Wenna, sitting alone at the window, heard Trelyon enter below. The young person who had charge of such matters allowed him to go up the stairs and announce himself as a matter of course. He tapped at the door, and came into the room.

"Where's your mother, Wenna? The girl said she was here. However, never mind—I've brought you something that will astonish you. What do you think of that?"

She scarcely looked at the ring, so great was her embarrassment. That the present of one lover should be brought back to her by another was an awkward, almost a humiliating, circumstance. Yet she was glad as well as ashamed.

"Oh, Mr. Trelyon, how can I thank you?" she said, in her low, earnest voice. "All you seem to care for is to make other people happy—and the trouble you have taken too!"

She forgot to look at the ring—even when he pointed

out how the washing of the sea had made it bright. She never asked about the dredging. Indeed, she was evidently disinclined to speak of this matter in any way, and kept the finger with the ring on it out of sight.

"Mr. Trelyon," she said then, with equal steadiness of voice, "I am going to ask something more from you; and I am sure you will not refuse it——"

"I know," said he, hastily, "and let me have the first word. I have been thinking over our position, during this trip to Plymouth and back. Well, I think I have become a nuisance to you—wait a bit, let me say my say in my own way—I can see that I only embarrass you when I call on you, and that the permission you give me is only leading to awkwardness and discomfort. Mind, I don't think you are acting fairly to yourself or to me in forbidding me to mention again what I told you. I know you're wrong. You should let me show you what sort of a life lies before you—but there, I promised to keep clear of that. Well, I will do what you like; and if you'd rather have me stay away altogether, I will do that. I don't want to be a nuisance to you. But mind this, Wenna, I do it because you wish it—I don't do it because I think any man is bound to respect an engagement which—which—which, in fact, he doesn't respect——"

His eloquence broke down; but his meaning was clear. He stood there before her, ready to accept her decision with all meekness and obedience; but giving her frankly to understand that he did not any the more countenance or consider as a binding thing her engagement to Mr. Roscorla.

"Mind you," he said, "I am not quite as indifferent about all this as I look. It isn't the way of our family to put their hands in their pockets and wait for orders. But I can't fight with you. Many a time I wish there was a man in the case—then he and I might have it out: but as it is, I suppose I have got to do what you say, Wenna, and that's the long and the short of it."

She did not hesitate. She went forward and offered him her hand; and with her frank eyes looking him in the face, she said—

"You have said what I wished to say, and I feared I had not the courage to say it. Now you are acting bravely. Perhaps at some future time we may become friends again—oh yes, and I do hope that!—but in the mean time you will treat me as if I were a stranger to you!"

"That is quite impossible," said he, decisively. "You ask too much, Wenna."

"Would not that be the simpler way?" she said, looking at him again with the frank and earnest eyes; and he knew she was right.

"And the length of time?" he said.

"Until Mr. Roscorla comes home again, at all events," she said.

She had touched an angry chord.

"What has he to do with us?" the young man said, almost fiercely. "I refuse to have him come in as arbiter or in any way whatever. Let him mind his own business; and I can tell you, when he and I come to talk over this engagement of yours——"

"You promised not to speak of that," she said quietly, and he instantly ceased.

"Well, Wenna," he said, after a minute or two, "I think you ask too much; but you must have it your own way. I won't annoy you and drive you into a corner—you may depend on that. But to be perfect strangers for an indefinite time!—then you won't speak to me when I see you passing to church?"

"Oh yes," she said, looking down; "I did not mean strangers like that."

"And I thought," said he, with something more than disappointment in his face, "that when I proposed to—to relieve you from my visits, you would at least let us have one more afternoon together—only one—for a drive, you know. It would be nothing to you—it would be something for me to remember——"

She would not recognize the fact, but for a brief moment his under lip quivered; and somehow she seemed to know it, though she dared not look up to his face.

"One afternoon—only one, to-morrow—next day, Wenna? Surely you cannot refuse me that?"

Then, looking at her with a great compassion in his eyes, he suddenly altered his tone.

"I think I ought to be hanged," he said in a vexed way. "You are the only person in the world I care for, and every time I see you I plunge you into trouble. Well, this is the last time. Good-bye, Wenna!"

Almost involuntarily she put out her hand; but it was with the least perceptible gesture to bid him remain. Then she went past him; and there were tears running down her face.

"If—if you will wait a moment," she said, I will see if mamma and I can go with you to-morrow afternoon."

She went out and he was left alone. Each word that she had uttered had pierced his heart; but which did he feel the more deeply—remorse that he should have insisted on this slight and useless concession, or bitter rage against the circumstances that environed them, and the man who was altogether responsible for these? There was now at least one person in the world who greatly longed for the return of Mr. Roscorla.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FAREWELL!

"YES, it is true," the young man said, next morning, to his cousin, "this is the last time I shall see her for many a day."

He was standing with his back to her, moodily staring out of the window.

"Well, Harry," his cousin said, gently enough, "you won't be hurt if I say it is a very good thing? I am glad to see you have so much patience and reasonableness. Indeed, I think Miss Rosewarne has very much improved you in that respect; and it is very good advice she has given you now."

"Oh yes, it is all very well to talk!" he said impatiently. "Common sense is precious easy when you are quite indifferent. Of course, she is quite indifferent, and she says, 'Don't trouble me!' What can one do but go? But if she was not so indifferent——"

He turned suddenly.

"Jue, you can't tell what trouble I am in! Do you

know that sometimes I have fancied she was not quite so indifferent—I have had the cheek to think so from one or two things she said—and then, if that were so, it is enough to drive one mad to think of leaving her. How could I leave her, Jue? If any one cared for you, would you quietly sneak off in order to consult your own comfort and convenience? Would you be patient and reasonable then?"

"Harry, don't talk in that excited way. Listen. She does not ask you to go away for your sake, but for hers."

"For her sake?" he repeated, staring. "If she is indifferent, how can that matter to her? Well, I suppose I am a nuisance to her—as much as I am to myself. There it is. I am an interloper."

"My poor boy," his cousin said, with a kindly smile, "you don't know your own mind two minutes running. During this past week you have been blown about by all sorts of contrary winds of opinion and fancy. Sometimes you thought she cared for you—sometimes no. Sometimes you thought it a shame to interfere with Mr. Roscorla; then again you grew indignant and would have slaughtered him. Now you don't know whether you ought to go away or stop to persecute her. Don't you think she is the best judge?"

"No, I don't," he said. "I think she is no judge of what is best for her, because she never thinks of that. She wants somebody by her to insist on her being properly selfish."

"That would be a pretty lesson."

"A necessary one, anyhow, with some women, I can tell you. But I suppose I must go, as she says. I couldn't bear meeting her about Eglosilyan, and be scarcely allowed to speak to her. Then when that hideous little beast comes back from Jamaica, fancy seeing them walk about together! I must cut the whole place. I shall go into the army—it's the profession open to a fool like me, and they say it won't be long open either. When I come back, Jue, I suppose you'll be Mrs. Tressider."

"I am very sorry," his cousin said, not heeding the reference to herself; "I never expected to see you so deep in trouble, Harry. But you have youth and good spirits on your side: you will get over it."

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"I am very sorry," his cousin said, not heeding the reference to herself; "I never expected to see you so deep in trouble, Harry. But you have youth and good spirits on your side: you will get over it."

"I suppose so," he said, not very cheerfully; and then he went off to see about the carriage which was to take Wenna and himself for their last drive together.

At the same time that he was talking to his cousin, Wenna was seated at her writing-desk answering Mr. Roscorla's letter. Her brows were knit together; she was evidently labouring at some difficult and disagreeable task. Her mother, lying on the sofa, was regarding her with an amused look.

"What is the matter, Wenna? That letter seems to give you a deal of trouble."

The girl put down her pen with some trace of vexation in her face.

"Yes, indeed, mother. How is one to explain delicate matters in a letter? Every phrase seems capable of misconstruction. And then the mischief it may cause!"

"But surely you don't need to write with such care to Mr. Roscorla?"

Wenna coloured slightly, and hesitated, as she answered—"Well, mother, it is something peculiar. I did not wish to trouble you; but after all I don't think you will vex yourself about so small a thing. Mr. Roscorla has been told stories about me. He is angry that Mr. Trelyon should visit us so often. And—and—I am trying to explain. That is all, mother."

"It is quite enough, Wenna; but I am not surprised. Of course, if foolish persons liked to misconstrue Mr. Trelyon's visits, they might make mischief. I see no harm in them myself. I suppose the young man found an evening at the inn amusing; and I can see that he likes you very well, as many other people do. But you know how you are situated, Wenna. If Mr. Roscorla objects to your continuing an acquaintance with Mr. Trelyon, your duty is clear."

"I do not think it is, mother," Wenna said, an indignant flush of colour appearing in her face. "I should not be justified in throwing over any friend or acquaintance merely because Mr. Roscorla had heard rumours. I would not do it. He ought not to listen to such things—he ought to have greater faith in me. But at the same time I have asked Mr. Trelyon not to come here so often—I have done so already—and after to-day, mother, the gossips will have nothing to report."

"That is better, Wenna," the mother said; "I shall be sorry myself to miss the young man, for I like him; but it is better you should attend to Mr. Roscorla's wishes. And don't answer his letter in a vexed or angry way, Wenna."

She was certainly not doing so. Whatever she might be thinking, a deliberate and even anxious courtesy was visible in the answer she was sending him. Her pride would not allow her to apologize for what had been done, in which she had seen no wrong; but as to the future she was earnest in her promises. And yet she could not help saying a good word for Trelyon.

"You have known him longer than I have," she wrote, "and you know what his character is. I could see nothing wrong in his coming to see my family and myself; nor did you say anything against him while you saw him with us. I am sure you believe he is straightforward, honest, and frank; and if his frankness sometimes verges upon rudeness, he is of late greatly improved in that respect—as in many others—and he is most respectful and gentle in his manners. As for his kindness to my mother and myself, we could not shut our eyes to it. Here is the latest instance of it; although I feel deeply ashamed to tell you the story. We were returning in a small boat, and I was carelessly letting my hand drag through the water, when somehow the ring you gave me dropped off. Of course, we all considered it lost—all except Mr. Trelyon, who took the trouble to go at once all the way to Plymouth for a dredging-machine, and the following afternoon I was overjoyed to find him return with the lost ring, which I had scarcely dared hope to see again. How many gentlemen would have done so much for a mere acquaintance? I am sure if you had been here you would have been ashamed of me if I had not been grateful to him. Now, however, since you appear to attach importance to these idle rumours, I have asked Mr. Trelyon——"

So the letter went on. She would not have written so calmly if she had foreseen the passion which her ingenuous story about the dredging-machine was destined to arouse. When Mr. Roscorla read that simple narrative, he first

stared with astonishment as though she were making some foolish joke. Directly he saw she was serious, however, his rage and mortification were indescribable. Here was this young man, not content with hanging about the girl so that neighbours talked, but actually imposing on her credulity, and making a jest of that engaged ring which ought to have been sacred to her. Mr. Roscorla at once saw through the whole affair—the trip to Plymouth, the purchasing of a gipsy-ring that could have been matched a dozen times over anywhere—the return to Penzance with a cock-and-bull story about a dredging-machine. So hot was his anger that it overcame his prudence. He would start for England at once. He had taken no such resolution when he heard from the friendly and communicative Mr. Barnes that Mr. Trelyon's conduct with regard to Wenna was causing scandal; but this making a fool of him in his absence he could not bear. At any cost he would set out for England; arrange matters more to his satisfaction by recalling Wenna to a sense of her position; then he would return to Jamaica. His affairs there were already promising so well that he could afford the trip.

Meanwhile, Wenna had just finished her letter when Mr. Trelyon drove up with the carriage, and shortly afterwards came into the room. He seemed rather grave, and yet not at all sentimentally sad. He addressed himself mostly to Mrs. Rosewarne, and talked to her about the Port Isaac fishing, the emigration of the miners, and other matters. Then Wenna slipped away to get ready.

"Mrs. Rosewarne," he said, "you asked me to find out what I could about that red-faced person, you know. Well, here is an advertisement which may interest you. I came on it quite accidentally last night in the smoking-room of the hotel."

It was a marriage advertisement, cut from a paper about a week old. The name of the lady was "Katherine Ann, widow of the late J. T. Shirley, Esq., of Barrackpore."

"Yes! I was sure it was that woman!" Mrs. Rosewarne said eagerly. "And so she is married again?"

"I fancied the gay young things were here on their wedding-trip," Trelyon said carelessly. "They amused me.

I like to see turtle-doves of fifty billing and cooing on the promenade, especially when one of them wears a brown wig, has an Irish accent, and drinks brandy-and-water at breakfast. But he is a good billiard-player; yes, he is an uncommonly good billiard-player. He told me last night he had beaten the Irish Secretary the other day in the billiard-room of the House of Commons. I humbly suspect that was a lie. At least, I can't remember anything about a billiard-table in the House of Commons, and I was two or three times through every bit of it when I was a little chap, with an uncle of mine, who was a member then; but perhaps they've got a billiard-table now—who knows? He told me he had stood for an Irish borough—spent 3000*l.* on a population of 284—and all he got was a black eye and a broken head. I should say all that was a fabrication, too; indeed, I think he rather amuses himself with lies—and brandy-and-water. But you don't want to know anything more about him, Mrs. Rosewarne?"

She did not. All that she cared to know was in that little strip of printed paper; and as she left the room to get ready for the drive, she expressed herself grateful to him in such warm tones that he was rather astonished. After all, as he said to himself, he had had nothing to do in bringing about the marriage of that somewhat gorgeous person in whom Mrs. Rosewarne was so strangely interested.

They were silent as they drove away. There was one happy face amongst them, that of Mrs. Rosewarne; but she was thinking of her own affairs, in a sort of pleased reverie. Wenna was timid and a trifle sad; she said little beyond "Yes, Mr. Trelyon," and "No, Mr. Trelyon," and even that was said in a low voice. As for him, he spoke to her gravely and respectfully: it was already as if she were a mere stranger.

Had some of his old friends and acquaintances seen him now, they would have been something more than astonished. Was this young man, talking in a gentle and courteous fashion to his companion, and endeavouring to interest her in the various things around her, the same dare-devil lad who used to clatter down the main street of Eglosilyan, who knew no control other than his own unruly wishes,

and who had no answer but a mocking jest for any remonstrance ?

"And how long do you remain in Penzance, Mr. Trelyon ? " Mrs. Rosewarne said at length.

"Until to-morrow, I expect," he answered.

"To-morrow ? "

"Yes ; I am going back to Eglosilyan. You know my mother means to give some party or other on my coming of age, and there is so little of that amusement going on at our house that it needs all possible encouragement. After that I mean to leave Eglosilyan for a time."

Wenna said nothing ; but her downcast face grew a little paler : it was she who was banishing him.

"By the way," he continued with a smile, "my mother is very anxious about Miss Wenna's return. I fancy she has been trying to go into that business of the Sewing Club on her own account ; and in that case she would be sure to get into a mess. I know her first impulse would be to pay any money to smooth matters over ; but that would be a bad beginning, wouldn't it ? "

"Yes, it would," Wenna said ; but somehow, at this moment, she was less inclined to be hopeful about the future.

"And as for you, Mrs. Rosewarne," he said, "I suppose you will be going home soon, now that the change seems to have done you so much good ? "

"Yes, I hope so," she said ; "but Wenna must go first. My husband writes to me that he cannot do without her, and offers to send Mabyn instead. Nobody seems to be able to get on without our Wenna."

"And yet she has the most curious fancy that she is of no account to anybody. Why, some day I expect to hear of the people in Eglosilyan holding a public meeting to present her with a service of plate, and an address written on parchment, with blue and gold letters."

"Perhaps they will do that when she gets married," the mother said, ignorant of the stab she was dealing.

It was a picturesque and pleasant bit of country through which they were driving ; yet to two of them at least the afternoon sun seemed to shine over it with a certain sadness. It was as if they were bidding good-bye to some

beautiful scene they could scarcely expect to revisit. For many a day thereafter, indeed, Wenna seemed to recollect that drive as though it had happened in a dream. She remembered the rough and lonely road leading up sharp hills and getting down into valleys again ; the masses of ferns and wild flowers by the stone walls ; the wild and undulating country, with its stretches of yellow furze, its clumps of trees, and its huge blocks of grey granite. She remembered their passing into a curious little valley, densely wooded, the winding path of which was not well fitted for a broad carriage and a pair of horses. They had to watch the boughs and branches as they jolted by. The sun was warm among the foliage ; there was a resinous scent of ferns about. By-and-by the valley abruptly opened on a wide and beautiful picture. Lamorna Cove lay before them, and a cold fresh breeze came in from the sea. Here the world seemed to cease suddenly All around them were huge rocks, and wild flowers, and trees ; and far up there on their left rose a hill of granite, burning red with the sunset ; but down below them the strange little harbour was in shadow, and the sea beyond, catching nothing of the glow in the west, was grey, and mystic, and silent. Not a ship was visible on that pale plain ; no human being could be seen about the stone quays and the cottages ; it seemed as if they had come to the end of the world, and were its last inhabitants. All these things Wenna thought of in after days, until the odd and plain little harbour of Lamorna and its rocks and bushes and slopes of granite seemed to be some bit of fairyland, steeped in the rich hues of the sunset, and yet ethereal, distant, and unrecoverable.

Mrs. Rosewarne did not at all understand the silence of these young people, and made many attempts to break it up. Was the mere fact of Mr. Trelyon returning to Eglosilyan next day anything to be sad about ? He was not a schoolboy going back to school. As for Wenna, she had got back her engaged ring, and ought to have been grateful and happy.

"Come now," she said, "if you purpose to drive back by the Mouse Hole, we must waste no more time here. Wenna, have you gone to sleep ? "

The girl started as if she had really been asleep ; then

she walked back to the carriage and got in. They drove away again without saying a word.

"What is the matter with you, Wenna? Why are you so downcast?" her mother asked.

"Oh, nothing!" the girl said hastily. "But—but one does not care to talk much on so beautiful an evening."

"Yes, that is quite true," said Mr. Trelyon, quite as eagerly, and with something of a blush; "one only cares to sit and look at things."

"Oh, indeed," said Mrs. Rosewarne, with a smile; she had never before heard Mr. Trelyon express his views upon scenery.

They drove round by the Mouse Hole, and when they came in sight of Penzance again, the bay, and the semicircle of houses, and St. Michael's Mount, were all of a pale grey in the twilight. As they drove quietly along, they heard the voices of people from time to time; the occupants of the cottages had come out for their evening stroll and chat. Suddenly, as they were passing certain huge masses of rock that sloped suddenly down to the sea, they heard another sound—that of two or three boys calling out for help. The briefest glance showed what was going on. These boys were standing on the rocks, staring fixedly at one of their companions who had fallen into the water and was wildly splashing about, while all they could do to help him was to call for aid at the pitch of their voices.

"That chap's drowning!" Trelyon said, jumping out of the carriage.

The next minute he was out on the rocks, hastily pulling off his coat. What was it he heard just as he plunged into the sea—the agonized voice of a girl calling him back?

Mrs. Rosewarne was at this moment staring at her daughter with almost a horror-stricken look on her face. Was it really Wenna Rosewarne who had been so mean; and what madness possessed her to make her so? The girl had hold of her mother's arm with both her hands, and held it with the grip of a vice; while her white face was turned to the rocks and the sea.

"Oh, mother!" she cried, "it is only a boy, and he is a man—and there is not another in all the world like him——"

"Wenna, is it you who are speaking; or a devil? The boy is drowning!"

But he was drowning no longer. He was laid hold of by a strong arm, dragged in to the rocks, and there fished out by his companions. Then Trelyon got up on the rocks, and calmly looked at his dripping clothes.

"You are a nice little beast, you are!" he said to the small boy, who had swallowed a good deal of salt water, but was otherwise quite unhurt.

"How do you expect I am going home in these trousers? Perhaps your mother'll pay me for a new pair, eh? And give you a jolly good thrashing for tumbling in? Here's a half-crown for you, you young ruffian; and if I catch you on these rocks again, I'll throw you in and let you swim for it—see if I don't."

He walked up to the carriage, shaking himself, and putting on his coat as he went, with great difficulty.

"Mrs. Rosewarne, I must walk back—I can't think of——"

He uttered a short cry. Wenna was lying as one dead in her mother's arms, Mrs. Rosewarne vainly endeavouring to revive her. He rushed down the rocks again to a pool, and soaked his handkerchief in the water; then he went hurriedly back to the carriage, and put the cool handkerchief on her temples and on her face.

"Oh, Mr. Trelyon, do go away, or you will get your death of cold!" Mrs. Rosewarne said. "Leave Wenna to me. See, there is a gentleman who will lend you his horse, and you will get to your hotel directly."

He did not even answer her. His own face was about as pale as that of the girl before him, and hers was that of a corpse. But by-and-by strange tremors passed through her frame; her hands tightened their grip of her mother's arm, and, with a sort of shudder, she opened her eyes and fearfully looked around. She caught sight of the young man standing there; she scarcely seemed to recognize him for a moment. And then, with a quick nervous action, she caught at his hand and kissed it twice, hurriedly and wildly; then she turned to her mother, hid her face in her bosom, and burst into a flood of tears. Probably the girl scarcely knew all that had taken place; but her two com-

panions, in silence, and with a great apprehension filling their hearts, saw and recognized the story she had told.

"Mr. Trelyon," said Mrs. Rosewarne, "you must not remain here."

Mechanically he obeyed her. The gentleman who had been riding along the road had dismounted, and, fearing some accident had occurred, had come forward to offer his assistance. When he was told how matters stood, he at once gave Trelyon his horse to ride in to Penzance; and then the carriage was driven off also, at a considerably less rapid pace.

That evening Trelyon, having got into warm clothes and dined, went along to ask how Wenna was. His heart beat hurriedly as he knocked at the door. He had intended merely making the inquiry, and coming away again; but the servant said that Mrs. Rosewarne wished to see him.

He went upstairs, and found Mrs. Rosewarne alone. These two looked at each other; that single glance told everything. They were both aware of the secret that had been revealed.

For an instant there was dead silence between them; and then Mrs. Rosewarne, with a great sadness in her voice, despite its studied calmness, said—

"Mr. Trelyon, we need say nothing of what has occurred. There are some things that are best not spoken of. But I can trust to you not to seek to see Wenna before you leave here. She is quite recovered—only a little nervous, you know, and frightened. To-morrow she will be quite well again."

"You will bid her good-bye for me," he said.

But for the tight clasp of the hand between these two, it was an ordinary parting. He put on his hat and went out. Perhaps it was the cold sea air that had made his face so pale.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MABYN DREAMS.

"YES, mother," said Mabyn, bursting into the room, "here I am; and Jennifer's downstairs, with my box; and I am to stay with you here for another week or a fortnight: and Wenna's to go back at once, for the whole world is convulsed because of Mr. Trelyon's coming of age; and Mrs. Trelyon has sent and taken all our spare rooms; and father says Wenna must come back directly, for it's always 'Wenna, do this,' and 'Wenna, do that;' and if Wenna isn't there, of course the sky will tumble down on the earth—— mother, what's the matter, and where's Wenna!"

Mabyn was suddenly brought up in the middle of her voluble speech by the strange expression on her mother's face.

"Oh, Mabyn, something dreadful has happened to our Wenna?"

Mabyn turned deadly white.

"Is she ill?" she said, almost in a whisper.

"No, not ill; but a great trouble has fallen on her."

Then the mother, in a low voice, apparently fearful that any one should overhear, began to tell her younger daughter of all she had learnt within the past day or two—how young Trelyon had been bold enough to tell Wenna that he loved her; how Wenna had dallied with her conscience and been loth to part with him; how at length she had as good as revealed to him that she loved him in return; and how she was now overwhelmed and crushed beneath a sense of her own faithlessness and the impossibility of making reparation to her betrothed.

"Only to think, Mabyn," said the mother, in accents of despair, "that all this distress should have come about in such a quiet and unexpected way! Who could have foreseen it? Why, of all people in the world, you would have thought our Wenna was the least likely to have any misery of this sort; and many a time, don't you remember, I used to say it was so wise of her getting engaged to a prudent and elderly man, who would save her from the plagues and trials that young girls often suffer at the hands of their

panions, in silence, and with a great apprehension filling their hearts, saw and recognized the story she had told.

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lovers. I thought she was so comfortably settled. Everything promised her a quiet and gentle life. And now this sudden shock has come upon her, she seems to think she is not fit to live, and she goes on in such a wild way——"

"Where is she?" Mabyn said, abruptly.

"No, no, no," the mother said, anxiously. "You must not speak a word to her, Mabyn. You must not let her know I have told you anything about it. Leave her to herself for a while at least; if you spoke to her, she would take it you meant to accuse her; for she says you warned her, and she would pay no heed. Leave her to herself, Mabyn."

"Then where is Mr. Trelyon?" said Mabyn, with some touch of indignation in her voice. "What is he doing? Is he leaving her to herself too?"

"I don't know what you mean, Mabyn," her mother said, timidly.

"Why doesn't he come forward like a man, and marry her?" said Mabyn, boldly. "Yes, that is what I would do, if I were a man. She has sent him away? Yes, of course. That is right and proper. And Wenna will go on doing what is right and proper, if you allow her, to the very end, and the end will be a lifetime of misery, that's all. No, my notion is that she should do something that is not right and is quite improper, if only it makes her happy; and you'll see if I don't get her to do it. Why, mother, haven't you had eyes to see that these two have been in love for years? Nobody in the world had ever the least control over him but her; he would do anything for Wenna; and she—why she always came back singing after she had met and spoken to him. And then you talk about a prudent and sensible husband! I don't want Wenna to marry a watchful, mean, old, stocking-darning cripple, who will creep about the house all day, and peer into cupboards, and give her fourpence-halfpenny a week to live on. I want her to marry a man, one that is strong enough to protect her; and I tell you, mother—I've said it before and I say it again—she *shall not* marry Mr. Roscorla!"

"Mabyn!" said her mother, "you are getting madder than ever. Your dislike to Mr. Roscorla is most unreasonable. A cripple!—why——"

"Oh, mother!" Mabyn cried, with a bright light on her face, "only think of our Wenna being married to Mr. Trelyon, and how happy, and pleased, and pretty she would look as they went walking together! And then how proud he would be to have so nice a wife: and he would joke about her, and be very impertinent, but he would simply worship her all the same and do everything he could to please her. And he would take her away and show her all the beautiful places abroad; and he would have a yacht, too; and he would give her a fine house in London; and don't you think our Wenna would fascinate everybody with her mouse-like ways, and her nice, small steps? And if they did have any trouble, wouldn't she be better to have somebody with her, not timid, and anxious, and pettifogging, but somebody who wouldn't be cast down, but make her as brave as himself?"

Miss Mabyn was a shrewd young woman, and she saw that her mother's quick, imaginative, sympathetic nature was being captivated by this picture. She determined to have her as an ally.

"And don't you see, mother, how it all lies within her reach? Harry Trelyon is in love with her—there was no need for him to say so—I knew it long before he did. And she—why, she has told him now that she cares for him; and if I were he, I know what I'd do in his place. What is there in the way? Why, a—a sort of understanding——"

"A promise, Mabyn," said the mother.

"Well, a promise," said the girl, desperately, and colouring somewhat. "But it was a promise given in ignorance—she didn't know—how could she know? Everybody knows that such promises are constantly broken. If you are in love with somebody else, what's the good of your keeping the promise? Now, mother, won't you argue with her? See here. If she keeps her promise, there's three people miserable. If she breaks it, there's only one—and I doubt whether he's got the capacity to be miserable. That's two to one, or three to one, is it? Now will you argue with her, mother?"

"Mabyn, Mabyn," the mother said, with a shake of the head, but evidently pleased with the voice of the tempter, "your fancy has run away with you. Why, Mr. Trelyon has never proposed to marry her."

"I know he wants to," said Mabyn, confidently.

"How can you know?"

"I'll ask him and prove it to you."

"Indeed," said the mother, sadly, "it is no thought of marriage that is in Wenna's head just now. The poor girl is full of remorse and apprehension. I think she would like to start at once for Jamaica, and fling herself at Mr. Roscorla's feet, and confess her fault. I am glad she has to go back to Eglosilyan; that may distract her mind in a measure; at present she is suffering more than she shows."

"Where is she?"

"In her own room, tired out and fast asleep. I looked in a few minutes ago."

Mabyn went upstairs, after having seen that Jennifer had properly bestowed her box. Wenna had just risen from the sofa, and was standing in the middle of the room. Her younger and taller sister went blithely forward to her, kissed her as usual, took no notice of the sudden flush of red that sprang into her face, and proceeded to state, in a business-like fashion, all the arrangements that had to be made.

"Have you been enjoying yourself, Wenna?" Mabyn said, with a fine air of indifference.

"Oh, yes," Wenna answered; adding hastily, "don't you think mother is greatly improved?"

"Wonderfully. I almost forgot she was an invalid. How lucky you are to be going back to see all the fine doings at the Hall; of course they will ask you up."

"They will do nothing of the kind," Wenna said, with some asperity, and with her face turned aside.

"Lord and Lady Amersham have already come to the Hall."

"Oh, indeed!"

"Yes; they said some time ago that there was a good chance of Mr. Trelyon marrying the daughter—the tall girl with yellow hair, you remember?"

"And the stooping shoulders? yes. I should think they would be glad to get her married to anybody. She's thirty."

"Oh, Wenna!"

"Mr. Trelyon told me so," said Wenna, sharply.

"And they are a little surprised," continued Mabyn, in the same indifferent way, but watching her sister all the while, "that Mr. Trelyon has remained absent until so near the time. But I suppose he means to take Miss Penaluna with him. She lives here, doesn't she? They used to say there was a chance of a marriage there, too."

"Mabyn, what do you mean?" Wenna said, suddenly and angrily. "What do I care about Mr. Trelyon's marriage? What is it you mean?"

But the firmness of her lips began to yield; there was an ominous trembling about them; and at the same moment her younger sister caught her to her bosom, and hid her face there, and hushed her wild sobbing. She would hear no confession. She knew enough. Nothing would convince her that Wenna had done anything wrong; so there was no use speaking about it.

"Wenna," she said, in a low voice, "have you sent him any message?"

"Oh, no, no," the girl said, trembling. "I fear even to think of him; and when you mentioned his name, Mabyn, it seemed to choke me. And now I have to go back to Eglosilyan; and oh! if you only knew how I dread that, Mabyn!"

Mabyn's conscience was struck. She it was who had done this thing. She had persuaded her father that her mother needed another week or fortnight at Penzance; she had frightened him by telling him what bother he would suffer if Wenna were not back at the inn during the festivities at Trelyon Hall: and then she had offered to go and take her sister's post. George Rosewarne was heartily glad to exchange the one daughter for the other. Mabyn was too independent. She thwarted him; sometimes she insisted on his bestirring himself. Wenna, on the other hand, went about the place like some invisible spirit of order, making everything comfortable for him, without noise or worry. He was easily led to issue the necessary orders; and so it was that Mabyn thought she was doing her sister a friendly turn by sending her back to Eglosilyan in order to join in congratulating Harry Trelyon on his entrance into man's estate. Now Mabyn found that she had only plunged her sister into deeper trouble.

What could be done to save her?

"Wenna," said Mabyn, rather timidly, "do you think he has left Penzance?"

Wenna turned to her with a sudden look of entreaty in her face.

"I cannot bear to speak of him, Mabyn. I have no right to—I hope you will not ask me. Just now I—I am going to write a letter—to Jamaica. I shall tell the whole truth. It is for him to say what must happen now. I have done him a great injury. I did not intend it; I had no thought of it; but my own folly and thoughtlessness brought it about, and I have to bear the penalty. I don't think he need be anxious about punishing me."

She turned away with a tired look on her face, and began to get out her writing materials. Mabyn watched her for a moment or two in silence; then she left and went to her own room, saying to herself, "Punishment? whoever talks of punishment will have to address himself to me."

When she got to her own room, she wrote these words on a piece of paper—in her firm, bold, free hand—"*A friend would like to see you for a minute in front of the Post Office in the middle of the town.*" She put that in an envelope, and addressed the envelope to Harry Trelyon, Esq. Still keeping her bonnet on, she went downstairs, and had a little general conversation with her mother, in the course of which she quite casually asked the name of the hotel at which Mr. Trelyon had been staying. Then, just as if she were going out to the parade to have a look at the sea, she carelessly left the house.

The dusk of the evening was growing to dark. A white mist lay over the sea. The solitary lamps were being lit along the parade—each golden star shining sharply in the pale purple twilight; but a more confused glow of orange showed where the little town was busy in its narrow thoroughfares. She got hold of a small boy, gave him the letter, sixpence, and his instructions. He was to ask if the gentleman were in the hotel. If not, had he left Penzance, or would he return that night? In any case the boy was not to leave the letter unless Mr. Trelyon was there.

The small boy returned in a couple of minutes. The gentleman was there, and had taken the letter. So Mabyn

at once set out for the centre of the town, and soon found herself in among a mass of huddled houses, bright shops, and thoroughfares pretty well filled with strolling sailors, women getting home from market, and townspeople come out to gossip. She had accurately judged that she would be less observed in this busy little place than out on the parade; and as it was the first appointment she had ever made to meet a young gentleman alone, she was just a little nervous.

Trelyon was there. He had recognized the handwriting in a moment. He had no time to ridicule or even to think of Mabyn's school-girl affectation of secrecy; he had at once rushed off to the place of appointment, and that by a short cut of which she had no knowledge.

"Mabyn, what's the matter? Is Wenna ill?" he said—forgetting in his anxiety even to shake hands with her.

"Oh no, she isn't," said Mabyn, rather coldly and defiantly. If he was in love with her sister, it was for him to make advances.

"Oh no, she's pretty well, thank you," continued Mabyn, indifferently. "But she never could stand much worry. I wanted to see you about that. She is going back to Eglosilyan to-morrow; and you must promise not to have her asked up to the Hall while these grand doings are going on—you must not try to see her and persuade her—if you could keep out of her way altogether——"

"You know all about it, then, Mabyn?" he said, suddenly; and even in the dusky light of the street, she could see the rapid look of gladness that filled his face. "And you are not going to be vexed, eh? You'll remain friends with me, Mabyn—you will tell me how she is from time to time. Don't you see I must go away—and, by Jove, Mabyn, I've got such a lot to tell you!"

She looked round.

"I can't talk to you here. Won't you walk back by the other road behind the town?" he said.

Yes, she would go willingly with him now. The anxiety of his face, the almost wild way in which he seemed to beg for her help and friendship, the mere impatience of his manner pleased and satisfied her. This was as it should be,

Here was no sweetheart by line and rule, demonstrating his affection by argument, acting at all times with a studied propriety ; but a real, true lover, full of passionate hope and as passionate fear, ready to do anything, and yet not knowing what to do. Above all he was "brave and handsome, like a prince!" and therefore a fit lover for her gentle sister.

"Oh, Mr. Trelyon," she said, with a great burst of confidence, "I did so fear that you might be indifferent!"

"Indifferent!" said he, with some bitterness. "Perhaps that is the best thing that could happen ; only it isn't very likely to happen. Did you ever see anybody placed as I am placed, Mabyn ? Nothing but stumbling-blocks every way I look. Our family have always been hot-headed and hot-tempered ; if I told my grandmother at this minute how I am situated, I believe she would say, 'Why don't you go like a man, and run off with the girl?'——"

"Yes!" said Mabyn, quite delighted.

"But suppose you've bothered and worried the girl until you feel ashamed of yourself, and she begs of you to leave her, aren't you bound in fair manliness to go?"

"I don't know," said Mabyn, doubtfully.

"Well, I do. It would be very mean to pester her. I'm off as soon as these people leave the Hall. But then there are other things. There is your sister engaged to this fellow out in Jamaica——"

"Isn't he a horrid wretch?" said Mabyn, between her teeth.

"Oh, I quite agree with you. If I could have it out with him now——but after all, what harm has the man done? Is it any wonder he wanted to get Wenna for a wife?"

"Oh, but he cheated her," said Mabyn, warmly. "He persuaded her, and reasoned with her, and argued her into marrying him. And what business had he to tell her that love between young people is all bitterness and trial ; and that a girl is only safe when she marries a prudent and elderly man who will look after her? Why, it is to look after him that he wants her. Wenna is going to him as a housekeeper and a nurse. Only—only, Mr. Trelyon, *she hasn't gone to him just yet!*"

"Oh, I don't think he did anything unfair," the young man said, gloomily. "It doesn't matter anyhow. What I was going to say is that my grandmother's notion of what one of our family ought to do in such a case can't be carried out : whatever you may think of a man, you can't go and try to rob him of his sweetheart behind his back. Even supposing she was willing to break with him, which she is not, you've at least got to wait to give the fellow a chance."

"There I quite disagree with you, Mr. Trelyon," Mabyn said, warmly. "Wait to give him a chance to make our Wenna miserable? Is she to be made the prize of a sort of fight? If I were a man, I'd pay less attention to my own scruples and try what I could do for her. . . . Oh, Mr. Trelyon—I—I beg your pardon."

Mabyn suddenly stopped on the road, overwhelmed with confusion. She had been so warmly thinking of her sister's welfare that she had been hurried into something worse than an indiscretion.

"What, then, Mabyn?" said he, profoundly surprised. "I beg your pardon. I have been so thoughtless. I had no right to assume that you wished—that you wished for the—for the opportunity——"

"Of marrying Wenna?" said he, with a great stare. "But what else have we been speaking about? Or rather, I suppose we did assume it. Well, the more I think of it, Mabyn, the more I am maddened by all these obstacles, and by the notion of all the things that may happen. That's the bad part of my going away. How can I tell what may happen? He might come back, and insist on her marrying him right off."

"Mr. Trelyon," said Mabyn, speaking very clearly, "there's one thing you may be sure of. If you let me know where you are, nothing will happen to Wenna that you don't hear of."

He took her hand, and pressed it in mute thankfulness. He was not insensible to the value of having so warm an advocate, so faithful an ally, always at Wenna's side.

"How long do letters take in going to Jamaica?" Mabyn asked.

"I don't know."

"I could fetch him back for you directly," said she, "if you would like that."

"How?"

"By writing and telling him that you and Wenna were going to get married. Wouldn't that fetch him back pretty quickly?"

"I doubt it. He wouldn't believe it of Wenna. Then he is a sensible sort of fellow, and would say to himself that, if the news was true, he would have his journey for nothing. Besides, Barnes says that things are looking well with him in Jamaica—better than anybody expected. He might not be anxious to leave."

They had now got back to the parade, and Mabyn stopped.

"I must leave you now, Mr. Trelyon. Mind not to go near Wenna when you get to Eglosilyan——"

"She shan't even see me. I shall be there only a couple of days or so; then I am going to London. I am going to have a try at the Civil Service examinations—for first commissions, you know. I shall only come back to Eglosilyan for a day now and again at long intervals. You have promised to write to me, Mabyn—well, I'll send you my address."

She looked at him keenly as she offered him her hand.

"I wouldn't be down-hearted if I were you," she said. "Very odd things sometimes happen."

"Oh, I shan't be very down-hearted," said he, "so long as I hear that she is all right, and not vexing herself about anything."

"Good-bye, Mr. Trelyon. I am sorry I can't take any message for you."

"To her? No, that is impossible. Good-bye, Mabyn; I think you are the best friend I have in the world."

"We'll see about that," she said, as she walked rapidly off.

Her mother had been sufficiently astonished by her long absence; she was now equally surprised by the excitement and pleasure visible in her face.

"Oh, mammy, do you know who I've seen? Mr. Trelyon!"

"Mabyn!"

"Yes. We've walked right round Penzance—all by ourselves. And it's all settled, mother."

"What is all settled?"

"The understanding between him and me. An offensive and defensive alliance. Let tyrants beware!"

She took off her bonnet, and came and sat down on the floor by the side of the sofa.

"Oh, mammy, I see such beautiful things in the future—you wouldn't believe it if I told you all I see! Everybody else seems determined to forecast such gloomy events—there's Wenna crying and writing letters of contrition, and expecting all sorts of anger and scolding; there's Mr. Trelyon, haunted by the notion that Mr. Roscorla will suddenly come home and marry Wenna right off; and as for him out there in Jamaica, I expect he'll be in a nice state when he hears of all this. But far on ahead of all that I see such a beautiful picture——"

"It is a dream of yours, Mabyn," her mother said; but there was an imaginative light in her fine eyes, too.

"No, it is not a dream, mother; for there are so many people all wishing now that it should come about, in spite of these gloomy fancies. What is there to prevent it, when we are all agreed? Mr. Trelyon and I heading the list with our important alliance; and you, mother, would be so proud to see Wenna happy; and Mrs. Trelyon pets her as if she were a daughter already, and everybody—every man, woman, and child in Eglosilyan would rather see that come about than get a guinea apiece. Oh, mother, if you could see the picture that I see just now——"

"It is a pretty picture, Mabyn," her mother said, shaking her head. "But when you think of everybody being agreed, you forget one, and that is Wenna herself. Whatever she thinks fit and right to do, that she is certain to do; and all your alliances and friendly wishes won't alter her decision, even if it should break her heart. And, indeed, I hope the poor child won't sink under the terrible strain that is on her: what do you think of her looks, Mabyn?"

"They want mending; yes, they want mending," Mabyn admitted, apparently with some compunction; but then she added, boldly, "and you know as well as I do, mother, that there is but the one way of mending them!"

CHAPTER XXX.

FERN IN DIE WELT.

If this story were not tied by its title to the Duchy of Cornwall, it might be interesting enough to follow Mr. Roscorla into the new world that had opened all around him, and say something of the sudden shock his old habits had thus received, and of the quite altered views of his own life he had been led to form. As matters stand, we can only pay him a flying visit.

He is seated in a verandah, fronting a garden, in which pomegranates and oranges form the principal fruit. Down below him some blacks are bringing provisions up to Yacca Farm, along the cactus avenue leading to the gate. Far away on his right, the last rays of the sun are shining on the summit of Blue Mountain Peak; and along the horizon the reflected glow of the sky shines on the calm sea. It is a fine, still evening; his cigar smells sweet in the air; it is a time for indolent dreaming and for memories of home.

But Mr. Roscorla is not so much enraptured by thoughts of home as he might be.

"Why," he is saying to himself, "my life in Basset Cottage was no life at all, but only a waiting for death. Day after day passed in that monotonous fashion; what had one to look forward to but old age, sickness, and then the quiet of a coffin? It was nothing but an hourly procession to the grave, varied by rabbit-shooting. This bold breaking away from the narrow life of such a place has given me a new lease of existence. Now I can look back with surprise on the dulness of that Cornish village, and on the regularity of habits which I did not know were habits. For is not that always the case? You don't know that you are forming a habit; you take each act to be an individual act, which you may perform or not at will; but all the same the succession of them is getting you into its power, custom gets a grip of your ways of thinking as well as your ways of living; the habit is formed, and it does not cease its hold until it conducts you to the grave. Try Jamaica for a cure. Fling a sleeping man into the sea, and watch if he does not wake. Why, when I look back to the slow, methodical, commonplace life I led at Eglosilyan, can I wonder that I was sometimes afraid of Wenna Rosewarne regarding me as a somewhat staid and venerable person, on whose infirmities she ought to take pity?"

He rose and began to walk up and down the verandah, putting his foot down firmly. His loose linen suit was smart enough; his complexion had been improved by the sun. The consciousness that his business affairs were promising well did not lessen his sense of self-importance.

"Wenna must be prepared to move about a bit when I go back," he was saying to himself. "She must give up that daily attendance on cottagers' children. If all turns out well, I don't see why we should not live in London; for who will know there who her father was? That consideration was of no consequence so long as I looked forward to living the rest of my life in Basset Cottage; now there are other things to be thought of when there is a chance of my going among my old friends again."

By this time, it must be observed, Mr. Roscorla had abandoned his hasty intention of returning to England to upbraid Wenna with having received a ring from Harry Trelyon. After all, he reasoned with himself, the mere fact that she should talk thus simply and frankly about young Trelyon showed that, so far as she was concerned, her loyalty to her absent lover was unbroken. As for the young gentleman himself, he was, Mr. Roscorla knew, fond of joking. He had doubtless thought it a fine thing to make a fool of two or three women by imposing on them this cock-and-bull story of finding a ring by dredging. He was a little angry that Wenna should have been deceived; but then, he reflected, these gipsy-rings are so much like one another that the young man had probably got a pretty fair duplicate. For the rest, he did not want to quarrel with Harry Trelyon at present.

But as he was walking up and down this verandah, looking a much younger and brisker man than the Mr. Roscorla who had left Eglosilyan, a servant came through the house and brought him a couple of letters. He saw they were respectively from Mr. Barnes and from Wenna; and, curiously enough, he opened the reverend gentleman's

first—perhaps as schoolboys like to leave the best bit of a tart to the last.

He read the letter over carefully; he sat down and read it again; then he put it before him on the table. He was evidently puzzled by it.

"What does this man mean by writing these letters to me?"—so Mr. Roscorla, who was a cautious and reflective person, communed with himself. "He is no particular friend of mine. He must be driving at something. Now he says that I am to be of good cheer. I must not think anything of what he formerly wrote. Mr. Trelyon is leaving Eglosilyan for good, and his mother will at last have some peace of mind. What a pity it is that this sensitive creature should be at the mercy of the rude passions of this son of hers—that she should have no protector—that she should be allowed to mope herself to death in a melancholy seclusion."

An odd fancy occurred to Mr. Roscorla at this moment, and he smiled.

"I think I have got a clue to Mr. Barnes's disinterested anxiety about my affairs. The widower would like to protect the solitary and unfriended widow; but the young man is in the way. The young man would be very much in the way if he married Wenna Rosewarne; the widower's fears drive him into suspicion, then into certainty; nothing will do but that I should return to England at once, and spoil this little arrangement. But as soon as Harry Trelyon declares his intention of leaving Eglosilyan for good, then my affairs may go anyhow. Mr. Barnes finds the coast clear; I am bidden to stay where I am. Well, that is what I mean to do; but now I fancy I understand Mr. Barnes's generous friendship for me and his affectionate correspondence."

He turned to Wenna's letter with much compunction. He owed her some atonement for having listened to the disingenuous reports of this scheming clergyman. How could he have so far forgotten the firm, uncompromising rectitude of the girl's character, her sensitive notions of honour, the promises she had given?

He read the letter, and as he read his eyes seemed to grow hot with rage. He paid no heed to the passionate

contrition of the trembling lines; to the obvious pain that she had endured in telling the story, without concealment, against herself; to the utter and abject wretchedness with which she awaited his decision. It was thus that she had kept faith with him the moment his back was turned. Such were the safeguards afforded by a woman's sense of honour. What a fool he had been, to imagine that any woman could remain true to her promise, so soon as some other object of flirtation and incipient love-making came in her way!

He looked at the letter again: he could scarcely believe it to be in her handwriting. This the quiet, reasonable, gentle, and timid Wenna Rosewarne, whose virtues were almost a trifle too severe? The despair and remorse of the letter did not touch him—he was too angry and indignant over the insult to himself—but it astonished him. The passionate emotion of those closely-written pages he could scarcely connect with the shy, frank, kindly little girl he remembered; it was a cry of agony from a tortured woman, and he knew at least that for her the old, quiet time was over.

He knew not what to do. All this that had happened was new to him; it was old and gone by in England, and who could tell what further complications might have arisen? But his anger required some vent; he went indoors, called for a lamp, and sat down and wrote, with a hard and resolute look on his face:—

"I have received your letter. I am not surprised. You are a woman; and I ought to have known that a woman's promise is of value so long as you are by her side to see that she keeps it. You ask what reparation you can make; I ask if there is any that you can suggest. No; you have done what cannot be undone. Do you think a man would marry a woman who is in love with, or has been in love with another man, even if he could overlook her breach of faith and the shameless thoughtlessness of her conduct? My course is clear, at all events. I give you back the promise that you did not know how to keep; and now you can go and ask the young man who has been making a holiday toy of you whether he will be pleased to marry you.

"RICHARD ROSCORLA."

He sealed and addressed this letter, still with the firm, hard look about his face; then he summoned a servant—a tall, red-haired Irishman. He did not hesitate for a moment.

"Look here, Sullivan, the English mails go out to-morrow morning—you must ride down to the Post Office, as hard as you can go; and if you're a few minutes late, see Mr. Keith, and give him my compliments, and ask him if he can possibly take this letter if the mails are not made up. It is of great importance. Quick now!"

He watched the man go clattering down the cactus avenue until he was out of sight. Then he turned, put the letters in his pocket, went indoors, and again struck a small gong that did duty for a bell. He wanted his horse brought round at once. He was going over to Pleasant Farm; probably he would not return that night. He lit another cigar and paced up and down the gravel in front of the house until the horse was brought round.

When he reached Pleasant Farm, the stars were shining overhead, and the odours of the night-flowers came floating out of the forest; but inside the house there were brilliant lights and the voices of men talking. A bachelor supper-party was going forward. Mr. Roscorla entered, and presently was seated at the hospitable board.

They had never seen him so gay; and they had certainly never seen him so generously inclined, for Mr. Roscorla was economical in his habits. He would have them all to dinner the next evening, and promised them such champagne as had never been sent to Kingston before. He passed round his best cigars; he hinted something about unlimited loo; he drank pretty freely; and was altogether in a jovial humour.

"England?" he said, when some one mentioned the mother country. "Of one thing I am pretty certain—England will never see me again. No—a man lives here; in England he waits for his death. What life I have got before me I shall live in Jamaica—that is my view of the question."

"Then she is coming out to you?" said his host, with a grin.

Roscorla's face flushed with anger.

"There is no she in the matter," he said, abruptly, almost fiercely. "I thank God I am not tied to any woman."

"Oh, I beg your pardon," said his host, good-naturedly, who did not care to recall the occasions on which Mr. Roscorla had been rather pleased to admit that certain tender ties bound him to his native land.

"No, there is not!" he said. "What fool would have his comfort and peace of mind depend on the caprice of a woman? I like your plan better, Rogers: when they're dependent on you, you can do as you like; but when they've got to be treated as equals, they're the devil. No, my boys, you don't find me going in for the angel in the house—she's too exacting. Is it to be unlimited?"

Now to play unlimited loo in a reckless fashion is about the easiest way of getting rid of money that the ingenuity of man has devised. The other players were much better qualified to run such risks than Mr. Roscorla; but none played half so wildly as he. I.O.U's went freely about. At one point in the evening the floating paper bearing the signature of Mr. Roscorla represented a sum of about 300*l.*: and yet his losses did not weigh heavily on him. At length every one got tired, and it was resolved to stop short at a certain hour. But from this point the luck changed; nothing could stand against his cards; one by one his I.O.U's were recalled; and when they all rose from the table, he had won about 48*l.* He was not elated.

He went to his room, and sat down in an easy-chair; and then it seemed to him that he saw Eglosilyan once more, and the far coasts of Cornwall, and the broad uplands lying under a blue English sky. That was his home, and he had cut himself away from it, and from the little glimmer of romance that had recently brightened it for him. Every bit of the place, too, was associated somehow with Wenna Rosewarne. He could see the seat, fronting the Atlantic, on which she used to sit and sew on the fine summer forenoons. He could see the rough road, leading over the downs, on which he met her one wintry morning, she wrapped up and driving her father's dog-cart, while the red sun in the sky seemed to brighten the pink colour the cold wind had brought into her cheeks.

He thought of her walking sedately up to church; of her wild scramblings among the rocks with Mabyn; of her enjoyment of a fierce wind when it came laden with the spray of the great rollers breaking on the cliff outside. What was the song she used to sing to herself as she went along the quiet woodland ways?—

"Your Polly has never been false, she declares,
Since last time we parted at Wapping Old Stairs."

He could not let her go. All the anger of wounded vanity had left his heart: he thought now only of the chance he was throwing away. Where else could he hope to find for himself so pleasant a companion and friend, who would cheer up his dull daily life with her warm sympathies, her quick humour, her winning womanly ways?

He thought of that letter he had sent away, and cursed his own folly. So long as she was bound by her promise, he knew he could marry her when he pleased; but now he had voluntarily released her. In a couple of weeks she would hold her manumission in her hands; the past would no longer have any power over her; if ever they met they would meet as mere acquaintances. Every moment the prize slipping out of his grasp seemed to grow more valuable; his vexation with himself grew intolerable; he suddenly resolved that he would make a wild effort to get back that fatal letter.

He had sat communing with himself for over an hour; all the household was fast asleep. He would not wake any one, for fear of being compelled to give explanations; so he noiselessly crept along the dark passages until he got to the door, which he carefully opened and let himself out. The night was wonderfully clear; the constellations throbbing and glittering overhead; the trees were black against the pale sky.

He made his way round to the stables, and had some sort of notion that he would try to get at his horse, until it occurred to him that some suddenly awakened servant or master would probably send a bullet whizzing at him. So he abandoned that enterprise, and set off to walk, as quickly as he could, down the slopes of the mountain, with the stars still shining over his head, the air sweet with

powerful scents, the leaves of the bushes hanging silently in the semi-darkness.

How long he walked he did not know; he was not aware that, when he reached the sleeping town, a pale grey was lightening the eastern skies. He went to the house of the postmaster and hurriedly aroused him. Mr. Keith began to think that the ordinarily sedate Mr. Roscorla had gone mad.

"But I must have the letter," he said. "Come now, Keith, you can give it me back if you like. Of course, I know it is very wrong; but you'll do it to oblige a friend——"

"My dear sir," said the postmaster, who could not get time for explanation, "the mails were made up last night——"

"Yes, yes; but you can open the English bag."

"They were sent on board last night."

"Then the packet is still in the harbour; you might come down with me——"

"She sails at daybreak——"

"It is not daybreak yet," said Mr. Roscorla, looking up.

Then he saw how the grey dawn had come over the skies, banishing the stars, and he became aware of the wan light shining around him. With the new day his life was altered; he would no more be as he had been; the chief aim and purpose of his existence had been changed.

Walking heedlessly back, he came to a point from which he had a distinct view of the harbour and the sea beyond. Far away out on the dull grey plain was a steamer slowly making her way towards the east. Was that the packet bound for England, carrying to Wenna Rosewarne the message that she was free?

CHAPTER XXXI.

"BLUE IS THE SWEETEST."

THE following correspondence may now, without any great breach of confidence, be published :—

"EGLOSILYAN, *Monday morning.*

"DEAR MR. TRELYON,—Do you know what Mr. Roscorla says in the letter Wenna has just received? Why, that you could not get up that ring by dredging, but that you must have bought the ring at Plymouth. Just think of the wicked old wretch fancying such things; as if you would give a ring *of emeralds to any one!* Tell me that this is a story, that I may bid Wenna contradict him at once. I have got no patience with a man who is given over to such mean suspicions.—Yours faithfully,

"MABYN ROSEWARNE."

"LONDON, *Tuesday night.*

"DEAR MABYN,—I am sorry to say Mr. Roscorla is right. It was a foolish trick—I did not think it would be successful, for my hitting the size of her finger was rather a stroke of luck; but I thought it would amuse her if she did find it out after an hour or two. I was afraid to tell her afterwards, for she would think it impertinent. What's to be done? Is she angry about it?—Yours sincerely,

"HARRY TRELYON."

"EGLOSILYAN.

"DEAR MR. TRELYON,—How could you do such a thing! Why, to give Wenna, of all people in the world, an emerald ring, just after I had got Mr. Roscorla to give her one, for bad luck to himself! Why, how could you do it! I don't know what to say about it—unless you demand it back, *and send her one with sapphires in it at once.*—Yours,

"M. R.

"P.S.—*As quick as ever you can.*"

"LONDON, *Friday morning.*

"DEAR MABYN,—Why, you know she wouldn't take a sapphire ring or any other from me.—Yours faithfully,

"H. TRELYON."

"MY DEAR MR. TRELYON,—Pray don't lose any time in writing; but send me at once a sapphire ring for Wenna. You have hit the size once, and you can do it again; but in any case, I have marked the size on this bit of thread, and the jeweller will understand. And please, dear Mr. Trelyon, don't get a very expensive one, but a plain, good one, just like what a poor person like me would buy for a present, if I wanted to. And post it at once, please—*this is very important.*—Yours most sincerely,

"MABYN ROSEWARNE."

In consequence of this correspondence, Mabyn, one morning, proceeded to seek out her sister, whom she found busy with the accounts of the Sewing Club, which was now in a flourishing condition. Mabyn seemed a little shy.

"Oh, Wenna," she said, "I have something to tell you. You know I wrote to ask Mr. Trelyon about the ring. Well, he's very, very sorry—oh, you don't know how sorry he is, Wenna!—but it's quite true. He thought he would please you by getting the ring, and that you would make a joke of it when you found it out; and then he was afraid to speak of it afterwards——"

Wenna had quietly slipped the ring off her finger. She betrayed no emotion at the mention of Mr. Trelyon's name. Her face was a trifle red, that was all.

"It was a stupid thing to do," she said, "but I suppose he meant no harm. Will you send him back the ring?"

"Yes," she said, eagerly, "give me the ring, Wenna."

She carefully wrapped it up in a piece of paper, and put it in her pocket. Any one who knew her would have seen by her face that she meant to give that ring short shrift. Then she said timidly—

"You are not very angry, Wenna?"

"No. I am sorry I should have vexed Mr. Roscorla by my carelessness."

"Wenna," the younger sister continued, even more timidly, "do you know what I've heard about rings—that when you've worn one for some time on a finger, you ought never to leave it off altogether; I think it affects the circulation—or something of that kind. Now if Mr. Trelyon were to send you another ring, just to—to keep the place of that one until Mr. Roscorla came back——"

"Mabyn, you must be mad to think of such a thing," said her sister, looking down.

"Oh, yes," Mabyn said, meekly, "I thought you wouldn't like the notion of Mr. Trelyon giving you a ring. And so, dear Wenna, I've—I've got a ring for you—you won't mind taking it from me; and if you do wear it on the engaged finger, why, that doesn't matter, don't you see——"

She produced the ring of dark blue stones, and herself put it on Wenna's finger.

"Oh, Mabyn," Wenna said, "how could you be so extravagant! And just after you gave me that ten shillings for the Leans."

"You be quiet," said Mabyn, briskly, going off with a light look on her face.

And yet there was some determination about her mouth. She hastily put on her hat, and went out. She took the path by the hillside over the little harbour; and eventually she reached the face of Black Cliff, at the foot of which a grey-green sea was dashing in white masses of foam; there was no living thing around her but the choughs and daws, and the white sea-gulls sailing overhead.

She took out out a large sheet of brown paper and placed it on the ground. Then she sought a bit of rock, weighing about two pounds. Then she took out the little parcel which contained the emerald ring, tied it up carefully along with the stone in the sheet of brown paper; finally, she rose up to her full height and heaved the whole into the sea. A splash down there, and that was all.

She clapped her hands with joy.

"And now my precious emerald ring, that's the last of you, I imagine! And there isn't much chance of a fish bringing you back, to make mischief with your ugly green stones!"

Then she went home and wrote this note:—

"Eglosilyan, *Monday.*

"Dear Mr. Trelyon,—I have just thrown the emerald ring you gave Wenna into the sea, and she wears the other one now *on her engaged finger*, but she thinks I bought it. Did you ever hear of an old-fashioned rhyme that is this?—

'O, green is forsaken,
And yellow's forsworn,
And blue is the sweetest
Colour that's worn!'

You can't tell what mischief that emerald ring might not have done. But the sapphires that Wenna is wearing now are perfectly beautiful; and Wenna is not so heartbroken that she isn't very proud of them. I never saw such a beautiful ring.—Yours sincerely,

"Mabyn Rosewarne.

"P.S.—Are you never coming back to Eglosilyan any more?"

So the days went by, and Mabyn waited, with a secret hope, to see what answer Mr. Roscorla would send to that letter of confession and contrition Wenna had written to him at Penzance. The letter had been written as an act of duty, and posted too; but there was no mail going out for ten days thereafter, so that a considerable time had to elapse before the answer came.

During that time Wenna went about her ordinary duties, just as if there was no hidden fire of pain consuming her heart; there was no word spoken by her or to her of all that had recently occurred; her mother and sister were glad to see her so continuously busy. At first she shrank from going up to Trelyon Hall, and would rather have corresponded with Mrs. Trelyon about their joint work of charity, but she conquered the feeling, and went and saw the gentle lady, who perceived nothing altered or strange

In her demeanour. At last the letter from Jamaica came; and Mabyn, having sent it up to her sister's room, waited for a few minutes, and then followed it. She was a little afraid, despite her belief in the virtues of the sapphire ring.

When she entered the room, she uttered a slight cry of alarm and ran forward to her sister. Wenna was seated on a chair by the side of the bed, but she had thrown her arms out on the bed, her head was between them, and she was sobbing as if her heart would break.

"Wenna, what is the matter? what has he said to you?"

Mabyn's eyes were all afire now. Wenna would not answer. She would not even raise her head.

"Wenna, I want to see that letter."

"Oh, no, no," the girl moaned. "I deserve it; he says what is true; I want you to leave me alone, Mabyn—you—you can't do anything to help this——"

But Mabyn had by this time perceived that her sister held in her hand, crumpled up, the letter which was the cause of this wild outburst of grief. She went forward and firmly took it out of the yielding fingers; then she turned to the light and read it.

"Oh, if I were a man!" she said; and then the very passion of her indignation, finding no other vent, filled her eyes with proud and angry tears. She forgot to rejoice that her sister was now free. She only saw the cruel insult of those lines, and the fashion in which it had struck down its victim.

"Wenna," she said, hotly, "you ought to have more spirit! You don't mean to say you care for the opinion of a man who would write to any girl like that! You ought to be precious glad that he has shown himself in his true colours. Why, he never cared a bit for you—never!—or he would never turn at a moment's notice and insult you——"

"I have deserved it all! it is every word of it true; he could not have written otherwise"—that was all that Wenna would say between her sobs.

"Well," retorted Mabyn, "after all I am glad he was angry. I did not think he had so much spirit. And if this is his opinion of you, I don't think it is worth heeding,

only I hope he'll keep to it. Yes, I do! I hope he'll continue to think you everything that is wicked, and remain out in Jamaica. Wenna, you must not lie and cry like that. Come, get up, and look at the strawberries that Mr. Trewhella has sent you."

"Please, Mabyn, leave me alone, there's a good girl."

"I shall be up again in a few minutes, then; I want you to drive me over to St. Gwennis. Wenna, I *must* go over to St. Gwennis before lunch; and father won't let me have anybody to drive; do you hear, Wenna?"

Then she went out and down into the kitchen, where she bothered Jennifer for a few minutes until she had got an iron heated at the fire. With this implement she carefully smoothed out the crumpled letter, and then she as carefully folded it, took it upstairs, and put it safely away in her own desk. She had just time to write a few lines:—

"Dear Mr. Trelyon,—Do you know what news I have got to tell you? Can you guess? The engagement between Mr. Roscorla and Wenna *is broken off;* and I have got in my possession the letter in which he sets her free. If you knew how glad I am!—I should like to cry 'Hurrah! hurrah!' all through the streets of Eglosilyan, and I think every one else would do the same if only they knew. Of course, she is very much grieved, for he has been most insulting. I cannot tell you the things he has said; you would kill him if you heard them. But she will come round very soon, I know; and then she will have her freedom again, aud no more emerald rings, and letters all filled with arguments. Would you like to see her, Mr. Trelyon? But don't come yet—not for a long time—she would only get angry and obstinate. I'll tell you when to come; and in the meantime, you know, she is still wearing your ring, so that you need not be afraid. How glad I shall be to see you again!—Yours most faithfully,

"Mabyn Rosewarne."

She went downstairs quickly, and put this letter in the letter-box. There was an air of triumph on her face. She had worked for this result—aided by the mysterious powers of fate, whom she had conjured to serve her—and now the

welcome end of her labours had arrived. She bade the ostler get out the dog-cart, as if she were the Queen of Sheba going to visit Solomon. She went marching up to her sister's room, announcing her approach with a more than ordinarily accurate rendering of "Oh, the men of merry, merry England!" so that a stranger might have fancied that he heard the very voice of Harry Trelyon, with all its unmelodious vigour, ringing along the passage.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE EXILE'S RETURN.

PERHAPS you have been away in distant parts of the earth, each day crowded with new experiences and slowly obscuring the clear pictures of England with which you left; perhaps you have only been hidden away in London, amid its ceaseless noise, its strange faces, its monotonous recurrence of duties; let us say, in any case, that you are returning home for a space to the quiet of northern Cornwall.

You look out of the high window of a Plymouth hotel early in the morning; there is promise of a beautiful autumn day. A ring of pink mist lies around the horizon; overhead the sky is clear and blue; the white sickle of the moon still lingers visible. The new warmth of the day begins to melt the hoar-frost in the meadows, and you know that out beyond the town the sun is shining brilliantly on the wet grass, with the brown cattle gleaming red in the light.

You leave the great world behind, with all its bustle, crowds, and express engines, when you get into the quiet little train that takes you leisurely up to Launceston, through woods, by the sides of rivers, over great valleys. There is a sense of repose about this railway journey. The train stops at any number of small stations—apparently to let the guard have a chat with the station-master—and then jogs on in a quiet, contented fashion. And on such an autumn day as this, that is a beautiful, still, rich-coloured, and English-looking country through which it passes. Here is a deep valley, all glittering with the dew

and the sunlight. Down in the hollow a farm-yard is half hidden behind the yellowing elms; a boy is driving a flock of white geese along the twisting road; the hedges are red with the withering briers. Up here, along the hillsides, the woods of scrub oak are glowing with every imaginable hue of gold, crimson, and bronze, except where a few dark firs appear, or where a tuft of broom, pure and bright in its green, stands out among the faded brackens. The gorse is profusely in bloom—it always is in Cornwall. Still further over there are sheep visible on the uplands; beyond these again the bleak brown moors rise into peaks of hills; overhead the silent blue, and all around the sweet, fresh country air.

With a sharp whistle the small train darts into an opening in the hills; here we are in the twilight of a great wood. The tall trees are becoming bare; the ground is red with the fallen leaves; through the branches the blue-winged jay flies, screaming harshly; you can smell the damp and resinous odours of the ferns. Out again we get into the sunlight; and lo! a rushing, brawling, narrow stream, its clear flood swaying this way and that by the big stones; a wall of rock overhead crowned by glowing furze; a herd of red cattle sent scampering through the bright-green grass. Now we get slowly into a small white station, and catch a glimpse of a tiny town over in the valley; again we go on by wood and valley, by rocks, and streams, and farms. It is a pleasant drive on such a morning.

In one of the carriages in this train Master Harry Trelyon and his grandmother were seated. How he had ever persuaded her to go with him to Cornwall by train was mysterious enough; for the old lady thoroughly hated all such modern devices. It was her custom to go travelling all over the country with a big, old-fashioned phaeton and a pair of horses; and her chief amusement during these long excursions was driving up to any big house she took a fancy to, in order to see if there was a chance of its being let to her. The faithful old servant who attended her, and who was about as old as the coachman, had a great respect for his mistress; but sometimes he swore—inaudibly—when she ordered him to make the usual inquiry at the front door of some noble lord's

welcome end of her labours had arrived. She bade the ostler get out the dog-cart, as if she were the Queen of Sheba going to visit Solomon. She went marching up to her sister's room, announcing her approach with a more than ordinarily accurate rendering of "Oh, the men of merry, merry England!" so that a stranger might have fancied that he heard the very voice of Harry Trelyon, with all its unmelodious vigour, ringing along the passage.

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country residence, which he would as soon have thought of letting as of forfeiting his seat in the House of Peers or hopes of heaven. But the carriage and horses were coming down all the same to Eglosilyan, to take her back again.

"Harry," she was saying at this moment, "the longer I look at you, the more positive I am that you are ill. I don't like your colour; you are thin, and careworn, and anxious. What is the matter with you?

"Going to school again at twenty-one is hard work, grandmother," he said. "Don't you try it. But I don't think I'm particularly ill; few folks can keep a complexion like yours, grandmother."

"Yes," said the old lady, rather pleased, "many's the time they said that about me, that there wasn't much to complain of in my looks; and that's what a girl thinks of then, and sweethearts, and balls, and all the other men looking savage when she's dancing with any one of them. Well, well, Harry; and what is all this about you and the young lady your mother has made such a pet of? Oh, yes, I have my suspicions; and she's engaged to another man, isn't she? Your grandfather would have fought him, I'll be bound; but we live in a peaceable way now—well, well, no matter; but hasn't that got something to do with your glum looks, Harry?"

"I tell you, grandmother, I have been hard at work in London. You can't look very brilliant after a few months in London."

"And what keeps you in London at this time of the year?" said this plain-spoken old lady. "Your fancy about getting into the army? Nonsense, man; don't tell me such a tale as that. There's a woman in the case; a Trelyon never put himself so much about from any other cause. To stop in town at this time of the year! Why, your grandfather and your father, too, would have laughed to hear of it. I haven't had a brace of birds or a pheasant sent me since last autumn—not one. Come, sir, be frank with me. I'm an old woman, but I can hold my tongue."

"There's nothing to tell, grandmother," he said. "You just about hit it in that guess of yours—I suppose Juliott told you. Well, the girl is engaged to another man; and what more is to be said?"

"The man's in Jamaica?"

"Yes."

"Why are you going down to-day?"

"Only for a brief visit: I've been a long time away."

The old lady sat silent for some time. She had heard of the whole affair before; but she wished to have the rumour confirmed. And at first she was sorely troubled that her grandson should contemplate marrying an innkeeper's daughter, however intelligent, amiable, and well-educated the young lady might be; but she knew the Trelyons pretty well, and knew that, if he had made up his mind to it, argument and remonstrance would be useless. Moreover, she had a great affection for this young man, and was strongly disposed to sympathise with any wish of his. She grew in time to have a great interest in Miss Wenna Rosewarne; at this moment the chief object of her visit was to make her acquaintance. She grew to pity young Trelyon in his disappointment, and was inclined to believe that the person in Jamaica was something of a public enemy. The fact was, her mere liking for her grandson would have converted her to a sympathy with the wildest project he could have formed.

"Dear, dear," she said, "what awkward things engagements are when they stand in your way. Shall I tell you the truth? I was just about as good as engaged to John Cholmondeley when I gave myself up to your grandfather—but there, when a girl's heart pulls her one way, and her promise pulls her another way, she needs to be a very firm-minded young woman, if she means to hold fast. John Cholmondeley was as good-hearted a young fellow as ever lived—yes, I will say that for him; and I was mightily sorry for him; but—but you see, that's how things come about. Dear, dear, that evening at Bath—I remember it as well as if it was yesterday—and it was only two months after I had run away with your grandfather. Yes, there was a ball that night; and we had kept very quiet, you know, after coming back; but this time your grandfather had set his heart on taking me out before everybody, and you know, he had to have his way. As sure as I live, Harry, the first man I saw was John Cholmondeley, just as white as a ghost—they said he had been drinking hard and

gambling pretty nearly the whole of these two months. He wouldn't come near me. He wouldn't take the least notice of me. The whole night he pretended to be vastly gay and merry; he danced with everybody; but his eyes never came near me. Well, you know what a girl is—that vexed me a little bit; for there never was a man such a slave to a woman as he was to me—dear, dear, the way my father used to laugh at him, until he got wild with anger. Well, I went up to him at last, when he was by himself, and I said to him, just in a careless way, you know, 'John, aren't you going to dance with me to-night?' Well, do you know, his face got quite white again; and he said—I remember the very words, all as cold as ice—'Madam,' says he, 'I am glad to find that your hurried trip to Scotland has impaired neither your good looks nor your self-command.' Wasn't it cruel of him?—but then, poor fellow, he had been badly used, I admit that. Poor young fellow, he never did marry; and I don't believe he ever forgot me to his dying day. Many a time I'd like to have told him all about it; and how there was no use in my marrying him if I liked another man better; but though we met sometimes, especially when he came down about the Reform Bill time—and I do believe I made a red-hot Radical of him—he was always very proud, and I hadn't the heart to go back on the old story. But I'll tell you what your grandfather did for him—he got him returned at the very next election, and he on the other side too; and after a bit a man begins to think more about getting a seat in Parliament than about courting an empty-headed girl. I have met this Mr. Roscorla, haven't I?"

"Of course you have."

"A good-looking man rather, with a fresh complexion and grey hair?"

"I don't know what you mean by good looks," said Trelyon, shortly. "I shouldn't think people would call him an Adonis. But there's no accounting for tastes."

"Perhaps I may have been mistaken," the old lady said; "but there was a gentleman at Plymouth Station who seemed to be something like what I can recall of Mr. Roscorla—you didn't see him, I suppose."

"At Plymouth Station, grandmother?" the young man said, becoming rather uneasy.

"Yes. He got into the train just as we came up. A neatly-dressed man, grey hair, and a healthy-looking face—I must have seen him somewhere about here before."

"Roscorla is in Jamaica," said Trelyon, positively.

Just at this moment the train slowed into Launceston Station, and the people began to get out on the platform.

"That is the man I mean," said the old lady.

Trelyon turned and stared. There, sure enough, was Mr. Roscorla, looking not one whit different from the precise, elderly, fresh-coloured gentleman who had left Cornwall some seven months before.

"Good Lord, Harry," said the old lady, nervously looking at her grandson's face, "don't have a fight here!"

The next second Mr. Roscorla wheeled round, anxious about some luggage, and now it was his turn to stare in astonishment and anger—anger, because he had been told that Harry Trelyon never came near Cornwall, and his first sudden suspicion was that he had been deceived. All this had happened in a minute. Trelyon was the first to regain his self-command. He walked deliberately forward, held out his hand, and said—

"Hillo, Roscorla; back in England again? I didn't know you were coming."

"No," said Mr. Roscorla, with his face grown just a trifle greyer, "no, I suppose not."

In point of fact he had not informed any one of his coming. He had prepared a little surprise. The chief motive of his return was to get Wenna to cancel for ever that unlucky letter of release he had sent her, which he had done more or less successfully in subsequent correspondence; but he had also hoped to introduce a little romanticism into his meeting with her. He would enter Eglosilyan on foot. He would wander down to the rocks at the mouth of the harbour, on the chance of finding Wenna there. Might he not hear her humming to herself, as she sat and sewed, some snatch of "Your Polly has never been false, she declares"—or was that the very last ballad in the world she would now think of singing? Then the delight of regarding again the placid, bright face and earnest eyes, of securing

once more a perfect understanding between them, and their glad return to the inn.

All this had been spoiled by the appearance of this young man: he loved him none the more for that.

"I suppose you haven't got a trap waiting for you?" said Trelyon, with cold politeness. "I can drive you over, if you like."

He could do no less than make the offer; the other had no alternative but to accept. Old Mrs. Trelyon heard this compact made with considerable dread.

Indeed, it was a dismal drive over to Eglosilyan, bright as the forenoon was. The old lady did her best to be courteous to Mr. Roscorla and cheerful with her grandson; but she was oppressed by the belief that it was only her presence that had so far restrained the two men from giving vent to the rage and jealousy that filled their hearts. The conversation kept up was singular.

"Are you going to remain in England long, Roscorla?" said the younger of the two men, making an unnecessary cut at one of the two horses he was driving.

"Don't know yet. Perhaps I may."

"Because," said Trelyon, with angry impertinence, "I suppose if you do you'll have to look round for a housekeeper."

The insinuation was felt; and Roscorla's eyes looked anything but pleasant as he answered—

"You forget I've got Mrs. Cornish to look after my house."

"Oh, Mrs. Cornish is not much of a companion for you."

"Men seldom want to make companions of their housekeepers," was the retort, uttered rather hotly.

"But sometimes they wish to have the two offices combined, for economy's sake."

At this juncture Mrs. Trelyon struck in, somewhat wildly, with a remark about an old ruined house, which seemed to have had at one time a private still inside: the danger was staved off for the moment.

"Harry," she said, "mind what you are about; the horses seem very fresh."

"Yes, they like a good run; I suspect they've had precious little to do since I left Cornwall."

Did she fear that the young man was determined to throw them into a ditch or down a precipice, with the wild desire of killing his rival at any cost? If she had known the whole state of affairs between them—the story of the emerald ring, for example—she would have understood at least the difficulty experienced by these two men in remaining decently civil towards each other.

So they passed over the high and wide moors, until far ahead they caught a glimpse of the blue plain of the sea. Mr. Roscorla relapsed into silence; he was becoming a trifle nervous. He was probably so occupied with anticipations of his meeting with Wenna that he failed to notice the objects around him—and one of these, now become visible, was a very handsome young lady, who was coming smartly along a wooded lane, carrying a basket of bright-coloured flowers.

"Why, here's Mabyn Rosewarne! I must wait for her."

Mabyn had seen at a distance Mrs. Trelyon's grey horses; she guessed that the young master had come back, and that he had brought some strangers with him. She did not like to be stared at by strangers. She came along the path, with her eyes fixed on the ground; she thought it impertinent of Harry Trelyon to wait to speak to her.

"Oh, Mabyn," he cried, "you must let me drive you home! And let me introduce you to my grandmother. There is some one else whom you know."

The young lady bowed to Mrs. Trelyon; then she stared, and changed colour somewhat, when she saw Mr. Roscorla; then she was helped up into a seat.

"How do you do, Mr. Trelyon?" she said. "I am very glad to see you have come back. How do you do, Mr. Roscorla?"

She shook hands with them both, but not quite in the same fashion.

"And you have sent no message that you were coming?" she said, looking her companion straight in the face.

"No—no, I did not," he said, angry and embarrassed by the open enmity of the girl. "I thought I should surprise you all——"

"You have surprised me, any way," said Mabyn, "for how can you be so thoughtless? Wenna has been very ill

—I tell you, she has been very ill indeed, though she has said little about it, and the least thing upsets her. How can you think of frightening her so? Do you know what you are doing? I wish you would go away back to Launceston, or London, and write her a note there, if you are coming, instead of trying to frighten her!"

This was the language, it appeared to Mr. Roscorla, of a virago: only viragoes do not ordinarily have tears in their eyes, as was the case with Mabyn, when she finished her indignant appeal.

"Mr. Trelyon, do you think it is fair to go and frighten Wenna so?" she demanded.

"It is none of my business," Trelyon answered, with an air as if he had said to his rival, "Yes, go and kill the girl! You are a nice sort of gentleman, to come down from London to kill the girl!"

"This is absurd," said Mr. Roscorla, contemptuously, for he was stung into reprisal by the persecution of these two; "a girl isn't so easily frightened out of her wits. Why, she must have known that my coming home was at any time probable."

"I have no doubt she feared that it was," said Mabyn, partly to herself: for once she was afraid of speaking out.

Presently, however, a brighter light came over the girl's face.

"Why, I quite forgot," she said, addressing Harry Trelyon; "I quite forgot that Wenna was just going up to Trelyon Hall when I left. Of course, she will be up there. You will be able to tell her that Mr. Roscorla has arrived, won't you?"

The malice of this suggestion was so apparent that the young gentleman in front could not help grinning at it; fortunately, his face could not be seen by his rival. What *he* thought of the whole arrangement can only be imagined.

And so, as it happened, Mr. Roscorla and his friend Mabyn were dropped at the inn; while Harry Trelyon drove his grandmother up and on to the Hall.

"Well, Harry," the old lady said, "I am glad to be able to breathe at last; I thought you two were going to kill each other."

"There is no fear of that," the young man said; "that

is not the way in which this affair has to be settled. It is entirely a matter for her decision—and look how everything is in his favour. I am not even allowed to say a word to her; and even if I could, he is a deal cleverer than me in argument. He would argue my head off in half-an-hour."

"But you don't turn a girl's heart round by argument, Harry. When a girl has to choose between a young lover and an elderly one, it isn't always good sense that directs her choice. Is Miss Wenna Rosewarne at all like her sister?"

"She's not such a tomboy," he said; "but she is quite as straightforward, and proud, and quick to tell you what is the right thing to do. There's no sort of shamming tolerated by these two girls. But then Wenna is gentle, and quieter, and more soft and lovable than Mabyn—in my fancy, you know; and she is more humorous and clever, so that she never gets into those schoolgirl rages. But it is really a shame to compare them like that; and, indeed, if any one said the least thing against one of these girls, the other would precious soon make him regret the day he was born. You don't catch me doing that with either of them; I've had a warning already, when I hinted that Mabyn might probably manage to keep her husband in good order. And so she would, I believe, if the husband were not of the right sort; but when she is really fond of anybody, she becomes their slave out-and-out. There is nothing she wouldn't do for her sister; and her sister thinks there's nobody in the world like Mabyn. So you see——"

He stopped in the middle of this sentence.

"Grandmother," he said, almost in a whisper, "here she is coming along the road."

"Miss Rosewarne?"

"Yes: shall I introduce you?"

"If you like."

Wenna was coming down the steep road, between the high hedges, with a small girl on each side of her, whom she was leading by the hand. She was gaily talking to them; you could hear the children laughing at what she said. Old Mrs. Trelyon came to the conclusion that this merry young lady, with the light and free step, the careless

talk, and fresh colour in her face, was certainly not dying of any love-affair.

"Take the reins, grandmother, for a minute."

He had leapt down into the road, and was standing before her, almost ere she had time to recognize him. For a moment a quick gleam of gladness shone on her face; then, almost instinctively, she seemed to shrink from him, and she was reserved, distant, and formal.

He introduced her to the old lady, who said something nice to her about her sister. The young man was looking wistfully at her, troubled at heart that she treated him so coldly.

"I have got to break some news to you," he said; "perhaps you will consider it good news."

She looked up quickly.

"Nothing has happened to anybody—only some one has arrived. Mr. Roscorla is at the inn."

She did not flinch. He was vexed with her that she showed no sign of fear or dislike. On the contrary, she quickly said that she must then go down to the inn; and she bade them both good-bye, in a placid and ordinary way; while he drove off, with dark thoughts crowding into his imagination of what might happen down at the inn during the next few days. He was angry with her, he scarcely knew why.

Meanwhile Wenna, apparently quite calm, went on down the road; but there was no more laughing in her voice, no more light in her face.

"Miss Wenna," said the smaller of the two children, who could not understand this change, and who looked up with big, wondering eyes, "why does oo tremble so?"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SOME OLD FRIENDS.

When they heard that Wenna was coming down the road they left Mr. Roscorla alone: lovers like to have their meetings and partings unobserved.

She went into the room, pale and yet firm—there was even a sense of gladness in her heart that now she must know the worst. What would he say? How would he receive her? She knew that she was at his mercy.

Well, Mr. Roscorla at this moment was angry enough, for he had been deceived and trifled with in his absence, but he was also anxious, and his anxiety caused him to conceal his anger. He came forward to her with quite a pleasant look on his face; he kissed her and said—

"Why, now, Wenna, how frightened you seem! Did you think I was going to scold you? No, no, no—I hope there is no necessity for that. I am not unreasonable, or over-exacting, as a younger man might be; I can make allowances. Of course I can't say I liked what you told me, when I first heard of it; but then I reasoned with myself: I thought of your lonely position; of the natural liking a girl has for the attention of a young man; of the possibility of any one going thoughtlessly wrong. And really I see no great harm done. A passing fancy—that is all."

"Oh, I hope that is so!" she cried suddenly, with a pathetic earnestness of appeal. "It is so good of you, so generous of you to speak like that!"

For the first time she ventured to raise her eyes to his face. They were full of gratitude. Mr. Roscorla complimented himself on his knowledge of women; a younger man would have flown into a fury.

"Oh dear, yes, Wenna!" he said lightly, "I suppose all girls have their fancies stray a little bit from time to time; but is there any harm done? None whatever! There is nothing like marriage to fix the affections, as I hope you will discover ere long—the sooner the better, indeed. Now we will dismiss all those unpleasant matters we have been writing about."

"Then you do forgive me? You are not really angry with me?" she said; and then, finding a welcome assurance in his face, she gratefully took his hand and touched it with her lips.

This little act of graceful submission quite conquered Mr. Roscorla, and definitely removed all lingering traces of anger from his heart. He was no longer acting clemency when he said—with a slight blush on his forehead:

"You know, Wenna, I have not been free from blame either. That letter—it was merely a piece of thoughtless

talk, and fresh colour in her face, was certainly not dying of any love-affair.

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CHAPTER XXXIII.

SOME OLD FRIENDS.

When they heard that Wenna was coming down the road they left Mr. Roscorla alone: lovers like to have their meetings and partings unobserved.

She went into the room, pale and yet firm—there was even a sense of gladness in her heart that now she must know the worst. What would he say? How would he receive her? She knew that she was at his mercy.

Well, Mr. Roscorla at this moment was angry enough, for he had been deceived and trifled with in his absence, but he was also anxious, and his anxiety caused him to conceal his anger. He came forward to her with quite a pleasant look on his face; he kissed her and said—

"Why, now, Wenna, how frightened you seem! Did you think I was going to scold you? No, no, no—I hope there is no necessity for that. I am not unreasonable, or over-exacting, as a younger man might be; I can make allowances. Of course I can't say I liked what you told me, when I first heard of it; but then I reasoned with myself: I thought of your lonely position; of the natural liking a girl has for the attention of a young man; of the possibility of any one going thoughtlessly wrong. And really I see no great harm done. A passing fancy—that is all."

"Oh, I hope that is so!" she cried suddenly, with a pathetic earnestness of appeal. "It is so good of you, so generous of you to speak like that!"

For the first time she ventured to raise her eyes to his face. They were full of gratitude. Mr. Roscorla complimented himself on his knowledge of women; a younger man would have flown into a fury.

"Oh dear, yes, Wenna!" he said lightly, "I suppose all girls have their fancies stray a little bit from time to time; but is there any harm done? None whatever! There is nothing like marriage to fix the affections, as I hope you will discover ere long—the sooner the better, indeed. Now we will dismiss all those unpleasant matters we have been writing about."

"Then you do forgive me? You are not really angry with me?" she said; and then, finding a welcome assurance in his face, she gratefully took his hand and touched it with her lips.

This little act of graceful submission quite conquered Mr. Roscorla, and definitely removed all lingering traces of anger from his heart. He was no longer acting clemency when he said—with a slight blush on his forehead:

"You know, Wenna, I have not been free from blame either. That letter—it was merely a piece of thoughtless

anger ; but still it was very kind of you to consider it cancelled and withdrawn when I asked you. Well, I was in a bad temper at that time. You cannot look at things so philosophically when you are far away from home ; you feel yourself so helpless ; and you think you are being unfairly—— However, not another word ! Come, let us talk of all your affairs, and all the work you have done since I left."

It was a natural invitation ; and yet it revealed in a moment the hollowness of the apparent reconciliation between them. What chance of mutual confidence could there be between these two ?

He asked Wenna if she had been busy in his absence ; and the thought immediately occurred to him that she had had at least sufficient leisure to go walking about with young Trelyon.

He asked her about the Sewing Club ; and she stumbled into the admission that Mr. Trelyon had presented that association with six sewing-machines.

Always Trelyon—always the recurrence of that uneasy consciousness of past events, which divided these two as completely as the Atlantic had done. It was a strange meeting, after that long absence.

"It is a curious thing," he said, rather desperately, "how marriage makes a husband and wife sure of each other. Anxiety is all over then. We have near us, out in Jamaica, several men whose wives and families are here in England ; and they accept their exile there as an ordinary commercial necessity. But then they put their whole minds into their work ; for they know that when they return to England they will find their wives and families just as they left them. Of course, in the majority of cases, the married men there have taken their wives out with them. Do you fear a long sea-voyage, Wenna ? "

"I don't know," she said, rather startled.

"You ought to be a good sailor, you know."

She said nothing to that : she was looking down, dreading what was coming.

"I am sure you must be a good sailor. I have heard of many of your boating adventures. Weren't you rather fond, some years ago, of going out at night with the Lundy pilots ? "

"I have never gone a long voyage in a large vessel," Wenna said, rather faintly.

"But if there was any reasonable object to be gained, an ordinary sea-voyage would not frighten you ? "

"Perhaps not."

"And they have really very good steamers going to the West Indies."

"Oh, indeed."

"First-rate ! You get a most comfortable cabin."

"I thought you rather—in your description of it—in your first letter——"

"Oh," said he, hurriedly and lightly (for he had been claiming sympathy on account of the discomfort of his voyage out), "perhaps I made a little too much of that. Besides, I did not make a proper choice in time. One gains experience in such matters. Now, if you were going out to Jamaica, I should see that you had every comfort."

"But you don't wish me to go out to Jamaica ? " she said, almost retreating from him.

"Well," said he, with a smile, for his only object at present was to familiarize her with the idea, "I don't particularly wish it, unless the project seemed a good one to you. You see, Wenna, I find that my stay there must be longer than I expected. When I went out at first the intention of my partners and myself was that I should merely be on the spot to help our manager by agreeing his accounts at the moment, and undertaking a lot of work of that sort, which otherwise would have consumed time in correspondence. I was merely to see the whole thing well started, and then return. But now I find that my superintendence may be needed there for a long while. Just when everything promises so well, I should not like to imperil all our chances simply for a year or two."

"Oh no, of course not," Wenna said : she had no objection to his remaining in Jamaica for a year or two longer than he had intended.

"That being so," he continued, "it occurred to me that perhaps you might consent to our marriage before I leave England again ; and that, indeed, you might even make up your mind to try a trip to Jamaica. Of course, we should have considerable spells of holiday, if you thought it was

worth while coming home for a short time. I assure you, you would find the place delightful—far more delightful than anything I told you in my letters, for I'm not very good at describing things. And there is a fair amount of society."

He did not prefer the request in an impassioned manner. On the contrary, he merely felt that he was satisfying himself by carrying out an intention he had formed on his voyage home. If, he had said to himself, Wenna and he became friends, he would at least suggest to her that she might put an end to all further suspense and anxiety by at once marrying him and accompanying him to Jamaica.

"What do you say?" he said, with a friendly smile. "Or have I frightened you too much? Well, let us drop the subject altogether for the present."

Wenna breathed again.

"Yes," said he, good-naturedly, "you can think over it. In the mean time do not harass yourself about that or anything else. You know, I have come home to spend a holiday."

"And won't you come and see the others?" said Wenna, rising, with a glad look of relief on her face.

"Oh yes, if you like," he said; and then he stopped short, and an angry gleam shot into his eyes.

"Wenna, who gave you that ring?"

"Oh, Mabyn did," was the frank reply; but all the same Wenna blushed hotly, for that matter of the emerald ring had not been touched upon.

"Mabyn did?" he repeated, somewhat suspiciously. "She must have been in a generous mood."

"When you know Mabyn as well as I do, you will find out that she always is," said Miss Wenna, quite cheerfully; she was indeed in the best of spirits to find that this dreaded interview had not been so very frightful after all, and that she had done no mortal injury to one who had placed his happiness in her hands.

When Mr. Roscorla, some time after, set out to walk by himself up to Basset Cottage, whither his luggage had been sent before him, he felt a little tired. He was not accustomed to violent emotions; and that morning he had gone

through a good deal. His anger and anxiety had for long been fighting for mastery; and both had reached their climax that morning. On the one hand, he wished to avenge himself for the insult paid him, and to show that he was not to be trifled with; on the other hand, his anxiety lest he should be unable to make up matters with Wenna, led him to put an unusual value upon her. What was the result, now that he had definitely won her back to himself? What was the sentiment that followed on these jarring emotions of the morning?

To tell the truth, a little disappointment. Wenna was not looking her best when she entered the room; even now he remembered that the pale face rather shocked him. She was more—insignificant, perhaps, is the best word—than he had expected. Now that he had got back the prize which he thought he had lost, it did not seem to him, after all, to be so wonderful.

And in this mood he went up and walked into the pretty little cottage which had once been his home. "What?" he said to himself, looking in amazement at the old-fashioned parlour, and at the still smaller study, filled with books, "is it possible that I ever proposed to myself to live and die in a hole like this?—my only companion a cantankerous old fool of a woman, my only occupation reading the newspapers, my only society the good folks of the inn?"

He thanked God he had escaped. His knocking about the world for a bit had opened up his mind. The possibility of his having in time a handsome income had let in upon him many new and daring ambitions.

His housekeeper, having expressed her grief that she had just posted some letters to him, not knowing that he was returning to England, brought in a number of small pass-books and a large sheet of blue paper.

"If yü bain't too tired, zor, vor to look over the accounts, 'tis all theear but the pultry that Mr.——"

"Good heavens, Mrs. Cornish!" said he, "do you think I am going to look over a lot of grocers' bills?"

Mrs. Cornish not only hinted in very plain language that her master had been at one time particular enough about grocers' bills, and all other bills, however trifling, but further proceeded to give him a full and minute account of

the various incidental expenses to which she had been put through young Penny Luke having broken a window by flinging a stone from the road; through the cat having knocked down the best teapot; through the pig having got out of its sty, gone mad, and smashed a cucumber-frame; and so forth, and so forth. In desperation, Mr. Roscorla got up, put on his hat, and went outside, leaving her at once astonished and indignant over his want of interest in what at one time had been his only care.

Was this, then, the place in which he had chosen to spend the rest of his life, without change, without movement, without interest? It seemed to him at the moment a living tomb. There was not a human being within sight. Far away out there lay the grey-blue sea—a plain without a speck on it. The great black crags at the mouth of the harbour were voiceless and sterile; could anything have been more bleak than the bare uplands on which the pale sun of an English October was shining? The quiet crushed him; there was not a nigger near to swear at; nor could he, at the impulse of a moment, get on horseback and ride over to the busy and interesting and picturesque scene supplied by his faithful coolies at work.

What was he to do on this very first day in England, for example? Unpack his luggage, in which were some curiosities he had brought home for Wenna?—there was too much trouble in that. Walk about the garden and smoke a pipe as had been his wont?—he had got emancipated from these delights of dotage. Attack his grocers' bills?—he swore by all his gods that he would have nothing to do with the price of candles and cheese now or at any future time. The return of the exile to his native land had already produced a feeling of deep disappointment; when he married, he said to himself, he would take very good care not to sink into an oyster-like life in Eglosilyan.

About a couple of hours after, however, he was reminded that Eglosilyan had its small measure of society, by the receipt of a letter from Mrs. Trelyon, who said she had just heard of his arrival, and hastened to ask him whether he would dine at the Hall not next evening but the following one, to meet two old friends of his, General and Lady Weekes, who were there on a brief visit.

"And I have written to ask Miss Rosewarne," Mrs. Trelyon continued, "to spare us the same evening, so that we hope to have you both. Perhaps you will kindly add your entreaties to mine."

The friendly intention of this postscript was evident; and yet it did not seem to please Mr. Roscorla. This Sir Percy Weekes had been a friend of his father's; and when the younger Roscorla was a young man about town, Lady Weekes had been very kind to him, and had nearly got him married once or twice. There was a great contrast between those days and these. He hoped the old General would not be tempted to come and visit him at Basset Cottage.

"Oh, Wenna," said he carelessly, to her next morning, "Mrs. Trelyon told me she had asked you to go up there to-morrow evening."

"Yes," Wenna said, looking rather uncomfortable. Then she added, quickly, "Would it displease you if I did not go? I ought to be at a children's party at Mr. Trewhella's."

This was precisely what Mr. Roscorla wanted; but he said—

"You must not be shy, Wenna. However, please yourself; you need have no fear of vexing me. But I must go; for the Weekeses are old friends of mine."

"They stayed at the inn two or three days in May last," said Wenna, innocently. "They came here by chance and found Mrs. Trelyon from home."

Mr. Roscorla seemed startled.

"Oh," said he. "Did they—did they—ask for me?"

"Yes, I believe they did," Wenna said.

"Then you told them," said Mr. Roscorla, with a pleasant smile, "you told them, of course, why you were the best person in the world to give them information about me."

"Oh, dear, no," said Wenna, blushing hotly, "they spoke to Jennifer."

Mr. Roscorla felt himself rebuked. It was George Rosewarne's express wish that his daughters should not be approached by strangers visiting the inn as if they were officially connected with the place: Mr. Roscorla should have remembered that inquiries would be made of a servant.

But, as it happened, Sir Percy and his wife had really made the acquaintance of both Wenna and Mabyn on their chance visit to Eglosilyan; and it was of these two girls they were speaking when Mr. Roscorla was announced in Mrs. Trelyon's drawing-room the following evening. The thin, wiry, white-moustached old man, who had wonderfully bright eyes and a great vivacity of spirits for a veteran of seventy-four, was standing in front of the fire, and declaring to everybody that two such well-accomplished, smart, talkative, and ladylike young women he had never met with in his life.

"What did you say the name was, my dear Mrs. Trelyon? Rosewarne, eh?—Rosewarne? A good old Cornish name—as good as yours, Roscorla. So they're called Rosewarne—Gad, if her august ladyship there wants to appoint a successor, I'm willing to let her choice fall on one o' these two girls."

Her august ladyship—a dark and silent old woman of eighty—did not like, in the first place, to be called her august ladyship, and did not relish either having her death talked of as a joke.

"Roscorla, now—Roscorla—there's a good chance for you, eh?" continued the old General. "We never could get you married, you know—wild young dog. Don't ye know the girls?"

"Oh yes, Sir Percy," Mr. Roscorla said, with no great good will; then he turned to the fire and began to warm his hands.

There was a tall young gentleman standing there who, in former days, would have been delighted to cry out on such an occasion, "Why, Roscorla's going to marry one of 'em." He remained silent now.

He was very silent, too, throughout the evening; and almost anxiously civil towards Mr. Roscorla. He paid great attention when the latter was describing to the company at table the beauties of West Indian scenery, the delights of West Indian life, the change that had come over the prospects of Jamaica since the introduction of coolie labour, and the fashion in which the rich merchants of Cuba were setting about getting plantations there for the growth of tobacco. Mr. Roscorla spoke with the air of

a man who now knew what the world was. When the old General asked him if he were coming back to live in Eglosilyan after he had become a millionaire, he laughed, and said that one's coffin came soon enough without one's rushing to meet it. No; when he came back to England finally, he would live in London; and had Sir Percy still that old walled-in house in Brompton?

Sir Percy paid less heed to these descriptions of Jamaica than Harry Trelyon did, for his next neighbour was old Mrs. Trelyon, and these two venerable flirts were talking of old acquaintances and old times at Bath and Cheltenham, and of the celebrated beauties, wits, and murderers of other days, in a manner which her silent ladyship did not at all seem to approve. The General was bringing out all his old-fashioned gallantry—compliments, easy phrases in French, polite attentions; his companion began to use her fan with a coquettish grace, and was vastly pleased when a reference was made to her celebrated flight to Gretna Green.

"Ah, Sir Percy," she said, "the men were men in those days, and the women women, I promise you; no beating about the bush, but the fair word given, and the fair word taken; and then a broken head for whoever should interfere, father, uncle, or brother, no matter who; and you know our family, Sir Percy, our family were among the worst——"

"I tell you what, madam," said the General, hotly, "your family had among 'em the handsomest women in the west of England—and the handsomest men, too, by Gad! Do you remember Jane Swanhope—the Fair Maid of Somerset they used to call her—that married the fellow living down Yeovil way, who broke his neck in a steeplechase?"

"Do I remember her," said the old lady. "She was one of my bridesmaids when they took me up to London to get married properly after I came back! She was my cousin on the mother's side; but they were connected with the Trelyons, too. And do you remember old John Trelyon of Polkerris; and did you ever see a man straighter in the back than he was, at seventy-one, when he married his second wife—that was at Exeter, I think. But there now, you don't find such men and women in these times; and do

you know the reason of that, Sir Percy? I'll tell you; its the doctors. The doctors can keep all the sickly ones alive now; before it was only the strong ones that lived. Dear, dear me, when I hear some of those London women talk—it is nothing but a catalogue of illnesses and diseases. No wonder they should say in church, 'There is no health in us;' every one of them has something the matter, even the young girls, poor things; and pretty mothers they're likely to make! They're a misery to themselves; they'll bring miserable things into the world; and all because the doctors have become so clever in pulling sickly people through. That's my opinion, Sir Percy. The doctors are responsible for five-sixths of all the suffering you hear of in families, either through illness or the losing of one's friends and relatives."

"Upon my word, madam," the General protested, "you use the doctor badly. He is blamed if he kills people, and he is blamed if he keeps them alive. What is he to do?"

"Do? He can't help saving the sickly ones now," the old lady admitted; "for relatives will have it done, and they know he can do it; but it's a great misfortune, Sir Percy, that's what it is, to have all these sickly creatures growing up to inter-marry into the good old families that used to be famous for their comeliness and strength. There was a man, yes, I remember him well, that came from Devonshire—he was a man of good family, too, and they made such a noise about his wrestling. Said I to myself, wrestling is not a fit amusement for gentlemen, but if this man comes up to our country, there's one or other of the Trelyons will try his mettle. And well I remember saying to my eldest son George—you remember when he was a young man, Sir Percy, no older than his own son there—'George,' I said, 'if this Mr. So-and-so comes into these parts, mind you have nothing to do with him; for wrestling is not fit for gentlemen.' 'All right, mother,' said he; but he laughed, and I knew what the laugh meant. My dear Sir Percy, I tell you the man hadn't a chance—I heard of it all afterwards. George caught him up, before he could begin any of his tricks, and flung him on to the hedge—and there were a dozen more in our family who could have done it, I'll be bound."

"But then, you know, Mrs. Trelyon," Mr. Roscorla ventured to say, "physical strength is not everything that is needed. If the doctors were to let the sickly ones die, we might be losing all sorts of great poets, and statesmen, and philosophers."

The old lady turned on him.

"And do you think a man has to be sickly to be clever? No, no, Mr. Roscorla, give him better health and you give him a better head, that's what we believed in the old days. I fancy, now, there were greater men before all this coddling began than there are now, yes, I do; and if there is a great man coming into the world, the chances are just as much that he'll be among the strong ones as among the sickly ones—what do you think, Sir Percy?"

"I declare you're right, madam," said he, gallantly. "You've quite convinced me. Of course, some of 'em must go—I say, let the sickly ones go."

"I never heard such brutal, such murderous sentiments expressed in my life before," said a solemn voice; and every one became aware that at last Lady Weekes had spoken. Her speech was the signal for universal silence, in the midst of which the ladies got up and left the room.

Trelyon took his mother's place, and sent round the wine. He was particularly attentive to Mr. Roscorla, who was surprised. "Perhaps," thought the latter, "he is anxious to atone for all this bother that is now happily over."

If the younger man was silent and pre-occupied, that was not the case with Mr. Roscorla, who was already assuming the airs of a rich person and speaking of his being unable to live in this district or that district of London, just as if he expected to purchase a lease of Buckingham Palace on his return from Jamaica.

"And how are all my old friends in Hans Place, Sir Percy?" he cried.

"You've been a deserter, sir, you've been a deserter for many a year now," the General said gaily, "but we're all willing to have you back again, to a quiet rubber after dinner, you know. Do you remember old John Thwaites? Ah, he's gone now—left 150,000*l.* to build a hospital, and only 5,000*l.* to his sister. The poor old woman believed

some one would marry her when she got the whole of her brother's money—so I'm told—and when the truth became known, what did she do? Gad, sir, she wrote a novel abusing her own brother. By the way, that reminds me of a devilish good thing I heard when I was here last—down at the inn, you know—what's the name of the girls I was talking about? Well, her ladyship caught one of them reading a novel, and not very well pleased with it, and says she to the young lady, 'Don't you like that book?' Then says the girl—let me see what was it?—Gad, I must go and ask her ladyship——"

And off he trotted to the drawing-room. He came back in a couple of minutes.

"Of course," said he. "Devilish stupid of me to forget it. 'Why?' said the young lady, 'I think the author has been trying to keep the second commandment, for there's nothing in the book that has any likeness to anything in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or the heavens under the earth——'"

"The waters under the earth."

"I mean the waters, of course. Gad, her ladyship was immensely tickled."

"Which of the two young ladies was it, Sir Percy? The younger, I suppose?" said Mr. Roscorla.

"No, no, the elder sister, of course," said Trelyon.

"Yes, the elder one it was—the quiet one—and an uncommon nice girl she is. Well, there's Captain Walters—the old sea dog—still to the fore; and his uniform too—don't you remember the uniform with the red cuffs that hasn't been seen in the navy for a couple of centuries, I should think! His son's got into Parliament now—gone over to the Rads, and the working-men, and those fellows that are scheming to get the land divided among themselves—all in the name of philosophy—and it's a devilish fine sort of philosophy, that is, when you haven't a rap in your pocket, and when you prove that everybody who has must give it up. He came to my house the other day, and he was jawing away about Primogeniture, and Entail, and Direct Taxation, and equal electoral districts, and I don't know what besides. 'Walters,' said I, 'Walters, you've got nothing to share, and so you don't mind a general division.

When you have, you'll want to stick to what's in your own pocket.' Had him there, eh?"

The old General beamed and laughed over his smartness; he was conscious of having said something that, in shape at least, was like an epigram.

"I must rub up my acquaintance in that quarter," said Roscorla, "before I leave again. Fortunately, I have always kept up my club subscription; and you'll come and dine with me, Sir Percy, won't you, when I get to town?"

"Are you going to town?" said Trelyon quickly.

"Oh, yes, of course."

"When?"

The question was abrupt, and it made Roscorla look at the young man as he answered. Trelyon seemed to him to be very much harassed about something or other.

"Well, I suppose in a week or so; I am only home for a holiday, you know."

"Oh, you'll be here for a week?" said the young man, submissively. "When do you think of returning to Jamaica?"

"Probably at the beginning of next month. Fancy leaving England in November—just at the most hideous time of the year—and in a week or two getting out into summer again, with the most beautiful climate, and foliage, and what not, all around you! I can tell you a man makes a great mistake who settles down to a sort of vegetable life anywhere—you don't catch me at that again."

"There's some old women," observed the General, who was so anxious to show his profundity, that he quite forgot the invidious character of the comparison, "who are just like trees—as much below the ground as above it—isn't that true, eh? They're a deal more at home among the people they have buried than among those that are alive. I don't say that's your case, Roscorla. You're comparatively a young man yet—you've got brisk health—I don't wonder at your liking to knock about. As for you, young Trelyon, what do you mean to do?"

Harry Trelyon started.

"Oh," said he, with some confusion, "I have no immediate plans. Yes, I have—don't you know I have been

cramming for the Civil Service examinations for first commissions?"

"And what the devil made the War Office go to those civilians?" muttered the General.

"And if I pull through, I shall want all your influence to get me gazetted to a good regiment. Don't they often shunt you on to the First or Second West Indians?"

"And you've enough money to back you too," said the General. "I tell you what it is, gentlemen, if they abolish the purchase of commissions in the army—and they're always talking about it—they don't know what they'll bring about. They'll have two sets of officers in the army—men with money, who like a good mess, and live far beyond their pay, and men with no money at all, who've got to live on their pay, and how can they afford the regimental mess out of that? But Parliament won't stand it you'll see. The War Minister 'll be beaten if he brings it on—take my word for that."

The old General had probably never heard of a royal warrant and its mighty powers.

"So you're going to be one of us?" he said to Trelyon. "Well, you've a smart figure for a uniform. You're the first of your side of the family to go into the army, eh? You had some naval men among you, eh?"

"I think you'd better ask my grandmother," said young Trelyon, with a laugh; "she'll tell you stories about 'em by the hour together."

"She's a wonderful woman that—a wonderful old creature," said the General, just as if he were a sprightly young fellow talking of the oldest inhabitant of the district. "She's not one of them that are half buried; she's wide enough awake, I'll be bound. Gad, what a handsome woman she was when I saw her first. Well, lads, let's join the ladies; I'm none of your steady-going old topers. Enough's as good's a feast—that's my motto. And I can't write my name on a slate with my knuckles, either."

And so they went into the large, dimly-lit, red chamber, where the women were having tea round the blazing fire. The men took various chairs about; the conversation became general; old Lady Weekes feebly endeavoured to keep

up her eyelids. In about half-an-hour or so Mrs. Trelyon happened to glance round the room.

"Where's Harry?" said she.

No one apparently had noticed that Master Harry had disappeared.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A DARK CONSPIRACY.

Now, when Harry Trelyon drove up to the Hall, after leaving Wenna Rosewarne in the road, he could not tell why he was vexed with her. He imagined somehow that she should not have allowed Mr. Roscorla to come home—and to come home just at this moment, when he, Trelyon, had stolen down for a couple of days to have a shy look at the sweetheart who was so far out of his reach. She ought to have been alone. Then she ought not to have looked so calm and complacent on going away to meet Mr. Roscorla; she ought to have been afraid. She ought to have—in short everything was wrong, and Wenna was largely to blame.

"Well, grandmother," said he, as they drove through the avenue, "don't you expect every minute to flush a covey of parsons?"

He was angry with Wenna; and so he broke out once more in his old vein.

"There are worse men than the parsons, Harry," the old lady said.

"I'll bet you a sovereign there are two on the doorstep."

He would have lost. There was not a clergyman of any sort in or about the house.

"Isn't Mr. Barnes here?" said he to his mother.

Mrs. Trelyon flushed slightly, as she said—

"No, Harry, Mr. Barnes is not here. Nor is he likely to visit here again."

Now Mr. Roscorla would at once have perceived what a strange little story lay behind that simple speech; but Mr. Harry, paying no attention to it, merely said he was heartily glad to hear of it, and showed his gratitude by being unusually polite to his mother during the rest of his stay.

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"So you're going to be one of us?" he said to Trelyon. "Well, you've a smart figure for a uniform. You're the first of your side of the family to go into the army, eh? You had some naval men among you, eh?"

"I think you'd better ask my grandmother," said young Trelyon, with a laugh; "she'll tell you stories about 'em by the hour together."

"She's a wonderful woman that—a wonderful old creature," said the General, just as if he were a sprightly young fellow talking of the oldest inhabitant of the district. "She's not one of them that are half buried; she's wide enough awake, I'll be bound. Gad, what a handsome woman she was when I saw her first. Well, lads, let's join the ladies; I'm none of your steady-going old topers. Enough's as good's a feast—that's my motto. And I can't write my name on a slate with my knuckles, either."

And so they went into the large, dimly-lit, red chamber, where the women were having tea round the blazing fire. The men took various chairs about; the conversation became general; old Lady Weekes feebly endeavoured to keep

up her eyelids. In about half-an-hour or so Mrs. Trelyon happened to glance round the room.

"Where's Harry?" said she.

No one apparently had noticed that Master Harry had disappeared.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A DARK CONSPIRACY.

Now, when Harry Trelyon drove up to the Hall, after leaving Wenna Rosewarne in the road, he could not tell why he was vexed with her. He imagined somehow that she should not have allowed Mr. Roscorla to come home—and to come home just at this moment, when he, Trelyon, had stolen down for a couple of days to have a shy look at the sweetheart who was so far out of his reach. She ought to have been alone. Then she ought not to have looked so calm and complacent on going away to meet Mr. Roscorla; she ought to have been afraid. She ought to have—in short everything was wrong, and Wenna was largely to blame.

"Well, grandmother," said he, as they drove through the avenue, "don't you expect every minute to flush a covey of parsons?"

He was angry with Wenna; and so he broke out once more in his old vein.

"There are worse men than the parsons, Harry," the old lady said.

"I'll bet you a sovereign there are two on the doorstep."

He would have lost. There was not a clergyman of any sort in or about the house.

"Isn't Mr. Barnes here?" said he to his mother.

Mrs. Trelyon flushed slightly, as she said—

"No, Harry, Mr. Barnes is not here. Nor is he likely to visit here again."

Now Mr. Roscorla would at once have perceived what a strange little story lay behind that simple speech; but Mr. Harry, paying no attention to it, merely said he was heartily glad to hear of it, and showed his gratitude by being unusually polite to his mother during the rest of his stay.

"And so Mr. Roscorla has come back," his mother said. "General Weekes was asking about him only yesterday. We must see if he will come to dinner the night after to-morrow——and Miss Rosewarne also."

"You may ask her—you ought to ask her—but she won't come," said he.

"How do you know?" Mrs. Trelyon said, with a gentle wonder. "She has been here very often of late."

"Have you let her walk up?"

"No, I have generally driven down for her when I wanted to see her; and the way she has been working for these people is extraordinary—never tired, always cheerful, ready to be bothered by anybody, and patient with their suspicions and simplicity, beyond belief. I am sure Mr. Roscorla will have an excellent wife."

"I am not at all sure that he will," said her son, goaded past endurance.

"Why, Harry," said his mother, with her eyes wide open, "I thought you had a great respect for Miss Rosewarne."

"I have," he said, abruptly,—"far too great a respect to like the notion of her marrying that old fool."

"Would you rather not have him to dinner?"

"Oh, I should like to have him to dinner."

For one evening, at least, this young man considered, these two would be separated. He was pretty sure that Roscorla would come to meet General Weekes; he was positive that Wenna would not come to the house while he himself was in it.

But the notion that, except during this one evening, his rival would have free access to the inn, and would spend pleasant hours there, and would take Wenna with him for walks along the coast, maddened him. He dared not go down to the village, for fear of seeing these two together. He walked about the grounds, or went away over to the cliffs, torturing his heart with imagining Roscorla's opportunities. And once or twice he was on the point of going straight down to Eglosilyan, and calling on Wenna, before Roscorla's face, to be true to her own heart, and declare herself free from this old and hateful entanglement.

In these circumstances, his grandmother was not a good companion for him. In her continual glorification of the

self-will of the Trelyons, and her stories of the wild deeds she had done, she was unconsciously driving him to some desperate thing, against his better judgment.

"Why, grandmother," he said, one day, "you hint that I am a nincompoop because I don't go and carry off that girl and marry her against her will. Is that what you mean by telling me of what the men did in former days? Well, I can tell you this, that it would be a deal easier for me to try that than not to try it. The difficulty is in holding your hand. But what good would you do, after all? The time has gone by for that sort of thing. I shouldn't like to have on my hands a woman sulking because she was married by force—besides, you can't do these mad freaks now—there are too many police-courts about."

"By force? No!" the old lady said. "The girls I speak of were as glad to run away as the men, I can tell you, and they did it, too, when their relations were against the match."

"Of course, if both he and she are agreed, the way is as smooth now as it was then; you don't need to care much for relations."

"But Harry, you don't know what a girl thinks," this dangerous old lady said. "She has her notions of duty, and her respect for her parents, and all that; and if the man only went and reasoned with her, he would never carry the day; but just as she comes out of a ball-room some night, when she is all aglow with fun and pleasure, and ready to become romantic with the stars, you see, and the darkness, then just show her a carriage, a pair of horses, a marriage license, and her own maid to accompany her, and see what will happen! Why, she'll hop into the carriage like a dicky bird; then she'll have a bit of a cry; and then she'll recover, and be mad with the delight of escaping from those behind her. That's how to win a girl, man! The sweethearts of these days think too much, that's about it: it's all done by argument between them."

"You're a wicked old woman, grandmother," said Trelyon, with a laugh. "You oughtn't to put such notions into the head of a well-conducted young man like me."

"Well, you're not such a booby as you used to be, Harry," the old lady admitted. "Your manners are con-

siderably improved, and there was much room for improvement. You're growing a good deal like your grandfather."

"But there's no Gretna Green now-a-days," said Trelyon, as he went outside, "so you can't expect me to be perfect, grandmother."

On the first night of his arrival at Eglosilyan he stole away in the darkness, down to the inn. There were no lamps in the steep road which was rendered all the darker by the high rocky bank with its rough masses of foliage; he feared that by accident some one might be out and meet him. But in the absolute silence, under the stars, he made his way down until he was near the inn; and there in the black shadow of the road, he stood and looked at the lighted windows. Roscorla was doubtless within—lying in an easy-chair, probably, by the fire, while Wenna sang her old-fashioned songs to him. He would assume the air of being one of the family now—only holding himself a little above the family. Perhaps he was talking of the house he meant to take when he and Wenna were married.

That was no wholesome food for reflection on which this young man's mind was now feeding. He stood there in the darkness, himself white as a ghost, while all the vague imaginings of what might be going on within the house seemed to be eating at his heart. This, then, was the comfort he had found, by secretly stealing away from London for a day or two; he had arrived just in time to find his rival triumphant.

The private door of the inn was at this moment opened; a warm glow of yellow streamed out into the darkness.

"Good-night," said some one: was it Wenna?

"Good-night," was the answer; and then the figure of a man passed down the road.

Trelyon breathed more freely; at last his rival was out of the house. Wenna was now alone; would she go up into her own room, and think over all the events of the day? And would she remember that he had come to Eglosilyan; and that she could, if any such feeling arose in her heart, summon him at need?

It was very late that night before Trelyon returned—he had gone all round by the harbour, and the cliffs, and the high-lying church on the hill. All in the house had gone

to bed; but there was a fire burning in his study; and there were biscuits and wine on the table. A box of cigars stood on the mantelpiece.

Apparently he was in no mood for the indolent comfort thus suggested. He stood for a minute or two before the fire, staring into it, and seeing other things than the flaming coals there; then he moved about the room, in an impatient and excited fashion; finally, with his hand trembling a little bit, he sat down and wrote this note:—

"DEAR MOTHER,—The horses and carriage will be at Launceston station by the first train on Saturday morning. Will you please send Jakes over for them? And bid him take the horses up to Mr. ——'s stables, and have them fed, watered, and properly rested before he drives them over. Your affectionate son,

"HARRY TRELYON."

Next morning, as Mabyn Rosewarne was coming briskly upon the Trevenna road, carrying in her arms a pretty big parcel, she was startled by the appearance of a young man, who suddenly showed himself overhead, and then scrambled down the rocky bank until he stood beside her.

"I've been watching for you all the morning, Mabyn," said Trelyon. "I——I want to speak to you. Where are you going?"

"Up to Mr. Trewhella's. You know his granddaughter is very nearly quite well again; and there is to be a great gathering of children there to-night to celebrate her recovery. This is a cake I am carrying that Wenna has made herself."

"Is Wenna to be there?" Trelyon said, eagerly.

"Why, of course," said Mabyn, petulantly. "What do you think the children could do without her?"

"Look here, Mabyn," he said. "I want to speak to you very particularly. Couldn't you just as well go round by the farm road? Let me carry your cake for you."

Mabyn guessed what he wanted to speak about, and willingly made the circuit by a more private road leading by one of the upland farms. At a certain point they came to a stile; and here they rested. So far Trelyon had said nothing of consequence.

"Oh, do you know, Mr. Trelyon," Mabyn remarked, quite innocently, "I have been reading such a nice book—all about Jamaica."

"So you're interested about Jamaica, too?" said he, rather bitterly.

"Yes, much. Do you know that it is the most fearful place for storms in the whole world—the most awful hurricanes that come smashing down everything and killing people. You can't escape if you're in the way of the hurricane. It whirls the roofs off the houses, and twists out the plantain trees just like straws. The rivers wash away whole acres of canes and swamp the farms. Sometimes the sea rages so that boats are carried right up into the streets of Kingston. There!"

"But why does that please you?"

"Why," she said, with proud indignation, "the notion of people talking as if they could go out to Jamaica and live for ever, and come back just when they please—it is too ridiculous! Many accidents may happen. And isn't November a very bad time for storms? Ships often get wrecked going out to the West Indies, don't they?"

At another time Trelyon would have laughed at this bloodthirsty young woman; at this moment he was too serious.

"Mabyn," said he, "I can't bear this any longer—standing by like a fool and looking on while another man is doing his best to marry Wenna: I can't go on like this any longer. Mabyn, when did you say she would leave Mr. Trewhella's house to-night?"

"I did not say anything about it. I suppose we shall leave about ten; the young ones leave at nine."

"You will be there?"

"Yes, Wenna and I are to keep order."

"Nobody else with you?"

"No."

He looked at her rather hesitatingly.

"And supposing, Mabyn," he said slowly, "supposing you and Wenna were to leave at ten, and that it is a beautiful clear night, you might walk down by the wood instead of by the road; and then, supposing that you came out on the road down at the foot, and you found there a carriage and pair of horses——"

Mabyn began to look alarmed.

"And if I was there," he continued, more rapidly, "and I said to Wenna suddenly, 'Now Wenna, think nothing, but come and save yourself from this marriage! Here is your sister will come with you—and I will drive you to Plymouth——'"

"Oh, Mr. Trelyon!" Mabyn cried, with a sudden joy in her face, "she would do it! She would do it!"

"And you, would you come too?" he demanded.

"Yes!" the girl cried, full of excitement. "And then, Mr. Trelyon, and then?"

"Why," he cried boldly, "up to London at once—twenty-four hours' start of everybody—and in London we are safe! Then, you know, Mabyn——"

"Yes, yes, Mr. Trelyon!"

"Don't you think now that we two could persuade her to a quick marriage—with a special license, you know—you could persuade her, I am sure, Mabyn——"

In the gladness of her heart Mabyn felt herself at this moment ready to fall on the young man's neck and kiss him. But she was a properly conducted young person; and so she rose from the big block of slate on which she had been sitting and managed to suppress any great intimation of her abounding joy. But she was very proud, all the same, and there was a great firmness about her lips as she said:—

"We will do it, Mr. Trelyon; we will do it. Do you know why Wenna submits to this engagement? Because she reasons with her conscience, and persuades herself that it is right. When you meet her like that, she will have no time to consider——"

"That is precisely what my grandmother says," Trelyon said, with a triumphant laugh.

"Yes, she was a girl once," Mabyn replied, sagely. "Well, well, tell me all about it! What arrangements have you made? You haven't got the special license?"

"No," said he, "I didn't make up my mind to try this on till last night. But the difference of a day is nothing, when you are with her. We shall be able to hide ourselves away pretty well in London, don't you think?"

"Of course!" cried Mabyn confidently. "But tell me

more, Mr. Trelyon! What have you arranged? What have you done?"

"What could I do until I knew whether you'd help me?"

"You must bring a fearful amount of wraps with you."

"Certainly—more than you'll want, I know. And I shan't light the lamps until I hear you coming along; for they would attract attention down in the valley. I should like to wait for you elsewhere; but if I did that you couldn't get Wenna to come with you. Do you think you will even then?"

"Oh, yes," said Mabyn cheerfully. "Nothing easier! I shall tell her she's afraid; and then she would walk down the face of Black Cliff. By the way, Mr. Trelyon, I must bring something to eat with me, and some wine—she will be so nervous—and the long journey will tire her."

"You will be at Mr. Trewhella's, Mabyn; you can't go carrying things about with you!"

"I could bring a bit of cake in my pocket," Mabyn suggested; but this seemed even to her so ludicrous that she blushed and laughed and agreed that Mr. Trelyon should bring the necessary provisions for the wild night-ride to Plymouth.

"Oh, it does so please me to think of it!" she said with a curious anxious excitement as well as gladness in her face; "I hope I have not forgotten to arrange anything. Let me see—we start at ten; then down through the wood to the road in the hollow—oh, I hope there will be nobody coming along just then!—then you light the lamps—then you come forward to persuade Wenna—by the way, Mr. Trelyon, where must I go? Shall I not be dreadfully in the way?"

"You? You must stand by the horses' heads! I shan't have my man with me. And yet they're not very fiery animals—they'll be less fiery, the unfortunate wretches, when they get to Plymouth."

"At what time?"

"About half-past three in the morning, if we go straight on," said he.

"Do you know a good hotel there?" said the practical Mabyn.

"The best one is by the station; but if you sleep in the front of the house, you have the whistling of engines all night long, and if you sleep in the back, you overlook a barracks, and the confounded trumpeting begins about four o'clock, I believe."

"Wenna and I won't mind that—we shall be too tired," Mabyn said. "Do you think they could give us a little hot coffee when we arrive?"

"Oh yes! I'll give the night-porter a sovereign a cup—then he'll offer to bring it to you in buckets. Now don't you think the whole thing is beautifully arranged, Mabyn?"

"It is quite lovely!" the girl said joyously, "for we shall be off with the morning train to London, while Mr. Roscorla is pottering about Launceston station at mid-day! Then we must send a telegram from Plymouth, a fine dramatic telegram; and my father, he will swear a little, but be quite content, and my mother—do you know, Mr. Trelyon, I believe my mother will be as glad as anybody! What shall we say?—'*To Mr. Rosewarne, Eglosilyan. We have fled. Not the least good pursuing us. May as well make up your mind to the inevitable. Will write to-morrow.*' Is that more than the twenty words for a shilling?"

"We shan't grudge the other shilling if it is," the young man said. "Now you must go on with your cake, Mabyn! I am off to see after the horses' shoes. Mind, as soon after ten as you can—just where the path from the wood comes into the main road."

Then she hesitated, and for a second or two she remained thoughtful and silent; while he was inwardly hoping that she was not going to draw back. Suddenly she looked up at him, with earnest and anxious eyes.

"Oh, Mr. Trelyon," she said, "this is a very serious thing. You—you will be kind to our Wenna after she is married to you!"

"You will see, Mabyn," he answered gently.

"You don't know how sensitive she is," she continued, apparently thinking over all the possibilities of the future in a much graver fashion than she had done. "If you were unkind to her, it would kill her. Are you quite sure you won't regret it?"

"Yes, I am quite sure of that," said he, "as sure as a man may be. I don't think you need fear my being unkind to Wenna. Why, what has put such thoughts into your head?"

"If you were to be cruel to her or indifferent," she said, slowly and absently, "I know that would kill her. But I know more than that. *I would kill you.*"

"Mabyn," he said, quite startled, "whatever has put such thoughts into your head?"

"Why," she said, passionately, "haven't I seen already how a man can treat her? Haven't I read the insolent letters he has sent her? Haven't I seen her throw herself on her bed, beside herself with grief? And—and—these are things I don't forget, Mr. Trelyon. No, I have got a word to say to Mr. Roscorla yet for his treatment of my sister—and I will say it. And then——"

The proud lips were beginning to quiver.

"Come, come, Mabyn," said Trelyon, gently, "don't imagine all men are the same. And perhaps Roscorla will have been paid out quite sufficiently when he hears of to-night's work. I shan't bear him any malice after that, I know. Already, I confess, I feel a good deal of compunction as regards him."

"I don't at all—I don't a bit," said Mabyn, who very quickly recovered herself whenever Mr. Roscorla's name was mentioned. "If you only can get her to go away with you, Mr. Trelyon, it will serve him just right. Indeed, it is on his account that I hope you will be successful. I—I don't quite like Wenna running away with you, to tell you the truth—I would rather have her left to a quiet decision, and to a marriage with everybody approving. But there is no chance of that. This is the only thing that will save her."

"That is precisely what I said to you," Trelyon said, eagerly, for he was afraid of losing so invaluable an ally.

"And you will be very, *very* kind to her?"

"I'm not good at fine words, Mabyn. You'll see."

She held out her hand to him, and pressed his warmly.

"I believe you will be a good husband to her; and I know you will get the best wife in the whole world!"

She was going away when he suddenly said—

"Mabyn!"

She turned.

"Do you know," said he rather shamefacedly, "how much I am grateful to you for all your frank straightforward kindness—and your help—and your courage——"

"No, no!" said the young girl, good-humouredly. "You make Wenna happy, and don't consider me!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

UNDER THE WHITE STARS.

During the whole glad evening Wenna had been Queen of the Feast, and her subjects had obeyed her with a joyous submission. They did not take quite so kindly to Mabyn, for she was sharp of tongue and imperious in her ways; but they knew that they could tease her elder sister with impunity—always up to the well-understood line at which her authority began. That was never questioned.

Then, at nine o'clock, the servants came, some on foot and some on dog-carts; and presently there was a bundling up of tiny figures in rugs and wraps and Wenna stood at the door to kiss each of them and say good-bye. It was half-past nine when that performance was over.

"Now, my dear Miss Wenna," said the old clergyman, "you must be quite tired out with your labours. Come into the study—I believe the tray has been taken in there."

"Do you know, Mr. Trewhella," said Mabyn boldly, "that Wenna hadn't time to eat a single bit when all those children were gobbling up cake. Couldn't you let her have a little bit—a little bit of cold meat now——"

"Dear, dear me!" said the kind old gentleman, in the deepest distress, "that I should not have remembered!"

There was no use in Wenna protesting. In the snug little study she was made to eat some supper; and if she got off with drinking one glass of sherry it was not through the intervention of her sister, who apparently would have had her drink a tumbler-full.

It was not until a quarter past ten that the girls could get away.

"Now I must see you young ladies down to the village,

"Yes, I am quite sure of that," said he, "as sure as a man may be. I don't think you need fear my being unkind to Wenna. Why, what has put such thoughts into your head?"

"If you were to be cruel to her or indifferent," she said, slowly and absently, "I know that would kill her. But I know more than that. *I would kill you.*"

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It was not until a quarter past ten that the girls could get away.

"Now I must see you young ladies down to the village,

lest some one should run away with you," the old clergyman said, taking down his top coat.

"Oh no, you must not—you must not, indeed, Mr. Trewhella!" Mabyn said, anxiously. "Wenna and I always go about by ourselves—and far later than this too. It is a beautiful, clear night! Why——"

Her impetuosity made her sister smile.

"You talk as if you would rather like to be run away with, Mabyn," she said. "But indeed, Mr. Trewhella, you must not think of coming with us. It is quite true what Mabyn says."

And so they went out into the clear darkness together; and the door was shut; and they found themselves in the silent world of the night-time, with the white stars throbbing overhead. Far away in the distance they could hear the murmur of the sea.

"Are you cold, Mabyn, that you tremble so?" said the elder sister.

"No—only a sort of shiver in coming out into the night air."

Whatever it was it was soon over. Mabyn seemed to be unusually cheerful.

"Wenna," she said, "you're afraid of ghosts!"

"No, I'm not."

"I know you are."

"I'm not half as much afraid of ghosts as you are, that's quite certain."

"I'll bet you you won't walk down through the wood."

"Just now?"

"Yes."

"Why, I'll not only go down through the wood, but I'll undertake to be home before you, though you've a broad road to guide you."

"But I did not mean you to go alone."

"Oh," said Wenna, "you propose to come with me? Then it is you who are afraid to go down by yourself? Oh, Mabyn!"

"Never mind, Wenna,—let's go down through the wood just for fun."

So the two sisters set out, arm-in-arm; and through some spirit of mischief Wenna would not speak a word.

Mabyn was gradually overawed by the silence, the night, the loneliness of the road, and the solemn presence of the great living vault above them. Moreover, before getting into the wood, they had to skirt a curious little dingle, in the hollow of which are both a church and churchyard. Many a time the sisters had come up to this romantic dell in the spring-time, to gather splendid primroses, sweet violets, the yellow celandine, and other wild flowers that grow luxuriantly on its steep banks; and very pretty the old church looked then, with the clear sunshine of April streaming down through the scantily-leaved trees into this sequestered spot. Now the deep hole was black as night; and they could only make out a bit of the spire of the church as it appeared against the dark sky. Nay, was there not a sound among the fallen leaves and underwood down there, in the direction of the unseen graves?

"Some cow has strayed in there, I believe," said Mabyn, in a somewhat low voice, and she walked rather quickly until they got past the place and out on to the hill over the wooded valley.

"Now," said Wenna, cheerfully, not wishing to have Mabyn put in a real fright, "as we go down I am going to tell you something, Mabyn. How would you like to have to prepare for a wedding in a fortnight?"

"Not at all!" said Mabyn promptly, even fiercely.

"Not if it was your own?"

"No—why, the insult of such a request!"

According to Mabyn's way of thinking it was an insu't to ask a girl to marry you in a fortnight, but none to insist on her marrying you the day after to-morrow.

"You think that a girl could fairly plead that as an excuse—the mere time to get one's dresses and things ready?"

"Certainly!"

"Oh, Mabyn," said Wenna, far more seriously, "it is not of dresses I am thinking at all; but I shudder to think of getting married just now. I could not do it. I have not had enough time to forget what is past—and until that is done, how could I marry any man?"

"Wenna, I do love you when you talk like that!" her sister cried. "You can be so wise and reasonable when you

choose! Of course you are quite right, dear. But you don't mean to say he wants you to get married before he goes to Jamaica, and then to leave you alone?"

"Oh, no. He wants me to go with him to Jamaica."

Mabyn uttered a short cry of alarm.

"To Jamaica! To take you away from the whole of us—why—oh, Wenna, I do hate being a girl so—for you're not allowed to swear—if I were a man now! To Jamaica! Why don't you know that there are hundreds of people always being killed there by the most frightful hurricanes, and earthquakes, and large serpents in the woods? To Jamaica!—no, you are not going to Jamaica just yet! I don't think you are going to Jamaica just yet!"

"No, indeed, I am not," said Wenna, with a quiet decision. "Nor could I think of getting married in any case at present. But then—don't you see, Mabyn—Mr. Roscorla is just a little peculiar in some ways——"

"Yes, certainly!"

"——and he likes to have a definite reason for what you do. If I were to tell him of the repugnance I have to the notion of getting married just now, he would call it mere sentiment, and try to argue me out of it—then we should have a quarrel. But if, as you say, a girl may fairly refuse in point of time——"

"Now, I'll tell you," said Mabyn, plainly; "no girl can get married properly, who hasn't six months to get ready in. She might manage in three or four months, for a man she was particularly fond of; but if it is a mere stranger—and a disagreeable person—and one who ought not to marry her at all—then six months is the very shortest time. Just you send Mr. Roscorla to me, and I'll tell him all about it."

Wenna laughed.

"Yes, I've no doubt you would. I think he's more afraid of you than of all the serpents and snakes in Jamaica."

"Yes, and he'll have more cause to be before he's much older," said Mabyn, confidently.

They could not continue their conversation just then, for they were going down the side of the hill, between short trees and bushes; and the path was broad enough only for one, while there were many dark places demanding caution.

"Seen any ghosts yet?" Wenna called out to Mabyn, who was behind her.

"Ghosts, sir? Ay, ay, sir! Heave away on the larboard beam! I say, Wenna, isn't it uncommon dark?"

"It is uncommonly dark."

"Gentlemen always say uncommon; and all the grammars are written by gentlemen. Oh, Wenna, wait a bit; I've lost my brooch!"

It was no *ruse*, for a wonder; the brooch had, indeed, dropped out of her shawl. She felt all over the dark ground for it, but her search was in vain.

"Well, here's a nice thing! Upon my——"

"Mabyn!"

"Upon my——trotting pony; that was all I was going to say. Wenna, will you stay here for a minute; and I'll run down to the foot of the hill, and get a match?"

"How can you get a match at the foot of the hill? You'll have to go on to the inn. No, tie your handkerchief round the foot of one of the trees, and come up early in the morning to look."

"Early in the morning?" said Mabyn. "I hope to be in——I mean asleep then."

Twice she had nearly blurted out the secret; and, it is highly probable that her refusal to adopt Wenna's suggestion would have led her sister to suspect something, had not Wenna herself, by accident, kicked against the missing brooch. As it was, the time lost by this misadventure was grievous to Mabyn, who now insisted on leading the way, and went along through the bushes at a rattling pace. Here and there the belated wanderers startled a blackbird, that went shrieking its fright over to the other side of the valley; but Mabyn was now too much preoccupied to be unnerved.

"Keeping a look out ahead?" Wenna called.

"Ay, ay, sir! No ghosts on the weather quarter! Ship drawing twenty fathoms, and the mate fast asleep. Oh, Wenna, my hat!"

It had been twitched off her head by one of the branches of the young trees through which she was passing, and the pliant bit of wood, being released from the strain, had thrown it down into the dark bushes and briars.

"Well I'm—no, I'm not!" said Mabyn, as she picked out the hat from among the thorns, and straightened the twisted feather. Then she set out again, impatient over these delays; and yet determined not to let her courage sink.

"Land ahead yet?" called out Wenna.

"Ay, ay, sir; and the Lizard on our lea! Wind S.S.W., and the cargo shifting a point to the east. Hurrah!"

"Mabyn, they'll hear you a mile off!"

It was certainly Mabyn's intention that she should be heard at least a quarter of a mile off, for now they had got down to the open, and they could hear the stream some way ahead of them, which they would have to cross. At this point Mabyn paused for a second to let her sister overtake her; then they went on arm-in-arm.

"Oh, Wenna," she said, "do you remember '*young Lochinvar*'?"

"Of course!"

"Didn't you fall in love with him when you read about him? Now, there *was* somebody to fall in love with! Don't you remember when he came into Netherby Hall, that

> The bride-maidens whispered, 'Twere better by far
> To have matched our fair cousin with young Lochinvar!'

And then you know, Wenna—

> One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
> When they reached the hall-door, and the charger stood near;
> So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
> So light to the saddle before her he sprung!
> 'She is won! we are gone—over bank, bush, and scaur!
> They'll have fleet steeds that follow,' quoth young Lochinvar.

That *was* a lover now!"

"I think he was a most impertinent young man," said Wenna.

"I rather like a young man to be impertinent," said Mabyn, boldly.

"Then there won't be any difficulty about fitting you with a husband," said Wenna with a light laugh.

Here Mabyn once more went on ahead, picking her steps through the damp grass as she made her way down to the stream. Wenna was still in the highest of spirits.

"Walking the plank yet, boatswain?" she called out.

"Not yet, sir," Mabyn called in return. "Ship wearing round on the leeward tack, and the waves running mountains high. Don't you hear 'em, captain?"

"Look out for the breakers, boatswain!"

"Ay, ay, sir. All hands on deck to man the captain's gig! Belay away there! Avast! Mind, Wenna; here's the bridge!"

Crossing over that single plank, in the dead of the night, was a sufficiently dangerous experiment; but both these young ladies had had plenty of experience in keeping their wits about them in more perilous places.

"Why are you in such a hurry, Mabyn?" Wenna said, when they had crossed.

Mabyn did not know what to answer, she was very much excited; and inclined to talk at random merely to cover her anxiety. She was now very late for the appointment, and who could tell what unfortunate misadventure Harry Trelyon might have met with?

"Oh, I don't know," she said. "Why don't you admire young Lochinvar? Wenna, you're like the Lacedæmons."

"Like the what?"

"Like the Lacedæmons, that were neither cold nor hot. Why don't you admire young Lochinvar?"

"Because he was interfering with another man's property."

"That man had no right to her," said Mabyn, talking rather wildly, and looking on ahead, to the point at which the path through the meadows went up the road, "he was a wretched animal, I know; I believe he was a sugar-broker, and had just come home from Jamaica."

"I believe," said Wenna, "I believe that young Lochinvar——"

She stopped.

"What's that!" she said. "What are those two lights up there?"

"They're not ghosts: come along, Wenna!" said Mabyn, hurriedly.

Let us go up to this road, where Harry Trelyon, tortured

with anxiety and impatience, is waiting. He had slipped away from the house, pretty nearly as soon as the gentlemen had gone into the drawing-room after dinner; and on some excuse or other had got the horses put to a light and yet roomy Stanhope phaeton. From the stable-yard he drove by a back way into the main road without passing in front of the Hall; then he quietly walked the horses down the steep hill, and round the foot of the valley to the point at which Mabyn was to make her appearance.

But he dared not stop there; for now and again some passer-by came along the road; and even in the darkness Mrs. Trelyon's grey horses would be recognised by any of the inhabitants of Eglosilyan, who would naturally wonder what Master Harry was waiting for. He walked them a few hundred yards one way, then a few hundred yards the other; and ever, as it seemed to him, the danger was growing greater of some one from the inn or from the Hall suddenly appearing and spoiling the whole plan.

Half-past ten arrived; and nothing could be heard of the girls. Then a horrible thought struck him that Roscorla might by this time have left the Hall; and would he not be coming down to this very road on his way up to Basset Cottage? This was no idle fear; it was almost a matter of certainty.

The minutes rolled themselves out into ages; he kept looking at his watch every few seconds; yet he could hear nothing from the wood or the valley of Mabyn's approach. Then he got down into the road, walked a few yards this way and that apparently to stamp the nervousness out of his system, patted the horses, and, finally, occupied himself in lighting the lamps. He was driven by the delay into a sort of desperation. Even if Wenna and Mabyn did appear now, and if he was successful in his prayer, there was every chance of their being interrupted by Roscorla, who had without doubt left the Hall some time before.

Suddenly he stopped in his excited walking up and down. Was that a faint "Hurrah!" that he heard in the distance? He went down to the stile at the junction of the path and the road; and listened attentively. Yes, he could hear at least one voice, as yet a long way off; but now he had no more doubt. He walked quickly back to the carriage.

"Ho, ho, my hearties!" he said, stroking the heads of the horses, "you'll have a Dick Turpin's ride to-night."

All the nervousness had gone from him now; he was full of a strange sort of exultation—the joy of a man who feels that the crisis in his life has come, and that he has the power and courage to face it.

He heard them come up through the meadow to the stile; it was Wenna who was talking; Mabyn was quite silent. They came along the road.

"What is this carriage doing here?" Wenna said.

They drew still nearer.

"They are Mrs. Trelyon's horses—and there is no driver——"

At this moment Harry Trelyon came quickly forward and stood in the road before her; while Mabyn as quickly went on and disappeared. The girl was startled, bewildered, but not frightened; for in a second he had taken her by the hand, and then she heard him say to her in an anxious, low, imploring voice:—

"Wenna, my darling, don't be alarmed! See here, I have got everything ready to take you away—and Mabyn is coming with us—and you know I love you so that I can't bear the notion of your falling into that man's hands. Now, Wenna, don't think about it! Come with me! We shall be married in London—Mabyn is coming with you——"

For one brief second or two she seemed stunned and alarmed; then, looking at the carriage, and the earnest suppliant before her, the whole truth appeared to flash in upon her. She looked wildly round.

"Mabyn——" she was about to say, when he guessed the meaning of her rapid look.

"Mabyn is here. She is quite close by—she is coming with us. My darling, won't you let me save you! This, indeed, is our last chance. Wenna——"

She was trembling so that he thought she would fall; and he would have put his arms round her, but that she drew back, and in so doing, she got into light, and then he saw the immeasurable pity and sadness of her eyes.

"Oh, my love," she said, with tears running down her face, "I love you! I will tell you that now, when we speak

for the last time. See, I will kiss you—and then you will go away——"

"I will not go away—not without you—this night. Wenna, dearest, you have let your heart speak at last—now let it tell you what to do!"

"Oh, must I go? Must I go?" she said; and then she looked wildly round again.

"Mabyn!" called out Trelyon, half mad with joy and triumph, "Mabyn, come along! Look sharp, jump in! This way, my darling!"

And he took the trembling girl, and half lifted her into the carriage.

"Oh, my love, what am I doing for you this night?" she said to him, with her eyes swimming in tears.

But what was the matter with Mabyn? She was just putting her foot on the iron step when a rapidly approaching figure caused her to utter a cry of alarm, and she stumbled back into the road again. The very accident that Trelyon had been anticipating had occurred; here was Mr. Roscorla, bewildered at first, and then blind with rage when he saw what was happening before his eyes. In his desperation and anger he was about to lay hold of Mabyn by the arm when he was sent staggering backwards half-a-dozen yards.

"Don't interfere with me now, or by God I will kill you!" Trelyon said, between his teeth; and then he hurried Mabyn into the carriage.

What was the sound then that the still woods heard, under the throbbing stars, through the darkness that lay over the land? Only the sound of horses' feet, monotonous and regular, and not a word of joy or sorrow uttered by any one of the party thus hurrying on through the night.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

INTO CAPTIVITY.

Towards eleven o'clock that night, Mrs. Rosewarne became a little anxious about her girls, and asked her husband to go and meet them, or to fetch them away if they were still at Mr. Trewhella's house.

"Can't they look after themselves?" said George Rosewarne. "I'll be bound Mabyn can, any way. Let her alone to come back when she pleases."

Then his wife began to fret; and, as this made him uncomfortable, he said he would walk up the road and meet them. He had no intention of doing so, of course; but it was a good excuse for getting away from a fidgety wife. He went outside into the clear starlight, and lounged down to the small bridge beside the mill, contentedly smoking his pipe.

There he encountered a farmer who was riding home a cob he had bought that day at Launceston; and the farmer and he began to have a chat about horses, suggested by that circumstance. Oddly enough, their random talk came round to young Trelyon.

"Your thoroughbreds won't do for this county," George Rosewarne was saying, "to go flying a stone wall and breaking your neck. No sir! I'll tell you what sort of hunter I should like to have for these parts. I'd have him half-bred, short in the leg, short in the pastern, short in the back, a good sloping shoulder, broad in the chest and forehead, long in the belly, and just the least bit over fifteen hands—eh! Mr. Thomas? I don't think beauty's of much consequence when your neck's in question. Let him be as angular and ragged in the hips as you like, so long's his ribs are well up to the hip-bone. Have you seen that black horse that young Trelyon rides!"

"'Tis a noble beast, sir—a noble beast," the farmer said; and he would probably have gone on to state what ideal animal had been constructed by his lavish imagination, had not a man come running up at this moment, breathless and almost speechless.

"Rosewarne," stammered Mr. Roscorla, "a—a word with you! I want to say——"

The farmer, seeing he was in the way, called out a careless good-night, and rode on.

"Well, what's the matter?" said George Rosewarne a little snappishly: he did not like being worried by excitable people.

"Your daughters!" gasped Mr. Roscorla. "They've both run away—both of them—this minute with Trelyon!

you'll have to ride after them. They're straight away along the high road."

"Both of them? the infernal young fools!" said Rosewarne. "Why the devil didn't you stop them yourself?"

"How could I?" Roscorla said, amazed that the father took the flight of his daughters with apparent equanimity.

"You must make haste, Mr. Rosewarne, or you'll never catch them."

"I've a good mind to let 'em go," said he sulkily, as he walked over to the stables of the inn. "The notion of a man having to set out on a wild-goose chase at this time o' night! Run away, have they; and what in all the world have they run away for?"

It occurred to him, however, that the sooner he got a horse saddled and set out, the less distance he would have to go in pursuit; and that consideration quickened his movements.

"What's it all about?" said he to Roscorla, who had followed him into the stable.

"I suppose they mean a runaway match," said Mr. Roscorla, helping to saddle George Rosewarne's cob, a famous trotter.

"It's that young devil's limb, Mabyn, I'll be bound," said the father. "I wish to heaven somebody would marry her—I don't care who. She's always up to some confounded mischief."

"No, no, no!" Roscorla said; "it's Wenna he means to marry."

"Why, you were to have married Wenna——"

"Yes, but——"

"Then why didn't you? So she's run away, has she?"

George Rosewarne grinned: he saw how the matter lay.

"This is Mabyn's work, I know," said he, as he put his foot in the stirrup, and sprang into the saddle. "You'd better go home, Roscorla. Don't you say a word to anybody. You don't want the girl made a fool of all through the place."

So George Rosewarne set out to bring back his daughters; not galloping as an anxious parent might, but going ahead with a long, steady-going trot, which he knew would soon tell on Mrs. Trelyon's over-fed and under-exercised horses.

"If they mean Plymouth," he was thinking, "as is most likely from their taking the high road, he'll give it them gently at first. And so that young man wants to marry our Wenna. 'Twould be a fine match for her; and yet she's worth all the money he's got—she's worth it every farthing. I'd give him the other one cheap enough."

Pounding along a dark road, with the consciousness that the further you go the further you've got to get back, and that the distance still to be done is an indeterminate quantity, is agreeable to no one; but it was especially vexatious to George Rosewarne, who liked to take things quietly, and could not understand what all the fuss was about. Why should he be sent on this mad chase at midnight? If anybody wanted to marry either of the girls, why didn't he do so, and say no more about it? Rosewarne had been merely impatient and annoyed when he set out; but the longer he rode, and the more he communed with himself, the deeper grew his sense of the personal injury that had been done him by this act of folly.

It was a very lonely ride indeed. There was not a human being abroad at that hour. When he passed a few cottages from time to time, the windows were dark. Then they had just been putting down a lot of loose stones at several parts of the road, which caused Mr. Rosewarne to swear.

"I'll bet a sovereign," said he to himself, "that old Job kept them a quarter of an hour before he opened Paddock's Gate. I believe the old fool goes to bed. Well, they've waked him up for me any way."

There was some consolation in this surmise, which was well founded. When Rosewarne reached the toll-bar, there was at least a light in the small house. He struck on the door with the handle of his riding-whip, and called out—

"Hi, hi! Job! Come out, you old fool!"

An old man, with very bandy legs, came hobbling out of the toll-house, and went to open the gate, talking and muttering to himself—

"Ay, ay! so yü be agwoin' after the young uns, Maister Rosewarne? Ay, ay! yü'll go up many a lane, and by many a fuzzy 'ill, and acrass a bridge or two afore yü come up wi' 'en, Maister Rosewarne."

"Look sharp, Job!" said Rosewarne. "Carriage been through here lately?"

"Ay, ay, Maister Rosewarne! 'tis a good half-hour agone."

"A half-hour, you idiot?" said Rosewarne, now in a thoroughly bad temper. "You've been asleep and dreaming. Here, take your confounded money!"

So he rode on again, not believing, of course, old Job's malicious fabrication, but being rendered all the same a little uncomfortable by it. Fortunately, the cob had not been out before that day.

More deep lanes, more high, open, windy spaces, more silent cottages, more rough stones; and always the measured fall of the cob's feet and the continued shining and throbbing of the stars overhead. At last, far away ahead, on the top of a high incline, he caught sight of a solitary point of ruddy fire, which presently disappeared. That, he concluded, was the carriage he was pursuing going round a corner, and showing only the one lamp as it turned. They were not so far in front of him as he had supposed.

But how to overtake them? So soon as they heard the sound of his horse would they dash onward at all risks, and have a race for it all through the night? In that case, George Rosewarne inwardly resolved that they might go to Plymouth, or into the deep sea beyond, before he would injure his favourite cob.

On the other hand, he could not bring them to a standstill by threatening to shoot at his own daughters, even if he had anything with him that would look like a pistol. Should he have to rely then on the moral terrors of a parent's authority? George Rosewarne was inclined to laugh when he thought of his overawing in this fashion the high spirit of his younger daughter.

By slow and sure degrees he gained on the fugitives; and as he could now catch some sound of the rattling of the carriage-wheels, they must also hear his horse's footfall. Were they trying to get away from him? On the contrary, the carriage stopped altogether.

That was Harry Trelyon's decision. For some time back he had been listening attentively. At length he said—

"Don't you hear some one riding back there?"

"Yes, I do!" said Wenna, beginning to tremble.

"I suppose it is Mr. Roscorla coming after us," the young man said coolly. "Now I think it would be a shame to drag the old gentleman halfway down to Plymouth. He must have had a good spell already. Shall I stop, and persuade him to go back home to bed?"

"Oh, no!" said Mabyn, who was all for getting on at any risk.

"Oh, no!" Wenna said, fearing the result of an encounter between the two men.

"I must stop," Trelyon said. "It's such precious hard lines on him. I shall easily persuade him that he would be better at home."

So he pulled up the horses, and quietly waited by the roadside for a few minutes. The unknown rider drew nearer and more near.

"That isn't Roscorla's pony," said Trelyon, listening. "That's more like your father's cob."

"My father!" said Wenna in a low voice.

"My darling, you needn't be afraid, whoever it is," Trelyon said.

"Certainly not," added Mabyn, who was far more uncomfortable than she chose to appear. "Who can prevent us going on? They don't lock you up in convents now-a-days. If it is Mr. Roscorla, you just let me talk to him."

Their doubt on that head was soon at rest. White Charley, with his long swinging trot, soon brought George Rosewarne up to the side of the phaeton, and the girls, long ere he had arrived, had recognised in the gloom the tall figure of their father. Even Mabyn was a trifle nervous.

But George Rosewarne—perhaps because he was a little pacified by their having stopped—did not rage and fume as a father is expected to do whose daughter has run away from him. As soon as he had pulled up his horse, he called out in a petulant tone—

"Well! what the devil is all this about?"

"I'll tell you, sir," said Trelyon, quite respectfully and quite firmly. "I wished to marry you daughter Wenna——"

"And why couldn't you do that in Eglosilyan, instead of making a fool of everybody all around?" Rosewarne said, still talking in an angry and vexed way, as of one who had been personally injured.

"Oh, dada!" Mabyn cried, "you don't know how it happened; but they couldn't have got married there. There's that horrid old wretch, Mr. Roscorla—and Wenna was quite a slave to him, and afraid of him—and the only way was to carry her away from him—and so——"

"Hold your tongue, Mabyn!" her father said. "You'd drive a windmill with your talk!"

"But what she says is true enough," Trelyon said. "Roscorla has a claim on her—this was my only chance, and I took it. Now look here, Mr. Rosewarne; you've a right to be angry and all that—perhaps you are; but what good will it do you to see Wenna left to marry Roscorla?"

"What good will it do me?" said George Rosewarne pettishly. "I don't care which of you she marries——"

"Then you'll let us go on, dada?" Mabyn cried. "Will you come with us? Oh, do come with us! We're only going to Plymouth."

Even the angry father could not withstand the absurdity of this appeal. He burst into a roar of ill-tempered laughter.

"I like that!" he cried. "Asking a man to help his daughter to run away from his own house! It's my impression, my young mistress, that you're at the bottom of all this nonsense. Come, come! enough of it, Trelyon! be a sensible fellow, and turn your horses round—why, the notion of going to Plymouth at this time o' night!"

Trelyon looked at his companion. She put her hand on his arm, and said, in a trembling whisper—

"Oh, yes! pray let us go back."

"You know what you are going to, then?" said he coldly.

She trembled still more.

"Come, come!" said her father, "you mustn't stop here all night. You may thank me for preventing your becoming the talk of the whole country."

"I shouldn't have minded that much," Mabyn said ruefully, and very like to cry, indeed, as the horses set out on their journey back to Eglosilyan.

It was not a pleasant journey for any of them—least of all for Wenna Rosewarne, who, having been bewildered by one glimpse of liberty, felt with terror and infinite sadness

and despair the old manacles closing round her life again. And what although the neighbours might remain in ignorance of what she had done? She herself knew, and that was enough.

"You think no one will know?" Mabyn called out spitefully to her father. "Do you think old Job at the gate has lost either his tongue or his nasty temper?"

"Leave Job to me," the father replied.

When they got to Paddock's Gate the old man had again to be roused, and he came out grumbling.

"Well, you discontented old sinner!" Rosewarne called to him, "don't you like having to earn a living?"

"A fine livin' to wait on folks that don't knaw their own mind, and keep comin' and goin' along the road o' nights like a weaver's shuttle. Hm!"

"Well Job, you shan't suffer for it this time," Rosewarne said. "I've won my bet. If you made fifty pounds by riding a few miles out, what would you give the gate-keeper?"

Even that suggestion failed to inveigle Job into a better humour.

"Here's a sovereign for you, Job. Now go to bed. Good-night!"

How long the distance seemed to be ere they saw the lights of Eglosilyan again! There were only one or two small points of red fire, indeed, where the inn stood. The rest of the village was buried in darkness.

"Oh! what will mother say?" Wenna said in a low voice to her sister.

"She will be very sorry we did not get away altogether," Mabyn answered. "And of course it was Mr. Roscorla who spoiled it. Nobody knew anything about it but himself. He must have run on to the inn and told some one. Wasn't it mean, Wenna? Couldn't he see that he wasn't wanted?"

"Are you talking of Mr. Roscorla?" Trelyon said—George Rosewarne was a bit ahead at this moment. "I wish to goodness I had gagged him and slung him below the phaeton. I knew he would be coming down there. I expected him every moment. Why were you so late, Mabyn?"

"Oh! you needn't blame me, Mr. Trelyon," said Mabyn, rather hurt. "You know I did everything I could for you."

"I know you did, Mabyn; I wish it had turned out better."

What was this, then, that Wenna heard, as she sate there, bewildered, apprehensive, and sad-hearted? Had her own sister joined in this league to carry her off? It was not merely the audacity of young Trelyon that had led to their meeting? But she was altogether too frightened and wretched to be angry.

As they got down into Eglosilyan, and turned the sharp corner over the bridge, they did not notice the figure of a man who had been concealing himself in the darkness of a shed belonging to a slate-yard. So soon as they had passed, he went some little way after them until, from the bridge, he could see them stop at the door of the inn. Was it Mrs. Rosewarne who came out of the glare, and with something like a cry of delight caught her daughter in her arms? He watched the figures go inside, and the phaeton drive away up the hill; then, in the perfect silence of the night, he turned and slowly made his way towards Basset Cottage.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AN ANGRY INTERVIEW.

Next morning George Rosewarne was seated on the old oak bench in front of the inn, reading a newspaper. Happening to look up, he saw Mr. Roscorla hurrying towards him over the bridge, with no very pleasant expression on his face. As he came nearer, he saw that the man was strangely excited.

"I want to see your daughter alone," he said.

"You needn't speak as if I had tried to run away with her," Rosewarne answered, with more good-nature than was his wont. "Well, go indoors. Ask for her mother."

As Roscorla passed him there was a look in his eyes which rather startled George Rosewarne.

"Is it possible," he asked himself, "that this elderly chap is really badly in love with our Wenna?"

But another thought struck him. He suddenly jumped up, followed Roscorla into the passage, where the latter was standing, and said to him—

"Don't you be too harsh with Wenna. She's only a girl; and they're all alike." This hint, however discourteous in its terms, had some significance as coming from a man who was six inches taller than Mr. Roscorla.

Mr. Roscorla was shown into an empty room. He marched up and down looking at nothing. He was simply in an ungovernable rage.

Wenna came, and shut the door behind her; and for a second or so he stared at her as if expecting her to burst into passionate professions of remorse. On the contrary, there was something more than calmness in her appearance—there was the desperation of a hunted animal that is driven to turn upon its pursuer in the mere agony of helplessness.

"Well!" said he—for, indeed, his passion almost deprived him of his power of speech—"what have you to say? Perhaps nothing? It is nothing, perhaps, to a woman to be treacherous—to tell smooth lies to your face, and to go plotting against you behind your back? You have nothing to say? You have nothing to say?"

"I have nothing to say," she said, with some little sadness in her voice, "that would excuse me, either to you or myself—yes! I know that. But—but I did not intentionally deceive you——"

He turned away with an angry gesture.

"Indeed, indeed I did not," she said piteously. "I had mistaken my own feelings—the temptation was too great. Oh, Mr. Roscorla! you need not say harsh things to me, for indeed I think worse of myself than you can do."

"And I suppose you want forgiveness now?" he added bitterly. "But I have had enough of that. A woman pledges you her affection, promises to marry you, professes to have no doubts as to the future; and all the while she is secretly encouraging the attentions of a young jackanapes who is playing with her and making a fool of her——"

Wenna Rosewarne's cheeks began to burn red: a less angry man would have taken warning.

"Yes—playing with her and making a fool of her. And

for what? To pass an idle time, and make her the bye-word of her neighbours."

"It is not true! it is not true!" she said indignantly; and there was a dangerous light in her eyes. "If he were here, you would not dare to say such things to me—no, you would not dare!"

"Perhaps you expect him to call after the pretty exploit of last night?" asked Roscorla, with a sneer.

"I do not," she said. "I hope I shall never see him again. It is—it is only misery to every one——"

And here she broke down in spite of herself. Her anger gave way to a burst of tears.

"But what madness is this?" Roscorla cried. "You wish never to meet him again; yet you are ready at a moment's notice to run away with him, disgracing yourself and your family. You make promises about never seeing him; you break them the instant you get the opportunity. You profess that your girlish fancy for a barber's block of a fellow has been got over; and then, as soon as one's back is turned, you reveal your hypocrisy——"

"Indeed I did not mean to deceive you," she said imploringly. "I did believe that all that was over and gone. I thought it was a foolish fancy——"

"And now?" said he hotly.

"Oh, Mr. Roscorla, you ought to pity me instead of being angry with me. I do love him—I cannot help it. You will not ask me to marry you! See, I will undertake not to marry him—I will undertake never to see him again—if only you will not ask me to keep my promise to you. How can I! How can I?"

"Pity you! and these are the confessions you make!" he exclaimed. "Why, are you not ashamed of yourself to say such things to me? And so you would undertake not to marry him? I know what your undertakings are worth!"

He had struck her hard—his very hardest indeed; but she would not suffer herself to reply, for she believed she deserved far more punishment than he could inflict. All that she could hope for—all that her whole nature cried out for—was that he should not think her treacherous. She had not intentionally deceived him. She had not planned that effort at escape. But when, in a hurried and pathetic

fashion, she endeavoured to explain all this to him, he would not listen. He angrily told her he knew well how women could gloss over such matters. He was no school-boy to be hood-winked. It was not as if she had had no warning; her conduct before had been bad enough, when it was possible to overlook it on the score of carelessness, but now it was such as would disgrace any woman who knew her honour was concerned in holding to the word she had spoken.

"And what is he?" he cried, mad with wrath and jealousy. "An ignorant booby! a ploughboy! a lout who has neither the manners of a gentleman nor the education of a day-labourer——"

"Yes you may well say such things of him now," said she, with her eyes flashing, "when his back is turned. You would not say so if he were here. But he—yes, if he were here—he would tell you what he thinks of you; for he is a gentleman and not a coward."

Angry as he was, Mr. Roscorla was astounded. The fire in her eyes, the flush in her cheeks, the impetuosity of her voice—were these the patient Wenna of old? But a girl betrays herself sometimes, if she happens to have to defend her lover.

"Oh! it is shameful of you to say such things!" she said. "And you know they are not true. There is not any one I have ever seen who is so manly, and frank, and unselfish as Mr. Trelyon—not any one; and if I have seen that—if I have admired too much—well, that is a great misfortune, and I have to suffer for it."

"To suffer?—yes," said he, bitterly. "That is a pretty form of suffering that makes you plan a runaway marriage—a marriage that would bring into your possession the largest estates in the North of Cornwall. A very pretty form of suffering! May I ask when the experiment is to be repeated?"

"You may insult me as you like—I am only a woman," she said.

"Insult you?" he cried, with fresh vehemence. "Is it insult to speak the truth? Yesterday forenoon, when I saw you, you were all smiles and smoothness. When I spoke of our marriage, you made no objection. But all the same you knew that at night——"

"I did not know—I did not know!" she said. "You ought to believe me when I tell you I knew no more about it than you did. When I met him there at night—it was all so sudden, so unexpected—I scarcely knew what I said; but now—but now I have time to think—Oh, Mr. Roscorla, don't think that I do not regret it! I will do anything you ask me—I will promise what you please—indeed, I will undertake never to see him again as long as I live in this world—only, you won't ask me to keep my promise to you——"

He made no reply to this offer; for a step outside the door caused him to mutter something very like an oath between his teeth. The door was thrown open, Mabyn marched in—a little pale, but very erect.

"Mabyn, leave us alone for a moment or two," said Wenna, turning away so as to hide the tears on her face.

"I will not. I want to speak a word or two to Mr. Roscorla."

"Mabyn, I want you to go away just now."

Mabyn went over to her sister, and took her by the hand.

"Wenna, dear, go away to your own room. You've had quite enough—you are trembling all over. I suppose he'll make me tremble next."

"Really, I think your interference is rather extraordinary, Miss Mabyn," said Mr. Roscorla, striving to contain his rage.

"I beg your pardon," said Mabyn, meekly. "I only want to say a word or two. Wouldn't it be better here than before the servants?"

With that she led Wenna away. In a minute or two she returned. Mr. Roscorla would rather have been shut up in a den with a hungry tigress.

"I am quite at your service," he said with a bitter irony. "I suppose you have some very important communication to make, considering the way in which you——"

"Interfered? Yes, it is time that I interfered," Mabyn said, still quite calm and a trifle pale. "Mr. Roscorla, to be frank, I don't like you, and perhaps I am not quite fair to you. I am only a young girl, and don't know what the world would say about your relations with Wenna. But

Wenna is my sister, and I see she is wretched; and her wretchedness—well, that comes of her engagement to you."

She was standing before him, with her eyes cast down, apparently determined to be very moderate in her speech. But there was a cruel frankness in her words which hurt Mr. Roscorla a good deal more than any tempest of passion into which she might have worked herself.

"Is that all?" said he. "You have not startled me with any revelations."

"I was going to say," continued Mabyn, "that a gentleman who has really a regard for a girl would not insist on her keeping a promise which only rendered her unhappy. I don't see what you are to gain by it. I suppose you—you expect Wenna to marry you? Well, I dare say if you called on her to punish herself that way, she might do it. But what good would that do you? Would you like to have a wife who was in love with another man?"

"You have become quite logical, Miss Mabyn," said he, "and argument suits you better than getting into a rage. And much of what you say is quite true. You *are* a very young girl. You don't know much of what the world would say about anything. But being furnished with these admirable convictions, did it never occur to you that you might not be acting wisely in blundering into an affair of which you know nothing?"

The coldly sarcastic fashion in which he spoke threatened to disturb Mabyn's forced equanimity.

"Know nothing?" she said. "I know everything about it; and I can see that my sister is miserable—that is sufficient reason for my interference. Mr. Roscorla, you won't ask her to marry you!"

Had the proud and passionate Mabyn condescended to make an appeal to her ancient enemy? At least she raised her eyes; and they seemed to plead for mercy.

"Come, come," he said, roughly. "I've had enough of all this sham beseeching. I know what it means. Trelyon is a richer man than I am; she has let her idle girlish notions go dreaming day-dreams; and so I am expected to stand aside. There has been enough of this nonsense. She is not a child; she knows what she undertook of her own

free will; and she knows she can get rid of this school-girl fancy directly if she chooses. I for one won't help her to disgrace herself."

Mabyn began to breathe a little more quickly. She had tried to be reasonable; she had even humbled herself and begged from him; now there was a sensation in her chest as of some rising emotion that demanded expression in quick words.

"You will try to make her marry you?" said she, looking him in the face.

"I will try to do nothing of the sort," said he. "She can do as she likes. But she knows what an honourable woman would do."

"And I," said Mabyn, her temper at length quite getting the better of her, "I know what an honourable man would do. He would refuse to bind a girl to a promise which she fears. He would consider her happiness to be of more importance than his comfort. Why, I don't believe you care at all whether Wenna marries you or not—it is only you can't bear her being married to the man she really does love—it is only envy, that's what it is. Oh! I am ashamed to think there is a man alive who would force a girl into becoming his wife on such terms—"

"There is certainly one considerable objection to my marrying your sister," said he, with great politeness. "The manners of some of her relatives might prove embarrassing."

"Yes, that is true enough," Mabyn said, with hot cheeks. "If ever I became a relative of yours, my manners no doubt would embarrass you very considerably. But I am not a relative of yours as yet, nor is my sister."

"May I consider that you have said what you had to say?" said he, taking up his hat.

Proud and angry, and at the same time mortified by her defeat, Mabyn found herself speechless. He did not offer to shake hands with her. He bowed to her in passing out. She made the least possible acknowledgment, and then she was alone. Of course, a hearty cry followed. She felt she had done no good. She had determined to be calm; whereas all the calmness had been on his side, and she had been led into speaking in a manner which a discreet and

well-bred young lady would have shrunk from in horror. Mabyn sat still and sobbed, partly in anger and partly in disappointment; she dared not even go to tell her sister.

But Mr. Roscorla, as he went over the bridge again, and went up to Basset Cottage, had lost all his assumed coolness of judgment and demeanour. He felt he had been tricked by Wenna and insulted by Mabyn, while his rival had established a hold which it would be in vain for him to seek to remove. He was in a passion of rage. He would not go near Wenna again. He would at once set off to London and enjoy himself there while his holiday lasted; he would not write a word to her; then, when the time arrived, he would set sail for Jamaica, leaving her to her own conscience. He was suffering a good deal from anger, envy, and jealousy; but he was consoled by the thought that she was suffering more. And he reflected, with some comfort to himself, that she would scarcely so far demean herself as to marry Harry Trelyon, so long as she knew in her heart what he, Roscorla, would think of her for so doing.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE OLD HALF-FORGOTTEN JOKE.

"Has he gone?" Wenna asked of her sister, the next day.

"Yes, he has," Mabyn answered, with a proud and revengeful face. "It was quite true what Mrs. Cornish told me—I've no doubt she had her instructions. He has just driven away to Launceston, on his way to London."

"Without a word!"

"Would you like to have had another string of arguments?" Mabyn said, impatiently. "Oh, Wenna, you don't know what mischief all this is doing. You are awake all night; you cry half the day; what is to be the end of it? You will work yourself into a fever."

"Yes, there must be an end of it," Wenna said, with decision, "not for myself alone, but for others. That is all the reparation I can make now. No girl in all this country

has ever acted so badly as I have done—just look at the misery I have caused—but now——"

"There is one who is miserable, because he loves you," Mabyn said.

"Do you think that Mr. Roscorla has no feelings? You are so unjust to him. Well, it does not matter now: all this must come to an end. Mabyn, I should like to see Mr. Trelyon, just for one minute."

"What will you say to him, Wenna?" her sister said, with a sudden fear.

"Something that it is necessary to say to him, and the sooner it is over the better."

Mabyn rather dreaded the result of this interview; and yet, she reflected to herself, here was an opportunity for Harry Trelyon to try to win some promise from her sister. Better, in any case, that they should meet than that Wenna should simply drive him away into banishment without a word of explanation.

The meeting was easily arranged. On the next morning, long before Wenna's daily round of duties had commenced, the two sisters left the inn, and went over the bridge, and out to the bold promontory of black rock at the mouth of the harbour. There was nobody about. This October morning was more like a summer-day; the air was mild and still; the blue sky without a cloud; the shining sea plashed around the rocks with the soft murmuring noise of a July calm. It was on these rocks, long ago, that Wenna Rosewarne had pledged herself to become the wife of Mr. Roscorla; and at that time life had seemed to her, if not brilliant and beautiful, at least grateful and peaceful. Now all the peace had gone out of it.

"Oh, my darling!" Trelyon said, as she advanced alone towards him—for Mabyn had withdrawn. "It is so good of you to come. Wenna, what has frightened you?"

He had seized both her hands in his; but she took them away. For one brief second her eyes had met his, and there was a sort of wistful and despairing kindliness in them; then she stood before him, with her face turned away from him, and her voice low and tremulous.

"I did wish to see you—for once—for the last time,"

she said. "If you had gone away, you would have carried with you cruel thoughts of me. I wish to ask your forgiveness——"

"My forgiveness?"

"Yes, for all that you may have suffered; and—for all that may trouble you in the future—not in the future, but for the little time you will remember what has taken place here. Mr. Trelyon, I—I did not know! Indeed, it is all a mystery to me now—and a great misery——"

Her lips began to quiver; but she controlled herself.

"And surely it will only be for a short time, if you think of it at all. You are young—you have all the world before you. When you go away among other people and see all the different things that interest a young man, you will soon forget whatever has happened here."

"And you say that to me," he said, "and you said the other night that you loved me. It is nothing, then, for people who love each other to go away, and be consoled, and never see each other again?"

Again the lips quivered: he had no idea of the terrible effort that was needed to keep this girl calm.

"I did say that——" she said.

"And it was true?" he broke in.

"It was true then—it is true now—that is all the misery of it!" she exclaimed, with tears starting to her eyes.

"And you talk of our being separated for ever!" he cried. "No!—not if I can help it! Mabyn has told me of all your scruples—they are not worth looking at. I tell you you are no more bound to that man than Mabyn is; and that isn't much. If he is such a mean hound as to insist on your marrying him, then I will appeal to your father and mother, and they must prevent him. Or I will go to him myself, and settle the matter in a shorter way——"

"You cannot now," she said; "he has gone away. And what good would that have done? I would never marry any man unless I could do so with a clear and happy conscience; and if you—if you and Mabyn—see nothing in my treatment of *him* that is wrong, then that is very strange; but I cannot acquit myself. No; I hope no woman will ever treat you as I have treated him. Look at

his position—an elderly man, with few friends—he has not all the best of his life before him as you have—or the good spirits of youth—and after he had gone away to Jamaica, taking my promise with him—oh! I am ashamed of myself when I think on all that has happened."

"Then you've no right to be," said he, hotly. "It was the most natural thing in the world, and he ought to have known it, that a young girl who has been argued into engaging herself to an old man should consider her being in love with another man as something of rather more importance—of a good deal more importance, I should say. And his suffering? He suffers no more than this lump of rock does. That is not his way of thinking—to be bothered about anything. He may be angry, yes!—and vexed for the moment, as is natural; but if you think he is going about the world with a load of agony on him, then you're quite mistaken. And if he were, what good could you do by making yourself miserable as well? Wenna, do be reasonable, now."

Had not another, on this very spot, prayed her to be reasonable? She had yielded then. Mr. Roscorla's arguments were incontrovertible, and she had shrinkingly accepted the conclusion. Now, young Trelyon's representations and pleadings were far less cogent; but how strongly her heart went with them!

"No!" she said, as if she were shaking off the influence of the tempter, "I must not listen to you. Yet you don't seem to think that it costs me anything to ask you to bid me good-bye once and for all. It should be less to you than to me. A girl thinks of these things more than a man—she has little else to think of—he goes out into the world and forgets. And you—you will go away, and you will become such a man as all who know you will love to speak of and be proud of; and some day you will come back, and if you like to come down to the inn, then there will be one or two there glad to see you. Mr. Trelyon, don't ask me to tell you why this should be so. I know it to be right; my heart tells me. Now I will say good-bye to you."

"And when I come back to the inn, will you be there?" said he, becoming rather pale. "No; you will be married to a man whom you will hate."

"Indeed no," she said, with her face flushing and her eyes cast down. "How can that be after what has taken place? He could not ask me. All that I begged of him before he went away was this—that he would not ask me to marry him; and if only he would do that, I promised never to see you again—after bidding you good-bye as I do now."

"And is that the arrangement?" said he, rather roughly. "Are we to play at dog in the manger? He is not to marry you himself; but he will not let any other man marry you?"

"Surely he has some right to consideration," she said.

"Well, Wenna," said he, "if you've made up your mind, there's no more to be said. I think you are needlessly cruel——"

"You won't say that, just as we are parting," she said, in a low voice. "Do you think it is nothing to me?"

He looked at her for a moment with a great sadness and compunction in his eyes; then, moved by an uncontrollable impulse, he caught her in his arms, and kissed her on the lips.

"Now," said he, with his face white as death, "tell me that you will never marry any other man as long as you live!"

"Yes, I will say that," she said to him, in a low voice, and with a face as white as his own.

"Swear it, then!"

"I have said that I will never marry any other man than you," she said, "and that is enough—for me. But as for you—why must you go away thinking of such things? You will see some day what madness it would have been—you will come some day and thank me for having told you so—and then—and then—if anything should be mentioned about what I said just now, you will laugh at the old half-forgotten joke——"

Well, there was no laughing at the joke just then; for the girl burst into tears, and in the midst of that she hastily pressed his hand, and hurried away. He watched her go round the rocks, to the cleft leading down to the harbour. There she was rejoined by her sister; and the two of them went slowly along the path of broken slate, with the green

hill above, the blue water below, and the fair sunshine all around them. Many a time he recalled afterwards—and always with an increasing weight at his heart—how sombre seemed to him that bright October day and the picturesque opening of the coast leading in to Eglosilyan. For it was the last glimpse of Wenna Rosewarne that he was to have for many a day; and a sadder picture was never treasured up in a man's memory.

"Oh, Wenna, what have you said to him that you tremble so?" Mabyn asked.

"I have bid him good-bye—that is all."

"Not for always?"

"Yes, for always."

"And he is going away again, then?"

"Yes, as a young man should. Why should he stop here to make himself wretched over impossible fancies? He will go out into the world; and he has splendid health and spirits; and he will forget all this."

"And you—you are anxious to forget it all too?"

"Would it not be better? What good can come of dreaming? Well, I've plenty of work to do; that is well."

Mabyn was very much inclined to cry: all her beautiful visions of the future happiness of her sister had been rudely dispelled. All her schemes and machinations had gone for nothing. There only remained to her, in the way of consolation, the fact that Wenna still wore the sapphire ring that Harry Trelyon had sent her.

"And what will his mother think of you?" said Mabyn, as a last argument, "when she finds you have sent him away altogether—to go into the army, and go abroad, and perhaps die of yellow fever, or be shot by the Sepoys and the Caffres?"

"She would have hated me if I had married him," said Wenna, simply.

"Oh, Wenna, how dare you say such a thing!" Mabyn cried. "What do you mean by it?"

"Would a lady in her position like her only son to marry the daughter of an innkeeper?" Wenna asked, rather indifferently: indeed, her thoughts were elsewhere.

"I tell you there's no one in the world she loves like you—I can see it every time she comes down for you—and she

believes, and I believe too, that you have changed Mr. Trelyon's way of talking and his manner of treating people in such a fashion as no one would have considered possible. Do you think she hasn't eyes? He is scarcely ever impertinent now—when he is it is always in good-nature, and never in sulkiness. Look at his kindness to Mr. Trewhella's granddaughter; and Mr. Trewhella a clergyman too. Did he ever use to take his mother out for a drive? No, never! And of course she knows whom it's all owing to; and if you would marry Mr. Trelyon, Wenna, I believe she would worship you and think nothing good enough for you——"

"Mabyn, I am going to ask something of you."

"Oh, yes, I know what it is," her sister said. "I am not to speak any more about your marriage with Mr. Trelyon. But I won't give you any such promise, Wenna. I don't consider that that old man has any hold on you."

Wenna said nothing; for at this moment they entered the house. Mabyn went up with her sister to her room; then she stood undecided for a moment; finally she said—

"Wenna, if I've vexed you, I'm very sorry. I won't speak of Mr. Trelyon if you don't wish it. But indeed you don't know how many people are anxious that you should be happy—and you can't expect your own sister not to be as anxious as any one else——"

"Mabyn, you're a good girl," Wenna said, kissing her. "But I am rather tired to-day—I think I shall lie down for a little while——"

Mabyn uttered a sharp cry, for her sister had fallen back on a chair, white and insensible. She hastily bathed her forehead with cold water; she chafed her hands; she got hold of some smelling salts. It was only a faint, after all; and Wenna, having come to, said she would lie down on the sofa for a few minutes. Mabyn said nothing to her mother about all this, for it would have driven Mrs. Rosewarne wild with anxiety; but she herself was rather disquieted with Wenna's appearance, and she said to herself, with great bitterness of heart—

"If my sister falls ill, I know who has done that."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

NEW AMBITIONS.

Mr. Roscorla, having had few friends throughout his life, had developed a most methodical habit of communing with himself on all possible subjects, but more particularly, of course, upon his own affairs. He used up his idle hours in defining his position with regard to the people and things around him, and he was never afraid to convince himself of the exact truth. He never tried to cheat himself into the belief that he was more unselfish than might appear; if other people thought so, good and well. He, at least, was not a hypocrite to himself.

Now, he had not been gone above a couple of hours or so from Eglosilyan when he discovered that he was not weighted with terrible woes; on the contrary, he experienced a feeling of austere satisfaction that he was leaving a good deal of trouble behind him. He had been badly used; he had been righteously angry. It was right that they who had thus used him badly should be punished. As for him, if his grief did not trouble him much, that was a happy peculiarity of his temperament which did not lessen their offence against him.

Most certainly he was not weighted with woe. He had a pleasant drive in the morning over to Launceston; he smoked a cigarette or two in the train. When he arrived at Plymouth, he ordered a very nice luncheon at the nearest hotel, and treated himself to a bottle of the best Burgundy the waiter could recommend him. After that he got into a smoking carriage in the London express; he lit a large cigar; he wrapped a thick rug round his legs, and settled himself down in peace for the long journey. Now was an excellent time to find out exactly how his affairs stood.

He was indeed very comfortable. Leaving Eglosilyan had not troubled him. There was something in the knowledge that he was at last free from all those exciting scenes which a quiet middle-aged man, not believing in romance, found trying to his nervous system. This brief holiday in

Eglosilyan had been anything but a pleasant one; was he not, on the whole, glad to get away?

Then he recollected that the long-expected meeting with his betrothed had not been so full of delight as he had anticipated. Was there not just a trace of disappointment in the first shock of feeling at their meeting? She was certainly not a handsome woman—such a one as he might have preferred to introduce to his friends about Kensington, in the event of his going back to live in London.

Then he thought of old General Weekes. He felt a little ashamed of himself for not having had the courage to tell the General and his wife that he meant to marry one of the young ladies who had interested them. Would it not be awkward, too, to have to introduce Wenna Rosewarne to them in her new capacity?

That speculation carried him on to the question of his marriage. There could be no doubt that his betrothed had become a little too fond of the handsomest young man in the neighbourhood. Perhaps that was natural; but at all events she was now very much ashamed of what had happened, and he might trust her to avoid Harry Trelyon in the future. That having been secured, would not her thoughts naturally drift back to the man to whom she had plighted a troth which was still formally binding on her? Time was on his side. She would forget that young man; she would be anxious, as soon as these temporary disturbances of her affections were over, to atone for the past by her conduct in the future. Girls had very strong notions about duty.

Well, he drove to his club, and finding one of the bedrooms free, he engaged it for a week, the longest time possible. He washed, dressed, and went down to dinner. To his great delight, the first man he saw was old Sir Percy himself, who was writing out a very elaborate *menu*, considering that he was ordering dinner for himself only. He and Mr. Roscorla agreed to dine together.

Now, for some years back Mr. Roscorla, in visiting his club, had found himself in a very isolated and uncomfortable position. Long ago he had belonged to the younger set—to those reckless young fellows who were not afraid to eat a hasty dinner, and then rush off to take a mother and

a couple of daughters to the theatre, returning at midnight to some anchovy toast and a glass of Burgundy, followed by a couple of hours of brandy-and-soda, cigars, and billiards. But he had drifted away from that set; indeed, they had disappeared, and he knew none of their successors. On the other hand, he had never got into the ways of the old-fogey set. Those stout old gentlemen who carefully drank nothing but claret and seltzer, who took a quarter of an hour to write out their dinner-bill, who spent the evening in playing whist, kept very much to themselves. It was into this set that the old General now introduced him. Mr. Roscorla had quite the air of a bashful young man when he made one of a party of those ancients, who dined at the same table each evening. He was almost ashamed to order a pint of champagne for himself—it savoured so much of youth. He was silent in the presence of his seniors; and indeed they were garrulous enough to cover his silence. Their talk was mostly of politics—not the politics of the country, but the politics of office; of under-secretaries and candidates for place. They seemed to look on the Government of the country as a sort of mechanical clock, which from time to time sent out a few small figures, and from time to time took them in again; and they showed an astonishing acquaintance with the internal and intricate mechanism which produced these changes. Perhaps it was because they were so busy in watching for changes on the face of the clock that they seemed to forget the swinging onward of the great world outside, and the solemn march of the stars.

Most of those old gentlemen had lived their life—had done their share of heavy dining and reckless drinking many years ago—and thus it was they had come to drink seltzer and claret. But it appeared that it was their custom, after dinner, to have the table-cover removed, and some port-wine placed on the mahogany. Mr. Roscorla, who had felt as yet no ugly sensation about his finger joints, regarded this ceremony with equanimity; but it was made the subject of some ominous joking on the part of his companions. Then joking led to joking. There were no more politics. Some very funny stories were told. Occasionally one or two names were introduced, as of persons well known

in London society, though not of it; and Mr. Roscorla was surprised that he had never heard these names before—you see how one becomes ignorant of the world if one buries oneself down in Cornwall. Mr. Roscorla began to take quite an interest in these celebrated people, in the price of their ponies, and the diamonds they were understood to have worn at a certain very singular ball. He was pleased to hear, too, of the manner in which the aristocracy of England were resuming their ancient patronage of the arts; for he was given to understand that a young earl or baron could scarcely be considered a man of fashion unless he owned a theatre.

On their way up to the card-room, Mr. Roscorla and one of his venerable companions went into the hall to get their cigar-case from their top-coat pocket. This elderly gentleman had been the governor of an island in the Pacific. He had now been resident for many years in England. He was on the directorate of one or two well-known commercial companies; he had spoken at several meetings on the danger of dissociating religion from education in the training of the young; in short, he was a tower of respectability. On the present occasion he had to pull out a muffler to get at his cigar-case; and with the muffler came a small parcel tied up in tissue-paper.

"Neat, aren't they?" said he, with a senile grin, showing Mr. Roscorla the tips of a pair of pink satin slippers.

"Yes," said Mr. Roscorla; "I suppose they're for your daughter."

They went up to the card-room.

"I expect you'll teach us a lesson, Roscorla," said the old General. "Gad, some of you West-Indian fellows know the difference between a ten and an ace."

"Last time I played cards," Roscorla said, modestly, "I was lucky enough to win 48*l.*"

"Whew! We can't afford that sort of thing on this side of the water—not if you happen to serve Her Majesty any way. Come, let's cut for partners!"

There was but little talking, of course, during the card-playing; at the end of it Mr. Roscorla found he had only lost half-a-sovereign. Then everybody adjourned to a snug little smoking-room, to which only members were admitted. This, to the neophyte, was the pleasantest part of the

evening. He seemed to hear of everything that was going on in London—and a good deal more besides. He was behind the scenes of all the commercial, social, political performances which were causing the vulgar crowd to gape. He discovered the true history of the hostility shown by So-and-so to the Premier; he was told the little scandal which caused Her Majesty to refuse to knight a certain gentleman who had claims on the Government; he heard what the Duke really did offer to the gamekeeper whose eye he had shot out, and the language used by the keeper on the occasion; and he received such information about the financial affairs of many a company as made him wonder whether the final collapse of the commercial world were at hand. He forgot that he had heard quite similar stories twenty years before. Then they had been told by ingenuous youths full of the importance of the information they had just acquired; now they were told by garrulous old gentlemen, with a cynical laugh which was more amusing than the hot-headed asseveration of the juniors. It was, on the whole, a delightful evening—this first evening of his return to club-life; and then it was so convenient to go upstairs to bed instead of having to walk from the inn of Eglosilyan to Basset Cottage.

Just before leaving, the old General took Roscorla aside, and said to him—

"Monstrous amusing fellows, eh?"

"Very."

"Just a word. Don't you let old Lewis lug you into any of his companies—you understand?"

"There's not much fear of that!" Mr. Roscorla said, with a laugh. "I haven't a brass farthing to invest."

"All you West-Indians say that; however, so much the better. And there's old Strafford, too; he's got some infernal india-rubber patent. Gad, sir, he knows no more about those commercial fellows than the man in the moon; and they'll ruin him—mark my words, they'll ruin him."

Roscorla was quite pleased to be advised. It made him feel young and ingenuous. After all, the disparity in years between him and his late companions was most obvious.

"And when are you coming to dine with us, eh?" the General said, lighting a last cigar and getting his hat.

"To-morrow night?—quiet family party, you know; her ladyship'll be awfully glad to see you. Is it a bargain? All right—seven; we're early folks. I say—you needn't mention I dined here to-night; to tell you the truth, I'm supposed to be looking after a company too, and precious busy about it. Mum's the word; d'ye see?"

Really this plunge into a new sort of life was quite delightful. When he went down to breakfast next morning, he was charmed with the order and cleanliness of everything around him; the sunlight was shining in at the large windows; there was a bright fire, in front of which he stood and read the paper until his cutlets came. There was no croaking of an old Cornish housekeeper over her bills; no necessity for seeing if the grocer had been correct in his addition. Then there was a slight difference between the cooking here and that which prevailed in Basset Cottage.

In a comfortable frame of mind he leisurely walked down to Cannon Street, and announced himself to his partners. He sat for an hour or so in a snug little parlour, talking over their joint venture, and describing all that had been done. There was, indeed, every ground for hope; and he was pleased to hear them say that they were especially obliged to him for having gone out to verify the reports that had been sent home, and for his personal supervision while there. They hoped he would draw on the joint association for a certain sum which should represent the value of that supervision.

Now, if Mr. Roscorla had really been possessed at this moment of the wealth to which he looked forward, he would not have taken so much interest in it. He would have said to himself—

"What is the life I am to lead, now that I have this money? Having luncheon at the club; walking in the Park in the afternoon; dining with a friend in the evening, and playing whist or billiards, with the cheerless return to a bachelor's chambers at night? Is that all my money can give me?"

But he had not the money. He looked forward to it; and it seemed to him that it contained all the possibilities of happiness. Then he would be free. No more stationary dragging out of existence in that Cornish cottage. He

would move about; he would enjoy life. He was still younger than those jovial old fellows who seemed to be happy enough. When he thought of Wenna Rosewarne, it was with the notion that marriage very considerably hampers man's freedom of action.

If a man were married, could he have a choice of thirty dishes for luncheon? Could he have the first edition of the evening papers brought him almost damp from the press? Then how pleasant it was to be able to smoke a cigar and to write one or two letters at the same time—in a large and well-ventilated room. Mr. Roscorla did not fail to draw on his partners for the sum they had mentioned; he was not short of money, but he might as well gather the first few drops of the coming shower.

He did not go up to walk in the Park, for he knew there would be almost nobody there at that time of the year; but he walked up to Bond Street and bought a pair of dress-boots, after which he returned to the club, and played billiards with one of his companions of the previous evening, until it was time to dress for dinner.

The party at the General's was a sufficiently small one; for you cannot ask any one to dinner at a few hours' notice, except it be a merry and marriageable widow who has been told that she will meet an elderly and marriageable bachelor. This complaisant lady was present; and Mr. Roscorla found himself on his entrance being introduced to a good-looking buxom dame, who had a healthy, merry roseate face, very black eyes and hair, and a somewhat gorgeous dress. She was a trifle demure at first, but her amiable shyness soon wore off, and she was most kind to Mr. Roscorla. He, of course, had to take in Lady Weekes; but Mrs. Seton-Willoughby sate opposite him, and, while keeping the whole table amused with an account of her adventures in Galway, appeared to address the narrative principally to the stranger.

"Oh, my dear Lady Weekes," she said, "I was so glad to get back to Brighton! I thought I should have forgotten my own language, and taken to war-paint and feathers, if I had remained much longer. And Brighton is so delightful just now—just comfortably filled, without the November crush having set in. Now, couldn't you persuade the General to take you down for a few days? I am going

down on Friday; and you know how dreadful it is for a poor lone woman to be in an hotel, especially with a maid who spends all her time in flirting with the first-floor waiters. Now won't you, dear? I assure you the —— Hotel is most charming—such freedom, and the pleasant parties they make up in the drawing-room; I believe they have a ball two or three nights a week just now——"

"I should have thought you would have found the —— rather quieter," said Mr. Roscorla, naming a good old-fashioned house.

"Rather quieter?" said the widow, raising her eyebrows. "Yes, a good deal quieter! About as quiet as a dissenting chapel. No, no; if one means to have a little pleasure, why go to such a place as that? Now, will you come and prove the truth of what I have told you?"

Mr. Roscorla looked alarmed; and even the solemn Lady Weekes had to conceal a smile.

"Of course I mean you to persuade our friends here to come too," the widow explained. "What a delightful frolic it would be—for a few days, you know, to break away from London. Now, my dear, what do you say?"

She turned to her hostess. That small and sombre person referred her to the General. The General, on being appealed to, said he thought it would be a capital joke; and would Mr. Roscorla go with them? Mr. Roscorla, not seeing why he should not have a little frolic of this sort just like any one else, said he would. So they agreed to meet at Victoria Station on the following Friday.

"Struck, eh?" said the old General, when the two gentlemen were alone after dinner. "Has she wounded you, eh? Gad, sir, that woman has 8,000*l.* a year in the India Four per Cents. Would you believe it? Would you believe that any man could have been such a fool as to put such a fortune into India Four per Cents?—with mortgages going a-begging at five, and the marine insurance companies paying thirteen! Well, my boy, what do you think of her? She was most uncommonly attentive to you, that I'll swear—don't deny it—now, don't deny it. Bless my soul, you marrying men are so sly there's no getting at you. Well, what was I saying? Yes, yes—will she do? 8,000*l.* a year, as I'm a living sinner."

Mr. Roscorla was intensely flattered to have it even supposed that the refusal of such a fortune was within his power.

"Well," said he, modestly and yet critically, "she's not quite my style. I'm rather afraid of three-deckers. But she seems a very good-natured sort of woman."

"Good-natured! Is that all you say? I can tell you, in my time, men were nothing so particular when there was 8,000*l.* a year going a-begging."

"Well, well," said Mr. Roscorla, with a smile. "It is a very good joke. When she marries, she'll marry a younger man than I am——"

"Don't you be mistaken—don't you be mistaken!" the old General cried. "You've made an impression—I'll swear you have; and I told her ladyship you would."

"And what did Lady Weekes say?"

"Gad, sir, she said it would be a deuced good thing for both of you."

"She is very kind," said Mr. Roscorla, pleased at the notion of having such a prize within reach, and yet not pleased that Lady Weekes should have fancied this the sort of woman he would care to marry.

They went to Brighton, and a very pleasant time of it they had at the big, noisy hotel. The weather was delightful. Mrs. Seton-Willoughby was excessively fond of riding; forenoon and afternoon they had their excursions, with the pleasant little dinner of the evening to follow. Was not this a charmed land into which the former hermit of Basset Cottage was straying? Of course, he never dreamed for a moment of marrying this widow; that was out of the question. She was just a little too demonstrative—very clever and amusing for half-an-hour or so, but too gigantic a blessing to be taken through life. It was the mere possibility of marrying her, however, which attracted Mr. Roscorla. He honestly believed, judging by her kindness to him, that, if he seriously tried, he could get her to marry him; in other words, that he might become possessed of 8,000*l.* a year. This money, so to speak, was within his reach; and it was only now that he was beginning to see that money could purchase many pleasures even for the middle-aged. He made a great mistake in imagining, down

in Cornwall, that he had lived his life; and that he had but to look forward to mild enjoyments, a peaceful wandering onwards to the grave, and the continual study of economy in domestic affairs. He was only now beginning to live.

"And when are you coming back?" said the widow to him, one evening, when they were all talking of his leaving England.

"That I don't know," he said.

"Of course," she said, "you don't mean to remain in the West Indies. I suppose lots of people have to go there for some object or other, but they always come back when it is attained."

"They come back to attain some other object here," said Mr. Roscorla.

"Then we'll soon find you that," the General burst in. "No man lives out of England who can help it. Don't you find in this country enough to satisfy you?"

"Indeed I do," Mr. Roscorla said, "especially within the last few days. I have enjoyed myself enormously. I shall always have a friendly recollection of Brighton."

"Are you going down to Cornwall before you leave?" Sir Percy asked.

"No," said he, slowly.

"That isn't quite so cheerful as Brighton, eh?"

"Not quite."

He kept his word. He did not go back to Cornwall before leaving England, nor did he send a single line or message to any one there. It was with something of a proud indifference that he set sail, and also with some notion that he was being amply revenged. For the rest, he hated "scenes;" and he had encountered quite enough of these during his brief visit to Eglosilyan.

CHAPTER XL.

AN OLD LADY'S APOLOGY.

WHEN Wenna heard that Mr. Roscorla had left England without even bidding her good-bye by letter, she accepted the rebuke with submission, and kept her own counsel.

She went about her daily duties with an unceasing industry; Mrs. Trelyon was astonished to see how she seemed to find time for everything. The winter was coming on, and the Sewing Club was in full activity; but even apart from the affairs of that enterprise, Wenna Rosewarne seemed to be everywhere throughout the village, to know everything, to be doing everything that prudent help and friendly counsel could do. Mrs. Trelyon grew to love the girl—in her vague, wondering, simple fashion.

So the days, and the weeks, and the months went by; and the course of life ran smoothly and quietly in the remote Cornish village. Apparently there was nothing to indicate the presence of bitter regrets, of crushed hopes, of patient despair; only Mabyn used to watch her sister at times, and she fancied that Wenna's face was growing thinner.

The Christmas festivities came on, and Mrs. Trelyon was pleased to lend her *protégée* a helping hand in decorating the church. One evening she said—

"My dear Miss Wenna, I am going to ask you an impertinent question. Could your family spare you on Christmas evening? Harry is coming down from London; I am sure he would be so pleased to see you."

"Oh, thank you, Mrs. Trelyon," Wenna said, with just a little nervousness. "You are very kind, but indeed I must be at home on Christmas evening."

"Perhaps some other evening while he is here you will be able to come up," said Mrs. Trelyon, in her gentle way. "You know you ought to come and see how your pupil is getting on. He writes me such nice letters now; and I fancy he is working very hard at his studies, though he says nothing about it."

"I am very glad to hear that," Wenna said, in a low voice.

Trelyon did come to the Hall for a few days, but he kept away from the village, and was seen by no one of the Rosewarnes. But on the Christmas morning, Mabyn Rosewarne, being early about, was told that Mrs. Trelyon's groom wished to see her; and going down, she found the man, with a basket before him.

"Please, miss, Mr. Trelyon's compliments, and would

you take the flowers out of the cotton wool, and give them to Miss Rosewarne?"

"Oh, won't I!" said Mabyn, opening the basket at once, and carefully getting out a bouquet of camellias, snowdrops, and sweet violets. "Just you wait a minute, Jakes, for I've got a Christmas-box for you."

Mabyn went up-stairs as rapidly as was consistent with the safety of the flowers, and burst into her sister's room.

"Oh, Wenna, look at this! Do you know who sent them? Did you ever see anything so lovely?"

For a second the girl seemed almost frightened; then her eyes grew troubled and moist, and she turned her head away. Mabyn put them gently down, and left the room without a word.

The Christmas and the New Year passed without any message from Mr. Roscorla; and Mabyn, though she rebelled against the bondage in which her sister was placed, was glad that she was not disturbed by angry letters. About the middle of January, however, a brief note arrived from Jamaica.

"I cannot let such a time go by," Mr. Roscorla wrote, "whatever may be our relations, without sending you a friendly word. I do hope the new year will bring you health and happiness, and that we shall in time forget the angry manner in which we parted, and all the circumstances leading to it."

She wrote as brief a note in reply, at the end of which she hoped he would forgive her for any pain he had suffered through her. Mabyn was rejoiced to find that the correspondence—whether it was or was not meant on his part to be an offer of reconciliation—stopped there.

And again the slow days went by, until the world began to stir with the new spring-time—the saddest time of the year to those who live much in the past. Wenna was out and about a great deal, being continually busy; but she no longer took those long walks by herself in which she used to chat to the butterflies, and the young lambs, and the seagulls. The fresh western breezes no longer caused her spirits to flow over in careless gaiety; she saw the new flowers springing out of the earth, but it was of another spring-time she was thinking.

One day, later on in the year, Mrs. Trelyon sent down the wagonette for her, with the request that she would come up to the Hall for a few minutes. Wenna obeyed the summons, imagining that some business connected with the Sewing Club claimed her attention. When she arrived, she found Mrs. Trelyon unable to express the gladness and gratitude that filled her heart; for before her were certain London newspapers, and behold! Harry Trelyon's name was recorded there in certain lists as having scored a sufficient number of marks in the examination to entitle him to a first commission. It was no concern of hers that his name was pretty far down in the list—enough that he had succeeded somehow. And who was the worker of this miracle—who but the shy, sad-eyed girl standing beside her, whose face wore now a happier expression than it had worn for many a day?

"And this is what he says," the proud mother continued, showing Wenna a letter. "'It isn't much to boast of, for indeed you'll see by the numbers that it was rather a narrow squeak; anyhow, I pulled through. My old tutor is rather a speculative fellow, and he offered to bet me fifty pounds his coaching would carry me through, which I took; so I shall have to pay him that besides his fees. I must say he has earned both; I don't think a more ignorant person than myself ever went to a man to get crammed. I send you two newspapers; you might drop one at the inn for Miss Rosewarne any time you are passing; or if you could see her and tell her, perhaps that would be better.'"

Wenna was about as pleased and proud as Mrs. Trelyon was.

"I knew he could do it if he tried," she said, quietly.

"And then," the mother went on to say, "when he has once joined, there will be no money wanting to help him to his promotion; and when he comes back to settle down here, he will have some recognised rank and profession such as a man ought to have. Not that he will remain in the army—for of course, I should not like to part with him; and he might be sent to Africa, or Canada, or the West Indies. *You* know," she added with a smile, "that it is not pleasant to have any one you care for in the West Indies."

When Wenna got home again, she told Mabyn. Strange to say, Mabyn did not clap her hands for joy, as might have been expected.

"Wenna," said she, "what made him go into the army? Was it to show you that he could pass an examination? or was it because he means to leave England?"

"I don't know," said Wenna, looking down. "I hope he does not mean to leave England." That was all she said.

Harry Trelyon was, however, about to leave England, though not because he had been gazetted to a colonial regiment. He came down to inform his mother that, on the fifteenth of the month, he would sail for Jamaica; and then and there, for the first time, he told her the whole story of his love for Wenna Rosewarne, of his determination to free her somehow from the bonds that bound her, and, failing that, of the revenge he meant to take. Mrs. Trelyon was amazed, angry, and beseeching in turns. At one moment she protested that it was madness of her son to think of marrying Wenna Rosewarne; at another, she would admit all that he said in praise of her, and would only implore him not to leave England; or again she would hint that she would almost herself go down to Wenna and beg her to marry him if only he gave up this wild intention of his. He had never seen his mother so agitated; but he reasoned gently with her, and remained firm to his purpose. Was there half as much danger in taking a fortnight's trip in a mail-steamer as in going from Southampton to Malta in a yacht which he had twice done with her consent?

"Why, if I had been ordered to join a regiment in China, you might have some reason to complain," he said. "And I shall be as anxious as you, mother, to get back again, for I mean to get up my drill thoroughly as soon as I am attached. I have plenty of work before me."

"You're not looking well, Harry," said the mother.

"Of course not," said he, cheerfully. "You don't catch one of those geese at Strasburg looking specially lively when they tie it by the leg and cram it—and that's what I've been going through of late. But what better cure can there be than a sea-voyage?"

And so it came about that, on a pleasant evening in

October, Mr. Roscorla received a visit. He saw the young man come riding up the acacia path, and he instantaneously guessed his mission. His own resolve was taken as quickly.

"Bless my soul, is it you, Trelyon?" he cried, with apparent delight. "You mayn't believe it, but I am really glad to see you. I have been going to write to you for many a day back. I'll send somebody for your horse; come into the house."

The young man, having fastened up the bridle, followed his host. There was a calm and business-like rather than a holiday look on his face.

"And what were you going to write to me about?" he asked.

"Oh, you know," said Roscorla, good-naturedly. "You see, a man takes very different views of life when he knocks about a bit. For my part, I am more interested in my business now than in anything else of a more tender character; and I may say that I hope to pay you back a part of the money you lent me as soon as our accounts for this year are made up. Well, about that other point—I don't see how I could well return to England, to live permanently there, for a year or two at the soonest; and—and, in fact—I have often wondered, now, whether it wouldn't be better if I asked Miss Rosewarne to consider herself finally free from that—from that engagement——"

"Yes, I think it would be a great deal better," said Trelyon, coldly. "And perhaps you would kindly put your resolve into writing. I shall take it back to Miss Rosewarne. Will you kindly do so now?"

"Why!" said Roscorla, rather sharply, "you don't take my proposal in a very friendly way. I imagine I am doing you a good turn too. It is not every man would do so in my position; for, after all, she treated me very badly. However, we needn't go into that. I will write her a letter if you like—now, indeed, if you like; and won't you stop a day or two here before going back to Kingston?"

Mr. Trelyon intimated that he would like to have the letter at once, and that he would consider the invitation afterwards. Roscorla, with a good-humoured shrug, sate down and wrote it, and then handed it to Trelyon, open. As he did so, he noticed the young man was coolly

abstracting the cartridge from a small breech-loading pistol he held in his hand. He put the cartridge in his waistcoat-pocket and the pistol in his coat-pocket.

"Did you think we were savages out here, that you came armed?" said Roscorla, rather pale, but smiling.

"I didn't know," said Trelyon.

One morning there was a marriage in Eglosilyan, up there at the small church on the bleak downs, overlooking the wide sea. The spring-time had come round again; there was a May-like mildness in the air; the skies overhead were as blue as the great plain of the sea; and all the beautiful green world was throbbing with the upspringing life of the flowers. It was just like any other wedding, but for one little incident. When the bride came out into the bewildering glare of the sun, she vaguely knew that the path through the churchyard was lined on both sides with children. Now she was rather well known to the children about, and they had come in a great number; and when she passed down between them, it appeared that the little folks had brought vast heaps of primroses and violets in their aprons and in tiny baskets, and they strewed her path with these flowers of the new spring. Well, she burst into tears at this; and hastily leaving her husband's arm for a moment, she caught up one of the least of the children—a small, golden-haired girl of four—and kissed her. Then she turned to her husband again, and was glad that he led her down to the gate, for her eyes were so blinded with tears that she could not see her way.

Nor did anything very remarkable occur at the wedding-breakfast. But there was a garrulous old lady there, with bright, pink cheeks and silvery hair; and she did not cease to prattle to the clergyman who had officiated in the church, and who was seated next her.

"Indeed, Mr. Trewhella," she said, confidentially, "I always said this is what would come of it. Never any one of those Trelyons set his heart on a girl but he got her; and what was the use of friends or relatives fighting against it? Nay, I don't think there's any cause of complaint—not I! She's a modest, nice, ladylike girl—she is indeed—although she isn't so handsome as her sister.

Dear, dear me, look at that girl now! Won't she be a prize for some man! I declare I haven't seen so handsome a girl for many a day. And as I tell you, Mr. Trewhella, it's no use trying to prevent it; if one of the Trelyons falls in love with a girl, the girl's done for—she may as well give in——"

"If I may say so," observed the old clergyman, with a sly gallantry, "you do not give the gentlemen of your family credit for the most remarkable feature of their marriage connections. They seem to have always had a very good idea of making an excellent choice."

The old lady was vastly pleased.

"Ah, well," she said, with a shrewd smile, "there were two or three who thought George Trelyon—that was this young man's grandfather, you know—lucky enough, if one might judge by the noise they made. Dear, dear, what a to-do there was when we ran away! Why, don't you know, Mr. Trewhella, that I ran away from a ball with him—and drove to Gretna Green with my ball-dress on, as I'm a living woman! Such a ride it was!—why, when we got up to Carlisle——"

But that story has been told before.

THE END.

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