

"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

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 homesickness ; 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 foggy 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 Mabyon 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.”