

## 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 48l.”

“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 Rosewarne's. 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 sea-gulls. 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. Trehella," 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.

*The following is a complete list of the new Half-Crown Edition of Mr. BLACK'S Novels, and the probable order of their monthly issue beginning January 1892.*

A Daughter of Heth. ( <i>Ready.</i> )	The Beautiful Wretch.
The Strange Adventures of a Phaeton. ( <i>Ready.</i> )	Shandon Bells.
A Princess of Thule. ( <i>Ready.</i> )	Adventures in Thule.
In Silk Attire. ( <i>Ready.</i> )	Yolande.
Kilmeny. ( <i>Ready.</i> )	Judith Shakespeare.
Madcap Violet. ( <i>Ready.</i> )	The Wise Women of Inverness.
Three Feathers. ( <i>Ready.</i> )	White Heather.
The Maid of Killeena.	Sabina Zembra.
Green Pastures and Piccadilly.	The Strange Adventures of a House Boat.
Macleod of Dare.	In Far Lochaber.
Lady Silverdale's Sweetheart.	The Penance of John Logan.
White Wings.	Prince Fortunatus.
Sunrise.	

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