

the tea table set in the twilight that evening, the court assembled, Mme. de la Cruchecassée and Mme. de Schlangenbad; and their whiskered humble servants, Baron Punter, and Count Spada, and Marquis Iago, and Prince Iachimo, and worthy Captain Blackball? Can you fancy a moonlight conclave, and ghouls feasting on the fresh corpse of a reputation; the gibes and sarcasms, the laughing and the gnashing of teeth? How they tear the dainty limbs and relish the tender morsels!

"The air of this place is not good for you, believe me, my little Kiou; it is dangerous. Have pressing affairs in England. Let your château burn down; or your intendant run away, and pursue him. Partez, mon petit Kiou; partez, or evil will come of it." Such was the advice which a friend of Lord Kew gave the young nobleman.

CHAPTER XXXII.

BARNES' COURTSHIP.

Ethel had made various attempts to become intimate with her future sister-in-law; had walked, and ridden, and talked with Lady Clara before Barnes' arrival. She had come away not very much impressed with respect for Lady Clara's mental powers; indeed, we have said that Miss Ethel was rather more prone to attack women than to admire them, and was a little hard upon the fashionable young persons of her acquaintance and sex. In after life care and thought subdued her pride, and she learned to look at society more good-naturedly; but at this time, and for some years after, she was impatient of commonplace people, and did not choose to conceal her scorn. Lady Clara was very much afraid of her. Those timid little thoughts, which would come out, and frisk and gambol with pretty graceful antics, and advance confidently at the sound of Jack Belsize's jolly voice, and nibble crumbs out of his hand, shrank away before Ethel, severe nymph with the bright eyes, and hid themselves under the thickets and in the shade. Who has not overheard a simple couple of girls, or of lovers possibly, pouring out their little hearts, laughing at their own little jokes, prattling and prattling away unceasingly, until mamma appears with her awful didactic countenance, or the

governess with her dry moralities, and the colloquy straightway ceases, the laughter stops, the chirp of the harmless little birds is hushed? Lady Clara being of a timid nature, stood in as much awe of Ethel as of her father and mother; whereas her next sister, a brisk young creature of seventeen, who was of the order of romps or tomboys, was by no means afraid of Miss Newcome, and indeed a much greater favorite with her than her placid elder sister.

Young ladies may have been crossed in love, and have had their sufferings, their frantic moments of grief and tears, their wakeful nights, and so forth; but it is only in very sentimental novels that people occupy themselves perpetually with that passion; and, I believe, what are called broken hearts are very rare articles indeed. Tom is jilted—is for a while in a dreadful state—bores all his male acquaintances with his groans and his frenzy—rallies from the complaint—eats his dinner very kindly—takes an interest in the next turf event and is found at Newmarket, as usual, bawling out the odds which he will give or take. Miss has her paroxysm and recovery—Mme. Crinoline's new importations from Paris interest the young creature—she deigns to consider whether pink or blue will become her most—she conspires with her maid to make the spring morning dresses answer for the autumn—she resumes her books, piano, and music (giving up certain songs perhaps that she used to sing)—she waltzes with the Captain—gets a color—waltzes longer, better, and ten times quicker than Lucy, who is dancing with the Major—replies in an animated manner to the Captain's delightful remarks—takes a little supper—and looks quite kindly at him before she pulls up the carriage windows.

Clive may not like his cousin Barnes Newcome, and many other men share in that antipathy, but all ladies do not. It is a fact that Barnes, when he likes, can make himself a very pleasant fellow. He is dreadfully satirical, that is certain; but many persons are amused by these dreadfully satirical young men; and to hear fun made of our neighbors, even of some of our friends, does not make us very angry. Barnes is one of the very best waltzers in all society, that is the truth; whereas it must be confessed Some One Else was very heavy and slow, his great foot always crushing you, and he always begging your pardon. Barnes whirls a partner round the room ages after she is ready to faint. What wicked fun he makes of other people when he stops! He is not handsome, but in his

face there is something odd-looking and distinguished. It is certain he has beautiful small feet and hands.

He comes every day from the City, drops in, in his quiet, unobtrusive way, and drinks tea at five o'clock; always brings a budget of the funniest stories with him, makes mamma laugh, Clara laugh, Henrietta, who is in the schoolroom still, die of laughing. Papa has the highest opinion of Mr. Newcome as a man of business; if he had had such a friend in early life his affairs would not be where they now are, poor, dear kind papa! Do they want to go anywhere, is not Mr. Newcome always ready? Did he not procure that delightful room for them to witness the Lord Mayor's show; and make Clara die of laughing at those odd City people at the Mansion House ball? He is at every party, and never tired though he gets up so early; he waltzes with nobody else; he is always there to put Lady Clara in the carriage; at the drawing room he looked quite handsome in his uniform of the Newcome Hussars, bottle-green and silver lace; he speaks politics so exceedingly well with papa and the gentlemen after dinner; he is a sound Conservative, full of practical good sense and information, with no dangerous new-fangled ideas, such as young men have. When poor dear Sir Brian Newcome's health gives way quite, Mr. Newcome will go into Parliament, and then he will resume the old barony which has been in abeyance in the family since the reign of Richard III. They had fallen quite, quite low. Mr. Newcome's grandfather came to London with a satchel on his back, like Whittington. Isn't it romantic?

This process has been going on for months. It is not in one day that poor Lady Clara has been made to forget the past, and to lay aside her mourning. Day after day, very likely, the undeniable faults and many peccadilloes of—of that other person, have been exposed to her. People around the young lady may desire to spare her feelings, but can have no interest in screening poor Jack from condign reprobation. A wild prodigal—a disgrace to his order—a son of old Highgate's leading such a life, and making such a scandal! Lord Dorking believes Mr. Belsize to be an abandoned monster and fiend in human shape; gathers and relates all the stories that ever have been told to the young man's disadvantage, and of these be sure there are enough, and speaks of him with transports of indignation. At the end of months of unwearied courtship, Mr. Barnes Newcome is honestly accepted, and Lady Clara is waiting for him at Baden, not unhappy to receive him;

when, walking on the promenade with her father, the ghost of her dead love suddenly rises before her, and the young lady faints to the ground.

When Barnes Newcome thinks fit, he can be perfectly placable in his demeanor and delicate in his conduct. What he said upon this painful subject was delivered with the greatest propriety. He did not for one moment consider that Lady Clara's agitation arose from any present feeling in Mr. Belsize's favor, but that she was naturally moved by the remembrance of the past and the sudden appearance which recalled it. "And but that a lady's name should never be made the subject of dispute between men," Newcome said to Lord Dorking, with great dignity, "and that Captain Belsize has opportunely quitted the place, I should certainly have chastised him. He and another adventurer, against whom I have had to warn my own family, have quitted Baden this afternoon. I am glad that both are gone, Captain Belsize, especially; for my temper, my lord, is hot, and I do not think I should have commanded it."

Lord Kew, when the elder lord informed him of this admirable speech of Barnes Newcomes', upon whose character, prudence, and dignity the Earl of Dorking pronounced a fervent eulogium, shook his head gravely, and said, "Yes, Barnes was a dead shot, and a most determined fellow;" and did not burst out laughing until he and Lord Dorking had parted. Then, to be sure, he took his fill of laughter; he told the story to Ethel, he complimented Barnes on his heroic self-denial; the joke of the thundering big stick was nothing to it. Barnes Newcome laughed, too; he had plenty of humor, Barnes. "I think you might have whopped Jack when he came out from his interview with the Dorkings," Kew said. "The poor devil was so bewildered and weak, that Alfred might have thrashed him. At other times you would find it more difficult, Barnes, my man." Mr. B. Newcome resumed his dignity; said a joke was a joke and there was quite enough of this one; which assertion we may be sure he conscientiously made.

That meeting and parting between the old lovers passed with a great deal of calm and propriety on both sides. Miss' parents of course were present when Jack, at their summons, waited upon them and their daughter, and made his hang-dog bow. My Lord Dorking said (poor Jack, in the anguish of his heart, had poured out the story to Clive Newcome afterward), "Mr. Belsize, I have to apologize for words which I used in my heat yesterday, and which I recall and regret, as I am

sure you do that there should have been any occasion for them."

Mr. Belsize, looking at the carpet, said he was very sorry.

Lady Dorking here remarked that, as Captain Belsize was now at Baden, he might wish to hear from Lady Clara Pullyn's own lips that the engagement into which she had entered was formed by herself, certainly with the consent and advice of her family. "Is it not so, my dear?"

Lady Clara said, "Yes, mamma," with a low courtesy.

"We have now to wish you good-bye, Charles Belsize," said my lord, with some feeling. "As your relative, and your father's old friend, I wish you well. I hope your future course in life may not be so unfortunate as the past year. I request that we may part friends. Good-bye, Charles. Clara, shake hands with Captain Belsize. My Lady Dorking, you will please give Charles your hand. You have known him since he was a child; and—and—we are sorry to be obliged to part in this way." In this wise Mr. Jack Belsize's tooth was finally extracted; and for the moment we wish him and his brother patient a good journey.

Little lynx-eyed Dr. Von Finck, who attends most of the polite company at Baden, drove ceaselessly about the place that day, with the real version of the fainting-fit story, about which we may be sure the wicked and malicious, and the uninitiated, had a hundred absurd details. Lady Clara ever engaged to Captain Belsize? Fiddle-de-dee! Everybody knew the Captain's affairs, and that he could no more think of marrying than flying. Lady Clara faint at seeing him! she fainted before he came up; she was always fainting, and had done so thrice in the last week to his knowledge. Lord Dorking had a nervous affection of his right arm, and was always shaking his stick. He did not say Villain, he said William; Captain Belsize's name is William. Is it not so in the Peerage? Is he called Charles in the Peerage? Those Peerages are always wrong. These candid explanations of course had their effect. Wicked tongues were of course instantaneously silent. People were entirely satisfied; they always are. The next night being Assembly night, Lady Clara appeared at the rooms and danced with Lord Kew and Mr. Barnes Newcome. All the society was as gracious and good-humored as possible, and there was no more question of fainting than of burning down the Conversation house. But Mme. de Cruchecassée, and Mme. de Schlangenbad, and those horrid people whom the men speak

to, but whom the women salute with silent courtesies, persisted in declaring that there was no prude like an English prude; and to Dr. Finck's oaths, assertions, explanations, only replied, with a shrug of their bold shoulders, "Taisez-vous, Docteur, vous n'êtes qu'une vieille bête."

Lady Kew was at the rooms, uncommonly gracious. Miss Ethel took a few turns of the waltz with Lord Kew, but this nymph looked more *farouche* than upon ordinary days. Bob Jones, who admired her hugely, asked leave to waltz with her, and entertained her with recollections of Clive Newcome at school. He remembered a fight in which Clive had been engaged, and recounted that action to Miss Newcome, who seemed to be interested. He was pleased to deplore Clive's fancy for turning artist, and Miss Newcome recommended him to have his likeness taken, for she said his appearance was exceedingly picturesque. He was going on with farther prattle, but she suddenly cut Mr. Jones short, making him a bow, and going to sit down by Lady Kew. "And the next day, sir," said Bob, with whom the present writer had the happiness of dining at a mess dinner at the Upper Temple, "when I met her on the walk, sir, she cut me as dead as a stone. The airs those swells give themselves is enough to make any man turn republican."

Miss Ethel indeed was haughty, very haughty, and of a difficult temper. She spared none of her party except her kind mother, to whom Ethel always was kind, and her father, whom, since his illnesses, she tended with much benevolence and care. But she did battle with Lady Kew repeatedly, coming to her Aunt Julia's rescue, on whom the Countess, as usual, exercised her powers of torturing. She made Barnes quail before the shafts of contempt which she flashed at him; and she did not spare Lord Kew, whose good-nature was no shield against her scorn. The old queen-mother was fairly afraid of her; she even left off baiting Lady Julia when Ethel came in, of course taking her revenge in the young girl's absence, but trying, in her presence, to soothe and please her. Against Lord Kew the young girl's anger was most unjust, and the more cruel, because the kindly young nobleman never spoke a hard word of any one mortal soul, and carrying no arms, should have been assaulted by none. But his very good-nature seemed to make his young opponent only the more wrathful; she shot because his honest breast was bare; it bled at the wounds which she inflicted. Her relatives looked surprised at her

cruelty, and the young man himself was shocked in his dignity and best feelings by his cousin's wanton ill-humor.

Lady Kew fancied she understood the cause of this peevishness, and remonstrated with Miss Ethel. "Shall we write a letter to Lucerne, and order Dick Tinto back again?" said her ladyship. "Are you such a fool, Ethel, as to be hankering after that young scapegrace, and his yellow beard? His drawings are very pretty. Why, I think he might earn a couple of hundred a year as a teacher, and nothing would be easier than to break your engagement with Kew, and whistle the drawing-master back again."

Ethel took up the whole heap of Clive's drawings, lighted a taper, carried the drawings to the fireplace, and set them in a blaze. "A very pretty piece of work," says Lady Kew, "and which proves satisfactorily that you don't care for the young Clive at all. Have we arranged a correspondence? We are cousins, you know; we may write pretty cousinly letters to one another." A month before the old lady would have attacked her with other arms than sarcasm, but she was scared now, and dared to use no coarser weapons. "Oh!" cried Ethel in a transport, "what a life ours is, and how you buy and sell, and haggle over your children! It is not Clive I care about, poor boy. Our ways of life are separate. I cannot break from my own family, and I know very well how you would receive him in it. Had he money, it would be different. You would receive him, and welcome him, and hold out your hands to him; but he is only a poor painter, and we, forsooth, are bankers in the City; and he comes among us on sufferance, like those concert-singers whom mamma treats with so much politeness, and who go down and have supper by themselves. Why should they not be as good as we are?"

"M. de C., my dear, is of a noble family," interposed Lady Kew; "when he has given up singing and made his fortune, no doubt he can go back into the world again."

"Made his fortune? yes," Ethel continued, "that is the cry. There never were, since the world began, people so unblushingly sordid! We own it, and are proud of it. We barter rank against money, and money against rank, day after day. Why did you marry my father to my mother. Was it for his wit? You know he might have been an angel, and you would have scorned him. Your daughter was bought with papa's money as surely as ever Newcome was. Will there be no day when this mammon-worship will cease among us?"

"Not in my time or yours, Ethel," the elder said, not unkindly; perhaps she thought of a day long ago, before she was old herself.

"We are sold," the young girl went on; "we are as much sold as Turkish women; the only difference being that our masters may have but one Circassian at a time. No, there is no freedom for us. I wear my green ticket, and wait till my master comes! But every day, as I think of our slavery, I revolt against it more. That poor wretch, that poor girl whom my brother is to marry, why did she not revolt and fly? I would, if I loved a man sufficiently, loved him better than the world, than wealth, than rank, than fine houses and titles—and I feel I love these best—I would give up all to follow him. But what can I be, with my name and parents? I belong to the world like all the rest of my family. It is you who have bred us up; you who are answerable for us. Why are there no convents to which we can fly? You make a fine marriage for me; you provide me with a good husband, a kind soul, not very wise, but very kind; you make me what you call happy, and I would rather be at the plow like the women here."

"No, you wouldn't, Ethel," replies the grandmother dryly. "These are the fine speeches of schoolgirls. The showers of rain would spoil your complexion—you would be perfectly tired in an hour, and come back to luncheon—you belong to your belongings, my dear, and are not better than the rest of the world—very good-looking, as you know perfectly well, and not very good-tempered. It is lucky that Kew is. Calm your temper, at least before marriage; such a prize does not fall to a pretty girl's lot every day. Why, you sent him away quite scared by your cruelty; and if he is not playing at roulette, or at billiards, I dare say he is thinking what a little termagant you are, and that he had best pause while it is yet time. Before I was married, your poor grandfather never knew I had a temper; of after-days I say nothing; but trials are good for all of us, and he bore his like an angel."

Lady Kew, too, on this occasion at least, was admirably good-humored. She also, when it was necessary, could put a restraint on her temper, and having this match very much to heart, chose to coax and to soothe her granddaughter rather than to endeavor to scold and frighten her.

"Why do you desire this marriage so much, grandmamma?" the girl asked. "My cousin's not very much in love—at least"

I should fancy not," she added, blushing. "I am bound to own Lord Kew is not in the least eager, and I think if you were to tell him to wait for five years, he would be quite willing. Why should you be so very anxious?"

"Why, my dear? Because I think young ladies who want to go and work in the fields, should make hay while the sun shines; because I think it is high time that Kew should *ranger* himself; because I am sure he will make the best husband, and Ethel the prettiest Countess in England." And the old lady, seldom exhibiting any signs of affection, looked at her granddaughter very fondly. From her Ethel looked up into the glass, which very likely repeated on its shining face the truth her elder had just uttered. Shall we quarrel with the girl for that dazzling reflection; for owning that charming truth, and submitting to the conscious triumph? Give her her part of vanity, of youth, of desire to rule and be admired. Meanwhile Mr. Clive's drawings have been crackling in the fireplace at her feet, and the last spark of that combustion is twinkling out unheeded.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LADY KEW AT THE CONGRESS.

When Lady Kew heard that Mme. d'Ivry was at Baden, and was informed at once of the French lady's graciousness toward the Newcome family, and of her fury against Lord Kew, the old Countess gave a loose to that energetic temper with which nature had gifted her; a temper which she tied up sometimes and kept from barking and biting; but which, when unmuzzled, was an animal of whom all her ladyship's family had a just apprehension. Not one of them but in his or her time had been wounded, lacerated, tumbled over, or otherwise frightened or injured by this unruly brute. The cowards brought it sops and patted it; the prudent gave it a clear berth, and walked round so as not to meet it; but woe be to those of the family who had to bring the meal, and prepare the litter, and (to speak respectfully) share the kennel with Lady Kew's "Black Dog!" Surely a fine furious temper, if accompanied with a certain magnanimity and bravery which often go together with it, is one of the most precious and for-

tunate gifts with which a gentleman or lady can be endowed. A person always ready to fight is certain of the greatest consideration among his or her family circle. The lazy grow tired of contending with him; the timid coax and flatter him; and as almost everyone is timid or lazy, a bad-tempered man is sure to have his own way. It is he who commands, and all the others obey. If he is a gourmand, he has what he likes for dinner; and the tastes of all the rest are subservient to him. She—we playfully transfer the gender, as a bad temper is of both sexes—has the place which she likes best in the drawing room; nor do her parents, nor her brothers and sisters, venture to take her favorite chair. If she wants to go to a party, mamma will dress herself in spite of her headache; and papa, who hates those dreadful soirées, will go upstairs after dinner and put on his poor old white neckcloth, though he has been toiling at chambers all day, and must be there early in the morning—he will go out with her, we say, and stay for the cotillon. If the family are taking their tour in the summer, it is she who ordains whither they shall go, and when they shall stop. If he comes home late, the dinner is kept for him, and not one dares to say a word though ever so hungry. If he is in a good-humor, how everyone frisks about and is happy! How the servants jump up at his bell and run to wait upon him! How they sit up patiently, and how eagerly they rush out to fetch cabs in the rain! Whereas for you and me, who have the tempers of angels, and never were known to be angry or to complain, nobody cares whether we are pleased or not. Our wives go to the milliners' and send us the bill, and we pay it; our John finishes reading the newspaper before he answers our bell and brings it to us; our sons loll in the arm-chair which we should like; fill the house with their young men, and smoke in the dining room; our tailors fit us badly; our butchers give us the youngest mutton; our tradesmen dun us much more quickly than other people's, because they know we are good-natured; and our servants go out whenever they like, and openly have their friends to supper in the kitchen. When Lady Kew said *Sic volo, sic jubeo*, I promise you few persons of her ladyship's belongings stopped, before they did her biddings, to ask her reasons.

If, which very seldom happens, there are two such imperious and domineering spirits in a family, unpleasantries of course will arise from their contentions; or if, out of doors, the family Bajazet meets with some other violent Turk, dreadful battles