

you were a year old; you worked on your papa's friends in the nurse's arms by the fascination of your lace frock and pretty new sash and shoes; when you could just toddle, you practiced your arts upon other children in the square, poor little lambs sporting among the daisies; and *nunc in ovilia, mox in reluctantes dracones*, proceeding from the lambs to reluctant dragoons, you tried your arts upon Captain Paget Tomkins, who behaved so ill and went to India without—without making those proposals which of course you never expected. Your intimacy was with Emma. It has cooled. Your sets are different. The Tomkinses are not quite, etc., etc. You believe Captain Tomkins married a Miss O'Grady, etc., etc. Ah, my pretty, my sprightly Miss Hopkins, be gentle in your judgment of your neighbors!

CHAPTER IX.

CONTAINS TWO OR THREE ACTS OF A LITTLE COMEDY.

All this story is told by one who, if he was not actually present at the circumstances here narrated, yet had information concerning them, and could supply such a narrative of facts and conversations as is, indeed, not less authentic than the details we have of other histories. How can I tell the feelings in a young lady's mind; the thoughts in a young gentleman's bosom? As Professor Owen or Professor Agassiz takes a fragment of a bone, and builds an enormous forgotten monster out of it, wallowing in primeval quagmires, tearing down leaves and branches of plants that flourished thousands of years ago, and perhaps may be coal by this time—so the novelist puts this and that together; from the footprint finds the foot; from the foot, the brute who strode on it; from the brute, the plant he browsed on, the marsh in which he swam (and thus, in his humble way, a physiologist too, depicts the habits, size, appearance of the beings whereof he has to treat); traces this slimy reptile through the mud, and describes his habits, filthy and rapacious; prods down this butterfly with a pin, and depicts his beautiful coat and embroidered waistcoat; points out the singular structure of yonder more important animal, the megatherium of his history.

Suppose then, in the quaint old garden of the Hôtel de

Florac, two young people are walking up and down in an avenue of lime trees which are still permitted to grow in that ancient place. In the center of that avenue is a fountain, surmounted by a Triton so gray and moss-eaten that, though he holds his conch to his swelling lips, curling his tail in the arid basin, his instrument has had a sinecure for at least fifty years; and did not think fit even to play when the Bourbons, in whose time he was erected, came back from their exile. At the end of the lime-tree avenue is a broken-nosed damp Faun, with a marble panpipe, who pipes to the spirit ditties which I believe never had any tune. The *perron* of the hotel is at the other end of the avenue; a couple of Caesars on either side of the door window, from which the inhabitants of the hotel issue into the garden—Caracalla frowning over his moldy shoulder at Nerva, on to whose clipped hair the roofs of the gray château have been dribbling for ever so many long years. There are more statues gracing this noble place. There is Cupid, who has been at the point of kissing Psyche this half-century at least, though the delicious event has never come off through all those blazing summers and dreary winters; there is Venus and her boy under the damp little dome of a cracked old temple. Through the alley of this old garden, in which their ancestors have disported in hoops and powder, M. de Florac's chair is wheeled by St. Jean, his attendant; Mme. de Préville's children trot about, and skip, and play at cache-cache. The R. P. de Florac (when at home) paces up and down and meditates his sermons; Mme. de Florac sadly walks sometimes to look at her roses; and Clive and Ethel Newcome are marching up and down; the children, and their *bonne* of course, being there jumping to and fro; and Mme. de Florac, having just been called away to M. le Comte, whose physician has come to see him.

Ethel says, "How charming and odd this solitude is; and how pleasant to hear the voices of the children, playing in the neighboring convent garden," of which they can see the new chapel rising over the trees.

Clive remarks that "The neighboring hotel has curiously changed its destination. One of the members of the Directory had it; and, no doubt, in the groves of its garden, Mme. Tallien, and Mme. Récamier, and Mme. Beauharnais have danced under the lamps. Then a marshal of the Empire inhabited it. Then it was restored to its legitimate owner M. le Marquis de Bricquabracque, whose descendants, having

a lawsuit about the Bricquabraque succession, sold the hotel to the convent."

After some talk about nuns Ethel says, "There were convents in England. She often thinks she would like to retire to one." And she sighs as if her heart were in that scheme.

Clive, with a laugh, says, "Yes. If you could retire after the season, when you were very weary of the balls, a convent would be very nice. At Rome he had seen San Pietro in Montorio and Sant Onofrio, that delightful old place where Tasso died; people go and make a retreat there. In the ladies' convents, the ladies do the same thing—and he doubts whether they are much more or less wicked after their retreat than gentlemen and ladies in England or France."

Ethel. Why do you sneer at all faith? Why should not a retreat do people good? Do you suppose the world is so satisfactory that those who are in it never wish for a while to leave it? (She heaves a sigh and looks down toward a beautiful new dress of many flounces, which Mme. de Flouncival, the great milliner, has sent her home that very day.)

Clive. I do not know what the world is, except from afar off. I am like the Peri who looks into paradise and sees angels within it. I lived in Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, which is not within the gates of paradise. I take the gate to be somewhere in Davies Street, leading out of Oxford Street into Grosvenor Square. There's another gate in Hay Hill; and another in Bruton Street, Bond—

Ethel. Don't be a goose.

Clive. Why not? It is as good to be a goose as to be a lady—no, a gentleman of fashion. Suppose I were a viscount, an earl, a marquis, a duke, would you say Goose? No, you would say Swan.

Ethel. Unkind and unjust—ungenerous to make taunts which common people make; and to repeat to me those silly sarcasms which your low Radical literary friends are always putting in their books! Have I ever made any difference to you? Would I not sooner see you than the fine people? Would I talk with you, or with the young dandies most willingly? Are we not of the same blood, Clive? and of all the grandees I see about, can there be a grander gentleman than your dear old father? You need not squeeze my hand so—those little imps are look—that has nothing to do with the question. Viens, Léonore! Tu connais bien monsieur, n'est-ce-pas? qui te fait de si jolis desseins?

Léonore. Ah, oui! Vous m'en ferez toujours, n'est-ce-pas, M. Clive? des chevaux, et puis de petites filles avec leurs gouvernantes, et puis des maisons—et puis—et puis des maisons encore—où est bonne-maman? [Exit little Léonore down an alley;

Ethel. Do you remember when we were children, and you used to make drawings for us? I have some now that you did—in my geography book, which I used to read and read with Miss Quigley.

Clive. I remember all about our youth, Ethel.

Ethel. Tell me what you remember.

Clive. I remember one of the days when I first saw you, I had been reading the "Arabian Nights" at school—and you came in in a bright dress of shot silk, amber and blue—and I thought you were like that fairy princess who came out of the crystal box—because—

Ethel. Because why?

Clive. Because I always thought that fairy somehow must be the most beautiful creature in all the world—that is "why and because." Do not make me May Fair courtesies. You know whether you are good-looking or not; and how long I have thought you so. I remember when I thought I would like to be Ethel's knight, and that if there was anything she would have me to do, I would try and achieve it in order to please her. I remember when I was so ignorant I did not know there was any difference in rank between us.

Ethel. Ah, Clive!

Clive. Now it is altered. Now I know the difference between a poor painter and a young lady of the world. Why haven't I a title and a great fortune? Why did I ever see you, Ethel; or, knowing the distance which it seems fate has placed between us, why have I seen you again?

Ethel (innocently). Have I ever made any difference between us? Whenever I may see you, am I not too glad? Don't I see you sometimes when I should not—no, I do not say when I should not; but when others whom I am bound to obey forbid me? What harm is there in my remembering old days? Why should I be ashamed of our relationship? No, not ashamed—why should I forget it? Don't do that, sir, we have shaken hands twice already. Léonore! Xavier!

Clive. At one moment you like me; and at the next you seem to repent it. One day you seem happy when I come; and another day you are ashamed of me. Last Tuesday, when

you came with those fine ladies to the Louvre, you seemed to blush when you saw me copying at my picture; and that stupid young lord looked quite alarmed because you spoke to me. My lot in life is not very brilliant; but I would not change it against that young man's—no, not with all his chances!

Ethel. What do you mean, with all his chances?

Clive. You know very well. I mean I would not be as selfish, or as dull, or as ill educated—I won't say worse of him—not to be as handsome, or as wealthy, or as noble as he is. I swear I would not now change my place against his, or give up being Clive Newcome to be my Lord Marquis of Farintosh with all his acres and titles of nobility.

Ethel. Why are you forever harping about Lord Farintosh and his titles? I thought it was only women who were jealous—you gentlemen say so. (Hurriedly.) I am going to-night with grandmamma to the Minister of the Interior, and then to the Russian ball; and to-morrow to the Tuileries. We dine at the embassy first; and on Sunday, I suppose, we shall go to the Rue d'Aguesseau. I can hardly come here before Mon—Mme. de Florac! Little Léonore is very like you—resembles you very much. My cousin says he longs to make a drawing of her.

Mme. de Florac. My husband always likes that I should be present at his dinner. Pardon me, young people, that I have been away from you for a moment.

[Exeunt Clive, Ethel, and Mme. de F. into the house.]

Conversation II.—Scene I.

Miss Newcome arrives in Lady Kew's carriage, which enters the court of the Hôtel de Florac.

St. Jean. Mademoiselle—Mme. la Comtesse is gone out; but madame has charged me to say that she will be at home to the dinner of M. le Comte as to the ordinary.

Miss Newcome. Mme. de Préville is at home?

St. Jean. Pardon me, madame is gone out with M. le Baron and M. Xavier, and Mlle. de Préville. They are gone, miss, I believe, to visit the parents of M. le Baron; of whom it is probably to-day the fête; for Mlle. Léonore carried a bouquet—no doubt for her grandpapa. Will it please mademoiselle to enter? I think Monsieur the Count sounds me. (Bell rings.)

Miss Newcome. Mme. la Prince—Mme. la Vicomtesse is at home, M. St. Jean?

St. Jean. I go to call the people of Mme. la Vicomtesse.

[Exit old St. Jean to the carriage; a Lackey comes presently in gorgeous livery, with buttons like little cheese plates.]

The Lackey. The Princess is at home, miss, and will be most 'appy to see you, miss. (Miss trips up the great stairs; a gentleman out of livery has come forth to the landing, and introduces her to the apartments of Mme. la Princesse.)

The Lackey (to the Servant on the box). Good-morning, Thomas. How d'ye do, old Backstopper?

Backstopper. How de do, Jim. I say, you couldn't give a feller a drink of beer, could yer, Muncontour? It was precious wet last night, I can tell you. 'Ad to stop for three hours at the Napolitum embassy, where we was a-dancing. Me and some chaps went into Bob Parsom's and had a drain. Old cat came out and couldn't find her carriage, not by no means, could she, Tommy? Blest if I didn't nearly drive her into a vegetable cart. I was so uncommon scruey! Who's this a-hentering at your pot-coshare, Billy, my fine feller?

Clive Newcome (by the most singular coincidence). Mme. la Princesse?

Lackey. Wee, munseer. (He rings a bell; the gentleman in black appears as before on the landing place up the stair.)

[Exit Clive.]

Backstopper. I say, Bill; is that young chap often a-coming about here? They'd run pretty in a curricule, wouldn't they? Miss N. and Master N. Quiet, old woman! Just look to that mare's 'ead, will you, Billy? He's a fine young feller, that is. He gave me a sovering the other night. Whenever I sor him in the park, he was always riding an 'ansum hanimal. What is he? They said in our 'all he was an hartis. I can 'ardly think that. Why, there used to be a hartis come to our club, and painted two or three of my 'osses, and my old woman too.

Lackey. There's hartises and hartises, Backstopper. Why there's some on 'em comes here with more stars on their coats than dukes has got. Have you never 'eard of Mossyer Verny, or Mossyer Gudang?

Backstopper. They say this young gent is sweet on Miss N.; which I guess, I wish he may get it.

Tommy. He! he! he!

Backstopper. Brayvo, Tommy. Tom ain't much of a

man for conversation, but he's a precious one to drink. Do you think the young gent is sweet on her, Tommy? I sor him often prowling about our 'ouse in Queen Street, when he was in London.

Tommy. I guess he wasn't let in in Queen Street. I guess hour little Buttons was very near turned away for saying we was at home to him. I guess a footman's place is to keep his mouth hopen—no, his heyes hopen—and his mouth shut. (He lapses into silence.)

Lackey. I think Thomis is in love, Thomis is. Who was that young woman I saw you a-dancing of at the Showmier, Thomis? How the young Marquis was a-cuttin' of it about there! The pleace was obliged to come up and stop him dancing. His man told old Buzfuz upstairs that the Marquis' goings on is hawful. Up till four or five every morning; blind hookey, shampaign, the dooce's own delight. That party have had I don't know how much in diamonds, and they quarrel and swear at each other, and fling plates; it's tremendous.

Tommy. Why doesn't the Marquis' man mind his own affairs? He's a supersellious beast: and will no more speak to a man, except he's out-a-livery, than he would to a chimby swip. He! Cuss him, I'd fight 'im for 'alf a crown.

Lackey. And we'd back you, Tommy. Buzfuz upstairs ain't supersellious; nor is the Prince's walet neither. That old Sangjang's a rum old guvnor. He was in England with the Count, fifty years ago—in the hemigration—in Queen Hann's time, you know. He used to support the old Count. He says he remembers a young Musseer Newcome then, that used to take lessons from the Shevallier, the Countess' father—there's my bell. [Exit Lackey.]

Backstopper. Not a bad chap that. Sports his money very free—sings an uncommon good song.

Thomas. Pretty voice, but no cultiwation.

Lackey (who re-enters). Be here at two o'clock for Miss N. Take anything? Come round the corner. There's a capital shop round the corner. [Exeunt Servants.]

Scene II.

Ethel. I can't think where Mme. de Montcontour has gone. How very odd it was that you should come here—that we should both come here to-day! How surprised I was to see you at the Minister's! Grandmamma was so angry! "That

boy pursues us wherever we go," she said. I am sure I don't know why we shouldn't meet, Clive. It seems to be wrong even my seeing you by chance here. Do you know, sir, what a scolding I had about—about going to Brighton with you? My grandmother did not hear of it till we were in Scotland, when that foolish maid of mine talked of it to her maid; and there was oh, such a tempest! If there were a Bastile here, she would like to lock you into it. She says that you are always upon our way—I don't know how, I am sure. She says, but for you I should have been—you know what I should have been; but I am thankful that I wasn't and Kew has got a much nicer wife in Henrietta Pulleyn, than I could ever have been to him. She will be happier than Clara, Clive. Kew is one of the kindest creatures in the world—not very wise; not very strong; but he is just such a kind, easy, generous little man as will make a girl like Henrietta quite happy.

Clive. But not you, Ethel?

Ethel. No, nor I him. My temper is difficult, Clive, and I fear few men would bear with me. I feel, somehow, always very lonely. How old am I? Twenty—I feel sometimes as if I was a hundred; and in the midst of all these admirations and fêtes and flatteries, so tired, oh, so tired! And yet if I don't have them, I miss them. How I wish I was religious like Mme. de Florac; there is no day that she does not go to church. She is forever busy with charities, clergymen, conversions. I think the Princess will be brought over ere long—that dear old Mme. de Florac! and yet she is no happier than the rest of us. Hortense is an empty little thing, who thinks of her prosy fat Camille in spectacles, and of her two children, and of nothing else in the world besides. Who is happy, Clive?

Clive. You say Barnes' wife is not.

Ethel. We are like brother and sister, so I may talk to you. Barnes is very cruel to her. At Newcome last winter poor Clara used to come into my room with tears in her eyes morning after morning. He calls her a fool, and seems to take a pride in humiliating her before company. My poor father has luckily a great liking to her; and before him, for he has grown very, very hot-tempered since his illness, Barnes leaves poor Clara alone. We were in hopes that the baby might make matters better, but as it is a little girl Barnes chooses to be very much disappointed. He wants papa to give up his seat in Parliament, but he clings to that more than anything. Oh,

dear me! who is happy in the world! What a pity Lord Highgate's father had not died sooner! He and Barnes have been reconciled. I wonder my brother's spirit did not revolt against it. The old lord used to keep a great sum of money at the bank, I believe; and the present one does so still; he has paid all his debts off; and Barnes is actually friends with him. He is always abusing the Dorkings, who want to borrow money from the bank, he says. This eagerness for money is horrible. If I had been Barnes I would never have been reconciled with Mr. Belsize, never, never! And yet they say he was quite right; and grandmamma is even pleased that Lord Highgate should be asked to dine in Park Lane. Poor papa is there; come to attend his parliamentary duties as he thinks. He went to a division the other night, and was actually lifted out of his carriage and wheeled into the lobby in a chair. The Ministers thanked him for coming. I believe he thinks he will have his peerage yet. Oh, what a life of vanity ours is!

Enter Mme. de Montcontour. What are you young folks a-talkin' about—balls and operas? When first I was took to the opera I did not like it—and fell asleep. But now, oh, it's 'eavenly to hear Grisi sing!

The Clock. Ting, ting!

Ethel. Two o'clock already! I must run back to grandmamma. Good-bye, Mme. de Montcontour; I am sorry I have not been able to see dear Mme. de Florac. I will try and come to her on Thursday—please tell her. Shall we meet you at the American Minister's to-night, or at Mme. de Brie's to-morrow? Friday is your own night—I hope grandmamma will bring me. How charming your last music was! Good-bye, mon cousin! You shall not come downstairs with me, I insist upon it, sir; and had much best remain here, and finish your drawing of Mme. de Montcontour.

Princess. I've put on the velvet, you see, Clive—though it's very 'ot in May. Good-bye, my dear. [Exit Ethel.]

As far as we can judge from the above conversation, which we need not prolong—as the talk between Mme. de Montcontour and M. Clive, after a few complimentary remarks about Ethel, had nothing to do with the history of the Newcomes—as far as we can judge, the above little colloquy took place on Monday, and about Wednesday Mme. la Comtesse de Florac received a little note from Clive, in which he said that one day when she came to the Louvre where he was copying, she had admired a picture of a Virgin and Child by Sasso Ferrato,

since when he had been occupied in making a water color drawing after the picture, and hoped she would be pleased to accept the copy from her affectionate and grateful servant, Clive Newcome. The drawing would be done the next day, when he would call with it in his hand. Of course Mme. de Florac received this announcement very kindly; and sent back by Clive's servant a note of thanks to that young gentleman.

Now on Thursday morning about one o'clock, by one of those singular coincidences which, etc., etc., who should come to the Hôtel de Florac but Miss Ethel Newcome? Mme. la Comtesse was at home, waiting to receive Clive and his picture; but Miss Ethel's appearance frightened the good lady so much that she felt quite guilty at seeing the girl, whose parents might think, I don't know what they might not think—that Mme. de Florac was trying to make a match between the young people. Hence arose the words uttered by the Countess, after a while, in

Conversation III.

Mme. de Florac (at work). And so you like to quit the world, and to come to our *triste* old hotel. After to-day you will find it still more melancholy, my poor child.

Ethel. And why?

Mme. de F. Someone who has been here to *égayer* our little meetings will come no more.

Ethel. Is the Abbé de Florac going to quit Paris, madame?

Mme. de F. It is not of him that I speak, thou knowest it very well, my daughter. Thou hast seen my poor Clive twice here. He will come once again, and then no more. My conscience reproaches me that I have admitted him at all. But he is like a son to me, and was so confided to me by his father. Five years ago, when we met, after an absence—of how many years!—Colonel Newcome told me what hopes he had cherished for his boy. You know well, my daughter, with whom those hopes were connected. Then he wrote me that family arrangements rendered his plans impossible—that the hand of Miss Newcome was promised elsewhere. When I heard from my son Paul how these negotiations were broken, my heart rejoiced, Ethel, for my friend's sake. I am an old woman now, who have seen the world and all sorts of men. Men more brilliant, no doubt, I have known; but such a heart as his, such a faith as his, such a generosity and simplicity as Thomas Newcome's—never!

Ethel (smiling). Indeed, dear lady, I think with you.

Mme. de F. I understand thy smile, my daughter. I can say to thee that when we were children almost, I knew thy good uncle. My poor father took the pride of his family into exile with him. Our poverty only made his pride the greater. Even before the Emigration a contract had been passed between our family and the Count de Florac. I could not be wanting to the word given by my father. For how many long years have I kept it! But when I see a young girl who may be made the victim—the subject of a marriage of convenience, as I was—my heart pities her. And if I love her as I love you, I tell her my thoughts. Better poverty, Ethel—better a cell in a convent than a union without love. Is it written eternally that men are to make slaves of us? Here in France, above all, our fathers sell us every day. And what a society ours is! Thou wilt know this when thou art married. There are some laws so cruel that nature revolts against them, and breaks them—or we die in keeping them. You smile. I have been nearly fifty years dying—*n'est-ce-pas*—and am here an old woman, complaining to a young girl. It is because our recollections of youth are always young, and because I have suffered so, that I would spare those I love a like grief. Do you know that the children of those who do not love in marriage seem to bear an hereditary coldness, and do not love their parents as other children do? They witness our differences and our indifferences, bear our recriminations, take one side or the other in our disputes, and are partisans for father or mother. We force ourselves to be hypocrites, and hide our wrongs from them; we speak of a bad father with false praises; we wear feigned smiles over our tears, and deceive our children—deceive them, do we? Even from the exercise of that pious deceit there is no woman but suffers in the estimation of her sons. They may shield her as champions against their father's selfishness or cruelty. In this case, what a war! What a home where the son sees a tyrant in the father, and in the mother but a trembling victim! I speak not for myself—whatever may have been the course of our long wedded life, I have not to complain of these ignoble storms. But when the family chief neglects his wife, or prefers another to her, the children too, courtiers, as we are, will desert her. You look incredulous about domestic love. Tenez, my child; if I may so surmise, I think you cannot have seen it.

Ethel (blushing, and thinking perhaps, how she esteems her father, how her mother, and how much they esteem each other). My father and mother have been most kind to all their children, madam; and no one can say that their marriage has been otherwise than happy. My mother is the kindest and most affectionate mother, and—(Here a vision of Sir Brian alone in his room, and nobody really caring for him so much as his valet, who loves him to the extent of fifty pounds a year and perquisites; or, perhaps, Miss Cann, who reads to him, and plays a good deal of evenings, much to Sir Brian's liking—here this vision, we say, comes, and stops Miss Ethel's sentence.)

Mme. de F. Your father, in his infirmity—and yet he is five years younger than Colonel Newcome—is happy to have such a wife and such children. They comfort his age; they cheer his sickness; they confide their griefs and pleasures to him—is it not so? His closing days are soothed by their affection.

Ethel. Oh, no, no! And yet it is not his fault or ours that he is a stranger to us. He used to be all day at the bank, or at night in the House of Commons, or he and mamma went to parties, and we young ones remained with the governess. Mamma is very kind. I have never, almost, known her angry; never with us; about us, sometimes, with the servants. As children, we used to see papa and mamma at breakfast; and then when she was dressing to go out. Since he has been ill, she has given up all parties. I wanted to do so too. I feel ashamed in the world, sometimes, when I think of my poor father at home, alone. I wanted to stay, but my mother and my grandmother forbade me. Grandmamma has a fortune which she says I am to have; since then they have insisted on my being with her. She is very clever, you know; she is kind too in her way; but she cannot live out of society. And I, who pretend to revolt, I like it too; and I, who rail and scorn flatterers—oh, I like admiration! I am pleased when the women hate me, and the young men leave them for me. Though I despise many of these, yet I can't help drawing them toward me. One or two of them I have seen unhappy about me, and I like it; and if they are indifferent I am angry, and never tire till they come back. I love beautiful dresses; I love fine jewels; I love a great name and a fine house—oh, I despise myself when I think of these things! When I lie in bed, and say I have been heartless and a coquette, I