

cry with humiliation; and then rebel and say, why not?—and to-night—yes, to-night—after leaving you, I shall be wicked, I know I shall.

Mme. de F. (sadly). One will pray for thee, my child.

Ethel (sadly). I thought I might be good once. I used to say my own prayers then. Now I speak them but by rote, and feel ashamed—yes ashamed to speak them. Is it not horrid to say them, and next morning to be no better than you were last night? Often I revolt at these as at other things, and am dumb. The vicar comes to see us at Newcome, and eats so much dinner, and pays us such court, and “Sir Brians” papa and “Your ladyships” mamma. With grandmamma, I go to hear a fashionable preacher—Clive’s uncle, whose sister lets lodgings at Brighton; such a queer, bustling, pompous, honest old lady. Do you know that Clive’s aunt lets lodgings at Brighton?

Mme. de F. My father was an usher in a school. M. de Florac gave lessons in the Emigration. Do you know in what?

Ethel. Oh, the old nobility! that is different, you know. That Mr. Honeyman is so affected that I have no patience with him!

Mme. de F. (with a sigh). I wish you could attend the services of a better church. And when was it you thought you might be good, Ethel?

Ethel. When I was a girl. Before I came out. When I used to take long rides with my dear Uncle Newcome; and he used to talk to me in his sweet, simple way; and he said I reminded him of someone he once knew.

Mme. de F. Who—who was that, Ethel?

Ethel (looking up at Gérard’s picture of the Countess de Florac). What odd dresses you wore in the time of the Empire, Mme. de Florac! How could you ever have such high waists, and such wonderful *fraises!* (Mme. de Florac kisses Ethel. Tableau.)

Enter Saint Jean preceding a gentleman with a drawing-board under his arm.

Saint Jean. M. Claive!

[Exit Saint Jean.

Clive. How do you do, Mme. la Comtesse? Mlle, j’ai l’honneur de vous souhaiter le bon jour.

Mme. de F. Do you come from the Louvre? Have you finished that beautiful copy, mon ami?

Clive. I have brought it for you. It is not very good.

There are always so many *petites demoiselles* copying that Sasso Ferrato; and they chatter about it so, and hop from one easel to another; and the young artists are always coming to give them advice—so that there is no getting a good look at the picture. But I have brought you the sketch; and am so pleased that you asked for it.

Mme. de F. (surveying the sketch). It is charming—charming! What shall we give to our painter for his chef-d’oeuvre!

Clive (kisses her hand). There is my pay! And you will be glad to hear that two of my portraits have been received at the Exhibition. My uncle the clergyman, and Mr. Butts of the Life Guards.

Ethel. Mr. Butts—quel nom! Je ne connois aucun M. Butts!

Clive. He has a famous head to draw. They refused Crackthorpe, and—and one or two other heads I sent in.

Ethel (tossing up hers). Miss Mackenzie’s, I suppose!

Clive. Yes, Miss Mackenzie’s. It is a sweet little face; too delicate for my hand though.

Ethel. So is a wax doll’s a pretty face. Pink cheeks; china-blue eyes; and hair the color of old Mme. Hempenfield’s—not her last hair—her last but one. (She goes to a window that looks into the court.)

Clive (to the Countess). Miss Mackenzie speaks more respectfully of other people’s eyes and hair. She thinks there is nobody in the world to compare to Miss Newcome.

Mme. de F. (aside). And you, mon ami? This is the last time, entendez-vous? You must never come here again. If M. le Comte knew it, he never would pardon me. Encore! (He kisses her ladyship’s hand again.)

Clive. A good action gains to be repeated. Miss Newcome, does the view of the courtyard please you? The old trees and the garden are better. That dear old Faun without a nose! I must have a sketch of him; the creepers round the base are beautiful.

Miss N. I was looking to see if the carriage had come for me. It is time that I return home.

Clive. That is my brougham. May I carry you anywhere? I hire him by the hour; and I will carry you to the end of the world.

Miss N. Where are you going, Mme. de Florac—to show that sketch to M. le Comte? Dear me! I don’t fancy that

M. de Florac can care for such things! I am sure I have seen many as pretty on the quays for twenty-five sous. I wonder the carriage is not come for me.

Clive. You can take mine without my company, as that seems not to please you.

Miss N. Your company is sometimes very pleasant—when you please. Sometimes, as last night, for instance, you are not particularly lively.

Clive. Last night, after moving heaven and earth to get an invitation to Mme. de Brie—I say, heaven and earth, that is a French phrase—I arrive there; I find Miss Newcome engaged for almost every dance, waltzing with M. de Klingspohr, galoping with Count de Capri, galoping and waltzing with the Most Noble the Marquis of Farintosh. She will scarce speak to me during the evening; and when I wait till midnight, her grandmamma whisks her home, and I am left alone for my pains. Lady Kew is in one of her high moods, and the only words she condescends to say to me are, “Oh, I thought you had returned to London,” with which she turns her venerable back upon me.

Miss N. A fortnight ago you said you were going to London. You said the copies you were about here would not take you another week, and that was three weeks since.

Clive. It were best I had gone.

Miss N. If you think so, I cannot but think so.

Clive. Why do I stay and hover about you, and follow you; you know I follow you? Can I live on a smile vouchsafed twice a week, and no brighter than you give to all the world? What do I get, but to hear your beauty praised, and to see you, night after night, happy and smiling and triumphant, the partner of other men? Does it add zest to your triumph to think that I behold it? I believe you would like a crowd of us to pursue you.

Miss N. To pursue me; and if they find me alone by chance, to compliment me with such speeches as you make? That would be pleasure indeed! Answer me here in return,

Clive. Have I ever disguised from any of my friends the regard I have for you? Why should I? Have not I taken your part when you were maligned? In former days when—when Lord Kew asked me as he had a right to do then—I said it was as a brother I held you, and always would. If I have been wrong, it has been for two or three times in seeing you at all—or seeing you thus; in letting you speak to me as

you do—injure me as you do. Do you think I have not had hard enough words said to me about you, but that you must attack me too in turn? Last night only, because you were at the ball—it was very, very wrong of me to tell you I was going there—as we went home, Lady Kew—go, sir. I never thought you would have seen me in this humiliation.

Clive. Is it possible that I should have made Ethel Newcome shed tears? Oh, dry them, dry them. Forgive me, Ethel, forgive me! I have no right to jealousy, or to reproach you—I know that. If others admire you, surely I ought to know that they—they do but as I do; I should be proud, not angry, that they admire my Ethel—my sister, if you can be no more.

Ethel. I will be that always, whatever harsh things you think or say of me. There, sir, I am not going to be so foolish as to cry again. Have you been studying very hard? Are your pictures good at the Exhibition? I like you with your mustaches best, and order you not to cut them off again. The young men here wear them. I hardly knew Charles Beardmore when he arrived from Berlin the other day, like a sapper and miner. His little sisters cried out, and were quite frightened by his apparition. Why are you not in diplomacy? That day at Brighton, when Lord Farintosh asked whether you were in the army, I thought to myself, why is he not?

Clive. A man in the army may pretend to anything, *n'est-ce-pas?* He wears a lovely uniform. He may be a general, a K. C. B., a viscount, an earl. He may be valiant in arms and wanting a leg, like the lover in the song. It is peace time, you say? so much the worse career for a soldier. My father would not have me, he said, forever dangling in barracks, or smoking in country billiard rooms. I have no taste for law; and as for diplomacy, I have no relations in the Cabinet, and no uncles in the House of Peers. Could my uncle, who is in Parliament, help me much, do you think? or would he, if he could?—or Barnes, his noble son and heir, after him?

Ethel (musing). Barnes would not, perhaps, but papa might even still, and you have friends who are fond of you.

Clive. No—no one can help me; and my art, Ethel, is not only my choice and my love, but my honor too. I shall never distinguish myself in it; I may take smart likenesses, but that is all. I am not fit to grind my friend Ridley's colors for him. Nor would my father, who loves his own profession so, make a good general probably. He always says so.

I thought better of myself when I began as a boy; and was a conceited youngster, expecting to carry all before me. But as I walked the Vatican and looked at Raphael, and at the great Michael—I knew I was but a poor little creature; and in contemplating his genius, shrunk up till I felt myself as small as a man looks under the dome of St. Peter's. Why should I wish to have a great genius? Yes, there is one reason why I should like to have it.

Ethel. And that is?

Clive. To give it you, if it pleased you, Ethel. But I might wish for the roc's egg; there is no way of robbing the bird. I must take a humble place, and you want a brilliant one. A brilliant one! O Ethel, what a standard we folks measure fame by! To have your name in the Morning Post, and to go to three balls every night. To have your dress described at the Drawing Room; and your arrival, from a round of visits in the country, at your town house; and the entertainments of the Marchioness of Farin—

Ethel. Sir, if you please, no calling names.

Clive. I wonder at it. For you are in the world, and you love the world, whatever you may say. And I wonder that one of your strength of mind should so care for it. I think my simple old father is much finer than all your grandees; his single-mindedness more lofty than all their bowing, and haughtiness, and scheming. What are you thinking of as you stand in that pretty attitude—like Mnemosyne—with your finger on your chin?

Ethel. Mnemosyne! who was she? I think I like you best when you are quiet and gentle, and not when you are flaming out and sarcastic, sir. And so you think you will never be a famous painter! They are quite in society here. I was so pleased because two of them dined at the Tuileries when grandmamma was there; and she mistook one who was covered all over with crosses for an ambassador, I believe, till the Queen called him M. Delaroche. She says there is no knowing people in this country. And do you think you will never be able to paint as well as M. Delaroche?

Clive. No—never.

Ethel. And—and—you will never give up painting?

Clive. No—never. That would be like leaving your friend who was poor; or deserting your mistress because you were disappointed about her money. They do those things in the great world, Ethel.

Ethel (with a sigh). Yes.

Clive. If it is so false, and base, and hollow, this great world—if its aims are so mean, its successes so paltry, the sacrifices it asks of you so degrading, the pleasures it gives you so wearisome, shameful even, why does Ethel Newcome cling to it? Will you be fairer, dear, with any other name than your own? Will you be happier, after a month, at bearing a great title with a man whom you can't esteem tied forever to you, to be the father of Ethel's children and the lord and master of her life and actions? The proudest woman in the world consent to bend herself to this ignominy, and own that a coronet is a bribe sufficient for her honor! What is the end of a Christian life, Ethel; a girl's pure nurture?—it can't be this! Last week, as we walked in the garden here, and heard the nuns singing in their chapel, you said how hard it was that poor women should be imprisoned so, and were thankful that in England we had abolished that slavery. Then you cast your eyes to the ground and mused as you paced the walk; and thought, I know, that perhaps their lot was better than some others.

Ethel. Yes, I did. I was thinking that almost all women are made slaves one way or other, and that those poor nuns perhaps were better off than we are.

Clive. I never will quarrel with nun or matron for following her vocation. But for our women who are free, why should they rebel against nature, shut their hearts up, sell their lives for rank and money, and forego the most precious right of their liberty? Look, Ethel, dear. I love you so that if I thought another had your heart, an honest man, a loyal gentleman, like—like him of last year even, I think I could go back with a "God bless you," and take to my pictures again, and work on in my own humble way. You seem like a queen to me, somehow; and I am but a poor, humble fellow, who might be happy, I think, if you were. In those balls where I have seen you surrounded by those brilliant young men, noble and wealthy, admirers like me, I have often thought, "How could I aspire to such a creature, and ask her to forego a palace to share the crust of a poor painter?"

Ethel. You spoke quite scornfully of palaces just now, Clive. I won't say a word about the—the regard which you express for me. I think you have it. Indeed, I do. But it were best not said, Clive; best for me, perhaps, not to own that I know it. In your speeches, my poor boy—and you will

please not to make any more, or I never can see you or speak to you again, never—you forget one part of a girl's duty—obedience to her parents. They would never agree to my marrying anyone below—anyone whose union would not be advantageous in a worldly point of view. I never would give such pain to the poor father, or to the kind soul who never said a harsh word to me since I was born. My grandmamma is kind, too, in her way. I came to her of my own free will. When she said she would leave me her fortune, do you think it was for myself alone that I was glad? My father's passion is to make an estate, and all my brothers and sisters will be but slenderly portioned. Lady Kew said she would help them if I came to her—and—it is the welfare of those little people that depends upon me, Clive. Now, do you see, brother, why you must speak to me so no more? There is the carriage. God bless you, dear Clive.

(Clive sees the carriage drive away after Miss Newcome has entered it without once looking up to the window where he stands. When it is gone he goes to the opposite windows of the salon, which are open toward the garden. The chapel music begins to play from the convent next door. As he hears it he sinks down, his head in his hands.)

Enter Mme. de Florac. (She goes to him with anxious looks.) What hast thou, my child? Hast thou spoken?

Clive (very steadily). Yes.

Mme. de F. And she loves thee? I know she loves thee.

Clive. You hear the organ of the convent?

Mme. de F. Qu'as-tu?

Clive. I might as well hope to marry one of the sisters of yonder convent, dear lady. (He sinks down again and she kisses him.)

Clive. I never had a mother; but you seem like one.

Mme. de F. Mon fils! Oh, mon fils!

CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH BENEDICK IS A MARRIED MAN.

We have all heard of the dying French duchess, who viewed her coming dissolution and subsequent fate so easily because, she said, she was sure that Heaven must deal politely with a person of her quality; I suppose Lady Kew had some such

notions regarding people of rank; her long-suffering toward them was extreme; in fact, there were vices which the old lady thought pardonable, and even natural, in a young nobleman of high station, which she never would have excused in persons of vulgar condition.

Her ladyship's little knot of associates and scandal-bearers—elderly roués and ladies of the world, whose business it was to know all sorts of noble intrigues and exalted tittle-tattle; what was happening among the devotees of the exiled court at Frohsdorf; what among the citizen princes of the Tuileries; who was the reigning favorite of the Queen Mother at Aranjuez; who was smitten with whom at Vienna or Naples; and the last particulars of the *chroniques scandaleuses* of Paris and London—Lady Kew, I say, must have been perfectly aware of my Lord Farintosh's amusements, associates, and manner of life, and yet she never for one moment exhibited any anger or dislike toward that nobleman. Her amiable heart was so full of kindness and forgiveness toward the young prodigal that, even without any repentance on his part, she was ready to take him to her old arms, and give him her venerable benediction. Pathetic sweetness of nature! Charming tenderness of disposition! With all his faults and wickednesses, his follies and his selfishness, there was no moment when Lady Kew would not have received the young lord, and endowed him with the hand of her darling Ethel.

But the hopes which this fond, forgiving creature had nurtured for one season, and carried on so resolutely to the next, were destined to be disappointed yet a second time, by a most provoking event, which occurred in the Newcome family. Ethel was called away suddenly from Paris by her father's third and last paralytic seizure. When she reached her home Sir Brian could not recognize her. A few hours after her arrival all the vanities of the world were over for him; and Sir Barnes Newcome, Baronet, reigned in his stead. The day after Sir Brian was laid in his vault at Newcome, a letter appeared in the local papers addressed to the independent electors of that borough, in which his orphaned son, feelingly alluding to the virtues, the services, and the political principles of the deceased, offered himself as a candidate for the seat in Parliament now vacant. Sir Barnes announced that he should speedily pay his respects in person to the friends and supporters of his lamented father. That he was a staunch friend of our admirable constitution need not be said. That