

my wife looked very grave as he passed the place where she sat, and seated Lady Clara in the next chair to that which Lord Highgate chanced to occupy. Feeling himself *en veine* and the company being otherwise rather mum and silent, my uncle told a number of delightful anecdotes about the beau monde of his time, about the Peninsular war, the Regent, Brummell, Lord Steyne, Pea Green Payne, and so forth. He said the evening was very pleasant, though some others of the party, as it appeared to me, scarcely seemed to think so. Clive had not a word for his cousin Maria, but looked across the table at Ethel all dinner time. What could Ethel have to say to her partner, old Colonel Sir Donald M'Craw, who gobbled and drank as his wont is, and if he had a remark to make, imparted it to Mrs. Hobson, at whose right hand he was sitting, and to whom, during the whole course, or courses, of the dinner, my Lord Highgate scarcely uttered one single word?

His lordship was whispering all the while into the ringlets of Lady Clara; they were talking a jargon which their hostess scarcely understood of people only known to her by her study of the peerage. When we joined the ladies after dinner, Lord Highgate again made way toward Lady Clara, and at an order from her, as I thought, left her ladyship and strove hard to engage in a conversation with Mrs. Newcome. I hope he succeeded in smoothing the frowns in that round little face. Mrs. Laura, I own, was as grave as a judge all the evening; very grave even and reserved with my uncle, when the hour for parting came, and we took him home.

"He, he!" said the old man, coughing, and nodding his old head and laughing in his senile manner, when I saw him on the next day; "that was a pleasant evening we had yesterday; doosid pleasant, and I think my two neighbors seemed to be uncommonly pleased with each other; not an amusing fellow, that young painter of yours, though he is good-looking enough, but there's no conversation in him. Do you think of giving a little dinner, Arthur, in return for these hospitalities? Greenwich, hey, or something of that sort? I'll go you halves, sir, and we'll ask the young banker and bankers—not yesterday's Amphitryon nor his wife; no, no, hang it! but Barnes Newcome is a devilish clever, rising man, and moves in about as good society as any in London. We'll ask him and Lady Clara and Highgate, and one or two more, and have a pleasant party."

But to this proposal, when the old man communicated it to her, in a very quiet, simple, artless way, Laura with a flushing face said No quite abruptly, and quitted the room, rustling in her silks, and showing at once dignity and indignation.

Not many more feasts was Arthur Pendennis, senior, to have in this world. Not many more great men was he to flatter, nor schemes to wink at, nor earthly pleasures to enjoy. His long days were well-nigh ended; on his last couch, which Laura tended so affectionately, with his last breath almost, he faltered out to me, "I had other views for you, my boy, and once hoped to see you in a higher position in life; but I begin to think now, Arthur, that I was wrong; and as for that girl, sir, I am sure she is an angel."

May I not inscribe the words with a grateful heart? Blessed he—blessed though maybe undeserving—who has the love of a good woman.

CHAPTER XII.

CLIVE IN NEW QUARTERS.

My wife was much better pleased with Clive than with some of his relatives to whom I had presented her. His face carried a recommendation with it that few honest people could resist. He was always a welcome friend in our lodgings, and even our uncle the Major signified his approval of the lad as a young fellow of very good manners and feelings, who, if he chose to throw himself away and be a painter, *me foi*, was rich enough no doubt to follow his own caprices. Clive executed a capital head of Major Pendennis, which now hangs in our drawing room at Fair Oaks and reminds me of that friend of my youth. Clive occupied ancient lofty chambers in Hanover Square now. He had furnished them in an antique manner with hangings, cabinets, carved work, Venice glasses, fine prints, and water-color sketches of good pictures by his own and other hands. He had horses to ride, and a liberal purseful of paternal money. Many fine equipages drew up opposite to his chambers; few artists had such luck as young Mr. Clive. And above his own chambers were other three which the young gentleman had hired, and where, says he, "I hope ere very

long my dear old father will be lodging with me. In another year he says he thinks he will be able to come home; when the affairs of the bank are quite settled. You shake your head! Why? The shares are worth four times what we gave for them. We are men of fortune, Pen, I give you my word. You should see how much they make of me at Baines & Jolly's, and how civil they are to me at Hobson Brothers! I go into the city now and then, and see our manager, Mr. Blackmore. He tells me such stories about indigo, and wool, and copper, and sicca rupees, and company's rupees. I don't know anything about the business, but my father likes me to go and see Mr. Blackmore. Dear Cousin Barnes is forever asking me to dinner; I might call Lady Clara Clara if I liked, as Sam Newcome does in Bryanstone Square. You can't think how kind they are to me there. My aunt reproaches me tenderly for not going there oftener—it's not very good fun dining in Bryanstone Square, is it? And she praises my cousin Maria to me—you should hear my aunt praise her! I have to take Maria down to dinner; to sit by the piano and listen to her songs in all languages. Do you know Maria can sing Hungarian and Polish besides your common German, Spanish, and Italian? Those I have at our other agents, Baines & Jolly's—Baines' that is in the Regent's Park, where the girls are prettier and just as civil to me as at Aunt Hobson's." And here Clive would amuse us by the accounts which he gave us of the snares which the Misses Baines, those young sirens of Regent's Park, set for him; of the songs which they sang to enchant him, the albums in which they besought him to draw; the thousand winning ways which they employed to bring him into their cave in York Terrace. But neither Circe's smiles nor Calypso's blandishments had any effect on him; his ears were stopped to their music, and his eyes rendered dull to their charms by those of the flighty young enchantress with whom my wife had of late made acquaintance.

Capitalist though he was, our young fellow was still very affable. He forgot no old friends in his prosperity; and the lofty antique chambers would not infrequently be lighted up at nights to receive F. B. and some of the old cronies of the Haunt, and some of the Gandishites, who, if Clive had been of a nature that was to be spoiled by flattery, had certainly done mischief to the young man. Gandish himself, when Clive paid a visit to that illustrious artist's academy, received

his former pupil as if the young fellow had been a sovereign prince almost, accompanied him to his horse, and would have held his stirrup as he mounted, while the beautiful daughters of the house waved adieux to him from the parlor window. To the young men assembled in his studio, Gandish was never tired of talking about Clive. The professor would take occasion to inform them that he had been to visit his distinguished young friend Mr. Newcome, son of Colonel Newcome; that last evening he had been present at an elegant entertainment at Mr. Newcome's new apartments. Clive's drawings were hung up in Gandish's gallery, and pointed out to visitors by the worthy professor. On one or two occasions I was allowed to become a bachelor again, and participate in these jovial meetings. How guilty my coat was on my return home; how haughty the looks of the mistress of my house, as she bade Martha carry away the obnoxious garment! How grand F. B. used to be as president of Clive's smoking party, where he laid down the law, talked the most talk, sang the jolliest song, and consumed the most drink of all the jolly talkers and drinkers! Clive's popularity rose prodigiously; not only youngsters, but old practitioners of the fine arts, lauded his talents. What a shame that his pictures were all refused this year at the Academy! Mr. Smee, R. A., was indignant at their rejection, but J. J. confessed with a sigh, and Clive owned good-naturedly, that he had been neglecting his business, and that his pictures were not so good as those of two years before. I am afraid Mr. Clive went to too many balls and parties, to clubs and jovial entertainments, besides losing yet more time in that other pursuit we wot of.

Meanwhile J. J. went steadily on with his work; no day passed without a line; and Fame was not very far off, though this he heeded but little; and Art, his sole mistress, rewarded him for his steady and fond pursuit of her.

"Look at him," Clive would say with a sigh. "Isn't he the mortal of all others the most to be envied? He is so fond of his art that in all the world there is no attraction like it for him. He runs to his easel at sunrise, and sits before it caressing his picture all day till nightfall. He takes leave of it sadly when dark comes, spends the night in a life academy, and begins next morning *da capo*. Of all the pieces of good fortune which can befall a man, is not this the greatest; to have your desire, and then never tire of it? I have been in such a rage with my own shortcomings that I have dashed my

foot through the canvases, and vowed I would smash my palette and easel. Sometimes I succeed a little better in my work, and then it will happen for half an hour that I am pleased, but pleased at what? pleased at drawing Mr. Muggins' head rather like Mr. Muggins. Why, a thousand fellows can do better; and when one day I reach my very best, thousands will be able to do better still. Ours is a trade for which nowadays there is no excuse unless one can be great in it; and I feel I have not the stuff for that. No. 666. Portrait of Joseph Muggins, Esq.; Newcome, George Street. No. 979. Portrait of Mrs. Muggins, on her gray pony; Newcome. No. 579. Portrait of Joseph Muggins, Esq.'s dog Toby; Newcome—this is what I'm fit for. These are the victories I have set myself on achieving. Oh, Mrs. Pendennis! isn't it humiliating? Why isn't there a war? Why can't I go and distinguish myself somewhere and be a general? Why haven't I a genius? I say, Pen, sir, why haven't I a genius? There is a painter who lives hard by, and who sends sometimes to beg me to come and look at his work. He is in the Muggins line too. He gets his canvases with a good light upon them; excludes the contemplation of all other objects, stands beside his pictures in an attitude himself, and thinks that he and they are masterpieces. Masterpieces! Oh, me, what driveling wretches we are! Fame!—except that of just the one or two—what's the use of it! I say, Pen, would you feel particularly proud now if you had written Hayley's poems? And as for a second place in painting, who would care to be Caravaggio or Caracci? I wouldn't give a straw to be Caracci or Caravaggio. I would just as soon be yonder artist who is painting up Foker's Entire over the public house at the corner. He will have his payment afterward, five shillings a day, and a pot of beer. Your head a little more to the light, Mrs. Pendennis, if you please. I am tiring you, I dare say, but then, oh, I am doing it so badly!"

I, for my part, thought Clive was making a very pretty drawing of my wife, and having affairs of my own to attend to, would often leave her at his chambers as a sitter, or find him at our lodgings visiting her. They became the very greatest friends. I knew the young fellow could have no better friend than Laura; and not being ignorant of the malady under which he was laboring, concluded naturally and justly that Clive grew so fond of my wife, not for her sake entirely, but for his own, because he could pour his heart out to her,

and her sweet kindness and compassion would soothe him in his unhappy condition.

Miss Ethel, I have said, also professed a great fondness for Mrs. Pendennis; and there was that charm in the young lady's manner which speedily could overcome even female jealousy. Perhaps Laura determined magnanimously to conquer it; perhaps she hid it so as to vex me and prove the injustice of my suspicions; perhaps, honestly, she was conquered by the young beauty, and gave her regard and admiration which the other knew she could inspire whenever she had the will. My wife was fairly captivated by her at length. The untamable young creature was docile and gentle in Laura's presence; modest, natural, amiable, full of laughter and spirits, delightful to see and to hear; her presence cheered our quiet little household; her charm fascinated my wife as it had subjugated poor Clive. Even the reluctant Farintosh was compelled to own her power, and confidentially told his male friends, that, hang it, she was so handsome, and so clever, and so confoundedly pleasant and fascinating, and that—that he had been on the point of popping the fatal question ever so many times, by Jove. "And hang it, you know," his lordship would say, "I don't want to marry until I have had my fling, you know." As for Clive, Ethel treated him like a boy, like a big brother. She was jocular, kind, pert, pleasant, with him; ordered him on her errands, accepted his bouquets and compliments, admired his drawings, liked to hear him praised, and took his part in all companies; laughed at his sighs, and frankly owned to Laura her liking for him and her pleasure in seeing him. "Why," said she, "should not I be happy as long as the sunshine lasts? To-morrow, I know, will be glum and dreary enough. When grandmamma comes back I shall scarcely be able to come and see you. When I am settled in life—eh! I shall be settled in life! Do not grudge me my holiday, Laura. Oh, if you knew how stupid it is to be in the world, and how much pleasanter to come and talk, and laugh, and sing, and be happy with you, than to sit in that dreary Eaton Place with poor Clara!"

"Why do you stay in Eaton Place?" asks Laura.

"Why? because I must go out with somebody. What an unsophisticated little country creature you are! Grandmamma is away, and I cannot go about to parties by myself."

"But why should you go to parties, and why not go back to your mother?" says Mrs. Pendennis gently.

"To the nursery, and my little sisters, and Miss Cann? I like being in London best, thank you. You look grave? You think a girl should like to be with her mother and sisters best? My dear mamma wishes me to be here, and I stay with Barnes and Clara by grandmamma's orders. Don't you know that I have been made over to Lady Kew, who has adopted me? Do you think a young lady of my pretensions can stop at home in a damp house in Warwickshire and cut bread-and-butter for little boys at school? Don't look so very grave and shake your head so, Mrs. Pendennis! If you had been bred as I have, you would be as I am. I know what you are thinking, madam."

"I am thinking," said Laura, blushing and bowing her head—"I am thinking, if it pleases God to give me children, I should like to live at home at Fair Oaks."

My wife's thoughts—though she did not utter them, and a certain modesty and habitual awe kept her silent upon subjects so very sacred—went deeper yet. She had been bred to measure her actions by a standard which the world may nominally admit, but which it leaves for the most part unheeded. Worship, love, duty, as taught her by the devout study of the Sacred Law which interprets and defines it—if these formed the outward practice of her life, they were also its constant secret endeavors and occupation. She spoke but very seldom of her religion, though it filled her heart and influenced all her behavior. Whenever she came to that sacred subject, her demeanor appeared to her husband so awful that he scarcely dared to approach it in her company, and stood without as this pure creature entered into the Holy of Holies. What must the world appear to such a person? Its ambitious rewards, disappointments, pleasures, worth how much? Compared to the possession of that priceless treasure and happiness unspeakable, a perfect faith, what has life to offer? I see before me now her sweet, grave face as she looks out from the balcony of the little Richmond villa we occupied during the first happy year after our marriage, following Ethel Newcome, who rides away, with a staid groom behind her, to her brother's summer residence not far distant. Clive had been with us in the morning, and had brought us stirring news. The good Colonel was by this time on his way home. "If Clive could tear himself away from London," the good man wrote (and we thus saw he was acquainted with the state of the young man's mind), "why should not Clive go and

meet his father at Malta?" He was feverish and eager to go; and his two friends strongly counseled him to take the journey. In the midst of our talk Miss Ethel came among us. She arrived flushed and in high spirits; she rallied Clive upon his gloomy looks; she turned rather pale, as it seemed to us, when she heard the news. Then she coldly told him she thought the voyage must be a pleasant one, and would do him good; it was pleasanter than that journey she was going to take herself with her grandmother, to those dreary German springs which the old Countess frequented year after year. Mr. Pendennis having business retired to his study, whither presently Mrs. Laura followed having to look for her scissors, or a book she wanted, or upon some pretext or other. She sat down in the conjugal study; not one word did either of us say for a while about the young people left alone in the drawing room yonder. Laura talked about her own home at Fair Oaks, which our tenants were about to vacate. She vowed and declared that we must live at Fair Oaks; that Clavering, with all its tittle-tattle and stupid inhabitants, was better than this wicked London. Besides, there were some new and very pleasant families settled in the neighborhood. Clavering Park was taken by some delightful people—"and you know, Pen, you were always very fond of fly-fishing, and may fish the Brawly, as you used in old days, when—" The lips of the pretty satirist who alluded to these unpleasant by-gones were silenced as they deserved to be by Mr. Pendennis. "Do you think, sir, I did not know," says the sweetest voice in the world, "when you went out on your fishing excursions with Miss Amory?" Again the flow of words is checked by the styptic previously applied.

"I wonder," says Mr. Pendennis archly, bending over his wife's fair hand—"I wonder whether this kind of thing is taking place in the drawing room?"

"Nonsense, Arthur. It is time to go back to them. Why, I declare I have been three-quarters of an hour away!"

"I don't think they will miss you, my dear," says the gentleman.

"She is certainly very fond of him. She is always coming here. I am sure it is not to hear you read Shakspeare, Arthur; or your new novel, though it is very pretty. I wish Lady Kew and her sixty thousand pounds were at the bottom of the sea."

"But she says she is going to portion her younger broth-

ers with a part of it; she told Clive so," remarks Mr. Pendennis.

"For shame! Why does not Barnes Newcome portion his younger brothers? I have no patience with that—Why! Goodness! There is Clive going away, actually! Clive! Mr. Newcome!" But though my wife ran to the study window and beckoned our friend, he only shook his head, jumped on his horse, and rode away gloomily.

"Ethel had been crying when I went into the room," Laura afterward told me. "I knew she had; but she looked up from some flowers over which she was bending, began to laugh and rattle, would talk about nothing but Lady Hautbois' great breakfast the day before, and the most insufferable May Fair jargon; and then declared it was time to go home to dress for Mrs. Booth's *déjeuner*, which was to take place that afternoon."

And so Miss Newcome rode away—back among the roses and the rogues—back among the fiddling, flirting, flattery, falseness—and Laura's sweet, serene face looked after her departing. Mrs. Booth's was a very grand *déjeuner*. We read in the newspapers a list of the greatest names: a Royal duke and duchess, a German highness, a Hindoo nabob, etc.; and among the marquises, Farintosh; and among the lords, Highgate; and Lady Clara Newcome, and Miss Newcome, who looked killing, our acquaintance Captain Crackthorpe informed us, and who was in perfectly stunning spirits. "His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke of Farintosh is wild about her," the Captain said, "and our poor young friend Clive may just go and hang himself. Dine with us at the Gar and Starter? Jolly party. Oh, I forgot! married man now!" So saying, the Captain entered the hostelry near which I met him, leaving this present chronicler to return to his own home.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN OLD FRIEND.

I might open the present chapter, as a contemporary writer of romance is occasionally in the habit of commencing his tales of chivalry, by a description of a November afternoon, with falling leaves, tawny forests, gathering storms, and other

autumnal phenomena, and two horsemen winding up the romantic road which leads from—from Richmond Bridge to the Star and Garter. The one rider is youthful and has a blond mustache; the cheek of the other has been browned by foreign suns; it is easy to see by the manner in which he bestrides his powerful charger that he has followed the profession of arms. He looks as if he had faced his country's enemies on many a field of Eastern battle. The cavaliers alight before the gate of a cottage on Richmond Hill, where a gentleman receives them with eager welcome. Their steeds are accommodated at a neighboring hostelry—I pause in the midst of the description, for the reader has made the acquaintance of our two horsemen long since. It is Clive returned from Malta, from Gibraltar, and Seville, from Cadiz, and with him our dear old friend the Colonel. His campaigns are over, his sword is hung up, he leaves Eastern suns and battles to warm young blood. Welcome back to England, dear Colonel and kind friend! How quickly the years have passed since he has been gone! There is a streak or two more silver in his hair. The wrinkles about his honest eyes are somewhat deeper, but their look is as steadfast and kind as in the early, almost boyish days when we first knew them.

We talk awhile about the Colonel's voyage home, the pleasures of the Spanish journey, the handsome new quarters in which Clive has installed his father and himself, my own altered condition in life, and what not. During the conversation a little querulous voice makes itself audible above stairs, at which noise Mr. Clive begins to laugh and the Colonel to smile. It is for the first time in his life Mr. Clive listens to the little voice; indeed, it is only since about six weeks that that small organ has been heard in the world at all. Laura Pendennis believes its tones to be the sweetest, the most interesting, the most mirth-inspiring, the most pitiful and pathetic, that ever baby uttered; which opinions, of course, are backed by Mrs. Hokey, the confidential nurse. Laura's husband is not so rapturous, but, let us trust, behaves in a way becoming a man and a father. We forego the description of his feelings as not pertaining to the history at present under consideration. A little while before the dinner is served, the lady of the cottage comes down to greet her husband's old friends.

And here I am sorely tempted to a third description, which has nothing to do with the story, to be sure, but which, if properly hit off, might fill half a page very prettily. For is not a