

tendance. In fact her ladyship was not in town. And that is why, no doubt, Barnes Newcome said nothing about her being there.

CHAPTER XIV.

FAMILY SECRETS.

The figure cowering over the furtive teapot glowered grimly at Barnes as he entered; and an old voice said, "Ho, it's you."

"I have brought you the notes, ma'am," says Barnes, taking a packet of those documents from his pocketbook. "I could not come sooner; I have been engaged upon bank business until now."

"I dare say! You smell of smoke like a courier."

"A foreign capitalist; he would smoke. They will, ma'am. I didn't smoke, upon my word."

"I don't see why you shouldn't, if you like it. You will never get anything out of me, whether you do or don't. How is Clara? Is she gone to the country with the children? Newcome is the best place for her."

"Dr Bambury thinks she can move in a fortnight. The boy has had a little——"

"A little fiddlestick! I tell you it is she who likes to stay, and makes that fool, Bambury, advise her not going away. I tell you to send her to Newcome; the air is good for her."

"By that confounded smoky town, my dear Lady Kew!"

"And invite your mother and little brothers and sisters to stay Christmas there. The way in which you neglect them is shameful, it is, Barnes."

"Upon my word, ma'am, I propose to manage my own affairs without your ladyship's assistance," cries Barnes, starting up; "and did not come at this time of night to hear this kind of——"

"Of good advice. I sent for you to give it you. When I wrote to you to bring me the money I wanted, it was but a pretext; Barkins might have fetched it from the City in the morning. I want you to send Clara and the children to Newcome. They ought to go, sir, that is why I sent for you; to tell you that. Have you been quarreling as much as usual?"

"Pretty much as usual," says Barnes, drumming on his hat.

"Don't beat that devil's tattoo; you *agacez* my poor old nerves. When Clara was given to you she was as well broke a girl as any in London."

Sir Barnes responded by a groan.

"She was as gentle and amenable to reason, as good-natured a girl as could be; a little vacant and silly, but you men like dolls for your wives; and now in three years you have utterly spoiled her. She is restive, she is artful, she flies into rages, she fights you and beats you. He! he! and that comes of your beating her!"

"I didn't come to hear this, ma'am," says Barnes, livid with rage.

"You struck her, you know you did, Sir Barnes Newcome. She rushed over to me last year on the night you did it, you know she did."

"Great God, ma'am! You know the provocation," screams Barnes.

"Provocation or not, I don't say. But from that moment she has beat you. You fool, to write her a letter and ask her pardon! If I had been a man, I would rather have strangled my wife than have humiliated myself so before her. She will never forgive that blow."

"I was mad when I did it; and she drove me mad," says Barnes. "She has the temper of a fiend and the ingenuity of the devil. In two years an entire change has come over her. If I had used a knife to her I should not have been surprised. But it is not with you to reproach me about Clara. Your ladyship found her for me."

"And you spoilt her after she was found, sir! She told me part of her story that night she came to me. I know it is true, Barnes. You have treated her dreadfully, sir."

"I know that she makes my life miserable, and there is no help for it," says Barnes, grinding a curse between his teeth. "Well, well, no more about this. How is Ethel? Gone to sleep after her journey? What do you think, ma'am, I have brought for her? A proposal?"

"Bon Dieu! You don't mean to say Charles Belsize was in earnest!" cries the dowager. "I always thought it was a——"

"It is not from Lord Highgate, ma'am," Sir Barnes said gloomily. "It is some time since I have known that he was not in earnest; and he knows that I am now."

"Gracious goodness! come to blows with him, too? You

have not? That would be the very thing to make the world talk," says the dowager, with some anxiety.

"No," answers Barnes. "He knows well enough that there can be no open rupture. We had some words the other day at a dinner he gave at his own house; Colonel Newcome, and that young beggar, Clive, and that fool, Mr. Hobson, were there. Lord Highgate was confoundedly insolent. He told me that I did not dare to quarrel with him because of the account he kept at our house. I should like to have massacred him! She has told him that I struck her—the insolent brute! He says he will tell it at my clubs, and threatens personal violence to me, there, if I do it again. Lady Kew, I'm not safe from that man and that woman," cries poor Barnes, in an agony of terror.

"Fighting is Jack Belsize's business, Barnes Newcome; banking is yours, luckily," said the Dowager. "As old Lord Highgate was to die, and his eldest son, too, it is a pity certainly they had not died a year or two earlier, and left poor Clara and Charles to come together. You should have married some woman in the serious way; my daughter Walham could have found you one. Frank, I am told, and his wife go on very sweetly together; her mother-in-law governs the whole family. They have turned the theater back into a chapel again; they have six little plowboys dressed in surplices to sing the service; and Frank and the Vicar of Kewbury play at cricket with them on holidays. Stay, why should not Clara go to Kewbury?"

"She and her sister have quarreled about this very affair with Lord Highgate. Some time ago it appears they had words about it, and when I told Kew that by-gones had best be by-gones, that Highgate was very sweet upon Ethel now, and that I did not choose to lose such a good account as his, Kew was very insolent to me. His conduct was blackguardly, ma'am, quite blackguardly, and you may be sure but for our relationship I would have called him to——"

Here the talk between Barnes and his ancestress was interrupted by the appearance of Miss Ethel Newcome, taper in hand, who descended from the upper regions enveloped in a shawl.

"How do you do, Barnes? How is Clara? I long to see my little nephew. Is he like his pretty papa?" cries the young lady, giving her fair cheek to her brother.

"Scotland has agreed with our Newcome rose," says Barnes

gallantly. "My dear Ethel, I never saw you in greater beauty."

"By the light of one bedroom candle! What should I be if the whole room were lighted? You would see my face then was covered all over with wrinkles, and quite pale and woe-begone, with the dreariness of the Scotch journey. Oh, what a time we have spent! haven't we, grandmamma? I never wish to go to a great castle again; above all, I never wish to go to a little shooting-box. Scotland may be very well for men; but for women—allow me to go to Paris when next there is talk of a Scotch expedition. I had rather be in a boarding school in the Champs Elysées than in the finest castle in the Highlands. If it had not been for a blessed quarrel with Fanny Follington, I think I should have died at Glen Short-horn. Have you seen my dear, dear uncle, the Colonel? When did he arrive?"

"Is he come? Why is he come?" asks Lady Kew.

"Is he come? Look here, grandmamma! Did you ever see such a darling shawl? I found it in a packet in my room."

"Well, it is beautiful," cries the Dowager, bending her ancient nose over the web. "Your Colonel is a *galant homme*, that must be said of him; and in this does not quite take after the rest of the family. Hum! hum! Is he going away again soon?"

"He has made a fortune, a very considerable fortune for a man in that rank in life," says Sir Barnes. "He cannot have less than sixty thousand pounds."

"Is that much?" asks Ethel.

"Not in England, at our rate of interest; but his money is in India, where he gets a great percentage. His income must be five or six thousand pounds, ma'am," says Barnes, turning to Lady Kew.

"A few of the Indians were in society in my time, my dear," says Lady Kew musingly. "My father has often talked to me about Barwell of Stanstead, and his house in St. James' Square, the man who ordered 'more curricles' when there were not carriages enough for his guests. I was taken to Mr. Hastings' trial. It was very stupid and long. The young man, the painter, I suppose will leave his paint pots now, and set up as a gentleman. I suppose they were very poor, or his father would not have put him to such a profession. Barnes,

why did you not make him a clerk in the bank, and save him from the humiliation?"

"Humiliation! why, he is proud of it. My uncle is as proud as a Plantagenet; though he is as humble as—as what? Give me a simile, Barnes. Do you know what my quarrel with Fanny Follington was about? She said we were not descended from the barber-surgeon, and laughed at the Battle of Bosworth. She says our great-grandfather was a weaver. Was he a weaver?"

"How should I know? and what on earth does it matter, my child? Except the Gaunts, the Howards, and the one or two more, there is scarcely any good blood in England. You are lucky in sharing some of mine. My poor Lord Kew's grandfather was an apothecary at Hampton Court, and founded the family by giving a dose of rhubarb to Queen Caroline. As a rule, nobody is of a good family. Didn't that young man, that son of the Colonel's, go about last year? How did he get in society? Where did we meet him? Oh! at Baden, yes; when Barnes was courting, and my grandson—yes, my grandson—acted so wickedly." Here she began to cough, and to tremble so that her old stick shook under her hand. "Ring the bell for Ross. Ross, I will go to bed. Go you too, Ethel. You have been traveling enough to-day."

"Her memory seems to fail her a little," Ethel whispered to her brother; "or she will only remember what she wishes. Don't you see that she has grown very much older?"

"I will be with her in the morning. I have business with her," said Barnes.

"Good-night. Give my love to Clara, and kiss the little ones for me. Have you done what you promised me, Barnes?"

"What?"

"To be—to be kind to Clara. Don't say cruel things to her. She has a high spirit, and she feels them, though she says nothing."

"Doesn't she?" said Barnes grimly.

"Ah, Barnes, be gentle with her. Seldom as I saw you together, when I lived with you in the spring, I could see that you were harsh, though she affected to laugh when she spoke of your conduct to her. Be kind. I am sure it is the best, Barnes; better than all the wit in the world. Look at grand-mamma, how witty she was and is; what a reputation she had, and how people were afraid of her; and see her now—quite alone."

"I'll see her in the morning quite alone, my dear," says Barnes, waving a little gloved hand. "By-by!" and his brougham drove away.

While Ethel Newcome had been under her brother's roof, where I and friend Clive, and scores of others had been smartly entertained, there had been quarrels and recriminations, misery and heart-burning, cruel words and shameful struggles, the wretched combatants in which appeared before the world with smiling faces, resuming their battle when the feast was concluded and the company gone.

On the next morning when Barnes came to visit his grandmother, Miss Newcome was gone away to see her sister-in-law, Lady Kew said, with whom she was going to pass the morning. So Barnes and Lady Kew had an uninterrupted tête-à-tête, in which the former acquainted the old lady with the proposal which Colonel Newcome had made to him on the previous night.

Lady Kew wondered what the impudence of the world would come to. An artist propose for Ethel! One of her footmen might propose next, and she supposed Barnes would bring the message. "The father came and proposed for this young painter, and you didn't order him out of the room!"

Barnes laughed. "The Colonel is one of my constituents. I can't afford to order one of the Bundelcund Banking Company out of its own room."

"You did not tell Ethel this pretty news, I suppose?"

"Of course I didn't tell Ethel. Nor did I tell the Colonel that Ethel was in London. He fancies her in Scotland with your ladyship at this moment."

"I wish the Colonel were at Calcutta, and his son with him. I wish he was in the Ganges; I wish he was under Juggernaut's car," cried the old lady. "How much money has the wretch really got? If he is of importance to the bank, of course you must keep well with him. Five thousand a year, and he says he will settle it all on his son? He must be crazy. There is nothing some of these people will not do, no sacrifice they will not make, to ally themselves with good families. Certainly you must remain on good terms with him and his bank. And we must say nothing of the business to Ethel, and trot out of town as quickly as we can. Let me see. We go to Drummington on Saturday. This is Tuesday. Barkins, you will keep the front drawing-room shutters shut, and

remember we are not in town, unless Lady Glenlivat or Lord Farintosh should call."

"Do you think Farintosh will—will call, ma'am?" asked Sir Barnes demurely.

"He will be going through to Newmarket. He has been where we have been at two or three places in Scotland," replies the lady, with equal gravity. "His poor mother wishes him to give up his bachelor's life—as well she may—for you young men are terribly dissipated. Rossmont is quite a regal place. His Norfolk house is not inferior. A young man of that station ought to marry, and live at his places, and be an example to his people, instead of frittering away his time at Paris and Vienna among the most odious company."

"Is he going to Drummington?" asks the grandson.

"I believe he has been invited. We shall go to Paris for November; he probably will be there," answered the Dowager casually; "and tired of the dissipated life he has been leading, let us hope he will mend his ways, and find a virtuous, well-bred young woman to keep him right."

With this her ladyship's apothecary is announced, and her banker and grandson takes his leave.

Sir Barnes walked into the city with his umbrella, read his letters, conferred with his partners and confidential clerks; was for a while not the exasperated husband, or the affectionate brother, or the amiable grandson, but the shrewd, brisk banker, engaged entirely with his business. Presently he had occasion to go on 'change, or elsewhere, to confer with brother capitalists, and in Cornhill behold he meets his uncle, Colonel Newcome, riding toward the India house, a groom behind him.

The Colonel springs off his horse, and Barnes greets him in the blandest manner. "Have you any news for me, Barnes?" cries the officer.

"The accounts from Calcutta are remarkably good. That cotton is of admirable quality really. Mr. Briggs of our house, who knows cotton as well as any man in England, says—"

"It's not the cotton, my dear Sir Barnes," cries the other.

"The bills are perfectly good; there is no sort of difficulty about them. Our house will take half a million of 'em, if—"

"You are talking of bills, and I am thinking of poor Clive," the Colonel interposes. "I wish you could give me good news for him, Barnes."

"I wish I could. I heartily trust that I may some day. My good wishes you know are enlisted in your son's behalf," cries Barnes gallantly. "Droll place to talk sentiment in—Cornhill, isn't it? But Ethel, as I told you, is in the hands of higher powers, and we must conciliate Lady Kew if we can. She has always spoken very highly of Clive; very."

"Had I not best go to her?" asks the Colonel.

"Into the North, my good sir? She is—ah—she is traveling about. I think you had best depend upon me. Good-morning. In the City we have no hearts, you know, Colonel. Be sure you shall hear from me as soon as Lady Kew and Ethel come to town."

And the banker hurried away, shaking his finger-tips to his uncle, and leaving the good Colonel utterly surprised at his statements. For the fact is, the Colonel knew that Lady Kew was in London, having been apprised of the circumstance in the simplest manner in the world, namely, by a note from Miss Ethel, which billet he had in his pocket, while he was talking with the head of the house of Hobson Brothers.

"My dear Uncle" (the note said): "How glad I shall be to see you! How shall I thank you for the beautiful shawl, and the kind, kind remembrance of me? I found your present yesterday evening on our arrival from the North. We are only here *en passant*, and see nobody in Queen Street but Barnes, who has just been about business, and he does not count, you know. I shall go and see Clara to-morrow, and make her take me to see your pretty friend, Mrs. Pendennis. How glad I should be if you happened to pay Mrs. P. a visit about two. Good-night. I thank you a thousand times, and am always your affectionate
E."

"Queen Street. Tuesday night. Twelve o'clock."

This note came to Colonel Newcome's breakfast-table, and he smothered the exclamation of wonder which was rising to his lips, not choosing to provoke the questions of Clive, who sat opposite to him. Clive's father was in a woeful perplexity all that forenoon. "Tuesday night, twelve o'clock," thought he. "Why, Barnes must have gone to his grandmother from my dinner table; and he told me she was out of town, and said so again just now when we met in the City." (The Colonel was riding toward Richmond at this time.) "What cause had the young man to tell me these lies? Lady Kew may not wish to be at home to me, but need Barnes Newcome say what is untrue to mislead me? The fellow actually went

away simpering, and kissing his hand to me, with a falsehood on his lips! What a pretty villain! A fellow would deserve, and has got, a horsewhipping for less. And to think of a Newcome doing this to his own flesh and blood; a young Judas!" Very sad and bewildered, the Colonel rode toward Richmond, where he was to happen to call on Mrs. Pendennis.

It was not much of a fib that Barnes had told. Lady Kew announcing that she was out of town, her grandson, no doubt, thought himself justified in saying so, as any other of her servants would have done. But if he had recollected how Ethel came down with the Colonel's shawl on her shoulders, how it was possible she might have written to thank her uncle, surely Barnes Newcome would not have pulled that unlucky long-bow. The banker had other things to think of than Ethel and her shawl.

When Thomas Newcome dismounted at the door of Honeymoon Cottage, Richmond, the temporary residence of A. Pendennis, Esq., one of the handsomest young women in England ran into the passage with outstretched arms, called him her dear old uncle, and gave him two kisses that I dare say brought blushes on his lean sunburnt cheeks. Ethel clung always to his affection. She wanted that man, rather than any other in the whole world, to think well of her. When she was with him, she was the amiable and simple, the loving, impetuous creature of old times. She chose to think of no other. Worldliness, heartlessness, eager scheming, cold flirtations, marquis hunting and the like disappeared for a while and were not, as she sat at that honest man's side. Oh me! that we should have to record such charges against Ethel Newcome!

He was come home for good now? He would never leave that boy he spoiled so, who was a good boy, too; she wished she could see him oftener. At Paris, at Mme. de Florac's—"I found out all about Mme. de Florac, sir," says Ethel, with a laugh, "we used often to meet there; and here, sometimes, in London. But in London it is different. You know what peculiar notions some people have; and as I live with grandmamma, who is most kind to me and my brothers, of course I must obey her, and see her friends rather than my own. She likes going out into the world, and I am bound in duty to go with her," etc., etc. Thus the young lady went on talking, defending herself whom nobody attacked, protesting her dislike to gayety and dissipation—you would have fancied her an artless young country lass, only longing to trip back to

her village, milk her cows at sunrise, and sit spinning of winter evenings by the fire.

"Why do you come and spoil my tête-à-tête with my uncle, Mr. Pendennis?" cries the young lady to the master of the house, who happens to enter. "Of all the men in the world the one I like best to talk to! Does he not look younger than when he went to India? When Clive marries that pretty little Miss Mackenzie, you will marry again, uncle, and I will be jealous of your wife."

"Did Barnes tell you that we had met last night, my dear?" asks the Colonel.

"Not one word. Your shawl and your dear kind note told me you were come. Why did not Barnes tell us? Why do you look so grave?"

"He has not told her that I was here, and would have me believe her absent," thought Newcome, as his countenance fell. "Shall I give her my own message, and plead my poor boy's cause with her?" I know not whether he was about to lay his suit before her; he said himself subsequently that his mind was not made up, but at this juncture a procession of nurses and babies made their appearance, followed by the two mothers, who had been comparing their mutual prodigies (each lady having her own private opinion)—Lady Clara and my wife—the latter for once gracious to Lady Clara Newcome, in consideration of the infantine company with which she came to visit Mrs. Pendennis.

Luncheon was served presently. The carriage of the Newcomes drove away, my wife smilingly pardoning Ethel for the assignation which the young person had made at our house. And when those ladies were gone our good Colonel held a council of war with us, his two friends, and told us what had happened between him and Barnes on that morning and the previous night. His offer to sacrifice every shilling of his fortune to young Clive seemed to him to be perfectly simple (though the recital of the circumstances brought tears into my wife's eyes)—he mentioned it by the way, and as a matter that was scarcely to call for comment, much less praise.

Barnes' extraordinary statements respecting Lady Kew's absence puzzled the elder Newcome; and he spoke of his nephew's conduct with much indignation. In vain I urged that her ladyship desiring to be considered absent from London, her grandson was bound to keep her secret. "Keep her secret, yes! Tell me lies, no!" cries out the Colonel. Sir

Barnes' conduct was in fact indefensible, though not altogether unusual—the worst deduction to be drawn from it, in my opinion, was that Clive's chance with the young lady was but a poor one and that Sir Barnes Newcome, inclined to keep his uncle in good humor, would therefore give him no disagreeable refusal.

Now this gentleman could no more pardon a lie than he could utter one. He would believe all and everything a man told him until deceived once, after which he never forgave. And wrath being once roused in his simple mind and distrust firmly fixed there, his anger and prejudices gathered daily. He could see no single good quality in his opponent; and hated him with a daily increasing bitterness.

As ill-luck would have it, that very same evening on his return to town Thomas Newcome entered Bay's club, of which, at our request, he had become a member during his last visit to England, and there was Sir Barnes, as usual, on his way homeward from the City. Barnes was writing at a table, and sealing and closing a letter, as he saw the Colonel enter; he thought he had been a little inattentive and curt with his uncle in the morning; had remarked, perhaps, the expression of disapproval on the Colonel's countenance. He simpered up to his uncle as the latter entered the club room, and apologized for his haste when they met in the City in the morning—all City men were so busy! "And I have been writing about this little affair, just as you came in," he said; "quite a moving letter to Lady Kew, I assure you, and I do hope and trust we shall have a favorable answer in a day or two."

"You said her ladyship was in the North, I think?" said the Colonel dryly.

"Oh, yes—in the North, at—at Lord Wallsend's—great coal proprietor, you know."

"And your sister is with her?"

"Ethel is always with her."

"I hope you will send her my very best remembrances," says the Colonel.

"I'll open the letter, and add 'em in a postscript," said Barnes.

"Confounded liar!" cried the Colonel, mentioning the circumstance to me afterward, "why does not somebody pitch him out of the bow window?"

If we were in the secret of Sir Barnes Newcome's corre-

spondence, and could but peep into that particular letter to his grandmother, I dare say we should read that he had seen the Colonel, who was very anxious about his darling youth's suit, but pursuant to Lady Kew's desire Barnes had stoutly maintained that her ladyship was still in the North, enjoying the genial hospitality of Lord Wallsend; that of course he should say nothing to Ethel, except with Lady Kew's full permission; that he wished her a pleasant trip to—, and was, etc., etc.

Then if we could follow him, we might see him reach his Belgravian mansion and fling an angry word to his wife as she sits alone in the darkling drawing room, poring over the embers. He will ask her, probably with an oath, why the— she is not dressed; and if she always intends to keep her company waiting? An hour hence, each with a smirk, and the lady in smart raiment with flowers in her hair, will be greeting their guests as they arrive. Then will come dinner and such conversation as it brings. Then at night Sir Barnes will issue forth, cigar in mouth, to return to his own chamber at his own hour; to breakfast by himself; to go cityward, money-getting. He will see his children once a fortnight, and exchange a dozen sharp words with his wife twice in that time.

More and more sad does the Lady Clara become from day to day; liking more to sit lonely over the fire; careless about the sarcasms of her husband, the prattle of her children. She cries sometimes over the cradle of the young heir. She is weary, weary. You understand the man to whom her parents sold her does not make her happy, though she has been bought with diamonds, two carriages, several large footmen, a fine country house with delightful gardens and conservatories, and with all this she is miserable—is it possible?

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH KINSMEN FALL OUT.

Not the least difficult part of Thomas Newcome's present business was to keep from his son all knowledge of the negotiation in which he was engaged on Clive's behalf. If my gentle reader has had sentimental disappointments, he or she