

painted her portrait as a souvenir for mamma when Miss Newcome should be Miss Newcome no more; and Lady Kew made a will, leaving all she could leave to her beloved granddaughter Ethel, daughter of the late Sir Brian Newcome, Baronet; and Lord Kew wrote an affectionate letter to his cousin, congratulating her and wishing her happiness with all his heart; and I was glancing over *The Times* newspaper at breakfast one morning, when I laid it down with an exclamation which caused my wife to start with surprise.

"What is it?" cries Laura, and I read as follows:

"Death of the Countess Dowager of Kew.—We regret to have to announce the awfully sudden death of this venerable lady. Her ladyship, who had been at several parties of the nobility the night before last, seemingly in perfect health, was seized with a fit, as she was waiting for her carriage and about to quit Lady Pallgrave's assembly. Immediate medical assistance was procured, and her ladyship was carried to her own house, in Queen Street, May Fair. But she never rallied, or, we believe, spoke, after the first fatal seizure, and sank at eleven o'clock last evening. The deceased, Louisa Joanna Gaunt, widow of Frederick, first Earl of Kew, was daughter of Charles, Earl of Gaunt, and sister of the late and aunt of the present Marquis of Steyne. The present Earl of Kew is her ladyship's grandson, his lordship's father, Lord Walham, having died before his own father, the first earl. Many noble families are placed in mourning by this sad event. Society has to deplore the death of a lady who has been its ornament for more than half a century, and who was known, we may say, throughout Europe for her remarkable sense, extraordinary memory, and brilliant wit."

CHAPTER XVII.

BARNES' SKELETON CLOSET.

The demise of Lady Kew of course put a stop for a while to the matrimonial projects so interesting to the house of Newcome. Hymen blew his torch out, put it into the cupboard for use on a future day, and exchanged his garish saffron-colored robe for decent temporary mourning. Charles Honeyman improved the occasion at Lady Whittlesea's chapel hard by; and "Death at the Festival" was one of his most thrilling sermons, reprinted at the request of some of the congregation. There were those of his flock, especially a pair whose quarter of the

fold was the organ loft, who were always charmed with the piping of that melodious pastor.

Shall we, too, while the coffin yet rests on the outer earth's surface, enter the chapel whither these void remains of our dear sister departed are borne by the smug undertaker's gentlemen, and pronounce an elegy over that bedizened box of corruption? When the young are stricken down and their roses nipped in an hour by the destroying blight, even the stranger can sympathize, who counts the scant years on the gravestone or reads the notice in the newspaper corner. The contrast forces itself on you. A fair young creature, bright and blooming yesterday, distributing smiles, levying homage, inspiring desire, conscious of her power to charm and gay with the natural enjoyment of her conquests—who, in his walk through the world, has not looked on many such a one; and, at the notion of her sudden call away from beauty, triumph, pleasure; her helpless outcries during her short pain; her vain pleas for a little respite; her sentence and its execution—has not felt a shock of pity? When the days of a long life come to its close, and a white head sinks to rise no more, we bow our own with respect as the mourning train passes, and salute the heraldry and devices of yonder pomp as symbols of age, wisdom, deserved respect, and merited honor; long experience of suffering and action. The wealth he may have achieved is the harvest which he sowed; the titles on his hearse, fruits of the field he bravely and laboriously wrought in. But to live to four-score years, and be found dancing among the idle virgins! To have had near a century of allotted time, and then be called away from the giddy notes of a May Fair fiddle! To have to yield your roses, too, and then drop out of the bony clutch of your old fingers a wreath that came from a Parisian band-box! One fancies around some graves unseen troops of mourners waiting; many and many a poor pensioner trooping to the place; many weeping charities; many kind actions; many dear friends, beloved and deplored, rising up at the toll of that bell, to follow the honored hearse; dead parents waiting above, and calling, "Come, daughter;" lost children, heaven's foundlings, hovering round like cherubim, and whispering, "Welcome, mother." Here is one who reposes after a long feast, where no love has been; after girlhood, without kindly maternal nurture; marriage, without affection; matronhood, without its precious griefs and joys; after four-score years of lonely vanity. Let us take off our hats to that

procession, too, as it passes, admiring the different lots awarded to the children of men and the various usages to which Heaven puts its creatures.

Leave we yonder velvet palled box, spangled with fantastic heraldry, and containing within the aged slough and envelope of a soul gone to render its account. Look rather at the living audience standing round the shell—the deep grief on Barnes Newcome's fine countenance; the sadness depicted in the face of the Most Noble the Marquis of Farintosh; the sympathy of her ladyship's medical man (who came in the third mourning carriage); better than these, the awe, and reverence, and emotion exhibited in the kind face of one of the witnesses of this scene, as he listens to those words which the priest rehearses over our dead. What magnificent words; what a burning faith; what a glorious triumph; what a heroic life, death, hope, they record! They are read over all of us alike; as the sun shines on just and unjust. We have all of us heard them; and I have fancied, for my part, that they fell and smote like the sods on the coffin.

The ceremony over, the undertaker's gentlemen clamber on the roof of the vacant hearse, into which palls, trestles, and trays of feathers are inserted, and the horses break out into a trot, and the empty carriages, expressing the deep grief of the deceased lady's friends, depart homeward. It is remarked that Lord Kew hardly has any communication with his cousin, Sir Barnes Newcome. His lordship jumps into a cab, and goes to the railroad. Issuing from the cemetery, the Marquis of Farintosh hastily orders that thing to be taken off his hat and returns to town in his brougham, smoking a cigar. Sir Barnes Newcome rides in the brougham beside Lord Farintosh as far as Oxford Street, where he gets a cab and goes to the City. For business is business, and must be attended to, though grief be ever so severe.

A very short time previous to her demise, Mr. Rood (that was Mr. Rood—that other little gentleman in black, who shared the third mourning coach along with her ladyship's medical man) had executed a will by which almost all the Countess' property was devised to her granddaughter Ethel Newcome. Lady Kew's decease, of course, delayed the marriage projects for a while. The young heiress returned to her mother's house in Park Lane. I dare say the deep mourning habiliments in which the domestics of that establishment

appeared were purchased out of the funds left in his hands, which Ethel's banker and brother had at her disposal.

Sir Barnes Newcome, who was one of the trustees of his sister's property, grumbled, no doubt, because his grandmother had bequeathed to him but a paltry recompense of five hundred pounds for his pains and trouble of trusteeship; but his manner to Ethel was extremely bland and respectful; an heiress now, and to be marchioness in a few months, Sir Barnes treated her with a very different regard to that which he was accustomed to show to other members of his family. For while this worthy baronet would contradict his mother at every word she uttered, and take no pains to disguise his opinion that Lady Ann's intellect was of the very poorest order, he would listen deferentially to Ethel's smallest observations, exert himself to amuse her under her grief, which he chose to take for granted was very severe, visit her constantly, and show the most charming solicitude for her general comfort and welfare.

During this time my wife received frequent notes from Ethel Newcome, and the intimacy between the two ladies much increased. Laura was so unlike the women of Ethel's circle, the young lady was pleased to say, that to be with her was Ethel's greatest comfort. Miss Newcome was now her own mistress, had her carriage, and would drive day after day to our cottage at Richmond. The frigid society of Lord Farintosh's sisters, the conversation of his mother, did not amuse Ethel, and she escaped from both with her usual impatience of control. She was at home every day dutifully to receive my lord's visits, but though she did not open her mind to Laura as freely regarding the young gentleman as she did when the character and disposition of her future mother and sisters-in-law was the subject of their talk, I could see, from the grave look of commiseration which my wife's face bore after her young friend's visits, that Mrs. Pendennis augured rather ill of the future happiness of this betrothed pair. Once, at Miss Newcome's special request, I took my wife to see her in Park Lane, where the Marquis of Farintosh found us. His lordship and I had already a half acquaintance, which was not, however, improved after my regular presentation to him by Miss Newcome. He scowled at me with a countenance indicative of anything but welcome, and did not seem in the least more pleased when Ethel entreated her friend Laura not to take her bonnet—not to think of going away so soon. She

came to see us the very next day, stayed much longer with us than usual, and returned to town quite late in the evening, in spite of the entreaties of the inhospitable Laura, who would have had her leave us long before. "I am sure," says clear-sighted Mrs. Laura, "she is come out as bravado, and after we went away yesterday that there were words between her and Lord Farintosh on our account."

"Confound the young man," breaks out Mr. Pendennis in a fume; "what does he mean by his insolent airs?"

"He may think we are partisans de l'autre," says Mrs. Pendennis, with a smile first and a sigh afterward, as she said, "Poor Clive!"

"Do you ever talk about Clive?" asks the husband.

"Never. Once, twice, perhaps, in the most natural manner in the world we mentioned where he is; but nothing further passes. The subject is a sealed one between us. She often looks at his drawings in my album (Clive had drawn our baby there, and its mother, in a great variety of attitudes), and gazes at his sketch of his dear old father; but of him she never says a word."

"So it is best," says Mr. Pendennis.

"Yes—best," echoes Laura, with a sigh.

"You think, Laura," continues the husband, "you think she——"

"She what?" What did Mr. Pendennis mean? Laura, his wife, certainly understood him, though, upon my conscience, the sentence went no further—for she answered at once:

"Yes—I think she certainly did, poor boy. But that, of course, is over now; and Ethel, though she cannot help being a worldly woman, has such firmness and resolution of character that, if she had once determined to conquer any inclination of that sort, I am sure she will master it and make Lord Farintosh a very good wife."

"Since the Colonel's quarrel with Sir Barnes," cries Mr. Pendennis, adverting by a natural transition from Ethel to her amiable brother, "our banking friend does not invite us any more; Lady Clara sends you no cards. I have a great mind to withdraw my account."

Laura, who understands nothing about accounts, did not perceive the fine irony of this remark; but her face straightway put on the severe expression which it chose to assume whenever Sir Barnes' family was mentioned, and she said: "My dear Arthur, I am very glad indeed that Lady Clara sends us

no more of her invitations. You know very well why I disliked them."

"Why?"

"I hear baby crying," says Laura—O Laura, Laura! how could you tell your husband such a fib?—and she quits the room without deigning to give any answer to that "Why?"

Let us pay a brief visit to Newcome in the North of England, and there we may get some answer to the question to which Mr. Pendennis had just in vain asked a reply from his wife. My design does not include a description of that great and flourishing town of Newcome, and of the manufactures which caused its prosperity; but only admits of the introduction of those Newcomites who are concerned in the affairs of the family which has given its respectable name to these volumes.

Thus, in previous pages we have said nothing about the Mayor and Corporation of Newcome, the magnificent bankers and manufacturers who had their places of business in the town and their splendid villas outside its smoky precincts; people who would give their thousand guineas for a picture or a statue, and write you off a check for ten times the amount any day; people who, if there was talk of a statue to the Queen or the Duke, would come down to the Town 'All and subscribe their one, two, three 'undred apiece (especially if in the neighboring city of Slowcome they were putting up a statue to the Duke or the Queen)—not of such men I have spoken, the magnates of the place; but of the humble Sarah Mason in Jubilee Row; of the Rev. Dr. Bulders, the vicar, Mr. Vidler, the apothecary, Mr. Duff, the baker; of Tom Potts, the jolly reporter of the Newcome Independent, and — Batters, Esq., the proprietor of that journal—persons with whom our friends have had already, or will be found presently to have, some connection. And it is from these that we shall arrive at some particulars regarding the Newcome family which will show us that they have a skeleton or two in their closets, as well as their neighbors.

Now, how will you have the story? Worthy mammas of families—if you do not like to have your daughters told that bad husbands will make bad wives; that marriages begun in indifference make homes unhappy; that men whom girls are brought to swear to love and honor are sometimes false, selfish, and cruel; and that women forget the oaths which they have been made to swear—if you will not hear of this, ladies, close

the book and send for some other. Banish the newspaper out of your houses, and shut your eyes to the truth, the awful truth, of life and sin. Is the world made of Jennies and Jessamies, and passion the play of schoolboys and schoolgirls, scribbling valentines and interchanging lollipops? Is life all over when Jenny and Jessamy are married; and are there no subsequent trials, griefs, wars, bitter heart-pangs, dreadful temptations, defeats, remorse, sufferings to bear, and dangers to overcome? As you and I, friend, kneel with our children round about us, prostrate before the Father of us all, and asking mercy for miserable sinners, are the young ones to suppose the words are mere form, and don't apply to us?—to some outcast in the free seats probably, or those naughty boys playing in the churchyard? Are they not to know that we err too, and pray with all our hearts to be rescued from temptation? If such a knowledge is wrong for them, send them to church apart. Go you and worship in private; or, if not too proud, kneel humbly in the midst of them, owning your wrong, and praying Heaven to be merciful to you a sinner.

When Barnes Newcome became the reigning prince of the Newcome family, and after the first agonies of grief for his father's death had subsided, he made strong attempts to conciliate the principal persons in the neighborhood, and to render himself popular in the borough. He gave handsome entertainments to the townsfolk and to the county gentry; he tried even to bring those two warring classes together. He endeavored to be civil to the Newcome Independent, the opposition paper, as well as the Newcome Sentinel, that true old uncompromising blue. He asked the dissenting clergymen to dinner, and the low church clergymen, as well as the orthodox Dr. Bulders and his curates. He gave a lecture at the Newcome Athenaeum, which everybody said was very amusing, and which Sentinel and Independent both agreed in praising. Of course he subscribed to that statue which the Newcomites were raising; to the philanthropic missions which the reverend low church gentlemen were engaged in; to the races (for the young Newcomite manufacturers are as sporting gents as any in the North), to the hospital, the People's Library, the restoration of the rood screen, and the great painted window in Newcome Old Church (Rev. J. Bulders), and he had to pay, in fine, a most awful price for his privilege of sitting in Parliament as representative of his native place—as he called it in his speeches, "the cradle of his forefathers, the

home of his race," etc., though Barnes was in fact born at Clapham.

Lady Clara could not in the least help this young statesman in his designs upon Newcome and the Newcomites. After she came into Barnes' hands, a dreadful weight fell upon her. She would smile and simper, and talk kindly and gayly enough at first, during Sir Brian's life; and among women, when Barnes was not present. But as soon as he joined the company, it was remarked that his wife became silent, and looked eagerly toward him whenever she ventured to speak. She blundered; her eyes filled with tears; the little wit she had left her in her husband's presence; he grew angry, and tried to hide his anger with a sneer, or broke out with a gibe and an oath, when he lost patience, and Clara, whimpering, would leave the room. Everybody at Newcome knew that Barnes bullied his wife.

People had worse charges against Barnes than wife bullying. Do you suppose that little interruption which occurred at Barnes' marriage was not known in Newcome? His victim had been a Newcome girl—the man to whom she was betrothed was in a Newcome factory. When Barnes was a young man, and in his occasional visits to Newcome lived along with those dashing young blades Sam Jollyman (Jollyman Brothers & Bowcher), Bob Homer, Cross County Bill, Al. Rucker (for whom his father had to pay eighteen thousand pounds after the Leger the year Toggery won it), and that wild lot, all sorts of stories were told of them, and of Barnes especially. Most of them were settled and sturdy business men by this time. Al., it was known, had become very serious, besides making his fortune in cotton. Bob Homer managed the bank; and as for S. Jollyman, Mrs. S. J. took uncommon good care that he didn't break out of bounds any more; why, he was not even allowed to play a game at billiards, or to dine out without her. . . . I could go on giving you interesting particulars of a hundred members of the Newcome aristocracy, were not our attention especially directed to one respectable family.

All Barnes' endeavors at popularity were vain, partly from his own fault, and partly from the nature of mankind, and of the Newcome folks especially, whom no single person could possibly conciliate. Thus, suppose he gave the advertisements to the Independent, the old blue paper the Sentinel was very angry. Suppose he asked Mr. Hunch, the dissenting

minister, to bless the tablecloth after dinner, as he had begged Dr. Bulders to utter a benediction on the first course, Hunch and Bulders were both angry. He subscribed to the races—wheat heathenism! to the missionaries—what sanctimonious humbug! And the worst was that Barnes, being young at that time and not able to keep his tongue in order, could not help saying, not to, but of such and such a man, that “he was an infernal ass, or a confounded old idiot,” and so forth—peevish phrases which undid in a moment the work of a dozen dinners, countless compliments, and months of grinning good-humor.

Now he is wiser. He is very proud of being Newcome of Newcome, and quite believes that the place is his hereditary principality. But still, he says, his father was a fool for ever representing the borough. “Dammy, sir,” cries Sir Barnes, “never sit for a place that lies at your park gates, and above all, never try to conciliate ’em. Curse ’em! Hate ’em well, sir. Take a line, and flog the fellows on the other side. Since I have sat in Parliament for another place, I have saved myself I don’t know how much a year. I never go to high church or low; don’t give a shillin’ to the confounded races, or the infernal soup tickets, or to the miserable missionaries; and at last live in quiet.”

So in spite of all his subscriptions, and his coaxing of the various orders of Newcomites, Sir Barnes Newcome was not popular among them; and while he had enemies on all sides, had sturdy friends not even on his own. Scarce a man but felt Barnes was laughing at him. Bulders, in his pulpit; Holder, who seconded him in his election; the Newcome society, and the ladies even more than the men, were uneasy under his ominous familiarity, and recovered their good-humor when he left them. People felt as if it was a truce only, and not an alliance with him, and always speculated on the possibility of war. When he turned his back on them in the market, men felt relieved, and as they passed his gate looked with no friendly glances over his park wall.

What happened within was perfectly familiar to many persons. Our friend was insolent to all his servants; and of course very well served, but very much disliked in consequence. The butler was familiar with Taplow—the housekeeper had a friend at Newcome; Mrs. Taplow, in fact, of the King’s Arms—one of the grooms at Newcome Park kept company with Mrs. Bulders’ maid; the incomings and outgoings, the

quarrels and tears, the company from London, and all the doings of the folks at Newcome Park were thus known to the neighborhood round about. The apothecary brought an awful story back from Newcome. He had been called to Lady Clara in strong hysterical fits. He found her ladyship with a bruise on her face. When Sir Barnes approached her (he would not allow the medical man to see her except in his presence) she screamed, and bade him not come near her. These things did Mr. Vidler weakly impart to Mrs. Vidler; these, under solemn vows of secrecy, Mrs. Vidler told to one or two friends. Sir Barnes and Lady Clara were seen shopping together very graciously in Newcome a short time afterward; persons who dined at the Park said the Baronet and his wife seemed on very good terms; but—but that story of the bruised cheek remained in the minds of certain people, and lay by at compound interest as such stories will.

Now, say people quarrel and make it up; or don’t make it up, but wear a smirking face to society, and call each other “my dear” and “my love,” and smooth over their countenances before John, who enters with the coals as they are barking and biting, or who announces the dinner as they are tearing each other’s eyes out? Suppose a woman is ever so miserable, and yet smiles, and doesn’t show her grief? “Quite right,” say her prudent friends, and her husband’s relations above all. “My dear, you have too much propriety to exhibit your grief before the world, or above all, before the darling children.” So to lie is your duty; to lie to your friends, to yourself if you can, to your children.

Does this discipline of hypocrisy improve any mortal woman? Say she learns to smile after a blow, do you suppose in this matter alone she will be a hypocrite? Poor Lady Clara! I fancy a better lot for you than that to which fate handed you over. I fancy there need have been no deceit in your fond simple little heart could it but have been given into other keeping. But you were consigned to a master whose scorn and cruelty terrified you; under whose sardonic glances your scared eyes were afraid to look up, and before whose gloomy coldness you dared not be happy. Suppose a little plant, very frail and delicate from the first, but that might have bloomed sweetly and borne fair flowers, had it received warm shelter and kindly nurture; suppose a young creature taken out of her home, and given over to a hard master whose caresses are as insulting as his neglect; consigned to cruel

usage; to weary loneliness; to bitter, bitter recollections of the past; suppose her schooled into hypocrisy by tyranny—and then, quick, let us hire an advocate to roar out to a British jury the wrongs of her injured husband, to paint the agonies of his bleeding heart (if Mr. Advocate gets plaintiff's brief in time, and before defendant's attorney has retained him), and to show society injured through him. Let us console that martyr, I say, with thumping damages; and as for the woman—the guilty wretch! let us lead her out and stone her.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ROSA QUO LOCORUM SERA MORATUR.

Clive Newcome bore his defeat with such a courage and resolution as those who knew the young fellow's character were sure he would display. It was while he had a little lingering hope still that the poor lad was in the worst condition; as a gambler is restless and unhappy while his last few guineas remain with him, and he is venturing them against the overpowering chances of the bank. His last piece, however, gone, our friend rises up from that unlucky table—beaten at the contest, but not broken in spirit. He goes back into the world again, and withdraws from that dangerous excitement; sometimes when he is alone or wakeful, tossing in his bed at nights, he may recall the fatal game, and think how he might have won it—think what a fool he was ever to have played it at all—but these cogitations Clive kept for himself. He was magnanimous enough not even to blame Ethel much, and to take her side against his father, who, it must be confessed, now exhibited a violent hostility against that young lady and her belongings. Slow to anger and utterly beyond deceit himself, when Thomas Newcome was once roused, or at length believed that he was cheated, woe to the offender! From that day forth, Thomas believed no good of him. Every thought or action of his enemy's life seemed treason to the worthy Colonel. If Barnes gave a dinner party, his uncle was ready to fancy that the banker wanted to poison somebody; if he made a little speech in the House of Commons (Barnes did make little speeches in the House of Commons), the Colonel was sure some infernal conspiracy lay under the

villain's words. The whole of that branch of the Newcomes fared little better at their kinsman's hands—they were all deceitful, sordid, heartless, worldly—Ethel herself no better now than the people who had bred her up. People hate, as they love, unreasonably. Whether is it the more mortifying to us, to feel that we are disliked or liked undeservedly?

Clive was not easy until he had the sea between him and his misfortune; and now Thomas Newcome had the chance of making that tour with his son which in early days had been such a favorite project with the good man. They traveled Rhineland and Switzerland together—they crossed into Italy—went from Milan to Venice (where Clive saluted the greatest painting in the world—the glorious "Assumption" of Titian—they went to Trieste, and over the beautiful Styrian Alps to Vienna—they beheld the Danube, and the plain where the Turk and Sobieski fought. They traveled at a prodigious fast pace. They did not speak much to one another. They were a pattern pair of English travelers. I dare say many persons whom they met smiled to observe them, and shrugged their shoulders at the aspect of *ces Anglais*. They did not know the care in the young traveler's mind; and the deep tenderness and solicitude of the elder. Clive wrote to say it was a very pleasant tour, but I think I should not have liked to join it. Let us dismiss it in this single sentence. Other gentlemen have taken the same journey, and with sorrow, perhaps, as their silent fellow traveler. How you remember the places afterward, and the thoughts which pursued you! If in after days, when your grief is dead and buried, you revisit the scenes in which it was your companion, how its ghost rises and shows itself again! Suppose this part of Mr. Clive's life were to be described at length in several chapters, and not in a single brief sentence, what dreary pages they would be! In two or three months our friends saw a number of men, cities, mountains, rivers, and what not. It was yet early autumn when they were back in France again, and September found them at Brussels, where James Binnie, Esq., and his family were established in comfortable quarters, and where we may be sure Clive and his father were very welcome.

Dragged abroad at first sorely against his will, James Binnie had found the continental life pretty much to his liking. He had passed a winter at Pau, a summer at Vichy, where the waters had done him good. His ladies had made several