

waiting for the arrival of the Canada at Liverpool from America, and very uneasy about my brother who is on board."

"What does he recount to us there? Keep these stories for the landlord, Jack; to us 'tis not the pain to lie. My good Mr. Harris, why have we not seen you at Rosebury? The Princess will scold me if you do not come; and you must bring your dear brother when he comes too. Do you hear?" The last part of this sentence was uttered for Mr. Taplow's benefit, who had re-entered the George, bearing a tray of wine and biscuit.

The master of Rosebury and Mr. Harris went out presently to look at a horse which was waiting the former's inspection in the stable yard of the hotel. The landlord took advantage of his business to hear a bell which never was rung, and to ask me questions about the guest who had been staying at his house for a week past. Did I know that party? Mr. Pendennis said, "yes, he knew that party."

"Most respectable party, I have no doubt," continues Boniface.

"Do you suppose the Prince of Montcontour knows any but respectable parties?" asked Mr. Pendennis—a query of which the force was so great as to discomfit and silence our landlord, who retreated to ask questions concerning Mr. Harris of Florac's grooms.

What was Highgate's business here? Was it mine to know? I might have suspicions, but should I entertain them, or communicate them, and had I not best keep them to myself? I exchanged not a word on the subject of Highgate with Florac, as we drove home; though from the way in which we looked at one another, each saw that the other was acquainted with that unhappy gentleman's secret. We fell to talking about Mme. la Duchesse d'Ivry as we trotted on; and then of English manners by way of contrast, of intrigues, elopements, Gretna Green, etc., etc. "You are a droll nation!" says Florac. "To make love well, you must absolutely have a chaise-de-poste, and a scandal afterward. If our affairs of this kind made themselves on the grand route, what armies of postillions we should need!"

I held my peace. In that vision of Jack Belsize I saw misery, guilt, children dishonored, homes deserted—ruin for all the actors and victims of the wretched conspiracy. Laura marked my disturbance when we reached home. She even divined the cause of it, and charged me with it at night, when

we sat alone by our dressing room fire, and had taken leave of our kind entertainers. Then, under her cross-examination, I own that I told what I had seen—Lord Highgate, under a feigned name, staying at Newcome. It might be nothing. "Nothing? Gracious heavens! Could not this crime and misery be stopped?" "It might be too late," Laura's husband said sadly, bending down his head to the fire.

She was silent too for a while. I could see she was engaged where pious women ever will betake themselves in moments of doubt, of grief, of pain, of separation, of joy even, or whatsoever other trial. They have but to will, and as it were an invisible temple rises round them; their hearts can kneel down there; and they have an audience of the great, the merciful, untiring Counselor and Consoler. She would not have been frightened at death near at hand. I have known her to tend the poor round about us, or to bear pain—not her own merely, but even her children's and mine, with a surprising outward constancy and calm. But the idea of this crime being enacted close at hand, and no help for it—quite overcame her. I believe she lay awake all that night, and rose quite haggard and pale after the bitter thoughts which had deprived her of rest.

She embraced her own child with extraordinary tenderness that morning, and even wept over it, calling it by a thousand fond names of maternal endearment. "Would I leave you, my darling—could I ever, ever, ever quit you, my blessing and treasure!" The unconscious little thing, hugged to his mother's bosom, and scared at her tones and tragic face, clung frightened and weeping round Laura's neck. Would you ask what the husband's feelings were as he looked at that sweet love, that sublime tenderness, that pure saint blessing his life? Of all the gifts of Heaven to us below, that felicity is the sum and the chief. I tremble as I hold it, lest I should lose it, and be left alone in the blank world without it.

Breakfast was scarcely over when Laura asked for a pony carriage, and said she was bent on a private visit. She took her baby and nurse with her. She refused our company, and would not even say whither she was bound until she had passed the lodge gate. I may have suspected what the object was of her journey. Florac and I did not talk of it. We rode out to meet the hounds of a cheery winter morning. On another day I might have been amused with my host—the splendor of his raiment, the neatness of his velvet cap, the

gloss of his hunting boots; the cheers, shouts, salutations to dog and man; and oaths and outcries of this Nimrod, who shouted louder than the whole field and the whole pack too—but on this morning I was thinking of the tragedy yonder enacting, and came away early from the hunting field, and found my wife already returned to Rosebury.

Laura had been, as I suspected, to Lady Clara. She did not know why, indeed. She scarcely knew what she should say when she arrived—how she could say what she had in her mind. “I hoped, Arthur, that I should have something—something told me to say,” whispered Laura, with her head on my shoulder; “and as I lay awake last night thinking of her, prayed—that is, hoped, I might find a word of consolation for that poor lady. Do you know I think she has hardly ever heard a kind word? She said so; she was very much affected after we had talked together a little.

“At first she was very indifferent; cold and haughty in her manner; asked what had caused the pleasure of this visit, for I would go in, though at the lodge they told me her ladyship was unwell and they thought received no company. I said I wanted to show our boy to her—that the children ought to be acquainted—I don’t know what I said. She seemed more and more surprised—then all of a sudden—I don’t know how—I said, ‘Lady Clara, I have had a dream about you and your children, and I was so frightened that I came over to you to speak about it.’ And I had the dream, Pen; it came to me absolutely as I was speaking to her.

“She looked a little scared, and I went on telling her the dream. ‘My dear,’ I said, ‘I dreamed that I saw you happy with those children.’

“‘Happy!’ says she—the three were playing in the conservatory, into which her sitting room opens.

“‘And that a bad spirit came and tore them from you, and drove you out into the darkness; and I saw you wandering about quite lonely and wretched, and looking back into the garden where the children were playing. And you asked and implored to see them; and the keeper at the gate said, ‘No, never!’ And then—then I thought they passed by you, and they did not know you.’

“‘Ah!’ said Lady Clara.

“‘And then I thought, as we do in dreams, you know, that it was my child who was separated from me, and who would not know me; and oh, what a pang that was! Fancy that.

Let us pray God it was only a dream. And worse than that, when you, when I implored to come to the child, and the man said, ‘No, never,’ I thought there came a spirit—an angel that fetched the child to heaven, and you said, ‘Let me come too; oh, let me come too, I am so miserable.’ And the angel said, ‘No, never, never!’

“By this time Lady Clara was looking very pale. ‘What do you mean?’ she asked of me,” Laura continued.

“‘Oh, dear lady, for the sake of the little ones, and Him who calls them to Him, go you with them. Never, never part from them! Cling to His knees and take shelter there.’ I took her hands, and I said more to her in this way, Arthur, that I need not, that I ought not to speak again. But she was touched at length when I kissed her; and she said I was very kind to her, and no one had ever been so, and that she was quite alone in the world, and had no friend to fly to; and would I go and stay with her? and I said, ‘Yes;’ and we must go, my dear. And I think you should see that person at Newcome—see him, and warn him,” cried Laura, warming as she spoke, “and pray God to enlighten and strengthen him, and to keep him from this temptation, and implore him to leave this poor, weak, frightened, trembling creature; if he has the heart of a gentleman and the courage of a man, he will.”

“I think he would, my dearest,” I said, “if he but heard the petitioner.” Laura’s cheeks were blushing, her eyes brightened, her voice rang with a sweet pathos of love that vibrates through my whole being sometimes. It seems to me as if evil must give way, and bad thoughts retire before that purest creature.

“Why has she not some of her family with her, poor thing?” my wife continued. “She perishes in that solitude. Her husband prevents her, I think—and—oh—I know enough of him to know what his life is. I shudder, Arthur, to see you take the hand of that wicked, selfish man. You must break with him, do you hear, sir?”

“Before or after going to stay at his house, my love?” asked Mr. Pendennis.

“Poor thing! she lighted up at the idea of anyone coming. She ran and showed me the rooms we were to have. It will be very stupid; and you don’t like that. But you can write your book, and still hunt and shoot with our friends here. And Lady Ann Newcome must be made to come back again.

Sir Barnes quarreled with his mother and drove her out of the house on her last visit—think of that! The servants here know it. Martha brought me the whole story from the house-keeper's room. This Sir Barnes Newcome is a dreadful creature, Arthur. I am so glad I loathed him from the very first moment I saw him."

"And into this ogre's den you propose to put me and my family, madam!" says the husband. "Indeed, where won't I go if you order me? Oh, who will pack my portmanteau?"

Florac and the Princess were both in desolation when, at dinner, we announced our resolution to go away—and to our neighbors at Newcome? that was most extraordinary. "Que diable goest thou to do in this galley?" asks our host as we sat alone over our wine.

But Laura's intended visit to Lady Clara was never to have a fulfillment, for on this same evening, as we sat at our dessert, comes a messenger from Newcome with a note for my wife from the lady there.

Dearest, kindest Mrs. Pendennis (Lady Clara wrote, with many italics, and evidently in much distress of mind): Your visit is not to be. I spoke about it to Sir B., who arrived this afternoon, and who has already begun to treat me in his usual way. Oh, I am so unhappy! Pray, pray, do not be angry at this rudeness—though indeed it is only a kindness to keep you from this wretched place! I feel as if I cannot bear this much longer. But, whatever happens, I shall always remember your goodness, your beautiful goodness and kindness; and shall worship you as an angel deserves to be worshiped. Oh, why had I not such a friend earlier! But alas! I have none—only his odious family thrust upon me for companions to the wretched, lonely

C. N.

P. S. He does not know of my writing. Do not be surprised if you get another note from me in the morning, written in a ceremonious style, and regretting that we cannot have the pleasure of receiving Mr. and Mrs. Pendennis for the present at Newcome.

P. S. The hypocrite!

This letter was handed to my wife at dinner-time, and she gave it to me as she passed out of the room with the other ladies.

I told Florac that the Newcomes would not receive us, and that we would remain, if he willed it, his guests for a little longer. The kind fellow was only too glad to keep us. "My wife would die without Bébi," he said. "She becomes quite dangerous about Bébi." It was gratifying that the good old lady was not to be parted as yet from the innocent object of her love.

My host knew as well as I the terms upon which Sir Barnes and his wife were living. Their quarrels were the talk of the whole county; one side brought forward his treatment of her, and his conduct elsewhere, and said that he was so bad that honest people should not know him. The other party laid the blame upon her, and declared that Lady Clara was a languid, silly, weak, frivolous creature, always crying out of season; who had notoriously taken Sir Barnes for his money, and who as certainly had had an attachment elsewhere. Yes, the accusations were true on both sides. A bad, selfish husband had married a woman for her rank; a weak, thoughtless girl had been sold to a man for his money; and the union, which might have ended in a comfortable indifference, had taken an ill turn and resulted in misery, cruelty, fierce mutual recriminations, bitter tears shed in private, husband's curses and maledictions, and open scenes of wrath and violence for servants to witness and the world to sneer at. We arrange such matches every day; we sell or buy beauty, or rank, or wealth; we inaugurate the bargain in churches with sacramental services, in which the parties engaged call upon heaven to witness their vows—we know them to be lies, and we seal them with God's name. "I, Barnes, promise to take you, Clara, to love and honor till death do us part." "I, Clara, promise to take you, Barnes," etc., etc. Who has not heard the ancient words; and how many of us have uttered them, knowing them to be untrue; and is there a bishop on the bench that has not amen'd the humbug in his lawn sleeves and called a blessing over the kneeling pair of perjurers?

"Does Mr. Harris know of Newcome's return?" Florac asked, when I acquainted him with this intelligence. "Ce scélérat de Highgate—va!"

"Does Newcome know that Lord Highgate is here?" I thought within myself, admiring my wife's faithfulness and simplicity, and trying to believe with that pure and guileless creature that it was not yet too late to save the unhappy Lady Clara.

"Mr. Harris had best be warned," I said to Florac; "will you write him a word, and let us send a messenger to Newcome?"

At first Florac said, "Parbleu, no!" the affair was none of his; he attended himself always to this result of Lady Clara's marriage. He had even complimented Jack upon it years before at Baden, when scenes enough tragic, enough comical,

*ma foi*, had taken place apropos of this affair. Why should he meddle with it now!

"Children dishonored," said I, "honest families made miserable; for heaven's sake, Florac, let us stay this catastrophe if we can." I spoke with much warmth, eagerly desirous to avert this calamity if possible, and very strongly moved by the tale which I had heard only just before dinner from that innocent creature whose pure heart had already prompted her to plead the cause of right and truth, and to try and rescue an unhappy, desperate sister trembling on the verge of ruin.

"If you will not write to him," said I, in some heat; "if your grooms don't like to go out of a night" (this was one of the objections which Florac had raised), "I will walk." We were talking over the affair rather late in the evening, the ladies having retreated to their sleeping apartments, and some guests having taken leave, whom our hospitable host and hostess had entertained that night, and before whom I naturally did not care to speak upon a subject so dangerous.

"Parbleu, what virtue, my friend! what a Joseph!" cries Florac, puffing his cigar. "One sees well that your wife had made you the sermon. My poor Pendennis! You are hen-pecked, my *pauvre bon!* You become the husband model. It is true, my mother writes, that thy wife is an angel!"

"I do not object to obey such a woman when she bids me do right," I said; and would indeed at that woman's request have gone out upon the errand, but that we here found another messenger. On days when dinner parties were held at Rosebury, certain auxiliary waiters used to attend upon Newcome, whom the landlord of the King's Arms was accustomed to supply; indeed, it was to secure these, and make other necessary arrangements, respecting fish, game, etc., that the Prince de Montcontour had ridden over to Newcome on the day when we met Lord Highgate, alias Mr. Harris, before the bar of the hotel. While we were engaged in the above conversation a servant enters, and says, "My lord, Jenkins and the other man is going back to Newcome in their cart, and is there anything wanted?"

"It is the heaven which sends him," said Florac, turning round to me with a laugh. "Make Jenkins to wait five minutes, Robert; I have to write to a gentleman at the King's Arms." And so saying, Florac wrote a line which he showed me, and having sealed the note, directed it to Mr. Harris at the King's Arms. The cart, the note, and the assistant waiters

departed on their way to Newcome. Florac bade me go to rest with a clear conscience. In truth, the warning was better given in that way than any other, and a word from Florac was more likely to be effectual than an expostulation from me. I had never thought of making it, perhaps, except at the expressed desire of a lady whose counsel in all the difficult circumstances of life I own I am disposed to take.

Mr. Jenkins' horse no doubt trotted at a very brisk pace, as gentlemen's horses will of a frosty night, after their masters have been regaled with plentiful supplies of wine and ale. I remember in my bachelor days that my horses always trotted quicker after I had had a good dinner; the champagne used to communicate itself to them somehow, and the claret get into their heels. Before midnight the letter for Mr. Harris was in Mr. Harris' hands in the King's Arms.

It has been said that in the Boscawen room at the Arms, some of the jolly fellows of Newcome had a club, of which Parrot the auctioneer, Tom Potts the talented reporter, now editor of the Independent, Vidler the apothecary, and other gentlemen were members.

When we first had occasion to mention that society, it was at an early stage of this history, long before Clive Newcome's fine mustache had grown. If Vidler the apothecary was old and infirm then, he is near ten years older now; he has had various assistants, of course, and one of them of late years had become his partner, though the firm continues to be known by Vidler's ancient and respectable name. A jovial fellow was this partner—a capital convivial member of the Jolly Britons, where he used to sit very late, so as to be in readiness for any night work that might come in.

So the Britons were all sitting smoking, drinking, and making merry, in the Boscawen room, when Jenkins enters with a note, which he straightway delivers to Mr. Vidler's partner. "From Rosebury? The Princess ill again, I suppose," says the surgeon, not sorry to let the company know that he attends her. "I wish the old girl would be ill in the daytime. Confound it," says he, "what's this?"—and he reads out, "Sir Newcome est de retour. Bon voyage, mon ami. F. What does this mean?"

"I thought you knew French, Jack Harris," says Tom Potts; "you're always bothering us with your French songs."

"Of course I know French," says the other; "but what's the meaning of this?"

"Screwcome came back by the five o'clock train. I was in it, and his royal highness would scarcely speak to me. Took Brown's fly from the station. Brown won't enrich his family much by the operation," says Mr. Potts.

"But what do I care?" cries Jack Harris; "we don't attend him, and we don't lose much by that. Howell attends him, ever since Vidler and he had that row."

"Hullo! I say, it's a mistake," cries Mr. Taplow, smoking in his chair. "This letter is for the party in the Benbow. The gent which the Prince spoke to him, and called him Jack the other day when he was here. Here's a nice business, and the seal broke, and all. Is the Benbow party gone to bed? John, you must carry him in this here note."

John, quite innocent of the note and its contents, for he that moment had entered the club room with Mr. Potts's supper, took the note to the Benbow, from which he presently returned to his master with a very scared countenance. He said the gent in the Benbow was a harbitrary gent. He had almost choked John after reading the letter, and John wouldn't stand it; and when John said he supposed that Mr. Harris in the Boscawen—that Mr. Jack Harris had opened the letter, the other gent cursed and swore awful.

"Potts," said Taplow, who was only too communicative on some occasions after he had imbibed too much of his own brandy and water, "it's my belief that that party's name is no more Harris than mine is. I have sent his linen to the wash, and there was two white pocket-handkerchiefs with 'H.' and a coronet."

On the next day we drove over to Newcome, hoping, perhaps, to find that Lord Highgate had taken the warning sent to him and quitted the place. But we were disappointed. He was walking in front of the hotel, where a thousand persons might see him as well as ourselves.

We entered into his private apartment with him, and there expostulated upon his appearance in the public street, where Barnes Newcome or any passer-by might recognize him. He then told us of the mishap which had befallen Florac's letter on the previous night.

"I can't go away now, whatever might have happened previously; by this time that villain knows that I am here. If I go he will say I was afraid of him and ran away. Oh, how I wish he would come and find me." He broke out with a savage laugh.

"It is best to run away," one of us interposed sadly.

"Pendennis," he said, with a tone of great softness, "your wife is a good woman. God bless her! God bless her for all she has said and done—would have done if that villain had let her. Do you know the poor thing hasn't a single friend in the world, not one—except me and that girl they are selling to Farintosh, and who does not count for much? He has driven away all her friends from her; one and all turn upon her. Her relations, of course; when did they ever fail to hit a poor fellow or a poor girl when she was down? The poor angel! The mother who sold her comes and preaches at her; Kew's wife turns up her little cursed nose and scorns her; Rooster, forsooth, must ride the high horse, now he is married and lives at Chantclere, and give her warning to avoid my company or his! Do you know the only friend she ever had was that old woman with the stick—old Kew; the old witch whom they buried four months ago, after nobbling her money for the beauty of the family? She used to protect her—that old woman; heaven bless her for it, wherever she is now, the old hag—a good word won't do her any harm. Ha! ha!" His laughter was cruel to hear.

"Why did I come down?" he continued in reply to our sad queries. "Why did I come down, do you ask? Because she was wretched, and sent for me. Because if I was at the end of the world and she was to say, 'Jack, come! I'd come.'"

"And if she bade you go?" asked his friends.

"I would go; and I have gone. If she told me to jump into the sea, do you think I would not do it? But I go; and when she is alone with him, do you know what he does? He strikes her. Strikes that poor little thing! He has owned to it. She fled from him and sheltered with the old woman who's dead. He may be doing it now. Why did I ever shake hands with him? that's humiliation sufficient, isn't it? But she wished it; and I'd black his boots, curse him, if she told me. And because he wanted to keep my money in his confounded bank; and because he knew he might rely upon my honor and hers, poor dear child, he chooses to shake hands with me—me, whom he hates worse than a thousand devils—and quite right too. Why isn't there a place where we can go and meet like man to man, and have it over! If I had a ball through my brains I shouldn't mind, I tell you. I've a mind to do it for myself, Pendennis. You don't understand me, Viscount."

"Il est vrai," said Florac with a shrug. "I comprehend neither the suicide nor the chaise de-poste. What will you? I am not yet enough English, my friend. We make marriages of convenience in our country, que diable, and what follows; but no scandal afterward. Do not adopt our institutions à demi, my friend. Vous ne me comprenez pas non plus, mon pauvre Jack!"

"There is one way still, I think," said the third of the speakers in this scene. "Let Lord Highgate come to Rosebury in his own name, leaving that of Mr. Harris behind him. If Sir Barnes Newcome wants you, he can seek you there. If you will go, as you should, and God speed you, you can go, and in your own name, too."

"Parbleu, c'est ça," cries Florac, "he speaks like a book—the Romancier!" I confess, for my part, I thought that a good woman might plead with him, and touch that manly not disloyal heart now trembling on the awful balance between evil and good.

"Allons! let us make to come the drague!" cries Florac. "Jack, thou returnest with us, my friend! Mme. Pendennis, an angel, my friend, a *quakre* the most charming, shall roucoule to thee the sweetest sermons. My wife shall tend thee like a mother—a grandmother. Go make thy packet!"

Lord Highgate was very much pleased and relieved, seemingly. He shook our hands; he said he should never forget our kindness, never! In truth, the didactic part of our conversation was carried on at much greater length than as here noted down; and he would come that evening, but not with us, thank you; he had a particular engagement—some letters he must write. Those done, he would not fail us, and would be at Rosebury by dinner time.

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## CHAPTER XX.

### "ONE MORE UNFORTUNATE."

The fates did not ordain that the plan should succeed which Lord Highgate's friends had devised for Lady Clara's rescue or respite. He was bent on one more interview with the unfortunate lady; and in that meeting the future destiny of their luckless lives was decided. On the morning of his

return home, Barnes Newcome had information that Lord Highgate, under a feigned name, had been staying in the neighborhood of his house, and had repeatedly been seen in the company of Lady Clara. She may have gone out to meet him but for one hour more. She had taken no leave of her children on the day when she left her home, and far from making preparations for her own departure, had been engaged in getting the house ready for the reception of members of the family, whose arrival her husband announced as speedily to follow his own. Ethel and Lady Ann, and some of the children were coming. Lord Farintosh's mother and sisters were to follow. It was to be a reunion previous to the marriage which was closer to unite the two families. Lady Clara said 'yes' to her husband's orders; rose mechanically to obey his wishes and arrange for the reception of the guests; and spoke tremblingly to the housekeeper as her husband gazed at her. The little ones had been consigned to bed early, and before Sir Barnes' arrival. He did not think fit to see them in their sleep, nor did their mother. She did not know, as the poor little creatures left her room in charge of their nurses, that she looked on them for the last time. Perhaps, had she gone to their bedsides that evening, had the wretched, panic-stricken soul been allowed leisure to pause, and to think, and to pray, the fate of the morrow might have been otherwise, and the trembling balance of the scale have inclined to right's side. But the pause was not allowed her. Her husband came and saluted her with his accustomed greetings of scorn, and sarcasm, and brutal insult. On a future day he never dared to call a servant of his household to testify to his treatment of her, though many were ready to attend to prove his cruelty and her terror. On that very last night Lady Clara's maid, a country girl from her father's house at Chanticleere, told Sir Barnes in the midst of a conjugal dispute that her lady might bear his conduct, but she could not, and that she would no longer live under the roof of such a brute. The girl's interference was not likely to benefit her mistress much; the wretched Lady Clara passed the last night under the roof of her husband and children, unattended save by this poor domestic who was about to leave her, in tears and hysterical outcries, and then in moaning stupor. Lady Clara put to sleep with laudanum, her maid carried down the story of her wrongs to the servants' quarters, and half a dozen of them took in their resignation to Sir Barnes as he sat over his