

Clive, whom I had found there over his work. A dubious maid scanned my appearance rather eagerly when I asked to see him. I found a picture dealer chaffering with him over a bundle of sketches, and his little boy, already pencil in hand, lying in one corner of the room, the sun playing about his yellow hair. The child looked languid and pale, the father worn and ill. When the dealer at length took his bargains away, I gradually broke my errand to Clive, and told him from whence I had just come.

He had thought his father in Scotland with Lord H.; and was immensely moved with the news which I brought.

"I haven't written to him for a month. It's not pleasant letters I have to write, Pen, and I can't make them pleasant. Up, Tommykin, and put on your cap." Tommykin jumps up. "Put on your cap, and tell them to take off your pinafore, and tell grandmamma——"

At that name Tommykin begins to cry.

"Look at that!" says Clive, commencing to speak in the French language, which the child interrupts by calling out in that tongue, "I speak also French, papa."

"Well, my child! You will like to come out with papa, and Betsy can dress you." He flings off his own paint-stained shooting jacket as he talks, takes a frock coat out of a carved wardrobe, and a hat from the helmet on the shelf. He is no longer the handsome splendid boy of old times. Can that be Clive, with that haggard face and slouched handkerchief? "I am not the dandy I was, Pen," he says bitterly.

A little voice is heard crying overhead—and, giving a kind of gasp, the wretched father stops in some indifferent speech he was trying to make. "I can't help myself," he groans out; "my poor wife is so ill, she can't attend to the child. Mrs. Mackenzie manages the house for me—and—here! Tommy, Tommy! papa's coming!" Tommy has been crying again, and flinging open the studio door, Clive calls out, and dashes upstairs.

I hear scuffling, stamping, loud voices, poor Tommy's scared little pipe—Clive's fierce objurgations, and the Campaigner's voice barking out—"Do, sir, do! with my child suffering in the next room. Behave like a brute to me, do. He shall not go out. He shall not have the hat"—"He shall"—"Ah—ah!" A scream is heard. It is Clive tearing a child's hat out of the Campaigner's hands, with which, and a flushed face, he pres-

ently rushes downstairs, bearing little Tommy on his shoulder.

"You see what I am come to, Pen," he says with a heart-broken voice, trying, with hands all of a tremble, to tie the hat on the boy's head. He laughs bitterly at the ill success of his endeavors. "Oh, you silly papa!" laughs Tommy, too.

The door is flung open, and the red-faced Campaigner appears. Her face is mottled with wrath, her bandeaux of hair are disarranged upon her forehead, the ornaments of her cap, cheap, and dirty, and numerous, only give her a wilder appearance. She is in a large and dingy wrapper, very different from the lady who presented herself a few months back to my wife—how different from the smiling Mrs. Mackenzie of old days!

"He shall not go out of a winter's day, sir," she breaks out. "I have his mother's orders, whom you are killing. Mr. Pendennis!" She starts, perceiving me for the first time, and her breast heaves, and she prepares for combat, and looks at me over her shoulder.

"You and his father are the best judges upon this point, ma'am," says Mr. Pendennis, with a bow.

"The child is delicate, sir," cries Mrs. Mackenzie; "and this winter——"

"Enough of this," says Clive with a stamp, and passes through her guard with Tommy, and we descend the stairs, and at length are in the free street. Was it not best not to describe at full length this portion of poor Clive's history?

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CHRISTMAS AT ROSEBURY.

We have known our friend Florac under two aristocratic names, and might now salute him by a third, to which he was entitled, although neither he nor his wife ever chose to assume it. His father was lately dead, and M. Paul de Florac might sign himself Duc d'Ivry if he chose, but he was indifferent as to the matter, and his wife's friends indignant at the idea that their kinswoman, after having been a Princess, should descend to the rank of a mere Duchess. So Prince and Princess these good folks remained, being exceptions to that

order, inasmuch as their friends could certainly put their trust in them.

On his father's death Florac went to Paris to settle the affairs of the paternal succession; and, having been for some time absent in his native country, returned to Rosebury for the winter, to resume that sport of which he was a distinguished amateur. He hunted in black during the ensuing season; and, indeed, henceforth laid aside his splendid attire and his *allures* as a young man. His waist expanded, or was no longer confined by the cestus which had given it a shape. When he laid aside his black, his whiskers, too, went into a sort of half mourning and appeared in gray. "I make myself old, my friend," he said pathetically; "I have no more neither twenty years nor forty." He went to Rosebury Church no more; but, with great order and sobriety, drove every Sunday to the neighboring Catholic chapel at C—— Castle. We had an ecclesiastic or two to dine with us at Rosebury, one of whom I am inclined to think was Florac's director.

A reason, perhaps, for Paul's altered demeanor was the presence of his mother at Rosebury. No politeness or respect could be greater than Paul's toward the Countess. Had she been a sovereign princess, Mme. de Florac could not have been treated with more profound courtesy than she now received from her son. I think the humble-minded lady could have dispensed with some of his attentions; but Paul was a personage who demonstrated all his sentiments, and performed his various parts in life, with the greatest vigor. As a man of pleasure, for instance, what more active *roué* than he? As a *jeune homme*, who could be younger, and for a longer time! As a country gentleman, or an *homme d'affaires*, he insisted upon dressing each character with the most rigid accuracy, and an exactitude that reminded one somewhat of Bouffé, or Ferville, at the play. I wonder whether, when he is quite old, he will think proper to wear a pigtail, like his old father? At any rate, that was a good part which the kind fellow was now acting, of reverence toward his widowed mother and affectionate respect for her declining days. He not only felt these amiable sentiments, but he imparted them to his friends freely, as his wont was. He used to weep freely—quite unrestrained by the presence of the domestics, as English sentiment would be; and when Mme. de Florac quitted the room after dinner, would squeeze my hand and tell me, with streaming eyes, that his mother was an angel. "Her

life has been but a long trial, my friend," he would say. "Shall not I, who have caused her to shed so many tears, endeavor to dry some?" Of course, all the friends who liked him best encouraged him in an intention so pious.

The reader has already been made acquainted with this lady by letters of hers, which came into my possession some time after the events which I am at present narrating: my wife, through our kind friend, Colonel Newcome, had also had the honor of an introduction to Mme. de Florac at Paris; and, on coming to Rosebury for the Christmas holidays, I found Laura and the children greatly in favor with the good Countess. She treated her son's wife with a perfect though distant courtesy. She was thankful to Mme. de Montcontour for the latter's great goodness to her son. Familiar with but very few persons, she could scarcely be intimate with her homely daughter-in-law. Mme. de Montcontour stood in the greatest awe of her; and, to do that good lady justice, admired and revered Paul's mother with all her simple heart. In truth, I think almost everyone had a certain awe of Mme. de Florac, except children, who came to her trustingly, and, as it were, by instinct. The habitual melancholy of her eyes vanished as they lighted upon young faces and infantile smiles. A sweet love beamed out of her countenance; an angelic smile shone over her face, as she bent toward them and caressed them. Her demeanor then, nay, her looks and ways at other times; a certain gracious sadness, a sympathy with all grief, and pity for all pain; a gentle heart, yearning toward all children; and, for her own especially, feeling a love that was almost an anguish; in the affairs of the common world only a dignified acquiescence, as if her place was not in it, and her thoughts were in her Home elsewhere—these qualities, which we had seen exemplified in another life, Laura and her husband watched in Mme. de Florac, and we loved her because she was like our mother. I see in such women—the good and pure, the patient and faithful, the tried and meek—the followers of Him whose earthly life was divinely sad and tender.

But, good as she was to us and to all, Ethel Newcome was the French lady's greatest favorite. A bond of extreme tenderness and affection united these two. The elder friend made constant visits to the younger at Newcome; and when Miss Newcome, as she frequently did, came to Rosebury, we used to see that they preferred to be alone, divining and re-

specting the sympathy which brought those two faithful hearts together. I can imagine now the two tall forms slowly pacing the garden walks, or turning, as they lighted on the young ones in their play. What was their talk? I never asked it. Perhaps Ethel never said what was in her heart, though, to be sure, the other knew it. Though the grief of those they love is untold, women hear it; as they soothe it with unspoken consolations. To see the elder lady embrace her friend as they parted was something holy—a sort of saint-like salutation.

Consulting the person from whom I had no secrets, we had thought best at first not to mention to our friends the place and position in which we had found our dear Colonel; at least to wait for a fitting opportunity on which we might break the news to those who held him in such affection. I told how Clive was hard at work, and hoped the best for him. Good-natured Mme. de Montcontour was easily satisfied with my replies to her questions concerning our friend. Ethel only asked if he and her uncle were well, and once or twice made inquiries respecting Rosey and her child. And now it was that my wife told me, what I need no longer keep secret, of Ethel's extreme anxiety to serve her distressed relatives, and how she, Laura, had already acted as Miss Newcome's almoner in furnishing and hiring those apartments which Ethel believed were occupied by Clive and his father, and wife and child. And my wife farther informed me with what deep grief Ethel had heard of her uncle's misfortune and how, but that she feared to offend his pride, she longed to give him assistance. She had even ventured to offer to send him pecuniary help; but the Colonel—who never mentioned the circumstance to me or any other of his friends—in a kind but very cold letter had declined to be beholden to his niece for help.

So I may have remained some days at Rosebury, and the real position of the two Newcomes was unknown to our friends there. Christmas Eve was come, and, according to a long-standing promise, Ethel Newcome and her two children had arrived from the Park, which dreary mansion, since his double defeat, Sir Barnes scarcely ever visited. Christmas was come, and Rosebury hall was decorated with holly. Florac did his best to welcome his friends, and strove to make the meeting gay, though in truth it was rather melancholy. The children, however, were happy; they had pleasure

enough, in the school festival, in the distribution of cloaks and blankets to the poor, and in Mme. de Montcontour's gardens, delightful and beautiful though winter was there.

It was only a family meeting, Mme. de Florac's widowhood not permitting her presence in large companies. Paul sat at his table between his mother and Mrs. Pendennis; Mr. Pendennis opposite to him with Ethel and Mme. de Montcontour on each side. The four children were placed between these personages, on whom Mme. de Florac looked with her tender glances, and to whose little wants the kindest of hosts ministered with uncommon good-nature and affection. He was very soft-hearted about children. "Pourquoi n'en avous-nous pas, Jeanne? He! pourquoi n'en avous-nous pas?" he said, addressing his wife by her Christian name. The poor little lady looked kindly at her husband, and then gave a sigh, and turned and heaped cake upon the plate of the child next to her. No mamma or Aunt Ethel could interpose. It was a very light wholesome cake. Brown made it on purpose for the children, "the little darlings!" cries the Princess.

The children were very happy at being allowed to sit up so late to dinner, at all the kindly amusements of the day, at the holly and mistletoe clustering round the lamps—the mistletoe, under which the gallant Florac, skilled in all British usages, vowed he would have his privilege. But the mistletoe was clustered round the lamp, the lamp was over the center of the great round table—the innocent gratification which he proposed to himself was denied to M. Paul.

In the greatest excitement and good-humor, our host at the dessert made us *des speech*. He carried a toast to the charming Ethel, another to the charming Mistress Laura, another to his "good fren", his brave fren", his 'appy fren", Pendennis—"appy as possessor of such a wife, 'appy as writer of works destined to the immortality," etc., etc. The little children round about clapped their happy little hands, and laughed and crowed in chorus. And now the nursery and its guardians were about to retreat, when Florac said he had yet a speech, yet a toast—and he bade the butler pour wine into everyone's glass—yet a toast—and he carried it to the health of our dear friends, of Clive and his father—the good, the brave Colonel! "We, who are happy," says he, "shall we not think of those who are good? We, who love each other, shall we not remember those whom we all love?" He spoke with very great tenderness and feeling. "Ma bonne mère, thou too

shalt drink this toast!" he said, taking his mother's hand, and kissing it. She returned his caress gently, and tasted the wine with her pale lips. Ethel's head bent in silence over her glass; and as for Laura, need I say what happened to her? When the ladies went away my heart was opened to my friend Florac, and I told him where and how I had left my dear Clive's father.

The Frenchman's emotion on hearing this tale was such that I have loved him ever since. Clive in want! Why had he not sent to his friend? Grands Dieux! Clive who had helped him in his greatest distress. Clive's father, *ce preux chevalier, ce parfait gentilhomme!* In a hundred rapid exclamations Florac exhibited his sympathy, asking of Fate, why such men as he and I were sitting surrounded by splendors—before golden vases—crowned with flowers—with valets to kiss our feet—(these were merely figures of speech in which Paul expressed his prosperity)—while our friend the Colonel, so much better than we, spent his last days in poverty, and alone.

I liked my host none the less, I own, because that one of the conditions of the Colonel's present life, which appeared the hardest to most people, affected Florac but little. To be a Pensioner of an Ancient Institution? Why not? Might not any officer retire without shame to the Invalides at the close of his campaigns, and had not Fortune conquered our old friend and age and disaster overcome him? It never once entered Thomas Newcome's head, nor Clive's, nor Florac's, nor his mother's, that the Colonel demeaned himself at all by accepting that bounty; and I recollect Warrington sharing our sentiment and trolling out those noble lines of the old poet:

His golden locks Time hath to silver turned;
 O Time too swift, O swiftness never ceasing
 His youth 'gainst time and age hath ever spurned,
 But spurned in vain; youth waneth by increasing.
 Beauty, strength, youth, are flowers but fading seen.
 Duty, faith, love, are roots, and ever green.
 His helmet now shall make a hive for bees,
 And lovers' songs be turned to holy psalms;
 A man at arms must now serve on his knees,
 And feed on prayers, which are old age's alms.

These, I say, respected our friend, whatever was the coat he wore; whereas, among the Colonel's own kinsfolk, dire was

the dismay, and indignation even, which they expressed when they came to hear of this what they were pleased to call degradation to their family. Mrs. Hobson Newcome, in subsequent confidential communication with the writer of these memoirs, improved the occasion religiously as her wont was; referred the matter to heaven too, and thought fit to assume that the celestial powers had decreed this humiliation, this dreadful trial for the Newcome family, as a warning to them all that they should not be too much puffed up with prosperity, nor set their affections too much upon things of this earth. Had they not already received one chastisement in Barnes' punishment, and Lady Clara's awful falling away? They had taught her a lesson which the Colonel's lamentable errors had confirmed—the vanity of trusting in all earthly grandeurs! Thus it was this worthy woman plumed herself, as it were, on her relatives' misfortunes; and was pleased to think the latter were designed for the special warning and advantage of her private family. But Mrs. Hobson's philosophy is only mentioned by the way. Our story, which is drawing to a close, has to busy itself with other members of the house of The Newcomes.

My talk with Florac lasted for some time; at its close, when we went to join the ladies in the drawing room, we found Ethel cloaked and shawled, and prepared for her departure with her young ones, who were already asleep. The little festival was over, and had ended in melancholy—even in weeping. Our hostess sat in her accustomed seat by her lamp and her work-table; but, neglecting her needle, she was having perpetual recourse to her pocket-handkerchief, and uttering ejaculations of pity between the intervals of her gushes of tears. Mme. de Florac was in her usual place, her head cast downward, and her hands folded. My wife was at her side, a grave commiseration showing itself in Laura's countenance, while I read a yet deeper sadness in Ethel's pale face. Miss Newcome's carriage had been announced; the attendants had already carried the young ones asleep to the vehicle; and she was in the act of taking leave. We looked round at this disturbed party, guessing very likely what the subject of their talk had been, to which, however, Miss Ethel did not allude; but, announcing that she had intended to depart without disturbing the two gentlemen, she bade us farewell and good-night. "I wish I could say merry Christmas," she added gravely, "but none of us, I fear, can hope for

that." It was evident that Laura had told the last chapter of the Colonel's story.

Mme. de Florac rose up and embraced Miss Newcome; and, that farewell over, she sank back on the sofa exhausted, and with such an expression of affliction in her countenance that my wife ran eagerly toward her. "It is nothing, my dear," she said, giving a cold hand to the younger lady, and sat silent for a few moments, during which we heard Florac's voice without, crying "Adieu!" and the wheels of Miss Newcome's carriage as it drove away.

Our host entered a moment afterward; and remarking, as Laura had done, his mother's pallor and look of anguish, went up and spoke to her with the utmost tenderness and anxiety.

She gave her hand to her son, and a faint blush rose up out of the past as it were, and trembled upon her wan cheek. "He was the first friend I ever had in the world, Paul," she said; "the first and the best. He shall not want; shall he, my son?"

No signs of that emotion in which her daughter-in-law had been indulging were as yet visible in Mme. de Florac's eyes; but, as she spoke, holding her son's hand in hers, the tears at length overflowed; and, with a sob, her head fell forward. The impetuous Frenchman flung himself on his knees before his mother, uttered a hundred words of love and respect for her, and with tears and sobs of his own called God to witness that their friend should never want. And so this mother and son embraced each other, and clung together in a sacred union of love; before which we, who had been admitted as spectators of that scene, stood hushed and respectful.

That night Laura told me how, when the ladies left us, their talk had been entirely about the Colonel and Clive. Mme. de Florac had spoken especially, and much more freely than was her wont. She had told many reminiscences of Thomas Newcome and his early days; how her father taught him mathematics when they were quite poor, and living in their dear little cottage at Blackheath; how handsome he was then, with bright eyes, and long black hair flowing over his shoulders; how military glory was his boyish passion, and he was forever talking of India and the famous deeds of Clive and Lawrence. His favorite book was a history of India—the "History" of Orme. "He read it, and I read it also, my daughter," the French lady said, turning to Ethel; "ah! I may say so after so many years."

Ethel remembered the book as belonging to her grandmother, and now in the library at Newcome. Doubtless the same sympathy which caused me to speak about Thomas Newcome that evening impelled my wife likewise. She told her friends, as I had told Florac, all the Colonel's story; and it was while these good women were under the impression of the melancholy history that Florac and his guest found them.

Retired to our rooms, Laura and I talked on the same subject until the clock tolled Christmas, and the neighboring church bells rang out a jubilation. And, looking out into the quiet night, where the stars were keenly shining, we committed ourselves to rest with humbled hearts; praying, for all those we loved, a blessing of peace and good will.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE SHORTEST AND HAPPIEST IN THE WHOLE HISTORY.

On the ensuing Christmas morning I chanced to rise betimes, and, entering my dressing room, opened the windows and looked out on the soft landscape, over which mists were still lying; while the serene sky above, and the lawns and leafless woods in the foreground near, were still pink with sunrise. The gray had not even left the west yet, and I could see a star or two tumbling there, to vanish with that twilight.

As I looked out I saw the not very distant lodge gate open after a brief parley, and a lady on horseback, followed by a servant, rode rapidly up to the house.

This early visitor was no other than Miss Ethel Newcome. The young lady espied me immediately. "Come down; come down to me this moment, Mr. Pendennis," she cried out. I hastened down to her, supposing rightly that news of importance had brought her to Rosebury so early.

The news was of importance indeed. "Look here!" she said, "read this"; and she took a paper from the pocket of her habit. "When I went home last night, after Mme. de Florac had been talking to us about Orme's 'India,' I took the volumes from the bookcase and found this paper. It is in my grandmother's—Mrs. Newcome's—handwriting; I know it quite well; it is dated on the very day of her death. She had been writing and reading in her study on that very night; I

have often heard papa speak of the circumstance. Look and read. You are a lawyer, Mr. Pendennis; tell me about this paper."

I seized it eagerly, and cast my eyes over it; but having read it, my countenance fell.

"My dear Miss Newcome, it is not worth a penny," I was obliged to own.

"Yes, it is, sir, to honest people!" she cried out. "My brother and uncle will respect it as Mrs. Newcome's dying wish. They must respect it."

The paper in question was a letter in ink that had grown yellow from time, and was addressed by the late Mrs. Newcome to "My Dear Mr. Luce."

"That was her solicitor, my solicitor still," interposes Miss Ethel.

The Hermitage, March 14, 182—.

My Dear Mr. Luce (the defunct lady wrote): My late husband's grandson has been staying with me lately, and is a most pleasing, handsome, and engaging little boy. He bears a strong likeness to his grandfather, I think; and though he has no claims upon me, and I know is sufficiently provided for by his father, Lieutenant-Colonel Newcome, C. B., of the East India Company's Service, I am sure my late dear husband will be pleased that I should leave his grandson, Clive Newcome, a token of peace and goodwill; and I can do so with the more readiness, as it has pleased heaven greatly to increase my means since my husband was called away hence.

I desire to bequeath a sum equal to that which Mr. Newcome willed to my eldest son Brian Newcome, Esq., to Mr. Newcome's grandson, Clive Newcome; and furthermore, that a token of my esteem and affection, a ring, or a piece of plate, of the value of £100, be given to Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Newcome, my stepson, whose excellent conduct for many years, and whose repeated acts of gallantry in the service of his sovereign, have long obliterated the just feelings of displeasure with which I could not but view early disobedience and misbehavior, before he quitted England against my will, and entered the military service.

I beg you to prepare immediately a codicil to my will, providing for the above bequests; and desire that the amount of these legacies should be taken from the property bequeathed to my eldest son. You will be so good as to prepare the necessary document, and bring it with you when you come, on Saturday, to

Yours very truly,

Sophia Alethea Newcome.

Tuesday night.

I gave back the paper with a sigh to the finder. "It is but a wish of Mrs. Newcome, my dear Miss Ethel," I said. "Par-

don me if I say I think I know your elder brother too well to suppose that he will fulfill it."

"He will fulfill it, sir, I am sure he will," Miss Newcome said, in a haughty manner. "He would do as much without being asked, I am certain he would, did he know the depth of my dear uncle's misfortune. Barnes is in London now, and——"

"And you will write him? I know what the answer will be."

"I will go to him this very day, Mr. Pendennis! I will go to my dear, dear uncle. I cannot bear to think of him in that place," cried the young lady, the tears starting into her eyes. "It was the will of heaven. Oh, God be thanked for it! Had we found my grandmamma's letter earlier, Barnes would have paid the legacy immediately, and the money would have gone in that dreadful bankruptcy. I will go to Barnes to-day. Will you come with me? Won't you come to your old friends? We may be at his—at Clive's house this evening; and oh, praise be to God! there need be no more want in his family."

"My dear friend, I will go with you round the world on such an errand," I said, kissing her hand. How beautiful she looked! the generous color rose in her face, her voice thrilled with happiness. The music of Christmas church bells leaped up at this moment with joyful congratulations; the face of the old house, before which we stood talking, shone out in the morning sun.

"You will come? thank you! I must run and tell Mme. de Florac," cried the happy young lady, and we entered the house together. "How came you to be kissing Ethel's hand, sir; and what is the meaning of this early visit?" asks Mrs. Laura, as soon as I had returned to my own apartments.

"Martha, get me a carpet-bag! I am going to London in an hour," cries Mr. Pendennis. If I had kissed Ethel's hand just now, delighted at the news which she brought to me, was not one a thousand times dearer to me as happy as her friend! I know who prayed with a thankful heart that day as we sped, in the almost solitary train, toward London.