

## CHAPTER XL.

## IN WHICH THE AUTHOR GOES ON A PLEASANT ERRAND.

Before I parted with Miss Newcome at the station, she made me promise to see her on the morrow at an early hour at her brother's house; and having bidden her farewell and repaired to my own solitary residence, which presented but a dreary aspect on that festive day, I thought I would pay Howland Street a visit; and, if invited, eat my Christmas dinner with Clive.

I found my friend at home, and at work still, in spite of the day. He had promised a pair of pictures to a dealer for the morrow. "He pays me pretty well, and I want all the money he will give me, Pen," the painter said, rubbing on at his canvas. "I am pretty easy in my mind since I have become acquainted with a virtuous dealer. I sell myself to him, body and soul, for some half-dozen pounds a week. I know I can get my money, and he is regularly supplied with his pictures. But for Rosey's illness we might carry on well enough."

Rosey's illness? I was sorry to hear of that: and poor Clive, entering into particulars, told me how he had spent upon doctors rather more than a fourth of his year's earnings. "There is a solemn fellow, to whom the women have taken a fancy, who lives but a few doors off in Gower Street; and who, for his last sixteen visits, has taken sixteen pounds sixteen shillings out of my pocket with the most admirable gravity, and as if the guineas grew there. He talks the fashions to my mother-in-law. My poor wife hangs on every word he says—Look! There is the carriage coming up now! and there is his fee, confound him!" says Clive, casting a rueful look toward a little packet lying upon the mantel-piece, by the side of that skinned figure in plaster of Paris which we have seen in most studios.

I looked out of window and saw a certain Fashionable Doctor tripping out of his chariot; that Ladies' Delight, who has subsequently migrated from Bloomsbury to Belgravia; and who has his polite foot now in a thousand nurseries and boudoirs. What confessors were in old times, Quackenboss and

his like are in our Protestant country. What secrets they know! into what mystic chamber do they not enter! I suppose the Campaigner made a special toilet to receive her fashionable friend, for that lady, attired in considerable splendor, and with the precious jewel on her head, which I remembered at Boulogne, came into the studio two minutes after the Doctor's visit was announced; and made him a low courtesy. I cannot describe the overpowering civilities of that woman.

Clive was very gracious and humble to her. He adopted a lively air in addressing her. "Must work, you know, Christmas Day and all—for the owner of the pictures will call for them in the morning. Bring me a good report about Rosey, Mrs. Mackenzie, please—and if you will have the kindness to look by the *écorché* there, you will see that little packet which I have left for you." Mrs. Mack, advancing, took the money. I thought that plaster of Paris figure was not the only *écorché* in the room.

"I want you to stay to dinner. You must stay, Pen, please," cried Clive; "and be civil to her, will you? My dear old father is coming to dine here. They fancy that he has lodgings at the other end of the town, and that his brothers do something for him. Not a word about Grey Friars. It might agitate Rosey, you know. Ah! isn't he noble, the dear old boy! and isn't it fine to see him in that place?" Clive worked on as he talked, using up the last remnant of the light of Christmas Day, and was cleaning his palette and brushes, when Mrs. Mackenzie returned to us.

Darling Rosey was very delicate, but Dr. Quackenboss was going to give her the very same medicine which had done the charming young Duchess of Clackmannanshire so much good, and he was not in the least disquiet.

On this I cut into the conversation with anecdotes concerning the family of the Duchess of Clackmannanshire, remembering early days, when it used to be my sport to entertain the Campaigner with anecdotes of the aristocracy, about whose proceedings she still maintained a laudable curiosity. Indeed, one of the few books escaped out of the wreck of Tyburn Gardens was a "Peerage," now a well-worn volume, much read by Rosey and her mother.

The anecdotes were very politely received—perhaps it was the season which made Mrs. Mack and son-in-law on more than ordinarily good terms. When, turning to the Campaigner, Clive said he wished that she could persuade me to

stay to dinner, she acquiesced graciously and at once in that proposal, and vowed that her daughter would be delighted if I could condescend to eat their humble fare. "It is not such a dinner as you have seen at her house, with six side dishes, two flanks, that splendid *épergne*, and the silver dishes top and bottom; but such as my Rosey has she offers with a willing heart," cries the Campaigner.

"And Tom may sit to dinner, mayn't he, grandmamma?" asks Clive, in a humble voice.

"Oh, if you wish it, sir."

"His grandfather will like to sit by him," said Clive. "I will go out and meet him; he comes through Guildford Street and Russell Square," says Clive. "Will you walk, Pen?"

"Oh, pray don't let us detain you," says Mrs. Mackenzie, with a toss of her head; and when she retreated Clive whispered that she would not want me; for she looked to the roasting of the beef, and the making of the pudding and the mince pie.

"I thought she might have a finger in it," I said; and we set forth to meet the dear old father, who presently came, walking very slowly, along the line by which we expected him. His stick trembled as it fell on the pavement; so did his voice, as he called out Clive's name: so did his hand, as he stretched it to me. His body was bent and feeble. Twenty years had not weakened him so much as the last score of months. I walked by the side of my two friends as they went onward, linked lovingly together. How I longed for the morrow, and hoped they might be united once more! Thomas Newcome's voice, once so grave, went up to a treble, and became almost childish, as he asked after Boy. His white hair hung over his collar. I could see it by the gas under which we walked—and Clive's great back and arm, as his father leaned on it, and his brave face turned toward the old man. O Barnes Newcome, Barnes Newcome! Be an honest man for once, and help your kinsfolk! thought I.

The Christmas meal went off in a friendly manner enough. The Campaigner's eyes were everywhere: it was evident that the little maid who served the dinner, and had cooked a portion of it under their keen supervision, cowered under them, as well as other folks. Mrs. Mack did not make more than ten allusions to former splendors during the entertainment, or half as many apologies to me for sitting down to a table very different from that to which I was accustomed. Good, faith-

ful F. Bayham was the only other guest. He complimented the mince pies, so that Mrs. Mackenzie owned she had made them. The Colonel was very silent, but he tried to feed Boy, and was only once or twice sternly corrected by the Campaigner. Boy, in the best little words he could muster, asked why grandpapa wore a black cloak? Clive nudged my foot under the table. The secret of the Poor Brotherhood was very nearly out. The Colonel blushed, and with great presence of mind said he wore a cloak to keep him warm in winter.

Rosey did not say much. She had grown lean and languid; the light of her eyes had gone out; all her pretty freshness had faded. She ate scarce anything, though her mother pressed her eagerly, and whispered loudly that a woman in her situation ought to strengthen herself. Poor Rosey was always in a situation.

When the cloth was withdrawn, the Colonel bending his head said, "Thank God for what we have received," so reverently, and with an accent so touching, that Fred Bayham's big eyes as he turned toward the old man filled up with tears. When his mother and grandmother rose to go away, poor little Boy cried to stay longer, and the Colonel would have meekly interposed, but the domineering Campaigner cried, "Nonsense, let him go to bed!" and flounced him out of the room; and nobody appealed against that sentence. Then we four remained, and strove to talk as cheerfully as we might, speaking now of old times, and presently of new. Without the slightest affectation, Thomas Newcome told us that his life was comfortable, and that he was happy in it. He wished that many others of the old gentlemen, he said, were as contented as himself, but some of them grumbled sadly, he owned, and quarreled with their bread and butter. He, for his part, had everything he could desire: all the officers of the establishment were most kind to him; an excellent physician came to him when wanted; a most attentive woman waited on him. "And if I wear a black gown," said he, "is not that uniform as good as another? and if we have to go to church every day, at which some of the Poor Brothers grumble, I think an old fellow can't do better; and I can say my prayers with a thankful heart, Clivy, my boy, and should be quite happy but for my—for my—for my past imprudence, God forgive me. Think of Bayham here coming to our chapel to-day—he often comes—that was very right, sir—very right."

Clive, filling a glass of wine, looked at F. B. with eyes that said, "God bless you." F. B. gulped down another bumper. "It is almost a merry Christmas," said I; "and oh, I hope it will be a happy New Year!"

Shortly after nine o'clock the Colonel rose to depart, saying he must be "in barracks," by ten; and Clive and F. B. went a part of the way with him. I would have followed them, but Clive whispered me to stay, and talk to Mrs. Mack, for Heaven's sake, and that he would be back ere long. So I went and took tea with the two ladies; and as we drank it, Mrs. Mackenzie took occasion to tell me she did not know what amount of income the Colonel had from his wealthy brother, but that they never received any benefit from it; and again she computed to me all the sums, principal and interest, which ought at that moment to belong to her darling Rosey. Rosey now and again made a feeble remark. She did not seem pleased or sorry when her husband came in; and presently, dropping me a little courtesy, went to bed under charge of the Campaigner. So Bayham, and I, and Clive retired to the studio, where smoking was allowed, and where we brought that Christmas Day to an end.

At the appointed time on the next forenoon I called upon Miss Newcome at her brother's house. Sir Barnes Newcome was quitting his own door as I entered it, and he eyed me with such a severe countenance as made me augur but ill of the business upon which I came. The expression of Ethel's face was scarcely more cheering: she was standing at the window, sternly looking at Sir Barnes, who yet lingered at his own threshold, having some altercation with his cab-boy ere he mounted his vehicle to drive into the City.

Miss Newcome was very pale when she advanced and gave me her hand. I looked with some alarm into her face, and inquired what news.

"It is as you expected, Mr. Pendennis," she said—"not as I did. My brother is averse to making restitution. He just now parted from me in some anger. But it does not matter: the restitution must be made, if not by Barnes, by one of our family—must it not?"

"God bless you for a noble creature, my dear, dear Miss Newcome!" was all I could say.

"For doing what is right? Ought I not to do it? I am the eldest of our family after Barnes; I am the richest after him. Our father left all his younger children the very sum

of money which Mrs. Newcome here devises to Clive; and you know, besides, I have all my grandmother's, Lady Kew's property. Why, I don't think I could sleep if this act of justice were not done. Will you come with me to my lawyer's? He and my brother Barnes are trustees of my property; and I have been thinking, dear Mr. Pendennis—and you are very good to be so kind, and to express so kind an opinion of me, and you and Laura have always, always been the best friends to me"—(she says this, taking one of my hands and placing her other hand over it)—"I have been thinking, you know, that this transfer had better be made through Mr. Luce, you understand, and as coming from the family, and then I need not appear in it at all, you see; and—and my dear good uncle's pride need not be wounded." She fairly gave way to tears as she spoke—and for me, I longed to kiss the hem of her robe, or anything else she would let me embrace, I was so happy, and so touched by the simple demeanor and affection of the noble young lady.

"Dear Ethel," I said, "did I not say I would go to the end of the world with you—and won't I go to Lincoln's Inn?"

A cab was straightway sent for, and in another half-hour we were in the presence of the courtly little old Mr. Luce, in his chambers in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

He knew the late Mrs. Newcome's handwriting at once. He remembered having seen the little boy at the Hermitage, had talked with Mr. Newcome regarding his son in India, and had even encouraged Mrs. Newcome in her idea of leaving some token of good will to the latter. "I was to have dined with your grandmamma on the Saturday, with my poor wife. Why, bless my soul! I remember the circumstance perfectly well, my dear young lady. There can't be a doubt about the letter, but of course the bequest is no bequest at all, and Colonel Newcome has behaved so ill to your brother that I suppose Sir Barnes will not go out of his way to benefit the Colonel."

"What would you do, Mr. Luce?" asks the young lady.

"H'm! And pray why should I tell you what I should do under such circumstances?" replied the little lawyer. "Upon my word, Miss Newcome, I think I should leave matters as they stand. Sir Barnes and I, you are aware, are not the very best of friends—as your father's, your grandmother's old friend and adviser, and your own too, my dear young lady, I and Sir Barnes Newcome remain on civil terms. But neither

is overmuch pleased with the other, to say the truth; and, at any rate, I cannot be accused—nor can anyone else that I know of—of being a very warm partisan of your brother's. But candidly, were his case mine—had I a relation who called me unpleasant names, and threatened me I don't know with what, with sword and pistol—who had put me to five or six thousand pounds' expense in contesting an election which I had lost—I should give him, I think, no more than the law obliged me to give him; and that my dear Miss Newcome, is not one farthing."

"I am very glad you say so," said Miss Newcome, rather to my astonishment.

"Of course, my dear young lady; and so you need not be alarmed at showing your brother this document. Is not that the point about which you came to consult me? You wished that I should prepare him for the awful disclosure, did you not? You know, perhaps, that he does not like to part with his money, and thought the appearance of this note might agitate him? It has been a long time coming to his address, but nothing can be done, don't you see? and be sure Sir Barnes Newcome will not be the least agitated when I tell him its contents."

"I mean I am very glad you think my brother is not called upon to obey Mrs. Newcome's wishes, because I need not think so hardly of him as I was disposed to do," Miss Newcome said. "I showed him the paper this morning, and he repelled it with scorn; and not kind words passed between us, Mr. Luce, and unkind thoughts remained in my mind. But if he, you think, is justified, it is I who have been in the wrong for saying that he was self—for upbraiding him as I own I did."

"You called him selfish! You had words with him! Such things have happened before, my dear Miss Newcome, in the best regulated families."

"But if he is not wrong, sir, holding his opinions, surely I should be wrong, sir, with mine, not to do as my conscience tells me; and having found this paper only yesterday at Newcome, in the library there, in one of my grandmother's books, I consulted with this gentleman, the husband of my dearest friend, Mrs. Pendennis—the most intimate friend of my uncle and cousin Clive; and I wish, and I desire and insist, that my share of what my poor father left us girls should be given to

my cousin, Mr. Clive Newcome, in accordance with my grandmother's dying wishes."

"My dear, you gave away your portion to your brothers and sisters ever so long ago!" cried the lawyer.

"I desire, sir, that six thousand pounds may be given to my cousin," Miss Newcome said, blushing deeply. "My dear uncle, the best man in the world, whom I love with all my heart, sir, is in the most dreadful poverty. Do you know where he is, sir? My dear, kind, generous uncle!"—and kindling as she spoke, and with eyes beaming a bright kindness, and flushing cheeks, and a voice that thrilled to the heart of those two who heard her, Miss Newcome went on to tell of her uncle's and cousin's misfortunes, and of her wish, under God, to relieve them. I see before me now the figure of the noble girl as she speaks; the pleased little old lawyer, bobbing his white head, looking up at her with his twinkling eyes—patting his knees, patting his snuff-box—as he sits before his tapes and his deeds, surrounded by a great background of tin boxes.

"And I understand you want this money paid as coming from the family, and not from Miss Newcome?" says Mr. Luce.

"Coming from the family—exactly"—answers Miss Newcome.

Mr. Luce rose up from his old chair—his worn-out old horse-hair chair—where he had sat for half a century and listened to many a speaker very different from this one. "Mr. Pendennis," he said, "I envy you your journey along with this young lady. I envy you the good news you are going to carry to your friends—and Miss Newcome, as I am an old—old gentleman who have known your family these sixty years, and saw your father in his long clothes, may I tell you how heartily and sincerely I—I love and respect you, my dear? When should you wish Mr. Clive Newcome to have his legacy?"

"I think I should like Mr. Pendennis to have it this instant, Mr. Luce, please," said the young lady—and her veil dropped over her face as she bent her head down, and clasped her hands together for a moment, as if she were praying.

Mr. Luce laughed at her impetuosity; but said that if she was bent upon having the money, it was at her instant service; and, before we left the room, Mr. Luce prepared a letter, addressed to Clive Newcome, Esquire, in which he stated

that among the books of the late Mrs. Newcome a paper had only just been found, of which a copy was inclosed, and that the family of the late Sir Brian Newcome, desirous to do honor to the wishes of the late Mrs. Newcome, had placed the sum of six thousand pounds at the bank of Messrs. H. W——, at the disposal of Mr. Clive Newcome, of whom Mr. Luce had the honor to sign himself the most obedient servant, etc. And, the letter approved and copied, Mr. Luce said Mr. Penderennis might be the postman thereof, if Miss Newcome so willed it; and, with this document in my pocket, I quitted the lawyer's chambers, with my good and beautiful young companion.

Our cab had been waiting several hours in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and I asked Miss Ethel whither I now should conduct her?

"Where is Grey Friars?" she said. "Mayn't I go to see my uncle?"

## CHAPTER XLI.

### IN WHICH OLD FRIENDS COME TOGETHER.

We made the ascent of Snowhill, we passed by the miry pens of Smithfield; we travel through the street of St. John, and presently reach the ancient gateway in Cistercian Square where lies the old Hospital of Grey Friars: I passed through the gate, my fair young companion on my arm, and made my way to the rooms occupied by Brother Newcome.

As we traversed the court the Poor Brothers were coming from dinner. A couple of score, or more, of old gentlemen in black gowns issued from the door of their refectory and separated over the court, betaking themselves to their chambers. Ethel's arm trembled under mine as she looked at one and another, expecting to behold her dear uncle's familiar features. But he was not among the brethren. We went to his chamber, of which the door was open; a female attendant was arranging the room; she told us Colonel Newcome was out for the day, and thus our journey had been made in vain.

Ethel went round the apartment and surveyed its simple decorations; she looked at the pictures of Clive and his boy: the two sabers crossed over the mantel-piece, the Bible laid on the table, by the old latticed window. She walked slowly

up to the humble bed, and sat down on a chair near it. No doubt her heart prayed for him who slept there; she turned round where his black Pensioner's cloak was hanging on the wall, and lifted up the homely garment, and kissed it. The servant looked on, admiring, I should think, her melancholy and her gracious beauty. I whispered to the woman that the young lady was the Colonel's niece. "He has a son who comes here, and is very handsome, too," said the attendant.

The two women spoke together for a while. "Oh, miss!" cried the elder and humbler, evidently astonished at some gratuity which Miss Newcome bestowed upon her, "I didn't want this to be good to him. Everybody here loves him for himself; and I would sit up for him for weeks—that I would."

My companion took a pencil from her bag and wrote "Ethel" on a piece of paper, and laid the paper on the Bible. Darkness had again fallen by this time; feeble lights were twinkling in the chamber windows of the Poor Brethren, as we issued into the courts—feeble lights illumining a dim, gray, melancholy old scene. Many a career, once bright, was flickering out here in the darkness; many a night was closing in. We went away silently from that quiet place; and in another minute were in the flare and din and tumult of London.

"The Colonel is most likely gone to Clive's," I said. "Would not Miss Newcome follow him thither?" We consulted whether she should go. She took heart and said "Yes." "Drive, cabman, to Howland Street!" The horse was, no doubt, tired, for the journey seemed extraordinarily long. I think neither of us spoke a word on the way.

I ran upstairs to prepare our friend for the visit. Clive, his wife, his father, and his mother-in-law were seated by a dim light in Mrs. Clive's sitting room. Rosey on the sofa, as usual; the little boy on his grandfather's knees.

I hardly made a bow to the ladies, so eager was I to communicate with Colonel Newcome. "I have just been to your quarters at Grey Friars, sir," said I. "That is——"

"You have been to the Hospital, sir! You need not be ashamed to mention it, as Colonel Newcome is not ashamed to go there," cried out the Campaigner. "Pray speak in your own language, Clive, unless there is something not fit for ladies to hear." Clive was growling out to me in German that there had just been a terrible scene, his father having, a