

water." The next minute she skipped into the car and laid her white hand on the steering-wheel.

"Oh, don't! Do take care!" I cried. "The thing may run away with you, or burst, or something, and the owner may come out at any moment — it belongs to that young man who was at Exeter, Sir Archibald Maxwell Mackenzie."

"I should like it very much if he did come out," said Virginia, looking over her shoulder at me with the most bewitching ogle I ever saw, and I soon saw that she intended to conquer Sir Archibald as she had conquered many another man, and meant to drive all over Dartmoor in his motor. Well, youth and high spirits are two good things. Let her do what she likes with the young man, so long as she enjoys herself; they will both be old soon enough!

II

Virginia Pomeroy

DARTMOOR, DEVONSHIRE

GREY TOR INN

THE plot thickens; well, goodness knows it was thin enough before, and it is now only of the innocent consistency of cream sauce. For myself I like a plot that will stand quite stiff and firm; still the Exeter motor is here and the Exeter motor-man is here. I don't mean the chauffeur, but the owner. He does n't intend staying more than a day or two, but he may like it better as time goes on, — they often do, even these British icebergs. It is, however, a poor climate for thawing purposes. There are only six people in the inn all told, and two, we hear, are leaving to-night.

I was glad to see the English girl standing at the window when we arrived. She brightened, as much as to say that we two might

make life more cheerful by putting our heads together. Mrs. MacGill is a good companion for mamma, but could not otherwise be endured for a moment. I find it very difficult to account for her on any ordinary basis; I mean of climate or nationality or the like. The only way I can explain her to my satisfaction is, that some sixty years ago her father, a very dull gentleman, met her mother, a lady of feeble mind and waspish disposition; met her, loved her, married her, — and Mrs. MacGill is the result of the union.

Her conversation at table is aimless beyond description, often causing Miss Evesham to blush, and Sir Archibald to raise his eyebrows. It does n't take much to produce this effect on Sir Archibald's part; when he was born they must have been slightly lifted.

Mrs. MacGill asked me, at dinner, my Christian name, not having heard it, as mamma often calls me "Jinny." Here is the colloquy.

Jinny: My name is Virginia; it is one of the Southern States, you know.

Mrs. Mac: Oh, I see! how curious! Is that a common habit of naming children in America?

Jinny: Oh, yes; you see it is such an enormous country, and there are such a number of children to be named that we simply had to extend the supply of names in some way. My mother's middle name, which is my own also, is something really quaint, — "Secessia."

Mrs. Mac: Secessia! What an extraordinary name! Has it any significance?

Jinny: Yes, indeedy! My mother was born in the early days of the Civil War, at the time of the secession, and her father, an ardent Southerner, named her Gloria Secessia.

Mrs. Mac: Let me see, I don't seem to remember any secession; were we mixed up in what you call your Civil War?

(Here Sir Archibald caught my eye and smiled, almost a human smile it was.)

Jinny: No, but you had a good deal to do with the War of Independence. That was nearly a century before. (Sir Archibald was honestly amused here. He must know American history.)

Mrs. Mac: I thought your last war was called the War of Independence, because it made the negroes independent, but I must have got the two confused; and you've just had another small one, have n't you, though now I remember that we were engaged in only one of them, and that was before my time. It seems strange we should have gone across the ocean to help a younger country to fight its battles, but after all, blood is thicker than water. I had a nephew who went to America — Brazil I think was the name of the town — a barrister, Mr. George Forsyth; you may have met him?

Jinny: I think not; I seldom go so far from home.

Mrs. Mac: But you live in South America, do you not?

Jinny: I live in the South, but that is merely to say in the southern part of the United States.

Mrs. Mac: How confusing! I fear I can't make it out without the globes; I was always very good at the globes when I was a child. Cecilia, suppose after dinner you see if there is a globe in the inn.

Poor Miss Evesham! She is so pale, so likable, so downtrodden, and she has been so pretty! Think of what is involved when one uses the past tense with a woman of thirty. She has fine hair and eyes and a sweet manner. As to the rest, she is about my height, and she is not dressed; she is simply clothed. Height is her only visible dimension, the village mantua-maker having shrouded the others in hopeless ambiguity. She has confessed to me that she dresses on fifteen pounds a year! If she had told me that her father was dead, her mother a kleptomaniac, and she the sole support of a large family, I should have pitied her, but a dress

allowance of fifteen pounds a year calls for more than pity; it belongs to the realm of tragedy. She looks at thirty as if she never had had, nor ever expected to have, a good time. How I should like to brighten her up a bit and get her into my room to try on Paris hats!

She and I, aided by Sir Archibald, have been to Stoke Babbage to try to secure a pony, sound, kind, and fleet, that will drag Mrs. MacGill up and down the hills. She refused the steeds proffered by the Grey Tor stables, and sent Miss Evesham to procure something so hopelessly ideal in the shape of horseflesh that I confess we had no expectation of ever finding it.

The groom at the Unicorn produced a nice pony chaise, well padded and well braked, with small low wheels, and a pony originally black, but worn gray by age, as well as by battling with the elements in this region of bare hills and bleak winds. Miss Evesham liked its looks particularly. I too

was pleased by its sturdy build and remarked that its somewhat wild eye might be only a sign of ambition. Sir Archibald took an entirely humorous view of the animal, and indeed, as compared with a motor, the little creature seemed somewhat inadequate. We agreed that for Mrs. MacGill (and here we exchanged wicked glances) it would do admirably, and we all became better acquainted in discussing its points.

Miss Evesham and I offered to drive the pony back to Grey Tor, and Sir Archibald saw us depart with something that approached hilarity. He is awfully nice when he unbends in this way, and quite makes one wish to see him do it oftener. From all our previous conversations I have come away with the sort of feeling you have when you visit the grave of your grandmother on a Sunday afternoon.

I don't know the number of miles between Stoke Babbage and Grey Tor. The distance covered cuts no actual figure in describing the time required for a drive with the new

pony, whom I have christened Greytoria. The word "drive" is not altogether descriptive, since we walked most of the way home. I hardly think this method of progression would have occurred to us, but it did occur to Greytoria, and she communicated the idea by stopping short at the slightest elevation and turning her head in a manner which could only mean, "Suppose you get out if you don't mind!"

Having walked up all the hills we imagined we could perhaps drive down. Not at all. Greytoria dislikes holding back more, if anything, than climbing up. We kept our seats at first, applied the brake, and attempted a very gentle trot. "Don't let us spoil the pony," I said. "We must begin as we mean to go on." Miss Evesham agreed, but in a moment or two each issued from her side of the chaise and that without argument. Greytoria's supports are both stiff and weak—groggy is Sir Archibald's word. She takes trembling little steps with her forelegs while

the hind ones slide automatically down any declivity. The hills between Stoke Babbage and Grey Tor being particularly long and steep, we found that I was obliged to lead Greytoria by the bridle while Miss Evesham held the chaise by the back of the seat and attempted to keep it from falling on the pony's legs; the thing, we finally discovered, that was the ruling terror of her life.

Naturally we were late at luncheon, but we did not describe our drive in detail. The groom at the stables says that the pony can drag Mrs. MacGill quite safely, if Miss Evesham is firm in her management. Of course she will have to walk up and down all the hills, but she doesn't mind that, and Mrs. MacGill will love it. It is bliss to her to lie in slippers ease, so to speak, and see all the people in her vicinity working like galley slaves. We shall be delightfully situated now, with Greytoria, Sir Archibald's motor, and an occasional trap from the stables, if we need other vehicles.

Sir Archibald as yet does not look upon a motor as a philanthropic institution. There are moments when he seems simply to regard it as a means of selfish pleasure, but that must be changed.

Item. Miss Evesham looked only twenty-nine at luncheon.

Mrs. MacGill

LAST night I slept so badly that I could not go down to the dining-room this morning. Cecilia, in spite of her neuralgia yesterday, seemed well and bright. I asked her to send me up some breakfast, but could scarcely eat it when it came; the tea was cold, the bread damp and tough, and the egg fresh enough, but curious. Cecilia never came near me after breakfast. When I came down about eleven o'clock, very cold, I found no one in the sitting-rooms. Hearing voices, I went to the door and found Cecilia talking to the American girl, who had a great deal of colour for that hour in the morning. Sir Archibald came up, grinding round the drive in his motor. It is quite unnecessary to have brought a motor here at all, for I observe that the hillsides are covered with ponies. There must have been a herd of twenty-five of them outside my

window this morning, so a motor is quite out of place. The doctor here recommends me to try driving exercise, but some of the animals are so very small that I scarcely think they could pull me up these hills. Cecilia says the smaller ones are foals. Many of them kick, I see, so we must select with care. I wish we could procure a donkey. The feeling of confidence I have when in a donkey-chair more than makes up for the slowness of motion.

Like me, Mrs. Pomeroy was kept awake by the wind — it never stops here. When I remarked on this, Cecilia said in her patronising way, "Don't you remember Borrow's famous line, —

"There's always the wind on the heath"?

"I see nothing clever in that," I said; "there is always wind on the heath here, and I particularly dislike it."

When we came into the drawing-room Miss Pomeroy was saying, "I've discovered

a piano!" The piano, to my mind, was the largest object in the room, so she must be short-sighted, if she had not seen it before; pride probably prevents her wearing glasses. She sat there singing for quite a long time. She would n't finish her songs, but just sang scraps of a number of things. Sir Archibald came into the room and stood about for some time. I asked him several questions about his father's sister, whom I used to know. He replied so absently that I could make nothing of it. Miss Pomeroy has a clear voice. She sang what I suppose were translations of negro songs — very noisy. When she afterwards tried one of Moore's exquisite melodies, I confess to admiring it. It was a great favourite with Mr. MacGill, who used to sing it with much feeling: —

Around the dear ruin, each wish of my heart.

What a touching expression that is for a middle-aged woman — "the dear ruin"!

Grey Tor is certainly very bleak. The