

guide-books speak of "huge monoliths" (I suppose they mean the rocks on the moor), "seeming to have been reared by some awful cataclysm of nature in primordial times." I hope there will be no cataclysms during our stay on the moor; the accounts of tempests of which I read in some of the novels quite frighten me, yet I can scarcely think there is much danger about this tor — "a giant, the biggest tor of all," the guide-books say. It is so fully peopled by tourists with luncheon baskets that one loses the feeling of desolation. Miss Pomeroy has been up to the top already — twice, once alone. Cecilia means to go too, though nothing can be worse for neuralgia than cold wind. She will always say that nothing hurts her like sitting in hot rooms. I should be very glad to have a hot room to sit in! She has got a nice, quiet-looking animal at last, and a low pony chaise, so I hope to have some drives.

Neuralgia is one of those things one cannot calculate on. Cecilia will be ill all day,

and then suddenly able to come down to dinner. I have suffered a good deal from tic douloureux myself, but was never able to eat during the paroxysms, as Cecilia seems to be. After having five teeth pulled, I once lived exclusively on soup for three days.

Miss Pomeroy, I suppose, is what most people would call a pretty girl. Hot bread and dyspepsia will soon do for her, though, as for all American women. The bread here is tough and very damp. She is dark, very dark in hair and eyes, in spite of her white skin, and she describes herself as a "Southerner." I should be inclined to suspect a strain of negro or Indian blood. I heard her discussing what she called "the colour problem" with Cecilia, and she seemed to speak with a good deal of bitterness. Yet Mrs. Pomeroy is evidently a lady. The girl dresses well in the American style, which I never attempt. She has, I suppose, what would be called a fine figure, though the waist seems of no importance just now. Her feet, in

shoes, look small enough, though the heels she wears astonish me; it is years since I have worn anything but a simple cloth boot, neat but roomy. I have seen her glance at my feet several times, as if she observed something odd about them.

Sir Archibald Maxwell Mackenzie.

GREY TOR INN

IS N'T it a most extraordinary thing that when people are in a comfortable house, with a good roof over their heads, solid meals served at regular intervals three or four times a day, and every possible comfort, they instantly want to go outside and make themselves not only thoroughly uncomfortable, but generally ill besides, by having a picnic in the open? Ever since I had that walk with Miss Pomeroy, she has done nothing but talk about a picnic at some beastly little village in the vicinity where there is a church that the guide-books tell the usual lies about. As to churches—a church to my mind is a place to go to on Sundays with the rest of the congregation. It is plainly not constructed for week days, when it is empty, cold, and damp, and you

have to take your hat off in the draughts all the same, and talk in whispers. As to picnics — there's a kind of folly about *them* that it is altogether beyond me to understand. Why such things ever take place outside the grounds of a lunatic asylum, goodness only knows; they ought to be forbidden by law, and the people who organize them shut up as dangerous. However, I see I am in for this one. Miss Pomeroy wants the motor, but she won't get the motor without me. Heaven be praised, the weather has broken up in the mean time, which is the reason I am staying on here. Motoring on Dartmoor in a tearing nor'easter is no catch. My quarters are comfortable, and but for the women I should be doing very well.

The worst of it is, there is a whole batch of them now. A Mrs. MacGill and her companion are here, and these two and the Americans seem to have met before. The two old women are as thick as thieves, and the fair Virginia (she told me her name,

though she might have seen, I am sure, that I was simply dying not to know it) seems to have a good deal to say to the companion, though the latter does n't appear to me much in the line of such a lively young person. There's no rule, of course, for women's likes and dislikes, any more than for anything else that has to do with them. The unlucky part of it is that Mrs. MacGill seemed to spot me the moment she heard my name. She says my father was her brother-in-law's first cousin, and her brother-in-law died at Agra in a fit; though what that has to do with it, goodness knows. It means I have got to be civil and to get mixed up with the rest of the party. A man can never be as rude as he feels, which is one of the drawbacks of civilization. So I have to sit at their table now, and talk the whole time — can't even have a meal in peace. The old woman MacGill is on one side, the American girl on the other. The companion sits opposite. *She* keeps quiet, which is one

mercy; generally has neuralgia, — a pale, rather ladylike young woman with a seen-better-days-and-once-was-decidedly-pretty air about her. The American girl's clothes take the cake, of course — a new frock every night and such ribbons and laces — my stars! I'd rather not be the man who has to pay for them. I'm surprised at her talking so much to the humble companion — thought this sort of girl never found it worth while to be civil to her own sex; but I conclude this is not invariably the case.

"I'm afraid your neuralgia is very bad up here," I heard her say to Miss Evesham (that's the companion's name) after dinner last night. "You come right along to my room, and I'll rub menthol on your poor temples." And they went off together and disappeared for the night.

The weather has cleared up to-day, though it is still too cold and windy, thank the Lord, for the picnic to Widdington-in-the-Wolds. I took the motor to a little town about four

miles off, and overtook the fair Virginia and Miss Evesham, footing it there on some errand of Mrs. MacGill's. I slowed down as I got near, but I soon saw Miss Pomeroy intended me to stop; there's no uncertainty about any of *her* desires.

"Now, Sir Archibald," said she with a straight look which made me understand that obedience was my rôle, "I know what you're going to do this very minute. Miss Evesham's neuralgia is so bad that she can scarcely see, and you've got to take her right along in your motor to the Unicorn Inn, and help choose a pony for Mrs. MacGill. Just a man's job — you'd love doing it, I should think."

I wanted to hum and haw a bit, but she did n't give me the chance. She pulled open the door behind. "Get in quick!" she said to the companion. "Quick, quick! a motor puff-puffing this way always makes me think it's in a desperate hurry and won't wait!"

I, however, was not in such a hurry this time, though there's nothing I hate more, as a rule, than wasting motor power standing still.

"What are *you* going to do, Miss Pome-roy?" I shouted above the throbbing and shaking of the machine.

"Going right home to my mother," she replied. "It's about time, too."

"No, you don't," thought I, "and leave me saddled with the companion." For if you *must* have female society, you may as well have it good-looking when you are about it.

"Won't you do me the pleasure of taking a ride too?" I asked politely. I knew perfectly well she was dying for a ride in the motor, and I had turned a deaf ear to dozens of hints. But now that she wanted to do the other woman a good turn and walk home herself, nothing would content me but to have her in the motor. I know how inconvenient it is to be good-natured

and unselfish. I am obliged to be both so often, against my natural inclinations.

Miss Virginia's eyes gave a sparkle, but she hesitated a moment.

"The front seat's much the jolliest," I remarked, "and it's very good going — no end of a surface." She gave a jump and was up beside me in half a second, and we were off.

By Jove — that was a good bit of going! The road was clear, the surface like velvet. I took every bit out of the motor that was in it, and we went the pace and no mistake. Miss Virginia was as pleased as Punch, I could see. She had to hold on her hat with both hands, and her cheeks and lips were as red as roses; the ribbons flew out from her neck, and flapped across my face, which was a nuisance, of course; they had the faint scent of some flower or other; I hate smells as a rule, but this was not strong enough to be bad. We got down at the Unicorn, and though I said I knew nothing whatever about

ponies, I had to look through the stables with the hostler, and choose a beast and a trap for Mrs. MacGill. There was only one of each, so the choice was not difficult. The two girls drove home in the turnout. I thought it was time to disappear.

Cecilia Evesham

GREY TOR INN

Thursday

I HAVE had a miserable thirty-six hours. Mrs. MacGill has been ill again — or has believed that she is ill again. I do not think there is much wrong with her, but the over-sympathetic Mrs. Pomeroy went on describing symptoms to her till she became quite nervous and went to bed, demanding that a doctor be sent for. This was no easy matter, but at last a callow medical fledgling was dug out somewhere, who was ready to agree with all I said to him.

“Suggest fresh air and exercise to Mrs. MacGill,” I said, “for she considers the one poisonous, the other almost a crime, and knitting the only legitimate form of amusement.”

So he recommended air and exercise — driving exercise by preference.

“I used to like the donkey-chairs at Tunbridge Wells,” Mrs. MacGill responded, “but horses go so rapidly.”

However, after the doctor had gone she began to consider his advice.

“Shall I go to the stables and arrange for you to have a drive this afternoon?” I asked.

She demurred, for she never can make up her mind about anything.

“I can’t decide just now,” she hesitated. “I’ll think it over.”

I took up the guide-book, and was allowed to read its thrilling pages for some ten minutes. Then Mrs. MacGill called me again.

“Perhaps if you go and select a *very* quiet horse we might have a drive in the afternoon,” she said.

I went and saw the horse, and arranged for the drive, then returned to tell Mrs. MacGill of the arrangement. She was not

pleased. Had I said that *perhaps* we would drive out at three o’clock, it would have been more to her mind.

“Go back and tell the man that perhaps we’ll go,” she said.

“But perhaps some one else will take out the horse, in that case,” I suggested, cross and weary with her fidgeting. All the rest of the forenoon was one long vacillation: she would go, or she would not go; it would rain, or it would not rain; she would countermand the carriage or she would order it. But by three o’clock the sun was shining, so I got her bonneted and cloaked and led her down to the hall. The motor had come round at the same moment with our carriage. Its owner was looking it over before he made a start, and I was not surprised to see that Miss Virginia Pomeroy was also at the door, and that she showed great interest in the tires of the motor. Had I been that young man I must have asked her to drive with me there and then, she looked so delightful;

but he is rather a phlegmatic creature, surely, for he did n't seem to think of it. Just as we were preparing to step into the carriage, the motor gave out a great puff of steam, and the horse in our vehicle sprang up in the shafts and took a shy to one side. It was easily quieted down, but of course the incident was more than enough for Mrs. MacGill.

"Take it away," she said to the driver. "I won't endanger my life with such an animal — brown horses are always wild, and so are black ones."

It was vain for me to argue; she just turned away and walked upstairs again, I following to take off her bonnet and cloak, and supply her again with her knitting. So there was an end of the carriage exercise, it seemed.

But there's a curious boring pertinacity in the creature, for after we had sat in silence for about ten minutes she remarked: —

"Cecilia, the doctor *said* I was to have

carriage exercise. Don't you think I could get a donkey-chair?"

"No," I replied quite curtly. "Donkey chairs do not grow on Dartmoor."

She never saw that I was provoked, and perhaps it was just as well.

"No," she said after a pause for reflection. "No, I dare say they do not, but don't you think if you walked to Stoke Babbage you might be able to get one for me?"

"I might be able to get a pony chaise and a quiet pony," I answered, scenting the possibility of a five-mile walk that would give me an hour or two of peace.

"Well, will you go and try if you can get one?" she asked.

"If you don't mind being left alone for a few hours, I'll do what I can," I said. She was beginning to object, when Virginia appeared, leading in her mother.

"Here's my mother come to keep you company, Mrs. MacGill," she explained. "She wishes to hear all about your chill, from

the first shiver right on to the last cough." She placed Mrs. Pomeroy in an armchair, and fairly drove me out of the room before her, pushing me with both hands.

"Come! Run! Fly! Escape!" she cried. "You are as white as butter with waiting on that woman's fads. I won't let you come in again under three hours. My mother's symptoms are good to last for two and a half hours, and then Mrs. MacGill can fill up the rest of the time with hers."

Gaiety like Virginia's is infectious. I ran, yes, really ran downstairs along with her, quite forgetting my headache and weariness. I almost turned traitor to Mrs. MacGill and was ready to laugh at her with this girl.

"She wants a pony chaise, and I'm to go down to Stoke Babbage to choose it," I said.

"Why, that's five miles away, isn't it?" she asked. "You're not half equal to a walk like that."

"Anything — anything for a respite from Mrs. MacGill!" I cried.

"Well, if you are fit for it, I reckon I am," Virginia said, and with that we set off together down the road. . . .