

under the solemn little roof that had sheltered so many a coffin on its way to the grave, Virginia turned and gave me a kiss.

“ You dear ! ” she said. That was all.

## VI

Virginia Pomeroy

GREY TOR INN

**H**ERE beginneth the chronicle of the dreadfulest drive that ever was driven. I pitied Sir Archibald with my whole heart to be left behind with Greytoria and me, but what else could be done? There was a mist when we started which degenerated after a bit into an intermittent drizzle, and at intervals the wind blew a young tornado. The road was dreary, but fascinating in its broad stretches of loneliness. We passed green field and brown moor in turn, with all the trees looking grey in the mist, and here and there the brawling of a stream to break the silence. Sometimes there was a woodman working in a roadside copse, sometimes a goggled stone-breaker pursuing his monoto-

nous task, sometimes a carrier bending beneath his weight of fagots. If it had not been for the flaming gorse and the groups of red cattle, there would have been no colour in the landscape. My spirits kept their normal height for the first six or eight miles, but they sank little by little as the hills grew in number and increased in height. Sir Archibald refused to let me walk, and it made me wretched to see him stalking beside the pony chaise, appealing to Greytoria's pride, courage, conscience, ambition, and sense of decency, in turn, and mostly without avail. We kept the best-travelled road, but it seemed to lead us farther and farther from Grey Tor, which had quite disappeared from the horizon and could not be used as a landmark. There could be no conversation either going up or down hill, as Sir Archibald was too breathless and busy. I, sitting in state, punctuated the ascents and descents, as long as I had strength, with agreeable persiflage something in this wise: —

“The guide-book says, ‘Pedestrianism is doubtless the ideal manner of touring in Devonshire. Only on foot is it possible to view the more romantic scenery. Motors are not advised and bicycles discouraged.’”

Sir Archibald would smile, say something under his breath, and whack Greytoria.

“Sir Archibald, there is a place in these parts where the devil is said to have died of cold; it must be just here.”

“Sir Archibald, do 'e knaw I think we 'm pixy-led? When Devonshire folk miss the path home at night and go astray, they 'm 'pixy-led.’”

If we two poor wayfarers could have sat quietly beside each other and chatted in 'e dimpsey light, it would not have been a bit bad, but there was something eternally doing. When the drag was n't being put on or off, the whip was being agitated, or Sir Archibald was looking for a house to ask the way. Never was there such a route from one spot to another as the one we took from Wid-

dington-in-the-Wolds to the Grey Tor Inn. If it was seven miles as the swallow flies, it was twenty-seven as Greytoria flew. The dinner hour passed, and the luncheon baskets, with all other luggage, were in the motor. Sir Archibald's last information, obtained from an unintelligible boy driving a cow, was to the effect that we were only two miles from home.

"She may manage it and she may not," said my squire, looking savagely at Greytoria. "If I only knew whether she can't or she won't, I should deal with her differently."

The rain now came down in earnest. Part of my mind was forever toiling up or creeping down a hill with the pony, and another part was spent in keeping my umbrella away from Sir Archibald's hat, on those rare occasions when he was by my side. A woman may have the charms of Cleopatra or Helen of Troy, but if she cannot keep her parasol or umbrella away from a man's hat, her doom is sealed.

How I hate this British climate! How I hate to wear always and always stout shoes, sensible clothes, serviceable hats, short skirts, looking like a frump in the intervals of sunshine, that I may be properly attired when it rains! I shed a few secret tears now and then for sheer down-heartedness and discouragement. I was desperately cold, and my wetting had given me a feverish, teeth-chattering sort of feeling. Hungry I was, too, and in such a rage with the beastly pony that I wished she had been eaten in the French Revolution; she was too old to be tender, even then.

Now ensued a brief, all too brief, season of content on a fairly level bit of road. It was not over an eighth of a mile in length, and must have been an accident on the part of Nature. I was so numb and so sleepy that I just heard Sir Archibald's sigh of gratitude as he took his seat for a moment beside me, and then I subsided into a semi-comatose state, too tired to make even one more ex-

piring effort to be agreeable. I am not clear as to the next few moments, in which I felt a sudden sense of warmth and well-being and companionship. I must have dropped off into a sort of dream, and in the dream I felt the merest touch, just the brush of something on my cheek, or I thought I did. Slight as it was there was something unaccustomed about it that made me come hastily into the conscious world, and my waking was made the more speedy by a sudden stir and noise and ejaculation. We had come to another hill, and Sir Archibald had evidently wished for once to omit the walking-up process. Greytoria, outraged in her deepest sensibilities by the unwonted addition of Sir Archibald's weight to her burdens, braced her hind legs firmly and proceeded to achieve the impossible by slithering backward down the hill. Sir Archibald leaped out on the one side; I put the drag on, or off, whichever is wrong, and leaped out on the other.

He adjusted the drag and gave Greytoria

a clip that she will describe to her grandchildren on future winter evenings. I, with matchless presence of mind, got behind the pony chaise and put my shoulder under the back to break its descent. And so we wound wearily up the hill, and on reaching the top, saw the lighted hotel just ahead of us.

In silence we traversed the few remaining yards, each busy with his own thought. Silently we entered the gate and gave Greytoria to the waiting groom. Silently and stiffly I alighted from the chaise, helped by Sir Archibald's supporting arm. He held my hand a second longer than was necessary; held it, half dropped it, and held it again; or did something unusual with it that was widely separated from an ordinary good-night "shake."

There was no harm in that, for the most unsentimental man feels a sort of brotherly sympathy for a damp, cold, hungry, tired, nice girl.

But about that other — episode? . . . Of

course if he did, I should resent it bitterly ; but if it were only a dream I must not blame him even in thought. . . . There is always the risk that a man might misunderstand the frank good-fellowship in which we American girls are brought up, and fail to realize that with all our nonsense we draw the line just as heavily, and in precisely the same place as our British cousins. . . . But why do I think about it any more? . . . It would n't be a bit like him, so probably he did n't. . . . In fact it is so entirely out of character that he simply could n't. . . . And yet I suppose the number of men who actually could n't, is comparatively small.

Mrs. MacGill

WELL, we spent the day till five o'clock in that dreary spot, cold and wretched. Then Sir Archibald proposed that I should go home with Mrs. Pomeroy in the motor; they said we should get there quicker that way! He meant to drive Miss Pomeroy in the pony chaise, not being at all afraid, he said, of any pony, however spirited. Of course nothing would induce me to enter a pony carriage drawn by that animal again. A motor is more dangerous in some ways, but at any rate it cannot sit down like that pony, and they all assured us that it was both safe and speedy. Mrs. Pomeroy had been quite at ease in it, she said, so at last I consented to go. Cecilia tied on my bonnet with my grey wool shawl, and we set out. It surprises me that motoring should have become a favourite pastime with so-called

fashionable people, for certainly one does not appear to advantage in motoring garments. The cold was intense, and at first everything whizzed past me at such a rate that I could remember nothing except two lines that Cecilia read to me last evening, about "the void car hurled abroad by reinless steeds."

There were no steeds, of course, nor reins, and the car was not void, but that was quite the motion. My bonnet, in spite of the shawl and string, was instantly torn from my head. I begged Johnson, a very civil Scotchman who could understand what I said, to stop the machine for a few moments and let me breathe. Cecilia advised me to remove the bonnet and trust wholly to the shawl. My hair is not thick, especially on the top, and I soon had all the sensation of the head being padded in ice, which we read of as a treatment for brain fever.

It was now beginning to get dark. Johnson drew up suddenly, and declared that he

must have taken the wrong road. There were no sign-posts anywhere, and it had begun to rain heavily. We were standing just at the foot of a steep hill where the road lay through a thick wood. Above us was a tower of rock, — another "tor," I suppose, if not a "monolith."

Johnson proposed to drive the machine on into the wood, and leave us under shelter whilst he went to a cottage that we saw farther up, to inquire about the road. This I decidedly objected to. Mrs. Pomeroy and Cecilia seemed to think me foolish, and could not understand my being afraid.

"But," I said, "I have good reason to refuse to enter that wood. Indeed it will not be safe for Johnson to leave us there alone: I recognize the place perfectly. In one of the books by that Mr. Phillpotts, who, you have all told me, is most accurate in his descriptions, I read about this place, and he said, 'The Wolf suckled her young there yesterday.' Yes, Cecilia, laugh if you

like; those were the very words, and I examined the date of the publication, which was not a year ago. *Yesterday* was the word used."

"Then the cubs will still be too small to attack us," observed Cecilia, who has no tact and is constantly trying to be facetious when she should be endeavouring to allay my nervous terrors.

"He would be meaning foxes, ma'am," said Johnson, who had been listening whilst fright compelled me to quote the exact expression I had read.

"It is possible that he meant foxes, Johnson," allowed I, "but three ladies alone in a motor, in the dark, attacked even by wild foxes, would be in some danger; so I hope that you will drive on directly, and get us out of this horrid place as soon as possible."

They tried to smooth over the situation, but I would listen to none of them, and Johnson at last drove on. Halfway up the hill

the motor stuck. Something had gone wrong with it inside, and I felt that we might stay there in the wilderness all night, which would have been impossible, as I had taken very few remedies of any kind with me, and cannot sleep sitting up. These stoppages occurred several times. How we at length got home I scarcely remember. My velvet mantle was like a sponge, my feet so cold that it was all I could do to dismount from the motor when it ground up to the hotel door. There was Sir Archibald standing smoking as if nothing extraordinary had occurred.

"Why, Mrs. MacGill," he cried, "you are even later than we were, and I thought that blessed pony was going to her own funeral."

I thought that in spite of his tone he looked rather pale and agitated; he was of course anxious, and rightly so, about my safety.

"Sir Archibald," I said, as soon as I could speak, "I trust that I never again

may have to enter one of those motors. Human life, especially mine, is too precious to be thrown away in such a fashion. Another half hour of it would have killed me outright. Had Mr. MacGill been alive he would never have consented to my going into it for a moment. As it is, I can scarcely hear or see owing to the frightful noises and the rain lashing on my face; every hair on my head feels pulled the wrong way, and I'm sure I shall have another bad relapse of influenza by to-morrow morning. Your uncle was a friend of my poor brother-in-law who died at Agra in a moment, and unless you take a warning you will have an end quite as sudden and much more frightful, for his was heart complaint, and you will be smashed to pieces by the wheels of that hideous machine."

I left them downstairs and went to bed. Cecilia tried to make me believe there was nothing wrong with me, as she always does when she has neuralgia, or *says* she has neu-

ralgia, herself, but I know that there is. What is the matter I can't exactly say, only I am certain that I am going to suffer in some way from this horrible expedition.