

meant "you," not "we"; for it was a long time before she went to sleep herself. She had plenty to think of, and wanted to be quiet, conscious of Sally in the neighbourhood.

We hope our reader was not misled, as we ourselves were, when Mrs. Nightingale first saw the name on Fenwick's arm, into supposing that she accepted it as his real name. She knew better. But then, how was she to tell him his name was Paliser? Think it over.

CHAPTER XIII

OF A SLEEPLESS NIGHT MRS. NIGHTINGALE HAD, AND HOW SALLY WOKE UP AND TALKED

WAS it possible, thought Rosalind in the sleepless night that followed, that the recurrence of the tennis-garden in Fenwick's mind might grow and grow, and be a nucleus round which the whole memory of his life might re-form? Even so she had seen, at a chemical lecture, a supersaturated solution, translucent and spotless, suddenly fill with innumerable ramifications from one tiny crystal dropped into it. Might not this shred of memory chance to be a crystal of the right salt in the solvent of his mind, and set going a swift arborescence to penetrate the whole? Might not one branch of that tree be a terrible branch—one whose leaves and fruit were poisoned and whose stem was clothed with thorns? A hideous metaphor of the moment—call it the worst in her life—when her young husband, driven mad with the knowledge that had just forced its way into his reluctant mind, had almost struck her away from him, and with angry words, of which the least was traitress, had broken through the effort of her hands to hold him, and left her speechless in her despair.

It was such a nightmare idea, this anticipation that next time she met Gerry's eyes she might see again the anger that was in them on that blackest of her few married days, might see him again vanish from her, this time never to return. And it spread an ever growing horror, greater and greater in the silence and the darkness of the night, till it filled all space and became a power that thrilled through every nerve, and denied the right of any other thing in the infinite void to be known or thought of. Which of us has not been left, with no protection but our own weak resolutions, to the mercy of a dominant idea in the

still hours when others were near us sleeping whom we might not wake to say one word to to save us?

What would his face be like—how would his voice sound—when she saw him next? Or would some short and cruel letter come to say he had remembered all, and now—for all the gratitude he owed her—he could not bear to look upon her face again, hers who had done him such a wrong! If so, what should she—what could she do?

There was only one counter-thought to this that brought with it a momentary balm. She would send Sally to him to beg, beseech, implore him not to repeat his headstrong error of the old years, to swear to him that if only he could know all he would forgive—nay, more, that if he could know quite all—the very whole of the sad story—not only would he forgive, but rather seek forgiveness for himself for the too harsh judgment he so rashly formed.

What should she say to Sally? how should she instruct her to plead for her? Never mind that now. All she wanted in her lonely, nervous delirium was the ease the thought gave her, the mere thought of the force of Sally's fixed, immovable belief—that she was certain of—that whatsoever her mother had done was right. Never mind the exact amount of revelation she would have to make to Sally. She might surely indulge the idea, just to get at peace somehow, till—as pray Heaven it might turn out—she should know that Gerry's mind was still unconscious of its past. The chances were, so she thought mechanically to herself, that all her alarms were groundless.

And at the first—strange as it is to tell—Sally's identity was only that of the daughter she had now, that filled her life, and gave her the heart to live. She was the Sally space was full of for her. *What* she was, and *why* she was, merged, as it usually did, in the broad fact of her existence. But there was always the chance that this *what* and *why*—two bewildering imps—should flaunt their unsolved conundrum through her mother's baffled mind. There they were, sure enough in the end, enjoying her inability to answer, dragging all she prayed daily to be better able to forget out into the light of the memory they had kindled. There they were, chuckling over her misery, and hiding—so Rosalind feared—a worse question than any, keeping it back for

a final stroke to bring her mental fever to its height—how could Sally be the daughter of a devil and her soul be free from the taint of his damnation?

If Rosalind had only been well read in the mediæval classics, and had known that story of Merlin's birth—the Nativity that was to rewrite the Galilean story in letters of Hell, and give mankind for ever to be the thrall of the fallen angel his father! And now the babe at its birth was snatched away to the waters of baptism, and poor Satan—alas!—obliged to cast about for some new plan of campaign; which, to say truth, he must have found, and practised with some success. But Rosalind had never read this story. Had she done so she might have felt, as we do, that the tears of an absolutely blameless mother might serve to cleanse the inherited sin from a babe unborn as surely as the sacramental fount itself.

And it may be that some such thought had woven itself into the story Fenwick's imagination framed for Rosalind the evening before—that time that she said of Sally, "She is not a devil!" The exact truth, the ever-present record that was in her mind as she said this, must remain unknown to us.

But to return to her as she is now, racked by a twofold mental fever, an apprehension of a return of Fenwick's memory, and a stimulated recrudescence of her own; with the pain of all the scars burnt in twenty years ago revived now by her talk with him of a few hours since. She could bear it no longer, there alone in the darkness of the night. She *must* get at Sally, if only to look at her. Why, that child never could be got to wake unless shaken when she was wanted. Ten to one she wouldn't this time. And it would make all the difference just to see her there, alive and leagues away in dreamland. If her sleep lasted through the crackle of a match to light her candle, heard through the open door between their rooms, the light of the candle itself wouldn't wake her. Rosalind remembered as she lit the candle and found her dressing-gown—for the night air struck cold—how once, when a ten-year-old, Sally had locked herself in, and no noise or knocking would rouse her; how she herself, alarmed for the child, had thereon summoned help, and the door was broken open, but only to be greeted by the sleeper, after explanation, with, "Why didn't you knock?"

She was right in her forecast, and perhaps it was as well the girl did not wake. She would only have had a needless fright, to see her mother, haggard with self-torment, by her bedside at that hour. So Rosalind got her full look at the rich coils of black hair that framed up the unconscious face, that for all its unconsciousness had on it the contentment of an amused dreamer, at the white ivory skin it set off so well, at the one visible ear that heard nothing, or if it did, translated it into dream, and the faint rhythmic movement that vouched for soundless breath. She looked as long as she dared, then moved away. But she had barely got her head back on her pillow when "Was that you, mother?" came from the next room. Her mother always said of Sally that nothing was certain but the *imprévu*, and ascribed to her a monstrous perversity. It was this that caused her to sleep profoundly through that most awakening of incidents, a person determined not to disturb you, and then to wake up short into that person's self-congratulations on success.

"Of course it was, darling. Who else could it have been?"

Sally's reply, "I thought it was," seems less reasonable—mere conversation making—and a sequel as of one reviewing new and more comfortable positions in bed follows naturally. A decision on the point does not prohibit conversation, rather facilitates it.

"What did you come for, mammy?"

"Eau-de-Cologne." The voice has a fell intention of instant sleep in it which Sally takes no notice of.

"Have you got it?"

"Got it? Yes. Go to sleep, chatterbox."

It was true about the eau-de-Cologne, for Rosalind, with a self-acting instinct that explanation might be called for, had picked up the bottle on her return journey. You see, she was always practising wicked deceits and falsehoods, all to save that little chit being made miserable on her account. But the chit wasn't going to sleep again. She was going to enjoy her new attitude awake. Who woke her up? Answer that.

"I say, mother!"

"What, kitten? Go to sleep."

"All right—in a minute. Do you remember Mr. Fenwick's bottle of eau-de-Cologne?"

"Of course I do. Go to sleep."

"Just going. But wasn't it funny?"

"What funny?—Oh, the eau-de-Cologne!"

Rosalind isn't really sleepy, and may as well talk. "Yes, that was very funny. I wonder where he got it." She seems roused, and her daughter is repentant.

"Oh dear! What a shame! I've just spoiled your go-off. Poor mother!"

"Never mind, chick! I like to talk a little. It *was* funny that he should have a big bottle of eau-de-Cologne, of all things, in his pocket."

"Yes, but it was rummer still about Rosalind Nightingale—*his* Rosalind Nightingale, the one he knew." This is dangerous ground, and Rosalind knows it. But a plea of half-sleep will cover mistakes, and conversation about the pre-electrocution period is the nearest approach to taking Sally into her confidence that she can hope for. She is so weary with her hours of wakefulness that she becomes a little reckless, foreseeing a resource in such uncertainty of speech as may easily be ascribed to a premature dream.

"It's not *impossible* that it should have been your grandmother, kitten. But we can't find out now. And it wouldn't do us any good that I can see."

"It would be nice to know for curiosity. Couldn't anything be fished out in the granny connexion? No documents?"

"Nothing will ever be fished out by me in that connexion, Sally darling." Sally knows from her mother's tone of voice that they are approaching an *impasse*. She means to give up the point the moment it comes fully in view. But she will go on until that happens. She has to think out what was the name of the Sub-Dean before she speaks again.

"Didn't the Reverend Decimus Ireson grab all the belongings?"

"They were left to him, child. It was all fair, as far as that goes. I didn't grudge him the things—indeed, I felt rather grateful to him for taking them. It would only have been pain-

ful, going over them. Different people feel differently about these things. I didn't want old recollections."

"Hadh't the Reverend Decimus a swarm of brats?"

"Sal—ly *darling!* . . . Well, yes, he had. There were two families. One of six daughters, I forget which."

"Couldn't they be got at, to see if they wouldn't recollect something?"

"Of course they could. They've married a lawyer—at least, one of them has. And all the rest, I believe, live with them." At another time Sally would have examined this case in relation to the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill. She was too interested now to stop her mother continuing: "But what a silly chick you are! Why should *they* know anything about it?"

"Why shouldn't they?"

Her mother's reply is emphasized. "My dear, do consider! I was with your grandmother till within a month of her marriage with the Reverend, as you call him, and I should have been ten times more likely to hear about Mr. Fenwick than ever they would afterwards. Your grandmother had never even seen them when I went away to India to be married."

"What's the lawyer's name?"

"Bearman, I think, or Dearman. But why?—Oh, no, by-the-bye, I think it's Beazley."

"Because I could write and ask, or call. Sure to hear something."

"My dear, you'll hear nothing, and they'll only think you mad." Rosalind was beginning to feel that she had made a mistake. She did not feel so sure Sally would hear nothing. A recollection crossed her mind of how one of the few incidents there was time for in her short married life had been the writing of a letter by her husband to his friend, the real Fenwick, and of much chaff therein about the eldest of these very daughters, and her powerful rivalry to Jessie Nairn. It came back to her now. Sally alarmed her still further.

"Yes, mother. I shall just get Mr. Fenwick to hunt up the address, and go and call on the Beazleys." This sudden assumption of a concrete form by the family was due to a vivid image that filled Sally's active brain immediately of a household of parched women presided over by a dried man who owned a wig

on a stand and knew what chaff-wax meant, which she didn't. A shop window near Lincoln's Inn was responsible. But to Rosalind it really seemed that Sally must have had other means of studying this family, and she was frightened.

"You don't know them, kitten?"

"Not the least. Don't want to." This reflection suggests caution. "Perhaps I'd better write. . . ."

"Better do nothing of the sort, child. Better go to sleep. . . ."

"All right." But Sally does not like quitting the subject so abruptly, and enlarges on it a little more. She sketches out a letter to be written to the lady who is at present a buffer-state between the dried man and the parched women. "Dear madam," she recites, "you may perhaps recall—or will perhaps recall—which is right, mother?"

"Either, dear. Go to sleep." But just at this moment Rosalind recollects with satisfaction that the name was neither Beazley nor Dearman, but Tressilian Tredgold. She has been thinking of falling back on affectation of sleep to avoid more alarms, but this makes it needless.

"I'm sure I've got the name wrong," she says, with revived wakefulness in her voice.

But Sally is murmuring to herself—"Perhaps recall my mother, Mrs. Rosalind Nightingale—Rosalind in brackets—by her maiden name of—by the same name—who married the late Mr. Graythorpe in India—I say, mother. . . ."

"Yes, little goose."

"How am I to put all that?"

"Go to sleep! I don't think you'll find that family very—coming. My impression is you had much better leave it alone. What good would it do you to find out who Mr. Fenwick was? And perhaps have him go away to Australia!"

"Why Australia?"

Oh dear, what mistakes Rosalind did make! Why on earth need she name the place she knew Gerry did go to? America would have done just as well.

"Australia—New Zealand—America—anywhere!" But Sally doesn't mind—has fallen back on her letter-sketch.

"Apologizing for troubling you, believe me, dear madam, yours faithfully—or very faithfully, or truly—Rosalind Nightin-

gale. . . . No; I should not like Mr. Fenwick to go away anywhere. No more would you. I want him here, for us. So do you!"

"I should be very sorry indeed for Mr. Fenwick to go away. We should miss him badly. But fancy what his wife must be feeling, if he has one. I can sympathize with her." It really was a relief to say anything so intensely true.

Did the reality with which she spoke impress Sally more than the mere words, which were no more than "common form" of conversation? Probably, for something in them brought back her conference with the Major on Boxing Day morning when her mother was at church. What was that she had said to him when she was sitting on his knee improving his whiskers?—that if she, later on, saw reason to suppose his suspicions true, she would ask her mother point-blank. Why not? And here she was with the same suspicions, quite, quite independent of the Major. And see how dark it was in both rooms! One could say anything. Besides, if her mother didn't want to answer, she could pretend to be asleep. She wouldn't ask too loud, to give her a chance.

"Mother darling, if Mr. Fenwick was to make you an offer, how should you like it?"

"Oh dear! *What's* the child saying? What is it, Sallykin? I was just going off."

Now, obviously, you can ask a lady Sally's question in the easy course of flowing chat, but you can't drag her from the golden gates of sleep to ask it. It gets too official. So Sally backed out, and said she had said nothing, which wasn't the case. The excessive readiness with which her mother accepted the statement looks, to us, as if she had really been awake and heard.

CHAPTER XIV

HOW MILLAIS' "HUGUENOT" CAME OF A WALK IN THE BACK GARDEN.
AND HOW FENWICK VERY NEARLY KISSED SALLY

IN spite of Colonel Lund's having been so betimes in his forecastings about Mrs. Nightingale and Fenwick (as we must go on calling him for the present), still, when one day that lady came, about six weeks after the nocturne in our last chapter, and told him she must have his consent to a step she was contemplating before she took it, he felt a little shock in his heart—one of those shocks one so often feels when one hears that a thing he has anticipated without pain, even with pleasure, is to become actual.

But he replied at once, "My dear! Of course!" without hearing any particulars; and added: "You will be happier, I am sure. Why should I refuse my consent to your marrying Fenwick? Because that's it, I suppose?" That was it. The Major had guessed right.

"He asked me to marry him, last night," she said, with simple equanimity and directness. "I told him yes, as far as my own wishes went. But I said I wouldn't, if either you or the kitten forbade the banns."

"I don't think we shall, either of us." It was a daughter's marriage-warrant he was being asked to sign; a document seldom signed without a heartache, more or less, for him who holds the pen. But his *cœur navré* had to be concealed, for the sake of the applicant; no wet blanket should be cast on her new happiness. He kissed her affectionately. To him, for all her thirty-nine or forty birthdays, she was still the young girl he had helped and shielded in her despair, twenty years ago, he himself being then a widower, near forty years her senior. "No, Rosa dear," continued the Major. "As far as I can see, there can be no objection but one—you know!"

"The one?"