

passion when he was still a student at Manchester New College. Then had come his moment of utterance—a thirst for preaching, for religious influence; though he could not bring himself to accept any particular shibboleth or take any kind of orders. He found something congenial for a time to a deep though struggling faith in the leadership of the Christian Brethren. Now, however, something had broken in him; he could preach no more. But he could go back to his old school; he could teach his boys on Sundays and week days; he could take them out country walks in spite of his lame limb; he could deny himself even the commonest necessities of life for their sake; he could watch over each of them with a fervour, a moral intensity which wore him out. In this, in some insignificant journalism for a religious paper, and in thinking, he spent his life.

There had been a dark page in his history. He had hardly left Manchester New College when he married suddenly a girl of some beauty, but with an undeveloped sensuous temperament. They were to live on a crust and give themselves to the service of man. His own dream was still fresh when she deserted him in the company of one of his oldest friends. He followed them, found them both in black depths of remorse, and took her back. But the strain of living together proved too much. She implored him to let her go and earn her living apart. She had been a teacher, and she proposed to return to her profession. He saw her established in Glasgow in the house of some good people who knew her history, and who got her a post in a small school. Then he returned to Manchester and threw himself with reckless ardour into the work of feeding the hungry, and nursing the dying, in the cotton famine. He emerged a broken man, physically and morally, liable thenceforward to recurrent crises of melancholia; but they were not frequent or severe enough to prevent his working. He was at the time entirely preoccupied with certain religious questions, and thankfully accepted the call to the little congregation at Clough End.

Since then he had visited his wife twice every year. He was extremely poor. His family, who had destined him for the Presbyterian ministry, were estranged from him; hardly anyone in Manchester knew him intimately; only in one house, far away in the Scotch lowlands, were there two people, who deeply loved and thoroughly understood him. There he went when his dark hours came upon him; and thence, after the terrible illness which overtook him on his leaving Clough End, he emerged again, shattered but indomitable, to take up the battle of life as he understood it.

He was not an able nor a literary man. His mind was a strange medley, and his mental sight far from clear. Of late the study of Newman had been a revelation to him. But he did not cease for that to read the books of scientific psychology which tortured him—the books which seemed to make of mind a function of matter, and man the slave of an immoral nature.

The only persistent and original gift in him—yet after all it is the gift which for ever divides the sheep from the goats—was that of a 'hunger and thirst after righteousness.'

CHAPTER IV

It was towards noon on a November day, and Dora Lomax sat working at her embroidery frame in the little sitting-room overlooking Market Place. The pale wintry sun touched her bent head, her deftly moving hand, and that device of the risen Christ circled in golden flame on which she was at work. The room in which she sat was old and low; the ceiling bulged here and there, the floor had unexpected slopes and declivities. The furniture was of the cheapest, the commonest odds and ends of a broker's shop, for the most part. There was the usual horsehair suite, the usual cheap sideboard, and dingy drugging of a large geometrical pattern. But amid these uninviting articles there were a few things which gave the room individuality—some old prints of places abroad, of different shapes and sizes, which partly disguised the blue and chocolate paper on the walls; some bits of foreign carving, Swiss and Italian; some eggs and shells and stuffed birds, some of these last from the Vosges, some from the Alps; a cageful of canaries, singing their best against the noise of Manchester; and, lastly, an old bookcase full of miscellaneous volumes, mostly large and worthless 'sets' of old magazines and encyclopædias, which represented the relics of Daddy's bookselling days.

The room smelt strongly of cooking, a mingled odour of boiling greens and frying onions and stored apples which never deserted it, and produced a constant slight sense of nausea in Dora, who, like most persons of sedentary occupation, was in matters of eating and digestion somewhat sensitive and delicate. From below, too, there seemed to spread upwards a general sense of bustle and disquiet. Doors banged, knives and plates rattled perpetually, the great swing-door into the street was for ever opening and shutting, each time shaking the old, frail house with its roughly built additions through and through, and there was a distant skurry of voices that never paused. The restaurant indeed was in full work, and Daddy's voice could be heard at intervals, shouting and chattering. Dora had been at work since half-past seven, marketing, giving orders, making up accounts, writing bills of fare, and otherwise organising the work of the day. Now she had left the work for an hour or two to her father and the stout Lancashire cook with her various handmaidens. Daddy's irritable pride liked to get her out of the way and make a lady of her as much as she would allow, and in her secret heart she often felt that her embroidery, for which she was well paid as a skilled and inventive hand, furnished a securer basis for their lives than this restaurant, which, in spite of its apparent success,

was a frequent source of dread and discomfort to her. The money obligation it involved filled her sometimes with a kind of panic. She knew her father so well!

Now, as she sat absorbed in her work, sewing her heart into it, for every stitch in it delighted not only her skilled artistic sense but her religious feeling, little waves of anxious thought swept across her one after another. She was a person of timid and brooding temperament, and her father's eccentricities and past history provided her with much just cause for worry. But to-day she was not thinking much of him.

Again and again there came between her and her silks a face, a face of careless pride and power, framed in strong waves of black hair. It had once repelled her quite as much as it attracted her. But at any rate, ever since she had first seen it, it had taken a place apart in her mind, as though in the yielding stuff of memory and feeling one impression out of the thousands of every day had, without warning, yet irrevocably, stamped itself deeper than the rest. The owner of it—David Grieve—filled her now, as always, with invincible antagonisms and dissents. But still the thought of him had in some gradual way become of late part of her habitual consciousness, associated always, and on the whole painfully associated, with the thought of Lucy Purcell.

For Lucy was such a little goose! To think of the way in which she had behaved towards young Grieve in the fortnight succeeding his notice to quit, before he finally left Purcell's service, made Dora hot all over. How could Lucy demean herself so? and show such tempers and airs towards a man who clearly did not think anything at all about her? And now she had flung herself upon Dora, imploring her cousin to help her, and threatening desperate things unless she and David were still enabled to meet. And meanwhile Purcell had flatly forbidden any communication between his household and the young reprobate he had turned out, whose threatened prosperity made at this moment the angry preoccupation of his life.

What was Dora to do? Was she to aid and abet Lucy, against her father's will, in pursuing David Grieve? And if in spite of all appearances the little self-willed creature succeeded, and Dora were the means of her marrying David, how would Dora's conscience stand? Here was a young man who believed in nothing, and openly said so, who took part in those terrible atheistical meetings and discussions, which, as Father Russell had solemnly said, were like a plague-centre in Manchester, drawing in and corrupting soul after soul. And Dora was to help in throwing her young cousin, while she was still almost a child with no 'Church principles' to aid and protect her, into the hands of this enemy of the Lord and His Church?

Then, when it came to this point, Dora would be troubled and drawn away by memories of young Grieve's talk and ways, of his dashes into Market Place to see Daddy since he had set up for himself, of his bold plans for the future which delighted Daddy

and took her breath away; of the flash of his black eyes; the triumphant energy of his youth; and those indications in him, too, which had so startled her of late since they—she and he—had dropped the futile sparrings in which their acquaintance began, of an inner softness, a sensitive magnetic something— indescribable.

Dora's needle paused in mid-air. Then her hand dropped on her lap. A slight but charming smile—born of youth, sympathy, involuntary admiration—dawned on her face. She sat so for a minute or two lost in reminiscence.

The clock outside struck twelve. Dora with a start felt along the edge of her frame under her work and brought out a book. It was a little black, worn manual of prayers for various times and occasions compiled by a High Church dignitary. For Dora it had a talismanic virtue. She turned now to one of the 'Prayers for Noonday,' made the sign of the cross, and slipped on to her knees for an instant. Then she rose happily and went back to her work. It was such acts as this that made the thread on which her life of mystical emotion was strung.

But her father was a Secularist of a pronounced type, and her mother had been a rigid Baptist, old-fashioned and sincere, filled with a genuine horror of Papistry and all its ways.

Adrian O'Connor Lomax, to give Daddy his whole magnificent name, was the son of a reed-maker, of Irish extraction, at Hyde, and was brought up at first to follow his father's trade—that of making the wire 'reed,' or frame, into which the threads of the warp are fastened before weaving. But such patient drudgery, often continued, as it was in those days, for twelve and fourteen hours out of the twenty-four, was gall and wormwood to a temperament like Daddy's. He developed a taste for reading, fell in with Byron's poems, and caught the fever of them; then branched out into politics just at the time of the first Reform Bill, when all over Lancashire the memory of Peterloo was still burning, and when men like Henry Hunt and Samuel Bamford were the political heroes of every weaver's cottage. He developed a taste for itinerant lecturing and preaching, and presently left his family and tramped to Manchester.

Here after many vicissitudes—including an enthusiastic and on the whole creditable participation, as an itinerant lecturer, in the movement for the founding of Mechanics' Institutes, then spreading all over the north—Daddy, to his ill-fortune, came across his future brother-in-law, the bookseller Purcell. At the moment Daddy was in a new and unaccustomed phase of piety. After a period of revolutionary spouting, in which Byron, Tom Paine, and the various publications of Richard Carlile had formed his chief scriptures, a certain Baptist preacher laid hold of the Irishman's mercurial sense. Daddy was awakened and converted, burnt his Byron and his Tom Paine in his three-pair back with every circumstance of insult and contumely, and looked about for

an employer worthy of one of the elect. Purcell at the tier. The a shop in one of the main streets connecting Manchester kind of Salford; he was already an elder at the chapel Daddy frequented; the two made acquaintance and Lomax became Purcell's assistant. At the moment the trade offered to him attracted Daddy vastly. He had considerable pretensions to literature; was a Shakespearean, a debater, and a haunter of a certain literary symposium, held for a long time at one of the old Manchester inns, and attended by most of the small wits and poets of a then small and homely town. The gathering had nothing saintly about it; free drinking went often hand in hand with free thought; Daddy's infant zeal was shocked, but Daddy's instincts were invincible, and he went.

The result of the bookselling experiment has been already told by Daddy himself. It was, of course, inevitable. Purcell was then a young man, but in his dealings with Daddy he showed precisely the same cast-iron self-importance, the same slowness of brain coupled with the same assumptions of an unbounded and righteous authority, the same unregenerate greediness in small matters of gain and loss which now in his later life had made him odious to David Grieve. Moreover, Daddy, by a happy instinct, had at once made common cause with Purcell's downtrodden sister, going on even, as his passionate sense of opposition developed, to make love to the poor humble thing mainly for the sake of annoying the brother. The crisis came; the irritated tyrant brought down a heavy hand, and Daddy and Isabella disappeared together from the establishment in Chapel Street.

By the time Daddy had set up as the husband of Purcell's sister in a little shop precisely opposite to that of his former employer, he had again thrown over all pretensions to sanctity, was, on the contrary, convinced afresh that all religion was one vast perennial imposture, dominated, we may suppose, in this as in most other matters, by the demon of hatred which now possessed him towards his brother-in-law. His wife, poor soul, was beginning to feel herself tied for good to the tail of a comet destined to some mad career or other, and quite uncontrollable by any efforts of hers. Lomax had married her for the most unpromising reasons in the world, and he soon tired of her, and of the trade, which required a sustained effort, which he was incapable of giving. As long as Purcell remained opposite, indeed, hate and rivalry kept him up to the mark. He was an attractive figure at that time, with his long fair hair and his glancing greenish eyes; and his queer discursive talk attracted many a customer, whom he would have been quite competent to keep had his character been of the same profitable stuff as his ability.

But when Purcell vanished across the river into Manchester, the zest of Daddy's bookselling enterprise departed also. He began to neglect his shop, was off here and there lecturing and debating, and when he came back again it was plain to the wife that their scanty money had been squandered on other excesses

than those of talk. At last the business fell to ruins, and debts pressed. Then suddenly Daddy was persuaded by a French commercial traveller to take up his old trade of reed-making, and go and seek employment across the Channel, where reed-makers were said to be in demand.

In ecstasy at the idea of travel thus presented to him, Daddy devoured what books about France he could get hold of, and tried to teach himself French. Then one morning, without a word to his wife, he stole downstairs and out of the shop, and was far on the road to London before his flight was discovered. His poor wife shed some tears, but he had ceased to care for her she believed, largely because she had brought him no children, and his habits had begun to threaten to lead her with unpleasant rapidity to the workhouse. So she took comfort, and with the help of some friends set up a little stationery and fancy business, which just kept her alive.

Meanwhile Lomax found no work in Picardy, whither he had first gone, and ultimately wandered across France to Alsace, in search of bread, a prey to all possible hardships and privations. But nothing daunted him. The glow of adventure and romance was on every landscape. Cathedrals, forests, the wide river-plains of central France, with their lights and distances,—all things on this new earth and under these new heavens 'haunted him like a passion.' He travelled in perpetual delight, making love no doubt here and there to some passing Mignon, and starving with the gayest of hearts.

At Mulhausen he found work, and being ill and utterly destitute, submitted to it for a while. But as soon as he had got back his health and saved some money, he set out again, walking this time, staff in hand, over the whole Rhine country and into the Netherlands. There in the low Dutch plains he fell ill again, and the beauty of the Rhineland was no longer there to stand like a spell between him and the pains of poverty. He seemed to come to himself, after a dream in which the world and all its forms had passed him by 'apparelled in celestial light.' And the process of self-finding was attended by some at least of those salutary pangs which eternally belong to it. He suddenly took a resolution, crept on board a coal smack going from a Dutch port to Grimsby, toiled across Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, and appeared one evening, worn to a shadow, in his wife's little shop in Salford.

He was received as foolish women in whom there is no ineradicable taint of cruelty or hate will always receive the prodigal who returns. And when Daddy had been fed and clothed, he turned out for a time to be so amiable, so grateful a Daddy, such good company, as he sat in the chair by his wife's fire and told stories of his travels to her and anybody else who might drop in, that not only the wife but the neighbourhood was appeased. His old friends came back to him, he began to receive overtures to write in some of the humbler papers, to lecture on his adventures in the

Yorkshire and Lancashire towns. Daddy expanded, harangued, grew daily in good looks and charm under his wife's eyes.

At last one day the papers came in with news of Louis Philippe's overthrow. Daddy grew restless, and began to study the foreign news with avidity. Revolution spread, and what with democracy abroad and Chartism at home, there was more stimulus in the air than such brains as Daddy's could rightly stand. One May day he walked into the street, looked hesitatingly up and down it, shading his eyes against the sun. Then with a shake of his long hair, as of one throwing off a weight, he drew his hat from under his arm, put it on, felt in his pockets, and set off at a run, head downwards, while poor Isabella Lomax was sweeping her kitchen. During the next few days he was heard of, rumour said, now here, now there, but one might as well have attempted to catch and hold the Pied Piper.

He was away for rather more than twenty months. Then one day, as before, a lean, emaciated, sun-browned figure came slowly up the Salford street, looking for a familiar door. It was Daddy. He went into the shop, which was empty, stared, with a countenance in which relief and repulsion were oddly mingled, at the boxes of stationery, at the dusty counter with its string and glass cases, when suddenly the inside door, which was standing ajar, was pushed stealthily inwards, and a child stood in the doorway. It was a tottering baby of a year old, holding in one fat hand a crust of bread which it had been sucking. When it saw the stranger it looked at him gravely for a second. Then without a trace of fear or shyness it came forward, holding up its crust appealingly, its rosy chin and lips still covered with bread-crumbs.

Daddy stared at the apparition, which seemed to him the merest witchcraft. For it was *himself*, dwarfed to babyhood and pinafores. His eyes, his prominent brow, his colour, his trick of holding the head—they were all there, absurdly there.

He gave a cry, which was answered by another cry from behind. His wife stood in the door. The stout, foolish Isabella was white to the lips. Even she felt the awe, the poetry of the moment.

'Aye,' she said, trembling. 'Aye! it's yourn. It was born seven months after yo left us.'

Daddy, without greeting his wife, threw himself down by the babe, and burst into tears. He had come back in a still darker mood than on his first return, his egotistical belief in himself more rudely shaken than ever by the attempts, the failures, the miseries of the last eighteen months. For one illuminating moment he saw that he was a poor fool, and that his youth was squandered and gone. But in its stead, there—dropped suddenly beside him by the forgiving gods—stood this new youth sprung from his, and all his own, this child—Dora.

He took to her with a passion which the trembling Isabella thought a great deal too excessive to last. But though the natural Daddy very soon reappeared, with all the aggravating

peculiarities which belonged to him, the passion did last, and the truant strayed no more. He set up a small printing business with the help of some old customers—it was always characteristic of the man that, be his failings what they might, he never lacked friends—and with lecturing and writing, and Isabella's shop, they struggled on somehow. Isabella's life was hard enough. Daddy was only good when he was happy; and at other times he dipped recklessly into vices which would have been the ruin of them all had they been persistent. But by some kind fate he always emerged, and more and more, as years went on, owing to Dora. He drank, but not hopelessly; he gambled, but not past salvation; and there was generally, as we have said, some friend at hand to pick the poor besmirched featherbrain out of the mire.

Dora grew up not unhappily. There were shifts and privations to put up with; there were stormy days when life seemed a hurricane of words and tears. But there were bright spaces in between, when Daddy had good resolutions, or a little more money than usual; and with every year the daughter instinctively knew that her spell over her father strengthened. She was on the whole a serious child, with fair pale hair, much given to straying in long loose ends about her prominent brow and round cheeks. Yet at the Baptist school, whither she was sent, she was certainly popular. She had a passion for the little ones; and her grey-blue eyes, over which in general the fringed lids drooped too much, had a charming trick of sudden smiles, when the soft soul behind looked for an instant clearly and blithely out. At home she was a little round-shouldered drudge in her mother's service. At chapel she sat very patiently and happily under a droning minister, and when the inert and despondent Isabella would have let most of her religious duties drop, in the face of many troubles and a scoffing husband, the child of fourteen gently and persistently held her to them.

At last, however, when Dora was seventeen, Isabella died of cancer, and Daddy, who had been much shaken and terrified by her sufferings in her last illness, fell for a while into an irritable melancholy, from which not even Dora could divert him. It was then that he seemed for the first time to cross the line which had hitherto divided him from ruin. The drinking at the White Horse, where the literary circle met of which Lomax had been so long an ornament, had been of late going from bad to worse. The households of the wits concerned were up in arms; neighbourhood and police began to assert themselves. One night the trembling Dora waited hour after hour for her father. About midnight he staggered in, maddened with drink and fresh from a skirmish with the police. Finding her there waiting for him, pale and silent, he did what he had never done before under any stress of trouble—struck and swore at her. Dora sank down with a groan, and in another minute Lomax was dashing his head against the wall, vowing that he would beat his brains out. In the hours that followed, Dora's young soul was stretched as it

were on a rack, from which it rose, not weakened, but with new powers and a loftier stature. All her girlish levities and illusions seemed to drop away from her. She saw her mission, and took her squalid *Œdipus* in charge.

Next morning she went to some of her father's friends, unknown to Daddy, and came back with a light in her blanched face, bearing the offer of some work on a Radical paper at Leicester. Daddy, now broken and miserable, submitted, and off they went.

At Leicester the change of moral and physical climate produced for a while a wonderful effect. Daddy found himself marvellously at ease among the Secularist and Radical stockingers of the town, and soon became well known to them as a being half butt, half oracle. Dora set herself to learn dressmaking, and did her best to like the new place and the new people. It was at Leicester, a place seething with social experiment in its small provincial way, with secularism, Owenism, anti-vaccination, and much else, that Lomax fell a victim to one 'ism the more—to vegetarianism. It was there that, during an editorial absence, and in the first fervour of conversion, Daddy so belaboured a carnivorous world in the columns of the 'Penny Banner' for which he worked, and so grotesquely and persistently reduced all the problems of the time to terms of nitrogen and albumen, that curt dismissal came upon him, and for a time Dora saw nothing but her precarious earnings between them and starvation. It was then also that, by virtue of that queer charm he could always exercise when he pleased, he laid hold on a young Radical manufacturer and got out of him a loan of 200*l.* for the establishment of a vegetarian restaurant wherein Leicester was to be taught how to feed.

But Leicester, alas! remained unregenerate. In the midst of Daddy's preparations a commercial traveller, well known both to Manchester and Leicester, repeated to him one day a remark of Purcell's, to the effect that since Daddy's migration Manchester had been well rid of a vagabond, and he, Purcell, of a family disgrace. Daddy, bursting with fatuous rage, and possessed besides of the wildest dreams of fortune on the strength of his 200*l.*, straightway made up his mind to return to Manchester, 'pull Purcell's nose,' and plant himself and his prosperity that was to be in the bookseller's eyes. He broke in upon Dora at her work, and poured into her astonished ears a stream of talk, marked by a mad inventiveness, partly in the matter of vegetarian receipts, still more in that of Purcell's future discomforts. When Daddy was once launched into a subject that suited him, he was inexhaustible. His phrases flowed for ever; of words he was always sure. Like a certain French talker, 'his sentences were like cats; he showered them into air and they found their feet without trouble.'

Dora sat through it, bewildered and miserable. Go back to Manchester where they had been so unhappy, where the White

Horse and its crew were waiting for her father, simply to get into debt and incur final ruin for the sake of a mad fancy she humoured but could not believe in, and a still madder thirst for personal vengeance on a man who was more than a match for anything Daddy could do! She was in despair.

But Daddy was obdurate, brutal in his determination to have his way; and when she angered him with her remonstrances, he turned upon her with an irritable—

'I know what it is—damn it! It's that Puseyite gang you've taken up with—you think of nothing but them. As if you couldn't find antics and petticoats and priests in Manchester—they're everywhere—like weeds. Wherever there's a dunghill of human credulity they swarm.'

Dora looked proudly at her father, as though disdainful to reply, gentle creature that she was; then she bent again over her work, and a couple of tears fell on the seam she was sewing.

Aye, it was true enough. In leaving Leicester, after these two years, she was leaving what to her had been a spiritual birth-place,—tearing asunder a new and tender growth of the soul.

This was how it had come about.

On her first arrival in Leicester, in a *milieu*, that is to say, where at the time 'Gavroche,' as M. Renan calls him—the street philosopher who is no less certain and no more rational than the street preacher—reigned supreme, where her Secularist father and his associates, hot-headed and early representatives of a phase of thought which has since then found much abler, though hardly less virulent, expression in such a paper, say, as the 'National Reformer,' were for ever rending and trampling on all the current religious images and ideas, Dora shrank into herself more and more. She had always been a Baptist because her mother was. But in her deep reaction against her father's associates, the chapel which she frequented did not now satisfy her. She hungered for she knew not what, certain fastidious artistic instincts awakening the while in unexpected ways.

Then one Easter Eve, as she came back from an errand into the outskirts of the town, she passed a little iron church standing in a very poor neighbourhood, where, as she knew, a 'Puseyite' curate in charge officiated, and where a good many disturbances which had excited the populace had taken place. She went in. The curate, a long, gaunt figure, of a familiar monkish type, was conducting 'vespers' for the benefit of some twenty hearers, mostly women in black. The little church was half decorated for Easter, though the altar had still its Lenten bareness. Something in the ordering of the place, in its colours, its scents, in the voice of the priest, in the short address he delivered after the service, dwelling in a tone of intimate emotion, the tone of the pastor to the souls he guides and knows, on the preparation needful for the Easter Eucharist, struck home to Dora. Next day she was present at the Easter festival. Never had religion spoken so touchingly to her before as through these hymns, these flowers,

this incense, this Eucharistic ceremonial wherein—being the mid-day celebration—the congregation were merely hushed spectators of the most pathetic and impressive act in the religious symbolism of mankind. In the dark corner where she had hidden herself, Dora felt the throes of some new birth within her. In six weeks from that time she had been admitted, after instruction, to the Anglican communion.

Thenceforward another existence began for this child of English Dissent, in whom, however, some old Celtic leaven seems to have always kept up a vague unrest, till the way of mystery and poetry was found.

Daddy—the infidel Daddy—stormed a good deal, and lamented himself still more, when these facts became known to him. Dora had become a superstitious, priest-ridden dolt, of no good to him or anyone else any more. What, indeed, was to become of him? Natural affection cannot stand against the priest. A daughter cannot love her father and go to confession. Down with the abomination—*écrasez l'infâme!*

Dora smiled sadly and went her way. Against her sweet silent tenacity Daddy measured himself in vain. She would be a good daughter to him, but she would be a good churchwoman first. He began to perceive in her that germ of detachment from things earthly and human which all ceremonialism produces, and in a sudden terror gave way and opposed her no more. Afterwards, in a curious way, he came even to relish the change in her. The friends it brought her, the dainty ordering of the little flower-decked oratory she made for herself in one corner of her bare attic room, the sweet sobriety and refinement which her new loves and aspirations and self-denials brought with them into the house, touched the poetical instincts which were always dormant in the queer old fellow, and besides flattered some strong and secret ambitions which he cherished for his daughter. It appeared to him to have raised her socially, to have made a lady of her—this joining the Church. Well, the women must have some religious bag or other to run their heads into, and the Church bag perhaps was the most seemly.

On the day of their return to Manchester, Daddy, sitting with crossed arms and legs in a corner of the railway carriage, might have sat for a fairy-book illustration of Rumpelstilzchen. His old peaked hat, which he had himself brought from the Tyrol, fell forward over his frowning brow, his cloak was caught fiercely about him, and, as the quickly-passing mill-towns began to give notice of Manchester as soon as the Derbyshire vales were left behind, his glittering eyes disclosed an inward fever—a fever of contrivance and of hate. He was determined to succeed, and equally determined to make his success Purcell's annoyance.

Dora sat opposite, with her bird-cage on her knee, looking sad and weary. She had left behind, perhaps for ever, the dear

friends who had opened to her the way of holiness, and guided her first steps. Her eyes filled with tears of gratitude and emotion as she thought of them.

Two things only were pleasant to remember. One was that the Church embroidery she had begun in her young zeal at Leicester, using her odds and ends of time, to supplement the needs of a struggling church depending entirely on voluntary contributions, was now probably to become her trade. For she had shown remarkable aptitude for it; and she carried introductions to a large church-furniture shop in Manchester which would almost certainly employ her.

The other was the fact that somewhere in Manchester she had a girl-cousin—Lucy Purcell—who must be about sixteen. Purcell had married after his migration to Half Street; his wife proved to be delicate and died in a few years; this little girl was all that was left to him. Dora had only seen her once or twice in her life. The enmity between Lomax and Purcell of course kept the families apart, and, after her mother's early death, Purcell sent his daughter to a boarding-school and so washed his hands of the trouble of her bringing up. But in spite of these barriers Dora well remembered a slim, long-armed schoolgirl, much dressed and becurled, who once in a by-street of Salford had run after her and, looking round carefully to see that no one was near, had thrust an eager face into hers and kissed her suddenly. 'Dora,—is your mother better? I wish I could come and see you. Oh, it's horrid of people to quarrel! But I mustn't stay,—some one 'll see, and I should just catch it! Good-bye, Dora!' and so another kiss, very hasty and frightened, but very welcome to the cheek it touched.

As they neared Manchester, Dora, in her loneliness of soul, thought very tenderly of Lucy—wondered how she had grown up, whether she was pretty and many other things. She had certainly been a pretty child. Of course they must know each other and be friends. Dora could not let her father's feud come between her and her only relation. Purcell might keep them apart; but she would show him she meant no harm; and she would bring her father round—she would and must.

Two years had gone by. Of Daddy's two objects in leaving Leicester, one had so far succeeded better than any rational being would have foreseen.

On the first morning after their arrival he went out, giving Dora the slip lest she might cramp him inconveniently in his decision; and came back radiant, having taken a deserted seed-shop in Market Place, which had a long, irregular addition at the back, formerly a warehouse, providentially suited, so Daddy declared, to the purposes of a restaurant. The rent he had promised to give seemed to Dora a crime, considering their resources. The thought of it, the terror of the servants he was engaging, the knowledge of the ridicule and blame with which

their old friends regarded her father's proceedings, these things kept the girl awake night after night.

But he would hear no remonstrances, putting all she had to say aside with an arrogant boastfulness, which never failed.

In they went. Dora set her teeth and did her best, keeping as jealous a watch on the purse-strings as she could, and furnishing their three rooms above the shop for as few shillings as might be, while Daddy was painting and decorating, composing *menus*, and ransacking recipes with the fever of an artist, now writing letters to the Manchester papers, or lecturing to audiences in the Mechanics' Institute and the different working men's clubs, and now plastering the shop-front with grotesque labels, or posing at his own doorway and buttonholing the passers-by in the Tyrolese brigand's costume which was his favourite garb.

The thing took. There is a certain mixture of prophet and mountebank which can be generally counted upon to hit the popular fancy, and Daddy attained to it. Moreover, the moment was favourable. After the terrible strain of the cotton-famine and the horrors of the cholera, Manchester was prosperous again. Trade was brisk, and the passage of the new Reform Bill had given a fresh outlet and impulse to the artisan mind which did but answer to the social and intellectual advance made by the working classes since '32. The huge town was growing fast, was seething with life, with ambitions, with all the passions and ingenuities that belong to gain and money-making and the race for success. It was pre-eminently a city of young men of all nationalities, three-fourths constantly engaged in the *chasse* for money, according to their degrees—here for shillings, there for sovereigns, there for thousands. In such a *milieu* any man has a chance who offers to deal afresh on new terms with those daily needs which both goad and fetter the struggling multitude at every step. Vegetarianism had, in fact, been spreading in Manchester; one or two prominent workmen's papers were preaching it; and just before Daddy's advent there had been a great dinner in a public hall, where the speedy advent of a regenerate and frugivorous mankind, with length of days in its right hand, and a captivating abundance of small moneys in its waistcoat pocket, had been freely and ardently prophesied.

So Daddy for once seized the moment, and succeeded like the veriest Philistine. On the opening day the restaurant was crowded from morning till night. Dora, with her two cooks in the suffocating kitchen behind, had to send out the pair of panting, perspiring kitchen-boys again and again for fresh supplies; while Daddy, at his wits' end for waiters, after haranguing a group of customers on the philosophy of living, amid a tumult of mock cheers and laughter, would rush in exasperated to Dora, to say that *never* again would he trust her niggardly ways—she would be the ruin of him with her economies.

When at night the doors were shut at last on the noise and the crowd, and Daddy sat, with his full cash-box open on his knee,

while the solitary gaslight that remained threw a fantastic and colossal shadow of him over the rough floor of the restaurant, Dora came up to him dropping with fatigue. He looked at her, his gaunt face working, and burst into tears.

'Dora, we never had any money before, not when—when—your mother was alive.'

And she knew that by a strange reaction there had come suddenly upon him the memory of those ghastly months when she and he through the long hours of every day had been forced—baffled and helpless—to watch her mother's torture, and when the sordid struggle for daily bread was at its worst, robbing death of all its dignity, and pity of all its power to help.

Do what she would, she could hardly get him to give up the money and go to bed. He was utterly unstrung, and his triumph for the moment lay bitter in the mouth.

It was now two years since that opening day. During that time the Parlour had become a centre after its sort—a scandal to some and a delight to others. The native youth got his porridge, and apple pie, and baked potato there; but the place was also largely haunted by the foreign clerks of Manchester. There was, for instance, a company of young Frenchmen who lunched there habitually, and in whose society the delighted Daddy caught echoes from that unprejudiced life of Paris or Lyons, which had amazed and enlightened his youth. The place assumed a stamp and character. To Daddy the development of his own popularity, which was like the emergence of a new gift, soon became a passion. He deliberately 'ran' his own eccentricities as part of the business. Hence his dress, his menus, his advertisements, and all the various antics which half regaled, half scandalised the neighbourhood. Dora marvelled and winced, and by dint of an habitual tolerance retained the power of stopping some occasional enormity.

As to finances, they were not making their fortune; far from it; but to Dora's amazement, considering her own inexperience and her father's flightiness, they had paid their way and something more. She was no born woman of business, as any professional accountant examining her books might have discovered. But she had a passionate determination to defraud no one, and somehow, through much toil her conscience did the work. Meanwhile every month it astonished her freshly that they two should be succeeding! Success was so little in the tradition of their tattered and variegated lives. Could it last? At the bottom of her mind lay a constant presentiment of new change, founded no doubt on her knowledge of her father.

But outwardly there was little to justify it. The craving for drink seemed to have left him altogether—a not uncommon effect of this particular change of diet. And his hatred of Purcell, though in itself it had proved quite unmanageable by all her arts, had done nobody much harm. In a society dependent on law

and police there are difficulties in the way of a man's dealing primitively with his enemy. There had been one or two awkward meetings between the two in the open street; and at the Parlour, among his special intimates, Daddy had elaborated a Purcell myth of a Pecksniffian character which his invention perpetually enriched. On the whole, however, it was in his liking for young Grieve, originally a casual customer at the restaurant, that Dora saw the chief effects of the feud. He had taken the lad up eagerly as soon as he had discovered both his connection with Purcell and his daring rebellious temper; had backed him up in all his quarrels with his master; had taken him to the Hall of Science, and introduced him to the speakers there; and had generally paraded him as a secularist convert, snatched from the very jaws of the Baptist.

And now!—now that David was in open opposition, attracting Purcell's customers, taking Purcell's water, Daddy was in a tumult of delight: wheeling off old books of his own, such as 'The Journal of Theology' and the 'British Controversialist,' to fill up David's stall, running down whenever business was slack to see how the lad was getting on; and meanwhile advertising him with his usual extravagance among the frequenters of the Parlour.

All through, however, or rather since Miss Purcell had returned from school, Dora and her little cousin Lucy had been allowed to meet. Lomax saw his daughter depart on her visits to Half Street, in silence; Purcell, when he first recognised her, hardly spoke to her. Dora believed, what was in fact the truth, that each regarded her as a means of keeping an eye on the other. She conveyed information from the hostile camp—therefore she was let alone.

CHAPTER V

'Why—Lucy!'

Dora was still bending over her work when a well-known tap at the door startled her meditations.

Lucy put her head in, and, finding Dora alone, came in with a look of relief. Settling herself in a chair opposite Dora, she took off her hat, smoothed the coils of hair to which it had been pinned, unbuttoned the smart little jacket of pilot cloth, and threw back the silk handkerchief inside; and all with a feverish haste and irritation as though everything she touched vexed her.

'What's the matter, Lucy?' said Dora, after a little pause. At the moment of Lucy's entrance she had been absorbed in a measurement.

'Nothing!' said Lucy quickly. 'Dora, you've got your hair loose!'

Dora put up her hand patiently. She was accustomed to be put to rights. It was characteristic at once of her dreaminess and her powers of self-discipline that she was fairly orderly, though

she had great difficulty in being so. Without a constant struggle, she would have had loose plaits and hanging strings about her always. Lucy's trimness was a perpetual marvel to her. It was like the contrast between the soft indeterminate lines of her charming face and Lucy's small, sharply cut features.

Lucy, still restless, began tormenting the feather in her hat.

'When are you going to finish that, Dora?' she asked, nodding towards the frame.

'Oh it won't be very long now,' said Dora, putting her head on one side that she might take a general survey, at once loving and critical, of her work.

'You oughtn't to sit so close at it,' said Lucy decidedly; 'you'll spoil your complexion.'

'I've none to spoil.'

'Oh, yes, you have, Dora—that's so silly of you. You aren't sallow a bit. It's pretty to be pale like that. Lots of people say so—not quite so pale as you are sometimes, perhaps—but I know why *that* is,' said Lucy, with a half-malicious emphasis.

A slight pink rose in Dora's cheeks, but she bent over her frame and said nothing.

'Does your clergyman *tell* you to fast in Lent, Dora—who tells you?'

'The Church!' replied Dora, scandalised and looking up with bright eyes. 'I wish you understood things a little more, Lucy.'

'I can't,' said Lucy, with a pettish sigh, 'and I don't care twopence!'

She threw herself back in her rickety chair. Her arm dropped over the side, and she lay staring at the ceiling. Dora went on with her work in silence for a minute, and then looked up to see a tear dropping from Lucy's cheek on to the horsehair covering of the chair.

'Lucy, what *is* the matter?—I knew there was something wrong!'

Lucy sat up and groped energetically for her handkerchief.

'You wouldn't care,' she said, her lips quivering—'nobody cares!'

And, sinking down again, she hid her face and fairly burst out sobbing. Dora, in alarm, pushed aside her frame and tried to caress and console her. But Lucy held her off, and in a second or two was angrily drying her eyes.

'Oh, you can't do any good, Dora—not the least good. It's father—you know well enough what it is—I shall never get on with father if I live to be a hundred!'

'Well, you haven't had long to try in,' said Dora, smiling.

'Quite long enough to know,' replied Lucy, drearily. 'I know I shall have a horrid life—I must. Nobody can help it. Do you know we've got another shopman, Dora?'

The tone of childish scorn she threw into the question was inimitable. Dora with difficulty kept from laughing.