

The Doctor's Wife

BY MISS M. E. BRADDOX

CHAPTER VIII.

When the chrysalis of the first evening at Graybridge was past and done with, Isabel felt a kind of remorseful regret for the mute passion of discontent and disappointment that had gone along with it. In the sunlight her new home looked a little better, her new life seemed a little brighter. Yes, she would do her duty; she would be a good wife to dear George, who was so kind to her, and loved her with such a generous devotion.

She went to church with him at Graybridge for the first time on the morning after that dreary wet Saturday evening; and all through the sermon she thought of her new home, and what she should do to make it bright and warm.

After church there was an early dinner of some baked meat, prepared by Mrs. Jefferson. Isabel did not take much notice of what she ate. She was at that early period of life when a young person of sentimental temperament scarcely knows roast beef from mutton, but she observed that there were steel forks on the surgeon's table—steel forks with knobby horn handles suggestive of the wildest species of deer—and a metal mustard-pot lined with blue glass, and willow-pattern plates, and that everything was altogether commonplace and vulgar.

After dinner Mrs. Gilbert amused herself by going over the house with her husband. It was a very tolerable house, after all, but it wasn't pretty; it had been inhabited by people who were fully satisfied so long as they had chairs to sit upon, and beds to lie on, and tables and cups and plates for the mere common purposes of breakfast, dinner and supper, and who would have regarded the purchase of a chair that was not designed to be sat upon or a cup that was never designed to be drunk out of, as something useless and absurd, or even in an indirect manner sinful, because involving the waste of money that might be devoted to a better use.

"George," said Isabel, gently, when she had seen all the rooms, "did you never think of refurnishing the house?"

"Refurnishing it! How do you mean, Izzy?"

"Buying new furniture, I mean, dear. This is all so old-fashioned."

George, the conservative, shook his head.

"I like it all the better for that, Izzy," he said; "it was my father's, you know, and his father's before him. I won't change a stick of it for the world. Besides, it's such substantial furniture; they don't make such chairs and tables nowadays."

"No," Izzy murmured, with a sigh; "I'm very glad they don't."

Then she clasped her hands suddenly upon his arm, and looked up at him with her eyes opened to their wildest extent and shining with a rapture.

"Oh, George," she cried, "there was an ottoman in one of the shops at Coventry, with seats for three people, and little stands for people to put their cups and saucers upon, and a place in the middle for flowers; and oh, George, if you'd meet the best tailor into a drawing room, and have that ottoman in the center, and chairs painted lined with rose color, and a white watered paper on the walls, and Venetian shutters outside—"

George put his hand upon the pretty mouth from which the eager words came so rapidly.

"Why, Izzy," he said, "you'd ruin me before the year was out. No, no, dear; the best parlor was good enough for my father and mother, and it ought to be good enough for you and me. By and by, when my practice extends, Izzy, as I've every reason to hope it will, we'll talk about a new carpet—a nice serviceable ground with a drab spot, or something of that kind; but until then—"

Isabel turned away from him with a gesture of disgust.

"What do I care about new carpets?" she said; "I wanted it all to look pretty."

Nobody ever quite understood Isabel; and least of all could George Gilbert understand the woman whom he had chosen for his wife. He loved her and admired her, and he was honestly anxious that she should be happy; but then he wanted her to be happy according to his ideas of happiness and not her own. He wanted her to be delighted with stiff tea parties, at which the Misses Pawlikatt and the Misses Burdock, and the young Mrs. Henry Palmer, wife of Mr. Henry Palmer, junior solicitor, discoursed pleasantly of the newest patterns in crochet, and the last popular memoir of some departed Evangelical carter. Isabel did not take any interest in these things, and could not make herself happy with these people. Unluckily, she allowed this to be seen; and after a few tea parties, of the Graybridge aristocracy dropped away from her, only calling now and then out of respect to George, who, in his hearty compassion, acted on account of his most mistaken selection of a wife.

So Isabel was left to herself, and little by little fell back into very much the same kind of life as that which she had led at Camberwell.

Isabel did as she liked; and this meant reading novels all day long, or as long as she had a novel to read, and writing unfinished verses of a lachrymose nature on half sheets of paper.

When the spring came she went out—alone, for her husband was away among his patients and had no time to accompany her. Sometimes she went as far as Thurston's Crag, a dear old place, an island of mediæval splendor amid a sea of green pasture land, where, under the very shadow of a noble mansion there were a waterfall and a mill and a miller's cottage that was difficult to believe in out of a picture. There was a wooden bridge across that noisier of waterfalls, and a monster oak, whose spreading branches shadowed all the width of water.

The Graybridge people were not slow to remark upon Mrs. Gilbert's habits, and hinted, to young people who spent so much time in the pursuit of works of fiction could scarcely be a model wife. Before George had been married three months the ladies who had been familiar with him in his bachelorhood had begun to pity him, and mapped out for him such a career of domestic wretchedness as rarely falls to the lot of afflicted man.

But while the Graybridge ladies criticized his wife and prophesied for him all manner of dismal sufferings, George Gilbert, strange to say, was very happy. He had married the woman he loved, and so thought that he had loved, and he was married to her, and he was not his mind. When he came home from a long day's work, he found a beautiful creature waiting to receive him—a lovely and lovable creature, who put her

arms around his neck and kissed him and smiled at him. It was not in his nature to see that the graceful little embrace and the welcoming kiss and the smile were rather mechanical matters that came of themselves. He took his dinner, or his weak tea, or his supper, as the case might be, and stretched his long legs across the familiar hearth-rug and talked to his wife and was happy.

Among the books which Mrs. Gilbert most often carried to the bench by the waterfall was the little thin volume of poems entitled "An Alien's Dreams." Mr. Raymond had given his nursery governess a parcel of light literature soon after her marriage, and this poor little book of verses was one of the volumes in the parcel; and as Isabel knew her Byron and her Shelley by heart, and could recite long melancholy rhapodies from the works of either poet by the hour together, she fastened quite eagerly upon this little green covered volume by a nameless writer.

The Alien's dreams seemed like her own fancies, somehow; for they belonged to that bright other world which she was never to see. How familiar the Alien was with that delicious region, and how lightly he spoke of the hot-house flowers and diamonds, the ermine car and Arab steeds! She read the poems over and over again in the drowsy June weather, sitting in the shabby, little, common parlor when the afternoons were too hot for outdoor rambles, and getting up, now and then, to look at her profile in the glass over the mantelpiece, and wonder whether she was like any of those gorgeous but hollow hearted creatures upon whom the Allen showered such torrents of melodious abuse.

Sometimes, when George had eaten supper, Isabel would do him the favor of reading aloud one of the most spasmodic of the Alien's dreams. On one occasion poor George was terribly perplexed to behold his wife suddenly drop her book upon her lap and burst into tears.

"You don't care for the poetry, George," she cried, with the sudden passion of a spoiled child. "Oh, why do you let me read to you, if you don't care for the poetry?"

"But I do care for it, Izzy, dear," Mr. Gilbert murmured, soothingly—"at least I like to hear you read, if it amuses you."

Isabel flung the "Alien" into the remotest corner of the little parlor, and turned from her husband as if he had stung her.

"You don't understand me," she said, "you don't understand me."

"No, my dear Isabel," returned Mr. Gilbert with dignity for his common sense reassured itself after the first shock of surprise; "I certainly do not understand you when you give way to such temper as this without any visible cause."

CHAPTER IX.

It happened that the very day after Isabel's little outbreak of passion was a peculiar occasion in George Gilbert's life. It was his wife's birthday—the first birthday after her marriage—and the young surgeon had planned a grand treat and surprise—quite an elaborate festival—in honor of the day. He had hired a fly—for the whole day, and Mrs. Jefferson had prepared a basket with all manner of delicacies; and George had written to Mr. Raymond, asking that gentleman to meet himself and his wife at Warrcliffe, the show place of the county. This Mr. Raymond had promised to do, and all the arrangements had been carefully planned, and had been kept profoundly secret from Isabel.

She was very much pleased when her husband told her of the festival early on that bright summer morning, while she was plaiting her long black hair at the little glass before the open lattice.

"I want it to be like that day last year, Izzy; the day I asked you to marry me. Mr. Raymond will bring the key of Warrcliffe Grove, and we're to drive there after we've seen the mansion, and picnic there, as we did before, and then we're to go to the very identical model old woman's tea; and everything will be exactly the same."

Ah, Mr. George Gilbert, do you know the world so little as to be ignorant that no day in life ever has its counterpart, and that to endeavor to bring about an exact repetition of any given occasion is to attempt the impossible?

It was a six-mile drive from the Graybridge to Warrcliffe, the grave old country town, the dear old town, with shady pavements and shutting upper stories, diamond-paned pointed gables, and cascades; the queer old town, with wonderful churches and gloomy archways, and steep stony streets, and above all, the grand old mansion, lashed forever and forever by the blue rippling water.

Mr. Raymond was waiting at the little doorway when the fly stopped, and he gave Isabel the key and led her into a narrow, winding alley of verdure and rockwork, and then across a smooth lawn and under an arch of solid masonry to another lawn, a velvety grass-plot, surrounded by shrubberies, and altogether a triumph of landscape gardening.

They went into the mansion with a little group of visitors who had just collected on the broad steps before the door, and they were taken at once under the canopy of a dignified housekeeper in a rustling silk gown, who started off into a catalogue of the contents of the hall. While the housekeeper was running herself down like a musical box that had been newly wound up, Mr. Raymond led Isabel to the window, and showed her the blue waters of the Waverne tumbling head foremost over craggy masses of rock work, green bowlder, and pebbles that shimmered in the sunlight, and then playing hide-and-seek, under dripping willows, and brawling away over emerald moss and golden sand to fall with sudden impetus into the quiet depths beneath the bridge.

Isabel moved through the room in a silent rapture; but yet there was a pang of anguish lurking somewhere or other amid all that rapture.

He and she were all true, then; there were such places as this, and people lived in them. Happy people, for whom life was all loveliness and poetry, looked out of those windows, and lolled in those antique chairs.

For some people life was like this; and for her—she shuddered as she remembered the parlors at Graybridge—the shabby carpet, the faded moreen curtains edged with rusty velvet, the cracked jars and vases on the mantelpiece; and even if George had given her all that she had asked—the ottoman, and the Venetian blinds, and the rose-colored curtains—what would have been the use? her room would never have looked like this. She gazed about her in a sort of waking dream, intoxicated by the beauty of the place. She was

looking like this when Mr. Raymond led her into one of the larger rooms, and showed her a little picture in a corner, which he said was a gem.

She looked at it in a drowsy kind of way. It was a very brown gem, and its beauties were quite beyond Mrs. Gilbert's appreciation. She was thinking, by some romantic imagination, she could "turn out" to be the rightful heiress of such a place as this, with a river like the Waverne brawling under her windows, and trailing willow branches dipping into the water. There were some such childish thoughts as these in her mind when Mr. Raymond, never tiring upon the wonderful finish and modeling of the Venetian masterpiece; and she was aroused from her reverie not by her companion's remarks, but by a woman's voice on the other side of the room.

"You so rarely see that contrast of fair hair and black eyes," said the voice; "and there is something peculiar in those eyes."

There was nothing particular in the words; it was the tone in which Lady Clara Vere de Vere might have spoken; a tone in which there was a large measure softened by wondrous gentleness—a drawing accent which had yet no affectation, only a kind of liquid carrying on of the voice, like a legato passage in music.

"Yes," returned another voice, which had all the laziness and none of the hauteur, "it is a pretty face, Joanna of Naples, isn't it? She was an excitable person, wasn't she? Threw some one out of a window, and made herself altogether objectionable."

Mr. Raymond wheeled round as suddenly as if he had received an electric shock, and ran across the room to the gentleman who was lounging in a half-reclining attitude upon one of the broad window seats.

"Why, Roland, I thought you were in Cuba!"

The gentleman got up, with a kind of effort and the faintest suspicion of a yawn; but his face brightened, and he held out his hand to Isabel's late employer.

"My dear Raymond, how glad I am to see you! I meant to ride over tomorrow morning for a long day's talk. I only came home last night, to please my uncle and cousin. You know Gwendoline? Ah, yes, of course, you do."

A lady with fair hair and a dark and aquiline nose—a lady in a bonnet which was simplicity itself, and could only have been produced by a milliner who had perfected herself in the supreme art of concealing her art—dropped the double eye-glass through which she had been looking at Joanna of Naples, and held out a hand so exquisitely gloved that it looked as if it had been sculptured out of gray marble.

"I'm afraid Mr. Raymond has forgotten me," she said; "papa and I have been so long away."

"And Lowlands was beginning to look quite a deserted habitation. I used to think of Hood's haunted house whenever I rode by your gates, Gwendoline. But you have come home for good now? As if you could come for anything but good," interjected Mr. Raymond, gallantly. "You have come with the intention of stopping, I hope?"

"Yes," Gwendoline answered, with something like a sigh.

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An idea of the cost of running a great nation may be gained from the statement that England's balance sheet for the last fiscal year shows an expenditure of considerably more than three-quarters of a billion dollars. The exact amount was \$151,709,000. To meet this revenues were raised amounting to \$153,707,000, leaving a surplus on hand of \$1,998,000. Of this vast expenditure \$66,200,000 went to the army and navy, \$24,000,000 for dispensing justice and \$15,101,000 was spent on education. There is one entry under expenditure which reveals the magnitude of the empire's business. It is that for "stationery and printing" and shows that three-quarters of a million pounds was expended on this item alone during the past year.

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The purpose for which said dockers are invited is the building of a concrete dock along the water front of the W. C. Sepp Building, located on the south side of Van Buren Street, on the east side of the Chicago River, and to be completed by the Clerk of the Sanitary District at Room 1110 Security Building, Chicago, until 12 m., standard time, of Wednesday, October 25, 1905, and will be publicly opened by the Board of Trustees on that date.

Each bid must be accompanied by a certified check or cash to the amount of Five Hundred (\$500.00) Dollars. All certified checks must be drawn on the City of Chicago and be made payable to the Clerk of the Sanitary District of Chicago. Said amount of \$500.00 deposited with the bid will be held by the Sanitary District of Chicago until all of the respective bids for said work shall be examined and the contract awarded and signed. The return of said check or cash being conditioned upon the appearance within 48 hours after receiving notice of the award to him of the bidder to whom the award of said work shall have been made, to execute a contract with the Sanitary District for the work so awarded and giving bond satisfactory to the Board of Trustees in the sum of \$12,000.

All bids must be upon blank forms furnished by the Board of Trustees.

No bid will be considered unless the party making it shall furnish evidence satisfactory to the Board of Trustees of his ability and experience in carrying on the class of work undertaken by him and of his financial ability to successfully prosecute the work.

Bidders are required to state in their bids their individual names and pieces of residence in full.

The said Board of Trustees reserves the right to reject any and all bids.

THE SANITARY DISTRICT OF CHICAGO.

By ZINA R. CARTER, President of its Board of Trustees.

Attest: L. C. LEIGNER, Acting Clerk. Chicago, August 24, 1905.

NOTE.—The date for receiving and opening bids for this work has been extended until December 6, 1905.

THE SANITARY DISTRICT OF CHICAGO.

By ZINA R. CARTER, President of its Board of Trustees.

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If a man gets poisoned externally he applies curatives at once.

—And yet skin disease doesn't begin to be as serious as having the brain cells and nerve cells poisoned. You know that.

Just from a dollars-and-cents standpoint one cannot afford to allow his brain, that marvelous Central Telegraph Office where thought messages originate, to become congested, inflamed and saturated with alcohol.

Brain-power is Earning-power.

A man with a \$50,000-a-year Brain should certainly take as good care of it as he expects a chauffeur to take of his Automobile.

—And the man with a \$2,000-a-year Brain cannot reasonably expect to develop increased Earning Power if he retards the process of development by giving his Brain Cells too many Alcohol Baths.

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