THE VANDERSTEENS' CAMPAIGN.

[C. G. Furley.]

The Misses Vandersteen were going to Europe, not in a vain spirit of sightseeing, such as might befit any commonplace American whose finances permitted him to visit the Old World, but with a distinct intention of invading and conquering English society, possibly of settling on English soil, but this formed no essential part of their plans.

"I don't know that it's worth while actually to marry any of them," said Mrs. Oppenheim. Mrs. Oppenheim was the guide, philosopher and friend of the young ladies, having herself passed two most successful seasons in London, and she declared, having aroused hopeless love in the breasts of innumerable Englishmen and intense jealousy in those of English ladies. "Englishmen don't make such kind, obedient husbands as Americans," said this experienced lady; "they are tyrannical and dreadfully stupid; but it always enhances a girl's value with men on this side to have it known that she has refused a few Englishmen. At least I should not advise you to accept anything less than the heir to an earldom, and then only if he is young and handsome. But the great point is that you'll be presented at court, which at once gives you a right to the best society here—it's a sort of certificate of merit; and Lady Barbara knows her work, and won't take you to any but the best houses, so I am sure you will have a lovely time. Oh, one last caution! don't get too intimate with any of the people on board ship, unless you are quite, quite sure that they are the sort you will want to keep up with afterward. I was terribly plagued by a woman who went over with me. I had been civil to her when we were crossing, and the result was that in London she was always bothering me. After she read in the newspapers that I had been at the drawing-room, she persecuted me to present her, till I was forced to insult her in self-defense."

Many more advices and warnings did Mrs. Oppenheim give her young friends, till both Valeria and Ermyntrude felt that if their career in England was not successful the failure would be due to their own blundering, and who was less likely to blunder than these stately and self-possessed damsels? Very high of heart were they when they stepped on board the Cunarder that was to convey them to the scene of triumph; and when they sat down to partake of their first meal with their fellow passengers, very careful were they not to risk a too intimate acquaintance with any of them. There was only one, they decided, after privately discussing their companions, that looked at all worth cultivating—a fair-haired, handsome young Englishman—but he had been conversing with the people near him with so much animation that they felt sure he could not be any one of importance.

"I shouldn't think he was anybody," said Valeria reflectively, "though he does look so aristocratic, but then you can never guess at an Englishman's position by his being civil all round. They never seem to think it necessary, even the highest of them, to keep their inferiors at a distance."

"That's because they are sure that the distance is so immeasurable that no one will attempt to traverse it," returned Ermyntrude a little bitterly, remembering one or two occasions when her social inferiors had not seemed so conscious that she stood far above them as might be desired. "I wonder what his name is?" she added.

"I heard some one call him Mr. Ellis."

"Ellis! You can't learn much from that. I like a name like Cholmondeley or Grosvenor; that you don't often find outside the 'Peerage;' then you know where you are, but Ellis might belong to any one."

"Let us look up the 'Peerage,'" suggested the younger sister.

They searched that interesting manual, without which no American woman's library is complete, and found that Ellis was the family name of the earl of sussex.

"What does it say about him?"

"He is an old man himself, born 1802. His eldest son, 'Lord Eastbourne, born 1828, married, 1853, Lady Louisa Frederica le Marchant, only daughter of the marquis of Foxland, and has issue: Hugh Roderick Herbert le Marchant Ellis, born 1855.'"

With one accord the sisters ceased reading and exclaimed: "Can it be he?"

They made an effort to discover if their fellow-passenger was indeed that scion of the noble house of Sussex. Leaving their stateroom, where the absorbing study of the "Peerage" had been carried on, they went on deck, where they found Mr. Ellis discussing Christian names with some other gentlemen.

"One's godfathers and godmothers occasionally make blunders in the names they give one, but society always sets the matter right," he was saying. "I know a man who was christened Launcelot, but whom everybody calls Dolly, for no other reason than that it seems to suit him better. I myself am afflicted with a string of names long enough to serve a whole family if economically used, but they are all contracted into Dick."

The Misses Vandersteen heard only the latter part of this speech, and a ray of disappointment shot from the eyes of each. This was not the Hon. Hugh Roderick Herbert le Marchant, but some commonplace, uninteresting, middle-class Dick! They walked round the deck, and as they again passed the gentlemen they heard the obnoxious, because plebian, Ellis say, in answer to some question, "No, I did not spend much time in the cities. I wanted to make some sketches, and, with the exception of some of the older parts of New York, I found nothing of interest in the northern towns. I spent most of my time on the Hudson till winter came on, and then I went south. Now, New Orleans is a place——"

The Misees Vandersteen listened to no more, but crept away to their cabin to hide their disappointment.

"To think of his being only an artist!" sighed Valeria.

"But some artists are in society," sighed Ermyntrude, who had been more deeply struck by the stranger's good looks than her sister.

"Not while they are so young as he is," replied Miss Vandersteen sententiously.

Next day was rather stormy, and many ladies were sick, among them the Misses Vandersteen. Their maid was also ill, and unable to attend to them, and the stewardess had too invalids goods to look after to give as much attention to the Misses Vandersteen as these young ladies required. Indeed, they would have fared badly but for the kindness of a young girl named Alice Barclay who was going to Europe for the first time with her parents. When they were able only to lie on a sofa in the ladies' cabin, she was ready to fan them, read to them, get them champagne or iced-water, as their capricious fancy dictated; in short, to make herself essential to their comfort. While they were ill and weak they accepted her attention gratefully, though with a sense of the injustice of a fate which ordained that an Alice Barclay, a little brown-haired girl of no particular consequence, should be well and enjoying the voyage, while the majestic Valeria and the sinuously elegant Ermyntrude Vandersteen lay prone and helpless. As, however, the sisters began to recover, Mrs. Oppenheim's warning recurred to their minds. What if Miss Barclay's kindness were only a trick whereby, like the old man of the sea, she might climb upon their shoulders and thus gain admission to the sacredly select social circles wherein they meant to shine. "One can't be too careful," said the sisters Vandersteen, and they amiably resolved to snub Miss Barclay as soon as they were well enough to dispense with her services.

At last Ermyntrude was able to crawl on deck. Alice Barclay, who was sitting in a deck-chair listening with deep interest to a lively description of a day's hunt from Dick Ellis' lips, saw her as she came up and was at her side in an instant.

"I am so glad to see you on deck," she exclaimed. "Come and take my chair; it is nicely sheltered from the wind, and Mr. Ellis is telling me about England, and it is so interesting."

"Thanks," said Ermyntrude stiffly; "I don't think Mr. Ellis could give me any information about England that would be of use to me and I have a chair of my own somewhere." Ellis found her chair, placed it in a comfortable corner and wrapped her rugs round her, but did not suggest that she should come near Alice. She barely thanked him and he returned to his companion.

"Can you wonder, Miss Barclay," he said, alluding to a conversation they had the previous day—"can you wonder at my countrymen having such a false impression of yours when a woman like that comes to England and calls herself an American lady?"

"I know she is horrid," Alice replied, with something like tears in her eyes; "but you know we aren't all like that."

"Yes, fortunately I do; I know you. Formerly my ideal woman was rather hazy and undefined, but now I know exactly what she is like. She is not very tall, but graceful as a fairy; she has brown hair and eyes; she is always bright and cheerful, and she is kind to every one, even to those who don't deserve it. She is an American, and her name is"—

"Oh, Mr. Ellis, there is Valeria Vandersteen; do go and get her a chair," interrupted Alice, speaking calmly enough and looking him in the face with a glance that seemed to defy him to say she was blushing.

"Thanks," said Dick, "I am only a barbarous Englishman, and a little insolence from a woman goes a long way with me. I have had quite as much as I want."

"Oh, but I wish you would help her!"

"That alters the case." And Dick obediently went and arranged everything for Valeria's comfort, thereby deepening the impression in the Vandersteen mind that he wished to attain the honor of their intimacy.

Presently a pause in their conversation enabled Alice and Dick to hear a dialogue between the sisters which was evidently leveled at them.

"The worst of there being no titles with us," said Valeria, "is that Englishmen who would never aspire to good society in their own country, think they have a right to mix with the best families in America."

"Yes, but they don't keep it up long," answered her sister; "they find their own level pretty soon and keep to the families of dry-goodsmen and the like."

Alice Barclay started from her seat. "Please take me for a walk up the deck, Mr. Ellis," she said, "I can't endure this." When they were out of hearing she exclaimed vindictively, "I should like to throw them overboard!"

"Don't!" cried Dick, laughing. "I don't mind taking any wager you like that before three months are over they will wish they had drowned themselves before they spoke rudely of either you or me."

During the remainder of the voyage the Misses Vandersteen treated Alice with a condescending stiffness which, we are sorry to say, made her regret she had ever spoken to them, but Dick Ellis they carefully ignored, save once. He was in the saloon, putting up in a portfolio some sketches which he had just been showing to Miss Barclay when Valeria Vandersteen entered. She herself had some talent for painting and no little love for it, and she could not resist the pleasure of looking at these drawings.

"Did you do them, Mr. Ellis? O, do let me see them?" she cried.

He showed her each one, telling her the subjects and talking about the spots where they were made, in such an interesting manner that for full half an hour Valeria forgot the solemn duty of keeping him at a distance. But as they came to the last of the sketches she recalled it, and mourned her temporary unbending.

"This is really lovely," she said taking up a view of the Hudson; "I should like to buy it. What is the price of it, Mr. Ellis?"

Dick stared at her in amazement.

"Excuse me," he said coldly, "my sketches are not for sale."

"But I want this one particularly."

"Then, Miss Vandersteen, will you honor me by accepting it?"

"Certainly not, I couldn't do such a thing. You must sell it to me."

"I would much rather give it to you."

"But I won't take it. What price do you ask?"

"I have really never thought of it," said Dick.

"Would $25 be enough?"

"Since you make a point of buying it—yes."

Valeria produced her purse, paid the money and carried off the sketch in triumph.

"Now he can't presume on knowing us," she reflected. "If I had accepted the drawing he might have made use of the incident to foist himself on us in London, but now it's merely a matter of business."

If Dick muttered something unorthodox under his breath after Miss Vandersteen had left him, it might surely be forgiven. He collected his sketches once more, and went to Alice Barclay. "I have just had a new experience, Miss Barclay," he said; "I have been earning money."

"Indeed! How?" she asked.

"Miss Vandersteen has just bought one of my sketches for $25."

"O, Mr. Ellis! And you let her do it?"

"She insisted on it. I asked her to take it as a gift, but she evidently considered the offer presumptuous, so I was obliged to let her have her own way. But I don't like to be insulted, even by a lady, and lest Miss Vandersteen should wish to purchase any further specimens of my work I want you to do me a favor.

"I?" said Alice, in astonishment.

"Yes. Will you accept the whole portfolio as a token of an Englishman's admiration for your country?"

"O, I can't, Mr. Ellis. It is too great a gift."

"Perhaps you would prefer to buy them?"

"How can you be so unkind! You know I don't mean that."

"Forgive me, I had no right to speak to you like that; but Miss Valeria's manner irritated me so much. You will forgive me, Alice? And in token of your forgiveness you will accept my work, will you not? I should like to think that it was in your possession."

And what could Alice do but blush and consent?

At last Liverpool was reached, and the Misses Vandersteen took train for London, there to place themselves under the care of Lady Barbara Macnab.

Lady Barbara Macnab was a disappointed woman. When, as Lady Barbara Vandeleur, she had first made her entrance into society, she had been much admired, and consequently she had disdainfully refused several offers of marriage which, though good, were not great enough to satisfy her ambition. It was, as the result proved, an unwise course for a lady so slenderly portioned as she, for an attack of small-pox deprived her of her beauty, and then she was obliged to ask herself, not whom she should marry, but who would marry her. The question seemed difficult of solution, but at last a suitor appeared in the person of Mr. Macnab, of Tulliecawdor. It is true that this gentleman was on the high road to 60, and possessed certain characteristic Scottish vices, in addition to a Scottish length of pedigree and a Scottish shortness of purse, but Dady Barbara accepted him, saying in her own mind that it was better to be a widow than a spinster. Of the intervening stage of existence as a wife, the less said the better.

Within two years, however, Mr. Macnab was laid in the grave of his fathers at Tulliecawdor, and Lady Barbara was a free woman once more. But she was not a rich one. The jointure she received from the Tulliecawdor estates was not sufficient to satisfy all her desires, and she had been obliged to add to her income by various means. She wrote paragraphs on balls, bazaars and beauties for society journals; she was obliging in countenancing and taking the management of the entertainments of rich parvenus, who, of course, gave her a handsome present as an expression of their gratitude, and were privileged to send wine, fruit and game when she gave a party; and every season she introduced a young lady into society. For this, too, she was—paid is too harsh a word; let us say compensated, by the girl's family, if she was rich, or by the man she married if she was poor. Lady Barbara demanded three things of her charges: That they should be pretty, obedient to her directions, and ready to marry at the end of the season. She could not stand girls who insisted on flirting with detrimentals and refusing good offers; they must be sensible and tractable And, let me tell you, Lady Barbara was very successful in her vocation; she never had a failure, and she had had several triumphs. Did not her last American heiress become countess of Bogoak, and relieve the earl of all future anxiety as to the caprices of his Milesian tenants? Was it not one of her charming but penniless protegess who married young Ironstone, whose coal-mines are the envy of thousands? It was to her care that the Misses Vandersteen were consigned, and her ladyship could not help feeling with modest pride that they could not have had a better chaperon.

She was delighted with her new charges. She had artistically advertised them by writing in The Glass of Fashion, the paper to which she contributed, paragraphs about "The new American beauties who are at present the guests of Lady Barbara Macnab at her charming little house, the rendezvous of the elite of the social and artistic world." She described their dresses and their diamonds and the sensation they created when they appeared at the drawing-room; but she knew well that advertisements do not always bring the success they aim at. In this case, however, they answered their purpose; the Misses Vandersteen were among the most successful of the season's debutantes, and Lady Barbara began to entertain justifiable hopes of a success greater than any of her previous ones.

"Make yourselves look as charming as possible to-night," she added to her proteges one evening in May; "Lady Foxland is one of the best dressed women in Europe, and she won't stand dowdiness even in a princess."

"And she's very select, too, isn't she?"

"Words won't describe it. She draws the line finer than any woman in London. I almost went down on my knees to her to get an invitation to a ball for James Ironstone after he was engaged to Evelyn Mowbray, but she wouldn't yield. 'I believe Mr. Ironstone's father was a collier,' she said. 'I decline to receive him, and if Miss Mowbray marries him I shall not receive her, either;' and she has kept her word. Any one who goes to Foxland house is safe, and as the marchioness never crowds her rooms your dresses are seen to the best advantage. You ought to make a sensation to-night."

Never had Lady Barbara had greater cause to be proud of her guests. They were beautiful, exquisitely dressed and successful. Every man in the room wished to dance with them, and, which delighted Lady Barbara more, Lady Foxland herself spoke of them as "your charming young friends." "If those girls don't make the best matches of the season I will never bring one out again" thought Lady Barbara.

"Valeria," said Ermyntrude to her sister "I am almost sure I saw Alice Barclay."

"Impossible! She knew no one in London; how could she get here?"

But even as she spoke she saw Alice and with her, Dick Ellis. Lady Barbara only noticed the latter.

"There is a man I must introduce to you," she said, "he who is going into the conservatory with that little dark girl—I wonder who she is—Dick Ellis. I suppose he is staying here."

"Here! in the house, do you mean?" asked Valeria.

"Yes."

"Oh, surely not!"

"Why not? Lord Foxland is his uncle."

"But he is only an artist."

"An artist! He goes in for painting a good deal, I know, but he is Lord Eastbourne's only son, and heir to the earldom of Sussex."

"But Lady Barbara, that Mr. Ellis's name is Hugh Roderick Herbert le Marchant."

"Yes, but everybody calls him Dick. He is a charming fellow."

The Misses Vandersteen nearly fainted with horror, but their partners claiming them at that moment, they were forced to subdue their feelings. But the gentlemen who had the honor of dancing with them were surprised to find them so silent. When they returned to their chaperon they found that Lady Barbara had captured Dick and was questioning him about Alice.

"She is Miss Barclay," they heard him say "Her parents and she came over in the same vessel as I, and since then they have been staying with my people at Bourne Lodge."

"She looks very charming."

Dick smiled "I think her so," he answered, "but perhaps my word won't be accepted, as she is the young lady I am going to marry."

"Indeed, I congratulate you," said Lady Barbara, with every correct appearance of delight, but with disappointment in her heart, nevertheless. It was a good partido lost "Let me introduce you to the Misses Vandersteen," she added, however, as a duty. The future earl of Sussex was worth having as a friend, even if he was lost as a husband.

"I am already slightly acquainted with them," said Dick, and with a few words, polite but chilly, he left them.

Then Lady Barbara perceived for the first time the confusion written on the girls' faces

"Why, my dears, what is the matter?" she asked.

"Let us go home, Lady Barbara. Oh, let us go home!" almost sobbed Valeria; "if we stop five minutes longer I shall begin to cry"

Lady Barbara was alarmed. She carried them off as speedily as possible, a growing anxiety mingling with her bewilderment.

"And now," she said, when they were home once more, "what is the matter?"

So they told the tale of their blunder, Lady Barbara listening with a face on which bewilderment gave place to graity and anxiety to horror.

"And oh!" exclaimed Ermyntrude, when all was told, "that I should have said to the girl he is going to marry that he couldn't give me any information about England that would be of use to me!"

"And that I," sobbed Valeria, "should have refused to take the picture he offered me, and insisted on paying him $25 for it."

"You have ruined yourselves," said Lady Barbara solemnly. "If either he or his fiancee mentions a word of this to any one—and though he may be silent, she won't—it will be all over London in twenty-four hours, and everybody will be laughing at you."

Then Lady Barbara was silent for a time, considering the situation. For the girls' mortification she did not care—indeed she regarded it as only a just punishment for not making sure whom they were snubbing before being rude to Mr. Ellis and his betrothed; but the odium which their folly reflected on her filled her with vexation. It was her first failure, and it came when she had been anticipating a marked success. After all her skill and care and good management, to come to a fiasco like this! Her reputation as a marriage-maker would be ruined if the Vandersteens' mistake, in all its enormity, came to the world's ears, and she would never be intrusted with a debutante again. She felt that she detested the poor girls of whom an hour ago she had been so proud, and now her sole desire was to get rid of them as soon as possible.

"I think," she said at last, "that you have spoken of some friends in Paris whom you meant to visit in the autumn. Under the circumstances, the best thing you can do is to go to Paris at once."

HER DIAMONDS.

"You know, dear, we are not the least bit in love with each other," Lucy Bassett said, reaching up to pull my whiskers, and laying a coaxing cheek against my shoulder. It would be very foolish for you and me to fall in love with each other, and we just won't—there!"

And to emphasize the declaration, the softest little fingers in the world being still twisted in my whiskers, pulled my face down to a level with hers, and this girl, who was not the least bit in love with me, kissed me.

There's a great many different ways of kissing, you know. There are cold lips, and dry lips, and oily lips, and lips that glide past your face like ghosts, and lips that you'd rather have a blow than kisses from; but Lucy's kisses were half-opened rosebuds at 5 o'clock of a June morning.

Lucy herself was a whole garden of roses—dew, color, fragrance and all. When she looked at you, you felt as if your whole heart was exhaling at your eyes; and when she smiled upon you, it did not matter what sort of thunder and lightning there was in any other part of the globe, it was distilled sunshine where you were. I don't know if Lucy were pretty, but she had a lot of pretty characteristics. She was all quality, like a golden wine that is better the longer you keep it, and that gets a new flavor every time you taste it—a more molten sparkle every time it drips over the beaker's rim.

The beauty of her eyes was in their expression; of her hair, in its brightness. Her face was a blossom, her hands birds; and if the white wings of her fingers fluttered across your horizon, you might as well be blind for all seeing anything else but her. In short, you see I was in love with Lucy, if Lucy was not in love with me; and it is my private opinion that we were very much in love with each other, in spite of Mrs. Anstruther's parting admonition, that we were on no account to commit so absurd a blunder.

Lucy and I were both orphans. Lucy was own neice to Mrs. Anstruther, whom she called Aunt Doria, and whose prospective heiress she was supposed to be, provided always she married to please her.

I was nephew to Mrs. Anstruther's husband, who was dead, and heir to nothing but my wits—a rather slender property, Lucy derisively assured me, and scarcely likely to yield an income equal to the probable demand of a pair so extravagantly inclined as we.

"So you see it would never, never do." Lucy would say, with a roguish pout of her rosy lips at me, and Aunt Doria needn't be one bit afraid, so far as I am concerned."

Aunt Doria had been absent from the Grove some three weeks now, summoned away by the illness of a friend, just as I had got myself comfortably bestowed in her best chamber, with a dislocated shoulder, which injury had been received in a struggle with a refractory steed which had tried to run away with Miss Lucy.

Mrs. Anstruther was warranted in considering the incidents as dangerously romantic in its tendencies, and she left us together at the Grove with manifest reluctance. She had, however, great confidence in Lucy, and she gave her distinctly to understand, in my presence, that if we two made such ninnies of ourselves as to turn lovers while she was gone, we should never see the color of her money, either of us.

Well, for some days I, for one, felt like little else but groaning; and then gradually I became conscious of a velvet touch that swallowed pain, of a hovering face that might have been an angel's, of a voice deliciously attuned, that chorused all sorts of soothing and coaxing speeches, with a "dear." I was petted and babied and pitied to an extent that I don't mind confessing here, and it was the means of my pretending sick a trifle longer than was really necessary; but I don't think many would have blamed me, under the circumstances. The consequence was, that I was only fairly established down stairs again when Mrs. Anstruther returned. She eyed Lucy and me very sharply, and we two bore the inspection with great demureness till, chancing to encounter glances, a spark from Lucy's roguishment lit on me, and we went off into explosions of laughter, that nearly took Mrs. Anstruther off her feet with amazement. However, she laughed, too, presently, and in the same breath announced that company was coming to the Grove the following week.

"Shall I go, Mrs. Anstruther?" I asked. "I am sufficiently recovered, I think."

"Certainly not," she answered, sharply. "Whatever mischief is done can't be made any worse by your staying; and it might be as well, besides, for Lucy to have an opportunity for comparing you with other people. If I am not mistaken, she will know a gentleman when she sees him."

"If I don't, aunt, it won't be the fault of Felix here," spoke Lucy, coming swiftly beside me, and pinching my arm.

"Ta-ta, miss! Impertinence, Felix, is very well; but wait till next week."

"I presume I shall, and considerably longer," Lucy answered saucily.

"Miss Lucy Basset, I should like to know what this means!" demanded Mrs. Anstruther, loftily.

"Nothing very serious—does it, Felix?" laughed Lucy. "We are too well warned, aunty, dear."

"I don't know about that," said Mrs. Anstruther, sailing from the room in a very evident passion, and sending for me to her apartment half an hour after.

I submitted to the curious tirade that followed with mingled irritation and good humor, and offered at least six times in the course of it to leave the Grove that very day. But Mrs. Anstruther would not hear to such a proceeding.

Lucy was waiting on the landing outside when I left her aunt, and she stood on tiptoe to whisper in my ear: "You don't mind, do you, dear," and left the warm print of rosy lips on my cheek, I can assure you I did not mind so much as I might.

When I left Mrs. Anstruther I had fully intended to quit the Grove, whether or no, the following day; but that half-dozen words with Lucy left me undecided again. I was an idiot for staying, first, because I was deliberately sacrificing a very pretty prospect in life by not going and, second, because I might have known beforehand what sort of an experience the next week's would be likely to be. But men are idiots when a pretty girl is concerned and I was a great deal more bewildered with Lucy than I owned to myself. I spoiled my own mess, too, with my conceit. I am willing to own that men are more conceited than women, but then they have so much more to make them so. Why, only think of one woman like Lucy Basset making "sweet eyes" at you.

I am willing to own at this day, that I had not at that time one misgiving as to how it was likely to turn with Lucy and me if I stayed. My going or staying was a mere question of self-abnegation. Should I try and win the girl who loved me in the face of Mrs. Anstruther's threats of poverty and starvation, or should I generously leave her to forget me as fast as she could, and bestow her matchlessness upon some prince of the crew that were coming to the Grove that week?

I was not generous. I did not at all relish being forgotten, and I stayed.

Mrs. Anstruther's company came in due time—a household of them, too—gentlemen and ladies; some married, some single; the young ladies pretty creatures enough, and the gentlemen good talkers and well dressed.

I understood long before the passage of the first day what Mrs. Anstruther meant by her talk about gentlemen. She meant men who owed their right to be ranked above the "plebs" to their tailor. My best coat was of last year's cut, and a trifle seedy, having done duty alternately as every day gear and Sunday toggery. My boots were neither patent leather nor morocco, and my unmentionables, though as well kept as could possibly be expected under the circumstances, had quite lost that beautiful shapeliness of limb which characterized those of Mrs. Anstruther's gnests.

In vain I kept repeating to myself, "A man's a man for a' that," and "Dress doesn't make the man." I was humiliatingly sure that I wasn't half a man because of my seedy garb.

Mrs. Anstruther watched me, and I felt rejoiced at my discomfiture, what she could see of it. Out of sheer revenge I devoted myself to Lucy. Secure in Lucy's fondness for me, I took airs upon myself, and for every sneer I imagined flung at my clothes, I managed to make Lucy snub the sneerer.

I don't know how it was; I think I had taken a little too much wine that evening, and there was a Count Leopold Keirst who was especially affected by Mrs. Anstruther for Lucy, and who was nothing loath himhimself. The man was the merest dandy, empty-headed as a rattle-box, positively nothing but clothes and title, but because I hated him for daring to aspire to Lucy, I insisted upon her openly insulting him by dancing with me when she had promised him, and they had even got their places upon the floor. I suppose I was mad with jealousy, envy and wine, and I saw Mrs. Anstruther shaking her head at Lucy from a corner. I insisted that Lucy should dance with me instead of the count, and she refused, of course.

Half an hour afterward, carpet-bag in hand, I had left the house, and by morning was miles on my journey city-ward.

I had recovered my sense by that time, and was sufficiently conscious what an idiot I had made of myself.

Whatever conceit was left in me then was taken out before the day was done.

As I got off the cars at noon a strange man put his hand on my shoulder. I was arrested for stealing Mrs. Anstruther's diamonds. She had telegraphed to have it done, and Lucy had not hindered her.

It was odd, but I never felt myself more a man than at that moment. The touch of that terrible finger of disgrace was like the prick of the surgeon's lancet to a swooning consciousness. By noon the next day Mrs. Anstruther herself came to the city to me in my prison cell.

The woman was positively wild about her diamonds.

"Oh give them back to me, Felix, and I won't prosecute the thing. I've got money enough to hush the matter, and I will; and I'll set you up in business, besides. Only give me back my diamonds, Felix. How could you have the heart to touch them! Why, man, they've been in the family more than 200 years."

Mrs. Austruther wrung her hands wildly as she pleaded, and clung to me when I would have risen from my chair.

"Madam, you will never see your diamonds more, if the return of them depends on me," said I.

"You ungrateful boy!" cried Mrs. Anstruther.

I smiled.

"After all I have done for you."

"I am aware that I owe Mrs. Anstruther one debt which it will be impossible for me ever to repay."

"Do you mean Lucy, sir? Give me back my diamonds, and you shall even have her."

"Madame values her diamonds at a curious price."

"Do you mean to keep them in the face of everything? What good will they ever do you now?"

"Madame forgets that there is a limit to durance vile, even for stealing diamonds. Many a man has toiled longer and harder for a fortune than that."

Mrs. Anstruther thought I was in earnest. Her face whitened and she trembled with agitation.

"Well, then, Felix," she said, "if you are so hard as that, I must leave you to the law. I should have liked to save the diamonds, and avoid the disgrace to the family. But you will not permit me."

"Mrs. Anstruther," said I, putting a detaining hand on her arm as she was going, "do you honestly believe I know anything about your diamonds?"

She stopped, and looked at me in odd perplexity.

"Who else could?"

"When did you first miss them, Miss Anstruther.

"In the morning after you went away."

"When did you see them last before that?"

"I always look for them before I sleep. I did so that night."

"And you did not retire, of course, till after your guests. Did they stop dancing any before 12?"

"I don't know about that, but it was after 2 o'clock before I got to bed. I remember noticing it was so late as that before I sent Lucy away. I had her in my room, and talked to her pretty plainly about you."

"Pray, Mrs. Anstruther, what time is the night express due at the Grove?"

"Oh, at 1 o'clock you know——"

She came to a sudden stop; her face turned red and white in a minute.

"What a horrible wretch I am!" she cried, covering her face with her hands, and then holding them both out to me. "Why, you must have been miles and miles away before I told Lucy good-night. Felix, I am ashamed of myself. Can you ever forgive me?"

"It is of no consequence, madam," I said, frigidly.

"Indeed it is, but I will make it up to you. You shall see that I will, Felix."

I was duly restored to honorable air again, and went back to Grove with Mrs. Anstruther on the first train thereafter. But I had not forgotten her.

We had arranged that a detective should go down to the Grove on the same train with us, though not in company, to avoid suspicion.

Mrs. Anstruther looked grave and anxious during all that homeward ride. She was thinking of her diamonds, and I almost believe she would have been willing that the family should have been disgraced by my stealing them for the sake of finding them again.

We reached the Grove at dark, and when the 1 o'clock express came from the opposite direction the detective made his appearance pretending to be a new guest.

Lucy met me like a woman. I had not asked Mrs. Anstruther about her, and what ever her lovely, speaking face might have said to me, if I had given it opportunity to express itself, it said nothing now but what my own did, and that was cold and stern as I could make it.

We were mostly at breakfast when Mrs. Anstruthers new guest came down, and was introduced to us as Mr. Clemens.

By the merest chance in the world, my eyes were on Count Leopold Keirst as his fell for the first time on Mr. Clemens. An instantaneous change flashed over his countenance, a swift, momentary pallor that left his very lips white.

He sat near the door, and when I again looked in his direction, after Mr. Clemens had taken his seat, he had vanished.

Making a scarcely audible excuse to Mrs Anstruther, I quitted the room also and passed noiselessly up the carpeted stairway which led to the count's apartment. But before I reached it, I heard the door open and, drawing back a step, heard him pass along to the opposite extremity of the hall, where a glass door opened upon the garden As I caught the sound of his retreating footsteps, I followed, and looked through the blind after him.

But was that the Count Leopold? Scarcely, though there was something about him oddly like the count; and then in a moment I knew him again, in spite of the disguise he had so quickly donned.

He crossed the garden, leaped the fence, and struck at a good round pace into a path which led across the fields toward the depot

"Eureka!" I cried, audibly, and fleeing to the breakfast parlor again, asked Mr. Clemens, with small ceremony, if I could have a word with him in the hall.

His face flashed eagerness while I told my story, and before the last words were out of my mouth he had snatched one hat from the hall-rack for himself and crammed another on my head, and was dragging me toward the depot.

There was a train due at half-past 9, and we had hardly time to reach it. But we did reach it—Mr. Clements entering at one door of the depot, while I sauntered idly through the other. Our man was at that instant at the ticket office. He wheeled at Clemens put his hand on him and flashed out a revolver. With a wrench that left his arm helpless, he twisted the weapon from him, and then, in a very brief time he had the handcuffs on him.

Clemens knew him the instant he fairly saw him. The Count Leopold Keisrt was an old offender, no more a count than Clemens himself, whom he had recognized first, and profiting by that recognized, would have neatly made his escape but for the chance which set me on his track.

We found Mrs. Anstruther's diamonds on him, unset, and sewed fast in a belt he had buckled around him. Mrs. Anstruther, when she heard the story and beheld its proof in the return of her glittering treasures rewarded me for my share in her good fortune with a single sentence.

"No one here knew of my absurd suspicion of you, Felix—not even Lucy."

Lucy's sweet face was very pale when she met my flashing glance, but she did not quit her aunt's side.

"Can Lucy forgive me for what has been amiss in me toward her?" I asked, sadly.

"Let us at least be friends—dear."

She flushed at the words, but did not lift her eyes.

"Ta-ta," said Mrs. Anstruther; "gracious indeed! I shall divide my money between you, and any day he likes. You'll be glad enough to make up with him, miss."

Whereat Lucy began to cry, and slipped out of the room before her aunt could stop her. She hid herself in her chamber the best part of the day; but I was on the watch, and I knew that when she at last crept forth in the dusk of the evening and stole into the music-room.

My sweet girl looked a little frightened when I followed her; but she did not refuse to hide her fears on my shoulder, and so without words we knew that we were all in all to each other once more.

How the Wolf Got Left.

[Detroit Free Press.]

A Fox who had been caught in a trap appealed to a passing Wolf to save his Life, and vowed that his Gratitude would never grow cold. The wolf helped him out and was overwhelmed with Thanks as the Fox limped away. After a few days the Wolf wanted Assistance in securing one of a fat flock of sheep, and he called upon the Fox to go with him.

"Too dangerous," replied Reynard.

"Then help me to catch a goat."

"Too much running."

"You will at least render me assistance in digging out a couple of Hares for my Sunday dinner?" continued the Wolf.

"But I am a Friend of the Hares," answered Reynard.

"See here!" exclaimed the Wolf, "I rendered you a Great Service and counted on your Gratitude. Is this the way you repay me?"

"My Friend," said Reynard, as he scratched a flea off his shoulder, "there's a heap of difference between a Fox in a Trap and a Fox at liberty. Please go away—you make me tired."

MORAL: The man who doesn't happen to meet you when he wants a favor continues your friend.

Sanitary Mustaches.

[Chicago Herald.]

It is reported that the ladies of Marseilles, France, have adopted a curious precaution against cholera infection by wearing what are called "sanitary mustaches," i. e., false mustaches anointed with carbolic acid. The notion of anointing the mustache with a disinfectant was first conceived by a gentleman, who suggested the idea to his female acquaintances. Some boys have even adopted false whiskers for the same purpose.

It Was Well Bound.

[Boston Globe.]

"This book is of no value whatever," said the literary editor to the managing editor of a provincial daily. "But we get so much advertising from the publishers that I dislike to cut it up. What shall I do?"

"Well, you might say that the binding is remarkably handsome," was the reply.