A FAMILY AFFAIR.

By HUGH CONWAY.

Author of "Called Back," and "Dark Days."

He engaged a bedroom. He ordered a dinner of which even Horace and Herbert might have approved. He rang for hot water, and spent half an hour soaking his hardened and disfigured hands. He scowled as he realized the painful fact that hundreds of gallons of hot water and months of time must be expended before these badly-used members in any way resumed their original appearance. Then, without a shilling in his pocket, he went to his dinner, with which he

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drank a bottle of champagne. It is clear that Mr. Hervey, late 1080, had liberal views as to the treatment due to himself. He had, moreover, a lot of leeway to make up.

He spent the evening smoking the hotel cigars and drinking the hotel whisky and water. Pleasant as these occupations were, he retired to rest early. While he had been soaking his hands he had cast longing eyes upon the beauties of the white-covered bed, and had mentally contrasted its soft charms with the asperities of the strip of sacking which had for so long been his resting-place. Sweet, truly sweet, are the uses of adversity when they teach a man to enjoy the simple comforts of life as Maurice Hervey that night enjoyed his bed. He reveled in the clean white sheets, he nestled on the soft mattress and yet softer pillows. The profusion of blankets filled his soul with a rapturous warmth. And as he fully realized the contrast between the innocent luxury he was enjoying and the discomforts of an iron cell eight feet by four, he vowed a very proper vow: that no ill-advised conduct of his own should force him to renew his acquaintance with prison fare and discipline. The love of luxury has saved many a man from going wrong.

"Besides," he murmured, as he sank off to sleep, "there is no need for foolery of that kind. I am master of the situation. I can eat, drink and be merry for the rest of my life." There are many men who would sleep the sounder had they such a thought to rock them.

In the morning, after breakfast, it occurred to Hervey that a moneyless man staying at a hotel is in a rather precarious position. Pleasant as was his newly-found liberty, there was work to be done before he could with a clear conscience enjoy it. So he sallied forth, trudged through a number of streets, and at last reached a quiet back road full of unpretending little houses. At one of these houses he inquired for a Miss Martin, who had lodged there some four or five years ago. Miss Martin, he was informed, had left ever so long—left without giving an address. Hervey's heart grew sick. In his haste to once more taste the luxuries of life he had been too precipitate. He knew that unless he could find the person he wanted it would have been better for him to have kept his good conduct money intact.

The woman of the house, who noticed his dismay, added that the shop at the corner might know what had become of Miss Martin; so to the shop he went. He was in luck. He learned that his friend lived about a mile away; moreover, that she was now Mrs. Humphreys. As he heard this surprising piece of news the man laughed so curiously that the shopwoman eyed him askance.

He walked to the new address, that of another little house in another quiet road. He knocked. A good-looking, respectable young woman, carrying a baby, and followed by a toddling child, opened the door. She gave a low cry, and staggered back against the wall. Hervey raised his hat with mock politeness, and without invitation entered the house. The woman called to her servant, who came and relieved her of her children. She then opened the door of a sitting-room, into which she followed her visitor. Hervey threw himself on a chair, and looked at the woman with a satirical smile. As yet not a word had passed between them. The man was the first to break silence.

"Well, Fanny," he said mockingly, "so you are married, and have forgotten me."

"No; I am trying to forget you," she spoke bitterly.

"And you can't. That's a compliment, considering the years of separation."

The woman looked at him in the face. "Maurice," she said, "I am married. I married a kind, true man, who loves me and works for me and for our children. He knows a great deal, not all about my past, yet he took me and trusts me. You will sneer when I tell you I am trying to be a good woman and a good wife. You never were good at anything good. But, Maurice, for the sake of what we were once to each other, spare me now. Let me live in peace, and see you no more."

She spoke in solemn earnest, such earnestness that the man's light laugh seemed discordant. "My dear girl," he said, "I have no wish to tempt your feet from the paths of domestic virtue—no wish to harm you. I have finer fish to fry. But you may remember that when certain circumstances rendered it imperative—curse it! I can speak plainly to you—when I learned that the warrant was out, when I knew that the game was up, I placed a little packet in your fond hands to keep until better times. Where is it?"

The woman flushed, and for a moment did not answer. Her prayer for mercy had been genuine; her wish to see him no more an honest utterance; but years ago she had given this man all a woman has to give—given it without consideration, without price. And now, so far as he was concerned the only memory of the past which linked them together was but of a certain thing left in her charge.

He saw the flush, he saw the hesitation, and, of course, attributed both to the wrong motive. His brow grew black. "By G—d!" he cried; "if it is not forthcoming——"

She burst into tears. "Wait," she said, quitting the room abruptly, and leaving her visitor in dire suspense. In a few minutes she returned and handed him a small sealed packet.

"There it is—just as you gave it to me that night," she said. "Many a time when I've been hard pressed, and did not know where to turn to for a shilling, I tried to persuade myself that you meant me to use it in case of need. But I knew you too well, Maurice—I know you too well!"

Hervey paid no heed to her last words, the scorn conveyed by which should have brought the blood to the cheek of any man of decent feelings. He tore the parcel open. It contained a gold watch and chain, two valuable diamond rings and about a hundred sovereigns. He placed the watch in his fob, then tried to draw the rings on his fingers. Neither would pass over his enlarged knuckles, so with a curse he shoveled them along with the gold, into his pocket. The woman watched him sadly.

"Thank you, my dear," he said airily "I knew I could trust you. By the by, perhaps you're hard up. Have some—I can get plenty more." He held out some gold to her.

"Not a farthing. Your gold would burn me."

"Will you give me a kiss for the sake of old times? Fancy! it is more than four years since my lips have touched a woman's."

She made an emphatic gesture of dissent. "It would be well for some women," she said, "if your lips had never touched theirs."

He laughed an unpleasant laugh. "Well good-bye then, if we are not to rake up old fires. Remember me to your respectable husband. Keep yourself unspotted from the world, and train up your children in the way they should go. Farewell."

He swung out of the house whistling a merry tune in vogue when his incarceration began. "Now," he said, "that I have money enough to last a long time, I can make my own terms. Grim want won't push me into a corner. Now, you jade, I'll make you bend your proud knees!"

He grated his strong teeth and stamped his foot—the latter so violently and viciously that a timid old gentleman who was close by him started off at an accelerated pace in the direction of a distant policeman.

Hervey hung about London for a few days. He made considerable additions to his wardrobe, was an excellent customer of the hotel, he patronized several theatres, and generally enjoyed himself. He was not altogether idle, part of his time being taken up in making a series of inquiries which it took some trouble to get answered. At last he learned what he wanted to know. "So far!" he muttered. "I feared I should have to look out of England." Forthwith he paid his hotel bill, and, carrying with him the respect of the proprietor, left the house. Evening found him in comfortable quarters in the smoky old city known as Blacktown.

CHAPTER XIX.

"IT HAS COME."

At Blacktown Maurice Hervey did not favor a hotel with his custom. Perhaps he mistrusted the capabilities possessed by the Blacktown hotels for furnishing him with luxuries such as, after so protracted and enforced an abstention, he felt to be rightly his due. Perhaps he sighed for the quietude and repose with which one usually associates a private house. After a short search he found a bedroom and a sitting-room, well furnished and commanding extensive views. They were in one of a row of substantial houses which by some freak of fortune had fallen from the high estate of fashionable residences to the lower level of respectable lodging houses. The landlady's quotation, which, after the manner of such quotations, had attached to it a string of extras like the tail to a kite, having been accepted, Mr. Hervey requested that some dinner might be prepared for him. This of course meant chops—or extemporized lodging house dinner invariably means chops. Having particularly requested that his chops should be broiled, not fried, Mr. Hervey, whilst the cooking was going on, went out, found a wine merchant's and ordered half-a-dozen of whisky sent in. This sight of the bottles, the number of which augured well for a long stay, gladdened the landlady's heart. By the aid of the whisky, a kettle of hot water, sugar, and cigars the new lodger spent a comfortable, if not an intellectual or improving evening.

In the morning he sallied forth. Like every visitor to the old city who has time to spare he seemed bent upon seeing the natural beauties of the suburbs of Blacktown. His landlady, who thought him a nice, pleasant, free-spoken gentleman, gave him an oral list of the stock sights in the vicinity; but as soon as he was out of doors Mr. Hervey inquired the way to Oakbury, and learned that an easy walk of about two miles would take him to that highly favored spot. The weather, although fine, was cold, so he decided to walk to his destination. He soon left the rows of houses and shops behind him, struck along a broad white road which cut its way through a level greensward, and in about three-quarters of an hour found himself in front of the Red Lion Inn, Oakbury.

He entered the inn—men of his stamp, when in the country, make entering inns a point of honor. He called for hot brandy and water, and was supplied with a jorum of that deep brown liquor, dear to rustic palates on account of its presumed strength. Hervey sipped it, lit a cigar and entered into a cheerful conversation with the Red Lion and

Hervey enters into conversation with the Red Lion.

Lioness, who were pursuing their calling in what, after the fashion of country inns, was a combination of bar and parlor. The Red Lion, an affable, condescending animal, and, like all noble animals, willing to relinquish toil for more congenial pursuits, seeing that his visitor was ready to talk, sat down in a round-backed chair near the fire and left the Lioness to attend to the bottle and jug department, which, as the hour was just past noon, was in full swing of activity.

Hervey asked a variety of questions about the neighborhood. He might really have been a gentleman of fortune anxious to buy a place and so properly particular as to what society might be round about. He obtained much valuable and interesting information about the "families of position" as they appeared to the eyes of the Red Lion. He learned who lived in the big white house at the edge of the common, who in the house at the top of the hill, who in the house at the bottom. He was gradually leading up to the questions he wanted to ask, when the sound of carriage wheels was heard, and the Lion after glancing over the wire window-blind laid down his pipe and went to the door. Hervey also glanced out of window and saw two tall gentlemen, who occupied the box-seats of a large wagonette. They were talking gravely and sadly to the Lion, who, whilst he listened with due respect, looked somewhat crestfallen and ill at ease.

"What's the matter now, Joe?" asked the Lioness, rather anxiously, as her spouse returned.

"Say the last cask o' beer ran out two days before its time, so couldn't have been full. They look after trifles, they do."

"Oh, nonsense!" said the Lioness, tossing her head. "Some one must have got at it. Their servants are no better than others."

"Who are they?" asked Hervey.

"The Mr. Talberts of Hazlewood House," replied the landlady, with that smile on her face which seemed to come involuntarily on the faces of many people when they mentioned or heard the name of our gentle Horace and Herbert.

Hervey went hastily to the window and looked after the wagonette, which, however, was by now out of sight.

"Rich men, I suppose?" he said, reseating himself.

"They're rich enough; but oh, that particular!" said the Lioness, with another toss of her head. The accusation of short measure rankled in her breast.

"Close-fisted?" asked Hervey.

"Well, yes, they're close," said the Lion. "That is, they like to get a shilling's worth for a shilling."

"We all like that. Let me have it now. Two brandies—one for you and one for me."

The Lion laughed and filled the glasses. Hervey adroitly plied him with questions about the Talberts, and soon learnt almost as much as we know. He laughed with the landlord at their amiable peculiarities. It was well our friends did not hear the Red Lion, or Hazelwood House might have gone elsewhere for its beer.

"They are funny gents," said the Lion. "You'd never believe; but a day or two ago I was walking along the road. It was drizzling with rain. The Mr. Talberts they passed me, driving. All of a sudden they pull up at the hedge round their paddock. Mr. Herbert he jumps down; he takes the whip and with the handle begins poking furiously in the hedge. I ran up thinking something was the matter. Law no! not it. He was a poking at a bit of white paper which had blown in there. Poke and poke he did till he got it out—and Mr. Horace the while holding the horses and sitting and looking on as if it meant life or death getting out that paper. Rum thing to be so particular, ain't it?"

Hervey professed himself much amused and continued his questions. He heard all about Miss Clauson, the niece who had been staying at Oakbury for so long. He even learned the name of every member of the Hazlewood House establishment, from that of the oldest retainer, Whittaker, to that of the latest arrival, Mrs. Miller the nurse. He heard, of course, the whole history, with additions, of the mysteriously-sent boy. And when he was told this, in spite of his self-control, a look of utter amazement spread over his face. He rose, and bade the Red Lion good day. The story he had heard must have engrossed his mind to an unprecedented extent, for he actually forgot to finish his brandy and water, a flattering tribute to the landlord's power of interesting a listener.

After leaving the inn Hervey took the first turning out of the main road. It was a little by-way leading to nowhere in particular. Here, as no onlookers were about, he gave vent to delight by sundry actions common to most men as soon as they find themselves alone after having received the best possible news. He smacked his thigh; he rubbed his hands together; he seemed to hug himself in his joy. He laughed aloud, but there was a cruel ring in his laugh, and there was a cruel look on his laughing mouth. His eyes brightened with the bleaded lights of malice and anticipated triumph.

"What luck!" he ejaculated. "What luck! I see it all from the very beginning. Confound it! it was a clever stroke. By G——! I've got her now! I've got her now!"

He calmed himself, returned to the main road and inquired the way to Hazlewood House. He stood for some time in front of the entrance gates, but finding that only the chimneys of the house could be seen from this point he walked round until he could get a better idea of the building. "It all means money! Pots of money!" he said, with glee. After this he returned to the gates, and it seemed as if he meant to favor our friends with a call. However, if so, he changed his mind.

"No," he said, turning away. "There's a new element in the case which must be considered. No need to be in a hurry. I'll go back home and think it all out over a pipe."

So he faced about, and, in a thoughtful way, sauntered down the lane, or road, whose mission in this world is to give access to Hazlewood House and two or three other equally desirable residences.

It was a glorious winter's day. The sun was shining brightly; so brightly that on the bare twigs of the hedges the hoar frost of the night had resolved itself into crystal drops which shone like jewels, and then, as if alarmed at their Protean nature, trembled and fell. Although a silvery haze hung round the horizon there was no fog. The air was sharp and crisp, but not damp. The wind if cold was quiet. It was a day of a thousand—a day, in fact, on which, if she knows her business, a woman who has charge of a child takes it out for a good long walk.

Mrs. Miller knew her business, so it was quite in order that as Maurice Hervey was walking down the lane the nurse and the boy, on their way home to early dinner, should be walking up. Hervey, whilst deep in his meditations, heard a voice, and looking up saw the dark clad woman and the golden-haired child within a few paces of him. He stopped short and looked at them.

Hervey to-day presented an appearance so different from that of the caged creature seen by Mrs. Miller at Portland that she would probably have passed him without recognition. He was now fashionably dressed and, had it suited his purpose, might have brushed elbows with the woman and yet left her ignorant of his release. This not being his purpose he stopped short and waited. Naturally she raised her eyes and at once knew the truth.

Had Sarah Miller followed the impulse which seized her when she saw that face, full of mocking triumph, she would have uttered a cry of anguish. Only the fear of alarming the child prevented her from so doing. As it was she gave a quick gasp, and for a moment gazed at the man as if she saw a ghost. Then she stooped and said to the boy: "Run on, my pretty, run as fast as you can." The boy obeyed. Hervey made no effort to stop him, but he turned and followed him with his eyes. Then once more he faced Mrs. Miller.

She had by now recovered from the first shock, and looked at him not so much with fear as with hatred and defiance. She took a few steps, passed him, and placed herself as if to bar the way to Hazlewood House.

"What are you doing here?" she asked fiercely.

"My dear Sarah," said the man in mocking tones, "what a strange question to ask! Considering your anxiety to appoint the earliest day possible for our meeting, is it any wonder that I come at once to find you?"

"Now you've found me, what do you want?"

"My poor Sarah, can't you guess. When you paid me that friendly visit last summer I told you what I pined for. I have come—you in order to find some one else."

"She is hundreds of miles from here. You'll never see her again."

Even as she told the lie her heart sank. The gleam in Hervey's eyes showed her she had lied in vain. He laughed like one enjoying the situation. "Never see her again!" he echoed. "I am inconsolable. But chance meetings do sometimes occur. You don't mean to give or sell me any information, I suppose?"

"I'd cut my tongue out first."

"Oh, true and faithful servant! Then it's no good asking. But about yourself, Sarah—have you got a good place in the neighborhood?"

"That's none of your business," said Mrs. Miller, sharply. Hervey laughed again.

"I should like to hear you had a nice comfortable place. Something easy and suited to your declining years. You have not worn well, my dear Sarah. You look at least twenty years older than when I first knew you."

She took no notice of the taunt. Again the man laughed his mocking laugh. "What kind of a place is yours, Sarah? As you know, I am much interested in you. You are a nurse, I suppose?" He nodded in the direction of the boy who stood some little distance off wondering in his childish way what his guardian was about with this gentleman.

"Yes, I am a nurse," said Mrs. Miller sullenly.

"And that is one of your charges? The youngest perhaps? A fine little fellow. Do you know I have often dreamed of owning such a boy as that. At heart I believe I have the germs of respectability and domestic goodness. What do you think, Sarah?"

"Your heart is as black as a coal," burst out the woman excitedly. "Would to God you had died in prison. For years it has been my daily prayer."

"Yet it availed nothing—the prayer of the righteous! Something gone wrong above, Sarah. Never mind, I give you good wishes in return for evil ones. I know something of this neighborhood and the people, and if I could choose a place for you it would be one with two middle-aged gentlemen named Talbert, who live at Hazlewood House with a beautiful unmarried niece named Beatrice Clauson. That would be such a comfortable place for you, Sarah!"

Until now he had been playing with her as a cat plays with a mouse. There was nothing to show her the extent of his knowledge. For all she knew he might simply have come down here to find her. So she had guarded every word, every look, fearing lest she might give him information. Now he bared his claws and showed her that escape was impossible. She groaned but struggled no more.

"You will take money?" she asked.

"Oh, yes, Sarah, I'll take money."

"And go away and trouble me no more. Tell me where to find you to-morrow. I will come and arrange everything."

"Oh, no, you won't. I never deal with agents. Your intervention is not needed, Sarah."

She stamped her foot angrily.

"Tell me what you want," she exclaimed, "or leave me and go and do your worst. You may have men to deal with now, not women."

He threw off in a second every trace of mockery. He seized her wrist and held her. His eyes shone fiercely into hers. "Listen, you hag, you cat!" he said. "All your part in this business is to take a message. Go straight to her. Tell her I am here, free, and with a pocketful of money. Tell her to come to me to-morrow at my rooms. Tell her I will wait until twelve o'clock. If she is not there when the clock strikes I swear I will come and see her in her own home. Do you understand? Answer me."

"Yes, I understand."

"Here's the address." He scribbled it on a bit of paper. "Now you can go back and resume your neglected duties. A sweet little boy that, Sarah."

"Go straight to her. Tell her I am here, free."

Without another word she left him. She took the boy by the hand and went through the gates of Hazlewood House. Hervey watched her disappear, chuckled maliciously, and strode off in the direction of Blacktown.

In a mechanical way Mrs. Miller gave the boy his dinner. She ate nothing herself, but her lips moved as if framing words, and her heart offered up its fervent but incoherent and illogical prayers. Knowing that it was Beatrice's custom to visit the nursery soon after lunch and assure herself that her boy had dined well, Mrs. Miller did not go in search of her. She listened for the expected step, and when she heard it opened the door and motioned her mistress to enter the adjoining room, the night nursery. She followed, and the look on her face told Beatrice what had happened.

"It has come!" she whispered, and turning very pale.

Mrs. Miller threw herself on her knees, and, taking Beatrice's hand, sobbed aloud.

"Oh, my poor dear! My poor dear!" she wailed. "It has come. Yes, it has come. The Lord has not thought fit to answer my prayers. Oh, my dear mistress, may He stretch forth His arm and lighten the sorrow which is before you!"

She kissed Beatrice's hand. She fawned upon her almost like a dog. Her mistress seemed scarcely to hear her words—scarcely to notice her actions.

"It was bound to come," she said, dreamily. "I have been waiting for it for weeks. The sword was over my head. I knew it must fall. Where is he?" she added.

"He was here, close at hand," said Sarah. Then, noticing Beatrice's shudder: "He has gone away for awhile; but I saw him. He gave me a message. Oh, my dear, my dear! You must expect no mercy."

"I expect none. I will ask for none. Give me the message."

Mrs. Miller gave it word for word and then handed her the paper with the address. "I must go," said Beatrice. "There is no help for it. The shame which I dared not face—the crash I shrank like a coward from preparing for, has come. Well, if all must be known it will rid my life of the deceit which for years has made it a burden."

She turned away, entered the nursery and kissed the boy. Suddenly she gave the nurse a frightened look. "You saw him," she said: "did he see the boy?"

Mrs. Miller nodded sadly.

"Did he know—did he guess?"

"He said nothing. But, oh, my poor dear! there was something in his manner that made me tremble—something that told me he guessed all."

"Then Heaven help me!" said Beatrice, leaving the room.

She went to her bedroom, in which she stayed for hours. Hours during which she lived again in thought the whole of her life during the past five years. Years which had turned her from a light-hearted, impulsive girl into a grave and saddened woman. A woman who, partly by her own folly, partly by the crime and cruelty of another, found herself to-day in as sore a plight as ever woman knew.

CHAPTER XX.

WHAT SHE LOOKED BACK UPON.

As the story of Beatrice's past is made up of things she know, things she guessed and things of which she knew nothing, it will be better to learn it in its veracious entirety than to glean it from the saddened musings that winter's afternoon.

After the battle royal between Lady Clauson and her stepdaughter, and when Sir Maingay weakly and for the sake of peace left his daughter at home, whilst he fled to the Continent with that newly acquired treasure, his beautiful wife, Beatrice settled down to the dullest of dull lives, or what certainly promised to be so unless the girl could brighten it by drawing on her own resources for amusement. On one point, however, she had nothing to complain of. A childless widow with a large income could not have enjoyed more freedom of action. Mrs. Erskine, the aunt in whose care she was nominally placed, was old, wrapped up in her own varied ailments, and so selfish as to keep herself clear of suspecting people, because suspicion brought trouble and worry. Beatrice was free to spend her hours as it best suited her; to come and go as she chose, and generally to do what pleased herself. By this arrangement Mrs. Erskine saved herself much trouble and responsibility—things which are extremely injurious to an old gentlewoman in feeble health.

But Beatrice, who was in magnificent health, as all young girls of eighteen should be, soon found that to render life at Mrs. Erskine's worth living she must find occupation for her lonely hours. Perhaps there were times when the ideal pleasure and joy with which an untraveled mind invests a foreign tour made her repent of her hastiness in disdaining to occupy a secondary place in her father's heart. But if it was so, her pride forbade any proposals of surrender. Nevertheless, something had to be done to make life tolerable. She cared little or nothing for general society, and even had she done so the fact of her possessing few friends anywhere, and none in London, would have rendered her going out into the world a matter of difficulty.

So that Miss Clauson, who was a young lady of no mean abilities, and who had somehow imbibed the modern notion that, if rightly directed, a woman's brain-power is equal to a man's in acquiring knowledge, decided that the most satisfactory method by which time could be killed was by continuing her studies from the point at which she laid them down when she left the fashionable finishing school.

Being also rather troubled by the feeling that she ought to do something for suffering humanity, she organized a little charitable scheme. She had plenty of pocket money. Sir Maingay, who, since old Talbert's death, had received a considerable sum per annum, paid out of the trust, for his daughter's maintenance and education, behaved most generously in this respect. There is no salve to the conscience so efficacious as a money sacrifice!

Beatrice, then, did what good she could on her own account. As a piteous tale always opened her purse, revilers of indiscriminate almsgiving may think little of her efforts. Perhaps they bore no fruit save in one noteworthy instance.

Charity brought her in contact with a woman, who, from a variety of circumstances, had been reduced from the state of a superior domestic servant to abject poverty, and who was lying almost at death's door. Beatrice heard her history, relieved her wants, had her doctored and cured, and by these acts made the woman her slave for life. She rivoted the links forever, when, fancying she could do with a maid, she, in spite of a grumble from her great-aunt, took this woman, named Sarah Miller, into her service. This happened in the early days of her sojourn at Mrs. Erskine's.

The course of study progressed. For the most part Beatrice taught herself. After a while it struck her she should like again to take up her drawing. Here, as her ambition rose higher than wishing to execute the usual schoolgirl masterpieces, she needed a master. A caller, an acquaintance of Mrs. Erskine's, gave her a name and address, which had been given to her by some one else. Beatrice wrote and asked the artist's terms. He replied. She wrote again, accepting the terms and begging him to call on a certain day. So Maurice Hervey came into her life.

When first she saw him the girl was surprised to find she had summoned to her aid a young man of about twenty-five. But the age of a drawing master appeared to Miss Clauson as a matter of secondary importance. So long as he know his business what mattered if he was twenty-five or fifty-five.

Mrs. Erskine troubled nothing about the affair. She knew that a master gave her niece lessons twice or thrice a week. The old lady never even acquired his name. To her he was the drawing master, no more and no less. There are many such old ladies as this!

In order that what happened may be read aright, two facts must be distinctly borne in mind. The first, that Beatrice Clauson was not then the stately and apparently emotionless young lady, whose calm and self-contained demeanor was such a subject of congratulation to her uncles, and such a puzzle to Frank Carruthers. She was but a girl of eighteen, proud, if you will, but romantic, impulsive, and notwithstanding the shattering of the paternal idol, trustful of man and womankind. She was lonely; craved for sympathy; and in spite of her position in the world, her life, so far as she could see it, looked void and colorless. A long stretch without a visible goal. Lastly, she believed, as most young people of eighteen believe, that her judgment as to what was best for herself was infallible.

The second fact to be borne in mind is that Maurice Hervey at twenty-five was not, in appearance, the scowling, crafty-looking felon seen by Mrs. Miller in Portland prison; not even the malicious, mocking ruffian who confronted her on his release. The mask worn by the man when Beatrice first knew him fitted to perfection, and, until the wearer chose, showed no glimpse of the villainous, sordid nature it hid. He was decidedly good-looking, he was well dressed, and if he carried a touch of the Bohemian about him it was not more than was pleasant and compatible with the profession he followed. His hands, a matter upon which young girls set undue store, were white and well formed. He was attentive and respectful in the discharge of his duties—doubly so after the first few lessons!

For by that time he had found out much about his pupil—not all he wanted to know, but a good deal. He had learned that she was a baronet's daughter, and an heiress. He could not ascertain how much money she would come into or from whom it came. But, so far as it went, he believed his information to be trustworthy, and acted accordingly.

He began by awakening the girl's sympathy for his unworthy self. He told her, or, it might be said, conveyed to her prodigious lies about his own hard lot; he dilated on the drudgery of lesson-giving to a man who believed he had genius. So cleverly did he talk that Beatrice was persuaded that she was under an obligation to him for the very act of teaching. His lies were masterpieces, because he did not, like many self-styled neglected geniuses, believe in his own talents. The man knew that such skill as he possessed could make him, at the outside, a fifth-rate artist, or, it might possibly be, a first-rate drawing-master.

But all the same he made Beatrice believe he was one day destined to storm the Royal academy, and when once she believed this all differences in station between them vanished. Our age, as every one knows, is the triumph of art. Poor artists and struggling literary men do not now fawn upon lords—lords ask them to dinner and make much of them, or such is the common belief. So, now that Miss Clauson was convinced that Maurice Hervey was a genius, no cold spectre of social distinction rose between the man and his desire.

(TO BE CONTINUED).

Happiness

results from that true contentment which indicates perfect health of body and mind. You may possess it, if you will purify and invigorate your blood with Ayer's Sarsaparilla. E. M. Howard, Newport, N. H., writes: "I suffered for years with Scrofulous humors. After using two bottles of Ayer's Sarsaparilla, I

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