

THE CHARITY GIRL

By EFFIE A. ROWLANDS

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Glendurwood carriage was remaining where Jack had ordered it to stand when he arrived. Jack had thrown himself back in his corner and had folded his arms across his breast; Audrey sat bolt upright, her two cold little hands clinched tight together, her teeth set so that the soles that rose to her throat should not escape her lips.

Who should attempt to describe the state of those two hearts, both wounded to the very quick, both heavy with that deep sorrow that comes when one has been deceived where one loves best?

"Why did they take me to him? Why was I married to him? I would sooner have died than have listened to what those women said to-night, and know that he has never loved me," said Audrey to herself, passionately.

"And so my happiness is over," ran Jack's troubled thoughts. "Well, it has not lasted long. Fool—fool that I have been, to believe that any woman could be the angel I have pictured her to be, and that she should love him—above all other men! I feel as though his very life's blood will not give me satisfaction."

They reached the gates of Craighlands at last; a few minutes' drive through the well-kept avenue, and then the door. Jack got out, and then forcing himself by an almost superhuman effort to appear natural before the servants, turned to assist her. Audrey put her cold hand in his as she stepped out of the brougham. How little did either of them think that they would not clasp, or even touch, hands again for many a weary day.

The fragrance and warmth of her bedroom seemed to choke Audrey. Hastily flinging off her domino, she passed to the window and pushed it open, and then stood by it, the sound of her own heart beating in her ears like a sledge hammer.

Would Jack come? She waited several moments. If he had come to her then she would have done that which would have put matters straight at once, for the agony in her breast was urging her to speak out to ask him why he had deceived her, why he had married her? The hot blood rushed to her cheeks again and again, as she recalled the remarks those two women had made, and realized how cruelly the world judged her already.

Five, ten, fifteen, twenty minutes went by, and Audrey still stood waiting for the sound of her husband's footsteps on the stairs and the passage outside.

Her happiness was ended; Jack no longer loved her—indeed, had never loved her. She was his wife, that was true, and it must be her lot to bear with the difficulties as with the joys that fell to her as his wife.

"Still," the child thought sorrowfully to herself, "he has acted wrongly; he has been cruel to Sheila, to himself, to me. I am glad he did not come in just now, yes, glad, for it shows that he is tired of deceit and hypocrisy, and—and I cannot bear to think that the nature I thought so honest should only prove false. What was it that those women said? 'The worst day's work Jack Glendurwood did when he married me.' People should be careful how they speak out—the truth." Her lips quivered, but her face flamed with proud color. "The worst day's work for Jack," she repeated slowly, "and I am the one who has brought that to him. I—I who would lay down my life for him. Why did I ever meet him? Why did I ever leave home? Why did not heaven let me die before all this sorrow came upon him through me? Jack! My darling! My darling!"

Her hot, tearful eyes stared into the fire, as if to seek some solution of this painful problem there. In her loving generosity Audrey made all excuses for her husband now. She no longer blamed; he was still to her the dearest creature on earth; and yet so great was the agony at thought of his deceit that, had he held out his arms to her and called her tenderly by name, she would have turned from him and stood aloof.

CHAPTER XXV.

Jean Thwait was lying in a delicious daze, half waking, half sleeping, on the morning following the Dinglewood masked ball, when a sharp tap at the door, followed by Audrey's rapid entrance, aroused her completely.

"What is it, darling? Something has happened?" she cried, hurriedly.

"Jean, can you pack up a few things and come with me at once?" Audrey spoke faintly, her face was deathly white, she shook in every limb; then before Jean could answer, she went on swiftly, "My mother is very ill. She has telegraphed for me. Perhaps even now I may be too late; she may be dead. I have ordered the carriage to be here in an hour, can you be ready?"

"Yes," replied Jean, briefly. It needed no words to tell her that more was the matter than this telegram from Germany. Audrey had never spoken like this to her before, had never looked as she looked now.

Audrey made no inquiries about Jack, although she knew she must acquaint him with her journey before she started. Jean found plenty to do in the time allotted to her, but she was wonderfully quick, and was in her hat and coat when she went to the door to open it in answer to a sharp summons. It was Jack, also fully attired in outdoor costume, with a railway rug over his arm.

"Good morning, Miss Thwait," he said, hurriedly. "Please forgive me for this unceremonious intrusion, but I wanted to speak to you before I leave."

"Are you not going with us?" she asked in surprise.

It was Jack's turn to show astonishment.

"Where are you going?" he asked huskily.

Jean in three words, explained what had happened, and then she knew something was very wrong, indeed, by the expression on Jack's face.

"Poor Constance!" she heard him mutter under his breath; then he gave a quick sigh. "I hope things may not be

so bad, Miss Thwait. It is quite impossible for me to get to Cronstadt yet."

"Does Audrey know you are not going with us?"

"I have not seen her this morning," was the answer, given with much evident pain.

Jean clasped her hands suddenly. Then her worst fears were realized, and something more had, indeed, happened; something, too, very terrible, to work such a change as this.

"Lord John," she said, involuntarily, "you must please forgive me, but is your business so important that you are compelled to attend to it rather than accompany your wife on such a journey as this?"

"Miss Thwait," he said as well as he could speak, "the business I am going on touches that which is dearer to me than life—my honor! I am sure that you at least would not wish me to neglect anything with which that is concerned."

"I will answer for Audrey as for myself," Jean said, hurriedly, "if your honor is concerned, Lord John, no other reason is needed; but is there nothing I can do?"

"Give this letter to Audrey, Miss Thwait," his voice quivered as he spoke his wife's name. "It is a sacred trust, one that I would not give to every one; but I know you are her friend, you will comprehend and sympathize with what I am going to do."

"Stay, Lord John; you must hear me!" Jean's gray eyes were full of tears. "I love Audrey better than anything on earth. I do not ask to know the reason, but I see, alas! only too well, that something has arisen between her and you. I ask you now, and it is my love for her that urges the question, will you not see her yourself before you start on this journey?—Will you not smooth away the quarrel? She is in trouble—will you not take her to your arms?"

"It is impossible," he said quickly, but with such determination in his voice as made Jean shudder, and sent a thrill of exquisite torture through Audrey's aching heart, as she, at that moment, opened the door in time to catch Jean's last word and her husband's reply.

By and by, when they were speeding Dover, Jean and Willie Fullerton—who when he found Jack did not join them, insisted on going—in a corner talked earnestly, Audrey drew out her husband's letter.

"Audrey—In future, after the even of last night, it will be impossible for me to live together. This, I take it, will be as much your wish as mine. To continue to live as we have been doing would be a mockery of marriage, a disgrace to our race, a dishonor to our name. This, then, is what I propose to do. There shall be no divorce; the pride and honor of the Harborough family protest against such a course. After all, you are very young, a mere child; you may have erred through ignorance, but be that so or not, from henceforth you can never be my wife in aught but name. My wife must be above suspicion—pure, sweet, true—not a girl who, before scarcely six months of her marriage have gone, encourages a man for whom she openly expresses horror and contempt."

"As for Beverley Rochford, before many hours are over—unless he be a cur, which I take him to be—he will have answered to me for his own part in this affair. Audrey, I am trying to write kindly; I am trying to remember your youth and the many disadvantages that have been yours since the first, and you—if you have justice and honesty in your heart—you will recognize that I am not treating you harshly. Your future is my care. This morning I have made my will. I leave you all the money I possess, together with Minster, in Blankshire, the property my father has just settled upon me. Whether I live or die, I wish you to make your home at Minster. I should like to think Miss Thwait was with you. Your money will be transmitted through my lawyers. I intend to start at once on a tour of the world, giving the condition of my health as a reason for thus relinquishing my parliamentary career. I shall be absent, perhaps, two years, and I leave it in your hands to judge whether at the end of that time your conduct has been such as to permit me to occupy the same house as yourself, and appear before the world in my proper position as your husband."

"JOHN GLENDURWOOD," was brought to Jean.

"For Lady Joan Glendurwood," the waiter said, inquiringly. "Is that right, madame?"

"Quite right."

Jean hesitated only a moment, and tore it open. She gave a little sound of sorrow as she read. It was from Marshall—poor, faithful Marshall—and ran thus: "Mrs. Fraser died this morning. Her last wish was that you should not travel here, but that she should be carried home and buried in England. I, therefore, beg your ladyship to obey this wish. I have telegraphed for my poor mistress's lawyers."

"SUSAN MARSHALL."

Poor little Audrey! Robbed already of the mother she had longed for so much, loved so dearly, and possessed so short a while!

CHAPTER XXVI.

There was nothing to do. Audrey fell into a sickness that threatened serious consequences. Jean sent at once for Lord Glendurwood and Fullerton, and he came in hot haste from a vain search for Beverley Rochford. There was nothing to be done but wait. Audrey had fallen into a stupor. Her dear mother was buried without the presence of her beloved child.

For three days and nights Jean sat beside Audrey's bed, watching and dreading for the moment when that fair, frail face should grow even whiter, the faint, low breathing even fainter. Three long, weary days; these were; but if she found them terrible, how much more so did the one who had nothing to do put to pace to and fro in the wet, leafless garden, his hungry eyes fixed always on the low, square window which hid his darling from

his view? The doctors forbade Jack Glendurwood from entering his wife's sick room. He had crept in for a few moments the night he arrived—no argument or threat could keep him out; and as he had bent over the girl's silent form, calling to her in his agony to speak to him, she had opened her eyes, and at sight of him she had given one little scream, and then had relapsed into unconsciousness, in which condition she had remained for three days and nights. When reason returned Audrey was better, and Jean sought out Jack and told the good news.

"And may I see her—when?" he asked, eagerly. "When may I see her? My darling! My darling!"

"The doctor will tell you. Perhaps to-night!"

As Jean sat by Audrey's bedside that evening, resting back wearily in the chair, now that all extreme anxiety was gone, a small, sweet voice came from the pillow, and she was alert at once.

"Jean," she said, after a little pause, "is—Ja—is my husband here?"

"Yes, darling; he has been here nearly all the time. Do you want to see him?"

"No, no, no! I will not see him, Jean. If you love me, send him away! I shall go mad if he is here! Promise! Promise! You must; you shall!"

"It shall be as you wish, my dearest," Jean said, softly. "You can trust me?"

"Yes—trust—you—always," she murmured, and in a few seconds she was asleep.

Constance Fraser had been brought over to England and laid beside her mother in an old-fashioned country churchyard. It had been a simple funeral enough, though flowers had come from far and near. High and low, rich and poor, one and all, had a sorrowful thought for the sweet, gentle woman, who had merited a better journey on earth.

Sheila was left to herself and her not very agreeable reflections. The masked ball had cost her an enormous sum. Lady Daleswater had never offered to take her away with her; she had absolutely no notion of what had happened to Jack and Audrey. Beverley Rochford never made the least sign, and to crown all, Murray, the whilom maid at Craighlands, and her much too clever accomplice, took matters into her own hands and bolted one night with the most valuable jewelry and lace she

fully qualified.

"So you're after the job, eh?" said the milkman who had advertised for a helper.

"Yes, sir," replied the young man.

"Well, what experience have you had?"

"Why, I've pumped the organ down to our church for years,"—Philadelphia Press.

Absent Minded.

Stranger (with suitcase)—Can you advise me, sir, as to the nearest route to the leading hotel?

The Native—Straight ahead three blocks. Two dollars, please.

Stranger—Eh!

Native—Beg pardon. Force of habit, my card. I'm Dr. Pellet.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

No Graft in It.

"See here," said the lieutenant of police, "that countryman claims he told you of his experience with a bunco man, but you paid no attention to him."

"Dat's all right," replied the cop. "He didn't interest me none. He admitted de bunco man had took de last cent he had."—Philadelphia Press.

Usually the Case.

"Say, pa," said Tommy, looking up from his paper, "what does 'obvious reasons' mean?"

"Usually, my son," replied pa, "it means reasons that the writer is too lazy or too ignorant to explain."—Philadelphia Press.

Coventent.

"So you have three pairs of glasses, professor?"

"Yes—one pair to read with, another for near-sightedness, and a third pair to look for the other two with!"—Philadelphia Blatter.

THE TRAMP FLOWER.

Betty grew within a garden,
Long ago;
Tended by old-fashioned fingers,
Trained just so!
Fairest of the flowers they thought her,
Lovers for their ladies sought her,
And for love and money bought her,
Lady Bet.

Fair and fine was pretty Betty,
Long ago;
In her perfumed gown of lacework,
Made for show.
Freshest dews from heaven kissed her,
Ne'er a balmy zephyr missed her,
Sunbeams hastened to assist her,
Dainty Bet.

But their fickle fancies wavered,
Long ago;
And a rival flower won them,
Ah, the woe!
Fashion's cruel whim dethroned her,
Robbed her of the prestige loaned her;
Old-time friends in vain bemoaned her,
Pretty Bet.

Thrust from out her native garden,
Long ago;
Betty crept upon the highway,
There to grow.
Now she nods from every corner,
Wildness has of beauty shorn her,
Till the passing children scorn her,
Gypsy Bet.

She that was so fine and dainty,
Long ago;
Tended by old-fashioned fingers,
Trained just so!
Grazing kine have tramped and maimed her,
Long neglect has paled and shamed her,
And the vulgar youth have named her
—Bouncing Bet.
—Ainslee's.

Someone's Letter

"You and I have always been such good comrades, Peggy, I am going to tell you something," Adams began, leaning forward to obtain a better view of Miss Bruce's pleasant features.

"Only a little while ago, as I was coming along the beach, the wind caught a scrap of paper and whirled it around so near that I grabbed it, and had read it, before I realized what it was doing. It was part of a letter in which some girl described her ideal man for her best friend's information, and—I know you will laugh—I couldn't help recognizing myself."

"What a conceited thing to do," Peggy retorted, smiling. "Girls write lots of nonsense."

"This wasn't nonsense, if you please; it rang true. I mean to find out who that girl is," he declared.

"I believe you are half in love with her already," she insisted mischievously.

"Perhaps I am," Adams admitted, calmly.

"Oh, Mr. Adams," they heard in affected tones, as Violet Sincell hurried to where they were seated on a ledge of rocks near the sea. "I hope I haven't kept you waiting long."

"That's all right," said Adam, rising. "We're going sailing, Peggy. Won't you come along?"

"No, thank you, I hope you will have a pleasant time." She waved her hand in farewell, and returned to the Bruce cottage, at which she and her father were entertaining a small party composed of Emory Adams, a young lawyer whom she had known from babyhood, and his mother, besides her two friends, Violet Sincell and Bernice Shaw.

Sea and sky were a soft, cool gray, the light changing from moment to moment. By the time Violet and Adams returned from their afternoon's outing an impalpable curtain shut off the ocean from view, rain began to fall, and the waves dashed thunderously against the rocks. A constraint seemed to have arisen between Violet and Adams, and, after dinner, Miss Sincell, pleading fatigue, went to her room. The remainder of the party were engaged in a game of bridge, with the exception of Peggy and Adams.

Miss Bruce, who Adams thought looked very well in a soft, white gown, seated herself at the piano and began the Brahms Wiegand, while he leaned against the instrument, listening to her playing. Suddenly she raised her brown eyes from the keyboard to his face, its strong features framed in smooth lustrous hair.

"You look worried, Emory?" she observed. "Did you and Vi have a quarrel this afternoon?"

"Oh, bless you, no," he hastened to say. "She was frightened at the fog, and once she clutched me around the neck and nearly upset the boat. She is a nice girl, and an awfully pretty girl; yet I think I should feel relieved if I knew that she didn't write that letter."

"Now that is too bad," Peggy told him. "Vi has taken a great fancy to you. She speaks of you and Boston in the same tone she uses when referring to heaven and the angels."

The consternation expressed on Adams' face at the information sent Peggy into a gale of laughter. "Don't look like that," she gasped; "I don't believe her infatuation is serious—you needn't feel obliged to propose."

Adams came nearer to Peggy's side. "Miss Shaw is hardly the kind of a girl who would disclose her feelings easily, it seems to me," he confided, in a lowered tone. "I like her; she has a strong, fine personality. But—"

"Are you determined to run that poor girl, who wrote a silly letter, to earth?" Peggy interrupted. "Take my advice,

and forget that you ever saw what was not meant for your eyes."

"Probably that would be the more sensible course," he agreed, giving Peggy's hand an affectionate squeeze, as he recollected how often she had counseled and sympathized with him. When he was in his own room he opened his memorandum book and took out the folded scrap of paper to reread the simple confession. He started to tear it into pieces, but something deterred him; he replaced it, half ashamed of his sentimentality.

II.

"What are you young people going to do today?" queried Mr. Bruce, after breakfast the following morning. He was a rotund gentleman, a favorite with Peggy's friends. "Come out to the quarry this afternoon, if you've nothing else on hand."

"Perhaps we will," Peggy answered; "we want to go to Gloucester to shop this morning, if you will let us have the automobile."

"I can do without it, I guess," he said, pinching her ear gently. "You'll look after them, won't you, Adams?"

"What am I, a mere man, when girls are on shopping bent," he rejoined gaily. "I'll do my best, Mr. Bruce."

Their departure was made in high spirits. The short distance was traveled in good time, and Adams left the girls at a milliner's, with the understanding that he would meet them in two hours at a drug store.

He visited one or two shops to make a few purchases on his own account. Then, as considerable time remained, he went to the library, where, in the reading room, his eyes fell at once upon Bernice Shaw.

"I thought you were buying frills and furbelows with Peggy," he remarked in surprise, sitting down in a chair beside her. "I dropped in to read an article a friend of mine has in this magazine. I want to tell him I've read it, when he asks me."

Miss Shaw appeared disturbed by his presence, turning the leaves of her magazine without reading them. Adams glanced over the articles in question, and retired in a discomfited frame of mind, as he had hoped for a quiet little talk with Bernice.

As he lounged on the beach behind a summer hotel he pondered deeply over the mystery of the authorship of that confession. Perhaps Miss Shaw's embarrassment was caused by her con-

sciousness that the letter was in his possession. Certainly he was in a predicament, for he was obliged to own that he did not feel either one of the two girls would satisfy him in a wifely capacity.

When he went for them Peggy said Bernice was not coming then, but would come later by trolley.

By the time the hour arrived when they were to visit the quarry, Violet excused herself on the plea of fatigue, and Bernice had not returned.

"There will be only you and I," said Peggy dubiously; "perhaps we would better wait until another time."

"There is no reason why we should not go," Adams replied. "It won't be the first walk we have taken together, by any means."

They sauntered along in a merry mood, Adams thinking that, after all, there was no girl quite like Peggy. When she married, things would hardly be the same, he reflected. The idea did not suit him; he became more serious.

"I think Bernice expected to meet Mr. Totheroh," Peggy confided; "it isn't announced yet, but I don't mind telling you they are engaged."

"Really!" Adams replied, absently. "He is a good fellow; I know him well."

"Don't be so glum," Peggy answered after a little, when significant silences were punctured by remarks on the weather and the scenery. "If you are still worrying about Vi, I will tell you that I saw that new boarder we met at the Ocean View going out with his camera shortly before she decided not to join us."

"Then her young affections are not blighted," he responded, with an attempt at jocularity.

When they reached the quarry Peggy clambered around here and there in a fearless manner. Her father, who had expected to meet them, had been called away, but all the workmen knew Miss Bruce. Adams watched her small, trim figure as she sprang from rock to rock with the increasing conviction that no woman could ever be to him what Peggy was—the truest, dearest little comrade in the world. Suddenly his heart leaped into his throat.

"Peggy!" His voice rang out, stern, imperious, as he rushed forward and, seizing her arm, jerked her violently out of the dangerous position she was

in. There was a dull roar, and a granite ledge was riven apart. A block fell precisely where she had stood.

The color died out of Peggy's face, Adams drew her hand within his arm. "Steady, dear Peg," he said tenderly. "Forgive my roughness. I hope I didn't hurt you."

"It didn't matter. I—I don't know how to thank you," she stammered.

In the twilight they walked home together, both sobered by the danger Peggy had escaped; Adams quite as much by the new knowledge of his own heart.

"Little girl," he said, abruptly "I didn't know how much you meant to me until I thought I was going to lose you. I've fallen in and—out of—love any number of times, as you know; but I am done with trifling. I belong to you; please, Peggy, will you marry me?"

A crimson wave replaced Peggy's pallor. After a brief silence, she murmured:

"I never thought you cared for me—in that way. What about the girl whose letter you found?"

"Really, I don't care who she was," he returned impatiently. "Don't you love me, dear?"

Peggy's dark head dropped until he could not see her eyes.

"I may as well tell you," she avowed, "that I wrote that letter."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

He Was Sitting Down.

The late James A. Bailey, famous as the successor of P. T. Barnum, once accepted an invitation to a dinner tendered to a bride and groom among the "freaks" of his circus. He was late in arriving and found the company politely awaiting him. There were living skeletons, dwarfs, Circassians, snake charmers, the "girl that spoke seven languages and had two heads which made fourteen languages in all," the "dog-faced boy" and others. Beaming upon them with paternal air, the happy manager acknowledged the genial "Hello, pop," that went around the festal board.

"I am sorry I kept you waiting," he said, taking his place at the table. "I believe there are several new additions to the company. Is this the groom?"

"No," replied a deep voice from the full beard addressed, "I am the bride."

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Bailey, "I did not recognize the bearded lady. But, tell me, which is the groom?"

"I am," proclaimed a very thin voice.

In astonishment Mr. Bailey glanced up at the figure towering near his elbow.

"I congratulate you, my man," said the manager. "Sit down, let us on with the feast—sit down."

The guest addressed at once began to ascend seemingly until his head was in the neighborhood of the canvas roof, from which height he looked down and said:

"I was sittin' down, pop—I was sittin' down!"—Success Magazine.

The First Boy Journalist.

When the library of ex-Governor Pennypacker of Pennsylvania was sold recently, there turned up among other odd volumes a complete file of the first magazine edited by a boy. It was bought by Mr. Beck, formerly assistant attorney general of the United States. This unique volume was entitled, "The Juvenile Port-Folio and Literary Miscellany." It was named for one of the earliest American magazines. Its editor was Thomas G. Condie. Young Condie's father was the publisher for one year of a monthly magazine for adults, and was engaged for many years in the general publishing business in Philadelphia. His son, who was born in 1797, had a natural fondness for the business, and in 1812, when he was 15 years old, founded his own monthly.

The "Juvenile Port-Folio" consisted each issue of four pages, a little larger than eight by five inches, and with two columns to the page. The editor made a house-to-house canvass for subscribers, and a list of more than six hundred of them is printed in the bound file.

The magazine had a life of a little more than four years until young Condie graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and began the study of law.

Although Condie has often been referred to as the founder of juvenile journalism, this is the first time evidence has been found to support that title, as the other files of his paper have disappeared.

The Hyena in Shakespeare's Time.

John Trevisa wrote that "the hyena is a cruel beast like to the world in devouring and gluttony. It is his kind to change sexes, for he is now male and now female and is therefore an unclean beast. And cometh to houses by night and felgneth man's voice as he may, for men should trow that it is a man, and herds tell that among stables he felgneth speech of mankind and cetheth some man by his own name and rendeth him when he hath him without. And he felgneth the name of some man for to make bound's run out that he may take and eat them."—Shakespeare's Natural History.

A Passing Thought.

A polite little girl was dining one day with her grandmother. Everything at the table was usually dainty and unexceptionable, but on this particular occasion the little girl found a hair in her fish.

"Grandmamma," she said, sweetly, "what kind of fish is this?"

"Halibut, my dear."

"Oh," replied the child, "I thought perhaps it was mermaid."



"DID YOU AND VI HAVE A QUARREL?"