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The Indiana State Sentinel.

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WHAT WILL CLEVELAND'S PLURALITY BE IN INDIANA?

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GUILDEROY

—BY—

OUIDA

Author of "Under Two Flags," "Two Little Wooden Shoes," "Chandos," "Don Gesualdo," Etc.

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[SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.]

CHAPTERS I AND II—Evelyn Herbert, Lord Guilderoy, owner of Ladysrood, an ancestral home of beauty and wealth, is visiting his domain. His sister, Lady Sunbury, a woman of great strength of character and will, chides her brother for his listless apathy, and urges him to exert himself in the cause of the state and his country.

CHAPTER III—Lady Sunbury is of opinion that her brilliant but blase brother should marry, but he decidedly objects to this, for so far as his life is pledged at all it is given to a woman whom he can not marry. His cousin, Lord Aubrey, pays him a visit, and informs him that the Duchess Soira, whom he had met at Marienbad, had expressed considerable bitterness at not meeting Guilderoy according to promise.

CHAPTERS IV AND V—Guilderoy, after his cousin's departure, rode out on his estate. He here came across a coarse mob of youths persecuting a girl, seventeen years of age, who had dared to interfere with their brutal pleasure of torturing a young fox. He rescues her and takes her to the house of her father, a hermit on his estate, named John Vernon, cultured and well born, but reduced by misfortune to comparative poverty. After a pleasant interview with his new acquaintance, Lord Guilderoy rides back to Ladysrood, wondering in his own mind why he should not marry this Gladys Vernon.

CHAPTERS VI AND VII—Guilderoy on returning home announces, much to his sister's disgust, that he shall marry the child he has seen, Gladys Vernon. He then visits Mr. Vernon and asks for her hand, which is at first refused by her father on account of her age, but Guilderoy persisting, Mr. Vernon at last consents that he shall visit his house, but that no clandestine meetings shall take place between him and Gladys. Lady Sunbury, chagrined at the turn affairs have taken, leaves Ladysrood for London, confident that her brother will soon tire of his choice, and will spend the winter in the country.

CHAPTERS VIII, IX AND X—Guilderoy, in his passionate love for the daughter of John Vernon, once almost forgets his promise to her father not to hold clandestine interviews with her. In showing her a missal he ventures to speak to her of love. In her innocence she knows nothing, she says, of love except love for her father. "Could you be happy with me, do you think?" he asks. "I should like Ladysrood," she replied simply. He drew her gently toward him and kissed her. John Vernon, who was in the same room, examining a rare manuscript, saw the action, and remonstrates. Speaking to his daughter, he asked: "Is it possible that you wish to leave me, and for a stranger?" "It is not very far away," she says, almost inaudibly. John Vernon understood that she was lost to him, and that to strive against fate any longer was useless.

CHAPTER XI.

"MY dear Hilda," wrote Guilderoy to his sister, "I am about to marry the daughter of Mr. Vernon of Llanarth, as I told you in September that I should do. You have been always exceedingly desirous that I should marry, only it was on condition that you should be empowered to choose the companion of my destinies. As I am the more interested of the two in such a choice, I have ventured to make the selection without applying to you. I should be sorry if you should persist in quarreling with me about it, because there is really no valid ground whatever for a quarrel. Gladys Vernon is not a kitchen-maid, a femme taree, or an American adventuress in search of a title—the only three persons to whom you would, I think, be justified in objecting vi et armis. She is quite a child, and I venture to hope that you will be kind to her. When will you return to Ladysrood and let her see you?"

The letter concluded with some allusions to other matters of less personal interest, and was signed with affectionate expressions.

It reached Lady Sunbury when she was staying with a large party with her uncle at Balfrons. The shock of the intelligence was increased by her knowledge of her own error in leaving her brother's house. Who could tell what influence she might not have had if she had remained with him? The fact that she had had the very slightest kind of influence on Guilderoy at any time did not occur to her remembrance. She was a clever woman. Like many clever people she had no estimate of her power over others. She felt the ability to guide them imagined that she had the means to an error common enough in human

"[illegible] is going to marry a country [illegible]se she beat some village boys off [illegible] she cried with intense bitterness [illegible] in Aubrey, who chanced to be [illegible]ry at Balfrons at that moment. "[illegible]ens! a man who has declined [illegible]t alliances in Europe goes and [illegible]self away in some moment of mad caprice on a rustic. Somebody with brown hands and lean elbows, who will make me look ridiculous when I have to present her! Somebody whom he will get divorced from with some horrible *esclandre* and uproar that will be the talk of London a whole season!"

"A country girl?" said Lord Aubrey, raising his eyebrows; "Je lui donne une quinzaine!"

"Is it not just like him?" cried Lady Sunbury, with a quiver of unutterable scorn in her voice. "Is is not exactly the kind of thing we might be sure he would do? After all these years of hypercriticism, of superciliousness, of disdain, all these years of romantic caprices and impossible passions, after rejecting all the most charming women in Europe, to go and throw his life away on a rustic boyden, a vixen whom he saw fighting with a mob of village boys!"

Aubrey laughed; he was accustomed to his cousin's manner of arranging circumstances according to her own views of them.

"I don't think it can be quite as bad as that," he said, turning over the letter which she had thrown to him. "One can trust Evelyn's taste in women and pictures. But if you knew there was any danger of this affair, why did you not stay on at Ladysrood?"

"Would to heaven I had!" said Lady Sunbury, with infinite bitterness. "I should have seen her at any rate!"

"I wouldn't make a quarrel if I were you," said Aubrey. "You see, he writes very well; he is evidently anxious you should countenance the affair, and that is a good deal for him to admit."

"Countenance it? Never!"

"Then you will make a great blunder," said her cousin very sensibly. "There is nothing for any one seriously to object to, we may be sure. He is not a man to marry anybody beneath him, and it is merely a matter of good feeling with him to ask your approbation; what you do cannot matter two straws to him. Come, write something pleasant. Why quarrel? After all, it does not really concern you."

"Concern me?" repeated Lady Sunbury, in a voice stifled with rage. "Not concern me? What should concern me? What should concern me if not the honor of my family, the reputation of my brother, the purity of my father's name, the respect of my own native county?"

"Those valuable things are all safe enough," said Aubrey, carelessly. "Evelyn is a fool in some ways, but he will not buy a peche a quinze sous with his family pride; in that kind of matter he is the proudest man living. Of course it does not please you; it is natural it should not please you; but if I were you I would try to look as if it did. Pleasantness is always the best policy before anything which we cannot alter."

"What is the matter?" asked the earl of Sunbury, coming in with a bundle of letters for his wife to answer.

"Guilderoy is going to marry a country girl, and Hilda takes it as an insult to herself," replied her cousin.

Sunbury gave a long whistle.

"A country girl and you will have to present her?" he said, with zest in anything which annoyed his wife.

"Others may present her; I shall not," said Lady Sunbury.

"Ah! you mean to make a row of it? You always make a row. Lots of people will present her. Perhaps she has decent people of her own. Is she 'born,' as the French say?"

"You had better write and congratulate him," said his wife; "he cares so much for your opinion."

"I shall certainly congratulate him. I always like him, though he monopolizes all the amiability of his family," replied Sunbury, who had often found the generosity of his brother-in-law convenient and long-suffering.

"Oh, yes, write and felicitate him, both of you," said Aubrey, rising and going away before what he foresaw would be a connubial quarrel. "He has done a great folly, and of course he will regret it immeasurably, and all that, but we cannot alter it; and after all it is his own affair. And you wouldn't like Madame Soria better, and it would be Madame Soria some day if it were not some one else."

"A wholesome English girl is certainly better than *that*, if she be a dairymaid," said Lady Sunbury; and toward evening she wrote a letter which was almost kind in tone, although the kindness was marred and jarred by many prophecies of ill.

"It is strange how certain both she and John Vernon are that we shall be miserable!" thought Guilderoy when he received it.

He had received another letter that day from Italy which had also irritated him excessively—a letter full of those useless reproaches, those unwise rebukes, those injudicious and violent demands which are the whips wherewith women think to scourge to activity a dead or dying passion. They are usually as futile as a whip of nettles used on a marble statue. They were not absolutely ineffective here, for they succeeded in stinging his soul into anger and rebellion; but they utterly failed to accomplish the purpose for which they were intended. On the contrary, they confirmed him in the wish which, half in jest, half in earnest, had moved him to give his life into the hands of Gladys Vernon.

He was a man of sudden impulses, romantic fancies, and very hasty action, which was united with an indolent and vaguely philosophic temper. The letter was imperious, reproachful, and passionate. It produced on him the opposite effect that it was intended to produce on him. It made him angry, irritated, and desirous to assert an independence which every word in it refused to him. Guilderoy, like many men who are tender of heart and yet unconsciously selfish, was easily led but was difficult to drive. If he felt coerced, he rebelled instantly. Tact and persuasion might lead him along, but the instant he felt that there was any effort to coerce him by force he grew restive, and men much less amiable and gentle were much easier to direct and command than he. His correspondent made the supreme error of exacting as a right what had no charm unless it were voluntary, and claiming as a due what was nothing if it were not a gift. The wood-dove was right in his choice, he thought, but only right as long as his companion pleases him and leaves him free. If she fasten a fetter on his foot, the very fussing and fretting of the sparrows were better than the columbarium in the clouds.

He shrank from the intent to rule and hold him which was so visible in the letter he had just received; he felt a vehement desire to vindicate his liberty against the claims which she so obviously showed her intention to lay upon it forever, or at least for such a "forever" as her pride and her passion might desire and demand from the future. He was a Launcelot whom Guinevere might have bound forever to her girdle if she had never let him feel that there was a cham under the silken lash. But as every Guinevere had been so rash and so blind as to let him feel it and be galled by it, each had in turn had his allegiance but a brief while. The Duchess Soria had had it longer than any other.

She had many advantages. She lived farther away from him than most; she had greater beauty than most; and she had that eminence of social position which raises a woman so high that no lover can doubt her sincerity in her selection of him, or her facilities for replacing him by others if she chose. These advantages had made her reign over his passions and command his allegiance longer than any other woman had done. It had been always understood that if Hugo Soria died, Guilderoy would ratify his devotion by marriage; but he himself had never dared to contemplate that probability; for the rest, Soria was almost as young as he was himself, and there was no apparent likelihood of his freeing his wife of his presence on earth, unless some unforeseen accident or some duel ending fatally were to prematurely cut short the measure of his days. Had he died, the world and Beatrice Soria herself would have expected her lover to replace him; the certainty with which she would have expected this allowed a too dominant and insistant tone of appropriation to show now through the lines of her letter, and raised in the feeling of its reader that instinct of rebellion which lies in the breast of all men. His intimacy with her had lasted years enough for many faults in her character to have become revealed to him. He had had time to outlive the belief in those perfections which every man who is much in love attributes to his mistress; he knew her to be imperious, exacting, and perilous and distainful when offended. They were defects which in daily life poison peace more cruelly than any others.

Beatrice Soria in Paris or Naples, visited at intervals and seen only in her superb bloom of beauty, had a great and irresistible sorcery for him, but Beatrice Soria as the eternal companion of his fate would have alienated and have irritated him unbearably.

Or, at the least, he thought so now, as his conscience smarted and his impatience rebelled under the lash of her impassioned reproaches and recall.

CHAPTER XII.

"I swear that I will make your daughter happy, if human means can command happiness," said Guilderoy a few days later when they were alone.

"For six months perhaps," said Vernon with impatience.

"Why do you doubt me so?" said Guilderoy, offended and pained.

"I do not doubt you in especial. You are possibly gentler and kinder than most men. But you are mortal, and you cannot prevent the divergence of character, the satiety of habit, the destruction of illusions, the growth of new passions—all which is inevitable in human nature, and in utter defiance of which marriage, the supreme idiocy of social laws, has been made eternal!"

"You are not encouraging."

"I desire so little to encourage," said John Vernon with some violence, "that if you will take back this evening the promise you have given my child this afternoon, far from blaming or reproaching you, I shall thank you. She does not care for you. You flatter and dazzle her, and she is in love with your house, but she would forget you in a week if you withdrew your word. Withdraw it; both she and you will be spared much sorrow."

"Your prophecies are painful to me," said Guilderoy; "but I will risk their realization. I think she gives me already as far as a child of her years can undertstand love. She would be less innocent than she is if she loved me more. I have had enough of passion—too much of it. I desire repose."

"And in six months' time you will say, 'I am tired of repose; give me passion.'"

"And do you think so lovely a creature incapable of inspiring it?"

"I think she will be incapable of inspiring it in you because she will be your wife," replied John Vernon.

His heart was heavy and his forebodings were founded on his knowledge of mankind. He was well aware that his dislike to such a marriage for his child was ingratitude to fate and would have seemed to most men a kind of madness. He was well aware that the future of his young daughter had been often a subject of disquietude and anxiety to him, and that, in a worldly sense, no destiny more brilliant than this now offered could be desired for her.

But he despised worldly advantages. He had learned to know that happiness comes from within, not without. He considered that the contentment which she had learned with himself to feel amongst simple things and homely joys were worth more than the pomps and vanities of a great position. He did justice to the generosity and gentleness of Guilderoy's temperament, but he did not believe in its stability or in its loyalty; nay, he believed in no man's, because he knew that the affections, like the senses, are beyond our own control. He saw a thousand reasons why this union should become a source of ultimate regret and unhappiness to both of them. He saw few probabilities that it would end otherwise than in estrangement and disappointment to both of them.

"The child is wholly unfit for your position," he said angrily. "She knows the names and qualities of all the apples in England, and she knows something of the history of England from first sources; but she knows next to nothing more, and no one wants to hear of pippins and russets or of Hengist and Horsa in your world. Go away, my dear lord, and you will have forgotten that she exists in ten days' time.

"She has not an idea of what you mean," he added bitterly. "Marriage is only a word to her. She thinks of living in Ladysrood as a child of five years old would think of it—as a delightful and roomy play-place. All that ignorance will excite you and interest you entirely for a few weeks—I know that—but at the end of those weeks you will ask yourself angrily why you took a country child to make you ridiculous. When you have dissipated the ignorance, what remains behind will not interest you in the least. You will begin to expect a woman's wisdom and patience in her, and you will not find them—children are never patient or wise. You think me a prophet of ill. I am one, certainly. It is utterly impossible that a girl like her and a man like you can live together without bitter disappointment and endless friction."

"She is too young! She is too young!" he repeated to himself again and again that night on his return from Ladysrood. He had said nothing to the child alone—what was the use of questioning her? She did not know her own heart; how could she answer for it?

"You are not glad?" she asked him wistfully when she came to bid him good-night. He looked away from her and drew her head down on his breast and kissed her curls.

"I hope you may be as happy, my darling, with him as you have been with me. I do not think you can be more so," he said tenderly, and said nothing more. What use was it to alarm her young soul with suggestions of perils and sorrows which she would be wholly unable to understand? Life looked to her like the gilded and illuminated pages of the Ladysrood missal. Why tell her that these pages would be stained and blotted by tears?

In the little parlor of Christalea Guilderoy and John Vernon sat long in conversation that evening.

Neither convinced the other.

The incipient friendship which had begun to grow up between them had been disturbed and diminished by the precipitancy of the one and the opposition of the other. Vernon considered himself dealt with in bad faith and Guilderoy grew impatient at the discontent with which his proposals were received.

"Does he think it would be a happier fate to have all her youth pass away in this little combe by the sea, with no companions but the gulls and the rabbits?" he thought, with a not unnatural sense that the immense gifts brought in his own hands were too little appreciated, whilst yet he respected all the more a man who accounted material and social advantages as of so little avail.

It was in vain that he offered the most princely presents to her, and promised to render her, so far as fortune went, wholly independent of himself.

John Vernon heard all this with little patience.

"I do not doubt your generosity or your justice," he said more than once. "I have told you before, I am convinced that you are not a man to injure or to defraud a woman. But against what I fear you can give no possible guarantees. You wish for Gladys at this moment as you have wished for a hundred women before her and will wish for a hundred women after her. You will tell me that you feel different to her to what you have done to others, and no doubt you believe it; but you are mistaken. You feel precisely the same, and your caprice will pass as all your other caprices have done."

"Will you not allow me even to know my own emotions?" said Guilderoy with anger. "And will you tell me what greater proof any man can give of the honesty of his emotions than to desire to make anyone his wife whom he loves?"

"That is quite true," replied her father, "and I do not question your present sincerity—I cannot do so in the face of the evidences you are willing to give of it. But I do not think that your emotions are of the kind you fancy them, and I am wholly certain that my poor child will not have the knowledge, the character, or the education in her which could alone enable a woman to keep her hold on the affections of such a man as you. Remember what the Master of Love said:—

Ut levis, absumtis paulatim viribus, ignis
Ipse latet, summo candet in igne cinis;
Sed tamen extinctas, admoto sulphure, flammas
Invenit, et lumen, quod fuit ante, redit.

My child will not know how to throw the sulphur over the fading flames, and and your fire will die out on her altar."

"I am tired of the sirens who throw the suphur," replied Guilderoy. "'Et puer et nudus est amor.' I want the innocence of supreme youth and the divine nudity of a soul which has nothing to conceal. Give them to me and I will respect them."

John Vernon sighed impatiently and abandoned the argument.

He did not doubt the entire good faith of his companion, but he was none the less certain of the truth of his own predictions. Guilderoy wished for these things as a child wishes for playthings, but they would have no more power to secure his constancy than the toy to charm the child for ever. But with love, as with anger, he knew that it was a waste of breath to argue.

Guilderoy read the last letter of Beatrice Soria many times when he sat in the solitude of the library on the evening of that day. It did not touch his heart; it disturbed his temper. It made him feel blamable and selfish, but it did not make him feel regretful or repentant. He laid the paper down before him under the light, and then looked up from it to the window far off, where Gladys had sat a week or two before and he had held the great missal upon her knee.

The embrasure of the window was shrouded in the dark velvet curtains which the servants head drawn at nightfall, but he seemed to her tall, slender, stooping form seated there, her golden-haired head, her face with its first sudden blush. He was not in love with her; no, it did not seem to him that even yet his new feeling merited that name, but he was haunted by the thought of her, distressed by the desire of her. She was unlike anything of her sex that he had ever known, and she seemed already a part of Ladysrood like its marble figures of Florence and its old sweet roses of France.

He hesitated no more, but drew pen and paper to him and began to answer the letter which lay under his hand. It was not an easy task. To say to a woman who loves him that he not only loves her no longer, but has transferred his allegiance elsewhere, is painful to any man who has a conscience and a memory.

He had those vague sentiments of inclination to the refreshment of repose, of pure affections, and of family ties which visit at times all men who have imagination and emotions, and which are perhaps the most utterly delusive and misleading of all their fancies.

Again and again has the mirage of innocent and lawful joys passed alluringly before the eyes of a tired man of the world, and has been followed by him only to bring him to the desert sands of monotony, of weariness, and of thralldom.

He was perfectly sincere when he assured John Vernon of his indifference to the passions and the pleasures of which his life had hitherto been so full, and of his wishes for a simpler, purer, and more legitimate attachment than those which he had known. But though he had not any intention of deceiving others, he did so, because he deceived himself, and took what was but a mere passing phase of imagination for a lasting alteration in his temperament.

Was it true that of this child he really knew no more than of a shut book, of which the exterior pleased him? Was it possible that with the passing of the years he would grow farther and farther from her, rather than she nearer and nearer to to him? His reason and his observation of the lives of others told him that it was very possible.

Fancy and admiration had hurried him into an action in which opposition had confirmed his persistency. But now that in cold blood he looked at his future, he could not feel sure that he would never repent an act which gave power over it into the hands of a child whose affections even were scarcely his, and of the tenacity of whose character he had had evidence.

He desired to possess her beauty, and he was fascinated by the courage and the simplicity which he saw in her; but the prophecies of John Vernon haunted and disquieted him, and his knowledge of his own temperament told him that they were not unlikely to be true hereafter.

How much of mere caprice, of sheer waywardness, of momentary impatience of existing ties, and of amusement at irritating the opposition of his sister had there not been mingled with the more poetic and personal feelings which had first sent him to Christslea?

"After all, it is the folly of life which lends charm to it," he thought; but he felt that if John Vernon had been able to know his thoughts he would have told him that the love which does not blindly believe itself to be the highest wisdom of life has the seeds of death in it at its birth.

Indeeed, he was well aware of it himself.

The warning words produced a vague effect upon him.

He felt vaguely that the future might justify them, and although he had been so self-willed in following out his caprice, he almost regretted now that Fate had granted him his wishes.

Had he mistaken a momentary desire for a strength of feeling such as was needed to outlast the stress of time?

In vain he told himself that Beatrice Soria had no claim of any sort upon him; he knew that the mere absence of claim constituted her strongest title to his fidelity; he knew moreover that his relations with her had touched her heart and her passions profoundly, whatever they had done to his own.

He was tired of those relations; they had a side to them which wearied and irritated him; he had resolved in his own mind to go back to her no more, because recrimination and reproach had of late formed the staple of her welcome. Yet the announcement of his marriage was very difficult for him to make, and now and again he pushed the paper from him and leaned his head upon his hands and saw the eyes of his forsaken love burning on him through the dark. She had not been alone in his affections, but she had been chief in them; and he knew that he had reigned supreme in hers. The letter of farewell which he was compelled to compose seemed a cowardice. It was the kind of letter which a gentleman cannot write without feeling that he loses something in his own self-esteem by writing it; indeed, the more truly he is a gentleman the more acutely he will feel this.

But despite his reluctance and the difficulty of the task, it was written at last, and when it had gone away from him irrevocably in the post-bag, with which a lad rode fifteen miles over the moors every morning, he had a sense of relief; of such relief as comes from a decision taken without power to undo or to modify it.

What would she answer?

He counted the days which must elapse before a reply could reach him, and opened the letter-bag with anxiety when those days had passed. To his astonishment he received no answer at all; days became weeks, weeks months, and and silence alone followed on his declaration of self-chosen and deliberate inconstancy. Such silence made him uneasy and apprehensive. He knew that it was not the silence of indifference: and, if not that, what must it portend?

Once or twice he was tempted to break it by writing again himself. But this he felt it was impossible to do; no man can insist on, or emphasize by unasked repetition, his own avowal of mutability and voluntary faithlessness. Silence was, at least, acquiescence and permission.

He had sought these and he could not quarrel with receiving them. Meanwhile he felt free to do what he was bent on doing, and used all his powers of persuasion to induce Vernon to shorten his probation.

Vernon was very reluctant to do so.

"She does not love you. She does not know what love is. You mistake if you fancy she does," he said to Guilderoy, who smiled.

"I will teach her," he answered.

"Yes," said John Vernon with pain and impatience, "and when she has learned the lesson it will have grown dull to you, and the teacher will go elsewhere. What is the cause of half the misery of women? That their love is so much more tenacious than the man's; it grows stronger as his grows weaker. He desires one thing which is quickly satisfied: she desires innumerable things which can never be satisfied; and among them as the most mythical and the most impossible she desires—poor soul!—the man's constancy!"

Where other men would only have seen the gain and honor of such a marriage he saw the gray cloud of possible, of most probable, unhappiness. As he walked in calm dark evenings by the little bay beneath his house the murmur of the waves sounded mournfully on his ear; and as he looked up at the attic window of his daughter's room shrouded in the ivy of the eaves, it was no mere selfish sense of his own coming loneliness which made him wish to heaven that Guilderoy had never come across her path.

Happiness is not a thing to be commanded, he thought with sadness and anxiety, to be obtained by any ingenuity, or retained by any obedience to precept or to duty. It is the most spontaneous thing on earth; boren only of the sympathies of two natures which mutually supply each other's needs; it is like the sunshine and the shower, and can no more be brought into human life by any endeavor than they can be brought on earth by the efforts of science. Happiness is the dew of the heart, making all green things spring where once the soil was barren; but it is not in human nature to create it at will, and it is a gift of destiny like genius or beauty.

True, ingrates mar the gift, as in the fairy story the talisman is lost by careless keeping; but it comes to none at prayer, at exercise of will; it is a treasure of the gods, and alas! "Deos ridere credo, quum infelix vocat."

But Vernon's wishes and his regrets could not stay the flight of time, nor change a caprice which opposition or warning only served to inflame; and before he was wholly sensible that the winter was gone, violets and hepatica were abloom in his orchard grass, and the little fishing fleet was setting out for its springtide harvest of the sea, and March was ended, and Guilderoy claimed from him a promise which he had no choice but to fulfill.

They were married in the private chapel of Ladysrood with no one present by her father's wish except himself and the old servants of the house, and she wore the white cambric frock which she had for her best for summer Sundays at Christslea, and about the throat of it were strings of pearls which Guilderoy had given her, and which were worthy a queen's regalia.

The heart of John Vernon was heavy as he left them to themselves, and took his way back to his solitary house through the budding woods, over the wide moors lying in the pale afternoon sunlight, while the sound of the more distant sea came like human sighs through the rural silence to his ears. There was the scent of violets on the wind and the golden gleam of gorse in the landscape; ever and anon he came in sight of the sea, gray and still, red sails and white crossing it noiselessly. The day was clear and soft and mild, the scene was fair, and yet the sense of a great sadness weighed upon him as he left his child the mistress of all these spreading woods and stately towers and pleasant gardens which lay behind him under the pale gray skies.

The world, he knew, would tell him with all its myriad voices that he had, in his solitude and poverty, had a stroke of the most marvellous good fortune, a social triumph such as most would prize and covet beyond all things. But John Vernon did not see as the world sees, and he would with much surer confidence and greater joy have known that his daughter had gone to a lovelier fate, where the world would have never given her that crown of envy which is so often a crown of thorns. Never again would the little simple things of life make her happiness; never again would she run through the