The Indiana State Sentinel.

VOL. XXXV--NO. 9. INDIANAPOLIS, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3, 1889. ONE DOLLAR PER YEAR.

A CLANDESTINE CORRESPONDENCE.

[Longman's London Magazine.]

"Why, Kate, we've been fancying you as happy as the day is long. I verily believe there isn't another governess in the kindom so comfortably placed in all respects; and you know you are only an amateur, without certificates or diplomas, or anything of that sort. I'm sure Mrs. Bulstrode spoke to us just now as if you were her daughter and I was her daughter's friend. What can you possibly find to complain of?"

"Complain? You quite misunderstood me! It would be not only ungrateful, but idiotic besides. What I meant to say was, that in spite of everybody's kindness—on that account, perhaps—life is rather dull. Mrs. Bulstrode has such a lot of friends, and she's always so busy, so interested, that it makes one feel lonely—I can't express what I mean; but the result is that I would give anything to have some concerns of my own to occupy me."

"Well, but, my dear," said Lydia, glancing round and laughing, "isn't it possible that you may find some such occupation shortly? Capt. Bulstrode seems to be as pleasant as he is handsome."

"Oh, you can't imagine what a funny idea that is! Capt. Bulstrode is certainly pleasant, what I have seen of him; but he appears to think that the only conversation possible with a young lady is an exchange of smiles. So far as they go, his remarks are most agreeable, for he has nice teeth; and I respond as prettily as I can. But in three days we have already exhausted our store of topics—at least I have, for Capt. Bulstrode never recollects that he offered the same observation—that is, the same smile—half a minute ago. It's like saying, 'How d'ye do?' all day long, and I feel the approaches of grinning imbecility."

The schoolroom maid entered, and while she was laying the tea-table, Kate Shafto talked merrily with her cousin of old times. Then, laughing and coloring, she produced a slip of newspaper.

"Capt. Bulstrode could never give me an interest in life, even if he wished, and if I let him try, which are both utterly out of the question. But here is an opening with a vengeance, Lydia, as Tom used to say! You recollect how I crossed the channel alone after poor papa's death, and how kind a boy was to me? See what appears in all the newspapers this morning." Lydia read:

"'If this should meet the eye of the young lady who crossed the Boulogne to Folkestone one night in January, 1883, the young man who left her a rug and overcoat begs permission—which he will regard as an honor—to correspond with her. He will not ask her name, nor seek to ascertain it without her consent. Address, Loyalty, care Messrs. Jordan, Austin Friars.' Oh, Kate, dear! what fun! It must be you! Shall you answer?"

"What do you think?"

"I wouldn't hesitate a moment—that is, if Messrs. Jordan are respectable people, of which I have no doubt. Admiral Bulstrode or any one could find that out for you."

"Yes, but they would find out a good deal more in the process! There was a regular debate at breakfast over this advertisement—which was lucky, for it prepared me, so that I kept my countenance when Mrs. Bulstrode gave it me to read. The admiral declares it is a cryptogram. Everthing that appears in the second column of the newspapers is inserted by nihilists, or dynamitards, or swellmobsmen in a secret language. This advertisement may be an exchange of suggestions for blowing up the house of commons, my dear; or, at best, it's a hint for a burglary! The police read these ciphers like a book. It's so easy that the admiral himself undertakes to interpret it, with the assistance of a friend at the Senior. Oh, your notion wouldn't do at all! But you might ask somebody at Richmond to ascertain who the Messrs. Jordan are."

"I'll ask Mr. Williams, and let you know at once!"

"Thank you, dear. And if his report is favorable, you would really send an answer?"

"Indeed I would. It's delightfully romantic; and where's the harm?"

"Well, but there's the question of address. You will take in Loyalty's replies?"

"Kate! I could not hear of such a thing! Mamma regards second-column advertisements quite as Admiral Bulstrode does. She would never allow me, even if I were willing; and really I must say downright that I can take no share in such an indecorous proceeding."

"Think of the romance, dear! I have often told you what a manly, courteous, high-bred boy it was. We can rely upon his word, I'm quite sure. Nothing will come of it besides amusement."

"Oh, but five years ago you were a thin little chit of fourteen, and now you are a well-grown young woman! Your manly boy has become a real man in the same time. If you pay any attention to my advice, you will not dream of pursuing the matter."

"It's too absurd, Lydia! Just now you would not hesitate a moment—you would ask Mr. Williams, and let me know at once, and so forth! But I won't demand too much. Will you take a note to old Hannah asking her to receive the letters and explaining all the circumstances? I'm quite sure she will consent, if you put it properly."

Lydia was not unwilling to accept this compromise, upon conditions which Kate was very willing to grant. She wanted only the excitement, an interest of her own in that bustling, cheerful household where everybody except the children had a packet of letters every morning and news of some sort to divert them—even Capt. Bulstrode. So it was covenanted with all solemnity that Kate should give no hint of her name, should not seek to learn "the boy's," and, emphatically, should not grant him a meeting without the permission of Mrs. Cantley, her aunt. This arranged, Lydia became enthusiastic once more, and undertook to persuade old Hannah. So she went away.

Certainly nature had not designed Kate Shafto for a governess. The worst disadvantage, truly, had been spared her, for she was not pretty in a style which the first glance recognizes. In fact, the perception of her beauty came as a surprise, after some acquaintance, even to those qualified to see it, and most people remained unconscious to the last. This was owing, perhaps, to the ivory-white complexion, which prejudiced observers so far that they did not look beyond. But persons of taste remarked in good time that the skin was exquisitely clear and soft, the features perfect, the dark eyes full of life and shrewdness and character. The discovery once made, appreciation grew warm, in general, with singular rapidity, and reached the point of enthusiasm. For some weeks Mrs. Bulstrode thought her governess plain, then suddenly perceived that she was interesting, and twenty-four hours afterward declared her lovely.

Kate was happy in obtaining such a situation at the outset. Nothing there roused the impatient scorn of meanness, the quick pride, or the biting ridicule which prudence would never have restrained had they been challenged. Her mistress was a charming woman in the best sense of that term—so thoroughly good-hearted that she never thought of dismissing the girl for her prettiness. "It's not the poor child's fault," said she to her husband. "We must hope that Jack doesn't admire that style!" And Admiral Bulstrode agreed the more heartily because he was one of those who could not see where Miss Shafto's beauty lay.

But it would certainly be annoying if Jack did admire that style—much worse than annoying if he carried admiration beyond the abstract point. Though still young, Mrs. Bulstrode no longer hoped to give an heir to her husband's ancient name. Jack would represent the family at his death, and would succeed to the estates which had known a Bulstrode as master from immemorial time. The admiral found some solace for his disappointment in this fact, since he regarded his nephew with pride and a very warm affection. It was a painful reflection with the old sailor—suspected by none, but constantly haunting him—that in thirty years' service he had never found an opportunity to distinguish himself. Almost all his contemporaries had the K. C. B. at least, but his name would be recorded in the annals of the family with no testimonial of merit. Jack would retrieve its glories! At twenty-six years of age he had won his brevet-captaincy upon the field, and had been mentioned twice in general orders. Furthermore, he was the best and noblest young fellow in England!

Therefore Jack ought to marry—should marry—must marry—to insure the permanence of the stock. For two years past the admiral had been urging the obligation by every mail, while his wife had been diligently seeking a bride. This pursuit gave to Mrs. Bulstrode's hospitalities, friendships, and correspondence the air of bustling interest which made Kate feel lonely, as she has explained. At length Jack was persuaded, or rather convinced—for he could not bring himself to an inclination. Three days before the advertisement appeared he reached the castle, and forthwith a defile of maidens was arranged.

Mr. Williams reported that Messrs. Jordan were solicitors of the highest standing, and Hannah Penrhyn, Kate's old nurse, consented to act. She dispatched her reply:

"Loyalty's advertisement has met the eye of the young lady to whom it was addressed, and she is glad to find an opportunity of expressing her gratitude for his kindness long ago. That she failed to do so at the time caused her much distress—she looked for him everywhere on arrival at Folkestone. His rug had been preserved with pious care, and it will be forwarded to Messrs. Jordan immediately.

"The young lady takes note of Loyalty's promise to make no inquiry about her, and, that both parties may bear it constantly in mind, she assumes a name derived, like his, from the motto of a king—K. E. P. E. Troth—for short, Miss Troth.

"And she awaits Loyalty's explanation of his object in seeking her out after five years.

"Reply frankly, please, to the care of Mrs. Penrhyn, 41 Deep-st., Richmond."

The answer came as speedily as crossposts would allow.

"My Dear Miss Troth—I would rather not have told you at the beginning why I wished to renew our acquaintance, lest the information itself should defeat my object. Utterly ignorant of the circumstances around you, I cannot guess how you will be affected. But since you made the demand—and certainly it is reasonable—I must run the risk.

"My friends have been urging me to marry for a long time past, by arguments which cannot be resisted; but my personal feelings do not support them. I have never seen the lady whose charms tempted me to think that the grave responsibilities of marriage would be compensated by the happiness of her society through life. Pray do not misunderstand. I have not looked for such a lady, and I have been very little in the way of finding her by accident up to this.

"But it is my plain duty to take a wife, in so far as that duty is not counterbalanced by another which forbids a man to marry unless he love with all his heart and believe himself loved in return. Subject to these conditions, I acknowledge the reasoning of my friends, and, therefore, it is right to give myself, or to make myself, the opportunity of discovering a person who must exist, if we can rely upon tradition—the helpmate who is destined for me, for whom I am destined.

"Now, my dear Miss Troth, in thinking of this matter continually for many months past, with equal persistence my thoughts have turned to the little girl who sat with her head upon my shoulder through a long, wet, miserable night on the deck of a channel steamer. I scarcely could see her face, but I think she was not pretty, and I have never asked myself whether she may be pretty now. But her eyes and her sweet voice under sufferings of mind and body have never faded from my memory. The impression grows stronger, indeed, for I was only twenty-one, and a boy of that age takes little notice of a girl in short frocks. You could not have been more than fourteen?

"These premises I feel bound to state at your demand; but are you able to leave them there, as mere statements, without drawing a conclusion? I have heard that your sex ignores and despises logic; but again, from my very limited means of observation, I have myself remarked that it works a straightforward syllogism with unfailing accuracy. It would be agreeable at this moment, and in this case, to believe the former proposition if I could. But however it be, I entreat you to forget an explanation which is offered most unwillingly, since various reasons and motives may induce you to break off our correspondence at this early stage, after learning my position. They may be such as I could not gainsay. But if not—if they are mere objections of conventionality—I beg you most earnestly to resist them. Let us talk together frankly, honestly, without thought of consequences. It was in the belief that the little girl who dwells in my recollection could sustain such converse without need of personal topics to eke it out that I searched for her again—and Miss Troth's letter strongly confirms that belief. I shall wait for her reply with anxiety.

"P. S.—I also was very sorry to miss bidding you good-bye at Folkestone. When you went down below, in sight of harbor, I paid a visit to a friend, a queen's messenger, on board, and fell asleep in his cabin. He did not arouse me till too late. As for the rug, I shall treasure it with 'pious care' hence forward."

Loyalty had to wait with such patience as he could muster. Very seldom does a girl receive a communication so embarrassing. Kate Shafto's brain was singularly clear. However it be with other women, few males had a keener grasp of logic; even the mechanics of that art she understood well enough to know all the meaning of a syllogism. The whole process of her correspondent's argument lay open before her, as before himself. But no objection which he could not gainsay arose; and as for the conventionalities, they were already cast aside. Moreover, her inclination to trust the handsome, gallant boy was greatly strengthened by the conduct of the man so far.

The propriety of answering, therefore, caused her not a moment's hesitation. But how the answer should be framed, how certain grave probabilities should be guarded against at the outset, occupied her thoughts for two days, and even, in a measure, for two nights; that is to say, until she went to sleep at the usual hour, and again until she rose. It was fun of the best class, brimming with interest and possibilities, but distinctly not the kind of thing to make a reasonable girl turn on her pillow.

The outcome of these cogitations is shown in her reply:

"My Dear Mr. Loyalty—I also regret the demand for motives which you so honorably meet, since they cannot be quite forgotten henceforth; but I believe myself able to act in the sense which you suggest. Referring to your explanation for the last time, it appears to me that we must fix a date when our correspondence shall cease. I think you will perceive the reason, or one of several. The search in which your relations have engaged will prove successful, doubtless, and, at an earlier date, your attention will be too much distracted to find pleasure in writing to a stranger. I will not run the risk that my letters may become a bore. Regarding the question thoughtfully, I have resolved that two months is the very longest time that can be fixed with safety. This is the 24th of February; on the 24th of April I shall write good-bye—with hearty friendship and respect, I feel sure. If the circumstances I contemplate should arise before that period, I lay it on your honor to inform me at once. You will ratify this understanding, please, without comment or discussion in your next letter.

"Now, what are we going to talk about? In the division of labor it will be your duty to find topics and to expatiate upon them. My amusement, to criticise your views about everything. That is the approved system in these matters. A clever man creates, a dunce passes judgment on his work, and the people accept the opinion of the dunce. If you expect a young-ladylike assent to every proposition, it is ungrateful to disappoint you. But really, the part of Echo is very dull, and, besides, I am not qualified to play it. You will not talk commonplace, I feel sure—partly from recollection, partly from the wording of your advertisement. A dull person would have said instinctively, 'if the young lady, etc., still survive,' or something superfluous to that effect. Commonplace irritates me as nothing else does, I think. 'But?' Now, does Mr. Loyalty grasp that bold figure of speech! Oh, by the by, I must put another clause into our agreement. I reserve the power of closing this correspondence at any time, without regard to the limit of two months. It seems a rude stipulation, but constitutional lawyers hold, I believe, that the right of self-defense cannot be annulled by any contract or covenant.

"And so I leave you to the exercise of your ingenuity. We are to make no allusion to private matters, excepting, if you like, such as came to our mutual knowledge in the very broken discourse we held that night. You have forgotten what they were? Of course you have, but I will give you a hint. It is already known to me that you are a soldier, or were, and that the grand desire of your heart at one time was to visit India. That may be a starting-point for our excursion. I am inclined to finish with the exclamation which sophists of old were wont to use when they invited the audience to give them a theme for eloquence. You would thus be convinced that it is no light responsibility you have undertaken. But I forbear.

"P. S.—I am ashamed of myself! That last observation will give you the idea that I understand Greek, and I dare not protest that it was undesigned! Remorse is consuming me! Peccavi, Oh, Mr. Loyalty! I can't even read the alphabet!"

"My Dear Miss Troth—Without comment or debate, I subscribe to your conditions, but if you knew what I feel!

"Nevertheless, when one contracting party is so precise, the other may seize any vantage ground unoccupied. You do not fix the number of our letters per week, and therefore I exact two at least. You do not say that I must submit when you bid me farewell, and therefore I reserve full liberty of action.

"Since we are not to mention private affairs, I suppose that compliments are most strictly forbidden. I confine myself, therefore, to the simplest matter of fact in declaring your first communication a little masterpiece. Within a very few lines it warns me, as you say, what a grave charge I have assumed; it suggests the line, if not the subjects, of our correspondence, and it shows a disposition in every word that interests and challenges me. You think I do not recollect the topics we discussed that night? Perhaps not. But my advertisement is proof that I keep a very strong general idea of your powers. And—you will allow me to flatter myself at least?—the evidence displays that my judgment was sound?

"'Commonplace irritates you so terribly?' Then I venture to conclude that my guess was correct—you were fourteen years old five years ago. Nineteen is the age, I should think, when a clever girl who has read much—so much that she can cite the 'Proballete' of the sophists in a casual way—feels moved to resent the style of conversation which is offered her in general. Before that time of life she does not notice, perhaps too much occupied with the delights of freedom; shortly after she grows accustomed. Remark, please, how bravely I take up your challenge, theorizing forthwith upon young ladies' sentiments of which my ignorance is utter! But with that tremendous subject of commonplace I am very well acquainted, and I beg you to believe that it is an excellent, a blessed thing, and indispensable. You see that I also decline to play Echo. May I say—without reference to our situation of course—that it is a feminine role? Your impatience of commonplace talk betrays an instinctive consciousness of that, for it means that people give you a note to which you can not reply—or rather, you scorn to reply. I hope to avoid that case. But, my dear Miss Troth, it does not follow at all that a person who talks commonplace at a given moment is thinking commonplace. He may well have discovered that the range of ideas in which an ordinary mortal can give him the replique is desperately narrow, and he prudently keeps within them. For the alternative is a brilliant monologue which human nature will not stand.

"There! Have I not given you a topic at the outset which you can not only criticise but dilate upon? I fancy that the next epistle I receive will be dashed off at white heat of indignation. What! I dare to suggest that you will ever regard with patience the dull talk of dull people! I venture to predict that you will, as your personal interest grows stronger. General conversation becomes more or less of a perfunctory business when a man or a woman has something to think of. I pause for the reply.

"Yes, I am a soldier, and I have fulfilled my wish. Very shortly after that introduction which is bearing its fruit now, I was ordered to India, and I have taken but one furlough since. When we fall short of matter for conversation, if that could ever be, we will talk of India. But I distrust myself upon that theme. It tends to raving and incoherency. If I declared in public my views, there would be danger of a writ de lunatico inquirendo."

* * * * * * *

I must make an end of these quotations. It would be a pleasure to transcribe the whole correspondence, but no pleasure, I suspect, for the majority to read it. The samples are enough to show how easily these young people mastered the difficulties of their extraordinary situation. The credit was due to the lady, of course. Kate's first letter struck a keynote which summoned Loyalty to respond. Had he failed to do so, the romance would have ended then and there. On the contrary, his success was complete. She recognized a man worth talking to, and forthwith began to chatter—brightly, humorously, with familiar frankness; for it must be borne in mind that Kate did not regard her anonymous correspondent as a stranger. The familiarity, however, was intellectual. As her interest grew she felt more and more disinclined to encourge the hope of a personal intercourse. That would destroy the charm. Unconsciously she admitted that some time, by some abnormal means, they would be brought face to face, but not with her sanction. And Loyalty was harmonious all through. He wrote as gayly, brilliantly and familiarly as herself, but gave no hint of a wish to meet. It is true that one month only had elapsed when I resume the story. He had no need to hurry the action yet.

Meantime, Bulstrode castle became a rendezvous for young ladies such as the chatelaine thought likely to fascinate Jack. None of them had succeeded apparently. In truth, things seemed to be going the other way. Kate overheard more than one remark that Capt. Bulstrode was like a knight of chivalry, and an impulsive young person declared him outright a "dear." He had that gentle and amiable calm which specially becomes a distinguished young soldier, and is specially appreciated by the sex. His air was thoughtful, but nothing funny escaped him, and his low quiet laugh showed keener enjoyment than the roar of boisterous souls. Conspicuously handsome, graceful in all he said and did, heir to an ancient name and large estates, Capt. Bulstrode realized, in serious truth, the popular notion of a hero.

Kate admired him warmly, as a picture, and liked very much what she saw of him—in the same sense. But this inroad of guests confined her to the school-room. Though Mrs. Bulstrode had dismissed her vague alarms after observing Jack, she was too shrewd to tempt the fates by thrusting a lovely governess upon the notice of any young man. So it came to pass that Kate only saw him at a distance, and never spoke. She had ample leisure for the correspondence in those long solitary evenings. Even her little pupils were less ignorant of the events preparing. She did not know that Capt. Bulstrode was the admiral's heir; much more, that this array of damsels was paraded for his choice. The castle had been lively with young people more or less since she resided there. It was natural that a larger gathering should be made to celebrate the return of a favorite nephew. But one day, about a month after the date of those letters cited, enlightenment came with a rush. Her eldest pupil, a charming little madcap, suddenly exclaimed:

"Oh, Miss Shafto, they say that Cousin Jack is going to marry Lady Norah! You don't believe it, do you? Say you don't if you do."

"I know nothing at all about it, Mary. Who says so?"

"I heard nurse ——"

"I have told you several times, my dear, that it is unladylike to listen to the servants."

"Oh, yes, when they are gossiping—that's what you said, Miss Shafto. But Cousin Jack's marriage isn't gossip. It's a landmark in history."

The child's droll emphasis and gesticulation made Kate laugh. Before she could interpose the hint was given.

"Nurse said to Wilkins, the new housemaid, that all papa's estate goes to Cousin Jack. I know that's true. And papa and mamma have been trying to persuade him for years to marry—and he wouldn't until now—and mamma got all these young ladies here to choose from, and he's chosen Lady Norah. Oh, I wish it had been any of the others; don't you? I shall speak to Cousin Jack—it's an outrage."

"You musn't do anything of the kind." That was all Kate could say.

"Oh! but excuse me, dear Miss Shafto; this is a family matter. I must act in the interests of the family." And she ran off.

Kate's mind was very quick. It followed the chain of reasoning at a glance and estimated the probabilities. Another soldier might be found in this great country whose relations had been urging him to take a wife; another, perhaps, who could write those clever, charming letters. But the coincidences were too many to be thus explained. Mr. Loyalty was Capt. Bulstrode!

A painful shattering—not of hopes, most assuredly, but of ideals. Kate felt so angry that she paused, in sudden consternation, to ask herself what Loyalty had done to justify this temper. Why, of course! He had violated a solemn condition—he had failed to warn her of his growing love for one of the beautiful girls around him. Forthwith Kate ran to her desk, and set herself to prepare the indictment which was to be Miss Troth's farewell. It proved to be mighty difficult, as the reader will understand if he reviews the circumstances. Half an hour afterward Mary found her still obstinately wrestling with a task as desperate as a composition well could be.

"Oh, Miss Shafto!" she cried from the door. "I have questioned Cousin Jack seriously, and he gives me his word of honor as a gentleman that there is not a syllable of truth in it."

Kate accepted the assurance implicitly, and her indignation vanished; but the letters must cease. Reason endeavored to convince her that if there was no harm in corresponding with an anonymous gentleman, the chance discovery of his name and address could not make it improper. Through her simple life hitherto, the instincts of womanhood had never been opposed to the dictates of common sense, and in one of her bright discussions with Loyalty she had maintained with warmth that they never could be. The logic of circumstances refuted her now. Reason might urge arguments unanswerable, but instinct declined to hear them. She wrote at once:

"My Dear Mr. Loyalty—I am compelled to forego an amusement which I have learned to cherish before the date we fixed. I must not write again, and I send this brief note only to assure you that my resolve is unconnected with any action of yours. It is bare truth to say that your letters have given me a broader and clearer view of the world. There is food for thought in every line, even those that have made me laugh so often. I feel myself wiser; and that knowledge, I think, will gratify you. It is my very earnest hope that we may meet at some time, but pardon me if I recall your undertaking to make no inquiry about me." And in a few regretful words she bade him good-bye.

A little incident occurred before the answer reached her, but I transcribe it in this place—so much as bears upon the story:

"My Dear Miss Troth—It is no exaggeration to say that your sudden resolve distresses me. If our correspondence was a cherished amusement to you, to me it was a grave matter from the beginning, which has grown continually more serious as I studied your disposition. But I have made up my mind to give no hint upon this subject until the day appointed, and I shall keep to that resolution.

"For, again, your terms leave an opening, of which I take advantage. Circumstances do not compel me to cease writing—quite the contrary—and inclination urges me furiously to continue. Therefore I shall go on until the end of the two months, and then, in what may be a farewell letter, I shall write very seriously.

"There is, however, a most weighty consideration. You insisted that I should warn you the moment I became conscious of certain feelings, and much more is it your duty to warn me in like case. If such be the motive of Miss Troth's wish to break off our pleasant relations, I am sure she will contrive to make loyalty understand.

"And now I shall scribble away as if nothing had happened—only it will be a monologue in future. * * *"

The effect which this letter would have had was entirely changed by the incident I have referred to. Capt. Bulstrode, like all who served in India, rose at daylight—not such a very early hour in the month of March. Kate saw him not infrequently whipping the stream as she sallied forth with her charges for the walk before breakfast, which Admiral Bulstrode exacted, wet or fine. Then the little girls raced away to Cousin Jack, and Mary performed a reckless fantasia with his fly rod. But he had never happened to be near the path.

Cousin Jack was not visible on the morning when Loyalty's reply might be expected, but they found his rod upon the bridge. Mary seized it, of course, and galloped down to the water's edge; and Miss Shafto, of course, remonstrated up above. Her perfunctory appeals ended in a sharp cry of pain; the fly had pierced her ear through and through.

Pitiful arose the wailing of the little girls; desperate were her efforts to extract the hook. Capt. Bulstrode, who had gone to seek a light for his cheroot, burst on the scene. Kate was not so distracted that she failed to observe his running—like a Greek athlete, she said to herself.

With that kind smile, which she had ridiculed to Lydia, though admiring it all the while, he examined the mischief. I have said that Kate Shafto's face did not strike at a glance, and Capt. Bulstrode had never happened to regard her with attention. He could not have avoided doing so now, and certainly she looked her very best—red with embarrassment, hair loose, eyes and lips protesting, yet diverted with the humor of the situation, which she only grasped. So startled was he that he paused, saying: "This is Miss Shafto?"—but found an excuse upon the instant—"Er—you are in great pain, I fear?" With that he snapped the hook and drew it gently out.

Kate foresaw what would happen. If there are girls who cannot read the look of overpowering admiration in honest, manly eyes, she was not one of them. But it would have been far more indecorous to walk with her hair dishevelled than to return home under escort of a young man, and she submitted to fate very willingly since it must be so. Capt. Bulstrode had wound up his tackle before she was ready, and they started.

The castle was not a mile away and the little girls demanded Cousin Jack's attention without ceasing; but he found means to draw the governess out—at least to assure himself that she was well worth the trouble. Kate understood perfectly. Several times she marked his cautious survey of her face, and read therein, with pardonable vanity, an expression of astonishment which grew rather than subsided. How could I possibly have overlooked this girl? it said. She did not feel called upon to mislead him by the affectation of a character, good or bad, which was not her own. And shyness would have been a gross affectation; besides, she could not help regarding Capt. Bulstrode as an old and intimate acquaintance.

So they talked merrily and frankly through the children, who played a very useful part as conductors. When the letter came Kate felt that it was ancient history. She saw him no more that day; but next morning, of course, he was at the brook, and very near the path. The rod was intrusted to Mary, and until she broke it in a triumphant flourish, they strolled to and fro. Naturally, then, Capt. Bulstrode might have accompanied them on their walk, but he was too sagacious. Next day, however, they met him again, and the next. The fun was over now; matters grew serious. On the fourth morning Kate took another direction, to the great disgust of her pupils; but on their return Cousin Jack joined them. She felt, without pretending irritation to herself, that her shrewdness was no match for his. There was no escape, for the admiral insisted that his girls should take exercise regardless of the weather. At a glimpse of their favorite the children galloped to him, and he contrived it so that they always seemed to bring him to the governess. Kate was perplexed, amused, and began to be troubled. Then the next letter arrived.

"My Dear Miss Troth—It is not four days since I took refuge in chincanery to evade the plain meaning of your injunctions, and to sustain a correspondence which interested me very deeply. I did wrong, and I knew it, but you are avenged. It is painful to eat one's words—doubly so in this case, for I have to beg what I refused when it was offered—a kindly farewell. Explanation is unnecessary, I think, under the circumstances, and it would be most embarrassing. You have proved yourself wise and prudent all through—let that suffice! With the warmest respect and admiration I reciprocate your expressions of good-will, and I subscribe myself for the last time,

Loyalty."

If Kate was perplexed and somewhat troubled before, this communication dumfounded her. She could scarcely find a smile for the extraordinary situation which the correspondence, begun in sport, had developed. It was awfully funny, doubtless, but grave enough for those concerned, and most complicated for herself. Explanation was unnecessary, indeed. Loyalty broke off his relations with Miss Troth because Capt. Bulstrode had fallen in love with Miss Shafto! Kate thrilled in reading the confession, but it was dreadful.

Since he had thus declared himself, unconsciously, she owned her love, she gloried in it. But the mere knowledge of that fact forbade her, a dependent, to allow meetings, under the admiral's roof, which had been harmless if disconcerting before. It did not occur to Kate, even as a possibility, that she might misunderstand the motive of Loyalty's withdrawal. Capt. Bulstrode's eyes were too expressive for that.

But how to check him? She had no grounds for giving a hint, nor was he in the least likely to supply her. The children must go out, their governess must accompany them; and Kate owned herself no match in strategy with this young soldier. She thought of feigning illness, but he was a man who could wait. The only means of escape was resignation, and that would be disastrous. A girl is not called upon to sacrifice her livelihood, perhaps all her future, to avoid an honorable suit from her employer's heir. Heroines of story do that kind of thing, but Kate Shaito was a "human girl," no more and no less. She resolved at length to take a holiday—that would give a pause—and wrote Mrs. Cantley forthwith to ask whether she could be received. The good old dame consented with warmth by return of post.

The same morning Mrs. Bulstrode summoned the governess to an interview; she seemed flurried and nervous, and she spoke less kindly than usual.

"My dear, we are starting for the continent to-morrow. You will accompany us?"

Kate was amazed. "I was just going to beg a short holiday, madam," she said.

"This will be a twelvemonth's holiday. I should not ask you to give the children regular lessons. We go to Italy, thence north, and we winter in Rome. The admiral will be with us much of the time."

Kate could not inquire whether Capt. Bulstrode would be of the party. She answered:

"I should like to spend a few days with my friends before leaving them for so long, madam."

"You can't do that!" said Mrs. Bulstrode shortly; and Kate's spirit rose at her tone.

"Relying on your constant kindness, madam, I begged my aunt to receive me, and she has made arrangements."

The lady looked in her face, which had grown stubborn, thought an instant, and spoke frankly, with a total change of manner.

"I honestly think, Miss Shafto, as I hope, that you have been comfortable with us. We have not tried to be kind, for it was no effort; and you, I believe, found it no effort to be grateful. I speak for the admiral also in declaring that your character and disposition made it a pleasure to have you in the house."

"Indeed, madam, you have treated me as a daughter!" Kate exclaimed, her eyes full.

Mrs. Bulstrode stretched out her hands, and drew the girl to her bosom. "Heaven knows, dear, that I wished to do so! I feel certain we can rely on your honor!" And then she told how Jack had sought an interview the night before, and solemnly announced that he would marry Miss Shafto or no one. Good and simple by nature, ignorant of the relations between the two, Mrs. Bulstrode felt very little embarrassment in making her appeal. "We put all our hopes in you, my dear!" she concluded tearfully. "You will not inflict this dreadful disappointment on us?"

Kate laughed while she cried, but the prayer touched her warm heart. Happily, Mrs. Bulstrode did not think of asking that she should never accept Jack; her single idea was to keep them apart. Kate agreed to travel for a year, after a week's holiday at Richmond. Capt. Bulstrode, they thought, might learn where she was, but Mrs. Cantley's address he could not find by any means he would use.

The same evening she arrived. Lydia's interest and her questions may be imagined. To avoid them Kate paid a visit to her old nurse next day—found that dame yet more inquisitive about the letters she had forwarded, and fled again. On the very doorstep she encountered Capt. Bulstrode, whose face lit up. Her mind at the instant was full of "loyalty" and "Miss Troth," after the nurse's chatter—so full that she mixed up the anonymous with the real personages inextricably, and addressed him with hot indignation.

"So, sir, in defiance of your solemn promise, you are trying to find me?"

"My promise?" he repeated in blank astonishment.

Kate saw her error and turned sharply away. He looked at the number of the house thoughtfully, and overtook her at a stride.

"Observing the name of this street, I turned into it from mere curiosity. It is quite true that I was seeking Miss Shafto. Can it possibly be that I have found Miss Troth?"

She hurried on, confused, longing to deny, to dismiss him, but unable to find words. It was too certain that Jack's quick brain would carry him to further discoveries. In a moment more her fears were realized.

"And you accused me?" he exclaimed abruptly. "Miss Shafto is not only acquainted with Loyalty's promise to Miss Troth, but she also charges Capt. Bulstrode with breaking it! Then—then, this is the reason you broke off our correspondence? I have only to tell you why I acquiesced."

"I don't wish to hear! I won't hear!"

"I have done nothing to sacrifice such treatment as an honorable man deserves, Miss Shafto. You must hear me!"

"Oh, don't!" she cried, at her wit's end. "I have promised Mrs. Bulstrode!"

"Is that it?" he laughed. "For how long have you promised?"

"For twelve months!"

"That's an awful time, but we shall see. Now, since I have spoken—at least, since you understand—the twelve months shall begin an hour hence. Then I will go away and weave plots against my well-meaning relations. Let us turn into the park."

She obeyed helplessly.

Long before the year was out Mrs. Bulstrode submitted in a cheerful spirit. They were married at Florence. The admiral gave Kate away. Lydia and the little girls were bridesmaids. Cousin Jack gave them lockets, with "K. E. P. E. Troth" in diamonds. Acting as governess for the very last time, Kate explained that it was the motto of King Edward I. But the application has never been set forth till now.

Possible Attractions.

[Puck.]

Mrs. Ontwit (reading paper)—"There, now! Dr. Howard Crosby says if there were only men on the stage, men would not go to the theater."

Mr. Ontwit—"Well, perhaps if there were only women in the pulpit, women would not go to church."

END OF A NOBLE CAREER.

JOHN BRIGHT'S DEATH YESTERDAY

He Passes Away Quietly at His Home in Rochedale Surrounded by the Members of His Family—A Long and Tedious Illness—The Funeral.

LONDON, March 27.—John Bright died at 8 o'clock this morning at Rochedale. His strength was so slight that he was unable to rally from the dangerous condition reported yesterday and he continued to fail gradually until the end came, painless and quietly as if he were sinking into a peaceful sleep. His four sons and three daughters, who had been hastily summoned when Mr. Bright's alarming symptoms appeared, were present at his death-bed.

Mr. Bright's illness has been long and tedious, but he has suffered little pain. He has kept his full faculties throughout and never lost his interest in public affairs. He has had all the proceedings in the Parnell case read aloud. He has been moved on days when he felt better to his study, a room which tells the history and character of the man. Its most striking feature is a bookcase, "Presented by friends of free trade to John Bright, 1847." Among the portraits on the wall are Gladstone in his wood-cutting costume; also Lincoln and Washington. There is a bust of Gladstone also. In spite of their strong political differences, Bright keeps his respect for his old friend, in pleasant contrast to the duke of Westminster, who sold his Millais portrait of Gladstone when the home rule split came. A touching incident of his illness has been the devotion of his pet dog, called Fly, a skye terrier, who night and day was by her master's bed.

In the house of commons to-day the Hon. William H. Smith, the government leader, with much emotion, referring to the death of Mr. John Bright, said that he would postpone his remarks on Mr. Bright until Friday, when Mr. Gladstone would be present. Mr. Morley thanked Mr. Smith for his consideration in regard to Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Bright represented the central division of Birmingham in the house.

The funeral will take place on Saturday. The interment will be in the Quaker burying ground at Roachdale, and the ceremonies will be as private as possible.

[John Bright was born at Greenbank Nov. 16, 1811. His father, Jacob Bright, was a cotton spinner and manufacturer and belonged to the society of friends. John entered his father's business at the age of fifteen and devoted his leisure hours to the study of history, politics and national economy. After making a journey to the continent he appeared first upon the rostrum in 1831 against church rates. He afterward attracted wide attention by his prominence in the anti-corn law league, which had for its object the repeal of the English corn laws. In 1839 the league appointed him one of its official agitators. Four years later he was the candidate of the league for the city of Durham, but was defeated. One year later, however, he was successful, and he represented the city until 1847. In that year he was returned from Manchester, and took the position of leader of what was known as the Manchester party. He earnestly co-operated with Mr. Cobden in his efforts for financial reform, and demanded relief measures for Ireland, an investigation into the affairs of India, and a reduction of the naval and military establishments of the kingdom. In 1850 he opposed Lord Russell's ecclesiastical title bill, and Palmerston's continental policy, and actively contributed to the overthrow of the Derby-Disraeli cabinet later on, when it threatened a restoration of a high protective system. His reputation and influence underwent a backset in 1857, when he opposed England's participation in the Eastern war. Palmerston appealed to the country and Bright was rejected by a large majority. A few months later, however, a vacancy having occurred at Birmingham, he was invited to become a candidate and he was elected. He has continued to represent Birmingham ever since. For more than twenty-five years Mr. Bright's name has been prominently identified with the extension of the right of suffrage and the reform of the electoral laws. He sympathized with the North during the war of 1861-5 in the United States. In 1866 he visited Dublin and was entertained at a public banquet by his Irish friends, but his general reception in Ireland was not so generous or enthusiastic as was anticipated. In 1868 the city of Edinburgh presented him with the freedom of the city and in the same year he became for the first time a member of the cabinet under Gladstone. In 1870 he was forced to relinquish the position because of illness, and he did not enter public life again for three years, when he was appointed chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster. He held that post until February 1874, when the liberal cabinet went out of office. Selections of his political speeches have appeared under the titles of "Speeches on Parliamentary Reform," "Speeches on Questions of Public Policy" and speeches on "The Public Affairs." His life has been written by a Mr. Gilchrist and published in London.]

IN OKLAHOMA.

The First Bloodshed Over a Contested Claim.

TOPEKA, Kas., March 28.—Immediately upon the announcement that the president had issued the Oklahoma proclamation officials of the Rock Island railroad and a corps of engineers started from this city to make the final survey for the extension through the Indian territory. The road is built as far south as Pond Creek, some twenty-five miles below, in the Cherokee strip, at which point construction will begin. The proclamation by which Oklahoma is opened designates King Fisher as the land office for the western district. This is at present a stage station, situated on King Fisher creek, a southern tributary of the Cimarron. It is on the projected line of the Rock Island and some ninety miles south of the Kansas line. It is stated that the railroad company will push its lines to King Fisher as soon as possible. It is not at all likely that the extension will stop there, as Ft. Reno is but a score or so miles further on, at which point there are six hundred to eight hundred troops stationed, which will create a demand for supplies and transportation.

A dispatch from Wichita says: The long looked-for proclamation for the opening of Oklahoma was received here with demonstrations of great joy. Flags were hung from buildings, cannons were fired and bonfires built. The same enthusiasm welcomed the news all over the south of Kansas. Extensive preparations are being made for entering the country, and some of the towns of southern Kansas will almost be depopulated. The boomers, who have been camped along the line, are making ready to move. The cattle men are hurrying on to Oklahoma to get their cattle, as they fear violence to stock and property from their deadly enemies, the boomers. The soldiers have left Oklahoma City. The boomers made bold to come out of their concealment in the woods to hear the news. The crowd kept on swelling in size, and it was estimated that there were eight hundred persons that rejoiced over the news.

Col. Summers received from