

## THE HUNDREDTH MAN.\*

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"The Casting Away of Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine," etc.

### IV.



On the day after Gay Armatt's birthday Mr. Stratford went fishing near the foot of the mountains, and he brought back a very fair string of trout; but on the following day, which was

Thursday, he drove over to Mrs. Justin's place, and found the two ladies engaged in setting up a target on the lawn where they were going to practice archery. He received a warm welcome, for Mrs. Justin knew him as a good bowman, and he speedily took the arrangement of the target and the stringing of the bows into his own hands.

It was not long before he found that the course of studies at Miss Armatt's college had not included archery, and that, although she had a good eye and a strong arm, she knew but little of the use of the bow and arrow. Mrs. Justin was an excellent archer and needed no assistance, and although Stratford took his shots when his turn came, he gave the most of his time to the tuition of Miss Armatt. He informed her—and in a manner which seemed as if he were telling her something she had once known and now forgotten—how she must stand, how she must throw back her shoulders and advance her left foot, how she must draw the feathered end of the arrow back to her little ear, how she must set her eye upon the target and her mind upon the arrow. Once he found it necessary to place her fingers properly around the string. But whatever he did, and whatever he told her, was done and said with such a courteous, almost deferential, manner, that the relation of teacher to pupil scarcely suggested itself. It seemed rather as if Gay and Mr. Stratford were partners in a match against Mrs. Justin, and that they were helping each other.

When he had gone, Gay Armatt expressed a high opinion of Mr. Stratford. He seemed to know so much, and was so kind, and gentle, and pleasant in his way of telling people how to do things. And to this remark Mrs. Justin answered that she knew of no one who was more of a gentleman at heart than Horace Stratford.

Whereupon Miss Gay had an idea, down at the bottom of her mind, about a certain relation that she thought would be very suitable indeed, and which gave her pleasure to think of. But nothing would have induced her to mention this idea to Mrs. Justin.

Mr. Stratford came no more to the Justin mansion until Sunday, when he staid to dinner, and spent the afternoon. Mr. Crisman was there, and he and Miss Armatt were very glad to see a visitor, for it was a rainy day, and there could be no strolling through the woods; but with some one to talk to Mrs. Justin in the library, there was no reason why the two younger people should not wander off into some other part of the house, and stay away as long as they pleased.

In the evening, however, they were all together, and Mr. Stratford, with that courtesy which was characteristic of him, yielded the floor, during the greater part of the time, to the younger man. Mrs. Justin expressed the hope that Mr. Crisman might arrange matters so that he could arrive earlier in the day when he returned on the following Saturday. In that case they could make up a croquet party of four for the afternoon. Croquet was a game of which Mrs. Justin was very fond, although it had gone out of fashion; but Mr. Crisman put his hands in his pockets and smiled. Then he stated, with an air of not unkindly superiority, that he had but a small opinion of croquet and archery; that is, considered as recreative occupations for adults.

"If there were enough people here and in the neighborhood to get up a base-ball match," he said, "that would be something worth considering, but I rather think my grass-billiard days are over. Then, there's another thing," said Mr. Crisman, turning suddenly towards Mrs. Justin; "I sha'n't be able to come here next Saturday, anyway, for some of my friends and myself have made up a party to go on a cruise on the Sound in a yacht. You see I want to get a little sea air when I have a chance, and I shall have plenty of the mountains when I come here to spend my vacation."

"You never said anything to me of not coming next Saturday," said Gay reproachfully.

"No," said Mr. Crisman, turning to her

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with a smile; "I didn't want to plump it on you too soon."

Mr. Stratford now rose to go home, and Mrs. Justin went out on the piazza with him to see if there was any chance of a clear day for the morrow, thus giving Mr. Crisman an opportunity to soothe the injured feelings of Miss Gay.

The next day Stratford drove over to the railroad station, and brought back with him his friend Arthur Thorne, whom he had invited to the Bullripple farm for a week's fishing. Mr. Thorne was a very earnest worker at fishing; and indeed he always worked earnestly, whether in pursuit of pleasure or profit. On the day after his arrival he walked steadily in his wading-boots, and with his fishing accouterments, up the middle of a long trout stream. The water was very cold, and sometimes quite deep; but when Mr. Thorne did anything he did it in the right way, and he knew very well that the way to fish a trout stream was to wade up the middle of it against the current. His friend Stratford was not so thorough in his methods, and frequently did a great part of his day's fishing while standing on dry land; but for all that he generally caught all the trout that he and the Bullripple family could eat.

When, towards the close of the afternoon, the two friends returned to the farm-house, they found Mrs. People in a state of wild agitation. Stratford had scarcely set foot upon the porch when she took him to one side, and communicated to him the cause of her mental and physical commotion.

"I don't know how to begin to tell you, Mr. Stratford," she said, "but me an' Enoch has got to go to the city to-morrow mornin' the very earliest we can, which is by the milk train, which leaves the station at five o'clock. Enoch got a telegraph message from John just as we was settin' down to dinner to-day, an' he sent for both of us to come to him just as soon as ever we could, which we would have done this afternoon, gettin' there after dark, to be sure, but we wouldn't 'a' minded that in times like this if it hadn't been for you an' the other gentleman, who couldn't be left with nobody but Marier to cook for you an' take care of you, who isn't no more able even to set your table, let alone a-cookin' a beef-steak an' makin' coffee as you like it, than she is to go into the pulpit an' preach; an' so, of course, we had to stay until we could see what could be done to make you an' your friend comfortable while we was away, which won't be more than three or four days, judgin' from John's message, which was a good long one, though I thought that ten words was all anybody ever sent. An' I'm sure nothin'

could 'a' happened worse than havin' to go away at this time just in the very week that you have company."

"But what is the matter, Mrs. People?" said Mr. Stratford. "You haven't told me that. Has anything happened to your son?"

"Happened!" she exclaimed. "Why, I should say something had happened! Vatoldi's has been boycotted."

At this announcement Mr. Stratford manifested his surprise by laughing outright. "What utter absurdity!" he exclaimed. "And why in the world should you and your brother be called upon in an emergency of this sort?"

"John says," replied Mrs. People, "that he must instantly have somebody he can trust, an' we are the only ones. What he wants with us I don't know. But down we must go, an' no later than five o'clock to-morrow mornin' either. John knows very well that Enoch's hired man, Jim Neal, can do everything that's needed on the farm for two or three days, anyway; and I suppose he'd forgot about Marier not bein' able to cook for anybody but farm hands, an' they wouldn't stand her more 'n a week at the outside, an', of course, he didn't know your friend was here. But there's no use talkin' about all that. What's to be done now is for you two gentlemen to make up your minds what you're goin' to do while we're gone."

"You need not trouble yourself about that," said Mr. Stratford, "if there is an urgent occasion for your leaving home; and I suppose there must be, though I don't understand it. Mr. Thorne and I will do very well while you are gone. We will consider that we are camping out, and what cooking Maria cannot do I can do myself. I'm a very good hand at that sort of thing."

"Not a bit of it! Not a bit of it!" exclaimed Mrs. People. "I couldn't rest easy for one minute on whatever kind of a bed John has to give me, for I'm sure I don't know what it's goin' to be, if I thought of you here doin' your own cookin', an' with Marier greasin' your way out of this world with her lard an' her ham-fat. No, indeed; it shall never be said of me that I went off an' left you in any such a mess as that. But here comes Mrs. Justin's man, Henderson, on horseback, an' by the looks of him he's bringin' a letter."

The man did bring a letter, and it was for Mr. Stratford, and in it Mrs. Justin gave him and his friend a very cordial and earnest invitation to stay at her house during the absence of Mrs. People and Mr. Bullripple.

"How did Mrs. Justin know anything about this?" exclaimed Stratford, when he had read the note.

"Why, you see the way of it was this," answered Mrs. People. "As soon as Enoch an' me got over the worst of our flurry, which was mostly mine, I must say, I began to think about you an' what was to become of you while we was gone. Then I says to myself: 'Mrs. Justin ought to know about this, not as I'd ask anythin' of her, for I'm just as independent as the next person; but still, if she wants to do anythin' in a neighborly way, it isn't for me, who ever sence she first come with her husband to live here never had one word to say ag'in' her, to put myself an' my independence in the way of her doin' it.' So I jus' had the buggy hitched up, an' I drove over to her house as hard as I could go; an' 'twould have done you good, Mr. Stratford, to see how that mare did trot when I worked her up to such a state of mind that she forgot to shy at them upturned tree-roots just at our line fence, which she's done reg'lar ever sence the tree was blowed down in September of year before last. An' I told Mrs. Justin all about the thing jus' as it really stood, an' she said I needn't trouble myself about you an' the other gentleman, for she'd invite you to stay till I got back. I made up my mind I wouldn't say nothin' about this till she sent over an' asked you, for it wasn't any of my business to interfere with her concerns, nor her way of attendin' to 'em; but I must say I felt a mighty relief when I saw that man Henderson comin' with a letter, which, of course, I knew he had an' what it was. An' now I'll be off and see about supper, or else Marier'll give you a taste of what you might have expected if you'd been left here with her to take care of you."

Stratford reflected some little time before answering Mrs. Justin's note, but then, after consulting with Thorne, and considering that the invitation was a very honest and kindly-intentioned one, which should not be declined without good reason, he determined to accept it.

In the early gray of the next morning Enoch and Mrs. People took the milk train for the city, and Stratford and Mr. Thorne drove over to Mrs. Justin's house in time for breakfast.

# V.

THERE was, indeed, trouble at Vatoldi's, and John People found himself in a perplexed and soul-harrowed condition. The establishment over which he presided was such a well-ordered one that everybody seemed to be surprised at the sudden changes which had taken place in this favorite resort. The employees had always been well treated and well paid, and had never shown any dissatisfaction with the rules of the establishment. But recently

they had broken out in open rebellion against a fundamental regulation.

It was a cherished belief in the mind of Mr. Stull that a waiter should look like a waiter, and that his working-clothes should not be the same as those worn by gentlemen on ceremonious occasions. None of the waiters at Vatoldi's had ever made the slightest objection to their neat and appropriate costume. But a man had recently been engaged, George Bencher by name, whose soul soared above the restrictions imposed by narrow-minded authority. He made it plain to the other men that in all first-class restaurants the waiters wore dress-coats in the evening, and for him and his fellows to be attired in jackets and aprons at all hours was a visible proof that they worked in an establishment of a low order, or else did not possess the manhood with which to assert their rights. A united demand was therefore made on John People that the waiters should thereafter be allowed to wear dress-suits in the evening, instead of jackets and aprons.

John People, of course, was not empowered to make a decision in an important case like this, nor could he say that he would refer the matter to his superiors, for, in the ordinary management of the business, he was not supposed to have any. Everybody connected with the place knew that the original Vatoldi must now be dead, and that, if John had not bought out the place, he was conducting it for the heirs. Mr. Stull had always insisted that, while John must refer to him in matters of any importance whatever, he must, at the same time, take care that no one should imagine that he was obliged to refer to anybody. Mr. Stull was most anxious that no curiosity should be aroused, and no impertinent investigations set on foot, in regard to the ownership of Vatoldi's.

Consequently John was obliged to tell the men that he must take a little time to think over the matter, and when he went to the bank that afternoon to make his daily deposit and confer with Mr. Stull, he laid the affair before that gentleman. Mr. Stull was very indignant, and ordered John to tell the waiters that on no account would their absurd and impudent demand be complied with; so long as they served at Vatoldi's they should never wear dress-coats; and that, if they desired to adopt that style of dress, they must go somewhere else and do it. John gave the waiters his decision that evening, and when it was received every man took off his jacket and apron, put on his ordinary coat and his hat, and departed, and the establishment closed an hour or two earlier than usual.

But John was equal to the emergency, and before the busy hours began next day he had secured, from the list of applicants in his possession, enough waiters with whom to carry on the service. Now the war began, the offensive operations of which were directed by the energetic Bencher. Many of the newly employed waiters were frightened away, and threats of loss of reputation and ill-usage weakened the forces in the kitchen. More than this, Bencher determined to produce an impression upon the patrons of Vatoldi's, and, if possible, bring about a boycott of the place. The discontented waiters were called upon to contribute to a fund, and the money was employed in efforts to make the public believe that they should not patronize Vatoldi's. Men were hired to parade the sidewalk in front of the place, bearing banners on which were painted warning inscriptions. "Eat not at the house of the oppressor!" sounding like a text of Scripture, was expected to have much effect. Another inscription, based upon the belief in Vatoldi's decease, read thus:

"The Ghost's Restaurant  
Kept By A Dead Man.  
Cooking Done In The Vault."

These banner-bearers, however, with the crowds they attracted in the busy thoroughfare, were soon driven away by the police; but the generous distribution of hundreds of copies of a circular which Bencher had composed and had had printed was found to be of great service to the cause of the boycotters. This informed the public that if they patronized Vatoldi's they might expect that the conscienceless management would be just as ready to impose bad eggs and tallow butter upon its patrons as it was to lay its vile yokes upon the necks of its employees; with much more matter of a like character.

As the authorship of these circulars could be referred to nobody in particular, and as they might be scattered by any one as he passed the place, it was difficult to prevent their distribution. People would stop to look into Vatoldi's to see what was going on, and other people stopped to see what these were looking at. Under these circumstances very few ladies came to Vatoldi's; and although a good many men persisted in taking their meals there in spite of the inferior service, the ordinary luncher or diner preferred to go to some restaurant not so prominent in public notice, and the patronage of the place fell off greatly.

The heart of Mr. Stull was filled with indignation and energetic resolve. If he could have appeared in his proper person as proprietor and manager of the boycotted establishment,

he would have conducted affairs with such courage and wisdom as would have entitled him to the approbation of all good citizens. But it was simply impossible for him to make up his mind to avow himself the owner of Vatoldi's. His pride in the high position which he held in social and financial circles would never allow him to admit, even in such a crisis as this, that his fortune in any way depended upon his ability as a restaurant-keeper. Social standing was dearer to him even than money, and he would much have preferred to see Vatoldi's deserted by its patrons for a month, or even a year, than to see himself and his family deserted by "Society."

But he did not intend that Vatoldi's should be deserted. He could do nothing openly; but indirectly as a patron of the place, and as an earnest defender of the right of man to carry on a legitimate business in his own way, he did a great deal. He took all his meals at the place, and induced many of his friends to go there. He urged them to do this for the "principle of the thing," although he did not hesitate to say that he should be very sorry to see this establishment, the best of its kind in the city, come to grief. He took his wife and three daughters to Vatoldi's for lunch and also for dinner, and both his carriage and his coupé were kept standing as long as possible before the door.

When John People came to him at the usual hour, Mr. Stull fairly loaded him with injunctions and directions. If anything very important occurred, John was to telegraph to him at bank or residence, in a simple cipher, of which Mr. Stull had prepared two copies; and the faithful manager was ordered, whenever his employer went up to the desk to pay his bill, to give him, with his change, a brief report of the state of affairs up to that time. It was at this conference that it was agreed that Mr. Bullripple and Mrs. People should be sent for. It was quite obvious that in this emergency John must have some assistants in whom he could trust; and although his mother and his uncle knew nothing of restaurant-keeping, they were persons of varied abilities and much energy, and he felt that he knew no one else in whom he could place a like confidence. Mr. Stull was acquainted with the old farmer and his sister, and while they were not the people whom he would have decided to call upon, had he had a choice, he knew that they were honest and devoted to John; and those points decided him to authorize John to call upon them.

Mr. Bullripple and Mrs. People arrived at Vatoldi's about eleven o'clock on the second day of the boycott—an hour of the morning at which, even on ordinary occasions, there



were comparatively few customers in the place. John expected them by this train, and knowing that the meeting with his parent would not be an exhibition suitable for the public eye, he had retired at the proper moment to a small back room used as a storage pantry; and it was there that his mother infolded him in her arms, and assured him with streaming eyes that she would stand by him to the last bone in her body.

When the emotions of Mrs. People had been somewhat quieted, and Enoch Bullripple had taken his nephew by the hand and had inquired what was the trouble, and what John wanted him to do, they all sat down at a table in the corner of the large room, and everything was explained. Mrs. People was very anxious to know what Mr. Vatoldi thought about it all, but John evaded her questions.

"Everything is left to me," he said. "The proprietor is away and cannot come here, and I must manage the whole affair myself; and I think I can get through all right if you two will stay here for a few days until things come straight again."

"We'll stay, John," said his mother, "just as long as you need us. You may depend on that."

"That's so," added the old man. "We'll stick to you till the place is either shut up or running along as it used to. Now, do you want me to carve, or to wash dishes?"

It did not take long for John to explain what he wanted his new assistants to do. His mother was to go into the kitchen. The head cook had been induced to follow the waiters, and although the assistants who remained were moderately skilled in their duties, they could not be trusted to work without supervision. Mr. Bullripple was to keep a general eye upon the dining-room, and when John went out was to preside at the cashier's desk. He was not quick at making change, but he could do so with great accuracy, having a very sharp eye for a penny.

Enoch Bullripple had not always been a farmer. Although country-bred, he had at one time kept a small grocery store in the eastern part of the city, and after that he had made a voyage to the West Indies, during which his speculations in early cabbages and potatoes had proved very profitable to him. The head, arms, and legs of Mr. Bullripple were very hard, and his movements and his wits were quick. He was not ignorant of the ways of the town, and was one of those countrymen against whom town dealers are much more likely to endeavor to defend themselves than to try to impose upon them. He entered with much interest into the new line of business now open to him at Vatoldi's. He was very

willing to give his nephew all the assistance in his power, but he also had a strong desire to make use of the opportunities that might now be afforded him to find out what was that nephew's true position in the establishment. If Vatoldi were dead, as he had reason to believe, could it be possible that John was now the real proprietor? In that case, what became of the very large profits which must accrue from the business? But if John were merely acting as the agent of some one else, who was that some one else? This was the question to which Enoch gave his attention, for he did not believe that John was actually at the head of affairs. He was quite sure that there was a proprietor and general director in the background, and he was quite as sure that this person desired to remain very much in the background. It was not merely curiosity which prompted Enoch to discover the unknown owner and his motives for secrecy. He believed that his nephew was carrying a very heavy load with but very little profit to himself, and that if he, Enoch, could get one of his strong thumbs into the Vatoldi pie, he would be able to pull out a plum for John.

Mr. Bullripple walked up and down between the rows of tables in the long room, sometimes taking his seat on an empty chair, of which, on this day, there were a good many. He kept his eyes on the new waiters who had been employed, looking sharply for signs of disaffection and intimidation. Now and then he stepped to the door to see if he could discover any of those banners of which he had been told, and several times he made a sudden swoop out upon the sidewalk, and in the direction of a boy who was distributing the circulars of the boycotters. He never caught the boy, but he picked up a great many circulars, and carried them in to be burned.

A little before three o'clock John asked his uncle to take his place at the cashier's desk,—a good deal of a sinecure just then,—as he was obliged to go to the bank and make his deposits.

"Can't I go for you?" asked his uncle.

"Oh, no," said John; "I always do that myself."

The rest of the afternoon and evening passed disagreeably at Vatoldi's. As night drew on, a crowd of idlers, apparently sent there for the purpose of making the ordinary public believe that something was going to happen, stood, dispersed, and reassembled upon the sidewalk. Sometimes rough fellows would come in and demand something to drink, without anything to eat, and when told that refreshments were not served here in that fashion would complain violently, and would go away with loud words of derision and con-

tempt. Nearly every one who passed the place seemed to carry in his hand one of Bencher's circulars; and when, in the course of the evening, Mr. Stull and his friends, with other gentlemen who had determined to patronize on principle this persecuted restaurant, came in, nearly all of them ordered something or other which John had thought would not be called for in these troublous times, and which, therefore, was not on hand. If Mr. Stull said anything to John when he went up to the cashier's desk, it must have been spoken very quickly, and in an undertone, for no one noticed it. But, as he walked away, Mr. Stull's face was very red, while John's seemed troubled. At the close of the day several of the newly engaged waiters informed Mr. People that they would like to have their money for their day's work, and that they should not return. They had not understood the state of affairs when they agreed to come there, and they did not wish to mix themselves up in any such trouble. Of course no one of them said anything about the private note he had received that day from Bencher.

John had secured rooms for his mother and uncle in the boarding-house where he lived; and after the young man had taken his weary body and soul to bed, the two elders had a little confabulation in the parlor.

"If this thing goes on much longer," said Mrs. People, "it will bring that boy to his dying bed. He's pretty nigh worn out now."

"That's so," replied Enoch; "John is mighty stout on his pins, but he looks shaky, for all that."

"Pins are no good," said his sister, "no matter how fat they may be, when the mind is so troubled and tossed it can't sleep. An' just look at that Vatoldi!"

"I wish I could," said Enoch, "but I don't expect to."

"No, indeed," said Mrs. People; "it's easy enough to see that he's goin' to keep himself out of harm's way, an' trouble's way too, an' leave my boy to bear everything. I tell you what let's do, Enoch. Let's shut the place up, an' take John away. Then, if Vatoldi wants to open it again, let him come an' open it."

"That wouldn't do, Hannah; that wouldn't do," said Enoch. "If the reg'lar customers, like Mr. Stull and all them carriage people, was to find the place shut up, they'd go somewhere else, and not come back again. It won't do to spile a good business that way."

"It's a long time sence John has had a holiday," said Mrs. People, after a little pause, "an' he's always told me he couldn't have one, because there was nobody to take his place while he was gone. Now it strikes me that this is just the time for John to get his

holiday. Here's you an' me on hand to be in his place; an' as long as the restaurant's boycotted there won't be much to do, an' what little business there is you an' me can attend to well enough without John."

"That's a good idea, Hannah," said Enoch, "a very good idea. As long as the business is upset, and hind-part foremost, and standing on its head, I can do what marketing is needed, and boss the waiters. But if everything was a-runnin' on as smooth and even as the fly-wheel of a steam-engine, with hundreds of people comin' in, and eatin' and drinkin', and never seein' nothin' to find fault with, then you and me would get the whole machinery out of order, because we don't understand it, and John, or somebody like him, would have to be on hand. But now we can go into this rough-and-tumble business as well as anybody, and keep things as straight as they can be kept till that lot of stupid waiters see which side their bread is buttered, and come back. Then John can take hold again, and everything go on as it used to. You're right, Hannah. This is the time for John's holiday, if he's ever goin' to get one."

"But he's got to get it!" said Mrs. People, her emotion lifting her to her feet. "I know he'll say he can't, an' he won't. But that's not goin' to make any difference with me. I'm determined he shall have a rest. Why, when he went off to bed jus' now he was about able to get upstairs, an' no more."

Enoch Bullripple had much more faith in the enduring powers of John than had been expressed by Mrs. People, but for more reasons than one he greatly desired that the young man should have a holiday. If he, Enoch, should be left in charge of Vatoldi's for a few days, he felt sure that he could get at the bottom of the mystery of the proprietorship.

"But, Hannah," said he, "I really don't see how it's goin' to be done."

"I don't neither," said Mrs. People, "but it's got to be done, an' that's the long an' the short of it."

## VI.

THE two gentlemen, whose residence at the Bullripple farm had been interrupted by the boycott at Vatoldi's, found the life at Mrs. Justin's house a very pleasant one. Mr. Thorne, having come into the mountains to fish, fished; and his friend Stratford usually went with him on his excursions. In the evening this family of four adapted itself very well to cards, conversation, or twilight strolls, and the ladies found fault with Mr. Thorne because he worked so hard at his fishing, and gave none of his daytime to pursuits in which they could

take part. But he was a thoroughly conscientious young man, and as he came to the mountains to fish, he fished.

As his friend now began to know the country, Mr. Stratford frequently left him to wade the cold trout streams alone, while he gave some of his time to the entertainment of the ladies. One afternoon he took them, with the Justin horses and carriage, on a long drive through some of the valley roads. On the next day he did not go out with Mr. Thorne at all, as Mrs. Justin desired his opinion on a business letter she had received from some of her fellow-workers; and in the afternoon, Mrs. Justin having retired to the library to compose her answer, Stratford proposed to Miss Armatt that she should go in a boat on Cherry Creek, and investigate the beauty of that winding stream.

"Why, I thought the Cherry River, as I shall call it, was not navigable," said Miss Gay. "When Mr. Crisman and I wanted to go rowing, Mrs. Justin told us that it was so full of sand-bars and snags and all sorts of obstructions, that boating on it was not to be thought of."

"She was entirely right," answered Stratford; "that is, when speaking of persons not familiar with the peculiarities of the stream. It would be extremely awkward and perhaps dangerous for you and Mr. Crisman to essay boating here. But in this case it is different. I have lived here a great deal, and have made myself perfectly acquainted with the eccentricities of the river, or creek. Suppose you come and let us see what progress we can make."

"Oh, I shall be delighted," said Gay. And, tossing on her hat, she walked with Stratford to the water-side.

In rowing of the sort that was required here Stratford was an adept. With Miss Gay in the stern of the boat, and himself placed moderately well forward, so that the flat-bottomed craft should draw as little water as possible, he rowed rapidly over the deeper and open places, pulled close to one bank to avoid the shallows by the other, crushed steadily through beds of lily-pads, and once slowly and gently pushed the boat beneath the trunk of a tree which spanned the stream, keeping his eyes meantime on Gay to see that her head and shoulders were bent low enough to prevent contact with the rough overhanging bark.

As they went on, the stream became wider and deeper, and they met with fewer impediments; and it was not long before, to Miss Armatt's great delight, Stratford turned the boat into a narrow tributary stream, which, running through the heart of the woods, presented to the eye a lovely water-avenue, pass-

ing under overhanging arches of green leaves, mossy branches, and down-reaching vines. This little stream, though narrow, was deeper and much more open to the approaches of a little boat than the upper part of Cherry Creek, and for ten or fifteen minutes Stratford rowed quite steadily, keeping his head the meanwhile turned well to one side so that he should not run into either of the banks.

Then he stopped, and, drawing in the oars, said: "Now I'll rest for a time and look about me."

"You'll see nothing," exclaimed Miss Gay with sparkling eyes, "that is not perfectly lovely."

Stratford looked about him and perceived that she was quite correct. Here and there was a break in the green roof above them, and the sunlight falling in little dapples on leaf and water enhanced the beauty of the shaded vernal hues with which the scene was mainly tinged. On one bank a matted grape-vine bent down so low and wide that it formed a spreading bower over the water, under which a little boat might gently lie. On either side there were glimpses of forest beauty; beyond them, the little stream twinkled and rippled into the far-away heart of the woods, and the perfume from the young blossoms of the grape-vines filled all the air.

Miss Gay sat silent, her eyes wandering from side to side, and resting at last upon the water-bower formed by the spreading vines. Then she said: "I think I must try and remember all the twists and turns we made in coming here, so that some time I can guide Mr. Crisman to this spot. I don't believe he was ever in such a charming place."

Stratford looked into the face of Miss Gay, and across the clear blue sky of her delight he saw floating a thin gray cloud. He knew that she was thinking what a little heaven this would be if it were but her lover who was with her. But Stratford had not brought Miss Armatt here that she might tell herself how delightful it would be to sit in a boat with Mr. Crisman under that roof of odorous vines. He wanted to talk to her of herself, and this he now set about to do.

He answered her remark by saying that she would have to come over this course a good many times before she would be able to act as guide for any one else. He made no offer to be her instructor in navigation, but began to question her on the subject of her past studies and those victories in the field of learning which she still hoped to achieve. He made her understand how greatly interested he was in the objects of Mrs. Justin's life-work; and having heard from that lady so much of Miss Armatt, he wished to talk to her about

what she had done and what she intended to do.

Miss Gay was very willing to talk of these matters. She had learned from Mrs. Justin that Mr. Stratford was a man whose experience and knowledge were very great, and whose opinions were of the highest value, and she much desired to have his advice about her future studies.

But very little advice she received on this occasion. Mr. Stratford wished to look into her mind, and not to exhibit his own. Miss Gay found it very easy to talk to her companion. He seemed to want to know exactly those things which she most wished to tell him. In ten minutes she was speaking more freely of her aspirations and half-matured plans than she had ever spoken to any one before. Mrs. Justin was her dear, kind friend, and always willing to listen and assist. But Gay had perceived that there was not a perfect sympathy between them when they talked of her future intentions. Mrs. Justin wished her young friend to climb, and climb boldly, but the spot at which she would have been willing to rest content was far below the altitude on which Gay Armatt had fixed her eyes and her hopes. But here was one who not only sympathized with her in her longings, but, by his questions and his hearty interest, led her on to bring forth ideas and plans which had long been laid away in her mind because there was no one to whom she could show them. She expected to talk about all these things to Mr. Crisman after they were married; but just now their conversation never ran upon intellectual or educational topics. There were always things of a totally different sort which he wished to say to her.

But now, side by side with this courteous gentleman, this scholar and careful thinker, she walked in the regions of high thought and far-spread prospects; and when the sun had sunk so low that it no longer threw its light upon the leaves and water, and Stratford took up the oars and said it was time for them to return, he looked into her face, and on the sky of her delight there was no cloud.

Gay told Mrs. Justin all about this most delightful little excursion, and hesitated not at the same time to give vent to her high admiration of Mr. Stratford.

"It is a pity," said Mrs. Justin, "that Mr. Crisman could not have rowed you into this woodland stream."

"It would have been perfectly lovely," exclaimed Miss Gay, "if he could have been with me! But then," she added, "I should have lost that most encouraging conversation with Mr. Stratford."

The next afternoon Mr. Thorne was pre-

vailed upon to stay at home and take part in Mrs. Justin's favorite outdoor amusement, a game of croquet. Thorne was a kind-hearted man, and as willing as anybody to aid in the work of making other people happy, provided such labor did not interfere with the things which he really ought to do. But now he felt that he had done his duty in the trout streams, and that, having come into the mountains to fish, he had fished. Therefore, a four-handed game of croquet was made up.

"Gay and Mr. Thorne will play together," said Mrs. Justin, "leaving you and me for the other side."

Stratford smiled. "That will be a most agreeable arrangement for me," he said, "but I am rather sorry for Miss Armatt and Thorne."

"That is true," said Mrs. Justin. "I remember now that Gay said she had not had a mallet in her hand since she was a little girl; and you and I are both good players."

"Thorne tells me he knows but little of the game," said Stratford. "Shall I take him on my side and coach him?"

"Of course not," answered Mrs. Justin. "We won't divide in that way. You must take Gay, and I will play with Mr. Thorne."

The game proved to be a very long one, for both Mrs. Justin and Stratford were good shots and excellent managers, and they so harassed each other that advantages on either side were slowly gained. But for Gay the game was none too long. She was surprised to find that croquet, which she had supposed to be a thing of bygone days, relegated now to children and very old-fashioned grown people, was really an interesting and absorbing exercise, in which many powers of the mind, not omitting those of a mathematical nature, were brought into vigorous play. Every shot she made, every position she took, and even her manner of standing and holding her mallet were directed by Mr. Stratford; and the pleasure of doing these things properly, and of feeling that every effort had its due value, helped very much to give the game its zest. She and her partner won, and this was not because Mr. Stratford was a better player than Mrs. Justin, or that Gay knew more of the game than Mr. Thorne, but because the younger lady subordinated herself entirely to Stratford. They moved through the game as one player, neither advancing far beyond the other, and at length side by side going out of it. Mrs. Justin did not demand such subjection from her partner. She thought that sometimes he ought to rely on himself, and when he did so she generally found that he had left little that she could rely on.

As they walked towards the house, Gay Armatt said to Mrs. Justin: "I believe Mr.



Stratford would make a splendid teacher. I think he ought not to deprive the world of the benefit of his extraordinary talents in that way."

"I know Mr. Stratford has not the slightest desire," answered Mrs. Justin, "to act as teacher to the world," placing a slight emphasis on the collective noun.

Whether Stratford liked teaching or not, he and Miss Gay spent more than an hour the next morning on the back piazza of the house, with four large books from the library and an ancient atlas.

"What in the world," asked Mrs. Justin, as she came out to them, "have you two been doing here all the morning?"

"We haven't been here all the morning," said Stratford, "and we have been visiting some of the head springs of literature, and tracing the meanderings of their streams."

"You can't imagine," cried Miss Gay, "how interesting it has been! But I had no idea," looking at her watch, "that it was nearly twelve o'clock, and I have two letters to write before you send to the post-office!"

Gay ran into the house, and Mrs. Justin took her place in the chair by Stratford. "It is a pity," she said, after glancing a few moments over the atlas, "that Mr. Crisman chose to take his yachting expedition just now. It would be so much more pleasant for him to be here while you two gentlemen are in the house. I heard from Mrs. People this morning, and she says she will not be able to return home until after next Sunday at the earliest."

Mr. Stratford looked at his companion with a very small twinkle in his eye, but with a grave face. "You think," he said, "that Mr. Crisman ought to be here while we are here?"

"I cannot but believe," she said, looking steadily at Stratford, "that it would be better for his interests."

"And how about Miss Armatt's interests?" he asked.

"What do you mean?" said the lady quickly.

"Mrs. Justin," said Stratford, closing the atlas and leaning forward as he spoke, "I mean this. Miss Armatt is a young woman in whom I have taken an extraordinary interest."

"It is scarcely necessary to mention that," remarked Mrs. Justin.

"You should not be surprised," said he, "at my interest in her, for you have the same feeling yourself. You know she is a girl with an exceptional future open to her, and you would do anything in your power to help her. I am of the same mind. I believe that I comprehend very clearly her present condition of

intellectual development; and I see, too, in what directions her inclinations will lead her in regard to her future work. I think her views are not exactly sound. She needs something more than her college and her text-books can give her; and I very much hope that I shall be able to bring her to look upon literature, philosophy, and science with the eye of an untrammelled thinker. This she ought to do before she takes another step forward. And I honestly admit to you, Mrs. Justin, that I am very glad to have the opportunity, uninterrupted by Mr. Crisman's weekly visit, to do what I can to assist in the cutting and polishing of this jewel in your crown."

"You know, Mr. Stratford," said Mrs. Justin, "that I expected you to take an interest in Gay, and that I should have been very much disappointed if you had not done so; but I did not expect that she would take such a deep and absorbing interest in you."

"I cannot say," answered Stratford after a moment's pause, "that I am sorry to hear that; because if she is interested in me she will be the more likely to give an earnest attention to what I say."

"Horace Stratford," said Mrs. Justin, "did anybody ever turn you the least bit to the right or the left?"

"Yes," he answered. "Here is this young creature, with the mind of a philosopher and the heart of a girl, who has turned me entirely aside from what I thought I was going to do when I came down here."

"It is just that girl-heart which troubles me," thought Mrs. Justin. But she did not deem it proper to speak her thought. Gay Armatt was engaged to be married, and what had she or Mr. Stratford to do with her girl-heart? So she continued not this conversation; but, after gazing a moment at the vines upon the lattice-work beside her, she looked over the lawn. "What has Mr. Thorne been doing with himself this morning?" she asked. "He is now sitting alone, down there on the bench by the bank. I think he has been outrageously neglected."

"I can't agree with you," said Stratford, "for immediately after breakfast he started out on some sort of pedestrian expedition, without saying anything to me about it. I knew nothing of his intention until I saw him marching away over the hills. He is an odd fellow, and I suppose he thought it was his duty, on a fine morning like this, to walk."

"Mr. Thorne is very conscientious, is he not?" asked Mrs. Justin.

"He is entirely too conscientious."

"How can any one be too conscientious?" asked the lady with some warmth.

"It is quite possible," answered Stratford.

"Arthur Thorne has an abnormal conscience. He has cultivated it so carefully that I believe it has grown to be a thing which overshadows his life. Now I prefer, for myself, a conscience which is pruned down to healthy and vigorous growth."

"And who does the pruning?" asked Mrs. Justin.

"I do," answered Stratford with a smile. And then he went down to join Mr. Thorne upon the lawn.

"Why did you start off this morning without saying anything to me about it?" asked Stratford, as he took a seat by his friend.

Mr. Thorne smiled. "I thought," he said, "that if I asked you, politeness might impel you to go with me; and as I saw Miss Armatt alone with her books on the piazza, I knew where your chosen place would be. Would it be stepping outside of the privileges of friendship if I were to offer you my congratulations, together with my most unqualified commendation?"

"My dear Thorne," exclaimed Stratford, "your reason has taken grasshopper legs unto itself, and has jumped most wildly! Let us speak plainly. Do you suppose I am making love to Miss Armatt?"

"I supposed," said Thorne, "from the general tone of your intercourse with the young lady, that the preliminary stage of love-making had been passed, and that you were engaged."

"You amaze me!" cried Stratford. "There is nothing whatever of that sort between me and Miss Armatt! I never saw her until I came up here, about two weeks ago. I am exceedingly interested in her studies and in her prospects, and that is the basis of our intimacy."

"I shall not ask your pardon," said Mr. Thorne, "for the mistake was a compliment to your taste and good sense. I used to think that Mrs. Justin, without question, was the most charming woman of my acquaintance; but since I have seen Miss Armatt, I have revolved the matter somewhat in my mind. In fact, that was what I was doing just now when you came."

"A most profitless revolution," remarked Stratford.

As the two men walked together towards the house, it occurred to Stratford that he had not mentioned to his friend that Miss Armatt was indeed engaged to be married, though not to himself. But the subject of Mr.

Crisman was not agreeable to him, and he did not care to discuss it; therefore he said nothing about it.

That afternoon Arthur Thorne took Miss Armatt to drive in his friend Stratford's buggy. Arthur had taken lessons in driving from a professional, and he was the only man with whom Stratford would trust his horse. Mrs. Justin did not say to herself that Mr. Thorne was the only man with whom she would trust Gay, but she was very willing to have him go with her, his abnormal conscience not appearing as a fault in her eyes. It was not, perhaps, entirely suitable that Gay should go driving with any young man other than her engaged lover; but, as Mr. Crisman chose to stay away, Mrs. Justin did not feel inclined to shut up her young friend on that account.

As for Gay herself, she went very willingly with Mr. Thorne, but she could not help feeling a little disappointed that it had not been Mr. Stratford who had asked her. Several times during the drive, which was a long and interesting one, she was employed in making mental comparisons between Mr. Stratford and Mr. Thorne, at moments when the latter thought she was absorbed in contemplation of the landscape. And yet she liked Mr. Thorne very much, and would probably like him better when she knew him better. There was here none of that fire-and-wax sympathy which had shown itself in the early stages of her acquaintance with Mr. Stratford. Mr. Thorne spoke but little on those subjects in which her mind was most deeply interested, and what he did say was not at all what Mr. Stratford would have said. But she felt, when she returned from her drive, that she had spent the afternoon with one who was truly a gentleman. Mr. Thorne had done nothing which was peculiarly adapted to produce this impression, but the impression had been produced; and Gay Armatt could not help thinking that it was a very pleasant thing to be in the company of persons who were truly gentlemen.

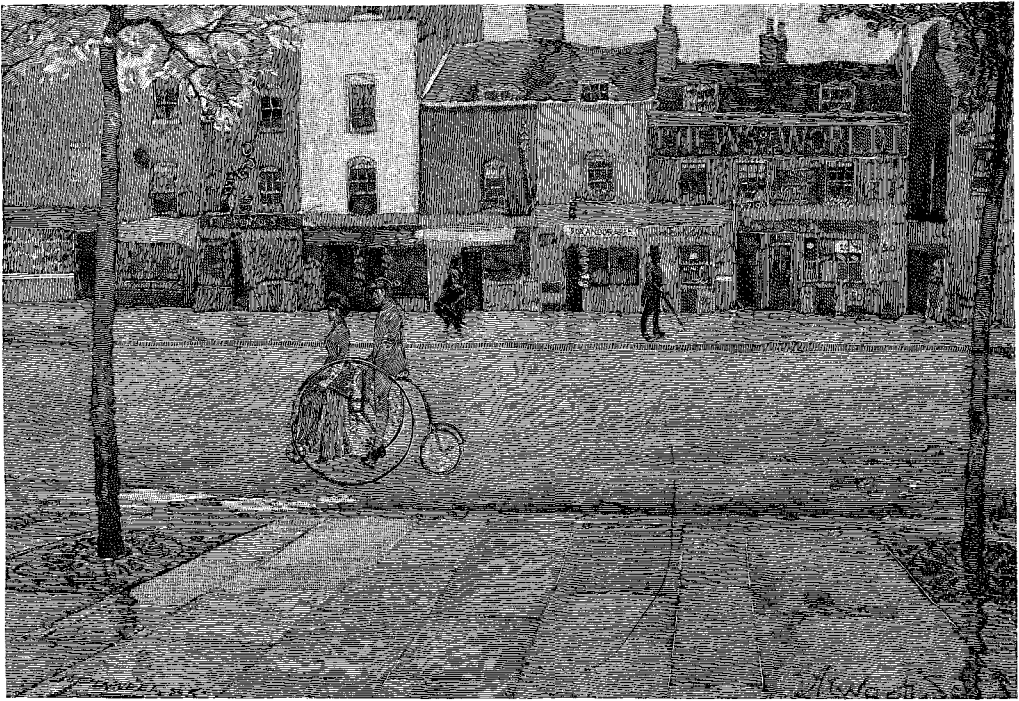
But, in her thoughts, Gay instituted no comparisons between Mr. Crisman and other men. Other men were other men, and had their faults and their merits. But Mr. Crisman was in a different sphere altogether; he was her lover, and she was to marry him; and with him criticism and comparison had nothing to do.

(To be continued.)

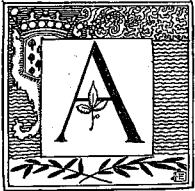
Frank R. Stockton.



## OLD CHELSEA. II.



THE WESTERN END OF CHEYNE WALK.



ALL that is now left of Paradise Row, across the road from Ranelagh Gardens, is half a dozen small brick cottages, with tiny gardens in front, and vines climbing above. Once, when all about here was country, these houses must have been really delightful, and have justified the name, as they looked out on pleasant parterres, terraced to the river. Unpretending as they are, they have harbored many historic personages. In Paradise Row — it is now partly Queen's Road West — lived the first Duke of St. Albans, Nell Gwynne's son, not far from the more modest mansion of his venerated grandmother. Here lived the Earls of Pelham and of Sandwich, and the Duchess of Hamilton. At the corner of Robinson's Lane stood Lord Robarte's house, wherein he gave the famous supper to Charles II. on the 4th of September, 1660, and was soon after made Earl of Radnor; whence the street of that name hard by. On April 19, 1665, Pepys visited him here, and "found it to be the prettiest contrived house that ever I saw in my life." A quiet, quaint old public-

house, "The Chelsea Pensioner," stands where Faulkner, the historian of Chelsea, worked with such pains on his driest of records, yet to which we are all glad to go for our facts about Chelsea. This row of poor little plaster-fronted cottages, running to Christchurch Street, is all that is left of old Ormond Row; and the swinging sign over the "Ormond Dairy" is all we have to commemorate old Ormond House, which stood just here, its gardens, in which Walpole's later house was built, sloping to the river-bank.

Let us stop again before the little two-storied house, the easternmost of Paradise Row, standing discreetly back from the street behind a prim plot of grass. Well-wrought iron gates are swung on square gate-posts, atop of each of which is an old-fashioned stone globe, seldom seen nowadays. A queer little sounding-board projects over the small door, and above the little windows we read: "School of Discipline, Instituted A. D. 1825." It is the oldest school of the sort in London, founded by Elizabeth Fry, and in it young girls, forty-two at a time, each staying two years, "are reformed for five shillings a week," and fitted for domestic service. They wear