

WITHIN THE EYE OF HONOR.

BY GEORGE HIBBARD.

"IF there is one thing I hate," said Kitty Cliffe, as she rose from the breakfast table, "it's a country house when it's first opened in the spring, and a house in town when it's first opened in the autumn."

Cliffe sank back in his chair and did not speak.

"Although," she went on, "both have been shut up, with no one in them, everything seems to have got moved about in the most unaccountable way."

He meditatively balanced a fork on his finger.

"And then," she pursued, "you have forgotten and left behind at the other place so many things that you want where you are."

He put down the fork and threw his arm over the back of his chair.

"While," she continued, "all the people you don't want to see have either 'come down' early or 'come up' early."

He looked attentively at a button on his coat.

"And of course," she added, "none of the people that you want to see have."

He desisted in his inspection of the button and gave his attention to his shoes.

"And," she concluded, "those you want to escape pursue you, and they are horrid."

A year before they had come to town at the same time, but then they had been so recently married that there was something of the honeymoon feeling still left, and it had been quite different. Now there was that sense of certainty that comes so soon in matrimony. If they had been asked—and been willing to answer—both would undoubtedly have confessed that they found the latter state in its comfort preferable to the first, though both would have felt obliged to express a regret—and would indeed have felt a little uncontrollable pang—when they considered that the first period of joyous uncertainty, of blissful experiment and mysterious adaptation, had passed never to return. As it was, they had spent the summer in a country house on the low Long Island shore, where it seemed to them that, although nothing had happened, they had made many discoveries

about each other, and now it was with a little regret that on the previous mellow October afternoon they had arrived at their house in the city.

"And," continued Cliffe, with unrelaxed mouth but smiling eyes, "the establishment is not in working condition, and you have to go out and dine at strange places."

She looked at the clock.

"And," he pursued, "things do not seem to go quite so smoothly even at the club."

She discovered that the timepiece had not been wound up, and searched for the key under its massive base.

"While every one asks you so many questions about where you have been, and you have to take a polite interest in their movements during the summer, which it is generally rather difficult to do intelligently when you don't know whether they have been up in Nova Zembla looking at the 'midnight sun,' or have been merely in a country place in New Jersey."

Not being able to find the key in its usual place, she turned away impatiently.

"But who were so particularly unpleasant?" he asked, lazily.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "it was only one—old Mr. Burbidge, whom I met tottering out of a shop. In the first place, he is always making mistakes, and he got me mixed up with Daisy Pomfret, who is getting a divorce."

Cliffe laughed as she paused in horror.

"And then he said, incidentally, women had no sense of honor."

"Well," replied Cliffe, "they haven't."

"You say so too?" she exclaimed, reproachfully.

"Perhaps," he said, "in their own way, but in an irregular fashion, without any principle."

"Is there a principle?" she asked. "I thought it was an instinct."

"That is exactly it," he answered. "It's an instinct with a woman, and instincts work uncertainly. With a man it's logical."

"Yes," she said, "logical! I believe that's another thing that we are not."

"But then," said Cliffe, consolingly,

"think of how many things they say you are."

"I know," she replied, promptly. "And I can't tell which is the most foolish, what they say we are, or what they say we aren't—or the most insulting. One gets accustomed to the most of it, but when one constantly hears that all women have no recognition of the meaning of honor, I become impatient and indignant and exasperated." She nodded her head abruptly, with so much emphasis that she conveyed quite the impression of having stamped her foot. "Why," she continued, "only just now I found a case in which a woman—a young girl—acted wholly and entirely from a sense of honor when she did what was the hardest for her to do, simply because she thought it was right."

"Yes, *right*," commented Cliffe.

"Isn't honor right?" she demanded.

"Honor requires very often that one should do what is intrinsically wrong—demands that one should 'perjure one's self like a gentleman.'"

"I don't know," she said; "I can't see how wrong can be honorable."

"That's just it," he remarked. "No one ever heard of a woman being obliged to perjure herself like—a lady."

"Anyway," she continued, "I know what Mabel Brooks did was honorable. She was engaged to Alfred Muirhead, but was in love with Jim Corlears."

"Was that honorable?" interrupted Cliffe.

"Wait," Kitty replied. "She always respected Mr. Muirhead, and he was so very rich, and—you know how a girl will do when she doesn't care very much in one way or the other—so she let herself be persuaded into it."

"Ah!" exclaimed Cliffe, with meaning intonation.

"Wait," Kitty repeated, confidently—"wait until you hear the end. Then she saw Jim Corlears and really fell in love with him—poor and wild and altogether attractive as he is. But she was engaged to the other man."

"Why didn't she break her engagement?" he asked.

"That's exactly what she was going to do, when something very unexpected happened. She was just going to tell Alfred Muirhead that she could not marry him, when suddenly, by some failure or something, he lost every cent he had in the

world. She immediately made up her mind never to see Jim Corlears again, and to be true to Mr. Muirhead. What do you think of that?" Kitty concluded, triumphantly; "what do you think of that?"

"I think it was particularly stupid," he answered.

"Why," she said, in amazement, "I think it was very fine!"

"To make three people unhappy—for of course it'll end by making Muirhead miserable—just for a fancy of that kind?"

"But it was honorable," she insisted.

"I suppose it was—in a way," he replied, "or, at least, would have been in a man."

"Does not the same rule hold good for women?"

"There's one thing women always forget," he continued, deliberately. "They—or the world for them—always complain that they are not judged by the same law as men, and that men are permitted greater freedoms and laxities. They do not remember that there are a lot of things as to which they are much freer than men, and that these things are permitted them for their own protection. Kissing and telling is one—or rather being kissed and telling is one—and breaking engagements is another."

"And do you think she should have broken this one?"

"Certainly," he replied, promptly.

"It's just because men are allowed such liberty in some cases that as a matter of honor they must be particularly careful in others, and *vice versa*, because women are so cramped in many directions they are permitted certain freedoms in other ways."

"Oh!" she exclaimed, protestingly.

"It's true," he maintained. "And I think Miss Brooks has made a great mistake, and indeed done a great wrong."

"And she thought she was doing so right, and it has been made so hard for her. Jim, when she told him she would not see him and that he must go away, would not obey her, but kept torturing her by his importunities. There," she said, suddenly, "that's a man's honor—when he knows that a woman is trying to do right, to torture her selfishly. No woman would do that; she would respect and admire and reverence a person who she knows through a sense of honor was trying to do his duty, and would help him all she could."

"And go away and build a shrine in her soul at which she worshipped, and suffer silently, without trying to accomplish anything to make what was wrong right?"

"Yes; and not persecuting the person she loved and who loved her."

"I think," said Cliffe, decidedly, "that if Jim knew that the girl loved him—"

"He did," Kitty admitted as he paused.

"Then I think he'd be a fool and a brute not to try to get her."

"And keep her suffering?" remonstrated Kitty. "You don't know what trouble it is for her every time that he tries to see her or in any way get word to her. She has talked to me, and I know. It's torture. I saw her yesterday, and I felt so badly. I asked her to come here this morning to drive down town with me so that we could talk. If I could only do something to help her! But, Harold, it's strange you cannot understand. I think it's Jim Corlears who is not honorable in the way he is acting."

"I'd do anything I could to help him," said Cliffe, positively.

"And I'd do anything I could to help her," she replied, sturdily. "That's my idea of honor."

"Very well," said Cliffe. "Giving up the girl a man loves, because she thinks it her duty to marry another, isn't mine."

She did not speak, and there was a moment's silence as the servant entered and placed on the table at Cliffe's elbow the letters just left by the postman. There had been a certain ring of defiance in the last speech, and the man's entrance broke what might have been an awkward pause. Such an interruption did away with the necessity for any reply, and both were able, without acknowledgment of constraint, to remain without saying anything after his departure.

"Here," said Cliffe, after running through the pile—"here are some for you." And pushing several envelopes across the table, he looked up at her, smiling. "I don't think we need row about this affair," he continued. "There's no chance that either of us should be called upon to act."

"No," she said, repentingly; "and I'm sorry I spoke the way I did."

He did not reply, but she was looking at him, and was evidently fully satisfied with what she saw, for with a small sigh of content she picked up her letters, while

he tore the corner off one of his. But he was not allowed to proceed undisturbed in the perusal of his mail, for he had hardly read down the first page of that particular missive when a quick exclamation caused him to look up.

"Oh," she cried, indignantly, "I think this is too bad—is perfectly shameful—to drag me into it."

"What is it?" Cliffe demanded. "Don't spare my feelings, but tell me at once."

"It's Jim Corlears," she replied, and then paused, lost in thought.

"Yes?" he said.

"I won't do it!" she exclaimed, after a moment's reflection. "I won't!"

"I have rarely seen you more determined," commented Cliffe.

"Harold," she said, "don't make fun of me. This is serious. You remember that I have always known him, although I haven't seen him very often lately; but he hasn't the right to do such a thing. Here's a letter from him in which he makes a long and harrowing appeal to me to give him my aid with Mabel—telling me how desperate he is, and how he can do nothing without me."

"Poor old chap! he does seem in a bad way; but if he chooses to overflow with confidence in his distress, why, is there any reason you should be so indignant and resolute?"

"That isn't all," she continued. "He encloses a letter that he says I must see reaches her—at once. He says that it is most important and there must be no delay, and that I must make her read it. He writes that she thinks it is not best or wise for her to see him, or even to hear anything from him, and he can't contrive that she should, and that I am his only hope."

"Really?" observed Cliffe.

"And don't you see how very hard it is for me? She has told me particularly that she does not wish to hear or see anything that will make her think of him. She said that she had made up her mind, and that it all was impossible and she wanted to forget. It has been hard enough for her, and I can't make it harder. He has been unkind and ungenerous and dishonorable in the way he has kept torturing her, and I will not help him to do it. If he cannot respect her noble strength and try to help her, I can and I will."

Kitty concluded with great energy, and

emphasized the last word by striking the edge of the envelope against the table.

"Let me see it," said Cliffe, holding out his hand.

She gave the letter to him, and watched him as he hastily ran over the pages.

"He doesn't say where he is, or where he is going to be."

"No," she replied, indifferently.

"And I heard them say at the club only yesterday that no one had seen him for a long time, and that there wasn't any one who knew how to reach him."

"What difference does that make?" she asked.

"Merely that you can't send it back to him and say that you can't do what he asks."

"Why?" she demanded.

"Because the letter to the girl is marked in the corner 'Immediate and urgent,' and you don't know where to send it so that he can get it—immediately and urgently."

"What is the difference?" she inquired.

"Only this, that if he can't have it back at once, the note ought to be delivered."

"I don't see why," she said.

"It's an implied trust," he answered.

"But I never asked for his trust," she urged.

"Very true," he answered.

"And he has imposed it on me without my consent and against my will."

"Certainly."

"Then I don't see why I should do anything."

"It's a question of honor," said Cliffe.

"How can it be," she exclaimed, "when I have not had anything to do with it?"

"It's just because you haven't had anything to do with it that it is."

"How very foolish!" she retorted.

"Not at all. It is possible to resolve almost every question of honor into a question of sense, and indeed honor may be said to be sense raised to the *n*th power. Take this example. You do not know that if this letter is not delivered immediately and urgently that it may not be too late for it to be of any use."

"Yes," she admitted; "he says that it is 'vital' that she should read it at once."

"Very well," argued Cliffe. "Suppose you send the letter back to him, and he does not receive it for some time, and does not know that she has not read it,

you don't know how wrongly things may go."

"I know how wrongly things will go if I give it to her, and what trouble, what terrible trouble such a useless appeal will make for this poor girl who is trying to do the best she can."

"But you have nothing to do with that; it is your duty to fulfil the trust reposed in you."

"And which he had no business to repose in me," she urged.

"Very true again," said Cliffe; "but again that is none of your business."

"And must we do things that are unreasonable simply because some people inflict them on us?"

"Very often—in honor," he answered.

"And must I act unwisely and cruelly because, without any fault on my part, this man has seen fit to put me in this position?"

"Assuredly—in honor," said Cliffe.

"That's a man's idea of honor," Kitty retorted, indignantly, "and as selfish as all his points of view. Simply so that he may shrug his shoulders and be able to say to himself 'I have not failed,' he is willing to bring trouble and suffering on others."

"Honor is a very complicated affair, often compelling us to act cruelly when we should act kindly, and kindly when it would be our inclination to act cruelly. Kitty," he said, "there is always an underlying reason. There was some Frenchman once who illustrated one of the great principles of honor by a letter. He said—I don't remember his exact words—that a letter was protected because it did not defend itself. Now suppose you heard that some one you knew had opened a letter that was not meant for them, and had gained something by what they read in it?"

"I should, of course, despise them more than I can say," she replied, vehemently.

"Of course. Now suppose—just suppose that some one you knew had broken open a bank vault and stolen the money that was in it?"

"I should be surprised and indignant and—sorry, if I had known them well."

"Your feelings would not be the same in both cases. Even if you condemned utterly the man who had robbed the safe you would not have in the same degree the feeling of contempt for the one who

had stolen the million dollars that were protected and the one who had stolen the secret that was not."

"It seems unreasonable," she admitted, "but it's true."

"There's really a reason," Cliffe went on. "Very well. Corlears is in something the same position as the letter. He cannot defend himself. You can't send it back to him so that he can get it in time and act for himself, so you must act for him."

"I don't know what trouble the letter may make for Mabel, and really I can't."

"It is necessary," said Cliffe.

"Besides," she urged, "I don't agree with you. It can't be honorable to create difficulty and distress, and I am not going to do it." She looked steadily at him, half entreatingly, half defiantly. "It might make it almost impossible for her to do what she has made up her mind to do," she added.

"It might," he admitted, readily. "That clearly is supposable."

"And Mr. Muirhead is so good, and is very much in love with her in his way, and it's honorable for her to marry him."

Cliffe said nothing.

"And can it be honorable for me to make it hard and perhaps impossible for her to do what is honorable for her?"

"That is not the question," he remonstrated.

"I don't see why it is not," she replied.

"We ought to help people, and I will be helping her."

"You have yourself to consider," he objected.

"That's why I condemn your man's idea of honor. It's all based on self, and that must be wrong. I know I must act for Mabel."

"And betray a trust," he said.

"Such a trust!" she interrupted, contemptuously. "You can't be made responsible for anything you don't do yourself."

"I said," he went on, reflectively, "that women had no sense of honor."

"You make me so angry!" she exclaimed. "They do, only it is a better, higher, truer, wider sense; not a narrow personal one."

Again the sudden feeling of slight constraint was broken by the entrance of the same servant who had before appeared.

"Miss Brooks," he murmured.

"Mabel!" exclaimed Kitty, looking at Cliffe; "so very early! How strange!" She turned to the man. "Take Miss Brooks to the library, and I will come at once."

The servant turned and disappeared.

"What are you going to do?" asked Cliffe, curiously.

"I don't know," she exclaimed as she hurried out.

Cliffe strolled to the fireplace and looked at the grate where the first fire of the year crackled cheerfully, then he strayed to the window and gazed across the small strip of grass at the vine, glorious with the crimson and gold of autumn, that hung in bright sunshine on the opposite stable wall. There was a smile on his face, but his brow was wrinkled a little perplexedly as he drummed on the glass. Suddenly his reverie was interrupted by the advent of the "second man," who was clearly officiating in the temporary absence of the butler.

"A gentleman, sir, to see you," he said. "and, if you please, he's in a hurry. He—"

The sentence was not finished, for the speaker was almost thrust aside by a young man who pushed through the door.

"Corlears!" cried Cliffe.

"Yes," exclaimed the other, "but I haven't the time to explain now. Do you know if your wife got a letter from me?"

"She did," said Cliffe.

"With a letter to be given to Miss Brooks?"

"Yes," said Cliffe.

"Do you know if she can have given it to her?"

"I don't," replied Cliffe, shaking his head.

"If I can only manage to stop her," cried the other.

"You don't want her to give it to this young woman?"

"No," cried the other, in an anxious tone. "Not for anything; not for the world—now."

"Something has happened," said Cliffe, advancing.

"Yes; I've experienced a change of heart," and Corlears laughed nervously. "I say, it's rather strange my rushing in and telling you these personal things straight off, when I have not seen much

of you for a long time, but we'll talk all about that later. It's this way: I was desperate, and I felt that it was all no use, and that I'd better give it up. I said I was going off somewhere to get myself shot—South Africa I had in my mind—and that then she'd be sorry for her heartlessness and her folly and her obstinacy. I said a good many pretty unpleasant things when I wrote last night, but as I was driving down to the steamer this morning, through the Avenue all gray and cold and deserted, in some way all appeared different, and I was sorry for what I had written in the excitement of the moment, and I couldn't endure to think of the way she'd think of me, and I found that if I was going to be miserable I'd rather be miserable here, near her, than somewhere else, and, in short, that I couldn't give her up and wouldn't give her up to him, no matter what she might be willing to do because of a cursed mistake."

Corlears paused, a little flushed and out of breath.

"The women call it honor," Cliffe observed.

"I won't tell you what I call it," said Corlears, savagely. "But, anyway, I've got to have that letter. I've let the steamer sail without me, and it's in a way lucky I did, for they've decided that lawsuit, and there will be a lot of business about the money that's coming to me."

"The courts have allowed the Corlears claim?" said Cliffe.

"Yes," said Corlears, impatiently; "it's all in the morning papers; but that's no matter. Where is your wife?"

"And you are rich?" asked the other.

"Yes, I suppose so; but what of that?"

"You cheerful idiot," replied Cliffe, "it would have been a great deal better if you had sailed."

"Why?" asked Corlears, aghast.

"Don't you see, if she wouldn't marry you when you were poor because he was poor, she certainly won't marry you now when he's poor and you're rich."

"I don't see."

"It's what they call honor," said Cliffe.

"And you might just as well tell them not to unpack your things, for then you can take the next ship out."

Corlears stood looking dumfoundedly at the other man.

"I thought," he blundered, "that it would make it better."

But before Cliffe could speak his ear caught the quick rustle of a gown, and Kitty dashed into the room.

"Harold," she cried, "you don't know what has happened."

"Neither do you," said Cliffe, impatiently. "Here's Corlears come to tell me that he's gone and taken to himself a fortune, and hasn't sailed this morning because he thinks there's a chance that foolish girl will marry him."

"Well?" said Kitty.

"And of course she'll only be more foolish," continued Cliffe, hotly. "And just because he's rich will be more unwilling to listen to him."

Kitty laughed gleefully as she looked up in Cliffe's indignant face; then she crossed over and shook hands warmly with Corlears.

"I congratulate you," she said, warmly.

"How absurd," said Cliffe, angrily, "to congratulate him! He doesn't care anything for the money in comparison with the girl, and now she's certainly lost to him with her idiotic fancies."

"Not at all," laughed Kitty.

"Impossible!" he exclaimed.

"Didn't I tell you that you didn't know what had happened?" she continued. "It's all most surprising. It seems that it was all a mistake about Mr. Muirhead's losing his money. He has it all back again, and, by some mines or things, twice as much as he had before."

Both men gazed at her eagerly.

"And," she went on, excitedly, "don't you see? Mabel could break the engagement, and she did at once. And that's what she came to tell me so early."

"Is she here?" inquired Corlears, quickly.

"In the library," cried Kitty. "You had better go and see her, and she can explain better than I."

Without waiting for further bidding or any word of explanation or excuse, Corlears crossed the room and was out of the door.

"There," Kitty exclaimed, triumphantly, "it has come out all right, after all."

"Without thanks to any one," remonstrated Cliffe.

"What's the difference about the way? It's right, and that is all."

"And the letter?" said Cliffe.

"Why, when she told me, of course I gave it to her."

"Oh!" he exclaimed, discontentedly.

"What is it?"

"There were things in it he wrote in excitement, and that he didn't want her to see."

"They'll make that all right," she answered, with assurance.

"I suppose so," he said, discontentedly.

"What else is there?"

"Why, it seems to me, as to the question of honor, we're very much where we were."

For a moment she was silent, then she looked up at him.

"I'll be honest," she said, impulsively.

"I gave the letter to her before she told me."

"But why—" he began.

"When I saw her I suddenly felt sorry

for him—she was so pretty, and I thought he must feel so badly."

"You were sorry for him because she was pretty?" he said. Cliffe's expression changed. "I have it," he added.

"What?" she asked.

"Women haven't any sense of honor."

"Oh," she cried, "are you going to begin all over again?"

"But they have sympathy, which is as good," he concluded.

"Do you say that?" she exclaimed, delightedly. "Then I'll forgive you."

For a moment there was silence.

"I wonder," he said, "what they are doing in the library?"

"Very much what we are doing here," she replied, with a laugh.

METEOROLOGICAL PROGRESS OF THE CENTURY.

BY HENRY SMITH WILLIAMS, M.D.

"AN astonishing miracle has just occurred in our district," wrote M. Marais, a worthy if undistinguished citizen of France, from his home at L'Aigle, under date of "the 13th Floreal, year 11"—a date which outside of France would be interpreted as meaning May 3, 1803. This "miracle" was the appearance of a "fire-ball" in broad daylight—"perhaps it was wildfire," says the naïve chronicle—which "hung over the meadow," being seen by many people, and then exploded with a loud sound, scattering thousands of stony fragments over the surface of a territory some miles in extent.

Such a "miracle" could not have been announced at a more opportune time. For some years the scientific world had been agog over the question whether such a form of lightning as that reported—appearing in a clear sky, and hurling literal thunder-bolts—had real existence. Such cases had been reported often enough, it is true. The "thunder-bolts" themselves were exhibited as sacred relics before many an altar, and those who doubted their authenticity had been chided as having "an evil heart of unbelief." But scientific scepticism had questioned the evidence, and late in the eighteenth century a consensus of opinion in the French Academy had declined to admit that such stones had been "conveyed to the earth by lightning," let alone any more miraculous agency.

In 1802, however, Edward Howard had read a paper before the Royal Society in which, after reviewing the evidence recently put forward, he had reached the conclusion that the fall of stones from the sky, sometimes or always accompanied by lightning, must be admitted as an actual phenomenon, however inexplicable. So now, when the great stone-fall at L'Aigle was announced, the French Academy made haste to send the brilliant young physicist Jean Baptiste Biot to investigate it, that the matter might, if possible, be set finally at rest. The investigation was in all respects successful, and Biot's report transferred the stony or metallic lightning-bolt—the aerolite or meteorite—from the realm of tradition and conjecture to that of accepted science.

But how explain this strange phenomenon? At once speculation was rife. One theory contended that the stony masses had not actually fallen, but had been formed from the earth by the action of the lightning; but this contention was early abandoned. The chemists were disposed to believe that the aerolites had been formed by the combination of elements floating in the upper atmosphere. Geologists, on the other hand, thought them of terrestrial origin, urging that they might have been thrown up by volcanoes. The astronomers, as represented by Olbers and Laplace, modified this theory by suggesting that the stones might,