

Lady Rose's Daughter

BY MRS. HUMPHRY WARD

PART VII

CHAPTER XIII

THE curiosity concerning Jacob Delafield's ideas and antecedents, which in Julie's mind was a passing and perfunctory emotion, was felt in good earnest by not a few of Delafield's friends. For he was a person rich in friends, reserved as he generally was, and crotchety as most of them thought him. The mixture of self-evident strength and manliness in his physiognomy with something delicate and evasive, some hindering element of reflection or doubt, was repeated in his character. On the one side he was a robust, healthy Etonian, who could ride, shoot, and golf like the rest of his kind, who used the terse, slangy ways of speech of the ordinary Englishman, who loved the land and its creatures, and had a natural hatred for a poacher; and on another he was a man haunted by dreams and spiritual voices, a man for whom, as he paced his tired horse homeward after a day's run, there would rise on the grays and purples of the winter dusk far-shining "cities of God" and visions of a better life for man. He read much poetry; and the New Testament spoke to him imperatively, though in no orthodox or accustomed way. Ruskin, and the earlier work of Tolstoy, then just beginning to take hold of the English mind, had affected his thought and imagination, as the generation before him had been affected by Carlyle, Emerson, and George Sand.

This present phase of his life, however, was the outcome of much that was turbulent and shapeless in his first youth. He seemed to himself to have passed through Oxford under a kind of eclipse. All that he could remember of two-thirds of his time then was an immoderate amount of eating, drinking, and sleeping. A heavy animal existence, disturbed by moments of unhappiness and remorse, or

at best lightened by intervals and gleams of friendship with two or three men who tried to prod him out of his lethargy, and cherished what appeared to himself in particular a strange and unreasonable liking for him:—such, to his own thinking, had been his Oxford life, up to the last year of his residence there.

Then, when he was just making certain of an ignominious failure in the Final Schools, he became more closely acquainted with one of the college tutors, whose influence was to be the spark which should at last fire the clay. This modest, heroic, and learned man was a paralyzed invalid, owing to an accident in the prime of life. He had lost the use of his lower limbs,—“dead from the waist down.” Yet such was the strength of his moral and intellectual life that he had become, since the catastrophe, one of the chief forces of his college. The invalid-chair on which he wheeled himself, recumbent, from room to room, and from which he gave his lectures, was in the eyes of Oxford a symbol not of weakness, but of touching and triumphant victory. He gave himself no airs of resignation or of martyrdom. He simply lived his life—except during those crises of weakness or pain when his friends were shut out—as though it were like any other life, save only for what he made appear an insignificant physical limitation. Scholarship, college business or college sports, politics and literature,—his mind, at least, was happy, strenuous, and at home in them all. To have pitied him would have been a mere impertinence. While in his own heart, which never grieved over himself, there were treasures of compassion for the weak, the tempted, and the unsuccessful, which spent themselves in secret simple ways, unknown to his most intimate friends.

This man's personality it was which, like the branch of healing on bitter wa-

ters, presently started in Jacob Delafield's nature obscure processes of growth and regeneration. The originator of them knew little of what was going on. He was Delafield's tutor for Greats, in the ordinary college routine; Delafield took essays to him, and occasionally lingered to talk. But they never became exactly intimate. A few conversations of "pith and moment"; a warm shake of the hand, and a keen look of pleasure in the blue eyes of the recumbent giant, when after one year of superhuman but belated effort Delafield succeeded in obtaining a second class—a little note of farewell, affectionate and regretful, when Delafield left the University—an occasional message through a common friend,—Delafield had little more than these to look back upon, outside the discussions of historical or philosophical subjects which had entered into their relation as pupil and teacher.

And now the paralyzed tutor was dead, leaving behind him a volume of papers on classical subjects, the reputation of an admirable scholar, and the fragrance of a dear and honored name. His pupils had been many; they counted among the most distinguished of England's youth; and all of them owed him much. Few people thought of Delafield when the list of them was recited; and yet in truth Jacob's debt was greater than any; for he owed this man nothing less than his soul. No doubt the period at Oxford had been rather a period of obscure conflict than of mere idleness and degeneracy as it had seemed to be. But it might easily have ended in physical and moral ruin; and as it was—thanks to Courtenay—Delafield went out to the business of life, a man singularly master of himself, determined to live his own life for his own ends.

In the first place he was conscious, like many other young men of his time, of a strong repulsion towards the complexities and artificialities of modern society. As in the forties, a time of social stir was rising out of a time of stagnation. Social settlements were not yet founded, but the experiments which led to them were beginning. Jacob looked at the life of London, the clubs, and the country-houses, the normal life of his class, and turned from it in aversion. He thought

sometimes of emigrating, in search of a new heaven and a new earth, as men emigrated in the forties.

But his mother and sister were alone in the world, his mother a somewhat helpless being, his sister still very young and unmarried. He could not reconcile it to his conscience to go very far from them.

He tried the Bar, amid an inner revolt that only increased with time. And the Bar implied London, and the dinners and dances of London, which for a man of his family, the probable heir to the lands and moneys of the Chudleighs, were naturally innumerable. He was much courted, in spite,—perhaps because of his oddities; and it was plain to him that with only a small exercise of those will-forces he felt accumulating within him, most of the normal objects of ambition were within his grasp.

The English aristocratic class, as we all know, is no longer exclusive. It mingles freely with the commoner world on apparently equal terms. But all the while its personal and family cohesion is perhaps greater than ever. The power of mere birth, it seemed to Jacob, was hardly less in the England newly possessed of household suffrage than in the England of Charles James Fox's youth; though it worked through other channels. And for the persons in command of this power, a certain *appareil de vie* was necessary, taken for granted. So much income—so many servants—such and such habits: these things imposed themselves. Life became a soft and cushioned business, with an infinity of layers between it and any hard reality—a round pea in a silky pod.

And he meanwhile found himself hungry to throw aside these tamed and trite forms of existence, and to penetrate to the harsh, true, simple things behind. His imagination and his heart turned towards the primitive indispensable labors on which society rests,—the life of the husbandman, the laborer, the smith, the woodman, the builder; he dreamed the old enchanted dream of living with nature; of becoming the brother not of the few, but of the many. He was still reading in chambers, however, when his first cousin, the Duke, a melancholy semi-invalid, a widower, with an only son tuberculous almost from his birth, ar-

rived from abroad. Jacob was brought into new contact with him. The Duke liked him, and offered him the agency of his Essex property. Jacob accepted, partly that he might be quit of the law, partly that he might be in the country and among the poor, partly for reasons or ghosts of reasons, unavowed even to himself. The one terror that haunted his life was the terror of the dukedom. This poor sickly lad, the heir, with whom he soon made warm friends, and the silent, morbid Duke, with the face of Charles V. at St. Just,—he became in a short time profoundly and pitifully attached to them. It pleased him to serve them; above all did it please him to do all he could, and to incite others to do all they could, to keep these two frail persons cheered and alive. His own passionate dread lest he should suddenly find himself in their place gave a particular poignancy to the service he was always ready to render them of his best.

The Duke's confidence in him had increased rapidly. Delafield was now about to take over the charge of another of the Duke's estates, in the Midlands, and much of the business connected with some important London property was also coming into his hands. He had made himself a good man of business, where another's interests were concerned; and his dreams did no harm to the Duke's revenues. He gave, indeed, a liberal direction to the whole policy of the estate; and, as he had said to Julie, the Duke did not forbid experiments.

As to his own money, he gave it away as wisely as he could—which is perhaps not saying very much for the schemes and Quixotisms of a young man of eight-and-twenty. At any rate, he gave it away—to his mother and sister first, then to a variety of persons and causes. Why should he save a penny of it? He had some money of his own, besides his income from the Duke. It was disgusting that he should have so much—and that it should be, apparently, so very easy for him to have indefinitely more if he wanted it.

He lived in a small cottage in the simplest, plainest way compatible with his work, and with the maintenance of two decently furnished rooms for any friend who might chance to visit him.

He read much and thought much. But he was not a man of any commanding speculative or analytic ability. It would have been hard for him to give any very clear or logical account of himself and his deepest beliefs. Nevertheless, with every year that passed, he became a more remarkable *character*,—his will stronger, his heart gentler. In the village where he lived they wondered at him a good deal, and often laughed at him. But if he had left them, certainly the children and the old people would have felt as though the sun had gone out.

In London he showed little or nothing of his peculiar ways and pursuits; was, in fact, as far as anybody knew—outside half a dozen friends—just the ordinary well-disposed young man, engaged in a business that every one understood. With Lady Henry, his relations, apart from his sympathy with Julie Le Breton, had been for some time rather difficult. She made gratitude hard for one of the most grateful of men. When the circumstances of the Hubert Delafields had been much straitened after Lord Hubert's death, Lady Henry had come to their aid, and had in particular spent £1500 on Jacob's school and college education. But there are those who can make a gift burn into the bones of those who receive it. Jacob had now saved nearly the whole sum, and was about to repay her. Meanwhile his obligation, his relationship, and her age made it natural, or rather imperative, that he should be often in her house; but when he was with her the touch of arrogant brutality in her nature, especially towards servants and dependents, roused him almost to fury. She knew it, and would often exercise her rough tongue merely for the pleasure of tormenting him.

No sooner, therefore, had he come to know the fragile, distinguished creature whom Lady Henry had brought back with her one autumn as her companion, than his sympathies were instantly excited, first by the mere fact that she was Lady Henry's dependent, and then by the confidence, as to her sad story and strange position, which she presently reposed in him and his cousin Evelyn. On one or two occasions very early in his acquaintance with her he was a witness of some small tyranny of Lady

Henry's towards her. He saw the shrinking of the proud nature; and the pain thrilled through his own nerves as though the lash had touched himself. Presently it became a joy to him whenever he was in town to conspire with Evelyn Crowborough for her pleasure and relief. It was the first time he had ever conspired, and it gave him sometimes a slight shock to see how readily these two charming women lent themselves on occasion to devices that had the aspect of intrigue, and involved a good deal of what in his own case he would have roundly dubbed lying. And in truth, if he had known, they did not find him a convenient ally, and he was by no means always in their confidence.

Once, about six months after Julie's arrival in Bruton Street, he met her on a spring morning crossing Kensington Gardens with the dogs. She looked startlingly white and ill, and when he spoke to her with eager sympathy, her mouth quivered, and her dark eyes clouded with tears. The sight produced an extraordinary effect on a man large-hearted and simple, for whom women still moved in an atmosphere of romance. His heart leapt within him as she let herself be talked with and comforted. And when her delicate hand rested in his as they said good-by, he was conscious of feelings, wild tumultuous feelings, to which in his walk homewards through the spring glades of the park he gave impetuous course.

Romantic indeed the position was, for romance rests on contrast. Jacob, who knew Julie Le Breton's secret, was thrilled or moved by the contrasts of her existence at every turn. Her success, and her subjection; the place in Lady Henry's circle which Lady Henry had in the first instance herself forced her to take, contrasted with the shifts and evasions, the poor tortuous ways by which, alas! she must often escape Lady Henry's later jealousy; her intellectual strength and her most feminine weaknesses; these things stirred and kept up in Jacob a warm and passionate pity. The more clearly he saw the specks in her glory, the more vividly did she appear to him a princess in distress, bound by physical or moral fetters not of her own making. None of the well-born, well-trained dam-

sels who had been freely thrown across his path had beguiled him in the least. Only this woman of doubtful birth and antecedents, lonely, sad, and enslaved, amid what people called her social triumphs, stole into his heart—beautified by what he chose to consider her misfortunes, and made none the less attractive by the fact that as he pursued, she retreated; as he pressed, she grew cold.

When, indeed, after their friendship had lasted about a year he proposed to her, and she refused him, his passion, instead of cooling, redoubled. It never occurred to him to think that she had done a strange thing from the worldly point of view,—that would have involved an appreciation of himself, as a prize in the marriage market, he would have loathed to make. But he was one of the men for whom resistance enhances the value of what they desire; and secretly he said to himself, "Persevere!" When he was repelled or puzzled by certain aspects of her character, he would say to himself:

"It is because she is alone and miserable. Women are not meant to be alone. What soft, helpless creatures they are!—even when intellectually they fly far ahead of us. If she would but put her hand in mine, I would so serve and worship her, she would have no need for these strange things she does—the doublings and ruses of the persecuted!"

Thus the touches of falsity that repelled Wilfrid Bury were to Delafield's passion merely the stains of rough travel on a fair garment.

But she refused him, and for another year he said no more. Then, as things got worse and worse for her, he spoke again—ambiguously—a word or two—thrown out to sound the waters. Her manner of silencing him on the second occasion was not what it had been before. His suspicions were aroused; and a few days later he divined the Warkworth affair. When Sir Wilfrid Bury spoke to him of the young officer's relations to Mademoiselle Le Breton, Delafield's stiff defence of Julie's prerogatives in the matter masked the fact that he had just gone through a week of suffering, wrestling his heart down in country lanes; a week which had brought him to somewhat curious results. In the first place, as

with Sir Wilfrid, he stood up stoutly for her rights. If she chose to attach herself to this man, whose business was it to interfere? If he was worthy and loved her, Jacob himself would see fair play, would be her friend and supporter.

But the scraps of gossip about Captain Warkworth which the Duchess—who had disliked the man at first sight—gathered from different quarters and confided to Jacob were often disquieting. It was said that at Simla he had entrapped this little heiress, and her obviously foolish and incapable mother, by devices generally held to be discreditable; and it had taken two angry guardians to warn him off. What was the state of the case now, no one exactly knew; though it was shrewdly suspected that the engagement was only dormant. The child was known to have been in love with him; in two years more she would be of age; her fortune was enormous; and Warkworth was a poor and ambitious man.

There was also an ugly tale of a civilian's wife in a hill station, referring to a date some years back; but Delafield did not think it necessary to believe it.

As to his origins—there again Delafield, making cautious inquiries, came across some unfavorable details, confided to him by a man of Warkworth's own regiment. His father had retired from the army immediately after the Mutiny, broken in health, and much straitened in means. Himself belonging to a family of the poorer middle class, he had married late, a good woman not socially his equal, and without fortune. They settled in the Isle of Wight, on his half-pay, and harassed by a good many debts. Their two children, Henry and Isabella, were then growing up, and the parents' hopes were fixed upon their promising and good-looking son. With difficulty they sent him to Charterhouse and a "crammer." The boy coveted a "crack" regiment; by dint of mustering all the money and all the interest they could, they procured him his heart's desire. He got unpardonably into debt; the old peoples' resources were lessening; and ultimately the poor father died, broken down by the terror of bankruptcy for himself, and disgrace for Henry. The mother still survived, in very straitened circumstances.

"His sister," said Delafield's inform-

ant, "married one of the big London tailors, whom she met first on the Ryde pier. I happen to know the facts, for my father and I have been customers of his for years, and one day—hearing that I was in Warkworth's regiment—he told me some stories of his brother-in-law, in a pretty hostile tone. His sister, it appears, has often financed him of late. She must have done! How else could he have got through? Warkworth may be a fine showy fellow when there's fighting about. In private life he's one of the most self-indulgent dogs alive. And yet he's ashamed of the sister and her husband, and turns his back on them whenever he can. Oh, he's not a person of nice feeling, is Warkworth—but mark my words, he'll be one of the most successful men in the army."

There was one side. On the other was to be set the man's brilliant professional record; his fine service in this recent campaign; the bull-dog defence of an isolated fort, which insured the safety of most important communications; contempt of danger, thirst, exposure; the rescue of a wounded comrade from the glacis of the fort, under a murderous fire—facts, all of them, which had fired the public imagination and brought his name to the front. No such acts as these could have been done by any mere self-indulgent pretender.

Delafield reserved his judgment. He set himself to watch. In his inmost heart there was a strange assumption of the right to watch, and, if need be, to act. Julie's instinct had told her truly. Delafield, the individualist, the fanatic for freedom—he also had his instinct of tyranny. She should not destroy herself, the dear, weak, beloved woman! He would prevent it.

Thus, during these hours of transition, Delafield thought much of Julie. Julie, on the other hand, had no sooner said good-night to him after the conversation described in the last chapter than she drove him from her thoughts—one might have said, with vehemence.

The *Times* of the following morning duly contained the announcement of the appointment of Captain Warkworth, D.S.Q., of the Queen's Greys, to the com-

mand of the military mission to Mokembé, recently determined on by her Majesty's government. The mission would proceed to Mokembé as soon as possible, but of two officers who, on the ground of especial knowledge, would form part of it, under Captain Warkworth's command, one was at present in Canada, and another at the Cape. It would therefore hardly be possible for the mission to start from the coast for the interior before the beginning of May. In the same paper certain promotions and distinctions on account of the recent Mahsud campaign were reprinted from the *Gazette*. Captain Henry Warkworth's brevet majority was among them.

The *Times* leader on the announcement pointed out that the mission would be concerned with important frontier questions, still more with the revival of the prestige of England in regions where a supine government had allowed it to wither unaccountably. Other powers had been playing a filching and encroaching game at the expense of the British lion in these parts; and it was more than time that he should open his sleepy eyes upon what was going on. As to the young officer who was to command the mission, the great journal made a few civil though guarded remarks. His record in the recent campaign was, indeed, highly distinguished; still it could hardly be said that, take it as a whole, his history so far gave him a claim to promotion so important as that which he had now obtained. Well, now he had his chance. English soldiers had a way of profiting by such chances. The *Times* courteously gave him the benefit of the doubt, prophesying that he would rise to the occasion, and justify the choice of his superiors.

The Duchess looked over Julie's shoulder as she read.

"Schemer!" she said, as she dropped a kiss on the back of Julie's neck—"I hope you're satisfied! The *Times* doesn't know what to make of it."

Julie put down the paper with a glowing cheek. "They'll soon know," she said, quietly.

"Julie! do you believe in him so much?"

"What does it matter what I think? It is not I who have appointed him."

"Not so sure!" laughed the Duchess. "As if he would have had a chance without you. Whom did he know last November when you took him up?"

Julie moved to and fro, her hands behind her. The tremor on her lip, the light in her eye, showed her sense of triumph.

"What have I done," she said, laughing, "but push a few stones out of the way of merit?"

"Some of them very heavy!" said the Duchess, making a little face. "Need I invite Lady Froswick any more?"

Julie threw her arms about her.

"Evelyn, what a darling you've been! Now I'll never worry you again."

"Oh, for some people I would do ten times as much!" cried the Duchess.

"But—Julie, I wish I knew why you think so well of this man. I—I don't always hear very nice things about him."

"I dare say not," said Julie, flushing. "It is easy to hate success."

"No, come!—we're not so mean as that!" cried the Duchess. "I vow that all the heroes I've ever known had a ripping time. Julie!"—she kissed her friend impulsively—"Julie!—Don't like him too much! I don't think he's good enough!"

"Good enough for what?" said Julie's bitter voice. "Make yourself easy about Captain Warkworth, Evelyn; but please understand—*anything* is good enough for me! Don't let your dear head be troubled about my affairs. They are never serious—and nothing counts—except," she added, recklessly—"that I get a little amusement by the way."

"Julie!" cried the Duchess—"as if Jacob—"

Julie frowned, and released herself; then she laughed.

"Nothing that one ever says about ordinary mortals applies to Mr. Delafield. He is of course *hors concours*."

"Julie!"

"It is you, Evelyn, who make me *méchante*. I could be grateful—and excellent friends with that young man—in my own way."

The Duchess sighed, and held her tongue with difficulty.

When the successful hero arrived that night, for dinner, he found a solitary lady in the drawing-room.

Was this, indeed, Julie Le Breton?—this soft, smiling vision in white?

He expected to have found a martyr, pale and wan from the shock of the catastrophe which had befallen her, and even amid the intoxication of his own great day he was not easy as to how she might have taken his behavior on the fatal night. But here was some one, all joy, animation, and indulgence, a glorified Julie who trod on air. Why?—Because good fortune had befallen her friend? His heart smote him. He had never seen her so touching, so charming. Since the incubus of Lady Henry's house and presence had been removed she seemed to have grown years younger. A white muslin dress of her youth, touched here and there by the Duchess's maid, replaced the familiar black satin. When Warkworth first saw her, he paused unconsciously in surprise.

Then he advanced to meet her, broadly smiling, his blue eyes dancing.

"You got my note this morning?"

"Yes," she said, demurely. "You were much too kind, and much—much too absurd! I have done nothing."

"Oh, nothing, of course." Then, after a moment: "Are you going to tie me to that fiction?—or am I to be allowed a little decent sincerity?—You know perfectly well that you have done it all. There! there! give me your hand."

She gave it, shrinking, and he kissed it joyously.

"Isn't it jolly!" he said, with a school-boy's delight, as he released her hand. "I saw Lord M—— this morning" (he named the Prime Minister)—"very civil indeed;—then the Commander-in-Chief, —and Montresor gave me half an hour. It is all right. They are giving me a capital staff. Excellent fellows, all of them. Oh, you'll see I shall pull it through—I shall pull it through. By George, it is a chance!"

And he stood, radiant, rubbing his hands over the blaze.

The Duchess came in, accompanied by an elderly cousin of the Duke's, a white-haired, black-gowned spinster, Miss Emily Lawrence—one of those single women, travelled, cultivated, and good, that England produces in such abundance.

"Well, so you're going," said the Duchess to Warkworth. "And I hear that we ought to think you a lucky man."

"Indeed you ought, and you must!" he said, gayly,—“if only the climate will behave itself. The blackwater fever has a way of killing you in twenty-four hours if it gets hold of you,—but short of that—”

"Oh, you will be quite safe," said the Duchess. "Let me introduce you to Miss Lawrence. Emily, this is Captain Warkworth."

The elderly lady gave a sudden start. Then she quietly put on her spectacles and studied the young soldier with a pair of intelligent gray eyes.

Nothing could have been more agreeable than Warkworth at dinner. Even the Duchess admitted as much. He talked easily but not too much of the task before him; told amusing tales of his sporting experience of years back in the same regions which were now to be the scene of his mission; discussed the preparations he would have to make at Dengga, the coast town, before starting on his five weeks' journey to the interior, drew the native porter and the native soldier, not to their advantage, and let fall by the way not a few wise or vivacious remarks as to the races, resources, and future of this illimitable and mysterious Africa—this cavern of the unknown, into which the waves of white invasion, one upon another, were now pressing fast and ceaselessly, towards what goal only the gods knew.

A few other men were dining; amongst them two officers from the staff of the Commander-in-Chief. Warkworth, much their junior, treated them with a skilful deference; but through the talk that prevailed his military competence and prestige appeared plainly enough, even to the women. His good opinion of himself was, indeed, sufficiently evident; but there was no crude vainglory. At any rate, it was a vainglory of youth, ability, and good looks, ratified by these budding honors thus fresh upon him; and no one took it amiss.

As for Julie, the minutes passed in a feverish pleasure,—a pleasure interfused every now and then with pricking pain, pain for the past, pain for the future.

but none the less golden and delightful. But she too exerted herself; and the Duchess almost forgot her fears, relaxed towards Warkworth, and blessed Julie for the gayety of the dinner.

When the gentlemen returned to the drawing-room, Warkworth and Julie once more found themselves together, this time in the Duchess's little sitting-room at the end of the long suite of rooms.

"When do you go?" she asked him, abruptly.

"Not for about a month." He mentioned the causes of delay.

"That will bring you very late—into the worst of the heat?" Her voice had a note of anxiety.

"Oh, we shall all be seasoned men. And after the first few days we shall get into the uplands."

"What do your home people say?" she asked him—rather shyly. She knew, in truth, little about them.

"My mother?—oh, she will be greatly pleased. I go down to the Isle of Wight for a day or two to see her to-morrow. But now, dear lady, that is enough of my wretched self. You—do you stay on here with the Duchess?"

She told him of the house in Heribert Street. He listened with attention.

"Nothing could be better. You will have a most distinguished little setting of your own, and Lady Henry will repent at leisure. You won't be lonely?"

"Oh no!" But her smile was linked with a sigh.

He came nearer to her.

"You should never be lonely if I could help it," he said, in a low voice.

"When people are nameless and kinless," was her passionate reply, in the same undertone as his, "they must be lonely."

He looked at her with eagerness. She lay back in the firelight, her beautiful brows and eyes softly illuminated. He felt within him a sudden snapping of restraints. Why, why refuse what was so clearly within his grasp? Love has many manners, many entrances, and—many exits!

"When will you tell me all that I want to know about you?" he said, bending towards her, with tender insistence. "There is so much I have to ask."

"Oh—some time!" she said, hurried-

ly, her pulses quickening. "Mine is not a story to be told on a great day like this."

He was silent a moment, but his face spoke for him.

"Our friendship has been a beautiful thing, hasn't it?" he said at last, in a voice of emotion. "Look here!"—he thrust his hand into his breast pocket and half withdrew it—"do you see where I carry your letters?"

"You shouldn't,—they are not worthy."

"How charming you are in that dress—in that light! I shall always see you as you are to-night."

A silence. Excitement mounted in their veins. He stooped suddenly, took her hands, and kissed them. They looked into each other's eyes, and the seconds passed like hours.

Suddenly in the nearer drawing-room there was a sound of approaching voices, and they moved apart.

"Julie—Emily Lawrence is going," said the Duchess's voice, pitched in what seemed to Julie a strange and haughty note. "Captain Warkworth, Miss Lawrence thinks that you and she have common friends—Lady Blanche Moffatt and her daughter."

Captain Warkworth murmured some conventionality, and passed into the next drawing-room with Miss Lawrence.

Julie rose to her feet, the color dying out of her face, her passionate eyes on the Duchess, who stood facing her friend, guiltily pale, and ready to cry.

CHAPTER XIV

ON the morning following these events Warkworth went down to the Isle of Wight to see his mother. On the journey he thought much of Julie. They had parted awkwardly the night before. The evening, which had promised so well, had, after all, lacked finish and point. What on earth had that tiresome Miss Lawrence wanted with him? They had talked of Simla and the Moffatts. The conversation had gone in spurts, she looking at him every now and then with eyes that seemed to say more than her words. All that she had actually said was perfectly insignificant and trivial. Yet there was something curious in her manner; and when the time came

for him to take his departure, she had bidden him a frosty little farewell.

She had described herself once or twice as a *great* friend of Lady Blanche Mofatt.—Was it possible—

But if Lady Blanche, whose habits of sentimental indiscretion were ingrained, *had* gossiped to this lady, what then? Why should he be frowned on, by Miss Lawrence or anybody else? That malicious talk at Simla had soon exhausted itself. His present appointment was a triumphant answer to it all. His slanderers—including Aileen's ridiculous guardians—could only look foolish if they pursued the matter any further. What "trap" was there—what *mésalliance*? A successful soldier was good enough for anybody. Look at the first Lord Clyde,—and scores besides.

The Duchess too! Why had she treated him so well at first?—and so cavalierly after dinner? Her manners were really too uncertain!

What was the matter?—and why did she dislike him? He pondered over it a good deal, and with much soreness of spirit. Like many men capable of very selfish or very cruel conduct, he was extremely sensitive, and took keen notice of the fact that a person liked or disliked him.

If the Duchess disliked him, it could not be merely on account of the Simla story—even though the old maid might conceivably have given her a jaundiced account. The Duchess knew nothing of Aileen, and was little influenced, so far as he had observed her, by considerations of abstract justice or propriety, affecting persons whom she had never seen.

No, she was Julie's friend, the little wilful lady, and it was for Julie she had ruffled her feathers, like an angry dove.

So his thoughts had come back to Julie, though, indeed, it seemed to him that they were never far from her. As he looked absently from the train windows on the flying landscape, Julie's image hovered between him and it,—a magic sun, flooding soul and senses with warmth. How unconsciously, how strangely, his feelings had changed towards her! That coolness of temper and nerve he had been able to preserve towards her for so long was indeed breaking down. He recognized the danger, and

wondered where it would lead him. What a fascinating, sympathetic creature!—and, by George, what she had done for him!

Aileen!—Aileen was a little sylph, a pretty child-angel, white-winged and innocent, who lived in a circle of convent thoughts, knowing nothing of the world, and had fallen in love with him as the first man who had ever made love to her. But this intelligent, full-blooded woman, who could understand at a word, or a half-word, who had a knowledge of affairs which many a high-placed man might envy, with whom one never had a dull moment,—this courted, distinguished Julie Le Breton,—his mind swelled with half-guilty pride at the thought that for six months he had absorbed all her energies, that a word from him could make her smile or sigh, that he could force her to look at him, with eyes so melting and so troubled as those with which she had given him her hands,—her slim, beautiful hands,—that night in Grosvenor Square.

How freedom became her! Dependency had dropped from her, like a cast-off cloak, and beside her fresh melancholy charm, the air and graces of a child of fashion and privilege like the little Duchess appeared merely cheap and trivial. Poor Julie! No doubt some social struggle was before her. Lady Henry was strong, after all, in this London world, and the solider and stupider people who get their way in the end were not likely to side with Lady Henry's companion in a quarrel where the facts of the story were unquestionably, at first sight, damaging to Miss Le Breton.

Julie would have her hours of bitterness and humiliation; and she would conquer by boldness, if she conquered at all,—by originality, by determining to live her own life. That would preserve for her the small circle, if it lost her the large world. And the small circle was what she lived for,—what she ought, at any rate, to live for.

It was not likely she would marry. Why should she desire it? From any blundering tragedy a woman of so acute a brain would of course know how to protect herself. But within the limits of her life why should she refuse herself happiness, intimacy, love?

His heart beat fast; his thoughts were in a whirl. But the train was nearing Portsmouth, and with an effort he recalled his mind to the meeting with his mother, which was then close upon him.

He spent nearly a week in the little cottage at Sea View; and Mrs. Warkworth got far more pleasure than usual, poor lady, out of his visit. She was a thin, plain woman, not devoid of either ability or character. But life had gone hardly with her; and since her husband's death what had been reserve had become melancholy. She had always been afraid of her only son, since they had sent him to Charterhouse and he had become so much "finer" than his parents. She knew that he must consider her a very ignorant and narrow-minded person; when he was with her she was humiliated in her own eyes; though as soon as he was gone she resumed what was, in truth, a leading place amongst her own small circle.

She loved him, and was proud of him; yet at the bottom of her heart she had never absolved him from his father's death. But for his extravagance, and the misfortunes he had brought upon them, her old General would be alive still—pottering about in the spring sunshine, spudding the daisies from the turf, or smoking his pipe beneath the thickening trees. Under her melancholy quiet her heart yearned and hungered for the husband of her youth; his son did not replace him.

Still, when he came down to her with this halo of glory upon him, and smoked up and down her small garden through the mild spring days, gossiping to her of all the great things that had befallen him, repeating to her word for word his conversation with the Prime Minister and his interview with the Commander-in-Chief, making her read all the letters of congratulation he had received, her mother's heart thawed within her, as it had not done for long. Her ears told her that he was still vain and a boaster; her memory held the indelible records of his past selfishness; but as he walked beside her, his fair hair blown back from his handsome brow and eyes that were so much younger than the rest of the face, his figure as spare and boyish now as when he had worn the colors of the Char-

terhouse eleven, she said to herself, in the inward and unsuspected colloquy she was always holding with her own heart about him, that if his father could have seen him now, he would have forgiven him everything. According to her secret evangelical faith, God "deals" with every soul He has created,—through joy or sorrow, through good or evil fortune. He had dealt with herself through anguish and loss; Henry, it seemed, was to be moulded through prosperity. His good fortune was already making a better man of him.

Certainly he was more affectionate and thoughtful than before. He would have liked to give her money, of which he seemed to have an unusual store. But she bade him keep what he had for his own needs. Her own little bit of money saved from the wreck of their fortunes was enough for her. Then he went into Ryde and brought her a Shetland shawl, and a new table-cloth for her little sitting-room, which she accepted with a warmer kiss than she had given him for years.

He left her on a bright, windy morning which flecked the blue Solent with foam and sent the clouds racing to westward. She walked back along the sands, thinking anxiously of the African climate and the desert hardships he was going to face. And she wondered what significance there might be in the fact that he had written twice during his stay with her to Miss Le Breton, whose name, nevertheless, he had not mentioned in their conversations. Well, he would marry soon, she supposed, and marry well, in circles out of her ken. With the common prejudice of the English middle class, she hoped that if this Miss Le Breton were his choice, she might be only French in name and not in blood.

Meanwhile Warkworth sped up to London in high spirits, enjoying the comforts of a good conscience.

He drove first to his club, where a pile of letters awaited him,—some, letters of congratulation; others concerned with the business of his mission. He enjoyed the first, noticing jealously who had and who had not written to him; then he applied himself to the second. His mind worked vigorously and well; he wrote his replies in a manner that satisfied him. Then throwing himself into a chair with a

cigar, he gave himself up to the close and shrewd planning of the preparations necessary for his five weeks' march; or to the consideration of two or three alternative lines of action which would open before him as soon as he should find himself within the boundaries of Mokembé. Some five years before, the government of the day had sent a small expedition to this Debatable Land, which had failed disastrously, from both the diplomatic and the military points of view. He went backwards and forwards to the shelves of the fine "Service" library which surrounded him, taking down the books and reports which concerned this expedition. He buried himself in them for an hour, then threw them aside with contempt. What blunders and short-sight everywhere! The general public might well talk of the stupidity of English officers. And blunders so easily avoided, too! It was sickening. He felt within himself a fulness of energy and intelligence, a perspicacity of brain which judged mistakes of this kind unpardonable.

As he was replacing some of the books he had been using on the shelves, the club began to fill up with men coming in to lunch. A great many congratulated him; and a certain number who of old had hardly professed to know him greeted him with cordiality. He found himself caught in a series of short but flattering conversations, in which he bore himself well,—neither over-discreet nor too elate. "I declare that fellow's improved," said one man who might certainly have counted as Warkworth's enemy the week before, to his companion at table. "The government's been beastly remiss so far. Hope he'll pull it off. Ripping chance, anyway. Though what they gave it to him for, goodness knows. There were a dozen fellows at least did as well as he in the Mahsud business. And the Staff College man had a thousand times more claim."

Nevertheless, Warkworth felt the general opinion friendly,—a little surprised, no doubt, but showing that readiness to believe in the man coming to the front which belongs much more to the generous than to the calculating side of the English character. Insensibly his mental and moral stature rose. He exchanged a few words on his way out with one of

the most distinguished members of the club, a man of European reputation, whom he had seen the week before in the Commander-in-Chief's room at the War Office. The great man spoke to him with marked friendliness, and Warkworth walked on air as he went his way. Potentially he felt himself the great man's equal; the gates of life seemed to be opening before him.

And with the rise of fortune came a rush of magnanimous resolution. No more shady episodes; no more mean devices; no more gambling; and no more debt. *Major* Warkworth's sheet was clean, and it should remain so. A man of his prospects must run straight.

He felt himself at peace with all the world. By-the-way, just time to jump into a cab and get to Park Crescent in time for his sister's luncheon. His last interview with his brother-in-law had not been agreeable. But now—he felt for the check-book in his pocket—he was in a position to repay at least half the last sum of money which Bella had lent him. He would go and give it her now, and report news of the mother. And if the two chicks were there, why, he had a free hour, and he would take them to the Zoo—he vowed he would!—give them something pleasant to remember their uncle by.

And a couple of hours later, a handsome soldierly man might have been seen in the lion-house at the Zoo, leading a plump little girl by either hand. Rose and Katie Mullins enjoyed a golden time, and started a wholly new adoration for the uncle who had so far taken small notice of them, and was associated in their shrewd childish minds rather with tempests at home than bunnies abroad. But this time, bunnies, biscuits, hansom-drives and elephant-rides, were showered upon them by an uncle who seemed to make no account of money, while his gracious and captivating airs set their little hearts beating in a common devotion.

"Now go home!—go home! little beggars," said that golden gentleman as he packed them into a hansom, and stood on the step to accept a wet kiss on his mustache from each pink mouth. "Tell your mother all about it, and don't forget your uncle Harry. There's a shilling for each of you. Don't you spend it

on sweets. You're quite fat enough already. Good-by!

"That's the hardest work I've done for many a long day," he said to himself with a sigh of relief, as the hansom drove away. "I sha'n't turn nurse-maid when other trades fail. But they're nice little kids all the same.

"Now then, Cox's—and the City"—he ran over the list of his engagements for the afternoon,—“and by five o'clock, shall I find my fair lady—at home—and established? Where on earth is Heribert Street?"

He solved the question; for a few minutes after five he was on Miss Le Breton's door-step. A quaint little house,—and a strange parlor-maid! For the door was opened to him by a large-eyed sickly child, who looked at him with the bewilderment of one trying to follow out instructions still strange to her.

"Yes, sir, Miss Le Breton is in the drawing-room," she said in a sweet, deliberate voice with a foreign accent, and she led the way through the hall.

Poor little soul—what a twisted back, and what a limp! She looked about fourteen, but was probably older. Where had Julie discovered her?

Warkworth looked round him at the little hall with its relics of country-house sports and amusements; his eye travelled through an open door to the little dining-room, and the Russell pastels of Lady Mary's parents as children, hanging on the wall. The *character* of the little dwelling impressed itself at once. Smiling, he acknowledged its congruity with Julie. Here was a lady who fell on her feet!

The child leading him opened the door to the left.

"Please walk in, sir," she said, shyly, and stood aside.

As the door opened, Warkworth was conscious of a noise of tongues.

So Julie was not alone? He prepared his manner accordingly.

He entered upon a merry scene. Jacob Delafield was standing on a chair, hanging a picture, while Dr. Meredith and Julie on either side directed or criticised the operation. Meredith carried picture-cord and scissors; Julie, the hammer and nails. Meredith was expressing the pro-

foundest disbelief in Jacob's practical capacities; Jacob was defending himself hotly; and Julie laughed at both.

Towards the other end of the room stood the tea table between the fire and an open window. Lord Lackington sat beside it, smiling to himself, and stroking a Persian kitten. Through the open window the twinkling buds on the lilacs in the Cureton House garden shone in the still lingering sun. A recent shower had left behind it odors of earth and grass. Even in this London air they spoke of the spring,—the spring which already in happier lands was drawing veils of peach and cherry blossom over the red Siennese earth, or the green terraces of Como. The fire crackled in the grate. The pretty old-fashioned room was fragrant with hyacinth and narcissus; Julie's books lay on the tables; Julie's hand and taste were already to be felt everywhere. And Lord Lackington with the kitten, beside the fire, gave the last touch of home and domesticity.

"So I find you established?" said Warkworth, smiling, to the lady with the nails; while Delafield threw him a nod from the top of the steps, and Meredith ceased to chatter.

"I haven't a hand, I fear," said Julie. "Will you have some tea? Ah! Léonie! tu vas en faire de nouveau, n'est-ce pas, pour ce Monsieur?"

A little woman in black, with a shawl over her shoulders, had just glided into the room. She had a small wrinkled face, and a much-flattened nose.

"Tout de suite, Monsieur," she said, quickly, and disappeared with the teapot. Warkworth guessed, of course, that she was Madame Bornier, the foster-sister—the "Propriety" of this *ménage*.

"Can't I help?" he said to Julie, with a look at Delafield.

"It's just done," she said, coldly, handing a nail to Delafield. "Just a trifle more to the right. Ecco! Perfection!"

"Oh, you spoil him," said Meredith. "And not one word of praise for me!"

"What have you done?" she said, laughing. "Tangled the cord—that's all!"

Warkworth turned away. His face, so radiant as he entered, had settled into sharp sudden lines. What was the meaning of this voice, this manner? He re-

remembered that to his three letters he had received no word of reply. But he had interpreted that to mean that she was in the throes of moving and could find no time to write.

As he neared the tea table, Lord Lackington looked up. He greeted the newcomer with the absent stateliness he generally put on when his mind was in a state of confusion as to a person's identity.

"Well—so they're sending you to D——. There'll be a row there before long. Wish you joy of the missionaries!"

"No—not D——," said Warkworth, smiling. "Nothing so amusing. Mokembé's my destination."

"Oh! Mokembé," said Lord Lackington, a little abashed. "That's where Cecil Ray, Lord R.'s second son, was killed last year; lion-hunting? No!—it was of fever that he died. By-the-way—a vile climate!"

"In the plains, yes," said Warkworth, seating himself. "As to the uplands, I understand they are to be the Switzerland of Africa."

Lord Lackington did not appear to listen.

"Are you a homœopath?" he said, suddenly, rising to his full and immense stature and looking down with eagerness on Warkworth.

"No! Why?"

"Because it's your only chance, for those parts. If Cecil Ray had had their medicines with him he'd be alive now. Look here—when do you start?" The speaker took out his note-book.

"In rather less than a month I start for Denga."

"All right. I'll send you a medicine-case—from Epps. If you're ill—take 'em."

"You're very good!"

"Not at all. It's my hobby, one of the last"—a broad boyish smile flashed over the handsome old face. "Look at me; I'm seventy-five, and I can tire out my own grandsons at riding and shooting. That comes of avoiding all allopathic messes like the devil. But the allopaths are such mean fellows; they filch all our ideas—"

The old man was off. Warkworth submitted to five minutes' tirade; stealing a glance sometimes at the group of Julie,

Meredith, and Delafield in the further window, at the happy ease and fun that seemed to prevail in it. He fiercely felt himself shut out and trampled on.

Suddenly Lord Lackington pulled up, his instinct for declamation qualified by an equally instinctive dread of boring or being bored. "What did you think of Montresor's statement?" he said, abruptly, referring to a batch of army reforms that Montresor the week before had endeavored to recommend to a sceptical House of Commons.

"All very well, as far as it goes," said Warkworth, with a shrug.

"Precisely! We English want an army and a navy,—we don't like it when those fellows on the Continent swagger in our faces,—and yet we won't pay either for the ships or the men. However, now that they've done away with purchase,—Gad! I could fight them in the streets for the way in which they've done it!—now that they've turned the army into an examination-shop, tempered with jobbery,—whatever we do, we shall go to the deuce! So it don't matter."

"You were against the abolition?"

"I was, sir!—with Wellington, and Raglan, and everybody else of any account. And as for the disgraceful violence with which it was carried—"

"Oh no! no!" said Warkworth, laughing. "It was the Lords who behaved abominably,—and it 'll do a deal of good."

Lord Lackington's eyes flashed.

"I've had a long life," he said, pug-naciously,—“I began as a middy in the American war of 1814, that nobody remembers now. Then I left the sea for the army—I knocked about the world—I commanded a brigade in the Crimea—"

"Who doesn't remember that?" said Warkworth, smiling.

The old man acknowledged the homage by a slight inclination of his handsome head.

"And you may take my word for it that this new system will not give you men worth a *tenth part* of those fellows who bought and bribed their way in under the old! The philosophers may like it, or lump it; but so it is!"

Warkworth dissented strongly. He was a good deal of a politician, himself a "new man," and on the side of "new men." Lord Lackington warmed to the

fight, and Warkworth with bitterness in his heart—because of that group opposite—was nothing loath to meet him. But presently he found the talk taking a turn that astonished him. He had entered upon a drawing-room discussion of a subject which had, after all, been settled, if only by what the Tories were pleased to call the *coup d'état* of the Royal Warrant—and no longer excited the passions of a few years back. What he had really drawn upon himself was a hand-to-hand wrestle with a man who had no sooner provoked contradiction than he resented it with all his force, and with a determination to crush the contradictor.

Warkworth fought well, but with a growing amazement at the tone and manner of his opponent. The old man's eyes darted war-flames under his finely arched brows; he regarded the younger with a more and more hostile, even malicious air; his arguments grew personal, offensive; his shafts were many and barbed; till at last Warkworth felt his face burning and his temper giving way.

"What are you talking about?" said Julie Le Breton at last, rising and coming towards them.

Lord Lackington broke off suddenly and threw himself into his chair.

Warkworth rose from his.

"We had better have been handing nails," he said, "but you wouldn't give us any work." Then as Meredith and Delafield approached, he seized the opportunity of saying in a low voice,

"Am I not to have a word?"

She turned with composure, though it seemed to him she was very pale.

"Have you just come back from the Isle of Wight?"

"This morning." He looked her in the eyes. "You got my letters?"

"Yes; but I have had no time for writing. I hope you found your mother well."

"Very well, thank you. You have been hard at work?"

"Yes; but the Duchess and Mr. Delafield have made it all easy."

And so on,—a few more insignificant questions and answers.

"I must go," said Delafield, coming up to them, "unless there is any more work for me to do. Good-by, Major—I congratulate you. They have given you a fine piece of work."

Warkworth made a little bow,—half ironical. Confound the fellow's grave and lordly ways. He did not want his congratulations.

He lingered a little—sorely—full of rage, yet not knowing how to go.

Lord Lackington's eyes ceased to blaze; and the kitten ventured once more to climb upon his knee. Meredith, too, found a comfortable arm-chair, and presently tried to beguile the kitten from his neighbor. Julie sat erect between them, very silent, her thin white hands on her lap, her head drooped a little, her eyes carefully restrained from meeting Warkworth's. He meanwhile leaned against the mantel-piece irresolute.

Meredith, it was clear, made himself quite happy and at home in the little drawing-room. The lame child came in and took a stool beside him. He stroked her head and talked nonsense to her, in the intervals of holding forth to Julie, on the changes necessary in some proofs of his which he had brought back. Lord Lackington, now quite himself again, went back to dreams, smiling over them, and quite unaware that the kitten had been slyly ravished from him. The little woman in black sat knitting in the background. It was all curiously intimate and domestic—only Warkworth had no part in it.

"Good-by, Miss Le Breton," he said at last, hardly knowing his own voice. "I am dining out."

She rose and gave him her hand. But it dropped from his like a thing dead and cold. He went out in a sudden suffocation of rage and pain—and as he walked in a blind haste to Cureton Street, he still saw her standing in the old-fashioned scented room,—so coldly graceful, with those proud deep eyes.

When he had gone, Julie moved to the window, and looked out into the gathering dusk. It seemed to her as if those in the room must hear the beating of her miserable heart.

When she rejoined her companions Dr. Meredith had already risen and was stuffing various letters and papers into his pockets with a view to departure.

"Going?" said Lord Lackington. "You shall see the last of me too, Mademoiselle Julie."

And he stood up. But she, flushing, looked at him with a wistful smile.

"Won't you stay a few minutes? You promised to advise me about Thérèse's drawings."

"By all means."

Lord Lackington sat down again. The lame child, it appeared, had some artistic talent which Miss Le Breton wished to cultivate. Meredith suddenly found his coat and hat, and with a queer look at Julie, departed in a hurry.

"Thérèse darling," said Julie, "will you go up stairs, please, and fetch me that book from my room that has your little drawings inside it?"

The child limped away on her errand. In spite of her lameness she moved with wonderful lightness and swiftness; and she was back again quickly with a calf-bound book in her hand.

"Léonie!" said Julie in a low voice to Madame Bornier.

The little woman looked up startled, nodded, rolled up her knitting in a moment, and was gone.

"Take the book to his Lordship, Thérèse," she said, and then instead of moving with the child, she again walked to the window, and leaning her head against it, looked out. The hand hanging against her dress trembled violently.

"What did you want me to look at, my dear?" said Lord Lackington, taking the book in his hand and putting on his glasses.

But the child was puzzled, and did not know. She gazed at him silently with her sweet docile look.

"Run away, Thérèse, and find mother," said Julie, from the window.

The child sped away and closed the door behind her.

Lord Lackington adjusted his glasses and opened the book. Two or three slips of paper with drawings upon them fluttered out and fell on the table beneath. Suddenly there was a cry. Julie turned round, her lips parted.

Lord Lackington walked up to her.

"Tell me what this means," he said, peremptorily. "How did you come by it?"

It was a volume of George Sand. He pointed, trembling, to the name and date on the fly-leaf—"Rose Delaney, 1842."

"It is mine," she said, softly, dropping her eyes.

"But how—how, in God's name!—did you come by it?"

"My mother left it to me, with all her other few books and possessions."

There was a pause. Lord Lackington came closer.

"Who was your mother?" he said, huskily.

The words in answer were hardly audible. Julie stood before him like a culprit, her beautiful head humbly bowed.

Lord Lackington dropped the book and stood bewildered.

"Rose's child?" he said—"Rose's child?"

Then, approaching her, he placed his hand on her arm.

"Let me look at you," he commanded.

Julie raised her eyes to him, and at the same time dumbly held out to him a miniature she had been keeping hidden in her hand. It was one of the miniatures from the locked triptych.

He took it, looked from the pictured to the living face. Then turning away with a groan, he covered his face with his hands, and fell again into the chair from which he had risen.

Julie hurried to him. Her own eyes were wet with tears. After a moment's hesitation, she knelt down beside him.

"I ought to ask your pardon for not having told you before," she murmured.

It was some time before Lord Lackington looked up. When at last his hands dropped, the face they uncovered was very white and old.

"So you," he said, almost in a whisper, "are the child she wrote to me about—before she died?"

Julie made a sign of assent.

"How old are you?"

"Twenty-nine."

"She was thirty-two when I saw her last." There was a silence. Julie lifted one of his hands and kissed it. But he took no notice.

"You know—that I was going to her—that I should have reached her in time?"—the words seemed wrung from him—"but that I was myself dangerously ill?"

"I know. I remember it all."

"Did she speak of me?"

"Not often. She was very reserved, you remember. But not long before she died—she seemed half asleep—I heard

her say 'Papa!—Blanche!' and she smiled."

Lord Lackington's face contracted, and the slow tears of old age stood in his eyes.

"You are like her in some ways," he said, brusquely, as though to cover his emotion, "but not very like her."

"She always thought—I was like you."

A cloud came over Lord Lackington's face. Julie rose from her knees, and sat beside him. He lost himself a few moments amid the painful ghosts of memory; then turning to her abruptly he said,

"You have wondered, I dare say, why I was so hard—why for seventeen years I cast her off?"

"Yes—often. You could have come to see us without anybody knowing. Mother loved you very much."

Her voice was low and sad. Lord Lackington rose, fidgeted restlessly with some of the small ornaments on the mantel-piece, and at last turned to her.

"She brought dishonor," he said, in the same stifled voice, "and the women of our family have always been stainless. But that I could have forgiven. After a time, I should have resumed relations—private relations with her. But—it was—your father who stood in the way. I was then—I am now—you saw me with that young fellow just now—quarrelsome and hot-tempered. It is my nature"—he drew himself up obstinately—"I can't help it. I take great pains to inform myself—then I cling to my opinions tenaciously—and in argument my temper gets the better of me. Your father, too, was hot-tempered. He came, with my consent, once to see me—after your mother had left her husband—to try and bring about some arrangement between us. It was the Chartist time. He was a Radical, a Socialist of the most extreme views. In the course of our conversation something was said that excited him. He went off at score. I became enraged, and met him with equal violence. We had a furious argument, which ended in each insulting the other past forgiveness. We parted enemies for life. I never could bring myself to see him afterwards, nor to run the risk of seeing him. Your mother took his side and espoused his opinions, while he lived. After his death

—I suppose—she was too proud and sore to write to me. I wrote to her once—it was not the letter it might have been. She did not reply—till she felt herself dying. That is the explanation—of what—no doubt—must seem strange to you." He turned to her almost pleadingly. A deep flush had replaced the pallor of his first emotion, as though in the presence of these primal realities of love, death, and sorrow, which she had recalled to him, his old quarrel, on a political difference, cut but a miserable figure.

"No," she said, sadly, "not very strange. I understood my father—my dear father," she added, with soft, deliberate tenderness.

Lord Lackington was silent a little. Then he threw her a sudden penetrating look.

"You have been in London three years. You ought to have told me before."

It was Julie's turn to color.

"Lady Henry bound me to secrecy."

"Lady Henry did wrong," he said, with emphasis; then he asked, jealously, with a touch of his natural irascibility, "Who else has been in the secret?"

"Four people at most—the Duchess first of all. I couldn't help it," she pleaded; "I was so unhappy with Lady Henry."

"You should have come to me. It was my right."

"But"—she dropped her head—"you had made it a condition that I should not trouble you."

He was silenced. And once more he leaned against the mantel-piece and hid his face from her. Till, by a secret impulse, both moved: she rose and approached him; he laid his hands on her arms. With his persistent instinct for the lovely or romantic he perceived with sudden pleasure the grave poetic beauty of her face and delicate form. Emotion had softened away all that was harsh; a quivering charm hovered over the features. With a strange pride, and a sense of mystery, he recognized his daughter and his race.

"For my Rose's child!" he said, gently, and stooping, he kissed her on the brow. She broke out into weeping, leaning against his shoulder, while the old man comforted and soothed her.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

The Reconciliation

BY ANNE O'HAGAN

THE Westchester hills had been mellow and tender with the light of a late October afternoon when they had laid Joan Fletcher to rest among her ancestors. Wet-eyed women had whispered to one another that the warm, brooding radiance upon the bright leaves and the weathered stones of the churchyard had been in a sense like a last message from her. And men had bared their foreheads to the blue sky as though they too had felt the likeness between the beneficent seeming of a world whose heart was already chilled to death and the stately kindness of the woman they had come to honor.

Nearest the grave, and opposite the white-surpliced clergyman and the row of choristers who had followed from the ancient church she had loved, her husband and her son, Richard and De Courcy, had stood. The man had been decorously controlled, impassive for all his drawn look of pain. The slender boy had quivered through his sensitive frame when the first reverberation had followed the first clod, but the stoic pride of race which she had taught him and the uplifting hope of her religion had stilled his young anguish.

Now they were at home in the old manor-house, changed by swift necromancy from the drugged abode of illness and death to an airy dwelling, swept and garnished and full of emptiness. Richard Fletcher sat in his study, a little room off his bed-chamber. Through the window he looked across the country to the Sound, a blue jewel beyond the russet gold and the trailing ruby of the land. The drive cut semicircularly the green sweep of the lawns. The hothouses shone like frosty panes on a winter morning. These and the orchard aisles and the tangled fields stretching clear to the watery boundary in the east were hers—all her well-ordered inheritance, come down to her with fluted silver and cabinets of

Sèvres, with portraits of dames in farthingales, and of men in dim scarlet coats and in tawny coats of buff, in legal wigs and in surplices; come down to her with traditions of loyalty to a king, of service to a country, of devotion to a cause—all the memories converging in her, the slender woman, the last of a great name.

"Or at any rate of a highly and continuously successful name," said Richard Fletcher, in a sudden rush of bitterness.

He turned from the window and made his way to the table. He picked up the papers—they had accumulated during the past two or three days. Still with the slight sneer on his face, he opened them to the accounts of his wife's death.

They were all the same. Mrs. Richard Fletcher, the daughter of the late Judge De Courcy of the Supreme Court, the granddaughter of the late Senator De Courcy, at one time the American representative at the Court of St. James, had died at three o'clock on Monday morning at the old De Courcy place in Westchester. Mrs. Fletcher had been thrown from her carriage when returning from the Westchester horse show a month before, her horse taking fright at a passing locomotive. From the first there had been no hope, but Mrs. Fletcher, though conscious of her condition, had borne the ordeal unflinchingly. The end had come suddenly. She had been a belle in her youth, a social leader for some years after her marriage. Lately she had spent most of her time at De Courcy Manor, the beautiful old place on the Sound granted to her ancestor Reginald De Courcy, by James the Second, when to him as Duke of York the Dutch settlement had been assigned in a burst of easy generosity by his brother, Charles the Second. Mrs. Fletcher had been indefatigable in her charities and an ardent churchwoman. She was peculiarly devoted to her son, De Courcy,