

DOUBLE HARNESS.*

BY ANTHONY HOPE,

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XXII (*Continued*).

BLAKE was in a turmoil. He hated to see Grantley; all the odious thought of his failure and defeat was brought back. He hated that Grantley should have seen him making love to Anna Selford, for in his heart he was conscious that he could not cheat an outside vision as he could manage to cheat himself. But both these feelings, if not swallowed up in fear, were at least outdone by it. His great desire had been to settle this matter finally and irrevocably before a hint of it came to the ears either of Grantley or of Sibylla. What would Grantley do now?

"You saw us?" he asked in a sullen, anxious voice.

"I couldn't help it—I'm sorry," said Grantley in colorless politeness.

"Well?"

"I really don't understand your question, Blake. At least you seem to mean it for a question."

"You do know what I mean. I'm not going to ask any favors of you. I only want to know what you intend to do."

"About what?"

"About what you saw—and heard, too, I suppose."

Grantley rose from his chair in a leisurely fashion, and stood with his back to the fire. He was looking at young Blake with a slight smile; Blake grew redder under it.

"Oh, I can't beat about the bush," Blake went on impatiently. "You might, if you chose, tell Miss Selford what you know."

"Well?" said Grantley in his turn.

"And—and—oh, you see what might happen as well as I do. I—I meant to—explain at my own time, but——"

"I shouldn't let the time come in a hurry, Blake. It'll be a very awkward quarter of an hour for both of you. And quite unnecessary."

"Unnecessary?"

There was a ring of hope in Blake's voice; he liked to be told that any such confession was unnecessary, and would have welcomed such an assurance even from Grantley's hostile lips.

"Certainly—and equally unnecessary that I should tell Anna anything." Grantley paused a moment and then went on. "In a different case I might think I had a different duty—though, being what you might call an interested party, I should consider carefully before I allowed myself to act on that view. But as matters stand, you yourself have made any action on my part superfluous."

"I have?"

"Oh, yes. You so far injured the fame of the woman for whom you hadn't afterwards the pluck to fight that it's not necessary for me to tell Selford that you were in love with her a few months before you made love to his daughter, nor that you tried to run away with her, but that in the end you funk'd the job. I needn't tell him, because he knows—and his wife knows. You took care of that."

Young Blake said nothing, though he opened his lips as if to speak.

"And I needn't tell Anna, either. That's unnecessary for the same reason. She knows just as well as her father and mother know."

"She knows nothing, I tell you. She hasn't an idea——"

"Did you see her face when she saw it was I, and not Richards?"

"I tell you—she was embarrassed, of course—but——"

"She knows quite well, Blake. Oh, not the details, but the main thing. She knows that quite well. And she will have made her decision. There's no duty incumbent on me."

"You'll say nothing, then?"

"I shall say nothing at all."

Grantley relapsed into silence—an easy, self-possessed silence. His eyes were on young Blake no more, but rested placidly on one of Selford's pictures on

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the opposite wall. Blake cleared his throat, and shifted uneasily from one foot to the other.

"Why do you stay?" asked Grantley mildly. "Wouldn't it be better to continue your interview with Anna elsewhere? Mrs. Selford's coming in here."

Blake broke out:

"God knows, Imason, it's difficult for me to say a word to you, but——"

Grantley raised his hand a little.

"It's impossible," he said. "There can be no words between you and me about that. And what does it matter to you what I think? I shall hold my tongue. And I think Anna will hold her tongue. Then you'll forget she knows, and go on posturing before her with entire satisfaction to yourself." He turned his eyes on him and laughed a little. "As long as you can humbug yourself or anybody else, or even get other people to let you think you're humbugging them, you're quite happy, you know."

Blake looked at him once and twice, but his tongue found no words. He turned and walked toward the door.

"Wait in the dining-room," said Grantley.

Blake went out without turning or seeming to hear. After a moment or two Anna's step came down the stairs.

"Mamma'll be down directly, Mr. Imason," she called as she reached the door. Then her eyes took in the room. "Mr.—Mr. Blake?" she asked with a sudden quick rush of color to her cheeks.

"I think you'll find him in the dining-room," said Grantley gravely.

She understood—and she did not lack courage. She had enough for two—for herself and for Blake. She met Grantley's look fair and square, drawing up her trim, stylish figure to a stiff rigidity and setting her lips in a resolute line. Grantley admired her attitude and her open defiance of him. He smiled at her in a confidential mockery.

"Thanks, Mr. Imason, I'll look for him. You'll be all right till mamma comes?"

"Oh, yes, I shall be all right, thanks, Anna!"

He smiled still. Anna gave him another look of defiance. "I intend to go my own way—I know what I'm about—I don't care a pin what you think." The glance seemed to Grantley as eloquent as Lord Burghley's nod; and no more than Lord Burghley did she spoil its effect by words. She gave it to Grantley full and square, then turned on her heel and swung jauntily out of the room.

Grantley's smile vanished. He screwed up his lips as if he had tasted something rather sour.

XXIII.

GRANTLEY IMASON had intended to go down to Milldean that same evening, but a summons from Tom Courtland reached him, couched in such terms that he could not hesitate to obey it. He sought Tom at his club the moment he received the message. Tom had been summoned to his own house in the morning, and had heard what had happened there. He had seen the wounded child and the other two terrified little creatures. Suzette Bligh gave him her account. The doctor told him that Sophy was no longer in danger, but that the matter was a grave one—a very serious shock, and severe local injury; the child would recover with care and with quiet, but would always bear a mark of the wound, an inefaceable scar. That was the conclusion, half good, half bad, reached after a night of doubt whether Sophy would not die.

"Did you see your wife?" Grantley asked.

"See her? I should kill her if I saw her!" groaned Tom.

"But—but what's being done?"

"She's in her room; she's been there ever since it happened. Suzette's seen her—nobody else. Nobody else will go near her. Of course, while there was a doubt about Sophy—well, the doctor made it a condition that she should confine herself to her room till the thing took a definite turn. I hope she's frightened at last. I don't know what to do. The woman really ought to be hanged, Grantley!"

But wrath and horror at his wife were not the only feelings in Tom's mind; the way in which the thing had happened raised other thoughts. He was prostrate under the sense that the fury which had smitten poor little Sophy had been aimed at him; his acts had inspired and directed it. He had made his children's love for him a crime in their mother's eyes. All his excuses, both false and real, failed him now. His own share in the tragedy of his home was heavy and heinous in his eyes.

"I ought to have remembered the children," he kept repeating desperately.

He ought to have stayed and fought the battle for and with them, however hard the struggle was. But he had run

away—to Mrs. Bolton—and left them alone to endure the increased fury of Harriet's rage.

"I've been a confounded coward over it," he said, "and this is what comes of it, Grantley!"

It was all true. Tom had not thought of the children. Even though he loved them, he had deserted them treacherously, because he had considered only his own wrongs, and had been wrapped up in his personal quarrel with his wife. What he had found unendurable himself he had left those helpless little creatures to endure. His friends had almost encouraged Tom in his treacherous desertion of his children. They, too, had looked at nothing but the merits of his quarrel with Harriet, putting that by itself, in a false isolation from the total life of the family, of which it was in truth an integral part. So Grantley meditated as he listened to Tom's laments; and the meditation was not without meaning and light for him also.

Tom had a request to make of him—that he would go to the house and spend the evening there.

"I daren't trust myself near Harriet," he said, "and I'm uneasy with only the servants there. They're all afraid of her. She was cowed, Suzette says, while there was danger, but she may break out again—anything might start her again. If you could stay till she's safely in bed—"

"I'll stay all night, if necessary, old fellow," said Grantley promptly.

"It'll take a weight off my mind—and I've got about enough to bear. I'm going to stay here, of course, so you'll know where to find me if I'm wanted, though I don't see what can happen now."

Terror brooded over the Courtlands' house. Grantley rejoiced to see how his coming did something to lift the cloud. The two children left Suzette's side—they loved her, but she seemed to them a defense all too frail—and came to him, standing on either side of his knee and putting their hands in his. The listening, strained look passed out of their eyes as he talked to them.

Presently Little Vera climbed up and nestled on his knee, while Lucy leaned against his shoulder, and he got them to prattle about happy things, old holidays and bygone treats to which Tom had taken them. At last Lucy laughed merrily at some childish memory. The sound went straight to Grantley's heart; a great tenderness came upon him. As he kissed them, his thoughts flew to his

own little son—the child who had now begun to know love, to greet it, and to ask for it. How these poor children prized even a decent kindness! Grantley seemed to himself to have done a fine day's work—as fine a day's work as he had ever done in his life—when he sent them off to bed with smiling lips and eyes relieved of dread.

"You won't go away to-night, will you?" Lucy whispered as she kissed him good night.

"Of course he's not going," cried little Vera, bravely confident in the thought of her helplessness.

"No, I'll stay all night—all the whole night," Grantley promised.

He made his camp in the library on the ground floor, and there presently Suzette Bligh came to see him. She gave a good account of the wounded child. Sophy slept; the capable, cheery woman who had come as nurse gave her courage to sleep.

"We must get her away to the seaside as soon as possible, and she'll be all right, I think, though there will be a mark always. And of course the permanent question remains. Isn't it all hopeless, Mr. Imason?"

"It's a terrible business for you to be involved in!"

"Oh, I can only thank Heaven I was here. But for me, I believe she'd have killed the child."

"What state is she in now?"

"I really don't know. She won't speak to me. She sits quite still, just staring at me. I try to stay with her, but it's too dreadful. I can't help hating her—and I think she knows it."

Grantley had had some experience of what it was like to come to know how people feel about you.

"I expect she does," he nodded.

"What will happen, Mr. Imason?"

"I don't know—except that the children mustn't stay with her. Is she afraid of prosecution do you think?"

"She hasn't said anything about it. No, she doesn't seem afraid; I don't think that's her feeling. But her eyes look awful. When I had to tell her that the doctor had forbidden her to come near the children, and said he would send the police into the house if she tried to go to them—well, I've never seen such an expression on any human face before. She looked like—like somebody in hell, Mr. Imason!"

"Ah!" groaned Grantley, with a jerk of his head, as if he turned from a fearful spectacle.

"I've just been with her. I persuaded her to go to bed—she's not slept since it happened, I know—and got her to let me help her to undress. Her maid won't go to her, she's too frightened. I hope she'll go to sleep, or really I think she'll lose her senses." She paused and then asked: "Will this make any difference in—the proceedings?"

"Well, it gives Tom something to bargain with, doesn't it? But you can't tell with her. The ordinary motives may not appeal to her, any more than the natural feelings. I hope it may be possible to frighten her."

"Anyhow, the children won't have to stay? You're sure of that?"

"We must try hard for that," said Grantley.

But Tom had made even that more difficult, because he had considered only his own quarrel, and, not thinking of the children, had run away to refuge with Mrs. Bolton, saving his own skin by treacherous flight.

Suzette bade Grantley good-night. She too must sleep, or her strength would fail.

"You'll keep the door open?" she asked. "And her room is just over this. You'll hear if she moves, though I don't think she will. It is good of you, Mr. Imason. We shall all sleep quietly to-night. Oh, but how tired you'll be!"

"Not I," he smiled. "I've often sat up till daylight on less worthy occasions. You're the hero. You've come through this finely."

Suzette's cheeks flushed at his praise.

"I do love the poor children," she said as Grantley pressed her hand.

He sat down to his vigil. The house became very still. Once or twice steps passed to and fro in the room above. Then there was silence. In a quarter of an hour, perhaps, there were steps again, then another interval of quiet. This alternation of movement and rest went on for a long time. If Harriet Courtland slept, her sleep was broken.

But presently Grantley ceased to mark the sound, ceased even to think of the Courtlands or of the house where he was. Led by the experiences of the day, and by the feelings they had evoked, his thoughts took their way to Milldean, to his own home, to his wife and son. How nearly tragedy had come there, too! Nay, was it yet gone? Was not its shadow still over the house? And why?

He looked back again at the Courtlands—at Harriet's unhallowed rage, at Tom's weakness and desertion, at the

fate of the children—not thought of and forgotten by the one, ill-used and put in terror by the other. He recollected how once they used to joke about the Courtlands being at any rate useful as a warning. That joke had taken on too keen an edge to sound mirthful now. But the serious truth in it came home to him, making plain what he had been groping after ever since that night at the Sailors' Rest in Fairhaven, ever since Sibylla had opened her mouth against him and spoken the bitterness of her heart. Yes, he thought he saw where the truth lay now. Calamity held up a torch to light his wandering feet.

No borrowed light had made plain the steps of the woman up-stairs. The glare of her own ruin had been needed to illuminate the way she trod; so dense was the turbid darkness of her spirit. She saw now where she stood, and there seemed no going back. She had fallen into fits of remorse before; she had called herself cursed over her betrayal of Christine. That was nothing to this; yet she remembered it now, and it went to swell the wave of despair which overwhelmed her.

Well might her eyes look like the eyes of one in hell, for she was cut off from all love and sympathy. Nobody would come near her; nobody could endure her presence; she was a thing of hatred and of fear. Even Suzette Bligh shrank while she served, and loathed while she ministered. Her husband could not trust himself in the house with her, and she could not be trusted in the room with her children. By the narrowest luck she was not a murderess; in the hearts of all, and in her own heart, she seemed a leper—a leper among people who were whole, an unclean thing—because of her bestial rage.

These thoughts had been in her mind all the night before and all the day. They did not consort with sleep, nor make terms with peaceful rest. Sometimes they drove her to wild and passionate outbursts of weeping and imprecation; oftener they chained her motionless to her chair, so still that only her angry eyes showed life and consciousness.

They left little room for fear of any external punishment, or for shame at any public exposure. They went deeper than that, condemning not the body, but the soul, pronouncing not the verdict of the world, but of herself and of nature's inexorable laws. They displayed the procession of evil—weakness growing to

vice, vice turning to crime, crime throttling all the good—till she had become a thing horrible to those about her, horrible and incredible even to herself. And there was no going back, no going back at all. Her will was broken and she had no hope in herself. The weights were on her feet, and they dragged her down the abyss which now lay open and revealed before her eyes.

Suzette had persuaded her to undress and go to bed. She must sleep—yes, or she would go mad with the thoughts. But where was sleep with the agony of their sting? She had her chloral, an old ally, and had recourse to it. Then she would fling herself on the bed and try to think that she could sleep.

Exasperation drove her up again, and she paced the room in wrathful despair, cursing herself because she could not sleep, battling again the remorseless thoughts, exclaiming against their tortures, refusing the inquisition to which they subjected her. Then back to bed again for another futile effort, another cry of despair, to be followed by another outburst of wild impatience, another fierce, unavailing struggle against her tormentors, new visions of what she was and of what her life must be.

This was not a thing that she would endure; nobody could endure it and keep sanity. It should be ended. Her fierce, defiant fury rose yet once more; the temper which had wrought all the calamity was not tamed by it in the end. She turned to her drug again. She knew there was danger in that, but she put the notion behind her scornfully. Why, the stuff would not even make her sleep! Could it hurt her when it could not even give her sleep? That was nonsense, stupid nonsense. She would have sleep!

Nature fell victim to her rage now; she would beat nature down by her fury as she had been wont to beat down all opposing wills. She had listened to nothing in her tempests. Now she rose again to the whirlwind of passion, denying what she knew, refusing to look at it.

Kill herself? Not she! Yet, if she did, what matter? Had she anything to look for in life? Would anybody grieve for her? It would be a riddance for all of them if she died. But she wouldn't die. No danger of that—and no such luck, either! Each dose left her more pitifully wide awake, more gruesomely alert in mind, more hideously acute to feel the sting of those torturing thoughts. An overdose indeed! No dose, it seemed, could serve even to dull the sharpness of

her mordant reflections. But she would have sleep—at all costs, sleep! She cursed herself vilely because she could not sleep.

Thus came, as of old, now for the last time, the madness and blindness of her rage, the rage which forgot all save itself, merged every other consciousness, spared nobody and nothing. It was turned against herself now, and neither did it spare herself. She drugged herself again, losing all measure, and then flung herself heavily on the bed.

Ah! Surely there was a change now! The horrid pictures grew mercifully dim, the sting of the torturing thoughts was drawn, the edge of conscience blunted. Her rage had had its way, it had beaten down nature. For a moment she grasped this triumph and exulted in it, with her old barbarous gloating over the victories of her fury. All things had been against her sleep. But now it came; she had won it. She ceased to move, to curse, even to think. The blessed torpor stole over her. Her life and what it must be passed from her mind; a compassionate blankness spread over her intellect. She was at peace.

To-morrow—yes, to-morrow! All things could wait now till to-morrow. She would be better able to face them to-morrow, after a good night's sleep. Who had dared to say she could not sleep? Her eyes closed, and her heavy breathing sounded through the room. She stirred no more. Her rage had had its way with her, as with all others. It had demanded sleep. She slept.

Dawn had broken when a hand laid on his shoulder roused Grantley Imason from an uneasy doze. He found Suzette by him, in her dressing-gown, and barefooted. Instinctively he listened for an instant to hear if there were any sound from the room above. There was none, and he asked her:

"Is anything wrong?"

"Yes," whispered Suzette. "Come up-stairs."

Not knowing what the evil chance might be, he followed her, and she led him into Harriet Courtland's room. She had already opened one of the shutters, and the early light streamed in upon the bed. Harriet lay on her side, with her head thrown back on the pillow, and her eyes turned up to the ceiling. She lay above the clothes of the bed, and her nightgown was torn away from her throat. Suzette had thrown a dressing-gown over her body from breast to feet. She looked wonderfully handsome as she

lay there, so still, so peaceful, like some splendid animal in a reaction of exhaustion after savage exertion.

Imason drew near. The truth came home to him at once. The two stood and looked at Harriet. At last he turned to Suzette. He found her very pale, but quite calm.

"She's dead, Mr. Imason," Suzette said.

"How?" he asked.

"An overdose of chloral. She often used to take it—and of course she would be very likely to want a sleeping-draft last night."

"Yes, yes, of course she would. Her nerves would be so much upset!" Their eyes met; Suzette's seemed puzzled. "What do you think?" asked Grantley in a whisper.

"I really don't know. She would really have been quite likely to take too much. She would be impatient if it didn't act quickly, you know."

"Yes, yes, of course she would. Have you sent for the doctor?"

"Oh, yes, directly I found her—before I came to you. But I've done some nursing, and—and there's not the least—" She stopped suddenly and was silent for several seconds. Then she said quietly and calmly: "There's not the least chance, Mr. Imason."

Grantley knew what word she had rejected in favor of "chance," and why the word had seemed inappropriate. He acknowledged the justice of the change with a mournful gesture of his hands.

"Well, we can never know whether it was accidental or not," he said, as he turned to leave the room.

"No, we can never know that," said Suzette.

How should they know? Harriet Courtland had not known herself. As always, so to the end her fury had been blind, and had destroyed her blindly.

She had struck at herself as recklessly as at her child. And here her blow had killed. Her rage had run its final course, and for the last time had its way. She slept.

And while she slept, her home was waking to the life of a new day.

XXIV.

THE calamity at the Courtlands' struck on all their acquaintances like a nip of icy wind, sending a shudder through them, making them, as it were, huddle closer about them the protecting vesture of any hope or any happiness

that they had. The outrage on the child stood out horrible in the light of the mother's death; the death of the mother found an appalling explanation in the child's plight. Whether the death were by a witting or an unwitting act seemed a small matter; darkness and blindness had fallen on the unhappy woman before the last hours, and somehow in the darkness she had passed away.

There was not lacking the last high touch of tragedy; the catastrophe which shocked and awed was welcome, too. It was the best thing that could have happened. Any end was better than no end. To such a point of hopelessness had matters come, in such a fashion Harriet Courtland had used her life. The men and women who had known her, her kindred, her friends, and her household, all whom nature had designed to love her, while they shuddered over the manner of her going, sighed with relief that she was gone.

The decree of fate had filled the page, and it was finished; but their minds still tingled from it as they turned to the clean sheet and prayed a kinder message.

Grantley Imason, so closely brought in contact with the drama, almost an eye-witness of it, was deeply moved, stirred to fresh feelings, and quickened to a new vision. Out of his somber and puzzled reflections there sprang—suddenly, as it seemed, and in answer to his cry for guidance—an enlightening pity; pity for his boy, lest he, too, should bear on his brow the scar of hatred, almost as plain to see as the visible mark which was to stamp little Sophy's forevermore—and pity for Sibylla, because her empty heart had opened to so poor a tenant when in very hunger she had turned to Blake.

He no longer rejected the hope of communion with the immature, infantile mind of his son; he ceased to laugh scornfully at a love dedicated to such a man as Walter Blake. A sad sympathy with his boy—even such as he had felt for Tom Courtland's little girls—spurred him to fresh efforts to understand. Contempt for his wife's impulsive affections gave way to compassion as his mind dwelt, not on what she had done, but on what had driven her to do it—as he threw back his thoughts from the unworthy satisfaction her heart had sought to the straits of starvation which had made any satisfaction seem so good. This was to look in the end at himself, and to the task of studying himself he was now thrust back. If he could not do

that, and do it to a purpose, desolation such as he had witnessed and shuddered at stood designated as the unalterable future of his own home.

Then, at last, he was impatient. His slow, persevering campaign was too irksome, and success delayed seemed to spell failure. The time comes when no man can work. The darkness might fall on his task still unperformed. He became afraid, and therefore impatient. He could not wait for Sibylla to come to him. He must meet her—in something more than civility, in something more than a formal concession of her demands, more than an acquiescence which had been not untouched by irony and by the wish to put her in the wrong.

He must forget his claims and think of his needs. His needs came home to him now; his claims could wait. And as his needs cried out, there dawned in him a glow of anticipation. What would it not mean if the needs could be satisfied?

He stayed in London for Harriet Courtland's funeral, and in the evening went down to Milldean, a sharper edge given to his thoughts by the sight of Tom and the two little girls—Sophy could not come—following Harriet's coffin to the grave. Christine Fanshaw was in the carriage which met him at the station, and was his companion on the homeward drive. The Courtland calamity had touched her deeply, too, but touched her to bitterness—if indeed her outward bearing could be taken as a true index of her mind. She bore herself aggressively toward fate and its lessons; an increased acidity of manner condemned the follies of her friends; she dropped no tears over their punishment. Still, there was very likely something else beneath; she had not heard from John since she came down to Milldean.

"How have you all been getting on?" Grantley asked as he took the reins and settled himself beside her.

"We've done excellently since you went away. Of course we've been upset about this horrible business, but——"

"Otherwise you've done very well?" he smiled.

"Oh, yes, very."

"Since I went away?"

"Yes, since you went away," Christine repeated.

"Perhaps it's not a very good thing for me to come back?"

"We can hardly banish you from your own house." The concession was grudging. Grantley laughed, and the tone of his laugh brought her eyes sharply round

to his face. "You seem very cheerful," she remarked with an accusing air.

"No, I'm not that exactly. But I've got an idea—and that brightens one up a bit, you know."

"Any change does that," Christine admitted waspishly.

"I saw John for a minute. He looked a bit worried. Does he complain?"

"He's not complained to me."

"Oh, then it's all right, I suppose. And he says the business is all right, anyhow. How's the boy?"

"As merry and jolly as he can be."

"And Sibylla?"

"Yes, Sibylla, too, as merry as possible."

"They both have been, you mean?"

"Yes, of course I do."

"While I've been away?"

"Yes, while you've been away."

Grantley laughed again. Christine looked at him in dawning wonder. She had expected nothing from this drive but a gloom deepening—or at least a constraint increasing—with every yard they came nearer to Milldean. But there was something new. With some regret she recognized that her acidity, her harping on "While you were away," had not been the best prelude to questioning, or much of an invitation to confidence. And it had, moreover, failed in its primary purpose of annoying Grantley by its implied comment on his conduct.

Her voice grew softer, and, with one of her coaxing little tricks, she edged herself closer to his side.

"Any good news among all the bad, Grantley?"

"There's no good news yet," said he.

She caught at his last word.

"Yet? Yet, Grantley?"

"I'm not going to talk any more. That off horse is a young 'un and——"

"It's something to have a 'yet' in life again," she half whispered. "'Yet' seems to imply a future—a change, perhaps!"

"Do you want a change, too?"

"Oh, come, you're not so dull as to have to ask that!"

"You've told me nothing."

"And I won't. But I'll ask you one question—if you'll leave it at that."

"Well, what's the question?"

"Did John send his love to me?"

Grantley looked at her a moment and smiled in deprecation.

"It would have been tactful to invent the message," smiled Christine.

"I'm getting a bit out of heart with tact, Christine."

"Quite so, my dear man. And get out of patience with some other things, too, if you can. Your patience would try Job—and not only from jealousy, either."

Grantley's only answer was a reflective smile.

"And what about Tom Courtland?" she went on. "Is he with the children?"

"No; he's living at the club. He feels a bit lost, I fancy. I think it rather depends on somebody else now. He's a weak chap, poor old Tom!"

"You're full of discoveries about people to-day. Any other news?"

"No, none."

"But, you see, I've heard from Janet Selford!"

"Will you consider my remarks about your remarks as repeated—with more emphasis?"

"Oh, yes, I will. You're talking more as you used to before you were married."

"That's a compliment? I expect so—coming from a woman. Christine, have you read Janet Selford's letter to Sibylla?"

"Parts of it."

"I wish you hadn't. I didn't want her to know. I saw the fellow there—with Anna."

"Anna's a very clever girl. She does me great credit."

"I should wait a bit to claim it, if I were you. I'm sorry you told Sibylla."

"If you're going to be generous as well as patient, there's an end of any chance of your turning human, Grantley!"

"You're quite good company to-day!"

"I'm always ready to be, but one can't manage it without some help."

"Which you haven't found in my house?"

"Yes, I have—since you were away."

She said it this time in a different way, with a hint, perhaps an appeal, in her up-turned eyes and the slightest touch of her hand on his sleeve—almost like the soft pat of a kitten's paw, as quick, as timid, and as venturous.

Grantley turned his head to look at her. Her eyes were bright and eager.

"We've actually begun to be pleasant!" he said, smiling.

"Yes, almost to enjoy ourselves. Wonderful! But we're not at the house yet!"

"Not quite!" he said, and his face set again in firm lines.

"You'd so much better not look so serious about it. That's as bad as your old county council!"

"Are you quite sure you understand the case?"

"Meaning the woman? Oh, no! She's difficult. But I understand that, when one thing's failed utterly, you don't risk much by trying another."

They came to the top of the hill which runs down to Milldean. Christine sighed.

"Poor old Harriet! She was a jolly girl once, you know, and so handsome. I've had some good times with Harriet. Do you think she's at peace, Grantley?"

"She has paid," said he. "She has paid for what she was and did. I hope she's at peace."

Christine's eyes grew dreamy; her voice fell to a gentle murmur.

"I wonder if it's quite silly to fancy that she's paid something for some of us, too, Grantley? I was thinking something like that, somehow, when I said 'Poor old Harriet!'"

"I daresay it's silly—but I don't know that it seems so to me," he answered.

Just once again he felt the tiny velvety touch. So they came to Milldean.

The twofold pity which had roused Grantley from a lethargy of feeling, mis-conceived as self-control, had its counterpart in the triple blow with which the course of events assailed Sibylla's estimate of herself. In the first place, the news about young Blake—announced in Janet Selford's letter, indirectly, indeed, but yet with a confident satisfaction—made her ask whether her great sacrifice had been offered at a worthy shrine, and her great offering received with more than a shallow and transitory appreciation. In the second, the thought and image of the Courtland children spoke loud to the instinct which her ideas had lulled to sleep, bitterly accusing her desertion of the child and her indifference to his fate, rousing her underlying remorse to quick and vengeful life. Lastly, she was stirred to see and recognize the significance of the third turn of fate, the meaning of the nemesis which had fallen on Harriet Courtland—how she had let her rage spare nothing, neither self-respect, nor decency, nor love, and how in the end, thus enthroned in tyranny, it had not spared herself.

The three accusations, each with its special import, each taking up a distinct aspect of the truth and enforcing it with a poignant example, joined their indictments into one. Thus united, they cried out their condemnation, taking for their mouthpiece Christine Fanshaw's pretty lips, using her daintily scornful voice and the trenchant, uncompromising words from which the utterer herself had afterwards recoiled as being far too

coarse and crude to be a legitimate weapon of attack.

The logic of events was not so squeamish; it does not deal in glosses or in paraphrase; it is blunt, naked, and merciless, and must be, since only when all other appeals and warnings have failed does its appointed work begin. It fastened with what almost seemed malicious glee on Christine's biting word, and enforced it by a pitiless vividness of memory, an unceasing echo in Sibylla's thoughts.

Her emotions had gone "sprawling" over everything. The description did not need elaboration. It was abominably expressive and sufficient. And it did not admit of pleading or of extenuation. It showed her touching, on one extreme, Blake's shallow and spurious sentiment, on the other Harriet Courtland's license of anger. It pointed her attention to the ruin of Tom's life, to the piteous plight of his children, to Harriet's fate, to Blake's facile forgetfulness of love too heedlessly and wantonly offered. It stripped her fantastic ideas of their garish finery, leaving them, in the revulsion of her feelings, bereft of all beauty and attractiveness.

Impelled to look back, she seemed to find the same trail over everything—even in those childish days of which Jeremy Chiddingfold had once given a description that would not have reassured her, even in the beginning of her acquaintance with Grantley, in the ready rapture of her first love, in the intoxication of the fairy ride. Changing its form, now hostile to her husband instead of with him, the same temper showed in all the events which led up to the birth of little Frank. Its presence proved that her madness over Blake was no isolated incident, but rather the crown of her development—and the truest interpreter of a character empty of worth, strength, or stability.

Many bitter hours brought her to this recognition; but when light came, the very temper she condemned was in her still, and turned the coolness of recognition and analysis into an extravagant heat of scorn and self-contempt.

What was the conclusion? Was she to throw herself at Grantley's feet, proclaiming penitence, imploring pardon, declaring love?

"No, no!" she cried.

That would be so easy, so short a cut, so satisfying to her roused feelings! She put the notion from her in horror; it was the suggestion of her old devil in a new disguise. Her love for Grantley had bitten too deep into her nature to be treated

so—with that levity and frivolity of easy impulses, that violence of headstrong emotion, those tempests of feeling so remote from true sincerity of heart. The cure did not lie in pampering sick emotions into a plump semblance of healthy life. Where did it lie, if it were possible at all? It must lie in the most difficult of all tasks—a change not of other people, or of their bearing and feelings towards her, but a change of herself and of her own attitude toward others and toward the world, a change in her judgment and her ruling of herself. If things were to go differently with her, she must be different. The arrogance of her nature must be abated, the extravagant claims she had made must be lowered.

The thought struck on her almost with despair; so hard seemed the lesson, so rough the path. And it seemed a path which must be trodden alone. It was not as the easy, pleasant road of emotion, beguiled by enchanting companionship, strewn with the flowers of fancy, carpeted with pleasure. This way was hard, bleak, and solitary. Merely to contemplate it chilled her.

Even that happiness with her child, which had struck Christine and afforded matter for one of those keen thrusts at Grantley Imason, now appeared to Sibylla in a suspicious guise. She could not prevent it nor forego it—nature was too strong; but she yielded to it with qualms of conscience, and its innocent delights were spoiled by the voice of self-accusation and distrust. Could it be real, genuine, true, in the woman who had deserted the child and been indifferent to his fate?

Both penitents, both roused to self-examination, Grantley Imason and his wife seemed to have exchanged parts. Each had suffered an inversion, if not of character, yet of present mood. Each sought and desired something of what had appeared to deserve reprobation when displayed by the other. Their own propensities and ideals, carried to an extreme, had threatened ruin; they erected the opposite temper of mind into a standard, and sought to conform their conduct thereto at the cost of violence to themselves. It seemed strange, yet it was the natural effect of the fates and the temperaments which they had seen worked out and displayed before their eyes, in such close touch with them, impinging so sharply on their own destinies.

Sibylla had not been at home when Grantley arrived. She met him first in

the nursery, when she went to see little Frank at his tea. No mood, be it what it would, could make Grantley a riotous, romping companion for a tiny child. That effort was beyond him. But to-day he played with his son with a new sympathy, talked to him with a pleasant gravity which stirred the young and curious mind, listened to his broken utterances with a kindly, quizzical smile which manifestly seemed to encourage the little fellow.

Grantley had never before found so much answering intelligence. He forgot the quick development which even a few weeks bring at such a time of life. He set all the difference down to the fact that never before had he looked for what he now found so ready and so obvious. Anything he did not find for himself the nurse was eager to point out; and with the aid of this enthusiastic sign-post Grantley discovered the road to understanding very readily. He and the boy were without doubt enjoying each other's society when Sibylla came in.

She stood in the doorway, waiting with an aching heart for the usual thing, for a withdrawal of even such sign of interest as Grantley had ever shown in old days. It did not come. He gave her a cheery recognition and went on playing with Frank. Irresistibly drawn, she came near to them.

Something was signaled in Frank's struggling speech, and impatiently waving arms. Grantley could not follow, and now turned his eyes to Sibylla, asking for an explanation. The nurse had gone into the other room, busied about the preparations for the meal. Sibylla took Frank in her arms.

"I know what he means," she said proudly.

Her eyes met Grantley's; his were fixed very intently on her.

"I don't," he said. "Is it possible for a man to learn these mysteries?"

His tone and words were light; they were even mocking, but not now with the mockery which hurts. Sibylla's cheeks flushed a little.

"You'd like to learn?" she asked. "Shall we try to teach him, Frank—to teach him your code?"

"I'll watch you with him," Grantley said.

For a moment she looked at him appealingly, and then knelt on the floor and arranged the toys exactly as Frank had wanted them. The little fellow laughed in triumph.

"How did you know?" asked Grantley.

"I've not lost that knowledge—no, I haven't!" she answered almost in a whisper.

The scene was fuel to Grantley's newly stirred impulses. He had rejoiced in his wife before now; but the clouds had always hung about the cot, so that he had not rejoiced nor gloried in the mother of his child. His heart was full as he sat and watched the mother and the child.

"You've got to watch him very carefully still, but he's getting ever so much more—more—"

"Lucid," Grantley suggested, smiling.

"Yes," she laughed, "and, if possible, more imperious still. I believe he's going to be like you in that."

"Oh, not like me, let's hope!"

He laughed, but there was a look of pain on his face. Sibylla turned to him and spoke in a low voice, lest by chance the nurse should hear.

"You mustn't be sure I agree altogether with that," she said, and turned swiftly away to the child again.

Grantley rose.

"Lift him up to me and let me kiss him," he said.

With grave eyes Sibylla obeyed.

But the natural man is not easily subdued, nor does he yield his place readily. Grantley was not apt at explanations or apologies.

The evening fell fair and still, a fine October night, and he joined Sibylla in the garden. Christine remained inside—from tact, perhaps, though she was very likely chilly, too. Grantley smoked in silence, while Sibylla looked down on the little village below.

"This thing has shaken me up dreadfully," he said at last. "The Courtlands, I mean."

"Yes, I know." She turned and faced him. "And isn't there something else that concerns you and me?"

"I know of nothing. You can hardly say that the Courtlands' affairs concern us exactly."

"They do—and there is something else, Grantley. I know what Janet Seldford wrote."

"That's nothing at all to me."

"But it is something to me. You know it is."

"I won't talk of that. It's nothing!"

He put his hand out suddenly to her. "Let's be friends, Sibylla."

She did not take his hand, but she looked at him with a friendly gaze.

"We really ought to try to manage that, oughtn't we?" she said. "For Frank's sake, if for nothing else. Or do

you think I've no right to talk about Frank?"

"Suppose we don't talk about rights at all? I'm not anxious to."

"It'll be hard; but we'll try to be friends for his sake—that he may have a happy home."

Grantley's heart was stirred.

"That's good, but is that all?" he asked in a low voice, full of feeling. "Is it all over for ourselves? Can't we be friends for our own sakes?"

"Haven't we lost—well, not the right, if you don't like that, but the power?"

"I'm an obstinate man; you know that very well."

"It'll be hard—for both of us—but, yes, we'll try."

She gave him her hand to bind the bargain; he gripped it with an intensity that surprised and alarmed her. She could see his eyes through the gloom. Were they asking friendship only? There was more than that in his heart and in his eyes; there was something which had never been dead in him. It had sprung to fresh vigor now, from the lessons of calamity, from the pity born in him, from the new eyes with which he had looked on the boy in his mother's arms. She could not miss the expression of it.

"Is that the best we can try for?" he whispered. "There was something else once, Sibylla!"

He had not moved, yet she raised her hands as if to check or beat off his approach. She was afraid. He invited her again along that perilous declivity which to begin is so easy, on which to stop is so hard. All that the path to which he again beckoned her had once meant to her came to her mind. If she followed him along it, would it not be once more to woo disillusion, to court disaster, to invite that awful change to bitterness and hatred?

"You are you, and I am I," she protested. "It—it is impossible, Grantley." His face assumed its old obstinate squareness as he heard her. "I don't want that," she murmured. "I'll try to be friends. We can understand each other as friends, make allowances, give and forgive. Friendship's charitable. Let's be friends, Grantley!"

"You have no love left for me?" he asked, passing by her protests.

"For months past I've hated you!"

"I know that. And you have no love left for me?"

She looked at him again, with fear and shrinking in her eyes.

"Have you forgotten what I did? No, you can't have forgotten! How can you wish me to love you now? It would be horrible for both of us. You may forgive me as I do you—what I may have to forgive. But how can we be lovers again? How can we—with that in the past?"

"The past is the past," he said calmly.

She walked away from him a little. When she came back in a minute or so he saw that she was in strong agitation.

"That's enough to-night—enough for all time, if you so wish," he said gently. "Only I had to tell you what was in my heart."

"How could you, Grantley?"

"I haven't said it was easy. I'm coming to believe that the easy things aren't worth much."

"You could love me again?"

"I've never ceased to love you—only I hope I know a bit more about how to do it now."

She stood there the picture of distress and of fear. At last she broke out:

"Ah, I've not told you the real thing. I'm afraid, Grantley, I'm afraid! I dare not love you. Because I loved you so beyond all reason and all—all sanity, all this came upon us. And—and I daren't love you again now, even if I could." She came a step nearer to him, holding out her hands. "Friends, friends, Grantley!" she implored. "Then we shall be safe. And our love shall be for Frank. You'll get to love Frank, won't you?"

"Frank and I are beginning to hit it off capitally," said Grantley cheerfully. "Well, I shall go in now—we mustn't leave Christine alone all the evening." He took her hand and kissed it. "So we're friends?" he asked.

"I'll try," she faltered. "Yes, surely we can manage that!"

He turned away and left her again gazing down on the village and Old Mill House. He lounged into the drawing-room where Christine sat, with an easy air and a smile on his face.

"A beautiful evening, isn't it?" asked Christine with a tiny shudder, as she hitched her chair closer to the bit of bright fire and threw a faintly protesting glance at the open window.

"Beautiful weather—and settled. I shall enjoy my holiday down here."

"Oh, you're going to stay down here, and going to have a holiday, are you?" she asked with a lift of her brows.

"Well, hardly a holiday, after all. I've got a job to do," he answered as he lit his cigarette. "Rather a hard job at my time of life!"

"Is it? What is the job?"

"I'm going courting again—and a very pretty woman, too," he said.

A rather tremulous smile came on Christine's face as she looked at him.

"It's rather a nice amusement, isn't it?" she asked. "And you always had plenty of self-conceit."

"Why, hang it, I thought it was just the opposite this time!" exclaimed Grantley in whimsical annoyance.

Christine laughed.

"I won't be unamiable. I'll call it self-confidence, if you insist."

He took a moment to think over her new word.

"Yes; in the end I suppose it does come to that. Look here, Christine—I wish the people who tell you you ought to change your nature would be obliging enough to tell you how to do it!"

Christine's answer might be considered encouraging.

"After all, there's no need to overdo the change," she said. "And there's one thing in which you'll never change. You'll always want the best there is."

"No harm in having a try for it—as soon as you really see what it is," he answered, as he strolled off to the smoking-room.

XXV.

MRS. BOLTON was very much upset by what had happened at the Courtlands'. An unwonted and irksome sense of responsibility oppressed her. She discussed the matter with Miss Pattie Henderson, and made Caylesham come and see her. Miss Henderson knew how Sophy's letter had come into her mother's hands, and Mrs. Bolton had made Caylesham a party to the joke.

It did not seem so good a joke now. She and Pattie were both frightened when they saw to what their pleasantry had led. Little Sophy's suffering was not pleasant to think of, and there was an uncomfortable uncertainty about the manner of Harriet's death. A scheme may prove too successful.

Caylesham had warned Mrs. Bolton that she was playing with dangerous tools. He was not inclined to let her down too easily, nor to put the kindest interpretation on the searchings of her conscience.

"You always time your fits of morality so well," he observed cynically. "I don't suppose poor old Tom's amusing company just now, and he's certainly short of cash."

Mrs. Bolton looked a very plausible picture of injured innocence, but of course there was something in what Frank Caylesham said; there generally was, though it might not be what you would be best pleased to find. Tom was not lively, nor inclined for gaiety—and he had just made a composition with his creditors. On the other hand, Miss Henderson, having completed her negotiations with the Parmenter family, was in funds, and had suggested a winter on the Riviera, with herself for hostess. There are, fortunately, moments when the good and the pleasant coincide; the worst of it is that such happy harmonies are apt to come rather late in the day.

"It's all different now that woman's gone," observed Mrs. Bolton. "It's the children now, Frank."

"Supposing it is? Why am I to be dragged into it?"

"We must get him to go back to them." Various feelings combined to make Mrs. Bolton very earnest. "He only comes here because he's got nobody else to speak to. And he's in awful dumps all the time. It's not very cheerful for me."

"I daresay not, Flora. But why doesn't he go back, then?"

Mrs. Bolton had been moving about the room restlessly. Her back was to Caylesham as she answered:

"He won't. He says he can't. He says——"

Caylesham threw a glance at her, his brows raised.

"What does he say, Flora?"

"Oh, it's nonsense—and he needn't say it to me, anyhow. It really isn't particularly pleasant for me. Oh, well, then, he says he's not fit to go near them!" She turned to Caylesham; there was a flush on her face. "Such nonsense!" she ended impatiently.

Caylesham pulled his mustache, and smiled reflectively.

"I suppose it might take him like that," he observed with an impartial air.

"Oh, I know you're only laughing at me. But I tell you, I don't like it, Frank!"

"These little incidents are—well, incidental, Flora. Innocent children, you know! And I shouldn't be surprised if he even made excuses for Harriet now?"

"No, he doesn't do that. It's the children. Stop smiling like that, will you?"

"Certainly, my dear Flora. My smile was a pure oversight."

Mrs. Bolton shrugged her shoulders impatiently.

"When you've had all the fun you can get out of me, perhaps you'll begin to help me. You see I want it settled. I want to be off to Monte with Pattie. She's going to stand it to me—I haven't got a farthing. And I say, Frank, he ought to go back to those poor little wretches now. You can make him do it, if you like, you know."

"I? Well, I'm an odd sort of a party for such a job!"

"Not a bit. He'll listen to you just because—well, because——"

"I haven't spared your feelings, Flora; don't mind mine."

"Because he knows you don't talk humbug or cant."

"You're being complimentary, after all—or at any rate you're meaning to be. And you'd really never see him again?"

"He'll never want to see me." She was facing Caylesham now. "I've been fond of poor old Tom; but he'll not want to see me—and soon I shan't want to see him, either." She looked a little distressed for a minute, then shrugged her shoulders with a laugh. "That's the way of the world!"

"Of part of it," Caylesham murmured as he lit a cigar.

With Flora Bolton set aside—and of course she had no reasonable title to consideration—the case seemed a simple one to Caylesham, and his mission an obvious utterance of common sense. He could not enter fully into Tom Courtland's mind. Tom was not naturally a lawless man; desperation had made him break loose. The bygone desperation was forgotten now, in pity for his children, and for the woman whom, after all, he had once loved. He looked with shame on the thing he had done, attributing to it all the results which Harriet's fury had engrafted on it.

Broken in fortune and in career—broken, too, in self-respect—he had been likely to drift on in a life which he had come to abhor. He felt his presence an outrage on his children, and feared the look of their clear young eyes. If the death of his wife had seemed to save him from a due punishment, here was a penalty different but hardly less severe.

While he was in this mood Caylesham was the best man to carry the message to him. The only chance with Tom was to treat what he had done as natural, but to insist that the sequence of events was utterly unexpected and essentially unconnected with it. To urge the gravity

of his offense would have been to make reparation and atonement impossible.

So Caylesham took a very strong and simple line. He declined to discuss the state of Tom's conscience, or the blackness of Tom's mind, or even the whiteness of the minds of the children. Everybody was very much alike—or would be in a few years, anyhow—and Tom was not to be an ass. The line of argument was not exalted, but it was adapted to the needs of the case.

"My dear chap, if you come to that, what man is fit to look his children in the face?" he asked impatiently. But then it occurred to him that he was idealizing—a thing he hated. "Not that children aren't often wicked little beggars themselves," he added cheerfully. "They steal and lie like anything, and torment one another devilishly. I know I did things as a boy that I'd kick any grown man for doing; and so did my brothers and sisters. I tell you what it is, Tom, the devil's there all the time; he shows himself in different ways, that's all."

Tom could not swallow this gospel; he would give up neither his own iniquity nor the halo of purity to which his mind clung amid the sordid ruin of his life.

"If I could pull straight!" he murmured despairingly.

"Why shouldn't you? You're getting on in life, you know, after all."

"They—they guess something about it, I expect, Frank. It's not pleasant for a man to be ashamed before his own children. And Miss Bligh—I thought she looked at me very queerly."

"You'll find they'll be as nice as possible to you. The children won't understand anything, and Suzette's sure to be on your side. Women always are, you know. They're not naturally moral. We've imposed it on them, and they always like to get an excuse for approving of the other thing."

Tom grew savage.

"I know what I've done, but anyhow I'm glad I don't think as you do!"

"Never mind my thoughts, old chap. You go home to your kids," said Caylesham cheerfully.

He was very good-humored over the matter; neither all the unnecessary fuss nor Tom's aspersions on his own character and views disturbed him in the least. And he did not leave Tom until he had obtained the assurance that he desired. This given, he went off to his club, thanking Heaven that he was quit of a very tiresome business.

(To be continued.)

Where is the Grave of Paul Jones?

BY GEORGE E. LIGHT,

ATTACHÉ OF THE CONSULATE-GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES IN PARIS.

AMERICA DESIRES TO DO HONOR TO ONE OF HER MOST FAMOUS HEROES, BUT HIS BURIAL-PLACE IS UNKNOWN, AND IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER HIS REMAINS CAN EVER BE FOUND.

MORE than once has Congress been asked to vote a few thousand dollars for the purpose of bringing the remains of Commodore John Paul Jones across the Atlantic, and reintering them in the United States. Perhaps the money may eventually be voted, but even then it will be very doubtful whether the bones of the fighting seaman of the Revolution will cross the seas again.

For nothing definite is known as to his last resting-place. He unfortunately died at a time (July 18, 1792) when France was in the throes of her great social and political upheaval. It was just three weeks before the Parisian mob swept through the Tuileries and massacred the Swiss Guard. The National Assembly had declared the country in danger. Dumouriez was moving to repel the Austrian invasion, and the newspapers had no space to spare for obituary notices and accounts of funerals.

The Assembly did indeed find time to listen to a letter written by a Colonel Blacksten, stating that his friend Paul Jones had just died in Paris. "In consequence of some formalities still existing with regard to Protestants," Blacksten continued, he had written to M. Simmoneau, commissary of the district, asking that his friend might be buried without fees; and that M. Simmoneau had replied that if any fees were demanded he would pay them himself. There was some applause at this, which was renewed when a member proposed that "to consecrate the freedom of worship" the Assembly should send a deputation to the funeral of Paul Jones.*

The motion was agreed to, a deputation was sent, and "a fulsome oration was made at his grave."* That is probable, indeed almost certain; but where was the grave? Miss Wemyss says he was buried in the cemetery of Père Lachaise. Most likely she derived her information from Michaud's "Biographical Dictionary," which states, more guardedly, that "it is asserted that he was buried at Père Lachaise." The assertion is not confirmed by any other authority, and the officials at that cemetery are firmly convinced that wherever the body of Paul Jones was buried it was not within their precincts.

THE GRAVEYARD OF THE RUE DES ECLUSES ST. MARTIN.

A hundred years ago there was no outcry against "intramural sepulture," and Paris contained seventy or eighty small graveyards. When one of these was full, it remained closed for a few years, and then, as the city grew, and land became more and more valuable, the builder cast longing eyes upon it, and eventually acquired and built on it. If, in the course of digging the foundations, a few bones were found, they were sent to the Catacombs; but the dead citizens who were not dug up by the excavators remained undisturbed.

One of these little graveyards occupied a tetragonal plot of land at the junction of the Rue des Ecluses St. Martin with the Rue Grange aux Belles, near what was then the northeast boundary of the city. Paul Jones died in the Rue de Tournon, which is on the south side of the Seine, and it seems odd that his body should have been taken so far,

* *Moniteur* (reprint) Vol. 13, p. 192.

* Miss Millicent E. Wemyss, in *Blackwood's Magazine*, Vol. 142, page 561 (1887).