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FLORA LYNDSAY;

OR,

PASSAGES IN AN EVENTFUL LIFE.

BY MRS. MOODIE.

AUTHOR OF "ROUGHING IT IN THE BUSH," "MARK HURDLESTONE," "LIFE IN THE CLEARINGS," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO

MISS GOODING,

OF CROMER, IN THE COUNTY OF NORFOLK,

THESE VOLUMES ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY HER ATTACHED FRIEND,

SUSANNAH MOODIE.

Belleville, Upper Canada.

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OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

FLORA LYNDSAY;

OR,

PASSAGES IN AN EVENTFUL LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

[1]

A MATRIMONIAL DIALOGUE.

"Flora, have you forgotten the talk we had about emigration, the morning before our marriage?" was a question rather suddenly put to his young wife, by Lieutenant Lyndsay, as he paused in his walk to and fro the room. The fact is, that he had been pondering over that conversation for the last hour.

It had long been forgotten by his wife; who, seated upon the sofa with a young infant of three years old in her lap, was calmly watching its sleeping face with inexpressible delight. She now left off her maternal studies; and looked up at her husband, with an inquiring glance,—

“Why do you ask, dear John?”

“Are you turned Quaker, Flora, that you cannot give one a *direct* answer?”

“I have not forgotten it. But we have been so happy ever since, that I have never given it a second thought. What put it into your head just now?” [2]

“That child—and thinking how I could provide for her, in any other way.”

“Dear little pet! She cannot add much to our expenses.” And the mother bent over her sleeping child, and kissed its soft, velvet cheek, with a zest that mothers alone know.

“Not at present. But the little pet will in time grow into a tall girl; and other little pets may be treading upon her footsteps; and they must all be clothed, and fed, and educated.”

Flora, in her overflowing happiness, had dismissed all such cruel realities from her mind.

“Emigration is a terrible word, John. I wish that it could be expunged from our *English* dictionary.”

“I am afraid, my dear girl, that you are destined to learn a practical illustration of its meaning. Nay, don’t look so despondingly. If you intended to remain in England, you should not have married a *poor* man.”

“Don’t say that, John, or you will make me miserable. Our marriage made me rich in treasures, which gold could never buy. But seriously, I do not see this urgent necessity for taking such a hazardous step. I know that we are not rich—that our expectations on that score for the future are very limited. We are both the younger children of large families, whose wealth and consequence is now a thing of the past. We have nothing to hope or anticipate from rich relations; but we have enough to be comfortable, and are surrounded with many blessings. Our little girl, whose presence seems to have conjured before you the gaunt image of poverty, has added greatly to our domestic happiness. Yes, little Miss Innocence! you are awake, are you? Come, crow to papa, and drive these ugly thoughts out of his head.” [3]

The good father kissed fondly the young thing seducingly held up to him. But he did not yield to the temptation, or swerve from his purpose, though Flora kissed *him*, with eyes brimful of tears.

“We are indeed happy, love. Too happy, I might say. But will it last?”

“Why not?”

“Our income is *very* small?” with a deep sigh.

“It is enough for our present wants. And we have no debts.”

“Thanks to your prudent management. Yes, we have no debts. But it has been a hard battle, only gained by great self-denial, and much pinching. We have kind friends, too. But Flora, I am too proud to be indebted to friends for the common necessaries of life; and without doing something to improve our scanty means, it might come to that. The narrow income which has barely supplied our wants this year, without the incumbrance of a family, will not do so next. There remains no alternative but to *emigrate*!” [4]

Flora felt that this was pressing her hard. All her affectionate ingenuity could not furnish an argument against such home truths. “Let us drop this hateful subject,” said she, hastily; “I cannot bear to think about it.”

“But, my dear girl, we must force ourselves to think about it, calmly and dispassionately; and having determined which is the path of duty, we must follow it out, without any reference to our own likes and dislikes. Our marriage would have been a most imprudent one, had it been contracted on any other terms; and we are both to blame that we have loitered away so many months of valuable time in happy ease, when we should have been earning independence for ourselves and our family.”

“You may be right, John,—yes, I know that you are right. But it is no such easy matter to leave your home and country, and the dear friends whose society renders life a blessing and poverty endurable—to abandon a certain good for an uncertain better, to be sought for among untried difficulties. I would rather live in a cottage in England, upon brown bread and milk, than occupy a palace on the other side of the Atlantic.”

“This sounds very prettily in poetry, Flora; but, my dear girl, life is made up of stern realities, and it is absolutely necessary for us to provide against the dark hour before it comes suddenly upon us. Our future prospects press upon my heart and brain too forcibly to be neglected. I have thought long and painfully upon the subject, and I have come to the resolution to emigrate this spring.” [5]

“So soon?”

“The sooner the better. The longer we defer it, the more difficulties we shall have to encounter. The legacy left you by your aunt will pay our expenses out, and enable us, without touching my

half-pay, to purchase a farm in Canada."

"Canada!"

Flora's eye brightened.

"Oh, I am so glad that it is not to the Cape of Good Hope!"

"In this decision, Flora, I have yielded to *your* wishes. My *own* inclinations would lead me back to a country where I have dear friends, a large tract of land, and where some of the happiest years of my life were spent. You are not wise, Flora, to regard the Cape with such horror. No person would delight more in the beautiful and romantic scenery of that country than yourself. You have taken up a foolish prejudice against the land I love."

"It is not that, dear John. But you know, I have such a terror of the wild beasts—those dreadful snakes and lions! I never should dare to stir beyond the garden, for fear of being stung or devoured. And then, I have been bored to death about the Cape, by our good friends the P——'s, till I hate the very name of the place!" [6]

"You will perhaps one day find out your error, Flora; and your fears are perfectly absurd! Not wishing to render your emigration more painful, by taking you to a country to which you are so averse, I have made choice of Canada, hoping that it might be more to your taste. The only obstacle in the way, is the reluctance you feel at leaving your friends. Am I less dear to you, Flora, than friends and country?"

This was said so kindly, and with such an affectionate earnestness for her happiness more than his own—for it was no small sacrifice to Lyndsay to give up going back to the Cape—that it overcame all Flora's obstinate scruples.

"Oh, no, no!—you are more to me than all the world! I will try and reconcile myself to any change, for your sake!"

"Shall I go first, and leave you with your mother until I have arranged matters in Canada?"

"Such a separation would be worse than death! I would rather encounter a thousand dangers, than remain in England without you! If it must be, I will never say another word against it!"

Here followed a heavy sigh. The young husband kissed the tears from her cheek, and whispered—

"That she was his dear, good girl."

And Flora would have followed him to the deserts of Arabia. [7]

"I have had a long conversation with a very sensible, practical man," continued Lyndsay, "who has lately come to England upon colonial business. He has been a settler for some years in Canada, and the accounts he has given me of the colony are so favourable, and hold out such encouragement of ultimate success and independence, that they have decided me in my choice of making a trial of the backwoods. I promised to meet him this morning at the Crown Inn (where he puts up), to look over maps and plans, and have some further talk upon the subject. I thought, dear, that it was better for me to consult you upon the matter before I took any decided steps. You have borne the ill news better than I expected: so keep up your spirits until I return, which will not be long."

Flora remained in deep thought for some time after the door had closed upon her husband. She could now recal every word of that eventful conversation, which they had held together the morning before their marriage, upon the subject of emigration. In the happy prospect of becoming his wife, it had not then appeared to her so terrible.

Faithfully had he reminded her of the trials she must expect to encounter, in uniting her destiny to a poor gentleman, and had pointed out emigration as the only remedy for counteracting the imprudence of such a step; and Flora, full of love and faith, was not hard to be persuaded. She considered that to be his wife, endowed as he was by nature with so many moral and intellectual qualities, with a fine face and noble form, would make her the richest woman in the world: that there was in him a mine of mental wealth, which could never decrease, but which time and experience would augment, and come what might, she in the end was sure to be the gainer. [8]

She argued thus:—"Did I marry a man whom I could not love, merely for his property, and the position he held in society, misfortune might deprive him of these, and a disagreeable companion for life would remain to remind me constantly of my choice. But a generous, talented man like Lyndsay, by industry and prudence may become rich, and then the most avaricious worlding would applaud the step I had taken."

We think after all, that Flora reasoned wisely, and, acting up to her convictions, did right. The world, we know, would scarcely agree with us; but in matters of the heart, the world is rarely consulted.

They were married, and, retiring to a pretty cottage upon the sea-coast, confined their expenditure to their limited means, and were contented and happy, and so much in love with each other and their humble lot, that up to this period, all thoughts upon the dreaded subject of emigration had been banished from one mind, at least. Flora knew her husband too well to [9]

suspect him of changing a resolution he had once formed on the suggestion of duty. She felt, too, that he was right,—that painful as the struggle was, to part with all dear to her on earth, save him, that it must be made. “Yes, I can, and will dare all things, my beloved husband, for your sake,” she said. “My heart may at times rebel, but I will shut out all its weak complainings. I am ready to follow you through good and ill,—to toil for our future maintenance, or live at ease. England—my country! the worst trial will be to part from you.”

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CHAPTER II.

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THE OLD CAPTAIN.

Flora’s reveries were abruptly dispelled by a gentle knock at the door; and her “Come in,” was answered by a tall, portly, handsome old lady, who sailed into the room in all the conscious dignity of black silk and white lawn.

The handsome old lady was Mrs. Kitson, the wife of the naval officer, whose ready-furnished lodgings they had occupied for the last year. Flora rose to meet her visitor, with the baby still upon her arm.

“Mrs. Kitson, I am happy to see you. Pray take the easy-chair by the fire. I hope your cough is better.”

“No chance of that,” said the healthy old lady, who had never known a fit of dangerous illness in her life, “while I continue so weak. Hu—hu—hu—. You see, my dear, that it is as bad as ever.”

Flora thought that she never had seen a person at Mrs. Kitson’s advanced stage of life with such a healthy, rosy visage. But every one has some pet weakness. Mrs. Kitson’s was always fancying herself ill and nervous. Now, Flora had no very benignant feelings towards the old lady’s long catalogue of imaginary ailments; so she changed the dreaded subject, by inquiring after the health of the old Captain, her husband.

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“Ah, my dear, he’s just as well as ever,—nothing in the world ever ails him; and little he cares for the sufferings of another. This is a great day with him; he’s all bustle and fuss. Just step to the window, and look at his doings. It’s enough to drive a sensible woman mad. Talk of women wearing the *smalls*, indeed! it’s a base libel on the sex. Captain Kitson is not content with putting on my apron, but he appropriates my petticoats also. I cannot give an order to my maid, but he contradicts it, or buy a pound of tea, but he weighs it after the grocer. Now, my dear, what would you do if the *Leaftenant* was like my husband?”

“Really, I don’t know,” and Flora laughed heartily. “It must be rather a trial of patience to a good housekeeper like you. But what is he about?” she cried, stepping to the window that overlooked a pretty lawn in front of the house, which commanded a fine view of the sea. “He and old Kelly seem up to their eyes in business. What an assemblage of pots and kettles, and household stuff there is upon the lawn! Are you going to have an auction?”

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“You may well think so; if that were the case, there might be some excuse for his folly. No; all this dirt and confusion, which once a week drives me nearly beside myself, is what K—— calls clearing up the ship; when he and his man Friday, as he calls Kelly, turn everything topsy-turvy, and, to make the muddle more complete, they always choose my washing-day for their frolic. Pantries and cellars are rummaged over, and everything is dragged out of its place, for the mere pleasure of making a litter, and dragging it in again.

“Look at the lawn! Covered with broken dishes, earless jugs, cracked plates, and bottomless saucepans,” continued Mrs. Kitson. “What a dish of nuts for my neighbours to crack! They always enjoy a hearty laugh at my expense, on Kitson’s clearing-up days. But what does he care for my distress? In vain I hide up all this old trumpery in the darkest nooks in the cellar and pantry—nothing escapes his prying eyes; and then he has such a memory, that if he misses an old gallipot he raises a storm loud enough to shake down the house.

“The last time he went to London,” pursued the old lady, “I collected a vast quantity of useless trash, and had it thrown into the pond behind the house. Well, when he cleared the decks next time, if he did not miss the old broken crockery, all of which, he said, he meant to mend with white lead on rainy days; while the broken bottles, forsooth, he had saved to put on the top of the brick wall, to hinder the little boys from climbing over to steal the apples! Oh, dear, dear, dear! there was no end to his bawling, and swearing, and calling me hard names, while he had the impudence to tell Kelly, in my hearing, that I was the most extravagant woman in the world. Now, *I*, that have borne him seventeen children, should know something about economy and good

[13]

management; but he gives me no credit at all for that. He began scolding again to-day, but my poor head could not stand it any longer; so I came over to spend a few minutes with you."

The handsome old lady paused to draw breath, and looked so much excited with this recapitulation of her domestic wrongs, that Mrs. Lyndsay thought it not improbable she had performed her own part in the scolding.

As to Flora, she was highly amused by the old Captain's vagaries. "By-the-bye," she said, "had he any luck in shooting this morning? He was out by sunrise with his gun."

The old lady fell back in her chair, and laughed immoderately.

"Shooting! Yes, yes, that was another frolic of his. But Kitson's an old fool, and I have told him so a thousand times. So you saw him this morning with the gun?"

"Why, I was afraid he might shoot Lyndsay, who was shaving at the window. The captain pointed his gun sometimes at the window, and sometimes at the eaves of the house, but as the gun always missed fire, I began to regain my courage, and so did the sparrows, for they only chattered at him in defiance." [14]

"And well they might. Why, my dear, would you believe it, he had no powder in his gun! Now, Mrs. Lyndsay, you will perhaps think that I am telling you a story, the thing is so absurd; yet I assure you that it's strictly true. But you know the man. When my poor Nelly died, she left all her little property to her father, as she knew none of her late husband's relations—never was introduced to one of them in her life. In her dressing-case he found a box of charcoal for cleaning teeth, and in spite of all that I could say or do, he insisted that it was *gunpowder*. 'Gunpowder!' says I, 'what would our Nelly do with gunpowder? It's charcoal, I tell you.'"

"Then he smelt it, and smelt it—''Tis gunpowder, Sally! Don't you think, that I know the smell of gunpowder? I, that was with Nelson at Copenhagen and Trafalgar?'

"''Tis the snuff in your nose, that makes everything smell alike;' says I. 'Do you think, that our Nelly would clean her beautiful white teeth with gunpowder?'

"'Why not?' says he; 'there's charcoal in gunpowder. And now, Madam, if you dare to contradict me again, I will shoot you with it, to prove the truth of what I say!'

"Well, after that, I held my tongue, though I did not choose to give up. I thought to spite him, so for once I let him have his own way. He spent an hour last night cleaning his old rusty gun; and rose this morning by daybreak with the intention of murdering all the sparrows. No wonder that the sparrows laughed at him. I have done nothing but laugh ever since—so out of sheer revenge, he proclaimed a cleaning day; and he and Kelly are now hard at it." [15]

Flora was delighted with this anecdote of their whimsical landlord; but before she could answer his better-half, the door was suddenly opened and the sharp, keen face of the little officer was thrust into the room.

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CHAPTER III. [16]

THE OLD CAPTAIN IN PERSON.

"Mrs. Lyndsay, my dear; that nurse of yours is going to hang out your clothes in front of the sea. Now, it's hardly *decent* of her, to expose female garments to every boat that may be passing."

The Captain's delicacy threw poor Flora nearly into convulsions of laughter—while he continued, rather pettishly—

"She knows no more how to handle a rope than a pig. If you will just tell her to wait a bit, until I have overhauled my vessel, I will put up the ropes for you myself."

"And hang out the clothes for you, Mrs. Lyndsay, if you will only give him the treat—and then, he will not shock the sensitive nerves of the sailors, by hanging them near the sea," sneered the handsome old lady.

"I hate to see things done in a lubberly manner," muttered the old tar.

"Oh, pray oblige him, Mrs. Lyndsay. He is such an old woman. I wonder he does not ask your permission to let him wash the clothes."

"Fresh water is not my element, Mrs. Kitson, though I have long known that *hot* water is yours. [17]

I never suffer a woman to touch my ropes, and Mrs. Lyndsay borrowed those ropes this morning of me. Don't interrupt me, Mrs. K.; attend to your business, and leave me to mine. Put a stopper upon that clapper of yours; which goes at the rate of ten knots an hour—or look out for squalls."

In the hope of averting the storm, which Flora saw was gathering on the old man's brow, and which in all probability had been brewing all the morning, she assured the Captain, that he might take the command of her nurse, ropes, clothes, and all.

"Mrs. Lyndsay,—you are a sensible woman,—which is more than I can say of some folks," glancing at his wife; "and I hope that you mean to submit patiently to the yoke of matrimony; and not pull one way, while your husband pulls the other. To sail well together on the sea of life, you must hold fast to the right end of the rope and haul in the same direction."

His hand was upon the lock of the door, and the old lady had made herself sure of his exit, and was comfortably settling herself for a fresh spell of gossip at his expense, when he suddenly returned to the sofa on which Flora was seated; and putting his mouth quite close to her ear, while his little inquisitive grey eyes sparkled with intense curiosity, said, in a mysterious whisper, [18]
"How is this, my dear—I hear that you are going to leave us?"

Flora started with surprise. Not a word had transpired of the conversation she had lately held with her husband. Did the old Captain possess the gift of second-sight? "Captain Kitson," she said, in rather an excited tone; while the colour flushed up into her face, "Who told you so?"

"Then it is true?" and the old fox rubbed his hands and nodded his head, at the success of his stratagem. "Who told me?—why I can't say, who told me. You know, where there are servants living in the house, and walls are thin—news travels fast."

"And when people have sharp ears to listen to what is passing in their neighbours' houses," muttered the old lady, in a provoking aside, "news travels faster still."

Flora was annoyed beyond measure at the impertinent curiosity of the inquisitive old man. She felt certain that her conversation with her husband had been overheard. She knew that Captain Kitson and his wife were notable gossips, and it was mortifying to know that their secret plans in a few hours would be made public. She replied coldly, "Captain Kitson, you have been misinformed; we may have talked over such a thing in private as a matter of speculation, but nothing at present has been determined."

"Now, my dear, that won't do; leave an old sailor to find out a rat. I tell you that 'tis the [19]
common report of the day. Besides, is not the *Leaftenant* gone this morning with that scapegrace, Tom W——, to hear some lying land-shark preach about Canada."

"Lecture! Kitson," said the old lady, who was not a whit behind her spouse in wishing to extract the news, though she suffered him to be the active agent in the matter.

"Lecture or preach, it's all one; only the parson takes his text from the Bible to hold forth upon, and these agents, employed by the Canada Company, say what they can out of their own heads. The object in both is to make money. I thought the *Leaftenant* had been too long in a colony to be caught by chaff."

"My husband can judge for himself, Captain Kitson. He does not need the advice, or the interference of a third person," said Flora, colouring again. And this time she felt really angry; but there was no shaking the old man off.

"To be sure—to be sure," said her tormentor, without taking the smallest notice of her displeasure; "people are all wise in their own eyes. But what is Canada to you, my dear? A fine settler's wife you will make; nervous and delicate, half the time confined to your bed with some complaint or other. And then, when you are well, the whole blessed day is wasted in reading and writing, and coddling up the babby. I tell you that sort of business will not answer in a rough [20]
country like Canada. I was there often enough during the American war, and I know that the country won't suit you,—no, nor you won't suit the country."

Finding that Mrs. Lyndsay made no answer to this burst of eloquence, he continued, in a coaxing tone—

"Now, just for once in your life, my dear, be guided by older and wiser heads than your own, and give up this foolish project altogether. Let well alone. You are happy and comfortable where you are. This is a nice cottage, quite large enough for your small family. Fine view of the sea from these front windows, and all ready furnished to your hand,—nothing to find of your own but plate and linen; a pump, wood-house and coal-bin, and other conveniences,—all under one roof. An oven—"

"Stop," cried the old lady, "you need say nothing about that, Kitson. The oven is good for nothing. It has no draught; and you cannot put a fire into it without filling the house with smoke."

"Pshaw!" muttered the old man. "A little contrivance would soon put that to rights."

"I tried my best," retorted the wife, "and I could never bake a loaf of bread in it, fit to eat."

"We all know what bad bread you make, Mrs. Kitson," said the captain. "I know that it can be [21]
baked in; so hold your tongue, Madam! and don't contradict me again. At any rate, there's not a smoky chimney in the house, which after all is a less evil than a cross wife. The house, I say, is

complete from the cellar to the garret. And then, the rent—why, what is it? A mere trifle—too cheap by one half,—only twenty-five pounds per annum. I don't know what possessed me, to let it so low; and then, my dear, the privilege you enjoy in my beautiful flower-garden and lawn. There is not many lodging-houses in the town could offer such advantages, and all for the *paltry* consideration of twenty-five pounds a-year."

"The cottage is pretty, and the rent moderate, Captain," said Flora. "We have no fault to find, and you have not found us difficult to please."

"Oh, I am quite contented with my tenants; I only want them to know when they are well off. Look twice before you leap once—that's my maxim; and give up this mad Canadian project, which I am certain will end in disappointment."

And with this piece of disinterested advice, away toddled our gallant naval commander, to finish with Kelly the arrangement of his pots and kettles, and superintend the right adjustment of the clothes-lines, and the hanging out of Mrs. Lyndsay's clothes.

Do not imagine, gentle reader, that this picture is over-charged. Captain Kitson is no creature of romance, (or was not, we should rather say; for he has long since been gathered to his [22] fathers); but a brave, uneducated man; who during the war had risen from before the mast to the rank of Post Captain. He had fought at Copenhagen and Trafalgar, and distinguished himself in many a severe contest on the main during those stirring times, and bore the reputation of a dashing naval officer. At the advanced age of eighty, he retained all his original ignorance and vulgarity; and was never admitted into the society which his rank in the service entitled him to claim.

The restless activity which in the vigour of manhood had rendered him a useful and enterprising seaman, was now displayed in the most ridiculous interference in his own domestic affairs, and those of his neighbours. With a great deal of low cunning, he mingled the most insatiable curiosity; while his habits were so penurious, that he would stoop to any meanness to gain a trifling pecuniary advantage for himself or his family.

He speculated largely in old ropes, condemned boats and sea-tackle of all description, whilst as consul for the port, he had many opportunities of purchasing wrecks of the sea, and the damaged cargoes of foreign vessels, at a cheap rate; and not a stone was left unturned by old Kitson, if by the turning a copper could be secured.

The meddling disposition of the old Captain, rendered him the terror of all the fishermen on the coast, over whom his sway was despotic. He superintended and ordered all their proceedings, [23] with an authority as absolute as though he were still upon the deck of his war-ship, and they were subjected to his imperious commands. Not a boat could be put off, or a flag hoisted, without he was duly consulted and apprised of the fact. Not a funeral could take place in the town, without Kitson calling upon the bereaved family, and offering his services on the mournful occasion, securing to himself by this simple manœuvre, an abundant supply of black silk cravats and kid gloves.

"Never lose anything, my dear, for the want of *asking*," he would say. "A refusal breaks no bones, and there is always a chance of getting what you ask."

Acting upon this principle, he had begged favours of all the great men in power; and had solicited the interest of every influential person who had visited the town, during the bathing season, for the last twenty years, on his behalf. His favourite maxim practically carried out, had been very successful. He had obtained, for the mere trouble of asking, commissions in the army and navy for all his sons, and had got all his grandsons comfortably placed in the Greenwich or Christ Church schools.

He had a garden too, which was at once his torment and his pride. During the spring and summer months, the beds were dug up and remodelled, three or four times during the season, to [24] suit the caprice of the owner, while the poor drooping flowers were ranged along the grass-plot to wither in the sun during the process, and

"Waste their sweetness on the desert
air."

This he termed putting his borders into ship-shape.

The flower-beds which skirted the lawn, a pretty grass plot containing about an acre of ground, surrounded by tall poplar trees, were regularly sown with a succession of annuals, all for the time being of one sort and colour. For several weeks, innumerable quantities of double crimson stocks flaunted before your eyes, so densely packed, that scarcely a shade of green relieved the brilliant monotony. These were succeeded by larkspurs, and lastly by poppies, that reared their tall, gorgeous heads above the low, white railing, and looked defiance on all beholders.

Year after year presented the same spectacle, and pounds of stocks, larkspur and poppy seeds, were annually saved by the eccentric old man, to renew his floral show.

Tom W——, who was enchanted with the Captain's oddities, had nick-named the marine cottage *Larkspur Lodge*.

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CHAPTER IV.

A VISIT OF CONDOLENCE.

The news of Lieutenant Lyndsay's intended emigration spread like wild-fire through the village, and for several days formed the theme of conversation. The timid shrugged their shoulders, and drew closer to their own cosy fire-sides, and preferred staying at home to tempting the dangers of a long sea-voyage. The prudent said, there was a *possibility* of success; but it was better to take care of the little you had, than run the risk of losing it while seeking for more.—The worldly sneered, and criticised, and turned the golden anticipations of the hopeful and the benevolent into ridicule, prophesying disappointment, ruin, and a speedy return. Lyndsay listened to all their remarks, endeavoured to combat unreasonable objections, and remove pre-conceived prejudices; but as it was all labour thrown away, he determined to abide by the resolution he had formed, and commenced making preparations accordingly.

Flora, who, like many of her sex, was more guided by her feelings than her reason, was terribly annoyed by the impertinent interference of others, in what she peculiarly considered, her own affairs. Day after day she was tormented by visitors, who came to condole with her on the shocking prospects before her. Some of these were kind, well-meaning people, who really thought it a dreadful thing, to be forced, at the caprice of a husband, to leave home, and all its kindred joys, for a rude uncultivated wilderness like Canada. To such Flora listened with patience; for she believed their fears on her account were genuine—their sympathy sincere.

There was only one person in the whole town whose comments she dreaded, and whose pretended concern she looked upon as a real *bore*—this was Mrs. Ready, the wife of a wealthy merchant, who was apt to consider herself the great lady of the place.

The dreaded interview came at last. Mrs. Ready had been absent on a visit to London; and the moment she heard of the intended emigration of the Lyndsays to Canada, she put on her bonnet and shawl, and rushed to the rescue. The loud, double rat-tat-tat at the door, announced an arrival of more than ordinary consequence.

"O!" sighed Flora, pushing away her desk, at which she was writing letters of importance, "I know that knock!—that disagreeable Mrs. Ready is come at last!"

Before Mrs. Ready enters the room, I may as well explain to the reader, what sort of an intimacy existed between Flora Lyndsay and Harriet Ready, and why the former had such a repugnance to a visit from the last-mentioned lady.

Without the aid of animal magnetism (although we have no doubt that it belongs to that mysterious science) experience has taught us all, that there are some natures that possess certain repellent qualities, which never can be brought into affinity with our own—persons, whom we like or dislike at first sight, with a strong predilection for the one almost amounting to love, with a decided aversion to the other, which in some instances almost merges into downright hate.

These two ladies had no attraction for each other: they had not a thought or feeling in common; and they seldom met without a certain sparring, which, to the looker-on, must have betrayed how matters stood between them.

But why did they meet, if such were the case?

It would be true wisdom in all such repellent natures to keep apart. Worldly prudence, and the conventional rules of society, compel persons to hide these secret antipathies—nay, even to present the most smiling exterior to those whom they often least respect.

The fear of making enemies, of being thought ill-natured and capricious, or even of making the objects of their aversion persons of too much consequence, by keeping them aloof, are some of the reasons we have heard alleged for these acts of mental cowardice.

Mrs. Ready was a low-born woman, and Flora belonged to a very old and respectable family. Mrs. Ready wished to rise a step higher in the social scale, and, thinking that Flora might aid her ambitious views, she had, after the first calls of ceremony had been exchanged, clung to her with a pertinacity which all Mrs. Lyndsay's efforts to free herself had been unable to shake off.

Mrs. Ready was a woman of great pretensions, and had acquired an influence among her own set by assuming a superiority to which, in reality, she had not the slightest claim. She considered herself a beauty—a wit—a person of extraordinary genius, and possessed of great literary taste. The knowledge of a few botanical names and scientific terms, which she sported on all occasions, had conferred upon her the title of a learned woman; while she talked with the greatest confidence of her acquirements. *Her* paintings—*her* music—*her* poetry, were words constantly in her mouth. A few wretched daubs, some miserable attempts at composition, and various pieces of music, played without taste, and in shocking bad time, constituted all her claims to literary distinction. Her confident boasting had so imposed upon the good credulous people among whom

she moved, that they really believed her to be the talented being she pretended.

A person of very moderate abilities can be spiteful; and Mrs. Ready was so censorious, and said when offended such bitter things, that her neighbours tolerated her impertinence out of a weak fear, lest they might become the victims of her slanderous tongue. [29]

Though living in the same house with her husband, whose third wife she was, they had long been separated, only meeting at their joyless meals. Mrs. Ready considered her husband a very stupid animal, and did not fail to make both him and her friends acquainted with her opinion.

“There is a fate in these things,” she observed, “or you would never see a person of *my* superior intellect united to a creature like *that*.”

The world recognised a less important agency in the ill-starred union. Mrs. Ready was poor, and had already numbered thirty years, when she accepted the hand of her wealthy and despised partner.

No wonder that Flora, who almost adored her husband, and was a woman of simple habits and pretensions, should dislike Mrs. Ready: it would have been strange indeed if persons so differently constituted, could have met without antagonism.

Mrs. Ready’s harsh unfeminine voice and manners; her assumption of learning and superiority, without any real title to either, were very offensive to a proud sensitive mind, which rejected with disdain the patronage of such a woman. Flora had too much self-respect, not to say *vanity*, to tolerate the insolence of Mrs. Ready. She had met all her advances towards a closer intimacy with marked coldness; which, instead of repelling, seemed only to provoke a repetition of the vulgar, forcing familiarity, from which she intuitively shrank. [30]

“Mrs. Lyndsay,” she was wont to say, when that lady was absent, “is a young person of some literary taste, and with the advice and assistance of a friend (herself of course) she may one day become an accomplished woman.”

Lyndsay was highly amused at the league, offensive and defensive, carried on by his wife and Mrs. Ready, who was the only *blue stocking* in the place; and he was wont to call her Flora’s Mrs. *Grundy*.

But *Mrs. Grundy* is already in the room, and Flora has risen to meet her, and proffer the usual meaningless salutations of the day. To these her visitor returns no answer, overwhelmed as she is with astonishment and grief.

“Mrs. Lyndsay!” she exclaimed, sinking into the easy chair placed for her accommodation, and lifting up her hands in a tragic ecstasy—“Is it true—true, that you are going to leave us? I cannot believe it; it is so absurd—so ridiculous—the idea of your going to Canada. Do tell me that I am misinformed; that it is one of old Kitson’s idle pieces of gossip; for really I have not been well since I heard it.

”Mrs. Ready paused for breath, and applied her handkerchief to her eyes. [31]

Flora remained silent and embarrassed. What could she say? She placed no confidence in the grief of the weeping lady, and despised the affectation of her tears—till she gasped forth—

“Do not leave me in suspense; I would rather hear the truth at once. Are you really going to Canada?”

“I believe so. That is, if no untoward circumstances arise to prevent it.”

“Good heavens!—And you can regard such a dreadful event with such stoical indifference? Why does not your mother exert her authority, to make you give up such a mad project?”

“My mother would never interfere with my husband’s wishes, particularly when she considers them reasonable, and knows that no real objections can be offered on the subject.”

“But think of the dreadful sacrifice!”

“Such sacrifices are made every day. Emigration, Mrs. Ready, is a matter of necessity, not of choice. Mr. Lyndsay thinks it necessary for us to take this step, and I have no doubt that he is right. Did I consult my own feelings, I should certainly prefer staying at home.”

“Of course you would, and you affect this unconcern on purpose to hide an aching heart. My dear, you cannot deceive me; I see through it all. I pity you, my sweet friend; I sympathise with you, from my very soul; I know what your *real* feelings are; I can realize it all.” [32]

Flora remained silent. She certainly did wish that Mrs. Ready occupied any other place in the United Kingdom at that moment than the comfortable seat in her easy chair. But what could she do? She could not inform the lady that she was tired of her company, and wished to be alone. That would be considered an act of ill-breeding of the most flagrant description; in common courtesy she was compelled to act a lie.

Rather irritated at the small impression her eloquence had made upon her companion, Mrs. Ready removed the cambric screen from her face, on which not a trace of grief could be found, and clasping her hands vehemently together, continued,—

“Your husband is mad, to draw you away from all your friends at a moment’s warning! I would

remonstrate—I would not go; I would exert a proper spirit, and force him to abandon this Quixotic expedition."

"You speak hastily, Mrs. Ready. Why should I attempt to prevent an undertaking in which I most cordially concur, and which Mr. Lyndsay thinks would greatly benefit his family?"

"Nonsense! I hate, I repudiate such passive obedience, as beneath the dignity of woman! I am none of your soft bread-and-butter wives, who consider it their *duty* to become the mere *echo* of their husbands. If *I* did not wish to go, no tyrannical lord of the creation, falsely so called, should compel me to act against my inclinations." [33]

"Compulsion is not necessary: on this subject we both agree."

"Oh, yes, I see how it is!" with a contemptuous curl of the lip, "you aspire to the character of a good, dutiful wife,—to become an example of enduring patience to all the refractory conjugals in the place, myself among the rest. I understand it all. How *amiable* some people can be at the expense of others!"

Flora was thunderstruck. "Indeed, Mrs. Ready, I meant no reflection upon you. My words had no personal meaning; I never talk *at* any one."

"Oh, certainly not! You are not aware," with a strong sneer, "of the differences that exist between Mr. Ready and me (and which will continue to exist, as long as mind claims a superiority over matter); that we are only husband and wife in name. But I forgive you."

"You have nothing to forgive, Mrs. Ready," said Flora, indignantly; "I never trouble my head with your private affairs—they cannot possibly concern me."

This gave rise to a scene. Mrs. Ready, who lived in an element of strife, delighted in scenes.

"Oh, no," she continued, eagerly clutching at Flora's last words, "you are *too* selfishly engrossed with your own happiness to have the least sympathy for the sorrows of a friend. Ah, well!—It's early days with you *yet*! Let a few short years of domestic care pass over your head, and all this honey will be changed to gall. Matrimony is matrimony, and husbands are husbands, and wives will strive to have their own way—ay, and will fight to get it too. You will then find, Mrs. Lyndsay, that very little of the sugar of love, and all such romantic stuff, remains to sweeten your cup; and in the bitterness of your soul, you will think of me." [34]

"If this is true," said Flora, "who would marry?"

"It is true in my case."

"But fortunately there are exceptions to every rule."

"Humph!—This is another compliment, Mrs. Lyndsay, at my expense."

"Mrs. Ready, I do not wish to quarrel with you; but you seem determined to take all my words amiss."

A long silence ensued,—Mrs. Ready smoothed down her ruffled plumes, and said, in a pitying, patronising tone, very common to her—

"You will be disgusted with Canada: we shall see you back in less than twelve months."

"Not very likely, if I know anything of John and myself."

"What will you do for society?"

Flora thought, solitude would be a luxury and Mrs. Ready away—and she answered, carelessly, "We must be content with what Providence sends us." [35]

"Ah! but you may be miles from any habitation. No church—no schools for the children—no markets—no medical attendant—and with your poor health—think of that, Mrs. Lyndsay! And worse, far worse, no friends to sympathise and condole with you, in distress and difficulty."

Now Flora was answering all these objections in her own mind; and, quite forgetful of Mrs. Ready's presence, she unconsciously uttered her thoughts aloud—"These may be evils, but we shall at least be spared the annoyance of disagreeable visitors."

Imprudent Flora—to think aloud before such a woman as Mrs. Ready. Who will venture to excuse such an eccentric proceeding? Would not the whole world blame you for your incorrigible blunder? It had, however, one good effect. It quickly cleared the room of your intrusive guest; who swept out of the apartment with a haughty "Good morning." And well she might be offended; she had accidentally heard the truth, which no one else in the town dared have spoken boldly out.

Flora was astonished at her want of caution. She knew, however, that it was useless to apologise; and she felt perfectly indifferent as to the result; for she did not care, if she never saw Mrs. Ready again; and such a decided affront would render that event something more than doubtful. [36]

"Thank heaven! she is gone," burst heartily from her lips, when she found herself once more alone.

It was impossible for Mrs. Lyndsay to contemplate leaving England without great pain. The

subject was so distressing to her feelings, that she endeavoured to forget it as much as she could. The manner in which it had been forced upon her by Mrs. Ready, was like probing a deep wound with a jagged instrument; and after that lady's departure, she covered her face with her hands, and wept long and bitterly.

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CHAPTER V.

[37]

THE TRUE FRIEND.

Flora Lyndsay was aroused from the passionate indulgence of grief by two arms being passed softly around her neck, and some one pulling her head gently back upon their shoulder, and kissing her forehead.

"Flora," whispered a sweet, gentle woman's voice; "Dear Flora. I am come home at last. What, no word of welcome? No kiss for Mary? In tears, too. What is the matter? Are you ill? Is the baby ill? No—she at least is sleeping sweetly, and looks full of rosy health. Do speak, and tell me the meaning of all this!"

Flora was in the arms of her friend before she had ceased speaking. "A thousand welcomes! dear Mary. You are the very person I most wished just now to see. The very sight of you is an antidote to grief. 'A remedy for sore eyes,' as the Irish say. You have been too long away. When did you arrive?"

"By the mail—about an hour ago."

"And your dear sister—?"

[38]

"Is gone to a happier home," said Mary Parnell, in a faltering voice; and glancing down at her black dress, she continued, "she died happy—so happy, dear Flora, and now—she is happier still. But, we will not speak of her just now, Flora; I cannot bear it. Time, which reconciles us to every change, will teach me resignation to the Divine will. But ah! 'tis a sore trial to part with the cherished friend and companion of our early years. We were most attached sisters. Our hearts were one—and now—"

There was a pause. Both friends wept. Mary first regained her composure.

"How is Lyndsay? Has he finished writing his book?"

"The book is finished, and accepted by Mr. Bentley."

"That is good, excellent news; and the darling baby?"

"Little Dormouse. There she lies at the end of the sofa, covered by my shawl. She has been sleeping ever since breakfast. I think she only wakes up to amuse papa. But she is beginning to stretch herself, and here comes the head-nurse himself."

"Our dear Mary, returned!" cried Lyndsay, entering the room. "It seems an age since you left us."

[39]

"It has been a melancholy separation to me," said Mary. "This parting I hope will be the last. My father has consented to come and live with my brother; and now that dear Emily is gone, I shall have no inducement to leave home, so you will have me all to yourselves, whenever I can steal an hour from my domestic duties; and we shall once more be so happy together."

Lyndsay looked at Flora, but neither spoke. Mary saw in a moment that there was some hidden meaning in that quick, intelligent glance; and she turned anxiously from one to the other.

"What mischief have you been plotting, during my absence?" cried the affectionate girl, taking a hand of each. "Some mystery is here—I read it in your eyes. I come to you striving to drown the remembrance of my own heavy sorrow, that we might enjoy a happy meeting: I find Flora in tears, and you, Lyndsay, looking grave and melancholy. What does it all mean?"

"Has not Flora told you?"

"Told me what?"

"That we are about to start for Canada."

"Alas! no. This is sad news—worse than I expected. But are you really determined upon going?"

"Our preparations are almost completed."

“Worse and worse. I hoped it might be only the whim of the moment—a castle, not of the air, but of the woods—and as easily demolished.”

“Let us draw back,” said Flora. “Lyndsay, dearest; the trial is too great.”

“It is too late now, Flora. Depend upon it, love, that God has ordered it, and that we act in conformity to the Divine will, and that all is for the best.” [40]

“If such is your belief, my dear friend,” said Miss Parnell, “far be it from me to persuade you to stay. God orders all things for good. The present moment is the prophet of the future. It must decide your fate.”

“I have not acted hastily in this matter,” returned Lyndsay. “I have pondered over it long and anxiously, and I feel that my decision is right. The grief poor Flora feels at parting with her friends, is the greatest drawback. I thought that she possessed more strength of endurance. As for me, I have passed through the ordeal before, when I left Scotland for the Cape of Good Hope; and I now look upon myself as a citizen of the world. I know that Flora will submit cheerfully to the change, when once we lose sight of the British shores.”

“This then means the cause of Flora’s tears?”

“Not exactly,” said Flora, laughing. “That odious Mrs. Ready has been here, tormenting me with impertinent questions.”

“Flora, I’m ashamed of you,” said Lyndsay, “for suffering yourself to be annoyed by that stupid woman.”

“And worse than that, dear John, I got into a passion, and affronted her.”

“And what did *Mrs. Grundy* say?”

“Ah! it’s fine fun for you. But if you had been baited by her for a couple of hours, as I was, you could not have stood it much better than I did. Why, she had the impudence to insist upon my acting in direct opposition to your wishes; and all but insinuated that I was a fool not to take her advice.” [41]

“A very serious offence, indeed,” said Lyndsay, laughing. “Instigating my wife to an act of open rebellion. But I am sure you will not profit by her example.”

“Indeed, no! She’s the very last woman in the world I should wish to imitate. Still I feel angry with myself for letting my temper get the better of prudence.”

“What a pity, Flora, that you did not fight it out. I would back my good wife against twenty Mrs. Grundys.”

“She would scratch my eyes out, and then write a horrid sonnet to celebrate the catastrophe.”

“Nobody would read it.”

“Ah, but she would read it to everybody, and bore the whole town with her lamentations.”

“Let her go, Flora. I am tired of *Mrs. Grundy*.”

“Indeed, I was glad enough to get rid of her, which reconciles me to the disagreeable manner in which I offended her.”

“Let us talk of your Canadian plans,” said Mary. “When do you go?”

“In three weeks,” said Lyndsay. [42]

“So soon! The time is too short to prepare one to part with friends so dear. If it were not for my poor old father, I would go with you.”

“What a blessing it would be!” said Lyndsay.

“Oh! do go, dear Mary,” cried Flora, quite transported at the thought; and flinging her arms about her friend’s neck. “It would make us so happy.”

“It is impossible!” said the dear Mary, with a sigh. “I spoke without thinking. My heart will follow you across the Atlantic; but duty keeps me here. I will not, however, waste the time still left to us in useless regrets. Love is better shown by deeds than words. I can work for you, and cheer you, during the last days of your sojourn in your native land. Employment, I have always found, by my own experience, is the best remedy for aching hearts.”

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CHAPTER VI.

FLORA’S OUTFIT.

HAVING once matured his plans, Lyndsay hastened to take the necessary steps to carry them into execution. Leaving Flora and her friend Mary to prepare all the indispensables for the voyage, he hurried to London, to obtain permission from head-quarters to settle in Canada, to arrange pecuniary matters for the voyage, and take leave of a few old and tried friends. During his absence, Flora and her friend were not idle. The mornings were devoted to making purchases, and the evenings to convert them into articles for domestic use. There were so many towels to hem, sheets to make, and handkerchiefs and stockings to mark, that Flora saw no end to the work, although assisted by kind sisters, and the indefatigable Mary.

The two friends held a grand consultation over Flora’s scanty wardrobe, in which there were articles “old and new;” but it must be confessed that the old and the unfashionable predominated over the new and well-cut. Flora’s friends were poor, and she had been obliged to dispense with a [44] wedding outfit. An old and very rich relation of her father had presented her with a very elegant wedding-dress, shawl, and bonnet, which was all the finery Flora possessed. Her other dresses were very plain, and composed of common materials; and if it had not been for the unexpected bounty of the said rich lady, our bride must have done without a wedding-garment at all; for she had earned the few common necessaries she took with her to housekeeping with her own hand, in painting trifles for the bazaars, and writing articles for ladies’ magazines. One small trunk contained Flora’s worldly goods and chattels, the night she entered the neatly-furnished lodgings which Lyndsay had prepared for her as his wife.

Flora felt almost ashamed of the little she possessed; but her high-minded, generous husband took her penniless as she was, and laughingly assured her that they could never quarrel on the score of riches; for his wardrobe was nearly as scanty as her own; and, beyond a great chest of books and music, he had nothing in the world but his half-pay. Many a long afternoon Flora spent during her quiet honeymoon (for the month was April, and the weather very wet) in looking over shirts and socks, and putting them into the best habitable repair. She was thus employed, when an author of some distinction called upon them, to enjoy half-an-hour’s chat. Flora hid up her work as fast as she could; but in her hurry, unfortunately, upset her work-basket on the floor, and [45] all the objectionable garments tumbled out at her guest’s feet.

He was young, unmarried and a poet; and this certainly was not a poetical incident. “Mrs. Lyndsay,” he cried, in a tragic horror—(it would have been more in good taste to have said nothing about it)—“Are you forced to devote your valuable time to mending old socks and shirts?”

“They were meant for my *private* hours,” said Flora, laughing, as she collected the fallen articles, and stowed them once more into their hiding-place. “With *such* the public has nothing to do.”

“Well, if ever I marry, I’ll take good care to give away every old thing I have in the world. No wife of mine shall have it to say that she was forced to mend my rags.”

“Wait till the time comes,” said Flora quietly. “You don’t know what may happen yet. There are more disagreeable things in every-day life than mending old clothes. Industry and perseverance may soon replace these with new ones; but it is useless to throw away old friends until we are sure of obtaining others as good.”

Flora had often thought of this scene, and in her overflowing happiness had blessed God that she had been permitted to share Lyndsay’s poverty. Mending the old clothes had become a privilege.

Thirty pounds was all that she could now afford to lay out upon herself and her little one. A [46] small sum, indeed, to the rich, who would have expended as much in a single article of dress, but very large in her estimation, whose wants had always been regulated more by the wants of others than her own.

Ignorant of the nature of the colony to which she was about to emigrate, and of the manners and customs of the people among whom she was to find a new home, and of whom she had formed the most laughable and erroneous notions, many of her purchases were not only useless, but ridiculous. Things were overlooked, which would have been of the greatest service; while others could have been procured in the colony for less than the expense of transportation.

Twenty years ago, the idea of anything decent being required in a barbarous desert, such as the woods of Canada, was repudiated as nonsense.

This reminds one of a gentleman who sent his son, a wild, extravagant, young fellow, with whom he could do nothing at home, to grow tame, and settle down into a quiet farmer in the Backwoods. The experiment proved, as it always does in such cases, a perfect failure. All parental restraint being removed, the young man ran wild altogether, and used his freedom as fresh occasion for licentiousness. The prudent father then wrote out to the gentleman to whose care the son had been consigned, that he had better buy him a wild farm, and a *negro and his wife* to [47] keep house for him.

This, too, after the passing of the Anti-Slavery bill! But, even if slaves had been allowed in the colony, the horror of *colour* is as great among the native-born Canadians as it is in the United States. So much did this otherwise clever man know of the colony to which he sent his unmanageable son!

Flora had been led to imagine that settlers in the Backwoods lived twenty or thirty miles apart, and subsisted upon game and the wild fruits of the country until their own lands were brought into a state of cultivation. Common sense and reflection would have pointed this out as impossible; but common sense is very rare, and the majority of persons seldom take the trouble to think. We have known many persons just as wise as Flora in this respect. It is a fact, however, that Flora believed these reports, and fancied that her lot would be cast in one of those remote settlements, where no sounds of human life were to meet her ears, and the ringing of her husband's axe alone awake the echoes of the forest.

She had yet to learn, that the proximity of fellow-labourers in the great work of clearing is indispensable; that man cannot work alone in the wilderness, where his best efforts require the aid of his fellow-men.

[48] The oft-repeated assertion, that *anything would do for Canada*, was the cause of more blunders in the choice of an outfit, than the most exaggerated statements in its praise.

Of the fine towns and villages, and the well-dressed population of the improved districts of the Upper Province, she had not formed the slightest conception. To her fancy, it was a vast region of cheerless forests, inhabited by unreclaimed savages, or rude settlers doomed to perpetual toil,—a climate of stern vicissitudes, alternating between intense heat and freezing cold, and which presented at all seasons a gloomy picture. No land of Goshen, no paradise of fruits and flowers, rose in the distance to console her for the sacrifice she was about to make. The ideal was far worse than the reality.

Guided by these false impressions, she made choice of articles of dress too good for domestic drudgery, and not fine enough to suit the rank to which she belonged. In this case, extremes would have suited her better than a middle course.

Though fine clothes in the Backwoods may be regarded as useless lumber, and warm stuffs for winter, and good washing calicoes for summer, are more to be prized than silks and satins, which a few days' exposure to the rough flooring of a log-cabin would effectually destroy; yet it is absolutely necessary to be well dressed when visiting the large towns, where the wealthier classes not only dress well, but expensively.

[49] In a country destitute of an hereditary aristocracy, and where the poorest emigrant, by industry and prudence, may rise to wealth and political importance, the appearance which individuals make, and the style in which they live, determine their claims to superiority with the public, chiefly composed of the same elements with themselves. The aristocracy of England may be divided into three distinct classes,—that of family, of wealth, and of talent,—all powerful in their order. The one which ranks the last should hold its place with the first, for it originally produced it; and the second, which is far inferior to the last, is likewise able to buy the first. The heads of old families are more tolerant to the great men of genius than they are to the accumulators of riches; and a wide distinction is made by them between the purse-proud millionaire and the poor man of genius, whose refined tastes and feelings are more in unison with their own.

In Canada, the man of wealth has it all his own way; his dollars are irresistible, and the money makes the man. Fine clothes are there supposed to express the wealth of the possessor; and a lady's gown determines her right to the title, which, after all, presents the lowest claims to gentility. A runaway thief may wear a fashionably cut coat, and a well-paid domestic flaunt in silks and satins.

[50] Now, Flora knew nothing of all this; and she committed a great error in choosing neat and respectable every-day clothing. The handsome, and the very ordinary, would have answered her purpose much better.

If "necessity is the mother of invention," experience is the handmaid of wisdom, and her garments fit well. Flora was as yet a novice to the world and its ways. She had much to learn from a stern and faithful preceptress, in a cold, calculating school.

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CHAPTER VII.

[51]

HOW MISS WILHELMINA CARR AND FLORA BECAME ACQUAINTED.

Among the many persons who called upon Flora to talk over her projected emigration was a Miss Wilhelmina Carr—a being so odd, so wayward, so unlike the common run of mortals, that we must endeavour to give a slight sketch of her to our readers. We do not possess sufficient artistic skill to do Miss Wilhelmina justice; for if she had not actually lived and walked the earth, and if we had not seen her with our own eyes, and heard her with our own ears, we should have considered her a very improbable, if not an impossible, variety of the human species feminine. We have met with many absurd people in our journey through life, but a more eccentric individual never before nor since has come under our immediate observation.

Flora's means were far too limited for her to entertain company. Her visitors were confined entirely to her own family, and a few old and chosen friends, with whom she had been intimate from childhood. How, then, did she become acquainted with this lady? Oddly enough; for [52] everything connected with Miss Carr was odd, and out of the common way.

There was a mystery, too, about Miss Carr, which had kept the gossips busy for the last four months, and clever and prying as they were—quite models in their way—not one of them had been able to come at the solution of the riddle.

One hot day during the preceding summer, Miss Wilhelmina walked into the town, wearing a man's broad-brimmed straw hat, and carrying a cane in her hand, with a very small dog trotting at her heels. She inquired at the first hotel in the town for lodgings, and hired two very handsome apartments of Mrs. Turner, who kept very respectable lodgings, and was patronised by the best families in the neighbourhood. Miss Wilhelmina paid three months' rent in advance; she brought no servant, and was to find her own table, engaging Mrs. Turner to cook and wait upon her.

Some days after her arrival, two large travelling trunks, and several well-filled hampers full of wine of the best quality, were forwarded to her direction, and Miss Carr became one of the lions of the little watering-place.

Who she was, or from what quarter of the world she emanated, nobody could find out. She had evidently plenty of money at her command, lived as she liked and did what she pleased, and seemed perfectly indifferent as to what others thought of her.

Her eccentric appearance attracted general attention, for she was no recluse, and spent most [53] of her time in the open air. If your walk lay along the beach, the common, or the dusty high-road, you were sure to meet Miss Carr and her dog at every turn.

The excitement regarding her was so great, that most of the ladies called upon her in the hope of gratifying their curiosity, and learning something about her from her own lips. In this they were quite disappointed, for Miss Wilhelmina Carr, though she was sitting at the window nursing her dog, did not choose to be at home to any one, and never had the courtesy to return these ceremonious visits. An old practised propagator of news waylaid Mrs. Turner in the street, and cross-questioned her in the most dexterous manner concerning her mysterious lodger; but the good woman was either seized with a fit of unusual prudence, or, like Horace Smith's mummy—

"Was sworn to secrecy."

There was no getting anything out of her beyond the astounding facts, that Miss Carr smoked out of a long pipe, drank brandy-punch, and had her table served with all the dainties of the season. "Besides all this," whispered the cautious Mrs. Turner, "she swears like a man." This last piece of information might be a scandal, the ladies hoped that it was, but believed and talked about it as a [54] shocking thing, if true, to all their acquaintance, and congratulated themselves that the dreadful woman had shown her wisdom in not returning the visits of respectable people.

The person about whom all this fuss was made, was a tall, and very stout woman of fifty years of age; but active and energetic looking for her time of life. Her appearance was eccentric enough to afford ample scope for all the odd sayings and doings in circulation respecting her. She had a satirical, laughing, jolly red face, with very obtuse features; and, in order to conceal hair of a decidedly carroty hue, she wore an elaborately curled flaxen wig, which nearly covered her large forehead, and hung over her eyes like the curly coat of a French poodle dog. This was so carelessly adjusted, that the red and flaxen formed a curious shading round her face, as their tendrils mingled and twined within each other. Her countenance, even in youth, must have been coarse and vulgar; in middle life, it was masculine and decidedly ugly, with no redeeming feature, but the large good-natured mouth, well set with brilliantly white teeth—strong, square, even teeth, that seem to express their owner's love of good cheer; and silently intimated, that they had no light duty to perform, and were made expressly for eating.

Miss Carr, though she sported a man's hat and carried a cane, dressed expensively, her outer garments being made of the richest materials; but she wore these so ridiculously short, that her [55] petticoats barely reached below the middle of her legs; leaving exposed to general observation, the only beauty she possessed—a remarkably handsome and neatly made foot and ankle.

Now, we don't believe that Miss Carr cared a fig about her handsome legs and feet. If they had belonged to the regular Mullingar breed, she would have shown them as freely to all the world; simply, because she chose to do so. She was a great pedestrian, to whom long petticoats would have been uncomfortable and inconvenient.

If she was vain of anything, it was of her powers of locomotion. She had made the tour of Europe on foot and alone, and still continued to walk her ten or fourteen miles a day, let the

weather be what it would. Hail, rain, blow, or snow, it was all one to Miss Carr. “She was walking,” she said, “to keep herself in practice, as she was contemplating another long journey on foot.”

Ida Pfeiffer, the celebrated female traveller, was unknown in those days; or Miss Carr might have taken the shine out of that adventurous lady; as easily as the said Ida destroys all the romantic notions previously entertained by stay-at-home travellers, about the lands she visits, and the people who form the subjects of her entertaining matter-of-fact books.

When Miss Carr made her *debût* at church, with her masculine hat placed resolutely on the top of her head, and cane in hand, people could not say their prayers, or attend to the sermon, for [56] staring and wondering at the uncouth apparition which had so unceremoniously appeared in the midst of them. This was not diminished, by her choosing to stand during those portions of the service, when pious females bend the knee. Miss Wilhelmina said, “that she was too big to kneel —that her prayers were just as good in one attitude as another. The soul had no legs or knees, that she could discover—and if the prayers did not come from the heart, they were of no use to her, or to any one else. She had not much faith in prayers of any kind. She never could find out that they had done her the least good, and if she had to go through a useless ceremony, she would do it in the most convenient manner.”

Flora had heard so much about this strange woman, that she had not called upon her on her first arrival in the town, though it must be confessed, that her curiosity was as much excited as her neighbours’. In her walks to and fro from her mother’s house, who resided within a short distance of the town, Flora had often encountered the sturdy pedestrian stumping along at full speed, and she had laughed heartily with her husband at her odd appearance; at her short petticoats, and the resolute manner in which she swung her cane, and planted it down upon the ground. She had often wondered how such an elephant of a woman could move so rapidly upon [57] such small feet, which looked as if she had lost her own, and borrowed a pair of some child by the way.

She was always followed in all her rambles by a diminutive nondescript kind of dog—a tiny, long-haired, silky looking creature, the colour of coffee freshly ground, no bigger than a large squirrel, with brilliant black eyes, bushy tail, and a pert little face, which greatly resembled that animal.

Often, when moving at full speed along the dusty highway, its mistress would suddenly stop, vociferating at the top of her voice—“Muff! Muff! where are you, my incomparable Muff?” when the queer pet would bound up her dress like a cat, and settle itself down upon her arm, poking its black nose into her hand, or rearing up on its hind legs, to lick her face. They were an odd pair, so unlike, so widely disproportioned in size and motion, that Flora delighted in watching all their movements, and in drawing contrasts between the big woman and her small four-footed companion.

By some strange freak of fancy, Lyndsay and his wife had attracted the attention of Miss Carr, who never passed them in her long rambles without bestowing upon them a gracious bow and a smile, which displayed, at one gesture, all her glittering store of large, white teeth.

“I do believe, John, the strange woman means to pick acquaintance with us,” said Flora to her [58] husband, one fine afternoon during the previous summer, as they were on their way to spend the evening with her mother at —— Hall. “Instead of passing us at her usual brisk trot, she has loitered at our pace for the last half-hour, smiling at us, and showing her white teeth, as if she were contemplating the possibility of an introduction. I wish she would break the ice; for I am dying with curiosity to know something about her.”

“You are very foolish,” said Lyndsay, who was not one of Miss Carr’s admirers, “to trouble your head about her. These eccentric people are often great bores; and, if you get acquainted with them, it is not easy to shake them off. She may be a very *improper* character. I hate mystery in any shape.”

“Oh, bless you!” said Flora, laughing: “she is too old and ugly for scandal of that sort. I should think, from her appearance, that she never had had a sweetheart in her life.”

“There’s no telling,” returned Lyndsay. “She may be lively and witty. Odd people possess an attraction in themselves. We are so much amused with them, that they fascinate us before we are aware. She has a good figure for her very voluminous proportions, and splendid trotters, which always possess charms for some men.”

“Now, don’t be censorious, husband dear. If she should speak to us—what then?”

“Answer her civilly, of course.”

“And if she should take it into her head to call upon us?” [59]

“Return it, and let the acquaintance drop.”

Flora’s love of the ridiculous was her besetting sin. She continued to watch the movements of Miss Carr with mischievous interest, and was as anxious for an interview as Lyndsay was that she should keep her distance. Flora pressed her hand tightly on her husband’s arm, scarcely able to keep her delight in due bounds, while she whispered, in a triumphant aside, “John, I was right. She is shaping her course to our side of the road. She means to speak to us,—and now for it!”

Lyndsay looked annoyed. Flora with difficulty repressed her inclination to laugh out, as Miss Carr came alongside, and verified Mrs. Lyndsay's prediction, by commencing the conversation in a loud-toned, but rather musical voice,

"A bright afternoon for your walk."

"Beautiful for the time of year," said Flora.

"Rather hot for stout people like me. You seem to enjoy it amazingly."

"I am fond of walking. I do not find the heat oppressive."

"Ah, yes; you are thin. Have not much bulk to carry; one of Pharaoh's lean kine. It requires a warm day to make your blood circulate freely. I like winter and spring best for long rambles."

"I should think you would prefer riding," said Lyndsay; "yet I see you out every day on foot."

"I never ride: I hate and detest riding. I never could be dependent upon the motions of an [60] animal. Horses are my aversion; jackasses I despise. God, when He gave us legs of our own, doubtless intended us to make use of them. I have used mine ever since I was a baby, and they are not worn out yet. I got upon my feet sooner than most children, and have kept them to their duty ever since. I am a great walker; I have been walking all my life. Do you know that I have walked over Europe alone, and on foot?"

"So I have heard," said Lyndsay. "It must have been an arduous undertaking for a lady."

"Far easier than you imagine. Women are just as able to shift for themselves as men, if they would follow my example, and make the trial. I have scarcely sat still for the last twenty years. There is not a remarkable spot in Europe that I have not visited, or mountain but what I have climbed, or cavern that I have left unexplored. Three years ago I commenced a pedestrian tour through Great Britain, which I accomplished greatly to my own satisfaction. When I take a fancy to a place, I stay in it until I have explored all the walks in the neighbourhood. Directly I grow tired, I am off. 'Tis a happy, independent sort of life I lead. Confinement would soon kill me."

"Your friends must feel very anxious about you," said Flora, "during your absence."

"Friends! Fiddlesticks! Who told you I had any friends who care a fig for me or my movements? [61] I am gloriously independent, and mean to remain so. There is but one person in the world who is related to me in the most remote degree, or who dares to trouble their head about me or my doings, and he is only a half brother. He has opposed himself against my freedom of thought and action; but I don't care that"—(snapping her fingers vigorously)—"for him or his opinions. He has made war upon my roaming propensities all his life. As if a woman has not as much right to see the world as a man, if she can pay her own expenses, and bear her own burthen, without being a trouble to any one. It is certainly no business of his how I spend my money, or where and how I pass my life. Not long ago I heard that he was going to issue a writ of lunacy against me, in order to get me and my property into his possession. This is mean; for he very well knows that I am not mad; and he is very rich, so that there is no excuse for his avarice. Fortunately, he don't know me personally—never saw me since I was a child—and as I never go by my real name, it is not a very easy matter for him to discover me. I don't like this place, but it is quiet and out of the way. I think I shall remain where I am, till he gets tired of hunting me out. I trust to your honour, young people; you must not betray my secret."

Both promised to say nothing about what she had so frankly communicated. [62]

"I take you at your word," continued Miss Carr; "I like your appearance, and would willingly improve my acquaintance. I often watched you from my windows; and yesterday I asked Mrs. Turner who you were. Her account was so much in your favour, that I determined to introduce myself the first time we accidentally encountered each other. I know your names and where you live. May I come and occasionally enjoy an hour's chat?"

"We shall only be too happy," said Flora, in spite of a warning pinch from Lyndsay, which said, as plainly as words could have done, "She's mad; as mad as a March hare." But Flora would not understand the hint. She felt flattered by the confidence so unexpectedly reposed in them by the odd creature; and vanity is a great enemy to common sense.

"Mind," said Miss Wilhelmina, turning abruptly to Lyndsay, "I don't want to see you at my house. I'm a single woman, and, though not very young, I'm very particular about my character. I never allow a male creature to enter my doors. I'm not fond of men—I have no reason to be fond of them. They never were commonly civil to me; and I hate them generally and individually. When I come to see your wife of course I don't expect you to hide out of the way, or peep at me through [63] crannies, as if I were a wild beast. I shall call to-morrow morning, and so, good day.

"Muff! Muff!—My incomparable! my perfect!—What are you doing? Frisking beside that ugly black cur! He's no companion for a dog of your breeding and degree. Away, you vulgar-looking brute." And running across the road, she seized hold of a pedlar's dog, who was having a great game of romps with her favourite, and gave it a most unjust and unmerciful belabouring with her cane.

The pedlar, who was by no means pleased with this outrage against his cur, now interfered.

"Don't lick my dorrg, ma'am, in that ere sort o' fashun. What harm can that hanimal ha' done to

you, or that whiskered cat-like thing o' yourn?"

"Hold your impertinent tongue, fellow! or I'll thrash you, too," cried Miss Wilhelmina, flourishing aloft her cane.

The man eyed her sullenly. "Maybe, you'd beest not try. If you warn't a 'uman I'd give it to 'un."

"A lady, sir," with great dignity, and drawing herself up to her full height.

"Ladies don't act in that ere way. You be but a 'uman, and a mad yun, too; that be what you be's."

The next moment Lyndsay expected the cane to descend upon the pedlar's head, and was ready to rush to the rescue of the fair Wilhelmina. But no; the lady dropped her cane, burst into a loud fit of laughter, stooped down, patted the offended cur, and, slipping a shilling into the hand of the angry countryman, snatched Muff to her capacious bosom, and walked off at full trot. [64]

The pedlar, looking after her for a minute, with his eyes and mouth wide open in blank astonishment, and then down at the silver glittering in his hand, cried out,—

"I knows you bees a lady now. If you delights in licking o' do'rrgs, ma'am, you ma' thrash Bull as much as you please for sixpence a licking. That's fair, I thinks."

He might as well have shouted to the winds; Miss Wilhelmina was out of hearing, and Flora and her husband pursued their walk to the hall.

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CHAPTER VIII. [65]

MISS WILHELMINA CALLS UPON FLORA.

The breakfast things were scarcely removed the following morning, when Miss Carr walked into the room, where Flora was employed at her work-table, in manufacturing some small articles of dress.

"Your husband is afraid of me, Mrs. Lyndsay: he started off the moment he saw me coming up to the door. I don't want to banish him from his own house."

"Oh, not at all. He has business in town, Miss Carr. You have favoured me with a very early visit."

"Too early? Just speak the truth plainly out. Why the deuce do people tell so many stories, when it would be far easier to speak the truth? I assure you, that you look so neat and comfortable in your morning costume, that you have no reason to be ashamed. I like to come upon people unawares,—to see them as they really are. You are welcome to come and see me in my night-cap, when the spirit moves me. When I'm not out walking, I'm always at home. Busy at work, too?" [66] she continued, putting a tiny cap upon her fist. "That looks droll, and tells tales."

"Oh, don't!—do spare me," cried Flora, snatching the article from her odd companion, and hiding it away in the table-drawer. "I did not mean that any one should catch me at this work."

"Don't think, my dear, that I am going to criticise you. I am no judge of sewing,—never set a stitch in my life. It must be a dull way of spending time. Can't you put your needle-work out?"

Flora shook her head.

"Too poor for that? Mrs. Turner's daughter takes in all such gimcracks. Send what you've got over to her, and I'll pay for the making."

"Miss Carr!" said Flora, greatly distressed.

"What, angry again?"

"No, not exactly angry; but you wound my pride."

"It would do you no harm to kill it outright," said Miss Carr, laughing—such a loud, jovial peal of merriment, which rang so clearly from her healthy lungs, that Flora, in spite of her offended dignity, was forced to laugh too.

"You feel better now. I hope the proud fit is going off, and we can enjoy a reasonable chat. These clothes—what a bore they are, to both poor and rich,—the rich setting their heart too much upon them, and the poor despised because they have not enough to keep them warm,—and those [67]

mean and old. Then, this is not all. There are the perpetual changes of the fashions, which oblige people to put on what does not suit them, and to make monstrous frights of themselves to dress in the mode. You must have a morning-gown, a dinner-dress, and an evening costume; all to be shifted and changed in the same day, consuming a deal of time, which might be enjoyed in wholesome exercise. I have no patience with such folly. The animals, let me tell you, are a great deal better off than their masters. Nature has provided them with a coat which never wants changing but once a-year; and that is done so gradually, that they experience no inconvenience. No need of their consulting the fashions, or patching and stitching to keep up a decent appearance. It is a thousand pities that clothes were ever invented. People would have been much healthier, and looked much better without them."

"My dear madam, did not God himself instruct our first parents to make garments of the skins of animals?"

"They were not necessary in a state of innocence, or He would have created them like cows and horses, with clothes upon their backs," said Wilhelmina, sharply. "It was their own fault that they ever required such trumpery, entailing upon their posterity a curse as bad as the thorns and thistles. For I always consider it as such, when sweltering under the weight of gowns and petticoats on a hot day; and I rate Mother Eve roundly, and in no measured terms, for her folly in losing the glorious privilege of walking in buff." [68]

"You must have been thinking of that," said Flora, rather mischievously, and glancing down at Miss Wilhelmina's legs, "when you cut your petticoats so short."

"You are welcome to laugh at any short petticoats," said Wilhelmina, "as long as I feel the comfort of wearing them. Now do tell me, candidly,—what impropriety is there in a woman showing her leg and foot, more than in another woman showing her hand and arm? The evil lies in your own thoughts. You see the Bavarian buy-a-broom girls passing before your windows every day, with petticoats cut three or four inches shorter than mine. You perceive no harm in that. 'It is the fashion of her country,' you cry. Custom banishes from our minds the idea of impropriety; and the naked savage of the woods is as modest as the closely covered civilian. Now, why am I compelled to wear long petticoats drabbling in the mud, when a Bavarian may wear hers up to the knees, and nobody think the worse of her? I am as much a free agent as she is; have as much right to wear what I please. I like short petticoats—I can walk better in them—they neither take up the dust or the mud, and leave my motions free and untrammelled—and what's more, I mean to wear them.

"I have tried trowsers; but they fettered me. It is difficult to stow a large figure like mine away into trowsers. I felt as if my legs were in the stocks, and kicked them off in disdain—simply remarking—'what fools men are!' So, you don't like my short petticoats? and I hate your long ones. First, because they are slatternly and inconvenient; secondly, because they make your stockings dirty; and thirdly, because they give you the idea that they are intended to conceal crooked legs. So don't say one word in their favour." [69]

"It is but a matter of taste and opinion," said Flora; "we will not quarrel about it. I think it wiser, however, in order to avoid singularity, to conform to existing fashions."

"Mrs. Lyndsay, I can prove to you in less than two minutes, that you transgress daily your own rules." Flora looked incredulous.

"You do not wear a *bustle*, which is now considered by all ladies an indispensable article of dress."

"You are right: it is a disgusting fashion, which destroys the grace and just proportions of the female form. A monstrous piece of absurdity, that I have never adopted, and never will."[A]

[A] During twenty years Flora kept her word.

"Bravo! Bravo!" shouted Miss Wilhelmina, clapping her hands in an ecstasy of delight. "I have conquered you with your own weapons. There is no slipping past the horns of that dilemma. You refuse to wear a hump on your back, and I decline the honour of the long petticoats. Let us hear how you can justify yourself?" [70]

"You have gained an advantage by my own admission," said Flora; "but I can't consider myself beat."

"Fairly out of the field, my dear—fairly out of the field. Acknowledge the defeat with a good grace. Let us shake hands, and drink a glass of wine together in token of peace."

"I never keep wine in the house," said Flora, rather embarrassed, at the request, particularly at such an early hour of the day.

"Never keep wine in your house! Why, how do you contrive to keep up your spirits, without a glass of wine now and then?"

"We are young, and require no artificial stimulants, to render us cheerful and happy."

"Well, I require stimulants," said Miss Wilhelmina, "with the violent exercise I take. I do not object to a glass of brandy-and-water, or even of gin, when I feel exhausted."

"If you feel ill, Miss Carr, I will send out and get some."

“Ill! Lord bless you! I never was ill for an hour in my life. So, you cannot afford a little luxury like wine? My child, I pity you: I am sure you require it. I wish you were better off.”

“I shall never quarrel with Providence, from whom we have received so many blessings, on that account,” said Flora; “I am very grateful for the real comforts we enjoy.” [71]

“Poor comfort!” quoth Miss Wilhelmina. “My ideas of comfort are always associated with wealth. I maintain, that no one can really be comfortable without it. What should I be, without money? An antiquated, despised old maid—and with all my expensive habits, and queer notions, the very boys in the village would hold me in derision. For even boys know the importance of money, and let me pass unmolested through the midst of them.”

“I perceive that you are very popular with the young folks,” said Flora.

“All bribery and corruption, my dear. Boys are but men abridged and cramped down into skeleton jackets. When I come to a town, I throw a handful of small silver coin into the middle of the first group of boys I find in my path. The next time they see me coming they cry out lustily, ‘Off with your hats, boys: here comes the rich lady!’ Off go the tattered hats and caps, and my small coin pays for the compliment.”

“Your plan is an expensive one,” said Flora; “no wonder the boys regard you with such favour.”

“I never found money fail but in one instance,” said Miss Wilhelmina thoughtfully. “Mind, it is not to every one that I would communicate my experience. People like to talk of themselves—to tell portions of their history; it relieves their minds. There are very few to whom I have ever told mine; but I think it will amuse you. The follies of others are always entertaining. [72]

“My father was Scotch—my mother Irish. The two nations don’t amalgamate very well together. The children of such an union are apt to inherit the peculiar national failings of both. My father united to a love of science a great deal of mechanical genius. He was a clever, prudent, enterprising man, and amassed a large fortune. My mother I never knew—she died when I was an infant. My father hired a good-natured, easy kind of woman, to be nurse. She was a widow, without children, whom he afterwards promoted to the head of his table. She was his third wife. He had one son by his first marriage, who had been born in Scotland, and adopted by a rich uncle. He afterwards got an appointment in India; and I never saw him above half-a-dozen times in my life—and only when a child. He was a handsome, proud man, very Scotch in all his words and ways. We never took to one another. He thought me a spoilt, disagreeable, pert child; and I considered him a cross, stern man; and never could be induced to call him brother.

“I inherited a good property from my mother, which made me a very independent little lady, in my own conceit. I knew, that the moment I became of age, I was my own mistress. Perhaps it was this consciousness of power which made me the queer being I am. [73]

“My step-mother was very fond of me. She spoilt me shockingly—more than most mothers indulge their brats. She always seemed to retain a sense of the inferior position she had held. Not a common failing, by-the-by: persons raised unexpectedly to wealth, from the lower class, generally measure their presumption by their ignorance. She always treated me as a superior. My father was very fond of her. These passive women are always great favourites with men. They have no decided character of their own, and become the mere echoes of superior minds. A vain man loves to see his own reflection in one of these domestic magnifying glasses: it is so gratifying to be the Alpha and Omega in his own house. His former wives were both handsome, conceited women, who thought so much of themselves that they could reflect no perfections but their own. In this respect I resembled my mother—from a baby I thought fit to have a will and opinions of my own.

“My step-mother always yielded to my masterly disposition when a child, generally ending the brief contest with the remark, ‘What a pity Willie was not a boy! What a fine spirited boy she would have made!’ When I grew a tall girl, I became more independent still, and virtually was mistress of the house. My father sent me to school. I learnt quickly enough; but I was expelled from half a dozen for striking my teacher whenever she dared to raise her hand to correct me. At length my education was finished, and I returned home for good, as wild and as fierce as an untamed colt. [74]

“My step-mother had a nephew—a lad whom my father had befriended very much. He had paid for his education, had bound him to an eminent surgeon, and, when his term expired, had enabled him, from the same source, to walk the hospitals and attend the necessary lectures. Henry was attending the last course which was to fit him for entering upon his profession; and during that period he made our house his home.

“He was not handsome, but a well-grown, high-spirited, clever young fellow. Not at all a sentimental person, but abounding in frolic and fun, full of quaint, witty sayings, and the very incarnation of mischief. We took amazingly to each other; and he enjoyed all my odd freaks and fancies, and encouraged me in all my masculine propensities.

“I grew very fond of him: he was the only creature of his sex I ever loved;—but I did love him, and I thought that he loved me. I considered myself handsome and fascinating. All young people think so, if they are ever so ordinary. It belongs to the vanity of the age, which believes all things —hopes for all things, and entertains no fears for the result.

“The girls at school had told me, that ‘I was a perfect fright;’ but I did not believe them. They [75]

laughed at my snub nose and carrotty locks, and said ‘that it would take all my money to buy me a husband.’

“Now, by way of digression, I’m a great talker, Mrs. Lyndsay, and love to ramble from one subject to another. Do just tell me, why a *snub* nose should be reckoned vulgar, and red hair disgraceful?”

This was an awkward question. It was, however, put point blank. Flora could not avoid giving something in the shape of an answer.

“It is impossible to account for these things,” she said. “Any deviation from a recognised standard of taste and beauty is always open to objections. But there are a great many modifications of these rules. Elegance of form, grace of manner, charms of expression, and even sweetness of voice, will render plain persons not only agreeable, but highly so.”

“You reconcile me to my snub nose and red hair,” said the odd woman. “But few people possess a nice sense of discrimination; they are quick at finding out defects, slow at discovering graces. The world is full of unjust partialities. My snub nose would have been considered a beauty in Africa. My red hair would have been admired in Italy; but there is no struggling against national prejudices; and these bull-headed English are the most prejudiced animals under the sun—and I [76] was remorselessly branded as a fright by a pack of sneering girls, half of whom had noses as bad as my own. I had my private opinion on the subject, in which I flattered myself my cousin (as I called Henry), would perfectly agree.

“He never told me he loved me. I felt certain that he did, and that it was gratitude to my father, for all that he had done for him, which kept him silent. This was a foolishly romantic notion of mine. But there was a touch of romance about me in those days. I was green—very green. I can laugh at myself now. But it has always been rather a sore subject.

“Henry did not speak himself. So I thought I would break the ice, and speak for him. You look surprised. Well, I know it is not exactly according to the general rules observed in such matters, which ties a woman’s tongue, and obliges her to wait with all humility, until she is asked by some man, whom perhaps she does not care a fig for, to be his wife. I never lived within rules, and I thought I had as much right to please myself, and ask a man to marry me, as a man had to ask me to be his wife.

“I made Henry an offer of my hand, heart, and fortune—and—it is no use being ashamed at my time of life, of a thing which happened such a long time ago—I was *refused*!—without any softening of the matter—down right, positively refused.

“The ungrateful varlet did not even thank me for the honour. He briefly told me, ‘That I was a [77] very amusing girl, but the last woman on earth he should wish to make his wife; that as to money, it was certainly a great inducement, but not enough to compensate for the sacrifice of his principles. He had a good profession, and hoped to earn by it wealth and independence.’

“Ah! how I hated him while he told me all this. How I have hated all his sex from that hour, for his sake!

“However, my dear, it had this good effect,—it cured me of all such ridiculous weakness then and for ever. I shook off the love fit, and Wilhelmina was herself again.

“My step-mother died shortly after this, and I became the mistress of my father’s house. He was old and very infirm, and completely wrapped up in his scientific studies. I only saw him occasionally, and then my nonsense amused him. He pined after my step-mother; and very shortly followed her to the grave. I had just attained my majority when he died, and I came into a fine property, and found myself at my own disposal.

“Nobody cared for me, and I cared for nobody. I wished to take a peep at the world, and determined to travel over as much of its surface as I possibly could; and please myself as to the method I employed to effect my object.

“I have been in a great many foreign countries, and seen a great many strange people; and [78] been an actor in many extraordinary scenes; and I have come to the conclusion, that the world after all is not such a terrible bad world to live in, and that the very worst of its inhabitants are not entirely without some good.”

As she finished this sentence, the church clock proclaimed to the whole town the hour of one. Miss Wilhelmina sprang from her chair, exclaiming, “Holloa! that’s my dinner-hour. It will take me ten minutes to get home, and the fish will be quite spoilt. Excuse me, Mrs. Lyndsay, and come and take tea with me, like a good soul, to-morrow evening. I never take tea later than six.”

Miss Wilhelmina vanished. Flora laughed over the interview until her husband came home, and then they had a good laugh together.

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CHAPTER IX.

FLORA GOES TO TEA WITH MISS CARR.

THE following evening, at the primitive hour of half-past five, Flora took her work, and went across the green to take tea with Miss Carr.

She found that eccentric lady seated by the window, looking out for her, and Muff standing on her shoulder, catching flies off the panes of glass. The evening was cold and raw, though the month was August, and threatened rain. Such changes are common on the coast. The dreary aspect of things without was relieved by a small but very cheerful fire, which was burning away merrily in the grate. A large easy chair, covered with snow-white dimity, was placed near it, expressly for Flora's accommodation, into which she was duly inducted by Miss Carr, the moment she had relieved herself of her bonnet and shawl. Everything looked so comfortable and cosy, in the neat lodging-house, and the tame mad woman received Mrs. Lyndsay with such hospitable warmth of manner, that the former regretted that her husband was not allowed to share her visit.

[80] "You are late," said Wilhelmina, drawing a small sofa up to the fire, and placing it opposite to Flora's easy chair, so that a pretty work-table stood conveniently between them; "I told you to come early, and I have been waiting for you this hour."

"I am sorry for that. I thought I had come unfashionably early."

"Fashion! What have you or I to do with anything so absurd as fashion? You are too poor to attend to the whims and caprices which sway the mind of the multitude, from which I presume emanate the fashions of the world; and I am too independent to be swayed by any will but my own. We will therefore set the fashion for ourselves. This is liberty hall while I am mistress of it. I do as I please; I give you full permission to do the same. But what kept you so late?"

"A thousand little domestic duties, too numerous and too trifling to dwell upon," said Flora, drawing her work from her bag; "since you give me the privilege of doing as I please, I will resume my work, while I listen to your lively conversation."

"You will do no such thing," returned Wilhelmina, twitching a frill which Flora had commenced hemming, from her hand, "I will have no stitching and sewing here, but as much conversation as you please." Then ringing the bell, she handed over the frill to Mrs. Turner, "Give that to your daughter, Mrs. T., to hem for me, and tell her to do it in her very best style.

[81] ""Why, la, ma'am, 'tis a very small affair," said Mrs. Turner, with a meaning smile.

"A nightcap frill for Muff," said Miss Carr. "The cold weather is coming. I mean Muff to wear caps in the winter."

"You are a droll lady," said Mrs. Turner retreating; "it's a pity you had not something better to make an idol of, than a dog."

While Miss Carr was speaking to Mrs. Turner, Flora glanced round the room, and was not a little surprised to find a pianoforte making part of the furniture, an open drawing-box, of a very expensive kind, with card-board and other drawing materials, occupied a side-table. These were articles of refinement she had not expected from a man-like woman of Miss Carr's character.

"Are you fond of drawing?" she asked, when they were once more alone.

"Passionately, my dear: I am a self-taught genius. Other people drew, and I was determined that I would draw too. What should hinder me? I have eyes to see, and hands to copy what pleases me; and the school from which I derive instruction is the best in the world, and furnishes the most perfect models—that of Nature. I never bent my mind to anything that I wished to accomplish, and failed. But you shall judge for yourself."

[82] Miss Wilhelmina sprang from her seat, and bouncing into a closet, soon returned with a large portfolio, which she placed on the table before Flora. "There are my treasures; you can examine them at your leisure."

Flora did not expect anything delicate or beautiful, but she was perfectly astonished, not at the skill and taste displayed in these drawings, but at the extraordinary want of it—nothing could be worse, or indeed so eccentrically bad. The first specimen of Miss Carr's talents as an artist which she drew from the splendid velvet-covered portfolio puzzled her not a little. What the picture was meant for, Flora, for the life of her, could not tell, until glancing down to the bottom of the sheet, she read with great difficulty the following explanation, written in a vile hand:—

"*Portrait of the Incomparable Muff, taken while picking her bone at breakfast.*"

It was a good thing she had discovered a key to the hieroglyphic, for Miss Carr's keen eyes were fixed intently upon her, as if they were reading her inmost soul.

"Is it not beautiful?" she cried, anticipating Flora's admiration.

"Muff is a very pretty animal," said Flora evasively.

“Muff pretty!” exclaimed Miss Carr indignantly, “who ever thought of insulting Muff by calling her *pretty*! She is exquisite—the perfection of her species. I have, in that spirited picture, hit her off to the life. Look at the action of that tail—the life-like grasp of those paws. You might almost [83] fancy you heard her growl over the delicious broiled mutton-bone.”

Flora thought the picture would have suited the *Ornithorhyncus paradoxus* quite as well as the incomparable Muff. The drawing was too bad to praise; she could not flatter, and she abhorred quizzing.

Miss Carr waited for her answer. Flora was dumb-foundered; fortunately the offended vanity of the artist soon relieved her from the painful and embarrassing silence.

“I perceive that you are no judge of good paintings, Mrs. Lyndsay, or you must see some merit in the one before you. I showed that sketch to an Italian artist of celebrity when I was at Rome; he said, ‘That it was worthy of the original,’ which I considered no mean praise.”

“Doubtless, he was right,” said Flora. “His judgment must be more correct than mine. Muff is so unlike the generality of dogs, that it is difficult to recognise her as such.”

“She’s a fairy!” cried Wilhelmina, forgetting her anger, and hugging Muff to her breast.

“A Brownie,” suggested Flora, delighted to find the conversation taking a turn.

“Brownies belong to an inferior order of immortals,” quoth Wilhelmina, still caressing her dog. “My Muff is among the aristocrats of her species. But you have not seen the rest of my sketches. [84] You will find a great many original pieces in the portfolio.”

Flora wished them all behind the fire, and turning with a rueful seriousness to the sacred repository of *genius*, she drew forth several daubs that were meant for landscapes, the contemplation of which would have provoked the most indifferent person to mirth; but it was no laughing matter to examine them while a being so odd as Miss Carr was regarding you with a fixed gaze, hungry for applause and admiration.

Flora thought she had discovered the maddest point in Miss Carr’s character. At length she stumbled upon a portrait. The figure was meant for that of a boy, but the head was as big as the head of a man, and covered with a forest of red curling hair, and he held in his hand a bunch of blue flowers as big as himself. “What an odd looking creature!” burst involuntarily from her lips.

“Ah, my beautiful Adolphe!” cried Wilhelmina. “He was odd like myself—he stood alone in the world in my estimation. I must tell you the history of that child while you have his charming face before you.”

Flora quietly slipped the portrait back into the portfolio. Her inclination to laugh became almost irrepressible. Miss Wilhelmina laid her right foot over her left knee, and, patting it almost as complacently as she would have done the silky brown back of her pet dog, gave Mrs Lyndsay [85] the following passage from her history:—

“That boy, with the education I meant to bestow upon him, would have become a great man—a second William Tell, or Andrew Hoffer—and I should have been the foster-mother of a man of genius. But it was not to be—there is a fate in these things.”

“Did he die?” asked Flora.

“Die! that would have been nothing out of the common way; everybody must die, some time or other. Oh, no, he may be living yet for what I know—it was far worse than that.”

Flora became interested.

“First—I like to begin at the beginning—I must tell you how I came by Adolphe. I passed the summer of ’28 in a small village among the Alps. Every fine day I rambled among the mountains, —sometimes with a guide, sometimes alone. About half a mile from the village I daily encountered, upon the rocky road, a red-headed little boy of eight years of age, who never failed to present me with a bunch of the blue flowers which grow just below the regions of ice and snow. He presented his offering in such a pretty, simple manner, that I never accepted his flowers without giving him a kiss and a few small coins. We soon became great friends, and he often accompanied me on my exploring expeditions. Whether it was his red head—God bless the [86] mark! or a likeness I fancied I saw between him and me, I cannot tell; but at last I grew so fond of the child that I determined to adopt him as my own. His father was one of the mountain guides, and resided in a small cabin among the hills. I followed Adolphe to his romantic home, and disclosed my wishes to his parents. They were very poor people, with a very large family, Adolphe being number twelve of the domestic group.

“For a long time they resisted all my entreaties to induce them to part with the child. The woman, like the mother of the Gracchi, thought fit to look upon her children as her jewels,—Adolphe, in particular, she considered the gem in the maternal crown. Her opposition only increased my desire to gain possession of the boy; indeed, I was so set upon having him that, had she remained obstinate, I determined to carry him off without asking her leave a second time. My gold, and the earnest request of the child himself, at last overcame her scruples; and after binding me by a solemn promise to let them see him at least once a-year, she gave him into my charge with many tears.

“Having accomplished this business, greatly to my own satisfaction, I set off with Adolphe, on a tour on foot through Germany. He was not only a great comfort to me, but useful withal. He was [87] sturdy and strong, a real son of the hills, and he carried my small valise, and enlivened the length of the road with his agreeable prattle.

“When we put up for the night, the people always took him for my son; a fact I thought it useless to dispute in a foreign country. It would have had a more significant meaning in England. A red-headed, single lady could not have travelled alone, with a red-headed child, without disagreeable insinuations. Abroad I always passed myself off as a widow, and Adolphe of course was my orphan son.

“Matters went off very pleasantly, until we arrived at Vienna, and I hired a neat lodging in a quiet part of the city, where I determined to spend the winter. The next morning I went out, accompanied by Adolphe, to examine the lions of the place. By accident we got entangled in a crowd, which had collected in one of the principal thoroughfares, to witness a fire. While striving to stem my way through the heaving mass of human forms that hedged us in on every side, I suddenly missed my child. To find him among such a multitude, was, indeed, to look for a needle in a waggon of hay; yet I commenced the search in utter desperation.

“I ran hither and thither, wherever I could find an opening, frantically calling upon Adolphe. I asked every person whom I met—‘If they had seen my boy?’ Some pitied—some laughed; but the [88] greater number bade me stand out of their way. I was mad with fear and excitement, and returned to my lodgings late in the evening, starving with hunger, and worn out with fatigue of mind and body. I hoped that the child might have found his way home, and was waiting me there. Alas! Adolphe had not been seen, and I went to bed too much vexed to eat my supper.

“Early the next morning I resumed my search. I hired the public cryer to proclaim my loss; I borrowed a large bell from my landlady, and went through all the streets crying him myself, hoping that he would recognise my voice. Alas! alas! I never saw my child again!”

“Never?” said Flora. “Was he irrevocably lost?”

“Lost, lost, lost!” said Wilhelmina, shaking her head. “This comes of adopting other people’s brats. Had he been a worthless, spoilt imp of my own, I should have been more successful. I stayed in Vienna all the winter. I advertised him in the papers. I had placards, offering a large reward for his discovery, pasted on the walls of the principal streets; but I failed in recovering my poor Adolphe. To console myself for his loss, I painted that portrait of him from memory. ’Tis an admirable likeness. No one who had ever seen the original, could mistake it for another. It was just a week after I lost my child, that the mistress of the house, in compassion for my distress, [89] presented me with my incomparable Muff. Fortune owed me a good turn, for the ill-natured trick she had played me. It would not have been difficult for me to have found another red-headed boy, as amiable as Adolphe; but such a prize as Muff is only to be met with once in a life.”

“And the parents of the poor child,—how did they bear his loss?”

“To tell you the truth, my dear, I never knew. I never wish to know; for, without Adolphe, I never mean to venture into their neighbourhood again.”

“Let us hope,” said Flora, “that the child found his way back to his native mountains.”

“Hurra!” cried Miss Wilhelmina, starting from her seat, and giving Flora such a hearty embrace that she nearly choked her. “I never thought of that possibility before. Yes—yes; he had money in his little purse. I have no doubt that, on missing me, he returned by the road we had travelled to his native place. That demon won’t haunt my dreams again. But here comes the coffee, and Miss Turner’s delicious cakes and home-made bread and butter. I hope you are fond of coffee, my dear? I detest tea;—it is a sort of nervous, maudlin, sick-chamber trash, only fit for old maids and milk-and-water matrons.”

“I prefer coffee,” said Flora. “I have quite an Asiatic taste in that respect.”

“Don’t talk of Asiatic coffee,” said Wilhelmina: “wait till you have tasted it. The nauseous stuff! [90] I have drank enough of it at Constantinople, but never could get it down without a grimace. I have it made in the French style.”

The coffee and cakes were served on a small silver tray, which was placed on the table between them. The coffee was fragrant and exhilarating; the bread and butter and cakes richly deserved the praise Miss Wilhelmina had bestowed upon them. Flora had dined early, and did justice to them.

“I like to see a person enjoy their meals,” said Miss Carr. “I hate affectation in eating, as much as I hate affectation in speech. Some mince with their food as if they were ashamed of putting a morsel into their mouths before people. They ask for the least piece of this, and for an imaginary crumb of that; and make their entertainers uncomfortable by their ridiculous fastidiousness; while, if we could see these very delicate masticators in their own homes, perhaps we should find them grumbling for Benjamin’s share of the daily meal. For my own part, I always eat in public as if no eye was upon me, and do it in a hearty, natural way. You may be sure, when you see persons, whether male or female, give themselves great airs at table, that they have never been used to good society at home.”

Flora thought there was a great deal of truth in some of Wilhelmina’s remarks. But she felt that [91]

it would be dangerous to take the doings of such an odd mortal for precedents in any case; and she was justified in her opinion by Miss Carr, the moment the table was cleared, calling for hot water, brandy, and wine.

“Do you smoke?” she cried, producing a box of cigars from the closet, and a long Turkish pipe. Then, drawing down the window-curtains, she tucked her legs under her upon the sofa, and commenced filling, from a beautiful inlaid silver box, her hooker, with its finely-ornamented bowl and amber mouthpiece.

Flora looked her astonishment, as she said,—

“Miss Carr, do you *really* smoke?”

“Do I know what is good?” said Wilhelmina. “Did you never see a woman smoke before?”

“Yes, Irish barrow-women in London; and I thought it odd, even for them.”

“They were wise women, my dear, and knew how to appreciate the merits of the weed. The Irish are a clever people—a very clever people. You remember, that I am Irish by the mother’s side, and have retained one of the national tastes. But it was not in Ireland, nor in the streets of London, sitting upon a fruit-woman’s barrow, that I learned the pleasures of smoking. It was in the East, with all its pretended romance, and real humbug, that I acquired what you consider an unfeminine accomplishment. I saw fat, turbaned men sitting cross-legged in every bazaar, dozing [92] over their huge pipes, in a sort of dreamy helplessness; and I determined to fathom the mystery of their enjoyment, and find out the grand secret.

“The first few whiffs I took made me very sick and stupid. ‘Courage,’ said I, not in the least disheartened—

> “‘Pleasure cometh after pain,
> Sunshine cometh after rain—
> Wilhelmina, try again.’

And I did try, for I was determined not to be beaten by these long-bearded, long-petticoated men; and the next trial was crowned with complete success.

“Now, Mrs. Lyndsay, is it not a shame that these selfish men should be tamely allowed by us foolish women to monopolise all the good things of life, and make that criminal in a female which they cannot deny themselves? You don’t know how much you lose, by being frightened by their blustering into passive obedience, and persuaded that what is good for a man is quite out of keeping with a woman. Do, just by way of illustration to my argument, try one of those fragrant cigars. They are of the best quality—real Havana—’pon honour.”

“You must excuse me,” said Flora, laughing—as Miss Wilhelmina’s head dimly loomed through clouds of smoke—“I have no wish to acquire such a taste.”

“You’re a little fool,” puffed forth Wilhelmina. “But I hope to make something out of you yet. [93] Take a glass of wine.”

“I never drink anything but water, excepting at breakfast and tea.”

“Water! Fiddle-faddle. A tumbler of hot punch will do you no harm. I am going to mix some in the most scientific manner.”

“Only think what Lyndsay would say,” cried Flora, “if he should come in, and find me smoking a cigar, and drinking brandy punch? He would never forgive me—I could never forgive myself.”

“All stuff and nonsense; I am certain he would neither refuse one of these cigars, nor a tumbler of this excellent punch. Does he never smoke?”

“Oh, yes; a cigar, sometimes.”

“And takes a glass of toddy—or he’s no Scot.”

“Occasionally, with a friend.”

“A male friend, *of course*. He takes snuff, for I have seen him do it; and this, between ourselves, is a far dirtier habit than smoking. I hate snuff; it always reminds me of a lecture I once heard upon that subject in America. The lecturer was a methodist; and he spoke very vehemently against the use of tobacco in any shape; but snuff-taking seemed to rouse him up, and inflame his indignation to a pitch of enthusiasm. ‘If the Almighty,’ he said, ‘had intended a man’s nose for a dust-hole, he would have turned up the nostrils the other way.’ These were his very words; and to me they were so convincing, that I discarded from that moment all idea of becoming a snuff- [94] taker.”

Wilhelmina emptied her tumbler of brandy and water, which she as quickly replenished. These strong potations began to take effect—her eyes danced in her head, and she became so strangely excited, that Flora wished devoutly that she was safe at home. Presently her odd companion laid aside her pipe, pushed from before her the now empty tumbler, and, rising abruptly, exclaimed—

“I’ve had enough.”

Flora thought that she might have come to that conclusion half an hour before.

“I’m not intoxicated,” she said: “I only drink enough to raise my spirits, and drive away the blue devils. And now for a little music.”

She sat down to the piano.

“I play entirely from ear, Mrs. Lyndsay; I leave you to judge if I have not an exquisite taste. Here is a march I composed this morning for Captain Lyndsay’s black regiment—Hottentot of course. You say he plays well himself. He cannot fail to admire it. I will write it out for him to-morrow.”

Of all Miss Carr’s strange whims, the idea she entertained of her being a great musician, was the most absurd. She rattled over the keys at a tremendous rate, striking them with such force that she made the instrument shake. It was a mad revel—a hurricane of sound, yet, not without a certain degree of eccentric talent. In the midst of a tremendous passage there came a knock at the door. [95]

“That’s my husband,” said Flora, rising, glad to get away.

It was only the maid.

“You are no prophet,” said Miss Carr, rattling on; “you must stay till I give you *Napoleon’s Passage of the Alps*. I wrote it on the spot. It is a grand thing. I mean to publish it one of these days.”

Flora said, “that she should be happy to hear it some other time. It was late. She was anxious to get home.”

“Be off with you then,” said Wilhelmina, laughing, “and don’t tell me any white lies, or try and convince your good man, that I have been endeavouring to corrupt your morals.”

Lyndsay was amused, but not much pleased, with the account his wife gave him of her visit to Miss Carr.

“You must drop that woman’s acquaintance, if possible,” said he. “Whether insane, or only eccentric, any particular intimacy with her must be attended with unpleasant consequences.”

Flora was willing enough to follow his advice; but to get rid of Miss Carr was sooner said than done. Flora did not go to that lady’s house, but Wilhelmina chose to come to her; though she gave her neither pipes to smoke, nor brandy to drink, her odd guest never failed to step in once or twice a week. [96]

“You are an ungrateful creature, Flora Lyndsay,” said Wilhelmina, one day to her—“very ungrateful. You know I am fond of you; but you are such a mental coward, that you are ashamed of my acquaintance, because the world finds fault with me, for not living in accordance with its lying customs. You are afraid lest people should sneer at you for tolerating my eccentricities, as they please to term a person leading a true life—or say, that Mrs. Lyndsay smokes, and drinks, and swears, because Miss Carr does; and your sense of propriety is shocked at such an idea. I do drink and smoke; but like Poll, in the sailor’s song, ‘*I seldom swear.*’ It gives me no pleasure; and I never do anything gratuitously bad.”

Flora could not deny, that these were among the objections she had to an intimacy with Miss Carr; but she wisely held her tongue upon the subject.

“Ah, well,” said Wilhelmina, after waiting a reasonable time for an answer, and getting none. “Your silence is very conclusive evidence of the accusation I have brought against you. I give you credit for being honest, at least. You are no sneak, though I am rich, and you are poor. I verily believe, that you are prouder of your poverty, than I am of my wealth. I know many persons who hate me, and would yet fawn to me before my face, while they abused me like pickpockets behind my back. You are not one of them, and I love you for that.” [97]

Flora had a kindness for Wilhelmina. She believed her to be mad, and not accountable for her actions, and she tried to persuade her to give over her rambling propensities, and accept the protection of her brother’s roof. This advice greatly displeased Miss Carr. Flora might as well have striven to confine a hurricane within the bounds of a cambric pocket-handkerchief, as to lay the least embargo upon that lady’s freedom of speech or action.

“Mind your own business! Mrs. Lyndsay,” she said, angrily. “I suffer no one to interfere with me, or my matters.”

For many months Wilhelmina never entered the house, though she walked past the window every day, to give Flora a hint that she was still in the land of the living.

In February Mrs. Lyndsay’s little girl was born; and for a very long time she was too ill to stir abroad. Miss Carr sent Mrs. Turner every day to inquire after her health; and testified her regard in a more substantial form, by sending her two dozen of old Madeira wine, which she said would strengthen and do her good. Flora was very grateful for these little attentions, and felt ashamed of the repugnance she had shown for Wilhelmina’s society. But they never met again, until Miss Carr came to bid her farewell.

“You are going to Canada,” she said, shaking Flora heartily by the hand. “You are wise. In that wild country you will enjoy the glorious privilege of living as you please. I would go too, but I am afraid the cold winters would not agree with Muff, and her comfort has to be considered as well [98]

as my own. I spent a winter in New York; and I liked the Americans first-rate. But as to pure democracy, my dear, that's all a humbug. No well-educated, wealthy persons, ever consider themselves upon an equality with their servants. But they are pleasant, kind, intelligent people to live with, if you have plenty of money, and dress well. I know nothing of Canada; it was too insignificant to awaken either interest or curiosity. I shall regard it with more complacency for your sake."

Flora took the opportunity of thanking Miss Carr for her kindness during her illness.

"What a serious matter you make of a trifle!" said Wilhelmina, laughing. "Don't thank me. It was neither out of love nor charity I sent it, but just to make you confess that wine was a good thing after all, and much better to take than the doctor's stuff."

"The doctor had recommended wine, but we could not afford it. I never told Lyndsay a word about it, for fear he should lay out the money we wanted so much for our voyage, in such an expensive remedy. I am certain that it did me a great deal of good."

"Doubtless," said Wilhelmina. "I am glad to have rendered you a service, however trifling. You [99]
are a clear, prudent creature, but want spirit to live as you please. I leave this hum-drum place to-morrow. Perhaps some of these days we may meet again; if not, you may live to learn that you slighted the friendship of one of the greatest geniuses that has arisen in this age."

Miss Carr left the town on foot, as suddenly as she had entered it. Who or what she was remains a riddle to this day: we are almost inclined to believe that she was a *myth*.

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CHAPTER X. [100]

OLD JARVIS AND HIS DOG NEPTUNE.

"Ma'am, old Jarvis is in the kitchen. He has brought some fish, and wants to see you," said Flora's maid one morning, as her mistress had just finished washing and dressing the baby.

"The poor old man! I thought he was dead," said Flora. "I have not seen him for such a long time!" and, with baby in her arms, she followed the girl into the kitchen.

David Jarvis was a fisherman, well known upon that coast,—an active, energetic son of the sea, though somewhat time-worn and weather-beaten. The person of the old man had been familiar to Flora since she was a little child; and many a stolen trip had she taken with her brothers in his cockleshell of a boat, which, tough as its master, had stood the wear and tear of the winds and waves for many years.

Since she came to reside at ——, she had often watched that little boat dancing over the waves, carried onward by a stiff breeze,—now hiding in the green valleys of the sea, now mounting aloft, [101]
like a feather floating on the ridge of some toppling surge. The old man seemed to bear a charmed life; for at all seasons, and in almost all weather, the little wiry seaman, with his short pipe in his mouth, and his noble Newfoundland dog, Neptune, in the bow of his boat, might be seen coasting along the shore, following his adventurous calling.

That large, deep-chested, powerful dog, was the admiration of all the children in the town. It was considered a privilege by the young fry to pat Neptune's buff head, and call him the "dear, good, old dog!" and well did the fine animal deserve the title.

The good dog had, at different times, saved nine seamen from a watery grave, as the collar he wore round his neck recording the fact could testify.

Next to his two fine sons, Nep was the delight of the old man's heart. They were never seen apart. In storm or shine, Nep accompanied his master in the boat; or, if fishing on the beach, he sat up on his haunches, with a calm, sagacious air, watching the accumulating pile of fish entrusted to his care. Sociable, affable, and gentle, he submitted good-humouredly to the caresses of all the youngsters who passed that way; but if any one dared to lay a finger upon the fish, the lion-like nature of the animal was roused into instant action. His mild eye became red and fiery, and his deep voice bade defiance to the incautious intruder on his master's rights, to [102]
protect which Nep was ready to lay down his valuable life.

Jarvis and his dog enjoyed a great degree of popularity in an humble way; and were decidedly among the lions of the place. Gentlemen had offered large sums for the buff Newfoundland dog, which Jarvis had rejected without a second thought; declaring, that he would as soon sell a child for money, as his faithful Nep.

During the past year the old seaman had been severely tried. Misfortune had followed upon misfortune; until the hardy veteran looked like the spectre of his former self. His only daughter, a pretty girl of eighteen, was engaged to marry the ostler at the Crown Inn, a fine-looking young man, who had lately come from London. He saw Nancy Jarvis, became enamoured of the fisherman's daughter, told his tale of love, and was accepted. The old man was rather averse to the match; for, in his eyes, no man was worthy of his Nancy, who was not a genuine son of the sea. Robert Green at last succeeded in overcoming his nautical prejudices; and a day was fixed for the wedding. Nancy's rosy, artless face was all smiles and sunshine, as night after night she sauntered past Flora's windows, leaning upon the arm of her betrothed. Only two days previous to the one appointed for the wedding, the father learned from old captain P——, whose vessel had just returned from London, that Robert Green had a wife and two children in the great city; that [103] the poor young woman, hearing that his vessel was from the Port of ——, had come on board, to make some inquiries respecting her faithless husband; and that she and her little ones were now on their way to join him.

This distressing intelligence was rashly communicated without any previous warning, to Nancy Jarvis. The unfortunate girl, seized with a sudden frenzy, rushed to the pier and flung herself into the sea, when the tide was running out; and her distracted parents never succeeded in recovering the body of the poor maniac. The worthless libertine, on whose account this desperate act was committed, decamped in the night; and so escaped the vengeance of the old fisherman and his sons.

Davy Jarvis, the old seaman's youngest son, a fine lad of sixteen, was drowned in the month of July, only a few weeks after the tragical death of his sister. Flora and Lyndsay had been eye-witnesses of this fresh calamity. Every fine afternoon the young Davy was in the habit of going off with another boy, of his own age, in his father's boat. When they had rowed a couple of miles from the shore, they lay to, stripped, and went into the water to swim, diving and sporting among the waves, like two sea-gulls taking their pastime in the summer ocean.

Lyndsay had often watched them, and admired the dexterity with which the younger Jarvis [104] would tumble himself from the water into the boat, which was left rocking upon the billows, and steady it for his comrade to get in. They would then resume their garments, and row to the beach.

One afternoon they went off as usual. The day was bright and cloudless, with a stiff breeze. Lyndsay was reading aloud to Flora, as she sat at work at the open window which commanded a view of the whole bay.

"There's Davy Jarvis and his comrade, putting off their boat, for a swim. They must mind what they are about," said Lyndsay; "the wind is rather too blustering for their water frolic to-day."

He put down his book, and continued to watch the lads with some interest. The boys reached their accustomed track among the waves; and, leaving their boat as usual, seemed to enjoy their sport with more zest than ever. Whilst in the water, the breeze freshened, and it was with great difficulty, and not without hard swimming, that the lads regained their boat, which driven before the wind, seemed determined to reach the shore without them. They succeeded at last, dressed themselves, and stood in for the land. A long line of heavy surf was beating violently against the beach, and by some mismanagement, the boat got capsized among the breakers. One lad was thrown on shore, but Davy Jarvis got entangled in the surf, which beat continually over him, and rendered all the efforts of himself and his comrade fruitless; and the brave boy was drowned [105] before the sailors who hurried to his assistance could rescue him from his perilous situation.

Flora had watched the scene with a degree of excitement so intense, that it almost deprived her of breath. She could not believe that the lad could perish within the reach of help, and so near the shore. The shrieks of the mother, and the mute despair of the old fisherman, who had been summoned to the spot, too clearly corroborated the report of Lyndsay, that the lad was indeed dead.

After this fresh calamity old Jarvis appeared an altered man. His sinewy frame became bent and attenuated, his step fell feebler, his hair was bleached to snowy whiteness, and his homely, tanned features assumed an expression of stern and patient endurance. It was evident to Flora that his heart was breaking for the loss of his children.

Neptune seemed to understand it all—to comprehend in the fullest sense his master's loss and his present sufferings. He would walk slowly by the fisherman's side, and whenever he paused in his unsteady aimless ramble along the beach, Nep would thrust his nose into his hard brown hand, or, rearing on his hind legs, embrace him with his shaggy fore-paws, fawning and whining to attract his notice, and divert him from his melancholy.

Day after day, during the long bright summer of 1831, Flora had watched the old man come to [106] the spot on the beach where the dead body of his son first touched the shore, and stand there for hours, looking out over the broad sea, his eyes shaded from the rays of the sun by his bony red hand, as if he expected the return of the lost one. During these fits of abstraction Nep would stretch himself along the beach at the fisherman's feet, his head sunk between his fore-paws, as motionless as the statue of a dog cut out of stone. The moment the old man dropped the raised hand from his face, Nep would leap to his feet, look up wistfully into his master's eyes, and follow him home.

This touching scene had drawn tears from Flora more than once, and she loved the good dog

for his devoted attachment to the grief-stricken desolate old man. When, however, the fishing season returned, Jarvis roused himself from the indulgence of hopeless grief. The little cockle-shell of a boat was once more launched upon the blue sea, and Jarvis might daily be seen spreading its tiny white sheet to the breeze, while the noble buff Newfoundland dog resumed his place in the bow.

Jarvis came regularly every day to the house to offer fish for sale—cod, whitings, herrings, whatever fish chance had given to his net. Flora was glad to observe something like cheerfulness once more illumine the old sailor's face. She always greeted him with kind words, and inquired affectionately after his welfare; and without alluding to his heavy family afflictions, made him [107] sensible that she deeply sympathised in his grief.

Things went on smoothly, until one terrible night in October, Jarvis and his only remaining son, a strong powerful man of thirty, had been off with several experienced seamen in the pilot-boat, to put a pilot on board a large vessel which was toiling her way through the storm to London. Coming back, the wind rose to a gale, and the sailors, in trying to enter the harbour, ran the boat against one of the piers with such violence, that it upset, and the whole party were thrown into the water.

Old Jarvis was an admirable swimmer, and soon gained the beach, as did most of the others, two of their number being rescued from death by the exertions of the brave dog. One alone was missing—Harry Jarvis was the lost man.

From that hour Flora had never seen the old Jarvis or his dog. The boat lay high and dry upon the beach, and his net was still suspended between the poles where it had been left to dry, and she concluded that Jarvis had not survived this last terrible blow. It was a joyful surprise, therefore, to hear, that he was not only alive, but pursuing his old calling.

She found the fisherman leaning against the open kitchen-door, a basket of fish at his feet, and his clear grey eyes fixed vacantly upon the silver waves, which flashing and murmuring in the [108] sunlight, came racing to the beach below. The old sailors' wrinkled face, once so ruddy and bronzed, was as white as his hair; his cheeks had fallen in, and deep hollows had gathered about his temples; it was painful to observe the great alteration in his appearance since they last met. The old man started from his abstraction, as Flora's foot sounded on the floor, and he tried to smile. It was a vain attempt, his shrunken features instantly contracted into their former melancholy expression.

"My good old friend" said Flora, "I am glad to see you; I was afraid you had been ill. What fish have you got for me?"

"Eels, Madam; I caught them in the river. They ar'n't for sale, but just a little present. I he'erd you wor goin' to cross the salt seas to Canady, an' I had a mind to see you agin."

"I will accept them with pleasure, Davy, and I am very much obliged to you for your kindness. I am very fond of eels,—we get them so seldom, they are quite a treat. I have not seen you out in the boat lately, Jarvis?"

"Maybe you'll never see me out in her agin," said the fisherman. "I'm thinking my fishing days are 'most over; boat, tackle and measter are all worn out together. I've parted with the boat; how'somever. An' as to the sea, I allers look'd upon its broad face with pleasure, but t'has been a [109] cruel enemy to me and mine; my path, I'm thinking, will be over it no more."

Flora saw the tear glistening in the old man's eye, and she tried to divert his attention by asking him what he had done with his dog—"with dear, old 'Nep?'"

"I shot him." The seaman's thin lips quivered, and his whole frame trembled. "Ay, I shot my good dog—my brave, faithful dog,—the best, the truest friend man ever had; an' I've niver know'd a happy hour since."

The bright drops were now raining down the old man's cheeks.

Flora reached him a chair, and begged him to sit down. The fisherman mechanically obeyed, with his chin sunk between his hands, and his elbows resting on his knees. For some minutes both were silent, until the old man said, in a thick, husky voice—

"Yes, I shot 'Nep'—shot him with my own hand. It wor cruel and wicked of me to do the like, but I wor mad—stark staring mad, and who's to blame? You see, my lady, he wor with us that terrible Saturday night, when we went off to put the pilot on board the brig *Sally*, from Shields. Comin' back it wor pitch dark, an' the sea runnin' mountains high, Sam Masters ran the boat plump upon the pier, an' we wor upset on the bar. Nep saved Sam Masters and Ben Hardy, but he let my Harry drown. I never rebelled agin' the providence of God till then; but I trust He'll [110] forgive what the old man said in his mortal distress. Instead of thanking Him, when I sor that so many wor safe, an' encouragin' Nep for having saved two on 'em, I cursed the dog for an ungrateful brute for saving strangers, an' letting my Harry be lost. I dashed him off whenever he'd come whining around, to lick my hands an' make friends, an' when I got home I took down the old gun—poor Harry's gun—and called Nep out upon the cliff an' shot him dead.

"I repented the moment I sor him drop. It wor too late then. I thought that both Davy and Harry would have blamed me for taking the poor brute's life—for they wor mortal fond of 'un. The next morning I wor up by daybreak, and down to the piers in the little boat to see if I might chance to

light upon the dead body.

“The storm was over, an’ in rowing ’atwixt the piers, I sor summut that looked like the thing I sought, hanging, as it wor, to the planking of the pier. I steered for the place, an’, God o’ heaven! it wor the body of my son! He wor just two feet below the water, hanging with his head downwards. The force of the waves had driven him upon an iron stauncheon, which extended some distance from the pier, the woodwork to which it belonged had been wrenched away in the storm. It had passed right through Harry’s body, and held him fast. And the dog—the poor dog—
had tried to get him off; he had dragged at his jacket and shirt-collar, till they wor all shred to [111]
bits, and had only given over when he found it of no use, an’ then did what he could to save the rest! An’ I killed him—I, that should have fed and cherished him to his dying day—I can never forgive myself for that.”

“Do not distress yourself, Jarvis, in this way. No one will blame you for what you did in such a distracted state of mind,” said Flora, though she was grieved to the heart for the death of the noble dog.

“You are right—you are just right; I was mad; and you must not think hard of a poor broken-hearted old man. My sorrow is ’most greater than I can bear. It will not be for long; I feel I’m goin’ the way of all the earth, an’ it matters little when we cast anchor in that port, whether our voyage wor short or long—rough or smooth, when the righteous Judge overhauls our vessel, an’ lays bare the secrets of all hearts. I trust He’ll have mercy on old Davy Jarvis, and forgive him for the death of his brave dog.”

The fisherman took the eels from his basket, and grasping Flora’s hand in his hard horny palm, said, “May the Lord grant you prosperity! an’ bless you an’ your husband an’ the little ’un, an’ bring you safe to the far land to which you are journeying! May it prove to you a haven of rest! God bless you! good bye!”

Flora looked after the drooping figure of the fisherman as he slowly descended the cliff, and [112]
she thought how intense must have been his agony in that dark hour of utter bereavement, which had tempted him to sacrifice his dog on the mere supposition that he had neglected to save the life of his son.

“God comfort you! poor Jarvis,” she said, “and guide you in peace through the shadows of the dark valley that stretches its long night before you. The grief which has brought your grey locks in sorrow to the grave was enough to have broken a sterner heart.”

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CHAPTER XI. [113]

FLORA IN SEARCH OF A SERVANT HEARS A REAL GHOST STORY.

Lyndsay had charged Flora, during his absence, to inquire for a female servant, to accompany them to Canada, and take care of the baby during the voyage. Flora was very reluctant to obey this command, though she knew that it was entirely on her account that the request was made. Her health was still very bad, and her kind husband was anxious to spare her any additional fatigue and trouble. She much doubted, however, whether another added to their party would not rather increase than diminish her anxiety, and she begged hard to be allowed to do without. To this proposition Lyndsay would not listen for a moment.

“The thing is impossible, Flora,” said he, very impetuously, “you cannot do without; you are not able to nurse the child. I must insist upon your hiring a woman immediately.”

Flora sighed. “There will be plenty of women in the steerage of any emigrant vessel, who for the sake of a few dollars would gladly render me all the assistance I require.”

“You must not trust to such contingencies.” [114]

“But, husband dear, consider the great additional expense,” she said, coaxingly.

“Nonsense!—that is my affair.”

“I should like to have my own way in this matter,” said Flora, leaning her hand upon his shoulder, and trying to win him into compliance by sundry little caresses. “I know, John, that I am in the right.”

“And those who love you, Flora, and wish to spare you fatigue and discomfort, are in the wrong. Is it not so?”

This last speech silenced his wife, but did not convince her that she was wrong. Flora, as my readers must long ago have discovered, was no heroine of romance, but a veritable human creature, subject to all the faults and weaknesses incidental to her sex. She wished to have her own way, and was ready to cry that she could not get it. Yet, had her advice been acted upon, she would have been spared a great deal of sorrow and mortification, which greatly embittered the first months of her sojourn in a foreign land.

Persons emigrating to Canada cannot be guilty of a greater blunder than that of taking out servants with them, which is sure to end in loss and disappointment; for they no sooner set foot upon the North American shores, than they suddenly become possessed with an *ultra republican* spirit. The chrysalis has burst its dingy shell; they are no longer caterpillars, but gay butterflies, [115] prepared to bask in the sun-blaze of popular rights. Ask such a domestic to blacken your shoes, clean a knife, or fetch a pail of water from the well at the door, and ten to one she will turn upon you as fierce as a lioness, and bid you do it yourself. If you are so imprudent as to insist on being obeyed, she will tell you to hire another in her place; she is sure of twenty situations as good as yours, to-morrow.

She is right in her assertion. Her insolent rejection of your commands would not stand at all in her way of procuring a new place. And although cleaning a lady's shoes, and bringing in a pail of water, or an armful of wood, is by no means such disgusting employment as scouring greasy pots and scrubbing the floors, she has been told that the former is degrading work not fit for a woman, and she is now in a free country, and will not submit to degradation.

The mistress, who in England was termed the *dear lady*, now degenerates into the *woman*, while persons in their own class, and even beggars seeking for alms are addressed as Ma'am and Sir. How particular they are in enforcing these titles from one another; how persevering in depriving their employers of any term of respect! One would imagine that they not only considered themselves on an equality, but that ignorance and vulgarity made them vastly superior. It is highly amusing to watch from a distance these self-made ladies and gentlemen [116] sporting their borrowed plumes.

Some years after she had been settled in Canada, Flora picked up a note which had been thrown out as waste paper, and which was addressed to the father of a very dirty, dishonest girl, whom she had dismissed from her service for sundry petty frauds, a few weeks before. It was addressed to Edward Brady, Esqre., and ran as follows:—

> "Honoured Sir,
>
> "The company of *self* and *lady*, is respectfully solicited at a *contribution* ball, to be given next Thursday evening, at the Three King's Inn. Dancing to commence at eight o'clock precisely.
>
> Stewards { Patrick Malone, Esq.
> John Carroll, Esq."

All the parties herein named were persons of the very lowest class; and the titles thus pompously bestowed upon themselves, rendered the whole affair exquisitely ridiculous. At a *contribution* ball, each person brings a share of the entertainment. Flora's maid had stolen a large quantity of sugar for her part of the feast, and was discovered in the act.

In compliance with Lyndsay's request, Flora now set diligently to work to inquire for a girl willing to emigrate with them to Canada, in the capacity of nurse to her baby. She had scarcely [117] made her wishes public, before the cottage was beset with matrons, widows and maids, both old and young, all anxious to take a trip across the water, and try their fortunes in Canada.

The first person who presented herself as a candidate for emigration, was a coarse, fat, she-clown, with huge red fists and cheeks, "as broad and as red as a pulpit cushion." On being shown into Flora's little parlour, she stood staring at her with her arms stuck in her sides, and her wide mouth distended from ear to ear, with a grin so truly uncouth and comic, that Mrs. Lyndsay could scarcely restrain her laughter; with a downward jerk of her broad shapeless person, meant for a curtsy, she burst out in a rude vulgar voice,

"He'eard, Marm, yah wanted a gurl to go with yah to Cannadah."

"I do. Who sent you up to me?"

"Whao sent oie up? Oie sent up moisel."

"What is your name?"

"Moi neame? Is't moi neame yah wants to knowah? Wall, moi neame is Sare Ann Pack; feather warks at Measter Turners."

"Have you ever worked out, or been used to take care of children?"

"Why yees, oie 'spect oie ha'. Moother has ten on 'em. Oie be the oldest on'em. Oi've had nursing enoof, an' wants to get quit on it."

"I am afraid, Sarah, you will not suit me."

"How dew yah noa, Marm, till yah tries?" [118]

“You are very slatternly, and I wanted a clean, tidy, active girl to nurse my baby.”

“Sure moi cloes is clane enoof, and good enoof, for to live amongst the sadvidges?”

“You’ll be put to no such trial,” said Flora laughing, in spite of herself, “without you reckon me and my husband sadvadges. Can you wash and iron?”

“Noa. But ’spose oie cud larn.”

“What work can you do?”

“‘Spect anything yah sets oie to. Oie can make doomplings, milk cows, and keep the pot a bilin’.”

“And what wages do you expect for such services?”

“Is it to goor to Cannadah? Oh, oie ’spects tree punds o’ month for the loike o’ that.”

“You must stay at home then, my good girl, and boil the dumplings,” said Flora. “Indeed, I cannot imagine what induced you to come up here to offer me your services. You literally can do nothing, for which you expect exorbitant wages. Why do you wish to leave your friends, to go out with strangers to Canada?”

“That’s moi consarn,” said the girl, with one of her gigantic expansions of mouth. “Oie he’eard ’twas a mortal good place for maids getting married. Husbands are scearce here, so oise thought, oise might as well try moi chance as the rest o’un. Won’t yah take oie?” Flora shook her head. [119]

The girl twirled the strings of her checked apron, “Mayhap, yah won’t get anoder so willin’ to go, as I’se be.”

“Perhaps not. But I want a person of some experience—one who has been used to service, and could bring a good character from her last employer.”

“Karaktah! Karaktah!” said the girl contemptuously. “What need of a karaktah in such a place as Cannadah? Folk a’ go there need na karaktah, or they might jeest as well bide to whome.”

This last declaration settled the matter, and Flora, not without some difficulty, got rid of the promising candidate for matrimony and emigration. Her place was instantly supplied by a tall, hard-featured, middle-aged woman, who had been impatiently waiting for Miss Pack’s dismissal, in the kitchen, and who now rushed upon the scene, followed by three rude children, from six to ten years of age, a girl, and two impudent-looking boys, who ranged themselves in front of Mrs. Lyndsay, with open mouths, and eyes distended with eager curiosity, in order to attract her observation, and indulge themselves in a downright stare.

“Well, my good woman, and what is your business with me?” said Flora, not at all prepossessed by any of the group. [120]

“Are you the mistress?” asked the woman, dropping a curtsy.

Flora answered in the affirmative.

“My business is to go to Canady; but I have not the means. I am a poor widow; my husband died of the fever three years ago, and left me with these children to drag along the best way I could. We have had hard times, I can tell you, Ma’am, and I should be main glad to better my condition, which I think I might do, if I could get out to Canady. I heard that you wanted a nurse for your baby during the voyage, and I should be glad to engage with you, if we can agree as to the terms.”

“What are your terms?”

“For you, Ma’am, to pay the passage of me and the three children over, and I to attend upon you and the child.”

“But, my good woman, I have only one little child for you to take charge of, and you cannot expect me, for the trifling services that you could render, to pay your passage over, and that of your family?”

“Sure, you might be glad of the chance,” said the sturdy dame. “It is not everybody that would take service with you to go there. I should not trouble you longer than the voyage. I have friends of my own at Montreal, who have written for me to come out to them; and so I would long ago, if I had had the means.” [121]

“If they want you, they may pay your passage,” said Flora, disgusted with the selfishness of her new acquaintance. “It would be less trouble to me to nurse my own child, than incur the responsibility of three that did not belong to me.”

The woman collected her young barbarians from the different quarters of the room, where they were reconnoitring the attractions of the place, and withdrew with a scowl; and Flora’s nurse, Mrs. Clarke, shortly after entered the room, with little Josephine in her arms.

“Well, nurse,” said Flora, giving way to a hearty laugh, “did you see those queer people, who want me to take them out as a venture to Canada?”

“A losing speculation that would be, if we may judge by looks and manners,” said the old lady;

“but, indeed, Mrs. Lyndsay, it will be no easy matter to find just what you want. It is not every one to whom I would trust the dear baby.”

Then sitting down in the nursing chair, and hushing Josey on her knee, she continued, “I have been thinking of you and the child a great deal since I heard you were bent on going to Canada; and if you think that I could be of any service to you, I would go with you, myself. I ask no wages [122] —nothing of you, beyond a home for my old age.”

Mrs. Clarke was a kind, amiable, good woman, but very feeble, nervous, and sickly, and very little qualified for the arduous and fatiguing life she had chosen.

“My dear nurse,” said Flora, clasping her hand in her own, “I should only be too happy to have you. But you are old, and in delicate health; the climate would kill you; I much doubt whether you could stand the voyage. I cannot be so selfish as to take you from your home and friends at your time of life. But take off your hat and shawl, and we will talk the matter over.”

The old woman laid the now sleeping babe in the cradle, and resumed her seat with a sigh.

“It is this want of a home which makes me anxious to go with you. It is hard to be dependent upon the caprice of brothers, in one’s old age. Thirty years ago and life wore for me a very different aspect.”

“Nurse,” said Flora, who was very fond of the good old body, who had attended her with the greatest care and tenderness, through a long and dangerous illness; “how comes it that such a pretty woman as you must have been did not marry in your youth? I can scarcely imagine that nature ever meant you for an old maid.”

“Nature never made any woman to be an old maid,” said Nurse; “God does nothing in vain. [123] Women were sent into the world to be wives and mothers; and there are very few who don’t entertain the hope of being so at some period of their lives. I should not be the forlorn, desolate creature I am to-day, if I had had a snug home, and a good husband to make the fireside cheery, and children together about my knees, and make me feel young again, while listening to their simple prattle.

“I thought to have been a happy wife once,” continued Nurse, sadly; “a heavy calamity that broke another heart besides mine, laid all my hopes in the dust, and banished from my mind the idea of marriage for ever. Did I never tell you the story, Ma’am? A few words will often contain the history of events that embittered a whole life. Whilst I am hemming this little pinafore for Miss Josey, I will tell you the tale of my early grief.

“My father was a native of this town, and captain of a small vessel employed in the coal-trade, which plied constantly between this port and Newcastle and Shields. He owned most of the shares in her, was reckoned an excellent sailor, and was so fortunate as to have escaped the usual dangers attendant upon the coast trade, never having been wrecked in his life,—which circumstance had won for him the nickname of ‘Lucky Billy,’ by which he was generally known in all the seaport towns along the coast.

“I was the eldest of a large family, and the only girl. My mother died when I was fourteen years [124] of age, and all the cares of the household early devolved upon me; my father was very fond of me, and so proud of my good looks, that his ship was christened the *Pretty Betsy*, in honour of me.

“Father not only earned a comfortable living, but saved enough to build those two neat stone cottages on the East-cliff. We lived in the one which my brother now occupies; the other, which is divided from it by a narrow alley, into which the back doors of both open, was rented for many years by the widow of a revenue officer and her two sons.

“Mrs. Arthur’s husband had been killed in a fray with the smugglers, and she enjoyed a small Government pension, which enabled her to bring up her boys decently, and maintain a respectable appearance. My father tried his best to induce Mrs. Arthur to be his second wife, but she steadily refused his offer, though the family continued to live on terms of the strictest friendship.

“Mrs. Arthur’s sons, John and David, were the handsomest and cleverest lads of their class, between this and the port of Y——. They both followed the sea, and after serving their apprenticeships with my father, John got the command of the *Nancy*, a new vessel that was employed in the merchant trade, and made short voyages between this and London. David, who [125] was two years younger, sailed with his brother as mate of the *Nancy*.

“David and I had been sweethearts from our school-days,—from a child in frocks and trowsers, he had always called me ‘his dear little wife.’ Time only strengthened our attachment to each other, and my father and his mother were well-pleased with the match. It was settled by all parties, that we were to be married directly David could get captain of a ship.

“Mrs. Arthur was very proud of her sons; but David, who was by far the handsomest of the two, was her especial favourite. I never saw the young sailor leave the house without kissing his mother, or return from a voyage without bringing her a present. I used to tell him, ‘There was only one person he loved better than me, and that was his mother;’ and he would laugh, and say, —‘Not better, Betsy,—but ’tis a different love altogether.’

“I must confess I was rather jealous of his mother. I did not wish him to love her less, but to

love me more. Whenever he left us for sea, he used to tell me the very last thing—'Show your love to me, dear Betsy, by being kind to my dear old mother. When you are my wife, I will repay it with interest.'

"During his absence, I always went every day to see Mrs. Arthur, and to render her any little [126] service in my power. She was very fond of me, always calling me 'her little daughter,—her own dear Betsy.' Her conversation was always about her sons, and David in particular, which rendered these visits very agreeable to me, who loved David better than anything else under heaven. He was never out of my thoughts, I worshipped him so completely.

"It was the latter end of February that the Arthurs made their last voyage together. David was to sail as captain, in a fine merchant-ship, the first of May; and everything had been arranged for our marriage, which was to take place the tenth of April; and I was to make a bridal tour to London with my husband in the new ship. I was wild with anticipation and delight, and would let my work drop from my hands twenty times a-day, while building castles for the future. No other girl's husband would be able to rival my husband; no home could be as happy as my home; no bride so well beloved as me.

"It was the twentieth of March, 18—; I recollect it as well as if it were only yesterday. The day was bright, clear, and cold, with high winds and a very stormy sea. The *Nancy* had been expected to make her port all that week, and Mrs. Arthur was very uneasy at her delay. She was never happy or contented when her sons were at sea, but in a constant fidget of anxiety and fear. She did not like both sailing in the same vessel. 'It is too much,' she would say—'the safety of two [127] lives out of one family—to be trusted to one keel.' This morning she was more fretful and nervous than usual.

"'What can these foolish boys be thinking of, Betsy, to delay their voyage in this way? They will in all probability be caught in the equinoctial gales. David promised me faithfully to be back before the eighteenth. Dear me! how the wind blows! The very sound of it is enough to chill one's heart. What a stormy sea! I hope they will not sail till the day after to-morrow.'

"Now, I felt a certain conviction in my own mind that they had sailed, and were at that moment on the sea; but, I must confess, I apprehended no danger. It might be that her fears hindered me from indulging fears of my own.

"'Don't alarm yourself needlessly, dear Mother,' said I, kissing her cold, pale cheek. 'The *Nancy* is a new ship,—the lads brave, experienced sailors. There is not the least cause for uneasiness. They have weathered far worse gales before now. They have, father says, the wind and tide in their favour. It is moonlight now o' nights; and I hope we shall see them merry and well before morning.'

"'God grant you may be right, Betsy! A mother's heart is a hot-bed of anxiety. Mine feels as heavy as lead. My dreams, too, were none of the brightest. I thought I was tossing in an open boat, in just such a stormy sea all night; and was constantly calling on David to save me from [128] drowning; and I awoke shrieking, and struggling with the great billows that were dragging me down.'

"'Who cares for dreams?' I said. Hers, I would have it, was one of good omen; for though she fought with the storm all night, she was not drowned. So it would be with the lads: they might encounter a gale, and get a severe buffeting, but would arrive safe at last.

"'I wish it may be so,' she said, with a sigh. 'But I felt just the same sinking at the heart the night my husband was killed, when there appeared no cause for uneasiness.'

"I remained all day with the old lady, trying to raise her spirits. She paid very little attention to all my lively chat; but would stand for hours at her back-window, that commanded a view of the bay, gazing at the sea. The huge breakers came rolling and toiling to the shore, filling the air with their hoarse din. A vessel hove in sight, running under close-reefed topsails, and made signals for a pilot.

"'Ah!' I exclaimed joyfully; 'that is Captain Penny's old ship, *Molly*. If she has rode out the gale, you may dismiss your fears about the *Nancy*. They have launched the pilot-boat. See how she dances like a feather on the waves! Why, Mother dear,' I cried, turning to Mrs. Arthur, who was watching the boat, with the large tears trickling down her cheeks, 'is it not weak, almost wicked [129] of you, to doubt God's providence in this way?'

"'Ah! how I wish it were their vessel,' she sobbed.

"'Captain Penny's wife and children would not thank you for that wish,' said I. 'How glad I am that the good old man is safe!'

"The day wore away. A long day for us both. The gale did not increase, and Mrs. Arthur at last began to listen to reason. The moon rose high and bright; and after seeing the old lady to her bed, I went home to give my father and the boys their supper.

"I found father very cross for having waited so long. 'What the devil, Betsy!' cried he, 'kept you so late? The lads and I have been starving for the last hour. When girls get sweethearts they can think of nothing else.'

"'Mrs. Arthur felt anxious about her sons, and I stayed with her.'

"'What's the old fool afraid of? This cupful of wind, Penny's old *Molly* rode it out bravely. He told me he left the Arthurs in the river. He thought they would be in by daybreak. Come, be quick, girl. As I am to lose you so soon, I would make the most of you while you belong to me.'

"His cheerful, hearty manner helped to raise my spirits, which had been depressed by Mrs. Arthur's fretful anticipations of evil. I bustled hither and thither, laughed and sung, and cooked [130] father's mess of fresh fish so much to his satisfaction, that he declared I should make a jewel of a wife, and that he had not made up his mind whether he would part with such a good cook. Without he married again, he was afraid he would not get such another.

"'You must be quick then,' said I, 'or you will not have me for your bridesmaid. I give you just three weeks for the courtship, for I shan't remain single one day longer to cook the wedding dinner for you.'

"'You are saucy,' said he, filling his pipe. 'Davy will have to take the helm himself, if he would keep you on the right tack. Clear the decks now, and be off to your bed. If the gale lulls, I shall sail early in the morning.'

"I removed the supper-things, and before I lighted my candle, lingered for a few minutes at the back window, to take a last view of the sea. It was a stormy but very beautiful night. The heavens were without a cloud. The full moon cast broken gleams of silver upon the restless, tossing waters, which scattered them into a thousand fragments of dazzling brightness, as the heavy surf rolled in thunder against the beach.

"'Has the gale freshened, father?' said I, anxiously.

"'Not a bit of it. Say your prayers, Betsy, and trust in Providence. Your lover is as safe in his [131] good ship to-night, as in his bed at home.'

"He pulled me on to his knee, and kissed me, and I went up to bed with a lighter heart.

"A few minutes later I was fast asleep. I don't know how long this sleep lasted, but I awoke with hearing David Arthur calling beneath my window. His mother's window and mine both fronted the cliff, and were in a line with each other. 'Thank God! David is safe!' I cried, as I sprang joyfully from my bed, and threw open the casement.

"There he was sure enough, standing in the moonlight, directly beneath the window. His norwester flung far back on his head, his yellow curls hanging in wet masses on his shoulders, and his clothes dripping with the salt spray. The moon shone forth on his upturned face. He looked very pale and cold, and his eyes were fixed intently upon his mother's chamber-window. Before I could speak, he cried out in his rich, manly tones—

"'Mother, dearest mother, I am come home to you. Open the door, and let me in!'

"'Stay, Davy, darling—stay one moment, and I will let you in. Your mother's asleep; but I can open the back-door with my key. Oh! I'm so happy, so thankful, that you are safe.'

"I threw my clothes on as fast as I could, but my hands trembled so from excitement, that I could scarcely fasten a string. A cold chill was creeping through my whole frame, and, in spite of the joy I felt, I involuntarily burst into tears. Dashing away the unwelcome drops with the back of [132] my hand, I bounded down the stairs, unlocked the back-door that led into the alley, and in another moment stood alone on the cliff.

"'David, where are you?' I cried. But no David was there. I glanced all round the wide, open space: not an object was moving over its surface. A deep stillness reigned all around, only interrupted by the solemn thunder of the waters, whose hollow surging against the shore rendered the solitude of the midnight hour more profound.

"Again I felt those cold chills steal through me—again the unbidden tears streamed down my cheeks.

"'What can have become of him?' said I, quite bewildered with surprise and fear; 'he must have got in at the back window!—I will go to his mother—I shall find him with her!'

"The key I held in my hand fitted both locks: I went into Mrs. Arthur's, lighted the candle that I had left on her kitchen dresser, and went up to her chamber. She started up in the bed as I opened the door.

"'Good God! Betsy,' she cried, 'is that you? I thought I heard David call me.'

"'And so he did,' I said; 'he came under the window just now, and called to you to let him in. I told him to wait till I could dress myself, and I would come down and open the door. Is he not [133] here?'

"'No,' said his mother, her face turning as white as her cap; 'you must have been dreaming.'

"'Dreaming!' said I, rather indignantly; 'you need not try to persuade me out of my senses—I saw him with my own eyes!—heard him with my own ears! and spoke to him! What else will convince you? He has gone back to the ship for John—I will breeze up the fire, put on the kettle, and get something cooked for their supper. After buffeting about in this storm, they will be cold and hungry.'

“Mrs. Arthur soon joined me. She could not believe that I had spoken to David, though she fancied that she had heard him herself, and was in a fever of anxiety, pacing to and fro the kitchen floor, and opening the door every minute to look out. I felt almost provoked by her want of faith.

“‘If the ship were in,’ she muttered, ‘he would have been in long ago, to tell me that all was safe. He knows how uneasy I always am when he and his brother are away. Betsy must have been deceived!’

“‘Mother, dear—indeed, what I tell you is true!’

“And I repeated to her for the twentieth time, perhaps, what David had said, and described his appearance.

“Hour after hour passed away, but no well-known footstep, or dearly loved voice, disturbed our [134] lonely vigil. The kettle simmered drowsily on the hob; Mrs. Arthur, tired out with impatient fretting at her son’s delay, had thrown her apron over her head, and was sobbing bitterly. I began to feel alarmed; a strange fear seemed growing upon my heart, which almost led me to doubt the evidence of my senses—to fancy, in fact, that what I had seen might have been a dream. But, was I not there, wide awake? Had not his mother heard him speak as well as me? though her half-waking state had rendered the matter less distinct than it had been to me? I was not going to be reasoned out of my sanity in that way, because he did not choose to wait until I came down to open the door—which I thought rather unkind, when he must be well aware, that my anxiety for his safety must quite equal that of his mother.

“The red beams of the rising sun were tinging the white foam of the billows with a flush of crimson. The gale had lulled; and I knew that my father’s vessel sailed with the tide. I started from my seat, Mrs. Arthur languidly raised her head—

“‘My dear Betsy, will you just run across the cliff to the look-out house, and ask the sailors there if the *Nancy* came in last night? I cannot bear this suspense much longer.’

“‘I might have thought of that before,’ I said; and, without waiting for hat or shawl, I ran with [135] breathless speed to the nearest station.

“I found one old sailor kneeling upon the bench, looking intently through his telescope at some object at sea. My eyes followed the direction of the glass, and I saw distinctly, about two miles beyond the east cliff, a vessel lying dismasted upon the reef, with the sea breaking continually over her.

“‘What vessel is that, Ned Jones?’ said I.

“‘It’s the *Nancy*,’ he replied, without taking his eye from the glass. ‘I know her by the white stripe along her black hull. She’s a perfect wreck, and both the brave lads are drowned.’

“‘When did this happen?’ I shrieked, shaking him frantically by the arm.

“‘She struck upon the reef at half-past one this morning. Our lads got the boat off, but too late to save the crew.’

“‘Good God!’ I cried, reeling back, as if struck with a bolt of ice; and the same deadly cold shiver ran through me. ‘It was his ghost, then, I saw.’[B]

[B] I have told this story exactly as it was told to me by Flora’s nurse. The reader must judge how far the young girl’s imagination may have deceived her. Whether as a dream, or a reality, I have no doubt of the truth of her tale.

“I don’t know how I got back to Mrs. Arthur. I never knew. Or, whether it was from me she [136] learned the terrible tidings of the death of her sons. I fell into a brain fever, and when I recovered my senses, Mrs. Arthur had been in her grave for some weeks.

“In thinking over the events of that fearful night, the recollection which pained me most was, that David’s last thought had been for his mother,—that during his death-struggle, she was dearer to him than me. It haunted me for years. At times it haunts me still. Whenever the wind blows a gale, and the moon shines clear and cold, I fancy I can see him standing below my window, in his dripping garments, and that sad pale face turned towards his mother’s casement; and I hear him call out, in the rich, mellow voice I loved so well,—‘Mother, dearest mother, I have come home to you. Open the door and let me in!’”

“It was a dream, Nurse,” said Flora.

“But supposing, Mrs. Lyndsay, that it was a dream. Is it less strange that such a dream should occur at the very moment, perhaps, that he was drowned; and that his mother should fancy she heard him speak as well as I?”

“True,” said Flora, “the mystery remains the same, and, for my own part, I never could get rid of a startling reality; because some people choose to call it a mere coincidence. My faith embraces the spirit of the fact, and disclaims the coincidence, though after all, the coincidence is [137] the best proof of the fact.”

“This event,” continued Nurse, “cast a shadow over my life, which no after sunshine ever dispelled. I never loved again, and gave up all thoughts of getting married from that hour.

Perhaps I was wrong, for I refused several worthy men, who would have given me a comfortable home; and I should not now, at my time of life, have to go out nursing, or be dependent upon a cross brother, for the shelter of a roof. If you will take me to Canada with you, I only ask in return a home in my old age."

Flora was delighted with the project, but on writing about it to her husband, she found him unwilling to take out a feeble old woman, who was very likely to die on the voyage; and Flora, with reluctance, declined the good woman's offer.

It happened very unfortunately for Flora, that her mother had in her employment a girl, whose pretty feminine face and easy pliable manners, had rendered her a great favourite in the family. Whenever Flora visited the Hall, Hannah had taken charge of the baby, on whom she lavished the most endearing epithets and caresses.

This girl had formed an imprudent intimacy with a farm servant in the neighbourhood, which had ended in her seduction. Her situation rendered marriage a matter of necessity. In this [138] arrangement of the matter, it required both parties should agree; and the man, who doubtless knew more of the girl's real character than her benevolent mistress, flatly refused to make her his wife. Hannah, in an agony of rage and contrition, had confided her situation to her mistress; and implored her not to turn her from her doors, or she would end her misery in self-destruction.

"She had no home," she said, "in the wide world—and she dared not return to her aunt, who was the only friend she had; and who, under existing circumstances, she well knew, would never afford her the shelter of her roof."

Simple as this girl appeared, she knew well how to act her part; and so won upon the compassion of Mrs. W——, that she was determined, if possible, to save her from ruin. Finding that Mrs. Lyndsay had failed in obtaining a servant, she applied to her on Hannah's behalf, and requested, as a favour, that she would take the forlorn creature with her to Canada.

Flora at first rejected the proposal in disgust: in spite of Mrs. W——'s high recommendation, there was something about the woman she did not like; and much as she was inclined to pity her, she could not reconcile herself to the idea of making her the companion of her voyage. She could not convince herself that Hannah was worthy of the sympathy manifested on her behalf. A certain [139] fawning, servility of manner, led her to imagine that she was deceitful; and she was reluctant to entail upon herself the trouble and responsibility which must arise from her situation, and the scandal it might involve. But her objections were borne down by Mrs. W——'s earnest entreaties, to save, if possible, a fellow creature from ruin.

The false notions formed by most persons in England of the state of society in Canada, made Mrs. W—— reject, as mere bugbears, all Flora's fears as to the future consequences which might arise from her taking such a hazardous step. What had she to fear from ill-natured gossip in a barbarous country, so thinly peopled, that settlers seldom resided within a day's journey of each other. If the girl was wise enough to keep her own secret, who would take the trouble to find it out? Children were a blessing in such a wilderness; and Hannah's child, brought up in the family, would be very little additional expense and trouble, and might prove a most attached and grateful servant, forming a lasting tie of mutual benefit between the mother and her benefactress. The mother was an excellent worker, and, until this misfortune happened, a good and faithful girl. She was *weak*, to be sure; but then (what a fatal mistake) the more easily managed. Mrs. W—— was certain that Flora would find her a perfect treasure.

All this sounded very plausible in theory, and savoured of romance. Flora found it in the end a [140] dismal reality. She consented to receive the girl as her servant, who was overjoyed at the change in her prospects; declaring that she never could do enough for Mrs. Lyndsay, for snatching her from a life of disgrace and infamy. And so little Josey was provided with a nurse, and Flora with a servant.

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CHAPTER XII. [141]

THE LAST HOURS AT HOME.

To bid farewell to her mother and sisters, and the dear home of her childhood, Flora regarded as her greatest trial. As each succeeding day brought nearer the hour of separation, the prospect became more intensely painful, and fraught with a thousand melancholy anticipations, which haunted her even in sleep; and she often awoke sick and faint at heart with the tears she had shed in a dream.

“Oh that this dreadful parting were over!” she said to her friend Mary Parnell. “I can contemplate, with fortitude, the trials of the future; but there is something so dreary, so utterly hopeless, in this breaking up of kindred ties and home associations, that it paralyses exertion.”

Mrs. W——, Flora’s mother, was in the decline of life, and it was more than probable that the separation would be for ever. This Flora felt very grievously;—she loved her mother tenderly, and she could not bear to leave her. Mrs. W—— was greatly attached to her little grandchild; and, to mention the departure of the child, brought on a paroxysm of grief.

“Let Josey stay with me, Flora,” said she, as she covered its dimpled hands with kisses. “Let me [142] not lose you both in one day.”

“What! part with my child—my only child! Dearest mother, it is impossible to grant your request. Whatever our future fortunes may be, she must share them with us. I could not bear up against the trials which await me with a divided heart.”

“Consider the advantage it would be to the child.”

“In the loss of both her parents?”

“In her exemption from hardship, and the education she would receive.”

“I grant all that; yet Nature points out, that the interests of a child cannot safely be divided from those of its parents.”

“You argue selfishly, Flora. You well know the child would be much better off with me.”

“I speak from my heart—the heart of a mother, which cannot, without it belongs to a monster, plead against the welfare of its child. I know how dearly you love her—how painful it is for you to give her up; and that she would possess with you those comforts which, for her sake, we are about to resign. But, if we leave her behind, we part with her ever. She is too young to remember us; and, without knowing us, how could she love us?”

“She would be taught to love you.”

“Her love would be of a very indefinite character. She would be told that she had a father and [143] mother in a distant land, and be taught to mention us daily in her prayers. But where would be the faith, the endearing confidence, the holy love, with which a child, brought up under the parental roof, regards the authors of its being. The love which falls like dew from heaven upon the weary heart, which forms a balm for every sorrow, a solace for every care,—without its refreshing influence, what would the wealth of the world be to us?”

Flora’s heart swelled, and her eyes filled with tears. The eloquence of an angel at that moment would have failed in persuading her to part with her child.

Never did these painful feelings press more heavily on Flora’s mind, than when all was done in the way of preparation; when her work was all finished, her trunks all packed, her little bills in the town all paid, her faithful domestics discharged, and nothing remained of active employment to hinder her from perpetually brooding over the sad prospect before her.

She went to spend a last day at the old Hall, to bid farewell to the old familiar haunts, endeared to her from childhood.

“Flora, you must keep up your spirits,” said her mother, kissing her tenderly; “nor let this parting weigh too heavily upon your heart. We shall all meet again.”

“In heaven, I hope, Mother.” [144]

“Yes, and on earth.”

“Oh, no; it is useless to hope for that. No, never again on earth.”

“Always hope for the best, Flora; it is my plan. I have found it true wisdom. Put on your bonnet, and take a ramble through the garden and meadows; it will refresh you after so many harassing thoughts. Your favourite trees are in full leaf, the hawthorn hedges in blossom, and the nightingales sing every evening in the wood-lane. You cannot feel miserable among such sights and sounds of beauty in this lovely month of May, or you are not the same Flora I ever knew you.”

“Ah, just the same faulty, impulsive, enthusiastic creature I ever was, dear mother. No change of circumstances will, I fear, change my nature; and the sight of these dear old haunts will only deepen the regret I feel at bidding them adieu.”

Flora put on her bonnet, and went forth to take a last look of home.

The Hall was an old-fashioned house, large, rambling, picturesque, and cold. It had been built in the first year of good Queen Bess. The back part of the mansion appeared to have belonged to a period still more remote. The building was surrounded by fine gardens, and lawn-like meadows, and stood sheltered within a grove of noble old trees. It was beneath the shade of these trees, and reposing upon the velvet-like sward at their feet, that Flora had first indulged in those [145] delicious reveries—those lovely, ideal visions of beauty and perfection—which cover with a tissue of morning beams all the rugged highways of life. Silent bosom friends were those dear old trees! Every noble sentiment of her soul,—every fault that threw its baneful shadow on the sunlight of her mind,—had been fostered, or grown upon her, in those pastoral solitudes. Those trees had

witnessed a thousand bursts of passionate eloquence,—a thousand gushes of bitter, heart-humbling tears. To them had been revealed all the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears, which she could not confide to the sneering and unsympathising of her own sex. The solemn druidical groves were not more holy to their imaginative and mysterious worshippers, than were those old oaks to the young Flora.

Now the balmy breath of spring, as it gently heaved the tender green masses of brilliant foliage, seemed to utter a voice of thrilling lamentation,—a sad, soul-touching farewell.

“Home of my childhood! must I see you no more?” sobbed Flora. “Are you to become to-morrow a vision of the past? O that the glory of spring was not upon the earth! that I had to leave you amid winter’s chilling gloom, and not in this lovely, blushing month of May! The emerald green of these meadows—the gay flush of these bright blossoms—the joyous song of these glad birds—breaks my heart!”

And the poor emigrant sank down amid the green grass, and, burying her face among the [146]
fragrant daisies, imprinted a passionate kiss upon the sod, which was never, in time or eternity, to form a resting-place for her again.

But a beam is in the dark cloud even for thee, poor Flora; thou heart-sick lover of nature. Time will reconcile thee to the change which now appears so dreadful. The human flowers destined to spring around thy hut in that far off wilderness, will gladden thy bosom in the strange land to which thy course now tends; and the image of God, in his glorious creation, will smile upon thee as graciously in the woods of Canada, as it now does, in thy English Paradise. Yes, the hour will come, when you shall exclaim with fervour,

“Thank God, I am the denizen of a free land; a land of beauty and progression. A land unpolluted by the groans of starving millions. A land which opens her fostering arms to receive and restore to his long lost birthright, the trampled and abused child of poverty: to bid him stand up a free inheritor of a free soil, who so long laboured for a scanty pittance of bread, as an ignorant and degraded slave, in the country to which you now cling with such passionate fondness, and leave with such heart-breaking regret.”

When Flora returned from an extensive ramble through all her favourite walks, she was agreeably surprised to find her husband conversing with Mrs. W—— in the parlour. The [147]
unexpected sight of her husband, who had returned to cheer her some days sooner than the one he had named in his letters, soon restored Flora’s spirits, and the sorrows of the future were forgotten in the joy of the present.

Lyndsay had a thousand little incidents and anecdotes to relate of his visit to the great metropolis; to which Flora was an eager and delighted listener. He told her that he had satisfactorily arranged all his pecuniary matters; and without sacrificing his half-pay, was able to take out about three hundred pounds sterling, which he thought, prudently managed, would enable him to make a tolerably comfortable settlement in Canada,—particularly, as he would not be obliged to purchase a farm, being entitled to a grant of four hundred acres of wild land.

He had engaged a passage in a fine vessel that was to sail from Leith, at the latter end of the week.

“I found, that in going from Scotland,” said Lyndsay, “we could be as well accommodated for nearly half price; and it would give you the opportunity of seeing Edinburgh, and me the melancholy satisfaction of taking a last look at the land of my birth.”

“One of the London steamers will call for us to-morrow morning, on her way to Scotland, and I must hire a boat to-night, and get our luggage prepared for a start. A short notice, dear Flora, to [148]
a sad but inevitable necessity, I thought better for a person of your temperament, than a long and tedious anticipation of evil. Now all is prepared for the voyage, delay is not only useless, but dangerous. So cheer up, darling, and be as happy and cheerful as you can. Let us spend the last night at home pleasantly together.” He kissed Flora so affectionately, as he ceased speaking, that she not only promised obedience, but contrived to smile through her tears.

It was necessary for them to return instantly to the cottage, and Flora took leave of her mother, with a full heart. We will not dwell on such partings; they

“Wring the blood from out young hearts,”

as the poet has truly described them, making the snows of age descend upon the rose crowned brow of youth.

Sorrowfully Flora returned to her pretty little cottage, which presented a scene of bustle and confusion baffling description. Everything was out of place and turned upside down. Corded trunks and packages filled up the passages and doorways; and formed stumbling blocks for kind friends and curious neighbours, who crowded the house. Strange dogs forced their way in after their masters, and fought and yelped in undisturbed pugnacity. The baby cried, and no one was at leisure to pacify her, and a cheerless and uncomfortable spirit filled the once peaceful and [149]
happy home.

Old Captain Kitson was in his glory; hurrying here and there, ordering, superintending, and assisting the general confusion, without in the least degree helping on the work. He had taken upon himself the charge of hiring the boat which was to convey the emigrants on board the

steamer; and he stood chaffering on the lawn for a couple of hours with the sailors, to whom she belonged, to induce them to take a shilling less than the sum proposed.

Tired with the altercation, and sorry for the honest tars, Lyndsay told the master of the boat to yield to the old Captain's terms, and he would make up the difference. The sailor answered with a knowing wink, and appeared reluctantly to consent to old Kitson's wishes.

"There, Mrs. Lyndsay, my dear, I told you these fellows would come to my terms rather than lose a good customer," cried the old man, rubbing his hands together in an ecstasy of self-gratulation. "Leave me to make a bargain; the rogues cannot cheat me with their damned impositions. The *Leaftenant* is too soft with these chaps; I'm an old sailor—they can't come over me. I have made them take one *pound* for the use of their craft, instead of *one and twenty* shillings. 'Take care of the pence,' my dear, 'and the pounds will take care of themselves.' I found [150] that out, long before poor Richard marked it down in his log."

Then sidling up to Flora, and putting his long nose into her face, he whispered in her ear,—

"Now, my dear gall, don't be offended with an old friend; but if you have any old coats or hats that *Leaftenant* Lyndsay does not think worth packing up, I shall be very glad of them, for my Charles. Mrs. K. is an excellent hand at transmogrifying things, and in a large family such articles never come amiss."

Charles was the Captain's youngest son. A poor idiot, who, thirty years of age, had the appearance of an overgrown boy. The other members of the Captain's *large* family were all married and settled prosperously in the world. Flora felt truly ashamed of the old man's meanness, but was glad to repay his trifling services in a way suggested by himself. The weather for the last three weeks had been unusually fine, but towards the evening of this memorable 30th of May, large masses of clouds began to rise in the north-west, and the sea changed its azure hue to a dull leaden grey. Old Kitson shook his head prophetically.

"There's a change of weather at hand, Mrs. Lyndsay; you may look out for squalls before six o'clock to-morrow. The wind shifts every minute, and there's an ugly swell rolling in upon the shore."

"Ah, I hope it will be fine," said Flora, looking anxiously up at the troubled sky; "it is so [151] miserable to begin a long journey in the rain. Perhaps it will pass off during the night in a thunder-shower."

The old man whistled, shut one eye, and looked knowingly at the sea with the other.

"Women know about as much of the weather as your nurse does of handling a rope. Whew! but there's a gale coming; I'll down to the beach, and tell the lads to haul up the boats, and make all snug before it bursts," and away toddled the old man, full of the importance of his mission.

It was the last night at home—the last social meeting of kindred friends on this side the grave. Flora tried to appear cheerful, but the forced smile upon the tutored lips, rendered doubly painful the tears kept back in the swollen eyes; the vain effort of the sorrowful in heart to be gay. Alas! for the warm hearts, the generous friendships, the kindly greetings of dear Old England, when would they be hers again? Flora's friends at length took leave, and she was left with her husband alone.

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CHAPTER XIII. [152]

THE DEPARTURE.

It was the dawn of day when Flora started from a broken, feverish sleep, aroused to consciousness by the heavy roaring of the sea, as the huge billows thundered against the stony beach. To spring from her bed and draw back the curtains of the window which commanded a full view of the bay, was but the work of a moment. How quickly she let it fall in despair over the cheerless prospect it presented to her sight! Far as the eye could reach the sea was covered with foam. Not a sail was visible, and a dark leaden sky was pouring down torrents of rain.

"What a morning!" she muttered to herself, as she stole quietly back to bed. "It will be impossible to put to sea to-day."

The sleep which had shunned her pillow during the greater part of the night, gently stole over her, and "wrapped her senses in forgetfulness;" and old Kitson, two hours later, twice threw a pebble against the window, before she awoke.

"*Leaftenant* Lyndsay—*Leaftenant* Lyndsay!" shouted the Captain, in a voice like a speaking-trumpet—"wind and tide wait for no man. Up, up, and be doing." [153]

"Ay, ay," responded Lyndsay, rubbing his eyes, and going to the window.

"See what a storm the night has been brewing for you," continued old Kitson. "It blows great guns, and there's rain enough to float Noah's ark. Waters is here, and wants to see you. He says that his small craft won't live in a sea like this. You'll have to put off your voyage till the steamer takes her next trip."

"That's bad," said Lyndsay, hurrying on his clothes, and joining the old sailor on the lawn. "Is there any chance, Kitson, of this holding up?"

"None. This is paying us off for three weeks fine weather, and may last for several days—at all events, till night. The steamer will be rattling down in an hour, with the wind and tide in her favour. Were you once on board, *Leaftenant*, you might snap your fingers at this capful of wind."

"We must make up our minds to lose our places," said Lyndsay, in a tone of deep vexation.

"You have taken your places then?"

"Yes; and made a deposit of half the passage money."

"Humph! Now, *Leaftenant* Lyndsay, that's a thing I never do. I always take my chance. I would rather lose my place in a boat, or a coach, than lose my money. But young fellows like you never learn wisdom. Experience is all thrown away upon you. But as we can't remedy the evil now, we [154] had better step in and get a morsel of breakfast. This raw air makes one hungry. The wind may lull by that time." Then gazing at the sky with one of his keen orbs, while he shaded with his hand the other, he continued—"It rains too hard for it to blow long at this rate; and the season of the year is all in your favour. Go in—go in, and get something to eat, and we will settle over your wife's good coffee what is best to be done."

Lyndsay thought with the Captain, that the storm would abate, and he returned to the anxious Flora, to report the aspect of things without.

"It is a bad omen," said Flora, pouring out the coffee. "If we may judge of the future by the present—it looks dark enough."

"Don't provoke me into anger, Flora, by talking in such a childish manner, and placing reliance upon an exploded superstition. Women are so fond of prognosticating evil, that I believe they are disappointed if it does not happen as they say."

"Well, reason may find fault with us if she will," said Flora; "but we are all more or less influenced by these mysterious presentiments; and suffer trifling circumstances to give a colouring for good or evil to the passing hour. My dear, cross philosopher, hand me the toast."

Flora's defence of her favourite theory was interrupted by the arrival of two very dear friends, [155] who had come from a distance, through the storm, to bid her good-bye.

Mr. Hawke, the elder of the twain, was an author of considerable celebrity in his native county, and a most kind and excellent man. He brought with him his second son, a fine lad of twelve years of age, to place under Lyndsay's charge. James Hawke had taken a fancy to settle in Canada, and a friend of the family, who was located in the Backwoods of that far region, had written to his father, that he would take the lad, and initiate him in the mysteries of the axe, if he could find a person to bring him over. Lyndsay had promised to do this, and the boy, who had that morning parted with his mother and little brothers and sisters, for the first time in his life, in spite of the elastic spirits of youth, looked sad and dejected.

Mr. Hawke's companion was a young Quaker, who had known Flora from a girl, and had always expressed the greatest interest in her welfare.

Adam Mansel was a handsome, talented man, whose joyous disposition, and mirthful humour, could scarcely be trammelled down by the severe conventional rules of the Society to which he belonged. Adam's exquisite taste for music, and his great admiration for horses and dogs, savoured rather of the camp of the enemy. But his love for these forbidden carnalities was always kept within bounds, and only known to a few very particular friends.

"Friend Flora," he said, taking her hand, and giving it a most hearty and cordial shake, "this is [156] a sad day to those who have known thee long, and loved thee well; and a foul day for the commencement of such an important journey. Bad beginnings, they say, make bright endings; so there is hope for thee yet in the stormy cloud."

"Flora, where are your omens now?" said Lyndsay, triumphantly. "Either you or friend Adam must be wrong."

"Or the proverb I quoted, say rather," returned Adam. "Proverbs often bear a double meaning, and can be interpreted as well one way as the other. The ancients were cunning fellows in this respect, and were determined to make themselves true prophets at any rate."

"What a miserable day," said the poet, turning from the window, where he had been contemplating thoughtfully the gloomy aspect of things without. His eye fell sadly upon his son. "It is enough to chill the heart."

“When I was a boy at school,” said Adam, “I used to think that God sent all the rain upon holidays, on purpose to disappoint us of our sport. I found that most things in life happened contrary to our wishes; and I used to pray devoutly, that all the Saturdays might prove wet, firmly believing that it would be sure to turn out the reverse.”

“According to your theory, Mansel,” said Mr. Hawke, “Mrs. Lyndsay must have prayed for a very fine day.” [157]

“Dost thee call this a holiday?” returned the Quaker, with a twinkle of quiet humour in his bright brown eyes.

Mr. Hawke suppressed a sigh, and his glance again fell on his boy; and, hurrying to the window, he mechanically drew his hand across his eyes.

Here the old Captain came bustling in, full of importance, chuckling, rubbing his hands, and shaking his dripping fearnaught, with an air of great satisfaction.

“You will not be disappointed, my dear,” addressing himself to Mrs. Lyndsay. “The wind has fallen off a bit; and, though the sea is too rough for the small craft, Palmer, the captain of the pilot-boat, has been with me; and, for the consideration of two pounds (forty shillings),—a large sum of money, by-the-bye,—I will try and beat him down to thirty,—he says he will launch the great boat, and man her with twelve stout young fellows, who will take you, bag and baggage, on board the steamer, though the gale were blowing twice as stiff. You have no more to fear in that fine boat, than you have sitting at your ease in that arm-chair. So make up your mind, my dear; for you have no time to lose.”

Flora looked anxiously from her husband to her child, and then at the black, pouring sky, and the raging waters.

“There is no danger, Flora,” said Lyndsay. “These fine boats can live in almost any sea. But the rain will make it very uncomfortable for you and the child.” [158]

“The discomfort will only last a few minutes, Mrs. Lyndsay,” said old Kitson. “Those chaps will put you on board before you can say Jack Robinson.”

“It is better to bear a ducking than lose our passage in the *Chieftain*,” said Flora. “There cannot be much to apprehend from the violence of the storm, or twelve men would never risk their lives for the value of forty shillings. Our trunks are all in the boat-house, our servants discharged, and our friends gone; we have no longer a home, and I am impatient to commence our voyage.”

“You are right, Flora. Dress yourself and the child, and I will engage the boat immediately.” And away bounded Lyndsay to make their final arrangements, and see the luggage safely stowed away in the pilot-boat.

Captain Kitson seated himself at the table, and began discussing a beefsteak with all the earnestness of a hungry man. From time to time, as his appetite began to slacken, he addressed a word of comfort or encouragement to Mrs. Lyndsay, who was busy wrapping up the baby for her perilous voyage.

“That’s right, my dear. Take care of the young one; ’tis the most troublesome piece of lumber you have with you. A child and a cat are two things which never ought to come on board a ship. But take courage, my dear. Be like our brave Nelson; never look behind you after entering upon difficulties; it only makes bad worse, and does no manner of good. You will encounter rougher gales than this before you have crossed the Atlantic.” [159]

“I hope that we shall not have to wait long for the steamer,” said Flora. “I dread this drenching rain for the poor babe, far more than the stormy sea.”

“Wait,” responded the old man, “the steamer will be rattling down in no time; it is within an hour of her usual time. But Mrs. Lyndsay, my dear,”—hastily pushing from him his empty plate, and speaking with his mouth full—“I have one word to say to you in private, before you go.”

Flora followed the gallant captain into the kitchen, marvelling in her own mind what this private communication could be. The old man shut the door carefully behind him; then said, in a mysterious whisper—“The old clothes; do you remember what I said to you last night?”

Taken by surprise, Flora looked down, coloured, and hesitated; she was afraid of wounding his feelings. Simple woman! the man was without delicacy, and had no feelings to wound.

“There is a bundle of things, Captain Kitson,” she faltered out at last, “in the press in my bedroom, for Mr. Charles—coats, trowsers, and other things. I was ashamed to mention to you such trifles.” [160]

“Never mind—never mind, my dear; I am past blushing at my time of life; and reelly—(he always called it reelly)—I am much obliged to you.”

After a pause, in which both looked supremely foolish, the old man continued—“There was a china cup and two plates—pity to spoil the set—that your careless maid broke the other day in the washhouse. Did Mrs. K. mention them to you, my dear?”

“Yes, sir, and they are *paid* for,” said Flora, turning with disgust from the sordid old man. “Have you anything else to communicate?”

“All right,” said the Captain. “Here is your husband looking for you. The boat is ready.”

“Flora, we only wait for you,” said Lyndsay. Flora placed the precious babe in her father’s arms, and they descended the steep flight of steps that led from the cliff to the beach.

In spite of the inclemency of the weather a crowd of old and young had assembled on the beach to witness their embarcation, and bid them farewell.

The hearty “God bless you! God grant you a prosperous voyage, and a better home than the one you leave, on the other side of the Atlantic!” burst from the lips of many an honest tar; and brought the tears into Flora’s eyes, as the sailors crowded round the emigrants, to shake hands with them before they stepped into the noble boat that lay rocking in the surf. [161]

Precious to Flora and Lyndsay were the pressure of those hard rough hands. They expressed the honest sympathy felt, by a true-hearted set of poor men, in their present situation and future welfare.

“You are not going without one parting word with me!” cried Mary Parnell, springing down the steep bank of stones, against which thundered the tremendous surf. The wind had blown her straw bonnet back upon her shoulders, and scattered her fair hair in beautiful confusion round her lovely face.

The weeping, agitated girl was alternately clasped in the arms of Lyndsay and his wife.

“Why did you expose yourself, dear Mary, to weather like this?”

“Don’t talk of weather,” sobbed Mary; “I only know that we must part. Do you begrudge me the last look? Good-bye! God bless you both!”

Before Flora could speak another word, she was caught up in the arms of a stout seaman, who safely deposited both the mother and her child in the boat. Lyndsay, Mr. Hawke, his son, Adam Mansel, and lastly Hannah, followed. Three cheers arose from the sailors on the beach. The gallant boat dashed through the surf, and was soon bounding over the giant billows.

Mr. Hawke and friend Adam had never been on the sea before, but they determined not to bid adieu to the emigrants until they saw them safe on board the steamer. [162]

“I will never take a last look of the dear home in which I have passed so many happy hours,” said Flora, resolutely turning her back to the shore. “I cannot yet realize the thought that I am never to see it again.”

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CHAPTER XIV. [163]

AN OPEN BOAT AT SEA.

Flora’s spirits rose in proportion to the novelty and danger of her situation. All useless regrets and repinings were banished from her breast the moment she embarked upon that stormy ocean. The parting, which, when far off, had weighed so heavily on her heart, was over; the present was full of excitement and interest; the time for action had arrived; and the consciousness that they were actually on their way to a distant clime, braced her mind to bear with becoming fortitude this great epoch of her life.

The gale lulled for a few minutes, and Flora looked up to the leaden sky, in the hope of catching one bright gleam from the sun. He seemed to have abdicated his throne that day, and refused to cast even a glimpse upon the dark, storm-tossed waters, or cheer with his presence the departure of the emigrants.

The gentlemen made an effort to be lively. The conversation turned on the conduct of women under trying circumstances—the courage and constancy they had shown in situations of great peril—animating the men to fresh exertions by their patient endurance of suffering and privation. [164] Mr. Hawke said, “That all travellers had agreed in their observations upon the conduct of females to strangers; and that, when travelling, they had never had occasion to complain of the women.”

At this speech, Lyndsay, who began to feel all the horrible nausea of sea-sickness, raised his head from between his hands, and replied with a smile, “That it was the very reverse with women, for, when they travelled, they had most reason to complain of the men.”

The effects of the stormy weather soon became very apparent among the passengers in the pilot-boat—sickness laid its leaden grasp upon all the fresh-water sailors. Even Lyndsay, a hardy

Islander, and used to boats and boating all his life, yielded passively to the attacks of the relentless fiend of the salt waters, with rigid features, and a face pale as the faces of the dead. He sat with his head bowed between his hands, as motionless as if he had suddenly been frozen into stone. Flora often lifted the cape of the cloak which partially concealed his face, to ascertain that he was still alive.

The anxiety she felt in endeavouring to protect her infant from the pouring rain, perhaps acted as an antidote to this distressing malady, for, though only just out of a sick bed, she did not feel the least qualmish.

Hannah, the servant, lay stretched at the bottom of the boat, her head supported by the ballast- [165]
bags, in a state too miserable to describe; while James Hawke, the lad who was to accompany them in their long voyage, had sunk into a state of happy unconsciousness, after having vainly wished, for the hundredth time, that he was safe on shore, scampering over the village green with his twelve brothers and sisters, and not tempting the angry main in an open boat, with the windows of heaven discharging waters enough upon his defenceless head to drown him—without speaking of the big waves that every moment burst into the boat, giving him a salt bath upon a gigantic scale.

After an hour's hard rowing, the *King William* (for so their boat was called), cast anchor in the roadstead, distant about eight miles from the town, and lay to, waiting for the coming-up of the steamer.

Hours passed away,—the day wore slowly onward,—but still the vessel they expected did not appear. The storm, which had lulled till noon, increased in violence, until it blew "great guns," to use the sailors' nautical phraseology; and signs of uneasiness began to be manifested by the hardy crew of the pilot-boat.

"Some accident must have befallen the steamer," said Palmer, the captain of the boat, to Craigie, a fine, handsome young seaman, as he handed him the bucket to bale the water from their vessel. "I don't like this; I'll be —— if I do! If the wind increases, and remains in the present [166]
quarter, a pretty kettle of fish it will make of us. We may be thankful if we escape with our lives."

"Is there any danger?" demanded Flora eagerly, as she clasped her wet, cold baby closer to her breast. The child had been crying piteously for the last hour.

"Yes, Madam," he replied respectfully; "we have been in considerable danger all day. The wind is increasing with the coming in of the tide; and I see no prospect of its clearing up. As the night comes on, do ye see, and if we do not fall in with the *Soho*, we shall have to haul up the anchor, and run before the gale; and, with all my knowledge of the coast, we may be driven ashore, and the boat swamped in the surf."

Flora sighed, and wished herself safe at home, in her dear, snug, little parlour; the baby asleep in the cradle, and Lyndsay reading aloud to her as she worked, or playing on his flute.

The rain again burst down in torrents,—the thunder roared over their heads,—and the black, lurid sky, looked as if it contained a second deluge. Flora shivered with cold and exhaustion, and bent more closely over the child, to protect her as much as possible, by the exposure of her own person, from the drenching rain and spray.

"Ah! this is sad work for women and children!" said the honest tar, drawing a large tarpaulin over the mother and child. Blinded and drenched by the pelting of the pitiless shower, Flora [167]
crouched down in the bottom of the boat, in patient endurance of what might befal. The wind blew piercingly cold; and the spray of the huge billows which burst continually over them, enveloped the small craft in a feathery cloud, effectually concealing from her weary passengers the black waste of raging waters which roared around and beneath them.

The poor infant was starving with hunger, and all Flora's efforts to keep it quiet proved unavailing. The gentlemen were as sick and helpless as the baby, and nothing could well increase their wretchedness. They had now been ten hours at sea; and, not expecting the least detention from the non-arrival of the steamer, nothing in the way of refreshment had formed any part of their luggage. Those who had escaped the horrors of sea-sickness, of which Flora was one, were suffering from thirst, while the keen air had sharpened their appetites to a ravenous degree.

In spite of their forlorn situation, Flora could not help being amused by the gay, careless manner, in which the crew of the boat contended with these difficulties.

"Well, I'll be blowed if I arn't hungry!" cried Craigie, as he stood up in the boat, with his arms folded, and his nor'wester pulled over his eyes, to ward off the drenching rain. "Nothin' would [168]
come amiss to me now, in the way of prog. I could digest a bit of the shark that swallowed Jonah, or pick a rib of the old prophet himself, without making a wry face."

"I wonder which would prove the tougher morsel of the two," said Mr. Hawke, raising his languid head from the bench before him, and whose love of fun overcame the deadly pangs of sea-sickness.

"A dish of good beefsteaks from the Crown Inn would be worth them both, friend," said Adam Mansel, who, getting better of the sea-sickness, like Craigie, began to feel the pangs of hunger.

"You may keep the dish, mister," returned Craigie, laughing; "give me the grub."

“Ah, how bitter!” groaned James Hawke, raising himself up from the furled sail which had formed his bed, and yielding to the terrible nausea that oppressed him.

“Ay, ay, my lad,” said an ancient mariner, on whose tanned face time and exposure to sun and storm had traced a thousand hieroglyphics; “nothing’s sweet that’s so contrary to natur’. Among the bitter things of life, there’s scarcely a worse than the one that now troubles you. Sick at sea,—well on shore; so there’s comfort for you!”

“Cold comfort,” sighed the boy, as he again fell prostrate on the wet sail. A huge billow broke [169] over the side of the boat, and deluged him with brine. He did not heed it, having again relapsed into his former insensible state.

“The bucket aft,” shouted Palmer. “It’s wanted to bale the boat.”

“The bucket’s engaged,” said Craigie, bowing with ludicrous politeness, to poor Hannah, whose head he was supporting, “I must first attend to the lady.”

The patience of the handsome young Quaker, under existing difficulties, was highly amusing. He bore the infliction of the prevailing malady with such a benign air of resignation, that it was quite edifying. Wiping the salt water from his face with a pocket-handkerchief of snowy whiteness, he exclaimed, turning to Flora, who was sitting at his feet with Josey in her arms, “Friend Flora, this sea-sickness is an evil emetic. It tries a man’s temper, and makes him guilty of the crime of wishing himself at the bottom of the sea.”

“If you could rap out a good round oath or two, Mister Quaker, without choking yourself, it would do you a power of good,” said Craigie. “What’s the use of a big man putting up with the like o’ that, like a weak gall—women were made to bear—man to resist.”

“The Devil, and he will flee from them,” said Adam.

“You smooth-faced, unshaved fellows, have him always at your elbow,” said Craigie. “He [170] teaches you long prayers—us big oaths. I wonder which cargo is the best to take to heaven.”

“Two blacks don’t make a white, friend,” said Adam, good-naturedly. “Blasphemy, or hypocrisy either, is sufficient to sink the ship.”

Night was now fast closing over the storm-tossed voyagers. The boat was half full of water, which flowed over Flora’s lap, and she began to feel very apprehensive for the safety of her child. At this moment, a large retriever dog which belonged to the captain of the boat, crept into her lap; and she joyfully placed the baby upon his shaggy back, and the warmth of the animal seemed greatly to revive the poor shivering Josey.

It was nearly dark when Palmer roused Lyndsay from his stupor, and suggested the propriety of their return to ——. “You see, Sir,” he said, “I am quite willing to wait for the arrival of the *Soho*, but something must have gone wrong with her, or she would have been down before this. The crew of the boat have been now ten hours exposed to the storm, without a morsel of food, and if the wind should change, we should have to run in for the Port of Y——, twenty miles distant from this. Under existing circumstances, I think it advisable to return.”

“By all means,” said Lyndsay. “This might have been done three hours ago;” and the next [171] minute, to Flora’s inexpressible joy, the anchor was hoisted, and the gallant boat once more careering over the mighty billows.

Her face was once more turned towards that dear home, to which she had bidden adieu in the morning; as she then imagined, for ever—“England”—she cried, stretching her arms towards the dusky shore. “Dear England! The winds and waves forbid our leaving you. Welcome,—oh, welcome, once more.”

As they neared the beach, the stormy clouds parted in rifted masses; and the deep blue heavens, studded here and there with a pale star, gleamed lovingly down upon them; the rain ceased its pitiless pelting, the very elements seemed to smile upon their return.

The pilot boat had been reported during the day as lost, and the beach was crowded with anxious men and women to hail its return. The wives and children of her crew pressed forward to meet them with joyful acclamations; and Flora’s depressed spirits rose with the excitement of the scene.

“Hold fast your baby, Mrs. Lyndsay, while the boat clears the surf,” cried Palmer. “I’ll warrant that you both get a fresh ducking.”

As he spoke, the noble boat cut like an arrow through the line of formidable breakers which thundered on the beach; the foam flew in feathery volumes high above their heads, drenching them with a misty shower; the keel grated upon the shingles, and a strong arm lifted Flora once [172] more upon her native land.

Benumbed and cramped with their long immersion in salt water, her limbs had lost the power of motion, and Lyndsay and old Kitson carried her between them up the steps which led from the beach to the top of the cliffs, and deposited her safely on the sofa in the little parlour of her deserted home.

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CHAPTER XV.

ONCE MORE AT HOME.

A CHEERFUL fire was blazing in the grate; the fragrant tea was smoking on the well-covered table, and dear and familiar voices rang in her ears, as sisters and friends crowded about Flora to offer their services, and congratulate her on her safe return.

“Ah, does not this repay us for all our past sufferings?” cried Flora, after the first hearty salutations of her friends were over. “And the baby! where is the baby?”

Josey was laughing and crowing in the arms of her old nurse, looking as fresh and as rosy as if nothing had happened to disturb her repose.

“Welcome once more to old England! dear Flora,” said Mary Parnell, kissing the cold, wet cheek of her friend. “When I said that we should meet again, I did not think that it would be so soon. Thank God, you are all safe! For many hours it was believed that the boat had been swamped in the gale, and that you were all lost. You may imagine the distress of your mother and sisters, and the anguish the report occasioned us all, and how we rejoiced when Waters ran up with the blessed news that the boat was returning, and that her crew was safe. But come up-stairs, my Flora, and change these dripping clothes. There is a nice fire in your bedroom, and I have provided everything necessary for your comfort.”

“Don’t talk of her changing her clothes, Miss Parnell,” said the old Captain, bustling in. “Undress and put her to bed immediately, between hot blankets, and I will make her a good stiff glass of brandy-and-water, to drive the cold out of her, or she may fall into a sickness which no doctor can cure. Cut your yarn short, I say, or I shall have to take charge of her myself.”

“Captain Kitson is right, Mary,” said Lyndsay, who just then entered from superintending the removal of his luggage from the boat, accompanied by a group of friends, all anxious to congratulate Mrs. Lyndsay on her providential escape. “My dear Flora, you must be a good girl, and go instantly to bed.”

“It will be so dull”—and Flora glanced at the group of friendly faces, beaming with affection and kindness; “I should enjoy myself here so much. Now, John, do not send me away to bed, and keep all the fun to yourself—the bright, cheery fire and all the good things.”

Lyndsay looked grave, and whispered something in her ear about the baby, and the madness of risking a bad cold. Whatever was the exact import of his communication, it had the effect of producing immediate obedience to his wishes, and Flora reluctantly quitted the social group, and retired to her own chamber.

“Ah, Mary,” she said, as Miss Parnell safely deposited her and the precious baby between the hot blankets, “it was worth braving a thousand storms to receive such a welcome back. I never knew how much our dear kind friends loved us before.”

“And now we have got you safe back, Flora, who knows what may happen to prevent your leaving us again; Lyndsay may change his mind, and prefer being happy on a small income at home to seeking his fortune in a strange land.”

Flora shook her head.

“I know him better than you do, Mary. When once he has made up his mind to any step which he considers necessary, a little difficulty and danger will only stimulate him to exertion, and make him more eager to prosecute his voyage.”

Whilst sipping the potion prescribed by old Kitson, and giving Mary an account of all the perils they had encountered during the day, Nurse came running up-stairs to say that Captain Kitson thought that the *Soho* was just rounding the point off the cliff, and he wanted to know, that if it really proved to be her, whether Mrs. Lyndsay would get up and once more trust herself upon the waves?

“Not to-night, Nurse, if a fortune depended upon it,” said Flora, laughing. “Tell the Captain that I have spent the day in a salt-bath, and mean to pass the night in my bed.”

Fortunately, Mrs. Lyndsay was not put to this fresh trial. The Captain had mistaken the craft, and she was permitted to enjoy the warmth and comfort of a sound sleep, unbroken by the peals of laughter, that from time to time ascended from the room beneath; where the gentlemen seemed determined to make the night recompense them for the dangers and privations of the day.

The morning brought its own train of troubles—and when do they ever come singly? Upon examination, Lyndsay found that the salt-water had penetrated into all their trunks and cases; and that everything would have to be unpacked and hung out to dry. This was indeed dull work, the disappointment and loss attending upon it rendering it doubly irksome.

While Flora and her friend Mary superintended this troublesome affair, Lyndsay lost no time in writing to the steamboat company, informing them of his disastrous attempt to meet the *Soho*; and the loss he had incurred by missing the vessel. They stated in reply, that the boat had been wrecked at the mouth of the Thames, in the gale; and that another boat would supply her place on the Sunday following; that she would pass the town at noon, and hoist a red flag at her stern, as a signal for them to get on board. [177]

This was Thursday, and the intervening days passed heavily along. A restless fever of expectation preyed upon Flora. She could settle to no regular occupation; she knew that the delay only involved a fresh and heavy expense, that they must ultimately go, and she longed to be off. The efforts made by her friends to amuse and divert her, only increased her impatience. But time, however slowly it passes to the anxious expectant, swiftly and surely ushers in the appointed day.

Sunday came at last, and proved one of the loveliest mornings of that delightful season of spring and sunshine. The lark carolled high in the air, the swallows darted on light wings to and fro; and the sea, vast and beautiful, gently heaved and undulated against the shore, with scarcely a ripple to break the long line of golden light, which danced and sparkled on its breast. The church bells were chiming for morning prayer; and the cliffs were covered with happy groups in their holiday attire. Flora, surrounded by friends and relatives, strove to be cheerful; and the day was so promising, that it infused new life and spirit into her breast. All eyes were turned to that part of the horizon, on which the long, black trailing smoke of the steamer was first expected to appear. A small boat, which had been engaged to put them and their luggage on board, and which contained all their worldly chattels, lay rocking in the surf, and all was ready for a start. [178]

In the midst of an animated discussion on their future prospects, the signal was given, that the steamer was in sight, and had already rounded the point. How audibly to herself did Flora's heart beat, as a small, black speck in the distance gradually increased to a black cloud; and not a doubt remained, that this was the expected vessel.

Then came the blinding tears, the re-enactment of the last passionate adieus, and they were once more afloat upon the water.

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CHAPTER XVI. [179]

THE FOG.

The human heart is made of elastic stuff; and can scarcely experience on the same subject an equal intensity of grief. Repetition had softened the anguish of this second parting; the bitterness of grief was already past; and the sun of hope was calmly rising above the clouds of sorrow, which had hung for the last weary days so loweringly above our emigrants. Mr. Hawke and his son alone accompanied them on this second expedition. Adam Mansel had had enough of the sea, during their late adventure, and thought it most prudent to make his adieus on shore.

James Hawke was in high spirits; anticipating with boyish enthusiasm, the adventures which might fall to his share during a long voyage; and his sojourn in that distant land, which was to prove to him a very land of Goshen. Many gay hopes smiled upon him, which, like that bright sunny day, were doomed to have a gloomy ending, although at the beginning it promised so fair.

The owner of the boat, a morose old seaman, grumbled out his commands to the two sailors who managed the craft, in such a dogged, sulky tone, that it attracted the attention of the elder Hawke, and being naturally fond of fun, he endeavoured to draw him out. An abrupt monosyllable was the sole reply he could obtain to any one of his many questions. [180]

Lyndsay was highly amused by his surly humour, and flattered himself that *he* might prove more successful than his friend, by startling the sea-bear into a more lengthy growl.

"Friend," said he carelessly, "I have forgotten your name?"

"Sam Rogers," was the brief reply; uttered in a short grunt.

"Does the boat belong to you?"

"Yes."

"She looks as if she had seen hard service?"

"Yes; both of us are the worse for wear."

The ice once broken, Mr. Hawke chimed in—“Have you a wife, Captain Rogers?”

“She’s in the churchyard,” with a decided growl.

“So much the better for Mrs. Rogers,” whispered Lyndsay to Flora.

“You had better let the animal alone,” said Flora in the same tone: “’Tis sworn to silence.”

“Have you any family, Captain Rogers?” recommenced the incorrigible Hawke.

“Ay; more than’s good.”

“Girls, or boys?”

“What’s that to you? Too many of both. Why do you call me Captain? You knows well enough [181] that I’m not a captain; never was a captain, and never wants to be.”

After this rebuff, the surly Rogers was left to smoke his short black pipe in peace, and in a few minutes the little boat came alongside the huge Leviathan of the deep. A rope was thrown from her deck, which having been secured, the following brief dialogue ensued:

“The *City of Edinburgh*, for Edinburgh?”

“The *Queen of Scotland*, for Aberdeen, Captain Fraser.”

This announcement was followed by a look of blank astonishment and disappointment from the party in the boat.

“Where is the *City of Edinburgh*?”

“We left her in the river. You had better take a passage with us to Aberdeen,” said Captain Fraser, advancing to the side of his vessel.

“Two hundred miles out of my way,” said Lyndsay. “Fall off.” The tow rope was cast loose, and the floating castle resumed her thundering course, leaving the party in the boat greatly disconcerted by the misadventure.

“The *City of Edinburgh* must soon be here?” said Lyndsay, addressing himself once more to Sam Rogers. That sociable individual continued smoking his short pipe without deigning to notice [182] the speaker. “Had we not better lay-to, and wait for her coming up?”

“No; we should be run down by her. Do you see yon?” pointing with his pipe, to a grey cloud that was rolling over the surface of the sea towards them; “that’s the sea rake—in three minutes: in less than three minutes, you will not be able to discern objects three yards beyond your nose.”

“Pleasant news,” said Mr. Hawke, with rather a dolorous sigh. “This may turn out as bad as our last scrape. Lyndsay, you are an unlucky fellow. If you go on as you have begun, it will be some months before you reach Canada.”

In less time than the old man had prognosticated, the dense fog had rapidly spread itself over the water, blotting the sun from the heavens, and enfolding every object in its chilly embrace. The shores faded from their view, the very ocean on which they floated, was heard, but no longer seen. Nature seemed to have lost her identity, covered with that white sheet, which enveloped her like a shroud. Flora strove in vain to pierce the thick misty curtain by which they were surrounded. Her whole world was now confined to the little boat and the persons it contained: the rest of creation had become a blank. The fog wetted like rain, and was more penetrating, and the constant efforts she made to see through it, made her eyes and head ache, and cast a damp [183] upon her spirits which almost amounted to despondency.

“What is to be done?” asked Lyndsay, who shared the same feelings in common with his wife.

“Nothing, that I know of,” responded Sam Rogers, “but to return.”

As he spoke a dark shadow loomed through the fog, which proved to be a small trading vessel, bound from London to Yarmouth. The sailors hailed her, and with some difficulty ran the boat alongside.

“Have you passed the *City of Edinburgh*?”

“We spake her in the river. She ran foul of the *Courier* steamer, and unshipped her rudder. She put back for repairs, and won’t be down till to-morrow morning.”

“The devil!” muttered Sam Rogers.

“Agreeable tidings for us,” sighed Flora. “This is worse than the storm; it is so unexpected. I should be quite disheartened, did I not believe that Providence directed these untoward events.”

“I am inclined to be of your opinion, Flora,” said Lyndsay, “in spite of my disbelief in signs and omens. There is something beyond mere accident in this second disappointment.”

“Is it not a solemn warning to us, not to leave England?” said Flora.

“I was certain that would be your interpretation of the matter,” returned her husband; “but [184] having put my hand to the plough, Flora, I will not turn back.”

The sailors now took to their oars, the dead calm precluding the use of the sail, and began to steer their course homewards. The fog was so dense and bewildering that they made little way, and the long day was spent in wandering to and fro without being able to ascertain where they were.

“Hark!” cried one of the men, laying his ear to the side of the boat, “I hear the flippers of the steamer.”

“It is the roar of the accursed *Barnet*,” cried the other. “I know its voice of old, having twice been wrecked upon the reef—we must change our course; we are on a wrong tack altogether.”

It was near midnight before a breeze sprang up and dispelled the ominous fog. The moon showed her wan face through the driving scud, the sail was at last hoisted, and cold and hungry, and sick at heart, our voyagers once more returned to their old port.

This time, however, the beach was silent and deserted. No friendly voice welcomed them back. Old Kitson looked cross at being roused out of his bed at one o’clock in the morning, to admit them into the house, muttering as he did so, something about “unlucky folks, and the deal of trouble they gave; that they had better give up going to Canada altogether, and hire their old [185] lodgings again; that it was no joke, having his rest broken at his time of life; that he could not afford to keep open house at all hours, for people who were in no ways related to him.”

With such consoling expressions of sympathy in their forlorn condition, did the hard, worldly old man proceed to unlock the door of their former domicile; but food, lights, and firing, he would not produce, until Lyndsay had promised ample remuneration for the same.

Exhausted in mind and body, for she had not broken her fast since eight o’clock that morning, Flora for a long time refused to partake of the warm cup of tea her loving partner had made with his own hands for her especial benefit; and her tears continued to fall involuntarily over the sleeping babe which lay upon her lap.

Mr. Hawke saw that her nerves were completely unstrung by fatigue, and ran across the green, and called up Flora’s nurse to take charge of the infant.

Mrs. Clarke, kind creature that she was, instantly hurried to the house to do what she could for the mother and child. Little Josey was soon well warmed and fed, and Flora smiled through her tears, when her husband made his appearance.

“Come, Flora,” he cried, “you are ill for the want of food,—I am going to make some sandwiches for you, and you must be a good girl and eat them, or I will never cater for you again.”

Mr. Hawke exerted all his powers of drollery to enliven the miscellaneous meal, and Flora soon [186] retired to rest, fully determined to bear the crosses of life with more fortitude for the future.

The sun was not above the horizon, when she was roused, however, from a deep sleep, by the stentorian voice of old Kitson, who, anxious to get rid of his troublesome visitors, cried out, with great glee,—“Hallo! I say—here is the right steamer at last.—Better late than never. The red flag is hoisted at her stern; and she is standing right in for the bay. Quick! Quick, *Leaftenant* Lyndsay! or you’ll be too late.”

With all possible despatch Flora dressed herself, though baffled by anxiety from exerting unusual celerity. The business of the toilet had to be performed in such a brief space, that it was impossible to attend to it with any nicety. At last all was completed; Flora hurried down to the beach, with Hannah and Mrs. Clarke, James Hawke and Lyndsay having preceded them to arrange their passage to the steamer.

“Make haste, Mrs. Lyndsay,” shouted old Kitson; “these big dons wait for no one. I have got all your trunks stowed away into the boat, and the lads are waiting. If you miss your passage the third time, you may give it up as a bad job.”

In a few minutes Flora was seated in the boat, uncheered by any parting blessing but the cold farewell, and for ever, of old Captain Kitson, who could scarcely conceal the joy he felt at their [187] departure. The morning was wet and misty, and altogether comfortless, and Flora was glad when the bustle of getting on board the steamer was over, and they were safe upon her deck.

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CHAPTER XVII. [188]

THE STEAMBOAT.

In spite of the early hour, and the disagreeable weather, a number of persons, glad to escape from the close confinement of the cabins, were pacing the deck of the steamer. Others were leaning over the bulwarks, regarding the aspect of the country they were rapidly passing; while some were talking in small groups, in a loud declamatory tone, evidently more intent on attracting the attention of the bystanders than of edifying their own immediate listeners. Though bright eyes might look heavy, and fair faces languid and sleepy, vanity was wide awake, and never more active than in the midst of a crowd, where all are strangers to each other. It affords such a glorious opportunity for display for pretenders to rank and importance to show off their affected airs of wealth and consequence; and the world can lay bare its rotten heart, without much fear of detection, or dread of unpleasant results.

Flora sat down upon a bench beside her husband, and her eye ranged from group to group of those strange faces, with a mechanical, uninterested gaze. Here a pretty insipid-looking girl [189] sauntered the deck with a book in her hand, from which she never read; and another, more vivacious, and equally intent on attracting her share of public notice, raved to an elderly gentleman, on whose arm she was leaning, of the beauty and magnificence of the ocean.

The young and good-looking of either sex were flirting. The more wily and experienced coquetting after a graver fashion; while the middle-aged were gossiping to some congenial spirit on the supposed merits or demerits of their neighbours.

Not a few prostrate forms might be seen reclining upon shawls and cloaks, supported by pillows, whose languid, pale faces, and disarranged tresses, showed that the demon of the waters had been at work, and remorselessly had stricken them down.

Standing near the seat occupied by the Lyndsays, Flora observed a tall, fashionably-dressed woman, apparently about twenty-eight or thirty years of age. She was laughing and chatting in the most lively and familiar manner with a handsome, middle-aged man, in a military undress. The person of the lady was very agreeable, and though neither pretty nor elegant, was fascinating and attractive.

As her male companion constantly addressed her as Mrs. Dalton, we will call her by her name. When Mrs. Lyndsay first took her seat upon the deck Mrs. Dalton left off her conversation with Major F——, and regarded the new arrival with a long, cool, deliberate stare, which would have [190] won a smile from Flora, had it not been evidently meant to insult and annoy; for, turning to the Major, with a glance of peculiar meaning, accompanied with the least possible elevation of her shoulders, she let slip the word—"*Nobody*!"

"I am sure that *he* is a gentleman, and, if I mistake not, an officer, and a fine intelligent looking man," remarked her companion, in an aside; "and I like the appearance of his wife."

"My dear Sir, I tell you that *she is nobody*. Look at that merino gown; what lady would venture on board these fine vessels, where they meet with so many *fashionable* people, in such a dress?"

"A very suitable dress, I should say, for a sea voyage."

"Pshaw!" muttered Mrs. Dalton, "have done with your prudent Scotch sense of propriety. Who minds spoiling a good dress or two, when their standing in society is risked by appearing shabby? I tell you, Major, that she is *nobody*."

"Had you not told me that you had passed the greater part of your life, Mrs. Dalton, in a British Colony, I could have sworn to the fact, from your last speech," said her companion: "you all think so much of dress, that with you it is really the coat which makes the man, and, I suppose, the gown which makes the lady. However, you shall have it your own way. You know how easy it is [191] for you to bring me over to your opinion."

"Do you think that a pretty woman?" she said, directing her husband's eyes towards the lady in question.

"Rather," he replied coldly, "but very worldly and sophisticated."

"I am glad to hear you say so," said Flora, like a true woman; "that is precisely the opinion I have formed of her. Is that officer her husband?"

"I should rather think not. Husbands and wives seldom try to attract public attention to themselves, as that man and woman are doing. I have no doubt they are strangers who never met before."

"Impossible!"

"Nothing more probable; people who meet on short journeys and voyages like this, often throw aside the restraints imposed by society, and act and talk in a manner which would be severely censured in circles where they are known. Were you never favoured by the autobiography of a fellow-traveller in a stage-coach?"

"Yes often, and thought it very odd that any one should reveal so much of their private history to a stranger."

"It is a common occurrence, originating in the vanity of persons who love to make themselves and their affairs the subject of conversation; and if they can but obtain listeners, never stop to [192] question who or what they are."

“Ah, I remember getting into a sad scrape,” said Flora, “while travelling from S—— to London in a stage-coach. It was one of these uncomfortable things which one hates to think of for the rest of a life, and yet so ridiculous that one feels more inclined to laugh over it than to cry, though I believe (for I was but a girl at the time), I did both.

“My fellow-passengers were three gentlemen, one, to whom I was well known, the others perfect strangers. One of the latter, a very well-dressed but rather foppish, conceited young man, talked much upon literary matters, and from his conversation gave you to understand that he was on the most intimate terms with all the celebrated authors of the day. After giving us a very frank, and by no means just critique upon the works of Scott and Byron, whom he familiarly called, ‘my friend, Sir Walter,’ ‘my companion, Lord Byron,’ he suddenly turned to me, and asked me, ‘if I ever read the S. Chronicle?’ This was one of the county papers, I told him; that I saw it every week.

“‘If that be the case,’ said he, ‘will you tell me what you think of the Rev. Mr. B.’s poems, which have from time to time appeared in its columns?’

“This reverend gentleman was a man with a very heavy purse and a very empty head, whose [193]
contributions to the county papers were never read but to be laughed at. Not having the slightest personal knowledge of the author, I answered innocently enough, ‘Oh, he’s a stupid, conceited fellow. It is a pity he has not some friend to tell him what a fool he makes of himself, whenever he appears in print. His poetry is such dull trash, that I am certain he must pay the Editor of the paper for allowing him to put it in.’

“Mr. C. was stuffing his handkerchief into his mouth, to avoid laughing out right; while the poor gentleman (for it was the author himself), drew back with a face alternately red and pale, with suppressed indignation. His feelings must have been dreadful, for, during the rest of his journey, he sat and regarded me with an air of such offended dignity, that I must have appeared to him like some wicked ogress, ready to devour, at one mouthful, him and his literary fame. He never opened his mouth to speak to any of us after I had made this unfortunate blunder, and I sat upon thorns, until a handsome plain carriage drove up to the coach about a mile from T., and relieved us of his company.

“This circumstance made me feel so uncomfortable, that I never ventured upon giving an opinion of the works of any living author to a stranger, without having a previous knowledge of the person of the writer.”

“He deserved what he got, for his egregious vanity,” said Lyndsay. “For my part, I do not pity [194]
him at all; and it afforded you a good lesson of prudence for the future.”

At this moment a young negro lad, fantastically dressed, and evidently very much in love with himself, strutted past. As he swaggered along the deck, rolling his jet black eyes from side to side, and showing his white teeth to the spectators, an indolent-looking young man, dressed in the extreme of fashion, called languidly after him—

“Hollo, Blacky! What colour’s the Devil?”

“White,” responded the negro, “and sports red whiskers, like you!”

Every one laughed; the dandy shrunk back, utterly confounded; while the negro snapped his fingers, and crowed with delight.

“Hector, go down into the ladies’ cabin, and wait there until I call for you,” cried Mrs. Dalton, in an angry voice; “I did not bring you here to insult gentlemen.”

“De Buckra affront me first!” returned the sable page, as he sullenly withdrew.

“That boy grows very pert,” continued his mistress, turning to Major F.; “this is the consequence of the ridiculous stir made by the English people against slavery. The fellow knows that he is free the moment that he touches the British shores; and he thinks that he can show his independence by disobeying my commands, and being insolent to his superiors. I hope he will not [195]
take it into his head to leave me, for he saves me all the trouble of taking care of the children.”

The Major laughed, while Flora pitied the children, and wondered how any mother could confide them to the care of such a nurse.

The clouds, which had been rising for some time, now gave very unequivocal notice of an approaching storm. The rain began to fall, and the decks were quickly cleared of their motley groups.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

A PEEP INTO THE LADIES' CABIN.

In the ladies' cabin all was helplessness and confusion: the larger portion of the berths were already occupied by invalids in every stage of sea-sickness; the floor and sofas were strewn with bonnets and shawls, and articles of dress were scattered about in all directions. Some of the ladies were stretched upon the carpet; others, in a sitting posture, were supporting their aching heads upon their knees, and appeared perfectly indifferent to all that was passing around them, and only alive to their own misery. Others there were, who, beginning to recover from the odious malady, were employing their returning faculties in quizzing, and making remarks in audible whispers, on their prostrate companions.

The centre of such a group was a little sharp-faced, dark-eyed, sallow-skinned old maid of forty, whose angular figure was covered with ample folds of rich black silk, cut very low in the bust, and exposing a portion of her person, which, in all ladies of her age, is better hid. She was [197] travelling companion to a large, showily-dressed matron of fifty, who occupied the best sofa in the cabin, and, although evidently convalescent, commanded the principal attendance of the stewardess, while she graciously received the gratuitous services of all who were well enough to render her their homage. She was evidently the great lady of the cabin; and round her couch a knot of gossips had collected, when Flora, followed by Hannah carrying the baby, entered upon the scene.

The character of Mrs. Dalton formed the topic of conversation. The little old maid was remorselessly tearing it to tatters. "No woman who valued her reputation," she said, with pious horror in her looks and tone, "would flirt in the disgraceful manner that Mrs. Dalton was doing."

"There is some excuse for her conduct," remarked a plain but interesting-looking woman, not herself in the early spring of life. "Mrs. Dalton is a West Indian, and has not been brought up with our ideas of refinement and delicacy."

"I consider it no excuse," cried the other vehemently, glancing up, as the cabin-door opened to admit Flora and her maid, to be sure that the object of her animadversions was not within earshot. "Don't tell me. She knows, Miss Leigh, very well what she's about. Is it no crime, think you, to endeavour to attract the attention of Major F.? My dear Madam," turning to the great [198] lady, who with her head languidly propped by her hand, was eagerly listening to a conversation which so nearly concerned her: "I wonder you can bear so calmly her flirtations with your husband. If it were me now, I should be ready to tear her eyes out. Do speak to the creature, and remonstrate with her on her scandalous conduct."

"Ah, my dear Miss Mann, I am used to these things," sighed Mrs. F. "No conduct of the Major's can give me the least uneasiness now. Nor do I think, that Mrs. Dalton is aware that she is trying to seduce the affections of a *married* man."

"That she is though," exclaimed Miss Mann, triumphantly. "I took care to interrupt one of their lively conversations, by telling Major F. that his wife was ill, and wished to see him. Mrs. Dalton coloured, and moved away; but the moment my back was turned, she recommenced her attack. If she were a widow, one might make some allowance for her. But a young married woman, with two small children! I have no doubt that she left her husband for no good."

"She was married very young, to a man more than double her own age," said Miss Leigh. "The match was made for her by her friends—especially by her grandmother, who now resides in Edinburgh, and whom I know very well; a woman of considerable property, by whom Mrs. Dalton was brought up. She was always a gay, flighty girl, dreadfully indulged, and used from a child to have her own way. I consider her lot peculiarly hard, in being united, when a mere girl, to a man [199] whom she had scarcely seen a dozen times, and whom she did not love. The worst that can be said of her is, that she is vain and imprudent; but I can never believe that she is the bad, designing woman you would make her."

"Her conduct is very creditable for a clergyman's wife," sneered the old maid. "I wonder the rain don't bring her down into the cabin. But the society of ladies would prove very insipid to a person of her peculiar taste. I should like to know what brings her from Jamaica?"

"If it will satisfy your doubts, I can inform you," said Miss Leigh, with a quiet smile. "To place her two children with her grandmother, that they may receive an European education. She is a thoughtless being, but hardly deserves your severe censures."

The amiable manner in which this lady endeavoured to defend the absent, without wholly excusing her levity, struck Flora very forcibly. Mrs. Dalton's conduct upon deck had created in her own mind no very favourable opinion of her good qualities. Miss Leigh's remarks tended not a little to soften her disgust and aversion towards that individual, whose attack upon her she felt was as ill-natured, as it was unjust. She was now inclined to let them pass for what they were worth, and to dismiss Mrs. Dalton from her thoughts altogether. But Miss Mann was too much [200] excited by Miss Leigh's extenuating remarks, to let the subject drop, and returned with fresh vigour to the charge.

“It is totally beyond my power,” she cried, “to do justice to her vanity and frivolity. No one ever before accused me of being ill-natured, or censorious; but that woman is the vainest person I ever saw. Did you notice, my dear Mrs. F., that she changed her dress three times yesterday, and twice to-day? She knelt a whole hour before the cheval-glass, arranging her hair, and trying on a variety of expensive head-dresses, before she could fix on one for the saloon. I should be ashamed of being the only lady among so many men. But she is past blushing—she has a face of brass.”

“And so plain too,” murmured Mrs. Major F.

“You cannot deny that her features are good, ladies,” again interposed Miss Leigh; “but creoles seldom possess the fine red and white of our British belles.”

“At night,” suggested Miss Mann, “her colour is remarkably good: it is not subject to any variation like ours. The bleak sea air does not dim the roses on her cheeks; while these young ladies look as blue and as cold as figures carved out of stone. Of course, Miss Leigh will think me very uncharitable in saying that Mrs. D. paints; but I know she does. She left her dressing-case open yesterday, and her little boy was dabbling his fingers in her French carmine and pearl [201] white, and a fine mess he made of his mamma’s beautiful complexion. Bless me!” exclaimed the old maid, suddenly lowering her voice to a whisper, “if there is not her black imp sitting under the table; he will be sure to tell her all that we have said about her! What a nuisance he is! I do not think it is proper for him, a great boy of sixteen, to be admitted into the ladies’ cabin.”

“Pshaw!” said Mrs. Major F.; “nobody cares for him—a black.”

“But, my dear Mrs. F., though he is a black, the boy has eyes and ears, like the rest of his sex, and my sense of female propriety is shocked by his presence. But, who are these people?”—glancing at Flora and her maid—“and why is that woman admitted into the ladies’ cabin?—servants have no business here.”

“She is the nurse; that alters the case,” said Miss Leigh. “The plea of being the children’s attendant brought Master Hector into the cabin.”

“The boy is black, and has, on that score, as Mrs. Major F. says, neither rank nor sex,” continued the waspish Miss Mann, contradicting the objections she had made to Hector’s company only a few minutes before. “I will not submit to this insult, nor occupy the same apartment with a servant.”

“My dear Madam, you strangely forget yourself,” said Miss Leigh. “This lady has a very young [202] infant, and cannot do without the aid of her nurse. A decent, tidy young woman is not quite such a nuisance as the noisy black boy that Mrs. Dalton has entailed upon us.”

“But, then she is a woman of *fashion*,” whispered Miss Mann; “and we know nothing about these people, and if I were to judge by the young person’s dress—”

“A very poor criterion,” interrupted Miss Leigh; “I draw my inferences from a higher source.” And turning to Flora, she inquired, in a kind, friendly tone, “if she were going all the way to Edinburgh, the age of the baby, and how both were affected by the sea.”

Before Flora could answer these questions, Miss Mann addressed her with great asperity of look and manner—

“Perhaps, Madam, you are not aware that it is against the regulations of these vessels, to admit servants into the state cabin.”

“I am sorry, ladies,” said Flora, rather proudly, “that the presence of mine should incommode you. I have only just recovered from a dangerous illness, and am unable at present to take the whole charge of the child myself. I have paid for my servant’s attendance upon me in the cabin, and I am certain that she will conduct herself in a manner not to offend the prejudices of any one here.”

“How unpleasant,” grumbled the old maid, as she turned disdainfully on her heel; “but what [203] else can be expected from under-bred people.”

“Send away your nurse,” said Miss Leigh, in a low voice, to Mrs. Lyndsay; “her presence gives, it seems, great offence to certain people, and, if I may judge by her pale looks, she will be of little service to you; I will help you to take care of your sweet baby.”

Flora immediately complied with Miss Leigh’s request. Hannah was dismissed, and, indeed, the poor girl had enough to do to take care of herself.

Towards evening the wind rose to a gale, and Flora, who had not suffered from sickness during her two disastrous trips to sea, became so alarmingly ill, that she was unable to attend to the infant, or assist herself. Miss Leigh, like a good Samaritan, sat up with her during the night, but in the morning she was so much worse, that she earnestly requested that her husband might be allowed to see her.

Her petition was warmly seconded by Miss Leigh, but met with a decided refusal from the rest of the lady-passengers. Mrs. Dalton, who took a very prominent part in the matter, sprang from her berth, and, putting her back against the cabin door, declared, “That no man save the surgeon should gain, with her consent, an entrance there!”

“Then I hope, Madam,” said Miss Leigh, who was supporting Flora in her arms, “that you will adhere to your own regulations, and dismiss your black boy.” [204]

“I shall do no such thing; my objection is to men, and not to boys.—Hector, remain where you are!”

“How consistent!” sneered the old maid.

“The poor lady may die,” suggested Miss Leigh.

“Send for the Doctor—there is one on board.”

“The Doctor, ladies,” said the stewardess, coming forward, “got hurt last night by the fall of the sail, during the storm, and is ill in his bed.”

“If such is the case,” continued Miss Leigh, “you cannot, surely, deny the lady the consolation of speaking to her husband?”

“What a noise that squalling child makes!” cried a fat woman, popping her night-capped head out of an upper berth; “can’t it be removed? It hinders me from getting a wink of sleep.”

“Cannot you take charge of it, Stewardess?”

“Oh, La! I’ve too much upon my hands already—what with Mrs. Dalton’s children and all this sickness!”

“Have a little mercy, ladies, on the sick mother, and I will endeavour to pacify its cries,” said Miss Leigh. “Poor little thing, it misses her care, and we are all strange to it.”

“I insist upon its being removed!” cried the fat woman. “The comfort of every lady in the cabin is not to be sacrificed for the sake of that squalling brat. If women choose to travel with such young infants, they should take a private conveyance. I will complain to the Captain, if the stewardess does not remove it instantly.” [205]

What a difference there is in women! Some, like ministering angels, strew flowers and scatter blessings along the rugged paths of life; while others, by their malevolence and pride, increase its sorrows an hundred fold.

The next day continued stormy, and the rain fell in torrents. The unsteady motion of the ship did not tend to improve the health of the occupants of the ladies’ cabin. Those who had been well the day before, were now as helpless and miserable as their companions. Miss Leigh alone seemed to retain her usual composure. Mrs. Dalton could scarcely be named in this catalogue, as she only slept and dressed in the cabin, the rest of her time being devoted to her friends upon deck, but, in spite of the boisterous winds and heavy sea, she was as gay and as airy as ever.

Her noisy children were confined to the cabin, where they amused themselves by running races round the table, and shouting at the top of their shrill voices. In all their pranks, they were encouraged and abetted by Hector, who, regardless of the entreaties of the invalids, and the maledictions of the exasperated stewardess, did his very best to increase the uproar and confusion. Hector did not care for the commands of any one but his mistress, and she was in the saloon, playing at billiards with Major F. [206]

Little Willie Dalton had discovered the baby, and Flora was terrified whenever he approached her berth, which was on a level with the floor of the cabin, as that young gentleman, who was at the unmanageable age of three years, seemed decidedly bent on mischief. Twice he had crept into her bed on his hands and knees, and aimed a blow at the head of the sleeping babe with the leg of a broken chair, which he had found beneath the sofa.

While the ladies slept, Hector stole from berth to berth, and possessed himself of all their stores of oranges, lemons, and cayenne lozenges; sharing the spoils with the troublesome, spoilt monkeys, left by their careful mamma in his keeping.

Towards evening Mrs. Lyndsay felt greatly recovered from her grievous attack of sea-sickness; and, with the assistance of Miss Leigh, she contrived to dress herself, and get upon the deck.

The rain was still falling in large, heavy drops; but the sun was bravely struggling through the dense masses of black clouds, which had obscured his rays during the long stormy day, and now cast a watery and uncertain gleam upon the wild scenery, over which Bamborough Castle frowns in savage sublimity. [207]

This was the last glance Flora gave to the shores of dear old England. The angry, turbulent ocean, the lowering sky, and falling rain, seemed emblems of her own sad destiny. Her head sunk upon her husband’s shoulder, as he silently clasped her to his breast; and she could only answer his anxious inquiries respecting herself and the child with heavy sobs. For his sake—for the sake of the little one, who was nestled closely to her throbbing heart—she had consented to leave those shores for ever. Then why did she repine? Why did that last glance of her native land fill her heart with such unutterable grief? Visions of the dim future floated before her, prophetic of all the trials and sorrows which awaited her in those unknown regions to which they were journeying. She had obeyed the call of duty, but had not yet tasted the reward. The sacrifice had not been as yet purified and sublimed, by long-suffering and self-denial, so as to render it an acceptable offering on so holy a shrine. She looked up to heaven, and tried to breathe a prayer; but all was still and dark in her bewildered mind.

The kind voice of her husband at last roused her from the indulgence of vain regrets. The night was raw and cold; the decks wet and slippery from the increasing rain; and, with an affectionate [208] pressure of the hand that went far to reconcile her to her lot, Lyndsay whispered, “This is no place for you, Flora, and my child. Return, dearest, to the cabin.”

With reluctance Flora obeyed. Beside him she felt neither the cold nor wet; and, with the greatest repugnance, she re-entered the ladies’ cabin, and, retiring to her berth, enjoyed for several hours a tranquil and refreshing sleep.

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CHAPTER XIX. [209]

MRS. DALTON.

It was midnight when Mrs. Lyndsay awoke. A profound stillness reigned in the cabin; the invalids had forgotten their sufferings in sleep,—all but one female figure, who was seated upon the carpeted floor, just in front of Flora’s berth, wrapped in a loose dressing-gown, and engaged in reading a letter. Flora instantly recognised in the watcher the tall, graceful figure of Mrs. Dalton.

Her mind seemed agitated by some painful recollections; and she sighed frequently, and several tears stole slowly over her cheeks, as she replaced the paper carefully in her bosom, and for many minutes appeared lost in deep and earnest thought. All her accustomed gaiety was gone; and her fine features wore a sad and regretful expression, far more touching and interesting than the heartless levity by which they were generally distinguished.

“Is it possible, that that frivolous mind can be touched by grief?” thought Flora. “That that woman can feel?”

Mrs. Dalton, as if she had heard the unuttered query, raised her head, and caught the intense [210] glance with which Mrs. Lyndsay was unconsciously regarding her.

“I thought no one was awake but myself,” she said; “I am a bad sleeper. If you are the same, we will have a little chat together; I am naturally a sociable animal. Of all company, I find my own the worst, and above all things hate to be alone.”

Surprised at this frank invitation, from a woman who had pronounced her *nobody*, Flora replied, rather coldly, “I fear, Mrs. Dalton, that our conversation would not suit each other.”

“That is as much as to say, that you don’t like me; and that you conclude from that circumstance, that I don’t like you?”

“To be candid then,—you are right.”

“I fancy that you overheard my observations to Major F.?”

“I did.”

“Well if you did, I can forgive you for disliking me. When I first saw you, I thought you a very plain person, and judged by your dress, that you held a very inferior rank in society. After listening a few minutes to your conversation with Miss Leigh, who is a highly educated woman, I felt convinced that I was wrong; and that you were far superior to most of the women round me. Of course you thought me a very malicious, vain woman.”

Flora smiled, in spite of herself. [211]

“Oh, you may speak it out. I shan’t like you a bit the less for speaking the truth. I am a strange, wayward creature, subject at times to the most dreadful depression of spirits; and it is only by affecting excessive gaiety that I hinder myself from falling into the most hopeless despondency.”

“Such a state of mind is not natural to one of your age, and who possesses so many personal attractions. There must be some cause for these fits of gloom.”

“Of course there is. I am not quite the heartless coquet I seem. My father was an officer in the army, and commanded a regiment in the West Indies, where I was born. I was an only child, and very much indulged by both my parents. I lost them while I was a mere child, and was sent to Scotland to be educated by my grandmother. I was an irritable, volatile, spoilt child, and expected that everybody would yield to me, as readily as my slave attendants had done in Jamaica. In this I was disappointed. My grandmother was a proud, ambitious woman, and a strict disciplinarian; and it was a constant battle between us who should be master. I was no match, however, for the old lady, and I fretted constantly under her control, longing for any chance that

might free me from her rule. It was a joyful day for me, when I was sent to finish my education at one of the first schools in Edinburgh, which I did not leave until I was sixteen years of age. I found grandmamma several years older, and many degrees more exacting than she was before. She was so much alarmed lest I should make an unsuitable alliance, that she never suffered me to go out without I was accompanied by herself, or an old maiden aunt, who was more rigid and stiff than even grandmamma herself. [212]

“At this period of my girlhood, and before I had seen anything of the world, or could in the least judge for myself, a very wealthy clergyman, who had been a great friend of poor papa’s, called to see me, before he returned to Jamaica; where he had a fine living, and possessed a noble property. Unfortunately for me, he fell desperately in love with the orphan daughter of his friend, and his suit was vehemently backed by grandmamma and aunt. He was a handsome, worthy kind man, but old enough to have been my father. I was so unhappy and restless at home, that I was easily persuaded to become his wife; and I, who had never been in love, thought it was a fine thing to be married, and my own mistress at sixteen. Our union has not been a happy one. I much question if such unions ever are. He is now an aged man, while I am in the very bloom of life, and consequently exposed to much temptation. Thank God! I have never acted criminally, though often severely tried. My home is one of many luxuries, but it has no domestic joys. My children are the only tie that binds me to a man I cannot love; and I have been so long used to drown my disappointment and regret in a whirl of dissipation, that it is only in scenes of gaiety that I forget my grief. [213]

“My own sex speak slightly of me; but I do not deserve their severe censures. My fellow-passengers, I heard from Hector, made a thousand malicious remarks about me yesterday, and that you and Miss Leigh were the only ladies who took my part.”

“My conduct,” replied Flora, “was perfectly negative. I said nothing either in praise or blame. I may have injured you by thinking hardly of you.”

“I thank you for your forbearance, in keeping your thoughts to yourself, for I did not deserve that from you. If I did flirt a little with Major F., it was done more to provoke the spleen of that ill-natured old maid, who acts the part of Cerberus for his proud, pompous wife, than for any wish to attract his attention.”

“It is better,” said Flora, her heart softening towards her companion, “to avoid all appearance of evil. Superficial observers only judge by outward appearance, and your conduct must have appeared strange to a jealous woman.”

“She was jealous of me then?” cried the volatile Mrs. Dalton, clapping her hands in an ecstasy of delight. “Oh, I am so glad that it annoyed her.” [214]

Flora could not help laughing at the vivacity with which she turned her words to make them subservient to her own vanity. But when she described the consternation felt by Miss Mann, on discovering Hector under the table, her eccentric companion laughed until the tears ran down her cheeks.

The introduction of Hector insensibly turned the conversation upon the state of the slaves in the West Indies. The excitement of the slave question was just then at its height; but the bill for their emancipation had not yet passed the Houses of Parliament. Upon Flora expressing her abhorrence of the whole system, Mrs. Dalton proceeded to defend it with no little warmth.

“Ah, I perceive that you know nothing about it. You are infected with the bigotry and prejudices of the Anti-slavery advocates. Negroes are an inferior race; they were made to work for civilized men, in climates where labour would be death to those of a different complexion.”

“This is reducing the African to a mere beast of burthen—a machine in the form of man. The just God never made a race of beings purposely to drag out a painful existence in perpetual toil and degradation.”

“They are better off than your peasants at home,” continued Mrs. Dalton, indignantly;—“better fed, and taken care of. As to the idle tales they tell you about flogging, starvation, and killing slaves, they are fearful exaggerations, not worthy of credit. Do you think a farmer would kill a horse, that he knew was worth a hundred pounds, out of revenge for his having done some trifling injury to his harness? A planter would not disable a valuable slave, if by so doing he injured himself. But your slave adorers will not listen to reason and common sense. I have been the owner of many slaves; but I never ill-used one of them in my life.” [215]

“Hector is an example of over-indulgence,” said Flora. “But still he is only a pet animal in your estimation. Tell me truly, Mrs. Dalton, do you believe that a negro has a soul to be saved?”

“I think it doubtful!”

“And you the wife of a Christian minister?” said Flora, reproachfully.

“If they had immortal souls and reasoning minds, we should not be permitted to hold them as slaves. Their degradation proves their inferiority.”

“It only proves the brutalizing effects of your immoral system,” said Flora, waxing warm. “I taught a black man from the island of St. Vincent to read the Bible fluently in ten weeks. Was that a proof of mental incapacity? I never met with an uneducated white man who learned to read so

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rapidly, or who pursued his studies with the ardour of this despised, soulless black. His motive for this exertion was a noble one, which I believe cost him his life—the hope of carrying the glad tidings of salvation to his benighted countrymen, which he considered the best means of improving their condition, and rendering less burdensome their oppressive yoke."

"This was all very well in theory; but it will never do in practice. If the British Government, urged on by a set of fanatics, who, in reality are more anxious to bring themselves into notice, than to emancipate the slaves, madly persist in adopting their ridiculous project, it will involve the West Indies in ruin."

"It were better that the whole group of islands were sunk in the depths of the sea," said Flora, vehemently, "than continue to present to the world a system of injustice and cruelty, which is a disgrace to a Christian community—a spectacle of infamy to the civilized world. And do not think that the wise and good men who are engaged heart and hand in this holy cause, will cease their exertions until their great object is accomplished, and slavery is banished from the earth."

Mrs. Dalton stared at Flora in amazement. She could not in the least comprehend her enthusiasm. "Who cares for a slave?" she said, contemptuously. "You must live among them, and be conversant with their habits before you can understand their inferiority. One would think that [217] you belonged to the Anti-Slavery Society to hear the warmth with which you argue the case. Do you belong to that odious society? for I understand that many pious women make themselves vastly busy in publicly discussing the *black* question."

"I have many dear friends who are among its staunch supporters, both men and women; whose motives are purely benevolent; who have nothing to gain by the freedom of the slaves, beyond the satisfaction of endeavouring to forward a good work, which if it succeeds, (and we pray God that it may,) will restore a large portion of the human family to their rights as immortal and rational creatures."

"Mere cant—the vanity of making a noise in the world. One of the refined hypocrisies of the present age. By-the-bye, my dear Madam, have you read a tract published lately by this disinterested society, called the History of Mary P.? It is set forth to be an authentic narrative, while I know enough of the West Indies, to pronounce it a tissue of falsehoods from beginning to end."

"Did you know Mary P.?"

"I wonder who does. It is an imaginary tale got up for party purposes."

"You are mistaken," said Flora quietly. "That narrative is strictly true. I was staying the winter before last, with her mistress in London, and I wrote it myself from the woman's own lips."

"You!" and Mrs. Dalton started from the ground as though she had been bitten by a serpent [218] —"and I have been talking all this time to the author of Mary P. From this moment, Madam, we must regard ourselves as strangers. No West Indian could for a moment tolerate the writer of that odious pamphlet."

Mrs. Dalton retired to her berth, which was in the state cabin; and Flora lay awake for several hours, pondering over their conversation, until the morning broke, and the steamer cast anchor off Newhaven.

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CHAPTER XX. [219]

EDINBURGH.

THE storm had passed away during the night; and at day-break, Flora hurried upon deck, to catch the first glance of—

"The glorious land of flood and
fell,
The noble north countrie."

The sun was still below the horizon, and a thick mist hung over the waters, and hid the city from her view. Oh, for the rising of that white curtain! how Flora tried to peer through its vapoury folds, to

"Hail old Scotia's darling seat,"

the beautiful abode of brave, intelligent, true-hearted men, and fair good women. Glorious Edinburgh! who ever beheld you for the first time with indifference, and felt not his eyes brighten, and his heart thrill with a proud ecstasy, the mingling of his spirit with a scene, which in romantic sublimity, has not its equal in the wide world—

"Who would not dare
To fight for such a land!"

exclaims the patriotic wizard of the North. Ay, and to die for it, if need be, as every true-hearted [220]
Scot would die, rather than see one stain cast upon the national glory of his noble country. The character of a people is greatly influenced by the local features of the land to which it belongs; and the inhabitants of mountainous districts have ever evaded most effectually the encroachments of foreign invaders. The Scot may, perhaps, derive from his romantic country, much of that poetic temperament, that stern, uncompromising love of independence, which has placed him in the first rank as a man.

The sun at length rose; the fog rolled its grey masses upwards, and the glorious old castle emerged from between the parting clouds, like some fabled palace of the gods, its antique towers glittering like gold in the sun.

"Oh, how beautiful!" exclaimed Flora, her eye kindling, and her cheek flushing with delight.

"The situation of Quebec is almost as fine," said Captain Forbes, who had been watching with pleasure the effect which the first sight of his native city produced upon her countenance. "It will lose little by comparison."

"Indeed," cried Flora, eagerly turning to the speaker, "I had formed no idea of anything in Canada being at all equal to this."

"You have been there, Captain?" said Lyndsay.

"Yes, many times; and always with increased pleasure. Quebec combines every object which is [221]
requisite to make a scene truly magnificent—woods, mountains, rivers, cataracts; and all on the most stupendous scale. A lover of nature cannot fail to be delighted with the rock-defended fortress of British North America."

"You have made me quite happy, Captain Forbes," said Flora; "I have contemplated a residence in Canada with feelings of such antipathy, that your description of Quebec almost reconciles me to my lot. I can never hate a country which abounds in natural beauty."

Boats were now constantly plying to and from the shore, conveying passengers and their luggage from the ship to the pier. The Captain, who had recognised a countryman in Lyndsay, insisted on the voyagers taking breakfast with him before they left the vessel. Mrs. Lyndsay accepted the offer with such hearty good-will, that the Captain laughed and rubbed his hands in the excess of hospitable satisfaction, as he called to his steward to place a small table under an awning upon the deck, and serve the breakfast there.

"You will enjoy it much more in the fresh air, Mrs. Lyndsay," he said, "after your severe illness, than in the close air."

Flora was delighted with the arrangement, and set the Captain down as a man of taste, as by this means he had provided for her a double feast—the beautiful scenery which on every side met [222]
her gaze, and an excellent breakfast, served in the balmy morning air.

The rugged grace with which the gallant tar presided at what might be termed his own private table, infused a cheerful spirit into those around him, and never was a meal more heartily enjoyed by our emigrants. James Hawke, who had been confined during the whole voyage to his berth, now rejoined his friends, and ate of the savoury things before him in such downright earnest, that the Captain declared that it was a pleasure to watch the lad handle his knife and fork.

"When a fellow has been starving for eight and forty hours, it is not a trifle that can satisfy his hunger," said Jim, making a vigorous onslaught upon a leg of Scotch mutton. "Oh! I never was so hungry in my life!"

"Not even during those two disastrous days last week, which we spent starving at sea," said Flora.

"Ah, don't name them," said the boy, with an air of intense disgust. "Those days were attended with such *qualms* of conscience that I have banished them from the log of life altogether. Oh, those dreadful days!"

"Why, Jim, you make a worse sailor than I expected," said Flora; "how shall we get you alive to Canada?"

"Oh, never fear," said the lad, gaily; "I have cast all those horrible reminiscences into the sea. I [223]

was very ill, but 'tis all over now, and I feel as light as a feather; you will see that I shall be quite myself again, directly we lose sight of the British shores."

On returning to the ladies' cabin, to point out her luggage to the steward of the boat, Flora found that important functionary, pacing to and fro the now empty scene of all her trouble in high disdain. She had paid very little attention to Mrs. Lyndsay during the voyage. She had waited with the most obsequious politeness on Mrs. Major F. and Mrs. Dalton, because she fancied they were rich people, who would amply reward her for her services. They had given her all the trouble they possibly could, while she had received few commands from Flora, and those few she had neglected to perform. Still, as Flora well knew that the paid salary of these people is small, and that they mainly depend upon the trifles bestowed upon them by passengers, she slipped half-a-crown into her hand, and begged her to see that the trunks she had pointed out were carried upon deck.

The woman stared at her, and dropped a low curtsey.

"La, Mem, you are one of the very few of our passengers who has been kind enough to remember the stewardess. It's too bad—indeed it is. And all the trouble that that Mrs. Dalton gave with her spoilt children, and nasty black vagabond. And would you believe me, she went off without bestowing on me a single penny! And worse than that, I heard her tell the big fat woman, [224] that never rose up in her berth, but to drink brandy-and-water, 'That it was a bad fashion the Hinglish had of paying servants, and the sooner it was got rid of the better.'

"'I perfectly hagrees with you,' said the fat woman; and so she gave nothing;—no—not even thanks. Mrs. Major F—— pretended not to see me, though I am sure I'm no midge; and I stood in the doorway on purpose to give her a hint; but the hideous little old maid told me to get out of the way, as she wanted to go upon deck to speak to the Major. Oh, the meanness of these would-be fine ladies! But if ever they come to Scotland in this boat again—won't I pay them off!"

Flora enjoyed these unsolicited confessions of a disappointed stewardess; and she was forced to turn away her head for fear of betraying a wicked inclination to laugh, which if indulged in at that moment would, I have no doubt, have afforded her great satisfaction and delight. As it was, she made no comment upon the meanness of her fellow-passengers, nor consoled the excited stewardess by complaining of their unlady-like conduct to herself.—What they were in their rank of life, the stewardess was in hers. They were congenial souls—all belonging to the same great family, and Flora was not a little amused by the striking points of resemblance.

Bidding adieu to the Captain of the steamer, the Lyndsays and their luggage were safely landed [225] on the chain-pier at Newhaven; from thence they proceeded to Leith, to the house of a respectable woman, the widow of a surgeon, who resided near the Leith bank, and only a few minutes' walk from the wharf.

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CHAPTER XXI. [226]

MRS. WADDEL.

GREAT was the surprise of Flora, when, instead of entering the house by a front door, they walked up an interminable flight of stone stairs, every landing comprising a distinct dwelling, or flat (as it is technically termed), with the names of the proprietors marked on the doors. At last they reached the flat occupied by good Mistress Waddel, situated at the very top of this stony region. Mrs. Waddel was at the door ready to receive them. She showed them into a comfortable sitting-room with windows fronting the street, where a bright fire was blazing in a very old-fashioned grate. She welcomed her new lodgers with a torrent of kindly words, pronounced in the broadest Scotch dialect, only half understood by the English portion of her audience.

A large portly personage was Mrs. Waddel,—ugly, amiable, and by no means particular in her dress; which consisted of a woollen plaid, very much faded, and both ragged and dirty. Her large mutch with its broad frills formed a sort of glory round her head, setting off to no advantage her [227] pock-marked, flabby face, wide mouth and yellow projecting teeth. She had a comical, good-natured obliquity of vision in her prominent light-grey eyes, which were very red about the rims; and Flora thought, as she read with an inquiring eye the countenance of their landlady, that without being positively disgusting, she was the most ordinary, uncouth woman she ever beheld.

Mrs. Waddel was eloquent in the praise of her apartments, which she said had been occupied by my Leddy W. when his Majesty George the Fourth, God bless his saucy face, landed at Leith, on his visit to Scotland. Her lodgings, it seemed, had acquired quite an aristocratic character since the above-named circumstance; and not a day passed, but the good woman enumerated all

the particulars of that memorable visit. But her own autobiography was the stock theme with the good landlady. The most minute particulars of her private history she daily divulged, to the unspeakable delight of the mischievous laughter-loving James Hawke, who, because he saw that it annoyed Mrs. Lyndsay, was sure to lead the conversation slily to some circumstance which never failed to place the honest-hearted Scotchwoman on her high-horse: and then she would talk,—ye gods!—how she would talk—and splutter away in her broad provincial dialect, until the wicked boy was convulsed with laughter.

"Ay, Mister Jeames," she would say, "ye will a' be maken' yer fun o' a' puir auld bodie, but 'tis na' cannie o' ye." [228]

"Making fun of *you*, Mrs. Waddel," said he, with a sly glance at Flora, "how can you take such an odd notion into your head! It is so good of you to tell me all about your courtship: it's giving me a hint of how I'm to go about it when I'm a man. I am sure you were a very pretty, smart girl in your young days"—with another quizzical glance at Flora.

The old lady drew herself up, and smiled approvingly upon her black-eyed tormentor.

"Na, na, Mister Jeames, my gude man that's dead an' gane said to me, the verra day that he made me his ain—'Katie, ye are nae bonnie, but ye a' gude, which is a' hantle better.'"

"No doubt he was right, Mrs. Waddel; but I really think he was very ungallant to say so on his wedding-day, and did not do you half justice."

"Weel, weel," said the good dame, "every ain to his taste. He was not ow'r gifted that way himsel; but we are nane sensible o' our ain defects."

The great attraction in the small, windowless closet in which James slept, was an enormous calabash, which her son, the idol of Mrs. Waddel's heart, had brought home with him from the South Seas. Over this calabash, the simple-hearted mother daily rehearsed all the wonderful adventures she had gathered from that individual, during his short visits home; and as she [229] possessed a surprisingly retentive memory, her maternal reminiscences would have filled volumes,—to all of which James listened with the most earnest attention, not on account of the adventures, for they were commonplace enough, but for the mere pleasure of hearing Mrs. Waddel talk broad Scotch, from which he seemed to derive the most ludicrous enjoyment. Mrs. Waddel had two daughters, to whom nature had been less bountiful than even to herself. Tall, awkward, shapeless dawdles, whose unlovely youth was more repulsive than the mother's full-blown, homely age,—with them the old lady's innocent obliquity of vision had degenerated into a downright squint, and the redness round the rims of their large, fishy-looking, light eyes, gave the idea of perpetual weeping,—a pair of Niobes, versus the beauty, whose swollen orbs were always dissolved in tears. They crept slip-shod about the house, their morning wrappers fitting so easily their slovenly figures, that you expected to see them suddenly fall to the ground, and the young ladies walk on in native simplicity.

"My daughters are like mysel—na' bonnie," said Mrs. Waddel. "They dinna' tak' wi' the men folk, wha look mair to comeliness than gudeness now-a-days in a wife. A' weel, every dog maun ha' his day, an' they may get husbands yet.

"I weel remember, when Noncy was a bairn, she was the maist ugsome wee thing I ever clappit [230] an e'e upon. My Leddy W. lodged in this verra room, in the which we are no' sittin'. She had a daughter nearly a woman grown, an' I was in my sma' back parlour washin' an' dressin' the bairn. In runs my Leddy Grace, an' she stood an' lookit an' lookit a lang time at the naked bairn in my lap: at last she clappit her hands an' she called oot to her mither—'Mamma! Mamma! for gudeness sake, come here, an' look at this ugly, blear-eyed, bandy-legget child!—I never saw sic an object in a' my life!'

"It made my heart sair to hear her despise a creture made in God's image in that way, an' I bursted into tears, an' said—'My leddy, yer a bad Christian to spier in that way o' my puir bairn, an' that in the hearin' of its ain mither. May God forgive you! but you ha' a hard heart.' She was verra angry at my reproof, but my Leddy W. just then came in, an' she said, with one of her ain gracious smiles—'For shame! Grace; the bairn's weel enough. Let us hope she maun prove a' blessin' to her parents. The straightest tree does na always bear the finest fruit.'

"I ha' met wi' mony crosses and sair trials in my day; but few o' them made me shed bitterer tears than that proud, handsom' young leddy's speech on the deformity o' my puir bairn."

Flora stood reproved in her own eyes, for she knew she had regarded the poor ugly girls with [231] feelings of repugnance, on account of their personal defects. Even Jim, careless and reckless though he was, possessed an excellent heart, and he looked grave, and turned to the window, and tried to hum a tune, to get rid of an unpleasant sensation about his throat, which Mrs. Waddel's artless words had suddenly produced.

"Hang me!" he muttered half aloud, "if I ever laugh at the poor girls again!"

Mrs. Waddel had in common with most of her sex, a great predilection for going to auctions; and scarcely a day passed without her making some wonderful bargains. For a mere trifle she had bought a 'gude pot, only upon inspection it turned out to be miserably leaky. A nice palliasse, which on more intimate acquaintance proved alive with gentry with whom the most republican body would not wish to be on intimate terms. Jim was always joking the old lady upon her bargains, greatly to the edification of Betty Fraser, a black-eyed Highland girl, who was Mistress

Waddel's prime minister in the culinary department.

"Weel, Mister Jeames, jist ha' yer laugh oot, but when ye get a glint o' the bonnie table I bought this mornin' for three an' saxpence, ye'll be noo' makin' game o' me ony mair, I'm thinkin'. Betty, [232] ye maun jist step ow'r the curb-stane to the broker's, an' bring hame the table."

Away sped the nimble-footed Betty, and we soon heard the clattering of the table, as the leaves flapped to and fro as she lugged it up the public stairs.

"Now for the great bargain!" exclaimed the saucy Jim; "I think, Mrs. Waddel, I'll buy it of you, as my venture to Canada."

"Did ye ever!" exclaimed the old lady, her eyes brightening as Betty dragged in the last bargain, and placed it triumphantly before her mistress. Like the Marquis of Anglesea, it had been in the wars, and with a terrible clatter, the incomparable table fell prostrate to the floor. Betty opened her great black eyes with a glance of blank astonishment, and raising her hands with a tragic air which was perfectly irresistible, exclaimed, "Mercy me, but it wants a fut!"

"A what?" screamed Jim, as he sank beside the fallen table and rolled upon the ground in a fit of irrepressible merriment; "Do, for Heaven's sake, tell me the English for a fut. Oh dear, I shall die! Why do you make such funny purchases, Mrs. Waddel, and suffer Betty to show them off in such a funny way? You will be the death of me, indeed you will; and then, what will my Mammy say?"

To add to this ridiculous scene, Mrs. Waddel's grey parrot, who was not the least important [233] personage in her establishment, having been presented to her by her sailor son, fraternised with the prostrate lad, and echoed his laughter in the most outrageous manner.

"Whist, Poll! Hould yer clatter. It's no laughing matter to lose three an' saxpence in buying the like o' that."

Mrs. Waddel did not attend another auction during the month the Lyndsays occupied her lodgings. With regard to Betty Fraser, Jim picked up a page out of her history, which greatly amused Flora Lyndsay, who delighted in the study of human character. We will give it here.

Betty Fraser's first mistress was a Highland lady, who had married and settled in Edinburgh. On her first confinement, she could fancy no one but a Highland girl to take care of the babe, when the regular nurse was employed about her own person. She therefore wrote to her mother to send her by the first vessel which sailed for Edinburgh, a good, simple-hearted girl, whom she could occasionally trust with the baby. Betty, who was a tenant's daughter, and a humble scion of the great family tree, duly arrived by the next ship.

She was a hearty, healthy, rosy girl of fourteen, as rough as her native wilds, with a mind so free from guile that she gave a literal interpretation to everything she saw and heard.

In Canada Betty would have been considered very green. In Scotland she was regarded as a [234] truthful, simple-hearted girl. A few weeks after the baby was born, some ladies called to see Mrs. ——. The weather was very warm, and one of them requested the neat black-eyed girl in waiting to fetch her a glass of water. Betty obeyed with a smiling face; but oh, horror of horrors, she brought the clear crystal to the lady guest in her red fist.

The lady smiled, drank the water, and returned the tumbler to the black-eyed Hebe, who received it with a profound curtsy.

When the visitors were gone, Mrs. ——, who was very fond of her young clanswoman, called her to her side, and said, "Betty, let me never see you bring anything into my room in your bare hands. Always put what you are asked for on to a waiter or an ashat."

The girl promised obedience.

The very next day some strange ladies called; and after congratulating Mrs. —— on her speedy recovery, they expressed an earnest wish to see the "*dear little baby*."

Mrs. —— rang the bell. Betty appeared. "Is the baby awake?"

"Yes, my leddy."

"Just bring him in to show these ladies."

Betty darted into the nursery, only too proud of the mission, and telling nurse to "mak' the [235] young laird brau," she rushed to the kitchen, and demanded of the cook a "muckle big ashat."

"What do you want with the dish?" said the English cook.

"That's my ain business," quoth Betty, taking the enormous china platter from the cook's hand, and running back to the nursery. "Here, Mistress Norman, here is ain big enough to hand him in, at ony rate. Pray lay his wee duds smooth, an' I'll tak' him in, for I hear the bell."

"Are ye duff, lass? Wud ye put the bairn on the ashat?"

"Ay, mistress tauld me to bring what she asked me for on an ashat. Sure ye wud no ha' me disobey her?"

“Na, na,” said the nurse, laughing, and suspecting some odd mistake. “Ye sal ha’ it yer ain way.”

And she carefully laid the noble babe upon the dish, and went before to open the door that led to Mrs. ——’s chamber.

Betty entered as briskly as her unwieldy burden would permit, and with glowing cheeks, and eyes glistening with honest delight, presented her human offering in the huge dish to the oldest female visitor in the room.

With a scream of surprise, followed by a perfect hurricane of laughter, the venerable dame received the precious gift from Betty’s hand, and holding it towards the astonished mother, [236] exclaimed, “Truly, my dear friend, this is a dish fit to set before a king. Our beloved sovereign would have no objection of seeing a dish so filled with royal fruit, placed at the head of his own table.”

The laugh became general; and poor Betty comprehending the blunder she had committed, not only fled from the scene, but dreading the jokes of her fellow-servants, fled from the house.

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CHAPTER XXII. [237]

CLIMBING THE MOUNTAINS.

The Lyndsays, to their infinite mortification and disappointment, found upon their arrival at Leith, that the *Chieftain*, in which vessel their places had been taken for Canada, had sailed only two days before. To make bad worse, Mrs. Waddel confidently affirmed, that it was the very last vessel which would sail that season.

Lyndsay, who never yielded to despondency, took these contrary events very philosophically, and lost no time in making inquiries among the ship-owners, to ascertain whether Mrs. Waddel was right.

After several days of anxious and almost hopeless search, he was at last informed that the *Flora*, Captain Ayre, was to leave for Canada in a fortnight. The name seemed propitious, and that very afternoon he walked down with his wife to inspect the vessel.

The *Flora* was a small brig, very old, very dirty, and with wretched accommodations. The captain was a brutal-looking person, blind of one eye, and very lame. Every third word he uttered was an oath; and instead of answering Mr. Lyndsay’s inquiries, he was engaged in a blasphemous [238] dialogue with his two sons, who were his first and second mates. The young men seemed worthy of their parentage; their whole conversation being interloaded with frightful imprecations on their own limbs and souls, and the limbs and souls of others.

They had a very large number of steerage passengers engaged, for the very small size of the vessel, and these emigrants were of the very lowest description.

“Don’t let us go in this horrible vessel,” whispered Flora to her husband. “What a captain! what a crew! we shall be miserable, if we form any part of her live cargo!”

“I fear, my dear girl, there is no alternative. We may, perhaps, hear of another before she sails. I won’t engage places in her until the last moment.”

The dread of going in the *Flora* took a hold of the mind of her namesake; and she begged Jim to be on the constant look-out for another vessel.

During their stay at Leith, Lyndsay was busily employed in writing a concluding chapter to his work on the Cape; and Flora amused herself by taking long walks, accompanied by James, the maid, and the baby, in order to explore all the beauties of Edinburgh. The lad, who was very clever, and possessed a wonderful faculty of remembering places and of finding his way among [239] difficulties, always acted as guide on these occasions. Before he had been a week at Leith, he knew every street in Edinburgh; had twice or thrice climbed the heights of Arthur’s Seat, and visited every nook in the old castle. There was not a ship in the harbour of Leith, but he not only knew her name and the name of her captain, but he had made himself acquainted with some of her crew, and could tell her freight and tonnage, her age and capabilities, the port from which she last sailed and the port to which she was then bound, as well as any sailor on the wharf. It was really extraordinary to listen of an evening to the lad’s adventures, and all the mass of information he had acquired during his long rambles through the day.

Flora was always in an agony lest James should be lost, or meet with some mishap during his

exploring expeditions; but Mistress Waddel comforted her with the assurance, “That a cat, throw her which way you wu’d, lighted a’ upon her feet. That nought was never tent—an’ they that war’ born to be hanget wu’d never be drowned.”

So, one fine afternoon in June, Flora took it into her head, that she would climb to the top of the mountain, the sight of which from her chamber window she was never tired of contemplating. She asked her husband to go with her. She begged, she entreated, she coaxed; but he was just writing the last pages of his long task, and he told her, that if she would only wait until the next [240] day, he would go with pleasure.

But with Flora, it was this day or none. She had set her whole heart and soul upon going up to the top of the mountain, and to the top of the mountain she determined to go. This resolution was formed, in direct opposition to her husband’s wishes; and with a perfect knowledge of the tale of the dog Ball, which had been one of her father’s stock stories, the catastrophe of which she had known from a child. Lyndsay did not tell her positively she should not go without him; and unable to control her impatience, she gave him the slip, and set off with Jim, who was only too eager for the frolic, on her mountain climbing expedition.

Flora was a native of a rich pastoral country; very beautiful in running brooks, smooth meadows, and majestic parks; where the fat sleek cattle so celebrated in the London markets, graze knee-deep in luxuriant pastures, and the fallow deer browse and gambol beneath the shadow of majestic oaks through the long bright summer days. She had never seen a mountain before her visit to the North, in her life; had never risen higher in the world than to the top of Shooter’s Hill; and when they arrived at the foot of this grand upheaving of nature, she began to think the task more formidable than she had imagined at a distance. Her young conductor, agile as a kid, bounded up the steep acclivity with as much ease as if he was running over a bowling- [241] green.

“Not so fast, Jim!” cried Flora, pausing to draw breath. “I cannot climb like you.”

Jim was already beyond hearing, and was lying on the ground peering over a projecting crag at least two hundred feet above her head, and impishly laughing at the slow progress she made.

“Now Jim! that’s cruel of you, to desert me in my hour of need,” said Flora, shaking her hand at the young mad-cap. “Lyndsay was right after all. I had better have waited till to-morrow.”

Meanwhile, the path that wound round the mountain towards the summit became narrower and narrower, and the ascent more steep and difficult. Flora sat down upon a stone amid the ruins of the chapel to rest, and to enjoy the magnificent prospect. The contemplation of this sublime panorama for a while absorbed every other feeling. She was only alive to a keen sense of the beautiful; and while her eye rested on the lofty ranges of mountains to the north and south, or upon the broad bosom of the silver Forth, she no longer wondered at the enthusiastic admiration expressed by the bards of Scotland for their romantic land.

While absorbed in thought, and contrasting the present with the past, a lovely boy of four years of age, in kilt and hose, his golden curls flying in the wind, ran at full speed up the steep side of the hill; a panting woman, without bonnet or shawl, following hard upon his track, shaking her [242] fist at him, and vociferating her commands (doubtless for him to return) in Gaelic, fled by.

On ran the laughing child, the mother after him; but as well might a giant pursue a fairy.

Flora followed the path they had taken, and was beginning to enjoy the keen bracing air of the hills, when she happened to cast her eyes to the far-off meadows beneath. Her head grew suddenly giddy, and she could not divest herself of the idea, that one false step would send her to the plains below. Here was a most ridiculous and unromantic position: she neither dared to advance nor retreat; and she stood grasping a ledge of the rocky wall in an agony of cowardice and irresolution. At this critical moment, the mother of the run-away child returned panting from the higher ledge of the mountain, and, perceiving Flora pale and trembling, very kindly stopped and asked what ailed her.

Flora could not help laughing while she confessed her fears, lest she should fall from the narrow footpath on which she stood. The woman, though evidently highly amused at her distress, had too much native kindliness of heart, which is the mother of genuine politeness, to yield to the merriment which hovered about her lips.

“Ye are na accustomed to the hills,” she said, in her northern dialect, “or ye wa’d na dread a hillock like this. Ye suld ha’ been born whar I wa’ born, to ken a mountain fra’ a mole-hill. There [243] is my bairn, noo, I canna’ keep him fra’ the mountain. He will gang awa’ to the tap, an’ only laughs at me when I spier to him to come doon. It’s a’ because he is sae weel begotten—an’ all his forbears war reared amang the hills.”

The good woman sat down upon a piece of the loose rock, and commenced a long history of herself, of her husband, and of the great clan of Macdonald (to which they belonged), which at last ended in the discovery, that her aristocratic spouse was a Corporal in the Highland regiment then stationed in Edinburgh, and that Flora, his wife, washed for the officers in the said regiment —that the little Donald, with his wild-goat propensities, was their only child, and so attached to the hills, that she could not keep him confined to the meadows below! The moment her eye was off him, his great delight was to lead her a dance up the mountain, which, as she never succeeded in catching him, was quite labour in vain.

All this, and more, the good-natured woman communicated in her frank, desultory manner, as she led Flora down the steep, narrow path which led to the meadows below. Her kindness did not end here, for she walked some way up the road to put Mrs. Lyndsay in the right track to regain her lodgings, for Flora, trusting to the pilotage of Jim, was perfectly ignorant of the location.

This Highland Samaritan indignantly refused the piece of silver Flora proffered in return for [244] her services. “Hout, leddy! keep the siller! I wudna’ tak’ aught fra’ ye o’ the Sabbath-day for a trifling act o’ courtesy—na, na, I come of too gude bluid for that!”

There was a noble simplicity about the honest-hearted woman, which was not lost upon Flora.

“If I were not English,” thought Flora, “I should like to be Scotch.”

She looked rather crest-fallen, as she presented herself before her Scotch husband, who laughed heartily over her misadventure, and did not cease to tease her about her expedition to the mountain, as long as they remained in its vicinity.

This did not deter her from taking a long stroll on the sands “o’ Leith,” the next afternoon, with James, who delighted in these Quixotish rambles; and was always on the alert, to join in any scheme which promised an adventure. It was a lovely afternoon. The sun glittered on the distant waters, which girdled the golden sands with a zone of blue and silver. The air was fresh and elastic, and diffused a spirit of life and joyousness around. Flora, as she followed the footsteps of her young agile conductor, felt like a child again; and began to collect shells and sea-weeds, with as much zest as she had done along her native coast, in those far-off happy days, which at times returned to her memory like some distinct, but distant dream.

For hours they wandered hither and thither, lulled by the sound of the waters, and amused by [245] their child-like employment; until Flora remarked, that her footprints filled with water at each step, and the full deep roaring of the sea gave notice of the return of the tide. Fortunately they were not very far from the land; and oh, what a race they had to gain the “Peir o’ Leith,” before they were overtaken by the waves. How thankful they felt that they were safe, as the billows chased madly past, over the very ground, which a few minutes before, they had so fearlessly trod.

“This is rather worse than the mountain, mamma Flora,” (a favourite name with James for his friend Mrs. Lyndsay,) “and might have been fatal to us both. I think Mr. Lyndsay would scold this time, if he knew our danger.”

“We won’t quarrel on the score of prudence. But what is this?” said Flora; and she stepped up to a blank wall, on their homeward path, and read aloud the following advertisement:—

> “To sail on the first of July, viâ Quebec and Montreal; the fast sailing brig *Anne*, Captain Williams. For particulars, inquire at the office of P. Gregg, Bank Street, Leith.
>
> “N.B. The *Anne* is the last ship which leaves this port, for Canada, during the season.”

“Hurra!” cried the volatile Jim, flinging his cap into the air; “a fig for Captain Ayre and the [246] *Flora*. I’d lay sixpence if I had it, that we shall sail in the *Anne*.”

“Let us go, James, and look at the vessel,” cried Flora, clapping her hands with delight. “Oh, if it had not been for our fright on the sands, we should not have seen this.”

Flora hastened home to inform her husband of the important discovery they had made; and before half an hour had elapsed, she found herself in company with him and Jim, holding a conference with Captain Williams, in the little cabin of the *Anne*.

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CHAPTER XXIII. [247]

THE BRIG ANNE

Was a small, old-fashioned, black-hulled vessel, marvellously resembling a collier in her outward appearance. She was a one-masted ship, of 180 tons burthen, and promised everything but aristocratic accommodations for women and children.

The cabin was a low, square room, meant to contain only the captain and his mate; whose berths, curtained with coarse red stuff, occupied the opposite walls. The table in the centre was a fixture, and the bench which ran round three sides of this crib, was a fixture also; and though backed by the wall, was quite near enough to the table to serve the double purpose of chair or

sofa. A small fireplace occupied the front of the cabin, at the side of which, a door opened into a tiny closet, which the Captain dignified with the name of his state-cabin. The compass was suspended in a brass box from the ceiling,—articles of comfort or luxury there were none.

[248] The Captain, a stout, broad-shouldered, red-faced man, like Captain Ayre of the *Flora*, was minus an eye; but the one which fortune had left him was a piercer. He was a rough, blunt-looking tar, some forty-five or fifty years of age; and looked about as sentimental and polite as a tame bear. His coarse, weather-beaten face had an honest, frank expression, and he bade his guests to be seated with an air of such hearty hospitality, that they felt quite at home in his narrow low den.

He had no cabin-passengers, though a great many in the steerage; and he assured Flora that she could have the very best accommodations, as he would resign the state-cabin to her and the child. Mr. Lyndsay could occupy the mate’s berth in the cabin, and they could not fail of being quite snug and comfortable.

The state-cabin was just big enough to hold the captain’s chest of drawers, the top of which, boarded, and draped with the same faded red stuff which decorated the outer room, formed the berth that Flora was to occupy. Small as the place was, it was scrupulously neat and clean, and possessed for Flora one great charm—that of privacy. She could, by shutting the door and drawing the bolt, at any time enjoy the luxury of finding herself, though in a crowded vessel, alone.

“Mamma Flora, are you not charmed with the splendid accommodations of your fancy ship?” whispered the mischievous Jim. “There is not room for a flea to hop, without giving him the [249] cramp in his legs.”

“It is better than the *Flora*; so hold your tongue, you wicked imp.”

But Lyndsay thought otherwise. The *Flora* was larger, and was to sail a fortnight earlier. He demurred—his wife coaxed and entreated; but he only went so far as to tell the captain to keep the berths unoccupied until the following day, and he would inform him of his final determination.

Just as they were rising to take leave, a tall, lanky man, stuck his long scraggy neck in at the cabin-door, and, in the broadest Scotch vernacular, exclaimed,—

“To what port are ye bound, man?”

“Quebec and Montreal.”

“Wull you tak’ a cabin-passenger on reasonable terms?”

“The fare is fixed by the owner of the vessel, P. Gregg, Bank-street, Leith. You had better apply to him.”

“Weel, I dinna’ think I’ll jest go noo. I want to see the Canada lochs. Ane o’ these days I’ll tak’ passage wi’ you onyhow.”

“Perhaps a glass of brandy and water would serve your purpose at this time,” said the captain, with a knowing smile.

“I’ve noo objections, captain,” said the long-visaged traveller to the lochs o’ Canada.

[250] “That’s one way of getting a glass of brandy for nothing,” said the captain, as he accompanied the Lyndsays to the deck. “That fellow has as much notion of going to Canada, as I have of taking a voyage to the moon. But he knows that I will give him the brandy to get rid of him.”

“What do you think of the *Anne* and her captain, John?” said Flora, as she took the proffered arm of her husband. “He is a rough sailor, but looks like an honest man. And the ship, though small, is clean, and offers better accommodations than the *Flora*, where we should have to share a small cabin with fourteen passengers.”

“My dear wife, it may all be true what you say; but I have made up my mind to go in the *Flora*. She sails so much earlier, that it will be a great saving of time and expense.”

Flora’s countenance fell; but she only muttered to herself,—

“Oh, I have such a horror of going in that ship!”

At the turning of the street they met Mr. Peterson, the owner of the *Flora*, to whom Lyndsay had spoken about taking a passage in her the day before.

“Well, Mr. Lyndsay,” said he, shaking hands in a friendly manner with him; “have you concluded to take passage in my vessel?”

[251] “Not quite,” returned Lyndsay, laughing. “My wife has such an unconquerable aversion to going with your captain and his sons, on account of the reprobate language they used the other day in her hearing, that she has actually found up another vessel in which she wishes me to sail.”

“Oh, the *Anne*, Captain Williams,” said Peterson, with a contemptuous smile,—“the last and the most insignificant vessel which leaves our port. The owner, P. Gregg, is not a liberal person to deal with; the captain is a good seaman, but a stubborn brute,—quite as unfit for the society of

ladies as Captain Ayre. To tell you the truth, we have little choice in these matters. It is not the manners of the men we employ we generally look to, but to their nautical skill. There is, however, one great objection to your taking passage in the *Anne*, which I think it right you should know. She has a most objectionable freight."

"In what respect?"

"She is loaded with brandy and gunpowder."

"By no means a pleasant cargo," said Lyndsay. "What do you say to that, Flora?" turning to his wife.

"I will tell you to-morrow: do wait until then."

In order to pacify her evident uneasiness, Lyndsay promised to postpone his decision.

When they reached their lodgings, they found a short, round-faced, rosy, good-natured looking individual, waiting to receive them, who introduced himself as Mr. Gregg, the owner of the *Anne*. He had learned from Captain Williams, that they had been inspecting the capabilities of his [252] vessel.

"She is a small ship," said he, "but safe; the captain, a steady, experienced seaman; and if Mr. Lyndsay engaged a passage for himself and family, he would grant the most liberal terms."

Lyndsay mentioned his objections to the freight.

"Who told you that?" asked the little owner, somewhat excited.

"Mr. Peterson. We parted from him only a few minutes ago."

"The scoundrel! the mean, dirty scoundrel!" said Gregg, stamping on the floor. "Why, Sir, Mr. Lyndsay, his own ship carries the same freight. What did he say about that?"

"He told me yesterday, she took out a general cargo——"

"Of brandy and gunpowder. Both vessels are employed by the same house, and take out the same freight. You must, however, please yourself, Mr. Lyndsay. The *Flora* has a great number of passengers of the lowest cast,—is old and crank; with the most vicious, morose captain that sails from this port. I know him only too well. He made two voyages for me; and the letters I received, complaining of his brutal conduct to some of his passengers, I can show you at my office."

"You have said enough, Mr. Gregg, to deter me from taking my wife and child in the *Flora*. The [253] deceitful conduct of Mr. Peterson alone would have determined me not to contract with him. And now, what will you take us for? Our party consists of my wife and infant, a lad of thirteen years who accompanies us, a servant-girl, and myself."

Mr. Gregg considered for some minutes. "Well," he said, "there is a large party of you; but I will give your wife, child, and self, a cabin passage, finding you in the same fare as the captain, and the lad and servant a second cabin passage, but the privilege of the cabin-table, for thirty pounds. Is that too much?"

"It is very liberal indeed. Peterson asked fifty."

"It is reasonable; but as you have to wait a fortnight longer in order to sail with me, I have taken that into account. Is it a bargain?"

They struck hands; and Mr. Gregg, after drawing up an agreement, which Lyndsay signed, turned to Mrs. Lyndsay, and pressingly invited the whole party to spend the following afternoon with them in a friendly way.

"My wife is a homely little body," he said; "but she will do her best to make you comfortable, and will give you, at any rate, a hearty Scotch welcome."

"Now, Flora, are you not delighted in having it your own way?" said Lyndsay, after Mr. Gregg left them. "But let me assure you, my dear wife, you owe it entirely to the mean conduct of Mr. [254] Peterson. I tell you frankly, that I would not have yielded my better judgment to a mere prejudice, even to please you."

"You are determined, John, that I shall never fulfil the gipsy's prophecy."

"What was that?"

"Did I never tell you that story, nor the girls either? for it was a standing joke against me at home for years. Oh, you must have it then. But be generous, and don't turn it as a weapon against me:—

"Some years ago, a gipsy woman came to our kitchen-door, and asked to see the young ladies of the house. Of course, we all ran out to look at the sybil, and hear her errand, which was nothing more nor less than to tell our fortunes. Partly out of curiosity, partly out of fun, we determined to have a peep into futurity, and see what the coming years had in store for us. We did not believe in gipsy craft. We well knew that, like our own, the woman's powers were limited; that it was all guess-work; that her cunning rested in a shrewd knowledge of character,—of certain likings springing out of contrasts, which led her to match the tall with the short, the fair

with the dark, the mild with the impetuous, the sensitive and timid with the bold and adventurous. On these seeming contrarieties the whole art of fortune-telling, as far as my experience goes, appears based.

"Well, she gave husbands to us all—dark, fair, middle-complexioned, short and tall, amiable, passionate, or reserved—just the opposite of our own complexions or temperament, such as she judged them to be; and she showed a great deal of talent and keen perception of character in the choice of our mates. [255]

"In my case, however, she proved herself to be no prophet. I was to marry a sea-faring gentleman—a tall, black-eyed, passionate man—with whom I was to travel to foreign parts, and die in a foreign land. I was to have no children; and he was to be very jealous of me. 'And yet, for all that,' quoth the gipsy, drawing close up to me, and whispering in my ear, but not so low, but that all the rest heard her concluding speech, 'you shall wear the breeches.'"

"She did not bargain that you were to marry a Scotchman," said Lyndsay, laughing.

"Nor did she know, with all her pretended art, that my husband was to be a soldier, fair-haired, and blue-eyed, and that this little lass would give a direct contradiction to her prophecy," and Flora kissed fondly Josey's soft cheek. "Well, I was so tormented about that last clause in my fortune, that I determined it should never come to pass; that whatever portion of my husband's dress I coveted, I would scrupulously avoid even the insertion of a toe into his nether garments."

"You forget, Flora, your trip to the mountain, without my consent?" whispered Lyndsay, mischievously. [256]

Flora coloured, stammered, and at last broke into a hearty laugh,—"I was too great a coward, John, to wear them with becoming dignity. If that was wearing the breeches, I am sure I disgraced them with my worse than womanish fears. I will never put them on again."

"My dear wife, I'll take good care you shan't. When a Scotchman has any breeks to wear, he likes to keep them all to himself."

"Ah! we well know what a jealous, monopolising set you are. Let any one attempt to interfere with your rights, and, like your sturdy national emblem, you are armed to the teeth," said Flora, as she ran off to order tea.

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CHAPTER XXIV. [257]

A VISIT TO THE SHIP OWNERS.

EARLY in the afternoon of the following day our family party set off to pay their promised visit. The weather was delightful, and Flora was in an ecstasy of high spirits, as they turned from the narrow streets of Leith into a beautiful lane, bounded on each side by hawthorn hedges, redolent with the perfume of the sweetbrier and honeysuckle. The breath of new-mown hay floated on the air, and the lilac and laburnum, in full blossom, waved their graceful boughs above the white palings which surrounded many a pleasant country retreat, in which the tired citizen, after the toils of the day in the busy marts of commerce, returned to enjoy a comfortable dish of tea with his family.

A walk of half-a-mile brought them to the suburban retreat of the worthy Mr. Gregg, and he was at the green garden-gate to receive his guests, his honest, saucy face, radiant with an honest welcome.

"I was fearful ye wud not keep your promise," said he: "my youngsters ha' been on the look-out for you for this hour." [258]

Here he pushed the giggling youngsters forward, in the shape of two bouncing, rosy-faced school-girls, who were playing at bo-peep behind papa's broad blue back, and whose red cheeks grew crimson with blushes as he presented them to his guests.

James Hawke seemed to think the merry girls, who were of his own age, well worth looking at, if you might judge by the roguish sparkling of his fine black eyes, as he bounded off with them to be introduced to the strawberry-beds, and all the other attractions of the worthy citizen's garden.

It was a large, old-fashioned house, which had seen better days, and stood on a steep sloping hill, commanding a beautiful view of Edinburgh. The grand old mountain loomed in the distance, and the bright Forth, with all its wealth of white sails, glittered in the rays of the declining sun.

“What a delightful situation!” exclaimed Flora, as her eye ranged over the beautiful scene.

“Ay, ’tis a bonnie place,” said Mr. Gregg, greatly exalted in his own eyes, as master of the premises;—“an’ very healthy for the bairns. I often walked past this old house when I was but a ’prentice lad in the High-street, o’ Sunday afternoons, and used to peep through the pales, and admire the old trees, an’ fruits, an’ flowers; an’ I thought if I had sic a braw place of my ain, I [259] should think mysel richer than a crow’ed king. I was a puir callant in those days. It was only a dream, a fairy dream; yet here I am, master of the auld house, and the pretty gardens. Industry and prudence, my dear madam—industry and prudence, has done it all, and converted my air-built castle into substantial brick and stane.”

Flora admired the old man’s honest pride. She had thought him coarse and vulgar, while in reality he was only what the Canadians term *homely*; for his heart was brimful of kindly affections and good feeling. There was not a particle of pretence about him,—of forced growth or refined cultivation; a genuine product of the soil, a respectable man in every sense of the word. Proud of his country, and doubly proud of the wealth he had acquired by honest industry. A little vain and pompous, perhaps, but most self-made men are so: they are apt to overrate the talents which have lifted them out of obscurity, and to fancy that the world estimates their worth and importance by the same standard as they do themselves.

In the house, they were introduced to Mrs. Gregg, who was just such a person as her husband had described: a cheerful, middle-aged woman, very short, very stout, and very hospitable. Early as it was, the tea-table was loaded with good cheer. Large strawberries preserved whole, and that pet sweetmeat of the Scotch, orange marmalade, looked tempting enough, in handsome dishes of cut glass, flanked by delicious home-made bread and butter, cream, cheese, and sweet [260] curds.

A tall, fine-looking woman, very gaily dressed, was presented to the Lyndsays as Mrs. M’Nish, a married daughter. Her husband was a loud-voiced, large-whiskered consequential-looking young man, whose good humour and admiration of himself, his wife, his father and mother-in-law, and the big house, appeared inexhaustible. His young wife seemed to look upon him as something super-human; and to every remark she made, she appealed to Wullie, as she called him, for his verdict of approval.

Little Josey, who made one of the party, was soon on the most intimate terms with the family group. The young married woman, after bestowing upon her many kisses, passed her over to her husband, telling him, with a little laugh, “that she wondered if he would make a good nurse: it was time for him to commence practising.” Then she blushed and giggled, and the old man chuckled and rubbed his knees, and the mother looked up with a quiet smile as the jolly bridegroom burst into a loud laugh. “Ay, Jean my woman, it’s time enough to think o’ troubles when they come.” And then he tossed Miss Josey up to the ceiling with such vigorous jerks, that Flora watched his gymnastics in nervous fear lest the child should fall out of his huge grasp and break her neck.

Not so Josey; she never was better pleased in her life; she crowed and screamed with delight, [261] and rewarded her Scotch nurse, by tangling her tiny white fingers in his bushy red whiskers, and pulling his long nose.

“Haut! you’re a speretted lass. Is that the way you mean to lead the men?” he said, as he bounced her down into his wife’s lap, and told her, “that it was her turn to mak’ a trial o’ that kind o’ wark, an’ see how it wud fit: he was verra’ sure he sud sune be tired o’t.” And this speech was received with another giggle, followed by a loud laugh.

The old gentleman was impatient to discuss the important business of tea-drinking; after which he proposed to have the pleasure of showing his visitors the garden, and some other grand sight of which he would not speak now, but which he was certain must be appreciated by every person, who possessed a half-pennyworth of taste.

Flora sat down to the table, wondering what they could be.

Big Wullie stepped to the hall-door, and summoned the children to the evening meal with a loud hallo! which was answered from among the trees by a jovial shout, and in a few minutes the young folks poured into the room, some of them looking rather dull, from their protracted visit to the strawberry-beds.

The fresh air and exercise had given Mrs. Lyndsay an unusual appetite. She enjoyed her meal, but this did not satisfy the overflowing hospitality of her entertainers, who pressed her in every [262] possible manner to take more, till she felt very much inclined to answer with the poor country girl, “Dear knows, I can’t eat another bit.”

There was no way of satisfying the entreaties of the Greggs, but by making a retreat from the table, and even then they persisted in declaring their guests had been starved, and would not do the least justice to their good cheer.

This mistaken kindness brought to Flora’s mind a story she had heard Lyndsay tell of a merchant of Edinburgh who went to the north of Scotland to visit some country folk who were his near relations. The good people were outrageously glad to see him, and literally killed the fatted calf, and concocted all sorts of country dainties in order to celebrate the advent of their distinguished guest, who it seems, in this case, was in less danger of starving than of being

stuffed to death.

Having partaken at dinner of all, and perhaps of rather more than he required, he did his best to resist their further importunities for him to eat *more*, but finding his refusal to do so increased their anxiety to force upon him the good things they had to bestow, he spread a large silk pocket-handkerchief upon his knees, under cover of the table-cloth, into which he contrived dexterously to empty the contents of his plate, whenever the eye of his watchful hostess was off him. At last, even her importunities for him to continue the feast grew fainter, and she wound up by [263] exclaiming, “You ha’ made a verra puir dinner, Sir; ye ha’ just eaten nothing ava’.”

At this speech, hardly able to keep his gravity, he placed his handkerchief upon the table, and displayed its contents of fish, flesh, fowl, and confectionaries, to his astonished entertainers, exclaiming, as he did so, “My dear Madam, think what would have become of me, had I eaten all this!”

It was no feast of reason, at the honest Greggs; the entertainment was of the most animal kind, and Flora felt relieved when it was over, and the whole party issued once more into the pure air.

She was just hastening to a parterre, gay with roses, to rifle some of its sweets, when the old gentleman came panting hard upon her track. “Ye must come an’ see my raree-show, before the sun gangs doun,” he cried; and Flora turned and followed him back into the house. In the hall the whole family party were collected.

“I’ll gang first, father, and open the door,” cried a merry boy of fourteen, and beckoning to Jim, they both clattered after each other up the old-fashioned stairs.

Old houses in Edinburgh and its vicinity are so high, one would think the people in those days wished to build among the stars; at least to emulate the far-famed wonders of that language-confounding tower, which caused the first emigration, by scattering the people over the face of [264] the earth.

They went up, and up, and up, until there seemed no end to the broad, short steps. On the last flight, which led to the roof, the staircase had so greatly contracted its proportions, that fat Mr. Gregg could scarcely force himself up it, and he so completely obscured the light which peered down upon them from a small trap-door, opening upon the leads, that Flora, who followed him, found herself in a dim twilight, and expected every moment the panting mountain, which had come between her and the sky, would lose the centre of gravity, and suffocate her in its fall.

No such tragic misfortune, however, occurred. The old gentleman forced himself, after much squeezing and puffing off steam, through the narrow aperture, and very gallantly lent a hand to assist Flora on to the leads.

“This is a strait gate, on a narrow way,” he cried. “But tell me, if it does na’ gie ye a glimpse o’ heaven?”

The old man was right. Flora stood entranced, as it were, with the glorious spectacle which burst upon her sight, the moment she stepped upon the roof of that old house. Edinburgh, and the world of beauty that lies around it, lay at her feet, bathed in the golden light of a gorgeous June sunset. To those who have beheld that astonishing panorama, all description must prove [265] abortive. It is a sight to be daguerreotyped upon the heart.

“Weel, was it not worth toiling up yon weary stair, to get sic a glimpse as that, of the brave auld town?” said honest P. Gregg. “I’m jest thinkin’ I must enlarge the stair, or diminish mysel, before I can venture through that narrow pass again. An’, my dear leddy, I can do neither the one nor the other. So this mayhap may be my last glint o’ the bonnie auld place.”

Then he went on, after his quaint fashion, to point out to Mistress Lyndsay all the celebrated spots in the neighbourhood, which every Scot knows by heart, and Flora was so much amused and interested by his narration, that she was sorry when the deepening shades of approaching night warned the old man that it required daylight to enable him to descend the narrow stair, and they reluctantly left the scene.

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CHAPTER XXV. [266]

FLORA’S DINNER.

Lyndsay had some literary friends in Edinburgh, whose kindly intercourse greatly enhanced the pleasure of a month’s residence near the metropolis of Scotland. The foremost among these was

M——, the poet, who, like Lyndsay, was a native of the Orkney Islands. Having been entertained at the house of this gentleman, he naturally wished to return his courtesy.

“Flora,” said he, addressing his wife, the day after their visit to the Greggs, “do you think you could manage a dinner for a few friends?”

Flora dropped her work, and opened her eyes in blank dismay at the very idea of such a thing.

“What, in these poor lodgings? and Mrs. Waddel such an impracticable, helpless old body? My dear John, it is impossible!”

Now, Lyndsay had set his heart upon the dinner, which he thought not only very possible, but could see no difficulty at all about it. Men never look behind the scenes, or consider the minor details of such things; and on these trifling items, in their eyes, the real success or failure of most [267] domestic arrangements depend. But Flora had been behind the scenes, and knew all about it, to her cost, for it was with the greatest difficulty she could prevail upon Mrs. Waddel to cook the plainest food. Mrs. Waddel declared she could “na fash hersel about; that dainties were a’ verra weel, but the meat ate jest as sweet without them.” The idea of such a tardy mistress of the kitchen cooking a dinner for company, appeared perfectly ridiculous to Flora, who knew that any attempt of the kind must end in mortification and disappointment.

“Flora,” said Lyndsay, quite seriously, “I am certain that you could manage it quite well, if you would only make the trial.”

“It is from no unwillingness on my part that I object to your entertaining your friends. But there is but one cooking range in the house, and that one small and inconvenient, and I fear the cooking utensils are limited to the dimensions of the fire.”

“There is a large fireplace in our bed-chamber, Flora,” said Lyndsay, unwilling to beat a retreat.

“True,” replied Flora, musingly; “I did not think of that. It would do that damp, cold room good to get a fire lighted in it.”

Seeing her husband determined upon the dinner, she began to question him as to the items of the entertainment.

“Oh, nothing particular, dear. M—— knows that we are in lodgings, and can’t manage as well [268] as if we were in a house of our own. A nice cut of fresh salmon, which is always to be had in the fish-market, a small roast of beef, or leg of mutton, with vegetables and a pudding, will do; and, above all things, Flora, don’t look annoyed, if every thing does not exactly please you, or it will only make matters worse. I am going to call upon M—— this morning, and I will ask him and his friend P——to step over and dine with us at six o’clock.”

“What shall we do for wine and spirits?”

“I will order these as I go along. So mind, dear, and have everything as snug and comfortable as you can.”

In spite of the anxiety she felt as to the success of the dinner, Flora could not help pausing to admire the spacious fish-market, with its cool stone pavement and slabs of white marble, on which lay piled in magnificent profusion, the most beautiful specimens of the finny rangers of the deep. Filled with marine curiosities, she could have spent hours in contemplating the picturesque groups it presented. There lay the salmon in its delicate coat of blue and silver; the mullet, in pink and gold; the mackerel, with its blending of all hues,—gorgeous as the tail of the peacock, and defying the art of the painter to transfer them to his canvas; the plaice, with its olive green [269] coat, spotted with vivid orange, which must flash like sparks of flame glittering in the depths of the dark waters; the cod, and the siller haddies, all freckled with brown, and silver, and gold; the snake-like eel, stretching its slimy length along the cool stone pavement, among moving heaps of tawny crabs—those spiders of the deep—which seemed to emulate the scorpion-like lobsters near them in repulsive ugliness.

But what most enchanted Flora, was the antique costume of the Newhaven fish-women, as, seated upon their upturned baskets, they called the attention of the visitor to their various stores of fish.

Flora was never tired of looking at these sea-maids and matrons. Their primitive appearance, and quaint, old-fashioned dress, took her fancy greatly—with their short petticoats, their blue stockings and buckled shoes, their neat, striped linen-jackets, and queer little caps, just covering the top of their head, and coming down in long, straight mobs, over their ears; their honest, broad features, and pleasant faces, which had been fair before the sun and the sea air tanned them to that warm, deep brown; their round, red arms, and handsome feet and legs, displayed with a freedom and ease which custom had robbed of all indecorum, and rendered natural and proper.

Flora wished that she had been an artist, to copy some of the fine forms she saw among these [270] fish-girls—forms which had been left as the great God of nature made them, uncrippled by torturing stays and tight vestments. How easy their carriage! with what rude grace they poised upon their heads their ponderous baskets, and walked erect and firm, filling the air with their mournfully-musical cry! The great resemblance between these people and the Bavarian broom-

girls, both in features and costume, impressed her with the idea, that they had originally belonged to the same race. The Newhaven sea-nymph, however, is taller, and has a more imposing presence, than the short, snub-nosed Bavarian.

But time, that waits on no one's fancy or caprice, warned her that she must not linger over a scene which she afterwards visited with renewed pleasure, but gave her a gentle hint, that there was work to be done at home—that she had better make her purchases and proceed to business.

She returned, therefore, to her lodgings in high spirits, despatching Jim to the greengrocer's in the next street, and then followed Hannah and her basket into Mrs. Waddel's kitchen.

"Marcy me! what ha' ye got, the noo?" said Mistress Waddel, lifting the napkin from the basket: "meat enough, I declare, to last the hale week. The weather's owr hot, I'm thinkin', for a' they to keep sweet sae lang."

"Mrs. Waddel, I expect two gentlemen to dinner, particular friends of Mr. Lyndsay; and I want you to cook these things for me as well as you can," said Flora coaxingly. [271]

"Twa' gentlemen, did ye say?—There's ten times mair in yon basket than twa gentlemen can eat!"

"Of course there is; but we cannot stint our guests."

"Whist, woman!" cried Mrs. Waddel, "it makes my heid ache only to think about a' that roast an' boil, an' boil an' roast!"

"Pray, how did you contrive to cook for Lady Weyms?" asked Flora, rather indignantly.

"Gudeness gracious! Do ye think, that my Leddy Weyms cared for the cooking o' the like o' me? When his late majestie, God bless him, honoured our auld toon wi' his preesence, folk were glad to get a deecent place to cover their heids, an' war in no wise owr particlar, sae they could get lodged ava."

"So I should think, when a titled lady put up with such as these; where the mistress engages to cook for her lodgers, and has not a whole pot in her culinary establishment."

"My Leddy brought her ain cook, an' she had my twa best rooms jest aff the passage, whar' Captain Macpherson bides the noo."

"And how do you manage to cook for him?" asked Flora, very sullenly.

"He keeps a man. An auld soger, whar' does the cooking himsel."

However, the dinner went off better than could have been expected, though little praise could be conscientiously given to the cooking. The fish was done *too much*, the ham *too little*, and the baked fowls looked hard and dry. The pastry was the only thing at table about which no fault could be found. [272]

After the cloth was removed, Flora gave the poet and his friend the history of the dinner, which so amused Mr. M., that he declared it was worth twenty dinners hearing her relate the misadventures of the morning. Flora forgot the disasters of the day while enjoying the conversation of Mr. M. and his friend,—men who had won by their genius no common literary reputation in the world; and the short hour "ayont the twal" had been tolled some time from all the steeples in Edinburgh before the little party separated, mutually pleased with each other, never to meet in this world of change again.

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CHAPTER XXVI. [273]

FEARS OF THE CHOLERA—DEPARTURE FROM SCOTLAND.

The cholera, which had hitherto only claimed a few victims in the city, now began to make fearful progress; and every day enlarged the catalogue of the dead, and those who were labouring under this awful disease. People seemed unwilling to name the ravages of the plague to each other; or spoke of it in low, mysterious tones, as a subject too dreadful for ordinary conversation.

Just at this time Flora fell ill, and was forced to keep her bed for several days. During the time she was confined to her chamber, Mrs. Waddel kept up a constant lamentation, declaring that the reputation of her lodgings would be lost for ever, if Mrs. Lyndsay should die of the cholera. Yet, to do the good creature justice, she waited upon her, and nursed her with most unselfish kindness; making gallons of gruel, which the invalid scarcely tasted, and recommending remedies

which, if adopted, would have been certain to kill the patient, for whose life she most earnestly and devoutly prayed.

The very morning that Mrs. Lyndsay was able to leave her bed, her husband got a note from [274] Mr. Gregg, informing him that the *Anne* was to sail at four o'clock the next day.

"My dear Flora," said Lyndsay, tenderly, "I fear you are not able to go in your present weak state."

"Oh yes, I shall be better for the change. This frightful cholera is spreading on all sides. The sooner, dear John, we can leave this place the better. Two persons, Mrs. Waddel told me, died last night of it, only a few doors off. I know that it is foolish to be afraid of an evil which we cannot avoid; but I find it impossible to divest myself of this fear. I look worse than I feel just now," she continued, walking across the room, and surveying her face in the glass. "My colour is returning—I shall pass muster with the doctors yet."

The great business of packing up for the voyage went steadily forward all day; and before six in the evening, trunks, bedding, and little ship stores, were on board, ready for a start.

Flora was surprised in the afternoon by a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Gregg, and the two rosy girls, who expressed the greatest regret at their departure. They had made a plum-cake for Mrs. Lyndsay to eat during the voyage; and truly it looked big enough to have lasted out a trip to the South Seas, while Mrs. Gregg had brought various small tin canisters filled with all sorts of farinaceous food for the baby.

Abundant as their kindness was, the blessings and good wishes they heaped upon the [275] emigrants were more abundant still; the kind-hearted mother and her bonnie girls, kissing them at parting, with tears coursing down their rosy cheeks. Mr. Gregg, who was terribly afraid of the cholera, tried to raise his own spirits, by describing all the fatal symptoms of the disease, and gave them a faithful catalogue of those who had died of it that morning in the city. He had great faith in a new remedy, which was just then making a noise in the town, which had been tried the day before, on a relation of his own—the injection of salt into veins of the sufferer.

"Did it cure him?" asked Flora, rather eagerly.

"Why no, I canna jest say that it did. But it enabled him to mak' his will an' settle a' his worldly affairs, which was a great point gained."

"For the living," sighed Flora. "Small satisfaction to the dying, to be disturbed in their last agonies, by attending to matters of business, while a greater reckoning is left unpaid."

"You look ill yoursel, Mistress Lyndsay," continued the gude man. "Let's hope that it's not the commencement of the awfu' disease."

"I thought so myself two days ago," said Flora. "I am grateful to God that it was not the cholera. Does it ever break out on board ship?"

"It is an affliction sae lately sent upon the nations by the Lord, that we have had sma' [276] experience o' the matter," quoth Mr. Gregg. "Your best chance is to trust in Him. For let us be ever so cautious, an He wills it, we canna' escape out o' His hand."

"Perhaps it is the best way to confide ourselves entirely to His care, and to think as little about it as we possibly can. All our precautions remind me of the boy who hid up in the cellar during a terrible thunderstorm, in the hope that the lightning would never find him there, little dreaming, that his place of safety exposed him to as much danger as a stand on the house-top. A man may run away from a battle, and escape from a fire, but it seems to me of little use attempting to fly from a pestilence which lurks in the very air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we take to nourish us. Faith in the mercy of God, and submission to His will appear to me the only remedies at all likely to avert the danger we shrink from with so much fear."

"It comes like a thief in the night," said Mr. Gregg; "and it behoves us all to mind the warning o' the Saviour, to watch an' pray, for we know not at what hour the Master of the house cometh."

After the good Greggs had made their adieus, Flora felt so much recovered that she accompanied her husband in a coach, to bid the rest of their kind friends in Edinburgh farewell.

They drove first to the house of Mr. W., where Flora had spent many happy days during her [277] sojourn in Leith. Mr. W. had an only son, who held an official situation at the Cape of Good Hope. Lyndsay had been on intimate terms with this gentleman during his residence in the colony; and on his return to Scotland, he was always a welcome visitor at the house of his parents. They loved to talk of Willie to Lyndsay, and treasured up as household words any little anecdotes they could collect of his colonial life. Mrs. W. and her two daughters were highly accomplished, elegant women. They took a deep interest in the fate of the emigrants, and were always devising plans for their future comfort.

As to the father of the family, he was a perfect original—shrewd, sarcastic, clever, and *very ugly*. The world called him morose and ill-natured; but the world only judged from his face, and most certainly he should have indicted it for bringing false witness against him. It was a libellous face, which turned the worst aspect to the world; its harsh lines and exaggerated features magnifying mental defects, while they concealed the good qualities of the warm, generous heart that shone like some precious gem within that hard rough case.

Mr. W. loved opposition, and courted it. He roused himself up to an argument, as a terrier dog rouses himself to kill rats; and, like the said terrier, when he got the advantage of his opponent, [278] he loved to worry and tease, to hold on till the last, till the vanquished was fain to cry aloud for mercy; and then his main object in quitting the dispute was to lie in wait for a fresh tussel. Flora laughed at all his blunt speeches, and enjoyed his rude wit, and opposed him, and argued with him to his heart's content, until they became the best friends in the world. Their first meeting was so characteristic, that we must give it here.

Flora had accepted an invitation to dine, with her husband, at Mr. W.'s house. It was only a family party, and they were to come early. On their arrival, they found that Mr. W. had been called away on business, but was expected back to dinner. After chatting awhile to Mrs. W. and her daughters, Flora's attention was strongly directed to an oil-painting which hung above the drawing-room mantelpiece. It was the portrait of an old man, as large as life. The figure was represented in a sitting posture, his head leaning upon his hand, or rather the chin supported in the open palm. The eyes glanced upward with a sarcastic, humorous expression, as if the original were in the act of asking some question which a listener might find it no easy matter to answer; and a smile of mischievous triumph hovered about the mouth. It was an extraordinary countenance. No common every-day face, to which you could point and say, "Does not that put you in mind of Mr. So-and-So?" Memory could supply no duplicate to this picture. It was like but [279] one other face in the world, the one from which it had been faithfully copied. It was originally meant for a handsome face, but the features were exaggerated until they became grotesque and coarse in the extreme, and the thick, bushy, iron-grey hair and whiskers, and clay-coloured complexion, put the finishing strokes to a portrait, which might be considered the very *ideal of ugliness*.

While Flora sat looking at the picture, and secretly wondering how any person with such a face could bear to see it transferred to canvas, she was suddenly roused from her reverie by the pressure of a heavy hand upon her shoulder, and a gentleman in a very gruff, but by no means an ill-natured or morose voice, thus addressed her.

"Did you ever see such a d——d ugly old fellow in your life before?"

"Never," returned Flora, very innocently. Then, looking up in his face, she cried out with a sudden start, and without the least mental reservation, "It is the picture of yourself!"

"Yes, it is my picture. An excellent likeness—half bulldog, half terrier. Judging from that ugly, crabbed old dog over the mantelpiece, what sort of a fellow ought I to be?"

He said this with a malicious twinkle in his clear, grey eyes, which glanced like sparks of fire from under his thick bushy eyebrows.

"Better than you look," said Flora, laughing. "But your question is not a fair one, Mr. W.; I was [280] taken by surprise, and you must not press me too hard."

"A clear admission, young lady, that you would rather avoid telling the truth."

"It is the portrait of a plain man."

"Pshaw! You did not qualify it as such in your own mind. Plain—is only one degree worse than good-looking. You thought it—"

"Ugly—if you insist upon it."

"Nothing worse?"

"Eccentric—pugnacious—satirical."

"God's truth! But that was not all?"

"Good heavens! what am I to say?"

"Don't swear; 'tis not fashionable for ladies. I do it myself; but 'tis a bad habit. Now shall I tell you what you *did think* of the picture?"

"I would rather have your opinion than mine."

"To relieve you from the horns of the dilemma? Well then; you thought it the ugliest, most repulsive, and withal the oddest phiz you ever saw; and you wondered how any one with such a hideous, morose countenance, could ever sit for the picture?"

"Indeed I did."

"Good!" cried her tormentor, clapping his hands. "You and I must be friends. You wonder how I came to guess your thoughts; I know them by my own. Had any one asked my opinion of the picture of another man as ugly as that, I should have spoken out plainly enough. Fortunately the [281] qualities of the mind do not depend upon the beauty of the face; though personal beauty is greatly increased by the noble qualities of the mind; and I know my inner man to be as vastly superior to its outer case, as the moon is to the cloud she pierces with her rays. To mind, I am indebted for the greatest happiness I enjoy,—the confidence and affection of my wife and children.

"Mrs. W. was reckoned pretty in her youth; I think her so still. She was of a good family too;

with a comfortable independence, and had lovers by the score. Yet, she fell in love with the ugly fellow, and married him, though he had neither fame nor fortune to offer her in exchange. Nothing but the mental treasures he had hid away from the world in this rough casket. My daughters are elegant, accomplished girls; not beauties, to be sure, but pleasing enough to be courted and sought after. Yet, they are proud of being thought like their ugly old father. That picture must be a likeness; it is pourtrayed by the hand of love. My dear girl there drew it with her own pencil, and rejoiced that she had caught the very expression of my face. To her, my dear lady, it is beautiful—for love is blind. She does not heed the ugly features; she only sees the mind she honours and obeys, looking through them."

"Ah, dear papa, who that knows you, as we know you, could ever think you ugly?" said Mary W., laying her hand on the old man's shoulder, and looking fondly and proudly in his face. "But I have forgotten all this time to introduce you to Mrs. Lyndsay." [282]

"My old friend Lyndsay's wife? I ought not to be pleased with you, madam, for you disappointed a favourite scheme of mine."

"How could that possibly be?" said Flora.

"I loved that man of yours; I wanted him for a son-in-law. Of course, neither I nor the girls hinted such a wish to him. But had he asked, he would not have been refused."

"Mrs. Lyndsay!" broke in Mary W., "you must not mind papa's nonsense. He will say just what he likes. Mr. Lyndsay was always a great favourite with us all; and papa would have his joke at our expense."

"Well, my young friend has thought fit to please himself, and I am so well pleased with his wife, that she shall sit by the ugly old man; 'an' I will ha' a spate o' clatter wi' her to mine ain sel.'"

The more Flora saw of the eccentric old man, the more she admired and respected him. In a little time, she ceased to think him ugly—he was only plain and odd-looking; till at length, like all the rest of Mr. W.'s friends, she almost believed him handsome. When did genius ever fail to leave upon the rudest clay, an impress of its divine origin?

It was with feelings of mutual regret that our emigrants took leave, and for ever, of this talented family. Before the expiration of one short year, that happy group of kind faces had passed out of the world! The sudden death of the younger Mr. W., who was the idol of the family, brought his mother in sorrow to the grave. The girls, by some strange fatality, only survived her a few weeks; and the good old man, bereft of every kindred tie, pined away and died of a broken heart! [283]

Some years after Flora had been settled in Canada, a gentleman from Scotland, who had been acquainted with the W. family, told her that he called upon the old gentleman on a matter of business, a few days after the funeral of his youngest daughter. The old man opened the door: he was shrunk to a skeleton, and a perfect image of woe. When he saw who his visitor was, he shook his thin, wasted hand at him, with a melancholy, impatient gesture, exclaiming, "What brings you here, P——? Leave this death-doomed house! I am too miserable to attend to anything but my own burden of incurable grief." He called again the following morning. The poor old man was dead!

The next day the emigrants bade farewell to the beautiful capital of Scotland. How gladly would Flora have terminated her earthly pilgrimage in that land of poetry and romance, and spent the rest of her days among its truthful, high-minded, hospitable people! But vain are regrets. The inexorable spirit of progress points onward; and the beings she chooses to be the parents of a new people, in a new land, must fulfil their destiny. [284]

On the 1st of July, 1832, the Lyndsays embarked on board the brig *Anne*, to seek a new home beyond the Atlantic, and friends in a land of strangers.

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CHAPTER XXVII. [285]

A NEW SCENE AND STRANGE FACES.

FOUR o'clock P.M. had been tolled from all the steeples in Edinburgh, when Flora stood upon the pier "o' Leith," watching the approach of the small boat which was to convey her on board the ugly black vessel which lay at anchor at the Berwick Law. It was a warm, close, hazy afternoon; distant thunder muttered among the hills, and dense clouds floated around the mountain from base to summit, shrouding its rugged outline in a mysterious robe of mist. Ever and anon, as the

electrical breeze sprang up and stirred these grey masses of vapour, they rolled up in black shadowy folds which took all sorts of Ossianic and phantom-like forms—spirits of bards and warriors, looking from their grey clouds upon the land their songs had immortalised, or their valour saved.

Parties of emigrants and their friends were gathered together in small picturesque groups on the pier. The cheeks of the women were pale and wet with tears. The words of blessing and [286] farewell, spoken to those near and dear to them, were often interrupted by low wailing and heart-breaking sobs.

Flora stood apart waiting for her husband, who had been to the ship, and was in the returning boat now making its way through the water to take her off. Sad she was, and pale and anxious, for the wide world was all before her, a world of new scenes and strange faces. A future as inscrutable and mysterious almost as that from which humanity instinctively shrinks, which leads so many to cling with expiring energy to evils with which they have grown familiar, rather than launch alone into that unknown sea which never bears upon its bosom a returning sail. Ah! well is it for the poor trembling denizens of earth that—

"Heaven from all creatures hides the book
of fate,"

or how could they bear up from day to day against the accumulated ills which beset them at every turn along the crooked paths of life?

Flora had already experienced that bitterness of grief, far worse than death, which separates the emigrant from the home of his love, the friends of his early youth, the land of his birth; and she shed no tear over the mournful recollection, though the deep sigh which shook her heart to its inmost depths, told that it was still felt and painfully present to her memory. She stood alone among that weeping crowd; no kindred hand was there to press hers for the last, last time, or bid [287] God speed her on her perilous voyage. What a blessing it would have been at that moment, to have bent a parting glance on some dear familiar face, and gathered strength and consolation from eyes full of affection and sympathy!

The beautiful landscape which had so often cheered and gladdened her heart, during her brief sojourn, no longer smiled upon her, but was obscured in storm and gloom. The thunder which had only muttered at a distance, now roared among the cloud-capped hills, and heavy drops of rain began to patter slowly upon the earth and sea. These bright globules in advance of the heavy shower whose approach they announced, made small dimples in the waters, spreading anon into large circles, until the surface of the salt brine seemed to boil and dance, which a few minutes before had lain so glassy and still, beneath the hot breath of the coming storm. Flora thought how soon those billows would chafe and roar for ever between her and her native land.

Then the lines of Nature's own bard, the unhappy but immortal Burns, whose fame had become as eternal as those ancient hills, rose to her mind, and she could fancy him standing upon that very spot, breathing out from the depths of his great inspired heart, the painful separation he [288] anticipated, when called by adverse circumstances to leave old Scotia's shores, and the woman he adored—

"The boat rocks at the pier o' Leith,
The ship rides at the Berwick Law,
And I maun leave my bonnie Mary."

The words still hovered on her lips when the boat touched the pier, and her husband threw his arms around her, and lifted her and the dear offspring of their mutual love, into the small bark which was to bear them away from the glorious land of Bruce and Burns. The men bent to their oars, and in a few minutes she found herself one among the many strangers that crowded the narrow deck of the emigrant ship.

The downpouring of the thunder-shower compelled her to take instant refuge in the cabin, followed by Hannah and the child. The little dingy place dignified by that name, was crowded with trunks and packages, piled upon each other in endless confusion. And the close atmosphere was rendered more hot and suffocating from the mingled odours of brandy, onions, red-herrings, and tobacco. The smoke from several pipes floated in lazy wreaths through the confined space, and effectually concealed, for the first few minutes, the parties indulging in the dreamy luxury of the fragrant weed.

The gloom occasioned by the passing thunder-clouds produced a dim twilight in the little room, [289] which looked more like the den in a travelling menagerie, appropriated to the use of some imprisoned lord of the desert, than a fitting habitation for civilized men and women.

Flora groped her way to the bench which surrounded the walls, and, for a few minutes, covered her face with her hands, to conceal her agitation and keep down the swelling of her heart, before she gained sufficient courage to reconnoitre the aspect of her temporary home. At length, she succeeded in calming her feelings, and was able to look about her.

The Captain was sitting upon a large trunk in his shirt-sleeves, with a short pipe stuck between his teeth, holding in one hand a tumbler of brandy punch, and in the other a bundle of papers containing a list of his passengers, which he was in the act of proffering for the inspection of the excise officers, who were settling with him sundry matters of business, connected with the cargo

of the ship.

Two sinister, ill-looking men they were, who spoke with loud, authoritative voices, and, for the time being, appeared masters of the vessel and all that it contained, examining with provoking exactness, cupboards, bedding, boxes, and binns of biscuit, till there seemed no end to their prying and vexatious system of cross-questioning.

[290] The Captain notified his consciousness of the presence of the new-comers with a short nod of recognition; but he was too much occupied to welcome them with words. He seemed in a desperate ill-humour with his official visitors, and replied to all their queries with a significant elevation of his broad shoulders, and a brief “No” or “Yes,” which greatly resembled a growl.

During his absence on deck, whither he accompanied the senior officer, his companion, who was seated on the bench opposite to that occupied by Mrs. Lyndsay and her maid, with his back to an open binn, full of biscuits and other sea-stores, took the opportunity afforded by the Captain’s departure, to fill the huge pockets in his large jacket with the said stores, until his tall, lank person, was swelled out into very portly dimensions. He then made a sudden dash at the brandy-bottle (which the Captain had left on the table), and, casting a thievish glance at Mrs. Lyndsay, who was highly amused by watching his movements, he refilled his glass, and tossed it off with the air of a child who is afraid of being detected, while on a foraging expedition into Mamma’s cupboard. This matter settled, he wiped his mouth with the cuff of his jacket, and assumed a look of vulgar consequence and superiority, which must have forced a smile to Flora’s lips had she been at all in a humour for mirth.

[291] “Strange!” she thought, as she sat muffled up in her cloak, a silent spectatress of his manœuvres, “that such a mean, dishonest wretch as this, should be empowered to act the petty tyrant, and pass judgment on the integrity of others, who is so destitute of the principles of common honesty himself!”

She certainly forgot, during her mental colloquy, the wisdom concealed beneath the homely adage, “Set a thief to catch a thief!” and the profound knowledge of the world hidden in that brief, pithy sentence.

The provoking business of inspection (for so it seemed to the Captain—to judge by his flushed cheek and frowning brow,) was at length over; the officers withdrew, and were succeeded by the doctor, who was appointed to inspect the health of the crew and passengers, before the ship sailed.

Doctor MacAdie was a lively, little, red haired man, with high cheek-bones, and a large Roman nose out of all proportion to the size of his diminutive body, but perfectly harmonising with his wide, sensible-looking mouth. His sharp, clear blue eyes, seemed to have crept as close to his nose as they possibly could, in the vain hope of glancing over the high, ridgy barrier it formed between them, which gave to their owner a peculiarly acute, penetrating expression,—a glance which appeared to look you through and through; yet, though extremely grotesque, it was a [292] benevolent, pleasing face, full of blunt kindness and ready wit.

The Doctor’s snuff-box seemed part and parcel of himself; for the quaint, old-fashioned horn repository, which contained the pungent powder, *real Scotch*, never left his hand during his professional dialogue with Mrs. Lyndsay.

He shook his head, as his keen eyes read sickness of mind and body in her weary and care-worn face. “Ye are ill, my gude leddy,” said he in broad Scotch; “in nae condition to undertak’ sic a lang voyage.”

Mrs. Lyndsay answered frankly and truly, that she had been indisposed during the past week, and her recovery was so recent, that she felt much better in health than her looks warranted.

The Doctor examined her tongue, felt her pulse, and still shook his head doubtingly. “Feverish —rapid pulse—bad tongue—just out o’ yer bed, from attack near akin to cholera. I tell ye that ye are mair fit to go to bed again, under the dochtor’s care, than to attempt crossing the Atlantic in a close crib like this.”

“The fresh sea air will soon restore me to health,” said Flora. “You know, Doctor, that we cannot command circumstances, and have things exactly as we could wish;” and she checked the sigh which rose to her lips, as she recalled to mind her dear, comfortable cottage at ——, and glanced round the narrow cabin, and its miserable accommodations. [293]

The Doctor regarded her with eyes full of compassion. He certainly guessed her thoughts, and seemed as well acquainted with complaints of the mind as with bodily ailments.

“Weel, weel, I ha’e my ain doubts as to your fitness for sic a voyage in your weak state; but I’ll e’en jist let ye pass. Are you married or single?”

“Married.”

“An’ the gudeman?——”

“Is on deck with the captain. He will be here presently.”

“Ha’e ye ony bairns?”

Flora pointed, with a feeling of maternal pride, to the little Josey, who was sleeping upon

Hannah's knees,—a lovely picture of healthy, happy infancy.

"Ay, she's bonnie," cried the kind Doctor, taking one of the tiny alabaster fingers of the babe in his red, rough hand. "Sma' need o' a dochter in her case. An' wha's this woman?" touching Hannah's shoulder with his forefinger.

"My nurse-girl."

"A married woman?"

"No, Sir."

"She shu'd be, I'm jist thinkin'; it will not be lang before she's a mither," muttered the little man. Then, turning quickly to Flora, he said, "I wull speak to the medical man on board, an' tell [294] him to tak' partic'lar care o' you during the voyage. What's his name?"

"There is no such person. The vessel is too small to incur such an expensive addition to the comfort of her passengers. The captain told me that he was his own doctor."

"How many passengers does he tak' out?"

"Seventy-two in the steerage, five in the cabin, besides his crew, eight in number."

"Eighty-five human beings, an' no medical man on board! 'Tis jest a' disgrace to the owners, and shu'd be reported. In case o' cholera, or ony other epeedemic brakin' out amang ye, wha wu'd become o' ye a'?"

"We must trust in God. The great Physician of souls will not be forgetful of our bodily infirmities."

"True, true, young leddy; cling close to Him. Ye ha' muckle need o' His care. An' dinna trust your life to the dochtering o' a sullen ignoramus like the captain,—an obstinate, self-willed brute, that, right or wrang, will ha' his ain way. Dinna tak' ony medicine frae him."

Flora was amused at the idea of calling in a one-eyed Esculapius like the jolly captain. The absurdity of the thing made her laugh heartily.

"It's nae laughing matter," said the little doctor, whose professional dignity was evidently wounded by her mistimed mirth.

"Hout! dinna' I ken the man for the last ten years or mair. Thae medicine kist he prizes mair [295] than his sole remaining e'e, an' fancies himsel a dochtor fitting a king. Ye canna' please him mair than by gie'n' him a job. The last voyage he made in this verra brig, he administered in his ignorance, a hale pint o' castor oil in ain dose to a lad on board, which took the puir fallow aff his legs completely. Anither specimen o' his medical skill was gie'n are o' his crew, a heapen spun-fu' o' calomel, which he mistook for magnesia. I varilie believe that he canna' spell weel eneugh to read the directions in the buik. An' is it to sic a dunderheid that the lives of eighty-five human beings are to be entrusted?"

Flora was highly entertained by this account of the Captain's skill; while the doctor, who loved to hear himself talk, continued in a more impressive and confidential tone—

"Now, dinna be sae ill-advised as to be takin' pheesic a' the time, young leddy. If ye wu'd keep yersel in health, persuade the Captain to gie ye the charge o' yon kist o' poisons, an' tak' the first opportunity to drap the key by accident overboord. By sae doin' ye may be the savin' o' your ain life, an' the lives of a' the humanities on boord the brig *Anne*."

Flora was fond of a little amateur doctoring. To part with the medicine-chest, she considered, would be a great sin, and she was already secretly longing to overhaul its contents.

A few well-established remedies, promptly administered in simple cases of illness, and followed [296] by the recovery of the patients, had made her imagine herself quite a genius in the healing art; and she rejected the homely little Doctor's last piece of advice as an eccentric whim, arising either from ignorance of his profession, or from disappointment in not having been appointed surgeon to the brig.

Dr. MacAdie was neither deficient in skill nor talent. He was a poor man, of poor parentage, who had worked hard to obtain his present position, and provide a comfortable home for his father and mother in their old age. His practice was entirely confined to the humble walks of life, and he was glad to obtain a few additional meals for a large family by inspecting the health of emigrants preparatory to their voyage.

In this case, his certificate of health was very satisfactory; and he told the Captain that he had seldom seen a heartier, healthier set o' *decent* bodies in sic a sma' vessel, and hepathetically entreated him not to tamper with their constitutions, by giving them dangerous drugs whose chemical properties he did not understand, declaring emphatically, "That nature was the best *phesician* after all." The Captain considered this gratuitous piece of advice as an insult, for he very gruffly bade Doctor MacAdie "Take care of his own patients; he wanted none of his impertinent interference."

The little Doctor drew up his shoulders with an air of profound contempt; then taking a [297] monstrous pinch of snuff, in the most sneezable manner, from his old-fashioned box, he shook

Mrs. Lyndsay kindly by the hand, and wishing her and her *gudeman* a prosperous voyage, vanished up the companion-ladder.

Old Boreas shook his fist after his retreating figure. “You d——d, insignificant, snuffy little coxcomb! I’m a d——d sight better doctor than you are. If the Government sends you again, poking your long nose among my people, I’ll make a surgical case for you to examine at home at your leisure, I will.”

In order to divert his ill-humour, Flora inquired at what hour the ship sailed?

“She must wait for that which never yet waited for mortal man—wind and tide. It will be midnight before we get under weigh.”

Boreas always spoke in short sentences. He was a man of few words, rough, ready, and eccentrically blunt. Had his talents been proportioned to his obstinacy of will, he might have ruled over large communities, instead of acting the petty tyrant on the deck of his small craft. Right or wrong, he never gave up his opinion to any one. He certainly did not belong to the “*Ay, Sir—very true, Sir*”—school of individuals, who would resign their own souls to agree with their superiors in rank or power. If there was a being on earth that he despised more than another, it [298] was a sneak. On one occasion, when a steerage passenger, in order to curry favour, was prostrating himself before him after this fashion, assuring the Captain, “That *his* thoughts coincided *exactly* with his own,” he burst out in a towering passion, “D—— you Sir! haven’t you got an opinion of your own? I don’t want such a sneaking puppy as you to think my thoughts, and echo my words. I should despise myself, if I thought it possible that we could agree on any subject.”

If really convinced that he was wrong, he would show it by a slight diminution of his ferocious stubbornness; but would never acknowledge it in words. If he gained even a doubtful advantage over an adversary, he rubbed his hands, clapped his knees, and chuckled and growled out his satisfaction, in a manner peculiarly his own. He was only tolerable as a companion after taking his third glass of brandy-and-water; and as he commenced these humanizing doses by daybreak in the morning, repeating them at stated intervals during the four-and-twenty hours, by noon he became sociable and entertaining; and would descend from his anti-meridian dignity, and condescend to laugh and chat in a dry humorous style, which, if it lacked refinement, was highly amusing.

Though an inveterate imbiber of alcohol, he was never positively drunk during the whole [299] voyage. The evil spirits seemed to make no impression upon the iron fibres of his stubborn brain and heart. He judged his morality by the toughness of his constitution, and congratulated himself on being a sober man, while he complained of his second mate, and stigmatised him as a drunken, worthless fellow, because one glass of punch made him intoxicated. This is by no means an uncommon thing both at home and abroad; and men condemn others more for want of strength of head, than strength of heart.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

R. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD STREET HILL.

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Transcriber’s Note:

Variations in spelling, use of hyphenated words, and in dialect have been retained as they appear in the original book.

Page 16 ropes fr you changed to ropes for you

Page 17 grey esey sparkled changed to grey eyes sparkled

Page 65 added double closing quotation mark to Busy at work, too?”

Page 92 real Havanna changed to real Havana

Page 95 one of these days.’ changed to one of these days.”

Page 96 and getting none, changed to and getting none.

Page 104 and by some mismagement changed to by some

mismanagement

Page 140 very plausibly changed to very plausible

Page 146 added double closing quotation mark to heart-breaking regret.”

Page 148 stumblingblocks changed to stumbling blocks

Page 150 Then sideling changed to Then sidling

Page 153 deep vexation changed to deep vexation.

Page 156 Bad beginings changed to Bad beginnings

Page 169 handsome young quaker changed to handsome young Quaker

Page 177 carolled high in air changed to carolled high in the air

Page 193 rest of his journey, changed to rest of his journey.

Page 214 it annoyed her ” changed to it annoyed her.”

Page 232 my Mammy say?’ changed to my Mammy say?”

Page 240 browze and gambol changed to browse and gambol

Page 240 and when the arrived changed to and when they arrived

Page 246 added double closing quotation mark after not have seen this.”

Page 261 removed double closing quotation mark after half-pennyworth of taste.

Page 267 added double closing quotation mark after dimensions of the fire.”

Page 271 said Flora coaxingly., changed to said Flora coaxingly.

Page 271 added double closing quotation mark after an’ boil an’ roast!”

Page 288 and in a few miuutes changed to and in a few minutes

Page 291 Doctor Mac Adie changed to Doctor MacAdie

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