



CHAPTER XII.

Griseida, darting homeward through the twilight garden, after another stroll with Tom Peyton on the garden wall, stops as she reaches the summer house, a favorite resort of Vera's, notwithstanding the father unpleasant associations connected with it, and pokes in her head to find Vera there.

"I've come back," she cries, breathlessly, shaking into a seat and looking at Vera with despair in her eyes. "I have done as you desired me, I have said good-bye to him forever."

"What did he say? Was he very much upset?" with burning interest.

"He said he'd manage to see me in some way or other," says Griseida, with a heavy sigh.

"Oh, well—come now, that's not so bad," says Vera, cheerfully, forgetting of prudence at sight of her sister's grief.

"He seems from all I have heard from you—a sort of a person who would be difficult to baffle. I think I should put faith in that declaration of his if I were you."

"Oh, he said more than that," cries Griseida. "Why, it appears that Tom—Mr. Peyton—knows Seaton quite well, and likes him, too. Mr. Peyton says that he, Seaton, is engaged to be married to a Miss Butler, a friend of Lady Riverdale's."

For a moment there is a dead silence, during which the pretty crimson on Vera's cheeks dies out, leaving her singularly pale. No doubt the surprise is great.

"Is that true?" she says. "I should not be surprised, though I confess I am. It is only what I might have expected from my first judgment of him. And one should not condemn him, either; it is not his fault that he calls Uncle Gregory father."

A footstep upon the gravel outside makes them both turn their heads.

"What is it, Grunch?" Vera calmly asks as the housekeeper appears on the threshold.

"The master wishes to see you, Miss Dyrast, in the library." There is an expression of malignant amusement in the woman's eyes as she says this.

Vera had gone into the library with a pale face, but it was with one paler still she came out of it half an hour later, white as death, and with a strained look of passion on every feature not to be subdued. She might perhaps have given way to the blessed relief of tears if she had had time to escape Griseida; but as she finds herself looking at Seaton Dyrast, who has at this moment entered the library, she is compelled to look at herself.

Slowly, with aimless steps, she rises and flings aside the moldy volume she had found in one of the rooms below, and which she has been making a fruitless effort to read, and looks out upon the sunless pleasure-ground beneath her window.

She becomes suddenly aware of an unfamiliar figure that, kneeling on the grass before one of the beds, seems to be waiting for her. Don't faint, I mean, or do anything like that.

"Oh, how could you do such a thing?" says she, in a trembling voice. "And how strange you look, and what dreadful clothes you have on!"

"Well, I gave a good deal for them," says he, casting an eloquent glance at his trousers; "more—four times more—than I ever gave for a suit. I'm sorry you don't approve of them; but for myself, I think them becoming, and positively glory in them; I would rather have them than any clothes I've ever yet had, and I think them right down cheap. It's rather a sell if you don't think they suit my style of beauty."

A little sharp cry breaks from her; she stifles it, but turns very pale.

"Don't look like that!" he says, in a low tone, but sharply. "Would you be any more? Remember, it was my only chance of getting near you. Don't faint, I mean, or do anything like that."

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you deliberately insulted your brother's child?"

"There was no insult. I may have told her that if she chooses to do such things as society disapproves of, she must only submit to the consequences and consider herself ostracized."

"Compromised," you said."

"Well, it is as good a word; you are welcome to it."

"Fahaw!" says Seaton, with a quick motion of the hand, as if flinging the idea far from him, "let us have no more of such petty squabbles. You forget, sternly, that when you seek to compromise Vera, you condemn me, your son."

Dyrast shrugged his shoulders.

"The man is never in fault; so your word rules," says he, lightly.

"You persist, then, in your insult," says Seaton, going a step nearer to him, the veins swelling in his forehead. "You still say that—"

"I say that," more, replied the old man, undaunted, a very demon of obstinacy having now taken possession of his breast. "I feel even bold enough to suggest to her the advisability of an immediate marriage with you, as a means of crushing in the bud the scandal that is sure to arise out of her imprudence."

"Go, Vera; leave the room," says Seaton, with great emotion.

"Why should she go? It seems to me you give her bad advice," says Mr. Dyrast, looking from one to the other with a satirically friendly glance. "Let her rather stay and discuss with you your marriage with her."

If he had been so foolishly blind as to hope by this bold move to force Vera into an engagement, his expectations are now on the instant destroyed by his son.

"Understand me, once for all, that I shall not marry Vera," says he, white with anger, and some strong feeling that he is almost powerless to suppress. "Were she to come to me this moment and lay her hand in mine, and say she was willing so far to sacrifice herself, I should refuse to listen to her."

Vera, for the first time since her entrance, lifts her head to look at him. Was he thinking of Miss Butler? Was he true at last to her? A little bitter smile curls her lip.

"I thank you," she says, with a slight inclination of her head toward her cousin, and with a swift step leaves the room.

CHAPTER XIII.

Four long days have crept languidly into the past, four of the dullest days Griseida Dyrast has ever yet endured, as she is compelled to look at herself.

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with a certainty of meeting nobody in the empty room and covering herself, almost, with her hands, she looks at the door. These rooms are well known to her, and presently wearing of them she turns aside and rather timidly pushes open a huge, faded, balise-covered door that leads she scarcely knows whither. She pushes it back and looks eagerly inward.

It is not an apartment, after all. A long, low, vaulted passage reveals itself, only dimly lighted by a painted window at the lower end. It appears to be a completely bare passage, leading nowhere; but presently, as she runs her eyes along the eastern wall, a door meets them, an old oaken door, iron-clasped and literally hung with cobwebs.

Curiosity grows strong within her. Catching the ancient handle of this door, a mere brass ring sunk in the woodwork, she pushes against it with all her might. In vain. But not deterred, she pushes again and again; and at the last trial of her strength a sharp sound—a ring of something brass falling on a stone floor—crashes with a quick, altogether astounding noise upon the tomblike silence that fills the mysterious passage.

At the same moment the door gives way, and she, unexpectedly yielding with it, steps hurriedly forward into a dark and gawsome hole.

The poverty of the light has perhaps dimmed her sight, because after a little while a shadow on the opposite wall, that resolves itself into an opening, becomes known to her. It is not a door, rather a heavy hempen curtain, and now, resolutely determined to go through with her adventure, she advances toward it, pulls it aside, and finds herself face to face with Gregory Dyrast!

He is on his knees, next that peculiar cabinet described in an earlier chapter, and as he lifts his head upon her entrance, a murderous glare, as of one hunted, desperate, comes into his curious eyes.

The side of the cabinet is lying wide open, and as he involuntarily moves, the chain of golden coins falling one upon another alone breaks the loud silence that oppresses the atmosphere. In his hand he is holding an old and yellow parchment.

"I—I am sorry," murmurs Vera, terrified; "I did not know; I—"

"What brought you here, girl—here where I believed myself safe? Go, go—there is nothing—nothing, I tell you—they led to you if they told you anything—go, I say!"

He has entirely lost his self-possession, and is still kneeling on the floor, now hugging, now trying to hide beneath him the paper he holds with his shivering, nervous fingers. "Go, go, go!" he shrieks, beside himself. He is in a perfect frenzy; all dignity is gone; to the girl standing trembling there it is a gruesome sight to see this man on the brink of the grave thus crouching, shamed, dishonored.

"I am going," she says, faintly. She is ghastly pale; the sight of him in his horrible fright, cringing thus upon the ground, has so unnerved her that she actually grasps at the curtain for support. (To be continued.)

PARADISE FOR BIRDS.

The White House Grounds Possess Many Charming Features.

Birds having a keen eye out for residence quarters in Washington find the White House grounds the most fashionable and select neighborhood they can enter. This is especially so of birds desiring a quiet life, without being subjected to the "rubber-necking" of other birds, animals and human beings.

Sparrows in great numbers have their homes in the grounds, but they would be just as much at home on Pennsylvania avenue, and it is said by the bird doctor at the White House that the sparrows which live around there are recalcitrant, or have been run away from the thickly settled quarters of the city.

There is plenty of room for more of these little rascals in the grounds, where the trees furnish quiet places for building and hatching, but the great majority of these birds appear not to care much for these delightful grounds. For feeding purposes the White House grounds are not a success, because they are always kept clean. In addition to the value of the grounds for residence purposes, there is one distinct advantage. That is in the bathing facilities. The White House sparrows are like Japanese people in this respect. When they are not chattering about this thing and that they are bathing in the different fountains in the grounds.

At all hours of the day, but more particularly in the morning, the little sparrows assemble at the fountains, flit to the leaves of the water plants and dive and duck as long as they desire. They are not good swimmers and do not wear fancy bathing suits. Where water is convenient sparrows are clearly little animals. Each leaf of a water plant is strong enough to hold the weight of a bird, and there is not much danger of drowning. At any rate, no life guards are stationed by the sparrows to watch and protect incautious birds.

Blackbirds, robins, thrush, bluebirds and crows make their homes in the White House grounds, together with other varieties. Nearly all the year round robins may be seen in the grounds, and they have their nests somewhere about. They fly about the front of the grounds and hunt among the flowers and plants for worms. They do not bathe themselves like the sparrows. They are comparatively tame, as no one bothers them. These few robins have been in the grounds for years. They do not go far north, like the others of their tribe, in the summer months. The Washington climate suits them. In the winter they disappear for a trip to the winter resorts in the South, but come back in the early spring. The blackbirds seen in the grounds are big fellows, half as big as crows and just as glossy black.

A rain crow which lives in the grounds and in the trees of Lafayette Square can be heard just before each rain, giving his peculiar warning that rain may be expected. Oldtimers at the White House say that this bird is a better weather prophet than the weather bureau, so far as rain is concerned.

Well, there's my sister, Gracie—she's a very good-natured woman, and clever, too. If I were to tell her all she would tell Seaton, and between them they might manage something. There's a step! Go away, and try to see me to-morrow if you can."

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THE AIR WE BREATHE

A FEW SCIENTIFIC FACTS ABOUT OUR ATMOSPHERE.

Covers the Earth to the Depth of Forty-Five to Fifty Miles—The Barometer and Its Use—Differences of Climate.

The three geographical elements in nature are land, water, and air or atmosphere. In our geographies we learn considerable about the land and water of the earth and their many divisions, but little or nothing in regard to the atmosphere which is so indispensable to all forms of life. For a knowledge of this we must turn to physical geography. The few points touched upon here, it is hoped, will prove to be the means of leading some one to seek further and learn more of things about him.

What we call the atmosphere is a vast ocean of air enveloping the whole earth, both land and sea, and at the bottom of this ocean is where we live. The atmosphere furnishes the elements upon which depends all animal and vegetable life, but there is another way in which it contributes to the welfare of man. Many countries in the world which are now warm and fertile would be cold and barren were it not for the heat and moisture carried to them by the winds. Indeed, our Mississippi Valley, the most productive region in the world, would be but a barren desert were it not for the moisture distributed over it by the winds from the Gulf of Mexico. The reason for this is found in the fact that this region is so remote from the oceans, and is flanked on either side by high ranges which prevent the rains from passing over them.

The composition of the atmosphere is of oxygen and nitrogen in the proportion of twenty-one parts of the former to seventy-nine of the latter, with a very small quantity of carbonic acid; besides these, there is always more or less watery vapor held in suspension. Atmosphere is one of the most elastic bodies in nature, the slightest change in temperature causing it to expand or contract to a remarkable degree.

The weight of atmosphere is measured by its pressure on the barometer. The word barometer is made up of two Greek words meaning weight measure. The instrument is made of a slender glass tube closed at one end and filled with mercury. The tube is then reversed and placed in a cup of the same fluid. The atmosphere pressing upon the fluid in the cup keeps the column of mercury within the tube at a height exactly sufficient to balance its own weight. At the level of the sea, the column within the tube is thirty inches in height. By this we understand that the entire weight of the atmosphere is equal to a layer of mercury thirty inches deep covering the whole earth, and exerting a pressure of fifteen pounds to every square inch of surface. When the pressure of air increases the barometer rises; when it decreases, the thermometer falls.

The atmosphere being so highly elastic, the layers closest to the surface of the earth having to support all those above, are most dense, the density diminishing upwards with the decrease of pressure. It has been proven that one-half the entire atmosphere, by weight, is condensed within three and two-fifths miles of the sea level, and two-thirds below the summit of the highest mountains. Were it not for this fact, mountain ranges would not have such an influence in directing and modifying the course of the winds.

It is calculated that from forty-five to fifty miles above sea level the atmosphere is so rarefied that its pressure would have no perceptible effect upon the barometer. Taking this as practically the upper limit, the atmosphere appears as a thin film measuring not more than one-hundredth the radius of the earth.

The climate of our globe is governed by astronomical causes, namely: the action of the sun's rays upon the earth's surface, the spherical form of the earth, and its daily and yearly motions. These causes operate so as to effect differences of temperature and rainfall in different latitudes, and variations in the same latitudes in different parts of the year. This is called astronomical climate. Besides this, there is also what is called physical climate. Physical climate is simply astronomical climate modified to a greater or less extent by physical agencies, such as atmospheric and marine currents, position in regard to the oceans, direction of prevailing winds and elevation above the level of the sea.

CROMWELL THE LITTLE.

Vicissitudes in the Life of Oliver Cromwell's Son.

The wheel of fortune has strange turnings, but it has often turned so completely round as in the spring of 1869. In April, Richard Cromwell sat on the throne of England, King in all but name, master of two palaces, with an allowance of £10,000 a year. In May he wandered homeless in a strange land, a fugitive, not from justice, but from the law. In his trunks were the congratulations he had received a month or two before from the crowned heads of Europe. A dozen years before his father's name had made the world tremble; now it was a name to which his son dared not answer. His wife waited fifteen years for his return, and died at last without seeing him again; his favorite daughter, Dorothy, was married and buried in a few months. She was the only Cromwell, somebody has said, "born in the purple."

Cromwell came home at last, to live in lodgings at 10 shillings a week. Nobody guessed that the Mr. Clarke who lived simply and quietly at Chestnut was the man who had been the Protector of the Commonwealth. Mrs. Peggotty, his landlady, kept his accounts in great detail, and Sir Richard Tangye has unearthed many of them, which give us strange glimpses of the later life of Cromwell's son. He smoked a great deal, paying 2 shillings 8 pence per gross for his "pypes," and he was generous even in his poverty. On one occasion he borrowed £2 from his landlady, who entered it down for the day "when you had your feast." When his daughters came to see him from Hursley, his home in better days, Richard

would treat them to a comfortable dinner in Westminster, borrowing the money from good Mrs. Peggotty, who seems to have done something to soften the hard fate to which an ungrateful country had doomed the son of Cromwell.

More than once Richard had come to his last shilling. Once, when visiting at Hursley, he had to put off his return for want of a shirt. But generally he seems to have been a tolerably happy man, blessing everybody in spite of circumstances, and blaming none. When Queen Mary died he spent half a crown, we are told, on a pair of mourning gloves. His last days were made unhappy by a painful quarrel with his daughters concerning the property at Hursley. The daughters did their utmost to deprive their father of his rights, as though his life had not been hard enough, and in his old age Richard, who had left Whitehall palace freely years before, was driven from his own home. A lawsuit established his rights at last, and before his death the family was at peace again.

"Live in love; I am going to the God of love," he said to his daughters, as he lay dying at Hursley in 1712.

There is a story told of a great ceremonial in which Queen Anne was the central figure. The Queen was surrounded by a host of gayly dressed courtiers, and in the throng was an old man of 83, wearing the plain dress of a country farmer. "Have you ever seen such a sight before?" asked a looker-on, and the throng was started to hear the old man say: "Never since I sat in her chair." It was Cromwell's son.—London St. James' Gazette.

WHAT DID THE FAKIR DO?

Is Hypnotism the Secret of East Indian Magic?

Wonderful stories are told of the powers of the Hindu fakirs. Careful attention to their tricks has not discovered their secret with any certainty, but Capt. James Parker, the English traveler, who has just returned from a tour of India, gives it as his belief that hypnotism is the means by which they accomplish their most startling illusions. One incident which he describes seems to bear out his view.

The trick which is acknowledged to be the greatest of these Hindu mystic performances, says Capt. Parker, and the one that has been described by trustworthy persons too often to be doubted, is the one in which the fakir throws a ball of twine into the air above him, until it disappears from sight. The loose end of the string he holds in his hand, and after the boy assistant has climbed up the string until he, too, is out of sight, the fakir himself follows, with a knife between his teeth.

The spectators, surprised when both boy and man climb out of sight, are horrified when the boy's severed head, arms and legs, followed by the trunk, fall to the ground, and the man slides down close behind. Their astonishment is increased when the fakir gathers the severed members and restores the boy to life.

Well, I saw this performance once, and once I didn't see it; and the latter experience was more wonderful than the other. I had some London friends visiting me, and after having left them for a few minutes on the veranda of my bungalow, I saw, as I was returning, the same fakir and his assistant, whom I had seen perform the trick, standing about forty feet in front of my friends, apparently preparing to begin a performance. As I was about as far behind the natives as my friends were in front of them, and had not been observed, I stood quietly where I was.

The man placed a drawn knife between his teeth, took the usual ball of twine in his right hand, made a motion as if throwing it into the air, and then stood perfectly quiet. My friends on the veranda were looking into the upper air with astonishment on their faces, which in a minute turned to a look of horror as their eyes came back to the ground. In another minute their countenances lighted up with pleasure, and they applauded loudly.

They could not say enough about the wonderful performance they had seen, and they were astonished beyond measure when I told them I had been as near the fakir as they, and had seen nothing of what had so wonderfully impressed them.

If that was not hypnotism, what was it?—Youth's Companion.

Rich Gifts that Embarrassed.

The funniest thing I ever heard of has happened in a family of moderate means, but whose daughter is a young person of vaunting ambition. She was engaged to a very nice young man, who was equally impecunious, and they would often bewail their lot at not being able to be married and receive a quantity of "numerous and costly" presents. The time arrived, however, not very long ago, when the wedding came off, and to this young lady's astonishment her friends sent bridal gifts that, in name at least, equaled millionaires.