DEAD PAST

CHAPTER XV.

In the month of December, when the papa. days were short and dark, and a black frost and biting east wind made winter hard to the young and unbearable to the old, Sir Hugh Grantley shuffled off this mortal coil and was buried in the family vault in Frierly churchyard by the side of all the Sir Hughs and Sir Johns and cated; better than all, quite new." Sir Gregorys who had preceded him. He died as he had lived, unloved and unregretted. His selfishness stood him in good stead up to the last.

He was buried with all becoming pomp and ceremony, and Roy, his son, reigned trude?" in his stead. But poor Roy's reign was but a short and troubled one in the house of his fathers. Sir Hugh's affairs were found to be in greatest confusion. The property was heavily mortgaged, the farms had depreciated in value, the rents htr glove buttons seemed to give her an had been left overdue. Poverty stared infinity of trouble. the young heir in the face. Margaret, who had partly guessed at the state of things, stood by him, with her strong mind and good common sense, to help him through his calamities.

"There is nothing for it but to let the house. You cannot afford to live in It," she said to him.

'Let Frierly! Oh, Margaret!"

"It is the only thing to be done, Roy; face it like a man. If you let it well, you will be able to live comfortably as a bachelor in London, and when you marry, you must marry well, and then you will be able to come back to your own again, pay off mortgages, put the farms in repair, and start fresh again. You see how important a good marriage is for you." "You mean a rich wife. I am afraid

that I am not at all likely to restore the failen fortunes of my family in that way. The only woman whom I could ever have married is lost to me."

"You are not, I suppose, going to remain a bachelor for ever because of a married woman!" cried Margaret, with bot. She had no mind to drop Roy anyreal irritation. She could not believe it possible that he was still mourning over Kitten Laybourne-there are women to whom a steadfast faithfulness appears the old story of the moth and the candle. in the light of absolute stupidity. Was not Kitten married and safely got out of the way? What on earth possessed the boy to be thinking about her still?

"But, Roy, you are the last-the very last. It is your duty to marry. The baronetey will become extinct if you do not!" cried Margaret in despair. "Somebody must be last, I suppose.

just as somebody else must be first. You are a wonderful woman at counting your where is the rich wife?" "There is Felicia."

"I am not wicked enough for her, said Roy, with a little smile to himself idly along he met an old college friend, over sundry speeches of his cousin's which still lingers in his memory. Marfgaret looked indignant and severe.

"I really do not pretend to understand steps of his own club. the character and manners of the young ladies of the present day. I am afraid he entered. He stood with it in his that Felicia is becoming rather reckless hand without looking at it for several er conversation since her father has minutes, talking to an acquain left her so much alone." "Exactly, and I could not marry a per-

son who was reckless, even for her money." laughed the young man.

"Well, there are plenty of rich girls to be picked up in London, and if we must let the Hall, we will go up to town and feelings seemed to divide him like and live there. My own money will enable me to take a small house; and you, of course, will live with me. You will be able then to live comfortably and suitably upon the remnant that can be saved out of the fire, together with the rent of the house. You can have your horse and your brougham, and do everything that is fitting to your position. As to your food, that need never cost you a farthing. Whatever is mine is yours."

They went up to London, and Margaret installed herself and her household goods in a small house in Connaught Square. Here, too, Roy had his own rooms and his own belongings, and he stayed at home as much as he liked, and went away also as much as he felt inclin-Nobody, either, could have said of Sir Roy Grantley that he lived the life of a woe-begone and despairing lover. He had plenty of friends, and his friends took care to make his life pleasant to ed shall meet again under other condi-

One afternoon, in the month of May, Roy found himself in a certain tiny drawing room in Mayfair, where, in these days, he was always sure of a cordial welcome. The house altogether was of the most minute dimensions, and was as thoroughly dirty and dingy as "bijou" residences within a stone's throw of Park Lane have a habit of being. The very door, as it was opened by the tall footman, seemed narrower and lower than other people's front doors, and the footman himself, as he preceded the visitor up the narrow wooden staircase, looked too large for the house.

One end of the room was filled completely with a wide, low sofa, across which Eastern embroideries and pieces of Italian brocade-all rather dirtywere flung in careless confusion. At one end of this sofa invariably reclined a black poodle, at the other was his mis-By Mrs. Talbot's side was a small table, upon which were arranged joy possessed him. Rosamond was back, a hand looking glass set in silver, several bottles of perfumes of different kinds, the poodle's silk bag of French sweetmeats, and the photographs of her pet admirers. To these latter Roy had been lately added in a respiendent new frame of crimson plush.

Gertrude, in her white muslin draperies, lay back among her embroidered cushions and sniffed at her salts bot- herself, in despair. "I wish, now, that tle. Felicia, who had found herself a small, low seat on the other side of the Does he have his letters forwarded, I little table, had seized upon a Japanese fan and was agitating it violently. Roy, upon a footstool between the two ladies, was made much of by both of them, and seemed to be enjoying himself

amazingly. "Nothing makes one so hot as a fan," sald Gertrude. "Do keep that thing shone, her lips parted and her heart beat. still, Felicia; you set all my nerves on How wildly her heart beat! For he had

go out, Gertrude. I wish I could drive love of her life, whom she had loved and

you, but I have promised to call for

"I am going out this very minute in a hansom," said Gertrude, jumping up. "Sir Roy, will you go with me? I am going to pay a call. I am going to see a charming, lovely, delightful little woman. Somebody quite young, quite unsophisti-

"I wouldn't go with her if I were you, Roy," said Felicia, when the door had cosed upon their hostess.

"Why not-will it create a scandal if I go in a hansom with the beautiful Ger-

"Don't you know-cannot you guess, Roy, who it is she wants you to call upon? It is Mrs. Desmond.'

A pause. Felicia would "Kitten-" not have lifted her eyes for the world;

"How does she know her?" Roy asked presently, and she could hear that his voice was altered.

"Oh, it is very simple. Gertrude met Mr. Desmond in the park two days ago. I was with her, and he introduced us to his wife, and asked us to call on her. I-I would not go if I were you, Roy.' "Did she look-happy?" he asked.

"Oh, yes. I suppose so; she was very

well dressed. You have not got over it, I am afraid." Mrs. Talbot came back gay and gushing; the hansom was summoned, and Felicia was driven away in her brougham.

"I-I don't think I'll come with you to-day," said the young man hesitatingly when he had helped Gertrude into the hansom. "Oh, Roy"-She dropped the "Sir"

when they were alone-"you promised; oh, do come." "Well, I will go a little way, then," "You can and he got into the cab.

drop me, you know." "To Lowndes square," said Mrs. Talwhere.

And Roy went with her. "I can't help myself," he said to himself; but it was

Brian, on leaving his wife to go out alone, intended to wend his way to his Had he gone there straight from his own door, he would have received a certain note which had been waiting for him there all day, three hours earlier, and-so little does it take sometimes to alter the whole history of a man's life -had he done so, it is probable that most of the events which ensued would have chickens, Margaret; but, to begin with, so far been changed or modified that they would not have been fraught with cer tain important circumstances to himself and to others. But as he was strolling who hailed him joyfully and linked his arm within his. So that it was just 7 o'clock when he turned leisurely up the

> The hall porter gave him a letter as whom he met in the hall. Then Brian looked down at his letter, turning it round as he did so.

And suddenly he recognized the handwriting! It was years since he had seen it. A whole century of new thoughts a yawning gulf from that other far away life, in which those even rounded characters had played so important a part. It was like an electric shock to Brian Desmond to see it once more-to hold a letter from her once again in his hands. A letter from Rosamond! An unstamp-

ed letter, too-sent not by post, but by hand. What could it mean? He had thought of her vaguely, dimly, as a something dear, yet dangerous to his peace of mind, that was on the other side of the world. She had been to him but a distant memory of a past which was over forever, a something which he had hoped and prayed might never again cross the new life he had built up for himself. Often he had thought of her thus, in misty dreams, thinking that he and she had drifted apart forever, and would meet no more, save in that other world where those who have loved and despairtions, and be perchance at last-happy!

And lo! she was here—at his very doors-in London-alive, and writing to him! He tore open the letter and read:

"I have come home, and am longing to see you. I arrived late last night, and am at the Langham Hotel. Come to me as soon as you receive this. I shall not leave the house until I hear from you ROSAMOND." or see you.

He glanced quickly up at the clock, It was the minutes past seven. He tore upstairs three steps at a time into the writing room, and wrote two lines to his

"Do not wait dinner for me. I shall

not be back." This he gave to a club messenger to take to Lowndes Square, and springing into a hansom, drove rapidly away to the Langham Hotel. He had given himself no time to think or reflect. He did not consider whether it was a wise or an unwise thing he was doing. A wild and he was going to see her! He could think of nothing else. After all the long, black, empty years they were to meet

again. She was very tired of the desolate hotel sitting room by this time-tired and weary. She had almost given him up by

"He cannot be in town!" she said to I had written before from Alexandria. wonder-and will he get my note in the course of time? How can I find out?"

All at once her quick ears caught the sound of approaching footsteps along the corridor. She sprang to her feet; her hands, womanlike, went instinctively up to smooth her ruffled hair; her eyes

come at last! "It is deliciously cool and breezy out Through a mist she seemed to see of doors," said Felicia. "You ought to him, a mist of her own glad tears. The

had forsaken, but to whom her faithful SOBBIE'S CHRISTMAS PRAYER. heart had clung, through all absence and time, he stood before her at last! She reached out her hands to him; she felt the strong grip of his as he grasped them.

One in each of him as he grasped them.

An' bring me a sied, nice an' new one in each of his. He only spoke her name hoarsely and huskily:

"Rosamond. And she-she it was who spoke firstwho found the words, poor, weak, trembling words-that shook with the great-

ness of her joy. "Yes; it is I-Rosamond-come back to you at last-my Brian-my only love -my heart's delight-never, never to be parted from you again. For I am free, and I am yours for ever."

Oh, why-why then did he not clasp her in his arms? Why did he not draw her to his heart, and rain such kisses upon her eager lips as she had dreamed of and thirsted for so long? Why did he stand so, and look upon her with that awful look of deepening horror and woe in his eyes? Why did his cold hands slacken thus their eager hold, and fall away at last, nerveless and helpless from out of hers?

"Brian! Brian!" she cried, with the sharp ring of a nameless terror; "do you not hear me? Do you not understand? I am free!"

"You-are-free?" he repeated slowly and painfully, bringing out each word separately with a sort of labor, as though each one hurt him to utter. "Yourhusband-is he dead?"

"Yes, yes-do you not see my clothes? I am a widow. Heaven forgive me if I am too glad, but how can I help my joy, when, from the day that he died, I knew that I might love you once more? I did my duty. I was a good wife to him, but, oh, how I suffered! But now it is all over and I have come back to you, and-Brian! Brian!" she broke out wildly, for still he stood there blanched to the very lips, and stared at her with those horror-stricken eyes. "Are you not glad? Speak to me, for heaven's sake! What is it? Why do you look at me

"When did he die?" was all he said in a number, dreary voice. 'Eight months ago.'

And then he flung up both arms wildly, with an exceeding bitter cry of anguish "Ah, it was my wedding day!" and fell prostrate before her upon his knees, burying his face in his outstretched arms. Rosamond spoke never a word. She stood erect and stiff, cold as ice, and motionless as marble; not a word broke An' the stillness of her agony, save those awful choked sobs from the bowed form at her feet. Afterward she could not recall what she had felt and thought in those first moments-only that in some vague fashion Fate was revenged upon her. Once long ago she had ruined this man's life, and now-now it was he who ruined hers!

(To be continued.) Can You Solve This? How much greater than three-

fourths is four-fourths? At first sight it seems an easy question, but put it to your arithmetical friends and you will probably find that it will divide them into two parties, one contending that the answer is onefourth and the other as positively affirming that it is one-third, while both will be ready to prove the accuracy of their respective solutions.

The party of the first part (to use a legal phrase) may argue their point in meant to make as festive as possible. Of this way:

Five shillings is the fourth part of a pound. If you have 15 shillings, or three-fourths of a pound, and somebody gives you another fourth part you have a sovereign-ergo, your fourfourths is one-fourth greater than three-fourths.

But this will not suit the other party at all, and they will proceed scornfully to point out that the argument is all wrong, since if you have 15 shillings and somebody is generous enough to add 5 shillings to it the donor is only giving you one-third of the amount you already possess (5 times 3 equals 15), therefore your sovereign is only onethird more than your 15 shillings.

It is a pretty problem, and expert accountants have been known to wrangle over it for hours.-London Answers.

Counting the Buttons.

"Yes," said the tailor, "Councilman Crookit ordered a four-button cutaway, but he changed it to a three-button," "Is the three-button more stylish?" asked the other.

"Oh, no. But as he was going out he saw some children on my doorstep playing that old game, 'Rich man, poor man, beggarman, thief."-Philadelphia Press.

Logical Deduction.

"Ah, my friend," said the passenger with the unbarbered hair, "what can be more delicious than clear, cold water in the early morn, fresh from the pump." "Water," rejoined the hardware

drummer, "is certainly a good thing. By the way, are you in the milk busi-

Caution. Bill-Why didn't the author of the

piece come out and show himself when the audience called for him? Jill-Well, you see, he'd just been getting married, and he's got light

eyes. If he went home with black eyes, he was afraid his wife wouldn't know him.-Yonkers Statesman, One Woman's Wisdom. "Alas!" groaned the discouraged hus-

there isn't a thing in the house to eat. What are we to do?" "Oh, I know!" exclaimed his wife, who had a short-order inspiration.

band. "I am unable to find work, and

'We'll take in boarders." Case of Self-Love. "Woe is me!" sighed the egotistical

youth who had been handed the icy mitt. "There's no one to love me." "Sir," rejoined the heartless maid, "you seem to forget yourself."

His Real Love. Eva-The count is going to marry the Montana heiress. Edna (in surprise)-For the love of

goodness! Eva-No, for the love of money.

"Dod b'ess sil the chil'ren poor,
An' make all the sick folks well;
An' dear Dod, p'ease don't forget
To send a pony, big an' swell,

"Dod be gracious to your lambs, An' keep sin out of my life;



Dod b'ess all my 'ittle frien's An' p'ease don't forget a fife.

"An' Dod b'ess ole Santa Claus, He is such a sprendid man! An' tell him-to not forget To bring a gun, too, if he can.

"An' a box of merbles, too,
An' a lot of pleture books—
An' a toolchest full of tools, Wif tacks, nails, screws, an' hooks.

To fill in corners wif, you kn Ginger cakes an' nuts an' figs An' a lot of candy, too. "An' I wouldn't mind some skates,

"An' dear Dod, some other fings

(I'll give my ole ones to some frien') n' I reckon dis is all— So dood-night, dear Dod, amen." -Detroit Free Press.



AMES," said Gerry Talbot suddenly, looking up from the letter he had just received, "you needn't mind about the rest. The dinner will not come off, after all."

The decorated end of the big, sumptuous studio looked oddly distasteful to Gerry Talbot since the reading of Miss Wakefield's telegram, which had shattered his enthusiastic plans. He had invited her-and her brother and his wife -to a Christmas studio dinner which he course, her rejection at the last hour had been a gentle invention prepared to avert a greater disappointment, for he had let her know unmistakably how it was with him, and he had been so hopeful of success that he had selected a ring for her Christmas gift-a little golden circlet set with a clear white solitaire.

The streets were thronged with bustling Christmas shoppers, glad of heart, with merry, expectant faces, and here and there a wistful one, too, looking on, but not buying. Talbot noticed two little girls gazing wistfully into a confectioner's window. "Yes, Min, I would. I'd do it fust

thing," said the taller of the two. "Oh, my, wouldn't it be nice to be rich an' invite all your friends to a big turkey an' ice cream dinner!" They were very poorly clad, thin-

featured and ill-nourished, but not unpleasant to look at. Talbot was conscious, sli at once, of an inexplicable impulse to gratify the child's wish. 'So you would really like to give

your friends a Christmas dinner!" he, smiling down at her astonished eyes. "I have a great mind to let you have your wish." "Oh, dear me, Min!" gasped Lou. "1

can't hardly believe it, can you? It sounds just like a make-believe thing. Won't Mis' Posey be s'prised! An Jonas an' Meg an' Tom. Oh, won't they be jest too pleased!" 'How many shall you invite?" Talbot

asked gravely, taking out his notebook. "Well, there's Aunt Katie an' Uncle Tim an' the baby. Mis' Posey, Jonas Boggs, Meg an' Pat Fooley-Min, can you think of anyone else?" Lame Betsy an' Moll."

"How many's that?" asked Lou. Twelve, counting us three.' "Don't you think it would be nice to have a little present beside each plate?" asked Talbot.

Both girls gasped, but looked immensely pleased. "Suppose you two go round with me and pick out what you consider suitable

for each of your guests, because I should not know what to select." When Lou appeared at the studio on the following morning she was a very

different looking girl, and any one would have known by the pure joy of her voice that some great and festive event was at hand. Talbot had finished the decorations which had been so harshly interrupted by Miss Wakefield's mes sage, and the result was extremely gratifying, especially after Lou's rapturous acclamations. At precisely 12 o'clock the bell rang

for the first time to announce the ar rival of Aunt Katie and Tim and the baby, all polished and prinked to the verge of painfulness. Next came Mis' Posey, a little, faded, bowed, ancient woman in rusty black, with long gold loops in her wrinkled ears. Lame Betty thumped in on her crutches, closely followed by Moll, in borrowed finery, of various sizes. Meg brought blind Jonas. and a merry little wraith of a man called Tom Doom.

Talbot shook hands all around with a "Merry Christmas!" after which they all took their places at the beautiful

table, the like of which none of that humble party had ever looked upon, But it was a kindly madness that possessed the host of that bountiful dinner, for his stories were of the pleasantest and his watchful care was unflagging. His guests rewarded his efforts by a spontaneous enjoyment of all that was set before them. It was good to see them walt upon blind Jonas, who could not help himself, and upon lame Betty, whose crippled hands made difficult the use of knife and fork.

Talbot rose to replenish a half-emptied plate as the hall bell thrilled merrily. There was a pause; then James' quiet, well-trained voice said: "Yes, madam; he is at dinner in the studior"

The door swung inward. Talbot knew that he was not dreaming when she came toward him with outstretched hands and a ripple of explanation of which he heard not one word. Indeed, to him one isolated fact filled the world -that she was smiling up at him with a great promise in her eyes.

"A little friend of mine wanted to give her friends a Christmas dinner, and I persuaded her to let me share it," he explained jauntily. "It has been a great treat to me."

Miss Wakefield read the whole truth for herself as she looked into the good, homely faces that reflected their host's praises in every glance. She said nothing, but her eyes told what Talbot would have given all he possessed to hear from her lips. Then Mr. Wakefield and his wife ventured in, and Talbot bethought himself to ask if they had dined, which they had not.

Lou and Talbot made room for three plates here and there, and as there was a plenty of crullers and turkey and icet cream, all went well to the very end of 1644the function, when the eleven originally invited gauests rose and made their added with glad hearts and beaming 1656—Treaty of Lieban sized Charles X. and the Great Re-

Miss Wakefield stood before the grate while her brother and his wife examined a row of pictures half hidden behind the holly wreaths.

"I was so sorry to disappoint you yesterday," she said, "but poor Ted's telegram was so urgent that we were afraid he was worse, and hadn't the heart to 1772-Three hundred chests of refuse him. When I discovered that we could take an early train home I made up my mind to run in and wish you a Merry Christmas, anyway, and so we 1777came, you see." Talbot thought of the ring. He had

taken it from its hiding place. "For a long while I have wanted to ask you to accept this-and what goes with it," he said simply, holding the glittering bauble toward her A red glow crept into her face. She

made no audible answer, but when the young couple at the other end of the room sauntered toward them they were smiling.

CHRISTMAS TREE FIRES.

How the Danger of Parlor Conflagrations May Be Minimized.

Several accidents on Christmas eve and day each year recall the fact, apparent only on that day, that the Christmas tree is quite as dangerous as it is pretty, and that the proud father personating Santa Claus should take the precaution to equip himself with asbestos whiskers. About the usual number of fires are recorded in the country each year as a result of the inflammable na ture of the Christmas tree and its dec orations and their careless handling. This warning always follows Christ-

mas just as the outery against toy pistols is raised after the Fourth of July Of course no rose is free from thorns, and apparently no holiday can be observed in the conventional fashion without risk of accident to the merrymakers. Sputtering candles on a Christmas tree are a very real danger, and the same may be said of the trees themselves, the wreaths of evergreen and the mistletoe. After a day or two they become dry and inflammable to a high degree, and in the joy of the celebration risks are run and precautions neglected. A tree thus loaded down with presents and decorations may become in an instant a torch capable of starting a disastrous fire, as many cities discovered the other day, to their great cost and to the serious discomfort of their fire departments.

By taking preventive measures thousands of dollars will be saved every year. Trees should be bought late and kept out doors until used. In the case of fresh, green trees the risk will be minimized. Candles should not be too close together and should be constantly watch-Above all, a wet blanket should be at hand, also a sponge on a pole long enough to reach any point of the trees or ceiling. So, at least, say the fire fighters, who every year have their own Christmas spoiled by the neglect of these very obvious precautions.

Old Ideas About Christman

Even as late as 1753 there was some doubt as to the exact date of Christmas, the old count bringing it to the 5th of January, the new count giving us the 25th of December, which is "the day we celebrate." In Devonshire, England, it is believed that if the sun shines at noon on Christmas day a plentiful crop may be looked for in the following year.

The Thoughtful Giraffe. The absord and long-legged giraffe Here is a thought mai kes me laugh Wear stockings, how could Old Santa Claus even fill half?"

ORDERED OFF.



The New Year-You'll have to move on, old man.

1213-First regular English Parlies

assembled at Oxford. 1400-Perkin Warbeck, pretender throne of England, execut Tyburn. -Proclamation issued by P

VIII., declaring Thomas P not a saint. 1572-First Presbyterian meeting

in England opened. The little ship Fortune England arrived at Plys. Mann.

-Henry McMabone executed Tyburn for conspiring leid

Treaty of alliance signed be Peter of Russia and Angu of Poland. -Duel between Dake of Her

and Lord Mohun. Both Kill -Queen Caroline of England thrown overboard at Bosts

cause of the duty inpose England. -Articles of Confederation of United States agreed to ican Congress recalled Silss D from Paris and appointed Adams..... Passage of the l ican forts on Delaware rise the British. Fort Lee, N. I. the Hudson, opposite apper York City, captured by the

1785-Sir David Wilkie, English er, born; died 1841.

1789-North Carolina ratified the stitution of the United Stra 1796—Catherine II. (the Great, press of Russia, died at &

tersburg: born 1729. 1797-Thurlow Weed born. 1805-British and Russian forces in Naples.

1806-Napoleon issued a decre & ing the British Isles in a st blockade. 1811-Great rlots at Nottingham,

land John Bright, great

lish statesman, born. 1813-Battle of Leipsic. 1815-Second Peace of Paris. 1816-Bells of Notre Dame, Park

1834-Melbourne ministry dissolve 1846 Cracow annexed to Austria 1848-Assassination of Count Ross minister to Pinx IX. at Re

New Orleans. Nearly 100 l 1852-Labos islands difficulty be

United States and Pers st 1857-Relief of Lucknow. 1862-Gen. Sumner demanded der of Fredericksburg, Va.

mark, Prussia and Austria fied . . . Gen. Sherman bep march to the sea. 1866-First G. A. R. post institut

1864 Treaty of peace between

Decatur, Ill. 1870-Duke of Aosta elected Ki Spain.

-Encyclical letter issued by IX. against Old Cathelies 1883-Standard time adopted in east of the Rocky mean hour spart and to differ by hours from Greenwick adopted. The divisions are ern time, central time, mountain time and Pacife being respectively 75 dep degrees, 105 degrees and L grees west of Greenwich

Chester Alan Arthur, tress President of the United S died in New York City; bon -Rear Admiral Charles H. win, Union naval vetera, New York City; born thee

1891—Ex-King Milan of Seria nounced all rights to the the 1893—Town of Kuchan, protis Khorassan, Persia, destroy an earthquake; over 1200

ple killed. 1894-Jose Salvador, snarchit threw bomb in Barcelots ter and killed many person roted.

1897—President McKinley sign treats adopted by the Un Postal Congress...Rer. 5 Hendricks Houghton, resi the Church of the Transfer (the Little Church Aron (Corner), died in New York

1808-Michigan State Supreme declared boycotting illegal -Admiral Dewey transf his wife the Washington given him by the America . Garrett A. Hobert, Vie ident of the United State 1901-James J. Jeffries defe

Ruhlin in a battle for the pugilistic championship -A canal treaty with the public of Panama sign

Washington. King Edward VII. of East rived in Portugal os a 1904

King Carlos.