COUSIN DOLLIE.

"Gelstone, Gelstone!" cried the soli-tary porter, as the train glided into the little country station. "Glad to see you, sir—welcome back"—with the touch of the cap and a broad grin di-rected towards the carriage from which Leonard, who had seized the strapped-up rugs and thrust his hat on his head, was about to spring.

was about to spring. "So this is Geistone at last!" said Dollie, drooping her eyelids rather guiltily. "Then I suppose I get out here?"

"Here? I thought you were going on Winscombe! That's the next sta-

tion." "No. They told me," explained Dol-lie lamely, "that Winscombe was near Gelstone, and I stop here." The lad dropped his own wraps, and began to load himself with some of the bags and boxes belonging to his fellow-travelar.

bags and boxes belonging to his fellow-traveler. "I will look after your luggage," he remarked, while handing her out of the carriage. "They don't give one over-much time at these small stations. What have you in the van?" "Two big boxes and a little one, and a portmanteau," she answered glibly; and the long-legged young giant hur-ried away.

ried away. "You are cousin Dora," said a quiet voice at her side. "I knew you at once by your likeness to aunt Dora." Dollie turned and received a cordial

Dollie turned and received a cordial greeting from a young man who intro-duced himself as "Cousin Dick." "Oh, goodness," she thought, "if the fates have decreed that I am to be sac-rificed on the altar of this impecunious family, I must say that the young giant allotted to me is infinitely preferable to 'Cousin Dick'!" Richard Haygarth was as unlike his younger brother as could well be ima-gined. He was under-sized, with a re-served expression, and was somewhat

younger brother as could war in a re-gined. He was under-sized, with a re-served expression, and was somewhat formal and precise in his manner. His hair and eyes were both dark, and in his thin shrewd face and square chin signs of resolution and firmness were not wanting. Withal his face was pleasant, while his voice was unusually melodious. But Dollie decided rapidly that the elder son had had to bear the brunt of the sharp struggle with pover-ty. Her meditations had arrived at this stage when Leonard had rushed hair and eyes were both dark, and in his thin shrewd face and square chin signs of resolution and firmness were not wanting. Withal his face was pleasant, while his voice was unusually melodious. But Dollie decided rapidly that the elder son had had to bear the brunt of the sharp struggle with pover-ty. Her meditations had arrived at this stage when Leonard had rushed up, saluting his brother with a blank stare of amazement as he marked his extraordinarily amicable relations with his traveling-companion. "Well, have you forgotten me during a three-months' absence? How are you, old fellow? We didn't expect you till to-morrow. But I'm glad you managed to get off to-day. So you stole a march upon me, and made cousin Dora's ac-quaintance first, eh? I hope you point-ed out all the 'lions' to her on the way. Did he make a good showman, Dora? I may call you 'Dora,' I suppose, for I remember yon as a tiny child of two or three who used to call me 'Dicky-bird'!"

The blank stare was succeeded by one of dismay almost ludicrous in its intensity. Leonard's face grew crim-son to the roots of his fair hair. At

last he stammered out— "I don't know—I didn't mean—I never thought you were Dora! I—I—

He could get no further. The full horror of the situation flashed upon him and half bewildered him. He had compromised himself miserably, and become involved in a scrape from which there could be no extrication. which there could be no extrication. No excuse or explanation could swall him. Indeed what explanation could he offer? He had told the truth, and nothing but the truth. Could he make his escape by the train? No. The train was gone! Dick eyed his brother in uncompre-hending surprise. Was he mad? What could be the meaning of his extraordi-nary aritation?

nary agitation?

mary agitation? "Do you mean to tell me," he in-quired at length, as a portion of the truth began to dawn upon him, "that you two traveled together for a couple of hours and never found out each of hours and never found out each other's names?" Still Leonard was silent. His agony of mind was not displayed in a suffi-ciently ludicrous manner to give Dollie the exquisite amusement that she had anticipated. It was too keen for that. So she came generously to the rescue. "Your brother and I did not ask each other's moment and I did not ask each "Your brother and I did not ask each other's names; and, curiously enough, we neither of us let slip anything to enlighten the other. Wasn't it odd?— for we talked nineteen to the dozen." This was strictly true, for it was not Leonard's conversation, but his lug-gage label which had enlightened her. Then, going up to the unhappy young fellow, she took his passive hand frank-ly, saying—

that you told me anything. And you need not be afraid of being 'chaffed' about it; for, if you do not tell any-body, neither will I, and, if we never mention it, we shall soon forget it our-

body, heither will 1, and, if we hever mention it, we shall soon forget it our-selves." "But you must think me such a fool, and such a coxcomb!" groaned repent-ant Leonard, reaching the climax in s despairing burst of self-contempt. "No, I don't! I don't think one bit the worse of you. You told me so plainly your opinion on the subject. and how much you disliked the thought of what your people wished to do, that I think all the better of you for it. You see you force me to pay you compli-ments, you look so miserable. I do like you very much! I am truly glad that you are really my cousin after all!" "It's very good of you to say so," he responded gratefully, though still rath-er dismally; "but I shall never forgive myself. And I know I'm——" "Hush!" she interjected peremptorily. "Not a word more! We've agreed to forget all that. What a pretty horse that is! Is it yours?" "No. That is the only hack to be bired in Gelatome. We have inst one

"No. That is the only hack to be hired in Gelstone. We have just one horse, and it is a pony."

A small gleam of sunshine lighted up his face as her clear sweet laugh rang through the air. He continued, as he handed her into the ramshackle old

vehicle— "Yes that pony is a maid-of-all-work. She works on the farms and carts— she's carting gravel to-day—and takes as many to church as will fit in the dog-cart. Are you fond of horses, Miss Nugent—Dora?" "Dollie,' you mean she corrected. "Yes, I love horses, and I am sure you do!"

do

Once launched on this congenial topic, the conversation flowed on brisk-ly, and presently they—or at least the chief culprit, who was in general a reckless scatterbrain, and who was not

"Here we are!" cried Leonard at last, in an almost regretful tone. "How fast this horse has brought us!" Dollie did not hear this remark. Her

companion's remorse soon softened down and his mental equilibrium re-stored, he did not interest her much. stored, he did not interest her much. Her attention was at present concen-trated upon the small ivy-covered house in which she was to spend the next fortnight. The horse wheeled round to the doorsteps. The hall door stood wide open, but the doorway was empty. Leonard remarked apologetically— "This looks a queer kind of welcome; but one cannot expect anything better from a house full of invalids." "Pray do not apologise! I was so

from a house full of invalids." "Pray do not apologise! I was so sorry to hear that your sister was ill. And, as for a welcome, why, you must do duty for all!" "I will do my best," said Leonard meekly, innocently wondering the while if she meant him to embrace her as his mother would have done. But, ere he had come to a decision upon this knotty point, a door was vio-lently flung open, and, with a kind of wild Indian war-whoop, four children rushed tumultuously into the hall. If Leonard had bestowed as warm a wel-Leonard had bestowed as warm a wel-come as that which they inflicted on come as that which they inflicted on the newly-arrived cousin, he would have been venturesome indeed. A still wilder shriek rent the air as Leonard followed her in, and a still more rapt-urous greeting was bestowed on him. "I'd no idea," panted Dollie, "that you had such a lot of small brothers and sites."

and sisters!"

"Only four," he assured her laughing-ingly-"a couple of each. But I ve no doubt you thought there were more of doubt you thought there were more of them. If I had not known them pretty intimately, I should have judged from that yell that there were twenty, at least." "Well, I certainly thought there were about eight! Now"-turning to the rioters—"let me see if I can tell you your names. This is Maud, and this is May"-touching in turn the two fair-haired denure-looking girls, who ap-peared—fallacious appearance!— as if they were models of propriety. "Wrong, wrong!" was the reply, ac-companied by a shriek of delight that sent Dollie's ingers to her ears. Then "I'm Maud" and "I'm May," they an-nounced. "Now guess which the others are!" are When she chose, Dollie accomodated herself readily to the mood of those around her. Looking with a smile at the happy sunburnt faces of the two youngsters who breathlessly awaited her decision, she affected with an air of her decision, she affected with an air of profound deliberation, then announc-ed, as the result of her scrutiny, "Jack the pickle, and Jim the studious boy." The bronzed urchin first indicated burst into an appreciative roar of laughter, while Jim the student shrank back a little abashed. "How did you know," demanded the former, "which was me and which was him, for I'm the tallest, though he's the eldest?"

ne, as she received a gentie kiss from a slight delicate-looking lady who might have been taken for Dora's elder sister. "So you are the matchmaker!" she remarked mentally. "You hardly look the character. Still you seem very kind, and I mean to be very fond of you, my dear aunt—and future mother-in-law!"

Truly it was a luxurious way to spend a summer afternoon! Lazily recum-bent on the grass, with a soft shawl un-der her head and an inviting-looking novel at her elbow, basked Dollie. Dora, quiet and pensive, sat on a rug by her side, stiching away at some fan-cy-work. Leonard was seated tailor-wise at his cousin's feet. In his big brown hand lay a spoon-shaped cab-bage-leaf filled with huge temptingly-cool strawberries, to which Dollie helped herself daintily from time to time. Tennis bats and balls lay strewn about where they had been tossed caretime. Tennis bats and balls lay strewn about where they had been tossed care-lessly when Dick—for Dick and Dora were sometimes inveigled by master and pupil into joining the game—had given up at the end of the first set, de-claring that he could play no longer; he must really go and— "Write a sermon?" suggested Dollie wickedly.

wickedly. "Yes-write a sermon. That excuse will serve as well as any other." And so he departed.

After that Dora declared that she too

After that Dora declared that she too ought to play no longer, and expressed her intention of fetching her work and performing the duties of umpire to the other two—this was no sinecure, for Dollie cheated unblushingly. But, when Dora reappeared, after a considerable lapse of time, she found the quondam antagonists most amica-bly employed, for Leonard was folding the great carriage-rug to make a com-fortable lounge for his cousin, who speedily abandoned it in favor of the grass; after which she promptly des-patched him to the strawberry-beds in search for refreshment. "We found it too warm to play any more," she explained; "but it's so de-lightful here in the sun that I mean to stay. You can work while I read, you know, and you will be saved the trou-ble of an umpire—and Leonard does contradiet so, doesn't he? He's gone to get some fruit now—I'm so terribly thirsty."

"He has? That's right," returned Dora benignly. "It is about the only luxury that we possess now; so I hope you will make the best of it." "Thank you, Dora. You know we never get any but bought fruit in town; and that does not taste the same some-

and that does not taste the same, some how.

how." "Oh, no!" she assented blandly. "I really don't know how you can bear the town. Would you not like to live al-ways in the country?" "Indeed I should! It would be de-lightful—too delightful ever to come to pass. I fear."

pass, I fear!"

pass, I fear!" A very unsuspiciously frank reply; and Dora smiled with a satisfied air. But her Machiavelian little namesake had, through this incautious feeler, divined that Dora also was privy to the scheme concocted by the head of the house against her guest's peace of mind; and the innocent acquiescence was strongly at variance with the un-dercurrent of thought in Dollie's mind. "So you too, my demure little cousin, are on matrimonial thoughts intent! But don't be too confident; you will

are on matrimonial thoughts intent! But don't be too confident; you will ind that a London"—"belle," she was about to say, but had the grace to sub-stitute another term—"a London habi-tuse is more than a match for a little country girl and her big hobbledehoy of a brother. How delicious they look!" This exclamation was uttered aloud, and addressed to Leonard, who felt himself more than repaid for his trou-ble and fatigue by the smile that ac-companied it.

companied it. "Taste them!" was his laconic re-

mark. "How many did you eat while you were gathering them?" she demanded severely, after a time. "Not one-not a single one!" was the

"Really I did not think there existed the schoolboy capable of resisting such a temptation!" said Dollie cruelly.

Ing the progress or a inscious straw-berry to her sweet ripe lips. "Am I particularly sensible? How have you found it out? Why are you glad?" "Yes, you are uncommonly sensible; and I have found it out by your not-I mean—that is—most girls would have refused to speak to me, or to have any-thing more to do with me, after my idiotic behavior. They would have told my mother that they had found her out, and got me into a row by tell-ing of my blundering stupidity; and they would always have been suspect-ing me of designs—yes, designs—ho, ho, ho!" He broke into his usual hearty, unrestrained laugh at the absurdi-ty of the idea; but his catechist was not yet satisfied. "You have not answered all my ques-tions yet," she pursued mercilessly, "Why are you glad?" "Because—because," he stammered out—"well, because I like to be with you. You are quite different, you see, and not like most girls." Poor simple Leonard! He had not learnt yet what it means when a young man singles out some "bright particu-lar star," as being unlike other stars; but Dollie had; and she gave him a

learnt yet what it means when a young man singles out some "bright particu-lar star," as being unlike other stars; but Dollie had; and she gave him a startled glance, and made no answer. "What made me think of that just now was that you did not jump up and make for the house, as most girls would have done, when Dora left us, espe-cially if they had suspected me of 'de-signs;'" and he nooded his head sage-ly, till his hair fell in most picturesque confusion, almost hiding his brown eyes. "You see I know all about it," he con-tinued, tossing back his hair; "and that would have been particularly an-noying when I was on the point of be-ing treated to strawberries." "Oh, so it was the strawberries you cared about chiefly, not.—." Dollie checked herself after framing so much of this artful question. Leo-nard fell innocently into the trap. "Not a bit of it! I didn't care for strawberries—much; but I liked them because you gave them to me. Upon my honor, that was the reason! Don't think I'm such a greedy pig, please, Dollie. Why, I only got them as an

think I'm such a greedy pig, please, Dollie. Why, I only got them as an excuse for staying with you a little

longer!" "There now," cried Dollie wickedly, in reproachful accents— "there—you acknowledge yourself that you had 'de-

signs'!"

Leonard started back aghast. His face crimsoned, then paled. "Dollie," he gasped, in a choking voice, "you don't believe, you can't be-lieve that I would ever do anything dis-bonorable!"

Dollie smiled and shook her head slightly. This simple young giant, with his frank boyish face, his freedom from conventional trammels, his sud-

from conventional trammels, his sud-den bursts of feeling, was beginning to interest her more deeply than she could have supposed possible. "What a man you will make some day!" was her next thought, as she coolly surveyed him from under the broad leaf of her garden-hat, her soft cheeks flushing, her eyes reflecting the excitement that flamed in his. "Of the half-dozen London suitors I have been on the verge of accepting, there was not one with half your manliness and pride." pride.

pride."
"Dollie," he went on passionately,
"do you think I would ever tell a downright lie?"
"No," she replied gravely—even Dollie could not answer him lightly or
mockingly now. "No, I know you
would not, Leo."
"Then listen to me. Dollie, I love
you with all my heart—for yourself and
yourself alone! I know I have no
chance of winning you. If I ever had
any, I threw it all away on the first
day I saw you. Bat I must tell you
and ask you to believe that what I
laughed about has happened to me—it
crept on me quite unconsciously." He
threw up his hands with almost a tragcrept on me quite unconsciously." He threw up his hands with almost a tragic air and sprang to his feet. "I never sought it," he cried fiercely; "and now I am miserable for lite! Dollie, say 'No' quickly, and seal my fate! I deyou will refuse me; but you must be-

serve it for my mad, my fatal folly!" But Dollae did not reply; and he turned away with a wild gesture of impatience, and strode with long swift steps up and down the little lawn. steps up and down the little lawn. Then, coming back, he threw himself down at her feet, and said gently—for a giance had shown him that the lus-trous dark eyes were filled with tears— "Dolhe, dear Dolhe, did I frighten you? I am sorry! Don't look like that! Tell me that I have no chance and I will go away. I want to hear it from your own lips. But I swear to you that I never knew, until you asked me that question about 'designs' that I liked you like this. And now I must have you like this. And now I must have an answer! I cannot wait. I know lieve that I am not acting a farce, or to please my mother. You do believe, don't you, Dolne, that it all came so suddenly, so terribly suddenly, that I could not help it?"



Then, going up to the Unhappy young fellow, she took his passive hand frank-ly, saying— "So you are cousin Leonard after all! I am very glad of it.' I should have been quite sorry never to see you again. And will you teach me to play tennis? I can hardly get a ball over the net, and you, I know, are an enthusiast." "I should think he is!" chimed in Dick, with rueful emphasis. "He em-bitters my existence with his tennis during the vacations, for I am the only available adversary at home — not counting your cousin Dora, whom he considers unworthy of his steel—so I shall be most grateful to you if you will be my substitute. And now I have two apologies to offer. The first is for the said Dora, who is laid up with a severe cold and could not come to meet you; the second is for myself. One of my parishioners who lives five miles away met me on my way to the station, and begged me to go at once to see his and begged me to go at once to see his son, who is, I fear, dying; so you must excuse my saying good-by for the pres-ent. A clergyman's time, you know, is not his own, and a curate's, I sup-pose, is still less so."

His smile was one that made his face wonderfully bright and animated, and Dollie looked after him as he walked away quickly, leaving a parting injunc-tion with Leonard to look well after her and see that her luggage was all right. It was a very mild and subdued voice, with an almost childish tremor in it, that said-

"I believe your boxes are all in the trap, Miss Nugent. It is waiting at the

She looked up quickly as they walked down the platform together. "'Miss Nugent,' Leonard! I am cou-

sin Dollie.

sin Dollie." He made no reply, but walked on, his neck bent in a thoroughly melancholy and dejected manner, his eyes shun-ning her glance. But this manœuvre only brought his tall head down a little closer to her own. Laying her hand on his arm, she looked up with a friendly little smile, saying declaively— "Now, Leonard, I cannot have you

"Yes-how did you know?" echoed Leonard, who from his lofty height had looked down with an amused air upon

this little scene. "Shall I tell you?" she rejoined sau-cily. "Well, I had heard before of the elly. Well, I had heard before of the Pickle and the Student, and I recog-nised them at once in this way. Jim is so like his brother Dick—the student; and Jack— Well, he is the very image of his brother Leonard-the big

The look and tone were irresistible, and Leonard's "Ho, ho, ho!" rang through the hall none the less loudly that the joke told against himself.

"Do you speak from hearsay or ex-perience?" he inquired audaciously. But, before Dollie could reply, she

heard a gentle-pitched voice.

"You seem very merry out here. Will you not come in and see mamma? You are my namesake, cousin Dora, 1 sup-

The mild, softly-spoken words pro-ceeded from the mouth of a fair quiet girl, another edition of Jim and Dick, so far as features went, tamed down and sobered by household cares into a very demure little maiden. She went on softly, in answer to Dollie's inquir-

"Yes, thank you, my cold is a little better, so I made an effort to come down and see you. Mamma, this is Dollie."

"Another edition still." thought Dol-

He was silent; and she added graciously

"Then you may have some of these for a reward." In her heart she was marvelling that

he did not inform her that he was now a man at college, no longer a schoolboy, and consequently able to resist the al-lurement that to such would be overpowering. But not for all the world would Leonard have contradicted his tormentor; that would have been bad manners, and bad policy too, as he had learned by experience.

At this juncture Dora rose, suddenly discovering that the light was too strong for her to work any more out of doors, and beat a retreat to the house. Dollie, who had transferred the cabbage-leaf to her own shell-like palm, was busily engaged in selecting the biggest and ripest strawberries wherewith to refresh her devoted slave. She merely glanced at the retreating figure,

"What terribly elaborate and alas, transparant machinations are yours, my dear Dora!" she reflected. "It would be humiliating, if it were not so amusing, to be treated in this way, and left tete-a-tete with Master Leo, in order o give him a chance of carrying the

forfress by storm." She looked keenly and rather quizzically at her cousin, to see if he also had fathomed the depths of this masterly piece of strategy, for a well-ordered retreat is a crucial test of good generalship.

For a moment he did not raise his yes. When he did so at last, and eyes found her mischievous orbs fixed on his face, he looked conscious and slightly embarrassed. Since Dollie's arrival, Leo had acquired an uncom-fortable habit of blushing and looking undeniably sheepish, especially in the presence of his mother or sister. It was a change and Dollie commented upon it as such. For she had greatly admired his nonchalant case and per-fectly natural unconsciousness in con-

rectly natural unconsciousness in con-versing with her on their first rencon-tor, and to their first luckless conversa-tion she ascribed this change. "Poor fellow! Ever since I led him on in such a shameful way to com-mit himself, and enticed him to put his foot in it, he has never been quite him-celf?"

In proof of this, Leonard's consciou In proof of this, Leonard's conscious look deepened into a vivid and painful blush. His first remark was not one that Dora would have anticipated in leaving the cousins tete-a-tete; for, though it did savor of a compliment, it was not one of the asual kind. "I am glad you are so sensible," he said, with a deep-drawn sigh, watch-

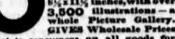
could not help it?" Her hand was playing nervously with the short ellipped grass at her side. He stooped and raised it reverently, gaz-ing into her face with a mournful pride and waiting numbly for his answer.

and waiting hambly for his answer. It came at last. Looking up with a flash of her old coquetry, she said— "I cannot do as you ask; but, Leo, if you were to beg me to say 'Yes' one half as earnesity as you have implored me to say 'No.' I could not refuse you! Hush!"—as he fell upon his knees by his site. "Listen to me! I must believe the to a antiden resultion has come you, for a sudden revelation has come to me too. I have found out that you are quite different from, quite unlike other boys. I must tell you first that other boys. I must tell you first that I believe you to be perfectly sincere and manly and noble. And I know too-though it seems rather strange-that you love me for myself, and would love me for all my money tumbled into the sea. Finally, I promise that, if I don't see anybody I like better, I will marry you some day!" A lame and unsatisfactory conclu-sion! But Leo-or Sancta Simplicitas, as Dollie mockingly dubbed him five minutes afterwards-read a fuller as-surance than this in the sweet eyes up-raised to his, as he took the vanquished "woman of the world" in his strong young arms and was content.

(THE END.)

A Louisiana judge decides that • man who loses money at poker may recover from the man who sells him the chips.

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