

THE CHARITY GIRL

By EFFIE A. ROWLANDS

CHAPTER VIII.—(Continued.)

When Frank was gone, at first she felt as if she must rush madly after him, but she restrained herself; and fortunately she got her father's permission to return to her aunt, and try to cheer the poor woman up. Roderick was back at her home, and proved a courteous and kind friend to his brother's wife. He sought her not to speak to her father about the marriage, urging all sorts of reasons for the delay. Roderick also advised her not to confide in his mother; and, bearing in mind Frank's wishes, she did all the young man advised.

So the days went by. Four months were spent; the time was drawing near for her father's annual winter visit to the Riviera, and Constance felt she ought to accompany him, when suddenly the current of her life was changed by two events, the first of which brought the color to her cheeks and the thrill to her heart, the second of which plunged the girl's soul into the deepest, darkest misery a woman can ever know.

Just as the letter in which she had written, in timid, gentle words, the maternal hopes she might assure herself of, a blow fell upon her which all but crushed out her life, as it successfully broke her heart. One day a woman presented herself at Lady Anstruther's house and asked to see Miss Gascoigne. Marshall, who guarded and shielded her young mistress by every means in her power, would have refused this woman admittance, but Constance took the matter into her own hands, and a meeting followed.

When Marshall went in to look after the girl, thinking she had given the stranger enough of her time, she found Constance standing before the fire, her face ashen white, her eyes staring and expressionless, like the eyes of the dead.

"Marshall," she said, with tones that were husky with emotion, "Marshall, I—I have been deceived. I am not Frank's wife!"

"Not Mr. Frank's wife! Oh, come, Miss Constance, you are altogether wrong! Why, didn't I see you a standard before the altar with my own eyes, and didn't I hear you swear to belong to each other?"

Constance put out an icy-cold hand. "Dear, true friend," she whispered, between her pallid lips, and then she took up a piece of paper and gave it to Marshall.

"Read that, and you will see I am not wrong," she said, with a wintry smile. "The wedding you assisted at was only a farce. Here is the certificate of Frank Anstruther's first marriage, ay, first and only one, for that woman who has just left me is his lawful, legal wife."

"I will not believe it! I will not believe it!" So cried Marshall over and over again, while the poor girl crouched down by the fire and rocked herself to and fro, asking herself in a wild, mad way, what was to become of her.

"Mr. Roderick will put this straight," was Marshall's verdict, and for a brief time a flame of hope sprang up in the wretched creature's breast; but alas! it soon died down and was crushed out forever.

Roderick took the matter up immediately. He sought out every clue, followed the truth up to the bitter end, and, lastly and sorrowfully, had to own his brother a liar and a villain.

Constance seemed turned to stone. She shed no tears, she made no moan; she bore herself with a pride that was something marvelous.

"What was to become of her? What of her child?" The question haunted her day and night.

Fortunately, her aunt's health became so bad, she was permitted to stay buried in the country house without further molestation from her father, who went off to Monte Carlo and enjoyed himself, doubly free from his daughter's presence. Letters arrived from Frank by every mail, but they were tossed into the fire unread.

"I leave you to communicate with your brother," the girl had said in her one and only interview with Roderick, and the hot blood of triumph had surged into his veins.

How well his evil, jealous plan had worked! Better than he could have hoped or dreamed. Frank was miles away; he could not stand forth and refute the horrible lies. Constance, bound up in pride and misery, refused to do as she should have done, write to him direct, and so learn the real truth. His two puppets worked at his will and hastened his revenge.

Revenge on the brother he had always hated; revenge on the woman he had loved in a wild, unreasoning, passionate way, and who had shrunk from his very friendship in a manner that had chilled him to the heart. It was a cruel, wicked, sinfully act to act rather of a demon than that of a man.

As day after day went by, the time approached for the birth of Constance's nameless child. She had made no plans, arranged nothing. Roderick did everything. He it was who guarded the girl in her mother's house, where, with no one about her but Marshall, not even a whisper of her condition caught the wind; he surrounded her with every comfort, every care, but he never saw her, and she sent him no thanks.

The day her child was born, Marshall came to him; she had no liking for Roderick—in fact, so great was her anger and hatred toward poor Frank she could scarcely bring herself to address any one connected with him; but there was nothing else to do, and even the old woman, in common justice, admitted that Roderick was acting with more than a brother's love to the unfortunate girl.

"She refuses to see the child," Marshall said, "and when I urge her, all she says is, 'Let it die! Let it die!' We can't do that, you know, sir. What are we to do?"

Roderick had already foreseen this contingency and was prepared. "The child must be removed. I know a woman who will take it and be thankful for the money. The mother will never ask for it, never wish to see it."

And thus, despite Marshall's longing to keep the helpless, hapless child, was the matter arranged. Constance never asked after her baby, and when she was told by her faithful maid what had been done with it, she made no sign, either by word or look. The doctor who attended her had been taken into confidence by Roderick, and he plied the poor young mother from the bottom of his heart, for he saw that a blow had been struck which could never be healed.

Constance was scarcely convalescent before she received a visit from her father, who was in a state of much perturbation.

"Knew how it would be," he said, when he first saw the girl's white face. "Bored up here with a dying old woman—enough to kill you in reality. And who could have put this into the papers? Anstruther says it must have been some officious person in the village who thought you were ill, and must needs kill you."

Constance took the newspaper from her father's hand, and read the announcement of her own death in a short paragraph. She was silent for a moment, and then, as she handed it back, she said, with a faint smile:

"It is a pity you have to contradict it, father."

"Eh? What nonsense! Now, Con, I shan't let you stop here any longer. I never saw such a change in any girl! Pack up your trunks at once and come away! Why, you look forty!"

How little did poor Constance think, as she journeyed to London with her father, that at that very time Frank Anstruther was reading the account of her death, not only in a newspaper, but in a loving, tenderly indited letter from his brother Roderick, who had hit on this idea of separating Frank from his wife as being the best. If he had hinted at anything else, Frank would have rushed back to England at once, but with Constance dead and buried, what was there to bring him back?

Roderick's shrewdness was verified; Frank never came home. And when the London season was at its height, and Constance Gascoigne was winning fresh laurels for her beauty and wit, the news arrived of an outbreak of fever in Burma, and Frank Anstruther's name was among the dead. They called him a hero; they sent home accounts of his courage, self-sacrifice, and bravery, and Constance's heart turned with a despairing yearning agony to the man she had loved so well, and she longed to be buried with him, shut out of the world forever. She saw Roderick as little as she could. It was from his lips that she learned of her child's death; the woman who had taken it had reported always how delicate it was, and the end, always expected, had come at last.

Then it was that Roderick spoke; that he showed himself in his colors. He pleaded for her love; he told her how he had adored her ever since their childhood's days; how he had given place to Frank against his longing, and entreated her to forget all and become his wife.

When he left her that day Roderick knew his plan had failed; come what might, Constance would never be his wife. To lend aid to his final coup he had lied to her about her child. He knew that it lived, although if neglect and poverty could have killed it the poor little thing had its share. Stung to the quick with the bitter words that came from Constance's lips at his offering of love, he determined she should never be told the truth. He had one interview with the woman who had charge of the child, and after giving her a large sum of money and sworn her to secrecy, he went out of England, and was lost to the world that knew him forever. He had lived for one thing only during the space of four years, and when he knew he had lost his triumph, he cast the dust off his shoes and vanished.

Then came the time of George Fraser's wooing, the miserable hopeless time when Constance learned that her hand was the price of silence over her father's dishonor and dishonesty. The rest we know up to the day that Audrey came to Dingewood as maid to Sheila Fraser.

CHAPTER IX.

"And you are my mother?" They were the only words Audrey could utter. She was bewildered, amazed; her heart was beating with a nervous excitement in which pride and joy mingled largely. She felt as though she were in some sort of dream, or waking trance; every now and then she passed her hand over her eyes as though to clear away the confusion that existed.

She was kneeling beside Constance Fraser's slender figure, the pretty, white hands were clasping hers, the soft, musical voice was ringing in her ears. And this was her mother! She—Audrey Maxse—the waltz and stray, the nameless nobody, she was this delicate aristocrat's child!

"You are my child, my darling. My own, my very own!"

Audrey gave a little cry and nestled close to her new-found mother. "It is too beautiful, too beautiful to be real!" was all she could say; and then, as she felt the soft, tender lips pressed to her brow and cheeks, she began to wake from her dream.

"Tell me, tell me how it all happened, how you found that I was not dead."

"It was your face that first seemed to whisper hope," Mrs. Fraser replied.

"When you came in that morning it was as though Frank stood before me again. You have his very eyes; the expression in them is exactly what lived in his. I began to wonder, to dream. I was not happy till I had learned your history. Now you know why I have had so many long chats with dear Mrs. Thorngate. I determined to confide in her; I knew I could trust her, as, indeed, that has been proved. At once she took matters into her own hands. She communicated with her husband, who made every investigation about you, my darling, and discovered, thank heaven! that when you were placed in the home through the influence of Sir Henry Bulstrode, certain things

belonging to the woman supposed to be your mother were deposited in the care of the matron, Miss Irons. I examined these few poor things—an old satchel, a Bible, a bundle of old letters; and in the satchel, hidden away in the lining, we discovered the certificate of your birth, together with the last letter Roderick must have written to the woman before she died. Oh, my darling! my darling!" she cried, holding Audrey pressed close to her. "How can I ever describe the exquisite joy that came to me when I seemed to live again—to grow, as I once was, strong and full of courage. Kiss me, my child, my baby! Kiss me, and let me hear you say you have forgiven me for my cruel desertion of you!"

"Forgiven you? Oh, my poor, dear, sweet, new mother, don't say such a thing! When I remember how you must have suffered, how cruel that wicked man has been to hide me from you all these years, I feel almost mad."

That eventful night ended in more excitement for the report spread to the house of the discovery of Jack Glendurwood, insensible and horribly wounded, and in the tumult that ensued Sheila worked off some of her violent feelings. She broke in abruptly upon the lengthened conference between Audrey and her mother, and blurted out the news without any warning; but her eyes glistened gladly as she saw the color leave Audrey's face and lips, and heard the moan that came from the sorrow-stricken heart. Constance Fraser turned pale, too, but the sight of her child's face gave her courage. As though she had read it in large letters, she knew the truth then.

"It may not be so bad, Sheila. These things are always exaggerated," she said, as she put her hands tenderly on Audrey's shoulders. "It seems to me incredible that Jack should have been attacked like this. Surely such a man can have no enemies."

"He has been robbed of all the jewelry and money he had on that will be a clue," Sheila said, apparently with indifference, but watching Audrey keenly as she spoke. All at once she seemed to realize that things were not so bad for her. This sudden illness of Lord John's might, after all, prove a good friend to her.

At any rate, it would separate him from Audrey, and that was a great deal. She noticed with the keenest pleasure the anguish that had dawned on the young girl's face. She must not let her step-mother notice her hatred of the girl that had stepped in between her and her happiness.

"But I am forgetting," she said, in a frank, pleasant manner. "I have to offer all sorts of congratulations to you, mamma. Why, it is like a fairy story. And so this pretty little girl is to be my sister?" She had come up to the slender drawn-up figure. "We must be good friends, you and I, Audrey," she said, glibly. "Let us seal that bargain with a kiss."

Constance Fraser's delicate face flushed. This was not what she had expected; her generous, noble heart was deeply touched and she trembled visibly.

"Thank you, dear Sheila," was all she said; but she gave the girl a look of unutterable gratitude. "You have always been kind to me. I—I should like to think you and my Audrey were friends."

Sheila stood silent for a moment, then, laughing softly, she pressed her lips to Audrey's cheek.

"There! It is done!" she said. "And now for the latest news of poor Jack."

Audrey had stood motionless all through this little scene; but her mother's hand felt the tremble that ran through the young frame. She fathomed only too well all that her child was suffering. As the door closed on Sheila, and they were alone once more, she wrapped her arms round the slight figure.

"My darling!" she said, in tones of the deepest tenderness. Audrey gave a little cry, and turning, clung to her new-found comforter and protector.

"Oh, mother, mother!" she whispered, brokenly; "and I—I love him so! What shall I do if he dies?"

Then, with those loving arms still about her, she went out the story of her simple love. It was an old and a new story; and though her heart was torn with anguish at this calamity that had befallen her beloved, the girl's sorrow was inexpressibly soothed by the remembrance that the heart she leaned on now beat only for her, and would be hers henceforth and to the end.

(To be continued.)

Broke Up His Dreams.

Stubb—Great Scott, man, what is the matter with you?

Penn—I-I fell over a cellar door last night.

Stubb—But you look as though you had been clubbed. Cellar doors don't club people.

Penn—Yes, but there was a policeman sleeping on the cellar door.

Sure to Tumble.

Gussie—But, dear boy, if the rich man refused to give you the hand of his daughter I don't see why you should persist in giving him tips on the races?

Reggy—Sh, I want him to go as broke as I am and then perhaps when we are on the same level he won't have such a strong objection.

Sure Thing.

Gunner—And you say that tall man is playing for the heart of the beautiful Boston heiress. What chance has he? Why, he has a heart of ice.

Guy—Oh, he'll capture her all right. He is an official of the ice trust.

Wisdom of Experience.

"They say," remarked the mere man, "that 'because' is a woman's reason—and it is about all the reason she has."

"Yes," rejoined the pretty widow, "it's about all the reason she has for marrying a man."

Often So.

He—Marriage is a pottery. She—You mean a lottery, don't you? He—No, I mean a pottery—a place for making family jars.

Circumstances are beyond the control of man, but his conduct is in his own power.—Beaumont.

GIRL CHALLENGES CHAMPION SPELLER.



Miss Jessie Hamilton

Miss Jessie Hamilton, of Macon, Mo., has accepted a challenge from "the champion speller of the world." Once a year for thirty-two years Prof. D. Jones, a school teacher of Lancaster, Mo., has published in his county seat paper a challenge to anybody who talks English to spell against him. He never misspelled a word. Until this very little woman decided to accept, Prof. Jones went unchallenged. Miss Hamilton is 18 years of age. She has the certificate of her last school teacher stating there is no word in the English language the girl cannot spell.

Popular Science.

A machine which threads a thousand needles a minute is at work in a Swiss factory. The purpose of the machine is to thread needles that are placed afterward in a loom for making lace. The device is almost entirely automatic. It takes the needle, carries it along, threads it, ties the knot, cuts the thread off a uniform length, then carries the needle across an open space, and places it in a rack. The work of threading these needles was formerly done by hand.

When a submarine boat becomes disabled beneath the surface of the water and cannot rise its crew is in a bad predicament. To remedy the difficulty an inventor has contrived an auxiliary boat to be carried in the submarine and to be a part of it, practically, until needed. In time of accident the crew of the incapacitated submarine would enter the little craft and when the containing chamber had been flooded the bolts would be withdrawn and the vessel with its human freight would clear itself and rise to the surface.

German observers recorded as long ago as 1747 that a luminous emanation of variable shape will appear in the dark at points on the surface of the earth below which there are extensive ore deposits. Immediately before or during a thunderstorm these phenomena are said to be especially striking. Similar observations have more recently been made in North America in the neighborhood of ore deposits. The electric emanation given off from the surface of the earth has been repeatedly ascertained photographically.

A new theory is advanced by hard-wood experts as to why wood which has been carefully kiln-dried often warps. It is now believed that when the sap is dried out various foreign substances other than turpentine, pitch, etc., remain in a more or less solid state, and when the wood is moistened these substances absorb water, and, swelling, cause warping. A process is announced for removing the objectionable substances, the inventor claiming a piece of oak so treated can be soaked in water all night without swelling perceptibly.

Sir William Crookes has discovered how to get nitric acid from the air, but the discovery has long been looked for. "I have before me," writes a correspondent of the London Chronicle, "a manual of chemistry in which I find a eulogy of nitrogen and its compounds, such as nitric acid and the so-called compound ammonias. 'Whoever,' says the inspired chemist, 'succeeds in producing those bodies in abundance from the nitrogen of the atmosphere without the use of organic materials will not only amass a princely fortune but must rank as one of the greatest benefactors of the human race, inasmuch as such a discovery would open up an almost infinite supply of matter for the fertilization of the land.'"

The fondness of cats for catnip is well known, but it seems, from a recent experiment at the Arnold Arboretum, in Boston, that cats have other favorite plants, and more than that, are pretty good botanical investigators for their own purposes. A few plants of a new vine from China were set out in the greenhouse. Presently it was found that some animal was eating their tender shoots. The deprecator turned out to be the house cat. This was, perhaps, regarded as only a temporary aberration of that particular cat's appetite, for in the spring 100 small vines of the same plant were set out in a cold frame. But the cats of the neighborhood flocked there and destroyed the entire bed, eating the plants clean to the ground. It has become necessary to protect these vines by wire nettings against the inroads of cats. An interesting question is, How did these American cats find out that

SAW THE MOTOR CAR.

It Was a Great Curiosity to the Farmer's Family.

It was the turn of the motor car tourist and he told this story, says the Kansas City Star.

"I was on the way to a small town about thirty miles distant and had stopped for luncheon in a little village. At the same table in the small hotel sat a countryman, a red handkerchief around his neck and his slouch hat on the floor beside his chair.

"How far is it to Billville?" I asked of him.

"The man to whom I addressed the question looked incredulous.

"Don't you know?" he replied.

"I admitted my ignorance of the country and its distances.

"It's about twenty-five miles," he said.

"What's the best road to take?"

"The man laid down his knife and fork and a smile passed over his face as he looked at me in silence, then his face took on a look of indecision, which at length was succeeded by a look of satisfied determination.

"Don't you know?" he asked by way of reassurance.

"I again admitted my ignorance.

"I'll show you," he said, and from his pocket he drew a pencil and an old envelope. Then he drew a diagram of the route I was to follow to reach the town for which I had set out in my motor car. No sooner had he delivered me the diagram and the instructions as to how many miles I was to go this way and that than he picked up his hat and suddenly left the table. I could not account at that time for his quick departure, but an explanation came to me later. After eating luncheon leisurely and smoking a cigar which consumed about an hour of my time, I climbed into my machine and resumed my journey.

"For five miles I followed the countryman's diagram and then came to a piece of road that was atrocious. For two miles I climbed over boulders and stumps and in and out of ruts and gulches. At last I saw ahead a little house in the edge of the woods. I was sure that I was off the regular road and I made for the house to ask for my bearings. Imagine my surprise upon drawing up in front of the house to find my friend, the countryman, his wife and children out in the road to meet me. They all looked at the machine with wondrous eyes, and the smallest child hung to his mother's skirt and cried from fright. The other children fled to the house and peeked out of the window. My friend who had been so kind in drawing the diagram and giving directions said:

"Neighbor, I must run my horse to death to get here afore you did. I wanted my old woman and the kids to be sure and see one of them critters. They never seen one afore. I'm much obliged to you, but if you want to get to Billville you'll have to pull back two miles to the road where you turned in and go straight ahead."

INDIAN OF MEXICO DOGIE.

Essentially a Man of Peace, He Wants to Be Let Alone.

The simple minded, patient, docile Indian of Mexico is eminently peaceful. Bountiful nature and perpetual summer combine to palliate his improvidence. He cannot see the necessity of laying up anything for a rainy day. It rains half the days in Mexico anyhow, but that only makes the mangoes grow larger and cheaper. If he has no tortillas to-day some of his neighbors have, and they will gladly share, for conditions may be reversed to-morrow.

These Mexican Indians make the best and the poorest servants in the world. Their greatest charm from this standpoint is their perfect appreciation of their position. Always polite, never presuming, with hat in hand, it is always "your servant" and "with your permission." In the household they ask a half holiday once a fortnight with never a word of complaint when working hours last from daylight to midnight.

The Mexican Indian does not want to fight. All he asks is to be let alone. His politeness and affectionate nature are inborn. His love for children is particularly marked. It is a common sight to see a laborer in the street with but two pieces of white cotton clothing to his back or his name stop a woman with a baby in her arms and, holding the child's face between both his hands, deliver a resounding smack and chuck it under the chin. And in the same unconscious and entirely unaffected manner will a young man take his sombrero from his head and reverently kiss the hand of some ancient relative in a tattered dress when he encounters her in the crowded thoroughfare.—Modern Mexico.

Long-Lived Goldfinch.

The longevity of ravens, geese and several other birds is well known, but it does not often fall to the lot of a cage bird to live to a great age. A goldfinch belonging to W. Godwin of Victoria Park, Dorchester, furnished the exception to the usual rule by living until it was over 22 years old. The bird died recently from old age.—London Standard.

Value of Antiseptics.

Before Lister's antiseptic inventions the death rate in amputations of the thigh was 41 per cent. It is now about 6.

One Year's Canned Tomatoes.

The total pack of the United States of canned tomatoes in 1908 is given as 9,074,965 cases.

this Chinese plant was good to eat? And how was the news of the presence of this new delicacy so rapidly spread through pussycodom?

LITTLE GIRL TO BE LEADER.

Upon a little Philadelphia girl, Julia Foster Avery, aged 15, was placed the mantle of Susan B. Anthony when the famous woman suffragist was dying. Little Miss Avery is now in special training to make the advancement of woman's suffrage her life work, and, indeed, has already begun her activity as a leader.

A short while before her death Miss Anthony called Julia and her mother, Mrs. Rachael Foster Avery, vice president of the National Woman Suffrage Alliance, to her bedside. Miss Anthony took the child's hand, "Julia," she said, "I am going to will you my position as head of the women of this country. You are the best fitted for that place of all the girls I ever met."

In order to qualify herself for the position of a world leader Julia is



JULIA FOSTER AVERY

studying German, French and Esperanto, Roberts' Rules of Order and constitutional history of the governments of all large countries. She has written a poem dedicated to the cause of suffrage. Her spare time between scholastic duties at Swarthmore is spent practicing oratory and studying the speeches of famous men and women.

Grip Facts.

The grip is not simply a bad cold, and this fact is worth knowing. It resembles a cold in some respects, and colds are often wrongly diagnosed by the victims as grip. The grip is a malady which has laws of its own, both as to origin and progress after development. According to the doctors, it must run its course—"there is no special remedy that can directly destroy the infection, no drug that can kill the bacillus or neutralize its toxin." This also is worth knowing. The main thing is to nurse with care and give the system the best possible aid in its efforts to throw off the poison.—Baltimore American.

Two Ways.

"Scriffs can tell the temperature by the sound of creaking wagons."

"That's nothing. I can tell it by a noiseless gas bill."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

A Straight Road.

"What do you suppose is the most direct way to avoid responsibility for mismanagement of a railroad?"

"Why, be a director, of course."—Baltimore American.

It's easier for some men to make love than it is for them to make a living.