

THE CHARITY GIRL

By EFFIE A. ROWLANDS

CHAPTER XXI.

Naturally when Jack Glendurwood came home from Belmont the truth about Sheila came out.

"I happened to call at Dinglewood for a moment. I wanted to speak to Tourist about that horse he said he would buy, and found the fair Sheila with that Fairfax girl and her Lancet all ready to start off for a ride. They proposed accompanying me, and I agreed, though I could have done very well without them."

Audrey laughed as he related the results of the ride, and Jean's gray eyes glowed with triumph.

"I wish I had told him what that odious woman said," she observed to Audrey, when they were alone in the drawing room; "he ought to know of her insolence."

"It would only vex him, and I don't really mind," Audrey answered, though she had been much hurt for the moment, "besides, it is all so vulgar and disagreeable. Why should we trouble about it?"

On the last day of October Willie Fullerton came down to Craiglands, greatly to Audrey's delight.

"Now, Jean, I want you to be very nice to him; he is a dear boy," she declared.

"The dear boy being a good five years older than your ladyship," laughed Jean; but she found it a very easy task to be nice to Willie Fullerton.

His open admiration for Audrey won her heart, and she felt that before long this pleasant young Englishman and herself would be good friends. To begin with, they both cordially detested Mrs. Fairfax and her daughter, and that was a very good foundation to commence upon.

The week following Mr. Fullerton's arrival was, to Jean Thwait's thinking, the pleasantest that had come since she had left Broadborough.

To Audrey, it was quietly happy; the Dinglewood folk gave her a little breathing space; Sheila and Lady Daleswater having gone up to town to arrange about the masked ball, and she had her Jack nearly all to herself, for Jean and Willie Fullerton fraternized warmly, and were much together. Audrey's letters to her mother that week unconsciously betrayed the feeling of her heart. She wrote freely, joyously, not in the strained fashion that had seemed to hang about her of late, and Constance Fraser, away alone, bearing her great sufferings with courage and patience, rejoiced as she read.

Alas! How little did she think those letters were the last happy ones Audrey would write for many a long, weary day. Jack, too, tired out with perpetual excitement and worry, basked in the sunshine of his girl-wife's love, and revelled in the gladness her presence gave him.

Two days before the masked ball Sheila and Lady Daleswater returned to Dinglewood, and drove over to Craiglands to discuss all the arrangements with the Glendurwoods. They found the four young people out in the grounds playing lawn tennis.

"I have come to ask Lady John what she is going to wear at the ball. Oh, I know it is a great secret, but I will betray it to no one," Sheila said to Jack, as they walked away, and then she tried to catch his eye as she gave a very palpable sigh.

Audrey good-naturedly offered to show her gown and domino to both Sheila and Lady Daleswater. Jean Thwait had been carefully excluded from the invitations.

"Lovely! Beautiful! Exquisite!" cried Sheila, as Murray unfolded the sherry satins and held them forth for inspection. "And this is your domino, Lady John?"

"Black and silver. It was Jack's idea. Isn't it pretty? Look at the design over the shoulders."

"I wish you would put it on; I should like to see it so much," Sheila next observed.

Lady Daleswater had not vouchsafed to come up and see the finery, she was in far too bad a temper.

"An artist from London is coming down to sketch us all. He arrives to-day. I think he had better begin at once. I wish you would allow him to sketch yours, Lady John."

"I shall be delighted," Audrey said, cordially. "Shall he come here or must I go to him?"

Sheila's cheeks were quite rosy. "Oh, there is no need to trouble you. Just send Murray over with it. She might drive back with us if you can spare her."

Audrey, only too glad to find Sheila speaking so pleasantly, agreed at once, and so, when the Dinglewood carriage drove away, Lady John's maid rode in it, carefully guarding the box containing the black and silver domino.

Audrey meant to have told Jean about this, but all ideas went out of her head as the carriage disappeared, and they rushed to finish their game.

"I say, baby, here's a bore," Jack Glendurwood said, as he entered Craiglands at dinner time on the evening of Sheila's ball. "I can't go with you to-night, after all."

"Oh, Jack!" Audrey clasped her hands in despair. "I am disappointed. I don't think I shall go, then. What is the matter?"

"Benson has telegraphed me he must see me at once on important business; something gone wrong with the election, I suppose. I'll get back as quickly as possible, and come on to you if I can."

"Your dress looks so lovely. You would make such an exquisite Black Brunswicker, Jack."

"Well," laughed Jack, kissing her, "I will try and get into my fine top; at least, if I cannot manage the Black Brunswicker, I will don my gray domino. You will be able to pick me out, won't you, fairy, even though I am masked?"

"And you me?" Audrey added. "Don't forget to look for the black and silver, Jack."

Dinner was hurriedly eaten, and Jean was much grieved for Audrey's sake that Lord John could not accompany her.

After Jack had driven away, the two girls mounted up to Audrey's pretty bedroom.

"You must be my maid to-night, Jean," she said, as they sat before the fire for a few moments.

"Why, where is Murray?"

"Oh, she was very rude and I was obliged to send her away," Audrey answered, a shade falling on her face. "There have been a great many complaints about her downstairs."

"I hope you told Lord John, Audrey," she said. "No? My dearest, believe me, you are wrong—this perpetual attacking of you. Believe me, if it were once known that your husband had put his foot down, you would find Dinglewood House would learn how to behave itself."

"But, Jean, dear, what has Dinglewood House to do with Murray's insolence?" Audrey asked, quietly.

"More than you imagine, Audrey," Audrey was silent for a moment.

"Jean," she said, looking up with tears in her eyes, "why is it that they—they are so cruel? What have I ever done to Sheila Fraser or Lady Daleswater that they should hate me so?"

"You have offended Lady Daleswater by your beauty and aristocratic bearing; you have made an enemy of Sheila Fraser because you have robbed her of the man she meant to marry."

"Jean!" Audrey turned pale. "Is this true?"

"Ask any one about the place, and you will find it is; but why should it distress you? Remember the time it takes to make your complexion, and how will your ladyship have your hair dressed to-night?"

Audrey smiled at Jean's grave mimicry of Murray's voice.

"Now let us go down, the carriage is at the door, and Mr. Fullerton will be tired of waiting."

She followed the black and silver domino down the stairs, and then gave a great start as Willie sauntered out of the smoking room in his ordinary evening dress.

"Why are you so late? Have you been sleeping?" Jean demanded severely.

Willie colored and stammered out an excuse.

"If you will forgive me, I have such a headache, I—"

"You want to stay at home? Certainly. Jean, look well after him. Good-night, darling; good-night, Mr. Fullerton; you really do look alarmingly ill," and so, laughing, Audrey drove away.

Jean stood gazing out after the carriage.

Willie had never seen her look like that before, and it puzzled him.

"I say, Miss Thwait, you are not vexed I did not go, are you? I—I am—"

Jean turned to him hurriedly.

"Not vexed, Mr. Fullerton, but sorry. I should like you to have been with her to-night. I hardly know why I say this, but I have a presentiment that something is going to happen, and that Audrey will find sorrow, not pleasure, at Sheila Fraser's masked ball."

CHAPTER XXII.

A huge ballroom had been erected on the lawn, with light, wooden walls, and one cone shaped roof; the floor was parquet, and as smooth as ice; a smart military band was to provide music; supper was served in another temporary room, and the drawing room, hall and conservatory were turned into a lounge and promenade.

Audrey felt quite bewildered as she found herself in this throng of variously colored forms, all with the black lace or silk covering over their faces. She wished vaguely she had not come, then that she had Jack with her, or Willie Fullerton. Suddenly Audrey became aware that two people were talking close to her and that they were speaking of her.

"They call her a beauty!" one woman's voice said. Audrey could recognize neither of the two. "A small, insignificant thing like that, with her black hair and staring white face! Jack Glendurwood did the worst day's work he will ever do when he married her! What can a low born and bred girl like that know about social duties?"

"And yet they say she was a great success in town."

"They say—of course they say so. Well, ask Gladys Daleswater and you will hear the truth."

"Ah, it was a sad mistake! Such a nice fellow, too; he should have married Sheila."

"I can't make out why on earth he didn't! This charity girl business seems to me to have been very well arranged by Mrs. Fraser. Why, everybody knows he has always been in love with Sheila. They are together now. I just caught sight of them as we came along, his tall gray domino beside her pale-blue one. I expect he tells her all his troubles. Sheila is so fond of him. They ought to have been man and wife, and would have been, too, but for that pesty-faced, upstart creature!"

Audrey's limbs seemed frozen, her heart a lump of ice. What was this she had heard? What horrible nightmare had come over her! So this was what was said!

"Sheila and Jack!" Again and again the phrase rang in her ears. "Sheila and Jack!" They had always loved; they loved now; and she—she, Audrey, the low-born, low-bred charity girl—she stood between them.

A moan broke from her burning lips; she held one hand pressed close over the other so tightly as almost to tear the gloves she wore. Her brain was on fire; her head reeled.

She sat so quiet she might have been a figure of marble, not human flesh and blood. Not even in that one moment of actual peril on board the *Mona* had she felt as she did now. She was stranded before she had sailed beyond the sun-dipped waves of youth and youth's sweet dreamings. Suddenly she awoke with a start. A voice was calling shrilly in her

ear, and a hand was placed on her shoulder.

"Lady John—I know it is you by your domino—what are you doing all alone? Isn't it fun? Aren't you enjoying yourself? I never was at anything so lovely in all my life. Don't you know me? I am Alice Fairfax. It is such fun being disguised like this. But you must not sit here all alone. Lord John is enjoying himself immensely. Let him walk in the garden with Sheila just now. You see, I know all the dominoes, and can pick people out quite easily."

"You—you are sure my husband is here, Miss Fairfax?"

"Yes. He has been dancing with Sheila. They are out in the garden. Do you want him? Shall I go and find him; or why not come with me, I know just where they are."

Audrey's simple, loving heart was ablaze with jealousy. So he had come, and had gone to Sheila first without looking for her? What if those cruel tongues had spoken true, that already he was repenting his bargain, and turning again to Sheila, the girl he had always loved.

"I think I will go with you, Miss Fairfax," she said, hurriedly. She would see for herself.

"Come this way, then," Alice Fairfax went out through the window. "Lift up your skirts, Lady John; I am afraid the paths are not too dry."

"They went down here," Alice Fairfax said, as they passed onward to a more remote corner; "but I don't see them now. What a nuisance! I thought we should have been sure of catching them up. Ah, here is Mr. Devereux. I will ask him if he has seen them. You go straight on, Lady John, I will overtake you."

The girl darted away as she spoke, and Audrey wandered on alone, obeying her mechanically.

"When I find Jack he shall take me home," she said to herself, very slowly. She longed to be gone, to be away from this horrible ball, with its laughter and fierce rivalry, and venomous tongues, hidden behind every mask. Deep in her agitated thoughts, Audrey had hurried on unconsciously. She left the ball room behind her. She had followed along the path in which Miss Fairfax had set her first. She scarcely realized that she was alone, she had no desire for the girl's companionship. All at once she came to a standstill.

What forms were those just before her, half hidden by a rustic garden house? Her eyes were blinded for an instant, then she saw quite clearly. That was Sheila Fraser's face; she had taken off her mask, and the far-away lights shone on it, and touched the red gold of her hair with a shimmering glory; and that tall, strong figure in the gray domino! Ah, did she not know that only too well?

With sickening pain Audrey noted the attitude of those two; how Sheila's white hands were clinging to the man's strong ones; and then, as though to confirm the truth, to allow of no remaining doubt, Audrey saw the girl's head, with its wealth of ruddy gold hair, rest against the man's breast. She caught the murmur of a man's voice, and then the answer that Sheila gave, clear and shrill as a bell. "Oh, Jack! Jack! my darling!" and then, with a cry of despair, she turned and sped away—on, on, unheeding, unconscious, till suddenly her strength went and she stumbled against something or some one, and she knew no more.

GOOD Short Stories

Went to the Right Place. An American whose business frequently takes him to London tells of an amusing conversation between the driver and conductor of a public bus in that city.

The bus was fairly crowded, so the American climbed to the top, where, shortly after taking his seat, he observed a person in peculiar garb, with a red turban. There was a laden sky overhead and a slow, drizzling rain, such weather as is the rule rather than the exception in the British metropolis.

As the conductor came to the top the red-turbaned person, evidently an Indian Parsee, got down.

"What sort of a chap is that?" asked the driver of the conductor.

"I fancy that's one of them fellows that worships the sun."

"Worships the sun, eh?" repeated the driver, with a shiver. "Then I suppose he comes over here to have a rest."—Success Magazine.

Drawing the Line. The Cook—"O'm'ginner givin' yez notice that O'm'ginner t' leave, ma'am."

The Mistress—"Why, what's the trouble, Jane? Are you dissatisfied with your work or your wages?"

The Cook—"No, ma'am, me work's aisy an' me wages is a plenty, but O'm'ginner stand fer so many av thim duds a-callyn' on yer daughter."

The Mistress—"But they do not interfere with you, do they?"

The Cook—"No, ma'am. But O'm'ginner afraid people will be after thinkin' some av thim is a-callyn' on me, ma'am."

Sure of It. Tourist—"Wasn't there a great battle fought about here?"

Village Dame—"Ah, I do mind it when I was a gell, I do. They was—Tourist—"But, my good woman, that was nearly 600 years ago!"

Village Dame (unabashed)—"Dear, dear! How time do fly!—Punch."

The New Danger. "I heard that Deacon Thompson had a narrow escape from being hit on the head by a meteor."

"Meteor! Nothing of the sort. It was a piece of slag that some fool aeronaut was using for ballast."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Painful Suggestion. Chapleigh—"I was—aw—out late lastest night, and the aw—result was I had a head on me this mornin', doncher know."

Miss Canstique—"Well, if I were you I'd stay out late every night."



"She seems a very cold, unsympathetic sort of woman to me," said the young matron. "I met her in the street the other day and had quite a long talk with her, and that was the impression I had. She was pleasant but totally unsympathetic."

"You surprise me," said her friend. "It seems to me that she ought to be able to sympathize with anybody."

"I don't know whether she ought to or not," replied the young matron. "I only know that she doesn't. She has one of those callous natures. I was telling her all about the way my poor darling baby had been suffering with the colic. She has had four attacks now, and she's less than 3 months old. Three severe attacks! Simply terrible! Why, she just screams and kicks her little limbs about in agony and her face twists up and she gets positively blue all around the mouth. My heart just bleeds for her—anybody's would—anybody who had a spark of human feeling. Nobody likes to think of a little baby suffering."

"I should think not," agreed the friend.

"It didn't bother her in the least. She just raised her eyebrows and half smiled and said that it was too bad. Too bad! I should think it was too bad. And then she said: 'Have you tried catnip? I declare I was so provoked I could almost have bit her with my umbrella. As if I hadn't tried catnip! I don't know what I haven't tried, really, but nothing seems to do her any good. And, of course, I can't get a wink of sleep all night—not a wink. Harry takes her up in his arms and walks the floor with her, and that quiets her for a little while, but just as soon as he goes to lay her down again she wakes up and begins to scream, and, of course, that wakes me, too, just as I am dozing off. The way I've felt after one of those nights I can't begin to tell you. I have terrible headaches—at least I had a terrible headache the last time—and I'm really not fit for a thing. Harry, too, poor fellow, quite feels it. He looks positively haggard after his rest has been broken in that way. I was telling this Mrs. Richardson how worried I was about it. Well, of course, she doesn't know Harry so awfully well, but I did expect she would sympathize with me a little."

"She didn't?"

"She didn't seem to, certainly. She said: 'It must be very hard on him! But she said it in such an unemotional, perfunctory sort of way that she'd better not have said anything at all. You know, it really would be a very serious thing indeed if Harry's health should break down. I'm sure I don't know what I should do, with the baby to take care of, too. I can't depend on that nurse one bit, she's so careless. I caught her the other day giving that poor little angel its milk four degrees lower than it should have been. And then when I came to question her, what do you think I found out?"

"What?"

"That she didn't use the thermometer at all—just squirted the milk on the back of her hand to see if it felt warm enough. Now, did you ever?"

"I never did in all my life," replied the friend, ambiguously.

"It's no wonder the poor little darling has the colic so much. But Mrs. Richardson didn't seem to think it was anything out of the way. She is naturally unsympathetic; that's what's the matter with her."

"When did you meet her?"

"On Wednesday afternoon."

"Then perhaps that explains it," said the friend. "I met her on Wednesday afternoon, and she was suffering with the toothache, and she said she was going downtown to have the tooth extracted. She's been having rather a hard time lately. She's not more than two weeks out of the hospital, you know, and her two grandchildren, whom she adores, are down with the scarlet fever, and they won't allow her to go to the house and nurse them. Then all the money she and her husband invested in some copper mines has been lost and they're going to be obliged to sell their home, and this last illness of hers has been very expensive, and even now they're afraid she'll have to go back to the hospital. She says she believes she'd rather die, though, she has had so much pain to bear for the last ten years, and they won't give her any hope of a cure."

"Why," exclaimed the young matron, "I never heard of any of all this! She never said a word about it."

"She doesn't complain much," said her friend. "But all the same she has troubles of her own."—Chicago Daily News.

gracious, man!" cried Red, wringing his hands. "What did you do that for? We can't make any more coffee!" "Do you think I'm going to stand here and see a son of a gun of a coffee pot get the best of a friend of mine?" demanded Donovan, as he returned to his bacon.

AVOID STRAIN UPON EYES.

Defective Vision Held Accountable for All Sorts of Human Ills.

It is difficult to realize that the relation of eye strain to headaches and other functional disorders was not appreciated by physicians until within thirty years ago. If an otherwise healthy person complains of headaches the chances are defective vision is the cause, says a recent writer in the American Medical Association Journal. These "ocular headaches" come on at any age, but are very frequent between 6 and 12. A peculiar feature about them, however, is that they are indistinguishable in character and position from headaches due to any other indisposition.

The extent of defective vision among children is indicated by the statistics of 420 children, mostly in the minor grades, whose eyes were examined for defective eyesight. Of this number about one-quarter had serious defects and required glasses, while only 40 per cent possessed perfect vision and exhibited no ocular symptoms. In another series of records compiled in Berlin it appears that over 40 per cent of all the children have refractive errors indicating imperfect vision.

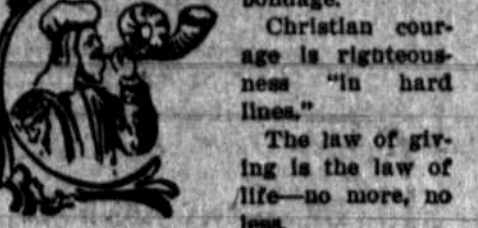
It is asserted that defective eyesight plays an important part in school efficiency, and the fact is adduced to prove this that in the Berlin schools the number of children with imperfect vision shows a decreased ratio from the lower to the higher grade.

Indeed, physicians are now wont to ascribe many bodily disturbances to eye strain. It is pointed out in support of this contention that 80 per cent of the patients of the National Hospital for Epileptics in London have serious ocular lesions. The records of the Elmira reformatory for young criminals show that nearly 50 per cent of the inmates are similarly afflicted with eye trouble.

One of the most curious functional disorders due to eye strain is that reported by a physician writing in the Medical Record, who declares that recurring "colds" are often due to eye strain. He asserts that one of his friends gets a "cold" whenever the frames of his glasses, for compound astigmatism, are bent. It is even asserted that nervous coughs are frequently due, according to the same authority, to lack of oculists' attention.

RAM'S HORN BLAST.

Warning Notes Calling the Wicked to Repentance.



All compromises are evil bondage. Christian courage is righteousness "in hard lines."

The law of giving is the law of life—no more, no less.

Christianity is good character expressed in conduct.

All painting in "clay" is doubtful until it has been "dred."

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see people.

Noon is the vindication of the fanatical streaks of the dawn.

Repentance is not moping, but facing the mark—and toiling it.

When you fight a man you watch his eye, not his hands or his feet.

A voter who consents to a saloon consents to all that naturally flows from it.

To-day is the axe's coil upon which every son of man must ride into His kingdom.

Conscience is the main shaft of the mind, and love is the gear that belts us to the eternal.

No holy life goes out of our sight but it returns a holy ghost, a comforter, a guide unto all truth.

"As a man thinketh in his heart, so he is," and the more his vital understandings are hitched to the second-hand of temporary clockwork, the more feebly he goes and the more liable he is to get out of order.

There is an ocean into which, from age to age, all streams of human consciousness, and conscience and conviction pour themselves, and from which there is no outlet save by the windlasses of God himself, who sends us showers of blessings which no present human effort can account for.

VOLCANOES OF THE MOON.

On Immensely Larger Scale Than Those of Our Globe.

It is evident to anyone who glances upward at the moon that its volcanoes are on an immensely larger scale than those which stud our globe. One explanation, now abandoned, is that the force of gravitation being there only one-sixth that of the earth, the matter expelled from a crater would be spread far more widely and explosions would be generally on a far more magnificent scale.

Professor Pickering quotes this theory only to refute it in some comparisons which he has made between the great volcanic region of Hawaii and one of the smaller craters of the moon. The facts seem to him to be that the larger craters on the moon came into existence when the thin, solid crust covering the molten interior was, owing to its solidification and contraction of the crust, much too small to contain the liquid material.

The craters were, therefore, formed by the lava bursting through the crust and so relieving the pressure. Later, after this relief had been found and the crust had thickened, the interior regions by cooling shrank away from the solid shell, which was now too large, and being insufficiently supported, caved in, permitting the great fissure eruptions which produced the so-called lunar seas. These extensive outflows of lava dissolved the original solid shell whenever they came into contact with it, much as they do in the present day in Hawaii.

Had the moon been much smaller these eruptions might not have occurred at all, and if the moon had been much larger their relative size would have been greater. Most probably on the earth similar outbursts were greater and our original gigantic craters were destroyed by the outflow of the earlier archaic rocks which completely submerged and dissolved them.

Not Thirsty.

Jane, the bright new maid, always anxious to please, had been intrusted with the care of a little aquarium, in which the goldfish had always thrived very well until Jane came on the scene. The first day she arrived she gave them fresh water, as instructed, and then left them to their own devices. But, alas, on morning the little fishes were found floating feebly on their backs. "Jane," called the anxious mistress, regarding her pets with concern, "have you given the fish any fresh water lately?" "No, ma'am. Bless their little hearts, they haven't drunk the water I gave them last month yet!"

An Admirer of Shakespeare.

"Do you think that Bacon really wrote the Shakespeare plays?"

"I don't see that the question is worth discussing," answered the busy theatrical manager. "There is no doubt that Shakespeare was the important and responsible man. Whether he wrote the plays or not, he managed the business."—Washington Star.

Carrying Out the Thought.

"Deduction is the thing!" declared the law student. "For instance, yonder in our yard is a pile of ashes. That is evidence that we have had fires this winter."

"And, by the way, John," broke in his father, "you might go out and sift that evidence."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Some married men are not home long enough to get homesick.