

# THREE ETON BOYS.

BY W. E. NORRIS.

But he did not seem disposed to dwell upon the subject, nor, indeed, upon any other that was connected with the present or the future. It was about old Eton days that he wanted to talk, and very soon Jim and he were chuckling over the memory of many a bygone escapade, as if they had been schoolboys together once more. At last Bracknell glanced at his watch and pitched away the end of his cigar.

"Ah, well!" he said, "it has been very jolly seeing you fellows again; but my time's up now and I must go and say good-bye to the governor and Mildred. I shall have to get back to London this evening, so as to make an early start tomorrow. You might walk up with me, Jim. Oh, no, by the way, you can't, though. But come down to the station at 5 o'clock and see the last of me, like a good chap, will you?"

Jim promised that he would be there, and presently Bracknell took my arm and walked me off toward Staines Court. I accompanied him very willingly, because

I was rather curious, I confess, to see what would happen if he encountered Hilda; and, as luck would have it, when we were within a few yards of the house that ill-used lady, in a neat walking dress, came tripping down the steps.

She nodded to Bracknell, without any manifestation of surprise. "Oh," said she, "you have turned up at last. Have you come down to stay?"

"No," answered Bracknell, shortly, "I have come down to say good-bye to my father. I'm leaving for the Sudan tomorrow."

"Really? How spirited of you! When will you be back, do you suppose?"

"I'm sure I don't know; never, perhaps. Don't let me keep you standing in the cold."

Hilda smiled and shrugged her shoulders. "I am not much accustomed to being left out in the cold," she remarked. "No body has ever yet succeeded in treating me in that way, and I doubt whether you will succeed. I shall stay at Staines Court until you return."

"Shall you?" said Bracknell. "I should think you would find that rather dull work. However, you know best what suits you. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," returned Hilda. "Take care of yourself."

She nodded again as she turned away, and so they parted, without so much as shaking hands.

This short dialogue had the effect of sobering my companion, whose face was grave enough when he rang the bell and asked for Lord Staines. I waited for him in the drawing room while he went to bid farewell to his father and sister, and a long time I had to wait before he reappeared, looking a little flushed and agitated.

"Come on," he said, hurriedly; "we haven't much more than time to catch the train." And when we were out in the park he drew a long breath. "Well, I'm glad that's over!" he exclaimed. "Poor, dear old boy! I shall never see him again, you know; and dash it all! I wish I had been a better son to him. Not much me saying that now, eh? But I do wish it, all the same."

I made some stupid conventional speech, to which Bracknell replied, "Oh, he's breaking up fast, anybody can see that, and he knows it himself. Besides, it's rather more likely than not that I shall leave my bones in Egypt; and between you and me, Maynard, I sha'n't mind if I do. I've been pretty well sick of life for some time past, and if I could make a fresh start—however, I can't make a fresh start; and as for living with my wife again, I'd sooner go into penal servitude. Upon my word, I think she's the most infernally wicked woman I ever came across—and I have seen a fairish number of women who are commonly called wicked."

It was neither my business nor my inclination to take up the cudgels on Hilda's behalf, but I said, "You won't make her any better by deserting her, will you?"

"Nor any worse," returned Bracknell. "She'll be glad enough to get rid of me, you may be sure, and she won't have much to complain of, for when I come into the property, if I ever do come into it, she shall have the lion's share of my income. I must pay off Beauchamp too, somehow or other. I say, Maynard, do you believe in Providence? Of course you do; though you're not the sort of respectable fellow who would; and your mother brought you up well. I sometimes think Providence may have taken poor little Stanning away for very good reasons. He wouldn't have had your advantages, you see."

Then he suddenly changed the subject and talked about the Egyptian campaign until we reached the station, where we found Jim waiting for us.

The train dashed in immediately afterward, so that our leave taking was a brief one. I remember that Bracknell's last words were: "Good-bye, old Jim; don't forget me if I get knocked on the head out there."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

I was dining up stairs with my mother that evening when our aged factotum came in to say that Mr. Leigh was at the door in his dog cart, and wished to speak to me.

I ran down stairs, feeling sure that some misfortune had happened, and my fears were confirmed when I stepped out into the whirly night and Jim, stooping down over the glowing lamps of the dog cart, said: "I want you to come up to the station with me, Harry; there's been an accident to the express."

He had heard no particulars, only that a collision had occurred down the line and that a great many lives were believed to have been lost. "I couldn't go to sleep, not knowing whether Bracknell was alive or dead," he said. "Besides, he may be badly hurt, and there's nobody with him."

I agreed that anything was better than suspense, and having sent a message to my mother to the effect that I was

going home with Mr. Leigh and might not be back before morning, got into the dog cart; though I had some doubts as to whether we should be able to proceed to the scene of the catastrophe.

However, when we reached the railway it seemed that there would be no difficulty on that score. Lord Staines was a great man in our part of the world, and Jim himself enjoys a certain consideration, so that the station master, on hearing our errand, at once placed an engine at our disposal. It had been a very bad accident, he told us; but he had heard that there was not four killed outright, and didn't see no reason to fear as his lordship was one of them.

I hardly know why both Jim and I should have formed an opposite opinion. We did not communicate it to each other—indeed we scarcely spoke a word during the half hour or so that we spent rushing through the darkness in the teeth of the southeasterly gale which had risen since nightfall—but afterward we compared notes and found that neither of us had had any hope from the first. Perhaps, as far as one of us was concerned, hope would not have been quite the right word to use. A little sooner or a little later death must come to us all; and the future, as poor Bracknell himself had said a few hours before, had had but few bright possibilities to offer him. Yet when among those four silent, stiffened bodies we recognized the one of which we were in search, I own that my philosophy broke down, and that I was just as sorry as if there had been no mitigating circumstances connected with this swift blotting out of a life which was still young and vigorous.

Jim took the loss of his friend terribly to heart. He had always loved the man, always admired him and wanted to believe in him, even when faith must have been a little difficult, and it was long before he recovered from the shock of that fatal night. To the present day he cannot bear any allusion to it; nor, I must confess, is it a subject upon which I myself care to dwell. Our first duty, of course, was to break the news at Staines Court; and how we accomplished this I can scarcely remember. The one thing that stands out clearly in my recollection is Hilda's look of horror when she was told in what manner her husband had met his death.

"I can't see him!" she cried. "Are they bringing him here? I won't look at anything shocking!"

It seemed to me amazing that at such a moment the woman's first thought should have been to spare herself; but perhaps, after all, it would have been more amazing if her first thought had been anything else.

Lord Staines was in bed when we reached the house. It was thought best that I should at once tell him what could not long be concealed, and he listened to me with very little apparent emotion. He asked me whether I thought Bracknell's death had been a painful one; and when I replied—as, happily, I was able to do—that it must have been instantaneous, he muttered, "Well, well!" and lay back on his pillows, looking straight before him with sunken, weary eyes.

"So there is an end and a finish of us," he said presently; "maybe it's best so. It seems odd that Bracknell and Stanning should both go before me; but I don't suppose I shall have much longer to wait now. When my poor boy and I parted this afternoon, we knew that it was for the last time, and I'm glad he came to see me—I'm very glad he came to see me. He was in great joy at the prospect of a fight—he has always been like that from a boy. We Henleys may have our faults, but I don't think we have ever been accused of wanting pluck. Bracknell will make himself heard of out there, you'll see. I was a little vexed with him at first for going off, and leaving me, but he gave me reasons, and I believe he was right. I wish he didn't hate writing letters so much! The newspapers will tell us all about him, though."

In this way the old man wandered on, until Lady Mildred came softly into the room and made me a sign to leave him. I doubt whether he ever fully realized what Bracknell's fate had been. During the next few days he talked a great deal about his son, sometimes speaking of him as still alive, sometimes as having been killed in Egypt; but he did not seem able to fix his mind upon any subject for more than a few minutes at a time, and often failed to recognize those about him. One duty, fortunately, recurred to his memory, and his performance of it was, I believe, an immense comfort to two simple-minded and conscientious people.

"My poor boy," he said, when he had caused Jim Leigh to be summoned and made him take Lady Mildred's hand, "told me that I might consent to your marriage without loss of honor. I had thought differently, but Bracknell assured me that some one—the other man!"

"Mr. Beauchamp?" suggested Lady Mildred gently, when her father came to a long pause.

"Beauchamp, yes—Beauchamp, it seems, withdraws. There is money owing to Beauchamp, and I can't attend to business now; but you will see that he is repaid. Bracknell explained it all to me, but I have forgotten. He promised that the money should be paid, though."

"It shall be paid, papa," said Lady Mildred.

"Thank you, my dear. You have been a good daughter and you will be a good wife. I wish you all happiness."

These were the last intelligible words that he said. He lingered on for some days after this, but soon sunk into a state of semi-consciousness, in which he at last passed quietly away. My mother says he died his duty according to his lights, and will be judged by that standard; and perhaps it may be allowed that in this instance she does not push charity beyond all reasonable limits.

His titles died with him, except that of the barony of Bracknell, which is of ancient creation and which has passed to his daughter. By her also have been inherited his estates, which, although still heavily encumbered, will doubtless recover themselves in time under their present judicious management.

Jim's marriage was a very quiet affair, the bride being in deep mourning at the time for her father and brother; but Lady Fitzworth, who came to take charge of the orphan after Lord Staines' death, con-

sidered it undesirable that the ceremony should be too long postponed; so good Mr. Turner tied the knot, and the young couple have been living at Elmhurst ever since in a seclusion which I dare say is agreeable to both of them, but of which the country does not altogether approve. Jim tells me that the debt of honor bequeathed to his wife has already been paid off and that he hopes in the course of a few years to be able to move to Staines Court, which is at present shut up. In the meantime he is very well satisfied with his less pretentious abode; and indeed, if a man were to be condemned to live in the country from year's end to year's end, I don't know that he could find a pleasanter place to live in than Elmhurst, while I am persuaded that he would search in vain for a fellow exile more amiable and charming than Lady Bracknell.

The other Lady Bracknell—the viscountess of that name—has quite recently decided to put an end to all confusion of identity between her sister-in-law and herself by changing her condition. During the first few months of her widowhood she resided with her father—a touching spectacle to the neighborhood, as she drove about, with lowered eyelids, in her weeds. Whether after a time she became bored with the respectful sympathy of the neighborhood or whether she found herself better off than she had anticipated I do not know; but she moved somewhat suddenly to London, set up house there, discarded crape in favor of pale gray and began to dispense a hospitality of which many people were found ready to avail themselves. Rumor has it that, on recovering her freedom, she made a desperate bid for the Beauchamp property and that the fortunate owner thereof met her advances by requesting her in so many words to omit him from the list of her acquaintances; but I do not believe this story. Hilda has experience enough to be aware that flirting with a married woman and espousing her after she has become a widow are two very different things, and it is not likely that so clear sighted an observer would have wasted time and energy upon a forlorn hope. As a matter of fact, she has done far better for herself than she would have done by marrying Beauchamp; for she is about to be led to the altar by the eldest son of a duke, and I hear that the bridegroom's relatives have received her with marked cordiality. Her career, so far as it has gone, may serve as a warning to impulsive young men and as an encouragement to the daughters of the clergy.

## THE END.

### Mr. Wallenbar's Remarkable Rug.

A rug 10 by 15 feet, made up of the fur of thirteen wild animals, is now in the possession of W. H. Wallenbar. Mr. Wallenbar keeps his rug, which cost him \$1,500, locked up in the vault in his office, and takes it out only occasionally to exhibit it to particular friends.

The rug was made in Moscow and took one man two years to put the pieces together. Finished the rug has the appearance of a rich mosaic, the deep yellow of the tiger woven into the coal black of the South sea seal in diamond shaped blocks. The center is made up of three rings of a diameter of twenty inches, the patchlike diamond pieces radiating from a circular tuft of monkey skin and bordered by a rim of otter. The groundwork of the entire piece is in monkey skin. Outside the large center pieces are two rows of circles. The outside contains fourteen circles six inches in diameter, made of mink, Angora and otter. The inner rows contain sixteen circles of Russian sable and monkey skin.

At either end and on the sides is a 6-inch selvage of Russian silver fox hide, and twenty silver gray fox tails adorn the ends. In the make up pieces of the furs from the Russia sable, Persian lamb, Angora goat, China goat, mink, otter, South sea seal, monkey, Thibet lamb, muskrat, weasel, leopard and the Russia silver fox are used.—Chicago News-Record.

### Beautiful Italian Women.

"The prettiest women in the world are those of northern Italy," said Henry C. Bartow, who has completed a trip around the world. "Pretty is not exactly the word to be used in describing them. A wax doll may be pretty. The women of northern Italy are gloriously, maddeningly beautiful. They are a mixture of the French gentility and the old Italian nobility, and inherit the vivacity of one country and the voluptuous, half oriental beauty of the other. If you want to understand what the poet meant by the 'dark eyes' splendor' go not to the Vale of Cashmere, nor to Cadix, but to Milan. Greece in her palmy days could not produce such perfect figures, nor Spain such coquettes. Add to unrivaled beauty of face and figure the sweet cadences of the Italian tongue, and I defy any youngster to get away from Milan without regret. Some one has said that Italian is the mother tongue of the goddess of love; certainly there is nothing sweeter—it is melody itself."—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

### Before the War.

A veteran sportsman, speaking of the hunting in South Carolina before the war, said the other day, "Ducks used to swarm in our rice fields then. Turkeys, partridges and other game filled the forests. Snipe infested the rice stubble in millions, and woodcock were plentiful in every swamp when in season. Never in any country have deer been more strictly preserved. From the 1st of February to the 1st of August the sound of a gun was never heard in certain preserves, where deer multiplied like cattle. It was nothing unusual for a planter to reserve four or five thousand acres of woodland for a deer park. I have seen no less than twenty-two deer cross the road in one herd. Bears also were very common."—Charleston News.

### When Money Is Freely Spent.

East side Hebrews are no doubt as careful of their money as any people in the world, but they will "part with the dollar" freely under two conditions—sickness or death in the family. There is one poor little flat off East Broadway where a little child was badly scalded two weeks ago. The family have had a trained nurse all that time and have had the doctor three and four times a day, and all the members will willingly work harder than ever to get the money for it all.—New York Times.

## NEW YORK FASHIONS.

### SOME EXAMPLES OF HOW HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF.

Mate Leroy Suggests That It Is Hardly the Thing to Wear an Old Fashioned Gown and a Modern Bonnet—Some of the Latest Styles.

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How history repeats itself we need only glance at the passing fashions to see, and while we might have some reasons to object to wearing old styles over again we still have others to be thankful that we are thus enabled to call the choicest ideas out of two or three centuries. If one woman looks better in a long skirted and short waisted dress, why not let her wear it in as serene content as fills her sister's heart in a fin de siècle? If one finds her great-grandmother's old poke bonnet sets off her fair face to good advantage, why frown because it is not a tiny little crease with a pair of velvet donkey's ears upon it? That is how fashion stands today. But when individual fancy causes a woman to put on a frock that irresistibly recalls that of her great-grandmother's, and a little bonnet of the hour, the effect is not exactly artistic. To dress artistically is easy. All one wants to do is to have everything in perfect keeping. When that is not done the richest and most elaborate costumes fail of their effect.

The dressing of the hair has a very great deal to do with the becomingness of the whole of a lady's toilet. With the present style of wearing a soft fluff of hair over the brows or a few short curls all the hard lines are softened, and almost any kind of headgear can be worn, and the softened and refined effect of the broken lines reaches indefinitely through the whole system of a woman's apparel. The face is framed like a picture in the loveliest manner, and its grace and softness pervade the whole. One may know this by occasionally meeting a woman whose hair is combed smoothly back, leaving the forehead bare. There is no bonnet or hat that can look well under such circumstances, and not only the face, but the whole woman, will have a hard and unwomanly look. She may partially hide it by a hat which covers her forehead, but there is still that uncompromisingly hard outline.

Notice the left figure in the illustration of new walking costumes. It is made after a long forgotten fashion, with stiff braided folds around the bottom of the skirt, with a formless short corsage, and settles looking as if carved from wood, with a three fold berthe extending around the shoulders, the whole effect being ugly and ungraceful in itself, with really no redeeming quality. Look now upon the little plateau bonnet, fitted to the shape of the head and softly fastened to the mass of lovely curls and waves of hair. That is the saving grace, and the awkward ugliness of the dress is forgotten and the remembrance lost in the twining maze of curls. Imagine the hat on the lady



RUSSIAN CLOAK.

beside her as sitting over a forehead with the hair brushed back. Such a hat could not be worn without the wilderness of curls and waves of hair, unless the wearer earned the name of a perfect fright.

The gown is of stone gray cloth over tartan velvet, the scallops bordered with narrow band of astrakhan. The back of the waist is seamless, and in very many of the newest gowns there are no side forms at all, and where they fasten is a mystery to the uninitiated, though I have a shrewd suspicion that it is under the left arm. It is told that in times long past the Spanish ladies used to consider it vulgar and a mark of low origin to require any fullness of the dress over the bust, and they were said to wear leaden plates to diminish the breadth of their chests, and the tendency seems to set strangely in that direction now.

There are many little usages of social manners taught us through the medium of don'ts. There should be a volume of don'ts for the instruction of ladies in dress, and one of the first should be, Don't constrict your chest, whatever fashion may dictate. Another should be, Don't follow a fashion unless you are sure that it will not bring out all your worst points or injure your health.

Shoes are now made on a common sense basis, with beauty combined. There is no



NEW WALKING COSTUMES.

pinching of toes and crowding the foot out of shape, and yet feet were so daintily dressed as now. Larger waists are the present result of the better understanding of the laws of health, and certainly the drawing of corsages so tightly across the bust is not a healthful practice. Let me say to all women thinking of doing so, Don't.

It is a real pleasure to note a garment or gown that has found its place. Simplicity and lightness for the young, rich and heavy fabrics for the middle aged are in keeping, and the young girl or the matron who understands herself thoroughly is a delight to the eye and a perfect picture for the artistic soul. Witness a Russian cloak for the mother of four marriageable daughters. The front and sleeves are of black velvet, and the back is of fine harriss cloth richly beaded with applique of velvet, and the whole is bordered with a band of mink. The muff is also of that soft fur. It is cut simply in princess shape. The distinguishing feature is the band of fur across the bust and around the sleeves. A man must admire the daughters of so tasteful a mother.

One great fault of our American girls is that they are so apt to want to wear rich and expensive fabrics while young. Youth needs no decoration. An opening robe needs no background to show its exquisite beauty, and the fresh bloom of youth shows sweeter and fairer in delicate but



WALKING DRESS AND RUSSIAN COSTUME.

Inexpensive tissues. No jewels can add to the brightness of their eyes, and it does not need the flash of diamonds to distract the attention from their freshness and bloom.

The matron, however, as her color fades and the indefinable but certain marks of age appear, needs the aid of handsome and elaborate costumes made of costly and valuable fabrics like the heavy broades, velvets, moires and other materials which bear upon their surface a tale of value and the requirement of middle age. Diamonds are for them, and lovely as they are they are after all but a poor compensation for the beauty of early youth.

No mother now dresses all her girls alike. If she has a dozen each one wears gowns as individual as the girl herself. What suits one would not do for the other, and so we meet two lovely sisters from one family out for a walk on upper Fifth avenue. The one is tall and fair, and she is habited in a curious combination of tartan plaid and dark blue cloth, with the narrowest possible binding of astrakhan. A tiny pink capote, with bronze velvet donkey ears and bows, sits lightly on her golden curls. A thin little black silk umbrella adds a chic to her rather severe costume.

The other is a brunette with large brown eyes and a magnificent color. Her dark brown hair is the resting place of a turban with a row of black fox fur around it. Her Russian jacket is bound with the same and trimmed with a narrow thread of gold around it, just above the fur. The same narrow braid borders the rose plaiting of dark green silk which trims the skirt, and the whole costume is of a dark olive green, nearly black. There is a bunch of deep scarlet velvet flowers on the hat. The gloves are tan and the umbrella a very large one, with a massive handle of painted porcelain.

The other sister wore to the theater the other evening a quaint but most comfortable cloak. It was

of ash colored sander down flannel, bordered with narrow bands of gray felt, and lined throughout with pale pink satin. She wore it over a dainty little frock of silvergray Henrietta trimmed with a white lace berthe studded with fine steel beads. The hat was of gray felt, with a narrow black velvet fold around the crown, and two handsome pink feathers. This daughter has brown eyes and light golden hair and very dark eye brows, and somehow she seemed to have grown up in this costume, so HERRING DOWN FLANNEL CLOAK.

well did it suit her, and so much a part of herself did it seem. Of course such a wrap is thrown off in a theater or concert, and carelessly turned inside out to show the beautiful lining, else why should there be such an elegant one?

### Job's Comforter.

The Captain—Colonel Waxem will be banqueted after his wedding tonight, and I am to respond to the toast, "None but the brave deserve the fair." What the deuce shall I say?

The Major—I hardly know how to advise you. After you've seen the bride, you'll have to turn your speech into an argument to prove either that Waxem isn't brave or that he isn't getting his deserts.—Kate Field's Washington.