

THE HALF-CASTE.

AN OLD GOVERNESS'S TALE--- FOUNDED ON FACT.

BY MISS MULLOCK.

"It seemed a long time since I had been in any town, and the girls might never have been there in their lives, so eagerly did they linger at shop-windows, admiring and longing after finery. The younger consoled the elder, saying that they would have all these sort of grand things some time. "It's only four years," whispered she, just four years, and then that stupid Zillah—"

Here Caroline pushed her away with an angry "hush!" and walked up to my side with a prim smile. I thought it strange, but took no notice, always disliking to play the governess out of school-hours. Another odd thing happened the same week. There came a letter to Mr. Le Poer from Mr. Sutherland. I could not help noticing this, as it lay on the mantel-shelf two days before the former returned, and I used to see it always when I sat at meals. His—Mr. Sutherland's I mean—was a fair, large hand, which would have caught any one's eye; besides, it was like old times to see it again.

I happened to be by when Mr. Le Poer opened the letter. He was so anxious over it that he did not notice my presence. Perhaps it was wrong of me to glance toward him, but yet natural, considering it was the letter of a friend of mine. I saw a little note inclosed, the address of which I was almost sure bore my name. I waited, thinking he would give it to me. I even made some slight movement to attract his attention. He looked up—he actually started—but the next moment smiled, as only Mr. Le Poer could smile.

"News from our friend, you see!" said he, showing me the outside envelope. "He is quite well, and—let me consider,"—glancing over his own letter—"he sends his kindest remembrances to you. A most worthy man is Mr. Sutherland."

So saying he folded the epistle, and placed it in his desk. The little note, which he had turned seal uppermost he quietly put unopened, into his pocket. It must have been my own delusion then. Yet I was disappointed.

At the expiration of my first year as a governess, just as I was looking with untold eagerness to my midsummer holidays, when I was at length to go home to my mother—for the journey to London was too expensive to admit of that happiness more than once a year—there happened a great disaster to the Le Poer family; no less than that terrible scourge, typhus fever. Matilda took it first, then Caroline, then the mother. These three were scarcely convalescent when Zillah caught the fever in her turn, and had it more dangerously than any of the rest. Her life was in danger for many days, during which I had the sole anxiety and responsibility; for Mr. Le Poer, on the first tidings of the fever, had taken flight, and been visible at home no more. True, he wrote every other day most touching letters, and I in return kept him constantly informed as to the progress of his wife and children. When Zillah was taken ill, however, I did not think it necessary to send him word concerning her, feeling that the poor orphan's life was precious to no one. I never was more surprised than when on Mr. Le Poer's venturing back and finding Zillah in the crisis of her disease, his terror and anxiety appeared uncontrollable.

"Good God!" he cried, "Zillah ill? Zillah going to die? Impossible! Why was I not informed before? Confound you, madam!"—and he turned furiously to his still ailing wife—"did you not think?—Are you mad—quite mad?"

I declare I thought he was. Mrs. Le Poer only sobbed in silence. Meanwhile the outcries of the delirious girl were heard in the very parlor. I had given her my room; I thought, poor soul, she should not die in her damp kitchen-closet.

Mr. Le Poer's first words were only mild concern when his wife and daughters were in peril. "Miss Pryor," said he, hoarsely, "a remedy must be done. The girl must be saved; I'll snatch her from the very hand of death. Send for advice, physicians, nurses; send to Leeds, Liverpool—to London even. Only, by —, she must not die!"

Poor Zillah did not die. She was saved, for Heaven's strange purposes; though I, in my then blindness, often and often, while sitting by her bedside, thought it would be better that she slip quietly out of the bitter world in which she seemed to be only an impediment and trampled weed. Mr. Le Poer's wonted anxiety did not end with her convalescence, which was very slow. "She may die yet!" I heard him muttering to himself, the first day after he saw his niece, "Miss Pryor, my wife is a fool—I mean a rather uneducated person. Tell me what you think ought to be done for Zillah's recovery?" I prescribed, but with little hope that my advice would be followed—immediate change to sea air. "It shall be done!" at once said he. "Mrs. Le Poer and the girls can take care of her; or stay—she likes you best, Miss Pryor, are you willing to go?"

This question perfectly confounded me. I had been so longingly anticipating my going home—delayed, as in common charity I could not but delay it, on account of the fever. Now this trouble was over I had quite counted on my departure. That very week I had been preparing my small wardrobe, so as to look as nice as possible in my mother's eyes. She had given me a hint to do so, since she and I were to spend the vacation together at Mr. Sutherland's country-house, and old Mr. Sutherland was so very particular.

"Why do you hesitate?" said Mr. Le Poer rather sharply. "Are you thinking of the money? You shall have any additional salary—£50 more, if you choose. Upon my soul, madam, you shall only entreat you to go."

I would not have minded his entreaties, but I was touched by those of Zillah, who seemed terrified at the idea of going to a strange place without me. Then, too, the additional money, not unneeded; for Mr. Sutherland, so kindly generous in other things, had the still rarer generosity never to offer us that. I determined to write and tell my mother the position of affairs. Her good judgment would decide; or if hers failed, she would be sure to appeal to Mr. Sutherland, her trusty and only adviser since my father died; and I was content to abide by his decision.

He did decide. He told my mother that it was his earnest wish I should stay a little longer with Zillah Le Poer, whom he called "his ward." Her history, he said, he would inform me when we met; which must be soon, as he was contemplating returning to India for some years, and had something to communicate to me before he went away.

Mr. Sutherland returning to India! And before his departure he must see me—me! It was a very simple and natural thing, as I felt afterward, but not then. I did what he desired—as indeed I had long been in the habit of doing—and accompanied Zillah.

I had supposed that we should go to some near watering-place, or at all events to the Liverpool shore. Indeed I had pointedly recommended Tammer where, as I stated to Mr. Le Poer, there was living an aunt of Mr. Sutherland's who would have taken lodgings or done anything in her power for her nephew's ward. To my surprise he objected to this plan. After staying a night in Liverpool, instead of crossing to the opposite shore, as I expected, he put us all—that is, Zillah, the two girls and myself—on board the Belfast boat, and there we found ourselves floating across the Irish Channel!

The two Misses Le Poer were considerably frightened; Zillah looked most happy. She said it reminded her of her voyage to England when she was a little child. She had never seen the sea since. Long after we got out of sight of land she and I sat together on the deck in the calm summer evening, talking of this Indian voyage and what it was like, and what people did during the long four months from land to land. She gave me much information to which I listened with strange interest. I well remember, fool that I was! sitting on the deck of that Belfast boat, with the sun dipping into the sea before us, and the moon rising on the other side—sitting and thinking what it would be to feel one's self on the deck of some India-bound ship, alone, or else in companionship that might make the word still correct, according to its ori-

ma, "Catching—arrest! An etymological notion worthy of a poor government!"

The only remarkable event of our voyage was my sudden introduction by Mr. Le Poer to a personage whom I had not thought existed. "My son, Miss Pryor; my eldest and only son, Lieut. Augustus Le Poer."

I was very considerably surprised, as I had never heard of the young gentleman. I could only conjecture what I afterward found to be the truth, that this was the son of a former marriage, and that there had been some family quarrel, lately healed. The lieutenant bowed to me, and I to him. Zillah, who sat by me, had no share in the introduction, until the young man, sticking his glass in his eye, stared at her energetically, muttering to his father some question, in which I just detected the words, "odd fish."

"Only Zillah," answered Mr. Le Poer carelessly. "Child, this is your cousin Augustus, lately returned from foreign service. Shake hands with him."

Zillah listlessly obeyed; but her "cousin" seemed not at all to relish the title. He cast his eyes superciliously over her. I must confess my poor child's appearance was not very attractive. I did not wonder that Lieutenant Augustus merely nodded his head, twirled his mustache, and walked away. Zillah just looked lazily after him, and then her eyes declined upon the beautiful expanse of sea.

For my part I watched our new friend with some curiosity and amusement, especially when Caroline and Matilda appeared, trying to do the agreeable. The lieutenant was to them evidently the beau ideal of a brother. For myself I did not admire him at all. Unluckily, if I have three positive aversions in the world, it is for dandies, men with mustaches, and soldiers—and he was a compound of all three. Also, he was a small man; and I, like most little women, have a great reverence for height in the other sex. Not universally, for some of my truest friends have been diminutive men—excellent, noble, admirable Zacheuses. Still, from an ancient prejudice, acquired—no matter how—my first impression of any man is usually in proportion to his inches; therefore Lieutenant Le Poer did not stand very high in my estimation.

Little notice did he condescend to take of us, which was rather a satisfaction than otherwise; but he soon became very fraternal and confidential with his two sisters. I saw them all chattering together until it grew dusk; and long after that, the night being fine, I watched their dark figures walking up and down the other side of the deck. More than once I heard their laughter, and detected in their talk the name of Zillah; so I supposed the girls were ridiculing her to their brother. Poor child! she was fast asleep, with her head on my shoulder, wrapped closely up, so that the mild night could do her no harm. She looked almost pretty—the light of the August moon so spiritualized her face I felt thankful she had not died, but that under Heaven, my care had saved her—for what? Aye, and for whom? If, as I kissed the child, I had then known—But no, I should have kissed her and loved her still!

Our brief voyage ended, we reached Belfast and proceeded to Holywood—a small sea-bathing village a few miles down the coast. To this day I have never found out why Mr. Le Poer took the trouble to bring us all over the water and settle us there; where, to all intents and purposes, we might as well have been buried in the solitudes of the Desert of Sahara. But perhaps that was exactly what he wanted.

I think that never in her life, at least since childhood, could Zillah have been so happy as she was during the first week or two of our sojourn at Holywood. To me, who in my youth, when we were rich and could travel, had seen much beautiful scenery, the place was rather uninteresting; to her it was perfection! As she grew stronger, life seemed to return to her again under quite a new aspect. Certainly it was a great change in her existence to have no one over her but me—for her uncle and cousin Augustus had of course speedily vanished from this quiet spot—to be able to do just what she liked, which was usually nothing at all. She was not made for activity; she would lie whole days on the beach, or on the grassy walk which came down to the very edge of high-water mark—covering her eyes with her poke-bonnet, or gazing sleepily from under her black lashes at the smooth Lough, and the wavy line of hills on the opposite shore. Matilda and Caroline ran very wild as to their work; but as for lessons I found it

hard work. "Make them obey me; indeed it was always a great pain for a quiet soul like me to have to assume authority. I should have got on better even with Mrs. Le Poer to assist me; but she, poor little woman, terrified at change, had preferred staying quietly at home in Yorkshire. I was not quite sure but that she had the best of it after all.

In the course of a week my cares were somewhat lightened. The lieutenant reassured, and from that time forward I had very little of the girls' company. He was certainly a kind brother; he could not but acknowledge that. He took them about a great deal or else stayed at Holywood, leaving us by the late evening train, as he said, to go to his lodgings at Belfast. I, the temporary mistress of the establishment, was of course duly polite to my pupils' brother, and he was really very civil to me, though he treated me with the distance due to an ancient duenna. This amused me sometimes, seeing I was only twenty-six—probably his own age; but I was always used to be regarded as an old maid.

To be Continued.

Writing taught at the McMinnville Business college per month, \$3. Twelve lessons \$2, with time till March 12th to complete the same. This offer is open for this week only. For further particulars call at the college between the hour of five and six p. m. Opera house building.

Advertisements, etc., intended for publication in The Weekly Reporter must be handed in Tuesday morning. We cannot in future deviate from this rule.

SEVENTH ANNUAL



FIREMAN'S FAIR

—OF THE—

McMinnville Fire Department,

—AT—

Garrison Opera House,

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, February 22d, 23d and 24th, 1887.

LIST OF PRIZES.

There will be prizes given on the following named exhibits:

1st and 2d prize for best and 2d best exhibit of Kensington painting.

1st and 2d prize, for best and 2d best exhibit of Kensington embroidery.

1st and 2d prize, for best and 2d best exhibit of outline work by a child under 14 years of age.

1st and 2d best, for best and 2d best exhibit of work of any kind by a boy under 14 years of age.

1st and 2d prize, for best and 2d best exhibit of crayon work.

There will also be a prize given for the heaviest, lightest and prettiest baby under 1 year of age.

Following is a list of prizes offered: For the prettiest baby, gold necklace; lightest and heaviest baby under one year of age, each a gold ring; outline work by a child under fourteen years, first prize, ear rings, second prize, s rap book; Kensington embroidery, first prize, napkin ring, second prize, box writing paper; Kensington painting, first prize, manicure set, second prize, bracket; crayon work, first prize, paper holder, second prize, pitcher; boy's work, first prize, paper holder, second prize, inkstand.

Parade of Firemen Tuesday afternoon.

Doors will be open at 7 o'clock, p. m. daily, during the Fair.

—All are invited to Attend—

Admission 25 Cents.

By Order of COMMITTEE.