

## Literature.

## A GOLDEN TRESS.

## CHAPTER. I.

Capt. Fitz-Hugh was hurriedly pacing up High Street, Portsmouth, one splendid July day, for he had much to do before he sailed. He had to bid good-bye to several friends, to take a farewell of the Port Admiral's family, and—first of all—to have his hair cut.

He was a very handsome man about thirty-five, and as he removed his hat on entering the apartment in which Mr. Crew, hairdresser, was wont to operate, that experienced individual decided that he had scarcely ever seen "so fine a 'ead of 'air."

While the hairdresser drew up his chair and went for his scissors, which he apologized for having left in the shop, Capt. Fitz-Hugh glanced round the room, and perceived lying on a table beneath the window a quantity of long, thick tresses of the most lovely auburn hair he had ever seen. He stepped across and took hold of it. It was fine and glittering as spun glass, and soft as silkworm's silk. The officer murmured:

"Beauty draws us by a single hair."

"This must be such hair as Lucrezia Borgia possessed, and of which Byron kept a hair or two. How wonderfully beautiful!"

"It is indeed, sir," said Mr. Crew, re-entering the room; "and though I gave a good and fair price for it, I think no money could really pay its worth."

"What could have induced any woman to part with it?" exclaimed Harry Fitz-Hugh.

"Poverty, sir, I have no doubt," was the reply; "the young lady who wore it once—for she was a real lady, and no mistake—came in about an hour ago and asked me to buy it. She said it made her head ache, and she would sooner have the money; so we soon agreed about it."

"Was she very beautiful?" asked Harry.

"Well, no, sir, I should say not; personable and comely no doubt; and with nice eyes, but not beautiful."

"Do you know who she was?"

"No, sir, I don't; she is, I think, a stranger in the place."

"Mr. Crew, will you sell me a single curl of these lovely tresses?" asked Capt. Fitz-Hugh, after a pause; "I will give you your own price for it."

"Well, sir, you see it would hurt it to cut a long tress shorter; but you shall have this much of one for a guinea," and he drew a very little line off one of the tresses.

Capt. Fitz-Hugh took it and turned it round his finger. How soft and silky it felt! A strange thrill passed through him. He turned a few hairs round into a ring, put them in a piece of silver paper which the hairdresser brought him, and placed the lock in his pocketbook. Then he submitted his own curls to the scissors.

There are no greater gossips than hairdressers or barbers; Mr. Crew was soon talking of all the floating news of the day while performing his task.

"Sail tomorrow, sir? Then you won't be at the Admiral's ball next Tuesday. Very handsome young lady his niece, sir. He has adopted her, I hear; she was one of his brother's children, who had a numerous family—a clergyman, sir. Her brother is to sail under you, sir? Well now, to think of that. A Lieutenant, I suppose? Miss Vane is very handsome, but somehow she has rather a repelling air. It's astonishing the difference in people! Some make you feel happier when you look at them, as the young lady with the golden hair did; and some make you feel depressed, as if clouds came over the sun. Temper, I suppose, sir—character."

When Capt. Fitz-Hugh left the hairdresser's he proceeded at once to the Admiralty House, where, in fact, he was invited to luncheon.

He possessed a good private fortune, and was generally acceptable where there were marriageable young ladies.

The Admiral's wife had fancied that he was struck with their adopted daughter, Miss Vane, and was therefore anxious to promote their acquaintance. She and her husband were childless, and had, as Mr. Crew said, adopted Lettice Vane; but the lady had found the Admiral's niece by no means as agreeable an addition to the family as she had hoped, and was, therefore, anxious to marry her off; any other means of getting rid of her not being possible, as the Admiral was blind to her faults; from which, indeed, he did not suffer as his wife did. Lettice had a cross, dissatisfied temper, and was thoroughly uninteresting out of a ball room or garden party. She talked for admiration, and would sit silent for hours when alone with her aunt, who dearly loved chat and gossip and felt the silent presence of the beautiful Miss Vane as a sort of nightmare on her spirits.

She therefore welcomed Capt. Fitz-Hugh very cordially. His ship belonged to the Channel squadron, and she hoped to see him again shortly. Lettice swept into the drawing room soon after his arrival, splendidly dressed, but with a decided frown on her face. On seeing him, however, she brightened into a smile, and greeted him cordially.

"Your brother will stay to luncheon, Lettice, won't he?" asked the kind hostess, as her niece sat down and took up a feather fan.

"Yes, thanks; he will join us as soon as papa can spare him."

"And your sister? Is she come?"

"No," said Miss Vane, flushing deeply. "She has sent an apology; she is very busy for Trevor, and she hopes you will excuse her. Indeed, she fears she cannot call here again, for our mother has sent her an urgent summons home."

"I am sorry," said Mrs. Vane. "I had taken quite a fancy to her. She is so bright, she somehow warms one like sunshine."

"Rather an unpeasant quality in this burning heat," sneered Miss Vane. "But Rose is good natured, I allow."

At this moment the Admiral entered, followed by Miss Vane's brother, who had arrived a day or two previously to join Captain Fitz-Hugh's ship. He was a tall, handsome young man, resembling his sister, but with a frank gay smile; and as Captain Fitz-Hugh shook hands with him, he decided that his new lieutenant looked pleasant, but had a weak mouth and restless eyes. Miss Vane's manner to her brother was extremely cold, and Fitz-Hugh was conscious that she threw a chill both on the young officer and her aunt at luncheon.

"So Rose will have to leave for home as soon as you sail," said Mrs. Vane. "I wish she could have stayed with Lettice a little while, if only for the ball."

Trevor Vane colored as he replied: "You are very kind, and I wish she could have stayed, but she is my mother's right hand you know, and they really could scarcely spare her for the two or three days we were in London together, and the two days we have been here."

"Rather hard lines for a young girl," said the Admiral, "to have the care of a whole family of young ones."

"And she bears it so cheerfully," added Mrs. Vane. "I was quite struck during my visit to the vicarage by her high spirits, and the cheerful way she took all her worries. It seemed to me she had scarcely a moment to herself, except when she sat with me; yet she never lost patience or looked worried by anything."

"She's the most unselfish girl I ever knew!" said Trevor, warmly. "I must say that, though she is my sister."

"I really think we might spare Captain Fitz-Hugh all these family details," said Lettice, rather scornfully.

"They interest me," said Harry. "I have no young female relatives, and I like to hear of other men's sisters."

"Is your mother living, Captain Fitz-Hugh?" asked Mrs. Vane.

"No, I am sorry to say," was the reply. "She died when I was a child, soon after my father. I was brought up by an aunt, who certainly did not bear the worries I inflicted on her cheerfully."

"Boys are great plagues when they are little," said Lettice.

"Quite true, Miss Vane; and sometimes when they are not little."

"You are thinking of your 'young gentleman,' alias 'midshipman,'" she said, with a little laugh; "but you have the power of making them behave themselves. There is no discipline like that of the navy I know."

The conversation then took another turn, and Lettice became wonderfully amiable and pleasant to Harry Fitz-Hugh.

Something of the fascination her beauty had exercised over him at their first meeting returned; and when, on going back to the drawing room, she played with great brilliancy—she had been well taught—he forgot the unpleasant impression of the early part of his visit, and was sorry that he was obliged to go away so soon; and when Mrs. Vane pressed him to return and dine at half-past seven, he assented, almost eagerly.

The Admiral's dinner party was very pleasant, and Harry thought that Trevor Vane promised to be a gain to his band of officers, he seemed so intelligent and light-hearted.

They left the house together, Fitz-Hugh for his hotel, and Trevor Vane for his lodging, which was also in the High Street. At the door of the latter they parted.

Trevor admitted himself with a latch-key, and ran swiftly upstairs into the drawing-room.

A young girl seated at a table busy at work sprang up as he entered and was at once clasped in his arms and kissed fervently.

"Still at work, my poor little darling!" he said. "Rose, how can I ever thank you for all you have done for me?"

"By being a good boy for ever and ever hereafter!" laughed the girl. "Have you had a pleasant evening?"

"Yes, very pleasant. Lettice was quite brilliant for the sake of my Commander, who also dined there. I suppose she did not give me even a cross look. I suppose she thought she had bullied me enough this morning. Wasn't she in a rage when I told her what you had done for me; while she would not spare me a pound of her large allowance!"

"You had better not have told her, Trevor."

"No—why? If I had dared I would have told Uncle Tom, also; but I could not safely, he is such a Tartar!"

"And what is your commander like, Trevor," asked Rose, resuming her work; "now that you have talked with him?"

"He is a capital fellow! Handsome, distinguished, gallant-looking. He has the very air of a man who would cut out a ship from under the guns of a battery. I wish you could have seen him!" regretfully.

"Yes; I should have liked it; but it will do another time. Aunt is not angry that I am not going there again, is she?"

"Oh, no! only sorry! They all praised you, till Lettice had to apologize to the 'Cap'n.' But oh! Rose, you have lost the ball too for my sake!" regretfully.

"It doesn't matter; I don't care for a ball, Trevor; at least," truthfully, "not under the circumstances."

For it was a disappointment. Rose dearly loved dancing, and the Admiral had promised her a new ball-dress if she remained, no small boon to a girl who had to dress on the fabulous five hundred a year! However, it could not be helped; and she tried, by turning the conversation, to make Trevor forget her sacrifices.

Early the next morning the brother and sister parted. Trevor insisted on seeing her off before he went on board; and she was fain to consent thus to forego watching his ship sail away as she had meant to do.

Rose's journey home was a long one, as her father's vicarage was in Devonshire, and she was very tired when she reached it; but no one would have thought so who had seen her spring from the cab into her father's arms, or when she answered the greetings of the young brothers and sisters who clustered round her in the hall.

They led her in triumph into the drawing-room, where her invalid mother lay on the sofa, and after the two had embraced, insisted on taking off her hat and cloak.

"She must have some tea before she goes upstairs, mustn't she, mother?" cried Geraldine, the next girl in age, and as she spoke she lifted off Rose's hat.

A general cry followed the action:

"Why Rose," was uttered in one voice, "what have you done with your hair?"

"Given it to Trevor as a parting gift," she said, laughing and blushing.

"Oh, that's nonsense!"

"But, Rose," said her mother, with a distressed look, "why have you cut off your hair? It was your great beauty! I am very vexed at it!"

"I am sorry, mother," said the girl, tenderly, "but I couldn't help it. I will tell papa why I cut it off, and if he approves, I know you will. It will grow again."

"Never, perhaps, to its former wonderful length, nor in equal beauty, Rose! I am quite annoyed at your doing such a foolish thing! I hope it was not done to please Lettice?"

"Oh! no, mother. She is very angry about it, and says I am an idiot for my pains," laughing.

"I hope I shall not have to say the same, dear," replied her mother.

The vicar at that moment entered, and at once perceived that his daughter's glorious hair was cut off, and now lay only in short rings on her head. He was equally surprised and annoyed, for he had been proud of her golden tresses; but she begged him to let her tell him the cause of their disappearance alone, and taking him away to his study, told him a tale which made him clasp her to his heart with tears in his eyes and bless her fondly.

A few minutes afterwards the father and daughter re-entered the drawing room, and the vicar turning to the surprised family, said:

"Rose has acted nobly about her hair, and I regard her little rings as a crown of honor. Ask her no more about it."

And as the vicar's command was never disobeyed, Rose heard no more of the departed glories of her golden tresses.

Time passed on, and the curls grew longer, and promised to be of the old sheen. But Rose had little time to think about them. She was so busy nursing her mother, teaching her sisters and two tiny brothers, and visiting the sick and poor of the parish.

One day there came a letter for her from Trevor enclosed in that to his father. It was seldom that he sent her a separate epistle, and Rose eagerly opened and read it. It ran thus:

"Dearest Old Rose,

I really can't help giving you a sheet to yourself, though you know how I hate letter writing, because I have the very strangest thing to tell you. The skipper is, as you know by my report, a capital fellow; and he and I have had many long chats together on the deck. He is not at all stand-offish, though he is a strict and good officer.

"Well, one day we were standing chatting by the bulwark on the poop, when his coxswain, who was going on shore to execute some commissions for him, came up and asked for the list of articles to be bought. Captain Fitz-Hugh opened his pocket-book, and drew it out to give him, at the same moment letting fall from it a folded paper, which fell on the deck.

"The wind was very high, and before he could stoop to pick it up, it blew over and over; and had I not run after it, would have gone overboard.

The paper was blown half off when I recovered it, and showed me that it was a curl of golden hair.

I daresay I looked a little amused, though I tried to screw up a demure face when I gave it to him, for he flushed and laughed as he thanked me, and said, quoting Swift, I think—isn't it?"

"Only a woman's hair, Vane but should have regretted losing it. I gave a

guinea for it. It was not given to me."

"Gave a guinea!" I exclaimed, amazed.

(To Be Continued.)

## A Plea for Less Study.

M. Berthelot, the famous French scientist, says that children in school should have twice as much play as they now have, with a radical change in the character of their studies.

In an address before a scientific body in Paris, M. Berthelot said millions of francs are wasted every year in pouring learning into sieves.

"According to the educational method in vogue," said Berthelot, "most of the education goes in at one ear and out of the other without leaving any other impression than mental disgust for further education. What educators need to do is to cast aside at once that inquisitorial institution called 'weekly examinations,' which compels the pupil to cram, cram, cram."

"In its place should be established a system of interesting each pupil's mind in particular studies by pointing out to him how he individually has a permanent interest in pursuing them, and then give the pupil plenty of leisure to think over what has been told him.

"There are entirely too many subjects being taught," says Berthelot, in conclusion. "Reduce the number of subjects of study, shorten the hours, and if we are to have examinations let them be as brief and as far apart as possible.

## What Will You Make of Yourself?

When some young men are asked this question, they answer: "I intend to be a merchant, or a teacher, or a book-keeper, or a salesman, or whatever other calling they may have selected.

But it has a higher meaning. When the late President Garfield was a young man, he was mowing during vacation from his studies, for the purpose of earning money to pay his school bill. His companion-mower, interested in his bright talk, said:

"Well, what are you going to make—a preacher?"

"That," answered James in a playful way, "is an unsolved problem. I have undertaken to make a man of myself. If I succeed, I may make something else afterwards; if I don't succeed I shall not be fit for much anyway."

With clear vision he sees that life is only worth living if he can make himself a man—a real man, having correct principles and a sturdy purpose, fulfilling the one great object of his creation.

The true form, then, of life's great question is, not "What place do you mean to get, or what 'stuff do you mean' to work, but what sort of a man do you wish to be?"

Got that question securely answered in life. It saves time, prevents waste of power, subdues impatience, inspires steadfast courage and clothes monotonous duty with the transfiguring beauty of a glorious motive.

## To Straighten Whalebones.

Whalebones that have become misshapen or bent may easily be straightened and made as supple as new by immersing them in cold water and then drying in a cool place out of the reach of the immediate action of sun or fire. They should stand in the cold water, fully covered, for about 12 hours, then be shaken well to dislodge the clinging drops of water; then dried.

In these days when whalebones are so expensive, it is a good thing to know this, for, by taking this care with them, bones may be transferred from dress to dress so long as they remain unbroken. Very often in throwing aside a pair of corsets, some of the bones are found to be sufficiently good after you have straightened them, cut into proper lengths and laid aside for future use in home dressing. This is one of the little economies that it is well to cultivate, for it will prove an important saving in the course of two or three seasons.

So, don't throw away bent or twisted whalebones as useless; as long as they are not split or broken they are of service. Remember about drying them in a cool and sheltered place, as they will warp if exposed to strong sunlight or direct heat from a fire.

## Named for Gladstone.

Probably a goodly number of children born in 1898 will bear the name of Gladstone. Already not a few bear it. There is the story of a Northern weaver who, when asked by a good old Presbyterian minister what he intended the name of his child to be, replied, "The Right Honorable William Ewart Gladstone."

But the minister declined to accept more than the three proper names, observing, "Oh, William, that'll never do. I can admit your hair into the vesicle kirk, but if you want the world's honors for it; I doot ye'll hae to gang to the Prime Minister himself."

## Reduced Cost.

An old colored man has written the following letter to a southern recruiting officer:

"To the Gurment: I is de father er nine boys, all er age, en good fightin' timber, en I want ter enlis' 'um for de war. Now, I heards dat de sal'ry is \$13 a month, but ef you'll take de nine er um, I'll bunch 'em ter you at \$10 a head; en please, suh, sen' me de money ez it falls due."

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