

# Prince Charlie.

By BURFORD DELANNOY.

## CHAPTER I.

### Hero and Heroine Meet.

The advent of its regatta is usually the herald of a sea-side season's demise. Wivernsea, as yet, is not sufficiently developed to justify indulgence in a water festival. So far, its carnival fights have been confined within the limits of flower shows and the treats of its Sunday school.

The builder, his surname is Jerry—is around with a ride though. His conspiracy with the man who plots lands and dispenses free luncheons and railway tickets, will possibly wreak a change on that part of the map's countenance. Increased population will render the place more famous or infamous. So very much depends on one's viewpoint.

The houses of Wivernsea are built in its bay. Stuck in round the fringe of it like teeth in a lower jaw. Pictures to yourself the long ago—the bay's origin—and the present appearance of the place may come before you. If possible to introduce a belief that there were giants in the earth in those days it will make realization simpler. Because it looks as if a mammoth had snapped at the coast just there and bitten out a huge mouthful.

If your imagination is sufficiently elastic to give play to it, conceive houses being dropped into the marks left by the giant's teeth—a sort of dental stopping. So may be garnered a fair idea of the presentment of this particular indentation in the land.

When the goose of Michaelmas is shaking in its scales, Wivernsea lodging letters encroach on the farmer's privilege. The closing time of their harvest is near enough to be grumbled at. It is painful knowledge to them that visitors scuttle away as September ends. The exodus is due to some absurd belief that the weather then—like a school at the advent of the holidays—breaks up.

In the ears of one man—William Masters by name, binder-together-of-sensational-incidents in-book-form by profession—such grumbles tinkled pleasantly. Because the usual October-Wivernsea weather is mild and bright and rainless. Being a non-gregarious man, the place shaped before his eyes as a land flowing with milk and honey. He knew it to be good then.

Knowledge is the wing on which we fly to heaven. In this instance, the author's flight from London was via the London and South Western Railway Company's terminus. Later on he told himself that it was proving veritably—his Waterloo.

Wivernsea's sea wall is known locally as the Esplanade. Euphemisms sacrificed to vanity at the expense of truth—are not uncommon objects of the seashore. The walk terminated eastwards with the abruptness of a

cinematograph view. A private owner claimed the land there.

It was not an undisputed claim. Opposition made the owner handle the matter with mailed fist. To make his position stronger he erected a high wall. If it did not prevent his opponents going further with their labial opposition, it effectually prevented them from going further along the parade.

The embellishments of the wall were, apparently, the outcome of deep thought. Its top was artistically encumbered with spikes and broken bottles. This sharply jagged crown was known locally as a shivery-freeze. Give the average man an opportunity to mispronounce a word and his success may be counted on every time.

Warnings to trespassers and threats of prosecution garnished the wall's face with the liberality of almonds in a piece of French rock. The everyday man might well be excused a fear that there was danger in letting an unguarded eye rest on it.

Amongst others, the wall barred the easterly progress of William Masters. In his instance no chagrin resulted. It was a boast of his that he possessed "views of his own"—the things which other people smile at unpleasantly and label "eccentricities." The owner of the wall was a man after his own heart. Undoubtedly a fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind.

It is not good that man should be alone. But the author had not yet realized the greatness of that truth. He had been heard to voice the nature of his Ultima Thule—undisturbed existence in a cot. Not beside the hill, but in the centre of a big field. The situation to be enhanced by possession of a shot gun, wherewith to pepper trespassers on his solitude.

Strangers who heard Masters speak so, felt inclination to move away a pace, were promoted to thoughts of Hanwell and Colney Hatch. His friends—another boast of his—was the poverty of their number-sulled. The idea of Masters hurting a fly appealed to the humour in them.

But, as the blackest hat may have a silver-paper lining, so the wall served a good purpose. It acted as a shelter from the one thing which disturbed the enjoyment of October in Wivernsea: that wind which is said to be good for neither man nor beast. Thoughtful hands had placed a comfortable seat within the wall's shelter.

Knowledge of these things had inspired Masters' journey to Wivernsea. Where he had stayed before the land-lady had rooms vacant. She knew his requirements and, hitherto, had suited him admirably. Had even acquired the knowledge that his visits to Wivernsea were not prompted solely by a desire to hear her talk.

Having done justice to a hasty prepared luncheon, Masters slipped a note book into his pocket and sallied forth. His route was easterly, its termination his favourite seat at the end of the Parade. There were some hours left to warmth and sunshine; the author's intent was to avail himself of them.

Seated, he for a time succumbed to the charm of the water as it stols out and away. Listened to its lapping as it broadened the ribbon of sand at each receding wave. Then, turning a deaf ear to the charm and his eyes on to his note book, he buried himself in the particular chapter on which he was engaged.

The writer's concentration was not of the plumbless kind. Sound of a girl's voice roused him from his depth of thought. It should not be gathered from that that the sex had any extraordinary influence over him—save when it was very young.

He loved children. Loved them best before the rubbing off of what is called their corners; the sweetness of what is actually the innocence we all come into the world with—which it seems the business of the world to destroy.

Masters guessed from the voice that it belonged to a very little girl. Looking up, saw standing in front of him proof of the correctness of his guess. A blue-eyed, wide-eyed-eyed with-astonishment too at seeing him there—the little maid. She had turned the parade corner and so come on him unexpectedly. It was plain that she had pulled up suddenly at seeing him there. Just as suddenly called out in her clear, childish treble:—

"Oh! There's someone on your seat, Miss Mivvins!"

The young lady so addressed came into view at that moment, round the bushes planted at the corner—the little one having run on ahead.

Miss Mivvins flushed a little. Becomingly, for otherwise the face might have been considered a trifle too pale. The possibility of the child's speech being considered rude induced her to say in an undertone:—

"Hush, Grace, dear!"

The speech reached Masters' ears. He was struck with the singularly sweet voice the governess had. When he looked at the place whence the voice issued, he thought it the prettiest mouth he had ever set eyes on. The little droop of sadness at its corners mellowed rather than took away from the sweetness of it.

The lips—ripe red in colour, Cupid's bowed in shape—enchanted as they were, did not hold his attention in iron bands. His glance wandered to her eyes and hair. From that inspection was formed an opinion—one which he never changed.

The features were the most beautiful and womanly ones he had ever seen. Just as sweet a face as a wo-

man with golden hair—that peculiar tint of gold which the sun ever seems anxious to search amongst—and forget-me-not eyes, can possess, at the age of three-and-twenty. She was good to look upon.

Observation was a trick of Masters' trade. The practice of it enabled him to paint a picture in a paragraph. What he saw in one glimpse of Miss Mivvins' face was cloquence itself. But of that gentle outward-going radiance in her eyes the merest layman would have been sentient. It was the kind of which one felt even a blind man must be conscious.

Details appealed to Masters' just then. He happened to be engaged at the moment on the description of a heroine. When he saw Miss Mivvins his difficulty about shaping the book-woman vanished. In flesh and blood she stood before him. All he needed was to describe what he saw; she would fit in all respects.

Save her name. He was not particularly struck with that.

## CHAPTER II.

### The Child, The Wise Man, And The Lady.

Proverbially women love man's approbation. Something of the feeling within him must have evidenced itself in Masters' eyes. His attentive scrutiny—despite all there was of respect in it—did not, apparently, please Miss Mivvins. Possibly, she was inclined to consider his admiration rudeness. Anyway she called:—

"Come, Grace!"

Taking the child's little hand in her own neatly-gloved one as she spoke, the woman turned, evidently intent on walking back in the direction whence she had come.

That brought Masters to his feet in a moment—cap in hand, and apology in mouth. Full of crudities as was his character, he possessed an instinctive courtesy. In all the arrangements for his breaches of Society's unwritten laws, impoliteness had never figured. He spoke, said:—

"Pray do not let me drive you away! Possession may be nine points of the law, but we may consider ourselves beyond the pale of its practice here. If, as I hear—from lips—the truth of which it would be absurd to doubt—that this is considered your seat—I should never forgive myself if trespass of mine interfered with the owner's use of it."

"Is that pen you are using," inquired Grace suddenly, a propos of nothing, "one of those you put the ink in at the wrong end, and trickle it out of the other?"

A softness blended with the smile on Masters' face, merged into that kindly expression of the strong for the weak. It was the successful catching of just such tenderness which made Landseer's name figure so prominently in the world of Art. As the author looked down at the mite from his six-feet altitude, the look on his face was an irresistible reminder of a St. Bernard's kindness to a toy terrier.

"You have accurately described it, little woman," he answered. "But it does not always trickle when you want it to—though it generally does

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when you don't."

The child looked mystified; evidently deeming further explanation necessary. Miss Mivvins was still standing waiting to go. Masters hesitated, looked from one to the other. Politeness made him say:—

"I am leaving—pray be seated."

But the woman saw through that. Would have been very high up the foot grade indeed had she failed to do so. It really was quite too transparent an utterance. When truth is sacrificed on the altar of politeness the ceremony needs skill, otherwise the lie becomes even more offensive than the act it was to cover.

His little speech induced her to take a step forward; made her say:—

"Oh, no! Do not let me drive you away!"

She spoke impulsively; hurriedly. Masters thought with everything in the tone that was desirable in a woman's voice. He smiled as he expostulated:—

(To be continued.)

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## AN ASTUTE CHIEF.

Claims He Has Solved Cutler Mountain Mystery and Has Only to Arrest His Man.

Colorado, Springs, Colo., Jan. 31.—Chief of Police Reynolds of this city who has been on the trail of Milton Franklin, suspected of having murdered Bessie Bouton has returned. He announces that he is convinced of two things, first that the man of Mrs. Bessie Bouton of Serran, N. Y., and second that Milton Franklin Andrews, of Hartford, Conn., is the Milton Franklin alias George Bouton, Barnett, who he believes is responsible for her death. The chief says he will have a warrant issued at once for Franklin's arrest. He says that Franklin is in hiding in New York city and that he has been travelling with a woman who calls herself his sister.

## WAS NOT DAMAGED.

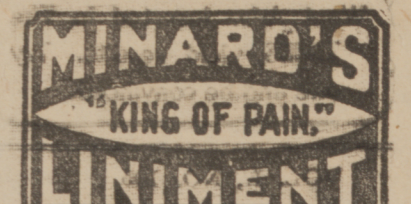
Nantucket, Mass., Jan. 31.—The steamer Georgetown which was driven ashore on the end of Great Point in the storm last Wednesday was floated early today on the high tide. The tug J. H. Merritt released the steamer and towed her to Great Round Shoal lightship where blemishes were taken for a run-up the sound. A hasty examination of the Georgetown revealed no damage as the result of the accident. The Georgetown is bound from Portland for Newport News.

## ROOSEVELT IS BACK.

Washington, Jan. 31.—President Roosevelt and party returned to Washington from Philadelphia this morning.

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