

STIFF-NECKED GENERATION!

FROM BLACKWOOD'S EDINBURGH MAGAZINE.

CHAPTER I.—Continued.

Poor Caroline always meant to be kind to her, was always glad to see her, and gave many and touching proofs that she was thought about when absent. If poor Caroline did not infrequently do the very things in the very ways that she, Julia, most disliked, she ought not to let herself think too much of it. If those trifling offences, those little annoyances, did seem to come oftener and oftener as time went on, she fancied it must be she who was growing, with years, more tiresome and foolish, in that she took them more to heart than she had been wont to do. She certainly had begun to feel, in spite of herself, that there was no actual need for her sister's every-other-day's visit to the Abbey; and that if she did not of her own free will choose to give an account of all she had done and seen since last the two met, it needed not to have been wrung out of her. She was helpless in Caroline's hands.

It had long been understood that what Caroline meant to know, she would know; and that what she willed, she would do; but even after years of submission, the pressure of the time-worn yoke would still occasionally be felt—nay, as we have said, increasingly so.

On the other hand, Caroline loved her. That, in itself, ought to have been sufficient atonement for all—or so she told herself. Caroline loved her. Theoretically, of course, Caroline loved her husband and children; as a fact, she loved Julia only—and of this fact Julia herself was dimly and sorrowfully aware.

She could not but have wished it otherwise, as the conviction slowly grew in depth and certainty in her own mind; and perhaps, had her nature been deeper and more reflective, she might have been more troubled. But as it was, Caroline was Caroline, and the position had to be accepted and made the best of.

She, at least, should not be the one to complain. For her, as she gratefully realized, that cold heart had a warm spot; for her, that unsparing tongue a gentle accent; and for her, and her alone, was found excuse and apology in the eye of one who never, in any other delinquent, overlooked a blunder, understood an inconsistency, nor forgave an offence.

Julia had indeed been the guardian angel of Lady Caroline's infantile years; the two motherless little ones had been all in all to each other then; and if in honesty it may be suggested that the unselfish and possibly not over-wise affection bestowed on the younger by the most amiable of elder sisters had helped to make of the spoiled child the woman she afterwards became, on the other hand it was often speculated as to what Lady Caroline might have been, had there been no Julia—and, as a rule, people preferred to have her as she was, and know the worst. She was at least, they reflected, vulnerable on this one point. She, who simply tolerated those nearest and (presumably) dearest to her—and not always that—was affectionate, almost tender, in her manner towards Lady Julia. Her eye would soften involuntarily as her sister's step was heard; a caress bestowed upon their aunt would be regarded with complacency, even if volunteered unreasonably by a boy or girl of her own; and well did all about her know on what grounds to sue for an exemption from or a relaxation of her rules.

For herself, Lady Caroline never broke a rule. The sisters were unlike each other in this, as in everything else. Lady Caroline had stated hours for everything; Julia did not know what method meant. Lady Caroline carried a note-book; Julia forgot or remembered as luck helped her. Lady Caroline never indulged in surreptitious summer fires on chilly evenings, never ate between meals, never picked a ripe plum off the bough as she walked in her garden, never sat up a little later than usual at night, nor rose a little later than usual in a morning, never bought a thing she did not want, never, in a word, did those things she ought not to have done (in her own opinion); and accordingly, her confession of the same, on a Sunday morning in church, which have referred to other matters, with which her everyday life was in no wise connected.

In appearance she was tall and spare, with a handsome nose, eyes set very close together, and a forehead from which a frown was seldom absent. Severely dressed, and with movements that corresponded with her slow and frigid mental powers, she fancied herself elegant, and would not have moved more quickly nor actively for the world.

Julia, on the contrary, was short, plump, brisk, undignified, lovable. Her little step was frequently a trot, and not infrequently a stumble—for from being somewhat short-sighted, and not very sure of foot, and from a sociable little way she had of turning herself about from one to the other, and bobbing up and down in her chair as anything caught her attention, running forward to meet a new-comer, and wheeling about to find her bag, which was

for ever being lost, and invariably contained something good—Julia often came to grief. That, the good creature did not mind in the least. The bag would be opened, and the sweets brought out—behind Caroline's back, if possible; if not, with a deprecating "Really good ones, sister, from our own grocer, so you cannot object; they cannot do the dear children any harm, I am sure!" and, wonderful to relate, the gift would be permitted, subject only to a faint protest.

Then Julia, who loved nothing better than to potter round from one door to another in the little county town, in the direction of which she drove three or four times a week, and who would shop as long as she had a sixpence in her pocket, would produce further purchases for inspection, and, itching as it was to curl, her sister's disdainful nose would keep free from the temptation. Her idea was that, by not showing contempt, she maintained the dignity of their aunt in the eyes of her children.

Little she knew! They did not care twopence for Julia's dignity, and they adored herself.

The girls would tell her their grievances, their escapades, and the misdemeanours of each other; the boys confide their early efforts with cigars, and the results attendant. No mortal man had ever been bold enough to ask permission to smoke even so much as a cigarette, and that in the open air, in the presence of the unapproachable Lady Caroline. No dusty and footsore pedestrian had ever been known to beg a lift in her carriage, whereas the sight of Julia's greys would be hailed as affording certain deliverance by the humblest of her acquaintance.

In a word, young and old, rich and poor alike, had goodwill toward the elder, and but a dubious respect at the outside for the younger; while by the youthful members of the family with whom this story has most to do, the aunt would be fondled, caressed, sought out and confided in, while the mother was only known to be feared and evaded. That she was a mother at all would have almost seemed to be a mistake on the part of Providence.

With children her imperious nature had nothing in common. They troubled her—if she would have let herself be troubled by them. They had to be thought about, and considered, and arranged for—and her time was already fully occupied. The hours spent at her desk had but the briefest and baldest occasional reference to them, and they were seldom made acquainted with any event in which they had to take part, until the time for action arrived.

Alone, she walked and drove. If business took her to London, as sometimes happened,—for even a masterful steward had met his match in her as a mistress, and she looked closely into her investments, and kept an eye on everything in which she held shares, besides making inquiries roundly before she ever signed a lease,—whenever these important affairs required her presence in town, she troubled no one for company.

Her maid and footman would be in attendance, and orders would have been given for the carriage to suit a specified train, and the coachman would have it in black and white what train he was to meet on the following day (for she rarely remained away beyond a night), and that would be all that the household, including husband and children, knew of the matter.

"I shall have to go to town to-morrow," Lady Caroline would remark of an evening, after the latter had gone to bed.

"Have you sent word to the stables?" would be Mr. Liscard's reply. And indeed he only desired to know, because, if not, it meant his stretching out his hand to ring the bell.

As for offering his own escort, or inquiring into the cause for the journey, neither idea would occur to him. He might, and occasionally did, volunteer a trifling commission—one not attended with difficulty nor trouble; and it would be punctually attended to if all went well otherwise. If not, he knew better than to ask about it.

One specimen of the lady of the manor within her own precincts, and we have done with her; in future she shall speak and act for herself.

"All alone, Caroline?" Some one peeped in at the door, and a well-known voice made the above inquiry.

Lady Caroline turned round. "You, Julia? Come in. Yes, we shall be alone. I always am, as you know, at this hour."

The sister embraced.

"I thought that perhaps, now that Rosamund is grown up, she would be your companion in the mornings," began Rosamund's kind aunt, whose delight it was to have any one of the girls, but especially the above-named favourite niece, to "companion" her at the Abbey.

"I prefer being alone, when I am busy," replied Lady Caroline, calmly. "There is no need for Rosamund to be here."

"Can she not help you at all, my dear? Such a pile of letters,—such dreadful-looking documents," and Julia glanced apprehensively at the laden writing-table. "I have always so longed for a nice little secretary,—but, to be sure, you are so much cleverer than I; you always could manage your own correspondence."

"Yes my dear, always." Lady Caroline looked also at the heavy pile, but with complacent satisfaction, and no sign of distaste.

"Still it would be nice—such a dear, bright girl," hinted the aunt, who had her own little ideas too, and had been ruminating over the matter in private; it would be nice, would it not?" she said, and paused.

"What would be nice?"

"To have some one by, my dear, to talk to, and—consult with; and discuss what is to be done, you know; invitations, you know, and—arrangements."

If it had been any one but Julia who spoke! As it was, Lady Caroline looked at her sister, and faintly smiled. She consulted and discussed! She saw herself doing it, and wondered what would be expected of her next?

"Well, well, you understand your own affairs, of course, my dear," hastily amended the docile elder—for, to tell the truth, that smile was sufficient answer for her or for any one. "I perceive you do not mean to make a companion of Rosamund."

"My dear Julia, let us understand each other. I certainly intend to make every difference—every recognized difference—between a daughter introduced into society and those still in the school-room. Rosamund, as you know, is quite taken away from her governess; she has all her meals with us; she has had a complete wardrobe of new things to wear; and she sits up till ten o'clock in the evening. I really do not see what more could be done for her. She has only not been presented at Court, because of our recent mourning, and my severe cold in the spring,—we thought it as well to put that off to another year, as you remember; but apart from that, she has had everything that others have on such occasions. I have stretched a point to take her to every piece of gaiety that has come in our way. Besides which, she will have a season in town next year, unless—unless anything happens in the meantime."

Lady Julia nodded. She understood. Yes, to be sure; unless anything happened. Caroline and she knew to what that proviso referred.

"Rosamund really does very well," continued Lady Caroline, with what was quite a comfortable, cosy, chatty tone for her. "Come out of the sun, Julia. I am not very busy this morning. I can go on with my writing presently. What I was going to say was, I consider that Rosamund is quite up to the mark as compared with other girls of her age. She is not fond of amusement, as I suppose they all are, and she has had plenty of it, one way and another."

Julia made an involuntary movement. Had not Rosamund, the very day before, been waiting into her ear complaints of the difficulty with which Lady Caroline was induced to look favorably upon any festive note of preparation, and of the tortures of anxiety to be gone through ere her opinion of any proposed merry-making was announced?

"We have several dinner-parties for this month," proceeded the speaker, entirely unconscious, and to all of these Rosamund accompanies us. The houses are full of shooting parties; and it really seems as if it rained invitations," unfolding with an easy air a note by her side.

"From Holmwood," said Lady Julia; "and are you asked to the Waterfields' also?"

"Oh yes," replied her sister; and to the rectory to meet the Bishop, and to the Bishop's to lunch after the Church festival. Indeed there seems no end to it," proceeded the speaker, who detested society, but was still fain to have it thought that she and hers were in popular request.

"There is that ball, too—"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Daniel McElher.

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Cadleton, May 1, 1890.

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LOCKPORT, May 16.—The murder trial of Mrs. Anna Harris, charged with starving her nine-year-old stepdaughter to death for her insurance, was concluded Friday night, when a verdict of manslaughter in the second degree was returned. She was sentenced to eleven years and six months in Erie County Penitentiary.

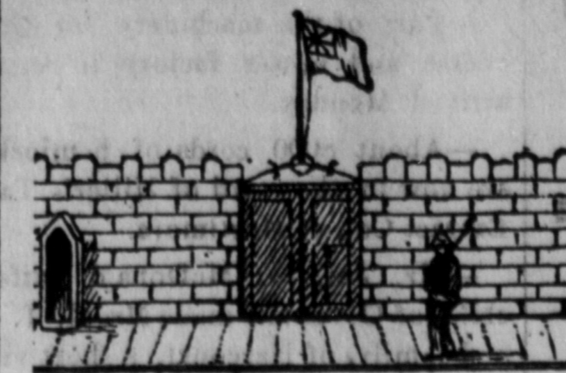
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All the right, title, and interest, property claim and demand, either at law or in equity, of, in, and to, all that certain lot, piece, and parcel of land situate, lying and being in the town of Richibucto, in the County of Kent. Bounded on the east by Queen Street, on the north by the McDermott property, on the west by land deeded to Robert Richardson, on the south by the Carey property, being the lot of land occupied by Thomas G. Richardson, the same having been seized and taken by virtue of an execution issued out of the County Court of Kent at the suit of Dosithe Richard against the said Caleb Richardson.

The above sale is further postponed until Saturday, the 24th day of December next at the same time and place.

The above sale is further postponed until Friday, the 24th day of March next at the same time and place.

The above sale is further postponed until Thursday, the 25th day of May next, at the same time and place.

W. W. WHEATEN, Sheriff.

Sheriff's office, Richibucto, March 24th, 1893.

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Accommodation for Campbellton,	12.32

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Through express for St. John and Halifax, (Monday excepted),	5.25
Accommodation for Campbellton,	5.25
Accommodation for Moncton, St. John and Halifax,	12.05

Through Express for Campbellton, Quebec, Montreal and Chicago,	21.00
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1 car Eastern Herring.	1 car Med. & Hand-picked Beans.
1 car Salt, factory filled and coarse.	3 cars Sugar, granulated and Yellow.
1 cask Cream Tartar.	
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