POETRY.

A LOST TYPE, MAYBE.

O for a glimpse of a natural boy—
A boy with freckled face,
With forehead white 'neath the tangled hair,
And limbs devoid of grace.

Whose feet toe in, while his elbows flare,
Whose knees are patched always,
Who turns as red as a lobster when
You give him a word of praise.

A boy who was born with an appetite,
Who seeks the pantry shelf
To eat his "piece" with resounding smack,
Who isn't gone on himself.

A Robinson Crusoe-reading boy,
Whose pockets bulge with trash,
Who knows the use of rod and gun
And where the brook trout splash.

It's true, he'll sit in the easiest chair,
With his hat on his tossled head!
That his hands andfeet are everywhere—
For youth must have room to spread.

But he doesn't dub his father "old man,"
Nor deny his mother's call,
Nor ridicule what his elders say,
Or think that he knows it all.

A rough and wholesome, natural boy,
Of good, old-fashioned clay;
God bless him if he is still on earth,
For he'll make a man some day.

SELECT STORY.

AN UNBROKEN PROMISE.

—OR—

A CASTAWAY.

PART III.

CONTINUED.

CHAPTER VI.

COMBINATION AND CONSPIRACY.

"It is useless to ask you whether you have any news, Gerald, I suppose?" said Mrs. Entwistle.

"None at all," he replied. "No news now would have any interest to me unless it came through Rose here, and I know she has none, or she would have rushed at me with it directly she came in."

"You judge rightly, Gerald," said Rose. "I have heard nothing—nothing at all."

"Our dear Rose's oracle takes a long time for deliberation," said Mrs. Entwistle, clipping out the words between her lips. "Let us trust that when it is induced to speak, its utterances may be favorable.

"Whether it speaks or not, matters very little to me now," said Gerald. "Not, dear one," he added, extending his hand to Rose, "that I mean to be in the least degree unkind to you. I know all that you have done has been for the best, and in the belief that you would be able to carry out all you hoped. But I find that I cannot exist under this mental pressure any longer, and I fear, unless some result, no matter whether favorable or unfavorable, be speedily arrived at, my mind will give way. There is no torture, to me, at least, to equal this agony of suspense."

"What do you propose to do, then?" asked Mrs. Entwistle anxiously.

"To make one more effort to see my father, and set myself right with him. If I succeed, my one aim in life will be accomplished; if I fail, I shall be able to settle myself down with the conviction that I, as a mortal, had done my best, and that the fates were against me."

"Will you not let me try once more to see whether I cannot help you?" said Rose; "I am sure that——"

"I am sure that you have done all you can, my dear child, and that any further attempt would be useless. Indeed, I would rather come upon my father taking him as unprepared even as I did last time, than that he should imagine I was currying favor with his friends to influence him in my behalf."

"If you would take the advice of one who has seen much more of the world than you, and who knows the tempers of men in general, and of Geoffry Heriot in particular," said Mrs. Entwistle, "you will think twice before you act on that determination. So far as you are aware nothing has transpired since your previous visit to your father to warrant you in anticipating any better reception than you then experienced. We, who are devoted to you, Rose and I, can judge the effect which that former visit had upon you. You cannot yourself pretend to be ignorant of, you cannot pretend to deny that since then you are a completely changed man, and you owe it as much to us as well as to yourself, to think over and weigh well what might be the result of a repetition of such insults.

While she was speaking these words, Mrs. Entwistle managed to raise herself upon her elbow, and emphasized her speech with telling gesture. Her cheeks were flushed, and her voice rang out in tones such as Gerald had never heard it utter. When, as she ceased speaking, she fell back faint with the exertion, Gerald rose from his chair, and quickly crossing the room, caught her in his arms and pressed his lips upon her forehead.

"I should be base, indeed," he said, "if I did not recognise and appreciate the loving kindness which not merely prompts those words, but which has watched over and nurtured me long. But I have thought over all you have just desired me to reflect upon, I have pictured to myself the scene which you have raised up before me, and I still think it right to go through with the task which I have set myself, and to attempt at least to perform what I still conceive to be my duty. If I fail, we three shall not be the less knit together. If I succeed——"

"If you succeed, you will regain your father's love, but you will not permit him, however much cause he may have, to teach you to hate me," said Mrs. Entwistle in a broken voice. "You will have to bear with me for such a very little time."

"I am not likely to forget," said Gerald kissing her cheek, "that when I was forsaken by him, you proved my friend."

"When do you intend going to Springside, Gerald?" asked Rose.

"If your friend is not able to gain me an interview this week, which I fear there is now little chance, I shall certainly go on Monday next."

"Monday next," repeated Rose to herself, "that would give me plenty of time to write again to Madge, if she felt that her intercession could now do us any good."

* * *

Just about the time that Gerald Hardinge announced his determination to his two companions, Mr. Philip Vane rang at the outer door of the house in Piccadilly in which Mr. Delabole's chambers were situate. Admitted by the hall porter, who rang a bell on hearing for whom enquiry was made, Mr. Vane ascended to the first floor, where he was received by Fritz, and informed that Mr. Delabole expected him. The valet added that his master was dressing for dinner, but that he had given orders to be told of Mr. Vane's arrival.

Indeed, Philip Vane had scarcely seated himself in an easy-chair, and taken up the evening paper, in which he turned by force of habit to the money article (though he had come straight from the City, and was probably at least as well informed about what had been going on there as the writer), when Mr. Delabole's jolly voice was heard from the inner room; and Fritz having opened the door of communication, Philip passed through and found his friend in a gorgeous dressing-room, with his short black hair standing straight on end awaiting the attention of the valet.

"What a luxurious dog it is!" said Philip Vane, sardonically, after he and his friend had exchanged greetings. "He is absolutely too rich and too idle to brush his own hair!"

"Not at all, dear boy, not at all," said Mr. Delabole. "He is never too rich or too idle to comb anybody else's hair, if he thinks they want it done for them, and to use a particularly small-toothed rasper for the occasion. As for his own hair, the manliness of his figure is so much developed, that he finds he cannot get conveniently at the back of his head, and is obliged to call in artificial aid.'

"You sent me a line to the City, saying you wished to see me here. I presume you have something of more importance than your hair to talk to me about?"

"My hair is of the utmost importance to me, my dear Philip," said Mr. Delabole placidly; "but I do not expect you to take equal interest in it. That will do, Fritz; if you put out the rest of the things I shall not want you any more. Now," he continued, when the valet had left the room, "I can tell you what I wanted to see you about, as it is not my habit to chatter before servants. You recollect the conversation we had at the office immediately after my return from my little country trip?"

"I am not likely to forget it," said Philip Vane.

"You will recollect my mentioning to you the necessity of our getting Mr. Irving to join us, and the impossibility of our doing so unless he saw his friend Sir Geoffry Heriot's signature to our registered Memorandum of Association?"

"I recollect it perfectly."

"That signature is not yet there, I think," said Mr. Delabole, pausing in the act of tying his cravat, and looking round at his friend.

"See here, Delabole," said Philip Vane under his breath. "Do you know what you are asking me to do?"

"To help yourself to a handsome wife with sixty thousand pounds. Nothing further that I know of."

"You have a hold over me in that matter, and you know it," said Vane, "but be careful how you——"

"Doctor Asprey is at the door," said Fritz. "Will you see him?"

"By all means," said Mr. Delabole. "Show him up." Then turning to Vane, he said, "Mind you sit him out. This must be decided to-night. Well, Doctor, how are you, and where do you bring all that dust from?"

"From the Great Western Railway, generally," said Dr. Asprey, who looked tired and travel-stained: "I just looked in on my way home from the station to see if you were going to dine at the half-yearly audit of the Friendly Grasp to-morrow?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Delabole. "We shall meet there. But where have you come from?"

"From Springside. My old fellow-student, Chenoweth, who was with me at St. Vitus, and is now in leading practice at Springside, telegraphed to me for a consultation, and I went down yesterday."

"Who is your patient, Doctor?"

"An old Indian officer, a certain Sir Geoffry Heriot. A man of mark in his time, I believe, though his time is nearly over now."

"You consider it a bad case, then?"

"Couldn't well be worse. Cannot possibly live more than a few days, heart disease and other complications. Well, I must be going, we shall meet to-morrow. Good-night, Mr. Vane." And the Doctor took his departure.

"You heard what he said," said Delabole, as soon as the door had closed; "the old man cannot live. This reduces the risk to nil. The signature would be supposed to have been obtained while we were at Springside. Luckily there was no lawyer, nor anyone else in Sir Geoffry's confidence. Do you see your way to it now?"

"Certainly more clearly than I did," said Philip Vane, in a firm voice.

CHAPTER VII.

A CRISIS.

On the morning after the dinner given by the directors of the Friendly Grasp Insurance Office, on the occasion of their half-yearly audit, at which Doctor Asprey and Mr. Delabole had been present, the last named gentleman, attired in a gorgeous dressing-gown and meandering between his bed-room and his sitting-room, now and then making a slight addition to his toilet, now and then taking stray snatches of breakfast from the well laden table, and all the time glancing at the newspaper which he carried about with him, suddenly saw the end of a letter sticking out from the rack which formed the usual receptacle for his correspondence in his absence.

"Strange," said Mr. Delabole, laying aside the newspaper and advancing towards the rack, "that I did not notice this last night. It must have been there, but I must have overlooked it in my eagerness to get at Irving's reply. From my dear Philip, eh! Now what can he want?" he muttered, as he tore open the envelope and hastily perused its contents.

Mr. Delabole's eyebrows, at first uplifted, then contracted, betokened astonishment and dissatisfaction at what he read. "Two or three days away from London, and he's to be married to-morrow week, and to travel for at least a month. What can take him away just now? You're a slippery customer, Master Philip," continued Mr. Delabole, shaking his head as he apostrophised his absent friend, "a very slippery customer! And yet what a clever fellow! What an admirable notion that was of getting Asprey to insist on old Heriot's people to keep from the invalid all letters and telegrams, anything touching on business matters! That secures us from any chance of discovery during the next few days, which are all-important. Irving has now been informed that his friend has signed the memorandum of association, thereby testifying to his belief in the soundness of the concern. He will probably write or telegraph at once to Springside, but neither his letter nor his message will be shown to his friend. In forty-eight hours, perhaps, in a week at the furthest, according to Asprey's idea, old Heriot will be dead. His illness will be sufficient excuse for his not having replied to his friend's enquiry, and Mr. Irving will stand committed to the subscription of a good round sum to prop the falling fortunes of the Terra del Fuegos mine.

"That cutting off the invalid from all communication with the outside world was Vane's idea, and the signature—how admirably it was done! but Master Philip must not think that I am paid in full, or that I intend to make no further use of that information which I was lucky enough to obtain. Now that he has done what I require he shall marry the widow without any unpleasant suggestion on my part of Miss What's-her-name, the actress and the Chepstow register. But when he returns to town I shall have to talk to him like a parent about the investment of Mrs. Bendixen's sixty thousand pounds. Meanwhile I wonder what can take him away just now? I will send for Gillman, and—By Jove! I had forgotten it was Sunday!" he cried, as the ringing of the church bells broke upon his ear; "Sunday, when Gillman is probably enjoying his domestic felicity at Camden Town, and would object to being disturbed. However, I will send for him to-morrow morning, and put him on the scent again."

Mr. Delabole's guess as to the manner in which Mr. Gillman was spending his Sabbath was not entirely correct. In an ordinary way Mr. Gillman was in the habit of devoting himself to his family on a Sunday, and spending the morning in washing himself—a proceeding which, with him, was not daily but hebdomadal; getting rid of the growth of a straggling but stubborn beard, putting on his Sunday suit, consisting of swallow-tail black coat, rusty black trousers, and black satin waistcoat very much frayed at the pockets, and his Sunday shirt, which was exuberant in waving collar and bulging breast, but fell short in the matter of wristband. Thus magnificently arrayed, Mr. Gillman, after presiding over the one o'clock dinner, and smoking a long clay pipe, as he indoctrinated himself with the politics of a Sunday newspaper, and glowed with delight as he read the fulminations of Brutus against a dissipated aristocracy, would take the children for a very wretched and melancholy walk, from which they would all return draggled, and wearied, and cross; and Mr. Gillman would not recover his equanimity until, the children having been duly slapped and sent to bed, he and Mrs. G. would settle down to a quiet "bit of supper" and a glass of "something hot," over which they would discuss their neighbors until bedtime.

This, however, was an extraordinary occasion. It was, indeed, one o'clock, and on a Sunday; but instead of being at home, dispensing portions of the baked shoulder of mutton, and the potatoes swimming beneath it in a brown dish, Mr. Gillman was seated in an upstairs room of the Dog and Duck at Mortlake, an untouched glass of ale and a clean pipe on the table before him. Mr. Gillman was in his working-day suit, which was merely a shabby repetition of his Sabbath garb, minus the black satin waistcoat. He was engaged on a secret mission when it was most important that he should not be recognized, but though his whole life was passed in spying and dogging, in listening and marking down, Mr. Gillman never condescended to the adoption of disguise. He had a very mean opinion of the detective police in general, and of their conduct in such matters in particular. "What is the use," he would remark, "of a policeman dressing up himself as a butcher or cabman, or what not? He don't get rid of his policeman's hands, does he? he don't get rid of his policeman's feet, does he? You could swear to both of 'em anywhere, just as if they were in berlins and bluchers. Besides, if you don't want to be seen, don't show yourself, leastways to make any mark. 'Did you see anyone go by?' perhaps they ask. 'Yes,' says you, having noticed, 'I saw a butcher or a cabby.' No one can tell what I am; all they could say is, 'I saw a man, and not much of that neither.'"

Mr. Gillman's companion, however—for he was not alone—evidently did not entertain the same idea. When he first entered the room, his wideawake hat was pulled down over his brow, the collar of his coat was pushed up over his ear, and it was not until he had looked around and ascertained, without doubt, that they were quite alone, that he emerged from his wrappings, and showed the somewhat worn and anxious features of Mr. Philip Vane.

The conference between this worthy pair had been long, and, on Philip Vane's part, animated. He had asked his questions impetuously, cogitated over the replies, and expressed his determination with a vehemence which seemed to awake no response in Mr. Gillman's little frame. Drawing hieroglyphical figures with the stem of the empty pipe on the beer-stained table before him, Mr. Gillman sat, never speaking only when he was spoken to, and then packing his reply into the smallest possible compass.

"And that was the last time you heard of her?" asked Philip Vane, after a pause of some minutes' duration.

"The very last," replied Mr. Gillman.

"Employed in the telegraph office at Springside?"

"Exactly; she and her sister got in there through the influence of a clergyman, name of——" And Mr. Gillman began fumbling in his pockets for his memorandum book.

"Never mind his name," interrupted Vane, "I don't want that now. All this coincides exactly with my own ideas upon the subject."

"I shall have a spare day or two this week, Mr. V., I expect," said Gillman, "and I could run down to Springside if you wish it, and——"

"No, not the slightest occasion for you to do that. You have brought the enquiry to a conclusion which is perfectly satisfactory to me. And there," laying the note on the table, "are the ten pounds which I promised you."

"Thank you sir," said Gillman, taking up the note and folding it away in a recess of his greasy pocket-book. "You have kept your word in this, I look to you to keep it in the other matter."

"What other matter?"

"Regarding keeping it from our governor that I have been working for you in this matter. "I would not have it known to Mr. D. for ten times ten pounds. It is not so much the 'sack,' which I would receive prompt, directly minute; but it is the unforgiving nature of that man, which I know, and the harm he would do me throughout the rest of my life."

"You need not fear, Mr. G——"

"Beg pardon; best not to name names in public houses," interrupted Gillman.

"You need not fear. It suited our friend to employ you to make enquiries respecting a certain portion of my family history; it suited me to pay you to issue a second edition of your discoveries for my especial behoof. I am not likely to see much of Mr. D., as you call him, for some time to come, and I certainly should not think of saying anything which would render your position with him less confidential than it is. And now I don't think I need detain you any longer."

Business being thus pronounced to be at an end, Mr. Gillman thought himself at liberty to drink the ale, which he did at one draught, and, putting on a very shiny and napless hat, took his leave of his patron and departed.

"That was ten pounds well spent," said Philip Vane, as he started on his return to town in the hansom cab which had brought him down, and had been waiting for him some little distance up the road. "The information picked up by that fellow completely coincides with what flashed into my mind about Madge, directly her name was mentioned by the parson at Springside. Springside—how curiously that place has become associated with me! First, in connection with that old Heriot, and now with Madge. Bah!" he continued, repressing a shudder "I hate to think of that business. So long as the old man is alive, the merest allusion to him, the place where he lives, or the infernal company, sends a shiver through me. If Asprey had not given such an account of him, I would never—there, it's no use dwelling on that. It is easy enough now to understand how this parson had establised such an influence over Madge as to induce her to confide that neat little episode in her life to him. It seems that he obtained for her the position by which she was enabled to make her living; so there is no wonder in her being grateful and confiding, and all that sort of thing. Now, my course is pretty plain before me. There are three persons possessed of information, by disclosing which they could, if they chose, prevent my marriage, or annul it after it had taken place and get me two years' hard labor. One of these, and the most dangerous, is Delabole; but I have squared him, and closed his mouth by—doing what he wished. The other two, Madge and the parson. And of these, I look upon Madge as far the most important. When the parson confronted me the other day, he was evidently acting on Madge's behalf, not, I should say, under instructions from her, but, in that sort of chivalrous spirit which influences such men. Any appeal I make must be made to Madge direct, and must not come through him. He would not hear of any compromise, and it would be impossible for him in his position not to take notice of a direct infraction of the law. He is but a poor creature mentally, if one may judge from the manner in which he was hoodwinked by my sudden penitence on the only occasion of our meeting. When I go to Springside to-morrow, my first enquiry must be for him. I must ask him where Madge is to be found, leading him to think that I am thoroughly sorry for having been a naughty boy, and wish to come back to her and to live happy ever after. When I find out where Madge is, and get her by herself out of Mr. Drage's range, there will not, I think be much difficulty in dealing with her. Whatever affection she may have had for me—and there is no doubt she was deuced fond of me at one time—must have passed away, so that will be no obstacle to her going abroad. She was always ambitious, and if I agree to give her a handsome allowance, or the money down—that's a better plan—and she hears that she can live in luxury and comfort, on condition that she does not allow herself to be betrayed in making any more confidences such as she made to her clerical friend, and keeps herself thoroughly to herself, I think there is very little doubt that she will agree. At all events, as Mrs. Bendixen is within a few days to become Mrs. Philip Vane, it is quite time some steps were taken in regard to the lady who now holds that title."

* * *

The autumnal sun, without much warmth in it to be sure, but doing its best to make things look bright and cheerful, was shining over Springside in the early afternoon of the next day, and tempting the strongest of the invalids, who may have made it their headquarters for the winter, into the streets. There was a little more excitement than usual in Springside, for it was "mail morning," and nearly all the inhabitants of the Indian colony there located had received letters, the generally interesting news of which they were anxious to discuss with their common friends. On such occasions the club was certain to be filled with a chattering, augmentative crowd, and it was incumbent on every Springside settler to take down his budget of gossip and contribute it to the general stock.

Captain Cleethorpe, in whom I long years of home residence had not in the least cooled his love for the East, and his interest in Indian affairs, had long taken the lead in the discussions which cropped up on such occasions. But when Sir Geoffry Heriot joined the colony, the Captain, with a good grace, yielded to his senior officer the position which the latter's age, experience, and clear-headed common sense enabled him to hold against all comers. Indeed, after a very short time, the old General's impetuosity of manner, and sharp caustic bits of conversation, grew to be so much relished, that the chance of his attendance at the club was held up as an attraction, and many an invalid, whom nothing else would ever have induced to venture out, wrapped himself in wondrous mufflers, and brave the night air, on the chance of hearing "old Heriot tackle a griff."

TO BE CONTINUED.

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