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Our Serial.

MURIEL'S KEY-NOTE

BY AGNES GIBERNE. CHAPTER XXV. THE CRISIS.

There are iron natures which may be crushed or broken, but which will not bend beneath the strongest pressure. Yet another mode lies open. For the mass of cold unyielding iron, upon which the mighty steam-hammer shall be used in vain, can be moulded with ease into shape-after the furnace heat.

Mr. Rivers was entering into that furnace. Nay, he stood in it already. Butthemetal would not soften quickly, The heat had to be increased.

Did he deceive himself, any more than others, with the thought that he did not care?

He sat alone one evening in his study. Rain pelted outside, and the fire had burnt low, and the lights were dim. He did not wish the room to look bright. He could do nothing. Books failed in interest. Letters were a disgust to him. John filled the horizon of his mind.

John! ah, how that simple name seemed to be burnt in upon his orain John-once the pride of his heart, John-once the delight of his life.

And suppose now that John were not to recover !

Mr. Rivers groaned aloud unknowingly. He sat leaning forward, a listless broken man-his hands trembling, his lips parched. The sound of his groan came back to his own ears. He was almost startled. What, did he really care so much?

He tried to think how John had offended him, how John had crossed his will, how John had checked his purposes. It would not do. A pale reproachful face seemed to haunt him. He could not shake it off. He could not work up any genuine indignation. His heart was aching bitterly for a sight of John.

Yet when there sounded a decisive tapping at the door, the old man sat upright, stern and resolute once more, Give way! Confess himself wrong

Chesney came in, cloaked, grave, hat in hand.

Father, I have driven over for a word with you. I want you to come back with me."

Mr. Rivers met his eyes coldly. "What for, if you please ?"

"John is sinking. The doctors do not think he can live through the

"Doctors are occasionally mis-"They are. Would to God they

might be so now !"

Chesney passed his hand across whis face. The old man was trembling

"Unless this sinking can be arrested -and the doctors give almost ano hope-John is dying." There was no reply.

"Father, you understand me? John is dying. He has asked for you-and you are coming to see him. Are you

Dead silence continued. Mr. Riv.

ers' face was rigid as steel. "Will you refuse him his last wish? I don't ask you as to forgiveness. If you have anything to forgive, surely now is the time to put it aside. He snay be gone before morning. How would you feel if you knew that he had died, longing for one kind word from you-and that word denied him?"

An answer dropped slowly-hollow and sepulchral in tone-from Mr. Rivers' grey lips. "I have told you before! Jehn Rivers is my grandson no longer."

"He is the son of your old age." "He is not."

"He was," said Cheaney sadly.

"I have nothing to do with that. "He is a sufferer, if no more. That alone is a claim. Would any humane

man refuse another's dying wish-so easily granted ?" "I do not believe he is dying." " And if you hear to-morrow that all

is over-No answer came.

"Have you at least no message to send him?

" I have-not."

"And this is your final decision?"

" Yes. "Then may God forgive you, father," said Chesney, with indignant sorrow hardly to be controlled. "If this is the drop too much, and John

dies where a word might help to save him, who will be to blame then ?" Mr. Rivers' head had sunk on his

" Will you not think better of it?" pleaded Chesney. "To-morrow may be too late. To-night is not. If John dies, you will never be happy again. What can you gain by holding out? Forgiveness is noble. This is simply a misery to all."

But the iron was not yet fit for the welding. The shackles of pride would not yield.

haughtily. "And you will not come ?"

"The carriage is waiting. I told John I thought he would see you."

"Not by my authority." "Father, do come!" said Chesney earnestly. "No. Go and leave me."

Chesney sorrowfully withdrew, closing the door behind him.

Then the flood-tide of woe, held back so far by resolute force of will, broke through all barriers and rolled in upon the old man's heart. Once more alone, he sat bowed beneath the anguish of the yoke which he had put upon his own neck. Verily the heavenly yoke is light and easy, while

"John dying-dying-dying !" How the words echoed and rang through the air of the room. How they sounded in his ears, and thrilled through his brain, and wrung his soul with pain. Stern composure was at an end. He groaned, and rocked himself to and fro. "John dying! John!"

He began to realize what this John was to him. Feeling had before been without realization. A diorama of the past rolled slowly before his eyes.

Not an unbroken succession of pictures. Some parts were dim with the uncertaintly of an aged memory. Some parts were blurred with passion.

He seemed again to see the brightwhere no living person beside might me! O God, help me!" venture without leave. John could joyous-toned voice which had been the very music of his life. Once again he seemed to see himself finding interest, happiness, sympathy, in that satisfying companionship. He had wanted nothing when John was near. John had seemed to want nothing when he was near. The two had been most closely bound together. John's marriage and settling into a home of his own had not shaken the bond. Something else was

Something-but what else? Mr. Rivers, spending this hour in vivid memories of earlier days, found certain after events fading into nothing. What had John done, to cause such grievous offence? He had insisted on following the leading of his own conscience. Was that unreasonable? He had helped Muriel out of a difficulty. advance. What of that?

Mr. Rivers could hold himself to no steady train of thought. He went back to the recollection of the bright face, the shining brown hair, the buoyant step, the merry laugh. How deadly silent the room was! Even the pattering of the rain had ceased. Not a murmur of sound was audible. Would John's voice ever ring through that house again? Such a cheery voice in health. But now-the voice was failing, the eyes were dim.

" John dying! My boy-John!" The old man muttered the words heavily. He rose and went to the writing-table, in a mechanical way, supporting himself by the backs of chairs, for he could scarcely stand. A small side drawer, carefully locked, was his aim. His shaking hands were slow to get it opened.

Within lay a knot of twine, and some dried daisies, curious remnants of John's baby days. Also a small wooden box, John's first carpentering attempt, and three or four childish sketches, and a packet of schoolboy letters. Mr. Rivers had not been to this drawer for a very long time. He had known the things were there, and he could not resolve to destroy them, so he had just let them alone.

He took up a small roll of paper, and from it dropped a long fair curl. John had been such a pretty little boy. Mr. Rivers remembered the curls, and the ruffles, and the rosy cheeks, and his own pride in them all.

A morocco case was amongst the little collection. Mr. Rivers took that up, opened it, and looked at the photograph within. John's own manly face met the gaze. John's frank brown eyes smiled pleasantly back into his.

A thick mist spread over his sight, and two reluctant tears fell heavily. For John was dying. The two had been parted long by the old man's will, but now that the parting threatened to be final, apart from his own control, a change came. Pride, which alone had been stronger than love, yielded beneath the furnace heat. Love, once more set free, sprang fiercely up, burning and melting the heart in which it had been so long

buried from the light of day.

about? John dying! John DYING! A strong amaze took possession of the old man. He walked to and fro "Leave me," said Mr. Rivers with tottering footsteps, seeing nothing, hearing nothing. His eyes were dazzled, his thoughts wild. A heart-breaking anguish was upon him. What could he do? How could he bear it? John dying !- and he had refused to see John again-had re-

fused to send one kind word! He began to look upon things in their true light. He had some glimpses of his own evil temper and its

Forgiveness! There was nothing to forgive. It was he who stood in need of John's forgiveness! For the first time this was made clear to him.

The anguish deepened, till the old man felt as if he must almost die beneath it. His whole soul, set free from its pride-shackles, cried out in Satan loads his servants with grievous grief and distraction for John. He wanted nothing but John. He had no interest in life but John. From head to foot he was burning and throbbing with a devouring thirst for John. As the furnace-fire grew hotter, the man's frame was racked with sorrow of heart. What could he do? How should he bear it? The grief he had brought upon himself was past endurance. He had no helper.

"O God! O God!" The sound broke out at intervals, with gasps of wee. For men in deep extremity do commonly call upon God, however lightly they may reject Him and despise His love in easier days. Thus often they compel Him in very pity to plunge them into the furnace, simply Other scenes stood forth, clear as day- that they may call upon Him. And Mr. Rivers, knowing practically nothing of prayer, in the helplessness of haired boy bounding into this very his deep distress took up the cry of so you are so that others can hear you. room-coming and going unchecked, many, and moaned aloud, "God help You may be wrong. You may hurt

John dying-but not dead yet. never intrude. John could never be That thought came to him suddenly. in the way. Once again he heard the The morrow would be too late, but this evening was not.

> His resolution was taken instantly, and acted upon without delay. Dizzied, distracted, half-blind, looking like a man demented, he staggered out of the study. He saw no one by the way. Mechanically taking his hat, he put it on, and went forth alone into

> He never thought of the carriage. In his overwrought state, the delay of waiting for it would probably have been insupportable. Rain had ceased, and the clouds were clearing away. He hurried on his way rapidly, with uncertain steps, making no calculation as to the four miles' walk and his own failing limbs. For John lay at the end of the four miles. John was his goal. No weakness might hinder his

Mile after mile he went, stumbling and staggering often, sometimes almost falling, then gathering himself up to fresh effort.

John might die before he arrived. That thought ever pressed upon him, and urged him to speed. "O Johnmy John!" was his mutter as he

He knew the direction well enough There was no need to leave the highway. No one passing recognized him, or if any did none ventured to speak. He saw nobody himself. A vision of a dying face lay before his eyes, and nothing else could come between. His keeping of the road was altogether mechanical. As the moon came out, the old man hurrying along, with his faltering steps and white hair and strange expression, must have had a weird look. He took off his hat after a while, that the night-breeze might cool his burning head, and the loose white hair was tossed about in the breeze. But he never stopped. Onward and onward, stooping, staggering and murmuring to himself-still he went pressing forward. Nothing checked him.

The four miles came to an end at last, and the Rectory was reached. It was years since he had passed through this gate. He looked up at the house, with dim eyes.

Which room was John's? How if all were over? He might be too late. That question, awful in its uncertainty, was almost more than Mr. Rivers could bear. His head and hands shook like the leaves of an aspen. "John!" his quivering lips said. "John!" But no answer came. No

He found the front door on the latch, and stumbled feebly in. The house was very still. A light burnt in the matted hall, where John had so often played with his boys. No games to-night. A dark dread came over the heart of the old man. John must surely be dead.

one heard him.

He clutched at a chair, and leaned upon it, unable to stand. The power

"My boy John! What have I been | had almost forsaken him.

Chesney came down-stairs, and walked to the hall-table. Mr. Rivers saw him faintly. Chesney sighed, and

"Poor John !" Then he looked up, and exclaimed n astonishment: " Father !"

The aged frame was swaying like a tall elm about to fall. Chesney caught. him, and held him up. The aged dim eyes looked at him, seeing nothing. The aged parched lips tried to move. "John," was the only word said. Then he sank heavily in his son's supporting arms-helpless and senseless.

God's stroke had fallen upon him. 111

THE ART OF LISTENING.

We learn more by listening than by talking, as a cistern fills up by what runs into it, and not by what runs out

Yet few good listeners can be found. To be a good listener does not mean that we should never speak. A cistern that never gives out is not only useless, but its contents grow foul. To be a good listener it is necessary to keep the mind on what is being said, and not let it run all over the world. Some persons are continually saying what shows that they have not been listening at all.

Never talk, except to ask a question or show approbation, when some one from whom you can learn any thing is willing to talk.

If you can't see what is meant, after the speaker has paused, politely ask for further explanation. And when the conversation is over refer to any book or dictionary that you may have at hand for more light.

Never correct persons older than their feelings. You will not be approved by others. If you think that they are mistaken ask them privately, if you know them well enough, and they will thank you.

When they cease speaking, if you have anything to say, proceed with it, and be sure not to carry it too far. The beauty of conversation is not to wear one thing out, but to have new subjects springing up all the time.

When the company breaks up ask yourself these questions: What did I hear that was new to me,

and who said it? What did I find that was wrong that I had thought was right, and what

right that I had thought was wrong? Listen in this way and you will learn to the last day of your lives. But those who understand the art

of listening are not as numerous as those who can merely keep still. And those who can keep still are not

nearly so many as those who cannot. -Selected.

MARRIED PEOPLE WOULD BE HAPPIER.

If home troubles were never told to

If expenses were proportioned to If they tried to be as agreeable as in

courtship days. If each would remember the other was a human being, not an angel.

when they were lovers. If fuel and provisions were laid in during the high tide of summer work If both parties remembered that they married for worse as well as for better. If men were as thoughtful for their wives as they were for their sweet-

If there were fewer silk and velvet street costumes, and more plain, tidy house dresses.

RANDOM READINGS.

The talent to sing is one of the richest of God's gifts, and he will require it at the hands of those who possess it. - Golden Rule.

It is a shame for a rich Christian man to be like a Christmas-box that receives all, and nothing can be got out of it till it is broken in pieces. Dr. John Hall.

No occupation is so holy that the devil will not tempt us right in the midst of it, and no name is so sacred that he will not try to use it to cover his vile ends. - Mrs. E. T. Morgan.

Just in proportion as you gain a victory over the evil which you have become aware of in yourself, will your spiritual eyes be purged for a brighter perception of the holy One .-- Channing. The warm sunshine and the gentle

zephyr may melt the glacier which has bid defiance to the howling tempest. So the voice of kindness will touch the heart which no severity could subdue. -Herder.

As the Dead Sea drinks in the river Jordan, and is never the sweeter, and to speak or move went from him, and | the ocean all other rivers, and is never numb confusion filled his brain. A the fresher, so are we apt to receive step sounded near, but he did not hear | daily mercies from God, and still reit. The consciousness of where he was | main insensible to them, unthankful for them. - Bishop Reynolds.

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1876	.102,822.14	715,944.64	2,214,093.00
1878	.127,505.87	773,895.71	3,374,683.43
1880	.141,402.81	911,132.93	3,881,479.14
1882	. 254,841.73	.1,073,577.94	5,849,889.19
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1878	127,505.87	773,895.71	3,374,683.43
1880	141,402.81	911,132.93	3,881,479.14
1882	254,841.73	1,073,577.94	5,849,889.19
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