Prince Charlie.

By BURFORD DELANNOY.

(Continued.)

Standing on the edge of the wall he looked out to sea. The water wore an appearance of invitation: that dangerous aspect which has proved irresistibly attractive to so many. Right out too, it looked so—so—so away from everything.

The tide was receding; was going out and away—to the Great Beyond. He knew that if he chose he could go with it. It would be so easy an act, if he stepped off the rocks further down—into the water that was always deep.

Then he pulled himself up with a jerk. Pride came to the rescue. Was he to cave in, go under, just because of a woman? What a fool he was! What an unmitigated, arrant fool! Was there a woman in the world—worth caring so much for? No. Not one!

But his heart contradicted He remembered that anxious look on her face, the loving attitude, the feel of her arms as they rested on her breast bi shoulders. His, too, was the remembrance of the warmth of the sweet human breath; her eyes that had looked into his. Then he looked out to sea again; mentally out to the Great Beyond. Asked himself the old, old question: Was life worth living?

Pathos saved the situation. He remembered that a character in one of his stories had asked the same question: Was life worth living? The comic doctor had replied that it depended—depended on the liver!

He walked home.

CHAPTER XIII.

Feverish Symptoms.

Masters did not leave Wivernsea. The obstinacy of his character came into play there; he had come down for a month and he stopped.

He had come for a purpose too—business purpose—had his book to finish, Was a trifling incident, the accident common to men's lives, to disturb the current of his life? To turn him from his prearranged plan in the smallest degree? Perish the thought!

All he altered was the direction of his walks; he thought that wisdom. Because, like other wise men, he left the east and went west. It was Cliff and there; sheltered spots innumerable were easily found.

She, yet more proud than he, altered nothing; took her walks with Gracie as usual. Sat on the seat at the end of the walk; read novels there with stoic fortitude—except for an occasional long look across the waters.

Looking across the wide sea seems to afford scope for, to encourage, limitless, aimless reflections. At any rate hers were aimless; she knew that. But a woman dearly loves the memories of the past, to bring them before her; to pet and fondle and keep them alive with the warmth of her heart.

Being at opposite poles, east and west, their daily meetings ended. Once he met her in the post office; he was leaving as she was entering. He raised his hat, and would—from mere courtesy—have said "Good-morning." But the unframed words wilted on his lips.

Her eyes, as they fell on him, lighted up with indignation; a second edition of what he had seen before. As they for a moment rested on him they seemed to scorch up what he would have said. His raised-to-hat hand trembled and fell; he passed out.

Reaching home she found that she had carried with her a recollection of his face. By the seat he had said things to her that no woman could forgive. She told herself that an average hundred times a day—to say nothing of the sleepless nights she passed with thoughts full of him. But she was sorry to see the haggard, worn look he was wearing as he left the post office.

He had appeared ill. His, she had told him, was a face which had borne no worry lines; lines of thought but not of trouble. The absence of the latter had made him appear younger than he really was.

With a smile she thought back on the time—it seemed quite a long while ago—when she has fancied that she had almost come to love that eager, chthusiastic face; boyish but still with an air of manly determination about it, set in a manly frame.

Masters' shoulders were quite abnormally broad and square; accentuated the impression of strength made by the broad bronzed forehead. How foolish women were, she thought. Well, she had learnt a lesson; she would profit by it. Experience had taught her; she would prove herself a grateful pupil.

She had deceived herself for the first time and the last. Of course it was painful—the awakening. Waking up to the perception of unvarnished facts generally is unpleasant. But she could look at her own foolishness without wincing, indulgently—her foolishness of a week ago. Just an error of judgment but there was no likelihood of her repeating.

Still—she admitted it to herself—he was undeniably attractive. Hardly less so because he looked older in the post office than he had done formerly. The worry lines, whose absence she had remarked, were there now. One hasty glance had shown them to her; they were so apparent. She wondered—a kindly feeling stealing over her—whether she had anything to do with it: the change. Then memory came and withered up the softness; pointed out what had been said to her that night when she knelt by the seat! The memory was a blasting breath; her softness withered away.

The mere remembrance of it made her feel hot all over. She to kneel to a man! Bevause she had fancied he was ill—full of kind feelings towards him, she had knelt; and he has talked of hugging and slobbering! To have her kindness, so well meant, recoil on her, thrown back on her hands as it were, with unwarranted insult instead of thanks.

It is galling to have a gift returned; the gall is greater when the gift is of the heart's kindness; more galling still when the ungracious recipient vacates a place in that heart itself. The return then savours of brutality.

Fury too came to her at the mere memory of his speech. She was almost as angry as when the words rang freshly in her ears. But with all the temper there was mingled wondor. Surely he could not be a man to whom brutality came easily. Why—why—why—had he behaved so)

Fool? No. She told herself that she was not that. She had read in his eyes that he loved her; indeed, had more than once checked his telling her so. What could be the cause?

He had spoken of seeing her in the back garden that night—but that was a mere incident—there were a thousand-and-one explanations of that. He would know that; there must have been something else.

But why should she worry herself about the matter—about the man? Plainly he was not worthy a second thought. Ready to misjudge her as he had been—well, let him! She did not care; not a scrap. She was quite capable of fighting her way alone.

Then she picked up one of the books of his he had given her. On the fly leaf she read—

"Miss Mivvins;—to remind her of Our Seat, on which so many of these pages were written.

"William Masters."

She stood with her eyes on the writing, the book in her hand, for many minutes. Then put the volume down with a sigh. After all, real friends are as rare as Christian charity.

Crunching sounds—boot pressure of gravel, made her look out of the window on to the path leading to the gate. The doctor was coming up it to the house. She went out to meet him.

Gracie was not well—restless and feverish—was now lying on her bed sleeping. The doctor, on his previous visit, had thought it a cold merely, but there were faint symptoms which made him promise to come again. He had come in fulfilment of that promise now.

She was waiting for him at the door when he reached it. Nodding to her, in an informal, friendly way, he questioned cheerily—

"And how is the little one this morning?"

"Much better, I think, doctor. She is sleeping peacefully now."

"Sleeping? Still? Is she drowsy? . . . Let me see her."

They walked into the bedroom together. The noise of their entrance roused the child. She looked up and around her, with the frightened eyes of one suddenly awakened from alarming dreams.

"Well, little girlie!"

The doctor spoke merrily. He was of that type; did not carry the undertaker with him when visiting a patient; He advanced to take the child's hand lying on the coverlet; continued—

"This is a nice idea of yours, upon my word! Going to sleep in the day——"

His intent in the adoption of a reassuring tone was to change the current of her thoughts; the wild thoughts evidently surging in that active little brain. But when he clasped the child's hand in his own, the merriment left his voice, the smile his face. His other hand he placed on his forehead, then turning, said—

"Why did you not send for me?"

The mother was standing close beside the child, stooping so that her face was on a level with the terror-stricken little one's bright eyes. She was speaking loving words, in the loving way that appeals to children. Words which read so foolishly, yet sound so sweetly. She turned round suddenly, startled by the gravity in the doctor's voice.

"Send!" she cried. "Why? She—she is not—oh, don't tell me——"

"Hush!"

She became quiet at once. Another phase of the doctor's character showed; his will power. The loving anxiety was suppressed. The practical woman was to the fore, intent on the doctor's instructions—

"She must be undressed and put to bed. Have a fire here; it must be kept going night and day. Send one of your maids"—he was writing on a leaf of his note-book as he spoke, and finishing, tore it out—"with this prescription at once."

Gracie was fever-stricken! Tossed in delirium all that night and the next day. All the next day and night—and the mother sat by the bedside, tending, never leaving the little one.

The doctor came three and four times a day. Each time he looked grave. There was no sign of improvement in the child's condition. The mother, worn out with watching, looking at him for comfort, read none.

Did ever—during all those hours of wearing, waiting, anxious watching—the thought of Masters cross her mind? She had shut him resolutely out of her heart, turned the key of consciousness upon him. But even bolts and bars are proverbially of small efficacy in similar cases.

In those long hours, the only silence breaking sounds were the monotonous ticking of the clock and the short, quick breathing of the little white-robed, white-faced form on the white pillows. Sometimes, then, the woman's resolution broke down; thoughts of The Man crept in upon her all unbidden. Gentler thoughts than she had harboured in the previous days: troubles' softening influence was around.

Their first meeting!—she thought of that. Of his affection for Gracie; of the child's love for him. Surely a child's instinctive love and trust went for something. Perhaps, after all—and then those horrible words of his rang in her ears, and she hid her hot face in the white coverlet. Never, never—they were unforgiveable. Besides, he did not seek forgiveness.

(To be continued.)

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A CANNY CENTENARIAN.

An anecdote is told of Hon. David Wark, the centenarian Senator from New Brunswick, who, in spite of his extreme age, takes an active interest in men and affairs, and thoroughly enjoys life. One day last June a charming young matron, well-known by name at least in London, was introduced to him by Hon. "Bob" Watson of Manitoba. After a few minutes' conversation the Western Senator whispered: "Ask him to go for a walk." Turning to the veteran of politicsm Mrs. S—— said: "Won't you go for a walk in the Lover's Lane?" With a twinkle in his eye he replied, "But I'm not looking for a wife."—London Free Press.

MAINE LAND IN CANADA.

Dispute Over Four Thousand Acres Belonging to Mr. Haynes of Augusta.

Augusta, Me., Feb. 10.—Hon. J. Manchester Haynes of this city, who owns wide tracts of wild land in the State of Maine, thinks he has discovered 4000 acres that belong to him and that are now claimed by the Government of Canada. These acres are located in the western part of Sandy Bay township, in the north part of Somerset County, and are known more specifically as No. 5, range 5, of North Bingham's Kennebec purchase. When Mr. Haynes bought this township it was supposed to be, like the other townships, six miles square and containing some 23,400 acres. In the original deed from the Sandy Bay Pier Company, a copy of which Mr. Haynes has in his position, this amount of land is mentioned. But some time in the early 40s, when the boundary question was under dispute, the line was so drawn as to take in portions of the several Maine townships. As it happened, in all the other cases the land thus taken by the division was State land; in the case of the Sandy Bay township it was individual land, almost the only instance occurring by reason of the division. Mr. Haynes claims that it rightfully belongs to him. He has had his land agent, George L. Smith, traverse the whole territory to ascertain its value and productiveness. The question has been referred to the attorney general of Canada, who in turn has submitted it to higher authorities in England. It is expected that considerable red tape will have to be unwound, and possibly some international litigation may ensue, before the land can be recovered. The acres are heavily wooded and of much value.

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