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A Wayward Ward.

It is the business of the philosopher, as the world knows, to find law and order in even the most abnormal phenomena, to suggest at least, and adequate explanation of every enigma. For what other purpose does he exist than to throw light on the surrounding darkness? He is a torch-bearer to humanity's ignorance. If now and again by reason of a pessimist temperament or defect of training, the rays he sheds around intensify rather than dispel the gloom, and cast shadows as of Egyptian night across man's forward path, surely he misconstrues his mission.

But the wisest head is sometimes puzzled, and the shrewdest explorer of the all-environing mystery is sometimes confounded, a problem presents itself which cannot be solved by any of the familiar processes. The why of some suddenly disclosed fact is as inscrutable as the Sphinx of the Eastern desert. It was thus with Bernard Ralston.

Those who thirst for fame, as misers thirst for gold, or coquettes for admiration, would have found much to envy in this young man's position. At an age when a statesman is currently supposed to be studying his parliamentary primer, and when a future general may still be writhing under the sarcasms of a barrack-room instructor, Bernard Ralston had been welcomed into the front rank of philosophical thinkers. His book on "Instinct Conscience and Reason" was read and criticised by the few, praised and avoided by the many. The noisy heterdox claimed him as a new and promising recruit; and so also, to the amusement of the onlooker, did the staunchest maintainers of old landmarks. He was flattered, feted, and the lion of his season.

It was from this suddenly acquired distinction that his embarassment had approached. The solicitor's letter that was the beginning of sorrows made this clear. It ran thus:

"DEAR SIR: We have to inform you that by the will of our late client, Mr. Humphrey Power, you are appointed sole guardian of his only surviving daughter, Olive. As this may be in the nature of a surprise, we beg leave to quote the precise paragraph of the will: 'And I herety empower Mr. Bernard Ralston to act in every respect as the guardian of my child. I am sure that Olive can have no fitter or wiser protector, none better qualified to advise and to regulate her life; and should he—as I earnestly beg—accept and fulfill this charge, I give and bequeath to the said Bernard Ralston, over and above such reasonable expenses as he may have incurred on my daughter's behalf, the sum of £5,000, to be paid by my executors on my daughter's twenty-first birthday, as a small tribute of my gratitude.'

The young lady is a very considerable heiress, in her eighteenth year, and at present at a private *pension* in France. Further particulars will follow on your reply. We are, dear sir, yours obediently,

FANSHAWE & FITCH."

The gift of the proverbial white elephant could have produced in no heart a greater consternation. What should a retired and solitary student, of serious pursuits and courtly manners, answer to such a challenge? If Cleethorpe Hall were large, it by no means followed that he want more life within it's bounds; and a girl in her teens, a mere child, as with the sage wisdom of five-and-thirty years he considered her! How could her presence by his fireside be harmonized with the quiet current of the life he elected to live?

Yet the bait of five thousand pounds was a temptation. The glories of Cleethorpe Hall had been sadly tarnished through the improvidence of Bernard's father, and philosophy is not a particularly remunerative hobby to ride. Mr. Humphrey Power's legacy, if not precisely a fortune, would be an assistance in the keeping up of the restrilted Cleethorpe establishment.

The matter was debated long and anxiously, and as the result Miss Olive Power arrived at the Hall one snowy February morning. Slight of figure, winsome of feature, with merry, violet-tinted brown eyes, and lips continually parting in piquant smile over teeth of whitest pearl, if he was properly to protect his ward, his position might not prove a sinecure. Neither did it.

The girl's beauty attracted suitors as clover-blossom allure bees; and it was soon an open secret in the country side that Miss Power, as well as being a lonely and lovely young thing, was a richly dowered one. This brought the sometimes lugubrious voice of prudence into reasonable accord with the chorus of adoration.

But Olive was not minded to be an easy capture for any of her wooers. With a woman's instinctive dexerity she kept them all at bay, and at twenty had escaped the necessity of as yet refusing any offer in formal and unequivocal terms. She was developing a taste for study which half amused, half interested her guardian. One evening he playfully rallied her on her application to sundry big volumes in the library.

"I shall be accused of transforming a merry and bewitching young lady into a blue-stocking—a disciple of my own dry-as-dust pursuits," he said; "some one some day may have special cause to blame me, I fear."

A sudden blush was on the maiden's cheeks, and her glance fell. It was impossible that she should misinterpret Bernard's meaning.

"There is Oswald Harbury to think of," Olive's guardian was daring enough to add.

Two shining eyes were momentarily uplifted. Was the flash they gave one of indignation, of scorn, or merely of confusion at a betrayed secret? Bernard could not guess.

"The nature of my employments can make no difference whatever, in any way that I can imagine, to Mr. Harbury," she answered. Then—it seemed to Bernard a strange transition—"Will you forgive me for asking a favor?" she went swiftly on; "I should like—oh, so much!—to help in your work. Could I not copy out your notes or revise proofs sometimes?"

What philosopher could have successfully resisted the volunteered help of such an amanuensis? Not Bernard Ralston.

It was summer, three months later than the date of this conversation. Olive's guardian was seeking his ward in her own boudoir, with a gloom upon his face and a depression of soul which defied his analysis. He had a message to convey and a proposal to informally submit, which he had little doubt would be accepted. Oswald Harbury, the young owner of half Cleethorpe had asked permission to lay himself and his fortunes at Olive's feet. He loved her, he said; he would do his best to make her happy.

"And I believe that he will. He has a home to offer you and is a true-hearted honorable gentleman. As your guardian, Olive, I am bound to give my sanction to so fair and promising a suit. May I bid Mr. Harbury to come and plead his own cause?"

He had spoken hoarsely and in a queer far-off kind of voice that he hardly recognized as his own. It was surely singular and must testify to an unsuspected weakness of character, that the prospect of separation from the ward originally received with so much doubt and dread thus make havoc of his peace. He waited for the answer in a suspense that was positively harrasing. At last it came.

"No you may not," Olive, said, "unless, indeed, you wish to get rid of me—to send me away. And not even then, for I cannot consent to marry a man whom I do not love."

Send Olive away! Was not every pulse in his body beating with fierce, unbidden joy at the verdict she had given? The measure of his present relief.

"That is a fear which my ward—my wayward ward! never need harbor" he said, with a slow broad smile; "she has brought too much sunshine into my lonely life for me to wish to lose her. But change is inevitable some day."

"Why?" a low voice murmured; and again came the mysterious illumination of Olive's eyes.

"Because, Olive—If for no other reasons—the years of my guardianship will soon be at an end," he answered steadily, almost sternly. He must face the future resolutely, as benefitted a teacher of his fellows.

And a few seconds later his quick, nervous step was echoing in the passage without.

An early summer vacation in Switzerland—when the glorious Alpine flora should be at its loveliest—had been the cherished dream of years of Bernard Ralston, and it was realized. A woman's hand guided his steps thitherward. Olive power had pursuaded him to lay aside his work and make playtime of the sunny weather.

"You can finish your book on 'Vanity as a Force in Human Affairs' when you return, and the critics will all say that the last chapters are the brightest," she said pleadingly. And when she added a slight involuntary expression of her own eagerness for the change he surrendered. The trio—Miss Ralston, Bernard's sister and housekeeper, was Olive's chaperon—had now been from England a fortnight.

They had reached the Riffel and were thus encamped under the shadow of the majestic (grim and uncouth, for variations of epithets) Matterhorn itself. Here Olive went into ecstasis. To watch the sunrise bathe the rugged, furrowed sides with waves of liquid light, was an occupation of which she never tired. And then there were the Gorner Crat to visit, the Gorner Glacier to see.

At the hotel there was pleasant company, including a couple of young Americans, who swept the ordinarily reserved and cautious student forward into a participation in their own reckless adventures by the sheer force of enthusiasm. The three went off one afternoon on a quest for edelweiss. The gloom was thickening in gorge and pass and gray shadows were to follow the crimson sunset glow on the huge crests aloft before there was any sign of a return. The ladies grew uneasy. Stories of accident and of awful peril were staples of the conversation al bill of fare in the hotel saloon, and invariably exerted their influence on nervous minds. In this case the presentiment of evil was but surely justified.

Two of the venturesome explorers returned weary and disheveled, but Bernard Ralston was missing.

"We thought he was before us," explained Mark Croxford, the elder of the brothers. "We drifted apart among the boulders and ice-ridges of a glacier-edge, and we looked for him to rejoin us at the lower end of the track. Not meeting him we supposed he had hurried away homeward."

A sudden chill had gone to many a heart in the little group of listeners. The thought of precipices and of hidden and treacherous dangers was in every one's mind. A search expedition was quickly organized and started.

"I hear steps behind," said the guide halting on the first stage of the journey and prominently displaying his lamp.

"Why it is Miss Power!" cried Mark Croxford in astonishment.

It was indeed Olive. With blanched cheeks and agonized eyes and dauntless resolution, she insisted on accompanying the seekers. It was at her request that Bernard Ralston had came to Switzerland. If he perished would it not in a sense be her fault? Better that her own life should have been sacrificed! To persuade the girl to return was useless—only a loss of precious minutes. With a muttered growl of disapprobation the guide was compelled to allow her to proceed.

Hours were spent in vain pursuit.

"Guide, is there any hope?" demanded a stout Cornishman, at last.

"I fear none!" he answered; at the bottom of yonder chasm"——

His words were cut short. A cry, half triumphant, half fearful, slipped from Olive Power's bloodless lips.

"Listen! I hear a groan," she said.

A silence that might be felt prevailed.

"The wind across the glacier, miss," answered the leader in sulky despair. "There is nothing for us but to go back."

"I will not," the girl declared, "until you tell me whose voice that is. Hark! it is no sound of wind!"

Again they listened, and again without result.

Mark Croxford gently laid his hand on Olive's arm. "Believe me, you are mistaken, Miss Power," he said; you do not suppose that any one of us would give up the search if the least chance remained? But the guide knows best."

And yet, as he uttured his melancholy remonstrance, there was a sound from over the neighboring ice-floe, hard to credit to even the most eerie of Swiss breezes.

"There! surely you hear it now?" the girl said.

If only to make clear the girl's folly to herself, the quest was recommenced.

The quick ear of love had not blundered, after all. This time a chance gleam of the guide's lantern over a jagged precipice-side revealed a dark form huddled against an inner ledge. It was Bernard Ralston, insensible from the effects of his perilous fall, and proving that he still lived only by an occasional groan.

"I beg pardon very humbly, Miss Power," Mark Craxford whispered.

* * * * * *

"And they tell me, Olive, that I owe my life to you," the convalescent said, wheeled out on the broad mountain terrace of his resting-place. "How shall I contrive to repay you, I wonder Do you know—nay you cannot know—I had a dream this morning. After the doctor had left my room I dozed and it seemed to me that—that the dearest girl in the wide world and surely the bravest—came to my side and smoothed down the pillow—and—dare I whisper the words?—caressed my forehead. It was singular, was it not?"

Something in the poise of the averted face awakened a swift suspicion—a keen thrill of happiness.

"It cannot be that—that it was not a dream?" he queried. "That my ward is willing to be still dearer—to be my wife?"

The small palm was not withdrawn, the lovely crimsoned face was swiftly nd momentarily upturned, as he had seen it twice before, and this time a look of ineffable content was mirrored there upon.

"If yon really desire so to extend your guardianship of your 'wayward ward,' mischievous accents answered. And Bernard Ralston's sometime problem had become his dearest treasure. Love itself had taught love's lesson.

A Wanderer's Fate.

"Stop!"

It was not a very loud voice, but the driver of the Second and Third street car slowed up and waited for the bell. It did not ring, so he went on again.

"Stop!"

The driver looked round the side of his car, but saw no one. The conductor heard the cry but only saw the driver. Again the car proceeded on its way, and for the third time the mysterious voice was heard:

"Stop!"

This time the conductor pulled the bell, for the voice sounded close to him. They had just passed a saloon outside of which stood a group of striking weavers who, from their loud laughter, appeared to be enjoying something mightily.

"Look on top o' yer car," cried one in a strong Yorkshire dialect.

The conductor got off his platform and followed the directions of the weaver's index finger. There perched on the edge of the skylight, hanging on like grim death, his wings fluttering helplessly, sat a gray parrot.

"Well, if that ain't a rum'un," said the conductor. "We can't stop, Polly; we'll take you off when we gets to the depot." And off they started. When they reached Chestnut street, something in the net-work of telegraphy and electric light wires must have irresistibly reminded Polly of her native forrests. She walked sedately to the conductor's end of the car and in a plantive voice said: "Wait for me!" flapped her gray pinions and, making a scarlet parabola in the air with her red tail, alighted on one of the electric light wires. She would have been wiser had she remained on the car.

The lamps were about to be lit. The current was turned on, and—perhaps was the "back kick"—she was heard to shriek at the top of her voice:

"Stop!"

And she fell, a helpless mass on the pavement, a dead parrot.

Woman's "Won't" in Greenland.

When the Danish missionaries had secured the confidence of the Greenlanders, marriage was made a religious ceremony. Formerly the man married the woman by force. One of the missionaries, writing in his journal, describes the present style as follows: The hopeful suitor coming to the missionaries says:

'I should like to have a wife.'

'Whom?' asks the missionary.

The man names the woman.

'Hast thou spoken to her?'

Sometimes the man will answer:

'Yes; she is not unwilling, but thou knowest womankind.'

More frequently the answer is:

'No.'

'Why not?'

'It is difficult; girls are prudish. Thou must speak to her.'

The missionary summons the girl, and after a little conversation, says:

'I think it is time to have thee married.'

'I won't marry.'

'What a pity! I had a suitor for thee.'

'Whom?'

The missionary names the man who sought his aid.

'He is good for nothing; I won't have him.'

'But,' replies the missionary, 'he is a good provider; he throws his harpoon with skill, and loves thee.'

Though listening to his praise with evident pleasure, the girl answers:

'I won't marry him.'

'Well, I won't force thee. I shall soon find a wife for such a clever fellow.'

The missionary remains silent, as though he understood her 'No' to have ended the matter. At last, with a sigh, she whispers:

'Just as thou wilt.'

'No,' replies the clergyman, 'as thou wilt; I'll not persuade thee.'

Then, with a deep groan, the girl says:

'Yes

And the matter is settled.

A crusty old bachelor sends us the following conundrum: What is the difference between a honeycomb and a honeymoon? A honeycomb consists of a number of small 'cells' and a honeymoon consists of one grand 'sell.'

Happy Home.

It is not always the costliest home that is the happiest. Now, take the Indian wigwam. It dosen't contain the luxuries of the bank president's home. All the carpet is an odd robe or two; the luxurious arm chair is the ground, and there is no bric-a-brac except a scalp or two. Yet the Indian is happy. There is not a shadow to dim the pure old gold sunshine of his wild life. He sees the smoke curl softly upward from under the kettle that contains his meal, and float away through the rustling needle of the pine.

This picture makes his happiness complete, as he lies on the ground calmly smoking and watching his wife do all the work. It is no wonder the Indian likes home, because that is the place where he never has anything to do but sit around and sleep. When he comes in from the hunt he is never sent off to the village to have some cretonne matched, or told to sit and hold three or four hanks of yarn that are to be wound; he dosen't have to take care of the papoose while his squaw goes out shopping, he dosen't have to stand on a barrel and build up the obstinate stove pipe section by section, with the soot pouring down in his eyes. He isn't asked what every woman he met had on, and is consequently not blown up for not having noticed.

Think what a happy home the Indian has, when you come to consider that his wife doesn't wear silk dresses, or twenty dollar bonnets, or care anything about operas, or horses and carriages. Why the squaw is perfectly happy in a blouse and a pair of army trousers. The noble woman makes every sacrifice to render her husband happy. H never knows what it is to be kept awake half the night to be talked into making some frivolous and unnecessary purchase, or to learn that the squaw in the next wigwam possesses something that his does not. These are some of the things that tend to make the Indian's home happy.—*Puck.*

One Hundred and Twenty Miles on Steerback.

Oxen can be readily trained to be governed by a bridle and to carry a rider. When a boy we had an ox broken thus as well as a horse. This was of course done for the novelty of it, as there are plenty of saddle horses on the farm. The Fort Worth (Texas) *Gazette* gives the following: "An old gentleman named Jones rode from Oak Grove, 15 miles from here, to a neighborhood 45 miles south of here, on Wednesday, to notify his daughter that her mother was dangerously ill. He did not ride a wild and untamed horse of the pampas, nor ride in a chariot, but mounted the hurricane deck of a two-year-old steer and made the trip of 60 miles in 16 hours. He started on his return this morning before the sun was up, his daughter accompanying him, riding a pony, while the old gentleman contented himself with his faithful bovine. The party arrived at Fort Worth at 7 o'clock last night, and after some simple refreshments and a little rest proceeded on their way, intending to make the remainder of the journey by midnight, thus accomplishing 120 miles in 48 hours on steerback, a feat never before performed."

Oil on Troubled Waters.

Off the Texas coast, and near the mouth of the Sabine River exists a phenomenon known as the "Oil Spot." When a tempest ranges this two miles in length remains perfectly calm, and its waters perfectly still, their only change being that they become turbid and red, as though the oil-bearing mud was stirred up from below. A broad belt of white foam and towering breakers marks where the waves, rolling shoreward, with the force gathered in an unbroken sweep of 700 miles across the gulf, are suddenly arrested and sink down powerless so soon as they come within the mysterious influence. Sailors who have here found refuge state that the bottom is of soft, soapy mud, into which they can easily push a pole to a considerable depth, a mud which, when applied to deck-scrubbing, is found to be exceedingly cleansing.

A happy old Democrat in a town near Boston, flushed with his party's victory, sought out his old church last Sunday, and was greeted with surprise by acquaintances who had missed him from the services for years. 'Why, how does this happen?' asked one. 'Well,' answered the Democrat, 'the Lord has got around onto the right side again, and I thought best to give him my encouragement.'

'What do you want?' asked Pat. 'Nothing,' was the reply. 'Then you'll find it in the jug where the whiskey was.'