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LITTLE THINGS. A cup of water timely brought. An offered easy chair.

A WOMAN'S SECRET.

A Story of the Revolution.

CONTINUED.

I HOPE that your lordship does not look upon my part in this unfortunate business as amounting to culpable negligence or neglect of duty?

Why, as to that matter, my friend, replied his lordship, "you can hardly think that sitting here with you as my fellow officer and companion, when off duty, that I can attribute any moral blame to you for this accident."

Will your lordship have the goodness to advise me what course to pursue under these circumstances, as a friend—as one gentleman advising another, in a case of difficulty, and not as my superior officer?

Why, my dear fellow," returned the stout earl, sincerely feeling for his young favorite in his awkward predicament, "the best advice I can give you is to ferret out these rascals, and find the orderly-book again, before it is missed. When that fails, we will see what can be done next."

But how much grace have I to make search, even if I could get a clue to the villainy, before it must be reported at headquarters?

I can give you till next Saturday, when I must make up my full weekly report to Gen. Howe. There is no need of saying anything about it before then; and it gives you four whole days to work in, as it is now only Tuesday morning. Leave no stone unturned, my good fellow, to get at the bottom of this affair. Much may be done in four days."

I am heartily obliged to you, my lord," said the officer, gratefully, for he felt much relieved and comforted by the kindness of Lord Percy's words and manner, "and you may be sure that I will lose no time in sifting this matter, to the best of my abilities. And you may be sure, also, that your lordship's goodness and consideration for me will be gratefully remembered by me as long as I live, whatever may be the event of this affair."

Keep up a good heart, my lad," returned the earl, kindly, "and hope bravely for the best. You may rely upon my doing all I can for you, consistently with my duty. And now you had better set about your inquiries, as there is no time to be lost. And when Williams comes to you, send him to me, and I will have a new orderly-book ready for you before evening parade."

With these words the heir of "the Percy's high-born race" bowed his visitor out of the room. Ingram descended the steps with a lighter heart than when he had ascended them, and he felt, what we have all felt in our time, how much more unpleasant the discharge of a disagreeable duty is in the anticipation than in the actual performance.

There is a great deal of one very excellent thing in this world. There is at least one article which every body is ready to give away, though there are comparatively few who are ready to accept it. I mean, there is a great deal of very good ADVICE floating about.

from a wish to whitewash their characters in the eyes of this water-drinking generation? "By Jove, Ingram," said Major Ferguson, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, "this is the most extraordinary ghost I ever heard of, and one that will take a bishop, at least, to lay him."

Now here was a case in point. Lord Percy had given Captain Ingram some very excellent advice; the perplexity was to know what to do with it, now he had got it. It was very easy for his lordship to say, "ferret out these rascals—find the orderly-book again;" but it was quite another affair for the gallant captain to reduce his instructions to practice.

But as suffumigation, though a powerful agent, did not seem to be alone sufficient to summon the powers most needed, the worthy surgeon, as one well skilled in potent mixtures, brewed a smoking caldron, in which he mingled many opposite ingredients, of various kingdoms of nature, to make the mixture "slab and good."

He is an extraordinary fellow, certainly," said the doctor, "and we must as certainly contrive to catch him, if it be only for the curiosity of the thing. What is your plan, Ferguson?"

"I can suggest nothing better," said the major, "than to keep a strict watch for a few nights, both within and without the building. For it seems to me our only chance to find him at his old tricks, or prowling about the premises; as we have no idea of where else to look for him."

"I can see no other plan that we can follow," said Ingram.

"Nor I," said Lyndsay, "can you doctor?"

"We can try it, at any rate," returned the leech; "we shall probably have plenty of time, in the intervals of his visitations, to devise other schemes. I am ready for my share of the watch; that is, if Ingram's punch and tobacco are what they should be."

"You need have no fears on that point," answered he, "for John will brew you an Atlantic of punch, and pile you up a Chimborazo of tobacco, when

he knows that you have entered into an alliance, offensive and defensive, against the ghost."

"I am your man then," cried the doctor, finishing the punch, "and I will bet you a supper at the Green Dragon that I am the first man to see the ghost."

And the session was adjourned.

After the conference at the quarters of Captain Lyndsay was broken up, our hero walked deliberately down Hanover street toward his own abode. He was busily planning operations in accordance with the result of the council as he walked along.

In those days it was an essential part of good breeding for a gentleman to call upon his partner on the morning after a ball, "and humbly hope she caught no cold," though he had to canter over half a county in the service. It was not likely, therefore, that Ingram would pretermit the performance of this duty when his path took him past her very door.

"No doubt, no doubt," replied Holcombe, "any fool can break his head. It takes a wise man to mend it again."

"And what," retorted Lyndsay, alluding to an operation he would persist in considering unnecessary in consequence of a knock over the head at Lexington, "and what if in mending the hole he makes two?"

"He puts at rest forever," replied the doctor gravely, "the disputed question, whether or not the party had any brains. There were not much to be sure; but it can never be denied again that there were some."

"Truce to banter," said the graver Major Ferguson, "and let us see what can be done to help poor Ingram out of this scrape."

"With all my heart," resumed the doctor, "it seems to me that the thing to be done is to set a trap for the thief. But what the deuce shall we do for bait? Unless, indeed, the commander-in-chief would lend us his private papers for the purpose."

"He cannot be a vulgar thief," said Ferguson, "or he certainly would not have left your tankard and spoons behind him, Ingram."

"Not only the plate," said Ingram, "but my watch and purse lay full in his sight. So plunder could not have been his object."

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brilliant object before him was quite too much for any dimly remembered warnings of his distant family against American beauties, or for the fresher hints of his friendly commander, to keep him from flying at last into the flame.

I can't tell you how it was, my dear reader, but somehow or other, in less time than I have been writing these three lines, Ingram was by the side of Helen, his left arm encircling her slender waist, their right hands clinging together, and her sweet head gently drooped upon his shoulder. It was a charming group, I do assure you. There are many more disagreeable situations in the world than that of young Ingram at that moment. It was a grand pantomime of action. No words could have expressed their meaning more eloquently. It was not a time for words—they would have been impertinent and superfluous. Accordingly their lips gave utterance to no sound. Whether lips did any thing else to the purpose, it is not my intention to disclose. I am "trusty Mr. Tattle" as to all matters which should be kept private. Nothing of that sort was ever wormed out of me. The ladies need have no hesitation in placing the most entire confidence in my discretion.

But this silence, though deep and delicious, could not last forever. Alas! that it could not. Murmuring words soon displaced it, and the faith of two true young hearts was pledged to each other forever. Ah! holy truth plight! This is the true marriage—the era of the mystic union of souls—of which the blessing of the priest is but the statement and proclamation. Woe to those who profane its mysteries by levity, by covetousness, or by falsehood!

As soon as their young joy had subsided into a sort of tumultuous calmness, how they sat, with their hands looked together, talking over their love and their hopes! They traced with fond curiosity the course of their true love—"Great Nature's Nile"—up to its small beginnings and unsuspected springs. Livingston himself could hardly have surpassed them in zealous or minute investigation. And then the more dubious future—how were its uncertainties turned into realities, and its doubts transmuted into sanguine hopes by the potent magic of youth and love!

Ah, love! young love! bound in thy rosy band, Let sage or cynic prattle as he will, These hours, and only these, redeem life's years of ill."

Helen's doubts as to her reception into the family of her lover, were eagerly driven away by his earnest assurances of a cordial welcome. Sir Ralph and his mother were the best of human beings, and had no earthly wish beyond his happiness; and was not his happiness wrapped up in her? Such is the logic of youth and love, and it easily prevailed over one willing enough to be convinced. The best of human beings sometimes take very different views of the component elements of earthly happiness from their children. At least, so it is said. They were too happy to fear. The future would take care of itself. The present was enough for them.

But such interviews, though they live forever, must come to an end in time and space. The time came when the pledged lovers were to part for the first time since they had exchanged their sacred vows. Dinner-time will come round on the day of rejoicing, and on the day of mourning, and interpose its material demands between our souls and soft emotions of tenderness and grief. The necessities of the body often afford a healthful distraction to thoughts too highly strung to sensations of joy or sorrow. The body is a "homely nurse," but it is a faithful one. If it be not maltreated, and does its best to guard and help the immortal child that is entrusted to it, to be carried in its arms during its days of infancy. So the time of parting came, and they parted; not for any interminable space of time to be sure—but it was their first parting. It was not, as I just said, an eternal separation, for there was to be a great sleighing-party that evening, and Ingram had already engaged Helen to be his companion. With as many last words as they were to part for years, he at length departed, with quite unnecessary entreaties to her not to forget the evening's engagement.—To be continued

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