

THE COLONEL'S HEIR.

HUGH HUDSON was fortunately alone when he broke the seal of the following letter:

"DEAR SIR:—At the request of our client, your great uncle, Col. Hugh Hudson, of Hudson Hills, it becomes our unpleasant duty to inform you of his desire that all communication between yourself and his family should cease from this date; and that you will consider yourself as having, by your conduct abroad, forfeited all claims of interest or affection upon him. Your own property, amounting to some fifteen thousand dollars, which he placed in our hands for your use, some time since, we have appropriated, as you requested, to the payment of your expenses during your foreign tour; and it has exactly sufficed for that purpose, as the enclosed statement will show. You are, therefore, left clear of debt, but otherwise unprovided for. Our client forwarded, with his communication, the accompanying check for five hundred dollars, which he trusts will relieve you from any temporary inconvenience in this sudden change of affairs. Trusting that you will not hold us, individually, responsible for our client's opinions, (in which we yet hope an alteration may be effected,) and that you will still continue to honor us with your regard and confidence, and command us whenever we can be of any service in your future career, we remain, etc.

Your obedient servants, LEXTON & LETTON."

"A pleasant greeting home," said Hugh Hudson, tossing the letter aside. "After ten years of absence! I could scarcely have had a colder reception from those Newfoundland icebergs, had we sunk among them that foggy night, when we never hoped to see our own dear land again. Step-mother Fortune, it was hardly kind to let me live!"

Half sad, half smiling—for his cheerful custom was to laugh at fate, and gather courage where others found abundant cause for despair—the young man drew his writing-desk across the table, and set himself seriously to the composition of his reply—for this ungracious epistle had been waiting for him a week, and could not be answered too soon. The task was quickly done; a brief but kind note despatched to the old lawyers, in which he "acknowledged the receipt of their favor," and thanked them for their interest, without giving any intimation of his future plans or prospects, with an inclosure for his uncle, in writing which, some drops of moisture visited his eyelashes—some pang of bitter and not undesired regret assailed his heart. Within the second of these letters he placed the five hundred dollar check; and having carefully sealed them, "for the last time," as he inwardly decided, with a handsome seal-ring, in the presence of his uncle, he promptly rose, pushed his chair away, and walked over to the fire-place to get a full-length view of his position.

"After, all, there is no great harm done," he cried. "I have ruined myself, with nobody else to blame for it—that's all. Many a man has done the same before me; I must only go to work and make myself over again. Thank heaven! I am able to do it! I am young and strong and active. I should have been ashamed to depend on my uncle in any case—the dear old boy may keep his money; I wanted only his good opinion—and that I will have yet, if it is to be earned!"

A beautiful English pointer, aroused by the unwonted commotion, thrust her slender head into her master's hand, and gazed up into his face with a look of human affection and comprehension. Both pair of eyes were handsome; I hardly know which was most so, dog's or man's; both were brown, clear, gentle, velvety soft, and tender, yet capable of lighting up with courage and keen intelligence. They evidently understood each other; and Hugh was comforted by his friend's silent sympathy, for his spirits rose rapidly as he played with her silken ears.

"We must take account of stock, Susette," he continued, "and see how near the prodigal is to his husks." Digging in his pockets with deep solemnity, he brought forth their contents, one by one and laid them on the table before the dog, who examined all with a ludicrous imitation of his earnestness, successively rejecting them as inedible and uninviting. The pile of property was not very imposing, even after being recruited from his traveling-bag. Handkerchiefs, gloves, shirts, socks, and slippers, properly belonging in the half-filled trunks that stood near, but crammed with characteristic carelessness in this smaller receptacle, were pushed aside to make room for an odd jumble of treasures, collected during his years of foreign travel. Add to these a Persian hookah, with its cumbersome appendages, intended for his uncle, a set of silver and coral jewelry for his petted cousin, a German gun, a Swiss watch, a dozen dictionaries of different languages, a good wardrobe, a handsome dressing-case, a large bundle of cheroots, and a collection of the current money of the realm—at that time possessing a substantial weight, and sound metallic ring, much missed in it since—not exceeding fifty dollars in val-

ue. Upon these assembled effects, Hugh continued to gaze with philosophic cheerfulness, but with some wonder.

"Ten years," he mused, "and twenty thousand dollars; and this is all the result! Susette, my girl, you see before you the reappings of my wild oats. They have been long in sowing, longer in growing, and proved a costly crop. Thank heaven, there is no more money to spend—the planter is a bankrupt, let us administer his estate. The presents we'll keep till those we love are not ashamed to receive them from us; the clothes we'll wear; the curiosities we'll give to some greater fool than ourselves if such there be; the dressing-case is the appanage of a gentleman who shall take it from me. For the rest, the gun must go into safe keeping, and the cheroots be suppressed till we have an income; but you and I will never part while there is starvation fare for either."

Whistling melodiously, for one of his misfortunes was an exquisite ear for music, he tumbled the miscellaneous pile of property into his trunks, taking the unusual precaution of locking them; then quitting his elegant apartments with a smile, he strode down the interminable stairs of the hotel, and sought the clerk's office to pay his bill and give up occupation at once. Many people turned to look after the handsome dog and man, as they passed down the street a little later, followed by a patient drayman with the baggage, and seeking carefully among the poorest neighborhood for lodgings, small and uncomfortable enough to meet Hugh's newly-acquired ideas of economy. From these, when at last obtained, he daily went forth on the weary search after employment, of which so many have had bitter experience before him, and which he was both by nature and habit peculiarly unfitted to commence.

Bearded and brown, a model of superb strength and vigor, he walked in upon the pale city men like a handsome Arab as he was, startling them from their stools by demanding a situation. What could they do for him? His education had not fitted him for their purposes—a careless, happy, desultory life could not so suddenly be turned into a new channel. A thousand times a day he had occasion to wish that since so hard a service in the battle of life had been reserved for him, he might have begun the necessary training earlier, and entered the ranks a younger soldier.

Country born and bred, he had been brought up from his orphan infancy on his uncle's magnificent estate of Hudson Hills as the heir and successor. At a suitable age he was sent to the military academy, where he excelled in all physical exercises, and with much reluctance took what part was needful in more intellectual studies. Arriving with difficulty at the end of his probation, through numerous pranks and scrapes, it was gently hinted to him that he could never pass the examination, and he promptly resigned; a favorite even with the stern mentors who thus advised, not willing to see him disgraced. Without returning home, he besought his uncle to allow him to finish his neglected education elsewhere, and was immediately entered at an English university. Here his sporting tastes led him into the company of "fast" men, among whom he was speedily elected the "prince of good fellows," at the expense of his own private fortune and his uncle's magnificent allowance, which came more rarely and reluctantly as the elder discovered how it was expended. His college course over, Hugh found himself not greatly the wiser, but much the poorer; and receiving no invitation to return to Hudson Hills, in which he now considered he had forfeited all right, wrote a brief and kindly letter of farewell, in answer to his uncle's last severe epistle; and finding the remnant of his fortune placed at his own disposal set off upon a series of travels that continued till it was exhausted. One dark November day, he drew the last draft at his London banker's and took ship for America, not with any intention of claiming aid or support from his uncle, but with a wild longing to behold again the dear western hemisphere; and so full of the prodigal's yearning for home he yet found himself forbidden to cross its threshold.

I am not about to deplet a scene of genteel starvation, with interludes of pawnbroker's shops and penny-rolls—for I do not believe these episodes need occur where people are really willing to work. If there is employment enough for every green Irishman who steps upon our shores, why need a gentleman want who can bring to the task a better head than Paddy's and hands not less strong? It was on these latter members that my hero finally placed his dependence; for though he was a good accountant, and wrote a handsome hand, had plenty of general information, and a practical acquaintance with three or four modern languages; was eminently intelligent, and quick at learning everything but his detested classics, and the rusty lore of the schools. He found his abilities still unappreciated, and

himself still unemployed, till he dressed in flannel and velveteen, and became a porter, thereby earning a sufficient sum to keep Susette in her accustomed luxuries, and himself in tolerable comfort. His ideas of economy were still rather vague. He would unthinkingly buy the morning paper, and find himself obliged to go without a breakfast in consequence; or give up his supper for a cigar. Sweet-tempered, cheerful, and energetic, he never failed or faltered; and, owning the justice of his fate, spent no time in idle complainings, but in the silent evening, and during his hours of leisure, his loneliness and isolation tried him sorely. Not a soul in that great city knew of, or cared for him. Should he die there—which many as strong and young as he had done—he would be hurried into a pauper's grave, unknown and unmissed. Perhaps at home they had forgotten him; even his little cousin, who was his playmate, and was to have been his wife when she grew up, as everybody agreed, and as he had unhesitatingly promised when he left her at twelve years old, frantic because she was not a boy and could not go to school with him. She was sole heiress now and mistress at dear old Hudson Hills; her girlish letters, which had continued to follow him in his wanderings long after their uncle's had ceased, he had carefully preserved, and now pored over for hours, trying to picture in his mind the new beauties of the place which she described, and recalling the old; thinking of the fair little writer herself, the sweet, generous, unspoiled nature, sometimes haughty to others, always gentle to him, the innocent, dark eyes, so clear and fearless; the graceful, imperious gestures; the witching, winking ways, the quick, musical tones; the dark curls that danced in the wind, and the light, childish figure that flew so gayly down the lawn to meet him when he had been away on short absences, and was welcome home. These reminiscences could bring only remorse, regret, and enervating sorrow, till, vowing against cowardice and useless retrospection, he locked the letters securely away, and compelled his mind to live on sterner stuff than day-dreams, save when in slumber it escaped his power and revealed in wild visions, in which he revisited that Eden-like home, as Eve in her sleep might have returned to Paradise.

His novel ideas of economy, however, happened to do him good service at last. Seated one evening over his dearly-bought newspaper, for which he had sacrificed half a dinner, his eyes fell on the following advertisement:—"Wanted a coachman and groom.—A faithful, intelligent man, who thoroughly understands his business, and is accustomed to the care of horses, will find a good situation and a liberal salary on the estate of Hudson Hills, Hudson county, N. Y. Apply to Netton & Netton, 3 Travis' Block, New York, or on the place."

A long reverie followed Hugh's reading of this notice, during which he frequently raised his eyes to the scrap of looking-glass with which his landlady had ornamented his apartment, with an eager scrutiny and interest that contained no vanity. "It's all I'm fit for," he softly argued with himself, "and they would never know me. Eight years have made great changes, and I should like to see little Fontibell." He sprang up whistling gayly; the dog barked joyfully about the room—youth is elastic and improvident. He went off at once to throw up the situation at a hardware-man's that was his daily bread; and the next afternoon the pair were walking along the high road that skirted the estate of Hudson's Hills.

His heart beat quickly as he hurried on, and almost stopped his breath while one familiar object after another came in view, and lastly, the tall chimneys of the house itself. The broad, winding track he was pursuing seemed to led to these too slowly; he sprang over the fences, and cleared the hedges at a single leap, in his feverish excitement to take a shorter cut, passing through bloomy fields and waving woods, whose every feature was as well known to him as his own face in the glass, and never resting till he had gained the grounds, and stood in front of the fine old mansion, the gray-stone walls of which had not grown a shade darker in all these years of wind and weather; while its later architectural ornaments of porches, roofs and bay-windows had been visibly renewed without altering their character.

The returning prodigal looked long and lovingly at his home. His heart was full in that moment, and he could have thrown himself upon the velvet turf, and cried like a school-boy, but that the long, French windows in the front were open, and through one of them he saw two ladies seated at their work within who would be sure to discover him shortly. There remained, therefore, only to walk up to the entrance door and ask to see Col. Hudson by the name of Harris.

The servant, who answered his knock, ushered him into the south parlor, where the master of the house was sit-

ting with the ladies Hugh had seen from the lawn. Both of these looked up at his entrance, and the colonel arose with stately dignity to receive his guest. Time had slightly sharpened the lineaments of his fine face, and turned his gray hair snowy white; but Hugh was glad to see that sorrow and anxiety for his prodigal nephew had ploughed no fresh traces in his broad forehead, nor bowed his grand old head. Except for these trifling indications of age, the colonel looked as upright, stern, and strong as on the day they had parted.

The two ladies were less easily identified, though Hugh soon recognized one as his distant cousin, Annie Orr, some two years since made Annie Astin by his old friend and schoolmate, Fred, Slender and childish-looking, with her light hair and delicate, dimpled face, she sat in a French negligé, all ruffles and tassels, though it was afternoon, rocking herself languidly in an easy-chair, and playing with a waxen baby, as he last remembered her playing with a waxen doll.

But the other—could it be little Fontibell? He recalled her image as she used to come running across the lawn to meet him with her light feet and her flying, flossy curls; but this young lady, slight and girlish as she looked, was much too dainty and dignified a personage to have had such antecedents. She wore a dress of bright brown silk, and what ladies call an "Empress collar" of costly old lace, which almost touched her pretty, sloping shoulders, and was fastened about the white throat by a diamond pin like a single spark of light. Her graceful head rose above it with a little fastidious, haughty poise, that spoke the beauty and heiress, and reminded Hugh of her charming wayward ways, and air of unconscious pride and distinction in childhood. Otherwise she looked gentle and good, as if her impetuous, ardent temper, and warm, affectionate disposition had been only educated, not wholly refined away with the growth of her lovely person. Her clear, dark eyes had the same innocent and fearless expression; they were softened by lashes of unusual length and glossy thickness; her silken hair was rolled back in shining waves from the smooth, white forehead; her brows were defined by delicate arches; her cheeks were oval, ivory pure, lightly tinted with the roseleaf color of her exquisite lips. She looked fair, and sweet, and imperial, conscious of her station, and fitted for it; and the generous prodigal admired her deeply, and did not grudge her one token of their uncle's favor, from the hot-house flower his own hand had placed in her dark hair, to the jewels that gleamed on her pretty hands half hidden in their lace drapery as she plied her embroidery.

But in this long gaze, and the reflection that crowded swiftly upon his mind among so many familiar and beloved objects, Hugh was forgetting his business there, and the colonel had bent upon him a look of courteous inquiry that plainly asked it. Brought suddenly down from the clouds by encountering his keen eyes, the visitor collected his thoughts and proceeded to make his application. "I came," he said, "in answer to an advertisement."

The colonel looked in evident surprise. The young man before him was plainly dressed, but with an air of quiet elegance, and had the manners and address of a gentleman, an educated and refined one. His accent was pure; his hands were white and smooth; his personal beauty was even less remarkable than his perfect grace and ease. Like all amateur stock fanciers, the colonel was an enthusiastic believer in blood and pedigree, as well in the human species as in their quadruped dependents. His horses were celebrated for their beauty and high breeding; his cattle were all that cattle should be; his own race had never known "a black sheep" till that unfortunate Hugh. He had always been considered an infallible judge of good or bad points in man or beast; but here was a superb creature that puzzled him by rating itself lower than his judgment would have placed it. No wonder he sat amazed, eyeing the applicant with keen regards, and hesitating for an answer.

"I beg your pardon," he observed at last. "I think there is some mistake. My advertisement—hem—was for a coachman."

"And I came to apply for that situation, sir," returned Hugh, with a smile. "I believe I can answer your requirements. I can be steady, faithful, and industrious; and I am accustomed to the care of horses."

"But you have not—you have not—" "I am not a professional coachman or groom, you would say; but I am a capital driver, and can soon become one—it's all I'm fit for."

VEGETINE Purifies the Blood, Renovates and Invigorates the Whole System. ITS MEDICAL PROPERTIES ARE: Alterative, Tonic, Solvent and Diuretic. VEGETINE. Reliable Evidence. Mr. H. H. Stevens. Dear Sir,—I will most cheerfully add my testimony to the great number you have already received in favor of your great and good medicine, Vegetine, for I do not think enough can be said in its praise, for I was troubled over forty years with that dreadful disease, Catarrh, and had such bad coughing-spells that it would seem as though I could never breathe any more, and Vegetine has cured me; and I do feel to thank God all the time that there is such a good medicine as Vegetine, and I also think that it is one of the best medicines for coughs, colds, and sinking feelings at the stomach, and advises everybody to take the Vegetine, for I can assure them it is one of the best medicines that ever was. Mrs. L. COYLE, Cor. Magazine & Walnut Sts., Cambridge, Mass. GIVES HEALTH, STRENGTH, AND APPETITE. My daughter has received great benefit from the use of Vegetine. Her declining health was a source of great anxiety to all her friends. A few bottles of Vegetine restored her health, strength, and appetite. N. H. TILDEN, Insurance and Real Estate A'g't, No. 49 Seers Building, Boston, Mass. CANNOT BE EXCELLED. H. R. Stevens. Dear Sir.—This is to certify that I have used your "Blood Preparation," in my family for several years, and think that, for Scrophula and Cankerous Humors and Rheumatic Affections, it cannot be excelled; and as a blood purifier or spring medicine, it is the best thing I have ever used, and I have used almost everything. I can cheerfully recommend it to any one in need of such a medicine. Yours respectfully, Mrs. A. A. DINSMORE, No. 19 Russell St. IT IS A VALUABLE REMEDY. South Boston, Feb. 7, 79. Mr. Stevens. Dear Sir,—I have taken several bottles of your Vegetine, and am convinced it is a valuable remedy for Dyspepsia, Kidney Complaint and general debility of the system. I can heartily recommend it to all suffering from the above complaints. Yours respectfully, Mrs. J. Parker, 80 Athens Street. VEGETINE Prepared H. R. STEVENS, Boston, Mass. Vegetine is Sold by all Druggists. March 5, 1878. MUSSEY & ALLEN CENTRAL STORE NEWPORT, PENN'A. Now offer the public A RARE AND ELEGANT ASSORTMENT OF DRESS GOODS Consisting of all shades suitable for the season. BLACK ALPACCAS AND Mourning Goods A SPECIALITY. BLEACHED AND UNBLEACHED MUSLINS, AT VARIOUS PRICES. AN ENDLESS SELECTION OF PRINTS! We sell and do keep a good quality of SUGARS, COFFEES & SYRUPS, And everything under the head of GROCERIES! Machine needles and oil for all makes of Machines. To be convinced that our goods are CHEAP AS THE CHEAPEST, IS TO CALL AND EXAMINE STOCK. No trouble to show goods. Don't forget the CENTRAL STORE, Newport, Perry County, Pa.