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VOL. 4693

**JUST LIKE
AUNT BERTHA**

BY

W. PETT RIDGE

IN ONE VOLUME

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W. PETT RIDGE

AUTHOR OF

"MISS MANNERING," "THE LUNCH BASKET," ETC.

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BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1925



JUST LIKE AUNT
BERTHA

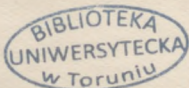
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JUST LIKE AUNT BERTHA

CHAPTER I

THE Great Man had delivered his speech in the wonderful voice that caused parents to think of certain nights at the theatre in the past when they, too, were younger, and when daughters, now entered for the competition, had—in the mothers' own phrase—not been dreamt of, and fathers were giving their earliest tributes of hat lifting. The Great Man seemed to have added to his bulk; fifteen stone, declared some, and, over fourteen, remarked others; certain he brought with him a suggestion of the Prince Regent as seen of late on the films. Nobody quite knew what he had talked about, and he himself probably owned a vague impression, but Miss Bertha Anderson, principal, had given all the attention she would have furnished to words of gold, and Miss Pyrford, assistant, detached from eagerness for no other purpose than to examine her reflection in the little square mirror of a wrist bag. The applause diminished in well-graduated stages.

“My notice is called,” said The Great Man, half rising from his chair, “by the charming lady who presides over this highly successful establishment to the fact that I have omitted to announce the name of the fortunate prize-winners. I now venture to do so.”

He read from a pencilled list, and in the audience, after slight cheering, disappointment was shown on certain

features. Miss Anderson, consulting with him again for a moment, sprang up.

"I am allowed," she said, pleasantly, "by our distinguished visitor"—The Great Man inclining his head as acknowledgment, also raised a hand in protest—"to tell you that whilst three prizes only are awarded, he has been so much impressed by the ability of other competitors that he has decided to ask me to issue honourable mention cards to all." Loud and sustained cheering. Something, at any rate, said each mother privately, to take home and show. "And now I will ask Lady Hedderwick to move a vote of thanks, and I hope Mrs. Brahams will be so kind as to support the vote."

It was the seconder who delayed the finish of the proceedings, and her anxiety to speak with enthusiasm of the neighbourhood could be explained by the circumstance, known to most, that she intended to sell her house. In addition to saying a good word for Maida Vale, the lady took the opportunity of decrying life in residential flats. As she neared the subject of the power of women voters, The Great Man drummed the table with his fingers.

"Thank you so much," interrupted Miss Anderson, briskly, when a full stop came. "All in favour; carried!"

Mrs. Brahams, as chairs were shifted, and folk began to round up youngsters and say farewells, came forward to secure five autographs from The Great Man (being apparently in the wholesale trade), to assure him there was much more she had wished and fully intended to speak about, and to ask why her Gladys had not received the first prize. Miss Anderson, at the doorway, shook hands with departing guests, and whispered confidentially to each:

"Your child has quite remarkable gifts. Capital weather for July, is it not?"

Miss Pyrford, assistant, hurried off to make tea in the ante-room, and—not being of those who argue that we cannot help our looks—to seize the opportunity to take a page from a small volume entitled *Papier Poudré*. To the ante-room the visitor was escorted by Miss Anderson when the more insistent mothers had been shoo'd off; he sat down cautiously in a wicker chair.

“Terrible people,” he remarked.

“They have their defects,” said Bertha Anderson, “but in a general way, they pay the fees regularly. And their pride in their youngsters is genuine.”

“Seemed to me overwhelming. I speak,” he added, “as a bachelor.”

“And I as a spinster.”

“For which,” with his Georgian manner, “there can be no possible excuse, Miss Anderson. You were once, I understand, a member of our profession.”

“Three times,” she answered. “Two long provincial tours, a short season in London, and then I determined to make a change. Besides, I wanted to be near to my nephews and my niece.” She waved a hand in the direction of the revolving bookcase whereon photograph frames rested. He considered the question of rising to inspect, but the heroic effort was not undertaken. “By the by,” she went on, “you know Mr. Edgar Nayland, I suppose?”

“Ought I? No cake, thank you.”

“One of our finest character actors,” declared Miss Anderson.

“What is his speciality?”

“Anything.”

“That,” said The Great Man, “is lamentable.”

A portrait was brought forward, and he looked at it without extravagant wonder. The inscription, boldly in-

scribed on an empty space, was "To Bertha. Affectionate greetings from Edgar." The Great Man returned the frame to its owner.

"No longer," he commented, "quite in the fresh and vernal years of early youth." The retort followed promptly.

"That might be said of so many of us."

Miss Pyrford, from her corner, gave a brief clearing of the throat, and Bertha Anderson, as though recognising a need for caution, altered the tone of her voice. She alluded to The Great Man's notable triumphs in the immediate past, and he prompted her when memory tripped, and quoted the admiring words of important authorities. Not until the whole subject had been fully dealt with did he find hat, gloves and walking-stick.

"And what was this place," he asked, rendered more genial by invigorating conversation, "before you took it, my child?"

"Just a sculptor's studio."

"Excellently adapted for your purpose. And you do well, I trust?"

"Tremendously assisted," she declared, "by your kindness in coming here this afternoon."

"Oh, no," he protested, modestly. "No, no, no. A thousand times, no!"

A lesson in deportment could have been gained by any witness of the farewell scene. There were, indeed, many spectators; at the tall building of flats on the other side of the broad roadway white-capped maids had not left the windows since arrival of the car an hour previously. Ladies of a more exalted position looked out from ambush, and near the kerb nurses had brought perambulators to a halt. As the two came along the pathway by the wall, folk on omnibuses going south turned their heads sharply

to the left. The gardener of the establishment to which the studio was attached raised his cap; for him an unusual sign of respect.

"Many, many thanks," said Bertha Anderson.

"I regard myself as your debtor," he said. The chauffeur waited at the open door of the car.

"We shall never forget your visit."

"It will remain," he said, as one determined to have the last word, "inscribed amongst the happiest records of my experiences."

On this, he stepped in, and Bertha Anderson drew back. The sweep of the grey top-hat given as the car moved off deserved the applause offered by the crowd.

She went back to Miss Pyrford, and the two gave, in unison, the sigh that expresses relief at the end of anxieties. Alone, the two were able to give a release to the ingratiating manners which the afternoon had required of them.

"Interesting white-haired old blighter," said Miss Pyrford, with impartiality.

"Very well preserved."

"Preserved in spirits," suggested the other. "He didn't drink his tea. We ought to have given him something else."

"Too late now."

"I suppose you told him who to give the prizes to?"

"Of course, Pyrford, of course."

"Wise lass!" Miss Pyrford stretched arms luxuriously. "Nothing more for either of us to do for a whole month, praise Heaven!"

The assistant was called later to superintend the removal of borrowed chairs, and Bertha Anderson wrote in her swift penmanship a few lines to My dear Edgar. She was pressing blotting-paper on the signature, when a double knock came, and two post letters dropped into the box.

"You will be surprised," she read, "to hear that I am leaving the profession. The truth is, I realise that I shall not now achieve fame, and I am out to make money.

"If I had ever had a London chance it might all have been different. I am tired of being informed by provincial journals that I give an adequate performance. I have burnt my boats. That is to say, my collection of land-ladies' addresses.

"More news next week. Do not attempt to dissuade me.

"Yours ever and always,

"EDGAR NAYLAND."

The telephone bell rang, and she said aloud that she knew quite well the message which was about to be given. Because of this, there was no difficulty in hearing.

"Is that Miss Anderson? Oh, splendid. Now then. With reference to our conversation just now. I have the opportunity that your friend requires. A small one, but good enough. Wire to him—don't interrupt, please—wire to him at once, I say, and tell him he is to see me at the theatre noon to-morrow. Noon to-morrow, precisely. This is for your own sake. Good-bye!"

"Hold on," she said, imperatively. "Kind of you, but I have this moment heard——" There came trouble in persuading the gentleman at the other end that the information was correct; his impatient remark, "Oh, blast!" was possibly not intended to reach her ears. "But if you like I'll communicate with him." The answer came brusquely.

"Do nothing of the kind!"

"And that," she declared to the directory near, "that is the trick of happenings in this world!"

Miss Pyrford reported that the business of the chairs had been arranged satisfactorily; the assistant felt just a

leettle weeny bit tired, and if Miss Anderson did not mind she would trot off home.

"I am not so young as I was," she mentioned. And waited for a contradiction.

"You are not so old as you are going to be."

Miss Pyrford gave a brief oration describing the precise age she hoped to select for departing from this life; to postpone it for a single week further would, she declared, be intolerable. Bertha Anderson suggested that so long as a man was left on earth, Miss Pyrford would not willingly die, and the assistant, gratified by this aspersion on her behaviour, went in excellent spirits.

The second letter had remained on the table. She identified her brother's handwriting and knew that James communicated with her only when help was required; the present envelope had the endorsement of "Immediate," a command which, likely enough, had not goaded the postal authorities into any special activity. The contents were short.

"Your nephew Robert is in dire trouble again. Pray see to it at once."

From this moment, Bertha Anderson raced against time.

She found her small handkerchief but did not touch her eyes; tears were arrested by contemplation of the fact that when Robert did anything creditable, he was alluded to as "my son"; in other cases, the responsibility was fixed on Robert's aunt. Bertha locked up carefully, and tried the doors, making certain that the fastenings were secure. In Maida Vale a Number One omnibus took her to Edgware Road, and to Marylebone Road where at a house in a turning on the southern side, she knocked twice with emphasis and precision; other folk besides the Andersons lived there, and they showed no exuberant joy if called

on to answer the door for anybody else's visitor. Foot-steps came leisurely. She knew they signalled the approach of her brother.

"Oh," he said, complainingly, "its only you. I needn't have hurried down from the second floor."

"You never hurried in your life, James," retorted Bertha. She entered. "What is all this about our Robert?"

"Now, let me think," he said, holding up a hand for silence. "Did I write to you about him? Wait a bit. Oh, I remember." A note of triumph in his voice. "I had a suspicion there was something amiss, but on challenging the boy, I found that, for once, I was wrong."

"For once," she repeated, ironically.

"But now that you are here, Bertha, you may as well come upstairs. I've written a rather striking letter about modern manners, and you can tell me which paper I ought to give it to."

"You still have the craving, James, to see your name in print?"

"I have a reputation as a publicist to maintain," he said, grandly. "My poor dear in her last words—or nearly the last—begged me not to fail to do that. My devotion to her memory——" He talked on, as he followed her.

She had begun to tidy the sitting-room ere he arrived, and ignoring his protests, she went on with the job. "I can never find anything," he declared, "after you have been here." Not without trouble, she kept him to the subject of Robert; Robert's progress at office; his most recent love affair. They discussed the question of Robert's looks. The boy's father gave all the credit for these to his late wife, commending the lady further by acknowledging her thoughtfulness in giving him but one child.

"A great disaster, though," he said, impartially, "that

she should have left us when she did. The boy needed a mother's care. No father can take the place. Useless for him to attempt it."

"All who know you, James, will admit that you are trying."

"There is a certain ambiguity about your remark, Bertha. I assume it to be unintentional."

"You needn't!" she rejoined.

There could be no grounds for want of candour in her further talk. She told her brother that he was but a poor example in industry to his son; that he had never contrived to gain Robert's affection, with the result that the lad took confidences elsewhere. Bertha alluded to occasions when she had been called upon to disengage the youth from scrapes that were, perhaps, of no great magnitude but, anyhow, ought not to have happened.

"Have you run across his cousins lately?" inquired James Anderson. "The Ennismore Gardens people, I mean. The Kenningtons."

She balked this effort in shunting, and made it clear that Robert, and Robert alone, was to be here the topic of debate. She did presently agree to read the letter addressed to "The Editor" that began, "With some reluctance I submit my views concerning a matter second to none in urgency——" and so on. Bertha Anderson failed to display enthusiasm, and her brother, taking the foolscap pages, read aloud, and sonorously; he seemed well contented with the effect and, at the mirror, gazed at his reflection with genuine admiration.

"Dashing off?" he asked, over his shoulder.

"My love to Robert," she ordered.

The message proved to be unnecessary. At the door of her small flat in Kilburn she discovered the young man

pacing to and fro the restricted landing, and the first sight of him made it obvious that to the boy's incompetent father the whole truth had not been given. Robert kissed his aunt, sighed deeply, and gripping her hand followed her in.

"Let me unpin my hat," she begged. "I have been to see your father."

"Enough to give anyone a headache," sympathetically. "Tell me, how did the competition go?"

"Boy," she said, "your anxieties have the first place."

"I really don't know," he declared, "why I am worrying you with them."

"Because you always have done so, and always will. Is there a girl, this time?"

"No," he answered, glumly. "A woman."

Encouraged by one or two direct inquiries, he gave the particulars. There came an allusion to money accepted and at this Bertha frowned; her nephew asked her to believe that the loans had been forced upon him, but she did not relax severity. A note was taken of the name and address.

"What will you do, aunt?" he asked, urgently.

"I shall do what I can," she replied. "And what I can do may be precious little."

"Would it be expecting too much to hope you will take some action before the week is out?"

"I make no promise."

He left with an affectionate embrace that probably had a hint of gratitude. "Sleep well, dear Aunt Bertha," he said. "You are a good sort to me!" She gave him the time to get clear of the flats, and away from Kilburn.

Near the station, a taxi driver responded to her signal, and the cab took her at a good speed—traffic at this hour

had diminished—and habits of economy accounted for the circumstance that she kept her eyes, throughout the long journey, on the fare dial. Just where Hammersmith Bridge began, she stepped out and paid the driver. “Shall I ’ang about for you, miss?” he asked. She replied that it was impossible to say whether her visit would be brief or prolonged; he announced that he would take his chance.

“Mrs. Lawrie?” she said. An elderly maid had answered the ring.

“The mistress is retiring.”

“Tell her, please, that Miss Anderson has called. Called with a message from Miss Anderson’s nephew.”

The lady of the flat appeared, after an interval, in an amazing dressing-gown; her hair was bobbed, but her features disclosed maturity.

“Anything happened to my dear lad?” she demanded, emotionally.

“He owes you some money.”

“But the darling need not worry about that.”

“It is I who am worrying about it,” retorted Bertha. “I have brought my cheque-book. Let me know what you make the total sum, and I’ll see if it agrees with the figure he mentioned.”

“You mustn’t expect one,” pleaded the bobbed-hair lady, “to go into details of finance at this time of night. And they were only trifling sums.”

“So much the easier to add up!”

It seemed that the lady had the records, noted on papers in the next room, and she was given permission to absent herself in order to find them. As she went, a sibilant call from the door of the apartment indicated to Bertha Anderson that the elderly maid wished to offer a private message. “You see, miss,” added the maid, at

the end of the short parley, "she's only thirty-nine, and she don't think." Bertha did not trouble to argue this. The lady returned, Bertha wrote a cheque.

"When did you last see your husband?" she demanded, abruptly.

The other gave a shrill, affected laugh. "Many years ago, I am sorry to say."

"Did you see him last week?"

"Perhaps I did," she admitted, reluctantly. "Yes, I fancy I did catch sight of him last week."

"You had a communication with him."

"We spoke to each other."

"And he said," persisted Bertha, "that he was still not willing to get rid of you."

"Words to that effect."

"And you are aware that you have no grounds——"

"Something may happen at any moment," urged the lady. "My people assure me they are having him very carefully watched."

"And it is in these circumstances," said Bertha, relishing the situation to the full, "that you induce a young man, little more than half your own age, to promise marriage, and it is in these circumstances that you insist on holding him to the promise. Why, my good woman——"

It is a fact that no woman, good, bad or indifferent, likes to be thus addressed. The lady of the Hammer-smith flat gave signs of exasperation.

"—You are surely not in your right mind," Bertha Anderson went on. "If my nephew agreed to take you to the registrar's office, your next public appearance would be at the police court in Southcomb Street, and afterwards at the Old Bailey."

"I can see what it is," cried the other, trembling,

"You have come here to blackmail me. You have somehow got to know that my husband makes me a generous allowance, and you have called here in order to obtain——"

"I am not well acquainted with blackmailers," interrupted Bertha, "but I had an idea they took money. Not that they gave it." She pointed to the cheque.

It may be assumed that the lady of the Hammer-smith flat owned an even temper. At this point, it snapped. She tore up the cheque, and threw the fragments in the grate, where an unnecessary fire was burning; she destroyed some letters in the handwriting of Bertha Anderson's nephew, and gave these also to the flames.

"Now you scoot off," she said, hysterically, "as soon as ever you jolly well like!"

Bertha Anderson found the hour late when, reaching Kilburn, she prepared for rest. The usual time was half-past ten.

"Altogether," she said, "quite a busy day!"

CHAPTER II

THE term having been finished with splendour by the competition—one or two of the examiner's ponderous statements were offered to readers of the journals under the heading of "Winged Words"—Miss Pyrford had gone to Etaples for ten days and Bertha Anderson was, to borrow her own description, taking it easy. A part of the holiday treatment was to allow a certain indolence in speech; precision could always be recalled when necessary, and meanwhile the luxury of ceasing to be perfect was enjoyed to the full. No other change appeared to be in view. When, across shop counters in Kilburn High Street,

Just like Aunt Bertha



polite young men, having taken Miss Anderson's small commissions, put the topical inquiry:

"And where do you think of going, miss, for your holidays this year?"

Then Bertha's reply, to the effect that she had not yet decided, was found to encourage discussion to a remarkable degree. For the assistants had a large group of theories calculated to meet the views of each customer, and they were prepared to argue that nothing stimulated the mind like travel, and, with equal force, that London was not such a bad old place, after all. In the result, Bertha Anderson found herself begged by her grateful nephew Robert to signalise his escape from horrifying anxieties by accompanying him to a cricket week in a cathedral city, not too distant from town, and already favourably known to both. The task of packing was brief and speedy; a neighbour in the Kilburn flats agreed to keep an eye open, and to forward letters.

"I don't wish," declared the young man, in the train, "to repeat what I have already said, aunt, and I content myself with assuring you that the whole affair has been a warning to me." To prove this, he frowned heavily at every girl in the compartment. This was between Charing Cross and London Bridge. From Sevenoaks onwards, he was on genial and conversational terms with all.

At the destination he and his aunt, ignoring conveyances, walked through the Norman gateway, and reached the old furniture shop where rooms had been booked.

"Great advantage is," said Robert, shrewdly, "that we shall not be forced to mix with a lot of odd people, as we should have had to do at an hotel."

"Quiet, simple meals," she agreed, "and doing just as we please."

"I've finished with racketing about," he declared.

They watched, when tea was over, the busy traffic in High Street and Bertha identified a car belonging to her sister. It was at the moment occupied by the chauffeur only, and she was hopeful enough to believe that the family might be on the way to a coast town, and making a halt for refreshment. The landlady came up to make defensive inquiries regarding the evening meal—"You don't want anything hot, weather like this!"—and Robert announced that, to save trouble, he proposed to take his aunt out to dinner at one of the hotels; the landlady, in giving cordial approval, recommended that a table should be secured beforehand. Robert, coming back from this task, announced that he had caught sight in the distance of Uncle Walter, Aunt Lily and their daughter and son, Irene and Gerald.

"We shall be able to dodge them," mentioned Bertha.

"Now," argued the lad, with submission, "would that be altogether wise? What I mean to say is that, frightfully well off as they may be, they are, after all, relatives. My father and Aunt Lily are brother and sister; you are their half-sister——"

"Anybody with them?"

"A girl," he admitted. "Friend of Irene's, probably."

"Good-looking?"

"My dear Aunt Bertha," he objected. "You needn't be quite so apprehensive. I have had my lesson."

"It wasn't the first," she pointed out.

"Wish you had a more treacherous memory," he said.

"Did you hear again from the Hammersmith lady?"

"A truly heart-rending communication," he answered cheerfully. "I believe she copied it out of a novel."

The Kenningtons came into the dining-room of the hotel at a point when Bertha and her nephew had almost reached

the end of a short meal; the manner of their arrival suggested that an orchestra should have been near to play a triumphal march. They were of the few who had taken the pains to dress specially for the evening; others were in the flannels or light dresses that had been worn throughout the day. The head waiter escorted them to a round table at the centre of the room; Aunt Lily's voice could be heard directing the order of taking chairs. "You, Irene, will of course sit next to dear Captain Guilford." Robert was able to tell Aunt Bertha that Guilford had once been a person of note in the athletic world; money had come to him, and, judging by his appearance, exercise and he were no longer on friendly terms. Thanks to Aunt Lily's carrying tones, and his own powers of hearing, Robert could state presently that Irene's girl friend was Miss Guilford; he assumed that she, too, was in good financial circumstances. Robert commented on the fact that Aunt Lily was, as usual, giving in to all the demands of her son and daughter, and Uncle Walter, as usual, took up a determined attitude of opposition. "You spoil them, Lily," grumbled Uncle Walter, and, "You are always so harsh with them," declared his wife. The wrangle had a familiar sound to Bertha Anderson.

"Coffee," said Robert, magnificently, "in the winter garden."

"There ain't one," retorted the waiter.

"Very well." With impatience. "Somewhere else."

"And bring the bill to me," requested Bertha.

"Halves, partner," urged the young man.

"No," she said, "this is a special occasion."

"Fancy I have heard that excuse before."

Over coffee they talked of outings in the past when she had met him at Paddington, carrying with her a new

bowler hat for his wear, and, school trunk dispatched to Quebec Street, the two went off, once to Grindelwald, once to Bruges, once so far afield as Rome. The young nephew, in lighting his second cigarette, touched her hand gently, and Bertha felt she was being overpaid. He declared the last time he and his cousin Irene had chatted together, they agreed that Aunt Bertha would have made an admirable parent. "I'm not so certain," argued Bertha, and pointed out the advantageous situation of an aunt. An aunt was exempt from the hourly duties of a mother or a father; her powers of direction were not continuous; the smaller and irritating occurrences of domestic life stood outside her radius. Furthermore, when called on to interpose, she came freshly to the scene, and therefore had a better chance of acting effectively.

"Home?" he suggested, rising from his chair.

"Home it is."

They were out in High Street, where folk discussed with animation the county's score for the day, and the right moment for declaring the innings at an end, when Robert found, to his surprise, that he had left his cigarette case on the table. He came back within twenty minutes.

"Dear aunt," he cried, apologetically, "so very sorry to have kept you waiting. Too bad, really. If you had but noticed that I had not taken my case——"

"I did. And I guessed you were leaving it there purposely."

He coloured, and shook his head in a reproachful way. "Anyhow, I chanced to run across Irene Kennington and the Guilford man. And Miss Guilford. It's arranged that I go with them to see the match to-morrow. And to the theatre afterwards."

"May we assume," inquired Bertha, good-temperedly,

"that the whole of your waking hours during our stay will be given to the company of Miss Guilford?"

"Please don't imagine," he said, with earnestness, "that I am so susceptible as all that. Or so neglectful of my duties to you."

All the same, it did prove that for a couple of days she had, in the crowded city, long periods of solitude. The Kenningtons said they were glad to see her, but only the young people said this with conviction; Gerald's mother whispered aside that the party had been carefully organised, and that the absence of an expected young man gave an opportunity to let in young Robert. Lily imparted further news. She and Walter, her husband, had quarrelled—not for the first time—about Irene's prospects; Walter cared little for Guilford and, at first, showed his antipathy openly. But Irene wanted to marry Captain Guilford, and Captain Guilford wished to marry Irene, and Irene's mother declared that no child of hers should be thwarted. The word appeared to be an obsession.

"I said to Walter, I said, 'You have always set yourself out to thwart the children. There is no greater mistake than to be continually thwarting them. To thwart now and again may be necessary but to be for ever——'"

"If you ask me——"

"Your opinion was not invited," said Bertha's sister. "By the by, what do you think of Captain Guilford?"

"My views on that subject," answered Bertha Anderson, "will not at present be given."

So Bertha wandered by herself about the city, gazing at windows of second-hand shops, and, at times, inspecting the contents of the establishment but making no more considerable purchase than a pair of brass snuffers and tray, and inclined to reprimand herself for such wasteful

expenditure. "You never know when money may be greatly needed," she said. There was the cathedral to see, when the midday sun became too intrusive, and from these cool restful spaces she emerged with a comforting assurance that life was good, and that no grounds existed for apprehensiveness in regard to any young relative. To the cricket ground she went; for choice, later in the day, and after tea at a shop in Mercery Street, for then shade could be discovered; Bertha Anderson had all a Londoner's craving on holiday to become sunburnt, but she knew that in her case the recovery from excess was not facile. There was a certain envy in regarding younger people, who coming out of the private be-flagged tents faced the rays boldly. For solace, Bertha, in watching the game and listening to the military band, gazed now and again at women older than herself, and more anxious than she to offer an appearance of youthfulness.

"It doesn't come off," she said, colloquially. And had to admit that, in certain instances, the comment was inexact. The Theatre Royal of an evening, with its performances by gifted folk who bore the titles of Lady and Honourable and Major, did not please her. The aloofness was justified by a notice in the London journals: "The words were not invariably clear, and there were some very long intervals, delaying the finish until a quarter to twelve, but, after all, this is cricket week."

"I help to supply the goods," admitted Bertha.

Mr. Kennington had to go to London on the Wednesday, called there by urgent business, and, returning at night, he brought with him the young man whose visit had been delayed; the young man was but a fairly presentable individual, and Robert encountered one of the shocks of his life in finding that Miss Guilford called him by an

affectionate nickname, and that he responded in a manner which seemed to Robert to overstep the bounds of decorum. So Robert sulked, and went to his Aunt Bertha for sympathetic listening; she gave him the comforting words that rarely provide any comfort for youth in this situation. Later, he called on Aunt Lily and from her received speech of considerable plainness. Robert, said Aunt Lily, would do well to bear in mind the fact that he was nothing more than a clerk in the City; for him to dream that Miss Guilford could regard him with favour when there were partners in City firms about was indeed in the nature of impudence. For the rest of the week, Robert was thrown back on the company of Aunt Bertha; on the Friday, the two were joined by the lad Gerald, who bewailed the circumstance that his father continued to show towards him the severe authority which might once have been seemly but, in Gerald's view, was no longer appropriate. To distract the nephews from their grievances, Bertha exhibited a note sent on from Kilburn. The crest on the envelope was enough to impress the lads.

"You'll do it, of course," said Robert.

"It wants thinking over," she answered.

"But she is a Duchess, Aunt Bertha."

"Be sure I shall not leave that fact out of consideration."

"She writes," mentioned Gerald, "as though she had known you all her life."

"They invariably do, when they want you to help to raise money for a charity."

The three made for the Dane John Gardens, and, seated there, formed themselves into a General Purposes Committee. Bertha's plea for a modest performance by her students at a hall in the north-western district was

promptly out-voted. A theatre, declared her young and enthusiastic colleagues; nothing short of a West End theatre. And one-half of the programme to be supplied by the Maida Vale pupils, in order to bring in relatives and friends; the other half to be contributed to by distinguished players in order to bring in outside folk. Said players to be approached, in winning tones, by the Duchess.

"What a blessing it is that we are all snobs," remarked Bertha.

Gerald had a notebook, purchased in order to set down comments on the two games of the week, and at the empty pages he recorded the suggestions. Gerald had left school, but no decision as to his future had been made for the reason that his father and his mother were as the poles asunder concerning the matter; he offered his services now to Aunt Bertha, and she at once appointed him honorary treasurer. It would, she announced, be an enormous help to be relieved of all the bother of looking after pounds and shillings.

"I've an idea," he said, "that I'm going to be a terrific success at the job."

"Don't undervalue your services," recommended his cousin.

"I shall jolly well put my back into it, anyway."

"You may be equal to it," conceded Robert. "On the other hand, you may not."

"This lad's ability to peer into the future, my dear aunt," said Gerald, "is positively uncanny."

A list was made of the notable people to be invited. The three, when dusk came, went back, after watching the torchlight tattoo on the recreation ground, with the feeling of something accomplished, to the rooms over the shop, where Gerald shared the evening meal, and later

insisted that Aunt Bertha should accompany him to the hotel, and give the news to his mother.

"It will please mother," said the lad. Robert was excused on the grounds that there would be risk of an encounter with Miss Guilford.

It proved that Mrs. Kennington was in no way gratified by the information. Bertha, she declared, was far too ambitious, considering her station in life; it could be nothing less than a blunder to engage upon any task for which one was not completely fitted. On this, Mr. Kennington intervened, and, after pointing out that Lily was invariably in the wrong whether in the management of children, or anything else, he offered to take a box at the contemplated performance, and to make himself responsible for a row of stalls. Captain Guilford and Irene came up to join in the discussion; Guilford wearing a foolish smile and repressing a tendency to hiccough; his generosity in regard to tickets enabled Bertha to look tolerantly on these indications.

"Who takes charge of the money?" asked Guilford. "Let's write a cheque now, and get 't over."

Bertha pointed at the young nephew. Her sister again protested.

"And why not Gerald?" barked Mr. Kennington. "Gives him a chance of showing his intelligence. You are always standing in the boy's way!"

"Pardon me, my dear Walter, but I think most people will agree that it is you who——"

"I can't argue with a fool," he cried.

"But I can," said his wife, "and I am going to do so." They were still debating when Irene beckoned to her aunt. Guilford had left the young woman on the reasonable excuse that the hour for closing the bar was approaching.

"Tell me, Aunt Bertha," said the girl, leading the way to the lounge. They sat on wicker chairs. "What do you think of my catch?"

"I should throw him back," she answered, bluntly. "And please let me remind you of the fact that you have the time to spare to go on fishing."

"A certain lack of delicacy in your speech, aunt, makes it sufficiently obvious to me that you don't like him."

"I am certain," she said, "that my dear girl could do better."

"On the other hand, the dear girl might find, as time goes on, that she is compelled to do worse. This one has money, and he's a sport. The important detail is that I want to get away from home. I'm tired of all the bickering that goes on. Father and mother never seem to agree on any one subject. If they did, Gerald and I would have to go into a nursing home, in order to recover from the shock."

"For what my good wishes may be worth, my dear, they are yours." She kissed her niece.

"I believe that," said the girl, earnestly. "And if matters don't pan out well I shall come to you, as I have done before, and get advice."

"Can't always guarantee the quality," said Bertha Anderson. "As to the quantity, there is no stint."

The Kennington party intended to return by car, and the business of farewells was avoided because the chauffeur—a masterly individual and, in his way, controller of the family's movements in that, from his decisions, there was no appeal—favoured an early morning start. Thus, when Robert called at the hotel to ascertain if Miss Guilford was prepared to make a suitable apology for her behaviour (in which case, a dignified pardon was to be granted), he

found all had gone, and that the young woman had left no sort of message for him. He told Aunt Bertha, in severe tones, that henceforth he intended to deal with members of the sex in a different manner. If he gained the reputation of a misogynist——

“A what?” she exclaimed. He gave the dictionary version of the word.

—Why it would not be his fault, and might not be counted as a disaster. At the crowded railway station where city folk had taken platform tickets, Bertha pointed out a girl who had played well in a comedy given by the amateurs during the week, and Robert showed but a mild interest; an elderly gentleman, who seemed to be in charge of the young woman, came forward and asked if Bertha was, by chance, travelling so far as Charing Cross. On receiving the affirmative answer, he presented the girl, who had the air of one fully capable of taking adequate care of herself, and giving her over, announced that she would be met in London by an anxious mother. Robert, after remarking that he proposed to make the journey in a smoking compartment, changed his resolve at the last minute, but in order to show that he was a man of implacable doggedness, spoke no word, whilst the other two chatted of the drama and of dramatists. The girl wanted to go on the stage; Ma objected. Ma gave reluctant consent to occasional appearances with novices, but drew the line at members of the profession. On Bertha disclosing some knowledge of the theatre, the girl became more animated.

“I should allow no sister of mine,” interposed Robert, firmly, “to embark on such an undertaking.”

“Have you a sister?” she inquired. Robert admitted he was an only child. “In that case, the question does not arise.”

"I hope your brothers will put their foot down on the idea."

"I haven't any brothers," retorted the girl, with spirit, "and if I had they would not be allowed, for a single moment, to express an opinion."

It is true that Bertha Anderson and other mature passengers dozed whilst the young people argued; the warmth of the day and the rhythmic hum of the train accounted for this. True, too, the journey was prolonged by the circumstance that near to London an axle became overheated, creating some alarm; Robert's pleasing duty was to assure the girl that no reason for anxiety existed, and that Ma would undoubtedly wait at the terminus until the express arrived. Anyhow, when Bertha, the first of her contemporaries to open her eyes, aroused also her powers of hearing, she caught the exchange of sentimental words. "Loveliest person!" said Robert, and "Bad boy!" whispered the girl.

"Oh youth, youth!" sighed Bertha Anderson.

With the opening of the new term, Bertha and her assistant took up afresh their job of teaching the young how to speak. Pyrford was invariably in good form in the earliest days, and new pupils congratulated themselves on being under a gentle rule; their seniors knew better. Ere the week was out, Pyrford had regained her normal manner, and, with the door open and a favourable wind blowing, her voice reached the now empty space at Lord's. At a crisis, it became a scream, and punctuation was ignored:

"The denseness of your stupidity is absolutely intolerable, I've a mind to report you to Miss Anderson or else write a stinging letter to your parents a good shaking is

what you really want a disgrace and a drawback to your self and every one about you!"

As to Bertha and the more advanced students, the method differed. On Bertha's side, there was a sense of gratitude for escape from a life that had meant dressing-rooms replete with every discomfort, a weekly change of apartments, Sunday journeys, and empty weeks in the course of a year; the pupils had reached the stage of excellence where a compliment may be thrown at any moment, and, at home, elders often conveyed wonder and admiration. There was a rumour at the studio that Miss Anderson had once lost hold of her good temper; no details existed to prove that this really happened, and it was not generally credited.

Certainly the more accomplished are sometimes astonished, in class teaching, at the patience shown towards the less efficient. The nice shades of the simple rise, and the simple fall; the compound rise, and the compound fall have to be imparted, and tendency to quicken the pace, once the stable door (or the full stop) comes in view has to be corrected. Also, there are instances where time has to be quickened, and the spur, in the shape of encouraging, pleading advice, given to the leisurely.

*"Now for the fight, now for the cannon peal.
Forward, through blood and toil and cloud and fire,
Glorious the shout, the shock, the crash of steel——"*

"Think of the words," begs Miss Anderson. "Consider what they mean. You are not complaining: you are supposed to be inspiring. Do get rid of the aggrieved tone. Let me just show you how the lines ought to be given."

It is when they are called upon to declaim Shake-

speare that Miss Anderson finds herself tested. Three out of four start well and accurately.

*"He jests at scars that never felt a wound.
But, soft, what light through yonder——"*

The fourth, in spite of example, gives the words in a precise and non-accentuated monotone, broken by slurring and stumbling. The erring pupil has to be delayed, when the rest have gone, and, in a corner, applies the mind and the intelligence to the word-twisters generally furnished by the standard book. The sun shines on the shop signs. Put the cut pumpkin in a pipkin. Such pranks Frank's prawns play in the tank. A little imagining, and the pupil, wrestling with these, can believe that the methods of the Spanish Inquisition have been restored.

With the individual teaching of the mature, Miss Anderson has to deal with all kinds of voices—the Cockney learner, at the start, calls these vices—and she listens whilst some one, taking a platform stance, affects to be Mr. William Pitt answering Mr. Walpole:

"Sir, the atrocious crime of bein' a young man——"

"Being. A g at the end."

"Of being a young man, which the honourable gentleman——"

"Please, please!"

The daywoman at the studio confessed she was not sorry to find herself at Maida Vale again. Her husband, gardener at the adjoining house, required a deal of supervision, and it was convenient to be at a place where she could, at intervals, keep an eye on him. Moreover, it was necessary for her to earn a wage.

"A pity," commented Bertha, "that you and he are not on better terms."

"He's never give me any."

"Any what?"

"Any better terms," explained the daywoman. "Keeps all the money he gets, and doles it out to me sixpence at a time."

"You should have come to an arrangement about finance before marrying him."

"Try it," retorted the other, "when your opportunity comes along, and see if you've got the face to talk of money, when the man is cackling about love. You're right enough in theory, miss, but when it comes to practice——"

"He is rolling the lawn," Bertha pointed out, in looking from the window. "Go and say something pleasant to him."

"I'll try!"

The result of the effort came in sentences caught a few minutes later. "I said 'How are you?'" complained the daywoman, "and you hadn't the good manners to give me a civil answer." The gardener raised his voice in protest. "Yes, I had," he asserted. "I told you to dam well mind your own business!"

The daywoman remarked to Miss Anderson later that she did not intend to relinquish cheerful views. "I'm in 'opes," she said, "that one of these fine days, he'll get hisself run over!"

CHAPTER III

EDGAR NAVLAND wrote, from the rooms in Brixton which he had always occupied when a tour brought him to the outlying London theatres, that he was on any day of the week at the disposition of Bertha; he suggested

lunch or dinner, or both, at a restaurant near the two small playhouses off St. Martin's Lane. He trusted Bertha's engagements would permit her to arrange. He had much to talk about. Bertha was to please bring with her the book containing receipts and disbursements. The outlook, he said in a postscript, might be regarded as favourable.

He stood up to attract her notice as she entered the restaurant, and she observed at once that he wore a morning suit that had done its duty in several plays, but had not hitherto made an appearance out of doors. Also he had grown a shade bulkier since their last meeting, and Bertha told herself to warn him presently to take an extra size in collars.

"Sweetheart," he murmured, pressing her hand fervently. And took the menu card. "What shall we say about the fish? I have been thinking it over, and so far as my know-ledge"—he divided the syllables as curates do—"my know-ledge goes, I am inclined to favour the brill."

"Order what you please, Edgar. I shall be certain to like it."

His discussion with the waiter was lengthy, and the impatience of the waiter so evident, that she took charge and issued the commands. The other tables filled; Edgar congratulated himself on wisdom in arriving half an hour earlier than the time appointed.

"Behold me," he said, "in London, and escaped from a profession on which I have wasted many valuable years. No more weeks out. No more calling on agents in Maiden Lane. There remains, to be candid, a question of finance."

"Here is your book," she said, producing her wrist bag. "See if the figures agree. Just lately you have not sent any important remittances."

"The cost of living——"

"I know, I know. And, besides, it has nothing to do with me. I am simply an intermediary banker. When you forward sums, I put them with my current account; when you want to draw out, I send a postal order."

"The system has answered sufficiently well," declared Edgar Nayland, profoundly.

"I make it that you have eighty-two pounds to your credit."

"Wish the total were larger."

"Naturally. But it isn't!"

The waiter arrived, and the debate was, for a time, suspended. Bertha ordered Moselle cup. Edgar Nayland inquired regarding the younger members of the circle, and by this device was able to concentrate his attention on food; he gave a nod of wisdom as the news of each was given.

"I look on them all," he said, at the end, "as connections of my own. And that reminds me. Would it appear suitable and timely, dear Bertha, at this important junction of my life, that you and I should get married?"

"To each other?"

"Assuredly."

"I think not," she said, with emphasis.

"My fear was that this would be your answer. If memory serves me, you have invariably——"

"I've asked for lamb cutlets to follow."

"With peas and potatoes?" he asked, with an added tone of eagerness. "Oh, splendid." He submitted a theory to the effect that one should always eat the vegetables that were in season.

Bertha Anderson, gazing at him across the table, recalled the fact that in the periods when their communi-

cations were in writing she had often felt a high regard for him; the weekly letters were looked for, read appreciatively. But it had invariably happened, too, that when they met, he somehow contrived ere long to diminish this esteem; there had been occasions when the mere sight of him had affected it. But, she told herself, an excellent man, all the same, with many admirable qualities.

"And this," he was saying, sonorously, "brings me—what about a fruit salad?—brings me to a matter I want to talk about. To be brief," here he glanced at his wrist watch, "I am in need of a sum of four hundred and eighteen pounds."

"No shillings, and no pence."

"Precisely. And the question I ask myself is, where am I to look for the money? Eh, what?"

"I didn't speak."

"It is truly surprising," he declared, "to glance around in one's thoughts and to realise how few people of one's acquaintance there are able and willing to lend four hundred and eighteen pounds. It would appear, to some, a mere bagatelle. There are folk who could write a cheque for the amount without the slightest hesitation. You could!" he added, venturesomely.

"I should hesitate a long, long while," she mentioned, "and then I shouldn't do it. And if, Edgar, there is no one else to whom you can apply, relinquish the idea, and think of another."

"You mean, definitely and irrevocably, no?"

"I mean just no. What I have I wish to keep. And of course, my young relatives have the first claim."

Edgar Nayland contended that the refusal could only suggest that her affection for him had been a pretence; he bewailed the circumstance that he had allowed himself

to be deceived so easily. With a thump of the fist on the table that upset his own glass, and drew the attention of folk seated near, he spoke, at large, of woman and her more conspicuous defects; he deeply regretted any support he might have given to woman's attempt to obtain the power of voting at elections. Bertha took it all serenely, but one of three girls at the neighbouring table exclaimed "Oh, but I say!" in a protesting voice, and Edgar Nayland lowered his tones, changed his manner.

"The disappointment," he said, apologetically, "is bitter and acute. I relied upon you. I counted on your assistance. I depended on your good nature."

"If, as I guess," she said, "you are asked to put five hundred pounds into a business as a condition of joining it, and as compensation offered for your ignorance, you are running a serious risk. Select the job you were at before you went touring; you do know something about that."

"Think of my age," he pleaded.

"I have enough to do in thinking of my own."

The difficult part of the conversation over, Edgar Nayland came out in a more attractive light. Bertha never tired of hearing news concerning members of the touring company; their loves, their dislikes, their grievances. He talked now of these the more freely because he was not returning to them, and his imitation of voices and deportment was good. The two walked out into Charing Cross Road, and together examined second-hand bookstalls; they honoured a Punch and Judy show near the Irving statue with their patronage. It occurred to Bertha to tell her companion of the offer made by The Great Man, and he at once became tremendously animated; his resolve to quit the theatre was definite, but here, as he pointed out, was something which could always be looked back upon as a

splendid exit. He begged to be allowed to call at the stage door and leave a card with acknowledgments and regrets; Bertha said this could do no harm. The Great Man was going in as they arrived.

"I quite understood," he said, graciously. "No apologies are necessary. And I am far from blaming you, my dear fellow, for taking this important and may I say momentous step. There comes a tide in the affairs of—— Miss Anderson, you must both come in and see the show." He signalled with finger and thumb, and the race of four attendants ended in a dead heat.

Nayland started by exercising the usual rights of those to whom the courtesy of the theatre is given, in that he proved far more critical than the folk who had paid for seats. Bertha contented herself by urging that young players ought really to make a closer study of voice production; for Edgar Nayland nothing escaped the condemning word. When Bertha, thinking his views too sweeping, began to quote—"Oh, I really don't know what to say. It's not as if the theatre was—— You needn't stand, Miss Snevellici—the drama is gone, perfectly gone!"—then he said, in a rather testy way, "What on earth are you talking about?" and, in answering him, she recollected that Edgar did not read books. He had once said that he read *The Era* religiously, and she thought the adverb inappropriate. At the end they left a message, "A delightful play, wonderfully produced," and there came a recommendation that tea should be taken. On the instant, Bertha announced a definite resolve.

"I have work to do," she said abruptly, "and I must get home."

"But I thought you were going to give me the day," he protested.

"Can't possibly." She searched her mind for an excuse, and had to invent one. "I am writing a handbook on elocution, and I want to go ahead with it."

"Business first," he conceded.

At Kilburn, she placated her conscience by setting out foolscap paper, and filling half a dozen pages. "I couldn't have endured his company," she said to herself, "for much longer." The queer detail was that when, later, a note came announcing that he had taken her advice, and was starting at the old office, she discovered it easy and agreeable to send good wishes in a cordial letter that conveyed the usual items of personal interest. It did seem that if a meeting could be avoided then friendship was safe.

Irene Kennington consulted her aunt in regard to the date of the wedding. The girl made a September choice, which enabled Bertha to promise to attend.

"I shall know it's bound to be lucky if you are there," declared Irene.

Once astonishment had been overcome in Ennismore Gardens at the circumstance that Mr. and Mrs. Kennington had decided to cease hostilities for the day of the ceremony, the rest was sufficiently agreeable. The strain, now and then, was great, and once Bertha feared the tension would snap, but after a period of silence, risk of warfare vanished, and she was able to breathe again. The best man told Bertha, in confidence, that he had guaranteed to look after the bridegroom until the reception at the hotel close by was over.

"Don't envy you the task," she said.

"I shan't be sorry when it ends. Guilford has many good qualities, but when he's had a spot or two——"

"Let me know if I can help."

"I shall be tremendously grateful," said the best man, "to have your assistance."

The moment when Bertha did a courageous act came as guests arrived from the church. Names were being announced sonorously by the head waiter, and the best man almost equalled the volume of the tones in his inquiries for Miss Anderson. Bertha was found, and the two consulted hurriedly; they raced off in separate directions. Bertha it was who succeeded in tracing the bridegroom; under the protection of an immense fern he was raising a glass as one about to drink his own health.

"Forgive me," cried Bertha, taking it from him. And drank off some of the contents, spilling the rest. "You have saved the life," she added, coughing, "of a fellow creature."

"I must order another," said Guilford, resourcefully.

"There is no time. Irene is asking for you." She conducted him back to the drawing-room.

Bertha guessed the beverage to have consisted of gin and vermouth, but she could not be certain and, during that afternoon, she did not greatly mind. The drink had the effect of causing her to feel extraordinarily lighthearted, and she found it easy to go about chatting with visitors whom she had not met before, and would probably not meet again. Her sister nodded to indicate recognition of service given; the best man, privately informed of the circumstances of the rescue, showed his admiration by refusing to leave her; the two did not fail to carry out their duty of keeping watch on the bridegroom. The Guilford people offered urgent inquiries—"Who is Miss Anderson, exactly?"—and Miss Guilford (once beloved for a short space by young Robert) was able to state that Miss Anderson represented Mrs. Kennington's side of the family, and that all the relatives were fond of her. "Very bright and amusing,"

commented the Guilford people. They themselves were inclined to the other extreme; one elderly gentleman went about courting unpopularity by asking ladies, who hoped they looked youthful, if they recollected the wonderful June of '78. "One hundred and forty-six degrees in the sun at Kew," he barked, and the women said they understood Kew was a charming place, but somewhat difficult of access. A car took off Irene and a perfectly sober husband at four o'clock, and when they had gone Bertha found her eyes filled with tears.

"The reaction," she said, excusingly to the best man.

"Wonderful how you stood it," he declared. "Guilford's drinks have got a kick in them. And your niece, Miss Anderson, can say what very few wives are able to say. It is that her husband has had an appetiser named after him at his club."

"The fact should be a great consolation."

At Kilburn, she found a letter from Miss Pyrford that compelled her to resume a businesslike manner. Miss Pyrford, hitherto counted a reliable and permanent assistant at Maida Vale, begged to inform dear Anderson that she had determined to open an academy at Cricklewood; she hastened to guarantee that nothing like poaching would be allowed, and there were to be no thoughts of interfering with Maida Vale pupils, or of circularising the mothers of the students in question.

"It is a devil of a jar for me," Miss Pyrford wrote, "and to miss our daily companionship will be simply hellish. But life altogether is a series of bloodthirsty incidents, and the only thing to do is to try to make them not more sanguinary than they need be. So here's to you, dear soul, and my blessing be upon thee, and ever so many thanks for years of kindness."

The inconvenience, just after the start of a new term,

was not small; need for instant action was imperative. Capable teachers were rare, and the choice of Pyrford had been a fortunate stroke that might not be repeated. A note was dispatched to the training establishment from which Pyrford had been secured, and the next day, at the studio, was entirely given to interviews with applicants. They were of all shapes, and there was variety in their heights, and the ages were not identical; Bertha, with a preference for youth, sent away with a gracious word, all over thirty, assuring them they were too young for the job; she kept till the last a tall quiet girl whose age, voice and deportment impressed her. Her nephew Robert looked in and announced an increase of salary at office; a gratifying hint had been given of promotion to another branch.¹

"By Jove," he whispered, on catching sight of the girl, "she's a winner."

"I am just about to engage her as my assistant."

"A wise proceeding, Aunt Bertha."

"The job of selection," she went on, "was all the easier because the rest were obviously unsuitable. This girl arrived first and——"

"Punctuality is worth a lot of other virtues, in business. It would exasperate me if I had a wife who couldn't tell the time by the clock."

"Robert," she said, "I think I must find a wife for you. The essays you have already made in that direction have not been happy."

"Hush!" he begged urgently. "Miss Charlton might overhear."

"How did you know her name?"

"Surely you must have mentioned it."

Bertha ignored the debatable point. Calling the girl in, she told her that the appointment was at her disposal;

there was conversation regarding terms, hours of duty, the date of opening the term.

"This is my nephew," said Bertha. The two young people exchanged a nod. "By the by, your address?" The girl replied that any communication sent to her parents' house would be forwarded. "I see. Making a nest for yourself, I take it?"

"That is the idea, Miss Anderson."

"I don't blame you. Sharing rooms, I suppose, with a friend?"

"Exactly!"

"Check me if I am too inquisitive," smiled Bertha. "It's a quality which increases with age."

The girl said good-bye, and bowed to Robert. He hastened to open the door.

"Now," said Bertha Anderson, decisively, when he returned to her, "that is something of the type, Robert, you ought to select. A capable young woman, and not a chatterbox. When she starts work here, look in pretty often."

"I will," he guaranteed.

"Study her carefully, and if you think you are likely to suit each other, don't let there be any unnecessary delay."

"A sound notion."

"It will be an advantage," she continued, "for you to get away from your father. He is not a helpful man, and I believe it would assist you greatly to detach yourself from his influence. You need some one to advise you, and to be an encouragement instead of a brake. A brake is what your father has always been."

"You have done everything, aunt, to counteract that."

"The task is getting beyond my powers. Your habit of falling in love with nearly every girl you meet——"

"I'm keeping her waiting," he exclaimed, glancing at his wrist watch. And smiled.

"What is the joke?" she demanded.

"It's too good," confessed her nephew, "to be kept from you. These dud candidates were all arranged with the agency by old Pyrford and myself. We felt sure you would choose Katherine."

"Why not, for the present, call her Miss Charlton?"

"Because, dear soul, it isn't really her name. I married her yesterday at the registrar's."

"The best of luck!" she said, kissing him.

CHAPTER IV

YOUNG Mrs. Robert, to avoid confusion in the circulars issued from Maida Vale, kept her maiden surname, and, as Miss Charlton, brought enthusiasm to the classes held there; proved astonishingly efficient in the drilling and rehearsal necessary for the afternoon performance. She it was who, when young Gerald Kennington announced that the sale of tickets had reached a blank wall, arranged a list of patronesses: most of the ladies had to be assured that they would not be expected to make any disbursement, and some who betrayed hesitation rushed in with offers on being informed that the wife of the Prime Minister had allowed her name to be added. Mrs. Robert, rejecting the counsel of her husband, called at 10, Downing Street, where she talked persuasively to a secretary, and was able, later, to announce to Aunt Bertha that a ticket-selling committee would meet at that impressive address, take tea, consult, and furnish news to representatives of London journals.

"I should never have dared!" cried Bertha Anderson,

"If you don't see what you require in the window," said the young woman, "it is advisable to step inside."

Paragraphs with illustrations began "I hear that Lady So-and-So (here) has joined the merry band of organisers——" And so on. "All London is agog concerning the mystery of the programme for the charity affair on the 26th. Miss Bertha Anderson, the well-known elocution teacher, is in the secret, and I believe the Duchess of This-and-That (here) has brought influence to bear on desirable members of the profession. The Duchess, who was, of course, Miss Vanderdecken of Louisville, Kentucky, may be persuaded to contribute a violin solo, on which instrument she is no mean performer." The Downing Street conference obtained such admirable publicity that Gerald was able to tell his aunt that tickets were now selling as hot cakes sell.

"And you are looking after the money, boy?"

"Sweetheart," he said, "I make myself entirely answerable for the cash. Trust your devoted Gerald for that!"

In the matter of general responsibility, she found that a great anxiety had been lifted from her shoulders by the marriage of Robert. Looking back, she reviewed the number of occasions when, with no kind of assistance from Robert's extraordinary father, she had snatched the young man from some pool of disaster and carried him on to dry land; gratitude was always tendered, but she knew the incidents were quickly forgotten. Also, bright and comforting notes arrived from Irene, causing Irene's aunt to feel that she had been guilty of over-nervousness. G., wrote Irene, was so generous in money matters that any small defects could be pardoned. "G. is a perfect scream when he has had one drink over the limit. You would be frightfully amused to watch his antics at the table. I am

so glad I did not marry a dull man." The pupils at Maida Vale, stimulated by the prospect of going on a real stage of a real theatre, showed unusual intelligence; all were word perfect, and many obeyed instructions with an alacrity which was almost perplexing. Elder relatives, during this space of intensive culture, were forbidden the studio, and they, too, complied with orders.

"Miss Anderson and her new assistant," they mentioned to each other, profoundly, "have a difficult task, and it is for us to see that they are not interfered with in any manner whatsoever. You understand?"

The protests of certain folk, who had hoped that at the end tickets would be given away, thus avoiding unnecessary disbursement, were many and loud. Young Gerald, proud to find himself in a situation of dignity, mentioned the question at home where it led to one more dispute between father and mother. Mr. Kennington, because his recommendations were not followed, stopped the lad's weekly allowance with the comment that he hoped it would bring Gerald to his senses. In private, Mrs. Kennington offered to make this up to Gerald, but the youth said he had no desire to be under an obligation to anybody. Once he was able to earn a living he would make this clear to the world in general, and to Ennismore Gardens in particular.

"And now," said his mother, "I suppose you are going to your Aunt Bertha with the grievance. As usual."

He mentioned to his aunt at Maida Vale that the net profits to be handed over to the charity could not be far short of three hundred pounds. She nodded. "But never again," she remarked. "I can't afford the time a job like this occupies. And it's only indirectly that it brings any money into my current account at the bank." The lad

said, rallying, that the deposit account there was probably in a healthy condition. "It wouldn't take much," she declared, "to induce it to look very anæmic."

Irene came to town specially for the performance, and at the vestibule of the theatre, apologised for the absence of her husband; Guilford was undergoing a course of treatment by the one medical man—a Dr. Wellesley of Sloane Street—whose instructions he was disposed to follow; the treatment was urgent because the doctor had in view a transfer to Madeira for the benefit of his own health. Irene wanted to meet Robert's wife, but Katherine was in charge behind the curtain, and Irene would have to leave so soon as the performance ended.

"I daren't leave G. for long," she said.

"Can he still make you laugh?"

"I find him a shade less diverting," admitted Irene. She turned the subject. "Let me know if I can do anything this afternoon, aunt dear."

The lady in charge of the programme-selling girls consented to allow Mrs. Guilford to join the band of robbers, and Bertha observed that her niece's good spirits came back in holding up folk and extracting money from them. There was much to do in the way of showing flattering attention to distinguished people, and it would have been counted a tragedy if any mother of any pupil had not received an individual welcome. Young Gerald, marvellously costumed by a Cork Street firm, went around busily, almost feverishly, and his aunt sent him a look of approval. Two young women who gave the impression of being all limbs, came in, arguing loudly to hide confusion created by environments to which they were obviously not accustomed, and Gerald taking charge of them, devoted all his attentions

to the pair. One turned, and exchanged a wink with the commissionaire.

"Wonder where the boy found that little lot," said his watchful aunt.

Three hours later—there was no stint of quantity in the programme—the Duchess accepted the fervent congratulations of patrons and patronesses, and made little attempt to correct the impression that the whole scheme had been carried through by herself, alone and single-handed. To the earnest inquiries of her friends, she answered reassuringly, that she was going to Scotland forthwith in order to enjoy a thoroughly good rest. No letters to be forwarded, and an endeavour would be made to bar newspapers. The friends declared, with rapture, that the Duchess was behaving with extraordinary foresight and shrewdness; they managed to hint that commoner folk would never have thought of such a procedure.

"Good-bye, Miss Anderson," said the Duchess, graciously, to Bertha. "I hope the affair will turn out to be a good advertisement for your school, or whatever you call it."

"Where shall I send the cheque?" Bertha, a trifle hurt at the omission of acknowledgments, spoke abruptly.

"Oh yes, of course." With the air of one called upon to bear a new and heavy burden. "Yes, the cheque. Now let me think!"

"Shall I forward it direct to the treasurer of the charity?"

"But how clever of you to have such a perfectly gorgeous inspiration. Certainly. That will save me an immense amount of trouble."

"It shall be posted without delay."

There were minor folk outside the theatre waiting to

exercise the right of having a word with Miss Anderson; it was near to six o'clock ere she had the opportunity of looking around for Gerald. Mrs. Robert, having seen the last student go in safe guardianship, helped in the search, and it was she who ascertained that the youth had left, ere the performance ended, in the company of the two girls to whom, throughout the afternoon, he had been paying special court. "I overheard," said the commissionaire, "some talk of dining later at the Ritz, but," acutely, "that's often done just for the sake of effect." Bertha decided that neither she nor Mrs. Robert had the effrontery to present themselves at that restaurant.

"I shall hear from the boy in the morning," she said.

It was, in fact, three days later ere any news came of him. Meanwhile telephone messages had been sent to Ennismore Gardens, where considerable vexation appeared in the tones used at the instrument; Gerald's mother and father, ignoring the circumstance that they themselves had attended the performance, made it clear that they reproached Bertha for not keeping a better guard over their son. Irene, answering a telegram from Maida Vale, said she knew nothing of her brother, or of his intentions. Bertha, going over the events of the afternoon, remembered that there seemed to be a certain acquaintanceship between one of the young women and the commissionaire, and she and Mrs. Robert posted off immediately to Shaftesbury Avenue.

"Known her since she was a child," answered the commissionaire, with an explanatory gesture. "To tell the truth, she's a sort of connection of the wife's. And if you ladies care to go on to Streatham and see the missus, she'll give you all the information that's in her power.

Say you come from me, and don't forget to ask after her neuritis."

No physical complaint interfered with the energy of the commissionaire's wife, once she was found and persuaded to join the search party. She conducted Bertha and Mrs. Robert to a house in a road near Wandsworth Common, and there cross-examined a defensive woman concerning the whereabouts of one Muriel; securing, with trouble, three addresses of girl friends of Muriel— "The young cat tells them more'n what she tells me," declared the woman—the three set off at a run. At the very first call, a valuable document in the shape of a picture post-card of the type that makes a happy blend of art and vulgarity was produced. Headed with the name of an hotel at Seaford, it said that the writer was there with a softy who appeared to have enough money to make a bonfire. "Strictly O.K., mind you. Always asks permission before he kisses me. Funny world, isn't it? Wish it was summer-time." From the nearest telegraph office in Putney, Bertha wired, as a speculation, to Gerald Kennington at the hotel, and the two, returned to Maida Vale, found on the doorstep of the studio a red bicycle, and a messenger.

"Am writing," said the telegram from him, briefly.

In the interval, the treasurer of the charity paid a visit, asking a thousand pardons for his intrusion. But Miss Anderson, he was sure, knew how difficult it was to get money in these days, and how impatient one was to touch it so soon as—— Quite, quite. The treasurer perfectly understood. The absence of Miss Anderson's young relative, on a brief holiday, was the most natural incident in the world, and of course, until he supplied the particulars, a complete settlement could not be made. But seeing that tradesmen were pressing, and bank-managers writing, how

would it be for Miss Anderson to make out a cheque for, say, two hundred and fifty on account. Now, that was really kind of Miss Anderson. Splendid. Ever so many thanks, and good-bye until the next meeting.

A large envelope arrived tardily from Seaford; it had been registered and this Bertha looked on as a hopeful detail; it bore the instructions, "Not to be posted until Thursday," which gave an air of mystery. Enclosed was no remittance of any kind, but a number of confusing pencilled memoranda, and a letter, so clearly written that it was obviously copied from a draft.

"MY OWN DEAR AUNT BERTHA,—

"I hope before you read this you will bear in mind how much I have always loved you, and how anxious I have ever been that you should love me. Because of the past, I want you to look on this side-slip of mine with gentleness.

"I have got rid of all the theatre money, excepting ten pounds, which will meet the cost of taking me abroad. See my father and mother—I can imagine how they will wrangle about my case—and put the best view you can upon the situation. I dare say, if the facts were known, the governor did a bit in the wild oats way at an earlier period in his career.

"I do not know what is to happen to me, and I do not care. The one girl I wanted to marry, has, after a lot of pretending, and accepting all the gifts I bought for her, told me that she is tired of the sight of me. So now I am for it. I am leaving the country in order to increase the difficulties of catching me.

"Good-bye, dear Aunt, and bless you. Don't let the charity people bluff you or anyone into paying up. I feel

sure that legally they cannot do so. Proceedings might and probably will be taken against me, but against nobody else. It will be rather interesting to see what Pentonville is really like."

Mrs. Robert suggested that the crisis was one that made a man's help advisable, and by her directions Robert called that evening at Maida Vale. Bertha Anderson found him a new Robert; one who hesitated to offer a view until he had secured his wife's permit to speak; any proposal from her and he at once withdrew his own suggestion. Robert, on the appeal of his aunt and by command of his wife, went off to make the journey to Ennismore Gardens in order to submit the letter to Gerald's parents, and to mention the steps taken by Aunt Bertha in regard to the wanted money.

"Do you think," asked the girl, bluntly, "that Robert has improved?"

"Do you want me to answer 'enormously' or 'to a certain extent'?"

"I only want the truth."

For the first time the girl embraced her. Bertha patted the other's hand in a friendly way.

"The reins," she said. "Are they being held just a little too tightly?"

"I fancy not," answered Mrs. Robert.

"I can guess at the difficulties," Bertha went on. "The bringing up by a slack father; the attentions of an aunt not too wise."

"Oh, I don't know. I don't know about that. I would rather trust your judgment than anybody's."

"Sycophant!"

"Give me your advice," begged Mrs. Robert.

She was saying, at the end of the discussion, as one persuaded against her will, "I do believe that you may be right, Auntie," when Robert burst into the studio crowded with irritation, and almost deprived of speech by annoyance; a word from her brought him to a state of composure. The Kenningtons, he declared, were the most extraordinary pair to be met with in London, in Great Britain, in the whole world. He had been able to make nothing of them. It was like arguing with a display of fireworks. They sent a message of emphatic blame to Aunt Bertha for drawing the cheque; for the rest, it only remained now for the boy to be punished. They intended to take no action in the matter, but, in their own words, to let everything take its course. Anyone who interfered could no longer be regarded with favour by the Kennington circle.

"I argued with them," said Robert, "until I was black in the face."

"Do be accurate," urged his young wife.

"Let him go on," suggested Bertha Anderson. The young woman sent her an apologetic glance. "I want to hear all about it."

"They forbid you, Aunt Bertha, to attempt to make investigations. They said—you don't mind if I repeat their absurd charge—they said you were disposed to meddle in affairs that did not concern you."

"It is a crime," she said, good-temperedly, "of which I have often been guilty. And am I correct in guessing that they also declared it was a pity I never married, and had children of my own?"

"I believe," confessed her nephew, "they did make some remark to that effect."

Irene, in sending an answer, after some delay, to her

Aunt Bertha's urgent communication, wrote that it was impossible for her to hunt for the brother; she had pressing anxieties of her own. Guilford was still undergoing the cure, and it had so far succeeded as to render him gloomy and morose. Irene dared not leave him.

"But I agree, my dear aunt, that something must be done, and I leave it all to you. Whatever you do will be done well. Send me news." A postscript guaranteed that when Guilford was found in one of his old moods, Irene would ask him to recompense Aunt Bertha for the disbursement made on poor Gerald's behalf.

Bertha Anderson secured the loan of a Continental Bradshaw from the mother of a pupil who had reason to be grateful to her, and, in studying the map and the small print, tried to persuade herself that mere selfishness constituted the basis of her intentions.

"I shan't be able to work until the affair is cleared up," she said.

The map suggested Newhaven as a jumping-off place. She remembered inconsequently Stevenson's words: "Because I have reached Paris, I am not ashamed of having passed through Newhaven and Dieppe." To the exploring of Dieppe she did not object; Dieppe was known to her. Bertha still had somewhere a *Guide Dieppoise* for '14; she recalled how fortunate she had been in catching a steamer homewards on that July day just before war was declared; the book had a picture on the cover of a girl shrimping; there was a numbered plan of the theatre; and it gave the environs of the town which she visited in their order. Arques-la-Bataille, Martin-Eglise, Puys, Berneval-sur-mer, Pourville, and the rest. But she did feel apprehensive at the thought of having to scour Paris. To go to Paris

would be an experience, and she suspected it might be as difficult to trace a missing youth there as in London.

"Dieppe, for a start," she said, "anyway!"

CHAPTER V

As she came off the steamer, and made her way in the chilly afternoon across the fish market, she caught sight of her young nephew. He appeared to be in ambush behind a stall, but encountering her gaze, came forward at once, and took charge of her suit-case.

"Going to stay long, best girl?" he asked, airily.

"I take you back by the next boat, Gerald."

"Not so fast, dear person, not so fast. You have endured a considerable journey, and you must pause awhile. This evening I take you along to the casino."

"Have you been gambling?" Sharply, and with a frown.

"Every night."

"And I suppose you have lost heavily."

"There," he said, joyously, "you lapse into error. When I came here I had little to lose, but I found the bank has plenty to be won. I've been raking in the boodle, hand over fist."

It seemed he had met each boat in the fear that one of his parents might arrive, in which case he would have sprinted—"Absolutely sprinted, my darling"—across to the Western Railway station, in order to reach the other side of France. But Aunt Bertha he was glad to see, and he said so, and she did not hide the relief she felt in thus early encountering him. To his question, she replied that she was not expected home immediately, and a compromise in regard to the space of the visit was arrived at; twenty-

four hours and then the return journey. Bertha insisted on making sure of an apartment before going any further. At the hotel in the rue Aquado where she had once taken a holiday, the proprietress, greeting her warmly, said the establishment was full, but a guest would be evicted in order to make room for Miss Anderson.

"Tea, as served at my hotel," said Gerald, "is tea in the correct and accepted meaning of the word. At tea, we can have a quiet discussion on the sad case of young Mr. Kennington."

"It has been no joke to me, boy."

"I know, I know," altering his tone. "And I ought to be dashed well ashamed of myself for behaving as I did. However," going back to his usual manner, "let me show off my acquaintance with the language of the country by saying that *tout est bien qui finit bien*."

Prompt attention given at the hotel—a sign that he was generous towards the attendants—and tea was served in the lounge; the conversation found itself interrupted more than once by English folk who begged to be informed the exact hour at which Mr. Kennington proposed to visit the casino that evening. "My nephew," interposed Bertha Anderson, "is not visiting the tables again." They argued that patronage ought to be given to the last night of the season, but Bertha shook her head.

Gerald showed disturbance at the news that his aunt had been called on to write a cheque for the part proceeds of the *matinée*; he guaranteed to hand over the sum immediately that his gains were paid into a London bank, and a cheque-book obtained. Gerald described amusedly, and in an undertone, the ingenuity he had to exercise in finding a safe hiding-place for notes.

"Of course," he said, judicially, "I am perfectly well

aware that the luck cannot last. It would be too much to hope for. But it is a fact that ever since I managed to rid myself of that young woman at Seaford——”

“I thought she ridded herself of you.”

“My memory is not quite clear on the subject. What I was going to say was that fortune has been smiling on me from that hour.”

“You have done nothing to deserve such generous treatment.”

“Don’t,” he protested, “rub it in too hard. I shall have enough of that when I get back to Ennismore Gardens.”

“I rather imagine, from what I hear, that the hall door there will not be opened to you.”

“It sounds far too good to be true,” commented Gerald.

For all his jauntiness there were moments when he became thoughtful, and once he took a pencil, and made notes on an envelope; he explained that he wanted to make certain of his financial position. Later, he wrote the names of the few who had gained a knowledge of his adventure.

“I shall give them a miss for a time,” he said. “All, excepting you.”

In her desire to watch over him, she readily consented that they should dine together, and when he spoke of going to the theatre, Bertha agreed to accompany him, in spite of the circumstance that one or two sleepless nights, and the journey across Channel had left her tired. It happened that the opera, played just opposite the casino gates, was one she had not previously heard and for her, in consequence, it lacked the interest that familiarity with music supplies. From the moment the curtain went up on Act Two until the point when it was rung down,

Bertha Anderson enjoyed profound rest. On awakening, she discovered that her nephew had left the strapontin which he had occupied; she assumed that for him, too, the performance had lacked fascination, and she in no way blamed him for going off early.

They told her at his hotel the following morning that he was still in his room, and she left word to the effect that she would meet him on board the steamer due to leave, in the time-table phrasing, at 13.30. Arriving early at the gangway, she waited for him until the Paris train came in, and then went on to secure a deck-chair. Her suit-case reserved the use of this, and as first-class passengers bustled up, she walked to and fro agitatedly, blaming herself for the want of perfection in her methods. The siren hooted; the steamer moved. As it moved, she, to her great relief, caught sight of Gerald in the second-class part of the steamer.

"My old trick," she said, self-reproachfully. "Worrying without cause."

At Newhaven, Bertha intended to share his compartment, but by some means he evaded her, and she had to travel to London in a Pullman with folk who appeared to be direct descendants of smugglers, and talked of nothing but their cleverness in balking the Customs. On the platform at Victoria, Bertha Anderson was the first to alight, and she took up position at once near the barrier.

"Don't speak to me, aunt," he begged, as she grasped his arm. "Just let me go my own way."

"Is it a good way?"

"It's a bad way."

"Then I shan't let you take it. Come along to the bookstall, and tell me what is the matter."

It was a short story appropriate, as she could not help

thinking, for any of the magazines exhibited there. Gerald, on ascertaining at the theatre that his aunt had closed her eyes, resolved, he said, to embark on a scheme intended to set him, for a while, entirely and luxuriously free of Ennismore Gardens or any other authority. The scheme had not worked out according to plan. Fortune at the casino had tired of Master Gerald, and her love changed to positive dislike. The lad, in reciting the circumstances, could felicitate himself on one point only. He had reserved enough to pay his hotel bill, and the cheapest fare home.

"A qualified pilot is needed to take charge of you," she declared, sharply.

"In due course, aunt," he said, with dignity, "I shall pay back every penny I owe."

"And in due course, and for all you care, I may, in the meantime, go bankrupt."

"I promise you, faithfully, I shall never gamble again."

"Looks as though you'll never have the chance."

He consented to go to his cousin Robert's house, and ask for shelter; his aunt agreed that the return of the prodigal to Ennismore Gardens could be delayed until the meteorological warnings there were more favourable. "I know you must think me a rotter," he said in going, and Bertha, to preserve austerity, mentioned that she was not alone in holding that view. So soon as he had disappeared, on an omnibus, she blamed herself for not giving him money, for being hard with him, for failing to make allowances for youth; justice compelled her to admit that no procedure of any kind would have been regarded as entirely satisfactory. At her flat in Kilburn she found three letters; one from the treasurer of the charity asking, in the most courteous way, for the balance of the takings; one from Edgar Nayland complaining that his eighty-two

pounds had not been forwarded, and a note from the local bank:

"We beg to inform you that your account has become £18 3s. 4d. overdrawn, and we shall be glad if——"

Bertha Anderson sat up that night puzzling over the distracting memoranda supplied by Gerald, and, in the morning, awoke to find the electric light still on, and herself sitting at the desk. It appeared the work of the evening before had advanced to a stage where lucidity arrives; a few more calculations and she was able to realise that a cheque for something like forty pounds was due, and would have to be sent. At the studio in Maida Vale, the daywoman had taken a trunk call on the telephone to the effect that Captain Guilford would call on Miss Anderson at an early hour.

"You seem worried, miss," said the daywoman.

"Surely not."

"And restless."

"I am creating a wrong impression."

"I was like it once," said the other, reminiscently. "Everything appeared to be going crooked. I thought about the canal, and I brooded over everything and everybody. And," exultantly, "in the result it proved an absolute God-send."

"So you have told me."

"It was in the war-time," said the daywoman, not to be checked, "and folk weren't near so mighty particular as they had been. And there was a society that hadn't too much to do, for looking after war babies, and the ladies took my case in hand, and they found me a far better situation than the one I'd been in when the trouble happened. And then he married me, and got a job as gardener next door. So you see," the peroration carefully timed to

take her to the doorway, "there's more silver linings about than some people like to think."

Mrs. Robert came with the reassuring news that Gerald had reached the house in due course, and, that morning, had taken an astonishingly good breakfast. Gerald, leaving with Robert, intended to offer his services in any capacity and at any salary, to any firm; Mrs. Robert had warned him influence was desirable and perhaps necessary. Bertha gave the figures arrived at by the calculations, and mentioned that she had resolved to make an appeal to Guilford.

"Loan or gift?" asked Mrs. Robert.

"Loan, of course. I shall pay it back so soon as I can."

"Now, I wonder, aunt, why it should be left to you to settle this?"

"Only because no one else is prepared to do it."

A parent from Elgin Avenue looked in to talk of a daughter and, as it soon appeared evident, other topics. With the announcement that she was in no hurry, she spoke of her husband's wonderful career—"Starting, my love, with next to nothing!"—of the number of clerks he employed, and his generous treatment of them. On Bertha inquiring if room could be made for an alert, well-educated youth, the lady from Elgin Avenue hedged slightly, but as she had already declared that, in the house, her word was law and that her husband invariably gave into her wishes, she had to accept the name and the address, and give a cautious reminder that she could not perform impossibilities. On this Bertha diverted the conversation to the topic of the daughter, guaranteeing special attention on the part of Mrs. Robert and herself.

"She's got a lovable disposition, but she ain't generally liked." Miss Anderson was not discouraged. "Inclined

to be knock-kneed, but, as I tell her father, it's better than being bow-legged." Miss Anderson assented. "And people think she's got adenoids, but, bless my heart, they say that of nearly everybody up in this quarter." Miss Anderson said hopefully that her task was to overcome errors in pronunciation.

The lady went only because Captain Guilford was announced and because she happened to be discussing a subject which he would not understand or ought not to understand; Bertha exacted a sworn statement that the case of Gerald Kennington was not to be overlooked. Mrs. Robert escorted the lady visitor to the garden door.

"I hope something will come of that," she said, rather nervously to the newcomer. "Irene told you about him, I suppose."

He frowned heavily, and banged his grey bowler hat on the table. "I have had to forbid Irene to allude to any of her relatives," he said. The former extravagances of behaviour had gone; in their place was an air of solemnity.

"His scrape," remarked Bertha, summoning courage, "has left me in urgent need of about a hundred and fifty pounds, and I don't know where to look for it."

"So long as you do not look in my direction——"

"I had no thought of doing so." Sharply.

"That is calculated to save a deal of argument. I have called to speak to you about Irene. Irene is extravagant. Irene is wasteful. The bills which came by post this morning—I chanced to be down early, because I am not sleeping well—they staggered me. Then she complained that I had opened her letters. I can't imagine why her parents did not bring her up more wisely."

"It is a trifle late to remedy that."

"Anyway, I'm not going to put up with it any longer.

You have some influence over her, and I want you to talk to her very seriously. Make it clear that we can't go on as we are going at present."

She eyed him squarely. With the change of deportment that the cure had effected, it struck her that he must be a difficult person to live with; she doubted if it would be wise to interfere.

"Look here," he said, suddenly. "Do the best you can, and I will let you have the money you want. If you succeed, I shan't dun you for it." He pulled a cheque-book from an inside pocket.

"Can you use a fountain pen?" she asked, readily.

Bertha Anderson discovered a sensation of magnificence in paying in the cheque; the bank-manager was going out to lunch at the time and, noticing the transaction, he chatted of the weather in terms which were almost apologetic. The bank-manager had seen notices of the theatre performance and hoped the results, so far as Miss Anderson was concerned, had proved good; Miss Anderson had to acknowledge that the classes showed no immediate benefit, but the other spoke as an optimist.

"'Cast thy bread upon the waters,'" he quoted.

"'For,'" said Bertha, not to be outdone in general knowledge, "'thou shalt find it after many days.' The question is how many?"

"There," said the bank official, "you have me." He made inquiries concerning the health of Miss Pyrford. "A fascinating woman," he remarked.

The piety of the short discussion might be held accountable for the fact that applications began to reach the studio. "As I observe you give lessons in elocution, I am writing to ask if you have room for my daughter Phyllis who, I may say——" There was a touch of magic in the

number and the quality of the requests; Bertha told Mrs. Robert that in the early days when pupils were rare she had a favourite dream, which included a crowded letter-box, and this dream now appeared to be coming true. Meanwhile there was luxury in being able to select and discriminate, and to say after inspection of some completely hopeless youngster, "Sorry, madam, but just at present it is quite impossible for us to add to our list. Yes, certainly, you can leave the address, and if a vacancy occurs we will see what we can do." The time-table had to be rearranged; a certain abridgment gave satisfaction to everybody. Mrs. Robert showed herself extraordinarily handy in preparing a light midday meal at the studio, and when it was necessary that week for her to stay on until a late hour, Robert called, and took his wife to an economical restaurant near Marble Arch. Bertha noted that he was no longer kept under the former severity of control; cross-examining in regard to occupation of the hours had been dropped.

"Gerald's clicked," he announced one evening. "Starting at seventy-five pounds a year."

"First class!" cried Bertha, heartily.

"Says he is indebted to you, aunt, for it, and he means to do his best. But, of course, the salary won't quite keep him, and we were wondering——" Robert paused.

"Go on, boy!"

"Wondering if you could induce his father to make a small allowance. Just a little addition. Say an extra fifty."

"This week-end I am due to stay with Irene."

"Could you manage to pay one of your diplomatic visits to Ennismore Gardens this very night? You see," frankly, "the presence of Gerald makes work in the house. And my dear missus has plenty to do already."

Ennismore Gardens said curtly, on the telephone, that Bertha could call if she particularly wished to do so; Mr. and Mrs. Kennington would be found at home, and alone. The house received Bertha with an uncanny silence. She could remember the times when the voice of either Irene or Gerald, or both, sounded joyously when she spoke to the maid in the hall, and vehement dances of welcome followed.

"Mrs. Kennington," said the girl, admitting her now, "has a headache, and Mr. Kennington is writing letters and does not want to be disturbed."

The sister's indisposition vanished when it was understood that Bertha had news of the son of the house, and Mrs. Kennington had no trouble in arousing herself sufficiently to point out the mistakes committed by Bertha. "But you always would barge in!" she declared. It appeared that Mr. Kennington, having resolved in agreement with her that Gerald should go on his own way, had suddenly determined this was a policy in favour of which nothing could be said; his wife was on the side of consistency, and keeping to all you once said.

"The strain of the argument," said Mrs. Kennington, self-sympathetically, "made me feel quite ill. And where is my dearest boy, pray, at this moment?"

Mr. Kennington, carrying out his own new idea, had, it appeared, advertised cautiously for his son in the journals; to round off the scheme, he had arranged for Gerald to come into his office so soon as the lad returned. "And," said his wife, "he won't be too well pleased to find you have upset his plans."

Bertha's sister had a hundred and one questions to put, most of them unanswerable. Why had Gerald won money at the Casino? Why, having won it, was he so

foolish as to lose it? How did Bertha know he was at Dieppe? The inquiry not offered was one regarding the payment of the sum Gerald had taken, and Bertha, anxious to succeed in her mission, said nothing of this. But the sister's craving for information went on, and her ability in making criticism showed no signs of giving out. A sharp cough at the doorway stopped her.

"I have heard a good deal," said Mr. Kennington, abruptly, "and I can imagine the remainder. Bertha, we are greatly indebted to you. You have acted wisely and well. If Gerald desires to live away from us, by all means let him do so. I'll see that he has a cheque once a month. Give the boy," here Mr. Kennington turned his head away, "give the boy my love!"

As Bertha was going, Mrs. Kennington spoke of Irene. Of the perfect happiness and complete serenity of Irene's marriage. Of the excellent qualities owned by Irene's husband.

"And if I remember correctly, Bertha, you didn't approve of him. Shows how wrong-headed one can be." Bertha mentioned that she was, by request, visiting the couple. "Whatever you do," begged the other, urgently, "don't attempt for a solitary moment to interfere between man and wife. Going home by omnibus, I suppose? A pity you don't buy yourself a car. There's one of ours we rather want to get rid of."

In the main road, as Bertha waited for a public conveyance, she found herself hailed by her brother James. He was driving a three-seater, and pulling up, greeted her and insisted that he should take her to any destination she cared to select. He explained, in going eastward, that the car had certain improvements suggested by himself; the makers, out of gratitude, had allowed him to

take it for a spin. Her brother talked so volubly and so technically that at Hyde Park Corner she was already feeling a trifle dazed. A shriek of warning voices, a crash, and when Bertha Anderson regained senses, she found herself occupying a bed in Winchester Ward.

CHAPTER VI

THE nurses were at the other end of the ward, and Bertha Anderson occupied the time of comparative independence by reviewing the situation. A motherly-looking woman in the next bed remarked, "Ullo, come to yourself, then? Ain't I seen you working the Wilton Road?" Bertha's voice in contradicting was feeble, and the neighbour said kindly, "You go on taking it quiet, ducks, whilst you've got the chance!"

Her first thoughts went in the direction of money, and the way money was likely to be affected. There had been arranged special lessons, at the pleasing fee of fifteen shillings per lesson, to be given to two young women who had to face the task of public speaking. (Bertha had tried to persuade each to take a course of, say, twelve lessons and by this means reach perfection, but they argued that perfection might be achieved at any moment, and then the rest would be a sheer waste.) There was the ordinary class work of forty-five minutes' length, at so much per term—three terms to the year—and Mrs. Robert would probably be able to deal with this somehow or other. It did, indeed, seem a blessing that a capable, reliable young woman like Mrs. Robert should be chief mate, ready to take charge of the ship in the absence of the captain. Ere going on to other items, Bertha Anderson found her-

self disturbed by wondering what the day was, and she put an inquiry to the matronly woman.

"I don' know," replied the woman, "no more 'n the dead. But it isn't Sunday, and it isn't Wednesday, and you can take your choice of the rest. Sunday and Wednesday is visiting days. Got any friends or relatives in London, or do they all live miles away? What's your business when you're at 'ome?"

It added perplexity to thought to be ignorant of the day, but the review went on as best it could; the name of Guilford arrested progress in the manner of a suddenly closed barrier at a railway platform. Guilford would be thinking the worst of her, and of her promises, at this moment. Cheque paid, an arrangement made, and no action taken. Guilford had cause to storm and rave; the first communication dispatched ought to go to Irene in order that the niece might explain. Meanwhile any storms at the house in Sussex were not likely to be calmed by the failure of Aunt Bertha.

And had the cheque for eighty-two pounds been sent on to Edgar Nayland? Bertha, with an effort, was able to remember the posting of it. In suggesting to herself that Edgar Nayland ought to be one of her callers, she began to make up a list of the folk she wished to see; the niece and the two nephews were at the head, and Nayland, to her surprise, came at the very end of the short inventory. Her brother James; what of him? He shared the accident, and it would be good to have reassuring news. James could not be looked on as an indispensable man, but he might be counted as one who rarely harmed anybody. If brother James could only by some means be induced to sit up, and take notice——

"Ah," said the Sister of the Ward, pleasantly, "and how are we now? Better, eh?"

"We are very comfortable," answered Bertha. "A certain humming in the head——"

"I know, I know. Are you sufficiently recovered to tell me who you are?" Bertha gave the information. "That's good. And now your nearest relative." Bertha gave Irene's address. "Splendid. Do you remember how the accident happened?"

"I only remember that it did happen."

"Quite so, quite so."

"And I'd like to find out how my brother is. Mr. James Anderson, of forty-two Quebec Street, Marylebone Road."

"On the telephone?"

"Not on the telephone."

Sister made notes on a small pad of writing-paper.

"Hungry?" she asked.

"Famishing," smiled Bertha.

A meal was brought, and it was in endeavouring to raise herself that she found there were aches and pains. The nurse made a vague allusion to ribs. Later, nurse was able to supply information concerning Mr. James Anderson. He was in Oxford Ward, doing well. It appeared the car had been the chief sufferer

Irene called that evening and was allowed to see her aunt; nothing could have been more satisfactory than the message she delivered. Guilford had felt a natural irritation when Aunt Bertha failed to arrive, but he understood now, and sent his affectionate sympathy. Also, Irene gave an emphatic assurance that she and her husband were on the best of terms, and Aunt Bertha was, on no account, to permit herself to suffer anxiety.

"Mutual concessions," said Irene, cheerfully.

"I am so glad."

"It's a tremendous joy to me," said the girl. "I dare say most of the fault was mine. And he particularly asked me to say that this basket contains fruit which he himself picked and selected." The invalid observed when Irene had gone that the basket had indications of a large stores in Brompton Road; she reproved herself for being over-suspicious and excessively inquisitive.

A lesson in curiosity was furnished by her immediate neighbours. Their craving for information seemed unbounded; full enjoyment was marred by the circumstance that they could not believe anything which Miss Anderson said. If they had been able to accept the statement that she had been riding in a car with a brother, all might have proved easy, but they jibbed at this, and subsequent details were received with an air of forced politeness. When Bertha was thought to be asleep, they discussed, with astonishing frankness, the probable facts of the case; they began with the assumption that she was no better than she ought to be, and this added enormously to their interest.

Young Mrs. Robert, in calling, had to confess there had been a period of agitated suspense, but all was going admirably now. Miss Pyrford, of Cricklewood, made acquainted with the situation, comported herself as a real good sort, and was giving first-aid at the studio; no lessons had been missed, and pupils' mothers were sending messages of inquiry. Mrs. Robert had visited her father-in-law, and her short previous acquaintance with him enabled her to say that there was a truly remarkable change.

"The accident has shaken him," suggested Bertha.

"I dare say," conceded young Mrs. Robert, puzzled. "But the queer 'thing is, he talks sensibly. And I never knew him to do that before."

“He will probably recover.”
“One or two of his comments were quite shrewd and wise.”
“Are you sure,” asked Bertha, “that you visited the right patient?”

Gerald came along, full of himself and his own doings at office. It was, he declared, a most terrific swot, and you had to do as you were bid, and there were several other drawbacks, and but for his gratitude to Aunt Bertha, and the allowance from Ennismore Gardens—which was to stop automatically if he ceased to work—why he would chuck the entire business, and let it go to pot. In reply to questions, he said accounts just balanced; until his salary increased, he could not hope to begin paying back to his aunt the sum he undoubtedly owed.

“But I am not forgetting it,” he said, brightly. “Make yourself perfectly sure about that, dearest. What I can’t understand is why on earth the pater didn’t give you a cheque, and settle the matter once for all.”

“I call your attention,” she said, “to the fact that he did not adopt that procedure.” It occurred to her there was a danger that the lad, by making frequent allusions to payment, might gradually convince himself that he had finished with the transaction. Debtors have these peculiar ways. Mental disturbance is generally the exclusive lot of the creditor.

Bertha Anderson was transferred to another bed, where she greatly missed the cross-examination that her neighbours had conducted; on the other hand, there came opportunities for reading, and, as convalescence progressed, for writing. The handbook on elocution, hitherto inclined to amble leisurely, now raced as a Derby winner goes. Without the disturbances and interruptions of normal days, foolscap pages were covered and sent to the typist; there

came a splendid hour when it could be realised that more than half the distance—fifteen thousand words, to be exact—had been run. Her brother, first to make a complete recovery, looked in before taking his departure from the hospital and Bertha found that Mrs. Robert's estimate, incredible as it had appeared, was correct. He asked leave to read a chapter of the book, and his criticisms were so acute that Bertha urged him to take the pile of sheets to Quebec Street, and give her the benefit of larger advice.

"At your convenience," she added.

"My evenings will be devoted to the task," he declared, with no suggestion of his former manner. "The daytime hours may be fully engaged. I have arranged to take up regular occupation with my motor friends. Office hours nine till five-thirty." In leaving, he bent and kissed her; it was an attention he had not paid for many years. With unexpected alacrity the typed pages were returned with neat slips conveying sage recommendations. "You should induce some notable person," he wrote, "to do a foreword or preface." Bertha sent a note to The Great Man. She had to admit that in her own case the Hyde Park Corner accident made no reformation of any kind. Instead, she found herself easily tired, and even the mild exertion of using a fountain pen induced, after a couple of hours, a sound sleep. When at last good-byes were said, and thanks conveyed, and payment made, and a careful journey from St. George's to Kilburn under the superintendence of young Mrs. Robert was effected, then it became clear that the old habits of industry could not be taken up immediately. A youthful doctor, who tried to look agéd, supported the view. Mothers of pupils, encountered during brief walks, were very emphatic on the same side. The daywoman at Maida Vale would take no denial.

"You go on sitting still," she commanded. "That's all you've got to do." She brought forward illustrative cases wherein medical men and nurses had performed their duty well and completely, but the patient had omitted to do her share. Kensal Green cemetery, as a result. Miss Pyrford and young Mrs. Robert supported the view.

"I am out-voted," said Bertha Anderson, resignedly.

In the train from Victoria, when she made her delayed journey to the Guilford establishment, she tried to recall Irene's words; the general purport of them was vaguely in her memory, but she had the impression that they were comforting. In order, however, to be prepared for emergencies she rehearsed sentences appropriate when one interposes in cases where two young folk, as the phrase goes, do not hit it off; Bertha, for safety, wrote down the words she proposed to use if necessity arose, and amended and bettered them. At the destination, Guilford met her in the car.

"How are you?" he asked, curtly. He paid no attention to the answer given. At the end of the drive, he spoke again. "You quite understand what you have to do, Miss Anderson," he said. And engaged in a vehement altercation with the man in charge of the garage. Before the visitor had entered the hall door, the man received notice of discharge from Captain Guilford's service.

"Dear aunt," cried Irene. "You are not looking yourself. Now do realise, at once, that you are here to get well."

"I am tired of being tired," she declared. "What I really need is something to do." Upstairs she put challenging questions.

"Your brain box," said Irene, "is in excellent order.

You have recollected, with marvellous precision, every word I uttered. Of course, now and again the old arguments crop up; this may happen even whilst you are about. But married life would be dreary if the two parties always agreed."

"Sure you are telling me the truth?"

"I don't tell the truth to everybody, but you ought to realise that I tell nothing else to you. And now, for proof, let me give you a secret."

Bertha was delighted, and made no attempt to conceal her pleasure. To be a great-aunt was a distinction she had always hoped for; she admitted a preference for a little boy, but a little girl would of course receive from her the same welcome. Guilford, it appeared, had not been told, partly because he had no liking for children. When, at dinner, an allusion was made to the youthful family of people living near by, confirmation of this was supplied. "Young nuisances!" he said, explosively. Bertha urged that there were children and children, but Guilford refused to budge. "Young nuisances," he repeated. "Every one of 'em!" In an endeavour to lighten the conversation, she addressed him as King Herold; it could not be reckoned one of her triumphant efforts. There was Sautérne on the sideboard, but he did not take any, and the decanter, at the finish of the meal, made a wasted journey up and down the table. As Bertha and her niece were leaving, he jerked out an announcement.

"I'm going off on a horse to see some friends, for a day or two. You," to Bertha, "will probably be gone when I come back!"

"'Homer's rule the best,'" she quoted good-humouredly.

"Don't follow you."

"'Speed the going guest,'" she explained.

He closed the door on them as men do who are not gifted in repartee. Wilson, the young maid who looked after Irene, was heard later remarking from a window to the others of the establishment that the master had taken his whip with him. The news was received, so Bertha thought, with the ejaculations which a parliamentary report calls "Murmurs."

She had no grievance against the master for thus absenting himself from the house during her stay; when two women are eager to discuss a prospective baby, there is no urgent necessity for the company of a man. To add to contentment, a letter came on the Saturday evening, reforwarded from Maida Vale. In it a firm of publishers wrote that they would be ready to take charge of the Handbook on Elocution on the terms subjoined herewith; Bertha sent the enclosure to Edgar Nayland for inspection and advice.

"Are you still madly, desperately in love, aunt?" asked Irene, on being informed of this.

"Really couldn't tell you, dear."

"The late Victorian type," mentioned her niece to the dog, "is extraordinarily shy and reticent."

"Not that," declared Bertha. "It is because I don't know. You see, it has never been a swift romantic piece of business. As yours was." The girl looked at her keenly as though to ascertain if satire was being conveyed.

They took the unusual step of going to church on the morning of Christmas Day, and when they came out, the eyes of Bertha's niece were wet. She explained that instead of listening to the sermon she had renewed acquaintance with The Form of Solemnisation of Matrimony; the length of the address—it dealt with transubstantiation—gave her the chance of looking through also The Ministra-

tion of Public Baptism of Infants. "And note," she recited, "that there shall be for every male child to be baptised two godfathers and one godmother, and for every female, one godfather and two godmothers." The agreed opinion, over lunch, was that the number seemed large. Bertha, holding the view that the figures were the maximum, and not the minimum, suggested that a member of the Guilford family would hope to be invited to take the position.

"In that case," said Irene, "the Guilford family will be disappointed."

"You mean to have your own way?"

"For once!" she said.

Bertha Anderson was in harness again, and pulling well at Maida Vale when, on a hazy morning in the New Year, three mothers of pupils arrived. They were kept waiting because of a prejudice against stating their business to Mrs. Robert; they eyed each other suspiciously, and two left owing to pressure of other engagements with an air of regret. The other, being admitted, showed at once a paragraph in the morning journal which she feared (or hoped) Miss Anderson might have overlooked.

"Captain Harold Guilford is to answer a summons at the local police court to-day for grievously ill-treating his wife." The lady, having read this aloud, pointed out judicially that it was no business of hers, and listened eagerly for a comment.

"Mere coincidence," said Miss Anderson, serenely. "The duplication of names often happens, and of course it is rather confusing!"

The conversation of the daywoman for once was not helpful. She, it appeared, had been talking to a neigh-

bour who held fatalistic views, and these were handed on now with the relish of a convert.

"Whatever we plan," she declared, "and whatever we do in no way affects what eventually 'appens. It's all mapped out, if you understand what I mean. It isn't in our power to alter it. If it's ordained that a party is going to meet with an accident, on a certain date, that party on that partic'lar date will certainly meet with that accident."

"And yet I notice that you skip quickly across the roadway to avoid the traffic."

"In the past, yes," admitted the other. "In the future, no." She took a duster, and went to the pianoforte. A bust standing there dropped to the ground, sustaining facial injuries. "There!" triumphantly. "Case in point. Me and you hadn't the faintest inkling of an idea that was going to occur. But you see it has!"

CHAPTER VII

IN spite of her hurry the case had been half heard by the time she arrived at the small building in the Sussex village; the February fog was partly to blame, and not until the express had reached Croydon did it obtain the chance of justifying its title. Conveyances were ranged up outside, and attendants at the court bore the satisfied manner of folk who have been well and amply paid for services given; Bertha advanced to the guarded doorway with two half-crowns carried openly for all to see, and the coins made an effective argument in support of her application.

"Just room for you, miss," said the officer, breezily, "and that's about all. If you'd been of a plumper build,

half of you would have had to remain outside." He whispered in going along the passage which led to a closed door that some of the best families in the county were represented there that day. "A murder," he said, exultantly, "couldn't have been a bigger attraction!"

On the instructions of another officer within, folk shifted along on a wooden seat, and they endured the interruption with displayed impatience much as though a fascinating novel had been wrested from them. Bertha looked around for her niece, but Irene was not to be seen; Guilford, at the moment, occupied the witness-box and the perturbed-looking gentlemen seated on the bench, with a background of green curtain, were conferring in the undertones that have to be protected by a hand. Near Bertha, three helmets hung on a peg; policemen, going around bareheaded, disclosed the astonishing fact that constables were sometimes bald. At the centre was a square dock; the box for defendants in cases of a summons faced the witness-box. A lady justice arrived and took a seat, and consultations had to be suspended whilst she explained to her colleagues the causes of delay. The Chairman turned over the blue pages of a large book, and the whispering began afresh with a suggestion of playing a charade wherein the complete word is "Scandal." The clerk below stood up to give assistance; the Chairman nodded presently, as chairmen do, to intimate that his own views were being triumphantly confirmed.

"Go on, Sir Edwin!"

Sir Edwin, down from London at, probably, an adequate fee to protect Guilford's interests, seemed to have made up his mind to show extreme deference to the bench, but his glance at the clock suggested also that he was becoming anxious concerning his return train. He offered

one or two questions, easily answered, and sat down. Folk in court exchanged glances of confidence.

The cross-examination, deliberate and searching, was made by a local solicitor who, apologising frequently, nevertheless managed to present a different aspect of the business. A riding whip was produced; women half rose to obtain a good sight of it, and were reprimanded by folk behind them. Guilford, speaking with less assurance, had to be urged from the bench to speak up. The whip, he said, was his, but he did not remember striking his wife with it. Yes, he had listened to the medical evidence, and he could only suppose that it had been exaggerated. Probably his wife's relatives had influenced the doctor. Yes, on more than one occasion he had found it necessary to complain of his wife's extravagance, and if he had touched her with the whip it was only done to emphasise his arguments; certainly there was no idea of giving her pain.

"Did you strike her, Captain Guilford, on the evening in question?" Guilford was again directed to raise his voice.

"There is a conspiracy," he argued. "I am the victim. There are many details I could explain, but I prefer not to do so." Elderly gentlemen on the bench who could hear this drummed on their blotting-pads.

"Did you, or did you not, on the evening in question——"

"Really, really!" Sir Edwin, from London, jumped up in a state of excitement; folk held their breath. "If my friend had one-half of my experience, he would be aware there is nothing to be gained by——"

"I conduct my case in my own way," said the local man, with spirit.

"And a very clumsy and regrettable way it is. Your worships," to the bench, "let me point out something that

my friend has overlooked. He is appealing—or he will make the appeal if this ridiculous cross-examination ever finishes—not to a stipendiary magistrate, warped by long acquaintance with sordid matters, but to a group of broad-minded gentlemen, not, I think, devoid of that shrewd common sense which is of such immense value in guiding our judgment even in trifling matters. I ask my friend, in the interests of his own client, and in the interests of all concerned, not excepting the bench, to be as brief as is conveniently possible.”

“The justices, Sir Edwin,” said the Chairman, “will check any indications of loquacity. You can safely leave that detail in their hands.”

On this, to the surprise of the whole court, Sir Edwin, from London, with one more inspection of the clock, decided to lose his temper rather than miss his train, and in three closely-filled minutes he told the bench exactly what he thought of it,—“Administration of the law a complete farce.” Gave a drubbing to the local solicitor. “Incompetence and arrogance so often travel hand in hand.” Criticised the spectators. “The apparently well-born people who hurry to the laundry whenever the dirty linen of a friend and neighbour is to be washed.” And, this done, spoke fiercely to a solicitor behind him, and dashed away. The Chairman called to him, but he took no notice.

“It rather looks,” said Bertha, to the woman seated next to her, “as though he is annoyed about something.” The neighbour stared to convey a reproach for speaking without a formal introduction.

The Chairman, from the bench, said this was a painful case; indeed, a very painful case, and not the less painful because of the scene they had just witnessed. The Chair-

man, rendered more courageous by the absence of Sir Edwin, declared it was ever a mistake of counsel, however great their distinction in the profession, to try to browbeat justices. The justices had charge in their own court, and the justices would see that the law was duly administered. And in the present case—which he begged to be allowed to refer to as very, very painful—he and his fellow justices had resolved that, in all the circumstances, a postponement of a decision for two months was advisable; by the end of that period, the complainant, in whose name the summons had been issued, would no doubt be able to appear.

“But she won’t!” whispered Bertha Anderson.

And meanwhile, to speak, believe him, with all the earnestness that was in his power, he and his colleagues did hope that the two young people would make a whole-hearted attempt to live together on amicable terms. Captain Guilford was known to many of them as a good sportsman——

“Covers more sin than charity,” said Bertha. Again, she spoke to herself.)

—A good sportsman, and his family was held in high regard. There had perhaps been errors on both sides. The early years of married life were notoriously——. The Chairman, having ordered everybody during the proceedings to speak up, now, under the influence of emotion, allowed himself to become quite inaudible. Women began to collect hand-bags, and to examine features in pocket mirrors as though apprehensive of finding themselves aged by several years.

“—This very, very, very painful case,” said the Chairman, finishing. “What comes next, inspector?”

Outside, Bertha was tempted to listen to the county’s observations; instead she went across to the group made

up of the Guilford domestic staff. Wilson, the young maid, stepped forward.

"Whether I did wrong, Miss," said Wilson, "or whether I did right I can't say, and opinions are likely to differ. But we all felt we couldn't leave the mistress in the house, and so I took her along to mother's. Mother used to be a bit of a nurse in her young days, and she says she recollects more than most have forgotten. So if you want to see the mistress, I'm afraid you'll have to come along with me."

At the cottage it was found Irene was sleeping, and Wilson's mother, enjoying to the full the autocratic powers once wielded, refused to allow Bertha's niece to be disturbed. In private, she gave a detailed account of the signs of injury, and offered the view that hanging was too good for anyone guilty of such acts. Bertha, by no means certain of the legal possibilities, and fearful that Guilford might arrive, was so unlucky as to sweep a china candlestick from the mantelpiece, and this was a regrettable piece of clumsiness, but it did arouse the girl on the bed, and Irene's contentment on seeing Aunt Bertha was unconcealed.

"I've been praying for you to come here," she said.

"Dress quickly," ordered Bertha.

Wilson's mother, on the grounds that the candlestick had been in the family for years without encountering accident, was ready to take some payment for it, but she would not hear of payment for anything else.

"It's been a honour," she declared, "and I shall be ready to do the same again at any time!"

At the railway station, in taking a ticket for Irene, Bertha overheard Sir Edwin talking to the station-master. His temper, it seemed, had not been improved by a compulsory two hours' wait for a train. "An infernal young

brute, if you ask me," Sir Edwin was saying. "Serve him right if he gets it well in the neck."

"Our sentiments," remarked Bertha to her niece, "and most admirably expressed. We'll stay in the waiting-room, dear, until the train is signalled."

"I'm going to be a tremendous bother to you, aunt."

"Nothing will be a bother. Providing you don't see that man again."

"I wasn't too lucky," agreed Irene.

Sir Edwin put a question to the station-master. How was it that, on any railway, if you happened to be a minute late you missed the train, whereas if you were at the station in good time, the train was invariably late? The other took space to consider this, before giving an official reply; in the meantime he hinted that a fog in London dislocated everything. By a flight of imagery, he compared railway traffic with the mechanism of a watch.

Bertha's fear that Guilford might gain news, and set out with the determination to make a scene, increased as the minutes went on. Folk looked in at the waiting-room and peered around inquisitively, but Bertha took care that they had no opportunity of recognising her niece, and the passengers missed a great chance of adding to their store of gossip. There had been little hesitation at the cottage of Wilson's mother, once Bertha had heard of the marks of violence; for the sake of Irene and for the sake of a little person yet to come into the world instant action was necessary, and quick assent was given to her proposal. The Kilburn flat would be a trifle overcrowded, but that could not be helped; Irene had urged her aunt not to suggest a return to Ennismore Gardens.

"My father," declared Irene, "would say 'What did I

tell you?' and my mother would say 'Foresaw it all along!' And the queer thing is that each would believe it."

On the platform, travellers were now taking up the arguments of the London barrister, and assailing any uniformed individual; to his acquaintances, the station-master adopted a slightly humorous vein and when they asked impatiently "How long is this train going to be?" he replied, "About seven coaches, a guard's brake, and an engine," but the joke did not go so well as it had probably gone when it was younger. A bell sounded, a signal made the collapsing jerk, and Bertha prepared to escort her charge from the waiting-room. Instead of the main line train, a light engine raced through as though it had escaped from detention at the works, and was being hotly pursued; the groan of disappointment from passengers made the station tremble.

"Auntie," said Irene, finding Bertha's hand, "I am nervous."

"There is really no occasion," she said, affecting bravery.

"If Guilford came along at the last moment, and spoke kindly to me, I am afraid I should go back with him."

"That," declared Bertha, "is all you have to be fearful about. Avoid that, and you will have every reason to congratulate yourself."

She went to the booking-office to see the time; as she peered at the clock in the dim light, a car drove up, and hearing Guilford's voice, she stepped out to meet him. He bawled for the station-master; the arrival of a down train was engaging the official's attention.

"Are you looking for my niece?" she asked, calmly.

"No," he said.

"Have you any idea where she is?"

"Not the slightest."

"And can you give me," she persisted, "no information concerning her? Can't you tell me what became of Irene when she left the house?"

"If I knew, I shouldn't dream of informing any of her relatives. My opinion of you, Miss Anderson, has never been concealed."

"I trust," she retorted, "that I have not, at any time, disclosed my opinion of you."

He stamped in, and at the window of the booking-office, demanded a gun case due from town; the lad there brought the article to the car, and Guilford, in acknowledgment of his services, described him as a clumsy lout. As the car drove away, Bertha Anderson made an airy gesture of farewell. It obtained no response.

She spared Irene all questions until Kilburn was reached, and even then she made it her first duty to take three-pence and go to a call office, and send a message. The maid who answered seemed desirous of taking the communication; Bertha insisted that either Mr. or Mrs. Kennington should come to the instrument. The sound of a clearing of the voice hinted that her brother-in-law was about to take charge. Mr. Kennington had his own methods where the telephone was concerned; he roared as captains talk to each other at sea; he usually issued instructions to the effect that the person at the other end should make an endeavour to speak distinctly; on recognising Bertha's voice he seemed to know that he would have to find some other admonition, and this put him off his stroke. Walter Kennington found another grievance.

"I don't read every foolish paragraph," he shouted. "Besides, my attention was not drawn to it. Why, I don't know. Looks very much like a conspiracy of silence. But if you knew, why did you not put matters straight?"

"That was impossible."

"I am sick and tired," he roared, "of hearing the word 'impossible.' Has the case been heard?"

"Heard to-day."

"What was done in it?"

"Postponed."

"Considering," he said, "that you, I take it, knew it was coming on and that you are my wife's half-sister, the least to be expected was that you would go down there."

"I did."

"Then why not say so?"

"Walter," she remarked, "you tempt me to use the word again. You are really—— Listen. Irene is suffering from the ill-treatment given to her, and I have brought her home to my flat."

It appeared Mr. Kennington was collecting his thoughts. "I am, I hope, no kill-joy," he said, oracularly, "but this I must say." Time being up, conversation was suspended. Bertha left the call-box with the feeling she once experienced after visiting a Centre for the Mentally Defective.

Another chance was given to Irene's parents by the holding of a family council at the studio; they did not avail themselves of the opportunity, and, for many reasons, their absence was commented upon without signs of regret. Present at the meeting: Miss Bertha Anderson (chair), Mr. James Anderson, Mr. Robert Anderson, Mrs. Robert Anderson, Mr. Gerald Kennington. At a later stage, Mr. Edgar Nayland entered, but took no share in the proceedings.

Miss Bertha Anderson, in giving a report of the circumstances, said she hoped her action would be approved, but hinted that, anyhow, she knew no other course was possible. Mr. Gerald Kennington contented himself by saying:

"Poor old Irene!"

And "Poor old girl!"

Mr. Robert Anderson said he did not understand how a man could behave in this way; Mrs. Robert said she failed to realise how a woman could put up with such behaviour. Mr. James Anderson then spoke. He said:

"We are greatly indebted to your Aunt Bertha for her promptitude and resourcefulness in dealing with this matter. During the time I was in hospital, I had the first opportunity, for many years, of looking back at the past, and it astonished me—yes, astonished me—to discover the many occasions when your Aunt Bertha had come to the aid of you young people." (Hear, hear.) At this point, Mr. Nayland entered the studio. Mr. James Anderson, resuming, said, "I, more than anyone else, have failed to tender due acknowledgments; I offer them now, in all sincerity, and I shall take care the omission is not repeated."

Mrs. Robert said:

"In connection with the remarks made by my husband's father, I should like to point out that his recognition comes at a moment when he is free from obligations in regard to his son."

Mr. James Anderson agreed.

Miss Bertha Anderson said that, in due course, she proposed to transfer Irene to a well-selected nursing home, not far from the Kilburn flat.

Mr. Gerald Kennington said:

"Dear old Irene!"

Mrs. Robert thought it not quite fair to impose the entire cost on Aunt Bertha. She suggested a whip round.

Miss Bertha Anderson said she was fairly all right as to money matters, and preferred to bear the expense alone. The meeting then terminated.

CHAPTER VIII

EDGAR NAYLAND stayed on when the others had left, and Bertha feared new talk about a loan; she was surprised to find her anticipations ungrounded. Nayland was travelling on behalf of people who desired to beckon attention to a new soap and a new hairwash; there are always customers for novelties of the kind, and he admitted he was doing well. His call was not to report his own progress, but to tell Bertha of a chance meeting with a former colleague of the theatre; the acquaintance's sister—principal bread-winner of the family—had for years controlled elocution classes at an Academy known to Bertha where music was the leading study, and her own department but an after-thought; the lady suffered from a throat affection and after ignoring hints that she should go, now intended to retire on the edge of the beginning of a term. Her relative told Nayland that this would be in the nature of a bombshell for the directors of the Academy; one likely to give them deep perturbation. And serve them right, added the informant.

"Have a shot at it," urged Nayland.

"I am not likely to stand an earthly chance," declared Bertha.

"What occurred to me was that if your book came out at the time the application was made——"

"There's something in that. But I am waiting for the preface."

"You can't afford to go on waiting. Obtain it without any further delay."

At the theatre in Shaftesbury Avenue, the secretary to The Great Man informed Miss Anderson that the governor was enjoying a holiday of which, as the journals said, he

had urgent need; the rest was being taken in the country, and further particulars the secretary had no right to give and did not propose to give. The secretary alone was in postal and telegraphic communication; useless for Miss Anderson to interrogate anyone else. Bertha explained all the details with candour, and the young man went so far as to agree that the foreword had been talked about, and the governor had selected one or two epigrams already used in public speeches; somewhere upstairs there was a rough draft which he, the secretary, had drawn up.

"But it would take days and weeks to find it," he mentioned.

"I think not," said Bertha, encouragingly. "You are a man of method. If I challenged you, you could produce it within five minutes."

"Don't imagine," said the youth, defensively, "that compliments will induce me to allow you to use the scrip without the governor's permission."

"How long would it take me to get to Looe?"

"I said nothing about Looe."

"But I did. I have heard him allude to the place, more than once. With a good deal of the manner of one who owned it."

Within the space alluded to by Bertha she was in possession of the typed papers; in half an hour she, at Kilburn, had arranged for the daywoman of the studio to give company to Irene; she caught the train at Paddington. It occurred to her in making the journey that it was unusual to find herself taking great pains for merely selfish reasons.

The Great Man had selected a period of the year when visitors to Cornwall were rare; the private hotel (Facing Bay) owned few visitors beside himself. As Bertha

entered the lounge, and the hall-porter took charge of her suit-case, the principal resident jumped up from a wicker chair, and held out a friendly hand. He expressed delight at, as he termed it, the chance and fortuitous meeting, and admitted that his desire to live for the while the life of an ordinary individual had succeeded beyond his loftiest hopes.

"And you are enjoying the experience," suggested Bertha.

"At first it had the charm of novelty, but now—— Will you believe, my dear Miss Anderson, that there is not a visitor in this hotel, beside ourselves, who has ever heard of my name?"

"Preposterous!"

"But true," he sighed.

He mentioned the name of a prize-winner at the examination he had attended; there might be an opportunity, he said, of arranging for her appearance in a new comedy, and Bertha Anderson guaranteed to supply the address so soon as she returned to town. "No hurry," he said, graciously, but Bertha assured him that she intended to go back by the night train. "My disappointment is intense," he announced.

She laid cards on the table, face upwards, and he bemoaned his luck. Never able to get away from this heavy stress, he complained. Rarely free from stern alarms. All the same, he consented to glance at the documents, and as he read, the look of the satisfied writer came to his eyes, and Bertha knew that no further pleadings would be necessary.

"Not too bad," he remarked.

And, "Rather neatly turned, you know."

And, at the end, "Upon my word, it all goes with a remarkable swing!"

His opinion of the foreword proved, indeed, so exalted that he began to doubt whether the book was likely to be worthy of it; Bertha had to quote from the letters of the publishers. Finally, and in order that she might catch the eight-fifty, she was compelled to mention another distinguished member of the profession, always ready to assist the good work of making his name widely known, and on this The Great Man took fountain pen, signed the article, and handed over the pages as one transfers pearls and diamonds.

“Bless you, dear child!” he said, emotionally.

A concert party joined the train at a town on the way, and when the members had reckoned their losses under the commonwealth system, the girls were ready to talk to Bertha Anderson, and to receive sympathy. Two had been educated at the Academy to which Nayland had alluded, and they spoke of student days there as octogenarians talk of childhood; answering Bertha's questions they said the Principal had the board of directors in his pocket, and not one ventured to contradict or oppose him. His strong line was composition—oratorios, fantasias, symphonies, anything—but he cherished a hope that his fame would be built up by his verses, and these had not hitherto gained an excessive meed of approbation. At Swindon, Bertha was able to write a note, dated from the studio, asking the gentleman to give consent for the inclusion in the book of his never-to-be-forgotten lines beginning, “I fain would be at Godalming where boyhood's days flew by.” This, posted in town, reached its destination speedily, and at an early hour the following morning, the studio was rung up and a message given to the effect that Miss Anderson had full permission to use the verses, and if she required any more they were at her disposal. Irene,

in applauding her aunt's industry, was able to say that she herself had been perfectly comfortable. The daywoman proved an attentive companion.

"I'd like to do some hard work, later on," said Irene.

"It wouldn't have hurt you," agreed her aunt, "in the past."

"This woman does more in an hour than I do in a year. And she seems happy."

"Indolence," said Bertha, "is an overrated joy."

The publishers agreed that, by efforts they described as superhuman (but this was surely an exaggeration), it might be arranged to have the book ready for the late spring market; they warned the author not to overestimate the sales and the consequent profits. Small and steady was their own guess. In view of the long period during which the writing had occupied her thoughts and her pen, it seemed to Bertha that progress now had the swiftness of a conjurer's trick; a brown-paper parcel with six complimentary copies reached her, and, by express messenger, one was dispatched to the Principal of the Academy. Earlier, she had sent in her application, with a few selected testimonials, and a chosen set of press cuttings. A formal letter was received.

"You won't get the job," Bertha told herself, "and you are not going to feel disappointed about it. But it may be as well to let people see you haven't lost all ambition."

At the nursing home, where a room had been booked for Irene on high recommendation, the matron said the dates fitted other engagements splendidly, adding that there was nothing against which she protested more than empty rooms. Matron called attention to the fact that Mrs. Guilford's apartment was at the moment occupied

by a lady of title, and that Mrs. Guilford in May would be followed by one whose husband fully expected to secure a knighthood. The name was whispered in confidence.

"I have recently had correspondence with him," said Bertha. "About some verses."

"Then you are aware that he is no less a person than——"

"I have never met the gentleman. Wish I could."

"He and his wife are coming here in ten minutes' time," said Matron, "and I tell you what I'll do. I'll introduce you."

The Principal of the Academy was charmed to meet Miss Anderson, and in the absence of the other two ladies who conferred apart, they had an illuminating talk on poetry, and the lack of appreciation shown towards it; the subject of music was not touched upon owing to want of time, and the matter of elocution was not brought into the debate by Miss Anderson; on the Principal's side it was limited to compliments on the book and the assurance that, if ever a new teacher had to be appointed at his establishment, he would take care that the use of the volume was recommended. Bertha had but just returned to the studio in Maida Vale when her presence was asked for at the telephone. The Academy speaking. The Principal said that, oddly enough, a vacancy on the staff had unexpectedly occurred; he had a distinct recollection of a letter with enclosures from Miss Anderson, but his people could not, at the moment, find any trace of the documents. Would Miss Anderson be so very kind as to send copies. Bertha, in the interests of celerity, took the papers to the Academy and there found the secretary, who admitted he had destroyed the earlier dispatches under the impression that they would never be required.

"We have been let down badly," complained the secretary, "and at the last minute. Temporary arrangements have been made, but we must see at once about a permanent appointment. You will be considered with the others."

"Are there likely to be many?"

"So soon as the news gets about," he answered, "there will be applicants by the million. Thousands, at any rate. I shouldn't be surprised if they ran into a hundred, all told."

"Perhaps I had better withdraw mine."

"No, no!" he begged, urgently. "Please don't think of doing that." He glanced around to make certain that listeners were not too near. "The Boss," he said—"but this is strictly between ourselves—the Boss is greatly impressed. And there's a pull in the fact that you are an old student."

In a few days, a communication informed Miss Anderson that she and four others would be interviewed by the executive on Monday next at ten-thirty a.m. "Bring this letter with you." At nine o'clock on that morning, Irene was taken at short notice to the Home, and Bertha waited there, ignoring all engagements, whilst doctors came and doctors went, and friends of patients entered the reception-room and, one by one, received permission to go upstairs. An occasional bulletin was conveyed to her, but the situation was so disturbing that she remained; no one suggested food, and she herself felt little desire for a meal. All the newspapers on the table had been read and all the photographs of Italian scenes on the wall had been inspected, and she was drafting a letter to Edgar Nayland when Mrs. Robert was announced. The letter explained the circumstances, and asked him to believe attendance

before the executive had simply not been possible; the early stages, she told him, had gone smoothly enough and whilst it was a pity she had not been able to run the last lap, why there it was and it could not be helped. One of the nurses came in on the heels of Mrs. Robert. A boy, she reported, and the mother doing but fairly well. No member of the family could be permitted to see her for at least twenty-four hours. Sorry!

"I have news for you," began Mrs. Robert, outside the nursing home.

"Spare me," pleaded Bertha. "Let me go alone to my flat."

"May I not look after you?"

"I want to be quite alone," she said.

A neighbour who had become interested in the case of Mrs. Guilford, and stood in urgent want of additional particulars—where was the husband, and who was he exactly, and had the baby come to town?—looked in from the flat above before going to rest, and found Miss Anderson's door open, and Miss Anderson herself lying in the dark, narrow passage. The neighbour, a young woman gifted with high mental alertness, came to the prompt decision that Miss Anderson had taken veronal. (Subsequently, she had to confess that her main reason for the assumption was that she had been reading of a case of the kind in the evening journal.) Most of the husbands in the flats were commercial travellers, and they had started on their weekly journeys; one, engaged in Lincoln's Inn Fields, made the statement that the body should not be touched until the police were called in. By the time a constable had been found, Bertha had recovered from her collapse, and the official discovered her at table. He apologised, and withdrew.

"When will the inquest be, policeman?" asked the neighbour, tremulously.

"Ladies who can sit up," answered the constable, "and take nourishment as this one is doing, don't want no coroner; they don't want no jury; they don't want no post-mortem." He changed his tone. "What does it all mean? Is it a joke, or what?"

"Never made a joke in my life," she declared, with earnestness.

"My advice to you, ma'am, is," he said, "not to begin!"

Thus it was not until the next morning at the studio—a call at the nursing home gained the news that the baby, bless his heart, was doing admirably; of Irene the cautious report was that she seemed no worse—not until the next morning did Bertha ascertain that she had been appointed by the executive of the Academy as a Teacher of Elocution and Public Speaking at the Academy. Attendance on two days a week during the three terms of twelve weeks each. Payment, at the start, seven-and-sixpence an hour.

The Principal, welcoming Bertha, mentioned in confidence that her failure to be present at the interview could be regarded as one of the main causes of the success. In Miss Anderson's absence, he was able to speak of her in terms he might not have dared to use if she had been in the room.

The time-table at Maida Vale had to be rearranged, and, on a hint from Mrs. Robert, an inquiry was sent to Cricklewood. In answer, Miss Pyrford came to the studio, and there confessed that the new undertaking had not achieved the triumph which was hoped and expected.

"The mothers," she declared,—“believe me or believe

me not, just as you like—didn't care for my appearance. What was worse, they said so."

"You would look so much younger," said Mrs. Robert, carefully, "if you permitted yourself to look older."

"Pyrford," interposed Bertha, "has always pleased herself in regard to that."

"But there's no catch in it," argued the lady from Cricklewood, "unless I please other folk. Anyway, I'm ready to come back here on the old terms. It will be worth something to find myself free of responsibility. There's nothing, I assure you, quite so ageing as responsibility."

"I rather like it," said Bertha.

"You're special," argued Miss Pyrford.

Bertha Anderson found it pleasant to be entering the Academy doors as one about to instruct, and not to learn. At ten o'clock on the appointed days, she took her key and her register book; at one o'clock came a rest and a meal, and the afternoon classes went on to the hour of half-past five, when the book and the key were returned. For elocution, the teaching was individual (half an hour to each student); diction was taught to singers in classes.

One of the advantages of the new post came in detachment from families. Teachers at the Academy had their grievances, and these were discussed with appetite in the luncheon-room, but they were rarely called on to listen to criticisms from elder members of a student's household. Tuition of the staff by correspondence was sometimes attempted, but the Principal's secretary, on these occasions, sent an elaborately worded answer that either placated or mystified the home authorities, and the endeavour failed.

Irene and her baby had to be transferred to Kilburn owing to advance bookings at the nursing establishment;

Bertha, in taking charge of her, was warned that the greatest care would have to be taken. Anything resembling excitement of the mind to be avoided. To comply with these instructions, Bertha each evening gave a report of the doings at the Academy, and the young mother, listening with interest, ordered her son to give attention. Irene protested against the fear expressed that the days must seem long for her.

"But of course I want to get well, and run about again."

"All in due course, love."

"Do you think," hesitatingly, "that some one ought to write to Guilford?"

"The thought," declared Bertha, "never entered my head."

"It has rarely been out of mine."

"All he has to do," said Irene's aunt, "is to keep away from us. Not to let us catch sight of him again. And, I imagine, he will have just enough sense for that."

Each blamed herself when a local newspaper arrived from Wilson, tied with cotton, and containing a paragraph marked with something like a directing hand. "The Chairman announced that as the prosecutrix had not attended, and had sent no message, the case would be dismissed. Some of the justices shook hands with Captain Guilford as he prepared to leave the court." Bertha's remark was that her niece, in her present state of health, could not have been expected to bear the date in mind; Irene said it was absurd to suppose that Aunt Bertha ought to have remembered it. They agreed, after a spirited defence of each other, that there was nothing to bewail in the termination of the case.

"Brings the whole affair to an end," said Bertha, contentedly.

"I expect he is wondering what has become of me," suggested Irene.

"Wah!" ejaculated the baby, calling attention to the need for a meal.

Bertha was walking from the Academy in the direction of Maida Vale, and, the evening being fresh, she strode along with more swiftness than usual. At the kerb, she had to stop in order to allow traffic to go by; a sharp tap was given to her shoulder by a walking-stick. She turned, and, recognising Guilford, called to memory the phrases she had rehearsed for use when a meeting took place.

"Why are you running away from me?" he demanded. In the prepared argument he was to say, "Where is my wife?" and the substitution flustered her. "Oh yes, I know," Guilford went on impatiently, "it is a habit of you people to deny everything. But you saw me near the pillar-box, and then began to hurry. This is quite ridiculous. The world is not so large as to enable us to avoid seeing one another."

"The desire for an encounter is scarcely one of my cravings."

"Come down west, and we can have dinner together."

It occurred to her that the hundred and fifty pounds had not, in the result, been earned. She was under an obligation to him to that extent, and politeness seemed advisable.

"Good of you," she said, "but I am a busy woman."

"Sometimes perhaps, just a trifle too busy." Lifting his hat, he crossed the roadway.

Before reaching Kilburn, she decided that Irene should be told of the incident, and she tried half a dozen versions of it, and then resolved to depend on the truth. Her niece

was, she thought, looking a shade better; the colour came to the girl's features directly Guilford's name was mentioned. The baby slept in his cot, ignoring the chatter of grown-up folk.

"And then," said Irene, trying to conceal eagerness, "then, I suppose, he asked if you had news of me?"

"I waited for him to do so, but he didn't mention you."

"Peculiar."

"A very good description of the man."

"He may," suggested Irene, "have been to Ennismore Gardens, and there he could obtain all the information."

Her brother Gerald called that evening, and he was able to clear up this point. Gerald had come direct from his parents' house; he could state definitely that the brother-in-law had not paid a visit there. But the news brought proved satisfactory in that it conveyed an invitation; Mr. and Mrs. Kennington would be glad if Irene and the baby could take up residence with them at the earliest possible moment, and they guaranteed, separately and collectively, to do their best to make both happy. They appreciated the difficulties of life in Aunt Bertha's small flat, and they trusted their recommendation would be accepted in the cordial spirit which prompted the offer.

"I shall be leaving you to-morrow, auntie," said the girl. "To-morrow morning."

"Make it the evening, dear, and I shall be free to accompany you." Irene argued that she was sufficiently recovered to make the journey alone. Her brother spoke of a taxi-cab, door to door.

This happened on a Thursday. By the first delivery on Saturday morning, Bertha received a letter bearing a country postmark.

"My dearest," said the communication. "I am here again with G., and the three of us are quite, quite happy. You might explain it all somehow to Ennismore Gardens, without mentioning that the notion of going there was simply——. Well, you know what my people are.

"Yours, lovingly and gratefully,
"IRENE."

It seemed to Bertha Anderson that, the months being well occupied and free from anxiety, they went more swiftly than usual.

CHAPTER IX

THE letter paper and the circulars at Maida Vale now bore at the head the names of Miss Bertha Anderson (with a reference to her position at the Academy), Miss Pyrford, and Miss Katherine Charlton (the two last bracketed as equal). Below, in noble print, were the words—

VOICE PRODUCTION.
THE DRAMA.
PUBLIC SPEAKING.

The assistants, having cleared the air by exchange of plain words at the start, were now on excellent terms with each other, and Miss Pyrford was able to announce that on Tube railways and other public conveyances she received, owing to the taking of sound advice on costume and features, an attention that, in earlier circumstances, had been denied to her. (There still rankled a far-off occasion when on entering the carriage at Warwick Avenue station and hoping that she looked not a great deal over

thirty, a middle-aged woman jumped up at once and said, good-humouredly, "Come along, Ma. 'Ave a sed down!") In discussions at the studio, during the interval between classes, she contended that there were so many folk who went prematurely grey that by not dodging about with your hair you were credited with something like youthfulness. Pyrford cordially supported an idea, brought forward by Bertha, of a reception of old students. "It will be a lark to find out what they say when they catch sight of me."

Pyrford was in more admirable spirits because the journals contained an account of a highly attractive case of murder of a lady by poisoning; Pyrford had already decided that the husband was in fault, but she was quite ready to discuss the matter with any pupil, and willing to hear the view held in the pupil's domestic circle. Bertha's assistant could give, when an opportunity of the kind arose, a complete list of similar and antecedent instances recorded by the Press in her own lifetime, and her enjoyment of the more gruesome details was frank and open. It is true she felt some impatience at the law's delays.

"What you'd prefer to do," Bertha said, "would be to hang the party first, and then, at your leisure, prove that he has been correctly treated."

"Might save time."

"When I am in the dock, Heaven send you may not be on the jury."

"Wouldn't I love it!" declared Pyrford, rapturously. "To serve on a jury, I mean. And help to bring some one in guilty!"

A former pupil, remembered under her title of Minories, —conferred by other girls because of her accent and

birthplace—was of the first to accept the invitation; she added a request for an early interview with Miss Anderson. The appointment made, it was found that Minories had an offer of a part at a London theatre; a character part to be exact; a part with a Cockney accent, to be more precise. And the trouble afflicting Minories was this. Miss Anderson would recall that lessons were taken, years before, on the urgent appeal of the girl's father—a haulage contractor with a rapidly increasing business—who wished that she should rid herself, once for all, of the methods of speech customary in the East End; the parents, too, had gone through a course of private tuition and, with the help of a costly domestic staff at Carlton Hill and the environments thus provided, not an aspirate had been omitted by the family, not a final g dropped, not an a turned into i. And here was Minories faced with the problem of recapturing the methods which had, at some expense, been checked and dispersed.

"It ought to be easy," said Bertha.

"I don't find it so," declared Minories.

"You have only to take off the brake."

"It was jammed on so hard," said the girl.

"We will do nothing," decided Bertha, "until the typed words are given out."

Minories arrived the next day with a set of pages in a brown-paper cover, and the two set to work. When rehearsals started at the theatre, the girl brought news that a dogmatic producer from Birmingham asserted her reading of the part was altogether incorrect; she thought it best to follow his teaching but promised that, on the first night, she would use the accent as instructed by Miss Anderson. The notices of the play showed that Minories had acted wisely, and acted well.

"A truly amazing performance," wrote one critic the next morning. He went on in a strain of high enthusiasm until, command of the English language being exhausted, he had to fall back on French and Italian, and, lastly, Greek as it was once spoken. That evening the journals gave evidence of industry. Snapshots of Minorities, a long talk with Minorities, and, in the talk, gratifying allusions to the help furnished by Miss Bertha Anderson, the well-known teacher of elocution. Outbursts of the kind do not, as a rule, last more than twenty-four hours, but in this case, a brisk youth presented himself at the Academy—having been sent on from Maida Vale—and in a five minutes' discussion obtained the material for half a column wherein something which Miss Anderson had said regarding the accents of town was included, and much that she had never dreamed of saying, was, for the pleasure of the reader, built up on the foundation of truth. And Bertha had to admit that but for the youth's powers of inventing there would not have ensued the correspondence in the journal with frequent mention of her name, and the useful advertisement that resulted in inquiries which each post brought to the letter-box of that studio.

"I have seen an allusion in print to you, and I am writing for your counsel. My two daughters have an impediment in their speech, and it occurs to me——"

Or,

"I was born in Poland, and am now residing already in London, where I often wish to speak at public conferences. But I shout myself too greatly. How much was your charge, we to terms come?"

For these, and similar applicants, fees in advance were demanded, and the sensation of wealth thus obtained increased when Edgar Nayland took up again his former

plan of remitting savings to Bertha. Nayland explained that, despite the change of tasks, he found he was still not to be trusted with a cheque-book; the money went as soon as it came, and he hoped Bertha would be so kind as to pay the sums into her own account until the time arrived when he needed them for some large and definite purpose. The registered letters which came each Saturday morning to Maida Vale were dealt with promptly, and the bank-manager, when he encountered Miss Anderson, smiled at her with considerable vehemence. There was full compensation for any trouble imposed when it became necessary for her to direct, in commanding phrases, a transfer from current to deposit account.

No further news came from Irene, and Gerald, acting as intermediary between Ennismore Gardens and Kilburn, announced that his parents had not received information, and furthermore, desired none; Mr. Kennington's own statement, that he washed his hands of the whole business, was given in a manner which extorted a compliment on the lad's ability in imitation. Gerald readily left family subjects, and talked of a new discovery he had made at one of the theatres. A marvellous girl, he declared.

"You don't mean to say that?" he cried, in an awed voice, when his aunt referred to her acquaintance with the youthful celebrity.

"It was mentioned in the Sunday papers that she was once a student of mine."

"You couldn't, I suppose, introduce me to her?"

"Nothing easier," said Bertha.

"Every one is talking about her cleverness."

"So I gather. Up to the present, I have been too much occupied to——"

"My dear soul," cried Gerald, "you are in danger of

becoming a recluse. Let me take you along now to see the play."

Bertha put notes in her bag, and this was as well, for at the box-office, her nephew discovered he could produce eightpence only; he spoke of the remoteness of the last pay day at office. Business at the theatre appeared to have reached the point of excellence which enables a staff to view late-comers with a blend of pity and amusement, and Bertha was informed that neither love nor money could obtain seats for that evening. At the pit and gallery entrances, the way was similarly barred. Gerald's spirits fell from the heights of joyous anticipations to the lowest depths of melancholy.

"Wait here, boy!" she ordered.

Bertha returned from the stage door with a card, and in the private box—somehow overlooked previously by the authorities—Gerald embraced his aunt, and told her she was the greatest person on earth. Absolutely.

He made a slight reservation in favour of Minories when the curtain went down on the first act; he looked dazed and incredulous when, at the end of the play, Bertha announced that Minories, in handing over the card, had insisted they should join a late meal at her people's house in Carlton Hill.

"This," he stammered, "is enough to knock a man clean off his perch. What I mean to say is, I suppose I shall wake up presently."

The mother and father of Minories were cordial in their reception of Bertha, and they alluded to earlier meetings; they were, at the start, on the defensive so far as Gerald was concerned, and only a shyness, rare with him, encouraged them, as supper went on, to treat him more amiably. The accents of refinement were preserved

in the household with determination; each of the three watched narrowly for opportunities to correct, and when a difference of view arose, Bertha Anderson's judgment was accepted.

"Our great aim," said the mother to her, apart and elaborately, "is that she shall not be beguiled into one of these impetuous registrar-office marriages. In due course, we must be prepared to lose her and if anyone with a title should become enamoured, as it were—— Well," dropping into a more convenient method of speech, "me and Dad won't think twice about it. Grasp what I'm adiving at, Miss Anderson?"

"I think I do. But you must remember that young people, in these days——"

"Yes, yes, I know. Got a habit of seizing hold of the reins, and driving for themselves. But somehow or 'nother, I don't fancy our gel will. She ain't easily carried away."

"That will make the task of an elopement the more difficult," remarked Bertha, glancing at her. The young woman was listening attentively to a discussion between Gerald and her father, with Gerald confessing that the host had an illuminating outlook on affairs of the country.

"But surely," said the elder lady, "elopements don't go on 'appening, do they? Thought they went out of fashion years ago."

"Something of the kind does, I believe, occasionally take place."

The expected inquiry came. Why had Miss Anderson never thought of getting married? And the well-used answer was given, to the effect that Miss Anderson had seldom thought of anything else, but no desirable man had, at the same time, sent his thoughts in her direction.

"You've had offers, surely."

"To be truthful," replied Bertha, "yes."

"And is there anybody on the horizon, as one may say, now?"

"To be candid," she said, "I am not going to tell you. But, to be civil, I admit that I envy the courage some have in making the experiment without taking over-long in thinking about it."

"In our case," remarked the lady, "me and Leonard got spliced when we was mere boy and gel."

"And it answered well," suggested Bertha.

"It ain't answered badly. But then Leonard is a man in a thousand." She looked across at her husband. "And he improves every year. 'Ark at him now, Miss Anderson. He'll be in parliament before he's done."

Minories left the company of her father and Gerald, and, joining the ladies, talked, on her mother's direction, of her experiences at the theatre. The mother called Bertha's attention to the fact that as her girl was playing a character part in which excellence of features was not the important detail, there had happened none of the romantic incidents to which certain young women were subject. A great advantage, mind you. Too much admiration, and girl's head was turned, and when a girl's head did that, she did not know where she was going. "And it's a real comfort to her father and myself," she added, earnestly, "that a child of ours is not being called on to show off her legs."

The hour was late when Bertha and her nephew left the house in Carlton Hill, but there could be no question of feeling tired after such an agreeable evening. Gerald, reticent in speech during the visit, now talked without a full stop, or a comma, and only arrival at his aunt's flat checked the monologue.

"Admit," he argued, although no contradiction had been offered, "admit that it is the most wonderful family we have ever encountered. What a piece of good luck it would be for anybody to gain her affection."

"Gerald lad," she interrupted, "in my opinion you haven't a fifty-to-one chance."

"Outsiders sometimes win," he mentioned hopefully. "Farewell, aunt dear. You are a guardian angel to me."

Mrs. Lawrie—once of Hammersmith and visited there in the days ere young Robert Anderson came under the superintendence and control of a wife—was met on the steps of the Academy, dressed in black and offering a disconsolate appearance. Answering Bertha's inquiries she announced that her husband had at last gone, and, to do him justice, had left her so comfortably off that she felt able to remove to a more expensive neighbourhood of town. Her loss, it seemed, was not the immediate cause of her melancholy aspect. Mrs. Lawrie, making inquiries concerning classes for the pianoforte and singing, had found that her age was reckoned a bar to studentship.

"So ridiculous," she complained. "I am as youthful in heart as ever I was."

"They have a prejudice here for relying on the almanack."

"And I like the society of young people," the other went on.

"I recollect."

"By the by, that nephew of yours. How is he doing?"

"Doing well," replied Bertha.

"That's splendid. And do you think he would care to call on me?"

"Most unlikely!"

The meeting had the effect of cheering Bertha Anderson. One could regret the absence of sentiment in one's life, but the lot of folk who had only that to occupy their minds was not to be envied.

"Really," she said to a bust of Mozart, "really and truly, I am a fortunate woman."

She discovered that Mrs. Lawrie called at Maida Vale, with the least possible delay, to ask for the address of Mr. Robert Anderson. Miss Pырford handed her over to Mrs. Robert, and it was ever a regret to Bertha that her duties prevented her from being a spectator of the fight. A contest of words only judging by Pырford's report, and a greater interest would have been aroused if the two had proved more equally matched; as it was the younger, from the start, triumphed in each round. The later consequences, satisfactory to Bertha, were that Mrs. Robert treated her husband with an increased respect; he was no longer ordered to call for her at Maida Vale on his return from a strenuous day in the City, and her allusions to him had a fresh and an admiring note. Apparently the circumstance that he was desired by another woman conveyed an impression to Mrs. Robert that his value was greater than she had supposed. On Christmas Day, when Bertha lunched with them, Mrs. Robert, dropping all austerity, called him "Bob, my darling."

There were speculations over the meal concerning Irene and her little son. Small presents had been forwarded to Master Charles Guilford, and no word of thanks had been received.

"It makes a great demand on my powers of self-control!" mentioned Bertha Anderson, good-humouredly, "to abstain from meddling any further. But if I went down

there in the holidays, I should only be snubbed. And I should deserve it."

"Leave her to work out her own salvation," urged Robert.

"Guilford may have reformed," said Mrs. Robert.

"He did that some time ago," Bertha pointed out, "and his second state was worse than the first. If he reformed again, I don't care to imagine what he would be like." The others said that the attitude of Ennismore Gardens had never ceased to puzzle them. "In all the years," she said, "that I have known them as parents of two children, I have at no time been able to guess what they would do next."

Gerald called, during the afternoon, bringing striking confirmation of his aunt's statement. He had taken the midday meal with his father and mother, and suddenly both declared that Irene ought to have been there. True, she was not invited, but the girl, in their opinion, should have invited herself. Christmas Day, argued the Kenningtons—when they did agree, their unanimity was wonderful—ought to be regarded as an occasion when past misunderstandings are explained, and cleavages in friendship mended. They found it difficult to understand why Bertha was not doing something in the matter.

"So I volunteered," explained Gerald, "to sprint along, and see you, aunt. It gave me the opportunity to make a quick exit. And now I must be off."

"You are going back home?"

"To tell the truth," he said, reddening, "I half thought of looking in at Carlton Hill. Just to see if the people there are at home."

"Stay here," urged Mrs. Robert, hospitably. "You will probably give yourself the trouble of a wasted journey. Many folk are out of town now."

"I had a card last night," confessed the young man.
"From Minories?" inquired his aunt, quickly.

He nodded. "It hinted that the old people would be asleep between tea and dinner."

"Venturesome lad," said his aunt, rallyingly.

"Don Juan," said his cousin Robert.

"Fortunate boy," said Mrs. Robert. He went off, immensely gratified, after handing to Bertha privately the sum of ten shillings.

"I am going to pay off my indebtedness to you, aunt," he said, resolutely. "This amount will come to you once a week." She refrained from pointing out that the final settlement at this rate would be some distance ahead. "I want to feel worthy of her," he added.

Bertha Anderson might have spared herself the mental debate experienced as a result of the communication from Ennismore Gardens. On the way home, she made several decisions: to go the next day to Sussex, and endeavour to see Irene; to ring up Ennismore Gardens and decline the task imposed on her; to invite her niece to bring the boy to the Kilburn flat for a few days; to accept no further responsibility in any matter which did not concern herself alone. Summing up as she neared the flat, she recognised, acquainted with herself as she was, that the slightest prompting only was necessary to induce her to take action of some kind. Leaning against the door were Irene and her baby.

"Rather theatrical, I know," said the niece, wanly, "to come back like this. But there is no one else I can go to!"

"Give me the dear boy," said Bertha.

"On the stage," mentioned Irene, "snow would be falling."

Bertha asked for no explanation, and none was offered; it was a comfort to see the two again, and to hear voices in the rooms. Irene did remark that the car had brought them, and that she had Wilson to thank for bringing influence to bear on the chauffeur, and inducing him to take risks. When, in the morning, Bertha telephoned from a call-box to Ennismore Gardens, the amazing couple there issued, as might have been expected, the unexpected announcement.

"To leave her husband once," said Walter Kennington's truculent voice, after a consultation that could be heard by Bertha, "was a blunder. To leave him a second time, can be regarded as almost criminal. We wish to see nothing of her. You understand? Nothing!"

CHAPTER X

THERE had been an idea—spoken of in the professors' luncheon-room at the Academy—of a fortnight in Switzerland; Bertha reminded herself that the giving up of this was all on the side of economy, and might therefore be reckoned as an admirable decision. But on the first day of the new term, after the lengthy vacation, it seemed a matter for regret that she could offer no contribution to the holiday experiences; she had to be satisfied with declaring she had enjoyed a complete rest, and even this statement was to be credited to imagination. Apart from the work caused by the presence of the two relatives, others had visited Kilburn and their calls were never brief, and their talk erred on the side of loquacity. In particular there was young Gerald Kennington. Gerald, with the information that the notices were up at the theatre

where Minories was playing, assured Bertha that not a second, or indeed half a second, could be lost. The two, having resolved to marry, were disinclined to allow obstacles to bar the way. Gerald's aunt took down the new "Whitaker," and, finding the page, read:

"A declaration, in the case of minors, that the consent of the person whose consent to the marriage is required by law, has been duly given."

"Yes, but," argued the youth, impatiently, "that surely can be wangled. Dodged. Avoided."

"I don't recommend the course," she said. "You are both under age, and the alternative is to wait."

"Out of the question. My girl is already being pestered by a number of blighters who are under the impression they could make her happy, and unless I marry her whilst she is favourably disposed towards me—— Set about it, aunt dear. You were always good at overcoming difficulties."

This was not spoken of at the Academy, because the delicate negotiations were still in progress. The Carlton Hill people having gone to Scotland, nothing could be done there; the Kenningtons came to Kilburn daily, separately or together, and argued the topic with all their usual incoherence, and without advancing the matter in any way. It seemed astonishing to Bertha that a man like her brother-in-law, wise and successful enough apparently in commerce, could be so muddle-headed in regard to subjects near at hand. Luckily, the Carlton Hill folk were returning that day. Bertha hastened direct from the Academy, when classes were over, to see them.

"Well now," said the father, when Bertha had stated the case, "let us see what's best to be done."

"It's a shock, Miss Anderson," remarked his wife,

perturbedly. "There's no denying it's a shock. A shock is all you can call it."

"We love our gel," said the father, "and her 'appiness is our 'appiness." Accuracy in speech was, in view of the crisis, and in the absence of Minorities, waived. "You can't divide one from the other. Consequently, if our gel is set on this, why the marriage can take place, and we give our consent."

"But couldn't it be arranged for them——?" began his partner.

He took his wife's hand, and kissed her wedding ring. "Providin'," he said, "that in due course they come back 'ere, and live along of us. It's a biggish 'ouse, and there's plenty of room, and we shan't have to feel that we're entirely losing our gel. Am I talking sense, missus?"

"You always do, Dad," she said.

So far, remarked Bertha to herself, in leaving, so good. But at Ennismore Gardens it was not possible to use this comment. Mr. Kennington, furnished with the latest information, did concede that it might be necessary, at some remote date, to give way, but the one detail he wished to make perfectly clear was that the young folk would have to take up residence with Gerald's parents. Bertha alluded to the fact that Gerald was not now living at home; Mr. Kennington asked his wife to corroborate his assertion that he had declared, long ago, that the mere exercise of voting would not increase the powers of logic in woman, and Mrs. Kennington retorted that she had never heard him make any statement of the kind.

"Moreover," she went on, "you are being inconsistent, Walter."

"Lily," he said, warningly, "I suggest you had better not try me too hard."

"You say one thing one day, and another the next."

Mr. Kennington, unable to endure the gravity of the charge, stamped from the room. Bertha's sister conducted the case in his absence, and offered to wager any sum that the marriage would never take place. There was the circumstance that they knew nothing of the young woman, apart from the information supplied by Bertha.

It was promised, at once, that this should be remedied, and the following evening, between a *matinée* performance and a night show, Bertha escorted Minories to Ennismore Gardens where she, without delay, made a good impression. The Kenningtons, in capitulating, renewed the order concerning apartments to be occupied. Minories, after a glance at Bertha, ventured to say that she had been thinking of a flat; Mr. Kennington's address that followed on the subject of housing could be reckoned amongst his highest flights in oratory. Only the girl's appointment, at the theatre, barred her from hearing it to the final peroration.

"Rather difficult people," commented the girl, in walking away.

"When their children are in question," agreed Bertha, "wellnigh preposterous."

"Gerald and I particularly want, you see, to have a nest of our own."

"And, of course, you are absolutely in the right. Leave it to me, dear, and I'll do what I can."

Her activities produced so little result that, when she tired of making journeys and found herself suffering from partial loss of voice owing to the strain of argument, she summoned the young folk to Kilburn, and issued her orders. They hesitated to act upon them, and only the support of Irene made them venture on the experiment. Gerald

wrote to Carlton Hill formally withdrawing his offer of marriage to the daughter of the household, and Minories sent a tearful communication in a similar vein to Gerald's father. On this, as Bertha had hoped and anticipated, the parties met, and decided that obstinacy and selfishness could not be allowed to wreck the happiness of the young couple; they cancelled the terms on which they had previously insisted, and Gerald and Minories, as they left the registrar's office, were faced by eight stern-visaged men, armed with cameras. "Wedding of Brilliant Young Actress," was the legend underneath the pictures, and the Kenningtons complained that their son's name, in certain instances, was not mentioned, and in others incorrectly spelt. Carlton Hill seemed less critical.

"'Appy ending," said the father there.

"But this is not the end," declared Bertha. "This is only the beginning. And now let us all be careful not to meddle. Let us leave them to themselves."

"They're both young," urged the mother.

"Old enough to be entitled to freedom."

"Your suggestion, Miss Anderson," promised the haulage contractor, "shall be duly bore in mind. On behalf of the missus and myself, I guarantee that!"

Bertha could not help noticing that the weekly payments by her young nephew now ceased. An oversight, no doubt. Also, as she said to Mrs. Robert, there were now no marriages to be arranged.

"Excepting your own, dear Aunt Bertha," remarked the other.

"My love," she mentioned, good-humouredly, "you seldom say anything quite so outrageous."

With one of the remittances from Edgar Nayland came

a note addressed to My darling Katherine, and Bertha felt the more justified in reading it from start to finish because of a suspicion that it was intended she should do so.

"It was with sincere regret, which still afflicts my moods," he wrote, "that I said good-bye to you on the station at Leicester. Our last embrace will always remain in my memory, and I ask you to believe that nothing but a solemn engagement elsewhere persuaded me to ring down the curtain on our loving friendship. You understood, I hope, that a pledge is something which a man may at times forget, but for the moment only.

"The lady resides in London, where she occupies a distinguished position on the staff of an important Academy, and it is not likely you will ever meet her; should you do so, you will not fail, I am certain, to share the lifelong admiration which I have always experienced.

"Yours, with best regards and good wishes." A postscript begged the recipient of the note to keep the wrist watch.

Bertha, in acknowledging the registered letter, began "My dear Petruchio," and said that the communication was evidently for Kate of Kate Hall, my super-dainty Kate.

"The shrewdest plan," she went on, "in dispatching several letters is to enclose each as it is finished; a mixing up of addresses is, in this way, avoided.

"The allusion to a pledge is a trifle obscure. If you ever want any of the money I bank for you, do not fail to apply to me, rather than make a visit to the pawnbroker.

"I am reminded of a situation in a comedy we once played in on tour. Forgive me for hinting that you are, in this case, not entitled to make a claim for originality. And when you write next do explain, to appease my curiosity, what is meant by a solemn engagement. And, for the same reason, pray define the phrase 'lifelong

admiration.' Can an acquaintance which began when the parties were over twenty be thus described?"

Edgar Nayland answered in a letter that was clearly meant to be regarded as penned in a hurry. He was too much occupied with affairs, he said, to follow the questions raised by Bertha; he could assure her the blunder was due to nothing but carelessness. In begging her to dismiss the whole incident from her thoughts, he pointed out that a little more of reciprocation on her side would not only bind friendship, but would also assist in keeping him from entanglements which meant nothing, and led to nothing. Finally, he was in no need of cash. Bertha would be able to judge from his weekly sendings that his earnings were now far beyond his personal needs.

A proof that this satisfactory condition was not universal came when Bertha's brother called at Maida Vale to inquire regarding her health. She assured him there were no grounds for alarm, and he declared that his new habits of industry alone had prevented him from ascertaining the facts at an earlier date.

"And," he said, "as you are a busy woman, and I am a busy man, let me state the actual reason of my visit. I want to borrow a hundred pounds."

"Quite a round sum."

"A hundred pounds, to be repaid this day month."

"And not a day earlier?"

"I am quite serious, Bertha," said James. "If you can put your hand on the money, I shall feel intensely grateful for the loan. If you cannot, just say so."

"You have so much altered," she said, "that I am half disposed to trust you. I'll send you the answer to-morrow."

She mentioned the application to young Mrs. Robert, who, at once, clasping hands, urged Aunt Bertha not to

dream of running the risk, either with money of her own, or money which had been entrusted to her. Young Mrs. Robert begged that, at any rate, her husband should be seen ere a step was taken, and Bertha agreed to this, and that evening discussion took place between the three, with Mrs. Robert listening admiringly to Robert's definite and well-reasoned advice. On no account, said Robert, give favourable notice to the request. Admitting his parent had showed an astonishing sanity of mind once the physical effects of the accident had disappeared, yet to trust him with cash would be little short of madness.

"You have done enough for your relatives, Aunt Bertha," he said, emphatically. "There is not one of us who hasn't been put under a debt of obligation to you."

"I was reminding her——" began his wife.

"Please be quiet," he said, "until I have finished. Where was I?" She prompted him, submissively. "Yes, yes. Under a debt of obligation. And now you are perfectly justified in drawing the line. That is clear, I hope. Cousin Irene still with you? Good. And the baby boy doing well? Oh, capital. We must really try to do something for them. A shame to leave everything to you, aunt. I trust Ennismore Gardens sees to the expenses. No? But that is quite intolerable, really!"

Bertha drew a cheque on the following day, and her brother, accepting it, assured her she would never repent the display of good nature. "This day month, remember," she said, and her brother said, "This very day, a month hence, and at this hour!"

Information was conveyed by paragraphs in the daily journals that Mr. Gerald Kennington had been engaged to appear—"with his highly distinguished wife"—in a new

comedy, and Bertha Anderson took a large share in the excitement provoked by the news. The papers spoke of her nephew as a talented amateur, a description she herself would not have applied; they added that he came of a West End family, and this was certainly within the limits of accuracy. Bertha regretted the boy should have given up his City berth, but she spoke with hopefulness at the Academy and to Maida Vale students of his prospects, and they spoke to others in a similar vein. With the result that on the first night, Gerald's appearance was watched for by upper circle and pit, and when he came on, cheers were given, and the stalls looked with a hurt expression over shoulders and then turned to the foot-lights with the grimness of people who are not disposed to allow judgment to be warped by extravagance of manner in the cheaper seats. Bertha, upstairs, had attempted to check the premature enthusiasm, and Irene—the infant was being looked after by the handy neighbour at Kilburn—supported her efforts; the signals came too late. On the stage, Gerald seemed astonished by the reception—as well he might have been—and, flustered, he gave his first words ere the applause had ended. There was, in consequence, a certain vagueness in identification and some thought he represented the uncle from Canada, and others guessed he was the man from Scotland Yard, and a few only saw in him the character who is brought on for no reason but to herald the approach of the leading man. This done, Gerald withdrew. The applause, following his exit, came only from Bertha and her niece.

“Hope we don't see him again,” said candid folk near.

The aspiration was fulfilled, but Bertha and her niece were on the tenter-hooks of apprehension during the remainder of the play. Luckily, Minorities scored. For her,

the sound of palm against palm was given deservedly; at the end of her great scene there were recalls, and when the leading man had gone through the formalities—Minories and himself at the space between the curtains; three steps to the right, a bow to her; curtain held for her to go, and final bow to audience—then the whole house signified plainly a desire to see Minories again, and to see her alone.

“Bravo!”

“Oh, well done; well done, indeed!”

Whilst the author was explaining from the stage, with diffidence and modesty, how he came to write such a remarkable play, Bertha and her niece contrived to reach the emergency door; the intention was to get off before the crowd began to move, and to reach Kilburn and Irene's boy at the earliest moment. In this they were checked by an encounter at the foot of the steps with Gerald.

“Minories was splendid,” cried Bertha. “Give her my love, and congratulations.”

“Minories,” declared Irene, “was wonderful. Tell her she made me forget all my troubles.”

“Don't hurry,” he begged. “What did you think of my performance? Not too bad, I fancy, eh? One of the stage hands told me he had never seen anything like it before.”

“I agree,” said Irene.

“Aunt Bertha,” said the youth, imploringly. “You know as well as I do that it's your opinion I want.”

For answer, she kissed him. “Don't hamper your girl's progress,” she urged. A Number One omnibus came in sight, and she was able to postpone a translation of her remark.

He brought journals with an air of triumph the follow-

ing morning to the studio; Miss Pyrford, and Mrs. Robert and Bertha had already inspected the entire set, and Bertha noticed that he kept back one which said that Mr. Gerald Kennington had the presence of mind to be completely inaudible. Others were more kindly. Mr. Kennington made a fairly promising début. Mr. Kennington gave a restrained performance. Mr. Kennington was entrusted with a minor part. Mr. Kennington must learn to speak up.

"All tosh," he commented, "that last one, of course, but I wanted to see you about it, aunt. Can you give me a few lessons?"

"You should have taken them earlier, boy."

"Perhaps. But I seemed to be so good at rehearsals. Everybody was all over me."

"For the sake of Minories."

"Do what you can," he begged.

He did contrive to imitate her rendering of the words, but, at his next visit, he confessed that the agitation of the mind which occurred so soon as he opened his lips on the stage, prevented him from taking full advantage of her hints. Subsequently, he complained that the authorities were suggesting that he should relinquish the part.

"Fortunately," said Gerald, with content, "Minories has taken up a very determined attitude. She has made it clear that if I go, she goes."

"Breaking her contract with them?"

"Rather than see me treated in this fashion——"

"My dear lad," said Bertha. "Take the facts from me. You are not an actor, and I doubt if you will ever be any good at the job. I warned you the other night not to check your wife's advance. Just you get off the stage

as quickly as you can, and trot away back to your City office."

"That," he declared, "is out of the question. I said good-bye there."

"And now you have to say good morning."

"A pity you can't be more helpful, Aunt Bertha."

CHAPTER XI

BERTHA ANDERSON one afternoon, as she came out of the Academy prepared for a brisk walk to the studio, found a young man whose features—and especially the nose—remained in her memory; she could not for some time discover the right label. He talked disparagingly of February, and the weather of England as compared with the weather of other countries. Not until he alluded to a certain theatre as "our show" did identification arrive; she recognised him as The Great Man's secretary. Bertha started on her walk, taking him at such a good rate that when pavement traffic—scooters, roller skates, perambulators—divided them, he had to sprint in order to catch up with her. He remarked, gasping for breath, that the governor would be pleased to hear of the chance encounter.

"But," she argued, "from the window of my classroom I saw you half an hour ago. And I don't know how long you had been waiting then."

"Perhaps," he said, "I ought not to have used the word 'chance.' Accidental occurrences do happen in the world, but this is not one of them. Miss Anderson, have you ever thought of going back to the stage?"

At Maida Vale, he talked as though from a brief, and any admission on Bertha's side was noted; objections were

ignored. Finally, the secretary asked, as a favour, for permission to be quite truthful.

"The governor wants you," he said. "Wants you for a new play he is just about to put into rehearsal."

"He knows my age."

"He can probably make a guess," agreed the youth. "My task is to approach you, and to ascertain if an offer in writing is likely to receive a prompt answer."

"It would mean giving up some of my present work."

"Three afternoons a week," mentioned the secretary, "and nightly performances."

"I can't help feeling that this is in the nature of a benevolence."

"It is the opportunity," he said, with gravity, "of a lifetime. To see your name, once more, on the playbill is, in my opinion, worth any trifling sacrifice that may be necessary."

"Your opinion," suggested Bertha, "is not of so much urgency as mine."

"Agreed."

"And I am very happy at the Academy. I don't want to relinquish that."

"It is to be feared," he said, carefully, "you would have to do so. I scarcely imagine it would be possible—it would certainly not be convenient—for you to run the two."

Bertha visualised the situation. No more of the agreeable evenings in the company of her niece, and the little chap at Kilburn.

"The answer is 'no,'" she said.

"Think again!" he counselled. And talked on.

She was finding herself dazed by his eloquence when Miss Pyrford and Mrs. Robert came in from their classes;

the youth re-stated his arguments, and begged for their help in the task of persuasion. The combined assistance given was not considerable. Mrs. Robert pointed out the risks. Uncertainty of a long run. Dislocation of present arrangements. Impression conveyed that Aunt Bertha's superintendence at Maida Vale would no longer be available and, as a result, falling off in number of pupils.

"It is entirely a matter," contended the secretary, "for Miss Anderson to decide."

"And that I have done," she said.

"I fancy not," he suggested. "Take the night to consider it. I shall go back to the governor, and tell him we may hear news very shortly."

The matter was discussed that night at Kilburn, and Irene protested that her aunt was not to be in any way affected, in coming to a decision, by thoughts of her, and of the baby. It was enough, declared Irene, that they should have imposed so far on aunt's good nature; if they were to hamper her over a question of this kind, then the two, as non-paying guests, would have to set out and find a boarding-house.

"I was thinking of it," said Bertha, "from a merely selfish point of view."

"You never thought of anything from that point of view," retorted her niece.

The situation was made additionally complex by the receipt, the next day, of a letter in the handwriting of The Great Man's secretary. The penmanship was not clear, but a second reading made it obvious that here were compliments, together with a distinct flavour of generosity. Bertha Anderson smiled when she found herself renewing a mental arithmetic habit indulged in long ago; a sum in which a figure in guineas was multiplied by fifty-two, and

the total represented a year's income. Such is ever the hopefulness of the professional mind.

Accustomed to solve riddles without delay, it perturbed her to notice that here was one for which she could not give a confident and immediate answer. At the Academy, she exhibited the note to some of her more friendly colleagues, and they made envious and complimentary ejaculations.

"You are in luck's way!"

"What a stroke!"

"Simply immense!"

"You have managed it all right, my love."

They did not deny that the Academy work might have to go, but the complaints of moderate earnings had become so much a custom and a habit that they could scarcely now pretend this was to be looked on as serious. So, throughout the busy day, her mind went to and fro, and, when a resolve came in sight, another took its place. At the studio, it was announced that the active youth of the theatre had been ringing up, and communicating urgent messages; the latest gave a warning that an answer had to be received by eight o'clock that night.

The consideration of her assistants permitted her to be alone for half an hour, and during that period she reviewed the whole business. It was in wondering who might be chosen as her successor that an idea occurred. She hurried back to the Academy, and obtained at the office there the address of the lady who had previously taught elocution. This address, it seemed, was out of date, and three calls in the Paddington district were necessary ere the current residence was found. The welcome given proved nothing short of rapturous.

"You are kindness itself," asserted the lady, with

emotion. "Very few women would have been so thoughtful. I shall never, never forget it."

"What do you think I have called about?" Bluntly, and with directness.

"Tell me," said the other, more warily, "just exactly what has prompted your visit. In any case, you cannot imagine how delighted I am to see you." She led the way to her sitting-room.

"Are you busy?" demanded Bertha.

"Even if I were, I could spare the time to talk to you."

"Have you any occupation?"

"A few private pupils. Fortunately, I am not entirely dependent on teaching."

"Anything in view?"

"You dear soul!" cried the lady, impulsively. "I know what you want to say, and you are leading up to it so cleverly, that it's a shame to interrupt you. But the long and short of it is, that you are giving up your berth at the Academy. And, remembering I gave up the post in a bit of a well—temper, and suspecting, now my throat is all right again, that I might like to return, why you have come here, as straight as the crow flies."

"Scarcely."

"You know what I mean."

Bertha mentioned the name of The Great Man. "Do you know him?" she inquired.

"I have seen him play."

"Know his secretary?"

"We were boy and girl together," replied the lady, rapturously. "At least I should say woman and boy. A great lad. In fact, we are second cousins."

"Very close relations," commented Bertha. "And did

you, by accident, or in playing for safety, ask him to see that I was offered a part in a new play?"

"I am inclined to think," remarked the lady, distantly, "that I have already said too much."

"No," Bertha Anderson rose to leave. "But you have said just enough!"

The daywoman, at this period, felt it necessary to warn Madame against the dangers of cheerfulness. She said it was tempting Providence. She declared there could be no good excuse for it.

"Keep as even-tempered as you like," said the daywoman, judicially. "I'm all for that. It helps. But when I hear a lady like you bursting into a sing-song when she thinks she's alone, then I know she's going to suffer for it later on."

"I must bear your warning in mind."

"I'm talking to you for your own good. Quite true I may have pointed out to you more than once, that every cloud has a silver lining. Miss, I have now to call your attention to the fact that every silver lining has a cloud. If your spirits go up, they've got to come down. You pay for it, all in due course."

"The price may not be unreasonable," suggested Bertha.

"Keep an eye on yourself," counselled the daywoman.

Her husband, a while later, made a formal complaint. There were not so many odd jobs about. He felt hurt by the growing disinclination to take advantage of his willing services. During the previous week, he had been able to claim from Miss Anderson nothing more than one-and-six, and he asked her if she realised the little distance that eighteenpence carried a man in these days at his favourite pub. Bertha made a suggestion.

"Talk civilly to your wife," she recommended, "when you meet her here, and I'll give you half-a-crown every Saturday."

"You drive a hard bargain, miss," he said.

The duty imposed was carried out for two weeks, and Bertha disbursed, in consequence, five shillings. On the second Saturday, the gardener issued a notice to the effect that the agreement was cancelled.

"At anything like manual labour," he said, with deliberation, "no one can get ahead of me. I'm renowned for it, far and wide. I've had praise given about it, before now. But when it comes to pretending to be amiable spoken to anyone you've grown to hate the very sight of, the strain is a jolly sight too much. One day, miss, you may have to go through the experience yourself!"

Bertha, remembering the case of herself and Edgar Nayland and its possibilities, nodded.

CHAPTER XII

THERE is a rapture in a narrow escape from disaster that pilots must sometimes know, and other cautious folk experience. For days Bertha Anderson congratulated herself, and stopped only on appreciating the fact that her rival had not been remarkably adroit. The new play, applauded with enthusiasm by the critics, ran for ten nights, and several reasons were offered that the public might make a choice: indisposition of The Great Man, arrangements with an American syndicate, necessary repairs to the theatre. So far as Bertha was concerned, the pleasing fact existed that she was not on the rocks. Earlier, her nephew, Gerald, had proved useful. Now publicity agent for his clever young wife, he was learning the art of in-

ducing journals to print bright little paragraphs regarding Minorities, and owing to his intervention, the newspapers told the world that because of pressure of engagements Miss Bertha Anderson had been unable to accept the highly flattering—— And so on. Pyrford, sharing the triumph, brought, one morning, three daily journals.

“Anderson,” she said, “you have done the hat trick!”

Bertha’s natural exultation—to see one’s name in print always induces a feeling of gratitude to Caxton—was tempered by the receipt of a letter from a firm of solicitors at Lewes, calling attention, on behalf of Captain Guilford, to an outstanding loan of one hundred and fifty pounds; payment was demanded. Edgar Nayland’s remittances had been so large and so continuous that Bertha had little hesitation in drawing on his savings; a cheque was made out that day to the solicitors, and Pyrford was invested with the task of seeing the envelope registered and dispatched.

“Don’t forget it,” urged Bertha. “It is important.”

“I never forget anything,” declared Pyrford, “whether important or not.”

“A most reliable wench,” agreed Bertha, “and I have perfect confidence in you. Carry on.”

A suspicion that she was taking liberties with cash which did not belong to her was quelled by industry, and, teaching at the Academy and at Maida Vale, Bertha forgot the apprehensions; it was in her dreams that she was called on to face the terrors of the examination at the Bankruptcy Court, and there she cut a truly deplorable figure as the butt and target of stern officials who would not accept evasive replies, but showed a desire for the truth that was almost uncanny. In her waking hours, she made when opportunity came a father-confessor of Irene’s

son; the advantages in selecting him were, first, that he did not reprimand; second, he was unlikely to break the rules of secrecy.

"And you see, my mannie," she explained, "by the time the cash is wanted, I shall have replaced it." There was an uneasy feeling that something like this had been read more than once in police reports.

She sent a note to her brother, mentioning the date when the sum lent was to be paid back; it scarcely astonished her to find that to this no reply came. Greater pressure than a mere written communication had ever been needed in the case of James.

Pay day at the Academy was at the end of the term, and a rainy spring evening, and a quiet space in Maida Vale enabled a man to dart forward from the railings, where he appeared to be taking shelter, to snatch at Bertha's wrist-bag, and race away and eventually up Carlton Hill. In his own phrase, used afterwards, he did not strike lucky, for the father of Mrs. Gerald, stepping out of his car and observing that Bertha was in hot pursuit, put out his foot, tripped up the man, and held him. Also, the bag contained little but a crossed cheque. The next morning at the court, the prisoner said he was guilty, adding that he would not have taken the lady's bag only that circumstances forced him to do so.

"And what were the circumstances?" asked the magistrate's clerk.

"I was down and out."

"Anything else?"

"Wife and two children, and another one expected."

A pause. "You will go to prison," said the magistrate, "for six weeks with hard labour."

All very briskly settled, and all quite satisfactory, excepting that Bertha Anderson could not rid her mind of thoughts of the woman. The woman had no share in the adventure; her fate was to stay at home, and endure. So Bertha, after many attempts to rout the subject from her mind, ascertained the address, and travelled to Branch Place, Hoxton, where, at a dwelling in which no one should have been permitted to dwell, she found Mrs. William Stammers, and, beginning to converse in a whisper, was told that she could speak as loudly as she pleased. Neighbours drifted up to listen, and Mrs. Stammers in no way resented this; she mentioned that an allowance in money and food came in from the Guardians, and she hoped to manage to rub along until William came out from over the wall. No blame was expressed against the law, but the general view seemed to be that William did not own the experience which counted for so much in an adventure of the kind; it was reckoned, too, a mistake that he should have undertaken it single-handed. There ensued talk of George and Herb and Steve, as men who rarely failed to score.

"Very kind of you, Miss," said Mrs. Stammers, accepting the Treasury note. "It'll make everything a bit easier. By the by, how did you come to know about the affair?" Bertha explained. "Well," amazedly, "you are a one, and no mistake. Oh yes, certainly you can call again. Often as you like. No, I'm never out anywheres. Can't afford to be."

The incident furnished Bertha with an opportunity of considering the matter of imperfect behaviour, and its reward as administered by the law. She discussed it with every one willing to give an opinion; some of her colleagues at the Academy refused to enter into any debate, assert-

ing that the whole business had been settled by authorities well equipped for the purpose. Bertha argued that offences where property alone was concerned should not be regarded too seriously. It was but the common game of grab, and the winners were those who grabbed the most. Most of us deserved to be locked up. As to physical interference, that, of course, was not to be tolerated for a moment; heavy punishments should be given; if the man now at His Majesty's establishment in Caledonian Road had struck her in making the robbery, no sympathy would have followed, no regrets for her own share in the incident.

"Are you thinking, by any chance," asked one of the professors, "of taking up embezzlement as a second study?" The challenge was well received in the luncheon-room. As Bertha left, she heard some one remark that it was surprising to find Miss Anderson, for once, not prepared to take a joke.

A further letter to brother James remained unanswered and she began to look on the financial situation with genuine disturbance of the mind. This was not lessened when an urgent wire came from Edgar Nayland, sent from Manchester. "Forward open cheque three hundred to-day certain." The name of his hotel followed. Inspecting the Nayland accounts, she discovered he had slightly overestimated his savings; a cheque for the precise amount was drawn, and posted by herself. Then she sat down at the studio to await the course of events, and to consider, as well as a heavy hailstorm overhead would allow, the possibilities. The day was Saturday, and she could be alone; the remote chance that her brother might call had to be taken into account, but she did not stress this as a likely occurrence. She knew James too well for

that. Meanwhile, with paying-in book and cheque-book and memoranda in front of her, she added and subtracted, and gazed apprehensively at the last figures. If the bank had been opened she would have called there to ask for her pass-book, in the hope that it might throw a more favourable light; a banking account was a queer piece of machinery and ere now she had found it doing some unexpected action owing to an oversight for which she, and not the bank officials, was responsible. Glancing once more through the counterfoils, she regretted the disbursement made to Captain Guilford; she admitted he had a moral claim—although the term seemed inappropriate as applied to Irene's husband,—but she doubted if he could have enforced the demand by legal means. Moreover, she was looking after his wife and his son; there was money due from him on that account.

"Anderson, my dear," cried Pyrford, rushing into the studio, "what a piece of luck to find you here. I've come along to add to your worries."

"At the moment," declared Bertha, "I am singularly free from any anxiety."

"Try again," ordered her assistant. "I've known you long enough to be able to tell when you are upset. A relative, I suppose, as usual."

"You are wearing your old coat," remarked Bertha, to change the conversation.

"Because of the truly awful weather," she mentioned, briefly. "And in the pocket, what do you think I came across? You'll never guess, and I may as well tell you, right away. That letter with a cheque that you asked me to register and post has been hiding all this time, and now I'm taking it along to the nearest post office in Edgware Road——"

"Give it to me."

"But it's all on my way. And I am so sorry, Anderson."

"Pyrford," she said, "your girlish mind is so completely occupied with romance that there is no space for anything else."

"A dear," cried the other with impulsiveness, "to take it so calmly!"

Here was relief that made the storm, driving hard on the glass roof, appear like broad sunshine. Here was her cheque, not debited to her account at the bank, and the overdraft would now be so inconsiderable that the manager might not trouble to send the warning. Looking at her watch, she determined to find an old macintosh, and make her way through the hail and rain to Kilburn. From the window as she put it on, she saw a figure, with umbrella held as a shield, battling along the pathway; her assistant was, perhaps, returning to take cover.

"Bertha, love," said her brother James, exhaustedly, "what can you be thinking of me? Here is the amount I owe you, together with the interest, and I am distressed at being fully a quarter of an hour late!"

Mrs. Stammers brought her husband by the most direct route from Pentonville on the morning of his discharge to express gratitude for help given, and their arrival synchronised with the announcement by the admirable day-woman that she was exempt from the necessity of going out to work; her husband had shown unlooked-for intelligence by becoming mixed up in a train accident, and the compensation offered would keep them, for a space, in something approaching luxury.

"I do hope," said Bertha, "his injuries are not in any way serious."

The other ignored the point. "Miss," she said, persuasively, "let my case be an example and, so to speak, a warning. 'Aven't I over and over again urged you to look on the bright side? Most certainly I 'ave. When I've noticed you'd got something on your mind, hasn't it been my custom to advise you to forget it? Confess it yourself."

"Are you going to live on the capital, or on the interest?"

"You are giving up," the daywoman went on, "a lump more than you or the other parties imagine. Wherever I've gone, I've always told myself it was a duty to my employers, apart from my ordinary tasks, to cheer 'em. What anxieties I 'appened to 'ave, I've never let on about them. I've invariably kept 'em to myself. Perhaps I should have been 'appier if I'd unloaded them, but I didn't."

"I trust your husband will make a good recovery."

"My parting advice to you, Miss," said the daywoman, forcibly, "is this. You get married as soon as ever you can. Fix on some one who can share your worries and double your joys, and then go for him for all you're worth. Don't give him a chance of escaping. Tie him down. And," tearfully, "if you're lucky, you won't have no cause to begrudge it!"

Mrs. Stammers, as the daywoman left, stepped forward and completed the interrupted message. William Stammers seconded the vote of thanks.

"What is your job?" asked Bertha.

"Haven't had none since I left the army."

"Are you good at anything?"

"I'm good at everything, miss. I'm what they call a 'andy man."

"All he wants," interrupted Mrs. Stammers, "is another trial."

"I don't call that a tactful expression," complained William.

"Supposing," demanded Bertha, "I give you occupation here to keep the studio clean and tidy, and to answer knocks, and to make yourself generally useful, can you guarantee to remain honest?"

"At the start," counselled William, frankly, "don't put temptation in my way. Lock up desks, and what not. But once I get into the swing of it, so to speak, you won't have no cause for fear." Mrs. Stammers had a sister living in a road near Praed Street; she thought it would be possible to obtain a room in the house. More convenient like for William, and a far better neighbourhood, as you might say. Bertha inquired concerning the expenses of the transfer.

"Bless your soul," cried Mrs. Stammers, "there's nothing but ourselves and the children to move!"

Within seven days William had acquired the manner reckoned seemly in opening the door to students; he no longer hailed them with inappropriate words, and any prejudices of race were given up, or concealed. Within a fortnight, he was presented with a neat blue suit to be worn when overall had been discarded, and from that time the reform seemed complete. Touches of the Hoxton deportment came out only at moments of crisis. The representative of a firm of solicitors—"acting," said the pencilled remark on the card sent in, "at the request of Captain Guilford"—found himself, as a result of exaggerated interpretation of Miss Anderson's comment, taken by William, and sent at a run along the walk to the garden door, and there flung well into the traffic of the pavement.

"'Alf measures," said William, "are of no use in a case of this kind."

Bertha had visions of a claim for damages, and other perplexing consequences, and she wrote a friendly and apologetic note to the solicitors at Lewes. In answer they mentioned that for some time past they had ceased to act for Captain Guilford, and the visitor to Maida Vale had no right to use one of their cards. Thus was William Stammers triumphantly vindicated, and his usefulness confirmed.

"I can tell a wrong 'un," he declared, "a mile and a half off, and me with one eye shut."

He was on even safer ground when, during his temporary absence on a shopping errand, a shifty-looking man called to give a warning to Mrs. Robert and Miss Pyrford. The caller was detained in conversation until William, returning, could be informed of the meaning of the visit; the man had spoken of William from personal knowledge gained when one resided in cell D2/48 and the other in D2/49. He was now told that the particulars were lacking in the element of novelty, and his eviction by William, by ready consent of the ladies, was entirely devoid of any signs of hospitality.

"But don't it jest show you?" he demanded, afterwards. "What I mean to say is how difficult it is for a chap—— Where should I be if—— You see my argument, don't you?"

The content of William and his wife was rounded off, and made perfect when Miss Anderson agreed to act as godmother to the new baby in Star Street. Mrs. Stammers declared her ambition was now realised. A child who could say that she was born in the West End; no mother could wish for anything better, although a hope was cherished that some day it might be possible to rent two rooms instead of one. "But I'm getting light-headed,"

she said, self-reprovingly. "I'm running past myself. William says it's due to good feeding."

The Kenningtons told Bertha that they were shocked and hurt and astonished—she was free to mix the ingredients at her will—to find, on visiting their son Gerald and his wife, that he was a mere chronicler of her public doings, and making no effort to create a name for himself. Walter Kennington, with his usual claim to be allowed to speak candidly, announced that this would not do at all.

"Admitted," he said, in the rolling tones of oratory, "that my daughter-in-law is gaining the money to run the establishment. Admitted she is an amiable young person, and treats me with a proper and correct deference. Admitted that my boy Gerald might have done far worse."

"Be careful not to admit too much, darling," urged his wife.

"A singular thing," he declared, gazing at the ceiling, "that in this house I am never allowed to speak without interruption. Constantly being shunted from the main line of argument."

"Talk to me, Walter," urged Bertha.

"I will," he said, forcibly. "And I talk to you because I desire to warn you—not for the first time—against meddling. Keep outside the ropes. I have a plan of my own for bringing Gerald back to what I regard as ship-shape conditions, and my fear is that you may intrude and spoil it all."

"You are apt, you know," said Mrs. Kennington, to her sister, "to take a great deal too much upon yourself."

The annoyance of a leader in court who resents the help of an over-eager junior is something that causes the

looker-on to tremble; Walter Kennington could express his irritation only by gestures. "The two," he said, recovering powers of speech, "must separate."

"You are talking nonsense," declared Bertha. "A pity you and Lily ever had children to look after."

"We have had little in return for the trouble and expense of bringing them up."

"And deserved less."

"You," with heavy sarcasm, "would, no doubt, have made an ideal parent."

"No," she retorted. "But I make a fairly good aunt."

"Bertha," remarked her sister, "doesn't it occur to you that you are overrating your good qualities?"

"I observe," said Bertha, taking another subject, "that you put no question concerning your daughter and her boy."

"Our final decision," said Mr. Kennington, heavily, "in regard to Irene was made long ago, and we see no cause for altering it. If the disbursements are too great for your pocket, Bertha, you have but to communicate with Captain Guilford."

He evaded further discussion by dashing from the room, and closing the door after him with a bang; the two sisters continued the discussion in quieter tones. Mrs. Kennington pleaded that she had been talked over by her husband, and admitted that she was not fully acquainted with the details of his scheme. She could not be sure that he himself knew them. But it was clear he regarded the separation of the young couple as an indispensable proceeding, and Mrs. Kennington had already guaranteed to furnish support and assistance.

"It is by no means a novel situation," she contended.

"Walter was reminding me that theatre people never live together for long after they are married."

"Furnish me with an instance."

"On the spur of the moment?"

"On the spur of five minutes."

At the end of the space, Bertha's sister was able to submit one example; she declared there must be thousands of which one did not hear.

"At any rate, dear, you realise, I hope, that my hands are tied."

"Mine are free," said Bertha.

She found, on making a call, half an hour later, that Gerald and Minories were on reticent terms with each other; Minories, apart, whispered that Gerald had been silent all day, and her efforts had not succeeded in arousing him. Acquainted with the usefulness of high explosives, Bertha announced the intentions of Ennismore Gardens; the two young folk, rushing towards each other, embraced affectionately.

"Aunt," cried Gerald over his shoulder, "the governor must be mad."

"Cranky," agreed Minories.

"My sweet," to his wife, "I couldn't live apart from you."

"Dearest," she said, "if you left me, I should simply die."

Calmness followed, and it had to be stated, in justice to the governor, that he had recently happened on the two when they were exchanging views which were not precisely identical. And, in regard to the young man's glumness, the fact came out that, by the morning post, he had received an anonymous letter charging him with being dependent on grants from his wife; grants, added the shy letter-writer, that were certainly not earned, and could only be looked on as gifts. "An able-bodied man like

you ought to be ashamed." The note produced, Minories was able to identify the penmanship, because it had once conveyed to her an offer of marriage. When the smoke had cleared away, it was possible to view everything clearly, and ere Minories went off to the theatre, the whole business had been considered in a peaceful atmosphere. The three arrived at the following conclusions:

(a) That the plan now being set up at Ennismore Gardens be disregarded.

(b) That grounds for misapprehension be, in the future, avoided. In other words, public disputes abandoned.

(c) That as there was something in the assertion made in the unsigned letter, Gerald should give up all connection with the theatre, go back once more to the City, and make his own living.

(d) That, henceforth, no payments, small or large, be made to Gerald by his wife. A system of thrift introduced. One never knew, in the profession, when it was likely to come on to rain.

CHAPTER XIII

A YOUTHFUL and highly impressionable male student at the Academy fell in love with Bertha Anderson, and admitted it, privately and publicly. It happened that, unlike most of his contemporaries there, he belonged to a well-to-do family, and the gifts he sent to express his devotion came upon Maida Vale not so much in a shower as in a thunderstorm. The earliest were returned by Bertha with a note calling attention to the distressing circumstance—for which she accepted no responsibility—that the donor was rather less than half her age, but the youth was not disposed to allow facts to arrest his purpose,

and more costly gifts followed. Bertha determined to store them, and return the articles in bulk so soon as the romantic youth transferred his affections.

"William," she said, to the handy man at the studio, "look about for a second-hand safe."

"An idea of the size, if you please."

"One not too large, and not too small."

"Give us a better clue than that," he protested.

William conveyed the safe on a barrow lent to him, and, in glancing around for help in unloading, caught sight of the man he had once known in Pentonville. The other readily gave assistance, chose in the room a spot which, from the expert's point of view, he spoke of as absolutely made for it, took his eighteenpence, and retired after delivering a brief address on the joy to be obtained from honest labour. Pyrford and Mrs. Robert were invited in to see the new contribution to furnishing.

"What are you going to keep in it?" demanded young Mrs. Robert, curtly.

"Don't raise difficult problems," counselled Pyrford.

Bertha indicated that Pyrford could go back to her duties. "Now tell me," she said persuasively. "It isn't that you have really any objection to the safe; it is that you have something on your mind."

"I don't like disturbing you, aunt," said the young woman, "and I don't at all care for leaving you. But Robert is doing so well that he insists upon it. A friend of his in the City discovered I was here, and chaffed him about it."

"Men are sensitive plants," commented Bertha.

"And now," sympathetically, "you will have all the trouble of finding a successor, and——"

"My love," she interrupted, "the woods are full of

them. I am sorry you are buzzing off, and you have been a splendid girl to me, but you are not to worry on my account."

On this came an announcement from Pырford. Pырford's new efforts to look her age had succeeded admirably; the local bank-manager, recently become a widower, had begged for her hand in marriage, and inspection of the rooms over the bank, compelled her to give coy acceptance. Wherefore Bertha Anderson made known her requirements through the usual printed columns, and letters arrived, and callers rang the bell at the side door, and when Irene tendered her services, with the assurance that a freshly-engaged nurse girl could be trusted, Bertha felt grateful, and her niece, installed at Maida Vale, sifted the numerous applications, and wrote the necessary letters. So soon as candidates had been selected, it proved, in the month of test, that they lacked some of the essential gifts. One failed to keep her temper under control; a difficult pupil was able to throw her into a wild rage, and start the use of explosive language. Two of the others mentioned candidly that they were but filling in time until their respective sweethearts could discover houses with moderate rentals. The fourth, well equipped with knowledge of her subject, was wholly unable to impart it. Mothers began to hint darkly of transferring their gifted offspring to establishments where better attention was given.

"Miss Anderson," said Bertha, to herself, "you must put your back into this job!"

The affectionate youth at the Academy stated, in a tensely written communication, that unless his appeal received a favourable answer, he intended one evening to jump over Westminster Bridge, and, in this way, put an end to a life that was devoid of attraction, and wanting

in hopefulness. Bertha replied that the nights were still chilly; she recommended a postponement of the adventure until later. Further, it was her duty to inform the young man that she had been secretly wedded for years past—she trusted he would respect this confidence—and the laws affecting bigamy did not err on the side of generosity. The youth took this very badly. He answered in a highly offended tone, declaring he had erased her from his memory, and Bertha, emptying the safe of its contents, and packing the gifts neatly in a case, returned them with all the best wishes. In his acknowledgment, the youth told her that he had hurled the case into the black darkness of the river Thames. “A very wise substitution,” commented Bertha.

But for Irene the days at Maida Vale would have been crowded with anxieties. Bertha's niece gave unexpected displays of tactfulness; occupation of the hours improved her temperament, and her health. The small boy at Kilburn furnished a welcome in the evening, calculated to gratify the desire of any parent, and his orders of dismissal to the nurse girl who, as the phrase goes, slept out, were emphatic. And his insistence on remaining awake until Auntie Bertha came home showed he was a man of determination. He proved content with listening whilst the two discussed business.

“Be sure,” said Bertha, to his mother, “to let me see any correspondence that looks important.”

“You can depend,” promised Irene, “that I shall not take too much upon myself.”

Pyrford's marriage made a welcome break in a chain of disturbing events, and, for the day, troubles were forgotten. It appeared the bride had many relatives, hitherto not mentioned, and in sending presents they

hinted at a right to be asked to the wedding breakfast; the bridegroom gave signs of horror when it was suggested that this should take place in the rooms over the bank. Most undignified, he declared. Altogether without precedent, he hinted. Bertha Anderson offered the use of the studio, and notice of a day's holiday was given to pupils concerned; one or two of the more curious asked for an explanation and, this given, a circular was at once drawn up, and sent to those who had gone through the mill in the past. As a consequence, crowds of young women, and women who had not so long ago been youthful, were at the church, and folk outside, seeing the crowds, resolved to add to the number, and fought their way in, and wept, and enjoyed themselves completely. At the end of the ceremony, Bertha had to make a selection from the double row that formed a guard of honour outside, and all who were asked to join the party at the studio accepted without a moment's hesitation. At Maida Vale, the head man from the refreshment contractors proclaimed a strike.

"We was asked," he said, "to cater for so many, and now look at the number that's put in an appearance. Talk about loaves and fishes. Why you're expecting us to carry out miracles that poets never dreamt of writing of."

"Send for additional supplies," recommended Bertha.

"I do not propose," doggedly, "to take any action of the kind whatsoever."

"Telephone to your firm, and ask what you are to do."

"Never," argued the head man, "in the whole course of my professional career have I had to stoop so low as to do that."

"Then just clear out."

A strike can be broken when the supply of volunteer

workers is good, and, a House Committee being formed, messengers were sent, obeying the directions of William Stammers, to Kilburn, and Edgware Road way, and Clifton Road way, and ere the van belonging to the contractors had returned with a new man in charge and added supplies, and instructions to do everything possible to help Miss Anderson, food and fruit had been set upon side tables, guests were eating, the crisis was past, and the bridegroom—a slave to order and precision—felt able to retire to Bertha's room in order to look over the notes of his speech. He asked later for the favour of Miss Anderson's presence.

"I speak here," he said, perplexedly, notes in right hand, "of the luxurious repast provided for special and intimate friends. You see my difficulty?"

Bertha nodded.

"And I go on to allude to the company as felt but fit, and I say that the name of each will be deeply engraven on the memories of my wife and myself."

"Well?"

"And I mention it was our desire that a solemn occasion should be marked by a certain gravity."

"Keep the speech for another opportunity."

"Do you actually suggest, Miss Anderson——?"

"The silver wedding," she explained.

"Ah," he said, with a change of manner, "now I follow you."

It was an afternoon of dancing, and singing, and talking; by agreement no one was allowed to give a recitation, and this seemed a wise arrangement, for if elocutionary displays had once been started, all would have insisted on the right to contribute, and the day would never have finished. The wedded couple left to catch the five o'clock

train at Paddington, and convention was preserved by observing something like silence in regard to the destination; not more than three-fourths of the guests were acquainted with the fact that Pyrford and her husband were going to Bath. By the command of the hostess, no one went with them to the departure platform, and thus the bride's gratitude was increased, and the bridegroom's anxiety for public decorum satisfied.

"Anderson," cried Pyrford, embracing tearfully, "the best and dearest chum that ever was."

"Pyrford," declared Bertha, keeping to the old name, "I wish to goodness I could find some one like you!"

One of the young women, adding herself to the company of assistants—referred to in their absence as Trials—brought no great competency in teaching, but proved extraordinarily fertile in suggestions. She thought, by arrangement with the landlord, an annexe might be built to the studio; the circumstance that it was not required in no way damped her enthusiasm for the idea. She drew up a scheme for founding branches all over London. She planned an evening at the studio with seats arranged as in the House of Commons, and students, acting as members, delivering the finest parliamentary orations by Burke, William Pitt, Disraeli, and others. The one recommendation that seemed to Bertha deserving of notice was that Miss Anderson should henceforth be called Madame. The notion at once obtained favour. There had been students who, coming freshly from educational establishments, saluted her as "Miss"; a few had said "Morning, teacher." The new scheme made for uniformity, and a start was made by giving instructions to William; he used the title widely and loudly.

"Is Miss Anderson about?" inquired a caller, meaning no harm.

"Madame is within," replied William Stammers, correcting, "but Madame at the moment is engaged. Shall I give Madame your name, please?"

"Say," said the other, in tones of apology, "that I will call again at some more convenient time. To Madame!"

The heading of the letter paper, and the circulars and the account forms was altered. At the Academy the change proved easier, because so many ladies there had anticipated the method. The Principal bowed his assent; the Principal's secretary made a note of the alteration.

Something like a dispute occurred one evening at the side door of the studio when Edgar Nayland called and demanded instant audience of Miss Anderson; William Stammers took exception to the dictatorial tone. A hot argument with his old friend, once of His Majesty's Prison—who had made another call, and still remained, unwilling to leave without, at least, the opportunity of securing a drink—had not improved William's temper.

"I want to leave some money," explained Nayland.

"That's a different affair altogether," conceded William. He gave an order to the other visitor to scoot instantly, or to take the risk of obtaining a thick ear. "Wipe your boots, and step inside, and I'll ascertain if Madame 'appens to be at liberty." The departing friend caught the last word, and threw a jibe. "If you had stated your business at the outset—— Is it much?"

Nayland turned to meet Bertha. "What is all this Madame nonsense?" he challenged, aggrievedly. "Why wasn't I requested to give advice?"

"Your advice would probably not have been taken, Edgar. And please don't shout."

In the room he made excuses. "I caught the twelve forty-three from Bath," he said. "By the by, I ran across down there your former assistant and her husband. I do think the most ridiculous sight in the world is a middle-aged couple openly and obviously in love."

"You caught the twelve forty-three."

"I did. And wouldn't you have said that allowed a good margin for placing money in a London bank?"

"I should not," answered Bertha. "The banks close at three nowadays."

"How was I to know that?"

"If you would only ask sensible questions instead of putting silly inquiries——"

"Anyway," he said, "when I reached the City, I found I was too late. To-night, I am staying at a Bloomsbury hotel, and I don't trust the people. They fail to inspire my confidence. I have arrived at a point where I can trust myself, but I don't trust them."

"There is a safe here," mentioned Bertha.

"Why, that is simply perfect," he declared, relievedly. "That takes an immense load from my mind."

"Why on earth you don't conduct your business by cheques as other people do——"

"I am going to," interrupted Nayland, eagerly. "I admit that my way is a trifle cumbersome. Besides, it makes people smile."

"Wonder is it doesn't make them laugh."

He took her off to dine in Oxford Street, and, at the restaurant, spoke of the money he was making, and of the comfort in knowing that he had already put by a round sum. Bertha found herself reminded of his ability in ordering a good meal; a notable gift. At the coffee, he gave indications of sentiment, and once he stroked her wrist;

when he said, heartily, "Now for a couple of hours or so at a theatre!" then Bertha Anderson found herself unable to endure the prospect of further companionship. She said Irene and the boy would feel disturbed by her absence.

"You ought to get rid of them," he said.

"They constitute the principal joys in my existence," she declared, arranging her fur collar.

"Very odd that you and I so rarely agree on any subject. But the fact remains that I love you more now than ever."

"Shows the effect of a really good meal," she said, evenly. "Look in for your cash in the morning!"

The most afflicting thought which can enter the human mind is in regard to locking up. Once you begin to doubt if you have correctly turned a key and rightly shot a bolt, then there is nothing to do but to go back, and make the test; failing this, a sleepless night awaits you. To Bertha, the element of uncertainty arrived as her omnibus was half-way along Maida Vale; she stepped off without delay and hurried towards the studio. In the dusk of the garden path near the wall she saw a figure, and assuming this was the occupier of the house, and desirous always of keeping on good terms with a landlord, she said, cheerfully, that it was a jolly evening; he replied with an indistinct ejaculation which suggested no desire for talk, and turning, walked to the garden door. "Recovering," said Bertha, "from a domestic argument." At the turning from the path she tripped over a length of cord that had been fixed from shrub to shrub. The door of the studio opened.

"What's the game?" demanded the voice of William Stammers. "What are we playing of?"

On the impulse of the moment, Bertha dashed forward. Gripping his arm, she swung him around; before he could

regain steadiness, she had taken off her fur collar and setting it over his mouth fastened it at the nape of his neck. Seizing his arm again, she tried to find the drawer of the heavy table in which pieces of string were kept. A yard of cord, related probably to the length over which she had stumbled, was discovered, and William's wrist was attached to a leg of the table. Energetic action was helped by the terrifying prospect of Edgar Nayland's authoritative and reproachful deportment if a robbery should be effected. She switched on the light.

"This is the result of trusting you," she said quietly. "I suppose I had forgotten the circumstances of our earliest meeting. So much temptation ought not to have been put in your way." William Stammers made inarticulate sounds, and with his disengaged hand attempted to free himself from the gag, and from the table.

"You had better keep quiet," she counselled. "If you go on struggling like that, I shall telephone to the police station, and your previous character will not help you when you face a magistrate." William, relinquishing his efforts, took up a resigned and motionless attitude. "You knew Mr. Nayland's money was in the safe, over there, and it seemed to you an easy method—— Have you thought of what your wife will say about it? Didn't you remember that ducky little baby of yours? When it grows up, it will have to be told that its father was a man who could not refrain from——"

William Stammers held up his free arm as though appealing for silence. Outside, some one else had fallen over the cord, and was using the language of exasperation. Bertha turned off the light. The door opened, and Bertha going forward, with an idea of explaining the situation to her landlord, found herself clutched and thrown against

the inside of the door. The door closed with a bang, and she was held there.

"I might," said the intruder, huskily, "have waited until you'd gone, but I regarded it as inadvisable. Delays, my poor mother used to tell me, are dangerous. Give me your word of honour not to shift from where you are, and no 'arm will come to you. Do otherwise and a whistle from me will bring in a mate who's not fur off."

"I think I know your mate," she said, breathlessly.

"The hell you do."

"Christian name, William."

"Wrong!" cried the other, triumphantly. "He changes his second name pretty often, but for a first name he's always stuck to the one."

"Surname, anyway, is Stammers."

"You are absolutely off the main road," he declared. "Stammers I know, but he's no special chum of mine; never was, and never will be. I don't hold with your reformed characters. You never know where you are with 'em."

Bertha Anderson, in struggling violently, made a mental reckoning of the bruises she would discover later on. She did get away from the door, and nearer to the table, but her efforts to reach Stammers, and to liberate him and give him powers of speech, were not successful; so soon as she neared him, she was hurled away from the objective. In the movements, William's free hand, converting itself into a fist, made a lucky blow and the man went down. She rushed to switch off the electric light, hurried back and unloosened the fur.

"Cut this cord, Madame," directed Stammers, "and I'll set about him. I'll move every feature he's got. I'll alter his appearance so that his own lady friend won't know him. Nor want. You go into the studio and leave us alone."

The treatment over, and the visitor gone, William explained, arguing incidentally the usefulness of being a moderate drinker. William's habit, it appeared, of an evening was to take one half-pint—no more, no less—on licenced premises at the beginning of Harrow Road. On this night, he sipped his refreshment in the saloon bar. He sat near the wooden division that separated it from the public bar and, if Madame understood, at the end near the counter. Possessing a hearing like to that owned by a ferret, he caught morsels of the conversation going on between his old acquaintance and another man; the words "iron safe" and "Maida Vale" were enough to induce William to make his way back to the studio.

"We've foiled that scheme," he said in the phrase of melodrama, "but it won't do to let 'em see us depart. They may not have took the hint. Consequently, Madame, you rest there in the studio for the night; I stay here in this room, and keep watch. Breakfast ready at seven forty-five a.m., sharp to the minute!"

CHAPTER XIV

EDGAR NAYLAND reached the studio as William—having served the promised breakfast to Madame—left to give explanations at Star Street. It appeared likely the caller would renew his affectionate demeanour of the previous evening, and Bertha received him cautiously; it soon proved that his early morning outlook differed.

"My money, please!" he snapped.

"Oh, take the cash," she quoted, going to the safe, "and let the credit go."

"Rather fancy," he said pointedly, "that there is no question of credit." Nayland examined the seals, and

walked off with a certain majesty of gait. "I bid you good morning," he remarked.

"I shall be so much obliged," she said, "if you will close the door after you."

The postman brought correspondence that included one or two large letters which would not slip into the box, and he, in comparison with Edgar Nayland was, during a stay of but a few moments, a breezy and a conversational visitor. He spoke hopefully of the outlook on the Continent, gave a word of congratulation on the summer, and declared it a pleasure to be alive. In going he mentioned that he knew folk who had reason to envy Madame; so far as he could guess she had not a care in the world. The postman took advantage of the seclusion from public gaze and hearing, afforded by the garden path, to whistle a cheerful air.

Bertha did not touch the post letters, because her niece enjoyed the importance of seeing to these each morning; in finishing her coffee she thought of the changed mood of Edgar Nayland. She congratulated herself on her wisdom in evading his further companionship after the dinner; if eloquence had come to his aid she might, by this time, have been forced to think from the view of one with a prospect of giving up some independence, and a knowledge that henceforth she would be compelled to watch and conciliate a partner's alterations in temperament.

"What an escape!" she exclaimed.

Irene, arriving, brought a piece of exclusive information which could be given to no one but Aunt Bertha, and, from her, could not possibly be withheld. Mr. Nayland, it seemed, called at the Kilburn flat at an early hour, and with a temperament which could only be described as chirpy. Delighted to meet Irene, charmed to make the

acquaintance of her boy. And how—when preliminaries were over—how was Mrs. Guilford's aunt this morning? Irene had grounds for believing that Aunt Bertha was in the enjoyment of capital health. A marvellous woman, he declared, and Irene agreed. Would it be possible, asked Mr. Nayland, for him to see Miss Anderson for a moment on business of special importance? Irene had to announce that Aunt Bertha had not returned to the flat for the night. "Oh, oh!" said Mr. Nayland, frowning. Irene suggested that Aunt Bertha had probably stayed with friends. "Doubtless!" said Mr. Nayland, and with that marched out and was heard on the landing making fierce and incoherent remarks.

"How fragile is one's reputation," commented Bertha, amusedly. "Edgar regards mine as damaged irretrievably."

"Not until he had gone," said Irene, "did I realise that." She was supplied with details of the attempt made by William's acquaintance. "A line from you, aunt, to Mr. Nayland will clear everything up."

"The line will not be written."

The gaiety of the morning was improved by an interview with two young women (sisters) who presented themselves in the hope of becoming Madame's assistants. Irene, delaying examination of post letters, saw them first and described them as two gems; they were passed on to Bertha, who saw at once that precious jewels had, at length, been discovered. She stood by as they entered on their duties with early pupils, and felt no hesitation in leaving them in charge as she left for the Academy.

"You will be here," she said, remindingly, to Irene, "in case they want advice. Anything special in the post?"

"Nothing, so far, that I can't deal with. There are three more, and I shall soon clear them off."

"Good child! Don't know what I should do without you."

At four o'clock in the afternoon Bertha returned to the studio. On inquiring for her niece, William Stammers said Mrs. Guilford had left within ten minutes after the departure of Madame. She seemed, he mentioned, a trifle off her balance, so to speak. Somewhat under the weather, as you might say. Bertha hurried to Kilburn, so soon as classes finished, and discovered, at the flat, the nurse girl alone. Mrs. Guilford had come home that morning in a deuce and all of a hurry, had packed a trunk, dressed baby, and without a single word of information to the nurse girl—in fact, making no answer to her questions,—the two set off in a taxi-cab. "Paddington, I heard her say to the driver, but, of course," shrewdly, "that may have only been a red herring. Looks somewhat rummy, don't it? But, with ladies living apart from their husbands, you never quite know, do you? Has she ever gone back to him before? Mother says that people look on marriage nowadays like a week-end at Herne Bay."

Bertha's confidence in her niece had increased so much of late that her concern was less than it had been on a previous and similar occasion. All the same, it was not easy to guess at the cause of the disappearance; the one thing clear was that she had to face, once more, the prospect of lonely evenings. Bertha made calls on her other young family connections, and encountered a welcome genial enough without touching the stage of rapture, and this, she realised, was due to the fact that her services were not, at the moment, in demand. Robert and his wife seemed to be making quick progress. They had taken a second flat, immediately above the rooms first secured, and Robert was able to work at his desk at night

without the disturbance of joyous music overhead. Mrs. Robert, when the two women were alone, spoke of current income and public tasks, and Bertha opened eyes widely at the news. Robert had given handsome permission to his wife to engage on social work, mainly, it appeared, in order that she should obtain a collection of friends; he desired to become popular and Mrs. Robert, for a start, had charge of a dramatic society at a working girls' club.

"The most difficult young people you can imagine," she told Aunt Bertha. "Cheeky, indifferent, abrupt. I have been devoting three evenings a week to them, and what I am afraid of is that I may have to give up out of sheer despair, and then," mournfully, "Robert will not be too well pleased."

"Are you going on the right lines?"

"Why, of course. I'd ask you to come along and see for yourself, only that Irene and her boy are expecting you at home."

"For once," she said, postponing explanations, "they can wait."

The reason for Mrs. Robert's failure at the club was not far to seek. Inspecting the material set before her she had, it appeared, selected a play with the scenes laid in Walworth; the second act had been reached, but Bertha could see obstinacy in every member of the society. The girls were determined in their refusal to use their own accent; either they widened it to the point of burlesque or they gave no indications of it. Bertha, having watched for a time, led Mrs. Robert to a corner of the large room, and the young women took advantage of the suspension of the rehearsal to sing and dance, wildly and exuberantly. When the two came back to the table it was not easy,

at first, for Mrs. Robert to gain their attention. Bertha stepped forward.

"We are going to scrap this play," she said. A burst of cheering followed the announcement. "We don't consider it worthy of the talents you possess." Some giggling. "We fancy you will be more at home in what is termed a comedy of manners." Expressions of curiosity. "The first act of the one we have selected takes place at the Carlton Hotel, after dinner." General congratulations.

"You must help me, Aunt Bertha," whispered Mrs. Robert. "Unless you are too busy."

"My dear," she declared, "I am never half busy enough. If you like, I'll read the play to them to-morrow, and I will come to the evening rehearsals." Thus it happened that loneliness was for a time evaded; the club girls showed so much enthusiasm that they were content with nothing short of nightly repetitions of the words.

The mystery concerning Irene and the boy continued until an occasion when Bertha, in searching for a document, went through the waste-paper basket and discovered there, amongst the jetsam of the writing-desk, an empty envelope addressed to herself in Guilford's handwriting; the date of the London postmark on it synchronised with the date of Irene's disappearance. This, of itself, did not make things clear, but there was the obvious suggestion that Irene, in dealing with correspondence, encountered it, and took swift action. Bertha, in her flat that evening after a strenuous hour at the club with Mrs. Robert's young women, had penned a letter in reproachful terms to her niece at Guilford's house, when a car drove up. With the postage stamp on her tongue she went across to the window; a single glance and she replaced the stamp carefully, face downwards, for use at some other time.

"Where is Irene?" barked Guilford, as she opened the door.

"I don't know." She did not ask him to enter the flat.

"Where is the boy?"

"Not here," she said.

"But you can tell me where he is," persisted Guilford.

"I was under the impression they were both with you."

"That doesn't sound like the truth."

"Give me time," said Bertha, "and I may be able to think of a lie."

He looked at her; she accepted his gaze steadily.

"I wish," he said, with a change of tone, "I could induce you to play on my side."

"I am in the opposite team."

There was a pause. "I called here some weeks ago," he remarked. "You were not at home."

"Sorry."

"But you must have had my letter, and you knew I was coming along." Bertha displayed the envelope, explained the circumstances, and offered to show the note she had just written. "In my letter," he said, "I gave you fair warning that I intended to get hold of the boy. Once under my care he is not likely to return to his mother."

"I see. Case of kidnapping."

"I want possession of the child," he argued, more frankly, "because I desire his company."

"And you especially wish to deprive Irene——"

"That's true," he admitted. "Now then. Can we speak to each other in a straightforward way?"

"I can answer for myself," said Bertha, "but I can't be sure about you."

With a sudden rush Guilford managed to overcome

the defences, and in the small rooms he went around calling, in a peremptory voice, "Irene, Irene. Your husband is here." There came something like a wail of appeal in his last cry of "Rene, dearest!"

"May I," asked Bertha, "call attention to the circumstance that the walls are not too thick, and that neighbours are inquisitive. All this clamour they, I am sure, will relish, but I don't like it. I don't like it, and I won't have it. You understand?"

"Miss Anderson," he said, rather piteously, "I'm an unlucky chap. I didn't treat Irene too well, I admit, but I am being over-punished for it. I haven't a friend left in the county."

"Well played, Sussex," remarked Bertha.

"At first I thought every one was backing me up, but since then there has been a sort of conspiracy going on. Miss Anderson, I have enemies."

"The wonder would be if you had anything else."

"If you could only——"

"Now, look here," she interrupted. "You wrote a letter to me which Irene found, and she was scared by the threats it contained. So far as the attempt now to find her and the boy are concerned, you and I can work together. I shan't know a moment's peace until we have traced them. But pray don't imagine that, in order to restore you to the favour of your neighbours, and to induce them to believe the fault is with my niece, that I am going to assist your scheme in any way."

"I could make it worth your while," he persisted. "Whatever you like to ask."

"Captain Guilford," she said, forcibly, "don't let me see you here again. Any communications can be sent through the post."

Once more a search for Irene began, and once again Bertha found the large portion of the task had to be undertaken by her, single-handed. Gerald Kennington, concerned about his sister, was nevertheless too busily engaged with his City occupation to give any assistance by day; Minories, his wife, offered to take charge of the expenses involved, but Bertha claimed this as her own right. Of an evening Gerald and his aunt held conferences, discussing new avenues to be investigated, and regarding the accumulation of failures. Notices on the front page of daily journals brought no answer, and the private inquiry office in Henrietta Street begged Miss Anderson to remember that Great Britain was a biggish place; she must not expect that their men could perform the impossible. These affairs always took a certain time. The lady had, likely enough, changed her name; maybe she had altered her appearance. Instances of young women reported as found wandering, and owing to loss of memory, unable to give an account of themselves, were followed up, and nothing but blind alleys were discovered.

"We shall have to tell your father and mother," said Bertha.

"Aunt," declared Gerald Kennington, "you know what my folk are. Either they would make a public business of it, straight away, or they'd be huffy because they had not been informed earlier. In any case, they could be depended on for doing the wrong thing."

It was in reviewing the details of the earlier affair in which Irene was concerned that Bertha Anderson thought of Wilson, the maid, and having thought of her, the belief that information could be obtained from the girl increased every hour. Bertha's anxiety had gradually centred on

the boy. Irene was old enough, and sensible enough to take care of herself, but she might find herself hampered by the child, and Bertha trembled at the thought of the little chap suffering from any kind of neglect at the hands of strangers. Accordingly, the familiar journey from Victoria was taken on Sunday morning by a train which could not have travelled so slowly as the pace seemed to her; there was an eagerness to deal with the Wilson clue, and to start on another. In the village, folk were going to church in the austere manner that the wearing of best clothes produces; Bertha Anderson caught sight of Captain Guilford, and the deportment of his neighbours towards him corroborated the statement made at the Kilburn flat. Near the lych-gate, he waited, and folk behind him came to a standstill; not until he moved did they shift from their position, and the risk of an exchange of words with him on the weather was, in this way, avoided. No signs of Wilson, nor of Wilson's people. The doors of the church were closed by the verger. The service began. The sound the clergy make before speaking audibly, like to the humming of bees, and—

“When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed——”

The main street, at one moment empty, became suddenly crowded by the arrival of a motor-coach. A few passengers descended, others gazed wistfully at the closed public-house, and moistened their lips; the coach, with a jerk and a splutter, went on its way.

“You ain't,” said an elderly man, coming out of a side road, and leaning at a flag-post for rest, “you ain't, Miss, by any chance, acquainted with them young women what got off that charabang, and have now just turned the corner?”

"I didn't notice them," answered Bertha.

"There's a kind of a mystery," he continued, with open relish, "and, try as I will, I can't get down to the fac's. No one can. 'Tis a puzzle to one and all of us. I'm beginnin' to despair, I am, and that's the truth."

"You mustn't lose heart."

"I don't mean to," declared the old gentleman, hitting the pathway with his walking-stick. "There's never been no scandal in this 'ere village where I 'aven't got 'old of the fac's sooner or later, and I'm fully determined—— Like this, you see. Them three gals are all out to service. Their mother lives 'ere, or resides 'ere, or has a cottage 'ere, whatever you like to call it. Suddenly, and all at once, a baby appears." Bertha simulated the correct astonishment. "Now, you're old enough, Miss, to re'lise that a baby isn't found under a gooseberry bush. A baby has to have a mother and a father. And one of them three gals is the mother."

"They all deny parentage?"

"Not so. Not so. On the contrary. Each one of 'em, when questions are put separately, says and swears and takes affidavit that she is the mother of the child. Now it stands to reason a child can't have three mothers. If there's anything certain in this 'ere world it is that." A call was sent across the roadway. Would grandfather like to have half a pint, later on, when the doors opened? The old chap left Bertha with some precipitation in order to accept the offer.

The door of the cottage was opened to the extent of a few inches by Wilson's mother. She exclaimed,

"Oh, it's you!"

And closed the door in the caller's face. Bertha hurried along by the side of the house, and found Wilson and

two other young women, grouped around a perambulator. Wilson came forward respectfully.

"Mrs. Guilford sent you, I suppose," she whispered, with respect. "Her little boy is quite well, but, as you see, he's having his morning doze. Won't he be excited to find you here when he wakes up!"

Mrs. Wilson's apologies were as generous as the mid-day meal set on the table at one o'clock to the minute. With expert assistance it was served correctly, once a difference of opinion had been overcome; Mrs. Wilson thought Miss Anderson would prefer to take the meal in distinguished solitude and in the front room; Bertha assured her the daughters were right in holding an opposite view. And on a brand-new high chair Master Guilford sat at table, learning the manners imposed by good society, and joining in the discussion with tremendous heartiness; his mastery over the English language was, as yet, imperfect, but Wilson acted as a ready interpreter.

"Belub—belub—belub," said Master Guilford.

"He wants to tell you," explained Wilson, "about the terrier next door that he's so friendly with."

"Glug—glug—glug—glug," he said emphatically.

"He says," translated Wilson, "that he sleeps in a nice big bed all by himself."

Only when, with the lady linguist's help, he had given Auntie Bertha all the more important items of news, did he allow the conversation to become general; the women-folk, in talking, glanced at him apprehensively as though fearful of speaking too openly before a member of the male sex. So long as the neighbours were fooled, they argued, there was no risk in the boy living so near to his father. Mrs. Guilford had recognised this in bringing him to the cottage. One infant was so much like another that

even if the Captain met his son, identification would not be possible. As to Mrs. Guilford, no particulars could be furnished by the Wilsons. Mrs. Guilford had brought the little man on the day of her departure from Maida Vale, but in leaving immediately, gave no hint of her intentions; she promised to take charge of the boy so soon as dangers and the risks had passed.

"You would like to have a stroll after dinner, Miss," suggested one of the girls.

"On no account whatsoever," commanded Mrs. Wilson, with authority. "If once it's known that Miss Anderson has been with us, it will get to the Captain's ears, and then—— Miss Anderson's best plan will be to slip away quietly when evening church has started."

"Mother's right," said Wilson.

"The funny thing is," mentioned Mrs. Wilson, "that I'm never wrong!"

CHAPTER XV

THE complacent assertion made by Mrs. Wilson might have been uttered by Bertha Anderson so far as the girls' club was concerned. In other matters, she could perceive that her efforts occasionally lacked the element of complete success; at the club, everything went well. The comedy proved to be little short of a triumph; the satisfaction of the various parents was unbounded. In the dances, arranged by Mrs. Robert that the programme might not be accused of skimpiness, real talent was discovered. Dorothy Wills, packer in a City warehouse, gave an eccentric turn which extorted applause not only from her own mother, but from every mother in the hall. Bertha,

watching impartially, was unable to refrain from tendering her congratulations.

"Takes it out of me," panted the girl in the side room, exhaustedly. "Shouldn't like to have to do it for a living."

"They are calling for you, Dorothy," announced Mrs. Robert. The cheering brought a smile to the girl's features.

"Oh, come on!" she said, good-humouredly. "Let's give it to 'em all over again."

Mrs. Wills took the opportunity, ere the lights were turned out, to ask for Madame's advice. A revelation, said Mrs. Wills; nothing more, nothing less. True, Dorothy had always seemed fond of dancing, but her great ability had never been suspected; not until now had there occurred a chance of tripping to appropriate music. Undoubtedly, a lot depended on the accompaniment. Certain folk stumbled over the keys, reckoning themselves lucky if they touched one correct note out of six. But, apart from all that, what did Madame—as a lady reputed to have enjoyed some experience of the stage—what did she think? Would Dorothy be justified in giving up a safe job in Friday Street?

"Ascertain her father's views," suggested Bertha.

"He ain't got any. Not on any topic whatsoever. Except 'orse racing."

"All the same, he ought to be consulted."

"I can see," remarked Mrs. Wills, shrewdly, "that you put more reliance on men than what I do. The point, so far as I'm concerned, appears to be this: would there be money in it?"

"I think so. But whether it would be for the girl's own good, or not, I can't say."

Mrs. Wills called attention to the circumstance that we

were not allowed to peer into the future, and that, indeed, those who affected to do so were sometimes liable to be brought up at the police court. "But," in going, "I quite understand that anything you can do, Madame, to help, you will. And I shall feel deeply grateful to you all my life!"

The omission to contradict this imposed on Bertha Anderson a new charge. Mrs. Wills rarely let a day go by without intercepting her, and submitting arguments. Whether Bertha happened to be engaged with pupils, or desired seclusion in order to think over the case of Irene, the girl's mother would take no denial. What about the Metropolitan, in Edgware Road, for a start? Mrs. Wills's family had always been patrons of that variety theatre, and for old association's sake—— But, of course; if Madame favoured the West End, why the West End it should be. And if Madame thought young Dorothy ought to have a few lessons from a professional, to what address should the girl be taken? And where, by the by, was the cash to come from?

"You can do precious little without it," contended Mrs. Wills, "in these days. No use in shutting your eyes to that. Oh, and did I tell you, Madame, that I persuaded Dor to give up her job in the City? So we can't afford any more dilly-dallying, can we? And you did guarantee to help, remember."

"I don't remember that."

"Oh, well," said the other, hedging slightly, "you as good as promised. And you realise how thankful I am."

Bertha made inquiries, and then sent a card to Mrs. Wills, and hoped this step would relieve her of any additional share in the business of furthering the girl's interests. Escape was not so easy. The professor of danc-

ing in Long Acre, recognising the gifts of his new pupil, wished to enter into a contract, and this document, submitted to Madame, aroused all her instincts of fairness and justice. She found herself involved in long consultations, wherein there was much argument, and a certain extravagance of gesture, and once a legal authority was sent for. "No, no!" said Long Acre, glancing at the clock, and answering the messenger's inquiry. "Not at his office. Try the Bodega, in Bedford Street." Finally, Bertha withdrew from the scent of powerful cigars and distilled waters, and appointed herself agent for Mademoiselle Dormeuil, danseuse excentrique, "who comes to us," said the paragraphs, "with an amazingly distinguished Continental reputation." Bertha's acquaintance, the Duchess, repaid a debt by allowing the girl to dance at one of her musical afternoons in Prince's Gate. Later, Mrs. Wills achieved the great moment of her life by paying the first of many visits to the stage door of a theatre in Leicester Square, in charge of a daughter for whom room had been found in a highly successful musical comedy.

"We shan't have to trouble you any further, Madame," said Mrs. Wills, condescendingly. "And if I can ever be of any assistance to you, let me know, and I'll think it over."

Bertha Anderson, on her side, also thought it over, and arrived at a conclusion to which other well-intending people have, no doubt, come; namely, that gratitude is an evanescent spirit, strongest in its early days. Achievement once reached, gratitude disappears. "The mistake is," said Bertha, to herself, "to expect anything else."

Heavily sealed envelopes, helped by stamp margins, continued to reach the studio from Wilson, and the communications were obscurely worded, suggesting that the

local post authorities could not be trusted implicitly. But if Wilson wrote that the canary was learning to sing, or that the primroses were making a brave show, then Bertha understood that all was going well with Irene's boy. Consequently, it astonished her when a note came from Wilson's mother, beginning in the third person, but taking up the first as the pen got into its stride; there were no full stops, no commas, and the absence of these made it necessary that the reading should be cautious. Mrs. Wilson announced that people were talking, and she blamed an elderly man who hobbled about the village, interfering with every one's business but his own.

"The vickar has called and he says how about Canada and I have spoke to my daughters and they rather like the idea but there is the little chap and will you fix a meeting at Vicktoria station and take him off our hands and I remain your obedt servant."

Bertha heard fuller particulars when she had welcomed the boy, and had received from him the kiss which all aunts receive, and many deserve. Mrs. Wilson first explained the ingenuity shown in pushing the perambulator for eight miles in order to join the train at the junction; not until she was well free of the village, did she put on her best hat and coat, and the Paul Prys would have little opportunity of realising, for a space of at least twenty-four hours, that the child had gone. No one, she declared, had the faintest suspicion that he was Mrs. Guilford's boy. Miss Anderson could rest assured of that. It might be taken as a positive certainty. The Captain had been met on more than one occasion, but he took no notice of the Wilsons, and the Wilsons reciprocated by taking small notice of him. But on an evening, after a football match in which the home team had been defeated, five

goals to none, something like a demonstration took place outside the cottage, by youths who, without pretending that their sense of delicacy had been offended, wished, apparently, to urge that in cases of the kind, home industries ought to be encouraged. Followed the visit from the clerical gentleman who, failing in his attempt to ascertain the parentage, made the recommendation.

"And as it turns out," said Mrs. Wilson, triumphantly, "it 'pears we all four had a bent that way, only we didn't want to hint anything of it to one another. And I firmly believe the gels will get married almost as soon as they land over there, and it may be they'll find themselves engaged on the journey out. Anyways, I mustn't be seen standing around here, miss, talking to you, so you run off, after I've given the lil' man a final hug, and don't let's have any mention about repayment unless you want to give offence to me, and to mine!"

"Good luck," said Bertha, "and ever so many thanks."

"Look well after him!" counselled the other.

Mrs. Robert, called in to advise, at once decided that the infant—this was subject to Robert's approval—should take up residence in their house. The address was unknown to Guilford, and there the boy would be safe. With reluctance, Bertha agreed; it was not until ten o'clock, as she was leaving the girls' club, that she recognised the wisdom of the procedure. The young women had gone; Bertha Anderson and two helpers were saying good night to the housekeeper.

"Give me five minutes," ordered Guilford's voice.

"At some other time," she suggested, composedly.

"Now, if you please."

Bertha told her companions to walk on; she, herself,

turned to the gate, and stood near a tall hedge which fringed the pavement.

"You are going to tell me where my boy is," he said.

"I think not."

"He was brought up to town to-day, and I am sure you know where he can be found."

"And I am sure you will not obtain the information from me."

"At any moment," he declared, aggrievedly, "during the last month or two, I could have taken charge of him if I had had a decent friend about who would have given a hint. Now that I am on his track, I don't give up the search until I have discovered him. Do you hear?"

"You talk so loudly," replied Bertha, "that I can't help doing so."

"If you were in my position," he interrupted, "you, too, would raise your voice. Come along into the main road; I want to see your features when you are talking. Otherwise, I can't guess whether or not you are telling the truth."

At the end of the side street, the two colleagues were waiting at a post which said that Cars Stop Here By Request. "Any assistance wanted, Madame?" they asked, and Bertha answered that they were on no account to delay the journey home. A tram-car pulled up for them.

"Is he at your flat?" demanded Guilford, in quieter tones. "I believe he is, and I caution you I shall have it closely watched."

"Thanks for the warning."

"Have you seen Irene lately?"

"Not," said Bertha, "very lately."

"By God," he cried, "if you fence with me like this I'll——"

"Sergeant," she called. The young policeman near, flattered, hurried up. "This man is annoying me. Just tell him to go away, please, and see that he does go."

"Now then, now then," said the constable, addressing Guilford, sternly. "What about it, eh?"

Bertha Anderson went home with the contented feeling that decisive action had given her a respite. At the flat she was hailed by the neighbour who had behaved in a friendly way during Irene's residence; the lady had been sent for by a relative who feared herself to be dangerously ill.

"But I dare say," remarked the neighbour, "she only wants company for an hour or two."

And would Miss Anderson be so very kind as to—— Why, of course; Miss Anderson was only too glad to have the opportunity of repaying kindness. Ever so much obliged, said the neighbour, and Miss Anderson could depend on not being kept up so much as a single second after midnight. Bertha examined bank books and found that she could draw a cheque for the sum once advanced by Guilford. This paid, the sense of obligation would disappear.

At a quarter to twelve, there was prolonged ringing at the door of the flat. Bertha went to answer the summons, and had offered the congratulatory ejaculation—"Been as good as gold!"—when Captain Guilford rushed by, and entered the sitting-room. She followed hastily, and noticed on his features a look of satisfied triumph.

"Aren't you making a mistake?" she asked. And going to the window, opened it. She took a police whistle from a brass nail.

"Needn't blow that," he said.

"But I shall if I think it necessary."

"You place so much reliance on the law that I wonder you don't find out something about it."

"I know sufficient for my needs."

"The most woollen-headed representative of the force," he remarked impressively, "will be able to tell you that in a case like this my rights take precedence of yours."

"I shouldn't advise you," said Bertha, amusedly, "to claim any relationship to the little one who is sleeping there in the cot. I fancy it would lead to complications."

"My child, anyway."

"No. He belongs to the floor above."

"One would have thought," said Guilford, "that, with your intelligence, you could have made up a more convincing narrative. I challenge you," suddenly and aggressively, "to produce the mother."

"The mother is away. I am looking after the infant for her."

Guilford went across and, taking the sleeping child, held its face to the light. "My boy, right enough," he declared.

"Wait for ten minutes," urged Bertha, "and I'll prove he is not."

"I have waited too long already." He put the youngster down, and turning, snatched at the whistle. She struggled with him, and, disclosing a vigour he had not expected, Guilford went down; an old-fashioned pistol dropped from his hip pocket, and she managed to secure it.

"Now then," trying to control her voice. "Touch me again, or touch that child, and I shall most certainly fire."

"Aim at me," he recommended, satirically, "and then no harm will be done."

"We shall see about that."

"Some additional safety exists in the circumstance that it is not loaded."

"I wouldn't take your word for that, or for anything."

Out of the corner of her eye, she perceived that the neighbour's boy had awakened, and was now looking on quietly and interestedly; Bertha felt grateful for the fact that a Kilburn baby was, in early years, inured, by the cinema, to incidents that would otherwise prove alarming. All the same, she prayed for another and an immediate ring at the door. There was, as she realised, just a possibility that at any moment she might collapse on the floor. Guilford, in the struggle, had hurt her neck, and she had a sensation of choking.

"You're a bad hat," she said, with some idea of gaining time.

"Misfortunes have made me what I am."

"Misfortunes that you asked for."

"They were unfairly imposed upon me. If Irene had played the game——"

"Nearly all the faults were on your side."

"Oh, of course," he said, impatiently, "you would be bound to say that. The circumstance remains that, thanks to her, I haven't a friend in the world."

"So you told me."

"When I say the world," he hedged, "I allude to my own immediate neighbourhood. If you hand over the boy, I guarantee to take him abroad somewhere, and to stay abroad."

"You would save yourself a lot of inconvenience," declared Bertha, "if you could realise that I am telling the truth. This," emphatically, "is not your child."

"You say you don't take my word, but you expect me to take yours."

"Isn't that perfectly natural?"

It occurred to her that the conversation had some resemblance to meal talk in seaside boarding-houses. Dis-

cussion in a circle, so that you were forced to repeat, in new words, an argument you had previously used.

Bertha Anderson was trying to dissuade herself from the thought that she could not hold out much longer when the expected ring came; in the gesture of thankfulness the pistol slipped from her hand. Guilford rushed towards the cot, took up the astonished infant, and made for the door. He had some trouble, thus hampered, in finding the knob, and Bertha in the swift moments, knew that she ought to dash after him; she found herself unable to move. Through her mind flashed the thought that if the caller happened to be anyone other than the neighbour, the escape of Guilford with his prize would lead to consequences half tragic and half comic.

"And how's my beauty boy by this time?" cried the neighbour. "Is he glad to see his own dear mummy back again, and has kind Miss Anderson looked after him nicely?" The sound came of an exchange of kisses between mother and son. The sound of footsteps descending the staircase was heard. Bertha Anderson opened the window.

"I say!" She called to the departing visitor as he emerged to the pavement. "Here's a cheque for you. And you had better take this as well. Very little use to me."

As the pistol struck the flags below, it went off with a bang.

"I think you are pretty right now," said the friendly neighbour, half an hour later. "And it's all a mystery to me why you should go into a faint, and why that strange-looking gentleman should be helping to look after my pet. But I ask no questions, and that saves you the trouble of

making up answers. By the by, you don't think, I suppose,—you heard the noise, didn't you,—that by any chance he shot himself?"

"I am not so hopeful as all that," said Bertha.

The other was summoned by a call from her offspring.

"He frightened you," she challenged, in going.

"Very slightly."

"You want a husband to look after you," said the neighbour.

"I am rather good at looking after myself," declared Bertha.

CHAPTER XVI

IN her early reading she had always felt amazed and gratified by the swift convalescence of characters of the story from grievous physical damage. They might engage in desperate combat for a full hour; they might be unhorsed and beaten severely; they might, in cases of shipwreck, be for days on an open raft without sustenance, but a doze for a few hours always restored their health, and their usual vivacity. Bertha Anderson, in her own case, discovered that the effects of a comparatively trifling encounter remained, and could not be forgotten. Luckily, *The Two Gems* proved capable in management at Maida Vale; duties at the Academy were rearranged by adroit changes in the time-table. Best of all, she was in a position to enjoy what she called her semi-obituary notices. Topics of distress kept away, and each caller at the flat makes a resolute endeavour to lighten the atmosphere.

"I was astounded," declares her brother-in-law from Ennismore Gardens, speaking for once in a well-controlled

voice—"where shall I put these grapes? Ah, a table; the very thing—simply astounded, my dear Bertha, when I heard you were indisposed. And I am not going to stay, because I know quite well that sleep is what you need. Yes, sleep. 'Balm of hurt minds, Great nature's second——' I forget how it goes on. And as I was remarking to Lily, we cannot spare you. We really cannot spare you." Walter Kennington kisses her hand, and, when he is gone, Bertha wonders how she has ever been able to discover any fault in him.

"My darling Anderson," cries Mrs. Bank Manager, born Pырford. "I have only just heard that you were off colour, and I absolutely flew away from the perch where Charlie and I are so happy together. 'Expect me when you see me,' I said to him, and he said, 'Sweetheart, don't leave me for longer than you can help!' You wouldn't believe how thoughtful he is. Only the other evening——"

It seems from Pырford's joyous statements, that the bank-manager has a hobby; one that makes a direct appeal to her. He, like Pырford, shows an interest in crime, and owns a library devoted almost exclusively to the subject, and it is the custom of the married pair, the evening meal at an end, to review cases, ancient, from the bank-manager; modern, from his contented wife.

"You have no idea," says Pырford, earnestly, "how absorbing it all is. Makes time fly like anything. Sometimes we sit up as late as a quarter past ten."

"A dissolute couple," remarks Bertha.

"And then suddenly Charlie says, 'Sweetie, do look at the clock!' and I rake out the fire, and he trots around to bolt up, and then," cooly, "off we go, you know."

"It's splendid," declares the other, genuinely, "to see how happy you are."

"One reason why I tell you," admits Pyrford, "is that I'd like to see you follow my example."

"Your Charlie," says Bertha, "is, I am sure, broad-minded and generous, but I fear he would regard two wives as an extravagance."

At the end of the call, Pyrford blames herself severely for having delayed inquiring about Anderson's health, and atones for this by recommending a Dr. Wellesley of Sloane Street. "It's just occurred to me," says Pyrford, returning. "He went abroad some time ago."

"Auntie dear," screams Minories, embracing her, "this is too hideous for words. Gerald and I cried gallons when we heard of it. And he would have come along instantly, only that he is a slave, as you know, in Gracechurch Street, and he sent his fondest love, and I bring mine, and how are you?" Minories, answering a question, confesses she is out of an engagement, but in her profession there are bound to come intervals, and it is fatal to be discouraged. "What the stage requires," says Minories, shrewdly, "is a greater supply of competent dramatists."

So, in their turn, but sometimes clashing—on which occasions there is a certain tenseness in the atmosphere, and a forced deference that seems unnatural—come relatives and friends. Her brother James and his son Robert are amongst the pairs, and as they have not encountered each other for some time, conversation goes from the progress of Bertha to the activities upon which the two are engaged, and Bertha fancies she can detect a certain irritation when Robert hears of his father's successes, and James has a difficulty in offering congratulations on the triumph of his son. Each tries to be the last to go—Robert especially shows that he has something to communicate privately—and the visit becomes so pro-

longed, that Bertha issues an imperative order, and dismisses them, coupled, from the flat. The window of the room being open, she has no alternative but to hear the discussion between the two in the roadway. "In a very low state." And "Ought to get away for a time." And, "Great pity she will live alone."

"Kindly meant, anyway!" remarks Bertha.

Even Edgar Nayland, calling on a flight through town from Harwich to Portsmouth, shows at his best, listening attentively, making no allusion to the suspected night out, and, when Bertha speaks of financial matters, begging her not to worry her dear head, but just to make up her mind to get well. There is a trace of the old Edgar in autobiographical reminiscences concerning minor lapses in his own health, but this is a trick with bedside callers; there seems to be ever some idea of comforting the patient by giving the assurance that the patient's case is by no means exceptional.

"I remember a cold I once caught at Rugby——" says Edgar Nayland, not without relish.

The incident of Guilford's visit is not mentioned to any of the callers, and the neighbour at the flats might stand to any artist as a model for a picture called "Secrecy."

Bertha Anderson, touched by the kindness and the attention shown, announced—when the Principal of the Academy paid something like a state call, with a notice issued beforehand, and a precise warning by the secretary that the Boss wished no fuss to be made of him—that she had decided to take three weeks at the seaside. "Brighton!" said the Principal with the air of one issuing a command, and Brighton was chosen, despite the fact that Bertha had always referred to the town in the

language of adverse criticism. "Elgin Avenue," she had suggested, "with a syphon of sea water!"

She took back everything said in dispraise so soon as recovery began. Certainly there were parents from Maida Vale at the hotel who claimed acquaintance with her, but they had the tact to realise that all she wanted was the long chair on the upper balcony, and a novel; they made it their business to see that the supply of fiction was adequate. On the Monday after her arrival, she wandered out to look at shop windows. "Good sign!" she remarked, self-encouragingly. A costume at one of the establishments tempted her; there was, moreover, the impetus created by arriving folk who were making their way in, and appeared to have a definite objective. In the fitting-room it was arranged that the necessary alterations would be made promptly. Eager politeness. Warm compliments.

"I thought I should find you busy," she remarked.

"Moddum," said the girl, "all our ladies are here for the display. You won't go, I hope, without having a glance at it."

In the large crowded room upstairs, a string band was playing, and graceful young women paraded to and fro, attractively garbed. They all seemed so far superior to the lookers-on that Bertha, near the doorway, inspected them curiously as they came in her direction. Not seemingly a very arduous way of gaining a living. Given the appropriate features and the desirable figure, any young woman could take a share. Bertha Anderson found herself guessing at the salary obtained; speculating on the kind of family to which the girls belonged.

"Ah!" ejaculated stout ladies, on the cane chairs.

The window curtains had been drawn and the electric

light turned on, and Irene Guilford, sailing down the room in an alluring evening frock, smiled pleasantly. Bertha, in the moment of recognition, thought her niece might be diverted at anticipation of the more generously endowed figures wearing a garment of the kind.

"Splendid!" said Bertha, raising her voice intentionally as Irene came near. Irene turned her head away. "Quite, quite charming," declared Bertha. Irene gave her a look of appeal, and this was answered by a reassuring nod.

Downstairs, Bertha put some inquiries to her attendant. The mannequins, explained the other, were sent around by a London house, and they made but one day's stay in each town, and in each town appeared at one shop only. The attendant believed that a few were single, but young married women of good appearance were preferred, for then there was less risk of a diminution of numbers owing to offers from impressionable youths.

"Love," remarked Bertha Anderson, "is responsible for many complications."

"I have always understood that to be so," agreed the girl.

"Will you give my card to Mrs. Guilford—she may be calling herself Miss Kennington—and tell her I shall be at the hotel for the remainder of the day."

"It may be wise, moddum, to furnish the name of the hotel."

Irene did not call, and Bertha's dinner companions found her less responsive than usual. Later, she heard them discussing her, and one lady said, "I'd like to find out who her dressmaker is," and, after an interval, some one asked "Why?" and the first said, "Oh, well, it's useful to know who to avoid!"

The new costume was delivered the next day, together

with a note stating that it had not been possible to discover anyone called Kennington or Guilford; the entire party had now gone on to some neighbouring town. There was disappointment consequent on this message, but the frock itself almost compensated. That evening, felicitations were tendered, and the lady who had thrown the carefully-arranged gibe proved the most enthusiastic. When, in a corner of the lounge, Bertha prepared to give herself the infrequent luxury of smoking a cigarette, three separate and distinct men rushed forward to supply a match; to the open regret of lady residents to whom they had previously shown a worshipping behaviour, they stayed near, and when friends drifted in, these were introduced, with the result that Bertha Anderson found herself surrounded by eight in all, and, rather to her amazement, enjoying the give and take of conversation. There came urgent proposals for outings on the following day, and Bertha regained the esteem of members of her own sex by excusing herself from accepting; her departure, ere any of the group offered signs of a yawn, was reckoned to her credit. In her room, she took off the new dress, hung it carefully, and kissed it.

"Praise," she said, "to whom praise is due!"

The incident was in the nature of an object lesson, and, back in town, she determined to profit by it, and there ensued consultations in and near Oxford Street. On her reappearance at the Academy, humorists amongst the staff paid a low obeisance, or pretended not to recognise her; others were more serious, more outspoken. "Makes all the difference to you," they asserted, candidly. "Wonder you hadn't thought of it before." At Kilburn, the neighbour declared it had, more than once, been on the tip of

her tongue to recommend the procedure now adopted. The neighbour went on to mention that the wife of Miss Anderson's nephew—not the theatre lady, but the other—had called twice, and promised to write. When Mrs. Robert's note did arrive, it announced in the discreet terms used by married ladies that she was expecting; would Aunt Bertha be ready to take charge once more of Irene's boy? To this, Bertha answered that the danger once apprehended might now be considered as over, and the dear little chap could be transferred to Kilburn at any moment. The earlier the better.

"Forgive me," begged Mrs. Robert, when she handed the infant over, "for bringing him along so soon, but Robert thought——"

"It is jolly," declared Bertha, "to have him with me again."

"And you feel sure the risk of Guilford coming here is past?"

"That can be regarded as a certainty."

A warning against over-confidence occurred that evening. The nurse girl—rescued from a West End residence where the domestic staff had treated her as a butt and a target—answering a summons at the door of the flat, brought in, with the smiling air of one who knows she is doing the right thing, a caller.

"Madame," she said, "Captain Guilford."

"I have looked in," said Guilford, "to apologise for all that happened on an earlier occasion. I am going away, and it was on my conscience——"

"Say that again."

"It was in my thoughts," he amended, "that you might feel you had a grievance." The cot with Irene's boy was near the fender seat, and it seemed to Bertha

she could only avoid a suspicion of nervousness by putting on a demeanour of animosity. The effort required was not great. "If you ever run across Irene, give her my love."

"Oh, no."

"And ask her to be good to our son. Miss Anderson, please shake hands."

She made a negative movement of the head. "I can't forget so easily," she said.

"I feared that," he remarked, going. "Anyway, I'm sorry." He turned. "Still looking after your friend's youngster, I see," he remarked. "You're one of the queerest-natured women I ever met." She did not breathe freely until the nurse girl had closed the outer door upon him.

Bertha Anderson took all the precautionary measures ere she allowed herself to relish the sensation of complete relief. A copy of the local journal was obtained from Sussex, and this lived up to its reputation for collecting and tendering news by mentioning in a column headed "Jottings," and amongst announcements of silver weddings, and motor-cycle accidents, the fact that Captain Guilford had sailed on the *Atalanta*, and would be absent from England for some time. "The neighbourhood will miss him sorely," declared the polite and inaccurate journal. One of the cards handed to her by visitors on leaving the Brighton hotel gave the name and address of a shipping agent, and to him she wrote, begging him to ascertain to which line the steamer belonged, and to find out if Captain Guilford sailed by it on such a date. Mr. Harkness, the gentleman in question, brought something like wild enthusiasm to the job, and was able, in a very short period, to assure Miss Anderson that Captain Guilford had truly embarked at Liverpool, and was, by this

time, preparing to go ashore on the other side. The writer expressed the hope that he and Miss Anderson would meet shortly. He and his two City chums often spoke of her.

On this, Bertha communicated with the establishment at Brighton in order to gain particulars of the firm with which Irene was engaged. The reply could not be regarded as satisfactory. The business had suddenly changed hands, and an entirely new staff had been called in; the present owners regretted they were unable to supply any information, but handsomely promised to send on their new catalogue so soon as it was ready. Checked here, she inserted an advertisement on the front page of a London newspaper, owning a wide circulation—

“IRENE. G. has left country. You can safely return Kilburn. AUNT B.”

Mr. Harkness sent a memorial drawn up by himself and his friends. It began, “Whereas the Undersigned had the pleasure of encountering one Miss Anderson at a seaside hostel,” finishing with, “And your humble Petitioners will ever pray.” Bertha allowed the three to take her out to dinner, and at eight o'clock produced a ticket endorsed “complimentary” which gave admission to a box at a theatre.

“Magnificent evening,” said one, at the end.

“The first,” said the others, with resolution, “of many.”

They were all bachelors, secretly proud of the circumstance that they had reached the late thirties without depriving themselves of the freedom of single life; publicly, they expressed the keenest sorrow for the absence of domestic happiness, and each, in lighter mood, disclosed remote incidents of a sentimental nature affecting one of the contemporaries. It interested Bertha to watch the

cautiousness of their deportment. She liked the companionship; she had nothing more than a regard for any of them, but it was easy to detect, now and again, that they entertained an apprehension that she might select and favour one in particular. Against this, they were on their guard. It was made clear that the hospitality had to be credited to the entire syndicate. The written messages bore the signatures in alphabetical order. If, at the rendezvous, one arrived before the others, he spoke of the others in the language of compliment.

"Two finer characters," he declared, "you won't discover in the City of London. Straightforward, decent, and," with emphasis, "as true as a die." Similar testimonials to him were offered, when the chance happened, by his friends.

It was Harkness who at the end of a month of entertainment, which had included meals, plays, concerts, telephoned an urgent summons to Maida Vale. His sister, living at Burnham Beeches, was anxious to make the acquaintance of Miss Anderson. What about Saturday and the 1.3 from Paddington to Slough? Bertha was about to select an excuse from a large number that occurred to her, when Harkness added something about nephews and nieces.

"I'll be there," she promised.

"Now," said Harkness's voice, with emotion, "this is really very kind of you. Can't tell you how grateful I am. By the by, there's the question of lunch." Bertha assured him he had no need to trouble about her meal.

The sister's house faced the Common, and the two visitors found her in altercation with a youthful gardener who had pulled up something which, in view of the

autumn, should have been permitted to remain, and had neglected to attend to something which ought to have been wrenched from the earth. It is not easy to switch off from truculence to amiability, and the sister made little attempt to do so; she mentioned austere, in reply to a question, that the children were out in the Beeches.

"Mr. Harkness," suggested Bertha, "let us go and find them."

"Great thought!" he said.

On the way, he explained that his sister was a good soul, and one of the best, but it was necessary to become well acquainted with her in order to detect these qualities. The youngsters proved less difficult, and ere Bertha had finished taking a part in a bloodthirsty episode, borrowed from the life of Hereward the Wake, they were calling her auntie; the return journey to the house at tea-time was made with the whole strength of the company dancing ecstatically about her.

"Miss Anderson," said their mother, in a peremptory way. "A word with you, if you please. Children, go to your uncle." The two women entered the drawing-room. "I look upon you," said the lady of the house, with vehemence, "as nothing but one of these dreadful women that come into cinema plays."

"I see," remarked Bertha.

"You are straining every nerve," went on the other, her voice not under control, "in order to snare and bring to ruin my poor brother."

"I understood he was fairly well to do."

"Of course you did." Triumphant. "You wouldn't have looked at him a second time if you had not gained that impression. And you are right so far as that is concerned. He is comfortably off, and I have always, ever

since my husband died, hoped he would assist with the education of my children."

"Judging by what he said coming down in the train, he fully intends to do so."

"And your intention is——?"

"I assure you it is not a matter in which I should dream of meddling."

"Not just now, perhaps," conceded Harkness's sister. "But wait until you are his wife, and what view will you take then?"

"Call him in," ordered Bertha. With reluctance, the lady obeyed. "Mr. Harkness," said Bertha, "have you any idea of asking me to marry you?"

"Not the slightest," he answered, promptly. "Like you too much for that. And if I did ask you, I know quite well that you would simply laugh in my face."

"My dear," cried Harkness's sister, hugging Bertha affectionately, "do come along and have your tea, and let's be good friends. I didn't quite recognise the sort I had to deal with."

"It is an experience, just for once," declared Bertha, "to have been regarded as a vampire!"

CHAPTER XVII

SHE felt justified in believing that those winter days constituted some of the happiest and enjoyable periods of her life. Three knights in armour in attendance; family anxieties suspended; Irene's boy to fill up any moments of evening leisure; Guilford out of the country; the studio in Maida Vale doing well, and the Academy safe.

"Now," remarked Bertha to herself at the mirror,

warningly, "don't use the conventional argument and say it is all too good to last."

A cheval glass, well lighted, possesses the element of candour in its reflections, and Bertha Anderson was prepared to admit that serenity of existence had helped the goodness of her looks. Outspoken mothers of pupils who had not met her for a time, cried, "Hullo, Madame. Whatever have you been doing to yourself?" and went on to disclaim any charge of using the aids to beauty mentioned in every journal; they assured her that all those tricks could be detected. One, residing in Greville Place, and under the impression that she was more discerning than the rest, said, challengingly,

"You are in love!"

"Incredible as it may appear," declared Bertha, good-temperedly, "I am not."

"Then," argued the other, "you ought to be."

"I have always understood it takes two to play at that game."

"Or more," said the Greville Place lady.

"Is there," demanded Bertha, quickly, "any particular intention in that remark?"

"My love," protested the other. "The only idea was to pay you a compliment."

All the same, Bertha Anderson diminished the number of acceptances when invitations came from the City. The unforgivable blunder known as getting oneself talked about was one she could not afford to risk; with a public position to maintain and a private reputation to be considered it was advisable to fend off Harkness, and Lang, and Churchward. Lang and Churchward seemed impressed by the notes of excuse and regret, but Harkness took them as goads to further activity. It was he who submitted the

notion of a trip to the Canary Islands. The three had for years taken their holidays in company, and no alteration was proposed, but Harkness did urge that Miss Anderson should make the same voyage, and make it on the steamer they had chosen. With considerable eloquence he met all the objections. Yes, certainly; Miss Anderson could take her own ticket; pay her own fare. She would meet the three at Muscovy Dock, and part from them at the end at Muscovy Dock. A table was to be kept, but for the rest, each member of the group was to go his or her way; if Miss Anderson wished to be alone, solitude would be hers for the asking. The coming vacation, mind you, provided a magnificent opportunity for the voyage. Each day, in travelling southward, one came nearer to good weather until the destination was reached.

"Then," said Harkness, fervently, "a blaze of sunshine."

"Your sister at Burnham Beeches would enjoy it."

"She couldn't leave the children."

"I ought to be looking after my niece's little boy."

"Now," said Harkness, persuasively, "how often you have told me that the nurse girl is absolutely reliable!"

There followed all the exultation that comes in planning a sea journey, and in becoming detached for a space from London; more purchases in West End shops; elaborate instructions at Kilburn, and the help of the useful neighbour once again secured. Also, there was the luxury of anticipating, and the joy of talking about the adventure.

"Who is going with you?" inquired the Academy, and the reply that a party had been made up was taken as a piece of news, vague, but on the whole satisfactory. With some notion of investing the affair with mystery so that she might continue to regard it as not devoid of romance, she abstained from giving the name of the steamer, and

when folk, meaning no harm, pressed for the information, Bertha assured them it had escaped a memory overcrowded with other details. But to Edgar Nayland, met on the escalator at Warwick Avenue Tube Station, she did happen to give a direct answer to the question.

"I need a holiday," he said, promptly, "and I'll come along with you."

"You are the picture of health," she retorted, "and you had much better keep to your work."

"My nose has been to the grindstone for I don't know how long," he continued, in the tones of a man sympathising with himself, "and it will do me good to cut away from everything." A thought seemed to occur to him. "You realise, I hope, dear Bertha, that I have sown all my wild oats."

"Don't be conceited. Whatever oats you had to sow, they were certainly not wild."

"And I trust," he said, with an effort to speak casually, "that you, too——" He decided not to go on.

Out in the street, he gave a list of his attractions and virtues as a fellow-traveller. She shook her head.

"But I suppose," brusquely, "you haven't chartered the entire ship? What I mean to say is, there's nothing to prevent me from booking a passage."

"You won't enjoy it," said Bertha.

It struck her, after she had left him, that a more genial manner would not have been appropriate; the occasion was not one for showing annoyance. Old friends, after all, had rights which new acquaintances could not demand. Edgar, in his time, had trusted her with money, and this, as a display of confidence, was flattering. But it was rather like Edgar Nayland to claim the right to attach himself to the group, and to assume that his presence was desirable.

There came a tardy effort in snowing when the *Ararat* left the Thames, and passengers, muffled to the eyes, and features scarcely recognisable, went about the lower deck ejaculating "B-r-r-h!" and trying to find a protected space. No trace could be discovered of Nayland, and Bertha hoped he had reconsidered the question of taking the voyage. Harkness, with Churchward and Lang in close attendance, spoke hopefully of the crossing of the Bay; they knew men who had on occasions described it as one of the calmest and most enjoyable details of a trip. Down Channel there was a gale, and the tables in the dining-room were supplied with fiddles; an ominous sign, but Bertha Anderson, to her amazement, found herself undisturbed by the movement of the *Ararat*, and she was one of the few at the evening meal. On deck, her presence extorted a compliment from the young steward.

"Faithful amongst the faithless," he quoted, glancing around at the vacant deck chairs.

"The seraph Abdiel," she agreed, "is not very strongly represented."

"I'm fairly gone on them lines," he remarked. "Always have been. Ever since I was at school."

When he came her way again he touched lightly on the subject of verse, ranging himself amongst those who preferred rhyme, and had an affection for evenness of rhythm. After breakfast the next morning, Bertha gave him a copy of her book, and thenceforth friendship between the two was as though held by cement. The youth took messages to the City men, and brought replies. "Going on fairly all right. Looking forward to seeing Miss Anderson at the earliest opportunity." The opportunity did not happen until the coast of Portugal arrived in sight; the three came up on deck with others who made a tentative

essay in facing the breeze; under encouragement from Bertha they took a light meal, and later ventured to smoke cigarettes.

"Well," said Harkness, "this is one of those shameful instances where no excuse can be regarded as adequate."

"We can only trust," said Lang, "that bygones may be considered as bygones."

"Funny thing is," declared Churchward, "that I've always prided myself on being a good sailor."

"The holiday begins now," said Bertha, firmly. "No allusion permitted to anything that happened before today. What shall we do? Walk, or talk?"

Harkness, on the grounds that he and his chums were still feeling a trifle sorry for themselves, begged Miss Anderson to read aloud. Some of the examples of poetry, for instance, that were in the book to which she had once made passing allusion. Miss Anderson had brought but one copy, and the deck steward—hereinafter referred to as Milton—being called, agreed to lend her his, on the understanding that it was handed back to him in due course.

"I prize it!" he said.

There was a semicircle of deck chairs, with Milton near by—apprehensive of being summoned away—and certain passengers who were not yet in the fettle for deck games, and had a craving for serene entertainment. Into this audience came Edgar Nayland.

"Oh, good," murmured the three. "Very good indeed. Topping, in fact."

"You don't give enough punch to it," said Edgar Nayland, stepping forward, and taking the book. "Now if I can discover anything in these pages which I used to give in the old days, I shall be only too glad to——"

"Mine, I think, sir," said Milton. He took his property and walked off with it.

"Are people demented on board this ship?" asked Nayland.

"One case only," replied Harkness.

"I was speaking, not to you, sir, but to Miss Anderson. Miss Anderson, whom I have had the pleasure of knowing for many, many years."

Introductions were made. Each of the four said he was delighted, and the statement had to be accepted. Lookers-on strolled away in search of other diversion.

"Our first meeting," said Nayland, with a wave of the hand, "occurred in the autumn of——"

"No, no," said Bertha. "No dates, thank you. They don't agree with me."

"I played Ralph Lawley in *The Night-light*, and the performance was, as I think rightly, counted as one of my greatest triumphs. We finished at Croydon, and I was out for a few weeks only. My next engagement——"

"But, my dear sir," protested Harkness, "we are not interested in your autobiography."

"Miss Anderson is."

"Miss Anderson," said Churchward, "has probably heard it already."

"There is a certain attraction," pleaded Edgar Nayland, "in looking back on former days, now that I am engaged in commerce."

They made handsome apologies. Their impression gained from his department had been that he still belonged to the theatre. On the topic of business life and its present-day anxieties, the four showed a greater amiability, and Bertha was gratified to observe that Edgar Nayland disclosed himself in a more attractive light. Important

firms were talked about, and he gave decisive opinions to which the others listened. The day went admirably.

But the morning brought turmoil. Some dispute about precedence at the bathroom started a violent discussion between Harkness and Nayland, and this was continued after the morning meal; it appeared Edgar was resenting the claims of the escort, and contesting their rights so far as Miss Anderson was in question. Milton, deck steward, told Bertha that if it ended in a scrap, all his money would go on Mr. Harkness. The debate was joined by Lang and Churchward, and the combination of three against one proved effective; Nayland went off to the smoke-room.

"I do beg your pardon," said a lady passenger, addressing Bertha, "but may I ask if you are travelling alone?" It seemed an innocent remark, and Bertha answered it innocently. "Four friends," echoed the other, with a giggle. "And all gentlemen. Now," with an effort to show playfulness, "isn't that rather greedy of you? Such a shortage of males on board, you know." She was again diverted. "Sounds like the Post Office, doesn't it?"

The lady passenger gave herself the trouble to explain, and Bertha nodded to indicate that the possibilities of a joke had not escaped her observation. "You want to know something," she said. "Tell me quite plainly what it is."

"My dear," cried the other with alarm, "please don't think I am inquisitive. Curiosity was never one of my defects. But people will talk, and, as I said to my sister, you can't be engaged to all of them, and the puzzle is which."

"Have you any recommendation to offer?"

"It is for you alone to decide," answered the lady, graciously.

"That simplifies matters."

The other hummed a few bars, and then, giving up melody, spoke of the food supplied at meals. The topic had to be dropped, because Miss Anderson had no complaints to make.

"Mr. Harkness," said the lady, "seems to me the pick of the bunch."

"I must tell him."

"Oh, but pray, don't, don't. Do let us be discreet where gentlemen are concerned."

"I am all for that," agreed Bertha.

"You are not—excuse me if I am reminding you of something that had slipped your memory—you are not pledged to some one else?"

"But how clever of you to guess!" Bertha leaned forward confidentially, and, prompted by an association of ideas, gave the first name that occurred to her. "Dr. Wellesley, who used to practise in Sloane Street."

"You cannot believe," said the other, preparing to go, "what a relief it is to know the truth, and I am sure you are craving to see him again."

"My heart yearns for the joyous meeting," said Bertha, emotionally.

Milton, deck steward, submitted the view, as one who had overheard the discussion, that human nature on board ship was like human nature elsewhere, but maybe a trifle more so.

"We're all of us interferers to some extent," said Milton, "and we're never 'appier than when we are not attending to our own business. Sounds rummy, I know, but there you are. Wellesley, I fancy you said, miss. A good name," added Milton thoughtfully. "Historical, too!"

"You are a sharp lad," said Bertha, "and your powers of observation give no signs of decay."

"I take notice of everything," he agreed, "in a way that some people don't give me credit for."

The news, promptly distributed by the curious lady, brought smiles and nods from some of the passengers; others continued to regard Miss Anderson with a certain disapproval. But this lessened when it was seen that the four no longer acted in unison, and that the individual attentions, given by Nayland, and Harkness, and Churchward, and Lang, diminished hour by hour as the first stopping-place came near. Courtesy, and a brief exchange of words on ordinary subjects, but nothing more.

The stay at Madeira was fixed for six hours, and Bertha, in alluding to the circumstance, felt surprised that not one of her companions offered any recommendations for inspecting Funchal and the island; there was, it is true, a sense of relief in the knowledge that she would be allowed to go her own way. On deck, Milton, scarlet-faced with importance, urged her to let the crowd go off in the first boats.

"Give 'em a start of about twenty minutes," he begged, earnestly. "The best and wisest plan, I do assure you, miss!"

As the tall range of mountains was neared, there came bustle, and a last moment shifting of arrangements by which ladies bolted from one group and attached themselves to another, and parties that chanced to be too large and unwieldy were subdivided. The three City men stood apart; Edgar Nayland, a solitary figure, put on his Burberry coat, gazed up at the old Moorish fort, and glanced, with a touch of anxiety, in the direction of Bertha. Folk began to descend the side of the *Ararat*: passengers struggled—as passengers will all the world over—for precedence.

"Stay where you are, miss," ordered Milton, authoritatively. "I shan't be long gone."

Edgar Nayland had resisted an appeal made to him, and he walked up and down slowly. The time passed. Bertha Anderson was considering the matter and had almost resolved to ignore Milton's advice, and go on shore, when a small boat reached the steamer; a tall, brown-faced man stepped out, and Milton, deck steward, followed him and, at the top of the climb, dodged in front. The two came on deck.

"Here's some one you know, miss," announced Milton, with importance. "Caught him just as he was starting on a professional visit. Another minute, and I'd have been too late."

"Who is he?" she demanded, perplexedly.

"Why, Dr. Wellesley, of course. That used to be in Sloane Street."

The inquisitive lady passenger bobbed up from nowhere, and took the position of a stage manager about to look on at a first performance. The tall man hurried forward, his arms outspread.

"My own darling," he cried.

"Play the game," she whispered, urgently.

"Why, of course." He embraced her, and spoke loudly again. "This is the most delightful moment of my life." He took her hands, gazed into her eyes with an excellent affectation of rapture. "And how well you are looking!"

"The sea voyage," she said, faintly.

"A splendid tonic," he declared. "And it was ingenious of you not to let me know that you were coming out. Fortunately this young steward remembered me as a voyager some time ago."

"You mustn't let me keep you from your professional duties," urged Bertha Anderson.

He glanced at his wrist watch, and made a grimace. "A consultation," he explained, "some distance away, but I shall be back before the ship goes. Until then——" He waved his hand and disappeared. From the small boat, he, with hand at side of mouth, shouted a message: "Returning to London in a month or so. I'll let you know when I arrive." A last signal ere the boat was hidden from sight. Edgar Nayland, having witnessed all this, preserving an attitude that was thoughtful rather than enthusiastic, strolled off. Bertha Anderson, evading the curious lady, encountered, at the top of the companion steps, the deck steward.

"Hope I didn't take too much on myself," he remarked, beaming, "but it was like this. He's one of the pleasantest gentlemen I ever waited on, and it's a long while since I met your equal as a lady, and thinks I to myself, 'If I can only bring 'em together again for a moment——'"

"The sunshine has given me a headache," interrupted Bertha, "and I am going to rest in my cabin until the ship moves."

"Next stop, Las Palmas," said Milton.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE *Ararat* reached the Thames on a Thursday afternoon, and the perturbation of travellers who were anxious in regard to catching of trains from a London station dimmed the interest that had been shown concerning Miss Anderson. There was busy packing work in cabins; farewells to be exchanged. From Madeira onwards the deport-

ment of the four men had been restrained, but commendable, and Bertha felt she had no reason to bewail the meeting with Dr. Wellesley; she told herself that he was probably looking upon the incident as just good enough to be recounted once at a Funchal dinner-table, and then deleted from a repertory of strange occurrences.

"I've been thinking," said young Milton. Bertha Anderson was one of the first on deck with her luggage beside her. "It often 'appens," the steward went on, "when the captains and the kings depart, in a manner of speaking, those of us whose duty it is to go over the ship find small articles of property which have been overlooked. Now, in your case, miss, you might kindly oblige me with an address."

"Quite sure I have forgotten nothing, but here is my card."

"I shall treasure it," he declared, "as a memento of a most agreeable voyage." Bertha followed the card with a small Treasury note, and it did seem as though Milton had a temptation to decline this; in accepting the gift he conveyed the hope that the world was not so wide as to prevent them from meeting again.

When Harkness had intimated that, to avoid unseemly disputes, it had been left to him to escort Bertha from docks to taxi-cab, the inquisitive lady approached, bearing the air of one in whom speech can no longer be checked. She laid her hand on Bertha's wrist as a signal of intimate friendship, and mutual confidence.

"It is quite impossible, dear Miss Anderson," she murmured effusively, "to leave you like this. We must fix on a day for seeing each other."

"I am a rather busy woman."

"At any rate," begged the other, "let me know when the great day has been fixed. I can always make time

to be present at a wedding. The joyousness of the surroundings appeals to me."

"I fancy it would be unwise of you to think of an engagement so far ahead."

"Oh," said the lady, with shrewdness. "Then it is not to take place at once."

"Purchasing a trousseau cannot be done hurriedly."

"I know, I know." A sympathetic pause. "I might be able to help with that."

"On the other hand," said Bertha, restively, "you might not."

"We were all so wrong in our guesses about you, Miss Anderson. Seeing you attended by no less than four desirable gentlemen, we naturally jumped to the conclusion——"

"Never do that. Never do it again. The gymnastic process sometimes leads to deplorable results." She turned away to stroll with Edgar Nayland. In the walk, Bertha overheard the lady discussing her with another woman passenger. "A singular creature," complained the lady. "I am no nearer to her now than I was on the first day out."

A broil was waiting at Maida Vale where Bertha looked in and caught The Gems as they were leaving. The studio work had gone well during Bertha's absence; So-and-So had gone but Such-and-Such had signed on, and the number of pupils had therefore suffered no reduction. The Gems considered Madame had gained in health and appearance by the voyage; they reckoned the money well expended. And they were really sorry to have to trouble her with the case of Mrs. Wills. Mrs. Wills, parent of the girl Wills (now widely known and acclaimed as Mlle Dormeuil), had been to the studio more than once.

"Shouting the roof off," declared the elder Gem. "I never knew anybody to take on so. Wouldn't tell us

what her grievance was, but she meant to see you, Madame, and she pooh-poohed our answer, and said she believed you were hiding from her."

"Mrs. Wills," said Bertha, "shall be suitably dealt with at the earliest possible moment."

The encounter took place on the gravel path beside the wall, as Bertha strolled back to the cab. It had to be shortened because the taxi was registering charges, but Mrs. Wills contrived to press into a minute and a half a sufficient amount of declamatory speech. Her daughter, it seemed, was running wild, and no one could be blamed for this but Madame. The daughter had given orders that her mother was not to pass any stage door, or to enter the rooms in Shaftesbury Avenue, and here again Madame, and Madame alone, was responsible. For two months the daughter had made no contribution to Mrs. Wills's upkeep, and Mrs. Wills desired to know simply this: what was Madame going to do about it? William Stammers came along as the visitor threatened to advance to personal attack.

"Come along, Ma," said William. "You are going to 'op it."

He returned when the eviction had been performed, and saw Madame to the cab.

"I wonder if it is wise," she remarked, "to try to help people."

"Some," decided William, "but not all. Not quite all. A certain discrimination, so to speak, is necessary."

It was pleasanter to be at the Kilburn flat, and to be greeted with enthusiasm by Irene's baby and to watch his joy over the gifts submitted for his approval. He glanced up sharply as the nurse girl commented on his behaviour, but the report happened to be good, and,

losing interest, he again concentrated on toys. The nurse was gratified with the wrist watch presented. Just what she desired. So awkward to be ever asking strangers for the right time. Occasionally they were apt to take advantage.

The nurse girl it was who, later, commented on the fact that Madame was now in receipt of fewer invitations to places of entertainment; handsome payment had been made to her for working overtime at Kilburn and this may have affected her interest in the subject. And certainly Bertha missed the friendly notes from the City; the good companionship at dinner or play, or both. Looking back, it seemed to her that whilst Edgar Nayland's irruption was unavoidable, the occurrence which brought in the doctor, formerly of Sloane Street, was needlessly and officiously arranged. So that when a post card came from Milton, deck steward, asking for permission to call, she answered at once, also by post card, intimating clearly that no appointment could be made.

"I can't be bothered," she remarked definitely.

And then came Walter Kennington of Ennismore Gardens on, as he explained, a strictly business visit, to inquire of Bertha what she knew of one Dr. Wellesley. He put the question with more than his usual abruptness.

"Why do you ask?" she fenced.

"No need," declared her brother-in-law, "to get red over it. He is applying for a job in an insurance firm with which I am connected, and he gives your name as one of the references." She checked an expostulation. "Are you well acquainted with him?"

"Sufficiently."

"Has he an alert mind?"

"So far as I am aware," said Bertha, "he suffers from no deficiency in that respect. Wonder how he knew my address."

"I called," mentioned Mr. Kennington, fussing up and down the studio, "because it seemed a chance to do a friend of yours a good turn. We have seen three applicants and none appear quite satisfactory. And it's a well-paid job and——" He took up books and replaced them. "You heard the news of Gerald's young wife, I suppose? No? An accident. The doctors say it is very unlikely she will ever be able to go on the stage again."

"Oh, bad luck indeed!" cried Bertha, distressedly.

"And Lily and I," here he set a picture straight, "we rather want you to step in and see that everything is done. It unfortunately happens that the last time the girl came to us—Gerald was not with her—something like an argument took place. My wife said more than she ought to have said; I told her so at the time. All the same, we are not the people to climb down."

"That has always been your difficulty."

"Our endeavour," said Walter Kennington, heavily, "is to be, so far as is humanly possible, consistent."

"You still regard consistency as a virtue? For my own part, I seldom hesitate to change my mind."

"Bertha," he said, going to the doorway, "you are a woman."

The disaster to Minories proved more serious than had been feared. Gerald declared that when it happened his first instinct was to send for Aunt Bertha, but Minories had argued, first, that a swift recovery was to be looked for; second, that no good reason existed for heaping upon aunt all the troubles which occurred. Moreover, there were her own people at Carlton Hill, and this would

have been a sound argument only that the father and the mother, without warning, started on a tour to the Far East; had, indeed, left ere the news could be communicated.

"It's a staggering blow," admitted Gerald, privately. "No doubt whatever about that. Such awful hard lines on the kid."

"The one redeeming feature is that you yourself are earning a salary."

"I'm thankful for that, Aunt Bertha. It isn't too much, but it enables us to be independent of my folk. When the last row took place, we agreed that not another penny-piece would be accepted from that quarter. I wrote to father and told him to stop the allowance he was making to me."

"And now," she suggested, "you can write again, and say that in the new circumstances you are prepared to withdraw that."

"My dear aunt," said the young man, with a touch of the family manner, "there is such a thing as one's dignity to be considered."

In the presence of her husband, Minories, from her couch, was animated and hopeful, and she and Bertha searched memories, and quoted instances of physical damage from which a swift recovery had been effected. But, Gerald sent off to take an hour's walk in the Park, then Minories told Aunt Bertha all that she herself suspected, and much that she had happened to overhear when two medical men were conferring in the next apartment. The walls of London flats are no bar to the transmission of the human voice.

"Wished I had saved," the girl told Bertha. "As the money came in, so it went out. Or earlier."

"Any debts?" asked Bertha.

"A few odd ones."

"Odd or even, let us make a total of them."

The amount seemed to Bertha large, but Gerald's wife said it might have been larger, and this argument it was impossible to contest. She admitted that only in the last few days had she felt in any way burdened by the obligations; if means could be found to clear them off, a weight would be taken from her thoughts by day, and her dreams by night. When Gerald returned, cheered by exercise, the whole circumstances were placed before him, and the young people, having conferred, decided that Aunt Bertha's offer of help was to be accepted.

"Gives us a clear start," said Gerald.

"We can't go on with a millstone around our necks," agreed Minories.

"A temporary arrangement, of course," mentioned Bertha's nephew.

"Until my people come back," said his young wife.

Mr. Kennington gave Bertha a cheque equal in value to the one she had drawn, and to her casually-worded question, said that Wellesley had been appointed to the job, and was now, he believed, on the way home. "You seem interested," said Walter, and she declared that many other subjects of far higher importance engaged her attention.

"You have never dreamt of getting married?" he asked suddenly. The question was not new.

"But that is exactly what I have done."

"Don't quite follow."

"Only in dreams," she explained, "and rarely in my waking hours."

"I take you!" said Walter Kennington.

A sheet of paper, wrested apparently by main force

from an exercise-book, was delivered by William Stammers, who mentioned that he found it without envelope in the letter-box; William's first intention was to destroy it, but second thoughts persuaded him to submit the document to Madame.

"Mrs. Carraway presents compts," the message said, "and begs you will be at Charing Cross Station, under clock, ten past seven p.m. this evening. Without fail. Very urgent. Most particular."

Bertha took the note to the Academy and showed it around there as a mysterious communication of which she could make nothing. It gained a fair amount of notice, but only a violin teacher showed anything like interest. He, as a reader of detective stories, argued that it was impossible to disregard the summons; it might concern some matter which should be handed over at once to New Scotland Yard. He volunteered to take Madame's place at the meeting, and here, as with William Stammers, later consideration intervened. The writer of the letter might know Madame, but she certainly would not recognise the violin professor. The amended offer—that he should accompany Madame, and be at hand in case of danger—this was accepted.

It can be said of the violin man that, possessing tact and discretion, he, looking on, at the hour named, from the pillar-box inside the station, withdrew at seven-three, and never again alluded to the topic. Few would have shown so much reticence, and the behaviour is to be set to his credit. His knowledge is restricted to the circumstance that immediately on the arrival of Madame Anderson, a tall individual emerged from the crowd that was making for North Kent trains and Mid Kent trains, and trains which were going down the main line.

"This is better luck than I deserved," said the tall individual.

"Dr. Wellesley, I think," remarked Madame, distantly.

"An admirable guess."

"Is it by accident that we meet again?"

"Accident, accident?" echoed the other, cheerfully.

"Bless my soul—and yours—no. An ingeniously-arranged plan for which we have to thank a certain young steward."

"Not sure that I feel indebted to him."

"Let us at any rate shake hands."

In taking her hand, he drew her towards him and kissed her. The salute, owing to the environments, gained little notice from spectators; the tolerant amongst them assumed it was an occasion of pained farewell, or of joyous meeting. It was here that the violin teacher strolled away. The other two walked in the direction of the hotel entrance.

"Does it occur to you, Dr. Wellesley," asked Bertha, "that you are taking rather too great an advantage of a chance encounter at Madeira?"

"There again," he contended good-humouredly, "the word is not quite the exact word. Our good friend, the steward, heard you say that we were engaged, and he took prompt and resolute steps to bring us together. Now, when he ascertained that I was returning to London, he was no less decisive in his procedure. He wrote, I understand, to his mother and she carried out his instructions. As I did."

"I really didn't know his real name," she said.

"You know mine," he suggested. "My first name, I mean."

"The second will be adequate."

"Let us adopt Christian principles. You are called Bertha, I understand."

"By my friends."

"Of whom surely, I am one. Bertha Anderson, you have had a journey to fulfil this appointment. Be a good sort and dine with me here, where I am staying. Tomorrow I shall have to look about for rooms. I suppose you couldn't help at all in regard to that."

It is likely Wellesley had no idea of the good choice in bait that he had made. The London woman does not exist who can fail to rise to it.

Upstairs and at the roast fowl in the dining-room, the unattractive quarters of town had been eliminated, and Wellesley surveyed with approval the notes set on the back of the menu card. Ere this, it had been necessary to make a frank statement in regard to income, and, parenthetically, excuses were offered for quoting Bertha as one of the references. He had done this, he said, a good deal out of bravado, but mainly because so many of his acquaintances had, like himself, taken posts abroad. Coming back to London made him feel extraordinarily solitary and lonesome.

"Now," remarked Bertha, "comes an earnest appeal to my romantic temperament."

"Not quite that," he contended. "But to be entirely frank, I was at one time—and for a long time—engaged to the daughter of a man in Wigmore Street. My professional advancement was not too rapid and she with her money—her father died—became overwhelming. It constitutes a warning against over-deliberation in these matters." He touched her hand, and for some reason Bertha did not withdraw it. The occasion was one for hinting at sympathy.

All the same, when the meal was over, she talked of going, and of going at once; Wellesley put inquiries to an

attendant, and was able to report that the night kept fine. Out on the station square, he walked along with her, and down steps, and ere Bertha Anderson quite realised the fact they were pacing eastward on the river-side of the Embankment. He talked of himself with amused candour, and she found herself listening interestedly. At the Blackfriars end, they turned. (To this day Bertha does not know for certain how many times the journey from bridge to bridge was made.)

"Now," she declared, presently, "I really must go. You heard what Big Ben said just now."

"Time was made for slaves."

"Made for me, at any rate," said Bertha. "I have to keep a very precise time-table in order to get through my work."

"Keep the twenty-fourth of next month free," he directed.

"For a special reason?"

"Only," said Wellesley, "that on the date named you are going to marry me."

"And you really imagine, do you," she asked, "that I am youthful enough, and sufficiently wanting in determination, to allow myself to be carried off my feet in this way?" They went under the approach to Waterloo Bridge.

He took Bertha by the elbows and lifting her with astonishing ease, swung her around once.

"Just like that!" he declared.

CHAPTER XIX

THE honeymoon was short, owing to the professional engagements of both parties, and Bertha and Wellesley came back from Devonshire ere London—or some part

of it—had ceased to talk of the quite amazing reticence shown by certain folk over matters of importance. A few intimates at the Academy and elsewhere still grumbled.

“One can understand that she didn’t want to tell everybody, but surely, surely she might have told me!”

At Ennismore Gardens, the indignation seemed likely to endure for a considerable time. Walter Kennington, taking lunch in the City, found himself approached by a colleague with whose opinions he was seldom in agreement. That new doctor chap of ours, said the colleague; getting married, I hear. To which Mr. Kennington, contradicting from sheer force of habit, retorted that the statement was altogether unfounded. And what is more, went on the colleague, the lady is a sort of a relative of yours. Mr. Kennington issued a prompt and resolutely-worded denial, and made this the more effective by jumping up, striding out of The Palmerston, and leaving his meal unfinished. Two days later, the colleague was able to exhibit a newspaper, and ejaculate that most triumphant of all phrases,

“Who was right?”

Walter Kennington told Lily, at home, that he had always tried to judge her sister fairly; he was by no means blind to her virtues or ignorant of her faults. But here was something which could never be forgiven.

“From the way you talk,” said his wife, “one would imagine, Walter, you had never before been guilty of anything like secrecy.”

“Can you name an occasion, my love?” he asked, coldly. The debate, brightened by illustrative anecdote, lasted well into the night.

Pupils at Maida Vale showed a higher reasonableness. They, too, had a grievance in that they had not been afforded an opportunity of being present at the ceremony,

but the first sight of Madame, after her return, extorted compliments and congratulations; apart, they declared she looked ten years younger. And when, on the first evening, Dr. Wellesley called for her, and was introduced to the students who happened to be about, then all was comprehended and all was pardoned.

"Well worth waiting for," said one.

"I suppose they must have known each other for years."

"Circumstances," said another, sentimentally, "kept them apart."

There was room for Wellesley's athletic figure at the studio, and the environments seemed appropriate; at Kilburn it had to be admitted the rooms were too small to fit him. Luckily, Irene's baby made no protest against the intrusion of a second man, but, on the contrary, greeted him in the most friendly style; the nurse girl made it clear that she approved of the union. As to the lady residents, they might have had their own views as to the correct age for beginning wedded life, but they realised the advantages. Here was a male, a strong male, and one not absent from Monday to Friday. Very handy, mind you, in case of burglars. And when it was discovered that he had been a general practitioner in the West End, then a welcome could not be restrained. See how extremely convenient if sudden illness occurred!

"No telephoning," they mentioned to each other. "Only just to pop along, and speak to Madame."

As to Madame, it seemed to her that the most notable change was in her outlook upon the world. Glancing back, she could see there were occasions when she had felt querulous; almost ill-tempered. Nephews and nieces were, at these moments, a perpetual anxiety; other relatives were difficult, and young people at classes had made up

their minds not to gain the education for which fathers paid. Now all these presented themselves in an entirely different aspect. Take Irene, for example. If Irene liked to stay away and forward no communication, why a good reason existed, and, in due course, everything would come right. Robert had for some time ceased to represent trouble. Gerald was going through the valley of misfortune, but the experience might prove useful to him. And if, in the day, anything awry happened at Maida Vale, or at the Academy, there was the knowledge that, the incident recited to her husband, he would at once see the brighter side of the occurrence; would, in any case, give a kiss. It was only necessary, at this moment in her thoughts, to catch sight of her reflection in a mirror, for Bertha to feel inclined to laugh at herself.

"Anybody would imagine you were still in your teens," she said, derisively. Or,

"My dear soul, do pray remember your age."

At Torquay one evening they had enjoyed an hour of businesslike sanity in compiling estimates of the financial situation. Tables of figures were submitted, and a sum in compound addition was made. For the first time since leaving school, Bertha Anderson found herself with a prospect of receiving money which she herself had not gained. Wellesley was to earn £650 a year; he believed he could live on £350; the balance would be handed over to her. It created an extraordinary sensation of affluence.

"Do you really think you have made a good bargain?" she asked.

"The best ever," he declared.

"You are a great joy to me, Dick." It had been agreed that 'as there were other folk entitled to call him Arthur, a special name for private use could be chosen.

These other folk come to Bertha's acquaintance without creating any sense of the overwhelming. At the evening meal Dick will remark, "You'll never guess who it was I ran across to-day," and Bertha, at the start, can plead that she knows none of his friends. A description follows, and if this appears satisfactory, then Bertha says, "Why not ask him to look in one night, and have supper?" A decision is left to the new head of the household. Sometimes the comment, "Not quite our sort, I think," settles the question; often the idea is followed up, and Dick brings home some pleasant-mannered guest, and introductions made, the usual formula is for Madame to apologise for the smallness of the apartments, and for the visitor to counter neatly with a brief description of want of space in his own rooms. Compliments on the taste in furniture and decorations ensue and Dick, very rightly, disclaims any share of the credit.

"Upon my word, Wellesley," says the guest, with envy, "you are indeed a favourite of fortune. How did it all happen?"

"Shall we tell him, my girl?"

"We will not," says Bertha, emphatically.

"The glorious detail is," remarks the visitor, "that it did happen."

During the meal—prepared by her hands, but of this the third party is not allowed to guess—Bertha warns herself, at intervals, not to talk too much, and she obeys this command so strictly that Dick, now and again, brings her in to the discussion. Talk generally wanders to old days at Bart's, to contemporaries who are enjoying a non-stop journey, and those who have not travelled beyond the first station. The odd circumstance is that men who favoured an irregular life in early days generally seem to

be the folk now practising within a stone's throw of Cavendish Square. Bertha leaves the two at the coffee on the plea that her niece's son requires her company, or, at any rate, her superintendence, and when she comes back the room is filled with smoke, and it is ever a relief to her if she observes that the guest is a pipe man. (A cigar in the flat is, for her, about the only drawback to the new existence. Dick—good man!—smokes nothing but honest tobacco in a fairly youthful pipe, but visitors at times bring their own cigars, and if these leave a vehement perfume windows have to be open all night, and even then the early morning conveys an atmosphere which she cannot pretend to relish.)

The guest, meaning no harm, says how about a little music, and Madame has to disclose the horrid fact that, to Dick, the piano is a penance; she has long since resolved not to play when he is near unless, of course, she should consider that he richly deserves it. Dick's friend endeavours to conceal his relief at this announcement; he may have feared—for ugly rumours have a trick of flying around—that he was booked for an evening of lengthy and persistent recitations from the works of Mr. Rudyard Kipling and Mr. W. B. Yeats. The rest is just talk, and friendship is made secure when Bertha, as overcoat is being put on, produces, with no hint of any kind from her husband, a silver salver bearing a cut-glass bottle, syphon, two tumblers.

"I wish you both," says the grateful visitor, "all the happiness you deserve. You yourselves cannot wish for more."

The best part of an evening like this comes when host and hostess, in front of the fire, and left by themselves, place the visitor on the dissecting-table. You can believe

that should there be anything amiss with him, it will then be found out.

On the other side, comes the lady once known as Miss Pyrford, and she talks not of old times but of present days, and above all of the amazing intelligence and vivacity of mind of Charlie who has the honour to call her wife. Bank-manager is described as one to whom the brisk and effective repartee arrives as easily as platitudes come to ordinary folk, but it may be that Pyrford keeps back the choicest; those submitted for approval fail to reach the standard existing in Kilburn, and when this is incautiously allowed to become evident, then Pyrford sees what is wrong.

"It's the tone of his voice," she pleads, "that carries it off. Mr. Wellesley must meet him one day." Mrs. Wellesley hints that life will be empty until he encounters the bank-manager.

Relatives appear to be coy where invitations are concerned, and Bertha is amused when the explanation occurs to her. They resent her marriage. They have, for so long a period, labelled her spinster that they are unable to make the change easily. But colleagues from the Academy share an evening meal, and talk shop, and when conversation becomes either too technical or too personal, Dick is given permission to go to the second house at the Kilburn Empire from which he brings later, when the Academy's representatives have gone, an account of the more hilarious items. It is in a like manner that each evening—the age of both making an assumption of precise modesty unnecessary—he contributes the stories which have happened to come his way, and Bertha is often able to furnish an anecdote which he takes back on his next journey to the City, and barter and exchanges there.

The July reception at the Maida Vale studio was arranged because hospitality at the flat did not seem to cover the ground swiftly enough. Bertha, on an elegant card where the printers had been checked from hinting at extravagance, begged to be favoured with the presence of—— And so on. Only at the moment when she was about to give the order, and pass the proof, did a new idea occur, and there ensued some quick, appealing words at the telephone.

“Please tell her,” said Bertha, “that I am tremendously obliged.”

The intimation that they were to meet a Duchess settled, in the minds of all, the nature of the reply, but an element of apprehensiveness was shown. Ladies, consulting with their daughters, argued that there was surely a catch about it somewhere, and the daughters were bidden to inquire, with proper tactfulness, if donations would be asked for on behalf of wasting infants, or tuberculous children, or mature blind; the young women brought reassuring news. No thought of making an appeal, or of suggesting a collection. The affair was being given for no other purpose than to enable folk to make the acquaintance of Madame’s husband. This satisfied most, but not all.

“At the next lesson,” said certain mothers, “you will make it your business to find out if wedding presents are expected. Because, if so, I shall have to consult your father.”

On this point, the message returned left no reason for doubt. Madame was astonished at the suggestion, and urged that any thought of bringing gifts should be at once cancelled. Gifts, in the circumstances, would be entirely out of place.

"That's as well to know," said the mothers, contentedly. "Now, what about dress?"

The evening at Maida Vale went admirably. All, from William Stammers—apparelled, on his own recommendation, in a suit that Wellesley had discarded, and adopting with it a considerate, bedside manner—all appeared well satisfied with themselves; the string band was unobtrusive, the refreshments were entirely adequate. Bertha had included amongst the guests certain of her former colleagues who happened to be in town and, moreover, advertised in the professional journal as resting; they supplied a note of high vivacity to the earlier moments that might otherwise have proved wanting, and their extraordinary affection in greeting the hostess was something the ordinary visitors did not pretend to equal. Aside, they remarked that Anderson had fallen on her feet. One mentioned that even in the old touring days, Anderson always contrived to take good care of herself.

"And found the emergency exit at just the right moment."

"She lacked genius," said a man, severely.

The Duchess arrived just at the hour when everybody had begun to suspect that a message of excuse would come, and her immediate congratulations to Wellesley rang through the hushed studio. And when in answer to something that Wellesley said, she made a joke—not a new joke, nor a great joke, but, for a Duchess, quite a good joke—the constraint vanished, and Maida Vale, and other neighbourhoods represented by the guests, realised that here was an item to be served up, for months ahead, at any afternoon tea reckoned worthy of it.

"Introduce your relatives, Madame," directed the principal guest, amiably.

"They seem to have been delayed," remarked Bertha. The Duchess spoke of the traffic difficulties of London. She really thought it was high time steps were taken in the matter. Twice that evening, on the way to the studio, progress of her car had been checked by signal from a policeman's hand.

"But," she said to Wellesley, "there are members of your family here, I am sure, doctor."

"When Madame found me," he answered, "I was a homeless outcast. I was on the point of entering a Barnardo Home. The blending of the waif and the stray was, in my case, quite remarkable. I sat for the drawings you see on the cover of appeals sent out on behalf of orphans."

"Arthur!" A woman's voice pierced the din of conversation; the owner of the voice was amongst those who, coming in late, had attached themselves to the group which followed the Duchess closely from the moment of arrival. "How unkind of you to say that. Surely you have forgotten me!" Folk said that here was a sample of the theatrical lot.

"Trouble ahead," remarked Bertha to herself. She went forward with the resolve to tackle the situation promptly; the other attempted to evade, but found her arm taken with a grip that meant decision. "Come into my room," ordered Bertha, sharply. "We are not going to have a disturbance here." She signalled to the conductor of the band, and music restarted.

"I suppose," said the lady, defiantly, as Bertha closed the door, "you think I am going to apologise?"

"My acquaintance with you is so brief that I cannot say whether or not you are ever likely to do the right thing."

"Dr. Wellesley and I," mentioned the other, "were once engaged to be married. I lived then with my father in Wigmore Street. That represents a chapter of tragedy in his life which has possibly not been alluded to by him."

"Few incidents," declared Madame, "have made me laugh quite so much."

"Arthur might have had the good taste to refrain from mentioning it."

"On the question of good taste," interrupted Madame, "how did you contrive to obtain an invitation for this evening?"

"I didn't" replied the lady. "But I heard it was coming off, and I bluffed the man who was taking the cards. I wanted to see what you were like."

"And now, having seen, all you have to do is to bluff him again, and he may allow you to go. But understand this, please. Don't try it on again."

"Before I go, Madame," here a change in deportment, "I should very much like to have a quiet chat with you. My case is, in many respects, a painful one. At an important junction in my career, I made a change that turned out, in every way, to be a mistake. I ought not to have given up Arthur. That I see now quite plainly."

"Does any remedy occur to you?"

"I should like," appealed the other, "to call back something like the old terms of friendship."

"That will be for my husband to settle," said Madame.

"And you will set no obstacles in the way?" suggested the other.

"All that I can think of."

The lady seemed genuinely disappointed. "I did hope," she remarked, aggrievedly, "that I should find you

prepared to throw convention to the winds. To a limited extent."

That evening, at Kilburn, Dick was thanked for the help he had given at the reception, and blamed for the one jarring incident. To this charge, he pleaded guilty, but urged extenuating circumstances. Dick asserted that his former sweetheart was not one woman, but, at least, six; he argued that in this fact might be found some reason for the length of the engagement. You bade her farewell on (say) a Tuesday with the impression that no happiness could be found in the company of anybody owning such a vehement and disputatious temper; on the Friday, you discovered her to be a gentle and a sentimental creature, agreeing rapturously with every opinion you submitted. By the following Sunday, she was one desiring nothing but a measured conversation on the prospects of His Majesty's Government. And so on. This defence received some confirmation when a very well-written, excellently-worded letter came signed intimately Flora M. and apologising, in the most correct way, for her intrusion at Maida Vale. The writer hoped Madame understood there was no desire to make a scene; but for the overhearing of Arthur's remarks to the Duchess, nothing untoward would have happened. And if Madame would just send the briefest of notes extending forgiveness, why then the writer could once more know the pleasure of a serene and an unperturbed mind. No reply was forwarded by Madame.

"I want no poachers," she said, "on my grounds."

All the same, Flora (insisting that her Christian name should be used because her present surname conveyed to her no hint of contentment) managed to keep herself well

in view. It appeared she had money, and a good deal of it, and this is always helpful; she owned pertinacity which is even more effective. To the studio, she introduced pupils requiring special treatment and willing to pay special fees, and here was an overture which could not be resisted; it gave her the right of entry at Maida Vale where she brought some heavy artillery in the way of cordiality to bear on The Two Gems; large pieces of silver handed at each visit to William Stammers gained his favour.

"At the start," admitted William, candidly, "I didn't take to her. I considered she was a party inclined to take too much on herself. Moreover, I didn't easily forgive that dust-up she made on the night of our reception. Since then, I've modified my opinion." The assistants remarked that, in their experience, they had often found second thoughts were best.

Flora's approach at Kilburn was, as a piece of strategy, admirable. Having ascertained by casual inquiry the date of the small boy's birthday, she conveyed to the flat, in Madame's absence, a rocking horse of just the right size for the stabling accommodation; the nurse girl was full of her praises, and Irene's boy had been well affected by the gift. It became necessary to send a note of acknowledgment. Soon afterwards, Bertha found on returning to the flat, that the sitting-room had been converted during the afternoon into a gorgeous flower garden; one might have thought the entire stock of some West End establishment had been imported. Dick, when he came in from the City, complained of the vehement perfume, and threw the more highly scented out of the window, and into the roadway.

"And this," said Bertha, rallyingly, "this is what happens to the gifts of an old sweetheart."

"My dear girl," he said, with earnestness, "I've been through it all many a time and oft. Whenever we quarrelled, it was inevitable that a florist's van should draw up in front of my house the very next day."

"It is a new experience for me," argued Bertha. "My powers of attraction have never extorted overwhelming compliments of this kind."

"Be prepared," he said, warningly, "at any moment for a quick change in the barometer. I know it so well!"

"She wants us to fix up a week-end at her cottage in Hertfordshire." He did not offer any remark. "You have always had a craving for travel," added Bertha.

CHAPTER XX

THE visit to Hertfordshire did not take place, and this was due to the circumstance that Bertha's man—in the domestic phrase—put his foot down. It is a step which, to prove effective, has to be taken rarely, and this apparently Dick recognised, for the point once gained he made no attempt to follow up the advantage by insisting on having his way in other details of procedure.

"We want to be left alone," he mentioned, dismissing the topic. "You and I require no sort of interference from outside. It's a fair claim to make, because we don't dream of interfering with outside people."

"I am not at all sure," she said, thoughtfully, "that my record is clear. There was a time when I might have been described as a fusser."

"At any rate, it is not your custom now!"

He came home one evening with news that supplied general exhilaration. (It is peculiar to medical and also to legal folk that they cannot help enjoying, to some ex-

tent, the misfortunes which happen to other folk.) Mr. Kennington—hitherto belonging to those who say of themselves that they had never had a day's illness in their lives—had seemingly, in making the oft-repeated announcement, omitted to touch wood. Dick, engaged in punching and sounding applicants who desired to insure their lives, was urgently summoned to the room where he found that Mr. Kennington had been laid on a hearth-rug. Restoratives were given, and within ten minutes Mr. Kennington was again at the polished table, sitting in his usual chair, and as nettled as most gentlemen are when they have been caught by a sudden and unusual indisposition. This mood over, and business of the morning completed, he looked in on the doctor and expressed, somewhat reluctantly, his gratitude. The following conversation, said Dick, took place:

"Now," mentioned Mr. Kennington, defiantly, "I suppose you are going to issue the conventional orders."

"Don't quite understand, sir."

"Oh, but I know the methods well enough, doctor. You ascertain what I eat and drink, and you tell me to knock off everything I am partial to."

"On the contrary," said Dick. "You are, I take it, a fairly abstemious man, and I counsel you to make no alterations. There is only this."

"Let us hear about it."

"Avoid an early morning argument. Have breakfast alone, if necessary. Don't allow yourself to be disturbed or upset before you reach the City. And even then, be careful."

Dick reported that Mr. Kennington seemed impressed, nodding profoundly, and showing a marked increase in cordiality. He inquired after the health of Bertha, and

mentioned, vaguely, something about risky experiments. In tones which Dick thought were not unkindly, he jerked, in going, an instruction. "Remember me to her!" And, coming back, said, "I hear good accounts of the way you are doing your job."

The incident could be looked on as satisfactory, and review of it on the next day, strengthened this decision.

But Bertha's half-sister forwarded a message which, so Bertha's husband argued, was one not to be answered promptly, or without full consideration. Lily asked Bertha to give her thanks for valuable services rendered. "Would you care to bring him to dinner one night? Please yourself about this, dear." The note came up for discussion on two or three evenings; arguments on both sides were brought forward, and the old committee trick of postponing was adopted. The two parties were not altogether at variance. Dick said he had no wish to be patronised, and Bertha assured him she would certainly not permit this. She admitted Walter and Lily were difficult folk, but there seemed no reason to think that the invitation was not well meant. Dick, looking at the note afresh, found a want of cordiality in the wording. Thus it was that before an answer could be drafted, a card arrived begging that Dr. and Mrs. Wellesley could come to a dinner at Ennismore Gardens on Thursday the twenty-sixth. R.S.V.P.

"We'll go," announced Bertha, desperately, "and get it over."

Until the moment when the small envelope was presented to her by Lily in the drawing-room, Bertha had not suspected that she and her husband would find themselves remotely placed from each other at the table; the information that Professor Galthrop would take her in to

dinner reminded her that man and wife, at affairs of the kind, are always separated. The occurrence balked and depressed her; she found an additional grievance in the fact that the Kenningtons had determined to crowd in as many guests as the dining-room permitted. Indeed, when all were seated, it looked as though, in the interests of comfort, about six men or women—preferably those disposed to stoutness—ought to be ejected, and sent home with an apology.

Bertha's companion, a corpulent and youngish man, overpowered his neighbours by sheer weight and bulkiness, and he talked with a slight impediment but at racing speed of ale; a subject with which Bertha was not fully acquainted. His enthusiasm for ale caused him to speak in deprecatory terms of the wine, and at each sip he made an ejaculation of distaste that could be heard up and down the table. Dick was far away, and placed in ambush by a huge bowl of flowers; Bertha could see that his companion was one of those terrifically eager conversationalists who begin an evening with the animation which some people reach at the finish.

"Poor lad!" she said.

"Now," said the bulky professor, when he had dealt with the topic of brewing, "what is your subject?" In jerking the inquiry over his shoulder, he showed no desire to budge an inch from the good position he had secured. "Any special knowledge about anything?"

"Elocution," replied Bertha.

"Great Heavens," cried the Professor.

"I teach."

"Lord save us!"

"I have a studio in Maida Vale, and classes at the Academy."

"And are there really people in this world of ours," he demanded, "unable to speak intelligibly and accurately without taking lessons?"

"Yes," said Bertha. "And you are one of them."

His astonishment was so great that he edged back his chair slightly; the two ladies saw their opportunity, and for the rest of the meal it was he who found himself discommoded. At his request, Bertha pointed out a few of his errors of speech, and he admitted that students had, at times, pleaded that they were unable to follow him, but this he had hitherto considered as a mere excuse for inattention. He asked presently if only the very juvenile could manage to repair the defects, and Bertha said her experiences with the mature—who wished to lecture, or to enter the field of politics—had not been too encouraging.

"Could you give me half a dozen lessons?" he inquired, submissively.

"Not for all the money in the Bank of England."

"But why not?"

"I don't like you," she said.

Walter Kennington put a question to Bertha, at a range of about six yards; she chanced to pick it up adroitly, and to give a prompt answer in her clear and definite voice. This drew attention to her, and some one opposite leaned forward and spoke to Bertha. Was he correct in thinking she had once visited Madeira?

"That was where I found my husband," she said, proudly. And was he here to-night? She nodded in the direction of the concealed Dick.

"I know him quite well," said the man opposite. "Known him for years. One," with emphasis, "one of the best chaps in the world."

Next to being close to Dick, it was good to be talking

of him; the corpulent professor was ignored, and Dick, his career, and the obstacles which had prevented him from obtaining high and complete success, formed an excellent topic for conversation. Thus it was that Bertha went off with the other ladies greatly cheered by food, wine and talk; at the doorway she turned and caught sight of her husband who was gazing at the ceiling in the way of one whose patience is being unduly strained. As she went upstairs with the others, she heard Walter Kennington speak in his most peremptory tones (much as though an inexcusable delay had occurred). "Wellesley, why don't you bring your chair up, man?" Bertha had some thought of returning in order to make an appeal for civility.

They were as near to the edge of a quarrel that night as any couple, desirous of remaining on good terms, would venture to go. They failed to agree concerning the attitude of the host and hostess; Bertha asserting there was nothing abnormal in the deportment of the Kenningtons, and Dick arguing that he was not used to being treated in a manner which Kennington's position in the City failed to justify or excuse. Dick, it seemed, held views on one or two of the questions discussed by the men, and the host was emphatic in stopping him from delivering them. "Keep quiet, Wellesley!" was an ejaculation made.

"That's his way," urged Bertha.

"I don't approve of it," said Dick. "And I did not like some of the guests."

"They were new to me," remarked Bertha. "I don't know where Walter could have found them."

The situation became eased by discovery of a most cordial note from Flora. The lady had pardoned the omission to visit Hertfordshire, and now begged for the

help and assistance of Bertha and her husband. Flora, it appeared, had taken up literature; not, as many do, by attempting to write, but by determining to read. And in reading, it had occurred to her that folk who wrote novels were deserving of larger recognition; no doubt people, at times, expressed thanks, and congratulations, but this, Flora reckoned, was not enough. So invitations to dinner at a notable West End establishment had been sent out; the replies were highly gratifying, and if Bertha would pardon the brief notice and support, as it were, Flora in the task of entertaining, and if Dr. Wellesley could come along to act as the hostess's best friend, why the kindness would never be erased from memory. A few names were appended as bait.

"I'd rather like to meet these people," said Bertha.

"They should be a deal more interesting," agreed her husband, "than the rotters we met at Ennismore Gardens. Curse them!" he added.

"By all means!"

Flora was exhibiting signs of nervousness on the evening, and the head waiter looked flustered; with a sigh of intense relief she said "Take your orders from Dr. Wellesley," and the head waiter seemed to be giving thanks to Providence for sending a man with whom he could deal. To Bertha, the confession was made that the task of entertaining, in rather large numbers, folk of high distinction and intelligence, now appalled Flora; she doubted if she was likely to find herself capable of understanding one-half of the talk which would go on at the table. To this the assurance was given that the guests were not likely to demand a high standard of intelligence from the hostess; if she praised their books, little else would be expected.

"But I'm so afraid of mixing them up," argued the other. Bertha arranged a formula, and, as a name was announced, Flora held out her hand and said, in emotional and confidential tones, "Delighted to meet you; I do so love your work!" And the new arrival invariably remarked, "But how kind of you to say that!"

It appeared each guest had been under the impression that it was to be a small party with himself as the guest of the evening, and as the number increased, an air of gloom became obvious. In making recognitions, they chatted distantly, but now and again, one put a direct inquiry.

"Are you on another book?"

"About half-way through."

"You mean you've done forty thousand words?"

"Fifty, to be exact."

"A longish story."

"Oh, I don't know. I believe in giving full measure. My readers look for it."

"What's the plot?"

Swift retirement into a dug-out. "If you don't mind, I'd prefer not to talk about it!"

After a pause:

"Who is your agent now?"

"I forget his name, just for the moment."

Many wore horn-rimmed spectacles, and two made great play with a monocle when soup was brought, inspecting the dish carefully in the manner of folk resolved not to be taken in. At the top of the table, Flora was able to stimulate conversation; Dick, at the other end, started a discussion, and Bertha managed to induce one of her neighbours to talk of cricket. Elsewhere, the anxiety to give away nothing in the way of information or views

caused the men to restrict themselves to platitudes; the filling of glasses made no difference to the method. When one, speaking in an authoritative voice, claimed the attention of the rest, it was to give the opinion that we were likely to have severe winters for a while.

"Have you any authority," challenged another, "for making an extraordinary statement like that?"

"These things," declared the first man, heavily, "come in cycles."

"But supposing," said Flora, innocently, "they came in motor-cars?" The guests were not to be diverted from their plans. The merciful view seemed to be that the hostess was trying to be humorous.

"I am told," said one, "that if there are a good many berries on the holly trees it is a sign."

"Queer," remarked somebody, "that we never get really hard frosts nowadays."

"There's an explanation of that. A scientific chap gave it me the other afternoon."

"What was his argument?"

"I fancy," with caution, "he means to print it himself." They nodded to indicate that the need for secrecy was well understood. A guarded allusion made to foreign waiters as compared with home-born attendants, and a youth began to tell an illustrative anecdote; he checked himself ere he had gone so far as to give the story away.

At an awkward silence, the hostess and her two helpers fired rather wildly inquiries that occurred to them; it happened that Bertha made the most effective shot. For her question, "And how have you been keeping lately?" elicited signs of real animation; the man addressed brightened up, and entered upon an exact and a particular account. That very morning he had risen with a sensation

of tiredness, altogether foreign to his nature, and, after considerable thought, he had not yet arrived at a solution of the mystery. Did he stint himself of rest, or was he too generous in this respect? He realised that the whole matter was one of supreme importance to a writing man. Unless a writing man could face the day with brightness and vivacity, then his work suffered, his public complained.

For the first time, conversation became general. Each craved to supply his own experiences. There were those who said firmly that eleven o'clock to bed and eight o'clock for breakfast were the only hours suitable for one who desired to keep body and mind in good condition. But, argued those on the other side, what about folk who never slave at the desk until the late evening? A certain heat was being shown when it occurred to Flora to mention that perhaps Dr. Wellesley would not mind giving the benefit of his knowledge.

"Please!" she said, in her most winning manner. He hesitated.

"Yes, do," urged Bertha.

The chance of interrogating a medical expert was too good to be lost. Bertha went to sit near to the hostess, and the two detached themselves from the remainder of the company; Bertha's husband gave something like a lecture with eager students taking mental notes. Presently—the topic of sleep having been dealt with—his attention and counsel were begged in regard to the crises met by those who write fiction. A character had been allowed to encounter a paralytic stroke; it was necessary he should recover, and perhaps Dr. Wellesley could advise how this was to be effected. And what were the symptoms of a heart attack? And how long could a hero be permitted

to live without any kind of nourishment? And was it possible—this from the youngest—for a somnambulist to do a murder, and to return to wakefulness without the slightest memory of the painful incident? Dick answered every one as well as his acquaintance with medical facts would allow. At the end the guests bade him good night with an affection they did not trouble to show towards the hostess.

“Oh yes,” he said, replying to one diffident suggestion. “Drop me a note at any time you are in a difficulty about any characters who are off colour, and I’ll help as well as I can. But I am no specialist, mind you.” They showered compliments.

Flora called Bertha’s attention to dear Arthur’s wonderful gift of achieving popularity, and said, of the evening, that she supposed it had gone off well enough. As to the table talk, Flora had expected it to be on a loftier plane, but, good heavens, it was not for her to dictate to men of genius.

The dinner cancelled memories of the night at Ennismore Gardens, and sociability at the Kilburn flat was being resumed—with chat over the day’s events, and gratifying rumours of the likelihood of an increased salary for Dick—when young Gerald paid his first visit since the wedding. The youth made no effort to give any explanation of his silence; he was frank in stating at once that he had come for Aunt Bertha’s help.

“No, no!” handsomely as Wellesley rose to go to the next room. “You needn’t leave us. It affects you, as well, now, and you had better stay and listen. Fact of the matter is—— By the by, no news of Irene, I suppose? Strange! What I was going to say was this. I shouldn’t have butted in upon you two if my wife’s people

had played the game. They are still travelling about, and either it is that letters don't reach them, or else it is that they don't trouble to reply."

"How is Minories?" asked Bertha.

"An invalid wife," he declared, "represents one of the greatest curses which can afflict a man."

"Not her fault."

"Not her fault, it's true, but certainly my misfortune. The original idea was that she would be able to keep herself."

"I fancy," said Bertha, "you had a suspicion that she would also be able to keep you."

"The past is over," remarked Gerald. "Let us come to the present. We want a hundred and twenty-five pounds." The request had a familiar ring.

"That," said Dick, after a silence, "is rather a large donation."

"I beg your pardon?" The comment was tendered again. "Aunt Bertha," said the young man, stiffly, "is aware that I am asking only for a loan. On earlier occasions when she has come to my aid, the sums—if my memory serves me aright—have always been refunded. Isn't that so, aunt?"

"Since you put the direct question, boy, I am bound to say your memory is at fault."

"The details, please."

"There was the business of the charity performance," she mentioned.

"It's a long time ago, but my impression is——"

"I can give you the exact figures, if you like."

"Don't trouble, don't trouble," he urged. "One subject at a time." Bertha glanced at her husband; he smoked his pipe, and gave no indication of views. "Debts

accumulate," Gerald added, "and the wife has simply no notion of keeping accounts. Dr. Wellesley, what about it?"

"Is there any reason," asked Dick, "why you should not apply, instead, to your father?"

"There are many reasons," declared the young man, "and all of them good and sufficient. And kindly realise this. I want your answer, here and now. If you can't assist me, I shall have to do something pretty desperate."

"That kind of talk," said Bertha, quietly, "does not impress us in the least. And it isn't for you to command, Gerald, how and when our decision is to be given. We must take our own time to consider it!"

CHAPTER XXI

THE subject was not at once discussed by the two when Gerald had left. In the morning and over breakfast, Bertha said, casually:

"Afraid you didn't see Lily's boy at his best."

And her husband said:

"A difficult part for anyone to play."

The world is full of married people who can give advice on behaviour in a domestic crisis; ere now the single have offered counsel. In retrospect, later, Bertha was able to discover some flaw in the procedure, and to condemn herself. But she did not take all the blame. If, she argued, her husband had agreed, with cordiality, to the financial transaction suggested, then it would have been her obvious duty to recommend carefulness, and to urge postponement; instead, Dick seemed to regard the matter as one which it was unnecessary to allude to again. Wherefore Bertha, sacrificing her valued luncheon hour, made a journey and called on Minories in order to as-

certain another view. There seemed a hope that the situation was not so acute as her nephew had hinted.

"We are stony broke," declared the young woman, promptly. She was resting on a settee, and the rooms had an air of neglect. Articles of furniture, bought not so long ago, appeared to have aged prematurely; frames on the wall had gone awry, and had not been adjusted. "We are living from hand to mouth. Tradesmen call and kick up rows just as they used to in the old-fashioned comedies."

"Gerald is asking for a big sum."

"We shall require every penny of it, aunt."

"I think you ought to be able to raise it in some other way."

"We would," said Minories. "Only, you see, all the other ways have been exhausted. And this is the situation. Gerald and the pawnbroker in Earl's Court Road are like first cousins. We exist mainly on sausages. We are thinking of doing without the woman who opened the door to you."

"Does she do any work?" asked Bertha, glancing around.

"To be honest—which she, I fancy, is not—I doubt if she overtasks herself."

"You are a hopeless pair of infants, you and Gerald."

"The blunder we made," said the girl, amusedly, "was in thinking I should recover from my accident. Assuming that, we allowed our disbursements to go on as though I still earned a salary."

"Who was responsible for the mistake?"

"I think Gerald was in fault," said Minories, equably, "and he, not to be outdone in courtesy, thinks the fault was mine. It would be a case for arbitration, only that no decision could put it right. And—perhaps Gerald

didn't tell you this—he has now been honoured by a reduction of wages in the City.”

“Which can only mean that he is not satisfying his employers.”

“You tell him so,” recommended the girl. “And see what he says.”

When Bertha prepared to leave, the young woman discarded her manner of indifference, and, hands covering her features, spoke of her parents, and especially of her mother. If mother had only been here, everything would be set right instantly. “Oh, mum, mum, dearest!” she cried, and Bertha could see that this was not a piece of acting.

“I'll get the cash together, somehow,” promised Bertha. She hurried away to escape the warm thanks.

Any idea which had been entertained of keeping the affair a secret from Dick—the chance existed that he might not refer to it—was spoilt by a chance encounter in the City between Gerald and Bertha's husband. Gerald, overflowing with gratitude, offered to treat Dick to the finest lunch Pimm's could supply. This invitation Dick resented, and at Kilburn he gave his views with plainness.

Life, as shrewd observers have pointed out, is very difficult; in a small flat it can easily become nearly impossible. For the first time, Irene's boy—a well-conducted, non-intrusive chap—seemed to be in the way. Whatever the room he happened to be in he mastered it, and hitherto this had not been reckoned a drawback; now that Bertha and Dick each wished at times for solitude, the company of Irene's boy was no longer welcomed with enthusiasm. When Bertha talked of a house, generous in its apartments, and helped by a garden, then Dick retorted by pointing

out the shortage of establishments of the kind; he admitted his own increase of salary might have permitted a removal, but declared the transfer of money to Bertha's nephew had checked this.

"But it was my personal loan, Dick dear."

"Same thing. Withdrawn from the common purse, anyway."

"I don't follow your argument." Argument is bound to continue when this phrase is used.

She had to admit that he did not take a debate to the stage of repetition. Many a time, in the old days, she had listened to wrangles at Ennismore Gardens wherein her brother-in-law and Lily found themselves using the phrase, "I say again, as I said just now——" Dick, having made it clear that he disagreed, took no pains to emphasise the circumstances.

A certain feeling of alarm—which she assured herself was needlessly exaggerated—arrived when, one night, he made an allusion to a single large room in Finsbury. A City man, on the point of retirement, had hitherto lived in it, escaping the anxieties of travel, and seeing residential houses near converted into offices; his love for the apartment and a regard for Dick had induced him to mention that the room could shortly be taken over, together with the furniture. It was added that there would be no question of driving a hard bargain.

"But, my dear man," cried Bertha, "you never have to stay late at your work."

"After a busy day," he said, "I have a good many details to finish up."

"That can be managed here."

"Not too conveniently."

"And Kilburn, you know, isn't exactly in Orkney and

Shetland. You can't pretend the journey is unmanageable. Think of all the voyaging you have done in the course of your career."

"I go no more a-roving," he quoted. "Who had the matches last?"

She noted that he ceased to hold talks with Irene's son, although the boy showed little diminution of cheerful amiability, and it occurred to her that the time had come when Irene should be found, and called on to accept responsibilities. Bertha loved the small chap, but he did represent an item in the expenses; the circumstance that the nurse girl had fallen in love, and was evidently thinking of nothing but love, had to be taken into account. So renewed efforts were made to trace Irene, and these had but just started when urgent news came from a hospital at Manchester regarding her.

Bertha caught the next train from Euston. At London Road station a taxi-cab went, by her directions, at its best pace, and in the ward she beat death by only three minutes.

"Look after my little chap, auntie," whispered Irene. "I depend on you. Now as always."

Bertha went through her niece's papers that evening before returning to London; she destroyed those which had to be considered as intimate—poor Irene had seemingly enjoyed the liberty of recent months—preserving a few documents to be handed to the boy when he grew up.

In the exacting tasks which followed, no one could have been more thoughtful and considerate than Dick; he shone by comparison with Ennismore Gardens. The Kenningtons gave signs of relenting when the news first reached them; within twenty-four hours they had entered on a dispute concerning the place for the funeral, and Bertha

had to take charge. In one of the notes Irene had set down a wish to be buried in the village where she and Guilford had enjoyed a brief period of happiness, and this desire Bertha carried out, imposing on herself all the trouble of making the arrangements. Lily and her son Gerald, with Bertha, attended the ceremony. The local builder and undertaker, hurt at not being entrusted with the job, had been drinking success to trade, and he did not cease to harass the visitors with inquiries, fending off the ancient inhabitant who, long before, had shown curiosity.

"Never hear nothin' of the Captain, I s'pose?" he asked. "Went all to pieces, didn't he, in a most 'stronary fashion."

And,

"How had the young lady been filling in her time, may I ask, 'tween when she left here, and now?"

And, when Gerald had ordered him to go away,]

"But how'm I to answer questions what are put to me onless I find out all about it?" He added a comment in self-justification. "I ain't by no manner o' means inquisitive, but I like to know."

It was a relief to all to be in the train and going back to London; Bertha, in glancing out at the village, said to herself that here was a chapter definitely and finally closed.

"I am glad," said Gerald's mother, attempting one of her rare expressions of gratitude, "to have had your companionship to-day, Bertha. It has been a trying time for a sensitive parent."

"Aunt," mentioned Gerald, "always toes the mark."

"Dr. Wellesley, I trust," went on Lily, graciously, "is keeping fit?" Bertha answered that Dr. Wellesley had no complaints. "Not able to be with us to-day?" No reply.

"I say that Dr. Wellesley was apparently unable to be with us to-day."

"Like Walter," said Bertha, sharply.

"Until the last moment, Walter fully intended to be present. Some casual remark upset him, and he changed his mind."

Bertha closed her eyes in the hope of avoiding further allusions to domestic argument. The voice of her half-sister went on; it seemed that an eager attitude of listening was not indispensable. Bertha reviewed the life of the young niece from the days when Irene had been the first occupant of the nursery in the household, and the opportunity had come of sharing the pride of the Kenningtons. Bertha knew she looked upon the two at that period as model parents; it was not until their children grew up that defects became obvious, and there appeared few occasions of importance when Walter and Lily agreed to take the action dictated by common sense. In a judicial manner, she tried to estimate the value of her own services, and was forced to admit that at times she interfered excessively; at others, it was now apparent she had not taken a full share. So difficult it is to be a competent meddler! At any rate, the small boy had been looked after, and defended from Guilford; that was surely to be placed on the credit side. Here was a task from which she would not allow herself to be diverted.

At Three Bridges, Lily Kennington was talking to her son. The impression seemed to be that Bertha had reached the stage of drowsiness when her interests could be talked about with freedom.

"And from what I can gather—but you know how reticent your father can be when he likes—the job abroad rests between two men. Wellesley is one of them. If he

accepted it, your aunt would find her freedom restored to her for a while, and all could go on in the old way. My belief is that she will be far happier."

"Can't you leave everything alone, mother?"

"That," she said with resolution, "has never been my line of country."

At Kilburn, Dick, after sympathetic inquiries, apologised for the imminent arrival of a City friend; an opportunity for conversation was desired, and as Dick particularly wished to hear from Bertha details of her journey he had vetoed the suggestion of a restaurant. So Bertha, having placed the small boy in his cot, telling him one of the choice items from her repertory of juvenile fiction, set at once on preparations for the meal, and assured her husband he had taken the right and the suitable course in giving the invitation. By the by, and ere she forgot it—was there any idea in Threadneedle Street of a vacancy happening a considerable distance away? Dick assured her he had heard nothing of the matter.

"Besides," he added, "it wouldn't affect me."

"That's all right, then," she said, contentedly. "I seem to be acquiring the habit of bothering myself about nothing. Check it, Dick, and lay the table for three."

Mr. Clay, the guest, proved an enthusiastic, loud-voiced man, whose spirits were checked for a moment only when he was told that his hostess had occupied the day in attending a ceremony of a painful nature; having ascertained that everything had gone without a hitch of any kind, he regained vivacity and, at the meal, which he tackled with good appetite, raised the argument that the events which were historical should be dismissed from the thoughts; to-day should receive consideration, and to-morrow was, of all, the most important. Bertha suggested

it was not so easy to forget. Pooh, said Clay. And went on to declare that it was just a matter of bending the will, forcing the disposition of mind. An ejaculation of protest—either against the argument, or the reverberating tones—from the boy in the next room compelled Bertha to ask to be excused.

“Didn’t know you were a family man, Wellesley,” said Clay. “Is there more than one?” The host explained. “Very good-natured of you both to be looking after the little chap. And, incidentally, rather a bit of luck for me. Shut the door, and we can talk business.”

Clay’s voice alone reached Bertha’s ears, and she could not escape recognition of the fact that he was disclosing the statement overheard by her in the train. So far as could be gathered, Dick was replying and commenting in words of one syllable. Clay pleaded that the job and himself fitted admirably; a hint from Wellesley, to the effect that he did not intend to be a rival, would make the prospect for Clay all that a cheery optimist could desire. When the youngster, having been induced to realise that the hour was not appropriate for a concert, had gone to sleep, and Bertha went back to the men, conversation was broken off as a twig is snapped.

“And,” said Clay, obviously taking up the first subject that came to his mind, “if Labour does get a majority, I don’t know that it is anything to become frantic about. We must keep a level head, Wellesley. That’s what we have to do!” Bertha noticed that when the guest had left—his breeziness continuing until the end—no allusion was made by Dick to the topic of foreign appointments.

The Two Gems submitted a proposal in joint form; it was clear it had been thought out carefully, and they

endured the fire of questions delivered by Madame with great steadiness. The main recommendations were that fees at Maida Vale ought to be raised, and that for Madame herself a studio should be rented in the district called "down West," where she could see to the highest and most lucrative pupils. Following on this came another recommendation. It was that the time had arrived when the sisters might be allowed to take a share of the profits.

"You see, Madame," they urged, "nearly all the work here now falls upon us."

"Quite true."

"Since your marriage, you have had less time at your disposal."

"The same amount of time," corrected Bertha, "but it has been liable to other engagements."

"We would make you a bid," said the elder, "and take over the whole concern, but unfortunately we haven't any capital."

"You are good, dear creatures," said Bertha, "and I am sure we shall be able to make a comfortable arrangement."

Dick, consulted that evening, said of this that it looked like an application based on reason; he preferred not to say more inasmuch as it was a matter which concerned Bertha. He had an armful of news which he was anxious to impart, and the business of Maida Vale, by agreement, stood aside to be considered again later. Bertha, apprehensive that the news would include an announcement of transfer of services to the East, discovered to her relief that it was made up of:

(a) Unusual cordiality shown at the offices by Mr. Kennington. Friendly chat about nothing in particular and, at the close, a warm shake of the hands.

"What on earth did it mean?" asked Dick. Bertha answered that she had rarely been successful in comprehending anything done by Walter Kennington.

(b) Flora waiting at lunch-time with her car, and driving him to a West End club where one Captain Guilford, recognised as an almost forgotten patient, was summoned from the lounge, and insisted on Dick sharing the midday meal.

"How came your Flora to be acquainted with Irene's husband?" demanded Bertha, sharply.

"Ask me another," he begged. "She is an extraordinary person, and she makes acquaintances everywhere. And please don't call her my Flora."

"She isn't mine," retorted Bertha.

(c) The room in the City, previously mentioned, had been snapped up by somebody and, to his disappointment, could no longer be regarded as available. This, he mentioned, exemplified the danger of not acting with promptitude. One-half of the best opportunities in the world were missed because an answer was not given on the instant.

"Is that all you have bagged to-day?" she asked.

"That, dear soul, represents the day's sport."

"Let us consider the matter of Guilford. He is home to renew his efforts to get possession of the boy. I tell you at once that if I can help it, he won't do anything of the sort. I routed him before, and I can rout him now."

"Error," said Dick, "has crept into your views. He had heard of Irene's death, and he is going to marry again."

"Quick work!"

"We ended our meeting with a row."

"That's good," declared Bertha. She walked to and

fro in the small room, betraying an excitement rare with her. "I'm glad of that, Dick. It needed a man to deal with him. If you made it clear that now, more than ever, we are determined to care for Irene's boy——"

"Forgive me for interrupting, best girl, but you are still on the wrong platform. Guilford wants nothing to do with the boy. The new lady apparently objects to the child as a gift."

"Then what was your quarrel about?" she asked, puzzled.

"The row occurred," said Dick, "when I told him, quite plainly, that he had no right to expect you—maybe I used the word 'us'—to continue taking the responsibility. I mentioned that he had a sister about. I called his attention to the circumstance that he was well off, whilst our coupled incomes made a total not too considerable. Also, I said that we lived in a small flat. This he took light-heartedly. He recommended that we should move into a larger one. I did not tell him the bar—not entirely disconnected with a loan or gift to a nephew—which prevented us from doing that."

"Men," complained Bertha, "are very difficult to understand."

"I seem to have heard a like remark about the other sex."

She resolved that measures had to be taken, and taken without delay. No want of unanimity in opinion could be allowed to separate Dick and herself, and the idea occurred that, with more leisure, she would be able to make friendship secure. Accordingly, the two young women at Maida Vale were granted all that they asked, and as there proved a difficulty in obtaining an address in a fashionable neigh-

bourhood at any rental which did not take the breath away, it was arranged that Madame should control in the studio one afternoon a week only. William Stammers, hearing of this, said, protestingly:

“Makes you seem like a mere outsider!”

The hours of freedom gained were devoted to schemes for the improved comfort of Dick. The nurse girl, having fallen out of love, was now more dreamy and unreliable than ever, and Bertha felt herself extremely magnanimous in searching the advertisements for some appropriate establishment to which Irene's boy could, in a year or so, be sent. At the moment, the step, she argued, was impossible. But an extra woman of homely aspect and manners was engaged for the hours of six o'clock to ten o'clock of an evening to do nothing else but to look after Master Guilford, and to ensure that he created no disturbance likely to give annoyance to the master of the household. And once free of the Academy, it became Bertha's practice to say to herself, in walking home:

— “Now let me think of something really nice for Dick's meal this evening!” And, after purchases in High Street, and before entering the flat, “Above all, no bickering!”

CHAPTER XXII

THE change in manner shown by Walter Kennington in the City was followed by a rumour that he was extending the new method to every one he met. It suggested a craving for a wide increase in the number of friends, and the City—so Dick reported—placing no great reliance on sudden conversion, was inclined to show defensiveness. The next piece of news proved even more

extraordinary. Kennington had quitted the company, and it was hinted the departure had been taken at the company's request.

"Some mistake," declared Bertha, firmly.

The assertion had to be withdrawn later. Her brother, James, of whom nothing had been heard for some time—the inference being that prosperity attended him—summoned, by urgent communications, a conference of relatives at the Central Hotel in Marylebone Road; the hour given (three o'clock p.m.) hinted that nothing in the shape of a feast could be expected. Indeed, the meeting there, in a private room, had from the start all the elements of seriousness. Lily Kennington, in a costume so decorous and simple that she looked a different woman, arrived at the moment Bertha reached the hotel, and a few words from her threw a light on the situation.

"My husband," she said, tremulously, "has been unlucky. Unlucky in money matters. James is being so good as to see what can be done. I feel grateful."

"Have you left Walter at Ennismore Gardens?" asked Bertha, pressing her hand.

"Nothing is left at Ennismore Gardens," she replied. "The sale took place yesterday."

"I wish I had known."

"You could have done nothing, Bertha."

By consent, no allusion was made to the subject until the proceedings had been formally opened. Before that, James Anderson talked quietly of London hotels of his youth as compared with London hotels of the day; he broke off to welcome his son and Robert's wife. "I sent a card to Gerald," he remarked to Lily Kennington; she answered that it seemed unnecessary to wait. On this, James Anderson brought chairs to the table, and himself

took the head. Producing notes, he begged Robert to see that the door was closed.

"I couldn't obtain Irene's address," he whispered to Bertha. She explained. "Bless my soul!" he ejaculated. "Bless my soul. And I never heard. What a scattered group we are to be sure. Poor young Irene!" James turned to the others, and still spoke in confidential tones; he could not refrain from showing a touch of his old deportment of elaboration.

"The facts of the case," he said, "have been placed in my hands, and I shall attempt, so far as is humanly possible, to summarise them. Put briefly, the circumstances are that Walter has to appear at Bow Street to-morrow morning. He will be in the dock, together with two other men, charged—I have the exact wording here—charged with conspiring together to defraud such people as might be induced to invest money in So-and-So, Limited. Certain of the folk concerned have, I understand, been recompensed; the proceedings are taken by one investor who intends to give himself the luxury of enjoying revenge."

"Have the warrants been served?" asked Bertha.

"The warrants have been served."

"And Walter is out on bail?"

"He is not on bail. Bail was refused."

"Please go ahead," she urged, sitting back, hopelessly.

"Is Uncle Walter guilty of the charge?" asked Robert.

"That, my dear son," said James, "is not a question for us to decide. If you ask whether or not he intends to plead guilty, then I can tell you that he will do nothing of the kind. A suspicion of carelessness, an unwisdom in leaving too much to others—these, it is likely, he will admit, but against anything more serious he proposes to

fight with all the resources which lie in his power. It is because these resources are few that I have asked you to meet here this afternoon, and I say to you, at once, that the proceedings will be so lengthy and so costly that unless we all agree to do our utmost, we may as well do nothing. It is one of those cases where the best legal assistance is indispensable."

"I am willing," said Bertha, quickly, "to spend my last shilling in order to help Lily's husband." Her sister, genuinely moved, pressed a handkerchief against her eyes.

"That," declared James Anderson, "I should have expected of you, Bertha. For myself, I am happily in a position to contribute my—er—quota."

There was a pause.

"The announcement," said Mrs. Robert, "is one of which Robert and I have no previous warning, but I think I can say on his behalf and mine that we will put down what we can spare." Robert gave a nod of agreement. "I wish," she went on, "I could say we do this as readily as Aunt Bertha makes her offering. We don't. We are young people, making our way in the world, and this is calculated to retard our progress. Moreover, I am unable to comprehend why a man like Mr. Kennington, of vast business experience, should allow himself to——"

"That," interrupted James Anderson, "will ever be a puzzle to all of us. It only remains now for us to write the figures. Bertha, will you give a lead?"

The paper, with the three scribbled amounts, was handed, with a bow, to Lily Kennington.

"I—I can only say 'thank you,'" she assured them. "And I wish I could think I deserved your kindness. I haven't been a wise mother, and I have not always behaved tactfully with Walter."

"Take charge of her, Bertha," requested James Anderson.

The two women conversed reminiscently. Lily talked of the days of her childhood; loss of a mother when James and she were young; remarriage of father and, eventually, arrival of Bertha. From this, they spoke of Lily's wedding, and the astonishing good fortune she appeared to have encountered in marrying a wealthy husband. Walter, said Lily, had bought his way into the City; his commercial qualities had never justified his position there. Others, around him, prevented him for a time from making serious blunders. Walter had once told her that his method in the City was to nod his head and say "I agree!" and it was perhaps to compensate for this that he disputed so readily at home. All the same, it appalled her to find that he had allowed himself to be mixed up in a commonplace employment swindle.

"But there it is," said Lily, valiantly. "And we must make the best of it!"

Dick's interest in the case was keen, and natural. When he asked, "Where is the money coming from?" Bertha answered, "Oh, there is money about," and reproved herself afterwards for not having seized the right moment for an exhibition of frankness. The right moment having gone, it seemed impossible to find another. But Walter Kennington's disaster excluded many topics from conversation at Kilburn; the two watched it from the first day of hearing when the newspaper placards gave it with unanimity—"City Man at Bow Street"—and on through subsequent occasions until a couple of lines announced that the magistrate had decided to commit. Ere this, Bertha had contrived to look in at the court, where, on

a narrow seat just in front of the space given up to the general public, she gazed at the backs of the men in the dock, and listened to an almost interminable cross-examination of the chief witness for the prosecution. Nothing caused this obstinate individual to budge. Other folk, connected with the deliberate proceedings, might give signs of exhaustion; he was as vigorous and alert at the end as he had been at the start.

"Oh, for a side-slip!" prayed Bertha. It never occurred. At other times, she said, impatiently, as one addressing the law, "For goodness' sake, get it over, and have done with it!" The law declined to be hurried. When the evidence of witnesses was read by the clerk, then Bertha could endure the situation no longer; she went out and looked on at men earning, by hard physical work, a moderate living in Covent Garden.

There came the business of a consultation with solicitors in regard to heavier and more expensive men to defend at the Old Bailey; the funds seemed to be going as water runs down a sink. To these meetings Bertha's sister brought a wisdom and a gentleness which she had not shown for many a long year, and if any outburst of agitation came it was never on the side of Lily. Bail had been granted and found, and at the two rooms—alleged to be furnished—occupied by Walter and his wife, Bertha discovered that they exhibited a consideration for one another, talking of the possibilities in quiet, reasonable tones. "If the worst comes to the worst," was the phrase used in regard to the future. There seemed no attempt to shut the eyes, nor to put on rose-coloured glasses.

Dick said his wife needed a change in the interval that elapsed before the sessions opened, and he spoke as a husband, as a medical man, and as one willing to give

his company. The friendly neighbour had removed to Stanmore, and the offer of the absent-minded nurse girl to bring a mother, to whom she alluded in terms of high praise, in order that the flat should be guarded and the boy looked after, had to be accepted. A tentative hint from Bertha, to the effect that the little chap might go with them, created the slight frown which she particularly wished not to see; the resolution was promptly withdrawn.

"I want you all to myself," he remarked.

"Greedy!" she said, contentedly.

"I have a desire to renew your acquaintance. There are times when I almost forget the sound of your voice."

"I will babble unceasingly," she promised.

They selected from the ABC time-table an hotel on the east coast—the place was to them quite immaterial—which guaranteed in its advertisement to provide Tennis, Croquet, Bowls. Within easy distance of four well-known Golf Courses. "Four will be enough, I think," said Dick. "As I don't play," remarked Bertha, "we could make shift with three." Best of all, the hotel mentioned, as an after-thought, Small Tables.

It did indeed justify all its claims, and a prepared ejaculation by Dick, after registering at the desk of The Queen's:

"Well, darling girl, it's a blessing to realise the ceremony at church is over!"

This, with the circumstance that their trunk bore few labels, was enough to send the gratifying news about that a honeymoon couple had arrived. True, they were not exactly a youthful couple, but most of the folk in the hotel happened to be advanced in years, and the newcomers were looked on as, comparatively speaking, young, and measures were taken at once to ensure for them the solitude the

newly married desire. If they chanced to be in the reading-room, and some one entered, some one cried:

“Oh, I do beg your pardon, really!”

And vanished. In the dining-room, a table at the far end was kept for them; when they strolled in the grounds, it seemed to be understood that nobody else had any right to walk there. The sea, on the autumnal mornings, was not exclusively theirs because other folk were staying at the other hotel, but so far as The Queen's was concerned, their right there was none to dispute. Three elderly sisters managed to find Bertha alone just before dinner, and tendered, in a swift, agitated way, advice on the best methods of retaining a husband's affection, but as they spoke in unison, and Dick was not long in making an appearance, the results were meagre. On the fourth day, a real honeymoon pair came to the hotel—boy and girl, eager to hide confusion by self-assertiveness—and the Wellesleys' importance diminished. To this they had no objection, and Dick now had the liberty to make acquaintances with the men, and Bertha exchanged courtesies with the womenfolk, until the question of ages began to be considered; whereupon Bertha found her husband, and took him off for a brisk walk. They chattered of everything but the few home topics on which, as each knew, they held different opinions. For the first time he spoke of his parents, and of an uncle who, when they died, took charge of the boy, sent him to a boarding-school, and, later, found the cash needed for medical training.

“Relatives can be useful,” said Bertha, incautiously.

He glanced at her. “Or the opposite.”

“I think,” she declared, with inconsequence, to make amends, “that I love you, Dick, more than I like all the other people in the world put together.”

"Set that down in writing, my child, and I'll have it stamped at Somerset House directly we get back to town."

The day and hour for the return came too soon. Ere this, the two discovered themselves suddenly invested with amazing popularity; even the head waiter declared they would be missed, and the honeymoon pair urged that friendship should be continued. On the morning of the departure, womenfolk attended the station with tributes of the best the bookstall could supply; men furnished Dick with enough cigars to last a pipe-smoker for a year. At an intermediate station who should enter the compartment but Harkness, and his two faithful chums, still retaining their custom of sharing holidays, and for the rest of the journey there was eager talk of the steamer trip, and the consequences of the encounter at Madeira. On the arrival platform of the London terminus, they took Dick aside, punched him as men do when they desire to offer congratulations, and told him he was a lucky hound, and one to be envied.

"I do believe you're right," he said.

The trial of Walter Kennington and his companions occupied a day and a half at the Old Bailey; to his wife and to Bertha seated in the pews reserved for the City Lands Committee the space seemed more like eighteen months. The impression was supported by the fact that Bertha's sister had given up elaborate attention to her hair, and this now showed itself in its natural colour of grey; her subdued manner increased the appearance of age. On the evening of the first day, Bertha went home with a full resolve to mention to her husband the share taken in the cost of the defence; for some reason—or perhaps for no reason—she again postponed the announce-

ment. When, just before the Court rose for lunch on the next morning, the jury returned from consultation, and the foreman stated that they found Walter Kennington not guilty, and the others guilty, then the Recorder spoke with gravity of the whole case before delivering sentences and his allusions to Bertha's brother-in-law had nothing of the element of flattery. The three—Bertha, and Lily and Walter—lunched economically at a restaurant in Holborn, and Walter Kennington agreed that a disappearance from London, either temporary or permanent, was the only course to adopt. The deference shown to her views gave Bertha a sense of pain.

"I fear," said Walter, "that all this has been a great strain on the financial resources of everybody. Later on, I may be able to express gratefulness."

"Don't," urged Bertha. "Leave it all where it is."

"But in order that dear Lily," here he pressed his wife's hand affectionately, "and myself may carry out the plan suggested, I am afraid we shall have to trench still further on good nature. Not a large sum, but just enough to allow us to start life afresh with a certain——" He was unable to find the word required, and gave up the effort. In the old days, he would have commanded silence until it had been found.

"Let us," said Bertha, "make an estimate, and I will see the others. I dare say James and Robert, and Mrs. Robert are likely to accept my suggestion."

As it happened, the others needed a good deal of persuasion. Bertha advanced the money from her depleted balance at the bank, and reckoned on her powers of argument. Satisfactory news came to the effect that Walter and Lily had settled down in a quiet Hampshire village; the added information that they had some idea of taking

up poultry-farming was not, to her, altogether reassuring. Going back in memories, instances occurred to her where people who failed on the stage invariably turned to chicken and eggs with a confidence that was rarely justified.

"Still," she said to herself, "better than doing nothing!"

In the result, Mrs. Robert voted against any additional help, and Robert agreed with her. Brother James promised to send in his donation as soon as circumstances made it possible for him to do so.

"I shall be glad of it," declared Bertha.

"We mustn't see you let down, my dear," said James.

"I am sure there was nothing else to do but to see the whole matter through."

"Quite, quite!" he agreed. "Any other course would have been impossible. But, you understand. You'll have to wait for my cheque."

With some notion of practising economy, she reduced invitations to the evening meal, and the lofty attitude of the evening woman, who said plainly that her life resembled that of a slave, and that she, for one, did not know how much longer she would be able to stick it—this gave Bertha an excuse, on the grounds that she wished to be again in charge of Irene's boy during her few spare hours, for dispensing with aid. Dick, informed of the arrangement, said casually that youngsters seemed to require a deal of attention. He was not sure, in the case of good health, that it was altogether necessary.

"But you know best, old girl," he added.

At the Academy women colleagues were tolerant, when she chanced to make an allusion to her relatives. As to the men, Bertha noticed—and, having noticed, feared she ought to have observed it earlier—that when she began to speak of Irene's boy or indeed of any relative, they

changed the subject with an indication of abruptness. One lady Sub-professor proved a useful confidante at this time; she had family troubles of her own, and, in private, she and Bertha made full admission of any perturbation of mind which afflicted them; it was a comfort to each to realise that her case was not without parallel.

"If I had my time to live over again," declared the Sub-professor, "I wouldn't do a hand's stroke for anyone, young or old, connected with my family. Have you never thought the same, Madame?"

"I have," replied Bertha. "And for once I have thought that, I have a thousand times resolved to do more for them."

"If only they showed a greater appreciation!"

"After a while," admitted Bertha, "they do seem to take it as a matter of course."

There were letters, as usual, one night, waiting for Dick, and it happened that Bertha did not glance, in her usual way, at the envelopes. Generally this was done with no idea of curious investigation, but merely for the sake of being prepared for his remarks when he went through the correspondence. She did, however, arrange them in the order he favoured: unclosed envelopes with halfpenny stamps on top, post cards next, any important-looking letters were set last. He came in with more than ordinary animation, and, taking her, went through the steps of a fox trot.

"Explain, my demented child," she appealed, breathless. "People will think we have gone off our heads."

"People will not be far out. Poor old Clay—you remember Clay? He has just been told that he is not to have the appointment out in the East."

"A pity!" commented Bertha. "He was so keen on it, You seem pleased."

"Pleased because it leaves the field clear."

"Clear for whom?"

"For me!"

She served the meal. Dick, without opening his letters, spoke of voyages taken in the past, mentioned places he had always wished to see. Ere he had finished he was going through the bookcase to search for a volume concerning the district. Then he remembered that Clay had asked to be allowed to read it, and, with all the customary denunciations of borrowers, announced his resolve to take an omnibus straightway to Clay's rooms, in order to secure possession.

"Nothing urgent here, I suppose?" Taking up the correspondence. He threw the obviously unimportant aside; with a dessert knife he opened a long envelope that had "Fleet" for postmark.

The reading occupied so long that Bertha had to put an interrogatory.

"Well?" she said.

"A long screed," he answered, slowly, "from your brother-in-law. He thanks me—me!—for all you have done for him. He says it must have cost you at least—— He mentions the figures somewhere—— Page five, I think."

"It had to be done," she said, apologetically.

"Possibly, possibly. But it is quite clear, Bertha, you ought to have told me about it. Told me, at the time."

He had gone ere she could think of an answer. He came back.

"A certain devotion to one's family," said Dick, "is

permissible, and even commendable, but there are limits which it is just as well not to overstep."

Again, Bertha's powers of retort failed her.

CHAPTER XXIII

BERTHA had a long conversation across the breakfast table with Irene's boy, and the young man assumed, quite incorrectly, that a game was being organised for his diversion. "Wonder what has become of Dick?" was the inquiry put, and the small chap entered into it all with great zest. He pointed to a likely hiding-place, and when Bertha shook her head, tried another, and at last fell back on an inspiration.

"Puff—puff!" said Irene's boy.

"You may be right, laddie," conceded Bertha. He endeavoured to hint that he himself would like to share a railway journey. "Our Dick doesn't need your company, my child. I seem to be the only person who wants you." She accepted a kiss that included a definite suggestion of marmalade.

To the nurse girl, Bertha mentioned, with a casual air, that Dr. Wellesley had been summoned away on urgent business; the information, she privately hoped, would arrest any show of curiosity on the part of residents in the flats. Nothing aroused so much genuine interest amongst them as the suspected disappearance of a husband, or the occasional absence of a wife; one would think the roll was called each day in order to ascertain if anybody was missing.

The post happened to be empty; the double knock had gone up and down the staircases, but made no stop at Bertha's outer door. When, at ten o'clock, she pre-

pared to leave for the Academy—with a glance in at the studio on the way—there came the question of leaving a note for Dick in case he returned; she decided that to do this would mar the effect of her communication to the nurse girl. Also, the art of steaming the flap of an envelope was, in all likelihood, still practised. She did, however, give a verbal time-table of her engagements for the day.

“I’ll bear it all in mind, Madame.”

“That is why I am telling you!”

Only to discover, on the pavement, that her plans were threatened with alterations. Flora, from surely the largest car that had ever been built, was stepping out, and her first ejaculation gave thanks to Providence for arranging the encounter.

“I have so much to talk to you about, dearest,” she cried, effusively, “that you must please give me the whole day. It will take countless hours to discuss it all. Send telegrams, and put everybody off, and let us devote ourselves——”

“Quite impossible!”

“Please, please!” urged Flora. “Don’t begin to talk foolishly.”

“You must remember that I have my living to earn.”

“At any rate,” said the other, “let me take you wherever it is you want to go.”

As the car went down High Road, she talked at a prodigious rate, and in an undertone; some moments went by ere Bertha could realise the drift of the argument. News, it appeared, had come to her by a roundabout journey, and she gathered that poor Arthur—this was her description of Bertha’s husband—poor Arthur had an idea of accepting an appointment in a Heaven-forsaken

place abroad. "He must not go," said Flora, with emphasis, and went on to explain, with a maidenly coyness that added nothing to clarity of expression. Flora admitted that she still regarded poor Arthur as a near and dear friend; one, so to speak, in a class by himself. If she needed good counsel, it was a solace to know that poor Arthur could be consulted, and being consulted, would give shrewd and valuable advice. Therefore, whatever the stage of the proceedings might be, she implored Bertha's aid in checking them. Flora produced from her wrist bag a cheque bearing her signature, and ordering her bank to pay to Mrs. Wellesley a sum represented by figures that Bertha was to fill in.

"I am sure this is meant well," said Bertha, perplexed, "but you are acting impulsively, and I think quite mistakenly."

"Consider it," urged the lady. She spoke to the chauffeur. "You want to look in here," she went on to Bertha. "I shall wait!"

From the studio, William was dispatched with a message. Madame's compliments and she found herself likely to be detained for an hour or two; possibly longer. William came back to announce that the car had driven off, and that the coast might be regarded as clear. Business at the studio was, in truth, no more than enough to occupy a few minutes; amongst the letters was one from brother James enclosing a cheque for his proportion of the advance made to Walter Kennington. As Bertha, after a short chat with The Gems, was going, the telephone bell rang, and William Stammers reported that Madame's presence was wanted. The voice of Minories came.

"Exhilarating news, Auntie dear," she said. "A most gorgeous remittance has come from my people this morning.

We shall be able to pay back every penny we owe you, and Gerald and I will have no further worries. Isn't it splendid? We are letting you know in good time. Best love; good-bye!"

At the Academy that day during the lunch interval, there were speculations concerning Madame's unusual reserve, and no attempt was made to conceal these from her; she took the rallying with her customary good humour. Madame, said one, was about to engage on writing verses; Madame, said another, had fallen in love with her husband; Madame, said a third, had saved so much cash that she did not know what to do with it. Bertha, when an opportunity came for thought, regretted the circumstance that, in this world, events came out of due order. Here was money, but here Dick was not. If the money had but arrived slightly earlier, there would have been a reassuring answer to give to him, and no disappearance would have ensued. An ingenious trick of fate that afternoon arranged for Madame to be summoned from the classroom on four occasions. Each time she left, Bertha was prepared to throw herself into Dick's arms, and ask him to forget. Instead it was, "Oh, Madame, about that social evening again for the professors!"

At Kilburn, to which she sped at a rate that pained the leisurely, she found an express letter in Dick's handwriting. In her fear at ending the suspense, she did not at once open the envelope; moreover, the flat was empty and this circumstance demanded investigation. Neighbours were able to tell her that the girl went out with the boy soon after lunch, and so far as they knew she had not come back for tea. So Bertha set forth, going in the directions known to be favoured by the nurse, and more by luck than anything else caught sight of the perambulator

at the draughty opening to a garage; the little chap had kicked off the coverlet in his desire for freedom, and he showed the appearance of one who has cried himself to sleep. Bertha wheeled the perambulator home rapidly. In giving Irene's son his evening bath she noticed that his little body had one or two spots, and, at his request, she kissed them to make them well.

Dick's letter read as follows:

"MY DEAR BERTHA,

"I stayed last night with my colleague at his room in the City. (Verify this, if you consider it necessary.) To-day I am being sent to a conference at Birmingham, and I shall be there until the end of next week. The Grand will find me.

"Whilst I am away, I would like you to consider the matter of our brief discussion. It is possible I did not express myself clearly. The truth is, dear girl, I care for you so much that I find a difficulty in quarrelling with you that does not arise where other people—and these include certain members of your family—are concerned. But my view is this. If our happiness is to go on, you must detach yourself from your relatives. Some one has furnished me with a record of your nephew, Gerald Kennington; it is not good, and you need do nothing more for him. The young man's father I know, and friendship between us cannot be lessened because it has never existed. Finally, there is the case of Irene Guilford's child. Guilford should be called upon at once, and without any more delay, to take charge of him. On this, I fear, you must allow me to insist.

"Write to me when you have thought this over. And, anyway, do remember that I love you."

The composing of an answer had to be deferred, and the cause of the postponement was sufficient. Irene's boy suddenly required exclusive attention; lady experts in the flats, where children were limited in number but guarded with care, handed in recommendations. The name of the doctor varied, but the experts were unanimous in asserting that he was to be summoned instantly. The nurse girl had the presence of mind to stay away, and this fact made it necessary for Bertha to send telegrams to the studio and to the Academy, and to give herself up to the job of looking after the disturbed, uneasy little person in the cot. When Dr. Bulwer arrived, he was able to make the cheering statement that there was a lot of it about.

"You must watch him," says Bulwer, writing a prescription, "very cautiously, and feed him by spoonfuls, and please don't alarm yourself overmuch, but realise that it will require persistent care on your side. No doubt his father will be able to assist in——"

"If his father were available he would not be of the slightest use."

"May I—forgive me—ask if your husband is living with you?"

"My husband is just now away. He is not, you understand, the parent of this boy."

"I see, I see!" Bulwer, as a man of the world, dodges the problem swiftly. "By the by, what is your husband? Occupation, I mean. Bless my heart!" On the reply being furnished. "Not Arthur Wellesley, is it? Used to be in Chelsea. Why, I've known him for years. Mrs. Wellesley," touching her shoulder, pleasantly, "I'll do my best to see you through this. It will entail on you days and nights of anxiety, but you send for me at any moment, and I'll come along, busy or not busy, as fast as

my car will bring me." He spoke to the little patient. "None of your larks, young chap. You know as well as I do that you are only malingering." Irene's boy, in a general way animated by chaff, and not ungifted in something like repartee, gazes at Bulwer with dull eyes.

Certainly the ladies of the flats are astonishingly kind; for the matter of that the sympathy of every woman is aroused. Medical guides are tendered with a leaf turned down at the right place; appeals made to be allowed to do shopping for Madame; custards made, and presented. "Return the dish any old time you like!" The Gems call each evening, on the way home from Maida Vale, and furnish satisfactory reports, and ask for the latest bulletin; folk from the Academy leave cards with affectionate inquiries. Gerald Kennington brings the cheque promised by Minorities in her talk over the telephone, and tendering it, with a magnificent flourish, omits to thank his aunt, but speaks with heat of Wellesley's behaviour in absenting himself from London.

"A blunder, that marriage of yours," says Gerald firmly. "I always said so. Everybody said so. Everybody."

"I don't remember," she says, "that I expressed the opinion. And you ought to know that Dick is not yet aware of the little man's illness."

"Then why don't you tell him?"

"I shall be writing soon."

"My theory is," says Gerald, blinking wisely, "that husband should share, not only wife's joys, but her anxieties. Old-fashioned, no doubt, but there you are." There is a certain particularity in Gerald's method of speech, and a hesitation in approaching difficult words; not until he has gone does it occur to Bertha that her

nephew had perhaps exceeded his normal allowance of refreshment.

Miss Pырford (as was) looks in soon after Gerald has left, and to her is entrusted the cheque, signed on the back, in order that Pырford may see it is paid in. Pырford, in taking charge of it, guarantees that darling—her husband is here referred to—will carry out the transaction the first thing in the morning. And this is as well, for, subsequently, private information comes (obtained by Pырford by circuitous means) to the effect that the West End bank on which the cheque was drawn has been asked, in the name of the drawer, to stop payment; by that time, it has already gone through, and the directions cannot be obeyed.

“Darling thinks it all very mysterious. And I am not sure that he meant me to tell you. How is the dear babs progressing? That was what I really called about.”

As though in recognition of the tender inquiries, Irene's boy takes a more hopeful look on the bedroom and the flat, going so far as to command that favourite toys shall be brought to him. But the mood passes, and a reaction sets in, and Bertha, gazing anxiously at his features, discovers a consolation in the thought that she has done entirely right in making herself responsible for his welfare, and that Dick is therefore completely wrong. Here, at any rate, comes full justification for the procedure taken. Left to a careless nurse or to indifferent people, the little life would go slowly out. And if Dick could only be sensible—— She begins a letter to My dear darling Husband, and is stopped by a piteous wailing from the cot.

William Stammers, apologising for the call, and trusting that his young lordship is on the mend, brings news

of a resolute visitor at the studio. Name, Mr. Edgar Nayland.

"Now I'll tell you, Madame, what put me off him," says William, frankly. "His first step before he jumped in, off the deep end, was to give me a ten-shilling note. I ask you! Do gentlemen pass over sums to that extent unless they want to pump the last word of information out of you? So far as my experience goes, they do not. My scheme of action was therefore clear. I simply dried up. And the more I dried up, the more keen does the gentleman become to find out everything about you; how you were getting on with Dr. Wellesley; whether any of the City gentlemen visited the flat; how you stood in regard to money, and Heaven knows what all. Well-dressed, mind you, and prosperous enough looking, but what you may term, a bit over eager."

"You did well to tell him nothing."

"So I reckoned," agrees William, complacently. "If he'd made it two bob or even 'alf-a-crown, I might have told him something; as it was—I hope I didn't behave injudicious, Madame."

William is so overcome by the praise given that he can only lift both hands in a self-deprecatory manner, and take his leave. At the back of her mind, Bertha discovers it somehow agreeable to think that she has not been forgotten by Nayland.

Once Irene's boy found he was winning, he put out his best efforts, sending the opponent well against the ropes, and showing himself as fit as he had been ere the struggle began. His faithful second exhibited signs of wear and tear; in glancing at her reflection in the mirror she felt hopeful that Dick would not come back until repairs had

been effected. And, from the same cause, her mind seemed to be less active; more than once she took up the sheet of letter paper and attempted to make progress with the communication to Birmingham, only to discover that the fountain pen declined to provide the words. To write of the child's illness would, she realised, show want of tact, and no other subject had recently engaged her thoughts. The good news conveyed by Minories was spoilt by the unexplained endeavour to stop payment of the cheque. An item in the morning journal—there was an accumulation of newspapers, unread owing to pressure of more urgent duties—did give an idea. "Last Hour Candidate at By-Election," it was headed, and the announcement followed that Mr. Robert Anderson, of Langhurst Mansions, N.W., had come forward at a moment when it had been hoped, by one party, that no contest would take place. The journal, being on the side with which Mr. Robert Anderson was associated, spoke with frenzied enthusiasm of his candidature. Undisputably the right man, said the paragraph. No better choice could have been made. Able to weld together the various conflicting elements; gifted in public speech, and the happy owner of an unblemished reputation. "Mrs. Anderson is prepared to lend every assistance in the work of canvassing. Helpers will be greatly needed."

Here, anyhow, was something to the credit of the family, and Bertha, by making inquiries, discovered a neighbour in the flats who was taking a journey to the district honoured by Bertha's nephew; she willingly undertook the errand of obtaining a copy of Mr. Anderson's address to the electors.

"Nothing else?" asked the neighbour.

"Nothing else. And I shall be so much obliged to you."

"A trifle," declared the other, lightly.

From this, the letter to Birmingham went on apace. The illness of the boy was referred to only to excuse the delay; a word of apology was given for the omission to give full confidence on money details, and loans to relatives; in the future nothing would be done without Dick's knowledge. Then the matter of Robert was entered upon, and it engaged all the rest of the available space. Bertha touched upon the far-off occasions when she had helped her nephew, and asserted that she felt amply recompensed now. Whether he failed or whether he succeeded, here was somebody of whom one could be proud. The enclosure, she was certain, would interest Dick, and he was not to give himself the trouble of returning it.

"I want you back again, very much, dear heart. I had no idea I should be so lonely without you!"

A good letter, she admitted, on reading it through, and filling in the punctuation marks; well-balanced and not too apologetic, not over austere. And it might have impressed the recipient, but for the circumstance that it was never dispatched. Not dispatched because the neighbour in handing over a two-paged circular bearing Robert's portrait, suggested that Madame should look through it.

"I lent it to my brother who shares the flat with me," mentioned the lady, "and I was only just in time to prevent him from throwing it into the fire. You know how ratty some men get where it's a question of politics. Men who are otherwise even-tempered."

It proved that the views, rather fiercely expressed by Bertha's nephew, were in direct opposition to those held by Bertha's husband. "Lucky," she remarked to herself, "that I hadn't put a stamp on the envelope "

There seemed a difficulty when she went back to duties at the Academy and at the studio in obtaining the services of a nurse girl; the problem found itself solved by the readiness of other women in the flats. A rota being drawn up, it was arranged that five of them would share the charge of the boy during the hours when Madame had to be absent; on Saturdays and Sundays she had no need for help. The reports each evening were of a complimentary nature, and the welcome given to her by the young man atoned for much of the disturbance of mind that bothered her in the intervals of giving lessons. A picture paper gave a group of doctors at Birmingham; the operation by the photographer had not been too successful, but in the names, reading left to right, Dr. Arthur Wellesley was included. Bertha gave a kiss to the blur which represented him, and whispered a message of affection. Elsewhere she found under the heading of "Notable Sayings," a brief extract from a speech he had delivered; without the context it gave the idea of having been shouted at a white heat of passionate argument. Bertha shivered. And on another page, the camera provided, "Mr. Robert Anderson tackling an interrupter at one of his meetings."

It seemed a pity men could not be more serene; so often they lost placidity for no sufficient reason. And this view was confirmed by the arrival of a telegram from Birmingham. All telegrams are curt, but this one was also emphatic:

"Just met Bulwer. He has impression boy is yours. Feel deeply annoyed.

ARTHUR."

On the Sunday when Irene's boy gave clear signs of

recovery by indicating in his own language, a desire to go out in the perambulator, and take the air, Minories arrived at the flat. She had walked, with the aid of sticks, from the omnibus halt in the main road, and her exhaustion appeared so great that, for some moments, she could not speak.

"Auntie," she said, "here is another drowning person to be saved by you. Gerald has gone off, and taken all the balance of the money Dad and Ma sent. Do the best you can with me!"

CHAPTER XXIV

THE arrival of Minories had the advantage of relieving the demands on neighbours for the care of the boy; it gave to Bertha a feeling of extended liberty. On the Tuesday she went direct from the Academy to investigate progress of the by-election, and reached the borough in time to hear the end of an outdoor speech by her nephew Robert. Around were sandwich men carrying boards which ordered the constituency to Vote for Anderson and Independence; handbills were being pressed on the crowd, and thrown away by the recipients.

"To that inquiry," shouted Robert, in a voice that showed traces of hoarseness, "I can give a very prompt answer. I am asked who is backing me with money in this contest. My reply is that I and no one else—— (Cheers). And, furthermore, it may be as well to assure our friend that never in the whole course of my life, since the hour I left school, have I been under any obligation whatsoever to a single——" The useful cheers came in again as the orator caught sight of his aunt.

Robert hurried through the dispersing crowd so soon as the peroration finished. He adjusted his muffler and then took her arm in an affectionate way that conveyed a suggestion of excuse for the inaccuracy of public speech.

"Two more meetings," he said, "but you don't want to come on to them."

"Doing well?"

"Better than I expected. There really does seem half a chance. I wouldn't place it higher than that."

"And Mrs. Robert?"

"I was going to speak about the wife. Will you run along, and have a chat with her? Although she hasn't seen you lately, we have both kept ourselves well posted in regard to Kilburn affairs, and I rather fancy we can be of assistance." He went on hurriedly: "By the by, there was somebody mentioning your name, just now, aunt. In regard to the offer of a motor-car. Now, let me think of the name."

He beckoned to one of his supporters. There was a whispered consultation.

"Mr. Nayland," he announced to Bertha. "That's who it was. I had a faint recollection——"

"Is he here now?" asked Bertha, casually.

Another discussion in undertones. The supporter gave an arresting cry, and Edgar Nayland pulled up the car he was driving, brought it to the kerb.

"Here," said Robert, with authority, "is your first chance, Mr. Nayland, of doing me a service. Run my aunt along to the house she wants to visit, and wait for her there. Afterwards, take her anywhere she wishes to go." Robert hastened off. Bertha stepped into the car, and gave the address.

"You, naturally enough, my dear Bertha," said Edgar

Nayland, in starting, "look for an explanation of the neglect and the apparent indifference I have shown."

"Don't go too fast," she urged. "There is plenty of time, and you don't want to have your licence endorsed."

"There is no time to waste, Bertha, and the licence is a matter of no concern to me. A week to-day I leave Liverpool."

"For the Isle of Man?"

"For a trip," he said, importantly, "which will last for a whole year."

"How jolly for you!"

"But," firmly, "I don't intend to go alone."

"Why should you?"

"I want you to come with me."

"We bear to the right here," she mentioned, pointing. "And then up this hilly road, and there we are. You must come inside, and see Robert's wife. You can form no idea how well he has done in business since he married her."

"Your nephew is not the only one to make friends with success. I myself have of late done sufficiently well. That is why my people——" The car required attention as the ascent began. "I was saying that my people have asked me to undertake this longish journey, and establish agencies in different parts of the world."

"A mark of confidence," she remarked. "You will have a lot to talk about when you come back."

"I have a good deal to say before I start."

He would not come into the house, arguing that motors were easily taken away by the gangs which roved all over town. Bertha could rely upon finding him there when the call was over.

The maid said Mrs. Robert Anderson was presiding

over a meeting of ladies in the drawing-room; Bertha announced that she would wait. In waiting, she recalled Nayland's invitation, and smiled at the absurdity of it. Edgar never had known when he was overstepping the line which marked off the ridiculous.

"He will have to give himself the trouble of finding some one else," said Bertha.

Womenfolk came out into the hall, chattering vivaciously. Mrs. Robert seemed anxious to bid them farewell, but they ignored the hint of the open door, and one peered into the side room to which Bertha had been conducted.

"Ah!" roguishly. "Thought I should find you hiding somewhere."

"Flora!"

"Yes," agreed the other, coming in, "and why not? As a member of the syndicate, I think I have a right— Is our dear Arthur with you?"

"I was brought here by a Mr. Nayland."

"Let me have a glance at him."

Flora, taken to the window, and allowed to inspect, said at once that Mr. Nayland was a fine figure of a man, belonging to a type she had always admired. An allusion by Bertha to his former connection with the stage increased the other's approval. Actors, she declared, were such good company. Always able to make you laugh.

"To return to Arthur," she said. "I want to hear everything about him, and that Eastern appointment. I am having sleepless nights over it."

Mrs. Robert, having persuaded the main body to depart, was looking around for stragglers. She hailed Bertha with relief.

"You are just going," she said to Flora, "and we

mustn't detain you, because you are such a frightfully busy woman. And thanks, ever so much, for all you are doing."

"My car," mentioned Flora, "will not be here for ten minutes."

"Aunt Bertha," said Mrs. Robert, "come into the drawing-room with me. It is a lifetime since we saw each other."

When Bertha returned to the hall, thirty minutes had elapsed, but Flora was still there; the car, she explained, had arrived, but had been sent off to place itself at the disposal of Mr. Anderson. On the pavement, Edgar Nayland was introduced, and he gave an assurance that the time of waiting had seemed brief; he accepted Bertha's suggestion and Flora sat beside him, and Bertha took the place at the back. There, exempt from conversation, she could think over the surprising offer made by Mrs. Robert. Mrs. Robert, mentioning that there had been disappointments, announced that Robert and herself wished to adopt a child; their selection had fallen on Irene's boy because in his case there was a guarantee that admirable supervision had already existed; they were ready to take over the charge of him, providing it could be looked on as certain that Guilford had relinquished all claims. In making this proposal, said Mrs. Robert, they were thinking of themselves, and of Aunt Bertha. An appeal for time to consider the matter was described by the young woman as perfectly reasonable.

At the Kilburn flat, Edgar Nayland made no further allusion to the twelve months' journey; he and Flora went off engrossed in an argument on the political situation. It appeared that their views were identical. In the flat was a scent of cigarettes of various brands; Irene's boy

was giving himself the pains to destroy tie-on luggage labels.

"Everything has been happening," said Minories, excitedly. "I do so wish you had been here, Auntie dear. Quite half a dozen girl friends of mine called."

"I don't remember inviting them."

"You mustn't be huffy," pleaded the girl. "I'm an invalid, and if my friends don't come to see me, why——"

"It's all right," interrupted Bertha. "Go on."

"And we were smoking and one was playing a fox-trot tune on the piano when," dramatically, "the key turned in the lock, and, to our amazement, in walked your husband."

"Dick? Is he still about?" She ran eagerly to his room.

"Only stayed a few minutes," said Minories. "Just long enough to pack his kit-bag. At first, I thought he was surprised to find us here."

"I don't wonder at that," commented Bertha.

"Then it struck me he was annoyed. And then just before he left, when he gave the boy a hug and a kiss, he seemed troubled and worried."

"Did he ask about me?"

"He did mention you, but the others were talking so much that——"

"You are certain he gave the boy a hug and a kiss?"

"Quite certain. And he whispered something to him, but what that was, of course, I don't know, and the infant—bless his heart—can't tell us."

Bertha took the young man into her room, and using all the arts of cross-examination, tried to persuade him, first that he had a message to deliver; second, that it was his duty to communicate it. The pity was that the

boy's acquaintance with the English language had not gone beyond the early stages when nouns only, and not many of them, are available. He showed good intentions by ejaculating all the words at his command, and, Bertha, sharpened by anxiety, knew that if she could not make sense of his talk, no other interpreter existed. Finally, when he slackened efforts to become intelligible, she urged him not to worry about it, but to wait until the morning.

In the early hours she found the explanation. Irene's boy, it seemed, had been chosen as a messenger, and the letter entrusted to him by Dick had, by oversight or intent, made its way into a papier-mâché fort that had, for some considerable period, withstood the vigorous attacks of leaden soldiers, both foot and artillery. A habit of tidying up the rooms before setting out proved useful.

“My DEAR, DEAR GIRL,

“I have made up my mind to take the job out East, and I sail by the *Cawnpore* from Southampton. My own berth is secured, and on hearing from you at the above address, I will at once book another in your name.

“It is to be a great lark for both of us, and one precious advantage comes in the fact that it enables you to detach yourself from folk who have engaged too much of your thoughts, and your good nature.

“I would ask you to bring the boy along—I have, to be candid, grown to like him—but I am assured the climate is unsuitable. You can place him in the care of some reliable woman, who will give you, at intervals, news of him, and when we come home for a holiday in a few years we can make no end of a fuss of him.

“I decided to write instead of seeing you, because you

ought to have the space for consideration. But please realise that time is short. The *Cawnpore* sails on Saturday morning. The boat train leaves Waterloo at ten o'clock.

"Bertha, dear soul, we are in for a tremendous adventure; one that will enable us to forget any small differences of opinion which have happened."

The pencilled note, obviously written at the flat, was signed, "Your affectionate husband," and Bertha pressed the signature to her lips. A sentence below mentioned that Clay, the only other man in the running, was acutely pained by the selection the directors had made.

There ensued hours which were filled and over-crammed with perplexity, and the need of some one whose advice could be relied upon was more urgent than ever. To go or not to go; that was the question, but its simplicity was marred by a variety of circumstances, and there were moments when these appeared overwhelming; now and again they lessened. Flora rang up the studio—had, so The Gems announced, been ringing all day—and, Bertha's presence at the telephone obtained, said with breathlessness and rapidity that she was compelled to withdraw any financial offer she might have tendered and it didn't matter now to her whether Dr. Wellesley stayed at home or whether he made for what-was-the-name of the place and Flora desired Bertha to be amongst the first of her dear chums to know that in Mr. Nayland she had discovered the one man for whom she had always yearned. The pace increased, and, when Bertha could no longer follow the words, she put back the receiver.

"A slight clearing of the atmosphere," she commented.

Mrs. Robert pressed for a decision in regard to the boy, and Bertha again pointed out that the importance of the subject excused a certain deliberation. Minories heard nothing of Gerald, but a cable informed her that her parents were on their way home.

"Life," remarked the young woman, "is not without its compensations. With Dad and Mum back, I shall feel widowed, but content."

"Minories," said Bertha, suddenly, "do you think you can give a short and a candid answer to an inquiry?"

"I doubt it, auntie."

"Are you as ill as you pretend to be?"

The girl sat up on the sofa. "Why, of course not," she replied. "I was pretty bad, but after a time I found it rather agreeable to be treated as a hopeless invalid. You have no idea how much trouble it saves."

"And doesn't it strike you," challenged Bertha, "that you are something of a fraud and a humbug?"

"A vague impression to that effect has occasionally drifted my way, but, aided by my courageous little heart and buoyant temperament, I have always proved able to dismiss it from my thoughts."

"I don't wonder Gerald left you."

"It might be that I overplayed the character. He may have come to regard my companionship as unduly exacting. And when the opportunity came of taking money, he saw his chance."

"Meanwhile, you are here, in my flat," contended Bertha, "and if I wanted to go away—no matter how important the necessity—I couldn't go."

"But why not?" asked Minories, evenly. "I am fully capable of taking care of myself until my honoured parents arrive."

"There is an opportunity of handing the little chap to some one's care."

"Splendid!" cried the girl. "That lets down the safety curtain. Aunt Bertha, you just barge off whenever you feel inclined to do so. Leave a few pound notes about, and I shall be as happy as a sand-boy." She gave a brief lecture on sand-boys. Did they exist, and if so, what was there in sand to make them jonyous?

On the Thursday, it seemed to Bertha that her husband had a right to expect an answer. One by one, the defensive arguments had given way; with all her desire to remain in London—and to induce him to stay—it did appear that her case was breaking down. The temptation to make a straightforward announcement at the Academy was one she contrived to resist; to do that would be too much like burning her only boat. So a letter, in the rough draft form, was composed at the studio, and conditions set out frankly. She informed Dick that in agreeing to share the journey, the right of coming home at any time when inclination or circumstances made a demand, would be reserved. It was intended to sustain the help always given to connections when they happened to be involved in a crisis. Complete freedom was required on this point, and it must be looked on as one exempt from discussion. As a letter, when finished, it erred, as Bertha admitted to herself, on the side of length and formality; she rewrote it in a more affectionate vein.

"Anything for post, Madame?" asked William Stammers, looking in. "I want a breath of fresh air."

"William," she said, gazing at the addressed envelope, "have you ever dropped a letter in the pillar-box, and then wished you could get it back?"

"I'm no judge," he declared. "You see, I've never had occasion to write anything to anybody."

"It's a difficult task, at times, and you may count yourself fortunate."

"But in your case, Madame," William went on, "I should be inclined to say that anything you had put down on paper would be well worth reading by the individual or party or person it was intended for."

"Your flattery persuades me," said Bertha. She thumped the stamp with her fist, and handed over the letter.

William Stammers, returning at once, said that there was an election car outside; the lady in it wished to know if Madame could be seen, and he had guaranteed to find out and give a reply. "My nephew's wife," said Bertha, casually. "Show her in." At William's second reappearance he had to state that the lady was far too busy on this busy day to leave the car; the communication brought concerned a private matter.

"As I am going out," said Bertha, "I will see to that post letter, William."

"As you please, Madame," he agreed, resignedly.

The occupant of the car proved to be not Mrs. Robert, but a determined-looking young woman who ejaculated, "Jump in!" with such a tone of authority that Bertha complied at once. The car had posters, "Vote for Anderson," and these seemed to emphasise the official note.

"Mrs. Anderson," said the driver, watching the traffic as she sped along, "has something to tell you. She talked it over with me. I suggested you ought to be informed without delay."

"How is the election going?"

"Don't ask," begged the other. "It's all too much

like a nightmare. You, I take it, are Mr. Anderson's aunt?" Bertha admitted the correctness of the assumption. "Then perhaps you can tell me. What was he like in earlier days? What I mean is, has he always had to struggle for himself without assistance from anybody?"

"If he likes to think so," answered Bertha, placidly, "I see no harm."

"I always suspect these self-contented men."

"Should he win," Bertha added, "you might give him my congratulations. I shall be leaving England and there may be no opportunity——"

"And are you taking the little boy Mrs. Anderson spoke about?"

"That isn't possible." The car was arrested by traffic.

"Oh, well then," said the lady driver, "you ought to have this made known to you. Mrs. Anderson has changed her intentions in regard to him. She has found a ducky mite of girl with blue eyes, who, she considers—and her husband agrees—will be less difficult to bring up."

"And the original arrangement is cancelled, then?"

"Washed out!" said the other.

Bertha stepped from the car as the traffic ahead began to move.

In the flat Irene's boy welcomed her with special enthusiasm; it appeared Minorities had shown a languid disinclination to join in boisterous games. Into these Bertha dashed with something approaching hysteria, and when the boy, comfortably tired later, had to be told the dustman was coming, and that the hour had arrived when all really good children went to bye-byes, then he kissed her gratefully on the tip of the nose, the lips, the neck.

The amended letter, posted that night, read as follows:

"MY DEAR DICK,

"I cannot leave my people, and especially the boy, and you must go out alone.

"God bless you. And me.

"BERTHA."

CHAPTER XXV

THE taxi-cab, with Bertha for passenger, took, on the Saturday morning, the directed way in turning out of Westminster Bridge Road, and found itself checked at the dark and narrow point by a motor lorry which, overweighted with care and baggage, had come to a stop. The driver of the taxi, jumping down, assured his fare that there was no cause for alarm; oceans of time existed, and he begged she would remain in the cab. The driver spoke with the complacency of a man who knows the fare register is in working order.

"If your idea," he argued, "was to see parties go away, it's quite likely you'll be on the platform before they are. There's some that prefer leaving it to the last minute. Myself, I don't hold with it. My view is that it's better to be too soon than too late." Bertha indicated that she shared this novel theory, and the driver encouraged, searched his mind for small talk. "When my friend, Mr. Stammers, come to me late last night, and asked me, as man to man, if I could take the job on, I answered him in the affirmative. I didn't consider it was any part of my business to put questions. But when I saw you come down out of the building of flats with signs of agitation about the eyes—tears, in fact—why then I began to wonder."

"Run ahead," urged Bertha, "and see how long it will be before we get through."

It appeared that the driver, sent on this errand, became involved in the contentious argument which invariably arises when traffic is disturbed, for he did not at once return, and Bertha was left to her thoughts. Retrospection led her back to Thursday evening and the writing of the letter to Dick; from there it took her to the following morning and those early hours when, if wakefulness arrives, the mood is disposed to be less resolute. Four-thirty a.m. often brings with it, to some, a lugubrious action of the mind that searches for grievances, imagines snubs, and plans retaliation; in Bertha's case there was, instead, a judicial summing-up. And this over, there had ensued a vehemence in planning, coupled with all the secrecy that conspirators favour, and strategists applaud—so that Robert's success at the by-election engaged but a passing notice—and, as a result, she experienced now a physical and a mental aching to which she was by no means accustomed. This delay to the taxi-cab, for instance, affected her but slightly. If any further disaster occurred, she believed it would be possible to take it with resignation.

"I'm nearly at the end of my tether," she sighed.

"All clear," announced the driver, mounting to his seat, "and up guards and at 'em is now our battle-cry!"

Waterloo porters were busy in giving attention to incoming conveyances, but they had a porter's natural hankering for luggage, and those who glanced at Bertha's cab, passed it by as unworthy of their steel. She pulled at the handle; the door, in a fit of stubbornness, declined to move.

"Pray allow me!" says a familiar voice.

And Bertha Anderson steps out into her husband's

arms. He tries to disengage himself from her embrace until, with a dexterous movement, she lifts the veil which covers her face. It is the kind of veil that hides identity by giving to the wearer the appearance of having been vigorously tattooed.

"You dear blessing," he exclaims, dropping his kit-bag. "Come to see me off, have you? Well, look here, old girl, it isn't going to happen. You have beaten me. I find I can't leave you, and I am coming back. Your taxi can take us both."

"Clay gets the job, then?" she asks, eagerly.

"Clay will be as pleased as Punch," says Dick. They are crossing Westminster Bridge ere they speak again. Bertha's husband, looking out, with appetite, at the river, the high buildings on the Embankment, gives an ejaculation of happiness. "To think," he says, self-reproachfully, "that I ever contemplated giving up all this. And you."

"My man!"

It is not possible to write with authority on the subject, but it can be suggested that Mr. and Mrs. Wellesley hold the record for kisses exchanged on the distance covered by a London taxi. The journey at the side of the parks helps them to achieve this distinction; at Marble Arch, a slight lapse into decorum happens.

"I just want to look in at the studio," remarks Bertha, "and then we'll take your kit-bag home, and go out to lunch."

"It's your day," he says, readily. "We shall do exactly what you like with it."

William Stammers comes down the path, with every sign of amazement; more than a hint of reproof. Bertha speaks quickly:

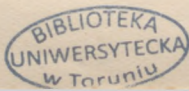
"You and Milton," she whispers, "alone know what

my intentions were. Tell Milton not to say a word. The berth on the *Cawnpore* that he secured for me is not going to be used. Go to Waterloo with this cloak-room ticket, and smuggle my luggage into the flat—as you smuggled it out—early to-morrow morning, before anyone else is awake.” She hurries back to the cab.

“If anybody had asked me,” says William Stammers to the studio door, “I sh’d have said Madame wasn’t one likely to change her mind in that sort of fashion. But, with womenfolk, bless my heart, you never know!”

THE END

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The Woman who did 1 v.
- "All for Greed," Author of (Baroness de Bury).
All for Greed 1 v. — Love the Avenger 2 v.

Anstey, F. (Guthrie).
 The Giant's Robe 2 v. — A Fallen Idol 1 v. — The Pariah 3 v. — The Talking Horse and other Tales 1 v. — Voces Populi 1 v. — The Brass Bottle 1 v. — A Bayard from Bengal 1 v. — Salted Almonds 1 v.

Antin, Mary (Am.).
 The Promised Land 1 v.

Arnold, Sir Edwin, † 1904.
 The Light of Asia (with Portrait) 1 v.

Arnold, Matthew, † 1888.
 Essays in Criticism 2 v. — Essays in Criticism (*Second Series*) 1 v.

Atherton, Gertrude Franklin (Am.).
 American Wives and English Husbands 1 v. — The Californians 1 v. — Patience Sparhawk and her Times 2 v. — Senator North 2 v. — The Doomsdwoman 1 v. — The Aristocrats 1 v. — The Splendid Idle Forties 1 v. — The Conqueror 2 v. — A Daughter of the Vine 1 v. — His Fortunate Grace, etc. 1 v. — The Valiant Runaways 1 v. — The Bell in the Fog, and Other Stories 1 v. — The Travelling Thirds (in Spain) 1 v. — Rezánov 1 v. — Ancestors 2 v. — The Gorgeous Isle 1 v. — Tower of Ivory 2 v. — Julia France and her Times 2 v.

Austen, Jane, † 1817.
 Sense and Sensibility 1 v. — Mansfield Park 1 v. — Pride and Prejudice 1 v. — Northanger Abbey, and Persuasion 1 v. — Emma 1 v.

"Autobiography of Lutfullah," Author of: *vide* E. B. Eastwick.

Avebury, Lord: vide Lubbock.

Bacon, Francis.
 Essays (with Glossary) 1 v.

Bagot, Richard.
 A Roman Mystery 2 v. — Casting of Nets 2 v. — The Just and the Unjust 2 v. — Love's Proxy 1 v. — The Passport 2 v. — Temptation 2 v. — The Lakes of Northern Italy 1 v. — The House of Serravalle 2 v. — My Italian Year 1 v. — The Italians of To-Day 1 v. — Darneley Place 2 v.

Baring, Maurice.
 Half a Minute's Silence 1 v.

Baring-Gould, S.
 Mehalah 1 v. — John Herring 2 v. — Court Royal 2 v.

Barker, Lady: vide Lady Broome.
Barrett, Frank.
 The Smuggler's Secret 1 v. — Out of the Jaws of Death 2 v.

Barrie, J. M.
 Sentimental Tommy 2 v. — Margaret Ogilvy 1 v. — Tommy and Grizel 2 v. — The Little White Bird 1 v. — Peter and Wendy 1 v.

Baynes, Rev. Robert H.
 Lyra Anglicana, Hymns and Sacred Songs 1 v.

Beaconsfield: vide Disraeli.
Beaumont, Averil (Mrs. Hunt).
 Thornicroft's Model 2 v.

Beaverbrook, Lord.
 Success 1 v.

Beerbohm, Max.
 Zuleika Dobson 1 v.

Bell, Currer (Charlotte Brontë—Mrs. Nicholls), † 1855.
 Jane Eyre 2 v. — Shirley 2 v. — Villette 2 v. — The Professor 1 v.

Bell, Ellis & Acton (Emily, † 1848, and Anne, † 1849, Brontë).
 Wuthering Heights, and Agnes Grey 2 v.

Bellamy, Edward (Am.), † 1898.
 Looking Backward 1 v.

Benedict, Frank Lee (Am.).
 St. Simon's Niece 2 v.

Bennett, Arnold.
 The Grand Babylon Hotel 1 v. — The Gates of Wrath 1 v. — A Great Man 1 v. — Sacred and Profane Love 1 v. — Whom God hath joined 1 v. — The Ghost 1 v. — The Grim Smile of the Five Towns 1 v. — Buried Alive 1 v. — The Old Wives' Tale 2 v. — The Glimpse 1 v. — Helen with the High Hand 1 v. — Clayhanger 2 v. — The Card 1 v. — Hilda Lessways 1 v. — The Matador of the Five Towns, and Other Stories 1 v. — Leonora; a Novel 1 v. — Anna of the Five Towns 1 v. — Those United States 1 v. — The Regent 1 v. — The Truth about an Author, and Literary Taste 1 v. — The City of Pleasure 1 v. — Hugo 1 v. — Paris Nights 1 v. — The Plain Man and his Wife, etc. 1 v. — Friendship and Happiness, etc. 1 v. — The Love Match 1 v. — How to make the Best of Life 1 v. — Riceyman Steps 1 v. — The Loot of Cities 1 v. — Elsie and the Child 1 v.

(*Vide* Eden Phillpotts.)

Benson, E. F.
 Dodo 1 v. — The Rubicon 1 v. — Scarle, and Hyssop 1 v. — The Book of Months 1 v. — The Relentless City 1 v. — The Chal-

East of Par
 Barham Br
 Rose, Teac
 Window 1
 Blanes, A
 The Midd

loners 1 v. — An Act in a Backwater 1 v. — The Image in the Sand 2 v. — The Angel of Pain 2 v. — Paul 2 v. — The House of Defence 2 v. — The Blotting Book 1 v. — A Reaping 1 v. — Daisy's Aunt 1 v. — The Osbornes 1 v. — Account Rendered 1 v. — Juggernaut 1 v. — Mrs. Ames 1 v. — The Weaker Vessel 2 v. — Thorley Weir 1 v. — Dodo the Second 1 v. — Visible and Invisible 1 v. — David of King's 1 v. — Rex 1 v.

Benson, Robert Hugh.

The Necromancers 1 v. — A Winnowing 1 v. — None Other Gods 1 v. — The Dawn of All 1 v. — The Coward 1 v. — An Average Man 2 v.

Besant, Sir Walter, † 1901.

The Revolt of Man 1 v. — Dorothy Forster 2 v. — Children of Gibeon 2 v. — The World went very well then 2 v. — Katharine Regina 1 v. — Herr Paulus 2 v. — The Inner House 1 v. — The Bell of St. Paul's 2 v. — For Faith and Freedom 2 v. — Armored of Lyonesse 2 v. — Verbena Camellia Stephanotis, etc. 1 v. — Beyond the Dreams of Avarice 2 v. — The Master Craftsman 2 v. — A Fountain Sealed 1 v. — The Orange Girl 2 v. — The Fourth Generation 1 v. — The Lady of Lynn 2 v.

Besant, Sir Walter, † 1901, & James Rice, † 1882.

The Golden Butterfly 2 v. — Ready-Money Mortiboy 2 v. — By Celia's Arbour 2 v.

Betham-Edwards, M.

The Sylvestres 1 v. — Felicia 2 v. — Brother Gabriel 2 v. — Forestalled 1 v. — Exchange no Robbery, and other Novelles 1 v. — Disarmed 1 v. — Doctor Jacob 1 v. — Pearla 1 v. — Next of Kin Wanted 1 v. — The Parting of the Ways 1 v. — The Romance of a French Parsonage 1 v. — France of To-day 1 v. — Two Aunts and a Nephew 1 v. — A Dream of Millions 1 v. — The Curb of Honour 1 v. — France of To-day (*Second Series*) 1 v. — A Romance of Dijon 1 v. — The Dream-orm-Rent Sky 1 v. — The Lord of the o-French Reminis- . — A Suffolk Court- ggars' Hall 1 v. — lumble Lover 1 v. — M.D. 1 v. — Martha From an Islington

Birchenough, Mabel C.

Potsherds 1 v.

Bisland, E. (Am.): vide Rhoda Broughton.

Bismarck, Prince: vide Butler. *Vide* also **Wilhelm Görlach** (Collection of German Authors, p. 29), and **Whitman**.

Black, William, † 1898.

In Silk Attire 2 v. — A Princess of Thule 2 v. — Kilmenny 1 v. — The Maid of Killeena, and other Stories 1 v. — Three Feathers 2 v. — Madcap Violet 2 v. — Green Pastures and Piccadilly 2 v. — Macleod of Dare 2 v. — Sunrise 2 v. — The Beautiful Wretch 1 v. — Shandon Bells (with Portrait) 2 v. — Judith Shakespeare 2 v. — The Wise Women of Inverness, etc. 1 v. — White Heather 2 v. — Sabina Zembra 2 v. — The Strange Adventures of a House-Boat 2 v. — In Far Lochaber 2 v. — The New Prince Fortunatus 2 v. — Stand Fast, Craig-Royston! 2 v. — Donald Ross of Heimra 2 v. — The Magic Ink, and other Tales 1 v. — Wolfenberg 2 v. — The Handsome Humes 2 v. — Highland Cousins 2 v. — Briseis 2 v. — Wild Eelin 2 v.

Blackmore, Richard Doddridge, † 1900.

Alice Lorraine 2 v. — Mary Anerley 3 v. — Christowell 2 v. — Tommy Upmore 2 v. — Perlycross 2 v.

"Blackwood."

Tales from "Blackwood" (*First Series*) 1 v. — Tales from "Blackwood" (*Second Series*) 1 v.

Blagden, Isa, † 1873.

The Woman I loved, and the Woman who loved me; A Tuscan Wedding 1 v.

Blessington, Countess of (Marguerite Gardiner), † 1849.

Meredith 1 v. — Strathern 2 v. — Memoirs of a Femme de Chambre 1 v. — Marmaduke Herbert 2 v. — Country Quarters (with Portrait) 2 v.

Boldrewood, Rolf.

Robbery under Arms 2 v. — Nevermore 2 v.

Braddon, Miss (Mrs. Maxwell).

Lady Audley's Secret 2 v. — Aurora Floyd 2 v. — Eleanor's Victory 2 v. — John Marchmont's Legacy 2 v. — Henry Dunbar 2 v. — The Doctor's Wife 2 v. — Sir Jasper's Tenant 2 v. — The Lady's Mile

2 v. — Rupert Godwin 2 v. — Dead-Sea Fruit 2 v. — Run to Earth 2 v. — Fenton's Quest 2 v. — The Lovels of Arden 2 v. — Strangers and Pilgrims 2 v. — Lucius Davoren 3 v. — Taken at the Flood 3 v. — Lost for Love 2 v. — A Strange World 2 v. — Hostages to Fortune 2 v. — Joshua Haggard's Daughter 2 v. — Weavers and Weft 1 v. — In Great Waters, and other Tales 1 v. — An Open Verdict 3 v. — Vixen 3 v. — The Cloven Foot 3 v. — The Story of Barbara 2 v. — Asphodel 3 v. — Mount Royal 2 v. — The Golden Calf 2 v. — Flower and Weed 1 v. — Phantom Fortune 3 v. — Ishmael 3 v. — Wyllard's Weird 3 v. — One Thing Needful 2 v. — Cut by the County 1 v. — Like and Unlike 2 v. — The Fatal Three 2 v. — The Day will come 2 v. — Gerard 2 v. — All along the River 2 v. — Thou art the Man 2 v. — The Christmas Hirelings, etc. 1 v. — Sons of Fire 2 v. — London Pride 2 v. — Rough Justice 2 v. — In High Places 2 v. — His Darling Sin 1 v. — The Infidel 2 v. — The Conflict 2 v. — The Rose of Life 2 v. — During Her Majesty's Pleasure 1 v.

Brassey, Lady, † 1887.

A Voyage in the "Sunbeam" 2 v. — Sunshine and Storm in the East 2 v. — In the Trades, the Tropics and the Roaring Forties 2 v.

"Bread-Winners, the," Author of (Am.).
The Bread-Winners 1 v.

Bret Harte: *vide* Harte.

Brock, Rev. William, † 1875.
Sir Henry Havelock, K. C. B. 1 v.

Brontë, Charlotte: *vide* Currer Bell.

Brontë, Emily & Anne: *vide* Ellis & Acton Bell.

Brooks, Shirley, † 1874.
The Silver Cord 3 v. — Sooner or Later 3 v.

Broome, Lady (Lady Barker).
Station Life in New Zealand 1 v. — Station Amusements in New Zealand 1 v. — A Year's Housekeeping in South Africa 1 v. — Letters to Guy, and A Distant Shore—Rodrigues 1 v. — Colonial Memories 1 v. (*Vide* p. 29.)

Broughton, Rhoda.
Cometh up as a Flower 1 v. — Not wisely, but too well 2 v. — Red as a Rose

is She 2 v. — Tales for Christmas Eve 1 v. — Nancy 2 v. — Joan 2 v. — Second Thoughts 2 v. — Belinda 2 v. — Doctor Cupid 2 v. — Alas! 2 v. — Mrs. Bligh 1 v. — Scylla or Charybdis? 1 v. — The Game and the Candle 1 v. — Foes in Law 1 v. — Mamma 1 v. — The Devil and the Deep Sea 1 v. — Between Two Stools 1 v. — Concerning a Vow 1 v.

Broughton, Rhoda, & Elizabeth Bisland (Am.).

A Widower Indeed 1 v.

Brown, John, † 1882.
Rab and his Friends, and other Papers 1 v.

Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, † 1861.
A Selection from her Poetry (with Portrait) 1 v. — Aurora Leigh 1 v.

Browning, Robert, † 1889.
Poetical Works (with Portrait) 4 v.

Bullen, Frank T.
The Cruise of the "Cachalot" 2 v.

Bulwer, Edward, Lord Lytton, † 1873.
Pelham (with Portrait) 1 v. — Eugene Aram 1 v. — Paul Clifford 1 v. — Zanoni 1 v. — The Last Days of Pompeii 1 v. — The Disowned 1 v. — Ernest Maltravers 1 v. — Alice 1 v. — Eva, and The Pilgrims of the Rhine 1 v. — Devereux 1 v. — Godolphin and Falkland 1 v. — Rienzi 2 v. — Night and Morning 1 v. — Athens 2 v. — The Poems and Ballads of Schiller 1 v. — Lucretia 2 v. — The New Timon, and St. Stephen's 1 v. — The Caxtons 2 v. — My Novel 4 v. — What will he do with it? 4 v. — Dramatic Works 2 v. — Caxtoniana 2 v. — The Lost Tales of Miletus 1 v. — Miscellaneous Prose Works 4 v. — Odes and Epodes of Horace 2 v. — Kenelm Chillingly 4 v. — The Coming Race 1 v. — The Parisians 4 v. — Pausanias, the Spartan 1 v.

Bulwer, Henry Lytton (Lord Dalling), † 1872.

Historical Characters 2 v. — The Life of Viscount Palmerston 3 v.

Bunyan, John, † 1688.
The Pilgrim's Progress 1 v.

"Buried Alone," Author of (Charles Wood).
Buried Alone 1 v.

Burnett, Mrs. Frances Hodgson (Am.).
Through one Administration 2 v. — Little Lord Fauntleroy 1 v. — Sara Crewe,

and Editha's Burglar 1 v. — The Pretty Sister of José 1 v. — The Secret Garden 1 v.

Burney, Miss (Madame D'Arblay),
† 1840.

Evelina 1 v.

Burns, Robert, † 1796.

Poetical Works (with Portrait) 1 v.

Burroughs, Edgar Rice (Am.).

Tarzan of the Apes 1 v. — The Return of Tarzan 1 v. — Jungle Tales of Tarzan 1 v. — The Beasts of Tarzan 1 v. — Tarzan and the Golden Lion 1 v. — The Son of Tarzan 1 v.

Burton, Richard F., † 1890.

A Pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina 3 v.

Bury, Baroness de: *vide* "All for Greed."

Butler, A. J.

Bismarck. His Reflections and Reminiscences. Translated from the great German edition, under the supervision of A. J. Butler. With two Portraits. 3 v.

Buxton, Mrs. B. H., † 1881.

Jennie of "The Prince's," 2 v. — Won 2 v. — Great Grenfell Gardens 2 v. — Nell—on and off the Stage 2 v. — From the Wings 2 v.

Byron, Lord, † 1824.

Poetical Works (with Portrait) 5 v.

Caffyn, Mrs. Mannington (Iota).

A Yellow Aster 1 v. — Children of Circumstance 2 v. — Anne Mauleverer 2 v.

Caine, Hall.

The Bondman 2 v. — The Manxman 2 v. — The Christian 2 v. — The Eternal City 3 v. — The Prodigal Son 2 v. — The White Prophet 2 v. — The Woman thou gavest me 3 v. — The Master of Man 2 v.

Caine, William.

The Strangeness of Noel Carton 1 v. — Mendoza and a Little Lady 1 v. — The Author of "Trixie" 1 v. — Lady Sheba's Last Stunt 1 v.

Cameron, Verney Lovett.
Across Africa 2 v.

Cannan, Gilbert.

Annette and Bennett 1 v.

Campbell Praed: *vide* Praed.

Carey, Rosa Nouchette, † 1909.

Not Like other Girls 2 v. — "But Men must Work" 1 v. — Sir Godfrey's Grand-

daughters 2 v. — The Old, Old Story 2 v. — Herb of Grace 2 v. — The Highway of Fate 2 v. — A Passage Perilous 2 v. — At the Moorings 2 v.

Carlyle, Thomas, † 1881.

The French Revolution 3 v. — Frederick the Great 13 v. — Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches 4 v. — The Life of Schiller 1 v. — Essays on Goethe 1 v. — On Heroes, Hero-worship, and the Heroic in History 1 v. — Historical and Political Essays 1 v. — Essays on German Literature 1 v.

Carnegie, Andrew (Am.).

Problems of To-Day 1 v.

Carr, Alaric.

Treherne's Temptation 2 v.

Castle, Agnes & Egerton.

The Star Dreamer 2 v. — Incomparable Bellairs 1 v. — Rose of the World 1 v. — French Nan 1 v. — "If Youth but knew!" 1 v. — My Merry Rockhurst 1 v. — Flower o' the Orange 1 v. — Wroth 2 v. — Diamond Cut Paste 1 v. — The Lost Iphigenia 1 v. — Love Gilds the Scene 1 v. — The Grip of Life 2 v. — Chance the Piper 1 v.

Castle, Egerton.

Consequences 2 v. — "La Bella," and Others 1 v.

Charles, Mrs. Elizabeth Rundle, † 1896:
vide "Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family."

Charlesworth, Maria Louisa, † 1880.

Oliver of the Mill 1 v. (*Vide* p. 29.)

Chesterfield, Earl of.

Letters to his Son 1 v.

Chesterton, G. K.

The Man who was Thursday 1 v. — What's Wrong with the World 1 v. — The Innocence of Father Brown 1 v. — The Flying Inn 1 v.

Cholmondeley, Mary.

Diana Tempest. 2 v. — Red Pottage 2 v. — Moth and Rust 1 v. — Prisoners 2 v. — The Lowest Rung 1 v. — Notwithstanding 1 v.

Christian, Princess: *vide* Alice, Grand-Duchess of Hesse.

"Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family," Author of (Mrs. E. Rundle Charles), † 1896.

Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family 2 v. — On Both Sides of the Sea 2 v. — Winifred Bertram 1 v. — Diary of Mrs. Kitty Trevelyan 1 v. — The Victory of the Vanquished 1 v. — The Cottage by the Cathedral and other Parables 1 v. — Against the Stream 2 v. — The Bertram Family 2 v. — Conquering and to Conquer 1 v. — Lapsed, but not Lost 1 v.

Churchill, Winston (Am.).

Mr. Crewe's Career 2 v.

Clemens, Samuel L.: *vide* Twain.

Clifford, Mrs. W. K.

Love-Letters of a Worldly Woman 1 v. — The Last Touches, and other Stories 1 v. — Mrs. Keith's Crime 1 v. — A Flash of Summer 1 v. — A Woman Alone 1 v. — Woodside Farm 1 v. — The Modern Way 1 v. — The Getting Well of Dorothy 1 v. — Mere Stories 1 v. — Eve's Lover, and Other Stories 1 v. — Sir George's Objection 1 v.

Clive, Mrs. Caroline, † 1873: *vide*
Author of "Paul Ferroll."

Cobbe, Frances Power, † 1904.
Re-Echoes 1 v.

Coleridge, G. R.
An English Squire 2 v.

Coleridge, M. E.
The King with two Faces 2 v.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, † 1834.
Poems 1 v.

Collins, Charles Allston, † 1873.
A Cruise upon Wheels 2 v.

Collins, Mortimer, † 1876.
Sweet and Twenty 2 v. — A Fight with Fortune 2 v.

Collins, Wilkie, † 1889.
After Dark 1 v. — Hide and Seek 2 v. — The Woman in White 2 v. — No Name 3 v. — Armadale 3 v. — The Moonstone 2 v. — Poor Miss Finch 2 v. — The New Magdalen 2 v. — The Frozen Deep 1 v. — The Two Destinies 1 v. — My Lady's Money, and Percy and the Prophet 1 v. — The Haunted Hotel 1 v. — Jezebel's Daughter 2 v. — Heart and Science 2 v. — "I say No," 2 v. — The Guilty River, and The Ghost's Touch 1 v. — Blind Love 2 v.

"Cometh up as a Flower": *vide* Rhoda Broughton.

Conrad, Joseph, † 1924.

An Outcast of the Islands 2 v. — Tales of Unrest 1 v. — The Secret Agent 1 v. — A Set of Six 1 v. — Under Western Eyes 1 v. — 'Twixt Land and Sea Tales 1 v. — Chance 2 v. — Almayer's Folly 1 v. — The Rover 1 v. — Tales of Hearsay 1 v.

Conway, Hugh (F. J. Fergus), † 1885.

Called Back 1 v. — Bound Together 2 v. — A Family Affair 2 v. — Living or Dead 2 v.

Cooper, James Fenimore (Am.), † 1851.
The Spy (with Portrait) 1 v. — The Two Admirals 1 v. — The Jack O' Lantern 1 v. — The Last of the Mohicans 2 v.

Cooper, Mrs.: *vide* Katharine Saunders.

Corelli, Marie.

Vendetta! 2 v. — Thelma 2 v. — A Romance of Two Worlds 2 v. — "Arduath" 3 v. — Wormwood. A Drama of Paris 2 v. — The Hired Baby, with other Stories and Social Sketches 1 v. — Barabbas; A Dream of the World's Tragedy 2 v. — The Sorrows of Satan 2 v. — The Mighty Atom 1 v. — The Murder of Delicia 1 v. — Ziska 1 v. — Boy. A Sketch. 2 v. — The Master-Christian 2 v. — "Temporal Power" 2 v. — God's Good Man 2 v. — Free Opinions 1 v. — Treasure of Heaven (with Portrait) 2 v. — Holy Orders 2 v. — The Life Everlasting 2 v. — Love—and the Philosopher 1 v.

Cotes, Mrs. Everard.

Those Delightful Americans 1 v. — Set in Authority 1 v. — Cousin Cinderella 1 v.

"County, the," Author of.
The County 1 v.

Craik, George Lillie, † 1866.

A Manual of English Literature and of the History of the English Language 2 v.

Craik, Mrs. (Miss Dinah M. Mulock), † 1887.

John Halifax, Gentleman 2 v. — A Life for a Life 2 v. — Romantic Tales 1 v. — Domestic Stories 1 v. — The Ogilvies 1 v. — Lord Erlstoun 1 v. — Christian's Mistake 1 v. — A Noble Life 1 v. — Olive 2 v. —

Studies from Life 1 v. — Poems 1 v. — The Woman's Kingdom 2 v. — The Unkind Word, and other Stories 2 v. — A Brave Lady 2 v. — Hannah 2 v. — Fair France 1 v. — My Mother and I 1 v. — The Little Lane Prince 1 v. — Sermons out of Church 1 v. — The Laurel-Bush; Two little Tinkers 1 v. — A Legacy 2 v. — Young Mrs. Jardine 2 v. — His Little Mother, and other Tales and Sketches 1 v. — Plain Speaking 1 v. — Miss Tommy 1 v. — King Arthur 1 v. (*Vide p. 29.*)

Craik, Georgiana M. (Mrs. May).

Lost and Won 1 v. — Faith Unwin's Ordeal 1 v. — Leslie Tyrrell 1 v. — Wini fred's Wooing, etc. 1 v. — Mildred 1 v. — Hero Trevelyan 1 v. — Without Kith or Kin 2 v. — Only a Butterfly 1 v. — Sylvia's Choice; Theresa 2 v. — Anne Warwick 1 v. — Dorcas 2 v. — (*Vide p. 29.*)

Craik, Georgiana M., & M. C. Stirling.

Two Tales of Married Life (Hard to Bear, by Miss Craik; A True Man, by M. C. Stirling) 2 v.

Craven, Mrs. Augustus: *vide* Lady Fullerton.

Crawford, F. Marion (Am.), † 1909.

Mr. Isaacs 1 v. — Doctor Claudius 1 v. — To Leeward 1 v. — A Roman Singer 1 v. — An American Politician 1 v. — Zoroaster 1 v. — A Tale of a Lonely Parish 2 v. — Saracinesca 2 v. — Marzio's Crucifix 1 v. — Paul Patoff 2 v. — With the Immortals 1 v. — Greifenstein 2 v. — Sant' Ilario 2 v. — A Cigarette-Maker's Romance 1 v. — Khaled 1 v. — The Witch of Prague 2 v. — The Three Fates 2 v. — Don Orsino 2 v. — The Children of the King 1 v. — Pietro Ghisleri 2 v. — Marion Darche 1 v. — Katharine Lauderdale 2 v. — The Ralsons 2 v. — Casa Braccio 2 v. — Adam Johnstone's Son 1 v. — Taquisara 2 v. — A Rose of Yesterday 1 v. — Corleone 2 v. — Via Crucis 2 v. — In the Palace of the King 2 v. — Marietta, a Maid of Venice 2 v. — Cecilia 2 v. — The Heart of Rome 2 v. — Whosoever Shall Offend... 2 v. — Soprano 2 v. — A Lady of Rome 2 v. — Arethusa 2 v. — The Primadonna 2 v. — The Diva's Ruby 2 v. — The White Sister 1 v. — Stradella 1 v. — The Undesirable Governess 1 v. — Uncanny Tales 1 v.

Crockett, S. R., * 1860, † 1914.

The Raiders 2 v. — Cleg Kelly 2 v. — The Grey Man 2 v. — Love Idylls 1 v. — The Dark o' the Moon 2 v.

Croker, B. M.

Peggy of the Bartons 2 v. — The Happy Valley 1 v. — The Old Cantonment, with Other Stories of India and Elsewhere 1 v. — A Nine Days' Wonder 1 v. — The Youngest Miss Mowbray 1 v. — The Cat's-Paw 1 v. — Katherine the Arrogant 1 v. — Fame 1 v. — Babes in the Wood 1 v. — A Rolling Stone 1 v. — The Serpent's Tooth 1 v. — In Old Madras 1 v. — Lismoyle 1 v. — The Chaperon 1 v. — The Pagoda Tree 1 v.

Cross, J. W.: *vide* George Eliot's Life.

Cudlip, Mrs. Pender: *vide* A. Thomas.

Cummins, Miss (Am.), † 1866.

The Lamplighter 1 v. — El Fureidis 1 v. — Haunted Hearts 1 v.

Cushing, Paul.

The Blacksmith of Voe 2 v.

"Daily News."

War Correspondence, 1877, by Archibald Forbes and others 3 v.

Danby, Frank.

The Heart of a Child 2 v. — An Incomplete Etonian 2 v. — Let the Roof fall in 2 v.

Dane, Clemence.

A Bill of Divorcement; Legend 1 v.

"Dark," Author of.

Dark 1 v.

Davis, Richard Harding (Am.).

Gallegher, etc. 1 v. — Van Bibber and Others 1 v. — Ranson's Folly 1 v.

De Foe, Daniel, † 1731.

Robinson Crusoe 2 v.

Deland, Margaret (Am.).

John Ward, Preacher 1 v.

"Democracy," Author of (Am.).

Democracy 1 v.

De Morgan, William.

Joseph Vance 2 v.

"Demos," Author of: *v.* George Gissing.

De Quincey, Thomas.

Confessions of an English Opium-Eater 1 v.

"Diary and Notes": *vide* Author of
"Horace Templeton."

Dickens, Charles, † 1870.

The Pickwick Club 2 v. — American Notes 1 v. — Oliver Twist 2 v. — Nicholas Nickleby 2 v. — Sketches 1 v. — Martin Chuzzlewit 2 v. — A Christmas Carol; The Chimes; The Cricket on the Hearth 1 v. — Master Humphrey's Clock (Old Curiosity Shop; Barnaby Rudge, etc.) 3 v. — Pictures from Italy 1 v. — Dombey and Son 3 v. — David Copperfield 3 v. — Bleak House 4 v. — A Child's History of England (2 v. 8^o M. 2, 70.) — Hard Times 1 v. — Little Dorrit (with Illustrations) 4 v. — The Battle of Life; The Haunted Man 1 v. — A Tale of two Cities 2 v. — Hunted Down; The Uncommercial Traveller 1 v. — Great Expectations 2 v. — Christmas Stories, etc. 1 v. — Our Mutual Friend (with Illustrations) 4 v. — Somebody's Luggage; Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings; Mrs. Lirriper's Legacy 1 v. — Doctor Marigold's Prescriptions; Mugby Junction 1 v. — The Mystery of Edwin Drood (with Illustrations) 2 v. — The Mudfog Papers, 1 v. — The Letters of Charles Dickens, ed. by his Sister-in-law and his eldest Daughter 4 v. — *Vide* also Household Words, Novels and Tales, and John Forster.

Dickens, Charles, & Wilkie Collins.

No Thoroughfare; The Late Miss Hollingford 1 v.

Disraeli, Benjamin, Lord Beaconsfield, † 1881.

Coningsby 1 v. — Sybil 1 v. — Contarini Fleming (with Portrait) 1 v. — Alroy 1 v. — Tancred 2 v. — Venetia 2 v. — Vivian Grey 2 v. — Henrietta Temple 1 v. — Lothair 2 v. — Endymion 2 v.

Dixon, Ella Hepworth.

The Story of a Modern Woman 1 v. — One Doubtful Hour 1 v.

Dixon, W. Hepworth, † 1879.

Personal History of Lord Bacon 1 v. — The Holy Land 2 v. — New America 2 v. — Spiritual Wives 2 v. — Her Majesty's Tower 4 v. — Free Russia 2 v. — History of two Queens 6 v. — White Conquest 2 v. — Diana, Lady Lyle 2 v.

Dixon, Jr., Thomas (Am.).

The Leopard's Spots 2 v.

Dougall, L. (Am.).

Beggars All 2 v.

Dowie, Méné Muriel.

A Girl in the Karpathians 1 v.

Doyle, Sir A. Conan.

The Sign of Four 1 v. — Micah Clarke 2 v. — The Captain of the Pole-Star, and other Tales 1 v. — The White Company 2 v. — A Study in Scarlet 1 v. — The Great Shadow, and Beyond the City 1 v. — The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes 2 v. — The Refugees 2 v. — The Firm of Girdlestone 2 v. — The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes 2 v. — Round the Red Lamp 1 v. — The Stark Munro Letters 1 v. — The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard 1 v. — Rodney Stone 2 v. — Uncle Bernac 1 v. — The Tragedy of the Korosko 1 v. — A Duet 1 v. — The Green Flag 1 v. — The Great Boer War 2 v. — The War in South Africa 1 v. — The Hound of the Baskervilles 1 v. — Adventures of Gerard 1 v. — The Return of Sherlock Holmes 2 v. — Sir Nigel 2 v. — Through the Magic Door 1 v. — Round the Fire Stories 1 v. — The Mystery of Cloomber 1 v. — The Last Galley 1 v. — The Lost World 1 v. — The Poison Belt 1 v.

Drummond, Professor Henry, † 1897.

The Greatest Thing in the World; Pax Vobiscum; The Changed Life 1 v.

Dufferin, the Earl of.

Letters from High Latitudes 1 v.

Duncan, Sara Jeannette: *vide* Mrs. Cotes.

Dunton: *vide* Th. Watts-Dunton.

Earl, the, and the Doctor.

South Sea Bubbles 1 v.

Eastwick, Edward B., † 1883.

Autobiography of Lutfullah 1 v.

Edgeworth, Maria: *vide* p. 29.

Edwardes, Mrs. Annie.

Steven Lawrence, Yeoman 2 v. — Ought we to visit her? 2 v. — A Vagabond Heroine 1 v. — Leah: A Woman of Fashion 2 v. — A Blue-Stocking 1 v. — Jet: Her Face or Her Fortune? 1 v. — Vivian the Beauty 1 v. — A Ballroom Repentance 2 v. — A Girton Girl 2 v. — A Playwright's Daughter, and Bertie Griffiths 1 v. — Pearl-Powder 1 v.

Edwardes, Amelia B., † 1892.

Barbara's History 2 v. — Miss Carew 2 v. — Hand and Glove 1 v. — Half a Mil-

lion of Money 2 v. — Debenham's Vow 2 v. — In the Days of my Youth 2 v. — Untrodden Peaks and Unfrequented Valleys 1 v. — Monsieur Maurice 1 v. — A Night on the Borders of the Black Forest 1 v. — A Thousand Miles up the Nile 2 v. — Lord Brackenbury 2 v.

Edwards, M. Betham: *vide* Betham.

Eggleston, Edward (Am.), † 1902.
The Faith Doctor 2 v.

Elbon, Barbara (Am.).
Bethesda 2 v.

Eliot, George (Miss Evans—Mrs. Cross), † 1880.

Scenes of Clerical Life 2 v. — Adam Bede 2 v. — The Mill on the Floss 2 v. — Silas Marner 1 v. — Romola 2 v. — Felix Holt 2 v. — Daniel Deronda 4 v. — The Lifted Veil, and Brother Jacob 1 v. — Impressions of Theophrastus Such 1 v. — Essays and Leaves from a Note-Book 1 v. — George Eliot's Life, edited by her Husband, J. W. Cross 4 v.

"Elizabeth and her German Garden,"
Author of.

Elizabeth and her German Garden 1 v. — The Solitary Summer 1 v. — The Benefactress 2 v. — Princess Priscilla's Fortnight 1 v. — The Adventures of Elizabeth in Rügen 1 v. — Fräulein Schmidt and Mr. Anstruther 1 v. — Vera 1 v. — The Enchanted April 1 v. — Love 1 v.

Elliot, Mrs. Frances, † 1898.

Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy 2 v. — Old Court Life in France 2 v. — The Italians 2 v. — The Diary of an Idle Woman in Sicily 1 v. — Pictures of Old Rome 1 v. — The Diary of an Idle Woman in Spain 2 v. — The Red Cardinal 1 v. — The Story of Sophia 1 v. — Diary of an Idle Woman in Constantinople 1 v. — Old Court Life in Spain 2 v. — Roman Gossip 1 v.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo (Am.), † 1882.
Representative Men 1 v. — Essays 1 v. — Nature and Thought 1 v. — English Traits 1 v. — Conduct of Life 1 v.

"English Fairy Tales." 1 v.

Erroll, Henry.
An Ugly Duckling 1 v.

Esler, E. Rentoul.
The Way they loved at Grimpat 1 v.

"Estelle Russell," Author of.
Estelle Russell 2 v.

Esterre-Keeling, Elsa D'.
Three Sisters 1 v. — A Laughing Philosopher 1 v. — The Professor's Wooing 1 v. — In Thoughtland and in Dreamland 1 v. — Orchardscroft 1 v. — Appassionata 1 v. — Old Maids and Young 2 v. — The Queen's Serf 1 v.

"Euthanasia," Author of.
Euthanasia 1 v.

Ewing, Juliana Horatia, † 1885.
Jackanapes; The Story of a Short Life; Daddy Darwin's Dovecot 1 v. — A Flat Iron for a Farthing 1 v. — The Brownies, and other Tales 1 v.

"Expiated," Author of.
Expiated 2 v.

Fergus, F. J.: *vide* Hugh Conway.

Farrar, F. W. (Dean), † 1903.
Darkness and Dawn 3 v.

"Fate of Fenella, the," Authors of.
The Fate of Fenella, by 24 Authors 1 v.

Felkin, Alfred Laurence: *vide* E. T. Fowler.

Felkin, Mrs.: *vide* E. T. Fowler.

Fendall, Percy: *vide* F. C. Philips.

Fenn, George Manville.
The Parson o' Dumford 2 v. — The Clerk of Portwick 2 v.

Fielding, Henry, † 1754.
Tom Jones 2 v.

Findlater, Mary & Jane (Am.): *vide* Kate Douglas Wiggin.

Fitzgerald, Edward.
Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám 1 v.

Five Centuries
of the English Language and Literature
John Wycliffe. — Geoffrey Chaucer. — Stephen Hawes. — Sir Thomas More. — Edmund Spenser. — Ben Jonson. — John Locke. — Thomas Gray (vol. 500, published 1860) 1 v.

Fleming, George (Am.).
Kismet 1 v. — Andromeda 2 v.

Forbes, Archibald, † 1900.
My Experiences of the War between France and Germany 2 v. — Memories

and Studies of War and Peace 2 v. — *Vide* also, "Daily News," War Correspondence.

Forrest, R. E.

Eight Days 2 v.

Forrester, Mrs.

Viva 2 v. — Rhona 2 v. — My Lord and My Lady 2 v. — I have Lived and Loved 2 v. — June 2 v. — Although he was a Lord, and other Tales 1 v. — Corisande, and other Tales 1 v. — Once Again 2 v. — Of the World, Worldly 1 v. — Dearest 2 v. — The Light of other Days 1 v. — Too Late Repented 1 v.

Forster, John, † 1876.

The Life of Charles Dickens (with Illustrations and Portraits) 6 v. — Life and Times of Oliver Goldsmith 2 v.

Fothergill, Jessie.

The First Violin 2 v. — Probation 2 v. — Made or Marred, and "One of Three" 1 v. — Peril 2 v. — Borderland 2 v.

"Found Dead," Author of: *vide* James Payn.

Fowler, Ellen Thorneycroft (Mrs. Alfred Laurence Felkin).

A Double Thread 2 v. — The Farringtons 2 v. — Fuel of Fire 1 v. — Place and Power 2 v. — In Subjection 2 v. — Miss Fallowfield's Fortune 1 v.

Fowler, Ellen Thorneycroft (Mrs. A. L. Felkin), & Alfred Laurence Felkin.

Kate of Kate Hall 2 v.

Fox, Caroline, † 1871.

Memories of Old Friends from her Journals and Letters, edited by Horace N. Pym 2 v.

"Frank Fairleigh," Author of (F. E. Smedley), † 1864.

Frank Fairleigh 2 v.

Francis, M. E.

The Duenna of a Genius 1 v.

Frederic, Harold (Am.), † 1898.

Illumination 2 v.

Freeman, Edward A., † 1892.

The Growth of the English Constitution 1 v. — Sketches from French Travel 1 v.

Froude, James Anthony, † 1894.

Oceana 1 v. — The Spanish Story of the Armada, and other Essays 1 v.

Fullerton, Lady Georgiana, † 1885.

Ellen Middleton 1 v. — Grantley Manor 2 v. — Lady Bird 2 v. — Too Strange not to be True 2 v. — Constance Sherwood 2 v. — Mrs. Gerald's Niece 2 v. — The Notary's Daughter 1 v. — The Lilies of the Valley, and The House of Penarvan 1 v. — The Life of Luisa de Carvajal 1 v. — A Will and a Way, and The Handkerchief at the Window 2 v. — Eliane 2 v. (by Mrs. Augustus Craven, translated by Lady Fullerton). — Laurentia 1 v.

Galsworthy, John.

The Man of Property 2 v. — The Country House 1 v. — Fraternity 1 v. — Villa Ruben 1 v. — A Man of Devon, etc. 1 v. — A Motley 1 v. — The Patrician 1 v. — Justice, and Other Plays 1 v. — The Silver Box, and Other Plays 1 v. — The Inn of Tranquillity 1 v. — The Island Pharisees 1 v. — The Dark Flower 1 v. — A Bit o' Love, and Other Plays 1 v. — A Family Man, and Other Plays 1 v. — Captures 1 v. — The White Monkey 1 v.

Gardiner: vide Lady Blessington.

Gaskell, Mrs., † 1865.

Mary Barton 1 v. — Ruth 2 v. — Lizzie Leigh, and other Tales 1 v. — The Life of Charlotte Brontë 2 v. — Lois the Witch, etc. 1 v. — Sylvia's Lovers 2 v. — Wives and Daughters 3 v. — Cranford 1 v.

"Geraldine Hawthorne," Author of: *vide* Author of "Miss Molly."

Gerard, Dorothea (Madame Longard de Longgarde).

Lady Baby 2 v. — Recha 1 v. — Orthodox 1 v. — The Wrong Man 1 v. — A Spotless Reputation 1 v. — One Year 1 v. — The Supreme Crime 1 v. — The Blood-Tax 1 v. — The Eternal Woman 1 v. — Made of Money 1 v. — The Bridge of Life 1 v. — The Three Essentials 1 v. — The Improbable Idyl 1 v. — The Compromise 2 v. — Itinerant Daughters 1 v. — Restitution 1 v. — Pomp and Circumstance 1 v. — The Grass Widow 1 v. — A Glorious Lie 1 v. — The City of Enticement 1 v. — Exotic Martha 1 v. — The Unworthy Pact 1 v. — The Waters of Lethe 1 v. — The Austrian Officer at Work and at Play 1 v.

- Gerard, E.** (Emily de Laszowska).
A Secret Mission 1 v. — A Foreigner 2 v.
— The Extermination of Love 2 v.
- Gibbon, Perceval.**
The Adventures of Miss Gregory 1 v.
- Giberne, Agnes.**
The Curate's Home 1 v.
- Gissing, George,** † 1903.
Demos 2 v. — New Grub Street 2 v.
- Gladstone, W. E.,** † 1898.
Rome and the Newest Fashions in Religion 1 v. — Bulgarian Horrors, and Russia in Turkistan, with other Tracts 1 v. — The Hellenic Factor in the Eastern Problem, with other Tracts 1 v.
- Glyn, Elinor.**
The Visits of Elizabeth 1 v. — The Reflections of Ambrosine 1 v. — The Vicissitudes of Evangeline 1 v. — Beyond the Rocks 1 v. — Three Weeks 1 v. — Elizabeth Visits America 1 v. — His Hour 1 v. — The Reason Why 1 v. — Halcyone 1 v. — The Contrast 1 v. — Guinevere's Lover 1 v. — Man and Maid 1 v. — Six Days 1 v. — The Great Moment 1 v.
- Godfrey, Hal:** *vide* Charlotte O'Connor Eccles.
- Goldring, Douglas.**
Nobody Knows 1 v.
- Goldsmith, Oliver,** † 1774.
Select Works (with Portrait) 1 v.
- Goodman, Edward J.**
Too Curious 1 v.
- Gordon, Julien (Am.).**
A Diplomat's Diary 1 v.
- Gordon, Major-Gen. C. G.,** † 1885.
His Journals at Kartoum (with eighteen Illustrations) 2 v.
- Gore, Mrs.,** † 1861.
Castles in the Air 1 v. — The Dean's Daughter 2 v. — Progress and Prejudice 2 v. — Mammon 2 v. — A Life's Lessons 2 v. — The Two Aristocracies 2 v. — Heckington 2 v.
- Grand, Sarah.**
Our Manifold Nature 1 v. — Babs the Impossible 2 v. — Emotional Moments 1 v.
- Grant, Miss.**
Victor Lescar 2 v. — The Sun-Maid 2 v.
- My Heart's in the Highlands 2 v. — Artiste 2 v. — Prince Hugo 2 v.
- Gray, Maxwell.**
The Silence of Dean Maitland 2 v. — The Reproach of Annesley 2 v.
- Grenville: Murray, E. C.** (Trois-Etoiles), † 1881.
The Member for Paris 2 v. — Young Brown 2 v. — The Boudoir Cabal 3 v. — French Pictures in English Chalk (*First Series*) 2 v. — The Russians of To-day 1 v. — French Pictures in English Chalk (*Second Series*) 2 v. — Strange Tales 1 v. — That Artful Vicar 2 v. — Six Months in the Ranks 1 v. — People I have met 1 v.
- Grey, Zane (Am.).**
Tappan's Burro, and Other Stories 1 v. — The Call of the Canyon 1 v. — The Thundering Herd 1 v.
- Grimwood, Ethel St. Clair.**
My Three Years in Manipur (with Portrait) 1 v.
- Grohman, W. A. Baillie.**
Tyrol and the Tyrolese 1 v.
- Gunter, A. C. (Am.),** † 1907.
Mr. Barnes of New York 1 v.
- Guthrie, F. Anstey:** *vide* Anstey.
- "Guy Livingstone," Author of (George Alfred Laurence), † 1876.
Guy Livingstone 1 v. — Sword and Gown 1 v. — Barren Honour 1 v. — Border and Bastille 1 v. — Maurice Dering 1 v. — Sans Merci 2 v. — Breaking a Butterfly 2 v. — Anteros 2 v. — Hagarine 2 v.
- Habberton, John (Am.).**
Helen's Babies & Other People's Children 1 v. — The Bowsham Puzzle 1 v. — Mrs. Mayburn's Twins 1 v.
- Haggard, Sir H. Rider,** † 1925.
King Solomon's Mines 1 v. — She 2 v. — Jess 2 v. — Allan Quatermain 2 v. — The Witch's Head 2 v. — Maiwa's Revenge 1 v. — Mr. Meeson's Will 1 v. — Colonel Quaritch, V. C. 2 v. — Cleopatra 2 v. — Allan's Wife 1 v. — Beatrice 2 v. — Dawn 2 v. — Montezuma's Daughter 2 v. — The People of the Mist 2 v. — Joan Haste 2 v. — Heart of the World 2 v. — The Wizard 1 v. — Doctor Therne 1 v. — Swallow 2 v. — Black Heart and White Heart, and Elissa 1 v. — Lysbeth 2 v. — A Winter

Pilgrimage 2 v. — Pearl-Maiden 2 v. — Stella Fregelius 2 v. — The Brethren 2 v. — Ayesha. The Return of 'She' 2 v. — The Way of the Spirit 2 v. — Benita 1 v. — Far Margaret 2 v. — The Lady of Blossholme 1 v. — Morning Star 1 v. — Queen Sheba's Ring 1 v. — Red Eve 1 v. — Marie 1 v. — Child of Storm 1 v. — The Wanderer's Necklace 1 v. — Wisdom's Daughter 1 v. — Heu-Heu, or The Monster 1 v. — Queen of the Dawn 1 v.

Haggard, Sir H. Rider, & Andrew Lang. The World's Desire 2 v.

Hall, Mrs. S. C., † 1881.

Can Wrong be Right? 1 v. — Marian 2 v.

Hamerton, P. G., † 1894.

Marmorne 1 v. — French and English 2 v.

Hardy, Rev. E. J.

How to be Happy though Married 1 v. — Still Happy though Married 1 v.

Hardy, Miss Iza: *vide* Author of "Not Easily Jealous."

Hardy, Thomas.

The Hand of Ethelberta 2 v. — Far from the Madding Crowd 2 v. — The Return of the Native 2 v. — The Trumpet-Major 2 v. — A Laodicean 2 v. — Two on a Tower 2 v. — A Pair of Blue Eyes 2 v. — A Group of Noble Dames 1 v. — Tess of the D'Urbervilles 2 v. — Life's Little Ironies 1 v. — Jude the Obscure 2 v. — A Changed Man 1 v. — The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid 1 v.

Harland, Henry (Am.), † 1905.

The Lady Paramount 1 v.

Harraden, Beatrice.

Ships that pass in the Night 1 v. — In Varying Moods 1 v. — Hilda Strafford, and The Remittance Man 1 v. — The Fowler 2 v. — The Scholar's Daughter 1 v. — Interplay 2 v. — Out of the Wreck I Rise 1 v. — Patuffa 1 v. — Youth Calling 1 v.

Harrison, Agnes.

Martin's Vineyard 1 v.

Harrison, Mrs.: *vide* Lucas Malet.

Harte, Bret (Am.), † 1902.

Prose and Poetry (Tales of the Argonauts: — The Luck of Roaring Camp; The Outcasts of Poker Flat, etc. — Spanish and American Legends; Condensed Novels; Civic and Character Sketches; Poems) 2 v. — Idyls of the Foothills 1 v. — Gabriel Conroy 2 v. —

Two Men of Sandy Bar 1 v. — Thankful Blossom, and other Tales 1 v. — Drift from Two Shores 1 v. — Jeff Briggs's Love Story, and other Tales 1 v. — Flip, and other Stories 1 v. — On the Frontier 1 v. — By Shore and Sedge 1 v. — Maruja 1 v. — Snow-bound at Eagle's, and Devil's Ford 1 v. — The Crusade of the "Excelsior" 1 v. — The Heritage of Dedlow Marsh, and other Tales 1 v. — A Waif of the Plains 1 v. — A First Family of Tasajara 1 v. — Sally Dows, etc. 1 v. — A Protégée of Jack Hamlin's, etc. 1 v. — The Bell-Ringer of Angel's, etc. 1 v. — Clarence 1 v. — The Ancestors of Peter Atherly, etc. 1 v. — Tales of Trail and Town 1 v. — Mr. Jack Hamlin's Mediation, and other Stories 1 v. — From Sand-Hill to Pine 1 v. — Under the Redwoods 1 v. — Trent's Trust 1 v.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel (Am.), † 1864.

The Scarlet Letter 1 v. — Transformation (The Marble Faun) 2 v. — Passages from his English Note-Books 2 v.

Hay, John (Am.), † 1905: *vide* "The Bread-Winners," Author of.

Hay, Marie.

Mas'aniello 1 v. — The Evil Vineyard 1 v.

Hearn, Lafcadio, † 1906.

Kokoro 1 v. — Kwaidan 1 v. — Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan (*First Series*) 1 v. — Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan (*Second Series*) 1 v. — Gleanings in Buddha-Fields 1 v. — Out of the East 1 v. — The Romance of the Milky Way, etc. 1 v.

Hector, Mrs.: *vide* Mrs. Alexander.

"Heir of Redclyffe, tho," Author of *vide* Charlotte M. Yonge.

Helps, Sir Arthur, † 1875.

Friends in Council 2 v. — Ivan de Biron 2 v.

Hemans, Mrs. Felicia, † 1835.

Select Poetical Works 1 v.

Henry, O. (Am.).

Cabbages and Kings 1 v.

Hergesheimer, Joseph (Am.).

Java Head 1 v. — Cytherea 1 v. — Mountain Blood 1 v. — The Three Black Pennys 1 v. — Linda Condon 1 v. — The Bright Shawl 1 v. — Balisand 1 v.

Hewlett, Maurice.

The Forest Lovers 1 v. — Little Novels of Italy 1 v. — New Canterbury Tales 1 v. — The Queen's Quair; or, The Six Years' Tragedy 2 v. — Fond Adventures 1 v. — The Fool Errant 2 v. — The Stopping Lady 1 v. — The Spanish Jade 1 v. — Halfway

Hous 2 v. — Open Country 1 v. — Rest Harrow 1 v. — Brazenhead the Great 1 v. — The Song of Renny 1 v. — Lore of Proserpine 1 v. — Bendish 1 v.

Hichens, Robert.

Flames 2 v. — The Slave 2 v. — Felix 2 v. — The Woman with the Fan 2 v. — The Garden of Allah 2 v. — The Black Spaniel, and Other Stories 1 v. — The Call of the Blood 2 v. — A Spirit in Prison 2 v. — Barbary Sheep 1 v. — Bella Donna 2 v. — The Spell of Egypt 1 v. — The Dweller on the Threshold 1 v. — The Fruitful Vine 2 v. — The Londoners 1 v. — An Imaginative Man 1 v. — The Way of Ambition 2 v. — The Holy Land 1 v. — The Last Time, and Other Stories 1 v. — After the Verdict 2 v.

Hobart Pasha, Admiral, † 1886.

Sketches from my Life 1 v.

Hobbes, John Oliver (Mrs. Craigie) (Am.), † 1906.

The Gods, Some Mortals and Lord Wickenham 1 v. — The Serious Wooing 1 v. — The Dream and the Business 2 v.

Hoey, Mrs. Cashel.

A Golden Sorrow 2 v. — Out of Court 2 v.

Holdsworth, Annie E.

The Years that the Locust hath Eaten 1 v. — The Gods Arrive 1 v. — The Valley of the Great Shadow 1 v. — Great Lowlands 1 v. — A Garden of Spinsters 1 v.

Holme Lee: vide Harriet Parr.

Holmes, Oliver Wendell (Am.), † 1894.

The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table 1 v. — The Professor at the Breakfast-Table 1 v. — The Poet at the Breakfast-Table 1 v.

Hope, Anthony (Hawkins).

Mr. Witt's Widow 1 v. — Half a Hero 1 v. — Comedies of Courtship 1 v. — The Heart of Princess Osra 1 v. — Simon Dale 2 v. — Rupert of Hentzau 1 v. — The King's Mirror 2 v. — Quisante 1 v. — The Intrusions of Peggy 2 v. — Double Harness 2 v. — A Servant of the Public 2 v. — Sophy of Kravonia 2 v. — Tales of Two People 2 v. — The Great Miss Driver 2 v.

Hopkins, Tighe.

An Idler in Old France 1 v. — The Man in the Iron Mask 1 v. — The Dungeons of Old Paris 1 v. — The Silent Gate 1 v. — The Women Napoleon Loved 1 v. — The Romance of Fraud 1 v.

"Horace Templeton," Author of.
Diary and Notes 1 v.

Hornung, Ernest William.

A Bride from the Bush 1 v. — Under Two Skies 1 v. — Some Persons Unknown 1 v. — The Amateur Cracksmen 1 v. — The Rogue's March 1 v. — Peccavi 1 v. — The Black Mask 1 v. — The Shadow of the Rope 1 v. — No Hero 1 v. — Denis Dent 1 v. — A Thief in the Night 1 v. — Dead Men Tell No Tales 1 v. — Mr. Justice Raffles 1 v. — The Camera Fiend 1 v. — Fathers of Men 2 v. — The Thousandth Woman 1 v. — The Crime Doctor 1 v.

"Household Words."

Conducted by Charles Dickens. 1851-56. 36 v. — NOVELS and TALKS reprinted from Household Words by Charles Dickens. 1856-59. 11 v.

Houstoun, Mrs.: vide "Recommended to Mercy."

"How to be Happy though Married":
vide Rev. E. J. Hardy.

Howard, Blanche Willis (Am.), † 1898.

Aunt Serena 1 v. — Guenn 2 v. — Tony, the Maid, etc. 1 v.

Howard, Blanche Willis, † 1898, & William Sharp (Am.), † 1905.

A Fellowe and His Wife 1 v.

Howells, William Dean (Am.).

A Foregone Conclusion 1 v. — The Lady of the Aroostook 1 v. — A Modern Instance 2 v. — The Undiscovered Country 1 v. — Venetian Life (with Portrait) 1 v. — Italian Journeys 1 v. — A Chance Acquaintance 1 v. — Their Wedding Journey 1 v. — A Fearful Responsibility, and Tonelli's Marriage 1 v. — A Woman's Reason 2 v. — Dr. Breen's Practice 1 v. — Miss Bellard's Inspiration 1 v.

Hughes, Thomas, † 1898.

Tom Brown's School-Days 1 v.

Hungerford, Mrs. (Mrs. Argles), † 1897.

Molly Bawn 2 v. — Mrs. Geoffrey 2 v. — Faith and Unfaith 2 v. — Loys, Lord Berresford, and other Tales 1 v. — Rossmoyne 2 v. — A Maiden all Forlorn, etc. 1 v. — A Passive Crime, and other Stories 1 v. — Green Pleasure and Grey Grief 2 v. — A Mental Struggle 2 v. — Her Week's Amusement, and Ugly Barrington 1 v. — Lady Branksmere 2 v. — Lady Valworth's Diamonds 1 v. — A

Modern Circe 2 v. — Marvel 2 v. — The Hon. Mrs. Vereker 1 v. — Under-Currents 2 v. — In Durance Vile, etc. 1 v. — A Troublesome Girl, and other Stories 1 v. — A Life's Remorse 2 v. — A Born Coquette 2 v. — The Duchess 1 v. — Lady Verner's Flight 1 v. — Nora Creina 2 v. — A Mad Prank, and other Stories 1 v. — The Hoyden 2 v. — Peter's Wife 2 v. — A Tug of War 1 v. — The Professor's Experiment 2 v. — A Point of Conscience 2 v. — A Lonely Girl 1 v. — Lovice 1 v. — The Coming of Chloe 1 v.

Hunt, Mrs.: *vide* Beaumont.

Hunt, Violet.

The Human Interest 1 v. — White Rose of Weary Leaf 2 v. — The Wife of Altamont 1 v.

Hutten, Baroness von (Am.).

Kingsmead 1 v. — The Lordship of Love 2 v. — The Green Patch 1 v. — Julia 1 v.

Ingelow, Jean, † 1897.

Off the Skelligs 3 v. — Poems 2 v. — Fated to be Free 2 v. — Sarah de Bereinger 2 v. — Don John 2 v.

Inglis, the Hon. Lady.

The Siege of Lucknow 1 v.

Ingram, John H.: *vide* Poe.

Iota: *vide* Mrs. Caffyn.

Irving, Washington (Am.), † 1859.

The Sketch Book (with Portrait) 1 v. — The Life of Mahomet 1 v. — Lives of the Successors of Mahomet 1 v. — Oliver Goldsmith 1 v. — Chronicles of Wolfert's Roost 1 v. — Life of George Washington 5 v.

Jackson, Mrs. Helen (H. H.) (Am.), † 1885.
Ramona 2 v.

Jacobs, W. W.

Many Cargoes 1 v. — The Skipper's Wooing, and The Brown Man's Servant 1 v. — Sea Urchins 1 v. — A Master of Craft 1 v. — Light Freights 1 v. — At Sun-
wich Port 1 v. — The Lady of the Barge 1 v. — Odd Craft 1 v. — Dialstone Lane 1 v. — Captains All 1 v. — Short Cruises 1 v. — Salthaven 1 v. — Sailors' Knots 1 v. — Ship's Company 1 v.

James, Charles T. C.
Holy Wedlock 1 v.

James, G. P. R., † 1860.

Morley Ernstein (with Portrait) 1 v. — Forest Days 1 v. — The False Heir 1 v. —

Arabella Stuart 1 v. — Rose d'Albret 1 v. — Arrah Neil 1 v. — Agincourt 1 v. — The Smuggler 1 v. — The Step-Mother 2 v. — Beauchamp 1 v. — Heidelberg 1 v. — The Gipsy 1 v. — Darnley 1 v. — Russell 2 v. — Sir Theodore Broughton 2 v.

James, Henry (Am.).

The Europeans 1 v. — Daisy Miller; An International Episode; Four Meetings 1 v. — Roderick Hudson 2 v. — The Madonna of the Future, etc. 1 v. — Confidence 1 v. — Washington Square, etc. 2 v. — The Portrait of a Lady 3 v. — Foreign Parts 1 v. — The Siege of London; The Point of View; A Passionate Pilgrim 1 v. — Portraits of Places 1 v. — A Little Tour in France 1 v. — The Finer Grain 1 v.

Jeaffreson, J. Cordy.

A Book about Doctors 2 v. — A Woman in spite of Herself 2 v. — The Real Lord Byron 3 v.

Jenkin, Mrs. Charles, † 1885.

"Who Breaks—Pays" 1 v. — Skirmishing 1 v. — Once and Again 2 v. — Two French Marriages 2 v. — Jupiter's Daughters 1 v.

Jenkins, Edward.

Ginx's Baby, his Birth and other Misfortunes; Lord Bantam 2 v.

"Jennie of 'The Prince's,'" Author of:
vide B. H. Buxton.

Jerome, Jerome K.

The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow 1 v. — Diary of a Pilgrimage, and Six Essays 1 v. — Novel Notes 1 v. — Sketches in Lavender, Blue and Green 1 v. — The Second Thoughts of an Idle Fellow 1 v. — Three Men on the Bummel 1 v. — Paul Kelter 2 v. — Tea-Table Talk 1 v. — Tommy and Co. 1 v. — Idle Ideas in 1905 1 v. — The Passing of the Third Floor Back 1 v. — The Angel and the Author—and Others 1 v. — They and I, 1 v. — All Roads Lead to Calvary 1 v. — Anthony John 1 v.

Jerrold, Douglas, † 1857.

History of St. Giles and St. James 2 v. — Men of Character 2 v.

"John Halifax, Gentleman," Author of:
vide Mrs. Craik.

Johnny Ludlow: *vide* Mrs. Henry Wood.

Johnson, Samuel, † 1784.

Lives of the English Poets 2 v.

- Jolly, Emily.**
Colonel Dacre 2 v.
- "Joshua Davidson,"** Author of: *vide*
Mrs. E. Lynn Linton.
- Kavanagh, Miss Julia,** † 1877.
Nathalie 2 v. — Daisy Burns 2 v. —
Grace Lee 2 v. — Rachel Gray 1 v. —
Adèle 3 v. — A Summer and Winter in
the Two Sicilies 2 v. — Seven Years, and
other Tales 2 v. — French Women of
Letters 1 v. — English Women of Letters
1 v. — Queen Mah 2 v. — Beatrice 2 v. —
Dora 2 v. — Silvia 2 v. — Bessie 2 v. —
John Dorrien 3 v. — Two Lilies 2 v. —
Forget-me-nots 2 v. (*Vide* p. 29.)
- Kaye-Smith, Sheila.**
The End of the House of Alard 1 y.
- Keary, Annie,** † 1879.
Oldbury 2 v. — Castle Daly 2 v.
- Keary, C. F.**
The Mount 1 v.
- Keeling, D'Esterre:** *vide* Esterre.
- Kempis, Thomas A.**
The Imitation of Christ. Translated
from the Latin by W. Benham, B.D. 1 v.
- Kennedy, Margaret.**
The Constant Nymph 1 v.
- Kimball, Richard B. (Am.),** † 1892.
Saint Leger 1 v. — Romance of Student
Life Abroad 1 v. — Undercurrents 1 v. —
Was he Successful? 1 v.
- Kinglake, A. W.,** † 1891.
Eothen 1 v. — The Invasion of the
Crimea 14 v.
- Kingsley, Charles,** † 1875.
Westward ho! 2 v. — Two Years ago 2 v.
— Hypatia 2 v. — Hereward the Wake
2 v. — At Last 2 v.
- Kingsley, Henry,** † 1876.
Ravenshoe 2 v. — Austin Elliot 1 v. —
Geoffrey Hamlyn 2 v. — The Hillyars and
the Burtons 2 v. — Leighton Court 1 v. —
Valentin 1 v. — Reginald Hetherege 2 v.
— The Grange Garden 2 v.
- Kinross, Albert.**
An Opera and Lady Grasmere 1 v.
- Kipling, Rudyard.**
Plain Tales from the Hills 1 v. — The
Second Jungle Book 1 v. — The Seven
Seas 1 v. — "Captains Courageous"
1 v. — The Day's Work 1 v. — A Fleet
in Being 1 v. — Stalky & Co. 1 v. — From
Sea to Sea 2 v. — The City of Dreadful
Night 1 v. — Kim 1 v. — Just So Stories 1 v.
— The Five Nations 1 v. — Traffics and
- Discoveries 1 v. — Puck of Pook's Hill 1 v.
— Actions and Reactions 1 v. — Rewards
and Fairies 1 v.
- Laffan, May.**
Flitters, Tatters, and the Counsellor 1 v.
- Lamb, Charles,** † 1834.
The Essays of Elia and Eliana 1 v. (*Vide*
p. 29.)
- Lang, Andrew:** *vide* H. Rider Haggard.
- Langdon, Mary (Am.).**
Ida May 1 v.
- "Last of the Cavaliers, the,"** Author of
(Miss Piddington).
The Last of the Cavaliers 2 v. — The
Gain of a Loss 2 v.
- Łaszowska, Mme de:** *vide* E. Gerard.
- Laurence, George Alfred:** *vide* "Guy
Livingstone."
- Lawless, the Hon. Emily,** † 1913.
Hurriah 1 v.
- Lee, Holme:** *vide* Harriet Parr.
- Lee, Vernon.**
Pope Jacynth, etc. 1 v. — Genius Loci, and
The Enchanted Woods 1 v. — Hortus
Vitae, and Limbo 1 v. — The Spirit of
Rome, and Laurus Nobilis 1 v. — Vanitas
1 v. — Louis Norbert 1 v. — The Senti-
mental Traveller 1 v. — The Tower of the
Mirrors 1 v.
- Le Fanu, J. S.,** † 1873.
Uncle Silas 2 v. — Guy Deverell 2 v.
- Lemon, Mark,** † 1870.
Wait for the End 2 v. — Loved at Last
2 v. — Falkner Lyle 2 v. — Leyton Hall,
and other Tales 2 v. — Golden Fetters 2 v.
- Lever, Charles,** † 1872.
The O'Donoghue 1 v. — The Knight of
Gwynne 3 v. — Arthur O'Leary 2 v. —
Harry Lorrequer 2 v. — Charles O'Mal-
ley 3 v. — Tom Burke of "Ours" 3 v. —
Jack Hinton 2 v. — The Daltons 4 v. —
The Dodd Family Abroad 3 v. — The
Martins of Cro' Martin 3 v. — The For-
tunes of Glencore 2 v. — Roland Cashel
3 v. — Davenport Dunn 3 v. — Confessions
of Con Cregan 2 v. — One of Them 2 v. —
Maurice Tiernay 2 v. — Barrington 2 v. —
A Day's Ride 2 v. — Luttrell of Arran 2 v.
— Tony Butler 2 v. — Sir Brook Fossbrooke
2 v. — The Bramleighs of Bishop's Folly
2 v. — A Rent in a Cloud 1 v. — That Boy
of Norcott's 1 v. — St. Patrick's Eve; Paul
Gosslett's Confessions 1 v. — Lord Kil-
gobbin 2 v.

Levett-Yeats, S.
The Honour of Savelli 1 v. — The Chevalier d'Auriac 1 v. — The Traitor's Way 1 v. — The Lord Protector 1 v. — Orrain 1 v.

Lewes, G. H., † 1878.
Ranthorpe 1 v. — The Physiology of Common Life 2 v. — On Actors and the Art of Acting 1 v.

Lewis, Sinclair.
Babbitt 1 v. — Our Mr. Wrenn 1 v.

Linton, Mrs. E. Lynn, † 1898.
The true History of Joshua Davidson 1 v. — Patricia Kemball 2 v. — The Atonement of Leam Dundas 2 v. — The World well Lost 2 v. — Under which Lord? 2 v. — Todhunters' at Loanin' Head, and other Stories 1 v. — Ione 2 v.

Lockhart, L. W. M., † 1882.
Mine is Thine 2 v.

Loftus, Lord Augustus.
Diplomatic Reminiscences 1837 - 1862 (with Portrait) 2 v.

London, Jack (Am.).
Burning Daylight 1 v. — The Call of the Wild 1 v. — When God Laughs 1 v. — The Sea-Wolf 2 v. — South Sea Tales 1 v. — Martin Eden 2 v. — A Son of the Sun 1 v. — The Son of the Wolf 1 v. — The Valley of the Moon 2 v.

Longard, Mme de: vide D. Gerard.

Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth (Am.), † 1882.
Poetical Works (with Portrait) 3 v. — The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri 3 v. — The New-England Tragedies 1 v. — The Divine Tragedy 1 v. — Flower-de-Luce, and Three Books of Song 1 v. — The Masque of Pandora, and other Poems 1 v.

Lonsdale, Margaret.
Sister Dora (with Portrait) 1 v.

Lorimer, George Horace (Am.).
Letters from a Self-Made Merchant to his Son 1 v. — Old Gorgon Graham 1 v. — Jack Spurlock, Prodigal 1 v.

"Lost Battle, a." 2 v.

Lowndes, Mrs. Belloc.
The Uttermost Farthing 1 v. — Studies in Wives 1 v. — When No Man Pursueth 1 v. — Jane Oglander 1 v. — The Chink in the Armour 1 v. — Mary Pechell 1 v. — Studies in Love and in Terror 1 v. — The Lodger 1 v. — The End of her Honey-moon 1 v. — Why They Married 1 v. — The Terrific Mystery 1 v. — Some Men and Women 1 v.

Lubbock, Sir John (Lord Avebury), * 1834, † 1913.
The Pleasures of Life 1 v. — The Beau-

ties of Nature (with Illustrations) 1 v. — The Use of Life 1 v. — Scenery of Switzerland (with Illustrations) 2 v. — Essays and Addresses 1900-1903 1 v.

"Lutfullah": vide Eastwick.

Lyall, Edna, † 1903.

We Two 2 v. — Donovan 2 v. — In the Golden Days 2 v. — Knight-Errant 2 v. — Wayfaring Men 2 v. — Hope the Hermit 2 v. — In Spite of All 2 v. — The Hinderers 1 v.

Lytton, Lord: vide E. Bulwer.

Lytton, Robert Lord (Owen Meredith), † 1891.

Poems 2 v. — Fables in Song 2 v.

Maartens, Maarten.

The Sin of Joost Avelingh 1 v. — An Old Maid's Love 2 v. — God's Fool 2 v. — The Greater Glory 2 v. — My Lady Nobody 2 v. — Her Memory 1 v. — Some Women I have known 1 v. — My Poor Relations 2 v. — Dorothea 2 v. — The Healers 2 v. — The Woman's Victory, and Other Stories 2 v. — The New Religion 2 v. — Brothers All 1 v. — The Price of Lis Doris 2 v. — Harmen Pols: Peasant 1 v. — Eve 2 v.

McAulay, Allan (Am.): vide Kate Douglas Wiggin.

Macaulay, Lord, † 1859.

History of England (with Portrait) 10 v. — Critical and Historical Essays 5 v. — Lays of Ancient Rome 1 v. — Speeches 2 v. — Biographical Essays 1 v. — William Pitt, Atterbury 1 v. — (See also Trevelyan).

Macaulay, Rose.

Told by an Idiot 1 v. — Orphan Island 1 v.

McCarthy, Justin.

The Waterdale Neighbours 2 v. — Dear Lady Disdain 2 v. — Miss Misanthrope 2 v. — A History of our Own Times 5 v. — Donna Quixote 2 v. — A Short History of our Own Times 2 v. — A History of the Four Georges. Vols. 1 & 2. — A History of our Own Times. Vols. 6 & 7 (supplemental). — A History of the Four Georges and of William IV. Vols. 3, 4 & 5 (supplemental). — A Short History of our Own Times. Vol. 3 (supplemental).

MacDonald, George, † 1905.

Alec Forbes of Howglen 2 v. — David Elginbrod 2 v. — The Vicar's Daughter 2 v. — Malcolm 2 v. — St. George and St. Michael 2 v. — The Marquis of Lossie 2 v. — Sir Gibbie 2 v. — Mary

Marston 2 v. — The Gifts of the Child Christ, and other Tales 1 v. — The Princess and Curdie 1 v.

Mackarness, Mrs., † 1881.

Sunbeam Stories 1 v. — A Peerless Wife 2 v. — A Mingled Yarn 2 v.

Mackay, Eric, † 1898.

Love Letters of a Violinist, and other Poems 1 v.

Mackenzie, Compton.

The Old Men of the Sea 1 v.

McKnight, Charles (Am.), † 1881.

Old Fort Duquesne 2 v.

Maclaren, Ian, † 1907.

Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush 1 v. — The Days of Auld Langsyne 1 v.

Macleod, Fiona, † 1905.

Wind and Wave 1 v. — The Sunset of Old Tales 1 v.

Macleod, Norman, † 1872.

The Old Lieutenant and his Son 1 v.

Macpherson, James, † 1796: *vide* Ossian.

Macquoid, Mrs.

Patty 2 v. — Miriam's Marriage 2 v. — Pictures across the Channel 2 v. — My Story 2 v. — Diane 2 v. — Beside the River 2 v. — A Faithful Lover 2 v.

"**Mademoiselle Mori,**" Author of (Miss Roberts).

Mademoiselle Mori 2 v. — Denise 1 v. — Madame Fontenoy 1 v. — On the Edge of the Storm 1 v. — The Atelier du Lys 2 v. — In the Olden Time 2 v.

Mahon, Lord: *vide* Stanhope.

Maine, E. S.

Scarscliff Rocks 2 v.

Malet, Lucas (Mrs. Mary St. Leger Harrison).

Colonel Enderby's Wife 2 v. — The History of Sir Richard Calmady 3 v. — The Far Horizon 2 v. — The Score 1 v. — Adrian Savage 2 v.

Malmesbury, the Earl of.

Memoirs of an Ex-Minister 3 v.

Mann, Mary E.

A Winter's Tale 1 v. — The Cedar Star 1 v.

Mansfield, Robert Blachford.

The Log of the Water Lily 1 v.

Mark Twain: *vide* Twain.

Marlowe, Christopher.

Doctor Faustus; Edward the Second; The Jew of Malta 1 v.

"**Marmorne,**" Author of: *vide* P. G. Hamerton.

"**Marriage,**" the Authors of (Am.).

Marriage. Short Stories of Married Life by American Writers 1 v.

Marryat, Capt., † 1848.

Jacob Faithful (with Portrait) 1 v. — Percival Keene 1 v. — Peter Simple 1 v. — Japhet in Search of a Father 1 v. — Monsieur Violet 1 v. — The Settlers in Canada 1 v. — The Mission 1 v. — The Privateer's-Man 1 v. — The Children of the New-Forest 1 v. — Valerie 1 v. — Mr. Midshipman Easy 1 v. — The King's Own 1 v. (*vide* p. 29.)

Marryat, Florence, † 1899.

Love's Conflict 2 v. — For Ever and Ever 2 v. — The Confessions of Gerald Estcourt 2 v. — Nelly Brooke 2 v. — Veronique 2 v. — Petronel 2 v. — Her Lord and Master 2 v. — The Prey of the Gods 1 v. — Life and Letters of Captain Marryat 1 v. — Mad Dumaresq 2 v. — No Intentions 2 v. — Fighting the Air 2 v. — The Poison of Asps, and other Stories 1 v. — "My own Child" 2 v. — A Harvest of Wild Oats 2 v. — A Little Stepson 1 v. — Written in Fire 2 v. — Her World against a Lie 2 v. — The Root of all Evil 2 v. — The Fair-haired Alda 2 v. — With Cupid's Eyes 2 v. — My Sister the Actress 2 v. — Phyllida 2 v. — Facing the Footlights (with Portrait) 2 v. — A Moment of Madness, and other Stories 1 v. — The Ghost of Charlotte Cray, and other Stories 1 v. — Peeress and Player 2 v. — Under the Lilies and Roses 2 v. — The Heart of Jane Warner 2 v. — The Heir Presumptive 2 v. — The Master Passion 2 v. — Spiders of Society 2 v. — Driven to Bay 2 v. — A Daughter of the Tropics 2 v. — Mount Eden. A Romance 2 v. — Blindfold 2 v. — A Scarlet Sin 1 v. — A Bankrupt Heart 2 v. — The Spirit World 1 v. — The Beautiful Soul 1 v. — At Heart a Rake 2 v. — The Strange Transfiguration of Hannah Stubbs 1 v. — The Dream that Stayed 2 v. — A Passing Madness 1 v. — The Blood of the Vampire 1 v. — A Soul on Fire 1 v. — Iris the Avenger 1 v.

Marsh, Mrs. Anna, † 1874.

Ravenscliffe 2 v. — Emilia Wyndham 2 v. — Castle Avon 2 v. — Aubrey 2 v. — The Heiress of Haughton 2 v. — The Rose of Ashurst 2 v.

Marshall, Mrs. Emma, † 1899.

Mrs. Mainwaring's Journal 1 v. — Benvenuta 1 v. — Lady Alice 1 v. — Dayspring 1 v. — Life's Aftermath 1 v. —

In the East Country 1 v. — No. XIII; or, The Story of the Lost Vestal 1 v. — In Four Reigns 1 v. — On the Banks of the Ouse 1 v. — Alma 1 v. — Under Salisbury Spire 1 v. — The End Crowns All 1 v. — Winchester Meads 1 v. — Eventide Light 1 v. — Winifrede's Journal 1 v. — Bristol Bells 1 v. — A Lily among Thorns 1 v. — Penshurst Castle 1 v. — Kensington Palace 1 v. — The Master of the Musicians 1 v. — An Escape from the Tower 1 v. — A Haunt of Ancient Peace 1 v. — Castle Meadow 1 v. — In the Choir of Westminster Abbey 1 v. — The Young Queen of Hearts 1 v. — Under the Dome of St. Paul's 1 v. — (*Vide p. 29.*)

Mason, A. E. W.

The Four Feathers 2 v. — Miranda of the Balcony 1 v. — The Courtship of Morrice Buckler 2 v. — The Watchers 1 v. — Running Water 1 v. — The Broken Road 1 v. — At the Villa Rose 1 v. — The Turnstile 2 v. — The Witness for the Defence 1 v. — The House of the Arrow 1 v. — The Winding Stair 1 v.

Mathers, Helen (Mrs. Henry Reeves).

"Cherry Ripe!" 2 v. — "Land o' the Leal" 1 v. — My Lady Green Sleeves 2 v. — As he comes up the Stair, etc. 1 v. — Sam's Sweetheart 2 v. — Eyre's Acquittal 2 v. — Found Out 1 v. — Murder or Manslaughter? 1 v. — The Fashion of this World (80 Pf.) — Blind Justice, and "Who, being dead, yet Speaketh" 1 v. — What the Glass Told, and A Study of a Woman 1 v. — Bam Wildfire 2 v. — Becky 2 v. — Cinders 1 v. — "Honey" 1 v. — The New Lady Teazle, and Other Stories and Essays 1 v. — The Ferryman 1 v. — Tally Ho! 2 v. — Pigskin and Petticoat 2 v. — Gay Lawless 1 v.

Maugham, W. Somerset.

The Trembling of a Leaf 1 v.

Maurice, Colonel.

The Balance of Military Power in Europe 1 v.

Maurier, George du, † 1896.

Trilby 2 v. — The Martian 2 v.

Maxwell, Mrs.: *vide* Miss Braddon.

Maxwell, W. B.

The Ragged Messenger 2 v. — The Guarded Flame 2 v. — Mrs. Thompson 1 v. — The Rest Cure 1 v. — In Cotton Wool 2 v. — General Mallock's Shadow 1 v. — The Day's Journey 1 v.

"Mehalah": *vide* Baring-Gould.

Melville, George J. Whyte, † 1878.

Kate Coventry 1 v. — Digby Grand 1 v. — Good for Nothing 2 v. — The Queen's Maries 2 v. — The Gladiators 2 v. — The Brookes of Bridlemere 2 v. — Cerise 2 v. — The Interpreter 2 v. — The White Rose 2 v. — M, or N. 1 v. — Contraband 1 v. — Sarchedon 2 v. — Uncle John 2 v. — Katerfelto 1 v. — Sister Louise 1 v. — Rosine 1 v. — Roys' Wife 2 v. — Black but Comely 2 v. — Riding Recollections 1 v.

Memorial Volumes: *vide* Five Centuries (vol. 500); The New Testament (vol. 1000); Henry Morley (vol. 2000); Theodore Stanton (vol. 4000).

Meredith, George, † 1909.

The Ordeal of Richard Feverel 2 v. — Beauchamp's Career 2 v. — The Tragic Comedians 1 v. — Lord Ormont and his Aminta 2 v. — The Amazing Marriage 2 v. — The Egoist 2 v. — Rhoda Fleming 2 v.

Meredith, Owen: *vide* Robert Lord Lytton.

Merrick, Hope.

Mary-Girl 1 v.

Merrick, Leonard.

The Man who was good 1 v. — This Stage of Fools 1 v. — Cynthia 1 v. — One Man's View 1 v. — The Actor-Manager 1 v. — The Worldlings 1 v. — When Love flies out o' the Window 1 v. — Conrad in Quest of His Youth 1 v. — The Quaint Companions 1 v. — Whispers about Women 1 v. — The House of Lynch 1 v. — The Man who Understood Women, etc. 1 v. — All the World Wondered, etc. 1 v. — The Position of Peggy Harper 1 v.

Merriman, Henry Seton, † 1903.

Young Mistley 1 v. — Prisoners and Captives 2 v. — From One Generation to Another 1 v. — With Edged Tools 2 v. — The Sowers 2 v. — Flotsam 1 v. — In Kedar's Tents 1 v. — Roden's Corner 1 v. — The Isle of Unrest 1 v. — The Velvet Glove 1 v. — The Vultures 1 v. — Barlasch of the Guard 1 v. — Tomaso's Fortune, and Other Stories 1 v. — The Last Hope 2 v.

Mill, John Stuart.

On Liberty and The Subjection of Women 1 v.

Milne, James.

The Epistles of Atkins 1 v.

Milton, John, † 1674.

Poetical Works 1 v.

"Miss Molly," Author of.
Geraldine Hawthorne 1 v.

"Molly Bawn," Author of: *vide* Mrs.
Hungerford.

Montgomery, Florence.

Misunderstood 1 v. — Thrown Together 2 v. — Thwarted 1 v. — Wild Mike 1 v. — Seaforth 2 v. — The Blue Veil 1 v. — Transformed 1 v. — Colonel Norton 2 v. — Prejudged 1 v. — Behind the Scenes in the Schoolroom 1 v. (*Vide* p. 29.)

Moore, Frank Frankfort.

"I Forbid the Banns" 2 v. — A Gray Eye or So 2 v. — One Fair Daughter 2 v. — The Jessamy Bride 1 v. — Nell Gwyn — Comedian 1 v. — A Damsel or Two 1 v. — Castle Omeragh 2 v. — Shipmates in Sunshine 2 v. — The Original Woman 1 v. — The White Causeway 1 v. — The Artful Miss Dill 1 v. — The Marriage Lease 1 v. — An Amateur Adventuress 1 v. — Priscilla and Charybdis 1 v. — The Food of Love 1 v. — The Laird of Craig Athol 1 v. — The Ulsterman 1 v.

Moore, George.

Celibates 1 v. — Evelyn Innes 2 v. — Sister Teresa 2 v. — The Untilled Field 1 v. — Confessions of a Young Man 1 v. — The Lake 1 v. — Memoirs of my Dead Life 1 v. — Ave 1 v. — Spring Days 1 v. — Salve 1 v. — Vale 1 v. — The Brook Kerith 2 v. — Muslin 2 v. — The Coming of Gabrielle 1 v.

Moore, Thomas, † 1852.

Poetical Works (with Portrait) 5 v.

Morgan, Lady, † 1859.

Memoirs 3 v.

Morley, Henry, † 1894.

Of English Literature in the Reign of Victoria. With Facsimiles of the Signatures of Authors in the Tauchnitz Edition (v. 2000, published 1881) 1 v.

Morris, William.

A Selection from his Poems 1 v.

Morrison, Arthur.

Tales of Mean Streets 1 v. — A Child of the Jago 1 v. — To London Town 1 v. — Cunning Murrell 1 v. — The Hole in the Wall 1 v. — The Green Eye of Goona 1 v. — Divers Vanities 1 v. — Green Ginger 1 v.

Muirhead, James Fullarton.
The Land of Contrasts 1 v.

Mulock, Miss: *vide* Mrs. Craik.

Murray, David Christie.
Rainbow Gold 2 v.

Murray, Grenville: *vide* Grenville.

"My Little Lady," Author of: *vide* E. Frances Poynter.

New Testament, the.

The Authorised English Version, with Introduction and Various Readings from the three most celebrated Manuscripts of the Original Text, by Constantine Tischendorf (vol. 1000, published 1869) 1 v.

Newby, Mrs. C. J.
Common Sense 2 v.

Nicholls, Mrs.: *vide* Currer Bell.

"Nina Balatka," Author of: *vide* Anthony Trollope.

"No Church," Author of (F. Robinson).
No Church 2 v. — Owen:—a Waif 2 v.

Noel, Lady Augusta.
Hithersea Mere 2 v.

Norris, W. E.

A Bachelor's Blunder 2 v. — The Rogue 2 v. — Miss Shafto 2 v. — Mrs. Fenton 1 v. — Misadventure 2 v. — Saint Ann's 1 v. — A Victim of Good Luck 1 v. — Clarissa Furiosa 2 v. — Marietta's Marriage 2 v. — The Fight for the Crown 1 v. — The Widower 1 v. — Giles Ingilby 1 v. — The Flower of the Flock 1 v. — His Own Father 1 v. — The Credit of the County 1 v. — Lord Leonard the Luckless 1 v. — Nature's Comedian 1 v. — Nigel's Vocation 1 v. — Barham of Beltana 1 v. — Harry and Ursula 1 v. — The Square Peg 1 v. — Pauline 1 v. — The Perjurer 1 v. — Not Guilty 1 v. — Vittoria Victrix 1 v. — Paul's Paragon 1 v. — The Triumphs of Sara 1 v. — Tony the Exceptional 1 v.

Norton, Hon. Mrs., † 1877.

Stuart of Dunleath 2 v. — Old Sir Douglas 2 v.

"Not Easily Jealous," Author of (Miss Iza Hardy).
Not Easily Jealous 2 v.

"Novels and Tales": *vide* "Household Words."

"Nursery Rhymes," 1 v.

O'Conor Eccles, Charlotte (Hal Godfrey).

The Matrimonial Lottery 1 v.

Oldmeadow, Ernest.

Susan 1 v.

Oliphant, Laurence, † 1888.

Altiora Peto 2 v. — Masollam 2 v.

Oliphant, Mrs., † 1897.

The Last of the Mortimers 2 v. — Mrs. Margaret Maitland 1 v. — Agnes 2 v. — Madonna Mary 2 v. — The Minister's Wife 2 v. — The Rector and the Doctor's Family 1 v. — Salem Chapel 2 v. — The Perpetual Curate 2 v. — Miss Marjoribanks 2 v. — Ombra 2 v. — Memoir of Count de Montalembert 2 v. — May 2 v. — Innocent 2 v. — For Love and Life 2 v. — The Story of Valentine and his Brother 2 v. — Whiteladies 2 v. — The Curate in Charge 1 v. — Phoebe, Junior 2 v. — Mrs. Arthur 2 v. — Carit 2 v. — Young Musgrave 2 v. — The Primrose Path 2 v. — Within the Precincts 3 v. — The Greatest Heiress in England 2 v. — He that will not when he may 2 v. — Harry Joscelyn 2 v. — In Trust 2 v. — It was a Lover and his Lass 3 v. — The Ladies Lindores 3 v. — Hester 3 v. — The Wizard's Son 3 v. — A Country Gentleman and his Family 2 v. — Neighbours on the Green 1 v. — The Duke's Daughter 1 v. — The Fugitives 1 v. — Kirsteen 2 v. — Life of Laurence Oliphant and of Alice Oliphant, his Wife 2 v. — The Little Pilgrim in the Unseen 1 v. — The Heir Presumptive and the Heir Apparent 2 v. — The Sorceress 2 v. — Sir Robert's Fortune 2 v. — The Ways of Life 1 v. — Old Mr. Tredgold 2 v.

"One who has kept a Diary": *vide* George W. E. Russell.

Orczy, Baroness.

Petticoat Government 1 v. — The Scarlet Pimpernel 1 v. — I will Repay 1 v. — The Elusive Pimpernel 1 v. — Fire in Stubble 2 v. — A True Woman 1 v. — Meadowsweet 1 v. — Eldorado 2 v. — Unto Caesar 2 v. — Nicolette 1 v. — The Honourable Jim 1 v. — Pimpernel and Rosemary 1 v.

Osbourne, Lloyd (Am.).

Baby Bullet 1 v. — The Motormaniacs 1 v. — Harm's Way 1 v. — The Kingdoms of the World 1 v.

Ossian.

The Poems of Ossian. Translated by James Macpherson 1 v.

Ouida, † 1908.

Idalia 2 v. — Tricotrin 2 v. — Puck 2 v. — Chandos 2 v. — Strathmore 2 v. — Under two Flags 2 v. — Folle-Farine 2 v. — A Leaf in the Storm; A Dog of Flanders; A Branch of Lilac; A Provence Rose 1 v. — Cecil Castlemaine's Gage, and other Novelettes 1 v. — Madame la Marquise, and other Novelettes 1 v. — Pascarel 2 v. — Two little Wooden Shoes 1 v. — Signa (with Portrait) 3 v. — In a Winter City 1 v. — Ariadne 2 v. — Friendship 2 v. — Moths 3 v. — A Village Commune 2 v. — In Maremma 3 v. — Bimbi 1 v. — Wanda 3 v. — Frescoes and other Stories 1 v. — Princess Napraxine 3 v. — Othmar 3 v. — A Rainy June (60 Pf.). Don Gualdo (60 Pf.). — A House Party 1 v. — Guideroy 2 v. — Syrlin 3 v. — Ruffino, and other Stories 1 v. — Santa Barbara, etc. 1 v. — Two Offenders 1 v. — The Silver Christ, etc. 1 v. — Toxin, and other Papers 1 v. — Le Selve, and Tonia 1 v. — An Altruist, and Four Essays 1 v. — La Strega, and other Stories 1 v. — The Waters of Edera 1 v. — Critical Studies 1 v. — Helianthus 2 v.

"Outcasts, the," Author of: *vide* "Roy Tellet."

Pain, Barry.

The Exiles of Faloo 1 v. — Stories in Grey 1 v. — Stories without Tears 1 v. — The New Gulliver, and Other Stories 1 v.

Parker, Sir Gilbert.

The Battle of the Strong 2 v. — Donovan Pasha, & Some People of Egypt 1 v. — The Seats of the Mighty 2 v. — The Weavers 2 v. — The Judgment House 2 v.

Parr, Harriet (Holme Lee), † 1900.

Basil Godfrey's Caprice 2 v. — For Richer, for Poorer 2 v. — The Beautiful Miss Barington 2 v. — Her Title of Honour 1 v. — Echoes of a Famous Year 1 v. — Katherine's Trial 1 v. — The Vicissitudes of Bessie Fairfax 2 v. — Ben Milner's Wooing 1 v. — Straightforward 2 v. — Mrs. Denys of Cote 2 v. — A Poor Squire 1 v.

Parr, Mrs.

Dorothy Fox 1 v. — The Prescotts of Pamphillon 2 v. — The Gosau Smithy, etc. 1 v. — Robin 2 v. — Loyalty George 2 v.

Paston, George.

A Study in Prejudices 1 v. — A Fair Deceiver 1 v.

Pasture, Mrs. Henry de la.

The Lonely Lady of Grosvenor Square 1 v. — The Grey Knight 1 v. — Catherine's Child 1 v. — Master Christopher 2 v. — Erica 1 v.

Paul, Mrs.: *vide* "Still Waters."

"Paul Ferroll," Author of (Mrs. Caroline Clive), † 1873.
 Paul Ferroll 1 v. — Year after Year 1 v.
 — Why Paul Ferroll killed his Wife 1 v.

Payn, James, † 1898.

Found Dead 1 v. — Gwendoline's Harvest 1 v. — Like Father, like Son 2 v. — Not Wooded, but Won 2 v. — Cecil's Tryst 1 v. — A Woman's Vengeance 2 v. — Murphy's Master 1 v. — In the Heart of a Hill, and other Stories 1 v. — At Her Mercy 2 v. — The Best of Husbands 2 v. — Walter's Word 2 v. — Halves 2 v. — Fallen Fortunes 2 v. — What He cost Her 2 v. — By Proxy 2 v. — Less Black than we're Painted 2 v. — Under one Roof 2 v. — High Spirits 1 v. — High Spirits (Second Series) 1 v. — A Confidential Agent 2 v. — From Exile 2 v. — A Grape from a Thorn 2 v. — Some Private Views 1 v. — For Cash Only 2 v. — Kit: A Memory 2 v. — The Canon's Ward (with Portrait) 2 v. — Some Literary Recollections 1 v. — The Talk of the Town 1 v. — The Luck of the Darrells 2 v. — The Heir of the Ages 2 v. — Holiday Tasks 1 v. — Glow-Worm Tales (First Series) 1 v. — A Prince of the Blood 2 v. — The Mystery of Mirbridge 2 v. — The Burnt Million 2 v. — The Word and the Will 2 v. — Sunny Stories, and some Shady Ones 1 v. — A Modern Dick Whittington 2 v. — A Stumble on the Threshold 2 v. — A Trying Patient 1 v. — Gleams of Memory, and The Eavesdropper 1 v. — In Market Overt 1 v. — Another's Burden etc. 1 v. — The Backwater of Life, or Essays of a Literary Veteran 1 v.

Peard, Frances Mary.

One Year 2 v. — The Rose-Garden 1 v. — Thorpe Regis 1 v. — A Winter Story 1 v. — A Madrigal, and other Stories 1 v. — Cartouche 1 v. — Mother Molly 1 v. — Schloss and Town 2 v. — Contradictions 2 v. — Near Neighbours 1 v. — Alicia Tennant 1 v. — Madame's Granddaughter 1 v. — Donna Teresa 1 v. — Number One and Number Two 1 v. — The Ring from Jaipur 1 v. — The Flying Months 1 v.

Pemberton, Max.

A Woman of Kronstadt 1 v. — The Garden of Swords 1 v. — The Footsteps of a Throne 1 v. — The Giant's Gate 2 v. — I crown thee King 1 v. — The House under the Sea 1 v. — Red Morn 1 v. — Beatrice of Venice 2 v. — Mid the Thick Arrows 2 v. — My Sword for Lafayette 1 v. — The Lady

Evelyn 1 v. — The Lodestar 1 v. — Wheels of Anarchy 1 v. — Love the Harvester 1 v. — White Walls 1 v. —

Percy, Bishop Thomas, † 1811.

Reliques of Ancient English Poetry 3 v.

Perrin, Alice.

The Charm 1 v. — The Anglo-Indians 1 v. — The Happy Hunting Ground 1 v.

Phillips, F. C.

As in a Looking Glass 1 v. — The Dean and his Daughter 1 v. — Lucy Smith 1 v. — A Lucky Young Woman 1 v. — Jack and Three Jills 1 v. — Young Mr. Ainslie's Courtship 1 v. — Social Vicissitudes 1 v. — Extenuating Circumstances, and A French Marriage 1 v. — More Social Vicissitudes 1 v. — Constance 2 v. — That Wicked Mad'moiselle, etc. 1 v. — A Doctor in Difficulties, etc. 1 v. — "One Never Knows" 2 v. — Of Course 1 v. — Miss Ormerod's Protégé 1 v. — My little Husband 1 v. — Mrs. Bouverie 1 v. — A Question of Colour, and other Stories 1 v. — A Devil in Nun's Veiling 1 v. — A Full Confession, and other Stories 1 v. — The Luckiest of Three 1 v. — Poor Little Bella 1 v. — Eliza Clarke, Governess, and Other Stories 1 v. — Marriage, etc. 1 v. — School-girls of To-day, etc. 1 v. — If Only, etc. 1 v. — An Unfortunate Blend 1 v. — A Barrister's Courtship 1 v.

Phillips, F. C., & Percy Fendall.

A Daughter's Sacrifice 1 v. — Margaret Byng 1 v. — Disciples of Plato 1 v. — A Honeymoon—and After 1 v.

Phillips, F. C., & C. J. Wills.

The Fatal Phryne 1 v. — The Scudamores 1 v. — A Maiden Fair to See 1 v. — Sybil Ross's Marriage 1 v.

Phillips, F. C. & A. R. T.

Life 1 v. — Judas, the Woman 1 v.

Phillipotts, Eden.

Lying Prophets 2 v. — The Human Boy 1 v. — Sons of the Morning 2 v. — The Good Red Earth 1 v. — The Striking Hours 1 v. — The Farm of the Dagger 1 v. — The Golden Fetish 1 v. — The Whirlwind 2 v. — The Human Boy Again 1 v. — From the Angle of Seventeen 1 v. — The Bronze Venus 1 v. — The Grey Room 1 v. — The Red Redmaynes 1 v. — A Human Boy's Diary 1 v. — Cheat-the-Boys 1 v. — A Voice from the Dark 1 v.

Phillpotts, E., & Arnold Bennett.
The Sinews of War 1 v. — The Statue 1 v.

Piddington, Miss: *vide* Author of "The Last of the Cavaliers."

Poe, Edgar Allan (Am.), † 1849.
Poems and Essays, edited with a new Memoir by John H. Ingram 1 v. — Tales, edited by John H. Ingram 1 v. — Fantastic Tales 1 v.

Pope, Alexander, † 1744.
Select Poetical Works (with Portrait) 1 v.

Poynter, Miss E. Frances.
My Little Lady 2 v. — Ersilia 2 v. — Among the Hills 1 v.

Praed, Mrs. Campbell.
Affinities 1 v. — The Head Station 2 v.

Prentiss, Mrs. E. (Am.), † 1878.
Stepping Heavenward 1 v.

Prince Consort, the, † 1861.
Speeches and Addresses (with Portr.) 1 v.

Pryce, Richard.
Miss Maxwell's Affections 1 v. — The Quiet Mrs. Fleming 1 v. — Time and the Woman 1 v.

Pym, H. N.: *vide* Caroline Fox.

Quiller-Couch, Sir A. T. ("Q").
I Saw Three Ships 1 v. — Dead Man's Rock 1 v. — Ia and other Tales 1 v. — The Ship of Stars 1 v. — Fort Amity 1 v. — Shakespeare's Christmas, and Other Stories 1 v. — The Mayor of Troy 1 v. — Merry-Garden, and Other Stories 1 v. — Brother Copas 1 v.

Quincey: *vide* De Quincey.

Rae, W. Fraser, † 1905.
Westward by Rail 1 v. — Miss Bayle's Romance 2 v. — The Business of Travel 1 v.

Raimond, C. E. (Miss Robins) (Am.).
The Open Question 2 v. — The Magnetic North 2 v. — A Dark Lantern 2 v. — The Convert 2 v. — The Florentine Frame 1 v. — "Where are you going to . . . ?" 1 v. — Way Stations 1 v.

"Rajah's Heir, the." 2 v.

Reade, Charles, † 1884.
"It is never too late to mend" 2 v. — The Cloister and the Hearth 2 v. — Hard Cash 3 v. — Put Yourself in his Place 2 v. — A Terrible Temptation 2 v. — Peg Woffington 1 v. — Christie Johnstone 1 v. — A Simpleton 2 v. — The Wandering Heir 1 v. — A Woman-Hater 2 v. — Readiana 1 v. — Singleheart and Doubleface 1 v.

"Recommended to Mercy," Author of (Mrs. Houstoun).

"Recommended to Mercy" 2 v. — Zoe's "Brand" 2 v.

Reeves, Mrs.: *vide* Helen Mathers.

Rhys, Grace.
Mary Dominic 1 v. — The Wooing of Sheila 1 v. — About many Things 1 v.

Rice, James: *vide* Walter Besant.

Richards, Alfred Bate, † 1876.
So very Human 3 v.

Richardson, S., † 1761.
Clarissa Harlowe 4 v.

Riddell, Mrs. (F. G. Trafford).
George Keith of Fen Court 2 v. — Maxwell Drewitt 2 v. — The Race for Wealth 2 v. — The Earl's Promise 2 v. — Mortomley's Estate 2 v.

Ridge, W. Pett.
Name of Garland 1 v. — Thanks to Sanderson 1 v. — Miss Mannering 1 v. — The Lunch Basket 1 v.

"Rita."
Souls 1 v. — The Jesters 1 v. — The Masqueraders 2 v. — Queer Lady Judas 2 v. — Prince Charming 1 v. — The Pointing Finger 1 v. — A Man of no Importance 1 v. — The House called Hurriah 1 v. — Calvary 2 v. — That is to say— 1 v.

Ritchie, Mrs. Anne Thackeray: *vide* Miss Thackeray.

Roberts, Miss: *vide* Author of "Mademoiselle Morl."

Robertson, Rev. F. W., † 1853.
Sermons 4 v.

Robins, Miss: *vide* Raimond.

Robinson, F.: *vide* "No Church."

Ross, Charles H.
The Pretty Widow 1 v. — A London Romance 2 v.

Ross, Martin: *vide* Somerville.

Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, † 1882.
Poems 1 v. — Ballads and Sonnets 1 v.

"Roy Tellet."
The Outcasts 1 v. — A Draught of Lethe 1 v. — Pastor and Prelate 2 v.

Ruck, Berta.
Sir or Madam? 1 v. — The Dancing Star 1 v. — Lucky in Love 1 v. — The Clouded Pearl 1 v.

- Ruffini, J.**, † 1881.
Lavinia 2 v. — Doctor Antonio 1 v. — Vincenzo 2 v. — A Quiet Nook in the Jura 1 v. — The Paragreens on a Visit to Paris 1 v.
- Ruskin, John**, * 1819, † 1900.
Sesame and Lilies 1 v. — The Stones of Venice (with Illustrations) 2 v. — Unto this Last and Munera Pulveris 1 v. — The Seven Lamps of Architecture (with 14 Illustrations) 1 v. — Mornings in Florence 1 v. — St. Mark's Rest 1 v.
- Russell, W. Clark.**
A Sailor's Sweetheart 2 v. — The "Lady Maud" 2 v. — A Sea Queen 2 v.
- Russell, George W. E.**
Collections and Recollections. By One who has kept a Diary 2 v. — A Londoner's Log-Book 1 v.
"Ruth and her Friends": *vide* p. 29.
- Sala, George Augustus**, † 1895.
The Seven Sons of Mammon 2 v.
- Saunders, John.**
Israel Mort, Overman 2 v. — The Shipowner's Daughter 2 v. — A Noble Wife 2 v.
- Saunders, Katherine (Mrs. Cooper).**
Joan Merryweather, and other Tales 1 v. — Gideon's Rock, and other Tales 1 v. — The High Mills 2 v. — Sebastian 1 v.
- Savage, Richard Henry (Am.)**, † 1903.
My Official Wife 1 v. — The Little Lady of Lagunitas (with Portrait) 2 v. — Prince Schamyl's Wooing 1 v. — The Masked Venus 2 v. — Delilah of Harlem 2 v. — A Daughter of Judas 1 v. — In the Old Chateau 1 v. — Miss Devereux of the Mariquita 2 v. — Checked Through 2 v. — A Modern Corsair 2 v. — In the Swim 2 v. — The White Lady of Khaminavatka 2 v. — In the House of His Friends 2 v. — The Mystery of a Shipyard 2 v. — A Monte Cristo in Khaki 1 v.
- Schreiner, Olive.**
Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland 1 v. — Woman and Labour 1 v.
- Scott, Sir Walter**, † 1832.
Waverley 2 v. — The Antiquary 1 v. — Ivanhoe 2 v. — Kenilworth 1 v. — Quentin Durward 1 v. — Old Mortality 1 v. — Guy Mannering 1 v. — Rob Roy 1 v. — The Pirate 1 v. — The Fortunes of Nigel 1 v. — The Black Dwarf; A Legend of Montrose 1 v. — The Bride of Lammermoor 1 v. — The Heart of Mid-Lothian 2 v. — The Monastery 1 v. — The Abbot 1 v. — Peveril of the Peak 2 v. — Poetical Works 2 v. — Woodstock 1 v. — The Fair Maid of Perth 1 v. — Anne of Geierstein 1 v.
- Seeley, Prof. J. R.**, † 1895.
Life and Times of Stein 4 v. — The Expansion of England 1 v. — Goethe 1 v.
- Sewell, Elizabeth**, † 1906.
Amy Herbert 2 v. — Ursula 2 v. — A Glimpse of the World 2 v. — The Journal of a Home Life 2 v. — After Life 2 v. — The Experience of Life 2 v.
- Shakespeare, William**, † 1616.
Plays and Poems (with Portrait) (*Second Edition*) 7 v. — Doubtful Plays 1 v.
Shakespeare's Plays may also be had in 37 numbers, each number sold separately.
- Sharp, William**, † 1905: *vide* Miss Howard, Fiona Macleod and Swinburne.
- Shaw, Bernard.**
Man and Superman 1 v. — The Perfect Wagnerite 1 v. — Cashel Byron's Profession 1 v. — Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant (The Three Unpleasant Plays 1 v. — The Four Pleasant Plays 1 v.). — Getting Married & The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet 1 v. — The Doctor's Dilemma & The Dark Lady of the Sonnets 1 v. — Three Plays for Puritans 1 v. — John Bull's Other Island etc. 1 v. — Androcles and the Lion; Pygmalion 1 v. — Misalliance 1 v. — Fanny's First Play, etc. 1 v. — Heartbreak House, etc. 1 v. — Back to Methuselah 1 v. — Saint Joan 1 v.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe**, † 1822.
A Selection from his Poems 1 v.
- Sheppard, Nathan (Am.)**, † 1888.
Shut up in Paris 1 v.
- Sheridan, R. B.**, † 1816.
The Dramatic Works 1 v.
- Shorthouse, J. Henry.**
John Inglesant 2 v. — Blanche Falaise 1 v.
- Sidgwick, Mrs. Alfred.**
The Lantern Bearers 1 v. — Anthea's Guest 1 v.
- May Sinclair.**
Anne Severn and the Fieldings 1 v. — ~~Un-~~canny Stories 1 v. — A Cure of Souls 1 v. — Arnold Waterlow: a Life 1 v. — The Rector of Wyck 1 v.
- Slatin Pasha, Rudolf C., C.B.**
Fire and Sword in the Sudan 3 v.
- Smedley, F. E.:** *vide* "Frank Fairleigh."
- Smollett, Tobias**, † 1771.
Roderick Random 1 v. — Humphry Clinker 1 v. — Peregrine Pickle 2 v.
- Snaith, J. C.**
Mrs. Fitz 1 v. — The Principal Girl 1 v. — An Affair of State 1 v. — Araminta 1 v. — Time and Tide 1 v.
- "Society in London," Author of.
Society in London. By a Foreign Resident 1 v.

- Somerville, E. C., & M. Ross.
Naboth's Vineyard 1 v. — All on the Irish Shore 1 v. — Dan Russel the Fox 1 v.
- "Spanish Brothers, the." 2 v.
- Stanhope, Earl (Lord Mahon), † 1875.
The History of England 7 v. — Reign of Queen Anne 2 v.
- Stanton, Theodore (Am.).
A Manual of American Literature 1 v.
- Steel, Flora Annie.
The Hosts of the Lord 2 v. — In the Guardianship of God 1 v.
- Sterne, Laurence, † 1768.
Tristram Shandy 2 v. — A Sentimental Journey (with Portrait) 1 v.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis, † 1894.
Treasure Island 1 v. — Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and An Inland Voyage 1 v. — Kidnapped 1 v. — The Black Arrow 1 v. — The Master of Ballantrae 1 v. — The Merry Men, etc. 1 v. — Across the Plains, etc. 1 v. — Island Nights' Entertainments 1 v. — Catriona 1 v. — Weir of Hermiston 1 v. — St. Ives 2 v. — In the South Seas 2 v. — Tales and Fantasies 1 v.
- "Still Waters," Author of (Mrs. Paul).
Still Waters 1 v. — Dorothy 1 v. — De Cressy 1 v. — Uncle Ralph 1 v. — Maiden Sisters 1 v. — Martha Brown 1 v. — Vanessa 1 v.
- Stirling, M. C.: *vide* G. M. Craik.
- Stockton, Frank R. (Am.), † 1902.
The House of Martha 1 v.
- "Story of a Penitent Soul, the." 1 v.
- "Story of Elizabeth, the," Author of: *vide* Miss Thackeray.
- Stowe, Mrs. Harriet Beecher (Am.), † 1896.
Uncle Tom's Cabin (with Portrait) 2 v. — A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin 2 v. — Dred 2 v. — Oldtown Folks 2 v.
- "Sunbeam Stories," Author of: *vide* Mrs. Mackarness.
- Swift, Jonathan (Dean Swift), † 1745.
Gulliver's Travels 1 v.
- Swinnerton, Algernon Charles, † 1909.
Atalanta in Calydon: and Lyrical Poems (edited, with an Introduction, by William Sharp) 1 v. — Love's Cross-Currents 1 v. — Chastelard and Mary Stuart 1 v.
- Frank Swinnerton.
The Three Lovers 1 v.
- Symonds, John Addington, † 1893.
Sketches in Italy 1 v. — New Italian Sketches 1 v.
- Synge, John M.
Plays 1 v.
- Tagore, Rabindranath.
The Home and the World 1 v. — The Gardener 1 v. — Sādhana 1 v. — The Wreck 1 v. — Gitanjali; Fruit-Gathering 1 v.
- Tallentyre, S. G.: *vide* H. S. Merriman.
- Tasma.
Uncle Piper of Piper's Hill 2 v.
- Tautphoeus, Baroness, † 1893.
Cyrilla 2 v. — The Initials 2 v. — Quits 2 v. — At Odds 2 v.
- Taylor, Col. Meadows, † 1876.
Tara; a Mahratta Tale 3 v.
- Templeton: *vide* Author of "Horace Templeton."
- Tennyson, Alfred (Lord), † 1892.
Poetical Works 8 v. — Queen Mary 1 v. — Harold 1 v. — Becket; The Cup; The Falcon 1 v. — Locksley Hall, sixty Years after; The Promise of May; Tiresias and other Poems 1 v. — A Memoir. By His Son (with Portrait) 4 v.
- Testament, the New: *vide* New.
- Thackeray, William Makepeace, † 1863.
Vanity Fair 3 v. — Pendennis 3 v. — Miscellanies 8 v. — Henry Esmond 2 v. — The English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century 1 v. — The Newcomes 4 v. — The Virginians 4 v. — The Four Georges; Lovel the Widower 1 v. — The Adventures of Philip 2 v. — Denis Duval 1 v. — Roundabout Papers 2 v. — Catherine 1 v. — The Irish Sketch Book 2 v. — The Paris Sketch Book (with Portrait) 2 v.
- Thackeray, Miss (Lady Ritchie).
Old Kensington 2 v. — Bluebeard's Keys, and other Stories 1 v. — Five Old Friends 1 v. — Miss Angel 1 v. — Fulham Lawn, and other Tales 1 v. — From an Island. A Story and some Essays 1 v. — Da Capo, and other Tales 1 v. — Madame de Sévigné; From a Stage Box; Miss Williamson's Divagations 1 v. — A Book of Sibyls 1 v. — Mrs. Dymond 2 v. — Chapters from some Memoirs 1 v.
- Thomas a Kempis: *vide* Kempis.
- Thomas, A. (Mrs. Pender Cudlip).
Denis Donne 2 v. — On Guard 2 v. — Walter Goring 2 v. — Played Out 2 v. — Called to Account 2 v. — Only Herself 2 v. — A Narrow Escape 2 v.

Thomson, James, † 1748.
Poetical Works (with Portrait) 1 v.

"Thoth," Author of.
Thoth 1 v.

Thurston, E. Temple.
The Greatest Wish in the World 1 v. —
Mirage 1 v. — The City of Beautiful Non-
sense 1 v. — The Garden of Resurrection 1 v.
— Thirteen 1 v. — The Apple of Eden 1 v.
— The Antagonists 1 v. — The Evolution
of Katherine 1 v. — The Open Window 1 v.
— Sally Bishop 2 v. — Richard Furlong 1 v.
— The Eye of the Wif 1 v. — Achieve-
ment 1 v. — The Miracle 1 v. — May Eve
1 v. — The Green Bough 1 v. — Charmeuse
1 v.

Trafford, F. G.: *vide* Mrs. Riddell.

Trevelyan, George Otto.
The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay
(with Portrait) 4 v. — Selections from the
Writings of Lord Macaulay 2 v. — The
American Revolution (with a Map) 2 v.

Trois-Etoiles: *vide* Grenville.

Trollope, Anthony, † 1882.
Doctor Thorne 2 v. — The Bertrams
2 v. — The Warden 1 v. — Barchester
Towers 2 v. — Castle Richmond 2 v. —
Framley Parsonage 2 v. — North America
3 v. — Orley Farm 3 v. — Rachel Ray 2 v.
— The Small House at Allington 3 v. —
Can you forgive her? 3 v. — The Belton
Estate 2 v. — Nina Balatka 1 v. — The
Last Chronicle of Barset 3 v. — The Claver-
ings 2 v. — Phineas Finn 3 v. — Sir Harry
Hotspur of Humblethwaite 1 v. — Ralph
the Heir 2 v. — The Golden Lion of
Granpere 1 v. — Australia and New Zea-
land 3 v. — Lady Anna 2 v. — Harry
Heathcote of Gangoil 1 v. — The Way we
live now 4 v. — The Prime Minister 4 v. —
South Africa 2 v. — An Eye for an Eye 1 v.
— John Caldigate 3 v. — The Duke's
Children 3 v. — Dr. Wortle's School 1 v. —
The Fixed Period 1 v. — Marion Fay 2 v. —
Kept in the Dark 1 v. — Frau Frohmann,
and other Stories 1 v. — Alice Dugdale,
and other Stories 1 v. — La Mère Bauche,
and other Stories 1 v. — The Mistletoe
Bough, and other Stories 1 v. — An Auto-
biography 1 v. — An Old Man's Love 1 v.

Trollope, T. Adolphus, † 1892.
The Garstangs of Garstang Grange 2 v.
— A Siren 2 v.

Trowbridge, W. R. H.
The Letters of Her Mother to Elizabeth
1 v. — A Girl of the Multitude 1 v. — That
Little Marquis of Brandenburg 1 v. — A

Dazzling Reprobate 1 v. — The White Hope
1 v.

Twain, Mark (Samuel L. Clemens)
(Am.), † 1910.

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer 1 v. —
The Innocents Abroad; or, The New
Pilgrims' Progress 2 v. — A Tramp Abroad
2 v. — "Roughing it" 1 v. — The In-
nocents at Home 1 v. — The Prince and
the Pauper 2 v. — The Stolen White
Elephant, etc. 1 v. — Life on the Mis-
sissippi 2 v. — Sketches (with Portrait)
1 v. — Huckleberry Finn 2 v. — Selections
from American Humour 1 v. — A Yankee
at the Court of King Arthur 2 v. — The
American Claimant 1 v. — The £ 100,000
Bank-Note and other new Stories 1 v. —
Tom Sawyer Abroad 1 v. — Pudd'nhead
Wilson 1 v. — Personal Recollections of
Joan of Arc 2 v. — Tom Sawyer, Detective,
and other Tales 1 v. — More Tramps
Abroad 2 v. — The Man that corrupted
Hadleyburg, etc. 2 v. — A Double-Bar-
relled Detective Story, etc. 1 v. — The
\$ 30,000 Bequest, and Other Stories 1 v. —
Christian Science 1 v. — Captain Storm-
field's Visit to Heaven & Is Shakespeare
Dead? 1 v.

"Two Cosmos, the." 1 v.

Vachell, Horace Annesley.

The Face of Clay 1 v. — Her Son 1 v. —
The Hill 1 v. — The Waters of Jordan 1 v.
— An Impending Sword 1 v. — The Paladin
1 v. — John Verney 1 v. — Blinds Down
1 v. — Bunch Grass 1 v. — The Procession
of Life 1 v. — Loot 1 v. — Quinneys' 1 v.
— Change Partners 1 v. — The Yard 1 v.
— Quinneys' Adventures 1 v. — Wat-
ling's for Worth 1 v.

"Venus and Cupid." 1 v.

"Véra," Author of.

Vera 1 v. — The Hôtel du Petit St.
Jean 1 v. — Blue Roses 2 v. — Within
Sound of the Sea 2 v. — The Maritime
Alps and their Seaboard 2 v. — Ninette 1 v.

Victoria R. I.

Leaves from the Journal of our Life in
the Highlands from 1848 to 1861 1 v. —
More Leaves, etc. from 1862 to 1882 1 v.

"Virginia." 1 v.

Vizetelly, Ernest Alfred.

With Zola in England 1 v.

Walford, L. B.

Mr. Smith 2 v. — Pauline 2 v. — Cousins
2 v. — Troublesome Daughters 2 v. —
Liddy Marget 1 v.

- Wallace, Edgar.**
The Book of All-Power 1 v. — The Valley of Ghosts 1 v. — Chick 1 v. — Captains of Souls 1 v. — The Missing Million 1 v. — The Face in the Night 1 v.
- Wallace, Lew. (Am.),** † 1905.
Ben-Hur 2 v.
- Walpole, Hugh.**
Jeremy and Hamlet 1 v. — The Old Ladies 1 v.
- Warburton, Eliot,** † 1852.
Darien 2 v.
- Ward, Mrs. Humphry.**
Robert Elsmere 3 v. — David Grieve 3 v. — Miss Bretherton 1 v. — Marcella 3 v. — Bessie Costrell 1 v. — Sir George Tressady 2 v. — Helbeck of Bannisdale 2 v. — Eleanor 2 v. — Lady Rose's Daughter 2 v. — The Marriage of William Ashe 2 v. — Fenwick's Career 2 v. — Diana Mallory 2 v. — Daphne; or, "Marriage à la Mode" 1 v. — Canadian Born 1 v. — The Case of Richard Meynell 2 v. — The Mating of Lydia 2 v. — The Crayston Family 1 v.
- Warner, Susan:** *vide* Wetherell.
- Warren, Samuel,** † 1877.
Diary of a late Physician 2 v. — Ten Thousand a-Year 3 v. — Now and Then 1 v. — The Lily and the Bee 1 v. — "Waterdale Neighbours," Author of: *vide* Justin McCarthy
- Watson, H. B. Marriott.**
The Excelsior 1 v.
- Watts-Dunton, Theodore,** † 1914.
Aylwin 2 v.
- Wells, H. G.**
The Stolen Bacillus, etc. 1 v. — The War of the Worlds 1 v. — The Invisible Man 1 v. — The Time Machine, and The Island of Doctor Moreau 1 v. — When the Sleeper Wakes 1 v. — Tales of Space and Time 1 v. — The Plattner Story, and Others 1 v. — Love and Mr. Lewisham 1 v. — The Wheels of Chance 1 v. — Anticipations 1 v. — The First Men in the Moon 1 v. — The Sea Lady 1 v. — Mankind in the Making 2 v. — Twelve Stories and a Dream 1 v. — The Food of the Gods 1 v. — A Modern Utopia 1 v. — Kipps 2 v. — In the Days of the Comet 1 v. — The Future in America 1 v. — New Worlds for Old 1 v. — The War in the Air 1 v. — Tono-Bungay 2 v. — First and Last Things 1 v. — The New Machiavelli 2 v. — Marriage 2 v. — The Passionate Friends 2 v. — An Englishman looks at the World 1 v. — The World Set Free 1 v. — A Short History of the World (with twelve Maps) 1 v. — Men Like Gods 1 v. — The Dream 1 v. — Bealby 1 v.
- Westbury, Hugh.** Acte 2 v.
- Wetherell, Elizabeth** (Susan Warner) (Am.), † 1885.
The wide, wide World 1 v. — Queechy 2 v. — The Hills of the Shatemuc 2 v. — Say and Seal 2 v. — The Old Helmet 2 v.
- Weyman, Stanley J.**
The House of the Wolf 1 v. — The Story of Francis Cludde 2 v. — A Gentleman of France 2 v. — The Man in Black 1 v. — Under the Red Robe 1 v. — From the Memoirs of a Minister of France 1 v. — The Red Cockade 2 v. — Shrewsbury 2 v. — Sophia 2 v. — In Kings' Byways 1 v. — The Long Night 2 v. — The Abbess of Vlaze 2 v. — Chippinge 2 v. — Laid up in Lavender 1 v.
- Wharton, Edith** (Am.).
The House of Mirth 2 v.
"Whim, a." 1 v.
- Whitby, Beatrice.**
The Awakening of Mary Fenwick 2 v. — In the Suntime of her Youth 2 v.
- White, Percy.**
Mr. Bailey-Martin 1 v. — The West End 2 v. — The New Christians 1 v. — Park Lane 2 v. — The Triumph of Mrs. St. George 2 v. — A Millionaire's Daughter 1 v. — A Passionate Pilgrim 1 v. — The System 2 v. — The Patient Man 1 v. — Mr. John Strood 1 v. — The Eight Guests 2 v. — Mr. Strudge 1 v. — Love and the Poor Suitor 1 v. — The House of Intrigue 1 v. — Love and the Wise Men 1 v. — An Averted Marriage 1 v. — The Lost Halo 1 v.
- White, Walter.**
Holidays in Tyrol 1 v.
- Whiteing, Richard.**
The Island; or, An Adventure of a Person of Quality 1 v. — The Life of Paris 1 v. — The Yellow Van 1 v. — Ring in the New 1 v. — All Moonshine 1 v. — Little People 1 v.
- Whitman, Sidney.**
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