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Books and Bookmen

FENWICK'S CAREER: Mrs. Humphrey Ward (Macmillan and Co., London).

A new book from the versatile pen of the writer of "The Marriage of William Ashie" will be received with more than ordinary interest, and, though "Fenwick's Career" lacks the brilliant dialogue the author has hitherto accustomed us to, we are more than compensated by the very real insight given us of the lives, aspirations, ambitions, and limitations of those dwellers who are popularly said to inhabit Bohemia, and designated artists, from which place, whether they be Idealistic, Impressionist, or Hedonistic, the geniuses emerge, bearing the hall mark of the academy, and success stamped upon them, and hie them to the flesh pots of Egypt, And Bohemia knows them no more. The scene is laid in Westmoreland, London, and Versailles. In the delightful description of Langdale Pikes the reader will be reminded of "Robert Elmer," and, if a North Country man, will be smitten with home sickness, and will long for "the snowy tops of the mountains and the sound of angry waters"; while in the picture drawn of "Trionon," silent, deserted, decaying, the tragedy of the French revolution will be brought back as vividly as though it had happened only yesterday. John Fenwick, the son of a Kendal bookseller of substantial means, has married Phoebe Gibson, a poor school assistant, which, fully coupled with the fact that he despises his father's business, having strong artistic tendencies, causes a rupture between himself and his father, which ends in his being thrown upon the world with no prospect other than the painting of rustic portraits, the commissions for which being few, and the remuneration small, constitute a sufficiently poor outlook for one who, whatever his faults as a man, had within him the elements of a great painter. At the time this story opens Fenwick had executed a commission for Mr. Morrison, the manager of the local bank—namely, to paint the portrait of his daughter Bella, which portrait, though an exceedingly good one, is not a thing of beauty, Bella Morrison being both plain of feature and vixenish of expression. She is bitterly disappointed with it, and Mr. Morrison suggests that Fenwick shall add a few gracing touches to it. But Fenwick, who has suffered a great deal of rudeness at the lady's hands, sees no reason for such embellishment, saying that it is a fine piece of painting, and refusing to supply her with the graces she lacks, and the portrait is delivered as at first painted, which causes Bella Morrison to conceive herself deliberately insulted, and she vows vengeance, and keeps her word to the undoing, as the sequel will show, of Fenwick and his wife Phoebe. Fenwick is surprised at this time by receiving an offer from Morrison, who is an expert in art matters, to supply him with money to go to London, there to study and attain to proficiency in his art, which offer Fenwick accepts, almost beside himself, as it is the cherished dream of his life, undertaking at the same time to repay the loan in pictures within a year. He determines to leave Phoebe and his little daughter (Carrie) behind, both on the score of economy and also fearing that a wife and child would be a hindrance to study. To this Phoebe strongly objects at first, knowing her husband's weakness in money matters, and for pretty faces; but he brings her round to his own way of thinking at last, and departs for London, taking up his residence in a house and neighbourhood where artists congregate. Going one day to the rooms of a fellow artist, he is introduced to "Lord Findon," a wealthy patron of art, and is asked by him if he has anything of his own to show. Fenwick takes him up to his room and shows

him a half-finished picture, which he was called "The Genius Loci," in which he has introduced the face and figure of his wife and child. Lord Findon is greatly pleased with it, and secretly determines to buy it. He asks Fenwick who his model had been, and Fenwick replies hurriedly that it was someone he had known in Westmoreland, thus Judas-like, denying his wife and child. A conversation follows, in which Lord Findon declares for an artist to marry before attaining celebrity is the greatest act of folly he can be guilty of, and Fenwick, who had regretted the moment he had denied Phoebe, now thinks it would mean ruin to confess his marriage, and so allows his first error to stand. Before leaving, Lord Findon invites him to dinner to meet some people who might be of use to him in his career. Fenwick gratefully and joyfully accepts, and at Lord Findon's house meets "Madam de Pastourelles," his host's daughter, who is afterwards to prove the inspiration of his life in all that is best and truest in him. Madame de Pastourelles is delighted with the artist, but deprecates the plebeian in Fenwick. After the ladies leave the dining-room, he manages by his ill-bred arrogant manner to upset the sangfroid of every man in the room and principally Monsieur de Chailles, the French Ambassador, so much so that Lord Findon feels it incumbent on him to apologise to de Chailles. Madame de Pastourelles, however, manages with infinite tact to bring out the best in Fenwick, and before the evening is over he is reinstated in his host's good favour, and has extracted a promise from Madame de Pastourelles to sit to him for her portrait. In the meantime poor Phoebe has been pining in loneliness and poverty—Fenwick's letters being short and not particularly affectionate. He has sent Phoebe very little money. Before beginning "The Genius Loci" he had made money by supplying illustrations to papers, but had of late been writing articles to the "Mirror," an art magazine, declaiming arrogantly against the methods of several artists, and the powers that be of the Royal Academy. Christmas came, and a flying visit was paid to Phoebe whom he finds looking ill and haggard. He hears from her that a few days before a tramp had tried to enter her cottage at night, that she had managed to repulse him, whereupon he had threatened to return some time and kill her. Phoebe is not satisfied by the way her husband takes his news, and though before leaving her he takes every precaution against its recurrence, she feels that she has a rival. While on this visit he hears of Morrison's death by suicide, and fears that he will be called upon to pay his debt, as it is discovered after Morrison's death that he had been defrauding the bank for years and his widow is left almost penniless. But the debt had evidently been overlooked, and Fenwick returns to London breathing more freely, and falling into the second great error of his career, denying his debt to Morrison. Soon after Fenwick's return to town Phoebe is surprised by a visit from Bella Morrison, who brings back "the hateful portrait," and also informs Phoebe that her husband is not true to her, that he is in love with, and is painting a portrait of, Madame de Pastourelles, and that they are seen about everywhere. Phoebe indignantly repudiates this statement, but the sting of jealousy is planted, and she makes a resolve to go up to town when she shall have saved sufficient money for the journey, and claim her right to live with her husband. By this time Fenwick has fallen into monetary difficulties. He had nearly finished both "The Genius Loci" and the portrait, but had not received anything on account of them from Lord Findon. But Madame de Pastourelles had begun to surmise that he was in

difficulties and had persuaded Lord Findon to write Fenwick a cheque, and accompanied by her father went to Fenwick's studio, taking the cheque and the good news, which they had learned privately, that both pictures had been accepted by the Academy, and were hung on the line. Fenwick was overwhelmed with happiness, which so irradiated his face that Madame de Pastourelles and her father found it hard to leave him, but at length Lord Findon remembering that he had not told Madame de Pastourelles that he had written out the cheque for £500 instead of £450, as at first agreed upon, carries her away, and Fenwick is left alone with his great joy. His first thought was of restitution to Phoebe, whom he really loved at bottom.

When Fenwick was alone, he walked to a chest of drawers in which he kept a disorderly multitude of possessions, and took out a mingled handful of letters, photographs, and sketches. Throwing them on a table, he looked for and found a photograph of Phoebe with Carrie on her knee, and a little sketch of Phoebe—one of the first ideas for the "Genius Loci." He propped them up against some books and he looked at them in a passion of triumph.

"It's all right, old woman—it's all right!" he murmured, smiling. Then he spread out Lord Findon's cheque before him, and he stared at it though no occasion it at Phoebe's shrine.

"Five hundred pounds! Well, it was only what his work was worth—what he had every right to expect. None the less, the actual position of the money seemed to change his whole being. What would his old father say? He gave a laugh, half scornful, half good-humoured, as he admitted to himself that not even now—probably—would the old man relent.

And Phoebe!—would the happy woman in her eyes—the rolling away of all clouds between them. For six weeks now he had been a veritable brute about letters! First, the stream of his work, then the final article with the "Genius Loci," including the unfortunate case of the picture, had really been a terrible affair!—then—then—he confessed it—the intellectual excitement of the correspondence with Madame de Pastourelles; between these two obsessions, no emotions, poor Phoebe had faded!

"But you'll forgive me now, old girl—won't you?" he said, kissing her photograph in an affection that brought the moisture to his eyes, he turned to replace it, with the sketches, in the drawer, forgetting in his excitement the letters which lay scattered on the table.

What should he do now? Impossible to settle down to a new work. The month just had gone, but he ought to return to Phoebe and write later. Meanwhile he would go over to Chelsea, and see Christopher and Watson, repay Watson his £100, or promise to do so, at least for the moment, when he should have time to cash the cheque, perhaps even—daring thought!—to open a banking account.

Suddenly a remembrance of Morrison crossed his mind; and he stood a moment with bent head, as he thought of the ghost passed through the room. He had sent £100 to Mrs. Morrison? He embarked on it, unwisely. Already his treasure secretly, for that, and Phoebe had so much to do—to get to his house and furnish it, to pay pressing bills, to provide money for the new picture! Why, it would be all gone directly!

He looked up the cheque safely, took his hat, and went just as he was, when his eye fell on the three-hooped skirt of Madame de Pastourelles, which had been the foundation of the portrait. He had recently framed it, but had not yet found a place for it. It stood on the floor against the wall. He took it up, looked at it with delight—by Jove! it was a brilliant thing!—and plucking it on a small easel, he arranged two lamps with movable shades, which he often used for drawing in the evening, so as to show it off. There was in him more than a touch of theatricality, and as he stood back from this little arrangement to study its effect, he was charmed with his own fancy. There she stood, in the centre of the room, his patron saint, and Phoebe! He knew well what he owed her, and Phoebe should soon know. He was in a hurry to be off; but he could not make up his mind—superstitiously—to put out the lights. So, after a hurried look at a few moments before her, in this tremor of imagination and of pleasure, he left her thus, radiant and haloed!—the patron saint in charge.

On his way out he made his landlady happy by promising to pay the whole of his arrears on the morrow, and hastened to tell the news to his friend and fellow-artist, "Watson." Passing Peter Robinson's on the way, he went in, and asked that some dainty trifles that he thought Phoebe would like be sent to him next day, and then sped on his way to Watson. At the very time he was purchasing these trifles Phoebe was knocking at the door of his lodgings, and trying to convince an incredible landlady that she was Fenwick's wife, who, after seeing a letter from Fenwick to Phoebe, believed, and allowed her to go upstairs to Fenwick's room, and the reader can imagine what a jealous, highly-wrought, erudite, mischievous woman would think and believe when she saw what she thought to be a portrait of her rival and

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