

grass, brushing the flowers with her whip.

After her return from Baden, one day in early September he received a note from her—a perfumed note which he had always guarded. Why? Seeing that he had ceased to attach any importance there, why should he have kept it?

But it was there. He often looked at it and recalled that time. She had written:

"Dear Stuart. Please meet me at the National Gallery to-morrow at eleven. I have something to tell you. I will be in the second room."

He went to the National Gallery long before the time fixed. He walked up and down in front of the building, glanced at the children playing near the fountain and then stopped a moment at the entrance to St. Martin's Lane where there were theatrical notices, for the autumn season had commenced; people were returning from foreign baths to London and they required to be amused.

It had certainly been a wonderful summer; he had seen her at the Opera and afterwards at Henley where there were violins over the water. He had met her at a great summer race meeting—the rendezvous of fashionable life; the band had played on a trim lawn in front of the Grand Stand. It had been a time of dreams.

Somehow there was something in that September day which was saddening; the details of the scene, the piano organ, the dancing children, the sandwich advertisements, carriers, seemed instinct with that something which denoted the end of a hope.

He entered the Gallery and waited. The pictures did not interest him for he could only recall her words—words which somehow just then seemed far away like something which lay beyond the sea, beyond battlefields, on the other side of mountains—words which had thrilled him. She had said, "Yes, in the autumn we will be engaged."

And the autumn had come! He eagerly watched the door by which she would enter. Two ladies in black passed through; then a uniformed car-taker. If she did not come! If she had forgotten! But no—she would be certain not to forget. A martial picture near the door attracted his attention; a prince was riding at the head of his regiment of cavalry. The face seemed to look at him meaningfully as if to mock him.

How little it all depended on! Perhaps now he was farther away than ever, for during those two or three months he had scarcely done any serious work. He had only thought of her. Yet there had been great movement in the world; there had been a revolution in one land and the breaking up of laws; the papers too had recounted a war.

At length he saw her. She walked rapidly into the room and glanced round; she was in a deep fawn tailor-made suit and a black hat trimmed with blue ribbon and white lace. He went eagerly to meet her, exclaiming:

"At last."
"Yes," she said airily. "I have come. Good morning. So you received my note?"

"Yes."
"How pale you are! Is anything wrong?"

"No, no; I only feared that you might not come, that you might have forgotten."

"Oh, I should not have forgotten." She walked through the room into the adjoining one, and he kept by her side.

"Shall we sit down here?" she said. "I have something which I wish to tell you."

When they were seated she looked for a second intently at the iron grating in the floor through which the gallery was warmed, and then gazing at him full in the face she said:—

"Stuart, I am going to be married." He started back and then stared at her.

"Then Lord Pyrmont consents."
"You do not understand me. I am going to be married to the Prince of Breuhl."

"To the Prince of Breuhl!"
"Yes; and you ought to know first as we are such old friends."

She rose and stood in front of him. "But but," he began and then he was silent.

"You might, I think, congratulate me," she said. "But why do you look at me like that?"

He at last managed to speak.
"Adrienne, you are joking; it is not true!"

"It is true," she said almost gravely, "quite true!"

"But you promised me."
"Foolish boy!" she exclaimed.

"That is all over. Come, don't look like that. The official is staring at you, you look so ghastly. Say something. You will come and see us when I am a Princess. You must see that I could not have married you. It would have been absurd. Yet we can be good friends."

He looked at her through a mist of something.

"I suppose it was absurd," he said faintly. "Good-bye."

She looked at him curiously for another second and then said "Good-bye." Her hand touched his.

He heard her steps along the polished floor and when he raised his head she was gone.

Afterwards it was clearly an awakening from a dream—a mad dream. He had a little independence—enough to enable him to settle down to work again—work which although not immediately resultant in material advantage, yet eventually brought him into a prominent place in the world.

VI.

A solitary life may yet be an excitable one, and Rockhampton's life had been full of excitement, of engagement, of new sensations, of applause. Yet he never forgot and never changed his idea. The dream of ten years ago was the same as if it had been the vision of yesterday. Why had she played with him only to cast him off, only to send him adrift into the desolate land of disillusionment and melancholy? Yet peace had come. He could go on alone now to the end. He had been to the furthest limit of despair and had come back strong to the fight, resolute, determined, prepared for all. It was only that during

blazing days of that June the similarity of the two seasons, with the gulf of years fixed between, recalled that old time when the scene impressed so strangely, when there was a glamour over all, when the sound of life, of the coach horns, of military music had seemed significant of much. It was all in London. He had scarcely left the city in reality, though in imagination he had gone far afield into quiet villages—the villages of the homeland, where windmills turned slowly, where brooks murmured over stones, where children played in cottage gardens ablaze with hollyhocks, and also into the quiet countryside of other countries—places which had hardly changed with the centuries, though the years had wrought revolutions in the busy towns.

It was a fixed memory—that of the long past summer. After the bitterness had gone he hoped that she was happy—as he was. He walked into the National Gallery that day and saw the place where they had sat down. The picture of the prince was still there.

He had promised to go to a reception that night after his work at Westminster was done, and the Earl of G— had extracted a promise from him that he would join him at the end of the week in his yacht at Seaford.

At the reception he saw among the later arrivals a woman whose face was familiar to him. She wore many diamonds and was surrounded on her entrance into the salon.

"You must be introduced, my dear Mr Rockhampton," said his host.

"To whom?"
"To the Princess de Breuhl—an Englishwoman despite her name. Her husband died last year."

Stuart started, and mechanically he followed his conductor across the room and heard him say, as in a dream:

"May I introduce the Hon. Stuart Rockhampton, princess?"

The princess looked at Stuart.

"I know Mr Rockhampton. He is an old friend," said she, and her voice seemed softer than of old.

And Stuart found it quite impossible to accept the yachting invitation after all.

NEW SHORT STORIES.

TO OUR READERS.

The "Graphic" has secured for publication in its pages a series of fifty-two short stories by such eminent writers as Justin McCarthy, Rev. S. Baring-Gould, Stephen Crane, Halliwell Sutcliffe, "M. E. Francis," Mary A. Dickens, Grant Allen, and others. These tales, which have been selected for their absorbing interest, will appear weekly in these pages.

A COACHMAN'S STORY.

"Rheumatism," said a leading physician not long since, "may attack anybody, but is especially the disease of age and poverty. The immediate cause is an irritant poison in the blood, which, becoming lodged in those parts of the system where the circulation has the least force, sets up a more or less violent inflammation. This poison is always associated with impaired digestion on the part of the stomach and liver, and the amount of it in the system is increased by the inactivity of the excretive organs, particularly the skin, bowels, and kidneys."

Assuming the correctness of this view, the following conclusion is clearly deducible from it, namely, that to relieve or cure a case of rheumatism we should seek, first, to prevent the formation of the poison by correcting the impaired digestion, and, second, to stimulate the skin, bowels, and kidneys, that they may throw it off; or, in other words, we must try to purify the blood. Outward applications, although they may, and do, mollify pain at certain inflamed spots, cannot, in the nature of things, eradicate the cause of the disease.

The following case illustrates the truth of this theory, and should be attentively studied by all who are afflicted with gout and rheumatism—the two ailments being, under different names, practically the same thing.

Sixteen years ago I had an attack of rheumatic gout which affected all my joints, giving me intense pain. My hands, feet, and shoulders were puffed up and swollen, and for many weeks I suffered martyrdom. After this I was from time to time subject to rheumatism, which moved about my system, sometimes appearing in one part and then another. For five years I suffered like this.

"In the autumn of 1885, whilst in the employment of a doctor at Bayswater as a coachman, my eyes became affected and I was almost blind, not being able to see either the numbers or names of the streets I drove along. My eyes were like a piece of liver.

and the doctor I was with sent me first to an eye specialist, and afterwards gave me a note, and I went to St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington, where I attended as an outdoor patient for nine months.

"I was so bad I had to give up my employment. The doctors at the hospital made a thorough examination of my eyes, and said they were sound, and that my affection was caused by the rheumatic gout. They gave me medicines and drops for the eyes; also placed blisters behind the ears and on the temples, but I was little better for anything.

"Some days I was better and then worse, and I feared I should lose my sight altogether. In July, 1886, my brother came to London on a visit, and urged me to try Mother Seigel's Syrup, as he thought it would drive the rheumatism out of my system. I got a bottle of this medicine from Whiteley's in Westbourne Grove, and after taking two bottles I was wonderfully better. My sight returned, and I felt better of myself. When I had taken six bottles I was well as ever, and have since been well. You can publish this letter, and refer anyone to me. (Signed) Joseph Parker, 21 Blomfield-street, Westbourne Square, Rayswater, July 1, 1896."

Mr Parker is a respectable man and worthy of implicit confidence. He is now in the employment of Mr Whiteley, the famous purveyor, of whom he bought Mother Seigel's Syrup in the time of his necessity. The cure is certainly remarkable, and demonstrates the truth of the proposition, now admitted by the highest medical authorities, that rheumatism is a disease of the blood, caused, at the root of it, by chronic dyspepsia and indigestion. Mother Seigel's Syrup, being the most successful medicine in the world for all ailments of the digestion, consequently prevents the further formation of the rheumatic poison, expels it from all places where it has produced inflammation in the body, and hence cures rheumatism. The reader will note that it is now ten years since Mr Parker's recovery, during which period he has had no relapses. Therefore the cure was real and radical.

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