Mildred & Trevanion

BY THE DUCHESS.

CHAPTER IX.—(Continued.)

As for Mildred, no sooner had the words crossed her lips than she disdained herself for the utterance of them, and wished them back unsaid.

Ever since that fatal night in the library Denzil and she had lived seemingly unseen and unheard by each other, as distinctly remote as though spheres had separated them, instead of so many rooms or feet, as the case might be. Now she felt that, by this one rash, uncalled-for act, she had done away with all the good so many silent days had helped to accomplish.

Nevertheless, having once given her word Mildred felt that she must abide by it, and appeared at the breakfast table next morning, to all outward seeming as imperturable as usual.

Eddie had also risen betimes to see his friend depart, and rattle on in gallant style all through the dismal meal, leaving no space for the other two to express their opinions, had they been so inclined. At length, a footman entering to announce the arrival of the dog-cart at the hall door, Eddie rose to see to Denzil's further comforts, and so left him and Mildred at last alone.

He came toward her, and, taking both her hands, held them with a clasp that amounted almost to pain.

"Think of me kindly," he said, in a low tone full of acute meaning.

"I will," she said.

"Is it quite hopeless, Mildred?"

"You will be late for your train," murmured Miss Trevanion, very gently.

So it fell out that King's Abbott was once more bereft of guests; and still the Trevanions were unhappy, because the very train that carried away—snugly ensconced among its cushions—the unhappy Denzil, brought to Lady Caroline a letter that filled her gentle bosom with dire alarm.

The letter began, "Mr. Dear Niece," and ended, "Your attached aunt, Harriet Disney," its contents being to the effect that Lady Eagleton—Lady Caroline's aunt by the father's side—had generously made up her mind to sacrifice her pleasures, inclination, habits, and self generally for the purpose of bestowing her society upon her "dear niece" aforesaid. This was inceed a heavy blow, her ladyship—having attained the troublesome age of eighty-two—being one of those people whom to entertain is a kind of martyrdom.

As misfortunes never come single, it was just about this time also that Lady Caroline heard for the first time of Mildred's refusal of Denzil Younge. The girl had hitherto kept it nervously to herself, thinking of it now and then with mingled feelings of pain and something akin to pleasure, but outwardly suppressing all sign until this day, when Lady Caroline timidly and without preface touched on the subject of his evident admiration of her.

"It seems a pity you could not care for him, Mildred," she said, interrogatively, as though it were by no means a certainty that Mildred did not care for him; "we should all like it so much, and your father says——"

Mildred rose hastily and threw down her work, while two red spots appeared on her cheeks.

"Mamma," she said, "perhaps it will be better, and will put a stop to all further mention of this matter, if I tell you the truth. Mr. Younge did propose to me, and I refused him."

She finished almost defiantly and turned to leave the room.

"Mildred, is it possible?" exclaimed Lady Caroline.

"Oh, Milly!" cried Mabel, who was also present, with lively reproach and disapproval in her tone.

"Is it such a crime then? Has nothing of the kind ever been done before?" demanded Mildred, passionately; and then she went out, and left them to their wonderings and censures on her conduct.

When eventually Sir George was told the unlucky news, it rendered him at first furious, and then despairing. Things were becoming more embarrassed and entangled day by day, the immediate possession of a large sum of money being the only hope his lawyer could hold out to him of ultimately saving the estate; and, as affairs were, it would be a difficult if not impossible task to procure it. Denzil, with his immense wealth, was out of his great love for Mildred, would have thought little of lending twice the amount required. But now all that was changed, and Mildred's had been the hand to dash the hope aside.

Both he and Lady Caroline were strangely distant and unsympathetic to her in these days; her father irritably so, her mother with a sort of mournful gravity that touched her far more.

Lord Lyndon, who at this period showed a tact and an adroitness that would have reflected honor on a cleverer man, managed to be perpetually at her side. His attentions were open and unmistakable, while he declared his inability to withdraw from her presence even for a time by the fact of his taking a shooting-box quite close to King's Abbott for the season.

All the little world of Cliston were beginning to look upon it as a settled matter, there being no mistake as to whom his devotion was given, as Roy Blount's wooing, and Mabel's acceptance of it, were very transparent things indeed; besides, just now, "the queen" was too much taken up with sorrowful misgivings and tender reflections to admit of any division of her favors, young Blount having received orders to join his regiment, which was stationed in Ireland, without further delay; so that scarcely a week remained to them before "Farewell"—that saddest of all words—would have to be uttered.

This news had been communicated to Mabel in a doleful whisper, and had been received as dolefully. For once all coquetry was laid aside, and she confessed herself as miserable at the idea of his going as he could be to go.

CHAPTER X.

Lady Eagleton and her "train" arrived at King's Abbott, the "train" consisting of one long-suffering maid, one ditto man, one lapdog, and one dilapidated canary.

"The canary always means three months, does it not?" asked Eddie, tragically, as the cortege swept up the stairs.

Mildred burst into an unrestrainable laugh.

"Oh, what shall we do?" she gasped. "What is to become of us? A little of Lady Eagleton goes such a very long way. Mr. Blount"—to Roy, who had walked over as usual, and who, having seen the procession, was enjoying the whole thing as much as any of them—"I will give you anything I possess, if you will show me some method of getting rid of her before Christmas time."

"And I will give you anything, if you will just take her out and tie her to a tree and deliberately shoot her," said Eddie, gloomily.

"Edward, how can you speak so disrespectfully of your grand-aunt?" put in Lady Caroline, reprovingly, walking away, her face covered with smiles.

* * * * * *

For a week everything had gone on smoothly, or rather there had been no actual outbreaks on the part of Lady Eagleton, though smothered hints and comments had been numerous. In a covert manner she inveighed against actions, habits, acquaintances, and all that came beneath her notice, but carefully subdued any open demonstrations of disapproval until the day before Roy's departure, when she chose to be particularly offensive.

Blount had come over rather earlier than usual, it being his last day, and he and Mabel had gone for a farewell walk among the shrubberies and through the winter gardens where they had loved to linger all through their hurried courtship. As he was not to leave until a late train the following day, he parted from her with the assurance that he would be down the next morning.

Slightly flushed and wholly miserable, Mabel entered the small drawing room, where she found her mother, Mildred, and Lady Eagleton assembled

"How heated you look, child! What have you been doing with yourself?" demanded the old lady, the moment she came within her view.

"Walking," returned Mabel, shortly.

"With that young man again, I presume?" grunted her grand-aunt, ominously; whereupon Lady Caroline began to look uneasy.

"I was walking with Mr. Blount," said "the queen," defiantly. She was sore at heart, and longing for sympathy, so that the old woman's words and manner grated cruelly on her overwrought feelings.

"I really think all decency and order have gone from the world," went on Lady Eagleton. "Society nowadays is widely different from what it once was. Even common propriety is a thing of the past. In my time a young woman would scarcely be allowed, under any circumstances, to walk alone with a young man for hours together—certainly not unless they were formally betrothed, having the consent of all parties concerned—and probably not even then. I presume he has made you an offer of marriage?"

Mildred rose, as if to interfere; but Mabel spoke again.

"People in your time must have been very depraved people indeed, Aunt Harriet," she said, with ill-suppressed indignation, "if they could make mischief out of a simple walk with one's friend. At all events, I am very glad I live in the days I do; and, if you are particularly anxious to know, I will tell you that Mr. Blount has not made me an offer of marriage, as you call it."

Her ladyship was triumphant.

"Has he not?" she said. "Then, if I were you, my dear, I would have as little more to say to him as possible. Young men who dilly-dally, and put off the evil hour, as he appears to be doing, seldom or never mean anything. I dare say he is only agreeably whiling away his time down here, and will think no more of you once his back is turned."

Mabel was choking with rage, but could think of nothing to say. Lady Caroline, who sat a little behind her aunt, put out her hand to her daughter with a gesture of sympathetic affection, but she was nervously afraid of this terrible old woman, and knew not how to interfere effectually.

"Young men now are not what young men were," continued Lady Eagleton, impressively, "and I think Mr. Blount one of the worst specimens I have yet seen. His manners are so cool; and he is so insolently self-possessed; and he has none of the well-bred diffidence, the courtly elegance that distinguishd the men of my generation. He is not half good enough for you, my dear, even were he in earnest, which I am pleased to consider extremely doubtful. I will receive you for a month or two, Mabel," declared her ladyship, magnificently, "and introduce you to those with whom you ought to associate. You shall return with me to my home, and gain those advantages that this secluded country place can never afford."

"Your ladyship is wonderfully kind," returned Mabel, "but I find 'this secluded country place' quite good enough for my tastes. Besides, I could not dream of accepting your invitation."

"May I ask why not?" demanded her grand-aunt, majestically.

"Because there is nothing in the world to which I should more strenuously object than to spend two months in your ladyship's society," answered Mabel.

"You wicked girl!" almost screamed Lady Eagleton, rising and supporting herself on her gold-headed stick while she quivered with anger. "How dare you presume so to speak to me! Caroline, why do you not order her to leave the room? Am I, at my age, and after all the sacrifices I have made for my family, to submit to the impertinence of a chit of a girl like that?"

Poor Lady Caroline was terrified.

"Dear Aunt Harriet, she did not mean it," she said—"she did not, indeed—did you, Mabel? Speak, darling, and tell her it was all a mistake."

"She shall apologize to me, or I will leave this house, never to enter it again," protested Aunt Harriet, still raging.

"So she will, I am sure. Mabel, my dearest, tell your grand-aunt how sorry you are for having used the language you did," said Lady Caroline, imploringly—"apologize to her."

"Apologize for what?" demanded Mabel. "She asked me to pay her a visit, and I declined. She then inquired my reasons, and I gave them. I do not see that any apology is necessary. However," she went on, turning toward the old lady, and executing an impertinent little courtesy, "if it will in any way gratify you, I will beg your pardon, and admit that I am extremely sorry to think I was the cause of putting you in such a dreadful temper."

Lady Caroline, after considerable difficulty, having managed to smooth down the old lady's ruffled plumage, she consented to forgive and forget, and once more peace war restored.

But Mabel, when the terrible "last hour" came the following day, though she never for a moment doubted Royston, yet felt somehow shy and constrained, remembering vividly that one little biting question of Lady Eagleton's, as to whether he had ever made her the requisite offer of marriage.

Meantime Roy's sorrow had swallowed up all nervousness and every other sentiment, leaving him only able to hold her hands and entreat that she would never forget him.

"I shall be back soon," he said—"so soon that you will scarcely have time to miss me; and meanwhile I shall write by every post, and you will do likewise, will you not?"

To which she had returned a sad, half-reluctant "Yes."

Had he been less wrapped up in sad thoughts about the coming parting, he might perhaps have fancied his love somewhat cold and cruel; but, as it was, he saw nothing. Presently he spoke the words that, had they been uttered yesterday, would have caused his "queen" to stand in such a different light before her tormentor.

"Shall I write to your father?" he asked. "You know, Mabel, it is time there was some decided understanding between us. Shall I ask your father's consent to a regular engagement, darling?"

"Yes," Mabel answered, partly comforted—"I suppose it will be best;" then, sadly breaking down, "Oh, Roy, what shall I do without you?"

After this there ensued fond words and lingering caresses, and warm assurances of never-dying love; and then they kissed their last fond kiss and parted.

(To be continued.)

CITY PEOPLE CURIOUS.

Colored Man's Song Nearly Blocks Traffic in New York.

It was only a song, and an old one at that, but it came near causing a block on the Broadway cable line the other day. The singer was as black as the coal in the cart he was driving, but that fact cast no shadow on his exuberant spirits. As he swung his chariot from Broadway into Cortlandt street he raised his voice, says the New York Mail and Express. Then the trouble began. When the notes of "Old Black Joe" rang out high and clear above the din of traffic expressions of blank amazement overspread the faces of the hurrying pedestrians who thronged the sidewalks. Necks were craned in a vain search for the location of some newly patented phonograph. Crowds collected and gazed vacantly into the air, as if they expected to locate the sound in some office window. Teams were drawn up until a long line of trucks extended into Cortlandt street to Broadway, barring access to the street, that their drivers might ascertain the cause of the crowd's curiosity. Suddenly a newsboy cried: "Ah, rubber! Dontcher see it's only de nigger a-singin'?" The crowd laughed. The darky, now lustily holding forth on "The Suwanee River," turned sharply into Church street, totally oblivious to the excitement he had caused. The crowd then dispersed, and the long line of wagons began to move once more. "Well!" exclaimed a Jerseyman on his way to the ferry, "New Yorkers call country people curious, but—" He shrugged his shoulders and passed on.

Train the waitress to hold a dish with her hand underneath.

WHAT IS FAIR TRADE?

SCHEME TO CUT DOWN OUR BIG TRADE BALANCES.

Economic Theorists Urge Increased Purchases of Foreign Goods in Order That Our Exports and Imports May Counterbalance Each Other.

Free trade newspapers are quoting with emphatic approval the views expressed in the speech of the Hon. George E. Roberts, director of the mint, delivered recently before the Bankers' Club, of Chicago. Their fervent admiration of Mr. Roberts undoubtedly springs from the belief on their part that he is an ex-protectionist who has seen the error of his ways and is now anxious to be enrolled as an ardent advocate of freer trade, if not of absolute free trade. The fact that in his Chicago speech Mr. Roberts said not one word which directly or by implication could be construed as in any manner recognizing the part played by protection in bringing about a return of prosperity seems to have been accepted by the free trade and semi-protectionist press as sure proof of his altered economic opinions. In this it is possible that too much is taken for granted. It should not be forgotten that Mr. Roberts was talking to an assemblage of financiers and men who make money by dealing in money. It was pleasant for the bankers to be told by the director of the mint that "our success has been obtained by the superior use of capital, by the massing of capital, by the substitution of invested capital for labor wherever an economic gain could be made."

If Mr. Roberts did not think it necessary to add that the reclamation of the home market to the control of the domestic producer had been a factor of some potency in the problem of building up the greatest prosperity the world has ever known, it was, perhaps, because he thought that it was not worth while to state a thing so obviously and unmistakably true. Still, when we are engaged in writing history it is sometimes thought desirable to make mention of facts and events of even so trivial inconsequence as the part played in our economic transformation by the election in 1896 of a protectionist president and the swift enactment of a protective tariff law. Although speaking to financial men only, Mr. Roberts might have been pardoned had he permitted himself to allude to these immaterial details. But he did not take the risk.

The portion of Mr. Roberts' Chicago address which has set the nerves of free traders tingling with agreeable excitation is that in which he said:

"Our exports last year exceeded those of the United Kingdom, and no other country approached either. Our trade balances are so great that to attempt to collect them in cash would ruin our customers and involve the world, including ourselves, in disaster. In the last three years their aggregate has equaled the sum of all the gold in all the banks and treasuries of Europe, including the British Isles. No wonder foreign governments have come here to place their loans. A nation with the power to amass such credits as these becomes of necessity a trader and investor in all parts of the world. We are out to say, for we never can bring our belongings home. This is an expansive and cheerful outlook. It is assuring and inspiring. It means a broader footing under our industries and security from the reactions of a restricted market. It means more intimate relations abroad and a larger part in all the affairs of the world. Such a development of national importance has moral and intellectual benefits as well; it will enlarge the national view; it will broaden the national character; it will dignify the national life. As we strive to extend our trade we shall meet prejudices, and in overcoming them surrender some of our own. We shall arouse antagonisms and have to conciliate them; encounter stubborn foes and have to placate or retaliate, as the occasion seems to require. In the long run, the policy of a great commercial and exporting people must be fair trade and reciprocity."

Fair trade and reciprocity! That is the doctrine, is it? Truly it has a pleasing sound and may be spoken trippingly on the tongue. Quite captivating as an idea it is, too, on the face of it. Fair trade has been a phrase to conjure with. Sir Robert Peel used it fetchingly, and so did Richard Cobden. Does the director of the mint, a former adherent of the school which believes that free trade is the farthest possible thing from fairness, accept fair trade in the British sense: "Buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market." Mr. Roberts did not stop to explain what he meant by fair trade and reciprocity. Another unimportant detail not thought to be worthy of attention, presumably. If fair trade and reciprocity mean anything in a country situated as the United States is, it means that we must buy from foreign countries as much as we sell to them. It means free interchange of products and no tariff, except for revenue and on articles which we do not produce; certainly no tariff for protection. That is what fair trade and reciprocity means to the foreign manufacturer who is trying to break into the American market; that is what it means to the New England Free Trade League and to the general body of American Cobdenites. But is that what it means to Mr. Roberts and the ex-protectionists and semi-protectionists who are quoting him so approvingly? People sometimes use phrases without stopping to inquire as to their full significance. Possibly this is the reason why so much is heard nowadays about fair trade and reciprocity.

EXPORT PRICES.

Why Some Goods Are Sold Cheaper Abroad than at Home.

Any fool can ask questions, any idiot can utter a falsehood, and neither the question nor the falsehood can be answered without investigation, requiring sometimes much care and time. For the past three months our Free Traders have rung the changes on the accusation that our manufacturers were selling their products abroad at a much lower price than in the home market. This accusation has been made, as most Free Trade statements are, in general without any attempt at specific names or amounts. The few instances of guesswork have been so ridiculous as to deserve no notice.

This question of export discounts was thoroughly investigated ten years ago, and we are no more afraid of it now than we were at that time, when it proved to be the biggest kind of a bugaboo. Until a thorough investigation is made by a competent authorized committee, with power to summon and question reliable witnesses, no one can wholly affirm or deny statements in general or in particular. In the meantime there are phases of the subject that will bear discussion.

For the sake of argument let us suppose that our manufacturers do dispose abroad of their surplus stock or any of their stock at cut rates. Is this not a universal rule of trade? Does not every merchant have his "clearance sale?" Are not unseasonable and shopworn goods marked down "below cost?" Are not stale and damaged products sold away under regular prices, frequently below cost of production? Is it anything rare for our great stores to put a certain article or articles on sale at or below actual cost to attract customers, who will buy paying articles in such quantities as to make up for the small loss? To introduce a new product does not the maker put it at a very low price, or, in fact, give away samples at first, till the people have proved its merits?

There is one firm in the state of New York which gave away last year over 1,000,000 sample bottles of medicine. Besides the cost of the medicine was the cost of the bottles and postage and the work of bottling, packing, shipping, addressing, etc., and yet that firm charged fifty cents and $1 a bottle for the same medicine.

These are all fair and legitimate expedients of trade. If an American manufacturer, in order to introduce a machine, or tool, or rail, or anything else into a new market, as an inducement makes a special price or discount on a trial order, putting the article at cost or perhaps below cost, and being willing to pocket his loss for the sake of future trade and profits, is it anybody's business, and must he sell at the same price to his established trade, which would mean that he would soon sell to no one at any price? Certainly American labor, the basis of all prosperity, is not the loser by an operation which provides increased employment in American mills and factories.

Has any but a blind Free Trader any idea that our manufacturers are going to habitually sell their products at a loss unless for some good trade reason? These reasons are four, and no more: To get rid of surplus stock; to get rid of undesirable stock (stale, unseasonable, damaged or out of date); to introduce new goods; to introduce goods into a new market. So much for the export price.

But Free Traders assert that Protection enables the manufacturer to extort exorbitant prices at home far in excess of what is a reasonable profit. We do not need any investigating committee to settle this question for us. Every man is capable of settling it for himself. And there is not an honest man in any part of the United States today but must acknowledge that he can buy any and every necessary thing cheaper, considering quantity and quality, than ever before in his life. It does not matter if steel rails are a little higher it costs less to ride and less to send freight on the railroad than ever before. It does not matter if structural iron or wire nails are somewhat higher; it costs no more to buy or rent a house. It does not matter if wool or leather fluctuate in price; clothing and shoes were never so reasonable in price. The advertisements in the daily papers prove this statement. Compare prices with those of five years ago under Free Trade, with ten years ago, with twenty years ago, with any past year, and it will be found that the same qualities of goods for wear or use were never so cheap as now. Why?

Our grand home market, built up by Protection, makes such an enormous demand that commodities are turned out by the thousands instead of the hundreds. No one will question that a thousand pairs of shoes can be made per pair cheaper than a dozen or a hundred pairs. That is why everything is cheaper today, and that is why more people are employed in spite of the increased use of labor-saving machinery.

So this revived bugaboo of the Free Traders, with a grain of truth and a mountain of falsehood, will fall by its own weight. The more light turned on it, the more ridiculous it will appear. Protectionists will never hesitate to discuss prices any more than they do wages.

The cold winter in the Adirondacks killed more deer in the past season than the entire multitude of hunters did last fall.

SUCTION OF A FAST TRAIN.

Cautious People Will Avoid the Wake of a Flying Express.

There is hardly any person, young or old, who does not like to see a fast railroad train go by. There is a fascination in the rush and roar, the engine represents so much resistless strength, and it is all such a triumph of man's skill that it never fails to evoke wonder and admiration. Yet there is danger in a moving train, and everyone should know enough to keep at a respectful distance while admiring this marvel. "The theory that a moving train carries along with it an envelope of air is very interesting," says an engineer. "I first had my attention attracted to the subject by a curious incident that happened several years ago at a crossing near Birmingham, Ala., where trains pass twice a day at a speed if about forty miles an hour. The tracks are seven feet apart and there would seem to be ample room to stand between them in safety between two trains. One day a terrier dog belonging to a section boss was asleep in the middle space, and woke up just as the trains closed in from each side. There was a barrel on the ground near by, and the dog in his fright jumped on top of it. That probably brought him into one of the rushing envelopes of air. At any rate, he was whirled off his feet and thrown clear to the roof of the opposite car, where he was subsequently found, jammed against a ventilator chimney, with no injury except a broken leg. How in the world he ever made such a journey and escaped alive is a mystery, unless his fall was deadened by a cushion of air. Apropos of atmospheric pressure, it is a well-known fact that there is a 'vortex space,' or 'zone of suction,' directly behind any rapidly moving train, and its presence accounts for a grotesque happening that took place some time ago on the Southern Pacific. While the California bound express was going through western Arizona at a clipping gait a passenger who was on the verge of lunacy rushed out to the rear platform, climbed on a rail and jumped off. He was wearing a very long linen duster, and a muscular tourist who happened to be on the platform at the time grabbed it by the tails as it sailed by and yelled for help. They reeled the man in like a kite, and he promised to be good."

WIRE GRASS WEAVING.

Great Development from an Experiment Made Near Oshkosh.

"The Creation of a New Industry" is described as "a romance of the Twentieth century" by Herbert Myrick, who is the author of a large book with heavy crepe paper covers in which is followed the development of the wire grass industry from the time the grass was first woven into binding twine down to the present extensive use of the grass in the manufacture of mattings, baskets, chairs and other furniture. It is interesting to note that the making of wire grass twine was begun near Oshkosh, Wis., on a small scale, in November, 1897. The grass twine proved profitable for binding grain, and the mattings found ready sale. From this beginning an enterprise has developed which operates enlarged works at Oshkosh, a large plant at West Superior, another plant at St. Paul, Minn., and an immense factory at Brooklyn, N. Y., for the manufacture from wire grass twine of furniture, baby carriages and other novelties. The utilization of a grass that had heretofore been worse than worthless is an economic development of so much importance that its promoters are worthy of classification among public benefactors. Wire grass is useless for grazing or feeding purposes, as it is hard and tough, and practically without nutritive substance. The plant is, in fact, only valuable for fiber. Mr. Myrick's book is illustrated with pictures showing the development of the various establishments of the corporation which has grown out of the Oshkosh experiment, and with attractive colored photographs showing the various articles that are now made from wire grass. The furniture is particularly attractive.

The Bektashis of Cappadocia.

Throughout Turkey in Asia and Persia there are many scattered tribes either professing heretical forms of Islam or wholly pagan in character. They very naturally enjoy the hatred of the orthodox, by whom they are persecuted. It has for a long time been thought that the devotees of these peculiar sects represent the earliest inhabitants of the land and that mixed up with their religion there are rites that extended back to times far anterior to the rise of either Mohammedanism of Christianity. In order to test this supposition Mr. J. W. Crowfoot spent last summer at some villages close to the ancient Halys in the eastern half of Asia Minor, which were occupied by a sect called the Bectash of Kizilbash. In his report regarding them, made recently to the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain, he states that the measurements and photographs taken corroborate the supposition regarding their antiquity, but that evidence was also found of an influx of some more eastern element driven westward, most likely, at the time of the great Mogul invasions. The people nominally worship Ali, but in reality worship "heroes" from whom they claim descent.—Philadelphia Times.

The poet writes lines on time—and time retaliates by writing lines on him.

The ratio of the heated surface to the volume of the cylinders has been increased.