

THE DOUBLE SECRET

BY FLORENCE MARYATT

CHAPTER XVI.—(Continued.)

The spontaneous twitch upon his arm made Captain Philip aware that something in his reply had touched her. "If he had not left off being a thief," she repeated slowly. "But surely he might relapse?" "He might. But isn't it a part of our duty to hope the best for our fellow-creatures, Miss Rayne, and does any one stand firmly without having had a few falls? A confirmed thief is a different thing. But I should be sorry to place an obstacle in the way of the reformation of any man who had sinned once—or even twice. We cannot measure the temptation any more than the repentance. The Almighty, who weigheth both, will not condemn us for erring on the side of mercy."

"Thank you," replied Evelyn, after a pause. "You are a good man, Captain Philip, and you have given me something to think of. The servant I spoke of tells me he has repented, and perhaps I am bound to believe him."

"All the same," said Captain Philip to himself, as he walked back to Bachelor's Hall, "you have not deceived me, Evelyn Rayne. No man servant's peccadilloes have had the power to shake your proud spirit in this way. It had something to do with Miss Featherstone's marriage. I am sure of that. Can she have met this Jasper Lyle before, and under different circumstances? It is hardly probable. He is not the sort of man, with his half-forgotten ways, to be easily forgotten; and he is evidently a stranger to everybody about here. And while at Liverpool, living in obscurity with her aunt, she was not in a position to make acquaintances. But there's a mystery somewhere, though I haven't got to the bottom of it yet. But if it is to worry her, or make her unhappy, I will—I will."

The next day the smart Featherstone liveries came gleaming up the avenue, and Mrs. Featherstone, all furbelows, fustices and fluff, rushed into his presence. Her agitated appearance made Evelyn's heart quake with fear for what she might have to say.

"Oh, my dear girl," she commenced excitedly. "I have come to take you back to the Hall with me. Now, no excuses, Evelyn. I know how busy you are, and what a lot you have to do; but Agnes is ill, and I am sure you will not refuse to go to her, for she is crying out for you every moment."

"Agnes is ill? Oh, what is the matter?" exclaimed Evelyn, forgetting all about her interview with Will Caryll in her anxiety for her favorite friend.

"Don't ask me, my dear, for I'm sure I can't tell you, no more than nothing," replied Mrs. Featherstone; "only the whole house is topsy-turvy, and heaven only knows what will happen to us next, and Agnes has locked herself into her bedroom, and won't come out for her Aunt Sophy nor me, nor anybody."

"But why—why?" cried Evelyn, in palpable distress.

"Why, all on account of Mr. Jasper Lyle, of course. Actually going back to Italy without any warning or reasonable excuse, and without fixing any time for his return. Of course Mr. Featherstone's quite put out about it, and says the engagement had better be broken off altogether, and poor Agnes is in hysterics, and I feel so ill you might knock me down with a feather."

When Evelyn reached Agnes' room she found the silly little girl as despairing as though her lover had been stretched out in his coffin, and ready for the grave. She sobbed in Evelyn's arms for some time so bitterly as to be quite unable to speak, and when the passionate outburst had somewhat subsided, her words were scarcely coherent.

"But what is all this terrible fuss about, Agnes?" inquired Evelyn, in her soft, rich voice. "Has Mr. Lyle deserted you for some other woman, or is he so ill that the doctors have given up all hopes of his recovery?"

"No, no," sobbed Agnes, from the shelter of her friend's bosom; "but he is going back to Italy at once, and I feel certain I shall never see him again."

"But surely that is rating your lover's fidelity at a very low standard, Agnes. Has Mr. Lyle intimated in any way that he has no intention of returning?"

"Oh, no. He has said nothing about that. Only it is imperative that he should go away for a while. Nothing that we can say or do will alter his determination. And, Evelyn, I have a premonition that it is forever. Something will happen to prevent our meeting again. It was too good to last. No one is permitted long to be so happy in this world as I have been. Jasper told papa that the most important business called him abroad, and that it was impossible to say how long it might keep him there. That is the miserable part of it."

"Suppose I were to speak to Mr. Lyle, Agnes? I have a good business head, and may be able to advise him. He is so ignorant of English laws and customs, he may not be aware that his business can be executed quite as well by writing as by word of mouth."

Agnes brightened up immediately.

"Oh, yes, Evelyn, do. You always set everything right."

Evelyn went all round the garden, with her brave, firm hand pressed tightly against her aching heart, before she found Mr. Lyle, and then the faint perfume of his cigar alone directed her to the sequestered seat where he had thrown himself full length, in the plenitude of his disappointment.

As her apparition burst upon his view, Will Caryll sprang from his seat with an expression almost of fear.

"Evelyn!" he exclaimed, "I have kept my promise; indeed I have, I am going to leave England again, and forever."

"Hush, Will," she answered warningly. "We must learn to address each other more formally, for some one might overhear us. You must make some allowance for yesterday. You took me by surprise, and I spoke hastily. Agnes is very, very dear to me, and I rank her happiness above my own. When I thought that you would wreck it, I told you to go. Now that I see that it is bound up in yours, I tell you to stay, and, from this moment, you shall be Jasper Lyle to me, and I will do my utmost to forget that you were ever—Will Caryll."

He leaped up then and tried to seize her hand; but she prevented him steadily,

"Remember who you are," she said—"the affianced husband of my friend. Have I not just warned you that we must not only forget, but utterly erase the past? Therein lies your only safety, for I have spoken of my cousin Will Caryll to Agnes, and a very little want of care might raise her suspicions of you. Your future is in your own hands now. Make it as noble and free from blame as the past should have been."

"Evelyn!" he exclaimed, "how can I thank you for your generosity—your forbearance? I have always loved you—no time, no distance, nor silence could tear my heart or memory from those unforgotten days, when—"

"Oh, hush, hush!" she said, in a voice of the keenest pain, "never speak of them again. They are dead and gone days. The cousin I knew then has vanished forever. From this day, you must be to me Mr. Jasper Lyle only, and I to you your wife's nearest and most faithful friend. Go to her, Mr. Lyle, go at once, and depend securely upon me."

CHAPTER XVII.

Within twelve hours of this interview, peace and contentment once more reigned at Featherstone Hall. Mr. Lyle had informed his future father-in-law that (in consideration of Agnes' objection to his departing he had given up the idea of revisiting Italy (at all events for the present), and the old man had expressed himself as well-pleased with his decision.

By the next day, Evelyn heard that her efforts on Agnes' behalf had been successful, and that the wedding day was fixed for a much earlier date than had been previously intended; and then she did what to those who knew her seemed a very funny thing—she sent for her doctor. Now, during the ten years that she had lived at Mount Eden, Dr. Wilton had never entered the house on her account, except once or twice.

When the doctor called she told him that she wanted a change of scene and air, and that her friends, especially the Featherstones, would make such a fuss about her going away that she wanted Dr. Wilton to give her a certificate that she required it. The doctor laughingly complied.

When Evelyn told Captain Philip in confidence, that she was about to leave home for a time, and wished her departure to be kept a secret till she was gone, it would not have been extraordinary, even on a land agent's part, to have displayed a little surprise; for, in all the time that they had worked together, Miss Rayne had never slept a night away from Mount Eden before. Yet Captain Philip did nothing of the kind. He listened with respectful attention to all she had to say, and then he asked her quietly:

"Shall you remain away till after harvest?"

"Till after harvest?" stammered Evelyn, taken aback—"I don't know—I am not sure—it will depend entirely upon circumstances."

Evelyn found her way down to the Cornish coast, and settled herself and Anna, her maid, in a weird-looking house, hanging over a cliff at Penzance, set to work determinedly to root that image from her heart, (more from custom than from her knowledge of its worth) seemed to have imbedded itself there. Day after day she wandered on the lonely beach, or sat on the rocks, watching the grand and restless ocean—nowhere more grand or more restless than on the coast of Cornwall—and arguing herself out of any remnant of feeling she might entertain for William Caryll. And to a woman of Evelyn's temperament this was an easier task than some might imagine, for she could not love where she did not esteem.

The marriage of Agnes and Will Caryll was fixed for the tenth of August, and on that morning Evelyn wandered far away upon the cliffs, walking fast and wondering why her heart should be beating in such an irregular, jerky manner all the while. She would not look at her watch for fear of ascertaining just when the ceremony was taking place, but as she saw the boatmen and fishermen returning from their work, and knew that it must have struck twelve o'clock, she threw herself down on the thyme-scented turf, and dedicated a few tears to the forever-vanished memory of the past.

These few tears completed Evelyn's cure. They watered the grave of her early attachment, from which the ghost of Will Caryll, as he had been, never rose again.

Evelyn descended to breakfast on the following morning, animated and cheerful. With the knowledge that Jasper Lyle and his wife had left Hampshire, she experienced a great longing to return to it. Mount Eden, with its fields golden with ripe fruit, appeared fairer in her eyes than it had ever done before, and she knew she should be restless until she was once more on the spot to superintend everything.

"How wicked I have been," she thought to herself, as she stood at the window of her sitting room, and looked out upon the foaming waves that dashed incessantly against the crag-bound coast—"how wrong to cherish such a rebellious spirit when I have so many mercies and so much pleasure left to me still. And as for poor Will, it must be almost punishment enough for him to see what he has lost without making him suffer more. Captain Philip's advice was sound, and good, and merciful. How I wish I were competent to attain his standard."

She finished off her reverie with a deep sigh, in the midst of which she was startled by hearing Anna exclaim, in rather an agitated voice:

"If you please, Miss, Captain Philip is here, and wants to speak to you."

Evelyn came down from cloudland at once. A thousand terrors rushed into her mind. Mount Eden had been destroyed by fire—her favorite hunter had dropped down dead—burglars had broken into the big house, and stolen all her property—anything and everything but the right thing, combined to make her face turn grey with fright.

"Captain Philip, Anna! What on earth can bring Captain Philip down to Cornwall?"

"Oh, don't look like that, miss, please. It's nothing particular, you may be sure. Perhaps the captain's come to tell you about the wedding yesterday."

She had hardly known how glad she

should be to see Captain Philip again, but as he entered the room and advanced to greet her, she flushed to the roots of her hair with pleasure, and he colored almost as much as she did.

"Oh, Captain Philip, this is most unexpected," she said, as they shook hands; "and I was just thinking of you and dear old Mount Eden. When did you arrive?"

"I have only just arrived, Miss Rayne. I have been traveling all night."

She arched her eyebrows.

"Indeed! You have come to tell me about my darling child's wedding, of course. Well, how did it go off? Was everything right, and did you send over all the white flowers to be found in our conservatories?"

"I executed all your orders, Miss Rayne, to the letter. Both the Hall and the church were a mass of flowers, and everybody said it was the prettiest wedding that had ever been seen in St. Mary Ottery. I need not tell you that the bride looked lovely."

"Ah, my sweet Agnes," interposed Evelyn, her eyes overbrimming with tears of affection; "she could not fail to do that."

"And after the breakfast, at which there were upwards of a hundred guests, Mr. and Mrs. Jasper Lyle left for Teignmouth, in Devonshire, where they are to spend the honeymoon."

"But, Captain Philip," cried Evelyn, suddenly laying her hand upon his arm, "you did not come all the way down here to tell me this?"

"No, Miss Rayne, I have a graver motive for seeking you."

"Oh, tell me quickly, for mercy's sake, nothing is wrong at Mount Eden?"

"You are mistaken. Everything at Mount Eden is as right as it can be."

Evelyn turned deathly pale.

"It isn't Agnes," she muttered—"or—"

"No; but it concerns them nearly. Miss Rayne, you must prepare yourself for a shock. It is in order to save you as far as possible that I started off at once to anticipate the newspapers."

"Tell me at once," she whispered.

"Mr. Featherstone has left us."

"Mr. Featherstone! and on his daughter's wedding day! How terrible. Who will break it to her?"

"I promised Mrs. Featherstone to see Mrs. Lyle before I returned. I shall go on to Teignmouth with as little delay as possible."

"But, Captain Philip, it must have been awfully sudden. When did it occur?"

"It was awfully sudden. He appeared quite well at the breakfast, but after the bride and bridegroom had left the Hall, he locked himself up in his room in order (as he said) to answer some important letters, and by six o'clock it was all over."

"Heart disease?" said Evelyn, in a low voice.

"No, Miss Rayne."

"That, then?"

"Evelyn will hardly believe it, but he destroyed himself."

Evelyn gave vent to a loud ejaculation, and leaned heavily against the table.

"Are you faint? Shall I call your maid?" said Captain Philip anxiously.

"No, no, I shall be all right in a minute," gasped Evelyn with wide-open, horror-stricken eyes. "Destroyed himself! It is incredible. Mr. Featherstone destroyed himself! Oh, Captain Philip, are you sure you are not mistaken?"

"I wish I were, Miss Rayne; but it is, unfortunately, too true. I was the first person out of the house that poor Mrs. Featherstone sent for. I had not returned home half an hour. Of course I went back at once, and dispatched the carriage for Dr. Wilton. But it was a mere matter of form. I knew that as soon as I saw the corpse. He had shot himself right through the brain. The roof of his head was blown off."

"Ah! Captain Philip, how horrible!—how horrible!" exclaimed Evelyn, closing her eyes at the sight her imagination had conjured up. "But what motive can he have had for such an act?"

"That is about the saddest part of the story, Miss Rayne. Mr. Featherstone left a letter behind him to explain his motives. It appears that the bank in which all his interests were placed has approached a crisis which it cannot possibly tide over, and everything will be swamped with it. Poor Mrs. Featherstone is left without a farthing, and the Hall (with the property on which it stands) is already mortgaged up to the elbow."

"Oh, how selfish, how cruel, how cowardly of him," cried Evelyn, with flashing eyes, "to leave a helpless woman to struggle alone against the tide which has overwhelmed himself. If everything is gone, there was nothing else to lose. Why did he cast his courage and his honor after it? This was the moment to have buckled on his armor, and gone to work afresh to keep bread in the mouth of the wife who was dependent on him. I have always respected Mr. Featherstone—I can respect him no longer. How I wish that heaven had taken him long ago."

"Can you make no allowance, Miss Rayne, for a weak brain, turned by the shock of such a discovery?"

"I don't know. I think that true and disinterested love would keep the brain cool and the courage strong for the sake of those who trusted to it. Could you do such a cowardly thing under any circumstances, as to take your own life, Captain Philip?"

"I think not, for I have had more than one temptation to do so, Miss Rayne. But neither could you. We possess energy of character, and an incentive to action is like a trumpet call to arms with us. But all people are not constituted alike, and heaven only knows how our poor friend may have struggled and fought before he was overcome."

Evelyn went up to her overseer, and clasped his hand.

"You are a good man, Captain Philip," she said, with moist eyes, "and I thank you for the lessons that you teach me."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Evelyn had expected that the poor little bride would return home in a very grave and melancholy mood, but she was quite unprepared to see how white and drawn her face had become in one short week (which should have been so happy, and to hear the cry of despair with which she threw herself into her arms.

"Agnes, Agnes!" she exclaimed, "try to control yourself for your poor mother's sake. She has so much to bear, remember. You have your husband's love to support you, but she is left alone in the world. This is the time when you must prove your affection for her by teaching her how to be brave."

"But, Evelyn," exclaimed Agnes, gazing up into her friend's face with terror-stricken eyes, "what does mamma mean by saying we are beggars? Surely papa was very rich. He said he should settle twenty thousand pounds on me on my

wedding day. Shall I have to give it up to mamma?"

A faint feeling of disappointment passed through Evelyn's mind. She could not believe that Agnes was mercenary, and yet what rest had the poor child ever had till now by which to try the metal that she was made of? Evelyn would have kept the news of her father's bankruptcy from her till after the funeral, but Mrs. Featherstone had evidently disclosed it, and there was no use in attempting further deception.

"You can never be a beggar, my darling," she said, as she stroked the girl's sunny hair; "Mr. Lyle has an income of his own, and, though it is small, it is enough to live upon."

But Agnes pushed the loving hand away almost brusquely, as she looked up again.

"Three hundred a year!" she exclaimed, contemptuously. "As if any one could live upon that!"

Jasper Lyle confessed himself unable to meet any present expenses. He had anticipated a considerable portion of his annual allowance to pay for his wedding journey.

"Mr. Featherstone told me," he said, "before ever I proposed for Agnes, that he was prepared to settle twenty thousand pounds on her. He repeated it afterwards, I never could have afforded to marry her otherwise, and I consider that I have been shamefully taken in and defrauded, and any other man would say the same."

"That may be, sir," exclaimed Captain Philip, stepping hastily forward, "but you must not, and you shall not, speak of the late Mr. Featherstone in such terms in the presence of his widow and his daughter and his friends. Whatever your disappointment may be, you will please to keep it to yourself here and now."

"Thank you, Captain Philip; that is just what I should have wished to say," added Evelyn, for the cruel circumstances under which she had met him again had robbed her of all nervousness in the presence of her cousin.

(To be continued.)

A Moment of Peril.

When the Ironsides, commanded by Captain—afterward Admiral—Dahlgren, was off Morris Island, South Carolina, while removing coal from her bunkers, it was discovered that the vessel had sustained a serious injury from a Confederate torpedo. It became necessary to know to what extent the hull had been affected externally under the water.

The diver's boat was brought alongside and the diver descended. It was low water and the instant was seized when the tide ceased to ebb. The diver went carefully over the part of the bottom at the damaged portion, and then reaching the keel concluded to pass under, and now saw that the vessel, in swinging, would pass close to a shoal ridge of the sandy bottom, and even grind into it. This must inevitably cut off the slender and delicate tube which conveyed air to him, and also sever the lines by which, in case of accident, he was to be drawn up. Fastened down by his heavy weights it would be instant suffocation.

With all the speed that his incumbrances permitted, he endeavored to reach the keel and pass under before it was too late. The ship was coming round rapidly; he passed his head and body, but began to feel the pressure of the keel against the soft ooze.

With great effort he succeeded in dragging his limbs and tubes clear, and the water became a little deeper; but one arm was so painfully crushed that it was some days before it was in a condition to use.

A French Bibliophile.

The late Duc d'Aumale was a genuine lover of books, and the New York Tribune, quoting Lady Dilke, has something to tell in this connection: His interest in his famous library at Chantilly was far from being confined to a superficial pleasure in their bindings, their beauty or their rarity; one could not lay one's hand on a volume in his superb and immense library with the contents of which he was not to some extent familiar.

Unless, indeed, you were specially authorized to do so, touching his books was a temptation that it was wiser to resist. He had a jealous sense of their value, and could be angry with a darling hand.

On one occasion, when the glass doors before the shelves at the end of the library had been unlocked, and some of his most precious treasures—each in its own glass case—had been brought forth and opened, I heard him cry out peremptorily to a most distinguished French Academician, who had ventured to handle a volume:

"Put it down, put it down, till I come to it. They should only be unlocked one by one as I show them to Lady Dilke."

"Have Some More."

Doctor Johnson's tongue spared nobody, and naturally enough, if any one ever got the better of him in a verbal encounter it was considered a memorable victory.

In this spirit a Scotch family cherishes an anecdote of his trip to Scotland. He had stopped at the house for a meal, and was helped to the national dish.

"Doctor Johnson," said the hostess, "what do you think of our Scotch broth?"

"Madam," was the answer, "in my opinion it is only fit for pigs."

"Then have some more," said the woman.

Blow for a Blow.

Mr. Oldboy—Girls are not as handsome now as they were twenty years ago.

Miss Cute—Well, are you?

Gold and Silver in the Sea.

It is estimated that greater quantities of gold and silver have been sunk in the sea than are now in circulation on earth.

At breakfast next morning Uncle Black began to scold as usual.

"Fish again!" said he. "This makes four mornings this week we've had ash."

BEAUTY BLIND

He said: "The clouds hide yonder range, And doubtless it will rain to-night, Ah, well! 'twill be a welcome change; These fields are but a tiresome sight."

He crushed beneath his careless feet, The white thistle-dill, blind words he said.

The clover blooming, dewy sweet, Where Dawn has made her rosy bed;

Nor heeded how, like thistle-down From purple blossoms lightly blown, The mists that veiled the mountain crown O'er all the opal skies were strewn.—Symposium.

LEARNING A LESSON.

can get along with him. I'm very sure," said Joscelyn Darkridge.

"Nobody could get along with him!" chorused the three other Miss Darkridges, in unison.

Uncle Black was the personage of whom they spoke—a crabbed, ill-tempered, little old man—who lived in a superb old country seat among the Catskills.

He had money to spare, but his nieces and nephews secretly believed that it would be a deal easier to go to California or Goldconda, or some of the fabulous places and dig fortunes out, nugget by nugget, than to stay at home and earn them by making themselves acceptable to an old gentleman who had as many tricks as a rose diamond, and as many prickly spikes of temper as a porcupine.

Naomi Darkridge had tried it first. Naomi was a soft-voiced, slender girl, with a head which reminded one of a drooping lily.

"No one can help loving Naomi," said Mrs. Darkridge, as she kissed her daughter good-by.

But in three weeks Naomi came back half frightened out of her wits.

"He scolds so dreadfully," said Naomi. "And he looked at me as the wolf must have looked at Little Red Riding Hood. Oh, mamma, I couldn't stay there, not if I were to be made richer than Miss Burdett-Coutts herself."

Magdalena Darkridge went next; but Magdalena, although a fine, tall girl, with a spirit of her own, was cowed by Uncle Black's savage eyes in less than a week.

"I'd sooner sweep crossing for a living," said she, "than be Uncle Black's mistress."

And so she came home without loss of rhoda.

Rhoda Darkridge, in no wise abashed by the successive failures of her sisters, was the third one to try Black Grange and its possibilities. But she also succumbed before the terrible scourge of Uncle Black's savage tongue.

"It's scold, snarl, snarl, scold, from morning till night!" said Rhoda, as in three days' time she tearfully related her experience to her parents. "Oh, you don't know—nobody can know—what a dreadful man Uncle Black is!"

"Oh, hang the old scamp!" said Mr. Darkridge, who was of a free-and-easy nature, and thought his girls a great deal too sweet and nice to be snarled at by any rich old miser. "Let him alone. My daughters needn't go begging for any man's money."

But here Joscelyn, the youngest, tallest and prettiest of the four girls, spoke up:

"I'll go!" said she.

"You don't know what you are undertaking," said Naomi, with a shudder.

"He'd wear out a stone," said Magdalena.

"He's a ghoul!" shuddered Rhoda.

"I can get along with him, I am very sure," said Joscelyn, brightly.

And she packed up her little trunk and went to Black Grange.

It was sunset—a red, flaming sunset like one of Gifford's pictures—when she came up the terraced flight of steps that led to the house. Everything blushed blood-red in the deep light, and Joscelyn could see how lovely was the scenery, how substantial this old gray house, with its square towers and semi-circular, colonnaded porch. Uncle Black stood on the steps.

"So you are Joscelyn?" said he, surveying her with little twinkling eyes, like glass beads.

"Yes, I am Joscelyn," said the bright-checked girl, giving him a kiss. "You're late!" said Uncle Black.

"I am late," said Joscelyn. "I thought the old beast of a stage never would have got here. The horses fairly crept and the roads were horrid."

"It's a dreadful warm day," growled Uncle Black.

"I'm almost roasted," sighed Joscelyn.

"The whole summer has been intolerably warm," said the old gentleman. "We might as well be in the tropics, and be done with it," retorted Joscelyn, flinging off her shawl and fanning herself vehemently.

Uncle Black gave her the keys that night, just as he had three times before given them to her three sisters.

"I shall expect you to take charge of the whole establishment," said he. "The servants are miserable—"

"No more than one might expect," interrupted Joscelyn, with a deprecatory motion of the hand. "Servants are mere frauds nowadays!"

"And nothing goes right about the place."

"Nothing ever does!" said Joscelyn. "Uncle Black eyed her queerly. This was quite different from the determined chiefness and systematic good-spirits of her sisters.

At breakfast next morning Uncle Black began to scold as usual.

"Fish again!" said he. "This makes four mornings this week we've had ash."

"I detest fish!" said Joscelyn, pushing away her plate with a grimace.

"And the rolls heavy again!" growled Uncle Black, breaking one open.

"Please give me the plate, Uncle Black," said Joscelyn, and she rang the table bell sharply.

Betty, the cook, a stout, good-humored Irish woman, made her appearance.

"Betty," said Miss Darkridge, "be so good as to throw these rolls out of the window."

Betty stared.

"Do you hear what I tell you?" said Miss Darkridge, with emphasis.

And Betty flung the rolls out among the rosebushes, where they were speedily devoured by Cato, the Newfoundland dog, and Rob and Roy, the two setters.

"But what am I to eat for breakfast?" bewailed Uncle Black.

"Crackers, of course," said Joscelyn. "Anything is better than imperilling one's digestion with such stuff as this! And, Betty, if you send up any more fish in a month you may consider yourself discharged—do you hear?"

"But, my dear, I am rather fond of fish," put in the old gentleman.

"One can't eat fish the whole time," said Joscelyn, imperiously. "Here, Betty—this coffee isn't fit to drink and the toast is burned; and you must have put the cooking butter on the table by mistake! Let these errors be rectified at once!"

Betty retired with an ominous rustle on her stiffly starched apron.

"My dear," said Uncle Black, apprehensively. "Betty is a very old servant, and—"

"I don't care if she is the age of Methuselah," said Joscelyn; "nobody can be expected to put up with such wretched cooking as this!"

"I really think she is not so bad, if—"

"Oh, pray don't apologize for her, Uncle Black!" said Joscelyn. "They are all shiftless, lazy creatures, who must be discharged promptly if they don't do their duties."

Uncle Black began to look frightened. He had kept Betty, Sylvia and old John for ten years. Was it possible that he had scolded at them for ten years, only to have Joscelyn Darkridge outscold him now?

"I wouldn't be too short with 'em, my dear, if I were you," he remonstrated.

"Then let them do their duty," said Joscelyn, with the air of an empress.

"We are all mortal," pleaded Uncle Black.

Uncle Black ate the rest of his breakfast with little appetite. Sylvia, the housemaid, was finishing dusting his library when he entered it.

"Not through yet?" growled Uncle Black, the frecklework of wrinkles once more coming into his brow.

"Sylvia," said Miss Darkridge, severely. "If this happens again I shall dispench with your services! Look at that clock! Is this the time of day to be dawdling about the rooms with a broom and duster? Remember Mr. Black does not pay exorbitant wages to lie in bed until noon!"

"My dear," said Uncle Black, "Sylvia is generally a very good girl, if—"

"Dear uncle," interrupted Joscelyn, "pray permit me to be the judge of these matters. You have ruled your household with a slack and indulgent hand altogether too long. I shall now institute a reform."

And poor Sylvia had never moved about so briskly as she did that day.

Old John, the gardener, was not exempt from his share of the general turmoil. Miss Darkridge chanced to hear her uncle reproaching the old man for some fancied neglect in the flower beds, whose diamonds, ovals and crescents of brilliant colors were the pride of his horticultural heart, and she promptly came to his aid.

"Gardening, indeed! Do you call this gardening?" she said. "Uncle Black, I'm astonished that you keep such a man as that about the place!"

And the torrent of taunts and reproaches which she showered upon the luckless head of poor old John was enough as that individual observed, "to make one's flesh creep."

"My niece is a young lady of spirit and energy," apologized Mr. Black, when at last Joscelyn had gone back to the house.

"Verra like you, sir, verra like you!" said old John, scratching his head.

"Like me!" said Mr. Black, slowly.

And he stood full five minutes, quite speechless and motionless, staring at the mossy rim of an ancient sun-dial half sunk in the velvet grass. And at the end of five minutes he spoke two other words, and only two:

"Like-me!"

"There's no knowin' the master, he's that changed," said Betty in the kitchen, a week or two later. "He's as mild as a lamb and as peaceable as a kitten."

"Sure, isn't that what the young lady told us," said Sylvia, "when she came down into the kitchen that first morning after the fire was lighted, and told us she was going to try an experiment, we wasn't to mind a word she said, 'cause it was all by contraries? He doesn't know what his temper has got to be," said she, "and I'm going to show him! And, bless her sweet heart, her plan has worked like a charm."

It had, in good truth. Uncle Black was a changed man. And Joscelyn had relapsed into the original sunshine of her temper—and all the domestic wheels of Black Grange seemed to revolve on velvet.

But Uncle Black took all the credit to himself. He never knew that Joscelyn had taught him a lesson.

"We can get along very nicely," said he, "now that my niece has subdued those little tempers of hers."

And Joscelyn was his heiress and darling after all—for he will always believe that it was he "who formed her character."—Cambridge Tribune.