

PART XIII.

MARCH.

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"Tom," she said, "I have come back."



CHAPTER IX.

MRS. FURNIVAL CAN'T PUT UP WITH IT.

WHEN Lady Mason last left the chambers of her lawyer in Lincoln's Inn, she was watched by a stout lady as she passed through the narrow passage leading from the Old to the New Square. That fact will I trust be remembered, and I need hardly say that the stout lady was Mrs. Furnival. She had heard betimes of the arrival of that letter with the Hamworth postmark, had felt assured that it was written by the hands of her hated rival, and had at once prepared for action.

'I shall leave this house to-day,—immediately after breakfast,' she said to Miss Biggs, as they sat disconsolately at the table with the urn between them.

'And I think you will be quite right, my dear,' replied Miss Biggs. 'It is your bounden duty to put down such wicked iniquity as this;—not only for your own sake, but for that of morals in general. What in the world is there so beautiful and so lovely as a high tone of moral sentiment?' To this somewhat transcendental question Mrs. Furnival made no reply. That a high tone of moral sentiment as a thing in general, for the world's use, is very good, she was no doubt aware; but her mind at the present moment was fixed exclusively on her own peculiar case. That Tom Furnival should be made to give up seeing that nasty woman who lived at Hamworth, and to give up also having letters from her,—that at present was the extent of her moral sentiment. His wicked iniquity she could forgive with a facility not at all gratifying to Miss Biggs, if only she could bring about such a result as that. So she merely grunted in answer to the above proposition.

'And will you sleep away from this?' asked Miss Biggs.

'Certainly I will. I will neither eat here, nor sleep here, nor stay here till I know that all this is at an end. I have made up my mind what I will do.'

'Well?' asked the anxious Martha.

'Oh, never mind. I am not exactly prepared to talk about it. There are things one can't talk about,—not to anybody. One feels as though one would burst in mentioning it. I do, I know.'

Martha Biggs could not but feel that this was hard, but she knew that friendship is nothing if it be not long enduring. 'Dearest Kitty!' she exclaimed. 'If true sympathy can be of service to you——'

'I wonder whether I could get respectable lodgings in the neighbourhood of Red Lion Square for a week?' said Mrs. Furnival, once more bringing the conversation back from the abstract to the concrete.

In answer to this Miss Biggs of course offered the use of her own bedroom and of her father's house; but her father was an old man, and Mrs. Furnival positively refused to agree to any such arrangement. At last it was decided that Martha should at once go off and look for lodgings in the vicinity of her own home, that Mrs. Furnival should proceed to carry on her own business in her own way,—the cruelty being this, that she would not give the least hint as to what that way might be,—and that the two ladies should meet together in the Red Lion Square drawing-room at the close of the day.

'And about dinner, dear?' asked Miss Biggs.

'I will get something at a pastrycook's,' said Mrs. Furnival.

'And your clothes, dear?'

'Rachel will see about them; she knows.' Now Rachel was the old female servant of twenty years' standing; and the disappointment experienced by poor Miss Biggs at the ignorance in which she was left was greatly enhanced by a belief that Rachel knew more than she did. Mrs. Furnival would tell Rachel but would not tell her. This was very, very hard, as Miss Biggs felt. But, nevertheless, friendship, sincere friendship is long enduring, and true patient merit will generally receive at last its appropriate reward.

Then Mrs. Furnival had sat down, Martha Biggs having been duly sent forth on the mission after the lodgings, and had written a letter to her husband. This she intrusted to Rachel, whom she did not purpose to remove from that abode of iniquity from which she herself was fleeing, and having completed her letter she went out upon her own work. The letter ran as follows:—

'Harley Street—Friday.

'MY DEAREST TOM,

'I cannot stand this any longer, so I have thought it best to leave the house and go away. I am very sorry to be forced to such a step as this, and would have put up with a good deal first; but there are some things which I cannot put up with,—and won't. I know that a woman has to obey her husband, and I have always obeyed you, and thought it no hardship even when I was left so much alone; but a woman is not to see a slut brought in under her

very nose,—and I won't put up with it. We've been married now going on over twenty-five years, and it's terrible to think of being driven to this. I almost believe it will drive me mad, and then, when I'm a lunatic, of course you can do as you please.

'I don't want to have any secrets from you. Where I shall go I don't yet know, but I've asked Martha Biggs to take lodgings for me somewhere near her. I must have somebody to speak to now and again, so you can write to 23 Red Lion Square till you hear further. It's no use sending for me, for I *won't come*;—not till I know that you think better of your present ways of going on. I don't know whether you have the power to get the police to come after me, but I advise you not. If you do anything of that sort the people about shall hear of it.

'And now, Tom, I want to say one word to you. You can't think it's a happiness to me going away from my own home where I have lived respectable so many years, or leaving you whom I've loved with all my whole heart. It makes me very very unhappy, so that I could sit and cry all day if it weren't for pride and because the servants shouldn't see me. To think that it has come to this after all! Oh, Tom, I wonder whether you ever think of the old days when we used to be so happy in Keppel Street! There wasn't anybody then that you cared to see, except me;—I do believe that. And you'd always come home then, and I never thought bad of it though you wouldn't have a word to speak to me for hours. Because you were doing your duty. But you aint doing your duty now, Tom. You know you aint doing your duty when you never dine at home, and come home so cross with wine that you curse and swear, and have that nasty woman coming to see you at your chambers. Don't tell me it's about law business. Ladies don't go to barristers' chambers about law business. All that is done by attorneys. I've heard you say scores of times that you never would see people themselves, and yet you see her.

'Oh, Tom, you have made me so wretched! But I can forgive it all, and will never say another word about it to fret you, if you'll only promise me to have nothing more to say to that woman. Of course I'd like you to come home to dinner, but I'd put up with that. You've made your own way in the world, and perhaps it's only right you should enjoy it. I don't think so much dining at the club can be good for you, and I'm afraid you'll have gout, but I don't want to bother you about that. Send me a line to say that you won't see her any more, and I'll come back to Harley Street at once. If you can't bring yourself to do that, you—and—I—must—part. I can put up with a great deal, but I can't put up with that;—*and won't*.

'Your affectionate loving wife,

'C. FURNIVAL.'

‘I wonder whether you ever think of the old days when we used to be so happy in Keppel Street?’ Ah me, how often in after life, in those successful days when the battle has been fought and won, when all seems outwardly to go well,—how often is this reference made to the happy days in Keppel Street! It is not the prize that can make us happy: it is not even the winning of the prize, though for the one short half-hour of triumph that is pleasant enough. The struggle, the long hot hour of the honest fight, the grinding work—when the teeth are set, and the skin moist with sweat and rough with dust, when all is doubtful and sometimes desperate, when a man must trust to his own manhood knowing that those around him trust to it not at all,—that is the happy time of life. There is no human bliss equal to twelve hours of work with only six hours in which to do it. And when the expected pay for that work is worse than doubtful, the inner satisfaction is so much the greater. Oh, those happy days in Keppel Street, or it may be over in dirty lodgings in the Borough, or somewhere near the Marylebone workhouse;—anywhere for a moderate weekly stipend. Those were to us, and now are to others, and always will be to many, the happy days of life. How bright was love, and how full of poetry! Flashes of wit glanced here and there, and how they came home and warmed the cockles of the heart. And the unfrequent bottle! Methinks that wine has utterly lost its flavour since those days. There is nothing like it; long work, grinding weary work, work without pay, hopeless work; but work in which the worker trusts himself, believing it to be good. Let him, like Mahomet, have one other to believe in him, and surely nothing else is needed. ‘Ah me! I wonder whether you ever think of the old days when we used to be so happy in Keppel Street?’

Nothing makes a man so cross as success, or so soon turns a pleasant friend into a captious acquaintance. Your successful man eats too much and his stomach troubles him; he drinks too much and his nose becomes blue. He wants pleasure and excitement, and roams about looking for satisfaction in places where no man ever found it. He frets himself with his banker’s book, and everything tastes amiss to him that has not on it the flavour of gold. The straw of an omnibus always stinks; the linings of the cabs are filthy. There are but three houses round London at which an eatable dinner may be obtained. And yet a few years since how delicious was that cut of roast goose to be had for a shilling at the eating-house near Golden Square. Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Green, Mrs. Walker and all the other mistresses, are too vapid and stupid and humdrum for endurance. The theatres are dull as Lethe, and politics have lost their salt. Success is the necessary misfortune of life, but it is only to the very unfortunate that it comes early.

Mrs. Furnival, when she had finished her letter and fastened it,

drew one of the heavy dining-room arm-chairs over against the fire, and sat herself down to consider her past life, still holding the letter in her lap. She had not on that morning been very careful with her toilet, as was perhaps natural enough. The cares of the world were heavy on her, and he would not be there to see her. Her hair was rough, and her face was red, and she had hardly had the patience to make straight the collar round her neck. To the eye she was an untidy, angry, cross-looking woman. But her heart was full of tenderness,—full to overflowing. She loved him now as well as ever she had loved him:—almost more as the thought of parting from him pressed upon her! Was he not all in all to her? Had she not worshipped him during her whole life? Could she not forgive him?

Forgive him! Yes. Forgive him with the fullest, frankest, freest pardon, if he would only take forgiveness. Should she burn that letter in the fire, send to Biggs saying that the lodgings were not wanted, and then throw herself at Tom's feet, imploring him to have mercy upon her. All that she could do within her heart, and make her words as passionate, as soft, and as poetical as might be those of a young wife of twenty. But she felt that such words,—though she could frame the sentence while sitting there—could never get themselves spoken. She had tried it, and it had been of no avail. Not only should she be prepared for softness, but he also must be so prepared and at the same moment. If he should push her from him and call her a fool when she attempted that throwing of herself at his feet, how would it be with her spirit then? No. She must go forth and the letter must be left. If there were any hope of union for the future it must come from a parting for the present. So she went upstairs and summoned Rachel, remaining with her in consultation for some half-hour. Then she descended with her bonnet and shawl, got into a cab while Spooner stood at the door looking very serious, and was driven away,—whither, no one knew in Harley Street except Mrs. Furnival herself, and that cabman.

'She'll never put her foot inside this hall door again. That's my idea of the matter,' said Spooner.

'Indeed and she will,' said Rachel, 'and be a happier woman than ever she's been since the house was took.'

'If I know master,' said Spooner, 'he's not the man to get rid of an old woman, easy like that, and then 'ave her back agin.' Upon hearing which words, so very injurious to the sex in general, Rachel walked into the house not deigning any further reply.

And then, as we have seen, Mrs. Furnival was there, standing in the dark shadow of the Lincoln's Inn passage, when Lady Mason left the lawyer's chambers. She felt sure that it was Lady Mason, but she could not be quite sure. The woman, though she

came out from the entry which led to her husband's chambers, might have come down from some other set of rooms. Had she been quite certain she would have attacked her rival there, laying bodily hands upon her in the purlieu of the Lord Chancellor's Court. As it was, the poor bruised creature was allowed to pass by, and as she emerged out into the light at the other end of the passage Mrs. Furnival became quite certain of her identity.

'Never mind,' she said to herself. 'She sha'n't escape me long. Him I could forgive, if he would only give it up; but as for her—! Let what come of it, come may, I will tell that woman what I think of her conduct before I am many hours older.' Then, giving one look up to the windows of her husband's chambers, she walked forth through the dusty old gate into Chancery Lane, and made her way on foot up to No. 23 Red Lion Square. 'I'm glad I've done it,' she said to herself as she went; 'very glad. There's nothing else for it, when things come to such a head as that.' And in this frame of mind she knocked at her friend's door.

'Well!' said Martha Biggs, with her eyes, and mouth, and arms, and heart all open.

'Have you got me the lodgings?' said Mrs. Furnival.

'Yes, close by;—in Orange Street. I'm afraid you'll find them very dull. And what have you done?'

'I have done nothing, and I don't at all mind their being dull. They can't possibly be more dull than Harley Street.'

'And I shall be near you; sha'n't I?' said Martha Biggs.

'Umph,' said Mrs. Furnival. 'I might as well go there at once and get myself settled.' So she did, the affectionate Martha of course accompanying her; and thus the affairs of that day were over.

Her intention was to go down to Hamworth at once, and make her way up to Orley Farm, at which place she believed that Lady Mason was living. Up to this time she had heard no word of the coming trial beyond what Mr. Furnival had told her as to his client's 'law business.' And whatever he had so told her, she had scrupulously disbelieved. In her mind all that went for nothing. Law business! she was not so blind, so soft, so green, as to be hoodwinked by such stuff as that. Beautiful widows don't have personal interviews with barristers in their chambers over and over again, let them have what law business they may. At any rate Mrs. Furnival took upon herself to say that they ought not to have such interviews. She would go down to Orley Farm and she would have an interview with Lady Mason. Perhaps the thing might be stopped in that way.

On the following morning she received a note from her husband the consideration of which delayed her proceedings for that day.

'DEAR KITTY,' the note ran.

'I think you are very foolish. If regard for me had not kept you at home, some consideration with reference to Sophia should have done so. What you say about that poor lady at Orley Farm is too absurd for me to answer. If you would have spoken to me about her, I would have told you that which would have set your mind at rest, at any rate as regards her. I cannot do this in a letter, nor could I do it in the presence of your friend, Miss Biggs.

'I hope you will come back at once; but I shall not add to the absurdity of your leaving your own house by any attempt to bring you back again by force. As you must want money I enclose a check for fifty pounds. I hope you will be back before you want more; but if not I will send it as soon as you ask for it.

'Yours affectionately as always,

'T. FURNIVAL.'

There was about this letter an absence of sentiment, and an absence of threat, and an absence of fuss, which almost overset her. Could it be possible that she was wrong about Lady Mason? Should she go to him and hear his own account before she absolutely declared war by breaking into the enemy's camp at Orley Farm? Then, moreover, she was touched and almost overcome about the money. She wished he had not sent it to her. That money difficulty had occurred to her, and been much discussed in her own thoughts. Of course she could not live away from him if he refused to make her any allowance,—at least not for any considerable time. He had always been liberal as regards money since money had been plenty with him, and therefore she had some supply with her. She had jewels too which were her own; and though, as she had already determined, she would not part with them without telling him what she was about to do, yet she could, if pressed, live in this way for the next twelve months;—perhaps, with close economy, even for a longer time than that. In her present frame of mind she had looked forward almost with gratification to being pinched and made uncomfortable. She would wear her ordinary and more dowdy dresses; she would spend much of her time in reading sermons; she would get up very early and not care what she ate or drank. In short, she would make herself as uncomfortable as circumstances would admit, and thoroughly enjoy her grievances.

But then this check of fifty pounds, and this offer of as much more as she wanted when that was gone, rather took the ground from under her feet. Unless she herself chose to give way she might go on living in Orange Street to the end of the chapter, with every material comfort about her,—keeping her own brougham if she

liked, for the checks she now knew would come without stint. And he would go on living in Harley Street, seeing Lady Mason as often as he pleased. Sophia would be the mistress of the house; and as long as this was so, Lady Mason would not show her face there. Now this was not a course of events to which Mrs. Furnival could bring herself to look forward with satisfaction.

All this delayed her during that day, but before she went to bed she made up her mind that she would at any rate go down to Hamworth. Tom, she knew, was deceiving her; of that she felt morally sure. She would at any rate go down to Hamworth, and trust to her own wit for finding out the truth when there.

CHAPTER X.

IT IS QUITE IMPOSSIBLE.

ALL was now sadness at The Cleeve. It was soon understood among the servants that there was to be no marriage, and the tidings spread from the house, out among the neighbours and into Hamworth. But no one knew the reason of this change;—none except those three, the woman herself who had committed the crime and the two to whom she had told it. On that same night, the night of the day on which the tale had been told, Lady Mason wrote a line,—almost a single line to her son.

‘DEAREST LUCIUS.

‘All is over between me and Sir Peregrine. It is better that it should be so. I write to tell you this without losing an hour. For the present I remain here with my dear—dearest friends.

‘Your own affectionate mother,

‘M. MASON.’

This note she had written in obedience to the behests of Mrs. Orme, and even under her dictation—with the exception of one or two words, ‘I remain here with my friends,’ Mrs. Orme had said; but Lady Mason had put in the two epithets, and had then declared her own conviction that she had now no right to use such language.

‘Yes, of me you may, certainly,’ said Mrs. Orme, keeping close to her shoulder.

‘Then I will alter it,’ said Lady Mason. ‘I will write it again and say I am staying with you.’

But this Mrs. Orme had forbidden. ‘No; it will be better so,’ she said. ‘Sir Peregrine would wish it. I am sure he would. He quite agrees that——’ Mrs. Orme did not finish her sentence, but the letter was despatched, written as above. The answer

which Lucius sent down before breakfast the next morning was still shorter.

‘ DEAREST MOTHER,

‘ I am greatly rejoiced that it is so.

‘ Your affectionate son,

‘ L. M.’

He sent this note, but he did not go down to her, nor was there any other immediate communication between them.

All was now sadness at The Cleeve. Peregrine knew that that marriage project was over, and he knew also that his grandfather and Lady Mason did not now meet each other; but he knew nothing of the cause, though he could not but remark that he did not see her. On that day she did not come down either to dinner or during the evening; nor was she seen on the following morning. He, Peregrine, felt aware that something had occurred at that interview in the library after breakfast, but was lost in surmising what that something had been. That Lady Mason should have told his grandfather that the marriage must be given up would have been only in accordance with the promise made by her to him; but he did not think that that alone would have occasioned such utter sadness, such deathlike silence in the household. Had there been a quarrel Lady Mason would have gone home;—but she did not go home. Had the match been broken off without a quarrel, why should she mysteriously banish herself to two rooms so that no one but his mother should see her?

And he too had his own peculiar sorrow. On that morning Sir Peregrine had asked him to ride through the grounds, and it had been the baronet's intention to propose during that ride that he should go over to Noningsby and speak to the judge about Madeline. We all know how that proposition had been frustrated. And now Peregrine, thinking over the matter, saw that his grandfather was not in a position at the present moment to engage himself ardently in any such work. By whatever means or whatever words he had been induced to agree to the abandonment of that marriage engagement, that abandonment weighed very heavily on his spirits. It was plain to see that he was a broken man, broken in heart and in spirit. He shut himself up alone in his library all that afternoon, and had hardly a word to say when he came out to dinner in the evening. He was very pale too, and slow and weak in his step. He tried to smile as he came up to his daughter-in-law in the drawing-room; but his smile was the saddest thing of all. And then Peregrine could see that he ate nothing. He was very gentle in his demeanour to the servants, very courteous and attentive to Mrs. Orme, very kind to his grandson. But yet his mind was heavy,—brooding over some sorrow that oppressed

it. On the following morning it was the same, and the grandson knew that he could look to his grandfather for no assistance at Noningsby.

Immediately after breakfast Peregrine got on his horse, without speaking to any one of his intention,—almost without having formed an intention, and rode off in the direction of Alston. He did not take the road, but went out through The Cleeve woods, on to the common, by which, had he turned to the left, he might have gone to Orley Farm; but when on the top of the rise from Crutchley Bottom he turned to the right, and putting his horse into a gallop, rode along the open ground till he came to an enclosure into which he leaped. From thence he made his way through a farm gate into a green country lane, along which he still pressed his horse, till he found himself divided from the end of a large wood by but one field. He knew the ground well, and the direction in which he was going. He could pass through that wood, and then down by an old farm-house at the other end of it, and so on to the Alston road, within a mile of Noningsby. He knew the ground well, for he had ridden over every field of it. When a man does so after thirty he forgets the spots which he passes in his hurry, but when he does so before twenty he never forgets. That field and that wood Peregrine Orme would never forget. There was the double ditch and bank over which Harriet Tristram had ridden with so much skill and courage. There was the spot on which he had knelt so long, while Felix Graham lay back against him, feeble and almost speechless. And there, on the other side, had sat Madeline on her horse, pale with anxiety but yet eager with hope, as she asked question after question as to him who had been hurt.

Peregrine rode up to the ditch, and made his horse stand while he looked at it. It was there, then, on that spot, that he had felt the first pang of jealousy. The idea had occurred to him that he for whom he had been doing a friend's offices with such zealous kindness was his worst enemy. Had he,—he, Peregrine Orme—broken his arms and legs, or even broken his neck, would she have ridden up, all thoughtless of herself, and thrown her very life into her voice as she had done when she knew that Felix Graham had fallen from his horse? And then he had gone on with his work, aiding the hurt man as zealously as before, but still feeling that he was bound to hate him. And afterwards, at Noningsby, he had continued to minister to him as to his friend,—zealously doing a friend's offices, but still feeling that the man was his enemy. Not that he was insincere. There was no place for insincerity or treachery within his heart. The man had done no ill,—was a good fellow—was entitled to his kindness by all the social laws which he knew. They two had gone together from the same table to the same spot, and had been close together when the one had come to

sorrow. It was his duty to act as Graham's friend; and yet how could he not feel that he must hate him?

And now he sat looking at the fence, wishing,—wishing;—no, certainly not wishing that Graham's hurt had been more serious; but wishing that in falling from his horse he might utterly have fallen out of favour with that sweet young female heart; or rather wishing, could he so have expressed it, that he himself might have had the fall, and the broken bones, and all the danger,—so that he might also have had the interest which those eyes and that voice had shown.

And then quickly he turned his horse, and without giving the beast time to steady himself he rammed him at the fence. The leap out of the wood into the field was difficult, but that back into the wood was still worse. The up-jump was higher, and the ditch which must be first cleared was broader. Nor did he take it at the easiest part as he had done on that day when he rode his own horse and then Graham's back into the wood. But he pressed his animal exactly at the spot from which his rival had fallen. There were still the marks of the beast's struggle, as he endeavoured to save himself before he came down, head foremost, into the ditch. The bank had been somewhat narrowed and paired away, and it was clearly the last place in the face of the whole opening into the wood, which a rider with his senses about him would have selected for his jump.

The horse knowing his master's humour, and knowing also,—which is so vitally important,—the nature of his master's courage, jumped at the bank, without pausing. As I have said, no time had been given him to steady himself,—not a moment to see where his feet should go, to understand and make the most of the ground that he was to use. He jumped and jumped well, but only half gained the top of the bank. The poor brute, urged beyond his power, could not get his hind feet up so near the surface as to give him a fulcrum for a second spring. For a moment he strove to make good his footing, still clinging with his fore feet, and then slowly came down backwards into the ditch, then regained his feet, and dragging himself with an effort from the mud, made his way back into the field. Peregrine Orme had kept his seat throughout. His legs were accustomed to the saddle and knew how to cling to it, while there was a hope that he might struggle through. And now that he was again in the field he wheeled his horse to a greater distance, striking him with his whip, and once more pushed him at the fence. The gallant beast went at it bravely, slightly swerving from the fatal spot to which Peregrine had endeavoured once more to guide him, leaped with a full spring from the unworn turf, and, barely touching the bank, landed himself and his master lightly within the precincts of the wood.

‘Ah-h!’ said Peregrine, shouting angrily at the horse, as though the brute had done badly instead of well. And then he rode down slowly through the wood, and out by Monkton Grange farm, round the moat, and down the avenue, and before long he was standing at Noningsby gate.

He had not made up his mind to any plan of action, nor indeed had he determined that he would ask to see any of the family or even enter the place. The woman at the lodge opened the gate, and he rode in mechanically, asking if any of them were at home. The judge and Mr. Augustus were gone up to London, but my lady and the other ladies were in the house. Mr. Graham had not gone, the woman said in answer to his question; nor did she know when he was going. And then, armed with this information, Peregrine Orme rode round to the stables, and gave up his horse to a groom.

‘Yes, Lady Staveley was at home,’ the servant said at the door. ‘Would Mr. Orme walk into the drawing-room, where he would find the young ladies?’ But Mr. Orme would not do this. He would go into a small book-room with which he was well acquainted, and have his name taken up to Lady Staveley. ‘He did not,’ he said, ‘mean to stay very long; but particularly wished to see Lady Staveley.’ In a few minutes Lady Staveley came to him, radiant with her sweetest smile, and with both her hands held out to greet him.

‘My dear Mr. Orme,’ she said, ‘I am delighted to see you; but what made you run away from us so suddenly?’ She had considered her words in that moment as she came across the hall, and had thought that in this way she might best enable him to speak.

‘Lady Staveley,’ he said, ‘I have come here on purpose to tell you. Has your daughter told you anything?’

‘Who—Madeline?’

‘Yes, Madeline. I mean Miss Staveley. Has she said anything to you about me?’

‘Well; yes, she has. Will you not sit down, Mr. Orme, and then we shall be more comfortable.’ Hitherto he had stood up, and had blurted out his words with a sudden, determined, and almost ferocious air,—as though he were going to demand the girl’s hand, and challenge all the household if it were refused him. But Lady Staveley understood his manner and his nature, and liked him almost the better for his abruptness.

‘She has spoken to me, Mr. Orme; she has told me of what passed between you on the last day that you were with us.’

‘And yet you are surprised that I should have gone! I wonder at that, Lady Staveley. You must have known——’

‘Well; perhaps I did know; but sit down, Mr. Orme. I won’t let you get up in that restless way, if we are to talk together. Tell me frankly; what is it you think that I can do for you?’

‘I don’t suppose you can do anything;—but I thought I would come over and speak to you. I don’t suppose I’ve any chance?’ He had seated himself far back on a sofa, and was holding his hat between his knees, with his eyes fixed on the ground; but as he spoke the last words he looked round into her face with an anxious inquiring glance which went direct to her heart.

‘What can I say, Mr. Orme?’

‘Ah, no. Of course nothing. Good-bye, Lady Staveley. I might as well go. I know that I was a fool for coming here. I knew it as I was coming. Indeed I hardly meant to come in when I found myself at the gate.’

‘But you must not go from us like that.’

‘I must though. Do you think that I could go in and see her? If I did I should make such a fool of myself that I could never again hold up my head. And I am a fool. I ought to have known that a fellow like me could have no chance with her. I could knock my own head off, if I only knew how, for having made such an ass of myself.’

‘No one here thinks so of you, Mr. Orme.’

‘No one here thinks what?’

‘That it was—unreasonable in you to propose to Madeline. We all know that you did her much honour.’

‘Psha!’ said he, turning away from her.

‘Ah! but you must listen to me. That is what we all think—Madeline herself, and I, and her father. No one who knows you could think otherwise. We all like you, and know how good and excellent you are. And as to worldly station, of course you stand above her.’

‘Psha!’ he said again angrily. How could any one presume to talk of the worldly station of his goddess? For just then Madeline Staveley to him was a goddess!

‘That is what we think, indeed, Mr. Orme. As for myself, had my girl come to me telling me that you had proposed to her, and telling me also that—that—that she felt that she might probably like you, I should have been very happy to hear it.’ And Lady Staveley as she spoke, put out her hand to him.

‘But what did she say?’ asked Peregrine, altogether disregarding the hand.

‘Ah, she did not say that. She told me that she had declined the honour that you had offered her;—that she did not regard you as she must regard the man to whom she would pledge her heart.’

‘But did she say that she could never love me?’ And now as he asked the question he stood up again, looking down with all his eyes into Lady Staveley’s face,—that face which would have been so friendly to him, so kind and so encouraging, had it been possible.

‘Never is a long word, Mr. Orme.’

'Ah, but did she say it? Come, Lady Staveley; I know I have been a fool, but I am not a cowardly fool. If it be so;—if I have no hope, tell me at once, that I may go away. In that case I shall be better anywhere out of the county.'

'I cannot say that you should have no hope.'

'You think then that there is a chance?' and for a moment he looked as though all his troubles were nearly over.

'If you are so impetuous, Mr. Orme, I cannot speak to you. If you will sit down for a minute or two I will tell you exactly what I think about it.' And then he sat down, trying to look as though he were not impetuous. 'I should be deceiving you if I were not to tell you that she speaks of the matter as though it were all over, —as though her answer to you was a final one.'

'Ah; I knew it was so.'

'But then, Mr. Orme, many young ladies who have been at the first moment quite as sure of their decision have married the gentlemen whom they refused, and have learned to love them with all their hearts.'

'But she isn't like other girls,' said Peregrine.

'I believe she is a great deal better than many, but nevertheless she may be like others in that respect. I do not say that it will be so, Mr. Orme. I would not on any account give you hopes which I believed to be false. But if you are anxious in the matter——'

'I am as anxious about it as I am about my soul!'

'Oh fie, Mr. Orme! You should not speak in that way. But if you are anxious, I would advise you to wait.'

'And see her become the wife of some one else.'

'Listen to me, Mr. Orme. Madeline is very young. And so indeed are you too;—almost too young to marry as yet, even if my girl were willing that it should be so. But we all like you very much; and as you both are so very young, I think that you might wait with patience,—say for a year. Then come to Noningsby again, and try your fortune once more. That is my advice.'

'Will you tell me one thing, Lady Staveley?'

'What is that, Mr. Orme?'

'Does she care for any one else?'

Lady Staveley was prepared to do anything she could for her young friend except to answer that question. She did believe that Madeline cared for somebody else,—cared very much. But she did not think that any way would be opened by which that caring would be made manifest; and she thought also that if wholly ungratified by any word of intercourse that feeling would die away. Could she have told everything to Peregrine Orme she would have explained to him that his best chance lay in that liking for Felix Graham; or, rather, that as his rejection had been caused by that liking, his chance would be good again when that liking should

have perished from starvation. But all this Lady Staveley could not explain to him; nor would it have been satisfactory to her feelings had it been in her power to do so. Still there remained the question, 'Does she care for any one else?'

'Mr. Orme,' she said, 'I will do all for you that a mother can do or ought to do; but I must not admit that you have a right to ask such a question as that. If I were to answer that now, you would feel yourself justified in asking it again when perhaps it might not be so easy to answer.'

'I beg your pardon, Lady Staveley;' and Peregrine blushed up to his eyes. 'I did not intend——'

'No; do not beg my pardon, seeing that you have given me no offence. As I said just now, all that a mother can and ought to do I will do for you. I am very frank, and tell you that I should be rejoiced to have you for my son-in-law.'

'I'm sure I'm very much obliged to you.'

'But neither by me nor by her father will any constraint ever be put on the inclinations of our child. At any rate as to whom she will not accept she will always be allowed to judge for herself. I have told you that to us you would be acceptable as a suitor; and after that I think it will be best to leave the matter for the present without any further words. Let it be understood that you will spend next Christmas at Noningsby, and then you will both be older and perhaps know your own minds better.'

'That's a year, you know.'

'A year is not so very long—at your time of life.' By which latter remark Lady Staveley did not show her knowledge of human nature.

'And I suppose I had better go now?' said Peregrine sheepishly.

'If you like to go into the drawing-room, I'm sure they will all be very glad to see you.'

But Peregrine declared that he would not do this on any account. 'You do not know, Lady Staveley, what a fool I should make myself. It would be all over with me then.'

'You should be more moderate in your feelings, Mr. Orme.'

'It's all very well saying that; but you wouldn't be moderate if Noningsby were on fire, or if you thought the judge was going to die.'

'Good gracious, Mr. Orme!'

'It's the same sort of thing to me, I can tell you. A man can't be moderate when he feels that he should like to break his own neck. I declare I almost tried to do it to-day.'

'Oh, Mr. Orme!'

'Well; I did. But don't suppose I say that as a sort of threat. I'm safe enough to live for the next sixty years. It's only the happy people and those that are some good in the world that die. Good-bye, Lady Staveley. I'll come back next Christmas;—that is

if it isn't all settled before then; but I know it will be no good.' Then he got on his horse and rode very slowly home, along the high road to The Cleeve.

Lady Staveley did not go in among the other ladies till luncheon was announced, and when she did so, she said no word about her visitor. Nevertheless it was known by them all that Peregrine Orme had been there. 'Ah, that's Mr. Orme's roan-coloured horse,' Sophia Furnival had said, getting up and thrusting her face close to the drawing-room window. It was barely possible to see a portion of the road from the drawing-room, but Sophia's eyes had been sharp enough to see that portion.

'A groom has probably come over with a note,' said Mrs. Arbuthnot.

'Very likely,' said Sophia. But they all knew from her voice that the rider was no groom, and that she did not intend it to be thought that he was a groom. Madeline said not a word, and kept her countenance marvellously; but she knew well enough that Peregrine had been with her mother; and guessed also why he had been there.

Madeline had asked herself some serious questions, and had answered them also, since that conversation which she had had with her father. He had assured her that he desired only her happiness; and though in so saying he had spoken nothing of marriage, she had well understood that he had referred to her future happiness,—at that time when by her own choice she should be leaving her father's house. And now she asked herself boldly in what way might that happiness be best secured. Hitherto she had refrained from any such home questions. Latterly, within the last week or two, ideas of what love meant had forced themselves upon her mind. How could it have been otherwise? But she had never dared to tell herself either that she did love, or that she did not. Mr. Orme had come to her with his offer, plainly asking her for the gift of her heart, and she had immediately been aware that any such gift on her part was impossible,—any such gift in his favour. She had known without a moment's thought that there was no room for hesitation. Had he asked her to take wings and fly away with him over the woods, the feat would not have been to her more impossible than that of loving him as his wife. Yet she liked him,—liked him much in these latter days, because he had been so good to Felix Graham. When she felt that she liked him as she refused him, she felt also that it was for this reason that she liked him. On the day of Graham's accident she had thought nothing of him,—had hardly spoken to him. But now she loved him—with a sort of love, because he had been so good to Graham. Though in her heart she knew all this, she asked herself no questions till her father had spoken to her of her future happiness.

Then, as she wandered about the house alone,—for she still went on wandering,—she did ask herself a question or two. What was it that had changed her thus, and made her gay quick step so slow? what had altered the happy silver tone of her voice? what had created that load within her which seemed to weigh her down during every hour of the day? She knew that there had been a change; that she was not as she had been; and now she asked herself the question. Not on the first asking nor on the second did the answer come; not perhaps on the twentieth. But the answer did come at last, and she told herself that her heart was no longer her own. She knew and acknowledged to herself that Felix Graham was its master and owner.

And then came the second question. Under those circumstances what had she better do? Her mother had told her,—and the words had fallen deep into her ears,—that it would be a great misfortune if she loved any man before she had reason to know that that man loved her. She had no such knowledge as regarded Felix Graham. A suspicion that it might be so she did feel,—a suspicion which would grow into a hope let her struggle against it as she might. Baker, that injudicious Baker, had dropped in her hearing a word or two, which assisted this suspicion. And then the open frank question put to her by her father when he demanded whether Graham had addressed her as a lover, had tended towards the same result. What had she better do? Of one thing she now felt perfectly certain. Let the world go as it might in other respects, she could never leave her father's house as a bride unless the bridegroom were Felix Graham. A marriage with him might probably be impracticable, but any other marriage would be absolutely impossible. If her father or her mother told her not to think of Felix Graham, as a matter of course she would obey them; but not even in obedience to father or mother could she say that she loved any one else.

And now, all these matters having been considered, what should she do? Her father had invited her to tell everything to him, and she was possessed by a feeling that in this matter she might possibly find more indulgence with her father than with her mother; but yet it was more natural that her mother should be her confidante and adviser. She could speak to her mother, also, with a better courage, even though she felt less certain of sympathy. Peregrine Orme had now been there again, and had been closeted with Lady Staveley. On that ground she would speak, and having so resolved she lost no time in carrying out her purpose.

‘Mamma, Mr. Orme was here to-day: was he not?’

‘Yes, my love.’ Lady Staveley was sorry rather than otherwise that her daughter had asked her, but would have been puzzled to explain why such should have been the case.

‘I thought so,’ said Madeline.

‘He rode over, and told me among other things that the match between his grandfather and Lady Mason is at an end. I was very glad to hear it, for I thought that Sir Peregrine was going to do a very foolish thing.’ And then there were a few further remarks on that subject, made probably by Lady Staveley with some undefined intention of inducing her daughter to think that Peregrine Orme had come over chiefly on that matter.

‘But, mamma—’

‘Well, my love.’

‘Did he say anything about—about what he was speaking to me about?’

‘Well, Madeline: he did. He did say something on that subject; but I had not intended to tell you unless you had asked.’

‘I hope, mamma, he understands that what he wants can never happen;—that is if he does want it now?’

‘He does want it certainly, my dear.’

‘Then I hope you told him that it can never be? I hope you did, mamma!’

‘But why should you be so certain about it, my love? He does not intend to trouble you with his suit,—nor do I. Why not leave that to time? There can be no reason why you should not see him again on a friendly footing when this embarrassment between you shall have passed away.’

‘There would be no reason, mamma, if he were quite sure that there could never be any other footing.’

‘Never is a very long word.’

‘But it is the only true word, mamma. It would be wrong in you, it would indeed, if you were to tell him to come again. I like Mr. Orme very much as a friend, and I should be very glad to know him,—that is if he chose to know me.’ And Madeline as she made this little proviso was thinking what her own worldly position might be as the wife of Felix Graham. ‘But as it is quite impossible that he and I should ever be anything else to each other, he should not be asked to come here with any other intention.’

‘But, Madeline, I do not see that it is so impossible.’

‘Mamma, it is impossible; quite impossible!’ To this assertion Lady Staveley made no answer in words, but there was that in her countenance which made her daughter understand that she did not quite agree in this assertion, or understand this impossibility.

‘Mamma, it is quite, quite impossible!’ Madeline repeated.

‘But why so?’ said Lady Staveley, frightened by her daughter’s manner, and almost fearing that something further was to come which had by far better be left unsaid.

‘Because, mamma, I have no love to give him. Oh, mamma, do not be angry with me; do not push me away. You know who

it is that I love. You knew it before.' And then she threw herself on her knees, and hid her face on her mother's lap.

Lady Staveley had known it, but up to that moment she had hoped that that knowledge might have remained hidden as though it were unknown.

CHAPTER XI.

MRS. FURNIVAL'S JOURNEY TO HAMWORTH.

WHEN Peregrine got back to The Cleeve he learned that there was a lady with his mother. He had by this time partially succeeded in reasoning himself out of his despondency. He had learned at any rate that his proposition to marry into the Staveley family had been regarded with favour by all that family except the one whose views on that subject were by far the most important to him; and he had learned, as he thought, that Lady Staveley had no suspicion that her daughter's heart was preoccupied. But in this respect Lady Staveley had been too cunning for him. 'Wait!' he said to himself as he went slowly along the road. 'It's all very well to say wait, but there are some things which won't bear waiting for. A man who waits never gets well away with the hounds.' Nevertheless as he rode into the court-yard his hopes were somewhat higher than they had been when he rode out of it.

'A lady! what lady? You don't mean Lady Mason?'

No. The servant did not mean Lady Mason. It was an elderly stout lady who had come in a fly, and the elderly stout lady was now in the drawing-room with his mother. Lady Mason was still upstairs. We all know who was that elderly stout lady, and we must now go back and say a few words as to her journey from Orange Street to Hamworth.

On the preceding evening Mrs. Furnival had told Martha Biggs what was her intention; or perhaps it would be more just to say that Martha Biggs had worked it out of her. Now that Mrs. Furnival had left the fashionable neighbourhood of Cavendish Square, and located herself in that eastern homely district to which Miss Biggs had been so long accustomed, Miss Biggs had been almost tyrannical. It was not that she was less attentive to her friend, or less willing to slave for her with a view to any possible or impossible result. But the friend of Mrs. Furnival's bosom could not help feeling her opportunity. Mrs. Furnival had now thrown herself very much upon her friend, and of course the friend now expected unlimited privileges;—as is always the case with friends in such a position. It is very well to have friends to lean upon, but it is not always well to lean upon one's friends.

'I will be with you before you start in the morning,' said Martha.

'It will not be at all necessary,' said Mrs. Furnival.

'Oh, but I shall indeed. And, Kitty, I should think nothing of going with you, if you would wish it. Indeed I think you should have a female friend alongside of you in such a trouble. You have only to say the word and I'll go in a minute.'

Mrs. Furnival however did not say the word, and Miss Biggs was obliged to deny herself the pleasure of the journey. But true to her word she came in the morning in ample time to catch Mrs. Furnival before she started, and for half an hour poured out sweet counsel into her friend's ear. If one's friends would as a rule refrain from action how much more strongly would real friendship flourish in the world!

'Now, Kitty, I do trust you will persist in seeing her.'

'That's why I'm going there.'

'Yes; but she might put you off it, if you're not firm. Of course she'll deny herself if you send in your name first. What I should do would be this;—to ask to be shown in to her and then follow the servant. When the happiness of a life is at stake—the happinesses of two lives I may say, and perhaps the immortal welfare of one of them in another world,—one must not stand too much upon etiquette. You would never forgive yourself if you did. Your object is to save him and to shame her out of her vile conduct. To shame her and frighten her out of it if that be possible. Follow the servant in and don't give them a moment to think. That's my advice.'

In answer to all this Mrs. Furnival did not say much, and what little she did say was neither in the affirmative nor in the negative. Martha knew that she was being ill treated, but not on that account did she relax her friendly efforts. The time would soon come, if all things went well, when Mrs. Furnival would be driven by the loneliness of her position to open her heart in a truly loving and confidential manner. Miss Biggs hoped sincerely that her friend and her friend's husband might be brought together again;—perhaps by her own efforts: but she did not anticipate,—or perhaps desire any speedy termination of the present arrangements. It would be well that Mr. Furnival should be punished by a separation of some months. Then, when he had learned to know what it was to have a home without a 'presiding genius,' he might, if duly penitent and open in his confession, be forgiven. That was Miss Biggs's programme, and she thought it probable that Mrs. Furnival might want a good deal of consolation before that day of open confession arrived.

'I shall go with you as far as the station, Kitty,' she said in a very decided voice.

'It will not be at all necessary,' Mrs. Furnival replied.

'Oh, but I shall. You must want support at such a moment as this, and as far as I can give it you shall have it.'

'But it won't be any support to have you in the cab with me. If you will believe me, I had rather go alone. It is so necessary that I should think about all this.'

But Martha would not believe her: and as for thinking, she was quite ready to take that part of the work herself. 'Don't say another word,' she said, as she thrust herself in at the cab-door after her friend. Mrs. Furnival hardly did say another word, but Martha Biggs said many. She knew that Mrs. Furnival was cross, ill pleased, and not disposed to confidence. But what of that? Her duty as a friend was not altered by Mrs. Furnival's ill humour. She would persevere, and having in her hands so great an opportunity, did not despair but what the time might come when both Mr. and Mrs. Furnival would with united voices hail her as their preserver. Poor Martha Biggs! She did not mean amiss, but she was troublesome.

It was very necessary that Mrs. Furnival should think over the step which she was taking. What was it that she intended to do when she arrived at Hamworth? That plan of forcing her way into Lady Mason's house did not recommend itself to her the more in that it was recommended by Martha Biggs. 'I suppose you will come up to us this evening?' Martha said, when she left her friend in the railway carriage. 'Not this evening, I think. I shall be so tired,' Mrs. Furnival had replied. 'Then I shall come down to you,' said Martha, almost holloaing after her friend, as the train started. Mr. Furnival would not have been displeased had he known the state of his wife's mind at that moment towards her late visitor. During the whole of her journey down to Hamworth she tried to think what she would say to Lady Mason, but instead of so thinking her mind would revert to the unpleasantness of Miss Biggs's friendship.

When she left the train at the Hamworth station she was solicited by the driver of a public vehicle to use his fly, and having ascertained from the man that he well knew the position of Orley Farm, she got into the carriage and had herself driven to the residence of her hated rival. She had often heard of Orley Farm, but she had never as yet seen it, and now felt considerable anxiety both as regards the house and its occupant.

'This is Orley Farm, ma'am,' said the man, stopping at the gate. 'Shall I drive up?'

But at this moment the gate was opened by a decent, respectable woman,—Mrs. Furnival would not quite have called her a lady,—who looked hard at the fly as it turned on to the private road.

'Perhaps this lady could tell me,' said Mrs. Furnival, putting out her hand. 'Is this where Lady Mason lives?'

The woman was Mrs. Dockwrath. On that day Samuel Dockwrath had gone to London, but before starting he had made known to his wife with fiendish glee that it had been at last decided by all the persons concerned that Lady Mason should be charged with perjury, and tried for that offence.

'You don't mean to say that the judges have said so?' asked poor Miriam.

'I do mean to say that all the judges in England could not save her from having to stand her trial, and it is my belief that all the lawyers in the land cannot save her from conviction. I wonder whether she ever thinks now of those fields which she took away from me!'

Then, when her master's back was turned, she put on her bonnet and walked up to Orley Farm. She knew well that Lady Mason was at The Cleeve, and believed that she was about to become the wife of Sir Peregrine; but she knew also that Lucius was at home, and it might be well to let him know what was going on. She had just seen Lucius Mason; when she was met by Mrs. Furnival's fly. She had seen Lucius Mason, and the angry manner in which he declared that he could in no way interfere in his mother's affairs had frightened her. 'But, Mr. Lucius,' she had said, 'she ought to be doing something, you know. There is no believing how bitter Samuel is about it.'

'He may be as bitter as he likes, Mrs. Dockwrath,' young Mason had answered with considerable dignity in his manner. 'It will not in the least affect my mother's interests. In the present instance, however, I am not her adviser.' Whereupon Mrs. Dockwrath had retired, and as she was afraid to go to Lady Mason at The Cleeve, she was about to return home when she opened the gate for Mrs. Furnival. She then explained that Lady Mason was not at home and had not been at home for some weeks; that she was staying with her friends at The Cleeve, and that in order to get there Mrs. Furnival must go back through Hamworth and round by the high road.

'I knows the way well enough, Mrs. Dockwrath,' said the driver. 'I've been at The Cleeve before now, I guess.'

So Mrs. Furnival was driven back to Hamworth, and on going over that piece of ground she resolved that she would follow Lady Mason to The Cleeve. Why should she be afraid of Sir Peregrine Orme or of all the Ormes? Why should she fear any one while engaged in the performance of so sacred a duty? I must confess that in truth she was very much afraid, but nevertheless she had herself taken on to The Cleeve. When she arrived at the door, she asked of course for Lady Mason, but did not feel at all inclined to follow the servant uninvited into the house as recommended by Miss Biggs. Lady Mason, the man said, was not very well, and

after a certain amount of parley at the door the matter ended in her being shown into the drawing-room, where she was soon joined by Mrs. Orme.

'I am Mrs. Furnival,' she began, and then Mrs. Orme begged her to sit down. 'I have come here to see Lady Mason—on some business—some business not of a very pleasant nature. I'm sure I don't know how to trouble you with it, and yet—' And then even Mrs. Orme could see that her visitor was somewhat confused.

'Is it about the trial?' asked Mrs. Orme.

'Then there is really a lawsuit going on?'

'A lawsuit!' said Mrs. Orme, rather puzzled.

'You said something about a trial. Now, Mrs. Orme, pray do not deceive me. I'm a very unhappy woman; I am indeed.'

'Deceive you! Why should I deceive you?'

'No, indeed. Why should you? And now I look at you I do not think you will.'

'Indeed I will not, Mrs. Furnival.'

'And there is really a lawsuit then?' Mrs. Furnival persisted in asking.

'I thought you would know all about it,' said Mrs. Orme, 'as Mr. Furnival manages Lady Mason's law business. I thought that perhaps it was about that that you had come.'

Then Mrs. Furnival explained that she knew nothing whatever about Lady Mason's affairs, that hitherto she had not believed that there was any trial or any lawsuit, and gradually explained the cause of all her trouble. She did not do this without sundry interruptions, caused both by her own feelings and by Mrs. Orme's exclamations. But at last it all came forth; and before she had done she was calling her husband Tom, and appealing to her listener for sympathy.

'But indeed it's a mistake, Mrs. Furnival. It is indeed. There are reasons which make me quite sure of it.' So spoke Mrs. Orme. How could Lady Mason have been in love with Mr. Furnival,—if such a state of things could be possible under any circumstances,—seeing that she had been engaged to marry Sir Peregrine? Mrs. Orme did not declare her reasons, but repeated with very positive assurances her knowledge that Mrs. Furnival was labouring under some very grievous error.

'But why should she always be at his chambers? I have seen her there twice, Mrs. Orme. I have indeed;—with my own eyes.'

Mrs. Orme would have thought nothing of it if Lady Mason had been seen there every day for a week together, and regarded Mrs. Furnival's suspicions as an hallucination bordering on insanity. A woman be in love with Mr. Furnival! A very pretty woman endeavour to entice away from his wife the affection of such a man as that! As these ideas passed through Mrs. Orme's

mind she did not perhaps remember that Sir Peregrine, who was more than ten years Mr. Furnival's senior, had been engaged to marry the same lady. But then she herself loved Sir Peregrine dearly, and she had no such feeling with reference to Mr. Furnival. She however did what was most within her power to do to allay the suffering under which her visitor laboured, and explained to her the position in which Lady Mason was placed. 'I do not think she can see you,' she ended by saying, 'for she is in very great trouble.'

'To be tried for perjury!' said Mrs. Furnival, out of whose heart all hatred towards Lady Mason was quickly departing. Had she heard that she was to be tried for murder,—that she had been convicted of murder,—it would have altogether softened her heart towards her supposed enemy. She could forgive her any offence but the one.

'Yes indeed,' said Mrs. Orme, wiping a tear away from her eye as she thought of all the troubles present and to come. 'It is the saddest thing. Poor lady! It would almost break your heart if you were to see her. Since first she heard of this, which was before Christmas, she has not had one quiet moment.'

'Poor creature!' said Mrs. Furnival.

'Ah, you would say so, if you knew all. She has had to depend a great deal upon Mr. Furnival for advice, and without that I don't know what she would do.' This Mrs. Orme said, not wishing to revert to the charge against Lady Mason which had brought Mrs. Furnival down to Hamworth, but still desirous of emancipating her poor friend completely from that charge. 'And Sir Peregrine also is very kind to her,—very.' This she added, feeling that up to that moment Mrs. Furnival could have heard nothing of the intended marriage, but thinking it probable that she must do so before long. 'Indeed anybody would be kind to her who saw her in her suffering. I am sure you would, Mrs. Furnival.'

'Dear, dear!' said Mrs. Furnival who was beginning to entertain almost a kindly feeling towards Mrs. Orme.

'It is such a dreadful position for a lady. Sometimes I think that her mind will fail her before the day comes.'

'But what a very wicked man that other Mr. Mason must be!' said Mrs. Furnival.

That was a view of the matter on which Mrs. Orme could not say much. She disliked that Mr. Mason as much as she could dislike a man whom she had never seen, but it was not open to her now to say that he was very wicked in this matter. 'I suppose he thinks the property ought to belong to him,' she answered.

'That was settled years ago,' said Mrs. Furnival. 'Horrid, cruel man! But after all I don't see why she should mind it so much.'

'Oh, Mrs. Furnival!—to stand in a court and be tried.'

'But if one is innocent! For my part, if I knew myself innocent I could brave them all. It is the feeling that one is wrong that crows one.' And Mrs. Furnival thought of the little confession which she would be called upon to make at home.

And then feeling some difficulty as to her last words in such an interview, Mrs. Furnival got up to go. 'Perhaps, Mrs. Orme,' she said, 'I have been foolish in this.'

'You have been mistaken, Mrs. Furnival. I am sure of that.'

'I begin to think I have. But, Mrs. Orme, will you let me ask you a favour? Perhaps you will not say anything about my coming here. I have been very unhappy; I have indeed; and—' Mrs. Furnival's handkerchief was now up at her eyes, and Mrs. Orme's heart was again full of pity. Of course she gave the required promise; and, looking to the character of the woman, we may say that, of course, she kept it.

'Mrs. Furnival! What was she here about?' Peregrine asked of his mother.

'I would rather not tell you, Perry,' said his mother, kissing him; and then there were no more words spoken on the subject.

Mrs. Furnival as she made her journey back to London began to dislike Martha Biggs more and more, and most unjustly attributed to that lady in her thoughts the folly of this journey to Hamworth. The journey to Hamworth had been her own doing, and had the idea originated with Miss Biggs the journey would never have been made. As it was, while she was yet in the train, she came to the strong resolution of returning direct from the London station to her own house in Harley Street. It would be best to cut the knot at once, and thus by a bold stroke of the knife rid herself of the Orange Street rooms and Miss Biggs at the same time. She did drive to Harley Street, and on her arrival at her own door was informed by the astonished Spooner that, 'Master was at home,—all alone in the dining-room. He was going to dine at home, and seemed very lonely like.' There, as she stood in the hall, there was nothing but the door between her and her husband, and she conceived that the sound of her arrival must have been heard by him. For a moment her courage was weak, and she thought of hurrying up stairs. Had she done so her trouble would still have been all before her. Some idea of this came upon her mind, and after a moment's pause, she opened the dining-room door and found herself in her husband's presence. He was sitting over the fire in his arm-chair, very gloomily, and had not heard the arrival. He too had some tenderness left in his heart, and this going away of his wife had distressed him.

'Tom,' she said, going up to him, and speaking in a low voice, 'I have come back again.' And she stood before him as a suppliant.

CHAPTER XII.

SHOWING HOW THINGS WENT ON AT NONINGSBY.

YES, Lady Staveley had known it before. She had given a fairly correct guess at the state of her daughter's affections, though she had not perhaps acknowledged to herself the intensity of her daughter's feelings. But the fact might not have mattered if it had never been told. Madeline might have overcome this love for Mr. Graham, and all might have been well if she had never mentioned it. But now the mischief was done. She had acknowledged to her mother,—and, which was perhaps worse, she had acknowledged to herself,—that her heart was gone, and Lady Staveley saw no cure for the evil. Had this happened but a few hours earlier she would have spoken with much less of encouragement to Peregrine Orme.

And Felix Graham was not only in the house, but was to remain there for yet a while longer, spending a very considerable portion of his time in the drawing-room. He was to come down on this very day at three o'clock, after an early dinner, and on the next day he was to be promoted to the dining-room. As a son-in-law he was quite ineligible. He had, as Lady Staveley understood, no private fortune, and he belonged to a profession which he would not follow in the only way by which it was possible to earn an income by it. Such being the case, her daughter, whom of all girls she knew to be the most retiring, the least likely to speak of such feelings unless driven to it by great stress,—her daughter had positively declared to her that she was in love with this man! Could anything be more hopeless? Could any position be more trying?

'Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear!' she said, almost wringing her hands in her vexation,—'No, my darling I am not angry,' and she kissed her child and smoothed her hair. 'I am not angry; but I must say I think it very unfortunate. He has not a shilling in the world.'

'I will do nothing that you and papa do not approve,' said Madeline, holding down her head.

'And then you know he doesn't think of such a thing himself—of course he does not. Indeed, I don't think he's a marrying man at all.'

‘Oh, mamma, do not talk in that way;—as if I expected anything. I could not but tell you the truth when you spoke of Mr. Orme as you did.’

‘Poor Mr. Orme! he is such an excellent young man.’

‘I don’t suppose he’s better than Mr. Graham, mamma, if you speak of goodness.’

‘I’m sure I don’t know,’ said Lady Staveley, very much put beside herself. ‘I wish there were no such things as young men at all. There’s Augustus making a fool of himself.’ And she walked twice the length of the room in an agony of maternal anxiety. Peregrine Orme had suggested to her what she would feel if Noningsby were on fire; but could any such fire be worse than these pernicious love flames? He had also suggested another calamity, and as Lady Staveley remembered that, she acknowledged to herself that the Fates were not so cruel to her as they might have been. So she kissed her daughter, again assured her that she was by no means angry with her, and then they parted.

This trouble had now come to such a head that no course was any longer open to poor Lady Staveley, but that one which she had adopted in all the troubles of her married life. She would tell the judge everything, and throw all the responsibility upon his back. Let him decide whether a cold shoulder or a paternal blessing should be administered to the ugly young man up stairs, who had tumbled off his horse the first day he went out hunting, and who would not earn his bread as others did, but thought himself cleverer than all the world. The feelings in Lady Staveley’s breast towards Mr. Graham at this especial time were not of a kindly nature. She could not make comparisons between him and Peregrine Orme without wondering at her daughter’s choice. Peregrine was fair and handsome, one of the curled darlings of the nation, bright of eye and smooth of skin, good-natured, of a sweet disposition, a young man to be loved by all the world, and—incidentally—the heir to a baronetcy and a good estate. All his people were nice, and he lived close in the neighbourhood! Had Lady Staveley been set to choose a husband for her daughter she could have chosen none better. And then she counted up Felix Graham. His eyes no doubt were bright enough, but taken altogether he was,—at least so she said to herself—hideously ugly. He was by no means a curled darling. And then he was masterful in mind, and not soft and pleasant as was young Orme. He was heir to nothing, and as to people of his own he had none in particular. Who could say where he must live? As likely as not in Patagonia, having been forced to accept a judgeship in that new colony for the sake of bread. But her daughter should not go to Patagonia with him if she could help it! So when the judge came home that evening, she told him all before she would allow him to dress for dinner.

‘He certainly is not very handsome,’ the judge said, when Lady Staveley insisted somewhat strongly on that special feature of the case.

‘I think he is the ugliest young man I know,’ said her ladyship.

‘He looks very well in his wig,’ said the judge.

‘Wig! Madeline would not see him in his wig; nor anybody else very often, seeing the way he is going on about his profession. What are we to do about it?’

‘Well. I should say, do nothing.’

‘And let him propose to the dear girl if he chooses to take the fancy into his head?’

‘I don’t see how we are to hinder him. But I have that impression of Mr. Graham that I do not think he will do anything unhandsome by us. He has some singular ideas of his own about law, and I grant you that he is plain——’

‘The plainest young man I ever saw,’ said Lady Staveley.

‘But, if I know him, he is a man of high character and much more than ordinary acquirement.’

‘I cannot understand Madeline,’ Lady Staveley went on, not caring overmuch about Felix Graham’s acquirements.

‘Well, my dear, I think the key to her choice is this, that she has judged not with her eyes, but with her ears, or rather with her understanding. Had she accepted Mr. Orme, I as a father should of course have been well satisfied. He is, I have no doubt, a fine young fellow, and will make a good husband some day.’

‘Oh, excellent!’ said her ladyship; ‘and The Cleeve is only seven miles.’

‘But I must acknowledge that I cannot feel angry with Madeline.’

‘Angry! no, not angry. Who would be angry with the poor child?’

‘Indeed, I am somewhat proud of her. It seems to me that she prefers mind to matter, which is a great deal to say for a young lady.’

‘Matter!’ exclaimed Lady Staveley, who could not but feel that the term, as applied to such a young man as Peregrine Orme, was very opprobrious.

‘Wit and intellect and power of expression have gone further with her than good looks and rank and worldly prosperity. If that be so, and I believe it is, I cannot but love her the better for it.’

‘So do I love her, as much as any mother can love her daughter.’

‘Of course you do.’ And the judge kissed his wife.

‘And I like wit and genius and all that sort of thing.’

‘Otherwise you would have not taken me, my dear.’

‘You were the handsomest man of your day. That’s why I fell in love with you.’

‘The compliment is a very poor one,’ said the judge.

‘Never mind that. I like wit and genius too; but wit and genius are none the better for being ugly: and wit and genius should know how to butter their own bread before they think of taking a wife.’

‘You forget, my dear, that for aught we know wit and genius may be perfectly free from any such thought.’ And then the judge made it understood that if he were left to himself he would dress for dinner.

When the ladies left the parlour that evening they found Graham in the drawing-room, but there was no longer any necessity for embarrassment on Madeline’s part at meeting him. They had been in the room together on three or four occasions, and therefore she could give him her hand, and ask after his arm without feeling that every one was watching her. But she hardly spoke to him beyond this, nor indeed did she speak much to anybody. The conversation, till the gentlemen joined them, was chiefly kept up by Sophia Furnival and Mrs. Arbuthnot, and even after that the evening did not pass very briskly.

One little scene there was, during which poor Lady Staveley’s eyes were anxiously fixed upon her son, though most of those in the room supposed that she was sleeping. Miss Furnival was to return to London on the following day, and it therefore behoved Augustus to be very sad. In truth he had been rather given to a melancholy humour during the last day or two. Had Miss Furnival accepted all his civil speeches, making him answers equally civil, the matter might very probably have passed by without giving special trouble to any one. But she had not done this, and therefore Augustus Staveley had fancied himself to be really in love with her. What the lady’s intentions were I will not pretend to say; but if she was in truth desirous of becoming Mrs. Staveley, she certainly went about her business in a discreet and wise manner.

‘So you leave us to-morrow, immediately after breakfast,’ said he, having dressed his face with that romantic sobriety which he had been practising for the last three days.

‘I am sorry to say that such is the fact,’ said Sophia.

‘To tell you the truth I am not sorry,’ said Augustus; and he turned away his face for a moment, giving a long sigh.

‘I dare say not, Mr. Staveley; but you need not have said so to me,’ said Sophia, pretending to take him literally at his word.

‘Because I cannot stand this kind of thing any longer. I suppose I must not see you in the morning,—alone?’

‘Well, I suppose not. If I can get down to prayers after having all my things packed up, it will be as much as I can do.’

‘And if I begged for half an hour as a last kindness—?’

‘I certainly should not grant it. Go and ask your mother whether such a request would be reasonable.’

‘Psha!’

‘Ah, but it’s not psha! Half-hours between young ladies and young gentlemen before breakfast are very serious things.’

‘And I mean to be serious,’ said Augustus.

‘But I don’t,’ said Sophia.

‘I am to understand then that under no possible circumstances

—

‘Bless me, Mr. Staveley, how solemn you are.’

‘There are occasions in a man’s life when he is bound to be solemn. You are going away from us, Miss Furnival—’

‘One would think I was going to Jeddo, whereas I am going to Harley Street.’

‘And I may come and see you there!’

‘Of course you may if you like it. According to the usages of the world you would be reckoned very uncivil if you did not. For myself I do not much care about such usages, and therefore if you omit it I will forgive you.’

‘Very well; then I will say good-night,—and good-bye.’ These last words he uttered in a strain which should have melted her heart, and as he took leave of her he squeezed her hand with an affection that was almost painful.

It may be remarked that if Augustus Staveley was quite in earnest with Sophia Furnival, he would have asked her that all-important question in a straightforward manner as Peregrine Orme had asked it of Madeline. Perhaps Miss Furnival was aware of this, and, being so aware, considered that a serious half-hour before breakfast might not as yet be safe. If he were really in love he would find his way to Harley Street. On the whole I am inclined to think that Miss Furnival did understand her business.

On the following morning Miss Furnival went her way without any further scenes of tenderness, and Lady Staveley was thoroughly glad that she was gone. ‘A nasty, sly thing,’ she said to Baker. ‘Sly enough, my lady,’ said Baker; ‘but our Mr. Augustus will be one too many for her. Deary me, to think of her having the impurance to think of him.’ In all which Miss Furnival was I think somewhat ill used. If young gentlemen, such as Augustus Staveley, are allowed to amuse themselves with young ladies, surely young ladies such as Miss Furnival should be allowed to play their own cards accordingly.

On that day, early in the morning, Felix Graham sought and obtained an interview with his host in the judge’s own study. ‘I have come about two things,’ he said, taking the easy chair to which he was invited.

‘Two or ten, I shall be very happy,’ said the judge cheerily.

‘I will take business first,’ said Graham.

‘And then pleasure will be the sweeter afterwards,’ said the judge.

'I have been thinking a great deal about this case of Lady Mason's, and I have read all the papers, old and new, which Mr. Furnival has sent me. I cannot bring myself to suppose it possible that she can have been guilty of any fraud or deception.'

'I believe her to be free from all guilt in the matter—as I told you before. But then of course you will take that as a private opinion, not as one legally formed. I have never gone into the matter as you have done.'

'I confess that I do not like having dealings with Mr. Chaffanbrass and Mr. Aram.'

'Mr. Chaffanbrass and Mr. Aram may not be so bad as you, perhaps in ignorance, suppose them to be. Does it not occur to you that we should be very badly off without such men as Chaffanbrass and Aram?'

'So we should without chimney-sweepers and scavengers.'

'Graham, my dear fellow, judge not that you be not judged. I am older than you, and have seen more of these men. Believe me that as you grow older and also see more of them, your opinion will be more lenient,—and more just. Do not be angry with me for taking this liberty with you.'

'My dear judge, if you knew how I value it;—how I should value any mark of such kindness that you can show me! However I have decided that I will know something more of these gentlemen at once. If I have your approbation I will let Mr. Furnival know that I will undertake the case.'

The judge signified his approbation, and thus the first of those two matters was soon settled between them.

'And now for the pleasure,' said the judge.

'I don't know much about pleasure,' said Graham, fidgeting in his chair, rather uneasily. 'I'm afraid there is not much pleasure for either of us, or for anybody else, in what I'm going to say.'

'Then there is so much more reason for having it said quickly. Unpleasant things should always be got over without delay.'

'Nothing on earth can exceed Lady Staveley's kindness to me, and yours, and that of the whole family since my unfortunate accident.'

'Don't think of it. It has been nothing. We like you, but we should have done as much as that even if we had not.'

'And now I'm going to tell you that I have fallen in love with your daughter Madeline.' As the judge wished to have the tale told quickly, I think he had reason to be satisfied with the very succinct terms used by Felix Graham.

'Indeed!' said the judge.

'And that was the reason why I wished to go away at the earliest possible time—and still wish it.'

'You are right there, Mr. Graham. I must say you are right

there. Under all the circumstances of the case I think you were right to wish to leave us.'

'And therefore I shall go the first thing to-morrow morning'—in saying which last words poor Felix could not refrain from showing a certain unevenness of temper, and some disappointment.

'Gently, gently, Mr. Graham. Let us have a few more words before we accede to the necessity of anything so sudden. Have you spoken to Madeline on this subject?'

'Not a word.'

'And I may presume that you do not intend to do so.'

For a moment or so Felix Graham sat without speaking, and then, getting up from his chair, he walked twice the length of the room. 'Upon my word, judge, I will not answer for myself if I remain here,' he said at last.

A softer-hearted man than Judge Staveley, or one who could make himself more happy in making others happy, never sat on the English bench. Was not this a gallant young fellow before him,—gallant and clever, of good honest principles, and a true manly heart? Was he not a gentleman by birth, education, and tastes? What more should a man want for a son-in-law? And then his daughter had had the wit to love this man so endowed. It was almost on his tongue to tell Graham that he might go and seek the girl and plead his own cause to her.

But bread is bread, and butcher's bills are bills! The man and the father, and the successful possessor of some thousands a year, was too strong at last for the soft-hearted philanthropist. Therefore, having collected his thoughts, he thus expressed himself upon the occasion:—

'Mr. Graham, I think you have behaved very well in this matter, and it is exactly what I should have expected from you.' The judge at the time knew nothing about Mary Snow. 'As regards yourself personally I should be proud to own you as my son-in-law, but I am of course bound to regard the welfare of my daughter. Your means I fear are but small.'

'Very small indeed,' said Graham.

'And though you have all those gifts which should bring you on in your profession, you have learned to entertain ideas, which hitherto have barred you from success. Now I tell you what you shall do. Remain here two or three days longer, till you are fit to travel, and abstain from saying anything to my daughter. Come to me again in three months, if you still hold the same mind, and I will pledge myself to tell you then whether or no you have my leave to address my child as a suitor.'

Felix Graham silently took the judge's hand, feeling that a strong hope had been given to him, and so the interview was ended.

IMPORTANT FAMILY MEDICINE.



CAMOMILE PILLS,

THE

MOST CERTAIN PRESERVER OF HEALTH,

A MILD, YET SPEEDY, SAFE, AND

EFFECTUAL AID IN CASES OF INDIGESTION,

AND ALL STOMACH COMPLAINTS,

AND, AS A NATURAL CONSEQUENCE,

A PURIFIER OF THE BLOOD, AND A SWEETENER OF THE WHOLE SYSTEM.

INDIGESTION is a weakness or want of power of the digestive juices in the stomach to convert what we eat and drink into healthy matter, for the proper nourishment of the whole system. It is caused by everything which weakens the system in general, or the stomach in particular. From it proceed nearly all the diseases to which we are liable; for it is very certain, that if we could always keep the stomach right we should only die by old age or accident. Indigestion produces a great variety of unpleasant sensations: amongst the most prominent of its miserable effects are a want of, or an inordinate appetite, sometimes attended with a constant craving for drink, a distension or feeling of enlargement of the stomach, flatulency, heartburn, pains in the stomach, acidity, unpleasant taste in the mouth, perhaps sickness, rumbling noise in the bowels: in some cases of depraved digestion there is nearly a complete disrelish for food, but still the appetite is not greatly impaired, as at the stated period of meals persons so afflicted can eat heartily, although without much gratification; a long train of nervous symptoms are also frequent attendants, general debility, great languidness, and incapacity for exertion. The minds of persons so afflicted frequently become irritable and desponding, and great anxiety is observable in the countenance; they appear thoughtful, melancholy, and dejected, under great apprehension of some imaginary danger, will start at any unexpected noise or occurrence, and become so agitated that they require some

time to calm and collect themselves; yet for all this the mind is exhilarated without much difficulty; pleasing events, society, will for a time dissipate all appearance of disease; but the excitement produced by an agreeable change vanishes soon after the cause has gone by. Other symptoms are, violent palpitations, restlessness, the sleep disturbed by frightful dreams and startings, and affording little or no refreshment; occasionally there is much moaning, with a sense of weight and oppression upon the chest, nightmare, &c.

It is almost impossible to enumerate all the symptoms of this first invader upon the constitution, as in a hundred cases of *Indigestion* there will probably be something peculiar to each; but, be they what they may, they are all occasioned by the food becoming a burden rather than a support to the stomach; and in all its stages the medicine most wanted is that which will afford speedy and effectual assistance to the digestive organs, and give energy to the nervous and muscular systems,—nothing can more speedily or with more certainty effect so desirable an object than *Norton's Extract of Camomile Flowers*. The herb has from time immemorial been highly esteemed in England as a grateful anodyne, imparting an aromatic bitter to the taste, and a pleasing degree of warmth and strength to the stomach; and in all cases of indigestion, gout in the stomach, windy colic, and general weakness, it has for ages been strongly recommended by the most eminent practitioners as very useful and beneficial. The

great, indeed only, objection to its use has been the large quantity of water which it takes to dissolve a small part of the flowers, and which must be taken with it into the stomach. It requires a quarter of a pint of boiling water to dissolve the soluble portion of one drachm of Camomile Flowers; and, when one or even two ounces may be taken with advantage, it must at once be seen how impossible it is to take a proper dose of this wholesome herb in the form of tea; and the only reason why it has not long since been placed the very first in rank of all restorative medicines is, that in taking it the stomach has always been loaded with water, which tends in a great measure to counteract, and very frequently wholly to destroy the effect. It must be evident that loading a weak stomach with a large quantity of water, merely for the purpose of conveying into it a small quantity of medicine must be injurious; and that the medicine must possess powerful renovating properties only to counteract the bad effects likely to be produced by the water. Generally speaking, this has been the case with Camomile Flowers, a herb possessing the highest restorative qualities, and when properly taken, decidedly the most speedy restorer, and the most certain preserver of health.

These PILLS are wholly CAMOMILE, prepared by a peculiar process, accidentally discovered, and known only to the proprietor, and which he firmly believes to be one of the most valuable modern discoveries in medicine, by which all the essential and extractive matter of more than an ounce of the flowers is concentrated in four moderate sized pills. Experience has afforded the most ample proof that they possess all the fine aromatic and stomachic properties for which the herb has been esteemed; and, as they are taken into the stomach, unencumbered by any diluting or indigestible substance, in the same degree has their benefit been more immediate and decided. Mild in their operation and pleasant in their effect, they may be taken at any age, and under any circumstance, without danger or inconvenience. A person exposed to cold and wet a whole day or night could not possibly receive any injury from taking them, but on the contrary, they would effectually prevent a cold being taken. After a long acquaintance with and strict observance of the medicinal properties of *Norton's Camomile Pills*, it is only doing

them justice to say, that they are really the most valuable of all TONIC MEDICINES. By the word tonic is meant a medicine which gives strength to the stomach sufficient to digest in proper quantities all wholesome food, which increases the power of every nerve and muscle of the human body, or, in other words invigorates the nervous and muscular systems. The solidity or firmness of the whole tissue of the body, which so quickly follows the use of *Norton's Camomile Pills*, their certain and speedy effects in repairing the partial dilapidations from time or intemperance, and their lasting salutary influence on the whole frame, is most convincing, that in the smallest compass is contained the largest quantity of the tonic principle, of so peculiar a nature as to pervade the whole system, through which it diffuses health and strength sufficient to resist the formation of disease, and also to fortify the constitution against contagion; as such, their general use is strongly recommended as preventative during the prevalence of malignant fever or other infectious diseases, and to persons attending sick rooms they are invaluable, as in no one instance have they ever failed in preventing the taking of illness even under the most trying circumstances.

As *Norton's Camomile Pills* are particularly recommended for all stomach complaints or indigestion, it will probably be expected that some advice should be given respecting diet, though after all that has been written upon the subject, after the publication of volume upon volume, after the country has, at it were, been inundated with practical essays on diet, as a means of prolonging life, it would be unnecessary to say more did we not feel it our duty to make the humble endeavour of inducing the public to regard them not, but to adopt that course which is dictated by nature, by reason, and by common sense. Those persons who study the wholesomes, and are governed by the opinion of writers on diet, are uniformly both unhealthy in body and weak in mind. There can be no doubt that the palate is designed to inform us what is proper for the stomach, and of course that must best instruct us what food to take and what to avoid: we want no other adviser. Nothing can be more clear than that those articles which are agreeable to the taste were by nature intended for our food and sustenance, whether liquid or solid, foreign or of native

production; if they are pure and unadulterated, no harm need be dreaded by their use; they will only injure by abuse. Consequently, whatever the palate approves, eat and drink always in moderation but never in excess; keeping in mind that the first process of digestion is performed in the mouth, the second in the stomach; and that, in order that the stomach may be able to do its work properly, it is requisite the first process should be well performed; this consists in masticating or chewing the solid food, so as to break down and separate the fibres and small substances of meat and vegetables, mixing them well, and blending the whole together before they are swallowed; and it is particularly urged upon all to take plenty of time to their meals and never eat in haste. If you conform to this short and simple, but comprehensive advice, and find that there are various things which others eat and drink with pleasure and without inconvenience, and which would be pleasant to yourself only that they disagree, you may at once conclude that the fault is in the stomach, that it does not possess the power which it ought to do, that it wants assistance, and the sooner that assistance is afforded the better. A very short trial of this medicine will best prove how soon it will put the stomach in a condition to perform with ease all the work which nature intended for it. By its use you will soon be able to enjoy, in moderation, whatever is agreeable to the taste, and unable to name one individual article of food which disagrees with or sits unpleasantly on the stomach. Never forget that a small meal well digested affords more nourishment to the system than a large one, even of the same food, when digested imperfectly. Let the dish be ever so delicious, ever so enticing a variety offered, the more so ever so enchanting, never forget that temperance tends to preserve health, and that health is the soul of enjoyment. But should an impropriety be at any time, or ever often committed, by which the stomach comes overloaded or disordered, render it immediate aid by taking a dose of *Norton's*

Camomile Pills, which will so promptly assist in carrying off the burden thus imposed upon it that all will soon be right again.

It is most certainly true that every person in his lifetime consumes a quantity of noxious matter, which if taken at one meal would be fatal; it is these small quantities of noxious matter, which are introduced into our food, either by accident or wilful adulteration, which we find so often upset the stomach, and not unfrequently lay the foundation of illness, and perhaps final ruination to health. To preserve the constitution, it should be our constant care, if possible, to counteract the effect of these small quantities of unwholesome matter; and whenever, in that way, an enemy to the constitution finds its way into the stomach, a friend should be immediately sent after it, which would prevent its mischievous effects, and expel it altogether; no better friend can be found, nor one which will perform the task with greater certainty than **NORTON'S CAMOMILE PILLS**. And let it be observed that the longer this medicine is taken the less it will be wanted; it can in no case become habitual, as its entire action is to give energy and force to the stomach, which is the spring of life, the source from which the whole frame draws its succour and support. After an excess of eating or drinking, and upon every occasion of the general health being at all disturbed, these PILLS should be immediately taken, as they will stop and eradicate disease at its commencement. Indeed, it is most confidently asserted, that by the timely use of this medicine only, and a common degree of caution, any person may enjoy all the comforts within his reach, may pass through life without an illness, and with the certainty of attaining a healthy OLD AGE.

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