



CHAPTER XIV.

SIR CYPRIAN HAS HIS SUSPICIONS.

Sir Cyprian Davenant had not forgotten that dinner at Richmond given by Gilbert Sinclair a little while before his departure for Africa, at which he had met the handsome widow to whom Mr. Sinclair was then supposed to be engaged. The fact was brought more vividly back to his mind by a circumstance that came under his notice the evening after he had accepted Lord Clanyarde's invitation to Marchbrook.

He had been dining at his club with an old college friend, and had consented, somewhat unwillingly, to an adjournment to one of the theaters near the Strand, at which a popular burlesque was being played for the three hundred and sixty-fifth time. Sir Cyprian entertained a cordial detestation of this kind of entertainment, in which the low comedian of the company enacts a distressed damsel in short petticoats and a flaxen wig, while pretty actresses swagger in costumes of the cavalier period, and ape the manners of the muic-skin swell. But it was 10 o'clock. The friends had recalled all the old Oxford follies in the days when they were under-graduates together in Tom Quad. They had exhausted these reminiscences and a magnum of Lafitte, and though Sir Cyprian would have gladly gone back to his chambers and his books, Jack Dunster, his friend, was of a livelier temperament, and wanted to finish the evening.

"Let's go and see 'Hercules and Omphale' at the Kaleidoscope," he said. "It's no end of fun. Jeem-on plays Omphale in a red wig, and Minnie Vavasour looks awfully fascinating in pink satin boot and lion-skin. We shall be just in time for the breakdown."

Sir Cyprian assented with a yawn. He had seen fifty such burlesques as "Hercules and Omphale" in the days when such things had their charm for him, too, when he could be pleased with a pretty girl in pink satin hose, or be moved to laughter by Jeem-on's painted nose and falsetto scream.

They took a hansom and drove to the Kaleidoscope, a bandbox of a theater screwed into an awkward corner of one of the narrowest streets in London—a street at which well-bred carriage horses accustomed to the broad thoroughfares of Belgravian shied furiously.

It was December, and there was no one worth speaking of in town; but the little Kaleidoscope was crowded, notwithstanding. There were just a brace of empty stalls in a draughty corner for Sir Cyprian and Mr. Dunster.

The breakdown was just on, the pretty little Hercules flourishing his club, and exhibiting a white round arm with a diamond bracelet above the elbow. Omphale was showing her ankles, to the delight of the groundlings; the violin was racing one another, and the flute squeaking its shrillest in a vulgar negro melody, accented by rhythmical bangs on the big drum. The audience were in raptures, and rewarded the exertions of band and dancers with a double rec'l. Sir Cyprian stifled another yawn and looked around the house.

Among the vacuous countenances, all intent on the spectacle, there was one face which was out of the common, and which expressed a supreme weariness. A lady sitting alone in a stage box, with one rounded arm resting indolently on the velvet cushion—an arm that might have been carved in marble, bare to the elbow, its warm, human ivory relieved by the yellow hue of an old Spanish point ruffle. Where had Cyprian Davenant seen that face before?

The lady had passed the first bloom of youth, but her beauty was of that character that does not fade with youth. She was of the Pauline Borghese type, a woman worthy to be modeled by a new Canova.

"I remember," said Sir Cyprian to himself. "It was at that Richmond dinner that I met her. She is the lady, Gilbert Sinclair was to have married."

He felt a curious interest in this woman, whose name even he had forgotten. Why had not Sinclair married her? she was strikingly handsome, with a bolder, grander beauty than Constance Clanyarde's fragile and poetic loveliness—a woman whom such a man as Sinclair might have naturally chosen. Just as such a man would choose a high-stepping chestnut horse, without being too nice as to fineness and delicacy of line.

"And I think from the little I saw that the lady was attached to him," mused Sir Cyprian.

He glanced at the stage-box several times before the end of the performance. The lady was quite alone, and sat in the same attitude, fanning herself languidly, and hardly looking at the stage. Just as the curtain fell, Sir Cyprian heard the click of the box door, and looking up, saw that a gentleman had entered. The lady rose, and he came forward a little to assist in the arrangement of her ornate-lined mantle.

The gentleman was Gilbert Sinclair. "What do you think of it?" asked Jack Dunster, as they went out into the windmill lobby, where people were crowded together waiting for their canings.

"Abominable," murmured Sir Cyprian.

"Why, Minnie Vavasour is the prettiest actress in London, and Jeem-on's almost equal to Toolie."

"I beg your pardon. I was not thinking of the burlesque," answered Sir Cyprian, hastily.

Gilbert and his companion were just in front of them.

"Shall I go and look for your carriage?" asked Mr. Sinclair.

"If you like. But as you left me to sit out this dreary rubbish by myself all the evening, you might just as well have let me find my way to my carriage."

"Don't be angry with me for breaking my engagement. I was obliged to go out shooting with some fellows, and I didn't leave Maidstone till nine o'clock. I think I paid you a considerable compliment in traveling thirty miles to hand you to your carriage. No other woman could expect so much from me."

"You are not going back to Davenant to-night."

"No; there is a supper on at the Albion. Lord Colverdale's trainer is to be there, and I expect to get a wrinkle or two from him. A simple matter of business, I assure you."

"Mrs. Walsingham's carriage?" roared the waterman.

"Mrs. Walsingham," thought Sir Cyprian, who was squeezed into a corner with his friend, walled up by opera-cloaked shoulders, and within ear-shot of Mr. Sinclair. "Yes, that's her name."

"That saves you all trouble," said Mrs. Walsingham. "Can I set you down anywhere?"

"No, thanks; the Albion's close by."

Sir Cyprian struggled out of his corner just in time to see Gilbert shut the brougham door and walk off through the December drizzle.

"So that acquaintance is not a dropped one," he thought. "It augurs ill for Constance."

"It must have been a great grief to Mrs. Sinclair," said Sir Cyprian.

"Ah, poor dear, she'll never hold up her head again," sighed Martha. "I saw her in church last Sunday, in the most beautiful black bonnet, and if ever I saw anyone going to heaven, it's her."

And Mr. Sinclair will have a lot of company, and there are all the windows at Davenant blazing with light till past 12 o'clock every night—my cousin James is a pointsman on the Southeastern, and sees the house from the line—while that poor, sweet lady is breaking her heart."

"But surely Mr. Sinclair would defer to his wife in these things," suggested Sir Cyprian.

"Not he, sir. For the last twelve months that I was with my dear lady I seldom heard him say a kind word to her. Always snarling and sneering, I do believe he was jealous of that precious innocent because Mrs. Sinclair was so fond of her. I'm sure if it hadn't been for that dear baby my mistress would have been a miserable woman."

This was a bad hearing, and Sir Cyprian went back to Marchbrook that evening sorely depressed.

shy, and after the first day Sir Cyprian left them to their retirement, preferring long, lonely rides among the scenes of his boyhood, and half-hours of friendly chat with ancient gaffers and goodies who remembered his father and mother, and the days when Davenant had still held up his head in the occupation of the old race.

"This noo gentleman, he do spend a power o' money; but he'll never be up to like old Sir Cyprian," said the gray-haired village sage, leaning over his gate to talk to young Sir Cyprian.

In one of his rounds Cyprian Davenant looked upon the abode of Martha Briggs, who was still at home. Her parents were in decent circumstances, and not eager to see their daughter Desiré of Sin-

TALMAGEON.

PREACHER TALMAGEONERS OF THE.

From a Far Land he Sends His Conception one Great Gardener—Describes in a Desert of Sin.

The Ro

Rev. Dr. Talmage nearing Australia on his world journey, has selected for his sermon this week. "The Royal Text being taken from v. 1, 'I am come into it.'

The world has many

beautiful gardens ad-

ded to the glory by de-

creeing that they are all

through the rest even

the names of the planted

there. Henry IV, es-

tablished gardens beauty

and luxuriance, at them

Aldine, Pyrenean plants.

One of the sweetest was the

garden of S. poet.

His writings have im-

pression on the world,

"The Leasowes," al.

To the natural ad-

place was brought the art

Arbor and terracistic

temple and res-

ervoir fountain

here had the Oak

and yew and ha their

richest foliage.

A life

diligence and gorged

to the adornment obscured

spot. He sold it for

The Garden

And yet I am tocher

garden than any id.

It is the garden spot,

the garden of the chulongs

to Christ, for me. He

bought it, He plants it,

and He shall have it,

in his outlay at Alc his

fortune. And now flow

ers of those gardeners

think or imagine blood

of that old man's.

The payment of the

hasted him.

But I have that

the outlay of this en

of the church of whic

Oh, how many s

and thorns and agonies

women who saw him, ye

executioners who let

Him down!

Tell i that

didst hide ye rock

loved the church al

it.

It, then, the gurh

belongs to Christ,

right to walk in,

O blessed Jesus, think

up and down these aish

Christ, the

That would be in

which there were no

where else, they the

borders or at the gome

liest taste will dic

it be the old fashik,

or dahlia, or coreopsis

be larger means the

Mexican cactus, and

arbutellion, and b and

clustering oleandrenist

comes to his garants

there some of the tht

ever flowered upome

of them are violets, but

sweet in heaven.

Arch for such sprits to

not see them ver

you find where the

brightening face and

the sprig of geranland,

and the window cut

the glare of the sun

perhaps more likilis,

creeping sweetly al

briers of life, giving

and many a man who hav

found that they ha all

over with towering

in and out amid these

Christians in Chri

like the sunflower, ght,

but whenever darkn a

soul that needs to b

they stand, night ses.

But in Christ's garan

that may be better the

Mexican cactus—the

beauty within—menin

of character. Those

every one that to

turne them nothing but

rist loves them, notwith

sharpness. Many ery

hard to handle

them nothing but

sharpness.