



CHAPTER XI—Continued.

From that time Constance Sinclair put aside all outward token of her grief. She wrote to the gayest and most pleasure-loving of her acquaintances—young married women whose chief delight was to dress more expensively than their dearest friends, and to be seen at three o'clock in the same evening, and a few who were still spinsters, from no fault or foolishness of their own, since they had neglected neither plans nor art in the endeavor to secure an eligible partner for the dance of life. To these Constance wrote her letters of invitation, and the first sentence in each letter was sufficient to insure acceptance.

"Dearest Ida—My husband is filling the house with men for the hunting season. Do come, and save me from being bored to death by their sporting talk. Be sure to bring your hunting habit. Gilbert can give you a good mount," etc., etc.

Whereupon, dearest Ida, twisting about the little note, meditatively remarked to her last bosom friend and confidante, "Odd that they should ask people so soon after the death of Mrs. Sinclair's boy—drawn now, it was in all the papers. Davenant is a sweet home to stay at, quite liberty will. Yet, I think I shall go, and if there are plenty of people I can finish out my ball dresses in the evenings."

Before another Sunday came Davenant was full of people, the attics noisy with strange ladies-maids, the stables and harness rooms full of life and bustle, not an empty stall or an uncoupled loo-box in the long range of buildings, the billiard-room and smoking-room resonant with masculine laughter, unknown dogs pervading the outbuildings and chained up in every available corner.

Constance Sinclair had put away her sober roles of crapes and cashmere, and met her friends with welcoming smiles, radiant in black silk and lace, her graceful figure set off by the latest Parisian fashion, which, being the newest, was, of course, the best.

"I thought she would have been in despair," said one of Mrs. Sinclair's dearest friends to another during a whispered chat in a dusky corner at afternoon tea. "The men were so noisy with their haw-haw talk, one could say what one liked," remarked Mrs. Millamount afterward to Lady Lovelace.

"Looks rather heartless, doesn't it—an only child, too. She might at least wear paramatta instead of that black silk—not even mourning silk. I suppose that black net trimmed with jet she wore last night was from Worth."

"My dear, you couldn't have looked at it properly. Worth wouldn't have made her such a thing if she had gone down on her knees to him. The sleeve was positively antediluvian. Nice house, isn't it? Everything in good style. What matches all these Claridges have made."

"I'm sure that she was engaged to Sir Cyprian Davenant."

"They say so. How sorry she must be! He has just come into quite a heap of money. Some old man down in the Lincolnshire fens left it to him—quite a character, I believe. Never spent anything except on black-letter books, and those have been sold for fortune at Sotheby's. Ah, Mr. Wyat, how do you do?" as the solicitor, newly arrived that afternoon, threaded his way toward the quiet corner; "do come and sit here. Is it true that Sir Cyprian Davenant has come into a fortune?"

"Nothing can be more true, unless it is that Mrs. Millamount looks younger and lovelier every season."

"You horrid flatterer. You are worse than a French milliner. And is it true that Mrs. Sinclair and Sir Cyprian were engaged? But no, it would hardly be fair to ask you about that. You are a friend of the family."

"A friend of the family, I am bound to inform you that rumor is false on that point. There was no engagement."

"Really, now?"

"But Sir Cyprian was madly in love with Miss Claryarde."

"And she—"

"I was not in the lady's confidence; but I believe that it was only my friend's poverty which prevented their marriage."

"How horribly mercenary!" cried Mrs. Millamount, who came of an ancient Irish family, proud as Lucifer and poor as Lazarus, and had been sacrificed in the blossom of her days, like Iphigenia, to raise the wind—not to Diana, but to a rich stock-broker. Perhaps as that was a long time ago she may have forgotten how much more Pritus had to do with her marriage than Cupid.

CHAPTER XII
THE SHACKLES OF AN OLD LOVE STRAIT-ENED HIM.

Cyprian Davenant had inherited a fortune. Common rumor had not greatly exaggerated the amount of his wealth, though there was the usual disposition to ex parte upon the truth. Needy men looked at him with envy as he went in and out of his club, or sat in a quiet corner reading the last "Quarterly" or "Edinburgh" and almost wondered that he was so well able to contain his spirits, and was not tempted to perform a savage dance of Choctaw character, or to give expression to his rapture in a war-whoop.

"Hang it all you know," remarked an impudent younger son, "it aggravates a fellow to see Davenant take things so quietly. He doesn't even look cheerful. He does not invite the confidence of his necessitous friends. Such a knight of the rueful countenance would hardly stand a pony. And he won't play whist, or touch a billiard-cue—quite an unapproachable beast."

A man cannot be lucky in all things. Sir Cyprian had set his life upon a cast, and the fortune of the game had been against him. The inheritance of this unexpected wealth seemed to be almost a useless and trivial stroke of fate. What could it avail him now? It could not give him Constance Claryarde, or even restore the good old house in which his father and mother had lived and died. Time had set a

He was not a little surprised when James Wyatt called upon him one day in November, and told him he was going down to Davenant, where there was to be a houseful of company.

"So soon after the little girl's death," exclaimed Sir Cyprian.

"Yes, it is rather soon, no doubt. But they would be moped to death at Davenant without people. Sack-cloth and ashes are quite out of the fashion, you see. People don't go in for intense mourning nowadays."

"People have hearts, I suppose, even in the nineteenth century," said Sir Cyprian, somewhat bitterly. "I should have thought Mrs. Sinclair would have felt the loss of her little girl very deeply."

"We don't know what she may feel," returned Wyatt. "Gilbert likes his own way."

"You don't mean to say that he illuses his wife?" asked Sir Cyprian, alarmed.

"Ill-usage is a big word. We don't employ it nowadays," replied Mr. Wyatt, with an imperturbable smile. "Gilbert Sinclair is my client, and an excellent one, as you know. It would become me to disparage him, but I must admit that he and Mrs. Sinclair are not the happiest couple whose domestic hearth I have ever sat by. She has some secret grief even before the death of her child and made up for being very brilliant in society by being exceedingly dull at home. I don't expect to find her very lively, now that she has lost the only being she really cared for. She absolutely worshipped that child."

This conversation gave Sir Cyprian Davenant material for much sad thought. To know that Constance was unhappy seemed to bring her nearer to him. It brought back the thought of the old days when those innocent eyes had looked into his, eloquent with unconscious love; when Constance Claryarde had given him her heart with an open thought of to-morrow, happy in the knowledge that she was loved, believing her lover strong to conquer fate and fortune. And he had brought the chilly light of worldly wisdom to bear on this dream of Arcady. He had been strong, self-denying, and had renounced his own happiness in the hope of securing hers. And now fate laughed him to scorn with this gift of vanities, and he found that his world was not the same as he had supposed.

"What a self-sufficient fool! What an idiot, I have been!" he said to himself, in an agony of remorse. "And, what atonement can I make to her for my folly? Can I defend her from the purse-proud snob she has been sold to? Can I save her wounded heart one pang? Can I be near her in the house of misery, or offer one drop of comfort from a soul overflowing with tenderness and pity? No; to approach her is to do her a wrong. But I can watch at a distance, perhaps. I must use other eyes. My money may be of some use in buying her faithful services from others. God bless her! I consecrate my days to her service; distant or near, I will be her friend and her defender."

Two days later Sir Cyprian met Lord Claryarde at the nobleman's club. It was a club which Cyprian rarely used, although he had been a member ever since his majority, and it may be that he went out of his beaten track in the hope of encountering Constance Sinclair's father.

Lord Claryarde was very cordial and complimentary upon his friend's altered fortune.

"You must feel sorry for having parted with Davenant," he said, "when you might so easily have kept it."

"Davenant is rather too big for a confirmed bachelor."

"True, it would have been a white elephant, I dare say. Sinclair has improved the place considerably. You ought to come down and have a look at it. I'm going to Marchbrook to shoot next week. Come and stay with me," added Lord Claryarde, with heartiness, not at all prepared to be taken at his word.

"I shall be charmed," said Sir Cyprian, to his lordship's infinite astonishment.

People generally took his invitations for what they were worth, and declined them. But here was a man just from the center of Africa, who hardly understood the language of polite society.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

RODE ON THE FIRST ENGINE.

Which Was Ever Run in the United States.

By the death of John Torry, in Honesdale, Pa., recently, Otis Avery becomes the sole survivor of those who rode America's first locomotive on its first day it ran, Aug. 8, 1829. Mr. Avery was born, Aug. 19, 1808, in Oneida County, New York. He removed to Bethany, Pa., in 1827, and was 20 years of age. Later he removed to Chenango County, New York, and still later to New York City, where he learned the profession of dentistry. Then he removed to Honesdale, and was Associate Justice for eleven years, not at all prepared to be taken at his word.

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