



CHAPTER XIII.

FAT MERLIN'S FEET THE WOLF VIVIAN LAY."

All went merrily at Davenant during the brief days of November and December, though the master of the house was not without his burden of secret care and care. That magnificent coal and iron producing estate in the north had not been yielding quite so much hard cash as its owner expected from it lately. Strikes and trade unionism had told upon Mr. Sinclair's income. The coal market had fluctuated awkwardly. Belgium had been tapping the demand for iron. There was plenty of money coming in, of course, from Gilbert's large possessions; but unfortunately there was also a great deal going out. The Newmarket stables had cost a small fortune, the Newmarket horses had been unlucky, and Gilbert's book for the last three or four seasons had been a decided failure.

"The fact is, Wyatt," he remarked, "to the confidential adviser, one dull afternoon, over a *tete-a-tete* game at billiards, "I'm spending too much money."

"Have you only just found that out?" asked the solicitor, with a calm sneer. "The purchase of this confounded place took too much of my capital, and these strikes and lock-outs coming on the top of it—"

"Not to mention your vicious habit of *plunging*," remarked Mr. Wyatt, parenthetically, taking a careful aim at the distant red.

"Have very nearly stumped me."

"Why not sell Davenant? You don't want such big barracks of a place, and—Mrs. Sinclair isn't happy here."

"No," said Gilbert, with a smothered oath; "the associations are too tender."

"I could get you a purchaser to-morrow."

"Yes, at a dead loss, no doubt. You fellows live by buying and selling, and you don't care how much your client loses by a transaction that brings grist to your mill."

"I can get you the money you gave for Davenant, timber and all."

"Who's your purchaser?"

"I'd rather not mention his name yet awhile. He is a quiet party and wouldn't like to be talked about."

"I understand. Some city cad who has made his money in the zoological line."

"How zoological?"

"Pulling and bearing. Well, if these beastly colliers hold out much longer, he may have Davenant and welcome. But he must take my new furniture at a valuation. I've paid no end of money for it."

"What did you do with the old J-

cocean oak?"

"Oh, the old sticks are put away somewhere, I believe, in lofts and lumber-rooms and servants' bedrooms."

Some of Mr. Sinclair's other guests dropped into the billiard-room at this juncture, and there was no more said about the sale of Davenant.

Nobody—not even his worst enemy, and no doubt among his numerous friends he had several foes—could deny Mr. Wyatt's merits as a guest in a country house. He was just the kind of man to keep things going—past-master in all social accomplishments—and Gilbert Sinclair graciously allowed him to take the burden of amusing everybody upon his shoulders, while the master of the house went his own way, and hunted or shot at his own pleasure. Mr. Sinclair liked to fill his house with people, but he had no idea of succumbing to his own inclination to their entertainment; he thought he did quite enough for them in giving them what he elegantly called "the run of their teeth," and was free use of his second-rate hunters.

On Mr. Wyatt, therefore, devolved the duty of keeping things going—devising the day's amusements, protecting the ladies of the party from the selfishness of neglectful and unappreciative mankind, arranging picnic luncheons in *keeps* lodges, at which the fair sex might assist, finding safe mounts for those aspiring damsels who wanted to ride to hounds, planning private theatricals, and stimulating the musical members of the society to the performance of part songs in business-like and creditable manner.

He had done all these things last winter and the winter before, but on those occasions he had been aided in his task. Constance Sinclair had given him her hearty cooperation. She had placed her party of horses with grace and spirit, and allowed a cloud of thought or memory to obscure the brightness of the present moment. She had given herself up, heart and soul, to the duties of her position, and her friends had believed her to be the happiest of women, as well as the most fortunate. To seem thus had cost her many an effort, but she had deemed this one of her obligations as Gilbert Sinclair's wife.

Now all was changed. Her husband had been obeyed; but that obedience was all which Constance Sinclair's sense of duty could now compel. She sat like a beautiful statue at the head of her husband's table, she moved about among her guests with as little part in their pleasure and amusement as if she had been a picture on the wall—courteous to all, but familiar with none, she seemed to live apart from her surroundings—a strange and silent life, whose dark shadow often sympathized failed to penetrate. Mrs. Millamount was unkindly, despite her frivolity, had tried to get Constance to talk of her bereavement, but the wounded heart was galled by the gentle touch.

"It's very kind of you," she said, divining her friend's motive, "but I'd rather not talk of her. Nothing can ever lessen my grief, and I like best to keep it quiet to myself."

"How you must hate us all for being here!" said Mrs. Millamount, moved with compunction at the incongruity between the household of company and the mother's de late heart. "It seems quite abominable for us to be thinking of nothing but pleasure while you bear your burden alone."

"Nobody could divide it with me," answered Constance gently. "Pray do not trouble yourself about my sor-

"Not another word," exclaimed James Wyatt; "there's the luncheon bell, and I must be off. You'd better take Zola. You'll find him more amusing than the talk in the servants' hall."

Melanie took the volume sullenly, and walked away without a word.

"What a little spitfire!" mused Mr. Wyatt, as he went slowly down the wide oak staircase. "She has taken my pretty speeches seriously and means to make herself obnoxious. This comes of putting one's self in the power of the inferior sex. If I had trusted a man—as I trusted that girl—it would have been a simple matter of business. He would have been extortive, perhaps, and there an end. But Mademoiselle makes it an affair of the heart, and I dare say will worry my life out before I have done with her."

STARTING A FASHION.

How the Wearing of White Gloves Was Initiated in Gotham.

The other day a young man wanted a pair of evening gloves late at night, and had to go out to Sixth Avenue to get them, says the New York Press. There was nothing of his size in stock but a pair of white gloves, while pearl alone are de rigueur. However, he was a dancing man and had to wear gloves, so he bought the gloves, and in due course of time led the cotillion wearing them. The chappies were astounded. Nobody could question this man's irreproachable taste, and in fact he was something of a leader of fashion. After supper a breathless deputation waited upon him to know whether or not white gloves had come back again.

"I'm wearing them myself, see, dear boy," he said jokingly, but with a slightly superior smile. "I haven't really heard whether the Prince has found it out yet or not."

Now your true dude is not susceptible to the influence of irony. Besides, the deputation was interested at the inquiry. The result was that they mixed those speeches up, and in an hour everybody in the room was saying that the Prince of Wales had taken to wearing white gloves in the evening, and that Tom Blank was the first man in New York to hear of it. So white gloves and not pearl are now the proper thing to wear in New York City on dress occasions, and when our man of fashion strolled into the Metropolitan Opera House the other night and looked around the circle he smiled grimly. Half the men in the boxes looked as if they were carrying snowballs.

Booth as a Bill-Poster.

One story of Booth's trip to the Sandwich Islands remains with me. He had gone there in 1854, in company with his comrade, Mr. David C. Anderson, after the murder of his portmanteau. On this dull December morning of that year, Mr. Wyatt stood before a doubtful Vandycreek, smoking meditatively, and apparently absorbed in a critical examination of Prince Rupert's slouched beaver and ostrich plume, when Melanie's light, quick step and tripping French walk at the other end of the gallery caught his ear.

They had hired a native to paste up the bills announcing the performance; this had to be done with a preparation name "poe-poe," made from a vegetable called "tara-tara," which is a favorite food in Honolulu; but the poor man was so hungry that, yielding to temptation, he incontinently ate up the paste, and to their surprise no bills appeared, writes William Bispham, in the Century.

When the reason was ascertained they feared to trust another native, and it was therefore agreed that, as Booth was the younger, he should act as bill-poster, and it came to pass that every night after the performance, Edwin went about the city with his play-bills and bucket of paste, and put up with his own hands the posters announcing that the company would play on the following night. He assured me that he did this honestly and did not eat the paste.

The Original Ossified Man.

In the Museum of Natural History in Dublin is the skeleton of a man, a native of the South of Ireland, who was killed in an ossified man. His body became ossified during his lifetime. He lived in that condition for years. Previous to the change he had been a healthy young fellow of superior strength and agility. One night he slept out in a field after a debauch, and some time later he felt the first symptoms of the strange transformation. The doctors could do nothing to avert the progress of his malady. His joints stiffened. When he wanted to lie down or rise up he required assistance. He could not bend his body, and when placed upright he resembled a statue of stone. He could stand, but not move in the least. His teeth were joined and became an entire bone. The doctors had to make a hole through them. He lost the use of his tongue, and his sight left him before he died.

"C'est dommage," murmured Melanie; "I have the heart too tender."

"Don't fret, my angel. See here, pretty one! I have brought you another novel," taking a paper-covered book from his pocket.

"Believe it, Zola."

"I don't want it. I won't read it. Your novels are full of lies. They describe men who will make any sacrifice for the woman they love—men who will take a peasant girl from her home or a gretette from her garret and make her a queen. There are no such men. I don't believe in them," cried the girl, passionately, her eyes flashing fire.

"Don't be angry, Melanie. Novels would be dull if they told only the truth."

"They would be very amusing if they described men of your pattern," retorted Melanie. "Men who say sweet things without meaning them, who flatter every woman they talk to, a foolish girl's head with their pretty speeches and caressing ways, and then laugh at her. Yes, as you are laughing at me," cried Melanie, exasperated by Mr. Wyatt's placid smile.

"No, my sweet, am only admiring your red hair, only. What have I done to raise this tessellated?"

"What have you done?" cried Melanie, and then burst into tears, real tears; this time, which seriously damaged the pearl-powder. "I am sure I don't know why I should care so much for you. You are not handsome. You are not even young."

"Perhaps not, but I am very agreeable," said James Wyatt, complacent.

"Don't cry, ma belle; only be patient, and reasonable, and perhaps I shall be able to prove to you some day that there are men, real, living men, who are capable of any sacrifice for the woman they love."

Melanie allowed herself to be appeased by this rather vague speech, but she was only half convinced.

"Tell me only one thing," she said. "Who is that lady I saw at Schoenheit's? and why were you so anxious to speak her?"

"James Wyatt's smooth face clouded at this question.

"She is related to me, and I knew she had been used badly. Hush, my dear, walls have ears. There are things we mustn't talk about here."

"What is the lady's real name?"

"Madame Chose. She comes of the oldest branch of the family—altogether grande dame, I assure you."

"I wish she would take me into her service."

"Why, you are better off here than with her."

"I don't think so. I should see more of you if I lived with that lady."

"There you are wrong. I see Madame Chose very rarely."

"I don't believe you."

"Melanie, that's extremely rude."

"I believe that you are passionately in love with that lady, and that is why—"

BEWARE of the man who defends any kind of evil.

AN INCIDENT OF LIFE IN TEXAS.

In some Texas towns it is impossible to ascertain when any particular train leaves without going to the depot and inquiring of the agent how many hours behind time the train is. Col. Yerger, who lives in Austin, wished to go to San Antonio on the 1 o'clock train, so he took his colored servant:

"Sam, go down to the depot and see what time the 1 o'clock train leaves."

"It was 3 o'clock when Sam returned."

"Well, when does the train leave?"

"It's 'em lef', boss. Hit's lef' at 2:30 past 2, sah!"

"What?"

"I did jes' yew what terole me. Yer told me ter see when de train lef', an' I watch till it was plain ol' teright out sight on deudder side ob Colorado Ribber."

AN ISLAND HOME.

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SENATE BRIBERY INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE.

ON THE SEA ISLANDS.

Last year \$5,000,000 worth of it was imported into the United States.

QUAINT INHABITANTS OF A LITTLE KNOWN REGION.

Gentle and Patient Negroes Whose Lives Are Passed in Raising Crops of Cotton—Where a Great Hurricane wrought Desolation—3,000 Human Beings Perished.

Produce Fine Cotton.

The full story of the horrors suffered last summer from the hurricane which desolated the islands along our southern Atlantic coast will never probably be fully told. The newspapers were full at that time with accounts of the misery of the people and the utter desolation wrought. At least 2,000 human beings lost their lives, 1,000 perished subsequently from exposure and disease, and between 20,000 and 30,000 were left homeless and helpless. In Scribner's Magazine Joel Chandler Harris, who has been in the South visiting the scene of the disaster, gives an interesting account of the present condition of the islands, and also tells something about the people who live on them. It is from this

relief station in their curious little bulbous houses. The Red Cross people are much hampered in their good work by lack of funds, but they do everything that is possible toward ameliorating the condition of the unfortunate natives.

A NEPHEW OF HENRY CLAY.

He Is Peddling Notions on the Streets of San Diego, Cal.

In one of the humblest cottages in San Diego, Cal., lives an old man whose tall form and distinguished appearance have made him a familiar figure on the streets of that city. He may be seen any day going from door to door with a basket strapped around him, peddling notions. This venerable old man, who was one day in fairly comfortable circumstances, is named Cyprian Clay, and his father was a brother of that brilliant political leader of bygone days, Henry Clay. He is now 81 years old, and his career of over four score years has been an eventful one. He can recall many of the most stirring incidents in the early history of this country as if they happened but yesterday, and prides himself on his acquaintance with many of those intellectual giants who flourished during the days of his illustrious uncle. Relief in their curious little bulbous houses. The Red Cross people are much hampered in their good work by lack of funds, but they do everything that is possible toward ameliorating the condition of the unfortunate natives.

The Sea Islands produce a good deal of territory altogether, for they reach down the whole coast from Charleston to Savannah. Those lying between Savannah and Port Royal are not so large, either in area or population, as those which extend from Port Royal to Charleston. All lie very near one another, separated by narrow lagoons. They are little known and rarely visited by the white people, and negroes form the bulk of the population. These negroes are negroes of a rather peculiar kind. They are of the slave type of the African; their ancestors were brought over from Africa, where, as slaves for generations, they were engaged in raising cattle and riding forms of agriculture. These traits which excited the rapacity of the slave-trader still manifest themselves in the negroes of the Sea Islands in a way that is both attractive and touching. They are gentle, unobtrusive and friendly; they are patient and uncomplaining.

The Cotton Growth.

The Sea Islands produce the finest and highest priced cotton in the world and the land on which it is grown recuperates and enriches itself from year to year. This cotton enters into the manufacture of the finest goods and is worth 25 cents a pound when carefully gathered. These, by the way, are high prices for cotton and many of the negroes, therefore, overtook him and now, as a daughter, the last of his seven children, he is passing his last days in poverty, eking out a scanty living for the two from the sale of his wares.

THE ANCIENT IDEA OF GOD.

A specially interesting subject occupied the Victoria Institute recently. Mr. T. G. Pinches, of the Oriental Department of the British Museum, describes some results of his examination of the Babylonian tablets. He showed from one of these, of about the period 650 B. C., that the king used the word God as a mono