



### CHAPTER XXXII.

Fortune smiled upon Mrs. Hardcastle. She had got Tom Pembroke into her hands, which was a great matter. The designing old lady intended the young soldier to her when Vanity was attacked with smallpox, and he accepted the invitation. Maud was her excitement offering no objection. The Nevilles took refuge in a furnished house near to their own, which by good luck was vacant for a few weeks. Each day they dined with Mrs. Hardcastle, and in this way that dame was supplied with a variety of engines for forcing a way into Tom Pembroke's heart. This was the smile of Fortune.

But Fortune frowned even while she smiled. Mrs. Hardcastle perceived that Tom Pembroke was grown cautious. He politely shunned too frequent intercourses with Arabella. Mrs. Hardcastle, feeling positive that Maud had warned him, was excessively irate; but, with worldly prudence, she repressed her anger, and was not more disagreeable with Maud Neville than usual. She saw that the advantage lay on her side, and doubted not but that Tom Pembroke would be her son-in-law before the year was out.

On the 1st of December the Nevilles were back in their home. They had a family luncheon party, and the weather was so mild that they strolled out upon the lawn. Mrs. Hardcastle and Arabella and Tom Pembroke were there; and the old lady hoped that at last her grand scheme was about to be crowned with success. It was a pleasant strolling on that well-kept lawn.

Suddenly two figures rounded the evergreen shadowy; one was Sister Catherine; the other, though closely veiled, they all immediately knew to be Vanity Hardware. Tom Pembroke turned quite pale, and trembled; old Mrs. Hardcastle hustled off another way, and Maud Neville went to meet her visitor.

"I have brought this child to see you," the sister said. "She is going away with me next week."

Maud Neville came up to Vanity and caught her hands; so full was she of what the girl had done, and what she had lost, that her tears overflowed too fast for speech.

"Oh, Vanity, what can I say to you, my brave child? What can I say to you? If it were one's own loss, one might say: 'God's will be done!' How can I say it for you?"

"Maud," Sister Catherine said. "God's ways are not our ways. Look here."

Gently as a mother lifts a new-born infant's veil she raised the covering from Vanity's face, and there was all the beauty untouched, enhanced, it seemed, by the lingering pallor of her illness, and still more by the tears with which her eyes had filled in reply to Maud Neville's sympathy. She looked so lovely, so sweet, so chastened, that she might have sat for a picture of the Madonna.

"Oh, thank God!" warm-hearted Maud Neville called out, hardly knowing what she said. "Why did you not tell me before? But you were right; the surprise is best. vanity, I must be the first to kiss you!"

"Which she did, then gently holding Vanity back a little, she looked at her. "Not a trace," she cried, exulting, "not a trace!"

"There you are wrong," Vanity replied, a gleam of the old vivacity plazing over her tears; "there is one mark."

She showed the place on her left cheek—one tiny pit; and with yet another glimpse of her old self, said:

"Look here!"

And when she smiled the mark melted away into the daintiest dimple in the world, and she looked prettier than ever.

### CHAPTER XXXV.

After this Tom Pembroke fell in love with Vanity Hardware, head over ears, as plain folk say. Augustus Neville knew it. His sister Maud knew it. And the redoubtable Mrs. Hardcastle knew it.

And thus to make what was in action a long story appear in narrative as a very short story indeed, Tom Pembroke made up his mind to ask Vanity Hardware to marry him. He concealed nothing. He consulted Maud, he consulted Augustus; the two advised together, as husband and wife will. What motives led them to so surprising a decision we need not inquire. Both said, Ask her.

Vanity was a guest in the house of the Nevilles, and an orphan without a protector, they all agreed that to take her by surprise would be improper. So Maud Neville said she would acquaint her brother, and inquire if the proposal would be such as she would entertain. She spoke of her brother with affection and admiration, said a few words about his position and his home, and then wound up gracefully:

"After all, the important question for my brother now is not what his sister thinks of his merits, but how you regard them?"

Maud had scarcely looked at Vanity all this time; now raising her eyes, she saw that the actress was pale, agitated, and ready to burst into tears. Somehow this pleased Maud. There was no more feminine exultation about Vanity, nor any affected confusion. It was real feeling that was expressed in her face.

"Will you sit down?" Vanity said; for Maud had come into her guest's room, and was standing beside her. "Sit here, please. I have a great deal to say to you."

Maud sat down. Vanity walked over to the window, and settling herself on a high ottoman, and resting her face against the pane, said in a tone of solicitude:

"I wonder how I ought to begin. I like you. I shall speak freely to you."

"Thank you," Maud said. "You are very kind."

"Fifteen years ago I was a little sickly child, with a dying mother, who was, oh, so patient and good! Now she has been fifteen years an angel in heaven. And a father—oh, God, forgive me for what I was going to say. Living in concealment and solitude, I met a man who was struck by my beauty. He asked me, 'O, what a time that was! He asked me to all that heart could wish. He asked me to marry him. I warned him that I was not fit for him. He persisted. I yielded. I let him enter go. O, let me not think of that time any more. It was too wild in its daring dreams."

"All the rest I know, Vanity."

"Not all. Not the most dreadful part. Mrs. Neville, for weeks after I was with you my fixed resolution was, at all costs, to win that man's heart back, to revenge myself on the woman who had robbed me and blasted my future. I lived that wicked life over and over in my thoughts, and then the smallpox came. I believed that my face was hopelessly disfigured.

"Good-by," Vanity said. "I am so sorry for you. It will be dull here to-night."

"Miss Hardware," he said, for the first time in all that trying day losing his self-possession, "I once hoped that you—that and I never thought the hour would come when I should feel thankful that you refused. Now my misfortunes are mine alone."

Vanity hung her head. He could not see a feature of that downcast face. Only he held her hand lingeringly.

"I thought," said Vanity, almost in a whisper, "that when a man loves us he means to let us share his sorrows as well as his joys."

"Augustus," said Maud that night when they were in their own room, "how wonderfully Tom keeps up. At dinner he seems really in good spirits."

"He has no end of courage," Augustus remarked.

"Now, I wonder," Maud Neville said, drawing off her rings with a thoughtful air, "I wonder had Vanity Hardware anything to say to it?"

### CHAPTER XXVI.

Sixty-eight and five make seventy-three. When I wrote the last few lines my age was sixty-eight. This day is my seventy-third birthday. The whole signifies that all things come to an end; and happy the life that closes in mild sunshine like this October day!

In July this year, having a matter of a hundred pounds saved, and no one to leave it to, I thought to myself, I ought to take one more holiday before I lie down in the churchyard and draw the green coverlet over my poor old body for the long sleep. Accordingly, I packed my little matters up, took ticket past me to Ilfracombe, and stuck a notice on my door that Dr. Book would return in a fortnight from Ilfracombe.

Ocean's mighty power, which tosses the largest steamship as a toy, upbuds vast territories of sand only to destroy them again and thunders on a long shore, with all the violence of the heaven's artillery, is a pitiable spectacle of wasted energy. The mighty strength of Niagara is hardly as great as that of the waves on a hundred miles of sea-shore.

The problem involved is merely a mechanical one. You must find a machine which will rise and fall with the tide, and which will be so strong as to withstand the greatest force of the incoming breakers.

The swells of ocean which go to yonder past mile after mile of coast, and it went behind and vanished, a little girl of three years, I should say, dressed like real justice, just able to run on her feet, came to my side and looked up in my face.

"Well, little missy," I said, "what may your name be?"

She looked fixedly at me, as young children will, but never spoke. Then up came her mother, whom I had not seen before—a lady dressed beautifully—and she took the child's hand, and was smiling at me pleasantly, when—

"Bless me! Miss Hardware!" said I.

"Why?" exclaimed she, "you must be Dr. Book!"

Do you know, there and then she sat down beside me, and told me all about it. "My husband's name is Pembroke."

"Indeed!" I said, making believe to know nothing.

"And we live in New Zealand."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed I.

"And I have a baby beside—a little boy!" she said, almost like a child herself; "and we are so happy!"

Just then her husband walked by, a tall, handsome man, and he stopped and looked at me.

"This is," said his wife, "is an old friend of mine."

After a time he sat down beside me, just as affable as she; and while the mother played with the child, he told me so much that putting what I heard together with what I knew, "Why," thinks I, "he is the end of the novel put into my hand."

It may as well tell you all I learned then and at a later time. The good lady Sister Catherine had died, and left her property, which was comfortable, to Vanity Hardware for dowry; the bank failure had not been, after all, a complete break-up, for Mr. Pembroke had in the end secured five hundred a year; they were living in New Zealand, farming; and I may remark that I never in all my seventy-three years saw so happy a couple. I never saw a wife so proud of her husband, so happy and satisfied in his love. I never saw a husband, after four years of marriage, so unaffectedly a lover and admirer.

The steamer turned into the little harbor, and Mrs. Vanity Pembroke told me all following.

"My husband has a sister named Mrs. Neville, who has taken a house for the summer at Combe Martin, about six miles from here. We are going to stay with them."

And there, sure enough, was the carriage waiting at the landing place. Grand carriage enough, handsome horses, polished harness, coachman, footman, all as smart as you please. Nurse and baby got in; then dark-eyed beauty wife; next Mrs. Pembroke; then her husband. How handsome both looked—quite carriage company.

"Good-by, Dr. Book!" they both said; and I was raising my hat, and the horses were prancing away, when the strangest thing happened that I ever saw in my experience.

Mr. and Mrs. Snow were staying at Ilfracombe just then. Being still on friendly terms, William had kindly offered to meet me on my return and take me home to tea. Now, just as my hat was in the air to bid the grandfolk good-day, I saw the eyes of William Snow and Vanity meet. William had maintained an excellent character always, but I am bound to admit that he has grown rather stout, added to which he is not particularly stout in his shaving, and sometimes wears his collar more than one day; and when you meet him, as on this present occasion, on a hot summer evening after a hurried walk, he scarcely looks his best. He by no means suggests the idea of love in a summer lane among the wild roses.

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Now, if I could only describe the look of Vanity's face when she recognized him! There was nothing of pride in it, or anger, or contempt. Was it self-reproach? Was it sorrow? Was it—why, before I could collect myself, carriage and all had driven away.

Only, just as the carriage turned the corner, I observed Vanity put her hand into the hand of her husband and look up into his face. The light of the sunset was upon her, and I never saw her in full loveliness until that instant, when she vanished from my view forever.

William and myself went home to tea. I took the meeting with his former sweethearts tolerably cool; only he was curious to know how she got that fine carriage, and spoke politely when he heard of her marriage. Somehow Mrs. Snow seemed different to me that evening, her manner striking me as awkward, and her dress and appearance clumsy, though I had never noticed before. The tea table, too, was rather in a mess, and the children had been eating jam pretty freely. William was very hot, and what with his being somewhat drowsy the fire and his hand and collar as before, and his having also taken off his hat and put on a pair of carpet slippers, although things looked friendly, still, you observe, there was something of a contrast. After tea William put his legs upon two chairs, and had a nap.

(The end.)

### Pigmy Porkers.

Some specimens of the smallest known species of hogs are now quartered at the London zoological gardens.

They came from the desert regions of Australia and are known as "the pigmy hogs of the antipodes." They are well formed, frisky little porkers, the very largest and heaviest in the lot (which are all full grown) not being larger than a muskrat. These zoological curios are real hogs, and should be confounded with the so-called "Guinea pigs," which are a species of rodent.

### THE DOMAIN OF DISCOVERY.

#### POSSIBLE INVENTIONS THAT WILL VASTLY BENEFIT MANKIND.

##### Utilizing the Waves of Ocean Waters-A Storage Battery will Solve the Flying Machine Problem-Portable Refrigeration Wanted.

The new and wonderful photography which depicts the interior of solid objects and the discovery of argon, a hitherto unsuspected quality of the atmosphere, show that progress nowadays is steady and rapid in the physical sciences. There are several important discoveries now receiving the attention of scientists and experimenters, who, almost any day, may stumble upon the right solution of problems which will yield untold wealth to the discoverer and confer lasting benefits on mankind.

There is in the first place the vast problem of utilizing the force and power of the sea. The waves that break upon our Atlantic seaboard exert in a single day a greater force than all the steam engines of the United States combined.

Ocean's mighty power, which tosses the largest steamship as a toy, upbuds vast territories of sand only to destroy them again and thunders on a long shore, with all the violence of the heaven's artillery, is a pitiable spectacle of wasted energy.

The mighty strength of Niagara is hardly as great as that of the waves on a hundred miles of sea-shore.

The problem involved is merely a mechanical one. You must find a machine which will rise and fall with the tide, and which will be so strong as to withstand the greatest force of the incoming breakers.

The waves are smooth, and as we glide past mile after mile of coast, and it went behind and vanished, a little girl of three years, I should say, dressed like real justice, just able to run on her feet, came to my side and looked up in my face.

"Well, little missy," I said, "what may your name be?"

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The electrical storage battery is a machine upon whose discovery many other problems are waiting for solution.

The mechanism that would take the power from the waves would be uneven in its work, according as the sea was high or low, but with a proper storage battery the vast energy of a storm could be stored to make up for the inefficiencies of the succeeding calm.

When the ideal storage battery is discovered, the flying machine problem will be nearly solved. Men are prevented now from flying because the weight of the propelling engine they have to take along diminishes the lifting power and requires gas-bags, wings or aeroplanes too big to be practicable.

If you could take along the power of 1000 horses stored in a two-pound block of metal, releasing it as required, then flying would be within the reach of all. Practicable flying machines would revolutionize warfare, making it possible to drop dynamite on armies and men-of-war, so that forts would be useless and submarine vessels only would be safe. The latter also wait for the storage battery to be discovered.

An intense heat is also wanted. By this means the sand of the seashore could be melted into a cheap and excellent building material, easily handled before the melting and more permanent than any brick.

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