

SHIPS THAT PASS IN THE NIGHT.

BY BEATRICE HARRADEN

PART 1.—CHAPTER XIV.

CONCERNING THE CARETAKERS.

The doctors in Petershof always said that the caretakers of the invalids were a much greater anxiety than the invalids themselves. The invalids would either get better or die: one of two things probably. But not so with the caretakers: there was nothing they were not capable of doing—except taking reasonable care of their invalids! They either fussed about too much, or else they did not fuss about at all. They all began by doing the right thing, they all ended by doing the wrong. The fussy ones had fits of apoplexy; when the poor irritable patients seemed to get a little better, the negligent ones had paroxysms of attentiveness, when their invalids, accustomed to loneliness and neglect, seemed to become rather worse by being worried.

To remonstrate with the caretakers would have been folly: for they were well satisfied with their own methods.

To contrive their departure would have been an impossibility: for they were firmly convinced that their presence was necessary to the welfare of their charges. And then, too, judging from the way in which they managed to amuse themselves, they liked being in Petershof, though they never owned that to the invalids. On the contrary, it was the custom for the caretakers to depreciate the place, and to deplore the necessity which obliged them to continue there month after month. They were fond, too, of talking about the sacrifices which they made, and the pleasures which they willingly gave up in order to stay with their invalids. They said this in the presence of their invalids. And if the latter had told them by all means to pack up and go back to the pleasures which they had renounced, they would have been astonished at the ingratitude which could suggest the idea.

They were amusing characters, those caretakers. They were so thoroughly unconscious of their own deficiencies. They might neglect their own invalids, but they would look after other people's invalids, and play the nurse most soothingly and prettily where there was no call and no occasion. Then they would come and relate to their neglected dear ones what they had been doing for others, and the dear ones would smile quietly, and watch the buttons being stitched on for strangers, and the cornflour which they could not get nicely made for themselves, being carefully prepared for some other people's neglected dear ones.

Some of the dear ones were rather bitter. But there were many of the higher order of intelligence who seemed to realize that they had no right to be ill, and that being ill, and therefore a burden on their friends, they must make the best everything, and be grateful for what was given them, and patient when anything was withheld. Others of a still higher order of understanding attributed the eccentricities of the caretakers to one cause alone: the Petershof air. They knew it had the invariable effect of getting into the head, and upsetting the balance of those who drank deep of it. Therefore, no one was to blame, and no one need be bitter. But these were the philosophers of the colony: a select and dainty few in any colony. But there were several rebels amongst the invalids, and they found consolation in confiding to each other their separate grievances. They generally held their conferences in the rooms known as the newspaper-rooms, where they were not likely to be interrupted by any caretakers who might have stayed at home because they were tired out.

To-day there were only a few rebels gathered together, but they were more than usually excited, because the doctors had told several of them that their respective caretakers must be sent home.

"What must I do?" said little Mlle. Gerard, wringing her hands. "The Doctor says that I must tell my sister to go home; that she only worries me and makes me worse. He calls her a 'whirlwind.' If I won't tell her, then he will tell her, and we shall then have more scenes. Mon Dieu! and I am so tired of them. They terrify me. I would suffer anything rather than have a fresh scene. And I can't get her to do anything for me. She has no time for me. And yet she thinks she takes the greatest possible care of me, and devotes the whole day to me. Why sometimes I never see her for hours together."

"Well at least she does not quarrel with every one, as my mother does," said a Polish gentleman, M. Lichinsky. "Nearly every day she has a quarrel with some one or other, and then she comes to me and says she has been insulted. And other come to me mad with rage, and complain that they have been insulted by her. As though I were to blame! I tell them that now. I tell them that my mother's quarrels are not my quarrels. But one longs for peace. And the doctor says I must have it, and that my mother must go home at once. If I tell her that, she will have a tremendous quarrel with the doctor. As it is he will scarcely speak to her. So you see, Mademoiselle Gerard, that I, too, am in a bad plight. What am I to do?"

Then a young American spoke.

He had been getting gradually worse since he came to Petershof, but his brother, a bright, sturdy young fellow, seemed quite unconscious of the seriousness of his condition. "And what am I to do?" he asked pathetically. "My brother does not even think I am ill. He says I am to rouse myself and come skating and tobogganing with him. Then I tell him that the doctor says I must lie quietly in the sun. I have no one to take care of me, so I try to take care of myself, and then I am laughed at. It is bad enough to be ill; but it is worse when those who might help you a little won't even believe in your illness. I wrote home once and told them; but they tell me to rouse myself."

His cheeks were sunken, his eyes were leaden. There was no power in his voice, no vigor in his frame. He was just slipping quickly down the hill for want of proper care and understanding.

"I don't know whether I am much better off than you," said an English lady, Mrs. Bridgetower. "I certainly have a trained nurse to look after me, but she is altogether too much for me, and she does just as she pleases. She is always ailing or else pretends to be; and she is always depressed. She grumbles from eight in the morning till nine at night. I hear that she is cheerful with other people, but she never gives me the benefit of her brightness. Poor thing! She does feel the cold very much, but it's not very clearing to see her crouching near the stove, with arms almost clasping it! when she is not talking of her own looks, all she says is: 'Oh, if I had only not come to Petershof!' or 'Why did I ever leave that hospital in Manchester?' or 'The cold is eating into the very marrow of my bones.' At first she used to read to me; but it was such a dismal performance that I could not bear to hear her. Why don't I send her home? Well, my husband will not bear of me being alone, and he thinks I might do worse than keep Nurse Frances. And perhaps I might."

"I would give a good deal to have a sister like Fraulein Müller has," said little Fraulein Oberhof. "She came to look after me the other day when I was alone. She has the kindest way about her. But when my sister came in, she was not pleased to see Fraulein Sophie Müller with me. She does not do anything for me herself, and she does not like any one else to do anything either. Still she is very good to other people. She comes up from the theater sometimes at half-past nine—that is the hour when I am just sleepy—and she stamps about the room and makes cornflour for the old Polish lady. Then off she goes, taking with her the cornflour together with my sleep. Once I complained, but she said I was irritable. You say to yourself 'Will that cornflour never be made? It seems to take centuries!'

"One could be more patient if it were being made for oneself," said M. Lichinsky. "But at least, Fraulein, your sister does not quarrel with every one. You must be grateful for that mercy." Even as he spoke, a stout lady thrust herself into the reading-room. She looked very hot and excited. She was M. Lichinsky's mother. She spoke with a whirlwind of Polish words. It is sometimes difficult to know when these people are angry and when they are pleased. But there was no mistake about Mme. Lichinsky. She was always angry. Her son rose from the sofa, and followed her to the door. Then he turned round to his confederates, and shrugged his shoulders.

"Another quarrel!" he said hopefully.

CHAPTER XV.

WHICH CONTAINS NOTHING.

"You may have talent for other things," Robert Allitsen said one day to Bernardine, "but you certainly have no talent for photography. You have not made the slightest progress."

"I don't at all agree with you," Bernardine answered rather peevishly. "I think I am getting on very well."

"You are no judge," he said. "To begin with you cannot focus properly. You have a crooked eye. I have told you that several times."

"You certainly have," she put in. "You don't let me forget that."

"Your photograph of that horrid little danseuse whom you like so much, is simply abominable. She looks like a fury. Well, she may be one for all I know, but in real life she has not the appearance of one."

"I think that is the best photograph I have done," Bernardine said, highly indignant. "She could tolerate his uppishness about subjects of which she knew far more than he did; but his masterfulness about a subject of which she really knew nothing was more than she could bear with patience. He had not the tact to see that she was irritated."

"I don't know about it being the best," he said, "unless it is the best specimen of your inexperience. Looked at from that point of view, it does stand first."

She flushed crimson with temper.

"Nothing is easier than to make fun of others," she said fiercely. "It is the resource of the ignorant."

Then, after the fashion of angry women, having said her say, she stalked away. If there had been a door to bang, she would certainly have banged it. However, she did what she could under the circumstances; she pushed a curtain roughly aside, and passed into the concert room, where every night of the season's six months, a scratchy string orchestra entertained the Kurhaus guests. She left the Disagreeable Man in the passage.

"Dear me," he said thoughtfully. And he stroked his chin. Then he trudged slowly up to his room.

"Dear me," he said once more.

Arrived in his bedroom, he began to read. But after a few minutes he shut his book, took the lamp to the looking glass and brushed his hair. Then he put on a black coat and a white silk tie. There was a speck of dust on the coat. He carefully removed that, and then extinguished the lamp.

On his way down stairs he met Marie, who gazed at him in astonishment. It was quite unusual for him to be seen again when he had come up from table-d'hôte. She noticed the black coat and the white silk tie, too, and reported on these eccentricities to her colleague Anna.

The Disagreeable Man meanwhile had reached the Concert Hall. He glanced around, and saw where Bernardine was sitting, and then chose a place in the opposite direction, quite by himself. He looked somewhat like a dog who had been well beaten. Now and again he looked up to see whether she still kept her seat. The bad music was a great irritation to him. But he stayed on heroically. There was no reason why he should stay. Gradually, too, the audience began to thin. Still he lingered, always looking like a dog in punishment.

At last Bernardine rose, and the Disagreeable Man rose too. He followed her humbly to the door. She turned and saw him.

"I am sorry I put you in a bad temper," he said. "It was stupid of me."

"I am sorry I got into a bad temper," she answered, laughing. "It was stupid of me."

"I think I have said enough to apologize," he said. "It is a process I dislike very much."

And with that wished her good-night and went to his room.

But that was not the end of the matter, for the next day when he was taking his breakfast with her, he of his own accord returned to the subject.

"It was partly your own fault that I vexed you last night," he said. "You have never before been touchy, and so I have been accustomed to saying what I choose. And it is not in my nature to be flattering."

"That is a very truthful statement of yours," she said, as she poured out her coffee. "But I own I was touchy. And so I shall be again if you make such cutting remarks about my photographs."

"You have a crooked eye," he said grimly. "Look there, for instance! You have poured your coffee outside your cup. Of course you can do as you like, but the usual custom is to pour it inside the cup."

They both laughed, and the good understanding between them was cemented again.

"You are certainly getting better," he said suddenly. "I should not be surprised if you were able to write a book after all. Not that a new book is wanted. There are too many books as it is; and not enough people to dust them. Still, it is not probable that you would be considered enough to remember that. You will write your book."

Bernardine shook her head.

"I don't seem to care, now," she said. "I think I could now be content with a quieter and more useful part."

"You will write your book," he said. "Now listen to me. Whatever else you may do, don't make your characters hold long conversations with each other. In real life people do not talk four pages at a time without stopping. Also, if you bring together two clever men, don't make them talk cleverly. Clever people do not. It is only the stupid ones who think they must talk cleverly all the time. And don't detain your reader too long; if you must have a sunset let it be a short one. I could give you many more hints which would be useful to you."

"But why not use your own hints for yourself?" she suggested.

"That would be selfish of me," he said solemnly. "I want you to profit by them."

"You are learning to be unselfish at a very rapid rate," Bernardine said.

At that moment Mrs. Refford came into the breakfast-room, and, seeing Bernardine, gave her a stiff bow.

"I thought you and Mrs. Refford were such friends," Robert Allitsen said.

Bernardine then told him of her last interview with Mrs. Refford.

"Well, if you feel uncomfortable, it is as it should be," he said. "I don't see what business you had to point out to Mrs. Refford her duty. I dare say she knows it quite well, though she may not choose to do it. I am sure I should resent it, if any one pointed out my duty to me. Everyone knows his own duty. And it is his own affair whether or not he heeds it."

"I wonder if you are right," Bernardine said. "I never meant to presume; but her indifference had exasperated me."

"Why should you be exasperated about other people's affairs?" he said. "And why interfere at all?"

"Being interested is not the same

as being interfering," she replied quickly.

"It is difficult to be the one with out being the other," he said. "It requires a genius. There is a genius for being sympathetic as well as a genius for being good. And geniuses are few."

"But I knew one," Bernardine said. "There was a friend to whom in the first days of my trouble I turned for sympathy. When others only irritated, she could soothe. She had only to come into my room and all was well with me."

There were tears in Bernardine's eyes as she spoke.

"Well," said the Disagreeable Man kindly, "and where is your genius now?"

"She went away, she and hers," Bernardine said. "And that was the end of that chapter."

"Poor little child," he said, half to himself. "Don't I, too, know something of the ending of such a chapter?"

But Bernardine did not hear him; she was thinking of her friend. She was thinking, as we all think, that those to whom in our suffering we turn for sympathy, become hallowed beings. Saints they may not be; but for want of a better name, saints they are to us, gracious and lovely presences. The great time Eternity, the great space Death, could not rob them of their sainthood; for they were canonized by our bitterest tears.

She was aroused from her reverie by the Disagreeable Man, who got up, and pushed his chair noisily under the table.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

FROM MOUNTAIN TO PLAIN.

Modern Civilization Brings This Change in Human Habitation.

In describing the picturesque rock-bound Italian cities between Sorrento and Amalfi, in the July number of the *Century*, Marion Crawford says:

It sometimes seems as though modern civilization tended, broadly speaking, to transfer life from the mountains to the plains, leaving behind just what we are pleased to call romance. In other days no man, as a rule, built in plain or valley when he could possibly build on a hill. Now, no one who can dwell in the plains takes the trouble to live on the top of the mountain, unless for some very particular reason. The security that once lay in stone walls and iron bars is now sought in strategic position and in earthworks. There are no small, daily dangers in our time against which man barricades himself in towers, and behind iron-studded doors of oak. The great perils of our age are few, far between, and general. Military power once meant an agglomeration of desperate individuals devoted to a common cause, bad or good, not one of whom could find a place in the well ordered, unceasing, and mechanically obedient ranks of a modern conqueror's army.

The more we live in plains the less we can understand the hills; the more systematically we obey laws and regulations having for their object the greatest good of the greatest number, the less able are we to understand the reasoning of such men as Alaric, Tancred, Caesar, Borgia, Goncalvo de Cordova, or Garibaldi.

It is singular that while most intelligent people undoubtedly prefer the conditions of modern civilization for their daily life, they should by preference also like to dream of the times when civilization was still unrealized, and of lives lived in circumstances against which modern communities revolt. These are machine-made times; those were hand-made; and true art is manual, not mechanical.

A Modern Bath-Room.

Harper's Bazaar.

A recent description of a bath-room in a grand American house shows how people of taste transform rooms devoted to the humblest uses into bower of beauty.

The floor is paved with mosaic, and there is no tub, the bath being simply a sunken space about three feet in depth in one corner. This is walled with marble, railed with bronze, and marble steps lead to it.

The walls are covered with ten-inch-square tiles, painted by an American artist with a design of waves, fishes, and other objects suggesting the sea, and above this frieze, a trellis wreathed with vines.

In many houses the bath-room is often regarded entirely from a utilitarian point of view; and while it is true that absolute cleanliness and hygienic plumbing are the chief considerations, beauty should also be aimed at here as in any other room of the house.

The plumbing should be arranged after the approved modern methods in which all the pipes are exposed, and the bath if possible should be of porcelain, which in the end is cheaper than the metal ones.

The floor, if tiling is too expensive should be of parquet or stained wood, with only one long rug, which may be easily taken up at the weekly cleaning, and glazed tile paper, which comes in many pretty designs should cover the walls.

It is well to have the wall below the cornice divided into two portions the upper covered with tile paper, and the lower painted with soap-stone finish, which is entirely waterproof, and may, like the paper, be washed off with a sponge.

Jean Ingelow spends a great part of the year in the south of France, where she has a cottage.

TOPICS OF THESE TIMES.

AN ELECTRIC AGE.

Twenty-five years ago scientists boasted of the wonderful progress of the "Iron Age" with all its attendant triumphs on land and sea. A few brief years and the wonders of that day were supplanted by the greater triumphs of an "Age of Steel." Iron was relegated to the junk heaps of a forgotten past and hardened steel came in to fill its place in all the arts and structures of the time. While it is true that steel still holds its place as a component part of almost every triumph of the day, yet its importance has, by familiarity, waned in the public esteem and it no longer holds or claims to hold the first place as a factor in the industrial development of the age. Every detail of our progress now seems to hinge upon the further development of applied electricity, and the possibilities in this direction warrant us in calling our day and time "The Electric Age." Electric street cars have already become familiar in almost every large city in the world, and every month brings intelligence of some new achievement of electrical engineers. Great suburban electric railway schemes are daily projected and assurance given that they will speedily materialize and change the course of urban development, weaning and luring the tired denizens of the metropolis to scenes of beauty and dreams of peace and quiet. No more, when these schemes eventually need the troubled business man dwell amid the arid wastes of giant towers where he daily toils, but when the day is done can speed away to villages far from the hateful crowd. The great north shore project at Chicago will transform all that territory between Chicago and Milwaukee along the lake shore into a prolonged stretch of happy homes, and the gigantic electric system, now well under way, with a capital of \$10,000,000, between Philadelphia and New York, will bring into the closest communication all the intervening territory tributary to those gigantic municipalities on the eastern seaboard. Trains on all these roads will run at a rate of not less than sixty miles an hour, and with the capital at command it would seem that there can be no doubt of the speedy realization of the wildest dreams of enthusiasts on the subject of an "Electric Age