

MISS CARRUTHERS' ENGAGEMENT.

BY "THE SECOND."

LITTLE Mrs. Baynton stood at the library window industriously twisting the silk cord of her morning robe into a very Chinese puzzle of a knot, and her "particular" friend, Miss Georgine Carruthers, sat on a low chair at her side, making another Chinese puzzle (or, at least, something very like it) of scarlet wool with an ivory crochet needle. A slender, stately girl, this same Miss Carruthers (who, playing the part of heroine, of course needs particular description), with large, heavily-fringed brown eyes, and a crown of amber hair, a girl with a little haughty curve on her velvet mouth, and a slightly *superbe* manner of holding her white neck. In disposition, warm-hearted and affectionate. A great favorite with her own sex, though not a "sweet young lady" in the common acceptance of the term. By this I mean, one of the sweet young ladies of the present day, who, so wisely averse to wasting their saccharine properties on the desert air, dispose of them to so much advantage, lending them out at interest, as it were, cooing and lavishing endearments on each other, in public, in a manner which, to persons of Mephistophelian temperament, might appear to insinuate an excess of amiability. Certainly not of this class my brown-eyed heroine; on the contrary, a little too apt, in her reserve, to impress one coldly; nevertheless, the tenderness and warmth were there, and her lady friends, speaking of her, gave it as their unanimous opinion that Georgie was a darling, and—mark this, oh, my reader—had such good taste! Among the sterner sex, conflicting as this may seem with my last statement, the superb Carruthers was universally popular, of course. Why not? Was she not beautiful, stylish, accomplished, and—mark also this, sagacious reader—was there not quite a desirable row of figures fronting her name on the records of that excellent and worthy institution—the "three per cents"?

By Mrs. Baynton, Georgie was looked upon as perfect; by Georgie, Mrs. Baynton was regarded as without a flaw; which state of affairs, considering the weaknesses of humanity, all must admit could not fail to be highly conducive to a state of comfort and amiability. In one thing only were they unlike, though both were too well bred to make it a point of difference. Miss Carruthers was English, "blue-blooded," "came over with the Conqueror," etc.; Mrs. Baynton, American, had a profound contempt for great-grandmothers; was, in fine, the most patriotically democratic of all democratic little patriots, though at the time of our story spending the summer on the wooden walled island, at a country-seat of which the death of a distant relative had left them the fortunate possessors. Enough of this, however.

For a few moments the before-mentioned

puzzle-making went on undisturbed; suddenly Mrs. Baynton broke the silence. "Georgie, do drop that scarlet abomination and talk a little, like a darling!"

"One, two, three, four," said Miss Carruthers, industriously intent on the Chinese curiosity; "just a minute, dear, and then—but I am in such a tiresome part!"

Mrs. Baynton looked disconsolate, but waited until the tiresome part seemed to be conquered, and the taper little hands, still however holding the "scarlet abomination," rested on her friend's lap.

"Well, dear," she said, "is it anything very particular?"

Mrs. Baynton seated herself in the deep window. "Not very particular; but I have just been reminded of an old friend, and I thought I would ask you to guess who it is."

"I think you had better tell me at once, Gertrude, I feel lazy."

"But it won't require any effort; think of a particular gentleman friend of yours who has been abroad for some time."

Georgie looked reflective. "Ah! now I know; it is that dear old Doctor Highlander, who went to—I forget where—but some dreadfully hot or cold place."

"To India it was, but not Doctor Highlander; some one who went abroad with him."

"If it was not Doctor Highlander, I can't guess, I am sure. Some one who went with him?—there were so many—the whole of the Fourth, you know. Was it Charlie Thorne? Ensign Seymour? Captain Poyser? Captain Lathbury? I think you had better tell me, Ger," and, apparently foiled at guessing, Miss Carruthers fell back on the Chinese curiosity.

"I think I had," laughed Ger, "if I may judge from your success in suggesting every one but the right person. I wonder you should have forgotten, Georgie. What do you think of Captain Standish?"

Miss Carruthers' head was bent over her work, and she seemed so much interested in it that, for a moment, she did not say what she thought of Captain Standish, and when she spoke, her words were strangely mingled with the number of her stitches. Such is the effect of crochet on a woman's mind.

"Captain Standish, did you say, dear? one, two, three; don't you think this is pretty? four, five, six."

"Yes, to both questions," said Mrs. Baynton, tossing her tassels in the air and catching them again. "Now you wonder why you did not guess, don't you?"

Georgie looked up, her face expressing lady-like surprise. "I do not see why I should think of Captain Standish before any other gentleman; besides, you said a 'particular friend of mine,' and you know Captain Standish was not—was not"—

"Oh!" said Ger; "oh! Captain Standish

was not—was not"—Then in a little gust of indignation, which was quite refreshing: "Georgie Carruthers, are you an accomplished flirt, or a consummate hypocrite?"

"I am sure I don't profess to be either," was the quiet answer.

"Profess! of course you don't; nobody expects you to, but you lay yourself open to the inference. It is almost a proverb that no one can read a woman's heart but a woman, and here am I, one woman, and you another, and I know no more of your heart than I do of the Grand Mogul's; and you pretend to be an affectionate girl, and my particular confidential friend, too;" and Mrs. Baynton looked injured, which you will find, my dear reader, is the way of these sweet women when they wish to get at a secret.

One thing the little lady understood: the secret of managing her friend, for the "particular's" tone was quite deprecatory when she made her defence.

"How can you be so unkind, Ger? I am sure you ought not to complain of want of confidence on my part. I do not see where you have got this absurd fancy about Captain Standish, unless Fred suggested it."

"Fred did not suggest it, and I am sure if you did not admire Lionel Standish, you flirted with him shamefully. Why, Georgie, you know during the whole of the summer, at Thanet, he was your most constant cavalier; you were always either waltzing, riding, or sentimentalizing with him, and the last night he stayed there, I was almost certain"—Here she ceased, in a little confused irresolution whether to end her sentence or not.

Was it the shade of the crimson curtain which colored Miss Carruthers' cheek so vividly? If so, its reflection was certainly a very bright one; still, if emotion had been anything to blame for this sudden brilliancy, her tone could hardly have been as composedly dignified as it was.

"Well, dear, I am very sorry I did not get up a grand admiration for your favorite; but as that was out of the question, I think it is hardly necessary for us to quarrel about it, so suppose you tell me what reminded you of the handsome captain." In this there was the faintest possible tinge of the superb Carruthers, and Mrs. Baynton, having sufficient tact to understand this little tournament of words was decisively concluded, with infinite discernment surrendered at discretion.

"Fred told me," she said, "that the Fourth had returned from India, and Captain Standish of course with them. I do not know whether you read the war returns during the war; if you did, of course you know how highly they speak of his bravery. Fred tells me all the papers are full of it. What suggested the idea to me, was the fact that he and several of his

fellow officers have accepted our invitation to join our party here."

Miss Carruthers was glad to hear it; it would be quite a pleasant addition to the Trafford assembly. "When were the gentlemen expected?"

"To-night! in fact we hope to see at least some of them at dinner. Ah! there is Rose Chetwynd on the lawn. I must send for her; if I am not mistaken, this news will interest her," and, ringing the bell, Mrs. Baynton ordered the servant who obeyed the summons to ask Miss Chetwynd, if she was not particularly employed, to step into the library.

A few moments afterwards there came a soft tap at the door, and, in answer to Mrs. Baynton's gentle "Come in, dear," a sweet little seventeen-year-old, with a pink and white face, a pink and white dress, and a bouquet of pink and white roses, entered the room, and after kissing Ger, and acknowledging Georgie's rather cool, but still very polite, "Good-morning, Miss Chetwynd," with a timid bow and smile, seated herself on a low seat between them.

"I have been to the rosary," she said, in just the bird-like little voice one could not help but expect to hear, "and Bates gave me these roses; are they not beautiful?" appealing timidly to Miss Carruthers, who replied with a smile which was rather too dignified to be strictly enthusiastic.

The pink little lady seemed rather awe-stricken, for she was quite rose-colored when she made her next essay: "Do let me share them with you."

"Thank you, I will not deprive you of your flowers."

"Oh, it will be no deprivation. I have plenty; do take some, dear Miss Carruthers," and the flowers were divided and handed to her with such a shy, pleading look that "dear Miss Carruthers" was fain to be gracious and receive them with thanks.

Rose seemed relieved, and, rising from her seat, began to arrange the remains of her floral treasure in the vases on the side-table. "I am going to decorate your room for you, Mrs. Baynton, and then I intend to talk to you until you are tired and send me away."

"You will have to talk a long time, then," said Gertrude, affectionately; "but I have some news to tell you; you are going to see an old flame, again."

Rose turned with a start, a very rose in color, but, meeting a pair of brown eyes fixed inquiringly on her, busied herself with her flowers, and Georgie rose, saying:—

"I have a slight headache, Ger; if you will excuse me, I will go and try to sleep it off before I dress for dinner."

"Certainly; but why did you not mention it before? I ought to have noticed how pale

you look. I will send Lorlotte to you with some sal volatile and water."

"Thank you, but I would rather not take any. I shall be better directly," and Miss Carruthers left the room.

Any one entering an hour afterward would have found Rose kneeling, with happy face and tearful eyes, before her friend, who was saying, evidently in comment on some story she had just heard, "And so your troubles are ended, at last, and, like all other heroines, you will 'live happily together ever afterwards.'"

Rose hid her face with a shy little laugh. "But to think," she said, "that I owe my happiness to that great, grand Captain Standish, who used to frighten me so! If it had been Miss Carruthers—but *me!*" and she opened her blue eyes in such pretty wonder at her own unworthiness, that Mrs. Baynton, being an impulsive little lady in general, felt called upon to kiss her at least sixty times on the spot.

It was seven o'clock; the great drawing-rooms at Trafford were crowded with company, and carriages were still rolling up the drive; for this was one of Mrs. Baynton's dinner evenings, and each vehicle brought its cargo of dignified papas, stately mammas, stylish young hopefuls, with long pedigrees and moustaches, and pretty, elegant girls, enjoying their rustication and recruiting themselves for next season's flirtations.

Several of the Fourth's officers had arrived, as was expected, per six o'clock train, and though, as yet, only a few were on the field, their appearance had produced such an effect on the ladies assembled as to reduce almost to a state of frenzy one or two of even the most eligible of the above mentioned eligibles, who, being civilians, could not fail to lose ground among the moustached heroes of Delhi and Cawnpoor. More especially had interest been awakened, in the minds of the bright-eyed damsels, concerning the lion of the evening (who had not yet given his introductory roar), the brave Captain Standish, who was spoken of, by brothers, as a jolly good fellow, by papas, as worthy of the name of his ancestors, and by military uncles, as "a brave fellow, by Jove, sir, and a good soldier."

At an open window, the envied possessor of a magnificently developed specimen of the genus hero, stood Rose Chetwynd, in a crisp silk of her favorite pink, and with bare white arms and shoulders, looking prettier, more childish, and, if possible, more pink and white than ever. "And Captain Standish," she said, when their light chat ceased for a moment, "how is it he is not here?"

"I do not know," was the answer. "I left him at the hotel, suffering from a bad headache, and blue, to boot. I expect him every moment, though."

As he finished speaking there was a slight

movement at the door, and the object of discussion entering, for several minutes nothing was heard but the warm welcomes and earnest congratulations of the old friends who had known him before his Indian campaign.

The eligibles, neglected before, were now snubbed in a manner which, towards the end of the evening, led to several extremely interesting lovers' quarrels; and the captain, happy man, passed from group to group, laughing, chatting, and shaking hands with crowds of elegant, fair-faced girls, who greeted him smilingly as an old friend or a desirable acquaintance.

Pretty Rose Chetwynd watched him from her place by the window, glancing shyly from under her long lashes, almost unconscious of the admiring looks and complimentary speeches of her companion, who, when at last the tall captain approached, made an immediate surrender to that formidable party, and proceeded to renew an acquaintance with a bright-eyed young lady who seemed glad to see him, and certainly did not ask him to play the uninteresting part of "second violinist."

For a moment—only a moment—Rose did not speak; then the words came in a low, almost tearful voice. "O Captain Standish! I—What must I say to you?"

He took both her hands in his and held them. "Poor Rose," he said, kindly, "what a sad little girl you must have been to write such sorrowful letters. I could hardly believe it was the gay little playmate Charlie Thorne used to talk about; but it is all over now, is it not?"

Rose lifted her bright face for a moment, and the captain seemed to be satisfied, for he made no more inquiries into the subject.

"I miss one person I thought to see here to-night," he said, during a slight break in the conversation that followed.

Rose looked up inquiringly.

"It is that stately Miss Carruthers, who was such a belle at Thanet."

"I wonder you should have overlooked *her*," said Miss Chetwynd; "do you not see her standing beneath the chandelier talking to some gentlemen?"

The captain turned in the direction pointed. At one of the side-tables, the bright light of the chandelier shining on her trailing dress of sea-green silk and glittering on the pretty, womanly absurdities of pearl and gold in her yellow hair, stood Georgie Carruthers. For a moment there was a strange look, half admiration, half pain, in the dark eyes that regarded her so steadfastly, then their owner turned, with a pleasant laugh, "Ah! I see the superb Carruthers has lost none of her beauty; suppose you come and help me to renew the acquaintance. If I remember rightly, you are a great favorite of hers."

Rose's bow was perhaps a trifle equivocal,

but the captain did not seem to notice it, and, offering her his arm, made his way across the room to the group at the side-table. For a few minutes they stood unnoticed, those who composed the party being too much interested in the photographic collection they were examining to observe their approach. Georgie, holding in her hand a picture she had taken from the table, was listening, with evident interest, to the criticisms of one of the connoisseurs.

"I cannot say I do," she said, Captain Standish judged in answer to some previous remark; "I think the picture in itself is good, but I do not admire the painter's choice of subject."

"Do you know, Miss Carruthers," said Fred Baynton, who was one of the number, "I have often thought I should like to have your opinion on this subject; may we not hear what you have to say about it?"

"I never noticed it before, and now I think it looks hardly natural."

"That is my opinion," said Mr. Baynton; "still, the story it tells is a true one, if we are to believe the Trafford chronicles."

Georgie looked interested. "I never heard that before; won't you tell me, Mr. Baynton?"

"It is soon told," was the answer. "Ger found both picture and history in some old corner or other. I believe the heroine was one of the grim women in the picture gallery. The story runs thus: that, having doubts of the truth of her lover, this same lady followed him in his travels in the guise of a page, for the purpose of watching him, and found him faithful too late; for, on discovering her sex and identity, the haughty Saxon refused to acknowledge her as his betrothed, saying, that the woman who distrusted him as a lover, would despise him as a husband; and it is when she returns, for the last time, to plead for forgiveness, that the painter has immortalized her."

"And did he forgive her?" said Captain Standish, giving the first intimation of his presence.

Fred looked astonished. "I had no idea you were there, Standish," he said; "come into the enchanted circle. Miss Carruthers, I do not think you have spoken to your old friend to-night."

Georgie turned towards him, her eyes shining like stars, cheeks and lips like the crimson heart of a rose, and offered her hand with a polite little speech of congratulation, and, for a time, the picture was forgotten in elegant commonplaces.

It seemed, however, not to be fated to rest here, for the bystanders, dropping one by one into the general crowd, the two were left to themselves, and, being thrown on their own resources, were forced to fall back on the grim woman.

The captain took the picture from the table.

"My question has not been answered yet," he said. "Did he forgive her?"

"I am not quite certain," was the rather cold reply; "but I believe not."

"And do you think he was right?"

"I do not think she was."

"In what?"

"In kneeling for forgiveness in the presence of his vassals. I do not profess to be a judge of the proprieties, but such a position seems to me to be too humiliating to be either womanly or delicate."

A while he was silent, then gave his answer with eyes steadily fixed on her face. "And yet," he said, "in her woman's power, she offered him the keenest possible insult in her simple distrust of him. Do you know, Miss Carruthers, I think a woman who has not perfect faith, can never hold much love in her heart. Do you not agree with me?"

Georgie's lip curved scornfully. "Certainly, in many instances, it is my opinion faith, perfect to blindness, is necessary to preserve even common respect, and perhaps the heroine of this story thought herself wronged."

"But still it would have been better to have trusted him a little longer, or at least to have given him an honorable trial, would it not"—there was a moment's pause, then he added, lowly—"Georgie?" lingering on the name as a thirsty man might linger over his first delicious draught of water.

The splendid eyes flashed up to his, blazing, but steady. "I think, Captain Standish," she said, "this woman must have thought that, in her case, as in many others, there was no doubt."

Fred Baynton was sitting in the library, book in hand. Not reading, however, but enjoying the beauty of the morning and the comforts around him, in his own peculiar fashion, which consisted in lounging back on his chair, closing his eyes and thinking of nothing. Presently, without any warning, the door opened and a shining brown head peeped into the room; it belonged to Mrs. Baynton.

"If you are not busy, Fred. Oh! I can come in, can't I?" and, without waiting for an answer, she closed the door and took a seat on the arm of his chair, with a very sober face. "Fred, I want to ask your advice about something."

Fred was quite equal to giving advice on any subject.

"Well, it was about Georgie. Hadn't he noticed anything lately?"

Perhaps this was a trifle ambiguous, but Fred was a man, and, accordingly, trying to look mysteriously knowing, by way of insinuating sagacity, made such a decided failure that, it was glaringly evident, in this instance, at least, his information had its limits.

Of course, asking pardon for wandering from

the subject, men are very well for doing great works with their hands—and with their heads, too, sometimes; but in such small matters as “noticing,” as Mrs. Baynton put it, they are sadly at fault. Observe a man and a woman in their different manner of studying character and reading hearts. How quickly and quietly does the little domestic diplomatist work out the true state of affairs; with what a wonderful complication of missteps and false hits does the mistaken masculine blunder to the secret; often, in his clumsy endeavors to do good, entangling all parties concerned in almost hopeless confusion. In these things I am reminded, somewhat, of a sportsman and the sharp-eared, light-footed little grayhound that accompanies him, scenting out the track, following it, and finally bringing the game to his master's feet; whereupon Nimrod, with strength and gun, takes possession, going home and saying, triumphantly, “See the game I have bagged!” Well, perhaps he did bag it, but what about Beppo? He gets the bones to pick and no share in the credit of the day's sport; and it is my private opinion, if he says nothing, it is because he thinks the more.

It being evident that Fred had not been making good use of his perceptive faculties, Mrs. Baynton proceeded to enlighten him.

“Fred, don't you remember that summer at Thanet, two years ago?”

Yes, he remembered that.

“And don't you recollect what good friends Georgie and Lionel Standish used to be, and how sure we were they were engaged?”

A sort of light broke into Fred's rather mystified countenance. “By Jove! yes,” he said.

Up to this moment Mrs. Baynton had been very quiet, but now all her calmness seemed to forsake her.

“O Fred!” with something that sounded quite like a sob; “I believe—I am sure—they were engaged, and that something has happened to part them; and Georgie is so proud, she would die before she would acknowledge it, and, O Fred! just think if it were you and I!”—

Mr. Banyton looked troubled, for in his heart, also, as in his wife's, our aristocratic little heroine had a large share.

“What near-sighted fellows we men are,” he said; “here I have been living with these two people for the last three weeks, and, until it was pointed out to me, could see nothing wrong; but perhaps it is not as bad as you think, dear?”

“But they never speak to each other when they can help it, and you know how it was at Thanet.”

“Perhaps they have ceased to care for each other.”

Mrs. Baynton looked indignant. “I know them both too well for that; it is no fickleness which separates them. I believe it is some

dreadful mistake Georgie has construed into an insult, she is so cold and stately.”

“Well, I don't see how I can help you, Ger, willing as I am. You see it wouldn't do for me to pump either of them, I should be sure to make some grand blunder or other; so suppose we let it rest, for awhile, and see how things go on.”

“Yes, and let ‘things,’ as you call them, get worse and worse every day. In a few weeks Captain Standish will leave, and they will be parted perhaps forever, and my poor darling”—Here Mrs. Baynton's remarks were abruptly brought to a close by the entrance of the captain himself, cigar in hand.

“Mayn't I come in, Mrs. Baynton,” he said, “and finish my weed? I know you don't object to smoking, and I am perfectly harmless; my only misfortune being that I don't know what to do with myself. Every one is at present violently interested in the croquet lawn, so, you see, there is no one to amuse me; even my own special and peculiar little Miss Chetwynd having gone over to the enemy,” and the captain threw himself lazily into a chair.

“Did you say every one was playing croquet?” asked Ger.

“I should think so, judging from the amount of muslin on the lawn. By the way, Mrs. Baynton, how do you manage to collect such a number of pretty girls together?”

“Oh, by a sort of magnetic attraction; but who do you think reigns belle this season, Captain Standish?”

To whom the captain would have awarded the apple is uncertain, for, as he was about to speak, the door opened, and Miss Carruthers entered, work in hand. Miss Carruthers, cool, dignified, and beautiful, in a delicate robe of sea-green muslin, and with little clusters of flame-colored geraniums at her slender throat and clinging to her amber hair.

If it were possible for Miss Carruthers to so far lose her-self-possession, I should certainly say that for a moment she looked both embarrassed and irresolute. It was only for a moment, however; then she stepped forward with a bow for the captain, and a bright smile for her friend. “Ger,” she said, as she took a seat, “I am coming to bore you again. I don't know whether I am really stupid, but I have got my work into what seems to me inextricable confusion.”

Fred rose from his chair, it is my opinion, in obedience to a matrimonial telegram. “Ladies,” he said, “if you will excuse me, I will go and superintend the unfortunates on the croquet ground,” and with a bow left the room.

Ger took the work and carefully inspected it, carrying on a little stream of pleasant chat the while. “I thought I was the only lady croquet proof, Georgie, but it seems I was mistaken. I had to call in the captain to entertain me, or I should have been quite desolate.”

Miss Carruthers, leaning back in her chair, politely oblivious of the captain's presence, laced the crimson wool through her slender fingers. "I have been playing a little, but I got tired, so I thought I would come and sit with you, before dinner. Thank you, dear; how nicely you have arranged it," bending forward and taking the work.

"Now, Captain Standish," said Mrs. Baynton, "there is a perfectly Herculean task before you. You are called upon to entertain two ladies who are deeply involved in the mysteries of crochet, so if we break in occasionally with an inopportune one, two, and three, you must excuse us."

Whether the task was Herculean or not, the captain did not seem to be afraid of it; and, for the next hour, certainly proved himself quite equal to its performance, laughing, chatting, and smoking (this last in accordance to Georgie's expressed wish), all at once, only stopping now and then to watch the swift, white fingers and beautiful face before him. Watching them, not furtively, but with calm, steady eyes, that more than once almost upset the Carruthers dignity.

At last, by some mysterious turn or other, the conversation wandered off to a certain flirtation which was being carried on under the eyes of the Trafford guests. The parties were an engaged young lady and a former lover, and Georgie, with womanly severity, condemned, in quite a spirited manner, the young lady's faithlessness to her betrothed.

"I do not know much about these things myself," she said; "and I don't doubt that Beatrice may have loved Mr. Montieth—indeed, may love him still—but I think she ought to remember her position with regard to Mr. Elgerner."

The captain had been listening to the ladies' comments for some time; at this he spoke again. "But what about poor Charlie? Perhaps, with him, it is the old story of 'never forgotten,' Miss Carruthers."

She did not even glance at him, but, with her rare scarlet lip curved downward, gave her answer scornfully: "Never forgotten! You have a strange faith in humanity, Captain Standish. That is a phrase I never hear made use of without a slight feeling of contempt."

The captain took the cigar from his lips and knocked the ashes from it, his mouth taking hard, stern lines the while; but, when he spoke, his words were not what one would have expected, looking at the man's face. "Ah!" he said, "then you do not believe in love's memory as implicitly as some people. Are you as sceptical as your friend Mrs. Baynton?"

Georgie rose, gathering her work in her hand. "No," she said, emphatically, as she left the room, "I do not believe in love's memory; sometimes I am almost tempted to doubt the existence of love itself."

Ger looked up from her embroidery, bright eyes and pretty mouth most decidedly expressive of surprise. "What are you two always quarrelling about? You are never together half an hour without one or the other making a dignified exit."

"I do not know that we quarrel, but there are some subjects on which Miss Carruthers and I always clash."

"Yes, and that horrid love is one of them. I shall begin to think you had a serious difference connected with it at some time."

"Perhaps you will not be mistaken."

Gertrude turned quickly to look at him, and in the glance she caught of his pale, stern face read at least the preface of a story. She had thought she partly understood his cold indifference and Georgie's cynical pride, but still something puzzled her. "Can I be right?" she asked herself. "Has there been a lovers' quarrel between them in by-gone times, or is it some little womanly pique Georgie cannot forget?" But a second glance at Standish's face told her it was not a slight difference, but a bitter pain, such as might darken a man's life, and then her heart gave a quick throb as she thought how almost utterly impossible it was for her, with all her willingness, to help those two she loved so well. Awhile she sat full of sadness, then she rose and crossed to the window, laying one soft hand on Lionel's arm, and looking up at him with sweet eyes full of womanly tears.

"I do not know," she said, falteringly, "whether I am right in speaking to you on this subject, but if I am wrong, I know, as Fred's wife, I am sure of your forgiveness. I may be mistaken—I hope I am—but something, I can hardly explain, in yours and I may say in my dear girl's manner, has led me to think that there has been some trouble—perhaps some misunderstanding between you. O Captain Standish!" clasping her hands earnestly, "I am a woman, and, though my life has been so happy, I know how much a woman can suffer through the man she loves, and my poor, proud Georgie has been so dear to me!"

Even at her first words the stern look had faded from her hearer's face, and, as she ended, he took her hands in his. "I believe you are my friend, Mrs. Baynton; if I had ever doubted it, your womanly tenderness would have set all such doubts at rest. What your kindness prompts me to tell you has been, until now, a secret between myself and the woman I love most in the world—Georgine Carruthers. When I left Thanet, two years ago, I went away, hoping to return in a few months calling your friend my wife. Happier, perhaps, in this thought than most men who had been more blest with home ties might have been, with such a strong hope that each in the end might be better and purer for the other's love, feeling such pride in her beauty and stately sweetness,

and with a determination to do all in my power to make her life even brighter than it had been, I left Thanet the night I had won her promise. You remember that, a few months before, Mr. Chetwynd had broken little Rose's engagement with Charlie Thorne on account of his wild freaks and consequent disgrace in the army. From the commencement of my acquaintance with Charlie, when he first joined my regiment, I had pitied him. A wild, good-natured boy, with more money than discretion, and no single adviser but a stern disciplinarian such as his guardian, Mr. Chetwynd, had proved to be, he was in every danger from the society into which he was necessarily thrown, and, as you have heard, was constantly in trouble. Some slight forbearance in my position as his superior officer gained me the young fellow's fervent esteem, and he accordingly made me his confidant in everything, from his rows with 'the governor' to his love affair and broken engagement with Rose. During our visit to Thanet it appeared his attentions to Miss Carruthers had aroused the jealousy of his little '*fiancée*,' and, on the night of our departure, he came to my room begging me to be the bearer of a letter explaining matters to her. As I was just then engaged on a farewell note to Miss Rosie's rival, you may be sure I was not quite ready for the commission; but, in my new happiness and my pity for the unfortunate pair, I consented to be at least the means of its delivery, depending on which promise Charlie departed, leaving the note with a blank envelope for my direction. After I had finished my writing, I laid the two letters on my desk and threw myself on the couch by way of resting before my journey, rousing only in time to direct and give them into the hands of my valet, who, I had arranged, should follow me with my luggage. Once with my regiment, and the preparations necessary for the throwing up of my commission made, I waited the arrival of news from my lady-love with considerable impatience. For some days, however, I heard nothing. I wrote for an explanation, thinking that the letters had probably been misdirected, and was not a little mystified to receive in answer to my lover-like epistle an envelope containing the engagement ring. There was no reason given for its return; simply a blank sheet indorsed with her name. Of course I was both surprised and chagrined. I could not think her guilty of coquetry. I loved her far too well for that; but that a misunderstanding could have arisen in so short a time pained me exceedingly. I could construe it into nothing but a great want of confidence.

"I was seated, holding the ring in my hand, trying in vain to find some clue to the mystery, when another letter was handed to me; it came from Rose Chetwynd, and contained her thanks for an explanatory note she had just received from Charlie (as she supposed through me),

and also a note which had fallen into her hands through some mistake in direction, and which she accordingly returned. I opened it and found it to be the very letter I had written to Miss Carruthers on the night I left Thanet. This explained all. In my hurry, I had inclosed my letters in the wrong envelopes, and Georgie, reading the writer's protestations of love for Rose, and indifference to herself, with an unreasoning pride, which did credit to her head if not to her heart, had not deigned to finish its perusal, or even look at the signature, but had returned it to Miss Chetwynd, and condemning your humble servant as a scoundrel and a traitor, had treated him accordingly. Naturally I felt a little sore on the subject. Nevertheless, I instantly wrote to Georgie, explaining the mistake I had made, and gently reproaching her for her readiness to mistrust me."

"And her answer?" asked Ger, breathlessly, for the captain had stopped.

He laughed bitterly. "Was a very simple one, and the ultimate cause of my Indian campaign—merely my letter returned unopened, with these words: 'Forever. Georgine Carruthers.'"

"O Captain Standish!" and Gertrude's voice sounded almost like a sob.

"You must not trouble yourself about it, Mrs. Baynton; it is more than your stately friend condescended to do; besides, what is it, after all? Nothing but a man's life darkened by a woman's caprice; not a new thing, you know, in these civilized days."

Ger raised her tearful eyes. "But have you never thought how she may suffer? Though thinking herself injured, she will not confess it even to me, her dearest friend. O Captain Standish, are you as unforgiving as the Saxon knight? Would you not pardon the woman who has erred through her very delicacy and too great love for you?"

He smiled a little sadly. "Ah, Mrs. Baynton, I think we can hardly call 'too great' the love which is ready to condemn unheard."

"Perhaps not, but it seems to me to be natural for a woman to err in her fear of giving herself an unloved and unloving life. A man can hardly understand this, I think; you see, though so closely linked, their positions are so entirely different—husband and wife. Captain, is it needful that I should plead for her?"

He turned and took her hands again. "There is no need for pleading; before I leave here I think she will have understood me rightly, and then"—

"And then?" said Ger, softly.

"Either my wife will end the story for you, or I leave England forever."

For some days after their meeting in the library, Georgie studiously avoided the captain's presence, and, though perfectly polite and kind in his manner to her, as to all others,

he certainly did not seek to throw himself into her society. Any continued coldness, however, in their position would have attracted more observation and remark than "Miss Carruthers" cared her conduct should; consequently, in the lapse of a few days, they fell into their old mode of intercourse, meeting and conversing with polite hypocrisy. Georgie occasionally inflicting on her antagonist keen stabs of sarcasm with a success which showed her to be a true woman.

At last the end came, though in a manner very different to what Standish had expected.

It had been a suffocatingly hot day, spent, by the Trafford guests, as such days are generally spent, in complaining indolence, and with many hopes that the morrow might prove cooler. Toward evening, however, a breeze arose, and, anxious to make up for the loss of the day, the greater part of the idlers repaired to the archery ground to decide a disputed match. Among the number was Miss Carruthers, this evening more than usually superb! with a veil of rich black lace flung over her head and held back from her face with heavy wax-like lilies, looking a very queen, reminding one, in her perfection, perhaps a little too much of Tennyson's "Maud."

"Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null."

Mrs. Baynton, seated in the veranda with Captain Standish, glanced from one to the other, as her friend sauntered by with her favorite escort, Charlie Thorne, and, gazing on the sweet cold face that revealed so little, wondered, asking herself, "Has this man ever held her heart, or, once having held it, can it have utterly passed away from him?" and still wondering, and learning nothing, the little lady felt almost inclined to wish something dreadful might happen, sagely concluding that if either were in danger the other would surely show some feeling, and then matters would "end all right."

The Fates, however, had not designed a tragical ending to my love story, and its hero, sauntering round the archery ground, cigar in hand, stringing bows and handing arrows to the fair archers, was certainly not the sort of man to quarrel with destiny on that account; indeed, I think he would have felt rather inclined to congratulate himself than otherwise. For about an hour he remained on the ground, and then, excusing himself, returned to the house to write some letters. Completing his task he passed out on the colonnade, and flinging himself on one of the divans, fell asleep. When he awoke it was sunset, the archery party were filling the parlors with the sound of light laughter and merry discussion, and one solitary couple promenaded the lawn, apparently deeply engaged in conversation. It was Georgie and Charlie Thorne. Several times they passed and repassed, at last, again near-

ing the colonnade, Charlie raised his voice earnestly, and Standish perceived that he himself was the subject of discussion.

"By Jove! Miss Carruthers, if you only knew what a splendid fellow he is!" and from his seat the captain saw his young admirer's boyish face flush, and his honest blue eyes kindle. "By Jove!" (for this was Charlie's favorite expression), "they did right to call *him* Lionel; he reminds one of a lion, one of those great strong fellows, a king in body and soul."

Miss Carruthers did not seem very enthusiastic, but the subject was too near Charlie's heart to admit of his ardor being easily dampened, and he went on slashing at Mrs. Baynton's rose trees in his vehemence.

"If, like me, you had been his constant companion amid danger and desolation, if you had only seen him in those old campaigning days, cheering and encouraging hundreds with his undaunted bravery, when it seemed as though all hope was past—working, day and night, among sick, dead, and dying, with no care for himself, no thought of danger—you would not wonder at my love and admiration for him."

Miss Carruthers' voice floated out on the air cooingly. "Then, I suppose, it is because I do not understand your friend that I do not admire him; indeed, I think I was rather rash in saying my opinion of him was unfavorable."

"I don't see why it should be," said Charlie, bluntly. "Do you know, Miss Carruthers, I always fancy he likes you? He is not the sort of fellow to say much about liking any one, particularly women, but still I think if ever you were in great trouble or danger, you might rely on him for help."

A little silence, and then Georgie's reply came, very low, and perhaps a trifle unsteady, nevertheless, characteristically controlled:—

"I have often heard it said that men never form such passionate friendships as women. You have proved this to be untrue. I have rarely, if ever, heard one woman defend another as you have defended Captain Standish."

Charlie warmed again. "No woman could ever be under the obligations to another that I am under to Standish. There is a story connected with my friendship for him which has almost been a secret between us. I do not mind telling it to you, because, in the first place, you are my friend, and I like you." Georgie smiled. "And, in the second, it will convince you what a splendid fellow *he* is, and make you like *him*. Do you care to hear it?"

Of course she cared to hear it; nothing would please her more.

And so he told it. Pretty much in the abstract what Mrs. Baynton had heard, though, of course, relating only to three persons, Rose, Standish, and himself. Speaking of his broken engagement with his guardian's little daughter

and the sin and dissipation into which he had plunged in his despair, from which his friend, by his continued efforts, had rescued him; relating the history of what Standish had so lightly passed over, as "some slight forbearance in my position as his superior officer," proving it to have been, in the strict army discipline, almost a matter of life and death, quite a matter of disgrace and ignominy, from which the unhappy boy had only been saved through the almost superhuman efforts and self-denial of the man whom in his madness he had insulted; describing the unlucky correspondence, ending with the misdirected letter which had caused his hearer so much unhappiness, and adding, gayly: "Rose and I often laugh to think how astonished Standish's lady correspondent must have been when she received my lover-like note. And now, Miss Carruthers, what do you say?"

"That I thank you for your interesting story; it has cleared away from your friend a shadow which has mystified me for some time, and—and—as I feel rather chilly, suppose we return to the house."

Standish drew back in his hiding place, his heart thrilling with a passionate pain. "Has she so completely outlived the old love," he asked himself, "that she can hear of the injustice she has done me unmoved? I wonder if her face is as calm as her voice?" and so wondering he waited for her coming.

A few moments and she stood on the veranda, so near to him that he might almost have touched her. Where her companion was he did not care to know; one thing only impressed him, her face, whiter than the lilies she had crushed in her clenched hand; white even to her firm-set lips, with no shade of color but the dark circles round her weary eyes. This much he had time to see, and she passed into the house.

Through the deserted hall and up the broad staircase, which seemed to her almost untermineable in its length, sometimes stopping, catching her breath with a quick, dry sob, at last reaching her room, closing the door behind her, and, dropping face downward on the rich carpet, sobbing in all the bitter abandonment of her grief. "O Lionel! O Lionel! Oh my love! forgive me!"

After all, what was she—with all her pride, with all her strength—but a girl with a girl's strong power of loving, and, consequently, suffering; for, it seems to me, these two are so often linked together, that the one has almost come to signify the other.

The remainder of the evening and the following day Miss Carruthers was not in view. She had a severe nervous headache, and must keep her room till it was better. "It will soon be over," she said, when Gertrude, frightened at her scarlet cheeks and heavy eyes, wished to

send for the doctor. "It will soon be over; it is not very bad. I always look dreadfully when I am in pain, and, if you wish me to get better, you must leave me to myself. Please, Ger."

And the "please Ger" said so much to sensitive, tender-hearted Mrs. Baynton, that she complied with the request, feeling that perhaps more depended upon it than she could clearly understand.

The next evening, however, a farewell ball was given to the officers of the Fourth, who, to the grief of the surrounding feminine population, were called away, and our heroine, waited on by Ger, was found, to all appearance, in full enjoyment of most enviable health and spirits. "I told you it would soon be over," she said, gayly, not a little to the astonishment and, if one must speak truthfully, the indignation of the frank young matron.

"I thought something had happened; I thought she had learned the truth, and here she is positively looking as though she were the happiest girl in the world," and poor little Mrs. Baynton was puzzled almost to loss of patience.

Two hours after Georgine swept down the staircase perfectly magnificent. Her trailing dress of rich white silk, her jewels, superbly unique, heavy bands of gold, thickly studded with pearls, forming zone, bracelets, and negligee, a single pond lily resting in her hair. Ger, performing her toilet in the prettiest of wrappers, meeting her at the door of her dressing-room, almost screamed with delight.

"O Geordie, you beauty!"

And Miss Georgie was walked across the floor, and turned round, and criticized from all possible points of view, and admired in a delightful feminine manner; said admiration being expressed by a variety of musical little shrieks and pretty interjectional phrases. At last, the verbal resources running rather low, Ger submitted herself to the hands of her maid with a sigh of ecstasy. "Well, dear, if I were only inclined to be envious, I should die of jealousy on the spot. I feel like the treble distilled essence of peonies in comparison with your marble ladyship. Do kiss me by way of a cooling draught."

A sweet, low laugh rippled over Miss Carruthers' scarlet lips as she gave the wished for salute. "I don't see why you should. I think I have need to envy your brightness. Ger, dear?" interrogatively.

"What is it?"

"Am I sometimes a little—just a little—too—too—frosty?"

"Frosty? what made you think of that?"

"I don't know," with half a sigh, and just the faintest suspicion of a quiver on her lip. "I suppose I am blue. I wish some one thought well enough of me to tell me of my faults."

"Well, get married," said Gertrude, sagely, "and you will find some one, I dare say, who will be ready enough to do that." Then, turning quickly and facing her, "Geordie, why don't you?"

The brown eyes opened, and a little wave of crimson color showed itself on the fair face.

"Why don't I—what?"

"Get married and have some one to find fault with you; it is not so *very* unpleasant."

"For the very American reason you are so fond of giving—'because.'"

There was a quick rap at the door, and Fred's voice was heard. "Ain't you ready, Ger? it is seven o'clock."

Mrs. Baynton shook out her airy draperies (for she had completed her toilet), and laid her hand on her friend's white shoulder. "If the 'because' were removed, what would be the effect? Geordie, the Fourth leaves Trafford to-morrow, and, darling, won't you lay aside the superb Carruthers for to-night?"

Captain Standish was seated alone by one of the deep windows in the library. Oppressed beyond measure by the glare and brilliancy of the ball-room, he had passed out unobserved, thinking to obtain a few moments' relief from it. The library had not been thrown open to the guests to-night, and, seated in the flood of moonlight which poured in at the wide window, he had exactly what he needed—time for thought. During the whole of the evening he had been puzzled, terribly puzzled. Watching Georgie, as she held her court, this night as ever star of stars and seemingly so radiantly happy, he had contrasted it with the scene of the night before with a feeling of indescribable pain.

"I wonder if I was mistaken in my estimate of her character?" he mused; "I had thought her a proud, loving girl, thinking herself injured through her very tenderness, and had forgiven even her injustice. One word to-night, one glance, would have cleared all doubt away, and yet, knowing of the wrong she has done me, she passes me with cold face and averted eyes. Well, after all, I am only suffering as hundreds of other men have suffered, a little pang for a scarlet mouth and a pair of velvet eyes, a little bitterness for a clear-cut face and a crown of amber hair; their glamour once removed, perhaps I may forget—but, oh, my darling, I cannot bear to think of you as other than the true woman whose heart I thought I had won."

A while longer he pondered, and then rose to return to the ball-room, stopping, however, a moment to listen to the merry voices on the colonnade, to the dancers' feet, to the delicious throb of the music in the room above. Perhaps this moment decided his fate. I think so, for, as he stood, there came the sound of a light foot on the stairs, the trail of a woman's dress

on the hall floor, its rustle on the carpet, and some one stood beside him. Some one with the moonlight frosting her falling robe with silver, with its brightness shimmering in her hair. Miss Carruthers, yet quite unlike her, perhaps more the girl he had called "my darling" under the trees at Thanet, than she had ever been since that night; still he did not speak to her, acknowledging her presence only by a slight movement.

A moment she waited, as though irresolute, then spoke, seemingly not without a struggle for composure. "They tell me you leave Trafford, to-morrow, Captain Standish, and I could not let you go without asking pardon for the injustice which I have unconsciously been guilty of. My object in coming here is to explain the manner in which I fell into error."

A moment she paused, then, laying one pretty ungloved hand on the window to steady herself, went on rapidly: "It is needless—I think you will spare me more than reminding you of our positions relative to each other when we separated the last night at Thanet. I suppose I had not rightly understood your arrangements, for I was quite surprised to hear of your absence in the morning, and on your valet's handing me the letter, I opened it, looking for an explanation. Only last evening I learned who was the writer. It began, 'My queen of roses'—the night before you had used those very words to me—and I read on until I came to my own name; three sentences more decided me—I did not finish it. Perhaps it might have been better if I had; you know the rest. This I must say to you; I have been wrong, from first to last; in my pride I have been almost wicked. I ask your pardon; will you not try, at least, to forget it?" and she extended a slender, trembling hand, which he took.

Thus far she had lost none of her calmness, speaking hurriedly, with swift-changing color and eyes steadily fixed on the moonlit park, but now, at the old familiar clasp of the strong fingers, her unconquered pride, battling with her conquered heart, broke down in bitter tears.

"I cannot ask you to forgive me wholly; I cannot expect it of you, but—O Lionel! you kissed my lips that night, and, after that, it was so hard to bear."

I do not know whether he had waited for this; it may be that he had. However that was, he spoke now, for the first time:—

"I might say a great deal on this subject, but I do not think matters would be any clearer if I did; and, Georgie, in the end it would all come to the same thing—that the man who kissed your lips at Thanet holds your hand to-night with an unchanged heart. Have you not still a little of the old love left? If you have, my darling, come to me."

He still held her hand, and as he ended he

drew her gently to his side—closer, closer, until her head lay on his breast, and drooping face and tear-wet eyes were covered with his kisses.

Mrs. Baynton, with that quick intuition of the state of affairs which I think is natural to women, excused their absence by some innocent white fibs.

"Georgie has gone to rest for a few moments; she said she felt a little faint, and I dare say Captain Standish is discussing some dreadful massacre with Fred. Did you ever in the world see anything like men for horrors?"

So for an hour, half happy, half sorrowful, the lovers were left to themselves, and certainly they made good use of their time; relating to each other the history of their miserable separation, laughing at poor Charlie's love scrapes, and sympathizing with Rose.

"Of course, since Charlie's reform, their troubles are over," said Georgie. "Poor little Rose! how unjust I have been to her. Lionel, I am afraid that is my forte."

"To be unjust? I hope not. I think your forte, as you call it, is (or has been) too great pride and want of confidence. Ah, my darling," he said, laying his hand softly on her hair, "if you had only trusted me a little more, we should not have these two sorrowful years to look back upon."

It was hardly the superb Carruthers who answered him, with tremulous lips and tender eyes.

"But perhaps the very bitterness has taught me a lesson which otherwise I might never have learned."

When they re-entered the ball-room, arm in arm, Fred, in his delight, would, I fear, have mortally committed himself, had it not been for some matrimonial asides; as it was, his handsome face, for the remainder of the evening, wore an expression of blank, though pleased, astonishment. Mrs. Baynton, like a dear little hypocrite, kept up a delightful semblance of ignorance, until her guests had separated for the night, when she rather surprised Miss Carruthers by breaking in upon her as that young lady sat by the fire of her dressing-room, delivering to her a short and somewhat disconnected lecture on want of confidence, breaking off in the middle and ending in a perfectly natural and womanly manner, by laying her pretty brown head on her shoulder and bursting into tears.

WHAT IS A TEAR?

THE principal element of a tear is water. This water, upon dissolution, contains a few hundredth parts of the substance called mucus, and a small portion of salt, of soda, of phosphate of lime, and of phosphate of soda. It is the salt and the soda that give to tears that

peculiar savor which earned for tears the epithet of "salt" at the hand of Greek poets, and that of "bitter" at that of ours. "Salt" is, however, the more correct term of the two. When a tear dries the water evaporates, and leaves behind it a deposit of the saline ingredients. These amalgamate and, as seen through the microscope, array themselves in long crossed lines which look like diminutive fish bones. Tears are secreted by a gland, called the lachrymal gland, which is situated above the eyeball and underneath the upper eyelid, on the side nearest the temple. Six or seven exceedingly fine channels flow from it along and under the surface of the eyelid, discharging their contents a little above the delicate cartilage which supports the lid. It is these channels or canals that carry the tears into the eye. But tears do not flow only at certain moments and under certain circumstances, as might be supposed; their flow is continuous. All day and all night (although less abundantly during sleep), they trickle softly from their slender sluices, and spread glistening over the surface of the pupil and eyeball, giving them that bright, enamel, and limpid look which is one of the characteristic signs of health. It is the ceaseless movement and contraction of the eyelids that effect the regular spreading of the tears; and the flow of these has need to be constantly renewed in the way just mentioned, because tears not only evaporate after a few seconds, but also are carried away through two little drains, called lachrymal points, and situated in the corner of the eye, near the nose. Thus all tears, after leaving the eyelids, flow into the nostrils; and if the reader will assure himself of this he has only to notice, unpoetical as the fact may be, that a person after crying much is always obliged to make a twofold use of his or her pocket-handkerchief.

BESIDE THE SEA.

BY ELIZA F. MORIARTY.

Oh gentle waves! that singing flow,
And softly kiss the beaten shore,
But yesterday you fiercely dashed
Against the rocks with sullen roar.

Oh smiling skies! that bend above
In cloudless glory o'er the world,
How lately through your azure depths
The storm's dark pennons were unfurled

Oh cruel waves! I seem to hear
From out your depths sad drowning cries >
I seem to see the wrecks a-strand
Beneath your light, deceitful skies.

I think of silent hearts that lie
Unburied 'neath your depths, O Waves!
The cherished ones, so still and cold,
No stone to mark their nameless graves.

Oh restless waves! be pitiful
When ships are ploughing through the foam;
Let longing eyes upon the shore
Behold them sailing home.