

tell you this in confidence, but do not commit me." No better parody on modern diplomacy could easily be written.

A CURIOUS PAGE OF FAMILY HISTORY.

THE Chambellans were an old Yorkshire family, which once had held a high place among the landed gentry of the county. A knight of that family had been a Crusader in the army of Richard Cœur de Lion; and now he lay, with all his insignia about him, in the parish church, while others of his race reposed in the same chancel, under monuments and brasses, which spoke of their name and fame during their generation. In the lapse of time the family had become impoverished, and gradually merged into the class of yeomen, retaining only a remnant of the broad lands which had once belonged to them. In 1744-5, the elder branch of the family, consisting of the father, two sons, and a daughter, resided at what had once been the mansion-house. It had been built originally in the reign of Stephen, and was a curious specimen of different kinds of architecture, bearing traces of its gradual transformation from the stronghold of the days when it was no metaphor to say that every man's house was his castle, down to the more peaceful dwelling of lawful and orderly times. It had now become little more than a better sort of farm-house. What had been the tilt-yard was filled with a row of comfortable barns, cart-sheds, and hay-stacks: a low wall of rough gray stones inclosed a small garden: a narrow gravel walk, edged on each side with currant-trees and gooseberry-bushes, led up to the fine old porch, embowered in the ivy and creepers which covered nearly the whole of the building with its luxuriant growth. The old gateway at the entrance of the yard was still surmounted with the "coat armor" of the family, carved in stone; but the gates themselves had long ago disappeared, and been replaced by a common wooden farm-yard gate. The "coat armor" itself was covered with moss, and a fine crop of grass and house-leek grew among the stones of the walls, to which it would have communicated a desolate appearance, if the farm-yard arrangements had been less orderly.

Halsted Hall, as it was called, was six miles from the city of York, and stood about a mile from the main road. The only approach to it was by a long rough lane, so much cut up by the carts and cattle that it was almost impassable to foot-passengers, except in the height of summer or depth of winter, when the mud had been dried up by the sun or the frost.

The father and brothers attended the different fairs and markets in the ordinary course of business; their sister, Mary Chambellan, managed the affairs of the house and dairy. She led a very secluded life, for they had no neighbors, and of general society there was none nearer than the city itself. Mary, however, had plenty of occupation, and was quite contented with her lot. She was nearly seventeen, tall, well-formed, and with an air of composed dignity which suited

well with her position, which was of great responsibility for so young a person. Her mother, who had been dead rather more than a year, had been a woman of superior education and strong character. To her Mary owed all the instruction she had ever received, and the tinge of refinement which made her manners very superior to those of either her father or brothers. She, however, was quite unconscious of this, and they all lived very happily together in the old out-of-the-way place.

It happened that, in the spring of 1745, an uncle of her mother's, who resided at York, was about to celebrate the marriage of one of his daughters; Mary Chambellan, with her father and brothers, were invited to the festivities. The father would have sent an excuse for himself and Mary; he was getting old, and did not like to be put out of his usual ways. The brothers, however, pleaded earnestly that their sister might have a little recreation. Finally consent was obtained, and she went with her brothers.

It was a very fine wedding, and a ball and supper finished the rejoicings. Some of the officers, quartered with their regiments in York, were invited to this ball. Among others was a certain Captain Henry Pollexfen. He was a young man of good family in the south of England, heir to a large fortune; and extremely handsome and attractive on his own account, independent of these advantages.

He was, by all accounts, a type of the fine, high-spirited young fellow of those days; good-tempered, generous, and overflowing with wild animal life and spirits, which he threw off in a thousand impetuous extravagances. He could dance all night at a ball, ride a dozen miles to meet the hounds the following morning, and, after a hard day's sport, sit down to a deep carouse, and be as fresh and gay after it as if he had been following the precepts of Lewis Cornaro. The women contended with each other to attract his attentions; but although he was devoted to every woman he came near, and responded to their universal good-will by flirting indefatigably, his attentions were so indiscriminate, that there was not one belle who could flatter herself that she had secured him for her "humble servant"—as lovers were then wont to style themselves. Mary Chambellan was not, certainly, the belle of the wedding ball-room, and by no means equal in fortune or social position to most of the women present; but whether from perverseness, or caprice, or love of novelty, Henry Pollexfen was attracted by her, and devoted himself to her exclusively.

The next York Assembly was to take place in a few days; and this young man, who did not know what contradiction meant, made Mary promise to be his partner there. Old Mr. Chambellan, however, who thought his daughter had been away from home quite long enough, fetched her back himself on the following day; and Mary would as soon have dared to ask to go to the moon as to remain to go to the assembly. Henry Pollexfen was extremely disappointed when he

found that Miss Chambellan had returned home; but he was too much caressed and sought after to be able to think long about the matter, and so his sudden fancy soon passed away.

In the autumn of the same year he met one of her brothers in the hunting field. Accident threw them together toward the close of a hard day's run; when, in clearing a stone fence, some loose stones were dislodged, and struck Captain Pollexfen's horse, laming him severely. Night was coming on; it was impossible to return to his quarters on foot; and young Chambellan invited his fellow-sportsman to go home with him—Halsted Hall being the nearest habitation. The invitation was accepted. Although old Mr. Chambellan would as soon have opened his doors to a dragon; yet even he could find no fault under the circumstances, and was constrained to welcome their dangerous guest with old-fashioned hospitality. He soon became so charmed with his visitor, that he invited him to return, and the visitor gladly did so.

His almost forgotten admiration for Mary revived in full force the moment he saw her again. He soon fell desperately and seriously in love with her. Mary's strong and gentle character assumed great influence over his mercurial and impetuous disposition. That she became deeply attached to him was nothing wonderful; she could scarcely have helped it, even if he had not sought to win her affections.

In a short time, he made proposals of marriage for her to her father, who willingly consented, feeling, if the truth must be told, very much flattered at the prospect of such a son-in-law.

Henry Pollexfen then wrote a dutiful letter to his own father, telling him how much he was in love, and how earnestly he desired permission to follow his inclinations. Old Mr. Pollexfen had, like many other fathers, set his heart upon his son's making a brilliant match; and although, after consulting the "History of Yorkshire," where he found honorable mention made of the Chambellan family, he could offer no objection on the score of birth; yet he thought his son might do better. He was too wise to make any direct opposition; on the contrary, he gave his conditional consent, only stipulating for time. He required that twelve months should elapse before the marriage took place, when his son would be little more than two-and-twenty, while Mary would be not quite nineteen. He wrote paternal letters to Mary, and polite epistles to her father. He even applied at head-quarters for leave of absence for his son; whom he immediately summoned up to London, where his own duties, as member of parliament, would detain him for some time.

Under any other circumstances, Captain Pollexfen would have been delighted with this arrangement; but, as it was, he would infinitely have preferred being allowed to marry Mary at once. However, there was no help for it. Old Mr. Chambellan, himself urged the duty of immediate obedience to his father's summons, and Pollexfen departed.

For many weeks his letters were as frequent as the post would carry them. He was very miserable under the separation; and, much as she loved him, Mary could not wish him to be otherwise. His regiment was suddenly ordered abroad; the necessary hurry of preparation, and the order to join his detachment at Canterbury without delay, rendered it quite impossible for Captain Pollexfen to see Mary before his departure. He wrote her a tender farewell, sent her his picture, and exhorted her to write frequently, and never to forget him for an instant; promising, of course, everlasting constancy for himself.

There was little chance that Mary should forget him, in that old lonely house, without either friends or neighbors. Besides, the possibility of ceasing to love her affianced husband never occurred to her. With Captain Pollexfen it was different. Under no circumstances was his a character that would bear absence unchanged; and the distraction of foreign scenes, and the excitement of his profession, soon banished the image of Mary from his mind. At length he felt it a great bore that he was engaged to be married. The regiment remained sixteen months absent, and he heartily hoped that she would have forgotten him.

Mary's father died shortly after her lover's departure; the family property descended to her brothers, and she was left entirely dependent upon them. Captain Pollexfen's letters had entirely ceased; Mary had received no communication for more than six months, when she saw the return of his regiment announced, and his name gazetted as colonel. He, however, neither came to see her, nor wrote to her, and Mary became seriously ill. She could no longer conceal her sufferings from her brothers. Under the impression that she was actually dying, they wrote to her lover, demanding the cause of his silence, and telling him of her situation. Colonel Pollexfen was conscience-stricken by this letter. He declared to the brothers that he intended to act as became a man of honor, and wrote to Mary with something of his old affection, revived by remorse: excusing his past silence, begging forgiveness, and promising to go down to see her, the instant he could obtain leave of absence.

Under the influence of this letter Mary revived; but the impression made upon her future husband soon passed away—he daily felt less inclination to perform his promise. He was living in the midst of fashionable society, and was more courted than ever, since by the death of his father he had come into possession of his fortune. He began to feel that he had decidedly thrown himself away; and by a most unnatural transition, he hated Mary for her claims upon him and considered himself a very ill-used victim.

Mary's brothers, finding that Colonel Pollexfen did not follow his letter, nor show any signs of fulfilling his engagement, would not submit to any more trifling. The elder made a journey to London, and demanded satisfaction, with the intimation that the younger brother would claim

the same right when the first affair was terminated.

Colonel Pollexfen was not, of course, afraid of having even two duels on his hands at once; he had already proved his courage too well to allow a suspicion of that sort. His answer was characteristic. He told young Chambellan that he was quite ready to meet both him and his brother, but that he was under a previous engagement to marry their sister, which he wished to perform first, as otherwise circumstances might occur to prevent it; he should then be quite at their service, as it was his intention to quit his bride at the church-door, and never to see her again!

The brothers, looking upon this as a pretext to evade the marriage altogether, resolved, after some deliberation, to accept his proposal. They had great difficulty in prevailing upon their sister to agree to their wishes; but they none of them seriously believed that he would carry out his threat, and Mary fancied that all danger of a duel would be evaded. A very liberal settlement was drawn up by Colonel Pollexfen's direction, which he signed, and sent down to the bride's family. On the day appointed, Mary and her brothers repaired to the church; a traveling chariot and four horses stood at the door. On entering, they found Colonel Pollexfen pointing out to a friend who accompanied him the monuments belonging to the Chambellan family. As soon as he perceived them he took his place at the altar, and the ceremony commenced without delay. As soon as it was concluded, he bowed with great politeness to all present, and said, "You are all here witnesses that I have performed my engagement!" Then, without even looking at his bride, he quitted the church, and, accompanied by his friend, entered the carriage which was in waiting, and drove rapidly away! Mary was carried senseless from the church, and for several weeks continued dangerously ill.

The real strength of her character now showed itself. She made no complaint; she did not even assume her husband's name, but took the appellation of Mrs. Chambellan. The settlement was returned to Colonel Pollexfen's lawyer, with an intimation that it would never be claimed. She stilled the anger of her brothers, and would not endure a word to be said against her husband. She never alluded to him herself. A great change came over her; she did not seem to suffer nearly so much from her cruel position as might have been expected; her melancholy and depression gave place to a steady determination of purpose. In the brief space during which she and her husband had stood before the altar, she had realized the distance that existed between their positions in life. With a rare superiority, she understood how natural it was that he should have felt no desire to fulfill his boyish engagement; she owned in her heart that she was not fitted to be the wife and companion of such a man as he had now become. Had she seen all this sooner, she would have at once released him; now she could no

longer do so, and she resolved to fit herself to fill the station to which, as his wife, she had been raised.

The brief interview before the altar had stimulated to desperation her attachment to him: and she felt that she must win him back or die. Mary had received very little education. In those days the education bestowed on most women was very limited; but Mary fancied that all gentlewomen, who moved in society, were well-informed; and her first step was to obtain some elementary books from the master of a boys' school at York, and begin, with undoubting simplicity, to learn history and geography, and all the things which she supposed every lady of her husband's acquaintance knew. A thirst for information was soon aroused in her; she had few advantages and very little assistance; but her energies and perseverance surmounted all obstacles, and she found a present reward in her labor. Her life ceased to seem either lonely or monotonous. Still, the spirit that worked within her was far more precious than any actual result she obtained. She had a noble object in view; and, unconsciously to herself, it purified her heart from all bitterness, or wounded vanity, or impatience. A great sorrow nobly borne, is a great dignity. The very insult which had seemed to condemn her to a wasted existence, was transformed into a source of life and fruitfulness, by the wise humility with which she accepted it.

Ten years passed thus, and in the matured woman of thirty, few could have recognized the forsaken girl of nineteen. But the present only fulfilled the promise which was then latent in her character.

All this time, her husband had endeavored to forget that he was married. Shortly after the ceremony, he went abroad with his regiment; and after some time spent in active service, he returned to England, and quitted the army with the brevet rank of general. He resided partly in London and partly in Bath, leading the usual life of a man of fashion in those days, and making himself remarkable for his brilliant extravagances.

About that time a young and beautiful actress appeared, who speedily became the object of adoration to all the young men of fashion about town.

General Pollexfen was one of her lovers, and carried her off one night from the theatre, when she came off the stage between the acts. He allowed her to assume his name, and lavished a fortune upon her caprices; although her extravagance and propensity to gambling involved him in debt.

Ten years had thus passed, when the cousin, whose marriage was mentioned at the beginning of this story, was ordered to Bath by her physician. She entreated Mary to accompany her, who, after some persuasion, consented. It was a formidable journey in those days, and they were to stay some months. They found a pleasant lodging. Mary, with some reluctance, was drawn into society, and occasionally accompanied her

cousin to the Assemblies, which were then in high vogue.

General Pollexfen was absent from Bath when his wife arrived there. He had been called up to London by some lawyer's business, and calculated upon being absent three weeks.

It so chanced, however, that the business was concluded sooner than he expected, and that he returned to Bath without announcing his coming. He went at once to the Assembly, and was walking through the rooms in a chafed and irritable mood (having that night discovered the treachery of the beautiful actress, which had long been known to every body else), when a voice struck his ear which caused him to turn suddenly. He saw, near at hand, a dignified and beautiful woman, who reminded him of some one he had seen before. She turned away on perceiving him—it was Mary. She had recognized her husband, and, scarcely able to stand, she took the arm of her cousin, and reached the nearest seat. Her husband, forgetting every thing else in his impatience to learn who it was who had thus startled vague recollections, went hastily up to the Master of the Ceremonies, and desired to be introduced to—his own wife!

By some fatality, the Master of the Ceremonies blundered, and gave the name of Mary's cousin. This mistake gave Mary courage; for years she had dreamed of such a meeting, and the fear of losing the opportunity nerved her to profit by it. She exerted herself to please him. He had been rudely disenchanted from the graces of fine ladies, and was in a humor to appreciate the gentle home influence of Mary's manners; he was enchanted with her, and begged to be allowed to follow up the acquaintance, and to wait upon her the next morning. Permission was of course given, and he handed Mary and her cousin to their chairs.

Mary was cruelly agitated; she had not suffered so much during the ten preceding years; the suspense and anxiety were too terrible to endure; it seemed as though morning would never come. Her husband was not much more to be envied. He had discovered that she resembled the woman he had once so much loved, and then so cruelly hated—whom he married, and deserted; but though tormented by a thousand fancied resemblances, he scarcely dared to hope that it could be she. The next day, long before the lawful hour for paying morning visits, he was before her door, and obtained admittance. The resemblance by daylight was more striking than it had been on the previous evening; and Mary's agitation was equal to his own. His impetuous appeal was answered. Overwhelmed with shame and repentance, and at the same time happy beyond expression, General Pollexfen passionately entreated his wife's forgiveness. Mary not only won back her husband, but regained, with a thousandfold intensity, the love which had once been hers—regained it, never to lose it more!

The story soon became known, and created an immense sensation. They quitted Bath, and retired to her husband's family seat in Cornwall, where they continued chiefly to reside. They

had one son, an only child, who died when he was about fifteen. It was an overwhelming affliction, and was the one mortal shadow on their happiness. They died within a few weeks of each other; their honors and estates passing to a distant branch of the family.

THE ASS OF LA MARCA.

I. THE HOG-BOY.

IN the year 1530, a Franciscan was traveling on foot in the papal territory of Ancona. He was proceeding to Ascoli; but, at that time, the roads were bad, where there were any roads at all, and after wandering in what appeared to be a wilderness, he lost his bearings altogether, and came to a stand-still. A village was visible in the distance, but he was unwilling to proceed so far to ask his way, lest it might prove to be in the wrong direction. While listening intently, however, for some sound that might indicate the propinquity of human beings—for the scrubby wood of the waste, marshy land intercepted his view—he heard what appeared to be a succession of low sobs close by. Mounting a little eminence a few paces off, he saw a small company of hogs widely scattered, and searching with the avidity of famine for a dinner; and rightly conjecturing that the sounds of human grief must proceed from the swineherd, he moved on to the nearest clump of bushes, where he saw on the other side a boy about nine years of age, lying upon the soft ground, and endeavoring to smother his sobs in a tuft of coarse moss, while he dug his fingers into the mud in an agony of grief and rage. The good father allowed the storm of emotion to sweep past, and then inquired what was the matter.

"Have you lost any of your hogs?" said he.

"I don't know—and I don't care," was the answer.

"Why were you crying then?"

"Because they have been using me worse than a hog: they have been beating me—they never let me alone; always bad names, and worse blows; nothing to eat but leavings, and nothing to lie upon but dirty straw!"

"And for what offense are you used thus?"

"They say I am unhandy at field-work; that I am useless in the house and the barn; that I am unfit to be a servant to the horses in the stable; and that I can't even keep the hogs together. They are hogs themselves—they be! I was clever enough at home; but my father could not keep me any longer, and so he sent me to be a farmer's drudge, and turned me out to the—hogs!" and the boy gave way to another passionate burst of grief. The Franciscan endeavored to soothe him, and talked of submission to Providence; but finding he could do no good he inquired the name of the village.

"Montalto," replied the boy, sulkily.

"Montalto! Then in what direction lies Ascoli?"

"Are you going to Ascoli?" demanded the hog-boy, suddenly, as he fixed a pair of blazing eyes on the Franciscan's face in a manner that made him start. "I will show you the way."