

Charlotte Evans was born in Oldham, England on 21 September 1841 as Charlotte Lees, one of four children of James and Sophia Lees (née Ball) (ATL-MS-5135-03). The Lees were Lancashire cotton merchants who emigrated to New Zealand in 1864 to settle in Oamaru in the region of South Otago. Evans died at the age of 40, in Oamaru, on 22 July 1882. In common with other women of the Victorian period she had in early youth expressed her feelings for the written word, in the form of 'stories, poems and hymns'

Skillbeck, Corry. *Jottings of a Gentleman*. Ashburton: MonoUnlimited, 2007.

(Skillbeck 65). Evans was to become the author of two of New Zealand's earliest romance novels, publishing both *Over the Hills and Far Away: A Story of New Zealand* and *A Strange Friendship: A Story of New Zealand* in 1874. An earlier work *Guy Eversley* was introduced to the local public in the *Oamaru Times and Waitaki Reporter* in serialised form between 1865 and 1866. Unlike Evans' later works, *Guy Eversley's* storyline, with a male narrator, still reflects Evans' familiar plot characteristics concerning marriage and Christian piety set amongst the colonial temptations of vice and greed

Moffat, Kirstine E. *The Puritan Paradox: The Puritan Legacy in the Intellectual, Cultural and Social Life of New Zealand, Focusing Primarily on the Works of Novelists Writing between 1862 and 1940*. Ph.D diss. Victoria University of Wellington.

(Moffat 19). In common with English emigrants to New Zealand Evans was strongly influenced by her Christian faith. It was a trait noticeable also among her wider body of published and unpublished work.

Evans' family the Lees came originally from Clarksfield in the north of England that was situated in the district of Oldham and recognised during the nineteenth-century for its cotton industry. Following a decline in cotton in the 1860's, the family moved further south to live in the vicinity of Richmond in southern England (ATL-MS-5135-03). There Evans spent her girlhood holidays, staying among friends and relations, becoming familiar with some of the better known landmarks of Devon and Sussex such as Plymouth and Dawlish Bay, both of which are mentioned in her novel *Over the Hills and Far Away*. In 1864 Charlotte's parents decided to emigrate to New Zealand as their elder sons, Joseph and James, had already travelled ahead of them to settle in South Otago. The remainder of the Lees family consisting of James Snr., Sophia and their younger daughter Charlotte, finally left England in 1864, sailing aboard the passenger ship *Chile*. They arrived, several months later, in November at Port Chalmers situated in the southern region of Otago. The Lees brought out capital to invest, which they succeeded in doing, in an area outside Oamaru then known as 'Teaneraki' (later 'Enfield') (Skillbeck 58). It was in that same vicinity that Charlotte met her future husband Eyre Evans, a young man from Trinity College, Dublin, who several years later accompanied his brother out to New Zealand. The couple were married at Teaneraki on 14 April, 1868. The wedding notice recorded that a Reverend Algeron Gifford officiated at the ceremony, with Eyre mentioned as the 'eldest son of Captain George Evans and grandson of the late Eyre Evans, Esq of Ash Hill Towers County Limerick' and Charlotte 'the youngest daughter of James Lees Esq Teaneraki' (ATL-MS-5135-09).

Evans is among the earliest of New Zealand's romantic novelists with a significant, though largely unrecognised, position as an early literary contributor to New Zealand's nationhood in providing escapist entertainment for a mainly overseas readership (ATL-MS-13-19-1). Her two published novels *Over the Hills and Far Away: A Story of New Zealand* (1874) and *A Strange Friendship: A Story of New Zealand* (1874) were modelled upon the 'sensation' novel, a 'new' form of melodramatic romance that was popularised during the 1860's by the British journalist and author Wilkie Collins and having its own set of conventions (Jones 125). In addition to the novel form, Evans produced a miscellany of writing that included poems and a collection of short stories. A selection of her poetry was published posthumously as *Poetic Gems of Sacred Thought* (1917). The short stories, in the form of three short novellas, were published as *Only a Woman's Hair* (1903). The stories were set in New Zealand and like her other published romances also written in a style both 'highly contrived and melodramatic' (Moffat 19). Evans' writing also belongs to the genre of popular 'romance'; a more recent version can be found in the Mills and Boon novel. The Mills and Boon romance, noted for its predictability and plot repetition with 'happy endings', is somewhat modified in Evans' writing through the influence of the sensation novel with which *A Strange Friendship* and *Over the Hills and Far Away* are associated.

The publisher of Evans' novels was the London firm Sampson Low, Marston, Low & Searle. Originally a bookselling and stationery business, the firm was originally founded by a Mr Sampson Low, the son of a printer and publisher, in 1819. The firm's premises incorporated a circulating library and attracted a strong middle-class readership constituency. Early patrons to the Sampson Low 'reading room' eventually included professional as well as literary men, all of whom contributed to and supported what would become one of the nineteenth-century's more prolific publishers of fiction and non-fiction (Feather 12). By 1874, the year of publication for Evans' novels, Sampson Low had moved his firm's premises to Fleet Street and formed a partnership with Mr Edward Marston. The breadth and scope of Sampson Low's influence was reflected in a range of New Zealand 'pioneer period' publications that were contemporary with Evans and featured

fictionalised adventure narratives, along with non-fictional accounts of early New Zealand exploration. In her publishing relationship with the *Sampson Low* firm Evans incorporated both an international and local dimension. In her role as a New Zealand pioneer novelist, and also as a contemporary within the wider arena of transnational publishing, she inhabited the same field as American novelists Louisa May Alcott and Harriet Beecher Stowe (whose depictions of American society parallel to some extent Evans' less detailed versions of the New Zealand colonists' milieu). Sampson Low was also more famously the publisher of Evans' fellow sensation writer Wilkie Collins and his acclaimed novel *The Woman in White* (1861).

'Pioneer Period' Writer – 1861-1889

The decade of the 1860's categorised by Lawrence Jones as the 'Pioneer Period' (Jones 120) places Evans among the very first New Zealand-based novelists to write locally, yet achieve international publication status. This formative period in New Zealand literature, though oriented toward the 'imperial centre', is considered nonetheless to have been 'vigorous, broadly based and central to the culture of the growing nation' both in its occasional reference to the rigors of colonial frontier society and in the case of Evans, as a romance novel that could provide an antidote to what has been cited as the 'dangerous unpleasantness of realism' (Stafford and Williams *Introduction: A Land Mild and Bold*). As an early New Zealand author working both physically and imaginatively within an evolving national landscape, Evans' novelistic outlook sought wherever possible to incorporate at least some of the indigenising features pertinent to a 'Story of New Zealand'. Evans addressed the difficulties experienced in confronting the changing New Zealand colony as a literary subject, mentioning in her 'Preface'

Evans, Charlotte. *Over the Hills and Far Away: A Story of New Zealand*. London: Sampson Low, Marston, Low & Searle, 1874.

(where she refers to her English contemporary, the novelist Charlotte Bronte) how the [colony's] 'pattern gradually changes' (*OHFA* 'Preface'). Though conforming to an 'inherited genre' of literary style aimed essentially for an established Empire audience Evans formed, in both her novels and collection of stories, at least some reliance upon an 'ad hoc' use of New Zealand material termed 'exploitative conventionalism'

Jones, Lawrence. 'The Pioneer Novel.' *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English*. Ed. Terry Sturm, 2nd ed. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1998.

(Jones 122). This often took the form of a narrative 'punctuation' or periodic insertion of the 'exotic', as for example in the giving of a Maori name to the Cunningham's station home of 'Maungarewa' - or casual mention of food with a name as 'strange' as 'pokekhas' (*OHFA* 213). As a result, the overall landscape in Evans' use of the 'exotic' began to assert a sense of 'place' that was yet strange, which haunted the background of a novel that was also a 'story of New Zealand' (See title).

Over the Hills and Far Away consists of 33 chapters, with a short 'Preface' by the author and a page dedicated to her husband Eyre Evans. A brief survey of the plot of *Over the Hills and Far Away* sees the following: Lucy's departure from England accompanied by her brother Louis followed by the ship journey aboard the 'Flora McDonald' and Lucy's arrival and introduction to life in the colonies (Chapters 1-8) The appearance of the Winstanleys and Lucy's meetings with the Lennoxes at Deepdene then involve a working out of marriage plots concerning the Cunningham and Lennox families. The two outsiders Rylston Dacre and Laura, however, complicate Lucy's feelings of attachment to her shipboard 'fiancée' Clinton Meredith and instigate a covert, but growing affection between Lucy and Dacre. The resulting love triangle then ends in the climactic resolution of the suspense sub-plot regarding Laura's identity and Dr Dacre's past, as the novel's resolution of the marriage plot concerning Lucy is finally effected in a Christian theme of redemption (Chapter 33).

As a form of novel genre *Over the Hills and Far Away* incorporates aspects of the classic realism normally associated with fiction (David 192), while also following in the format of the sensation style popularised by Wilkie Collins; the writer and journalist contemporary of novelist Charles Dickens. Her novels were published during what is commonly referred to as the 'sensation decade' (David 1). Collins was noted for his adoption of gothic, romance and melodramatic elements to create a sensational form of writing which addressed popular court cases and themes of criminality (Jones 120). The Collins style of the popular novel encouraged the development of a certain form of modern storytelling. Based in contemporary settings and involving an experimentation with the violation of Victorian sexual mores, or accepted conventions of the bourgeois code, the sensation novel's narrative placed female characters in crime drama scenarios for which narrative disclosure became, in addition, a form of 'dissecting' the feminine (Flint 25). Collins' novels also, like Evans' colonial versions, addressed male melancholia, the position of women within marriage and the 'domesticated gothic'. All these factors are recognisable within *Over the Hills* in the following chapters: in 'The Slope' (Chapter 31) involving the hidden guilt and anxiety of Rylston Dacre; in 'The Third Time' (Chapter 11) the portrayal of Laura in the domestic interior of her 'dark sitting room' in a final confrontation with Dacre and Louis Cunningham (Chapter 11); and the trials of Lucy toward womanhood, culminating in the closing chapter -

'Forgiven' (Chapter 33).

Evans' insertion of detail concerning emigration and ship journeys with that of social custom also confirms her attention to the mode of 'classic realism' (David 65). This is noticed more particularly in the novel's opening chapters concerning the Cunningham's departure from English shores which refer specifically to the cities and ports of southern England such as Brighton, Plymouth and the coastal cliffs of Sussex (*OHFA* 30). Once aboard the 'Flora MacDonald' the features of shipboard life, undoubtedly drawn from Evans' own travel experiences, begin to colour the story. Based on simple day to day interactions, the diary Lucy writes aboard the 'Flora MacDonald' obeys the Victorian diarist's convention of daily observances of people and cabin arrangements, weather patterns and leisure reading (see Chapters 2-7 'Lucy's Diary'). Amidst these scenes of shipboard activities and the forming of new acquaintances, Evans developed her future plot scenarios regarding romance and relationships between the home country and the colony soon to be established. In the naiveté of its descriptions of shipboard romance and arrival in the colony with meetings on horseback, Evans' narrative directed itself toward a vision of landscape and people that was 'escapist', while also containing elements of realism. The escapist element formed itself particularly around the reconstituting of an idealised colonial landscape when, upon disembarkation at Port Chalmers, the characters' former ties with their home country appeared to swiftly re-established themselves - with seemingly little or no sense of intervening time, distance or physical effort. Of the progress of colonisation in her own area of Otago Evans wrote: 'The land which lay waste and desolate is now fenced and under cultivation' ('Preface'). Subsequently, in her novel on the colonial farm, is found the saccharine vista of Evans' conventionally idealised New Zealand landscape of home-like features, including 'English grass' (79), lawns, fences and 'enclosed' gardens (79).

Evans' exploitation of plot in the sensation genre emphasises certain features mentioned by Lawrence Jones i.e., the crimes and secret past separating hero and heroine; an emphasis on the 'unravelling of a mystery'

Jones, Lawrence. 'The Pioneer Novel.' *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English*. Ed. Terry Sturm, 2nd ed. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1998.

(Jones 125) and use of false identity; the 'documentary method'

Jones, Lawrence. 'The Pioneer Novel.' *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English*. Ed. Terry Sturm, 2nd ed. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1998.

(125) of telling the story with 'partial perspectives' (letters and journals)

Jones, Lawrence. 'The Pioneer Novel.' *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English*. Ed. Terry Sturm, 2nd ed. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1998.

(125), as well as the effect of shock and surprise and use of evocative settings. The influence of the sensation novel and a break with usual social boundaries begins to be felt in (Chapter 1) when after a protected life spent in the company of her aunts, Lucy's breaking of ties with England among a group of strangers appears to plunge her into an adult world of hidden intrigue and romantic possibility fitting the gothic stereotype, yet alleviated by the 'lighter' tone of the sensation narrative. While Lucy is ostensibly meant to be under the male protection of her brother Louis she often paradoxically appears to risk flirtation with a range of other male characters, the observations of whom she enters into her diary in ladylike fashion (see Chapters 2-7). For the Victorian traveller, and most particularly the young unmarried woman, a ship journey was clearly symbolic of encounter beyond normal social horizons. This is evidenced in Lucy's early flirtation with Clinton Meredith and anticipation of life in the colonies. In the opening chapters of emigration to the 'colonies' the ship becomes its own 'social cocoon'. Evans then manages to find scope for a delectating 'pas de deux' of amorousness, flirtation and worldly intrigue whilst maintaining a semblance of Victorian moral respectability. The question might then be raised as to the future meaning of the colony for the characters: is it to be a distant locus of escapism, of the socially dissident and 'unsanitary', or the place of prosperity, fortune and marriage?

A central preoccupation of Evans' characters would then appear to lie in the uncovering and restitution of their various past relationships in England. The freshness of the colonial vistas, though inviting, nonetheless contain shadows of secret dilemmas, providing the necessary ingredient of spice and intrigue anticipated by the Empire reader, as the colonies themselves become the scenario for a working out of sexually triangular relationships. In this respect, Evans staged much of her narrative action between the two geographical points of reference of Maungarewa and Deepdene, both of which serve as picturesque settings for a series of romantic episodes involving hidden desire (when can Dacre fully reveal his feelings), death scenarios (the 'sudden' death of Effie (192)) and marriage contracts and flirtations which see Mrs Lennox becoming confidential (see Chapter 15) – with all the scenes set amidst imported drawing room splendours. Using the now colonial family associations of the Lennoxes, the Priors and the visitors Winstanley and Dacre, Evans continued to sustain a web of romance sub-plots and mini dramas, during which characters are not allowed to be fully aware of each other's hidden relationships or feelings. This is so particularly in the sub-plot of Clinton Meredith's flirtation with the Lennox sisters in (Chapters 15-18), as Clinton's intentions come under increasing scrutiny followed by his eventual admission to having had a former love in England. On another subversive note is the sub-plot

concerning Dacre's tantalising former association with Laura, linked in the plot through the Brighton letter. The said clue first appears in the chance encounter between Lucy and Laura, prior to Lucy's departure, when she inadvertently picks up the letter about to be posted to Dacre. The letter then later reappears in the chapters surrounding Laura's full disclosure of her identity.

A further interesting and perhaps more subtle feature of the Evans plot is the apparent superficiality of the romantic interlude and tacit engagement of Lucy to Clinton Meredith, which in the succeeding chapters, is eventually to assume an increasingly complex and subverted character. This takes the form of Lucy's passing attachment, in view of a delay over Meredith, to a number of other possible suitors. An underlying plot theme of romantic dilemma involving discernment and subterfuge then ensues, whereby relationships in New Zealand become further complicated with the emergence of the Priors and the 'apathetic' outsider Arthur Winstanley. The romance and sensation plot theme of marriage settlement in *Over the Hills and Far Away* is also to be found in the courtship of Effie Lennox and Clinton Meredith, carefully overseen by Mrs Lennox (who plays confidant to Lucy). However, Lucy's own journey towards a marriage settlement, being more circuitous and fundamental to the suspense element in the novel itself, is rather less governed by watchful family members. Lucy in fact lacks the conventional family pattern of the Lennoxes, with no mother still alive and an 'absent' father who has been settled in advance in the colonies. Similarly, in her round of courtship with several suitors, Lucy is able at times to demonstrate independent traits of discernment and self-possession. The narrative voice of Evans then assumes a 'mother figure' role for the heroine, with commentaries aimed to cast amused or critical judgement. In her working out of the sensation romance plot Evans employs the element of time effectively, allowing for both leisurely and realist descriptions of colonial habitation and custom (i.e. 'lavish' outdoor Victorian picnics and horseriding) whilst also introducing characters so as to culminate in pivotal episodes such as 'The Country Concert' (Chapter 14), or 'Lucy's Ride' (Chapter 20) and, finally, in the climactic scenes of the closing chapters involving 'The Picture' (Chapter 28), in which Dacre's and Louis' mutual entanglements with Laura are finally discovered.

In the final two Chapters, 'A Charge' and 'Forgiven', Laura's charge against Dacre is resolved. Prior to that, Evans has skilfully allowed for both Dacre and Laura's reputations to be fully explored before the denouement which discloses upon Laura's scandalous impersonation over her dead sister Beatrice. At this point, Laura's disclosure of her real identity and the sad tale of her sister's death and association with Dacre fulfils the role of the purposely mistaken identity associated with the sensation novel. The presence of a Victorian moralist flavour is thus largely everted until the penultimate chapters, notably in the 'Forgiven' episode, when the suspect Dacre becomes not only Lucy's 'true love', but also an idealised Christian figure whose love must remain 'spiritual'.

In terms of narrative style *Over the Hills and Far Away* is seen to imitate the 'documentary method' whereby events are related through diaries, letters or journals

Jones, Lawrence. 'The Pioneer Novel.' *The Oxford History of New Zealand*

Literature in English. Ed. Terry Sturm, 2nd ed. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1998.

(Jones 125). The principal source is firstly evident in the use of Lucy's diary during her journey to New Zealand, then followed later on by a more factually driven and linear sequence narrative in the criminal genre

Jones, Lawrence. 'The Pioneer Novel.' *The Oxford History of New Zealand*

Literature in English. Ed. Terry Sturm, 2nd ed. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1998.

(Jones 120). In comparison to the in-depth characterisations and descriptiveness of other 'serious' fiction, the sensation phenomenon as seen in *Over the Hills and Far Away* brings a more altered reading into perspective, demonstrating an 'expedient' interpretation of character and event. Thus the frequently vacuous and saccharine presentation of Evans' characters (as echoed in Clinton Meredith's sudden remark over the Lennox sisters' 'regular' and 'horribly insipid' faces) have a banality that serves the underlying purpose of sensation narrative. A further indication of Evans' spare yet telling method of characterisation, is Lucy's sudden yet insightful observation of Meredith: 'One foot on shore, and one on sea, to one thing constant never' (OHFA 94).

Among other narrative features to which Evans' novel also adheres, is its essential faithfulness to the conventions of narrative closure usually demanded by the Victorian novel, such as the requiring of a form of 'resolution' or moral outcome through death or marriage (Flint 25). An example occurs in Evans' adaptation of the Collins' treatment of the 'iniquities of marriage'

Pykett, Lyn. 'Sensation and the Fantastic in the Victorian Novel.' *The Cambridge*

Companion to the Victorian Novel. Ed. Deirdre David. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

(Pykett 201) as seen in the sub-plot of Laura and Dacre's past entanglement and the suggestion of bigamy in the marriage of Lucy's brother Louis. The role of marriage in *Over the Hills* as the suggested means of resolution to the plot differs somewhat, however, in Dacre's tragic death and Lucy's forfeiture of the prospect of marriage.

Until the final two chapters, Evans appears to take particular care in maintaining the 'tightly-plotted' suspense plot line in this novel of the 'new mode' of colonial writing (Jones 125). This is seen for example in 'On the Lewes Road' (Chapters 1) and 'Lucy's Diary' (Chapter 3) with the central clue of Laura's letter emerging as the pivotal feature for resolving the theme of the 'hidden relationship'. To begin with, at this point in the novel, the main heroine Lucy is established as the narrator's main focus for the romance theme. At this time Lucy is found surrounded by an emerging cast of characters: her brother Louis, romantic suitor Clinton Meredith, 'hidden' love interest Dr Dacre and the 'mystery' woman crucial to the plot of 'Laura'. In what may appear a prosaic narrative style, Evans nonetheless initiates a series of characters and responses that will be developed more fully to include the subversive features mentioned by Jones i.e. a bigamous relationship and mystery of false identity. In the opening chapters, Evans also conforms to many features of romance melodrama, such as in her attaching of significance to descriptions of dress, making frequent mention of minor accessories such as bracelet 'charms', velvet neck ribbons and 'mysterious' physical deformities associated with a secret 'past' (such as the scar on Laura's otherwise beautiful neck) and items of sentiment (i.e. locket).

In its overall characterisations *Over the Hills and Far Away* appears to be rather more influenced by the idyllic recreation of the circle of gentility known at home, what Kirstine Moffat's *The Puritan Paradox* describes as 'aristocratic pleasure seekers rather than pioneers'

Moffat, Kirstine E. *The Puritan Paradox: The Puritan Legacy in the Intellectual, Cultural and Social Life of New Zealand, Focusing Primarily on the Works of Novelists Writing between 1862 and 1940*. Ph.D diss. Victoria University of Wellington.

(Moffat 19). Early on in the journey to New Zealand, a leisured circle can be seen forming among Lucy's sphere of acquaintance which appears strongly middle-class i.e. army officers, doctors and girls being accompanied out to the colony by their brother. Upon leaving England the facts of shipboard life carry constant reminders of the homeland in Evans' portrayal of shipboard activities. The influence of the Canterbury Settlement and the Anglican Church in New Zealand's early emigrations are a clearly identifiable feature, as witnessed in Chapter 3, in the captain's reading of 'Morning Prayers of the English Church' (*OHFA* 26). Seen from the vantage point of the ship's deck, Lucy's youthful anticipation of arrivals and future engagements all suggest a smooth transition into the new, waiting social milieu of the colony. For instance, Lucy notes in her diary that a Mr Prior, emigrating to Otago, has relations 'already settled and prospering' (40). With an authorial guiding commentary the *Over the Hills*' text positions Lucy in the discourse as judge of social appearances and character, fashion and custom; a role clearly illustrated in her observance at a local gathering underlining the following injunction: 'It was an understood thing [in that part of the New Zealand colonies] that ladies were never to appear before a colonial audience in anything but demi-toilet' (143). A similar sentiment is to be found in the following from the author's preface: 'Society has become more formal, and conforms more strictly to the rules in vogue in Europe'

Flint, Kate. "The Victorian Novel and its Readers". *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel*. Ed. Deirdre David. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

The novel's title *Over the Hills and Far Away* thus suggests a place of distance and geographic isolation from the homeland of Britain where scenarios of fulfilment and romantic escapism might be envisaged - not always within the boundaries of social or moral convention. Mr Cunningham's station set among the hills of New Zealand, and only recently made hospitable, presents (to Evans' mainly British or American readers), not only a setting for the visual imagination to roam in, but also an opportunity for a sentimental and melodramatic view of 'paternalism' in the 'transplanted' Victorian family and gender stereotypes

Pykett, Lyn. 'Sensation and the Fantastic in the Victorian Novel.' *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel*. Ed. Deirdre David. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. (David 98).

In Lucy's diary and later in the third-person narration Evans explores feelings surrounding paternal authority, sometimes taking what might appear a satirical view of the manly 'chivalric' code and models of femininity. In episodes describing flirtation and courtship, the naïve simplicity of a young woman's first steps into what will be a new 'society' in a far away land, takes along with it a world of inherited manners, conventions and social expectations. In accordance with conventional romance plot expectations, Lucy's diary of meetings with male acquaintances on board ship bear the flavour of a romantic fortuitousness. Though at times simplistically delivered in its narrative style, Evans effectively presents an underlying ingredient of 'suspense'. Evans then colours her narrative by exploiting the gothic romance through an expressive romantic imagery and melodrama. See, for example, chapter 28, where 'the face' is seen to come forth in its 'strange wild beauty' (*OHFA* 92).

Collins' fascination with the unstable boundary between the normal and the deviant and power relationships within the Victorian family, as more recently described in texts such as *The Cambridge*

Companion to the Victorian Novel

Flint, Kate. "The Victorian Novel and its Readers". *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel*. Ed. Deirdre David. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

(2001), are incorporated by Evans with histrionic flair, in particular with her depictions of outsider figures and paternal authority within settler culture. This is seen for example in the veiled infamy of Laura or 'Mrs Keith' (*OHFA*) and 'Madame Ainsleigh' (*ASF*) becoming 'sensationally' exposed by Evans through an intricately worked plot that confronts internal contradictions of the genre with regard to 'normal' and 'deviant' behaviour, sex and gender stereotyping. With her 'pale face and black hair' (*OHFA* 286), magnificent dresses and 'velvet on her throat', Evans positions Laura (or Mrs Keith), in the sexual female gothic element to which her outsider position decrees (287). As a form of shadow figure, Laura appears to exert a degree of control, yet perhaps in the nature of sensation romance lacks the malefic characteristics of the more serious fiction of Bronte.

In *Over the Hills and Far Away* Evans refers to two other popular romantic novels: *The Mill on the Floss* by George Eliot and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (whom the author acknowledges in her 'Preface'). Evans' first serialised novel *Guy Eversley* (where the 'proud heroine must be blinded before she accepts the virtuous hero') is described in *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature* as a 'reversal' to the character of Rochester in *Jane Eyre*

Jones, Lawrence. 'The Pioneer Novel.' *The Oxford History of New Zealand*

Literature in English. Ed. Terry Sturm, 2nd ed. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1998.

(Jones 125). In Chapter 1 of *Over the Hills*, in an overlap with fictional realism, Evans creates a "novel within the novel" effect by incorporating *Mill on the Floss* and *Jane Eyre* as books to be read on board the 'Flora MacDonald' by Laura, the 'mystery' woman figure. The character of Laura's image as an outsider is further enhanced in Clinton Meredith's aside that she might well have 'a whole novel in three volumes connected with her' (*OHFA* 76). Further to *Jane Eyre* the characters Lucy and Dacre appear to play similar roles to that of Edward Rochester and Jane, with each of the novels sharing in common an 'older man with a past' and 'younger' unmarried heroine. In another, re-occurring instance of the female shadow figure, is Brontë's invention of Bertha in *Jane Eyre*. This is echoed in Dacre's admission that he could 'curse the day when I took her [Laura] for my wife' (57). Similar to *Jane Eyre* is Lucy's reference in *Over the Hills and Far Away* to the older Dacre as a man with 'shock' and 'trouble' that has 'coloured his whole history' (66). In the denouement of *Over the Hills*, Evans is also found to be noticeably careful in her drawing out of Dacre's feelings for Lucy, which forms yet another parallel with Brontë's novel in the romantic passion seen in Jane and Rochester's 'resolved' relationship.

Contemporary Pioneer Women Novelists

Two New Zealand women novelists writing during the same period as Charlotte Evans were Isabella E. Aylmer, author of *Distant Homes: Or the Graham Family in New Zealand* (1862) (NZETC Collection) and more particularly Lady Mary Anne Barker, whose epistolary memoirs *Station Life In New Zealand* and *Station Amusements in New Zealand* are now well established in the early national canon

Jones, Lawrence. 'The Pioneer Novel.' *The Oxford History of New Zealand*

Literature in English. Ed. Terry Sturm, 2nd ed. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1998.

(Jones 123). Aylmer's and Lady Barker's works share certain characteristics in common with Evans, at least in terms of their portrayal of Christian ethic and social relationships found in pioneer society. The novels shed anecdotal insight upon the construction of everyday existence and European settlement in mid- New Zealand: in Aylmer's descriptions of early settlement in Nelson and in Evans' felicitous relating of colonial pastimes, such as the picnic in 'Under the Gums' (Chapter 12) and the 'End of the Concert' (Chapter 14) at which Dacre and Lucy meet. Evans also shares similar themes with Barker's memoirs, as for example in Barker's fictional depictions of social life at a station in early Otago i.e.: 'Everyday Station Life' (Letter 15)); 'A Christmas Picnic and Other Doings' (Letter 4); and 'Death in our New Home – New Zealand (Letter 9). If in these narratives Evans did in fact attempt to deflect away from any 'dangerous unpleasantness'

Stafford, Jane and Williams, Mark. *Introduction: A Land Mild and Bold, Diffident and Pertinent*. New Zealand Electronic Text Centre, New Zealand Novels Digital Collection, <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/subject-000005.html>.

(Stafford and Williams *Introduction: A Land Mild and Bold*), they did so by embracing both the pleasures and difficulties and everyday crises and hopes within a discourse of gentility. Subsequently, the question of narrative voice presented an interesting comparison for both women authors who were seeking in the nineteenth-century to address in reassuring tones an Empire readership that could then have seemed distant or superior in its demands: an audience made to respond to the 'tone of command truly imperial' (*OHFA* 98).

Unlike Evans who wrote while domiciled in New Zealand, Barker and Aylmer were at least partially absent from the scenes of their narratives. Barker was distinctly autobiographical, basing her writing on letters written during a period spent in New Zealand. Aylmer, on the other hand, never actually lived in New Zealand. Writing

from England and also sharing Evans' Christian background, Aylmer based her novel *Distant Homes* on letters written by a cousin of her husband's

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(Moffat 5). In *Station Life* Barker reconstituted and reflected upon memory while reliving her former New Zealand experiences. Distance and a lack of direct familiarity with New Zealand's geographical and social terrain thus posed their own, sometimes amusing, differences in the realism Aylmer in particular brought to her writing

Moffat, Kirstine E. *The Puritan Paradox: The Puritan Legacy in the Intellectual, Cultural and Social Life of New Zealand, Focusing Primarily on the Works of Novelists Writing between 1862 and 1940*. Ph.D diss. Victoria University of Wellington.

(Moffat 5). Aylmer's portrayal of New Zealand's early settlement appeared as an epic narrative, with moral overtones derived from the influence in the colony of the early missionary church. *Distant Homes* has since been criticised for its puritanism in *The Puritan Paradox*

Moffat, Kirstine E. *The Puritan Paradox: The Puritan Legacy in the Intellectual, Cultural and Social Life of New Zealand, Focusing Primarily on the Works of Novelists Writing between 1862 and 1940*. Ph.D diss. Victoria University of Wellington.

(Moffat 5). While the thread of moral didacticism runs through the work of Evans' and Aylmer's works in particular, the vein of religious sentiment in *Over the Hills* provides a thematic 'crux' for the romantic plot's final resolution. As noted by recent biographers, the results of Aylmer's imagined perceptions of New Zealand have produced their own anomalies in an early pioneer novel that conveys the challenge of writing for a distant Empire audience – of a country situated emotionally and geographically 'far away'

Moffat, Kirstine E. *The Puritan Paradox: The Puritan Legacy in the Intellectual, Cultural and Social Life of New Zealand, Focusing Primarily on the Works of Novelists Writing between 1862 and 1940*. Ph.D diss. Victoria University of Wellington.

(Moffat 5).

Evans' thematic handling of the colonial setting is similar to that of Barker and also another less well-known pioneer novelist Elizabeth Boyd Bayly (NZETC Collection). The primarily autobiographical works by Barker relate to the period of her second marriage to Frederick Napier Broom, whom she married in 1865. Many aspects of Barker's own life in fact bear similarities to the plots of Evans' novels, including even a touch of that risqué element associated with the colonial sensation novel. Barker in fact left her children in England to follow Broome out to New Zealand

Barker, Lady Mary Anne. *Station Life in New Zealand*. Auckland, New Zealand: Random House, 2000.

(Barker 12). Like the Cunningham family in Evans' novel *Over the Hills and Far Away*, Broome intended to buy a sheep station. In common with the Cunningham family's sailing from Brighton to New Zealand on a long sea voyage and prior to their settling in at the station home 'Maungarewa', Barker and her husband were also to brave a 'long, stormy voyage' to Lyttelton Harbour in New Zealand's South Island

Barker, Lady Mary Anne. *Station Life in New Zealand*. Auckland, New Zealand: Random House, 2000.

(Barker 71). The couple then made a laborious trek over the Port Hills of Christchurch. In 1866, the Barkers moved to a sheep station which they named 'Broomielaw'

Barker, Lady Mary Anne. *Station Life in New Zealand*. Auckland, New Zealand: Random House, 2000.

(Barker 109). It was from Broomielaw, situated in the foothills of the Southern Alps, that Barker began a series of correspondence to Britain that would form the basis for her classic autobiographical novels. Barker's biography and literary motivations also find a parallel with those of Evans, in the form of a frontier farming lifestyle and diminishing financial returns, for which the writing of literature could provide additional income.

Climate, sudden upheaval and nature's unpredictable elements feature also in both the fortunes of the Barkers and the Somerset family in Evans' novel *A Strange Friendship*, whose station home life is disrupted by the sudden rising of flood waters (ASF 203). It was following a 'severe snow storm' that the Barkers made the reluctant decision to return to England, from whence the memories of colonial life provided the impetus for a nostalgic look back to the life they had previously led in the colony 'far away'. Barker's brisk and entertaining approach to her writing recalls with vigour the impressions she received from what was a relatively privileged standpoint. She joined with Evans in her observations of people and the sense of a new energy or independence synonymous with the expectations of a 'new' society, in which class divisions could only be a reflection of the more entrenched class system in England. Barker's tone of optimism noting the 'very practical style and tone' and 'independence in bearing' of the people

Barker, Lady Mary Anne. *Station Life in New Zealand*. Auckland, New Zealand: Random House, 2000.

(Barker 10), shares in common with Evans the capturing of a breaking down of usual social and domestic

boundaries. The pertinent and more ambitious flavour of domestic servants in comes in particular to the regular observation of Barker and also Evans. In *A Strange Friendship*, Dolly enthuses on the ‘rapidity’ of the new strengths learnt by their new domestic servant Lizzie and ‘her readiness of resource upon an emergency’ (ASF 24).

Elizabeth Boyd-Bayly (*A New Zealand Courtship and Other Work-A-Day Stories*) (NZETC Collection) also concerns herself with patterns of courtship and popular romance conventions set in the colony - except this time in a strongly working class context. In *A New Zealand Courtship* published by the Religious Tract Society of London, Boyd Bayly traced the progress of ‘honour’ in romantic courtship between John and Sallie, a working class couple, two Sunday School teachers in the rural settlement of Rakawahi. In Chapter 2, John and Sallie’s story is drawn against a setting of rusticism and visual degradation as the courting couple earn local acceptance through their moral commitment to a lengthy engagement, validated in the comment that they ‘never had done anything on the sly’ (60). This romance of the colonial working class occurs during a time of economic depression when ‘great men were failing on all sides; but the little men held on their way—married, and wanted houses for themselves and their stock’ (65). More than Evans, however, Bayly exploited the features of natural landscape to create a sense of hybrid New Zealand romanticism, evoking in the moving and shifting shades of ‘dark and purple’ and ‘fitful gleams of sunshine’, the impressions of lowland plains and rivers (10). In another attempt at romanticisation of the New Zealand landscape, Bayly saw familiar landmarks such as the Port Hills of Christchurch as ‘cumulus cloud, like vast heaps of snow resting on their own grey shadow’ (10). A colonial gothic then looms at the edge of the ‘little settlement of Rakawahi’ in a ‘wilderness of Maori-heads’ (10). In their subjection to the vagaries of the New Zealand climate, the rural livelihood of Bayly’s farm characters have something in common with the home of the Somersets in *A Strange Friendship*, being ever threatened by floodwaters. As Bayly’s character states: ‘When it does not rain outright in that part of New Zealand, it shines; and when it rains, it ‘pays attention to it’ (12). More than Evans, Bayly’s narrative descriptions portray the strenuousness of a physical pioneering life, marked by a local terrain of ‘thick stumps of peaty earth, two or three feet high, each bearing a crown of long, coarse, drooping grass, like unkempt hair’ (12). In Bayly’s hungry, survivalist version of the colonist milieu ‘the stumps are like peat; the people cut them, and use them for fuel. The soil, when cleared, is rich in the extreme’ (12).

In comparison with her New Zealand contemporaries, Evans had a relatively prolific output for an isolated writer, having two published hard-back novels, three published short stories and a small collection of poetry to her credit. Evans combines the influences of literary genre with elements of her own biography to offer an early, yet hybrid, version of a New Zealand novel. As a sensation novelist, Evans explores the breaking of accepted moral codes and social norms by writing of gender relationships and the position of women in marriage. Although working within the framework of light romance fiction, Evans manages to suggest a sense of human character and its consequences, in particular the plight of women, en route to fortune and happiness. Her novel themes include the rituals of romantic courtship and the colonists’ all-important task of acquiring property, wealth and at times even a landed title (readily seen in her extended kinship link with the Ogilvie-Grant family)

Bauld, Jean. *Fragments of Poetry and Prose. The Story of Three Closely Linked New Zealand Colonial Families, Evans, Lees, Ogilvie-Grant*, ATL-MS-13-19-1, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

(ATL-MS-5135-03).

As a work of early Empire writing, *Over the Hills and Far Away* is concerned mainly with adventure and relationship, finding its own place within the everyday world of social identity filled with passing needs and day dreams. Such a story might have been intended not only for the Empire reader, but even more perhaps, for the actual shipboard passenger on a long sea journey to the colonies. In her novel of epiphanies and felicities, double entendre, attractive men and picture box pretty women (including the ineffable prettiness of young Jeanie Lennox) Evans creates a book of entertainment wherein ‘dreams’ might become ‘reality’, yet not without some human ordeal. In this novel is the central character of Lucy, who with her pleasing though not stunning features resembles the heroine of *Jane Eyre*. For Lucy has at least one salient attribute – her hair of ‘lovely curly rings, clustered full of golden lights ...’ (OHFA 3). As a novel both quixotically sentimental and a reminder of new beginnings, contained within the boundaries of inherited convention – yet indefinably ‘other’ – *Over the Hills and Far Away* presents an early glimpse of a ‘story of New Zealand’.

Front Cover

Back Cover

Title Page

Over the Hills, and Far Away: A Story of New Zealand.

BYC. Evans, Author of “A Strange Friendship,” Etc.

London: Sampson Low, Marston, Low, & Searle, Crown Buildings, 188, Fleet Street. 1874. [All rights

reserved.]

I Dedicate

This Book To My Husband.

Preface.

IN writing a story of New Zealand life, one great difficulty presents itself.

It is a life which in its social aspects is continually altering, as the country advances in prosperity and civilization. The colours in the kaleidoscope remain the same, but the pattern gradually changes.

In writing this story, I had in my mind the New Zealand of some years ago, with which I first made acquaintance. Since then much is altered. The land which lay waste and desolate is now fenced and under cultivation, and society has become more formal, and conforms more strictly to the rules in vogue in Europe.

Charlotte Brontë says, at the end of one of her letters written on the Continent, to a friend at home, that it seems to her, while writing, as if the winds and waves of the Channel must drown the sound of what she is saying.

I too have the same odd fancy. Thinking of the mighty waste of waters which separates me from the home-country, I feel tempted to exclaim, "Oh, mighty ocean which divides us, hush your roar awhile! Oh, wild winds, cease to moan! and let them hear my voice in England!"

Contents.

Chapter I. On the Lewes Road.

BRIGHTON

A city on the south coast of England noted for its long promenade. A popular habitat among English middle and upper classes.

during the season, and about three o'clock on a glorious summer afternoon; the Grand Parade

Name for the long promenade along the seafront of the City of Brighton.

a stream of carriages and riders so deep and rapid that Lucy Cunningham, after waiting vainly for several minutes for a chance to cross the road, gave it up in despair, and pursued her way along the foot pavement nearest the sea, hoping for better luck anon.

She had some letters in one hand, and was intending to drop them into the first pillar letter-box she met with. There was one on the farther side of the road just opposite to her she knew, but at present she was cut off from it by the steady ebb and flow of chariots

A name commonly associated with Roman times but used here in the context of Victorian horse-driven carriages.

during the season, and about three o'clock on a glorious summer afternoon; the Grand Parade and horsemen. She comforted herself with the reflection that she had plenty of leisure time, and that her walk would be better prolonged, for it was the last walk she was to undertake in England until—who could say when?

This was Monday. On Tuesday she was going with her mother on board the "Flora Macdonald

A Scottish name Flora MacDonald is an actual historic character named after an 18th century Scottish Jacobite heroine famed for assisting the escape of Charles Edward Stuart (commonly known as 'Bonnie Prince Charlie') during the Jacobite rebellion. The name links to the history of early Scottish settlement in the region, see" Susan MacLean Kybett, *Biography*. London" Unwin Hyman, 1998.

," bound for Otago.

Lucy Cunningham said to herself, as she sauntered down the Brighton Parade that afternoon, that with the morrow a new chapter in her life would begin. But she was wrong. It was to commence that day.

This history does not concern itself with anything happening to Lucy previous to the time I now write of. Briefly and concisely, in as few words as possible, let me state how she came to take that last walk in Brighton when a fresh episode in her life opened out before her.

She was then twenty-one, and her brother Louis was eight years her senior. The last four he had spent in New Zealand

Founded as a British colony by the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. Following the treaty the colony received increasing numbers of European settlers, mainly British. For further information on the history of New Zealand,

see: Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*. Auckland, N.Z: Penguin Books, 2003.

with his father, and then he had taken a trip to England to fetch his sister, who had been educated at home, out to the colony

OED definition states: 'a settlement in a new country; a body of people who settle in a new locality, forming a community subject to or connected with their parent state; the community so formed, consisting of the original settlers and their descendants and successors, as long as the connexion with the parent state is kept up'. New Zealand was a British colony from 1840 to 1907 when it became a dominion, although from 1856 onwards it was effectively self-governing. See: <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/government-an-nation/2/>

A major river in southern England most well known for being the river around which England's main city London is built.

, between which residences they divided their time with extreme regularity.

Lucy had not seen her father for seven years, for that period had elapsed since he had left England, so that he was almost a stranger to his only daughter. When she last saw him she was

“Standing with reluctant feet
Where the brook and river meet—
Womanhood and childhood sweet.”

Now childhood had passed for ever into the “days that are no more;” but Lucy was still in all the bloom of her first youth.

Let me try to sketch her as she stands in this first chapter of my story, leaning over the railings of the Esplanade

OED definition states: 'a levelled piece of ground; often, such a space intended to serve as a public promenade'

, looking out, not only at the blue waves of the Channel

Refers here to the English Channel the expanse of water dividing England from continental Europe.

, but also at the advancing tide of her life. A pretty girl certainly, yet not uncommonly so. You may see many fairer faces in the carriages passing by. A complexion more pale than rosy—not beautiful, yet not sallow; a mouth and nose of the same mediocre type; eyes not large, but bright and clear; and a broad, intelligent forehead. Her hair was, with the exception of her graceful, rounded figure, her one especial beauty. An artist would have loved its rich brown colour and its regular natural ripple; so, too, he would have approved of the picturesque mass in which—Lucy disdained hair-pads or false plaits—it was gathered high upon her head, and set off with a blue ribbon. Lovely curly rings clustered, full of golden lights, upon the front of that natural crown, but no long falling tress or ringlet concealed the outline of the graceful neck and shoulders. Certainly that hair had been bestowed upon one who knew how to manage it and do it justice. The worst of it was, as Lucy herself used to say, that in these days of wigs and hair-dyes people would not give her credit for her real, true possession, but persisted in believing it to be false.

My portrait is almost complete. It only remains to be added that Lucy was dressed, on the day we first met, like numbers of other English girls, in a pretty short walking costume

Victorian vernacular for dress apparel 'costume' has specific connotations with socially appropriate or expected forms of clothing defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as 'the mode of personal attire and dress belonging to a nation, period or class'.

of silvery grey lustre, with a little black high-crowned hat, adorned with a snow-white plume.

She walked on for some time without making another attempt to cross the Parade

In the 19th century a busy thoroughfare filled with passing horses and carriages.

. She had by this time determined that she would find her way home through the town, and post her letters—farewells to one or two friends—on the way. Louis, who had gone to London, would not be back until seven o'clock, and they were not to dine until then.

The tide was coming in, the sky was without a cloud, and the air was only freshened by a faint breeze from the sea. The dark-blue waters heaved languidly in the summer afternoon. Lucy, in her heart, was bidding “good-bye” to it all, but not too sorrowfully. She was very young, and she fully intended to come back and visit it all again some day.

In the town she made a few purchases—last additions to her outfit—and managed, with a forgetfulness for which she felt provoked with herself, to pass the General Post Office without once thinking of her letters.

Mention of letters is also linked to the 18th century 'epistolary' novel an early example of the novel form in which letters are a narrative feature.

She only remembered them when she was half-way home, and the incident that recalled them to her mind was this:—Turning the corner of a quiet by-street, which she knew would lead her back to the Parade, she saw, lying on the pavement before her, a letter, face downwards.

She took it up. It was sealed and stamped, and directed in a lady's hand, clear and good, to

“*R. DACRE, ESQ., M.D., “301, Citadel Road, “Plymouth.”*”

It had been lying on a dusty square of stone, and was slightly soiled from its contact therewith.

There was not a single person visible in the street, and Lucy looked at the envelope in her hand, feeling for a moment rather puzzled. Then she determined to slip it into the nearest letter-box with her own. It was quite ready for posting, and probabilities were that it had been dropped on the way to the post-office by its bearer.

She walked on with a few vague speculations in her mind as to the probable contents of this letter. Would she be assisting to make or to mar some small romance

'Romance' is also a literary genre. Used here to denote a felicitous 'passing' attachment consistent with romantic 'melodrama'.

by posting it? Or did it merely concern some prosaic, important matter of business?

In the next street which Lucy entered there was, as she knew, a chemist's shop

Formerly known as 'apothecary' the term 'chemist' may reflect 19th century advancements in science and medicinal drugs.

, which was also a post-office. As she turned the corner of the street she saw that there was, standing by the letter-box, a tall lady, whose back was towards her. A black grenadine shawl, a black dress, and a black bonnet with violet flowers—that was all she could see. But, as she approached, the tall, sombre figure turned round, and Lucy saw a handsome face with an expression of such blank dismay and perplexity that she actually started. Could this be the owner of the lost missive?

She held it towards the stranger with the words, “I have just found this lying in the road; does it belong to you? You are the first person I have seen since.”

The large eyes looking down at her—Lucy was rather below the medium height, and this lady was above it—lost their troubled expression. The lady in black smiled, took the letter quickly, and dropped in into the box before her.

“It belonged to me,” she said. “I must have let it fall as I came along. What a lucky chance I met you! I am much obliged to you for returning it to me. It was of importance.”

It was an important letter truly; but it never reached the person to whom it was addressed. Had it done so this story would never have been told. But he had already left Plymouth

A major maritime city in south east England Plymouth was a principal departure point for 19th century emigrants. Plymouth may have been familiar to the author who stayed in southern England before travelling to New Zealand in 1862. See: <http://www.New Zealandetc.org/tm/scholarly/subject-000001.html>.

. The Dead Letter Office

A repository for mail with incomplete address details its mention here could also have intended association with the mystery or suspense element found in this type of 'sensation' novel.

took possession of it, opened it, and found in it no clue to the writer, consequently it was doomed to annihilation. But it deserves mention here, because, though it failed to fulfil the errand on which it was despatched, and died dumb to the only one who could have understood its words, yet it was the accidental cause of first bringing together two women who were destined to exercise a vast influence on each other's lives.

At this, their first meeting, neither made any great impression on the mind of the other. Lucy said to herself, “She is handsome

Victorian vernacular for pleasant or dignified appearance but not implying extreme beauty.

—decidedly so—but she looks as if she had a temper; and, besides, she's rather faded. I wonder what that letter was about?”

The other, after her few hurried words of explanation to Lucy, made her a farewell gesture and turned away. Her thought was, “A pretty baby face, with no character about it; nice hair; I should recognize her again by that more easily than by anything else.”

She was walking away towards the end of the street, and presently she turned the corner. As she did so she looked back, but Lucy was gone. She had gone into the chemist's shop to make some small purchase. They did not see each other again just yet.

Lucy went home and found her brother Louis waiting for her. He was a good-looking man, with a fair beard and quiet, reserved manners. But for the present we must leave them, and follow the steps of the lady in black.

She walked quickly, and as one who knew her way about Brighton well. Street after street she entered and left behind her, until at last the houses grew fewer in number, and the gay, busy part of the town was passed.

She was on the Lewes Road, and in awhile she stopped at the gates of the cemetery which lies on the

right-hand side as you leave Brighton. She passed under the archway and emerged on the gravel drive which leads up to the graves. Here she walked slower and with a more weary step. The tombs

Associated here with graveyards tombs represent a particular Victorian preoccupation with 'gothic' or morbid subjects such as death and mortality. The tomb was therefore a common feature of 18th and 19th century novels and in particular the 'gothic romance'.

, among which is the great marble block with a medallion on two sides, dedicated to the memory of Frederick William Robertson, she passed without a glance. She made her way, still slowly, but without pausing, to the higher and cheaper part of the burying-ground—not the very cheapest, but the intermediate part. Here she sought out a grave. There was no stone on it—only grass—and at the head was planted a geranium. Other distinguishing sign it had none.

Beside the green mound she sat down. She was high up on the slope of the hill. Brighton lay at her feet. The white tombs

Victorian tombs of the wealthier classes often consisted of white marble and were ornate or simple according to family or dynastic associations. Also symbolic in sentimental literature which eulogised the death of the small child or innocence.

below stood out in exquisite contrast with the green tints of the grass and the trees; the sunlight lay brilliantly over all, and the sea rippled in front, blue and calm. The solitary figure seated on the hill-side had her eyes fixed upon the lovely view below, but her inward vision saw it not.

Nothing interrupted her thoughts, whatever they were. There were two or three parties of visitors to the cemetery, but they were satisfied with examining the larger and more striking-looking tombs below. Not one of them came any higher. At some little distance from her a man was busy painting the small iron railing

Common feature in Victorian graveyards.

round a baby's grave with dark-green paint, but he was intent upon his work, and did not notice the woman seated by a mound on his right. It was not at all an uncommon sight there, so that no one saw a change pass gradually over the face of the motionless watcher on the hill.

It was a very handsome face, and would be so most probably for some years to come, although the first bloom and softness of youth were past, and although at first its expression was one of utter weariness and indifference; but as the minutes flew by, slowly, the pale cheeks began to flush with pink, and there rose and darkened in the great grey eyes a look of wrath.

The man who was painting the green railing came at last to tell her that it was the hour when the cemetery was closed for the night. He thought, as he spoke to her, that the expression of her face was not pleasant. She got up, however, and when he had gone back to fetch his paint and brushes, she pulled a few leaves from the geranium at the head of the grass-covered mound.

She had a bunch of charms

Associated with talismanic protection the word refers here more specifically to a decorative female fashion accessory. Charms are also traditionally linked to girdles and more recently wrist bracelets.

hanging to her watch-chain. Into one of these—a large, old-fashioned locket

Popular dress accessory dating to pre-Victorian times with strong sentimental and personal associations the locket is a potent romance image.

—she put the leaves, fastening the glass over them carefully, and then shutting the trinket with a firm snap. Two of the charms upon the cluster were remarkable—a wedding-ring and its guard, a circle of dead gold set with three turquoises.

After this she walked slowly away. At that moment she felt, as did the girl in Jean Ingelow's beautiful ghostly poem, "Requiescat in Pace," after her vision, as she sat on the Cromer Downs and looked out to sea,—

"I rose up, I made no moan, I did not cry nor falter,
But slowly in the twilight I came to Cromer town.
What can wringing of the hands do, that which is ordained to alter?
He had climbed, had climbed the mountain he would ne'er come down."

Chapter II. Pages from Lucy's Diary.

ON BOARD THE "FLORA MACDONALD," JULY 27th, 18—. —Yesterday, Louis and I went on board the "Flora Macdonald," at Gravesend, and to-day we sailed; so I suppose I ought immediately to commence a diary. A common preoccupation in the Victorian era and often associated with ship travel.

of the voyage

Further reference to emigration in other novels of the Literature collection. See:
<http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/subject-000005.html>.

. Every one, I am told, begins one on first setting out, but people say it is very hard to find something to record every day at sea. I shall learn by experience if this is true or not.

To begin, then, with yesterday. It was rather a dull kind of day, and very hot, until in the middle of the day a breeze sprang up from the river. We dined in Gravesend, and went on board our ship just after the passengers who were already assembled had finished their dinner in the saloon. They were most of them on deck.

Just as I stepped on board, a gust of wind blew off my hat. It was immediately captured and restored to me by a gentleman with a dark beard, who was standing near.

As I took my hat from him, I distinctly heard him mutter to himself, "What beautiful hair!"

I felt myself grow scarlet, and was thankful to turn away to hide my hot cheeks; for the little scene had been so dramatic that it almost seemed as if I had lost my hat on purpose, for the sake of effect!

I had spirits enough to see the humorous side of everything; and, indeed, the day was not a sad one at all to Louis and myself. This was chiefly, I think, because we had no especial friends to come and see the last of us. My aunts were not strong enough to attempt it; Louis' friends are chiefly in New Zealand; and of my school-girl allies, not one could arrange matters so as to escort me to the ship.

It was much better; and both Louis and I were relieve at having got through all our farewells on *terra firma*.

But pathetic little scenes

Incidents described may be realistically drawn from the author's own shipboard experiences when travelling to New Zealand.

were about us everywhere, and were taking place that day all over the ship, from the wheel to the forecastle.

Front part of a ship below the deck'.

In one corner I saw a poor old woman crying bitterly over her son, whom she never hoped to see again.

A girl of my own age was lowered into a boat, looking as pale as death. As the boat pulled off, I saw that she had fainted, and her friends were trying to restore her, so far in vain. Her lover was on board our ship.

The "ship's husband," as he is called, was on board, and the agent

Advertisement for passenger ship agents in North Otago Times 6 October 1874. See:
<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>New Zealand.

from Simpson and Seymour's,

Many early New Zealand emigrants arrived under 'The New Zealand Company'.

but not the captain, and no one seemed quite to know when he might be expected. At six o'clock we went down to a most uncomfortable tea in the saloon. Every one sat in the wrong place, and no one had any appetite.

All the other first-cabin passengers were at tea, and I may as well put down their names here.

The stern-cabin

At rear of a ship or boat.

next to mine is taken by a young married couple—a Mr. and Mrs. Grant; then comes my cabin, then Louis', then the doctor's; opposite to him is the gentleman with the beard, whose name I have not yet learnt.

Then comes a cabin belonging to a Mr. Lennox, who has a run in Otago, and is returning from a few months' visit to England.

Travel between New Zealand and England was not uncommon among the wealthier of early settlers.

He is grave, grey-haired, and elderly; but with a pleasant, attractive face and manner. Then two ex-officers of the 200th, Mr. Prior and Mr. Meredith, share a cabin between them; and the other stern-cabin is taken by a Mrs. Mostyn, with her two children and nurse. She is going out to join her husband.

The saloon party is completed with the captain and first mate, who take the head and foot of the table.

After tea we went up on deck again. It was utter misery and confusion. The doctor was reviewing the sailors on one side of the deck, and some of the second-cabin passengers had pitched their camp-stools, and were actually trying to keep their heads sufficiently clear in the confusion as to admit of their studying cheap editions, in very small type, of the Waverley Novels!

One of a series of novels that were published by the early romantic novelist Sir Walter Scott between 1814 and 1831.

It was a very hot night. The breeze died away again, and it became perfectly calm. Louis and I went and leant over the bulwarks,

Extension of a ship's sides above sea level.

side by side, but were neither of us inclined to talk.

A small steamer, bound for Rotterdam, passed us; and the people clustered like bees on her deck, waved their hats and handkerchiefs, and cheered the emigrant vessel. Some of us returned the salute. It began to grow

dusk. When it was getting quite dark, and I was tired of watching

“The lamp's quiver
So far in the river,”

I went below. Sleep, as I imagined, would be out of the question in that small closet of a cabin, with such strange noises all about me; but I was dead tired, and soon fast asleep.

The last thing I remember is hearing some one, standing close to my cabin door, in the saloon say, “Good-bye, Dacre. *Dieu vous garde!*”

I looked through the slides of my cabin ventilator, and saw the bearded gentleman shaking hands with, apparently, a friend, who was just leaving. “Dacre? Dacre? Where have I heard that name lately? I cannot remember.”

The captain came on board late at night, and we sailed about four o'clock this morning. Grey dawn showed the water visible through my port-hole, glassy smooth, but turning green. After breakfast I went on deck. It was a lovely morning, without a breath of wind. We were towed by a steam-tug to Deal, where we anchored, and waited for a breeze.

Mr. Meredith, who is a very handsome, fair-haired man, introduced himself to Louis, and they rapidly made friends, while Mrs. Grant and I showed each other some new patterns in tatting. If we had been setting forth on a picnic in a pleasure-boat, we could not have had a more lazy, charming day of it, with novels and backgammon on deck.

July 28th, Thursday.—Sailed this morning. Another lovely day. At night, off Dungeness.

July 29th.—Our pleasant society

OED definition states: 'association or friendly interaction with other people' the company of others. Also in extended use with reference to animals or (occas.) plants'.

broken up by the melancholy

OED definition states: 'all temper, sullenness, brooding, anger'.

the fact that almost all its members have succumbed to sea-sickness. There were several gaps at the breakfast table, and about ten o'clock Louis broke down. He went below, leaving me on deck, fully determined never to give in.

The first mate came to me, as I stood by the door of the companion-stairs leading from the saloon, and told me Beachy Head was in sight.

I was wild for a last glimpse of the dear old Sussex coast,

This nostalgic reference to the coast of Sussex is also reflected in the popular song 'The White Cliffs of Dover'.

so he helped me to walk up the deck, and, holding fast by one of the belaying pins,

A device used on board ships comprised of solid metal or wooden bars. Used for attaching ropes. OED definition states: 'Naut. The coiling of running ropes round pins, etc'.

I looked at the distant coast-line out of my opera-glass.

After awhile a voice behind me said, “You must be tired of standing. Shall I fetch your easy chair up here for you?”

I looked round. Doctor Dacre, with his telescope in his hand, was close to me, standing, in spite of the rolling of the vessel, with sufficient ease and firmness as to show that this was not the first time he had been to sea.

Doctor Dacre is the gentleman whom I have mentioned in my diary before as “the man with the beard.” I should have added, “and with the eyes,” for his eyes are certainly uncommonly bright and handsome. For the rest, he looks about thirty, and has a pleasant face, with a square forehead. But he is not nearly as good looking as Mr. Meredith, who is by far our handsomest cabin passenger.

I thanked Doctor Dacre, and he fetched my chair. Then, standing by my side, he said, “No one has introduced us to each other; but, considering that we are likely to be near neighbours for a good many weeks, I think I may venture to present myself. Your name is Miss Cunningham, I know, and mine is Rylston Dacre.”

We both bowed very gravely and formally, in honour of the introduction, and then both laughed; and Doctor Dacre remarked, “You seem to be a good sailor, Miss Cunningham.”

I told him this was my first voyage, and I was afraid to boast too soon. “But you have been to sea before now, I am certain,” I added.

He asked me how I knew that. I said by the way he walked the deck. He smiled, and said I was right. He had been accustomed to spend days on board a Plymouth trawler,

OED definition states: 'a vessel employed in fishing with a trawl-net; now applied to a steam-trawler'.

and the motion of this large ship seemed nothing to him after that.

Then, after a short pause, he told me that with his telescope he could see a thrashing machine on the downs, near Beachy Head.

I exclaimed—and he held the glass for me to look through.

When I raised my head, I saw that he was gazing at the white cliffs

Direct reference to the white cliffs associated with the coast of Sussex.

with a face, the expression of which had clouded during the last moment or two. I know his look rather startled me; and he must have noticed that it did, for, catching my eye, he said, “I was thinking of the last time I stood on the deck of an outward-bound, and looked at those cliffs. Six years ago. It's a long time.”

I did not know what to reply to this, so I made no answer. He also held his peace, and looked out darkly, for a few moments, at the distant coast.

The blue waves of the Channel were leaping and dancing all round us. A large Turkish vessel was passing us to leeward;

'On or towards the side sheltered from the wind or towards which the wind is blowing'

and behind were the white chalk walls, with glimpses of the green down-land above.

“Do you know Sussex, Doctor Dacre?” I asked, more by way of something to say than because I took the slightest interest in the answer I might receive.

He shook his head. “No,” he said, “I have never even entered that county. I have no associations with it whatever.”

“All my pleasantest English associations centre in Sussex,” I said.

I was beginning to grow intensely weary of the conversation. “This tiresome man!” I thought. “Will he never go away, and let me read in peace? What do I care which county he likes best? or about his life six years ago?”

I was glad when the first mate, Mr. Bruce, came up, and began to talk to Doctor Dacre, who presently left me, and they walked up and down the deck together.

I pondered for a minute or two on a subject that puzzles me. Where did I see or hear the name “Dacre” before I left England? I never knew any one of that name. I must have read it somewhere, but where? and in connexion with what subject? I cannot remember.

Chapter III. Pages from Lucy's Diary.

IN the afternoon Louis came on deck. He was pale and misanthropic.

'A person who dislikes and avoids other people'.

He said that life at present was a burden to him, and that the times were out of joint. He really was a trifle cross; but, under the circumstances, I quite forgave him.

July 30th, Saturday.—A thick, gloomy day. Wind against us, and we were beating about all day off the Isle of Wight.

A small island and popular holiday resort off the coast of southern England.

and the doctor Dacre and myself still the only survivors of the first-cabin passengers. His face looked much brighter than yesterday, in spite of the weather; and he was kind enough to take me under his especial charge all day, wrapping me up in rugs and waterproofs from the wet mist, and carrying my easy chair about to one sheltered part of the deck after another as the vessel altered her course. He did not talk much, nor did I; but, somehow, I did not feel lonely with that rough-coated, broad-shouldered figure keeping guard over me at a little distance; and, upon the whole, the day passed pleasantly, though Louis was still invisible.

July 31st, Sunday.—The captain read the Morning Prayers

Regular custom aboard ships. In 1912 passengers on the Titanic are said to have attended service shortly before the tragic sinking of the vessel.

of the English Church

Meaning the Church of England or Anglican Church.

in the saloon; and most of the passengers, including Louis, came to life again.

August 1st, Monday.—To-day the pilot left us, and we had our last sight of the English coast. Devonshire

A region in the south of England, 'Devonshire' was the county of origin for numerous early British settlers. See New Zealand History section (NZETC collection),

<http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/subject-000001.html>.

faded away in the gloamin',

Derived from Old English, meaning twilight or dusk.

and on Tuesday morning we saw only a sapphire sea on all sides.

I have been looking back over the pages of my diary, and I find that I have written a good deal in it about Doctor Dacre. I scarcely know what is the reason of this, except that he and I have been, from the force of circumstances, which neither of us could prevent, much in the other's society during the past week. And then, too, there is certainly something about him which I like. I should say he is a man who would gain a great influence over the people he saw much of. But he is very peculiar with it all—very odd, indeed, at times. If it would not sound too romantic and sentimental for anything but a young lady's diary, I should venture to suggest that he might have a story connected with his life. I must put down something which happened, trifling though it is, to show what gave rise to this theory in my mind.

This evening, Tuesday, August 2nd, most of the passengers were on deck about tea-time. It was a lovely evening, and a light wind, quite in our favour, was wafting us along swiftly and gently.

I was playing backgammon with Mr. Meredith, who is certainly the handsomest man on board the "Flora." Doctor Dacre was leaning over the bulwarks near us; he was lounging with that perfect grace with which some men can manage to do nothing—languor

Type of posture also suggestive of cultivated gentility or upper class attitude.
of the most fascinating kind, because it is only strength dormant.

Doctor Grey, the ship's doctor, one of the shortest and fattest of men, had been going his rounds among the invalids in the second cabin. He now came up the stairs from the single women's department, and, making his way up the deck to the other doctor, leant over the bulwarks by his side, and began to talk to him.

"One of the women down there is very ill," I heard Doctor Grey say. "She's worse than any of them. And she seems a superior sort of person too. I don't think I ever saw any one handsomer, in her way."

Mr. Meredith was throwing doubles
Probably a game of dice.

with truly remarkable luck, and I was struggling against adverse circumstances, with no hope of winning. Perhaps, having resigned myself to losing the game, I was attending more to what was being said near me than I otherwise should have been.

Doctor Dacre had turned round, so that I could see his face.

"Has she got any friends on board?" he asked, with not much interest in his tone.

"No. She is going out alone—to her brother, I think she told me. She is very much above the women around her, really."

"Ah? Is she young—this princess in disguise?"

"About eight and twenty I should say."

"Quite old enough to take care of herself. Handsome, you said?"

"Very. Black hair and great grey eyes. But she's ill, you know."

"Ah, yes! So you said." There was certainly more alacrity now in Doctor Dacre's manner.

"What is her name?" he asked.

"Mrs. Keith."

"She is a widow, then?"

Doctor Grey shrugged his shoulders.

"That's as may be," he said. "I don't inquire into the family history of all my patients."

There was a few moments' silence. I made my last throw and gave up the game. Mr. Meredith immediately challenged me to play again, and commenced to put the board in order for another.

Doctor Grey was speaking again. "She has given me her watch, and begged me to ask the captain to take charge of it for her. They often do that, you know, if they don't think their fellow-passengers are to be trusted. Here's the watch. She had a chain and a bunch of charms too, but those she would not part with."

Doctor Dacre took the watch in his hand. It was a pretty little hunting-watch. One side was plain; the other had the letter "L"

Turning it over on his palm, the doctor's countenance fell. There came over it the same expression which it had assumed when he looked at the Sussex cliffs, but intensified and mixed with—what? Was it terror?

Then suddenly—for what reason I cannot tell—he looked full at me. This time there was another meaning in his eyes, but I could not read it. I had no clue to the mystery.

He handed back the watch, and his hand did not tremble. I noticed that.

"A pretty little trinket," he said. "I don't wonder she was afraid to lose it. It's nearly teatime, and I think I shall go below."

Chapter IV. Lucy's Diary.

AUGUST 16th, Tuesday.—I have never touched my diary for a fortnight. So much for the good resolutions

made at the commencement of the voyage.

And I have nothing to plead in excuse, except that it is too hot to write; too hot to exert one's mind in the least; too hot to do anything all day but recline on deck under an awning, and amuse one's self after some very easy and luxurious fashion.

Tennyson's "Lotus-Eaters"

A celebrated poem written by Alfred, Lord Tennyson in 1833 that was based around two early Greek epic poem The Iliad and The Odyssey both of which were attributed to the Greek poet 'Homer'. Tennyson's poem concerned 'Odysseus' the hero figure in Homer's Iliad. Tennyson was the British poet laureate between 1809-1892. See references to Tennyson and colonial reading in reports of the 'Oamaru Mechanics Institute' in the North Otago Times, <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>.

* * * * *

What was I writing about before this great chasm occurred in my diary?

Something about Doctor Dacre and a woman who has been very ill among the second-class. We have never seen her yet on deck, and I feel rather curious about her, I confess.

Is there a mystery connected with her, or is it all my fancy, I wonder?

However it may be, I have not thought or seen much of Doctor Dacre lately. Somehow or other, he never comes in my way now. Once or twice I have been tempted to think that he purposely avoids me; but that is so very improbable that I really cannot believe it. What motive could he possibly have?

A few days ago we were becalmed off Madeira about tea-time. The island looked beautiful, with an exquisite rosy glow on the cliffs, and a white convent perched high on the side of the hill. Mr. Meredith has some cousin who live at Madeira, though at present they are on a visit to England. One or two of them are young ladies, and I gather from all he has said that he is a great admirer of them. He tried hard to make out their house from the description he had received, but could not succeed, even with the aid of the captain's telescope.

Strangely enough, all my pleasantest recollections of our week in the Channel centre around Doctor Dacre—Rylston Dacre. It is an uncommon name. But now I don't know why I shouldn't write it.... I have grown to find some one else much more agreeable. Clinton Meredith—what a pretty name it is! and how well suited to its owner, who is certainly the handsomest man I ever saw!

I can't describe him. He has fair hair and moustache, and eyes as blue as the ocean waves around us.

"In thy blue eyes' splendour,
Where the warm light loves to dwell."

And then, too, he sings so charmingly, and with so much expression. It is treat to hear "When other lips" from him.

And then ... I think ... I am nearly sure ... he means me to understand ... but I will not write any more to-day.

* * * * *

August 20th.—Another day of this delicious lotos-eating existence.

Let me try to put it all down from beginning to end.

I was on deck directly after breakfast, reading "Lady Adelaide's Oath," with my easy chair facing the stern. The awning was over my head as usual, and the sky was of a glorious cloudless blue. The sea was very calm, and the "Flora Macdonald," like every one else, seemed to have grown idle and to be loitering on her way.

Louis was lying on the top of the skylight, smoking, and languidly dipping into the pages of a magazine; Mrs. Grant was seated near me, braiding herself a white Piqué costume; and Mrs. Mostyn, by her side, was sewing frills on to her little girl's frock.

Mr. Meredith, with a book in his hand, was swinging luxuriously in his hammock, which he had caused to be slung to the spanker-boom; while Doctor Dacre, a little further off, was prostrate on the deck, where he had made himself extremely comfortable with opossum rugs and cushions.

The other passengers were scattered here and there, and two of the sailors, seated on the hencoops, were mending the weak places in a sail, under the superintendence of the second mate, whose watch it was.

Suddenly some one descries a black speck on the horizon, which must be a vessel. She comes nearer. Telescopes and opera-glasses are in demand. Our little community has roused up suddenly into keen anxiety and eager life.

Preparations are made for signalling her. Soon we learn that she is a steamer, the "Flying Foam," from Glasgow to Hong Kong, that she sailed a week later than the "Flora," and has offered us newspapers.

It is needless to say that the offer is snapped at. The "Flying Foam" steams slowly past the stern of the "Flora," and lies-to alongside of her.

Our first mate goes off in a boat, and fetches the precious documents. Our captain presents the skipper of the "Flying Foam" with a turtle, who sends in return an offering of a little pig. Then there is a great cheering and waving of hats and handkerchiefs on board both vessels, and slowly the "Flying Foam" steams away to Hong Kong, leaving the "Flora Macdonald" tossing on a glassy sea, beneath a cloudless sky.

Of course there was a rush for the newspapers. Mr. Meredith was especially anxious to see if there were any of the first sheets of the *Times* among them. There were two, and, pouncing upon one of them, he began to skim the column of "Births, Marriages, and Deaths."

In a minute or two he stopped, turned scarlet, and flung the paper down with a low whistle.

"Anything interesting, Meredith?" said Louis, who had resumed his old position on the skylight.

"Only the death of an old uncle," he answered.

"I hope he has had the good taste to leave me something handsome."

I looked up, struck by something forced and unnatural in the lightness of the tone.

"I say, Meredith, was your uncle's name Lindsay?" called out his friend, Mr. Prior, across the deck.

"You've hit it, old fellow," was the answer. Mr. Prior turned away, stifling a laugh. But Clinton Meredith was perfectly grave. There was a flash of anger in his beautiful eyes for a moment when he looked at his friend. Then the colour faded from his face, and he came a few steps nearer me.

Just then the luncheon-bell rang, and every one rose and gathered together their books, working materials, and other belongings.

Mr. Meredith offered to carry my books below for me.

I let him take them, lingered a moment behind, snatched up the *Times*, and glanced down the list of deaths. The name of Lindsay was not among them, so that I do not believe that story about his uncle's death; but I think there was more in the above little scene than appeared on the surface, and that is why I have recorded it in my diary.

After lunch it was too hot to do anything. The very absence of all wind made the vessel roll heavily, and Doctor Dacre, coming up, lashed my chair to the side of the skylight, for I was beginning to find my position untenable.

Then he went away, but I remained on deck for some time. I was talking to Mr. Prior, who was making a *confidante* of me in a manner which would have astonished any one who was not aware how rapidly acquaintanceships progress at sea.

Mr. Prior is a tall man, as dark as a gipsy, and not handsome in the least, but good tempered and gentlemanly looking. He is engaged, he told me, to a girl whose acquaintance he made at Gibraltar about a year ago.

She was travelling with her father, who had been ordered to Spain for his health, and has since recovered, and chosen to offer the most decided opposition in his power to the match.

This has caused Mr. Prior to leave the army and emigrate to Otago, where he has some cousins already settled and prospering, and by whose aid he hopes to get on.

But the most romantic part of the story is yet to come. Miss Winstanley—for that is her name—has promised to come out and join him in a very few months. She will be of age in January, he said, and will then act for herself. Fortunately, they have secured her brother as an ally, and he has promised to bring her out, as she would not like to undertake the voyage alone.

I was very much interested in Mr. Prior's story, and I sympathized, I am sure, to his heart's content. By the time we had talked it well over, and he had shown me two or three photographs of his lady-love—a tall, fine-looking girl, in a large, majestic style—the bell rang for dinner, and we had to adjourn below.

Dinner at 3.30; then a gorgeous tropical sunset; and then a glorious moonlight evening on deck.

I have never seen a more beautiful effect of light and shadow than you get by standing at the binnacle on such nights. The deck of the "Flora Macdonald" is flush to the fore-castle, which is raised a few steps. The second-cabin passengers collect together by the mainmast and sing song after song, all of which, however ill performed, are greeted with immense applause. A more appreciative audience for undeveloped talent it would be hard to find.

Sometimes they dance

Dancing classes were popular in the colony. See notice for 'Select Dancing Class' Oamaru. North Otago Times, Volume XXI, Issue 983, 20 October 1874, Page 4. See: <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>. New Zealand. instead; but to-night it was a concert, and not a ball.

About eight bells the festivity was at its height. Louis was, I fear, joining in it; at least, he was not at the stern, where I was standing with Mrs. Grant and Mr. Meredith, nor was he in the saloon. The skylights were raised, and we could look down and see that a rubber of whist was being played, in the warm lamp-light, by Doctor Grey, the captain, Mr. Grant, and Mr. Prior.

They broke up at last, and Doctor Grey came up and joined us. I called his attention to the picturesque

group collected amidships, in the space of bright moonlight, between the two great shadows cast by the sails.

As he looked at it he told me that the woman who has been so ill was on deck to-night. It is the first night she has been up for any length of time, and though Doctor Grey has roused our curiosity by his description of her, we have none of us had a chance to see her before.

Once or twice she has appeared on deck for a few minutes while we were at dinner, but always when we came up again she was gone.

To-night I determined to see her, and I did, in this manner:—

At nine o'clock I shook hands with Mrs. Grant and Clinton Meredith, wished them good-night, and walked to the door of the companion-stairs leading to the saloon. There are two doors—one opening on each side. I went in at the one on the weather side, close to which the concert was being held, and out again by the other.

This part of the deck was quite quiet and deserted. Only one figure—the one I was looking for—was seated about half-way between where I stood and the forecabin.

Her face was turned away; but presently she looked round, and I involuntarily drew back into the shadow of the doorway.

Strange to say, I recognized her. She is the woman whom I met in the street at Brighton the day before we sailed. Her face is white and wasted; she has evidently been very ill. But Doctor Grey is right; she is very handsome—very uncommon-looking.

As I stood there watching her, a man came down the deck, whistling softly to himself an accompaniment to the air they were singing at the other side—

“For I'm marr-i-ed to a merm-i-ed
At the bottom of the sea.”

He emerged from the deep shadow by the mainmast out into the moonlight. It was Doctor Dacre. More curiously still, then I remembered where I had seen that name before.

Chapter V. Laura.

DOCTOR DACRE, still whistling, came slowly down the deck. The ship was very steady, and he walked with deliberate ease towards the figure seated in the moonlight.

Within a few paces of it he stopped, and, struck seemingly by some sudden misgiving, turned back to the door of the companion and looked keenly into the darkness.

There was no one there. Lucy had gone below. By the light of the lamp of the stairs he saw that they were vacant.

He listened a moment. He heard the captain's voice in the saloon wish “good night” to Miss Cunningham as she passed up to her cabin. Then he heard only the jingling of some glasses in the steward's pantry. Satisfied at last, he turned away.

The same figure was still seated in the same place in the same attitude. She watched him quietly as he approached. When he at last stood by her side, she rose slowly to her feet and faced him.

On that hot tropical night she had no covering on her head. Her beautiful black hair, glossy as satin, and as smooth and waveless, was fastened in two massive plaits on the top of her head. The thin black shawl upon her shoulders she allowed to drop as she rose, showing that her dress was black also, and that she wore around her throat a broad band of black velvet. Save that she had no crape about her, she might have worn a suit of mourning.

OED definition states: 'the action of feeling or expressing sorrow, grief, or regret; sorrowing, lamentation; an instance of this'.

Besides that this woman was in face and figure unusually handsome, she knew how to dress herself to advantage. She had the gift, which some women never possess or can learn, of knowing how *to put on* what she wore. Even in plain black this was apparent. Her costume fitted her to perfection, even to the little white ruff at her throat, which might have cost her sixpence, yet which added the only touch wanting to the general effect. Her shawl, poor and shabby as it was, was folded in a manner graceful enough to atone for its faults.

Holding this shawl, caught over one arm, with the moonlight falling on her white face and throat, and the black band round it, she waited for the doctor speak first.

“I am not surprised,” he began. “I guessed long ago it was you.”

“Then you recognized me?” she returned, looking at him steadily out of her large grey eyes. “I am not changed? I have been ill, you know.”

“I know,” he said. “Of course that has changed you a little—not much, though. But never mind. You don't want compliments from me, I should imagine. Where have you been since . . . since I saw you last?”

“You really wish to know? Is it possible?” she returned, with the bitterest irony

OED definition states: 'a figure of speech in which the intended meaning is the opposite of that expressed by the words used; usually taking the form of sarcasm or ridicule in which laudatory expressions are used to imply condemnation or contempt'. See: <http://dictionary.oed.com>.

“What do you want me to do, Laura?”

“Not to recognize me. Oh, no! the time for that has gone by. But I am only a poor second-class passenger, and you are living in luxury. Considering that we once knew each other very well . . . considering this”—she showed him, among the charms hanging to her short gold watch-chain, a wedding-ring and its guard, a circle of dead gold set with three turquoises—“considering *this*, I think you might share with me some of your comforts at least.”

He did not answer directly, and there was a pause, in which the song from the other side of the deck came in loudly and distinctly,—

“No grog

DNZE definition states: 'in the Brit. Sense 'spirits, esp. rum, and water'. See also the following: '1839 Lang New Zealand in 1839. The existence of a considerable European population and the artificial wants of the natives, have . . . led . . . also to the settlement of a swarm of individuals . . . of a very different description, as retail dealers, grog-sellers, and panderers to the worst vices of the most abandoned of men'.

or baccy

Slang for tobacco.

now I get,

And yet for these here things

My heart I do not fret.”

* * * * *

“Go tell my poor old par-i-ents

'Twas stern necessitee

Which made me wed to the merm-i-ed

At the bottom of the sea.”

“Rule, Britannia! Britannia

Name for a Roman goddess and the title of a popular nationalist song 'Rule Britannia'. Sea themes also common in British ballads and songs.

* * * * *

The undertone of sadness running through the grotesque lines chimed in with Dacre's mood at the moment. The complaint of the poor drowned sailor seemed to him one of the most pathetic songs he had ever heard. In the time to come Dacre could never hear those verses without a spasm of the old pain which he was enduring when they were sung on board ship, making him wince once more.

At last he turned again to his companion and said, “You want money. You shall have it. Meet me here to-morrow night at the same time, and I will bring it you.”

“That will do,” she answered coldly. “I thank you. We will remain as we are. No one will know; and you can continue your flirtation, if you like, with the little wavy-haired girl I have seen you looking at so often, though I don't think she regards you with eyes of great favour after all. She wouldn't give a halfpenny for you when the handsome man with the light moustache is by. You see I have kept my eyes open, though I have not been on deck very often.”

A lurch of the vessel brought her shoulder in contact with Dacre's rough pilot coat

Probably a form of overcoat worn by a pilot.

He recoiled, as if the touch hurt him, with a muttered exclamation of disgust.

If she heard it, she gave no sign, but stood looking away towards the man at the wheel with an air of languid indifference

A form of 'studied' posture.

,which seemed to imply that she was weary of the interview, and did not care how soon it terminated.

Dacre had a few more words to add, however.

"They tell me you are going out alone," he said.

"Have you friends in New Zealand?"

"One—a brother. You know it already."

"I had forgotten. You are going to him, then? I don't consider myself responsible for you, but I am glad there is some one out there upon whom you have some claim."

"Thank you. When we leave this ship, and I have got what you promised me, our paths will diverge again. You need not in the least concern yourself about me or my doings."

"I'll be hanged if I do, after all that has passed."

She was silent, still looking up the deck towards the man at the wheel.

"You used to have several sisters," Dacre remarked presently; "what has become of them all?"

"Augusta is with my brother Edgar in New Zealand, Nora has married a clergyman in England ... and Beatrice ... is dead."

She uttered the last words slowly, pausing between each. He saw, to his amazement, that her great grey eyes had grown dim and soft with tears.

"Beatrice," said Dacre, considering for a moment. "She was your favorite sister, wasn't she? You used to talk of her sometimes, I remember, but I don't think I ever saw her."

"No; you never did."

"Was she older or younger than you, Laura?"

"Older and far handsomer."

"Then she would have been thirty now?"

"She would have been ... but she is dead."

This time the words were uttered in quite a different tone. The tears were gone from her handsome eyes

A theme associated with sentimental and romantic 19th century fiction.

. Sorrow was drowned, blotted out, surged over by a great wave of passion.

Dacre, whose manner to her had softened very much during the last few moments, asked presently, "Where did she die?"

"At Brighton."

"And how long is it ago?"

"More than a year. I owe some one a great grudge on Beatrice's account," she added presently, still with subdued anger in her voice. "If it ever lies within my power, I shall demand a complete reckoning some day."

"A grudge? What for?"

"That is her secret—and mine."

Almost as she spoke, still standing, looking up the deck, she started slightly. The, gathering up her shawl with a hasty gesture, she turned to Dacre with the words, "To-morrow night—do not forget. And bring it chiefly in gold."

He assented, and without a word of farewell she walked away.

Dacre stood a moment looking after her, and then turned in the opposite direction.

By the binnacle he encountered Louis Cunningham with a cigar in his mouth. There was no one else at that part of the deck except the officer of the watch.

"Have you been to the opera, Cunningham?" Dacre asked as he passed. "There has been the most astonishing display of vocal talent down there to-night."

To which Louis made only a curt reply, and seemed for some reason or other to have lost the usually even balance of his temper.

Lucy's brother has never yet been more than slightly sketched in this story; but it is necessary to say these few words about him as he comes more prominently forwards.

He was rather a tall man, taller by half a head than Dacre, with fair hair and dark eyebrows; not unlike his sister in the face, but far graver and more reserved in manner. Louis was a silent man, and Lucy was full of fun, and lively; very piquant

Refers to a quality that combines a sense of delicacy with interest or excitement.

conversation was always ready on her lips. She would have made an agreeable companion from this cause alone.

But people often remarked that it was well she had such a brother, so quiet and steady, and with so much strength of character. They thought his influence might counteract some of her froth and frivolity, and teach her more real earnestness and depth of feeling .

It had been the custom in the Cunningham family to speak of the two in this manner. Lucy's maiden aunts

always did so; and Lucy herself, having been told of this theory from her childhood, believed in it accordingly.

One thing was certain concerning Louis Cunningham—that he was a man whose liking was not always easy to win, but once won he was staunch and true. If he ever fell in love it would probably be once and for a lifetime.

If he ever did. But on this point his sister was in despair.

During his visit to England she had introduced him to several of her prettiest, most agreeable friends, with match-making intentions most carefully concealed from Louis himself. In vain. He remained stoically indifferent to them all.

Black eyes

Here 'eyes' are seen depicted as a means to 'seeing into' the person's character or 'soul'.

, with gleams of fire lurking in their depths; blue eyes, deep and liquid; brown eyes, clear and merry—all tried their power upon him and failed. He admired them all in a cool, critical fashion, but cared no more for one pair than for another. Lucy gave it up as a hopeless business.

Let us go back to Louis Cunningham on the deck of the “Flora Macdonald,” standing by the binnacle

A binnacle is a case or box on the deck of a ship.

smoking gloomily; and to Dacre, staring over the bulwarks on the weather side at the phosphorus

Refers to a natural chemical reaction in the sea which emits a glow. Also derived from the Greek for 'light bearer'.

on the waves. Looking round, after he had been there a few minutes, he saw that Louis had disappeared.

Dacre turned away again and went on with his meditations.

“Just the same!” he was thinking. “Just the same as ever! The six years that have gone by since I saw her last have made no change. The same beauty, the same graceful manner which I, poor fool, thought so charming once; the same treacherous, savage temper—all just the same, even to the velvet band that hides the scar upon her throat.

“How well I remember the night the dog bit her! Not half as great a simpleton as his master, Nero knew and hated her from the very first. I can see now the large room, lit only by the firelight; the crimson curtains, the stand of hot-house flowers, and Landseer's

Sir Edwin Henry Landseer (1802-1803) a popular portrait artist of the Victorian era.

‘Dignity and Impudence’ upon the wall behind her.

“I was thinking how superb she looked—she, the poor governess then—in her blue silk evening dress, with one yellow rose in her black hair, her handsome eyes shining, and her full red lips wearing their sweetest expression to attract me. All the colouring necessary to that face lies in the hair and eyes and mouth. She was always very pale, and it suited her. I have never seen her look so ugly as when she blushed. It is a long time since she did that, I should fancy.

“I was not thinking anything of all this then however. I was a great deal too far gone to criticise. I was staring at her, and dreaming, and making an utter ass of myself, when she struck at the dog for being in her way, and he sprang at her throat.

“That was the night that decided my fate, when I had to throttle Nero off and dress the wound, and break it to her that she was marked indelibly for life. How mad I was! How awfully in earnest through it all!

“It seems awful to me now, when I know what miserable tinsel I mistook for genuine gold!

“I don't believe she ever loved me. I don't believe she ever loved any one but herself and her sister Beatrice, and perhaps—no, I won't think about that!

“To meet me as she did to-night, with the coolest and most injured air!

Denoted as an affectation of feeling typical of the literature of 'manners' found in the 18th and 19th centuries.

You would have thought her a long-suffering heroine! As if the fault lay entirely on my side; and this after all that she has done! Really, the brass of some women passes all conception.

“Ah, well! I was a great fool about Laura once! It's all over. And now I could curse

This curse relating to a wife is also linked to a similar romantic novel 'Jane Eyre'.

the day when I took her for my wife!

“I must grin and bear it; and one thing is certain, I must keep out of the way of Lucy Cunningham.

Fortunately for me, she can't do with my ugly face by the side of Meredith's blue eyes. It is no use thinking of what might have been. I never had a chance to try with her.

“Her brother looked blue to-night. What was wrong, I wonder?”

Chapter VI. Lucy's Diary.

AUGUST 20th, Thursday.—Very wet all day. Impossible to get on deck; and a day spent below, in the tropics, is not a thing to be spoken of lightly.

The seats in the saloon

On board ship a 'saloon' was a large room designed for the general recreation of passengers.

—the iron benches I may call them—which run along each side of the table, are not very inviting for a prolonged period; the skylights could only be partially opened, as the rain beat in. I held my ground for an hour in the morning, trying to knit, and to fancy it was not so very hot, after all.

Quite in vain. At the end of the hour I had a headache; had tried half a dozen different positions, each worse than the last; had deluded the captain into lending me a chair out of his cabin; had been upset, chair and all, by a roll of the vessel; and had been advised by Louis, who picked me up, to go and “lie by, and wait for better times.”

I took his advice, and retreated to my cabin for the rest of the day.

In the evening it still rained. Scarcely any one seemed to think it worth while to appear at the tea-table. Mr. Meredith had been invisible all day.

I pined for a breath of fresh air, and determined that, rain or not, I would have it; so I put on my waterproof cloak, drew the cape over my head, and crept quietly up the companion-stairs.

The door on the weather side was shut to keep out the rain; the other was open, and some one was standing smoking just outside. He moved away when he saw me; but, though it was growing dark, I recognized Doctor Dacre. I suppose he saw my face by the light of the lamp on the stairs, as I came up, for otherwise I am sure he could not have made me out in the shadow.

When I saw him turn away I said directly, “Oh, Doctor Dacre, don't go! Do stay and talk to me! I've been so stupid all day, and I want to be amused!”

He came back immediately, throwing away his cigar, but looking so grave that I felt in a moment as if I had been unpardonably forward.

So I said, “You mustn't mind what I say, doctor, please. I always talk dreadful nonsense. Of course, I could not think of your standing there in the wet to talk to me.”

I was quite demure

OED definition states: 'To look demurely, 'to look with an affected modesty'.

and dignified now. He said, “I like your nonsense, Miss Cunningham; and I'm only too happy to stay and talk to you, if—if you wish it.”

He rather stammered over this speech, and yet I did not feel as if he were merely inventing a polite assurance to pacify me. Doctor Dacre somehow manages to make you feel he means what he says; therefore I answered, “Well, then, if you don't mind, rally and truly, I do wish it; so pray stop. But,” I added politely, “you are in all the rain; won't you come a little more into shelter?”

“No, I think not. You have no idea how wet I am, Miss Cunningham. If I came any nearer, you might blame me afterwards, when you find yourself laid up with a bad cold.” He shook some of the drops off his white mackintosh

English term for a raincoat or type of waterproof clothing.

as he spoke.

“Have you been out in the rain long?” I asked.

“About half an hour. It is not pleasant, certainly; but anything is better than staying below in the tropics.”

“I quite agree with you. I think this has been our most disagreeable day yet since we sailed. But if it is not pleasant for us, what must it be for the poor second-cabin passengers?”

I was feeling my way to an inquiry about the handsome black-haired lady, whom I am convinced Doctor Dacre knew something about. She is so out of her element amongst the maid-servants, and farmers' daughters, and young shopmen, who make up the bulk of the second-class passengers,

Reference to 'emigrant sotick' in New Zealand History section of the NZETC collection. See: <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/subject-000001.html>.

that I feel convinced she has, as people say, “seen better days.” I have woven a romance for her in my own mind.

In literature the mind is linked to the personal imagination.

She is certainly quite beautiful enough for the heroine of a novel.

Whether Doctor Dacre divined the intention with which I made the last remark or not I cannot say, but it is certain that he immediately turned the conversation, and there by frustrated my diplomatic little effort to extract some information

Theme linked with crime stories and 'secrecy' in the sensation novel genre.
concerning her.

“Mr. Lennox was telling me to-day that his run joins on to your father's,” was my companion's next

observation. "He thinks you will like that part of the country."

"I am sure I shall. And Mr. Lennox has two daughters. He has been talking to me about them. I am so glad that they will be my next neighbours."

"One of them is considered a beauty, the captain tells me," said Doctor Dacre.

I was delighted to hear it, and immediately set her down in my own mind as destined for Louis; but of course I did not utter this thought aloud.

There was a minute's silence, and I caught myself wondering a little whether the man by my side, with his bright, dark eyes looking out steadily into the night, had ever had a sister to build castles in the air

Common expression for an indulgence in fantasy and imagination.

for him; and, in fact, what sort of a life he had led altogether, because I am persuaded that no man with as much depth of expression as I have caught in his eyes, at times, can have gone through the world in quite a common-place way. Where-ever he has lived, depend upon it he has stamped his mark upon the lives around him, with which his own has been brought in contact. Such men as he is exert a great influence over others for good or evil. Probably his life's drama is not over yet, for he looks little more than thirty; and sometimes I suspect he is a trifle younger than he looks.

"Doctor Dacre," I said at last.

"Yes."

"I should like to ask you something."

"Would you? Ask me anything you please, Miss Cunningham."

He looked me full in the face as he said this. I like his eyes.

"If you won't think me very rude," I said, "I should like very much to know if you are going out to settle in the colonies, or only for pleasure?"

"I did not come out with any intention of settling in New Zealand," he replied. "I came because I am very fond of travelling, and because I had overworked myself, and been ill. So I ordered myself a voyage ... and here I am."

This was all addressed to me, and uttered in a deliberate and straightforward manner. But afterwards he turned his head away, and said something to himself under his breath about "choosing a fatal ship," which I could not understand; and which, as it was evidently not meant for me, of course I took no notice of.

"Then you will go back to England before long?" I went on.

"Not immediately, perhaps. I shall see. If I find no work ready to my hand, and my conscience begins to prick me, I shall certainly return. Work in one sense is no necessity to me; that is, I have always had more money than I have quite known what to do with. But several years ago, Miss Cunningham, I learnt to set a great value on the precept, 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might'—and, fortunately, a doctor need not look far for something to do. Wherever there is physical suffering—and where is it not?—there his work is cut out for him."

He paused a moment; then added, in a lighter tone, "You must forgive me if I am boring you. You asked me to stay and amuse you. I fear I've set about it in rather a clumsy fashion."

This last remark I disdained to take any notice of. Did he think me a mere baby, only to be amused with playthings?

I said—answering what had gone before—"It appears to me that a working life like that is a very noble one, with a noble prospect before it. 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.'"

Doctor Dacre shook his head rather sadly and gravely. "There has been nothing noble about my life," he said. "I found out that there is scarcely anything in the world which deadens mental pain like seeing some one else suffer, and being able to do a little to relieve them. It is a marvellous anodyne

Here used to denote the means to relieve suffering in the least offensive way possible.

So you see selfishness has been at the root of my work after all."

I think I did not honour him at all the less, but rather the more for this speech. There have been others before now who have called themselves "unprofitable servants."

Gradually a great respect is growing up in my mind for Doctor Dacre. And one thing I am sure of: somewhere, and at some time in his life, this man has had a shock, a trouble, which has coloured his whole history. I became quite certain of it while he was speaking.

I had an answer on my lips, when a voice at the bottom of the stairs said, "Miss Cunningham!"

I looked down. Clinton Meredith was standing below in the shadow, with his face turned up towards me.

"Miss Cunningham!" he repeated.

"Yes."

"Are you alone?"

"No. Doctor Dacre is here."

But when I turned towards where the Doctor had been standing, he was gone; he had disappeared into the rain and darkness outside. I corrected myself,—

“He was here, but he has gone.”

“I'm not sorry.”

He mounted a step or two, and then stopped.

“Do you know,” he said, “I think I'm jealous of that fellow Dacre.”

“Don't be a goose,

Victorian expression for 'fool' or 'foolish'.

please.”

“Well, I am, Miss Cunningham;”—here he came a step or two higher—“Have I any occasion to be?”

“To be what?”

“Jealous. Have I any need to be? You know what I mean; and I will have an answer.”

He was only two steps beneath me now.

* * * * *

Well, after all, it was a strange time and place to receive one's first proposal. The companion-ladder of an emigrant ship, on a dark, rainy night in the tropics, with a sailor poking his head in at the door at the most critical moment, to look at the clock over the stairs!

We both began to laugh; but by that time we had come to an understanding, so we could afford to.

I said, very severely, “Why didn't you choose a more suitable moment, Mr. Meredith, for asking such a question? One of those lovely moonlight evenings would have been quite the correct thing; and you must needs select a night like this, and a place where I can only stand by holding on with my eyelids!”

And he answered, “Well, I meant to have waited for a better time; but, you see, I came and found you with Dacre, and I really *was* jealous. No, you needn't shake your head at me, Lucy! It serves you right for calling me anything beginning with ‘Mister!’”

Chapter VII. Lacy's Diary.

SEPTEMBER 1st.—To-day we crossed the Line.

* * * * *

In the afternoon, we were seated in a group at the stern—that is, Louis, myself, and Clinton. Some distance from us Doctor Dacre was sitting on one of the guns, with one of the children on board—a little girl, a mere baby-child—on his knee. He was showing her the works of his watch, and they were evidently upon the best possible terms with each other.

Hard by, her three small brothers were carrying on a most original and extraordinary game at cricket,

A traditional English sporting past-time transported to the colonies, in particular to Canterbury, one of the earliest regions for English settlers in New Zealand. In Canterbury a cricket club was formed as early as 1851, foreshadowing Canterbury's domination of the game. The New Zealand Cricket Council was formed in Christchurch in December 1894. See: <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/government-and-nation/2>.

the doctor being umpire, and seeing fair play. Two of the passengers—young women—were seated in the shade, knitting, and extremely conscious of their near neighbourhood to Doctor Dacre, at whom they cast

The 'coquette' is a flirtatious and sexually suggestive young woman.

looks from time to time, while their conversation was evidently intended for his ears. All labour lost. I do not believe he knew that they were there.

I was looking down the deck, and watching all this sleepily enough. Clinton imagined himself to be reading aloud to me. It was, in reality, only an excuse for sitting with Louis and myself—for we have agreed that our engagement is not to be made public at present. Louis has graciously accorded us his approval; but my father's consent has yet to be gained, and besides, Clinton, like most young men who emigrate, is going out “to make his fortune,

Refers here to hopes of prosperity in the colony.

” and till that fortune, or the germ of it, takes some definite shape, anything further than an engagement is quite out of the question.

It was a very hot afternoon. There was scarcely a breath of air, and Clinton was reading an extremely foolish story in a magazine, and was even more sleepy, I believe, than myself. He went droning on, however, long after my attention had utterly deserted the book, and fixed itself in a dreamy fashion on what was taking place lower down the deck.

Doctor Dacre stopped the little boy's ball with his foot, and then rose suddenly, setting the child he had on his knee gently down, and looking round hurriedly for some one to relieve him of the charge of her. The two

young women, delighted at having at last caught his attention, received her from him with much graciousness.

But his manner was hasty, and he had the air of a man who has just recollected a pressing engagement. Two or three hasty strides brought him up the deck towards us, and he seated himself not far from us. An instant afterwards I noticed that Mrs. Keith had come up from the single women's cabin, and was standing not far from where he had been sitting. She was dressed as usual in plain black, with a little white lace frill

Mourning continued as a ritual out in the colony. Clothes for mourning were advertised in the 'North Otago Times' 6 October 1874. See: <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>

at the throat. I wonder if she is in mourning, or if she knows that this style of dress sets off her good looks and suits her best of all. I do not believe that she would look half as well in colours, however carefully chosen and arranged. Perhaps, however, I am doing her injustice: it may be a life-long mourning for some one very dear to her. As she is a widow, of course the most probable idea seems that it is for—

“A nearer one still,
And a dearer one
Yet than all other.”

All I can be certain of, at any rate, is that she does not wear a widow's cap, and she does wear always a broad black velvet band round her neck.

I had scarcely taken in the general details of her appearance when I saw that Mrs. Keith was approaching us. She passed Doctor Dacre and Louis without a glance, and addressed herself to me. She asked me if I would be so good as to lend her a book which she had seen lying on the skylight while we were at dinner, and which had my name in it. It was a cheap edition of “Jane Eyre

A novel by the English novelist Charlotte Bronte, published in 1847, was a popularly read novel of Charlotte Evans's period.

“I must apologize for trespassing on your kindness,” she added; “but I find the hours hang very heavily sometimes here at sea, especially when I am obliged to remain below.”

Words, voice, and manner were all those of a lady

OED definition states: 'a woman having the characteristics traditionally associated with high social standing; a refined or genteel woman'.

“I shall be very happy to lend it you,” I said. “If you don't mind waiting a moment, I'll fetch ‘Jane Eyre’ for you now.”

“I'll get it,” said Louis, jumping up with what I thought unusual alacrity on his part. But suddenly, before the words were fairly out of his mouth, Doctor Dacre struck into the conversation.

“Don't, Miss Cunningham!” he said with the strangest emphasis, and with a gesture which I am sure was involuntary, but which looked like waiving Mrs. Keith back from her position by my side. “Don't, Miss Cunningham ... I mean, don't take the trouble.... I have a copy of ‘Jane Eyre’ in my cabin, and I'll get it for you directly.”

He had turned towards her with the last words, which were uttered with the same curious repressed vehemence. It was in his face too—flaming out of his bright brown eyes.

She bowed and thanked him without once looking at him. The colour had risen in her cheeks; but if she noticed his manner, and was annoyed by it, she gave no other sign

In an instant, however, some one else had taken up the glove. I have observed for some time past that Louis and Doctor Dacre don't seem to get on. Louis, indeed, appears to have taken a settled dislike to “that fellow Dacre.” I cannot in the least penetrate to the origin of this, but on the occasion I am writing of it became very strongly perceptible. The next moment Louis was glaring at Doctor Dacre as Doctor Dacre was glaring at Mrs. Keith.

“I don't see what business it is of yours, Dacre,” Louis said hotly. “My sister is perfectly willing to lend her book. Wouldn't it be better to keep yours until you're asked?”

Dacre turned slowly towards him with, strange to say, an instantaneous cooling-down of manner.

“You're quite right, Cunningham,” he said, with the most perfect good humour. “It *is* no business of mine. If *you* are going down, of course it's all right. I wanted to save your sister a little trouble — that was all.”

No exception could possibly be taken to this speech, and Louis departed on his errand, smoothed down, but still rather out of humour.

When he had reappeared, and when, after a few more civil words, Mrs. Keith's tall figure had receded down the deck, Clinton for the first time joined in the conversation.

“Dacre,” he asked suddenly, “whoever is that woman?—lady, I should say—I beg her Royal Highness's pardon. She would have withered me with a look if she'd heard me. But, I say, I want to know really, you know. I saw you talking to her one evening on deck, and I'm sure you can tell us if you will. Spin us a yarn about her, that's a good fellow.”

Dacre, with his eyes fixed on the deck at his feet, did not answer for a moment. Then he said, “I'm
“Don't you know anything about her, then?” said Clinton. “Not even who her husband was, and if he beat her? What a grind! She must have a whole novel in three volumes connected with her. I'll be hung if she is not a sort of Lady Macbeth to look at! ‘All the perfumes of Arabia!’ Couldn't you fancy her saying it, Miss Cunningham?”

I certainly could, and I laughed a little as I acknowledged it.

“Lady Macbeth!”

The villainous wife in Shakespeare's play 'Macbeth'.

. said Louis, who was not quite his own natural self again yet. “What nonsense! She is far more like Maggie Tulliver

Heroine, main character in George Eliot's novel 'Middlemarch' set in 1820's England and published in 1874.

in the ‘Mill on the Floss.’”

Novel by the English woman novelist George Eliot (real name Mary Ann Evans) published in 1860.

“Too old,” said Clinton, who had just been reading the book.

Then followed a grand discussion concerning this mysterious lady's age. Louis maintained it was twenty-five, and Clinton thirty. Doctor Dacre took no part in the conversation, but stood by, perfectly cool and

An 'aesthetic of attitude, behaviour, comportment, appearance and style' - in this case an attitude of emotional reserve. See: 'The Concise Oxford Dictionary', ed. Judy Pearsal, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

e. Probably he could have settled the dispute with ease, had he chosen. But he did not choose, and whatever he knows he means to keep to himself, that is evident.

* * * * *

September 2nd.—To-day Clinton and I came very near to having our first quarrel. It happened in this manner:—

Something brought up the subject of Madeira

Exotic locale geographically situated as an island or archipelago in the north Atlantic Ocean.

into our conversation, and I reminded Clinton of the cousins he had once talked of so much and so enthusiastically, who lived he said at Madeira. He seemed to have grown strangely reserved concerning them, and, after an ineffectual attempt to turn the conversation, said shortly, “You need not be jealous, Lucy, for the one I most admired is married.”

Now I was not jealous, or not consciously so, and the remark, spoken gravely as it was, both hurt and offended me. I tried not to show it, but the life had gone out of our intercourse for the time, and wounded pride would not allow me to talk any more. I took up my book and pretended to read diligently Clinton, for his part, not having discovered my annoyance, I really believe, sauntered away towards the stern

The stern is the rear or 'aft' part of a ship or boat.

. A few moments afterwards I saw him detach a small coral cross he had always worn on his watch-chain and let it fall into the sea.

That evening, when all was quite made up between us, I asked him the reason for this strange action.

“That cross?” he said. “Oh! it was a present from a girl I knew once; and of course I don't care about her now, so what could I do better than throw it away?”

* * * * *

With this we close the extracts from Lucy's diary. After leaving the tropics it becomes a mere occasional record of the weather, and of the latitude

Gives the location of a place on Earth north or south of the equator.

and longitude, copied from the slate in the saloon

Large room for the relaxation of passengers.

, so that its interest for our readers is over. But we learn from the conclusion of it that the “Flora Macdonald” anchored safely at Port Chalmers

The main port of the city of Dunedin located on a hilly peninsula and also the site of Dunedin's container port. Mentioned also in the 'North Otago Times' 1874. See: <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz> New Zealand. on the 17th of November.

Chapter VIII. The Lennoxes.

The ground from the verandah sloped gradually downwards to the fence which enclosed the garden, and divided it from the paddock

OED definition states: 'a small field or enclosure, usually adjoining a house or farm building; esp. a piece of pasture in which horses or other animals are turned out to grass'.

beyond. The slope immediately beneath Lucy was covered with English grass

Reference to growing of grass species in the new colony. In the North Otago Times, 6 October 1874. See: <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>

—a rich contrast to the pale tussock grass clothing the hills on all sides of her.

In front of the house the valley stretched away far and wide. Behind rose a hill, from which Maungarewa—Maori

A name derived from Maori language: 'Maunga' meaning 'mountain'. 'Rewa' meaning 'to float', to be 'high up'. See: www.maoridictionary.co.nz

.for "the steep mountain"—Mr. Cunningham's station took its name. It was high, and rather abrupt, rocky too at the top, with huge stones, which Mr. Cunningham was wont to say reminded him of Cornish

Large granite boulders are a common feature of the Cornish landscape with prehistoric associations. Also found on Oamaru coastline.

boulders—partly, I suspect, because it was so long since he had left England, that his memory of places, well known of old, had grown visionary.

On the left the valley opened, showing a grand range of mountains stretching away towards the sea. They towered solemnly up in the summer calm. Lucy had learnt already to love those mountains, though she had not yet seen them in their full glory —Alp-like under a veil of snow.

Louis was catching the horses in the paddock beyond the garden; and his sister was watching with much interest from the verandah above. Robin Hood

Popular figure in English folklore celebrated in ballads and songs as a man who 'robs from the rich to give to the poor'. A memorial statue to Robin Hood exists in the city of Nottingham in Northern England.

e, the handsome black

A black horse has strong romantic associations with animal nature or 'wildness'.

horse which Mr. Cunningham had just bought for his daughter's riding, was amongst them, and was leading off the cavalcade in an undisguised defiance of Louis' attempts to approach them.

But assistance was at hand. Two riders were descending the hill behind the house, and Lucy, catching sight of them, advanced joyfully to meet them at the gate. One, a man about fifty, sunburnt and bearded, was greeted as "Papa." The other, a remarkably handsome fair-haired young fellow, received a silent shake of the hand, but appeared satisfied with his reception, notwithstanding.

"I was coming over from Prior's place," he said, "and I met Mr. Cunningham on the way. Are you going anywhere, Lucy?"

"Louis and I are going to ride over and spend the day with the Lennoxes. Won't you come too? Do come!"

"Of course he will," said Mr. Cunningham. "She doesn't coax badly, does she, Meredith? It's about eight miles over the hills. Louis knows the way, and I suppose you'll all be back to-night?"

He slipped his horse's bridle over the gate-post, and sauntered away towards the house, leaving the other two standing together, Meredith still holding his horse.

It was rather too public a place for making love

In Victorian vernacular referring more to an affectionate, romantic (rather than overtly physical or sexual) response.

, however. Clinton glanced round, and saw that Mr. Cunningham was standing in the verandah, that the Scotch cook was looking out of the kitchen window, and that Louis, in the paddock below, had his attention visibly turned towards them. So he only contrived, swiftly and dexterously, to touch his lips to Lucy's gauntlet. A form of riding glove., under cover of his horse's neck, and asked her what she thought she deserved for running away as soon as he arrived.

"Don't flatter yourself you'll escape me, though; of course I'm going too. And I shall have my revenge, but not now."

Lucy laughed, and flushed over her retort. "You ought to be very much obliged to me. I'm going to introduce you to two young ladies, and one of them is the belle

Refined woman from the French word "belle" (beautiful) also linked to physical desirability, overall attractiveness and the social 'season'.

of the district. There—you ungrateful boy!”

The “ungrateful boy” said he was at her service, and she might do what she pleased with him. But about the young ladies he did not care; his heart was steeled to all but one.

“Ah! but you're going to like them, I know,” said Lucy. “I've only seen them once, when they came here to call on me, but I quite fell in love with them, particularly with Effie, though she isn't as pretty as Jeanie.”

Then she added, with a sly hesitation in her tone, “Clinton ... are you quite sure ... you won't like them better than me?”

Clinton rejected the notion with disdain, and his answer was eminently satisfactory.

By this time Louis, out of all patience, was making iratic signals to them from below; so they went down the hill together into the paddock, and Robin Hood, having been captured by the two men, was made over to Lucy's guardianship.

Thenceforward there was no further trouble with him; in fact, his behaviour to his mistress was always marked by a sense of

Linked to the medieval institution of Knighthood and the "knightly" virtues of honour and courtly love.

, greatly to his credit. Considering himself put upon his honour

Meant to signify 'gentlemanly' behaviour and sexual restraint. See also note page 161.

, he followed her like a lamb to the house, and affably stooped his head to assist her in the novel feat she had undertaken of bridling him.

“In a quarter of an hour the three riders were well on their way to Deepdene, Mr. Lennox's station.

Their course lay over the hills, just then of tissue paleness, relieved here and there by a few small cabbage-trees

Latin name 'cordyline australis' the cabbage tree is a well-known New Zealand native. Founded on a single stem with a forked crown of flowering branches. The leaves are sword shaped. Cabbage trees grow throughout the country, from sea level to about 1,000 metres, but are most common on the coast and lowlands. They grow singly or in groves on open forest margins as well as in swamps and along lake margins and river terraces. See: <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/shrubs-and-small-trees-of-the-forest/6>.

or a little flax

New Zealand flax is one of the country's most distinctive native plants. It has sword-shaped leaves 1-3 metres long that grow in a fan shape. As well as growing wild, flax has long been cultivated as a garden plant and a source of fibre. Latin name: *Phormium tenax* and *Phormium cookianum*. See: <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/flax-and-flax-working/1>.

. There was no brush

DNZE definition states: 'in occas. early New Zealand use as a shortened form of brushwood, in the sense 'scrub'.

in that neighbourhood, nor had cultivation as yet relieved the wildness

The Otago hill and mountain scenery is notable for its sparsely covered valleys and rivers.

and desolation of the scenery.

Riding through one gully

DNZE definition states: 'the usual New Zealand word for a small ravine; a small, deep and steeply-sided valley' an eroded watercourse'.

, Louis pointed to where a sheep-path struck sharply off to the left.

“That is the way to the out-station, Lucy,” he said, “where my life, for the present, will chiefly have to be passed.”

She looked up the wild ravine

OED definition states: 'deep narrow gorge or cleft, esp. one formed by erosion by running water'.

in the direction he indicated, wishing she could see through the hills which barred her view of Louis' future home. But she never dreamt for a moment of the important part which that cluster of wooden huts

Poorer small type of shelter dwelling built of wood and used for various purposes in the colony.

, ten good miles away, was to play in her life's story.

They cantered on. And then they saw some cattle at a distance, and Louis with his opera-glass descried, or thought he descried, one or two of his own among them. He rode a little way towards them to make sure, and left Lucy and Clinton halted near an oasis of flax plants. They bent down the tall co-raddies

A form of native plant.

and sucked the honey from the flowers, agreeing that they were equal to the most superior French bonbons,

A way of blending European associations with a native or 'indigenous' experience.

and streaking their lips and noses with the golden dust.

It was a beautiful summer morning. Everything new and colonial

Meant as a distinguishing term which might sometimes be 'derogatory'. OED definition states: 'of,

belonging to, or relating to a colony, or (spec.) the British colonies; in American history, or or belonging to the thirteen British colonies which became the United States, or to the time while they were still colonies. Now freq. derogatory. Also cited in DNZE definition as: 'an early name for usu. a non-Maori immigrant settler (also (rarely) a Maori settler or native-born New Zealander. (In non New Zealand use colonial often connotes inferiority). DNZE definition also cites as: '[AND 1808]. In usu. Pejorative, often jocular, use inferior in some respect, provincial, rough, makeshift'. Also a much discussed term in New Zealand. The term was cited in 1846 as follows: 'The very few persons who are not (to use the current expression) 'colonial' in their ideas and conduct, are neither understood nor estimated as they deserve to be, and as they would be in old countries'. was enchanting to the two just fresh from England. This ride, and a few others, lingered in the brightest tints on Lucy's , until there rose up in her heart a great wave of pain, and washed all the colours out of them for ever.

They descended at last on to the plains, the great yellow level stretching for miles between the hills and the sea. They rode on, always skirting the hills, for what was really a considerable distance, but on the plains they could go faster, and Robin Hood's great strides left the ground behind him so rapidly, at such an easy, regular pace, that Lucy's idea of space became confused, and she could not have made any correct guess at the number of miles they had traversed, when Deepdene came in sight, nestled snugly among gum-trees at the outlet of a gully between the hills.

Of course they were very welcome. One of the prettiest little golden-haired Scotch lassies

A popular term to describe young Scots women.

imaginable opened a long bow window of the drawing-room, and came dancing down the lawn to meet them. It was Jeanie Lennox, and behind her came her sister Effie.

They were called after the heroines of Mr. Lennox's favourite novel, "The Heart of Mid-Lothian,"

Name of a novel written by the romantic novelist Sir Walter Scott and the seventh of a collection known as the 'Waverley Novels'. Originally published in four volumes in 1818.

and, as a matter of course, their names did not fit them in the least.

Effie was the older of the two, and had grown up the plainest, with by far the most strength of character and intellect. Lucy was not long in discovering this, but still she loved Jeanie. Who could help it? She was the smallest, prettiest, most loving girl in her manners Lucy had ever met with, altogether a fascinating little piece of childishness.

Effie was taller, larger, graver; less gold in her hair, less violet in her eyes. She walked quietly to meet them, with a step which did not dance.

They were both delighted to see Lucy, carried her off to their room, and offered her everything they could think of to assist her in her toilet.

In this context as washing or cosmetic toiletries.

She must take off her riding-habit, of course, and she must wear instead a polonaise

Style of fitted garment originating in the 18th century and later revived in the 1880's.

of Effie's, and a skirt of Jeanie's, by way of being strictly impartial. Finally they insisted that she must not dream of returning home that night.

It was an understood thing in the colonies, Jeanie assured her, with her lovely blue eyes all earnestness, that people *always* stayed the night.

She was so urgent in her entreaties, and Effie too so determined, that Lucy agreed at once to stop.

It becomes necessary here to explain that, though Mr. Cunningham had laid no obstacle in the way of his daughter's engagement to Clinton Meredith, who came of a good family, and had "expectations" from two old uncles at home, he had stipulated that it was not to be made known to the world in general at present. They were too young, he considered, and Meredith had not as yet invested his capital,

Desirable possession for intending emigrants, capital money allowed for land purchase and independence.

or decided where to purchase land. Probably Mr. Cunningham had reflected that, if some wealthy squatter

Implies that the settler is well-to-do but has yet to have claimed legal ownership of the land. DNZE definition states: '[Orig. US squatter a settler with no legal title to the land occupied].

were to take a fancy to lay his heart and his wool-bales at Lucy's feet, it would be a pity for a boy and girl kind of affair such as this to stand in her light.

Therefore the Lennoxes knew nothing of any link so far between Lucy and Meredith, and Jeanie at all events was never likely to find it out for herself.

They dined, and strolled up the beautiful gully behind the house in the cool of the evening. Mindful of some vague ideas which had crossed her mind during the voyage, Lucy had her attention roused to note her brother's manner to these two girls, whom he had met to-day for the first time.

She soon discovered that Jeanie and Louis were utterly unattractive to one another. "Not bad looking, but not *my style* at all," he said of her afterwards; and Jeanie told her sister in confidence that she loved Lucy Cunningham, but thought her brother was not much good in any way.

Jeanie's eyes were certainly prejudiced. Louis was a fine looking, rather attractive young fellow, tall and fair, with dark eyes, and a silky yellow beard, never degenerating into the slightest tinge of red. He was not as decidedly and undeniably handsome as Meredith perhaps; but, to atone for this, he possessed a larger share of that subtle indefinable essence of manliness which will always, in the long run, prove more irresistible to a woman's heart than any mere attraction springing from good looks alone. Then, too, Louis was a man of a very resolute, very independent disposition. Had he chosen, he would have set his opinion against the world's, and stood by it without flinching. Characters of this type are apt to be stubborn at times to an excess, and Louis was by no means an exception to the rule; nevertheless, the obstinacy of his temperament was a part also of its strength, and in many feminine minds would have roused only a greater longing to subdue a fortress apparently so impregnable.

Lucy, walking by his side that night, felt a shade of disappointment at the discovery that Jeanie Lennox and her brother were never likely even to appreciate each other's society. Perhaps, however, Effie might be his "fate" instead, thought the young match-maker by his side. That would be better still; for of the two sisters Lucy was the most attracted by Effie.

No. Louis, courteously attentive, was cool and unimpressed as ever in this direction also. "I do believe he'll never marry," thought his sister with a spice of indignation at the failure of all her castles in the air, mingled with her disappointment. She felt a little comforted, however, when she noticed that Effie's interest seemed slightly roused by the brother of her new friend, and that she was not inclined to be so utterly indifferent to Louis' merits as her sister Jeanie.

Lucy had fallen behind with these two as they walked up the gully, so, with all her quickness and clearness of intuition, something else happened which she did not see. Jeanie had mounted on to the top of a huge stone, and was balancing herself on its sharp summit with the most perfect grace, utterly regardless of Clinton's entreaties to her to come down before she fell. As her especial cavalier, he considered himself responsible for her welfare.

"Nonsense," she said; "I've often done it before. I shan't fall, I know."

She looked lovely as she spoke, in her frilled pink and white muslin dress, a great Dolly Varden hat swinging in one hand, and her high-piled rolls of golden hair—glossy, satin, smooth hair, without wave or flaw in its perfectly-arranged order.

"You little beauty!" Clinton said to himself under his breath. "I'd no idea the colonies contained anything half so perfect!"

Jeanie, spite of her confident assertion, overbalanced herself, and nearly fell. She turned quite white in one moment, and looked at Meredith with the most piteous expression in her blue eyes.

"How am I to get down?" she said, transformed in an instant into a veritable little coward.

He held out his hands. "Jump," he said, "and I'll take care you don't fall."

She placed her hands in his, and sprang down as lightly as possible. He detained her a moment and said audaciously, "Now may I claim a reward?"

There was no anger in the soft eyes he looked down at, but she laughed a little and blushed.

Clinton saw he was sure of his ground. He glanced round to ascertain that the others were not in sight, then bent his head, and swiftly and stealthily touched one of the little hands with his lips. He had once before that day gone through the same little drama, when he met Lucy in the morning.

"It was dreadfully cool of him, really," Jeanie said to herself afterwards; "but he is very handsome, indeed; and, on the whole, I think I won't tell Effie!"

It was Effie whom she wished more especially to remain in ignorance concerning the little flirtation

See 'How to Woo and Win Her' in Poets' Corner from North Otago Times. Volume XXI, Issue 987, 29 October 1874, Page 4. See: <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>

just described, not her mother. Mrs. Lennox, who was now seated at her sewing-machine in the drawing-room at Deepdene, was just another Jeanie—a matronly Jeanie, and much plainer, with only the germ of the beauty, in fact, which had developed so remarkably in her little daughter, but with no clearer head or stronger spirit.

They both looked up to Effie, went to her for advice when in any difficulty, and left her to do the thinking for all three, adopting her opinions readymade. Even Mr. Lennox scarcely exercised as much influence in the household as his elder daughter. The two Jeanies looked up to him too much. Effie's girlishness and inexperience made her nearer, and more easily clung to, than the grave elderly head of the house.

The next morning the two girls escorted Lucy to the gate of the paddock, and after much kissing and embracing on Jeanie's part, she rode off with Louis and Clinton. When they had gone a short distance Lucy looked back; Effie, still faithful, was looking after them; Jeanie had already turned away. Involuntarily Lucy spoke.

"Jeanie is a dear little thing," she said, "but I love Effie best. What do you think of them, Clinton?"

He answered with the most languid indifference of tone and manner, "I don't think I quite agree with you, Lucy. I don't take much to Miss Lennox. The other is a pretty little thing, but those regular faces, with no change of expression, are horribly insipid." Did he think so last night, beneath the blue gums in the gully at Deepdene?

"One foot on shore, and one on sea,
To one thing constant never."

But you will find it safer in the end, Clinton Meredith, to be off with the old love before you are on with the new!

Chapter IX. A Drawn Game.

LUCY'S father was a man of a passionate disposition; his temper, once roused, was mighty; his capacity for anger was gigantic; yet, in spite of this, he could scarcely be called an irritable man. Sometimes, for months all would go on smoothly with him, and then there would come a day when the times were out of joint. Some member of his family would cross his will while the flames were yet smouldering, and, lo, an explosion, which nearly shook the roof over their heads.

Lucy remembered with horror one or two scenes between her father and Louis in the early days, before either of them had emigrated to New Zealand, and when she was quite a child. Fortunately, Louis' disposition was not a hasty one; compared with his father, he might be said to hold his temper in his hand, almost completely under his own control; so that of late years, since Louis had grown to man's estate, quarrels between the father and son had become of rarer and rarer occurrence. But there was one of no ordinary character destined to rise up between them at this period.

Two days after their visit to the Lennoxes, Lucy was with her father and brother in the drawing-room at Manugarewa, after their six o'clock dinner. The day had been one of the hottest in the whole month —intense heat, and a nor'-wester to crown it.

"Regular Melbourne weather," said Mr. Cunningham, with a sigh of relief at the coolness which had followed upon a sudden change of wind, and which was settling down over the land with the approaching night. He was lying on the chintz-covered sofa, near the large bay-window of the drawing-room, looking tired out. Louis and he had been out after cattle in the heat, and they had had a great deal of trouble with them, and Mr. Cunningham had shattered the handle of his favourite stock whip into a dozen pieces, which was not exactly a soothing termination to their ride.

Lucy had just come in from the garden, and was seated near him, with her lap full of roses, geraniums, and carnations. She was arranging them in a large blue-and-white china bowl which stood always on a little table of light wood by the window, and as she did so she was talking to her father about the garden at Deepdene. From this subject she glided naturally into speaking about Effie Lennox, who had greatly taken her fancy.

Louis was reading the newspaper and did not appear to be attending, but Mr. Cunningham was roused up gradually out of his fatigue. He sat up suddenly on the sofa in the gathering dusk, and commenced to stroke his thick light-brown beard with one hand —a gesture which in Mr. Cunningham always denoted great interest in the subject uppermost in his mind at the time.

"Both the Miss Lennoxes are uncommonly nice girls," he remarked to Lucy; "quite above the ordinary run; and Lennox is as well off, I believe, as any man I know." Then turning to his son, he added, "Louis, put down that paper; I wish to speak to you."

Louis put it down.

Mr. Cunningham hesitated for a moment, then asked, somewhat abruptly, "How old are you now, my boy?"

Louis' ideas on this subject appeared hazy; at last, prompted by his sister, he replied, "Twenty-eight last August."

"Then it's high time you were married," returned his father with startling emphasis and decision; "and the sooner you go in for that, and settle down, the better, and the more pleased I shall be. You could not do better than take one of Tom Lennox's daughters; in fact, I've had my eye upon one of them for some time for you; and I desire you'll set about it without delay."

The last sentence was uttered in a tone of command truly imperial, and which would of itself have been enough to rouse the opposition of many sons; but Louis was accustomed to his father's manner. Still, in the pause that followed, Lucy's heart began to beat. She felt, for the first time, that the atmosphere was stormy.

"Which of them did you wish me to have?" inquired Louis at last, with ominous calmness.

Lucy detected amusement in his tone. She trembled lest her father should do so also. Ridicule of any kind was to Mr. Cunningham like the red flag to a bull, and it made him furious in a moment.

"You may take which you like, *I don't care*," returned Mr. Cunningham, quite unsuspectingly however. "Please yourself. I'll have the out-station made into a thoroughly comfortable home for you; and you may be sure neither of Tom Lennox's daughters would come to you empty-handed; his heart is set upon them."

"You are very kind, really," said Louis, quite grave this time; "but, to tell you the truth, it's my belief neither of the two ladies in question would have me if I asked them."

Lucy, who had been aghast at the remarkably free-and-easy manner in which her father was disposing of the Miss Lennoxes' hands and fortunes, was glad Louis at least had the good sense to remember that they might themselves have a vote in the matter; but Mr. Cunningham rejected the idea with disdain.

"Of course they'll have you," he said, "either of them. There can't be any doubt as to that. I know for a fact that they are not engaged; and what more would you have? A woman who isn't engaged will always snap at the first offer made her, provided the fellow doesn't squint or have red hair—and sometimes even then. It mayn't be so in books, but it is so in real life."

"Oh, papa!" cried Lucy, utterly scandalized at last. But he took no notice of her; in fact, he had forgotten her presence, and stroked his beard with increasing excitement.

"Well, if you won't accept that excuse as a valid one," said Louis slowly, "I'm afraid I must put it the other way. I don't think I could myself do with either of them. Jeanie is not my taste ... and her sister ..."

He stopped abruptly. Mr. Cunningham had sprung to his feet. This time he saw, or thought he saw, that his son was laughing at him.

"Don't let me have any more such atrocious nonsense!" he said, even more imperiously than he had spoken yet. "I tell you to take your choice of the two nicest girls in the province, and offer to provide handsomely for you: and you tell me they are not to your taste! Now ... will you go over to Deepdene to-morrow, and make Jeanie Lennox an offer? ... or will you not?"

"I don't admire her indeed," said Louis, still good-temperedly, and with another effort to deprecate his father's anger. "I never care about those blonde beauties ... I can't think of it, really ..."

"Did you ever admire any woman in your life, I wonder?" inquired Mr. Cunningham, ironically. "Blonde beauties, indeed! But I tell you what, sir, if you ever dare to marry a woman with dark hair, neither she nor you shall ever cross my threshold!"

He was making himself ridiculous in his wrath, as hot-tempered people are very apt to be, if they only knew it. Surely, half the disputes in the world would evaporate instantaneously if we could only "see ourselves as others see us."

Louis had risen, and was leaning against the mantel-piece with his face turned away. When he looked round, it had hardened and stiffened into an expression Lucy had seen there before, and recognized. It meant dogged resistance, and an obstinacy which would not yield one inch of ground.

Lucy rose up to go. She was growing afraid to stay, now that she saw that look upon her brother's face.

Once more Mr. Cunningham said slowly, "Will you go over next week and make Jeanie Lennox an offer, or not?"

And Louis returned a simple negative, coolly and emphatically spoken. At this Lucy fled, hardly closing the door behind her in time to shut herself out from the first burst of the storm that followed. She darted into her own room, and seated herself upon her little iron bed, listening with a beating heart to the faint mutterings of the thunder which reached her once or twice even there—hasty steps, and now and then an unusually loud tone of voice.

The daylight gradually faded away, and then the moon rose. The corner of the verandah outside Lucy's window was full of soft dusk gloom, just crossed by a narrow strip of moonlight. She sat staring out into the shadow, until at last it seemed to move and flicker gently, and gradually it assumed to her mind the form of Mrs. Keith, in her black trailing garments, as she used to stand again and again, leaning over the bulwarks of the "Flora Macdonald," looking out to sea.

It seemed strange, Lucy thought, to be reminded of her in this weird unearthly fashion, considering that she had never seen or even thought of Mrs. Keith since the "Flora" anchored at Port Chalmers. What might have become of her Lucy had never once troubled her head to imagine.

It was past nine o'clock when Louis came out of the drawing-room, closing the door behind him. He went into the verandah, and Lucy ran to him. She was not in the least afraid of her brother.

Louis was, in his way, very fond of her. He stroked her hair and told her not to mind. He was going to catch his horse and ride to the outstation there and then. It was a bright, cloudless night—"And all this will have blown over in a few days," he added.

"Are you going to ask Jeanie?" she ventured to whisper.

He shook his head.

“But it has been a hard battle,” he went on after a moment, “and I've only just held my ground. I'm to be cut off with a shilling if I ever marry any one with dark hair, or indeed, for that matter, any one except Jeanie or Effie Lennox.”

Neither Louis nor his sister could help laughing, the threat put into words sounded so ludicrous and unreasonable; but yet Lucy knew her father well enough to be aware that, in spite of its absurdity, he was quite as likely as not to adhere to the very letter of his vow. The obstinacy of Louis' disposition was certainly inherited from Mr. Cunningham.

Louis stood some minutes longer in the verandah, seemingly lost in thought, the smile still lingering round his lips. There was something in it, and in his expression, which struck Lucy as odd, and not altogether agreeable: it was a smile more of contempt than of amusement.

Then suddenly he seemed to wake up with a slight start, wished her “good-night,” and desired her to go back into the house at once. The air was growing chill, and she had on still the light muslin dress she had worn during the heat of the day.

She returned to her room. A few minutes afterwards Louis' heavy step crunched the gravel on the walk in front of her window, as he passed round the corner of the house, on his way to fetch his horse.

She lifted a corner of the curtain, and looked out. The moon had risen higher, and shone brightly in her eyes; and the shadow which had startled her in the early part of the evening had quite disappeared.

Chapter X. Mrs. Prior's Brother.

LIFE at Maungarewa glided on for some time very peacefully after this stormy interlude.

Mr. Cunningham's anger blew over in a few days, as Louis had prophesied that it would; assisted probably by his son's departure to Auckland for a month to settle some business-matters not concerning the course of this story. After his return, Louis lived principally at the station which was situated like an outpost on the verge of his father's land; so that opportunities for a renewal of the argument, had Mr. Cunningham wished it, were few and far between.

Lucy had by this time quite settled down into her new life, and England was becoming the dream, not New Zealand. Only the coming and going of the English mail

See Notice for postal services in 1874 North Otago Times. See: <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/New Zealand>. reminded her at times that there were still friends, and still another country, across the blue ocean,

The geographic area in which New Zealand is situated, is also called 'Oceania'. New Zealand faces the Pacific on its eastern coastlines.

of which the faint thunder of the surf could be heard on a still day, in the peaceful valley where Maungarewa lay.

The visitors who found their way to Maungarewa were, except the Lennoxes, almost entirely of the masculine order

For references to 'masculinist' or male culture in the colonies refer to Literature Criticism and History section (NZETC collection), <http://www.New Zealandetc.org/tm/scholarly/subject-000006.html>.

. It is true there were a few ladies scattered about among the different farms and stations, and rather more collected at the nearest township, ten miles or so away; but they were almost all married, and for the most part too much occupied with the care of children and domestic matters to have time to spend in paying visits, especially country ones; so that Lucy soon found her visiting list numbered three or four masculine to one feminine name, and the constant repetition of strange bearded faces became in time rather monotonous.

Gentlemen were kind enough to drop in pretty frequently at Maungarewa, and sometimes to remain for two or three days. It was a comfortable and well-ordered household—rather inviting after many of the rough bachelor establishments

Local boarding houses provided accommodation for single men in colonial society. See North Otago Times 6 October 1874, <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/New Zealand>.

of the district—Lucy's relations having, with unusual forethought, included the elements of housekeeping in her education to a more thorough extent than is usual, I believe, among the young ladies

See 'The Canons of "Genteel" Society', North Otago Times, Volume XXI, Issue 988, 31 October 1874, Page 4. See: <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/New Zealand>.

of the present day.

But none of her home friends ever found her sketches of New Zealand scenery in water colours.

A 'gentile' recreational pastime in English society. See 'Nineteenth Century NZ Artists: A Guide and Handbook'. See: <http://www.New Zealandetc.org/tm/scholarly/search/search.html?text>.

collectionless charmingly touched because she could personally superintend the preparation of beef-steak pies

Beef was a primary New Zealand export well into the 20th century. With the development of the colony, New Zealand meat produce became a main export to Britain. See: <http://www.NewZealandetc.org/tm/scholarly/search/search.html?text=meat+industry>.

, which were not uninviting when completed, or cause to be placed upon her table a roast turkey

Also a common Christmas meat dish.

, with delicate accompaniments of mashed potatoes and sauces, which her father, at all events, appreciated. Nor was her admiration of Tennyson

See note page 32.

or Mrs. Browning ever deadened by the fact that her apricot tarts melted in the mouths of all those who partook of them.

Clinton Meredith and many others were, at all events, at this period, the gainers

Meaning those who ought to prosper thereby.

by the different branches of domestic economy which Lucy had been brought up to cultivate. She received many compliments, which gave her pleasure, more or less, for surely there never was a clever housekeeper

See 'Station Life in New Zealand' (1870) by Lady Mary Anne Barker. See: <http://www.NewZealandetc.org/tm/scholarly/search/search.html?text=lady+barker>.

yet who did not like to feel that she was appreciated?

But her head was not over-exalted by the praise bestowed upon her; and one day she nearly made Clinton jealous, by telling him that she had met no one since she came out whom she considered half as agreeable as Doctor Dacre.

"I wonder where he is, and what he is doing?" Lucy added, more to herself than to him. "It seems odd that we have never heard of him since we landed; but perhaps he has already gone home."

Clinton had heard of him, and knew that he was at that time not very far from Maungarewa; but, being jealous, he did not choose to tell her so. And so the subject dropped.

But somewhere about this time Lucy heard that Mr. Prior, another old shipmate, was at last to be made happy. His lady-love landed in perfect safety at Christ Church, with her brother, under whose protection she had consented to venture upon the long voyage.

Miss Winstanley became Mrs. Prior within a week of her setting her foot once more upon terra firma; and, after a short honeymoon, the happy couple came up to settle upon the station of which Mr. Prior was manager, about six miles from Maungarewa. They brought the brother with them, and Arthur Winstanley accompanied them when they went to Maungarewa to return Lucy's call. Mrs. Prior, in spite of her majestic figure, and the atmosphere of strong-mindedness which appeared to surround her, was no rider, so her husband drove her over, and Arthur Winstanley rode his brother-in-law's grey horse.

They found Lucy and her father both at home. It was Lucy's first introduction to the bride, as she had happened to be out on the day of Lucy's visit. Mrs. Prior was very like her photographs—a handsome girl with a Roman nose, and on a large scale altogether; but she was common-place-looking after all, which was just the thing that her brother was not.

Both of them had dark hair and eyes, and there all resemblance between them began and ended. He was as utterly unlike his sister as could well be imagined.

Arthur Winstanley was a man of about the medium height and size, but, instead of Mrs. Prior's aquiline nose and wide mouth, he had delicate, regular features, which would have made the fortune of a girl's face. He would have been a handsome man but for his eyes; they were so light in colour, and so expressionless.

The most striking thing about him, however, was the utter want of interest or animation in everything he did or said. He looked like a man half asleep, without energy enough to rouse himself, and he never once brightened up the whole time he remained at Maungarewa. The same weary indifference characterized his manner as his face. It was not a sad face at all, but more like that of a person who has received some shock, under the influence of which the spirit remained stunned, and without sympathy in what took place around it.

When I said that Mrs. Prior brought her brother with her, I used the words advisedly. He was evidently entirely at her disposal, and too lazy, or too tired out, to have any will at all of his own.

Lucy found afterwards that the impression he had made upon her was of a person suffering from a violent and prolonged fit of sulkiness.

Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Prior plunged into an animated discussion of colonial politics

See column regarding provincial government in New Zealand in North Otago Times, October 6 1874. See: <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>

, in which the governor's name repeatedly came uppermost; Lucy and Mrs. Prior compared notes as to their respective voyages; while Mr. Winstanley sat quietly back in an easy chair, listening to the conversation of the two ladies, but without making the slightest effort to join in it himself. Only when they were going away, and

Lucy patted the neck of the grey horse, he asked her if she was fond of riding. When she had replied in the affirmative, and by way of politely prolonging the conversation for a moment or two, had inquired whether he shared the same taste, he said, in his sleepy way, "I did once; but I had a little too much of it when I was at home at one time."

Mrs. Prior turned sharply round, just as she finished shaking hands with Mr. Cunningham.

"Why will you speak of that time, Arthur?" she said, with asperity

Spoken in a sharp tone or with severity.

; "you know it is nothing to your credit."

Arthur took the rebuke very calmly, and did not seem to care about it in the least. But he said no more.

Lucy gathered, however, from the frown upon Mrs. Prior's face, that he might at one time have been the black sheep

The 'black sheep' emigrant, not an uncommon character in the colonies, was often the youngest of the family or the 'disgraced' son of an aristocratic family. Also a character stereotype found in the New Zealand Novels Digital Collection. See: <http://www.NewZealandetc.org/tm/scholarly/subject-000005.html>.

of his family, if so quiet a young gentleman could ever have found energy enough within him to be anything decided at all.

It appeared, in course of time, that she was partly right in her conjecture; for afterwards, as she learnt to know more of Mrs. Prior, little scraps of that lady's family history from time to time slipped out.

"Arthur has given us all such trouble," his sister said, in her superb, majestic way. "I assure you, papa says he would rather have had ten daughters than such a son! Fancy! we sent him to read with a clergyman in Devonshire, and he ran away! We heard nothing of him for a long time, and we could not trace him; but at last he wrote to papa, and then—only imagine!—we found he had enlisted in a cavalry regiment

See New Zealand Novels Digital Collection for stories of regimental life in the colony, <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/subject-000005.html>.

!"

She paused here, and waited for some show of horror and amazement on Lucy's part, which Lucy, as in duty bound, proceeded to give.

"Papa bought him out," Mrs. Prior then continued, "and went to him; and there he was in miserable little lodgings, sitting with his face hidden in his hands, and the table all covered with bits of letters, torn up. When papa spoke to him he started as if he had been shot, and then suddenly fainted away. He had a bad illness—brain fever, I believe—but got over it, and has never given us any trouble since."

Lucy said she was glad to hear it, and wondered, privately, whether it was at that time that Mr. Arthur Winstanley had lost his interest in sublunary

Refers to 'unconscious' or 'beneath the surface'.

affairs, and ceased to care enough about anything to have a will of his own left.

She grew to like him very well, as time went by, and she saw more of him; and for his part, he appeared to take quite a fancy to her. He always singled her out whenever they met, and showed a greater respect for her opinion than for that of any one else. In fact, he paid her a good deal of attention in a quiet way.

Mrs. Prior observed this with delight, hoping that Arthur might really make up his mind to marry, and settle down near her at last. She felt perfectly satisfied with his choice, for she, too, had acquired a genuine liking for Lucy.

She was strongly confirmed in her idea by an accidental discovery which she made about this time. Arthur Winstanley had one curious habit. When he was thinking, or listening to music

See letter about 'Choral Singing', North Otago Times, Volume XXI, Issue 977, 6 October 1874, Page 2. Also letter concerning 'The Organ Fund Concert', Volume XXI, Issue 997, 24 November 1874, Page 2. See: <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>.

, or to a conversation taking place near him, he had an odd, absent fashion of scrawling over every scrap of paper he could lay hold of, the letter L. He would form it into a monogram in every variety of character and design—sometimes really graceful ones. Occasionally, but not often, he joined with it the initial of his own name, A. But he always crossed these out with heavy pencil strokes afterwards.

Mrs. Prior found one morning a half sheet of note paper thus ornamented; and, remembering that Miss Cunningham's Christian name began with an L, she regarded it as proof positive of the manner in which that young lady occupied her brother's thoughts.

By way of ascertaining how far the admiration was mutual, she, with much concealed artfulness and great outward innocence of manner, showed her discovery to Lucy the next time they were alone together.

"Arthur is so absurdly absent," she said, "but I suppose we must excuse him! Only imagine! he was amusing himself by scribbling these monograms all the time that I was talking to him about getting the new carpets we want for this house

Dunedin houses were built of timber in imitation of English style homes. See Kirkpatrick, Glendining Co advertisement, 6 October 1874. See: <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>. New Zealand. in Dunedin! So stupid of him! I don't believe he heard a word that I said!"

She placed the half sheet of note paper she held in Lucy's fingers, and watched with secret anxiety for the expression of her face as she looked it over.

"It seems to be all designs of one letter," Lucy remarked calmly. "These are very pretty, and would look well embroidered on the corner of a handkerchief. Where have I seen an L like this before, I wonder? Oh, I know! it was on the back of a watch."

She did not blush or look in the least conscious of any possible connexion between Mr. Winstanley's fits of absence and herself; and Mrs. Prior, to use her own words, "could not flatter herself that Miss Cunningham so far evinced any reciprocity

A mutual exchange or "rapport".

Chapter XI. Effie.

TIME passed. January and February burnt themselves out in heat and glare and dust, and March came in with cooler days, but equally lovely.

One day Lucy had ridden over to Deepdene alone. She knew her way over the hills now perfectly, and the three girls went backwards and forwards between each other's homes almost regularly.

Louis never came to Maungarewa when he thought that Effie or Jeanie Lennox would be there, but once or twice he had been caught, and could not avoid a meeting. In such cases he devoted himself to Effie, and Jeanie tossed her golden head privately, and thought him the greatest bear she had ever known. The little "blonde beauty" was used to admiration, and enjoyed it heartily.

Effie always took Louis' part when her sister attacked him, but otherwise never spoke about him at all. Only Lucy thought it a suspicious fact that just about this time Effie refused an excellent offer from a distant cousin of her own who had been attached to her ever since they had played together as children, and whom her father and mother had always hoped she would marry.

"It's odd," said Jeanie thoughtfully, when her sister was not in the room. "Effie seemed to like poor Jack till quite lately, and then suddenly she grew as cold to him as ice."

It *was* odd, Lucy thought; but to Effie herself she did not venture to say a word, only she found herself constantly hoping that Louis after all would change his mind and gratify both his father and herself by choosing the wife they both so eagerly desired for him.

On this March evening, when Lucy had ridden over to Deepdene, the three girls were sitting by one of the long open windows of the drawing-room.

They formed a pretty group. Lucy was seated in the middle, wearing her dark-grey riding habit, set off by its little white collar and scarlet tie at the throat. It was a costume which suited her figure, and the sober-coloured cloth of the habit seemed to make her great coils of glittering waving hair a richer coronet than ever to her small, well-shaped head.

Jeanie was sitting on a footstool at her feet, in a blue-spotted muslin which just suited her delicate pink-tinted cheeks. A scarlet carnation was coquettishly fastened over her left ear, and another in the belt that surrounded her neat little waist

A small waist, often a desired feature of Victorian feminine beauty, was enhanced by tight corsetry. See North Otago Times for 19th century advertisements for Womenswear, 6 October 1874. See: <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>.

Effie was the farthest back of all, and was dressed like her sister, but without the flowers. Her eyes, less lovely in colour than Jeanie's, but with far greater capacity of expression, were fixed on the sunset sky without, and she held one of Lucy's hands in hers.

The soft air came in at the window and fanned their faces, and once wafted in a shower of rose-leaves from the full-blown flowers which twined around the sill

For more reading of "idyllic" colonial homes and gardens see 'Distant Homes: Or the Graham Family in New Zealand' by Isabella Aylmer NZETC literature collection. See: <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>.

Effie caught some of the leaves in her hand, and played with them unconsciously while she was speaking. Ah! there was one rose there which was to fade gently before its bloom had fully come!

Jeanie looked up with large blue eyes when the conversation of the others, as sometimes happened, got beyond her depth, but she admired all that they said, whether she understood it or not, and was happy and loving as usual.

At last they saw a horseman ride through the paddock and up to the garden gate.

"It is Mr. Meredith!" said Jeanie and Lucy in a breath.

Lucy thought that he had found out where she was gone, and had come to fetch her home. Jeanie believed that he had come to see her pretty little self. It was not the first time by any means that he had done so. She had no more idea of any engagement between Clinton and Lucy than she had of the geology of the district. Even Effie had not found it out.

Jeanie jumped up in a moment, saying, "I'll go and find papa," and she ran out of the room. She came back in a few moments with her hat in her hand, and reported that papa had gone up the gully, and that she was going to find him. Somehow papa was very apt to be up the gully whenever Mr. Meredith came to Deepdene, but fortunately Effie did not think of remarking upon this fact to her companion.

Presently they saw Jeanie guiding Clinton across the lawn to the little gate which opened on to the path leading up the gully among the trees.

"He doesn't know I am here," thought Lucy. "But I wonder Jeanie has not told him," she added to herself a moment afterwards.

Somehow or other she felt suddenly sobered, and she looked out at the fading light in the sky with a feeling of sadness at her heart for which she could scarcely account.

In a few minutes Mrs. Lennox came into the room.

"Where is Jeanie?" she asked.

"She has gone with Mr. Meredith up the gully to find papa," said Effie.

"But papa is not up the gully," returned her mother. "He has gone over to the manager's house to speak to Mr. Hood. *I* could have told Jeanie that if she had asked me."

Lucy felt more sober than ever as Mrs. Lennox spoke. But her faith in Clinton was too great not to resist the first slight shock it had received.

"I suppose they will soon be back," went on Mrs. Lennox, "when they find papa is not there,"—and she went out of the room again.

Almost at the same moment Effie shook down all the rose-leaves from her lap on to the floor. "There," she said, "I'm tired of them; they are withered. Let me throw them away."

"Their day is over, poor things!" said Lucy, with an involuntary sigh.

"There will be more next summer," Effie returned, looking up with a smile.

"Ah, yes!" said Lucy, "but not the same."

She scarcely knew what prompted her to this little bit of sorrowful moralizing, but afterwards she remembered those words with tears, for they were only too true.

"It's well Louis doesn't hear us," she went on in a moment, quite in her usual manner. "He would call us dreadfully sentimental."

Effie stooped to collect together the scattered rose-leaves on the ground. Still bending down she said, "Mr. Louis has not been here for a long time. I suppose he is very busy?"

"Very busy indeed just now," returned his sister, thinking she could guess what was passing in Effie's mind. "He has just had to buy a new horse. One of his others was quite lame from being ridden too much. The new one is a beauty—dark bay, and called 'Llewellyn

A Welsh name or originating in the country of Wales on Britain's West Coast.

,"

Wise as Lucy thought herself, she was not quite as much behind the scenes as she imagined. One day she learnt this, but that day was far in the future yet.

There was a slight pause. Effie did not seem to take much interest in the bay horse. At last she said suddenly and rather shyly, "I wonder if any one ever marries their first love? Papa told us one day that he did not, and he did not believe people ever did, except in books."

Lucy felt that she could quite understand this. It would indeed have been difficult to picture plain common-place Mrs. Lennox as any one's first love. In her girlish arrogance, which was really ignorance of life, she did not allow for the changes brought to Mrs. Lennox by the "slow, sure discipline of years."

"Some people do not seem to have any first loves at all," she said, in answer to Effie's remark. "My brother Louis for instance."

She intended Effie to understand that at all events she had no rival to fear; the field was clear before her, and who knew what might not come to pass in time? But she was a little startled at Effie's reply.

"I do not think that follows at all," Effie said, "—about Mr. Louis, I mean. Men are just as careful sometimes not to let any one find out their secrets as we girls are; and you know, when they travel about much, they make many acquaintances we do not know of at all."

"That is quite true," said Lucy. "But still I am sure I am right about Louis."

Remembering this conversation in after days with a wider experience of life, the confidence with which she

had spoken seemed to her unutterably ridiculous. Effie, from whatever reason it sprang, had proved in this instance a keener judge of Louis Cunningham's character than his sister Lucy.

The two girls remained seated by the window, talking together for a long time. Both felt during that hour that the bond of their friendship was signed and sealed for their lifetimes.

Would it have been so, and would it have lasted? I think it would; but it was never put to the test. The wear and tear of life never touched it, and time had no power to try it, because one of these two was soon to pass for ever out of the region where Time holds sway. A little longer, and there was to be no thought of marrying or giving in marriage for Effie Lennox.

Chapter XII. Under the Blue Gums.

CLINTON and Jeanie were away a long time. It was a lovely evening, very cool and pleasant under the gum-trees

A species of Australian native tree also imported to New Zealand (also the native habitat of the Australian 'koala' bear).

and Australian shrubs, which had been planted with excellent effect on both sides of the gully; and neither of them were in any hurry to return to the house.

Clinton, to do him justice, had no idea that Lucy was then at Deepdene. He had not seen her since the week before, when he had spent two days at Maungarewa, and enjoyed himself supremely. It was business which had brought him that night to Deepdene, and he really wished to see Mr. Lennox before he went away. But still there was plenty of time, and Jeanie was a very pleasant companion, especially in that soft romantic gloom beneath the boughs of the trees, with the little creek, which flowed like an English stream

This passage is suggestive of the 'romantic' poem. See Keats' 'To a Nightingale' through the gully, gliding gently by at their feet.

They came at last to the large stone, or rather rock, which was the scene of Jeanie's exploit alluded to in a former chapter. The grass was soft and green at its foot, and Jeanie sat down and took off her hat.

"I'm tired," she said, "and I don't see anything of papa."

Clinton, who had never expected to meet Mr. Lennox there at all, sat down by her side, and, pulling a few leaves from one of the trees, crushed them in his fingers, filling the air with their aromatic perfume.

"I shall always love this place," he then remarked sentimentally, favouring Jeanie with one of those looks out of his blue eyes which he had before now found to be so irresistible.

Of course the young lady immediately asked him why, and of course Clinton replied, "Can you ask me"? And this time he managed to sigh as he spoke.

Jeanie blushed, and her little heart began to flutter with delight. She was becoming only too much in earnest in these occasional meetings, while to Clinton it was all a pretty little game, which just kept his hand in for more serious business. She could think of nothing to say, however, except another remark of "I wonder where papa can be!"

"He will turn up in good time," said Clinton quietly, and then he placed some of the blue gum leaves he was playing with in her hand, and managed to give it a meaning pressure while he did so.

It was beginning to grow quite dark beneath the trees; perhaps that was the reason Clinton had to bend down so near to see his companion's face. Neither of them had spoken for some minutes. At last Jeanie made a violent effort, and her first words broke the spell, for her companion at least.

"I really must go back," she said; "Effie and Lucy will wonder what has become of me."

It was so dusk that she scarcely noticed Clinton's sudden start.

"Is Miss Cunningham here to-night?" he inquired; and Jeanie was conscious that there was a change in his tone.

"Yes," she said innocently. "Why do you ask like that? Don't you like her?"

"I like her?" replied Clinton, really for once feeling confused by this inquiry, and thankful that she could not distinctly see his face in the dusk. "Why, yes, of course I do. Every one does, don't they? But I had no idea you had any visitors. Perhaps, after all, we had better go and see if Mr. Lennox is in the house."

Jeanie got up at once, feeling disappointed, and conscious that in some way, for her, the pleasure of the evening was over. Could she have done anything to offend him? She put on her hat, and Clinton did *not* offer to tie the strings, as she had expected that he would, and as they walked back very soberly and formally down the gully something extremely like tears were glittering in her pretty eyes. But she kept her head carefully turned from her companion; and he was feeling too provoked with himself, at the mistake he had unconsciously made, to notice anything unusual about her.

The lamp was not yet lighted when they entered the drawing-room, and Lucy and Effie were still seated by

the window. Only the outlines of their two figures were visible, however, in the twilight.

Clinton had by this time perfectly regained the command of himself. He contrived, while shaking hands with Lucy, to whisper to her that he was feeling dreadfully bored, and *so* glad that she was there to put him to rights again.

Of course she was pleased with the compliment from her lover—what girl would not have been?— and, though Clinton had been flirting with Jeanie all the evening, it was not such an insincere speech after all.

Jeanie was the prettiest of playthings—for a time—but she had not Lucy's intelligence and piquancy, or her power of keeping those in whose society she was interested and amused by her conversation. Clinton was thoroughly alive to this, and on that evening he managed to make Lucy understand that he was aware of it, in a manner which set to rest the unformed doubt at her heart for awhile.

But there was somewhat at hand which was to drive away all minor troubles just then.

The next day Effie drooped; they thought she had taken cold with sitting too long by the window while the dew was falling. Bronchitis

A congestive illness affecting the lungs.

came, bringing with it much suffering, borne with exceeding patience. Then, in a lull of the battle, Effie became aware that she was dying. It was about six o'clock in the evening, and Lucy was with her. She could speak a little, and she spoke of Jeanie.

"Jeanie will want me," she said, somewhat wistfully. "What will she do without me? ... Oh, Lucy! you are stronger than she is.... Will you help her? ... Always, for my sake, do take care of Jeanie!"

Lucy answered, "I will ... God helping me. Do not fear for Jeanie."

It was a solemn vow

Death and solemnity often feature in Victorian melodrama with biblical or christian themes. See also Literature and New Zealand History sections (NZETC collection) for mention of the christian church and Maoridom, see: <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz>.

, destined to be solemnly redeemed far sooner than she had any idea of then.

* * * * *

When Effie spoke again it was in a perfectly satisfied tone. Her last anxiety was gone. She said that nobody must grieve for her. She was very happy—knowing on whose love she rested.

At the end of the week she died. Her figure fades away from among the characters of mystery , and henceforth her place is vacant. Her life was a very short one; not remarkable in any manner; but her influence on Lucy Cunningham did not die with her.

If Effie Lennox had lived she might have continued to love Louis Cunningham, and that love would have been utterly hopeless. The shadow, lying lightly on her life then, might have grown very dark within the years to come; but, dying when she did, Effie escaped all this. It had grown to be with her,—

"If I had lived, I cannot tell, I might have been his wife,
But all these things have ceased to be with my desire of life."

She was not to have her portion in this present world; but, doubtless, God had prepared some better thing for her.

Chapter XIII. Laura Reappears.

AND what was Dacre doing all this time? He had been wandering to and fro, like a man with no object in life. He had visited the West Coast and the hot springs; had even tried the diggings (it is not necessary to specify which of the gold-fields

Otago was an early location for gold prospecting or 'digging'. See reference to gold exports in New Zealand History (NZETC collection), <http://www.New Zealandetc.org/tm/scholarly/subject-000001.html>.

was the scene of his visit), and worked hard at a claim; but, growing disgusted at his want of success, had bought a nugget from another, and started on a trip to Australia.

From Sydney he was very near commencing a trip to the Fiji Islands; but one night he had a dream. Lucy Cunningham stood by him, and offered him one of the soft curly rings which lay so charmingly upon her forehead, just clipped from its station on her pretty head. He stretched out his hand for it eagerly, and awoke to find that memory would not consent to be killed even by a constant change of scene.

After this he endured a day of such thorough "blues," that he decided upon going home; and it seemed to him that he could only carry out this plan by way of New Zealand, and especially of that part where

Maungarewa was situated.

He had a hundred excellent reasons why no other route than this was at all practicable. For one thing, he had not yet completed his assortment of moa bones

Moa were large to very large birds that lived exclusively in New Zealand. They became extinct less than 600 years ago. They are classed as a member of the ratite group of birds, which includes the rheas (South America), ostriches (Africa and Europe-Asia), elephant birds (Madagascar), emus and cassowaries (Australia and Papua New Guinea) and kiwi (New Zealand). See: <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/moa/1>. The giant moa is now part of New Zealand legend.

, and he had heard that some excellent specimens were to be procured in the neighbourhood of Maungarewa.

When he took up his abode in the nearest township to Mr. Cunningham's station he found that the musical clique of the district were upon the eve of giving a concert

See reference to local amateur concerts in "The Organ Fund Concert" letter to the editor of the North Otago Times, Volume XXI, Issue 997, 24 November 1874, Page 2. See: <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>.

. It was for a charitable purpose, and every one who possessed any musical talent had promised to give their assistance.

One day Dacre met Clinton Meredith riding through the town. They greeted each other, and then Dacre asked after Miss Cunningham.

"She was quite well when I saw her last," said Clinton stiffly. He never could divest himself of an unaccountable feeling of jealousy towards Dacre.

Dacre took no notice of his manner. "Are you going to sing at the concert next week?" he asked pleasantly.

"Yes," returned Clinton; adding, with a touch of his usual self-assertion, "they say they can't do without me."

"Ah! indeed," said Dacre. He had found out all he wanted now, and had no wish to prolong the conversation.

If Clinton was to sing, no doubt Lucy would be there, and there he determined to see her and speak to her for the last time, he assured himself, and shut his eyes to the fact that he had come to that neighbourhood for just such an opportunity, and for no other reason.

Lucy, meanwhile, never thought about him at all. Her heart was full of grief at the loss of her girlfriend, and she was trying as far as she could to fulfil her promise to Effie Lennox. As much as lay in her power, she endeavoured to fill Effie's place to poor little Jeanie. She found, too, that this was an easier task at first than she had imagined. Jeanie mourned

Mourning ritual and mourning clothes were observed and catered for early in the new colony. See: North Otago Times 1874, <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>.

.truly and sincerely for the sister she had lost, but it was a necessity to her to cling to the one who offered herself in bodily presence to fill up the void.

"Quand on n'a pas ce qu'on aime, il faut aimer ce qu'on a."

Jeanie's was a nature which realized the truth of this axiom intensely; so that Lucy, who had never dreamed of being looked upon quite in the same light as Effie, found that Jeanie had accepted her, though not without tears, as a substitute, and was daily becoming more and more reconciled to the exchange.

Of course it was out of the question for Jeanie to attend the concert; but Mr. Cunningham wished to go, and wished to take his daughter, and Lucy herself wanted to hear Clinton sing. So she dressed herself for the occasion on the day appointed, though somewhat sadly, with many a longing wish for the lost friend who would never share any pleasures with her again. She had chosen to wear the very simplest toilet of black and white—half-mourning, in fact. A necklace of Roman pearls, and a red rose which Clinton had given her in her hair, were the only ornaments she had allowed herself.

But there was one person at the concert who thought her looking more captivating than ever the moment he set eyes upon her. Alas for Dacre's good resolutions! He found himself, when seated, on the opposite side of the room to Miss Cunningham, and, in fact, in an excellent position for watching her as much as he pleased without being himself observed. Still he could not help wishing for a glance of recognition, and this he set himself at once to gain. The gentleman seated by Lucy's side he guessed, and correctly, to be her father, and to Mr. Cunningham Dacre was determined to obtain an introduction before long.

Lucy, for her part, was scarcely seated before she caught a glimpse of a yellow beard, and became aware that Louis was seated a few rows in front of her, and immediately behind a party consisting of two ladies and a gentleman. On the row before her were the Priors and Mr. Winstanley—Mrs. Prior looking handsome in black

silk, with scarlet poppies in her hair—her husband obviously proud of her—and Arthur Winstanley half asleep, as usual. Lucy caught her brother's eye and nodded to him, and he came to speak to her for a moment.

After he had gone back to his place, and before the performers had made their appearance on the platform arranged for them, Lucy again became conscious that some one was bending forwards and trying to catch her attention from one of the seats at the other side of the room, and almost in a line with those occupied by her father and herself. She turned her head slightly, and encountered a certain pair of bright brown eyes which she had not forgotten. "What is Doctor Dacre doing here, I wonder?" was her first thought; and then, "What an uncommon-looking face he has! He is a man to single out of a crowd."

Dacre, having obtained what he wanted—Lucy's bow and smile—drew back quietly and looked another way. But he told himself next moment that he was rightly punished for having come there at all when he saw that Lucy had forgotten all about him, for Clinton Meredith had come on to the platform and was just about to sing. He was quite right. Lucy had entirely forgotten him. All her thoughts were now absorbed by the evening's entertainment, which had already begun. It was not until the interval between the first and second parts, when the performers had subsided behind a curtain hung to shelter them from profane eyes during their brief breathing space, that Lucy found herself again at liberty to survey some of the audience around her. Suddenly she touched her father's arm,—

"Papa," she said, "do you see those people in front of Louis? One of those two ladies came out with us in the 'Flora Macdonald;' but she was a second-class passenger. It's the one with the black velvet round her neck. Isn't she handsome?"

Mr. Cunningham looked in the direction she indicated to him, and immediately replied in the affirmative. He did not think he had seen such a handsome woman since he came out to the colony.

Mr. Prior, in front of him, overheard the remark, and was inwardly disgusted, regarding his own wife as a far finer specimen any day! But had the proposition been put to the general vote, Mr. Prior would certainly have found himself in a minority.

The party in front of Louis Cunningham consisted, as I said before, of two ladies and a gentleman. There was sufficient resemblance between all three as to indicate that the relationship of brother and sister existed among them. But the gentleman was short and stout in figure, and could never have had any pretensions to good looks, even had his face not been so exceedingly sulky; while the two ladies, on the other hand, were both tall and uncommonly handsome. They had graceful, stately figures, thick black hair, and large grey eyes. They were remarkably alike; only when you compared them together you saw that one of them was older than the other, and that her beauty was nearer its wane. The elder lady was dressed plainly in black grenadine; the other was in white, set off with coral ornaments, coral round her neck and wrists, and thick strings of coral twisted in her splendid black plaits of hair. She wore also round her throat a broad black velvet band.

None of those ladies whose costumes I have noticed in this chapter wore dresses cut low in the neck, or what would be considered full dress in England. It was an understood thing at the time I write of, and in that part of the New Zealand colonies, that *ladies* were never to appear before a colonial audience in anything but demi-toilet

Not full 'formal' evening dress as would be the custom in Europe. See Evans's reference to this in her 'Preface' for the novel *Over the Hills and Far Away* in the Literature section (NZETC collection). See: <http://www.NewZealandetc.org/tm/scholarly/subject-000005.html>.

Lucy had just finished the observations she was making of Mrs. Keith's party, when something attracted her attention nearer home, and her eye fell carelessly on the people immediately before her. Then she gave an involuntary start, for she saw to her amazement that Arthur Winstanley was awake at last!

The change was remarkable. Five minutes ago he had been languidly studying the programme of the songs which he held in his hand, and evidently wondering when the whole affair would be over. Now the sleepy eyes had suddenly lit up; the sulky mouth was actually quivering; the man's whole attitude expressed eagerness and alertness in every line. What was it that had aroused him at last?

Lucy followed the direction of his eyes. They were fixed upon the two ladies to whom she had just been calling her father's attention. After a moment she became certain that he was watching them; and even when he recollected himself and drew back into his seat, half shading his eyes with his hand for a minute or two, she saw that his excitement had still by no means subsided.

He was so quiet through it all, however, that no one had noticed him except Lucy, and even she could not tell from the expression of his face what was the nature of his repressed agitation. Whether it were joy or sorrow, anger or pleasure, she had not the slightest idea. A minute afterwards, however, she saw that his hand was trembling so much, he could no longer hold the little slip of pink paper containing the printed programme of the evening's entertainment

See North Otago Times for an example of community entertainment, 17 November 1874. See:

<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.New Zealand>.

; it had fallen to the ground; and the next instant Arthur Winstanley rose from his seat, and slipped quietly out of the room.

A little while and some one behind Lucy said, not loudly, but in a distinct tone which could be heard all round, "A person outside has fainted! Is there a medical man in the room?"

Doctor Dacre rose at once, making an affirmative gesture with his hand, and then he, too, disappeared; and Lucy found herself feeling somewhat nervous, and her cheeks hotter and more flushed than they had been a short time before.

Chapter XIV. The End of the Concert.

DOCTOR DACRE was not away long; he soon returned and resumed his seat, looking so cool and unconcerned that Lucy felt quite reassured by one glance at his face. And in about half an hour Arthur Winstanley, too, came in, very pale, but quite himself again to all outward appearance. Just as he entered it became Clinton's turn to sing his last solo

The singing of light songs or 'lieder', sometimes with piano accompaniment, were a popular feature of 19th century society and brought to the colonies. There is evidence in 19th century New Zealand newspapers of early attempts to provide formal public musical entertainment. See North Otago Times, 17 November 1874. See: <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.New Zealand>.

This was nearly at the close of the evening. Lucy made her father applaud Clinton vigorously, and he got the *encore* he wished for. Then came a glee, and then "God save the Queen

Was the New Zealand 'national anthem' from 1840, also as 'God save the King'. Another anthem entitled 'God defend New Zealand' (written in 1874) was adopted as a national hymn in 1940 and in 1977 given equal status with 'God save the Queen'. A Maori translation is often sung before the english verses. See: <http://www.teara.govt.New Zealand/en/government-an-nation/9>.

," when, of course, every one rose.

After this the people streamed out. Those who chose to wait until the crush was over grew into isolated little groups, and were full in view of each other. The Priors, Arthur Winstanley, and Mr. Cunningham, formed one of these; Clinton was hunting for some music on the platform, and Louis was with him. Lucy had gone to fetch some wraps from the small room at the entrance, used that night as a cloak-room; and Dacre, having waylaid her as she came out, was getting the interview he had been looking forward to so long. Not very far from the platform the two ladies who had interested Arthur Winstanley so much were still standing.

Mr. Winstanley detached himself from his own party, and walked quietly down the room towards them. As he drew near, the younger lady, with the coral in her hair, suddenly dropped her fan. Arthur made a hasty step forwards, as though to restore it to her, but she was too quick for him. She picked it up, and turned rather away from the rest of her party as she did so. Any one who had noticed her face at this moment would have seen that it expressed the blankest dismay.

Arthur Winstanley immediately addressed her; he spoke a very few words in an under tone, but all the world might have heard what he said. It was simply a request to know when and where it would be convenient to her to grant him an interview. She replied in the same tone, and naming a time and place.

This was all that passed between them. He bowed, and she returned the salute, and then he walked away again back to his own friends. The whole affair had not lasted two minutes, and her face never lost its startled expression till he had fairly gone.

On his way up the room he passed Lucy and Dacre. Dacre turned and looked hard at him, as he went by, with a somewhat puzzled face. Lucy ventured to ask him if that was not the gentleman who had been taken ill that evening.

"Yes," Dacre returned, "it is. But what puzzles me is that I seem to remember having met him before, and I cannot recall where." He stood a moment, evidently taxing his memory for something that had escaped him, and apparently in vain.

"His name is Mr. Winstanley," said Lucy.

But this did not enlighten Dacre in the least. "I have seen the fellow before somewhere," he said—"of that I am certain—and it must have been under a different name. But where and when I met him I cannot recollect at all."

Lucy did not feel able to help him any further; but she thought it strange, if he were indeed right in his conjecture, that Arthur Winstanley had not already recalled himself to Dacre's remembrance.

Quite a little hum of conversation was going on at the upper end of the room.

"Mr. Brown played exquisitely, didn't he? I was quite enchanted."

Those 'Lieder ohne Worte'

See Mendelssohn's 'Songs Without Words'. See: Robert H.B. Hoskins, *An Annotated Bibliography of New Zealand Songbooks*. Christchurch, N.Z: School of Music, University of Canterbury, 1988.

are so bewitching!"

"And how sweetly Miss Jones sang!"

"Did you observe Mrs. Robinson's dress? Pearl-grey silk

See 'In the Silk Department', *North Otago Times*, 6 October 1874. See: <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz> New Zealand.

, and blue convolvulus in her hair. So lovely!"

"She has just had a box from home. No doubt that sweet silk came in it!"

"The applause from the diggers behind was less uproarious than I expected."

"Who was the poor man that fainted, I wonder?"

"The heat was enough to make any fellow faint. Why did not some one open a window?"

So ran the comments of the "upper ten thousand" upon the evening's amusement.

"Papa," said Lucy, "I want to introduce you to Doctor Dacre."

Mr. Cunningham took a fancy to Dacre's face, and invited him to Maungarewa on the spot. Clinton Meredith joined them, and they all four left the room together, followed in a moment by the Priors and Arthur Winstanley.

The instant they had disappeared Laura looked at Louis, and made him the slightest possible signal with her fan. He was by her side in a moment.

Chapter XV. Mrs. Lennox becomes Confidential.

LUCY had promised to ride round by Deepdene on her way home the day after the concert, and tell Jeanie all about it. Louis, having some business to transact with Mr. Lennox, had promised to escort her.

They reached the house about five o'clock p.m., just an hour or so before dinner

DNZE definition states: 'the midday meal whether the main meal of the day (as often in rural New Zealand) or not (as is usual in towns). Also cited: 'As elsewhere and esp. in urban use, a main meal taken at evening'. Also: local hoteliers and dining rooms in Evans' home of Oamaru advertised their dining hours from 12-2 in the afternoon. See *North Otago Times* 6 October 1874, page 3, <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz> New Zealand.

Jeanie was out somewhere in the garden, but Mrs. Lennox came to meet Lucy, and gave her, as usual, a hearty welcome.

The evenings had now begun to grow short and cold. After Lucy had taken off her riding-habit, they repaired to the drawing-room, and were glad to find a good fire glowing in the grate.

Mrs. Lennox placed two easy chairs before the hearth for herself and her visitor. The room was empty, except for Lucy and herself, and it was fast getting dusk. Neither could see the other's face very distinctly as they sat before the fire; it was, in fact, quite a confidential sort of hour, and, everybody being out of the way, Mrs. Lennox took advantage of it, and settled herself down for a comfortable talk.

"My dear," she said, after a short pause, during which Lucy, tired with her ride, was beginning to grow drowsy under the combined influence of the luxurious easy chair and the warmth from the red embers. "Lucy, my dear, I want to speak to you about Jeanie—something very particular indeed."

"Yes?" returned Lucy, rousing up immediately. "About Jeanie? What is it, Mrs. Lennox?"

"It is a matter of very great importance, my dear," said the elder lady, smoothing down some of the trimming—black crape, alas!—on her dress as she spoke.

However, in all this she was really doing Mrs. Lennox great injustice, for that lady certainly had something of importance to say.

"Perhaps you have noticed a little yourself, my dear," Mrs. Lennox went on presently, "and you won't be surprised, I think, at what I am going to tell you. The fact is, that a certain gentleman who has been here pretty often has really paid Jeanie some marked attentions, and I wanted to consult you as to whether it would be a desirable match for her or not, for I think your father seems to know him well."

Not the slightest hint of the truth had as yet dawned on Lucy's mind. She ran over in her head the names of half a dozen professed admirers of Jeanie's without being able to discover to which Mrs. Lennox referred.

Several of them had been often at Deepdene, but which had been the most pointed in his attentions she was unable from her own observation to decide. So, with a strong feeling of curiosity growing within her, she inquired, "Who is it, Mrs. Lennox?"

"Then you haven't noticed anything," said Mrs. Lennox, slightly disappointed; "but perhaps it was not likely. Now I come to think of it, I remember his visits here have never happened to take place at the same time as yours except once ... but that was weeks ago ... before ... before we lost Effie."

Still no hint of the truth had flashed upon Lucy. The sudden gravity that had fallen upon her face was caused by the allusion in Mrs. Lennox's last words. She shook her head slightly and said, "I don't recollect. Who is it?"

"I remember you both came over on the same evening then," went on Mrs. Lennox, still without the slightest notion of returning a straightforward answer to Lucy's question—"Mr. Meredith and you. Don't you recollect now?"

"Who?" returned Lucy hastily, with dilated eyes fixed on her companion's face.

"Mr. Meredith."

"You surely are not speaking of *him*?" said Lucy.

"Yes I am," returned Mrs. Lennox composedly, not noticing the look of perfect horror in the girl's eyes. The fire had grown dull, however, and their faces in that dim light were not clear to each other's vision. "You seem a little surprised, my dear, but you would not be if you had noticed all that I have done. I assure you that young man never comes to the house now but what I expect he will make Jeanie an offer. I want you to tell me if you know anything of his family and his prospects, and whether I am doing wisely in encouraging his attentions or not."

Not a word of answer to this appeal came from the easy chair opposite to her. Lucy was sitting in a kind of trance of horror, which for the moment had almost stricken her dumb.

She felt in her inmost heart that Mrs. Lennox was not deceived, and that what she said was perfectly true. Little fragments of doubt, which had found their way into her mind from time to time, hitherto crushed down and despised, all rose up in revolution in a moment, and formed a solid barricade of proof, against which Hope dashed herself once, and then dropped down dead for ever.

Mrs. Lennox, as it happened, had no time to feel surprised at Lucy's silence and apparent apathy concerning Jeanie's prospects in life, so different from her usual ready sympathy on all subjects brought before her notice by either Mrs. Lennox or her daughter. Just at this moment there was a step in the hall, and a clear voice called out, "Mamma, are you there? and where's Lucy? Has she come yet?"

"We're both here, Jeanie," her mother answered; and then to Lucy, in a lower tone, "Another time, my dear. We'll finish our talk together quietly some day when there's no one by to interrupt us."

Jeanie came in, fresh and cold from the evening air, her shawl unfastened and drooping over her shoulders, her large garden hat in her hand. She went up to Lucy and offered her a pink cheek to kiss.

"You look very snug," she said. "Why didn't you send some one to fetch me in?"

"We did not know where you were," said Mrs. Lennox, "nor who you might be with," she added in rather a meaning tone.

"Oh, nonsense!" returned Jeanie, smiling a little to herself, as though she quite understood the allusion. "We have not had any visitors now for two days. They were all at the concert." Then to Lucy, with a slight hesitation, she added, "Did—did ... Mr. Meredith sing, and was he encored?"

Lucy replied to both questions in the affirmative, but somehow not quite in her usual tone.

"I'm sure you're tired," said Jeanie compassionately, "so I won't bother you now, but you must tell me all about it after dinner. I want to know what every one wore, and which of the glees went off the best. Now I'm going to sit by your side and let you rest until you've had some tea."

She curled herself on the hearth-rug by the side of Lucy's chair, and kept silence meritoriously for some time. She little dreamt that Lucy, lying back so very still, was drawing a mental comparison between Jeanie and herself, and that the case, in her opinion, was decidedly in Jeanie's favour.

Lucy Cunningham was not beautiful, as I have said before. She was merely a nice-looking girl, with a bright, intelligent expression. The only claims she could lay to beauty rested on her pretty rippling hair and round, graceful figure.

But Jeanie was, in all respects, unusually pretty. Her little golden head gleamed in the firelight under Lucy's eyes; her soft oval face, from the delicate eyebrows to the dimpled chin, Lucy knew by heart, and knew that it was very fair. The fault of Jeanie's face lay in the forehead, which was too high and not broad enough to please a critical eye; but Lucy did not think of this just then. She weighed herself and Jeanie in the balance and found herself wanting. She was utterly unconscious of one of her own greatest charms—perhaps the one of all others which had most attracted Clinton towards her—her piquant, graceful manners.

It was quite beyond Jeanie's power to keep silence very long. She soon began to talk again as eagerly as ever. She was wild to know everything that had happened the evening before, and especially all that concerned Clinton Meredith. But by this time Lucy had rallied her forces and could answer every question quite steadily. The extreme innocence and simplicity of both Jeanie and her mother rendered this much easier to her. She soon

saw that there was no more likelihood of her secret being discovered by either of them than by two children.

She told Jeanie everything she could remember about the concert, from the lace on Mrs. Prior's dress and Arthur Winstanley's attack of faintness down to the flower in Clinton Meredith's buttonhole; and after awhile the gentlemen—Louis and Mr. Lennox—came in, and they had dinner.

Chapter XVI. Dacre's Advice.

“Liberavi animam meam.”

DURING all the weary watches of the night which followed this memorable evening, Lucy little dreamt that, only a few hours before, Clinton too had been weighing something in the balance, but not as she had done—alone. He asked advice and secured the assistance of a firmer hand than his own to hold the scales. The man to whom he applied was Doctor Dacre.

It was partly owing to their being accidentally thrown together at a time when Clinton's mind had begun to grow uneasy as to the future, partly because Clinton had recognized, in a vague sort of fashion, that this other man was built of stronger, more reliable materials than himself. Not that he would have admitted this even to his own inner consciousness. He had the bump of self-esteem exceedingly well developed under his fair hair, and had by no means at that time made up his mind to regard Dacre as his superior, whatever other people might do.

It happened that both Clinton and Dacre had some distance to ride home after the concert was over, and that for the greater part of the way their roads lay together, so they got their horses and started in company.

For some time both were very silent—Clinton even, now that the excitement of the evening was over, rather gloomy—but at last, riding along under the stars, in the soft hush of the night, his mood relaxed, and he felt an impulse to open his heart to his companion.

“Dacre,” he said suddenly, when they had gone about two miles or so, “Dacre, did it ever happen to you to come to a place where two roads met, and for the life of you you didn't know which to take? I mean by roads—courses of action, you know.”

Dacre glanced at him for a moment somewhat surprised, and then, seeing that Clinton was really in earnest, he shook his head and said “No.” After a moment he added, “The two roads—yes: the doubt —no. One road was always plainly right and the other wrong.”

“Ah, but I don't mean that, old fellow,” said Clinton. “You're on the wrong track. I don't mean a question of conscience, you know. But did you never see two roads before you, each equally easy to take, and for the life of you you didn't know which you'd rather go?”

Dacre laughed outright.

“No,” he said. “I never felt doubtful as to what I wanted in my life. I always saw *that* clearly enough. You are talking of an *embarras des richesses*

French, meaning a surfeit of fortune or literally an embarrassment of riches.
such as I never experienced.”

Clinton was quite silent for some time after this. They halted their horses on the side of the hill they were ascending, and looked down on the lights of the town sparkling below them.

At last Meredith said abruptly, “The truth is, Dacre, I'm just now in a deadly dilemma. I must do one thing or the other, and I'll be hanged if I know which it's to be.”

He stared hard at the lights below in an absent manner as he spoke.

Dacre, also with his eyes far away, answered, “Why do you say this to me, Meredith? Do you want advice from me? I tell you plainly I can give you none, being as completely in the dark as I am. You say it's not a question of conscience, and if it's not, and you really don't know your own mind, why, so far as I can see, you might as well toss up for it and abide by heads or tails.”

They had turned their horses' heads and were riding on now.

“Well, no, there's no conscience in it,” returned Clinton, ignoring the last suggestion entirely. He was half inclined to be affronted with Dacre for making it, and with the view of proving that his troubles arose entirely from his own superior powers of fascination, and were therefore matters for envy rather than otherwise, he rushed into particulars forthwith.

“You know Miss Cunningham?” he went on. “Well, we were engaged—at least, after a fashion, you know—Hallo, Dacre! don't go so fast, will you? It's a nasty bit of road just here—and so, as luck would have it, she insisted on introducing me to her friend Jeanie Lennox. I held back rather, but she would have it so,

and—and—she's very pretty, you know—and—I say, what am I to do, you know? Upon my word, old fellow, you'll have a cropper in a moment if you go on like that.”

Dacre's horse had stumbled on the slope of the hill as they descended. He was certainly riding rather recklessly at the time.

“If you want to come to grief I certainly don't,” Clinton went on. “There, that's more the pace for such a hill as this. Breaking my neck isn't exactly the way I should choose out of my difficulties, though they're no end of a bore all the same. It has just come to this:—One of these girls I suppose I must throw over—which is it to be?”

Dacre muttered something between his teeth. He had not been entirely ignorant of all that Clinton was now imparting to him. The fact of Clinton's engagement to Lucy he had guessed long since on board the “Flora Macdonald,” but all this complication concerning Jeanie Lennox was quite new to him, and perfectly staggered him for the time.

If Clinton had only known it, breaking his neck by following the other's lead was not the only risk he ran just at that moment. The man by his side, of whom he had been making a confidant, would have liked nothing better than to dismount, and fight it out there and then—fair play on both sides, and no favour.

But, after all, would it be fair play? Dacre's eye fell on Clinton's arm and shoulder, as they rode abreast now, and then he glanced down at his own broad chest. The contrast was too great; and, after all, Clinton, in telling him this, had trusted him, and was speaking in good faith

Meaning 'implicit' trust.
towards him atleast.

Dacre's decision came at last, slow and steady: “You said it wasn't a question of conscience: I think it is—decidedly so. Which of these two girls has the first claim on you?”

“Pon my honour

Literally translated 'upon my honour'. OED definition of honour states: 'as received, gained, held, or enjoyed: Glory, renown, fame; credit, reputation, good name. The opposite of dishonour, disgrace'.

. I scarcely know,” said Clinton, after a moment's hesitation. “I've said more to Jeanie than I'd any business to, I know. But, after all, Lucy has the first claim, I suppose.”

“Then if you think that, and if you love her, and believe that you can make her happy—mind that, Meredith—I say, be loyal to the one who trusted you first. It's a hard matter to decide; but I see no other way out of it.”

Dacre spoke as though the words were forced out of him against his own consent; and he felt, when he had uttered them, somewhat as a man might do who had been compelled to sign his own death-warrant.

Clinton acquiesced on the instant. Dacre's stronger nature had for the time taken a firm grasp of his own, and he accepted the other man's decision without hesitation.

“There'll be some unpleasantness about it, either way,” he remarked. “But Lucy certainly has the greatest right, and I'll go by what you say, Dacre. Here's the turning to Prior's house. Good-night, old fellow, and thanks for your good counsel.”

Dacre simply answered, “Good-night,” and rode on. The iron hand

Could this also be a form of parody on the male stereotype? The sexual 'double entendre' could be seen here almost as parody yet appears to be consistent with Evans's 'sensation' narrative style.

with which he had been controlling himself relaxed, and he was breathing in quick gasps, with his bright brown eyes on fire.

He had ridden a mile or two before they began to cool, and then he suddenly exclaimed aloud, “It was a hard matter; but, anyhow, I have been enabled to deliver my soul.”

The consequence of the conversation

The Art and therefore the consequences of conversation also constituted a significant aspect of the late 18th century novel such as found in the works of Jane Austen.

just related was that when Lucy walked into the dining-room at Maungarewa, after her ride home, the first object her eyes encountered was the figure of Clinton Meredith, seated in an easy chair near the window, with the light of the dying sun turning his fair hair and silky moustache to gold.

Chapter XVII. A Question.

“If you love her best, speak out like a man.”

LUCY recoiled for a moment with an exclamation of surprise. Her next thought was, that in the whole course of her acquaintance with Clinton she had never seen him look handsomer than he did then. The beautiful outlines of his face and head stood out magnificently against the shadow gathering behind him in the corner of the room. Lucy took note of it all, with a curious sensation of wonder and perplexity as she did so. She had begun to learn the rudiments of a great lesson—to perceive dimly at last that “all that glitters is not gold

A traditional proverb meaning that superficial appearances may be deceiving.

Clinton had been expecting her for some time, and for his part was not in the least surprised or embarrassed. He rose to meet her with his usual air of caressing deference

Could also read as sexual 'double entendre'.

He was apt occasionally to treat Jeanie with a little soft-spoken condescension; but Lucy, he had long since discovered, was a girl of a different calibre, and he liked her the better for it.

Now, when he came forward to welcome her, however, he felt at once a change in her manner towards him. She held out her hand, but drew back a little at the same time, keeping him at arm's length; and when he took to caressing the little hand, that too deserted him, and Lucy turned away.

“Is anything the matter?” Clinton asked involuntarily.

“No,” she answered quietly; “but I want to speak to you, please. Sit down again, Clinton—you looked very comfortable when I came in—and I'll warm my hands.”

The lamp was standing upon the table, but it was not yet lit; it was scarcely dusk enough for that. The sun still touched the posts of the verandah with his last rays, and outside the sky was all one splendour of red and gold.

Lucy knelt down on the rug before the fire, and, taking off her riding-gloves, held out her hands to the glowing wood embers in the grate, but in an absent fashion, and with a strangely sober face.

“Something *is* up!” thought Meredith as he watched her.

When she turned towards him, still gravely, and asked, “Clinton, how long is it since you were at Deepdene?” his countenance fell.

Lucy noticed it, and, without waiting for an answer to the first question, she went on:—“She's very pretty, isn't she, Clinton? And I suppose it was natural?”

Clinton turned scarlet. “What on earth have you got into your silly little head now?” he asked, with the poorest assumption possible of unconsciousness.

“You know what I mean,” Lucy answered, looking at him steadily with eyes which he was accustomed to see soft and smiling, but which were now very grave. “Don't try to keep it from me any longer, Clinton. I—I—don't like it. I dare say you couldn't help caring most for Jeanie; but I wish you'd told me so honestly.”

“I don't care most for Jeanie,” he said, repeating her words, and all the more bent upon following Dacre's counsel, now that he began to have a faint inkling the decision might not be so completely in his own power as he had imagined.

“You are

Meaning neither one thing nor another.

!” Lucy returned, but still quietly. “You must see, Clinton, that I have found out the truth. Why do you try to deceive me still?”

“I'm not equivocating, or trying to deceive you,” he said rather sulkily. “Perhaps in your turn you'll tell me what you've found out, or fancy you've found out, at all events?”

He thought that he was conducting the matter with a masterly diplomacy. Once he could persuade her to bring any specific charge against him, he could deny everything, and assume an injured *rôle*.

But he was not prepared for Lucy's reply.

“Mrs. Lennox told me all about it,” she said; “and now, Clinton, I won't blame you ... I'll try not to say another sharp word—if you will answer me one question in all honesty.”

“What is it?”

“Honestly and truly, then, Clinton.”

“Well, if I answer at all, of course it will be honestly,” he replied, with an air of injured innocence.

“Do you think that Jeanie Lennox—on your honour, mind—cares for you or not? I want the plain truth, and what you tell me I shall believe.”

Clinton hesitated. She was so intensely in earnest, that she was forcing him to be the same; and besides, in this case, the truth was flattering, and Clinton's ready vanity came into play at once.

“I believe she does,” he said at last. “There, now—that's honest. And remember, you *would* have it.”

Lucy drew a long breath and was silent. Instead of the rose-flushed clouds outside, on which her look was fixed, she saw, curiously blended together, Effie's dying eyes imploring her to take care of Jeanie; and again

Jeanie's lovely round face, with the pathetic child-like expression it always assumed when she was thwarted, and with her beautiful blue eyes swimming in tears.

At last she spoke again, very slowly, and pausing between every few words.

"One of us two will have to give up," she said. "And I expectit will haveto be me."

This was not at all what Clinton desired. He had resolved magnanimously to give up pretty Jeanie for Lucy's sake, and lo! his magnanimity was finding itself without ground to stand upon.

"No such thing," he exclaimed vehemently. "Jeanie won't break her heart—and if she *is* a bit cut up, why it's chiefly her own fault. She encouraged me to the end: I give you my word for that. But as for me, I shall do as I choose; and I choose ... *you*, Lucy."

She sprang to her feet, and turned on him almost fiercely.

"Don't try to lay the blame on her, whatever you do," she said. "It's bad enough without that, Clinton."

Clinton was betrayed into an involuntary expression of admiration.

"Pon my honour," he said, "Jeanie's pretty, but her face can't light up like that—nor her eyes look so! I swear, Lucy, I'd rather have you than a dozen Jeanies!"

As she stood before him, panting, with wrath in her face, a shadow came between her and the rose glory in the sky in front. It was a man passing through the verandah towards the door of the house, and Lucy recognized him in a moment.

The next instant she threw open one of the long windows of the dining-room, saying, "Enter, Doctor Dacre, you are *most* welcome."

Dacre came in.

He had come in accordance with an invitation pressed upon him by Mr. Cunningham, who had taken a great fancy to him at first sight. He entered, to find Lucy standing in one corner of the room, and Clinton in another, both flushed and excited. Between them lay one of Lucy's riding gauntlets, lying where she had accidentally dropped it, but looking like a gage of battle.

The first thing Dacre did was to stoop and take up the glove.

He saw that something was the matter, and, knowing half, he guessed the rest. If the picking up of that glove had involved the acceptance of a veritable challenge, he could not have placed himself more decidedly by Lucy's side, or looked more ready to do battle on her behalf against all comers.

Lucy, on her part, felt vaguely that here was a friend, and one who would take her part whenever called upon, for which she owed him some gratitude.

Clinton, on the instant, experienced a sensation of the wildest jealousy, and knew at the same time that Lucy was lost to him for ever.

Truly at that moment both Lucy and Jeanie were revenged.

And this was the situation of all parties when Mr. Cunningham came into the room.

Chapter XVIII. Clinton's First Love.

MR. CUNNINGHAM came in, fortunately, in high spirits, and very cordial to both his guests. It was well he was disposed to be so sociable, for Lucy's conversational powers had entirely deserted her, and Clinton scarcely spoke a word.

Dacre, however, threw himself into the breach. He took the seat at dinner next to Lucy, and contrived to cover her silence so dexterously by his own remarks, that her father never even noticed it, and the girl was more grateful to him than ever.

She thought, while he was speaking, that she had never before noticed the really remarkable beauty of his eyes. They were not soft eyes like Clinton's, but generally bright, keen, and rather sad. Still they could deepen into softness, which was the more attractive, perhaps, from its rarity. They were, however, eyes gifted with the ability of expressing themselves; what they meant they could say, and say distinctly and forcibly. Therefore they possessed that higher order of beauty which is not form or colour, and which outlasts, outrivals both.

When Dacre rose to go—for he could not be persuaded to stay the night—his host pressed him eagerly to come soon again.

"Come as often as you can, Dacre," Mr. Cunningham said. "You will be always welcome, won't he, Lucy?"

"Yes," returned Lucy, with one of her brightest smiles. And Dacre knew from her face that she was aware of how he had taken her part that evening, and he felt more than rewarded.

Then she turned to Clinton, offering him her hand, and lowering her voice a little as she spoke.

"Good-night," she said, "and good-bye! I am sorry I spoke crossly. I shall tell papa and Louis it was all my fault; so you need not mind about that, Mr. Meredith."

She had called him "Clinton" for the last time, and he knew it.

He answered her in the same tone: "That is good of you, and I thank you for it, Lucy. I shan't call you that again, so never mind. I suppose it must be Jeanie; but it never would have been either of you if I hadn't seen the marriage of the only girl I ever really loved in the *Times*, the day we spoke the 'Flying Foam.'"

The words were so bitter that she did not at first believe they were true. She thought that Clinton was revenging himself on her thus.

But he went out, saying to himself, "Oh, Mary Lindsay! Mary Lindsay! Why did you let me think you loved me, and then marry in three weeks after I had sailed? If I have been fickle and dishonest since, it is all your fault, and with you lies the blame."

Clinton's boyish love, Mary Lindsay, will never enter this story. But what he had said to Lucy was almost the truth. He had loved his pretty coquettish little cousin who lived at

An island situated in the North Atlantic Ocean discovered by the Portuguese in the 15th century, but whom he had seen a great deal of during a visit of hers to England, as much as it was in his nature to love any earthly thing.

He had never thought of Lucy Cunningham except as a lively, agreeable girl, whose society, *French, for 'filling in' or 'passing time away'.*

le temps, was invaluable on board ship, until the day he saw Mary's marriage in the *Times*. Then pride and wounded vanity were sore within him, and half from pique, half from genuine admiration for Lucy, he soon found himself

In Victorian vernacular referring more to an affectionate, romantic (rather than overtly physical or sexual) response.

to her in earnest—in earnest, at least, as far as Clinton understood the words.

But though he had not been engaged to Lucy for a month before he had recognized her superiority to his boyish idol, he did not love her as he had done Mary. Lucy did not struggle for admiration, did not talk and act for effect, like Mary had done; but still in Clinton's heart her image stood alone, distinct from all the other women whom he might admire, and whose favour he might still be eager to win, on his way through life.

Lucy did not know all this. How should she? If she had, she would not have tried to help on Clinton's engagement to Jeanie as she did.

But she estimated herself at too low a value; and she did not believe that Clinton could be at heart indifferent to Jeanie. "And if he loves her, she will be happy with him," Lucy thought. "It was because I had not the power of gaining his love that he proved unfaithful to me."

Her reasoning, though false, was not devoid of the grace of humility after all.

So she used her influence with Mr. and Mrs. Lennox in Clinton's behalf, and pacified her father and Louis, who never heard a correct version of what had passed. They knew, in fact, much less of it than Dacre did.

But Mr. Cunningham had never liked Clinton, or been much in favour of bestowing his daughter upon him, and he was not sorry that, as he fancied, some childish dispute had arisen between them, which had terminated in the dissolution of their engagement.

Clinton, for his part, was in no great hurry to bind himself afresh. He gave himself a month to think it over, and try how he liked his freedom. In all that time he never once went near poor Jeanie. But at last, one fine day, he dressed himself carefully, and with the pleasing consciousness that he was looking his best, set off for Deepdene.

He found every one out but the maid, who opened the door to him, and who was as fully persuaded as her mistress of the purport of his former frequent visits. She therefore volunteered the information that "Miss Jeanie was somewhere about. Perhaps she had gone up the gully, or perhaps she was in the orchard."

Clinton set off at once up the gully, hoping to find her there. But there was no sign of her at all to be discovered. He went on, however, until at last he reached the great stone, the scene of former meetings and flirtations, sweet, because stolen.

The sight stung him with an odd feeling of lost time. He had been with Jeanie there, and many times afterwards, when he might have been with Lucy.

Now he could see Jeanie whenever he chose, but he could never have Lucy for a companion again. He felt as if he had better have made the most of her while it lay in his power.

He set off again, with this thought still in his mind, and did not lose it until he had closed the little gate which opened on to the gully behind him. Then he considered what he had better do next. Maggie had said something about the orchard, and there at all events he determined to look for Miss Lennox next.

He did so, and was rewarded by a glimpse of the black skirt of Jeanie's dress between the boughs of a large apple-tree.

He walked round, and there she was, holding up with one hand her little holland apron full of fruit, with a great basket, nearly filled with apples, on the ground beside her.

Chapter XIX. The “Beauty of Kent.”

WHEN Jeanie saw him, she gave a start and a little cry, and let her apron fall, so that all the apples it contained rolled on to the ground.

Clinton picked up one—an immense “Beauty of Kent,” at his feet, and walked up to her, still holding it in his hand.

“I am afraid I startled you,” he said.

“Oh, no!” returned Jeanie. “But I—I did not expect to see you.”

The loveliest rosy bloom had risen into her little round cheeks, but she drew herself up with a pretty assumption of dignity, and turned slightly away from him.

The poor child was trying hard to be cold, and to keep him at a distance. She had not seen Clinton for some time, and had been imagining herself deserted. Twenty times a day she had resolved that if he came again she would give him *such* a lesson.

And now, here he was, as handsome as ever, and she knew she was looking pleased to see him. For a moment or two she could scarcely prevent herself from crying in her vexation.

“It seems very jolly here,” said Clinton, “I’m glad I found you. Shall we sit down?”

Jeanie made no answer to this, but she seated herself immediately. Between shyness and self-consciousness, if he had proposed to her to climb one of the

An early imported fruit tree in the colonies. Apples and pears have been grown in New Zealand since the first arrival of Europeans to the country. The missionary Samuel Marsden introduced the first apple and pear trees in 1819. See: <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/government-and-nation/2>.

, and sit with him among the branches, she would scarcely have found words to refuse.

Clinton sat down by her side, still nursing his “Beauty of Kent,” and began by remarking that it was a long time since he had seen her.

“Very long,” said Jeanie in reply, with an emphasis which came very near to being a sob.

“It shall never be so long again,” went on Clinton pointedly; “at least if *you* don’t forbid me to come” he added.

All of a sudden, from something in his manner and the tone of his voice, it flashed upon Jeanie what was coming. She blushed rosier than ever, and down came the great tears in good earnest.

After this it was all fair sailing. Clinton had only to put down his great yellow apple, ask her what was the matter, and kiss away her tears.

Jeanie’s poor little attempt at dignity had gone to the winds.

“I—I—thought you were never coming again,” she said.

“But you see I’m here,” returned Clinton. “Your slave—at your feet.”

He never gave her any further explanation of his absence, and, having got him back again, she was quite satisfied.

Once, just once, he could not help remembering the companion-stairs of an emigrant ship, on a certain rainy evening in the tropics

The long ship journey to the antipodes involved crossing through the ‘tropical’ regions between the Northern and Southern hemispheres.

, and some one very different to the present some one, who had been beside him then. But the thought passed, and Jeanie’s blue eyes, looking up into his with perfect innocence and truthfulness, never detected it at all.

Very soon Clinton was peeling Ribston

A brand of apple.

for them both, and the whole thing was finally settled between them, subject of course to the approval of Jeanie’s parents, which, however, she had no fear would be withheld.

She was as happy as possible, looking up to Clinton in everything, and taking for granted that all he did and said must be right. Clinton was a very poor hero, but he *was* a hero to Jeanie after all.

“She darkly felt him great and wise,
She dwelt on him with faithful eyes.
I cannot understand—I love.”

It was the simplicity of the worshipper that formed the pedestal for the idol.

The engagement of Miss Lennox to Mr. Meredith was soon made public, and very soon the whole district had discussed it.

It was universally considered that such a handsome couple were well matched. The world does not comprehend the proverb Lucy had just been learning by heart; it takes everything that glitters for the precious metal.

But just about this time, one of Clinton's uncles died at home, and Clinton, as he expected, found himself the owner of a very comfortable sum to invest as he might find most advantageous. The match had become a very good one for Jeanie, in a worldly point of view, and it was settled that her marriage should take place in about six weeks—that is, in the early spring.

Lucy received this piece of news one day when she had ridden over to Deepdene to keep Mrs. Lennox and Jeanie company during the absence of the head of the family. Mr. Lennox, Mr. Cunningham, Louis, and Clinton had all journeyed into the next province to attend a great Agricultural Show, and they were not expected home for several days.

Jeanie, for the first part of the evening after Lucy's arrival, was in the highest possible spirits. She had already thought over and settled her complete wedding toilet, down to the most minute items.

“A veil, of course, you know, dear,” she said to Lucy, “and some orange blossom in my hair. I think my dress shall be white silk, with the tunic looped so—won't it look lovely? And you, you know, Lucy, must be one of my bridesmaids. Would you rather wear white and blue, or white and pink?”

“I am not going to be a bridesmaid at all,” said Lucy, shaking her head.

“Oh, you cross darling, why not?” inquired Jeanie anxiously.

Lucy, having no answer ready, only said, “Wait and see,” and Jeanie's mind was so full of a pearl set, which Clinton was going to have out for her from home, that she forgot to insist upon a more explicit reply.

Chapter XX. Lucy's Ride.

JEANIE could not eat any dinner that night, but she chattered incessantly, and looked lovely with pink-flushed cheeks, and eyes even brighter than usual. When dinner was over she went to the piano, but she could not sing; her throat was sore, she said. At last she sat down at Lucy's feet, laid her little yellow head on Lucy's lap, and subsided into silence.

“How hot her hand is!” said Lucy to Mrs. Lennox. “Jeanie, are you ill?”

“Yes, I think I am,” said Jeanie, sitting up suddenly. “My throat's very bad, mamma,—and my head. I think I shall go to bed.”

The next day she was worse. She complained more and more of her throat.

“I am afraid it is diphtheria

A bacterial infection occurring in unsanitary or crowded conditions. More common in Europe and therefore the colonies prior to immunization.

,” said Mrs. Lennox, clasping her hands in her anxiety. “And just now, when Mr. Lennox is away! Whatever shall we do?”

Lucy stood in the centre of the dining-room considering. She too was feeling much alarmed. Perhaps Effie's recent death had made them all unusually ready to take fright at the sight of illness attacking Jeanie also. Clear before her mind was the necessity for obtaining medical advice without delay; and it so happened that at that very time there was not a man upon the place.

Business connected with the sheep had called both Mr. Hood, the manager, and all the available men to be had there, away from the station for two whole days at the least, and to wait for their return was not to be thought of.

Mrs. Lennox was half beside herself with terror and anxiety.

Lucy soon saw that the decision of what to do, and how to do it, would rest entirely with her; and Jeanie's illness was increasing with alarming rapidity.

“Don't be so uneasy, dear Mrs. Lennox,” she said at last. “But tell me at once, please, where is the nearest place that I can get a doctor.”

Mrs. Lennox endeavoured to think. There were two doctors at the nearest town, but it was many miles away. All at once she remembered having heard that

See reference to 'Hospitals and Early Hospitals in New Zealand' in New Zealand History section in the [NZETC collection](#)

, reputed to be among the most skilful in the colony, was staying that very week with a friend on a large farm only about half as distant from Deepdene as was the town.

Lucy's face cleared up immediately on hearing this announcement.

“Now, Mrs. Lennox,” she said, “you needn't fret any more. I shall have Doctor Thompson here in no time.”

“You?” said Mrs. Lennox in amazement; so astonished, in fact, that she immediately wiped away her tears.

“But it's over the hills! You never could find your way there, my dear.”

“Yes, I can; and I shall, too!” returned Lucy. “

Name of the horse.

is just outside in the paddock, and I can catch him in no time. Come, Mrs. Lennox, don't cry any more, but help me to be off as fast as possible.”

She ran out of the room to slip on her habit and hat as she spoke.

Mrs. Lennox followed her with some reluctance. She felt as though she were scarcely doing right in allowing her young guest to set off on such an adventurous expedition. Under ordinary circumstances it would not of course have been allowable for a moment; but Jeanie's serious illness seemed to drown all lesser considerations, and people in the colonies must be prepared to put their shoulder to the wheel on an emergency.

She followed Lucy out into the paddock, only stopping to take down her holland sun-bonnet on the way. After all, the poor little lady was only too glad to have some one to think for her in this dilemma. It was her nature, like her daughter, to rely implicitly on the guidance of a clearer head than her own; and in this case Lucy's promptness of action scarcely gave her room to remonstrate, and in fact perfectly bewildered her.

Still she knew, and the knowledge troubled her, that had the cases been reversed, not even for Lucy's sake would she have allowed her daughter to start upon such a lonely expedition.

When Lucy had caught Robin Hood, and was ready, she went softly into Jeanie's room to have one look at her before starting. The girlish face, flushed with fever, was turned towards her as she opened the door; but Jeanie's eyes were closed, and she was either asleep or only half conscious. Her satin hair, scarcely ruffled even then, was glistening in a radiant heap upon the pillow, just as she had swept it backwards from her face, and both her pretty white hands were thrown restlessly outside the quilt of the bed.

Lucy drew back very quietly, without speaking to her, and closed the door again.

On the toilet-table she had noticed a box of flowers and ribbons, which Jeanie had been trying on the day before. The thought of all her happy talk of the future—her plans for wedding-veils, and pearls, and white silk dresses—smote Lucy with a sudden pang. If Clinton only knew what was happening in his absence!

The thought sent her out of the room, and down to the garden-gate, where Mrs. Lennox was holding Robin, with double alacrity if possible.

When she had mounted she stooped down, and, taking Mrs. Lennox's hand for a moment in her own, bade her keep up her courage and not fret.

“Perhaps Jeanie will sleep till I get back,” she said; “and I'll do my very best to send you advice before long.”

Then she forced herself to smile quite bravely, and rode away, leaving Mrs. Lennox, somewhat comforted, to wait for the results of her expedition.

As long as Lucy was on the plain she rode fast. Had her route lain entirely over this long yellow sea it would indeed have been easy; but after a few miles she was obliged to turn off on to the hills.

Here, though her will was equally good, she was of necessity obliged to proceed more slowly, and with greater caution. Still, in spite of this, she was gaining ground very satisfactorily. She knew she was proceeding in the right direction, although she was afraid her want of knowledge of the country might add a few miles on to her course—one

See more recent watercolours of the hills and landscape of the Otago Region.

-covered hill and gully are so very like all other tussock-covered hills

New Zealand's native grasslands are dominated by tussocks which are grasses that have a clumping growth form. In the colonising period of New Zealand, farmers burnt off large areas of tussock and tried to replace it with imported grasses. See: <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/government-and-nation/2>.

and gullies to an inexperienced eye.

She remembered now that on her way she must pass near to Louis' station among the hills. Had he been at home she would have ridden there immediately; but he had gone with his father to the

An inherited agricultural tradition at which local farming produce and animals are exhibited, takes place over the summer months in New Zealand. See: North Otago Times, <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>.

November 17, 1874., and to ride to the station, on the chance of finding some one there who knew the country, and could do her errand, would be a waste of time not for one moment to be thought of.

At last, skirting the base of a hill, which hid from her, within a few yards, the faint track along which her course lay, Lucy was startled by a “cooe” from some one, not far from her, but hidden from her sight by the hill-side.

The next instant there passed her a riderless horse with a lady's saddle on its back, and when the “cooe” was repeated she recognized, in the clear ringing tone, a woman's voice.

She shouted in reply, and the next instant she came in view of a lady in a riding habit, sitting on the ground before her, with her hat lying at some little distance, and one great heavy coil of black hair falling over her shoulder.

“What is the matter?” inquired Lucy, riding up to her, and recognizing, with a start, her old shipmate, Mrs. Keith. “Are you hurt?”

Mrs. Keith, as she sat, looked up at Lucy with her great grey eyes, dilated with pain.

“It's my ankle,” she said. “The creek looked so soft and boggy, I got off to lead my horse, and somehow I've sprained my ankle. It's very bad.”

She turned, if possible, a shade whiter even than before, dropped down upon her side, and appeared, to Lucy's horrified eyes, to faint quite away.

Lucy dismounted in a moment, fastened Robin Hood's bridle, as well as she could, to a flax-plant near by, and ran to the creek for some water. She had nothing to carry it in except the palms of her hands; however, the few drops she managed to bring back revived Mrs. Keith, who was, in fact, in too much pain to remain long insensible.

When she sat up again, after her brief unconsciousness, her first action was an apparently involuntary movement of her hand towards her throat, covered as usual by a broad band of black velvet.

Lucy mistook the gesture. “Shall I unfasten it for you?” she asked. “Perhaps then you would feel better?”

“No,” returned Mrs. Keith promptly. Then, as though to atone for her somewhat ungracious refusal, she added, “I always wear it. It hides a scar. I was once bitten there by a dog, and the mark is an unsightly one.”

Evidently she was sensitive on the subject; and after this confession, uttered with manifest reluctance, she paused a moment. Then she added, “What shall we do now?”

“Shall I try to catch your horse?” asked Lucy.

“I don't think you can,” returned the other, doubtfully. “Is there no house anywhere near here?”

“Yes, there is a station of my father's,” said Lucy. “I think I had better help you on to my horse, and we will go there. They can send some one after yours, and then I shall lose no time in trying to catch it, for I have no time to waste to-day.”

“That will be much the best plan, certainly,” answered Mrs. Keith, “if I can only mount.”

She gathered up her long hair in readiness for the attempt, and Lucy fetched her her hat.

Robin was unfastened, and stood quietly with his mouth full of grass, while Mrs. Keith managed with some difficulty to scramble into the saddle. Then they set off, Lucy holding up her habit with one hand, and with the other leading the horse.

They had not far to go, fortunately, and soon saw the station lying before them, at the entrance to a rather wide gully.

A respectable-looking elderly woman, Louis' housekeeper, came to the door to receive them. She was full of pity for Mrs. Keith's sprained ankle, and promised to send her husband, as soon as he came home to his dinner, in search of the runaway horse.

Louis' sitting-room was a cheerful, sunny room, and a regular

Here Evans appears to give a vivid image of symbols of indoor masculinity.

. A rifle and a revolver hung on one wall; a pair of spurs dangled beneath them; on a small table lay a pile of newspapers, smelling frightfully of tobacco; nor were stock-whips and boxing-gloves wanting.

On each side of the fireplace was a shelf of handsomely-bound volumes

Implies the significance of imported fiction reading in the colonies. Colonial readers were often reputed to be at least as "informed" of the latest works as those readers still "at home".

. —Kingsley

English novelist Charles Kingsley, 1819-1875

in blue, Macaulay

The 19th century English historian Thomas Babington Macaulay, 1800-1859.

in brown, Thackeray

The English novelist William Makepeace Thackeray, 1811-1864.

and Dickens

The author Charles Dickens, 1812-1870.

in red, and a complete set of the “Cornhill Magazine” in handsome bindings. In the centre of the mantelpiece, under a glass shade, was a Parian copy of the lovely bust of

or 'Clytia' a water nymph in Greek mythology and lover of the God 'Apollo'

. It contrasted oddly and rather piquantly with some of its surroundings, but it gave the room an air of refinement which, but for that and the books and one other thing, would have been completely wanting to it.

The other noticeable object was a picture . It hung just over Clytie in the centre of the wall above the fireplace—an oil painting without a frame. It was not particularly well painted, and was only half finished, the

background being all cloudy daubs of paint; but out of the obscurity stood a head—a woman's head, pale and dark—and the picture had a strange kind of fascination about it, because without title or motto the artist had contrived to make the face suggest a story, the details of which it could supply for itself.

The great passionate eyes, the handsome scornful mouth, the slightly-worn white cheeks, brought out effectively by thick masses of dead-black hair, all combined to make a decided impression upon Lucy.

She was first oddly reminded of the poem she had been reading the night before,—

“We were two sisters of one race—
She was the fairest in the face;
Oh, the evil was fair to see!”

“Just the heroine for a story like that,” Lucy thought; and then she half started, for it suddenly flashed upon her, as she was helping Mrs. Keith to limp across the room to the sofa, that the picture was not unlike that lady herself—bore, in fact, a decided resemblance to her.

The mysterious painted head was really very like that of this equally mysterious lady.

“A mere coincidence, of course,” she thought, “but an odd one; for if this Mrs. Keith were ever to break her heart and grow utterly desperate, she would be the living duplicate of the picture on the wall. Who painted it, I wonder? And wherever did Louis meet with it?”

But Lucy had no time to waste in conjectures. Now that the first emergency was over, she was in haste to set out again on her way.

Mrs. Keith was seated on the sofa in comparative comfort, and was looking round her composedly, taking note of everything. She gazed so steadily at the face above the mantelpiece, that Lucy wondered if she detected the resemblance to herself. But she made no comment upon that or anything else, and received Lucy's explanation of whither she was going, also silently.

“Good-bye,” said Lucy, holding out her hand.

The other took it, hesitated a moment, and then asked, “Will your brother be likely to return to-night?”

“I do not think so,” returned Lucy. “He is not expected home until the end of the week.”

“Then if my ankle continues painful, may I take the liberty of remaining here for the night?” inquired Mrs. Keith.

“Certainly,” said Lucy, “I can answer for my brother that he will be glad for you to remain until you are better; and Mrs. Smith, I am sure, will make you as comfortable as she can.”

“Thank you,” and she dropped Lucy's hand which she had held during this short dialogue.

Then suddenly she smiled—almost the first smile Lucy had ever seen upon her face—and repeated “Thank you. You have been very kind to me. I wish you good speed.”

Lucy flew to the garden gate, mounted Robin Hood in hot haste, and set off again at full speed.

But all this had lost some time. Worse than that, it had taken Lucy out of the direct line of her course, and in trying to regain it she made a wrong turn, missed the gully she ought to have traversed, and went up the one she ought not to have done.

The day was passing by rapidly; her watch told her that, also the sun, and her own growing fatigue, and at last it dawned upon her that she had mistaken her way.

Lucy had a brave heart; a proof of that was that she was there at all. She braced herself up from the involuntary which overcame her at the idea of being lost on those desolate hills, and endeavoured to set herself right once more.

In vain. Robin Hood would canter in any direction she pleased, but she had not the slightest idea at last whether to turn him to the right or to the left. What would Jeanie do? for it was evident that the attempt to fetch a doctor that day would be a failure. And what would she herself do in solitude and night upon the hills?

She had halted by a cluster of flax-plants

See note page 84.

and a lagoon. On the hill above her a spectral-looking cabbage-tree

See note, page 84.

reared itself up in the light of the declining sun. The in the lagoon had assumed their peculiar ghastly look in the shadow already beginning to thicken in the valley. They almost appeared to nod at her, with an awful derision, as dead tired and sick at heart she sat on her horse, looking round on the pale yellow solitude on all sides of her.

Everywhere tussac grass and flax, and flax and another rolling sea of tussac; everywhere except... a speck, far off... Did it move?... Is it coming nearer?... Yes... No... Yes... it is—yes, it is—a horseman!

Chapter XXI. Dacre to the Rescue.

AS he came nearer, Lucy thought she recognized him. Yes, surely she knew the broad square shoulders, the dark beard and moustache, and the bright brown eyes, gazing at her with unfeigned amazement from under the black felt hat. Of all men in the world, the one she would have chosen to encounter at that particular moment, had the choice been offered to her; for here was her errand accomplished, and herself delivered at one and the same instant.

She cantered forwards to meet Doctor Dacre, and with a long breath, an expression of the most intense relief, she held out her hand.

"Oh! I am so glad I've met you!" she said. "Fancy! I had lost my way on the hills."

Dacre took the little hand in his own, and privately thought himself a very lucky fellow.

"Were you afraid?" he asked, holding her fingers in a firm grasp, which to Lucy, not yet recovered from her terror, spoke of comfort and protection, intensely soothing.

"I was," she answered; "but I'm not afraid now. Doctor Dacre, you must please to come with me."

"I'll go with you anywhere you like on the face of the earth," said Dacre, and he meant it.

"Whatever should I have done if I had not met you?" she remarked as much to herself as to him.

"I should have missed a great pleasure, at any rate," Dacre answered.

He had reluctantly come to the conclusion that it was time he released her hand. Even the circumstances under which he had encountered her, and her evident need of sympathy, would not justify him in retaining it any longer. He released her fingers, therefore; and when Lucy glanced at him again, she saw that he was looking steadily at a tuft of flax, with his face a little turned away.

She began telling him eagerly of Jeanie Lennox's illness and of her own accidental delay from the accident to Mrs. Keith's ankle, and she thought that Dacre's manner grew graver and graver as he listened.

It was certainly with a sigh that he told her he would look Mrs. Keith up the next day, but at present, of course, Miss Lennox's condition required his first attention; and, wondering a little at the sudden coldness of his manner, Lucy found herself riding by his side back to Deepdene. The coldness, however, did not last. Dacre's manner was almost as usual again when he turned towards her and asked her if she was not very tired.

"A little," she confessed; but it was of no consequence. She was anxious to get back to Jeanie.

"She is thinking more of her friend's comfort than of her own," said Dacre to himself. "And Jeanie Lennox is what the world would call this girl's rival. It is not so long ago since I doubted if I should ever again meet a woman whom I could honour and respect from my heart; but I was wrong."

It was a long ride. At last they reached the plain, and by this time it was quite dark. Lucy proposed that Dacre should ride on and leave her to follow slowly behind, but he scouted the idea so indignantly that she was almost amused, though grateful to him also for his care of her.

At last they reached Deepdene. Dacre lifted Lucy from her horse just as Mrs. Lennox ran joyfully out to meet them. Jeanie was no better; but then, on the other hand, she was no worse; and now that medical aid was secured, her mother was vastly relieved in her mind.

Dacre went in at once to see his patient, while Lucy hastily changed her riding-habit, and then went into the drawing-room to wait for his opinion. Tired as she was, she was too restlessly eager for that, even to sit down, until she heard his step in the hall.

He caught the appeal in her eyes as he came in, and smiled. "Miss Lennox's attack is not dangerous," he said. "Set your mind at rest; she will be better to-morrow."

The reaction from the anxiety she had been suffering was so great that the light grew dim and the room seemed to Lucy to swim round for a moment. She had followed Mrs. Keith's example that morning, and fainted quite away.

It seemed only a minute to her before she opened her eyes to find Dacre bathing her temples with water, and Mrs. Lennox by her side, in agonies of remorse and commiseration.

"It is all my fault," she said, "That long ride has half killed her, poor dear!"

"You didn't tell me I was to have two patients instead of one," said Dacre, as he saw her growing more like herself.

"And you won't have," she retorted. "You haven't caught me for a patient yet, don't flatter yourself. Don't pity me, Mrs. Lennox; I am all right again now."

Dacre was smiling to himself at that moment in a manner which reassured Mrs. Lennox more than anything else; but no one had the least idea that by means of the tiny penknife attached to his watch-guard he had secured the identical round curl from Lucy's head which he had set his heart on ever since she had once offered it to him in a dream,—a very boyish freak, and one quite unworthy of him, but which gave him some moments of

happiness nevertheless.

It occurred to Mrs. Lennox suddenly that both her guests must be half starved.

“It is indeed lucky,” she said, “that the dinner is just ready. I was afraid it would not have been, because the stove's got out of order—it always does when Mr. Lennox is away—and the leg of mutton wouldn't roast properly; but I think everything is ready at last.”

She led the way to the dining-room, where a most comfortable repast was found to be awaiting them. To the two poor wanderers coming in out of the cold and darkness, the fire and light and food were truly inviting.

Besides the leg of mutton, which had condescended to allow itself at last to be thoroughly done, there were bruised pokekhas, with plenty of bread sauce. They are excellent eating prepared in this manner; and some people prefer ka-kas, served on toast, to English pigeons.

Lest my story should be pronounced too colonial in its language to be intelligible, I had perhaps better explain that pokekhas are swamp hens, and ka-kas charming little grey parrots, with a few rosy feathers beneath the wings; but neither delicacy is always to be procured in the New Zealand of to-day.

Who should drop in, while they were at dinner, but Arthur Winstanley. They made him join them, of course, immediately, with the ready hospitality of the colonies; and Lucy was really glad to see him, for with her he was rather a favourite.

When she told him of her expedition that day, he regretted with real earnestness that he had not come over the evening before, as he had once intended to do, so that he might have saved her all her trouble.

Lucy gave him credit for being perfectly sincere in what he said; but she was not in the least deceived by it, as Mrs. Prior was. She saw that he did truly like and respect her; but she felt instinctively that, if he had ever been in love, he must have shown it in a far different fashion.

“Whatever the reason may be,” she said to herself one day, “it is evident that he is a man who prefers the society of those women who will allow him to be a friend, without ever suspecting him of a wish to be anything more.”

So she continued to be very civil and kind to him, in a perfectly open, unconstrained fashion; and he, in his turn, plainly showed that he preferred Miss Cunningham to any one else in whose company he ever found himself.

To-night Dacre and Arthur Winstanley seemed to meet with a slight constraint on both sides. It was explained, however, when Dacre, after little desultory conversation, said quietly, “I dare say, Winstanley, you won't mind my telling you now, that I remember you perfectly. We won't say anything more about it, but let bygones be bygones; but of course I always saw that you were a gentleman, and I never really believed that your name was Smith.”

A faint tinge of colour came out on Arthur's cheek. “I should prefer to say no more about it,” he replied, with a glance at Lucy.

“All right!” returned Dacre; and the subject dropped at once.

But Lucy, being of course devoured by feminine curiosity, attacked Dacre on the subject the very first time that Arthur Winstanley was out of the room.

“It is not much to tell,” Dacre said. “Winstanley was one of the troopers in the regiment to which I was surgeon. He called himself John Smith. I suppose he had got into trouble of some sort, and enlisted. When I saw him first at the concert, the other night, I felt sure I recollected him, but I could not recall under what name.”

Chapter XXII. The First Time.

DOCTOR DACRE was right. The next day Jeanie was better, and all seemed in a fair way to go on comfortably once more.

Dacre got his horse, and disappeared soon after breakfast. Lucy fancied that he had gone, as he said he would the day before, to see how Mrs. Keith's injured foot was progressing; and in this conjecture she was quite right.

“What on earth can have brought Laura into this part of the country?” he muttered to himself as he mounted and rode away. “Her brother's station is eighty miles away. She was at that concert with him and her sister, and I suppose she has been living with them since she landed.”

His thoughts did not dwell upon her long, however, nor did he trouble himself to ride at all quickly in the direction where he expected to find her. He let the reins fall on his horse's neck, and, taking out his pocket-book, extracted from its deepest, safest corner a small round lock of hair, which he held up in the sunlight, while he wondered to himself if Lucy had yet missed it, and, supposing that she did, if she would for one moment suspect where it had gone.

At last, not far from the same part of the track where Lucy had the day before encountered Mrs. Keith's horse, that is, where the path took a sudden turn, he roused himself from his musings, gathered up his rein, and cantered round the curve of the hill. This brought him out face to face with another rider—a figure well known to him.

“Laura herself!” exclaimed Dacre.

She was riding very slowly, and without a stirrup, as her sprained foot would not yet bear it. Her riding-habit was black, and she wore a black felt hat, with a large curled black feather; nothing relieved the sombre dress except the pointed linen collar beneath the velvet round her neck, her white gauntlets, and the bunch of trinkets dangling and glittering at the end of her short gold watch-chain, Conspicuous among them were two rings—one plain, and one set with three turquoises. Altogether she looked, in costume and manner, not like the Laura of the concert, but like the Mrs. Keith who had often paced the deck of the “Flora Macdonald” on a calm moonlight evening.

Dacre's hand went mechanically to his hat as he approached her; but he recollected himself, and the salute was never completed. For her part, she took no notice of him whatever; it really appeared as though she would have passed him within a few yards, without the slightest acknowledgment that she was aware of his presence, if he had not placed himself directly in her way, and stopped her further progress.

“I hear that you have hurt your ankle,” he said. “I was coming to see if the injury was in any manner serious.”

“Extraordinary condescension!” she replied, with the utmost scorn in her voice and expression. “Did you really suppose you could do any good?”

Dacre must have been a good-tempered man, for he kept his temper now.

“I heard that you had sprained your ankle too badly to allow of your leaving Mr. Cunningham's station,” he answered; “and, feeling sure that it must be unpleasant to you to be dependent upon the kindness of strangers, I was going to endeavour to help you. However disagreeable to myself to be brought once more into your society, yet conscience ordered me to act towards you as I would to any other human being whom I had known to be in the same circumstances.”

“Your conscience!” she said, beneath her breath, with intense bitterness.

Dacre did not appear to hear. “I will get off and examine your foot now,” he went on.

“You will do nothing of the kind,” she said sharply.

“You refuse to allow me?”

“I do.”

“Then I have only to say—good morning.”

He had turned his horse's head, and was actually leaving her as he spoke, but she called him back.

“Stay a moment!” she said. “Who told you of my accident?”

He hesitated before replying, and suddenly a flush of fire rose into Laura's cheeks, and her great eyes glowed.

“I know,” she said. “It was Miss Cunningham. Ah! what a pity it is that my unworthy self stands in the way!”

She repeated the words twice over, with a fierce little laugh of triumph, which made her face for the moment an unpleasant one to contemplate.

Dacre's blood was getting up now. His straight, strongly-marked eyebrows contracted, and his whole face hardened. It was like the rising of a storm. Suddenly he gave a great sigh, and his brows relaxed. “Only a woman,” he said, “after all!” But oh, the infinite contempt of the words! So might a man have spoken who, driven into a moment's fury by an insect's sting, reflects, “Only a gnat after all! Not worth a grain of the passion I am wasting on it!”

Something, however, in his look, underlying the anger and contempt, told Laura that her chance shot had gone even nearer to the mark than she expected. She pursued the theme, therefore, with a complacency that was almost remarkable, and becoming peculiarly calm and sweet in her manner, after the fashion of some women when they intend to give utterance to anything especially spiteful.

“A great pity, indeed!” she said once more. “But, unfortunately, I fear I am too substantial an obstacle to be evaded. Even my late accident is not a dangerous one, though upon the whole I think it is more prudent not to place the case under *your* medical care.... May I trouble you to give a message from me to Miss Cunningham? Pray tell her I am sorry for her sake she came up when she did yesterday, and showed me so much attention. Perhaps a night's exposure to the weather, and the pain of my sprain unrelieved, might have inflicted some injury upon my constitution. But try not to mind, for perhaps you may have better luck next time!”

It was all uttered in the softest tone and with the most charming smile in the world.

As she spoke, one hand was playing with the trinkets on her watch-chain, making the two rings glitter as they caught the sunlight, and of course attracting Dacre's attention towards them, which was perhaps what she

intended.

He waited quietly, and allowed her to say her say out. He never attempted to stem the current of the bitterness and spite she was displaying. Perhaps he knew her of old, and knew that it would be of no use.

At all events, it is but fair to say that all through their interview his conduct had shown to great advantage by the side of that of the lady—shall we still call her so?—whom we have hitherto known as Mrs. Keith.

At last, when she had relapsed into silence, partly from want of breath, Dacre said, "It will be a long time before I carry a message from *you* to Miss Cunningham. And perhaps now you will allow me to inquire in my turn—What has become of Captain Rollo?"

He thought that the taunt would have stung her into fury. Strange enough it did not; it rebounded, leaving her perfectly cold and calm. The arrow seemed in some manner to have missed its mark.

"Captain Rollo?" she said thoughtfully, and then, "I think our interview has now lasted quite long enough to annoy us both sufficiently. Let us bring it to a close."

"With all my heart," said Dacre.

"Probably we shall not meet again," she added. "My brother, Augusta, and myself are leaving the country for England, *viâ* Melbourne, in about a month. So farewell!"

"Farewell!" returned Dacre. "Am I to pay your passage?"

She hesitated, evidently longing to say "No." But the offer must have been a tempting one, for, after a moment's struggle with herself, she bent her head and said "Yes"—but not one word of thanks.

"I will send you a cheque," he returned, and then they parted—Dacre turning his horse's head back to Deepdene.

Laura pursued her way as before, at a walking pace. The horse on which she was mounted was a very quiet animal, or with her injured ankle she could not have ridden it at all.

It was a fair, soft, sunny morning in early spring. There was nothing to attract her attention in the scenery around her. She rode with her eyes on her horse's ears, letting the reins drop on his neck, and suffering herself to become engrossed in her own thoughts.

"The money is a good thing,"—so her meditations ran on—"but the revenge is a better. Have I wounded him at last? After all, I think I grow a little weary of this too. I think I am growing tired of all things and people—except one. Lucy Cunningham has a sweet face, I confess, and there is something about her which I suppose people would call loveable. She was very willing to give up her horse to me when I was hurt, and her hands were very gentle when she touched my foot. They tell me Arthur admires her. What do I care? That does not trouble me at all. What does trouble me is, sometimes, old memories, faded ghosts of Beatrice long ago, when we were all fresh innocent girls together. Beatrice! ... Now I suppose in England it is night. I wonder if the moon is shining on that grave at Brighton?"

Chapter XXIII. Louis Loses His Temper at Croquet.

THE hill behind Maungarewa was steep, and strewn with boulders, as has before been mentioned in the course of this story.

Steep as it was, however, on one hot afternoon in the early summer Lucy set forth valiantly to ascend to the summit. Halting more than once to rest and pant in the great heat, and with a feeling of considerable pride in her own exertions, she at last found herself at the top.

From the point where she was standing the road by which Maungarewa was usually approached was visible to some distance; in fact, two roads were commanded from this position. One of them, the longest, but the easiest, skirted the base of the hill, and swept round to the house. It was *the road par excellence*.

The other, a much shorter way, led straight over the summit of the hill itself; but it had the drawback of far rougher ground, and the steep descent. It was usually only attempted by masculine riders. Mr. Cunningham and Louis invariably approached the house this way; so did those of their friends who preferred riding across country to the beaten track. But ladies seldom ventured on it.

At this moment, Lucy, standing quite at the top of the hill, leaning against a huge grey rock, was eagerly scanning the road beneath. At last the object of her watch became apparent, in the form of a couple of riders, a lady and gentleman, advancing in the direction of Maungarewa. It was Mr. and Mrs. Meredith.

During the spring Clinton and Jeanie had been married. They had been to Auckland for their wedding tour, and they had come back and settled down in a composed fashion on some land which Clinton had purchased, not very far from Maungarewa.

To-day there was a game of croquet in prospect, and as it was a novelty to Jeanie she was wild with

delighted anticipation.

Lucy imagined that she had climbed to the summit of the hill to look out for her two guests. Nevertheless, after she had discerned their figures quite distinctly beneath, her eye still turned towards the distant road with an eager, unsatisfied expression.

At last, cresting the spur of a hill far away, appeared another horse and rider, following almost in the track of the other two, but at some distance behind them. Lucy saw and smiled.

Reaching the point where the road branched off towards the hill, Clinton and Jeanie paused a moment. Evidently they conferred a little, and decided that it would not do. They presently set off again, still keeping to the regular path.

The other rider came up at a canter, and dashed off the road and up the hill, almost in a straight line to where Lucy was standing. Like the prince in the German fairy stories, he was in too great a hurry to reach the princess to look what the road was made of under his feet; and as the princess happened to be watching him at the time, the attention was very gratifying to her.

He did not see her at first, and when he at last made out her pale grey dress, almost the colour of the rocks themselves, she was just turning to fly down the hill on the other side.

"I shall be too late to receive them," she said to herself, as she darted down the rocky slope as fast as the ground would allow her. Nevertheless, Dacre overtook her before she reached the house.

He had become a very frequent visitor at Maungarewa. Mr. Cunningham had taken an immense fancy to him, which only increased as time went by. Unlimited invitations, and inclination to match, brought Dacre to Maungarewa again and again.

Did he see what he was drifting towards? At first, certainly not. He had started with the idea that Lucy had cared too much for Clinton Meredith ever to be in any danger from himself, that for her there was no fear, and that he had only his own peace of mind to look to.

The present was temptingly sweet; pain must follow—that he knew—but he put it off; the inevitable suffering, which stared him grimly in the face at times, put it off from day to day, and time flew by; and while he lingered here, reaching after an impossible Paradise

See further references to the New Zealand colony as envisaged by Edward Gibbon Wakefield in New Zealand History section in the NZETC collection, <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz>.

, the night was coming wherein no man can work.

Dacre had been much loved by the people with whom the course of his life had brought him in contact. He had no near kith and kin, but the officers in his regiment years ago had, one and all, liked Dacre; and afterwards, when he left the army, and devoted himself to sanitary work in one of the large English towns, where such work was sorely needed, he made for himself a place in some hearts which never forgot him afterwards. He had been a wealthy man all his life, and he had done much good with his money—such good as can never be forgotten, for the record of it is on high.

But after this testimony in honour of Rylston Dacre, it cannot be denied that at this time he was most assuredly in the wrong; and it does not make that wrong less, that he was destined to a bitter repentance later on.

Louis happened to be at Maungarewa that afternoon, so their

A game using a ball and wooden mallet highly popular in England in the 19th century. Played by both men and women croquet was also a competitive sport and featured at the 1900 Summer Olympics.

party was complete. They took their balls and mallets and marched down to the bottom of the garden, where there was a level space of lawn suitable for carrying on the game.

Jeanie was in a flutter of delight and excitement: as pretty as ever in her blue silk dress and coquettish little sailor's hat. Mrs. Meredith was just as childish, as light-hearted, and good-humoured as Miss Lennox had been.

Clinton, too, was quite unaltered. When Lucy asked him to come with her, and help her to arrange the wires, he told her she had only to command him with a look out of his blue eyes such as she remembered of old.

It did not mean very much. Clinton was fond of his pretty little wife, and was very kind to her; but he could no more help trying the power of his handsome eyes on Lucy than he could have helped eating his dinner when it was served up hot before him.

Lucy returned his look very quietly and steadily, with something lurking in the depths of her eyes which was very like disdain; but the next moment that changed to amusement, and she smiled to herself.

"Is it possible that this man ever had any power over me?" she thought. "How small and shallow and weak he seems to me now, by the side of—some one else!"

Lucy and Dacre had practised croquet so much together lately that they had become by far the best players among the company collected at Maungarewa that afternoon. Clinton and Jeanie were mere beginners, and Louis, though tolerably skilful, was not equal to his sister.

But Louis' odd and unaccountable dislike to Dacre, which had originated long ago on board the "Flora Macdonald," was still in full force. He utterly disapproved of the frequency of Dacre's visits at Maungarewa; and though he had joined the croquet party to-day to please his sister, it was under protest, and he would not play on Dacre's side.

Lucy found this out almost immediately, and to cover it she proposed that Louis and herself should play against their three guests. It seemed on the whole a tolerably just division of talent.

One game was got through in this manner; then Louis declared himself dead beat with the heat, and said he would look on while the others continued to play. The two ladies, therefore, challenged the two gentlemen, and soon found they had met with more than their match. Jeanie was intensely anxious to win, but her husband was more expert than herself, and Lucy found that she could not hold her own against Dacre.

At last there came a time when Dacre had his two fair antagonists at his mercy. As he made ready to croquet Lucy's ball, she said involuntarily, under her breath, "As you are strong, be merciful!"

Dacre, looking up into her eyes, answered in the same tone, "I won't hurt *you!*" and straightway knocked her ball into a rather more advantageous position than it had before occupied, but the next instant he sent Jeanie's ball flying far and wide.

Louis, watching, had seen it all. He knew that Dacre had said something to his sister, although he was not near enough to catch the words, and he saw that Dacre's awkwardness was assumed. He got up from where he was seated, with wrath in his heart, and walked towards them.

"Your skill appears to desert you sometimes, Dacre," he said. "That was a very bad stroke you made just now."

"I suppose I was nervous," was the answer.

Lucy was so amused at the extreme coolness and promptness of the reply, and at the idea of Doctor Dacre, one of the most self-possessed of men, being attacked with a sudden fit of nervousness, that she was obliged to turn away to stifle a laugh.

Louis saw it, and the cup of his wrath was full. He stood looking on for a few moments longer with a gloomy brow, and then walked away towards the house, leaving the others to continue playing or not, as they chose.

Straight into the drawing-room he marched, and there he found his father lying stretched out on the sofa, reading the newspaper, with a glass of claret on the table by his side.

"Hot— isn't it? said Mr. Cunningham. "How on earth those gals can play croquet in this weather I cannot imagine ! Help yourself to some claret, old fellow, and pass me the decanter"

Louis did as he was desired, and drank his claret in moody silence.

Mr. Cunningham had retired into the columns of the newspaper. Stillness reigned supreme. All at once the clear ring of a peal of girlish laughter from the bottom of the lawn came floating in through the open windows.

Louis dashed his tumbler down on to the table by his side. "Really," he said, "this will have to be put a stop to !"

"What will?" inquired Mr. Cunningham, opening his eyes in amazement, as well he might.

"This croquet playing !" Louis went on still more hotly. "These visits ! He's always here, day and night! I say it shan't go on!"

"You seem in no end of a heat about something," said his father. "What is in the wind, I should like to know?"

"In the wind?" repeated Louis. "Why this—that if you don't take care you'll have Lucy marrying him before your very eyes!"

"What if she did?" retorted Mr. Cunningham, all the opposition of his nature fairly roused by his son's manner. "It would be a great deal better than marrying him any other way, at any rate!" Then in a moment he added scornfully, "Talk sense, will you have the goodness? Who are you speaking of her marrying? Dacre?"

Louis assented with a kind of bitter growl.

"Well," said Mr. Cunningham reflectively, "she might do far worse. In fact, I don't think I'm sorry. Dacre's a thoroughly good, manly fellow, and a gentleman. Upon the whole, I don't mind giving my consent on the spot!"

Now at the bottom of Louis' heart there was a secret conviction that his father was in the right. Dacre *was* a good fellow and a gentleman, and Louis knew it, however he might choose to deny the facts. He ignored the knowledge utterly, but there it was, and he could not shut his eyes to it entirely. He had been forced to yield Dacre a sort of reluctant admiration in trifles ever since he had discovered what a much better shot and more skilful swimmer this other man was to himself; but he would not have owned to the existence of one redeeming trait in the man to whom he appeared to feel such a groundless aversion.

However, the decided manner in which his father had spoken left him no hope in that quarter. What was to be would be—Louis could not hinder it. He said no more, therefore, but sat and sipped his claret and looked out

of the window with a gloomy face.

"I know you don't like Dacre," resumed Mr. Cunningham after a few moments spent in studying his son's countenance. "What is the reason, Louis?"

This was just what Louis did not wish to explain. He took refuge in a convenient form of evasion.

"I don't mean to say anything against him," Louis said, "only I don't much care to have him for a brother, I confess. He hasn't asked her yet, though, so perhaps our conversation is a little premature. Let us drop the subject."

"With all my heart," returned Mr. Cunningham, "more especially as I didn't start it."

There was another silence, during which the croquet-players, having finished their game, were heard coming up the lawn.

They came in, both the girls laughing and flushed with the heat, and exchanging "chaff" with their cavaliers concerning the game just concluded.

Jeanie carried a small basket full of ripe strawberries from the garden, and Lucy went out of the room and fetched little china plates and spoons, with cream and sugar in cut-glass dishes.

A dainty little repast was soon improvised, with another bottle of claret for the gentlemen.

Louis would not condescend to partake. He chafed inwardly to see how Dacre had managed to put the best strawberries on to Lucy's plate, and to give her the richest spoonfuls of the scalded cream.

"The show of fruit this year is perfectly wretched," he remarked, at last, in a snappish kind of tone.

"Not in my garden," retorted Mr. Cunningham immediately, with a counter-snap.

"Certainly not in the way of strawberries," put in Dacre with one in his hand, and clenching the last nail on the head.

"Of course, if you all choose to contradict me I had better shut up at once," replied Louis with a deeply-injured air.

Jeanie looked at him with round, wondering eyes. "No one contradicted you, Mr. Louis," she said. "I'm sure I didn't, for the very sweetest little cherry-tree in my garden, with *such* blossoms, has been blighted this year by the frost."

"Never mind, Jeanie," said Clinton consolingly. "I'll get you lots of cherries from Prior. He has more than he knows what to do with."

There was some new music lying on the piano— some songs of Claribel's and a few of Arthur Sullivan's. Louis walked across the room and began turning it over, with now and then a contemptuous expression at something in the notes or the words.

Dacre was looking at a volume of the *Graphic* which lay upon the drawing-room table.

"How good these American sketches are!" he said to Lucy.

"Excellent!" replied Lucy, getting up to look at one of them over his shoulder.

"Couldn't we get up a sketching excursion?" he went on. "There are some pretty bits near the bridge you have not tried yet."

Louis immediately interposed. "You know you can't do anything of the kind, Lucy," he said crossly. "Robin Hood is perfectly lame."

This was too much even for his sister's good temper.

"Robin is quite better, Louis," she said very coldly. "He was only lame for two days last week from a little strain he got in the creek." Then, turning to Dacre, she added, "Let us get up the expedition by all means; but I think we will arrange the details another time."

Altogether the evening did not pass off as harmoniously as usual, and the disturbing element was felt by all to be Louis Cunningham's unaccountable ill-temper.

Chapter XXIV. The Second Time.

THAT summer was very hot, and Mrs. Prior felt the close oppressive weather severely.

She was lying on a couch in her drawing-room, looking as majestic as ever in a gold-coloured lustre costume, which suited her dark hair and brunette complexion admirably.

"I never felt so utterly exhausted in my life," she remarked to her husband, who was seated by the table, looking over some accounts, and much too busy with the long columns of figures to pay any attention to what she was saying.

Not meeting with any response or sympathy, Mrs. Prior was silent for a time; she even, I think, indulged in a slight doze; but some unusual sound aroused her at last, and she exclaimed with less than her usual dignity, "Well, really! there is actually Arthur leading his horse to the door!. Wherever can he be going to on such a blazing afternoon?"

When Arthur himself appeared soon after in the drawing-room, booted and spurred, and requested his sister to put a fresh

Probably a form of decorative accessory.

on his hat, she made the same inquiry again.

But her curiosity was doomed to remain unsatisfied, and she did not succeed in obtaining any satisfactory reply from him.

“I have a little business to see after at some distance,” he said, “and I shall probably not be back until the day after to-morrow. To sell a horse, did you say? Oh yes, that or anything else you like. Hot? Yes, I know it is, but business won't wait. Now that you've put this white concern on my hat, I shan't take the least harm.” With which words he quietly walked, out of the room, and in ten minutes was riding” out of the paddock and away westwards.

His business was, as he had told Mrs. Prior, at some distance apparently. That night he slept at an hotel by the banks of a river, which he crossed the next morning.

Gentlemen in the colonies do not usually take much luggage with them on such journeys as this. A macintosh, a tooth-brush, and a pocket-handkerchief comprised the larger half of Arthur Winstanley's *impedimenta*. Besides these, he had in one pocket a minute portable brush and comb, and in another a clean linen collar, far too great a nuisance to be tolerated when alone in the heat, but carefully reserved to complete his toilet at a fitting moment.

When he set off on the second morning, the character of the scenery in which he found himself had quite changed; he had now got into the region of bush and ferns—both very scarce around Deepdene, Maungarewa.

At last he came in sight of a station on the outskirts of the bush, an irregularly built house, with a verandah deserving of no especial description. In front there was a square space of English grass, shut in on all four sides by trees: you entered it by a natural avenue of trees, and a gate in some pretty green rails at one end.

The house, thus enclosed, had a peculiarly quiet, secluded appearance; you might have passed it quite close, and not have known that it was there; it lay basking in the sunshine, with no signs of life about it in front. Had it been of larger, more pretentious appearance, it might have served an artist for a drawing of the Palace of the Sleeping Beauty in the Wood.

The garden as it was, however, was decidedly the most striking characteristic it possessed. It lay at the side of the house, and was entered by a small white gate at the corner. It was remarkable because, having once been well-stocked, and then neglected for some time, it had become a truly magnificent

Among the first importation of flower species into New Zealand bearing strong symbolic association with the 'homeland'. A summer flower, the rose blooms in New Zealand during the northern winter.

and honeysuckles

a form of sweet smelling weed was a familiar decorative vine for early NZ timber homes, also growing prolifically in hedges planted by the colonists.

Approaching the house, and before emerging from the sheltering shadow of the trees, Arthur Winstanley put on his collar, and made his toilet as complete as was possible under the circumstances. This argued that he expected soon to find himself in the presence of ladies.

In this supposition he proved to be perfectly correct, for he had scarcely entered upon the slope of English grass in front of the house before a woman's figure glided out of the principal door before him, and proceeded towards the white gate at the side of the garden.

We cannot fail to recognize her as soon as we observe that she is dressed in black, and wears a black velvet band round her neck. Arthur, too, knew her immediately; and, raising his hat, got off his horse, fastened it to the fence, and walked up to her.

She was evidently taken by surprise to see him, and was not expecting him just then in the least. She had a great garden hat on her head, and in one hand a small basket and a pair of scissors; her other hand was on the latch of the garden gate, and she stood swinging the little gate backwards and forwards, with an unconscious gesture, arrested on her way to cut her flowers, and, at first, not too well pleased apparently at the interruption.

All traces of annoyance, however, she had managed to banish from her face by the time he came up to her, and she shook hands with Arthur with well-acted cordiality.

“What a hot day, is it not?” she said, as she greeted him; “I suppose you have ridden some distance? Pray come in; your horse shall be looked after, and I will order some luncheon for you; but I fear you must be contented with only me for your hostess to-day, for Augusta is lying down with a bad headache, and my brother is away from home.”

Considering that his business lay entirely with herself, Arthur thought that things had fallen out rather conveniently than otherwise; but he was a man of few words. He simply replied, “Thank you,” and followed her into the house.

The room into which she led him was of a good size, and comfortably furnished. There were several

water-colour sketches on the walls in plain gilt frames. All of them were views on the South Devon Coast. The

On the Wessex coast of Southern England situated near the town of Dawlish. The area is noted for its red sandstone rock.

by moonlight, a view from Plymouth Hoe

Open space situated in the city of Plymouth on the English southern coast. The area is near limestone cliffs forming the seafront with views out to Plymouth Sound.

, and a Study of the Bolt Head

Headland on the south coast of Devon now owned by the National Trust and situated west of the Kingsbridge Estuary.

, were the three largest of them. The rest were small, and less finished in execution; but all were well painted, and brought back that lovely coast scenery to Arthur in a moment. Perhaps he saw it sparkling with the "light of other days," for he quite held his breath as he entered the room.

"I see you are recognizing the old places," remarked Laura, as she followed the direction of his eyes. "How I do long myself sometimes to see that exquisite colouring again; to stand once more on the dear old Bolt, with my eyes on the glorious blue sea beneath!"

"So do I," said Arthur, with unmistakable sincerity.

"Would not you like to go home?" she asked him suddenly, with an abruptness which seemed quite to startle him for a moment.

"Why do you ask?" he answered coldly, and with a curious steady look at her as he spoke.

She coloured a little and gave a faint sigh.

"We won't talk about it now," she said; "you shall get some luncheon first; and then I have a plan in my head to propose to you; but we will go out and discuss it in the garden. These wooden walls have ears, but my roses have not."

A servant came in with some cold meat and bread-and-butter on a tray, and Laura herself fetched in a decanter

Pouring vessel made from cut glass and a familiar feature of drawing room entertaining.

of sherry. Arthur was really very hungry, and ate what was placed before him with a good appetite, his hostess sitting quietly meanwhile by the window at the farther end of the room.

No one disturbed them during this time, and when he had finished they went together to the garden, as Laura had proposed.

It was in its way a lovely garden. As they paced down the walks they could not avoid at times treading upon the lovely perfumed blossoms which stretched themselves far over the borders of their appointed flower-beds on to the grassy vistas between. At their side the roses and honeysuckles had caught the trunks of the trees, and clung to them, flinging delicate sprays high up into the branches, and with the sunshine streaming through the leaves, forming an exquisite tapestry of pink and green and gold.

The two dark figures passed and repassed between the sunlight and the shadow against the brilliant background for at least an hour. Then they once more approached the little white gate together, and leaned over it for a few moments to exchange a parting word or two.

Whatever excitement either of them might have passed through during that hour, and however fierce the argument which had previously raged, all was now over, and both were quite outwardly calm and courteous.

As they reached the gate, Arthur was inquiring after another sister of Laura's.

"What has become of Nora?" he asked. "She was the plainest of you all, I know; and not the same style of girl at all as you others, who were all so much alike; but I used to admire Nora, and respect her too, in spite of that."

"She has turned out the best of us," Laura answered. "She has married a clergyman in England. Nora is a good woman, and I wish I were more like her." She ended her words with an involuntary sigh.

"What did Nora think of Captain Rollo?" Arthur asked suddenly, watching her keenly while he spoke.

Laura gave a violent start. It was the name which Dacre had taunted her with the day he met her riding on the hills.

"The second time," she thought, "that this insignificant, forgotten name has risen out of the past! What does this mean?"

"Captain Rollo?" she repeated slowly.

"Yes. You remember Rollo, don't you?" Arthur went on quietly. "A fellow with curly black hair, who kept hunters, and did not sing badly. You ought to remember him, Laura, for he was a great admirer of yours."

Something in his words—was it a touch of irony in their tone?—sent the hot colour up to the roots of her hair. Dacre had once said of her, she never looked so ugly as when she blushed; and it was true.

"Ah, yes!" she said; "I remember him now."

After this, nothing further passed between Arthur Winstanley and his companion. They simply said,

“Good-bye,” and separated.

Just as Arthur was mounting his horse, which a man had brought round from the stables, Laura called out, “Remember your promise!”

And he replied, “I shall not forget. But do you, on your part, remember the conditions of the agreement.”

“When he had ridden quite out of sight, Laura still stood where he had left her, leaning over the little white gate. Her tall black figure served as a foil to bring out more vividly the lavish wealth of colour in the background.

A wattle

Wild yellow coloured flower native to Australia and now known as Australia's floral emblem. A Wattle Club was founded in the State of Victoria in 1889.

, growing by the gate, bent its beautiful green feathery sprays over one of her shoulders; and on the other side of her was a bush of gorse

Wild growing flowering prickly native to Scotland and imported NZ with the colonists soon became a pest weed. The Otago region was settled early by Scottish settlers.

, all one blaze of cocoa-nut scented gold. She stood, a sombre shadow, between the two. Her face, to any one who studied it narrowly, was always a very sad one. There was about it no peace, none of the strength born of inward rest. It was a very handsome face, and a very expressive one; but always in its passionate love, anger, or grief, very mournful in its one blank want—the face of one, tossing on the dark ocean of this life, who has not yet sighted land ahead.

The day on which Arthur Winstanley again reached home was much cooler than that on which he had started upon his mysterious expedition; there was, in fact, a fresh strong breeze from the north; consequently Mrs. Prior was enabled to throw much more energy into her inquiries as to where he had been, and what he had been doing during his absence.

But his replies still left her curiosity unsatisfied. All he condescended to inform her was that he was growing perfectly weary of living in her house, with nothing definite to do; and had fully made up his mind to leave for home by the next San Francisco mail, or, at all events, the next but one.

Mrs. Prior immediately jumped to the conclusion that he had been to propose to Lucy Cunningham, and had been rejected. She sank back mournfully on the sofa, and felt that her hopes were crushed.

“Arthur was too premature,” she said afterwards to her husband. (Mrs. Prior dearly loved long words.) “He should have waited until she gave some sign of responding to his feelings.”

It was not a week or two afterwards, when she found that he actually delayed his departure for the sake of meeting Lucy again at a picnic, that she relinquished this idea. However, acting on this belief, she felt it right to lay no obstacles in the way of his departure. Indeed, what would have been the use? Arthur Winstanley, having once formed a resolution, was inflexible; and arguments could not find their way through his languid indifference to everything.

Chapter XXV. The Beginning of the End.

ABOUT a week after the croquet party before mentioned, Louis Cunningham came riding down the hill behind Maungarewa.

The sun was setting over the mountains, and a sea of golden clouds covered half the heavens. Full before Louis' eyes, as he crested the hill, opened out the pale blue sky, shading into delicate green at the horizon, the deep purple mountains, and the gold behind gradually flushing into rose colour. It was one of our really glorious New Zealand sunsets; and its beauty continually changed, developing some fresh type every moment.

Louis drew rein for a moment to enjoy the effect. In the opposite direction “the night rack came rolling up, ragged and brown” Louis, turning that way, saw a cloud of dusk gloom, making the hills and gullies already misty with the coming darkness. At last he looked down at the house beneath him; the paddock and garden in front were quite commanded from the position he occupied. He saw Lucy in the garden in a dress which at that distance appeared white, trailing a shawl over one arm, and with her hat in her hand instead of on her head.

She did not appear to be doing anything except watching the sunset, though she had a book in her hand: for as Louis looked at her, he saw her drop it, and then stoop to pick it up.

He rode down the hill, unsaddled his horse, and turned him out into the paddock. Then he went to join his sister in the garden.

She came eagerly to meet him as soon as she saw him. Seen nearer, Louis became aware that she had on a dress of some very pale blue material, not white, and that the book in her hand was one of Miss Alcott's charming American stories.

“Oh, Louis,” she cried, “I'm so glad you've come! Papa has been called away suddenly on business, and

won't be back for a week, and I'm all by myself."

"So I suppose you want me to stay and look after you," said Louis, stroking her rippling hair. He was very fond indeed of his sister, in his quiet reserved fashion. "Well, I don't mind if I do, but I shall have to go to the station off and on, so I warn you."

"That does not matter," replied Lucy, "and I'm very glad you can stop. If you couldn't, I think I should have sent for Jeanie to come and stop with me till papa turned up. I don't like being left a 'lone, lorn creetur,' in this manner."

"That reminds me," said Louis, "I've a note for you somewhere from Mrs. Meredith. I saw Meredith in town to-day, and he gave it to me."

After looking in every pocket but the right one, Louis at last produced a tiny pink envelope, addressed to "Miss Cunningham," in Jeanie's angular handwriting.

The note inside ran as follows:—

"Monday.

"DEAREST LUCY,—We have quite decided that a picnic will be nicer than a sketching-party, only you can sketch if you like, and I want you to come. It is to be my picnic, and Mrs. Prior is going to help me. Thursday next is the day, and I shall be so glad, and so will Clinton if you and Mr. Louis will meet us at the Great Swamp at eleven o'clock. Clinton has given me another silk dress, and I want you to come and help to cut out the Polonaise, and tell me how to trim it. It is such a sweet colour, just like apricot jam! But we can settle all about this on Thursday, so be sure you come, and don't forget, and oh, I hope it won't rain!

"Your loving

"JEANIE.

"P.S.—Doctor Dacre is coming."

Lucy read her note, and handed it to her brother without a word, who also perused it in silence. Only at the "P.S." his face clouded over.

He crushed Jeanie's little sheet of pink note-paper in his hand, and asked, at last, "Shall you go, Lucy?"

"Oh, yes! I think so. I should like to go very much," she replied. Then she added, somewhat artfully, "Jeanie will be offended if I don't."

Louis dropped the little ball of pink paper, into which he had at last reduced poor Jeanie's note, on to the gravel walk at his feet, stooped to pick it up, and said abruptly, "Don't go."

"Why not?" asked Lucy, with equal conciseness.

It appeared that his reason was not ready to deliver at a moment's notice, for he was a long time in answering. At last he said, "I cannot tell you why, but I wish you would not go. I don't believe in presentiments—isn't that what nervous people call them?—but for all that there is a strongfeeling in my mind against this picnic. I wish you would give it up."

"Nonsense, Louis," returned his sister, obstinate in her turn for once. "If you have no better reason to give for declining than that, I think it would indeed be absurd. Am I to disappoint Jeanie because you have taken a fancy into your head against her picnic? And what excuse could I make for refusing to go?"

She longed to tell him that she knew his objection was altogether founded on the postscript to Jeanie's note; but it was a subject on which she was too conscious to speak freely. She knew perfectly well in her heart that her own desire to accept the invitation was based upon the very words which had aroused Louis' distaste to it.

"I wish Jeanie had not added that line," she thought, "and then Louis would not have said a word against my going."

However, Louis did not seem disposed to make any further remonstrance. He had said his say, and had washed his hands of the matter.

Finding that Lucy was determined upon going, he acquiesced, and on the appointed morning saddled his own horse as well as hers, and set forth with her, as in duty bound.

"It was a hot day, as usual. They were punctual at the place of meeting which Jeanie had mentioned, and, having joined company there with the rest of the party, they all rode together to the outskirts of the bush, where they took their luncheon.

A most sumptuous repast was found to have been provided. Jeanie, as principal giver of the feast, had brought two cold turkeys and a tongue, with endless cakes and jam tarts; Mrs. Prior had brought cold roast beef, lettuces for salad, and cherries enough to feast a small army; while Lucy, who had been sternly forbidden by the other ladies to provide anything, had, in defiance of the edict, brought with her a splendid ham a profusion of strawberries, and a jar of thick cream.

With the champagne, claret, and sherry, which the gentlemen had taken good care not to forget, they found that they could have "camped out" for a few days with much comfort if they had so desired.

Arthur Winstanley was among the guests. He devoted himself, as usual, in his languid way, to Lucy all day, she received his attentions, in the most unconstrained manner. Mrs. Prior became at last convinced that her

conjecture concerning a proposal and a rejection having passed between them must have been a mistaken one.

“It is the most puzzling case that ever came under my observation,” she wrote home to a dear friend; “but then Arthur is a most remarkable man, and Miss Cunningham certainly understands his peculiar temperament more than any one I ever knew.”

It was certainly a proof of the entirely Platonic character of the relations between Arthur and Lucy, that neither Clinton nor Dacre had ever felt in the least jealous of this man.

Several of the people present at this picnic enjoyed the day most thoroughly. To more than one it marked the end of a chapter, and was the last day of a life they had found a very agreeable one.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, Louis, who had gone to fetch back his horse, which had strayed away from the others, came up and directed the attention of the rest of the party to some rather ugly-looking clouds rising in the north.

“There will be a stormy night,” he said. “Those clouds signify atmospheric disturbance of some kind. My opinion is that the sooner we start for home the better.”

His suggestion was considered a wise one by the majority of the party, and acted upon forthwith.

Jeanie pouted, and wanted to stay and risk it; but her husband scouted the idea, and put her on her horse before she had time to rebel.

Dacre was then leading up Robin Hood and his own horse. He had Lucy in the saddle before Louis could interpose, and they all started in twos and threes as quickly as they could.

At the Swamp, where the Cunninghams had met the others in the morning, there was a general shaking of hands and wishing “Good-bye!”

Arthur Winstanley wished Lucy “Farewell” and then suddenly, when he had gone about a hundred yards, turned back, rode up to her and said it again.

She looked a little surprised, and he added, “I am going by the San Francisco Mail next week.” Then, after a moment's pause, he remarked, “*You* are the only one I am sorry to say ‘Farewell!’ to.”

“Thank you!” replied Lucy, bowing to the compliment. “I hope it is not for ever.”

“I hope not either,” he returned, with real sincerity of look and tone; and then he took leave of her once more.

When they came in sight of Maungarewa the wind was rising, and a few heavy drops of rain were beginning to fall. The clouds were looming up in great murky masses over the mountains, and it was beginning to grow dark. Evidently there was a wild night in prospect.

About a quarter of a mile from Maungarewa there was a shepherd's hut belonging to Mr. Cunningham; and as they passed it Louis stopped to say a few words to one of the men.

“Ride on,” he said to Lucy, “I shall be with you again directly.” He watched Dacre and herself as far as a small creek which they had to cross a hundred yards or so away. Here he saw Lucy stop to let her horse drink.

Dacre followed her example, and at the same time bent over her, to say something evidently meant for her ear alone, in a manner which Louis thought excessively familiar and disagreeable.

Chapter XXVI. Peccavi.

LOUIS was detained about half an hour. When he rode up to the house he was surprised to see that there was no light in either of the sitting-rooms, both of which faced the front of the house. The kitchen was at the back, and the whole line of building was one unbroken mass of darkness.

“Very odd,” thought Louis; “the place looks deserted. And yet they must have reached here long before now. I don't think anything could have happened to them in that short distance.”

But a vague feeling of uneasiness had arisen in his mind, and it only increased and deepened as he unsaddled his horse and turned him out. Robin Hood and Dacre's horse, if in the paddock, must have gone down to the creek to drink, for they were not in sight anywhere.

As quickly as he could Louis walked into the house. All quite dark and quite still. Louis stood for an instant in the hall, listening for some sound to guide him. There was a murmur of voices in the kitchen and a line of light beneath the door—nothing else. He turned at last into the drawing-room: it was cold, empty, and deserted. Then he felt his way down the dark passage to the dining-room, and, finding the door shut, he opened it and walked in.

The evening had grown chilly with the sudden change in the weather, and there had been a fire made in the grate, but it had died down into a red mass of embers—warm, but giving no light. Louis threw on a log of wood as he entered, and the flame leaped up, showing him Lucy in her riding-habit, standing leaning against the mantelpiece, looking very pale, and Dacre seated at the table, his back turned towards her, his head resting on his crossed arms, and his face hidden from sight.

“What on earth has happened?” asked Louis involuntarily, with real alarm in his voice.

Dacre raised his head, as though then for the first time aware of Louis' presence; the next instant he sprang up and pushed his chair away.

“I have been waiting for you, Cunningham,” he said. I wanted to say a few words before I—I—go. I owe your sister an apology, and I wanted to make it in your presence.”

Louis looked at his sister. She was still standing in just the same attitude by the fire—still staring down at the embers, with the same white face. Dacre glanced at her also, and then went on more hurriedly—

“You see that something has happened,” he said, “and I won't leave it to her to tell you what it was. I'll spare her that, at all events. It's all I can do for her now!”

His voice broke a moment; then he recovered himself, and went on firmly—“You see, when we got here, I had to lift her off her horse—I've often done it before, and now I suppose I've done it for the last time—but to-night—you'll hate me, Cunningham, but I deserve it—the devil tempted me, I suppose, and I kissed her, and said something mad and wild about asking her to be my wife!”

Louis set his teeth and made a step forwards. It appeared as though he were at last justified in the dislike he bore to this man. But the next instant he stopped, thoroughly bewildered. He had seen for some time that Dacre was in love with his sister, and he had dreaded lest Lucy should become his wife; but the course that events were now taking had never entered his imagination for a moment, and his astonishment absorbed every other feeling for the time. “What could the fellow mean by saying that he was tempted of the devil?”

Dacre meanwhile looked again at Lucy, still drooping over the lire, one hand clenching her whip, the other mechanically folding up the folds of her riding-habit. She did not move or speak, and in the silence within the wind came sweeping in a fierce gust, forerunner of the rising storm around the house outside.

Dacre drew a long breath, and went on hastily—“Now that I have told you this, I must follow it up by another confession still harder to make than the last. The temptation I have struggled against so long, to keep back the truth, is now over; and the only reparation I can make is to speak out openly—I owe it to her to do that. If you hate me now, Cunningham, you'll hate and despise me ten times over in a moment. The truth is, that between your sister and myself there lies a deadly bar—I cannot cross it—I am married already!”

Louis would have been upon him in a second. This was letting in the light with a vengeance on the bewilderment in which he had been groping. Both were powerful men, and Dacre was well-nigh desperate. What might not have followed?

But in the instant, while they faced each other—an awful, breathless pause—Lucy suddenly threw herself between.

She laid one hand on Dacre's arm, and with the other kept Louis back, and she spoke for the first time.

“It was wrong,” she said, “quite wrong, and a mistake from first to last. But you have suffered ... and you are sorry. Louis, stand back! If I forgive him, you can bear no grudge”

“You forgive me?” Dacre answered; “that is like Lucy ... but I can never forgive myself. I ought to have told you this long ago; I ought never to have come here at all ... It is easy to see all this now; it was harder then ... Now it is all over.”

“Yes,” said Lucy, with her sweet voice perfectly calm and steady; it is over. We must say ‘goodbye’ now; it is our duty. And because it is our duty, we must see each other's faces no more.”

The wind took up the story again, and shook the house savagely; then moaned and died: that was all that followed Lucy's words.

Dacre had sunk down again in his old place by the table, and his face was hidden by his arm. Nothing but his hard breathing broke the stillness, which seemed to last for hours, as if it would never come to an end.

At last Lucy said again, with her voice a little more unsteady now, “I shall pray for you every day, and we shall both be forgiven, if we are sorry ... Don't grieve about me; I shall live through this, though it seems hard now.”

Then Dacre said softly, but with intense passion, “Oh, God, hear me! and take from her *all* the suffering, and lay it upon me double!”

They had both quite forgotten Louis' presence; but now suddenly he came forward, holding out his hand, and Dacre looked up.

“Dacre,” he said, “I've never liked you since I first knew you; no doubt you found that out long ago. But now I tell you that I will be your friend from this time forward if you will let me—a real friend, and not an empty form of words—and there's my hand on it.”

Dacre took it in his own, and they stood a moment, holding each other with a firm grasp.

“You've lost my sister,” Louis added, “but you've gained an ally, who will be true to you, you'll see. It seems a very poor exchange, but it's something after all.”

Dacre did not reply a word, but his hold on Louis' hand tightened; and Louis felt that the strange agreement was sealed; but after another moment Dacre dropped Louis' hand, and turned away.

"I must go," he said; "I cannot stay here any longer. Yes, I know it rains, but that does not matter. Don't follow me, Cunningham; I must go alone."

With that he went out—into the rain and the darkness and the desolation outside.

Chapter XXVII. Good-Bye.

LITTLE Mrs. Meredith had come in to luncheon in an unhappy frame of mind. Her yellow locks were slightly ruffled out of their usual satin sleekness. Dreadful to relate, there was a suspicion of a frizette visible at one side of her head, and she had forgotten to put on her long gold and coral ear-rings. All these were very unusual circumstances with her, and signs of some uncommon mental disturbance.

But, in addition, she ate her mutton chop with a woe-begone countenance, and sighed so deeply as she helped Clinton to green peas, that he felt obliged to ask her at last what was the matter.

Then out came a tremendous grievance. "It's nearly a fortnight since my picnic," Jeanie moaned, "and during all that time I've never seen Lucy. I thought she would certainly have come over this morning—such a lovely day too!—but she hasn't, and I think it's very strange. She knows I wanted her to help me to make my new silk dress, for I told her so while you were mixing the salad and Doctor Dacre was unpacking the knives and forks— don't you remember?"

"No, I don't in the least," replied Clinton; "and I think it is very likely that the knives and forks put it out of Miss Cunningham's head."

Jeanie did not catch the point of this speech at all. She cast a regretful glance at her sewing-machine in a corner of the room, with a pile of glistening gold-coloured pieces of silk beside it, and went on with her remarks,—

"I've had to cut that dress by myself now, and I've cut the back wrong, and wasted ever so much of the stuff. I shouldn't have done it if Lucy had been here, and I think it is very unkind of her, and she does not love me as she did Effie."

This was quite true, if Jeanie had only known it. Lucy never did love any girl again like she had done Effie. Unto her there was "no second friend." But Jeanie did not in her heart believe anything of the kind, though she professed to do when provoked.

Clinton sat at the foot of his table, listening very passively to his wife's grievances. He was thinking, while she spoke, what an excellent kind were the new potatoes he had just bought, and how many dozen of plum-trees he should send for next week to stock an unoccupied corner of his garden.

He knew by experience that Jeanie's troubles were not likely to be very weighty ones, but he admired her extremely when she pouted and assumed her injured air. It gave her round, soft, childish face more expression, and was a kind of playing at being angry which always struck him as rather charming.

So, having finished his lunch, he sat back in his chair watching her, encouraging her to chatter to her heart's content, and rather wishing that some one might drop in and see her before the pink flush faded out of her cheeks and her blue eyes lost their pathetic expression.

Jeanie was a dreadful little gossip. She told him a long story of how Mrs. Prior had quarrelled with her new cook, to whom she was giving 40*l.* a year; and how Mr. Cunningham was reported to have gone into a passion because some one had left his garden gate open, in consequence of which a cow had got in and eaten all the blossoms off the solitary quince-tree, so that no quince jelly could be made that year.

"And I'm not sorry," she added, "for it's horrid stuff, and always tastes as if it were flavoured with onions."

After this came a long account of Mrs. Somebody's baby, which had got red hair; and, lastly, she informed her husband that every one was saying Lucy was engaged to Doctor Dacre, and asked if he believed the report to be true.

"For it's very odd *I'm* not told—if it is so," quoth Jeanie, bridling up with a fresh sense of injury.

Clinton winced a little—a very little. It was only a twinge of wounded vanity. He got up, went over, and kissed his little wife.

"She's a jolly little thing!" he said to himself, "and prettier than Lucy, after all."

Thus fortified, he felt capable of continuing the subject. "If they're not engaged, I should say they soon will be," he replied to the question put to him. "It's one of the clearest cases I ever saw in my life."

And, behold! the words were hardly out of his mouth when, looking through the window, he perceived Dacre himself riding up the gravel drive to the front door.

Clinton ran out to meet him. He had a real liking for Dacre, in spite of the jealous pangs which the other man had once or twice caused him. He did not wish Lucy to remain faithful to himself any more, but still it was mortifying at times to find how completely she had forgotten him.

Still, in spite of this, he could not help liking Dacre, and would have seconded Mr. Cunningham's opinion

of him—"a thoroughly good fellow, and a gentleman"—any day. There must have been something loveable about Rylston Dacre.

The two men came in together, and Jeanie, who had discovered meanwhile that her ear-rings were missing, and flown to put them on, received Dacre very cordially.

"I'm so glad to see you," she said. "Sit down and have some luncheon, please. Have you been to Maungarewa, and have you brought me a message from Lucy?"

Dacre was all but guilty of the rudeness of turning his back upon her. He had dropped his whip, however. When he had picked it up he looked round and said, "No; he had not the pleasure of seeing Miss Cunningham since the day of the picnic."

"Well, I wonder whatever she has been doing!" said Jeanie indignantly. "She seems to have cut all her friends lately. I think I shall go over to Maungarewa to-morrow, and give her a piece of my mind."

While Dacre took his luncheon Jeanie seated herself opposite to him, in her favourite easy chair, with some delicate lace embroidery, which she was rather clever at executing, in her hand. She chattered away briskly, according to her custom, upon all sorts of subjects, and Dacre listened, and was as much amused as usual. He liked Mrs. Meredith, partly, for her own sake, and partly because, "if not the rose," she had dwelt near her. So, a little for the sake of seeing again Jeanie's pretty face, but chiefly in order that he might at least hear a few words about Lucy once more, though he might not see her, he had come to wish Jeanie "Good-bye!" before he sailed for England.

He told her, when he had finished his lunch, that it was a farewell visit, and asked her if he could do anything for her at home.

Jeanie was really grieved at the idea.

"Going home?" she said. "You are not in earnest, surely?"

"Yes I am," returned Dacre. "I am really going home."

Jeanie had by this time become impressed with the idea that some change had passed over him since she had seen him last. She could not make out wherein it lay, however. There was no decided difference in him that she could see.

Perhaps, if anything, his brown face was a trifle thinner, and his manner graver than usual. But even of this she grew doubtful when he smiled, just in his old way, and said he was waiting her commands. "What might he have the pleasure of sending her from London?"

"Oh!" said Jeanie, with the delighted flush and wide open eyes of a child at the thought, "I should like a set of croquet just like Lucy's."

"It shall come out by the first ship," replied Dacre.

The Merediths wanted him to remain the night at their house, but he refused.

"I am going on to-night," he said, "to see Louis Cunningham before I go. I must be on board the steamer in two days, so my time is growing very short. Good-bye, old fellow! Good-bye, Mrs. Meredith! I hope you won't quite forget me."

Jeanie had never known before how much she liked him; she was ready to cry.

"Do, do come back again some day!" she said, clasping her hands, and looking up into his face.

Dacre smiled again—a strange smile.

"No," he said; "when I go I shan't come back. But perhaps you will follow me, Mrs. Meredith, some day, and I shall see you there. Good-bye again! Mind you bring her to England some day, Clinton; and don't either of you forget me meanwhile."

The instant the two gentlemen had gone out, Jeanie burst into tears.

"Lucy has refused him," she sobbed. "I am sure she has. And oh, I wonder how she could have had the heart to do it!"

Chapter XXVIII. The Picture.

CLINTON, when he came in again, was quite of the same opinion as his wife. He, too, had noticed a change in Dacre, and fully believed him to be a rejected suitor of Lucy Cunningham's. The Merediths both fell into the identical delusion which Mrs. Prior had only just recovered from with reference to her brother.

Poor Lucy! What an amount of mischief she seemed destined to be charged with!

"A horrid shame it is!" said Clinton; and Jeanie echoed the words, adding, "After all the encouragement she gave him, too! and which I saw with my own eyes!"

Clinton felt for his part as if he could now think with more ease of certain passages in the past which he had not hitherto been fond of recalling to his memory. Lucy, by treating Dacre as he imagined her to have done, had suddenly lowered herself to his own level, and condoned his past faults by the action.

He had never realized before how much he believed in Lucy, but he caught himself now thinking that if *she* had acted like this, the fault must be a venial one, after all.

And meanwhile Dacre, blissfully unconscious of the scandal he had given rise to, was quietly proceeding on his way to Louis Cunningham's house among the hills.

It was a fine and very hot afternoon, with scarcely a breath of air, and he rode slowly, his thoughts busy with much that had occurred of late. He came at length to the place where he had last seen Laura. It was the day he met her riding with her sprained ankle, and she had rejected his help with contempt. He remembered perfectly her effort to anger him by her use of Lucy's name, and his own retaliation, by reminding her of some one she could not easily have forgotten; and, finally, her acceptance, ungraciously enough, of his offer to pay her passage money to England.

From that day to this he had seen and heard nothing more of her. She had sent him an address to which she wished the money to be forwarded, and he had carried out her desire to the letter. Afterwards he had received one line without signature, but in Laura's well-known writing, signifying the safe receipt of the cheque, and that was all.

Riding round the base of the hill where he had encountered her, how clearly every incident of that past time rose up before his mind! He could see Laura now, in her black riding-habit, and hat with its long black feather, her pale face and black hair, and the scorn of her great grey eyes—all stood clear before him, even to the bunch of charms at her watch-chain. The picture was touched in with perfect detail from the white gauntlets and silver fox-headed whip down to the velvet on her throat.

"It was an ugly scar that!" he thought; "and she was always morbidly sensitive about it. She had a horror of the slightest disfigurement to her beautiful white skin. Once, I remember, she cut her hand a little, and wore a glove for weeks, until the very smallest trace of the scratch had disappeared."

Musing thus, he rode steadily on until he came in sight at last of Louis Cunningham's home. It was the same to which Mrs. Keith had once been assisted by Lucy. It was altered since then. A fancy to improve his house and garden had lately taken possession of Louis, encouraged by his father, who had begun to form fresh matrimonial prospects on his son's behalf.

Louis did not suspect this, however, and, finding his father propitious, he had greatly improved and added to the rough little iron-roofed dwelling which he had inhabited for the last two years. Two new rooms, one with a bow-window, had been added at the side; and a verandah, up which honeysuckle had begun to climb, made it in appearance a very different dwelling to the one which had stood on the same spot formerly.

Dacre fastened his horse to the gate, and made for the entrance door, to be met on the threshold by his host, with outstretched hand and hearty, cordial manner. Dacre felt at once that the other's pleasure in seeing him was genuine and sincere. Louis, once won, was won for ever. They had sworn an eternal friendship, and he at all events would not fail in his part of the agreement.

"Come in, old fellow!" he said. "I'm awfully glad to see you—you're just in time. Tea will be ready in a minute, and I'll send some one down to dispose of your horse. Of course you'll stay the night."

He ushered Dacre first into the room that had been the only sitting-room; but there was another now. This room had still Clytie on the mantelpiece, and the picture without a frame upon the wall above. It was much neater and more comfortable than of old, however. The chaos of newspapers, section-plans, stock-whips, and spurs, which once covered a whole table in the corner, had disappeared. Everything was in its place, and, by consequence, the room looked twice as large as formerly.

Dacre remarked it.

"I suppose you have changed your housekeeper," he remarked to his bachelor host. "The one you have now must be a treasure; she has made everything so snug and jolly."

"Yes," replied Louis. "That's just about it. Hush! she's coming in!"

She came in with the tea things—a tall, large-featured Scotch woman, with nothing at all prepossessing about her in any way.

As she turned to leave the room Louis said something to her in an under tone. The words "Can't come to-night," being emphasized, were alone audible to Dacre.

It was a very hot, breathless evening, and after tea they went out into the verandah to smoke. The long windows of the dining-room were open behind them, and as they lounged against the posts of the verandah talking, the picture on the wall within looked out at them with its beautiful passionate eyes. Clytie died away into the shadow that soon began to darken in the room; but the face above caught the last ray of the sunset, and remained a bright spot upon the wall.

Dacre and Louis had so far, by tacit consent, avoided all mention of what was painful in the past. But Dacre had spoken of his intended departure for England, and Louis understood him and was satisfied.

After a time Mrs. McLeod came to say that Mr. Cunningham was wanted; and he went away, leaving Dacre alone in the verandah.

The sun had gone long since, and a lovely moonlight night without a cloud had settled down upon the land. The sky was radiant with stars, and from where Dacre stood he could catch a glimpse of the mountains far away. They stood out with that strange clearness and crystal sharpness of outline which appears to be produced by certain states of the atmosphere in the New Zealand climate, and which brings them miles nearer to one in appearance as long as it lasts.

Dacre singled them out with his eye, and in his heart he wished them "Good-bye!" like old friends.

"I shall see no hills in England that will find their way to my heart like those," he thought; "and tomorrow I shall turn my back on you, old snow-ranges, so farewell to-night!"

But he was wishing them "Farewell!" too soon. The mountains had not quite done with him yet.

The soft clearness and beauty of the night soothed him inexpressibly, like a cool hand upon a fevered forehead, and presently his thoughts wandered off in a new direction.

"I will go back to England," he said to himself, "and take up my old work once more. There are more lives than mine in the world, though mine is but a tangle of broken threads. I cannot see the meaning of it at all, but it will all be made clear to me some day, I am persuaded; and waiting for that I will try to throw my mite into the Master's treasury."

After awhile Louis came back, and they talked on as before. It was such a lovely night they could not go in, so they stayed out in the verandah, with the scent of the honey suckle perfuming the air, and the moonlight making picturesque lights and shadows all around them.

"How awfully hot it is!" said Dacre. "There isn't a breath—" He stopped suddenly with a violent start.

Louis looked up, and saw that his eyes were fixed on something within the sitting-room.

"Cunningham!" he asked the next moment, "who is that picture meant for?"

Louis followed the direction of his eyes. The moonlight streamed through the open windows of the sitting-room, and fell in a broad, bright streak across the picture over the fireplace. The face came forth dead-white from the darkness around; and it seemed, in its strange wild beauty, to be looking out and watching the two men in the verandah so eagerly, that even Louis was startled for a moment.

He answered Dacre's question in a slow, thoughtful manner.

I bought it," he said, "of a fellow in Auckland, who didn't paint badly. He used to do it for pleasure, at a lonely station in Australia, where he had not much else to amuse himself with. He wanted to call this head Charlotte Corday; but I told him I would not have such an association with it for any consideration, for it reminded me of some one whom I—I knew. And that was why I bought it. He persisted, however, to the last, in saying that it was very like what Charlotte Corday must have been."

Looking at his companion at last, Louis saw that Dacre had not heard one word he had said. Dacre was staring at the painting with a face nearly as white as its own.

All of a sudden he gasped out, "How like that picture is to my wife!"

"What?" asked Louis, growing pale in his turn at last. "Like *who*? Dacre, I never asked you before, but tell me now—where is your wife? Who was she?"

"She was the Mrs. Keith who came out with us in the 'Flora Macdonald.'"

Louis sprang up as if the other man had struck him.

"Now may God have mercy on us both!" he said, "for I was married

See reference to bigamy in "An Extraordinary Bigamy Case" North Otago Times, Volume XXI, Issue 1007, 17 December 1874, Page 2. See: <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>

to her two months ago in Christ Church!"

Chapter XXIX. The Third Time.

"We were two sisters of one race."

SUCH a long silence followed Louis' words, it seemed as if the two men were stricken dumb. You might have counted a hundred, and still neither spoke; they stood confronting each other with white faces, and in a stillness that seemed breathless. Dacre was the first to break the spell.

"Where is she?" he asked; and Louis answered, "She is here. She is within ten yards of you now!"

Another pause; and then, scarcely above a whisper, he added, "Which of us is to tell her?"

"I will," returned Dacre; "and let her look to it, for my blood is fairly up at last."

Louis led the way out of the verandah without another word. They crossed the dark sitting-room, and an equally dark passage beyond. Then Louis threw open a door, and they stepped into a large well-lighted room,

with pretty chintz curtains, and ottomans covered with the same, a handsome carved side-board at one end, and some clever water-colour sketches on the walls. There was a table in the centre, inlaid with beautiful New Zealand wood of different kinds; upon this stood books, a few pretty trifles of china and aluminium, and a *tête-à-tête* tea-service of delicate white French china. Last of all, at the further end of the room, was a lady seated at a piano, who rose as they entered and faced them.

She had not been singing, but merely turning over the leaves of some new music with her tea-cup in her hand. She set this quietly down on the table, and then drew back a step or two, and seemed to wait their pleasure. To all outward appearance she was not embarrassed in the least.

She was beautifully dressed, and in full dress too. Black lace over white silk, looped with scarlet roses, and roses to match in her black hair, which was taken up in a splendid coronet of plaits over her head. What fancy could have induced her to attire herself after this magnificent fashion for an evening in a quiet New Zealand station, it is impossible to say. But, however it may have been, this whim of hers was destined to have an effect, and that a wonderful one, upon the scene which followed.

Looking at Laura as she stood before him, queenly and magnificent, Dacre was haunted by an idea that there was something strange about her, something peculiar, which made her unlike her usual self; but what gave rise to this notion in his mind he could not make out.

Louis remained standing quietly by the door, which he had carefully closed behind him. It was a dark corner of the room, and he was half hidden in the shadow. Dacre, on the other hand, came forward; but as he advanced Laura retreated, and when he stopped at last, there were still several paces between them.

"You must know what I have come here for," Dacre said. "Seeing Cunningham and yourself together—you, who have striven so hard to keep us apart, must be aware that your game is up at last."

Mightily as his temper was roused, he yet spoke calmly, and repressed his passion with an iron hand. Dacre was a man with a large gift of self-control; he possessed assuredly the greatness of "he that ruleth his spirit."

Laura did not answer a word; she only gave a quick, uneasy glance at Louis, standing by the door.

"I suppose nothing I can say will have much effect," Dacre went on; "not even if I tell you—" He came to a sudden stop.

"What is it? What is it?" himself uneasily. Something was wrong about Laura; what could it be?

Suddenly the whole truth flashed upon him. She was standing by the table in front of him, full in the light of the lamp, which stood in its centre. She was, as before described, in full dress—gold bracelets on her round white arms, and a necklace with gold pendants round her beautiful neck. The velvet band was gone!

Dacre's eye had found it out. His glance sought out the spot where the scar should have been—where his dog's teeth had met in the white flesh, and left an indelible mark, years ago. He looked for it, but that too was gone!

Then all at once the woman before him drew herself up defiantly—fairly at bay at last.

"You have found it out," she said; "and I don't wish to keep it from you any longer. I am *not* your wife Laura! Laura is lying on the slope of the hill at Brighton, and I am—Beatrice!"

"Beatrice?"

"Yes; the Beatrice whom you never saw, but whom you were told was the living image of your wife, as time has proved to be the truth. The game is up now, Rylston Dacre, as you said yourself; and I do not care if I set matters right at last in your mind—if not for your sake, for the sake of some one else."

She gave another uneasy glance at Louis, who stood listening like a man stunned, taking no part at all in what went forward.

"I may as well tell you the whole story from the beginning," she went on, "or you will never understand either it or me. It was on the fourth of March, eight years ago, that I, then living with my sister Nora in a quiet little country town in England, received a letter from Laura, dated from Brighton.

"She was my favourite sister, as you know, and of course I had heard from her all the particulars of her acquaintance with you, formed whilst she fulfilled the duties of governess in your uncle's family—a dependent position, perhaps, but one in which you would have been far kinder to have left her—and afterwards of her marriage. Up to the time when I received her letter I had always thought of her as happy and contented as your wife. Afterwards I learnt the truth—the truth which rendered me your deadly enemy thenceforward. I did not learn it from her letter however. That merely told me my sister was ill and alone at Brighton, begging me to go to her at once. I went to Brighton. I went to see and to lose almost the only human being I then really loved. I found Laura in miserable little lodgings, with no money, no friends, and dying! That, Rylston Dacre, was the end of your wife! Are you not ashamed to stand before her sister now? When I reached Brighton it was almost too late. The fever was too far advanced, and she did not know me. She *never* knew me except, I think, just at the very last, when speech was gone. But from her broken, delirious wanderings I gathered that you had treated her very badly, and that you had cast her off to die among strangers. Can you wonder if, seeing her loneliness and misery, I vowed to have revenge? The last day of her life she made an effort to beckon to me with one

hand. 'Rylston,' she said faintly; 'don't let him know! don't let him know!' She repeated this brokenly many times over. It was mingled with the incoherent repetition of some other name which I could not distinctly catch, but I think the words suggested to me my revenge. She died. She lies buried there at Brighton. Even now I cannot bear to speak about that time. I went straight home from her grave and wrote to you but I wrote in Laura's name and merely told you, to prevent the accidental discovery of the truth, that I myself was dead. I said, 'His love for her is over; the tie between them had become a mere clog to him. Very well, I will hold him bound—bound to an imaginary Laura—and as long as I have the power to hinder it he shall never form another home and take another wife.' It was a poor retaliation perhaps, but it was all that I could think of at the time, and, upon the whole, it appears to have answered better than I could have hoped for. Months passed. My hatred of you began to fade a little. I made up my mind when Nora married to join my other sister in New Zealand, and the day before I sailed I wrote to you. You were in Plymouth then, as I thought, and in that letter I confessed my deceit and directed you where to find your wife's grave; but you never received it; it was not to be. When I met you on board the 'Flora Macdonald' I saw at once that you mistook me for Laura. Perhaps my being in possession of her watch, which you recognized, assisted the delusion. The old temptation to punish you for your conduct towards her leaped up in a moment, all the more fiercely because I saw, or fancied that I saw, you were attached towards Lucy Cunningham. I played my part well, I think, on the whole, but it was six years since you had seen Laura, and we were always very much alike. I think the velvet band, which I fortunately recollected in time, made the resemblance complete."

She paused a moment with her hand on the gold necklace, which now replaced the velvet she had formerly worn. "Louis" gift," she said gently to herself, with a sudden softening of the great grey eyes and a smile that touched the corners of her mouth.

Then to Dacre once more she added, "Arthur Winstanley, who was wild about Laura long ago, when he was reading with a tutor in Devonshire, before you married her and ruined her life, was sharper far in his perception than you were. He must have loved her better than you did, for he found me out at once, though at first my great resemblance to Laura cost him a sudden fit of faintness; but I bribed him to silence with the money you paid me for my passage to England, and he is far away in Australia by this time."

Dacre looked steadily into Beatrice's eyes while she poured out her story, in sentences short and curt, with repressed passion; and it never for an instant occurred to him to doubt that she spoke the truth; not even though she was giving him proof at that very moment of her skill in cool systematic deception. He saw from her eyes—which looked as they did when she sat by Laura's grave at Brighton long ago—that she was at present desperately in earnest.

He was not conscious, however, that at this moment Beatrice, if she had wished to deceive him, dare not have done so. He had no idea what his own face seemed to her at that moment, and how —only a woman, after all!—she had begun to quail inwardly, and to feel afraid before the righteous wrath of the two men before her; for that Louis was against her also was evident from something indefinable in his look and position, although he did not speak.

Dacre's manner, too, was quite calm. He seemed perfectly unmoved by the contempt she had lavished upon him during the course of her story; and when she had finished, he, too, kept silence for some minutes, until the interval became so awful to Beatrice that she felt obliged to break it in some manner herself.

She took up the small bunch of trinkets hanging at her watch-chain, and slowly detached from them a wedding-ring and its guard—a circle of dead gold set with three turquoises.

"There," she said, offering them to Dacre, "take them back! I took them off your wife's cold hand; and now that they have played their part with me I can bear to restore them as a token that Laura and you are quits at last!"

But Dacre put them back decidedly. "No," he said, "I can't touch those; I never will. You seem to imagine that the wrong throughout lay altogether on my side. Did Laura never speak to you of Captain Rollo?"

The third time now that this man's name had leaped up out of the past! Beatrice turned very pale, and looked at Dacre with a vague terror in her eyes.

He saw that she was puzzled. "You did not know it then?" he said. "She did not tell you that she chose to leave her husband for that man's sake? That you found her alone, friendless, and without money at Brighton does not surprise me. It was what might have been expected of Rollo. But perhaps you can understand now why I must decline the wedding-ring which I put once upon your sister's finger, and why it scarcely strikes me as so *very* generous of you to forgive me in her name."

Beatrice had turned from pale to red; a burning glow covered all her face. She played a moment with the two rings, then refastened them once more to her chain.

"No doubt," said Dacre as she did so, with the contempt which he felt in his turn, "they must be very precious to you as a memento of the sister you so loved and respected!"

He was sorry for the sneer a moment afterwards, but Beatrice deserved it, and she was not without words in

her own defence.

"I see," she said, "I have been a little—mistaken; but, remember, I never saw Laura until she was past speaking coherently. She could not tell me anything then; and if I have done you wrong, things certainly looked very black against you."

Not one word of this made the slightest impression upon Dacre. He did not care for any slight apology that Beatrice might make him. The expression of his face had quite changed, and his brown eyes were brilliant. He had suddenly grasped the idea that he was a free man, and that Lucy was within a few miles of him.

"Cunningham," he said, turning to Louis for the first time, "I am going."

Louis only nodded. He did not require to ask where.

"Good-bye, old fellow!" said Dacre, holding out his hand as he passed him.

"Good-bye!" said Louis, returning the salute cordially. They were the first words he had spoken since he entered the room.

Chapter XXX. Broken.

BEATRICE and Louis were left alone. She was waiting breathlessly for his first words—bending forwards a little, with her eyes fixed eagerly on his face, and her beautiful full red lips slightly parted. At last they began to tremble, and she said softly, "Oh, Louis! have you given me up at last?"

For the first time he was mute and cold to her appeal; and suddenly she threw herself on the ground at his feet with a cry.

"Oh, Louis! Louis Cunningham!" she said, "don't cast me off! I am really your wife—your own wife Beatrice! Won't you love me still?"

He shook his head.

She looked up into his face and read the decision, repeated still more pitilessly there in its hard, cold expression. She wrung her hands and began to sob, though without tears, in an almost hysteric passion of terror and, agony. The attitude

Suggesting an artificial stance aimed to create an impression. Is Evans attempting to be sardonic? she had thrown herself into was superb—a splendid despairing pose, set off by her beautiful dress of silk and lace, the gold drops glittering on her handsome neck, the crimson flowers in her black hair.

Louis waited a moment, then quietly lifted her up, and put her on one side.

"A little too theatrical for my taste," he said coolly. He had become hard as granite to the woman to whom up to this hour he had yielded willing homage

The paying of 'homage' is historically linked to the age of Romance and the medieval 'cult of the Lady'—the one woman Louis Cunningham had ever been in love with.

There stood on the table in the centre of the room a little tea service of white china. Louis in that very room, two hours before, had taken tea, sitting it by his wife's side, and had kissed the hand that offered him his cup. His eye fell on the little teacup, thin and fragile as an egg shell, standing just where he had put it down at the beginning of the evening. Suddenly he dashed his foot upon it, shattering it into a thousand tiny fragments.

"There!" he said; "do you see that? I could as soon pick up those pieces, and make that cup just as it was before, as I could gather up and mend my old love for you. It is no thanks to you if my sister's heart is not already broken. You have stained your hands with an awful sin

Victorian Christian morality looked upon 'sin' with some seriousness.

, Beatrice. Look to it!"

He turned away with the last words, and left the room, leaving Beatrice quite alone.

She remained for a long time—how long she never quite knew—lying just as Louis had left her. She had attained her revenge at last, and in doing so had also attained to the very bitterest hour of all her life. Repent

Sin and repentance are widely featured themes in English novel writing of the 18th and 19th centuries.

as much as she would, and wish to undo the past, it was now too late. How fearfully too late Beatrice had yet to learn.

At last she raised her head and looked round her. The room was just as it had been left some hours before; the tea-things were standing about; the lamp was burning brightly; the light seemed so comfortable and brilliant, it felt like a mockery in her present mood. She got up and extinguished the lamp, leaving the room to be illuminated only by a ray of moonlight which glimmered past the edge of the window curtain.

"The darkness is best for such as I am," she said to herself. Then she threw herself on the sofa and sobbed, with her face hidden in the cushions. "He will never love me again as he did," she moaned; "and I was growing so happy with him! Laura, I have lost all by my mad fidelity to you!"

At last her ear caught the sound of a horse's hoof on the gravel outside. She got up, and, lifting the curtain,

looked out. By the light of the moon she saw Louis ride off on his favourite horse at a brisk pace.

“He will never come back,” she said, despairingly. “Oh! if I could only undo the past, and be Mrs. Keith on board the ‘Flora Macdonald’ once more!”

Her repentance, so far as it went, was very genuine; but it was a selfish repentance after all.

And ah, Beatrice! you will have to learn that, though we repent of our sins, we cannot repair the mischief they have caused. Only One can do that, and He will do it only in His own way and at His own time.

Chapter XXXI. The Slope of the Hill.

How bright the stars looked that night, and how gloriously the moon shone! There was no wind—none—not a breath. But what mattered the intense, oppressive heat? What would have signified cold, thirst, hunger, anything at that moment to Dacre? Was not Lucy there before him, beckoning him on?

She was as vivid and distinct to his mind's eye as if she had really been there in bodily presence hovering before his horse's head as he rode on. He could see the lovely silky ripples of her hair—the hair which he had always admired so much—the little head set so gracefully upon her shoulders—the sweet face smiling as only Lucy could smile—for him.

Dacre had seen during his life many far more beautiful women than Lucy; but not one of them could have been to him what she was. She was simply “Lucy,” and no other did he want—no one else, however lovely or fascinating—Lucy just as she was, and Lucy only.

When a man loves in this unreasoning way, the lady of his choice need have no fears of any rival. She is queen of his heart, let what will come, and no other can ever dispute her sovereignty.

Dacre rode fast. The road lengthened behind him, shortened in front. How short it was growing now! How near he was to the end!

The mountains were on his left hand. He caught glimpses of them now and then between the hills among which he was riding, but he knew that he should not see them in their full glory until he crested the hill which looked down on Maungarewa, for of course he meant to take the shortest track. Who would go round another mile, however easy the way might be, with such an end in view? Certainly not Dacre.

It was eleven o'clock when he began to ascend that hill. Would he find them up, or would the Maungarewa household have all retired quietly to rest? He was afraid so; and yet he knew that Mr. Cunningham was given to sitting up late on a hot night like this, smoking in the verandah or anywhere he fancied was the coolest.

With Mr. Cunningham, Dacre had no fears of a rejection. He knew that Mr. Cunningham would be well pleased to hear of his attachment to Lucy.

The brow of the hill at last, and the great mountain range burst upon him in its everlasting splendour. But the house was in sight, and he had no eyes for anything else. He held his breath for a moment as he looked downwards, and then with a sigh of relief became aware that there was more than one light still shining from its different windows.

The terror lest he should see them extinguished, as he gazed, sent him down the slope with a fresh impulse of eagerness—a fresh touch of the spur to his horse. But it was a steep bit of ground and rocky—not exactly suited to a night ride. Dacre's horse stumbled, slipped, picked itself up again; went all right for a few paces further; then, as its master looked away once more to the lights below him, suddenly took the opportunity, stumbled again, and fell, rolling over Dacre and crushing in his side!

* * * * *

A blank of utter darkness, and then a slow creeping back to life—life once more, for a short space of suffering. The cup which seemed so full of sweetest nectar a little while ago was nearly empty now: only the last few drops—how bitter!—remained to drink.

With his own clear surgical knowledge, Dacre became aware that he was dying! He could not move or raise himself in the least; but his fall had left him on his back, with his face turned up to the night sky, and when his senses slowly returned to him, the first thing he was conscious of was the heaven above and the stars. They looked brighter than ever, and the great arch seemed greater and more solemn than ever before.

So, too, did the mountains on the left—exquisitely, mistily purple in the moonlight—glorious, everlasting hills! They looked down, calmly and solemnly, on this little unit of humanity writhing beneath them, and seemed to hush the awful cry of anguish in his heart, for as Dacre lay he could see Maungarewa beneath him. The house—the windows shining still—lay clear before his eyes. He could see the window of Lucy's room—could see a shadow pass from side to side upon the blind. So near, and yet so utterly separated from him now! It seemed as though all the life within him threw itself into one great cry of agony at the sight, and he fainted once more.

* * * * *

Another weary, painful resurrection after a longer space of time, and the stars were looking at him still. Oh, those bright stars! And oh, those lovely lilac peaks, so far away! What was it they were saying?

Something that grew upon him more and more clearly as the hours of the night slipped by.

Dacre was very near Home; his feet had nearly reached the gates of the Golden City

Probably symbolising a spiritual or 'heavenly' home or 'state'.

whose cornerstone is Christ. Surely some faint reflex of the radiance, some dim echo of the eternal harmony, was wafted to him that night, through the mountains and the stars, to bind up the broken heart—for, as far as this life went, he was broken-hearted. Every hope that he had cherished seemed to have slipped from him one by one. This last ride of his—what was it but the crowning failure of it all? But what matter? What was it he was losing after all? The desire of life was failing now with Dacre; and as these earthly shadows grew dim to his eyes, the great eternal realities began to unveil themselves more and more clearly before him. It seemed as though the meaning of his life, and all that he had ever gone through, was gradually unrolling before his inward vision, and the love of Christ our Redeemer

Christ - his death is believed by Christians to redeem humankind.

was being made plain to him as he had never seen it before. Deep peace flowed slowly into his heart—a peace that nothing could shake. In the paroxysms of agony he passed through as he lay helpless there, and in his moments of relief from pain, it was still with him, making him more than conqueror.

He could look down at last at the little window beneath him, and see the light extinguished there quite calmly.

As he lay alone, during those long, weary night-watches, it was as though the whole of his life came up in review before him. Dacre had been an orphan ever since he could remember; not the faintest image of either father or mother lingered on his memory; but he was a little child again, in his uncle's house, and stood—

“Knee deep in mountain grass,
And heard his native breezes pass,
And runlets babbling down the glen.”

It seemed to him that he really felt the cool breeze upon his hot brow; and the murmur of the stream, where he used to spend whole days trout-fishing, was in his ears as well.

Then he was a boy at Eton

An upper class English boy's preparatory school situated at Windsor.

, playing in a cricket-match at Lord's

Main cricket ground in St John's Wood, London, at which major matches are held over summer.

, and oh, so proud of the laurels he had won there! Very perishable laurels—long since sere and withered!

He was at Oxford

Name of a university situated in the same town called 'Oxford' situated near Cambridge University in the county of Buckinghamshire.

—he was studying for the profession

Dacre is decorated with the conventional symbols of class and "success" reflecting the gentility of Evans' chosen characters.

he had chosen—not of necessity—for with Dacre money had always been plentiful—but because he loved work, and was miserable idle.

Then the lights grew brighter, as the darker shadows brought them out into stronger relief. He was in the midst of his infatuation for Laura—governess, then, in his uncle's household. He was “drinking the cup of a costly death.” He was passing through the gradual fading of his illusions after his marriage. She had left him for Rollo. He had given up the army; had worked hard among the poor of a large English town; had, lastly, taken passage in the ship “Flora Macdonald”—the ship which had been a fatal one to him, and where he had come under the influence of the attraction which had power to hold him to New Zealand ever since.

All the old faces from the past came up and looked at Dacre as he lay there. Some of them spoke to him in old familiar tones, and hands, many of which were dust now, were put forth for him to shake. In his delirious wandering he exchanged jokes with his old brother officers; Laura flashed defiance on him from her great grey eyes, and Rollo's dark brows scowled on him over her shoulder. Then, strangely enough, Rollo called up Clinton Meredith; and last rose Lucy's soft round face; and beside that the others grew dim and faded out.

The night wore itself away at last—a night that had been years to the dying man—and the dawn, a lovely, pearly, transparent light, spread and brightened in the sky every moment. His head felt clearer now, and he wondered dreamily when and by whom he would be found, and how they would break it to Lucy. Would she hear the story Beatrice had told him, and know that he was on his way to her—dying almost at her feet? yes, he

could trust Louis to tell her all that had passed.

He wondered what had become of his horse. It had disappeared long since. The sun was up at last, and now the glorious sunshine “smote him on the face.”

It must have been very early in the morning, but he had lost all count of time, when he saw that the house beneath him was astir once more. A girl's figure—oh, Dacre, you knew it well!—came out of the door at the side facing him, and Lucy stood a few moments looking round her and drinking in the fresh cool morning air.

She wore her riding-habit, and when she gathered it up with one hand, and walked away, Dacre became certain that she was going to catch her horse.

He was not mistaken. She returned in a short time, leading Robin Hood, and Mr. Cunningham came out of the house and saddled him for her. The English mail

See reference to 'The English Mail' in North Otago Times, 20 October 1874. See:
<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>

was in, and Lucy was going to give herself the pleasure of an early ride to fetch the letters.

Her father put her on the saddle. Dacre could see it all quite plainly from where he lay.

At the bottom of the hill she paused a moment, evidently considering which way to take. Her hesitation only lasted a moment however; then she came riding up the slope, straight as a bird flies, to the spot where he was lying. She did not usually choose this way. What subtle instinct urged her to do so now?

Between Dacre and herself, however, there lay a small creek, which must be crossed by any one ascending or descending the hill-side. Here she stopped to let her horse drink. How little she thought that each mouthful of water it swallowed answered to another throb of the ebbing life above her!

The suspense while she loitered there was almost too much for Dacre, but it was over at last, and she came on faster now.

He could hear her singing an air she had taken a great fancy to lately—“The Last Rose of Summer”—as Robin Hood breasted the slope. The sweet sad notes, which seemed to hover up and precede her, were only too mournfully true! The first roses of Lucy's summer faded with Effie Lennox—the last went with Dacre!

Another moment, and she rose before him—a bright vision, with the sunshine on her face and rippling hair.

Chapter XXXII. A Charge.

“The glory

May denote the fulfilment of some state of love felt by Lucy. In this context however it does not infer sexual passion.

that is brighter than the sun.”

Dacre managed to explain everything to her gradually, and by a few words at a time, and he begged her to forgive Beatrice.

“Poor Beatrice!” he said. “I thought a few hours ago that I never could have done it; but one sees things differently when one is near death.”

So once more Lucy heard and remembered a charge from dying lips.

He would not let her go for help. “I should not last till you got back,” he said. “Don't leave me now!”

As she knelt beside him in the morning sunlight, supporting his head, he passed one of his hands, which he could still move, over her hair.

“Your beautiful hair!” he said; then, “Open the locket on my watch-guard... Do you see that? How soft and bright it is! ... Do you know when I got that precious little lock? It was the night you fainted... You never knew.”

“Ah, yes,” he went on presently, “I have been all wrong . . . all wrong. I forgot who said that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth. I coveted you, You, Lucy, and I thought my life was spoiled because I could not have you. But He has forgiven me ... and after that nothing seems hard to bear. If He requires my life—my poor worthless life—shall I grudge it to Him?”

He began to speak with greater difficulty, pausing often, and resuming with a greater effort every time the broken words.

“Do you remember,” he said, “the said, “the hymn

Hymn singing was a feature of colonial life. Early rural settlers often would make their own music. All families would sing hymns or Gilbert and Sullivan songs around the piano, while out in the men's quarters concertinas or accordions accompanied a good singalong of shanties and folk songs. See:

<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/rural-recreation/1>

'Dark, dark hath been the midnight ,
But dayspring is at hand,
And glory

May here imply the Victorian Christian's belief in life after death as an image of spiritual hope and salvation.

, glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.'

The dark night is over now with me. I have learnt to see the meaning of the words. There is no glory here . . . nothing lasts . . . nothing satisfies . . . we thirst with a thirst which no earthly draught can slake ... but I am going where all is real, and the glory is 'brighter than the sun' ... You won't forget me, Lucy? ... and you will come soon?"

A long pause, and then once more he rallied a little, and said brokenly, "Once you sang that on board ship ... I remember ... your dress was white ... the wind lifted your hair ... I think I always loved you from that day ..."

That was all. He lay for some minutes quite unconscious, and only roused up for a few moments of agony that wrung Lucy's heart. When they were over he could not speak.

But he knew her still, and seemed to comprehend the anguish in her face. If he could he would have tried to comfort her; but the power was gone. His brown eyes looked at her wistfully, and Lucy understood their meaning.

She made a great effort, and steadied her voice.

"I will come soon," she said; "and the Lord watch between thee and me while we are absent the one from the other!"

She saw that he was comforted for her.

* * * * *

How long did this last? Was it hours, or only minutes? and was he really gone? She could not leave him; she could only kneel and pray.

At last a shadow came between her eyes and the sun. A horseman, riding down the hill above them—Louis Cunningham—sprang off, and came to her side. He had followed Dacre with early morning light, but, alas! too late.

Dacre's eyes opened once more. He knew Louis, and made an effort to move one hand. Louis took it in his, and Dacre smiled and said—yes, Louis was sure he caught the words—"My friend!" Then he turned his eyes—not sad now, but radiant with a light brighter than the morning sunshine—to Lucy, and with a last struggle to speak, he said, quite clearly, "My wife!"

* * * * *

Chapter XXXIII. Forgiven.

"Through the night-time, while thou sleepest,
Still I watch the shrouded east."

BEATRICE waited until she could bear her solitude no longer, then she set off alone on her horse to Maungarewa.

Louis was standing in the verandah. He made no effort to help her to dismount, and the face he turned towards her was hard as stone.

Beatrice's heart died within her. She tried to speak, but the words would not come.

At last she said, "Will nothing soften you? Is Dacre always to stand between you and me, now that I am sorry for the past?"

Louis looked at her sternly. She noticed, for the first time, that he was dressed in mourning. "Be as sorry as you like," he answered; "that won't bring him back to life again."

Beatrice sprang off her horse, perfectly awestruck.

"He is not dead?" she gasped out.

"He was buried yesterday," said Louis, and turned away.

He would have left her quite alone, but Lucy came from somewhere behind him, and took Beatrice's hand and led her into the house.

Had not Dacre told her to forgive, and must she not keep her word?

Once within the house, the two women stood and looked at one another in silence. As they confronted each other in the first chapter of the story so they once more met, after each had gained some bitter experience, and learnt to know the other perhaps only too well.

Lucy's face had much pity in it; Beatrice's was almost transformed by an unwonted expression of humility Seen as a desirable quality by Victorians.

. She clung to Lucy's hand like a child.

"Louis," said his sister, "come here!"

Louis, who was not far off, followed them into the drawing-room. At that time his reverence for his sister's sorrow would have made him do anything she asked.

"I only wanted to say one thing to you," Lucy went on, with the weary intonation she could never at times quite banish from her voice again. "Beatrice was left to my charge ... and I think you can fulfil the trust better than I can."

"Did Dacre forgive me?" asked Beatrice softly.

"He forgave you entirely," Lucy said; and she saw that great tears were running down the other woman's cheeks. "He was very sorry for you when he lay dying."

"How I injured him!" Beatrice replied. "Never was greater injustice done than mine to Rylston Dacre."

She sank softly to the ground, and hid her face in the dark folds of her riding-habit. But Louis was conquered at last. There were tears in his eyes too; and he lifted his wife once more to her feet.

* * * * *

The surf of the Pacific

By the mention of 'surf' and the 'Pacific' Evans places a 19th century Romantic theme of untimely or tragic death for the first time in the colonial 'exotic'.

roars and thunders not far from Dacre's grave; but it only serves to enhance the peace of the little valley where he lies.

Standing by his grave, Lucy can now look forward and feel nothing but a solemn joy at the remembrance of her lost love; for "He is gone," she thinks; "He is happy; he is singing 'Hosanna in the Highest!'"

The End