



The Vicar's Daughter.

Cyril Hardinge entered his West End chambers about 11 a. m. in a very self-satisfied frame of mind. Previous to that evening, Fortune had treated him in none too generous a fashion, but now the fickle goddess, seemingly repentant, had made amends by placing fame and fortune well within his grasp.

All recollections of his previous failures faded from his memory, and his life seemed to date only from that moment. Being possessed of a moderate income, he had never felt the pinch of being hard up, and had met his numerous reverses with commendable fortitude. But now all the world was at his feet, his name was made, his future productions would be eagerly sought after, and, consequently, the glow of pride which suffused his whole frame was pardonable.

On entering his room, he turned up the light and, not feeling any inclination to retire, he casually took down a large volume from the mantel-piece and proceeded to read an old book. Throwing himself into an easy chair, he lit his pipe, and, with extended limbs, puffing clouds of pale blue smoke toward the ceiling, he was a man of about 35, and not affecting the mannerisms of others of his class, wore a dark beard trimmed in the style now fashionable by the genius of Van Dyke, a fact which made him look considerably older than he really was.

He sat and smoked for some time, and then his eye rested on the table by his side, on which lay an envelope addressed to him. He took it up in a listless fashion and lazily scrutinized it. He saw that it had been written by a female hand, and had not been through the post, and he therefore concluded that it had been left by a caller. He broke it open and read the following epistle:

"Dear Sir—Please pardon the liberty I take in writing to you. I have just witnessed the great success of your play. You have now made your name, and will be much sought after. Will you grant me the privilege of interviewing you? I am endeavoring to get my foot upon the first rung of the literary ladder, but so far have not met with success. I am not connected with any paper, but feel confident that the report of an interview with you would be accepted. I shall call tomorrow to learn your decision.

Yours, very truly, ANNIE RALEIGH."

Hardinge read this communication with much interest, but never looked at the signature. He put the letter on one side, pressed down the tobacco in his pipe, and between the whiffs muttered:

"Poor girl, no success—well, surely in the hour of my triumph—I can do some one a good turn—call tomorrow—umph, no—entering too—well, well—I hate to be bored and by a woman too—however, I think I'll see her—I wonder who she is, and he took up the letter again.

"Annie Raleigh," he cried. "Good heavens! surely 'tis not—no it cannot be—she is married long ago, and vegetating somewhere in the country long ere this; but what a curious coincidence."

rooted out a bundle of old letters, and from among them took out a slightly faded photograph. It was a photo of a young lady, attired in a pure white dress. It was a dainty little figure, slim and neat, with a pair of laughing eyes, surrounded by a mass of beautiful hair.

He held it in his hand for some time, and gazed on it as though spell-bound. At length his lips parted, and in a voice of agony he groaned:

"Oh, Annie, Annie, why were you not true? Oh, heaven, how I loved you, loved you with a love which was my very existence. I thought—fool that I was—you loved me too; but no, no, you did not. I was simply a toy—a toy to be played with—and when tired of thrown ruthlessly aside. Ah, well, I was foolish to be entangled by a pretty face; and yet—no—I was not. A man loves but once in his life, and truly I loved them. It was destiny, destiny, and shaped to a curious end. But surely its time had got over that feeling; and yet, Annie, my blood rises at this old picture of you, and I love with the same intensity as of yore. Those were my happy days—days when I lived as a fool's paradise." He laid the photograph down and pondered. "I wonder where she is now—does she ever think of me—does she feel any pang of regret? Possibly she thinks me dead, perhaps it would be better if I were so. She would not recognize me now," and he carelessly stroked his beard.

He put the photo back in the cabinet and threw himself into his chair again. But the gates of memory had been opened, and in that night he lived again the life of years ago. He recalled in the self-torture, and whipped with unsparring hand the cruel sores which time could never heal, and the deep groans which occasionally burst from his compressed lips revealed the agony of the sea within.

When he rose from his chair and went to bed it was 4 a. m.

"A lady wishes to see you, sir."

Hardinge was seated at his table with a pile of "shells" before him, protesting with immovable face the steady notices of his play. Lifting his eyes for a moment, he briefly exclaimed, "Ah! what name?"

He took the piece of cardboard handed to him, and the color rose to his pale face as he read the old familiar name.

"Very well, tell the lady I'll see her. Show her my."

"Carious," he soliloquized, "none of these criticisms can raise the slightest emotion, but that name—" and he stopped.

A few moments later the lady entered, and as he turned to greet her he caught sight of her face.

"Good heavens!" he gasped, "'tis Annie!" and then he became cool again.

He offered her a chair, and, seeing that she was at a loss as to how she should commence, opened the conversation.

"So, Miss Raleigh, you wish to interview me?"

"I am afraid I cannot adequately express my sense of gratitude," she replied, with a sweet smile, which caused his heart to bound again; "you are indeed too kind."

"Well, I am afraid you have chosen rather a poor subject," said Hardinge; "you see I am hardly yet a celebrity, but if I can assist you in any way I shall only be too pleased. Cross-examine me as you like, for, as you know, it will be quite a novel experience, as far as I am concerned."

"Thank you, Mr. Hardinge, I really don't know how to commence, I suppose I had better jot down a few particulars about your surroundings, etcetera."

She took out a notebook and pencil, and as she bent forward to write, Hardinge carefully scrutinized her. She was still the same sweet girl he had loved. True, she looked older, and a great deal more serious, giving him the impression that her life had not altogether been cast in pleasant places.

"I wonder how she came to this," he thought. "Her husband must either be a wretch, or he must be dead, and in taking up literature she has gone back to her maiden name. Ah, well; I suppose I ought to be delighted to see one who once seemed me bright to this state; but upon my word I don't. My heart

goes out to her again. How I should like to know what has happened during the last eight or nine years; and, as Providence has placed the opportunity in my power, I will make a bold effort to fathom all before she leaves."

The interviewer looked up, and in rather a beseeching tone said: "Mr. Hardinge, I have very erudite ideas as to how I should go about this interview. I wish you would give me a few details about yourself, your work and methods, and then perhaps I could jot down a few particulars, which I could weave together afterwards."

He smiled sadly, and then gave her the information required. She made some notes, and then at the conclusion put away her book, and, after thanking him again, made a movement as if preparing to depart. Hardinge noted this, and at his wife's embittered out, in a desperate fashion:

"So you are endeavoring to adopt literature as your profession, Miss Raleigh?"

"Yes," she replied, "but I find it very difficult indeed to get a foothold."

"Do you write stories? Excuse the liberty I take, but I feel quite an interest in you."

"Oh, thank you. Yes, I do try my hand occasionally at a short story."

"Well, Miss Raleigh, what do you think of this for a plot? Do you think it could be woven into a story? I can only give you the incidents as far as I know them, so you would have to make your own conclusion. Above all, it has the merit of being true. Shall I give you the incidents?"

"If you would be so kind, I should be extremely grateful."

"Then here they are. By a curious coincidence your name is that of the heroine, and it is that fact which has recalled everything to my mind."

Hardinge proceeded with his tale. He dared not look at his visitor as he remorsefully went on; perhaps it was as well he did not do so, as the indescribable agony which overspread her features would have acted upon his chivalrous instincts and forced him to stop. But as he did not look in her direction he did not notice this, and earnestly commenced:

"Some years ago—I forget how many—a young fellow, who was my cousin at Oxford, spent his vacation at Millfield, a little village in the north. While there Fred—Fred Gower was his name—met and fell in love with the vicar's daughter, Annie Raleigh. They became engaged, and shortly afterwards he went out to India, in order to represent his father's business house in Calcutta.

"For some months a correspondence passed between the two, but at length Fred received word from some friend in the village that the vicar's son was paying close attention to Miss Raleigh, and it was rumored that they were engaged to be married. In a fit of pique, Fred wrote breaking off the engagement, even before he received any corroborative evidence. The lady was either stung by the letter, or the rumor was correct, as she did not reply, and from that day he has never seen or heard of her. He did not make any inquiries, he did not write to his informant, but simply waited at Calcutta until he had set the business affairs in order. He then went off into the hills, intending to lose himself there, and cut himself off from all things which would bring to mind his unfortunate love.

"Poor fellow! I often wonder what has become of him. He has not written to any of his old friends, and, I suppose, almost forgotten by all. But really, Miss Raleigh," he added, turning to her and noticing her agitated countenance, "you don't look well. Can I get anything for you?"

"No, thank you, Mr. Hardinge. But—no doubt you will think me foolish—your story has quite upset me."

"I am awfully sorry. I would not have related it had I known. But why should it upset you?"

"Well," said the lady, her pale lips trembling, "I am the Annie Raleigh you have been speaking of. Fred Gower was my lover. Poor Fred," she added, meditatively, "and all through a misunderstanding."

"A misunderstanding!" said Hardinge in an incredulous tone. "How was that? Pardon my curiosity, but no doubt you will understand why I should be curious."

"Well, as you were a friend of his, and knew one part of the story, perhaps it would be as well if you were acquainted with the other part." She sighed deeply and went on: "It is true that the vicar's son did pay me attention. We were busily engaged in organizing some amateur theatricals at the time, and as we were both taking prominent parts, we were thrown into each other's society a

great deal. But I was entirely faithful to Fred, and when Hinton did make love to me I promptly gave him his answer.

"But I am sorry to say the tongues of the villagers had already commenced wagging, and I heard some of the rumors. Then Fred's petulant letter came, and I felt so piqued and offended at his suspecting me, that I did not answer. At length the feeling wore off, and I wrote, explaining all. But the letter never reached its destination and was returned to me. Twelve months later my father died, and gradually I was forced to adopt some means of obtaining a living, and always having a taste for literature, I have tried to make my way in the literary world. Poor Fred, his petulance and my pride ruined two lives, I am afraid. But, Mr. Hardinge," she said, raising her sweet blue eyes, now suffused with tears, "I have remained faithful to my lover's memory."

"For heaven's sake, Annie, look at me," cried Hardinge, springing to his feet and seizing her hand. Do you not recognize me? Do you not know my voice?"

Startled and surprised, the lady rose, and prompted by a sudden impulse gazed into his eyes. She paled, drew back, and then in a voice of mingled agony and delight cried:

"It is—are my eyes deceiving me! No, it cannot be—Fred Gower is dead—and yet—oh, merciful heaven—it is!" and in a fit of passionate tears, she threw herself upon his breast.

Hardinge—or rather Gower—pressed her closer to him, and in a sweet, low voice consoled her, begging her forgiveness for all he had done.

"My life, my love, my all, Fate has strangely parted us. Fate has strangely united us. You are mine now forever."

"Forever," was the almost inaudible reply, as she raised her glistening eyes to his.—Tit-Bits.

CO-EDS OF THE SPREEWALK.

Consul-General de Kay writes a paper entitled "An Island Venice" for the Century. It is a description of life in the Serbie. S. ap, Vend and. Mr. de Kay says: "School out" in the village school of "Barg" is a pretty sight. The substantial brick building overlooks the ever-murmuring highway, and the boys and girls, instead of strapping up a dusty coat, tumble into punts and pole away for dear life—the boys much like other boys, but the girls retained fascinations of their mothers and elder sisters, clad in bright, but short raincoats, and visible afar off through their strange mole-caps with wings. As one moves down stream from Barg by Leles to Little-ban, these wings grow smaller, and collapse, while the skirts grow longer and more resemble the ordinary dress of women. At a dance the Spreewalker knows instantly, by the peculiarities of her costume, from what village a woman or girl has come. At Little-ban the multitudinous skirts of alarming girth are no more, the gown reaches the ankles, and the cap fits close to the head instead of resting on a framework as in Barg. This the dress in Leles is perhaps more graceful, but it is more commonplace; it no longer testifies to that pride of the peasant father or husband which is shown by the number of yards in the skirts of his womanfolk, and the variety of their caps, by the richness of their dress as well as their jewelry.

She Has Forty-one Fingers and Toes.

Little forty-year-old May Hill is one of the queerest human freaks in the matter of fingers and toes that a person sees in a lifetime, says a Fort Worth (Texas) correspondent of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. She was brought to Fort Worth by her father, J. W. Hill, who, with her mother, is carrying her back to their home in Cass county. The child has on her left foot nine toes, one growing from the top of her foot, and on the right foot eight toes. She has nine fingers and three thumbs on the right hand, and seven fingers and five thumbs on the left. Each hand is divided into two phalanges, each containing several fingers. The thumbs grow on the hand where one thumb of normal persons grows. The fingers are grown together like webbed feet. In all, the girl has forty-one toes and fingers.

Extinguished Extravagance.

"My mother says," the young woman observed to her fiancé, "that she does not approve of a young man's giving a girl expensive presents before they are married."

"That's very unreasonable."

"I don't see why."

"Because, so far as I can learn from observation, after marriage the desire to give expensive presents becomes totally extinct."—Washington Star.

IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

A Description of the President's Mansion at the Nation's Capital as it Appears To-Day.

THE White House has been greatly changed within the past few years, writes Frank C. Carpenter in the Detroit Free Press. All kinds of improvements have been made, and the white hair of John Quincy Adams' ghost must rise in holy horror as he looks at the magnificent furnishings. Mrs. President Harrison expended some thing like \$50,000 on improvements, and a number of changes have been made by Mrs. Cleveland. The Harrisons spent a lot on the kitchen. When they came in the basement was full of rats. One kitchen floor had been laid on top of another, and they were all rotten. Mrs. Harrison ordered the wooden floors taken out and had the ground covered with concrete. Upon the top of this she put porcelain tiles and walled all the rooms of the basement as high as one's shoulder with the same material. The White House is now lighted with electric lights. The chandeliers have electric globes and the lights are kept burning in the basement and in most of the rooms of the building all night.

I think it was Martin Van Buren who was denounced all over the country for buying a set of gold spoons for the White House. The new china which has been recently bought is worth almost its weight in gold. I know nothing about the late purchases of Mrs. Cleveland, but there is a new set of cut glass in the empheors of the executive mansion which cost \$1973, and I happen to know that Mrs. Harrison sent one order to Europe for twenty-four dozen china plates and five dozen coffee cups of a special design. Congress allows each President something like \$10,000 a year and more to run the White House, and a large part of this goes into new furniture and dishes. The linen costs a small fortune. The table cloths are of the finest damask, and the napkins shite like silk.

New carpets are bought about every six years, and though the ones which I found on the different parlors are good, Mrs. McKinley will probably have a chance to select new ones. I don't believe she will care to re-carpet the rooms. When the dining room was last fitted up the artists received more than \$500 for the work. The walls of the dining room are now padded and draped with silk, as fine as that of the ball dresses of the ladies who will come here to shake hands with President McKinley. The silk is of the most delicate blue, and it is interwoven with silver. It is the same with the red room, which is also hung with silk and stucco-work has been designed and cushioned to match. The carpets of all the ground floor parlors are fine. That on the east room is so soft that one's foot sinks into it if it were half an inch deep. It takes almost 500 yards of carpet to cover the floor, and the one now tacked down cost \$950. It takes more than a thousand yards to carpet the White House parlors and dining rooms, and the carpets of every room match the furniture and hangings.

But let me tell you just how the White House looks in this year of our Lord 1897. It is a big, certain it seems, for it covers the third of a city block. You do not see the basement as you look at it from the street, and the basement is almost a house in itself. Its rooms are high and, with its recent improvements, it is now as dry as a bone. The White House is some distance back from the street. A big park surrounds it, and going up to the front door you walk about a drive which leads in the shape of a half moon to Pennsylvania avenue. On one side of this drive there is a flag

room and talked to him until he dropped off to sleep. It was through that same door that Garfield was brought after he was shot by Guiteau. He had been but a few weeks in the White House, and, tired and worn out by fighting with the office-seekers and the Senate, was just about to go to Long Branch for a few days of much-needed rest. He came out here and took the carriage for the depot, not half a mile away, and was waiting for the train to start when the assassin's bullet brought him back. He was carried in through this door and lay here for weeks, racked with everlasting pain.

We passed policemen when we came into the yard. They patrolled the streets about the White House night and day. There are now more than a dozen on duty within the White House grounds, and President McKinley will be watched almost as carefully as any king. There are guards within the vestibule and the messengers who conduct you from room to room, though they look very harmless, have by long watching become expert detectives, and can tell a crank almost at a glance.

There are only four hours of the day when strangers without urgent business can be admitted to the White House. This is from 10 a. m. till 2 p. m. After this, if you call and ring the bell, you will see a guard's face at the little round hole filled with plate glass in the mosaic window of the door and a pair of sharp eyes will examine you before the knob is turned which lets you in.

If you are so fortunate as to pass this inspection, you will see the doors open inward and a moment later you will find yourself standing in what

before the front door of the White House.

The front door of the White House! What stories it could tell of grief as well as joy. Through that door Abraham Lincoln was brought after he was shot by John Wilkes Booth. Step with me to that side window and I will show you an old man who was one of the White House messengers at the time, and who is still stationed at the door. His name is Penning. He told me once how little Tad Lincoln came running in the morning after the shooting and cried:

"They have killed my papa; they have killed my papa!" He will tell you how he picked up Tad and tried to comfort him, and how he carried him upstairs to his



THE RED PARLOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE.

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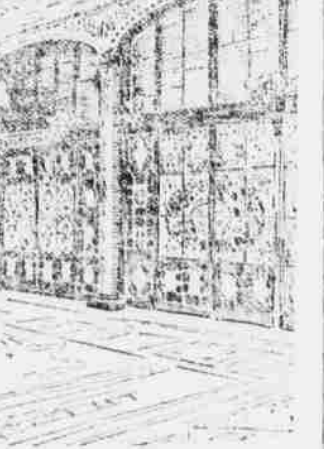
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rooms to the left of the White House will be fitted up with shelves, where the hats and coats of the men can be put away, while the wraps of the ladies will be stored for the time in the state dining room.

It will be in the fine room that President McKinley will receive a great many of his guests. This has been the custom from time immemorial, and it will not be changed, I doubt, however, whether Mrs. McKinley will be able to be with him. She is not well, and she could not stand the wear and tear of an evening reception. It took all of Mrs. Cleveland's vitality to enable her to carry out her part during her first years in the White House. I know of receptions at which she shook hands with at least 5000 people, and at which it seemed to me she gave a smile to each one and no two alike. Mrs. Harrison tried to save herself by not shaking hands, and at some of the receptions she carried a bouquet in order to show the people that she could not do this. Some think that it was the care, overwork, and worry of the White House that killed her, and the same is said to have caused the death of the first Mrs. Tyler and also of Mrs. Fillmore, although she survived, I believe, until a few weeks after she left the White House. It was in the blue room that Mrs. Cleveland was married, and here she bade good-by to her guests and took the carriage with the President to the special car on the Baltimore and Ohio road, which was secretly waiting almost half a mile from the station to take the White House bride and groom to their honeymoon cottage at Decet Park.

Wintergreen Oil. Distilling oil of wintergreen is now carried on to a small extent in northern Maine, but recent newspaper reports of its magnitude there are undoubtedly exaggerated. This bark of all the wintergreens and coming on the market is still produced in Pennsylvania, while practically all of the oil of birch, which is both chemically and essentially the same thing, is shipped from North Carolina.—New England Homestead.



WHITE HOUSE VESTIBULE, OR "CAVE OF ALADDIN."

might be called a very cave of Aladdin. Columbus has been written about the east room and the wonders of the parlors of the White House. The most beautiful part of the whole building to my mind is this great vestibule, with its frescoed ceiling, its beautiful walls covered with the coats of arms of the United States, its floor of many colored tiles, and the jewelry wall which separates it from the entrance opening into the blue room, the red room and the green rooms beyond. One of the great monarchs of India made a throne of gold, the back of which was set with jewels to represent the feathers and colors of the peacock's tail. The throne cost \$30,000,000, and it is described as having

been wonderfully beautiful. It was, however, not much larger than a chair. I visited the room where it stood during my stay in Delhi some years ago. The throne room was, I venture, not as large as this White House vestibule, and here, instead of a chair of jewels, there is a whole wall made of bits of glass and costly stone put together in the form of a magnificent mosaic. It has cost not as many thousand dollars as the peacock throne cost millions, but when the electric lights shine behind it, it is, I venture, far more beautiful. It is in this vestibule that the Marine Band, dressed in their gorgeous red uniforms, with their brazen instruments shining like so much gold, play at the President's receptions, and over this mosaic floor step the diplomats of all the Nations of the world, and in their gold lace, the gay uniformed officers of our army and navy, and the powdered and bejeweled throng which makes up what is known as Washington society.

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ARTHUR, THE WHITE HOUSE MESSENGER.

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