

A VISITOR AND HIS OPINIONS.

By Mrs. OLIPHANT.

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CHAPTER I.

He came round the corner of the cliff suddenly, no step or rattle, as of a wayfarer, betraying him before he appeared, with something indefinable in his pose, as if he had just descended from the light and a quick look around him at an unknown landscape quite new to him.

The English monocleable is. Sir—It was pronounced, sir, the manager was aware, who knew a little of all the languages of the continent. He made a lower bow than ever, backing out, bowing himself out of the room, murmuring, "Yes, sir," as he went. As for Jerningham, his soul owned a thrill of alarm to feel himself left alone with this wonderful person, king or potentate. "A gentleman of great distinction," he was told, had engaged him; a foreign gentleman, not accustomed to English ways. This is not a description which usually fills the English domestic with the grace of humility. It is difficult for him not to despise a personage, however exalted, who is ignorant of English ways. But, though there was an outlandish look about this one, for once Jerningham was really overawed. He retreated from the doorway and began to occupy himself with unpacking his new master's luggage, but after a time his curiosity overcame him, and he peeped through the chink of the door to see what he was about. And indeed nothing could be more curious than what he was about. He had taken the letter to read it, not to the light of the candles, which burned all by themselves, as though nobody wanted them, upon the table, but to the window, where he stood reading it in the dark. No, not exactly in the dark either; a soft light fell about him, showing the whiteness of the letter and the attitude of his head bent to read it—a light that seemed suffused over his figure and the very part of the carpet he stood upon and to shine in the panes of the window. The light was not from the candles, for the candles were not lit. It was from the window, where he stood reading it in the dark. No, not exactly in the dark either; a soft light fell about him, showing the whiteness of the letter and the attitude of his head bent to read it—a light that seemed suffused over his figure and the very part of the carpet he stood upon and to shine in the panes of the window. The light was not from the candles, for the candles were not lit. It was from the window, where he stood reading it in the dark.

Dazzled him so that he had almost fallen over the cliff.

He went to the great hotel, the Lord Wexley, which then did not seem to be any one here known to this great personage. He said a few words to the manager in a tone which was not German or any other which we are used to, but yet not English either—in a large, sonorous voice, which gave a thrill to the ears of the manager. The manager bowed more and more till he seemed almost doubled in two. "It is all right, sir—your highness—may I, sir," he said, instead of calling any of his men to assist him with a pair of silver candlesticks in which the candles had just been lighted for some other guest and himself went mounting backward, very uncomfably, up the stairs, showing the way. The prince, or whatever he was, said nothing, but he said, "Walk, sir, as nature intended you." These words were heard by everybody. They were not very extraordinary in the way of words, but yet they were repeated in the most curious way from one to another, as if they had been the most remarkable meaning. "I heard him say it with my own ears," various people said afterward, as if they had been made partners of some great action of wisdom. It was to the best apartment in the house that the prince came, with a spacious sitting-room, with large windows looking out upon the channel, which that night was "dirty," flustered by big waves with white tops which rose and fell, making a fine effect to those who viewed the scene from the shore. The room was dark, save for these two twinkling lights and the broad spaces of window, through which shone the last of the twilight, and the clearness of a winny sky and the glimmer and winking light of the sea. "Your highness had, I fear, a bad passage," said the manager. He paused a moment for a reply, and then added, "But the luggage and your highness' servant arrived all right."

At the same time another figure appeared in the doorway between the sitting room and a bedroom opening from it. No doubt about this individual. A well bred valet, gentlemanly gentleman, grave, respectful, point divine. He had a letter in his hand. "From Lord Hillsborough, sir," he said, at first with less awe than had been hitherto shown at the sight of the stranger, but on the second look at this majestic figure, half visible, with the light of the candles behind him, even Jerningham felt a thrill. "I was to wait your highness here," he said, faltering, as he drew back within the door.

"You will have the goodness to call me 'sir' only. I am not accustomed to titles," said the stranger, to be sure that was what it was right to say to the Prince of Wales himself. Not accustomed to titles! Was he, perhaps, then, a king in disguise? It appeared more than anything else to these two persons, accustomed to all the laws of service. Highness, though it means a great deal to other men, would not mean much to a king. To him it would mean a derogation, a sort of disrespect, though unintentional. Sir was the title for him—speaking with an "s" at the end, and not pronounced exactly as

the cliff wrapping everything in deeper darkness. It seemed to have a great fascination for him. During the course of the evening he turned to it again and again, as if with a sensation of relief, perhaps feeling that nature and even storm were more congenial than the surroundings of man. But he was not disposed to separate himself so far as would appear from the life going on around him. He looked at the clothes which Jerningham had arranged for him, spreading them out on the bed, with again a smile. "This is the dress of England?" he said, with the little accent which not unpleasantly pointed him out as not an Englishman. Jerningham by this time had recovered his self-possession. "Not of England, sir," he said, "but for the evening, as far as I've heard, the costume of all the civilized world."

"Is it so?" said the prince, with an amused look. He added, "Is it much remarked when a stranger continues to wear the dress of his own country here?" "Oh, not at all, sir," cried Jerningham, with a sort of patronage and condescension to ignorance. "There was the Indian princes at the jubilee in all colors, and blazing with jewels, as the papers said. It was peculiar, but it was approved. The ladies, they liked it," he added, perceiving that his new master, now that he saw him more closely, was still a young man. "If I might make so bold as to ask," he said, after a moment's silence, "what was your highness' name?" "I do not think," said the stranger, "that I will change my dress tonight. Do you belong to this country? Have you relations with the people here? Do you think you could act as my guide?" "My highness' name was 'ere, sir," said Jerningham, in a slightly alarmed tone. "I was in the commandant's service, and though I have no relations, yet I can find my way about. There isn't, however, as you might say, very much to see in a place like this—nothing except the castle, and—the cliffs, and—" Jerningham ended abruptly, constrained by his new master's eye.

"Some thousands of people," said the prince. "I wish to see them. Can you guide me to the place where they live? Men—and women—are what I want to see."

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Notice. NOTICE—North Carolina, Buncombe County—in the Superior Court, August term, 1898. Joseph B. Cheshire, T. W. Patton and Haywood Parker, trustees of the mission-ary jurisdiction of Asheville, vs. T. Summey and others—Notice of Summons.

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Table with columns: Numbers, Numbers, Number, (Central Time), Numbers, Numbers, Number. Lists train routes and times for various destinations like Knoxville, Memphis, etc.

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