ANTHONY HOPE

COMEDIES OF COURTSHIP

BIOGRAPHICALLY ANNOTATED

Comedies Of Courtship

Anthony Hope

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Anthony Hope – His Life And Work

By Frederick Taber Cooper

It is a sufficiently pleasant task to undertake to write a brief appreciation of Mr. Anthony Hope. The prevailing urbanity of his manner, the sustained sparkle of his wit, the agreeable expectation that he arouses of something stimulating about to happen, largely disarm criticism. Besides, he does not seem to demand to be taken too seriously; he is not a preacher or reformer, he is not trying to revolutionize the world; he is too well pleased with men and women as they actually are, to desire to make them something different. In short, he is a suave and charming public entertainer, and like all wise entertainers he alters the character of his program in accordance with the fluctuations of public taste. And being both versatile and farsighted he is usually in the van of each new movement. The God in the Car, his story of gigantic land speculations in South Africa, with the Herculean figure whom he chooses to disguise under the name of " Juggernaut," appeared in 1894, thus antedating by five years The Colossus, by Morley Roberts. Phroso, with its romantic setting among the islands of modern Greece, anticipated by a year Mr. E. F. Benson's analogous attempts, The Vintage and The Capsina. When the revival of the English historical novel was at its height, he succeeded once more in coming in ahead of his competitors, and Simon Dale, which appeared in 1898 and is a study of Restoration manners, with Nell Gwynn for its central interest, led the way for The Orange Girl by Sir Walter Besant, issued in 1899, and F. Frankfort Moore's Nell Gwynn, Comedian, which was not published until 1900.

But although he so cleverly adapts himself to the trend of public taste, Mr. Anthony Hope is not an innovator; he adapts but does not originate. Yet it is no uncommon thing to hear him erroneously praised for having created two new and widely popular types of fiction, the Zenda type and that of The Dolly Dialogues. Now, The Prisoner of Zenda, as

we remember at once when we stop to think, is not the first up-to-date sword and buckler story of an imaginary principality; it was preceded, by nearly a decade, by Stevenson's Prince Otto; and the only reason that it so often gets the credit of being the forerunner of its class is simply because it was done with a defter, lighter touch, a more spontaneous inspiration. Similarly, The Dolly Dialogues are not the first attempt to imitate in English the sparkle and the piquancy of the Gallic dialogue in the form that " Gyp " and Henri Lavedan have made familiar. Although it is quite likely that at that time Anthony Hope had never even heard of it, The Story of the Gadsbys had at least three years the start of The Dolly Dialogues, and even though it was done with a heavier hand, it succeeded in getting a greater effectiveness out of the type.

But, after all, statistics of this sort, while interesting to a person of precise and inquiring mind, have little or no bearing upon the sources of enjoyment which a surprisingly large number of people undoubtedly find in Mr. Hope's writings. And there is variety enough among them to suit all tastes. He began in a spirit of blithe and irresponsible romanticism; he has gradually come, in his later years, to look upon life in a rather matter-of-fact way and to picture, by choice, the more serious problems of life in the social world to which he belongs. Yet his novels, even the most ambitious of them, never suggest the ponderousness of a novel-with-a-purpose; he never forgets what is expected from a conscientious entertainer. And one reason why he so uniformly succeeds is that he is an exceedingly good craftsman; he has mastered the sheer mechanics of his art. It is never wise for a novelist, whatever his literary creed may be, to be wantonly scornful of technique. There are just a few erratic geniuses who, because they have in them certain big thoughts that are struggling for utterance and apparently cannot be uttered in the simple usual way,

boldly break the established rules and make new ones to suit their needs. To draw an offhand parallel, they are somewhat in the position of a man who, although untrained in public speaking, is listened to indulgently because of the importance of what he has to say. But your public entertainer enjoys no such license; and the lighter and more irresponsible his theme the more perfect must be his execution. And it is because Mr. Hope possesses that magic touch of the born story teller, that such delightful triflings as The Dolly Dialogues and The Indiscretion of the Duchess seem to linger in the memory with perennial youth, while many another weightier volume has faded out with the passage of years.

Accordingly, Mr. Hope belongs to that order of novelists about whom it is not only more enjoyable but more profitable to gossip genially than to weigh strictly in the balance. It is so easy to become garrulous over volumes that have worn well and afford many a pleasant hour of relaxation. It would be purposeless to take up serially each one of his many volumes, analyze and pigeonhole it according to its relative value. The better and the franker thing to do is to admit that there are certain volumes by Mr. Hope which gave the present writer genuine pleasure, and certain others that gave him no pleasure at all, and that those falling under the first division are the only ones which it seems worth while to discuss. In his earlier period the mere mention of Anthony Hope conjured up scenes of spirited adventure, reckless daring, gallant heroes combining the good breeding, the patrician ease, the assured manner of the better class of young Englishmen possessing the double advantage of birth and education, who, nevertheless, despite their studied reserve and immaculateness of dress, are plunged by a whim of fate into adventures of extraordinary daring and sublime audacity, adventures that would have taxed the prowess of

Dumas's Immortal Three. It is a clever formula, this trick of taking certain types of familiar everyday people straight out of prosaic actuality and compelling them, whether they will or no, to perform romantic deeds against a romantic background. This peculiar combination was certainly a happy thought. It appealed to that latent thirst for adventure which we almost all possess; it unconsciously flattered the reader with a new sense of daring, a feeling that he too, if thus suddenly and surprisingly transported into Zendaland, might similarly rise to the occasion and achieve great deeds. There is no purpose served by analyzing once again the story of The Prisoner of Zenda. It is one of those stories the artificiality of which stands out glaringly the moment one starts to lay its bones bare.

Any story which depends upon the chance resemblance of two human beings, a resemblance so close, so misleading, that even the wife of one of the two is at a loss to distinguish them, takes on, when stated briefly, apart from the glamour of the tale itself, an air of palpable falsity to life. And yet the fact remains that tens of thousands of readers have lost themselves, forgotten time and space, in their utter absorption in the dilemma of the Princess Flavia, who finds in Rudolph Rassendyl all the qualities which might have made it possible for her to love her husband, if only he had been as close a replica of Rassendyl morally as he was physically.

I do not mind admitting that personally I revert more frequently to The Dolly Dialogues than to any other volume by Mr. Hope. This is not merely because of the delicate touch and epigrammatic neatness for which they have been so universally praised. Superficially considered they are a series of encounters between a sparkling and fascinating little lady and a sedate and nimble-witted gentleman, whom it is insinuated that the Lady Dolly has jilted. Now, the real

fascination about these brilliant exchanges of repartee lies chiefly in the subtle and yet elusive implications that we are always on the point of reading between the lines, and yet never quite get in their entirety. That Mr. Carter has long been a worshiper at the shrine of Lady Dolly, that he has many a time felt a pang of regret that his fortune in life has made him ineligible, that he considers her husband not half grateful enough to Providence and that his own assumed air of sentimental resignation has in it a little touch of genuine regret, all this we get pretty clearly. And yet, we are well aware, all the time, that Mr. Carter, in spite of an occasional twinge of envy, would not change his condition if he could; that, although he may not be precisely aware of it, he is already confirmed in his bachelor habits; that he likes his freedom from responsibility, his harmless, unprofitable daily routine, his favorite corner in his favorite club, his innocent philandering with various young women, married and unmarried. He may, at times, deceive the Lady Dolly into commiserating him and blaming herself as a thoughtless coquette, but never for very long at a time. The whole thing is a sort of grown-up game of make-believe in which the players get a curious transitory, almost illogical enjoyment in feigning broken hearts and blighted lives. And yet there is just enough truth underlying it all to suggest that Mr. Hope was capable of more serious work than he had yet done. There was, for instance, everywhere a pervading suggestion of the infinite number of contradictory motives and impulses that determine every human action, and the impossibility which every man and woman must admit to themselves of deciding just how much gladness and how much regret is entailed in every least little thing that they do.

Almost without warning Mr. Hope proved that the vague promise of more serious work was well founded, by

producing what, I think, the sober judgment of posterity will recognize as his most ambitious and most enduring work, Quisante. Alexander Quisante, from whom the volume takes its name, is not an Englishman either by birth or ancestry. He comes of antecedents almost unknown beyond the fact that they are a mixture of French and Spanish. With scanty means he comes, an absolute outsider, preparing to lay siege to the political and social world of London. In every way he finds himself handicapped. The foreordained course of education through which the English ruling classes pass as a matter of course and by which their prejudices and points of view are determined, has not been his privilege. In addition to this he lacks that inborn refinement which sometimes makes up for good breeding and social experience. His taste is often exceedingly bad; his manner is alternately too subservient and too arrogant. Of the higher standards of morality he has no perception; he is the typical adventurer, unscrupulous, insincere, monumentally selfish. But, to offset all this, his intellect is quite extraordinary; his brain is an instrument marvelously under control, and he uses it at his pleasure, to bring the lesser intellects about him under his dominion. Above all, he has the gift of eloquence; and when he chooses to give full rein to his rhetorical powers, he can sway his audience at will, and thrill and sweep them with him through the whole gamut of human emotions. Of the men and women whom he meets, fully one-half are antagonized and repelled; the others give him an unquestioning, almost slavish devotion. But he has a personality which cannot leave negative results; it must breed love or hate.

The other character in the book who shares the central interest is Lady May Gaston, a woman who, by birth and training, participates in all those special privileges of rank and caste, all the traditions of her order from which

Quisante is shut out. There is another man, one in her own class, who would be glad to make her his wife. He is in all respects the sort of man whom she is expected to marry; and she is not wholly indifferent to him. But she meets Quisante, and, from the first, comes under the spell of his dominant personality. There is much in him from which she shrinks. His social ineptitude, his faculty for doing the wrong thing, or the right thing at the wrong time, makes her shudder. Although fascinated, she is not blinded. She sees his vulgarities, she questions his sincerity, she even doubts whether he is deserving of her respect. Nevertheless, the spectacular, flamboyant brilliancy of the man dominates her better judgment, and in spite of her relatives' remonstrances, in spite of warnings from a member of Quisante's own family, she marries him, unable to resist the almost hypnotic spell cast over her by this man, who is something of a charlatan and something of a cad. The greater part of the book concerns itself with the story of the married life of this curiously ill-assorted couple; of his success in the public eye; of her gradual disillusionment, which, bitter though it is in its completeness, finds her somewhat apathetic, unable to feel the resentment that she knows she ought, unable to acknowledge that she regrets her choice. This, indeed, is the most interesting aspect of the book, the domination, mentally and morally, of a woman of rare sensitiveness and infinite possibilities by a man with whom companionship inevitably means deterioration.

The next of Mr. Anthony Hope's volumes, which personally appealed to the present writer, is entitled A Servant of the Public, and is enjoyable chiefly because of the tantalizing witchery of its heroine. Ora Pinsent is a young actress, who has taken London by storm. She has a husband somewhere, it is said, " whose name does not matter "; indeed, it matters so little that it does not prevent her from letting

Ashley Mead make ardent love to her, one Sunday afternoon, though all the while she " preserves wonderfully the air of not being responsible for the thing, of neither accepting nor rejecting, of being quite passive, of having it just happen to her." Thus with a single pen stroke Mr. Hope has set the woman unmistakably before us. Throughout the book she practices the art of having things just happen to her, the art of dodging responsibility. With Ashley she drifts, dangerously one thinks, at first, until one sees how easily she checks his ardor when she chooses, with a nervous laugh, and a low whispered " Don't, don't make love to me any more now." She talks much solemn nonsense about her duty to the husband whose name does not matter, and about her intention to renounce Ashley, although one realizes that there is really nothing to renounce, nor ever will be. And when the time comes for her company to leave London and start on their American tour, here also she plays the passive role, neither accepting nor rejecting. It is only when the weary months of her absence are over and she comes back as the wife of her leading man, that Ashley begins to see her as she really is; only then that he feels her power over him has ceased; only then that he can say, " I no longer love her, but I wish to God I did! " It is not easy to convey an impression of a woman's charm, when it lies not in what she says, but in the way she says it; not in what she does, but in the way she does it. But this is precisely what Anthony Hope has done triumphantly in his portraiture of Ora Pinsent, Ora, with her upturned face, with its habitual expression of expecting to be kissed, is one of the heroines in contemporary fiction that will not easily be forgotten.

Helena's Path deserves something more than a passing word of commendation, for it is an excellent example of Mr. Hope's deftness in doing a very slight thing extremely well. It has an outward framework of actuality, the atmosphere

of present day English country life; yet into this he has infused a certain spirit of old-time chivalry and homage that gives to his whole picture something of the grace and charm of a Watteau landscape. The whole theme of the volume, which is scarcely more than a novelette, concerns itself with a right of way. The hero's estates lie somewhere on the east coast of England; but between his land and the strip of beach where he and his fathers before him have for generations been in the habit of bathing lies the property which the heroine has recently purchased; and, unaware of any right of way, she closes up the gate through which it is his habit to pass for his daily swim. He writes courteously but firmly, insisting on his right. She answers in the same spirit, emphatically denying it. He refuses to be robbed of his legal rights, even by a pretty woman; she refuses to yield, at a command, what she would have graciously granted to a prayer. As neither side chooses to adopt legal measures, a state of mimic war ensues, in which he continues to invade the enemy's territory, while she continues to barricade and entrench. And all the while, although they have not once met face to face, each is quietly falling in love with the other, so that when finally honorable terms of peace are concluded, it is already a foregone conclusion that the whole dainty little comedy will end with oaths of fealty and bestowal of favors worthy of a knight and a lady of the olden times.

With the passage of years, however, the author of The Dotty Dialogues has tended to give us fewer and fewer of these dainty trifles and more and more of his serious and careful social studies. In this class belongs The Great Miss Driver, and there is no exaggeration in saying that since the publication of Quisante it is easily the biggest, best-rounded, and altogether worthiest book he has written. And yet, the first thing you are apt to think of is that the germ idea of the story goes straight back to The Dolly Dialogues;

that in a superficial way, yes, and perhaps in a deeper way, too, there is a certain rather absurd similarity between them; just as though the author, having once made a pleasant little comedy out of a certain situation, had ever since been turning over in his mind the possibility of using it in a bigger and more serious way, until eventually he evolved the present volume. Not that Jennie Driver, heiress to Breysgate Priory, bears any close resemblance to Lady Mickleham beyond the very feminine desire for conquest, any more than the Mr. Austin of the one story is a close relative of Mr. Carter in the other. The resemblance lies in this, that both stories are told in the first person by the man who in his secret heart loves the woman of whom he writes, but knows that because he is poor, because he has the natural instinct of an old bachelor, because, also, she has given her heart elsewhere, he must remain content to look upon her joys and sorrows in the capacity of a friend, and not that of a lover. To this extent The Great Miss Driver may be defined as The Dolly Dialogues rendered in a different tempo.

Yet, such a definition gives no hint of the strength, the variety, the vital interest of this story. In the character of Jennie Driver Mr. Hope has given us a woman whose ruling passion is to hold sway, to fascinate and bend to her will every one who comes within her sphere. And because of this desire she can never bear to lose the allegiance of any man, no matter how mean and unworthy he has proved himself; and herein lies the source of her life's tragedy. She is not content to be merely the richest woman in the county, to play the part of Lady Bountiful, and build memorials and endow institutions with fabulous sums; she wants also to be a social leader with undisputed right to take precedence over all the other ladies of the community, and this she could do if she married Lord Fillingford, whom she respects, and who badly needs her fortune; but not if

she should marry Leonard Octon, big, brusque, rather brutal, who is cut by the whole county, and whom she happens to love. It is a rather unique situation in fiction for a woman to be forced into publicly slighting the one man on earth that she cares for; still more unique for a woman who is pledged to marry one man to be secretly meeting the other man, and thus atoning for deliberately cutting him whenever they meet in public. And, surely, it was a rather audacious thing for Mr. Hope to attempt to make us feel that in spite of her double-dealing Jennie Driver is a rather big and fine and splendid sort of woman; that she would have kept faith with Fillingford had he been big enough to trust her when appearances were heavily against her; and that in defying convention and scandalizing the little world she lives in by fleeing with Octon to Paris, she is doing the one big, brave, inevitable act. Yet, that is precisely what the author does succeed in making us feel; and when because Fate intervenes and wrecks the last chance of Jennie's happiness through the death of Octon, we not only sympathize with her bitterness toward the narrow-minded social circle that had forced her lover into exile, but we also glory with her in the big, carefully planned and altogether adequate revenge by which she forces the county to pay tardy homage to the name of Octon.

Notwithstanding the statement made at the beginning of this chapter, to the effect that Mr. Anthony Hope does not write problem novels, the volume entitled Mrs. Maxon Protests comes critically near the border-line. Mrs. Maxon is simply one more young woman who has discovered marriage to be something vastly different from what she had imagined; and her difficulty is of the variety which she regards as almost humiliatingly commonplace namely, incompatibility. Her husband happens to be one of those narrow, self-satisfied, dictatorial men, with old-fashioned

ideas about women in general and a rooted conviction that a man has a high moral responsibility for his wife's conduct and must mould her in all fashions to his own way of thinking. Mrs. Maxon bears the strain for five years; then she consults a lawyer. She learns that while she cannot get a divorce in England, she can leave her husband and he cannot force her to come back. At the time of their separation, or to be more accurate, her desertion of him for Maxon refuses to take the matter seriously there is no other man in her life; but in the weeks that follow during which she stays at the country home of some friends with lax ideas of life and a houseful of curious and often irregular people, she suddenly surprises herself by falling in love with a certain Godfrey Ledstone and promptly scandalizes society by eloping with him openly and unashamed. The rest of the book traces, with a clear-sightedness that Mr. Hope has not always shown in his books, the subsequent career of a woman who thinks that by the force of her own example she can bring the whole world over to her way of thinking. He does not spare us any of her disillusions, her humiliations, her heartache and loneliness. But through it all she is learning, strangely and cruelly learning, much that is exceedingly good for her. She is learning, for instance, that charity and sympathy and understanding are often found where least expected. She is learning, too, that there are many other standards in this world as well as her own and that they are just as reasonable and perhaps nobler. She learns that one of the best men she has ever had the good fortune to meet, loving her, pitying her, utterly disapproving of her, would nevertheless have made her his wife in spite of the scandal that had preceded and followed her divorce but for one reason: he is an army officer, and a woman with a taint upon her name would lower the social tone of his regiment and be in some degree a menace to the moral tone of the younger set. It is a temptation to analyze at some length

the separate episodes of this rather unusual book throughout the years while Mrs. Maxon is slowly finding her way out of the quagmire of her own making into a belated peace and happiness. Yet, after all, what the book stands for is so admirably summed up in the concluding paragraph that one cannot do it a greater service than to close with one brief quotation. It is a satisfaction to find a book written upon this theme which, while recognizing that there is much to be said on both sides, shows neither vindictiveness toward the woman nor a misplaced championship that would exalt her into a martyr.

In the small circle of those with whom she had shared the issues of destiny she had unsettled much; of a certainty she had settled nothing. Things were just as much in solution as ever; the welter was not abated. Man being imperfect, laws must be made. Man being imperfect, laws must be broken or ever new laws will be made. Winnie Maxon had broken a law and asked a question. When thousands do the like, the Giant, after giving the first comers a box on the ear, may at last put his hand to his own and ponderously consider.

Such are the volumes chosen as a matter of personal preference, out of the generous series that Mr. Hope has so industriously turned out, during a score of years. Another reader's choice might be different, and who shall say whether it would not be as well justified? Because, the first duty of a public entertainer is to entertain; and, taking this for a criterion, the most that any one can say of his own knowledge is, such-and-such volumes have entertained me. It is obvious that Mr. Hope's own preference is for his more serious work, that with the passage of years he has grown more willing to allow the books of his romantic period to fade from sight. Yet, by doing this, he challenges a harder competition, a stricter measurement against a host of

rivals. There has been no one to give us a second Prisoner of Zenda, excepting Mr. Hope himself, notwithstanding that many another writer has tried his best. But it would be easy to name a dozen contemporary novelists who could give us the annals of another Servant of the People, or chronicle some further Intrusions of Peggy, and one or two who, perhaps, could do it better. Mr. Hope is not one of the great novelists of his generation; but he is never mediocre, and even in his uninspired moments never dull. His Prisoner of Zenda and his Dolly Dialogues were both gems of the first water; his Quisante certainly suffers nothing by comparison with George Gissing's Charlatan, separated from it by barely a year. As a chronicler of English manners he is certainly of rather more importance than Mr. E. F. Benson or Mr. Maarten Maartens, although not in the same class with Galsworthy, Bennett, or W. H. Maxwell. He will be remembered, I think, somewhat as William Black and Marion Crawford are remembered, as having preserved a wholesome optimism, an unshaken belief in human nature, and as having done his part to keep the tone of the modern novel clean and wholesome.

The Wheel Of Love

Chapter I

The Virtuous Hypocrites

AT first sight they had as little reason for being unhappy as it is possible to have in a world half full of sorrow. They were young and healthy; half a dozen times they had each

declared the other more than common good-looking; they both had, and never knew what it was not to have, money enough for comfort and, in addition that divine little superfluity wherefrom joys are born. The house was good to look at and good to live in; there were horses to ride, the river to go a-rowing on, and a big box from Mudie's every week. No one worried them; Miss Bussey was generally visiting the poor; or, as was the case at this moment, asleep in her arm-chair, with Paul, the terrier, in his basket beside her, and the cat on her lap. Lastly, they were plighted lovers, and John was staying with Miss Bussey for the express purpose of delighting and being delighted by his fiancée, Mary Travers. For these and all their mercies certainly they should have been truly thankful.

However the heart of man is wicked. This fact alone can explain why Mary sat sadly in the drawing-room, feeling a letter that was tucked inside her waistband and John strode moodily up and down the gravel walk, a cigar, badly bitten, between his teeth, and his hand over and again covertly stealing toward his breast-pocket and pressing a scented note that lay there. In the course of every turn John would pass the window of the drawing-room; then Mary would look up with a smile and blow him a kiss, and he nodded and laughed and returned the salute. But, the window passed, both sighed deeply and returned to lingering those hidden missives.

"Poor little girl! I must keep it up," said John.

"Dear good John! He must never know," thought Mary.

And the two fell to thinking just what was remarked a few lines back, namely, that the human heart is very wicked; they were shocked at themselves; the young often are.

Miss Bussey awoke, sat up, evicted the cat, and found her spectacles.

"Where are those children?" said she. "Billing and cooing somewhere, I suppose. Bless me, why don't they get tired of it?"

They had—not indeed of billing and cooing in general, for no one at their age does or ought to get tired of that—but of billing and cooing with one another.

It will be observed that the situation promised well for a tragedy.
Nevertheless this is not the story of an unhappy marriage.

If there be one thing which Government should forbid, it is a secret engagement. Engagements should be advertised as marriages are; but unless we happen to be persons of social importance, or considerable notoriety, no such precautions are taken. Of course there are engagement rings; but a man never knows one when he sees it on a lady's hand—it would indeed be impertinent to look too closely—and when he goes out alone he generally puts his in his pocket, considering that the evening will thus be rendered more enjoyable. The Ashforth—Travers engagement was not a secret now, but it had been, and had been too long. Hence, when Mary went to Scotland and met Charlie Ellerton, and when John went to Switzerland and met Dora Bellairs-the truth is, they ought never to have separated, and Miss Bussey (who was one of the people in the secret) had been quite right when she remarked that it seemed a curious arrangement. John and Mary had scoffed at the idea of a few weeks' absence having any effect on their feelings except, if indeed it were possible, that of intensifying them.

"I really think I ought to go and find them," said Miss Bussey. "Come,
Paul!"

She took a parasol, for the April sun was bright, and went into the garden. "When she came to the drawing-room window John was away at the end of the walk. She looked at him: he was reading a letter. She looked in at the window: Mary was reading a letter.

"Well!" exclaimed Miss Bussey. "Have they had a tiff?" And she slowly waddled (truth imposes this word-she was very stout) toward the unconscious John. He advanced toward her still reading; not only did he not see her, but he failed to notice that Paul had got under his feet. He fell over Paul, and as he stumbled the letter fluttered out of his hand. Paul seized it and began to toss it about in great glee.

"Good doggie!" Cried Miss Bussey. "Come then! Bring it to me, dear.
Good Paul!"

John's face was distorted with agony. He darted toward Paul, fell on him, and gripped him closely. Paul yelped and Miss Bussey observed, in an indignant tone, that John need not throttle the dog. John muttered something.

"Is the letter so very precious?" asked his hostess ironically.

"Precious!" cried John. "Yes!—No!—It's nothing at all."

But he opened Paul's mouth and took out his treasure with wonderful care.

"And why," inquired Miss Bussey, "are you not with Mary, young man?

You're very neglectful."

"Neglectful! Surely, Miss Bussey, you haven't noticed anything—like neglect? Don't say——"

"Bless the boy! I was only joking. You're a model lover."

"Thank you, thank you. I'll go to her at once," and he sped towards the window, opened it and walked up to Mary. Miss Bussey followed him and arrived just in time to see the lovers locked in one another's arms, their faces expressing all appropriate rapture.

"There's nothing much wrong," said Miss Bussey; wherein Miss Bussey herself was much wrong.

"What a shame! I've left you alone for more than an hour!" said John. "Have you been very unhappy?" and he added, "darling." It sounded like an afterthought.

"I have been rather unhappy," answered Mary, and her answer was true. As she said it she tucked in a projecting edge of her letter. John had hurriedly slipped his (it was rather the worse for its mauling) into his trousers-pocket.

"You—you didn't think me neglectful?"

"Oh, no."

"I was thinking of you all the time,"

"And I was thinking of you, dear."

"Are you very happy?"

"Yes, John; aren't you?"

"Of course I am. Happy! I should think so," and he kissed her with unimpeachable fervor.

When a conscientious person makes up his mind that he ought, for good reasons, to deceive somebody, there is no one like him for thorough-paced hypocrisy. When two conscientious people resolve; to deceive one another, on grounds of duty, the acme of duplicity is in a fair way to be reached. John Ashforth and Mary Travers illustrated this proposition. The former had been all his life a good son, and was now a trustworthy partner, to his father, who justly relied no less on his character than on his brains. The latter, since her parents' early death had left her to her aunt's care, had been the comfort and prop of Miss Bussey's life. It is difficult to describe good people without making them seem dull; but luckily nature is defter than novelists, and it is quite possible to be good without being dull. Neither Mary nor John was dull; a trifle limited, perhaps, they were, a thought severe in their judgments of others as well as of themselves; a little exacting with their friends and more than a little with themselves. One description paints them both; doubtless their harmony of mind had contributed more than Mary's sweet expression and finely cut features, or John's upstanding six feet, and honest capable face, to produce that attachment between them which had, six months before this story begins, culminated in their engagement. Once arrived at, this ending seemed to have been inevitable. Everybody discovered that they had foretold it from the first, and modestly disclaimed any credit for anticipating a union between a couple so obviously made for one another.

The distress into which lovers such as these fell when they discovered by personal experience that sincerely to vow eternal love is one thing, and sincerely to give it quite

another, may be well imagined, and may well be left to be imagined. They both went through a terrible period of temptation, wherein they listened longingly to the seductive pleading of their hearts; but both emerged triumphant, resolved to stifle their mad fancy, to prefer good faith to mere inclination, and to avoid, at all costs, wounding one to whom they had sworn to be true. Thus far their steadfastness carried them, but not beyond. They could part from their loved ones, and they did; but they could not leave them without a word. Each wrote, after leaving Scotland and Switzerland respectively, a few lines of adieu, confessing the love they felt, but with resolute sadness saying farewell forever. They belonged to another.

It was the answers that Mary and John were reading when Miss Bussey discovered them.

Mary's ran:

"MY DEAR MISS TRAVERS: I have received your letter. I can't tell you what it means to me. You say all must be over between us. Don't be offended—but I won't say that yet. It can't be your duty to marry a man you don't love. You forbid me to write or come to you; and you ask only for a word of good-by. I won't say good-by. I'll say *Au revoir—au revoir*, my darling."

"Charlie."

"Burn this."

This was John's:

"MY DEAR MR. ASHFORTH: What am I to say to you? Oh, why, why didn't you tell me before? I oughtn't to say that, but it is too late to conceal anything from you. Yes, you are

right. It must be good-by. Yes, I will try to forget you. But oh, John, it's very, very, very difficult. I don't know how to sign this—so I won't. You'll know who it comes from, won't you? Good-by. Burn this."

These letters, no doubt, make it plain that there had been at least a momentary weakness both in Mary and in John; but in a true and charitable view their conduct in rising superior to temptation finally was all the more remarkable and praiseworthy. They had indeed, for the time, been carried away. Even now Mary found it hard not to make allowances for herself, little as she was prone to weakness when she thought of the impetuous *abandon* and conquering whirl with which Charlie Ellerton had wooed her; and John confessed that flight alone, a hasty flight from Interlaken after a certain evening spent in gazing at the Jungfrau, had saved him from casting everything to the winds and yielding to the slavery of Dora Bellairs's sunny smiles and charming coquetries. He had always thought that that sort of girl had no attractions for him, just as Mary had despised 'butterfly-men' like Charlie Ellerton. Well, they were wrong. The only comfort was that shallow natures felt these sorrows less; it would have broken Mary's heart (thought John), or John's (thought Mary), but Dora and Charlie would soon find consolation in another. But here, oddly enough, John generally swore heartily and Mary always began to search for her handkerchief. "They're as affectionate as one could wish when they're together," mused Miss Bussey, as she stroked the cat, "but at other times they're gloomy company. I suppose they can't be happy apart. Dear! dear!" and the good old lady fell to wondering whether she had ever been so foolish herself.

Chapter II

Sympathy In Sorrow

"Give me," observed Sir Roger Deane, "Cannes, a fine day, a good set to look at, a beehive chair, a good cigar, a cocktail on one side and a nice girl on the other, and there I am! I don't want anything else."

General Bellairs pulled his white mustache and examined Sir Roger's figure and surroundings with a smile.

"Then only Lady Deane is wanting to your complete happiness," said he.

"Maud is certainly a nice girl, but when she deserts me ——"

"Where is she?"

"I don't know."

"I do," interposed a young man, who wore an eye—glass and was in charge of a large jug. "She's gone to Monte."

"I might have known," said Sir Roger. "Being missed here always means you've gone to Monte—like not being at church means you've gone to Brighton."

"Surely she doesn't play?" asked the General.

"Not she! She's going to put it in a book. She writes books you know.
She put me in the last—made me a dashed fool, too, by Jove!"

"That was unkind," said the General, "from your wife."

"Oh, Lord love you, she didn't mean it. I was the hero. That's how I came to be such an ass. The dear girl meant everything that was kind. Who's taken her to Monte?"

"Charlie Ellerton," said the young man with the eye-glass.

"There! I told you she was a kind girl. She's trying to pull old
Charlie up a peg or two. He's had the deuce of a facer, you know."

"I thought he seemed less cheerful than usual."

"Oh, rather. He met a girl somewhere or other—I always forget places—Miss—Miss—hang it, I can't remember names—and got awfully smitten, and everything went pleasantly and she took to him like anything—, and at last old Charlie spoke up like a man, and——" Sir Roger paused dramatically.

"Well?" asked the General.

"She was engaged to another fellow. Rough, wasn't it? She told old
Charlie she liked him infernally, but promises were promises, don't you
know, and she'd thank him to take his hook. And he had to take it, by
Gad! Rough, don't you know? So Maud's been cheering him up. The devil!"

"What's the matter now?" inquired the General.

"Why, I've just remembered that I promised to say nothing about it. I say, don't you repeat it, General, nor you either, Laing."

The General laughed.

"Well," said Sir Roger, "he oughtn't to have been such a fool as to tell me. He knows I never remember to keep things dark. It's not my fault."

A girl came out of the hotel and strolled up to where the group was. She was dark, slight, and rather below middle height; her complexion at this moment was a trifle sallow and her eyes listless, but it seemed rather as though she had dressed her face into a tragic cast, the set of the features being naturally mirthful. She acknowledged the men's salutations and sat down with a sigh.

"Not on to-day?" asked Sir Roger, waving his cigar toward the lawn-tennis courts.

"No," said Miss Bellairs.

"Are you seedy, Dolly?" inquired the General.

"No," said Miss Bellairs.

Mr. Laing fixed his eye-glass and surveyed the young lady.

"Are you taking any?" said he, indicating the jug.

"I don't see any fun in vulgarity," observed Miss Bellairs.

The General smiled. Sir Roger's lips assumed the shape for a whistle.

"That's a nasty one for me," said Laing.

"Ah, here you are, Roger," exclaimed a fresh clear voice from behind the chairs. "I've been looking for you everywhere. We've seen everything—Mr. Ellerton was most kind—and I do so want to tell you my impressions."

The new-comer was Lady Deane, a tall young woman, plainly dressed in a serviceable cloth walking-gown. By her side stood Charlie Ellerton in a flannel suit of pronounced striping; he wore a little yellow mustache, had blue eyes and curly hair, and his face was tanned a wholesome ruddy-brown. He looked very melancholy.

"Letters from Hell," murmured Sir Roger.

"But I was so distressed," continued his wife. "Mr. Ellerton would gamble, and he lost ever so much money."

"A fellow must amuse himself," remarked Charlie gloomily, and with apparent unconsciousness he took a glass from Laing and drained it.

"Gambling and drink—what does that mean?" asked Sir Roger.

"Shut up, Deane," said Charlie.

Miss Bellairs rose suddenly and walked away. Her movement expressed impatience with her surroundings. After a moment Charlie Ellerton slowly sauntered after her. She sat down on a garden-seat some way off. Charlie placed himself at the opposite end. A long pause ensued.

"I'm afraid I'm precious poor company," said Charlie.

"I didn't want you to be company at all," answered Miss Bellairs, and she sloped her parasol until it obstructed his view of her face.

"I'm awfully sorry, but I can't stand the sort of rot Deane and Laing are talking."

"Can't you? Neither can I."

"They never seem to be serious about anything, you know," and Charlie sighed deeply, and for three minutes there was silence.

"Do you know Scotland at all?" asked Charlie at last.

"Only a little."

"There last year?"

"No, I was in Switzerland."

"Oh."

"Do you know Interlaken?"

"No."

"Oh."

"May I have a cigarette?"

"Of course, if you like."

Charlie lit his cigarette and smoked silently for a minute or two.