

HER SISTER'S HONOR.

A Tale of English Life.

By Walter Besant.

CHAPTER I.

On a fine Saturday evening in July there are never many readers in the Free Library. The old men who come in winter, because the place is warm and light and quiet, are now walking up and down the pavement, where the sunshine warms them through and through, and chase away their rheumatic pains. The younger men are all afloat, playing cricket, boating, cycling, rambling, foot-thumping, or doing nothing but the delights of fresh air, and rejoicing in their youth. What have the young to do with a dusty, dingy library on a summer evening? A library is a cemetery. Books are mostly the tombs of dead men's brains. Young folk are much better occupied with reading each other's thoughts than with walking among the tombs. So that the library is almost empty.

It was about seven o'clock. At the window into which the sun would have poured its wealth of heat and light—which it gives to the tombs of the dead as well as to the fields and flowers of the living—a brown blind was hauled down, leaving a long, narrow line. The sun, pertinacious in its attempt to reach everything, took advantage of the line to make a thin plate of lamina of bright sunshine, across which the merry notes danced with their usual cheerfulness. There was a smell of leather bindings; the tables were covered with magazines and papers; a few readers sat at the tables. But it is not knowledge that is not greatly advanced. One or two of them kept one or two looked as if their thoughts were elsewhere—with the brook babbling over the shallows, with the village crows gathered under the lean-to beside the ale-house. One of them, gaunt, bearded, hungry, sat with an illustrated paper before him. But he never turned over a leaf, and he looked not at the pictures. The librarian watched that man suspiciously. He did not like the look in that man's eyes. It meant rebellion; it meant a wicked spirit of discontent with the social order which left him staring while it made his neighbor fat, and refused him work while it suffered his neighbor to live in comfort on the work of other men. Only a year or two ago—or it might be ten, because to one who is a librarian years have no significance in connection with numbers—a man had come into the place with just such a look in his eyes. That man asked for a book, sat down, and proceeded to tear away his bindings and to wrench its sheets asunder. Then he gave himself up to the librarian with the greatest gentleness and politeness, explaining that liberty without a crust was really a mockery, and that in the future he meant to be maintained by his country, and that when he had served his time for the destruction of the book, he meant to smash a lamp, and that atoned for, to steal a stretcher from a police station, and so on, getting perhaps longer sentences, until he should be called to his reward. They walked off together to the nearest police station like two old friends, and parted with a hearty grasp after the sergeant had noted the case.

Another man there was whom the librarian regarded with eyes of compassion. He dragged himself slowly and wearily up the stairs, threw himself upon a seat next the wall, and therefore provided with a back, took up a paper, sighed, and instantly fell fast asleep. This sort the librarian knew very well—he was the clerk out of work.



THE LIBRARIAN SAT IN HIS CORNER.

He fell asleep because he was exhausted with want of food, and with climbing the stairs in the city seeking for work. The librarian wondered how much longer the weary quest would continue. The man was clearly well on the downward slope; his next place would be lower; his next lower still. With adversity arrives too often moral weakening—it is one of the countless ills which follow in misfortune's train; perhaps this poor wretch would take to drink—many of them do; in the end, a clean bed in the London Hospital, with pneumonia drawing him swiftly to an ignominious grave.

The librarian sat in his corner, a pigeon-hole, but not against the wall at his side, a great book before him—no librarian is complete without a great book before him—and the usual materials for cataloguing on his desk, because to carry on the catalogue is as necessary a part of the daily work as to open the day's letters or for a secretary. He was a man of 60, or perhaps more, his beard white, and his gray hair scanty on the top. He wore spectacles, and his face showed the clear, unlined surface of one who has never been concerned with markets, prices, or the state of trade. He lived all day in the library, and in the evening he walked home to his solitary lodging, two miles away.

He classified them all. There are first the unemployed, the most numerous patrons of the free library. The librarian gets to know the trade of every man, if he belongs to one of the commoner branches of work, by his appearance. There are the quiet men who use the library in the evening, when their mates are in the public-house drinking, or at the club wrangling or perhaps gambling. They come here not to pursue a line of study, but to amuse themselves in peace. Then in any library there are one or two habitués of the day time. Mostly they are retired tradesmen, or old pensioners, who continue to live in the locality where they have friends. There is the young fellow who comes regularly to consult all the papers on sporting matters. He collects the prophetic tips, and notes the odds in a book; he would fain be a sharp, but he too often remains a Juggins. There is the boy who comes here whenever he can get the chance to sit in a corner and dream away the time deliciously over a story. There is the poor country lad who has more knowledge in his little finger than a London artisan in his whole body, who understands how to plow and sow and reap, and stack and thrash; who can cultivate an allotment; who knows sheep and beasts, and pigs and horses; who can foretell the weather. Yet he has thrown it all over and come up to London, where he has nothing but his pair of hands and his strong arms, and his great knowledge avails him nothing. 'Tis as if you turned a professor of mathematics into a draper's shop, where they would use him for nothing but to sweep the floor and carry out the parcels. He rolls into the library accidentally, and not liking the place or the smell (which is not in the least like the smell of the earth), he goes out again.

The librarian knows them all. He watches in the silent-rooms as the clock over his head ticks loudly, and makes up their little stories for them. Sometimes they whisper a little with him. He is a sympathetic creature, and they will confide in him, asking for his advice. They do not seek it in the search for a book to read, but in search for work. And sometimes he knows, or has heard things, which may help them. Other librarians, you see, get a vast and intimate acquaintance with books. This librarian is more useful to his readers if he knows the contents of the trade journals.

Sometimes, however, as in the case of Naomi Hellyer, he was altogether at sea. Naomi first appeared on this Saturday evening. She came in timidly, and looked about her with hesitation. There was no other woman in the place. Perhaps women were not admitted. Then the librarian stepped out of his corner and invited her to take a seat and ask for anything she might want.

He saw a woman of thirty dressed in the black stuff frock of a workwoman, with a cloth jacket, though it was so warm an evening. Her dress was perfectly neat and well-fitting; her gloves were worn; she had the appearance of resolute respectability doubled with small pay. Her face was thin and pale, and her features delicate. She was not beautiful, but she looked steady and self-reliant, what is called responsible. The librarian noticed these things; he also noticed, for he was an observant creature, as well as sympathetic, that there was trouble in the face—abiding trouble.

When she took off her work glove the librarian saw upon her forefinger the usual sign of needlework, which a woman can no more disguise than a mulatto can disguise the black streaks below his finger-nails. She took a place at one of the tables, and began to turn over the leaves of an illustrated paper, but languidly, as if she took no interest in what she read. The librarian, watching her from his corner, observed that she presently put down the paper and began to walk about, reading the titles on the books on the shelves as if she was in search of something.

Being a conscientious librarian as well as observant and sympathetic, he left his place in the corner and asked her if there were any work which she wished to read. She shook her head. There was nothing, she said. The librarian observed that she had an extremely sweet voice. He also observed that she went looking at the titles as if she really did want something.

The librarian was expounded as well as conscientious, observant, and sympathetic. He discovered that there was something behind this restless curiosity.

"I think you are looking for some book," he said. "If you will tell me what it is—"

"Have you got," she asked, coloring deeply, "any book that tells about—"

She hesitated.

"About women?"—here she looked about to make sure that nobody else could hear, and her voice dropped to a whisper—"about women in prison, how they are treated, and how they live?"

"We have a book called 'Five Years of Penal Servitude,'" he replied, "but that is about male convicts, not women."

"May I see that?"

He found and gave her the volume.

When the library closed she brought him back the book, and went away. But her eyes were red. She had been crying.

During the week the librarian found himself thinking a good deal about this woman. She looked refined and delicate, perhaps above the position she now held, which seemed to be poorly paid, judging from her dress. By her language and her manner she showed herself what is called ladylike or what ladies prefer to call rather a superior

person. He could not remember whether she wore a wedding ring. He hoped that she would come again.

On Saturday evening she did come again. The librarian greeted her with the smile reserved for habitual readers. "Let me find you another book," he said. "Please let me have the same"—as if the librarian should remember every book taken up by every reader. But he did remember her book and gave it to her.

She finished the book that evening. But long after she closed the volume she sat with it in her hand, thinking. She was in a corner where there were no other readers. But the librarian could see her. And from time to time the tears rose to her eyes and ran down her cheeks. He wondered what was meant by this grief, what miserable story lay behind.

She was the last to leave the library. The other readers had all gone, half an hour before the time for closing, but she sat there motionless, thinking, crying silently, and the librarian made pretence not to see her.

When the clock struck ten he locked the room and went out, a few minutes after her. His mind was quite full of her distress, as he walked along the streets, now growing cool in the July twilight.

Presently he saw before him, going the same way, his reader. He overtook her and ventured to speak.

"We are going the same way?" he asked.

"I am going to—"

"It is the same way," he replied; "may I walk with you? I am the librarian, you know."

She hesitated a little. But an official such as a librarian is not a perfect stranger. Besides, he was old and looked harmless, and his voice and manner were friendly. "If you please, she said presently.

They walked together in silence, side by side.

Presently the librarian began to ask a few leading questions, and learned that his new friend was a workwoman at a dressmaker's in the neighborhood. It is not a fashionable quarter, and the pay given to the most superior person is but meager—still it was enough, and the work was regular.

"I do not belong to the place," she said, "I come from the country. I have no friends, and am fortunate in getting any work at all."

"You must come a great deal to the library," he replied. "There you can be quiet and have the companionship of books, if you care for them. But you must not always read sad books—"

"I have no heart," she said, "for anything but sad books. This is my street. Good-night."

A week later she came again. Always on a Saturday evening. The reason was that she worked extra time in order to get a little more money on other evenings.

"I have found you a book about female convicts," the librarian told her. "It is twenty years old, but I suppose things are not changed much."

"Oh, give it to me—thank you!"

She snatched it from him and sought her corner, where she sat, her head on her hand, reading the book all the evening.

They walked home together again.

"You are in great trouble," said the librarian. "If it will be any help to you, tell me what it is. A good many people tell me their troubles. Sometimes I help only to talk about things. Have you no friends?"

"No. I have lost all my old friends, and I cannot make new ones. Oh! if I could tell you—"

"You may tell me, if you will trust me."

"You will not give me any more books if I do."

"Surely—surely—"

"Well then—the reason why I want to read about—about—you know—oh! I must speak to someone—the reason why—it is because my sister is in prison—oh! my sister—oh! my poor, poor sister! She is in prison."

CHAPTER II.

Outside the old wall, a little of which still stands, runs, winding slowly through the meadows, the river on whose banks the ancient northern town is built. It is broad enough for boats, and on summer evenings a few come out, but not many, because it is a sleepy old town, and all the young men who have any go in to them seek their fortunes elsewhere when they come to the rowing age. For half a mile or so below the town a broad walk has been constructed, having the river on one side and a row of trees on the other. Seats are planted here and there. It is the weather and the townspeople, and when the weather and season allow, the place is crowded and animated with the girls in their happy town who go up and down in pairs laughing and prattling as merrily as if they were not destined by the rigor of fate to single blessedness, because there are so many of them. I have always thought that this special application of the old law about the sins of the fathers must be very hard for a girl to accept with resignation. "You suffer," says the law, "because there are too many of you, I am very sorry, but it is the sin of the father—why were you born?" Why, indeed?

In the summer the lilies lie upon the water; the river sparkles and dances



"TELL ME ALL," HE SAID.

in the night and sunshine; there are swans and ducks; under the branches depart millions of midges; there is a soft warm smell in the air, partly from the river and partly from the low meadows on the other side; the fields are full of buttercups; from the tower of the cathedral float the melodious notes of a curlew; the river is lazy, and flows slowly, lingering beside its banks; now and then a water-rat plunges on the opposite side as a fish leaps out of the water; the cows sit watching the sky and the sunset; the swallows and swifts are the only really active things; it is a pleasant, peaceful place to which the crowd of girls leads an illusive show of youth. I say illusive because youth ought not to be all of one sex, and when there are not male and female in equal proportion, youth loses its brightness.

When the evenings are cold and dark the place is deserted. No one walks there after sunset. This was the reason why a certain couple chose the place on one evening in October. It was a little after seven; the night had fallen upon a gloomy day. A fresh breeze blew up the river, tearing the leaves off the trees, whirling them about in the air and making drifting heaps of them; the branches overhead creaked; the meadows were dark; the river was black; drops of rain fell upon the faces of the pair who walked side by side, the young man's arm around the girl's waist.

"Tell me all," he said. "Let me know the worst, and then we can face it. My darling, is there anything that we cannot face together—hand-in-hand?"

"Oh!" she murmured. "It puts new strength in me—to hear you speak and to feel your presence. Naomi is anxious and troubles herself about the future, morning, noon and night. Harry, will it make no difference to you?"

"My darling, how would anything make a difference to me? Do I not love you once for all—for all this world and all the next?"

He bent over her—he was a tall and gallant young fellow—and she raised her face to meet his lips.

"He fell down," she went on, "while John was putting up the shutters. He was standing at his desk, and he fell down on his face. He never spoke again or knew anybody or felt anything. And next morning about noon he died."

"He died," echoed the lover. "Poor dear Ruth! You told me of this in your letter. It was a terrible blow to you."

"I wrote to you about it. But I said nothing of what was discovered afterward."

"What was discovered?"

"We always thought he was so well off. Everybody thought so. There was never any want of money. When he died the people said we must remember how well off we should be left, and that ought to console us."

"Well, dear?"

"There is nothing. The business had been failing off for years. There is not enough now to pay rent and taxes. And as for what is left it must all go to pay debts."

"Poor child! This is terrible. What will you do?"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

FIGHTING MOTHS IN CUBA

Carpet moths were never cheaper than now, but until times ago we shall have to take care of our pets. The moth is the great pest of the housewife, and its ravages are often a source of great annoyance. The most efficacious remedies. One is to use a solution of carbolic acid in water, one-fourth of a pound of carbolic acid to one gallon of water, then to spray the carpet with this solution, and to allow it to dry. Another remedy is to use a solution of kerosene in water, one-fourth of a pound of kerosene to one gallon of water, then to spray the carpet with this solution, and to allow it to dry. A third remedy is to use a solution of borax in water, one-fourth of a pound of borax to one gallon of water, then to spray the carpet with this solution, and to allow it to dry. A fourth remedy is to use a solution of salt in water, one-fourth of a pound of salt to one gallon of water, then to spray the carpet with this solution, and to allow it to dry. A fifth remedy is to use a solution of vinegar in water, one-fourth of a pound of vinegar to one gallon of water, then to spray the carpet with this solution, and to allow it to dry. A sixth remedy is to use a solution of lime in water, one-fourth of a pound of lime to one gallon of water, then to spray the carpet with this solution, and to allow it to dry. A seventh remedy is to use a solution of soda in water, one-fourth of a pound of soda to one gallon of water, then to spray the carpet with this solution, and to allow it to dry. A eighth remedy is to use a solution of ammonia in water, one-fourth of a pound of ammonia to one gallon of water, then to spray the carpet with this solution, and to allow it to dry. A ninth remedy is to use a solution of caustic soda in water, one-fourth of a pound of caustic soda to one gallon of water, then to spray the carpet with this solution, and to allow it to dry. A tenth remedy is to use a solution of caustic potash in water, one-fourth of a pound of caustic potash to one gallon of water, then to spray the carpet with this solution, and to allow it to dry. A eleventh remedy is to use a solution of caustic soda in water, one-fourth of a pound of caustic soda to one gallon of water, then to spray the carpet with this solution, and to allow it to dry. A twelfth remedy is to use a solution of caustic potash in water, one-fourth of a pound of caustic potash to one gallon of water, then to spray the carpet with this solution, and to allow it to dry. A thirteenth remedy is to use a solution of caustic soda in water, one-fourth of a pound of caustic soda to one gallon of water, then to spray the carpet with this solution, and to allow it to dry. A fourteenth remedy is to use a solution of caustic potash in water, one-fourth of a pound of caustic potash to one gallon of water, then to spray the carpet with this solution, and to allow it to dry. A fifteenth remedy is to use a solution of caustic soda in water, one-fourth of a pound of caustic soda to one gallon of water, then to spray the carpet with this solution, and to allow it to dry. A sixteenth remedy is to use a solution of caustic potash in water, one-fourth of a pound of caustic potash to one gallon of water, then to spray the carpet with this solution, and to allow it to dry. A seventeenth remedy is to use a solution of caustic soda in water, one-fourth of a pound of caustic soda to one gallon of water, then to spray the carpet with this solution, and to allow it to dry. A eighteenth remedy is to use a solution of caustic potash in water, one-fourth of a pound of caustic potash to one gallon of water, then to spray the carpet with this solution, and to allow it to dry. A nineteenth remedy is to use a solution of caustic soda in water, one-fourth of a pound of caustic soda to one gallon of water, then to spray the carpet with this solution, and to allow it to dry. A twentieth remedy is to use a solution of caustic potash in water, one-fourth of a pound of caustic potash to one gallon of water, then to spray the carpet with this solution, and to allow it to dry.

ANTONIO
FRONT OF HIS ARMY
Dashing Career—The Wounded March of 800 Miles—How He Fought Campos
In the news of the present uprising in Costa Rica, he quickly about him several veterans of years war, among whom was the Jose, and hurried to the remote native island, from which he instantly taken leave—seventeen before. That was in March, in one short year he has traversed the island from one end to the other, fighting the Spaniards in their very breaking down military trochas, trying the Spaniards in their very fields. These twelve months show him to be more than a chieftain, a great general—one of the greatest of modern times. The basis upon information from the island served with Maceo in the ten years war, and who has been closely connected with his movements, during the present struggle.

Antonio Maceo is a mulatto. He was born in Santiago de Cuba, July 14, 1848. His father was Marcus Maceo and his mother was Mariana. He was educated at Barajagua and kept pack for a living. From this circumstance the statement has been made that Antonio Maceo was a driver of pack mules before the war. At the beginning of the ten years war in 1868, the father of the Maceo family, who was then in progress several years, and the Maceo family had been taken part in the uprising. One day there appeared a band of guerrillas, led by Captain Campos in which the Maceo family was included. This band had nothing to do with the Maceo family, and the Maceo family was soon in ruins. The Maceo family were burned, the mules and the female members of the family were treated in an outrageous manner. The father called his eleven sons to him. All were now grown except one, Marcus Maceo, who was then a boy. He promised that he would lay his arms until Cuba was free. The Maceo family now lived on the island from one end to the other. The father fell at the battle of Manzanillo, Manuel, Fernan and other sons were killed in the east, Raphael, with wounds, left the island to go into exile. Miguel was killed by the Spaniards at the capture of Ure. He was shot dead in the east, at Neuvo Mundos. Felipe was a helpless cripple from childhood, while Antonio, Jose and other sons were still fighting.

Antonio Maceo received the title of Brigadier General at the battle of Barajagua. He was about thirty years of age, when he first took the field. His dauntless bravery led him to the front during the great risks and during the months of service he received sixteen of the twenty-one medals that marked his body at the end of the ten years war. With the rank of Major he had been promoted to the rank of Brigadier General at the capture of the town of Barajagua. The Cubans numbered only a few hundred men, but they were driven from the forts. Antonio received the title of Brigadier General at the battle of Barajagua. He was about thirty years of age, when he first took the field. His dauntless bravery led him to the front during the great risks and during the months of service he received sixteen of the twenty-one medals that marked his body at the end of the ten years war. With the rank of Major he had been promoted to the rank of Brigadier General at the capture of the town of Barajagua. 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