

The American Senator

Vol. II

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by

Anthony Trollope

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The American Senator Volume II, by Anthony Trollope

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CHAPTER I. Mounser Green

"So Peter Boyd is to go to Washington in the Paragon's place, and Jack Slade goes to Vienna, and young Palliser is to get Slade's berth at Lisbon." This information was given by a handsome man, known as Mounser Green, about six feet high, wearing a velvet shooting coat,—more properly called an office coat from its present uses, who had just entered a spacious well-carpeted comfortable room in which three other gentlemen were sitting at their different tables. This was one of the rooms in the Foreign Office and looked out into St. James's Park. Mounser Green was a distinguished clerk in that department,—and distinguished also in various ways, being one of the fashionable men about town, a great adept at private theatricals, remarkable as a billiard player at his club, and a contributor to various magazines. At this moment he had a cigar in his mouth, and when he entered the room he stood with his back to the fire ready for conversation and looking very unlike a clerk who intended to do any work. But there was a general idea that Mounser Green was invaluable to the Foreign Office. He could speak and write two or three foreign languages; he could do a spurt of work,—ten hours at a sitting when required; he was ready to go through fire and water for his chief; and was a gentleman all round. Though still nominally a young man, being perhaps thirty-five years of age—he had entered the service before competitive examination had assumed its present shape and had therefore the gifts which were required for his special position. Some critics on the Civil Service were no doubt apt to find fault with Mounser Green. When called upon at his office he was never seen to be doing anything, and he always had a cigar in his mouth. These gentlemen found out too that he never entered his office till half-past twelve, perhaps not having also learned that he was generally there till nearly seven. No doubt during the time that he remained there he read a great many newspapers, and wrote a great many private notes,—on official paper! But there may be a question whether even these employments did not help to make Mounser Green the valuable man he was.

"What a lounge for Jack Slade," said young Hoffmann.

"I'll tell you who it won't be a lounge for, Green," said Archibald Currie, the clerk who held the second authority among them. "What will Bell Trefoil think of going to Patagonia?"

"That's all off," said Mounser Green.

"I don't think so," said Charley Glossop, one of the numerous younger sons of Lord Glossop. "She was staying only the other day down at the Paragon's place in Rufford, and they went together to my cousin Rufford's house. His sister, that's Lady Penwether, told me they were certainly engaged then."

"That was before the Paragon had been named for Patagonia. To tell you a little bit of my own private mind,—which isn't scandal," said Mounser Green, "because it is only given as opinion,—I think it just possible that the Paragon has taken this very uncomfortable mission because it offered him some chance of escape."

"Then he has more sense about him than I gave him credit for," said Archibald Currie.

"Why should a man like Morton go to Patagonia?" continued Green. "He has an independent fortune and doesn't want the money. He'd have been sure to have something comfortable in Europe very soon if he had waited, and was much better off as second at a place like Washington. I was quite surprised when he took it."

"Patagonia isn't bad at all," said Currie.

"That depends on whether a man has got money of his own. When I heard about the Paragon and Bell Trefoil at Washington, I knew there had been a mistake made. He didn't know what he was doing. I'm a poor man, but I wouldn't take her with 5,000 pounds a year, settled on myself." Poor Mounser Green!

"I think she's the handsomest girl in London," said Hoffmann, who was a young man of German parentage and perhaps of German taste.

"That may be," continued Green; "but, heaven and earth! what a life she would lead a man like the Paragon! He's found it out, and therefore thought it well to go to South America. She has declined already, I'm told; but he means to stick to the mission." During all this time Mounser Green was smoking his cigar with his back to the fire, and the other clerks looked as though they had nothing to do but talk about the private affairs of ministers abroad and their friends. Of course it will be understood that since we last saw John Morton the position of Minister Plenipotentiary at Patagonia had been offered to him and that he had accepted the place in spite of Bragton and of Arabella Trefoil.

At that moment a card was handed to Mounser Green by a messenger who was desired to show the gentleman up. "It's the Paragon himself," said Green.

"We'll make him tell us whether he's going out single or double," said Archibald Currie.

"After what the Rufford people said to me I'm sure he's going to marry her," said young Glossop. No doubt Lady Penwether had been anxious to make it understood

by every one connected with the family that if any gossip should be heard about Rufford and Arabella Trefoil there was nothing in it.

Then the Paragon was shown into the room and Mounser Green and the young men were delighted to see him. Colonial governors at their seats of government, and Ministers Plenipotentiary in their ambassadorial residences are very great persons indeed; and when met in society at home, with the stars and ribbons which are common among them now, they are, less indeed, but still something. But at the colonial and foreign offices in London, among the assistant secretaries and clerks, they are hardly more than common men. All the gingerbread is gone there. His Excellency is no more than Jones, and the Representative or Alter Ego of Royalty mildly asks little favours of the junior clerks.

"Lord Drummond only wants to know what you wish and it shall be done," said Mounser Green. Lord Drummond was the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the day. "I hope I need hardly say that we were delighted that you accepted the offer."

"One doesn't like to refuse a step upward," said Morton; "otherwise Patagonia isn't exactly the place one would like."

"Very good climate," said Currie. "Ladies I have known who have gone there have enjoyed it very much."

"A little rough I suppose?"

"They didn't seem to say so. Young Bartletot took his wife out there, just married. He liked it. There wasn't much society, but they didn't care about that just at first."

"Ah;—I'm a single man," said Morton laughing. He was too good a diplomat to be pumped in that simple way by such a one as Archibald Currie.

"You'll like to see Lord Drummond. He is here and will be glad to shake hands with you. Come into my room," Then Mounser Green led the way into a small inner sanctum in which it may be presumed that he really did his work. It was here at any rate that he wrote the notes on official note paper.

"They haven't settled as yet how they're to be off it," said Currie in a whisper, as soon as the two men were gone, "but I'll bet a five-pound note that Bell Trefoil doesn't go out to Patagonia as his wife."

"We know the Senator here well enough." This was said in the inner room by Mounser Green to Morton, who had breakfasted with the Senator that morning and had made an appointment to meet him at the Foreign Office. The Senator wanted to secure a seat for himself at the opening of Parliament which was appointed to take place in the course of the next month, and being a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the American Senate of course thought himself entitled to

have things done for him by the Foreign Office clerks. "Oh yes, I'll see him. Lord Drummond will get him a seat as a matter of course. How is he getting on with your neighbour at Dillsborough?"

"So you've heard of that."

"Heard of it! who hasn't heard of it?"—At this moment the messenger came in again and the Senator was announced. "Lord Drummond will manage about the seats in the House of Lords, Mr. Gotobed. Of course he'll see you if you wish it; but I'll take a note of it"

"If you'll do that, Mr. Green, I shall be fixed up straight. And I'd a great deal sooner see you than his lordship."

"That's very flattering, Mr. Gotobed, but I'm sure I don't know why."

"Because Lord Drummond always seems to me to have more on hand than he knows how to get through, and you never seem to have anything to do."

"That's not quite so flattering,—and would be killing, only that I feel that your opinion is founded on error. *Mens conscia recti*, Mr. Gotobed."

"Exactly. I understand English pretty well; better as far as I can see than some of those I meet around me here; but I don't go beyond that, Mr. Green."

"I merely meant to observe, Mr. Gotobed, that as, within my own breast, I am conscious of my zeal and diligence in Her Majesty's service your shafts of satire pass me by without hurting me. Shall I offer you a cigar? A candle burned at both ends is soon consumed." It was quite clear that as quickly as the Senator got through one end of his cigar by the usual process of burning, so quickly did he eat the other end. But he took that which Mounser Green offered him without any displeasure at the allusion. "I'm sorry to say that I haven't a spittoon," said Mounser Green, "but the whole fire-place is at your service." The Senator could hardly have heard this, as it made no difference in his practice.

Morton at this moment was sent for by the Secretary of State, and the Senator expressed his intention of waiting for him in Mr. Green's room. "How does the great Goarly case get on, Mr. Gotobed?" asked the clerk.

"Well! I don't know that it's getting on very much."

"You are not growing tired of it, Senator?"

"Not by any means. But it's getting itself complicated, Mr. Green. I mean to see the end of it, and if I'm beat,—why I can take a beating as well as another man."

"You begin to think you will be beat?"

"I didn't say so, Mr. Green. It is very hard to understand all the ins and outs of a case like that in a foreign country."

"Then I shouldn't try it, Senator."

"There I differ. It is my object to learn all I can."

"At any rate I shouldn't pay for the lesson as you are like to do. What'll the bill be? Four hundred dollars?"

"Never mind, Mr. Green. If you'll take the opinion of a good deal older man than yourself and one who has perhaps worked harder, you'll understand that there's no knowledge got so thoroughly as that for which a man pays." Soon after this Morton came out from the great man's room and went away in company with the Senator.

CHAPTER II. The Senator's Letter

Soon after this Senator Gotobed went down, alone, to Dillsborough and put himself up at the "Bush Inn". Although he had by no means the reputation of being a rich man, he did not seem to care much what money he spent in furthering any object he had taken in hand. He never knew how near he had been to meeting the direst inhospitality at Mr. Runciman's house. That worthy innkeeper, knowing well the Senator's sympathy with Goarly, Scrobby and Bearside, and being heart and soul devoted to the Rufford interest, had almost refused the Senator the accommodation he wanted. It was only when Mrs. Runciman represented to him that she could charge ten shillings a day for the use of her sitting-room, and also that Lord Rufford himself had condescended to entertain the gentleman, that Runciman gave way. Mr. Gotobed would, no doubt, have delighted in such inhospitality. He would have gone to the second-rate inn, which was very second-rate indeed, and have acquired a further insight into British manners and British prejudices. As it was, he made himself at home in the best upstairs sitting-room at the Bush, and was quite unaware of the indignity offered to him when Mr. Runciman refused to send him up the best sherry. Let us hope that this refusal was remembered by the young woman in the bar when she made out the Senator's bill.

He stayed at Dillsborough for three or four days during which he saw Goarly once and Bearside on two or three occasions,—and moreover handed to that busy attorney three bank notes for five pounds each. Bearside was clever enough to make him believe that Goarly would certainly obtain serious damages from the lord. With Bearside he was fairly satisfied, thinking however that the man was much more illiterate and ignorant than the general run of lawyers in the United States; but with Goarly he was by no means satisfied. Goarly endeavoured to keep out of his way and could not be induced to come to him at the Bush. Three times he walked out to the house near Dillsborough Wood, on each of which occasions Mrs. Goarly pestered him for money, and told him at great length the history of her forlorn goose. Scrobby, of whom he had heard, he could not see at all; and he found that Bearside was very unwilling to say anything about Scrobby. Scrobby, and the red herrings and the strychnine and the dead fox were, according to Bearside, to be kept quite distinct from the pheasants and the wheat. Bearside declared over and over again that there was no evidence to connect his client with the demise of the fox. When asked whether he did not think that his client had compassed the death of the animal, he assured the Senator that in such matters, he never ventured to think.

"Let us go by the evidence, Mr. Gotobed," he said.

"But I am paying my money for the sake of getting at the facts."

"Evidence is facts, sir," said the attorney. "Any way let us settle about the pheasants first"

The condition of the Senator's mind may perhaps be best made known by a letter which he wrote from Dillsborough to his especial and well-trusted friend Josiah Scroome, a member of the House of Representatives from his own state of Mickewa. Since he had been in England he had written constantly to his friend, giving him the result of his British experiences.

Bush Inn,
Dillsborough,
Ufford County,
England,
December 16, 187—.

MY DEAR SIR,

Since my last I have enjoyed myself very well and I am I trust beginning to understand something of the mode of thinking of this very peculiar people. That there should be so wide a difference between us Americans and these English, from whom we were divided, so to say, but the other day, is one of the most peculiar physiological phenomena that the history of the world will have afforded. As far as I can hear a German or even a Frenchman thinks much more as an Englishman thinks than does an American. Nor does this come mainly from the greater prevalence with us of democratic institutions. I do not think that any one can perceive in half an hour's conversation the difference between a Swiss and a German; but I fancy, and I may say I flatter myself, that an American is as easily distinguished from an Englishman, as a sheep from a goat or a tall man from one who is short.

And yet there is a pleasure in associating with those here of the highest rank which I find it hard to describe, and which perhaps I, ought to regard as a pernicious temptation to useless luxury. There is an ease of manner with them which recalls with unfavourable reminiscences the hard self-consciousness of the better class of our citizens. There is a story of an old hero who with his companions fell among beautiful women and luscious wine, and, but that the hero had been warned in time, they would all have been turned into filthy animals by yielding to the allurements around them. The temptation here is perhaps the same. I am not a hero; and, though I too have been warned by the lessons I have learned under our happy Constitution, I feel that I might easily become one of the animals in question.

And, to give them their due, it is better than merely beautiful women and luscious wine. There is a reality about them, and a desire to live up to their principles which is very grand. Their principles are no doubt bad, utterly antagonistic to all progress, unconscious altogether of the demand for progressive equality which is made by the united voices of suffering mankind. The man who is born a lord and who sees a dozen serfs around him who have been born to be half-starved ploughmen, thinks that God arranged it all and that he is bound to maintain a state of things so comfortable to himself, as being God's vicegerent here on earth. But they do their work as vicegerents with an easy grace, and with sweet pleasant voices and soft movements, which almost make a roan doubt whether the Almighty has not in truth intended that such injustice should be permanent. That one man should be rich and another poor is a necessity in the present imperfect state of civilisation;—but that one man should be born to be a legislator, born to have everything, born to be a tyrant,—and should think it all right, is to me miraculous. But the greatest miracle of all is that they who are not so born, who have been born to suffer the reverse side,— should also think it to be all right.

With us it is necessary that a man, to shine in society, should have done something, or should at any rate have the capacity of doing something. But here the greatest fool that you meet will shine, and will be admitted to be brilliant, simply because he has possessions. Such a one will take his part in conversation though he knows nothing, and, when inquired into, he will own that he knows nothing. To know anything is not his line in life. But he can move about, and chatter like a child of ten, and amuse himself from morning to night with various empty playthings,—and be absolutely proud of his life!

I have lately become acquainted with a certain young lord here of this class who has treated me with great kindness, although I have taken it into my head to oppose him as to a matter in which he is much interested. I ventured to inquire of him as to the pursuits of his life. He is a lord, and therefore a legislator, but he made no scruple to tell me that he never goes near the Chamber in which it is his privilege to have a seat. But his party does not lose his support. Though he never goes near the place, he can vote, and is enabled to trust his vote to some other more ambitious lord who does go there. It required the absolute evidence of personal information from those who are themselves concerned to make me believe that legislation in Great Britain could be carried on after such a fashion as this! Then he told me what he does do. All the winter he hunts and shoots, going about to other rich men's houses when there is no longer sufficient for him to shoot left on his own estate. That lasts him from the 1st of September to the end of March, and occupies all his time. August he spends in Scotland, also shooting other animals. During the other months he fishes, and plays cricket and tennis, and attends races, and goes about to parties in London. His evenings he spends at a card table when

he can get friends to play with him. It is the employment of his life to fit in his amusements so that he may not have a dull day. Wherever he goes he carries his wine with him and his valet and his grooms; and if he thinks there is anything to fear, his cook also. He very rarely opens a book. He is more ignorant than a boy of fifteen with us, and yet he manages to have something to say about everything. When his ignorance has been made as clear as the sun at noon-day, he is no whit ashamed. One would say that such a life would break the heart of any man; but upon my word, I doubt whether I ever came across a human being so self-satisfied as this young lord.

I have come down here to support the case of a poor man who is I think being trampled on by this do-nothing legislator. But I am bound to say that the lord in his kind is very much better than the poor man in his. Such a wretched, squalid, lying, cowardly creature I did not think that even England could produce. And yet the man has a property in land on which he ought to be able to live in humble comfort. I feel sure that I have leagued myself with a rascal, whereas I believe the lord, in spite of his ignorance and his idleness, to be honest. But yet the man is being hardly used, and has had the spirit, or rather perhaps has been instigated by others, to rebel. His crops have been eaten up by the lord's pheasants, and the lord, exercising plenary power as though he were subject to no laws, will only pay what compensation he himself chooses to award. The whole country here is in arms against the rebel, thinking it monstrous that a man living in a hovel should contest such a point with the owner of half-a-dozen palaces. I have come forward to help the man for the sake of seeing how the matter will go; and I have to confess that though those under the lord have treated me as though I were a miscreant, the lord himself and his friends have been civil enough.

I say what I think wherever I go, and I do not find it taken in bad part. In that respect we might learn something even from Englishmen. When a Britisher over in the States says what he thinks about us, we are apt to be a little rough with him. I have, indeed, known towns in which he couldn't speak out with personal safety. Here there is no danger of that kind. I am getting together the materials for a lecture on British institutions in general, in which I shall certainly speak my mind plainly, and I think I shall venture to deliver it in London before I leave for New York in the course of next spring. I will, however, write to you again before that time comes.

Believe me to be, Dear Sir,
With much sincerity,
Yours truly,

ELIAS GOTOBED.

The Honble. Josiah Scroome,
25, Q Street, Minnesota Avenue,
Washington.

On the morning of the Senator's departure from Dillsborough, Mr. Runciman met him standing under the covered way leading from the inn yard into the street. He was waiting for the omnibus which was being driven about the town, and which was to call for him and take him down to the railway station. Mr. Runciman had not as yet spoken to him since he had been at the inn, and had not even made himself personally known to his guest. "So, Sir, you are going to leave us," said the landlord, with a smile which was intended probably as a smile of triumph.

"Yes, sir," said the Senator. "It's about time, I guess, that I should get back to London."

"I dare say it is, Sir," said the landlord. "I dare say you've seen enough of Mr. Goarly by this time."

"That's as may be. I don't know whom I have the pleasure of speaking to."

"My name is Runciman, Sir. I'm the landlord here."

"I hope I see you well, Mr. Runciman. I have about come to an end of my business here."

"I dare say you have, sir. I should say so. Perhaps I might express an opinion that you never came across a greater blackguard than Goarly either in this country or your own."

"That's a strong opinion, Mr. Runciman."

"It's the general opinion here, sir. I should have thought you'd found it out before this."

"I don't know that I am prepared at this moment to declare all that I have found out"

"I thought you'd have been tired of it by this time, Mr. Gotobed."

"Tired of what?"

"Tired of the wrong side, sir."

"I don't know that I am on the wrong side. A man may be in the right on one point even though his life isn't all that it ought to be."

"That's true, sir; but if they told you all that they know up street,"—and Runciman pointed to the part of the town in which Bearside's office was situated,—"I should

have thought you would have understood who was going to win and who was going to lose. Good day, sir; I hope you'll have a pleasant journey. Much obliged to you for your patronage, sir;" and Runciman, still smiling unpleasantly, touched his hat as the Senator got into the omnibus.

The Senator was not very happy as to the Goarly business. He had paid some money and had half promised more, and had found out that he was in a boat with thoroughly disreputable persons. As he had said to the landlord, a man may have the right on his side in an action at law though he be a knave or a rascal; and if a lord be unjust to a poor man, the poor man should have justice done him, even though he be not quite a pattern poor man. But now he was led to believe by what the landlord had said to him that he was being kept in the dark, and that there were facts generally known that he did not know. He had learned something of English manners and English institutions by his interference, but there might be a question whether he was not paying too dearly for his whistle. And there was growing upon him a feeling that before he had done he would have to blush for his colleagues.

As the omnibus went away Dr. Nupper joined Mr. Runciman under the archway. "I'm blessed if I can understand that man," said Runciman. "What is it he's after?"

"Notoriety," said the doctor, with the air of a man who has completely solved a difficult question.

"He'll have to pay for it, and that pretty smart," said Runciman. "I never heard of such a foolish thing in all my life. What the dickens is it to him? One can understand Bearside, and Scrobby too. When a fellow has something to get, one does understand it. But why an old fellow like that should come down from the moon to pay ever so much money for such a man as Goarly, is what I don't understand."

"Notoriety," said the doctor.

"He evidently don't know that Nickem has got round Goarly," said the landlord.

CHAPTER III. At Cheltenham

The month at Cheltenham was passed very quietly and would have been a very happy month with Mary Masters but that there grew upon her from day to day increasing fears of what she would have to undergo when she returned to Dillsborough. At the moment when she was hesitating with Larry Twentyman, when she begged him to wait six months and then at last promised to give him an answer at the end of two, she had worked herself up to think that it might possibly be her duty to accept her lover for the sake of her family. At any rate she had at that moment thought that the question of duty ought to be further considered, and therefore she had vacillated. When the two months' delay was accorded to her, and within that period the privilege of a long absence from Dillsborough, she put the trouble aside for a while with the common feeling that the chapter of accidents might do something for her. Before she had reached Cheltenham the chapter of accidents had done much. When Reginald Morton told her that he could not have congratulated her on such prospects, and had explained to her why in truth he had been angry at the bridge,—how he had been anxious to be alone with her that he might learn whether she were really engaged to this man,—then she had known that her answer to Larry Twentyman at the end of the two months must be a positive refusal.

But as she became aware of this a new trouble arose and harassed her very soul. When she had asked for the six months she had not at the moment been aware, she had not then felt, that a girl who asks for time is supposed to have already surrendered. But since she had made that unhappy request the conviction had grown upon her. She had read it in every word her stepmother said to her and in her father's manner. The very winks and hints and little jokes which fell from her younger sisters told her that it was so. She could see around her the satisfaction which had come from the settlement of that difficult question,—a satisfaction which was perhaps more apparent with her father than even with the others. Then she knew what she had done, and remembered to have heard that a girl who expresses a doubt is supposed to have gone beyond doubting. While she was still at Dillsborough there was a feeling that no evil would arise from this if she could at last make up her mind to be Mrs. Twentyman; but when the settled conviction came upon her, after hearing Reginald Morton's words, then she was much troubled.

He stayed only a couple of days at Cheltenham and during that time said very little to her. He certainly spoke no word which would give her a right to think that he himself was attached to her. He had been interested about her, as was his aunt, Lady Ushant, because she had been known and her mother had been known by the old Mortons. But there was nothing of love in all that. She had never supposed that there would be; and yet there was a vague feeling in her bosom that as he had been strong in expressing his objection to Mr. Twentyman there might have been something more to stir him than the memory of those old days at Bragton!

"To my thinking there is a sweetness about her which I have never seen equalled in any young woman." This was said by Lady Ushant to her nephew after Mary had gone to bed on the night before he left.

"One would suppose," he answered, "that you wanted me to ask her to be my wife."

"I never want anything of that kind, Reg. I never make in such matters,—or mar if I can help it."

"There is a man at Dillsborough wants to marry her."

"I can easily believe that there should be two or three. Who is the man?"

"Do you remember old Twentyman of Chowton?"

"He was our near neighbour. Of course I remember him. I can remember well when they bought the land."

"It is his son."

"Surely he can hardly be worthy of her, Reg"

"And yet they say he is very worthy. I have asked about him, and he is not a bad fellow. He keeps his money and has ideas of living decently. He doesn't drink or gamble. But he's not a gentleman or anything like one. I should think he never opens a book. Of course it would be a degradation."

"And what does Mary say herself?"

"I fancy she has refused him." Then he added after a pause, "Indeed I know she has."

"How should you know? Has she told you?" In answer to this he only nodded his head at the old lady. "There must have been close friendship, Reg, between you two when she told you that. I hope you have not made her give up one suitor by leading her to love another who does not mean to ask her."

"I certainly have not done that," said Reg. Men may often do much without knowing that they do anything, and such probably had been the case with Reginald Morton during the journey from Dillsborough to Cheltenham.

"What would her father wish?"

"They all want her to take the man."

"How can she do better?"

"Would you have her marry a man who is not a gentleman, whose wife will never be visited by other ladies; in marrying whom she would go altogether down into another and a lower world?"

This was a matter on which Lady Ushant and her nephew had conversed often, and he thought he knew her to be thoroughly wedded to the privileges which she believed to be attached to her birth. With him the same feeling was almost the stronger because he was so well aware of the blot upon himself caused by the lowness of his own father's marriage. But a man, he held, could raise a woman to his own rank, whereas a woman must accept the level of her husband.

"Bread and meat and chairs and tables are very serious things, Reg."

"You would then recommend her to take this man, and pass altogether out of your own sphere?"

"What can I do for her? I am an old woman who will be dead probably before the first five years of her married life have passed over her. And as for recommending, I do not know enough to recommend anything. Does she like the man?"

"I am sure she would feel herself degraded by marrying him."

"I trust she will never live to feel herself degraded. I do not believe that she could do anything that she thought would degrade her. But I think that you and I had better leave her to herself in this matter." Further on in the same evening, or rather late in the night,—for they had then sat talking together for hours over the fire,—she made a direct statement to him. "When I die, Reg, I have but 5,000 pounds to leave behind me, and this I have divided between you and her. I shall not tell her because I might do more harm than good. But you may know."

"That would make no difference to me," he said.

"Very likely not, but I wish you to know it. What troubles me is that she will have to pay so much out of it for legacy duty. I might leave it all to you and you could give it her." An honester or more religious or better woman than old Lady Ushant there was not in Cheltenham, but it never crossed her conscience that it would be

wrong to cheat the revenue. It may be doubted whether any woman has ever been brought to such honesty as that.

On the next morning Morton went away without saying another word in private to Mary Masters and she was left to her quiet life with the old lady. To an ordinary visitor nothing could have been less exciting, for Lady Ushant very seldom went out and never entertained company. She was a tall thin old lady with bright eyes and grey hair and a face that was still pretty in spite of sunken eyes and sunken cheeks and wrinkled brow. There was ever present with her an air of melancholy which told a whole tale of the sadness of a long life. Her chief excitement was in her two visits to church on Sunday and in the letter which she wrote every week to her nephew at Dillsborough. Now she had her young friend with her, and that too was an excitement to her,—and the more so since she had heard the tidings of Larry Twentyman's courtship.

She made up her mind that she would not speak on the subject to her young friend unless her young friend should speak to her. In the first three weeks nothing was said; but four or five days before Mary's departure there came up a conversation about Dillsborough and Bragton. There had been many conversations about Dillsborough and Bragton, but in all of them the name of Lawrence Twentyman had been scrupulously avoided. Each had longed to name him, and yet each had determined not to do so. But at length it was avoided no longer. Lady Ushant had spoken of Chowton Farm and the widow. Then Mary had spoken of the place and its inhabitants. "Mr. Twentyman comes a great deal to our house now," she said.

"Has he any reason, my dear?"

"He goes with papa once a week to the club; and he sometimes lends my sister Kate a pony. Kate is very fond of riding."

"There is nothing else?"

"He has got to be intimate and I think mamma likes him."

"He is a good young man then?"

"Very good," said Mary with an emphasis.

"And Chowton belongs to him."

"Oh yes;—it belongs to him."

"Some young men make such ducks and drakes of their property when they get it."

"They say that he's not like that at all. People say that he understands farming very well and that he minds everything himself."

"What an excellent young man! There is no other reason for his coming to your house, Mary?" Then the sluice-gates were opened and the whole story was told. Sitting there late into the night Mary told it all as well as she knew how,—all of it except in regard to any spark of love which might have fallen upon her in respect of Reginald Morton. Of Reginald Morton in her story of course she did not speak; but all the rest she declared. She did not love the man. She was quite sure of that. Though she thought so well of him there was, she was quite sure, no feeling in her heart akin to love. She had promised to take time because she had thought that she might perhaps be able to bring herself to marry him without loving him,— to marry him because her father wished it, and because her going from home would be a relief to her stepmother and sisters, because it would be well for them all that she should be settled out of the way. But since that she had made up her mind,—she thought that she had quite made up her mind,—that it would be impossible.

"There is nobody else, Mary?" said Lady Ushant putting her hand on to Mary's lap. Mary protested that there was nobody else without any consciousness that she was telling a falsehood. "And you are quite sure that you cannot do it?"

"Do you think that I ought, Lady Ushant?"

"I should be very sorry to say that, my dear. A young woman in such a matter must be governed by her feelings. Only he seems to be a deserving young man!" Mary looked askance at her friend, remembering at the moment Reginald Morton's assurance that his aunt would have disapproved of such an engagement. "But I never would persuade a girl to marry a man she did not love. I think it would be wicked. I always thought so."

There was nothing about degradation in all this. It was quite clear to Mary that had she been able to tell Lady Ushant that she was head over ears in love with this young man and that therefore she was going to marry him, her old friend would have found no reason to lament such an arrangement. Her old friend would have congratulated her. Lady Ushant evidently thought Larry Twentyman to be good enough as soon as she heard what Mary found herself compelled to say in the young man's favour. Mary was almost disappointed; but reconciled herself to it very quickly, telling herself that there was yet time for her to decide in favour of her lover if she could bring herself to do so.

And she did try that night and all the next day, thinking that if she could so make up her mind she would declare her purpose to Lady Ushant before she left Cheltenham. But she could not do it, and in the struggle with herself at last she learned something of the truth. Lady Ushant saw nothing but what was right and proper in a marriage with Lawrence Twentyman, but Reginald Morton had declared it to be improper, and therefore it was out of her reach. She could not do

it. She could not bring herself, after what he had said, to look him in the face and tell him that she was going to become the wife of Larry Twentyman. Then she asked herself the fatal question;—was she in love with Reginald Morton? I do not think that she answered it in the affirmative, but she became more and more sure that she could never marry Larry Twentyman.

Lady Ushant declared herself to have been more than satisfied with the visit and expressed a hope that it might be repeated in the next year. "I would ask you to come and make your home here while I have a home to offer you, only that you would be so much more buried here than at Dillsborough: And you have duties there which perhaps you ought not to leave. But come again when your papa will spare you."

On her journey back she certainly was not very happy. There were yet three weeks wanting to the time at which she would be bound to give her answer to Larry Twentyman; but why should she keep the man waiting for three weeks when her answer was ready? Her stepmother she knew would soon force her answer from her, and her father would be anxious to know what had been the result of her meditations. The real period of her reprieve had been that of her absence at Cheltenham, and that period was now come to an end. At each station as she passed them she remembered what Reginald Morton had been saying to her, and how their conversation had been interrupted,—and perhaps occasionally aided,—by the absurdities of the bird. How sweet it had been to be near him and to listen to his whispered voice! How great was the difference between him and that other young man, the smartness of whose apparel was now becoming peculiarly distasteful to her! Certainly it would have been better for her not to have gone to Cheltenham if it was to be her fate to become Mrs. Twentyman. She was quite sure of that now.

She came up from the Dillsborough station alone in the "Bush" omnibus. She had not expected any one to meet her. Why should any one meet her? The porter put up her box and the omnibus left her at the door. But she remembered well how she had gone down with Reginald Morton, and how delightful had been every little incident of the journey. Even to walk with him up and down the platform while waiting for the train had been a privilege. She thought of it as she got out of the carriage and remembered that she had felt that the train had come too soon.

At her own door her father met her and took her into the parlour where the tea-things were spread, and where her sisters were already seated. Her stepmother soon came in and kissed her kindly. She was asked how she had enjoyed herself, and no disagreeable questions were put to her that night. No questions, at least, were asked which she felt herself bound to answer. After she was in bed Kate came to her and

did say a word. "Well, Mary, do tell me. I won't tell any one." But Mary refused to speak a word.

CHAPTER IV. The Rufford Correspondence

It might be surmised from the description which Lord Rufford had given of his own position to his sister and his sister's two friends, when he pictured himself as falling over the edge of the precipice while they hung on behind to save him, that he was sufficiently aware of the inexpediency of the proposed intimacy with Miss Trefoil. Any one hearing him would have said that Miss Trefoil's chances in that direction were very poor,—that a man seeing his danger so plainly and so clearly understanding the nature of it would certainly avoid it. But what he had said was no more than Miss Trefoil knew that he would say,—or, at any rate would think. Of course she had against her not only all his friends,—but the man himself also and his own fixed intentions. Lord Rufford was not a marrying man,—which was supposed to signify that he intended to lead a life of pleasure till the necessity of providing an heir should be forced upon him, when he would take to himself a wife out of his own class in life twenty years younger than himself for whom he would not care a straw. The odds against Miss Trefoil were of course great;—but girls have won even against such odds as these. She knew her own powers, and was aware that Lord Rufford was fond of feminine beauty and feminine flutter and feminine flattery, though he was not prepared to marry. It was quite possible that she might be able to dig such a pit for him that it would be easier for him to marry her than to get out in any other way. Of course she must trust something to his own folly at first. Nor did she trust in vain. Before her week was over at Mrs. Gore's she received from him a letter, which, with the correspondence to which it immediately led, shall be given in this chapter.

LETTER No. 1.

Rufford,
Sunday.

MY DEAR MISS TREFOIL,

We have had a sad house since you left us. Poor Caneback got better and then worse and then better,—and at last died yesterday afternoon. And now; there is to be the funeral! The poor dear old boy seems to have had nobody belonging to him and very little in the way of possessions. I never knew anything of him except that he was, or had been, in the Blues, and that he was about the best man in England to hounds on a bad horse. It now turns out that his father made some money in India,—a sort of Commissary purveyor,—and bought a commission for him

twenty-five years ago. Everybody knew him but nobody knew anything about him. Poor old Caneback! I wish he had managed to die anywhere else and I don't feel at all obliged to Purefoy for sending that brute of a mare here. He said something to me about that wretched ball;—not altogether so wretched! was it? But I didn't like what he said and told him a bit of my mind. Now we're two for a while; and I don't care for how long unless he comes round.

I cannot stand a funeral and I shall get away from this. I will pay the bill and Purefoy may do the rest. I'm going for Christmas to Surbiton's near Melton with a string of horses. Surbiton is a bachelor, and as there will be no young ladies to interfere with me I shall have the more time to think of you. We shall have a little play there instead. I don't know whether it isn't the better of the two, as if one does get sat upon, one doesn't feel so confoundedly sheep-faced. I have been out with the hounds two or three times since you went, as I could do no good staying with that poor fellow and there was a time when we thought he would have pulled through. I rode Jack one day, but he didn't carry me as well as he did you. I think he's more of a lady's horse. If I go to Mistletoe I shall have some horses somewhere in the neighbourhood and I'll make them take Jack, so that you may have a chance.

I never know how to sign myself to young ladies. Suppose I say that I am yours,
 Anything you like best, R.

This was a much nicer letter than Arabella had expected, as there were one or two touches in it, apart from the dead man and the horses, which she thought might lead to something,—and there was a tone in the letter which seemed to show that he was given to correspondence. She took care to answer it so that he should get her letter on his arrival at Mr. Surbiton's house. She found out Mr. Surbiton's address, and then gave a great deal of time to her letter.

LETTER No. 2.

Murray's Hotel,
 Green Street,
 Thursday.

MY DEAR LORD RUFFORD,

As we are passing through London on our way from one purgatory with the Gores to another purgatory with old Lady De Browne, and as mamma is asleep in her chair opposite, and as I have nothing else on earth to do, I think I might as well answer your letter. Poor old Major! I am sorry for him, because he rode so bravely. I shall never forget his face as he passed us, and again as he rose upon his knee when that horrid blow came! How very odd that he should have been like that, without any friends. What a terrible nuisance to you! I think you were quite wise to come away. I am sure I should have done so. I can't conceive what right Sir John

Purefoy can have had to say anything, for after all it was his doing. Do you remember when you talked of my riding Jemima? When I think of it I can hardly hold myself for shuddering.

It is so kind of you to think of me about Jack. I am never very fond of Mistletoe. Don't you be mischievous now and tell the Duchess I said so. But with Jack in the neighbourhood I can stand even her Grace. I think I shall be there about the middle of January but it must depend on all those people mamma is going to. I shall have to make a great fight, for mamma thinks that ten days in the year at Mistletoe is all that duty requires. But I always stick up for my uncle, and mean in this instance to have a little of my own way. What are parental commands in opposition to Jack and all his glories? Besides mamma does not mean to go herself.

I shall leave it to you to say whether the ball was `altogether wretched.' Of course there must have been infinite vexation to you, and to us who knew of it all there was a feeling of deep sorrow. But perhaps we were able, some of us, to make it a little lighter for you. At any rate I shall never forget Rufford, whether the memory be more pleasant or more painful. There are moments which one never can forget!

Don't go and gamble away your money among a lot of men. Though I dare say you have got so much that it doesn't signify whether you lose some of it or not. I do think it is such a shame that a man like you should have such a quantity, and that a poor girl such as I am shouldn't have enough to pay for her hats and gloves. Why shouldn't I send a string of horses about just when I please? I believe I could make as good a use of them as you do, and then I could lend you Jack. I would be so good-natured. You should have Jack every day you wanted him.

You must write and tell me what day you will be at Mistletoe. It is you that have tempted me and I don't mean to be there without you,—or I suppose I ought to say, without the horse. But of course you will have understood that. No young lady ever is supposed to desire the presence of any young man. It would be very improper of course. But a young man's Jack is quite another thing.

So far her pen had flown with her, but then there came the necessity for a conclusion which must be worded in some peculiar way, as his had been so peculiar. How far might she dare to be affectionate without putting him on his guard? Or in what way might she be saucy so as best to please him? She tried two or three, and at last she ended her letter as follows.

I have not had much experience in signing myself to young gentlemen and am therefore quite in as great a difficulty as you were; but, though I can't swear that I am everything that you like best, I will protest that I am pretty nearly what you ought to like,—as far as young ladies go.

In the meantime I certainly am, Yours truly,

A. T.

P.S. Mind you write—about Jack; and address to Lady Smijth—Greenacres Manor—Hastings.

There was a great deal in this letter which was not true. But then such ladies as Miss Trefoil can never afford to tell the truth.

The letter was not written from Murray's Hotel, Lady Augustus having insisted on staying at certain lodgings in Orchard Street because her funds were low. But on previous occasions they had stayed at Murray's. And her mamma, instead of being asleep when the letter was written, was making up her accounts. And every word about Mistletoe had been false. She had not yet secured her invitation. She was hard at work on the attempt, having induced her father absolutely to beg the favour from his brother. But at the present moment she was altogether diffident of success. Should she fail she must only tell Lord Rufford that her mother's numerous engagements had at the last moment made her happiness impossible. That she was going to Lady Smijth's was true, and at Lady Smijth's house she received the following note from Lord Rufford. It was then January, and the great Mistletoe question was not as yet settled.

LETTER No. 3.

December 31.

MY DEAR MISS TREFOIL,

Here I am still at Surbiton's and we have had such good sport that I'm half inclined to give the Duke the slip. What a pity that you can't come here instead. Wouldn't it be nice for you and half a dozen more without any of the Dowagers or Duennas? You might win some of the money which I lose. I have been very unlucky and, if you had won it all, there would be plenty of room for hats and gloves,—and for sending two or three Jacks about all the winter into the bargain. I never did win yet. I don't care very much about it, but I don't know why I should always be so uncommonly unlucky.

We had such a day yesterday,—an hour and ten minutes all in the open, and then a kill just as the poor fellow was trying to make a drain under the high road. There were only five of us up. Surbiton broke his horse's back at a bank, and young De Canute came down on to a road and smashed his collar bone. Three or four of the hounds were so done that they couldn't be got home. I was riding Black Harry and he won't be out again for a fortnight. It was the best thing I've seen these two years. We never have it quite like that with the U.R.U.

If I don't go to Mistletoe I'll send Jack and a groom if you think the Duke would take them in and let you ride the horse. If so I shall stay here pretty nearly all January, unless there should be a frost. In that case I should go back to Rufford as I

have a deal of shooting to do. I shall be so sorry not to see you;—but there is always a sort of sin in not sticking to hunting when it's good. It so seldom is just what it ought to be.

I rather think that after all we shall be down on that fellow who poisoned our fox, in spite of your friend the Senator.

Yours always faithfully,

R.

There was a great deal in this letter which was quite terrible to Miss Trefoil. In the first place by the time she received it she had managed the matter with her uncle. Her father had altogether refused to mention Lord Rufford's name, though he had heard the very plain proposition which his daughter made to him with perfect serenity. But he had said to the Duke that it would be a great convenience if Bell could be received at Mistletoe for a few days, and the Duke had got the Duchess to assent. Lady Augustus, too, had been disposed of, and two very handsome new dresses had been acquired. Her habit had been altered with reckless disregard of the coming spring and she was fully prepared for her campaign. But what would Mistletoe be to her without Lord Rufford? In spite of all that had been done she would not go there. Unless she could turn him by her entreaties she would pack up everything and start for Patagonia, with the determination to throw herself overboard on the way there if she could find the courage.

She had to think very much of her next letter. Should she write in anger or should she write in love, or should she mingle both? There was no need for care now, as there had been at first. She must reach him at once, or everything would be over. She must say something that would bring him to Mistletoe, whatever that something might be. After much thought she determined that mingled anger and love would be the best. So she mingled them as follows:

LETTER No. 4.

Greenacre Manor,
Monday.

Your last letter which I have just got has killed me. You must know that I have altered my plans and done it at immense trouble for the sake of meeting you at Mistletoe. It will be most unkind,—I might say worse,—if you put me off. I don't think you can do it as a gentleman. I'm sure you would not if you knew what I have gone through with mamma and the whole set of them to arrange it. Of course I shan't go if you don't come. Your talk of sending the horse there is adding an insult to the injury. You must have meant to annoy me or you wouldn't have pretended to suppose that it was the horse I wanted to see. I didn't think I could have taken so violent a dislike to poor Jack as I did for a moment. Let me tell you that I think you are bound to go to Mistletoe though the hunting at Melton should be better than

was ever known before. When the hunting is good in one place of course it is good in another. Even I am sportsman enough to know that. I suppose you have been losing a lot of money and are foolish enough to think you can win it back again.

Please, please come. It was to be the little cream of the year for me. It wasn't Jack. There! That ought to bring you. And yet, if you come, I will worship Jack. I have not said a word to mamma about altering my plans, nor shall I while there is a hope. But to Mistletoe I will not go, unless you are to be there. Pray answer this by return of post. If we have gone your letter will of course follow us. Pray come. Yours if you do come—; what shall I say?

Fill it as you please.

A. T.

Lord Rufford when he received the above very ardent epistle was quite aware that he had better not go to Mistletoe. He understood the matter nearly as well as Arabella did herself. But there was a feeling with him that up to that stage of the affair he ought to do what he was asked by a young lady, even though there might be danger. Though there was danger there would still be amusement. He therefore wrote again as follows:

LETTER No. 5.

DEAR MISS TREFOIL,

You shan't be disappointed whether it be Jack or any less useful animal that you wish to see. At any rate Jack,—and the other animal,—will be at Mistletoe on the 15th. I have written to the Duke by this post. I can only hope that you will be grateful. After all your abuse about my getting back my money I think you ought to be very grateful. I have got it back again, but I can assure you that has had nothing to do with it.

Yours ever,

R.

P.S. We had two miserably abortive days last week.

Arabella felt that a great deal of the compliment was taken away by the postscript; but still she was grateful and contented.