MISS HELEN'S LOVERS.

CHAPTER VI.

"Unfold, ye tender blooms of life;
Sing birds; let all the world be gay;
'Tis well—the morning of our day
Must rise 'mid joyous songs and strife."
—*Lewis Morris.*

The first week of Helen's visit had passed, and she had already decided that Carnation Cottage was the pleasantest house possible in which to live, that no companion could be more congenial than Miss Elizabeth, that Betsey's wit was equal to Sheridan's, that Devon was the loveliest county in England—in fact, to be brief, that she was as happy as the lovely July days were long.

Both Miss Elizabeth and the less impressionable Betsey had gone down before her charms like ninepins. When she was out of the room, they talked about her; when she was present, they followed her about, watching her with indulgent eyes. As a matter of course, she took the guidance of the household into her firm hands, and even gave advice on the subject of gardening, flitting to and fro the grass-plot, from flower-bed to flower-bed, carrying shears or watering-pot, trowel or rake, hose or spud, as the fancy seized her, with Miss Elizabeth, a little breathless and anxious, but uncomplaining, following at her heels. When, as was sometimes the case, she fell into a wild and whimsical mood and talked and romped more like an irresponsible madcap than the than the dignified young woman she sometimes appeared, Miss Elizabeth, instead of scolding, went into fits of weak laughter.

More than once during her wanderings she had caught a glimpse of a high, yellow dogcart, with a square shouldered figure sitting bolt upright on the box seat, whom she recognized. Usually he had some one beside him; twice it had been another square-shouldered, broad figure like his own; but the third time his companion had been a lady, a pretty girl, whose face was turned toward him as though she was listening while he talked. Once, only once, Helen had met that dogcart face to face, and then its occupant, who had been alone, had drawn up beside her and engaged her for an unconscionably long time in conversation. More than once she had tried to move on, but each time he had recalled her by a question and always on the subject of her loss, on which topic he had, of course, a right to question her. In an affair of dogged determination, Helen had met her master, an amiable, gentle but unflinchingly obstinate master.

Mr. Jones had also called one afternoon at Carnation Cottage, and again it was for the purpose of conversing with Helen about her stolen property, of which, it seemed, he had heard some hopeful news; in fact, he believed the watch had been discovered in a pawnbroker's shop in Birmingham, and in that case before very long he should have the pleasure of restoring it to its owner.

Helen, who had been down on the beach during this event, was toiling slowly up the hill on her way home when Mr. Jones emerged from the garden gate, with the most cherished of her aunt's rosebuds in his button-hole, and an aggressively debonair and satisfied demeanor. She was overjoyed at the prospect of recovering her watch and listened to all he had to say, which was not a little, on that and on other subjects, with eager eyes and her most gracious manner. When, at last, she left him, he watched her out of sight, and then, turning away, he walked home with a graver look than usual on his careless, untroubled face; while she, entering the garden, met her excited aunt with a torrent of insane jokes and teasing laughter.

Upon the afternoon of that day which had been fixed for the ball at Newton Hall the Misses Mitford, at Helen's request, had tea early; after which the girl, adjusting her big white hat, and, as a tribute to custom, fetching her gloves) which she put in her pocket instead of upon her hands), set off for her daily walk. She paused a moment at the gate to wave a farewell to her aunt, who was bent double over her carnation bed, the surface soil of which she was loosening with a fork.

"The tide is out this evening, auntie; I am going to the rocks. The distant rocks, it's a long walk. I may be late."

"Don't get drowned, love."

"No, auntie."

"Don't get your feet wet."

"No, auntie."

Half an hour later Helen had reached the shore. She loved the sea, the thousand lights and shades that tinged its surface, the restlessness, the eternal variety, the mystery of its troubled life. But that evening she had no time to watch the waves; she walked quickly along the sands, skirting the groups of nursemaids and children with her face turned westward toward the cliffs, which shelved down into a jutting peninsula. Here the low rocks reached far out into the sea, and then, sinking below the surface, showed like a black shadow through the blue waters. Thither she steered her way.

The bathing-woman, who was standing as sentinel behind a long row of curious, sand-ingrained, faded garments which, secured by stones, lay supine on the yellow sands, addressed her as she passed—

"Where be'ee going to, Miss?"

"To the rocks."

"Then plaze to mind the tide; her comes in powerful fast and strong out yonder. Don't 'ee go out tu far, miss. It's safe enough if yu'll be a bit careful."

Helen nodded. "She would be careful," she said, and strode on fast.

She toiled laboriously over the rough and broken shingle which intervened between the sands and those splendid rocks—her destination. Most girls would have been daunted by the obstacles of that long and painful walk, and would soon have turned back to join those comrades who were content with pleasures less difficult of access, but with Helen it was altogether otherwise. An impediment in her route was merely a thing to be surmounted; it was no barrier to stop her progress. When once that formidable possession of hers, her mind, was made up, her purpose, she had accustomed herself to consider, was inflexible.

She found the distance she had to traverse was far greater than she had anticipated, and it was long before she—tired, hot and footsore—reached the desired spot and sat down on the first low rock at hand to rest and look about her. The air was redolent of the breath of the sea; a bright breeze was blowing, which put a "sharp head" on the chopping waves, and cut them up into bustling, zig-zag ridges that splashed and broke continually against the rocks, and tossed and swayed the heavy layers of seaweed to and fro.

She was enjoying herself after a childish fashion, the warm transparent water was tempting. She rolled her sleeves up high, and knelling down before a pool and she plunged her hand and arm deep down among the seaweed and the stones. She was laughing at the awkward flight of a tiny crab when a call—a clear, loud call—startled her to her feet.

She stood up, raised her dripping, white hand to shade her eyes, and stared in the direction whence the sound had come. A little sailing-boat, in which were seated Mr. Jones and the gentleman whom Helen had seen before in the yellow-wheeled dog cart, was within twenty yards of her. It was the former of these two young men who had so unceremoniously hailed her.

"Hey, hey! You mustn't stay there—don't stay there!" he cried. "The tide has turned; in two minutes those gulleys behind you will be three feet deep. If you don't want a ducking, you had better hurry up, I can tell you."

Helen was dismayed; the situation was exasperating. She did not move: she stooped a little, to be sure that those dreadful feet of hers were concealed, and then she cast a hurried glance around. Where was that rock upon which she had stored her belongings? Alas, she had not marked the place, and now she could not find it.

"I say, don't wait!" cried the voice again. "You will be drowned. There isn't too much time to get across."

"Thank you—thank you," she called back, feebly. "I will go—I am going."

Still she did not move.

"What a good-looking girl!" said Mr. Jones's friend. "No wonder you rowed here ten thousand miles an hour when you saw her! She's a precious deal too pretty to drown. She has lost her head, though. Why don't she go on?"

"No fear of her losing her head," returned the other, with an unkind laugh. "we have told her what to expect, so if she wishes to be drowned she knows how to do it. She is as headstrong as 'an allegory.' If her manners matched her face she would do, but they don't."

"Poor thing! What has she done to you, Bertie? She has never jumped on you, has she? You are such a lucky chap, you expect to get all the roses and none of the thorns. She 'don't take no 'count of us,' as you say in Devon, for she has not budged an inch."

"She is a little fool," said Mr. Jones, shortly. "Turn the boat, Mason. We will bustle up and leave her."

After a mild protest his friend obeyed.

Tacking to the wind, the boat sailed down the bay, and landed its occupants on the shore below Noelcombe. Here the men separated, one disappearing in the direction of Newton, the other—after wandering rather aimlessly about the sands for a time—suddenly turned his face westward, and began to plod over the rough route which led to the reef of rocks.

Though Miss Helen Mitford was ungrateful and pig-headed, and though Mr. Jones thought it probable that he should shortly ask the gentle and pliable Lady Lucy Freemantle to marry him, yet he was interested to know what had become of that slender figure which he could still see, with his mind's eye, standing in the sunshine, with her beautiful wet hand and arm raised, and her earnest, startled eyes fixed on him. He had felt unreasonable anger at his companion's admiration of the girl, anger which he had directed upon her luckless head. He had spoken of her with unjustifiable rudeness; it was well for him that she had been out of earshot when he had done so; he could picture her face had she, by any unhappy chance, overheard his words.

If she had not flown at the first hint of danger, then she deserved praise for her pluck—not the condemnation for rashness which he had allotted her.

His head was overflowing with thoughts of her. His heart misgave him that he had not appreciated the daring bravery with which she had heard of her danger (a danger he had somewhat exaggerated), and steadily, calmly, courageously faced it.

Meanwhile, this calm, young heroine, as soon as the boat's head was turned away, cast custom and caution to the winds. The choice between dignity or drowning was not hard to make, between clothed feet or safety, seemliness or preservation, boots or death. Stumbling, clambering, slipping, she ran like a stag over the rocks, fording pools and gulleys recklessly in her panic, cutting and bruising her feet and accomplishing her painful retreat with wonderful celerity considering the difficulties of her path and her constant backward glances at the departing boat.

And so, presently, Mr. Jones saw the figure for which he was in search, approaching him, but most leisurely. How provokingly she dawdled; no house-laden snail ever crawled so slowly as she now advanced. Could it be that she recognized him, and from perversity, or coyness, or some unfathomable feminine coquetry, lingered for the mere purpose of annoying him?

The conclusion he naturally deduced from this delightfully unexpected shyness of hers, set his heart beating fast, he had taken her unawares, and thus learned the value of that indifferent manner which it had pleased her to adopt toward him. How exceedingly pretty she looked! Her downcast black-lashed eyes, her drooping head, that changing color of which he was the author, became her royalty; he would not spoil the picture by speaking and setting her at her ease. Even her voice, as she addressed him hurriedly by name, faltered—there was a deprecating cadence, new as it was sweet, in its tones. His late companion had accused him of desiring to possess, nay, more, of actually possessing "all the roses and none of the thorns"; this blushing rose had assuredly stripped off her prickles, and she was a rare blossom, the fairest of her sisters. His heart warmed to her, he would be most gentle, he would be unconscious of her constraint. But he must be cautious, it would not do to be too—there his resolutions failed him, for Miss Mitford, with a second rapid uncertain movement, sank down again into her former position on the shingle, flushing like Aurora.

It was his duty, of course, to follow her lead and seat himself beside her, and, late though it was, he felt no disinclination to do so. Leisurely, and with a kind smile, he placed himself beside her; his reception had flattered him, he was sure of himself.

"Trust in thyself—then spur amain" for wooing as for working is an excellent motto.

To give him his due he made himself very agreeable; how fluently he talked and how quietly she listened; she answered him but in soft monosyllables; he felt that he shone in conversation, she was evidently well satisfied with his society, for she made no attempt to move, she sat motionless as a statue. Fired by the troubled expression of her beautiful eyes—by the way, how her sweet face had grown in expression, the anxiety that ruffled her brow, the restlessness, a constraint betrayed by the way in which she toyed continually with some pebbles in her hand, were all new—he began to talk sentiment, it was not his way to be sentimental, he hardly knew what ailed him. Following her gaze across the sea, he began to descant on its beauties. Had she watched last night's sunset, the lights had been—what did that poet say? he was sure Miss Mitford knew whom he meant and what he meant—"day died like the dolphin." Yes, that was it. Had she seen a storm at sea? Viewed from the coast, he declared it to be a most glorious sight; he would give anything to be with her at Noelcombe when a real nor'easter was blowing, and the waves dashed roaring up against the rocks and drenched the cliffs a hundred feet aloft with spray. But she would be miserable; her kind heart would be with the sailors, and her thought of them would blind her eyes to the beauties of the storm. He was getting on fast; he was going ahead; to his comrade's unutterable relief, he suddenly drew out his watch and changed the subject.

"It is half-past 7," he announced carelessly; he thought that, perhaps, her watchless position had made her regardless of time. "At what a pace the time has gone!"

Every nerve in her body lustily negatived that remark, but she said:

"Yes, it is very, very late. Won't you" (timidly) "be late for dinner?"

"Yes," he returned with a regretful sigh; "unless we start at once, I shall probably get no dinner at all."

"Don't," she began with a sudden boldness; "please don't think it necessary to wait for me. I shall not go home for some time. I don't know when I shall go home—not for hours and hours."

"Then," he returned, gravely, "you mean to deprive me altogether of my dinner."

"But, surely, you have forgotten, you must go; it is the night of your ball."

He murmured something which the breaking of the waves drowned, but which was in reality a rash avowal of oblivion to the mundane matters of life under the present circumstances.

She smiled a bewilderindingly kind smile into his face.

"Good-by," she said, holding out her hand to him. "I won't allow you to stay for another moment. I should never forgive myself if you lost your dinner through your—your politeness, and don't you think—I'm sure—at least I think your people will want you and won't know where you are."

A pathetic, pleading note had become entangled in her hesitating tones. He took her cold little hand and held it tightly, answering her with some words apt and soft enough to repay her amply for her favor. He fancied that he knew a good deal about the ways of women, but this one puzzled him. Game so easy of acquisition was sport not worthy of the name. But the hand which he held, small and cold though it was struggled stoutly for freedom, so stoutly, indeed, that he released it.

Poor Helen; the failure, or rather the result of her final effort to rid herself of this unconscious aggressor overwhelmed her. She was disheartened, preplexed, and tired out. The incoming waves splashed dangerously near her; a few minutes more and her present position would be untenable. Her mouth quivered perceptibly, and the tears started to her eyes. Mr. Jones noticed these preliminaries with dismay; he had barely time to feel that matters were getting serious, and to reflect that the kissing away of these tears would be a blessed work, when her drowned gray eyes were turned tragically to his.

"Won't you go? Will nothing make you go?" she cried, pushing forth, for one moment, from beneath her serge skirt, a bare and bleeding foot at which she pointed with a pregnant gesture. "I have to walk all the way over these dreadful, dreadful stones barefoot. I could not find my—my boots or stockings when you frightened me; they were out there on the rocks; they have been washed away. Oh! you are laughing—how can you laugh?"

And the tears in her eyes welled over, and rolled slowly down her cheeks.

CHAPTER VII.

There's a divinity that shapes our ends.
Rough-hew them how we will.
SHAKSPEARE.

But if Mr. Jones had smiled, the smile arose from a desire to screen an inevitable chagrin, rather than from any sense of humor at the situation, and at her words he became grave as a judge. Indeed, he felt as little inclined to laugh as did Helen herself at that moment, for he was disagreeably conscious of having played the coxcomb in his thoughts. Had ever man more grievously misread a manner? And yet he was glad—yes, glad that he had been mistaken, and that this young person differed from that vast tribe of *demoiselles a marier*, who advanced uninvited from all corners, and at all stages of his life, to meet him.

At the sight of her distress, he forgot himself; such a lapse of memory was not quite of so rare an occurence with Mr. Jones as with the majority of his sex. Divesting himself instantly of that gallant air which embarrassed her, with considerable tact and kindliness he soothed Helen into taking a less hopeless view of her position; and when her tears were dried and she was composed, she found that he had again opened a road through which she could escape from a dilemma.

"But I am giving you so much trouble; you are so kind," she faltered.

"Trouble? Nonsense, its no trouble at all. I was going into the village, anyway. I shall get up to your place in no time, and explain what has happened. You stay quietly here; no, not just here, but a dozen yards further in. Get up; give me your hands; lean on me, that's right. Bah! how those beastly stones hurt you. There, you're all safe now, and the tide won't be in for an hour. Don't move, and I will undertake that your maid shall bring your shoes and stockings before you know where you are. No, don't thank me, it's absurd. You know it was all my fault for scaring you out of your life on the rocks. Good-bye, till to-morrow. I wish"—pressing the hand he held suddenly and firmly—"I wish to heaven that you were coming to our dance to-night."

But before he had reached Noelcombe, when his young blood had had time to cool, and when the extraordinary influence of the girl's presence was removed, he was no longer sure of the truth of that forcibly expressed desire, for he remembered Lady Lucy to whom he had already engaged himself for half-a-dozen dances, and to whom he quite intended to engage himself for life.

Some time later that evening, Miss Elizabeth Mitford, her spectacles upon her hose, was delicately perambulating her dewy lawn, with her upgathered skirts in one hand and a jam-pot containing a deadly solution of salt and water in the other. The passion of her nationality, the thirst for sport, shone in her eager, downcast eyes.

"Auntie, let those wretched slugs live on for just one more night," she said; her suggestions were apt to fall from her autocratic lips in the guise of commands. "Come over here, and look at the sea and let me talk to you. When you are slug-hunting, you never hear a word I say."

Thus adjured, the disturbed sportswoman drew herself upright by a stiff effort, and with a guilty confusion turned to her niece.

"My love, I did not see you, I thought you were in the drawing-room singing that odd song of yours. or I should not have come out here. How," anxiously, "are you poor, dear feet?"

Helen looked down critically at those invalids which were roaming within her aunt's capacious house boots—cloth boots, they were capped with patent leather, lined with scarlet flannel, side laced, devoid of heels and roomy.

"Oh, they are all right now, Auntie, they don't hurt at all, I had forgotten them. I assure you, it is awful when they press their identity on one—as mine did upon me on the beach."

"Mr. Jones is a most kind-hearted person, Helen."

The girl had turned aside to pick a crimson rose from the tree behind her, which she placed in the bosom of her gown; she was humming very softly

"It may draw you a tear
Or a box on the ear,
You can never be sure till you've tried."

"I learned both the value of boots and of messengers," she answered, watching the sky.

Though Miss Elizabeth had obediently joined Helen, her eyes were not on that miraculous and glorious panorama of changing color to which they had been directed but had crept down to the hunting ground at her feet.

"Auntie," in a slow, low-pitched tone, "were you ever in love?"

Miss Elizabeth, scrutinizing the lawn, said, with a pre-occupied air.

"What did you say, my dear?"

"Were you ever in love?"

"Oh, yes, my dear, to be sure I was."

"Then you fell in love?"

"Yes, yes, certainly I did."

"Well?" inquisitively.

No answer.

"Well, Auntie?" a little louder, and persuasively.

"Well—what—my dear!"

"What happened when you were in love?"

"Nothing which I can at this moment recollect, Helen."

"Then you were not engaged?"

"Yes, indeed, I was engaged for nearly a year, love. It was an anxious time and Thomas jilted me."

Helen drew in her breath and flushed. Her curiosity had inflicted a wound on this poor lady, who must yet be made of tough material for she had been jilted, jilted, jilted, and yet her outraged pride had not killed her! Helen, in her angry distress, could not speak, but the victim of the wrong manifested no agitation, she went on commenting on the circumstance with serene complaisance.

"Dear me, Helen, you have no notion how unpleasant it all seemed, and how foolishly I fretted. It is hard to foresee in a present distress a future gain. Providence was very good to me. The poor thing for whom he jilted me became his wife—a position I was ignorant enough to envy her. She has had a hard life, for he made a most uncomfortable and selfish husband, while I, my dear, have spent the autumn of my happy life without a care. My love, the adoption of a life-partner is too great a risk to be willingly undertaken by any one except those who are fearless through the inexperience of their extreme youth. * * * My goodness me! Helen, there, look, upon the stalk of that tender picotee? Do you see it? Rapacious little wretch! I must secure him." And she ran back to recommence her engrossing occupation. Then Helen re-entered the little porch and a few moments later the sound of music reached Miss Elizabeth through the open window. Helen was singing a new song, unfamiliar to the household.

Upon the following afternoon the younger Miss Mitford, looking as sweet and fresh and fair as the flowers around her, was fidgeting about the grass plot as she waited for the carriage which Lady Jones had promised should call at four o'clock to pick her up on its way to Rivers Meet. She wore, with sad extravagence, her very best gown, a thin electric cotton that matched the color of her eyes, and clad in which she looked her best, and knew it. In her waistbelt she had carefully stored a whole *parterre* of her aunt's choicest carnations; her nut-brown lovelocks were arranged to perfection beneath the broad brim of her hat.

"Too-to-to-too-toot!" the stirring and lively call of a horn, the rumble of wheels, the sharp trot of horses' hoofs, the jingling of harness precursed the arrival of the Jones' coach, which presently, loaded with a boisterous, laughing, happy crew, drew up alongside the door of Carnation Cottage.

Neither Lady Jones nor her son were among the party, but a girl, whom Helen afterwards learned to be Patricia Jones, called out, listlessly:

"How do you do?" following the question by the advice to "Get up as fast as possible, for the horses won't stand."

So Helen mounted the steps precipitately and squeezed herself into the small space on the third seat back, whither she was directed—a little abashed at finding herself the one outsider among a party of inmates—a position seldom enviable. Her happy faculty of easy enjoyment served her in good stead during that drive, for, more from lack of invitation than want of inclination, she took small part in that "feast of reason and flow of soul" floating around her. She was in the habit of taking her stand in the foreground of the scene; here she was unceremoniously thrust into the background, and subsequently ignored—no doubt a wholesome though an unpalatable experience for the damsel, who, however, laughed at such witticisms as she heard, observed the company, and craned her neck first on one side, then on the other, to catch a full sight of the surrounding country, and culled plenty of pleasure from so doing. Patricia, Anastasia, and the other half-dozen girls were fully occupied with their respective swains, and the aftermath of the previous night's flirtations was being cropped on all sides.

The young man whom Helen had seen with Mr. Jones in the boat was driving, and by his side on the box-seat Anastasia sat; such attention as he could spare from the team, which required careful handling over the Devon roads, she engrossed.

Once, afid once only, Patricia addressed her silent guest—

"I'm afraid you have not much room, Miss Mitford. My brother said you would go in the landau with my mother, and she forgot all about you and started an hour ago." Then, turning to the man next her, she went on—"Bertie drove Lady Lucy in the dogcart; she was more than half afraid, but he insisted."

"Have they settled it?" he asked, with that sort of smile which flickers only over one "it."

Miss Jones shrugged her high, broad shoulders.

"Bertie is like all the rest of you, Sir Edwin," she returned—"doesn't know his own mind. The fact is he is an unconscionable flirt, though if one told him so he wouldn't believe it."

The gentleman addressed murmured some response, at which Patricia's rosy cheeks grew rosier, and to which she retorted with gratified smiles.

Helen was an unsympathetic observer of these soft passages; her lips hardened a little. "They are all making fools of themselves—every one," she thought, and she plumed herself on her superiority to these weaknesses.

Up and down the heaving country the strong team of hill-trained horses trotted fast. The air fanned a color into Helen's cheeks, and brightened her eyes. The chaperon of the party was a girl, little older than Helen herself, whose husband was Helen's neighbor, and who, before they reached their destination, fell into a broken conversation with her. When they alighted at Rivers Meet he elected to constitute himself her companion, and though he was heavy, dull, and universally discontented, she was compelled to accept his proffered society, as it seemed to be a choice between him as her squire or no one. Thus she spent the greater part of the time with him, trying conscientiously to amuse and interest him, but failing obviously. She received a careless smile and pre-occupied greeting from her young host. He did not speak to her; his presence was in great demand. A girl with a weak, inanimate face, whom Helen heard addressed as Lady Lucy, was always by his side, and he seemed to bestow some of that superfluous energy of his upon the arrangement of the picnic, for the servants were flying to and fro at his behests.

Now this wise young man had read "the books of woman's looks rather deeply; he knew the feminine weakness that desires everything except that one thing which she possesses, that values nothing which she owns, but ever casts a covetous eye upon the unattainable, and so, though with considerable reluctance, he scrupulously neglected Helen. The picnic part of the entertainment was worthy of its source—iced drinks with startling names; sandwiches, cool, curious and unwholesome; tea, coffee, sugared and almonded cakes, bon-bons, and tea-table accessories beloved of women were pressed upon the guests by troops of servants. No man need stir a finger on his comrade's behalf, and therefore the men for once in a way, enjoyed a picnic.

"That is the muster, old chap," said Helen's squire with alacrity, addressing Mr. Jones. "Come along, Miss Mitford, you and I must be off. Awfully noisy place this—Niagara not in it. Shan't be sorry to get into the quiet. See you again. Good-bye. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, Jack," said he, "but it isn't good-bye to Miss Mitford. If she will allow me, I am to have the pleasure of driving her back in my cart. Lady Lucy fancies there is going to be a thunderstorm, so she has booked for the landau, and I can't be such a brute as to sunder any of the couples on the coach."

By this speech Mr. Jones had shown the subtlety of the serpent; by his indifferent, but incontestable invitation, he precluded the possibility of Helen's either refusing his escort or guessing at what pains he had been in perfecting the present arrangement. To which arrangement she acquiesced quite graciously—her pride would not allow her to wince beneath the punishment of her vanity.

"Will you go down and see the start, Miss Mitford? Or will you come a hundred yards higher up the stream and have a look at the pools?"

She hesitated; she had no inclination to see the start, she had no interest in her late companions. Mr. Jones read her silence to his liking.

"We won't see them off. Good-bye's are melancholy duties, you are quite right. Come along down this path, it's not far," and he led the way through the bracken, "but such a ripping place when you get there. We have plenty of time, I am going to drive you home by the New Cut round the Great Tor—it is a shorter way than the way you came, but the road isn't safe for coaching. You want a good head and a steady nerve to appreciate the view, but you possess both, I know."

To this locality Bertie guided his companion.

"Isn't this ripping?" said he, leaning against the rock, upon a ledge of which she had seated herself. "I wanted you to see the pools. I knew you would like Rivers Meet. Just look and listen, I won't talk to you. A human voice or a human being is superfluous here. We are too insignificant to assert ourselves; we ought to take back seats and keep quiet."

(To be Continued.)