

CHAPTER XXXIV - A WAY IS FOUND FOR TOMMY

The moment for which he had tried to prepare himself was come, and Tommy gulped down his courage, which had risen suddenly to his mouth, leaving his chest in a panic. Outwardly he seemed unmoved, but within he was beating to arms. "This is the test of us!" all that was good in him cried as it answered his summons.

They began by shaking hands, as is always the custom in the ring. Then, without any preliminary sparring, Lady Pippinworth immediately knocked him down; that is to say, she remarked, with a little laugh: "How very stout you are getting!"

I swear by all the gods that it was untrue. He had not got very stout, though undeniably he had got stouter. "How well you are looking!" would have been a very ladylike way of saying it, but his girth was best not referred to at all. Those who liked him had learned this long ago, and Grizel always shifted the buttons without comment.

Her malicious Ladyship had found his one weak spot at once. He had a reply ready for every other opening in the English tongue, but now he could writhe only.

Who would have expected to meet her here? he said at last feebly. She explained, and he had guessed it already, that she was again staying with the Rintouls; the castle, indeed, was not half a mile from where they stood.

"But I think I really came to see you," she informed him, with engaging frankness.

It was very good of her, he intimated stiffly; but the stiffness was chiefly because she was still looking in an irritating way at his waist.

Suddenly she looked up. To Tommy it was as if she had raised the siege. "Why aren't you nice to me?" she asked prettily.

"I want to be," he replied.

She showed him a way. "When I saw you steaming towards the castle so swiftly," she said, dropping badinage, "the hope entered my head that you had heard of my arrival."

She had come a step nearer, and it was like an invitation to return to the harbour. "This is the test of us!" all that was good in Tommy cried once more to him.

"No, I had not heard," he replied, bravely if baldly. "I was taking a smart walk only."

"Why so smart as that?"

He hesitated, and her eyes left his face and travelled downward.

"Were you trying to walk it off?" she asked sympathetically.

He was stung, and replied in words that were regretted as soon as spoken: "I was trying to walk you off."

A smile of satisfaction crossed her impudent face.

"I succeeded," he added sharply.

"How cruel of you to say so, when you had made me so very happy! Do you often take smart walks, Mr. Sandys?"

"Often."

"And always with me?"

"I leave you behind."

"With Mrs. Sandys?"

Had she seemed to be in the least affected by their meeting it would have been easy to him to be a contrite man at once; any sign of shame on her part would have filled him with desire to take all the blame upon himself. Had she cut him dead, he would have begun to respect her. But she smiled disdainfully only, and stood winking. She was still, as ever, a cold passion, inviting his warm ones to leap at it. He shuddered a little, but controlled himself and did not answer her.

"I suppose she is the lady of the harbour?" Lady Pippinworth inquired, with mild interest.

"She is the lady of my heart," Tommy replied valiantly.

"Alas!" said Lady Pippinworth, putting her hand over her own.

But he felt himself more secure now, and could even smile at the woman for thinking she was able to provoke him.

"Look upon me," she requested, "as a deputation sent north to discover why you have gone into hiding."

"I suppose a country life does seem exile to you," he replied calmly, and suddenly his bosom rose with pride in what was coming. Tommy always heard his finest things coming a moment before they came. "If I have retired," he went on windily, "from the insincerities and glitter of life in town,"--but it was not his face she was looking at, it was his waist,--"the reason is obvious," he rapped out.

She nodded assent without raising her eyes.

Yet he still controlled himself. His waist, like some fair tortured lady of romance, was calling to his knighthood for defence, but with the truer courage he affected not to hear. "I am in hiding, as you call it," he said doggedly, "because my life here is such a round of happiness as I never hoped to find on earth, and I owe it all to my wife. If you don't believe me, ask Lord or Lady Rintoul, or any other person in this countryside who knows her."

But her Ladyship had already asked, and been annoyed by the answer.

She assured Tommy that she believed he was happy. "I have often heard," she said musingly, "that the stout people are the happiest."

"I am not so stout," he barked.

"Now I call that brave of you," said she, admiringly. "That is so much the wisest way to take it. And I am sure you are right not to return to town after what you were; it would be a pity. Somehow it"--and again her eyes were on the wrong place--"it does not seem to go with the books. And yet," she said philosophically, "I daresay you feel just the same?"

"I feel very much the same," he replied warningly.

"That is the tragedy of it," said she.

She told him that the new book had brought the Tommy Society to life again. "And it could not hold its meetings with the old enthusiasm, could it," she asked sweetly, "if you came back? Oh, I think you act most

judiciously. Fancy how melancholy if they had to announce that the society had been wound up, owing to the stoutness of the Master."

Tommy's mouth opened twice before any words could come out. "Take care!" he cried.

"Of what?" said she, curling her lip.

He begged her pardon. "You don't like me, Lady Pippinworth," he said, watching himself, "and I don't wonder at it; and you have discovered a way of hurting me of which you make rather unmerciful use. Well, I don't wonder at that, either. If I am--stoutish, I have at least the satisfaction of knowing that it gives you entertainment, and I owe you that amend and more." He was really in a fury, and burning to go on--"For I did have the whip-hand of you once, madam," etc., etc.; but by a fine effort he held his rage a prisoner, and the admiration of himself that this engendered lifted him into the sublime.

"For I so far forgot myself," said Tommy, in a glow, "as to try to make you love me. You were beautiful and cold; no man had ever stirred you; my one excuse is that to be loved by such as you was no small ambition; my fitting punishment is that I failed." He knew he had not failed, and so could be magnanimous. "I failed utterly," he said, with grandeur. "You were laughing at me all the time; if proof of it were needed, you have given it now by coming here to mock me. I thought I was stronger than you, but I was ludicrously mistaken, and you taught me a lesson I richly deserved; you did me good, and I thank you for it. Believe me, Lady Pippinworth, when I say that I admit my discomfiture, and remain your very humble and humbled servant."

Now was not that good of Tommy? You would think it still better were I to tell you what part of his person she was looking at while he said it.

He held out his hand generously (there was no noble act he could not have performed for her just now), but, whatever her Ladyship wanted, it was not to say good-bye. "Do you mean that you never cared for me?" she asked, with the tremor that always made Tommy kind.

"Never cared for you!" he exclaimed fervently. "What were you not to me in those golden days!" It was really a magnanimous cry, meant to help her self-respect, nothing more; but it alarmed the good in him, and he

said sternly: "But of course that is all over now. It is only a sweet memory," he added, to make these two remarks mix.

The sentiment of this was so agreeable to him that he was half thinking of raising her hand chivalrously to his lips when Lady Pippinworth said:

"But if it is all over now, why have you still to walk me off?"

"Have you never had to walk me off?" said Tommy, forgetting himself, and, to his surprise, she answered, "Yes."

"But this meeting has cured me," she said, with dangerous graciousness.

"Dear Lady Pippinworth," replied Tommy, ardently, thinking that his generosity had touched her, "if anything I have said----"

"It is not so much what you have said," she answered, and again she looked at the wrong part of him.

He gave way in the waist, and then drew himself up. "If so little a thing as that helps you----" he began haughtily.

"Little!" she cried reproachfully.

He tried to go away. He turned. "There was a time," he thundered.

"It is over," said she.

"When you were at my feet," said Tommy.

"It is over," she said.

"It could come again!"

She laughed a contemptuous No.

"Yes!" Tommy cried.

"Too stout," said she, with a drawl.

He went closer to her. She stood waiting disdainfully, and his arms fell.

"Too stout," she repeated.

"Let us put it in that way, since it pleases you," said Tommy, heavily. "I am too stout." He could not help adding, "And be thankful, Lady

Pippinworth, let us both be thankful, that there is some reason to prevent my trying."

She bowed mockingly as he raised his hat. "I wish you well," he said, "and these are my last words to you"; and he retired, not without distinction. He retired, shall we say, as conscious of his waist as if it were some poor soldier he was supporting from a stricken field. He said many things to himself on the way home, and he was many Tommies, but all with the same waist. It intruded on his noblest reflections, and kept ringing up the worst in him like some devil at the telephone.

No one could have been more thankful that on the whole he had kept his passions in check. It made a strong man of him. It turned him into a joyous boy, and he tingled with hurrahs. Then suddenly he would hear that jeering bell clanging, "Too stout, too stout." "Take care!" he roared. Oh, the vanity of Tommy!

He did not tell Grizel that he had met her Ladyship. All she knew was that he came back to her more tender and kind, if that were possible, than he had gone away. His eyes followed her about the room until she made merry over it, and still they dwelt upon her. "How much more beautiful you are than any other woman I ever saw, Grizel!" he said. And it was not only true, but he knew it was true. What was Lady Pippinworth beside this glorious woman? what was her damnable coldness compared to the love of Grizel? Was he unforgivable, or was it some flaw in the making of him for which he was not responsible? With clenched hands he asked himself these questions. This love that all his books were about--what was it? Was it a compromise between affection and passion countenanced by God for the continuance of the race, made beautiful by Him where the ingredients are in right proportion, a flower springing from a soil that is not all divine? Oh, so exquisite a flower! he cried, for he knew his Grizel. But he could not love her. He gave her all his affection, but his passion, like an outlaw, had ever to hunt alone.

Was it that? And if it was, did there remain in him enough of humanity to give him the right to ask a little sympathy of those who can love? So Tommy in his despairing moods, and the question ought to find some place in his epitaph, which, by the way, it is almost time to write.

On the day following his meeting with Lady Pippinworth came a note from Lady Rintoul inviting Grizel and him to lunch. They had been to Rintoul once or twice before, but this time Tommy said decisively, "We

sha'n't go." He guessed who had prompted the invitation, though her name was not mentioned in it.

"Why not?" Grizel asked. She was always afraid that she kept Tommy too much to herself.

"Because I object to being disturbed during the honeymoon," he replied lightly. Their honeymoon, you know, was never to end. "They would separate us for hours, Grizel. Think of it! But, pooh! the thing is not to be thought of. Tell her Ladyship courteously that she must be mad."

But though he could speak thus to Grizel, there came to him tempestuous desires to be by the side of the woman who could mock him and then stand waiting.

Had she shown any fear of him all would have been well with Tommy; he could have kept away from her complacently. But she had flung down the glove, and laughed to see him edge away from it. He knew exactly what was in her mind. He was too clever not to know that her one desire was to make him a miserable man; to remember how he had subdued and left her would be gall to Lady Pippinworth until she achieved the same triumph over him. How confident she was that he could never prove the stronger of the two again! What were all her mockings but a beckoning to him to come on? "Take care!" said Tommy between his teeth.

And then again horror of himself would come to his rescue. The man he had been a moment ago was vile to him, and all his thoughts were now heroic. You may remember that he had once taken Grizel to a seaside place; they went there again. It was Tommy's proposal, but he did not go to flee from temptation; however his worse nature had been stirred and his vanity pricked, he was too determinedly Grizel's to fear that in any fierce hour he might rush into danger. He wanted Grizel to come away from the place where she always found so much to do for him, so that there might be the more for him to do for her. And that week was as the time they had spent there before. All that devotion which had to be planned could do for woman he did. Grizel saw him planning it and never admitted that she saw. In the after years it was sweet to her to recall that week and the hundred laboriously lover-like things Tommy had done in it. She knew by this time that Tommy had never tried to make her love him, and that it was only when her love for him revealed itself in the Den that desire to save her pride made him pretend to be in love with her.

This knowledge would have been a great pain to her once, but now it had more of pleasure in it, for it showed that even in those days he had struggled a little for her.

We must hasten to the end. Those of you who took in the newspapers a quarter of a century ago know what it was, but none of you know why he climbed the wall.

They returned to Thrums in a week. They had meant to stay longer, but suddenly Tommy wanted to go back. Yes, it was Lady Pippinworth who recalled him, but don't think too meanly of Tommy. It was not that he yielded to one of those fierce desires to lift the gauntlet; he had got rid of them in fair fight when her letter reached him, forwarded from Thrums. "Did you really think your manuscript was lost?" it said. That was what took Tommy back. Grizel did not know the reason; he gave her another. He thought very little about her that day. He thought still less about Lady Pippinworth. How could he think of anything but it? She had it, evidently she had it; she must have stolen it from his bag. He could not even spare time to denounce her. It was alive--his manuscript was alive, and every moment brought him nearer to it. He was a miser, and soon his hands would be deep among the gold. He was a mother whose son, mourned for dead, is knocking at the door. He was a swain, and his beloved's arms were outstretched to him. Who said that Tommy could not love?

The ecstasies that came over him and would not let him sit still made Grizel wonder. "Is it a book?" she asked; and he said it was a book--such a book, Grizel! When he started for the castle next morning, she thought he wanted to be alone to think of the book. "Of it and you," he said; and having started, he came back to kiss her again; he never forgot to have an impulse to do that. But all the way to the Spittal it was of his book he thought, it was his book he was kissing. His heart sang within him, and the songs were sonnets to his beloved. To be worthy of his beautiful manuscript--he prayed for that as lovers do; that his love should be his, his alone, was as wondrous to him as to any of them.

But we are not noticing what proved to be the chief thing. Though there was some sun, the air was shrewd, and he was wearing the old doctor's coat. Should you have taken it with you, Tommy? It loved Grizel, for it was a bit of him; and what, think you, would the old doctor have cared for your manuscript had he known that you were gone out to meet that

woman? It was cruel, no, not cruel, but thoughtless, to wear the old doctor's coat.

He found no one at the Spittal. The men were out shooting, and the ladies had followed to lunch with them on the moors. He came upon them, a gay party, in the hollow of a hill where was a spring suddenly converted into a wine-cellar; and soon the men, if not the ladies, were surprised to find that Tommy could be the gayest of them all. He was in hilarious spirits, and had a gallantly forgiving glance for the only one of them who knew why his spirits were hilarious. But he would not consent to remain to dinner. "The wretch is so hopelessly in love with his wife," Lady Rintoul said, flinging a twig of heather at him. It was one of the many trivial things said on that occasion and long remembered; the only person who afterwards professed her inability to remember what Tommy said to her that day, and she to him, was Lady Pippinworth. "And yet you walked back to the castle with him," they reminded her.

"If I had known that anything was to happen," she replied indolently, "I should have taken more note of what was said. But as it was, I think we talked of our chance of finding white heather. We were looking for it, and that is why we fell behind you."

That was not why Tommy and her Ladyship fell behind the others, and it was not of white heather that they talked. "You know why I am here, Alice," he said, as soon as there was no one but her to hear him.

She was in as great tension at that moment as he, but more anxious not to show it. "Why do you call me that?" she replied, with a little laugh.

"Because I want you to know at once," he said, and it was the truth, "that I have no vindictive feelings. You have kept my manuscript from me all this time, but, severe though the punishment has been, I deserved it, yes, every day of it."

Lady Pippinworth smiled.

"You took it from my bag, did you not?" said Tommy.

"Yes."

"Where is it, Alice? Have you got it here?"

"No."

"But you know where it is?"

"Oh, yes," she said graciously, and then it seemed that nothing could ever disturb him again. She enjoyed his boyish glee; she walked by his side listening airily to it.

"Had there been a fire in the room that day I should have burned the thing," she said without emotion.

"It would have been no more than my deserts," Tommy replied cheerfully.

"I did burn it three months afterwards," said she, calmly.

He stopped, but she walked on. He sprang after her. "You don't mean that, Alice!"

"I do mean it."

With a gesture fierce and yet imploring, he compelled her to stop. "Before God, is this true?" he cried.

"Yes," she said, "it is true"; and, indeed, it was the truth about his manuscript at last.

"But you had a copy of it made first. Say you had!"

"I had not."

She seemed to have no fear of him, though his face was rather terrible. "I meant to destroy it from the first," she said coldly, "but I was afraid to. I took it back with me to London. One day I read in a paper that your wife was supposed to have burned it while she was insane. She was insane, was she not? Ah, well, that is not my affair; but I burned it for her that afternoon."

They were moving on again. He stopped her once more.

"Why have you told me this?" he cried. "Was it not enough for you that I should think she did it?"

"No," Lady Pippinworth answered, "that was not enough for me. I always wanted you to know that I had done it."

"And you wrote that letter, you filled me with joy, so that you should gloat over my disappointment?"

"Horrid of me, was it not!" said she.

"Why did you not tell me when we met the other day?"

"I bided my time, as the tragedians say."

"You would not have told me," Tommy said, staring into her face, "if you had thought I cared for you. Had you thought I cared for you a little jot--"

"I should have waited," she confessed, "until you cared for me a great deal, and then I should have told you. That, I admit, was my intention."

She had returned his gaze smilingly, and as she strolled on she gave him another smile over her shoulder; it became a protesting pout almost when she saw that he was not accompanying her. Tommy stood still for some minutes, his hands, his teeth, every bit of him that could close, tight clenched. When he made up on her, the devil was in him. She had been gathering a nosegay of wild flowers. "Pretty, are they not?" she said to him. He took hold of her harshly by both wrists. She let him do it, and stood waiting disdainfully; but she was less unprepared for a blow than for what came.

"How you love me, Alice!" he said in a voice shaking with passion.

"How I have proved it!" she replied promptly.

"Love or hate," he went on in a torrent of words, "they are the same thing with you. I don't care what you call it; it has made you come back to me. You tried hard to stay away. How you fought, Alice! but you had to come. I knew you would come. All this time you have been longing for me to go to you. You have stamped your pretty feet because I did not go. You have cried, 'He shall come!' You have vowed you would not go one step of the way to meet me. I saw you, I heard you, and I wanted you as much as you wanted me; but I was always the stronger, and I could resist. It is I who have not gone a step towards you, and it is my proud little Alice who has come all the way. Proud little Alice!--but she is to be my obedient little Alice now."

His passion hurled him along, and it had its effect on her. She might curl her mouth as she chose, but her bosom rose and fell.

"Obedient?" she cried, with a laugh.

"Obedient!" said Tommy, quivering with his intensity. "Obedient, not because I want it, for I prefer you as you are, but because you are longing for it, my lady--because it is what you came here for. You have been a virago only because you feared you were not to get it. Why have you grown so quiet, Alice? Where are the words you want to torment me with? Say them! I love to hear them from your lips. I love the demon in you--the demon that burned my book. I love you the more for that. It was your love that made you do it. Why don't you scratch and struggle for the last time? I am half sorry that little Alice is to scratch and struggle no more."

"Go on," said little Alice; "you talk beautifully." But though her tongue could mock him, all the rest of her was enchained.

"Whether I shall love you when you are tamed," he went on with vehemence, "I don't know. You must take the risk of that. But I love you now. We were made for one another, you and I, and I love you, Alice--I love you and you love me. You love me, my peerless Alice, don't you? Say you love me. Your melting eyes are saying it. How you tremble, sweet Alice! Is that your way of saying it? I want to hear you say it. You have been longing to say it for two years. Come, love, say it now!"

It was not within this woman's power to resist him. She tried to draw away from him, but could not. She was breathing quickly. The mocking light quivered on her face only because it had been there so long. If it went out she would be helpless. He put his hands on her shoulders, and she was helpless. It brought her mouth nearer his. She was offering him her mouth.

"No," said Tommy, masterfully. "I won't kiss you until you say it."

If there had not been a look of triumph in his eyes, she would have said it. As it was, she broke from him, panting. She laughed next minute, and with that laugh his power fell among the heather.

"Really," said Lady Pippinworth, "you are much too stout for this kind of thing." She looked him up and down with a comic sigh. "You talk as well as ever," she said condolingly, "but heigh-ho, you don't look the same. I have done the best I could for you for the sake of old times, but I forgot to shut my eyes. Shall we go on?"

And they went on silently, one of them very white. "I believe you are blaming me," her Ladyship said, making a face, just before they overtook the others, "when you know it was your own fault for"--she suddenly rippled--"for not waiting until it was too dark for me to see you!"

They strolled with some others of the party to the flower-garden, which was some distance from the house, and surrounded by a high wall studded with iron spikes and glass. Lady Rintoul cut him some flowers for Grizel, but he left them on a garden-seat--accidentally, everyone thought afterwards in the drawing-room when they were missed; but he had laid them down, because how could those degraded hands of his carry flowers again to Grizel? There was great remorse in him, but there was a shrieking vanity also, and though the one told him to be gone, the other kept him lagging on. They had torn him a dozen times from each other's arms before he was man enough to go.

It was gloaming when he set off, waving his hat to those who had come to the door with him. Lady Pippinworth was not among them; he had not seen her to bid her good-bye, nor wanted to, for the better side of him had prevailed--so he thought. It was a man shame-stricken and determined to kill the devil in him that went down that long avenue--so he thought.

A tall, thin woman was standing some twenty yards off, among some holly-trees. She kissed her hand mockingly to him, and beckoned and laughed when he stood irresolute. He thought he heard her cry, "Too stout!" He took some fierce steps towards her. She ran on, looking over her shoulder, and he forgot all else and followed her. She darted into the flower-garden, pulling the gate to after her. It was a gate that locked when it closed, and the key was gone. Lady Pippinworth clapped her hands because he could not reach her. When she saw that he was climbing the wall she ran farther into the garden.

He climbed the wall, but, as he was descending, one of the iron spikes on the top of it pierced his coat, which was buttoned to the throat, and he hung there by the neck. He struggled as he choked, but he could not help himself. He was unable to cry out. The collar of the old doctor's coat held him fast.

They say that in such a moment a man reviews all his past life. I don't know whether Tommy did that; but his last reflection before he passed

into unconsciousness was "Serves me right!" Perhaps it was only a little bit of sentiment for the end.

Lady Disdain came back to the gate, by and by, to see why he had not followed her. She screamed and then hid in the recesses of the garden. He had been dead for some time when they found him. They left the gate creaking in the evening wind. After a long time a terrified woman stole out by it.

CHAPTER XXXV - THE PERFECT LOVER

Tommy has not lasted. More than once since it became known that I was writing his life I have been asked whether there ever really was such a person, and I am afraid to inquire for his books at the library lest they are no longer there. A recent project to bring out a new edition, with introductions by some other Tommy, received so little support that it fell to the ground. It must be admitted that, so far as the great public is concerned, Thomas Sandys is done for.

They have even forgotten the manner of his death, though probably no young writer with an eye on posterity ever had a better send-off. We really thought at the time that Tommy had found a way.

The surmise at Rintoul, immediately accepted by the world as a fact, was that he had been climbing the wall to obtain for Grizel the flowers accidentally left in the garden, and it at once tipped the tragedy with gold. The newspapers, which were in the middle of the dull season, thanked their gods for Tommy, and enthusiastically set to work on him. Great minds wrote criticisms of what they called his life-work. The many persons who had been the first to discover him said so again. His friends were in demand for the most trivial reminiscences. Unhappy Pym cleared £11 10s.

Shall we quote? It is nearly always done at this stage of the biography, so now for the testimonials to prove that our hero was without a flaw. A few specimens will suffice if we select some that are very like many of the others. It keeps Grizel waiting, but Tommy, as you have seen, was always the great one; she existed only that he might show how great he was. "Busy among us of late," says one, "has been the grim visitor who knocks with equal confidence at the doors of the gifted and the ungifted, the pauper and the prince, and twice in one short month has he taken from us men of an eminence greater perhaps than that of Mr. Sandys; but of them it could be said their work was finished, while his sun sinks tragically when it is yet day. Not by what his riper years might have achieved can this pure, spirit now be judged, and to us, we confess, there is something infinitely pathetic in that thought. We would fain shut our eyes, and open them again at twenty years hence, with Mr. Sandys in the fulness of his powers. It is not to be. What he might have become is hidden from us; what he was we know. He was little more than a stripling when he 'burst upon the town' to be its marvel--and to die; a

'marvellous boy' indeed; yet how unlike in character and in the nobility of his short life, as in the mournful yet lovely circumstances of his death, to that other Might-Have-Been who 'perished in his pride.' Our young men of letters have travelled far since the days of Chatterton. Time was when a riotous life was considered part of their calling--when they shunned the domestic ties and actually held that the consummate artist is able to love nothing but the creations of his fancy. It is such men as Thomas Sandys who have exploded that pernicious fallacy....

"Whether his name will march down the ages is not for us, his contemporaries, to determine. He had the most modest opinion of his own work, and was humbled rather than elated when he heard it praised. No one ever loved praise less; to be pointed at as a man of distinction was abhorrent to his shrinking nature; he seldom, indeed, knew that he was being pointed at, for his eyes were ever on the ground. He set no great store by the remarkable popularity of his works. 'Nothing,' he has been heard to say to one of those gushing ladies who were his aversion, 'nothing will so certainly perish as the talk of the town.' It may be so, but if so, the greater the pity that he has gone from among us before he had time to put the coping-stone upon his work. There is a beautiful passage in one of his own books in which he sees the spirits of gallant youth who died too young for immortality haunting the portals of the Elysian Fields, and the great shades come to the portal and talk with them. We venture to say that he is at least one of these."

What was the individuality behind the work? They discussed it in leading articles and in the correspondence columns, and the man proved to be greater than his books. His distaste for admiration is again and again insisted on and illustrated by many characteristic anecdotes. He owed much to his parents, though he had the misfortune to lose them when he was but a child. "Little is known of his father, but we understand that he was a retired military officer in easy circumstances. The mother was a canny Scotchwoman of lowly birth, conspicuous for her devoutness even in a land where it is everyone's birthright, and on their marriage, which was a singularly happy one, they settled in London, going little into society, the world forgetting, by the world forgot, and devoting themselves to each other and to their two children. Of these Thomas was the elder, and as the twig was early bent so did the tree incline. From his earliest years he was noted for the modesty which those who remember his boyhood in Scotland (whither the children went to an uncle on the death

of their parents) still speak of with glistening eyes. In another column will be found some interesting recollections of Mr. Sandys by his old schoolmaster, Mr. David Cathro, M.A., who testifies with natural pride to the industry and amiability of his famous pupil. 'To know him,' says Mr. Cathro, 'was to love him.'

According to another authority, T. Sandys got his early modesty from his father, who was of a very sweet disposition, and some instances of this modesty are given. They are all things that Elspeth did, but Tommy is now represented as the person who had done them. "On the other hand, his strong will, singleness of purpose, and enviable capacity for knowing what he wanted to be at were a heritage from his practical and sagacious mother." "I think he was a little proud of his strength of will," writes the R.A. who painted his portrait (now in America), "for I remember his anxiety that it should be suggested in the picture." But another acquaintance (a lady) replies: "He was not proud of his strong will, but he liked to hear it spoken of, and he once told me the reason. This strength of will was not, as is generally supposed, inherited by him; he was born without it, and acquired it by a tremendous effort. I believe I am the only person to whom he confided this, for he shrank from talk about himself, looking upon it as a form of that sentimentality which his soul abhorred."

He seems often to have warned ladies against this essentially womanish tendency to the sentimental. "It is an odious onion, dear lady," he would say, holding both her hands in his. If men in his presence talked sentimentally to ladies he was so irritated that he soon found a pretext for leaving the room. "Yet let it not be thought," says One Who Knew Him Well, "that because he was so sternly practical himself he was intolerant of the outpourings of the sentimental. The man, in short, reflected the views on this subject which are so admirably phrased in his books, works that seem to me to found one of their chief claims to distinction on this, that at last we have a writer who can treat intimately of human love without leaving one smear of the onion upon his pages."

On the whole, it may be noticed, comparatively few ladies contribute to the obituary reflections, "for the simple reason," says a simple man, "that he went but little into female society. He who could write so eloquently about women never seemed to know what to say to them. Ordinary tittle-tattle from them disappointed him. I should say that to him there was so much of the divine in women that he was depressed when they hid their wings." This view is supported by Clubman, who notes that Tommy

would never join in the somewhat free talk about the other sex in which many men indulge. "I remember," he says, "a man's dinner at which two of those present, both persons of eminence, started a theory that every man who is blessed or cursed with the artistic instinct has at some period of his life wanted to marry a barmaid. Mr. Sandys gave them such a look that they at once apologized. Trivial, perhaps, but significant. On another occasion I was in a club smoking-room when the talk was of a similar kind. Mr. Sandys was not present. A member said, with a laugh, 'I wonder for how long men can be together without talking gamesomely of women?' Before any answer could be given Mr. Sandys strolled in, and immediately the atmosphere cleared, as if someone had opened the windows. When he had gone the member addressed turned to him who had propounded the problem and said, 'There is your answer--as long as Sandys is in the room.'"

"A fitting epitaph, this, for Thomas Sandys," says the paper that quotes it, "if we could not find a better. Mr. Sandys was from first to last a man of character, but why when others falter was he always so sure-footed? It is in the answer to this question that we find the key to the books, and to the man who was greater than the books. He was the Perfect Lover. As he died seeking flowers for her who had the high honour to be his wife, so he had always lived. He gave his affection to her, as our correspondent Miss (or Mrs.) Ailie McLean shows, in his earliest boyhood, and from this, his one romance, he never swerved. To the moment of his death all his beautiful thoughts were flowers plucked for her; his books were bunches of them gathered to place at her feet. No harm now in reading between the lines of his books and culling what is the common knowledge of his friends in the north, that he had to serve a long apprenticeship before he won her. For long his attachment was unreciprocated, though she was ever his loyal friend, and the volume called 'Unrequited Love' belongs to the period when he thought his life must be lived alone. The circumstances of their marriage are at once too beautiful and too painful to be dwelt on here. Enough to say that, should the particulars ever be given to the world, with the simple story of his life, a finer memorial will have been raised to him than anything in stone, such as we see a committee is already being formed to erect. We venture to propose as a title for his biography, 'The Story of the Perfect Lover.'"

Yes, that memorial committee was formed; but so soon do people forget the hero of yesterday's paper that only the secretary attended the first

meeting, and he never called another. But here, five and twenty years later, is the biography, with the title changed. You may wonder that I had the heart to write it. I do it, I have sometimes pretended to myself, that we may all laugh at the stripling of a rogue, but that was never my reason. Have I been too cunning, or have you seen through me all the time? Have you discovered that I was really pitying the boy who was so fond of boyhood that he could not with years become a man, telling nothing about him that was not true, but doing it with unnecessary scorn in the hope that I might goad you into crying: "Come, come, you are too hard on him!"

Perhaps the manner in which he went to his death deprives him of these words. Had the castle gone on fire that day while he was at tea, and he perished in the flames in a splendid attempt to save the life of his enemy (a very probable thing), then you might have felt a little liking for him. Yet he would have been precisely the same person. I don't blame you, but you are a Tommy.

Grizel knew how he died. She found Lady Pippinworth's letter to him, and understood who the woman was; but it was only in hopes of obtaining the lost manuscript that she went to see her. Then Lady Pippinworth told her all. Are you sorry that Grizel knew? I am not sorry-- I am glad. As a child, as a girl, and as a wife, the truth had been all she wanted, and she wanted it just the same when she was a widow. We have a right to know the truth; no right to ask anything else from God, but the right to ask that.

And to her latest breath she went on loving Tommy just the same. She thought everything out calmly for herself; she saw that there is no great man on this earth except the man who conquers self, and that in some the accursed thing which is in all of us may be so strong that to battle with it and be beaten is not altogether to fail. It is foolish to demand complete success of those we want to love. We should rejoice when they rise for a moment above themselves, and sympathize with them when they fall. In their heyday young lovers think each other perfect; but a nobler love comes when they see the failings also, and this higher love is so much more worth attaining to that they need not cry out though it has to be beaten into them with rods. So they learn humanity's limitations, and that the accursed thing to me is not the accursed thing to you; but all have it, and from this comes pity for those who have sinned, and the desire to help each other springs, for knowledge is

sympathy, and sympathy is love, and to learn it the Son of God became a man.

And Grizel also thought anxiously about herself, and how from the time when she was the smallest girl she had longed to be a good woman and feared that perhaps she never should. And as she looked back at the road she had travelled, there came along it the little girl to judge her. She came trembling, but determined to know the truth, and she looked at Grizel until she saw into her soul, and then she smiled, well pleased.

Grizel lived on at Double Dykes, helping David in the old way. She was too strong and fine a nature to succumb. Even her brightness came back to her. They sometimes wondered at the serenity of her face. Some still thought her a little stand-offish, for, though the pride had gone from her walk, a distinction of manner grew upon her and made her seem a finer lady than before. There was no other noticeable change, except that with the years she lost her beautiful contours and became a little angular--the old maid's figure, I believe it is sometimes called.

No one would have dared to smile at Grizel become an old maid before some of the young men of Thrums. They were people who would have suffered much for her, and all because she had the courage to talk to them of some things before their marriage-day came round. And for their young wives who had tidings to whisper to her about the unborn she had the pretty idea that they should live with beautiful thoughts, so that these might become part of the child.

When Gavinia told this to Corp, he gulped and said, "I wonder God could hae haen the heart."

"Life's a queerer thing," Gavinia replied, sadly enough, "than we used to think it when we was bairns in the Den."

He spoke of it to Grizel. She let Corp speak of anything to her because he was so loyal to Tommy.

"You've given away a' your bonny things, Grizel," he said, "one by one, and this notion is the bonniest o' them a'. I'm thinking that when it cam' into your head you meant it for yoursel'."

Grizel smiled at him.

"I mind," Corp went on, "how when you was little you couldna see a bairn without rocking your arms in a waeful kind o' a way, and we could never thole the meaning o't. It just comes over me this minute as it meant that when you was a woman you would like terrible to hae bairns o' your ain, and you doubted you never should."

She raised her hand to stop him. "You see, I was not meant to have them, Corp," she said. "I think that when women are too fond of other people's babies they never have any of their own."

But Corp shook his head. "I dinna understand it," he told her, "but I'm sure you was meant to hae them. Something's gane wrang."

She was still smiling at him, but her eyes were wet now, and she drew him on to talk of the days when Tommy was a boy. It was sweet to Grizel to listen while Elspeth and David told her of the thousand things Tommy had done for her when she was ill, but she loved best to talk with Corp of the time when they were all children in the Den. The days of childhood are the best.

She lived so long after Tommy that she was almost a middle-aged woman when she died.

And so the Painted Lady's daughter has found a way of making Tommy's life the story of a perfect lover, after all. The little girl she had been comes stealing back into the book and rocks her arms joyfully, and we see Grizel's crooked smile for the last time.