

FIFTH SCENE.--GLASGOW.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-NINTH. - ANNE AMONG THE LAWYERS.

ON the day when Sir Patrick received the second of the two telegrams sent to him from Edinburgh, four respectable inhabitants of the City of Glasgow were startled by the appearance of an object of interest on the monotonous horizon of their daily lives.

The persons receiving this wholesome shock were--Mr. and Mrs. Carnegie of the Sheep's Head Hotel--and Mr. Camp, and Mr. Crum, attached as "Writers" to the honorable profession of the Law.

It was still early in the day when a lady arrived, in a cab from the railway, at the Sheep's Head Hotel. Her luggage consisted of a black box, and of a well-worn leather bag which she carried in her hand. The name on the box (recently written on a new luggage label, as the color of the ink and paper showed) was a very good name in its way, common to a very great number of ladies, both in Scotland and England. It was "Mrs. Graham."

Encountering the landlord at the entrance to the hotel, "Mrs. Graham" asked to be accommodated with a bedroom, and was transferred in due course to the chamber-maid on duty at the time. Returning to the little room behind the bar, in which the accounts were kept, Mr. Carnegie surprised his wife by moving more briskly, and looking much brighter than usual. Being questioned, Mr. Carnegie (who had cast the eye of a landlord on the black box in the passage) announced that one "Mrs. Graham" had just arrived, and was then and there to be booked as inhabiting Room Number Seventeen. Being informed (with considerable asperity of tone and manner) that this answer failed to account for the interest which appeared to have been inspired in him by a total stranger, Mr. Carnegie came to the point, and confessed that "Mrs. Graham" was one of the sweetest-looking women he had seen for many a long day, and that he feared she was very seriously out of health.

Upon that reply the eyes of Mrs. Carnegie developed in size, and the color of Mrs. Carnegie deepened in tint. She got up from her chair and said that it might be just as well if she personally superintended the installation of "Mrs. Graham" in her room, and personally satisfied herself that "Mrs.

Graham" was a fit inmate to be received at the Sheep's Head Hotel. Mr. Carnegie thereupon did what he always did--he agreed with his wife.

Mrs. Carnegie was absent for some little time. On her return her eyes had a certain tigerish cast in them when they rested on Mr. Carnegie. She ordered tea and some light refreshment to be taken to Number Seventeen. This done--without any visible provocation to account for the remark--she turned upon her husband, and said, "Mr. Carnegie you are a fool." Mr. Carnegie asked, "Why, my dear?" Mrs. Carnegie snapped her fingers, and said, "That for her good looks! You don't know a good-looking woman when you see her." Mr. Carnegie agreed with his wife.

Nothing more was said until the waiter appeared at the bar with his tray. Mrs. Carnegie, having first waived the tray off, without instituting her customary investigation, sat down suddenly with a thump, and said to her husband (who had not uttered a word in the interval), "Don't talk to Me about her being out of health! That for her health! It's trouble on her mind." Mr. Carnegie said, "Is it now?" Mrs. Carnegie replied, "When I have said, It is, I consider myself insulted if another person says, Is it?" Mr. Carnegie agreed with his wife.

There was another interval. Mrs. Carnegie added up a bill, with a face of disgust. Mr. Carnegie looked at her with a face of wonder. Mrs. Carnegie suddenly asked him why he wasted his looks on her, when he would have "Mrs. Graham" to look at before long. Mr. Carnegie, upon that, attempted to compromise the matter by looking, in the interim, at his own boots. Mrs. Carnegie wished to know whether after twenty years of married life, she was considered to be not worth answering by her own husband. Treated with bare civility (she expected no more), she might have gone on to explain that "Mrs. Graham" was going out. She might also have been prevailed on to mention that "Mrs. Graham" had asked her a very remarkable question of a business nature, at the interview between them up stairs. As it was, Mrs. Carnegie's lips were sealed, and let Mr. Carnegie deny if he dared, that he richly deserved it. Mr. Carnegie agreed with his wife.

In half an hour more, "Mrs. Graham" came down stairs; and a cab was sent for. Mr. Carnegie, in fear of the consequences if he did otherwise, kept in a corner. Mrs. Carnegie followed him into the corner, and asked him how he dared act in that way? Did he presume to think, after twenty years of married life, that his wife was jealous? "Go, you brute, and hand Mrs. Graham into the cab!"

Mr. Carnegie obeyed. He asked, at the cab window, to what part of Glasgow

he should tell the driver to go. The reply informed him that the driver was to take "Mrs. Graham" to the office of Mr. Camp, the lawyer. Assuming "Mrs. Graham" to be a stranger in Glasgow, and remembering that Mr. Camp was Mr. Carnegie's lawyer, the inference appeared to be, that "Mrs. Graham's" remarkable question, addressed to the landlady, had related to legal business, and to the discovery of a trust-worthy person capable of transacting it for her.

Returning to the bar, Mr. Carnegie found his eldest daughter in charge of the books, the bills, and the waiters. Mrs. Carnegie had retired to her own room, justly indignant with her husband for his infamous conduct in handing "Mrs. Graham" into the cab before her own eyes. "It's the old story, Pa," remarked Miss Carnegie, with the most perfect composure. "Ma told you to do it, of course; and then Ma says you've insulted her before all the servants. I wonder how you bear it?" Mr. Carnegie looked at his boots, and answered, "I wonder, too, my dear." Miss Carnegie said, "You're not going to Ma, are you?" Mr. Carnegie looked up from his boots, and answered, "I must, my dear."

Mr. Camp sat in his private room, absorbed over his papers. Multitudinous as those documents were, they appeared to be not sufficiently numerous to satisfy Mr. Camp. He rang his bell, and ordered more.

The clerk appearing with a new pile of papers, appeared also with a message. A lady, recommended by Mrs. Carnegie, of the Sheep's Head, wished to consult Mr. Camp professionally. Mr. Camp looked at his watch, counting out precious time before him, in a little stand on the table, and said, "Show the lady in, in ten minutes."

In ten minutes the lady appeared. She took the client's chair and lifted her veil. The same effect which had been produced on Mr. Carnegie was once more produced on Mr. Camp. For the first time, for many a long year past, he felt personally interested in a total stranger. It might have been something in her eyes, or it might have been something in her manner. Whatever it was, it took softly hold of him, and made him, to his own exceeding surprise, unmistakably anxious to hear what she had to say!

The lady announced--in a low sweet voice touched with a quiet sadness--that her business related to a question of marriage (as marriage is understood by Scottish law), and that her own peace of mind, and the happiness of a person very dear to her, were concerned alike in the opinion

which Mr. Camp might give when he had been placed in possession of the facts.

She then proceeded to state the facts, without mentioning names: relating in every particular precisely the same succession of events which Geoffrey Delamayn had already related to Sir Patrick Lundie--with this one difference, that she acknowledged herself to be the woman who was personally concerned in knowing whether, by Scottish law, she was now held to be a married woman or not.

Mr. Camp's opinion given upon this, after certain questions had been asked and answered, differed from Sir Patrick's opinion, as given at Windygates. He too quoted the language used by the eminent judge--Lord Deas--but he drew an inference of his own from it. "In Scotland, consent makes marriage," he said; "and consent may be proved by inference. I see a plain inference of matrimonial consent in the circumstances which you have related to me and I say you are a married woman."

The effect produced on the lady, when sentence was pronounced on her in those terms, was so distressing that Mr. Camp sent a message up stairs to his wife; and Mrs. Camp appeared in her husband's private room, in business hours, for the first time in her life. When Mrs. Camp's services had in some degree restored the lady to herself, Mr. Camp followed with a word of professional comfort. He, like Sir Patrick, acknowledged the scandalous divergence of opinions produced by the confusion and uncertainty of the marriage-law of Scotland. He, like Sir Patrick, declared it to be quite possible that another lawyer might arrive at another conclusion. "Go," he said, giving her his card, with a line of writing on it, "to my colleague, Mr. Crum; and say I sent you."

The lady gratefully thanked Mr. Camp and his wife, and went next to the office of Mr. Crum.

Mr. Crum was the older lawyer of the two, and the harder lawyer of the two; but he, too, felt the influence which the charm that there was in this woman exercised, more or less, over every man who came in contact with her. He listened with a patience which was rare with him: he put his questions with a gentleness which was rarer still; and when he was in possession of the circumstances---behold, his opinion flatly contradicted the opinion of Mr. Camp!

"No marriage, ma'am," he said, positively. "Evidence in favor of perhaps establishing a marriage, if you propose to claim the man. But that, as I

understand it, is exactly what you don't wish to do."

The relief to the lady, on hearing this, almost overpowered her. For some minutes she was unable to speak. Mr. Crum did, what he had never done yet in all his experience as a lawyer. He patted a client on the shoulder, and, more extraordinary still, he gave a client permission to waste his time. "Wait, and compose yourself," said Mr. Crum--administering the law of humanity. The lady composed herself. "I must ask you some questions, ma'am," said Mr. Crum--administering the law of the land. The lady bowed, and waited for him to begin.

"I know, thus far, that you decline to claim the gentleman," said Mr. Crum. "I want to know now whether the gentleman is likely to claim you."

The answer to this was given in the most positive terms. The gentleman was not even aware of the position in which he stood. And, more yet, he was engaged to be married to the dearest friend whom the lady had in the world.

Mr. Crum opened his eyes--considered--and put another question as delicately as he could. "Would it be painful to you to tell me how the gentleman came to occupy the awkward position in which he stands now?"

The lady acknowledged that it would be indescribably painful to her to answer that question.

Mr. Crum offered a suggestion under the form of an inquiry:

"Would it be painful to you to reveal the circumstances--in the interests of the gentleman's future prospects--to some discreet person (a legal person would be best) who is not, what I am, a stranger to you both?"

The lady declared herself willing to make any sacrifice, on those conditions--no matter how painful it might be--for her friend's sake.

Mr. Crum considered a little longer, and then delivered his word of advice:

"At the present stage of the affair," he said, "I need only tell you what is the first step that you ought to take under the circumstances. Inform the gentleman at once--either by word of mouth or by writing--of the position in which he stands: and authorize him to place the case in the hands of a person known to you both, who is competent to decide on what you are to do next. Do I understand that you know of such a person so qualified?"

The lady answered that she knew of such a person.

Mr. Crum asked if a day had been fixed for the gentleman's marriage.

The lady answered that she had made this inquiry herself on the last occasion when she had seen the gentleman's betrothed wife. The marriage was to take place, on a day to be hereafter chosen, at the end of the autumn.

"That," said Mr. Crum, "is a fortunate circumstance. You have time before you. Time is, here, of very great importance. Be careful not to waste it."

The lady said she would return to her hotel and write by that night's post, to warn the gentleman of the position in which he stood, and to authorize him to refer the matter to a competent and trust-worthy friend known to them both.

On rising to leave the room she was seized with giddiness, and with some sudden pang of pain, which turned her deadly pale and forced her to drop back into her chair. Mr. Crum had no wife; but he possessed a housekeeper--and he offered to send for her. The lady made a sign in the negative. She drank a little water, and conquered the pain. "I am sorry to have alarmed you," she said. "It's nothing--I am better now." Mr. Crum gave her his arm, and put her into the cab. She looked so pale and faint that he proposed sending his housekeeper with her. No: it was only five minutes' drive to the hotel. The lady thanked him--and went her way back by herself.

"The letter!" she said, when she was alone. "If I can only live long enough to write the letter!"

CHAPTER THE THIRTIETH. - ANNE IN THE NEWSPAPERS.

MRS. KARNEGIE was a woman of feeble intelligence and violent temper; prompt to take offense, and not, for the most part, easy to appease. But Mrs. Carnegie being--as we all are in our various degrees--a compound of many opposite qualities, possessed a character with more than one side to it, and had her human merits as well as her human faults. Seeds of sound good feeling were scattered away in the remoter corners of her nature, and only waited for the fertilizing occasion that was to help them to spring up. The occasion exerted that benign influence when the cab brought Mr. Crum's client back to the hotel. The face of the weary, heart-sick woman, as she slowly crossed the hall, roused all that was heartiest and best in Mrs. Carnegie's nature, and said to her, as if in words, "Jealous of this broken creature? Oh, wife and mother is there no appeal to your common womanhood here?"

"I am afraid you have overtired yourself, ma'am. Let me send you something up stairs?"

"Send me pen, ink, and paper," was the answer. "I must write a letter. I must do it at once."

It was useless to remonstrate with her. She was ready to accept any thing proposed, provided the writing materials were supplied first. Mrs. Carnegie sent them up, and then compounded a certain mixture of eggs and hot wine for which The Sheep's Head was famous, with her own hands. In five minutes or so it was ready--and Miss Carnegie was dispatched by her mother (who had other business on hand at the time) to take it up stairs.

After the lapse of a few moments a cry of alarm was heard from the upper landing. Mrs. Carnegie recognized her daughter's voice, and hastened to the bedroom floor.

"Oh, mamma! Look at her! look at her!"

The letter was on the table with the first lines written. The woman was on the sofa with her handkerchief twisted between her set teeth, and her tortured face terrible to look at. Mrs. Carnegie raised her a little, examined her closely--then suddenly changed color, and sent her daughter out of the room with directions to dispatch a messenger instantly for medical help.

Left alone with the sufferer, Mrs. Karnegie carried her to her bed. As she was laid down her left hand fell helpless over the side of the bed. Mrs. Karnegie suddenly checked the word of sympathy as it rose to her lips-- suddenly lifted the hand, and looked, with a momentary sternness of scrutiny, at the third finger. There was a ring on it. Mrs. Karnegie's face softened on the instant: the word of pity that had been suspended the moment before passed her lips freely now. "Poor soul!" said the respectable landlady, taking appearances for granted. "Where's your husband, dear? Try and tell me."

The doctor made his appearance, and went up to the patient.

Time passed, and Mr. Karnegie and his daughter, carrying on the business of the hotel, received a message from up stairs which was ominous of something out of the common. The message gave the name and address of an experienced nurse--with the doctor's compliments, and would Mr. Karnegie have the kindness to send for her immediately.

The nurse was found and sent up stairs.

Time went on, and the business of the hotel went on, and it was getting to be late in the evening, when Mrs. Karnegie appeared at last in the parlor behind the bar. The landlady's face was grave, the landlady's manner was subdued. "Very, very ill," was the only reply she made to her daughter's inquiries. When she and her husband were together, a little later, she told the news from up stairs in greater detail. "A child born dead," said Mrs. Karnegie, in gentler tones than were customary with her. "And the mother dying, poor thing, so far as I can see."

A little later the doctor came down. Dead? No.--Likely to live? Impossible to say. The doctor returned twice in the course of the night. Both times he had but one answer. "Wait till to-morrow."

The next day came. She rallied a little. Toward the afternoon she began to speak. She expressed no surprise at seeing strangers by her bedside: her mind wandered. She passed again into insensibility. Then back to delirium once more. The doctor said, "This may last for weeks. Or it may end suddenly in death. It's time you did something toward finding her friends."

(Her friends! She had left the one friend she had forever!)

Mr. Camp was summoned to give his advice. The first thing he asked for was the unfinished letter.

It was blotted, it was illegible in more places than one. With pains and care they made out the address at the beginning, and here and there some fragments of the lines that followed. It began: "Dear Mr. Brinkworth." Then the writing got, little by little, worse and worse. To the eyes of the strangers who looked at it, it ran thus: "I should ill requite * * * Blanche's interests * * * For God's sake! * * * don't think of me * * *" There was a little more, but not so much as one word, in those last lines, was legible.

The names mentioned in the letter were reported by the doctor and the nurse to be also the names on her lips when she spoke in her wanderings. "Mr. Brinkworth" and "Blanche"--her mind ran incessantly on those two persons. The one intelligible thing that she mentioned in connection with them was the letter. She was perpetually trying, trying, trying to take that unfinished letter to the post; and she could never get there. Sometimes the post was across the sea. Sometimes it was at the top of an inaccessible mountain. Sometimes it was built in by prodigious walls all round it. Sometimes a man stopped her cruelly at the moment when she was close at the post, and forced her back thousands of miles away from it. She once or twice mentioned this visionary man by his name. They made it out to be "Geoffrey."

Finding no clew to her identity either in the letter that she had tried to write or in the wild words that escaped her from time to time, it was decided to search her luggage, and to look at the clothes which she had worn when she arrived at the hotel.

Her black box sufficiently proclaimed itself as recently purchased. On opening it the address of a Glasgow trunk-maker was discovered inside. The linen was also new, and unmarked. The receipted shop-bill was found with it. The tradesmen, sent for in each case and questioned, referred to their books. It was proved that the box and the linen had both been purchased on the day when she appeared at the hotel.

Her black bag was opened next. A sum of between eighty and ninety pounds in Bank of England notes; a few simple articles belonging to the toilet; materials for needle-work; and a photographic portrait of a young lady, inscribed, "To Anne, from Blanche," were found in the bag--but no letters, and nothing whatever that could afford the slightest clew by which the owner could be traced. The pocket in her dress was searched next. It contained a purse, an empty card-case, and a new handkerchief unmarked.

Mr. Camp shook his head.

"A woman's luggage without any letters in it," he said, "suggests to my mind a woman who has a motive of her own for keeping her movements a secret. I suspect she has destroyed her letters, and emptied her card-case, with that view." Mrs. Karnegie's report, after examining the linen which the so-called "Mrs. Graham" had worn when she arrived at the inn, proved the soundness of the lawyer's opinion. In every case the marks had been cut out. Mrs. Karnegie began to doubt whether the ring which she had seen on the third finger of the lady's left hand had been placed there with the sanction of the law.

There was but one chance left of discovering--or rather of attempting to discover--her friends. Mr. Camp drew out an advertisement to be inserted in the Glasgow newspapers. If those newspapers happened to be seen by any member of her family, she would, in all probability, be claimed. In the contrary event there would be nothing for it but to wait for her recovery or her death--with the money belonging to her sealed up, and deposited in the landlord's strongbox.

The advertisement appeared. They waited for three days afterward, and nothing came of it. No change of importance occurred, during the same period, in the condition of the suffering woman. Mr. Camp looked in, toward evening, and said, "We have done our best. There is no help for it but to wait."

Far away in Perthshire that third evening was marked as a joyful occasion at Windygates House. Blanche had consented at last to listen to Arnold's entreaties, and had sanctioned the writing of a letter to London to order her wedding-dress.