

CHAPTER XIII. EUNICE'S DIARY.

Not long before I left home, I heard one of our two servants telling the other about a person who had been "bewitched." Are you bewitched when you don't understand your own self? That has been my curious case, since I returned from the picture show. This morning I took my drawing materials out of my box, and tried to make a portrait of young Mr. Dunboyne from recollection. I succeeded pretty well with his frock-coat and cane; but, try as I might, his face was beyond me. I have never drawn anything so badly since I was a little girl; I almost felt ready to cry. What a fool I am!

This morning I received a letter from papa--it was in reply to a letter that I had written to him--so kind, so beautifully expressed, so like himself, that I felt inclined to send him a confession of the strange state of feeling that has come over me, and to ask him to comfort and advise me. On second thoughts, I was afraid to do it. Afraid of papa! I am further away from understanding myself than ever.

Mr. Dunboyne paid us a visit in the afternoon. Fortunately, before we went out.

I thought I would have a good look at him; so as to know his face better than I had known it yet. Another disappointment was in store for me. Without intending it, I am sure, he did what no other young man has ever done--he made me feel confused. Instead of looking at him, I sat with my head down, and listened to his talk. His voice--this is high praise--reminded me of papa's voice. It seemed to persuade me as papa persuades his congregation. I felt quite at ease again. When he went away, we shook hands. He gave my hand a little squeeze. I gave him back the squeeze--without knowing why. When he was gone, I wished I had not done it--without knowing why, either.

I heard his Christian name for the first time to-day. Mrs. Staveley said to me: "We are going to have a dinner-party. Shall I ask Philip Dunboyne?" I said to Mrs. Staveley: "Oh, do!"

She is an old woman; her eyes are dim. At times, she can look mischievous. She looked at me mischievously now. I wished I had not been so eager to have Mr. Dunboyne asked to dinner.

A fear has come to me that I may have degraded myself. My spirits are depressed. This, as papa tells us in his sermons, is a miserable world. I am

sorry I accepted the Staveleys' invitation. I am sorry I went to see the pictures. When that young man comes to dinner, I shall say I have got a headache, and shall stop upstairs by myself. I don't think I like his Christian name. I hate London. I hate everybody.

What I wrote up above, yesterday, is nonsense. I think his Christian name is perfect. I like London. I love everybody.

He came to dinner to-day. I sat next to him. How beautiful a dress-coat is, and a white cravat! We talked. He wanted to know what my Christian name was. I was so pleased when I found he was one of the few people who like it. His hair curls naturally. In color, it is something between my hair and Helena's. He wears his beard. How manly! It curls naturally, like his hair; it smells deliciously of some perfume which is new to me. He has white hands; his nails look as if he polished them; I should like to polish my nails if I knew how. Whatever I said, he agreed with me; I felt satisfied with my own conversation, for the first time in my life. Helena won't find me a simpleton when I go home. What exquisite things dinner-parties are!

My sister told me (when we said good-by) to be particular in writing down my true opinion of the Staveleys. Helena wishes to compare what she thinks of them with what I think of them.

My opinion of Mr. Staveley is--I don't like him. My opinion of Miss Staveley is--I can't endure her. As for Master Staveley, my clever sister will understand that he is beneath notice. But, oh, what a wonderful woman Mrs. Staveley is! We went out together, after luncheon today, for a walk in Kensington Gardens. Never have I heard any conversation to compare with Mrs. Staveley's. Helena shall enjoy it here, at second hand. I am quite changed in two things. First: I think more of myself than I ever did before. Second: writing is no longer a difficulty to me. I could fill a hundred journals, without once stopping to think.

Mrs. Staveley began nicely; "I suppose, Eunice, you have often been told that you have a good figure, and that you walk well?"

I said: "Helena thinks my figure is better than my face. But do I really walk well? Nobody ever told me that."

She answered: "Philip Dunboyne thinks so. He said to me, 'I resist the temptation because I might be wanting in respect if I gave way to it. But I should like to follow her when she goes out--merely for the pleasure of seeing her walk.'"

I stood stockstill. I said nothing. When you are as proud as a peacock (which never happened to me before), I find you can't move and can't talk. You can only enjoy yourself.

Kind Mrs. Staveley had more things to tell me. She said: "I am interested in Philip. I lived near Fairmount in the time before I was married; and in those days he was a child. I want him to marry a charming girl, and be happy."

What made me think directly of Miss Staveley? What made me mad to know if she was the charming girl? I was bold enough to ask the question. Mrs. Staveley turned to me with that mischievous look which I have noticed already. I felt as if I had been running at the top of my speed, and had not got my breath again, yet.

But this good motherly friend set me at my ease. She explained herself: "Philip is not much liked, poor fellow, in our house. My husband considers him to be weak and vain and fickle. And my daughter agrees with her father. There are times when she is barely civil to Philip. He is too good-natured to complain, but I see it. Tell me, my dear, do you like Philip?"

"Of course I do!" Out it came in those words, before I could stop it. Was there something unbecoming to a young lady in saying what I had just said? Mrs. Staveley seemed to be more amused than angry with me. She took my arm kindly, and led me along with her. "My dear, you are as clear as crystal, and as true as steel. You are a favorite of mine already."

What a delightful woman! as I said just now. I asked if she really liked me as well as she liked my sister.

She said: "Better."

I didn't expect that, and didn't want it. Helena is my superior. She is prettier than I am, cleverer than I am, better worth liking than I am. Mrs. Staveley shifted the talk back to Philip. I ought to have said Mr. Philip. No, I won't; I shall call him Philip. If I had a heart of stone, I should feel interested in him, after what Mrs. Staveley has told me.

Such a sad story, in some respects. Mother dead; no brothers or sisters. Only the father left; he lives a dismal life on a lonely stormy coast. Not a severe old gentleman, for all that. His reasons for taking to retirement are reasons (so Mrs. Staveley says) which nobody knows. He buries himself among his books, in an immense library; and he appears to like it. His son

has not been brought up like other young men, at school and college. He is a great scholar, educated at home by his father. To hear this account of his learning depressed me. It seemed to put such a distance between us. I asked Mrs. Staveley if he thought me ignorant. As long as I live I shall remember the reply: "He thinks you charming."

Any other girl would have been satisfied with this. I am the miserable creature who is always making mistakes. My stupid curiosity spoiled the charm of Mrs. Staveley's conversation. And yet it seemed to be a harmless question; I only said I should like to know what profession Philip belonged to.

Mrs. Staveley answered: "No profession."

I foolishly put a wrong meaning on this. I said: "Is he idle?"

Mrs. Staveley laughed. "My dear, he is an only son--and his father is a rich man."

That stopped me--at last.

We have enough to live on in comfort at home--no more. Papa has told us himself that he is not (and can never hope to be) a rich man. This is not the worst of it. Last year, he refused to marry a young couple, both belonging to our congregation. This was very unlike his usual kind self. Helena and I asked him for his reasons. They were reasons that did not take long to give. The young gentleman's father was a rich man. He had forbidden his son to marry a sweet girl--because she had no fortune.

I have no fortune. And Philip's father is a rich man.

The best thing I can do is to wipe my pen, and shut up my Journal, and go home by the next train.

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I have a great mind to burn my Journal. It tells me that I had better not think of Philip any more.

On second thoughts, I won't destroy my Journal; I will only put it away. If I live to be an old woman, it may amuse me to open my book again, and see how foolish the poor wretch was when she was young.

What is this aching pain in my heart?

I don't remember it at any other time in my life. Is it trouble? How can I tell?--I have had so little trouble. It must be many years since I was wretched enough to cry. I don't even understand why I am crying now. My last sorrow, so far as I can remember, was the toothache. Other girls' mothers comfort them when they are wretched. If my mother had lived--it's useless to think about that. We lost her, while I and my sister were too young to understand our misfortune.

I wish I had never seen Philip.

This seems an ungrateful wish. Seeing him at the picture-show was a new enjoyment. Sitting next to him at dinner was a happiness that I don't recollect feeling, even when Papa has been most sweet and kind to me. I ought to be ashamed of myself to confess this. Shall I write to my sister? But how should she know what is the matter with me, when I don't know it myself? Besides, Helena is angry; she wrote unkindly to me when she answered my last letter.

There is a dreadful loneliness in this great house at night. I had better say my prayers, and try to sleep. If it doesn't make me feel happier, it will prevent me spoiling my Journal by dropping tears on it.

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What an evening of evenings this has been! Last night it was crying that kept me awake. To-night I can't sleep for joy.

Philip called on us again to-day. He brought with him tickets for the performance of an Oratorio. Sacred music is not forbidden music among our people. Mrs. Staveley and Miss Staveley went to the concert with us. Philip and I sat next to each other.

My sister is a musician--I am nothing. That sounds bitter; but I don't mean it so. All I mean is, that I like simple little songs, which I can sing to myself by remembering the tune. There, my musical enjoyment ends. When voices and instruments burst out together by hundreds, I feel bewildered. I also get attacked by fidgets. This last misfortune is sure to overtake me when choruses are being performed. The unfortunate people employed are made to keep singing the same words, over and over and over again, till I find it a perfect misery to listen to them. The choruses were unendurable in the performance to-night. This is one of them: "Here we are all alone in the

wilderness--alone in the wilderness--in the wilderness alone, alone, alone--here we are in the wilderness--alone in the wilderness--all all alone in the wilderness," and soon, till I felt inclined to call for the learned person who writes Oratorios, and beg him to give the poor music a more generous allowance of words.

Whenever I looked at Philip, I found him looking at me. Perhaps he saw from the first that the music was wearying music to my ignorant ears. With his usual delicacy he said nothing for some time. But when he caught me yawning (though I did my best to hide it, for it looked like being ungrateful for the tickets), then he could restrain himself no longer. He whispered in my ear:

"You are getting tired of this. And so am I."

"I am trying to like it," I whispered back.

"Don't try," he answered. "Let's talk."

He meant, of course, talk in whispers. We were a good deal annoyed--especially when the characters were all alone in the wilderness--by bursts of singing and playing which interrupted us at the most interesting moments. Philip persevered with a manly firmness. What could I do but follow his example--at a distance?

He said: "Is it really true that your visit to Mrs. Staveley is coming to an end?"

I answered: "It comes to an end the day after to-morrow."

"Are you sorry to be leaving your friends in London?"

What I might have said if he had made that inquiry a day earlier, when I was the most miserable creature living, I would rather not try to guess. Being quite happy as things were, I could honestly tell him I was sorry.

"You can't possibly be as sorry as I am, Eunice. May I call you by your pretty name?"

"Yes, if you please."

"Eunice!"

"Yes."

"You will leave a blank in my life when you go away--"

There another chorus stopped him, just as I was eager for more. It was such a delightfully new sensation to hear a young gentleman telling me that I had left a blank in his life. The next change in the Oratorio brought up a young lady, singing alone. Some people behind us grumbled at the smallness of her voice. We thought her voice perfect. It seemed to lend itself so nicely to our whispers.

He said: "Will you help me to think of you while you are away? I want to imagine what your life is at home. Do you live in a town or in the country?"

I told him the name of our town. When we give a person information, I have always heard that we ought to make it complete. So I mentioned our address in the town. But I was troubled by a doubt. Perhaps he preferred the country. Being anxious about this, I said: "Would you rather have heard that I live in the country?"

"Live where you may, Eunice, the place will be a favorite place of mine. Besides, your town is famous. It has a public attraction which brings visitors to it."

I made another of those mistakes which no sensible girl, in my position, would have committed. I asked if he alluded to our new market-place.

He set me right in the sweetest manner: "I alluded to a building hundreds of years older than your market-place--your beautiful cathedral."

Fancy my not having thought of the cathedral! This is what comes of being a Congregationalist. If I had belonged to the Church of England, I should have forgotten the market-place, and remembered the cathedral. Not that I want to belong to the Church of England. Papa's chapel is good enough for me.

The song sung by the lady with the small voice was so pretty that the audience encored it. Didn't Philip and I help them! With the sweetest smiles the lady sang it all over again. The people behind us left the concert.

He said: "Do you know, I take the greatest interest in cathedrals. I propose to enjoy the privilege and pleasure of seeing your cathedral early next week."

I had only to look at him to see that I was the cathedral. It was no surprise

to hear next that he thought of "paying his respects to Mr. Gracedieu." He begged me to tell him what sort of reception he might hope to meet with when he called at our house. I got so excited in doing justice to papa that I quite forgot to whisper when the next question came. Philip wanted to know if Mr. Gracedieu disliked strangers. When I answered, "Oh dear, no!" I said it out loud, so that the people heard me. Cruel, cruel people! They all turned round and stared. One hideous old woman actually said, "Silence!" Miss Staveley looked disgusted. Even kind Mrs. Staveley lifted her eyebrows in astonishment.

Philip, dear Philip, protected and composed me.

He held my hand devotedly till the end of the performance. When he put us into the carriage, I was last. He whispered in my ear: "Expect me next week." Miss Staveley might be as ill-natured as she pleased, on the way home. It didn't matter what she said. The Eunice of yesterday might have been mortified and offended. The Eunice of to-day was indifferent to the sharpest things that could be said to her.

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All through yesterday's delightful evening, I never once thought of Philip's father. When I woke this morning, I remembered that old Mr. Dunboyne was a rich man. I could eat no breakfast for thinking of the poor girl who was not allowed to marry her young gentleman, because she had no money.

Mrs. Staveley waited to speak to me till the rest of them had left us together. I had expected her to notice that I looked dull and dismal. No! her cleverness got at my secret in quite another way.

She said: "How do you feel after the concert? You must be hard to please indeed if you were not satisfied with the accompaniments last night."

"The accompaniments of the Oratorio?"

"No, my dear. The accompaniments of Philip."

I suppose I ought to have laughed. In my miserable state of mind, it was not to be done. I said: "I hope Mr. Dunboyne's father will not hear how kind he was to me."

Mrs. Staveley asked why.

My bitterness overflowed at my tongue. I said: "Because papa is a poor man."

"And Philip's papa is a rich man," says Mrs. Staveley, putting my own thought into words for me. "Where do you get these ideas, Eunice? Surely, you are not allowed to read novels?"

"Oh no!"

"And you have certainly never seen a play?"

"Never."

"Clear your head, child, of the nonsense that has got into it--I can't think how. Rich Mr. Dunboyne has taught his heir to despise the base act of marrying for money. He knows that Philip will meet young ladies at my house; and he has written to me on the subject of his son's choice of a wife. 'Let Philip find good principles, good temper, and good looks; and I promise beforehand to find the money.' There is what he says. Are you satisfied with Philip's father, now?"

I jumped up in a state of ecstasy. Just as I had thrown my arms round Mrs. Staveley's neck, the servant came in with a letter, and handed it to me.

Helena had written again, on this last day of my visit. Her letter was full of instructions for buying things that she wants, before I leave London. I read on quietly enough until I came to the postscript. The effect of it on me may be told in two words: I screamed. Mrs. Staveley was naturally alarmed. "Bad news?" she asked. Being quite unable to offer an opinion, I read the postscript out loud, and left her to judge for herself.

This was Helena's news from home:

"I must prepare you for a surprise, before your return. You will find a strange lady established at home. Don't suppose there is any prospect of her bidding us good-by, if we only wait long enough. She is already (with father's full approval) as much a member of the family as we are. You shall form your own unbiased opinion of her, Eunice. For the present, I say no more."

I asked Mrs. Staveley what she thought of my news from home. She said: "Your father approves of the lady, my dear. I suppose it's good news."

But Mrs. Staveley did not look as if she believed in the good news, for all

that.