

### CHAPTER XXIII. EUNICE'S DIARY.

Only two days now, before we give our little dinner-party, and Philip finds his opportunity of speaking to papa. Oh, how I wish that day had come and gone!

I try not to take gloomy views of things; but I am not quite so happy as I had expected to be when my dear was in the same town with me. If papa had encouraged him to call again, we might have had some precious time to ourselves. As it is, we can only meet in the different show-places in the town--with Helena on one side, and Miss Jillgall on the other, to take care of us. I do call it cruel not to let two young people love each other, without setting third persons to watch them. If I was Queen of England, I would have pretty private bowers made for lovers, in the summer, and nice warm little rooms to hold two, in the winter. Why not? What harm could come of it, I should like to know?

The cathedral is the place of meeting which we find most convenient, under the circumstances. There are delightful nooks and corners about this celebrated building in which lovers can lag behind. If we had been in papa's chapel I should have hesitated to turn it to such a profane use as this; the cathedral doesn't so much matter.

Shall I own that I felt my inferiority to Helena a little keenly? She could tell Philip so many things that I should have liked to tell him first. My clever sister taught him how to pronounce the name of the bishop who began building the cathedral; she led him over the crypt, and told him how old it was. He was interested in the crypt; he talked to Helena (not to me) of his ambition to write a work on cathedral architecture in England; he made a rough little sketch in his book of our famous tomb of some king. Helena knew the late royal personage's name, and Philip showed his sketch to her before he showed it to me. How can I blame him, when I stood there the picture of stupidity, trying to recollect something that I might tell him, if it was only the Dean's name? Helena might have whispered it to me, I think. She remembered it, not I--and mentioned it to Philip, of course. I kept close by him all the time, and now and then he gave me a look which raised my spirits. He might have given me something better than that--I mean a kiss--when we had left the cathedral, and were by ourselves for a moment in a corner of the Dean's garden. But he missed the opportunity. Perhaps he was afraid of the Dean himself coming that way, and happening to see us. However, I am far from thinking the worse of Philip. I gave his arm a little

squeeze--and that was better than nothing.

.....

He and I took a walk along the bank of the river to-day; my sister and Miss Jillgall looking after us as usual. On our way through the town, Helena stopped to give an order at a shop. She asked us to wait for her. That best of good creatures, Miss Jillgall, whispered in my ear: "Go on by yourselves, and leave me to wait for her." Philip interpreted this act of kindness in a manner which would have vexed me, if I had not understood that it was one of his jokes. He said to me: "Miss Jillgall sees a chance of annoying your sister, and enjoys the prospect."

Well, away we went together; it was just what I wanted; it gave me an opportunity of saying something to Philip, between ourselves.

I could now beg of him, in his interests and mine, to make the best of himself when he came to dinner. Clever people, I told him, were people whom papa liked and admired. I said: "Let him see, dear, how clever you are, and how many things you know--and you can't imagine what a high place you will have in his opinion. I hope you don't think I am taking too much on myself in telling you how to behave."

He relieved that doubt in a manner which I despair of describing. His eyes rested on me with such a look of exquisite sweetness and love that I was obliged to hold by his arm, I trembled so with the pleasure of feeling it.

"I do sincerely believe," he said, "that you are the most innocent girl, the sweetest, truest girl that ever lived. I wish I was a better man, Eunice; I wish I was good enough to be worthy of you!"

To hear him speak of himself in that way jarred on me. If such words had fallen from any other man's lips, I should have been afraid that he had done something, or thought something, of which he had reason to feel ashamed. With Philip this was impossible.

He was eager to walk on rapidly, and to turn a corner in the path, before we could be seen. "I want to be alone with you," he said.

I looked back. We were too late; Helena and Miss Jillgall had nearly overtaken us. My sister was on the point of speaking to Philip, when she seemed to change her mind, and only looked at him. Instead of looking at her in return, he kept his eyes cast down and drew figures on the pathway

with his stick. I think Helena was out of temper; she suddenly turned my way. "Why didn't you wait for me?" she asked.

Philip took her up sharply. "If Eunice likes seeing the river better than waiting in the street," he said, "isn't she free to do as she pleases?"

Helena said nothing more; Philip walked on slowly by himself. Not knowing what to make of it, I turned to Miss Jillgall. "Surely Philip can't have quarreled with Helena?" I said.

Miss Jillgall answered in an odd off-hand manner: "Not he! He is a great deal more likely to have quarreled with himself."

"Why?"

"Suppose you ask him why?"

It was not to be thought of; it would have looked like prying into his thoughts. "Selina!" I said, "there is something odd about you to-day. What is the matter? I don't understand you."

"My poor dear, you will find yourself understanding me before long." I thought I saw something like pity in her face when she said that.

"My poor dear?" I repeated. "What makes you speak to me in that way?"

"I don't know--I'm tired; I'm an old fool--I'll go back to the house."

Without another word, she left me. I turned to look for Philip, and saw that my sister had joined him while I had been speaking to Miss Jillgall. It pleased me to find that they were talking in a friendly way when I joined them. A quarrel between Helena and my husband that is to be--no, my husband that shall be--would have been too distressing, too unnatural I might almost call it.

Philip looked along the backward path, and asked what had become of Miss Jillgall. "Have you any objection to follow her example?" he said to me, when I told him that Selina had returned to the town. "I don't care for the banks of this river."

Helena, who used to like the river at other times, was as ready as Philip to leave it now. I fancy they had both been kindly waiting to change our walk, till I came to them, and they could study my wishes too. Of course I was

ready to go where they pleased. I asked Philip if there was anything he would like to see, when we got into the streets again.

Clever Helena suggested what seemed to be a strange amusement to offer to Philip. "Let's take him to the Girls' School," she said.

It appeared to be a matter of perfect indifference to him; he was, what they call, ironical. "Oh, yes, of course. Deeply interesting! deeply interesting!" He suddenly broke into the wildest good spirits, and tucked my hand under his arm with a gayety which it was impossible to resist. "What a boy you are!" Helena said, enjoying his delightful hilarity as I did.