CHARLOTTE M. YONGE

THE HEIR OF REDCLYFFE

HISTORICAL NOVEL

Charlotte M. Yonge

The Heir of Redclyffe (Historical Novel)

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CHAPTER 1

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In such pursuits if wisdom lies,
Who, Laura, can thy taste despise?
—GAY

The drawing-room of Hollywell House was one of the favoured apartments, where a peculiar air of home seems to reside, whether seen in the middle of summer, all its large windows open to the garden, or, as when our story commences, its bright fire and stands of fragrant green-house plants contrasted with the wintry fog and leafless trees of November. There were two persons in the room—a young lady, who sat drawing at the round table, and a youth, lying on a couch near the fire, surrounded with books and newspapers, and a pair of crutches near him. Both looked up with a smile of welcome at the entrance of a tall, fine-looking young man, whom each greeted with ‘Good morning, Philip.’

‘Good morning, Laura. Good morning, Charles; I am glad you are downstairs again! How are you to-day?’

‘No way remarkable, thank you,’ was the answer, somewhat wearily given by Charles.

‘You walked?’ said Laura.

‘Yes. Where’s my uncle? I called at the post-office, and brought a letter for him. It has the Moorworth post-mark,’ he added, producing it.

‘Where’s that?’ said Charles.

‘The post-town to Redclyffe; Sir Guy Morville’s place.’

‘That old Sir Guy! What can he have to do with my father?’

‘Did you not know,’ said Philip, ‘that my uncle is to be guardian to the boy—his grandson?’

‘Eh? No, I did not.’

‘Yes,’ said Philip; ‘when old Sir Guy made it an especial point that my father should take the guardianship, he only consented on condition that my uncle should be joined with him; so now my uncle is alone in the trust, and I cannot help thinking something must have happened at Redclyffe. It is certainly not Sir Guy’s writing.’

‘It must wait, unless your curiosity will carry you out in search of papa,’ said Charles; ‘he is somewhere about, zealously supplying the place of Jenkins.’

‘Really, Philip,’ said Laura, ‘there is no telling how much good you have done him by convincing him of Jenkins’ dishonesty. To say nothing of the benefit of being no longer cheated, the pleasure of having to overlook the farming is untold.’

Philip smiled, and came to the table where she was drawing. ‘Do you know this place?’ said she, looking up in his face.

‘Stylehurst itself! What is it taken from?’

‘From this pencil sketch of your sister’s, which I found in mamma’s scrap book.’

‘You are making it very like, only the spire is too slender, and that tree—can’t you alter the foliage?—it is an ash.’

‘Is it? I took it for an elm.’

‘And surely those trees in the foreground should be greener, to throw back the middle distance. That is the peak of South Moor exactly, if it looked further off.’

She began the alterations, while Philip stood watching her progress, a shade of melancholy gathering on his face. Suddenly, a voice called ‘Laura! Are you there? Open the door, and you will see.’

On Philip’s opening it, in came a tall camellia; the laughing face, and light, shining curls of the bearer peeping through

the dark green leaves.

‘Thank you! Oh, is it you, Philip? Oh, don’t take it. I must bring my own camellia to show Charlie.’

‘You make the most of that one flower,’ said Charles.

‘Only see how many buds!’ and she placed it by his sofa. Is it not a perfect blossom, so pure a white, and so regular! And I am so proud of having beaten mamma and all the gardeners, for not another will be out this fortnight; and this is to go to the horticultural show. Sam would hardly trust me to bring it in, though it was my nursing, not his.’

‘Now, Amy,’ said Philip, when the flower had been duly admired, ‘you must let me put it into the window, for you. It is too heavy for you.’

‘Oh, take care,’ cried Amabel, but too late; for, as he took it from her, the solitary flower struck against Charles’s little table, and was broken off.

‘O Amy, I am very sorry. What a pity! How did it happen?’

‘Never mind,’ she answered; ‘it will last a long time in water.’

‘It was very unlucky—I am very sorry—especially because of the horticultural show.’

‘Make all your apologies to Sam,’ said Amy, ‘his feelings will be more hurt than mine. I dare say my poor flower would have caught cold at the show, and never held up its head again.’

Her tone was gay; but Charles, who saw her face in the glass, betrayed her by saying, ‘Winking away a tear, O Amy!’

‘I never nursed a dear gazelle!’ quoted Amy, with a merry laugh; and before any more could be said, there entered a middle-aged gentleman, short and slight, with a fresh, weather-beaten, good-natured face, gray whiskers, quick

eyes, and a hasty, undecided air in look and movement. He greeted Philip heartily, and the letter was given to him.

‘Ha! Eh? Let us look. Not old Sir Guy’s hand. Eh? What can be the matter? What? Dead! This is a sudden thing.’

‘Dead! Who? Sir Guy Morville?’

‘Yes, quite suddenly—poor old man.’ Then stepping to the door, he opened it, and called, ‘Mamma; just step here a minute, will you, mamma?’

The summons was obeyed by a tall, handsome lady, and behind her crept, with doubtful steps, as if she knew not how far to venture, a little girl of eleven, her turned-up nose and shrewd face full of curiosity. She darted up to Amabel; who, though she shook her head, and held up her finger, smiled, and took the little girl’s hand, listening meanwhile to the announcement, ‘Do you hear this, mamma? Here’s a shocking thing! Sir Guy Morville dead, quite suddenly.’

‘Indeed! Well, poor man, I suppose no one ever repented or suffered more than he. Who writes?’

‘His grandson—poor boy! I can hardly make out his letter.’ Holding it half a yard from his eyes, so that all could see a few lines of hasty, irregular writing, in a forcible hand, bearing marks of having been penned under great distress and agitation, he read aloud:—

‘“DEAR MR. EDMONSTONE—

My dear grandfather died at six this morning. He had an attack of apoplexy yesterday evening, and never spoke again, though for a short time he knew me. We hope he suffered little. Markham will make all arrangements. We propose that the funeral should take place on Tuesday; I hope you will be able to come. I would write to my cousin, Philip Morville, if I knew his address; but I depend on you for saying all that ought to be said. Excuse this illegible letter—I hardly know what I write.

‘ “Yours, very sincerely,
‘ “Guy Morville.” ’

‘Poor fellow!’ said Philip, ‘he writes with a great deal of proper feeling.’

‘How very sad for him to be left alone there!’ said Mrs. Edmonstone.

‘Very sad—very,’ said her husband. ‘I must start off to him at once—yes, at once. Should you not say so—eh, Philip?’

‘Certainly. I think I had better go with you. It would be the correct thing, and I should not like to fail in any token of respect for poor old Sir Guy.’

‘Of course—of course,’ said Mr. Edmonstone; ‘it would be the correct thing. I am sure he was always very civil to us, and you are next heir after this boy.’

Little Charlotte made a sort of jump, lifted her eyebrows, and stared at Amabel.

Philip answered. ‘That is not worth a thought; but since he and I are now the only representatives of the two branches of the house of Morville, it shall not be my fault if the enmity is not forgotten.’

‘Buried in oblivion would sound more magnanimous,’ said Charles; at which Amabel laughed so uncontrollably, that she was forced to hide her head on her little sister’s shoulder. Charlotte laughed too, an imprudent proceeding, as it attracted attention. Her father smiled, saying, half-reprovingly—‘So you are there, inquisitive pussy-cat?’ And at her mother’s question—‘Charlotte, what business have you here?’ She stole back to her lessons, looking very small, without the satisfaction of hearing her mother’s compassionate words—‘Poor child!’

‘How old is he?’ asked Mr. Edmonstone, returning to the former subject.

‘He is of the same age as Laura—seventeen and a half,’ answered Mrs. Edmonstone. ‘Don’t you remember my

brother saying what a satisfaction it was to see such a noble baby as she was, after such a poor little miserable thing as the one at Redclyffe?’

‘He is grown into a fine spirited fellow,’ said Philip.

‘I suppose we must have him here,’ said Mr. Edmonstone. Should you not say so—eh, Philip?’

‘Certainly; I should think it very good for him. Indeed, his grandfather’s death has happened at a most favourable time for him. The poor old man had such a dread of his going wrong that he kept him—’

‘I know—as tight as a drum.’

‘With strictness that I should think very bad for a boy of his impatient temper. It would have been a very dangerous experiment to send him at once among the temptations of Oxford, after such discipline and solitude as he has been used to.’

‘Don’t talk of it,’ interrupted Mr. Edmonstone, spreading out his hands in a deprecating manner. ‘We must do the best we can with him, for I have got him on my hands till he is five-and-twenty—his grandfather has tied him up till then. If we can keep him out of mischief, well and good; if not, it can’t be helped.’

‘You have him all to yourself,’ said Charles.

‘Ay, to my sorrow. If your poor father was alive, Philip, I should be free of all care. I’ve a pretty deal on my hands,’ he proceeded, looking more important than troubled. ‘All that great Redclyffe estate is no sinecure, to say nothing of the youth himself. If all the world will come to me, I can’t help it. I must go and speak to the men, if I am to be off to Redclyffe tomorrow. Will you come, Philip?’

‘I must go back soon, thank you,’ replied Philip. ‘I must see about my leave; only we should first settle when to set off.’

This arranged, Mr. Edmonstone hurried away, and Charles began by saying, ‘Isn’t there a ghost at Redclyffe?’

‘So it is said,’ answered his cousin; ‘though I don’t think it is certain whose it is. There is a room called Sir Hugh’s Chamber, over the gateway, but the honour of naming it is undecided between Hugo de Morville, who murdered Thomas a Becket, and his namesake, the first Baronet, who lived in the time of William of Orange, when the quarrel began with our branch of the family. Do you know the history of it, aunt?’

‘It was about some property,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone, ‘though I don’t know the rights of it. But the Morvilles were always a fiery, violent race, and the enmity once begun between Sir Hugh and his brother, was kept up, generation after generation, in a most unjustifiable way. Even I can remember when the Morvilles of Redclyffe used to be spoken of in our family like a sort of ogres.’

‘Not undeservedly, I should think,’ said Philip. ‘This poor old man, who is just dead, ran a strange career. Stories of his duels and mad freaks are still extant.’

‘Poor man! I believe he went all lengths,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone.

‘What was the true version of that horrible story about his son?’ said Philip. ‘Did he strike him?’

‘Oh, no! it was bad enough without that.’

‘How?’ asked Laura.

‘He was an only child, and lost his mother early. He was very ill brought up, and was as impetuous and violent as Sir Guy himself, though with much kindliness and generosity. He was only nineteen when he made a runaway marriage with a girl of sixteen, the sister of a violin player, who was at that time in fashion. His father was very much offended, and there was much dreadfully violent conduct on each side. At last, the young man was driven to seek a reconciliation. He

brought his wife to Moorworth, and rode to Redclyffe, to have an interview with his father. Unhappily, Sir Guy was giving a dinner to the hunt, and had been drinking. He not only refused to see him, but I am afraid he used shocking language, and said something about bidding him go back to his fiddling brother in-law. The son was waiting in the hall, heard everything, threw himself on his horse, and rushed away in the dark. His forehead struck against the branch of a tree, and he was killed on the spot.'

'The poor wife?' asked Amabel, shuddering.

'She died the next day, when this boy was born.'

'Frightful!' said Philip. 'It might well make a reformation in old Sir Guy.'

'I have heard that nothing could be more awful than the stillness that fell on that wretched party, even before they knew what had happened—before Colonel Harewood, who had been called aside by the servants, could resolve to come and fetch away the father. No wonder Sir Guy was a changed man from that hour.'

'It was then that he sent for my father,' said Philip.

'But what made him think of doing so?'

'You know Colonel Harewood's house at Stylehurst? Many years ago, when the St. Mildred's races used to be so much more in fashion, Sir Guy and Colonel Harewood, and some men of that stamp, took that house amongst them, and used to spend some time there every year, to attend to something about the training of the horses. There were some malpractices of their servants, that did so much harm in the parish, that my brother was obliged to remonstrate. Sir Guy was very angry at first, but behaved better at last than any of the others. I suspect he was struck by my dear brother's bold, uncompromising ways, for he took to him to a certain degree—and my brother could not help being interested in him, there seemed to be so much goodness in

his nature. I saw him once, and never did I meet any one who gave me so much the idea of a finished gentleman. When the poor son was about fourteen, he was with a tutor in the neighbourhood, and used to be a good deal at Stylehurst, and, after the unhappy marriage, my brother happened to meet him in London, heard his story, and tried to bring about a reconciliation.'

'Ha!' said Philip; 'did not they come to Stylehurst? I have a dim recollection of somebody very tall, and a lady who sung.'

'Yes; your father asked them to stay there, that he might judge of her, and wrote to Sir Guy that she was a little, gentle, childish thing, capable of being moulded to anything, and representing the mischief of leaving them to such society as that of her brother, who was actually maintaining them. That letter was never answered, but about ten days or a fortnight after this terrible accident, Colonel Harewood wrote to entreat my brother to come to Redclyffe, saying poor Sir Guy had eagerly caught at the mention of his name. Of course he went at once, and he told me that he never, in all his experience as a clergyman, saw any one so completely broken down with grief.'

I found a great many of his letters among my father's papers,' said Philip; 'and it was a very touching one that he wrote to me on my father's death. Those Redclyffe people certainly have great force of character.'

'And was it then he settled his property on my uncle?' said Charles.

'Yes,' said Mrs. Edmonstone. 'My brother did not like his doing so, but he would not be at rest till it was settled. It was in vain to put him in mind of his grandchild, for he would not believe it could live; and, indeed, its life hung on a thread. I remember my brother telling me how he went to Moorworth to see it—for it could not be brought home—in

hopes of bringing, back a report that might cheer its grandfather, but how he found it so weak and delicate, that he did not dare to try to make him take interest in it. It was not till the child was two or three years old, that Sir Guy ventured to let himself grow fond of it.’

‘Sir Guy was a very striking person,’ said Philip; ‘I shall not easily forget my visit to Redclyffe four years ago. It was more like a scene in a romance than anything real—the fine old red sandstone house crumbling away in the exposed parts, the arched gateway covered with ivy; the great quadrangle where the sun never shone, and full of echoes; the large hall and black wainscoted rooms, which the candles never would light up. It is a fit place to be haunted.’

‘That poor boy alone there!’ said Mrs. Edmonstone; ‘I am glad you and your uncle are going to him.’

‘Tell us about him,’ said Laura.

‘He was the most incongruous thing there,’ said Philip. ‘There was a calm, deep melancholy about the old man added to the grand courtesy which showed he had been what old books call a fine gentleman, that made him suit his house as a hermit does his cell, or a knight his castle; but breaking in on this “penseroso” scene, there was Guy—’

‘In what way?’ asked Laura.

‘Always in wild spirits, rushing about, playing antics, provoking the solemn echoes with shouting, whooping, singing, whistling. There was something in that whistle of his that always made me angry.’

‘How did this suit old Sir Guy?’

‘It was curious to see how Guy could rattle on to him, pour out the whole history of his doings, laughing, rubbing his hands, springing about with animation—all with as little answer as if he had been talking to a statue.’

‘Do you mean that Sir Guy did not like it?’

‘He did in his own way. There was now and then a glance or a nod, to show that he was attending; but it was such slight encouragement, that any less buoyant spirits must have been checked.’

‘Did you like him, on the whole?’ asked Laura. ‘I hope he has not this tremendous Morville temper? Oh, you don’t say so. What a grievous thing.’

‘He is a fine fellow,’ said Philip; ‘but I did not think Sir Guy managed him well. Poor old man, he was quite wrapped up in him, and only thought how to keep him out of harm’s way. He would never let him be with other boys, and kept him so fettered by rules, so strictly watched, and so sternly called to account, that I cannot think how any boy could stand it.’

‘Yet, you say, he told everything freely to his grandfather,’ said Amy.

‘Yes,’ added her mother, ‘I was going to say that, as long as that went on, I should think all safe.

‘As I said before,’ resumed Philip, ‘he has a great deal of frankness, much of the making of a fine character; but he is a thorough Morville. I remember something that will show you his best and worst sides. You know Redclyffe is a beautiful place, with magnificent cliffs overhanging the sea, and fine woods crowning them. On one of the most inaccessible of these crags there was a hawk’s nest, about half-way down, so that looking from the top of the precipice, we could see the old birds fly in and out. Well, what does Master Guy do, but go down this headlong descent after the nest. How he escaped alive no one could guess; and his grandfather could not bear to look at the place afterwards—but climb it he did, and came back with two young hawks, buttoned up inside his jacket.’

‘There’s a regular brick for you!’ cried Charles, delighted.

‘His heart was set on training these birds. He turned the library upside down in search of books on falconry, and

spent every spare moment on them. At last, a servant left some door open, and they escaped. I shall never forget Guy's passion; I am sure I don't exaggerate when I say he was perfectly beside himself with anger.'

'Poor boy!' said Mrs. Edmonstone.

'Served the rascal right,' said Charles.

'Nothing had any effect on him till his grandfather came out, and, at the sight of him, he was tamed in an instant, hung his head, came up to his grandfather, and said—"I am very sorry," Sir Guy answered, "My poor boy!" and there was not another word. I saw Guy no more that day, and all the next he was quiet and subdued. But the most remarkable part of the story is to come. A couple of days afterwards we were walking in the woods, when, at the sound of Guy's whistle, we heard a flapping and rustling, and beheld, tumbling along, with their clipped wings, these two identical hawks, very glad to be caught. They drew themselves up proudly for him to stroke them, and their yellow eyes looked at him with positive affection.'

'Pretty creatures!' said Amabel. 'That is a very nice end to the story.'

'It is not the end,' said Philip. 'I was surprised to see Guy so sober, instead of going into one of his usual raptures. He took them home; but the first thing I heard in the morning was, that he was gone to offer them to a farmer, to keep the birds from his fruit.'

'Did he do it of his own accord?' asked Laura.

'That was just what I wanted to know; but any hint about them brought such a cloud over his face that I thought it would be wanton to irritate him by questions. However, I must be going. Good-bye, Amy, I hope your Camellia will have another blossom before I come back. At least, I shall escape the horticultural meeting.'

‘Good-bye,’ said Charles. ‘Put the feud in your pocket till you can bury it in old Sir Guy’s grave, unless you mean to fight it out with his grandson, which would be more romantic and exciting.’

Philip was gone before he could finish. Mrs. Edmonstone looked annoyed, and Laura said, ‘Charlie, I wish you would not let your spirits carry you away.’

‘I wish I had anything else to carry me away!’ was the reply.

‘Yes,’ said his mother, looking sadly at him. ‘Your high spirits are a blessing; but why misuse them? If they are given to support you through pain and confinement, why make mischief with them?’

Charles looked more impatient than abashed, and the compunction seemed chiefly to rest with Amabel.

‘Now,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone, ‘I must go and see after my poor little prisoner.’

‘Ah!’ said Laura, as she went; ‘it was no kindness in you to encourage Charlotte to stay, Amy, when you know how often that inquisitive temper has got her into scrapes.’

‘I suppose so,’ said Amy, regretfully; ‘but I had not the heart to send her away.’

‘That is just what Philip says, that you only want bones and sinews in your character to—’

‘Come, Laura,’ interrupted Charles, ‘I won’t hear Philip’s criticisms of my sister, I had rather she had no bones at all, than that they stuck out and ran into me. There are plenty of angles already in the world, without sharpening hers.’

He possessed himself of Amy’s round, plump, childish hand, and spread out over it his still whiter, and very bony fingers, pinching her ‘soft pinky cushions,’ as he called them, ‘not meant for studying anatomy upon.’

‘Ah! you two spoil each other sadly,’ said Laura, smiling, as she left the room.

‘And what do Philip and Laura do to each other?’ said Charles.

‘Improve each other, I suppose,’ said Amabel, in a shy, simple tone, at which Charles laughed heartily.

‘I wish I was as sensible as Laura!’ said she, presently, with a sigh.

‘Never was a more absurd wish,’ said Charles, tormenting her hand still more, and pulling her curls; ‘unwish it forthwith. Where should I be without silly little Amy? If every one weighed my wit before laughing, I should not often be in disgrace for my high spirits, as they call them.’

‘I am so little younger than Laura,’ said Amy, still sadly, though smiling.

‘Folly,’ said Charles; ‘you are quite wise enough for your age, while Laura is so prematurely wise, that I am in constant dread that nature will take her revenge by causing her to do something strikingly foolish!’

‘Nonsense!’ cried Amy, indignantly. ‘Laura do anything foolish!’

‘What I should enjoy,’ proceeded Charles, ‘would be to see her over head and ears in love with this hero, and Philip properly jealous.’

‘How can you say such things, Charlie?’

‘Why? was there ever a beauty who did not fall in love with her father’s ward?’

‘No; but she ought to live alone with her very old father and horribly grim maiden aunt.’

‘Very well, Amy, you shall be the maiden, aunt.’ And as Laura returned at that moment, he announced to her that they had been agreeing that no hero ever failed to fall in love with his guardian’s beautiful daughter.

‘If his guardian had a beautiful daughter,’ said Laura, resolved not to be disconcerted.

‘Did you ever hear such barefaced fishing for compliments?’ said Charles; but Amabel, who did not like her sister to be teased, and was also conscious of having wasted a good deal of time, sat down to practise. Laura returned to her drawing, and Charles, with a yawn, listlessly turned over a newspaper, while his fair delicate features, which would have been handsome but that they were blanched, sharpened, and worn with pain, gradually lost their animated and rather satirical expression, and assumed an air of weariness and discontent.

Charles was at this time nineteen, and for the last ten years had been afflicted with a disease in the hip-joint, which, in spite of the most anxious care, caused him frequent and severe suffering, and had occasioned such a contraction of the limb as to cripple him completely, while his general health was so much affected as to render him an object of constant anxiety. His mother had always been his most devoted and indefatigable nurse, giving up everything for his sake, and watching him night and day. His father attended to his least caprice, and his sisters were, of course, his slaves; so that he was the undisputed sovereign of the whole family.

The two elder girls had been entirely under a governess till a month or two before the opening of our story, when Laura was old enough to be introduced; and the governess departing, the two sisters became Charles’s companions in the drawing-room, while Mrs. Edmonstone, who had a peculiar taste and talent for teaching, undertook little Charlotte’s lessons herself.

CHAPTER 2

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If the ill spirit have so fair a house,
Good things will strive to dwell with’t.
—THE TEMPEST

One of the pleasantest rooms at Hollywell was Mrs. Edmonstone’s dressing-room—large and bay-windowed, over the drawing-room, having little of the dressing-room but the name, and a toilet-table with a black and gold japanned glass, and curiously shaped boxes to match; her room opened into it on one side, and Charles’s on the other; it was a sort of up-stairs parlour, where she taught Charlotte, cast up accounts, spoke to servants, and wrote notes, and where Charles was usually to be found, when unequal to coming down-stairs. It had an air of great snugness, with its large folding-screen, covered with prints and caricatures of ancient date, its book-shelves, its tables, its peculiarly easy arm-chairs, the great invalid sofa, and the grate, which always lighted up better than any other in the house.

In the bright glow of the fire, with the shutters closed and curtains drawn, lay Charles on his couch, one Monday evening, in a gorgeous dressing-gown of a Chinese pattern, all over pagodas, while little Charlotte sat opposite to him, curled up on a footstool. He was not always very civil to Charlotte; she sometimes came into collision with him, for she, too, was a pet, and had a will of her own, and at other times she could bore him; but just now they had a common interest, and he was gracious.

‘It is striking six, so they must soon be here. I wish mamma would let me go down; but I must wait till after dinner.’

‘Then, Charlotte, as soon as you come in, hold up your hands, and exclaim, “What a guy!” There will be a compliment!’

‘No, Charlie; I promised mamma and Laura that you should get me into no more scrapes.’

‘Did you? The next promise you make had better depend upon yourself alone.’

‘But Amy said I must be quiet, because poor Sir Guy will be too sorrowful to like a racket; and when Amy tells me to be quiet, I know that I must, indeed.’

‘Most true,’ said Charles, laughing.

‘Do you think you shall like Sir Guy?’

‘I shall be able to determine,’ said Charles, sententiously, ‘when I have seen whether he brushes his hair to the right or left.’

‘Philip brushes his to the left.’

‘Then undoubtedly Sir Guy will brush his to the right.’

‘Is there not some horrid story about those Morvilles of Redclyffe?’ asked Charlotte. ‘I asked Laura, and she told me not to be curious, so I knew there was something in it; and then I asked Amy, and she said it would be no pleasure to me to know.’

‘Ah! I would have you prepared.’

‘Why, what is it? Oh! dear Charlie! are you really going to tell me?’

‘Did you ever hear of a deadly feud?’

‘I have read of them in the history of Scotland. They went on hating and killing each other for ever. There was one man who made his enemy’s children eat out of a pig-trough, and another who cut off his head.’

‘His own?’

‘No, his enemy’s, and put it on the table, at breakfast, with a piece of bread in its mouth.’

‘Very well; whenever Sir Guy serves up Philip’s head at breakfast, with a piece of bread in his mouth, let me know.’

Charlotte started up. ‘Charles, what do you mean? Such things don’t happen now.’

‘Nevertheless, there is a deadly feud between the two branches of the house of Morville.’

‘But it is very wrong,’ said Charlotte, looking frightened.’

‘Wrong? Of course it is.’

‘Philip won’t do anything wrong. But how will they ever get on?’

‘Don’t you see? It must be our serious endeavour to keep the peace, and prevent occasions of discord.’

‘Do you think anything will happen?’

‘It is much to be apprehended,’ said Charles, solemnly.

At that moment the sound of wheels was heard, and Charlotte flew off to her private post of observation, leaving her brother delighted at having mystified her. She returned on tip-toe. ‘Papa and Sir Guy are come, but not Philip; I can’t see him anywhere.’

‘Ah you have not looked in Sir Guy’s great-coat pocket.’

‘I wish you would not plague me so! You are not in earnest?’

The pettish inquiring tone was exactly what delighted him. And he continued to tease her in the same style till Laura and Amabel came running in with their report of the stranger.

‘He is come!’ they cried, with one voice.

‘Very gentlemanlike!’ said Laura.

‘Very pleasant looking,’ said Amy. ‘Such fine eyes!’

‘And so much expression,’ said Laura. ‘Oh!’

The exclamation, and the start which accompanied it, were caused by hearing her father's voice close to the door, which had been left partly open. 'Here is poor Charles,' it said, 'come in, and see him; get over the first introduction—eh, Guy?' And before he had finished, both he and the guest were in the room, and Charlotte full of mischievous glee at her sister's confusion.

'Well, Charlie, boy, how goes it?' was his father's greeting. 'Better, eh? Sorry not to find you down-stairs; but I have brought Guy to see you.' Then, as Charles sat up and shook hands with Sir Guy, he continued—'A fine chance for you, as I was telling him, to have a companion always at hand: a fine chance? eh, Charlie?'

'I am not so unreasonable as to expect any one to be always at hand,' said Charles, smiling, as he looked up at the frank, open face, and lustrous hazel eyes turned on him with compassion at the sight of his crippled, helpless figure, and with a bright, cordial promise of kindness.

As he spoke, a pattering sound approached, the door was pushed open, and while Sir Guy exclaimed, 'O, Bustle! Bustle! I am very sorry,' there suddenly appeared a large beautiful spaniel, with a long silky black and white coat, jetty curled ears, tan spots above his intelligent eyes, and tan legs, fringed with silken waves of hair, but crouching and looking beseeching at meeting no welcome, while Sir Guy seemed much distressed at his intrusion.

'O you beauty!' cried Charles. 'Come here, you fine fellow.'

Bustle only looked wistfully at his master, and moved nothing but his feather of a tail.

'Ah! I was afraid you would repent of your kindness,' said Sir Guy to Mr. Edmonstone.

'Not at all, not at all!' was the answer; 'mamma never objects to in-door pets, eh, Amy?'

‘A tender subject, papa,’ said Laura; ‘poor Pepper!’

Amy, ashamed of her disposition to cry at the remembrance of the dear departed rough terrier, bent down to hide her glowing face, and held out her hand to the dog, which at last ventured to advance, still creeping with his body curved till his tail was foremost, looking imploringly at his master, as if to entreat his pardon.

‘Are you sure you don’t dislike it?’ inquired Sir Guy, of Charles.

‘I? O no. Here, you fine creature.’

‘Come, then, behave like a rational dog, since you are come,’ said Sir Guy; and Bustle, resuming the deportment of a spirited and well-bred spaniel, no longer crouched and curled himself into the shape of a comma, but bounded, wagged his tail, thrust his nose into his master’s hand and then proceeded to reconnoitre the rest of the company, paying especial attention to Charles, putting his fore-paws on the sofa, and rearing himself up to contemplate him with a grave, polite curiosity, that was very diverting.

‘Well, old fellow,’ said Charles, ‘did you ever see the like of such a dressing-gown? Are you satisfied? Give me your paw, and let us swear an eternal friendship.’

‘I am quite glad to see a dog in the house again,’ said Laura, and, after a few more compliments, Bustle and his master followed Mr. Edmonstone out of the room.

‘One of my father’s well-judged proceedings,’ murmured Charles. ‘That poor fellow had rather have gone a dozen, miles further than have been lugged in here. Really, if papa chooses to inflict such dressing-gowns on me, he should give me notice before he brings men and dogs to make me their laughing-stock!’

‘An unlucky moment,’ said Laura. ‘Will my cheeks ever cool?’

‘Perhaps he did not hear,’ said Amabel, consolingly.

‘You did not ask about Philip?’ said Charlotte, with great earnestness.

‘He is staying at Thorndale, and then going to St. Mildred’s,’ said Laura.

‘I hope you are relieved,’ said her brother; and she looked in doubt whether she ought to laugh.

‘And what do you think of Sir Guy?’

‘May he only be worthy of his dog!’ replied Charles.

‘Ah!’ said Laura, ‘many men are neither worthy of their wives, nor of their dogs.’

‘Dr. Henley, I suppose, is the foundation of that aphorism,’ said Charles.

‘If Margaret Morville could marry him, she could hardly be too worthy,’ said Laura. ‘Think of throwing away Philip’s whole soul!’

‘O Laura, she could not lose that,’ said Amabel.

Laura looked as if she knew more; but at that moment, both her father and mother entered, the former rubbing his hands, as he always did when much pleased, and sending his voice before him, as he exclaimed, ‘Well, Charlie, well, young ladies, is not he a fine fellow—eh?’

‘Rather under-sized,’ said Charles.

‘Eh? He’ll grow. He is not eighteen, you know; plenty of time; a very good height; you can’t expect every one to be as tall as Philip; but he’s a capital fellow. And how have you been?—any pain?’

‘Hem—rather,’ said Charles, shortly, for he hated answering kind inquiries, when out of humour.

‘Ah, that’s a pity; I was sorry not to find you in the drawing-room, but I thought you would have liked just to see him,’ said Mr. Edmonstone, disappointed, and apologizing.

‘I had rather have had some notice of your intention,’ said Charles, ‘I would have made myself fit to be seen.’

‘I am sorry. I thought you would have liked his coming,’ said poor Mr. Edmonstone, only half conscious of his offence; ‘but I see you are not well this evening.’

Worse and worse, for it was equivalent to openly telling Charles he was out of humour; and seeing, as he did, his mother’s motive, he was still further annoyed when she hastily interposed a question about Sir Guy.

‘You should only hear them talk about him at Redclyffe,’ said Mr. Edmonstone. ‘No one was ever equal to him, according to them. Every one said the same—clergyman, old Markham, all of them. Such attention to his grandfather, such proper feeling, so good-natured, not a bit of pride—it is my firm belief that he will make up for all his family before him.’

Charles set up his eyebrows sarcastically.

‘How does he get on with Philip?’ inquired Laura.

‘Excellently. Just what could be wished. Philip is delighted with him; and I have been telling Guy all the way home what a capital friend he will be, and he is quite inclined to look up to him.’ Charles made an exaggerated gesture of astonishment, unseen by his father. ‘I told him to bring his dog. He would have left it, but they seemed so fond of each other, I thought it was a pity to part them, and that I could promise it should be welcome here; eh, mamma?’

‘Certainly. I am very glad you brought it.’

‘We are to have his horse and man in a little while. A beautiful chestnut—anything to raise his spirits. He is terribly cut up about his grandfather.

It was now time to go down to dinner; and after Charles had made faces of weariness and disgust at all the viands proposed to him by his mother, almost imploring him to like them, and had at last ungraciously given her leave to send

what he could not quite say he disliked, he was left to carry on his teasing of Charlotte, and his grumbling over the dinner, for about the space of an hour, when Amabel came back to him, and Charlotte went down.

‘Hum!’ he exclaimed. ‘Another swan of my father’s.’

‘Did not you like his looks?’

‘I saw only an angular hobbetyhoy.’

‘But every one at Redclyffe speaks so well of him.’

‘As if the same things were not said of every heir to more acres than brains! However, I could have swallowed everything but the disposition to adore Philip. Either it was gammon on his part, or else the work of my father’s imagination.’

‘For shame, Charlie.’

‘Is it within the bounds of probability that he should be willing, at the bidding of his guardian, to adopt as Mentor his very correct and sententious cousin, a poor subaltern, and the next in the entail? Depend upon it, it is a fiction created either by papa’s hopes or Philip’s self-complacency, or else the unfortunate youth must have been brought very low by strait-lacing and milk-and-water.’

‘Mr. Thorndale is willing to look up to Philip,’

‘I don’t think the Thorndale swan very—very much better than a tame goose,’ said Charles, ‘but the coalition is not so monstrous in his case, since Philip was a friend of his own picking and choosing, and so his father’s adoption did not succeed in repelling him. But that Morville should receive this “young man’s companion,” on the word of a guardian whom he never set eyes on before, is too incredible—utterly mythical I assure you, Amy. And how did you get on at dinner?’

‘Oh, the dog is the most delightful creature I ever saw, so sensible and well-mannered.’

‘It was of the man that I asked.’

‘He said hardly anything, and sometimes started if papa spoke to him suddenly. He winced as if he could not bear to be called Sir Guy, so papa said we should call him only by his name, if he would do the same by us. I am glad of it, for it seems more friendly, and I am sure he wants to be comforted.’

‘Don’t waste your compassion, my dear; few men need it less. With his property, those moors to shoot over, his own master, and with health to enjoy it, there are plenty who would change with him for all your pity, my silly little Amy.’

‘Surely not, with that horrible ancestry.’

‘All very well to plume oneself upon. I rather covet that ghost myself.’

‘Well, if you watched his face, I think you would be sorry for him.’

‘I am tired of the sound of his name. One fifth of November is enough in the year. Here, find something to read to me among that trumpery.’

Amy read till she was summoned to tea, when she found a conversation going on about Philip, on whose history Sir Guy did not seem fully informed. Philip was the son of Archdeacon Morville, Mrs. Edmonstone’s brother, an admirable and superior man, who had been dead about five years. He left three children, Margaret and Fanny, twenty-five and twenty-three years of age, and Philip, just seventeen. The boy was at the head of his school, highly distinguished for application and good conduct; he had attained every honour there open to him, won golden opinions from all concerned with him, and made proof of talents which could not have failed to raise him to the highest university distinctions. He was absent from home at the time of his father’s death, which took place after so short an illness, that there had been no time to summon

him back to Stylehurst. Very little property was left to be divided among the three; and as soon as Philip perceived how small was the provision for his sisters, he gave up his hopes of university honours, and obtained a commission in the army.

On hearing this, Sir Guy started forward: ‘Noble!’ he cried, ‘and yet what a pity! If my grandfather had but known it—’

‘Ah! I was convinced of *that*,’ broke in Mr. Edmonstone, ‘and so, I am sure, was Philip himself; but in fact he knew we should never have given our consent, so he acted quite by himself, wrote to Lord Thorndale, and never said a word, even to his sisters, till the thing was done. I never was more surprised in my life.’

‘One would almost envy him the opportunity of making such a sacrifice,’ said Sir Guy, yet one must lament it.

‘It was done in a hasty spirit of independence,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone; ‘I believe if he had got a fellowship at Oxford, it would have answered much better.’

‘And now that poor Fanny is dead, and Margaret married, there is all his expensive education thrown away, and all for nothing,’ said Mr. Edmonstone.

‘Ah,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone, ‘he planned for them to go on living at Stylehurst, so that it would still have been his home. It is a great pity, for his talent is thrown away, and he is not fond of his profession.’

‘You must not suppose, though, that he is not a practical man,’ said Mr. Edmonstone; ‘I had rather take his opinion than any one’s, especially about a horse, and there is no end to what I hear about his good sense, and the use he is of to the other young men.’

‘You should tell about Mr. Thorndale, papa,’ said Laura.

‘Ah that is a feather in master Philip’s cap; besides, he is your neighbour—at least, his father is.’