Critical Edition of *The Silence of Dean Maitland* by Maxwell Gray

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Edited by

Kevin A. Morrison

Cambridge
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INTRODUCTION

When Alfred Chenevix Trench got his hands on Maxwell Gray's *The Silence of Dean Maitland*, he knew that his firm needed to publish it. In 1886, Kegan Paul, Trench, and Company was best known for its titles in economics, politics, sociology, and science. Some of the most influential liberal intellectuals of the day, including Walter Bagehot, Thomas Huxley, and Stanley Jevons, were its authors. Even though the firm published "very little fiction," Trench knew that the novel's shocking content would make it a blockbuster. "I said to myself: 'It is too good to miss. . . .I must take it'" (qtd. in Mumby 195).[1] Trench's instincts were right. Gray's novel was one of the firm's great successes.

The Silence of Dean Maitland is a sprawling epic that unfolds over a roughly twenty- year period. The novel centers on the rise and fall of Cyril Maitland. When it opens, Maitland is a newly ordained deacon in the Anglican Church working alongside his father, the rector of Malbourne, in a fictional town based on the Isle of Wight. He is engaged to marry Marion Everard, who lives in London. Through his interactions with others, Maitland is revealed to be a sympathetic, generous, and kindly spirit. He rescues Alma Lee, a young working-class girl, from the driver of a horse-drawn wagon, when the older married man attempts to extort a kiss from her in lieu of payment. He is solicitous of his invalid mother. He is jovial in his interactions with Lilian, his twin sister; the doctor Henry Everard, Maitland's friend from college to whom Lilian is engaged; as well as his two much younger siblings.

But the reader soon learns that there is another side to Cyril Maitland. Ambitious, charismatic, and hedonistic, Maitland takes advantage of the young Alma, after she inadvertently reveals that she has feelings for him. The two have sex. In the following year, the town learns that Alma is pregnant with the child of a man vastly superior to her in social status. Given Alma's age as well as his vocation, Maitland wrestles with a heavy conscience that he attempts to assuage by delivering sermons from the

[1] On 15 April 1886, the firm offered Gray the sum of £25 and a further £25 if sales exceeded 400. She declined. The firm negotiated better terms, which she found acceptable (Isle of Wight County Record Office, letter to Mary Gleed Tuttiett, 15 Apr. 1886, Z/49).

pulpit on themes of guilt and innocence and using a spiked crucifix to mortify his flesh. Nevertheless, Maitland is never suspected of being the father. Owing to an illness, Everard had spent some time with Alma supervising her care in the months prior to her sexual relationship with Maitland. A jealous and spurned suitor of Alma's peddles a theory to her father, the coachman Ben Lee, that Everard is responsible for his daughter's fall from grace. In a blind rage, Ben resolves to confront the doctor. On New Year's Eve, he sets out into the forest, where Everard, Lilian, and Maitland are known to be enjoying themselves. Soon thereafter, as Alma gives birth to her child, Ben's lifeless body is found.

The police are called to investigate and quickly determine that a homicide has been committed. Owing to the testimony of others that place him in the woods at approximately the same time as Ben Lee, a flabbergasted Everard is arrested for the crime. In the ensuing months, Everard is subject to court appearances and, ultimately, a trial at which Alma is called to testify. When she is pressed to divulge what she knows, she reveals that the baby's father had met up with her in the woods and offered financial support in a belated attempt to partially rectify the situation. When her father arrived on the scene, the two fought and her father was unintentionally killed. At first, Alma refuses to provide the court with a name. But when she realizes that she has no choice, she decides to finger Everard for her father's death rather than implicate Maitland, who is, in fact, the guilty party. When he learns that his friend may be convicted of manslaughter, Maitland tries but fails to introduce testimony that would free him. Following the trial, Henry is transported to Australia, where he serves out a twenty-year prison sentence. Convincing himself that further interventions would be futile, Maitland keeps his silence.

In the years that follow, Maitland—through his powerful oratory and naked ambition— ascends the church hierarchy and becomes the Dean of Belminster. His popular devotional texts, including *The Secret Penitent* and *Verses for the Suffering*, win him national fame. Booksellers on the High Street feature his published works in their windows. Of all his publications, *The Secret Penitent* is the most widely read. It runs to many editions and, the narrator notes, the treatise "must have comforted the souls of thousands of human beings; it could only have been written by a man of deep religious convictions and high-toned morality." In fact, Maitland continually deludes himself into thinking that the workings of fate kept him free in order for him to bring salvation to so many, while Everard is punished for a crime he did not commit.

Yet in the climactic moments of the novel, Maitland must come to terms with what he has done. Everard is released from prison and makes his way

back to England. Having studied Maitland's publications, he comes to believe that whatever physical deprivations Maitland may have experienced in prison are nothing compared with what his friend's tormented soul must have suffered. He offers his forgiveness to Maitland. On the verge of being granted a bishopric, Maitland is given another chance to own up to his crime when his superiors attend a sermon that he is delivering to his congregation. Will he use the occasion to acknowledge that he is responsible for the manslaughter of Ben Lee? Or will he remain silent and gain the bishopric knowing that his friend will never point his finger at him?

The Silence of Dean Maitland was an immediate success. It is also one of a small number of literary works from the period to be adapted across media. Soon after the novel's publication audiences eagerly gathered in a number of different Australian and British cities—from Sydney to Worcester—to watch theatrical performances. In 1914, Raymond Longford brought out the first cinematic version of the novel: a silent film. A year later, two other films were released, including an American version titled *Sealed Lips*. In 1934, the novel was adapted by Australian film producer and director Ken G. Hall. His version of *The Silence of Dean Maitland*—the sexual content of which pressed against the limits of what could be shown to audiences at the time—performed strongly down under. Indeed, Hall's 1934 film was a significant watermark in the creation of a distinctive Australian cinema. Its successful performance at box offices in Australia led to its release in England, where the film also flourished. In 1986, *The Silence of Dean Maitland* was broadcast as a mini-series on Australian television. It is, in short, a Victorian novel of great reach. Yet one that few today have read or studied.

The Silence of Dean Maitland certainly raises a series of questions with which generations of readers, as well as audience members and viewers of its various theatrical and cinematic adaptations, have wrestled. What does it mean to lead a religious life? Although Maitland devotes his life to the church, he possesses some of the qualities (self-pride, deceit) that are inimical to his position. By contrast, Everard, who at first seems comparatively more worldly in orientation, nevertheless evinces many of the qualities that Maitland lacks. What does it mean to atone for one's sins? Throughout the novel, Gray is keen to show that Maitland is genuinely anguished by what he has done, which spurs him to accomplish much important public work. Can we ever escape punishment for our actions? Although Maitland convinces himself that he has been spared prison in order to help others, he nevertheless interprets every private grief, including the deaths of many around him whom he loves, as divine retribution for the lives he took: the first by his own hands and the second because of his sealed

lips. These questions are reflected, in part, by the different titles Gray contemplated giving her novel, among them: *The Sorrow of Dean Maitland*, *The Agony of Dean Maitland*, and *A Terrible Price*.[1] [Figs. 1, 2]

Gray settled on *The Silence of Dean Maitland* for her third literary work. Her two previous novels were barely noticed by the reading public. Thus, when the novel was first published, reviewers were unsure of the author's gender. Some thought it was written by a male hand and compared it, sometimes unfavorably, with the work of Thomas Hardy. Others rightly guessed that Maxwell Gray was a pseudonym and that the writer was a woman. In fact, Maxwell Gray was the nom de plume of Mary Gleed Tuttiett, a native of the Isle of Wight. She set much of the novel on the island resort with slight modification of town names. Thus, Newport is Oldport, Calbourne is Malbourne, and Carisbrooke is Chalkburne. Although she never achieved the same triumph with subsequent novels, Gray became one of the more popular fiction writers of the late Victorian and early Edwardian periods. Her next novel, *The Reproach of Annesley* (1888), was so highly anticipated that two publishers dispatched their representatives to the Isle of Wight in an attempt to win her over as their author. Other novels included *The Last Sentence* (1893), *The House of Hidden Treasure* (1898), and *The Great Refusal* (1906). Gray also penned several volumes of poems.

Ordinarily, critical editions of historical novels include appendices, which may contain contemporary reviews, selections from other works by the writer or peers, and so on—all designed to historically situate the text. This Cambridge Scholars edition of *The Silence of Dean Maitland* is different. Following a fully annotated version of the novel, three concise and provocative essays accompany the main text, each one discussing some aspect of the text as it originates on the page and is subsequently adapted for the stage and film. These essays—one written by a literary scholar, another by a film historian, and, because many students will be reading the novel, a third by one of their peers—will be geared toward stimulating conversations among students in the classroom and between those with different disciplinary perspectives about *The Silence of Dean Maitland* and its subsequent adaptations. Instead of documenting the originating context of the literary work, historical materials are used to illustrate the novel's adaptation on stage and screen. The underlying assumption of this editorial decision is that the uses to which a literary work is put—or the ways in which it is repurposed or reimagined—tells us something not just about those efforts but about the original work itself.

[1] See the correspondence file, Isle of Wight County Record Office, Z/49.

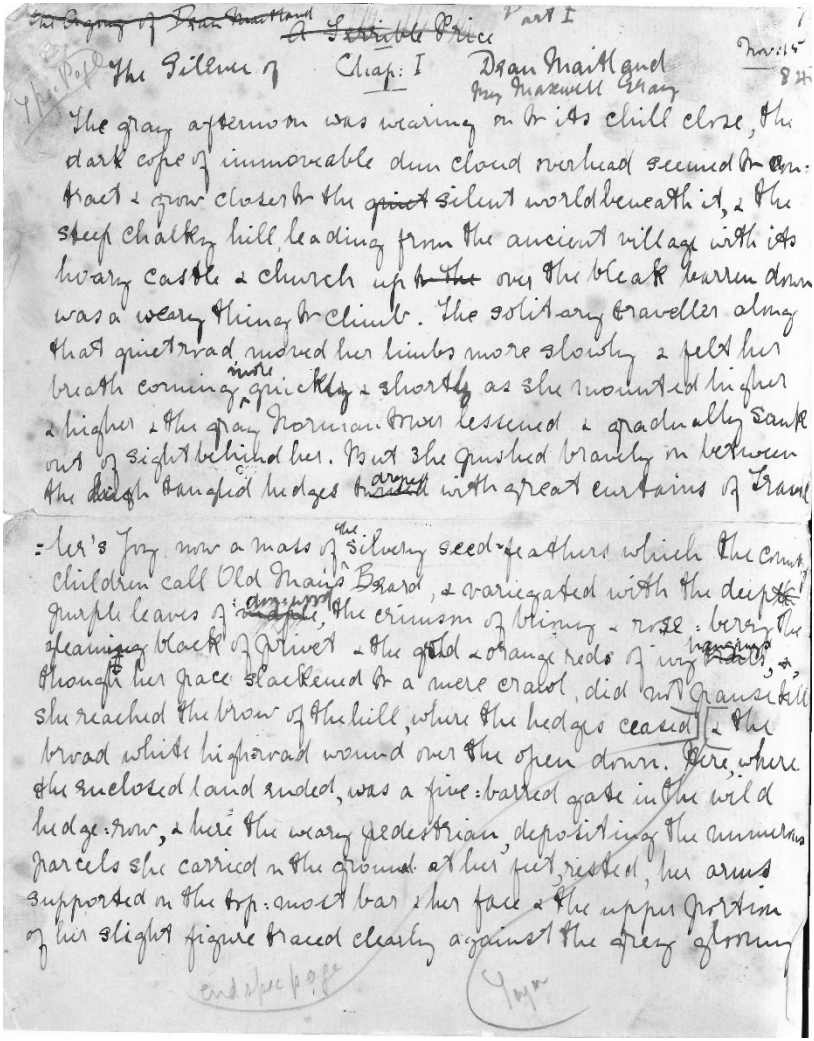


Fig. 1 Scan of the first page of the manuscript for the *Silence of Dean Maitland* showing possible titles (Courtesy of the Isle of Wight County Record Office, Z/49)

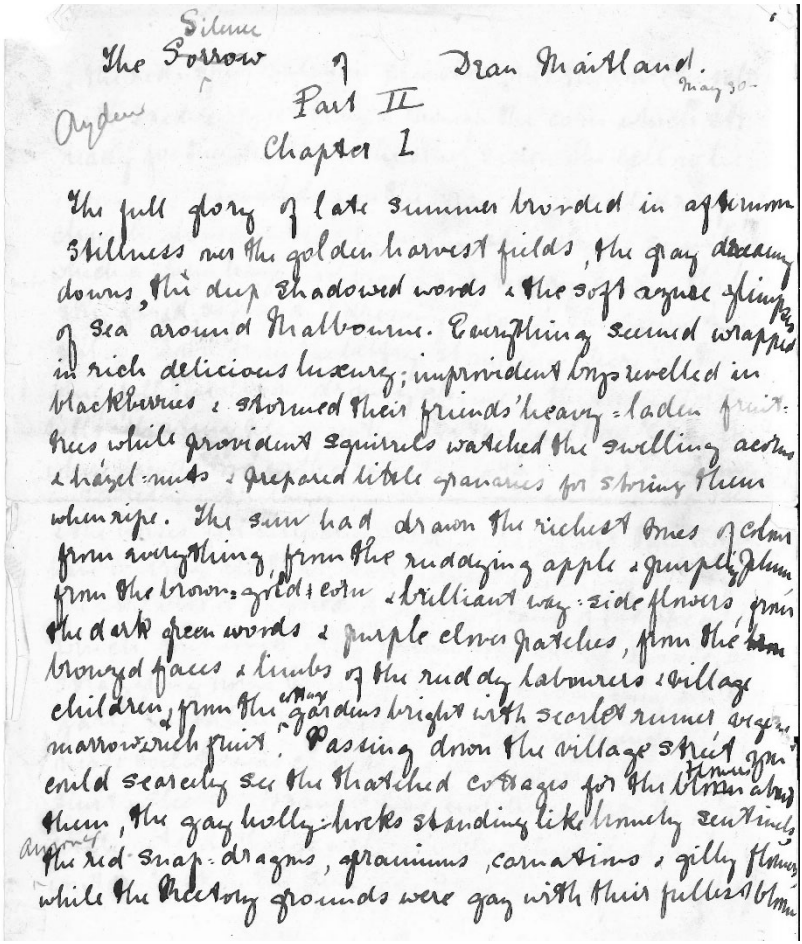

Silence
The Sorrow of Dean Maitland.
May 30-
Part II
Chapter 1
Ogden
The full glory of late summer brooded in afternoon stillness over the golden harvest fields, the gray downs, the deep shadowed woods & the soft azure shimmer of sea around Malbourne. Everything seemed wrapped in rich delicious luxury; improvident boys revelled in blackberries & stormed their friends' heavy-laden fruit-trees while provident squirrels watched the swelling acorns & hazel-nuts & prepared little granaries for storing them when ripe. The sun had drawn the richest tones of color from everything, from the ruddying apple & purple plum from the brown-gold corn & brilliant way-side flowers from the dark green woods & purple elm-patches, from the bronzed faces & limbs of the ruddy laborers & village children, from the cottage gardens bright with scarlet runner & marrow-bearing fruit. Passing down the village street one could scarcely see the thatched cottages for the blossom above them, the gay hollyhocks standing like sentinels among the red snap-dragons, geraniums, carnations & gilly flowers while the Rectory grounds were gay with their fullest bloom

Fig. 2 Scan of the first page of part 2 with the heading the Sorrow of Dean Maitland (Courtesy of the Isle of Wight County Record Office, Z/49)

For the text of this edition, I have used the original published by Kegan Paul, Trench, and Company in 1886. However, I have incorporated the illustrations by F. Hamilton Jackson, which were added to an edition by the same firm a decade later. I have also regularized spelling and capitalization by consulting later editions and silently corrected misspellings or minor grammatical errors in all primary source materials included in this volume.

Justin Goh Xian Qiang helped me with formatting and (endless) proofing. I am enormously grateful.

Kevin A. Morrison
Henan University

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Introduction

Annotated text

THE SILENCE OF DEAN MAITLAND

A NOVEL

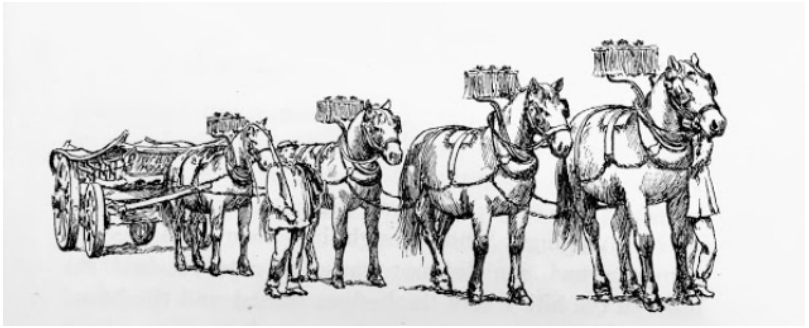
BY

MAXWELL GRAY

"Denn alle Schuld rächt sich auf Erden"

PART I.

"Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou ow'dst yesterday."[1]



Chapter I.

THE grey afternoon was wearing on to its chill close; the dark cope of immovable dun cloud overhead seemed to contrast and grow closer to the silent world beneath it; and the steep, chalky hill, leading from the ancient village, with its hoary castle and church, up over the bleak, barren down, was a weary thing to climb.

The solitary traveller along that quiet road moved her limbs more slowly, and felt her breath coming more quickly and shortly, as she mounted higher and higher, and the grey Norman[2] tower lessened and gradually sunk

[1] From Shakespeare's *Othello* (1603). The lines come at the end of Iago's soliloquy in which he rejoices for having set in motion the plan that leads to Othello's downfall.

[2] A reference to the eleventh-century Norman Conquest of England. The Isle of Wight, which is the basis for Gray's fictional world, is dotted with Norman-era ecclesiastical architecture.

out of sight behind her. But she toiled bravely on between the high tangled hedges, draped with great curtains of traveller's joy, now a mass of the silvery seed-feathers which the country children call "old man's beard,"[1] and variegated with the deep-purple leaves of dogwood, the crimson of briony and roseberry, the gleaming black of privet, and the gold and orange reds of ivy hangings; and, though her pace slackened to a mere crawl, she did not pause till she reached the brow of the hill, where the hedges ceased, and the broad white high-road wound over the open down.

Here, where the enclosed land ended, was a five-barred gate in the wild hedge-row, and here the weary pedestrian, depositing the numerous parcels she carried on the ground at her feet, rested, her arms supported on the topmost bar, and her face and the upper portion of her tall figure traced clearly against the grey, gloomy sky. Some linnets fluttered out of the hedge beside her, one or two silent larks sprung up from the turf of the downland sloping away from the gate, and some rooks sailed cawing overhead. All else was still with the weird, dreamy stillness that hangs over the earth on a day of chill east wind haze.

There is a brooding expectancy about such a day that works strongly on the imagination, and suggests the dark possibilities of irresistible Fate. There is an austere poetry in the purply grey, breathless earth and the dark, unchanging sky, and a mute pathos in the quiet hush of weary Nature, thus folding her hands for rest, which has an unutterable charm for some temperaments, and touches far deeper chords than those vibrated by the brilliance and joyous tumult of life and song in the pleasant June-time. There is something of the infinite in the very monotony of the colouring; the breathless quiet, the vagueness of outline, and dimness of the all-infolding mist are full of mystery, and invest the most commonplace objects with romance.

The sense of infinity was deepened in this case by the vast sweep of the horizon which bounded our pedestrian's gaze. The grey fallows and wan stubble-fields sloped swiftly away from the gate to a bottom of verdant pastures dotted with trees and homesteads; beyond them were more dim fields, and then a wide belt of forest, principally of firs. To the right, the valley, in which nestled the now unseen tower of Chalkburne, widened out, bounded by gentle hills, till the stream indicating its direction became a river, on the banks of which stood the mist-veiled town of Oldport, the tall tower of whose church rose light, white, and graceful against the iron-grey sky, emulating in the glory of its maiden youth—for it had seen but two lustres—the hoary grandeur of its Norman parent at Chalkburne. Beyond

[1] Any of several clematises, a plant with a white-feathery appearance.

the town, the river rolled on, barge-laden, to the sea, the faint blue line of which was blurred by a maze of masts where the estuary formed a harbour.

To the left of the tired gazer stretched a wide champaign, rich in woodland, and bounded in the far distance by two chalky summits, at whose steep bases surged the unseen sea, quiet to-day on the surface, but sullen with the heavy roar of the ground-swell beneath. Here and there, in the breaks of wood and forest on the horizon, Alma's accustomed eyes saw some faint grey touches which in bright summer were tiny bays of sapphire sea.

Alma Lee herself made a bright point of interest in the afternoon greyness, as she leant wearily, and not ungracefully, on the gate, her face and figure outlined clearly against the dark sky. Her dress was a bright blue, and her scarlet plaid shawl, fastened tightly about her shoulders, revealed and suggested, as only a shawl can, a full, supple form, indicative of youth and health. Her dark, thick hair was crowned by a small velvet hat, adorned with a bright bird's wing; and her dark eyes and well-formed features, reposeful and indifferent as they were at the moment, suggested latent vehemence and passion. Her hands and feet were large, the former bare, and wrapped in the gay shawl for warmth.

Alma was not thinking of the mystery and infinite possibility suggested by the grey landscape before her; still less was she dreaming of the tragic shades Fate was casting even now upon her commonplace path. Unsuspecting and innocent she stood, lost in idle thought, deaf to the steps of approaching doom, and knowing nothing of the lives that were to be so tragically entangled in the mazes of her own. Could she but have had one glimpse of the swift-coming future, with what horror would the simple country girl have started back and struggled against the first suspicion of disaster!

The silence was presently broken by four mellow, slowly falling strokes from the grey belfry of Chalkburne; then all was still again, and Alma began to pick up her parcels. Suddenly she heard the sound of hoofs and wheels, and, dropping her packages, turned once more to the gate, and appeared a very statue of contemplation by the time a dog-cart, drawn by a high-stepping chestnut, and driven by a spick and span groom, fair-haired and well-featured, drew up beside her, and the groom sprung lightly to the ground.

"Come, Alma," he said, approaching the pensive figure, which appeared unconscious of him, "you won't say no now? You look dog-tired."

"I shall say exactly what I please, Mr. Judkins," she replied.

"Then say yes, and jump up. Chestnut is going like a bird, and will have you at Swaynestone in no time. Do say yes, do ee now."[1]

"Thank you, I intend to walk."

"Just think what a walk it is to walk to Swaynestone, and you so tired."

"I am not tired."

"Then, why are you leaning on that there gate?"

"I am admiring the view, since you are so very inquisitive."

"Oh, Lord! the view! There's a deal more view to be seen from the seat of this here cart, and its pleasant flying along like a bird. Come now, Alma, let me help you up."

"Mr. Judkins, will you have the kindness to drive on? I said in Oldport that I intended to walk. It's very hard a person mayn't do as she pleases without all this worry," replied Alma, impatiently.

"Wilful woman mun have her way," murmured the young man ruefully. "Well, let me carry them parcels home, at least."

"I intend to carry them myself, thank you. Good afternoon;" and Alma turned her back upon the mortified youth and appeared lost in the charms of landscape.

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[1] The Isle of Wight accent, which is similar to southwest English dialect, includes an emphasis on long vowels and the dropping of certain consonants.

"Well, darn it! if you won't come, you won't; that's flat!" the young man exclaimed, angrily. "This is your nasty pride, Miss Alma; but, mind you, pride goes before a fall," he added, springing to his perch, and sending the high-stepper flying along the level down-road like the wind, with many expressions of anger and disappointment, and sundry backward glances at Alma, who gazed with unruffled steadiness on the fields.

"I wonder," she mused, "why a person always hates a person who makes love to them? I liked Charlie Judkins well enough before he took on with this love-nonsense."

And she did not know that by declining that brief drive she had refused the one chance of escaping all the subsequent tragedy, and that her fate was even now approaching in the growing gloom. But what is this fairy music ascending from the direction of Chalkburne, and growing clearer and louder every moment? Sweet, melodious, drowsily cheery, ring out five tiny merry peals of bells, each peal accurately matched with the other, and consisting of five tones. The music comes tumbling down in sweet confusion, peal upon peal, chime breaking into chime, in a sort of mirthful strife of melody, through all which a certain irregular rhythm is preserved, which keeps the blending harmonies from degenerating into dissonance. With a sweep and a clash and a mingling of sleepy rapture, the elfin music filled all the quiet hazy air around Alma, and inspired her with vague pleasure as she turned her head listening in the direction of the dulcet sounds, and discerned their origin in the nodding head of a large silk-coated cart-horse looming through the haze.

He was a handsome, powerful fellow, stepping firmly up the hill with the happy consciousness of doing good service which seems to animate all willing, well-behaved horses, and emerging into full view at the head of four gallant comrades, each nodding and stepping as cheerily as himself, with a ponderous waggon behind them. Each horse wore his mane in love-locks, combed over his eyes, the hair on the massive neck being tied here and there with bows of bright woollen ribbon. Each tail was carefully plaited at its spring from the powerful haunches for a few inches; then it was tied with another bright knot, beneath which the remainder of the tail swept in untrammelled abundance almost down to the pasterns, the latter hidden by long fringes coming to the ground. The ponderous harness shone brightly on the broad, shining brown bodies, and, as each horse carried a leading-rein, thickly studded with brass bosses and fastened to the girth, and there was much polished brass about headstall, saddle, and collar, they presented a very glittering appearance.

But the crowning pride of every horse, and the source of all the music which was then witching the wintry air, was the lofty erection springing on

two branching wires from every collar, and towering far above the pricked ears of the proud steeds. These wires bore a long narrow canopy placed at right angles to the horse's length, and concealing beneath a deep fringe of bright scarlet worsted the little peal of nicely graduated bells. Balls of the same bright worsted studded the roof of the little canopy, and finished the gay trappings of the sturdy rustics, who bore these accumulated honours with a sort of meek rapture.

The waggon these stout fellows drew needed all their bone and sinew to bring it up and down the steep, hilly roads. Its hind-wheels were as high as Alma's head; their massive felloes, shod with double tires, were a foot broad; the naves were like moderate-sized casks. High over the great hind wheels arched the waggon's ledge in a grand sweep, descending with a boat-like curve to the smaller front wheels, whence it rose again, ending high over the wheeler's haunches, like the prow of some old ship over the sea. A massive thing of solid timber it was, with blue wheels and red body, slightly toned by weather. On the front, in red letters on a yellow ground, was painted, "Richard Long, Malbourne, 1860."

Two human beings, who interrupted the fairy music with strange gutturals and wild ejaculations to the steeds, mingled with sharp whip-cracks, accompanied this imposing equipage. One was a tall, straight-limbed man in fustian jacket and trousers, a coat slung hussar-wise from his left shoulder, and a cap worn slightly to one side, with a pink chrysanthemum stuck in it. His sunburned face was almost the hue of his yellow-brown curls and short beard; his eyes were blue; and his strong laboured gait resembled that of his horses. The other was a beardless lad, his satellite,[1] similarly arrayed, minus the flower. Sparks flew from the road when the iron hoofs and heavy iron boots struck an occasional flint. When the great waggon was fairly landed on the brow of the hill, the horses were brought to by means of sundry strange sounds and violent gestures on the part of the men, and, with creaking and groaning and hallooing, the great land-ship came to anchor, the elfin chimes dropped into silence, interrupted by little bursts of melody at every movement of the horses, and the lad seized a great wooden mallet and thrust it beneath the hind wheel. The carter leant placidly against the ponderous shaft with his face to Alma, and struck a match to kindle his replenished pipe.

"Coldish," he observed, glancing with surly indifference towards her.

"It is cold," returned Alma, drawing her shawl cosily round her graceful shoulders; while the wheeler, stimulated into curiosity by his master's voice, turned round to look at Alma, and shook out a little peal of bells, which roused the emulation of his four brothers, who each shook out a little chime

[1] Used here in the sense of someone being attendant or subordinate.

on his own account; while the waggoner glanced slowly round the vast horizon, and, after some contemplation, said in a low, bucolic drawl—

"Gwine to hrain, I 'lows."

"It looks like it," replied Alma. "How is your wife, William?"

The waggoner again interrogated the horizon for inspiration, and, after some thought, answered with a jerk, "Neuce the same."

"I hope she will soon be about again," said Alma; and the leader emphasized her words by shaking a little music from his canopy, and thus stimulated his brothers to do likewise. "You come home lighter than you set out," she added, looking at the nearly empty waggon, which she had seen pass in the morning filled with straw.

William turned slowly round and gazed inquiringly at the waggon, as if struck by a new idea, for some moments; then he said, "Ay." After this he looked thoughtfully at Alma and her parcels for some moments, until his soul again found expression in the words, "Like a lift?" the vague meaning of which was elucidated by the pointing of his whip towards the waggon.

Alma assented, and with the waggoner's assistance soon found herself, with all her merchandise, comfortably installed in the great waggon, which was empty save for a few household and farming necessaries from Oldport. Before mounting—a feat, by the way, not unworthy of a gymnast—she stroked the wheel horse's thick silken coat admiringly.

"You do take care of your horses at Malbourne, William," she said. "I heard father say this morning he never saw a better-groomed and handsomer team than yours."

William went on silently arranging Alma's seat, and stowing her parcels for her; but a smile dawned at the corners of his mouth, and gradually spread itself over the whole of his face, and his pleasure at length found a vent, when he reached the ground, in a sounding thwack of his broad hand on the wheeler's massive flank—a thwack that set the bells a-tremble on the horse's neck, and sent a sympathetic shiver of music through all the emulous brotherhood.

"Ah," he observed, with a broad smile of admiration along the line of softly swaying tails and gently moving heads, with their nostrils steaming in the cold air, "he med well say that."

"Ah," echoed Jem, the satellite, removing the sledge mallet from the wheel and striding to the front, with a reflection of his chief's pleasure in his ruddy face as he glanced affectionately at the team, "that he med." It was not Alma's admiration which evoked such satisfaction—she was but a woman, and naturally could not tell a good horse from a donkey; but her father, Ben Lee, Sir Lionel Swaynestone's coachman, a man who had breathed the air of stables from his cradle, and who drove the splendid silk-

coated, silver-harnessed steeds in the Swaynestone carriages, his opinion was something. With a joyous crack of the whip, and a strange sound from the recesses of his throat, William bid his team "Gee-up!"

The mighty hoofs took hold of the road, the great wheels slowly turned, a shower of confused harmony fell in dropping sweetness from the bells, and with creaking and groaning, and nodding heads, and rhythmic blending of paces and music, the waggon lumbered ponderously along the level chalk road, which led, unenclosed by hedge or fence, over the open down.

To ride in a waggon with ease, and at the same time enjoy the surrounding landscape without a constant exercise of gymnastic skill in balancing and counter-balancing the body in response to the heavy sway and jerking of the unwieldy machine, is difficult; to sit on the ledge is to be an acrobat; to lie on the floor is to see nothing but sky, besides having one's members violently wrenched one from the other. Alma, however, was very comfortably placed on a pile of sacks, which served as an arm-chair, deadened the jerking power of the motion, and left her head and shoulders above the ledge, so that she could well see the grey surrounding landscape in the deepening haze.

She leant back with a feeling of agreeable languor, wrapped her hands in her shawl, and gazed dreamily on the down rising steeply to the left, and forming, where the chalk had been quarried in one place, a miniature precipice, crested with overhanding copse, rich in spring with fairy treasures of violets in white sheets over the moss, clusters of primroses and oxlips among the hazel stumps, blue lakes of hyacinth, and waving forests of anemone; and she gazed on the sloping fields, farmsteads, and bounding forest to the right, lulled by the steady music of the bells, among which she heard from time to time William's satisfied growl of "Ay, he med well say that," and the occasional song of Jem, as he trudged along by the leader—

> "For to plough, and to sow, and to reap, and to mow,
> Is the work of the farmer's bu-oy-oy."

Happy and harmless she looked in her rustic chariot, as they rolled slowly along in the gathering gloom, now over a heathy stretch nearly at the summit of the down, past a lonely, steep-roofed, red-tiled hostelry, with a forge cheerily glowing by its side, whence the anvil-music rose and blended pleasantly with that of the bell-team, and over which hung a sign-board bearing the blacksmith's arms, the hammer, with the couplet inscribed beneath, "By hammer and hand, All arts do stand."[1]

[1] A line from ironmonger Moses Kipling's "The Blacksmiths' Song" (1828).

Downhill now, with the heavy drag cast beneath the wheel by mighty efforts on the part of Jem; then again on the level road, with the chalk down always rising to the left, and falling away to the right; past farm-houses, where the cattle stood grouped in the yard and the ducks quacked for their evening meal; then once more down a hill, steep and difficult, down to the level of a willow-shaded stream by a copse, outside which daffodils rioted all over the sloping lea descending to the brookside in spring; and then up and up, with straining and panting and creaking, with iron feet pointed into and gripping the steep chalk road, with louder pealing of the fairy chimes, whose rhythm grows irregular and fitful, with strange shouts and gestures from the men, with "Whup!" and "Whoa!" and "Hither!" with many pauses, when the great heads droop, the music stops, and the mallet is brought into requisition.

Happy and harmless indeed was Alma, the lashes drooping over her rose-leaf cheeks, her fancies roving unfettered. She was hoping to get home betimes, for she had something nice for father's tea among her parcels, and she was thinking of the penny periodical folded up in her basket, and wondering how the heroine was getting on in the story which broke off abruptly at such an interesting moment in the last number. Was the peasant girl, in whom Alma detected a striking likeness to herself, really going to marry the poor young viscount who was so deplorably in love with her? She could not help furnishing the viscount with the form and features of Mr. Ingram Swaynestone, Sir Lionel's eldest son, though the latter was fair, while the viscount happened to be dark.

Now they are at the summit of the steep hill, and pause to breathe and replenish pipes. On one side is dense coppice; on the other, Swaynestone Park slopes down in woodland, glade, and park-like meadow to the sea-bounded horizon. Then on again, up hill and down dale, past cottage and farmstead, with the park always sloping away to the sea on the right. Lights glow cheerily now from distant cottage windows, and they can even catch glimpses of lights from the façade of Swaynestone House between the trees occasionally, while the merry music peals on in its drowsy rhythm, and little showers of sparks rise at the contact of iron-shod wheel and foot with the flinty road.

They have just passed the entrance-gates of Swaynestone—lonely gates, unfurnished with a lodge—and the waggon stops with interrupted music at some smaller gates on the other side of the road, where the upland still rises, not in bare down, but in rich meadow, to a hanging wood, out of which peeps dimly in the dusk a small white structure, built with a colonnade supporting an architrave, to imitate a Greek temple—Alma's home.

"Ay! he med well say that," repeated the waggoner, still digesting the pleasure of Ben Lee's compliment, and slapping the wheel-horse's vast flank, so that the fairy chime began again, and the smack resounded like an accompaniment to its music. It was fairly dark in the road; the misty dusk of evening was overshadowed by the thick belt of chestnut, lime, and beech bounding the park by the roadside; and the large horn lantern was handed to Alma to aid her in gathering her parcels together, and its light fell upon her bright dark eyes, and rosy, dimpled cheeks, making her appear more than ever as if her gaudy dress was but a disguise assumed for a frolic. Her almond-shaped, rather melancholy eyes sparkled as she looked in the young carter's stolid face, and thanked him heartily.

"I have had such a nice ride," she added pleasantly, and the horses one by one dropped a bell-note or two to emphasize her words.

"You must gie I a toll for this yere ride," returned William, with a look of undisguised, but not rude admiration.

Alma flushed, and drew back. "How much do you want?" she asked, taking out her purse, and pretending not to understand.

"You put that there in your pocket." he replied, offended, "and gie I a kiss."

"Indeed, I shall do nothing of the kind," retorted Alma. "Let me get down. I'll never ride with you again, if I walk till I drop—that I won't."

But the waggoner insisted on his toll, and vowed that she should not descend till it was paid; and poor Alma protested and stormed vainly, whilst Jem leant up against a horse and laughed, and adjured her to make haste. Alma burst into tears, wrung her hands, and wished that she had not been so obdurate to poor Charlie Judkins. He would not have been so rude, she knew. Nor, indeed, would William have been so persistent had she not offended him by her unlucky offer of money, and roused the dogged obstinacy of his class. She darted to the other side of the waggon, but in vain; William was too quick, and she was just on the point of raising her voice, in the hope that her father might be near, when a light, firm step was heard issuing from the park gates, and a clear and singularly musical voice broke into the dispute with a tone of authority.

"For shame, William Grove!" it said. "How can you be so cowardly? Let the girl go directly. Why, it is Alma Lee, surely!"

Chapter II.

THE speaker emerged into the little circle of light cast by the lantern—a slight, well-built, youthful figure of middle height, yet commanding presence, clad in dark grey, with a round, black straw hat and a neat white necktie, the frequent costume of a country curate in those days, when the clerical garb had not reached so high a stage of evolution as at present. His beardless face made him look still younger than he really was; his features were refined and clearly cut; his hair very dark; and his eyes, the most striking feature of his face, were of that rare, dazzling light blue which can only be compared to a cloudless, noon sky in June, when the pale, intense blue seems penetrated to overflowing with floods of vivid light.

"I waren't doing no harm," returned the waggoner, with a kind of surly respect; "I gied she a ride, and she med so well gie I a kiss."

"And you a married man!" cried the indignant young deacon; "for shame!"

"There ain't no harm in a kiss," growled William with a sheepish, discomfited look, while he stood aside and suffered the newcomer to help Alma in her descent.

"There is great harm in insulting a respectable young woman, and taking advantage of her weakness. As for a kiss, it is not a seemly thing between young people who have no claim on each other, though there may be no positive harm in it. You ought to know better, William."

"There ain't no harm for the likes of we," persisted the waggoner. "'Tain't as though Alma was a lady; she's only a poor man's daughter."

"And a poor man's daughter has as much right to men's respect as a duchess," cried the young fellow, with animation. "I wonder you can say such a thing, Grove. And you a poor man yourself, with a little daughter of your own! How would you like her to be kissed against her will?"

William muttered to the effect that "Anybody med kiss she"—which was true enough, as she had seen but three summers yet—and went on twining his whip with a cowed, injured look, while Alma gazed in awed admiration at her handsome young champion, whose kindling eyes seemed to send forth floods of pale-blue light in the gloom.

"There is something so unmanly in attacking a girl's self-respect," continued the eager champion. "I did not think you capable of it, William. A stout fellow like you, a man I always liked. Go home to your wife, and think better of it. I will see you across the meadow myself, Alma, though it is hard that a girl cannot be abroad alone at this hour."

So saying, the young Bayard possessed himself of sundry of Alma's parcels, and with a pleasant "Good night, Jem," turned his back on the

waggon and opened the gate, through which Alma passed quickly, followed by her protector, while the cumbrous waggon went on its way to the rhythmic jangle of the sweetly clashing bells, and William trudged stolidly on with his accustomed whip-crackings and guttural exclamations, murmuring from time to time with a mortified air, "There ain't no harm in a kiss!" And, indeed, he meant no harm, though he took care not to relate the incident to his wife; it was only his rough tribute to Alma's unaccustomed beauty, and signified no more than a gracefully turned allusion in higher circles. "And Mr. Cyril must go a-spiling of she," he added, "as though she didn't look too high already. But pride goes before a fall, as I've heerd 'un say." Ominous repetition of Judkins's words!

Alma, in the mean time, murmured her thanks to her chivalrous protector, and stepped up the dewy meadow with a beating breast and a flushing cheek, her ears tingling with the words, "A poor man's daughter has as much right to respect as a duchess," her heart swelling at the memory of the courtesy with which Maitland handed her down from the waggon and carried half her parcels; she knew that a veritable duchess would not have been treated with more honour. All her life she had known Cyril Maitland. She had sported with him over that very lea, where the tall yellow cowslips nodded in spring, and where they had pelted each other with sweet, heavy cowslip-balls; she had kissed and cuffed him many a time, though he was always "Master Cyril" to the coachman's child; and as they grew up, had been inclined to discuss him with a half-respectful, half-familiar disparagement, such as well-known objects receive. Never till that fatal evening had his grace of mind and person and the singular charm of his manner keenly touched her. But when he stood there in the lantern's dim rays, looking so handsome and so animated by the impulsive chivalry with which he defended her, and she heard the musical tones and refined accents of the voice pleading her cause and the cause of her sex and her class, a new spirit came to her—a spirit of sweetness and of terror, which set all her nerves quivering, and opened a new world of wonder and beauty to her entranced gaze. As holy as a young archangel,[1] and as beautiful, he seemed to the simple girl's dazzled thoughts, and she felt that no harm could ever come to her in that charmed presence, no pain ever touch her.

All unconscious of the tumult of half-conscious emotion awakening beside him, Cyril Maitland walked on, chatting with pleasant ease on all sorts of homely topics, in nowise surprised at his companion's faltering, incoherent replies, which lie attributed to the embarrassment from which he

[1] Archangels are thought to be especially divine beings and of a higher rank than ordinary angels.