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SCRAMBLES AMONGST THE ALPS IN THE YEARS 1860-'69.

BY EDWARD WHYMPER.



CROSSING MONT CENIS (1861).

CHAPTER III.

THE MONT CENIS—THE FELL RAILWAY.

GUIDE-BOOKS say that the pass of the Mont Cenis is dull. It is long, certainly, but it has a fair proportion of picturesque points, and it is not easy to see how it can be dull to those who have eyes. In the days when it was a rude mountain track, crossed by trains of mules, and when it was better known to smugglers than to tourists, it may have been dull; but when Napoleon's road changed the rough path into one

of the finest highways in Europe, mounting in grand curves and by uniform grades, and rendered the trot possible throughout its entire distance, the Mont Cenis became one of the most interesting passes in the Alps. The diligence service which was established was excellent, and there was little or nothing to be gained by traveling in a more expensive manner. The horses were changed as rapidly as on the best lines in the best period of coaching in England, and the diligences themselves were as comfortable as a "milord"

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vine" was completed. In 1866, the poet, a weary, worn-out, broken-down man, sought rest and quiet in Brussels, and was there attacked by paralysis. For a year he lingered in a living death,

conscious but speechless and motionless, and having been carried back to Paris, died there in a hospital, September, 1867—a sad ending to a sadder life.
LUCY FOUNTAIN.

THE BRANDON GHOST.

WHEN Chauncey Brandon, in the year 1830, stepped ashore from the sailing vessel that had brought him from England, his wife leaned on his arm and he was followed by a nurse with a bundle. This bundle, when unwrapped, proved to be a something soft and round, and highly ornamented with embroidery—a something with a marvelously short waist and a marvelously rich lace cap: in short, a luxuriously appareled baby. A very important baby it was, for, from love of it, Chauncey had relinquished his noble old homestead, with the prestige which centuries of possession confers upon a family, had ceased to be the leading man in his county, and had become a stranger in a land which, however dear to its sons, could be to him but a place of exile. He had abandoned all the advantages of ancestry, and come where he must stand or fall on his own merits; and Chauncey was humbly conscious that he had few merits beyond an honest, genial nature, and a capacity for unswerving affection, which in its paternal development had made him an alien. An only son, we doubt not that Chauncey gave up his ancestral domain with a keen pang, but he gave it up heartily, and made the best of it. He had ordained that his own life should be clipped and narrowed to evade a curse upon his child and make her existence a benediction. Chauncey Brandon was, in fact, running away from a ghost—a ghost which he had never seen, and which he never expected to see.

Mrs. Chauncey Brandon was an easy-going little body, not capable, like her husband, of any emotion that reached the heroic, but feeling herself much more conversant than he with the ways of ghosts. Not that these airy somethings had ever wakened her with foot-falls, startled her by appearing whitely in the night, or stood between her and the sunlight; but she had theories concerning them which she asserted as facts.

In leaving home, Chauncey had not denuded himself of wealth. He had left his aged parents and his eldest sister in the old home: the other girls had flown like young birds to their own nest-building, and the property had been sufficient to portion all and give the departing son enough to maintain him in gentlemanly style.

"Somehow, I feel better, safer, in this country," Chauncey remarked to his wife.

"I don't see why, my dear," replied Mrs. C. B., oracularly. "Spiritual presences are not subject to the same laws of motion as fether us. Space, like time, is nothing to them." Mrs. C. B. accepted the family ghost as a fact, and made various assertions concerning the laws or lawlessness of its being.

"At all events," said Chauncey, "I shall build our new home as unlike the old one as possible."

"I don't care how you build," said madame, "but you must know, Chauncey, that the keen vision of spiritual eyes will not be deceived by architectural differences."

"I'll have our house beside a river: you know what they say of running water."

"That only concerns witches and fairy spells," returned his wife. "Water has no power over spirits, Chauncey."

They talked of their dismal heirloom coolly enough; they were used to their family ghost; it was known over all the west of England, and, like the family mansion, portraits and tombstones, had served to augment the family respectability. Moreover, just at this period it was not a personal matter with this couple, for the Brandon ghost was keeping an engagement that might last indefinitely.

Chauncey Brandon built himself a house as large as Noah's ark, and much more ornamental: like Noah also, he planted a vineyard, but he did not drink the wine thereof, for he considered villainous and high-priced decoctions of dried apples and old prunes, called port and champagne, much more gentlemanly drinks. "Home-made" was good enough for common folk, but not for Chauncey Brandon.

The new house was on the Hudson: it had bath-houses, boat-houses, hot-houses: in truth, so great was the owner's passion for building that he created a little village on his estate. He kept dogs and horses, as an Englishman should do; made friends, and extended to them his hospitality; people liked him well; he was passably happy; and if a spasm of fear for the future or the misery of homesickness came to him, he gave no sign.

Margaret Brandon, the embroidered and lace-capped bundle that the Brandons brought with them, grew apace, and other bundles had no hesitation in intruding themselves upon the domestic circle: they came and made the circle wider, and formed part of it.

The old home over the sea, with whatever joys and sorrows were attached to it, was scarcely mentioned in Chauncey's household. The English nurse ruled over the rising generation of the Brandons, and when strangers commended her faithfulness, Chauncey

would reply, "Yes, a most valuable woman: she knows how to hold her tongue." Yet he set no undue value on reticence, and was well pleased that his wife's nicely-worded platitudes flowed on each day like the soft ripple of a stream.

Time passed, and Margaret Brandon was fifteen—a plump, red-cheeked, English-looking girl, who could ride her dozen miles, walk over hill and dale, and eat her dinner without mincing, and who eschewed pickles and slate-pencils. Margaret was neither intellectual nor romantic: she learned what lessons she must, had never read the *Arabian Nights* nor anybody's *Mythology*, was ignorant of the tales of chivalry, and had been carefully kept from her mother's ghostly lore. She knew nothing of the unseen, except what she had learned from her Prayer-book.

Margaret was at her piano one evening, rattling off merry waltzes with small regard to time, the family sitting chatting around—all but the nursery juveniles, already tucked in bed in good old English fashion. The night being warm, the bay-window was open, and the wind waved the lace curtain softly to and fro. Margaret played with her face turned toward this window. Presently her fingers moved more slowly, then ceased to press the keys. She rose, her eyes still on the window, and walked through it into the open air. After a time she came back through the door.

"Where did you go, Margaret?" asked her mother indifferently, conversation having flagged.

"On the terrace," said Margaret, again sitting down at the piano. She played more mournful music now—Moore's "Farewell, farewell to thee, Araby's daughter."

"Livelier, livelier, girl!" cried her father, who would never let this child be otherwise than gay. But Margaret wandered off into a simple, sad old love-song—"Leonore."

"Merrier, merrier, Madge!" said Chauncey.

"It's bed-time, father," said Margaret, and went away.

Next evening, Margaret and her brother were playing backgammon. Presently, Margaret began looking into the hall, and played very badly.

"How stupid you are, Mag!" shouted Master Brandon.

Margaret rose and went quietly from the room: she was gone ten minutes, then returned to resume her game.

"I thought you went off in a huff," said the boy.

"Oh no," said Margaret, and played very well.

Several evenings after this, when it was nearly bed-time, Margaret dropped her embroidery and went out as if obeying a call.

While she was gone, Nurse Catherine came down to consult with her mistress about Master Edward, aged one year. Margaret returned with a wondering look in her face, and stood under the chandelier.

"As I told you, nurse," said Mrs. Brandon, "Jane must carry Master Edward out for half an hour, early every morning."

But Catherine no longer gave her mistress her attention: she was looking at Miss Margaret. She took hold of the girl's hands and carefully scanned her face. "It's over now, after all's said and done," said Catherine. "I always said it was no use: no more it isn't."

"Indeed, Catherine, there is no occasion for you to argue: the doctor says the early morning air will help Master Edward."

"Oh, Master Edward!—*that's* easy cured: he is of small account any wise. We didn't leave England for *him*," said nurse, and walked off.

Mrs. Brandon gazed after nurse sorely puzzled, but Mr. Brandon fixed his eyes on Margaret, over whose round young face a shadow came as she looked through the bay-window as if in search of something. "What troubles you, Margaret?"

"Nothing," said the girl, uneasily.

"Where did you go just now, child?"

"Nowhere, father."

"Speak fairly, my girl: something has come over you."

"I only saw some one, father."

"Who was it?"

"I don't know," answered Margaret, reluctantly.

"Where?" demanded her father, huskily.

"Out of doors, in the hall, by the window."

"That is nothing: some of the servants, likely."

"Oh no, father. It was some one that wanted me."

Chauncey and his wife trembled. "Describe this person, my child," said the father.

Margaret was still looking out at the window, and spoke slowly, as if seeing what she described: "A woman, father, with a *motherly* face, and such big, sad, dark eyes. It is her eyes that ask me to come to her, but when I go she is lost."

"What sort of a person is she, child?" asked Mrs. Brandon.

"Not a lady, mother—a common sort of person maybe, and yet I go to her. She has a black dress—a queer one—and a white kerchief on her head. She wants me to comfort her, mother;" and Margaret stepped quickly toward the window.

Her father caught her in his arms: "Don't fancy such things, Margaret. Go to nurse and tell her of it, and go to bed. Nurse will tell you this is nonsense."

No sooner had Margaret left the room than Mr. Brandon, turning to his wife, said, "It is the Brandon ghost!"

"Yes, and your sister Annie is dead," said his wife.

"She is done with her trouble, and our poor girl has come to her inheritance," Mr. Brandon said, sadly.

"I always told you that it would do no good to come here," said Mrs. Brandon. "Poor, darling Margaret! Well, it is a blessing the servants are not afraid of the ghost."

The matter was kept very quiet for some weeks: nothing was said to Margaret. Gradually the girl changed:

the ruddiness of buxom health died out of her cheeks; her robust form grew slender; the face that had been thoughtless as that of a little child wore a dreamy expression. Margaret withdrew from her playmates, and grew addicted to silent musing. She seemed neither ill nor unhappy, but she was changed, and parents and nurse knew how the change had come.

Meanwhile, the slow-sailing packet had brought news across the sea that Annie Brandon, spinster, had died at Brandon Grange on the very evening when young Margaret had been beckoned from her rattling music and had gone out through the open bay-window to meet the Brandon ghost.

Chauncey drew his daughter to his side one evening as he sat on the balustrade of one of the many verandahs of the house. He encircled his child's waist with his arm, and said softly, "Have you any more wild fancies, my child?"

"I have no *fancies*, father," said Madge, seriously.

"But do you see the stranger, the woman that seemed to call you?"

"She is no *fancy*, father. Yes, I see her."

"Where? how often?"

"I cannot tell how often, and she comes to me everywhere. Sometimes she sits by my bed at night: sometimes she follows me when I walk, or she calls me away to some room or to some corner of the garden."

"Does she speak to you, touch you?"

"Oh no. She is satisfied when I come, and fades away."

"Are you afraid of her, Margaret?"

"No, father. But each time that she looks so at me I feel as if she drew a part of my life, my soul, something that is strongest in me, out to herself. Father, I am not the only one that has seen her: I know it, I feel it. Do you know, can you tell me, is she not some being that has lived years and years by drawing the strength of those like me with her eyes?"

"Margaret," said Chauncey, holding his child fast and shivering as he spoke,

"she is a *mother* seen by the women of our race."

"And do they die young, father?" asked the girl, bending closer to him.

"No. I have known those that lived to be gray; and your aunt Annie was nearly as old as I am."

Though Mrs. Brandon could talk glibly to other people about the supernatural, predicating many things concerning spirits, she never spoke to her daughter of the Brandon ghost. Nurse preserved the same discreet silence, and Margaret never mentioned her strange inheritance unless her father questioned her, which he did only at long intervals, with a sickening desire each time to hear that the Being came no more.

One person may possibly keep a secret, but when knowledge that should be hidden is possessed by several, it is apt in some way to be revealed. It may be that something a little singular in Margaret's appearance or actions called attention to her and led to discovery: at all events, whisperings of the Brandon ghost got abroad.

Now, ghosts are not so popular and respectable in America as in England: an heirloom of this kind, instead of being treated deferentially and accepted as a fact, like the family name and the family silver, is scoffed at as a dream of lunacy, and causes remarks concerning the beneficial effects of insane asylums and the general danger of having mad people abroad.

Moreover, in England family-servants, being well instructed and familiar with the prerogatives of high birth, have no fear that the aristocratic ghost will intrude upon their humble lives: they pursue the quiet tenor of their domestic duties, and leave their employers to the undisturbed possession of the hereditary spectre.

American servants, on the contrary, believe that they are part and parcel of all that occurs under the roof which shelters them. They decidedly object to the mysterious; they take frights not intended for them; they gossip most unmercifully, and politely inform the heads of the family that either the ghost

or their own valuable services must be dispensed with. Now, a family ghost is real estate, entailed and untransferable, but American domestics are rolling-stock, and for ever "suffer change."

Nor were the ways of servants the sum-total of the Brandon troubles. Whispers crept abroad: there were looks cast askance, there was a coolness in place of cordiality, a faint greeting instead of a warm grasp of the hand. While servants were hard to get, visitors became few, and Mrs. Brandon saw clearly that in spite of wealth, good temper, good health, culture and fair faces, her troop of daughters were likely to be unwed because of Margaret. These young people, trained in America, were not likely to feel at home in the land of their forefathers, and Chauncey himself utterly refused to return to Brandon Grange. Margaret, all unconsciously, was spoiling the prospects and marring the fortunes of her family, and her brothers and sisters took the same view as did strangers, that Margaret was the victim of hereditary insanity. Even the mother was fain to admit that her eldest child was partially insane—that she was perhaps a monomaniac. Now that the ghost was disreputable and brought neglect and condemnation, Mrs. Brandon, with the facility of a shallow nature, rejected it. Moreover, when Margaret reached the age of twenty-three, a maiden still, and seemed standing in the way of her younger sisters, who were hindered on her account from finding husbands, Mrs. Brandon told her better-half decidedly that a settlement *must* be found for Margaret. It was not to be expected that a lover would come to this girl as to others: she was fair, gentle, pleasing, with nothing strange about her but a wistful, yearning melancholy that could not be explained, and that obedience to invisible calls which at all times and in all places she would meekly follow.

Being of a narrow soul, Mrs. Brandon was not capable of great compassion, of undying devotion. Her child without doubt had become a burden to her. While Chauncey loved his first-

born not less than when for her sake he had expatriated himself, his life was now filled to such a degree with anxieties and perplexities, so harassed was he with the estrangement of friends, the fretfulness of his wife, the repining of his children, the desertion of his servants and the strangeness of his fated daughter, that existence was well-nigh unendurable.

He undertook to find a husband for Margaret. The first individual upon whom he fixed his choice was a young iron-merchant in a town twenty miles distant. He was an honest, agreeable, well-born and well-mannered young fellow, some two years Margaret's senior. There was no nervousness, no imagination, no susceptibility about him: he was a full-blooded youth, with a mellow voice and an unfauling appetite for good dinners. With this excellent young person Chauncey's acquaintance grew: it was a terrible bowing of the English gentleman's proud soul to cultivate a friendship for such an end, and offer his daughter instead of having her asked for. But, as we have seen, Chauncey was a man who could do anything for the good of his family.

Meantime, the youthful merchant believed that his own merits caused him to be sought, and plumed himself upon his own fascinations. When, after having often spoken of his daughter, Chauncey offered her hand and her fortune to his new friend, that friend still fondly dreamed that his own innate goodness had secured him a wife and means to build up an extended and remunerative business. He accepted with alacrity. No sooner did he begin to speak of his prospects than kind friends related to him the facts of Margaret's insanity: wherever he went the rumor reached his unwilling ears. He had met Margaret, and she pleased him well, but a crazy wife, an heirloom of insanity for his future children, were more than he anticipated in agreeing to become Mr. Brandon's son-in-law. He was an honorable young man, and he went to Mr. Brandon frankly for an explanation.

Poor Chauncey! He bowed like a

bulrush in a storm, then unfolded his family history.

The iron-merchant shook his head: "I cannot believe in the supernatural, my dear sir: I have not the least faith in ghosts, but, unfortunately, manias are hereditary. In marrying your daughter—and indeed I greatly admire her—I should take a burden which has proved too heavy for you—the burden of insanity—among my children."

Mr. Brandon could have combated this, but he would not press his cross upon other people. "Forgive me if I seem to have dealt unfairly by you," he said, "but indeed I have been sorely tried."

"Dear sir," answered the young man, "you have offered me a great honor and a great advantage: pardon me if I must decline it."

Thus the iron-merchant passed out of Chauncey Brandon's life, and for the next few years the perplexed father made no further effort to marry off his daughter, and the domestic difficulties thickened.

Still, Mrs. Brandon urged a renewal of matrimonial offers in Margaret's behalf to some party who might be eligible, and Fate threw into Mr. Brandon's neighborhood a young physician, Horace Merrill. Doctor Merrill loved nothing so well as books. Hampered by poverty, he had by great sacrifices obtained a classical and professional education, but he was the student rather than the physician. He adored theory, he abhorred practice: he longed to pursue his investigations in quiet, he loathed the exercise of his profession. He was refined in manner, kind of heart, a recluse by nature, but, being burdened by debts, was driven among men to toil for means to pay those debts. After months of acquaintance, he said one day to Chauncey, "I *detest* my business. I'd give anything, do anything, to get money enough to pay what I owe and live plainly in peace with my books."

"Is that so?" said Chauncey. "You are a good man, and I can trust you. I will give you my eldest girl and thirty

thousand dollars. Most likely you have heard her history."

"I have heard it said that she was insane, but I do not think she looks so," said Doctor Merrill.

"She is no more insane than you or I: she has simply inherited a curse—she sees the Brandon ghost, but ghosts are unknown in America."

"I would like your version of the story," said the doctor.

"Hundreds of years ago, in the lawless feudal times," said Chauncey, "one of my ancestors carried off from her village home a lovely maiden, a widow's only child. He kept her close prisoner in his house. He was rich and strong, the mother poor and weak: she could get no redress, could not recover her child: all she could do was to haunt the house, going about it day and night, crying and calling for her daughter. Heart-broken mother, injured child and lawless Brandon died at last, but ever since, with the wild longing that she had for her girl, that mother pursues the eldest daughters of the house. She can draw them with her eyes: it is as if they had filial feeling for her, as if her blood ran in their veins and her milk had fed them. They obey her call, they go out to her longing eyes, as her imprisoned daughter could not go."

Doctor Merrill shook his head: "Insanity, transmitted from mother to daughter, and explained by a fanciful legend."

"You are mistaken: these eldest daughters are all childless. They die spinsters or wives that have never been mothers."

"But you say the crime was committed by a *man*. How unjust to imagine that Heaven would visit the wrong on the *women* of the race!"

Chauncey replied, as one who had often thought on the subject: "It is a compensation to the defrauded mother, thus to claim for ever a daughter in our house. Moreover, the curse falls heaviest on the *fathers*, who see their daughters doomed. These women do not fear the Brandon ghost—it seems a part of themselves—but the fathers— Ah!

I know their misery;" and tears ran down his face.

"A break in the chain of lives might destroy the visitation," said the doctor, musingly.

"There has been a break," said Chauncey. "My aunt, who saw this ghost, died ten months before my sister Annie was born: there was then no living daughter of the Brandons. During those months, in the calmest weather winds wailed through all the house, shook the walls, cried in the chimneys, sobbed along the entries and in lonely rooms, while not a leaf stirred nor a grass-blade bent; and no blazing fires, no bursts of music, could banish the chilliness and the mourning cries. Then Annie was born, contention ceased and the vexed ghost of the Brandons had its own again. In earliest infancy the babe saw a presence by the cradle invisible to all beside. Its eyes, too young to answer to the smile of nurse or mother, responded to the longing glances of the Brandon ghost. The child in its nurse's lap began to stretch its arms to go to some one who beckoned, and having grown and gained its feet, it would turn its first steps to follow something wooing it across hall or sward. I cannot describe to you the longing, yearning look that always rested on Annie's face from infancy to girlhood, from girlhood to womanhood."

The doctor mused: "These daughters heard the story until it possessed them: the tale produced these results in them."

"No," said Chauncey. "With the sad memory of Annie's babyhood before me, I separated myself from home and friends, came where none knew our history, never permitted one word of it to be breathed; and Margaret was as innocent of all this story as a babe unborn, until, on the very night when Annie died, she saw and followed the Brandon ghost."

"At all events," said Doctor Merrill, "if you and Margaret consent, I will marry your daughter. Stay one moment: does this ghost ever touch its victims?"

"Yes: once—once only."

"And when?"

"At the hour of death—a mother's kiss."

The doctor married Margaret. They traveled here and there. He was kind and true, she was content; but still, through whatever change of scene, in spite of her husband's most learned discussions and profoundest theories, she saw the Brandon ghost. Doctor Merrill with the most unanswerable arguments could prove that the ghost was a mere creature of the imagination. He demonstrated to Margaret that what she saw was simply her own dream photographed on the air. But he had never seen the ghost, and his arguments satisfied only himself.

Ten years passed by. Mrs. Brandon had seen all her daughters married, and her troubles seemed gone—gone with Margaret and the Presence. Doctor Merrill found the woes of the Brandons shifted to his household. The curiosities and scandals, the outbreaks among servants, the interference and the avoidance, bore heavily upon him, and he resolved to return where Margaret's early history was known, and where some at least understood her. He bought a house near Chauncey's home.

People noted how Margaret had altered. Her hands were almost transparent, her figure fragile: there was a patient, waiting smile on her lips, a longing in her violet eyes. Poor Margaret! Strangers looking at this woman whispered that her husband was less than kind—that she moaned unceasingly because she was "childless among women." But her white-haired father shook his head. He knew how in her veins throbbed, with a pain deadened, it is true, by the lapse of centuries, the ravished daughter's wild longing for her mother's arms: he knew how her slow pulse beat in accord with that mother's crying for her lost treasure.

Still, the shadow of the Unseen grew over Margaret's face. The ghost was nearer now: it stood close to her chair, and walked within the space where her shadow fell. Still, as the longing eyes drew more of her life, Margaret's small

strength dwindled away. Now she kept her chair, and now her bed; and nearer than husband or nurse a watcher stood, unseen by all but Margaret. So she lay, and her life was ebbing like the tides; and now she lifted her weak arms

suddenly, as if she held some neck in loving clasp, and the Brandon ghost had satisfied once again its mother-craving, had kissed her, and she was gone! JULIA MCNAIR WRIGHT.

MARRIAGE.

THESE is perhaps no one element of the present scheme of civilization more essential to its successful working than marriage. The notions of virtue introduced by Christianity limited the institution to the form of monogamy, and with this emendation of the original idea marriage has passed into one of the recognized necessities of governmental and social science. Indeed, it is impossible to realize, without considerable effort and a quite thorough crushing out of one's educational prejudices, a state of society in which it does not play an important part. The average American will probably find himself unable to imagine a condition of things where marriage is not. So woven is it into the warp and woof of our life that we stand aghast at the thought of what we should be without it. It is the basis of much of our English literature, not only in novels and the poetry given over to describing its bliss and the love out of which it grows, but in graver works of historical word-painting, semi-philosophical discussion, epic poetry and artistic research. When its glory is not the theme of the chant you are still sure to find it somewhere in the harmony. The worst of men are touched by the picture of faithful and earnest conjugal love, and the best captivated by the ideal of the devoted, self-sacrificing life it reveals. And nothing can be more curious than the extent to which the æsthetic aspect of marriage has entered into all our views of the subject. Even jurisconsults have not escaped.

The history of the gradual change in the legal phase of marriage is the chronicle of continuous efforts—unfortunately, not at all successful ones—to bring the practical, every-day relation up to the desired level of poetic loveliness—to tie up people, as it were, to meet the requirements of the romantic aspect of the case.

And yet underneath all the poetry and the romance lurks the unpleasant consciousness that human nature is not doing what is expected of it in this behalf. The very violence and unanimity of the effort bears witness to the acuteness of our sense of the need of perpetual activity to keep men up to the correct pitch. There is something almost painful in the exultation with which the scoffer is referred to one or two happy marriages, and the gratitude we feel to a woman who makes her husband happy is a melancholy commentary upon our fear of not being dealt with in like fashion. If, however, we rise above personal feeling and regard the subject as a mere question of population and education, we are forced to take a still less cheerful view. And if we look to the older countries of Europe as types of the efficacy of the system, the feeling of insecurity deepens into one of positive distrust. From either stand-point the subject is worthy of all interest. On every hand stand in awful array the evils which seemingly are the necessary accompaniments of marriage—which certainly have hitherto always attended it. In Austria, France, some