

somebody else," exclaimed Aunt Priscilla, grimly. "And what is unpardonably wrong when Tweedledum does it, is altogether right when Tweedledee does it. For myself I cannot understand why two precisely similar actions should be judged from two entirely different standpoints, according to whether they are done by Tweedledee or Tweedledum. Very likely this sounds like nonsense to you, my dear, but that is because Tweedledum says it. It would be sense fast enough if said by Tweedledee. And that's just what makes

all the difference between Tweedledee and Tweedledum. I wonder you don't see it, Maria."

Poor Mrs. Maxwell stood an instant uneasily in front of her old aunt, like one summarily bidden before an unanswerable judgment bar. She had no answer ready, and could find none, and so turned away, contenting herself with thinking how very, very queer Aunt Priscilla was growing to be, an opinion in which she knew that her husband, if consulted, would not fail to coincide.

The Independent.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, JULY 28, 1887.

AN ENIGMA.

BY GRACE DENIO LITCHFIELD.

To have not, is to long for with desire.
To have, is but to lose.
To lose, is to remember and expire.
How may one rightly choose?
Between a want, a loss, a lifelong pain,
What, saving death, hath any soul of gain?

MENTONE, FRANCE.

The Independent.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, AUGUST 18, 1887.

HOW IT REALLY WAS.

BY GRACE DENIO LITCHFIELD.

SCENE 1st.—MR. AND MRS. CHANCELLOR.

Mrs. Chancellor (biting the end of her pen). You don't mean we must invite those odious people, my dear? It will utterly spoil our dinner to have them here.

Mr. Chancellor (poking the fire disconsolately). I know it. I don't want them any more than you do. Harris is an ass, and his wife is an exact match to him.

Mrs. Chancellor. She dresses like a parrot and chatters like a magpie.

Mr. Chancellor. It will be like opening an aviary on our guests.

Mrs. Chancellor. And he's worse yet. He's worse even than his pantaloons would lead one to expect.

Mr. Chancellor. My dear he would be in evening dress. At least we should be spared the check trousers.

Mrs. Chancellor. But there will be the watch-chain always, and Heaven knows what for shirt-studs, And their past-participles! Oh really, Henry, I can't ask them—not with their past-participles!

Mr. Chancellor. There's no "can't" in the world can stand up against a "must." We've got to ask them, Maria, participles and all; and I wish to goodness it was only the participles.

Mrs. Chancellor (rebelliously). Why?

Mr. Chancellor. Because I must keep

in with Harris for business reasons. You know it as well as I do. They invited us to their dinner, and we're bound to return it.

Mrs. Chancellor. I wish they hadn't. I didn't want to go.

Mr. Chancellor. Nor I. But we did go. We had to.

Mrs. Chancellor. What a dinner it was! I believe they bought everything they could get at every market in town and cooked it all at once.

Mr. Chancellor. And the wine was like his dress-coat, dreadfully new and a tight fit.

Mrs. Chancellor. Still, isn't there any way out of inviting them to our dinner?

Mr. Chancellor (lugubriously). If there were I would follow it blindfold. But there isn't. It won't do to cut them.

Mrs. Chancellor (catching at a straw). Perhaps they won't come.

Mr. Chancellor (removing the straw). Won't they? They'll jump at the chance.

Mrs. Chancellor (reluctantly drawing paper and ink toward her). I wish something would put it into their heads to decline. Could I suggest that if she's not going to the opera, as I am afraid she may be, the twentieth being Patti's last night—I should be delighted, etc.?

Mr. Chancellor. Your suggestion would be worth more if you said it was the last night of the Haverly Minstrels.

Mrs. Chancellor (reflecting). Could I hint at our Nelly's having been recently exposed to the mumps? Really, Henry, she ran into the Lancasters' for a moment the other day, and a child next door to the Lancasters' is just taken with them. Might I say if Mrs. Harris isn't afraid to come on account of her own children, I should be most happy, etc.

Mr. Chancellor. Oh Lord, she'd never stay away for the mumps. You couldn't make it measles, could you?

Mrs. Chancellor (severely). I really couldn't lie about it you know, Henry. Besides if I said measles, nobody would come.

Mr. Chancellor (reflecting). Is there nobody asked whom the Harrises especially dislike, and whom you could mention as sure to be here, perhaps stating incidentally that they should have the mutual pleasure of sitting next each other at the table?

Mrs. Chancellor (promptly). Nonsense! As if one wouldn't dine civilly with one's own murderer if asked to meet him out. Where would society be if people stuck at trifles like that?

Mr. Chancellor. True. A dress-coat is as good as a steel corselet against undress prejudices. How if you attacked them on their superstitious side? They are sure to be superstitious, people of that stamp always are. Say that if they don't mind making thirteen at table, you'll be charmed, etc.

Mrs. Chancellor (gloomily). There are two of them. They'll make fourteen.

Mr. Chancellor. Stretch a point. As man and wife they count one.

Mrs. Chancellor. Ye-es. But according to that way of reckoning—

Mr. Chancellor. Come, come, you've too much conscience. You'll never get on in the world if you know only one form of the multiplication table.

Mrs. Chancellor. But they're smart enough to see that if they accepted, we could easily add some one to even the number. They would chance it.

Mr. Chancellor. So far as I can see, we must chance it too, then. One has to take risks in all business ventures. Just write them then in proper style, and pray to Heaven that something may prevent their coming. Their children may run in at the Lancasters' too and take the mumps from the child next door.

Mrs. Chancellor. Mercy, I hope not! Nellie goes to the same school. She would catch them sure, as fate. How thoughtless you are, Henry!

Mr. Chancellor. Then leave the method of their detention with Heaven, and confine your energies to praying for the result. There ought to be a clause added to the Litany—"From all undesirable guests, Good Lord deliver us." Is your note written?

Mrs. Chancellor (with dejection). Yes.

Mr. Chancellor. Say, we couldn't mail it without a stamp, could we? Such accidents do happen frequently. That would send it to the dead-letter office first, and ten to one they would get it too late to come.

Mrs. Chancellor (contemptuously). Goose! We can't mail it at all. Of course invitations all go by hand.

Mr. Chancellor (gloomily). Then send it and prepare for the worst.

Mrs. Chancellor. I am ready to cry. If only they would decline!

Mr. Chancellor. No one ever declines when he is wanted to. It's only the people one is anxious to have who are ever pre-engaged, or prevented by accident, or ill, or dead, or anything. You may always count on those you don't want. There's no ship sails but is sure to board its Jonah, like as not carry his whale

along in tow, too, no matter how many eminently respectable and safe parties get left behind.

Mrs. Chancellor. And to think how delighted the Harrises will be with the invitation when it is such a misery to have to send it! Oh, dear me! They'll spoil the whole dinner! Is there no chance they won't come?

Mr. Chancellor. No, my dear. None whatever. Not the very least.

Mrs. Chancellor. I do wish they were dead!

SCENE II.—MR. AND MRS. HARRIS.

Mr. Harris. You must write it, Nan.

Mrs. Harris. You know I can't. I do write such a scrawl. Now go ahead and let's get it done with.

Mr. Harris. 'Tisn't done with if we're to go. It's only begun with, the deuce take it! What did they invite us for?

Mrs. Harris. I wish to goodness they hadn't. But, poor things, it's awfully unkind of us to take it so, and they that set on having us. The fact is I never could abide those Chancellors. They're not our style one bit. They're too airified. She has a way of making you feel as if you'd got an extra thumb to each hand and ought to hide it, and he listens to you as if he was a short-hand reporter, and was thinking all the time how he could best manage to squeeze all your talk into two lines for to-morrow's paper. If it hadn't been for the good of your business, I'd never have had either of them to set foot in my house, I can tell you that.

Mr. Harris. They were mighty quick to come, though, when once we asked 'em. I guess Chancellor ain't one as is going to let a good dinner go by him when he's give a chance to put a fork in. He knows where good wines is to be got and he'll be on hand every time, see if he ain't.

Mrs. Harris. Well, we're not that sort; and while I'm perfectly willing they should eat at our table once in a way, if it's to help on your business (though I can't for the life of me see how it's to improve the pork trade), I'm not that hungry that I care to eat at theirs, and I'd not stir a step to go if I wasn't afraid of hurting their feelings by refusing, which I wouldn't like to do not to my greatest enemy if I had one, and I don't know as I have.

Mr. Harris. Supposing you drop a friendly line to Mrs. Chancellor and just tell her confidentially you'd be most happy to come, and you wouldn't miss it noway, only you haven't a dress and she

must excuse you. Any lady would take that as an excuse, wouldn't she?

Mrs. Harris. That won't do. She knows I've my green satin with the yellow brocade. I wore it at our own dinner and I saw she admired it particular from the way she took it in as she shook hands, though even then she made me feel somehow that it was short-waisted and that the sleeves were put in wrong.

Mr. Harris (meditating): There's none of the children sick, is there, as it wouldn't do for us to go and leave 'em alone of an evening?

Mrs. Harris (energetically). Bless their hearts, no! And they are going to a tea-party the next afternoon after this dinner, and I couldn't give out as they were took down with anything just the night before which they wouldn't have time to recover from. Nor I couldn't reconcile it to my conscience anyhow to write a lie down. There's many a word slips out in talking which mayn't be as straightforward as it should be, but it's not set a seal to, like it is when it's down in black and white, and it will doubtless get let off easier in the Day of Judgment, just as in the courts it makes a sight of difference whether a murder is premeditated or done all of a moment with whatever is handiest and no idea of no damage following. But there's a church meeting fixed for the 20th, Tom. Couldn't you settle it in your own mind that it was your duty to attend it instead of the dinner?

Mr. Harris. It's my most religious duty not to attend it. It's a meeting to pay off the church's debt, and they'll stick every fellow there for a hundred dollar subscription on the spot, sure as fate. It's a deal cheaper to go to the dinner. Anyhow, we're bound to go. They came to our dinner, and to my notion of what's what, if a man eats of my bread when I ask him, I'm bound to eat of his when he asks me.

Mrs. Harris. I'd not care for that, if it wasn't for hurting their feelings, but they're maybe just counting on us to make the party social and pleasant for the folks; for there's no denying that we're not so stiff as some, and can do our share toward making the time pass lively and easy. I don't doubt it would put 'em out dreadful if we didn't go, though, for my part, I'd as lieve spend the time at the dentist's, or at one of those high-toned concerts that is all screech and no tune, and which is money thrown away on the ticket.

Mr. Harris. What if I should say you

were changing cooks just now, and so we couldn't go?

Mrs. Harris. La, stupid! any one would know that was just a reason the more for dining out. There's no time like it, unless when you're settled with a bad one. I really don't see but we've got to go, unless Providence mercifully clears the way, somehow, and the unlikeliest things do happen sometimes; though that's not to say that I am wishing the Chancellors any harm, to be sure. So just send off the note, Tom, to ease their minds, and say how pleased we shall be to come, and we're much obliged and all, and then we shall feel we've done our duty by them, and if Providence afterward should lend a hand to our staying away, there'll be nothing on our consciences, and no harm done.

Mr. Harris. And you don't mind saying we're pleased to accept, when we're just as blamed sorry as we can be? That's a lie on paper if ever anything was.

Mrs. Harris. Indeed, and it's not. It's a conventionality, that's all, and conven-

tionalties never are what they look to be on the face of them, you know, and nobody ever thinks of holding them to account. I wouldn't tell a lie for all the world, and you know it. But a conventionality is no more of a lie than what we say every Sunday in church when we declare we're miserable sinners because it's set in our Prayer-books for us to say so on Sunday mornings, though we know we've done our duty the week through like Christians, and ought to be handsomely commended for it. And so I don't mind your writing what it's only decently civil you should, though I shall pray steady till the day dawns that something may prevent our going.

Mr. Harris. Confound it all! It was just our luck to get invited.

Mrs. Harris. Well, we must forget ourselves in thinking of the pleasure we're giving them. It won't do to get selfish, Tom. We must think of others sometimes, especially when there's no way to think of ourselves first.

Mr. Harris. Right enough, Nan. But if there is a way out of going—

Mrs. Harris. Never you fear. If there is, we'll take it and no time lost. But, poor things, it would come awful hard on them, Tom, to lose us!

The Independent.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1887.

THE GRACE OF LOVE.

BY GRACE DENIO LITCHFIELD.

A GREAT while ago, there once lived a very beautiful and very rich little Princess. So beautiful and so rich she was, that suitors from all parts of the world came flocking in shoals to her palace, wearing out pantaloons by the million in protracted and agonizing kneeling at her tiny feet.

Notwithstanding the glory of it, however, the little Princess did not much enjoy this sort of thing; for whereas other young ladies could spend their time in making delightful slippers and comfortables for their friends, this poor little thing had to employ all hers in knitting everlasting mittens (which are very awkward, disagreeable things to make, besides being never pleasantly accepted), so that many a time did she wish she might only have been born married, and thus have been spared this continual worry and vexation of soul. For she was a proud, fastidious little Princess, and had declared that she

never would marry until she had found one who was in every way her superior, as was, of course, all extremely right and proper; only, though all kinds of paragons came to woo, somehow or other none of them ever proved superior enough to succeed in winning the little Princess for his bride. It really was pitiable to see so many fine fellows turned off daily; but the Princess was become so accustomed to it that she grew quite callous-hearted on the subject; and when she heard that of the thousands rejected, seven or eight shot themselves, and five or six felt badly, and three or four cut their wisdom teeth, and one or two stayed single, all for her sweet sake, she never shed a tear.

But one day, as a hundred or so stood in the outer court of the palace, squeezing on their gloves, and practicing tender glances and sighs, preparatory to entering the fair one's presence, a young man, of very different appearance from the rest, came quietly up and joined them.

"Well, fellow," said the others, "what errand brings you here?"