

HARRY JOSCELYN.

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BY
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CHAPTER I.

HARRY'S RESOLUTION.

THERE is nothing that grows and strengthens with thinking of it like the sense of personal injury. Harry Joscelyn had been very angry when he left home; but he was not half so angry at that moment as when he looked out of the window of the railway carriage, as the train swept through the valley, and saw in the distance the village roofs, over which, had there been light enough, and had his eyes served him so far, he might have seen the White House seated, firm and defiant, upon the Fellside. And every mile that he travelled his wrath and indignation grew. When he reached Liverpool he had formed his purpose beyond the reach of argument, or anything that reason could say; and reason said very little in the general excitement of his being. He had been turned out of his home, he had been refused the money by which he thought he could have made his fortune. He felt himself cast off by everybody belonging to him. His mother had permitted that final outrage, he thought; for surely she could have found means of help if she had chosen to exert herself. His Uncle Henry had bought himself off, and got rid of a troublesome applicant by the gift of that twenty pounds. They were all against him. He thought of it and thought of it till they seemed to be all his enemies, and at last he came to believe that they were glad to get quit of him, to be done with him. This was the aspect under which he contemplated his relations with his family when he got to Liverpool; and the effect upon him was that of a settled disgust with all the ordinary habits of his life, and its fashion altogether. When he thought of returning to the office, to his former routine as clerk, the idea made him sick. It seemed to

him that he could do anything, or go anywhere, rather than this. But though the impulse of abandoning all he had been or done hitherto was instantaneous, he could not quite settle in a moment, with the same rapidity, what he was to do, or be, in the future. He crossed to the other side of the great river with his little bag of "needments," the linen Mrs. Eadie had bought for him and a few other indispensable things which he had himself procured, and lived in one of the villages there, which have now grown into towns, watching the ships go by, and leaving his mind open to any wandering impulse that might lay hold upon it. In these days the River Mersey was a great sight, as probably it is still. To the idle young man, accustomed to some share in the perpetual commotion of that coming and going, there was meaning in every one of the multitudinous ships that lay at anchor in the great stream, or glided out, full-sail, to the sea, or were poked and dragged away by a restless, toiling little slave of a steam-tug, carrying off its prey like one of the devils of the Inferno. He knew where they were going, and what they had to bring from afar, and all about their bills of lading and the passengers they carried. The river had not to him that grandeur of prose which becomes poetry, and fact which turns to romance, in less accustomed minds; but was only a huge highway, a big street full of crowds coming and going, over which he brooded, wondering where he should plunge into the tide of movement, and how take his first step out of the horizons which hitherto had bounded him. He did not say, as his mother might have done, "Oh, for the wings of a dove!" but he put that profound breath of human impatience into nineteenth century prose, and said to himself, "If I had but a steamboat, a yacht, anything to take me out of reach of all of them, where they will never hear of me again!" He was not rich enough, however, to hope for a yacht, so that all he could really do was to decide what "boat" he would go

with, and whether he should turn his steps across the Atlantic, or choose another quarter of the world in which to become another man.

He went to the office one day, as Philip Selby discovered, and asked for the amount of salary due to him, and purchased a few more necessary articles of clothing; and he wrote to the persons to whom he owed money, telling them that he was about to leave Liverpool, but would send them their money without fail within a certain period. He did not know how this was to be done, but he was resolute to do it, and he had no more doubt on the matter than he had that he should perfectly succeed in his plunge into the unknown. But after he had done this he remained for some days longer by the river-side with a self-contradictory impulse, watching the ships go by, and putting off the execution of his project. Where was he to go? To resolve to give up his own identity, to separate himself for ever from his family, and all his belongings, and all his antecedents, was easy; but to make up his mind which boat he was to go by, and whither he was to betake himself, was much more difficult. America was so hackneyed, he said to himself, with that fastidious impatience and disgust which is one of the characteristics of a sick soul: everybody goes to America; it would be the first idea that would occur to everyone; and this made him throw away that first suggestion angrily, as if it had been an offence; but if not to America, then where? He tossed about various names in his mind, satisfied with none, and when at last he made his decision, it was made in a moment, with the same kind of sick disgust and impatience as had made him reject the other ideas as they presented themselves. He was crossing the river to Liverpool, leaning over the side of the ferry steamboat lest anybody should see and recognize him, and in his own mind

passing in review the advantages and disadvantages of all the ships he passed. The Mersey was very full and very bright, the sun shining, a brisk breeze blowing, the sky blue, the great estuary throwing up white edges of spray and leaping here and there against the bows of an out-going boat, in a manner which boded little comfort to unaccustomed sailors outside the shelter of its banks. The opposite shore was still clothed with trees beginning to grow green in the earliest tints of spring, and not unpleasantly mingled with the beginnings of docks and traces of mercantile invasion. Nature, as yet, had not given up her harmonizing power; the touches of colour on the masts, a national flag flying here and there, even the sailors' washing fluttering among the yards, was an addition to the brilliancy of the spring lights. The ferry-boat was full of people, though it was not the hour for business men to be moving about. The freight was a more varied one than that mass of black-coated figures which weighed it down to the water's edge in the morning. But Harry turned his back upon them all, and looked over the side, watching in a dream the long trail of water which slid under the bows and was caught and churned by the paddle-wheel. The motion, as he watched it thus, soothed him, and took the place of thinking in his mind, carrying him vaguely, he knew not whither, just as he would fain have been carried beyond the ken of men. He was waiting the guidance of chance, not caring what became of him. Something caught his ear suddenly as the ferry-boat rustled along by the side of a long low steamer with raking masts and short funnels, which lay not far from the bank.

“I wouldn't go in that boat for the world,” some one said. The remark caught Harry's ear, and roused him into mere wantonness of opposition. “Why?” he said to himself aloud. It did not matter whether it was said loud or low, nobody but himself could hear it

as he leaned over the rushing water. "I'll go." He was in such a condition of perversity that this was all he wanted to fix his purpose.

He landed on the Liverpool side, no longer languidly, but with the air of a man who has something to do, and went straight to examine the ship and ascertain where to apply for his passage. She was bound for Leghorn. He went stepping briskly forth to the office of the agent, and then with a mixture of economy and gentility, still conscious of the importance of the family from which he was about to cut himself off, took a passage in what was called the second cabin.

"What name?" said the clerk. What name? he had not considered this question. Should he give his own name, thus leaving a clue to anyone who chose to inquire? The doubt, the question was momentary: "Isaac Oliver," he said, and looked the man in the face as if defying contradiction. But the clerk had no idea of contradicting him; as well Isaac Oliver as Harry Joscelyn to the stranger, who knew nothing about either. Five minutes after he could not tell what had put this name into his head; but his fate was decided, and beyond correction. He went home with a curious feeling in his mind, not sure whether it was amusement, or shame, or anger with himself and fate. It was all three together. He was himself no longer, he had thrown away his birthright. What had tempted him to take the name of Isaac Oliver he could not explain. He laughed, but his laugh was not pleasant. He was annoyed and appalled and disgusted with himself, but he could not alter that now. All the evening he roamed about the riverbank, looking at the ships going out and in, and the little steamers rustling and fuming across the gleaming water, and all the many coloured symbols and ceaseless industry of the scene, with a strange sense of having lost

himself, of having so to speak died in the middle of his life. He could not get over it. He was living in a little inn which had been turned into a sort of suburban tea-garden, instead of the little neat ale-house it once was. The weather was very fine and warm, though it was so early in the season, and every steamboat disgorged a crowd of visitors to sit under the half-open foliage of the trees, and in the damp little arbours. Harry avoided all these visitors in the fear of meeting some one who might know him. Harry! he was not Harry any longer. The mere giving of the false name had changed him. He did not know who he was. He was confused and confounded with the sudden difference. Had some one called out Harry Joscelyn quickly, he thought that it would no longer have occurred to him to answer. He was not Harry Joscelyn; and who was he? The name he had chosen, or which some malicious spirit had put into his head, seemed to float before him wherever he went. He shuffled in his walk unconsciously as he fled from himself along the margin of the great flood. What had he done? He had abandoned not only his own name and family, but his own condition, his place in life. Wherever he went, he would be known as a peasant, a common countryman, he thought, never thinking in his pre-occupation that the strangers among whom he was going knew just as much about Isaac Oliver as about Harry Joscelyn. The night grew dark, and the great river gleamed with a thousand sparkles of light like glowworms. Little vessels, each with a coloured lantern, went darting across and across, lights swung steadily with a sort of dreamy regular cadence from the stationary ships. The stars above were not more manifold than those little lamps below. The quiet of the night had hushed the sounds of the great city on the other side, and all the heavy hammers and the din of machinery: but still life was busy, coming and going, darting on a hundred messages; pilot boats steaming out

to sea, little dark tugboats bringing back cargoes of souls out of the unknown. But Harry thought of nothing save of the strange, unpremeditated step he had taken; that one incident filled all the earth to him; a momentary impulse, a deed that was scarcely his, and yet he felt that it would colour all his life. He stayed out till the passenger boats had stopped and all the visitors were gone. The little inn was shut up and dark, all but one little querulous candle sitting up for him, when he went home: home! he called this temporary refuge by that sacred name involuntarily—just such a home he now said bitterly, as he would have for the rest of his life. Fortunately next day the Leghorn boat was to sail, and his new start would be made without time to think about it any more.

Isaac Oliver took possession of his berth next morning. He went on board early, and lounged about the deck all day. For the first time this morning it occurred to him that they might send after him, that his departure could not have passed altogether without notice among his friends. He had not thought of this before, but now it came upon him with some force. They would try to stop him at the last moment. The very name he had chosen would betray him, for who but Harry Joscelyn would call himself Isaac Oliver? He kept on the further side of the ship, leaning over the bulwarks, and watched everybody who went or came with jealous eyes. Tardy passengers came on board one after another, bringing luggage and new items of cargo and provisions; there was scarcely a moment without some arrival, and every one of them, Harry felt, must be for him. When at last the gangway was detached, the anchor weighed, the latest idler or porter put on shore, and the very screw in motion, he felt sure there must be some last attempt, some appeal from the quay. "Have you one of the name of Harry Joscelyn there?" he thought he could actually hear them calling;

and saw the rapid examination of the list of passengers, and the shaking of heads of the captain and his immediate assistants, who were standing together high above all the others. When there could be no longer any doubt that the steamboat was off, and that no appeal of the kind had been made, a quick and hot sense of offence came over Harry. He had been alarmed by the idea of being identified and stopped at the outset of his voyage: but as soon as he was certain that he was to be allowed to proceed peaceably on that voyage, his heart burned within him with a sense of injury. Now it was indeed all ended and all over, his life, his name, everything to which he had been accustomed in the past. He went below to his berth, with a sense of complete abandonment and desolation which it would be impossible to describe. It appeared to him that until now he had only been playing with the idea, amusing himself with all the preparations for a change which would never really take place, which somehow would be stopped and prevented at the end. But nobody had put forth a finger to stop him, and now the end was accomplished and beyond all remedy. Up to the time he came on shipboard he had not thought of being stopped, but now he felt as if he had expected it all the time, and was grievously injured and heartlessly abandoned by all the world and by all his relations, not one of whom would lift a finger on his behalf. He went down to his shabby berth in the second cabin, and felt much disposed, like his mother, to turn his face to the wall. But, perhaps fortunately for Harry, the sea was rough, and when the vessel steamed out of the Mersey and felt the full commotion of the waves outside, he was sick, and not in a condition to care for anything.

In this way he lost the thread of his trouble for the first two days: and then novelty and excitement began to tell upon him, and he came altogether to himself. No, not to himself: he did not feel

clear about who he was or what. He came to—Isaac Oliver, looking that new personage in the face with a bewildered awe of him and wonder at him. Isaac Oliver! who, he wondered vaguely, could he be? not a son of old Isaac, who had only little children—a nephew or a cousin, some off-shoot of the family, if the Olivers could be called a family, a suggestion at which he smiled in spite of himself. That must be who he was, the offspring of a race of peasants, no better blood, no other pretensions. The Joscelyns were a very different class of people, but he had given them up, he had shaken off all bonds between them and himself. “In for a penny, in for a pound,” he said to himself, setting his face to it with a smile, as the steamboat bore up along the Italian coast, and “the old miraculous mountains hove in sight.” Harry did not feel any special interest in Italy: he was of the class who never travel, and understand but little why one place should be more interesting than another. And, indeed, Leghorn does not sound like Italy to any traveller. What he knew of it was that it was a busy sea-port, where there were merchants’ offices and a thriving trade. He did not interest himself much about anything else. He had his living to make, alone and unbefriended in a strange country: need was that he should collect himself and pluck up a heart and think what he was to do, now that he was so near the place of his destination—or, at least, not what he, but young Isaac Oliver, was to do. Would any merchant take him in without character, without introduction or testimonial? This thought was like a cold breath going through and through him, when he began to think. But he had still a little money in his pocket, and could afford to wait and look about him for a week or two. There is always something turning up in a busy place. And Harry, accustomed to occupation all his life, could not believe that he would ever starve where there was anything to do.

They had touched at various other ports on the way, whose chief claims to be visited were such as Harry had little understanding of, and the eagerness of his fellow-passengers to get on shore and see these places had surprised him. For his own part, he did not see the fun of going to see a succession of churches and pictures. He had seen but few pictures in his life, and he had never been taught that they were of much importance. He had, indeed, privately, an honest contempt for such things, though he said little about it. He was disposed to ask, "What are you all staring at?" when he was brought face to face with an early Master, a thing which he would have banished into the darkest corner had it been his. But when he got into the harbour at Leghorn he began to feel himself once more *dans son assiette*. He knew what the docks meant, and appreciated the masts of the shipping better than if they had been the most delicate works of art. It was nothing to Liverpool, but it was something he could understand and felt at home with. He landed in better spirits than he had experienced for a very long time. He felt a moral certainty that he should "get on" here.

But what a shock it was when the unaccustomed Englishman stepped first on shore, and found himself in the midst of a strange life, of which he did not understand even the first word! He knew very well, of course, that it was a foreign place, and that English was not spoken there; but he never had realized that it would be impossible by speaking loudly, or using a sort of broken English, or some other simple contrivance, to make the barbarous natives understand. Even an individual much better educated than poor Harry may be excused if the shock of that extraordinary solitude and isolation which surrounds him when he finds himself incapable of understanding a word of what is going on, is a

surprise and irritation as well as a discomfort. He stood on the quay with his little portmanteau by him—after having been rowed over endless links of basins, all full of clear green sea-water, cut like a great jelly by the progress of the boat, to the landing-place—and stood there aghast, and, indeed, agape, hustled by the crowd, and with a grinning porter on each side of him making offers of incomprehensible service. He would not deliver himself over into the hands of any such harpies he was resolved, not even when they addressed him in a word or two of English, though the sound was as balm to his ears. He stood over his portmanteau and angrily pushed the facchini away, but at last got hold of a lad whose appearance pleased him, who was tidier than the rest. To him Harry said “Hotel?” in a sort of half-questioning, half-suggestive way; but this was not enough to get him clear of the officious crowd, who flew at him with names which conveyed no meaning to his ears. Harry felt like a man caught in a hailstorm as he was pelted with those big sonorous syllables. He grew furious with confusion and bewilderment. He had not been thought specially strong on the Fells, but here his North-country muscles told. He pushed away the crowd, who he thought were making a joke of him, and took up his own portmanteau. “The gentleman is all right,” said some one beside him; “you have no education, you are without manners, you others,” and somebody took off a hat and made a salutation, somebody who reached to about Harry’s elbow. It was civil, and the first part of the sentence had been said in English, so Harry, learning by experience, conquered his wrath, and was civil too. “Can I perhaps indicate a hotel?” this new personage said; “Mister is an English?” Harry stood still and looked down upon his new acquaintance, not quite clear as to the meaning of what he said. He was a little man, small and dainty, dressed with quaint care, with high shirt-collars, and a large black

cravat tied in a bow, and the most shining of black hats, which he took off when he spoke. He was olive-complexioned, with big, dark, soft Italian eyes. "Mister is an English?" he said; "by paternity I am an English, too. I will indicate a hotel if the gentleman chooses. It will deliver him from *la canaglia*, what you call this rabbel," he added, with an ingratiating smile, and a great rattle of his *r*'s. It was mere good-nature, but Harry was by no means sure of this, and he knew that foreigners were deceivers. "Thanks, I won't trouble you," he said, abruptly, and lifting his portmanteau—it was not a big one—strode away. He felt angry and depressed, yet excited. The astonished look of the little man, who made him another bow, and replaced his hat with a shrug of his shoulders at the Englishman's want of manners, added to his discomfiture. Perhaps he had made a fool of himself by refusing those good offices which were offered to him, Harry thought. Perhaps he would have been a bigger fool had he accepted. Perhaps they were all in a conspiracy to rob him. He strode on and on, somewhat ashamed of his own appearance with the portmanteau, as if he were too poor to pay anyone to carry it, and thoroughly bewildered altogether amid the sounds and sights which he did not understand. But at the end he got into an inn where there was some one who spoke English, not such a usual accomplishment in these days as it is now; and where he got a room which was very strange of aspect to the untravelled young man. The half hour which he passed there, seated upon the odd little bed, with his portmanteau at his feet upon the tiled floor, all so strange, so desolate to Harry, was as terrible a moment as he had ever passed in his life. His very soul was discouraged, sunk low in his breast with a kind of physical drop and downfall. It was all he could do not to burst out crying in his forlornness and helplessness and solitude. What could he do in a place where he

did not understand a word? In many cases novelty is delightful, but there are some in which it is the most dreadful of all depressing circumstances. Everything, from the dingy tiles under his feet, and the dark eating-room downstairs, with its unaccustomed smells, up to the blaze of the Italian noon, and the incomprehensible tongue that everybody spoke, weighed upon Harry. He covered his face with his hands, sitting there upon his bed. What evil fate had led him to this unknown place? What should he do without even a name that belonged to him, without a friend? A gasp came into his throat, and the hand that covered his eyes was wet. He felt himself bowed down to the very ground.

After thus “giving way,” however, Harry braced himself up, and recovered at least the appearance of courage. He made the best toilette he could by the help of the small washing utensils, which were not so entirely abhorrent to English customs then as they are now—for baths were not very general, and washing-basins were but small, in the first quarter, if not the first half, of this century. And then he sallied forth refreshed—into a new world.

CHAPTER II.

A NEW WORLD.

HARRY strayed about the town during the afternoon, losing his way, and finding it again; but got back to the hotel before the important hour of dinner, of which the English-speaking waiter had informed him. He was less amused than depressed with all he saw. The perpetual talk that seemed to be going on around him—sharp, varied, high-pitched, incomprehensible—gave him at first a sense of offence, as if all these people were doing it on purpose in order to bewilder him, and afterwards a profound feeling of discouragement. He was not clever he was aware. He had never been very great at his school work, and how was he to accomplish the first preliminary, the very initial step of existence here, the learning of the language, to which he had no clue, and of which he could not make out one word? It seemed to him as if years must elapse before he could master the very rudiments of the new tongue; and how was he to seek for work, or to get work to do, not knowing the very A B C of the life about him? Harry went doubling about the unfamiliar streets, looking with wistful eyes at every passer-by who had the look of an Englishman, and asking himself what he was to do. He did not seem to have any spirit left for the uphill work of learning a language. There rose up before him a vision of the exercises which he had once laboured at, daubing himself with ink, and of the verbs which he had got by heart overnight only to forget them in the morning. To think that he could not even ask his way! Wherever he strayed he looked at the people helplessly, as if he had been dumb, and anxiously examined all the street corners, without venturing to approach any shop, or

lay himself open to any encounter. He was more fortunate than might have been expected in this point, for he found the right street corner at last, and the house, with its strange old courtyard, and the long dark *sala* which looked into it, and in which the guests were already gathering. The house had a good reputation, and the large room was nearly full. Harry, who had never seen anything of the kind before, saw the people take their places, each appropriating his own turned down chair, and half finished bottle of wine, and looked for his own place with a curious sense of the everyday character to the others of all these proceedings, which to him were so unusual. Yesterday, at the same hour, no doubt they had all been here, and last year, and as long as anybody could recollect, munching a slice from the long Italian loaf, the yard of bread which of itself astonished his simple-minded ignorance. To think that with such an air of routine and long establishment this dinner should have been happening methodically every day while he was pursuing his work at Liverpool, or taking his holiday at home. At home! The words sounded like a bitter sarcasm to the young man, who had no home—who had now no identity, no self to fall back upon, but had begun to exist, so to speak, only a few days ago. And to think this table, with all its soils and steams, should have been waiting for him all this time!

“Ere, Sarr, ’ere,” said the English-speaking waiter, his black eyes rolling in his head with pride and pleasure in this exhibition of his gift of languages. He was holding the back of a chair which had been carefully turned down, and was placed between a fat old Italian, with an enormous depth of double chin, and a small figure, which Harry recognised at once as that of the man who had spoken to him on the quay. “De gentelman speak English,” said the waiter, bowing with amiability and pleasure. Harry, it is to be feared, did

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