

# **Like Another Helen**

By  
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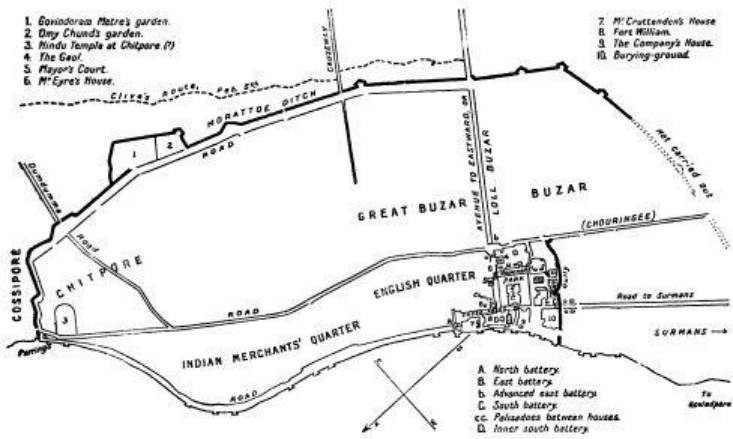
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# **DEDICATION.**

TO

**Captain Lionel J. Trotter**

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE  
OF LONG-CONTINUED ENCOURAGEMENT  
AND HELP

# EPIGRAPH.

“AND, LIKE ANOTHER HELEN, FIRED ANOTHER TROY”

## **LIKE ANOTHER HELEN.**

*(The following letters are all, unless it is otherwise stated,  
written by Miss Sylvia Freyne to Miss Amelia Turnor.)*



# CHAPTER I.

## THE REFLECTIONS OF A YOUNG LADY ON GOING OUT INTO THE WORLD.

ROYAL OAK INN, DEAL, *NOV. YE 26TH*, 1754.

THE hour so long dreaded is at length almost arrived, my Amelia, and your Sylvia weeps to remember that this is her last night on British soil. To-morrow, in the company of strangers, she leaves the only home she has ever known, her native land and all its dear inhabitants—and who is the best beloved of them, her sweet girl knows well—for an unfamiliar region, parents hitherto unseen, and a new manner of life. Ill would it become her to consecrate these last precious moments to anything but the duties of friendship, and in fulfilment of the promise that her latest thoughts on quitting England should be her dearest friend's, she takes the opportunity to begin this letter. It will reach you, as she understands, from about the neighbourhood of the Isle of Wight, since she expects to finish it on board the Orford, in time to entrust its posting to the pilot who steers the ship down the Channel.

But how, you will ask, has your friend contrived to learn so soon these particulars of her journey? The answer to that question, my Amelia, belongs to the history of the day's travelling, of which you saw only the heartrending commencement. Sure no young creature ever left Holly-tree House with a heart so heavy as mine! When I had kissed the hands of our venerable instructresses, and had received Mrs Eustacia's warning against neglecting the

polite accomplishments, in the practice of which (she was good enough to say) I had gained so considerable a proficiency, and Mrs Abigail had begged of me not to read romances and to beware of listening to the flatteries of men, the worst was still to come. Was it not enough to encounter the tearful farewells of all the dear Misses, that I must experience the crowning grief of beholding my Amelia fallen into a fit,[01] and carried away by Mrs Abigail and the governess, thus depriving me of the last fond glance I had anticipated? Oh, my dearest Miss Turnor, when the good Rector stopped me on the footpath as I was hurrying to hide my tears in the chaise, and bade God bless me, and wished me an obliging spouse and a great fortune (hateful word!), I was hard put to it not to burst out sobbing in his face. Once seated in the chaise, however, the polite concern and surprised countenances of Mrs Hamlin and her niece assisted me to restrain my tears, and we drove off in the genteel style imaginable, with Miss Hamlin's brother, the lieutenant of dragoons, riding beside the chaise.

As soon as she saw me a little more composed, Miss Hamlin began to rally me on the grief I displayed to quit my school, and charged me with leaving a dear friend behind me there. "And I'm certain," says she, "that I have discovered this friend. Pray, miss, wasn't it the handsome young lady in the blue lustring nightgown[02] who was so overcome by her feelings that she fainted away? Sure you must have observed her, brother?"

"That I did," says Mr Hamlin; "and a monstrous fine girl she was, too."

More to this effect was said, and my Amelia will guess how these compliments to my friend warmed my heart, and placed me on the best of terms with Mr and Miss Hamlin, while their aunt, who seems a very agreeable, good sort of a woman, did her best to set your timid Sylvia at her ease. As often as the thoughts natural to my situation threatened to overcome my composure, the ladies were ready to divert my mind to some fresh topic, the elder with infinite good humour, and her niece with the greatest archness in the world. My Amelia must not imagine herself in the smallest degree forgot when I tell her that I am persuaded I shall find Miss Hamlin a vastly agreeable companion, in spite of the difference between her constitution and mine. At midday we abated our journey at an inn, where we found the advantage of Mr Hamlin's company, since every one was agog to serve him. No sooner had he entered the place in his laced scarlet coat, with the King's ribbon[03] in his hat, than there was all manner of rushing hither and thither, and it was, "What does your honour please to desire?" and "What will the noble Captain[04] take?" on every side.

Miss Hamlin rallied her brother very pleasantly on the matter during the meal, and I was thankful that she was thus engaged, since I could scarce eat a morsel. On returning to the post-chaise, Mrs Hamlin fell asleep, and her niece confided to me in whispers many points of extraordinary interest touching the clothes she is taking out to Bengal with her—confidences which I did my best to return, although I can't hope to rival them. We reached Deal about four in the afternoon, and Mrs Hamlin ordered tea immediately in the private parlour she had engaged

beforehand, whither we repaired. Presently up comes Mr Hamlin, who had been seeing our trunks brought in, and acquainted his aunt that there were lodging in the inn two young gentlemen of whom he had some slight knowledge, and who were to be our fellow-passengers to India on board the Orford, adding that if we could come to an agreement with them to share a boat on the morrow, we might reach our vessel at far less cost.

“Well thought of!” cries Mrs Hamlin. “Pray, Henry, request the gentlemen to step upstairs and drink a dish of tea with us here.”

“With all my heart, madam,” says the Captain, and down he goes, returning quickly with the two gentlemen, who differed considerably from each other in appearance. The first, whom Mr Hamlin presented to his aunt as Lieutenant Colvin Fraser, of his Majesty’s ship Tyger, was tall and very well made, but a degree too thin for his height, his complexion ruddy, his eyes grey, his hair, which was his own, of a reddish colour. He wore the King’s ribbon, but a plain fustian suit of a dark blue. The other gentleman, who was of a smaller and slighter figure and a dark complexion, and with whom Mr Hamlin had a much better acquaintance than with Lieutenant Fraser, was introduced as Mr Ensign Ranger, of the Hon. Company’s Bengall European Regiment. The gentlemen were presented to us severally, and both entered into conversation in a very genteel manner, modest without being bashful, although it seemed to me that Mr Ranger was the more assured, and Lieutenant Fraser the more cautious.

“Come, gentlemen,” says Mrs Hamlin at last, “since we are to be fellow-travellers for so long, let us begin, like the personages in the romances, by telling each other our histories. As for myself, you will have guessed that I am sailing to rejoin my spouse, who was until lately head of the Company’s house at Ballisore, and that during the journey I have the charge of Miss Freyne, whose papa is a member of Council at Calcutta, as well as of my niece, who will reside with her uncle and me when we reach Bengall.”

“And questionless you’ll also have guessed that both ladies are sailing to seek their fortunes—with spouses attached to ’em,” says Mr Hamlin.

“Oh, fie, brother!” cries Miss Hamlin. “See how Miss Freyne is out of countenance for your freedom. Pray, miss, don’t heed the Captain. He has no delicacy of mind.”

“And pray, miss, why are you going, if not in the hope of getting married?” demanded Mr Hamlin. “How silly must these gentlemen think it in you to be so nice in denying what’s the truth!”

Before Miss Hamlin could reply, Lieutenant Fraser took up the dispute with great warmth, saying that for his part, not only would he not venture to suggest to a lady the terms she should employ in speaking, but he thought that man a sad coxcomb who would presume to do so, more especially in a matter of such delicacy as had just been touched upon. Mr Hamlin, though astounded by this outburst, was about to reply warmly, when his aunt interfered, reproved both disputants for the heat they were displaying, and desired

them to return to the topic on which she had requested information.

“You, Lieutenant Fraser,” she said, “shall be the first to recount to us your history. How is it, pray, that we find a King’s officer taking passage in an Indiaman?”

“Indeed, madam,” says he, fetching a heavy sigh, “my situation can’t appear stranger to you than it did irksome to myself until a few minutes ago. Sure you see before you the victim of a series of the cruellest misfortunes that ever balked a man of his most reasonable desires. You’ll be already aware, questionless, that in February the King despatched Admiral Watson to the East Indies with the Kent and Salisbury and others of his Majesty’s ships, in the anticipation that when war next breaks out with France, much will hang upon the situation in the Decan, where our nation and the French have been so continually at strife of late years. You will be at no loss to imagine that the recent exploits and successes of Colonel Clive have stirred up such a spirit of emulation in both the sea and land services that the Admiral might have had his pick of the whole nation either as officers or volunteers on board of his ships, but it so happened that having been fortunate enough to gain his approbation when serving with him before (for I was bred up under him from my earliest youth at sea), I had his promise to take me with him if he could in any way compass it. But now, madam, came in the first of the distressing accidents I have mentioned. Not only did I find my applications continually set aside in favour of gentlemen who possessed greater interest than I could boast, but Mr Watson’s own desires were thwarted with a like

persistence. And all this was in spite of the many signal services rendered by my father to the Government in the rising of the Highlands nine years back, so true is the saying that good offices are seldom remembered unless their repetition is looked for.”

“Pray, sir,” cries the Captain, “stick to your tale, and don’t weary the ladies with pieces of musty wisdom that you’ve picked up from some long-winded divine.”

“Pray, nephew Henry,” says Mrs Hamlin, seeing that Lieutenant Fraser, although out of countenance by reason of the interruption, was looking very fierce; “don’t break into the gentleman’s history, which we all love to hear him tell in his own style. Sure you ought to know that though you fine London sparks may make a boast of your ignorance, every Scottish gentleman prides himself on possessing a store of polite learning and reflections, and if Mr Fraser is good enough to display his for our entertainment, he is to be commended, and not blamed. Pray, sir, continue.”

“I’ll do my best not to be tedious, madam,” says the Lieutenant, with a bow. “You may conceive then my mortification when the squadron set sail without me, although I was a little comforted by the Admiral’s assuring me that he had left my case in the hands of a friend of his that had interest at the India House, and would see that my name was brought before the Admiralty if there were any question of sending out reinforcements to him. If my distress had been extreme at the rude blasting of my hopes, it was equalled by my delight when in the month of May I

received my commission as fourth lieutenant of the Tyger. You may not, madam, have heard at the time that Admiral Watson met with such severe weather in the Channel that he was forced to send back part of his fleet disabled from Kingsale, where he had put in for the purpose of taking on board Colonel Adlercron's regiment of foot[05] for service in the Carnatic. On hearing of this disaster the Government determined to fit out and despatch immediately the Tyger and the Cumberland, which might take on board the remainder of the soldiers, and endeavour to overtake Mr Watson, who had continued his voyage without regarding the smallness of his force. No words can paint my delight on receiving this news, but making the best of my way to join my ship at Plymouth, I was so unfortunate as to spend the night at an inn where a man lay sick of the small-pox. Although I did not approach him, as you may well guess, it seems that the air of the place must have carried the infection, for I was seized with the malady the day before that on which the Tyger and her consort were to sail. The disorder of my mind, on seeing my hopes again overthrown, aggravated my sufferings to such a degree that I barely escaped with my life, and only left the hospital after an extraordinary long bout of sickness. As soon as I was fairly recovered, I made haste to open my affairs to the Admiralty, who, compassionating my hard case, gave me leave to proceed at my own costs to the East Indies, where, if I find my post aboard the Tyger filled up, I must even offer my services as a volunteer."



“Unless your ill-fortune should pursue you so far as to prevent your sailing with us to-morrow, sir,” says Mrs Hamlin.

“Sure, madam, in the company in which I now am no ill fortune can prevail to touch me.”

“I protest, sir, you are too flattering. Pray, sir,” and Mrs Hamlin looked towards the second gentleman, “tell us your history now.”

“Alas, madam!” says Mr Ranger, heaving a prodigious sigh, in extravagant imitation of that with which his friend had commenced his recital; “I have no tale to tell that will bring the moisture of compassion to the eye of beauty, as that of Mr Fraser has been happy enough to do. My sufferings are of too ordinary a nature to do more than excite the tribute of a pitying glance. I can but say that I had the honour to serve his Majesty in the regiment which your nephew, my esteemed friend here, so justly adorns, and that the modest fortune I inherited proved insufficient to support the dignity with which I desired to invest my situation. I need not wound the tender hearts of the young ladies by describing the disagreeable results of this unfortunate disproportion; it is enough to remark that I was thankful to accept the offer of my uncle, who is an India director, to make interest to obtain for me a pair of colours in the Bengall Regiment.”

“Indeed, sir, you en’t in no way to be pitied,” says Mrs Hamlin, with some coldness. “Are you aware how many worthy young gentlemen, each of whom has spent several years as a private man in the Company’s forces, carrying a

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