

*Mr Dossett walks to work*

Dossett was popular at his office, and was regarded by his brother clerks as a friend. But no one was acquainted with his house and home. They did not dine with him, nor he with them. There are such men in all public offices,—not the less respected because of the quiescence of their lives. It was known of him that he had burdens, though it was not known what his burdens were. His friends, therefore, were intimate with him as far as the entrance into Somerset House,—where his duties lay,—and not beyond it. Lucy was destined to know the other side of his affairs, the domestic side, which was as quiet as the official side. The link between them, which consisted of a journey by the Underground Railway to the Temple Station, and a walk home along the Embankment and across the parks and Kensington Gardens, was the pleasantest part of Dossett's life.

*Ayala flashes up*

The party from Scotland reached Queen's Gate late one Saturday evening, and intended to start early on the Monday. To Ayala, who had made it quite a matter of course that she should see her sister, Lady Tringle had said that in that case a carriage must be sent across. It was awkward, because there were no carriages in London. She had thought that they had all intended to pass through London just as though they were not stopping. Sunday, she had thought, was not to be regarded as being a day at all. Then Ayala flashed up. She had flashed up some times before. Was it supposed that she was not going to see Lucy? Carriage! She would walk across Kensington Gardens, and find the house out all by herself. She would spend the whole day with Lucy, and come back alone in a cab. She was strong enough, at any rate, to have her way so far, that a carriage, wherever it came from, was sent for Lucy about three in the afternoon, and did take her back to Kingsbury Crescent after dinner.

*Raging lions*

It is generally understood that there are raging lions about the metropolis, who would certainly eat up young ladies whole if young ladies were to walk about the streets or even about the parks by themselves. There is, however, beginning to be some vacillation as to the received belief on this subject as regards London. In large continental towns, such as Paris and Vienna, young ladies would be devoured certainly. Such, at least, is the creed. In New York and Washington there are supposed to be no lions, so that young ladies go about free as air. In London there is a rising doubt, under which before long, probably, the lions will succumb altogether. Mrs. Dossett did believe somewhat in lions, but she believed also in exercise. And she was aware that the lions eat up chiefly rich people. Young ladies who must go about without mothers, brothers, uncles, carriages, or attendants of any sort, are not often eaten or even roared at. It is the dainty darlings for whom the roarings have to be feared. Mrs. Dossett, aware that daintiness was no longer within the reach of her and hers, did assent to these walkings in Kensington Gardens. At some hour in the afternoon Lucy would walk from the house by herself, and within a quarter of an hour would find herself on the broad gravel path which leads down to the Round Pond. From thence she would go by the back of the Albert Memorial, and then across by the Serpentine and return to the same gate, never leaving Kensington Gardens. Aunt Dossett had expressed some old-fashioned idea that

lions were more likely to roar in Hyde Park than within the comparatively retired purlieu of Kensington.

*Ayala meets Isadore Hamel in Kensington Gardens*

... But now, even though he were to come back to London, he would know nothing of her haunts. Even in that case nothing would bring them together. As the idea was crossing her mind,—as it did cross it so frequently,—she saw him turning from the path on which she was walking, making his way towards the steps of the Memorial.

Though she saw no more than his back she was sure that it was Isadore Hamel. For a moment there was an impulse on her to run after him and to call his name. It was then early in January, and she was taking her daily walk through Kensington Gardens. She had walked there daily now for the last two months and had never spoken a word or been addressed,—had never seen a face that she had recognised. It had seemed to her that she had not an acquaintance in the world except Uncle Reg and Aunt Dosett. And now, almost within reach of her hand, was the one being in all the world whom she most longed to see. She did stand, and the word was formed within her lips; but she could not speak it. Then came the thought that she would run after him, but the thought was expelled quickly. Though she might lose him again and for ever she could not do that. She stood almost gasping till he was out of sight, and then she passed on upon her usual round.

She never omitted her walks after that, and always paused a moment as the path turned away to the Memorial. It was not that she thought that she might meet him there,—there rather than elsewhere,—but there is present to us often an idea that when some object has passed from us that we have desired then it may be seen again. Day after day, and week after week, she did not see him. During this time there came letters from Ayala, saying that their return to England was postponed till the first week in February,—that she would certainly see Lucy in February,—that she was not going to be hurried through London in half-an-hour because her aunt wished it; and that she would do as she pleased as to visiting her sister. Then there was a word or two about Tom,—“Oh, Tom—that idiot Tom!” And another word or two about Augusta. “Augusta is worse than ever. We have not spoken to each other for the last day or two.” This came but a day or two before the intended return of the Tringles.

No actual day had been fixed. But on the day before that on which Lucy thought it probable that the Tringles might return to town she was again walking in the Gardens. Having put two and two together, as people do, she felt sure that the travellers could not be away more than a day or two longer. Her mind was much intent upon Ayala, feeling that the imprudent girl was subjecting herself to great danger, knowing that it was wrong that she and Augusta should be together in the house without speaking,—thinking of her sister's perils,—when, of a sudden, Hamel was close before her! There was no question of calling to him now,—no question of an attempt to see him face to face. She had been wandering along the path with eyes fixed upon the ground, when her name was sharply called, and they two were close to each other. Hamel had a friend with him, and it seemed to Lucy at once, that she could only bow to him, only mutter something, and then pass on. How can a girl stand and speak to a gentleman in public, especially when that gentleman has a

friend with him? She tried to look pleasant, bowed, smiled, muttered something, and was passing on. But he was not minded to lose her thus immediately. "Miss Dormer," he said, "I have seen your sister at Rome. May I not say a word about her?"

Why should he not say a word about Ayala? In a minute he had left his friend, and was walking back along the path with Lucy. There was not much that he had to say about Ayala. He had seen Ayala and the Tringles, and did manage to let it escape him that Lady Tringle had not been very gracious to himself when once, in public, he had claimed acquaintance with Ayala. But at that he simply smiled. Then he had asked of Lucy where she lived. "With my uncle, Mr. Dosett," said Lucy, "at Kingsbury Crescent." Then, when he asked whether he might call, Lucy, with many blushes, had said that her aunt did not receive many visitors,—that her uncle's house was different from what her father's had been.

"Shall I not see you at all, then?" he asked.

She did not like to ask him after his own purposes of life, whether he was now a resident in London, or whether he intended to return to Rome. She was covered with bashfulness, and dreaded to seem even to be interested in his affairs. "Oh, yes," she said; "perhaps we may meet some day."

"Here?" he asked.

"Oh, no; not here! It was only an accident." As she said this she determined that she must walk no more in Kensington Gardens. It would be dreadful, indeed, were he to imagine that she would consent to make an appointment with him. It immediately occurred to her that the lions were about, and that she must shut herself up.

*Tom walks home with Mr Dosett*

Punctually at four Tom made his appearance at Somerset House, and started with his uncle as soon as the index-books had been put in their places. Tom was very anxious to take his uncle home in a cab, but Mr. Dosett would not consent to lose his walk. Along the Embankment they went, and across Charing Cross into St. James's Park, and then by Green Park, Hyde Park, and Kensington Gardens, all the way to Notting Hill. Mr. Dosett did not walk very fast, and Tom thought they would never reach Kingsbury Crescent. His uncle would fain have talked about the weather, or politics, or the hardships of the Civil Service generally; but Tom would not be diverted from his one subject. Would Ayala be gracious to him? Mr. Dosett had made up his mind to say nothing on the subject. Tom must plead his own cause. Uncle Reginald thought that he knew such pleading would be useless, but still would not say a word to daunt the lover. Neither could he say a word expressive of hope. As they were fully an hour-and-a-half on their walk, this reticence was difficult.