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Scott & Bowne, Toronto, Ont.

Love in the Abbey

OR,

Lady Ethel's Rival

CHAPTER XXIII

THE SERPENT'S STING.

"We" with a slight flush of annoyance at the slip of the tongue which had nearly spoiled the whole plot. "Why, the two lovers and myself, my dear fellow! My offices were not quite so disinterested, but the young ones were too many for me!" and he laughs.

The laugh seems to jar, like a blow, upon every nerve of the listener's brain.

"I got the fly, and arranged that they should pick me up at the marketplace; I left my cigar case at home, and wanted a weed on the way outside—but, by Jove, they gave me the slip!"

Elliot Sterne stops, and raises his hat as if for air.

"Gave me the slip as cleanly as if they were a couple of young Spaniards cheating their duenna! They went around the other side of the marketplace, and left me to cool my heels at the wrong corner."

Elliot Sterne's face whitens with rage, jealousy, and shame.

"Do you mean to tell me," he says, "that they rode home—by themselves—Miss Trevelyan and Mr. Ainsley?"

"Certainly—and very cleverly managed the whole affair was, too! I fancy I can hear Miss Trevelyan's laugh as they steered round the wrong side of the marketplace, and left the good Samaritan to walk home as best he could. Mind! I give the young lady the credit of the clever trick, for I don't think Ainsley was sharp or spirited enough to have suggested it."

Elliot Sterne bites his lips, to repress the passionate oath that rises as if in protest against this insulting suggestion. And yet, what can he say? If it is true—and he cannot doubt it—that Kitty stole out of the house, just as a servant girl might do, to run to the play with her sweetheart—if she had deliberately pushed aside the effort Sydney Calthrop had made to save her from the consequences, and by a trick, quite worthy of the same ingenious housemaid, had given this friend the slip, how could he resent that friend's interpretation of her actions? But above the storm of jealousy that tossed within him, rose the bitter humiliation of the conviction that he has wasted his love, his passionate love, upon a girl who could make a clandestine assignation with her sweetheart, and, outraging the most ordinary conventional rules, accompany him alone to the theater, flinging recognition and insult, and by a trick secure a tete-a-tete ride home in the very fly which had been procured to save her!

There is a silence, broken only by

the devoted companion and friend

the light air which Sydney Calthrop hums to himself as if totally unconscious of the emotion which is racking the man beside him; then he says, as if with a sudden thought:

"I hope Mr. Ainsley seized his golden opportunity, and pressed his suit to a successful issue; for, if I am not mistaken, Miss Trevelyan has caused him to suffer pretty considerably from strong alternations of hope and despair. The reflection that perhaps on such a propitious occasion the poor young fellow might succeed in getting a decided 'yes,' consoled me for my walk. I have heard nothing of it as yet, but I suppose they are regarded by the whole family as engaged from their childhood upward, and the actual betrothal will make but little sensation. Mr. Ainsley looked remarkably happy, and Miss Trevelyan ditto embarrassed when they reached the Hall lodge, from which I augur favorably to Mr. Ainsley's claim. By Jove! he is a lucky dog. I don't think I ever met a girl who more thoroughly came up to Herve's idea of 'charming.' The other morning we had a chat in the rosary; it was a treat to a hackneyed man of the world to see her smile and hear her happy, light-hearted banter—the sweet, unconscious coquetry of a child joined to the bewitching grace and beauty of a woman. Art cared to ask for nothing. She gives you a flower with that artless air of generous unconcern that renders the act a poem—"

As he speaks he looks down with placid complacency at the flower in his coat, and Elliot Sterne's dark eyes flash down upon him.

"She gave you that?" he says in a low voice.

"Yes," laughs Iago; "but Mr. Ainsley has no cause of jealousy; she would give away a bushel of them with the same smile of interest and absorption, and mean—just nothing! That's her charm. I think!"

Elliot Sterne's hand wanders to the rose upon his breast, and his fingers clutch at it with a spasmodic gesture; but he does not pluck the flower from its place—his hand falls to his side again, and he remains silent.

They reach the Abbey, and in silence pace across the little lawn; Elliot Sterne, with his hand upon the latch—the door knows no other fastening—turns to say good night.

As he does so, the moon pours straight upon his face, making its whiteness look livid, and Sydney Calthrop, with an affection of surprise and anxiety, cannot but remark it.

"My dear fellow, how knocked-up you look! Are you ill?"

"No," is the reply, curt and cold.

"I'm afraid you are, though," with an air of deep concern. "I'm half inclined to think there was more in the old doctor's advice than we thought, and that you ought to have kept quiet a little longer."

"There is nothing the matter with me!"

The devoted companion and friend

shakes his head gravely.

"You don't look at all straight! Let me come in with you and see that they get you something—a brandy and soda. Where is Saunders?" and he looks round anxiously.

Elliot Sterne puts out a hand, and lays it on his arm with a commanding touch.

"I do not want anything," he says. "I am tired, that is all. No, don't trouble to come in—Saunders will get anything I want, thanks!"

"Very well, my dear fellow, just as you like; but do have something. You'll see the doctor in the morning!" Elliot Sterne nods impatiently.

"Yes, yes; in the morning—in the morning!" he repeats, with a ghastly smile. "Good night!" and he holds out his hand. Iago takes it, and presses it affectionately, noting how cold it is, and with a grave little shake of the head of great concern, turns away.

Elliot Sterne opens the door and ascends the stairs with the tread of a man worn out by physical toil. Saunders comes out of his room with his noiseless step, and is guilty of a slight start at the sight of his master's face; but he is dismissed with a wave of the hand, and Elliot Sterne enters his room and locks the door.

Even now, when there is no eye to see him, the lifelong habit of restraint keeps him outwardly calm; he paces up and down the room with his head sunk upon his breast and his hand wandering about the rose in his coat; then, with quiet deliberation, he takes the flower from its place and looks at it. But he does not see it! He is looking down at the sweet, girlish face that is upturned to him with the light of love—or its make-believe—shining in her eyes; he sees a girl's fresh lips, half parted with soft, half-sad smiles of a first passion—he feels a girl's shy, frightened kiss upon his cheek; and then, with a groan, he drops the rose upon the ground and sets his foot upon it.

"Heavens!" he exclaims, his agony finding words for the first time; "I did not know till now how much I loved her! Oh, fool! fool!"

That is all—he says nothing more—no words of reproach beyond those self-upbraiding ones—no words of hope. As the rose lies crushed beneath his foot, so lies that passionate love of his, to be crushed out of his life as if it had never been. Then he sinks into a chair, with his head resting on his hand, and there he sits, wrestling with the passion within him through the night, and the sun peering through the curtains, finds him there still.

CHAPTER XXIV

A SUITOR'S ANSWER.

KITTY stands by the gate looking down the hill, after that one passionate outcry—stands motionless, as that statue of the sculptor's might have done, when, in answer to the artist's mad prayer, the gods endowed his handiwork with life. She has been like that statue, marble, senseless marble until now, innocent, ignorant of love; now the gods have given her their great, grand-eye, and sorrowful gift, and she stands blinded by the glory of the prospect, by the very fullness of the knowledge that has come to her.

She loves and is loved!

It is a sweet thing that, even when one's beloved is an ordinary mortal; but how glorious a thing it is when, as Kitty reflects, her heart throbbing with its new, strange ecstasy, one's beloved is a prince among men, a man towering above his fellows in rank, in beauty, fame, genius. No man, but a mighty god, he seems in her eyes, and she covers them with her warm, trembling little palms that she may the more easily recall his face, his every look.

Slowly, like one walking in some feticious delight, in a dream, she strolls back to the house; she cannot bear to look beyond at the tree beneath which they sat, lest the absence of his stalwart figure should make her weep; she cannot bear to think a whole night, perhaps some hours of the morning, must elapse before she shall see him again, and, as she goes up the stairs to her own room, she murmurs, with pleasure-giving repetition:

"To-morrow he comes; he comes to-morrow; I shall see him to-morrow!"

When she reaches her own room, she goes, womanlike, to her glass, and gazes into it with a new and sharpened interest; she puts her head first on one side, then on the other, with a



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critical, scrutinizing, doubting expression.

"He said I was beautiful," she murmurs, as if she defied the glass to deny it. "He said it, and that is enough; but I am not—not so beautiful as Ethel, now, she is beautiful, and yet—and yet," with a vivacious blush that sweeps a deep carnation over her face and neck—and yet he never cared to kiss her! He kissed me!" she adds, with a sudden flash of her eyes, a sudden thrill that makes her sink upon the soft mat at her feet, and hide her face in her hands. "He kissed me! Oh!" with a burst of rapturous delight; "how happy I am! How happy, how happy!"

"And this is love! I used to laugh at it—to say that only foolish people loved! Ah! I wonder!" vehemently; "I wonder that I cared to live without it—could not now that I know what it is! Oh, my darling! My darling, if you did not love me, I should die!"

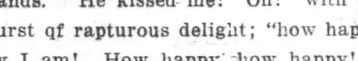
Already that great, aching happiness is too much for her untried, virgin soul, and the face that, but a minute ago was all fire and passionate warmth, is white and wan with a vague, tearless dread. The clang of the bell—that bell to which all in the Lawn bow the knee, as before a potent god, recalls her to herself and that present miserable existence which knows no Elliot!

She bathes her face, and slips on her evening dress—a girlish frock of net and lace; and as she throws the one she has taken off upon her bed, pauses to look at it wistfully. That cotton frock has acquired a new value in her eyes—has grown suddenly dear.

"Ugly old dress!" she says, with a sudden burst of girlish pathos. "Aren't you happy? Don't you feel proud? He called you pretty, you stupid, stained old thing! He called you pretty, and put his arm"—with a blush—"round your waist! No one but I shall ever touch you again!" she adds, with sudden determination; and she folds it tenderly and hides it carefully away.

It is very humorous this, and raises a smile; but, oh, how serious it was to Kitty—to Kitty, who had suddenly learned the great secret—to Kitty, who had learned to love!

(To be Continued.)



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At Reductions of at least 20 per cent

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Ladies' and Misses' Winter COATS.

At Prices that will certainly clean up those remaining in stock. For example a ladies \$23.00 Coat is now \$17.00, and if you want one of the Best, a \$45.00 one is \$35.00.

Amongst the small number of Ladies' Coats left over, we have some at \$7.00 each. These are older styles and mostly Navy's.

Dress Goods and Corduroy Velveteens at Reduced Prices:

Though Spring prices, quoted to us, show large advances, and our present stock is marked very conservatively, still for this Sale we are making specially low prices for all these goods. You will be wise to buy now for Winter or Spring requirements or both.

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Sale Prices, 90c., \$1.15, \$1.30 and upwards.

Men's and Boy's Winter OVERCOATS.

Our prices for these Goods are very much lower than obtainable elsewhere, but now we are getting into incomplete ranges in some patterns, so are making Special Reductions to clean up.

Brighten Up the Home For Xmas. Our Special Offerings Will Help You.

FLOOR COVERINGS, Splendid Patterns, 2 yards wide, in Best American makes, Only \$1.50 Yard. These are going like hot cakes, for cheaper makes on the market are selling at higher prices. These are the best qualities and their replacement cost to us would be \$1.90 yard.

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STAIR OIL CLOTHS in Seconds and Remnants, Regular 20c. to 24c. yard. Now 18c. and 20c. yard. Please understand the Stair Oil Cloths are not perfect goods, but we have been unable lately to obtain Firsts, so bought these and are selling them largely.

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Henry Blair.

London Welcomes Haig

Wilson to be

LONDON'S WELCOME TO HAIG

LONDON, Dec. 19

Field Marshal Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Armies in France and Belgium, attended by General Plumer, Rawlinson, Birdwood, Byng and Horne, who were his mainstays in aiding to defeat the German

reached London to-day, and was accorded a notable welcome. The first

bringing the Field Marshal to London was accompanied from Dover by about twenty airplanes, which also hovered over the procession which passed through the densely crowded thoroughfares from the station to Buckingham Palace, where King George welcomed the returning warriors. At the station the Generals were met by the Duke of Connaught, representing the King, the Prime Minister, the Secretary of War, members of the Army and Air Councils, representatives of the Admiralty, and many other distinguished persons. The Grenadier Guard with the regimental colors at hand were drawn up at the station to act as an escort to the Field Marshal, and amid loud cheers as the band played "See the Conquering Hero Comes," the Crown Equerries, escorted Sir Douglas to a Royal carriage waiting to take him to the palace. As the carriage emerged from the station yard, the bells of St. Martin's were rung and the crowd again broke into tumultuous cheering. Through the possession of Trafalgar Square, following before the Royal carriages containing the Field Marshal and his Generals came into view. When the came abreast the historic square a mighty cheer such as had rarely been heard there, broke out. All the Generals clearly evidenced delight at the cordiality of the reception. As the carriages passed along Cockspur Street, Pall Mall and St. James Street the enthusiasm was unbounded. At Marlborough House there was a brief halt, during which Sir Douglas saluted Dowager Queen Alexandra, who was standing outside her residence. Piccadilly and its approaches were densely packed with people, and the Field Marshal was again cheered to the echo as he drove along the famous thoroughfare. Likewise in Hyde Park, down Constitution Hill, and onward to Buckingham Palace, there were stirring scenes. Many soldiers and sailors on leave participated in the demonstrations. The carriages passed along the front of the palace to the entrance at the southern gates, where they drove up to the Grand entrance. Here Field Marshal Haig and the Generals passed into the palace and were received by King George, Queen Mary and the members of the royal family. After the reception they were entertained at luncheon in the state room. It was notable that the luncheon was an entirely informal function.

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