

**MAGIC BAKING POWDER**  
Contains no alum

**Happiness At Last!**  
OR  
**Royalty Recommended.**

CHAPTER XLII.

With trembling hands she obeyed, and the next instant he was in the room and she was in his arms. For a space she hid her face on his breast, and a convulsive sob shook her; then, with her hands clinging to his shoulders, she looked up at him.

"You will be killed! Oh, why have you done it—risked—"

His eyes met hers calmly, with even a smile, but he did not kiss her, though he held her tightly for this second or two.

"We shall be all right," he said, quietly. "Don't be afraid. Do just as I tell you."

"I am not afraid with you! I am not afraid—now!" she panted. "Is it really you, or am I dead and—"

She gazed up at him with wide eyes, and her hands touched him, pressed upon his shoulders, as if she wished to assure herself of the reality of his presence.

"You are not dead—and not going to die, please God," he said, quietly. "Now, you will do as I tell you. Come to the window. Don't look down. Stand there, with your face toward me."

She obeyed. He sprang to the bed, and tearing off the clothes, tied the sheets and counterpane together into a rope. The end of this he passed under her arms and knotted securely.

"Oh, what—what are you going to do?" she breathed.

He smiled.

"Let you down—into safety," he said. "Get up on to the window. He lifted her on to the sill. Now kneel down. Good! Hold my arm. Now shut your eyes, and do not open them until you are safe on the ground beneath."

He leaned forward from the window to tell those below what he was about to do; but there was no need. Mr. Bright had guessed at it, and he and another, a strong young fellow, were already on the ladder, waiting to receive her.

"Now let go your hands," said Gaunt in Decima's ear. "Don't open your eyes, and do not cling to anything. Just let yourself go. Can you do it? Ah, but you can! You will be braver!"

"I will do anything, everything, you tell me!" she panted. "But you—"

"Never mind me. I am all right," he said, impatiently. "Are you ready?"

She opened her eyes and looked at him—the look which a woman gives the man she loves, the man who is coolly and calmly risking his life to save hers—the look no pen, however graphic and eloquent, can hope to describe; then she closed her eyes again, and gradually loosening her hold, folded her arms across her breast.

Gaunt lowered her slowly and gently. Her slight figure swayed to and fro, but he set his foot against the wall and steadied the linen rope, and so lowered her gently until she was grasped by the eager hands upstretched for her.

A wild, enthusiastic cheer rose hoarsely from a hundred throats, the women shrieked with relief and joy, and Gaunt, as he saw her surrounded and dazed at the crowd, smiled and drew a long breath of relief and gratitude.

She was safe!

"Come down! come down!" rose the shout from every voice. "Quick! The fire!"

He put his knee on the sill and looked over. As he did so, a tongue of flame shot out from the window beneath him. The fire had reached the back of the house. Decima had been only just in time. She was safe, and the thought, the joy of it, filled Gaunt with a kind of exhilaration. He had conducted and carried through many a forlorn hope, but no success had ever given him such satisfaction as this.

"Come down!" shouted the crowd; and one man, in his excitement,

screamed out an oath.

Gaunt stepped on to the sill, and was about to lower himself, but the flames beneath him curled round the ladder, and he saw that it had caught fire. He hesitated; the crowd groaned and yelled. He saw Decima—her figure, in its white dressing-robe, lighted up by the flames—break from a group of women and spring to the foot of the ladder. She stood with her face and arms uplifted to him, and he could almost fancy that he saw her lips move. He heard the burning ladder crackle and hiss as the flames licked it. Then he did the only foolish thing he had done. He left the window and ran to the door of the room. But the fire had obtained a firm hold of the upper landing, and no one could hope to pass through it and live. He returned to the window, and, without any further hesitation, lowered himself by the ivy to the ladder, and began to descend. But the few seconds they were scarcely more than five—had permitted the flames to eat through the ladder, and his weight broke it off at the burned part.

He fell, clutching at the sides of the ladder; but his weight was too great for the strain, and he came down to the ground with a dull, heavy thud which emote every soul with horror and pity.

He was conscious for a moment, and in that space of time he knew that a white-robed figure was kneeling beside him, that its hands were holding him to its bosom; then all became a blank.

CHAPTER XLIII.

A week later Gaunt was lying on his bed in his room at the Hall, it was the room in which his father, his grandfather—and how many generations of Gaunts!—had been born and had died. It was a bright and sunny day, but the blinds were drawn, and the nurse and the doctor spoke in whispers as they stood by the bed, and looked at the scorched and maimed figure lying so still and helplessly upon it.

Gaunt opened his eyes, and looked from one to the other. He was very

thin, and felt as weak as a baby. He tried to move his arm, but with a dull kind of surprise found that he could not do it. Both arms were bound in splints and wadding; he was swathed, so to speak, in cotton and wool, and felt and looked like a mummy.

Across his chest and about his arms was a stinging, aching pain which puzzled him. For a moment he thought he was in Africa, and wounded by an assegai, and as he looked at the doctor, he said in the thin tones of extreme weakness, and yet with a smile: "What's happened? Have they beaten us?"

The doctor didn't understand; but he laid a soothing hand on the hot brow.

"Better, I hope, my lord?" he said.

Gaunt tried to nod, but his head was as heavy as lead, and he felt as if even his tongue was burned with the rest of him.

"Have I been ill? Where am I? Ah, yes!—Is she safe?"

The nurse—she was a woman of the village who had been through one of the London hospitals, and happening to be home for a holiday, had begged to be permitted to nurse him—the nurse understood.

"Yes, my lord," she said, "Miss Deane's all right. Quite right!"

Gaunt again tried to nod.

"Thank God!" he murmured to himself. "Have I been bad long?" he asked.

"It's a week since the fire," said the doctor. "You have not been quite conscious since then."

Gaunt tried to glance at his swollen and imprisoned arms.

"What is the matter with me?"

The doctor knew his man, and did not evade the question.

"One arm broken," he said, cheerfully, "and the other burned; in fact, you are scorched and burned pretty liberally."

"The fire—ah, yes, I remember!" said Gaunt. "It was a bad fire. Any—any lives lost? Miss Deane is not hurt—"

"Miss Deane is all right, thanks to you," said the doctor, with a slight catch in his voice. "No, there were no lives lost. Mr. Deane nearly came to grief. He was anxious to rescue some invention—model or other—and ran into the house after it, but the men dragged him out, and he was not burned."

Gaunt nodded.

"I'm glad. How—how did it occur?"

The doctor shrugged his shoulders.

(To be continued)

**Better a Peasant Than a Peer.**

CHAPTER I.

A TOMBOY AT SEVENTEEN.

There is a village in Merry England called Newton Regis. Newton Regis sounds very grand and imposing, but you will seek for Newton Regis in the Gazetteer in vain, and yet it is as old as Brighton, and almost as old as Liverpool. It lies snugly ensconced on one of the midland hills, sheltered from the east wind in winter, and basking in the sun in summer. It consists of, say a dozen houses, a church, a pump and a bridge. It is celebrated for nothing. Nobody of any consequence was ever born there, it is unlikely that anybody of any consequence will die there; history is dumb concerning it, for nothing of any consequence ever occurred there, and yet it is one of the most beautiful spots in England, and will remain so until some learned physician discovers that the pump water possesses mysterious curative qualities, and sends his patients down to Newton Regis to die of cholera; or some infatuated or weak-minded artist paints it and labels it, and—by making it fashionable—utterly destroys it.

In time, no doubt, that omnivorous monster, the speculative builder, will scent it out, and dab hideously new brick packing cases on its hillside, and down by its stream. Then it will be blessed—or cursed—with a town hall, a vestry, and a board of guardians. At present Newton Regis lies sweetly and placidly asleep, innocent of the fame and the misery that in common with all the other, at present, quite villages, awaits it. It is true that within a couple of miles rolls the sea, but the most sanguine of speculators would never dream of making the seaboard of Newton Regis into a fashionable watering place, for the coast is rocky and impracticable, and there is a bar which often brings even the experienced fisherman to grief. "Newton Cliff" they call the sharp and rugged bay, and mariners know it and avoid it.

At the end of the principal—and only—street, lying a little back from the road, stands one of those old-fashioned houses which seem to remain with us by way of a reminder that, although we of the present generation are leaping in luxury, our forefathers understood comfort.

It is one of those square, red-bricked, old places which artists are never tired of painting, and which are a standing rebuke to the hideous packing-cases we are now learning to dwell in. It is surrounded on all sides by a high brick wall, leaving a goodly space of velvet lawn and flower beds in front of the house, and the entrance to the grassy court is gained by an

iron gate, which is so elaborate a piece of work in metal, that the original owner or builder of the place was inspired thereby to call it "Gate House." The name was painted in gold letters on the gate itself.

It is a December afternoon, somewhat about three o'clock, and the village is at its stillest, so quiet and silent that the tum-tum on a piano in the drawing-room of Gate House floats into the street, and considerably disturbs a couple of sparrows, who are sitting shivering on the wall discussing the secrecy of worms.

Every now and then the tum-tum of the piano is emphasized by a girl's voice chanting in monotone the insipid "one, two, three—one, two, three," which is considered indispensable to the proper keeping of good time.

There is scarcely light enough to see the girl, for the drawing-room is low, and the windows of Gate House were apparently designed for some other object than that of affording light, but you can get a glimpse of a graceful figure and a well-poised head, which is at one moment a dark brown, and the next, when the freights play on it, a rich golden.

Practicing the piano is not a cheerful pastime, and I believe even the good girls whom we read of in books (but very seldom see), do not go through the five-finger exercise with any great delight. This girl—to tell the plain truth—looked very impatient and very bored, and displayed her feelings by a series of good, hearty yawns. But she stuck to her stool and the monotonous "time counting" for quite ten minutes at a stretch, until at last she banged both hands—they were very slapsly and white—upon the long-suffering keys, and jumped off the stool.

Scarcely had the yell of the tortured and long-suffering instrument died away, than the door opened slowly, and a boy's head was cautiously thrust into the room, and a boy's voice exclaimed:

"Broke anything, Jeanne?"

"Broke anything?" echoed the girl, looking around from the fire before which she had thrown herself. "Broke anything? What do you mean? And why can't you say 'broken' if I have broken, that's broken? I have broken—"

"That'll do, Jeanne!" replied the boy, coming into the room and seating himself on the table. "You don't know anything about grammar any more than I do—and why aren't you practicing? Has the long-suffering old hurdy-gurdy struck or have you, as the minstrel boy did to his harp, 'tore its chords asunder'?" and with a laugh he tossed a book, which he had brought with him, up to the ceiling, and swings his legs backwards and forwards, and within an inch of his sister's back.

"Don't bother, Hal! Is that your exercise book you have thrown away? Look at it—there's a leaf torn! What do you mean, Hal?"

"I'm sick of it, I've been breaking my head over it for the last half hour, and now I hope I've broken it back. Besides, it isn't the exercise, it's that beastly arithmetic! I wonder why they can't ask sensible questions in these diatribe books. Look here, Jeanne, and he leans over and reaches for the ill-used book, nearly tumbling on the top of the girl's head in the act. "Look here, Jeanne, this is the sum for today. It takes ten men—three weeks to build a wall six feet high and ten yards in length, how long will it take to build a wall nine feet and a half high, and forty yards long, employing fifteen men? Now, who'll do it? I guess that? And when you have guessed that—what's the use of it? I had

wall to build—but I say, Jeanne, help us, there's a dear, good girl! Have you any idea how to get at the answer?"

"Not the slightest—unless I know how strong the men were," says the girl, promptly, and with a quiet, low laugh.

The boy grins, but rather disconsolately. "By Jove, I'll tell old Bell that to-morrow, and inform him I got from you."

The girl looks around quickly, with a sudden dash of color in her cheeks. "Don't do anything of the sort, least, don't say I said so, and let me look at the book, Hal?"

(to be continued.)

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**"What has come over Annie? She always used to be so jolly."**

"SHE cannot be very well?"

"Suppose she isn't; there is no need for her being so ill-tempered."

"I think it is her nerves. And you know how irritable a person gets when her nerves play out."

"But why should she be so nervous and irritable? She has always been healthy."

"Yes, but you know, Annie is great for society, and gets invitations to all the dances. Why, she is out nearly every night some weeks, and you know as well as I do that no one can do that and be of any use next day."

"I guess that's right."

"Sure, it's right. I know, for I tried it myself when I was about Annie's age. I'm a wiser owl now."

"I didn't think you were ever nervous or irritable. I never saw you that way."

"Well, I was far worse than Annie is. Had a real nervous breakdown, in fact, and didn't do a thing for three months."

"What did you do to get better? Take a trip to Europe?"

"Well, scarcely. But I will tell you what I did do. I used Dr. Chase's Nerve Food for two months, and don't think I missed a dose after meals and at bedtime during the whole two months."

"And do you think that was what made you well?"

"There is no 'think' about it. I know it did. Why, say, I could scarcely sleep a wink at night; was tired out in the mornings, and cross as a bear. I hadn't enough energy left to sit up straight; had no appetite, and couldn't digest what little food I did take. I wonder if Annie knows about Dr. Chase's Nerve Food?"

"Let us go and tell her. For Annie was always such a nice girl, and I am sure she cannot be well."

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