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## Lord Cecil's Dilemma

—OR—

### The Picnic

—IN—

## Woodall Forest

CHAPTER XVII

Sir Charles followed Mr. Lupus in a dazed, mechanical sort of way. Jabez Caddick gone!

He could scarcely realize it. All else was exactly the same, even to a scratch on one of the frosted window panes. He had been struck by its absurd likeness to a monkey's face five years ago.

He sat down, and Mr. Lupus took the chair wherein he first saw Jabez Caddick.

"Where shall I be able to find Mr. Caddick?" he asked. "Has he retired from business?"

"Yes, Sir Charles, a long time ago—almost five years ago. I didn't want to shock you, but the fact is, sir, your father-in-law is dead!"

Hastings started. He was astonished, and had never anticipated this. "You surprise me," he said.

"I wrote full particulars to you, but the letter came back, and I judged that you had gone abroad."

"Ha! I remember that letter. I thought that it was from him, and wished to hold no communication



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with him. You know all the circumstances?"

Mr. Lupus nodded. "Perhaps you can tell me what has become of her?"

"Your wife?" A spasm of pain contracted the young man's features. A week or two since he could have heard the words "your wife," with the utmost indifference; now their significance was horrible.

"Is it possible that you have not heard from her, or of her in any way, Sir Charles?" continued Mr. Lupus.

"Not one word since the day I married her. I would give anything to get rid of the bonds that bind me to that woman. If you know anything, Lupus, I will pay you well. I am my own master now; I have put my affairs on a business footing, and can find a reasonable amount of money for the purpose of setting this marriage aside, if such a thing is possible without publicity. It was no marriage in the sight of Heaven. I never spoke to the girl. I never even looked at her."

"I know—I know." A sudden light had come into the eyes of Ebenezer Lupus, and he grinned. The distortion of his features could not be called a laugh.

"I think that I am your man," he said, with a chuckle. "If you have money to work with, I have very little capital, as Jabez Caddick merely left the bare business connection. I should require to draw pretty liberally in advance."

"Upon what grounds do you base your hopes?" was the eager question.

"It is a complicated story," Lupus replied, "and the girl you married was not his daughter at all. He never had any children. Her correct name was Lucy Rankin, and she was left at the age of fifteen heiress to a vast sum of money. Something like a hundred and fifty thousand pounds. She lived with an aunt, and the property was in the hands of two trustees until Miss Rankin was twenty-one years old. These trustees were Jabez Caddick, and the junior partner in Spliers' Bank—Alfred Spliers. As Miss Rankin approached womanhood, both trustees conceived the idea of marrying her for the fortune she was possessed of."

"I thought that Caddick was already married," interrupted Sir Charles.

"Yes, but his wife died within a year of her marriage."

"Pray, go on! Oh, if there is hope for me I shall be the happiest of men."

"It was soon apparent to Caddick that Miss Rankin favored Spliers, and he set his artful brain to work to circumvent his rival, and obtain at least a portion of her money, for gold was his god."

"At the time she married you she

was only nineteen, and had to obtain the consent of both trustees in writing, or forfeit her entire fortune to a pack of greedy relatives. Pretending that his suit was hopeless, Spliers apparently lost all interest in his ward, and when she made a formal demand upon both trustees to be made mistress of her fortune, on the plea that she and her aunt wished to go abroad, Caddick absolutely refused unless she consented to marry one of his needy clients, and transferred to himself some fifty thousand pounds. By this move he calculated to shut out his rival entirely, and, besides having a sweet revenge, hoped to pocket a neat sum after foregoing his claim against your mother. He was outwitted at every point by Spliers. The transfer was antedated, and, therefore, valueless, for the ward's signature was not in effect until after she entered into possession of her fortune. This she did the day after her marriage. In the meanwhile young Spliers had sold his interest in the banking business, and immediately assisted your wife to realize her property. Within one week after her marriage the two went away together, and when Caddick discovered how he had been duped, and at what a financial loss, he moped for two days, and finally died in this very chair!"

Sir Charles listened to this story with breathless eagerness. It was an extraordinary story of plot and counterplot, and he was interested to learn in what position he stood now.

"Caddick's money went to some hospital," continued Lupus and he left the business to me. If I can number you among my clients, Sir Charles, I shall always endeavor to serve you well, and it may be that I am in a better position to unravel the tangle into which you were forced than any other man living."

"I believe you—I believe you," the young baronet responded. "Now tell my position exactly. Lupus, you cannot guess what this means to me?"

"I think I can, Sir Charles. It comes to every man at some time in his life. You have met the woman you want to marry!"

"Sir Charles flushed redly. He wondered if it were possible for men like Ebenezer Lupus to understand the meaning of love."

After a few moments of consideration, the lawyer went on:

"There is but one way out of this trouble if your wife is still living, and that is divorce."

"That means a horrible story in all the papers!"

"I do not think so; there can be no defense. The woman's guilt is so certain. She went away with Spliers and neither has since been heard of, to my knowledge."

"What became of the aunt?"

"She went with them, I suppose," replied Lupus. "Of course, the proceedings will obtain a certain amount of publicity. If there should be any defense, it will be too weak to hold water, but we must be prepared for all emergencies. In the first place, I suggest that we employ an astute detective to trace the movements of Spliers and your wife. The situation will have to be served either personally or by substituted service, with the consent of a judge."

"Yes, yes! Trace them, first. She may be dead. I devoutly hope that she is."

(To be continued.)

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**Corns?**

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## EVENING MEDITATIONS.

Often in the quiet gloaming by my cottage door I sit, from my tangled whiskers combing chinchebugs, sandbars, dust and grit. And I see the people chasing to some silly mania show; all diversion-mad they're racing, on their errands vain they go. Where the garish lights are burning in a long parade they tramp; no one's reading, no one's learning, banished is the evening lamp. In my youth I read the pages writ by men of mighty domes, for there were no movie stages calling children from their homes. When the evening chores were finished, I sat in our humble cot, and with pleasure undiminished read. Bill Shakespeare, Pope and Scott. And my head is always ringing, with the echo of their lyrics. And I soothe myself with verses as beneath my vine I rest, while the boys, in speedster harness, rush to see some Chap-linist. Times have changed, and oft I wonder if with change we risk or sink, with the evening lamp gone under, and the poets on the blink. In their cars of tin and iron folks are going to the show; do one spend a night with Byron, as I used to long ago.

WALT MASON.

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California Or  
Grapefruit  
Cucumbers  
Sweet melon  
New Lemons

MACACON  
BERR  
EGC

To  
NEW ORLEANS

C

Duck

## Prime Condensed

Idiotic  
Squires  
Deadlock  
conditional

THE RAILWAY

The railroad... second week of the... parent, inclination... avenue of peace... Railroad Labor Board... on the position that... men could only receive... conciliatory conference... to work and then... negotiations for a settlement... head of the Shop... open to approval... person authorized... element, but declines... move, saying the... finance of the... Labor Board and... railroad remains... attitude of considering... against the road.

EDUCATION

"Idiotic" was... applied to the... of Canada... postage rate to... Richard Squires, ... and, in an interview... spent two days in... on Saturday night... he will sail for... conference with... who are considered... of approximately... are in development... Valley, Nfld. In... orts to develop... with Newfoundland... considered the de... not only ins... lighted, but abso... department of... said Sir Richard... considerable sum in... missioner to N... one of conviction

MUTT AND