

Stevenson, the doctor's aunt, had taken the blonde upon her list of special favorites, and it was astonishing how often the gay beauty found an excuse to visit her elderly friend.

It troubled him, too, that his aunt had so evidently set her heart upon a match between himself and Maude, for he dearly loved her, and was loth to cross any of her wishes. So, not wishing to make any violent rupture, cunning Charley, one evening in the early spring, said—

"Auntie, do you remember once wishing you could replace your old companion, Miss Bruce?"

"Yes, but I never can. And when you are married, Charley, your wife will share our home."

"Very true. In the meantime, auntie, I have a patient who has been very ill with lung fever, and whose sole support is her needle. She is not strong enough yet to follow her trade of dressmaking, and I was thinking, if my auntie could find a place for her and make her useful, it would be a charity, and might prove a comfort here, also."

"Who is she, Charley?"

"Miss Daisy Graham."

"Graham! What Graham?"

"Her father was Josiah, and I believe they were wealthy at one time."

"H'm! Yes. It seems to me you are wonderfully interested, Dr. Charley. Is Miss Daisy pretty?"

"Lovely; and so gentle and good."

Then Charley told of his New Year's call, of the subsequent visits, of his pleading for and obtaining permission to make social visits after professional ones were no longer needed, and how each one deepened his interest in the fair sweet girl.

Two weeks later, Miss Maude Middleton, being about to prepare a wardrobe for the summer campaign, bethought her of the money she owed Daisy Graham, resolved to pay it and so pave the way for a new order. But Miss Graham was not at home.

"Gone with her mother to visit some friends," her landlady told Miss Middleton, who re-entered her phaeton in no amiable frame of mind.

"She had such exquisite taste, and fitted me to perfection, and worked for a mere nothing," thought that ill-used young lady as she drove in the direction of Mrs. Stevenson's. "I'll ask that old maid who makes her dresses, though I suppose they cost a small fortune."

Miss Stevenson was at home, the servant informed Maude, and that young lady being a privileged visitor, went at once to the sitting-room. At the door she paused, seeing a lady seated near the window, and in a low chair at Miss Stevenson's feet, Daisy Graham.

"Oh! Miss Graham," she said, "I have just been to your house to see if you could make me some summer dresses, and to pay you a trifle I owe you."

"Miss Graham," said Miss Stevenson dryly, "has given up dressmaking for the present; but the trifle will be quite convenient towards providing her *trousseau*. You will be the first to hear of the engagement, Maude, but you may say on my authority, that we are to have a wedding in the fall, when Daisy will become the wife of my nephew, Charley."

Very sweetly Miss Middleton made her congratulatory speech, and paid her bill, but in her phaeton the young lady shed piteous tears in the shadow of her veil, muttering—

"So that was the reason Charley Stevenson stayed away from my New Year's reception, and has been so offish over since!"

And reader, that was exactly the reason.

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