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Sweet Eva!

CHAPTER IV. (Continued.)

There was someone else besides Philip Winterdick who had found it impossible to settle down to anything on the evening following the tennis party; when everybody had gone, Eva Dennison wandered restlessly about the garden in the dusk till one of her brothers found her and demanded to know what she had got the hump about. Whatever people like Kitty Arlington and young Winterdick thought of Ralph Dennison's daughter, her own brothers adored her. She was the eldest of the family, and in the words in which the boys invariably expressed their admiration for her, she was a real sport. On more occasions than they could remember she had stood between them and their father's anger; and over again in the old days, before wealth knocked at their door, Eva had looked after them like a mother, sewing on odd buttons and scraping pennies together for some small treat, working early and late to make life more bearable, and sacrificing herself in a thousand small ways. Mrs. Dennison was a useless, fretful sort of person, who from the moment the necessity for economy ceased had her fingers manacled and firmly refused to use them again for anything more strenuous than fancy work. She imagined that by so doing she was proving herself a suitable wife for a rich man; she spent most of her time now reclining on a couch in her too elaborate drawing-room, or taking short drives in the expensive car which was the terror of her soul. She loathed motoring; she looked for accidents at every corner, but as the Winterdicks and everyone else who was anyone had a car and used it, she hid her fear and followed their example. Only the chauffeur, perhaps, knew what a penalty the daily run was to his mistress or recognized the note of real agony in her voice as she besought him in a whisper to "Drive carefully, John."

He had long since cherished a scheme in his ambitious mind by which his daughter was to marry Philip Winterdick, but that an opportunity would ever arise to make the way easy for him had never once entered into his calculations. He had never cared particularly for Eva. He had wished all his family to be sons, but since they had left the suburban town where he had laboriously built up the foundations of his wealth, and come to live in Apsley, Eva had grown in importance. He began to realize that she was pretty. He was proud that the Arlington had taken her up. He never minded what she gave her to spend on clothes. "Buy what the other girls buy," he told her. "Buy clothes like those Miss Arlington wears, and you'll look as well as she does. Dash it all! Do you think I'm going to have my girl put out by people like them?" Eva flushed. She hated this ostentation and show. She was naturally a simple, unaffected girl. She knew quite well what Apsley and his leading people thought of her and her family, and she knew that the Winterdicks, courteous as they always were when they met, in their hearts looked down upon them. That knowledge hurt intolerably. She envied Kitty Arlington bitterly because of the long line of ancestors she had to back her up. Rogues and vagabonds they may have been. That did not matter. They were at least ancestors and blue-blooded, and she knew that to Philip and his parents they mattered far more than all her own wealth. Eva had cared for Philip Winterdick from the first moment of their meeting. For her he was the one man in the world. Such things do happen sometimes in spite of cynics. "Not that he would ever look at me, I know," she said to herself again and again. But this afternoon, when he had so carelessly thrown her over in order to be with Kitty Arlington, she had felt as if she could bear it no longer, and when her brother came upon her wandering about the garden later in the evening there were very obvious signs of tears on her face. He slipped an arm about her waist with a sort of embarrassment. "What's up?" he demanded. "What have you got the hump about, Bonnie?" Bonnie was the boys' nickname for her. Nobody knew quite how it had originated or why, but they never called her by any other name. She tried to laugh. "I haven't got the hump—of course I haven't. I'm tired, that's all." "Well, then, you'd better come indoors," he advised. "Peter's been asking for you all the evening. I say," his voice changed to a sort of perplexity—"have you noticed how frightfully bucked with himself the pater's been looking lately?" Eva shook her head.

"No. Has he? Perhaps he's made some more money." There was a touch of bitterness in her voice. What was the use of money? It would not buy the one thing in all the world that she wanted. They turned back towards the house. "How do you think things went off this afternoon, Peter?" she asked, with an attempt at her old cheerfulness. "I played a rotten game, I know—did you notice?" He shook his head. "You can't always be on top of your form," he said, rather absently. "I say—Kitty Arlington's a stunner, isn't she?" His sister's heart contracted a little; Peter was her favourite brother, and the whole-hearted enthusiasm in his voice hurt her somehow. "She's very pretty," she said, with an effort. She was thinking of the expression of Philip Winterdick's eyes as he came back across the lawn with Kitty at his side. "She's engaged to Mr. Winterdick, isn't she?" she asked, carelessly. Peter shrugged his shoulders. "Couldn't say, I'm sure," he said, laconically. "She doesn't wear a ring if she is." There was a little pause. "Does she?" he asked, a trifle anxiously. Eva looked up quickly; something in his voice touched her with a sort of apprehension. Surely Peter . . . but Peter was such a boy—only just turned two-and-twenty; she tried to shake the thought aside. "Well, she soon will, if she doesn't now," she said decidedly. "It's one of those things that are . . . well—in the air, you know."

Peter did not answer; they had reached the house, and he left her at the door. Eva went on to her father's room; the "study," he called it, though he never did anything more arduous in its book-lined precincts than read the Financial Times. She put her head round the half-closed door. "Do you want me, father?" Mr. Dennison was standing back to the mantelpiece; a fat cigar between his lips, and a great expanse of white waistcoat showing beneath his dinner jacket. "Come in, my dear—come in," he said affably. "I was wondering where you were. Been in the garden?" "Yes," she was puzzled by his manner; she looked at him curiously. Mr. Dennison hummed and hawed; he was a trifle afraid of his daughter; he cleared his throat vigorously. "I've been suggesting to your mother," he said at last, "that we ought to ask the Winterdicks to dinner." Eva flushed crimson. "Ask them to dinner?" she echoed. "Why, father, they've never asked us. They've never even properly called—and it was their place to call." He frowned. "That's an absurd idea that's gone out of fashion," he said emphatically. "People don't call as they used to—I know it for a fact! Besides . . . I like the Winterdicks." She laughed ruefully. "I'm afraid they don't like us," she said. "And besides—we can't do it, father—I don't believe they'd come if we did." "Tut, tut!" he was getting annoyed now. "Allow me to be the best judge of that, my dear. Old Winterdick was here yesterday morning, and he made himself most agreeable—in fact, he . . . well, he gave me to understand that he hoped we should all be nice and jolly together—neighbourly, in fact, you know . . ." He stopped; he looked anxiously at his daughter. "I thought you liked young Winterdick," he broke out with sudden exasperation. Eva clenched her hands in her lap to hide their sudden trembling. "Like him! When we've only met half-

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(Sgd.) (Mrs.) W. J. BEGLEY.

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dozen times," she said as carelessly as she could. "Half-a-dozen times!" he echoed scornfully. "Why, I proposed to your mother the second time I ever saw her. Hasn't she ever told you? It was Whit Monday, and I . . ." He stopped and cleared his throat to hide his embarrassment. The memory of that Whit Monday did not however seem to fit in to the present elaborate picture. "Anyway, I mean to ask them," he hurried on. "So you'd better talk to your mother about it." He turned away as if to intimate that the discussion was at an end, and Eva left him. Her cheeks were hot and flushed. How on earth could they do this thing? She could not understand her father at all. Though she was as fond of him as he would allow her to be, she knew that compared with Philip's father he was common and uneducated; she could well imagine what it would mean if this invitation were sent. "They would refuse—of course, they would," she told herself. (To be continued)

PAYING UP.
The first day of the month arrives, as scheduled by the almanac, and then, to save the merchants' lives, I toddle up the street and back. Escorted by the village band, I climb up Main street, asphalt hills, and with my checkbook in my hand I pay up all my monthly bills. It's good to see the grocer's face when I arrive, with checks on tap; it's good to see the glad smiles chase themselves around his haggard map. And from the butcher's furrowed brow the shades of trouble flee away, when I would pay him for the cow I bought in fragments, day by day. The weary baker seems quite gay, and heaves no more his heart-sick sighs, when I invade his mart and say, "I'll pay you for those concrete pies." Oh, many books have told us how to make the world a brighter place, to speed the optimistic plow, and light up every mourning face. And doubtless all such schemes are fine, and Pollyanna cut much grass; but I contend this scheme of mine will do it all the other schemes surpass. I might invade the merchant's store and say a lot of sunny things, and he would rate me as a bore, and throw a score of bricks and things. His heart is sick with grievous woes, his trade is slack, he's needing cash; and sunshine words and smiles like those appear to him as tawdry trash. But when I come and say, "By heck! Produce your bill—I'll pay it now," he promptly falls upon my neck, and plants a kiss upon my brow.

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dec27,1921

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There was no question of discussions of the guarantee given by the Treaty, Premier Briand and Chamberlain. Entente between France and Belgium is as strong and as solid as ever.

WILL SATIS


Lloyd George, on attending the meeting of the Council, said with the ardour which he is sure we shall regard as seeking.

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