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The Heir of Rosedene

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CHAPTER XVII

"IF I COULD FIND OUT!"

"Which she undoubtedly is," remarked Viscount Alfred, a young cornet in the Blues, who had fallen dead over heels in love with Edna at first sight.

"Which she undoubtedly is," echoed Bromley, "but because she is utterly unimpressible—"

"By your royal highness!" laughed some one.

"By all of us," retorted Bromley, with calm nonchalance. "Is there one of you who has produced any effect?" Truth as well as modesty caused the inevitable silence. "No, she is gentleness and amiability herself; there is not an ounce of vanity in her composition, and she will listen to any of us with the sweetest consideration—even to you, Alfred, my lamb, for I saw you talking to her for three-quarters of an hour at the suffrage the other evening."

The young viscount blushed as hotly and prettily as any of his sisters could have done.

"But just as you think you have interested her, and are making a step forward; just as you begin to feel how bewitching she is, there comes over her a gentle abstraction, a dreamy absence and unconsciousness of your humble existence—not to say proximity, that makes you cold with despair."

"That's it, beautifully described, my dear sir!" assented a fox-hunting squire, who had resisted innumerable creases and fallen at Edna's feet without a struggle. "And when you stop and wait patiently for her return to mundane affairs, she comes down from heaven or wherever she has been, and smiling sweetly says: 'I beg your pardon! I was thinking of something else!'"

"Something else? Somebody else?" groaned another admirer.

"No," said Bromley; "not somebody else. I don't think that. She hasn't that look, and she would guard against that dreamy way of hers if it were so."

"Hem!" mused the young squire. "You may be wrong there. Here comes some one who ought to know, if all accounts are true," he added, as Lord Mersey came wandering into the room.

"What are you fellows talking about?" he asked.

"About the one topic—the heiress," replied the squire.

Mersey turned to choose a pipe from the rack before he spoke.

"Do you mean Miss Weston?" he asked. "Scarcely a suitable topic for discussion in a smoking room."

And there was something in his straightforward gaze over his pipe, as he lit it, that silenced any retort, though the young squire whispered behind his back to Bromley:



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charming, so irresistible, take care that it does not spring from some secret which you, with all your fine feelings, would scarcely think fitting for the future Countess of Portfield to hold."

Then her sister—much younger than herself, and a great romp, who looked upon her sister Grace with something like contempt, because she took no interest in prize bulls and the improvement of stock, subjects Kate would discuss with her father, Sir George, for hours. Kate was short, thickset and boyish, the image of her father, as they all said—came in, whistling like a boy, stopping to exclaim, in a voice, clear and ringing as a boy's also: "What, Grace! wasting all this beautiful afternoon over that monstrosity in 'catgut! Why don't you come out? I've been—"

"My dear Kate, spare me the details, I beg!" interrupted "my Lady Grace," as Kate called her; "I can guess where you have been—the stables, the pig sty, the kennels. Look at your boots!"

"Rather dirty, aren't they? You should see father's!—but then they're topboots, and don't matter. I wish mamma would let me wear topboots."

"A stable boy's waistcoat and a huntman's cap. Certainly!" said Grace, sweeping the strings of her harp.

"How shocked you would all be!—all except Mersey."

"Would you oblige me, my dear Kate, by giving gentlemen their title when you speak of them?"

"The Right Honorable Viscount Mersey!" resumed Kate, with due pomposity; "he's the best of the lot, for all his bookwormish propensities. He never scolds and worries and teases me as you do, and I believe he likes me."

"He is interested in any phenomenon, monstrous or otherwise," calmly retorted Grace.

"Thank you, my Lady Grace!" retorted Kate, coloring—she had her father's temper, short and fiery—"don't you wish you were a monstrosity? He doesn't seem to take much interest in you now."

Grace paled, and her eyes shot fire as she bent down to tighten a string; but her voice was quite calm as she said:

"Did he ever do so? Kate, I think I will take your advice, so emphatically if not delicately given, and go out. Would you mind ordering the mare? I am sure you are going to the stables!" and with this parting thrust my Lady Grace rose and sailed from the room.

Kate looked after her ere she in turn went to do as she was bid, for it was noticeable that sharp as Kate was with her tongue and rough in her manner, she was never reluctant to run on Grace's errands or do her bidding. Kate looked after her and whistled.

"Poor Grace! I wonder if she does care for him? What fools girls are to fall in love! I declare I never will!"

Grace's mare came round—a beautiful creature, almost black, and so shapely as a painted horse of Wou-vern's—and Grace got on his back and started for a gallop, and for a time the green-eyed monster that even music would not exorcise, was cast off in the clear, bracing air of the spring afternoon. Grace would have been all the better for that ride, but as fate would have it, after reaching Fox Gorse cover she turned to go home by the More Park Road.

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and coming into it by a bridle path through the wood, came full upon an elegant little phaeton, drawn by a pair of cream ponies, and driven by Edna. A tiny groom sat behind, with his arms sternly folded and his baby face fixed in stolid impassiveness after the manner of his kind; but it was not by the phaeton, or the ponies, or the groom that Grace's earnest gaze was drawn, but to the beautiful girl who held the reins and whip, and drove as if she were driving in her dream, and her face set with a wistful sadness. Grace was just going to ride up to the phaeton, which was walking up the hill, when a man's figure came through the wood opposite her, and held up his hand to stop the phaeton, and taking off his hat walked across to it.

It was Lord Mersey, and Grace saw that as he approached Edna's face was worth more than all Grace's imperial beauty.

She saw Lord Mersey look at his hands, as if they were too dirty to touch the daintily gloved one of the young charioteer, and then wipe them on his trousers, just as a waterman might do, before he took the little, primrose-colored pair. He had got something to show her, evidently, for he produced something from one of the front pockets of his loose coat, and Edna's head and his went very close together over the something; and then Grace heard Lord Mersey's deep voice explaining or recounting how he had found it, Edna listening all the while with interested attention. Then suddenly there came the old look of abstraction and absence, and Lord Mersey, perhaps, noticing it himself, stepped aside, said good-by, raised his hat, and the phaeton walked on.

Grace watched them part, as she had watched them meet, pale and anxious, then she turned her horse's head toward the road again, and, clenching her whip, murmured: "She does not care for him—I know it, I feel it!—and yet she will win him, if I know a man's nature at all. That indifference of hers would plique him into a declaration. She has bewitched him! He will grow still more infatuated, propose to her, marry her, and be miserable—yes, for I know him. It will happen, as sure as fate, unless something prevents it! Surely," she mused, her color coming and going—"surely it were no sin to prevent him making himself miserable for life—to save his happiness? Any means to such an end would be pardonable. What can I do? If I could find out the cause for that manner of hers—if I could but find out something about her!"

Patience, Grace Bromley, and chance—or shall we say fate?—may throw that knowledge in your way.

(To be Continued.)

Household Notes.

Seasoning is the making of a dish. Tomatoes go well with any kind of fish.

Potatoes scalloped with peppers are a novelty.

Never mix salad with dressing till ready to serve it.

Prevent a scum on cocoa by adding the sugar last.

Let raisins satisfy the sweettooth of your child.

Invalids find a straw an easy way to take a beverage.

Junket flavored with coffee makes an agreeable change.

A cushion to kneel on while scrubbing saves the knees.

Beef fat is the best for greasing a stove before polishing.

Fifteen minutes' boiling is enough to sterilize the clothes.

Oysters and celery can be combined in many a tasty dish.

A well-baked cake gives a simple meal the necessary richness.

Simplicity should be the first consideration in the luncheon meal.

All sour milk should be made into cottage cheese or used in cooking.

Be sure that the children are getting the proper lunches at school. If pork is baked with beans, serve a pickle or sour sauce with them. Tunny fish makes an excellent appetizer served in French dressing. Every child should have one quart of milk a day until it is 2 years old. A cookie-cutter can be used in making attractive party sandwiches. A pinch of salt in the coffee lessens the necessity for so much sugar. Beans baked with tiny sausages are a good luncheon dish on a cold day. Poor laundry work shortens the life of clothing more than anything else. If mayonnaise is covered closely in a jar it will keep in a cool place a week. With dry, white fishes serve a rich butter sauce, with fat fish, plain lemon. Gustards can be sweetened with corn syrup if it is desirable to save sugar.

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WORKING

Lord George's received Callers day---Jubilee

POSTPONES VISIT. LONDON, Feb. 20. Lord George has postponed his visit to Paris owing to the business here especially the labor unrest. He is expected to attend the labor conference which the government has called for February 27th, hence it is believed he will start for Paris until after that date.

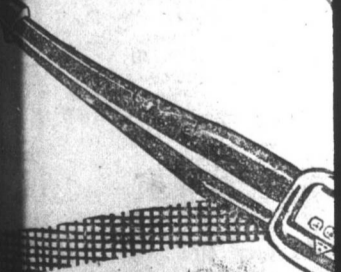
TO PREVENT STRIKE. LONDON, Feb. 20. Lord George, it is understood, has made proposals to the Trades Union Federation at a conference in London with a view to preventing a strike which would likely to be in the railway men and transporters as well as the miners. The leader of the movement, the executive committee, immediately considered the proposals, but any recommendation which the committee might make will have to be submitted to a full meeting of the Miners' Federation. If the executive committee should decide to convene a conference the strike planned for March 15, which the ballots of the miners are said to favor by a large majority, will be at least delayed.

CANADIAN LEGISLATION.

OTTAWA, Feb. 20. The House opened today. The day's business consisted of the reading of the throne speech, the debate on the bill to amend the Criminal Code, and the debate on the bill to amend the Criminal Code. The House adjourned at 10 o'clock.

PENETRATED LUNGS.

PARIS, Feb. 20. A bullet which wounded Premier Clemenceau penetrated his lungs, it is stated by the official statement issued this afternoon to-day. The statement reads: "The examination of the bullet, which occurred at one o'clock yesterday, demonstrated that the bullet penetrated the lungs. An examination disclosed the penetration of the bullet. The condition is satisfactory, temperature 38.4, pulse 72, the nourishment is normal. Signed: Gosset, Laubry, Combe." After the examination had been completed Premier Clemenceau walked over to the garden to take a breath of fresh air. The morning was a clear one, the first real sunshine since the Premier seemed vigorous when he spat a little blood. The statement made in the official bulletin caused some anxiety in the home, and the news that his condition was more serious than reported spread quickly through the city, causing widespread excitement.



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