

LOVE THE LEVeller

ROMANCE OF A MACHINE SHOP.

She threaded her way daintily through the great shop with its bewildering whirr of machinery and its roaring fires—its flying sparks and dirt and dust and smoke.

Now and again she stopped to watch some great machine perform its almost human work. The men, with their splendid muscles and perfect skill interested her immensely. But her companion, who distinctly bored. The grime and sweat and dirt offended his aristocratic senses and the noise jarred upon his ears.

"What you can find interesting in this pandemonium I cannot imagine," he expostulated. "It is bad enough for those who have to be here and do the work, but to deliberately seek it when the sun is shining outside, the roads are hard and a motor car is waiting, is beyond me."

"Oh, Philip, can't you feel the thrill of seeing things done by real people?" she replied. "Just look at that man at the forge! See the great muscles stand out as he lifts the hammer. And see how skillfully he shapes the iron! The strength of a giant, the delicate touch of a woman—it is grand!"

"Well, I'm blessed if I can see it that way," rejoined the man. "Far from seeming romantic, it looks to me as though the fellow might, as well be in prison as he is compelled to spend his time doing that kind of work. Of course, I suppose they are used to this sort of labor—and somebody has to do it—but I can't say I care to see them at it—anyway, on a fine day with fresh air and a lively spin awaiting me."

Just the shadow of impatience crossed the girl's face at this speech, but she laughed merrily and continued her way through the shop.

It was Ida's first visit to the great works of which her father was the owner. She had been reared in the exclusive atmosphere of wealth, and her vision had not reached much beyond her father's palatial mansion, the theatres, the other paternal mansions in "our set," and the Continental tour.

Of course, she knew about the great mills, but heretofore to her they had been simply acres of gloomy, smoking prisons, from which there was wrested the money that bought all the good things.

On this pleasant day in the early autumn, wearied with the conventional round of pleasures and pastimes with which she was surfeited, and somewhat aroused by a novel she had been reading, which dealt with the world of workers, she had determined to see the inside of those great smoky shops and find just what was going on there and in the manner of men who lived among them.

Her father had laughed at her whim, and as he had not time that day to go with her, Philip Hammond acted as her escort. Philip was her constant companion—her destined husband—the son of Mr. Norton's life-long friend, a successful banker.

It was but a moment after the conversation recorded between Miss Norton and Mr. Hammond that an accident occurred.

A man directly ahead of the visitors carrying a heavy load on his shoulders, made a misstep, fell against a great leather belt, and was carried off his feet and was carried upward with the belt. As he realized his danger he gave a fearful shriek and his eyes met those of Miss Norton. The mortal terror of them burnt into her very soul and she shrieked.

"Philip, Philip, save him! Oh, save him!"

She saw the wheel to which the belt was dragging him and knew that he must be crushed.

Philip saw the fearful danger, but stood as one paralyzed.

He could have reached the man from where he was, but stood trembling with white face and horror-stricken eyes.

The attention of the entire shop had been attracted by the shrieks, and a score of men were running toward the scene.

"Pull that lever, you there with the white cap! The black one! Quick! Throw off the belt! Come in clear, commanding tones from behind. But Hammond did not stir. He threw up one hand to shut out the sight of the man being crushed.

In the meantime past the two visitors sprang the man who had shouted.

It was the blacksmith from the forge.

The man on the belt was right in the clutch of the wheel.

It seemed to Ida that she must surely faint.

At that instant the blacksmith made a lunge at the revolving wheel, caught two of the iron spokes and braced his stalwart legs.

It seemed as though he would be thrown against the machine beyond—but no, the wheel stopped with a jerk.

The muscles of the blacksmith's arms and chest stood out like whipcords.

"Quick boys, quick!" he cried; "I can't stand this long."

He had no need to urge. Already two workmen had hoisted a third to their shoulders, and he pulled the victim from the wheel, with one arm badly crushed, but alive.

Then the blacksmith led the wheel and the machinery started to whirl and buzz. The men crowded about him, uttering congratulations.

"Well, I'm best, Joe. You saved Mike from being made into mince-meat that time. I didn't think it could be done. By Jove, Joe, I'd like to have your muscle."

These and similar compliments were fired at him as he turned with a broad grin to the forge.

Directly in his way stood a beautiful girl with blanched face, her

sturdily told his employer that he had been accepted by Ida and they were going to marry with or without parental consent.

Mr. Norton summoned his daughter and she corroborated the statement of her plebeian lover.

Then Mr. Norton told them that the girl had not a penny in her own right, and if she married Madern she never would have.

To which Madern replied that that pleased him exactly.

They were married. Madern left the employ of the Norton works and found another position.

The Nortons were unrelenting until some three years later, Mrs. Norton being dead and a fine baby boy having been born in a certain rose-covered cottage in the suburbs, Mr. Norton softened.

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Both Good Fellows

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A prospector, floating down from Dawson, who had just shot a rapid with a canoe, waved his hand and my companion waved back. The man in the boat held a brown bag filled with dust—his harvest of the yellow corn of the Klondike.

The old miner pulled his white beard to one side and spat far out into the stream, staining the river as he had stained the lower fringe of his mustache, and remarked that Dawson would never be taken by a miner for a mining camp.

It was all very well, he said, to talk of law and order, and it looked well in the outside papers, but if a Forty-niner or a Fifty-niner came to the Klondike, as he had come, to breathe the free air, to breathe some atmosphere of Early Days, that man would go back to the camp of his boyhood, with its electric lights, trolley cars and painted houses, deeply disappointed.

He told her of their workmen's club and the discussions they had. "You should attend one of our open meetings," it would interest you," he said.

"I will," she replied, and she did, and was still more astounded to hear him in debate where he stood like a lion to fight for his opinions, using always the most forcible language and displaying the widest reading and information.

She interjected to call and he did once or twice. As he was about to take his departure on the second occasion he said:

"I think this is the last time, Miss Norton, that I will see you, and I want to tell you how thoroughly I appreciate your kindness and how much I have enjoyed the evenings I have spent here."

"The last time!" she repeated, the blood rushing to her face. "What do you mean? You are not going away?"

"No, but it is better that I should not see you. We belong to different worlds. They do not mix. The very keenness of the pleasure I feel in coming here warns me that I had better not."

"There is only one world for kindred spirits," she said impulsively. "Do you mean that? Do you know what you are saying?" he demanded, coming close to her.

She stood with downcast eyes. Then, straightening her broad shoulders and throwing back her head, he said: "Miss Norton, I am a plain, blunt man of the people and not versed in the ways of society. I have discovered that you love me, and I know it would be presumptuous to propose for your hand. I do not quite understand what you mean by your last remark. If you mean that you consider that we are on a social equality, I want to say that I love you with a love as deep and as honest as man ever had for a woman. I can offer you nothing but that which my arms may earn, and that is not what you have been accustomed to. Still, if it should so happen that your exceeding kindness to me means that you love me, all that is nothing."

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