

FOR LOVE AND BIRTHRIGHT

—OR—

PLOT VS. PRINCIPLE.

The bell rang just then, and there was no time for anything further, for Mr. Gordon then came forward to take his seat with Ruby.

He shook hands cordially with Walter, saying: "I suppose you will soon return?" "Yes, by the end of another week," the young man replied.

"I hope we shall see more of you then," continued the elder gentleman, with a shy glance at his sister, whose heightened color and drooping eyes he had not failed to observe.

"Thank you, sir," said Walter. "We are all fond of young company," Mr. Gordon pursued, "and I, for one, shall be glad to become better acquainted with you. Ruby, can't you second my invitation?"

Ruby started. She had scarcely heard what her brother was saying. Her thoughts had gone back to yesterday—to her peril, her rescue, to how, for a few brief moments, she had been clasped close to Walter's terror-stricken heart, and he had called her his "darling," and she had felt that was all the world to her.

But she looked up as her brother put this question to her, and met Walter's earnest eyes reading her face wistfully.

"Certainly," she said, trying to throw off the embarrassment of the moment, "do come to see us, Mr. Richardson, when you come back to Philadelphia; my brother is, as he says, very fond of your company."

Robert Gordon laughed. She had spoken very demurely, but he felt sure that she was laboring under an unusual restraint.

"I think I have proved that beyond a doubt, by allowing this young lady to drag me wherever her sweet will has prompted this summer," he said, softly pinching the rosy cheek next him.

"But," he added, "the train is ready to start, and I must not detain you. Good morning; we shall look for you some evening shortly."

Walter bowed a smiling acceptance of this invitation, lifted his hat, with one last lingering glance at Ruby, and hastened from the car with a very happy heart, and yet feeling, as he watched the train disappear around a bend in the road, as if half the sunshine had been blotted from the day.

CHAPTER XVI.

A Call and Its Result.

Walter's second week soon slipped away, and he returned to his business with a heart full of courage and resolution.

He had served two years under Mr. Conant, and had done excellent work, so that gentleman told him—work which, though it might have seemed more like drudgery to him, he would never regret, and not he was to serve two years more in the office, and in learning how to manage contracts, at a salary which would be gauged according to the progress he made.

After that he would be ready to go into business for himself, if he should feel so disposed.

Mr. Conant felt that he had secured a genius in Walter, for he proved to be peculiarly adapted to the business. He was often surprised by the apt and valuable suggestions which he made regarding difficult and intricate plans, while he certainly possessed excellent taste and judgment.

Walter availed himself of Mr. Gordon's invitation to call not long after his return, and he was most cordially received by all the members of the family, although his pleasure was very shortly interrupted by the entrance of Edmund Carpenter, who had renewed his visits and attentions to Ruby immediately upon discovering that she was in the city.

Young Carpenter was evidently anything but pleased to find Walter a visitor in that house, and greeted him coldly, while an unmistakable frown settled upon his brow at what he considered his impertinent assurance for daring to be upon such familiar terms with people so far above him socially.

They endeavored to monopolize Ruby's time and attention. She tried to divide her favors between her two callers, but Edmund Carpenter adroitly managed to make all such efforts appear so forced that she grew embarrassed whenever she attempted to speak to Walter, and he, observing it, was upon the point of excusing himself and taking his leave, when Mr. Gordon drew him into conversation regarding his new residence, which was now nearly ready for occupancy, and after that things moved along more smoothly, although the evening proved to be anything but a pleasant one.

He could not fail to perceive that Edmund had serious designs upon the young girl whom he had learned to love, and he told himself that, perhaps he had no right to interfere between her and the brilliant prospects that would be hers if he could win her for his wife; and yet the very thought was torture to him.

Ruby was not herself at all that evening; she was laboring under a painful restraint, engendered by the antagonism which she felt that Edmund Carpenter entertained for Walter, and she, too, was very miserable when at length the young man arose to take his leave.

Edmund made his adieu at the same time, and the two men passed out together, while Walter instinctively felt that he had some sinister purpose in thus accompanying him.

He was not long left in doubt. "Are you not rather presuming in visiting a lady of Miss Gordon's position?" young Carpenter abruptly asked, after they had passed into the street.

"If you call responding to an invitation given by Mr. Gordon and seconded by his sister 'presuming,' doubtless I am guilty of the charge," Walter replied, with some coldness.

"Indeed! When were you so fortunate as to secure such an invitation, allow me to ask?"

"To be exact, I believe it was tendered me on the twentieth of last month."

"Neither Miss Gordon nor her brother was in the city at that time," retorted Edmund Carpenter.

"Very true; neither was I," Walter quietly replied.

"Ha! Where were you?"

"I spent the two weeks of my vacation with Mr. Ruggles at Redville. Mr. Carpenter experienced an inward shock at this information.

"Where were you during Miss Gordon's visit to the farm?"

"I was."

"And played the gay cavalier to the best of your ability, I presume?"

"I do not know what you mean to insinuate by that, Edmund," Walter said, coldly; "but, at all events, I took Miss Gordon about a good deal, and enjoyed a very pleasant visit with her and her brother."

Edmund Carpenter gnawed his under lip angrily. This, then, accounted for the unusual reserve which Ruby had manifested toward him since her return.

Walter had been playing the agreeable to her while she was at Redville. He must nip the thing in the bud.

"Well," he said, gruffly, after considering these points for a few minutes, "I wish to inform you that I am addressing Miss Gordon, and with her brother's permission, and I desire that you will do nothing that will interfere with my plans."

He had, indeed, recently sought Mr. Gordon and solicited his consent to his addressing his sister.

Mr. Gordon had gravely told him that it was a matter in which Ruby herself was chiefly concerned; that he should never lay any obstacle in the way of her happiness; and if she should bestow her affection upon him, he should freely give his consent to their union.

Robert Gordon, however, was very sure, from what he had seen at Redville, that Ruby would never marry Edmund Carpenter.

Walter's heart sank heavily upon being told this, while a feeling of indignation sprang up within him at the tone of authority which his rival had adopted toward him.

"It is not my intention to ever interfere with any of your plans, Edmund," he returned, in the same tone as before. "If you desire to win Miss Gordon—and can do so—with a little unobtrusive emphasis on those last words, 'of course it is all right and proper; but both Mr. and Miss Gordon have proffered me their hospitality, and, having no congenial home, I see no reason why I should not avail myself of it occasionally.'"

"You are very independent about it; perhaps you even aspire to win Miss Gordon yourself," sneered his companion.

A swift flush mounted to Walter's brow, and an angry retort rushed to his lips. He checked it, however.

"I am not in a position to aspire to anything of the kind at present," he said, gravely.

"That is the most sensible thing that I have heard you say to-night," Mr. Carpenter returned in a somewhat mollified tone. "All the same," he added, "it might be just as well to keep out of temptation, and out of the way of doing an injury to others."

"I do not think I clearly understand the latter part of your remark," he said, then, to be plain, it may do my cause harm if you continue to visit the Gordons."

"Surely you cannot feel very confident of succeeding in your designs, if you fear that the occasional visits of any one will mar your plans."

Edmund turned upon him fiercely. "None of your sarcasms to me, if you please. I know what I am about. I am bound to win the pretty heiress if I can, and it won't be healthy for you, or any one, to balk me in my purpose."

"That is the heiress, not a wife—not the sweet, gentle woman—whom you wish to win," said Walter, a note of scorn in his tone, for all his manhood arose indignantly against such a fate for beautiful Ruby Gordon.

"Sweet and gentle fiddlestick!" was the contemptuous retort. "Don't be absurdly sentimental, Walter. Of course I admire Ruby Gordon—love her, if you will. Who wouldn't love a pretty girl like that, with thirty thousand dollars tacked on as an additional charm? I am going to marry her if I can get her, and—I want you to keep out of my way. Do you understand?"

"Yes, I understand," Walter said, calmly, but longing to make him suffer for speaking so flippantly of the woman he loved.

Edmund Carpenter turned upon him with an angry frown.

"Do you mean to imply by that tone that you understand my wish but will not heed it?" he demanded.

Walter paused a moment before replying; then he said, quietly but firmly:

"I should be willing to heed any reasonable and civil request which you might make, Edmund, although I do not feel that I owe you very much of consideration; but if you imagine that I am going to deprive myself of the enjoyment of a pleasant and profitable friendship, simply to comply with or pamper a freak of jealousy on your part, you have made a mistake. I will continue to visit at Mr. Gordon's so long as I am welcome."

"Then I warn you that if I fall in my plans because of you, it will be the

earliest day that you ever knew, Walter Richardson!" cried his companion in a rage.

"You may spare your threats, Edmund, for I shall not heed them. I wish you no ill, and I would not knowingly injure you in the estimation of anyone. If you can win Miss Gordon's heart, she will doubtless marry you; if you cannot, she will never be so untrue to herself, or to you, as to take such a false step."

"You speak very confidently. You must have closely studied Miss Gordon's character."

"Yes, I do speak confidently; and I am sure that Ruby Gordon is a true and conscientious woman—that she will never forfeit her self-respect by acting a lie."

"I am not sure but that you have already fallen in love with her yourself," cried young Carpenter.

The young man's face flushed and his heart bounded wildly at the accusation.

He knew that Edmund Carpenter could never feel for Ruby a tithe of the affection which his true heart bestowed upon her; while the mere thought of losing her—of having her sacrificed to his designs—was like rending soul from body.

But he would never confess his secret to the man beside him; torture should not wring it from him.

"Silence signifies assent," pursued Edmund, bending forward to look into Walter's face as they passed a street lamp.

"Not necessarily," was the unmoved reply. "I do not think it worth while to make any response to your sneering remark."

"Beggars! pauper! Is this the return you make for all that has been done for you in the past?"

Edmund was exasperated beyond endurance at Walter's superior self-control, and the indifference that he had manifested to his commands and threats.

Walter's hands closed and unclosed with a convulsive movement, and for a moment he was tempted to make his insolent companion measure his length upon the pavement.

But his better nature controlled him, though his high spirit resented the opprobrious epithets that had been applied to him.

"I am neither a beggar nor a pauper," he returned, slowly and with impressive distinctness, "and I owe you no return for anything, for you have never done me a kind or generous act during all the years that we have known each other. Your father loved and revered me for his goodness to me, and had he lived, any service that I could have rendered him would have been but a pleasure to me. I do not wish to quarrel with you. For his sake, I would wish to always treat you with respect and consideration. But it is worse than folly to prolong this interview. I turn here, and will wish you good night."

"Stay," cried young Carpenter, laying a heavy hand upon Walter's shoulder, and speaking in a low, fierce tone. "I hope you understand me; it will not be wise for you to cross my path at the Gordons' very often."

Walter shook himself free from that detaining hand, and faced the man proudly.

"I think you hardly understand me," he said, in a haughty tone. "I will prove to you here and now. Suppose, for instance, that I do love Ruby Gordon; if I were sure that she would return my affection, I should try—provided I was in a position to warrant my doing so before all the world. Any other man has the same privilege and right in this free country, and no one has any authority to lay restrictions upon another. Good-night, Edmund."

He turned upon his heel and walked resolutely away, but not before he had caught the ominous words that were thrown savagely after him:

"Braggart, I have only one word to say to you—beware!"

CHAPTER XVII.

Mr. and Mrs. Ruggles Come to Philadelphia.

Mr. Robert Gordon's house was at last completed, furnished and ready for occupancy, and a veritable palace of luxury and elegance it was, too.

The site upon which it had been built was unexceptional, while the grounds had all been laid out with exquisite taste before the house was erected.

There were long, smoothly graveled walks, overarched with wide-spreading, luxuriant trees, leading up to it. There was a beautiful lawn, green and smooth as velvet, in front; and this was ornamented with choice shrubs, lovely beds, with here and there a fountain and choice pieces of gleaming white statuary.

Wide marble steps led up to the spacious mansion, and the grand entrance hall, whose rich and elegant furnishings gave but a faint idea of the magnificence awaiting beyond.

On one side of this was the grand drawing-room, extending the whole length of the house, and furnished with almost royal splendor. Opposite were a reception-room, the library and dining-room, all marvels of luxury; while beyond there was a spacious conservatory, filled with choice plants and exotics.

An imposing stairway of carved oak led to the rooms above, which were also as rich and beautiful as money and good taste could make them.

Ruby's apartments, comprising a parlor, bedroom and dressing-room, were upon the south side of the house, commanding a delightful view of the Schuylkill and Fairmount Park, and were fitted up with a daintiness just suited to the lovely girl.

The family moved into the luxurious abode about the first of December, and Mr. Gordon and his wife planned to give a grand house-warming not far from Christmas time.

"Robert, let us send for Mr. and Mrs. Ruggles; it would be something grand for them to be at such a party," Ruby said, when they were making out their list for invitations.

Mr. Gordon laughed and glanced at his wife.

"Estelle, what do you say to Ruby's proposition?" he asked.

"Don't you imagine that they would feel rather out of their element?" Mrs. Gordon inquired, raising her shapely eyebrows, while her lips curled with a smile of scornful amusement.

"People like to get out of their element, sometimes," her husband responded. "They treated us very handsomely when we were at Redville. If you have no serious objections, it might be as good a time as any to return their hospitality and show them something of the city; besides, Ruby seems anxious to have them here."

"Oh, Estelle, let them come," Ruby pleaded. "They are very nice, harmless people, and I will manage not to let them be conspicuous at the reception to annoy you with their rustic ways."

"Very well," asserted Mrs. Gordon. "But mind, I shall hold you to your promise. They will be your guests, and you must entertain them."

She was a woman who had a great reverence for gold, and she felt that even the rustic Ruggles could be endured for a time, since they bade fair to become, if they were not already, one of the wealthiest families in the State.

Ruby was delighted at having gained her sister's consent. She knew it would be a red-letter day in their lives, so she directed their invitation, and wrote a kind letter to send with it, in which she begged them to come a week before the grand reception, and make them a little visit.

She was quite diplomatic in this movement, for she thought it would give her time to see that they were properly equipped for the occasion, so that her sister's fastidious taste need not be offended, nor they rendered conspicuous among their guests by any eccentricity of costume.

An answer came very shortly, accepting her invitation, and mentioning the day on which they would arrive in the city.

One other favor Ruby had craved of her brother, but she did it with drooping lids and a flush upon her cheeks. It was that he would send Walter a card for their house-warming.

"You're too late, my pet," he said, laughing, and patting the rosy cheek nearest him. "One has already gone to our fine young architect."

"Oh, thank you, Robert, for remembering him. I would not like to have him neglected. I am sure it will be rare pleasure."

"A rare pleasure to whom, petter?" quizzed her brother, with a twinkle in his eyes.

"Why, to Mr. Richardson, of course," Ruby retorted, but with a blush which betrayed that it would be a pleasure in which she would share.

A week before the grand reception Mr. and Mrs. Ruggles arrived, and were kindly and graciously received by the Gordons, the fastidious lady of the house not excepted.

Mrs. Gordon, after giving the matter some thought, had concluded that it would be policy to extend every possible courtesy to them.

She knew that they were relatives of Edmund Carpenter—who, in her own mind, she had decreed should marry Ruby, if any manœuvreing on her part could accomplish such a union. They had no children of their own, and, since they had taken such a fancy to her beautiful young sister, their great wealth might possibly be thus added to their family. Accordingly, she surprised Ruby by being very gracious to them.

Mr. Gordon, having no such mercenary calculations, was most cordial and genial simply out of the nobility of his great heart, while Ruby betrayed genuine delight in their welcome.

Mrs. Ruggles was very becomingly arrayed in a modest but rich traveling costume of fine, dark-gray cloth, while her husband looked really neat in a new and becoming business suit.

The house-warming had been set for the 21st, and Mrs. Ruggles confided to Ruby at the outset that she must have a dress suitable for the occasion, and asked her advice and help in obtaining it.

"You are not to count the cost either, Miss Ruby," Owen Ruggles interposed. "I want mother to do you credit, so you just get the best—what you would want your own to wear to such a party."

Ruby's eyes twinkled at these instructions, for she remembered Estelle's fears regarding eccentricity of costume, and she resolved to give her sister a surprise such as she had not had for many a day.

"I will take you to my own dress-maker," she said. "She will tell us just what you need, and we will have her make it."

So a private consultation was held with the fashionable modiste. A handsome black satin was advised, and Ruby enjoyed herself hugely in purchasing it, together with some other nice adornments for the approaching festival.

"Father is going to have a new suit, too—made to order at Wanamaker's," Mrs. Ruggles confidentially informed Ruby; and the latter could hardly wait to witness the astonishment which she knew this new departure on the part of the farmer and his wife would occasion both Estelle and Edmund Carpenter.

That gentleman was still very marked in his attentions to Ruby, but she seemed to feel more and more of aversion toward him, and shunned his society upon every possible occasion when she could do so without actual rudeness.

The week that followed the arrival of her guests was a very busy and pleasant one, for she took them to all the points of interest in the city, visiting churches, art museums, the mint, picture galleries, etc., during the day, and going to some concert or the theatre in the evening.

Walter had called soon after their arrival, and had been invited to make spare the evening.

This was a temptation and privilege he could not resist, and he was thus thrown much into Ruby's coveted society, where he was made to feel both welcome and useful.

"You will be with us here to-morrow evening," Ruby said to him on the night before the 21st, as he was taking his leave of her after having escorted her party home from the theatre.

"Yes, I had planned to come in for a little while," he replied, with quickened heart-throbs, as he looked into the lovely eyes raised with such eager questioning to his.

"For a little while!" she repeated, in a disappointed tone. "Oh, I hoped you would come early and stay through the whole. We are to have a delightful time. You know the stable is but just finished—all but the stalls and boxes—and Robert has had it beautifully decorated, and an awning extended from the house to it, and we are to dance there. You dance, do you not?"

"I used to."

"And is the experience so far in the dim past that you have forgotten how?" Ruby asked, archly.

"No, indeed, and I enjoy dancing very much; but my life has been such during the last two years that I have had no opportunity to exercise my accomplishments in that line."

"Then a little tripping of the 'light fantastic' will refresh your memory and do you good."

"But I shall be a stranger to almost every one here."

"I believe I did not find it such a formidable undertaking to get acquainted with you," Ruby retorted, with a light laugh; "and I know scores of young ladies who will make charming partners after an introduction. I shall expect you to present yourself in season for the first quadrille."

"I promise, upon one condition," said Walter, in an eager tone.

"And what is that?"

"That you will dance it with me."

A ripple of color stole into Ruby's cheek, and her eyes dropped an instant as she met his glance.

Then she drew back and swept him a charming little courtesy, saying:

"With pleasure, Mr. Richardson. I am delighted to have secured your presence upon such easy terms."

"Thank you," Walter simply returned, but his eyes told her that he longed to give utterance to much stronger language, while the clasp of his hand at parting had a lover's lingering touch in it.

(To be Continued.)

Ask for Minard's and take no other.

To Retain One's Beauty.

Don't roll your eyes up into your head as if they were marbles; a fine pair of eyes will be utterly ruined by this operation.

A girl with a pretty mouth will purse it into the prettiest bouton, and continue the habit until many lines form about the lips, and the once lovely mouth has to be put into the hands of the beauty doctor.

Nearly every woman bites or sucks her lips.

Others contract the brows and produce two furrows between the eyes.

Others wrinkle the forehead with frowns.

Others perpetually wear a tip-tilted nose.

It must be remembered that a truly expressive face does not consist of a set of features hung on strings or wires.

Do cultivate placid features.

I was cured of terrible lumbago by MINARD'S LINIMENT.

Rev. Wm. Brown.

I was cured of a bad case of earache by MINARD'S LINIMENT.

Mrs. S. Kaulback.

I was cured of sensitive lungs by MINARD'S LINIMENT.

Mrs. S. Masters.

Tidal Waves and Air Pressure.

The so-called earthquake or tidal waves that are frequently noticed along the coast near Sydney, N. S. W., are found by H. C. Russell to be mostly traceable to low atmospheric pressure. Their period, about 26 minutes from crest to crest, is that of earthquake waves. Mr. Russell has proved, however, that only 1 per cent. are produced by earth disturbances, while 60 per cent. are due to low pressure areas, which cause the sea level to rise, with currents along the south and east coasts that meet in Bass strait, producing waves that affect the Sydney and Newcastle tide gauges.

Success.

In business comes when thorough satisfaction is given the public. That's why Nerviline sells so rapidly. Toothache is cured, as if by magic. Pain, internal or external, finds a prompt antidote in Nerviline. Try it.

Poor Bobby! Poor Papa.

Bilkins was seated in an easy chair enjoying his paper, while his wife was busy with fancy work. Bobby, the 4-year-old son of the household, on the floor, was fighting a battle with tin soldiers. Presently the little fellow tired of his play, and exclaimed: "Mamma, won't you please tell me a fairy story?"

"I don't feel like it to-night, Bobby," said Mrs. Bilkins. "Go and get your papa to tell you what detained him down town so late last night. That will be a fairy story."

Blacker than the blackest is ENGLISH ARMY BLACKING

And will give a brilliant shine that will last.

It is asserted that revelations seriously compromising General Mercier's honesty have been made in connection with the Madagascar expedition.