

ALL FOR LOVE.

CHAPTER XIX.
THE SECRET WILL.

"No, dear, not to get the money. I understand that," he replied; "but since we are no longer in doubt regarding our attitude toward each other, we may just as well avail ourselves of the conditions of the will, and save the fortune that rightly belongs to you."

Beth shook her pretty head with decision.

"No, I should always feel that I had had its influence with one or both of us, and I should hate it every day of my life. Then everybody else would think and say it was a marriage of convenience; so I'd rather have the benighted heathen get every dollar of it, and—I never want to think of that hateful will again."

Philip saw that she had taken her stand, and he was nonplussed for the time being. At length he asked:

"But when will you marry me, Beth, if you will not comply with the conditions of the will? Now that I have won you, I want you, and there is no sense in waiting indefinitely."

"Well," she thoughtfully replied, "if you wish, let it be as soon as you like after the date set by Aunt Eliza. I will even make it the day following my twenty-second birthday, one month from to-morrow, if that will please you, Philip."

Philip's face beamed in view of this concession to an early union; yet he was far from being reconciled to what he regarded as willful waste of a large amount of money.

"Well, if that is your ultimatum, I am only too glad to capture you at the earliest possible date. All the same—"

"Oh, Philip, pray do not argue that point any more. Please—please take me just as I am, without a penny, and so prove to me that you don't want that money," Beth pleaded in a tone the tremulousness of which told how deeply in earnest she was; and Philip, happy in having won her at any cost, resolved that he would not broach the obnoxious subject again.

Not so, however, with Mr. Russell, Teddy, and Muriel, and even gentle Aunt Prue, all of whom, though delighted with the prospective marriage, were agast in view of such an unheard-of sacrifice. Each and every one argued and objected collectively and separately with Beth, but the obstinate bride-elect would not "budge an inch, the little mule," as Teddy impatiently expressed himself after an hour of fruitless expostulation.

"Papa!" Beth blazed out at him one day when he had been more insistent than usual; "I'll live on a crust a day, I'll go without pretty clothes, I will even work to earn money, but I will not have that tone of contention, that has already caused so much misery, come into my life with Philip. If Aunt Eliza had given me that money either to you or to me, as she ought to have done, I own I'd

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he glad not to go a dowdier bride to him. As it is, I want him to know that I love him for what he himself is, and—I want the same assurance from him."

This ended the contest, and then everybody at once became absorbed in preparations for the wedding which was to take place at the farm, noon, on the date Beth had named. It was to be a very quiet, informal affair, with only her relatives and intimate friends present; but the numerous beautiful and costly gifts which poured in upon her from every quarter testified to her popularity in the social world, regardless of the recent reverses in the family.

Two hours before the ceremony, Aunt Prue handed Beth a legal-looking envelope addressed to her, which was accompanied by a note from Philip. The note explained that he had decided to resign the trusteeship of Miss Crawford's estate, and the day previous he had looked over some papers, which his father had left in his care relating to the matter. While thus engaged he had come upon the envelope he was sending to her, which was addressed in his father's handwriting, with instructions that it was to be given to her on her wedding day, or on her twenty-second birthday, if she were unmarried at that time.

Beth was in the midst of dressing for her bridal when she received this communication, and all the light suddenly went out of her bright face.

"Oh, why need anything pertaining to that cruel will haunt my wedding day!" she ruefully exclaimed; then added resolutely: "I just will not let it spoil everything for me, and—tossing it carelessly into her traveling bag—"Phil and I will open it on our way to Boston."

Three hours later the happy husband and wife were on their way to that city en route for a quiet place in the Berkshires, where they were to spend a week, then back to the dear old Russell home, which Philip had rescued from an auction sale, and had been having renovated and refurnished during the last month, as a surprise for Beth, and his wedding gift to her.

During the first part of their trip southward they were so glad to be by themselves, and away from the confusion and excitement of the morning, they could think of nothing but their own happiness; but shortly after

their stop at Concord, Philip said he was thirsty, and asked Beth for her drinking cup.

Opening her bag to get it, she came across the legal-looking envelope he had sent her that morning. "Oh, what do you suppose this can be?" she exclaimed, holding it up and regarding it askance.

"Why, haven't you opened it?" inquired Philip, in surprise.

"No—I couldn't," Beth said, half laughing, but with an anxious cloud on her brow. "I was half afraid it might be something to prevent—"

Philip laughed out joyously as he caught the hand nearest him in a fond clasp.

"You silly child!" he cried, "did you imagine for a moment that I would allow anything to prevent at that stage of the game? But open it, dear. I am consuming with curiosity to know its contents."

"Have you any idea what it is?" queried Beth, still hesitating to break the seal.

"No—yet I surmised—"

"What?" demanded the young wife, eagerly.

(To be Continued.)

One in a
Thousand,
BUT TRUE TO
THE LAST

CHAPTER I.

BY OLD DEVICES.

"I never saw him," says Loys, regretfully.

"Nor I," I echo—I always follow Loys in everything; "but, then, I am so short-sighted that I could not possibly see him without a glass, and I dared not use one in church."

Theo offers no remark; she sits looking dreamily into the fire, and presently Loys speaks again.

"What is he like, Theo?"

"Oh, so handsome!" cries Theo, clasping her pretty hands; "so very handsome! I told you that he was there last Sunday, and how he stared at me. Well, to-day he was there again, and once I saw him look at the name in my hymn book."

"Is it decently written?" I ask, seizing the book, in order to satisfy myself upon this point. "Why, Theo, there's a note! How wicked!"

"Nonsense!" cries Loys, snatching it out of my hand.

Theo reads it quickly.

"Oh, I say!" she exclaims.

"What is it?" I cry, impatiently.

So Loys read it aloud:

"Don't be angry with me for writing to you. Come down the garden to the wall at five this evening, and I will be there.—A. St. C. Do come, darling."

"Darling!" repeats Loys, turning it over. "Well, that's cool, isn't it? What fun for you, Theo!"

Theo is only sixteen, and school-girls of that age are proverbially romantic and giddy; their heads are filled with nonsense, which often leads them into danger before they know what they are doing. We three sisters—Theo, Loys and Audrey Luttrell—are at a boarding school where the discipline is lax in the extreme—one of those old-fashioned, yet high-class, establishments where manners and accomplishments are highly cultivated, and the girls very little teased by the more solid branches, and never expected to go in for middle-class examinations, at all. "I don't profess to train governesses," is a favorite remark of Mrs. Dickenson's; "I make gentlewomen."

There are only twelve pupils, and they are all boarders. We three "Luttrell girls" have a room to ourselves, overlooking the garden, and when afternoon school is over, we are free to stay in it, if it pleases us, until the bell rings for tea at six o'clock. We are very loving sisters, and generally avail ourselves of what is called the "free hour" in crouching over the fire—for Loys is not strong, and, as our father is very indulgent, we have a fire in our bedroom during six months of the year—chatting of home, writing our letters, or any

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other occupation which pleases us.

As I said before, girls of sixteen are not very often staid. Loys and I think it is a fine thing for our pretty sister to have a lover, and a romantic meeting in a garden in October; it is the next thing to having the like ourselves. We quickly smother any qualms of conscience which Theo may be feeling, and, as the autumn twilight falls, watch her go, ghostlike, down the garden walk to meet "A. St. C."

"I hope it will be all right," says Loys, with a nervous shiver. "There will be a frightful row, if it comes out. Suppose Mrs. Dickenson asks for her?"

"Oh, she won't!" I answer, gravely. "Old Dickey is fast asleep before the drawing-room fire. Mademoiselle has gone to tea with the French governess at St. John's, and Miss Burleigh is telling 'dear Jack' that she is counting the days until he comes back; then she will leave all this drudgery, and be transmogrified into his loving, little wife, and so on, ad libitum, until four sheets are filled, all of which 'dear Jack' will devour at Port Said or Malta, or wherever the letter may find him."

Loys laughs at my very poor wit, but suggests that one of the servants may go down the garden. The minutes glide slowly by, and Theo does not return. Apparently, she finds "Mr. St. C.'s" society very entertaining.

"I wish she would come back," says Loys, in a frightened tone. "Suppose he runs away with her altogether?"

"Not he!" I laugh. "Besides, Theo has too much sense for that."

"Well, but just suppose anyone comes in here?"

"No one will come," I say, shortly, though I wish myself that Theo was back.

"She is coming," says Loys, with a sigh of relief. "I hope it is all right."

A light step sounds on the back stairs, which are close to our door, and Theo rushes in, shuts the door with a bang, and "plumps" down upon the hearth rug between us.

"Well!" we say, vaguely.

"Oh, he is splendid!" she exclaims, rapturously; "he is splendid—so big, so handsome, so—so—so everything, in fact!" stretching out her arms, with an expansive gesture.

"And what is his name?"

"Arthur St. Clair."

"What made you stop so long?" I ask, anxiously.

"He wouldn't let me come away," answers Theo, with a newly acquired air of importance, which we two think extremely grand; "he would not, really. He said he had been waiting and watching and lingering for a glimpse of me so long that he would keep me when he had me. In fact, he wanted to carry me off altogether."

(To be continued.)

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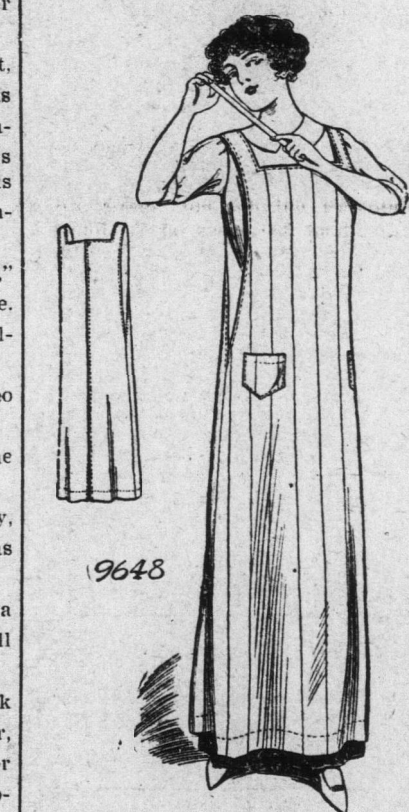


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