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The Sound of Wedding Bells

Won After Great Perseverance!

CHAPTER XXIV.

Another thing she notices, and that is, that although almost every group they come against greets him, and many a beautiful face smiles a welcome and invitation, Archie seems proof against all comers, and cleaves to her side, scarcely doing more than lifting his hat, and returning the greetings in short decisive fashion.

"Do you know all London?" she says at last, with a smile.

"Well, you see," he says, almost apologetically, "when a fellow knocks about he meets with a host of people, and everybody seems to be here this afternoon."

"Isn't it rather unfair and unwarrantable of me to monopolize all your attention?" she says, presently, after he has passed another smiling group of acquaintances. "Where has Lady Brookley got to? We seem to have wandered away from her. Take me back to her, and then go and join some of those people; they look very good."

"Thanks," he says, quietly. "I am quite content if you will allow me to remain and look after you. Perhaps, though"—apprehensively—"I am boring you?"

"How can that be?" she responds. "Very well, then," he says, "don't say any more about my leaving you. Look, there are some fine blossoms. I wonder what would happen if I stole one for you?"

"I should say that we should find ourselves in jail, you as the thief, and I as the receiver," she answers, in a brighter tone. "Come away, if you feel tempted."

They walk on, and presently, the crowd getting thicker, they are brought to a stand-still, just at the junction where one path crosses the end of the other. At this moment a stream of people is in possession of the cross path, and those who, like Archie and Dulcie, are in the other, are compelled to pull up and wait until the stream thins a little.

There is some good-natured jostling and pushing, such as will occur even in fashionable mobs; and Archie, who cannot bear that an elbow should touch his darling, clears a little space and draws her into it.

It is at this moment, when they stand apart, as it were, that Archie feels the hand resting upon his arm close with a little spasmodic gesture. He looks down at her, and sees that her face has grown suddenly pale, and that her eyes are fixed on the crowd passing in front. Following the direction of her gaze, he is just in time to see Sir Hugh, with a lady on his arm, followed by the Duke of Grennam. They have passed almost in an instant, but there is time for him to recognize Lucy Fairfax in the lady.

Instinctively Archie steps a little in front of her to hide her from them, why, he scarcely knows, but the movement comes too late. Either the duke or Lucy Fairfax draws Sir Hugh's attention to some flowers near where the other two stand, and Hugh turns and sees Dulcie.

For a moment he stares as if he had received a sudden shock, then he makes a movement as if to approach her; but at the instant he sees who is with her, and with a compression of the lips he raises his hat and passes on.

It was all over in a moment, yet volumes could not describe the intense significance of the incident. To Hugh, Archie's appearance by Dulcie's side was confirmation of her treachery and deceit; to Dulcie, the fact of Lucy Fairfax hanging on Hugh's arm, corroboration of Archie's words.

Poor Archie, inwardly cursing the flower-show and the evil chance that has brought them to a standstill, summons up courage at last to look down at the beautiful face beside him. With almost a start he finds the dark, lovely eyes raised to his with something approaching a smile—he does not know how much it cost her, it is true.

"Yes, the color is back in her face, her lips are set firmly, there is a smile in her eyes."

Once she has betrayed herself, but she has vowed that it shall not be so again, and she keeps her word.

While Archie is trying to stammer out something, anything, she says, in a low, clear voice:

"I think we can move now. If we stay we shall be carted away with the rest of the flowers."

There is not a quiver in the voice.

not a sign of the sudden pain that has smitten her.

"All right," says Archie. "We'll get out here and go round to the first tent. We shall find my aunt there. She and a great many more never get beyond that tent. Between you and me, one half the people here don't care a farthing for flowers. They come just because it's the thing to come; and if you show yourself in the first tent, why you have done your duty, you know."

And so he rattles on, saying anything that occurs to him first, to give her time to recover herself entirely; but indeed she scarcely seems to need it, and when they emerge on to the gravel paths into the fresh air, she is looking pale still, but with the sweet paleness of one of the roses they have left behind. They find Lady Brookley in the first tent, as Sir Archie prophesied.

"Why, my dear," she says, "where have you been? I've been looking for you everywhere," she adds, unblushingly. "Archie, you had better see where my stupid men have taken the carriage."

And as Archie goes she says to Dulcie:

"My dear, you have got just a color. I hope you haven't let him tire you."

"Sir Archie has been most kind and careful," says Dulcie, quickly. "He—he treats me as if I were something that would break or melt," she adds, with a laugh, but with a certain feeling in her voice that contradicts the laugh.

"Oh, he's a very good boy when he likes," says her ladyship, with a little twinkle in her eyes.

Archie finds the stupid men and helps the two ladies into the carriage, but he does not offer to get in. He will not let her think him obtrusive.

"I'm going to fetch uncle from the club," he says, "or else he'll forget all about it," and he hurries off.

Dulcie's hand trembles as she lowers her veil.

"Archie has grown very modest all of a sudden," says Lady Brookley. But Dulcie does not reply.

All unconsciously he has hit upon the way to woo her, though never was a woman yet who could withstand for long the respectful devotion of—well, a handsome, true-hearted man, and Sir Archie is both.

CHAPTER XXV.

Was it true? Were they going to be married? Had Sir Hugh forgotten his new love and turned to the old so quickly?

It was with the resolution to have done with love, old and new, that he left Holme Castle half an hour after the scene with Dulcie in the fernery.

With the grim despair of a man who finds the dearest hope of his life cast to the ground, he fled the presence of the girl whom from the first he had mistrusted, and whom he now believed guilty of the direct treachery.

Even if Dulcie had found presence of mind to explain how it had come to pass that she was playing the lover to Sir Archie, it would have made little difference. As he had said, his disposition tended toward jealousy; his love was of that exacting kind which will not brook even the appearance of a rival, and the vision of Dulcie clasped in Sir Archie's embrace, of Sir Archie's ardent, passionate voice, haunted him during that solitary journey to town.

If he had but lost his train, Dulcie and he would have met, and—well, then the tangled skein, which the gods weave for us poor mortals, might have been unraveled in their case, but there were to be no more chances for them that night.

He caught his train and came to town, to the cold, desolate chambers, that looked more desolate than ever after the scene he had left.

All that night he sat or paced the room, fighting with the trouble that had fallen upon him.

At times he was inclined to think that he had dealt hardly with her; but the bare facts rose and justified him, and at last a strange pity for her mingled with his anger.

"My poor Dulcie!" he murmured; "she could not be true! It was not in her nature. She was right. We have had a lucky escape. I should have made her miserable with my

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jealousy and suspicion, and she—she would have broken her heart."

The anger passed, and on the morrow he went to his agent to inquire if there was a chance of exchange into a regiment ordered for India.

His one sole desire was to get as far from England as possible. If there had been one of those little wars on, he would have volunteered for service; but the piping times of peace were reigning, and as no opportunity presented of exchanging for India, he rushed about town.

He sent a line to Holme Castle, saying that business kept him; and in time an answer came, and that answer, written in Maud's high-pointed Italian hand, confirmed his worst fear.

"Miss Dorrinore has gone," she wrote, "and, of course, Sir Archie has followed her."

That was all. There was no mention of Mrs. Fernor's illness; and Hugh, more convinced than ever that Dulcie had fitted him for Sir Archie, groaned, and he threw the note into the fire.

Then came a note from his solicitor, begging Sir Hugh to favor him with a call, and Hugh went after a day or two; he hated interviews with his solicitor, and generally conducted his business with that useful personage by short notes.

He went, and his solicitor, with thinly concealed satisfaction, handed him Dulcie's note, which Lady Falconer had sent up to him.

"Here is the end of the trouble respecting the will, Sir Hugh," he said, expecting his client to look pleased; but Hugh crushed the note in his hand, with a frown.

"Not by any means," he said. "This—this note goes for nothing."

"The young lady exercises her power of choice, Sir Hugh, and—ahem!—declines the allowance," said the man of law.

"I don't care for that," said Sir Hugh, in his grim fashion.

"But—but," remarked the lawyer, who had held the Holme business since he had entered the profession, "you can't compel the young lady to marry you, Sir Hugh."

"No, but I can decline to rob her of her proper share in her uncle's will," said Hugh.

(To be Continued.)

Cough Nearly Gone in 24 Hours

That's the usual experience with this home-made remedy, Cough Pills—17¢.

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Any druggist can supply you with 2½ ounces of Pinex (50 cents worth). Pour this into a 16-oz. bottle and fill the bottle with plain granulated sugar syrup. The total cost is about 53 cents and you have 16 ounces of the most effective remedy you ever used.

The quick, lasting relief you get from this excellent cough syrup will really surprise you. It promptly heals the inflamed membranes that line the throat and air passages, stops the annoying throat tickle, loosens the phlegm, and soon your cough stops entirely. Splendid for bronchitis, croup, whooping cough and bronchial asthma.

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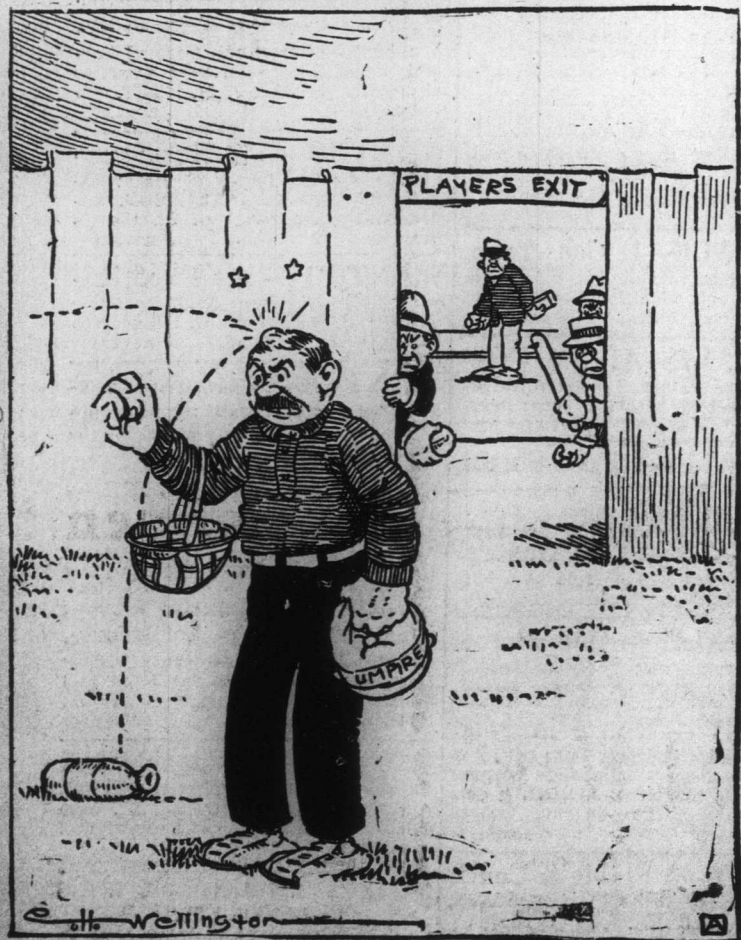
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The Fit and How

I presume that all know what the fit is. Throughout the year, the horribly twisted that could do well by being subject of this talk is only trust that will help out some young may really and dry.

The Fifth Commandment, "Honour thy father and mother," is the first of the ten. Now, when does a man not do it by dishonouring his father? Some parents stand for absolute obedience to their parents until they are dead. Now, I have seen find any age limit, but I think just as well as the time for their age, or to years of age, say that it would be boys to pay due regard to their parents' wishes, in their youth and to their mature years, but a man he is supposed to think for himself.

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