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## A Millionaire; —or— Countess Westleigh

CHAPTER XLIII.

They were away on their bridal trip until the spring was smiling and laughing over meadow, hill and dale; even over dear old London, which on the afternoon they entered it shone as brightly and as gayly as if it had got up a special sunset to welcome them back.

I think both of them would have liked to have driven from Charing Cross Station to a quiet hotel in a hansom; but fate had decreed that they should possess a great name, a huge house in St. James' Square, and a tremendous carriage which the butler had, of course, sent to meet them. Fortunately, it was an open carriage, and so not much inferior to a cab; and probably in all London there was not a handsomer or a happier young couple than the Earl and Countess of Westleigh, who, sitting side by side, and sometimes hand in hand, looked out at the familiar streets and the throngs of people as the horses dashed along.

"Are you glad to be back, dearest?" he asked, after awhile, and as they neared the quieter Pall Mall.

"I was just asking myself the question. Don't you think the people can see you are holding my hand, Vane? I'm sure I noticed a lady smile as I passed her. I'm—I'm not certain whether I am or not. It has been such a lovely time," she sighed, happily, "but then it will always be a lovely time while you are near me, dear."

"Better be quiet," he said, threateningly, "or I shall feel in duty bound to kiss you, and then we shall lose our characters with the servants, and probably be seen by a policeman and taken in charge. Anyway, if we don't like it we needn't stay long. We can go to Westleigh or Barton, or Vale Hall, for instance."

"Yes," said Nora, in a slightly graver and more thoughtful tone. "Vane!"

"Well?"

"Do you think—No, I won't say it—I can not!"

"Now, what's the matter?" he demanded.

It was the first time since their marriage—their "real" marriage—that he had heard a note of apprehension in her voice. "What is it? Oh, I think I can guess!"

"Never mind, dear. And yet—Ah, yes! It is better to speak out. We are never to have a moment's concealment, are we, Vane? Do you think that any one will—will know me—remember me?"

Her voice had sunk to an almost inaudible whisper.

He looked at her long, and as steadily as his passionate admiration would permit him.

Happiness had wrought a great change in her. Her face was fuller; her wonderful eyes brighter, shining with a great joy; the dark hair was long, and bound in a great coil at the back of the shapely head. She was dressed, not gorgeously, but richly, and in perfect taste. The tone of her voice had altered, grown sweeter, softer.

"Be at rest!" he said, quietly, but emphatically. "No one—no one—would know you."

They were silent for a moment or two, and in that moment or two, there was a block in the street, and the carriage came to a stand-still.

Two gentlemen came down the steps of the fashionable club opposite. They were arm in arm, and talking cheerfully. They were the Baby and Lord Clenham. At sight of the couple in the carriage they stopped still and raised their hats.

"Halloo, Vane!" exclaimed the Baby in delighted accents. "Oh, I'm awfully glad to see you back!"

Vane shook hands, then he looked at Nora.

"My wife!" he said, introducing her.

The light was full on her lovely face, grown suddenly a little pale. The two men looked at her in silent admiration for a second, then raised their hats again and bowed, and the Baby, whom beauty could always draw by a single hair, moved round to her side of the carriage and talked to her.

"Any news?" asked Vane, but of the alert.

Clenham shrugged his shoulders. "N-no; not much." He related some; then he added: "Oh, you've heard about Lady Florence, I suppose?"

"No," said Vane, with a glance at Nora, who he saw was listening.

"She's married—married to Count Serge, the Russian. You remember? Great match; but, by George, I don't

envy her! Serge is jealously personified, and they say that she won't be permitted to cross the Russian frontier for at least twenty years. Can't bear her out of his sight. Rather a bore for the divine Florence, I should think. You heard of the sensation her picture made? Read it in the papers, of course?"

Vane nodded. "Yes."

"Tremendous jump up for—what's his name?—Serge Tyers. Everybody raving about him. Might have been the lion of the season; but somehow he seems to have preferred to sulk in his den. Nobody has seen anything of him for months past. Well, the street's clear, and we mustn't keep you. I shall have the honor of calling upon Lady Westleigh very shortly."

As he and the Baby went off, the latter exploded into ejaculations of admiration.

"Clenham, that is the loveliest woman that ever lived—and, I'll wager, my life, the sweetest!"

"For once, Baby, I'm afraid I can't contradict you," retorted Clenham, sententiously.

"You see," said Vane, in a low voice, as the carriage rolled on and Nora sunk back—"you see? You are safe—quite safe, dearest."

(To be Continued.)

## Love a Conqueror —OR— WEDDED AT LAST!

CHAPTER I.

Shirley obeyed instantly. Started as she was at the terrible change which had passed over her mother,

she did not lose her presence of mind. She dropped the window to let the chill wind blow upon the pale pinched face, and forced some of the cordial through the white lips. For a moment she thought that this must be death, and became ill and fainted herself at the thought of her mother's condition, and the impossibility of obtaining assistance; but in a few minutes the death-like pallor vanished, and the invalid's breathing became more regular.

"It is nothing," she said feebly, and tried to smile into the startled anxious face bending over her. "I am better, Shirley."

Trembling now in every limb, and almost entirely unnerved, Shirley sank upon her knees by her mother's side, half supporting her; and Mrs. Ross put both her feeble arms round the girl's head and drew it close to her breast.

"Mother—oh, mother!" Shirley said, trying to stifle the great choking sobs which rose in her throat; and Mrs. Ross drew her closer and rested her own hand on the girl's soft chestnut hair.

"Shirley—my darling!" her mother whispered tenderly. "No—do not move, child. Let me hold you; head upon my breast a little while it does not tire me. It makes me think of the days when you were a happy little baby, with big eyes and such rings of curly hair, Shirley!"

"Yes, dear," the girl said firmly enough, although even her lips whitened in the effort to retain her calmness.

"Can you be very brave, dear, and let me tell you now what I have to tell?"

"But, mother, it will tire you!" the girl opposed. "And you need all your strength now. Let us wait."

"Dear, I dare not wait," Mrs. Ross said tremulously. "There may not be time."

"Mother—there was no mistaking the heart-broken anguish in the girl's voice—"mother, not now—I cannot hear it—not now. We will rest at Boulogne."

"No—I must go on, Shirley, I insist"—and in her eagerness the dying woman lifted herself up and stood resting her hand upon her daughter's shoulder—"I insist on going on. You hear me? I will not stay—I will not rest anywhere until I reach London. Shirley, you promise?" she added, as she sank back again exhausted.

"Yes, yes, mother; I promise," the girl said earnestly; and once more she drew her mother's head upon her

shoulder and supported her tenderly in her arms.

The train sped on. The gray October twilight would soon spread over the face of the earth; in the stations through which they passed lights were beginning to glimmer, while the trees on the roadside now stood up grim and ghost-like. There was a lamp in the carriage; and Shirley closed the blinds to shut out the gloomy landscape, which looked so dreary under the falling rain and lowering sky.

"We shall soon be there now, mother," Shirley said cheerfully. "It seems absurd to say so, shut up in this carriage; but I think I can smell the sea already."

"Do you, dear?" her mother said, with a faint smile, remembering how often she had fancied that she could smell the heather and wild thyme of the Scotch moors when the sea and land lay between her and them.

"It is wet, but there is not much wind," Shirley continued. "We shall not have it rough, dear."

"I dare say, not, Shirley, darling"—and Mrs. Ross's eyes went wistfully to her daughter's face—"will you listen now? I feel much stronger. Let me tell you what I have to tell."

"There is not time for anything now," Shirley said cheerfully. "These lights mean Boulogne station, dear. We stop here for a few minutes, you know, to set down any travellers for Boulogne; then this nice good-natured train takes up right down to the boat. Do you really feel stronger, mother?"

"Really, Shirley. The sea air, you know!" Mrs. Ross replied, smiling a little. "Will you collect the wraps, dear? And don't you think you had better give me a dose of that nice mixture of Dr. Lejeune's before we get out?"

The train glided into the Boulogne station and set down some of its passengers there. There were a cheerful sound of voices, a bright glimmer of lights, and quick foot-steps hurrying by; then the train left the station again, and went slowly along the quay to the boat. The masts of the ships in the docks and harbor rising grim and ghost-like in the gray autumnal twilight, their lights glimmering feebly through a haze of fog and mist.

CHAPTER II.

Shirley had dreaded beyond all things the change from the train to the boat; but her mother seemed to have rallied wonderfully during the last few minutes. With the assistance of Shirley's arm, she alighted from the train and walked firmly enough across the short space to the boat; but there her strength failed.

The sight of the ladder—for the tide was rather low and the vessel below the level of the quay—terrified her in her weakness and debility, and she stood still, clinging to Shirley trembling and faint. But even then her eagerness to continue her journey made her try to dissemble.

(To be Continued.)

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