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CHAPTER IV.

Lashmore's Dilemma.

With the dogs scampering in front of her, Eva passed the lodge, after a little chat with Mrs. Bone, the gatekeeper, and made her way to the village. She was a familiar and welcome figure, and she had to run the gauntlet of a pack of women and children before she reached the old woman with the rheumatism. Having listened to a long and detailed account of the invalid's sufferings, and assuaged them with the contents of a basket, which Mrs. Styles had been eyeing hungrily during her dramatic recital, Eva went on her way again.

Old Blake was sitting in the sun outside the inn, with a pot of beer; and he rose to approach her and tell her what he thought of her and the rest of the "idle rich"; but Eva, with a laugh and a nod, quickened her pace, and, leaving the tiny village, got out onto the road through the open fields, much to the satisfaction of the dogs, who did not appreciate Billy, and would persist in smelling at him in a contemptuous and offensive fashion.

She had gone nearly a mile, and the whole party were enjoying themselves amazingly, when suddenly Tim, the fox-terrier, emitted a warning growl; and Eva, looking up, saw a big, ugly-looking dog coming toward them. He was a cur, and a tramp every inch of him, and as they approached, he cast a surly glance at them from his blood-shot eyes, and struck to the other side of the road. Eva called the dogs into heel, and cracked her whip; and they all obeyed, save Tim, to whom a strange dog was irresistible. With his short hair erect, and walking as if he were on stilts, he went across and evidently insulted the tramp, for he gave an ominous growl. There was a snap, a yell of pain and indignation from the outraged Tim; the other dogs bolted across to be in the fray, and in less than half a minute a pandemonium raged in the quiet countryside.

Eva succeeded in beating off some of the pack, but Tim and a special pal of his, and his equal in mischievousness, Bill by name, were still engaged, and the tramp, showing more pluck than one would have expected, held onto Tim, and was mauling him rather badly. He was now howling for assistance; and Eva, at her wits' end, was belaboring all three dogs with indiscriminate and quite futile energy. It was a lonely road, all the men of the village were away at work, and Eva was in despair of rescuing her pet from martyrdom, when a young

man came strolling up the road. His hands were in his pockets and a pipe in his mouth; and for a moment he did not take in the significance of the scene; then, when he saw what the trouble was, he hurried up, knocking out his pipe as he came.

At this moment, Eva, driven to desperation, had abandoned the whip, and, at the risk of a bite, was endeavoring to tear Tim from his opponent's formidable jaws, and the young man's first words were:

"Don't do that!"

"What?—Oh, please help me!" cried Eva, without looking up.

"Certainly, if you'll stand back," responded the young man; and, with commendable coolness, he kicked the tramp off Tim and thrust Bill aside.

All would have been well, but, unfortunately, Tim, who never lost a chance of playing to the gallery, thought that he would get in a parting snap at the enemy, and the tramp, resenting this breach of a truce, laid on to him again.

"That's the worst of fox-terriers," remarked the stranger. "Let go, stupid!"

He kicked the tramp again, and caught Tim a sharp knock on the nose. The tramp yielded and retired growling, as Tim, of course, turned and bit his preserver in the hand; but the young man, who had expected something of the kind, held on to him, and Eva, when she could make herself heard, expressed her thanks in agitated incoherence.

"I am so sorry!" she said, apologetically. "It was all Tim's fault! I really do not know what I should have done, if you had not come up."

She stopped suddenly, for the heroic rescuer was staring at her with anything but heroic complacency. Surprise, embarrassment, were so eloquent in his face that Eva stared back with something like a reflection of his expression.

He seemed to be waiting for something, some word from her, for his eyes dwelt upon her questioningly, doubtfully; then, as if he had suddenly remembered his manners, he raised his cap, and said in the most banal of tones:

"Don't—don't mention it. I'm glad I happened to be here—Then he colored, and a faint smile crossed his lips, as if called there by some memory; but the smile brought no responsive one to Eva, who was still rather agitated.

"Do you think he is much hurt?" she asked anxiously. "It was a big dog, and I saw him bite him several times."

The stranger eyed Tim, who was sitting a little apart with an injured air, licking his wounds.

"I don't know. I'll see," he said. He picked up the terrier, who protested strongly, and overhauled him. "He has been bitten, certainly," he said; "but I don't think he is badly hurt. Fox-terriers can take a lot of

this kind of thing. There is nothing broken, anyway; but he's in a frightful mess."

"Oh, yes, yes! He is all over blood, poor thing! Please put him down! He will make you—there's some blood on your wrist already—please put him down!"

The young man set the dog on its feet, and unobtrusively put his hand behind him; but Eva's eyes were sharp, and the little action betrayed him.

"You were bitten," she said, very quietly, and as if she were accusing him of meanness in attempting to conceal the fact.

"I think not," he returned, casually. "Let me see, please," she said, as quietly as before but with a dignified air of command, which, when it is displayed by a woman, and a young and beautiful one, no man can disobey.

So he held out his hand, and she looked at the now bleeding wound with a frown and a sudden pallor. "You have been bitten badly. Which—Which dog did it?"

"I don't know," he replied carelessly; and he did not. "It doesn't matter. I've been bitten scores of times—well, half a dozen times—"

"But not by a strange dog," she broke in, "and that was a strange one. What shall I do?"

She looked at him, and then at the surrounding scenery, and bit her lip with a mixture of responsibility and annoyance on her charming face that made the young man want to smile.

"There is nothing to be done," he said. "I assure you that this"—he touched his hand, which was already beginning to be disagreeably hot and painful—"is not of the least consequence. I am thankful he didn't turn on you. That would have been really serious."

She put this illogical assertion aside with a little gesture of impatience. "You ought to have it cauterized," she said emphatically; "and there is no chemist nearer than Okefield. Will you go there at once?"

He had been looking at her with a strange intensity while they had been speaking, and now he seemed to awaken from a kind of reverie. "Oh, I think not," he said. "Oh, no; there is no need."

"Where are you staying?" she asked. "At the Temples," she added, these being the nearest family.

"No; I'm staying at the inn," he replied. "I am a stranger here; I came down for some fishing." He paused a moment, his eyes fixed steadily on hers, then he added slowly and distinctly: "My name is Lashmore."

His tone, the pause, seemed to indicate an expectation of some response on her part other than the usual and conventional one; and he lowered his eyes with a touch of embarrassment as she merely inclined her head and said easily:

"Mine is Lyndhurst. I live near here," she moved her hand slightly toward the Court. "If you would not mind coming with me—it is quite close. Oh, do be quiet, dogs! One can't hear oneself speak! What is it now?"

It was a carriage coming down the road, and at the sight of it Eva exclaimed with joy and relief:

"Here is my father! Father!"

The carriage stopped, and Sir Talbot got out, and approached them quickly.

"Eva! What is the matter?" he demanded.

With a slightly heightened color, Eva explained, none too coherently, and introduced Tim's preserver and victim; and Sir Talbot, at first much alarmed on her account, turned to Lashmore with genuine gratitude.

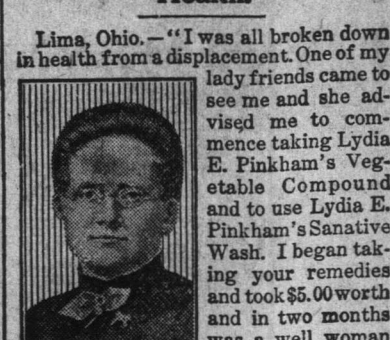
"I am very much obliged to you, sir!" he said. "It is evident that you've saved my daughter from being bitten, and have paid the penalty invariably exacted of those who interfere in quarrels—especially canine ones. The wound should be cauterized at once. Fortunately, I have some caustic at home; if you will come on with us, we will, at any rate, take all the precautions that are available."

He waved his hand toward the carriage, but Lashmore hesitated.

"I really—I can't think of bothering you," he said, with a touch of color in his face. "As I have assured Miss Lyndhurst, the bite is a mere nothing. A little warm water—"

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"We have warm water also," said Sir Talbot, with a smile. There was something about the young man that attracted him, and his hesitation in accepting the invitation pleased Sir Talbot. "Pray don't rob us of the opportunity of expressing our gratitude in something more than mere thanks."

To have stood out any longer seemed impossible; Lashmore followed Eva into the carriage, and they drove off. On the way, Eva gave a clearer and more detailed account of the accident, and Sir Talbot, seeing more plainly the risk she had run, and the service Lashmore had rendered, grew still more favorably impressed by the young man, who sat in well-bred silence, as if it were quite unnecessary for him to protest against the charge of heroism.

"Now, if you'll come into the library with me—" said Sir Talbot, as they entered the hall. Eva ring for some warm water and a towel.

"I'll bring it myself," she said. She ran off, and presently returned with the water and the towel, and stood by while Sir Talbot washed the wound, and applied the stick of caustic.

"Isn't—Isn't it a nasty bite?" she asked, in a low voice.

(To be Continued.)

1690—Figured organdie with "Val." insertion and lace is here shown. The dress is also nice for dimity, voile, lawn, nun's veiling, marquisette, crepe, embroidery, batiste, silk, chiffon and crepe de chine. The skirt is finished with a wide tuck over sides and back, and has a panel over the front, finished with a plait extension at each side seam. The waist fronts are lapped at the closing, and the neck edge has a deep and pretty collar. The long sleeve is in bishop style, with a deep, straight cuff. In elbow length the finish is in "bell" effect. The Pattern is cut in 6 sizes: 34, 36, 38, 40, 42 and 44 inches bust measure. It requires 8½ yards of 44-inch material for a 36-inch size. The skirt—A pattern of this illustration mailed to any address on receipt of 10 cents measures 3½ yards at its lower edge. In silver or stamps.



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