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Miss Patterson and Another

By CLIVE R. FENN

"WHAT are you going to do about Miss Patterson?" said Mrs. Spark, seated comfortably at breakfast.

"Do about her, my dear?" said Mr. Spark. "I am not going to do anything about her. Why should I?"

"Well, now I should have thought that you would be the first to resent it, to see the utter impossibility of it. When I engaged her as governess for Rose I certainly had my doubts as to her fitness for the post; but you, in your rough and ready way, told me to take her and have done with it. Of course, I could see that she would never do. Now there comes this frightful scandal."

"But what sin has she committed?" "What sin? The artful, designing hussy! And your own brother, too!"

Mr. Spark laughed in the assertive way that always got on his wife's nerves.

"I should say that old Jack can take care of himself."

"That is just like you, Ted. You leave me all the horrid responsibility and worry. Of course, the matter cannot be allowed to remain where it is. It is absurd! Monstrous! I will not have it! If your brother has no better idea of the family dignity—well, I will look after it myself. Jack is a baby in the ways of the world. The first girl who sets her cap at him, and he surrenders. He ought to have been married long ago. If he is not looked after he will end by making some ludicrous *mésalliance*."

Mr. Spark sighed.

"Oh, very well, Amy; have it your own way," he said resignedly.

"But it is your way. It is everybody's way. Is your brother to be made the victim of a scheming girl who began to ogle and set her cap at him the moment he came down?"

"She doesn't wear a cap," said Mr. Spark.

"Don't be ridiculous."

"Certainly not, my dear. But look here. You asked Jack down because you wanted to fix up a marriage between him and that—who is she?"

"Miss Vavassour."

"Yes, of course, that's it. You have got it in your head that Jack will make a rush for her."

"So he ought. He's in debt. If he doesn't marry and settle down he'll become a bankrupt."

"If Jack heard you he would swear off matrimony for ever. He's not that sort."

"Then he ought to be."

"What, go and get married to the first girl because he happens to owe a few hundreds?"

"I have no patience with you. What if I did bring him down with a purpose? It's for his good. And you sit there and smile. He actually travelled down with Miss Patterson, and he was not even at the garden-party yesterday when I had arranged everything."

"Well, there he is out in the garden. Call him in and tell him what you think of him. Oh! and there is Miss Patterson with him! I didn't see her."

He rose from the table and went over to the French window.

"Call your brother in," said Mrs. Spark. "Tell him that breakfast is nearly cold. I won't have him flirting with that minx."

"Hallo, Jack! Ship ahoy!" cried Mr. Spark from the window. "Come in to breakfast."

"All right, Ted," was shouted from the garden. "Come along, Miss Patterson."

The two entered by the open win-

dow. Mrs. Spark rose; she was about to say something majestic and severe, but before she could utter a word Jack had given a comprehensive good-morning, and made the governess sit down.

"There's a place, Miss Patterson," he said. "Now, which will you have, tea or coffee—or both?"

"Tea, please," said the governess.

Mrs. Spark looked unutterable things.

"Miss Patterson usually has her breakfast in the nursery," she said austere.

"I dare say; but she isn't going to this morning! We are going golfing to-day, and she hasn't time for the nursery."

Mrs. Spark swept from the room with a frown; and Mr. Spark sighed.

"Golfing to-day, eh, Jack?" he said.

"Yes, my boy, golfing it is," said Jack, with his mouth full of eggs and bacon. "By Jove, Miss Patterson, that walk before breakfast has given me an appetite. You might pour me out another cup of coffee, as you are nearest the coffee pot. Thank you. Going, Ted?"

"Yes; I've some letters to write before I drive over to the Court."

The door closed, and Jack Spark's hand settled down on the small one of Miss Patterson. He rose from the table still keeping hold of that hand, which did not seem reluctant.

The girl got up, too.

"You have made my position very, very difficult," she said demurely. "Mrs. Spark will send for me in a minute and tell me that my services are not required here any more."

"Then you will look out for another place, I suppose?"

"What do you think? Do you imagine that a nursery governess can go about the country playing golf?"

"Look here, Ethel—I met you a week ago on the train, so I've known you long enough to call you Ethel—I want a nursery governess."

"But I couldn't teach you anything."

"You could. Rather. There's that stroke of yours at golf. Where did you learn to play so well?"

"Oh!—oh!—before I became a nursery governess I had a few opportunities!"

"I should just think you had. Why, you are prime at it."

The girl turned with a half-smile as the prim parlourmaid entered the room.

"If you please, Miss Patterson, mistress wishes to speak to you in the morning-room."

"Oh, very well!" said Jack, and he dismissed the maid with a gesture.

"Now, then, it's my play. See here. I've got a few hundred a year—oh! very few, but it will be enough for us! Before you go in there say you will marry me."

"Mr. Spark!"

"No, it's Jack." He caught her round the waist and kissed her.

"Say you will. Quick!"

"Ye—es—I will."

"Good! Now I don't care if it snows."

"Well, it's July; it couldn't."

"Oh, that's all you know about it! You can't know our climate. But you do—you said you had lived in Birmingham all your life."

"Oh, that was a part I was playing!"

"What do you mean?"

Just then Mrs. Spark bristled into the room.

"Miss Patterson," she said, "I expect ready obedience from my servants. I am sorry to have to tell you

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