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A Woman's Love.

CHAPTER I.

It was the sweetest and fairest May morning I ever remember. The English spring-time had reached the summit of highest perfection. Yesterday had been cloudy and showery, and tomorrow might be stormy, but today was transcendent. Our garden beds were gay with flowers and the plants in the conservatory were in full bloom. It had not been an early spring. The hedges had not been "over" with buds in the early days of the month of May. The spring had come "but slowly up our way." The trees wore their tenderest foliage. On every branch of the elms the leaves lay lightly, like delicate green butterflies with golden wings, waiting for the sun to expand them. The yellow-green of the young poplars dancing restlessly, and the leaf-like tips of the birches on the topmost boughs of the beech trees, shone against the clear, sweet blue of the sky. On Wimbledon Common, outside our walls, the silver birches spread their delicate network, and the thorn bushes had a glow upon them like the bloom upon hot-house fruit.

Little white clouds, with no rain in them, but shot through and through with golden light, floated idly across the sky, ready to melt into its blue depths as soon as the sun grew hotter. The birds were delicious in their singing. The clear whistle of the blackbirds, the mocking song of the thrushes, and the sweet, plaintive calls of the starlings, blended with the harsher cawings of the rooks, all their busy and half-hidden among the trees. It was indeed a blithe and gay day for them.

And I, too, was blithe and gay. I felt so light-hearted as I almost ran down the hill to the station, that I could have sung as joyously as the birds, if that had been according to custom. I fancied that the few acquaintances I met looked at me with some astonishment, and smiles as if in spite of themselves. The station-master, whom I had known for years, greeted me with unusual kindness, and put me into a carriage himself. There was every reason why I should be light-hearted. I was the only child of a very rich man; and no cares or anxieties had crossed my path. The common round of my life consisted in balls, concerts, sports and amusements of every kind. I was betrothed to a man of my own rank, and of a very popular regiment; and we were to be married in a few weeks, soon after I was three and twenty, a date my father stipulated for. The diversions of my lot were growing a little stale and monotonous to me; but my marriage would take me to new fields of pleasure, for we were going to India for some years.

The only thing among my roses was my step-mother, who bore the well-earned character of an excellent woman; excellent as a wife, a daughter, and a friend. She was very popular everywhere except at home. But my marriage would rid me of her. No doubt she would be glad to get rid of me.

London was looking its best, for the gloom of winter was gone, and the dust and heat of summer were yet in the future. The window-sills of the houses were bright with flowers, and track-roads of gay-colored plants, skillfully arranged, were being slowly wheeled along the streets. Even in Piccadilly it was a delicious morning. The air had some of the freshness of the breeze on a mountain side; and dainty little cloudlets flecked the narrow band of blue overhead. I passed along the crowded pavement smiling, and it seemed to me as if the passer-by looked pleased to see me. I heard one of them say, "That girl has the spring in her face. Was I ever so light-hearted before?"

I turned under the deep archway leading to the square in front of Burlington House. The pigeons flew up with a flutter of motley wings as a carriage dinged at the door. There were many visitors coming and going incessantly; for the Academy Exhibition was in full swing. I held in my hand a card I had received the day before, containing only the words, "On the line, 4th gallery, No. 283." I almost laughed at my great eagerness to see the painting, for it was my own portrait, and was I not familiar with every line of it? I had enjoyed sitting for it to the rising young artist, George Blandford, the brother of Arthur, my future husband. It had been a pleasant pastime to sit in his studio, and chatter nonsense with the two brothers, as free from care and as happy as myself. But, of course, there could be nothing new to me in the sight of the picture.

I lingered in the vestibule a few

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minutes, waiting for George, to whom I had written the night before, fixing the hour for meeting. Arthur, I knew, could not join us before noon. But my impatience soon mastered me, and with just a slight tinge of vexation at his want of punctuality, I bought a catalogue and threaded my way through the crowd of sight-seers in the first three galleries, scarcely glancing at any of the pictures, till I found myself opposite No. 283.

It was exactly as I had seen it last; certainly prettier than I really was. I had said; not half so pretty, said Arthur. My father had forbidden my name being given, and I looked with some anxiety and curiosity to see what it was called in the catalogue. "No. 283, The Soul of Honor, George Blandford."

I felt my cheeks burn, and I turned away with something like a feeling of shame. The title of my portrait had been first a joke among us, but latterly an amusing mystery between the brothers. Did George call me that because I had insisted on paying a bet I had had with him, and lost on the last Oxford and Cambridge boat race? It seemed to me the only possible thing to do, and it was so trivial a matter.

I sat down on an ottoman near the painting, but with my back to it. George would be sure to seek me there, and it would be pleasant and less fatiguing to go round the galleries with him. I was trembling with shame-faced happiness. That was what Arthur and George thought of me. And yet how easy it was to be honorable.

But the Soul of Honor! I glanced round at the familiar painting—the slim figure of a girl in a simple dress, with clear-cut features, and with a frank, happy expression in the gray eyes. I felt as if I had done before, a touch of disappointment. There was merely a picture of a pretty girl in a becoming dress. It was painted from the surface only. There was really nothing suggestive or ideal in it. Here was no soul. An extraordinary likeness, everybody said; but the manipulation of details. The lace was actually marvelous.

I sat for some time thinking, seriously for me, what honor meant, and how it must bear out every insincere word and ignoble thought. At length a slight strain of apprehension seized upon me. This absence of George Blandford was inexplicable. Yet it was so vague, and I was so little used to introspection that I hardly heeded it, only feeling as if a light cloud was passing over my sunshine. I was about to get up when my eyes fell upon an old man, very poorly clad, in a strange contrast with the throng of fashionable people about him. He held his brown felt hat in his hand, and the light from above fell upon his snow-white hair and his finely-moulded face, which had the color of old ivory.

He was looking carefully at the portrait he sank down on the other side of the ottoman, his back to me, with a sigh of contentment. I was just again moving away, when I saw another elderly man, with a beaming smile upon his face, making his way regardless of pictures and people to the ottoman where I was sitting. He looked as prosperous as the other man looked poor, and I thought half quizzically of Dives and Lazarus. They met and exchanged a few words with the familiarity of old friends.

"Well," said Dives, "so you are enjoying your yearly treat?"
"My only extravagance at present," answered Lazarus. "Yes, I shall feast on the memory of these paintings many a time during the year. Some of them are worth remembering! Look at that pretty, innocent young creature opposite to us. It is a good open, straightforward countenance. How candid and fair she looks! Ah! The Soul of Honor! Well, she looks it."

"Oh! there's no trusting to faces," said Dives, "one of the greatest secrets in London is a good, open, straightforward countenance, as you call it. That man I would have trusted with untold gold. He has been trusted by thousands of poor folks. At least a score of my clerks have invested their savings with him, and most of the other directors are really eminent philanthropists. Talk above highway robbery and burglary! They are not a tenth part as mischievous as these infamous swindling companies, these great London rogues have cheated thousands of poor people out of their hard-earned savings, and ruined their homes. I'm on my way to the Cannon Street office, where there is a meeting of creditors at 1 o'clock. But I'm forgetting. They are our old friends."

(To be continued.)

IN LONDON there is a cat whose partiality for a war and a war so marked that she has selected the top of a dynamo in a power station. She sleeps there calmly and peacefully, while the machinery around and within six inches of her is running at the rate of 2,000 revolutions per minute.

Talking It Over.
When a party of middle-aged women get together alone, a common theme of conversation is their physical ailments. It would be better if these discussions of the ailments peculiar to women took place twenty years earlier in life. If a little of the prudery of modern society were banished, so that young women talked these subjects over among women in middle life.

Good health is the best endowment that a human being can have. Good general health among women is largely dependent upon good local health in a womanly way. Through ignorance and neglect it has become such an ordinary, common-place thing for women to suffer from weakness and disease of the delicate and important feminine organism, that many women have come to look upon these troubles as an unavoidable inheritance. This is a mistake. All troubles of this nature may be cured in the privacy of the home, without undergoing the obnoxious "examinations" and "local treatment" insisted upon by the average physician. Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription gives health, elastic strength and vitality to the sensitive organs concerned. It allays inflammation, heals ulceration and frees from pain. It tones the nerves and builds up the nerve centers. It makes a woman healthy and strong, and thus prepares her for healthy widowhood, capable motherhood and a safe transition at the change of life.

"I want to testify to the great benefit derived from using Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription," writes Mrs. H. Mason, Wynemore Co., N. Y. "I commenced using it about three months before confinement. With my former confinement I suffered greatly, while this one was comparatively easy, owing to the use of the Favorite Prescription."

North Middlesex.

A Lively Gathering at Bornish, West Williams.

Opposition Speakers Given a Bad Half Hour by Mr. T. O. McIntyre.

A Reminder of the Dastardly Tactics Pursued in the 1894 Contest.

Speeches by Mr. Taylor, M.P.P., John McDonald, Hugh McIntyre, A.M., McPhillips of London and Mr. E. B. Smith.

Bornish, West Williams, Feb. 21.—On Friday night last, Mr. W. H. Taylor, M.P., held a meeting in the school house, to which he had invited a large number of people. The school-house was filled, many standing from 8 p.m. When the meeting opened, until a half hour after midnight, at which time the last speaker closed. Mr. Barney Dignan was elected chairman, and asked any representative of the Conservative candidate who desired an opportunity to address the electors to come to the front. The invitation was accepted by Mr. Taylor, M.P., who, being the only Conservative speaker present, was accorded one hour and a half. Mr. Taylor, M.P., came in and was allowed all the time he wished thus giving the Conservative speakers one hour and three-quarters to, as the chairman expressed it, "talk themselves out," as a consequence it was early morning before the meeting broke up after shouting themselves hoarse with ringing cheers for Hardy, Taylor, good government and her Majesty the Queen.

Mr. McDonald, M.P., of Williams, was the first speaker, making on this occasion his "maiden speech." The speaker referred at some length to the wise and economical administration of the affairs of the province by the Liberal party, to their success in educational and agricultural matters, to the simple means adopted by the Liberal government to provide for the unfortunate mentally and financially, to the asylums for the blind, deaf, dumb, insane and poor, and contrasted the small cost per inmate in Ontario with the more expensive institutions of a similar nature in other provinces and in the United States.

Mr. Taylor, M.P., was the next speaker, and received an ovation on ascending the platform. Mr. Taylor thanked those present for the very flattering manner in which he had been received, holding the demonstration not as a personal compliment but as an indication that the electors of West Williams were still friends and supporters of good government by the Liberal party and that it was not in their opinion time for a change. Mr. Taylor never would be until there was good reason for it. Four years since the speaker was elected to represent North Middlesex as an independent supporter of the Liberal government, and during that time he had voted against the government on two occasions only, and every vote he had given had been conscientiously bestowed in what he believed to be the true interest of the province, and, if returned at the coming election, he felt that he would be the best qualified to support the Hardy-Ross government so long as it should be carried on as the Liberal government had been carried on for the past quarter of a century. He expected that when the next 25 years were passed away that those who with untold gold he had been trusted by thousands of poor folks. At least a score of my clerks have invested their savings with him, and most of the other directors are really eminent philanthropists. Talk above highway robbery and burglary! They are not a tenth part as mischievous as these infamous swindling companies, these great London rogues have cheated thousands of poor people out of their hard-earned savings, and ruined their homes. I'm on my way to the Cannon Street office, where there is a meeting of creditors at 1 o'clock. But I'm forgetting. They are our old friends."

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"Fellow Catholics, remember who are your friends. Four years ago, who stood with you shoulder to shoulder? Was it not our broad-minded Liberal friends? Who was it that formed a society to deprive Catholics of work? Who was it that would not buy from a Catholic or give him work? It was these same Conservatives who are now trying to hoodwink us, patting us on the back and making believe to be our friends. They brought Mr. Bartlett here four years ago with his little song. This time it is Mr. McIntyre and Hugh McIntyre, and they should be ashamed of themselves. If Mr. McIntyre had brought 'Toome' with him and Margaret L. Sheppard, too, wouldn't they make a pretty quartet? (Laughter and cheers.) Mr. McIntyre made a most vigorous appeal to those present to stick to their friends and to place no confidence in men who had tried to use them so ill only a short time since."

MR. E. B. SMITH.
Mr. Smith deplored the personal attack made by Messrs. McIntyre and Hugh McIntyre. He paid a high tribute to the ability and standing of Mr. George C. Gibbons and spoke of his business connection with Hon. Justice McMahon, one of the brightest ornaments of the judicial bench, and with the late lamented George McNabb. So many of the audience knew what Mr. Gibbons' professional and social standing was, and the vindication provoked the hearty applause of all present. Then Hon. Mr. Ross was referred to, his career traced from the farm to his seat in the cabinet, and the farmers present were only too delighted at the opportunity presented to mark by their applause the vindication of Canada's greatest and most brilliant "farmer's son."

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