

*Continued from Page 7.*

safely turning into the Park Lodge-gates. After which he went back radiant and hungry, with an amazing appetite—one of those powerfully healthy all-grist-to-my-mill kind of appetites that would make confirmed dyspepsies shiver in their shoes to witness.

"It's a strange thing," said Jimmie confidentially, "though I've remarked it before, and when a fellow's been out all day with a pretty girl, he always comes home hungry; why is it?"

"I don't know," said Delaunay, and groaned.

The next morning after breakfast the two hired a couple of horses and rode gaily away over the velvet sward towards Beachy Head, returning to lunch at the hotel in the best possible spirits.

"How long do you suppose we shall stay here?" asked Bell over lunch.

"Only got leave of absence for a week," replied Delaunay.

"We shall be broke by the end of a week," commented Jimmie Bell, sipping his burgundy, "so it'll be long enough."

"It's no good being economical for a bare seven days, is it?"

"Certainly not," rejoined his friend. "We're only living at the rate of a thousand a year for a week, that's nothing."

"Do you think Miss Carmichael will expect presents?"

"Don't be ridiculous. Teddie: She's got everything she wants." He paused a second, then thoughtfully added, "except a man, and they're always expensive."

At four o'clock the two, more faultlessly arrayed than ever, presented themselves at Park Lodge. After the usual preliminaries, including a graphic description of their ride, the pup was produced. The dog, though suspicious, permitted Delaunay to stroke him, but evinced the greatest reluctance to Jimmie Bell's neighbourhood, and when he would have playfully caught it, ran to Miss Carmichael stationed itself beside her, and actually barked at him.

"I could almost wish the dog was really mine, but you are the rescuer, Mr. Delaunay."

"If you will only accept it," said the young man, "I shall always feel proud of having rescued it from such an unfeeling brute as that man showed himself to be."

"Suppose the man were to claim it?"

"I'll take good care he doesn't," said Bell.

"That's rather arbitrary," rejoined Miss Carmichael, laughing nevertheless.

After the afternoon tea, with its cheerful clatter, the conversation received fresh impetus, and Jimmie Bell covertly watched Amy as the dainty teamaker. Then Miss Carmichael suggested a walk through the conservatories.

"Amy dear, you may like to show Mr. Delaunay through, Mr. Bell will doubtless escort me." The two had risen. "You know," continued Miss Carmichael *sotto voce*, "Mr. Delaunay may wish to talk a little with his cousin."

Mr. Bell had a vivid idea that it would be much better if it had been the other way about, and that Delaunay's place was by the side of the unsuspecting lady, forging fetters while he had the chance and having an extremely keen sense of the ridiculous, and not being always able to control himself, he suddenly went off into fits of laughter.

Miss Carmichael stood by in gentle dismay for a minute or so, but Bell still laughed, till the contagion, so to speak, seized her, and she was obliged to laugh herself, though she could not have told you what she was laughing at; indeed, she half waited for an explanation. The other two had gone.

"Excuse me, Miss Carmichael, sometimes"—he was searching for an excuse—"sometimes a sudden thought strikes me—absurdity of law courts—I'm a barrister, you know, and I have to laugh—that man bringing an action for his dog," and he roared again.

"But, really, Mr. Bell," said the lady a little flustered, "might such a thing happen?"

"Miss Carmichael," said Bell, wiping his eyes, "leave the case in my hands. If I could arrest him, I'd prosecute him for cruelty to animals. I never saw a more flagrant act of brutality in all my life."

"I like to hear young men speak so warmly," said the unsuspecting spinster; so Jimmie determined to improve upon the occasion, and they traversed the larger of the two drawing-rooms he dwelt upon Delaunay's tender-heartedness, and his noble desire to alleviate the sufferings of the poor. "I like to think of charitable men," commented the lady with great warmth. "I may tell you, Mr. Bell, that in my own small way I try to help some poor people in that terrible East-end abyss of London, but private charity is of little avail. I begin to think that only the co-operation of the rich with means judiciously applied can be any real solution to the question."

"That's exactly what Delaunay says," remarked the unabashed Jimmie.

"Your friend has noble sentiments."

"Only those who know him can appreciate his true worth."

"I'm sure, Mr. Bell, he has a very true friend in yourself."

"I shall never leave him till he is married!"

"Oh, then—is he engaged?"

"Miss Carmichael, he is heart-whole; he has different views of life to—well, to myself. He is a far better man; no young girl would satisfy him, he likes mind and matter, a contrast to his own light-hearted disposition, you know, light and shade so to say, a happy mixture." The truth was, that Bell was getting mixed himself, so he broke off his panegyric and fell to admiring a large *Osmunda regalis*.

Miss Carmichael was not only fond of flowers, but was a good horticulturist herself. Still, at the moment human problems had just a little more interest for her, especially with this blue-eyed, fresh-faced young fellow who did not seem to have a care of his own in the world. Presently the conversation worked round again to personal topics, until Jimmie Bell, in the friendliest way, had told Miss Carmichael all about himself.

"I thought barristers got briefs quite easily," said the lady musingly.

"They do—when solicitors send them," said Jimmie.

"Do you know of Messrs. Growl, Gribble, and George?"

"Yes, Bedford-row; very good firm."

"The title of my Welsh property is in dispute. Do you understand these matters?"

"It is my especial line."

"Well," said the lady as they prepared to return, "we will speak about this matter again. I wonder how it is we've missed Amy; perhaps they went into the garden."

Upon entering the drawing-room they found Ted Delaunay skillfully playing an operatic air, and Amy looking through some pieces of music.

There was a kind of delightful audacity about the way the two young men made themselves at home that was not without a bewildering charm to the Scotch maiden lady. Delaunay rose as Miss Carmichael entered.

"I was trying to remember a bit of the new opera."

"Do go on, please," said his hostess; and he re-seated himself, and played the *morceau* through with brilliancy. At its conclusion he turned and said,

"Do you often go up to town, Miss Carmichael?"

"Yes, in the season."

"Because I should like you to hear Revetti; her voice is perfect. Why not go up next week with Miss Tudor and go to the Italian Opera? I'm sure my friend and I will only be too glad to escort you."

Bell did not want to hear any more, feeling that Teddie was acting in a properly spirited and audacious manner, and should be left with perfect safety; so by several adroit movements, he managed to detach Amy from the perusal of music books till he had got her to a distant window, on the pretext of asking her in which direction the Meads lay. As he at once began pressing her to plead with Miss Carmichael for an immediate visit to town, it is presumable that the Meads did not satisfy him.

"I'm sorry you leave so soon," Miss Carmichael was saying as Delaunay rose to go. "Then" and she turned smilingly to Bell, "I may expect you to dinner to-morrow evening. It will be very quiet; a rubber perhaps, and a little music."