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The Heir to Beecham Park

CHAPTER XXII.

"Pray be sensible, Stuart," she said, sharply; "you were never like this before. It galls me, it wounds me to see you wasting your days down here, pottering about on the farms, and for what?"

"Some one must look after things, mother; my father cannot, and you have often complained to me of the bad management, so I have determined to relieve you of further anxiety."

"Fehaw! Do I want my son to turn steward? I have to-day received a letter from Lady Bayliffe strongly recommending me a manager, and I have all but settled to engage him."

"Then don't do it," promptly replied Stuart. "He is not wanted."

"He is wanted! I shall not allow you, Stuart, to do this kind of work!"

"My dear mother, I am of age!"

Mrs. Crosbie was silent, and Stuart, looking up, saw the pain and perplexity on her face.

"Forgive me, mother," he added, moving toward her. "I am very selfish. Tell me what you want me to do, and if it is in my power I will undertake it."

"I want you to rise in the world; I want you to be famous, Stuart."

"Fame is not to be bought, mother."

"It is within your reach. Contest Chesterham at the next election. You will be returned with an immense majority. The rest will follow."

"I have no brains for politics," declared Stuart. "I cannot do it."

"There is no such word as 'cannot!' returned Mrs. Crosbie, vigorously. "If I were in your place, Stuart, how differently I would act! You are wasting your life."

Stuart walked back to the window.

"I will not give you a decided answer now, mother," he said. "Give me two days to consider."

"Willingly," she agreed, "and weigh all things well. Remember, you will afford me the greatest happiness in life if you agree to this and to another wish."

"To make you happy, mother, I would do much," Stuart responded, raising her hand to his lips. "What is it?"

Mrs. Crosbie drew a long breath.

"That you will marry."

"Marry!" repeated Stuart, dropping her hand, while his face grew white and his brow darkened. "That mother, is impossible."

"I have not spoken to you on this subject before, Stuart, though it has been one very near my heart. You have been troubled; but you are not my son if you have not pride sufficient to drown and wash away forever any trace of your trouble. It is not for a Crosbie to submit to insult and humiliation."

"I submit to none!" retorted Stuart, in a quiet, clear voice.

"You have been deceived," his mother declared, coldly and proudly; "by one who was not worthy even a second thought."

"Mother!" he exclaimed, hurriedly,

through Mrs. Crosbie's mind when she was alone. Would Vane, after all, bring him happiness? She had tricked and deceived him. But this momentary feeling was soon lost in the glad thrill of ambition that stirred her breast. Stuart married, and in Parliament, she had nothing more to wish for.

In a maze of troubled thoughts Stuart strode down the wet path. Vane loved him; and yet she had put her own feelings on one side and ministered tenderly, thoughtfully, kindly to him! What depths of womanly sweetness in such a sacrifice—what a generous, noble nature! His heart warmed with gratitude toward her, though it cooled again as he remembered that she loved him. What could he do—whether turn in this dilemma? Vane was dear to him as a friend, as a sister, but not as the woman he would make his wife. And to make any woman his wife now, when such sadness darkened his life, was almost impossible. What must he do? Could he let her live on alone with the sorrow he knew from experience to be so bitter wearing out her heart? Would it be a generous return for all she had done, for the noble tenderness with which she had tried to bring him happiness? No, no, a thousand times no! If he could no longer have joy, if gladness were gone forever, he had still the peaceful pleasure of bringing gladness to another's heart. His mother was right—it was his duty to face the world, and Vane should be his wife.

Even while he thought thus, his brow contracted with pain, a spasm of regret shot through him, the first of his first love in all its sweet returned and enthralled him once more. It was impossible! He paced up and down under the wet, dripping trees, trying to calm the tumult in his breast, with a longing for solitude and peace one moment, and a piteous thought of Vane's great love the next. It was a terrible struggle, and it lasted through the night hours, never ceasing till the dawn, when, pale and worn, yet with a steadfast look of determination about his mouth and in his handsome eyes, he conquered it. He was brave and strong—sorrow could not crush him; but Vane—poor, delicate Vane—she could not endure trouble; and so, if indeed his mother had spoken aright, he would go to Vane, and ask her to be his wife.

The gloomy weather in London did not tend to lessen Miss Charteris's despondent mood. She was peevish, bored, discontented, longing to leave England and go to a warmer climate, yet feeling that she could not give up her desire and declare herself defeated. She was waiting only for a week or two to pass, and then she would go down once more to Crosbie Castle and make a final effort. This idea was occupying her mind as she sat one dull, wet afternoon gazing out into the dismal streets, with a gloomy look spoiling her pretty face. She heard the door open, but did not stir, imagining it to be her mother. The stillness that followed caused her to turn; and, looking around, she met Stuart's eyes.

"Stuart!" she exclaimed, her face flushing. "You have given me quite a start! I did not know—"

"I have been watching you for the last two minutes, Vane; you were lost in thought. Whose memory were you honoring by such deep meditation?"

Stuart looked very handsome, and something in his manner thrilled her with joy.

"I was thinking of Crosbie," she answered. "Come to the fire, Stuart; you must be frozen. And how is Aunt Constance—and why have you come? am very glad to see you."

Stuart stood silent, slowly removing his gloves; then he moved nearer to her side by the fire. Vane was looking lovely; the plaintive sadness of her face, which was tinged with a delicate flush, touched him. He had read it well in the first moment of his entrance, and traced, as he thought, the marks of her trouble.

"I have come to see you, Vane," he told her quietly, "because I have something to ask you."

Vane felt her heart beat wildly.

"Yes, Stuart," she said faintly.

"Vane, you must know my innermost heart—you were my confidante, my friend. I want you to continue to be my friend, the aid and trust of companions—I want you to be my wife."

Vane stood silent, her head bent. She felt faint, and, now that success had come at last, she could not speak.

(To be continued.)

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Mr. G. D. Pickers, Dominion Government Superintendent of Insurance, in Toronto Globe Financial Survey, January 18, 1925.

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CROSS-WORD PUZZLE

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THE INTERNATIONAL SYNDICATE.

When We Look Up at Eternity

"The eclipse revealed to Londoners recently the marvellous beauty of their atmosphere," says the Editor of the Sunday Express. "As a rule Londoners pay no attention to the cloud-scapes above their heads. They seldom look higher than the shop windows. Many of them walk along the street with their eyes fixed on the pavement. They seldom lift their gaze to the great dome of smoke-wreaths and trailing vapours that entrances the artist."

"They discovered that there is no sky in the world so marvellously coloured as their own. The sun was not brutal. It was bland. The breath of London shifted its beams and transformed them into a wistful luminosity that gleamed ghostly as the coin of the moon stealthily crept across its delicate circumference. Smoked glass was a comfort, but not a necessity. The march of the moon could be watched with awe and amazement."

"It was more than a rare show. The petty life of mortals does not often pause to survey the solemn dance of the sun and moon. We lack the imaginative power of seeing ourselves as our fellow planets see us. But when the mystical smoke-veil of London enables us to watch the dark disc of the moon moving majestically across the pale disc of the sun we catch a glimpse of the vast cosmic mystery which no astronomer can unravel."

"It shocks our serene egotism to be confronted with interstellar space and to realize that man and his whirling home are only a minute portion of the everlasting drama of the universe. It humbles our pride and abashes our learning to snatch a swift glance at the inscrutable, inexplicable and unfathomable machinery of eternity."

"And yet there is comfort in the conviction that there is law and design in the great grave procession of suns and moons and stars. Punctual are the clock of the sun and the clock of the moon. They fall not. Some power guides their journeyings and controls their orbits. It is not a blind power, for the mind of man can trace its errorless promediation and its flawless rules. Stable are the stars, even as the seasons and the tides are stable. It is a consolation to know that the great motions and curves of the dwellers in infinite space are not anarchical or capricious. There is a hand on the helm."

"And the unpaintable and indescribable loveliness of the dyed skyscapes brings us a tender assurance of benignity and compassion. Our dreams and visions are not baseless. The revelation of beauty in the evanescent wreck that fades and wanes almost ere it is created confirms our faith in Natura Benigna. Shadows though they are, and though we pursue them, the wonders of the eclipse declare the glory of God. In a brazen age it is good to be steeped in reverences, and in awe even for one brief hour."

—Boston Transcript.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SOLVING CROSS-WORD PUZZLES

Start out by filling in the words of which you feel reasonably sure. These will give you a clue to other words crossing them, and they in turn to still others. A letter belongs in each white space, words starting at the numbered squares and running either horizontally or vertically or both.

HORIZONTAL

- 1—Author of a famous story
- 2—Foot
- 3—A species of snake (pl.)
- 4—Pertaining to the kidney
- 5—Alot
- 6—Puritan
- 7—sacred image or picture in Greek church
- 8—Wiles
- 9—Narrow strip of fabric
- 10—Dampener and cooler
- 11—Held together
- 12—Fruit of the pine tree
- 13—A medieval trading vessel
- 14—To cover
- 15—To rest at length
- 16—Singing voice
- 17—To equip
- 18—Over (post.)
- 19—Western State (abbr.)
- 20—Before
- 21—Frequent (post.)
- 22—One of the months
- 23—An excuse, or its grounds
- 24—Peanut (Southern)
- 25—To pass unnoticed
- 26—Soil
- 27—A ship's jolly-boat
- 28—Girl's name
- 29—Illegal interest
- 30—Personal pronoun
- 31—Ancient Greek physician, "father of medicine"
- 32—A state of disorder
- 33—Seven days
- 34—One of the constellations

VERTICAL

- 1—A grating of parallel bars
- 2—To can again
- 3—A New Englander
- 4—Possessive pronoun
- 5—Pertinent, apposite
- 6—Median province of Greece
- 7—Chair
- 8—A substance made from repp, wood-pulp, etc.
- 9—Used in a winter sport
- 10—A bow, an arch
- 11—Girl's name (familiar)
- 12—Egg-shaped
- 13—To whip
- 14—A Roman emperor noted for cruelty
- 15—Reality
- 16—Refuse matter
- 17—Any animal seized by another for food
- 18—Vast periods of time
- 19—Id est, Latin for "that is" (abbr.)
- 20—A metal-bearing vein
- 21—Prefix, assimilated form of in
- 22—Fine filaments
- 23—To render tough by heating and cooling
- 24—A silly creature
- 25—To move with a lever
- 26—To make ill
- 27—Substance added to paint to make it dry quickly
- 28—Moody and sileat
- 29—Burden
- 30—Sole, single
- 31—Girl's name
- 32—Reverential fear
- 33—Small

Fine Old Hen

Lord Fisher tells of this blunt but amusing compliment paid to his country by an American admiral. It was at a dinner. Fisher had made a speech in which he said some nice things about America, and at the conclusion of it the admiral arose and reciprocated by saying: "It was a fine old hen that hatched the American eagle."—Boston Transcript.

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1924 Marriage Slump

The Registrar-General of London, England, states in his quarterly returns that the lowest marriage rate ever recorded was that in the first quarter of this year. There were 29,714 fewer marriages than in the last quarter of 1923.

Crepe frocks may be a little bit of a fad, but it is being worn in this season.

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