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THE FAIR IMPOSTOR.

CHAPTER XVI. HER SOUL SHINES THROUGH HER EYES.

(Continued.)

Good-morning, Mr. Slade, she said, with a smile. 'I will go and find papa.' And, with a slight inclination of the head, she glided away from him.

Dawson Slade sank into a seat, and looked round, with a strange, mystified expression. Not a sign of embarrassment, not a flicker of the calm eyebrows, nor a quiver of the red lips! Could it be possible that he was mistaken? Had he dreamed that she wore that look of surprise, dread, defiance, last night? Was she only like Hilda Fane?

The door opened, and she entered again, with Sir Talbot on her arm. Dawson Slade had seen him years ago—a tall, upright, iron-visaged man, with stern eyes and mouth. He could scarcely reconcile the bent, gentle, sinking, old man with that figure of his memory.

'Mr. Slade? Yes, yes,' said Sir Talbot, extending his thin, white hand. 'Glad to see you. Not overcome by your exertions of last night? You played your part well, Mr. Slade. An ornament to the real stage. I said so at the time, and I repeat it. How are their graces? Sorry to hear that Gerald is so unwell. You are an old friend of his? Let me see—let me see—it is some years since I saw you; you have not been at the Grange for—'

'Half a dozen years, Sir Talbot,' said Dawson Slade. 'Have scarcely been in England, indeed.'

'Ah, traveling, said Sir Talbot, nodding affably, his hand toying carressingly with Lillian's white sleeve, his eyes wandering to her face with that strange look of anxious, craving affection. 'And where have you been?'

'In too many places to mention,' replied Dawson Slade, and as he spoke he leaned forward so that his face was in the shadow, while the

beautiful one beside Sir Talbot was in the full sunlight. 'My last place of sojourn was in America.'

'Ah, yes—quite new ground,' said Sir Talbot. 'We did not go so far in my day. America—New York, and so on.'

'Yes,' said Dawson Slade, softly, his dark eyes fixed on the downcast ones of Lillian. America—New York, and so on.'

'Yes,' said Dawson Slade, softly, his dark eyes fixed on the downcast ones of Lillian. 'The last city was—San Francisco.'

As he spoke, Lillian rose. A flower had fallen from a vase on a table near her; she replaced it, and carelessly arranged the bouquet.

'Yes, yes,' said Sir Talbot; 'and you are not sorry to get back to England, and England is not sorry to have you back,' he added, with his old world courtesy.

Dawson Slade inclined his head. 'We cannot spare men of talent like yourself, Mr. Slade,' Sir Talbot went on. 'I have your performance last night fresh in my memory, and I thank you for an intellectual treat.'

'You are a connoisseur, Mr. Slade,' he said. 'That is in favour of mine.'

'A Kneller,' said Slade; 'and a fine specimen, too!'

'They tell me that there are two better ones in the portrait gallery; but we won't bore you with family portraits, Mr. Slade.'

'Nothing delights me more,' was the quiet, low-toned reply; 'I am fond of physiognomy, Sir Talbot; there is more to be learned 'from studying faces than we imagine, I think.'

'True, true,' murmured Sir Talbot. 'Yes,' went on Dawson Slade, 'one time, and not so long ago, I used to pride myself on the possession of a retentive memory for faces, and I think even now that I do not forget a face easily.'

'As he spoke, his eyes wandered from Sir Talbot's placid face to the beautiful one beside him, and rested there.

She was looking down as he spoke, touching with her feet a rose that had dropped from her dress. As he spoke, she looked up swiftly, and her eyes met his. A faint, momentary quiver passed over the half-smiling lips; then her eyes sank again, not suddenly, but leisurely, to the flower at her feet.

'A gift,' said Sir Talbot; 'quite a gift, and an uncommon one, though it might be thought otherwise. Speaking of that, I remember a story of a man who, like you, had a quick eye for the points in a face, who was able to identify a burglar who had broken into his house. The man wore a mask as low as his mouth, and the gentleman, though he caught sight of him for a moment only, noticed that his moustache grew a little lower on the right side than on the left. This gave a peculiar expression to the lower part of the face, and by that he identified the prisoner, who was—it is years ago—hanged! A useful gift in that case, Mr. Slade!'

Dawson Slade laughed, and, stooping, picked up the flower, and handed it to Lillian.

'I hope I may never be called upon to use mine in that fashion.'

'No, no—just so,' assented Sir Talbot. 'Yes,' he added, rambling on, identification is a ticklish thing; I have met with some strange cases in my time—I remember one at this moment, a successful attempt at personation. I forget the exact details; but the impostor enjoyed the fruits of his fraud, a large estate, till the day of his death. He would have been buried under his assumed title, but remorse compelled him to confess at the last hour. The rogue confessed, also, that he had never enjoyed a happy

moment during all his years of wrongful possession.

'Fear of detection or the return of the right man, I suppose?' said Dawson Slade, with placid curiosity.

'No; for, if I remember rightly, he had murdered the right man, and had, apparently, proved his identity so clearly that—Yes, my dear!' he broke off, for Lillian had drawn her arm away, and had dropped a low murmur.

'Is it not very hot up here?' she said, with a smile that served to show up the sudden pallor of her face.

'Yes, yes how thoughtless of me! And I have startled you with my foolish stories!' broke in Sir Talbot anxiously. 'The window! Would you be so good, Mr. Slade?'

But Dawson Slade did not wait to be requested; the window was already open; and he was back again by her side, with a chair in his hand. But she put it aside with her hand, gently but firmly.

'No, thanks; I am not at all faint—but it was hot, was it not? Well, papa?'

'No, no, my dear,' said Sir Talbot, his anxious eyes glued to her face. 'Come, let us go back. Mr. Slade can see the portraits on some other occasion.'

Dawson Slade bowed; a swift gleam of relief played over Lillian's face, but it faded again instantly as Sir Talbot went on:

'And yet this is the quickest way to your room—for you must go and rest, my darling. Ah, last night was too much for you.'

'Well, I will go to please you,' she murmured, and they passed on. In a few steps they came to the entrance of the small gallery at the end of the corridor, where hung the family portraits, and in which Harold smoked the obnoxious cigar.

Here a smaller corridor led to her room.

With a bow to Dawson Slade, she was turning away, on Sir Talbot's arm, when suddenly, as if obeying an impulse, she stopped, and, turning back, said, quickly but quietly:

'No, it is too hot in my room, and I am quite, quite well. I would rather go on with you, papa, for it is cooler here, now that the window is open.'

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MULLALY'S MOTION

Defeated by Casting Vote of the Mayor.

At last night's meeting of the Civic Board, the motion of Councillor Mullaly, asking for a special audit of the Council's affairs covering the last four years, came up for discussion. The Mayor and the full Board were present, and also representatives of the News and Herald.

At 11.30, the notice of motion of Councillor Mullaly came up for discussion, and for more than an hour, occupied the attention of the Board, during which a heated debate was kept up, particularly between Councillors Mullaly and Martin.

Mr. Mullaly, in bringing forward the resolution, intimated that he was not prompted by ulterior motives, and that he in no way wished to reflect on the conduct of the past two Councils. The present Board, however, contained five new men and he thought it was due to those to know how business had been and was conducted. The people, he demanded an audit, and he felt sure that if an expense were incurred, the public would willingly pay for it.

Mr. Ellis—Are you asking an audit because of your own pride or its officials? Councillor Mullaly—I'm only here long enough to know some keeps books around here; but as to how they are kept, I can't offer an opinion.

Councillor Channing—Have you considered the cost of an audit? Councillor Mullaly—No; that is a secondary consideration; but I believe that it would be money well spent, as the public is asking for it.

Mayor Ellis—If Councillor Mullaly would examine the books himself, and then found anything wrong, he could make a specific charge, and an audit would follow.

Councillor Mullaly—Mr. Mayor, you might as well ask me to conduct the audit. I came here as a Councillor, not as a book-keeper. If I made a specific charge, then an investigation would have to follow. I'm making no charge, but only asking for an audit.

Mayor Ellis—Under the Municipal Act, we have an audit every month by the Auditor-General. Councillor Mullaly—So far as I can see, Mr. Mayor, that is only a check which you speak of. The Auditor-General comes in, and simply sees that the vouchers correspond with the statements submitted. He does not go over the books, as an Auditor, that is, he does not know whether there has been extravagance or waste on the part of officials. On the statement of arrears, submitted to-night, we find that \$70,000 was due Dec. 31st last; and, glancing through the names, I find some who are well able to pay up. Surely the Board had nothing to fear if a special audit were held. It has come under my notice, recently, that estimates have been given for certain works, and instead of being near or about the price figured on when the job would be finished, the cost would be double the estimate. What the public wants to know is, has this money been spent judiciously; have more men that were necessary been employed; have too much been paid for materials, etc.?

Mayor Ellis—The proposition would come with better force if you had gone into matters, and went over the books. Councillor Mullaly—I have just gone over this statement of arrears. I say, and I can't find out whether the delinquents owe for one or ten years, though I can find some on the list who owe as much as \$672.00, \$649.50, and others \$300 and \$400. If an audit were held, we could find out these matters.

Mayor Ellis—The books are audited by the Auditor-General every month. Councillor Mullaly—Are all the books at the disposal of the Auditor-General, Mr. Mayor? Mayor Ellis—Yes. Councillor Mullaly—Will you tell me if he always had access to the arrears book? Mayor Ellis—I can't say; but he has a right to. Councillor Mullaly—That's not the answer, Sir; did he— Here it was explained by the Secretary that the Auditor did not go over the roll of arrears. Councillor Mullaly—Then it is not a complete audit, and the sooner we have one the better.

at a future meeting.

Councillor RYAN—Do I understand from you, Mr. Mayor, that the present system of auditing is not a complete one? Mayor Ellis—Yes; it is not exactly complete. Councillor RYAN—Then, for this reason I must support the motion of Councillor Mullaly, and will second his motion. Councillor MARTIN—We should consider this matter seriously. I reiterate that there is a reflection on the old Council, and certain insinuations have been made to-night that are unfair. Councillor MULLALY—Mr. Mayor, I ask you, do you think that I'm reflecting on you, by bringing in this motion. Mayor Ellis—I have nothing to hide; but there is a reflection. Councillor MULLALY—I'm sorry you think the latter. Councillor RYAN—Mr. Mayor, was there ever a compromise made with any person, who was in arrears, for a considerable sum. Mayor Ellis—Yes; in one instance. It was about the time of the Crash, and the person was 'hard up.' Councillor MULLALY—There were quite a number 'hard up,' the time of the Crash, Mr. Mayor. Mayor Ellis—I think, if Councillor Mullaly would submit to a Committee of investigation going into the matter, it would be better, and would cost nothing. Councillor MULLALY—The only thing is an audit. Councillor MYRICK—I cannot support the motion, as there does not appear sufficient cause for an audit being made; and again, we don't know what the expense will be. Councillor COAKER—I think Councillor Mullaly could get at the matter some other way, and that he should leave it over to another meeting. Councillor MULLALY—Now or never, Mr. Mayor. A supreme calmness fell over the Council after this, and for about three minutes the full Board considered the matter in silence. Suddenly Councillor Mullaly rose to his feet and said: 'Say, Mr. Mayor, let us take a walk.' The motion was then put, the vote being:

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Councillor RYAN—Do I understand from you, Mr. Mayor, that the present system of auditing is not a complete one? Mayor Ellis—Yes; it is not exactly complete. Councillor RYAN—Then, for this reason I must support the motion of Councillor Mullaly, and will second his motion. Councillor MARTIN—We should consider this matter seriously. I reiterate that there is a reflection on the old Council, and certain insinuations have been made to-night that are unfair. Councillor MULLALY—Mr. Mayor, I ask you, do you think that I'm reflecting on you, by bringing in this motion. Mayor Ellis—I have nothing to hide; but there is a reflection. Councillor MULLALY—I'm sorry you think the latter. Councillor RYAN—Mr. Mayor, was there ever a compromise made with any person, who was in arrears, for a considerable sum. Mayor Ellis—Yes; in one instance. It was about the time of the Crash, and the person was 'hard up.' Councillor MULLALY—There were quite a number 'hard up,' the time of the Crash, Mr. Mayor. Mayor Ellis—I think, if Councillor Mullaly would submit to a Committee of investigation going into the matter, it would be better, and would cost nothing. Councillor MULLALY—The only thing is an audit. Councillor MYRICK—I cannot support the motion, as there does not appear sufficient cause for an audit being made; and again, we don't know what the expense will be. Councillor COAKER—I think Councillor Mullaly could get at the matter some other way, and that he should leave it over to another meeting. Councillor MULLALY—Now or never, Mr. Mayor. A supreme calmness fell over the Council after this, and for about three minutes the full Board considered the matter in silence. Suddenly Councillor Mullaly rose to his feet and said: 'Say, Mr. Mayor, let us take a walk.' The motion was then put, the vote being:

For. Mullaly. Against. Martin. Ryan. Coaker. Channing. Myrick.

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