

UNCLE DICK;

Or, The Result of Diplomacy and Tact.

CHAPTER III.

For nearly a week—before and after noon—they met. It was a sheltered spot Miss Mivvins walked out to each day. She had selected it on account of its freedom from cold winds; there was a seat on which to sit and read. At the same time a watchful eye could be kept on her playing-on-the-sands charge. Masters had always used it. Neither now gave it up because of the other. Each would have scornfully repudiated a suggestion that the regular seeking of it arose from any other reason. For instance, that it arose from anticipation of the other's presence.

But would the repudiation have been honestly grounded? Cupid alone knows. The love-god is a deity enshrined in mystery. He never reveals the secrets of the wonders he performs. Were it possible to see the hand which lets loose the arrow, probably there would be many a stepping aside to avoid it. The sudden striking of the dart makes it so deadly—wounds to the heart.

Gracie and the author became fast friends. She was a winsome little soul, and children have their own methods of creating friendships. Masters met her advances more than half-way: was as fond of children as he was of flowers.

His friends—the nice friends who feel privileged to say nasty things—by reason of that fondness, professed to see in it a chance of his redemption. They admitted a possibility of his becoming humanized some day: said there was at least hope for him.

Beyond a good-morning, and occasionally a remark on one of the tenses of the weather—past, present or future—the meetings were bare of conversation, so far as the adults were concerned.

Masters would have been more than glad to talk. Perhaps natural nervousness prevented his setting the conversational ball rolling. For he admired his companion of the seat with a fervent admiration—unable to label the feeling, as yet, by any other name.

Her presence did not disturb him now in his seclusion. She seemed to be in keeping with his thoughts. His thoughts of her harmonized with the surroundings—she belonged to them.

A vague sort of wonder took possession of him; how it was that he had never missed her—never known what was lacking. The more he saw of her, the more his admiration grew.

Admiration is the kind of thing which develops rapidly, once it germinates. In this instance the seed had thrown deep roots. Master's heart seemed likely to prove fruitful soil.

With Gracie he stood well. That, he felt, was a making of headway; for the governess unquestionably loved her charge. On the principle of love me, love my dog, he was acting wisely—apart from the pleasure it gave him—in cultivating the little one's affection.

When the child discovered his ability to manufacture stories she instantly—the exacting nature of her sex in its dealings with man manifested itself at an early age—demanded to be told one.

That was the introduction of the wedge's thin end; brought about a little change in the current of the elders' conversation. The lady in black came out of the ice-bound silence, fringed by a frigid Good-morning and Good-afternoon; saying—

"You must not let Gracie worry you."

The lashes went up as she spoke and he got a good view of those lovely eyes of hers. They held him spellbound. The evident admiration in his glance caused the lashes to fall, and he, released from the momentary thralldom, exclaimed—

"Worry? How could she?"

"She is a perfect little glutton for stories. Once you indulge her, she will do her best to make your life unbearable with her clamor for more. With food of that sort with-in reach she is a regular Oliver Twist."

A gratified little laugh—he thought he saw the door open a little wider—accompanied his answer:

"Oh, story-telling is in my particular line! I am full of fiction to the brim!"

She reciprocated his laugh and as she picked up, to resume, her book again, said—

"Well, I have warned you! The consequences be on your own head."

"I am moved to disregard your warning. Gracie is so excellent a listener. That is so flattering, you know." Then turning to the child, he continued, "Now, run on to the sands and finish your castle, little woman, before the tide reaches it. When it can no longer withstand Old Ocean's assaults and is washed away, come back. Then I will tell you what became of Jack after the fairy had rescued him from the three-headed giant."

The child was sitting on his knee with her arms round his neck. Between the kisses she was giving, said—

"You dear old thing! You are the very nicest, delightfulest, beautifullest story-teller I ever met."

"I am dethroned then?" The observation from Miss Mivvins. "I used to be told that."

"Y-y-yes. But you never told me tales like Prince Charlie's."

Prince Charlie was a character in one of the stories Masters had told the child. A prince who had rescued innumerable princesses from giants, ogres and demons. Instantly it had pleased the listener to christen the narrator after the hero.

All her people, she informed him gravely, she christened out of stories. It was much nicer than calling them by their real names. They were so much prettier and lots easier to remember—didn't he think so?

Yes, he had made answer. He quite thought that Prince Charlie was an improvement on his own name. But Gracie betrayed no anxiety to know what that was. To her henceforth he was Prince Charlie. That was quite sufficient—she was a godmother of the most self-satisfied type.

Turning to Miss Mivvins the child continued, with a trace of reproach in her voice—she felt she had been defrauded—

"Besides, your giants never have three heads!"

A trinity of that description—unity is strength—appeared an unanswerable argument; seemed to her to clinch the matter. She climbed down from Masters' knee, and jumped her way down the steps to the sands, with bucket and spade rattling in her hand.

As she disappeared, Masters took his courage in both hands; continued the conversation—

"I shall have to prescribe a course of Grimm's Fairy Tales, if you wish to resume your position as story-teller-in-chief."

His speech was at random. The ice was broken, they had spoken; he did not want the coldness of silence to freeze it all over again. Having got in the thin edge of the wedge he proposed to drive it right home—if possible. Hence his speech.

Miss Mivvins laughed. The child liked him—so did she. Fearful of driving her away, he had not attempted to force conversation. She had curled up a trifle because of his reserve—hence they had spoken but little. Unknown to themselves their communication had been more subtle than that of words, perhaps had paved the way for them. They came easily enough now.

"You also," he said, "seem to have a taste for fiction of a pronounced type. I see you are reading one of my books."

"Your books?" Her query was uttered in a tone of surprise. "Oh, no! This came down from Maudie's with others yesterday."

"Oh, I don't doubt that."

He laughed openly at her concern—a hearty, resounding laugh, a trifle loud but with a pleasant honest ring in it; continued—

"I don't doubt that the library people acquired it honestly. My claim was not made in a possessory sense. I meant that my name figures on the title page."

She looked at him blankly for a moment, so great was her surprise. Then, the truth dawning on her, she said—

"You! You—are the author?"

CHAPTER IV.

That she should meet a real live

author, the writer of the book she was reading, was a coincidence strange enough to take Miss Mivvins' breath away. Masters saw her wonderment, smiled at it.

"Is the fact," he asked, "so difficult a thing to reconcile with my appearance?"

"Oh, no, no! How awfully rude you must think me! I meant—I mean—that I expected the author of this book to be—"

Then she paused. Did not quite know what she expected or how to express herself; added lamely—

"To be much older."

"Really! I am sorry I don't come up to your age standard. Age has its privileges, but wisdom is not always its perquisite. Why should an author be necessarily old? Surely youth is pardonable?"

She—a woman famous in her own particular circle for the coolness of her tongue—could have kicked herself. Was saying, in her unwonted nervousness, all the things she would rather have left unsaid. Angry with herself, she blurted out—

"There is not, of course, any earthly reason. It was purely my utter stupidity."

He smiled at the flush on her cheek; a smile conjured up by his admiration of it, said merrily—

"Here have I been peacocking around, with a sort of metaphorical feather in my cap. Pampering my vanity, applying the flattering unction to my soul—rubbing it in several times per diem—that no author of my age has turned out so many volumes. Lo! with one breath you blow that feather clean away."

She could not resist laughing at his mock despair. Became at her ease once more; said—

"Indeed not! I don't know what prompted me to say what I did. As to this book—"

"No! Don't! Please don't give me your opinion of it!"

His interruption was a continuation of his burlesque melodramatic style. She did not quite know how to take him; said—

"You mean you would not value my opinion?"

That was disconcerting. Sobered him in a minute. He knew quite well the kind of value he would be likely to put on any opinion of hers—concerning himself.

"Oh, no!" His answer was spoken earnestly. "I do not mean—"

But she interrupted him. In her nervousness felt that whilst her tongue was in action it would help to keep the helm the right way; said—

"Why should you? A stranger's opinion would necessarily be valueless. You know nothing of me."

The deafness of those who will not hear is proverbial. The underlying earnestness in the tone of his reply should have warned her.

"Aren't you going just a trifle too far?" he asked. "We are not quite strangers. True, I know nothing of you—except that you are Miss Mivvins."

An irresistible smile accompanied his words. His smile—and his laugh too—were capable of creating many friends. But he did not allow them to. His views on the subject were cynical in the extreme.

His smile was infectious. Once more those alluring dimples which he had noticed at their first meeting deepened in her face.

"It is distinctly more my misfortune than my fault," he continued, "that I know so little of you. May I say—with an absence of fear of your thinking me impertinent—that I should like, much like, to know more of you?"

The flush, that becoming flush, on her cheek again. The eyes were fringed over by those long lashes of hers as she cast them groundwards. Just a blend of trouble in her look as she queried—

"Really?"

He liked the pink showing on the white. Colors inspire some men. Perhaps the combination in her face inspired him. Anyway there was more vigor and determination in his voice as he answered—

"Yes."

She, dallying, as a woman will, quite well knew that there was a spark. That it would burst into flame, chose she to fan it; gained time by asking—

"Why?"

He vaulted on to his hobby horse. The question was a stirrup helping him to the saddle.

"Because I—may I say it?—hail you in a measure as a kindred soul."

She lifted her eyes; he could not fail to read the astonishment in them; continued—

"You are here in October, and you don't look bored. Don't look as if life held no further charm for you. You do not follow the fashionable decrying of the place simply because it is out of fashion—because it is October."

She smiled. Encouraged by it, he continued, in the same strain—

"You are always alone, yet you create the impression that you are

happy. You don't seem to sigh for bands of music, to hanker after a crowded promenade. You find existence possible without a shoal of people to help you pass your time."

Her smile broadened into a laugh. This time at herself—at his description of her; she asked—

"And those—shall I call them unusual—characteristics in a woman interest you?"

"Amazingly!"

"Why?"

She put the question with a little nervousness, bred of that eagerness of his.

"Because—well, let me say by sheer force of contrast. In those respects, Heaven be thanked you are not as other women."

The amused look had not left her face. It lingered in the upward curve of the corners of her eyes.

"So you prefer eccentric women, then?"

She could not resist just a trace of mischief in the tone of her query. He answered—

"Heaven forbid! I see nothing eccentric in the attributes I have allotted to you. They are refreshingly good to a thirsty soul."

(To be Continued.)

The Farm

FARM BUTTER-MAKING.

While the creamery is essential to the development of butter-making, as a national industry, it will never altogether displace the private dairy. Where there are a sufficient number of farmers in a section to support a successful creamery, one should be established. There is less labor in sending the cream to the creamery and having it made into butter on the co-operative plan than in making the butter at home, and the returns are usually better.

There are many individual farmers, however, who are not adjacent to a creamery, or who are in a cheese district, but prefer to make butter, that will find a private dairy a paying investment, if operated in the right way. The old-fashioned way of making butter will not do. It must be made after the modern plan, and be of a quality that will command a ready market. There is nothing to prevent as good butter being made on a farm as in a creamery, providing the same system of separating the cream and in churning and working the butter is followed. There are private dairymen to-day making butter who get as good a price for their product as any creamery does. But they understand their business and conduct it along approved lines.

In a private dairy the conditions should be most favorable for making good butter. The maker not only has control of the cream, but he has control of the cows, their feed, and the milking and separating of the cream. From the beginning to the end of the process, he can keep an oversight over things, and if he understands his business, should turn out a quality of product second to none. Many private dairymen are doing this and others desiring to or compelled to make their own butter, should follow their example. The butter must not only be of good quality, but must be put on the market in first-class shape. Many good butter makers fail in this regard. They neglect those little things connected with the marketing of the product that are essential in obtaining the highest price and in retaining their customers.

The cream separator is a great help to the private butter-maker. It enables him to obtain a uniform grade of cream, and to care for the cream in the best way. A striking example of this came to the writer's notice a few weeks ago. A farmer out of reach of a creamery or cheese factory was compelled to make his own butter. He purchased a separator, and began operations after the approved plan, putting the butter in pound prints. The butter made at the time of our visit was of very fine quality, and as good as any creamery. It commanded ready sale at the village store. In fact, the storekeeper supplied the wrappers, free of cost, with his own name and brand printed on them, and made a special feature of selling the butter. On the adjoining farm, where the conditions were more favorable for caring for the cream, there being a cold spring near the house, no separator was used. The butter was a very low grade as compared with the other; the flavor was bad, and the quality inferior. It may not be fair to ascribe the better quality of the butter made in the former case to the

use of the separator. But so far as we could see in the different methods followed, it had a great deal to do with it. There is this about it a farmer with a few cows, who invests in a cream separator, will give more attention to the business. The care necessary in operating a separator successfully, becomes a habit, and is carried through the entire process. The separator must be made to pay for itself and this it will do, if the cream is not cared for properly, and the butter made and handled in a slovenly way.

As to the market for dairy butter, there should be no trouble on that score, so long as the quality is good. First-class butter will command a good price, no matter whether made in a creamery or not. The farmer with the separator mentioned above, found a market for his butter among some of the patrons of a cheese factory a few miles away. The buyers came to the farm for it and willingly paid the same price that the storekeeper paid when delivered at his store. In other cheese centres, where patrons prefer to send all the milk to the factory, and buy butter for their own use, a private dairy can obtain a good market for its butter during the summer months.

The help problem has to be reckoned with in private butter-making. Unless the farmer is so situated as to have plenty of help, and has the facilities for making good butter, it is better to patronize a creamery, if there is one handy. Even under favorable conditions, both as to help and facilities, it may pay to do so. A well managed creamery will always give a good return, and the farmer has not the worry of sending to market for his product, and getting his pay therefor.—Dominion Dairyman.

POULTRY HINTS.

Quite a few of these old hens had better be killed off before cold weather.

If there are sufficient well matured pullets to make up the flock, keep very few of the hens.

It is time to be putting up the spare cockerels. Save the best only for breeding and feed the others, also the cull pullets and hens.

Get the house cleaned up for the pullets, and put in only those pullets that are a good shape, well matured, and a good specimen of the breed.

Feed them well, have the pullets start to lay about the middle of November or first of December, and make arrangements to know which are laying this winter and use their eggs for setting next spring. Keep only the good layers of this winter for the year following.

It should never be forgotten that poultry needs some green food at all seasons of the year. In winter they can be given cabbage, onions, turnips, etc. Economy in preparing and in other distribution of the food is a matter that deserves the most earnest consideration of the poultrymen.

Fresh lean beef fed to sick fowls or chickens will affect a cure when all medicine fails, and if there is weakness in the fowls or the newly hatched chickens are afflicted with bowel trouble the fresh lean meat fed the hens will add strength to the first chickens hatched from the eggs after the beef has been fed. When chickens hatched from improperly fed hens have bowel trouble it is almost a hopeless case. Dry oat flakes and sweet skimmed milk will save them if anything can.

A white clover lawn clipped twice each week with a lawn mower and the clippings fed to the laying hen fowls and growing chickens will save nearly half the cost of feed, increase the egg yield and develop the chickens quickly. It will improve the lawn by mowing twice weekly, and a little finely sifter fertilizer from the hen house will make the lawn very productive. Spread the clippings about three inches deep on the cellar floor and you will have fresh clippings to feed daily.

WHAT HE SAID.

Attorney—"I insist on an answer to my question. You have not told me all the conversation. I want to know everything that passed between you and Mr. Gibson on the occasion to which you refer."

Reluctant Witness—"I've told you everything of any consequence."

"You have told me what you said to him: 'Gibson, this case will get into the courts some day.' Now I want to know what he said in reply."

"Well, he said: 'Chumley, there isn't anything in this business that I'm ashamed of, and if any snooty little yee-hawin' four-by-six, gimlet-eyed lawyer, with half a pound of brains and sixteen pounds of jaw, ever wants to know what I've been talking to you about, you can tell him the whole story.'"