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her explain exactly what her duties would be: but he was pleased to hear that her "office hours" would be short, from ten in the morning to four in the afternoon. And so, for the next two or three months, they went up to town by the same train, Arthur getting out at the Temple, and Norah, always quietly dressed in black, going to the Mansion House. Arthur's prospects improved steadily, his hard work at devilling for well-known barristers was beginning to have its effect, and "briefs came trooping," if not exactly "gaily" at all events fairly frequently. Suddenly another blow fell. He was assured by a friend that his uncle, Lord Eagleston, was about to marry again, either a chorus-girl or a barmaid, his informant had forgotten which. Arthur went straight off and had a long interview with his lordship's solicitors, whom he knew professionally. It was not, he told them, that his own prospects of succeeding to the title were placed in jeopardy, for of that there was no immediate prospect under any circumstances, but the scandal of such a *mesalliance* ought to be prevented. They promised to help him. A few weeks afterwards they wrote to him that they had been successful in bringing influence to bear upon the Earl, and that the proposed marriage would not take place; on the other hand, there would unfortunately be an action for breach of promise, unless they could effect a compromise. All attempts, however, had hitherto failed, and if the matter did have to come into court, they hoped he would consent to hold a brief marked with a liberal fee, which somewhat tended to mitigate his disgust at the inevitable scandal of a *cause celebre*, which he saw very clearly, as soon as he had read through the papers, his uncle was quite certain to lose. He was, of course, furnished with copies of the letters that had passed on both sides, and he writhed at the thought of the Earl's ridiculous effusions being read out in open court. The letters from the girl, on the other hand, were almost dignified, and showed a superior education, at all events it appeared that Lord Eagleston, during his frequent visits to his stockbroker, had been much struck by a good-looking barmaid at the "Packhorse," and had spent hours pouring sweet nothings into her ears, while she poured out his drinks. There were letters, offering to get her a place in the front row at the Frivolity Theatre, invitations to dinner at celebrated restaurants, etc., etc., all of which Miss Skinner (that was the fair charmer's name) had refused, much to the Earl's bewilderment. She had evidently, Arthur realized, played her cards extremely well. By dint of refusal after refusal she had gradually drawn Lord Eagleston on to his absurd protestations of affection, and ultimately to the proposal of marriage, which had been duly accepted. He had asked her to fly with him to Paris where he would marry her at the Embassy; but, apparently, this proposition had not met with Miss Skinner's entire approval, for she had failed to keep the appointment which he had suggested. Arthur knew well enough that the other side would assert Lord Eagleston had never really intended to marry the girl at all, but had merely written these letters to get her into his power; and he thought of the susceptible hearts of a British jury, who would almost certainly award the full damages, which were laid at £20,000. "And not a penny more than the old fool deserves to lose," Arthur said to his wife when he told her all about the story that

same evening. "Just fancy if we had got it instead of Miss Skinner; still, I shall make my bit anyhow out of it, which is some consolation, and though of course we shall lose the case, it won't be a bad advertisement for me. And Norah, dear, now I am getting on rather better, I hope you will give up that tiresome work of yours."

Arthur had many interviews with his uncle before the case came on, and found him crustier than ever. He quite realised what a fool he had made of himself, and implored Arthur to do all he could to effect a compromise. He would willingly pay £5,000, £10,000 even, to escape going into court. Arthur duly conferred with the solicitors engaged on the other side, but in vain; as he expected, they were confident of obtaining the full amount demanded.

At last the day of the trial arrived. Skinner v. Eagleston stood second on the list. The Earl was in a pitiable state of nervousness, and almost prepared to pay the whole sum in order to escape the publicity which was inevitable. Arthur saw the Q. C. engaged by the other side come into court, and made a final effort.

"How much will you take to compromise?" he asked.

"Will take £15,000 and our costs; that is what I have just proposed to my client, and she has agreed."

Arthur went at once to his uncle and suggested a settlement on these terms, he would save £5,000, and the story would not get into the newspapers. Need I say that Lord Eagleston at once agreed; he brought out his cheque book, and signed a cheque then and there for £15,000, cursed Arthur and all lawyers, and rushed from the building.

Arthur returned to the consulting-room and announced his success; he was curious to see the plaintiff, but she did not appear and as he had business in another court, he hurried away, leaving the formal statement of the compromise to be made by his junior.

In the evening he went home and told Norah all about it, and how the family, not that it made much difference to them personally, was £15,000 the poorer.

"Will you promise to forgive me, dear," said his wife, "if I tell you something? You know I never let you know what my work in the city was. It was the only work I could get to do. I saw the advertisement, and thought it would be amusing, and of course I knew at once he was Lord Eagleston, because of the photograph there on the mantelpiece."

"But what are you talking about, Norah?" said Arthur, bewildered.

"And don't you see, dear, if he had come to dinner when we asked him, it would never have happened, for he would have recognised me? And I was so afraid you would find it out and put a stop to it all. And, do you know, my lawyers were so glad to compromise it when I told them I wouldn't go into court."

"But, Norah dear, you don't mean to say—"

"That I was Miss Skinner, the barmaid? It has been such a hard secret to keep, especially these last few days. But you will forgive me, dear, won't you? for we did want the money so badly, and we have a sort of right to it, anyhow. And I'm sure it will be a good lesson to our dear uncle. But, dear, it was tiresome work, horribly tiresome, and I am so glad to be able to give it up."

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