

— OUR NEW SERIAL —

THE SCULPTOR'S WOOING

Continued from last issue

"Miss Newton—Stella, what is all this? Why are you here? Sir Richard Wildfang, too. What does it all mean?"

Sir Richard, with an anxiety not disinterested, interrupted him hastily. "It means, sir, that your villainy is unmasked; that Miss Newton knows you now for what you really are—a base, criminal adventurer."

"Stop," said a voice, that was Stella's yet so unlike so dreadfully, quietly calm that it might have belonged to an automaton. And she, with an expressive gesture, motioned Sir Richard aside, and advancing confronted Louis with white drawn face, and dark, accusing eyes.

"It means, sir," she said, in regular metallic tones, "that one you had succeeded in deceiving is now undecieved; that one whom you taught to love you have now learned to hate you; that one who would have given her life to have purchased you an hour's happiness, would now give her life to secure your punishment. It means, that from a trusting girl you have reformed me by your baseness to an insulted woman. All this means, and this much more, that, having escaped your mercenary clutches, the woman you attempted to deceive has learned the bitter lesson of a wasted love and a wasted life. Go, sir, from my path forevermore. Should you cross it again—beware I shall find some means of resenting the insult of your presence."

Then she let the hand fall which she had raised in denunciation and turned.

Louis stood for a moment, white and statuesque with astonishment, then he passed his hand across his forehead, looked up at the clear sky to assure himself that it was not a dream, and held out both his hands imploringly.

"Stella. Tell me what it all means. How have I wronged you—how deceived?"

Stella turned again, her face lit up with passionate scorn.

"Would you have me recite the story of your vile plot," she asked, huskily. "Look within your own heart and read in its baseness the reason for my accusation."

"This is madness," he said. "Vile plot—baseness—of what do you accuse me?"

"Of the vilest dishonesty," said Stella, confronting him. "Do you ask for proofs? Seek then in the confession of your tool and accomplice, who has sought safety in flight; seek them in the evidence that remains—that carriage—'Accomplice—carriage'—repeated Louis. "Stella, that carriage—oh listen, I beseech you." For Stella had taken the arm high Sir Richard had in stern silence offered her, and, though stung through all his soul by the sight, Louis spoke calmly and humbly.

"I have heard too much of your honeyed words; they can deceive me no longer," said Stella, coldly, over her shoulder.

"This much you shall tell me," exclaimed Louis, springing forward, his face white with passion, his teeth chincched, and his eyes blazing. "And I ask it from your false lips, Sir Richard Wildfang." And as he spoke he grasped Sir Richard's arm. "How came you here—both she and you?"

"Ask your own conscience," said Stella, faltering for the first time. "Did you not rite me a letter?"

"I did," said Louis.

"Enough," exclaimed Sir Richard. "He confesses his baseness. Leave us, sir, if you have the slightest vestige of honor remaining?"

Louis drew himself up, and, casting a look of scornful contempt upon the all-anxious face of Sir Richard, appealed to Stella.

"Miss Newton, do you say 'go'?"

"I do," said Stella.

"You cast me off—forever?"

Forever, said Stella.

He said not another word, but crossing his arms, stepped from their path, and watched them with set stonelike face, until they were lost to him around the curve of the road.

He waited even after that for the space of five minutes, then he turned and walked with slow, measured pace up his own carriage entrance.

He slowly climbed the broad stone steps up which he had, so short a time since, and so proudly led his beautiful Stella, and, with the same indescribable expression of concentrated, deadly calm, pushed open the door and entered the antique dining-room.

He stood before the fire musing for a few moments, thinking of all he had lost and the mysterious, inexplicable manner in which he had lost it, then without a sigh—his sorrow had no really that distinctness yet—he walked

into his studio.

"Here in this room," he murmured, "I held her against my heart. Here her lips—so false! so cruel!—told me that she loved me! Here the sweetest happiness my life has ever known fell to me. Blessed by the room—forevermore. Those blind eyes," and he swept his hand before the sightless marble faces, "shall see no misery, other eye scene here I swore to break them, one and all, if we were parted. We are parted, and I will keep my vow."

As he spoke he took up the heaviest mallet and with passion utterly indescribable struck first at one beautiful face and then at another, until the room was filled with the noise of falling marble, and the fragments themselves, as they dropped and rolled about his feet.

With the mallet in his hand he went into the garden, made his way to the shrubbery, where they had taken so long and joyously, and raised his destroying mallet before the face of a statue which he and Stephen had only that day set up there.

It was the statue of the mother and child which he had worked at so enthusiastically, and which he had placed on the very spot in accordance with Stella's expressed wish.

But as the mallet was swung back a twinge of regret and remorse struck across his soul, and with a sigh he let the mallet fall to his side, gazed up at the plaintive face of the mother, and murmured:

"No, it is sorrow and despair itself it shall stand!"

Then hefting the mallet from him, and with drooping head, re-entered the house.

With the same cam self-possession which had settled upon him as the snow does upon the mountain he ascended the stairs, and entering the room slowly and methodically, put on his overcoat and heavy waking boot.

Then he descended again, went through every room looked every door, and flinging the keys into the farthermost corner of the studio, left the house as desolate and silent as he had found it on the Christmas eve upon which he had met Stella—his beautiful, cruel and only love—at the little wicket.

When he had got clear of the grounds he stood, for a moment, and looked back at the vale, which was all alight in the clear night, and at a steady, swinging pace started off on the London road.

For some few minutes Stella and her companion and protector remained profoundly silent.

Every now and then Sir Richard darkey took stealthy glances at her face but in expressions was not encouraging.

Stella was still as white as the snow and as hard as the frost.

Her eyes were bent upon the ground, her lips compressed. The hand which held her wrap around her was clinched hard and fast as marble upon her bosom.

Altogether she was as statuesque as Louis, whom she had left watching her retreat from.

But as they neared the Vale the little frost of despair, broken love and disappointment wavered and began to thaw.

Her lips trembled, her hand unclasped and clasped again, panted, her eyelids quivered, and Sir Richard, ganing stealthily again saw a tear slip from under the lowered lids and fall upon her pale cheek.

Then he thought it was time to speak and, having learned his part most thoroughly, he commenced to take it up at he point at which he had been compelled drop it for a while.

"Miss Newton—Stella," he murmured, in the softest, most dulcet tones of sympathy, "do not let your gentle heart distress itself. The cause is not worth a tear! Think how mercifully you have been permitted to escape a great misfortune. Remember what a vice plotter you have been rescued from, and look more hopefully, and—dare I say?—thankfully upon the future."

Stella turned her pale face to him. "Sir Richard," she said, in a very low, flattering voice, "I am grateful to you, though I cannot show it. I know from what you have rescued me. From a life of misery, chained to one who would have snared me for the worthless dross which has clung to me like a curse! Oh, that I had been the poorest peasant on earth rather than my wealth should have tempted him to such baseness!"

Her tears fell fast and she turned her head aside.

"Do not think any more of him; is not worth a thought," pleaded Sir Richard. "He will never cross your path again. You must forget him." "Forget him?" said Stella, with a

bitter smile. "I shall not be permitted to do that. You forget that I have to meet a mother's just reproaches. I am justly punished for deceiving her. But, alas! that punishment will be severe."

"You fear, Miss Newton," said Richard, more softly than ever. "Why should you give her unnecessary pain and anxiety? Let me enjoy the happiness of taking the responsibility of this night's events."

"You?" said Stella, half shrinking from him.

"Yes, I," said Sir Richard. "Do you remember the promise you gave? Though it was a solemn promise, I would not have reminded you of it now but that by so doing I may be able to spare you pain."

He paused for a moment.

Stella turned colder even than she grew in the moment of her belief in Louis' treachery.

"Remember how I loved you, how patiently I pleaded, how patiently I waited. Had that scoundrel proved all you could have wished him, all he ought to have proved with such an incentive to virtue as your love, I would never have spoken of my love to you again. But now dare I hope that you will pardon me if I remind you of your promise? He has proved himself to be unworthy of your love—dishonorable mercenary, base vile. Will you keep your promise?"

He bent over as he breathed the words in his softest, most musical tones, and gently but firmly took her cold hand.

She let it remain in his, passive and icy.

"Your promise," he breathed. "You will keep it?"

Stella looked up at the sky and around at the snow-clothed park, with a wild, helpless, despairing gaze.

What mattered her fate now that her heart was broken?

As well marry Sir Richard whom she disliked, as another. All men were one to her now—she dreaded, distrusted every son of Adam now that the prince of them all had turned out to be a fiend in disguise of an angel!

"I will keep my promise," she said, in a faint, low voice.

Sir Richard bent over her hand, and pressed his lips upon it.

"Heaven bless you!" he murmured. "I cannot thank you; my heart is brimming o'er with happiness."

Like a wise man he said no more.

They reached the Vale, and Stella entered the hall.

Mrs. Newton came from the drawing room, white with anger and anxiety. "Stella, you wicked, wicked girl, where have you been? I have—"

Then she stopped suddenly as she caught sight of Sir Richard, and stared from one to the other.

"You are alarmed, no doubt my dear Mrs. Newton," he said, coming forward in his quiet, self-possessed way, and with his calmest, most placid smile. "Miss Stella has been taking a moonlight stroll in the park when I had the happiness of meeting her."

Mrs. Newton turned to Stella, who smiled a dreadful, ghastly smile, and slowly ascended the stairs.

Then Sir Richard gently led Mrs. Newton into the dining-room, and with a smile of triumph that was not at all feigned, said, in his silkiest whisper: "My dear madam, congratulate me! Miss Newton has promised to make me the happiest man in the world!"

CHAPTER XXXIII

In Budding Springtime

The snow had gone. Winter had given place to spring.

In place of hoar frost and east winds, soft winds spangled the fields with diamonds and gentle breezes waved the buds and blossoms.

Town was full the country was deserted.

Down at Heavithorne both the Hut and the Vale were shut up and silent, and the deer rambled fearlessly around each, and couched upon the paths which Lou's Felton and his love Stella, who had driven him from her presence, had walked side by side and heart to heart.

That same Stella—the same, and yet not the same if internal changes count for anything, was in London again the belle of society, and again pledged to marry the wealthy and powerful Sir Richard Wildfang!

Changed indeed was Stella.

Those who had in the previous season deemed her proud now declared that her haunter was unbearable, and Mrs. Newton, the wily mother who had succeeded in selling her daughter to the best advantage, was not excepted from the quiet, unexpected scorn with which the beautiful girl seemed to regard men and women alike.

With scrupulous consistency Stella went through her round of duty, neglecting nothing and pleading no weariness.

Balls, concerts, picture galleries, she was present at all, always under the guardianship in and the possession of Sir Richard Wildfang.

So little was her face the index of her feelings that Sir Richard himself as acute a reader of faces as any on the habitable globe, was puzzled and perplexed by it.

Had she forgotten that moonlight night when he had thwarted the foolish idiot of a sculptor?—for so Sir Richard always designated Louis Felton in his

thoughts—or did she still remember him and cherish a secret regret and remorse?

If Sir Richard could not decipher the calm, self-possessed face of his bride-elect, all the rest of the world must of necessity fail.

As for Sir Richard himself, he was calmer, more placidly self-satisfied than ever.

Around him, in the commercial world, well-known firms and houses once of high repute tottered and fell, but the house of Wildfang & Co. stood unshaken, looking down like a colossus or a sphinx at the crumbling ruins of fair fame and high names which were strewn at its feet.

The world looked on and bowed down to his wisdom and sagacity with more admiring suppleteness than ever, and new companies toiled, schemed and diplomatized to obtain his name upon their prospectuses.

Perhaps Mr. Dewlap, the confidential manager, could have undecieved the world and stripped the feathers from the golden owl, but Mr. Dewlap was the discreetest of his class and looked on with closed lips and meditative eyes, while he watched the world fall down at the feet of his master and worship.

There were some keen-sighted men who said that the immense weight of business which Sir Richard's shoulders supported was telling upon him; that his face had at times a slightly weary and over-watchful expression, and that the smile, which, ever as of old, sat upon his face, as a sunbeam upon ice on a cold January morning, was a trifle, a trifle only, overstrained.

"But what wonder if it should be so?" they exclaimed in chorus, and the little signs of thought only added to his popularity.

No man is a hero to his valet, and perhaps Sir Richard's could, like Dewlap, have played the part of iconoclast.

He might have told of sleepless nights of measured paces across the luxurious bedchamber, of startings from sleep and mutterings of a woman's name—Lucy!—of the violent groans with which his master—half asleep—greeted his appearance one morning, and the wild words:

"Take the child away!"

But the valet was as directed as Mr. Dewlap, took his wages, dressed his master to perfection, and—most valuable service of all—held his tongue.

And Louis Felton—where was he? Ask it of the wilds of Corsica, the plains of Nevada, of any of the out of the way places of the uncivilized globe, and they could answer better: than the fashionable world of London, which knew him not when he was in its midst and knew not whither he had gone now that he had departed.

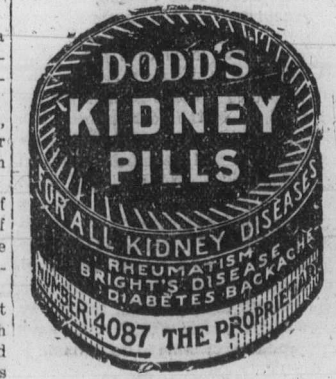
There was a report in Heavithorne that a face and form like his had been seen passing through the village on cold, sleety night; but the report was only partially credited, and the majority of the good, simple folks firmly believed that he had delivered himself up to the malignant power to whom, in pursuance of a long-standing treaty, he was due; and they would have let him slip from their memory even more quickly had his name not been useful in scaring disobedient children.

So the spring wore on to summer, and one morning Mrs. Newton, entering the breakfast-room, which was flooded with the June sunlight, sighed mentally, and, glancing at Stella, who sat toying with a scrap of toast too small to satisfy the hunger of a London parrot, said:

"The heat is unendurable already; what will it be in another month's time? I really think we'd better go down to the Vale."

Stella looked up, and across her face there flashed a sharp spasm of pain, just such a fleeting look as touch-blows upon an unhealed wound.

(To be continued)



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St. John's, Nf., Mar. 29.—A successful season has rewarded the efforts of the Newfoundland sealing fleet. Reports reaching this city yesterday said that 150,000 seals has been killed since hunting opened two weeks ago. This figure is slightly above the average of recent years. Messages from the fleet indicated that the available seal herds on the ice fields in the

North Atlantic had been exhausted and that the main hunt would come to an end shortly. The steamer Beothic left the main fleet last Friday and proceeded around the South coast of Newfoundland to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Here hunters hoped to increase their kill considerably among the herds on the Gulf ice floes.

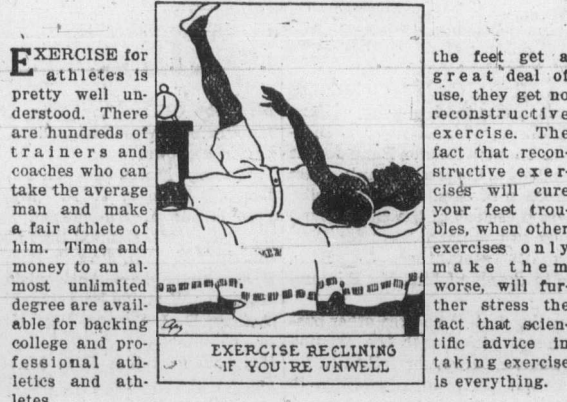
Children Cry for



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"Proper Food and Exercise," by ARTHUR A. MCGOVERN
Former physical director, Cornell Medical College.

Rules of exercise for the invalid



the feet get a great deal of use, they get no reconstructive exercise. The fact that reconstructive exercises will cure your feet troubles, when other exercises only make them worse, will further stress the fact that scientific advice in taking exercise is everything.

But it is rather unfortunate that the man who often needs exercise most, the sick man, can find less than half a dozen teachers or exercise experts in the entire country who thoroughly understand his demands. There are very few books on the subject and far too few students of exercise in specific therapy.

Although there are many dangerous, delicate situations where safe treatment can be given only in careful individual instruction and supervision, there are a few general rules that the organically unsound may safely adopt from an article of this kind. Moderation is the first rule. Take your exercise in a reclining position, is the second. Weak hearts, hernias, varicose veins, curved spines, fallen abdominal organs and weak arches are often aggravated by exercising while standing so that any upright strenuous exercise becomes dangerous.

So many people suffer from weak and fallen arches and painful feet that it seems advisable to give a special set of reconstructive foot exercises. While

Exercise No. 1 Lie flat on the back and alternately kick feet in a circle as though riding a bicycle.

Exercise No. 2 Lie flat on the back, raise the right leg straight to vertical position, lower to floor and raise left, thus alternating.

Exercise No. 3 Lie flat upon the stomach, hands clasped in small of back, raise both ends of body, that is, the head and shoulders and the feet and legs, from the floor as high as possible until only the abdomen is touching. Return to starting position and repeat.

Exercise No. 4 Lie flat upon the back, bring both knees up to chest, return to starting position and repeat.

A Laxative Diet

BREAKFAST: Fresh fruit of any kind, preferably without sugar. Any coarse cereal, mixed with bran. Whole wheat bread toasted. Bran muffins, coffee substitute. Between breakfast and luncheon drink at least two glasses of water.

NOONDAY MEAL: Vegetable lunch consisting of any fresh vegetables in season except potatoes. For dessert, gelatin, raw fruit such as apples, oranges, grapefruit or figs. Dark bread and buttermilk. Between luncheon and dinner drink at least two glasses of water.

DINNER: Soup. Lean meat of any kind. At least two vegetables. Gelatin. Whole wheat bread. Cocoa or chocolate.

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