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"ECHOES of the Past; OR, The Recompense of Love!"

CHAPTER XXXIII
No convalescing is so rapid as that of the man whose recovery is to him as important as life and death. Two days later Clive crawled down on Quilton's arm to a cab and was driven to Benson's Rents. Quilton helped him up the stairs, but, after knocking at the door for him, seated himself on the top step. Mina's voice said "Come in," and, with his heart throbbing, Clive entered.

She was seated at the piano, the notes of which he had heard as he laboriously climbed the stairs, and she rose and looked at him, her face crimson, then white, her hands pressed to her bosom; and her blush, her attitude, recalled old times to Clive and gave him courage.

"Mina!" he said in his still feeble voice. "Ah, come to me, Mina!"

She stood for a moment, battling with herself, struggling with the magnetic influence of his voice, fighting against the desire to obey. Where were all her resolutions, her carefully laid plans to avoid him, to separate herself from him?

"Come to me!" he said again. And all the resolutions and plans melted into thin air at sight of his pale and wasted face, his hollow eyes. She remembered at that moment only the bound figure lying beside her, the weak voice, scarcely sounding above the lapping of the water, murmuring hoarsely: "I love you, Mina." Against her will, she was drawn toward him; she moved to him slowly; his arms were round her, her head was on his breast. But as his kisses rained on her head, she raised her head and, with her eyes drowned in tears, she murmured in broken accents:

"Oh, Clive, Clive, I cannot help it; I love you! I can't let you go. I can't, I can't!"

Quilton lit a cigarette and sat on the stairs with admirable patience. Presently a step sounded from below and a voice said in shrill tones:

"You just come off them stairs, young 'Arry Marks. I s'pose your mother thinks she owns the whole of the 'ouse instead of the top attic, and 'as the right to let her kids play s'asphubbles all over the place and make a sloppy mess that chucks everybody down? There! there ain't no occasion to cry. Got no more

no occasion to cry. Got no more

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soap, 'aven't yer? Well, 'ere's a penny to buy some. But you mark my words, you'll be the death of some one some day, and there'll be a hinqest; and your mother'll be took up for murder in the fust degree. There; wipe your nose, for goodness saka, an' go an' spend that penny, sharp."

The steps ascended, and Tibby stopped short and surveyed Quilton with a critical and indignant air.

"Can't you find anything better to do than sit there poisoning the atmosphere with cheap cigarettes, and settin' a bad example to the other brats?" she demanded.

Quilton disregarded this inquiry and jerked his head over his shoulder.

"He's in there—with Mina," he said. "Two's company, four's none. Sit down, Tibby."

Her face brightened, her eyes glowed; she hesitated a moment, then she sat down beside him, her sharp little chin resting on her hand. There was silence for a minute or two; then Quilton said in a low voice and a face as inexpressive as a ship's figurehead:

"How old are you, Tibby?"

"You mind your own business," she replied. "How old are you, if it comes to that?"

"Twenty-two," replied Quilton promptly. "Will you marry me, Tibby?"

Tibby surveyed him with infinite scorn.

"I don't marry infants," she said.

"I'm old enough to be your father," he said, shaking his head, as if he were driven by an all-compelling fate it was useless to fight against. "I'm old enough to know better than to make a fool of myself; but still I'm doing it. I'll even go so far as to admit, if you insist upon it, that I love you. It sound curious, but the more curious thing is that it's absolutely true. Do not strike me, Tibby, for I am old and an orphan. I am also an imbecile and an idiot, for I am possessed by the firm conviction that if you say that you will not marry me I shall be a remarkably wretched and unhappy individual. Do not ask me to account for this strange and ludicrous condition of mind; but believe me that it is a kind of insanity which, in my case at any rate, will prove quite incurable. Therefore, Tibby, I ask you again—will you marry me?"

Tibby stared at him, with her head on one side—just as she was wont to stare at the joint of meat offered by the butcher for her approval—then she heaved a long sigh of compassionate resignation and said in a pitying tone:

"It's a shocking thing to think of a poor 'elpless idiot wanderin' about the world alone and getting into all sorts of trouble without anybody to stop him; so I suppose I must!"

It was not a double wedding. Clive suggested one, but both Quilton and Tibby declined, with thanks.

"I once knew a double wedding," she said, "where the parties got so mixed up that one of the bridegrooms went off with the wrong bride. Of course, I shouldn't mind exchanging William Henry; in fact, I daresay I shall have to advertise him presently in one of those papers where people offer to exchange a clothes-horse and a tea-caddy for a sealskin jacket; but it's only fair to give him a little trial."

And Quilton had nodded complete approval of her sentiment.

(To be Continued.)

Paint marks can be removed by soaking them for a short time in benzine or turpentine, then rubbing them with emery paper or a little pulverized pumice stone.

A teaspoonful of camphor added to a quart of soft water will kill earthworms in house plants. The plants should be quite ready for water when it is applied.

Love in a Flour Mill, OR, The Romance of Two Loyal Hearts!

CHAPTER I.

"Here's Ronnie Desborough!" said some one, and the Princess gave an imperceptible start; a faint touch of colour came into her pale face as she cast one swift glance at the tall, splendidly built young man who was entering, then as swiftly looked away.

Ronnie Desborough came in with a smile on his handsome face, his good-humoured grey eyes glancing round cheerfully. The most careless observer would have differentiated him from the rest of the men present; for most of them were pale, and bore traces in face and bearing of constant dissipation; but Ronald Desborough looked what he was, the most "fit" and happy-go-lucky man in the world.

He was as erect as a soldier, and carried himself with the unconscious grace of an athlete. The foolish course of life which had set its hall-mark on so many of the men in the room, had as yet graven no lines in his face, nor turned its healthful hue to pallor. He was young, of extraordinary physical strength, and of the bright and cheerful temperament which had come to him from the strain of Celtic blood in the great Desborough family. As yet, he had stretched out his hand to the cup of pleasure with a laugh of careless enjoyment; it would remain for Time to show whether he would later snatch at it with the snarl of feverish despair which is born of satiety.

It may safely be said that Ronald Desborough, or Ronnie, as he was called by his innumerable friends, was one of the most popular men in society. Alas! popularity, like all other forms of success, has its penalties; he had got into a fast set, and he moved, joyously, unthinkingly, in the swiftest of the swift. He was a member of the Ace of Spades Club, not because he loved cards, but because he had been insensitively drawn into it; the horrid vice of gambling had really no charm for him; he loved a horse-race for its own sake, was good at most of the sports all strong men delight in, and was far happier tramping over the turnips with a imbecile and an idiot, for I am possessed by the firm conviction that if you say that you will not marry me I shall be a remarkably wretched and unhappy individual. Do not ask me to account for this strange and ludicrous condition of mind; but believe me that it is a kind of insanity which, in my case at any rate, will prove quite incurable. Therefore, Tibby, I ask you again—will you marry me?"

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(To be Continued.)

mond, meaning to have a bit of dinner there and get back in plenty of time for our appointment with you; but the nags got a bit wild, and we had a trifling accident; shied at a German band—no wonder!—and turned over the apple-cart. How do you do, Princess?" She had come forward to the table and seated herself, and was looking at him, looking over him, with a kind of furtive apprehension. "No one hurt!" he hastened to add. "We picked up the pieces and got back all right; but late, of course. We're most awfully sorry. Let's cut for deal. Yours, Lydstone. Usual stakes, I suppose? Bring some wine, please."

They began to play. Lydstone and Brandon with keen and rigid carefulness; Ronald Desborough in the smiling, debonaire fashion with which he played all games; the Princess with her usual timidity and barely concealed nervousness. The luck was with Desborough and Brandon from the start; Brandon played well, and did not let a trick slip; Lydstone's narrow face grew darker, his thin lips twitched, he stared at the centre of the table, only raising his moody eyes to scowl at his wife, who gradually grew paler and obviously more nervous. Once or twice he rebuked her, in a low voice like the snarl of a dog, for some mistake; and on one of the occasions he was doing so she had glanced at Ronald Desborough with, perhaps, an unconscious appeal in her blue eyes. He caught the glance, but, of course, he could say nothing.

The Lydstones' luck, joined to the Princess's faulty play, continued; and presently, at the end of a rubber, Desborough said, in a casual way:

"Shall we drop it now? You've had shameful luck, Lydstone, and both you and Lady Lydstone must be sick of it. We will give you your revenge another night; eh, Brandon?"

"Certainly; by all means," responded Brandon promptly. He rubbed his shoulder and smiled ruefully. "I am quite ready to drop it; for, to tell you the truth, I'm feeling a bit shaky. Must have come out on my shoulder."

He had done nothing of the kind, and was not hurt in the least, and he winked almost imperceptibly at Ronald; but Lydstone caught the wink, his face flushed darkly, and he glared at the two men.

"We will go on playing," he said sullenly. "You were all right a minute ago; it's not usual for the winners to cry off; and it's early yet."

"I'm sure the Princess is tired," said Ronald, rather unwisely.

Lydstone turned to him with an ugly sneer.

"Permit me to answer for my wife, Desborough," he said.

Ronald coloured slightly. "I beg your pardon," he said.

Her small hand slid along the table and just touched his arm; he met her troubled, anxious eyes, gathered from their expression that she wished him to continue playing, and, with his cheery "All right!" took up the cards again.

Fortune remained faithful to him and Brandon; Lydstone had evidently lost his head; he played badly, and the unfortunate little woman played even worse. Suddenly, as she made a palpable mistake and lost a trick, Lydstone leant across the table and snarled through his clenched teeth, "You fool!"

She sank back, her hand stretched out with a gesture of fear and appeal, and the tears rose to her eyes. Ronnie, his eyes blazing and his hands actually clenched, sprang to his feet and turned to the unmanly coward. The Princess, still seated, caught the clenched hand and murmured a terrified "No, no!" Brandon, an Irishman, with all the alertness of his race, stepped swiftly between the two men. The other men and women ceased playing, and stared at the group; some of them rose hastily and went towards it. Coming on the silence, the strained absorption, this sudden outburst of passion, absolutely novel in that room, created a kind of hysterical excitement.

(To be Continued.)

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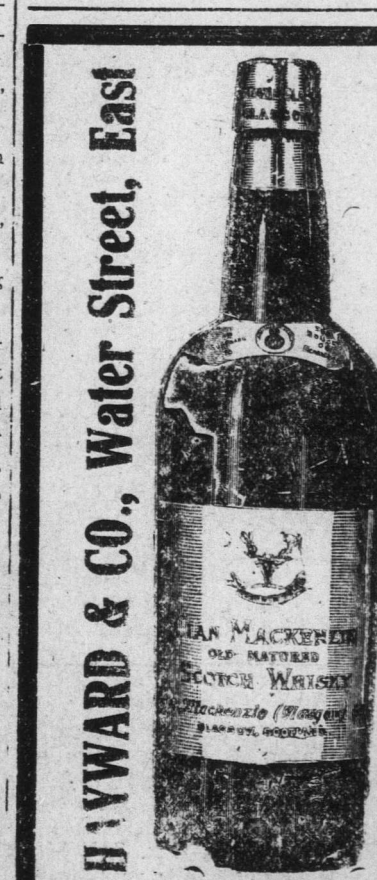
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