

Duke Lawless fell in love with Emily Dorset. She did him the honour to prefer him to any other man; at least he thought so. Her income, however, was limited like his own. The engagement was not announced; for Lawless had determined to embark in some enterprise, the profits from which would make marriage possible, according to his ideas. He inclined to ranching in Canada or a planter's life in Queensland. The eight or ten thousand pounds necessary was not, however, easy to get together, and Lawless hadn't the least notion of discounting the future, or his uncle's affections either, by seeking it from the source naturally suggested by the circumstances. Besides, he knew his uncle did not wish him to marry except he married a fortune. While things were in this uncertain state, Just Trafford arrived on a visit to Trafford Court. The meeting of the old friends was cordial. Immediately on Trafford's arrival, however, the current of events changed. Things occurred which brought disaster. It was noticeable that Miss Emily Dorset began to see a deal more of Admiral Lawless and Just Trafford, and a deal less of the youngest Lawless. One day Duke Lawless came back to the house unexpectedly, his horse having knocked-up on the road. On entering the library he saw what turned the course of his life."

Sir Duke here paused, sighed, shook the ashes out of his pipe with a grave and expressive anxiety which did not properly belong to the action, and remained for a moment, both arms on his knees, silent and looking awhile at the fire.

"Just Trafford sat beside Emily Dorset in an attitude of—say, affectionate consideration. She had been weeping, and her whole manner suggested very touching confidences. They both rose on the entrance of Lawless; but neither sought to say a word. What could they say? Lawless apologised, took a book from the table which he had not come for, and left." Again Sir Duke paused.

"The book was an illustrated 'Much Ado About Nothing,'" said The Honourable.

"A few hours after, Lawless had an interview with Emily Dorset. He demanded, with a good deal of feeling perhaps—for he was romantic enough to love the girl—an explanation. He would have asked it of Trafford first if he had seen him. She said Lawless should trust her; that she had no explanation at that moment to give. If he waited—but Lawless asked her if she cared for him at all, if she wished or intended to marry him. She replied lightly: 'Perhaps, when you become Sir Duke Lawless.' Then Lawless accused her of heartlessness and of encouraging both his uncle and Just Trafford. She amusingly said: 'Perhaps she had, but it really didn't matter, did it? For reply Lawless said her interest in the whole family seemed active and impartial. He bade her not vex herself at all about him, and not to wait until he became Sir Duke Lawless, but to give preference to seniority and begin with the title at once, which he has reason since to believe that she did. What he said to her, he has been sorry for, not because he thinks it was undeserved, but because he has never been able since to rouse himself to anger on the subject, nor to hate the girl and Just Trafford as he ought. Of the dead he is silent altogether. He never sought an explanation from Just Trafford, for he left that night for London and in two days was on his way to Australia. The day he left, however, he received a note from his banker saying that eight thousand pounds had been placed to his credit by Admiral Lawless. Feeling the indignity of what he believed was the cause of the gift, Lawless neither acknowledged it nor used it, nor any penny of it. Four years have gone since then, and Lawless has wandered over two continents a self-

created exile. He has learned much that he didn't learn at Oxford; and not the least of all that the world is not so bad as is claimed for it, that it isn't worth while hating and cherishing hate, that evil is half accidental, half neutral, and that hard work in the face of Nature is the thing to pull a man together and to strengthen him for his place in the universe. Having burned his ships behind him, that is the way Lawless feels. And the story is told."

Just Trafford sat looking musingly but imperturbably at Sir Duke for a minute; then he said: "That is your interpretation of the story, but not *the* story. Let us turn the medal over now. And, first, let Trafford say that he has the permission of Emily Dorset"—

Sir Duke interrupted: "Of her that was Emily Dorset."

"Of Miss Emily Dorset to tell what she did not tell that day four years ago. After this reading of the tale has been rendered, her letter and those documents are there for fuller testimony. Just Trafford's part in the drama begins, of course, with the library scene. Now Duke Lawless had never known Trafford's half-brother, Hall Vincent. Hall was born in India, and had lived there most of his life. He was in the Indian Police, and had married a clever, beautiful, but impossible kind of girl against the wishes of her parents. The marriage was not a very happy one. This was partly owing to the quick Lawless and Trafford blood, partly to the wife's wilfulness. Hall thought that things might go better if he came to England to live. On their way from Madras to Colombo he had some words with his wife one day about the way she arranged her hair, but nothing serious. This was shortly after tiffin. That evening they entered the harbor at Colombo; and Hall, going to his cabin to seek his wife, could not find her; but in her stead was her hair, arranged carefully in flowing waves on the pillow, where through the voyage her head had lain. That she had cut it off and laid it there was plain; but she could not be found, nor was she ever found. The large porthole was open; this was the only clew. But we need not go further into that. Hall Vincent came home to England. He told his brother the story as it has been told to you, and then left for South America, a broken-spirited man. The wife's family came to England also. They did not meet Hall Vincent; but one day Just Trafford met at a country seat in Devon, for the first time, the wife's sister. She had not known of the relationship between Hall Vincent and the Traffords; and on a memorable afternoon he told her the full story of the married life and the final disaster, as Hall had told it to him.

Sir Duke sprang to his feet.

"You mean, Just, that"—

"I mean that Emily Dorset is the sister of Hall Vincent's wife."

Sir Duke's brown fingers clasped and unclasped nervously. He was about to speak, but The Honourable said: "That is only half the story, wait!"

"Emily Dorset would have told Lawless all in due time, but women don't like to be bullied ever so little, and that and the unhappiness of the thing kept her silent in her short interview with Lawless. She could not have guessed that Lawless would go as he did. Now the secret of her caressing the uncle—yes, that's the best word to use—was Duke Lawless's advancement. She knew how he had set his heart on the ranching or planting life. She would have married him without a penny, but she felt his pride in that particular and respected it. So, like a clever girl, she determined to make the old chap give Lawless a check on his possible future. Perhaps as things progressed the same old chap got an absurd notion in his head about marrying