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**Arter the Ball;**  
 OR,  
**The Mystery Solved at Last.**

CHAPTER XIV.  
 The Exhibition.

"Thank you," said Carlotta. "I did not know whether I might; you are so inflexible in your laws and rules, Mr. Chichester, when they are made for the good and management of your little kingdom, that I trembled," and she smiled, "lest I was proposing something reasonable."

At her tone, which was almost sarcastic in her endeavor to regain the composure she had lost for the moment, Chudleigh's look of happiness died away, and with something like anger, he said:

"You have full permission from the throne to do anything you choose, even to the disposing of the kingdom, or planning a new set of laws, though I fear so small a government would be too trivial and ridiculous for you, who have seen so much, governed so many."

She saw the smarting of his wound in his grave voice and brave smile, and at once healed it.

"Will the king forgive me?" she said, in her low, sweet voice, which had the charming power of a Circe's; "he misunderstands."

Chudleigh turned his face to her, with a flash of the eye and a quick pressure of the hand upon her own that made her tremble.

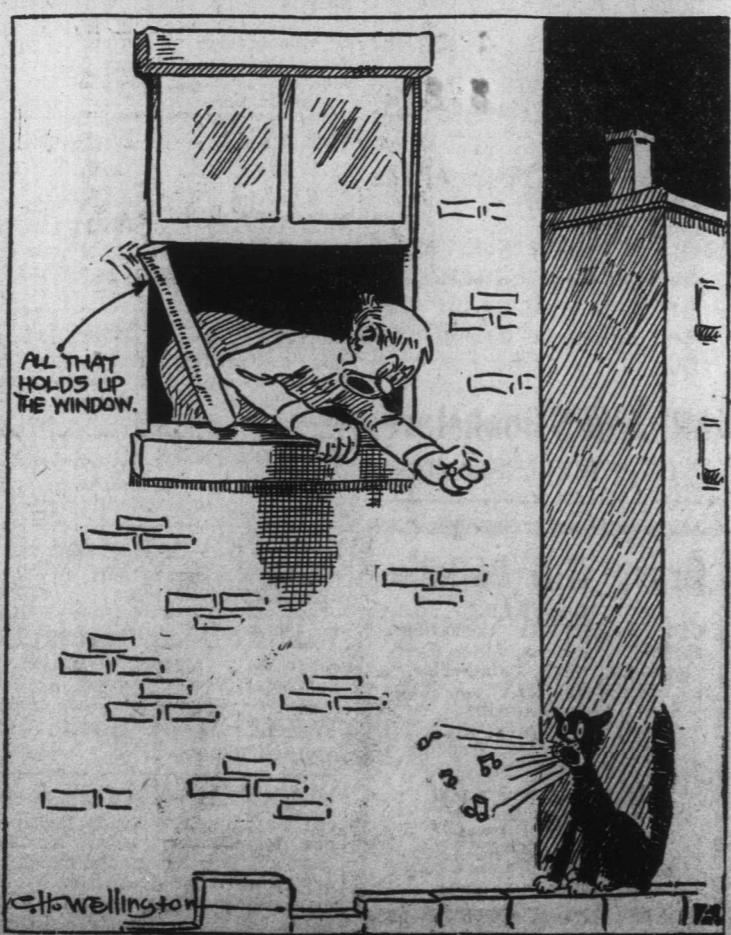
"Let us go to Lady Mildred," she said, quietly, before he could speak, and, recovering himself at her once more cold tone, he bowed in silence and led her on.

Lady Mildred, surrounded by the "committee," as Chudleigh had termed the Gregsons and Sir Fielding, was going over the various names of the exhibitors to whom Sir Fielding and Mr. Gregson had decided prizes meritoriously due.

"Oh, do come here, Chud," said she; "I'm feeling so confused, and your father cannot, or will not, help me at all. Tell me how you pronounce that word—it's Latin, and I can't get hold of it," Sir Fielding has told me three times, but laughed so I could not hear him."

Chudleigh stooped down to spell over the Latin noun, and Carlotta gazed from his side to Sir Fielding, who welcomed her with a genial smile, and commenced scolding her

**And the Worst is Yet to Come—**



cited friends, came up, scratching his head, and blushing like his familiar carrot, taking the money when he got it as if he did not know what to do with it, looking as near a sudden death from over-shyness as it was possible for him to be.

One or two stalwart gardeners, more an fait at this sort of thing, stepped up, with a businesslike air, and took their golden sovereigns as their right; while two old women, who had reared some fuchsias in a cottage of two rooms to a state of perfection, came up slowly, leaning upon their sticks, and crowed out: "Heaven bless ye, my lady!" in acknowledgment.

After this rather elaborate business was disposed of, the meeting caught an attack of cheering, and a sturdy young farmer, whose head c/rotopped by some inches the remainder of the crowd, took the lead in a series of hurrahs, from Lady Mildred down to Mr. Tom Gregson, whose surprise at such a display of enthusiasm for him was only outstripped by his embarrassment.

Then Chudleigh marshaled his people out, and returned to Sir Fielding, who immediately commissioned him with the invitations.

All were accepted, and Lady Mildred and Carlotta drove off to the hall, while the Gregsons galloped home to change their habits and morning suits for the conventional dinner costume.

The dinner was a very pleasant, almost a merry, one, for the Gregson element introduced a great deal of laughter, which Lady Mildred's genial yet thoroughbred manner nicely toned down.

Mr. Gregson, senior, engaged Sir Fielding in a political argument, but of so mild a nature that it did not create more attention than was its due, notwithstanding he once or twice emphasized an assertion to which Sir Fielding had gently shook his head by hanging the delicate wineglass on the table.

Maud joined in the conversation going on around, and bent her beautiful smile and attentive ear to her next neighbor—of course, Mr. Tom—with her usual gentleness, but a keen observer would have discovered that many of the bashful young man's speeches were unheard by her, and that the gentle smile served but to hide a wistful almost sad, expression that broke the reverie now and then.

At the end of the table, Carlotta Lawley was seated next to Chudleigh, who ministered to her every want, and seemed to supply every wish before it was expressed.

Chudleigh, being hungry, talked little until the joint had vanished, and then found that Miss Bella Gregson on the opposite side of the table, demanded a great deal of his attention.

"Mr. Chichester," said that young lady, "do you know your sister says that she likes Mr. Chaplaine's sermons—"

"Some of them, I said," put in Maud, quietly.

"Well, some of them. Now, Mr. Chichester, I want your opinion of them. I can't read them, really. Oh, they are dreadful, such low-church ones, and so very heretical," and Miss Bella shook her head gravely.

"I'm sure you don't approve of them, Mr. Chichester?"

"I don't, indeed," said Chudleigh, rather absently, being engaged in cutting from an epergne for Carlotta. "I am so glad!" said Miss Bella.

"Eh, what's that?" said Sir Fielding, attracted by the joyous exclamation, and fortunately for Chudleigh, the discussion on the Rev. Tobias Chaplaine's sermons was transferred from son to father.

"I have a new picture to show you in the gallery," said Chudleigh to Carlotta, as the ladies arose. "Would you like to look at it? It is by an unknown artist—by unknown, I mean undiscovered."

Carlotta, whose love for art was always at passion heat, answered at once:

"A new picture? I should be delighted!"

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**War News**  
 Messages Received Previous to 9 A.

NEW YORK, Feb. 9.—The British in the Somme region are keeping up their offensive against the Germans in efforts to push forward toward paume. Southeast of Bapaume, the Bapaume-Peronne Road, they taken the highest point of Salliseil Hill, and captured a number of Germans and one machine gun. Along both sides of the River west of Bapaume further progress has been made, including capture of a trench near court, where a godly gain was on Wednesday. On other parts front in France and Belgium continues to be carried out by of artillery and small attacks raiding parties. The Teutonic in Macedonia have shown along the entire front, according the last French official. This ably means that the intensive some time ago will shortly be ed "in this theatre. On the front comparative calm prevails the Battle to the line in Italy. In the Carpathians near Kron however, Petrograd reports the ture of the first line of trenches, which were held by Russian, despite counter Rome reports the failure of a trian attack against the Italian Sugana Valley, and the smallest the big guns of the Italians' trian batteries in several. Enemy and neutral ships aggreg 21,505 tons, have been sunk men subs. during the past 24 Ten vessels in all were sent during this period, six being steamers, aggregating 16,736 ton nouncement is made by the Si parment on the authority of dent Wilson, that in case of tween the United States and eign country, the Governme under no circumstances take sion of property of subjects foreign nation except in con with international understand recognized law.

**SALLY SALLISEL CAPTURED BRITISH.**  
 LONDON, Feb. 9.—British troops have captured Salliseil, on the Somme front, ing to an official issued to-ni