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**Lord Cecil's Dilemma**

**The Picnic**  
**Woodall Forest**

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Yes, Sir Charles; quite suddenly, I believe, as his lordship hasn't been well for some time. I can't say exactly where, but I know that the idea is to winter abroad."

Sir Charles was upon the point of asking some question, when he detected an inquisitive look upon the face of the lackey, and, thanking him instead, for the information supplied, he took his leave.

Completely dazed by the news, he walked through the magnificent avenue of limes, and made his way to the old hostelry, where he was known, for there was no train back to Emden for two or three hours.

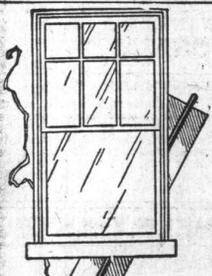
When within a dozen yards of the hotel, a carriage swept in view round a curve in the road; the horses were pulled up with a jerk, and he heard his name pronounced in tones of real pleasure.

"Sir Charles Hastings!"  
There was no mistaking those silvery notes, and in one moment he found himself pressing the dainty fingers of Ada Craythorne.

"This is a pleasant surprise!" she continued, bestowing upon him one of her most bewitching glances. "I am so glad that I saw you, as the hired carriages are wretched conveyances, and I am sure that you were coming to see mamma!"

Sir Charles had not given the Craythornes a thought, but he stepped into the carriage as Ada made room for him, and the coachman drove on.

He was surprised that Ada should treat him so kindly, and the sweet glances from her bright eyes rather bewildered him. Of course, his story had reached them. He was determined



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to be received nowhere under false pretences again.

"I was unfortunate in being away from Emden when Lady Craythorne called some time ago," he observed. "And my mother was too ill to receive visitors."

"We were not very much disappointed," Miss Craythorne replied, "for you had taken care to warn us. Do you remember?"

"Yes," he replied, absently; then he continued: "I have not been able to return the call, owing to an old trouble of mine turning up again."

He stammered a little, and his eyes dropped before her sympathetic gaze. "I know," she responded, gently. "We read something about it in the papers—and—and—the Horleys told mamma a great deal about it."

"Yes," he replied, absently; then he continued: "I have not been able to return the call, owing to an old trouble of mine turning up again."

He stammered a little, and his eyes dropped before her sympathetic gaze. "I know," she responded, gently. "We read something about it in the papers—and—and—the Horleys told mamma a great deal about it."

"It is quite true," replied Sir Charles. "I should not know her if I met her face to face. I believe that she has black eyes. That is all I remember."

"It was an awful sacrifice," "It was—a sacrifice that I never fully realized until now."

She glanced at him tenderly, and he felt that her sympathy was very sweet. There could be no danger—no wrong now—in her companionship. She knew his pitiful history. He felt drawn toward her almost insensibly, and wished that he had a sister like her. He believed now that the hard thoughts he had had of her were without foundation, and caused merely by his own vanity, and the insinuations of Lord Cecil Stanhope.

"But you will never acknowledge her," continued Ada. "It would be too dreadful. The law will not acknowledge such a marriage!"

"I do not care to air my grievances in public," he said, with a faint smile. "We cannot get rid of such incumbrances in England without the objectionable routine of the divorce court and its terrible obligations. I only want to be free of her presence. What woman would care to link her fair fame with that of a man who had been divorced?"

"Any woman who truly loved that man—under the same circumstances as yours."

She spoke excitedly, then passed with a vivid blush; but he did not see it; he was looking before him, and her words sounded in his ears as though from afar. He did not even feel the full force of their import until some hours later.

"I hear that Lord Howard and family are to winter abroad," he said presently. His heart leaped into his throat, for he expected that their movements had been made known to the Craythornes.

"Yes," replied Ada. "Rather early to go away, is it not? There appears to have been a great deal of illness at the Abbey. First Lady Marcia, then the earl; and, though Lady Gladys has not quite broken down, she has grown thin and pale. Of course you have heard of her engagement to Lord Stanhope? It was not of a surprise to most people, but I did not think Gladys cared for him one little bit."

Hastings feared that his brain was reeling, but he recovered himself by an effort, saying: "Is the wedding arranged; an early one, I suppose?"

"Oh, no! Lady Gladys would not agree to it. She will not be married until next June. She wishes to have one London season unfettered." Ada laughed merrily, and just then the carriage turned into the drive.

possessed on earth at that moment to be alone, but it was quite impossible. The vehicle pulled up; there was a rush of feet, and Lady Craythorne and Flossie were greeting him effusively, though they failed to disguise the astonishment they experienced upon seeing the who was Ada's companion.

He talked to them, he dined with them, though he could never tell how he did it, for there was only one thought in his brain, one constantly recurring thought.

"It is true! Gladys is false to me!" It rang in his mind like a knell of doom; it never varied, but boomed. "It is true! Gladys is false to me!"

He recklessly accepted another invitation, and begged the Craythornes to visit Lady Hastings. His mother was always regretting that she had been unable to receive them when they came so unexpectedly before.

Before he left for the station Ada whispered to him: "You know how sorry I am for you, Sir Charles. If you ever want a friend, I am ready to serve you. Sometimes a woman can be of great use."

He did not notice her impassioned tones—he did not see the fire in her smouldering eyes, and replied: "Your sympathy is pleasant, Miss Craythorne. It is more than kind of you, and I shall never forget it. It proves to me that all women are not fickle and false."

It was a foolish speech, and she can be pardoned for misinterpreting it, but his heart was filled with bitterness.

When he was gone, Ada Craythorne kissed a flower that his hand had touched, and sobbed for very gladness. She believed that he had loved her for weeks, but had not dared to speak of it, because of that woman!

CHAPTER XXV.  
A week passed, and Hastings received a letter postmarked Paris. Without glancing further, he knew who it was from, and laid it on one side with a throbbing heart. But for the presence of his mother, he would have pressed the dear handwriting to his lips.

"I never hear you speak of Lord Cecil Stanhope now," Lady Hastings observed to her son.

"No," he said, his brow darkening. "We were never close friends, and have very little in common. I do not like Lord Stanhope, mother."

She was looking at him with anxious interest. This occurred daily after the arrival of the post bag, and every letter terrified her.

"No, there is nothing from Lupus," went on Sir Charles. "I cannot understand his inattention to business, and will run up to town to see him to-day. It is four days since I wrote him."

He was silent a moment, a wild hope in his heart. "I have only his word that the creature is in England, and meditates making scandal, and I confess that I dislike and distrust the man. He may have some ugly scheme in his brain to make money out of me. These low-class lawyers are all alike!"

(To be continued.)

**Fads and Fashions.**

The petal cape is gaining in favor. One shows very wide petals in triple tier arrangement.

At the seaside resorts one sees printed cottons and linens to the exclusion of crepe dresses.

Novelty ratines in striking designs are used for cape costumes, skirts, frills and skirts.

Most children are wearing the straight dresses, just as the grown-ups do. Bewitching models made of unbleached muslin show the gayest of stitchery on the edges. Others have appliqued motifs in bright colors.

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With dust frill and flounce of beautifully worked embroidery; various styles and sizes.  
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"Regular fence climbers."  
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In Fawn, Brown, Grey, Nigger.  
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Made out of fine combed yarn.  
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Resemble Leather in appearance but not as expensive; strongly made throughout, insuring unusual wearing qualities; excellent Suit Cases at a moderate price.  
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Let us show you these Suits for swimming. They are of a splendid Jersey Cloth, nicely trimmed.  
Each, \$1.49

**Men's Summer Caps**  
In Light and Dark shades; all sizes.  
Each, \$1.25 to \$1.75

**Boys' Blouses.**  
An unusually good assortment of pleasing patterns were in our last shipment. Your choice of these while they last at 98c.

**Children's Holiday Dresses.**  
Strength and comfort is combined with daintiness of style in these garments. Choose from variety of attractive patterns.  
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Is the best Toilet Soap.  
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Of White Jean.  
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**Hair Nets**  
With or without elastic.  
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To fit from 1 to 6 years.  
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Each, 15c.

**Children's Socks**  
In Blue and White, trimmed with contrasting colors.  
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4 folds, for Confirmation.  
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Each, 45c.

**Ladies' Pink Corsets.**  
Regular Summer wear; nothing hot or heavy about them.  
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**Ladies' Dark Sateen Underskirts**  
In Green, Mauve, Red and Black.  
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Here is a great opportunity for you to save on your headwear for this season.  
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In Green, Mauve, Red and Black.  
Each, \$1.98

**Ladies' Summer Hats and Sailors.**  
Here is a great opportunity for you to save on your headwear for this season.  
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Splendid Elastic.  
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