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UPSET? Pape's Diapepsin WILL PUT YOU ON YOUR FEET

The Lost Will; OR, LOVE TRIUMPHS AT LAST!

CHAPTER XII

The servant came in to announce lunch, and drew back the curtains which divided the room from another and a larger one, in which the table was laid. Lord Ferndale wheeled the invalid couch into the other room, then returned for his guests. The appointments of the table were exquisite, the well-worn napery of the finest, the silver antique and well-kept priceless; but the luncheon was plain almost to meagreness. There was some soup in a massive silver tureen, and a cold joint at the other end of the table; but Lord Ferndale made no apology for the plainness of the fare, and served the soup with unbroken equanimity. He carried a plate to the invalid-table, which the servant had placed beside Lady Blanche, unfolded her napkin and spread it on her lap, even placed the upon in her hand; and as Nora watched these devout attentions, she felt her eyes grow moist.

"You came from Australia, Miss Norton?" he said, as he resumed his seat. "Tell me, do you like England? Ah, but forgive me, you have been here so short a time, have you not?" "I love England," said Nora. "You mean, the Colonials flatter ourselves that our love for the Old Country is more ardent than that of its own people;—I mean, the people who are born here?"

"Yes," he said promptly; "but no doubt you miss a great deal; we must seem small, circumscribed, after the wide expanses of your country."

"Oh, they're wide enough," said Nora, with a smile. "You find them too wide when you are tramping through them, sometimes tired and hungry."

He did not look awkward or embarrassed by this candid statement; his dark eyes dwelt on her for quite a moment or two of silence, and Nora went on:

"My—my father was very poor; one does not see the best of any country when one is nearly penniless and homeless. Perhaps I like England because of the contrast. You know that I have been rich only a very short time?"

He bowed his head in assent. If he thought it strange and somewhat outspoken that this beautiful young girl should be so quick to remind him of the suddenness of the change that had come in her fortunes, nothing in his face or manner proclaimed his feelings.

"You must find it very—interesting," he said.

"Yes, that is it," she responded, with a smile; "and it will be still more interesting when I can fully realize it, if ever I do. I feel like Aladdin when he used the magic lamp for the first time, and sometimes I wake up in the night and think that the whole thing is a fairy-tale, or that I have dreamt it—"

She broke off suddenly, realising

that she had been guilty of talking of herself and her own affairs too freely and with too much candour, and she blushed as she looked round at the others; but Mrs. Feltham met her glance with a smile almost of approval, and Lady Blanche was regarding her with an eager interest which certainly had nothing of adverse criticism in it. Lord Ferndale's face was just courteously impassive.

"I love to hear you say that, dear Miss Norton," said Lady Blanche. "I think I know exactly how you must feel. It must be like stepping into a new life, a new world. But, if you had not told us so," she added quickly, "we should not have known that you felt any strangeness."

It was a nice little speech, and it brought the colour again to Nora's face. She would have liked to have got up and kissed the gentle-voiced speaker.

"Oh, but I have had such good friends to help me," she said; "I mean Mrs. Feltham here—she looked toward her—and Mr. Chalfonte."

"The gentleman who left you a fortune?" said Lord Ferndale, as if he were slightly puzzled.

"No, Mr. Jack—I mean Mr. John Chalfonte—" Nora began to explain, feeling her cheeks grow hot; but Mrs. Feltham instantly and suavely came to her relief.

"My cousin Jack," she said. "He was the secretary friend of Mr. Chalfonte—who spelt his name without our final 'e'; Jack has become Miss Norton's agent."

"Ah, yes; I understand," murmured Lord Ferndale. "I have not met your cousin, Mr. Chalfonte, but I hope to have that pleasure shortly." He made no apology or excuse, as another man might have done, for not calling upon the elder Chalfonte; it seemed to Nora quite impossible that Lord Ferndale should ever find it necessary to make excuse or apology, that he would do, or leave undone, just what should seem right to him.

"I think you will like this country," he went on, addressing Nora. "It is very beautiful. You will hunt; of course you ride?"

"Oh, yes," said Nora, simply. "I have ridden ever since I was a child; but I don't know about hunting." She glanced at Mrs. Feltham, who nodded and said:

"Oh, yes, of course Nora will hunt; there is nothing else for a lady to do here in the winter."

The fragrant lunch was over; Mrs. Feltham rose.

"We mustn't trespass on you any longer, dear Lady Blanche," she said. But Lady Blanche stretched out her hand, with a gesture of entreaty.

"Oh, don't go yet!" she implored. "I want to talk to Miss Norton. Shall we go in the garden? It is quite warm there."

Lord Ferndale wheeled the couch through the window into a warm room of the garden, and Lady Blanche beckoned to Nora, for whom Lord Ferndale had placed a chair near his sister.

"Oh, but I loved you to say what you said," she murmured. "You spoke so simply, naturally, from your heart; and it touched me very much. Yes, we must be friends! And I am so glad you have come, for Edward's sake," she went on. "I have so often wished that there was some one near us in whom he could take an interest. Oh, please don't misunderstand me! He is not cold-hearted or averse to making friendships; but he is very—grave and—and, somehow, unlike other men; and people who do not know him are apt to think him proud and stand-offish."

Nora, who thought that such an impression was not unreasonable, could not find anything to say.

"My brother is the dearest fellow in the world," said Lady Blanche fervently. "He is everything to me—father, brother— But you've seen how patient and good he is to me. You know, I've always been like this, since a child, and the earliest thing I can remember is being carried in Edward's arms, as you saw him carry me to-day." Her eyes filled with tears, but she smiled through them as she went on, apologetically: "You see, I mean to be a very close friend or I shouldn't talk to you like this, Miss Norton. Your name's Nora, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Nora. "I wonder whether you'd mind calling me by it, Lady Blanche?"

Lady Blanche clapped her hands softly and laughed.

"You dear girl! You fell into the trap directly," she said. "I've been wanting to call you 'Nora' all through lunch, and now I'll do so, if you drop the 'Lady.' We've sworn eternal friendship, like a couple of school-girls, haven't we? But you mustn't let me be a burden to you; I can't walk or ride, and sometimes I may be a nuisance—"

"Don't!" murmured Nora, her eyes filling.

Lady Blanche put up the ethereal hand and drew Nora's head down and kissed her.

"I've found a friend at last," she said. "How strangely things happen! We only met an hour or two ago, yet our feet have been turned towards each other through all the years— Oh, but I'm getting poetical, as Edward says, and I must stop. I like you, Mrs. Feltham. Is Mr. John Chalfonte as nice?"

"Yes," said Nora, promptly. "He has been very good to me, as I say; but for him, I don't know what I should have done."

"You must tell me all about it," said Lady Blanche. "We shall have plenty of opportunities of exchanging confidences; not that I have anything to confide, for nothing has happened to me, or ever will happen. I live on here, at the Abbey, from day to day, year to year, like a—vegetable." She laughed.

"Like a flower," Nora corrected, with a smile. "Well, now you'll have to live part of your time at Chertson."

While the two girls had been talking, Lord Ferndale and Mrs. Feltham had been strolling along the many winding walks of the Italian garden. Though he had not asked any questions—it was not Lord Ferndale's way to ask questions—Mrs. Feltham had been telling him something of Nora's story, and of the sudden and extraordinary change in her position.

"Oh, Edward, why not?" she murmured, eagerly, pleadingly. "Isn't it only natural that I should—"

(To be Continued.)

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WAR REVIEW.
While Germany and Austria-Hungary are clamoring for peace, the Entente Allied Governments thus far are paying scant heed to the proposals, but their armies are pressing forward to further victory on all fronts. Officially, no cognizance has yet been taken of the request of Prince Maximilian of Baden, the new German Imperial Chancellor, or that of the Austro-Hungarian Governments for an armistice on land or sea or in the air or the commencement of peace negotiations, for President Wilson, to whom the dual and highly antipathetic proposals are addressed, is not yet a recipient of them. On the battle fronts the Germans are everywhere being forced to give ground to the Allied troops. In Belgium the enemy is gradually being pushed eastward and in anticipation of a forced final withdrawal is continuing to make ready for that eventually by removing his guns and otherwise lessening the value of his defensive works in the territory upon and adjacent to the North Sea coast. To the south, from Arras to the Verdun sector the Germans are being hard pressed by the British, American, Italian and French forces, and although on numerous sectors they still are offering desperate resistance, they seemingly are unable to do more than retard the advance of their foes. Douai, south of Lens, is almost enveloped, and Cambrai has been further endangered through the capture of the village of Auben-Chaulaux-Bois, five miles to the southeast where more than 1,000 Germans were made prisoners. Hard fighting has taken place around Mont Brehain and Beaurevoir and in this immediate vicinity where the Germans have brought up fresh reserves as an endeavor to keep Field Marshal Haig's men from cutting the highly important St. Quentin Le Cateau road from which they now are but a step, both Beaurevoir and Mont Brehain are now in British hands. With the Germans being defeated over wide areas by the French and Americans, from Rheims to the Argonne forest, the Italians south of Laon have begun in offensive which seemingly has as its objective the finishing of the work previously begun by the French for the obliteration of La Fere and Laon. Here they have captured in storming operations important and strongly held German positions. In the vicinity of Laon conflagrations are to be seen and it seems not improbable that the Germans are preparing for a withdrawal.

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