

A FAIR MAIDEN'S NO.

The Story of an Unprecedented Courtship and a Betrayed Trust.

(Not Yet Published in Book Form.)

She could not resist her passion for semi-polite censure. She was a sort of Xanthippe, whose tongue had caught the trick of at least occasional decorum, since society would not endure from it less prudent laxities. "You admire my dinner table," she could not help exclaiming, "with one of her acid little smiles." "Part I, assure you it's a very ordinary table, as such things go. If you had not been brought up, my dear Carroll, to know nothing whatever of society, of life of the great worldly movement, you would take all this sort of mere everyday diversion very much for granted."

"In that case," he answered, "I should enjoy it less than I do." He smiled as he said this, with his wonted amiability, childlike, and yet manly. "Don't I gain, therefore, from what you've called my mother's injustice?"

"Oh," said Mrs. Bellamy, recoiling, "I didn't say that your mother was unjust. I only said—"

"That other people might think her so. But what does that matter, Mrs. Bellamy, if I do not think her so?"

"Ah, yes; then it's all quite your own affair."

"That she has wanted me to live at Southmeadow—so live and die there?"

"Well—yes."

"But pardon me," replied Carroll, at this point, with a grave yet kindly persistence. "I think you have treated it as if you thought it your affair."

"Have I?" returned Mrs. Bellamy, bridling. She laughed a little shrilly here, throwing back her head. "Well, perhaps I have."

"Undoubtedly you have."

His kinswoman began nervously to finger one of the heavy silver forks beside her plate. "I'm afraid, after all, you're a kind of mild barbarian," she said, not without a certain bland ill-humor.

Carroll did not like this, but at the same time he was not hurt by it. The pique or resentment of women never stirred his ire. He somehow always felt that he might have been wrong in raising their rebukes on all the few occasions when he had received them. Mrs. Bellamy was suddenly engaged by the gentleman on her other side, and just then he heard a soft voice on his own side say to him:

"Pray tell me, Mr. Courtaigne, if town life has yet succeeded in pleasing you?"

While answering, he looked upon a face and figure that he had seen and admired in the drawing-room just before dinner was announced.

"Oh," he said, "it's you, isn't it? I'm so glad you're here, at my other hand, I—I was presented to you, was I not?"

"Have you forgotten it?" said the lady, with a languid smile. She was young, and had great wavy masses of reddish-gold hair that seemed almost to outweigh her small head, poised on a slim and very graceful throat.

"No," Carroll declared. "But I didn't catch your name."

"Didn't you? I'm only another of your cousins, a rather remote one, too."

"Yes? Please tell me."

"My name? It's Philippa Chadwick. Your mother and my mother were second cousins, if I mistake not. That makes our relationship rather widely understood, does it not?"

"Yes, Miss Chadwick, it certainly does. Am I to call you 'Miss Chadwick, by the way'?"

"Oh, yes. I've no claim to any more august title. Has Mrs. Bellamy been kidding you?"

Carroll broke into a sudden surprised laugh. "Do you mean that you've been hearing her?"

Philippa Chadwick echoed his laugh, but with a note of worldly warning that jarred upon him. "I didn't precisely play eavesdropper, Mr. Courtaigne. But one can't help overhearing things at these dinners. I heard her call you a barbarian, which, I know, I've found myself hoping that she is right? A real barbarian would be so pleasant to meet. All the savagery that I ever fell in with is so tediously cultivated."

"But Anna Bellamy called me only a mild barbarian."

"True. She drew a line at your ferocity. Did it strike you as a just species of limitations?"

"Very. I'm not at all dangerous."

She looked at him closely with a pair of eyes that were a curious blending of the lightest and darkest blue; and what made them very lovely to him was the glossy curl of her lashes, lined like the soft lusciousness of her hair.

"I begin to think that you might be a trifle dangerous without knowing it," she presently said, and laughed her laugh again, which struck him as strangely tired, considering that she was so young and comely.

He now appeared dazed for a moment. Then he said, a little wonderingly:

"Will you please explain these words? I'm afraid I'm stupid enough not to understand them."

Miss Chadwick took a sip from her white wine, encased in a high, gold-embellished beaker of Bohemian glass, dark green with a twisted stem.

"They have no explanation," she said; "they are too stupid."

"I'm afraid your answer implies that I am stupid."

"No; I don't say such double meanings. Do I seem to you like a person with double meanings?"

"You seem to me like a person who means either more or less than what she says; I'm not sure which."

"And you—pray tell me, are you always quite frank and open?"

"Yes."

"Really? Have you no concealments?"

"I can't say that. But I never intentionally wound, for instance."

"Do you realize, however," said his companion, with a frown, which instantly altered to a diverted and yet half-indifferent smile, "that you have just made an attempt to wound me?"

"I'm so sorry," protested Carroll, flushing like a bashful boy. "I wouldn't have done it for the world!"

"Thanks. Your apology is delightfully genuine. But I didn't say that you had wounded me. I said that you had seemed to make the attempt."

"And how?" he pleaded with an anxiety that kindled sparks of suppressed mirth in the eyes he had already begun to think uniquely fascinating. "Please, please tell me how I have struck you as making such an attempt."

"And how?" he pleaded with an anxiety that kindled sparks of suppressed mirth in the eyes he had already begun to think uniquely fascinating. "Please, please tell me how I have struck you as making such an attempt."

"Oh, I'm not any better or any worse than most of us."

"Most of us? Do you mean—"

(To be continued.)

A DREAM OF POSSIBILITIES.

I dreamed last night that woman had at last thrown off the chain which she had worn so many years of misery and pain. I found man hauled from high estate, shorn of his might and power, by those who've had no rights before save courtesy and dower.

And what a wondrous change was made! The city's streets were clean as any silvered pin could be—their like was never seen. The sidewalks glistened in the sun, as spotless as the snow. And all the curbs were scrubbed until they dazzled with their glow.

Down in the City Hall, within the office of the Mayor, I found a stately woman sitting in the civic chair. And all the business of the town with neatness and dispatch was there transacted in a way you'd find it hard to match.

And as I walked about the square I found that all was peace and glad day when maid replaced the men on the police. For man, brute as he is and bad, I think 'twill oft be found. Refrains from kicking up a row when ladies are around.

Indeed it was a model town, this place that woman ran: 'Twas cared for like a well-kept house, and let things stay just as they are; for the homes they left to take our city's interests in their care, I truly stood aghast to note the changes that were there.

The squalor that had been without was now, alas! within. The rooms were dusty, and the babies were heavy-eyed and thin. And while the town was better kept than it had been before, The home and all its peace and joy had gone for evermore.

For some one must take care of home: To care for political, to man must come domestic woes. And no man ever fixed, I vow, with strength to combat these, To meet domestic trials with a woman's grace and ease.

So, woman, won't you kindly take this little hint from me. And let things stay just as they are? for a dozen model cities each as proud as ancient Rome. Aren't half as fine an empire as one simple happy home.

THEMES FOR THE THOUGHTFUL.

A good man needs no monument. We are all ruled by what we love. The question with Christ was not, To divide a sorrow with another will lighten it. No man goes willingly where his heart does not lead. The highest station in life is taken one step at a time. The more brotherly we act the more brotherly we feel. God will not give to us any more religion than we will have. Profession that is all pretension has no influence except for evil. The man who is willing to do wrong to obtain riches cannot enjoy them. The best soldier is not the bravest, but the one who obeys orders the best. God aims at the heart when he turns the artillery of his truth at a sinner. Deeds of love are more precious than jewels, because they cannot be bought. It pays to read books that will make you think and dig down into yourself. How much can I do for myself at my expense, but how much can I do for you?

You may not be able to get people to read the Bible, but you can make them read you. It is hard to have a revival in a church where everybody wants to be a brigadier general. Be mindful of God in all the small things of life, and you will not forget him in the great ones.—From the *Book of Hours*.

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