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**The Romance of a Marriage.**

CHAPTER IX.

"Isn't there rather too much of it, papa?" she suggests, as hamper after hamper proceeds to the front. Display and ostentation are the bane of poor May's existence at all times; but this morning they seem more distasteful than usual.

"What do you mean, my dear?" says Mr. Palmer, a little irritably. "I suppose there must be enough to eat? If I do a thing I like to do it well; I hate being mean."

"Yes, papa, dear; but I should think there is enough for twenty in those hampers. And all that wine, too! and they have put the silver cups in. You said it was to be a simple picnic, papa?"

"So it is," assents Mr. Palmer, reddening and puffing a little, "quite a simple affair. As to the cups—well, I suppose we must have something to drink out of. I ain't got any pewter pots, or I'd take 'em if you prefer them."

And May sighs and is silent.

Presently, Mr. Stancy de comes down—a wondrous sight for mortal eyes! as the poet remarks.

As Stancy himself is wont to remark, he likes to dress the character. This morning, as he has undertaken to drive the four-in-hand, he has chosen to attire himself in the costume of a member of the Four-in-Hand

Club, and has, as usual, just overdone it.

His trousers are as tight as possible; he wears a long, light gray frock-coat, buttoned to his chin, which a high, stand-up collar compels him to stick up in the air; a white felt deer-stalker, with an enormous brim; and a red scarf, in which reposes a huge horseshoe pin set with diamonds.

As he came down-stairs, carrying a long whip, and struggling with his eye-glasses, the effect startled even his father, who is tolerably used to his son's range of costume.

"Won't you find it—rather hot in that coat, Stancy?" he asks, gazing at him with ludicrous, doubtful gravity.

"Haw—no, not driving," says Stancy, with the perspiration already standing on his forehead.

"Oh, all right," says Mr. Palmer. "You know best, of course."

"Haw—I think so," remarks Stancy. "Haw—I—haw—got this coat from Lord Buckley's tailor; it's the—haw—proper thing."

"Just so, my boy; just so," acquiesces Mr. Palmer, duly impressed by the noble authority. "Well, it's past twelve. Is the coach here?"

"I believe so. I'll go and see," says Stancy, and he crosses the hall languidly and disappears.

May looks after him.

"I suppose it is all right, papa?" she says, doubtfully.

"All right? What's all right?" says Mr. Palmer.

"About the coach. Stancy can manage it? Four horses are a good many to drive."

**And the Worst is Yet to Come—**



"Bless my soul, yes, of course," says Mr. Palmer, but not with the profoundest confidence. "What's the use of sending a boy to college if he don't learn all this sort of thing?" he adds, as if driving a four-in-hand were part of the university course.

By this time the grooms have brought the coach to the front, and the four horses, overtaken and rarely used, are pawing up the gravel and pulling at the bits, while Stancy stands looking at them through his eye-glass with an affectation of carelessness, which could be seen through at a glance.

"Haw—seem a little fresh," he says to the groom.

"Yes, Sir," says the man, with exasperating cheerfulness, "awful fresh. Have to keep a tight hand upon them, Sir; especially the near leader."

"Haw—yes," draws Stancy, with a sinking at the heart.

At this moment the Estcourt party come in sight, and Stancy advances to greet them, with his eye-glass firmly fixed, and a languidly aristocratic smile.

"Good gracious!" whispers Paula, under her breath. "What an extraordinary get-up! Bob, do look! What does it all mean? I suppose it wouldn't be possible to drive a coach without a stand-up collar and a long, grey coat?"

"Hush! pray hush!" murmurs Alice, warningly; "and please—please do not smile in that exasperatingly childish fashion."

"Bob, pinch me," says Paula. "or I shall laugh right out!"

"What a frightful guy!" growls Bob.

"Haw—how do you do, ladies?" is Mr. Stancy's greeting. "How d'you do, Bob?"

Alice puts on her sweetest smile, and shifts the dainty, shell tinted sunshade to give him her tiny hand.

"Good-morning. What a delicious day!" she says in her sweetest, softest voice. "How fortunate we are! What a delightful idea this is! It was yours, wasn't it? We might have guessed from whom it emanated."

"Haw—really," simpers Stancy. "I—haw—hope you'll enjoy it."

Then he turns to Paula, whose face is twisted into a strained gravity which borders on derangement or laughter.

"Glad you have honoured us—haw—too, Miss Paula," he says. "Hope you'll enjoy the drive. Ever sat behind a four-in-hand?"

"Never," says Paula, gravely. "Is it very nice? There's no danger, I suppose?"

"Danger!" and he laughs with affected amusement. "Now, weally, what a question! Danger! Come, weally good! I'm going to dlive, you know."

"Then I, for one, feel no apprehension," says the soft voice; and Mr. Stancy turns an appreciative smile upon the owner.

"You'll be quite safe, Miss Paula, I assure you."

"Come, come!" says Mr. Palmer, hurrying up with his most bustling, important air. "Good-morning, ladies; good-morning, Robert. Beautiful morning. Come, Stancy, my boy, the horses are impatient. Now, ladies!"

And he assists them up the ladder—that is, Alice; Paula springs up like a young gazelle.

"I think we might come off with a broken arm, Bob," she whispers, looking down. "If I fall, I shall try and drop on Mr. Palmer's white waist-coat."

"Hold your tongue," growls Bob. After a little graceful fussing from Alice, they settle down into their seats, and Stancy mounts the box and takes the reins. The grooms let go the horses' heads, and, as if they had unloosed a spring, up go the leaders on their hind-legs.

Alice utters a little, faint cry, and clings to Bob; and Paula smiles, her eyes fixed on Stancy, whose face goes from red to white, as he fumbles with the reins helplessly.

The footmen skip nimbly to a safe distance, and Mr. Palmer clutches his seat.

"Bless my soul!" he exclaims. "What's the matter with 'em, Stancy?"

"Haw—nothing!" draws Stancy, with a ghastly affectation of amusement. "A little fresh. Don't be alarmed, ladies. It's—It's—all right."

It appears to be rather all wrong, however, and the horses, feeling themselves drawn up at his nervously tight grasp, beat the air with their forelegs until the grooms get down and pull them to earth again.

"Better give them a little more

**To Prevent Grip**  
Take  
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**Fashion Plates.**



2036.—Here is a very attractive one-piece dress. The closing is effected at the left side of the panel front. The sleeve shows a new style feature in the cuff shaping. This is a good model for serge with satin, velvet with faille or moire, or for any plain cloth with a trimming of braid or embroidery.

The Pattern is cut in 7 sizes: 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44 and 46 inches bust measure. Size 38 requires 5 1/2 yards of 44-inch material. The dress measures about 2 yards at lower edge, with plaits extended.

A pattern of this illustration mailed to any address on receipt of 10c. in silver or 1c. and 2c. stamps.



2733.—This simple model is easy to develop, and is most becoming to slender figures. The back and front are plaited, and the closing is effected at the left side of the front at shoulder and under the plait.

The Pattern is cut in 3 Sizes: 16, 18 and 20 years. Size 16 will require 3 1/2 yards of 44-inch material.

Serge, corduroy, velveteen, satin, Jersey cloth or gabardine could be used for this style. Blue velveteen with sleeves and hat of Georgette crepe would be pleasing, or brown serge with matched satin. The dress measures about 2 yards at the foot.

A pattern of this illustration mailed to any address on receipt of 10 cents in silver or stamps.

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head sir," suggests the coachman, looking on with a thinly disguised contempt.

"Haw—yes—just so," says Stancy, and with the aid of the grooms he manages to make the impatient horses start fair.

Paula smiles—"grins from ear to ear!" as Bob describes it afterwards, and Alice's colour flies, not to return for some time.

"You are sure you can manage it, eh, Stancy?" enquires Mr. Palmer, rather nervously, and still clutching his seat, while he glances down at the hard road as if he were looking for a soft spot.

"What a ridiculous question!" says poor Stancy, with a sickly smile.

"Oh, very well, then," says Mr. Palmer. "Only don't let them jump about or they'll break the wine bottles."

"To say nothing of the passengers," remarks Paula, cheerfully.

The horses, however, having once made a start, are merciful, and, doubtless smiling among themselves, go straight; but there is a certain freedom about their style of progression which would be very significant to an experienced hand.

Stancy gains a little courage, and he ventures to cast a smile behind him.

"Not nervous now, eh?" he says.

"I never was," says Paula, upon whom the smile falls. "I like a little excitement. It must be very nice driving four horses?"

"Ye—s," draws Stancy. "A sense of power, you know; but he doesn't intimate whether the sense is felt by the horses or the driver."

"It must be delightful," murmurs Alice, smiling, her eyes fixed with nervous dread on the horses' ears.

"Ye—s; very fond of it myself," says Stancy.

"Here's the King's Arms," says Mr. Palmer. "I trust our friend Sir Herrick will not have been kept waiting; we are rather late. Most agreeable young gentleman, Sir Herrick, Miss Alice."

"I haven't had the pleasure of meeting him yet," says Alice, sweetly.

"You'll find him the correct thing," says Mr. Palmer, with approval: "quite the old style, you know. Hal! there he is, waiting outside; most considerate, really."

All eyes turn to the inn, where, leaning against the horse-trough, is the tall figure of Sir Herrick.

He is dressed in a tweed suit, which sits upon him with a pleasant easiness and fitness, in marked contrast to Stancy's uncomfortable get-up; there is the perpetual cigarette in his mouth, and his hands are thrust into his coat-pockets.

Paula looks down at him with a little, rising colour in her face, which she struggles angrily to repress, but which she cannot altogether get rid of, as he comes up with raised hat.

(To be continued.)

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**Critical Situation**  
Cargo Congestion -- Labor Troubles  
D'Annunzio Coming Fiume -- News from Dublin -- Bellefleur Donegal

**BRITAIN'S CRITICAL SHIPPING SITUATION.**

WASHINGTON, Dec. 28.

England is confronted with one of the most critical shipping situations the country has ever known, despite the increase in the number of ships flying the British flag, the secretary of the port and transit committee of London to-day informed the department of Commerce. Labor trouble and the shortage of railway trucks, the report said are holding up the movement of cargoes and has created such congestion at the docks that some ships are allowed to lie in the harbor from seven to eight days before discharging their cargoes. Increases in the prices of foodstuffs and raw materials result from the heavy demurrage charges. The shortage of railway trucks is estimated at 300,000.

**TO ARREST ALL SINN FEINERS.**

LONDON, Dec. 28.

In a despatch dealing with the Sinn Fein problem in Ireland the Dublin correspondent of the Evening Standard says it is not secret in Dublin that the authorities are determined to handle the situation with a certain amount of ruthlessness and apply drastic measures to what they consider a dangerous disease. The correspondent adds that it is stated in quarters which have the reputation of being well informed that the steps contemplated by the victory, Lord French, and his advisers for restoring normal conditions, include the arrest of every known active Sinn Fein throughout the country.

**NOTHING FURTHER FROM BELMONT ISLAND.**

HALIFAX, Dec. 28.

No further word has been received here regarding the plight of the Canadian Government employees at Belmont Island who will be brought here by the icebreaker Montcalm following the



**"The Flu"**

THE FLU is an ailment which it says that it is among physicians return the winter.

"Have they found a cure?"

"No. It seems the meeting of the American Association of Physicians who gathered from subject. There was an opinion on the effect of inoculation, that they had considered a success."

"What is a person to do?"

"Well, statistics show persons out of four a 'Flu' germ. In a number of cases makes immunity from attack if full condition of the virus."

"In some districts 24 developed pneumonia. The germs of the ailment under similar conditions out and run down you to pneumonia germs, and