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**"Love in the Wilds"**

OR  
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CHAPTER XXXVIII.  
A TORTURED MIND.

Now the brook came in sight and the excitement rose like yeast.

"Now, then," shouted one old farmer above the cheering and hurraing, "put the old in well to it, cap'n."

And Reginald, with a half smile, lifted the good old horse at the broad span of water.

Before he could clear it, however, Sir Charles passed him and, amidst an outburst of cheering and shouting, leaped the silver stream and, pulling himself together, shot on ahead.

Reginald followed after, Sir Bois in the rear of him and sending splashes of water into the marquis's face, who, after a most gallant effort, landed in and floundered through the water and crawled out, horse and rider soaked and dripping.

The excitement, however, was too great for the spectators to notice him; he was out of the race, and the whole interest centered in the four remaining, Lord Taunton having succeeded, with a touch of his spurs, in sending his horse on to keep company with the rest.

Now, almost abreast, they rise and clear the hurdle, then spin round the piece of turf on their way home.

Whiz! Clack! Smash! At the first barrier Sir Bois comes a cropper and the gallant horse falls lengthways.

Lord Taunton, with a brief-muttered curse, tries to take him in the leap, but falls short and tumbles within a yard.

Reginald Dartmouth and Sir Charles have it all their own way now, and amidst a death-like silence, bred of



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the most intense excitement, urge their panting horses toward the brook.

"Ten to one on Sir Charles! Fifteen to one on the captain!" shout the crowd.

"Here they come! Oh, the brook—the brook!" exclaims the ladies, rising in the stand, as if by one impulse, and waving their handkerchiefs.

With stern, set face Reginald Dartmouth bears down upon the calm line of water.

Sir Charles, with the old, careless smile upon his handsome face, follows half a yard after.

"The brook—the brook—that'll do it!" roars the crowd.

Then they raise their voices with one loud cry as Reginald Dartmouth, raising his eyes toward the stand, charges at the water and, lifting the chestnut, clears it by an inch.

Sir Charles takes it more cautiously, but clears it, nevertheless, and then a roar rises:

"Now the last hurdle! Two to one on Sir Charles—no, no; Captain Dartmouth—"

The roar ceases as if by magic.

The last hurdle had been cleared by the broad-chested chestnut, but the racer had missed it, and as Reginald Dartmouth rides on, winner of the precious ring, Sir Charles is thrown, as from a catapult, full upon his golden beard, and lies stretched out, still and motionless, upon the greensward.

A shriek cleaves the air, followed by another and yet another—the fence goes down before the onslaught of the crowd, and lords and ladies, farmers and laborers, throng round the prostrate form.

"Lift him up carefully—don't move him!" cry different voices, warningly.

But before any one could do anything a sturdy figure pushed its way through the crowd and, with the aid of a stable-helper, proceeded to lift the unconscious man with gentle care.

Reginald Dartmouth came forward at this moment and, wiping the perspiration from his forehead, bid them be careful—very careful.

But they seemed not to notice him, and, going sedately through the crowd, bore the limp form to a carriage that had stopped on the outskirts of the throng.

Reginald Dartmouth opened his mouth to ask for an explanation and give some command, but he shut it as a lady, dressed in deep mourning, stepped from the carriage and, looking very white and determined, said, distinctly:

"Captain Dartmouth, Sir Charles Anderson is my cousin—the Warren is nearer than the Hall."

Then, before he could answer, she re-entered the carriage, the door was shut with a bang, the faithful old coachman mounted the box, and Sir Charles was borne off.

CHAPTER XXXIX.  
WITHIN TWO YEARS.

Change! change! Didst think the world would stand still, man?—BUTLER.

While Captain Dartmouth and some of his friends were rickling their necks over hurdles and a widened brook for the amusement of his guests, a young man was wearily toiling up the hill to the Dale.

He was a slim but well-built young

follow, with an air of good-breeding about him that was scarcely borne out by his face, for what could be seen of it was of a dark hue, made rather pallid-looking by the huge blue spectacles perched on the nose, while in direct antagonism his hair which, to match his complexion, should have been black, or at least brown, was of an unmistakable and somewhat brilliant red.

Evidently the young gentleman was no stranger in Dale, for at every turn of the long, dusty road he paused and, shifting the little wallet he carried on his back to a fresh position, looked curiously roundabout him.

Sometimes, as, for instance, when the new row of cottages by Manor Farm met his view, he seemed lost in meditation, and nodded once or twice with an approving air.

But as he reached the top of the hill and came within sight of the new Hall, which reared its stately head above the trees like a new Tower of Babel, he stopped point-blank in the road and, opening his eyes wide behind the blue spectacles, stared with unbounded amazement.

For a few minutes he seemed too astonished to proceed, but, still keeping the spectacles turned upon the new palace, he walked slowly on and, with an air of puzzled bewilderment, gained the new gates, which, in all their glory of iron mounting, presented a magnificent and imposing barrier to the outside world.

As if unable to take in enough of the sight by a long, stand-up gaze, the youth seated himself upon one of the huge stone bowlders flanking this gate, and leaning his chin upon his hands let his eyes wander from cell to grating to garret casement, reveling in a long, scrutinizing gaze.

Presently, while he was still looking, an old farm laborer trudged by.

The youth turned quickly and, in a voice slightly tinged with an accent that might be foreign but could not have been recognized as belonging to any language in particular said:

"Good-morning."

"Good-morning, master," replied the old man, with apt civility.

And touching his wrinkled forehead he essayed to proceed, but the youth arrested him with:

"Can you tell me what place this is?"

"The old man, leaning on his hos, turned with a significant smile.

"You be a stranger in these parts?"

"Yes," nodded the youth; "quite."

"Ay, ay, so I was thinking," returned the old man. "Well, this be the new Hall!"

And he removed his eyes from the youth to gaze at the enormous place with admiring awe.

"The new Hall!" repeated the youth.

"Humph! Well, it looks new—"

"Ay, it looks new, doesn't it?" assented the old man, with quiet delight.

"So 'ud anybody say; but it beant—not quite, you know. 'Tis only the outside, as one may say, on'y coat and clothin'; the bricks and mortar, and t' stones be the same as when it was called t' Dale."

"Oh!" said the youth, rather strange, and with a sudden drop of his face; "so this used to be called the Dale, eh? How long ago?"

"Two years nigh upon," replied the old man, pleased at the evident interest which the strange wayfarer took in the new Hall, the pride of the county—"two years nigh upon. Ay"—this with a sigh—"it be more'n two years since t' 'ould squire died."

The youth uttered an exclamation and sprang to his feet, letting fall the knapsack with a crash.

"There must be some ants here somewhere," remarked the youth, sinking down upon the stones again and looking round him carefully while he rubbed his leg restfully. "I think I'll change my seat," and still keeping his face, which was white and working, no doubt by the sudden sting—ants can sting, and pretty sharply—picked up his wallet and seated him-



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self upon the opposite stone. "So the old squire died, you say, two years ago?" he repeated, looking down, but speaking with a tone of curious interest; "and this place was built upon the old house, eh?"

"Yes, that be it," sighed the old man, taking off his battered hat and wiping his brow with a glaring bandanna.

"It be a wonderful change! If Squire Darrell could come from his grave yonder he'd never know the place."

"I don't think he would," muttered the youth, sorrowfully.

"I beg t' pardon?" said the old man, not catching the reply.

"I don't suppose he would," said the youth. "This looks such a very grand place. Pray to whom does it belong?"

"To the capt'n—Captain Dartmouth," replied the old man.

"Captain Dartmouth!" echoed the youth, so glibly and with such an expression of amazement and indignation that the old laborer stared; but the youth continued, in a colder and more indifferent tone: "Captain Dartmouth! A sea-captain, I suppose? Bought it, eh?"

"No," sighed the old man, "he didn't buy it. T' squire left it 'im by will. He be a sojer, not a sea-captain."

"By will?" repeated the youth. "Did he leave him anything else besides the old house, which he lost so little time in effacing?"

"He left him everything," answered the old laborer, with a certain bitterness in his tone. "Everything—Dale, lands, and money, and all."

"Ah!" said the youth, with a certain hesitation in his voice. "There were no other relations, I suppose—there is no nearer?"

The laborer looked at him a moment before answering; then, with a sudden reserve, as of a servant respecting his master's business, replied:

"No, none nearer than the captain. He was his nephew."

"No son—no niece?" asked the youth, carelessly, and with a yawning that necessitated his covering his face with his hands. "No son or daughter or niece?"

"No," said the old man, shortly, faint hesitation in his voice.

"Leastways—no, none. Good-day to you, young sir," and with another touch to the forehead he moved on.

The youth, after another long look at the house beyond the gates, rose likewise and, with averted face, passed into the road.

Before he got fifty paces a sudden shout broke the mid-day stillness, a shout followed by a mingled roar of excitement, a shout and uproar of a crowd interested in some spectacle of accident.

The youth turned and saw a carriage coming down the road toward him.

He stepped on one side just in time to escape the horse—and so narrowly escaping it that his face almost touched the window, through which he saw a lady's face.

The lady saw him and suddenly pulled the check-string.

(To be Continued.)

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