

TWO FAIR WOMEN

GOLDWIN IN THE WEEKLY EPHEMERAL.

"There is no use in shutting your eyes to the truth, Kennedy. It's as plain as A B C that the girl is over head and ears in love with you."

"The individual whose name was Kennedy yawned, uncrossed his legs to cross them the other way, and refrained from replying, as there seemed nothing to be said. He did not wish to own the suit impeachment; he could not truthfully deny it. He and his friend, Frank Murphy, were having a smoke and a talk in his bachelor quarters. They had been to a dance together, and now, in the still hours of the early summer morning, felt inclined to prolong their vigil, instead of going sensibly to bed. They were Dublin men. They had been important posts in a thriving and important atmosphere of the Irish metropolis was now

"I can't deny that I am Murphy insisted. "I told you would be," I warned you not to say so." "Hang it!" said Kennedy, dabbing his forehead with his handkerchief as a movement of annoyance, "I never encouraged her. She's a flirt. If she chose to flirt with me I could not help that. I wish she would fix her attentions on some other man."

"I wish she would," said Murphy, rather wistfully. "Dash it all, Frank, I believe you are soft on her." "Murphy laughed constrainedly. "If I am, why not? She's not the first girl I have been soft on."

"What would you do if you were in my place?" "I'd marry her." "You would, of course, because you are fond of her. I'm not." "That's not the reason. I'm advising you for your good, and I'm judging from your side of the question. I know Nellie Leeson is a bit of a flirt, but that's all on the surface. She's a downright good girl every way. She'll be as good a wife as you can find. And it's time you married. You know you're tired of being a bachelor. Aren't you, row?"

Kennedy sighed. His friend's arguments wrought on him in spite of himself. "You put love quite out of the question, Frank. Don't you think a man should love the woman he wants to marry?"

"Both!" said Murphy conclusively. "Hot love soon cools. That sentimental sort of thing does not go far in real life. People who begin that way often end by hating each other."

"But if I marry Nellie what about you? You are fond of her." "It's quite a fraternal feeling," said Murphy comfortably. "I'm not the sort of fellow to lose my head over any woman. If she cared for me I'd be glad enough to have her. As she doesn't I'm quite satisfied she should have the fellow who does care for."

"I don't know on earth why she cares for me." "It's because of your face, Phil. That's the worst of being born so beastly good-looking. Then a man has all the women running after him."

Kennedy smiled slightly. Then an expression of pain came over his handsome face. "But women are fools," Murphy resumed. "Good-looking fellows are always hard to manage. You are the greatest crank I know."

"That's why I think it is unwise to rush into matrimony." "Did you ever love a woman?" "I dreamt once that I did."

"Dreamt it?" "Such experiences are the dreams of life, old fellow. They are far better than the reality. But you know nothing about them."

"Just as well for me that I don't. But why didn't you marry her?" "She wouldn't have me." "Is she a Dublin girl?" "She was in Dublin then. I don't know where she is now."

by allowing them pass as a matter of course. Intensely sensitive on any point of honour, Kennedy was now startled to realize that he had erred towards Miss Leeson by allowing her to take it for granted that she could rouse matrimonial intentions with regard to herself in his mind.

Then one of those sudden radical changes that are sometimes effected in a man's way of thinking came upon him. Why should he not marry Nellie Leeson? He asked himself seriously. The idea would have seemed absurd to him yesterday, yet it appeared quite natural to-day, and the remembrance of Frank Murphy's practical suggestion gave it tenacity and shape. The reasons for his marrying her were much stronger than the reasons against. He liked the girl though she was fond of masculine society she was not unwomanly. He knew she had many sterling qualities, and her attachment to him was quite disinterested. She had several more eligible admirers. He was tired of his bachelor quarters. He was feeling worried and restless. It was just the time to settle down to a responsibility. What better one could he want than that of endeavoring to make a woman who loved him happy? He almost made up his mind to propose to Nellie the next time he met her, and thus he quietly dozed off to sleep with her image filling his mind.

In his sleep he heard a voice calling him. "Philip! Philip!" The call flashed to his consciousness through the slumber that was dulling his brain. It was like a clarion sounding in some still place. Then, as an echo, came another call also reiterated—"Phil! Phil!"

He started to his feet and rubbed his eyes, with a troubled expression. "It was her voice," he said to himself. "How strange! I could have sworn she was here. It must have been a dream."

Going to the window, he opened it, and stood looking out. His face was very pale, and though he had described his experience as a dream, he was much moved by it. The incident or coincidence of being roused by the voice of the woman he loved, when he had almost made up his mind to marry a woman he did not love, affected his purpose. Usually he was promptly decisive. Now he resolved to tamper. He would not propose to Nellie just yet. He would not even decide whether or not he would marry her, for he was really not bound to her in any way. He would ask for a holiday and go away for at least a month. He wanted a change, but he was not in the mood for company. He would go on a long cycling tour by himself. He had often planned a cycling tour through Ireland, but had never carried out the project. He would do it at once, and his intentions with regard to Nellie Leeson would depend on how he felt when he came back. Marriage was too serious to be undertaken on the spur of a momentary impulse.

On applying for his holiday that day, Kennedy had his request granted. Indeed an affirmative answer. Since his first appointment in the distillery he had been rapidly promoted as he was related to the proprietors of the concern; and for the same reason it was highly probable that he would one day get a partnership. This was Friday, so Kennedy arranged to begin his leave of absence on Monday. The month was July, the weather very fine, so he had the best augury of propitious circumstances for his tour. This evening Kennedy had an engagement, and though it was one he was not particularly anxious to fulfill, he decided to go just to pass the time. His restlessness was now becoming suppressed excitement. He was longingly feverishly, as a schoolboy longs for the first day of vacation, for the next few days to be over.

The function to which he was going was a "cocktail" at his aunt's, in Marston square. This aunt, Mrs. Allen, was a very exclusive sort of person, wont to flatter herself that the society in which she mixed was the most select in Dublin. Her side of the family had no connection with the distillery, she was accustomed to maintain. Her people were gentry, connected with the landed interest and not with trade. Kennedy rather liked his relative, who always had a warm welcome for him, though her snobbish notions jarred on him; while she considered his Radical tendencies quite preposterous.

"Well, Philip, you really are the most unprincipled man in town," she said, shaking hands with her nephew when he appeared. "I thought you were not going to come. But you are just in time to hear Nellie Leeson sing."

Mrs. Allen, too, favored the project of a match between her nephew and Nellie, who was well connected. "Kennedy had decided that he would keep clear" of Miss Leeson this evening. But he had reckoned without his host—that is, without Nellie. When her song was over she beckoned him absently to her side. He had to go to her. She was a brilliant-

looking blonde of six-and-twenty, who passed for being a beauty, though she had many personal deficiencies. But her taste in dress and her fascinating smile, which set off to advantage two rows of pearly teeth, helped to disarm adverse criticism in her regard.

"You morose creature!" she said reproachfully to Kennedy; "did you intend sitting in that corner by yourself all the evening?"

"I am an unresolvable mood." "How horribly beastly!" "Yes, it is just the way to describe it."

"You require a good shaking. It is the best cure for unsociability." "I am going to try the effect of a cycling tour. A whole month of my own society exclusively will make me tired of it probably."

"A whole month! What do you mean?" "I'm taking my holidays at once. I'll start on a cycling tour next Monday."

Kennedy felt rather vicious as he said this, and watched the effect on Nellie. He was stirred by a sudden indignation at the way in which she appropriated him. She looked dumfounded.

"What a sudden decision. You told me you would not go till September. You would not change his mind as well as a woman!"

"Of course, but there must be some reason for it."

"Oh, it was merely a sudden fancy," he said, looking at her keenly. She reddened and became uncomfortably conscious that his reason had some reference to herself, but she tried to treat the matter lightly.

"Well, I hope you will enjoy your self, and that you will have charming adventures, and not break any bones. We are to go to Switzerland in August."

"So you told me." She was silent for a few moments, feeling damped. She had hoped to be engaged before going to Switzerland; now there did not seem to be the least chance of it. Then another hope stirred in her; perhaps he, too, might go to Switzerland.

"Where are you going?" she inquired suggestively.

"I don't know yet, but not out of this country."

"How dull! Why don't you decide to go abroad?" "I don't want to."

It was evident she could not influence him in his present mood, so she gave way to pique and left him. Feeling satisfied with the way he had conducted affairs Kennedy did not wait for the end of the programme, but went back to his lodgings.

"I should have behaved like this sooner," he said to himself, and "not allowed her to take possession of me. But I did not see how matters were tending. If I ever marry her it will be because I choose, not because she chooses." He was quite furious at the thought that he had been very nearly entrapped.

As soon as he reached his sitting-room Kennedy opened the drawer, took out a photograph and looked at it steadily for some minutes. As he gazed at it his expression altered. It had been stern; it softened, it grew tender, and then wistful.

It was a woman's face—a fair woman too—but not brilliant in any sense. This woman's hair was evidently of that colour which the French call *coeur* (not golden like Nellie's), her face was thin and rather sharp-featured her expression was resolute, but sad. She was evidently one who had learned early in life that Fate for her would be an adverse force against which she would have to arm herself and do battle. Under the photograph one was written, "Eileen." Kennedy word's eyes grew dim as he remembered the day when he had made the giver write her name there.

"She has mind and a soul," he said to myself. "Nellie has not much of either. Eileen, where are you? Why did you misunderstand me so cruelly?"

Eileen's history, in so far as it concerned Kennedy, was a sad but very ordinary one. She had lived his aunt, Mrs. Allen, for six months as lady-help, and during that time Kennedy had had many opportunities of meeting her, incessantly, this quiet, self-contained woman had drawn him to her, and when he recognized that he loved her, he was intensely happy for a while. He was sure she returned this feeling, though she was very reserved with him. But a shy sensitive woman, when she behaves coldly to a man (equally sensitive) who loves her, repels him and hinders him from assuming a lover's attitude. Kennedy sought every possible opportunity of meeting Eileen, but he dared not speak of love to her. He wanted encouragement which she shrank from giving. Then a rupture suddenly occurred between her and Mrs. Allen when some one who had seen Eileen and Kennedy together one day when she was out with Mrs. Allen's boys reported the matter. Kennedy's aunt became suddenly aware that the lady-help had designs on her nephew, and was consequently very indignant. She provoked Eileen into giving notice and going at once.

"And she is not a lady at all," said Mrs. Allen to the crony who had made the mischief. "She is nicely educated and musical, so I treated her as a lady, and allowed her into the drawing-room. But her people are only farmers. Fancy that! Common

farmers somewhere in the country." "She must be most desiring," said the crony. "Fancy making an appointment with him, to meet her out. It was the second time I saw them together in Stephen's green. I thought it was time to tell you."

"It was most kind of you, I am sure. Never trust quiet people. They are always say. And Philip is such a flirt, he is quite capable of marrying her."

Kennedy had a short interview with Eileen before she left. She was haughty, implying plainly by her manner that she thought he had been trifling with her. He was broken-hearted but haughty too. So they parted in anger. He had no clue as to where she went, but supposed she had gone to America, as she had frequently told him she wished to go there. But his heart clung persistently to the thought of her, though there was no hope in him that she should ever meet her again. Thus had Eileen O'Farrell come into and passed out of his life. Probably he now thought she had married some one else. Irish women who go to America generally marry.

"I dare say I am predestined to marry Nellie," he said to himself as he put back the photograph in the drawer. (It was too precious a memento to let mingle with the photographs of ordinary acquaintance that adorned the room.) "But there is a month's reprieve, anyhow. It is a privilege to be a free man."

Then he produced some cycling maps, and began to plan where he should go. The West attracted him; still he decided that he would go along the East coast, go through Waterford and Cork, and do "Killarney. If there would be time, then he would go on westward.

Monday was a dull day, yet a pleasant one for cycling. Kennedy felt in better spirits than he had been in for a long time as he started on the first stage of his journey. But his restlessness soon returned. He could not pause to admire the beauties of the places he passed through, as he had planned to do. A feverish excitement urged him on and made him indifferent to, almost unconscious of, fatigue. He grudging the nights which had to be spent in hotel en route, and went fifty miles in one wet day when it was impossible to ride.

The first halt of any length he made was in Killarney, which he was visiting for the first time. But even the charms of that far famed resort failed to make much impression on his usually impressive artistic faculty. He got as much sight-seeing as possible into a stay of three days, and he felt relieved when he was again wheeling along. The next day he was in the county of Limerick; and, on the evening of that day, found himself in an unpleasant predicament. Having gone a wrong road, he found himself, when it was growing dark, twelve miles from the town he hoped to reach, and three miles from the nearest village where, of course, there would be a public house, but no accommodation for travellers. Dismounting, Kennedy laid his machine on the grass by the roadside and stretched himself near it to consider what he would do. Now he discovered that he was excessively tired. He had expected to be at the projected hotel by this. It seemed to him that he could not possibly ride even a couple of miles further. Besides, how should he find his way in the dark, with no one to direct him?

"I have overdone it to-day anyhow," he said to himself. "I am just rightly served. I ought have stayed at Newcastle. But what on earth is to be done now?" Mechanically he lit a cigar and began to smoke. Then an answer to his question suggested itself. Opposite was a gate through which a way led to a substantial looking house in a field. It was evidently a farmhouse, and Kennedy hastily decided that he would go there, explain his dilemma, and ask for accommodation for the night. Immediately he lifted himself and his bicycle from the grass, and was soon knocking at the front door of the house that had unwittingly suggested shelter to him. It was only when the door was opened by a rosy-cheeked servant that he became suddenly conscious that his position was embarrassing. He briefly explained that he wanted to see the master or mistress of the household, and handed her a card to give.

"There isn't no mistress," said the girl, looking at him with curiosity, for visitors, especially gentlemen with bicycles, were rare occurrences. "An' I think the master is out, out, I'll go an' see, if you'll come in. You can leave your bicycle there. No one won't touch it."

She showed him into a sitting-room, and requested him in a friendly manner to sit down. Presently she returned with a lamp. Then he was surprised to find himself in a very tastefully arranged room. The furniture was old-fashioned, but there were no gaudy anti-messengers or like accessories usual in the best parlors of a farmhouse. The walls were artistically decorated. There were flowers in pots and in vases, an abundance of bric-a-brac—a piano which stood open with music on it, as though she had recently been down. Kennedy had only time to take in these details when he heard steps descending the stairs. They were light steps, like a woman's, and this puzzled him, as he remem-

bered that there was no mistress. The next moment the door opened, and he was face to face with Eileen O'Farrell.

"Eileen!" he exclaimed. "Philip!" she said.

It was the first time they had called each other by their Christian names; but their mutual astonishment made them behave simply. Eileen smiled and felt happy. Kennedy smiled and felt happy also. Each knew before any more words had been spoken that the barriers of reserve that had separated them were now removed for ever.

"Sit down," said Eileen. "I was told there was a stranger in the drawing-room who wanted to see father, and Eileen gave me your card, but it was too dark to see it. I never expected that it was you."

"I thought you were in America." "I had intended to go, but my step-mother died, and it seemed unkind to leave father, as there are a lot of young children—my step brothers and step-sisters. So I have been looking after them since. I used not get on with my step mother. That's why I was living away from home."

"Then this is your home! Oh! Eileen, if I had known you were so near me, I should have come to you long since. It has been such a miserable year since we parted."

"Do you think I have been less miserable than you?" "You knew that I loved you, yet you willfully misunderstood me."

"I think a man should make himself plainly understood."

"You were so cold, so haughty." "Were you less so?" "You know I love you now?" "I do, since you say so."

"And you love me, Eileen?" "I think you need not ask."

The rest of the conversation was in a somewhat similar strain. It was only when Mr. O'Farrell came on the scene that Kennedy remembered why he had come and the request for hospitality he had to make.

Of course the request was granted. In fact Kennedy spent the remainder of his month's holiday at Rathdrom, which was the name of Mr. O'Farrell's farm. Of course, too, Kennedy married Eileen, and thereby greatly scandalized his aunt, Mrs. Allen. "Fancy marrying a common farmer's daughter!" she cried wrathfully to the crony who had previously reported the pair. "But I told you Philip would be foolish enough to do it."

For a little while Nellie Leeson was broken-hearted. Then she consoled herself by matrimony on her account,

and her name figured in the marriage lists with that of Frank Murphy.

Kennedy thinks he has had a narrow escape, for which he thanks his lucky cycling tour.

The Jews and Palestine.

At the Jewish conference held at Basle last week a proposal to purchase the Holy Land for the purpose of reconstituting the Hebrew nation was passed by acclamation. A day or two later a ministerial newspaper in Rome announced that the Sultan had expressed his willingness to sell Palestine to the Jews, but that the Vatican was organizing a campaign of opposition to this plan, and had already sent out petitions to the chief European Powers requesting that no such project might be allowed to go into execution. To this I am in a position to oppose a complete denial, says the *Rome correspondent of the Liverpool Catholic Times*. The Vatican has not occupied itself in the least degree with this Jewish project, for it knows full well that in fulfillment of a prophecy of our Saviour there is not the least likelihood, for the present at least, of the Jewish nation reconstituting itself. Besides, the insinuation that the Catholic Church has a tendency to persecute the Israelite is absolutely false, as is patent to all who are acquainted with history.

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