

FOR PASTIME.

(Concluded.)

'I don't know. I don't think there is any kind of arrangement,' Maud answers, laughing. She looks flushed and pretty.

'Then we shall take the matter into our own hands. You must give me every waltz to-night; there won't be many. The country-people will want reels.'

'Every waltz!' Maud echoes, shaking her head.

Ada sees and hears, though apparently fully occupied with her own concerns.

Maud is no longer the belle of the evening—that is very plain. But custom has robbed all this of its charm for Ada—she is so used to it. She finds this kind of thing wearisome now, though no doubt she would have felt it still more wearisome if she had missed the wonted homage. Radiant she looks, and rather scornfully beautiful, as she moves among the plebeian crowd—out of her element too, as if she found the whole thing rather a bore.

Garde never asks her to dance—not once during the whole course of the evening. Two or three times she thought he was steering through the dense crowd in her direction, but it was always in search of some one else. He seemed to dance with everyone else—to be the hero of the night, in fact—but her he never approached. She does not want partners—she has only too many of them—but somehow she wishes the evening were at an end. She is not amused.

It is over at last, and the waggon sets out with its sleepy occupants, but there is some delay in getting round Ada's horse and Garde's. Ada changes her dress, and leaves the box to be called for at some other time. Then, in the dark—for the moon has set, she is put into her saddle by one of her most devoted admirers, and, after many a good night, she starts on her dark ride home.

It is nearly two o'clock, and, when Ada and her companions lose sight of the lighted windows of the farmhouse, the darkness seems for a while intense. But they soon get accustomed to it, and the stars overhead send down their silvery glitter, and, as they keep to the more level road, it is not difficult to make their way.

'Do you feel cold? The air is chilly,' Garde says, as they trot on side by side.

'No, not at all. I like it.'

They ride for a mile or two in silence; then there is an ominous clatter.

'Black Bess has lost a shoe,' Ada says, pulling up.

It is true. Garde dismounts, but finds the shoe broken in two pieces.

'This is the effect of mountain-climbing. Now what's to be done?'

'Can't we go on?'

'We can try.'

They go on a little farther, and then Black Bess falls dead lame.

'This is terribly provoking,' Garde exclaims, again dismounting. But in the dark he cannot discover the cause of the horse's lameness. Ada is terribly provoked too because he is.

'Is there no forge in the neighborhood?' she asks, feeling in an awkward predicament, and feeling also that she has brought it upon herself.

'There is one, but it is more than a mile away.'

'Can't we reach it?'

'Yes, in the course of time, I suppose.'

'I had better dismount.'

'No, you need not dismount. I will lead the horse.' He takes the bridle in his hand, having his own over his arm. Their progress is very slow.

'At this rate it will be morning before we get back,' Garde says discontentedly. This makes Ada still more angry.

'I shall get down and walk home,' she says, and prepares to be as good as her word.

'You will do no such thing. Is it likely I should let you do so at this time of night? Sit still. What can't be cured must be endured.'

This true saying does not mollify Ada's feelings.

'It is horribly tiresome!' she exclaims vehemently.

'Horribly so indeed.'

What a troublesome companion he must think her, and how disagreeable it must be to find himself in this hobble with her! Had it been Maud, he might have quite enjoyed it. But he makes no secret of being annoyed and bored now. Perhaps he is afraid Maud will wonder at the delay, and think he protracted the ride for pleasure. Ada's proud heart revolts at the mere suggestion.

'I am awfully sorry this should have happened,' she begins passionately.

'So am I,' her cousin answers quietly.

'You must think me a horrid bother.'

'Do not talk to me,' he says in a strange tone.

She bends her head to look at him; he must be terribly annoyed to speak like that.

'You are so uncivil that I scarcely pity you,' she exclaims hotly.

'I am sure you cannot pity me,' he echoes in the same low tone.

HOW TO GET A "SUNLIGHT" PICTURE.

Send 25 "Sunlight" Soap wrappers (wrapper bearing the words "Why Does a Woman Look Old Sooner Than a Man") to Lever Bros., Ltd., 43 Scott St., Toronto, and you will receive by post a pretty picture, free from advertising, and well worth framing. This is an easy way to decorate your home. The soap is the best in the market and it will only cost 1c. postage to send in the wrappers, if you leave the ends open. Write your address carefully.

'Even if you minded, you need not have shown us so plainly,' she says in an aggrieved voice.

'What have I shown plainly?'

'That you find this accident so—so—'

'Trying?' he concludes. 'I do find it trying—it is almost more than I can bear.'

'But why—why?'

He struggles with himself for a moment. Is all his strength to go like this? Is the victory to be hers after all? Is he to be only another of her victims, after all his stern resolves?

'Because,' he begins slowly and gravely—'because I cannot trust myself.'

'To what?'

'To hold my tongue.'

Her heart gives one great bound.

'Ada,' he says—and Black Bess stands still—'I love you. Now you know all, and I must go. I need not ask you to show mercy—you cannot do that.'

'Why must you go?' she asks softly, bending from her saddle.

He raises his face, and for one moment his eyes brighten—but only for a moment.

'Do you ask me that? Here is the forge, and by good luck they are stirring already. Now we shall be all right before many minutes.'

Black Bess is soon shod; and they ride home in a canter, neither caring to speak. Garde Ruthven does not bid Ada good night, and he is gone in the morning when she awakes—gone to visit some friends. She does not see him again before she and her sister go back to town. Maud is surprised at this, but not much more. The little maiden's heart is not touched, and as she herself confesses, Garde had never said a word of love to her. But Ada breaks off her engagement with her Dragoon, apparently without rhyme or reason—fortunately her Dragoon has not brains enough to care very much—and before the next spring comes, with its violet-haunted airs and azure skies, Garde Ruthven finds that he cannot live without his cousin. And Ada has found this out too—she found it out on the night Black Bess lost her shoe—she is quite content to set sail with him in the *Phœbus* for New Zealand, and to find her future kingdom in her husband's heart.

ALISON.

JACK'S NEW YEAR'S EVE.

New year's eve was not pleasant to Jack Knickerbocker. It made him think how happy the coming year might be if he could recall a certain blunder in his life. Recollections of other days when another and more dainty pair of slippers rested on the fender beside his own came back to him. Turkish shoes among the pictures in the coats, and sometimes the face of the woman who wore them smiled at him from the changing glow. Jack remembered how, not many months after he had been married to the owner of those slippers, he had deliberately put her from him. It was their first quarrel, and his quick temper had made him swear that it should be their last. But he didn't start to bring this about by improving his temper. Oh, no! He decided at once that marriage was a failure, and his pretty wife, when he had brutally announced that decision, had quietly said, through her tears:

'Well, Jack, if you think it is, it is.'

And he had said goodbye.

Oh, yes; he had given her money enough, he reasoned, when he tried to justify himself for his cruelty; he had arranged that with his lawyer. But he had gone to London, and was there yet. To-night he realized that he had got his reasoning mixed up. He saw plainly that he had been crueler to himself than he had been to his wife. His lawyer had carefully followed his instructions. Jack had neither seen nor heard from his wife since that night.

Four years had passed and Jack was almost accustomed to being a bachelor again. New Year's eve, and just back again in New York, he occupied an apartment in the Osborne.

A noise of someone entering from the hall made Jack start from his reverie and look around.

There in the center of the room stood a wee mite of a girl. She could not have been more than 3 or 4 years old. Her blue eyes twinkled with mirth and her short golden curls seemed to reflect the firelight.

'You is Jack, isn't you?' she said, as she stretched out her baby arms and toddled forward.

'Yes, that is my name,' gasped the astonished man, and opening his arms he received the little bundle of lace.

'I knowed you was Jack,' said the child as she nestled close to him, 'cos I saw'd you from de hall.'

'And who is Jack?'

'I don't know, but mum loves Jack.' The little girl slipped down and sat on an ottoman at Jack Knickerbocker's feet, and looked up earnestly into his face. 'You isn't as pretty as our Jack,' she said, after a pause.

'And where is your Jack?' was the question of the surprised host.

'Oh, our Jack hangs over de fire. We lives in de next 'partment, mum and me. Won't you come in and see our Jack, an' our fire is brighter dan your's.'

OUR FAMILY PHYSICIAN.

DEAR SIRS.—I was troubled with eczema (salt rheum) for about two years, but I did not bother with it until it began to itch and spread over my hand. I then took four bottles of B. B. B., which completely drove it away. It was by my son's advice I took B. B. B., as B. B. B. is our family physician. J. S. MILLS, Collingwood, Ont.