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**Always have BOVRIL in the House**

"Bovril prevents that Sinking Feeling."

**Lord Cecil's Dilemma**

—OR—

**The Picnic**

—IN—

**Woodall Forest**

CHAPTER XXIX.

Lord Howard was in no gentle mood, and the steward seemed to be goaded to desperation.

"Is the presence of Lord Stanhope necessary?" demanded the earl.

"There can be secrets between us two no longer," retorted Collins. "Lord Stanhope is the party chiefly concerned, and he knows the secret of my power over you now."

My lord covered for an instant; then he went on:

"Let me hear your demands, sir."

"I have first to explain one or two trifling matters to you. I will be as brief as possible. I am your elder brother; but, unfortunately, there is a doubt as to my legitimacy. I can prove it; but, if you are amenable to reason, I have do desire to make any scandal. I also desire to keep you out of a convict prison. Lord Cecil Stanhope is my son."

"What madness is this?" he demanded, contemptuously.

"No interruption, if you please. I repeat—Lord Cecil Stanhope—or at least the person who is known as

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ed very unhappy. He was quite sensible to the volcano under his feet. It was his duty to prove the story that Collins had told him, but he felt that he must obey the iron will of the man who claimed to be his parent.

"We're in a pretty mess all round," he concluded. "And it is only by holding together that we can hope to save the story from the world. If you do your part, Lord Howard, and let Gladys know that she is not the important lady she believes herself to be, we may be able to patch up matters."

The earl had been watching him steadily all this while, it was so difficult to believe that all that the steward had declared was true.

Lord Cecil Stanhope his own nephew! By keeping silent he was helping to maintain a terrible conspiracy, but he was bound hand and foot. Turn whichever he would, the crime of murder stared him in the face, within a few yards of him, even now was the skeleton of his victim.

"I am utterly bewildered," he said, hoarsely. "Let me give up everything, and take my child away. You can have all."

"That is just what I suggested to the steward—I can't get used to calling him father yet—that is just what I wanted; but he won't have it. He insists upon my marrying Gladys."

He drummed his fingers on the table for a few minutes, then added:

"And there is no getting out of the fact, my lord, that we have to obey our new master. For a decent sum of ready cash, I would get out of the country!"

He laughed harshly, and there was a sudden gleam in his pale blue eyes.

"I tell you frankly that I am not so infatuated with life as I was a few months since. I've carried things with a high hand, and I don't relish a villain for my father, reckless as I may be. To my mind the real Lord Stanhope will soon turn up, and even as the husband of Lady Gladys, I shall hold no enviable position in the country. She will regard me with greater contempt than ever, and my beautiful father will be feeding upon us after the bombshell has burst—possibly from some distant land—unless he can shift the stealing of the rightful heir upon other shoulders."

The picture was not a pleasing one, and Lord Howard could not resist a savage smile.

"I must confess that I shall await the denouncement with some interest," he replied, coolly. "I have been a weak fool from the moment that I thrust the body of Edgar Emden behind yonder panels. I am a man of resolution now. I killed him in self-defence—almost accidentally. I was frightened, and hid the body. That is my only crime. Mr. Collins, the steward, shall have my reply on the first day of January, and I will be judged by twelve of my countrymen."

Lord Cecil's face paled a little.

"My actions depend solely upon yours," he said, nervously. "I shall not bother Gladys with my attentions. I tell you, I am a changed man. If I can't be lord of my estate, I'll be nothing. I don't want to marry Lady Gladys now. I have pictured her as something beautiful to add to my possessions. This ambition being dead—or impossible—she is of no further use to me. I tell you, Howard, that I would rather get out of the country, if provided with money, and I shall look to you for my cue."

"I am grateful to you for this sympathy," the earl observed, after a few minutes of thoughtful silence, "but I do not think we need go any further into the matter to-day. You may depend upon one thing, however; when the steward comes for my reply to

his demands, I shall straightway elect to suffer for my miserable crime. I cannot live longer under the shadow which is deepening and expanding day by day."

"I am satisfied," Lord Cecil declared.

He took the earl's hand, and grasped it with muscular force, continuing: "Our master commands that I remain your guest, and assert my authority. I will see Lady Gladys, and you may trust me that she shall have no excuse to avoid me again."

There was so much meaning in his words that the earl warmly expressed his gratitude, and the young man left him alone, feeling almost hopeful. He promptly locked the library door, and after standing for a while in thought, he glanced straight before him, and muttered:

"Dare I do it?"

(To be continued.)

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Under the proposed service the steamer will leave St. John's every week, calling at Havana, Jamaica, Porto Rico, Martinique, Barbados, Trinidad and other islands in the West Indies, making one call on each trip at the above ports. The service to be continuous throughout the whole of each year, and the contract to be for a term of 5 years from the commencement of the service. The second or November next, the second steamer will take up the work in October, 1923. Tenders to specify rate per round trip at which the service will be performed, which will also cover the carriage of mail by the said steamers. Envelopes to be marked "Tenders for Steamship Service to West Indies."

Further particulars may be obtained on application to this Department. The Government do not bind themselves to accept the lowest or any tender.

ARTHUR MEYER  
Deputy Colonial Secretary  
Colonial Secretary's Department,  
July 27th, 1922.  
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