

The Millionaire

"So you hope to get married next year?" As they drew near the entrance to Selwith & Company's big chemical works, George Bingham shook his head doubtfully. "You'll find it pretty difficult, though, unless you get a good 'rise' before then. Or perhaps you're like old Peter, and expect to turn into a millionaire one of these days."

He laughed, pointing to the figure of a middle-aged man passing through the doorway in front of them.

"Poor old Peter!" muttered Charles Spence abruptly.

At Selwith's they had grown quite accustomed to Peter Grate's eccentricities. He was harmless, his companions admitted, and sometimes in a peculiar mood, they would try their foreheads significantly.

For Peter Grate was the victim of a delusion that at any moment he might find himself the possessor of boundless wealth. It was to come from a property abroad, which he declared he had bought with his savings—in the United States, some believed. At any rate, he had at one time lived out of England.

What most amused a certain of Selwith's employees was to tempt him to enter into details. Men and women clustered round him in the dinner-hour, nudging queer how excited a soothing expression of doubt would make him. He had even invented a partner called Durwent, who was looking after their wonderful property, and would sooner or later send reports of its success.

For nearly a year Grate had been in Selwith & Company's employment; and he still affirmed that any post might bring him a letter of good news; he still stated that he would not have to work at Selwith's for very long.

"Heard from your partner lately, Peter?" was a favorite witticism. "I tell you what—he's run off with all our millions, and he's having a fine time somewhere."

"I trust Joe Durwent," he would answer gravely. "Some day he'll write."

"Speaks," chuckled George Bingham to the amused listeners—"speaks for all the world as if this chap Durwent was really alive!"

To a few the pathetic side of Peter Grate's delusion was always uppermost. Edith Cranway, to whom Charles Spence was engaged, was sorry for the shabby, gray-haired man. To her it seemed very hard that, though Peter Grate could never earn more than a pittance, he dreamed continually of the immense fortune which would soon be his. She could not laugh at him with the rest.

He was apt to be absent-minded. One day a serious blunder was made in the chemical works and the culprit was soon traced. Selwith & Company were ready to discharge Peter Grate forthwith. The news went round that he was to receive a week's notice on the following Saturday. Edith Cranway asked if it were true.

"Very likely," he shrugged his shoulders. "Tobah! Let them sack me if they like! I'll be rich enough soon to buy up the whole concern, and never miss the money."

She touched his arm, stifling a sigh.

"But how are you going to manage in the meantime?"

"I'll be all right. It's no business of yours to worry about me, is it? Why do you do it, then?"

"I'm sorry if you're angry, Mr. Grate."

"Oh, I'm not angry," he growled; "only surprised. I suppose you're like the rest—think I'm mad."

She could not speak for fear of hurting his feelings; but he did not appear to notice her embarrassment.

"I'll tell you more than I've ever told anyone. That property of mine—of ours, rather, because my partner, Joe Durwent, owns half—of course—we hadn't got the capital to work it; and over there," he waved his arm, "nobody knew us well enough to advance the money. They didn't believe we were right, didn't believe there was oil anywhere near—"

He shook his head sadly. Edith Cranway felt a lump rise in her throat.

"So I came back home to England," added the gray-haired man. "I raised every penny I could and sent it out to Joe. Hadn't even enough over to pay my return passage; so I wrote and said I'd wait till I heard from him. I said I'd rub along somehow. He answered that letter!"

Peter Grate fixed his eyes suddenly on her face. She nodded, flushing.

"But somehow or other I can't find the note he sent back. I can't find it nowdays." His voice grew querulous and depressed.

The girl turned aside. He had evidently imagined it all so often that now the whole affair was to him actual fact. She pitied him.

But, on the following morning, Edith Cranway presented herself at Mr. Selwith's private office.

"I've come about Mr. Grate, sir—Peter Grate. If you ever thought of discharging him, I hope

you won't do it. Please give him another chance, sir."

The head of the firm frowned impatiently.

"What's he to you?"

"Nothing, sir. Only I'm sorry for him; and you'd be, too, if you understood. He's a pretty old, and he'd never get a place anywhere else. And you know, sir—" she hesitated.

"He's a bit queer in his manner—yes. Half-witted, some folks would call it. Well, I think we've been lenient in keeping him as long as we have. Still, there's something in what you say. Show him under the man to starve. Make him understand, though, there mustn't be any more mistakes."

When she ran to Peter Grate with the news, he merely nodded.

"H'm! P'raps I might as well stop—just till I get a line from Joe Durwent."

For almost the first time in their acquaintance she and Charles Spence exchanged angry words. When she spoke of Peter Grate and suggested a further course of action. She had learned that the old man was in debt to his landlady.

"Lend him the money he owes for rent! Not if I know it! Six pounds, indeed! I'd never get it back. And you know it's for your own good."

"Then give it him, to please me!"

But he only laughed, and she left him indignantly. It was two days before they spoke, and then Charles gave way.

"Mind you, Edith, I think it's very foolish of us."

"It's nice," she whispered, "to be foolish sometimes."

At first Peter Grate curtly refused her offer.

"It's only a loan, just for convenience," she protested. "You can pay it back directly you hear from your partner—when you're rich, you know."

"That's true," the gray-haired man assented slowly. "Very well. I'll use it, and thank you!"

Two months passed. Each day he seemed to grow more listless and despondent. A gibe of "Hallo, millionaire!" now made him wince. Finally, the whole of Selwith's workers were amazed to learn that he intended to leave the firm of his own free will.

"I'm going away," he told Edith Cranway wearily. "I'm getting old, and I'm tired of waiting. I'm going out to our property, to see what my partner's doing. He ought to have written by now. Maybe I can help him, anyhow."

The girl was silent, aghast.

"I'm in your debt; but as soon as I get to the other side I'll be able to pay you that six pounds, very likely. I've scraped up the fare—steerage. Ah, but I'll be in a grand private cabin I'll come back."

Mechanically she shook the hand he held out. She was near to tears as she watched his retreating figure. What would become of him when he landed? When would he realize the truth? Would he ever survive the bitter disappointment?

When Peter Grate had gone, however, she had other things to occupy her mind. Charles Spence pressed her to marry him.

"I'm like old Peter, tired of waiting," he pleaded. "We'll just be able to manage if you can put up with what they call love in a cottage."

It was half a small flat they took at last; and after a week-end honeymoon they settled down happily enough.

But late one evening they were startled by terrified cries of "Fire!" Someone in the flat below had carelessly upset a lamp.

Charles Spence and his wife just escaped in time. From the roadway they watched the building blaze. All their furniture and belongings were burning. Edith cried helplessly on his shoulder.

"We've lost our home!" she sobbed. This unexpected catastrophe had turned their little world upside down.

Neighbors sheltered them for the night; and next morning Spence had to leave her and start off for the works as usual. As he approached the works he heard shouts and a cheering. A man who had not heard of his trouble greeted him boisterously and hilariously.

"There's a letter!" he cried. "A letter from old Peter Grate to the gov'nor! You'll never guess what's happened. Why, my boy, he's sent a hundred pounds to pay for a day's outing for everybody!"

"Peter Grate?" Spence echoed dully. Then he started in amazement. "It was all true, then!" he gasped. "That property of his—he really had it! All his tales about being a millionaire one day—"

Directly work was over, Charles Spence set off to his wife. They would have to take a single furnished room somewhere. He hardly dared look into the future of discomfort and rigid economy. They owned practically nothing but the clothes they wore.

"I'm sorry," he assured her wearily. "I'd never have asked you to marry me if I'd known this was going to happen."

"As long as we're together it won't really matter," the girl answered. "What did they say, up at Selwith's?"

"Oh, they're too excited to trouble much about us. There's news from old Peter Grate, dear. What do you think? He's turned out a real millionaire, after all! A letter

came—"

"There's one for you, too, Charles. It's been delayed—sent on from your old address."

Spence seized the envelope excitedly, and quickly tore it open.

"Yes, it's from him right enough. See the stamps! Now surely he's remembered that six pounds he owed. What a godsend it'll be!"

They read the cramped writing together, with many exclamations of surprise.

It appeared that Joe Durwent not only existed, but had passed through a strange experience. In a recent accident, a week after receiving Peter Grate's remittance, he had been struck on the head and had, completely lost his memory. That accounted for his long silence. His partner found him helpless among strangers, but at sight of a familiar face the past had come back. Gradually Durwent recovered.

Then together they started operations on their land. Almost immediately luck favored them, and they discovered oil in large quantities.

"And I haven't forgotten your goodness," the letter ran. "You and your kind-hearted girl helped me when I was in a corner. You lent me money you could hardly afford. So now I've settled some of my profits on you both—just enough to bring in £100 a year. You'll get a notice from the bank about it. Give a thought to 'Old Peter' sometimes—"

Spence and his wife held each other tightly, laughing half-hysterically with joy.

In their answer they begged Peter Grate to visit them as soon as business allowed him. They never guessed that he had told them only half the truth. The American property was rich, but it was soon exhausted. Grate's share, after he had bought their annuity, left him just enough to live upon—no more.

At Selwith's they wait for Peter Grate to return him in a blaze of glory. But he will never come. For one thing, he could hardly afford to pay for his passage—London Answers.

A MARATHON TALKER.

The member for the City of London is known both inside and outside the British House of Commons as the champion long-distance speaker of the day.

He is a terror to friend and foe alike. He is credited with having remarked on one occasion that he was prepared to talk "at any length, at any time, on any subject," and throughout his political career he has justified the statement.

When he rises the House empties as if a plague had entered the chamber, but Sir Frederick is unperturbed. Like the brook, he ambles along until he has talked time out. It could run like he talks the great Marathon race would be a gift for England. At sixty-two he exhibits no lack of breath, but appears in splendid condition. Dullness and prolixity are natural gifts with him, and they have proved of great service to his party in Parliamentary warfare.

It is now twenty years since he entered Parliament as Conservative member for the Peckham division of Camberwell, and he is still referred to as "Peckham" in the current slang of the House. He lost his seat in 1906 owing to the opposition which he put up against the proposal to carry the tramways across the bridges. His constituents and the majority of the dwellers in South London were in favor of the proposal, but Sir Frederick refused to alter his opinions, and so he was compelled to seek a more congenial atmosphere.

Amongst the bills Sir Frederick has talked out the statutory right of admission to meetings of public bodies. He loves animals, but abhors trades unions, and he is a strong anti-vivisectionist. Sir Frederick is a stockbroker, and from the point of view of his constituents in the City of London, has proved an ideal representative.

"Pa, why do you always insist on my singing when Mr. Spence comes here?" "Well, I don't like that fellow, and yet I have to come right out and tell him to go."

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The Uphill.

"We all feel the yearning for better things sometimes," remarked Mr. Wombat.

"I'm glad to hear you say that," responded Mrs. Wombat. "Now you will understand me when I tell you that I positively must have a willow plume."

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HOME

Dainty Dishes.

Lemon Egg Sauce.—One tablespoon flour, one-half cup sugar, one cup boiling water, one egg well beaten. Mix sugar and flour thoroughly in saucepan. Add boiling water and boil three minutes.

Then add one tablespoon of lemon juice and pour mixture slowly over a well-beaten egg. Serve warm.

Eagle Cake.—One cup of sugar; scant half cup of butter, one cup of sour milk or buttermilk, one cup of chopped raisins (seeded, of course), one egg, two cups of flour, one teaspoonful of soda dissolved in milk; half teaspoonful of ground cinnamon, a quarter teaspoonful of ground cloves, half a grated nutmeg. Bake slowly, covering with paper until the cake has risen to its full height.

Buttermilk Cake.—One quart of buttermilk, one level teaspoonful of salt, two eggs, flour to make a thin batter and one teaspoonful of baking soda. Beat up the eggs well, add to them the buttermilk, then add the salt and mix thoroughly. Dissolve the soda in two table-spoonfuls of boiling water, then stir it into the buttermilk. Now gradually add the flour, stirring all the time, until you have a batter that will pour smoothly from a spoon. Give a good beating and bake quickly on a hot, well-greased griddle.

Sardine Salad.—Take some cold cooked fish, haddock will do, free it from skin and bone and flake it. Place a layer of this in a dish and sprinkle it over with minced gherkins and a few bruised asparagus, range on this layer of sliced German sausage and arrange on top of the pile sardines freed from skin and bones and split in halves. Cut some lettuce hearts into quarters, place round the dish with hard-boiled eggs, also out into quarters. Then pour over the following sauce: Take the flesh of three sardines and rub to a smooth paste with the yolk of two hard-boiled eggs, a pinch of cayenne, a grate of nutmeg, and two tablespoonfuls each of olive oil and vinegar. Beat the sauce well before adding it to the salad.

To Cook Tough Beefsteak.—If you want it for an early dinner, get your steak ready about 9.30 or 10 o'clock a.m. Pound it well with a potato beetle. Sprinkle liberally with flour, salt, and pepper at discretion and fry to a nice brown in the usual way. Then lay in a covered steamer, cover with water and cook slowly (covered) until noon. If the water boils away too much add more from the boiling kettle from time to time. You will now have a deliciously tender steak. Take it up, thicken the gravy with browned flour and send to table in a gravy boat.

Fresh Oyster Soup.—One pint oysters, one pint cold water, slice onion, stalk celery, dash mace, three cups of milk, two and one-half tablespoons butter, salt and pepper to taste, two egg yolks. Wash oysters, chop fine, add onion, celery and water and simmer twenty minutes. Sauté milk and thicken with butter and flour rubbed to a froth. Add oyster liquor, straining out oysters, mace and salt and pepper as needed and pour on to beaten egg yolks. Let reheat, but do not boil.

Old-Fashioned Chicken Potpie.—One (3-pound) fowl, one-half cup fat salt pork (diced), three cups boiling water, four tablespoons flour mixed with one cup cream, salt and pepper to taste, short biscuit paste. Clean and disjoint chicken. Heat a small iron pot and put salt pork into it. Fry out fat, then toss in fowl, and cook until well browned. Add water, cover and let simmer, on back of range or in oven till tender. Season, add flour and cream blended, let boil up once, and set paste in position as follows: Cut strips of paste in 3-inch widths, and line inside of pot. Pour in chicken. Set a round cover in place, over top of boiling liquid, pinch the two edges together, set in oven, and bake till light and brown. Invert on platter and serve surrounded with peas.

Tips to Housewives.

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Ink stains on beards may be removed by vinegar or salts of lemon. Another recipe, if the above fails, is, scour the beard with sand, wet with water in which a few drops of oil of vitel are mixed.

When stitching chiffon or any such material on the machine, use the finest possible thread and put a strip of thin paper under the goods and stitch them together. Then tear away the paper when the work is done.

When you launder madras curtains, they may be easily dried by hanging them on their own rods, with a heavy brass rod in the bottom hem to hold them steady. The rods should first be covered with some white cloth.

Sandwiches.

French Cheese Sandwiches.—Brown bread, cream cheese, jam, marmalade, or preserved ginger. Slice the bread thinly and spread with a layer of the marmalade or jam. Strawberry or peach flavor should be used for the best results. Spread a layer of fresh cream cheese over the jam and cover it with another slice of bread. Press and serve for afternoon tea.

Cream of Chicken Sandwiches.—Half cupful of white chicken meat, one teaspoonful of gelatin, half pint of whipping cream, one cupful of milk, seasoning of salt, but-tered white bread. Dissolve the gelatin in two tablespoonfuls of cold water. Pound the chicken finely and add the liquid gelatin and salt to taste. Put over the fire and stir until it begins to thicken; then remove from the fire and add the cream, previously whipped, a little at a time. Stand away to cool, and when very cold spread on thinly cut, buttered bread.

MAINTENANCE OF ARMIES.

A Big European War Would Paralyze the World's Business.

What would be the cost of a European war at the present day? This question is being much debated in economic circles in Paris, France, just now, and the Gauls has just printed some interesting opinions on that subject from recognized experts on such problems.

The most striking of these is that of M. Jules Roche, former Minister of Commerce, who made some remarkable calculations on the point. Taking as a basis the expense incurred by France during the war of 1870, he reckons that, assuming for the sake of example, that the six nations of the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente went to war, the cost of maintaining the armies alone would work out at no less than \$6,400,000,000 a month, without taking into account the other expenses.

"And what would be their internal condition?" he asks. "The bel-liguerent nations would be struck with general paralysis, and would see their very means of subsistence disappear. Suspension of work would be forced even on those who were not included in the general mobilization, since whom would there be to work for? To whom would they sell their products? How could they be exchanged or transported? All the large works and factories where the division of labor is complete would have to be shut. Even agriculture would be impossible."

"No more purchases or sales, either the economic or the financial death of labor, an abrupt stoppage of the heart's action in the national organism of all the nations at war, with profound reaction on all others—such would be the consequences of a general conflagration in the present conditions of European civilization."

Similar opinions are held by Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, member of the Institute, and one of France's leading economists. He thinks, however, that in such a crisis France would suffer less than the other great powers, since being self-supporting, she always has at her disposal an immense accumulation of agricultural products of the previous year whereon she could draw for a long period. She would thus be in a far better circumstance than Germany, for instance, which would find the greatest difficulty in obtaining imports, being cut off by the English fleet on the one hand and by Russia on the other.

"But," he adds, "it is after the war that vanquished nations would have the hardest times, for many years would be necessary to repair the losses and heal the wounds."

Alfred Neymarck, vice-president of the Society of Political Economy, after pointing out the huge magnitude of commercial, industrial and financial interests, as well as the enormous expansion in credit and business generally among the six nations which would be engaged, asserts that the consequences of an abrupt cessation of all this activity through a general war would be incalculable in its vastness.

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