


Useful for Over 500 Purposes



GILLETT'S LYE
EATS DIRT.

The Earl's Son;
—
TWO HEARTS UNITED

CHAPTER XXII.

Fanny Mason heard of Ralph's departure when she went down to the hut the next morning to "tidy up."

"Gone!" she cried, almost dropping her broom and staring at Burchett with pale, aghast face. "I—I saw him last night with a bundle on his back; but I thought he was going to the town—I didn't think—" She turned her head away to hide her face. "Why, whatever made him go, and so sudden, Mr. Burchett?"

"That's his business, not mine, nor yours," he replied, grimly. "When the last woman's dead, curiosity will be buried with her. You're late this morning."

"I overslept myself, and mother was busy," said Fanny, sullenly. She was suffering badly, but from wounded pride rather than love; for it is not given to her kind to love deeply. "If I'd known he was going I'd have spoken to him, and perhaps—"

She tossed her head and bit her lip. "Nothing you could have said would have kept him back. He went on important business," said Burchett.

He was leaving the hut when Mr. Talbot Denby came through the clearing. He looked particularly well; the palor and haggard expression had left his face, and there was a touch of color in his pallid cheeks and his eyes were bright. Everything had gone well with him, and he was to hear yet further good news.

"Good-morning, Burchett," he said. "I just looked in to ask you how the birds were doing. I rather think we may have a shooting party this season."

"Things are looking very well, sir," replied Burchett. "A shooting party? I shall have to get an extra hand or two, and I've just lost a good one. Farrington's gone."

Talbot did not start, but his face became like a mask. "Indeed!" he said. "Dissatisfied, I

suppose? Well, I should think he was a good riddance. Where has he gone? Another situation?"

"No, sir. I think he's making for Australia, where he came from."

Talbot's heart leapt with relief and satisfaction. Certainly his lucky star was in the ascendant, and Fate seemed to be removing, with one sweep of the hand, every obstacle in his path. Burchett was passing on, but paused.

"Perhaps you'd be kind enough to tell Miss Veronica that I'll send up the roots of the wall-flowers she asked me for, sir," he said. "I can move 'em now."

Veronica had some time ago admired some gentian and wild orchids which she had seen near the hut.

Talbot nodded. "You need not trouble. Miss Veronica has left the Court," he said, casually. "She has gone to pay some visits, and will be away some time."

Burchett touched his cap and walked away, and Talbot was following, when Fanny, who had been listening, came to the door. She looked very pretty, with the sunlight falling on her face and golden hair; her cheeks were flushed with the emotion which had been evoked by the tidings of Ralph's departure, and Talbot, in this moment of his elation, was in the humour to admire her. Usually he was quite unimpressible.

"Good-morning," he said, ingratiatingly. "You are Fanny Mason, are you not?"

"Yes, sir," assented Fanny, dropping a curtsy and blushing with pleasure at the notice of the great Mr. Talbot.

"Ah, yes, I remember! Of course! I remember you when you were quite a little girl; you were pretty even then. You and I used to play together when we were little children. I haven't seen very much of you lately, but that is because I am so seel-dom at the Court. How hot is it! I think I will come in and rest for a little while."

He went into the hut and sat down, and continued to talk to her as she worked. The relief from the awful strain was so great that he felt delighted with himself, with this girl, with the very air he breathed. Presently he asked for some water; but Fanny brought him a glass of milk, and, as he took it from her hand, she looked up at her with a smile that set poor, weak Fanny's heart all in a flutter. And the heart, sore with Ralph's desertion, was, so to speak, on the rebound; it was not difficult for Talbot Denby to catch it.

"You're too pretty and—and clever a girl to waste your sweetness on the desert air of Lynne, Fanny," he said. "You ought to be in London. You would see something of life then; you are buried alive down here amongst a set of yokels and chawbacons. You've never been to London, I suppose?"

At the moment he had no definite object in view, and the desire to flirt with the girl was born of his mood, of his sudden exaltation; but Fanny's downcast eyes and blushes flattered him.

"Oh, no, no!" she said, timidly. "But I've heard of it; and oh, how I should like to go."

"Well, we must see about it," he said. "I will try and find a place for you. I think I know a lady who would take you."

Fanny blushed still more deeply and her pretty face was alight with the pleasurable emotions that chased over it.

"Oh, if you would, sir," she breathed. "I'm so tired of this place! It isn't life, as you say, sir—"

"And you ought to see life," he put in, smoothly: really with her complexion of milk and roses and her foolish, child-like eyes she was very pretty. "I'll see what I can do. But I think I wouldn't say anything about it, Fanny, in case it came to nothing. I daresay we shall meet again. Let me see, you live in the cottage on the hill? There's a lane behind it, I remember. Now, suppose you meet me there some evening; shall we say to-morrow, after dinner?"

Fanny nodded eagerly. To meet the great Mr. Talbot of the Court, and secretly! The honor of it nearly turned her weak little brain.

"Oh, I'm so grateful; it's so kind of you, sir!" she murmured, with suppressed excitement. "I can't thank you, sir!"

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"Oh, yes, you can!" he said, with a smile. "There are better ways of expressing one's thanks than by words, Fanny. Don't you know one of them? Let me teach you."

He put his arm round her, and, raising her face, looked down at her with a smile and kissed her.

"Oh, I forgot!" he said, in a low voice. "It was you who should have done that, wasn't it?"

She hung her head for a moment, then she raised it slowly and kissed him.

Mr. Talbot left the hut with the smile still on his face. The little flirtation with Fanny had made his heart still lighter. After all, there were other ways of amusing oneself than at the gaming table. And she really was very pretty and tempting; not an icicle of a woman, like Veronica, for instance. For a moment or two he asked himself why she had gone—had her disappearance anything to do with Ralph Farrington's? The question drove the smile from his face and drew his dark brows together; but he thrust it from him. It was sufficient for him that she had gone and left the field clear for him.

As for Fanny, Mr. Talbot's "kindness" had soothed the wound inflicted on her vanity by Ralph's departure. She could almost think of him contemptuously, for what was a game-keeper compared to Mr. Talbot of the Court! And Mr. Talbot had kissed her, whereas Ralph had actually refused her proffered lips.

She met Mr. Talbot in the lane the next evening and for several following evenings, for he lingered at the Court, though the whip of his party sent him the usual imperative notices from the House of Commons.

A week later Fanny showed her mother a letter she had received from a lady in London, a lady in St. John's Wood, who required a servant. Mrs. Mason was opposed to Fanny's accepting the offer, but Fanny overrode her mother's opposition and one morning she started for her "situation."

Mr. Talbot had left the Court the preceding night.

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On the following evening, a little later, he was in his place at the House and spoke in support of a bill introduced by his party, spoke with more than his usual force and eloquence. Once only did the low, clear, level voice pause and the impassive face change. The pause was only for a moment, but in that short space of time the House, crowded with members eager to hear Denby speaking on his own side, saw a strange and subtle expression in the mask-like face. It seemed to grow set and rigid, the dark eyes were fixed on the opposite wall as if the speaker had suddenly seen something terrible, awe-inspiring; the faint color caused by the heat and excitement of debate gave place to a death-like pallor; and the spectators almost held their breath as they looked at him.

But, whatever the emotion might have been, it passed in an instant; the face again grew impassive, the clear, level voice flowed on in fluent, rhythmical sentences which carried conviction with them.

The two old members, Mr. Welch and Mr. Bouchier, had exchanged glances, as the change had come over Mr. Talbot Denby's face, and when the speech was over and the government side of the House was cheering wildly, Mr. Bouchier whispered:

"What was the matter with Denby just now?"

Mr. Welch shook his head. "I don't know. A splendid speech. It will help them to carry the bill. But he looked—bad, just then, didn't he? I've not forgotten what you said about him some time ago; and tonight it seemed to me that you were right. That man has something on his mind or conscience—"

"Say mind: conscience is out of date," said Mr. Bouchier.

"He is leading a double life, and the other life, the one that is not apparent to us, cropped up just then. If ever a man looked in morbid terror Denby did when he paused just now."

There was, however, no terror on Talbot Denby's face as he left the House after receiving the thanks and approval of his whips, thanks all the more emphatic for their rarity—there no more rejoicing on the government benches over one repentant sinner than over a hundred righteous?—and called a hansom.

He told the man to drive to Rose Cottage, Park Road, St. John's Wood, and he leant back in the cab and smoked a cigar with a serene and placid countenance, and with a smile of satisfaction hovering about his thin lips. He had scored heavily that night. All was going well with him.

The cab pulled up at a pretty little house just peeping above a high wall; the kind of house which, pretty though it be, seems to shrink from its neighbors and crave for privacy.

(To be Continued.)

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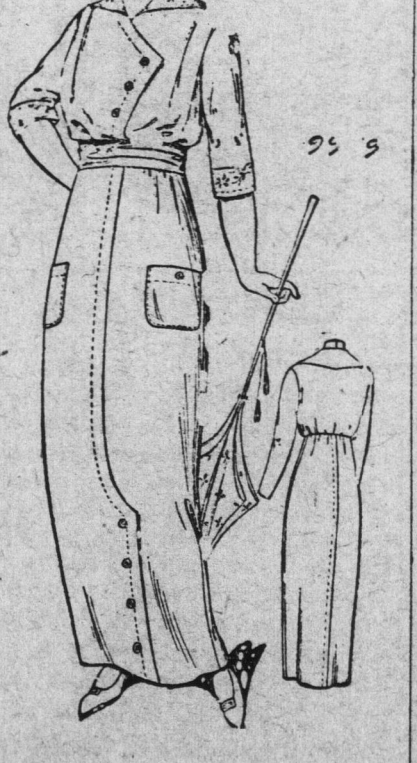


Dress for Misses and Small Women (With or Without Chemise and with Long or Short Sleeve.)

Figured dainty in white and blue is here shown. The waist is simple, and becoming. It is made with long shoulder effect and has a sleeve that may be finished in wrist or shorter length. The three piece skirt is gathered at the top and finished with a deep tuck fold in front. The pattern may be omitted. Silk, crepe, lawn, gingham, ratine, eponge, daveyn, tafeta and linen are also appropriate for this style. The pattern is cut in four sizes: 14, 16, 17 and 18 years. It requires 6 yards of 44 inch material for a 14 year size. The skirt measures 1 1/2 yards at the foot.

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Blue ratine embroidered in self color, was used in this instance. The waist fronts are crossed diagonally. The sleeve may be in wrist or elbow length. The skirt has simple lines, and is finished with a hem tuck at the centre back. The right front is shaped over the left. This model is easy to develop. It is finished with slightly raised waistline. Eponge, tafeta, striped or figured viole, crepe, gingham, lawn, dimity, batiste and tub silk, are all desirable materials for its development. The pattern is cut in 7 sizes: 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42 44 inches bust measure. It requires 6 yards of 36 inch material for a 36 inch size.

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