

"THE ENEMY IN THE CAMP"

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A Lover's Triumph.

It created a good deal of surprise and comment that two young men, nearly resembling each other, and yet in no way related, should stand so high in their class, and be such brilliant scholars.

Mrs. Mapleson, who had come on from the South to be present upon the occasion, was strangely impressed by the circumstance.

Col. Mapleson had been called out West on business, and could not return in season to accompany her, so she had been forced to come alone.

She was a magnificent-looking woman, tall, with a stately figure, a brilliant complexion, with dark hair and eyes, and beautiful teeth, such as a youthful belle of 20 might envy.

"It is the strangest thing in the world," she remarked to her son after the exercises of the day were concluded. "I mean this wonderful resemblance between you and that young man. If I had not known the Maplesons all my life, and that our family is the last of the race, I should be tempted to believe that he belonged to us in some way."

"Fah! mother, that is all nonsense," her son replied, a hot flush of resentment rising to his brow. "Don't, for pity's sake, suggest that any of our blood flows in his veins!"

"Why, Everett? He appears like a fine fellow—handsome, manly, and he is certainly extremely clever. Does he belong, and what is his family?"

"Granted, though that may sound egotistical, since we are considered the counterparts of each other, but for all that he has been a thorn in the flesh and a marplot to me ever since he entered college, and I detest him!"

"That is not a very good spirit, I'm afraid, Ep." Mrs. Mapleson said, chidingly. "But who is he? Geoffrey D. Huntress, I believe, was the name on the programme, but where does he belong, and what is his family?"

"Nobody knows who or what he is; there is a queer story connected with his life. I heard while I was in New York, that this Mr. Huntress found him several years ago wandering in the streets of the city in a deplorable condition. He became interested in him, took him to some hospital, and had an operation performed—a piece of bone was pressing upon the brain, and was removed, I believe, and he recovered his senses immediately, but appeared more like a child 6 years old rather than like a boy in his teens."

"How very strange!" exclaimed Mrs. Mapleson, deeply interested; "but could he tell nothing about himself after his mind was restored?"

"No, nothing of any consequence; all that he could remember of his previous life was that he had lived with some people named Margery and Jack, and that his name was Geoffrey Dale."

"Dale! Dale!" repeated Mrs. Mapleson, with a start. "There used to be a family of Dale's living near Rue de l'Eau before I was married; at least, there was a widow and her daughter, a girl named Annie. They were poor people; they lived in one of those cottages near the old mill, and after the mother died the girl suddenly disappeared, and was never heard of again."

"Mother, what is this you are telling me?" cried young Mapleson, a strange look flashing over his face. "The girl went away and never came back."

"Yes."

"Where did she go? She must have had some special place in view when she started."

"She said she was going to Richmond to serve as governess in some family; that was the last I ever heard of her."

Everett Mapleson's eyes glowed.

"Ah! he thought, 'who knows but what I have at last found a clew to the fellow's birth?'"

"Dale, Dale," he too, repeated, thoughtfully, "don't that the name of that queer old codger who was to have had Uncle Jabez's fortune, if you and father didn't fulfill the conditions of his will?"

"Yes, Robert Dale. He was a cousin of Uncle Jabez, and considerably younger than he, and I suppose he would have had all the money, if your father and I had been contrary."

"It was the most eccentric will I ever heard of," said Everett, musingly.

"What could have prompted him to make it?"

"Your father was his brother's only son, and the last of the Maplesons. I was a favorite niece, the daughter of his sister, and I suppose he did not wish the wealth which it had taken so many years to accumulate, to be divided, yet he wished to have it benefit his relatives, and so took this way to accomplish it."

A little sigh escaped Mrs. Mapleson as she concluded.

Her son noticed it, and shot a searching glance into her face.

"Mother," he said, as if some strange thought had suddenly come to him, "it has never occurred to me before, but were the conditions of that will obnoxious to you?"

Mrs. Mapleson colored a vivid red at this unexpected question.

"You are touching upon rather delicate ground, Everett, and this is hardly the time or place for the discussion of such a matter," she replied gravely; "but since you have asked the question, I will tell you the truth about it."

"You need not tell me anything if the subject is painful to you," interrupted her son, whose love for his mother was the noblest trait in his character.

"No, the pain is all a thing of the past, if indeed, there ever was any connected with my marriage with your father. When the conditions of the will were first made known to us, neither of us were willing to carry them out, not that we had any especial dislike to each other; we simply did not seem to be in perfect sympathy, we had no real affection for one another, and on that account we both shrank from assuming the intimate relations of husband and wife. William Mapleson was a handsome and noble gentleman, and I admired and liked him in a cousinly way. His own feelings were similar to mine, so that you perceive it was not easy to comply with the wishes of Uncle Jabez. The property, as you perhaps know, was divided equally between us, and we were free to use the income of it as we chose, until I should be 25 years of age, provided neither of us married anyone else before that time; in that case, whichever of us violated the conditions of the will was to forfeit his or her share, and it was to go to the other, who was then free to marry, and would have the whole fortune. If both of us remained single after I reached the age of 25, then all was to go to Robert Dale."

"It was an abominable will!" Everett Mapleson exclaimed, indignantly.

"Yes, it was, and it made me very antagonistic at first. I was extremely high spirited as a girl, and I resented the presumption of anyone choosing my husband for me." Mrs. Mapleson replied, a flush dyeing her whole face at the memory of her girlish indignation.

"Of course, anyone would. Besides this, Robert Dale had plenty of money of his own, hadn't he?"

"Yes, he was worth a great deal. He was a bachelor and a sort of miser and hermit."

"What if he had died before you were 25?"

"That would have ended all our difficulties—the money would have been ours without restrictions."

"What finally induced you to change your mind?" Everett asked, searching his mother's handsome face earnestly.

She did not reply for a moment, and seemed to be struggling with an inward emotion.

"I shall have to confess, Everett, that it was the love of money," she at last said, with a sigh, although a slight smile played over her brilliant lips.

"I had known what poverty was as a girl, and I hated it. I had struggled during my youthful years for even the necessities of life, for, as you know, my father was poor and an invalid. After I came into the possession of my share of Uncle Jabez's money, I enjoyed every luxury and was enabled to provide all the family with comforts such as they had never known before. Do you think it would have been easy to have gone back to the hardships of my early life?"

"I suppose it would not have been easy."

"Your father was situated somewhat the same. He had been dependent upon Uncle Jabez's bounty ever since the death of his parents, and though he was as indignant as I, at first, over this will, and vowed he would not submit to any such arbitrary conditions, yet, after years of luxurious living, when he began to realize what it would be to be deprived of it, he came to me and asked I was willing to revoke my early decision and become his wife."

"But, mother, was there no one else in the world whom you would have preferred to marry?—no one whom you loved, and loved?—no one whom you would have chosen to marry?"

"No, there was no one whom I loved better—no one whom I would have been as willing, even, to marry."

"That seems very strange. How old were you at that time?"

"Twenty-four—it was my last year of grace," replied Mrs. Mapleson, with a little laugh.

"Have you never met anyone since who has made you regret the step?"

"No, Everett, and if I had, I had too much respect for myself and for your father to ever have yielded to any such sentiment. More than that, I have become deeply attached to my husband, and our life, as you know, has been a remarkably peaceful and untroubled one."

And father— the young man began, and then hesitated.

"He told me frankly when he asked me to marry him, that he had no other attachment," interposed Mrs. Mapleson. "In fact, we mutually confessed that, although we did not possess any romantic love for each other, such as lovers usually entertain, we had none for anyone else; that we did admire and esteem each other, and we believe that a marriage would, under the circumstances, be best for us both."

"It is the strangest union I ever heard of, and I believe it was a very dangerous thing to do."

"Dangerous? Why?"

"You might have met some one later whom you would have learned to love, and unhappiness must have resulted from it to all parties."

"That was hardly probable, for we had both been much in society and had seen a great deal of the world. At all events we have been a very contented couple. Our early admiration and simple liking have ripened into a deep and lasting affection, and we have been as quietly happy as most married people, I believe."

(To be Continued.)

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