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HESTER, AND A LEGACY

"And as for the reason why I did not tell Doctor Turner of my meeting the man at the garden door and the finding of the keys in the medicine chest that night, that is simple enough. They were very suspicious circumstances, and I had not then heard Fanny's story, and I could not account for them. I was afraid of how things would look if I gave my evidence. Doctor Turner seemed to suspect that Lady Lynnmonth's death was not a natural one and I preferred to be silent. There are people who would put together the facts that you were cut off in the will, had left your mother in anger, that the medicine chest had been tampered with, and that a man had been seen at twelve o'clock at night at the garden door. Of course I knew that you could explain everything if you chose, but all the circumstances were so strange that I waited for a day or two to see how things turned out. As it was I was free to silence by Fanny. And, if the doctor's evidence had not been so factory and suspicion had fallen on me instead of you, I was willing to bear it, for it was the deepest desire of my heart to be able to serve you in some way."

"I have now put before you all that I know myself, but still under an oath of secrecy. I have sworn to Fanny that the story shall go no farther than to you, and you will naturally feel bound by my oath. I know I can trust you to keep it as faithfully as I have been obliged to do. You know the truth now, and my mind is at rest. As for last night, I am afraid we were both very unwise, but I suppose it was the smell of the syringe-bushes that got into our heads. To-day, in broad daylight and with no syringe-bushes near, I see clearly the rashness of the step we were taking, but the present happiness is too great for me to dare to put it away with my own hand, and—well, I love you too dearly, and that is the truth!—Yours, as you know, for ever, "Hester Phillips."

This letter, when finished, she sent to Lord Lynnmonth's room.

CHAPTER XXXVII. AND LAST.

What Hester said about the rashness of the step she and Lord Lynnmonth were taking was sadly more forcibly by every one who knew them. The fashionable world was aghast. Mrs. Vavasour, furious, and Lady Montague distressed. Of course it was easy to see the reason—that unfortunate will had brought it about. Lord Lynnmonth had scruples about taking over the estate, and it was the easiest way of placing things on a straightforward basis; but still, what a pity! His mother's companion—such a terrible messianic! Oh, yes, the girl was a lady, very gentle in manner and quiet in her dress! Oh, yes, there was nothing absolutely objectionable about her personally, but such a connection, such a mistake!

This is what the fashionable world said constantly and in various ways. Lady Montague ran through a list of names of eligible girls she knew, suitable rank for her nephew, and laid their various perfections before him in a plaintive voice. He waved the whole programme aside with a mere gesture of the hand. "It is an infatuation, a mere fancy, Dudley!" exclaimed Lady Montague. "I have nothing to say against her personally, but as Lady Lynnmonth she will be quite out of her sphere. I don't think it she understands the etiquette of precedence at dinner or any of the little observations that belong to our rank of society."

"They are mere trifles. She will have learned everything that sort there is to know in a week. I don't want a fashion-plate or a society machine for a wife. What I want is a companion through life, who will love me and understand me and please my personal taste, even though she may commit a hundred small social errors every day of her life."

Lady Montague shook her head sorrowfully. "If only your poor dear mother had not made that unfortunate will, such an idea would never have come into your head!" she murmured, with increased plaintiveness.

"There you are wrong! I fell in love with Hester the moment I saw her, and I proposed to her a month before I became engaged to Muriel Dovercourt. If she would have accepted me then we should have been married long before this."

Lady Montague had scarcely recovered from the first shock of this startling piece of news when Hester entered the room with some open letters in her hand. She looked from one to the other quickly and apologized to Lady Montague for interrupting their conversation.

Lord Lynnmonth went forward to meet Hester, his face lighting up at the sight of her in true lover's fashion.

"Whom are those letters from?" he demanded, with the newly-acquired air of proprietorship. "From mother and Nancy," replied Hester, looking up with an answering smile. "I am not sure that mother is quite pleased, but she will be with pride in her voice—when she sees you! And, as for Nancy, she is out of her senses with delight. She says she predicted it all along, and that she is longing for the moment when their sporting Sally will usher you up the stairs!"

"Have you a sporting Sally?" he inquired, smiling, while his aunt unclosed her eyes sufficiently to glance with a slight shudder at the girl who could not blushingly draw such a terrible picture of her home life.

"No, we haven't now—it is only an old joke!" said Hester. "My mother and sister are living in the sweetest rose-covered

cottage in the country and have a most respectable Jane to wait upon them. But I wonder what you would have thought of sporting Sally if you had visited them in her days. I don't suppose I should have thought of her at all," he returned headily—"at least not if you were anywhere about"—and unmindful of his aunt's presence and distinctly disapproving expression, he put his arm around Hester's waist and kissed her tenderly.

In the midst of this little scene Lady Muriel Dovercourt was announced, and the actors in it had only just time to move apart and he discovered a few yards away from each other, doing nothing with absorbed expressions, when she came forward. After speaking to Lady Montague, she turned immediately to Hester. "I felt I must come over at once and wish you joy. I hope you will be very happy," she said gently, and taking Hester's hands in hers she kissed her on the lips.

Hester returned the kiss readily, and her heart went out to the generous-minded girl who had once been her rival. And from that moment they were friends.

Indeed it was Lady Muriel who did more than any one else for Hester amid the difficulties of her new position: it was she who fought her battles, upheld the engagement, called on her, invited her, went with her everywhere, and set the seal of her approval on her in the eye of the world. Lady Muriel was no longer a child; she had developed into a woman during the last year, and her word now carried weight and her example set the fashions. She liked Hester personally, and she still loved Lord Lynnmonth and was anxious to serve him in any way she could. And the way that came to her, the way she thought would probably affect him most, was the launching of the new Lady Lynnmonth on the sea of fashionable society, over the waters of which Hester eventually steered her barque as creditably as did most of the fine ladies of her acquaintance.

But, though both Hester and Lord Lynnmonth were grateful to Lady Muriel and she always remained their nearest and dearest friend, they were in themselves fairly indifferent to the attitude society chose to take towards them, and when they left London to bury themselves in comparative solitude in the country, for it was there that they could be more entirely together and free from interruptions in their great happiness.

THE END.

BURFORD

Mrs. Hamilton and children returned to their home in Manitoba on Tuesday.

Mr. A. Henderson is home for a few days previous to taking a Government position in Dover.

Mr. and Mrs. A. D. Muir have returned from a holiday trip to New York.

Miss Violet Clement is visiting her grandmother, Mrs. E. Pearson.

Mrs. Todd of Hamilton, visited last week with Mr. John Rusk.

Mrs. Chas. Gurney of Bethel, has been visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. G. Rutherford.

Mr. G. Rutherford and Mrs. R. Henderson are visiting at the home of Mr. Harry Rutherford's.

Mrs. H. Stuart is spending a few days at Galt.

The late daughter, Alice, of Mr. and Mrs. John Bonney, passed away at the Cornish House on Thursday evening, 16th inst. The funeral took place to Trinity cemetery on Saturday afternoon.

Miss Cora Stuart of New York City is visiting the parental home.

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Ledger of Toronto, are visiting at the home of Mr. and Mrs. E. Park.

What might have been a serious accident happened on Monday to Jno. Farrell. He was teaming heavy iron pipes in office when a man on a motor cycle passed him and frightened the horses. In pulling upon the horses, part of the load slipped and hit them. Mr. Farrell fell straddle of the tongue of the wagon, while the team ran away. He rode in this dangerous position from W. F. Miles' place, as far as the Toronto Bank, where the horses fell. He escaped from the mix-up with only a few bruises.

Bread in Burford is now selling at 5 cents.

LANGFORD

Rev. Mr. Bowers had charge of the service on Sunday morning.

Rally Day will be on October 3rd. Rev. Mr. Pyley will have charge.

Mr. and Mrs. H. M. Vanderlip spent last Friday in Hamilton the guests of Mrs. C. T. Templar.

Mr. and Mrs. C. Whitfield, Hamilton, spent Sunday afternoon with Mr. and Mrs. D. Westbrook; also Mr. and Mrs. W. Doddy were guests of Mr. and Mrs. Westbrook.

Miss Hellyer, Waterford, Mr. Jones, Marburg, were guests of Mrs. John Hunter on Sunday.

Mr. H. M. Vanderlip had the misfortune to have one of her cows get its leg broken so badly that it had to be killed.

Mr. James W. Westbrook is putting up a silo this week.

State of Ohio, City of Toledo, L. S. Frank J. Cheney makes oath that he is sole partner of the firm of F. J. Cheney & Co., doing business in the City of Toledo, County and State aforesaid, and that said firm will pay the sum of ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS and every cent of said amount that cannot be cured by the use of HALL'S CATARRH CURE.

Sworn to before me and subscribed in my presence, this 6th day of December, A. D. 1886.

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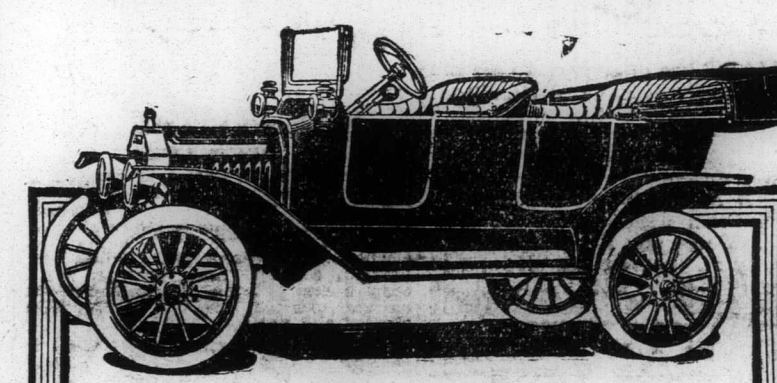
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