



"HOWLERS."

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## "Until Death Do Us Part."

By J. Wells.

The man studied the face of the woman opposite with a growing sense of uneasiness, not unmixed with a trace of satisfaction. His mind was busy with futile attempts to account for the strangeness of her manner.

Her cheeks were pink with suppressed feeling; her eyes were by turns pensive and daring; soft laughter bubbled over her lips at frequent intervals, and about her whole being there was an air of subdued expectancy.

She was serious now, leaning slightly forward, her chin resting in the palm of her hand, her face and shoulders all aglow from the light of the open fire which held her gaze.

After a moment's reflection, without looking at him, she spoke in that low alluring tone, which is possessed by so few women:

"I have thought about this 'higher life' at times—when I have been able to find a stray moment between dinners and balls."

She smiled, shaking her head gently, as if with the hopelessness of it. "It interests me as nothing else can," she continued, "but some way I can't seem to make much out of it."

She paused a moment, her blue eyes full of a pretty seriousness, and then went on:

"Now your articles in the 'Utonia'—do you believe that we of this present generation can really mould our lives by those intangible theories?" she finished, laughingly.

"They are only intangible to the uninitiated," he responded. "To me the intangible is the only tangible. The unreal is the only real."

"The unreal is the only real," she repeated, "how mysteriously complex!" and she held up her hands in mock amazement, laughing softly and again shaking her head.

Becoming serious at once, she leaned back in her chair, and, looking at him through half-closed lids, she said appealingly:

"But I would be one of the initiated, Dr. Weyman. Tell me more of your beautiful theories. I should like so much to know. Many times have I felt the force of the real, as I see it, only to writhe in helplessness. What could I do but go on? But you will help me. Tell me how it is possible to live your way."

The persuasive tone and childlike attitude thrilled him strangely.

He did not answer at once, but gave himself up for a moment to the study of her face. It was pleasant to have this woman, whom he knew to be a social favorite, courted and admired for her beauty and intelligence, turn to him and ask to be led away from the material snares and into new fields of thought; it was more pleasant to sit by the fire listening to her laughter and to the sound of her voice, or watching her changes in expression, as various emotions held her; it was more pleasant to reflect that it was his presence which was responsible for this new mood—the dropping of the mask, as it were.

This last thought brought him up with a start and a slight feeling of irritation. What right had he to presume so much? He would not—it could not be—it must not be.

His voice, when he answered her, bore no trace of the perturbation which he felt.

"Men have lived by those theories," he said quietly, "and men are living by them to-day. It is not that they are queer or extravagant; it is only that they are so simple as to be misunderstood."

The woman was silent for an instant, and then:

"But is it not very difficult to lead this ideal life?" she said. "Does it not require a lot of probation, self-denial, sacrifice, and a host of other distressing things?"

She made a little gesture of impatience, and then went on:

"That would quell all joy in life, and joy—happiness, is the end and aim of your theory."

He smiled at her question.

"You make the mistake common to those to whom things are new. You take the shadow joys for the real ones; once know the real, the shadow will not satisfy," he said.

She made no answer, and he continued slowly:

"Difficult? That depends on your conception of the meaning of the word. Does the tourist, inspired by the knowledge of his reward, find it difficult to climb the mountain from whose summit can be seen the view which will electrify his soul? Or does the swimmer find it difficult to breast the waves and come to safety on the beach? No, it is not difficult; it is only exercise which is essential to true living."

He spoke surely, but was vaguely conscious at that moment that the words found no echo in his heart.

She saw the smile that accompanied the words and said ruefully:

"I don't know. I fear I am very stupid. You must teach me," and, laughing softly, she turned to him with a glance half appealing, half daring.

"Then let me teach you to laugh again," he said, anxious to lead her away from this seriousness, which, although so delightful, was, he felt, dangerous.

"One needs only to be happy after all," he continued, "and you are that."

"Am I?" and her eyes flashed a challenge from underneath half closed lids.

"Aren't you?" he retorted, and regretted it.

"Perhaps." But she sighed. There was a moment's tense silence in which he struggled with

himself. It would be so easy to enter this flower-strewn path to which she led him; so easy to go on with this entrancing intimacy, and the wild beating of his heart urged him to it—but "We all are, if we but knew it," he said with elaborate carelessness, leaning slightly back in his chair.

She gave him a quick, questioning glance, and a shade of disappointment passed over her features. He winced, but continued with composure:

"I remember when I first read that statement," and quite naturally drew the conversation into other channels. The critical moment had passed.

Half an hour later, when he rose to take his departure, the woman had resumed her mask. She gave him her hand in parting and said almost as if perfunctorily:

"You will come again soon? And give me lesson number two?" she added, laughing; but her laugh had lost its music.

"Thank you, Miss Langford," he answered, nodding slightly, and avoiding her eyes in which he knew there lay a deeper question.

"Now is she coquetting, or is she in earnest?" he asked himself when he had reached the street, and, answering his own question, "Both," he muttered.

Dr. Horace Weyman, student, scholar and writer, did not take the car, and, as he walked homeward, was deeply engrossed with a problem so intricate that it required the exertion of every faculty of mind, and the frown on his brow seemed to set at naught the words which he had spoken to Miss Vivian Langford, with reference to the absence of difficulties in the lives of idealists.

His friendship with Miss Langford had extended over the period of one year, but had never progressed further than that of congenial companionship on a rather formal basis. He was often lonely, and she, amiable, sensible, well-bred, had helped him to while away many an evening with social chit-chat, that otherwise would have been spent in solitude.

Thus had he drifted, not thinking where this course might be leading. Now, he suddenly found from her manner that he had indeed drifted far; he dazedly wondered if too far to retract. But that could not be—must not be.

He remembered with a feeling of relief that she was not a young girl but a woman who had been out several seasons, a woman whom he knew he had absolute control over, and who would be cautious in bestowing her affections.

Dropping her side of the question, he began to think how it would be with him to give up her friendship, and not until then did he realize all that such a step would mean. Could he endure the loneliness now? Could he go back to the old life—the life without her?

He found himself unconsciously picturing Miss Langford as the mistress of his home. He retraced every detail of the evening. He dwelt on her beauty, her grace, her tact, and their mutual pleasure in companionship. She would be just the wife for him; the woman of all others who would draw a coterie of congenial friends to his home, and who would transform his sombre rooms into scenes of social gaiety.

After all, what was holding him back, why did he hesitate to make himself happier? He struggled for a moment with the thought of happiness. Had it not a deeper significance than mere social pleasure? Did it not arise from a far different source?

He mentally faced the cause of his dilemma. He knew that it was because the Ideal at whose shrine he had worshipped since he had entered manhood, decreed that man should have but one love through all the ages, and he had found her years ago.

He drew himself up with a start, as from across the abyss of years there came floating to him on the wings of memory the vision of her for whom his home had been built, of her whose lovely presence had graced it for three short years, of her gentle spirit glided into eternity, leaving him an infant daughter, the only consolation of the years of loneliness which had followed. He had not doubted, when she lived, that Alice was for him the one woman, come what might; but now—

Happiness, he argued with himself, is the privilege and right of all. Heretofore, to obey the mandates of the Ideal had been his only guide to happiness—now he could not see clearly. He groaned aloud as he mounted the steps of the home which she had planned—he and she together. He leaned a moment against a supporting pillar. Visions of his young wife, her girlish form enshrouded in the soft folds of her bridal veil, came to him, and clearly he seemed to hear the words spoken that evening, when, for him, heaven and earth had blended.

"Until death do us part." It was these words which, above all others, stood out in his consciousness, and he repeated them over and over in his mind. His brow became somewhat cleared, and he murmured:

"Until death do us part." And for seven long years thereafter, have I been true, and now—

He turned abruptly and entered the house. When he had reached his room, he stood irresolutely in the center of it for a moment, and then walked slowly toward the portiers

which closed the entrance to his private study. With his hand on the curtain, he hesitated and then, shaking his head, he muttered:

"What the use to call up the dead past?" and turned abruptly away.

The following day he went about in a fit of abstraction, so unlike his usual firm poise of bearing that Mrs. Denning, the housekeeper, was much perturbed. She had known him since his boyhood days and her sympathetic heart longed to give the comfort which his reticence forbade. Little Alice, too, noticed the difference and shyly kept at a distance.

On the morning of the second when he came down to breakfast, it was plainly evident that he had spent a sleepless night. His little daughter and Mrs. Denning had preceded him. Breakfast was eaten in silence. When Mrs. Denning had gone to give some directions to the servants, Alice slipped from her chair, and, shyly approaching her father, put her hand in his, and looking up into his face, said persuasively:

"Father, won't we go and see mother this morning? It has been a long time since we went."

He started, pushed her away almost roughly, and said, as he rose from the table:

"Not this morning, Alice; not now—father's busy."

The little girl looked after him, and her big blue eyes showed her perplexity.

Since she could remember, her father had made a practice of often taking her with him into his study, where there stood a life-sized portrait of that other Alice of whom her father told her such beautiful things. It was to visit this picture that she desired to be taken.

Dr. Weyman went directly into the library where his secretary sat opening the mail. With a curt nod he seated himself at the table and, together, they ran through a number of letters, and then the secretary held up a note written in a feminine hand.

"An invitation from Miss Langford for dinner to-morrow," he said, and turned to the man opposite with a questioning lift of the brows.

There was a moment's hesitation, and then:

"Write, saying that I do—"

Dr. Weyman stopped and then continued hastily:

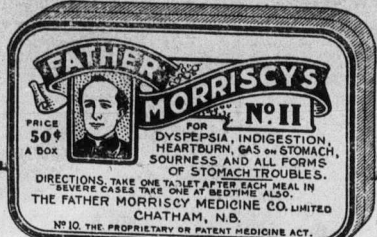
"Never mind that one, William; I'll see to it later."

William bowed politely and looked up in surprise, as his employer rose suddenly, and, making some remark about a business engagement and leaving the letters until later, left the room.

Dr. Weyman lunched in town and did not return until the autumn day was drawing to a close. He did not immediately enter the house, but went into the garden at the back, where a few weeks ago the flowers had bloomed in charming profusion, and where now all was desolation. Seating himself in a secluded corner, where he had spent so many hours in thought, he murmured:

"I will decide this thing here and now," and, bowing his face in his hands, he commenced anew the struggle with himself.

When the last rays of the setting sun had bidden adieu to the tallest trees, he rose, and standing erect his head thrown back, he inhaled deeply the autumn air. Then, drawing himself to his full height, he walked firmly and steadily, as a man who is master of himself. Entering the library by the side door, he found the zealous William still there, engaged in collecting certain data for an article that had been begun several days before.



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### A Stinging Rebuke.

One of the foremost artists of Paris has addressed a stinging reproach to those who favor the spoliation of the religious orders. One of those, Victor Charpentier, formed a project of asking the government to convert the Abbey of Solesmes into a maison des artistes, and he nominated a committee on which he placed the name of M. Maurice Barres. The latter addressed to him the following letter:

"I disapprove of your project to establish a maison des artistes at Solesmes under the conditions stated in your papers. Solesmes belongs to the Benedictines. It was they who built it. I do not wish to profit, directly or indirectly, by the robbery of which they are the victims, and I must ask you to erase my name from the list of your committee."

### CROSS, SLEEPLESS BABIES ARE SICKLY BABIES.

When little ones are sleepless and cross it is a sure sign that they are not well. Probably the little stomach or the bowels are out of order, or the child may be suffering from teething troubles. Give Baby's Own Tablets and see how quickly the child grows well and happy and sleeps soundly—not the drugged sleep of "soothing" medicines, but the natural sleep of health. Mrs. Edward Sicord, Maskinonge, Que., says: "I have used Baby's Own Tablets for indigestion and other troubles of childhood, and they always work like a charm. They always keep my little one well." Sold by medicine dealers or by mail at 25 cents a box from The Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

The great Benedictine Abbey of Solesmes in France, which cost millions of dollars, was sold to a Jew for 500,000 francs after two successful attempts by the government to sell the same at auction recently.

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