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help the bowels to functionate properly, and influence the liver and kidneys to act very efficiently.

**The Romance of a Marriage.**

CHAPTER XI.

"I wish this would last forever," he says. "I said that yesterday, did I not? I say it again, with truth, earnestness, and sincerity. Paula, I have learnt something since we danced together in the moonlight the other night."

"Yes," she says, looking down at him with a listening smile, and wondering whether all the Powisses had the deep, intense expression in their eyes which shone in his dark ones. "We were not to speak of that, you know," she adds, softly. "What is that you have learnt? That it is not safe to undertake a four-in-hand until you have learnt to drive a single horse?"

He smiles grimly; but his eyes lose nothing of their deep, sweet gravity. "I have learnt that life might still be worth the living," he says.

Paula looks at him intently, curiously.

"And I had concluded, before the other evening, that it was not. I had decided that the whole thing was a hollow mockery and a farce, in which men were happiest whose parts were played out first, and who left the stage early. You laugh at me?"

"No, I did not laugh," she says, simply, her eyes downcast, her fingers pulling a piece of moss to pieces idly.

"I could laugh myself when I think of it," he says. "But—ah! well, you cannot understand—how could you? Thank Heaven you cannot! As soon would the lark that soars each morning from the meadow to the sky understand the life of its kinsman cooped in a cage in some squalid alley. But think how a man must feel coming straight from a world which he has learnt to know, as well as a man can know it; who has got to believe in nothing and doubt everything but evil; who has gone through the social mill, and had all trust and confidence in the good crushed out of him; think what he must feel when, like a flash of light, it is revealed to him that, after all, happiness is not a mere word used to trick fools and children, but a solid, possible fact. Think what he

must feel. Don't you think it would set him longing for it, and wondering whether it would be a possibility for him?"

Paula is silent. What can she say? Every word, as it falls with deep, grave music from his lips, gaining added eloquence by the earnest, almost wistful expression in the dark eyes, goes home to her. But she is silent.

"Do you know what I have been thinking to-day?" he says, leaning a little nearer to her, and speaking in a slow, rapt voice. "And—with a smile—'I have been thinking a great deal.' She remembers how silently he sat while Mr. Palmer smoked—how frequently the absent, dreamy look came into the dark eyes, and she shakes her head.

"Tell me," she says.

"Well," he says, "I have been thinking of the past, and wishing that I could drive it away—get rid of it—drive it out of sight and mind, and begin life from—yesterday."

Silence for a moment; then he laughs with a strange, wistful sort of bitterness.

"A foolish wish," he says. "But it clung to me strangely; it puzzled me—the fact that I should wish it. I mean, I have never taken life as anything but rather a grim joke. Just worth laughing at, and no more, until it came down here. And I have been wondering how the wish came to be born—what had come over me—how it had all come about."

Silence still. Then in a low whisper, half-fearful, half-wistful:

"And I have found out."

Paula tries to smile as she lifts her eyes and looks down at him; but her gaze falters and returns to the moss in her fingers.

"I have found out!" he says. "Would you like to know what has occasioned the change? Are you curious? Ah, not why should you be? But if I told you, I wonder how you would take it? Laugh, perhaps—yes, I think you would laugh—perhaps be angry. Shall I tell you?"

He pauses, his eyes fixed on her face, its fresh loveliness a little pale and fixed, as if her whole being were listening.

A robin drops noiselessly from above them, and hops almost to their feet. Paula's eyes follow it, seeing it not.

And the Worst is Yet to Come—



"Shall I tell you?" he says. "If it would make you angry, you must try and forgive me. It is only the fear of making you angry and offending you that makes me hesitate. I should like when I go away to look back upon these days, and say to myself that they were without spot or blemish—white stones in my life's calendar—first fair and perfect days in which I caught a glimpse of what happiness meant. No, I would spoil all to make you angry. And yet—I could not go without telling you. Are you listening?"

Her lips part, and she tries to say "Yes," with a feigned carelessness, with no trace of the sensation his words have quickened in her, but the little word falls on her lips.

He leans nearer to her, so near that his hand touches the sleeve of the Galates dress.

"Then I will tell you," he says. With an absorbed air he pushes his hat from his head and lets it fall and roll down the bank, and raises himself on his arm that he may see her face and look into her eyes.

"It began the night before last," he says, "this strange change in me. Do you remember how I first saw you? I had wandered into the Court grounds with no motive, curiosity even, and stood listening to the music, thanking my stars that I was outside instead of in, when suddenly I saw you. I thought you were a servant, and was going away when you stumbled against me."

The red blush of maiden shame burns on Paula's cheek; but he goes on as if he did not see it.

"On the impulse of the moment I persuaded you to stay, half-carelessly, I confess. See, I am going to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. You know what followed. By every subterfuge I could think of, I kept you there, mentally resolved that I would see you again. Well, we parted. You went home, and, doubtless, forgot me."

Paula's eyes droop heavily, and her lips close tightly.

"While I—well, I tried to forget you. I sat in the solitude of my room trying to smile the little incident away, to pat it from me as a little, amusing accident that was worth just what such trifles are worth; but it would not go. The harder I tried to get away from it the more persistently did your face, as I saw it all flushed and sparkling, framed in the white shawl, haunt me; and half-angry with myself, I resolved that I would not take advantage of the permission I had got from you—that I would not allow the face that haunted me, but that I would pack up my traps and go off—anywhere—in the morning."

Paula drops the moss from her fingers, and leans forward with clasped hands, her face turned away from him that he may not see the sudden pallor that has smitten it.

"But when the morn came I found that I was powerless. Yes, powerless. I could not go. Your face drew me like a dream, and I—followed it. Fate was with—or against me, which? Fate ordained that we should be thrown together alone that morning, and the spell—it was no other—grew stronger, so that when I went back to the locality room, not only your face, but your voice, every little trick of your hands, your very smile—haunted me. I fought hard against it—and his face darkens—'knowing as I know; I fought hard, but it was of no use. I looked forward to the morning, as a man looks forward to certain happiness. A change had come over me, the great change which a man feels only once in his life, and that which has fallen upon me I knew was—love!'"

He pauses at last, pauses breathless, and pale with suppressed emotion.

"Paula, it was love!"

There is silence, profound, futatee, but all the air seemed filled with those words, "Paula, it was love!" The very trees seem to be murmuring it, and the birds to word it in their song.

And with that subtle music the whole earth seems to take to itself a new meaning. As if a veil had been torn aside, she sees herself, her innermost heart revealed; knows now the significance of the strange, vague joy which had fallen upon her since yesterday; knows that, come what will, she who sits at her feet and has won the heart from her bosom, holds her future in his hands; it is a vanguard moment, full of almost fearful joy and blissful trembling. Paula and transfigured, struggling, maiden-like, against the spell that enfolds her, she sits with clasped hands and beating heart,

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