

**MAGIC**  
  
**BAKING POWDER**  
**THE HEIR**  
**Lancewood**

CHAPTER XXVI.  
 "Certainly," replied Gerald—"the sooner the better. He has a great capacity for learning; and one thing is quite certain, Lady Neslie—if he is not employed, he will always be in mischief."  
 She laughed with a certain readiness of good humour this time.  
 "If you will permit me," he continued, "I shall be happy to continue to devote some hours each day to him."  
 Miladi's eyes shone with a peculiar light.  
 "No, that will not do, Mr. Dorman. You have your own affairs to attend to. If it be really desirable to engage a tutor, I will engage one."  
 "Much will depend on the kind of tutor you engage. If he is high-principled he will make the boy the same."  
 "I consider myself quite competent, Mr. Dorman, to find a proper person," said Lady Neslie, still good humoredly.  
 Then she withdrew, and Vivien, true to her idea of peace and conciliation, followed her.  
 "I hope, Valerie," she said, "that you are not annoyed. It was I who suggested that Oswald should learn."  
 Lady Neslie turned a laughing face to Vivien.  
 "Annoyed?" she repeated. "No, I am not. You have solved a problem for me."  
 More than once that day miladi smiled as she said to herself—  
 "It is the very thing. I only wonder I did not think of it before."

CHAPTER XXVII.  
 "Vivien," said Lady Neslie, "I have been thinking over what Mr. Dorman said, and I quite agree with him; it is high time Oswald had a tutor."  
 Vivien's beautiful face brightened as though some real kindness had been done herself.  
 "I have resolved," continued her ladyship, "upon seeing to the matter at once."  
 "I should try to get an Oxford man," said Vivien, "if possible."  
 "I shall engage a Frenchman," announced her ladyship, laughing. "I am not English. Oxford scholarship may be all very well—it has no great charm for me, I should like my child to have a French training."  
 Miss Neslie did not like to object; it was certainly better to have a French tutor than none. She would have preferred an English gentleman, but then the matter was in miladi's own hands.  
 "I met a cousin of my own in Paris," continued Valerie. "I say 'cousin,' but he is really a distant relative

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ninth cousin, I should imagine—Henri de Nouchet—and he asked me if I knew of any engagement of the kind that was open. As I had never thought of a tutor for Oswald, I said 'No'; but now the idea occurs to me that he would be the very man."  
 "Is he competent?" asked Vivien, anxiously.  
 "My relations are not all ignorant, though you fancy me so," said miladi, proudly.  
 But Vivien would not take offence; she had too much at stake to give way to vexations; all small personal feelings must be set aside; she had a heavy interest at stake—the honor of the Neslies.  
 "Dear Valerie," she said, calmly, "I mean nothing unkind. A man might be all that's good and clever, yet not be qualified to teach; that requires peculiar capabilities."  
 "I shall please myself," announced miladi. "Henri de Nouchet shall be my son's tutor, or he shall have none, and I will write to-day and ask him if he will accept the post. He may refuse—it is a poor position for a De Nouchet; but he shall be handsomely paid, and treated as one of the family if he comes."  
 "That would not be very pleasant," thought Vivien—"still anything for the boy's sake."  
 Then miladi continued—  
 "I want to talk to you about something else, Vivien. It will soon be quite a year since poor Sir Arthur died. Of course I am very sorry and all that kind of thing; but I really think we might have something to entertain us—a quiet dinner-party or a dance. You might leave off those depressing black dresses, and let us be a little brighter. If Monsieur de Nouchet does come, he will think it is a prison."  
 "You have full power in your own house," replied Vivien. "I should not dream of putting aside my mourning until the year is over; nor should I appear at any dance or entertainment. It would be disrespectful to my father's memory."  
 "You can please yourself," observed miladi, "and I shall do the same."  
 "Valerie," said Miss Neslie, "do not be angry if I say another thing. If this gentleman comes to undertake the education of your son, he will not surely expect to have all kinds of gayety offered to him."  
 "He will tell you that when he comes," laughed Lady Neslie. "I shall write to him to-day. I only hope he will accept. We shall have life a little brighter than it is."  
 And Vivien heard with considerable misgiving. She had a foreboding about the coming of this Henri de Nouchet which she would have been ashamed to confess, and could hardly explain in words. The old doubts and suspicions she had entertained of Lady Neslie returned to her. She was ill at ease—for the honor of the house was in her hands.  
 There was but one person she could consult, only one to whom she could go in her distress for counsel and comfort. To Gerald Dorman she told all that Lady Neslie had said.  
 "I cannot explain my foreboding to you," she said; "I had just such a feeling of depression and coming evil on the night you came in search of me when my father was taken ill. I cannot account for it, but it seems to me that if this stranger enters the doors evil will come with him, as it came with Lady Neslie."  
 He understood, but was powerless to help her.  
 "Would it be of any use for me to make inquiries in Paris?" he said.  
 "At least then we should know who this Henri de Nouchet really is."  
 "And what would it avail us, Mr. Dorman? Suppose even that we

found him to be utterly unfitted, morally and mentally, for the post, we could not prevent miladi from engaging him. She has all the power. I can see now one mistake that my poor father made as to his will. He ought to have left some gentleman of note and position as Oswald's guardian, some one who would have had the power to interfere if he saw matters going wrong."  
 "Yes, it was an oversight," said Mr. Dorman. "The only thing we can do is to hope for the best. Lady Neslie will have some regard for public opinion if not for you. I do not think she would risk her credit by bringing any really unworthy person into the house. If she does, we must—"  
 Then he paused.  
 "Must what?" she asked, despairingly.  
 "We must appeal to the law. But until that time, dear Miss Neslie, live in hope."  
 She remembered so well the time before when he had called her "dear Miss Neslie," and she had been annoyed at it. Now matters were so altered that he was the only friend she had to rely on—the only one who could comfort or advise her. With a sudden frank, sweet impulse she held out her hands to him.  
 "You are a true friend," she said. "What should I do in my trouble but for you?"  
 And, if she could have given him the whole world, she would not have made him so proud and happy as those few words did. There was nothing for it, she saw, but patient endurance. All hope of anything good from Valerie was at an end.  
 Several days afterward Valerie said to her—  
 "You remember, Vivien, what we were lately discussing—the engagement of a tutor for Oswald? I am glad to say that I have succeeded in my wish; Henri de Nouchet has consented to come."  
 Miladi was looking at her with laughing, mischievous eyes.  
 "It would be such a relief to me to have some friend of my own whom I can trust near me. Henri de Nouchet is very clever, of course. In the years to come, Oswald will go to your favorite place, Oxford, and then I intend Monsieur de Nouchet to succeed Mr. Dorman."  
 Vivien said nothing. Words were all so useless.  
 "Vivien," continued miladi, "I hope you will find it worth your while to be civil to my friend. If you are not, you know the alternative. I am quite determined that the house shall be made comfortable for him."  
 For the sake of the heavy stake—the honor of her house—she restrained the burning passion of her indignant pride. Alas, if she went, what would, in the present state of things, become of Lancewood?  
 "Alas, my father," sighed the unhappy girl, "what a charge you have laid to me!"  
 She was somewhat surprised to find that Lady Neslie had selected two of the best rooms in the house for the tutor. He had a sitting-room that had been in former years a state-room, and one of the finest bedrooms.  
 "He is no common person," said miladi, proudly. "For any one like Mr. Dorman I should not think of arranging such rooms; but Monsieur de Nouchet is a French gentleman and a distant relative of my own."  
 "I always understood that the D'Estes were a wealthy family," observed Vivien. "How is it that this gentleman is compelled to work for his living?"  
 Miladi coughed a very little cough.  
 "My dear Vivien," she said, "my father was a D'Este, my mother a De Nouchet, and the De Nouchets were all poor."  
 The rooms were prepared, much to

Vivien's secret annoyance. Another saddle horse was bought—one that would do for Monsieur de Nouchet.  
 "Do you intend your son's tutor to spend much of his time in riding?" Vivien asked;—and Valerie, with a sneering laugh, replied—  
 "What my son's tutor will do will be seen when he comes."  
 He came in May. Apparently he was in no great hurry to accept the post that Lady Neslie had offered him. He came in May, when the lilacs were budding, and the laburnums gleamed like yellow flame among the trees.  
 Vivien looked on in wonder that was almost fear. It was like the arrival of the master of the house rather than of a paid dependent. The carriage was sent to the station to meet him—dinner was delayed.  
 "Henri is accustomed to dining well," said miladi. "He would not like any ordinary kind of dinner."  
 "But," inquired Vivien, "will your son's tutor dine with us every day, Valerie?"  
 "My son and his tutor," was the wary reply. "It is high time that the child began to learn manners."  
 "But surely our luncheon would do for their dinner," said Vivien. "I never heard of such an arrangement as that."  
 "You are likely to hear of several arrangements that will startle you," remarked miladi, with a laugh. "I have only this to say—that, if you do not choose to dine with my relative, who is also my friend, you need not trouble to dine with me."  
 So, in sheer despair, Vivien watched the course of events, and on the fourteenth of May Henri de Nouchet first entered the Abbey.  
 CHAPTER XXVIII.  
 Miss Neslie was somewhat startled when she entered the drawing-room, on the day of the tutor's arrival, to find him seated there, laughing and conversing with Lady Neslie on the most familiar terms. They were seated side by side on a fauteuil, and Oswald was playing near them. Her ladyship had laid aside the last vestige of her mourning—the widow's cap had long since disappeared. She looked radiant in a dinner-dress of rose silk and white lace, with diamonds gleaming in her hair and round her throat. Henri de Nouchet, with eyes full of admiration, was gazing at her when Vivien suddenly entered the room.  
 He rose quickly, looking with wondering awe at the tall, stately girl whose noble, beautiful face and white throat rose statuesquely from a cloud of soft black tulle. Valerie rose also, and introduced Monsieur de Nouchet in a few words.  
 "A cousin of mine," she said, and then, in reply to a laughing remonstrance from him, she corrected herself. "Not exactly a cousin, then, but a distant relation."  
 The tutor bowed, and said her ladyship "honored him greatly." Vivien spoke kindly to him, but she was annoyed at finding him there, and at the very familiar terms on which he seemed to be with Lady Neslie. He bowed low before the queenly beauty, whose dark, proud eyes seemed to awe him. He did not at first enter into conversation with her—he seemed rather to be studying her. He was quieter, too, after her entrance. He took the child in his arms, but Oswald did not seem to like him.  
 "Your eyes are black, and I don't like your face," he said, with his usual charming frankness. "I like Mr. Dorman best."  
 The tutor's face darkened.  
 "Who is Mr. Dorman?" he asked after a few minutes; and miladi replied—  
 "A nondescript. He was my late husband's secretary. He is secretary, steward, agent, and everything else now to Lancewood. He has rooms in the Abbey. Sir Arthur thought it more convenient than for him to live away."  
 "I see—a kind of upper servant—trusted confidentially."  
 "Yes," replied miladi.  
 (To be Continued.)

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