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Marriages Made on Earth.

AN ANGLo-INDIAN STORY.

A girl stood on the quay, straining her tear-misted eyes to catch a last glimpse of the vessel that was bearing her lover away. Only a little hour lay between his caresses and the present emptiness, but how great the void already seemed. His kisses still lay warm upon her quivering lips. But he was out on the sea, and with the sound of the waves there mingled his last yearning words, "Be true to me, Nellie, love. I shall soon return to claim you, and we shall go out together to that golden land. Oh, Jack, if I could only go with you now—I shall miss you so."

"Cheer up, darling. India is a wonderful land. I shall do splendidly in a place where there is room to live and work. I shall come for you soon."

Thus they had spoken a short hour ago. Now Jack was beyond sound of voice, and touch of hand.

"How long will this cruel sea divide us?" whispered Nellie as she turned homewards. Womanlike her heart was full of unvoiced fears. She quailed at the thought of the temptations her handsome lover would have to face alone, in a far off land. She knew, too, poor child, that pride and self-confidence make but an uncertain shield against the arrows of temptation, and her lover had gone out equipped in such frail armor to fight the battle of life.

Jack West and Nellie Ford had been engaged for two years. He was a master in a preparatory school for boys on a salary of a hundred pounds a year. She was the daughter of a London solicitor whose work far exceeded his income. But the lovers were young and hope beat high. They told each other every day that "something would turn up," and when the offer of a good appointment in an Indian College was made to Jack, they felt as if Providence had befriended them, and almost believed they heard their own wedding bells in the still evening air. The thought of the inevitable parting was put away until Jack was actually ready to sail. And then the bitterness of it smote the two hearts like a sudden, dreadful storm. For the girl a long and weary waiting seemed to loom ahead. The man, at least, was going to a new life, full of novelty and hope. But in the midst of this pang a gleam of sunshine fell upon Nellie. In her quiet way she had from time to time done little services for the Temperance Society of the church to which she belonged, and now an urgent request was preferred by the committee that she should take the secretaryship which was vacant. She entered upon her duties with a quiet and happy enthusiasm, for no work appealed more strongly to her tender and womanly heart than the work of redeeming from ruin the victims of drink. Her first thought was of winning Jack to take the pledge before he sailed for India.

"I wish you would become the 'first fruit' of my labor, Jack," she said with a sweet, pleading little laugh. "It would make me so happy if I knew you were going out avowedly pledged to do right."

But Jack laughed her pleading away. "It would never do for me to go out labeled as a narrow and prejudiced man, Nell. You may be sure I will be as good an advocate of temperance as any fanatical teetotaler. I ain't, by you know, temperate in all things, and so be we?" from the faithful, pure heart that loved him.

The same ship that bore Jack West away from his promised wife also carried a party of gay tourists and some Anglo-Indians returning to their Eastern home. And among the company was a bright-faced young girl, the only daughter of Professor Somers, who was returning to her Indian home after a "finishing" process in one of the English boarding schools. This lately emancipated young lady made the life of the company, and soon established herself as first favorite on board.

After the usual spell of mal de mer, Jack went on deck and encountered Maud Somers in a bewitching attitude throwing spoils. He joined the game, and gradually drifted into friendship with Miss Somers.

They had a community of tastes, and the girl's knowledge of the land to which he was going a stranger made Jack anxious for her opinion and advice on a thousand matters connected with his new home. When Maud Somers discovered that Jack West was going out to take up a tutorship at Lal Bagh College she clapped her hands with glee. "How funny," she said, "my father is the Principal of Lal Bagh. What a stroke of luck that we met." Jack was pleased, too. He had found a pleasant and useful friend. The two, chatted by the hour. Jack soon made interest with the head steward to get his seat placed next to Miss Somers at table, and here her influence soon caused him to feel glad he had not bound himself in Nellie's narrow total abstinence principles. Maud Somers took her wine with a pretty air of discrimination, and Jack would not for worlds have confessed that he had almost adored it altogether. Life on board ship lends itself to quick intimacies, but though the "Mr. West" and "Miss Somers" had now changed to "Jack" and "Maud," and the old stagers nodded after the two with knowing looks, Jack had not yet found opportunity to tell his friend of his engagement to Nellie Ford. So the friendship grew till Maud Somers came to regard the handsome young tutor as her special property.

India, it must be confessed, is a delightful land during

the winter months. The stations in the plains are full of visitors, tourists, and folk returned from their sojourn in the "hills."

Jack West arrived at his destination in November, when the roses were blowing and the air full of cool and pleasant sweetness. He speedily entered with zest into the gay life around him. He was invited to tennis parties, to afternoon teas and dinners, and was a welcome addition to the Sports Club, where he shone as a cricketer and tennis-player. The principal of Lal Bagh and his good wife treated Jack as a son and he enjoyed full freedom in their beautiful house. The gaiety and glamour of the new life fascinated the young Englishman. He found himself for the first time in his life free from care, and able to enjoy the privileges extended to a gentleman in a good position. Maud was constantly at his side to inspire him with a desire for still greater popularity and social success. He lost the fresh image of Nellie's pale and sweet face, and when flushed with the "pegs" which now had become a necessity of life to him, he swore that he was too fine a fellow to be tied up to a little Puritan, who would spoil all his "sport." When his conscience reproached him for disloyalty he stilled it with clever excuses.

"This sort of life would never suit Nellie," he mused. "She is such a shy, home-loving girl, and so straight-laced, that this strange new life would almost kill her. The poor girl would be utterly miserable, and I could not afford her constant trips 'home.'"

So Jack for the best and most unselfish reasons married Maud Somers, who thus brought him an income of £300 a year, and encouraged all his ambitions. She laughed and sang and drank success to him in all his sporting contests.

Nellie spoke no word when the news came. She made no cry, but she drooped like a broken flower. Mrs. Ford's wrath was great, and it was to escape her mother's constant abuse of Jack, and the pitying glances that Nellie after much suffering, at last consented to marry Colonel Hall, a retired Indian officer, who had for a long time loved her.

The Colonel was not her girlish ideal, but he was one of those steadfast and upright men who lighten the earth with goodness. He wrapped his little bride about with wonderful love and tenderness, and set her in a garden of happiness. To his amazement he found himself absorbed in her interests, and to no one's astonishment more than his own, did he take over the secretaryship of the Good Faith Temperance Society when illness laid Nellie aside for a time. So the two grew very near together, and love and righteousness prospered. When Nellie, to her unutterable delight found her husband placed in the Parliament chiefly by Temperance voters she felt that to them was indeed given a great work for their people and for their country.

Long years after, when Nellie remembered her false lover only to rejoice that his disloyalty had given her such a brave and good husband, she met Jack again. It was at a great ball given during the Durbar at Delhi. They had sailed from the very harbor that had seen Jack's going forth. The same ship was bearing Nellie and her husband to the land of "ornal and spice," to witness the grand and the wonderful show of Imperial splendor, the Durbar, in the old Moghul Palace, under a blaze of light, Nellie and Jack met. She, grown radiant and young with happiness, he, staid and dull, and cursed with the unsteady sight and constant thirst of a habitual drinker. On his once handsome face a look of discontent sat. As they left the gorgeous scene Nellie saw a man and woman passing down the velvet carpeted way, and a woman's voice came clearly back to her, "I wish you were dead, Jack." The man lurched unsteadily and the woman clutched him hastily. "For pity's sake, hang on to me, and let us get out before all the world sees that you're drunk."

So they passed out, and Nellie tightened her hold on her husband's arm.

The Indian moon shone down, silencing the wide streets. Nellie sat close to her husband in the carriage.

"Are you glad you married me after all, Nellie, poor old prosy teetotal M. P. that I am?"

Nellie's eyes were wet and her heart full as she answered, "I would not change my heaven-blessed marriage for Jack West's earth-made contract for all the wealth of the Indies."

And her husband was more than satisfied.—(Olive Christian Malvery, in the "Alliance News.")

A Flag of Truce.

Mr and Mrs. Edgar Graham were taking their breakfast, or, rather, he was taking and apparently enjoying his, while she scarcely made the pretence of eating any. Her husband noticed this at last, and looked up critically.

"What is the matter, Kate? Is it you or the breakfast that is wrong? To me the fish seems very good, and the omelet, too," he said proving it in a practical way.

Mrs. Edgar gave up the attempt at breakfast then, and began to voice her thoughts. The opportunity for conversation was what she had been awaiting, and she responded eagerly.

"Edgar, your Uncle Trev comes this afternoon—you remember?"

"Certainly, my dear. He's your uncle too, isn't he? I am willing to go shares."

She smiled then, still eagerly—

"Gar," she said, "I have been thinking of something I should like, oh, so much, and I want to ask you, Gar."

"Dear thinking too much to eat your breakfast? A pity, my dear Kate; because if there's a shop where the thing you want can be bought we will try and get it. Now what is it?"

"It is nothing of that sort, Edgar listen. You know Uncle Trevelyan is to give a temperance lecture tonight—"

"That is what he is coming for," remarked Edgar, "so to voice."

"And this is the first time he has stayed with us since our marriage, and there is one thing I long for just now, more than anything else in the world, it seems to me, and you can give me this great, great pleasure if only you will."

Mr. Graham was roused to some concern as well as curiosity.

"Why, Kate, you know I would do any possible thing to give you pleasure, and I think you might have known it

well enough to prove it by telling me straight out what you want. Don't you think I like to please you, Kate?"

"Yes, yes, it is because you are so good to me that I hesitate to ask, for I fear to vex you, Gar. But it is just this. I cannot bear that Uncle Trev should see the wine and spirits on our table, and if only for a few days—just the little while he is here, you would not have any, oh, Gar—!"

There was a break in her voice, and, though her words had ruffled him at first that little stifled sob touched him. He laughed and threw down his serviette.

"Why, my dear little wife, you quite startle me. Even if we were to agree to have these tempting delights on our table, pro tem, don't you fancy it would rather like a thief putting on the garb of a police officer and feigning the honest man? You see, not having wine and such things on our table will not make me a solemn good teetotaler. I am probably a very black sheep, Katie, but covering up my blackness will not make me at all white."

There was a hurt flush on her pretty cheek and a little shadow on her brow. Edgar Graham left his seat and crossed over to her.

"Katie, I am a bear to treat you like this. I am all contrition."

His wife clasped her arms lovingly on his arm in an instant. No one was sweeter in temper than Kate Graham.

"Dear, I am only asking for a flag of truce. Every brave commander may permit me that in honor. Think, Edgar, if you were Uncle Trevelyan, how hurt you would feel to see a color in any form on the table of your host, I believe I should make a hundred ears in striving if those decanters faced me while he was sitting at the table."

"A flag of truce? Ah, well, you have pleaded a very pretty case. But do not let Uncle Trev think I am what I am not, that is all I ask. I suppose you must have your own way, Kate you usually do. Only I don't see what you want to trouble yourself for over this temperance business. You never used to bother before we were married, and why should you now? I know I like my glass of beer and wine occasionally, I admit that, but you never saw—"

He stopped in some confusion, for his wife's head had dropped slightly, and he suddenly remembered there certainly had been one exception to what he was about to affirm. There had been one terrible night when he had come home in a condition which had frightened Kate, a condition of excitement and strange unreasonable hilarity. He had attended a congratulatory dinner in honor of one of his old friends, and there had been a large number of toasts which had been drunk most enthusiastically. Of course it was extremely annoying that the champagne he had drunk should have made him not quite himself. It was just as likely to have been the heat of the hall, and the mingled scented smoke from a couple dozen cigars, and he told Kate this the next morning, and also said he was really sorry it should have occurred, and he meant it, and he promised it would not occur again. And it had not. Therefore why should Katie every now and then, in a shy, indirect way, bring it to his mind and fuss over this miserable teetotal fad? It was rather unjust to him, and not at all like Kate, and he felt vexed when he had thought of it. Still she was really a dear girl, and the best little wife in the world, and how could he refuse her odd request? He could not and he told her so.

"You may lock the sideboard and put me on one glass per diem while Uncle Trev is here, Katie, and I'll stand true my dear, and be a credit to you," he said.

"Oh, Edgar, how good of you. I am more grateful than you can imagine. You don't know how much care I will take to have all your favorite dishes and fruits so that you will not miss the other things, Gar, dear, you have made me such a real happy woman."

"Reward enough, surely," he answered playfully. "Now, I must away. Let me see, Uncle Trev is to come by the five express, so that means hard work for me all the morning and afternoon, with only a quarter of an hour for a sandwich lunch, if I meet the express. And you may depend on me, Katie, I'll meet it and act the dutiful nephew. By the way is the 'flag of truce' to be run up right away. No ale or wine not even a sandwich to-day? Ah, your eyes say 'No,' and answer me. Well, I have passed my word. High tea at six and then the temperance meeting, eh? I suppose I must look in and hear the speechifying if Uncle Trev is to do it, and after all that concession you will let me have a glass of brandy and water the last thing with my smoke on the quiet after supper, Katie?"

Bantering, teasing, as his words were, there was fear and gladness in her heart as she listened. But she sent him off with her every ready bright smile, and not until after he had gone did she permit herself one quiet minute to grasp the meaning of it all—of what she had asked and of what he had promised. "A flag of truce!" Thank God even for that; and she did thank him reverently, with bowed head and throbbing heart.

Punctually the five o'clock express drew up at the station and Mr. Trevelyan Brooke, familiarly called Uncle Trev by his relations, instantly stepped out on to the platform. Very alert, very much in the habit of taking note of every detail, and living in the present, was he. There was no hurry and equally no idleness about him. A capable man every inch of him, and people instinctively felt it. Even his nephew, Edgar Graham, felt it as he met him, and offered his hand. Mr. Brooke's clear eye glanced him over critically as well as kindly.

"Glad to see you again, Edgar," said he. "How is Kate? She was pretty as good before she married you. I hope you have not spoiled her?"

Edgar Graham smiled as he shook his uncle's cordially offered hand. Certainly Uncle Trev seemed as if he were capable of enjoying life.

"Kate, as usual, is too good for me; but I am grateful that some get more than they deserve or I would fare badly. Kate will be waiting for us; are you ready, Uncle Trev?"

The way was not long, and soon the jovial guest was sitting with his young host and hostess at Kate's dainty tea table, enjoying the appetizing spread. It was spoken of as high tea, but Uncle Trev might be pardoned for thinking it would have been no discredit to call it by another and more imposing name. The three were merry enough, and even Edgar allowed to himself that this teetotal relation of his was provokingly good company. Mr. Brooke had a dozen capital stories ever on his lips, and