

Plot That Failed;

Love That Would Not Be Denied.

CHAPTER X.

"Oh," said Violet, with her sweet little laugh, "throws the dishes at the butler's head, I suppose you think Marie?"

"Oh, no, miss, but has the cook up, and talks to him so cold and terrible, like he talked to Bill Summers, who threw down the horse he was so fond of. But, notwithstanding that way of his, he's very kind to all the servants, and any of 'em would do anything for him. They like Mr. Fairfax, too, miss, and he, I heard 'em say, was an artist or an author, or something clever, miss, in London, and he lives with Mr. Leicester, in the same house, and him and Lord Fitz Boisdale are all great friends. And they do say, miss, though, of course, I can't tell whether it's true, that Mr. Leicester is courting Lady Ethel. Did I hurt you, miss?" she broke off, suspending her operations with the hair brush, for Violet had turned round her head rather suddenly.

"No," said Violet, quietly. "What do you say, that Mr. Leicester is in love with Lady Ethel Boisdale?"

"Well, miss, they say so, and it certainly do look like it, if all accounts be true, for Mr. Leicester's man says that his master is at all the balls and soirees and dinners at the Earl of Lackland's, and that he only came down here so suddenlike because Lady Lackland and Lord Fitz and Lady Ethel were coming down to Coombe Lodge."

"That will do," said Violet. "I will go to bed now."

And Marie braided the heavy mass of hair into thick, silken plaits, rattling on meanwhile with a laughable account of Mr. Starling's sayings and doings in the servants' hall, to which he seemed, by Marie's account, quite an acquisition. Violet smiled with her usual enjoyment of the humorous, of which she had a quick perception, and Marie left her still smiling.

But when the talkative little maid had closed the door behind her, light-hearted Violet felt rather lonely.

Her aunt slept in the next suite of rooms, and by touching a small bell, she could summon her, or by opening a door and passing through a little anteroom she could reach her, but Violet was not nervous or timid, and after a little wrestling with the feeling she conquered it.

But she could not altogether dismiss the small incidents of the evening from her mind.

Had she really seen the White Nun, or had fancy deceived her? That was a question she could not answer satisfactorily.

Then another one presented itself



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for consideration. Was Mr. Leicester Dodson a suitor for Lady Ethel's hand?

That also was a question which she could not answer.

It was true he had gone up to town suddenly, and it was true that he had been present at a ball at which Lady Ethel was also present. It was also a singular coincidence that he should return so suddenly to Penruddie at the time of the Lacklands' visit to Coombe Lodge.

"Well, if it was so," thought Violet, humming the air of a song which Captain Murpout had sung, "it was nothing whatever to do with her."

Then she thought of his manner by the stile that evening—of its quiet sense of power and protection; of the grasp of his firm, strong hand on her trembling arm, of—well, of every word he had spoken, of every gesture he had used, of that act of kindness toward Jemmie Sanderson.

"I wish I were a little sleeper," she said, at last.

But though she went to bed sleep would not come to her sweet, deep eyes, which Mr. Leicester so much admired, and they were wide open watching the moonlight as it fell upon the wall for some time.

Had they possessed the power of looking through the wall they might have seen Mr. Leicester's tall, stalwart figure where he leaned against the garden gate, smoking his before-bed cigar, and ruminating, as wakeful as herself.

As for Lady Ethel, she, too, was thoughtful; but that was nothing unusual for her. But when Lord Fitz himself, who was generally extremely talkative, leaned back in profound silence for at least the time occupied in traversing two of the six miles to Coombe Lodge, Ethel felt rather surprised.

"How quiet you are, Fitz!" she said.

"Eh! am I?" he replied, rousing. "I was thinking. I say, Ethel, what do you think of the Mildmay's?"

"I haven't thought very much about them," said Lady Ethel, and indeed she had not. "I think Violet Mildmay is very pretty."

"Isn't she!" exclaimed Lord Fitz, eagerly. "I think her the nicest girl I've seen. She's what you call a 'blue-stocking,' isn't she? One of the 'merry and wise sort,' eh, Ethel?"

"Yes, I liked what I have seen of her very much. I am glad we have met."

"Yes, so am I," said Lord Fitz. "I say, I heard Bertie and Leicester arranging a riding party; do you know if Miss Mildmay is coming?"

"I believe so," said Ethel; "yes, I am sure she is."

"Then," said his lordship, "I think I shall go."

"Of course you will, to take care of me," said Ethel, smiling.

There was a short pause, then Lord Fitz roused again with the sudden question:

"Ethel, do you think the Mildmay's are well liked?"

"Tired, in, you insupportable boy, what can you mean?" asked Ethel, with laughing bewilderment.

"Tired, in, well off, rich, you know, and all that."

"I should think so," said Lady Ethel, thoughtfully. "They have a

very beautiful place and I have heard that her father was a merchant. Oh, yes, I should think she was rich."

Lord Fitz gave a sigh of relief. "I'm glad of that," he said.

Ethel laughed. "Why should you be glad?" she said, looking at him curiously.

"Oh, never mind," said Lord Fitz, rather embarrassed. "So her father was a merchant. All those merchant fellows get rich. Look at Leicester's father, he's as rich as Croesus. I wish my governor was a merchant."

"He would be very much obliged to you for the compliment," said Lady Ethel with a smile. "For my part I am satisfied with an earldom."

"Oh!" said Lord Fitz, and as he drew a long sigh he murmured inaudibly: "So should I if it had a lot of money with it."

"That's a rum fellow, that captain," said Lord Fitz, after a pause.

"In what way?" asked Ethel. "He seemed very ordinary, very amusing, too."

"Oh, yes, he's amusing enough, as-sented Lord Fitz. "But I'm half inclined to think he's deuced sharp. He can play whist like a book, and picked up the coin like old Hawkeye at the club. But I say, Ethel, you're pretty sharp, sharper than I am, and did you notice the rum look of the captain's eyes? They seemed to be watching everybody and everything, and when he caught you looking at him they shifted down the table, and he was sure to make one of those funny speeches of his, as if he didn't want you to think he'd noticed you looking at him. And every time he lifted his winglass he looked over the top all down the table."

"No, I didn't notice all that," replied Ethel. "You are getting quite a student of human nature and manners, Fitz."

"Oh," said Fitz, nodding his curly head decisively. "You were too much taken up with Mr. Bert. I saw you, Miss Sly Boots, laughing and whispering."

"For shame, Fitz!" retorted Ethel, blushing in the darkness. "Whispering to a stranger?"

"Well, and what then?" said Lord Fitz. "And I don't wonder at any one being taken up with Bert. He knows more stories than any man in all the clubs in London, and he can tell 'em better, too. Pitty he's so poor, Ethel. Poor old Bert!"

Lady Ethel looked straight before her.

"He ought to have been a merchant or a tea grocer, or something of that sort," said Lord Fitz. "That's the way to make money."

By this time, or very shortly afterward, the carriage rolled up to the door of Coombe Lodge.

Ethel, who had not spoken since Lord Fitz's assertion that Bertie should have been a tea grocer, went straight up to Lady Lackland's room, where her mother was waiting for her.

Lord Fitz sauntered off to the billiard room, where he lighted a huge cigar and, with half-closed eyes, tried to decide upon the color of Violet's.

"I'm glad she's rich," he muttered, "very glad!"

Lady Lackland had been prevented from accompanying Fitz and Ethel by one of a series of headaches produced by the last balls of the past season, and she was now quite anxious to hear a full account of the party.

Ethel gave her a list of the guests. Lady Lackland, who was lying on a couch, raised her head with a grave look of displeasure as Ethel mentioned Bertie Fairfax's name.

"Mr. Fairfax there?" she said. "You did not tell me he was to be there, Ethel."

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"Did I not, mamma?" said Ethel, calmly. "I had forgotten it, perhaps, or did not think his expected presence of sufficient consequence. Yes, he was there."

"And this Miss Mildmay? I remember Mrs. Mildmay—quite a distinguished looking woman. Is her niece like her?"

"She is very pretty and well bred," said Ethel.

Her ladyship moved coldly, eyeing her daughter at intervals while she sat looking through the window at the moon.

"And how did the Dodson's seem? Do you like them?"

"Yes," said Ethel, "very much. It was a very pleasant party, mamma; and we have arranged another, a riding party this time. I may go, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Lady Lackland. "If Fitz goes with you—oh, yes, certainly. Mr. Leicester Dodson goes, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Ethel, "we are all going, all the young ones. Shall I stay any longer? I make your head ache more by talking."

"No, don't stay any longer," said Lady Lackland, coldly. "Before you go you will please draw that writing table near to me."

Ethel did so, kissed her mother, who returned the warm pressure of her soft, sweet lips by a cold touch with her own, and left the room.

Lady Lackland drew the table to a convenient position, and without rising wrote a note to the earl, who was still in London.

"Tell me by return," she wrote, "who and what these Dodsons are, whether they are really as rich as they are supposed to be and if I am right in letting Ethel see so much of the son. She and Fitz dined at their place, the Cedars this evening, and met a Mrs. Mildmay, Violet Mildmay, the merchant John Mildmay's daughter. I believe he left an immense fortune behind him, but I am not certain, and perhaps you can ascertain. I have not seen Fitz, but Ethel says the girl is very pretty and well bred. I am sorry to say that odious Mr. Fairfax was there also; he is staying at the Cedars."

Poor Bertie!

TO A HESITANT BRITON.

You have not gone—no doubt you have a reason: 'Tis, may be, one that all the world might know: But will you not accept a word in season?—Whilst yet you may with honour pray, you go!

How can you sleep when midnight rainstorm drenches And beats tattoo upon your window pane! Do you not dream of those in yonder trenches, Facing the foe beyond the ensanguined Aine? —F. G. Greenwood.

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Somewhere on your body? If so, attend to it at once. In Eczema—and itchy spots, whether dry and scurfy, or moist and inclined to "weep," are generally exzematous—delays are foolish, allowing the disease to spread and affect more of the good skin. Your best chance for a cure is to use Zylex, which will give almost instant relief, and if used in the earlier stages of the trouble will almost certainly greatly ameliorate the trouble. Ask your druggist about it. Price 50c. a box. Zylex Soap, 25c. a cake. ZYLEX, London.

Our Volunteers

FOUR MORE ENLIST.

Recruiting continues and four more young men came forward yesterday to join the land forces, making a total enrolment of 369, out of which 400 have passed the examination and are considered physically fit for foreign service. Those who volunteered yesterday are: James Geo. Hagen, St. Pierre; Wm. F. Foster, St. John's; Cyril O'Keefe, St. John's; Wm. J. Murphy, Conception Hr. Yesterday forenoon four platoons were taken for a march countrywards where they were given a test in reconnoitering, whilst the remainder of the contingent were put through company drill at Government House grounds. This morning the platoons will go countrywards again and resume reconnoitering work, which will be practised in sections. Good shooting was made at the Southside range yesterday.

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This Date in History.

JANUARY 15.

New Moon—15th

Days Past—14 To Come—359

BRITISH MUSEUM opened 1759. This was founded by Hans Sloane's collection, which the Government acquired for £20,000, though worth four times as much. The library to which copies of all books published in Great Britain have to be sent free, is a great treasure house of books, ancient and modern. The museum portion contains a series of invaluable collections of sculptures, antiquities, bronzes, jewels, geological specimens, rare manuscripts, and books. The Natural History Department is now separately housed at South Kensington.

HENRY LABOUCHERE died 1912, aged 81. The well-known journalist who founded "Truth." Was in Parliament 1880-1906 and was made a Privy Councillor on his retirement from active politics.

Books cannot always please, however good: Minds are not ever craving for their food. —Crabbe.

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Living Scenes in the Hospital

Father Paul Bull, in a letter superior of the Mirfield Brothers gives a long and interesting account of his experiences as a chaplain of the hospitals in France. The Church Times.

"In No. C Ward we have a German, twelve or fifteen. They first arrived our men did appreciate their coming, and said 'Hello' to them out, Sister. But the 'souvenirs' here. But the day discovered a poor German lad of seven, who could speak a few words of English, and whose brother of had been shot dead by his side, and had been shot at him; and he made a get of him; and he got into four of our men sitting on and starting at him and teaching English. (When I gave him our little crucifixes, one of the men did it on his breast, and he grateful.

Service in the Wards.

"When I arrived the men rapidly recovering from their and about 100 were able to get about; the rest were in bed whole place is continually with laughter, which in no attracts from the deep sympathy have for me another.

"The first service I held in the officers. Capt. —, of the Hussars, was reported to me dangerously ill, and he asked Celebration. So, on Thursday, Mass in the Officers' Ward. —, who was a great boxer, rider, had lost his arm. His knelt by his side for Comm and Major — had his wife with it was a most beautiful service they were all very grateful for next day! Capt. — suddenly had away, and in ten minutes had away. Everyone loved him. I day I began a daily Mass in ing room, which has been a and rich blessing to the hospital.

"To-night, at 5.30, I had a fourteen names of those who had ill handed to me. I started them till 6.15, when I took meeting of prayer and instruction Holy Communion until 7. I visited a poor German from Lorraine, who can speak French and sympathy. He has both his legs off, as he has got in both feet. Just the pathos of it—a refined and matured young man in a foreign country, amidst few people who speak his language—and with what outlook for the future.

"After dinner I returned to hospital, and found No. C Ward in a lively condition. One poor man who is dying seems to be saying 'good-bye' to all his German hours and our men are telling 'shut up' in many different languages. I announced—and men to sleep, and commend men into God's keeping; they probably be dead before morning. One poor fellow in the Regiment has not uttered a word since he was brought quietly fading away in spite has given me many grateful.

The Hero's Bible.

Describing the condition of the wounded are often received Bull says:—

"It was often difficult to what was most and what was Then we carefully popped them and covered them with blankets, ran for a cup of soup, fed them with a spoon, a cigarette into their mouths, and ran off to another special favourite was a lad, rowin-Furness, with a wounded arm. He walked to his bed, saturated his overcoat, which was being a bright red, been bleeding freely all the Journey. When we had got bed, and were turning his out of his pockets, he said: 'Bible and small book in a pocket'; so we found his Bible was as dirty as himself, and by him.

"He then showed me a list of day of lessons, and went in elaborate explanation of how the Bible portion for every thought not unfamiliar to coming strangely from this. I always hero all covered it left him, after lighting his supreme comfort, and he nicely."

STATE HELP FOR TR

Temporary Advance

We understand that the Government have under consideration a bill advancing money to business firms which find themselves temporary difficulties owing to disruption of commerce by the war. It is stated that the sum advanced for this purpose, if carried through, will amount to millions.—Daily Mail.