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Love in the Abbey
OR
Lady Ethel's Rival

CHAPTER XVIII
A SIMPLE CONFESSION.

"Forget all the rest, think only that I love you!" he says, and his arm steals round her and draws her to him in a passionate embrace. "Forget the past as I do, my darling!" he whispers. "I live but from to-day! From to-day! From this hour! Oh Kitty, if my past were but as pure and unspiced as yours. I come to you what I am, and you meet me pure as a child, innocent of guile, of the veriest shade of deception." He hesitates a moment and scans her face. "Is so, darling, is it not? You have never loved any one but me!"

For answer Kitty's arms glide upward in a caress at each inch of the way, and she steals round his neck. "I have never loved any one but you!" she whispers, looking straight into his face.

"I knew it!" he murmurs, with delight. "I knew it! Oh, it is greater happiness than I deserve! Kitty, you shall be happy! I swear it, here with my lips on yours."

Kitty's face draws back—all aglow, her heart beating fast against his; but he will not take any, and Kitty palpitates under her first kiss.

There is no place in which to hide her blushing face but on his heart, and there she must fain hide it. And how contented he is that it should be so! What tender, gentle, impassioned words he murmurs, until the whole atmosphere is so laden with love—Kitty's first love—that she almost swoons with ecstasy. Then suddenly—so suddenly that he is startled—she draws away from him, and one word leaves her now white lips:

"Ethel!"

"Ethel!" he echoes, trying to draw her to him again.

"Yes," says Kitty, staring at him with a new-born dread that is too horrible for endurance. "Ethel, Cousin Ethel! What will you do—what have you done about her?"

"What have I done about your Cousin Ethel, my darling?" he says smilingly; "what is troubling you—what have I to do with Lady Ethel?"

"What have you to do with Ethel!" repeats Kitty, open-eyed and pale. "You were to be married to her, were you not? Oh!"

And she draws a long breath of miserable doubt and suspicion as it all comes back to her.

"I—do be married to Lady Ethel!" he says, with amazement. "My darling, what absurd notion is this? Why do you go away from me—what has Lady Ethel to do with us?"

Kitty's color comes back, and her bosom heaves with a faint sigh of relief, but she looks in his face anxiously.

"It was not true, then?" she asks.

"What was not true, Kitty?" he says, dwelling on her name with a caress in the tone.

"What! That—oh, I cannot say it!" and the tears spring into her eyes—"that, that you loved Ethel, and were to marry her!"

For a moment Elliot Sterne looks as if he did not believe his ears, then he rises, and draws her to him by main force.

"Rest your sweet face here, darling," he says, with a low laugh, "while I answer you. I know not who has told you this silly fable, but there is no truth in it, came it from whence

it might. I neither love nor intend to marry your Cousin Ethel."

As he speaks there is a rustle in the path near them, and a voice says, hurriedly with agitation:

"Do not move, they will hear us!"

Then all is quiet, as if waiting for Kitty's next words.

"Then—then it was not true!" she says, with a great gulp. "Oh, how cruel it was to say so when I loved you so dearly."

"Who said so, my darling? Who told you this absurd story?" he asks, stroking her hair, and stooping until his lips touched it with a fond caress.

"No matter," she replies, "so that it is not true! Oh!" then she pauses and raises her face to his—"ever since I heard it I have been—so wretched!"

A gleam of joy and delight shines in his eyes, and, taking her face in his hand, he says:

"Now I know that you love me, Kitty, my darling!" and he kisses her once again.

A movement, a rustle among the leaves disturbs them almost unconsciously. Kitty moves away from him, and he takes her arm in his.

"My own," he says; "my beautiful little maiden! My Kitty! Let me go and see where you have lived your sweet girl life! Show me something that loves you. Where is your favorite seat—the spot you love best?"

"This is it from to-day," she says softly, looking at the old oak, and then up at his face, and then they move slowly away.

Scarcely have they gone out of sight than the bushes part and Ethel comes out from among them, and stands staring at the seat, pale and trembling. The well-dressed figure of Sydney Calthrop follows her. He, too, has nothing to boast of in the way of color, and he, too, stares in a gloomy, desperate way at the seat from which the two lovers have just risen.

Suddenly Lady Ethel turns with a well-bred hauteur which but thinly masks her fury, and confronts him.

"You knew of this! You brought me here that I might witness it!"

He turns with a start as if he had forgotten her.

"Your ladyship forgets," he says. "I met you at the gate."

"Yes," retorts Ethel, her hand clenching the dainty sunshade, and a jealous, resentful light gleaming in her usually mild eyes—"yes, I am aware of that; but it was you who proposed that we should come into the garden. You knew that—that he was here!"

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23 THE PROMENADE

Sydney Calthrop hesitates a moment, then, as if he saw denial would be thrown away, he says, in a low, determined, almost sullen voice:

"Yes, I did know it."

"Then," says Ethel, drawing a long breath through her shut teeth, and glaring at him, "why did you bring me here? I know by your face that you did it of set purpose. I ask you why?"

"Why?" he echoes, drawing nearer and speaking in a hoarse whisper. "You ask me why? Because you might not lose the game by thinking too lightly of it. Was I wrong, Lady Ethel?"

"I—I do not understand you, sir," she says, but the tone, the heaving of the dainty face upon her bosom gives the lie to her denial.

"Yes, I think you do," he says coldly, but still pale and resolute. "Forewarned is forearmed; only by seeing would you have believed; you have seen."

"I have seen an—absurd, disgusting exhibition of mawkish sentiment!" says Ethel, pausing. "What then?"

"It is for your ladyship to see that it goes no further than mawkish sentiment," he says, eyeing her steadily. "I do you think I would stretch out my hand to prevent her winning the stakes she has played so cunningly for, to undecieve the man who is so miserably duped by the pretense of girlish innocence? No! let him marry her, let him marry her! Make her Lady Sterne if he will for me. No one can prevent him."

"Yes," he says, coming closer to her and biting his pale lips, "yes, two persons can, Lady Ethel. You and I."

"You—I!" she says laughingly, then something in his set, resolute face breaks down her proud disdain and her eyes drop.

"You and I!" she repeats, plucking the delicate lace of her sunshade into tatters. "How, may I ask?"

"Give me your arm and let us get away from here," he says, with a long breath, "and I will tell you."

CHAPTER XIX
HEAVEN'S GREATEST GIFT.
ELLIOT STERNE'S arm—the right and uninjured one—is round Kitty's waist, and she is nesting against him while they are under the chestnut and among the winding paths of the kitchen garden; but when they reach the more open ground beyond, Kitty draws shyly away. Elliot Sterne looks round rather impatiently, and seeing no human cause for such withdrawal, remonstrates; but Kitty is gently firm.

"None of our maids or men are blind," she says, with a naive glance. "Then let us go somewhere where their eyes can't penetrate," he says. "This is dreamland to me, Kitty! Take me into every nook and corner you have been in. I can picture you all over this grand, old garden, the presiding spirit of the scene." And he looks fondly at the slim, graceful figure, walking so demurely by his side, with her hands clasped loosely together, and her eyes downcast under the weight of this new world of love. "I can understand the man in the poem who wished that he and his love could be cast on an uninhabited island. How would you like that, Kitty?"

Kitty looks up at him.

"How dreadfully dull and bored you would be!" she says, turning the question upon him, womanlike—"how soon you would get tired of me! I expect you would, driven to despair at last, kill me and turn cannibal!"

"Most likely," he says, gazing at her ardently—"you are tempting enough, my darling!"

"Where will you go?" she says.

"Papa—"

"I would not intrude upon Mr. Trevelyan's morning slumber for the world," he says instantly. "Let us go into—"

"The stables!" says Kitty, with an inspiration, "that is the place I am most at home in—so papa says," she adds demurely.

"So be it," he assents—"anywhere with you."

With such simple, passionate devotion are the words spoken, that Kitty's eyes glisten, and she turns aside to pluck a rose, to hide them.

"For whom is that intended?" he asks, eyeing it wistfully.

"Would you like it?" she responds, standing before him with downcast eyes.

"Offer it me, and see," he returns. Then she holds it out to him, and he takes it and presses it to his lips, looking up quickly to remark, as he fumbles at his buttonhole:

"I don't think I can fix it—do you mind?"

With an attempt at demure gravity, she places the rose in his breast, and before she can step back, he bends and kisses her, pleading, as the burning blush rises to her face:

"May I not thank you, my darling?"

"Not so warmly," says Kitty, then she laughs a low, delicious laugh and he joins in, but she keeps her distance, and does not offer to pick him another flower.

So they go, side by side, to the stables. It is surely a strange fatality that induces Kitty to keep her love frays in so unromantic a spot, and at the door she halt hesitates, to look up at the handsome face of her lover with a deprecating smile.

"Do you really care to come?" she asks, half doubtfully, half wistfully.

He nods eagerly.

"There is nothing to show you," she says, as they pass in; "nothing but Jack," she adds, with a transient gleam of pride. "We have not so many horses as they have at the Hall"—with a little sigh—"or such nice stables."

"Far better," he says, delighted with everything about him, for is it not all beautified by her presence?

"Yes, this is Jack," he says, going up to the horse; "I remember him." Kitty colors and hides her face against the horse's neck. "He is a fine fellow, and the dog—" as Poesie and his companions come bounding in, ready to eat the stranger if required, but compelled to cower by Kitty's few admonishing words.

(To be Continued.)

Sweet green peppers chopped fine and interest to scrambled eggs. Pork pie is an old New England dish which might well be revived. Coffee is the better if a drop or two of vanilla is put in each cup. Appetizers in the form of sardines are excellent luncheon dishes.

Fashion Plates.



2624—In organdie, net, dotted swiss or balise, this model will be very attractive. It may be trimmed with lace or embroidery edging, or, the free edges of bolero and sleeve, and the tucks may be finished with hemstitching. If desired, the bolero may be omitted. Vols, gabardine, gingham, poplin and rep are nice, too, for this design. As illustrated, the neck edge may be high or low, and the sleeve in bishop, bell or puff style.

The Pattern is cut in 4 sizes: 6, 8, 10 and 12 years. Size 8 requires 3 1/2 yards of 27-inch material for the dress and 1/2 yard for the bolero.

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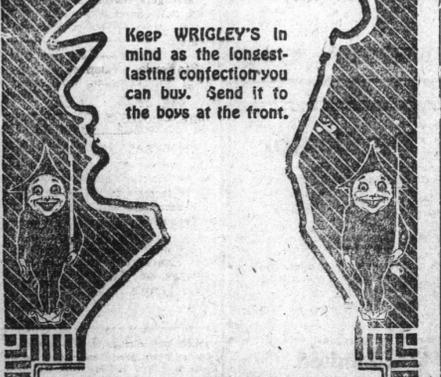
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They were the words used by Detective-Inspector Bedford, as he hinted said at Westminster Police Court, when he called upon Marie Charles, known as "Madame Charles," who was charged with fortune-telling.

Madame lives in Brompton-road, and Mr. Bedford said that on the way to the station she said, "Why don't you persecute the people who come to me Ministers of State and the highest in the land? They persecute me to do this. I don't ask them to come."

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