

# PAYING THE PRICE

BY AGNES C. MITCHELL.

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"Is he? He had better not try. He will discover he has to deal with a man who is more than a match for him, if he commences with me." Archie's tone was grandiose; James Arbuthnot, big, strong and honest, would have been justly amused had he heard it. "What a up!"

Greta entertained him to discreet selections from her mother's remarks, keeping William Howden's name well to the fore.

From the beginning of their acquaintance Mrs. Arbuthnot had known of their meetings, but all knowledge of these had been carefully kept from her husband. The honest, upright, hard-working man, who considered nothing too good for his wife or daughter, and was unremitting in his care of them, was not admitted to their confidence so far as Greta's "young men" were concerned. Once or twice gossip had reached his ears and he married there, but Greta had laughed him off when he spoke of it. Then came a circumstantial story to the effect that she had been motoring with Archie, and it had taxed her ingenuity to the full to explain that satisfactorily and keep him from interfering openly. Since then she had been very careful, but evidently some busy-body had been at work again.

Archie blushed. Greta hung to him, sweet and tender, agreeing to all he said for once, guiding him skillfully, throwing out a hint here, a suggestion there, dangling the solid, elderly William's wishes before him like a red rag before a bull. She was very much given to congratulating herself on being able to manage Archie, and she managed him to such purpose tonight that when they parted they had arranged to go to Newcastle on the following Tuesday and be married there.

"It will be a high old lady, any way," Archie said. "Wonder if I ought to get some of the chaps to go with us? Bobby Ellis would be one, so would Charlie Cleveland. We could have a jolly lunch afterward, and make a ripping day of it."

"They might not hold their tongues," Greta hazarded doubtfully. "Better

not, Archie. If we are going to steal a march on our own people, let us make everybody like. The news will be all the bigger a thunderclap when the time comes for you to tell it."

"Cause, real-honest sensation, won't it?" he chuckled. "By George, wouldn't the governor and Isobel have fits if they knew?"

He himself went off into something approaching a fit of laughter in his enjoyment of the thought, and his delight lasted until the Monday afternoon, when his courage began to evaporate. Greta, however, could not be seen that evening, and not until he met her in Newcastle the next morning had he an opportunity of hinting to her that it might not be advisable to rush into matrimony.

She listened to him calmly, in novice's disconcerted, then took him in hand firmly.

"There is to be no nonsense of this kind, Archie," she said. "You asked me to come here today to be married, and you are to marry me and make no fuss about it. Do you think I am not taking risks, too?"

"Oh, but I won't mean ruin for you!" "It will mean for me whatever it means for you—ruin or riches. You and I will share alike in what is beyond this. And why you should imagine it will bring ruin, I am sure I can't guess. Your father did not at all ways have a title, and my grandfather was as respectable as yours."

"I am not saying he was not," Archie returned gloomily, "but I am dependent on the governor, and—"

"I'll manage Sir Anthony when it is time for that," Greta declared. "You leave him to me. He can't pose as a public benefactor and condemn his only son to starvation. Come along. It is time we were getting on."

"You don't know the governor, Greta," Archie's reluctance was slowly emerging into admiration, but he still hesitated. "He will never forgive us."

"Wait till you see. We needn't suppose with a long spoon. Things will be round somehow; take my word for it. I'll be at Abbotsdale yet. And won't I live it up!"

Her confidence was infectious, and the ceremony which made them husband and wife was performed without further protest. Afterward they had lunch in the best hotel in town, and then Archie, flushed with pride of possession, hired a horse and trap and drove all the way back to Fleetmill. The afternoon was bitterly cold, the frost still held, and the air was very grim, but Archie forgot to grumble, and Greta, happy and triumphant, was in a very paradise. The visions she saw were splendid ones, and her delight knew no alloy.

Archie pulled up the horse a couple of hundred yards from her father's gate.

"If the old man says anything, tell him I'll come and take my wife away," he said, as he helped her to alight. "I'll be great off in a paroxysm of laughter. 'Oh, great Caesar! Fancy me anybody's son-in-law!'"

"You have got a father-in-law you won't have any cause to be ashamed of, at any rate," Greta said. "Good night, Archie. I shall meet you here tomorrow."

"Good night," he drew her stole closer round her throat with an air of proprietorship, and kissed her. "You look awfully fetching in those white furs, Greta! Wish I could take you right home with me and let the governor see you just as you are. 'Pon my word, I do!'"

She laughed and sped away from him. When she went into the house she found her father and mother were both out; they had gone to spend the evening with some friends, the servant told her, and she went upstairs wishing she had known sooner; she might have spent another hour with Archie quite safely.

Secure in the shelter of her own room, she executed a pas-de-seul before the mirror, and her voice rang out in one of her favorite choruses, which she had been humming very often during the past few days:

"But Molly married the Marquis! What a thing to do! She smuggled him down to the country town, And hurried the service through."

Then she nodded to the radiant, laughing reflection in the glass, "Good girl, Molly!" was her rare remark.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### Wedding Presents.

It is very selfish of you, extremely selfish, even to contemplate any such proceeding, and George thinks so, too. He could not have believed it of you, he says, if it had not been I who told him."

"Why am I selfish, Isobel? I shall give up a great deal more than I can possibly hope to gain."

"Then why give it up?" was Isobel's impatient question. "No one wants you to. I don't imagine for a moment that you can fill my place here, but you can at least make an attempt."

It was the first week in January. Before another week had run its course Isobel would be transformed into Mrs. George Courtney, and she was living in a chronic state of excitement. Wedding presents were arriving hourly; already some of the rooms were denuded of part of their furniture in preparation of the reception, the florists' men were haunting the house and the church, planning and designing schemes of decorations. The cream of Sir An-

thony's social circle had been invited, as well as a good many titled people who certainly did not seek the man himself as being in that circle, and the watchword of economy had given place to display.

Isobel's frugal mind had forbidden her indulging too lavishly in gowns or other things, but she had been induced quickly—but with a prudent eye to the newspaper description, she was making sure that the arrangements for the ceremony and the reception should be perfect. She was worrying the organist of St. Mary's nearly out of his mind, and but for Mrs. Dent's soothing and coaxing, the Abbotsdale servants would have left in a body.

Ten minutes ago she had come fussing into the morning room, where Margot was going over the role of St. Mary's Sunday school children, counting up how many would have to be entertained, and whenever she saw her face Margot knew she had a grievance. And what that grievance was Isobel had speedily made known.

Her father had mentioned casually to her that Margot might not be very long at Abbotsdale, and—after informing the Reverend George—she had hurried off to "have it out" with Margot.

"Sir Anthony has a good housekeeper," Margot contended. "You yourself say you never had a better than Mrs. Dent."

"But it is someone to look after papa I am thinking of—someone to be company to him. I must say, Margot, after all he has done for you, you are not showing much gratitude. Most girls in your position would think they could not do enough to show their appreciation, and instead of that, here you are talking of going away in some way."

"I am not saying he was not," Margot's face flushed hotly. Selfish, ungrateful, dishonorable!—and unable to hide her love for a man who had forgotten her. Would people have any good at all to say of her by-and-by, she wondered.

"Papa is far from well, and the thought of your going is making him worse," Isobel rasped on. "I saw that when he spoke of it—he is quite worried over it."

"I should not like to think any intentions have anything to do with his being unwell, Isobel. It is not at all likely that he can care so much."

"Oh, but he does. Papa isn't the man he used to be, and he has got into the way of letting trifles irritate him." She paused, studied the sweet face narrowly for a minute, then spoke in a tone that had less asperity in it. "Won't you abandon the idea altogether, Margot? You will relieve all our minds if you do, and you know you won't be doing any more than your duty if you stay."

"No—I suppose I will not," Margot spoke wearily, as if she had grown tired of struggling. "I was not going at once in any case," she said, thinking of Conyngham, still closed up. "Perhaps I shall go at all now. What does it matter, after all? I may as well be here as anywhere else."

"Then you will stay?" Isobel exclaimed eagerly.

"I may. I will think of it again. Let me finish this register now."

"I will go and tell George," said Isobel. A little later Margot had another interruption. Mrs. Dent was the intruder this time, and the girl looked at her in surprise when she beheld that her errand was the same as Isobel's had been.

"I overheard the master and Miss Garrick speaking of your going, and I could not rest till I had asked you if it was true. The housekeeper said, nervously fingering the folds of her dress, 'Miss, I hope it isn't—I hope you won't go.'"

"Why?" Margot asked.

"Your place is here, if you will excuse me saying so. The woman was evidently battling with some emotion; her words came jerkily. 'It isn't for you to go and work for yourself—you have as much right as anybody to be in this house.'"

"Scarcely," Margot smiled faintly. "However, I may not go after all. I half promised to change my mind. Mrs. Dent, are you crying? Whatever is the matter?"

The housekeeper had put her handkerchief to her eyes. Margot drew it away.

"Is that on account of my going—or staying?" she queried, with a tremulous smile. "Why Mrs. Dent, you will make me concede if you all seem to care so much! I shall have to remain, willy-nilly, just to please you."

She told Sir Anthony that evening she was willing to relinquish her intention of leaving Abbotsdale if he still desired her to do so, and the flash of relief that showed in his face went far to convince her that Isobel had been right and that her proposed departure must have weighed upon his mind. Isobel also was relieved.

"You know I have always had the fear that papa might marry again should he ever get his head out of the head of his household. The way why I was so dreadfully afraid you might go away," the future Mrs. Courtney explained. "He thinks his position requires a lady to go with him and do the honors of the house when needed."

That's nonsense, of course, doesn't entertain so very often, but still it's a dangerous belief, so far as Archie and I are concerned. It would be almost unfair of him to take a second wife while we were always counted on getting his money between us. George would be highly displeased."

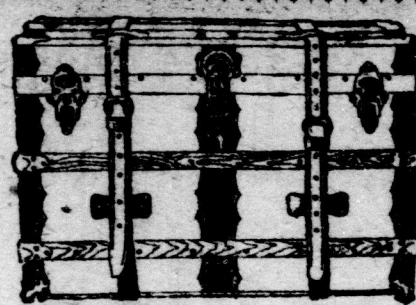
Margot said nothing. She might have spared herself the momentary conceit of imagining she was wanted for her own sake, she thought bitterly.

She was early astir on the morning of the wedding day, and was giving some touches to the flowers on the breakfast table, when the letters were brought in. There were none for her; Tom was her only correspondent, and he did not write often, but there was quite a pile for Isobel, including two or three packages. Margot smiled across at the maid as she deposited the collection beside Isobel's plate.

"More presents, Ellen?" she said. "It looks like it, miss. They are late enough."

## To Be Continued.

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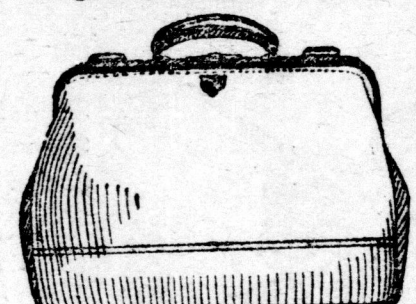
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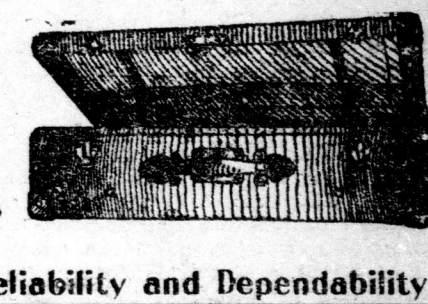
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Waterproof Canvas-Covered Iron-Bound Trunks, hardwood slats, brass lock and trimmings, set up tray, covered hat compartment, two sole-leather straps. Regular price, \$6.00. Sale price .....	\$3.69	Ladies' Dolphin Grain Hand Bags, black and brown, moreen lining. Regular price 75c, \$1.00 and \$1.25. Sale price, 53c, 47c and .....	39c
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Many Canadians Prominent in the Business Life of Los Angeles.

Toronto, Jan. 8.—Inspector Hughes returned to the city on Tuesday from a trip to California, where he addressed the State Teachers' Association at Santa Cruz, and the Southern Teachers' Association of California at Los Angeles. He reports that many of the leading men in Los Angeles are Canadians.

Mr. Geo. J. Cochrane, son of the Rev. George Cochrane, formerly of Toronto, is president of the Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Company, and is a member of the board of directors of 56 leading financial institutions. Mr. Letts, formerly on the staff of one of the Toronto drygoods stores, owns two large departmental stores in Los Angeles, and is one of the wealthiest men in the city.

Mr. Wells, general manager of the Santa Fe Railway, was a Guelph boy, and his brother is general manager of the Salt Lake Railroad. The general passenger agent of the Santa Fe is Mr. Byrne, formerly of Hamilton. The largest jewelry store in the west is owned by Montgomery Bros., who formerly lived in Woodstock. A great many other successful Canadians reside in Los Angeles, among them being Mr. Bruce Williamson, formerly of Bowmanville; Mr. Howland, from Is-

lington; Mr. Winstanley and Mr. W. E. Watson, of Toronto.

The Canadians in San Bernardo have a Canadian Club which owns its own hall.

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