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After the Ball ;
 OR,
The Mystery Solved at Last.

CHAPTER X.
 A Rash Bet.

"Nonsense, nonsense!" retorted Mr. Gregson, slowly relapsing into his old manner at the warmth of Sir Fielding's apology. "Bulls are bulls. He didn't do much harm, and if he had, I suppose that wouldn't be any reason why one gentleman should forget himself in regard to another. I'm about sure if one of my cattle had got into your grounds, you would have acted something after the same style."

Sir Fielding colored slightly, for he had a shrewd suspicion that Mr. Gregson's bull, had it trespassed on the Chichester grounds, would have gone into the pound; therefore, he thought it safest to bow.

"Just so," exclaimed Mr. Gregson. "Do as you'd be done by, is my motto, and always has been since I first started in life. I commenced on that principle, and went along on that principle, and I'm going on it now," and he brought his heavy fist down upon a paper-mache table with sufficient force to make Sir Fielding jump and Chudleigh smile.

"A very good principle," said Sir Fielding, his soft, well-bred voice presenting a marked contrast to the burly one just silent. "With such a principle, a man should prosper."

"And I have prospered, Sir Fielding," replied Mr. Gregson, looking around with a defiant air. "I have prospered. I began life with two-and-fourpence half-penny in my pocket, and here I am with—well, it doesn't matter how much. I'm content. I've worked hard but uprightly. This hand may be hard, but it's honest," and Mr. Gregson flourished his right hand before him with a decided shake of the head, while Sir Fielding muttered beneath his breath:

"It is hard."

"I've worked my own way, sir, I may say unhelped, unaided. I've known what hardship is; but hardship and misfortune don't hurt a man; it's luxury and ignorance, extravagance and vice, as ruins a man, and that's what England is coming to."

Mr. Gregson having delivered his opinion, emphasized by another bang on the unoffending table, sat down. Sir Fielding smiled.

"Your life must have been an interesting one," said Sir Fielding. Then, turning to the window, and anxious to change, or rather avoid, a continuance of the subject, he said: "That is a fine position for your fruit trees."

"Yes, very good," said Chudleigh. "Miss Gregson tells me that their gardener got the prize at the last show."

"Three prizes," said Miss Lavinia, modestly.

"Dear me!" said Sir Fielding, who, within his heart, had cherished the

idea that no plums could compare with the Chichester.

"Would you like to walk around?" said Mr. Gregson, and, Sir Fielding assenting, the three gentlemen made their way into the conservatories. Sir Fielding was astounded at their magnitude and appointments.

"This is very beautiful," he said, with admiration.

"That arrangement for the firs is a splendid improvement," said Chudleigh. "Maud's ferns would be improved if she adopted this plan."

Mr. Gregson looked pleased.

"Well," he said, "they are nice, I suppose. They ought to be, for they cost a mint of money—a mint of money," and he shook his head slowly. "But there; I don't mind; it's a whim of my daughter's, and they never have a wish ungratified. 'Papa,' they say, 'I want a conservatory; I want a new pony; I want a set of brilliants.' They have them. Conservatory, ponies, brilliants—no matter what they ask for, they get it."

Sir Fielding murmured something, which sounded like: "Indulgent father, value of money," and they descended the steps on to the lawn.

As they did so, Mr. Hartfield appeared, coming around the corner, exquisitely dressed in a loose morning coat of purple velvet, perfectly fitting pearl-gray trousers and a deer-stalker that set off his golden hair to perfection.

Arranging his eyeglass, Mr. Hartfield lounged forward, and with a noiseless laugh of delight, shook hands.

"Ah, Sir Fielding, delightful morning, is it not? Ah, Mr. Chichester, can you play racket? Yes? Give me a game, eh? em! Points? Oh, deuced bad player, I assure you. Mr. Gregson—Tom, I mean—beats me frightfully. Ah, by Jove! here is Mr. Gregson," he added, as Tom Gregson, in a brown cutaway coat, light trousers and horse-looking deerstalker, emerged from the racket hall.

"Mr. Chichester, Mr. Gregson. If you want any information about the next handicap, Mr. Chichester, Mr. Gregson's the man. He knows a horse when he sees it. No, no; I don't mean that. I should have said that he's a most excellent judge of horses. Eh, Tom, eh?"

Mr. Thomas Gregson looked half sorry, half complimented.

"I am not a bad judge of a horse," he admitted. "Coming to have a game, Mr. Chichester? Fine game. I'll bet you what you like there is not a healthier sport, except hunting, going."

Chudleigh shook his head.

"I am very sorry," he said. "I must return with Sir Fielding."

Sir Fielding and Mr. Gregson had gone on to the stables.

The three younger men followed them, and Chudleigh talking all the time, and managing imperceptibly to cover Mr. Tom's occasional remarks with his frequent "Eh, eh?" and striving, so it seemed to Chudleigh, who being jealous of the exquisite, was naturally suspiciously keen-eyed, to pass the meeting over pleasantly.

"Hello, here's the governor," said Tom, entering the first stable. "Look

here, Mr. Chichester, I can show you a good bit of horseflesh. What do you think of that?" and with a knowing look he pulled the cloth off a showy-looking animal. "That's a good one to look at, eh? How do you do, sir?" he added, turning to Sir Fielding, who at that moment entered.

Sir Fielding shook hands with him, and stood to look at the horse.

"A splendid creature," said Chudleigh, with honest admiration. "Rather a tough one, is it not? It's ears look suspicious."

"Tough!" repeated Mr. Tom; "I should guess she is, too. I'll bet there is not a nastier-tempered animal in the county. Have a spin around?" and he jerked his head at the courtyard.

Chudleigh was a good horseman, and did not know what fear was, but it struck him that it would be scarcely wise to get a broken head or a damaged nose simply to contribute to Mr. Tom Gregson's amusement, so he declined.

"Quite right, sir; you're quite right," said Mr. Gregson, senior. "Tom's an idiot with horses, a perfect idiot. This animal, sir, is a beast. Knew it the moment I saw it, but my son insisted upon purchasing it, and consequently there's a hundred guineas gone in a kicking machine," and he waved his hand in denunciation at the obnoxious quadruped, who, by its fidgeting to and fro, seemed to understand the lavish condemnation passed upon her.

"Oh, she ain't so bad as all that," said Tom. "Look here. Bob says he can't mount her, says she kicks him off as soon as he's on. Now, I say it's his fault. What does he let her kick him off for, when once he's on? Look here, Hartfield; I'll bet you two to one in guineas I mount her and keep her as still as a statue without a kick to the bad."

Mr. Gregson opened his mouth, pretty widely, too; but Clarence Hartfield's voice stopped the abuse, or whatever was coming, by drawing: "Done, by Jove! and twelbe, if you like."

"I'll double it," said Tom, without hesitation, and telling one of the grooms to come and saddle her. It was hard work for the man, but after a great deal of backing, kicking, hoisting and other gymnastics, the saddle was slipped on and all ready.

Chudleigh and Sir Fielding looked on with some little astonishment. To mount the horse alone would be a matter of no little danger, and they had not given Mr. Tom Gregson credit for courage.

"All ready, sir," said the groom, touching his cap.

"Then take her out into the yard."

"Yard, sir?" muttered the groom, interrogatively; "not the paddock?"

"Yard, yard, I said," replied Tom. "Beg pardon, sir," said the groom, with whom Mr. Tom, through similarity of tastes, was a favorite. "I was thinking of the stones."

"Then you shouldn't think of the stones," retorted Tom. "Go and do as you're told."

The man led the horse out. The animal was as quiet as a lamb, but with her ears laid well back, and her eyes leering viciously.

"Don't you think you'd better try the paddock, Mr. Gregson?" said Sir Fielding, mildly. "A fall on those stones would be dangerous."

"But I'm not going to fall, sir," said Tom. "Besides, the bet was for the yard, and I'll stick to it."

"Don't be foolish," growled his father.

But to this mild exhortation Mr. Tom made no reply, and followed by the others, walked into the yard.

The moment he approached the horse it reared on its hind legs, then coming down with an ominous crash, struck out behind.

"I'm off the bet, Tom, if you like," said Mr. Hartfield. "You'll break your neck!"

"I'll treble it, if you like," retorted Tom.

"No; it's wobbling you," said Clarence, shaking his head.

"All right," said Tom. And taking his whip from the groom, he, with a sudden spring, vaulted onto the saddle, and, holding the bridle with a grasp of iron, gave the beast a good slash across its skin.

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Off she went across the yard like a thunderbolt, then made a sudden stop and an attempt to raise her heels, but with another slash, and a peculiar turn of the hand, her rider got her mouth well under, and she stood still.

"Keep a lookout, sir," cried one of the grooms, as the beast, perfectly astounded, laid back her ears right along her neck.

"Confound you! mind your own business," shouted Tom, irately, and the groom slunk away.

"Now, then," cried Tom, "she's to stand three minutes."

And with a lash of the merciless whip again, he brought her, with a leap, into the center of the yard.

Then, stroking her neck but in no whit lessening the strain on the bit, he kept her motionless almost as a statue, and, as Chudleigh cried out the third minute, he leaped to the ground, with a grin.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Clarence Hartfield, assuming, with the aid of his eyeglass, a look of astonishment that was perfectly ridiculous, although he had known that the feat would be performed. "Tom, you are a w-wonder. Here's the m-money; and the twick was worth it, eh, Sir Fielding?"

"Beautifully done," assented Sir Fielding, with genuine admiration, adding, to Tom, whom he regarded with very different eyes to those which acknowledged his greeting: "If you would do me the favor to look over the stables at the hall, Mr. Gregson, I think you would find one or two animals there that would interest you."

"You are very kind," said Tom, candidly. "I should be glad to come. To tell the truth, I'm fond of horses—"

"Too fond," muttered his father, who, though proud of his son's achievement, could not miss an opportunity of growing at him.

"And I'm glad to make the acquaintance of a strange one now and then," he continued.

"Then come over to the hall, by all means," said Chudleigh. "I have just bought a new hack; perhaps you would be kind enough to give me your opinion of him. Will to-morrow suit you?"

(To be Continued.)

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War News
 Messages Received Previous to

NO CHANGE IN S

PA

The Central Committee ship owners informed Press to-day that the submarine policy will change whatever in France.

PRISONERS TAKEN

PETROGRAD. A Russian official from the front says that 100 prisoners were taken during fighting of Tuesday in the region. One cannon and guns were also captured.

An advance by Russian Kálnzin, on the northern Russian front, is announced by the War Office. The advance follows: In the sector of the high road has been held of the enemy. Our

withstanding asphyxiating were frost and obstinate by the enemy, re-occupied trenches. Three attack positions east of the northern end of the front were reported last war office also announced.

GERMAN NOTE CAUSING AND SENNAT

LONDON. Although the German a surprise and produced among the public and there is reason to believe in the inner circles of the Allies were aware of what was had considered to be taken. The second

ference held here, at the Corst, the Italian Minister Admiral Lacaze, the French Minister, and other representatives of the Allied nations took stood to have gone over to the German side of the

information available at was that Germany would justify as justification for naval warfare, and that to be employed would take of a blockade of British

northern coast of France. The German declaration of a strictest war at sea has found sensation in English

terrest centres on the neutral maritime nations. The decision of the United

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