

# HALIBURTON'S ENTRANCE INTO GOOD SOCIETY

BY WM. HAMILTON OSBORNE

WHEN Lord Southdown died, his surviving family was the center at once of that typical tragedy of English life that springs from the genteel habit of entailing properties.

The instant that the breath left his body, he and his were immediately stripped of the title to the famous Southdown estates in land. For these vast estates had been conferred by some ancestor upon Lord Southdown and upon his heirs male.

Heirs male he lacked, and while his soul was fluttering away, the title to the lands hovered for an instant in the air and then swooped down upon a distant relative—some remote Southdown unknown even to the late incumbent.

Lord Southdown was not childless, for he left behind him the Honorable Peggy Southdown, fair, slender, and some nineteen years of age. And he left also his worthy sister, the Honorable Carolina Southdown, a gentle spinster of resource and tact. But when this gentle spinster began to realize, as she did soon after her brother's death, that her brother's entire wealth was now the property of someone else, her tact and her resource seemed incontinently to abandon her. However, she kept the news from her fair and slender niece.

"If it were not for Peggy," she kept exclaiming to herself, "I would not mind. I could get along. But Peggy—" With a mist floating before her eyes the tender-hearted spinster watched her young niece as she swung along the green.

"We certainly must do something," wailed Aunt Carolina to herself. "What can we do—what can we do? Poor Peggy. She'll know it all too soon. I must keep it from her while I can."

One day the Honorable Carolina was exceedingly befuddled to receive a formal looking package by post. When she had opened it, however, she uttered a sigh of relief. It was a brief note from the London solicitors of the new Lord Southdown stating that his client would refrain from

demanding possession of his estates until some time during the middle of the summer.

"Thank goodness!" ejaculated Aunt Carolina, "this gives us plenty of time to turn around. And now I must get my wits together and arrange some plan of action."

Lady Carolina was good at arranging anything, and she was past mistress in the art of planning, but the present situation put her to it beyond any experience that she had ever had. Aunt Carolina was not a woman with an immobile face, and though she told herself that she was keeping her secret well and safely from the Honorable Peggy, this same Peggy finally put two and two together.

"Poor Aunt Carolina," she said to herself when she found it out, "what will she ever do?"

Now, on a certain memorable day in her career, Aunt Carolina shut herself up in her rooms in the east wing, and surreptitiously untied a bundle. When she did so, every daily paper in the Kingdom fell out of it, and Aunt Carolina began her systematic search for profitable and dignified employment. In the very first paper she tackled a small notice in a corner attracted her attention. She read it through and then gasped with horror.

"Dear me," she exclaimed, "that any gentlewoman would so demean herself. Wait, let me read that over again." Then, after reading it, she shook her head.

"No, no," she exclaimed, "that would never, never do. I could never do it, and if Peggy ever found it out—"

She continued her perusal, but ever and anon she returned to that small notice.

"I wonder if it would be so bad," she reasoned. "Perhaps I could manage to keep it from Peggy after all. And I could tell her that—that they were—were distant cousins, or old school friends—or anything." She glanced about uncertainly. "It is just awful to think of it, but why not, after all. Needs must when—when there's Peggy to be considered. And we'll have