



**The Foundation of Good Cookery**

Add a Spoonful of **BOVRIL**

*It makes the whole dish more nourishing.*

**Sweet Eva!**

CHAPTER XLII.

"You'd better sit down a minute and get cool," he said, breathlessly. Peter dropped into a chair and hid his face. He had gone through a great deal since parting with his sister that morning, and he was shaken with hysterical emotion.

Philip went out into the hall. He stood at the foot of the stairs and called to his wife.

"Eva! There was no answer, and he went up the stairs two at a time and knocked at her door.

The maid to whom he had spoken downstairs came to him.

"Mrs. Winterdick is not in her room, sir—she's not in the drawing-room, either—I've looked everywhere."

Philip frowned. He opened the door of his wife's room and switched on the light. The room was empty, but the bed was disordered a little where she had been lying, and the frock she had worn at dinner that night lay in a heap by the dressing-table just as it had fallen from her.

"She must be in the house somewhere—ask—no, wait; I'll go myself."

He went downstairs with a faint sense of apprehension at his heart. She must be somewhere about, of course—he went straight to his mother.

"I can't find Eva—isn't she with you?"

"I haven't seen her since dinner—she went to her room, she looked ill, but she insisted that there was nothing the matter," Mrs. Winterdick rose. "Is anything wrong, Philip?"

"No, but Peter Dennison is here and wants her."

He went out again. He stood for a moment in the hall, not knowing what to do; the maid came down the stairs to him.

"I think Mrs. Winterdick must have gone out, sir—her hat and coat are not in her room."

"Of course!" He drew a breath of relief. "I forgot! She said she should

go home this evening. I'll walk over and meet her."

He rejoined Peter.

"Eva's gone over to your place, I'll walk back with you and meet her." He looked at his brother-in-law for a moment in silence; then he said impulsively: "Look here, Peter, if there's anything—well, I'd much rather have it now and done with it. All this has been a shock to you; I'm sorry—I'd give a great deal to be able to undo my share in it. . . . But it's no use getting things all mixed up, you know—Eva knew—there wasn't any—dirty trick played on her as you say there was, though—though I suppose that's not my fault," he added bitterly.

Peter looked up; his face was distorted with grief and passion.

"It's not true," he said vehemently. "She didn't know! She may have told you so, but it's not the truth. . . . and I've been so rotten to her—only this morning—and last night. . . . and she's always been such a brick to me. . . ." he added brokenly.

Philip took a step forward laying his hand on Peter's shoulder.

"What do you mean—that she didn't know?" he asked in a queer voice. "Why do you insist that she didn't know?"

"I ought not to tell you—she made me promise—but I must now—I must! It was the day you were married—after we came back from church, I went upstairs to hurry her—you were waiting. . . ."

Peter broke down for a moment, then struggled on again.

"Something had happened—something dreadful—I don't know what it was, and she wouldn't tell me. . . . but she looked as if someone had stabbed her—she clung to me and cried. . . . I shall never forget her face as long as I live," added poor Peter brokenly.

Philip swallowed hard; he walked away and came back again.

"Yes, but—but that's nothing," he said with an effort. "If that's all. . . ."

"But it isn't! It isn't! . . . Afterwards, when you'd both gone, we found her veil—her wedding veil—she'd torn it in two—it looked as if it had been trampled on; and her flowers—the flowers you gave her—she'd thrown them across the room; they were all broken and bruised." Peter rose to his feet, his hands clenched, as if he hardly knew what to do with himself. "I believe it was only then that she knew—she insisted wretchedly. 'I don't know why I think so, but I'm sure—I'm sure! She's hidden it ever since; she's never let anyone know—she's laughed and pretended—that's so like Bonnie. . . . She wouldn't even tell me—and I've asked her ever so many times. Then—last night—I told her I was ashamed of her because of Calligan."

"Calligan!" said Philip savagely. Peter rounded on him.

"It's been decent to her, anyway," he said hotly. "And that's more than we have—you and I!"

There was a little silence; then Philip took Peter's hat from the chair where he had thrown it down and handed it to him.

"Come along—we'll go and find her," he said.

They went out into the darkness together; they walked fast and neither of them spoke till as they reached the Dennisons' house. Philip said in a strangled voice—

"Supposing she isn't here?" The fear had been growing in his heart all the way, the words seemed forced from him.

"Of course she's here," said Peter

irritably. He opened the door with his key, and Philip followed him in.

The house was very quiet; Peter looked into two of the rooms.

"I know the gov'nor's in, anyway," he said brusquely. "I only left him to come to you."

Peter went upstairs and found Mr. Dennison in his wife's boudoir listening with an air of boredom to her complaints because she chose to think that the vicar's wife had deliberately cut her that afternoon.

"Well, what's it matter if she did?" he was saying tartly as Peter opened the door. "I'll stop my subscription to the church; I'll—" He broke off.

Peter spoke:—

"Where's Bonnie? Philip's downstairs He wants her."

Mrs. Dennison answered him frostily:—

"She hasn't been here—hasn't even troubled to come and see her own mother, after all these weeks. You would have thought that my only daughter—"

Peter went out again.

"We must have missed her on the road," he told Philip. "She hasn't been here. What are you going to do? Wait, or—"

"I'm going back," Philip was already at the door. Peter followed.

Philip walked at such a rate it was all Peter could do to keep pace with him. Presently he asked a breathless question:—

"What's the hurry? Here, that's not the way."

"I'm going to the station first."

"Station! But—"

He asked no more questions. He felt instinctively that something was desperately wrong. He stood by anxiously while Philip questioned a porter:—

"Has the first train gone to town?"

"Yes, sir."

Philip glanced at his watch.

"When's the first one in the morning?"

"Nothing till the nine-five, sir."

Philip turned away. Peter caught a glimpse of his face in the yellow lamp outside, and a sudden nameless fear shot through him; but nothing was said till they were in the road again; then Philip broke out hoarsely:—

"Look here—I'm going to run. I've got to get up to town to-night. There's no train, so I shall take the car. You can come if you like, but make up your mind quickly." Peter's mind was made up already.

"I'll come he said briefly.

They raced back through the dark lanes; they were panting and breathless when they reached the Highway House; Philip paused a moment; he was sick with fear and dread; Peter glanced at him and broke out:—

"She may be here—let me go and see first."

"Very well—but I know she isn't—I'll get the car."

He went off round to the garage; a moment later Peter rejoined him.

"Well—well?" Philip asked.

Peter shook his head. They took the car round to the front door; Philip went in for a moment to find his mother; he explained hurriedly.

"I'm going up to town—with Eva." He dared not tell her the truth; he gripped her hand for a moment. "It's all right—don't ask any questions, there's a dear, and don't worry." He kissed her and was gone; a moment later he and Peter were racing towards London.

The little car seemed to fly over the road; Philip was driving recklessly without being in the least conscious of it; they had gone some miles before Peter spoke:—

"Where are you going—to the flat?"

"No."

Presently Peter tried again.

(To be continued.)



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**SIDE TALKS.**  
By Ruth Cameron.

**THE OLD MAID AND HER CAT.**

Do you think there is anything funny about an old maid who is devoted to her cat?

Or anything that should arouse criticism? I don't. I think the criticism belongs to the people who think there is something funny about that devotion.

There was a time when insane people were thought ideal butts for jokes. We don't think so now. Some day we will realize that the suppressed desire represented by the unmarried woman's devotion to a cat or dog or a cause is touching rather than amusing or objectionable.

Of course someone is always ready to say that the unmarried woman should do something for humanity instead of lavishing her love on a cat. I have known very few unmarried women who were not devoted to their nieces and nephews, if they had any, and who did not give generously of their time and strength and money to the Church or some other institution for humanity's benefit. But doing that does not prevent one's wanting

outlet of some of the mother love that lacks its normal object.

And now since we are on the verge of the subject one word on the attitude so common on the part of mothers toward the women who are married and are not mothers.

**Why Should She Be Bitter?**

Why is it that the mother who has, as she would be the first to admit, the greatest blessing that the world can bring a woman, so often feels a kind of bitterness for the woman who has no children?

Why doesn't she feel pity and sympathy instead? It is they who are losing the beautiful things of life, not she.

Furthermore, why does she always assume that the barrenness is a matter of choice. And even when it is, why does she not pity them for the dreadful mistake they are making—these women who are afraid of life.

**They Should Know.**

Just this morning a letter came to me from a married woman, mother of several children, in which the finest spirit was shown on everything except this one subject. When she touched on it she became almost venomous. And I have often heard mothers talk in this critical, almost bitter vein of the childless wives of their acquaintance.

Of course there are plenty of women who have deliberately preferred a life of greater ease and luxury to the joys of motherhood. But surely you who know these joys are the ones who know best the folly of their mistake and therefore should know best how to pity them.

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