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The Mystery of Rutledge Hall

"The Cloud With a Silver Lining"

CHAPTER XVII.

"I mean just that," he said, coolly, looking up suddenly and glancing from Dolly's eager, puzzled, smiling face to Sidney's, so pale and startled.

"What fun?" cried Dolly, gaily.

"How did he serenade? Had he a guitar? Whose window did he look at? I should think it was Lord de la Poer serenading you, Sidney!"

Sidney forced a smile to her pale lips; the suspense and uncertainty were almost more than she could bear. What had he seen? What had he heard? What was he going to say next? She felt ill and giddy in her terror, but struggled desperately against the feeling of faintness which increased every moment, and to which she dared not yield. If she were to swoon now, they would have to suspect something, and this keen-eyed barrister's suspicions for her suspected her undoubtedly—would become certainties. Her long, sleepless night had made this more of an effort than her strength was quite equal to; but she gathered up all her courage, and, when she spoke, her voice was as quickly as usual, but very low.

"Serenading me! Is that likely, Dolly, when you are here?" she said.

"Besides, the Earl plays no instrument, I think. Mr. Milner is the only friend we have able to serenade us."

"The serenading was poetical license," the young barrister interposed, lightly. "My gay cavalier" did not serenade. He waited silently for his lady to appear."

"And did she come?"

"Yes, at last," he answered, smiling. "She was not very punctual; but he was patient, and his patience was rewarded."

"Did you see her?" asked Dolly eagerly.

"Oh, yes!" he answered. "Did I not tell you that the moon was shining? But, how charming her silver light may be for legitimate love-rambles, it is not equally desirable for stolen interviews."

"This is becoming interesting," said Miss Daunt, smiling. "Stephen, do you hear?"

Stephen glanced up from his letter abstractedly.

"I hear a great deal of chatter," he answered, smiling. "What is it all about?"

"Do you allow lovers' meetings in your grounds at midnight?" she asked, demurely. "Because Mr. Milner was the reluctant witness of one last night."

"What does this made-up mean?" Stephen inquired, turning to his friend. "Is she talking nonsense? Did you see anything unusual in the grounds last night?"

"Something very unusual," was the laughing reply. Then Milner's tone changed to one of swift alarm. "Mrs. Daunt, is anything the matter? Are you ill?"

Three pairs of startled inquiring eyes went swiftly to the head of the table. Sidney had risen, and was supporting herself by one hand upon the table and the other on the back of the chair from which she had risen. She was pale to ghastliness, her eyes were half closed, and she seemed on the point of fainting. In an instant Stephen was by her side, but with almost equal rapidity she rallied.

"It is nothing—nothing," she declared, forcing a smile. "It is so close this morning that the heat made me feel faint. I am sorry to have startled you, Stephen," she added, tremulously, her little fingers closing involuntarily over the strong hand which held hers; "but it is nothing. Indeed I am quite myself now."

She resumed her seat at the table, trying to ignore her husband's anxious eyes, and those other inquiring eyes which were so much more unpleasant to meet and so much more difficult to avoid, and waited tremulously for the conversation to continue; but her sudden illness had been effective in silencing it, and when her companions spoke again, they had changed the subject.

Breakfast was over at last; the two young men had left the table, and were glancing over separate sheets of the local newspapers; Dolly, in her dainty seal-brown gown, was looking out of the window with a wistful look in her pretty blue eyes. In Sidney's troubled brain the thought was how she was to get to Lymouth alone and unaided. She must be doubly cautious now. Ah; why had such a cruel fate brought Lloyd Milner to Easthorpe at this juncture?

"Don't you think a drive would do you good, Sidney?" her husband said presently, throwing aside the newspaper that he had been reading. "You look very pale this morning."

"My head aches too much to go out," she answered petulantly. "But" eagerly—"there is no need for Dolly to stay at home. I shall do very well alone."

Dolly made a feeble protest, her blue eyes denying her words.

"I shall be better alone," Sidney said eagerly, repenting of her eagerness the next moment when she discovered Lloyd Milner's eyes fixed upon her over his newspaper.

"But I am afraid Dolly is not to be trusted with your ponies, Sidney," said Stephen, glancing at his sister and smiling.

Sidney looked blank. She must have done herself, to drive to Lymouth.

"No," she said dubiously; "but Lady Gollightly will carry Dolly beautifully, and she would not be long changing her dress."

"Oh, that will be too delightful!" Dolly cried enthusiastically. "Don't say 'No,' Stephen. I promise I shall not want to follow. I will come home with the groom as soon as I have seen the meet."

"Of course, if Sidney likes to trust you with Lady Gollightly, I am quite willing," the young man answered lightly. "Milner may take the responsibility of your care upon his shoulders if he likes."

"Will you, Mr. Milner?" Dolly asked demurely. "I won't be a very great nuisance, I promise you."

"I think I can bear the infliction for once," was the grave answer, while the pleasant gray eyes frankly showed their delight at the proposal; and Dolly hastened away to put on her habit just as the horses were brought round.

Sidney breathed a sigh of relief; when once they were gone, she would be free for a few hours—and she had plenty of work before her. On looking into her purse that morning, she had found that her supply of money was very small, amounting to merely a few pounds; she must therefore go and cash a check before going to Lymouth. This would entail a drive into Ashford, which was the only difficulty—for Stephen's liberality had made his wife a rich woman, able to draw checks without much fear of overdrawing her banking account. Of course it would require time, and she had not much between this and twelve o'clock. She glanced at the timepiece it was nearly ten. The meet was at half-past ten; but Cotley was but three miles from Easthorpe.

"You are quite sure you will not be dull?" Dolly said, coming into the room, looking distractingly pretty in her dark blue habit and coquettish riding-hat. "It seems so selfish to leave you, Sidney."

"Not at all," Sidney answered, with almost feverish eagerness. "I shall enjoy being alone. And—Dolly, don't hurry back on my account. If you think you would like to go to Lambwold, pray do; I shall not be dull."

"You seem awfully anxious to get rid of me," pouted Dolly. "I believe you have some desperate design on hand, Madam Sidney."

"Ah, how cruel the hot blood was that it rose so redly in her pale cheeks at Dolly's laughing heedless words! Sidney glanced nervously at Mr. Milner; but he was settling Dolly's habit, and did not see the hot, vivid blush, or Sidney thought he did not, as she watched them ride away, the slender girlish figure between the two red-coated ones, leaving her free to keep her promise to Frank Greville—a promise which was to cost her very dear. Hardly had the horses disappeared down the avenue than she had rung the bell, ordered her pony-carriage to be brought round with as little delay as possible, and was donning her outdoor attire with nervous little fingers which almost defeated their own haste, uneasily haunted the while by the strangely questioning, meaningful look in Lloyd Milner's gray eyes. What had he seen? What did he suspect?

Sidney would have started on her mission with yet more trepidation if those questions had been truly answered, and if she could have known the result of that morning's ride.

"I'm awfully sorry I said anything about the nocturnal apparition," Lloyd Milner said confidentially to Dolly, as they rode side by side behind Stephen in a lane which was a short cut to Cotley, and which was too narrow to allow them to ride three abreast.

"Why?" asked the girl, looking up in some surprise from under the brim of her dainty riding-hat.

"I am afraid I alarmed Mrs. Daunt," he answered.

"Oh, dear, no! Sidney is not so absurdly nervous," remarked Dolly confidently, with a smile of superior knowledge. "You do not really mean that you think that made her ill this morning?"

"I fancied so."

"Oh, then you are quite mistaken," declared Miss Daunt, nodding her wise golden head. "She does not seem very well, I think," she added, in a minute.

"There has been so much visiting and going about lately that she is tired out, I dare say; and the winter always tries Sidney."

(To be continued.)



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CARNATION BREAD

1 1/2 cups water, 2 cups Carnation Milk, 2 teaspoons salt, 2 tablespoons cornstarch, 2 cups flour, 1 cake compressed yeast, 2 teaspoons sugar. Measure the salt, sugar and cornstarch into a mixing bowl. Add the milk and water. When lukewarm add the yeast and mix thoroughly. Then add the flour gradually. When stiff enough to handle, turn the dough on a floured board and knead until smooth and elastic. Put into a bowl, cover and let rise in a warm place about one and one-half hours or until double its bulk. Then make two loaves and put in baking pans. Cover, and let stand in a warm place about one hour or until it has doubled its bulk. Then bake about forty-five minutes. This makes two loaves of bread.

SUNSHINE CAKE

5 egg yolks, 1 cup sugar, 7 egg whites, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/2 cup flour, 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar, 1/2 teaspoon orange or lemon extract. Beat the yolks and sugar thoroughly. Sift flour twice, sift sugar once, beat whites until foamy, add cream of tartar and beat until stiff. Fold sugar in lightly, add beaten yolks, then flour, and cut and fold in flour. Bake about fifty minutes in a moderately hot oven. This serves twelve to fifteen people.

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SIDE TALKS.

By Ruth Cameron.

ILLNESS, A POST-GRADUATE COURSE.

Anyone who has never been ill at least once in his life has not yet completed his education.

His mind may be educated but his sympathies have not been.

I know of no experience that more thoroughly educates the sympathies than a post-graduate course in serious illness.

Of course just as there are people whose minds cannot absorb a high degree of education, so there are people whose sympathies are difficult or impossible to educate.

"Her Case Is Different."

I knew a woman who went through a serious mental breakdown with all the unspeakable and incomprehensible suffering that involves, and when she had recovered from it and was asked to sympathize with another member of her family who had also broken down, she said coldly: "She hasn't been through what I had, her case is entirely different. I don't believe there is any need of her giving up the way she does. It's very hard on her husband I think. No, I don't think we ought to try and take the children for the summer. It will probably do her good to have some responsibilities."

Yet the first woman, when her illness was upon her, had been given every care and attention and luxury, and completely freed from responsibility.

"Now I Understand."

But the ordinary person, the person with sympathies capable of education, cannot go through a painful illness without thinking as each new phase of suffering reveals itself, to him: "Well, I don't wonder, people who have insomnia can't think of anything else." "No wonder Alice needed a lot of waiting on if she felt as uncomfortable as I do." "Well, I don't wonder now that it took Harry so long to get on his feet if he felt as weak as this."

It is the nature of illness to make people selfish, even normally unselfish people. The world narrows for them to the room in which they are imprisoned, and their condition becomes its axis. An anxious family fosters this impression—and then resents it when the danger is passed.

Pain is essentially an egocentricizer. We can forget ourselves and think of others when we are well, but when our bodies suddenly become assertive, our minds centre upon them.

Can You Remember Feeling This Way?

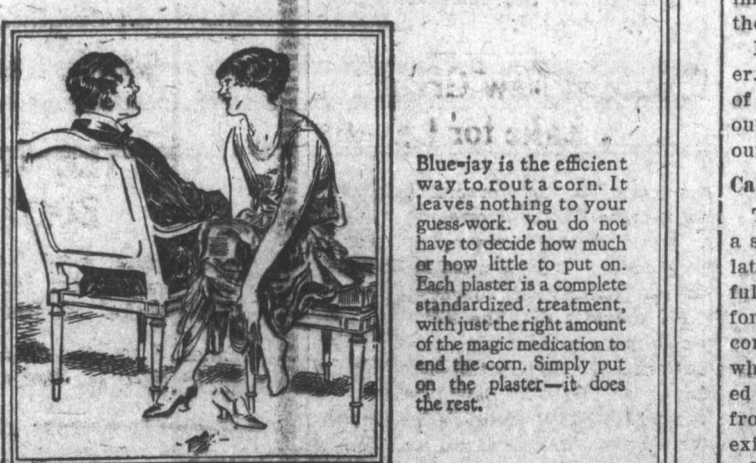
There is an excellent description of a sick man on one of Arnold Bennett's later books. The sick man is frightfully uncomfortable and this discomfort makes him regard everyone who comes near him only in the light of what they can do for him. "He wanted and wanted ravenously something from everybody he saw. The world existed solely to succor him."

Who that has once been ill cannot remember that state of mind on the sick bed has passed, and someone else in our family has been made egotistic and self-centered by the discomfort of sickness, we feel inclined to criticize. How can we dare? Why aren't we afraid that the Teacher will think our sympathies need more education and give us another post-graduate course?

Brocaded bags for the theatre are set with semi-precious stones and beads.

The high-spike heel and center strap are features of the more drossy slipper.

MINARD'S LINIMENT FOR SORE BACK.



She hated to acknowledge the Corn

So goes the old saying. And few indeed, like to confess a corn. It seems such an undainty thing—an admission of physical untidiness. One may conceal the presence of a corn, but not its ill-effect. It shows itself in the face—and the humor. That twinge in the toe means a frown on the forehead—and a thorn in the disposition. But how foolish to carry a secret sorrow in your shoe! You can end the pain in ten seconds—and the corn in two days—with a pleasant Blue-jay plaster.

Blue-jay

THE QUICK AND GENTLE WAY TO END A CORN

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