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"GILLETT'S LYE EATS DIRT"
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For Love of a Woman;
New Romeo and Juliet.

OR,
CHAPTER XII
TO WED AN ACTRESS.

"I thought it was out of fashion to be in love with your wife. Forgive me, I have been outside the world so long Pray go on."

"And I love another lady."

"Indeed!" came the cold response. There was no surprise, scarcely a trace even of displeasure; but the keen eyes glittered like those of an eagle as they rested on his handsome, manly face. "Don't you think it would have saved both of us some trouble and many words if you had mentioned this rather important fact when we were discussing the question the other night?"

Lord Neville smiled faintly.

"I did not know it myself," he replied. "I had not met the young lady."

"Ah! love at first sight!" said the marquis, "interesting, but rather prudent. You have known her and seduced her and want to marry her, all how many days is it?"

Lord Neville coloured.

"I seem to have known her for years," he said, almost to himself.

"And may I ask—I don't desire to appear inquisitive—who this young lady is? I didn't know that you had visited any of the people here. Do I know her?"

"I think not, sir," said Lord Neville. "Her name is Doris Marlowe."

"Doris Marlowe," repeated the marquis. "A pretty name. No I don't know it. There is no county family hereabouts, that I remember, of the name of Marlowe."

"She is not a member of a county family. She is an actress," said Lord Neville.

He looked up steadily, expecting to see the cold, laughty face break into an expression of rage, fury, scorn; but there was not the least emotion displayed on the thin, curled lips and glittering eyes.

"An actress? Really? Dear me! This is very—entertaining! I was under the impression that only callow schoolboys ever fell in love with actresses. I should have thought—pray forgive me—that you were too old, if not too sensible, to be gully of such a gancherie."

Lord Neville pressed his foot down upon the Turkey carpet, and sat himself squarely in his chair in his effort to command his temper. He had resolved that nothing the marquis should say should rouse him to anger or to retaliation.

"An actress! I don't think the Stoyles have ever had an actress in the family—and some of us have gone pretty low down for our wives, too."

Lord Neville bit his lip.

"If you knew Miss Marlowe, sir, think you would scarcely consider that I was condescending in asking her to marry me."

The marquis stared at him as if he were some curious specimen, worthy of calm and careful consideration.

"I will take your word for that. At any rate I won't venture to contradict you; but you must permit me to express my satisfaction that Fate has spared me to that extent. I have no desire to add an actress to my list of acquaintances."

Lord Neville inclined his head.

"This is exactly what I expected you to say, sir," he said, quietly; "but I considered it my duty to tell you, and to ask your consent as I should have asked my father's, had he been living."

"By Heaven! if you only knew her!" broke from Lord Neville's parched lips.

The marquis laughed.

"Thanks again. But you'll excuse me, I trust. An actress! Come I'm not a betting man—now, but I will wager you a hundred pounds to five that before two months after you have been married you will admit to me that I was right, and that you were a great fool indeed."

"I take you, sir," said Lord Neville, grimly; and he drew out his pocket-book and carefully potted down the bet.

The old man's eyes alone with a swift approval. It was a touch worthy of himself.

"And I'll make you another that in the same period the girl herself will be as sorry that she married you."

"I don't take that," said Lord Neville, coldly. "For, considering the blood that runs in my veins, any woman's chance of happiness as my wife is a small one."

I am quite convinced of it. We'll agree that she is everything that is beautiful and innocent and talented, and that you are very much in love with her—"

And he laughed—such a laugh of taunting scorn and contempt as might have been echoed in Tophet.

Lord Neville's face darkened.

"Even in your day, my lord, all men were not scoundrels," he said grimly.

"No," said the marquis, delighted at having driven him to retort. "No; there were some fools, even in my day!"

"You shall call me what you please, sir."

"My dear fellow, what else can I call you? Even you will not expect me to applaud such a step as you propose taking. You are a Neville; you will be the Marquis of Stoyles, a peer of the three kingdoms; you will get—or would have got—the Garter; and you propose to marry an actress! An actress! If there is any man in England who would not call you a fool, I should like to see him; I should like to see him very much, indeed. Why, my dear fellow, depend upon it no one thinks you more decidedly a fool than the girl herself."

"By Heaven! if you only knew her!" broke from Lord Neville's parched lips.

The marquis laughed.

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tion entitle you, and sink into grim solitude or the companionship of people of her class. We will take all this for granted. And now, what do you expect me to do, if I may ask?"

"To request me to leave this house, to discontinue my allowance, and to cut me from henceforth," said Lord Neville, promptly but faintly.

The marquis smiled.

"Y—es," he said, nodding "that is my duty forcibly and concisely. This is what I ought to do; but all my life I have never done what I ought to have done, and have always done what I ought not. You are welcome to remain at the Towers as long as you please."

Lord Neville looked with faint surprise, and the marquis sipped his wine slowly.

"I shall double your allowance, and, as to cutting you, that would be inconvenient and troublesome, not to say vulgar. Of course I shall keep to my resolve respecting the property—that will go to Lady Grace, as I said."

Lord Neville's face flushed.

"She is welcome to it, quite welcome to it," he said at once. "I am glad that it should be so. I—I think you have acted very generously to me, and I thank you sir."

The marquis inclined his head, a faint smile hovering about his thin lips.

"You might be able to marry upon your allowance doubled, as I propose," he said. "You would not be very rich, but it might do."

"It will be quite sufficient," said Lord Neville, as yet unrecovered from his surprise.

"I shall not live very long, I hope; though, by the way, I should like to live long enough to win that five pounds of you"—Lord Neville smiled—"and then you will have the estate—such as they are."

"I ask you to believe me that I am in no hurry. I do not wish, and never have wished, for your death," and his face flushed.

The marquis waved his hand.

"Thanks very much. But to return: I presume you have not the slightest doubt of the stability of your feelings? You are sure that you won't change your mind—your heart, I should have said?"

"Quite certain," replied Lord Neville, Doris's face rising like a beacon. "My happiness is bound up in Miss Marlowe. I shall never cease to love her."

"Very good," said the marquis. "Of course you want to be married at once? Oh, I have no objection; it is a matter of perfect indifference to me, I assure you."

"Then your kindness and liberality are all the more marked, sir," said Lord Neville. "I wish I could convince you of my gratitude; it is sufficient to make me forget—almost—all the hard things you have said."

"Ah," said the marquis, "gratitude is a fine sentiment—very fine. But rather hollow and shadowy. If I were to ask you to do something, for instance, to prove this beautiful sentiment!" he sneered as a finish to the sentence.

Lord Neville looked up.

"I wish you would!" he said. "I should like to prove my sincerity, sir."

The marquis looked round the room with a smile of idle amusement.

(to be continued.)

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