

said, "of course, I'd stand by you in the affair, but unfortunately I've promised to go fishing with Pattison this week."

"Put him off. Pat won't mind. Urgent business," called out of town, etc., you know the style," beamed the Cherub, thrusting a sheet of note-paper before me.

I groaned inwardly, and took up the pad. I am not a weak man as a rule, but what could one do in the face of such determination? Thus while I lied to Pattison, the Cherub busied himself throwing things into my grip; as I sealed the note, he was in the act of ramming in a dress coat.

"Hurry up," he panted, "or we shall miss that train."

"Tooth-brush in?" I inquired. "It can't go in here," he cried excitedly, "no room," and with a mighty effort he closed the grip.

"But my dear chap," I remonstrated. "All right, I'll make a parcel of the rest," he said, buckling the straps feverishly.

Thus exactly fifty-eight minutes later we were facing each other, somewhat out of breath, in the express for Down.

"By the way, you're not much of a hand at parcels, are you?" I said, glancing at the bulging, misshapen object in the rack.

"Oh, I fancy it will be all right," he said easily, and leaning back he puffed at his pipe with a dreamy expression that warned me what was coming. Presently he sighed.

"She's wonderful, old chap," he exclaimed.

"Since I'm in for it, you might tell me her name and have done with it," I said.

"I call her the Divine Phyllidia," he replied.

"Look here, Cherub, do you expect me to lie about you with any success to a girl with a name like that?"

He looked a trifle uncomfortable.

"Well, you needn't pitch it too steep, and I'll back you up, you know, Gip."

After this we traveled some time in silence.

"Yes," he said suddenly, "she's wonderful, with eyes black, my boy, as a moonless night, that flash at you, man, beneath low brows crowned with misty hair."

I did not even attempt to hide my smile.

When in due time we arrived at Down there was of course no conveyance to be

had for miles round, and the Cherub, taking the paper parcel gingerly under his arm—I had, with an eye to possible future contingencies, prudently secured the grip before hand—elected to show me a short cut.

"By the way," I said, "looks a trifle unwell, that parcel."

"Oh! it will hang together all right until we get there, it isn't far, you know, this way." So saying, he led the way down a maze of narrow lanes, and after climbing grassy banks and squeezing through numerous fences, we found ourselves in a small wood. Here the Cherub suddenly stood still and swore,—the parcel had gone wrong.

"Just what I expected," I sighed, "and by-the-way, what did you do with my tooth-brush?"

"Tooth-brush be hanged," he cried, struggling desperately with the parcel, "come and help me with the confounded thing." But instead of complying, fancying I heard voices, I stole towards a clump of bushes, and stealthily peered round.

Within a few inches of mine was a face, so close that I might almost have kissed it,—piquant face it was, warm with the rich coloring of scarlet mouth and raven hair. I started back.

"I beg your pardon," I began, and lifted my hat,—as I did so something leaped thence to the grass at my feet—it was my errant tooth-brush. I trod upon it immediately, but too late, for I heard a half-suppressed laugh behind me, and turning, I saw another face peeping at me over a bush, and this time the hair was red gold, and the laughing eyes wonderfully blue. I was standing there with my foot on my tooth-brush, looking from one to the other helplessly, when the Cherub appeared. I fancy he must have had a bad time with that parcel, for it was torn in several places, from one of which dangled a white flannel trouser leg.

"Phyllidia!" he gasped, and, dropping the parcel, stood staring. In a moment Phyllidia was down on her knees, and began setting it to rights.

"This is outrageously packed," she laughed, "and just look Kate, tied with two boot laces."

The Cherub looked apologetic. "You see," he began, but meeting the cousin's blue eyes stopped.

"We were in rather a hurry packing, and the Cherub's idea of a parcel is decidedly quaint," I put in.



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