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## Lord Cecil's Dilemma

## The Picnic

**Woodall Forest** 

CHAPTER V. "Your condition, Lord Cecil? I must

have back my flowers!" He looked ahead. Lord Howard and Lady Marcia were out of sight. He could only hear the cracking of dried sticks among the trees.

me," he replied, savagely. "I have house, a cigar in his mouth. long regarded you as my future wife bowed his head humbly, saying: "Forgive me. It is my love for you that makes me act like a bore. I only ask you to say why you want back the truth, and I will return the flowers to

To Gladys this request appeared to be adding insult to injury. What gaving: right had this man to question her? How dared he make demands and Gladys? The earl has mentioned to me

'ed, her bosom heaved, and she stamped her foot with passion.

pope. His pleasure in mere animal beauty came to the surface. He had never seen Gladys Howard angry before, and her new beauty only added to her worth in his eyes. ,

"What a spitfire you are, Gladys!" he laughed. "I shall not give you the flowers! Now, let's see another ex-

hibition!" With a quick bound, she snatched the heads of the flowers snapping off are strangers! Auntie, you must neve in her hands; then, casting upon the say this again!" astonished and discomforted young! lord a glance of the bitterest hatred and scorn, she fled after her father very eyes," said Lady Marcia. "You

she reached the abbey unobserved. She went directly to her own apartments, and was glad that her maid Was away.

Sher docked the door, and, having dased the unfortunate flowers, hid themsaway in the bottom of a tiny ise-shell desk.

med Oh, At I were only a el that it would be a pleasure

CHAPTER VL

fter her rapid walk and the der which she had been

child with the thoughts of a child. cheviously, and continued: "Well, we To-day she is a woman. She has seen must begin to think of dressing for

Lrod Cecil, and she felt that she hated death comes to all in its own season. Lord Cecil. He was loud, vulgar, pre- Lady Marcia did not reply, and

Charles Hastings make a friend of acquaintance, handsome as a

'I did not know that you had come gift I prize so much. Only tell me the left him quite half an hour since." "I was tired, auntie, and have been

"Has that young man annoyed you, something about Lord Stanhope's this world."

"My opinion, is already formed, auntie," Lady Gladys replied, firmly. "Lord Cecil has annoyed me. I do not like him. I could never marry him,

"She paused, and Lady Marcia finished the sentence for her, smiling-

The girl blushed painfully.

I cannot read what is thrust under my have ever beheld. You think that it

"I will not have you say those dread-

"the admiration is mutual. Remember trayed yourself by feeling angry with Miss Craythorne by giving his flowers

eks that surrounded Swinford Ab- quite romantic!" Her eyes sparkled. "Was he-were they anything alike?"

inner. The earl will be wondering what has become of us."

She looked at her niece nd lovingly for a moment, then kissed er with quivering lips, and said:

of a perfect life, we are robbed of

"Oh, don't, auntie," shu Arthur—the knights that inspired the remorseless fate pursues us unless w troubadours. She compared him with prepare the way by pride or folly. And

delicacy, even toward the girl he seemed to bring the young barone Lord Cecil Stanhope? How could two god, courtly as a knight of old; a man men so totally dissimilar have one who had stirred the sweet mysteries common sympathy? She shrank from of her heart, whose glances had the window, for the object of her flushed her cheeks, whose touch had "I do not like your way of treating thoughts was strolling toward the thrilled her through and through. A few minutes more and there was family's history was known to her the future Lady Stanhope." Then he a tap at her door. She knew who it aunt. They could welcome him to the in, Gladys. Lord Cecil says that you ple like Lord Cecil Stanhope were neighbors-nothing more.

She had forgotten her brief jealousy

CHAPTER VII. Sir Charles Hastings did not meet his host until luncheon next day "I refuse to answer you, sir! Give wish to make you his wife. I have as- When Lord Cecil arrived at the me back my flowers!" Her eyes flash- sured him that it would be wrong for Towers, he heard that his guest had early riser, he missed Sir Charles at breakfast. Sir Charles had gone for a

"To pay a morning call, I suspect." muttered Lord Stanhope to his mother. "He is quite smitten with Ada Cray-

"Then it is our duty to let Lady Craythorne know that Sir Charles is a comparative stranger to us. It would be a dreadful thing if one of man who trades upon our name." "Oh, I think Mother Craythorne

"Well, Lady Craythorne," he laughed. "I think she knows how to look "Hush, hush, auntie!" cried Gladys. he has been up to during the past six or seven years I have no know-"Nevertheless, Cecil, I shall warn Lady Craythorne. She thinks so much

"Yes," grinned the young peer Wants to hook me to Flossie's know, but she doesn't hold a candle to Lady Gladys Howard. Wouldn't represent a fellow's dignity, half so

"Lady Gladys is a charming girl," e remarked, "but I do not think she

her imagined," sneered Lord Cecil, ingrily. He knew that she had spoker he truth, "I proposed to her yester ne!" He told this falsehood in a spir other would hear the words. "I also poke to the earl, and he urged me



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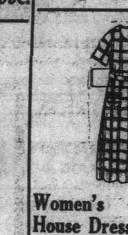
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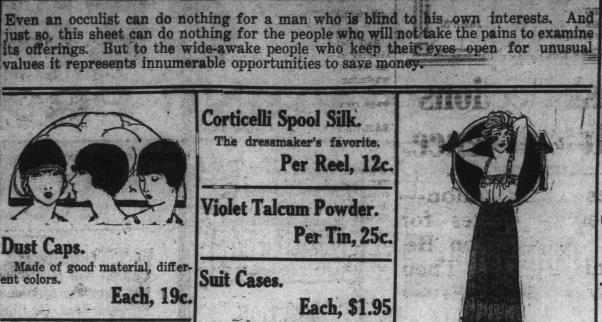
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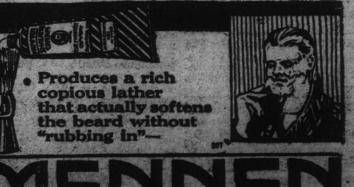


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