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**BAIRD & CO. WHOLESALE AGENTS
ST. JOHN'S**

"Flatterers"

The Shadow of the Future.

CHAPTER XXII.
THE FRIENDS SHE LEFT BEHIND.

"My dear fellow," he said, in tones of vexation, "I'm afraid I have bad news for you there, Miss Alwyn. I have left St. Clair's these three months."

"Left! Just when I wanted to tell—when I wanted her to say—Now, by all that's unlucky, how I wish I had come earlier! Once more I've been too slow. But I can follow her wherever she is, for of course you know, sir?"

"No more than you do."

Then, careful to avoid watching the signs of extreme disappointment on his hearer's face, the doctor, as far as he felt at liberty, told of Sydney's good-bye to him, and the subsequent vanishing of the Dale, finishing with:

"No I fear, Drayton, here is a block in the good-luck which you had not calculated on."

"But one that must be got over," said the doctor, resolutely. "Can you tell me, sir, where the Alwyns came from to St. Clair's? I might get their present whereabouts so."

"I have not the slightest idea, I never heard their former home named."

"Nor anything of their former life? Mr. Alwyn's profession or so forth?"

"Nothing whatever. It has struck me sometimes it was a subject, purposely avoided."

Mr. Drayton crumpled up his brows, and for a minute thought intently. Then he asked:

"And you've no clue to what took Miss Sydney away?"

"Not the least. I only surmise, from the poor child's emotion, it was something delicate and painful. As she could not disclose it, I have no right to pry into it. Though as for you—you haven't said in so many words why you want to see her, but my dear Dick—"

"But I must find her somehow," broke in Mr. Dick, abruptly, "if you can't see me on my way, sir, I suppose no one at St. Clair's can!"

"No one, unless Miss Dacie has heard of her since we last met."

"Ah, I could ask her, couldn't I?" said Mr. Drayton, with great alacrity.

"At a quarter to ten?" Nay, that's past canonical calling hours in the country. Wait till the morning."

So till the morning Mr. Drayton was fain to curb his impetuosity, rewarding resolution by starting for the Gate House at nine o'clock next day.

Mary was working diligently in the garden, her conscience a little lighter for the thought of three receipts bills in her desk. She heard a step, looked up, saw who came, and had no time to flee into the house, and hide a preposterous attack of shyness and her much-faded cotton gown before he was by her side.

In trepidation worthy of a leech, her hands got her hand out of its huge leather glove and offered a disjuncted greeting, stared at her own awkwardness, though, as a matter of fact, with the sunshine on her yellow-brown hair and a rising color in her cheeks, she looked younger than she had done for many a day, and, spite of the washed-out print, a gentlemanly comely and graceful still.

Perhaps this struck Mr. Drayton, for he shook hands with her warmly,

and then, having picked up her rake and hoe, shook hands again, remarking that he would have come on the night before, but had arrived too late, so he took time by the forelock to-day.

"W—my father will be very pleased to see you," said Mary, leading the way with another blush. "He was wondering last week if we should ever see you again."

"See me! Why, of course you would. I wanted very much indeed to get here. For, Miss Dacie, I am so hoping you can tell me something of your friend at the Dale—of Miss Alwyn especially."

The bright color left Mary's cheeks with a chill rush. To hear of Sydney's name, she said, thankful that on such a theme she might be pardoned sadness.

"And you can't help growing over it, can you?"

"Indeed, not!" turning her head away.

"And I'm sorry too. On your account"—he was staring determinedly at her, but Mary kept her face invisible—"and hers too, and my own, I'd have given a good deal to have found her here. Can't you possibly do us all a good turn by putting me on the track to see her?"

"If I could I would, Mr. Drayton. (It cost something, that assertion)—but I have no knowledge of where she is."

"Nor her mother?"

"Mrs. Alwyn was at Zurich a month ago."

"Zurich. H'm! It will be a round-about road if I have to trace her from there. But one or the other I must see. Properly says Mrs. Alwyn. Preference says Miss. The lady mother and I seemed mutually repellent; while Miss Sydney—Mary swallowed a great heart-burning during that pause—"

"she would answer the question I have put in a moment. You'll give me your good wishes to speed me to her, won't you, Miss Dacie?"

By good fortune in came the doctor and Mrs. Dacie just then. With a murmur of affirmation Mary escaped to the other end of the tidy, shabby room, and busied herself with mending, while the father and mother chatted with their caller.

Of course they had presently their say about the Alwyns, and Mrs. Dacie reiterated her belief that it was an affair of the affections which drove Sydney away—"affection on one side, Mr. Drayton, not here! I'm confident our dear Sydney would choose differently. I'm not a conjurer, but I fancy I know where! Though, perhaps, that's hard-fair, is it?"

But the gentleman was deaf to these last words and their innuendo. Mary had just slipped quietly out of the room, and he expressed a hope that he had not interrupted Miss Dacie by coming so early.

"Oh, no! my daughter is not often long with us in the morning, unless," said poor Mrs. Dacie, half-humbled, half-proud at the admission—"unless we mean to go without our dinner. Don't frown at me, doctor, dear! Mr. Drayton knows quite well we are not rich, and that Mary is a daughter of all-work."

Possibly the doctor dreaded more domestic revelations, for, hearkening to an apology, he said he must be starting on his round; it was not a long one, but it took him a good while to walk; and he explained elaborately to the visitor, who volunteered to go with him and lend him an arm, how Punch being deficient they had made up their minds, for various reasons, not to replace him at present. Between the

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and others

place of which Mr. Drayton read the truth pretty plainly, and had his deduction confirmed when, the thrumming trudge over, they again neared the Gate House.

For Mary hastened to meet them, exclaiming, "Oh, papa! have you seen the man from Oakleigh Place? No? Ah, then he is gone on to Dr. McAndrew! You were wanted to attend the house-keeper. If only you had had poor Punch, now, you would have been back in time. Isn't it unlucky?"

"As usual," said the poor old supplanter, "I have been in a bad way. Mr. Drayton left them, to mature a fine design just planted in his brain."

He took another walk by himself that afternoon, and admitted its aim that evening to the doctor.

"Your parish spreads so far, sir, you ought to have a good cob for the outlying parts. I looked out such an animal as would suit you to-day at the farm up the road, where you like the people."

"Hammerton's? Ay, they are good folks, and have excellent cattle. But, friend Richard, such a luxury means money; and I've not enough to spare for that. Besides, my expense would never keep the creature in health."

"Just so, sir. But there's Dr. Dacie killing himself, and losing his patients, for want of a quadruped. Couldn't you and he keep a cob between you? I'll leave you to settle terms (without mentioning me, though, please), but the fact is, I've bought that brown nag of Hammerton's, and I want to get it into Dacie's stable somehow. I know Miss Alwyn would have managed it. You won't refuse the offer in her stead, will you, sir?"

So the upshot of that device was that a few hours after Mr. Drayton left St. Clair's, he had a much better horse than he had before. "I'd much rather have stayed longer," he asserted; "but I really do so want to find Mr. Alwyn. I hope I shall return, with her leave, and tell you what she and I had to talk about, before long!"

A serviceable steed was discovered crunched at the Punch's manger, and for the present Mr. Vaughan had to carry off his share of the guilty secret as best he could, determining to make a clean breast of the conspiracy the very next time Mr. Drayton came down.

But, though they all seemed vaguely to expect to see him soon, the year wore out without his reappearing. A note reached the Gate House early in October, saying:

"Dear Miss Dacie.—Shortly after leaving St. Clair's I met the Major Villiers whom I had once seen there. By his assistance I was put in the way of obtaining information which I hinted at to you. Unfortunately, I have not had the pleasure of seeing Miss Alwyn at present. I thought you might be expecting to hear this, which is all I feel myself as yet free to communicate. Kindly accept my best regards, and believe me, very faithfully yours,

"RICHARD DRAYTON."

Whatever did it mean? Had he, through her former guardian, offered himself to Sydney and been rejected? Impossible! Was there to be a private engagement? Why, what for? And yet what else could the semi-confidence betoken? Mary read her note fifty times, surreptitiously cried over it; then, in a rage of her weakness, nearly burned it. Reluctant, bid it in an innermost drawer, took it out and looked at it at night; and continually, with some reason maybe, called herself for her pains the very biggest goose, or any other emblem of absurdity, that ever stepped!

CHAPTER XXIII.
ROCKS AHEAD!

That September evening when Sydney went back from Stillcote Upton to Capel Moor, so grateful had she felt at the manifest desire for her return that she would willingly have taken double duties on herself for Jean Hurst or for her brother. But in one direction this impulse not only met no response, but was steadily repelled. A curious change came over Mr. Hurst's bearing toward her. He had been always grave, reserved, save when he warmed up to some subject under study, or on those notable occasions when he talked with Sydney on their early morning and homeward walks together. Still, there had been a brightening in all his aspects as the hours he evidently enjoyed came round, and Sydney's apt questioning and pertinent calls upon the wealth his splendid memory held roused him unflinchingly to cheerful activity, if not positively active cheerfulness.

Now this was altered. As unobtrusively but completely as when between ere and dawn myriads of silent snowflakes spread a white shroud over the living earth, so some spell was cast over these signs of reawakening interest in existence. The books he had before been finished, certainly, and not a shade of his usual attention or thanks did Mr. Hurst remit. A chair would be always placed for his interpreter of pages, in warmth and light between fire and window, though he no longer seated next; would listen, shoulder up against the bookcase, as far off as the room permitted. Furtiveness he grew, that Miss Grey should not read on into the hour allotted to her mid-day walk.

(To be continued.)

A gown of black Canton crepe has a train of inch-wide black ribbon.

A motor coat of black embossed crepe satin is lined with scarlet tulle.

A gown of gray crepe has its long, slim black panel faced with black.

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PAINS SO BAD STAYED IN BED

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