

**Plot That Failed;
OR,
Love That Would
Not Be Denied.**

CHAPTER XXIII.

"My dear lord," he said, in his sweetest voice, "we men of business know a great deal more than most people give us credit for knowing. One little bird—pray don't think I wished him to whisper secrets—came to me one day and whispered your name and that of a certain well-known money-lender."

The earl's face grew more fixed, but he did not move a muscle or show the slightest anger or surprise at the captain's knowledge of his embarrassments.

"Do not be afraid, my lord," said the schemer, in his softest voice; "the secret is safe with me. I shall not tell any one that Lackland Hall is mortgaged to the neck; that there is a lien on every other house your lordship holds; that there is a bill of sale upon the furniture, and that Lady Lackland's diamonds are at the jewellers, being repaired. I shall not tell all this because it is not to my interest to do so."

The earl stroked his mustache and looked straight before him.

"You do indeed speak plainly, Mr. Murpoint," he said, "and, while I will not endeavor to disprove or deny your assertions, I must at least confess that they startle me. Granting, merely for argument's sake, that I am an embezzler—somewhat embarrassed, I cannot see how it can be to your interest to help me."

Presently a couple—a handsome man and a beautiful woman—passed them as they promenaded after the dance.

"What a couple they make! My ward is beautiful and well-bred, my



lord, and Lord Boisdale and she are good friends."

The earl scrutinized the sleek, serene face of the speaker with acute anxiety.

"I see," he said, "I see. You are right, you are right, Mr. Murpoint; they would make a handsome and suitable pair. It is a capital idea."

"Which requires capital," said Howard Murpoint.

The earl flushed.

"Your ward is wealthy—"

"And your son must needs be noble, my lord," continued the captain.

"A match between them is a thing to be desired."

"You would give your consent?" said the earl, almost feverishly.

The captain smiled.

"Let us talk of something else," he said. "It is a shame to dispose of the young things without their consent."

Then suddenly he said:

"Did you hear that the prime minister had spoken of my scheme for negotiating with the Swedish mines with much favor?"

"Yes," said the earl, not understanding why the conversation had been so rapidly changed.

"A friend told me that I deserved a baronetcy for it, hah! hah!" and he laughed softly. "Fancy plain Howard Murpoint made Captain Sir Howard Murpoint, Bart., M.P.!"



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"I see!" said the earl, as a sudden light began to burst in upon him. "Let me follow your example, Mr. Murpoint, and speak plainly. Do I understand that you will give your consent and bring about a marriage between my son, Lord Boisdale, and your ward if I obtain for you through my influence the baronetage which seems to cause you so much amusement?"

"My dear lord!" exclaimed the schemer, with a deprecating smile "that is indeed speaking plainly. I am very grateful for your good intentions, very, but if I am anything, my lord, I am disinterested. From my boyhood I have worked for others; I am working for others now. It is enough for me that I can see my ward—my dearest friend's daughter!—happy. Be assured that if I thought a marriage between her and the admirable Lord Boisdale would tend to increase that happiness I would use every influence I possessed to bring about such a match, which would do us so much honor and would, I hope, be beneficial to the interests of your noble house."

The earl held out his hand and his cold, icy eyes glittered.

"You are a clever man, Mr. Murpoint, and a generous one. England is blessed indeed in the possession of such men as you! I am honored by your confidence—and—ahem—I think you really deserve the baronetcy!"

"You are very good to say so," smiled the captain, with a cunning light in his dark eyes.

"Shall I," he said, as the earl took up his crush hat and prepared to depart—"shall I have the pleasure of adding your name to the list of directors of the Penwain Mining Company?"

"Certainly, certainly. I shall be delighted," said the earl; "I will go on to the club, I think, and after shaking hands warmly he departed."

Howard Murpoint leaned back in his chair, and watched the tall form of his latest dupe disappear amid the crowd.

"Snared at last!" he muttered. "Did I speak too plainly? No; I think not. I have committed myself to nothing. Shall I get the baronetcy? I think so; if not, let the Earl of Lacklands beware. I have him in a cleft stick."

At that moment Bertie and Ethel approached. As they entered the corridor, Mr. Murpoint rose with a scowl and passed out.

"Those two," he murmured; "they must be disposed of before long. She thinks, poor girl, that Fate will prove kind and give her to the arms of Master Bertie. Lady Boisdale, I am your Fate, and have other intentions respecting you."

Bertie and Ethel entered as the curtain fell over the doorway through which they had passed.

"I thought papa and Mr. Murpoint were here," said Ethel.

"They are not far off, I dare say," said Bertie. "Will you not rest a while?"

"How warm it is," said Ethel, leaning forward and fanning herself.

"Every one looks hot excepting dear Violet. See where she goes, pale and untruffed as usual. Dear Violet!" and she sighed.

Bertie's eyes followed Violet as she passed, leaning upon Lord Boisdale's arm.

"Do you think Miss Mildmay is ill or unhappy?" he asked, in a low, grave voice.

"I cannot say. I do not think her ill, and I would not like to say that she is unhappy. I think she scarcely knows herself the exact state of her own feelings. See how dreamy and yet serene she looks; she is not thin either, and yet—oh, how terrible a puzzle is life—how weary, stale, flat and unprofitable."

Bertie looked up at her.

"Not to you—you are happy, Lady Boisdale. What should you know of the temptations, the sorrows, the failures of life?"

Ethel smiled.

"I may retort," she said, "in kind. What failures can the celebrated and popular Mr. Fairfax know?"

"The greatest failure a man can experience," said Bertie leaning forward. "The failure of a hope, that at the best never deserved the word! Lady Boisdale, if you could read my heart at this moment you would see how bitter life is to me, how hollow the mockery of success which has fallen to me! Once I would have welcomed it, longed for it. Now it is as bitter Dead-Sea fruit which crumbles to dust beneath my touch. Once—may I listen, I implore you to listen," for Ethel had half risen, pale and confused. "Once," he continued, very pale and earnest, and with a sad music in his voice. "When I was young enough to cherish such daring ambitions I dreamed that I could make a place for myself in this great struggling, writhing world, a place high enough to satisfy my ambition and feed my hope. I hoped to reach that place and to seat another there beside me, rather let me say, upon the throne itself while I knelt at the feet. This was a boy's dream, Lady Boisdale, and like most dreams only the bitterness of its unreality is left to me. I have made a place for myself, but it is empty and desolate. A desolate and bitter mockery because I dare not, I dare not hope that she whom I would have for my queen will ever deign to fill it. Lady Boisdale, could you see me as I really am, solitary, alone in the great world, bereft of my dearly-loved friend, bereft of my hope, you would pity me. Others might laugh me to scorn for a presumptuous idiot, but you, whose gentle heart I know so well, would pity me."

He took her hand as he spoke, his voice trembled.

A tear fell on the hand which held hers.

He looked up and saw that she was weeping.

In an instant his reserve, his determination to go no further was broken down.

He drew the hand to his lips and, looking up at her averted face, passionately said, in a voice trembling with love and supplication:

"Lady Boisdale—Ethel! you know for whom my heart has thirsted, you know why to me the world is bitter and life a mockery! It is because I love you—I love you, Ethel, and I have not dared to hope. If you can forgive me my presumption, if you can—if you can love me—oh, Ethel, you know I have loved so long and hopelessly. Forgive me if I have forgotten the gulf which yawns between us. Why should I not?" he exclaimed, suddenly and passionately. "Is it a crime to love a noble woman, because she is an earl's daughter? Hearts are not given to the rich and

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mighty alone. The peasant revels in the power to love, and I—I who kneel at your feet pleading for your pardon, feel that I have not sinned against Heaven or man, but have simply obeyed the pure impulse of my soul in daring to love you. Ethel, Ethel, you too condemn me!"

And with a tone of despair and reproach, he half rose.

"No, no!" cried Ethel, turning to him and laying her white, trembling hand upon his arm. "No, no. Condemn you! I love you!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

So Bertie had declared love, and won an acknowledgment from Ethel that his love was returned.

"Ethel," he said, and the name sounded wonderfully sweet as he dwelt upon it with loving tenderness, "Ethel, I must go to the earl and ask for my pearl of price. Shall I go tomorrow?"

Ethel turned pale and sighed.

"To-morrow?" she said. "Yes, must be so soon?"

"Yes," he said, quietly and gravely, "the world will say that I should have asked him first; but we cannot always control our hearts, they will have their way sometimes, and mine has been under boot and bar so long—so long."

"So long?" she murmured, blushing and turning away from him.

"Almost from the day when I first saw you—do you remember the time? Poor Leicester was alive then, and I poured all my hopes and fears into his ears. Ethel, I thought it hard that I should be debarred from hope; you were an earl's daughter—as you are now—and I was penniless, struggling, unknown."

"But it is all altered now," breathed Ethel, pressing his hand. "You are famous, and—and not poor."

(To be Continued.)

Mother Is Child's Stomach Sour, Sick?

If tongue is coated or if cross, feverish, constipated give "California Syrup of Figs."

Don't scold your fretful, peevish child. See if tongue is coated; this is a sure sign its little stomach, liver and bowels are clogged with sour waste.

When listless, pale, feverish, full of cold, breath bad, throat sore, doesn't eat, sleep or act naturally, has stomach-ache, indigestion, diarrhoea, give a teaspoonful of "California Syrup of Figs," and in a few hours all the foul waste, the sour bile and fermenting food passes out of the bowels and you have a well and playful child again. Children love this harmless "fruit laxative," and mothers can rest easy after giving it, because it never fails to make their little "insides" clean and sweet.

Keep it handy, Mother! A little given to-day saves a sick child to-morrow, but get the genuine. Ask your druggist for a 50-cent bottle of "California Syrup of Figs," which has directions for babies, children of all ages and for grown-ups plainly on the bottle. Remember there are counterfeits sold here, so surely look and see that yours is made by the "California Fig Syrup Company." Hand back with contempt any other fig syrup.

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Costumes for Misses and Small Women, (with Sleeve in Either of Two Lengths).

Brown broad cloth was used for this design, finished with a simple machine stitching. The model would also look well in green serge, or in taffeta in any of the pretty new shades of this season. The plaited skirt with yoke top is new and graceful. The waist is cut with low neck outline, and finished with a smart collar. The sleeve may be in wrist length or short, with a neat cuff finish. This model will also be desirable for wash fabrics, such as linen, cotton, crepe, poplin or gingham. The pattern is cut in 4 sizes: 14, 16, 17 and 18 years. It requires 6 1/2 yards of 40 inch material for a 16 year size. The skirt measures about 3 yards with plaits drawn out.

A pattern of this illustration mailed to any address on receipt of 10c. in silver or stamps.

1181—A MOST DESIRABLE MODEL.



Ladies' House or Home Dress, with Sleeve in Either of Two Lengths, and with Raised or Normal Waistline.

This style is simple in design and easy to develop. It is made with deep tucks over the shoulders, and the right front laps over the left in closing. The sleeve in wrist or short length is equally becoming. The skirt is a comfortable three piece model, with plaited fullness at the side seams. It may be finished in normal or raised waistline. A shaped band covers the closing in the skirt, and meets the trimming of the waist front. The rolling collar forms a neat neck finish. The design is good for gingham, chambray, seersucker, serge, pique, or voile. A stylish neat business suit could be developed from this pattern, in serge or velvet, with trimming of plaid, checked or striped silk or cloth, or flat braid applied in rows or as binding, would be good. The pattern is cut in 6 sizes: 34, 36, 38, 40, 42 and 44 inches bust measure. It requires 5 1/2 yards of 44 inch material for a 36 inch size.

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War News.

Messages Received Previous to 9 A.M.

OFFICIAL.

LONDON, Feb. 11. The Governor, Newfoundland: The French Government reports a slight advance in Lorraine.

The Russian Government reports continued fighting in East Prussia and further capture of officers, met and machine guns in the Carpathians.

Russian torpedo boat destroyers have bombarded three enemy batteries at Trezond, destroyed railway bridges, and sunk fifty enemy sailing vessels.

HARCOURT. BERESFORD ON RAIDERS.

LONDON, Feb. 11. In the Commons to-day, answering a question put by Admiral Lord Charles Beresford, concerning German air and sea raids on undefended towns, Premier Asquith said, "I am not prepared to make any general statement. Each case must be dealt with on its own merits."

Beresford asked the Government to treat German raiders on undefended places as pirates, and after trial by court martial to hang them in public for the killing of women and children.

TAKING MORE STRINGENT MEASURES.

LONDON, Feb. 11. Premier Asquith, in an announcement made in the Commons, said that the Government is about to take more stringent measures against the trade of Germany. He promised that arrangements will be made to publish communications from Sir John French twice weekly, thus giving more news of the war. In connection with his recent statement to the effect that British casualties in the western fighting zone numbered 84,000 officers and men, the Premier explained that approximately 60 per cent. of alleged wounded had already recovered and were fit for service.

THE COST OF LIVING.

LONDON, Feb. 11. The housewives' side of the great war occupied the attention of the House of Commons this afternoon.

For this body, by motion, invited the intervention of the Government in the present fight, which has been going on against the increased cost of living in the British Isles. The Government has already appointed a Parliamentary Commission to investigate this matter, and Premier Asquith explained to the House the result of inquiries, thus far made, and outlined certain proposed steps dealing with urgent necessities which are causing much hardship on the poor.

The Premier admitted the formidable rise in the cost of the necessities of life, but he contended that prices were substantially below the level, which this the best informed judgment of the country would have anticipated at the end of six months of a war, involving, virtually, the whole civilized world, with the exception of the United States.

THE KAISER DISSATISFIED.

COPENHAGEN, Feb. 11. Close observers of conditions in Germany, assert that the hurried return of Emperor William from the

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