



Do You Bake Your Own Bread?

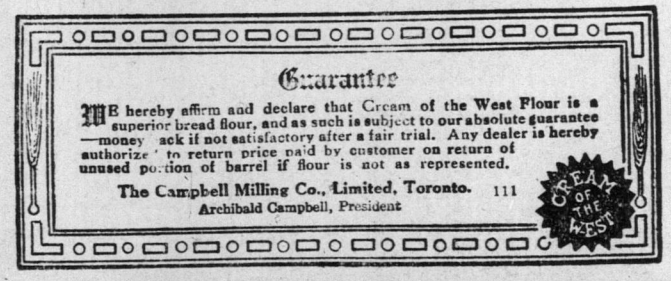
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A MYSTERIOUS QUEST.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

AT THE RECEPTION.

(Concluded.)
'Miss Aspinwall uttered a low cry; no one heard it, not even Jenny, for the impetuous girl was full of her own thoughts, and was saying, passionately:
'My voice will be a surprise to him. He must turn, and then if he goes away—'

She finished with a gesture. Hilary gave her one look, it was that of encouragement, and next minute Jenny was standing by the piano, and the first liquid tones of the fine instrument had burst forth.

No one notices a piano in such a gathering, and not a head, least of all his, turned at the sound. But when, in an instant later, this trained singer's strangely melodious and exquisitely cultivated voice broke out with a force and fervor it had never displayed even in the old happy and ambitious days with her singing-masters, not a head but responded to the call, and she saw, with a rushing sense of joy which nearly stopped her voice, that he not only saw her, but flushed with an unexpected rapture which made all her future assured. Thinking of him, and only of him, she went on, filling the great room with melody such as they never will again, doing for love what she failed to do for ambition, and awakening in more hearts than one the enthusiasm never to be forgotten in the presence of any other singer. Miss Rogers had shown that the Signorina Valdi could sing, but only two persons besides herself ever knew what gave her the impetus, or inspired her with the power to sustain herself to the end before such a multitude of people.

When stillness came, an irresistible cry broke out; but she did not hear it. She was looking for Mr. Degraw to advance. And he did. She saw him burst from every detaining hand and come forward with his heart burning on his lips, when what is it that makes him stop suddenly and as if held back by a force he cannot resist? She cannot see; she sees only that he does not come; that he gives her look which seems to promise something, but he does not come; and at last she perceives him melt away with the crowd and vanish in the direction of the door, which finally opens and shuts upon him, leaving her with her glory and her grief.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A TURN OF THE WHEEL.

THREE days went by; three slow-footed, miserable days, and another evening was near its waning, and no ring at Miss Rogers' house-bell had as yet announced the artist, nor had the post brought her any message to relieve her anxiety or explain his neglect. The only comfort she had received was that which came with the discovery that the name of Hamilton Degraw had not appeared among the list of cabin passengers sailing in the Etruria. But this comfort had a sting in it as well as balm; for if he had recognized her avowal sufficiently to delay his departure, how could he reconcile it with his expressed ardor, to remain away from her at a time so critical? Was he ill? She did not believe it. The manner in which he had cut short his approach after her song did not argue illness, but suddenly conceived determination. He did not wish to acknowledge her devotedness. He felt that it came too late or was prefaced by too much hesitation to be real, and so took this way to express his displeasure and withdraw his claims. It was a crushing experience for her; it was a humiliating one. It robbed her of self-possession and peace, it brought a hectic

flush to her cheek, and lent a feverish intensity and delirious inconsequence to all her actions. She would not see Hilary; she would not see any one. She paced her room by day and tossed upon her bed by night. If the bell rang, her heart gave such a leap that she could not recover from the shock for minutes, and if by any chance a letter came, she grew quite ill between the time she saw it in the servant's hands and the moment it reached her own.

A man never knows or realizes the torture he can inflict upon a woman. He does not remember that in such emergencies as these she is helpless; that she must sit in her house alone, watching, waiting, hanging upon each passing moment for that action on his part which will explain his feelings or intentions. A man can force a situation. He can besiege his lady's door and demand the secret of her reticence or coldness. But under the same circumstances she can do nothing, not even send an inquiry as to her lover's health; and so the canker, eating into the rose, and when love or remembrance brings him again to her side, he wonders what has destroyed this lady's beauty.

Jenny Rogers had no preparation for this show of cruelty upon the part of this especial lover. Since that first delicious moment when her eyes opened upon his face, from a sleep like death, she had beheld it brimming with admiration and filled with love. She had, as it were, held his heart in her hands, or she had thought, and secure in that belief, had sometimes played the coquette, knowing that she had but to smile again upon him to see him fall in rapture at her feet.

And now the neglect was on his side, and she had to endure it alone, sitting in her desolate home, silent and forsaken, while hundreds of whom she had no regard knocked at her gates and lavished gifts and tokens upon her as if in mockery of his forgetfulness, for whose remembrance she alone cared.

Hilary knew her grief, but Hilary's sympathy was, for that reason, unbearable. Jenny could not endure the mildly encouraging glances of a dear friend, nor the smile that bespoke a heart as nearly broken as her own. No; better the society phrases of Mrs. Dutton, the amiable widow, who had so kindly consented to lend her respectable presence to this otherwise too narrow household; better anything than the obtrusion of comfort where there was no comfort, and the display of sympathy against which her woman's pride rebelled.

Had she known that Hilary had sought to save her all this uncertainty and grief by an interview with the artist—that Hilary had even subdued her own pride, which was great, to the point of visiting him in his study—Jenny would have felt more wretched still. For Hilary came forth abashed by a reticence that was new in his experience of him, and rode to her home in a whirl of dissatisfaction and

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revolt that made her own existence, about this time, almost as wretched as that of her unhappy friend.

And, as I have said, the clock was verging toward nine on a Friday night, and no summons had come to rouse Jenny Rogers from those dreams of bitter resentment into which her secret grief and despair had finally plunged her. No summons, did I say? Then what is this? Though she has forbidden her maid, Clairette, to bring her any card which has not the name of Hamilton Degraw upon it, the girl is standing in the doorway with an inexplicable smile on her lips and a small silver tray in her hand, on which Jenny can faintly see gleaming a white bit of pasteboard. Had he come, then? Is the world going to move on again in its accustomed orbit? She tries to be calm, but she springs toward the girl, seizes the card, gives it one look and becomes in an instant another woman.

There is a peculiar look on Clairette's face, a hesitancy in her manner, but Jenny Rogers observes neither. She waves the girl from the room, then calls her back to say:

"Remember, I receive no other callers to-night," and sends her forth again in haste; for the young heiress is wild to be alone, that she may don her most bewitching garments and hang clusters of flowers on her breast, which otherwise might betray the heaving of her heart too plainly.

She has an exquisite robe of purple rose; she puts it on, and you who have not seen this wonderful woman in her jubilant mood, should see her now. She fairly irradiates the room; she walks like a goddess, she smiles like a child; she sings, yes, sings out a snatch of heart-searching melody as she ties her last ribbon and affixes her last flower. She is happy, but she does not mean that she shall be happy too. No, she will give him coldness for coldness; suspicion for suspicion; and pride for pride. But she will look so beautiful and hide her joy under such an airy veil, that he will never go away again, nor leave her as before to eat out her heart in pride and desolation.

But this mood, which lasted till she reached the parlor door, vanished as she crossed the threshold. At sight of a tall figure emerging from behind the curtain of a window, she

stopped downcast, a crowd of blushes flitting over her white cheeks. He came forward, first quickly, then more slowly, as if overcome by her beauty and evident feeling, then as he did not speak, she gave a quick look up and—

She did not fall nor faint, she only stared a little with a pitiful smile, that gradually and by pure force of will deepened into a show of greeting that made him forget that she did not reach forth her hand.

It was her benefactor from Cleveland, and not her artist lover, Hamilton Degraw.

His manner was almost as agitated as hers. He took her hand and bowed over it with an air such as she had never seen in him before, and when she had composed herself sufficiently to awaken to the duties of a hostess and offer him a seat, he took it with a lingering look at her youthful loveliness, that set her heart beating with new fears and possibly new hopes, for her faith in her recent lover was broken and a violent resentment had taken its place.

"This is kind of you," she now murmured in her anxiety to break the silence. "I have often wished that I might have the opportunity again to thank you for the great benefits heaped upon me by your hand. And I did not like to write."

"And I did not like to intrude myself, nor should I be here now, Miss Rogers, if circumstances of a most unexpected nature had not changed my position in regard to you to such an extent that it has become my joyful duty to follow the impulses of my heart; if, in short, I were at liberty now to offer you my hand without any such conditions as those I felt compelled to make upon a former occasion."

"Mr. Degraw!"
She had started to her feet. Her astonishment had overmastered her. She sank back again, but it was with palpitating heart and benumbed brain. "No conditions," the word rang sweetly in her ears. It was like a haven of rest. "No conditions."

"I do not wonder at your surprise," said he. "You ask, and rightly, what could have occurred to make such an action as this on my part pardonable. I will tell you in a word. After my return to Cleveland, the lawyer friend under whose invitation I visited Mr. Delancy's death-bed, came to see me, and asked if I had determined upon the woman who was to inherit that gentleman's fortune. I told him that I had, whereupon he put some very plain questions, which elicited answers that undoubtedly betrayed my interest in you, for he smiled as he said:

"Then it will not be a trial to you to fulfil Mr. Delancy's last request?"
"And what is that?" I asked.
"That you should marry the girl you thought worthy to enjoy this fortune."

"Miss Rogers, I have never expressed my feelings to you either in their depth or persistency, but you can imagine how I was affected, if you remember the stand I took at the critical moment before the signing of the deed. I risked that which it was my happiness to possess, and all for an instinct of honor which these words proved to have been founded upon a mistake. I would have vented my despair upon the lawyer, but he answered me that Mr. Delancy had breathed this wish in private, and requested that it should not be made known to me till I had made my decision."

"It is very strange," uttered Jenny. "But this must have occurred three months since."

The sarcasm, if it was meant as such, was clothed in tones so gentle as to be almost pathetic. She was thinking how full of hope those three months had been, and how little they had brought her.

Mr. Degraw smiled and looked at her with tender indecision.

"I waited," he said with effort, "because I had been led to think, to fear, I should not find you heart quick free to consider any proposal of mine. Though I have never been far from you, I resisted my impulses to the extent of not showing myself in your presence till time and inquiry have assured me that my conclusions were groundless and that your hand is quite free."

She looked up in fine scorn and her

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eyes blazed with more than her old fire.

"Quite free," she echoed, and with the word she seemed to cast something away from her that was very precious.

He saw the gesture and seemed to comprehend it. A softer look crept into his face and he took a place nearer her side.

"No heart is without its burden," said he. "I love you none the less that your cheek is not quite as round, nor your eyes quite as brilliant as of old. Will you let that love be your comfort? It is fervent, Miss Rogers, and it is very deep and sincere. It has never been frittered away on another and it will know no change. I love those now whom I loved in infancy, and never lose an affection which I have once formed."

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New York, Jan. 12.—George Steward of the British steamer Ramsay, upon its arrival at the port of falling overboard a shark was coaling at Santa in the West Indies. A strong swimmer, he was leisurely sweeping him some little way from the ship, but he was leisurely mingled when those aboard sighted the fin of a man-eater shark.

They shouted a warning, and the shark was never seen again, while Capt. Mallen was sailing a lifeboat over the side. As they lowered the lifeboat, the shark was nearing Kirtell, the Tozer, a young officer, with a his hand, dived under the net and using his knife ripped the open, thus saving Kirtell's life, still was weak from fright and was finally gotten on board.

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Before coming to the dinner table, he was known as Lord Turnover, and he had figured in noisy scenes in the House. Months after his father's death, he was thus addressed at dinner fellow-guest: "I ought to know, but I can't recall your name."

"Oh, I am Earl Winton," he replied.
"Of course, of course," said the neighbor at the table. "Why, I have been confounding you all the time with that ass Turnover."

Lord Winton is twenty-eight years of age and owns about 5,800 acres.

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