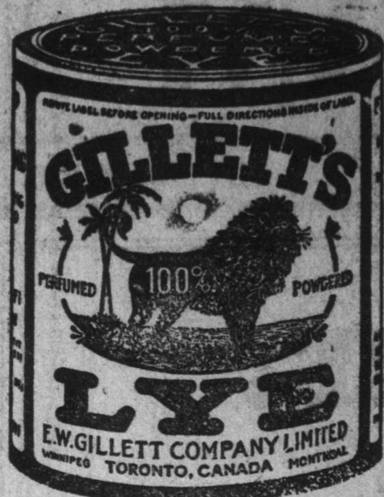

The Romance OF A Marriage.

CHAPTER IV.

"At any rate," she says, with a smile, "he must have a high opinion of me—a young girl who goes out alone at night and waltzes with strange young gentlemen! Oh, he must think very highly of me. Well, it is as much as I deserve. I wonder what Alice would say if she knew? I expect the roof would come off. And now I wonder how long they will be?"

And while she wondered she fell asleep; fell asleep in the old arm-chair, Bob's chair. Her head had fallen back, the thick coils of her fair hair unloosed and letting their wealth flow over her shoulders; her beautiful face "veiled in slumber," as a poet has it.

Herrick Powis thought her beautiful when he saw her in the Court gardens—he would think her more beautiful still if he could see her now. The Sleeping Beauty who was roused to life by the Prince's kiss could not have looked more beautiful, more enticing than she looked now.

Then there came the sound of wheels, and Bob's voice, instead of the prince's awoke her.

"Hallo, Paula!" he exclaims, entering the room. "Asleep, eh? Why didn't you go to bed? What a flat you were to sit up!"

"Oh, you're back, are you?" she says, springing up and shaking the thick hair clear of her face. "Enjoyed yourself? What's the time?"

"Time? Oh, almost time to get up again. Where's my pipe?"

"Here you are, Bob," she says, reaching his beloved brier from the mantel-shelf. "Well, Alice?"

The Beauty comes in, enveloped in her fleecy dolman, and yawns.

Beauty, be it remembered, wears a very different aspect going to and coming from the ball. Alice's beauty is not of the endurable kind. A few hours' hard work makes a visible mark upon it.

Somehow the fair face turns yellowish and wan, the golden hair fades into tow; the blue eyes look leaden and heavy, and, as a rule, the temper of Beauty corresponds with Beauty's appearance; but to-night Beauty is triumphant and in the best of humours.

"Up still!" she says. "Why didn't you go to bed? Have you been drawn through a hedge backward? Your hair is all down! You look as if you had been dancing all the evening."

A faint flush flies over Paula's face.

"Do I?" she says, quickly. "Never mind. People who sit up always look more tired than the people sat up for. Of course I have waited. I wanted to hear all about the ball. That's my reward for being virtuous and self-denying!"

Oh, Paula!

"It was a great success," said Alice, yawning, and crouching into the arm-chair into which she has thrown herself—"a great success, a most pleasant evening."

"And what's your verdict, Bob?" says Paula.

"Give me a light," is Bob's answer. "I'm dying for a pipe. If ever I am so unfortunate as to give a ball, which the gods forefend! I'll take jolly good care to avert the curses of my masculine guests by providing some hole and corner they can smoke in. Haven't had even a cigarette since I started."

"Robert, don't be idiotic!" says Alice, severely.

"Poor Bob!" murmurs Paula, and she hands him a light, and holds it to his pipe. "They might have given you a chance of a cigarette."

"Not even a cigarette," says Bob, with a groan. "I thought I smelt one once, and tried to find out where it was, but it must have been a coachman outside."

"But the supper, Bob?" says Paula, hurriedly.

"The supper wasn't so bad," he admits; "but I had to hang on to an old lady—fat, fair, and forty, with a tremendous appetite, and she took up all my time in keeping her supplied; I'll swear she ate six oyster patties, half a lobster—that was mine—and—"

"We don't want to know how much Lady Brabazon ate, Bob; you ought to have been proud to take a lady of title into supper!"

Bob grunts.

"I'll take care to take a lady of no title in next time; then, perhaps, I shall get some supper myself. Is there any liquor of any kind about, Paula? I've had exactly two glasses of Claret-cup: the lady of title—confound her!—drank all the champagne."

Paula gets some whiskey and water and mixes him a glass.

"Poor Bob!" she says, ruffling his short, yellow locks. "You've had a hard time of it, it appears!"

"Don't be idiotic, if you please, Paula," interrupts Alice, severely. "If Bob has not enjoyed himself, other people have. Other people are not so fond of beer-and-skittles—"

"Only played one game of skittles in my life," murmurs Bob.

"And it was a most successful evening. I danced every dance."

"I know. I saw you dancing—" begins Paula, eagerly.

"What!" ejaculates Alice.

"In fancy, I mean," murmurs Paula, meekly.

"Oh! Yes, every dance. It was a beautiful band—Coote & Tinney's. I wish you had heard it, Paula."

"Yes. Thank you," meekly.

"And the floor was perfect."

"As good as a smooth, gravel walk?" thinks—not says—Paula.

"And—and everybody was most attentive," goes on Alice, smoothing her ruffled hair and eyeing her satin-clad toes. "Most attentive, especially Stancy de Palmar."

Here Bob bursts into a laugh.

"Poor Stancy de!" he says. "If ever there was an idiot—"

"Robert!" exclaims Alice, indignantly.

"Well, it's the truth," says Bob, eyeing her steadfastly. "It is, upon my word, Paula. I wish you could have seen him. You know what he usually is, with his drawl and his eye-glasses!"

Paula nods, with a little laugh.

"Well, he was worse to-night. He was, indeed. He couldn't speak three consecutive words without a 'haw, haw,' and the eye-glass wouldn't stick in his eye, and he'd got on a pair of shiny patent leather boots two sizes too small for him; you could see they hurt him. And his smile! Look here!" and he gets up and limps round the room with a penny stuck in his eye. "'Haw, Mith Ethcourt, will you danch thith danch with me? Thankth, awfully obliged. Very good of you. Hot, ithn't it? Haw, haw!' There, that's him to the life. I give you my word."

"Really?" and Paula leans back to laugh at her ease. "Really, Bob? How delicious! How I should have liked to have seen him. Do it again!"

"No!" exclaims Alice, on whose fair face an angry red is glowing. "You shall not, Robert. You should be ashamed of yourself! To—to enjoy anyone's hospitality and come home to mimic them!"

"But you see," says the impatient Bob, dropping into his chair, and puffing at his pipe, "I didn't enjoy it."

This is unanswerable, and Alice is driven to a little sniff of indignation.

"At any rate," she says in a highly virtuous tone, "everybody seemed to enjoy themselves excepting you, Bob, and I think I shall go up to bed."

"Do," they both responded, with suspicious alacrity, and she rises with a little shiver and a yawn.

"Don't let them make too much noise in the morning, Paula; I sha'n't get up to breakfast."

"Very well," says Paula, and a faint flush comes into her face. "Good-night, dear, shall I come and brush your hair for you?"

"No; I'm too tired," says the beauty. "Good-night," and, with another yawn, she takes her candle and departs.

Bob laughs in his slow, silent fashion.

"Dissipation doesn't suit Alice," he says. "Washes her out. Pity you weren't there, Paula; you'd have enjoyed yourself, no doubt. I thought of you once or twice—"

"Not, really, Bob!" with a little, incredulous laugh.

"Yes, I did," he says, nodding. "Fact. Wished you'd been in my place. You see, I was just so much lumber—couldn't dance."

"Didn't you dance at all?" asks Paula.

"Y—es," he says, puffing his pipe, "one dance."

"Who with?" she demands, bending forward with her elbows on her knees, and her chin on her folded hands, her eyes fixed dreamily on his handsome, honest face.

"Oh," he says, carelessly—a little too carelessly—"with May Palmer."

"Oh!" says Paula; and Paula's "oh's" are generally significant. "With May? That was good of her!"

"So I told her," he says, staring at the fire-place. "But she said she didn't mind. Plenty of people wanting to dance with her too."

"I like May!" says Paula, emphatically. "She's worth all the Palmers put together. Did she look pretty, Bob? How was she dressed?"

"How should I know?" he retorts, stolidly. "Pretty? Yes, I suppose so. What rum questions you girls ask!"

"I know how she'd look," says Paula, meditatively. "Just sweetly petite and soft and nice, just like the dear little thing that she is! I don't think it right for a sugar-baker to have such a dear little thing like that!"

"You said just now that she was 'sweet,'" he says, with a grin.

"And was Stancy de Palmer so attentive to Alice, Bob?"

"I don't know—how should I?—what do you mean? He danced about her a good deal, and got her things to eat and drink, and played the imbecile generally. Hadn't we better get to bed? Did you see to the colt and the puppies?"

"Yes, Bob," slowly. How is she to tell him about the stranger who is coming to-morrow? And yet she must tell him.

"Well, let's go. You must be tired of sticking up. Jolly dull evening for you all alone here. Come on."

"Yes, Bob. Oh, Bob!"

"Well!" with a mighty yawn and a stretching of the great limbs.

"It hasn't been so dull. I—I haven't been alone. That is—"

"Well, what—what on earth's the matter with you?"—staring at her.

"I—I just ran out after I'd seen the colt, Bob, and I met someone. Don't stare so."

"I wasn't staring. Do you want me to shut my eyes? Well, who was it?"

"A—a gentleman, Bob."

"Oh, old Jackson about the calf? Did you tell him to call in the morning?"

"Yes, I told him to call in the morning; but it wasn't old Jackson. It was a young man. Bob, what do you think; I've seen a Powis!"

"A what?" demanded Bob, as if she had named some strange animal.

"A Powis. At least he said that was his name."

"Where—here?"

"No—o; just outside." Oh, Paula! "We met by—by accident. He is coming to call on you to-morrow about the fishing. I told him he might."

"All right. But what Powis is it?"

"Herrick Powis is his name."

"Oh!" says Bob, thoughtfully. "Herrick—Herrick! Don't know that I've heard of him. Oh, yes, by Jove! I have. Well, you've made the acquaintance of a nice specimen!" and he laughs.

"A nice specimen? What do you mean, Bob?" she demands, open-eyed.

Bob laughs in his silent fashion for a moment, evidently recalling something that he has heard or known.

"So he is," he says. "If all they say is true, all the Powises are a rum lot; but this one—if this is the one—is the rummiest and wildest of the lot."

"Wildest?" incredulously and curiously.

"Yes; a regular bad lot."

A deep crimson floods the girlish face, and the dark eye-brows arch expressively.

"This isn't the one, then."

Bob stares.

"How do you know? You said his name was Herrick?"

"Then there must be another Herrick," she retorts, with an air of conviction. "This one I met can't be a bad lot, as you call it."

"And why not, Miss Know-all?"

"Because—because—oh, because he can't be. Why, he's as quiet and—and gentlemanly as a—bishop."

Bob leans against the mantel-shelf, that he may laugh at his ease.

"What an innocent you are, Paula! As if that had anything to do with it! Why, the quiet ones are always the worst. Quiet as a bishop, was he? That's good!"

Paula's eyes sink and her lips twitch quickly. Certainly, come to think of it, a bishop would not have invited a young lady whom he had met for the first time to dance on a gravel walk with him.

"I'm—I'm sure you're mistaken, Bob," she says, argumentatively. "He—he doesn't look bad."

"They never do," says Bob, with an air of worldly wisdom that somehow doesn't suit his honest and simple minded face. "Don't you know that it has been decided that a certain person never mentioned to ears polite is one of the most gentlemanly men that walk the earth? I tell you, if this man is the Herrick Powis I've heard of—and there can't be two with such a ridiculous name—"

(To be continued.)

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A Good Reminder.

With a relieved sigh, the chief partner turned to his junior.

"Coming towards the station?" he asked, as he closed his desk.

"Right, oh!"

The younger man had recently got married, and was full of things to say about wives in general.

"I wish," he remarked, "that my wife was a little more domesticated. She doesn't seem to care about the house—in fact, she is hardly ever indoors now."

"My word, that reminds me!" exclaimed his senior. "Excuse me a moment. I must just run in here."

He emerged from the shop, placing a small packet in his waistcoat pocket.

"Just remembered that my wife asked me to get her a packet of needles. Lucky your talk reminded me," he said.

"I wish my wfie would ask for needles!" grunted the youthful one. "But she absolutely refuses to sew a stitch. You're a lucky man, sir."

"Thank you," said the other, smiling. "But I am bound to admit that these are for the gramophone!"

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Coal Operators' Profits.

Former Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo in a telegram to Fuel Administrator Garfield say that income tax returns for 1917 showed that "many mine owners made shocking and indefensible profits on bituminous coal"; that before deduction of excess profit taxes "these returns showed earnings on capital stock, ranging from 15 to 2,000 per cent.," and that earnings of 100 to 300 per cent. on capital stock were not uncommon." We believe that a close examination of the returns for last year will prove that it will be unnecessary to change the fixed price on coal in order to have the operators pay a living wage to the coal miners.

Commenting on the testimony of Mr. McAdoo, the New York World says, it "cannot be ignored," and "if corroborated, it must convict the mine owners not only of outrageous profiteering but of inhumanity. They have underpaid their labor and they have overcharged the public. Furthermore, they have put their labor in the wrong and then have appealed to a plundered public to make the odious cause of monopoly its own. There may be something meaner than that but we do not know where to look for it."

The New York World is right. From the very beginning it was known to the miners and those who followed their case that the operators were plundering the public and had put their labor in wrong.

The government should insist upon a setlement as suggested by Secretary of Labor, Wilson, and accepted by the miners for a 31.61 per cent. increase and the operators should not be permitted to raise the price of coal a penny. For the government to permit an increase in the price of coal to the public would be "something meaner" than the "outrageous profiteering" and "inhumanity" with which the mine owners are charged in the testimony given by former Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo.—Charleston American.

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Fads and Fashions.

Sleeves are larger.

Large hats predominate.

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Plaid waists are in high favor.

The long overtunic is still worn.

Capes are made of steamer rugs.

Broadcloth is once more in favor.

New Batavia cloths are brocaded.

Handbags run to football shapes.

Most black gowns are of satin and velvet.

Bathing suits for the South are knitted.

Colored blouses are worn with the coat suit.

Venise lace is favored on handkerchiefs.

Beige duvetyne is combined with nutria fur.

Rainbow scarfs in four colors are back again.

Black Spanish lace is having a great vogue.

Yellow and blue are used much in combination.

Black chantilly is draped over cloth of gold.