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For Love of a Woman;
 OR,
New Romeo and Juliet.

CHAPTER XX.
 AN EXTRAORDINARY PROPOSAL.
 "A very proper question—very proper. If you will look over this bond, you will see that the payment of the ten thousand pounds is contingent upon the young lady's becoming possessed of at least twenty thousand a year. Do me the favour of perusing it; it is very short and very simple."
 "And very sweet," said Percy, and he rapidly ran over the paper. "I see you have left a blank where the young lady's name should go."
 "Which I will fill in when you have signed."
 "Ah! How long will you give me to consider this extraordinary proposal of yours?"
 "Exactly five minutes," said Spencer Churchill, blandly; "and excuse me, my dear Percy, if I say that that is four minutes too long! My dear young friend, consider! A young refined, accomplished lady, with a future fortune of at least twenty thousand a year—and you hesitate. Are you so fond of Soho, and this rather—excuse me—squalid life of yours? Think what a vista this opens before you! You are ambitious. I present you with a golden ladder by which you may climb to any height you please. What are your prospects now, save those of a lifelong drudgery with the work-house at the end? You, whose gifts warrant your taking your place among the flowers of the land—"
 "Wait, wait!" interrupted Percy. "I can't think with your drive buzzing in my ears! I want to think! Man alive, I can scarcely believe that this is sober earnest, and if it were not for the price you exact, I should find it impossible to do so; but now I see your game, or part of it—" He wandered to the piano as he spoke, and dropping into his music-chair, abstractedly let his hands stray over the keys. "I think more easily to music," he murmured, dreamily.
 Spencer Churchill watched him in

silence for a few minutes, then he said:
 "Time is up, my dear Percy. Is it to be 'Yes' or 'No'?"
 The young fellow rose from the piano. His face was pale, and his eyes glowing with a strange excitement.
 "I cannot resist it!" he said, in a voice, whose tremour belied his faint smile. "You are right—more right than you guessed—when you said I was ambitious. I am sick and weary of this life of squalid drudgery. I feel as if I would sell my soul—perhaps I am doing it!—to get out of it. Give me the paper and I'll sign it."
 Spencer Churchill spread it on the table, and Percy Levant snatched up a pen and wrote his name.
 "There!" he said, pushing it from him, folding his arms, and looking down at Spencer Churchill with an almost defiant light in his dark eyes. "And now what next? I am all attention. Who and where is my future bride, and when shall I see her?"
 "Her name is Doris Marlowe," said Spencer Churchill, softly, writing the name in the blank left for the purpose as he spoke. "She is at present acting as companion to Lady Despard, and you shall see her in a day or two."
 "Doris Marlowe!" repeated Percy Levant. "Doris Marlowe! It sounds pretty; but a rose by any other name, etc.; and she is acting as companion to Lady Despard, is she? And has no suspicion of the wealth that will be hers? Churchill, are you sure that this is not a fiction born of your too fertile imagination?"
 "You will see in a day or two," said Spencer Churchill.
 "It is really genuine? And what is the plan to be adopted? You will, I suppose, introduce me as a prince travelling incog, a millionaire in embryo, a something brilliant enough to dazzle the eyes of the young lady and carrying her fancy captive? Is this to be the line?"
 The philanthropist shook his head with an indulgent smile.
 "No, my dear Percy; I'm free to admit that that is the kind of thing most men would do; but I think that you and I are too wise, not to say too honourable, to adopt such a course of deception."
 Percy Levant laughed sardonically. "Pardon; I forgot that you were a man of high principle, and a light of

Exeter Hall. Well, what will you do?"
 "I shall tell the truth," said Spencer Churchill, with a virtuous uplifting of the eyes. "I shall introduce you to Lady Despard as a musical genius—you are a genius, you know, my dear Percy—struggling against the difficulties and obstacles insuperable to poverty and—er—that kind of thing. Lady Despard is never so happy as when she is assisting struggling talent, and she will receive anyone whom I recommend. Dear Lady Despard! The rest I leave to you. If you cannot find a way to Miss Marlowe's heart, then I will confess that I am very much mistaken in you."
 "Thanks for your flattering opinion," said Percy, with a short bow. "I will do my best—or my worst, which is it?"
 "Meanwhile, touching that ten thousand!"
 "You shall have it with pleasure," said Spencer Churchill, and he took a note from his purse and handed it to him with a benevolent smile. "Do not spend it—"
 "In riotous living. No, Father Patriarch, I won't. I will buy myself some decent clothes, and get my hair cut—for I've noticed that your Lady Despard takes a great deal more interest in struggling genius when it is clean and neatly dressed."
 Spencer Churchill nodded.
 "You know the world, I see, my dear Percy. I think that is all we need say. We thoroughly understand each other—"
 "I thoroughly understand you," returned the young fellow. "Whether you understand me is quite another matter."
 "I think I do—I think I do," murmured Spencer Churchill, blandly. "I think that you will do your best to win the game which secures you a charming wife and future independence. Good-bye, my dear Percy. Don't let the new suit of clothes be too resplendent; remember that you are a poor young man of genius."
 "I'm not likely to get the poverty," said Percy, slowly. "Good-bye. Mind how you go down-stairs. There are generally from twenty to thirty children asleep on that at this hour, and the parents, strange to say, have an unreasonable objection to having them smothered."
 "I will take care," said the philanthropist, and, with a murmured benediction, he ambled out.
 CHAPTER XXI.
 AN ART PATRON.
 "Dear me, how interesting!" said Lady Despard.
 It was the third day after Doris's arrival, and they were sitting at breakfast in a small room, beautifully cool and shady, and furnished with an elaborate simplicity which, while it avoided all garish colour, was fresh and bright. A great bowl of roses stood in the centre of the table, from which rose a long fountain of perfumed water. Curtains of the faintest blush-pink threw a warm tint upon her ladyship, who, in her morning-gown of delicate chintz, looked like one of the Dresden shepherdesses which stood on the mantel-shelf. Doris, in her white morning-trock, with its deep black sash, was the only patch of decided colour—it white can be called a colour—in the room, but, beside Lady Despard's rather insipid prettiness, her fresh young loveliness looked like one of the roses in the bowl.
 She looked up from the coffee-cup she was filling from the great silver urn with a faint smile of curiosity. In three days she had learnt all that there was to learn of Lady Despard's character, and had grown to like her. As for her ladyship, she had already

taken to the beautiful girl and her quaint, graceful ways and soft, musical voice, and twenty times in each of the days had congratulated herself and blessed Mr. Spencer Churchill on having sent her such a treasure.
 "Really very interesting!" she repeated, turning over the note she was reading, and regarding it with a pensiv smile. "It is from our friend Mr. Churchill, dear," she said. "One of his charming, little letters. The good that man does in a quiet, unobtrusive way is really astounding!"
 "What has he been doing now?" asked Doris, quietly.
 "Why, he has written asking me to help him in assisting a young friend of his who has had a great deal of trouble and all that. He is a great musician—that is, he ought to be great, you know—but he is poor and friendless, and Mr. Churchill wants me to take him by the hand. He says that I have such immense influence in the arts and musical world that I can do anything. Of course that's nonsense; that is only his nice way of putting it. But there's the note. Just read it out, dear."
 Doris took the letter and read it. It was a charming little composition, as Lady Despard had said, and in the pleasantest way told the story of struggling genius, which only needed Lady Despard's patronage to rise to the heights of success and fame. Might he bring his young friend to see dear Lady Despard? Perhaps, if he might suggest, and her ladyship was disengaged, she would kindly ask them to dinner. He was quite sure she had only to know his dear young friend, Percy Levant, to feel an interest in him for his own sake, and the sake of the art of which dear Lady Despard was so distinguished a patroness.
 Charming words as was the epistle, Doris, as she read it, felt a strange and vaguely indefinite want of faith in it; an incredulity for which she at once took herself to task, as she reminded herself that Mr. Churchill was only doing for the young man that which he had done for her.
 "It is a nice letter," she said, handing it back. "Shall you ask him, Lady Despard?"
 "Well, yes, dear; I think so," said her ladyship. "I don't know that I can do much for the young man. You see, we go to Florence in a week's time. I might give a concert, and so introduce him to the musical people; but I daresay Mr. Churchill has a plan ready—he is always so systematic. I wonder what the young man is like? Percy Levant is the name, isn't it? Sounds Greek, doesn't it? I hope he isn't a foreigner; they generally smell so of tobacco, and it's so dreadfully difficult to understand them; and they are not always presentable. There was a Senor Something-or-other, an artist they got me to patronise, and he used to swear dreadfully in Spanish, which no one understood, fortunately."
 "Then it did not so much matter," said Doris.
 (To be Continued.)

Fashion Plates.



2876.—This design is good for rajah silk or shantung, for pongee, poplin, taffeta, satin, linen or gingham. The blouse is separate from the skirt, which may be of lining under the tunic portion.
 The Pattern is cut in 6 sizes: 34, 36, 38, 40, 42 and 44 inches bust measure. Size 38 requires 6½ yards of 36 inch material. Width of skirt at lower edge is about 1½ yards.
 A pattern of this illustration mailed to any address on receipt of 10 cents in silver or stamps.

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2877.—Here is just the dress and hat for warm summer days. This outfit may be made of khaki, lawn, percale, linen, cotton, corduroy, pique, drill, gingham or chambray. Smocking may replace the gathers at the waistline; the shoulder straps may be of ribbon.
 The Pattern is cut in 5 sizes: 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 years. Size 4 will require ½ yard of 27 inch material for the hat, and 2½ yards for the dress.
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- Pineapple (Grated).
- Peaches (Whole).
- Peaches (Sliced).
- Cherries (White).
- Apricots (Whole).
- Apricots (Sliced).
- Egg Plums.
- Strawberries.
- Cherries (Black).

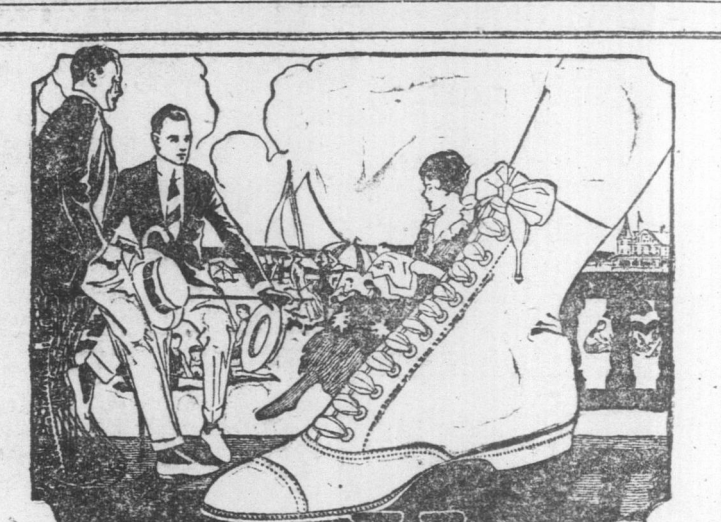
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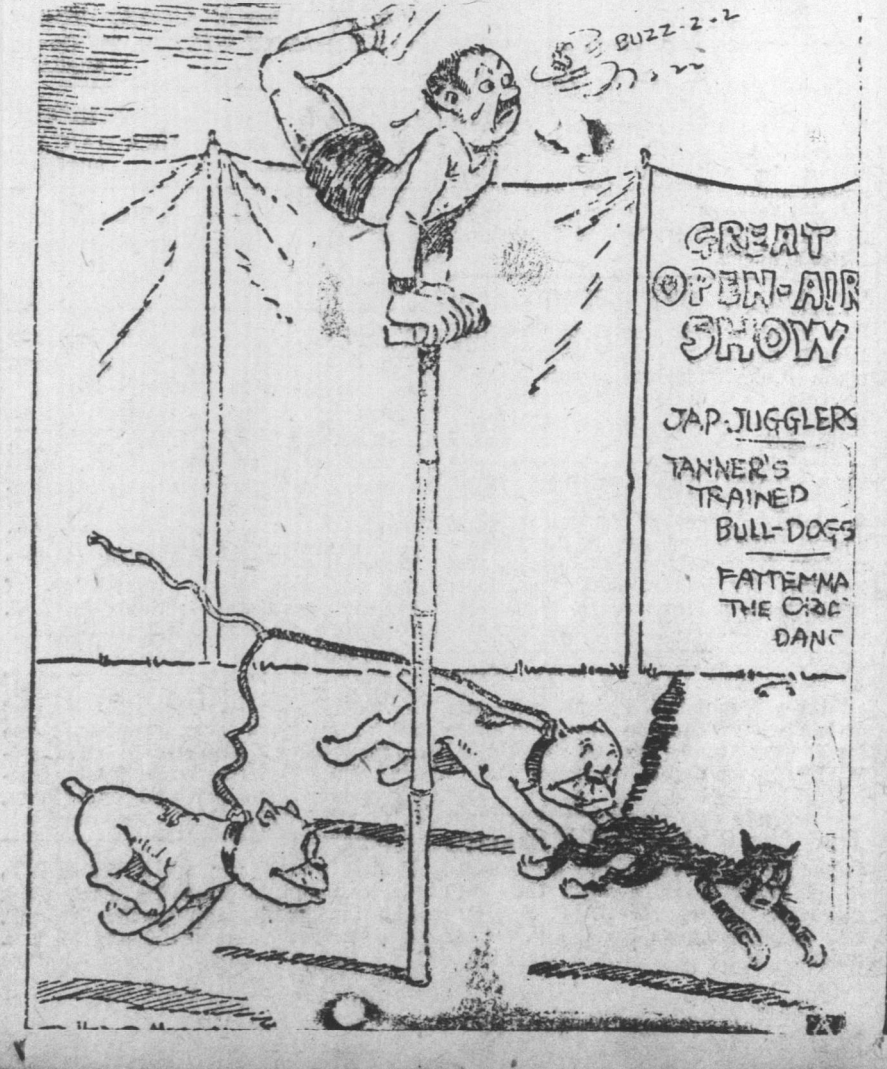
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