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After the Ball;
OR,
The Mystery Solved at Last.

CHAPTER VI
"All is Vanity."

"There is nothing wrong, Mr. Hawes," said Sir Fielding. "It is Maurice Durant who preached this morning. Make your mind easy, and remember that, however strange his manner, he is your rector, and without waiting for the curate's expression of thankfulness, he turned back to the carriage, which was waiting for him, passing several groups of cottagers who were eagerly discussing the mysterious event.

Entering the hall carriage, which contained the ladies only—Chudleigh had sent Lady Mildred's carriage back to the cottage and decided to walk—Sir Fielding, in answer to the shower of questions poured upon him by Lady Mildred, gave her an exact description of the scene at the hall on the night of Maurice's return.

"And he faced the storm there at night?" said Carlotta, with quiet astonishment. "It seemed to me sufficient to sweep a human being from the earth."

"It was terrible," murmured Maud, shuddering and nestling against her companion. "Think, Carlotta! he fought his way to the rectory, and slept there in that deserted, ghostly place where his father fell dead! Carlotta, I know not why that he slept in the very room—he looked aged to-day, even from two days since, aged and wan, as if he had seen some frightful sight or endured some fearful agony," and she shuddered, uttering a low sob that alarmed her beautiful companion.

"Hush, hush, Maud," she said. "He has terrified you."

"No, no," exclaimed Maud, eagerly. "He does not frighten me. I feel for him, I—oh, Carlotta, think of his face; it is so kindly, so sorrowful, so sad; I am sure he has suffered, suffered terribly, and I pity him so," and she laid her face among the furs on Carlotta's breast.

"Poor Maud," exclaimed Sir Fielding. "It has quite upset her. Into the drawing-room, where she was playing alone, he found the way, unseen by any of the servants, how or by what means I cannot understand, and appeared before her, with the rain streaming from a large cloak which he wore in a foreign fashion and his hair blown about his head like a figure from a Raphael cartoon."

"Oh, of course not. I confess, I never felt so terrified in my life as I did this morning," said Lady Mildred. "I never heard such fearful eloquence."

"One could only learn in suffering such wondrous knowledge of human passion as he displayed," said Carlotta, in a low voice.

Severe Headaches and Pains in the Back

Resulted From Deranged Kidneys and Constipation of the Bowels.

It is in vain to try to regulate and restore the healthful action of the kidneys until the liver and bowels are set right.

And just here is where so many kidney medicines fail. Kidney derangements almost invariably begin with constipation and torpidity of the liver. The whole work of filtering the blood is thrown on the kidneys, and in time they fail to stand the strain. The poison in the system gives rise to severe headaches, pains in the back and tired, depressed feelings.

Because they act directly on the liver and bowels, as well as on the kidneys, Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills are eminently successful in the treatment of kidney derangements. Mr. William Loney Marysville, N. B. writes:—"I am glad to recommend Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills to anybody who is suffering from kidney trouble or constipation. I suffered

"You are right, my dear Miss Lawley, you are right," said Sir Fielding. "Heaven knows what Maurice Durant has gone through during his wanderings."

"If his story is half as mysterious as his appearance would lead one to imagine it," said Lady Mildred, "it is a sad one, Fielding."

"Ay, ay," echoed Sir Fielding, sighing.

"Is he at the rectory still, Sir Fielding?" asked Carlotta, as the carriage drew up at the hall.

"Yes, I believe so," said he. "I sent Wilson over this morning with an invitation to dine here. I put it in the most supplicating language I could, but I do not know—oh, here is Wilson," he broke off, as his valet approached the carriage. "Well, Wilson, have you been to the rectory?" he asked.

"Yes, Sir Fielding," replied the man.

"And did you find Mr. Durant?"

"Yes, sir; I knocked several times, and receiving no answer, was going away, especially as all the windows were as dark and the place looked as desolate as usual, but as soon as I had got down the steps I saw a tall gentleman sitting on one of the broken terraces, smoking a foreign-looking pipe and watching me quite cool and unconcerned. 'Why are you knocking?' he said. I lifted my hat respectfully, for I guessed it was Mr. Durant, Sir Fielding, and said I had a letter for Mr. Durant. He held out his hand, without a word, and after reading the letter, fell to smoking his pipe again, as if he had quite forgotten me. I stood silent some time, and determined to remind him by a cough. He looked up with a start, and, thrusting your letter into his pocket, said, as he walked toward the house: 'Tell your master, sirrah, that I beg to be excused.'"

Sir Fielding sighed.

"Strange, marvelously strange. It is like him. I fancy I can see him at this moment walking away, and hear his foreign accent, which is the most singular I ever heard."

Maud sighed deeply.

"Papa," she said, "what will he get to eat? Will he have no dinner?" she asked, anxiously.

"I'm afraid not, my dear," said Sir Fielding.

"It will not be the first time Maurice Durant has been dinnerless," thought Carlotta, for she had been used to faces that bore the hallmark of hunger.

And if she was not mistaken, she could read a story of want and privation in Maurice Durant's face.

CHAPTER VII
The Lady in Black.

There are strange creatures with manners queer, Who crop up in our world from year to year; Yet of them all—ah, find me, if you can, A more offensive being than a self-made man.

—Lyrics of Society.

THE "Folly" was new, so was everything in it, from the lord and

master thereof to the gloomy dinner service—carved, stamped and engraved with the Gregson crest wherever there was room to put it—and the glittering armor ranged down the hall, worn by Mr. Gregson's ancestors, who existed in any age Mr. Gregson's imagination might select.

Mr. Gregson's manner was new, too, and striking. A little, short, hickety man, with a red face, rough lead of hair, and stubby, iron-gray whiskers, large, lobster-hued hands, which he had a habit of hanging on tables or chairs in support of an argument or to emphasize a command, he looked from head to foot that most obnoxious of individuals—a self-made man, who never can forget his manufacturer.

Of Mrs. Gregson little need be said. She was a worthy woman, who really merited better things than a life made miserable by being placed in a false position.

The son, Tom Gregson, bore a strong resemblance to his father, though his manners were slightly better, and he looked something of a gentleman, though, unfortunately, somewhat of the fast school. Tom Gregson was particular about his clothes, took an interest in race meetings and handicaps, and never omitted to back his opinion, however trivial the subject upon which he offered it; indeed, nearly all his sentences commenced or ended with, "I bet you two to one," or "I'll take six to four," and like phrases, which shocked his would-be refined sisters and made his father use bad language.

Of the girls it would be scarcely fair to speak too critically. They were as well-mannered and unaffected as could be expected of them in such bad-mannered and affected surroundings, were tolerably good-looking, rather show than beautiful, and extremely desirous of entering the charmed circle of the country aristocracy, especially of the hall, which stood at the head.

Occasionally, Tom Gregson made the acquaintance of some smaller stars of the fashionable hemisphere, and obeying his father's order, would invite them down to the "Folly," but seldom succeeded in getting acceptations, for there was no shooting, and very little fishing, to be had on the Folly grounds, and as for the hunting, the Grassmere park was not celebrated enough to tempt a hunting man of these hard-riding, long-run days.

Sometimes, however, Tom succeeded in hooking a fish, and this Christmas was one of them, for a certain Hon. Clarence Hartfield, having nothing else to do, and feeling rather bored with his own "high-toned lot," as he termed the Earl of Crownbrilliant and the ladies of his family, had accepted Tom's invitation, and was dangling his patent-leather heels and twirling his golden-hued moustache in the Folly drawing-room, rather enjoying in a quiet way the persistent toadyism of Papa Gregson and the outspoken idolatry of the Misses Lavinia and Bella.

Coming home from church with the strange sermon ringing in their ears, the Misses Gregson had, of course, burst into a torrent of chatter, in which, as usual, Hon. Clarence Hartfield did not join, being averse to hard talking, as well as all other hard work, and preferring to lie back among the soft cushions and listen with half-closed eyes. Besides, Mr. Hartfield had another reason for silence. He was thinking—and that was a great undertaking for one of Clarence Hartfield's class—thinking not of the strange sermon or the preacher, but of a certain lovely face he had seen in the little church, and wondering where he had seen it before.

So engrossed was he on this special occasion that he was quite dumb to the volley of excited questions as to whether he had ever seen such an extraordinary-looking man, or heard such a singular sermon, which the mamma and daughters fired at him, and, when the gaudy equipage pulled up at the door with a clash, he lounged off to his room, and was seen no more till dinner-time, when he entered the drawing-room in exquisitely fitting evening suit, with diamond studs at his white wrists and flashing in his spotless shirt front.

"Oh, Mr. Hartfield, we thought you had gone to bed," said Miss Bella,

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sweeping up her silken skirts to make room for him.

"Did you?" drawled the honorable swell, in a languid monotone. "I did think of it, but—oh, ah, yes," dropping his eyeglasses and recovering from the fit of abstraction which had seized him before he had labored through his sentence. "Oh, weally, I don't know why I didn't. P'waps I smelt something you had for dinner that I thought I liked," and he laughed spasmodically.

"A plain dinner, sir, a plain joint and vegetables, sir," shouted old Gregson, from the fire before which he was wasting his countails and adding a deeper tint to his crimson hands. "None of your foreign kick-shaws for me on Sunday. 'Mrs. Gregson,' says I, 'whatever you may do on other days, let's have wholesome victuals on Sunday.'"

"Oh, papa," remonstrated the girls, while Mrs. Gregson smiled with vacant uneasiness. But Mr. Gregson was not to be put down. Removing one hand from his cooking, he flourished it, and continued:

"I hate the French muck I'm obliged to eat here six times a week. What with your soups with names no sensible man can pronounce, and your made dishes which nobody but an idiot would eat, I'm almost poisoned—almost poisoned," and the eminent Manchester merchant emphasized the last assertion by turning around and poking the fire with sufficient force to knock the back of a new enamelled grate out, adding, to the languid Clarence: "and I'm surprised a sensible man like you, sir, can eat them."

"Ye—s, it is surprising," said Mr. Hartfield, with deep gravity; "I agree with you." A chorus of "Oh, Mr. Hartfield!" "Oh, I do weally, You don't know how fond I am of beef and mutton!"

Whereupon, just as Miss Bella had declared that she doted on mutton likewise, Mr. Tom entered and proceeded at once to join the hunt with: "Hello! I'll bet you what you like we've got beef for dinner."

"What the deuce do you mean, sir?" roared old Gregson. "Isn't beef good enough for you? Do you mean to turn up your nose at wholesome food, sir?"

"Easy, governor," retorted Tom, thrusting his hands in his pockets and falling into a chair. "Who said I didn't like beef? It's good enough, I dare say, when there isn't anything better to be got. Well, girls, what's the text?"

(To be Continued.)

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If you have a severe cough or chest cold accompanied with soreness, throat tickle, hoarseness, or difficult breathing, or if your child wakes up during the night with croup and you want quick help, just try this pleasant tasting home-made cough remedy. Any druggist can supply you with 2½ ounces of Finex (50 cents worth). Pour this into a 16-oz. bottle and fill the bottle with plain granulated sugar syrup. This prepared, you have 16 ounces of really reliable cough remedy—one that can be depended upon to give quick and lasting relief at all times.

You can feel this take hold of a cough in a way that means business. It loosens and raises the phlegm, stops throat tickle and soothes and heals the irritated membranes that line the throat and bronchial tubes with such promptness, ease and certainty that it is really amazing.

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There are many worthless imitations of this noted mixture. To avoid disappointment, ask for "2½ ounces of Finex" with full directions and don't accept anything else. A guarantee of absolute satisfaction or money promptly refunded, goes with this preparation. The Finex Co., Toronto, Ont.

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War News

Messages Received Previous to

SUCCESSFUL RAIDS

PARIS, Jan. 24. (Off.) French troops made successful raids last night in the south of the Somme, and in the district, the war office said. Patrols were also unusually near the Selle region near the east of the front.

FRENCH OFFICIAL

PARIS, Jan. 24. (Off.) During the night we effected successfully several raids at St. Omer on the Somme and in the region of Neville. In the district there was patrolling. Quiet prevailed on the remainder of the front. In aviation yesterday Gynemer brought down a German machine which fell near Maurepas. In the West two other German machines brought down, one near the other near Epinecourt, and the 22nd German plane with special guns smashed its ground. North of Louvain, the same day, 16 planes of the Naval Aviation Corps bombarded high furnaces of Durbach, which seems to have suffered considerable damage.

AUSTRIA AND BANKRUPTCY

PARIS, Jan. 24. (Off.) Austria has decided on an extraordinary measure to stave off bankruptcy, according to the Journal's Geneva correspondent. The correspondent says that about to be submitted to the government, whereby a fourth part of the and personal property of all the inhabitants of the empire become the property of the State in exchange for a kind of bond. This bond, according to the correspondent, the State intends to redeem when the financial crisis permits.

BRITISH OFFICIAL

LONDON, Jan. 24. (Off.) The official report from the headquarters in France reads: "An enemy raid against our trenches south of Loos early this morning was off without difficulty. A number of dead and wounded Germans were in our hands. Our losses were another party caught under last night south of Mulluch, sent back with loss. Enemy

