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CHAPTER VI
BEWITCHED.

"So awfully glad to see you, Bruce! It seems ages since we met! And how well you are looking! I am awfully lucky! Do you know I hesitated outside for a moment before I came in! Never expected to see you, you may be sure, or I should not have paused a moment!" and he wrung Lord Norman's hand again.

Then his joyous blue eyes turned to Floris, questioning. She had her face toward the stage, and Lord Norman made no offer of introduction, but Lady Betty leaned forward and tapped Floris on the arm.

"My dear, let me make you acquainted with an old friend—I beg your pardon, Bertie! A young friend—"

"Now, Lady Pendleton!" murmured Lord Clifford, with meek reproach.

"Lord Clifford, Miss Carlisle." Floris turned her head and bowed, and Bertie, as Viscount Clifford was usually called, started slightly, flushed, and then bowed. Lady Betty laughed with pleasant maliciousness. She saw the effect Floris' beauty had made upon the boy.

"And so you have just come from Canada, Bertie?" said Lord Norman.

Bertie responded with a smile and a laugh, and began to tell them some of his adventures. Floris scarcely listened, but the clear, fresh voice reached her ears and chimed in not inharmoniously with the music. All the while he was talking, the young viscount's eyes were wandering toward her, and in a pause of the conversation he drew near Lady Betty and leaned down to whisper:

"Who is she, Lady Pendleton?"

"My companion, Bertie. Isn't she beautiful?"

"Hush!" he whispered, with a bright blush that many a woman in the theatre would have given her suite of diamonds to possess. "Hush, she will hear you! She is lovely!"

He drew nearer to Floris, and seeing her opera cloak had slipped to the floor of the box, stooped and, picking it up, put it on the back of her chair.

"Thank you," said Floris, looking around at him, and reading in his eyes the direct obvious desire to speak to her, she slowly moved her chair so that he might draw his near.

But when he had seated himself close to her, he did not seem to know what to say.

"Have you been long in London?" he asked, almost timidly, but his eyes showed the interest he took in her.

"Only a day or two," said Floris. "This is the first opera I have ever seen."

"Really!" his blue eyes expanding. "How jolly! I wish I had come earlier!" then he blushed. "Has Bruce—Lord Norman—been here all the time?"

"Yes," said Floris.

"Dear old Bruce!" he said, glancing slightly to the back of the box where Lord Norman leaned, looking at the door. "I am so glad to see him again."

"You are old friends?" said Floris, very quietly.

"Oh, yes; we were at Eton together, that is; I was there a couple of terms before he left, and we have seen a great deal of each other since. He has been awfully kind to me, taken me about, and put me up at his clubs. I am very proud of being his friend; there are so few fellows he is really intimate with. It is just good luck my meeting him here to-night. I heard at the club that he had sailed in his yacht."

"Lord Norman is staying in London to help Lady Pendleton at a fancy fair," said Floris.

"Really! A fancy fair! How jolly! I wonder whether she would let me help. I'll ask her!" he said, resolutely, and he got up and went to Lady Betty.

Lord Norman came forward, as if he had been waiting.

"How do you like my friend, Bertie, Miss Carlisle?" he asked.

"Very much," replied Floris. "He has gone to ask Lady Betty to allow him to help her at the fancy fair."

"She will be delighted. Bertie is what is called in theatrical circles, 'a safe draw.' He is the pet of society; it is a wonder he is not spoiled."

"I don't think I should say that he is not spoiled," said Floris, with a smile.

Bertie came back to her chair, as she spoke, flushed and radiant.

"I am accepted, Miss—" he stopped.

"Carlisle," put in Lord Norman.

"Miss Carlisle! I shall work awfully hard! There are lots of things I can do. You will see! We'll make a big success of it."

The curtain fell amid a thunder of applause, and Lady Betty, with a little yawn, shut up her fan and looked around.

"Don't you wait, Bruce," she said, with a significant glance at the opposite box. "Bertie will take charge of us."

A frown gathered for a moment on Lord Norman's brow.

"What have I done to be summarily dismissed?" he said.

"I was thinking for your own good, Bruce," she whispered.

"Pray, let me think for myself," he said.

Then he went to put on Floris' cloak, but Bertie, with hands that almost trembled in his eagerness and delight, had got the cloak in his hand, and was reverently arranging it on her shoulders; then he offered her his arm, and Lord Bruce was left to escort Lady Betty. The two men conducted the ladies from the box into the crowded foyer, and Bertie dashed off to find the carriage, which he managed, by dint of hard work and the bribe of a sovereign, to bring to the door just five minutes before its time. Then he went back to the saloon, looking superbly handsome, with his fair face flushed with his exertions. As he entered he saw Lord Norman, as he thought, standing by the door.

"Why! Where are the ladies, Bruce?" he exclaimed.

The man he addressed looked at him for a moment, then turned, and was instantly swallowed up in the brilliant crowd thronging the corridor.

Bertie looked after him with astonishment, then mechanically made his way to where he had left the three, and found them standing in the same spot, waiting for him. He stared at Bruce with amazement, and in silence for a moment.

"What's the matter, Bertie? Has the carriage gone away?"

"Why!—how did you get in here so soon, and without your overcoat?" asked Bertie, open-eyed.

"I have not left the saloon since you went, of course," returned Lord Norman.

"But I saw you outside here a minute—a second—ago!" retorted Bertie. Lady Betty laughed.

"What nonsense you talk, Bertie!" she exclaimed. "Bruce has not left us; how could he?"

"I have made a stupid mistake," he said, penitently. "I have got the carriage."

They went down without another word, but as they descended the stairs he looked from right to left, searchingly.

Lord Norman and he put them into the carriage, and Lord Norman stood by the window a moment after he had shut the door.

"Good-night," he said, in his low, musical voice, and speaking to Floris. "I hope you will not be tired in the morning."

"Thanks," she said, calmly.

The carriage moved on very slowly, and Bertie seized the opportunity to press forward.

"I may come and talk about the fair, to-morrow," he said, eagerly.

"Yes, yes; do," said Lady Betty, putting out her hand. "And make haste back! You have no hat on, and will catch cold!"

He laughed his frank, boyish laugh, and, as if in echo, Floris laughed, too, and held out her hand.

He flushed with grateful pleasure and seized it, getting nearly run over for his pains, and stood looking after the carriage until it was lost to sight.

Lord Norman watched him with a smile on his face.

"Don't they wear hats in Canada, Bertie?" he asked.

The young viscount started, and laughed apologetically; then sent a man to the saloon for his hat.

"Oh, Bruce, what a lovely creature!" he exclaimed, in a low voice, as he locked his arm in Lord Norman's. Lady Betty's companion! Do you know her well, Bruce? How glad I am that I came back, and that I dropped in to-night!"

Lord Norman stopped again and looked at him, with something like a frown and a smile commingled.

"Now, Bertie, don't play the fool. I know what this rhapsody means. You are in love for the five hundred and ninety-ninth time!"

The young viscount raised his head and looked at him. His face went pale, and his blue eyes were almost solemn in their earnestness.

"No; for the first time, Bruce. Don't chaff me. I—I don't think I should like it. Yes, I am in love," he went on, almost defiantly; "and I am not ashamed to own it. I feel as if I had been bewitched."

He put his hand to his brow again, and his face went pale.

"Don't chaff me. I am serious this time, Bruce."

"So you have assured me quite a dozen times before," retorted Lord Norman.

"But I have never felt like this. There, don't let us talk of it, Bruce."

"But we will," said Lord Norman, almost sternly. "Listen to me, Bertie; I know about as much of you as you do yourself. You are Viscount Clifford, with an old title and an empty purse. You are good-looking, confound you, as a picture, and you have got to take your good looks into the open market, and do your duty in that state of life, etc. And that duty is, to marry an heiress as soon as you conveniently can."

The boy flushed, turned pale and then sighed.

"Now, Miss Carlisle is not an heiress; she is penniless, or next door to it, and Lady Betty's companion; and the sooner you get over your infatuation the better!"

Bertie stood silent for a moment—they had reached the door of Lord Norman's chambers—then he looked up.

"It is all very well for you to talk like this, Bruce. You do not know what I feel. I don't think you were

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ever downright in love."

"No," said Lord Norman, with a strange smile.

"But you mean well," as they say, and perhaps you are right. I'll call on Lady Betty to-morrow, and start off for—oh, anywhere!"

"Do," said Lord Norman.

"Lord Clifford!" said Lady Betty, as Josine opened the door of the boudoir, and made the announcement.

The room was in the wildest confusion, littered with the contents of a huge box, which had just arrived from Paris, containing a selection of Swiss costumes, slightly altered and beautified by the great master. Floris was kneeling before the glass trying on white linen caps and kerchiefs.

"Bertie, my dear! How attentive of him. Show Lord Clifford up," she said, and presently they heard him coming up two stairs at a time.

He stopped at the door, agast and blushing at the sight of the finery and the occupation of the two ladies.

"Oh, I beg pardon! I thought the girl said 'upstairs.'"

"Oh, it is all right! Come in, Bertie. You are the very man we want," said Lady Betty, holding out her little paw. "We are too busy to receive visits of ceremony this morning, but if you like to take us as we are you are quite welcome."

"What an awful litter! How do you do, Miss Carlisle?"

Floris held out her hand, without getting up from her knees, and he bent over it.

"What a fine lot of dresses! Rather gorgeous, aren't they?"

"Color is everything at a fancy fair," said Lady Betty, with an air of conviction.

"Color and cheek!" said Bertie. "Sir!" exclaimed Lady Betty, with mock severity. "We did not admit you into our boudoir to receive your impertinence."

"Beg pardon, Lady Betty!" he retorted. "I meant color and confidence."

"Then we had better give you a stall all to yourself, Bertie," said Lady Betty. "Now tell me how I look. Isn't this quite a Swiss girl's get-up?"

They tried on several other caps and kerchiefs, and Bertie was asked his opinion on each and all, till he must have become rather confused; then he said suddenly, as if he had been tracing himself up for the announcement:

"It was very kind of you to show me these things, Lady Pendleton, because—because, you see, I shan't be able to see them at the fair."

"Why not?" demanded Lady Betty. He glanced at Floris as she knelt at the box replacing the costumes.

"I—I find I have to go down to my uncle's place; I'm overdue there now, and he gets rather rough if I don't show up pretty often."

(To be continued.)

A large shipment of Nyal's Face Cream just arrived for Stafford's Drug Stores. Theatre Hill Store open every night till 9.30.—June 6, 17

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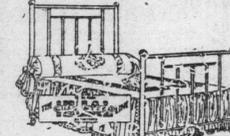


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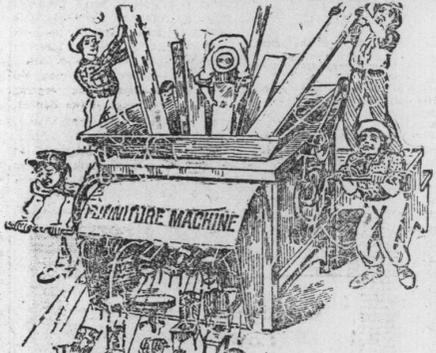
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BURT & LAWRENCE
June 11, 1918

Our Baseball PLAGIARISED

All communications in connection with this Column should be addressed to "Baseball Editor," care of Evening Telegram.

LEAGUE NOTES.

Miss Harris has kindly consented to start the ball rolling by pitching over the first one at the opening game next Wednesday, between the Wanderers and Cubs. The proceeds will be devoted to the W. P. A. Brit will likely pitch for the Wanderers in Hall for the Cubs. Both teams are in fine form having been hard at work practising the past week. Tickets will be on sale shortly and the fans are advised to get theirs early. Should the weather-man see fit to favour us with a fine day all attendance records ought to be broken.

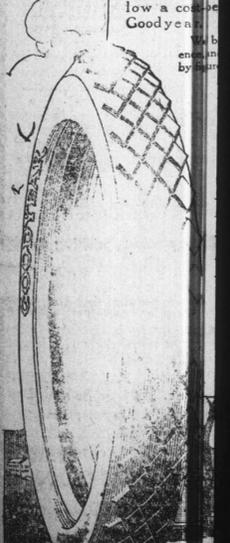
PLAY BALL.

This world's a diamond, with the bases laid, And on it Life's great game of noll is played. The teams are Human Beings versus Fate, And Time's the Umpire watching by the plate. We're at the bat. Our purpose is to throw, To wield Ambition's club and try to score. To try and solve the curve the pitcher throws, And lam the sphere where not a feather goes. Some of seem to bat with skill and sense, Knocking long homers o'er the deep field fence. Others bunt infield hits, but wily race, And beat the ball down to the primal base. Still others, though they strive their best, No doubt, Fan wildly at the air, and then—strike out! Then seek the bench, downcast, with visage drawn, Crestfallen, shamefaced, blue, and slumped in gloom! Or rag the Umpire, growling like a bear— "You robber! That decision wasn't fair!"

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