

"She must please herself," she said, and Olive laughed and blushed, and said she would be very glad.

And then they talked of brocades, of fashions of hairdressing, and arranged the times of their sittings, while Lawrence Waldron listened with a strange feeling of impatience and a vague wonder as to what that dainty picture reminded him of.

And after that evening every time he came to the square Arthur was busy over that picture. Once he came in on a sitting, and absolutely stared at sight of the girl—turretted curls, white neck, blue eyes, yellow brocade. It was the miniature come to life.

What a shame to have a girl like that working for her living! to have mother and daughter pinched for money, as Lawrence guessed they were. And the hot summer days were coming on. Everyone was leaving town, but they were staying on.

Mr. Waldron thought of the beautiful Court, with its delicious gardens and shadowy woods. He did not care to be there now. He felt lonely and oppressed, but what would it be to these women? It was only the end of June, but it seemed to the man as if he had lived a lifetime this spring, or rather as if he had never known what life might be until these few weeks. And now he must go home. He had stayed too long. He came to that conclusion one evening at Mrs. Mansell's. Olive was there in the white dress he had first seen her in, and Arthur Faithful devoted himself to her all the evening.

Mrs. Mansell was disgusted.

"I knew how it would end; he ought never to have gone there," she said to Mr. Waldron. "And now what sort of a prospect is it for either of them?"

"They are young enough to wait awhile," said Mr. Waldron, looking at Olive as she sat at the piano, and just then the girl looked up, and their eyes met, and Lawrence turned away with a sharp pang at his heart.

"She has made him work, that is a great thing," said Miss Churchill in her calm voice. "I always said Arthur could do something if he tried."

Miss Churchill was very friendly to Mr. Faithful in these days; very kind to Olive.

"Constance, I have no patience with you!" her aunt would say sometimes.

"I am going home to-morrow," Mr. Waldron said.

Olive Deering was sitting in a high-backed chair. There was some crimson stuff draped about it, throwing out her dark head and white throat. For a wonder Arthur had deserted her for a few minutes, and was talking to Miss Churchill. It seemed to Lawrence Waldron, as he drew his chair close to the girl, that he never, as often as he saw her, got the chance to say a word alone to her.

"I am going home. This is my very last dissipation."

The girl looked round at him.

"It must be delightful to be going to the country," she said, "I cannot imagine anyone staying in London now that could go."

"Can you not?" Lawrence Waldron gave a queer little smile. "Well, I shall never forget these few weeks," and then a little silence fell between them.

"Your picture is nearly finished now, Miss Deering," Lawrence said after awhile.

"Yes, very nearly."

"Arthur has worked hard over it; you have made him work."

"Have I?" The quick color rushed into the girl's face.

Her eyes rested on Arthur a moment, where he stood at the other end of the room.

What a handsome fellow he was, with his fair hair and spirited face! No wonder, Lawrence thought, for any girl to like him.

"We have always been good friends, he and I."

"Yes." The colour had faded now in her face.

Arthur was bending over Constance Churchill, talking very earnestly. Perhaps she did not like it, Lawrence thought.

"You are tired, you work too hard. You ought not to do so much," he said.

"Oh no; I am not tired. My work amuses," she said lightly. "I think, Mr. Waldron, I will go to mother. Shall we say good-bye to night?"

She gave him her hand with smiling carelessness.

"She does not care if I never come back again," thought the man bitterly. "She would not part from Arthur like that."

How could he help contrasting her seeming indifference with Constance Churchill's cordial friendliness.

"You are going," she said. "Well, of course we are leaving town ourselves in a day or to—everyone is; but we shall not lose sight of you. We shall meet again."

How handsome and friendly she was! What a perfect mistress she would make for the Court, as Arthur said; but, nevertheless, Lawrence Waldron's dreams were haunted that night, not by a tall, stately lady with a handsome clever face and cordial manner, but by a graceful girlish figure with blue eyes and winsome, half-foreign ways.

He went home next day. Arthur Faithful saw him to the train, but did not attempt to keep him. Some cloud seemed to have come between the two who had used to be such friends.

"Are you staying in town?" Lawrence asked.

"Yes. No. I don't quite know. It would be better for me to go, I think, and yet I must finish my picture."

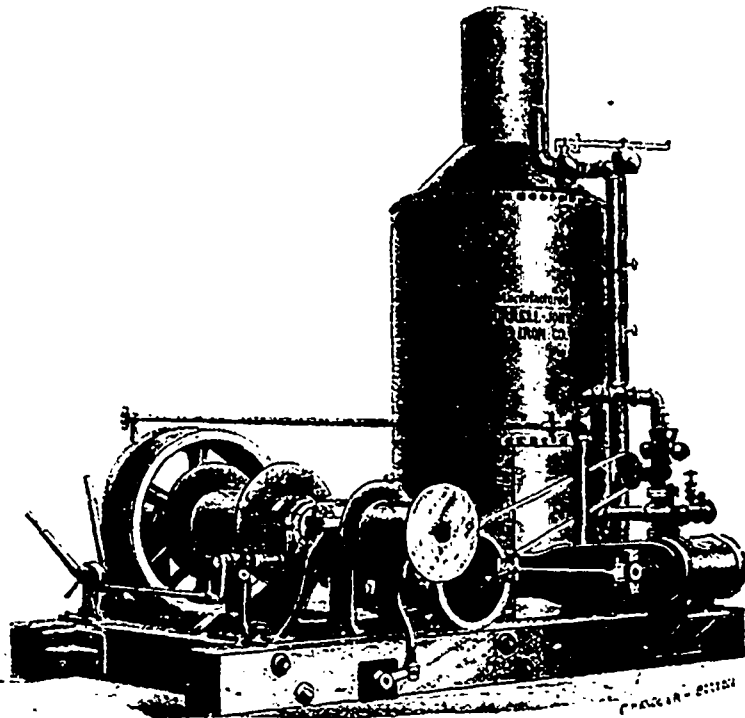
Arthur blushed.

"Of course you must," and Mr. Waldron talked of other things, but on the platform, just as the train was going, he gripped his friend's hand.

{To be Continued.}

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