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Lord Cecil's Dilemma

—OR—

The Picnic

—IN—

Woodall Forest

CHAPTER XLIII.

He rose and examined the door to see that they were not likely to be disturbed by any intruder; then he sat well in the shadow, as though ashamed of being seen, and began the recital of the story that is already known to the reader.

He had turned it over so many times in his own mind that there was no faltering, no disconnection. He told everything fully, placing himself in the worst light of all, and Gardner listened without sign or comment.

At length there was silence, and the young barrister looked pityingly at the man whom we must still call Lord Cecil.

"I honor you from the bottom of my heart," he said. "You are a thousand times a better fellow than I had ever imagined you to be."

"Thank you for that; but you must confess that it is hard upon me."

"Terrible hard, but you will be the happier for it. I am astonished, too, by the light that you throw upon the fate of Edgar Emden. It may be that he still lives, but the chances are slender. Now, all I shall say at present is that we must find the real Lord Cecil, and, if he is a man, your future shall be assured. I am sure that I can speak for Lady Stanhope. I would not like to break the news to her yet, though."

"What shall you do?" asked Cecil, glad of any relieve, no matter how brief.

"I shall first make some inquiries in the village about the nurse, her real name, and a careful description. I will send this to every hospital in the country. Something may come of it. It is evident that the steward holds some threat over her. We must find her and promise that she shall be pardoned if she reveals the truth. I can do all this to-morrow morning. In the afternoon I will go to Emden, and you shall hear from me in the course of two or three days. Further than this I am undecided at the present moment, but I have not yet had time to work the matter out."

(To be continued.)

Lord Cecil buried his face in his hands and sobbed.

"It's an awful come-down for a fellow," he groaned.

"It is your first step toward an honorable and useful manhood," declared Gardner. "Give me your hand, old fellow, and look upon me as your friend for all time."

"It's very good of you, Gardner—by George, it is! I quite expected that you would look down on me after such a confession. I deserve nothing better. The son of a thieving steward! I don't care a rap about his being the earl's half-brother. He is an infernal scoundrel, and I am his child! I thank you from my heart for your friendship, Gardner, and from this day all is settled; I swear that I will begin a new life!"

The barrister left him to get over his injured feelings, while he conveyed the result of the interview to the ladies, who were awaiting him anxiously in the drawing-room.

CHAPTER XLIII.

The prompt measures adopted by the Birmingham physician probably saved Miss Ada Craythorne from a serious and protracted illness.

The fright she had received in the woods had completely shattered her nerves, and the shock was accentuated by the strain to which they had been subjected for so many days.

She spoke of the madman in the forest, and said many things that mystified the doctor, but the old nurse was most assiduous in her intentions. She would admit no one into the sick girl's room, and guarded her utterances with jealous care.

Strong as she was physically and mentally, it was a surprise to the doctor to find the fever abated on the second day and the patient become quite rational.

"Well," he smiled, "you are an extraordinary young lady! I gave you a week in which to recover."

"There is not much the matter with me, sir," she told him. "I was only dreadfully frightened. Nurse has told me that the madman is put safely away. He fancied that I was some one else, and wanted to murder me. Oh, doctor, it was the fear that I had killed him that shocked me so terribly."

"There, there! never mind. I am very glad to see that my fears are not likely to be realized if you take care of yourself. You did not kill the poor fellow, and you must be a most uncommon girl to keep your nerve as you did. This will be good news for Lady Hastings and Sir Charles."

(To be continued.)

LADY IRIS' MISTAKE;

—or the—

Hero of 'Surata'

CHAPTER II.

"I am sure that you will always try to help me and be my greatest comfort. You know, Iris, that every man has two sides to his life; the outward side of mine is that I am a man of wealth and position, the inward side is that I had a passionate love for your mother."

"She was the one love of my life and losing her—ah, well, you could not understand that, I am sure!"

"I will be so careful, papa," she said, with such pretty penitence that he was charmed, and the gray lock left his face. He smiled, and tried to turn her thoughts into another channel.

"It is time you thought of your presentation, Iris," he said. "There will be a Drawing-Room during the first week in May. Will you be ready for that?"

"Yes, I can be ready—at any time I have three days' notice I shall see Madame Vallere about my court dress. Am I to wear the Caledon diamonds, papa?"

"They are yours, my dear Iris, and I have had them exquisitely reset. Will Mrs. Bellow present you?"

The lovely dainty face flushed crimson.

"Mrs. Bellow, papa? No, certainly—that is, I hope not."

"Why?" asked the earl.

"Why? I should not like. I wish some lady of higher rank even than my own to do so. You said the other day that you had spoken to me to the Duchess of Clifton when you met her in Rome. I should like the duchess to present me."

"I am sure she will be delighted. But what a proud young lady you are, Iris!"

"Yes," she answered "I am proud; I do not deny it. To my rank as your daughter certain privileges are attached. Why should I forego them? One most certainly is that I should be presented to the queen by a lady of high degree."

"You argue very logically," laughed the earl. "Madame told me you were proud. I begin to see there is some truth in it."

"There is pride and pride, papa. I am proud—I own it most frankly—of my name, of my birth, of the ancient honor and grandeur of my race. I am proud of my beautiful home. I could not endure to see it profaned by vulgar people; nor could I endure that a word or deed of mine should ever bring even the faintest stain on my name. I am too proud to be mean or to tell a lie. I feel proud when I think of those words, 'Held with honor.' Anything that could shadow that honor would be more bitter than death to me. You knew the two lines, papa—

"All the Faynes are proud and cold— They their name with honor hold."

I am proud and cold, and I should not care to change my nature."

Lord Caledon looked thoughtfully at her. Young as she was, she had evidently firm and settled ideas of her own. She would have but little pity or mercy for any one who brought the taint of disgrace on her ancient name.

"I often think," continued Lady Iris, "that pride and courage go together. Who was prouder than the beautiful Marie Antoinette? She never quailed before the horrible crowd who reproached in her death. I could do that. I would have faced that crowd with a smile, and not one should have been able to say I feared to die."

"Such courage comes from something higher than pride, Iris," said the earl. "You have peculiar ideas for so young a girl. Pride, however, disguise it as we may, is a sin."

"Nay, papa, I cannot think that. Pride is a great preservative of character, I think." And Lord Caledon laughed as he quitted the room.

"A few years," he thought, "will make a great difference in her. What a proud girl she is; and how well her pride suits her beauty! Any great blow to her notions would kill her, I believe."

(to be continued.)

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To have good credit in your town! There is no worthier renown; to have the merchant princes know I pay up promptly as I go, and when I drift into their stores, they and their clerks are simply bored; they want to sell me all they have, from anvils down to beeswax salve. They hate to see me get away; they want to sell me hats of hay, and suits of clothes and pairs of shoes, and stovepipe hats and liquid glues. They want to show cane-seated chairs, stuffed crocodiles and pickled pears. They've just received a shipment fine of sherkins in imported brine. They grab my coat when I'd go, and yank and pull me to and fro, to show me corn beef in a pail, and tripe and prunes and shredded whale. They grab my sideboards in their haste to show me pots of rancid paste. At last, when haply I escape, my form is pulled all out of shape, my coat is split, my collar spotted, my temper and my whiskers soiled.

Cocoanuts as Wealth.

Wealth and rank on the island of Nauru, in the South seas, are gauged by coconut trees. To own much coconut land is wealth and aristocracy; to own none is beggary; in the old time it was slavery. Some men have made a good thing, as reckoned in the islands, by marrying brown brides rich in coconut land.

The land is cut up into very small plots, usually described by square rods and rods instead of acres. The title to the trees does not pass with the land, but is a separate transaction. One may buy a piece of land, but can not use the nuts and the native owner has the right to come upon one's premises to gather toddy and nuts. The trees are not only reckoned by count. In normal times the crop is continuous blossoms, green and ripe fruit being on the trees at the same time.—National Geographic Magazine.

WATCH FOR "PALS."

aug28,tf

A Double Scotch.

One of the best raconteurs in clubdom is Sir Walter de Frece, Vesta Tilley's husband.

The other day he told me a good one about a man in a West End saloon; he going up to another who had just entered. After looking at him intently for several seconds he said:—

"Pardon me, but you are De Smith, aren't you?"

The man accented denied that that was his name.

"But surely," said the other, "you attended my wife."

"I did not," was the answer, "nor then you must have a double," was the reply.

"Thank you!" said the man, "I will."

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