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Love Gives Itself THE STORY OF A BLOOD FEUD

BY ANNIE S. SWAN.

CHAPTER II.—(Cont'd.)

"And what brought you to Ayr?" asked Alan.
"Carliotta shrugged her shoulders. 'What wind blows the straw?' My father had had a wonderful holiday here once, in his old tutoring days, with two Scottish students whose home was in this county. It was always the dream of his life to return permanently. So, when his Cambridge days were done, he simply girded up his loins and came. My mother and I had no choice."
"And you do not feel at home here?"
She shook her head.
"Do we look as if we should? My mother was an actress. That, in itself is enough. Not that I mind much, and my father minds not at all. In fact, he is completely unconscious of anything amiss, or other than what it should be. Ayrshire has not disappointed him."
"Nor will it disappoint you, surely, in the long run, since you have consented to make it your future and permanent home."
Her face flushed, and she lifted her eyes to his in a look of odd but quite definite appeal.
Rankine rose to his feet, for in that moment two things were revealed to him—that Carliotta Carlyon did not love Peter Garvoek, and that it was unwise for him, Alan, to remain longer in her presence.
"Are you going already?" she asked, and there was a trail of disappointment in her voice.

"I must. I have been away from Stair the greater part of the day, and I only returned this morning. My sister must not be left longer. I am glad to have had this opportunity."
"And you will come again?"
"As to that I am not sure," he answered, and seeing him on his feet, Peter came forward, apparently surprised too at his cousin's abrupt departure.
"How are you going to get back to Stair, Alan? It's a beastly night, and a rough walk."
"I shan't mind it," he answered. "Good night, Professor. I'll unearth some of the old Stair Records and send them down for your benefit. Good night, Miss Carlyon. Perhaps you may be over to-morrow, Peter? Do you go to town on Saturdays too?"
"I won't go to-morrow, though I usually do. Tell Judy I'll look in in the morning."
They nodded good night, but did not shake hands.
Once free of the house, Alan Rankine shook himself as if he felt something closing in on him. He did not know what it was, but, most certainly, Carliotta had disturbed him as no woman had yet done in all his thirty years of life. He felt the blood rioting in his veins; he longed to go back into that peaceful, homely room, and, standing up before his cousin, Peter, dare him to marry Carliotta, who was no mate for him! That these two ever would marry was impossible, unthinkable, even if the appointed day had been set.
He turned, rather by instinct than clear plan, into the short field path which cut nearly two miles off the road to Stair, and between six and seven o'clock, dripping wet, and with muddy boots, pushed open the inner door of his home, and stepped into the hall.
Judy, dressed in a low-cut evening frock of dead black, sitting on the low fender-stool, jumped up in amazement.
"Why, Alan, you have walked! And through all that rain! Whatever made you do it? Couldn't you have wired for Bob Figgis, or hired a trap at the station?"
"I fancied the walk, my dear, and the rain is nothing," he answered, trying to speak as naturally as possible.

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"I'm sorry if I've kept you waiting. When is dinner?"
"In about five minutes' time."
"I won't keep you," he said, and, as if glad to escape, took the stairs three steps at a time, and quickly disappeared.
Judy, looking still surprised and puzzled, resumed her seat.
A quarter of an hour later they were seated together at a small round table, set, like an oasis, in the vastness of the great dining-room, which, Judy decided, should be used that night in honor of the new laird of Stair. She had taken great pains with the table, which showed a mass of exquisite spring flowers, such as are grateful to eyes that have not looked upon their like for years.
They were waited upon by a maid-servant because, after her father was compelled to spend most of his time upstairs, Judy began to practice strict domestic economies, and had constantly reduced the household at Stair. But to-night she felt that there ought to have been a man behind Alan's chair, and the question she put, presently, crystallized her thought.
"What have you done with Denis O'Rourke, Alan? I made sure you would bring Denis with you."
"He's coming," said Rankine, with a nod and a smile. "I sent him home to Connemara, via Holyhead, just to get a peep at his father and mother. But he'll be here by Ardrossan, I don't doubt, in the course of a few days."
"And you mean to keep him here?"
"Why, yes, I suppose so. You see, I've got used to Denis, and he'll be a chap after your own heart. We could do with him here, couldn't we? He's an excellent servant. There isn't anything under heaven he doesn't know something about."
As he spoke, his eyes significantly followed the tablemaid as she left the room to change the plates.
"We haven't had a butler since you left, Alan. It wasn't necessary, with only Claud and me, and father so much upstairs. And women-servants are cheaper. I like them better too. You can say more to them."
"You'll like Denis," repeated Rankine, and his mouth hardened a little as he reflected that he had come back to face a rather desperate kind of struggle which would go to prove his mettle.
A sudden pity and kindness for his sister softened his face almost immediately, however, and, leaning across the table, he said, almost caressingly:
"I'm afraid you've had a pretty rotten time of it just lately, old girl."
In spite of herself, Judy's eyes overflowed.
Unused to being considered, save in the way of appeal to provide the sinews of moral war for other people, the tender note in her brother's voice broke down her self-control. She was a very woman at the moment, and, had she obeyed the impulse of her heart, would have run to him and hid her head on his breast.
Instead, however, she merely blinked her eyes vigorously, and tried to steady her voice.
"Oh, no; not so very bad. Just at the end, perhaps, when there was so much to do, and nobody but Claud to talk to about things, I felt like letting go."
At the moment the maid entered with the next course, and they had to return to impersonal topics. When the meal was over (and Judy wondered whether Club or ship-board dinners had made Alan more fastidious than of yore, he ate so little), she suggested that they should go and sit in the Pool.
That queer name had been given, when they were children, to an old gun-room at the back of the house, opening through a short passage off the library, where they had been allowed to collect all sorts of rubbish and nobody found fault.
"I had it cleared up a bit last week, and you've no idea what heaps of treasures I found, Alan! There has been a fire in it since early morning, and perhaps we can imagine we are young again, and things as they used to be."
He assented, apparently well pleased, and when they entered the queer, octagon-shaped place, with its medley of furniture and odds and ends, a strange look crept over his face.
"Judy, you're the most understanding woman creature it has ever been my lot to meet!" he said, with a catch in his voice. "If you had lain awake nights, planning it, you couldn't have thought of anything better for to-night."
She smiled happily, paused a moment to fasten more securely the posy at her belt, then, drawing in the old basket-chair, which had been the favorite bed for the dolls of long ago, she sank into it with a fluttering little sigh.
"Mary will bring the coffee here, and I'm going to do nothing but lazy now, Alan. You can do the talking."
Alan got out a pipe and began to get tobacco ready, while he told of his visit to Glasgow and his talk with the lawyers. He had nothing to tell her which Judy did not know already.
"And then you came down with Peter, and where have you been since—at The Lees?" asked Judy, watching with pride and untold affection every movement of the long, graceful figure on the opposite side of the fireplace.
"No, you can't guess. Peter took me to the Clock House to introduce me to his fiancée."
Judy sat forward instantly, vividly interested.
"He did? Well, and what do you think of her? I am interested to hear, because, you know, I admire her most awfully and like her as well. I am quite sure I am looking forward to having her at The Lees."
"I've seen lots of women, Judy," said Alan, deliberately, "but I've never seen anybody like her."
"For beauty, do you mean? She is very beautiful, isn't she?" asked Judy wistfully, "and a very unusual type."
"For beauty, and other things; and, if you could tell me how Peter got in there far enough to get her to promise to marry him, I would be much obliged."
"I'm afraid it's the money, Alan. They are very poor."
"They don't look it. They live like gentle-people, Judy."

"Oh, she would, because she is a gentlewoman. The mother is different, I believe. But isn't the Professor an old dear?"
(To be continued.)
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For Sore Feet—Minard's Liniment.

Abraham's Birthplace.
A temple has been found at Ur, in Mesopotamia, by British and American explorers, which is claimed to be the oldest building in the world. It was built by King A-n-ni-pad-da, who reigned about 4,500 years before the birth of Christ, and the building is thus about 6,500 years old. Ur was the native place of Abraham and the city of Nebuchadnezzar.
Interesting details of the excavations at Ur are given by Mr. C. Woolley, leader of the joint expedition of the British Museum, and the University Museum of Pennsylvania, which has made the discoveries.
The little temple is at Tell el Obeld, about four miles from Ur. Mr. Woolley writes:
"A broad flight of stone steps led to a platform about 20 ft. high, on the south corner of which stood the temple proper, its gate-tower fronting on the stairway, its facade set back from the edge of the platform so as to leave a narrow step, on which stood a row of statues of bulls sculptured in the round.
"These stood some 3 ft. high, and were made of thin copper plates beaten up over a wooden core; their heads were turned out to face the spectator, and their horns were of gold. Two of these statues have been recovered, though in a bad condition owing to the crushing of the metal under the enormous weight of the brickwork which had fallen on the top of them, and to its subsequent decay, and to the enemy hands which had torn off the golden horns."
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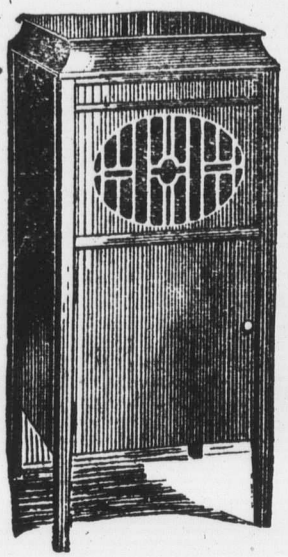
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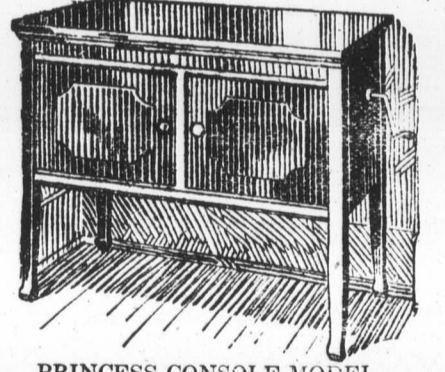
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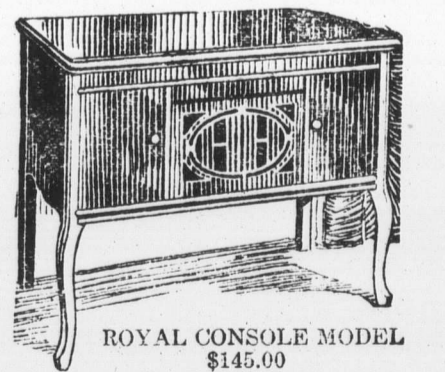
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