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"Love in the Wilds"
 —OR—
The Romance of a South African Trading Station.

CHAPTER XLXII.
 THE WHEELS OF FATE.

Foul deeds will rise, though all the earth o'erwhelm them to men's eyes.—SHAKESPEARE.

Wheel within wheel the great machinery of fate pants and throbs day and night without ceasing, till the thunder-bolts of Nemesis lay ready for the hurling.

Little did Reginald Dartmouth imagine that, in handing the rusty keys of the old Dale lumber-rooms to his quiet and singular secretary, he was giving a turn to one of the wheels of fate; and still less that, in allowing his guest and friend, Sir Charles, to be borne off to the Warren, he had given another turn.

Leaving the taciturn secretary with the keys in his possession and waiting only for a convenient time to use them, we will look in at the Warren and unwind the skein of events weaving there.

"On a sofa, large and comfortable, in the sitting-room, not large but very cozy, lay Sir Charles.

He was pale and somewhat thin; more haggard-looking than ever, and with dark marks, partly due to disipation, partly to his late illness, beneath his still frank and genial eyes.

One arm rested in a sling; for, though the days had passed rapidly and it was already three weeks since the race, the limb was still helpless and useless.

Beside the couch stood a little table, upon which were two bottles of nauseous medicines to irritate the senses, but a large bouquet of flowers and a small, beautifully-cut decanter of light wine—not brandy, for, though Sir Charles had repeatedly asked for that spirit, Mr. Toddy had resolutely forbidden it.

There was a slight puzzled look on the invalid's face as he sat watching the sunlight that stole through the half-closed blinds.

Sir Charles, the dissolute, dissipated man of the world, who had run through three fortunes, ruined his digestion, and almost spoiled as handsome a face as ever fell to the lot of men, was

thinking, weighing, rather, his past life and contrasting its fiery, tumultuous ways with the quiet, peaceful, quietly and silently over the misadventure and talents.

At least, if he were not thinking so he should have been, for his fine eyes looked remorseful, and it was with a deep sigh he caught at the bell-rope and rang. Mrs. Lucas—rather older than when she ruled over the Dale; rather sadder-looking in her deep mourning, but active and hale as ever—entered with noiseless haste.

"Did you ring, sir?"

"Yes, Mrs. Lucas," said Sir Charles, twisting round with his frank smile; "I have ventured to ring, I say, ventured, for I have been trying to keep from it for the last hour, and he shook his head slowly.

"I hope you are not in pain, sir," said Mrs. Lucas, anxiously. "Mr. Toddy said as we were to send for him the moment the arm got worse."

"It isn't the arm this time, for a wonder, Mrs. Lucas," replied Sir Charles. "It's somewhere else, I have a pain in the heart—in the head—a longing, that's a great deal worse than pain, to see your mistress."

"Miss Rebecca?"

"Yes," he nodded. "I have been here for three weeks and, although you have been like a second mother to me, my dear old lady, I am naturally anxious to see and thank the lady beneath whose roof I have experienced such unusual and extraordinary kindness. There, that's a long speech. By Jove, it's ridiculously long! But who is to remember that she is my cousin when she behaves so coolly to me? Mrs. Lucas, my dear old soul, you must go to her and tell that she must come here or that I really must—must, mind you—go to her and thank her. I can not lay here any longer without unburdening my heart of some part of the load of gratitude lying on it. Go, Mrs. Lucas, I beseech you, and ask Miss Rebecca, my cousin, to come to me, it only for a moment!"

Under the light banter of his tone there was a current of earnestness that made Mrs. Lucas hesitate.

"You know, sir, I have told you so many times that Miss Rebecca does not see any one; nay, that she particularly wished me to tell you that she would not see you until you were able to come down."

"But why?" asked Sir Charles, impatiently. "What on earth can be her reason? We are the best of friends—at least, we were. I know of nothing to prevent her. Oh, my dear woman, go and give her my message, that if she will not come to me I will go to her—say, and at once!"

Mrs. Lucas, alarmed by a movement he made of getting up from the couch, from which he had been bidden not to rise, muttered a hasty consent and left the room.

He waited impatiently for a few minutes, then actually arose from the couch; but as he did so the door opened and Rebecca entered.

She looked very lovable—which is something near akin to lovely—in her quiet, dark dress, and her usually pale face was tinted by a slight crimson

as she came forward in her quiet, unobtrusive way and held out her hand. "Rebecca," said Sir Charles, taking her hand and holding it, with an accompanying look of gratitude and affection—"Rebecca, how glad I am to see you! Why have you kept away from me?"

At this question Rebecca lowered her eyes with a sudden darkening of the brows, but raised them again as she replied:

"Never mind that, Charlie, for a while; but tell me how you are this morning."

"Better," he said. "I should have been quite well, no doubt, if you had not kept me on the fidget longing to see you. How well and fresh you are looking—a nice contrast to the haggard old wreck I can see in the glass opposite!" and he nodded, with a smile that was rather sad, at the reflection of his own worn and haggard face.

Rebecca shook her head.

"Ah, Charlie," she said, gravely, "you promised me!"

"Ay, and myself, too, Rebecca. But, there; you know me—good to-day and bad to-morrow. For my word, my dear girl, I don't think I am a respectable being; I don't, really. You see, I can't say 'No.' Ah, dear me, I can't say 'No.' Life's all a temptation, Rebecca! But there—what's the use of my telling you? How should you understand, you, who have never seen it? But to go back. You must tell me why you have kept away from me. Have I offended you?"

Rebecca's pale face flushed and she averted her eyes.

"No," she said; "you have never offended me, Charlie. Do not ask me, I beg of you."

"But I must, my dear girl; I must. You do not know how it has worried me. It was of no use that fussy old fellow telling me to keep quiet or he would not answer for the consequence—though, as to that, nobody wanted him to; that I know of. It was no use of his telling me to be composed and go to sleep. I could not be composed and I couldn't go to sleep. I said, or, rather, I thought: Here am I staying with Reginald Dartmouth; I ride a race in his paddock, and that animal of mine pitches me head foremost at the finish. Well, so far so good. But here comes the twist. Instead

"Sir Charles stared in amazement. "Not trust me!" he exclaimed, with astonishment; then, as if struck by the deep meaning in her eyes, lowered his own for an instant, then lifted them again and said, quietly, "Rebecca, you never were a romantic girl—you are anything but that now. Tell me what you mean."

"I will," said Rebecca. "I feel that I must, Charlie. I told you that I had a purpose. I have, indeed, a deep and resolute one. Can you guess it?"

He shook his head.

"It is to revenge the death of my friend and second father, old Squire Darrell, and to restore to the rightful heir the Dale estate, which Reginald Dartmouth by villainy and something worse holds and usurps."

Sir Charles turned pale and sank back against the curtains, covering his eyes with his hands.

Rebecca, with her small clasped tightly in her lap, continued, in a quiet tone:

"Can you not guess why I would not see you before, Charlie? Could I have seen you and kept this purpose of mine from you? No; I should have surely let it out before you were strong enough to bear it—thrown you back into another fever and thwarted my own plans."

Sir Charles drew a long breath and raised himself upon his elbow.

"Rebecca," he said, in a low voice, "I need not say you have astonished me. I can scarcely persuade myself that I am not dreaming or delirious. Reginald Dartmouth a murderer—Oh, I can't say the word! Surely there must be some mistake—surely, my dear girl—"

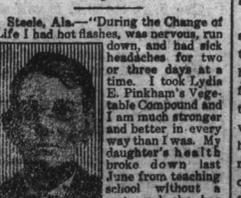
"Listen," interrupted Rebecca, with sudden excitement—"Listen and I will tell you the story of the events that have so changed me—changed me from a timid, weak woman into a determined, resolute one. I will tell you without addition or exaggeration the history of Reginald Dartmouth's connection with the Dale, hiding and concealing nothing, and you shall judge for yourself if there is any grounds for my suspicions."

Then, while Sir Charles leaned forward with fixed and earnestly attentive gaze, she narrated, clearly and calmly, the story of the squire's quarrel; the flight of Hugh; the advent of Grace; the visit of Reginald Dartmouth, and the flight of Grace.

(to be continued)

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of being taken home to the new Hall I am carried off to Cousin Rebecca's at the Warren. Well, that's accounted for by the presence of her carriage on the course, or by the fact of the Warren being nearer than the Hall. But then comes the most singular part of it. Here I lay for three weeks, with fever off and on, but during the best part of the time well able to see any one. Cousin Rebecca does not show her head—only the doctor and Mrs. Lucas—who, by the way, is as good and kind-hearted a soul as there is out of heaven. Cousin Rebecca never comes near me till I threaten to get up and find her for myself. And now she is here she won't tell me the reason of her well-kept determination to absent herself, I am beginning to think that there is a deeper reason than any of which I dreamed.

"There is good reason," replied Rebecca, with a flash of her upraised eye. "See, Charlie; I am a different woman from what I was when you saw me last. I was free and light-hearted then, but now—well, I have a purpose for which to live, a purpose that creeps into every action of my soul and renders me unfit for the society of all, most of all an invalid requiring quiet and freedom from exertion."

Sir Charles Anderson raised himself upon his elbow and gazed long and fixedly at his cousin's face. He had never seen it so moved before.

"Rebecca," he said, in his frank way, "let there be no secrets between us. We are cousins, and you have done me many a good turn—for which I thank you from the bottom of my worthless heart, more especially for the last and best turn of all. What is in the wind? You had some reason for bringing me here to the Warren. Come, Rebecca; what was it?"

Rebecca got up, walked to the door and closed it carefully, then, sinking into a chair and fixing her dark eyes upon the frank ones of Sir Charles, said:

"Because I could not trust you to the tender mercies of the master of the Hall."

Sir Charles stared in amazement. "Not trust me!" he exclaimed, with astonishment; then, as if struck by the deep meaning in her eyes, lowered his own for an instant, then lifted them again and said, quietly, "Rebecca, you never were a romantic girl—you are anything but that now. Tell me what you mean."

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(to be continued)

Fashion Plates.



Pattern 3275 is here portrayed. It is cut in 7 Sizes: 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, and 46 inches bust measure. A 38 inch size requires 5 1/2 yards of 44 inch material. The width of the skirt at lower edge is about 1 1/2 yard.

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