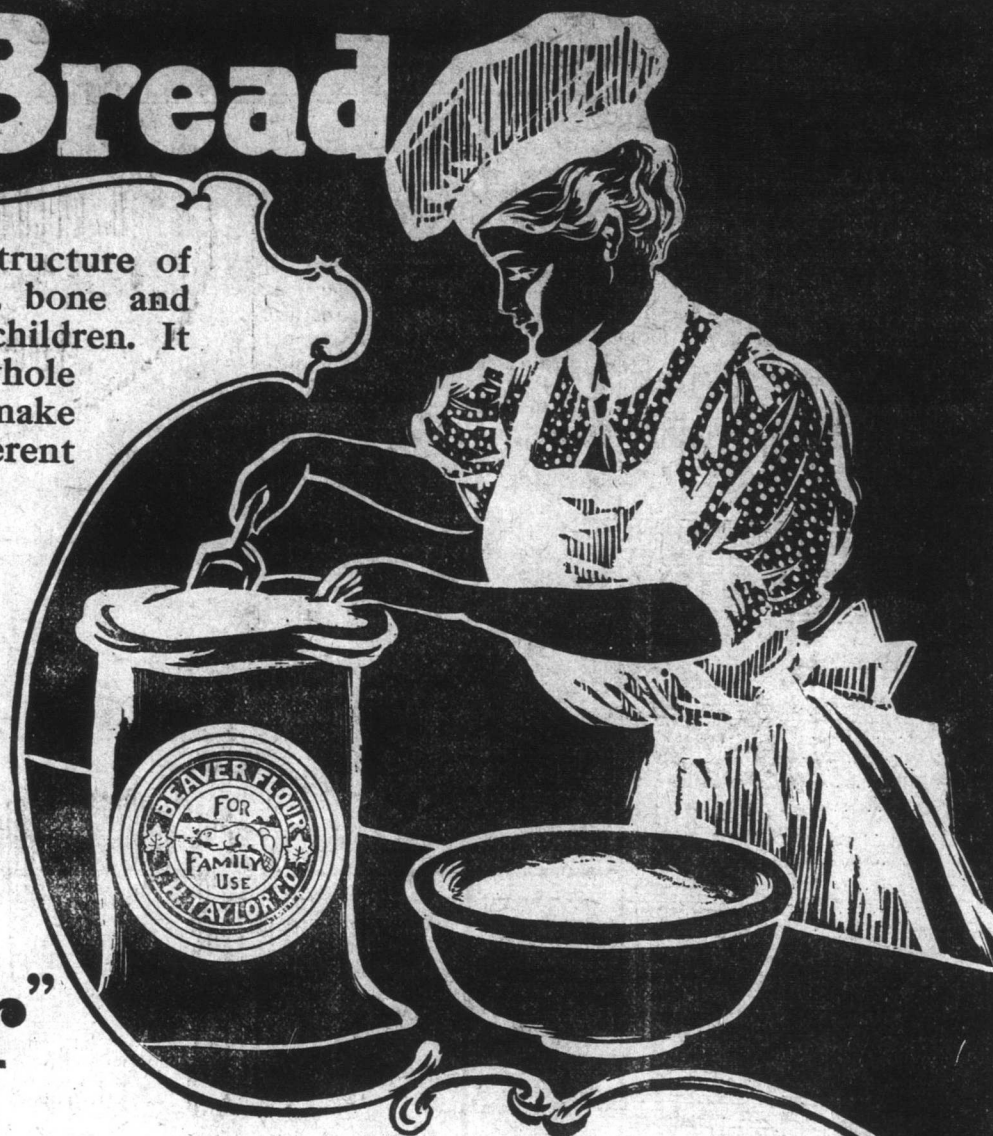


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THE FAIR IMPOSTOR.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Those Beastly Carriages.

"HERE'S the grand, old man," said Gerald. "Come drink it off, it's as old as the hills and as mild as milk; it won't hurt you. I know exactly what you are feeling. It's those beastly carriages. Those wretched cushions hold all the damp; I believe it would be better to travel third class; and then you didn't have a wrap, did you; I didn't see one in the carriage."

"No," said Harold, sipping the liquor. "That was it, no doubt. I forget it."

"By Jove! we mustn't forget to put plenty of wraps in the carriage when you go away to-morrow! It wouldn't do for Lillian to catch cold!" said Gerald. "Come, how do you feel now, Warner?"

"All right now," said Harold. "Don't wait any longer, old man; I'll get into civilized togs."

"All right!" said Gerald, cheerily; "I'll send Withers to you. Don't be long. By the way, he said, putting his head into the room again, 'we sent word to Lillian that you have

arrived, so that she should not think that you had sought safety in flight!' Thanks!" said Harold, with a laugh, but as the door closed he sank into the chair again, and the laugh turned into a groan.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The Voice of the Storm.

UP at the Hall there was a stir and thrill of excitement and anticipation which, though subdued, made itself felt.

In Lillian's room confusion reigned triumphant. Travelling dresses, hats, bonnets—all the innumerable trifles which are considered necessary to a young bride of position and fashion, were scattered about on tables and chairs; two maids were busy on their knees busy packing the huge imperials; a local dressmaker was hard at work sewing on the last hooks and eyes, servants were running to and fro continually.

Lillian's own maid was engaged in the delightful task of making a list of each article as it was consigned to the hungry maw of the travelling trunks. On a side table stood the casket, iron within, velvet without, which contained the bride's jewels. In it were not only the Wood eight diamonds, but the costly presents which Sir Talbot had given his daughter. The evidences of wealth met the eye at every turn. A princess of the blood would have been content with such a trousseau.

Presently the door opened, the chatter of tongues was silenced—Lillian entered.

She stood for a minute or two, looking at the busy scene, her face calmly serene, her clasped fingers snowy white against her rich dress of silk and velvet.

"Have you nearly finished?" she asked.

"Not nearly, miss. There seems no end to it, miss; I don't believe these imperials will hold it all."

"Why pack so many?" she asked.

"I shall not want them; I can't possibly wear them, there seems enough here for three women."

"The maid looked horrified.

"Not pack them, miss! Oh, we must pack them now they are here."

"Can I help you?" she asked, moving towards the boxes.

"Oh, no, miss, don't you trouble, answered the maid, quietly. 'We can manage; we are not at all tired. Please don't trouble.'

"Very well," she said, "I will come up again after dinner." She left the room and went down the staircase. As it was above, so it was below; the servants were busy preparing the large drawing room, the whole house seemed alive and restless as she reached the hall; it was lined with costly, exotics, placed there in readiness for to-morrow. She stood for a moment looking round her, then passed into the small drawing room. On a Florentine table, but were arranged the wedding gifts—it was not a small table, but it was covered with the good-will offerings.

Mechanically she took them up one by one and looked at them—vases, objets d'art, elegantly bound books, and the usual costly and useless articles which accumulate on such an occasion.

Calmly she turned them over one by one until the last was reached; then, closing the door after her, entered the library.

"Is that you, my darling?" said Sir Talbot, turning in his chair, where he was sitting in front of the fire.

"Yes, it is I, dear," she said, "Come and sit down," he said, holding out his hand.

She came and sat opposite him, her hands clasped, her eyes fixed on the ground.

"Where have you been all the afternoon?" he asked, his eyes fixed on her, lovingly.

She looked up.

"Have I been away so long? I have been wandering about. This seems the only room in which one can rest."

He smiled.

"We don't marry a Lillian Woodleigh every day in the week," he said, with a proud smile. "Are they making much fuss?"

"A great deal too much," she said, quietly. "Too much for your comfort," and she looked at him.

He laughed feebly.

"No, I like it. If I had my will I would have a great deal more; you know that, my darling. To-morrow will be the happiest day in my life, and he fixed his eyes on her, eagerly. She sat motionless as a statue, her face turned toward the fire.

"Yes," he went on, almost to himself, "I have prayed to be spared until to-morrow; after to-morrow I can die contented. Where is Harold—has he come back yet?"

Without looking up she answered: "He goes to the Grange to-night."

"Yes—yes, I remember," he muttered, apologetically. "I wonder whether he has come back. I should have liked to have seen him."

"Shall I send for him?" she asked. Before he could answer a servant knocked at the door with Gerald's message.

"Ah! he's got back," murmured the old man. "That's all right. What was that?"

"It is the wind," she said; "it is a very bad night."

He laughed softly.

She went and sat at his feet and held his hand.

"I shall soon be back," she said.

"Yes—yes," he responded. "Oh, yes, you will soon be back. You will come back Harold's wife. You will be glad to get back to the old place, Lillian?"

"I shall be glad to get back," she said, laying her head on his knee.

Then there fell a silence upon them; every now and then he leaned forward and looked down at her and caressed the silken hair, but neither of them spoke.

Presently the gong sounded; it was the dressing bell. "I shall not be long. We are to dine here to-night, papa, you know."

He nodded and lay back watching her until the door closed.

Her dress rustling as she moved, she went up the stairs again. Under the calm, serene exterior a storm was raging which required all her strength for its suppression. Once or twice she paused on her way to press her hand against her heart, which beat wildly in her bosom, like some caged wild beast wanting to be free.

They were still packing in her rooms, but as she entered they put their task aside, and, excepting her maid, withdrew. With a gesture she dismissed her, and stood looking round at the costly confusion.

To-morrow was the wedding day!—to-morrow she would be Harold Woodleigh's wife, the future Lady of Woodleigh Hall! What more could she desire?—what more could her wronged, dead mother wish? She had kept her vow.

Through peril, through hate, through love itself, she had kept her vow, sacrificing all. She, the nameless and friendless, had thrust aside the world's scorn and clambered to this altitude! If her dead mother had lived, could she have desired a fuller, a richer vengeance for the wrong Sir Talbot Woodleigh had wrought her?

No! She, the illegitimate daughter occupied the place the lawful daughter would have filled—she, Hilda Fane, the outcast, was the acknowledged heiress of Sir Talbot Woodleigh, and would be the future Lady Woodleigh!

"I have kept my vow, mother," she murmured— "I have kept my vow!"

And, with a weary sigh, she stood looking at her pale, beautiful face, mirrored in the dressing glass.

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Suddenly the dinner bell rang. She was already dressed, but, from habit rather than intention, she took a flower from a glass that stood on the table, and placed it in her hair, and arranged some lace round her neck.

She felt like one in a dream—she felt as if she were playing some part just as she had done in the past, when she was a great actress; and she was content to feel as if in a dream, for she could play her part then. It was only when Dawson Slade's face—white and anguished as it was when she found it on the cliff—rose before her, that she lost her presence of mind.

And how often that face would rise! At night, when all was still in the great house, she saw that face, heard

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that voice, with its broken curse!

Yes! she had kept her vow—through love she had been obedient to her mother's dying command. For she knew now—now that she was about to set up an insurmountable barrier between them—that she loved this man who had told his love months ago in the distant land. Yes, she loved him too well to let him marry her—her, the impostor and usurper! As for Harold, he was one of the race on whom her mother had made her swear vengeance, and by marrying him she would be safe.

With feverish hands she arranged the flower and the lace, and left the room.

To be continued.

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A Adams, Miss E. R., card. Andrews, Katie Prescott St. Atwood, Matilda, Duckworth St.	B Baird, Jack, care W. E. Bearn. Biggs, Mrs. James, Charlton Street Bishop, Laura, card, Belvidere Street Brooking, Almira, Bond Street. Brown, Ralph, care J. LeDrew Brosstrom, F. W., care Mrs. S. Rabbitt Butler, John Butler, E. J., Mt. Scio Road	C Crane, Miss Etta, Pleasant Street Clarke, Dawson J., Power St. Clifton, Walter Conrad, Herbert Coady, J. J., card, Pleasant Street Coady, Miss Mary, card, Gower Street Cooper, Mrs. John, card, Lime Street Cosh, Philip, South Side Corkum, S. Collier, Miss Emily, Springdale Street	D Day, Geo. E. Dahl, Karl, care G.P.O. Dwyer, Michael Driscoll, Mrs. Willis, Gower Street Dicks, Winsor, late Grand Falls Dugmore, A. R.	E Effert, Mrs. Annie C. Ellis, J. C., late General Hospital, Patrick St.	F Flemming, James Fitzgerald, Thomas, late Grand Falls Fitzpatrick, T., Pleasant St. Fowler, Bride, Water St.	G Gibbons, Miss G. Gilbert, Mrs. Arthur, George's St. Gillingham, Thos.	H Haliday, Miss, Long Pond Road Healey, James, Blackhead Hilcher, Roy House, Miss Bridget Hughes, Mrs. Robert, Lower Battery Rd. Hughes, H. V., care Mrs. Whitten Hutchinson, Ledgemoor	I Ingram, Nellie, card, Lenette Mill Road Ivany, Andrew, LeMarchant Road	J Jackson, Archibald, Springdale St. Jones, Mrs., LeMarchant Rd.	K Kennedy, Mrs. F., card, Brazil's Square Kelly, Elizabeth, care Mrs. Snow, Brazil's Square Kenny, Wm., late s.s. Home Kelly, Josephine, Miss, New Gower Street Kelly, Mrs. Jas. A., Gower Street Kelly, Winnie, retd., Brazil's Square Kelly, Mrs. Ennis, care Mrs. Ennis, care General Delivery	L Lamb, Mrs., Brazil's Square Larder, Capt. J. G., Gower St. Lamb, Patrick, Gower St. Lanigan, Miss Johanna, Patrick St. West Lundrigan, Mary A., Gower Street Lane, W. H., LeMarchant Road	M Martin, Lar, card, Lime St. Martin, Capt. Frank Martin, Rebecca, retd. Martin, Hannah	N Newman, Lillian, card Nelson, John, late Bonavista Branch Newhook, W. H., card O'Neill, Jane, card, Circular Road O'Brien, Mrs. Agnes, Quidi Vidi Road O'Brien, Sylvester, Colonial Street Oldford, Samson, care G. P. O.	O O'Neill, Jane, card, Circular Road O'Brien, Mrs. Agnes, Quidi Vidi Road O'Brien, Sylvester, Colonial Street Oldford, Samson, care G. P. O.	P Perry, Jethro Pritchett, Wm., Freshwater Bay Pincault, Rev. Peter Piercey, John, care Mrs. White, Monroe St. Power, Miss May, Gower St. Powers, Elizabeth, Mrs., Woodridge, Alexander, Buchanan St. Power, W. A., card Power, Richard, card, Bond Street Power, B., Publicover, Furlvis Parsons, Jas. J., LeMarchant Rd	Q Quinn, Mrs. W. E. Quinn, Miss Emma Quinn, Mrs. M., late Goose Bay, King's Road	R Reddy, Miss L., Rennie Mill Rd. Riggs, Edward Rogers, W. J., card Ross, Jos. P. Roche, Edward Rose, Hannah, Mundy Pond Road Rogers, T., card Rogers, A. W., card Russell, Miss, Queen's Road	S Shave, Martha, Duckworth Street Salmon, Thomas Stamland, M., Wm., late of Cambridge Spry, Thomas, card Spry, J. H. Sheehan, John Steed, Mrs. W. J., Cochrane Street Simms, Mr., care Reid Nfld. Co. Simmons, Robert, card Simms, Mrs. Cochrane St. Simons, Mrs. Peter Scott, George, late s.s. Argyle	T Taylor, Miss Florence, Springdale Street Taylor, Harry, Queen's Road Taylor, Miss Harriet, late Carbonear Tilley, Miss Annie, Alexander Street	V Verge, Charlie, card Vickers, Miss N., Water St. Vavasseur, Miss Alice, late Gower St. Verge, Mrs. Julia	W Warren, Miss Nell, Catherine Row Way, Chas. W., card Whelan, Miss A., late Hospital Whelan, Miss Mgt., Water Street Wills, James, Woodridge, Alexander, Buchanan St. Warford, Harry, care Mrs. K. Pinn W., Laurence, Boggan Street	Y Young, John, care Mr. Smith Young Walter
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