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By Love Alone OR The Friend of the People

CHAPTER XXXIII

At Last.

But if Mina's social success may be described as extraordinary, there is only one word which to designate that of Tibby when, yielding to Mina's insistence, she appeared at Mina's side; and the word is phenomenal. She leaped into popularity at one bound, and Quilton and Clive, stood by and watched her, the one with laughing delight, the other with impressive calm, devoid of the slightest sign of surprise, as Tibby soared triumphantly through the celestial spheres of what she called "the upper ten." No function of any importance was considered complete without the presence of the dainty form and the

pretty, shrewd face of the charming Mrs. Quilton.

The fashionable world petted and caressed her; they copied her walk, her gestures, her every accent; they quoted her sharp sayings and were never tired of laughing at and applauding her witty comments and rejoinders. The society papers presented her portrait in their supplements and embelished her epigrams in paragraphs; and, through it all, strange to say, and yet not strange to say, Tibby kept that wonderful little head of hers perfectly level.

"They are just like anybody else," William Henry," she informed Quilton, after one occasion of particular triumph. "They are just like the people down at the Rents; only they've got into the habit of washing their faces and always eating with their forks instead of their knives. They're just as fond of a lark, and just as easy to get it; and you've only got to show that you consider yourself quite as good as they are, if not a little better, to get on with them. They get the pull of you with Frinistance, last night when the Duchess of Melbury asked me if Mina was once a flower girl, before she went on the stage—like her cheek, wasn't it?—I said yes; and that she

made up the bouquet the duchess carried on her wedding day. For, you see, I happened to know that the duchess was on the 'alls, and that she ran away with that softy the duke when he was Lord Poultry and used to hang about the stage doors."

Quilton laughed with a quiet enjoyment; but Elisha—he was a great swell by this time, and was almost as much in request, on account of his musical gifts, as his brilliant daughter—Elisha looked rather aghast.

"What did she say, Tibby?" he asked.

"Oh, she's not a bad sort, the duchess," replied Tibby, with a grin. "She looked me up and down for a minute; then she burst out laughing, a regular music-hall laugh, and said quite good-temperedly: 'What a sharp little dear you are; plucky, too! I'm very fond of that sister of yours—though how she came to be your sister goodness only knows! She's coming to stay with me at Melbury, and you must come, too. Mind, I'll take no refusal! You'll keep some of the cheeky ones in order. And I like you!'"

"Of course Clive was proud of Mina's success—he was almost as proud of Tibby's—but as the season wore on and Lord Chesterleigh's and Lady Edith's return was announced, he had some grave and anxious moments; for he knew that the ordeal of a meeting with them would have to be gone through. How should they meet? Lady Edith had formally terminated their engagement by a note of two lines written at Tisbury, soon after her arrival there. Clive knew, more by Quilton's manner than his words, that Lady Edith had consented, probably without knowing the extent the murderous character of the plot, to Sara's attempt to avenge her mistress's supposed wrong. He acquitted her of a full knowledge of Sara's diabolical plot, which she had so very nearly carried out with Koshki's assistance, but she had been so closely concerned in it that he wondered how she would bear herself at their first meeting.

It was, therefore, with some trepidation that, one night when he and Mina—and, of course, Tibby—were at a reception at the French embassy, he heard the Chesterleigh's names announced.

He turned to Mina, who was at his side, surrounded by the usual court of admirers, and drawing her a little apart, said quietly:

"Lady Edith is here."

To his surprise—and yet he ought not to have been surprised—instead of displaying any embarrassment, Mina drew herself up and smiled at him. And she looked so beautiful, so queenly, that Clive thrilled with pride and felt reassurance. A little later he met the Chesterleighs face to face. Lord Chesterleigh went pale; then, as he scanned Clive's face, the color came back to his face—it was sadly aged and worn—and he held out his hand and gripped the one Clive quickly gave him.

(To be continued)

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Won by Devotion OR The Rightful Heir

CHAPTER II.

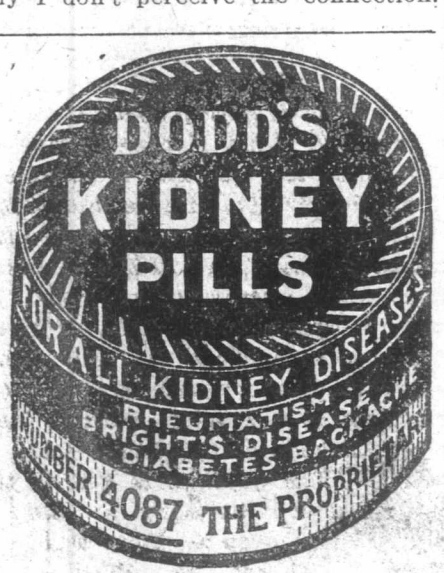
Charlton Place.

"I wish to speak with you, seriously, my dear, v-e-r-y seriously," said Mrs. Charlton, taking a chair, folding her hands, and fixing her glimmering eyes on her daughter's face. "I have just been talking to Mr. Charlton, and he says—sit down."

She pushed a chair up, and Eleanor obeyed. A look of weariness came over her fair face, as if the ordeal of being "v-e-r-y seriously" spoken to was no new one and no pleasant one.

"As I inferred from the first day, my dear," began Mrs. Charlton, with a nod, "Mr. Charlton had a motive in sending for us to visit him, other than that he set forth, people may remember their deceased cousin's widow and orphan, and blood may be thicker than water; but, as a general thing, they don't send several hundred miles for these relatives to visit them, without some other motive than pure benevolence being on the cards. That something else I have discovered, and its name is—"

"Richard Caryl French," Miss Charlton lifted her pretty eyebrows, but she was not surprised. "Captain French—his stepson? Well, that is very natural, mother, only I don't perceive the connection."



What have we to do, what has our coming to do, with this modern Sir Philip Sidney?

"My dear, everything, everything!" Mrs. Charlton looked about her, glanced out of the window, lowered her voice to a whisper—plot-whisper, "Mark my words, Eleanor, Robert Charlton has set for you with one purpose—only one—to marry you to Richard French."

"Mother!"

"It is perfectly true. He did not say so in so many words, of course. How could he? All the same, that is the hidden meaning of our invitation here. And, Eleanor, mind what I am saying, it is the best chance you have ever had, ever will have. I look to you not to thwart Mr. Charlton."

"But, mother—"

"You can raise no obstacle—none at all. When you dismissed Mr. Gore a year ago, you said he was notoriously dissipated, and I accepted that reason, although I failed to perceive then, and do still, what a little the wildness in a man with a million can signify. But here it is different. Captain French, from what I can hear, is all the most exacting could desire; handsome, young, brave, clever—everything. I look to you, advertise in the 'ADVOCATE'."

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Eleanor, to do all you can please Captain French."

"Oh, mother, mother, hush!" Her color flushed, then faded; a look of pain, of shame contracted her brows; her hands locked and unlocked nervously. "You are always dreaming, always talking, always hoping for this. Why should Mr. Charlton have meant so absurd a thing? Captain French has no need to have a wife chosen for him, and thrown at his head. If he is all you say, is he likely to let any one choose for him? And, besides—"

"Well, Eleanor, and, besides?" said Mrs. Charlton austerely; but Eleanor rose, biting her lip and flushing guiltily. She went back to the window, where the roses hung and the woodbine clambered, just as sweetly as half an hour ago, but the soft eyes were only full of impatient, impotent pain now.

"There can be no 'besides,'" said her mother, still more austerely. "And I have made no mistake in Mr. Charlton's meaning. It is not my habit to make mistakes. It is Mr. Charlton's wish that you should marry his stepson, who is a little, just a little, hare-brained about exploring and soldiering, and liable to run away at a moment's notice."

"And so is to have a wife tied to him as a sort of drag anchor, whether he will or no. Well, mother, I decline being that drag anchor."

"You will do exactly as you please, of course," retorted her mother angrily; "as you always do. But remember this, if you are perverse, if you take to riding any of your extremely high horses here, if you refuse the heir of this noble estate to—"

"Mother, listen to me," Eleanor Charlton said, and put her hand with a tired gesture to her head; "do not let us quarrel—oh! do not, this very first day. What you hope for cannot be; there must be a mistake. You know—his letter of invitation said so—that he has also invited those two young ladies in New York, his distant relatives, as well as we—"

(To be Continued.)

STAMP-MAKING MYSTERIES

Devices to Baffle Forgers.

One of the most delicate and difficult branches of the printing trade is postage stamp making.

Many governments have their own stamp printing works, but in this country they are produced by private firms under the direction of the Postmaster-General.

The first step is to select the design. In some countries the designs are selected by means of an open competition, but in Britain the subjects are either commissioned from well-known artists or chosen from specimens sent in by the printers.

Three Methods Used.

The next thing is to transfer the design to a steel die. This work is seldom carried out by one man. The portrait or arms may be cut by one man, the lettering by another, and the ornamental border by a third. This method is adopted as a precaution against forgery by engravers.

There are three methods of printing stamps—recess plate printing, direct plate printing, and flat printing from prepared stones. The first process is the most costly, but gives the best results; the second is quick and cheap, and therefore most widely used. Flat printing is an inferior method and is used only in an emergency, since by this method it is not possible to produce large numbers of stamps at the speed which is necessary.

In recess printing the design is engraved in recess upon a flat piece of steel, which is afterwards hardened. The design is then pressed on to a

smaller roller of soft steel, hydraulic power being used. This roller in its turn is hardened, and used to transfer the design on to the steel plates from which the stamp is actually printed in sheets. This is done by rocking the roller to and fro on the steel plates until the surface is impressed with so many exact copies of the design in recess—that is to say, with the design, sunk into the plate.

Special Ink.

The plate is then cleaned and polished, and special ink is forced into the grooves by means of a soft pad. The surface is wiped clean so that the ink is left only in the sunken design. A sheet of thick paper which has been

damped is laid upon the plate, and an impression taken under pressure. After leaving the press the sheets of stamps are dried in a hot room, flattened out, and coated with gum. The sheets are then perforated, checked and counted.

The direct printing method is very similar, except that the design is engraved in relief instead of recess. The design is transferred to lead, wax, or gutta-percha, which are then coated with copper. When the coating has dried it is removed from the lead or wax, and mounted on an iron plate, from which the stamps are printed.

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