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The Heir to Beecham Park

CHAPTER V.

"If you are ill after this, Cousin Vane," she heard Stuart say, "I shall never forgive myself. The heat is terrific, you know. Are you quite sure you can manage it?"

"Quite," answered the woman's voice. "I want to see this poor doggie; besides, you tell me it is just as far back again as round this way."

"Just as far. Well, here we are! Poor Sir Charles, I hope the old fellow is better."

The two figures came into sight. They were about six yards from Margery, and were walking slowly. She could see the delicate blue drapery, the slender gauntleted hand, though she did not raise her eyes; and she drew back into her corner with a nervous dread such as she had never felt hitherto.

Mr. Crosbie led his cousin to a small outhouse immediately facing the kitchen door, and was about to open the door, when, looking round, he saw Margery. His face flushed for an instant; then, before his cousin could perceive it, his embarrassment was gone.

"There, Vane," he said, easily, opening the door and pointing to a large collic lying on a heap of clear straw. "Don't be afraid; he won't hurt you. Poor Sir Charles—poor old fellow!" He stooped and took up a bandaged paw. "I shall have you about in a day or two. He wants some fresh water. Margery—he left his cousin's side a little, and looked straight at the girl sitting up in the corner.

"Margery, will you kindly ask one of the maids to bring me some water for Sir Charles?"

Margery let down her book without a word, went indoors, brought a jug, then walked to the well a little to the left, and, having filled the jug, approached him.

"Thank you. Why a trouble, Margery?" said Stuart, courteously. "How is your mother to-day?"

"She is no better, Mr. Stuart, thank you," returned Margery, in her clear, refined voice. "I am waiting for some things madame is kindly going to send her."

Vane Charteris had turned at the first sound of the girl's voice, and she was almost alarmed at the beauty of the face before her. Beside the golden glory of that hair, the depths of pathetic splendor in those eyes, the

only the face of a maid, or did her heart speak truly when it called that mother, madame's equal?

Margery was pained and troubled as she took her way along the paddock—pained not so much at the woman's words as at the thought that the man had re-echoed them and deemed her stupid and plain. She had grown to look on Stuart Crosbie as something bright and delightful in her life. They had played together as children, and the memory of that friendship was the strongest link in the chain that held him as her hero. When he was away, Stuart had written once or twice to Margery, sending her views of the places he visited, and giving her long chatty accounts of his travels. When he came home, they renewed their intimacy; there was not a shadow of surprise or fear in Margery's mind when the young squire came so frequently to see her.

She had no suspicion that this friendship would annoy his mother or was in any way strange or uncommon. She liked Stuart Crosbie; she could talk to him of her studies, her pursuits—a sealed book in her home—and gradually grew to welcome him as a companion with whom she could converse easily and naturally, and as a friend who would never fail her. Mrs. Morris was too great an invalid to devote much thought to the girl's amusements, nor would she have been greatly troubled had she known how intimate the young squire and Margery had become; so the girl had had no constraint put upon her; she met, walked, and chatted with Stuart Crosbie as freely as she liked, and no cloud had dawned on her happy life till today.

The sight of that other girl, so different from herself, had brought a strange, sharp pang, but that was lost in the pain she endured when she thought that Stuart had agreed with the cruel remark, and that his friendship was gone forever. She wandered her way along the paddock, and was turning through the gate to enter the gardeners' path again, when a hand was stretched out from beside her, took the basket from her, and, putting a finger under her chin, raised her head from its drooping position.

"Well?" said Stuart, quietly.

"Give me my basket, please, Mr. Stuart," Margery murmured, hurriedly, a crimson wave of color dyeing her cheeks.

"What for?" asked the young man, calmly.

"I must get home. I am very late as it is."

"Well, why don't you go?" Stuart inquired, watching the color fade from her cheeks.

"I cannot go without my basket," Margery answered, trying to be at her ease. "Please give it to me, Mr. Stuart."

"No," he answered, briefly.

"Then I must go without it!" she exclaimed, and, suiting the action to the word, she began to move down the path.

Stuart followed at once, and put a detaining hand on her arm.

"Here is your basket, Margery. I was only teasing you. What a time you have been! I have been waiting for you for the last five minutes." Margery's heart grew lighter again.

"You might have been better employed," she returned, with the quaint sharpness Stuart always admired. "But, if you have time to waste, I have not. Listen! There—it is striking six, and mother will wonder what has become of me."

"Yes, that is six," observed Mr. Crosbie, listening to the clock chiming from the castle. "You will get home by seven, Margery, if you start at once. Not that way!"—as she turned again down the path. "This is nearly half a mile nearer." He pushed open the gate and motioned her into the paddock again. "Now," he continued, slinging the basket on his arm, and turning beside her across the field, "why are you cross with me, Miss Margery?"

"I am not cross with you," Margery answered, hurriedly.

"Not now, perhaps; but you were," Margery was silent.

"What was it, Margery?" he asked, gently.

"I heard what that lady said about me just now," she replied, after a pause; "and—and—"

"You are angry with me. That is hardly fair—rough on an old friend, you know."

"I thought you might have—"

She stopped.

(To be continued.)

Knowledge

They list for me the things I cannot know:
Whence came the world? What hand flung out the light
Of yonder stars? How could a God of Right
Ordain for earth an ebbless tide of woes?
Their word is true; I would not scorn their doubt,
Who press their questions of the how and why.
But this I know: that from the star-strewn sky
There comes to me a peace that puts to rout
All brooding thoughts of dread, abiding death:
And too I know, with every fragrant dawn,
That Life is Lord; that, with the winter gone,
There cometh Spring, a great, reviving breath.
It is enough that life means this to me:
What death shall mean, some sunny morn shall see.
—The Watchman-Examiner.

Pearline Makes Washing Easy

—oct.10.14

The Months in a Muddle

DO WE WANT A NEW CALENDAR?

We have entered upon another year with our old and unreformed calendar. Proposals for its simplification have often been made; but it remains complicated and erratic.

Last year we had five Fridays in February—a thing which, though it had not happened previously for forty years, will happen again after an interval of twenty-eight years. Yet normally it is only twenty-eight years before any one day of the week recurs as leap year day.

Why, then the long interval of forty years since February 29th previously fell on a Friday? Because, under the Gregorian correction to the calendar, three leap years are dropped in four hundred years at three successive century years, and because in the last interval a "double 0" year (1900) intervened.

Working for Nothing.
Some countries still use the Julian calendar, and consequently they make every fourth year a leap year. It follows that by their system each week day has its turn as leap year day once every twenty-eight years.

Another anomaly is that in a leap year persons who are paid monthly or quarterly have to give a day's work for nothing. If the salary is £1,000 a year, this means a loss to the worker of £2 15s. The State, in particular, gains largely through this peculiarity. Pay is also affected by the calendar in a different manner. We sometimes have fifty-three Saturdays in a year, and consequently most workers receive an extra week's pay in it. This makes a great difference to big corporations, as well as to the State. Old-age pensioners, too, get an extra week's money.

Coincidence and Prophecy.
On the other hand, millions of people have to pay fifty-three premiums on policies in such a year—an enormous gain to the great industrial insurance offices, which do not suffer a corresponding loss either in the preceding or the following year.

A further peculiarity of the calendar is that occasionally two great anniversaries of the Church fall on the same day. Thus, in 1921 the Annunciation was on Good Friday, and it will be again in 1932. This coincidence is generally supposed to be referred to in the prophecy—
"When our Lord shall lie in our Lady's lap
England will meet with a strange mishap."

Some authorities, however, consider that the coincidence meant is that between the Annunciation and Easter Day, as in 1894. Easter in that year fell on March 26th, the Feast of the Annunciation.

In connection with miscellaneous anniversaries, also, there are many curiosities. Some people, for instance, are unable to reconcile the date of a birth with some other date. This may be due to failure to allow for the difference between our former calendar and the present calendar.

A Fixed Date for Easter.
Let us take a single illustration. The anniversary of George III's birth is given as June 4th whereas in many books he is said to have been born on May 24th, 1738. So, in fact, he was. But when the calendar was altered in 1752 birthdays of all living persons were post-dated by eleven days as far as the law was concerned. After 1752, therefore, George III's birthday was celebrated on June 4th.

The question of a fixed date for Easter has often been raised. The variations in the date of Easter cause a great deal more inconvenience and disorganization in the community than is generally realized. School, university, and law terms have to be altered in accordance with the change in the date of Easter, while the date of Whitsun and the question of holidays also depend upon it.

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