

The Bread and Butter Miss.

PART II.

'It is too bad,' Maisie overheard the young chateleine whisper to a friend, 'such affectation really amounts to rudeness. But yet it is so awkward to go down—' then followed some words too low for her to understand, succeeded by a joyful exclamation—'Ah, there he is at last,' as again the door opened, and 'Mr. Norreys' was announced.

And Maisie's ears must surely have been preternaturally sharp, for through the buzz of voices, through the hostess' amiably expressed reproaches, they caught the sound of her own name, and the fatal words 'that girl in black.'

'You must think me a sort of Frankenstein's nightmare,' she could not help saying with a smile as Despard approached to take her down to dinner.

But she was scarcely prepared for the rejoinder.

'I won't contradict you, Miss Florde, if you like to call yourself names. No, I should have been both surprised and disappointed had you not been here. I have felt sure all day I was going to meet you.'

Maisie felt herself blush, felt too that his eyes were upon her, and blushed more, in fury at herself.

'Fool that I am,' she thought. 'He is going to play now at making me fall in love with him, is he? How contemptible, how absurd! Does he really imagine he can take me in?'

She raised her head proudly and looked at him, to show him that she was not afraid to do so. But the expression on his face surprised her again. It was serious, gentle, and almost deprecating, yet with an honest light in the eyes such as she had never seen there before.

'What an actor he would make,' she thought. But a little quiver of some curious inexplicable sympathy which shot through her as she caught those eyes, belied the unspoken words.

'I am giving far more thought to the man and his moods than he is worth,' was the decision she had arrived at by the time they reached the dining-room door. 'After all, the wisest philosophy is to take the goods the gods send us and enjoy them. I shall forget it all for the present, and speak to him as to any other pleasant man I happen to meet.'

And for that evening, and whenever they met, which was not infrequently in the course of the next few weeks, Maisie Florde kept to this determination. It was not difficult, for when he chose, Despard Norreys could be more than pleasant. And—Miss Florde in her third personality was not hard to please; and—another 'and'—they were both young, both—in certain directions—deplorably mistaken in their estimates of themselves; and, lastly, human nature is human nature still, through all the changes of philosophies, fashions, and customs.

The girl was no longer acting a part; had she been doing so, in-

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ALL DRUGGISTS 11-61

ded, she could not so perfectly have carried out the end she had, in the first fire of her indignation, vaguely proposed to herself. For the time being she was, so to speak, 'letting herself go' with the pleasant insidious current of circumstances.

Yet the memory of the first evening was still there. She had not forgotten.

And Despard?

PART III.

THE London season was over. Mr. Norreys had been longing for its close; so, at least, he had repeated to his friends, and with even more insistence to himself, a great many, indeed a very great many, times, during the last hot, dusty weeks of the poor season's existence. He wanted to get off to Norway in a friend's yacht for some fishing, he said; he seemed for once really eager about it, so eager as to make more than one of his companions smile, and ask themselves what had come to Norreys, he who always took things with such imperturbable equanimity, what had given him this mania for northern fishing?

And now the fishing and the trip were things of the past. They had not turned out as delightful in reality as in anticipation somehow, and yet what had gone wrong Despard, on looking back, found it hard to say. That nothing had gone wrong was the truth of the matter. The weather had been fine and favourable; the party had been well chosen; Lennox-Brown, the yacht's owner, was the perfection of a host.

It was a case of the workman, not of the tools, I suspect,' Despard said to himself one morning, when, strolling slowly up and down the smooth bit of gravel path outside the drawing-room windows at Markerslea Vicarage, he allowed his thoughts to wander backwards some little way. 'I am sick of it all,' he went on, with an impatient shake, testifying to inward discomposure. 'I'm a fool after all, no wiser, indeed a very great deal more foolish, than my neighbours. And I've been hard enough upon other fellows in my time. Little I knew! I cannot throw it off, and what to do I know not.'

He was staying with his sister, his only near relation. She was older than he, had been married for several years, and had but one trouble in life. She was childless. Naturally, therefore, she lavished on Despard an altogether undue amount of sisterly devotion. But she was by no means an entirely foolish woman. She had helped to spoil him, and she was beginning to regret it.

'He is terribly, quite terribly blase,' she was saying to herself as she watched him this morning, herself unobserved. 'I have never seen it so plainly as this autumn,' and she sighed. 'He is changed, too; he is moody and irritable, and that is new. He has always been so sweet-tempered. Surely he has not got into money difficulties—I can scarcely think so. He is too sensible.' Though, after all, as Charles often says, perhaps the best thing that could befall the poor boy would be to have to work hard for his living—a most natural remark on the part of 'Charles,' seeing that he himself had always enjoyed a thoroughly comfortable sufficiency, and again Mrs. Selby sighed.

Her sigh was echoed; she started slightly, then glancing round, she saw that the glass door, by which

she stood was ajar, and that her brother had arrested his steps for a moment or two, and was within a couple of yards of her. It was his sigh that she had heard. Her face clouded over still more; it is even probable that a tear or two rose unbidden to her eyes. She was a calm, considering woman as a rule; for once she yielded to impulse, and, stepping out, quickly slipped her hand through Mr. Norreys' arm.

'My dear Despard,' she said, 'what a sigh! It sounded as if from the very depths of your heart, if, she went on, trying to speak lightly, 'if you have one that is to say, which I have sometimes doubted.'

But he threw back no joke in return.

'I have never given you reason to doubt it, surely, Madeline?' he said half reproachfully.

'No, no, dear. I'm in fun, of course. But seriously—'

'I'm serious enough.'

'Yes, that you are—too serious. What's the matter, Despard, for that there is something the matter I am convinced?'

He did not attempt to deny it.

'Yes, Madeline,' he said slowly, 'I'm altogether upset. I've been false to all my theories. I've been a selfish enough brute always, I know, but at least I think I've been consistent. I've chosen my own line, and lived the life, and among the people that suited me, and—'

'Been dreadfully, nay miserably spoilt, Despard.'

He glanced up at her sharply. No, she was not smiling. His face clouded over still more.

'And that's the best even you can say of me?' he asked.

Mrs. Selby hardly let him finish.

'No, no. I am blaming myself more than you,' she said quickly. 'You are much—much better than you know. Despard. You are not selfish really. Think of what you have done for others: how consistently you have given up those evenings that night school.'

'On a week—what's that? And there's no credit in doing a thing one likes. I enjoy those evenings, and it's more than I can say for the average of my days.'

But his face cleared a very little as he spoke.

'Well,' she went on, 'that shows you are not at heart an altogether selfish brute,' and now she smiled a little. 'And all the more does it show how much better you might still be if you chose. I am very glad, delighted, Despard, that you are discontented and dissatisfied; I knew it would come sooner or later.'

'Mr. Norreys looked rather embarrassed.

'Madeline,' he began again, 'you haven't quite understood me. I didn't finish my sentence. I was going on to say that at least I had done no harm to anyone else; if no one's any better through me, at least no one's the worse for my selfishness—oh, yes, don't interrupt,' he went on, 'I know what you'd like to say—'No man liveth to himself,' the high-flown sort of thing. I don't go in for that. But now—I have not even kept my consistency. You'd never guess what I've gone and done—at least, Madeline, can you guess?'

And his at all times sweet voice sweetened and softened as he spoke, and into his eyes stole a look Madeline had never seen there before.

'Despard,' she exclaimed breathlessly, 'have you, can you, have fallen in love?'

He nodded.

'Oh, dear Despard,' she exclaimed, 'I am so very glad. It will be the making of you. That's to say, if—but it must be somebody very nice.'

'Nice enough in herself—nice,' he repeated, and he smiled. 'Yes, if by nice you mean everything sweet and

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womanly, and original and delightful. 'Oh, Despard,' she exclaimed, 'you don't mean that she's a married woman?'

'No, no.'

'Or, or any one very decidedly beneath you?' she continued, with some relief, but anxiously still.

Despard hesitated.

'That's exactly what I can't quite say,' he replied. 'She's a lady by birth, that I'm sure of. But she has seen very little. Lived always in a village apparently—she has been—some ways unusually well and carefully educated. But I'm quite positive she's poor, really with nothing of her own. I fancy. I'm not sure, it has struck me once or twice that perhaps she had been intended for governess.'

Mrs. Selby gasped, but checked herself.

'She has friends who are kind to her. I met her at some good house it was at Mrs. Englewood's first or all, but since then I've seen her a much better places.'

'But why do you speak so doubtfully—you keep saying "I fancy"—suppose.' It must be easy to find out all about her.'

'No; that's just it. She's curiously no—not reserved—she's too nice an well-bred for that sort of thing—but if you can understand, she's frank in her own way, in speaking of herself. She'll talk of anything but herself. She has an old invalid father whom she adores—and upon my soul, that about all she has ever told me.'

'You can ask Mrs. Englewood, surely.'

Despard frowned.

'I can, and I have; at least, I tried it. But it was not easy. She's been rather queer to me lately. She would volunteer no information, and of course—you see—I didn't want to seem interested on the subject. It's only just lately, since I came here it fact, that I've really owned it to my self,' and his face flushed. 'I was yachting and fishing to put it out of my head, but—it's been no use—' won't laugh at all that sort of thing again as I have done, I can tell you.

'He's very much in earnest, though Mrs. Selby.

'What—you don't mind telling me what is her first name?' she asked.

'Florde—Miss Florde. I fancy her first name is Mary. There's a name they call her by,' but he did not tell it.

'Mary Florde—that does not sound aristocratic,' mused Mrs. Selby. 'Despard, tell me—Mrs. Englewood is really fond of you. Do you think she knows anything against this girl, or her family, or anything like that, and that she was afraid of it for you?'

'Oh, dear no! Quite the contrary. Mai—Miss Florde is a great pet of hers. Gertrude was angry with me for not being civil to her,' and he laughed.

'Not being civil to her,' she repeated. 'And you were falling in love with her? How do you mean?'

'That was afterwards. I was brutally unkind to her at first. That's how it began somehow,' he said, disconnectedly.

Mrs. Selby felt utterly perplexed. Was he being taken in by a designing girl? It all sounded very inconsistent.

'Despard,' she said after a little silence, 'shall I try to find out all about her from Mrs. Englewood? She would not refuse any information if it was for your sake.'

He considered.

'Well, yes,' he said, 'perhaps you'd better.'

'And—' she went on, 'if all is satisfactory—'

'Well?'

'You will go through with it?'

'I—suppose so. Altogether satisfactory it can't be. I'm fairly well off as a bachelor, but that's a very different matter. And—Madeline—I should hate poverty.'

'You would have no need to call it poverty,' she said rather coldly. (To be continued.)

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The Evening

By RUTH

'I wouldn't give much for a person who didn't have a backbone enough to hate some one else.' I heard a girl say that the other day in justification of a statement which she had just made about disliking one of the girls at her school.

Her mother had gently rebuked her for having such a feeling, and the above statement, accompanied by a toss of the head, was her way of taking the rebuke.

It seems to me that this idea that it takes backbone to be an enemy, and that it is a sign of a high-strung and desirable temperament to hate, has a good deal of prevalence. People quote in support of this view, the saying that a man who has no enemies has not done very much. They have the wrong idea. By a man's enemies, this saying means those who hate him, not those whom he hates. To be hated may sometimes be a sign of character; to hate never.

I wish the folks who hold this peculiar idea would make a business some day of analyzing the causes and motives behind all the hatreds which they pride themselves on cherishing, and then see if they think hating is so fine a thing.

If we hated people for being cruel, for causing suffering, or for being very wicked in any direction, our hatred would not be an altogether

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Fads and Fashions.

Everything is Russian. One-piece gowns are still the vogue. In evening dress two colors are often combined. Crepe de chine is enjoying a decided popularity. Shaded berthas of lace are predicted for a return. Many belt will be worn and the leather ones are very chic. Patent leather belts are snappy for linen, gingham, etc., frocks. The changeable taffeta suits and gowns will require white gloves. In millinery, small flowers and tightly pressed designs are used. White dresses are frequently relieved with bright sashes and ribbons. A charming new material for dressmaking is known as "Eponge". There is a decided revival of the jacket bodice popular during the second empire. White is very prominent in millinery, and in footwear it is practically everything. The pretty flowered foulards are especially appropriate for the frocks of youthful maidens. There is a steady demand for fine qualities of serges and whipcords for the spring suits. White corduroy is being used in separate skirts and proves a most admirable material for that purpose. Decidedly effective is the separate blouse of white linen trimmed with plain linen of blue or white.

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