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The
Wooing of Nell.

"Then, indeed, she is wrong," cried Clifford, hotly. "Nobody is more angry than I am about it. And you will believe me when I tell you, that I have come down today on purpose to ask Nell, for the second time, to be my wife."

The old gentleman listened with vivid interest.

"Come back with me, do come inside the house with me for one minute," he said, with as much excitement as the young man himself had shown. "Theodore will be ready to embrace you when she hears."

But Clifford, who was in no hurry to be embraced by Theodore, excused himself. He had so little time, he said, he was afraid he should hardly be able to get back to Courtstair before dark.

"Tell Miss Theodore," said he, "that I am very grateful to her for believing in my darling girl. I call her mine, although she won't give me the right to do so. But I haven't given up hope. I shall not do so, even if she refuses me again."

Still it was with very little confidence in his immediate chances of success that Clifford, after taking leave of the colonel, walked briskly on to the little inn. He had written to Nell three or four times, without receiving a single line in answer. She had not returned his letters; she must have received, and probably read them. If there was anything to hope for in that fact, he might hug the thought to his heart; but considering the terms in which he had written, the warmth with which he had begged her to let him come down and see her, there was very little encouragement in that.

He was luckier than he had ventured to expect. For as he came over the little bridge which spanned the river, he saw Nell herself approaching the house from the opposite direction. She had her Prayer Book in her hand, and was evidently returning from Ströan, where she had been to church.

She saw him as soon as he saw her, stopped, turned pale, and ran a few steps to the left, evidently with the hope of escaping into the fields behind a group of cottages which stood between her and the inn. But Clifford was too quick for her. She saw by the pace at which he approached that it was useless to try and avoid him, so she gave up the attempt, and came steadily on with her eyes on the ground.

"Miss Clara! Nell!" said he in a low voice, as he came up to her.

She raised her eyes to his face for a moment only, and he saw that a great change had taken place in her since he had last seen her. There was in her face a sullen expression, as different as possible from the child-like openness of face and manner which had seemed to him her greatest charm. And his heart smote him as he thought that this change had been brought about, though unintentionally, indeed, by him.

"You are not glad to see me, I can see that," he went on hurriedly, as he turned and kept pace with her. "Of course I had no right to expect that you would be. But still I had hoped."

She made no answer.

"You got my letters?"

"Yes," answered Nell, in a tone in which he was surprised to detect a tremor.

"You know that I asked you to let me come down?"

"—I did not write to say you might, though."

But her tone was not angry, he thought.

"Well, I did wait as long as I could. But, Nell, I was too miserable to wait any longer. And now that I see you, and see that you look changed, and think that it is my fault, I feel as if I could hang myself."

He hoped she would say something, but she did not. After a few moments' silence he saw that a tear was falling down her cheek.

"Oh, my darling!" broke out Clifford, unable to restrain himself any longer, "won't you let me marry you, and take you away? You have known me long enough now, haven't you?"

But Nell shook her head.

"I would never marry anyone till this affair of the robberies was cleared up," answered Nell, firmly.

"And can't you help us to find it out?"

At this her face changed. She looked up at him with an expression of angry defiance.

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ed up at him with an expression of angry defiance.

"That is what you came down here for, then, to see whether I could tell you anything, and satisfy your curiosity without your having the trouble of sending any more detectives down?" she cried, uttering the words with breathless rapidity, while her frame shook from head to foot. "No, Mr. King, I don't know anything, and if I did I wouldn't tell you. You have begun by trying to tell me that your own case may be sent, mind, I don't know this, I only guess it. But I thought it right you should know."

"Instead of seeming grateful for the information, Nell evidently took it as a fresh offense."

"Why should you warn me?" she asked, and the pallor of her face gave place suddenly to a red blush of anger. "Is it that I may put a check to my lascivious propensities until he has gone away again?"

"Nell! Nell! How can you? You would not, if you knew how horribly it makes me suffer!"

She broke down completely, and burst into tears. Clifford was at least as unhappy as she, and there was no doubt that his eyes, as he looked in vain to comfort her. He did succeed at last, however, in making her confess that she had never believed that he had any share in the sending from town of the amateur detective, Jack Lowndes. As for the fresh arrival, which Clifford told her to expect, she shrugged her shoulders and told him she had grown a little calmer.

"Let them send him," she said, lessly. "I shall not even advise my uncle to refuse to let him stay, even if I guess who he is. It must all be found out some day, and the harder they try the sooner it will be all over."

As she was now quite calm and dry-eyed, Clifford made one more attempt to get at her own real views of the mystery. She had grown kinder to him, and had acquitted him of all blame for her own sake he must make use of the opportunity.

And again when he put his question, there came into the girl's face that curious look, as if a haunting, vague memory had disturbed her mind.

"I tell you solemnly, I have no more idea than you have yourself," said she. "I will confess now that I had a horrible sort of half idea before."

"And you will not tell me what that sort of a half idea was?" interrupted Clifford, eagerly.

"No," answered Nell, firmly.

"And now?" pursued Clifford.

"Now I have no more idea who did it than you have yourself. At first I tried to think that this Mr. Lowndes went to sleep with his head full of thoughts of robbery, and that he dreamt all the long story that he told us. But the more I thought about his manner of telling us, the more I could not help believing that it was not a dream after all. And yet—"

"You saw no one go through your room but him?"

"Could it have been—the servant, the woman I saw in the bar?" suggested Clifford with lowered voice.

Nell smiled sadly.

"Poor Meg? No. She has been with my uncle for fifteen years; and you know they say it is only lately, since I have been here, in fact, that she grew crimson, that the thefts have been committed. I am ashamed

to say that that night, when Mr. Lowndes had told his story, I did go into poor Meg's room, just to—just to see if she was there. And she was fast asleep, really fast asleep, not shamming. I tried her with a lighted candle before her eyes; you see I was desperate," she added, in apology. "And then I even went downstairs and had a look at old Nannie!"

And Nell looked deeply ashamed of the fact she was confessing.

But Clifford, who had naturally less delicacy on the subject of Nannie and Meg, secretly cherished a hope that, in some inexplicable way, one or other of these estimable persons might get them all out of their difficulty by eventually confessing to the thefts. But he was careful to give no hint of this hope to Nell.

Clifford did not want to see George Claris, but he felt bound to do so. The innkeeper was, as he had anticipated, very surly in manner towards him, and he frustrated Clifford's intention of opening his heart to him on the subject of his daughter's disappearance. He came, only a few days after Clifford's visit, in the guise of a mild-looking man with sandy hair and pale eyes, one of those men whose age it is difficult to guess until you perceive, by a close inspection of the wrinkles under the eyes, that the appearance had in well over 40.

(To be continued.)

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Tired of Life.

Suicide of the Station Agent at Sebringville.

Wear of Living Without His Wife Who Is in London Asylum.

Stratford, Ont., Feb. 2.—Richard Symonds, G. T. R. station agent at Sebringville, committed suicide by taking poison yesterday.

Symonds was on hand for duty as usual when the morning train passed, but his son, on coming home for dinner, found him dead in bed, and within reach of a vial labeled "Strychnine." He left a note stating that he was tired of living without his wife, who, a few years ago, became demented, and had to be placed in the London Asylum. He was apparently on good terms with the company, his neighbors and his family, and no other cause can be assigned for the act than that named.

Deceased was about fifty years of age, and had been station agent at Sebringville about five years. An inquest was thought to be unnecessary.

SEAFORTH.

Long Remembered Trouble, Now a Thing of the Past.

A Seaforth lady gives an account of her rescue from a lifelong ailment:

"Ever since I can remember I have suffered from weak action of the bowels, and it has been a constant source of worry, reducing my health to a very low state. I frequently had such sharp pains under my heart that I was afraid if I drew a long breath it would cause death. In going upstairs I had to stop to regain breath. When my children made a noise while playing I would be so overcome with nervousness and weakness that I could not do anything, and had to sit down to regain my composure. Oftentimes my heart would seem to swell, and give me great pain. My limbs were unnaturally cold, and I was subject to nervous headache and dizziness. My memory became uncertain, and sleep deserted me."

"I have been taking Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills, which I got at Mr. Fear's drug store, and as a result am very much better. I have improved in health and strength rapidly since commencing this treatment. The blessing of sleep is restored to me. My heart is much stronger, and the oppressive sensation in it has vanished. I can now go upstairs without stopping and with the greatest ease, and I no longer suffer from dizziness or headache. It seems to me the most estimable of my wife has become healthy and normal, thereby removing the coldness from my limbs. I can truly say that Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills have done me a world of good."

(Signed) Mrs. James Constable, Seaforth, Ont.

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