

FORTUNE FAVORS THE BRAVE; OR, A LOOK INTO THE PAST

CHAPTER V.—(Cont'd)

After that the walk home was delightful; no further mention was made of the man who had insulted and frightened her, or of the locket, though Darnley had not forgotten it; and the sky above was not clearer than Nancy's mind when she re-entered Ripstone Hall, not even aware of fatigue, heat, or discomfort in any shape or form.

A very smart—rather too smart—dog-cart was waiting outside the great entrance when they arrived.

Derrick Darnley frowned slightly as he said:

"The millionaire has lost no time. Mr. Crawshaw is here, I see."

Nancy smiled.

"Aren't you jealous?" she asked, with a little laugh, as she threw off her hat.

"Do you care about money?" was the young man's reply, put abruptly and questioningly.

"I adore it!" she laughed back, and then she laughed away, and a startled, fearful look came in her eyes.

"Who—who is that speaking?" she asked, hurriedly.

"Those refined accents," Derrick Darnley replied, carelessly—he was bending over one of the many dogs that came to greet him—"belong to Mr. Crawshaw, or, to give him his full title, Mr. Thomas Moss Crawshaw, late timber foreman, of the East End, London, but now owner of several estates, and occupier of the Manor House, situated about two miles from here."

CHAPTER VI.

"Oh, there you are, Derry—back already—and what have you done with Nancy, pray?"

There was a decided touch of peevishness in Dorothy Leicester's pretty voice.

Darnley was silent for a moment; he had been standing staring up at the broad staircase in a fixed, almost vexed way, when his cousin came out of the large drawing-room and put the above query to him.

He woke from his reverie with a start and looked down at Dorothy.

"Miss Hamilton is in her own room, I believe," he answered, in a curiously short manner.

"In her room; then I expect she is fired out, and no wonder, starting off to walk to the village in this heat. I mean to scold her well. Are you going in to say 'How d'ye do' to the 'great' millionaire, Derry? You know it is your duty to pay court to all his wealth."

Dorothy's face had lost its cloud, and was as sunny and lovely as usual; she had been a little vexed that Derrick should have left her to go after Nancy; but now he was back again, and that was all she asked. Had she been a little less occupied with her own feelings on this subject, she must have noticed that Mr. Darnley was in anything but a pleasant humor.

"Mr. Crawshaw is quite prepared to receive any amount of homage, so come along," she laughed, slipping her dainty hand through his arm, and trying to pull him toward the drawing-room, whence issued sounds of a strong, loud voice, holding forth with much consequence and vigor.

Darnley's brows contracted in a frown.

"Many thanks, but I would rather be excused, Dolly," he said, curtly. "I have had one experience of Mr. Crawshaw and I am in no hurry to have a second. I think I will go and rescue Merefield from the cubs, he must have had about enough of them by now."

"You have only to utter the magical words, 'Crawshaw is here!' and Merefield will be free immediately," Dorothy observed, with a slight sneer, and then she gave an impatient little sigh.

"I should like to go with you," she said, "but I must remember my duty as hostess and return to my very unwelcome guest."

Darnley pulled a broad tennis hat low over his eyes, and, with a short whistle to the dogs, set off across the lawn towards the tennis ground.

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He was both surprised and annoyed.

Why had Nancy suddenly flown away up the stairs, vanishing before he had time to draw breath, when she discovered that Crawshaw was in the house?

Darnley had been bending over the dogs, dispensing pats of welcome all round, and he had not seen the change that had come over the girl's laughing, happy face, nor the expression of something akin to agony which had flashed into her eyes. He had not seen the sudden terror—the exquisite fear, which had overwhelmed her at the intelligence that her dreaded foe was not only actually close at hand, but would be near her every day to torment and trouble her.

All that Darnley had seen was her hasty rush up the stairs, with an eagerness that as he remembered it sent a curious pang to his heart, which grew deeper and deeper as he walked across the grounds.

"My judgment has been utterly at fault, it seems," he said, bitterly, to himself, kicking savagely at a little daisy that was rearing its innocent and pretty head to greet the summer sun, "and she is no better than the rest. What was that she said just now, 'I adore money!' She said it laughingly, but it was the truth she uttered, all the same. Money—money!—money!—and this brute, because he can boast of a gigantic banking account, is set up and worshiped!"

He turned aside moodily as he neared the tennis court, forgetful of poor Lord Merefield, who was almost reduced to a bundle of rags from the affectionate vigor of his partner, the Hon. Ella, and, reaching a shady and lonely corner, flung himself on the grass and gave way to his thoughts.

"Why do I let this girl vex me as she does!" he cried, impatiently, to himself; "is it not sufficient that I should have been foolish enough to have been bewitched by her face the very instant I saw it—that in one moment she should have scattered all my prudence and worldly wisdom to the four winds, without worrying myself over every little thing concerning her, as I have done these last two days? Would any man in his senses do as I am doing?"

He pulled a low easy garden chair close to him and flung himself into it.

"I'll have a smoke, it will clear my brain; I want to see into this matter rightly; I won't condemn her too quickly!"

So saying, he pulled out his silver case—a gift from Dorothy—and, having lit a cigar, he folded his arms and began to think.

Soothed by the fumes of the fragrant weed, his mood softened, and Nancy's face, with those wonderful eyes and tremulous, sweet red lips, returned to haunt, fascinate and torment him.

"Hang it all!" he mentally declared, with a sudden determination born of a variety of feelings, "I am a brute to judge the child so harshly; so much for my great theory of never going on anything like circumstantial evidence, when at the merest, the vaguest cause, I immediately begin to imagine all sorts of things. Now, why should I doubt her about that locket? What earthly connection can the dainty, beautiful, refined, intellectual—in every sense a thorough lady—what connection can she have with such creatures as this man whom she refused to let me follow and thrash—to-day? And why should she not treasure a little gold locket if she likes?"

He took his hat off, flung it away, and rumbled his dark, curly locks, his face growing shadowed and uneasy again.

"I wish, though, she had let me get at that fellow. I would have given him something to remember this day by. She seemed as if she feared to let me go after him. By Jove! I—if—" A flush rose to his face, and a smile came unconsciously to his lips, making him almost handsome in that moment.

"What if she were nervous about me?" Then he frowned. "Pooh—bah! conceited ape that I am, why should she care about me? She has only known me about three days

altogether, and doubtless doesn't desire to extend the acquaintance-ship."

He flicked away his cigar ash rather moodily; but his thoughts soon went back to Nancy, and his heart beat in a strange, quick way, while his pulses thrilled as he remembered how she had clung to him in her fear, and how tempting and exquisite her face had seemed to him as she gradually grew calm and her smiles came again.

Look whichever side he would Nancy's face haunted him; if he shut his eyes, she laughed out of the darkness.

"She is a witch!" Darnley cried, suddenly, to himself; "she has charmed me."

He gave himself up to the enthrallment of this conclusion, and gradually became quiet and contented.

"She is an angel," was his next verdict, as he leisurely finished his cigar; "and as for her thinking about money and that brute, Crawshaw, even for an instant, why the whole thing is a disgraceful libel, and I ought to feel ashamed of myself for letting it come into my mind for a single instant. How proud she is!" was his next thought. "She disowns the Hamiltons. Serve them right, too, if they could turn their backs on her when she needed them. They ought to feel that she despises them now, that she will never need their help. Thank Heaven that she will never come to want them now. How happy she is! Her face is like a flower bathed in perpetual sunshine; it is the reflection of her mind. Who could help loving her? It is no wonder Dorothy has not grown tired of her, for she is as sweet and rare as she is beautiful!"

And here his rhapsodical musings were broken by the arrival of Lord Merefield in a very bad temper.

"You are a nice fellow, Derry," he commenced, flinging himself on the grass, viciously. "I think you might have given me a hand."

"You have four such able ones near in those possessed by Misses Maude and Ella, that I don't think you can have needed mine."

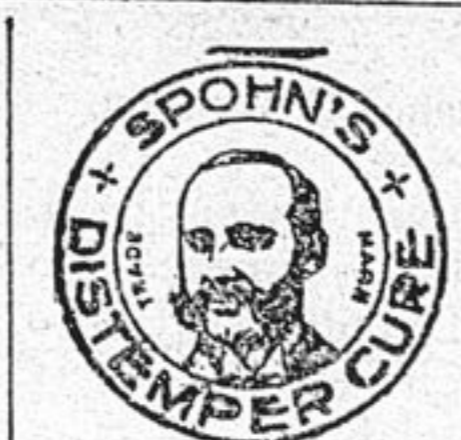
Darnley lit another cigarette, and smiled while the young earl vented his feelings freely on his friend.

"I believe they would have gone on playing till doomsday if Fairfax hadn't suddenly espied Crawshaw about to depart, and the cubs, of course, fled to greet him. I hope to goodness he will carry one of them off—the two together are too much for me!"

"See what it is to have a coronet at your back," laughed the other man.

"The coronet may go down to the bottom of the sea, for all I care!" observed Lord Merefield, gloomily; then, with an assumption of indifference, "What have you done with Dolly?"

"Oh, we parted company hours ago. I fancy she is with the millionaire. Are you going in? Take



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care, Merefield, the cubs may seize you again."

But Lord Merefield was out of earshot, and Darnley laughed softly to himself.

"What a case that is; poor boy, certainly love is not altogether a paradise to him."

And then, left alone in the cool, soothed by the fragrant scent of his tobacco, he gave himself up to his thoughts of Nancy and her fascinations; while she, up in the seclusion of her dainty bedroom, was standing gazing out of the window, wondering in a blank, vague sort of way if her happiness and contentment had gone for ever, and what lay for her in the future, now that Thomas Moss had crossed her path again.

"It is like some hideous dream! Ah! I was right when I told myself I was too happy; yet, though I feared something might come to trouble me, I never thought of this—I never thought that he could come into this life, mix in this world, and now he has come, not quietly, but loudly and ostentatiously. Why has not Dr. Grantley told me about this? If I had been warned, I might—"

but there Nancy stopped. Warned or no, the discomfort, the horror of meeting this man would have been just the same. She sighed a little, then sat down and thought it all out in her cool, commonsense way. "After all," she mused, "things are so changed that it may not be so bad. Thomas Moss, foreman of Yorrick's timber yard, is a very different creature from Thomas Moss Crawshaw, Esq., millionaire and great matrimonial catch—her face lightened visibly. "Of course, he will consider me very much his inferior, doubtless in his heart he will rejoice that he escaped the folly of marrying me when he can now take a wife from any poor, aristocratic family he chooses; yes, yes, how silly I was; the difficulty will be infinitesimal—the color had come back to Nancy's cheeks, the light to those marvellous eyes. "When all is said and done, he can only regard me as a poor dependent on Sir Humphrey's love and generosity, and so quite beneath the great Mr. Crawshaw's notice. Besides, I am safe now; if—if he should try to remind me of the past, I have

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one who will protect me now and always." (To be continued.)

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Poets are borne, not paid.

Where there's a bill there's a pay.

A bird on the tree is worth two on the hat.

Flour by any other name would cost as much.

Heaven help those who help themselves—without permission.

One swallow may not make a summer, but one grasshopper makes many springs.

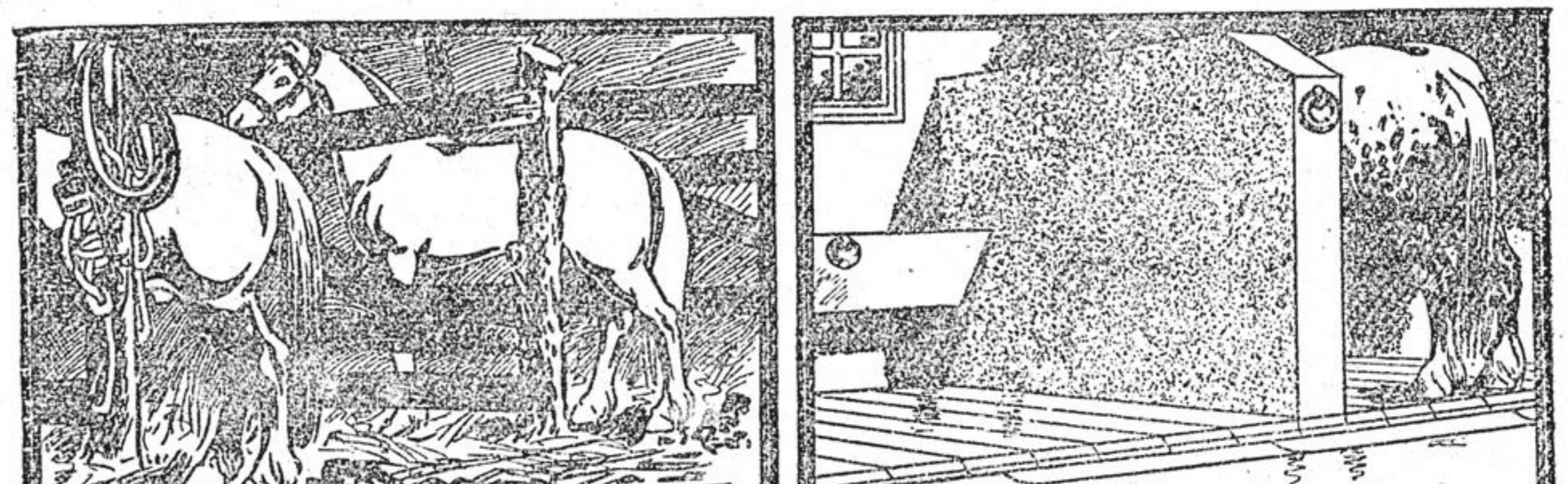
REMEMBER TO FORGET.

Blobbs—"A woman is always illogical."

Slobbs—"Yes; she will always expect you to remember her birthday, but never her age."

An amusing blunder was made in the case of an Irish judicial declaration that certain resident magistrates "could no more state a case than they could write a Greek ode." This was made to read that the magistrates "could no more state a case than they could ride a Greek goat."

"Are checks fashionable now?" asked a highly-dressed young man of his tailor, as he looked over some cloth. "I don't believe they are, sir," was the reply, "for I haven't seen any about lately." He looked so hard at the young man when he said it that it caused an absence in the shop very rapidly.



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