

The Wedding Eve;

Or, Married to a Fairy.

CHAPTER VII.—(Continued).

"But I hear you are a Radical," I ventured to observe. "Surely in that case you don't think the worse of a man because, under the economic conditions of his age, your cousin is unable to make a living for himself and his daughter?"

His little, fierce, light eyes glared at me savagely under his overhanging black eyebrows.

"I'm not a Radical," he snapped out. "I'm a Socialist. The state should provide for those who can't 'elp themselves; but 'Dance and his daughter can 'elp themselves. He might do porter's work, and she's old enough for domestic service. If she'd ad any sense, I'd have sent the old woman who chaps and mends for me away and taken her on. He'd work more and eat less than those greedy boys," he added, with a malevolent look in the direction of his two apprentices. "But 'Orace's girl's no good, nor him, either. He's at the Red Hoar, and as for her, she's throwing her heels about dancing in the attics upstairs all day instead of washing and cleaning, and she can't cook worth a cent. No, I 'elp those that 'elp themselves, and I haven't any sympathy with a man without a penny in his pocket who goes about calling himself a Conservative because he thinks it's a swell thing to do."

Long before this I had given up all hope of finding a shelter for Lillith under the roof of her father's cousin, and it was ready to take my leave. I thought it my duty to inform Mr. Saxon, before doing so, that Horatio was dead. But my news only produced an angry disclaimer against being made liable for his funeral expenses or being considered in any way responsible for his daughter's future, and I speedily quitted the shop, convinced that no home existed there for my little orphan protege.

Her grandfather, the clergyman, next occurred to me as a possible protector. His name was Pritchard, and some few years ago he had been a curate in London. Thus, I knew already, and I resolved to question Lillith further on the subject after her father's funeral, when Mrs. Nokes' vigilant guard over her would be to some extent relaxed.

My opportunity came after the short service at the church on the Sunday, and as the coffin lay in the ground she clung to my arm, dry-eyed, but trembling. I put my hand upon her two hands clasped tightly over my arm, and as I did so I silently registered a vow to guard and protect her throughout my life.

It seemed as though by some magnetic thought transmission she divined this, for her trembling ceased, and she presently looked up at me with so much tenderness, gratitude, and affection shining in her eyes that tears sprang to my own.

The scene remains now as a strange, vivid picture on my mind. The gray stone walls of the square embattled church tower, streaked here and there with yellow lichen and brown velvet moss; the low, rank grass and weathered gravestones of the neglected churchyard into which the sheep wandered at will; the still branches of the dark pine-trees showing black against the mist that rolled up from the marsh; the bent, white-haired clergyman reading those infinitely pathetic words, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;" stout, handsome Mrs. Nokes in tears—as she decried it only right to weep at any funeral—and the slim, yellow-haired girl in black, clinging to my arm with that touch which even now I can feel vibrating through my whole body, and looking into my eyes with those blue ones of hers, surely the bluest and most beautiful ever seen away from a princess in a fairy-tale.

After the service I turned to Mrs. Nokes, who was wiping her eyes with an elaborately embroidered pocket-handkerchief.

"I want to speak to Lillith about the future," I said, and without waiting for any comment I led the girl out of the churchyard toward the Sandhythe road. The fact that had paid the late Mr. Saxon's funeral expenses clearly gave me, in the opinion of the few persons present, a prescriptive right to arrange with his daughter about the future. As for Lillith, she seemed instinctively to turn to me for guidance and protection with a docility and gentleness which touched me deeply.

"But please, Mr. Hervey," she whispered eagerly, "let us get off the high-road, and go down toward the sea. I haven't been near the sea since last Saturday, and I do want to hear the sound of it. Mayn't we take the lane toward West Sandhythe?"

"The marshes are thick with mist," I demurred.

"But soon the mists will clear," she urged. "The sun is trying to shine through them. Please, Mr. Hervey!"

"I have so much to say to you, and down in the valley we shall not be able to see each other's faces," I said.

"But you can hold my hand, which is just as good."

She held it out to me as she spoke, and hand in hand we began the steep descent down a narrow lane, with here and there a little tiled or open-timbered cottage perched high on the steep banks which bordered the way. We could only see a few feet in front of us into the white nebulous mass that seemed to roll away at our approach. The air was strangely still, the very song-birds twittered nervously as though weighed down in spirit by the clammy mist, and with the exception of a group of gipsy hawkers, haggling in their peculiar jargon by the wayside, a dusky, ill-kempt, raggedly picturesque group, we met no human creature until we reached the level of the marsh.

Here, strange to say, our path lay clearer before us. A slight wind from the sea was driving the vapors inland and upward. Almost in silence we crossed the bridge over the military canal, and made our way to the coast by the winding road through the level land where once the sea had flowed. Over our heads a sea-bird was wheeling round, uttering a short, wailing note, the one touch wanting to complete the mysterious loneliness of the scene.

At last a martello tower loomed vaguely before us through the lightning haze, and to the left a long line of sand-dunes immediately facing it, gleaming thread of white, incoming tide. Lillith seated herself on the dry sand, dotted here and there by stunted reeds and gray thistles, and sheltered inland by the dunes. She made room for me beside her, and when I took the proffered seat she nestled to my side and ped her hand trustfully to mine.

"Now, dear," I began, "I have to talk about your future. Have you thought of it at all?"

"Yes, a little. But I knew you would look after me. And I shall bet no ex-pense to you or anybody because, you see, now that father is dead, I can dance on the stage in pantomimes and make some money."

"Your mother did not wish you to do that."

"No, I know. She made father promise. But now that they are both dead, what does that matter?"

She stared up into my face inquiringly. Clearly sentimental considerations had no weight with Lillith Saxon.

"And supposing I do not want you to dance on the stage, either?" I suggested.

She was silent a moment. Then she said humbly:

"I would do anything to please you. What do you want me to do?"

"You told me," I said, trying to speak with a fine blending of the judicial and the paternal, and to forget the blood of seven-and-twenty rioting in my veins, "that your mother was a lady, and that you would like to be one, too."

I stepped to consider how I should make my plan sound attractive to her. Lillith clasped both her small hands on my shoulder and watched my face, a gleam of delight clearly shown in her shining eyes and parted, smiling lips.

"Go on," she whispered softly.

"Well, dear," I said, "you would not like, when you are older, to feel at a disadvantage before other ladies. You would like to speak correct English, and to play those dance tunes you like so much, and to sing the songs you admire, and understand something of the people who wrote them, and perhaps to speak a little French and German, and understand how to manage a house, and to see after cookery and needlework."

Her face fell, and she shook her head emphatically.

"I shouldn't like that!" she murmured. "But, of course, I'd do it for you. Anything else?"

"Well," I said, racking my brains to remember what the girls of my own class really did know how to do, "then there would be spelling and history and geography, and perhaps a little drawing and painting, and some poetry, reading, and—and lawn-tennis, and riding, and all those things as well. And, of course, ballroom dancing."

"That is the only part I like the sound of," she said gravely. "And are you going to teach me all these things yourself?"

I own I was considerably startled by the suggestion. But before I could speak she had broken into a torrent of words.

"Because, though I'm not good at learning, I will try so hard to please you. I know you will like me better when you have made me a lady—and I'd learn anything so as you would like me better, dear, dear Mr. Hervey."

She slipped her arm round my neck and gave me a half-childish hug of affection. Then she sprang to her feet and executed a little pas seul of her joyousness on the firm sand just in front of me. In the middle she stopped, and hung her head in sudden penitent remembrance.

"Poor father!" she faltered. "I'd clean forgotten all about him. But when I heard you tell Mrs. Nokes yesterday that I should always have a friend in you, and you would look after me in future, I was so delighted I could have screamed for joy. First, I thought you'd make a dancer of me, and so I'd earn my living; but now you say I'm to be educated and made a lady of, and that I'm not to go on the stage or conduct with my father. Because, you see, if he hadn't died, you wouldn't have offered to do all these things for me."

She knelt down in front of me in the sand. The sea air and rapid movement had brought a bright carmine to her cheeks. She had taken off her black-straw hat, and her yellow curls were blowing loosely about her face and shoulders. It was difficult to look at her without kissing that little curved rose-red mouth which smiled up at me so invitingly. I had schooled myself to a certain line of conduct with regard to my little ward, and I was resolved not to be tempted out of it.

"One thing I can't promise you," I said, with matter-of-fact cheerfulness, "and that is to instruct you myself. But I will certainly come and see you while you are at school."

"At school?"

Her face fell, and her under-lip trembled in undisguised dismay. Mr. Hervey: please don't send me, she pleaded passionately. "I know what school is, and I hate it. Keep me with you! I know you have a studio in London. Well, it must be dusty and cleaning, and your clothes must want mending, too, sometimes, and you must have a servant to do it. I don't want to be a lady any more because if I am made a lady, I see it will mean being put away into one of those dreadful schools, and sneered at and looked down upon, and bothered and worried to learn things, and kept in so I can't see the sea and sky—or you. That's the worst part. Oh! Mr. Hervey, don't send me away from you! I'd rather be your servant, to wait on you, than be the finest lady in England! I can look a lot older in a long print frock with my hair twisted up. Let me just sweep out your studio and watch you paint; only let me be with you, and I don't care how hard I work. For I love you, Mr. Hervey, and I shall be miserable if you send me away. You are so kind and so handsome, and you have been so good to me. And think how I shall amuse you, learning new dances to please you while you play the piano. And when you're busy and don't want to be bothered, you don't know how quiet I can keep. I'll never give you a bit of trouble if only you let me stay with you!"

She was holding my hand tight between both hers and looking up at me with big tears gathering in her great blue eyes, like a sea-nymph in distress, with the incoming tide, from which the mist had lifted me, a background for her flushed face and floating hair. I am proud of my self-control, as a rule, but I own I had to look out to sea, and not into her pleading eyes, as I answered her.

"Silly child!" I said. "Of what possible use would you be as a servant at your age, and with your small experience of household work? If you really want to please me, you will stay here like a good girl, with Mrs. Nokes, while

I go up to town and try to find out your grandfather, Mr. Pritchard, the clergyman."

"My grandfather! Why do you want to find him?"

"I want to find you a home with him, dear, while you are finishing your education."

"But he has hardly ever heard of me, and I have never seen him. And he was very, very angry with mother for running away with father. Suppose he won't have me?"

"Then I must find you some other home for your holidays."

"Won't you even have me with you, then?"

"Of course not," I answered, laughing. "I am a bachelor, Lillith, living all by myself. I don't keep a boarding-school of young ladies under my roof."

She was silent for a few minutes, as if reflecting. Then she asked suddenly: "How long will it take to what you call finish my education?"

"By the time you are eighteen," I said, still in the same half-banter tone. "I shall expect to find you a highly accomplished young lady."

"Eighteen! Two whole years! And will you come and take me away from school when I am eighteen?"

"I suppose so."

"And what will become of me then?"

"This was just the question which that kind, well-meaning old gossip, the doctor from Sandhythe, had asked me, and which I had not been able to answer. There would be, of course, so-called overstocked and underpaid so-called educated woman of vagabond parentage, ward to a man eleven years her senior. But I could not find it in my heart to mention any of these things, only to try to be more fatherly than ever. I gentled my tone and said: "It is on you that I must depend."

Her answer was only too explicit. "I mean," she said wistfully, "shall I see you every day after that? If I work very hard, and rise to my feet, I helped her to rise, too, from where she knelt staring at me in that altogether bewildering way. Then I took her little hand in one of mine, and laying the other on it, I tried to be more fatherly than ever. "You don't understand, dear," I said, "that in the world I come from young gentlemen do not ask young ladies to stay in the house and sweep the floor, and to do things that are absurd of that sort. They just see them sometimes at tea or dinner at other people's houses, or they meet them at balls or parties, or at the theatre, or in the park. It is on every married people who see each other every day."

She suddenly disengaged her hands, and stretched them up round my neck. "You are very fond of me, aren't you?" she asked, seriously. "Of course you'd have never done so much for me if you hadn't been. But you are, aren't you?"

"Of course I am fond of you, dear."

"Well, then," she said triumphantly, "I shall be a lady, and you'll marry me."

CHAPTER VIII.

The question she had asked me was again one I could not answer.

Why would I not marry her, as she put it, when she was educated? I could not frame so obvious a lie as that I did not sufficiently care for her. Already I cherished for this little untaught creature a passion which, although still to some extent ideal and romantic, was not altogether devoid of the character of that love which comes to a man once in his life and once only—the love which by some is called folly and infatuation, but which makes of our lives on earth a heaven or a hell.

I was to her humble birth and vagabond training, her obvious lack of all higher morality, her unconventional ideas, and the difference between our relative social positions—all these things I cared nothing at all. At that moment, as I looked into her liquid blue eyes, and as I beheld my soul's ideal standing there before me, constraining me with gentle caresses to give up the world, I would have given my soul to be able to accept her offer and to say: "Yes; stay at school until you have gained the surface polish the world esteems so highly; I will see you constantly to encourage you to work hard for my sake. And remember always that you are mine, and that in a very short time I shall take you away and make you my adored wife."

That was the impulse, passionately strong, which surged up within me at her words and touch, and no man but a villain, loving her, could have felt otherwise.

(To be continued.)

A Willing Servant.

An Irish maid was a willing servant, though she could not be described as graceful, but Mrs. Tomkins, knowing the difficulty of obtaining servants, thought that a small drawback. After a month's training Molly had improved so much that her mistress thought she might venture to give a little dinner party. For the first two courses all went well. Molly refrained from speech, and looked as pretty as a young Irish girl can. But in taking the fish downstairs her foot slipped, there was a series of bumps and crashes, and all the guests did their best to look as if they thought nothing unusual was happening. There was silence in the room, however, when the descent was completed, and no one lost a word of the rich Irish brogue which floated up to the dining-room.

"Did you hear me, m'm?" she cried exultingly. "Arrah! I fell all the way downstairs and landed on me feet like a burd!"

Not Catching.

Jane's sister was coming home from Normal School. "Why is she coming home?" asked the neighbor. "Is she sick?" "Yes, she is very, very sick," said Jane. "What ails her?" asked the neighbor. "Well, I don't know exactly. Mamma had a letter from the schoolmistress, and she said it was lack of mental catching. I don't know whether it is catching or not."

Bix—I can't afford to make a fool of myself. Dix—I know that; but you always were reckless of expense.

STATE REVENUE FROM BETS

GERMANY PROPOSES A NOVEL SCHEME.

Will License Bookmaking to Cater to the Horse Racing Public.

The German authorities have again capitulated to what they term "the ineradicable gaming instinct of the average person." After continued and vain attempts to put an end to promiscuous betting on horse races, which involves a sum yearly estimated at between \$150,000,000 and \$200,000,000 they have decided to license book-making in an effort to secure for the state a percentage of this sum. A measure to this end has been adopted by the Federal Council, and is now awaiting the action of the Reichstag. It is hoped to have it become effective in time for the Baden-Baden races next August.

Heretofore the only form of betting sanctioned by law has been by means of the pari-mutuel machine. This, however, was available only to persons able to visit the race tracks. The result is that a vast army of bookmakers, estimated at 6,000, ply their business in defiance of the law. In addition, every barber shop and thousands of cafes and similar resorts harbor their handbook men.

Competent authorities estimate the number of business places where wagers can be laid on horse races at over 200,000. Prosecutions for bookmaking increased from 1,600 in 1906 to 3,000 in 1912. For the most part they resulted in trivial fines or short jail sentences, and the business went ahead just the same. The better, too, is outside the law and has no remedy against dishonest handbook men or bookmakers who refuse to settle winning wagers.

Regular Business.

The number of licensed bookmakers is not fixed in the new measure, but it is understood that the Government contemplates licenses for about fifty, scattered throughout the empire, each of which will be entitled to establish branch offices to meet the demand. Notwithstanding rigorous provisions against illicit betting, punishing both bookmaker and bettor (the latter with fines up to \$250), experts believe that illicit books will continue to flourish, not only because the wage earners, clerks and small-salaried men who to-day furnish the bulk of the handbook custom cannot afford the minimum stake of \$12, but because the heavy taxation of the licensed bookmakers will enable the handbook men to offer far better odds.

Since six per cent. of every bet entered will go to the Government as an initial tax, and winning bets will be mulcted with an additional tax of from six per cent. on bets at odds of two to one or less, up to 20 per cent. on a long shot of 20 to 1 or better, the man who plays a heavily-backed odds-on favorite, say at 7 to 5, may risk a possible fine rather than the certain loss of nearly half of his scanty winnings. To backers of 100 to 1 outsiders, the prospective surrender of some \$25 of a \$100 win will be equally deterrent.

Limited to Racing.

Limited authorized gambling under this law to horse racing, the Government, in its introduction to the bill, pronounced against betting on football and other sports popular with the "middle and lower classes," to save them from the gambling contagion. Officers and soldiers are also classed in the undesirable category, bookmakers being forbidden to accept bets from members of the military forces, and betting on races with gentlemen jockeys is also prohibited.

An important provision of the proposed law makes winning wagers collectible at law, provided they are each cash wagers. This, it is believed, will greatly reduce the

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number of dishonest bookmakers. The maximum penalty for unlicensed bookmaking is to be two years' imprisonment and \$1,500 fine, as against six months and \$125 at present. Bettors dealing with unlicensed bookmakers also make themselves liable to imprisonment and fine, and to the loss of all sums wagered, which will be confiscated by the state. The police may forbid the publishing of tips and form sheets.

Huge Revenue Expected.
The Government estimates that the new law will produce at least \$6,000,000 yearly, of which \$2,000,000 will go to the states where the races in question are held, to be devoted to the encouragement of horse-breeding, and \$4,000,000 to the federal treasury. Despite the reduction of the tax on pari-mutuel takings, it is not believed that returns will be below the present figures, which are approximately \$3,000,000 yearly, since betting through the machines is to be permitted, with restrictions, on races outside Germany. Under the existing law, the machines may be employed only for domestic races.

Britain's Oldest Bachelor.
Britain's oldest bachelor, Mr. Robert Crichton, entered his 103rd year on the 3rd inst. He resides at The Mardens, Caterham, Surrey, England, and was born on April 3rd, 1812, at Alyth, Perthshire, Scotland. He is a typical sample of the hardy Scot, and is a non-smoker and abstainer, not having taken alcoholic liquors for many years. He never takes medicine. He enjoys a pinch of snuff and played billiards till he was 97, when failing eyesight compelled him to cease the pastime. He continues to take an interest in political and other events, having daily newspapers read to him.

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