

The Wedding Eve;

Or, Married to a Fairy.

CHAPTER XXII.—(Continued).
As well as I could I soothed her, but I was suffering keenly, too.
"You are perfectly safe, now, darling," I whispered, "something told me you were in trouble, and led me to you. Thank God! I was in time. But why did you run away from me like that? All day I and Mrs. Morland and Nicholas Wray have been searching for you everywhere."

"Mrs. Morland? And Mr. Wray?"
"Yes, I know you used not to like him, but he has been most kind, searching for you everywhere."
"What does he say—I want to know, because he is an old friend of yours?"
"About this idea of your marrying me?"
"He says it is the best, the only thing to be done, if you are able to win you, since I love you so dearly."

She was silent for some minutes.
"Listen," she said, then, in a very low voice. "I see it's no good struggling. And now you've saved my life in addition to all the other things you will make me happy. I suppose you must marry me. But marry me at once and take me away to new places. Don't give me time to think about it or I shall run off again. The impulse came upon me early this morning, and I couldn't resist it. I made a plan that I would come to London, and cut off my hair and get my things and take a boy's clothes somewhere and never be found by you or any one. But I hadn't the pluck to carry it through. I had a little money left out of what you gave me last time you saw me. And I slipped off from Morland House at night, and cut off my hair in the train, and bought some boy's clothes in an old clothes' shop as soon as the shops were opened, and changed my things in a four-wheeled cab in the fog. But once I'd got them I felt every one was looking at me, and I got frightened; and when I went to a restaurant to leave the place, and hid and waited about, and at dark I lost my way and got robbed—and, oh! I am so tired! You won't ask me any more questions to-night, will you?"

"No, dear."
"And where are you taking me?"
"This was my plan, indeed. I could not risk Wrenshaw seeing Lillith in this travesty, and yet I was intensely anxious to place her in Mrs. Morland's care as speedily as possible. It was out of the question to leave her at any hotel, in her boy's clothes, and for too long a time to purchase other things. The notion of Mrs. Jackson at Battersea was not to be entertained for a moment; consequently, the studio and Mrs. Morland were my only hope."

At my door I had to leave Lillith in the cab, dreadfully afraid lest ever now she might give me the slip again, after making her promise to honor me to remain in the cab until my return.
"I am too tired and sleepy to run away again," whimpered Lillith. "Besides, I know it's no good now. So I promise."
In the studio I found Mrs. Morland, looking pale, and, as if by a flash, I cut short the plain record of her experiences by telling her that Lillith was waiting below in the cab.

"Thank goodness!" she exclaimed. "And now that you have found her, Mr. Hervey, you must put her in a hotel, and tomorrow we will sleep at Bristol."
"To-morrow," I said, "I shall get a special license, and marry Lillith."
"Marry her!" almost shrieked Mrs. Morland. "On the top of all this mad conduct? Mr. Hervey, you cannot be in your right senses!"

"My mind is made up, all the same," I said. "I will not trouble you with the care of Lillith after to-night."
Mrs. Morland clutched her traveling-cloak and small portmanteau.
"No!" she said, in most determined tones. "If you really mean to marry Lillith Saxon, Mr. Hervey, I wash my hands of her entirely, and from this moment I decline to see her. I consider she has treated both you and me abominably. I am not complaining over the hundred and seventy-five pounds I shall lose by her flight, although I am much in need of it."
"Stop!" I said. "I will sit down now and write you a check for a hundred and seventy-five pounds, to take away with you, on one condition—that is, that you will for that amount sell me the contents of your little traveling valise, and also that long dust-cloak you carry over your arm."

Her bright, catlike, greenish-gray eyes dilated and glistened.
"What can you possibly want them for?" she asked.
"For Lillith. Is it a bargain?"
She only hesitated a second or two.
"If you will let me take out my trinkets and one or two little things, I agree," she said, then.

And a few minutes later I accompanied her to the door, and saw her disappear in the fog, walking rapidly, and not even once glancing in the direction of the cab in waiting before the door.
They sought Lillith, not without some dread of finding her flown. But she was fast asleep in a corner of the hansom, and I had to awaken her to tell her to slip Mrs. Morland's all-enveloping traveling-cloak round her before she entered the house. Up to the studio I led her, and showed her where Mrs. Morland had neatly placed a change of dress, and the other contents of her traveling bag on a chair and spread a copy of an evening paper over them.

"Here is some feminine attire, dear," I said, "and here are plenty of cushions and the most comfortable of sofas for a good sleep. And here is the bell which communicates with my man Wrenshaw's room, and here is another which will awaken my landlady, a very kind old woman who will come in to you when you have changed your dress, if you want her. To-night, I shall stay at a hotel in the next street, but to-morrow early I will call and see how you are. And this time to-morrow, dear, I hope we shall be man and wife."

"You are very, very good," she said, looking up at me with tearful eyes, and after extracting another solemn promise that she would not run away, I kissed her forehead and left her.
And thus passed the eve of my wedding-day.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Next day, a terrible day, fog still, black and blinding, and drizzling rain, I arrived at my studio before midday, carrying in my pocket a special license for the immediate marriage of Lillith Saxon,

spinster, aged seventeen, daughter of Horace Saxon, actor, and Adrian Blakiston Hervey, bachelor, aged twenty-eight, son of Colonel Hervey.
I found Lillith in the big armchair, looking very slight and pale and fragile, in a black silk gown of Mrs. Morland's, six sizes too large for her, in which her little head of cropped yellow curls and small, childish face seemed altogether lost.

I knelt before her and put my arms about her waist. She kissed me in the readiest and most friendly fashion, in me she had slept peacefully upon the cushions of the sofa, and asked me if I did not think London in the fog was the most dreadful place in the world.
"We shall soon be out of it, my darling," I whispered, clasping her close in my arms. "As soon as we are married we will take the train to Plymouth, where my yacht lies."

"The Lady Margaret?"
"It isn't called that now. I have had the name painted out and the Marsh Fairy put over it."

"The Marsh Fairy. What a pretty name," she exclaimed. "You were thinking of Lythinge, weren't you? Ah, Mr. Hervey, why didn't you marry me then?"
"I couldn't marry a child of sixteen. And if you call me Mr. Hervey again I shall keep your mouth shut with kisses for the rest of the day."

"I wonder you take me when I showed you plainly that I didn't want you."
"To tell you the truth, so do I! But I am so certain, dear, that I can make you happy, and can make you love me, that I am not afraid you will run away again when once you are my wife."
"Adrian," she said, with her little hands on my shoulders, looking with pathetic earnestness down into my eyes, "if you marry me you will be making the greatest mistake of your life."

Something in her unwonted earnestness chilled me.
"Do you love any one else?" I asked.
"No, no."
"Is there any one else you would like to marry?"
"No one in the world! I would much rather not marry at all."

That was all I could get out of her, but I would not be discouraged. I had all arranged for the ceremony to take place at half-past twelve in the hall of the church on the Embankment, and there was much hurrying about and packing to be done, unaided by my landlady a request that I would dispense with his services that day, as he was "laid up with rheumatism."

On the way to the church we had to make a detour into a linen-draper's to buy for Lillith a black jersey-bodice to wear instead of Mrs. Morland's capacious garments, and a pretty hat instead of the elderly looking jet bonnet, also belonging to that lady, which Lillith had appropriated.

Then came the dimly lit church, and Lillith trembled like a leaf before the wind as she almost audibly murmured the words of the service. The fog was so thick we could scarcely see each other's faces, and both the clergyman, an absent-minded man with gray, wispy hair, and whiskers, who coughed and blinked behind his spectacles, and the officious, loud-voiced clerk, seemed anxious to get the whole affair over as speedily as possible.

There was no one to give the bride away, but the clerk hastily volunteered to perform that office. Indeed, so anxious did he seem to get us all home to the fog-laden building, and himself home to his early dinner, that I am convinced he would have drawn the line at nothing save marrying the bride himself.

When we got into a four-wheeled cab to drive to Victoria Station, Lillith broke down altogether and burst into a passion of tears.
"It seems such a dreadful, dreary beginning," she sobbed. "And, oh, how will it all end?"
I folded her in my arms and covered her face with soft, lingering kisses. She was mine now, and no one could take her from me. With Lillith as my wife I could well afford to laugh at fortune.

"There is no one in this world so happy as I at this moment," I said. "All the dreams of joy I ever had, meant only this—to hold close to my heart the one woman in the world I love with all my heart and soul, and to know that she is mine, my wife. Ah, don't cry, my loved one! Why should the thought of belonging wholly to me make you cry, when I would die to save you the least pain? No, you can see us in this kindly fog. Clasp me now, my wife, and tell me just a very little."

She obeyed with her usual docility, looking up at me at first with blue eyes, blurred with tears. But gradually her old dimpling smile broke through, and a lovely blush stole over her cheeks.
"After all," she said, "you wanted me more than anything in the world, and now you have me. So that one of us at least is happy."

CHAPTER XXIV.

Six months later, Mr. and Mrs. Adrian Hervey returned to London, after a prolonged cruise in Italian waters, and took up their abode in a pretty, detached brick house and studio in the near vicinity of Holland Park.

I had no wish to come home, but Lillith confided to me one day that she was tired of the sea, and tired of traveling, and wanted to have a house of her own. And it must be all ready for her to come to, she said, as she did not understand fur, she said, and could not be bothered with engaging servants.

So at her urgent request, though sorely against my will, I left her in a hotel in Paris, while I crossed and recrossed the Channel, and spent my time in London buying and furnishing a house which I wanted to make in every way worthy of my lovely mistress.

It was strange how much in all these transactions I missed Madge's advice and assistance. Until this point in my career she had always been my right hand in the purchase of studios, and even in the change or alteration of the furniture of my rooms. In my work, too, I missed her, for she had invariably taken the keenest interest in every picture I undertook. It was not to be expected that a girl so young and inexperienced, as my Lillith could possess intuitively that knowledge and judgment in art matters which Madge, who was eight years her senior, had gained through frequenting and studying all the picture-galleries of Europe. Selfish as most men are, I wanted in Madge a counselor, a friend, and sister, while in Lillith all I wished for was a woman to adore.

And I did adore her, the more madly, perhaps, that I soon became convinced I did not wholly understand her. She was always affectionate, always sweet-

tempered, easily amused, and easily moved to a light-hearted Bohemian gaiety, both delightful and infectious. She seemed happy in my society, she took my caresses sweetly, and she accepted my devotion with a dainty gracefulness and charm. And yet, somehow, the notion never came into my head that I was married to a fairy, and this creature of ideal loveliness, whose forget-me-not blue eyes reflected while they did not return the passionate love of my gaze was not a real live woman at all, but that some morning I should wake to miss her golden head and to know that she had flown back to fairy-land.

Some lines of Browning's that I came across in Venice on our travels seemed so made and meant for Lillith that their truth hurt me:
"That fawn-ekin dappled hair of hers,
And the blue eye,
Dear and dewy,
And that infantine fresh air of hers!"

The man who wrote those lines might have had my wife before him to inspire him. But the bitterest part of the likeness came in the sixth stanza:
"But for loving—why, you would not,
sweet,
Though we prayed you,
Paid you, braved you,
In a mortar—for you could not, sweet!"

It was not that she was cold—as well call a child cold that slips off one's knee to chase a butterfly. She was always glad to see me, always pleased to be with me, and she hated above all things to be left alone. It was strangely difficult to paint with her in the room. Not only did my eyes instinctively turn to her bright presence, but, truth to tell, she was a terrible fidget. She could not read, she could not keep still. She would practise dance steps and ballet twirls we had seen at theatres, for she insisted on frequenting any and every place of amusement where would strum on the piano, or pretend to play the "rhythmic" drawers and boxes, a process that involved upsetting gloves, ribbons, laces, bows, and shoes all over the floor of my temporary studio, where in all probability they would remain until I trod them out of shape, or the chambermaid stole them, for Lillith was constitutionally untidy, as she was extravagant, in great things as in small.

Lillith alternately laughed and wondered at my methodical, or, as she called it, "old-bachelor" habits. To please them, she would now and then make a desperate attempt at order in the yard, the parlour, or the rooms of which she speedily reduced to chaos—or in the hotels at which we stayed. Her method was to make small heaps of the various articles she had tossed on the floor; two or three odd gloves, hat and cloak, papers, and programmes, fancy work, sheets of music, and one volume of a novel; in another, more heterogeneous feminine belongings, none of which were ever to be found when wanted.

She never remembered whether bills had or had not been paid, and usually curled her locks with the receipts. She continually emptied my purse into her own pocket, forgetting that there was a hole in it, so that we frequently found ourselves far from our hotel or from the bank, or to buy food. She could not more resist bright any pretty things in the shops than a savage fresh to civilization; everything she saw she wanted to buy. She caused me agonies of jealousy by what I considered her quite unnecessary friendliness with strangers, to whom she would talk freely on the slightest provocation. In Paris, where by her special request we stayed while I superintended the arrangements of our new London home, her attention she attracted by her beauty, her pretty and extravagant frocks, and her unconventional liveliness, was such that I could not endure to leave her even for a few hours in the hotel without me, and I engaged a perfect Gorgon of an elderly French maid, named Rosalie, to look after her.

I could not even lay the flattering unction to my soul that my wife would miss me in my absence. Some rich Americans, mother and her son and daughter, visitors at the hotel, were so enormously taken with Lillith's beauty and brightness that they offered to take entire charge of her during my temporary absence, an offer I was only too glad to accept.

(To be continued.)

THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY.

To be silent and to let your silence be understood is the eloquence of difficult situations.—Lamartine.

Pride is not a bad thing when it only urges us to hide our own hurts, not to hurt others.—George Eliot.
Most people would succeed in small things if they were not troubled with great ambitions.—Longfellow.

While people will not rise early enough even to say their prayers they will not be really improved by altering the clock.—Mr. A. Leslie Smith.

Money spent in travelling is one of the best investments a man can make. It not only does not do him good by affording him health and pleasure, but he brings back with him pleasant associations that enrich his life and his memory.—Mr. H. Mills.

Envy by Some.

"When you prove that a man is a grafter, people will regard him with aversion."

"Some will," replied Senator Sorghum, "but unfortunately a lot of them will be slightly envious of him."

Occasionally a girl knowingly marries the wrong man rather than run the risk of not getting married at all.

Most men might be fairly happy if they could forget all the mean things they know about themselves.
"Was her father violent when you asked her hand?" "Was he? Great Scott! I thought he would shake my arm off."

Talk about a shortage of food at one period during his last expedition, Sir Ernest Shackleton tells an amusing story of his companions. On his return to England his bootmaker met him, and asked "How did you find those boots I made for you?" "Best I ever tasted," was the prompt reply.

MAY SEE ACROSS ATLANTIC

NOTHING IS MORE CERTAIN,
SAYS MR. MARCONI.

He Now Talks of Startling New
Idea for Wireless
Communication.

One of these days the head of a London business may sip the wireless phone.

"Ring up New York," he'll order. "Get my New York manager on the ether."

That isn't impossible. Guglielmo Marconi says so. A further miracle of the etheric waves may come in the future. It may be that the New York manager is determined to abstain from conversation by wireless with his boss. It may even be that he may hide behind the door. Even that would not help him. A further application of the etheric waves may penetrate that door and disclose the guilty shiverer to the gaze of his incensed master.

"We are now talking for short distances by wireless," said Mr. Marconi. "By short distances I mean up to 100 miles or so. Within another month or so this system will be working commercially. It is quite as feasible to talk for long distances by wireless as for short distances. It only requires the application of more power."

"Will the day ever come when telephonic conversation across the sea by wireless may be possible?"

"Undoubtedly," said Mr. Marconi. "I will go further. We will be talking from London to New York by wireless long before we will be talking between the same cities by cable. Wireless telephony over great distances is a less difficult undertaking than is telephoning similar distances by cable."

Very recently there appeared the announcement of an invention by which it may be possible for the parties to telephone conversation to see each other. The inventor declares the apparatus to be a comparatively simple one, and capable of universal use.

"I see no reason to doubt it," said Mr. Marconi. "I have been too busy with my work for the wireless to pay much attention to it. But there is nothing inherently impossible in the theory."

Making Walls Transparent.

"We could certainly see by wireless if anyone can see by wire," said Mr. Marconi. "Nothing is more certain."

Recently he heard a rumor of a still more startling application of electricity to the evasions of every-

day life. Someone has invented, he says—a machine by which the walls of buildings became as transparent glass to him. He simply turns on the current, projects his light ray at the wall, and presto! those who may be on the other side are exposed to his curious gaze. Mr. Marconi knows nothing of this, but he thinks it also possible.

"One can hardly set bounds to science nowadays," he observed.

Marconi's time has of late been given over to the perfecting of his wireless telephone apparatus and to the adaptation of wireless to the uses of the aeroplane in London. The first is now complete. For some time he had a wireless phone in operation between his office and the Savoy Hotel, across the street. He has communicated between ships at sea at distances of thirty or forty miles with less difficulty than one would experience in telephoning to a neighbor forty miles away. He has heard sounds through his wireless phone when efforts were made to telephone from Berlin to London, but the words were indistinguishable. Further work needs to be done before long distance telephony may be expected as a practicability.

A LAPSUS LINGUAE.

(The Canadian Courier.)

A prominent newspaperman in Toronto tells a good story. He is a huge man—both ways. When he was in England he went to Clovelly, in Devon, where, at the bottom of a steep declivity you may catch a glimpse of the sea.

The newspaperman, who leans towards fatness, toiled down to the bottom of the rocks and got the view. Then he looked at the steep road which he had to climb to get back. A native of the place came along, and the newspaperman complained to the old villager that there should be some motor or traction car running up the cliffs.

Said the villager: "When the Almighty put those cliffs there He didn't expect people to be so lazy they would complain about climbing up and down. Besides, we don't want any motors with their oil and stench; we don't want any rocks railway with their petrol and smell. In fact, sir, we don't want any vernacular traffic of any kind!"

The lady gave him a glass of whisky. After Sandy finished his glass, he exclaimed: "Aweel, my lady, there was never sic a thing in my young days." "What," said the lady, in astonishment, "no whisky?" "Plenty whisky, but never sic a wee glass," replied Sandy.



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