

The Wedding Eve;

Or, Married to a Fairy.

CHAPTER XXIV.—(Continued).

For I was jealous, passionately jealous, of my beautiful wife, and I believe that one reason for which I was anxious to return to my native land was that Englishmen as a rule do not dare to look at a pretty woman—at least, when her husband is about—with the love-making insolence which characterizes the Frenchman or the Italian's ogle. It was not that Lillith flirted conspicuously with other men. It was only that she longed with all my soul for the key to her heart to be mine, and that I dreaded beyond everything lest it might ever be stolen from me by another.

Had she a heart? I sometimes asked myself, or was she incapable of loving as a man would wish to be loved? Less than two years ago Nicholas Wray had pronounced her to be an Undine, lovely and soulless, and I was sometimes almost inclined to agree with him.

And yet, one day, shortly after we settled in Paris, when I arrived from England earlier than she expected, I found her in her room lying stretched upon the floor with her hands clasped behind her head sobbing as though her heart would break.

All the explanation she gave, when I caught her up in my arms, and implored her to tell me what troubled her, was that she had had a "bout me," and very soon she was all smiles and gaiety again, enjoying a shopping excursion, a restaurant dinner, and a visit to the opera.

From our seats that night I remember I recognized Nicholas Wray in a cheaper part of the house and presently sought him out. His greeting was cold and constrained, and he flatly declined to come back with me and speak to my wife.

"Mrs. Hervey and I don't like each other," he said, and the less we see of each other the better. Why don't you take her to London? It's not fair to her to keep her away from town, looks as if you were ashamed of her, you see."

That view of the case had not occurred to me, and, vexed as I was by his words, I saw there might be something in them. A week later we took possession of our new home. Lillith was like a child with a fresh toy, flitting about, full of delight, dancing from one room to another, too much leashed and excited to require rest or feel fatigue. By her consent I had reinstated Wrenshaw, who was punctiliously polite to his new mistress; I also retained Rosalie, and engaged a cook and parlor-maid. With so small an establishment, as Lillith urged, I could afford to gratify the desire of her heart, "to ride in her own carriage as she artlessly put it. So the neatest of victorias was bought and installed in our stable, and for a time the use of it placed Lillith in the seventh heaven. But not many days after its arrival, Lillith and I were driving up Regent's Square, passed her old instructor, Mrs. Stanhope Morland, in a modest hansom cab.

And Mrs. Stanhope Morland gave us both the cut direct.

At this, Lillith, with her usual absence of pride, went outright then and there, in her pretty carriage, to the crowded street, and when we reached home she would not be comforted.

But another surprise was in store for us that afternoon. Before I had kissed my wife's tears away, a carriage drove up to our door, and a visitor was shown into the drawing-room.

The visitor was Lady Margaret Lorimer.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Your cousin, Lady Margaret!" cried Lillith, forgetting her tears in her astonishment. "She has actually come here to see us! Or, rather, to see you, I suppose?"

There was no touch of either jealousy or bitterness in her tones, only wondrousment not unmixed with awe. Her inflexion voiced me. Why should my wife be overwhelmed with the honor of a visit from my cousin?

"She has come to see you," I said hastily. "Ladies call upon the lady of the house, not the gentleman belonging to it."

"Oh, you'll have a lot to do teaching me all that social stuff," Lillith observed placidly. "But I can't have her quiz me with these red eyes. You talk to her a bit until I come Dicky, dear, and get her into a nice rood humer. And don't talk too much about being happy with me, for if you do she is sure to hate me, as she was once so sweet on you herself."

"She broke off our engagement!"

"Oh, I dare say! But you won't persuade me she wanted to. Remember, I was under the sofa at that time she was talking to me in the studio that morning, and anybody could see with half an eye she was in love with you."

She ran off, laughing, to her dressing-room, while I slowly descended the stairs to the drawing-room. There were certain expressions that constantly made use of, which, though neither very slangy nor very vulgar, were sufficient to jar upon the ear of a sensitive person. And Madge was critical and sensitive in the extreme. I knew that, and knew how my wife's abhorrent habit of calling me "Dicky," for no reason in the world but that I was going to be christened "Richard," after my father, until at the last moment my great-uncle's names were substituted, would surprise and vex her.

"Adrian's too grand. I shall feel more like a relation and an equal if I call you 'Dicky,'" Lillith had said, and "Dicky," or "Dicky," I ever was to her. Her trick of calling every one by nicknames amused me, as did most of her childish ways. But then to me whatever she did was delightful, and I was only apprehensive lest her impulsive ways might be unfavorably commented upon by the hypercritical Madge.

Another reason, and one which I hardly dared to own even to myself, made me secretly regret Madge's visit. She was so terribly clear-sighted and so keen a judge of character. Would she not realize that in our married life Lillith and I played the parts quoted in the dreary French proverb:

"Il y a toujours un qui baise et un qui tend la joue—there is always one who kisses, and one who is kissed."

Would she not, in fine, with that keen, far-seeing gaze of hers, realize that the fire of my passionate love spent itself in vain upon my wife's friendly indifference, and that worship Lillith as I did, die for her as I would, I was little more in her life than a "very nice man, who paid for everything and was always kind?"

With these thoughts in my mind, I entered the drawing-room. Madge rose at sight of me, and came forward with frank cordiality.

"She had not altered much in six months' time, and yet to me she seemed changed from the Madge I used to know. Her hair was a darker shade than it had been, a fashionable nut-brown tint, which went admirably with her bright skin and the awn-colored velvet gown she was wearing. Three things struck me about her—for one, that she looked more than her age nearer thirty than five and twenty;

for another, that every line of her face was full of meaning, of thought, and of feeling; and for a third, that there was a distinction about her whole bearing to which I had formerly been too well accustomed to specially remark it.

She was shaking me by both hands, asking how I was, and inquiring after Lillith, before I had time to feel quite at ease with her again.

"Papa is so dreadfully ill," she said, "that he couldn't come. In fact, he hardly goes anywhere now."

"Is that true?"

"That Lord Carchester is ill? Indeed it is only too true."

"You know what I mean. That he would have come if he could?"

Madge hesitated.

"Well, it isn't quite true," she admitted at last, "but it will be when he comes to a reasonable frame of mind. He will persist in thinking that you jilted me, and broke my heart. Now, do I look like it?"

She laughed, and it suddenly struck me that her laughter rang false. Looking at her, for one brief flash I caught in her dark eyes an expression of intense pain. But almost before I had time to realize that Madge had suffered cruelly and was suffering still, she had broken into lively chatter about the life at the various foreign spots to which she had recently accompanied her parents for the cure of their respective ailments.

"Papa is really ill," she declared, "but there is nothing in the world the matter with mama but diamonds on the brain. The young Duchess of Axminster cut her out completely at the state concert in Berlin last month, and poor mama has been ill with temper ever since. To soothe her, I have to swear the duchess diamonds were paste. But abusing her diamonds does her no good that it would be fair to tell her nothing is the matter with her."

"It is delightful to be listening to your sub-acid tongue again," I said. "Lillith is much impressed with your visit, and is changing her frock in your honor. You—you will be kind to her, I am sure, Madge. She has no mother and no woman-kind at all, not even any women friends."

"Kind! Why, of course I will," she said, turning upon me with a lovely smile, though tears shone in her eyes. "I hear she is so beautiful that only to see her is to love her, and—oh, Adrian, that is not your wife, is it?"

For Lillith had entered, looking most fair-like in a tea-gown of silver-gray crepe, which fell in long narrow pleats from her throat to her feet, and was caught loosely round the waist, with a girle of chased silver.

Madge's tone was one of horrified amazement. Her eyes were fixed upon Lillith, and they expressed recognition as clearly as those of my wife showed surprise at her reception, and even something of fear.

Lillith crept toward me, pale as death, as though Madge's cry of startled recognition were an indictment against her.

"Is this your cousin, Lady Margaret?" she faltered, with white lips and lowered eyes. "Won't you introduce me?"

By this time Madge had had time to recover herself. Never once had she removed her eyes from Lillith's face, but she advanced to meet her with perfect politeness, if with no geniality.

"I think I have seen Mrs. Hervey before," she said. "I remember that I thought I recognized her photograph. Did I not have the pleasure of seeing and speaking to you at Lymhurst, the New Forest, rather more than a year ago?"

The question was addressed to Lillith, and at first elicited no answer. Turning to her in surprise, I perceived that even her lips were colorless, and that she appeared to be trying to speak with dry lips and words that would not come.

"You are not ill, my darling, are you?" I exclaimed, slipping my arm about her, for indeed I feared that she would faint.

"No, no," she muttered, "not ill at all. Only I was so puzzled and startled when Lady Margaret said she knew me, and had spoken to me. I was quite certain that I had never seen her before."

"Really? I must have been mistaken, then," Madge returned. "Or possibly you have forgotten. Have you ever been to Lymhurst?"

"Not since I went to school," murmured Lillith, almost inaudibly, with lowered head and cheeks that had suddenly grown crimson. "Before then I may have been. I—my father—we—"

She stopped short in deep confusion, and guessing that she was ashamed of alluding to those old vagrant days, I came to her rescue.

"Lillith used to travel about a great deal formerly under her father's care," I explained, "but she would rather not be forced to talk about those sad old days."

"That is just what I wanted to say," Lillith exclaimed, with a grateful look at me.

And we both left Madge in the wrong. The interview began thus inauspiciously, was a constrained one on all sides, Lillith was clearly on her best behavior, spoke in monosyllables with rather an affected intonation, and seemed to have no opinions on any subject. Only once did she break into her natural vivacity, and that was when the talk turned to the dancer whom she and I had seen in Paris.

"She can't dance really well," exclaimed my wife. "She only moves her feet and head."

And, springing up, she was about to give an illustration of the style of the dancer in question, when she, and I, too, caught Madge's brilliant dark eyes fixed upon her with so strange an expression in them that Lillith stopped short in the dance she was beginning.

"I—I can't do it myself, of course," she stammered. "But any one can tell what I mean."

"You can dance, then?" Madge asked sweetly.

And Lillith, with a vivid blush, denied it. When Lady Margaret left, after taking tea with us, I accompanied her to the door. Candidly, I did not want her to come again, and I was both embarrassed and surprised when she assured me very earnestly that she wanted to see a great deal more of my wife, and hoped that they might become warm friends.

"Oh! and one thing I must ask, Adrian," she said, pausing on the threshold. "Do you ever see anything of Nicholas Wray now?"

"I exchanged a few words with him in a Paris theatre recently, that was all. I don't even know where he is."

"Whatever you do," she said impressively, "never ask that man to your house. Drop him altogether. He is a bad man, not a person you should let your wife meet."

"Poor Wray is a great admirer of yours," I protested; but Madge turned on me quite fiercely.

"His admiration is an insult!" she said. "If you have any regard for me, any consideration for the honor of your

family, you will drop the man altogether." "Do you mean that he has insulted you?" I asked, astonished at her vehemence.

She was silent for a moment. Then she said: "Yes. He has insulted me. And as I regard you now as a brother, for my sake you must never meet him. Good-by!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

And now began a time in my life which I experience the greatest difficulty in describing, as I believe that those who know me best consider it either inexcusable or inexplicable.

In my own defense I can only state that I was always a poor hand at figures and business details; that I had up to now found my income sufficient for my requirements; that I was making money easily, having managed to hit the public taste; that I not unnaturally considered about four thousand a year amply sufficient for a childless married couple, with four servants, a coachman, and two horses; and, above all, that I adored my wife, and belief in her was to me a religion.

When we settled first in our new house, I was desirous of providing Lillith with a housekeeper, to take all domestic details, such as looking after the accounts and regulating the expenses, of her inexperienced hands. But this arrangement Lillith would not hear of.

"Dear," she pleaded. "As it is, I have not much authority with the servants, except the parlor-maid, who is only eighteen. Both cook and Rosalie bully me, rather. Oh, of course, I shall teach them to respect me in time, but not if you interfere, or if you put some dreadful old woman over my head, to worry me and patronize me, and treat me like a child before my own servants besides. I understand all about accounts. I really am not bad at arithmetic, and doing sums amuses me."

So she had her own way. But though we lived simply enough, we hardly entertained at all—for Lillith could never get over her prejudice against her own sex, or her constrained and awkward manners among them, and I could not let her appear at receptions where the guests were all men—the money simply flew in our household.

I was very much occupied about this time with the "one-man-show" which I had been induced to give, chiefly by Madge, who had set her heart upon it. Undoubtedly, she was right, in that the Bond Street exhibition of my marine paintings was one of the most successful of the season, and not only was splendidly reviewed, but sent up both my name and my prices, not a single picture being left unsold when the gallery was closed.

There are many reasons, indeed, why I have never, either before or since, done such good work as during the first portion of my married life. My Uncle Carchester's allowance of a thousand a year, and the admiral's legacy of twice that sum, seemed wholly inadequate to support the needs of a level with a passion for diamonds, who refused to look at a gown unless it came from Paris.

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ESKIMO OF THE FAR NORTH

REPORT TELLS OF LIFE IN THE FROZEN REGIONS.

Polygamy Is Fast Dying Out Owing to the Efforts of the Missionary.

Special reports of the officers who were appointed to take a census of the inhabitants of the Far North have been compiled by the census and statistics branch at Ottawa. These reports are of more than ordinary interest at least from an ethnological, if not from a statistical point of view.

M. Fabien Vanasse, historiographer of the Canadian Government steamship "Arctic" under Captain Bernier, was appointed to take the census of Baffin Island and took in addition the census of Kilenek, or Port Burwell, on the south side of Hudson Straits. His report contains the following interesting remarks as to conditions amongst the Eskimos. "The lamps which are used by hundreds to light and heat their igloos, as also to cook with, are nothing more than a stone block of about eight to ten inches in circumference in which is carved a semi-circular cavity about three inches deep. This cavity is filled with seal oil, then a wick made of dry moss is placed around this bowl, and when this primitive wick is well soaked with oil it is lighted. The lamp gives a dim light and produces a heat of about two or three degrees. This affords all the light and all the heat which is enjoyed by the Eskimo during his existence in his house of snow. The yearly value of the hunt for each Eskimo hunter is placed at \$800 or \$1,000 on the premises. If this forsaken one of civilization were living in the proximity of our competitive markets, if he knew the value of the products of the hunt, if he was more concerned about the future, in spite of all the inconveniences he has to suffer from the inhospitable climate where God has placed him. But unfortunately the Eskimo has no idea of the economic values he holds in his hands after his slaughter of 10 or 20 polar bears, his capture of 25, 30 and sometimes 100 foxes, of two, three or four narwhals, of eight to ten wolves, of hundreds of large salmon, each weighing 10, 20 or 30 lbs., and which he throws to his dogs. Besides this he is cheated odiously each year by the skimmers of the sea who visit him to collect his furs. At the trading counters he exchanges for a few pounds of biscuits and tobacco, a few quarts of molasses, pipes, matches and some few yards of showy cotton goods, his silky furs of the greatest economic value.

None Very Old.

"Generally speaking, the Eskimo does not attain a very advanced age. Some have been met, however, aged 60 to 65 years. The average length of life of this people is from 35 to 40 years. There is no settled age for domestic pairing. There are couples of nine and twelve years; then children live together in the igloo as man and wife. The chief provides regularly for the wants of his companion. After a few months, and even a few years, of this apprenticeship in married life, if any friction occurs under the igloo between the two apprentices, the couple separate without noise, and for the two life has to begin over again. A Christian can hardly honor with the name of "marriage" the unions formed under the igloo of the Eskimo. These unions are, for the most part, simply promiscuous pairings. But it must be said, to the honor of the Eskimos of Baffin Island, that this sad state of affairs tends more and more to disappear among these tribes. The zealous work of the Anglican unions among this people during thirty years has largely contributed to diminish, or even extirpate entirely this pagan vice, destroyer of the family and domestic happiness." M. Vanasse writes that he has met with only one case of polygamy in taking the last census, and the Isky who acknowledged it seemed to be ashamed of it.

Not Too Clean.

The visit to the domicile, or the igloo, M. Vanasse writes, is not what one may think. The igloo is of circular form, eight feet in diameter and as much in height. It is made of blocks of snow, the door is at the bottom, on a level with the ground, it is about one foot and a half wide by two feet high. It is not every one that can pass through it easily. To get in one must at first get on his knees, then lie flat on his stom-

ach and slide in, snake-like, for a distance of about ten or twelve feet in this tube of the same dimension as the door. One never gets in and comes out of it spotless, for this vestibule is not kept in an exaggerated state of cleanliness. Once in the igloo you are asked to sit on a block of snow, which is covered with a deerskin. In less than five minutes you are covered with the hairs of this fur. But after a few visits to the domicile one does not notice these small details. The interpreter is alongside of you. Naturally this brave man, the sage of the village, has no idea of what constitutes a census. He has to be made to understand the questions put to the head of the igloo. There are English and French words which have no equivalent in the language of the Eskimo. Thus, for example, the words "years," "months," "days," "hours," are denominations of time absolutely ignored by the natives. These are so many mysteries to them.

"Married or Single."

"What is your age?" was invariably answered by "none savi mi." Then, M. Vanasse writes, he had to enter a conversation, carried on much more by gestures than by the voice, with the interpreter, in order to make him understand the question. This done, the interpreter and the hunter, or the wife of the latter in his absence, made end- less calculations. It was a review of all the important events in the country, from as far back as the hunter could remember, and the farthest away event was used as a basis to determine as near as possible the date of his birth. There is another difficult point for the Eskimo to elucidate. There was a great deal of trouble in the beginning to ascertain from the head of an igloo if he was married or single. The word marriage is absolutely unknown among the natives; the same with the words "child" and "family." M. Vanasse writes that he managed to make himself understood by asking first if they had an igloo, a koney, a pik-nini. Now the head of the igloo is Isky; koney is his wife, and the pik-nini the children. Each child has his name and constitutes by himself a separate unit.

Only Two Seasons.

Here is an example: the Osky Nassou has three sons, namely Iktonta, Kak-ton and Pro-mik-ton. We do not say Ikton-ta Nassou, etc., as we say in the Christian world John Smith, etc. In twenty years from this, when a new generation will have grown up, who will know that Ikton-ta and his brothers are the sons of old Nassou? With such a system it is difficult to preserve family traditions. As to the month of their birth, it is a mystery to themselves, they do not know this subdivision of the year. In reality there are only two seasons for the Eskimo: "summer" and the ice season "winter." As the winter lasts nine or ten months of the year the greater number of births is in winter. The same difficulty exists as to the number of animals slaughtered or captured by the hunter during the year. The Eskimos count easily up to ten; above that their mode of calculation is long.

M. Vanasse, whose report is dated October 24, 1911, concludes that if the Government of Canada wants to preserve these relics of primitive humanity they will very soon have to put a stop to the depredations, plunders and thefts of which the Eskimos are the victims on the part of the rovers of the sea. The Government of Denmark has shown a noble example in this respect in favor of the Greenland Eskimos.

Silk Fishing Lines.

The familiar leaders for attaching fishhooks to lines, known as silkworm gut, is made from the caterpillars of silkworms, by placing the freshly-killed worms in vinegar for several days. The caterpillar is then pulled apart in such a way as to draw out a glutinous thread formed by the silky secretion, three feet long, which is then stretched on boards and dried in the sun. The silkworm from which this kind of fishline is made is a green variety about three inches long, feeding on the leaves of the camphor tree. Forty grades of this product are recognized by dealers, the price varying from 30 cents to \$6 a pound.

Neighborly Kindness.

"This plant belongs to the bongia family."

"Ah! And you are taking care of it while they are away."