A Girl's Caprice

OR, THE RESULT OF A FANCY DRESS BALL.

CHAPTER II.

"I say, can't you hurry up a bit, you two girls?" cries Mr. Clifford from the hall below. "It's a quarter to ten already, and there are five miles to drive."

"Coming! Coming!" calls Mrs. Clifford in a muffled tone from above.

It is plain to her husband that she has something in her mouth. Can it be hairpins? If so, experience has taught him that another good half-hour will not see her downstairs. She has elected to dress in Hilary's room tonight, which is large and lofty, so that he cannot be sure of her progress toward perfection. As a rule he is a long-suffering man, but now his feelings overcome him. He springs up the stairs three steps at a time, and having beaten a lively tattoo on Hilary's door bursts it unceremoniously open.

"Ir you think," begins he, "that you'll be there before 'God Save the Queen,' you——"

"Oh, there you are, Jim," cries his wife thankfully, dropping pearls, like the angelic girl of old, out of her mouth, in the shape of a little brooch. "Come here and settle this thing on my head, and this brooch in at the side. Hilary is in such a hurry! Her cap had to be done all over again." She pauses to give him the brooch, and then says anxiously: "How am I looking, Jim?"

"Right down lovely!" says Jim, who is a delightful husband; so delightful indeed that his wife has never fully realized how very much more comfortable she might be if Providence had only given him a little more money.

"Oh, nonsense!" says his wife, coloring and making a would-be indignant little grimace at him. "Am I passable—that's all I ask?"

But in truth she is looking all he had said—a charming Marie Antoinette—in a gown made by her own clever fingers out of some old gowns that had belonged to some of the dead and gone Clifford dames when the fortune of their house was at its height. Diana has the fingers of a ready worker, and has got herself up to perfection, with very little expense. Great outlay being impossible with her and her husband at any time, she has yet managed, so far, to keep herself in touch with the world around her—on a very limited income. A difficult matter always but not impossible, when one is of acknowledged good birth in one's own country, and has common sense and cleverness.

Hilary has helped her a good deal, though not in any pecuniary sense, having a bare pittance of her own—sufficient only to dress her. But she has given much time and love to the three children, and has been a source of comfort in many ways. She had come to the Cliffords on the death of her mother—that had left her entirely orphaned—and had lived very happily with them, a calm, uneventful existence, until three months ago, when a strange chance fell into her life.

An old aunt had died and had left her enormous fortune to be equally divided between Hilary and a nephew (a cousin unknown to Hilary), on the condition that they should marry each other. This odd will had lifted the girl suddenly to a high plane, in spite of the insecurity of the whole thing, and the hateful condition.

The "hateful condition" in all probability will be at this ball tonight.

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It is growing late. The flowers are beginning to droop a little. The music is growing lower—more tender; the ball has come to that point where every one can safely declare that the evening has been a great success. The stewards have been indefatigable. They had looked after everybody. Even Miss Boring, that old-established wallflower, has had one quadrille. Somebody had basely manoeuvred Peter Kinsella into the position of her partner, much to the indignation of his aunt, old Miss Kinsella, who, like Satan, has been going to and fro all the evening, making herself most fearfully unpleasant. She has made a point of going into all the sitting-out places under pretence of seeing that the lamp-shades are not taking fire—in reality to turn them up, and spoil all the pretty flirtations. Miss Kinsella is the village Tyrant—the Terror of the country. Closed doors and barred windows do not keep her out, and her tongue is as a sharp sword.

She has a fine, strong Irish brogue that "you could hang your hat on," as Jim said in a moment of exasperation—and one great affection.

Peter is the affection, and to see him dancing with Miss Boring, "that distharacted ould maid," as I regret to say she calls poor Miss Boring, has filled her withered breast with rage. "Peyther," figged out in splendid equipments as a red-haired Romeo, was surely worthy of a better fate! That he fled precipitately at the end of the quadrille gave his aunt some small consolation.

Supper is over. So are the supper dances. The usual programme has been again restored to its place. The fiddlers are in great form now, having been let loose one by one, to go into a room behind them, where an ample supper has been arranged by the committee for these most principal components of the evening's joys. Once more they are all in their places, prouder of mien when they left, and eager to begin upon their instruments once more.

Sweeter, wilder, shriller ring the notes. They seem to carry all before them. The dancing is indeed at its height when Diana Clifford, entering the ball-room with old General Weekes, is accosted at the doorway by a small, very much bepainted and bedizened Amazon, whose petticoats are as nearly up to her knees as the laws of the land permit. She is quite a young woman and very pretty, and smiles at Diana out of two handsome dancing eyes, thickly blackened about the lids, and with two lips as red as vermilion can make them. She is followed by a bevy of young men, conspicuous among whom is one, very tall and dark, who is looking rather intently at Mrs. Clifford. This young man is in plain clothes.

"Haven't been able to get a word with you all the evening," says Mrs. Dyson-Moore, in her excited, fast way, and with a great deal of action. "Where have you been hiding yourself, and with whom? Better not ask that, I suppose. I want to introduce a friend to you." She gives a rapid glance over all her attendant swains, so rapid that Diana fails to know which among the crowd is the particular friend in question. "He's staying with me, you know. Says he wants to meet you. Mutual acquaintances, I suppose?"

Here she mutters hurriedly, "Mr.——" (Diana does not hear the name "Mrs. Clifford," and storms away again, with her train no whit decreased, as during her pause with Dianna she has managed to annex the old general.

This defection on the elderly warrior's part leaves Diana alone, gazing blankly into the face of the tall young man in plain clothes, who is looking not a little amused.

"My name is Ker," says he pleasantly, "Frederic Ker. We are cousins, I think."

Diana makes a little movement. The bolt has fallen then! This is the unwelcome suitor. This is Hilary's fate.

A second later she has sufficiently recovered herself to acknowledge that, so far as appearance goes, Hilary's fate is by no means to be despised. Frederic Ker, if not exactly an Adonis, is uncommonly good-looking. He is a smart, well-set-up young man, of about twenty-eight, with dark gray eyes and a very handsome head.

"I only arrived five minutes ago," says Ker, still looking rather amused. "I had wired to Mrs, Dyson-Moore to tell her not to trouble about me, but to go on to her dance, and that, if I had the energy, I would follow her there. I knew I should I have the energy. You will understand why."

"You wanted to see my sister?" says Diana, regarding him closely.

"Yes. The energy all lay in that. You can imagaine I had some curiosity."

Mrs. Clifford would have answered this leading question naturally enough, but that the light, almost quizzical character of his tone annoys her.

"She feels curiosity too," says she, a little coldly.

"Ah! But not so strong as mine. I am here—looking for her. But she——"

"She certainly is not looking for you," says Mrs. Clifford, dropping gracefully into the seat behind her.

"Don't be angry with me," says Ker, taking a modest corner of the lounge, and looking at her with beseeching eyes. "I would, believe me be well out of all this."

"You mean——?"

"That," with extraordinary courage, but the most perfect air—an air to disarm any one—"it is detestable to me to seek marriage with——"

He hesitates. His eyes, however, are perfectly frank. Diana is conscious of the fact that she admires him. There certainly is something honest about him.

"Go on," says she. "I know. With a woman you do not love."

"With a woman who does not love me!" That makes a stronger case."

"I don't know that. But," says Diana anxiously, "if there is no love on either side—for—any outsider—any third person——" She breaks off and looks at him earnestly. "You are heart-whole?" asks she.

Ker laughs. His laughter, at all events, sounds heart-whole and very reassuring.

"There is nothing—nothing!" says he, with a little suggestive movement of his hand. "But your sister—that is more important."

"Oh, no! The man is always the more important. If he loves——"

"Well? If he does?"

He seems always a little amused, as if the whole thing is of no real consequence—treating it as a mere entr'acte as it were.

"It wouldn't do," says Diana. "If you had an affection elsewhere, and were stil, bent on this marriage with—my sister, you would always revenge the loss of your love on her.'

"That sounds very tragical," says Ker. "However, there will be no revenge—because there is no 'prior attachment.' That's the right name for it, isn't it?"'

He picks up the fan that is lying on her knees and opens it. "Your sister is here to-night?"

"Ye—es. Not exactly here, but—somewhere." She looks eagerly round, as if to see Hilary, and colors warmly. "Of course, you would like to be introduced to her. It is only natural. But——"

"Well, I should," says the young man frankly. "But if you think it better to wait; if it would annoy her——"

"You see, you came so late, and we shall be going directly, and——"

"If you would even point her out to me."

"I shall, of course, when I see her" says Diana. "But even if I don't there is plenty of time before us. Have you an engagement for to-morrow, or will you come and lunch with us?"

"Delighted," says Ker. "I don't think Mrs. Dyson-Moore has anything on for to-morrow."

"Have you told her anything about this extraordinary will?" asks Mrs. Clifford anxiously.

He shakes his head.

"I have not spoken of it to any one. Why should I? I expect it will come to nothing—that your sister will give me my conge without delay."

"You are hoping for that?" says Mrs. Clifford sadly.

"I am not. I am not, indeed. But the whole thing is so absurd, so impossible."

"And yet," regretfully, "it is such a great deal of money. It seems a pity to let it go."

"It does!" He seems made of frankness, Mrs. Clifford tells herself. He looks at her- "That's why I've come here."

"To see," with a rather offended glance, "if you would like Hilary?"

"That's a horrid way of putting it. To see if she would like me. But now that I have seen you——"

"Seen me?"

"I feel she will be too good for me." He pauses. "Is she—like you?"

At this moment it occurs to Diana that her new cousin seems distinctly inclined to enter into a mild flirtation with her. This annoys her the more, in that it denotes his utter absence of earnestness about this affair with Hilary.

"There were never two sisters so unlike," says she coldly. "As you will acknowledge when you see Hilary. And now if you know nobody here, can't I get you a partner? That young lady over there, the Swiss peasant, doesn't seem to be attached——"

At this moment, the Swiss peasant under view comes quickly up to Mrs. Clifford's side, and drops heavily on to the seat beside her.

"Oh, Mrs. Clifford, I feel so faint—so ill," says, she and indeed the pallor of her lips and cheeks speak for the truth of her assertion.

Diana turns hurriedly to Ker.

"Will you run downstairs, and bring me a glass of water? At once!"

"In a moment!" says Ker. He gets quickly through the people who throng the doorway, and so downstairs.

(To be Continued.)

CHURCH OF VEGETARIANS

PHILADELPHIA IS THE CENTRE OF THIS CULT

Congregation is Said to be a Healthy-Looking Lot of People.

Vegetarianism is the banner under which hundreds of Philadelphians are marching now-a-days. A sudden wave of popularity has risen in the erstwhile calm course of its followers, and many new organizations have lately sprung up to help foster this "religion," says the Philadelphia North American.

Philadelphia is the world's great centre of this cult. Churches, mission homes, restaurants and boarding houses all tend to strengthen the believers in the doctrine and help to make fresh converts.

"Man's food becomes his mind," might be considered the creed of this cult, whose followers are so impressed with the benefits derived from a diet without meat that they have banded themselves together, founded a church, the only one of its kind in the United States, and sought to convert others to their way of thinking and living.

The church, with its vegetarian pastor, vegetarian congregation and vegetarian choir, is called the First Bible Christian Church of Philadelphia.

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

The Rev. Henry S. Clubb, the pastor, is hale and hearty, and his parishioners from year's end to year's end touch no meat. For some time Dr. Clubb has preached to Philadelphians the value both to the moral and physical man of disciplining the appetites for flesh food, and for more than seventy years he has followed the doctrine of the vegetarian church.

The Philadelphia church was founded some years ago, and its congregation has gradually grown from a mere handful of people to the flourishing body, new members now being constantly gained.

The forms of their service are few, and are very simple, but impressive. The golden rule is the basis of their creed, and a spirit of peace pervades their place of worship.

Another noticeable feature, and one which instantly impresses the visitor to the Christian Church, is the health and vigor of the congregation. The men appear alert and muscular, the women fresh and blooming. Old age seems to come with flagging footsteps and the marks of time are light. There are few stooped shoulders, no sallow faces, and scarcely a shaking hand among the entire flock.

Dr. Clubb, although having celebrated his 76th birthday, is as active as a man many years younger, and all this he ascribes wholly to his abstinence not merely on his own part, but on the part of several past generations of his family.

CHEAP LODGING.

Equally as active as Dr. Clubb's church is a vegetarian mission, which makes its home in the lower part of the city, at 210 North Second street. A huge sign in front proclaims "The Gospel Help Mission," and here, in the cheapest hotel in the world, the abstainers from meat draw converts to their ranks by feeding and lodging them at wonderfully low rates. Its establishment was the work of an active vegetarian, Dr. W. L. Winner, and since its start several other members of the cult have taken an interest in its progress.

In its short life it has served 70,000 guests with lodging and 460,000 meals, and despite its cheapness it is almost self-supporting.

Here a week's lodging, with three meals a day and the use of a bath, a shaving set and the laundry, costs $1.12. The lodging is clean, the bath is of porcelain, the shaving set better than the average barber's, and the laundry well equipped.

They who avail themselves of all these comforts are not of an exalted social station; in fact, most of them are of the worst class, and the mission therefore specially prides itself on the fact that it has a number of pentitents and converts to the "course."

When the mission started a few years ago there were twenty beds and a few miscellaneous pieces of furniture in the house, and the first night three men slept and breakfasted there. The second there were twenty men, and fifty the third, for the mission was a welcome charity, and its first pensioners praised its name loudly and widely.

At the beginning men slept, when beds ran out, on the floor, but they are permitted to do this no longer. For cleanliness and order are hard enough to maintain when the place is but moderately full. When it is overcrowded such maintenance is impossible.

HIGH PRICED MEALS.

For the more fastidious there are other, more expensive, vegetarian restaurants in Philadelphia, which cater to the delicate tastes of their patrons and not to their purses.

Some of the most active vegetarians in the city belong to the smart set, and right in their midst, where fashionable club houses and cafes abound, in Walnut street, near Tenth a pretty little place, the daintiness of whose service would satisfy the most fastidious taste, is well patronized.

Many dainties that would tempt the most sanguinary person to become a vegetarian are here set forth to take the place of flesh, fish and fowl.

For instance, a most attractive looking "chicken" is brought in, and proves to be a delicious concoction with much the taste of real fowl, and having ground peanuts as its base.

CONVERT MEAT EATERS.

The conductors of this establishment and of the other vegetarian restaurants are wise in their day and generation, for they recognize the truth of the saying that "one's heart (or mind) may be reached through his stomach."

All of these establishments, though managed by different persons, are really carried on by the combined efforts of influential members of the vegetarian cult all over the city.

Quite recently a vegetarian sanitarium has been opened in the heart of the fashionable section. This establishment aims to accomplish among a quite different class of people, those who are wealthy, or at least well to do, the same object as the mission down town, namely, the conversion of meat eaters to the doctrine of vegetarianism, and the restoration to health of those who have indulged too freely in the fleshpots of Egypt. So far it has met with wonderful success.

SHE GOT THE MONEY.

"Harry," she said, "I want twenty dollars."

"But, my dear," he protested, "that's nearly all the cash I have on hand at the present moment, and I had planned to use it to take up a bill."

"Oh, well," she returned, carelessly, "ii you think the man who holds the bill can make things any hotter for you than I can, why, go ahead!"

Thus it happened that she got the money.

TO KEEP HUSBANDS GOOD

A FEW HINTS FOR THE YOUNG WIFE.

It Behoves Her in Every Way to Preserve and Increase Her Husband's Esteem.

First catch your good husband; that is the main thing. Having caught him, the next and most important thing is, to keep him good; and the only way to effectually bring that about is for a wife to be good herself.

Always remember one thing: never use a lover ill whom you design to make your husband, lest he should either upbraid you with it, or, worse still, return it in kind—afterwards.

Repress every inclination to play the tyrant; men may be led, but they most certainly will not be driven. Gently and persuasively ruled, you may do almost anything with them; treat them haughtily and dictatorially, and you will have yourself to thank for the natural result.

Avoid, both before and after marriage, any suspicion even of managing your husband. Never seek to deceive him, even ever so innocently, or attempt to impose on his understanding.

Some injudicious wives succeed in trying a husband's temper by giving him unnecessary uneasiness. He has tion, and your respect,

a right to your sincerity, your affec-

IF HE DESERVES IT.

To be over sanguine before marriage, or to promise yourself absolutely unalloyed felicity is a mistake, for in the present condition of things social, it is unwise to expect too much of even a good man. He is just a man, not an angel, and if, in the course of time, you discover about the husband of your choice anything not quite according to sample, use a little tactful forbearance; be, in fact, a little blind, and pass it over as being, after all, only human. Smooth your brow, compose your temper, put on a clean bib and tucker, and trust to cheerfulness and good nature to carry you through.

Never, on any account, dispute with a man, no matter how great the temptation. Not only will he, in nine cases out of ten, be sure to get the best of it, but the trivial satisfaction of having your own way, will be but a poor equivalent for the quarreling and heart-burning of which it is even impossible to see the end.

A woman's power, as well as happiness, has no other foundation than her husband's love and esteem; which, consequently, it behoves her in every possible way to preserve and increase.

Study his temper, therefore, and command your own, for even a good husband has his terrible irritable moments, which a good wife will respect, and deal gently with.

MAKE A MAN "COMFY,"

and you can do almost anything with him, but you must do it all without any undue obtrusiveness of hand or method. He likes it, but he does not care about his liking to be noticed or commented upon.

Fortunately for the majority of married men, women are, as a rule, only too well fitted for the true wifely position, and the hints we are giving are chiefly designed for those whose youth and inexperience render the matrimonial issue a matter of anxiety, doubt and uncertainty.

This is an age of early marriages, and the girl who enters upon wedded life before she is well free of her girlish irresponsibility, needs a few words of advice in and warning with regard to the ordering of herself in the eyes of her husband.

Man, to the average girl in her late teens, is a human enigma. So much of his life is necessarily passed away from his home, that his habits, thoughts, his entire personality cannot but be unfamiliar, somewhat in the nature of a riddle indeed, to one whose world, from childhood, has been limited to her domestic hearth.

Such a girl may get a good husband, but her ability to keep him in that desirable condition may not be equal to her endeavors, however praiseworthy; it is then "safe bind" that has a far deeper and more important significance than "safe find" —matrimonially considered.

LITTLE MOSLEM'S START.

A little Moslem when she was 4 years 4 months old goes through the "Name-of-God," or Bismillah, ceremony—which begins her real life. She is dressed in cloth of gold, with a veil and wreath of flowers, and friends are invited to salute the little queen. She sits on a gold cushion, which must be borrowed if she hasn't one, and all the rest sit on the floor. Then an old mullah recites very slowly a certain verse from the Korean, which is also written in saffron on a silver plate Bibi held in her hand. She runs her fingers over the words and stammers them after him. "Say it now, Bibi; be a good girl, then you shall see your presents." Soon they all cry, "Shabash! Shabash! Wah! Wah!" and the ceremony of the little girl's first lesson in reading, writing and religion is over. She salaams mamma, then shows her presents to her sahelis (girl friends).

"You can't get something for nothing," said Jones. "No," answered Tomkins; "I can't. But the people with whom I do business seem to manage it every now and then."