The Wedding Eve;

Or, Married to a Fairy.

CHAPTER XV.—(Continued).

The principal ballet did not come on until ten, and for Lilith's sake I regretted this. At half-past nine I had to touch her arm to remind her of the flight of time, and I found her flushed and radiant, with shining eyes and parted lips, gazing rapturously upon a gentleman in spangles, who was balancing three plates, a box of cigars, a bottle, and a walking-stick on the end of his chin.

"Isn't he wonderful?" she whispered.

"Very. But, Lilith, dear, you must come away now. It's half-past nine."

She shot a half-frightened glance at me.

"It's all right," she murmured. "The—the last train's gone, you know."

I started from my seat.

"You told me, you assured me again and again, that there was a ten o'clock train to Bristol on Thursdays."

"I said so—but there isn't. Please don't be cross. You can't think how much I wanted to stay."

"Then you told me a deliberate falsehood?"

I suppose I looked very severe, for she grew extremely pale, and laid her hand timidly on my arm.

"Please don't be angry," she whispered. "I am enjoying myself so much, and I did so want a holiday. You see, I am not a little girl any more, to be always at school. And—and I did so want to be a little longer with you!"

The last argument told, as I suppose she guessed it would. She was watching my face, and I suppose she saw some change in it, for she withdrew her fingers from my arm, and said quite joyously:

"And now we can wait for the ballet, can't we? I wouldn't miss it for the world!"

What was to be done with such a girl?

As she herself had said, she was no longer a child, nor could she be scolded and punished as one. She was a young woman, and as I realized this, glancing at her, the tremendous responsibility I had undertaken with regard to her came upon me for the first time in its full force and meaning.

In a quixotic impulse I had undertaken the guardianship of this young creature, of whose early training, associations, and family characteristics I knew hardly anything that was not wholly bad. Her beauty, her innocence, and her helplessness had appealed to me irresistibly, and the course I had taken toward her seemed the only possible one. And yet what good had I done her? Lilith quoted menu French with a very fair accent, and her English, though slipshod, was passable. But apart from these details, and some extravagant tastes she appeared somehow to have developed, she was just the same fascinating little vagrant who had danced before me in the sunset light at the "Rose and Crown" rather more than a year ago.

It seemed absurd to keep her at school; and yet what in the world was I to do with her when she came out? Her disingenuousness on the subject of the time of the train was truly startling; but, try as I might, I could not be very greatly shocked by it. It was of no use expecting conventional notions of decorum from this little Bohemian. She wanted to be happy, and she grasped at the chance even if it involved a considerable amount of fibbing. She could very well pass the night at Mrs. Jackson's, and on the following day I would myself see her into the Bristol train. Still, I felt it due to my position as guardian to remonstrate with her over her alarming disregard of veracity, and presently I observed coldly:

"I presume you were also telling a falsehood when you said you had sent a telegram to Mrs. Morland?"

Lilith nodded.

"I said it to prevent you from sending another," she answered simply. "But please don't speak so coldly to me. I've had rather—rather a hard time of it lately, and now I'm enjoying myself so much, it seems too bad to spoil it by being cold and nasty to me. Presently you will be married, and Lady Margaret won't let you see me any more. So you may as well be nice to me now."

"I hope I shall see you again, and very often."

"You haven't been very anxious about it up to now, have you? And I was so miserable when I first got to Morland House! I spent all my time for the first two months looking out of the window for you, hoping you'd come."

My heart smote me at her words.

"I was away," I said quickly, "painting out of England——"

"Oh, I know all about it," she said, interrupting me. "You were in the yacht that rich young lady you are going to marry gave you. And you have named it after her. Still, she might have let you come and see me just at first. It would have made a great difference to me."

I could not say one word to defend myself against her soft-voiced reproaches. I dared not tell her how often and how passionately I had longed to see her, or how constantly her image had danced between me and my work, flitting like some newly risen Venus between my vision and the waves I tried to paint. Luckily, Lilith's thoughts seldom remained long absorbed with one subject, and very soon the gaily colored ballet enchained her utterly, to the exclusion of all remembrance of my sins of omission, and I was left to watch the exquisite curves of her profile as, with chin thrust a little forward, she drank in the moving pictures before her.

When it was all over, she was one of the last reluctantly to leave her seat.

"Oh, dear! I wish it was going to begin all over again!" she sighed, as I drew her hand through my arm and made my way through the crowd in search of a hansom cab. "That is the worst of nice things—they pass so quickly one has hardly time to know one is enjoying them."

"A philosopher already at seventeen! Why, Lilith, you are beginning early!"

"Is it being a philosopher to think happy things last too short a time! Well, anyhow, I have had a lovely day, thanks to you, dear Mr. Hervey. And now we are going to have another hansom, and I do love hansoms! I would like to live in them. You can't think how sleepy I am, though. I shall never keep awake until we reach Battersea."

She spoke truly enough. Before we had been driven out of the square her head drooped again. Then she took her hat off, and leaned her yellow head against the back of the cab.

"It's rather uncomfortable," she presently murmured sleepily. "I wonder if you'd be very much offended if I rested my head on your shoulder? I should be much more comfortable."

I should have been rather more or less than a man if I had resisted such an appeal. I slipped my arm about her waist, and with another deep sigh like a tired child, she nestled her head down upon my shoulder, and in a very few seconds was fast asleep.

Beneath Lilith's soft cheek my heart was beating loud and fast. I suppose no man can see for the first time unmoved the head of the woman he loves resting on his breast. Lilith's absolute trust and confidence in me appealed to all that was best in me, while at the same time it could not fail to sting my vanity to note the way in which she ignored my love, and treated me as though I were eighty instead of eight-and-twenty.

Her head, as it drooped forward more heavily, made a paper within my breast pocket rustle. It was Madge's unopened letter and this reminder of my fiancee's existence served to rouse in me a most unreasonable and unjust impatience against her.

Why could not Madge take her grand duke, or any other of the stiff-collared young idiots by whom she was surrounded, and leave me in peace to pluck and wear this little wild flower? By marrying Madge, while with every fibre of my body I loved Lilith, should I not be working a cruel wrong against all three of us—against Madge and Lilith and myself? And would not Madge, once married to me, speedily discover that my love was given wholly to another woman? What happiness could come of such a union?

At the moment when the question flashed across my brain we were being driven down Northumberland Avenue, past the great, new hotels. Opposite one of these our driver came to an unexpected standstill, owing to the sudden drawing up of another hansom before the portico. Within the vehicle were three young men in evening dress, talking and laughing pretty loudly. Our cab was stopped so suddenly and so near the other that the lights of the latter flashed full upon our faces—Lilith's and mine—and, to my intense annoyance, I perceived that one of the three men in the other conveyance had recognized me and was laughingly pointing me out to his companions.

The man was Charles Brookton, an admirer of Madge's between whom and myself there existed a strong dislike which was, perhaps, partly the result of jealousy, but chiefly that of antagonistic tastes and characters. Brookton was witty, cynical and dissipated. He was in chronic need of money; but I really believe he was nearly as much in love with Madge as with her money. And now he had certainly seen me, and would record the fact to Madge; had seen me, too, in a hansom cab with a girl's fair head resting on my shoulder.

The cabs parted company. The mischief was done now. There was no undoing it, and things would be in no way improved by waking Lilith. So I waited until our hansom drew up before the door of Mrs. Jackson's house in Battersea, and then I gently stroked Lilith's hair to arouse her.

"Lilith, dear, wake up! We are at Mrs. Jackson's house."

At the sound of my voice she moved her head yawned, and, still half asleep, stretched one arm up so that it lay across my neck. But this was one point beyond my guardianly self-control. Snatching her hand to my lips, I kissed it passionately, and pressed my face for one brief second against her soft, flushed cheek.

In an instant she had started up, fully awake, and laughing rather nervously.

"Why, I declare I have been right off!" she exclaimed. "I do hope I didn't tire you? You will take me out to-morrow, too, won't you, before I am packed back to Bristol? Good night, dear Mr. Hervey. I've had a most lovely day."

So I drove home to my lonely studio, letting myself in with my latch-key, for Wrenshaw did not expect me, and had gone to bed. And I drew out the deep armchair into which Lilith had curled herself when she first visited the studio, and took from my desk Nicholas Wray's sketch of her and Saladin the cat asleep in it.

Far into the night I sat and thought of her, with throbbing brain, and burning eyes, until, so strong was the fancy and so great my longing for her, I could almost see her grey-blue eyes shining at me from the dark corners of the room, and feel the air shaken by her rustling skirts as she danced between me and the waning lamplight. At last, to exorcise her witchlike presence, I rose from my chair, stretched myself, drew from my pocket Madge's unopen letter, and tried to forget Lilith's laughing lips in reading the chronicle of Madge's fashionable conquests.

Very, very far away my future wife seemed to me in those cold hours before the dawn as I vainly tried to trace on paper the features of that other one—the girl I loved. And farther still some few hours later, when after a few hours' fitful sleep and troubled dreams, I got up, dressed, and ascended again to my studio, to find Lilith in possession, petting Saladin, and teasing Wrenshaw, who, with a sternly disapproving face, was laying the breakfast table.

"I tell you, you must really lay for two," she was saying, as I paused just outside the door. "Mr. Hervey has invited me to breakfast, and, as it's nine o'clock, I'm hungry. And it's no good your frowning at me now, for I'm grown up, and don't mind a bit!"

I entered at that moment, and the man turned to appeal to me.

"Shall I lay for one or two, sir?"

"Two," I answered curtly.

"What did I tell you?" Lilith asked him, in triumph, as, with a backward look of extreme disgust, Wrenshaw left the room.

Then she came to me, and held out her small right hand in greeting, laughing and blushing a little.

"You see, I am much better behaved than I used to be," she said proudly. "I don't call your servant 'Mr. Wrenshaw,' and I don't hug you!"

"You may do the latter if you wish to."

"But I don't. I know better now."

"If you knew very much better, my dear child, you would have waited at Mrs. Jackson's for me to fetch you. Young ladies do not come unchaperoned to artists' studios. I don't wonder Wrenshaw was surprised."

"Why, you are my chaperon!" she exclaimed, with wide-open eyes. "And I'm not a young lady. I'm only a little marsh-bred gipsy at the best."

Just at this point there came a loud single knock at the front door, whereat Lilith turned first red and then pale.

"It's that odious Mrs. Jackson," she murmured apprehensively.

And, sure enough, Wrenshaw's tap a few seconds later heralded his appearance with the news that his sister, Mrs. Jackson, from Battersea, humbly begged a moment's private conversation, as she had something most particular to tell me.

CHAPTER XVI.

As soon as Wrenshaw had left the room to inform his sister that I would see her in the hall below, Lilith sprang from her seat, which faced mine at the breakfast-table, and approached me in evident excitement.

"Don't believe a word she says!" she whispered. "I can't bear that Mrs. Jackson. She's a regular old cat. She hates me and suspects me, and watches me just because I am pretty. Promise you won't listen to her tales about me."

"I must see her now that I have promised."

"Why should you? Send her about her business. She's only come to try and make mischief."

"You forget that her brother has been in my service, and that of my father before me, for over thirty years. I can't treat a relative of his badly."

"Well, then, if you will listen," she pleaded, clasping her hands round my arm, "promise me at least that you won't believe a word she says. You don't know what awful stories she makes up about people."

"I promise at least to tell you every word that passes between us. Will that content you? Let me go now, dear. I must see the woman, since I said I would."

Very reluctantly she withdrew her detaining clasp, and at my last view of her she was standing disconsolately in the middle of the room, with a look of fear in her eyes.

I own that my mind misgave me as I descended the stairs to where Mrs. Jackson, a solid, tidily dressed, motherly looking sort of woman, was seated waiting for me on a chair in the hall.

She rose at my approach. She was a little red in the face, and very determined-looking, but civil and collected in manner.

"I shouldn't be doing my duty, sir," she began, "knowing and respecting your family as I do, if I didn't report to you what happened last night. It goes against me to see money and kindness wasted on worthless and ungrateful people, sir; and I think it only right you should know the truth."

The blood rushed to my face but I kept my temper, and asked her coldly to explain herself.

"It's about the young person you left at my house at half-past eleven last night, sir," she proceeded. "I asked her if she'd have any supper, and she says she was too tired for anything but to go right off to bed. So, as I had a room ready, I just went up with her and straightened it a bit. And 'Good-night, Mrs. Jackson,' she says; 'and have you locked up for the night?' 'Not me, miss,' I says, 'for my husband, being on night-duty on the railway, lets himself in at five in the morning.' Then I went to bed, sir, but my room was next to hers, and, before I got off to sleep, I thought I heard an odd sort of creaking on the stairs. I called out and got no answer. Then I put my head out of the window, and saw somebody on the sidewalk before our house hail a cab and jump in and drive away very fast, indeed. It was too dark for me to see who it was, but I got a sort of presentiment, and I slips something on and knocks at my young lady's bedroom door. There was no answer, and it was locked, and the key taken out. Of course, she might have been inside and asleep, so I called her name through the keyhole again and again, but there was no notice taken, and downstairs I went to the hall, when, what should I find, but the front door left ajar, and the scraper stuck between to keep it open. That put my blood up a bit, sir, I must say, for across the way they'd had burglars in this very road only a month ago. So I just blows out my candle and gets behind the door and waits. And at close on one o'clock I hears a cab rattling down the street, and stopping suddenly a little way up. Then comes hurrying footsteps, and my lady sneaks up the steps, lifts out the scraper, and—finds herself in my arms.

"Yes, sir; there she was, this beautiful Miss Lilith Saxon, with her hat on, but no gloves, and as frightened as could be when I caught her so nicely. 'Who is it?' she says, all of a pant. 'It's me' Mrs. Jackson, your landlady,' I says. 'Nice goings-on, I must say, for a young lady to go off alone at twelve o'clock at night in a cab.' 'I only went to Paddington Station after my luggage,' says she. 'A very likely story,' says I. 'We shall see what Mr. Hervey will think of it when I tell him to-morrow.' 'Mr. Hervey!' she cries out. 'Oh, you wouldn't tell him!' And there in the hall she almost went down on her knees to me to beg and pray me not to let you know. And it was 'Good Mrs. Jackson,' and 'Dear Mrs. Jackson,' and goodness knows what she wasn't going to do for me if only I'd help her to deceive you. And she empties her pocket and pulls out a few shillings, and presses them upon me, 'for the children,' as she says, and she'd give me any amount more the next day if I'd promise not to tell you. But I let her money fall to the floor, and, says I, 'I know my duty,' I says, 'and I'm going to do it. And now up you go to your room, miss, and you give me the key and I locks you in. And if you was the Queen of England I wouldn't have you in my house another night.' And then she creeps up-stairs before me, crying and sobbing, but very quiet and obedient; and she goes to her room, and I locks the door, and opens it at eight o'clock this morning. And I'm sure, sir, after this that you'll understand when I say that not even for you could I lodge the young person another night. I'd do a great deal for you, Mr. Hervey, a very great deal; but I've got a young family growing up, and all of them old enough to take notice, and my Anna Maria turned ten and——"

(To be continued.)

DR. ALEX. GRAHAM BELL.

Invented the Telephone at the Age of Twenty-five.

Forty years ago, on the porch of an unpretentious little house in Brantford, two Scotchmen sat talking. One was a middle-aged man, known to his neighbors as an elocutionist, deeply interested in helping deaf mutes communicate with each other. The other was a thoughtful looking young fellow of 25, professor of Vocal Physiology—whatever that was, in Boston University. Neighbors passing up and down the street heard snatches of their conversation, and passed on, wondering what all this talk about "armatures," and "current interrupters," and "induction coils," meant.

The young man was explaining a new invention he had been working on, a multiple telegraph instrument, which could send a number of messages over a single wire. It worked on the principle of an electric buzzer, with springs that alternately made and broke a circuit. The way in which these springs vibrated at the sending end was reproduced at the receiving end. Only, and this was the important feature, the single wire would carry the six different kinds of waves from the six different vibrating springs, without blending them. Each receiving spring had to be "tuned" to take the message from the corresponding sending spring. "I can produce musical sounds, father," declared the young man in conclusion.

"How?" said the older man, puffing thoughtfully at his pipe. "What about the voice"

The young man considered for a few minutes, then looked up with shining eyes.

"If the air vibrations of the voice could set up electrical vibrations—" he began.

"You'd have it," declared the other positively.

Again the young man relapsed into silence, and again, looked up eagerly.

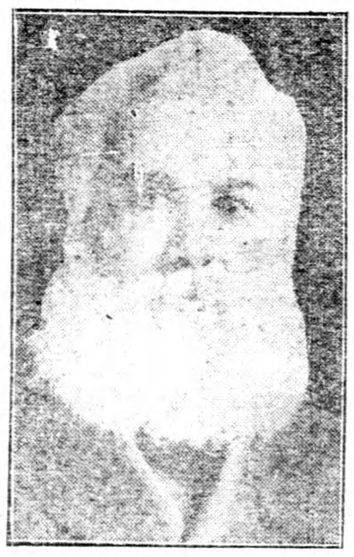
"Perhaps," he said, "with a membrane I might."

The Inspired Moment.

That, as nearly as can be determined, was the moment that the telephone was invented. The middle-aged man was Alexander Melville Bell, famous elocutionist, and the young man, his son, was Alexander Graham Bell.

"Brantford was my thinking place," said Dr. Graham Bell, "not long ago, discussing the invention of the telephone. "There I would go and spend my summer holidays and look over the line of experiments that had been made in Boston, and plan for the future. And in the summer of 1874, during my visit to my father's house in Brantford, discussing with my father the experiments I had made in Boston, relative to the reproduction of musical sounds by electricity for the purpose of multiple telegraphy, the thought of the membrane telephone was elaborated. It was practically the same instrument that was shown in the patent. It was a theoretical conception of a magneto telephone, a very daring conception, if I may be allowed to say so that the vibration of the voice might create electrical impulses and produce an audible result at the other end. As a theoretical man I saw a speaking telephone, that theoretically we had the means of transmitting and reproducing speech in distant places."

Dr. Bell went back to Boston with his idea fermenting in his head. He kept on for a time working at his harmonic telegraph. He was assisted by a young Boston mechanician, Thomas A. W. Watson. On the afternoon of June 2, 1875, Watson and Bell were "tuning-up" one of the spring instruments. Watson was plucking away at the transmitter spring, making it buzz, or, rather, whine, while Bell was adjusting the transmitter spring so that it would give a whine of exactly the same pitch as the other. Suddenly the spring of Watson's instrument stuck. He kept plucking at it without avail. He bent over to examine it. The make and break points were fused. There was no interruption of the current. The circuit was unbroken. Yet the receiving spring continued to vibrate. The steel vibrating over



Dr. Alexander Graham Bell.

the magnate was making the steel over the other magnet vibrate. The electrical waves were setting up sound waves.

The First Telephone.

Bell rushed over to Watson's instrument with a shout. "What did you do then? Don't change anything. Let me see." A few days before he had remarked: "If I could make a current of electricity vary in intensity, precisely as the air varies in intensity during the production of a sound, I should be able to transmit speech telegraphically." That was exactly what had just happened. The steel spring, vibrating across the poles of the magnet, was generating a current of electricity that varied in intensity precisely as the air was varying in intensity within hearing distance of the spring. The sound was being electrically transmitted, the telephone was possible. The first crude telephone was in operation.

Bell and Watson immediately set to work to construct an instrument suitable for transmitting the human voice. To get the delicate vibrations of speech they arranged a membrane of gold-beater's skin over the springs of the instruments to work in the same way as the human ear-drum acts by passing vibrations.

Dr. Bell describes the first conversation over the 'phone on July 1, 1875, as follows: "We had only one membrane telephone, and the receiver was one of the old tuned reed receivers. It was held up to the ear. You crammed the armature against the ear to dampen its vibrations. I was listening at that armature, while Watson was down in the basement of Charles Williams, Jr.'s building at 109 Court street, shouting into the end of a telephone, and then we changed places. I may say that I heard nothing. Then Mr. Watson went downstairs to listen, and I went upstairs to speak, and while I was speaking, Mr. Watson came rushing upstairs in a state of great excitement, and saying: "Why, Mr. Bell, I heard your voice very distinctly, and could almost understand what you said."

Then Dr. Bell prepared to file his claim for a patent.—H. R. Gordon in Star Weekly.

Patient Husband—"Why did you keep me waiting on this corner for two hours? You said you were merely going to step in to see how Mrs. Knowall was." Wife—"Well, she insisted on telling me."

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MANY STUDENT SUICIDES.

Schoolboys of Berlin, Germany, End Their Lives.

The recent examinations at the German schools were again, as each year, accompanied with numerous instances of boys killing themselves, either through fear that they would not pass or because of mortification at failure.

On a single day three suicides of students, all less than 18 years old, were reported, and the body of one who had drowned himself some days earlier was recovered. These instances were in Greater Berlin alone.

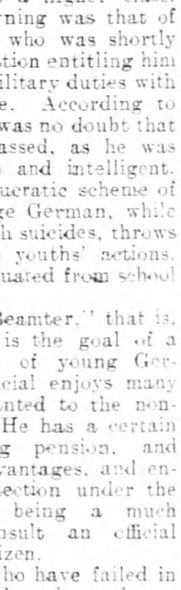
One of the boys threw himself in front of a train because he had not been promoted to a higher class. A suicide by drowning was that of a 17-year-old boy who was shortly to try the examination entitling him to discharge his military duties with one year's service. According to his teachers there was no doubt that he would have passed, as he was unusually capable and intelligent.

The fixed bureaucratic scheme of life for the average German, while not explaining such suicides, throws some light on the youths' actions. Failure to be graduated from school is a serious thing.

To become a "Beamter," that is, a public official, is the goal of a great percentage of young Germans, for the official enjoys many privileges not granted to the non-official German. He has a certain tenure, a retiring pension, and other material advantages, and enjoys especial protection under the law of insults, it being a much graver crime to insult an official than a private citizen.

But for those who have failed in their school work there is no chance to become state officials.

Even in private life they find it almost impossible to secure respon-



sible positions with mercantile firms, and they are, of course, debarred from entering the learned professions. It is not altogether strange that the German youth is disposed to take a grave view of his failure.

It is not only students in the schools who kill themselves before or after examinations. A man of 22, who had been studying legal procedure, reached the point where he was to take his examination for advancement to court clerk. He repeatedly told his friends that he was sure he should not pass the examinations.

The night before the examination he threw himself from the window of his third story room and was crushed to death.

Stops to Listen.

A farmer was having trouble with his horse. It would start, walk twenty yards or so, then stop for a few seconds and start again, to repeat the performance. After watching this exhibition for some time a friend overtook the farmer during one of the horses's long waits. "What's the matter? Is it lame?" he asked. "Not as I know of," replied the farmer crossly. "Then what's wrong with it?" "Oh, he's so afeard I'll say 'Whoa!' and he won't hear me," replied the farmer, "he stops every now and then to listen!"

Mother Looks the Part.

"How pale and worried your mother looks. Is she sick?"

"No, ma'am, but pa's got the grip."

"And is she afraid that he won't get well?"

"Oh, no, but whenever pa's sick he worries her so that she always looks as though she had what was ailing him."

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