The Wedding Eve;

Or, Married to a Fairy.

CHAPTER XVIII.—(Continued).

This was the woman my soul longed for, the complement of my own nature, the being presaged in my dreams, whose diaphanous form had so often seemed to flit, will-o'-the-wisplike, between me and my canvas long before my eyes had ever been blessed by a sight of her. I was positively startled to realize how wonderfully like Lilith was to those dream fancies of mine, which had forever pictured a slim, blue-eyed, yellow-haired, youthful, unreasoning creature, all laughter and all love.

At four o'clock I went to bed at last, and slept heavily until half-past eight. At nine, while I was enjoying my morning tub—never more refreshing than after a short night—Wrenshaw tapped at my dressing-room door.

"It's Mr. Wray, if you please, sir. I told him you were out of town, as were your instructions, but he insisted upon going up to the studio, saying as he had left some canvases and things there."

"Hang the fellow!" I muttered, below my breath.

Wray was a desperate stayer and my train started at eleven thirty-five.

"Get rid of him as soon as you can, and let me have my breakfast," I said aloud.

But half an hour later Wrenshaw came to me again, a comic picture of despair.

"That Mr. Wray, sir, he won't go. He's got his canvas, but he's taken the armchair, and his feet on another, and he's filling the room with his nasty, cheap tobacco smoke. I spoke to him strongly, sir; but says he: 'Your master would never refuse an hour's rest and shelter to a man who is down on his luck and tired out,' he says. Depend upon it, sir, he has come to borrow money. When a gentleman—leastways a man—won't be put off from seeing another, it's always a favor he comes after; and it's generally ready money."

Wrenshaw seldom delivered himself of so many words; but he disliked Wray, I believe, only a little less than he disliked Lilith. For my own part, I was exceedingly annoyed by the presence of this uninvited guest at my studio. It was especially irritating to reflect that, although I might indeed breakfast down-stairs or out of the house, and slip off to Bristol without meeting him, I should practically leave Lilith's reputation in his hands, since he was quite unprincipled enough to find out for himself the many new portraits of Lilith which I had taken down from the walls and placed just within my desk and quite artful enough, by pumping the unfriendly Wrenshaw, to discover that she had visited the studio not many days ago. Little Wilson, a friend of his, had seen me dining with her tete-a-tete at a Regent Street restaurant. Charlie Brookton had recognized me by her side in a cab; and Madge had already openly put the most unjust and cruel interpretation upon my relations with her.

Certainly I was to marry Lilith at once, and so put a stop to all possible scandal; but it was intolerable to me to think that her name should be made light of, even for a short time, by a man of so bitter a tongue and so cynical a disbelief in women as Nicholas Wray.

Under these circumstances I resolved to see him, and so at least get him out of the studio. From Wilson's account I guessed, too, that he was in very low water, even had not his own words to Wrenshaw confirmed the idea. For many months none of his brilliant black-and-white work had been seen about town, and I could not bear to think that a man of such brilliant capabilities should really be in want, even though his misfortunes were more often than not the result of his foolish excesses.

Moved by all these impulses, I ascended to the studio, and found Wray just as Wrenshaw had described him, taking his ease upon a couple of chairs, and filling the room with smoke from his pipe, a handsome amber-mouthed and elaborately carved one which I had never seen before.

Wray looked, as ever, handsome, picturesque, and dirty. In spite of the shifty life I had heard he was leading, his tall frame was less thin than before. A loosely knotted yellow silk scarf encircled the wide turned-down collar of his flannel shirt, which, with that brown velvet painting-coat of mine, which he had calmly annexed after his last visit to me, helped to produce a very striking and unconventional ensemble.

"Hello, Hervey! I thought old Wrenshaw was lying!" was his greeting, as he lazily stuck out one of his long, white hands.

"I had told him I was not at home to anybody," I answered shortly. "I am only in town for a few days, during which I have been extremely hard at work; and in two hours' time I am leaving London again. So you will excuse me if I begin my breakfast."

He lay still for a few moments, staring at me over his pipe, and smoked on in silence, while I rang the bell and gave some orders to Wrenshaw about my breakfast.

"May I ask where you are going in such a deuce of a hurry?" he inquired, as the door closed on the man.

"I am going to Bristol."

"To Bristol, eh? It wouldn't be a bad notion for me to go to Bristol and ask my Cousin, Kate Morland, to put me up for a few nights. Would you like a fellow-traveler?"

"No, Wray," I replied emphatically. "I most certainly should not."

"Well, that's frank, at any rate!" he observed, laughing imperturbably. "And may I ask what takes you to Bristol of all places?"

"Surely you must remember," I said, that a young girl in whom I am deeply interested is in the care of your cousin, Mrs. Stanhope Morland?"

"Oh, ah, yes, of course! Fact is, I haven't been near my cousin for so long, and haven't heard from you, and I'd forgotten all about it. But, now that you recall it, I remember a little dancing beggar-girl you have somehow picked up, who insisted upon having supper with you and me in the studio, and wanted to spend her life with you."

"Please be careful what you say," I said coldly. "I am going down to Bristol to-day to ask that girl to be my wife."

Wray sprang up in his chair. He had grown pale with excitement, and was staring at me incredulously.

"What in the world are you talking about?" he exclaimed. "In six months you will be married to Lady Margaret Lorimer; the papers are full of it——"

"They will have to be filled with contradictions. Lady Madge dissolved our engagement yesterday morning."

"Oh, a lover's quarrel! That is nothing," said Wray, in tones of relief. "If you really have been keeping that dancing child at Kate's school all this time, and it has come to Lady Madge's ears through some infernally good-natured friend, of course there would be ructions. That magnificent woman would be a tigress of jealousy, and would brook no rival. She is quite right, mind. She is a superb creature; and as to that girl—pooh! a mere thread-paper, undeveloped thing, if I remember rightly. I sketched her and your cat asleep together. I thought she was about twelve. Why, she's a child, man, a mere child, and you are—what is it? Thirty?"

"Twenty-eight. And Lilith Saxon is seventeen."

"In years, perhaps. But you look thirty—on my word you do, and she looks fourteen! It is preposterous, Hervey! A mad freak on your part, born of pique because you have quarreled with that splendid woman. No man in his right senses would descend from a beautiful, brilliant accomplished, and wealthy totled lady to a little, ill-bred, unformed, uneducated minx of a dancing-girl."

"You are speaking of the lady who is to become my wife," I said, springing from my chair, "and unless you instantly apologize and retract your words, I must ask you to leave this house and never to visit it again!"

"Great Scott! What big words and big looks! Hervey, if you thought a man was a decent fellow, and saw him about to commit suicide, wouldn't you try and stop him? When you came to me in my studio at Kensington a year ago, you interfered just when I meant to join the majority—and it was a thousand pities you didn't let me alone! Anyway, I like you, respect you, and admire you. In many ways your notions are too high-flown and you're too good for this world; but you're one of the best, and I can't see you deliberately setting out to cut your throat without a protest. For Heaven's sake, don't marry that girl! It would be a social and artistic suicide. I understand women better than you, and though I only saw her for a few minutes, I have met girls of her type before, and I understand them. No man of sens marries a woman of that sort. They belong to the kitten or chorus girl species—pretty, graceful, good-tempered, and affectionate, to all appearance, and full of little caressing tricks and ways; but at heart they are nothing but ignorant, shallow, heartless, ungrateful, and immoral little animals. Hervey, don't waste your heart upon such a woman. She will take it in her claws and play with it and purr over it; and when she is tired of it she will throw your heart aside, and take her soft words and pretty tricks to some richer or better-looking man, or even to some penniless and ugly scoundrel, out of mere frivolity and love of change. The only man to deal with that type of woman is the bully, who frightens her into faithfulness by oaths and blows. With such an ideal and romantic and sensitive nature as yours, marriage with Lilith Saxon would mean a tragedy and your utter ruin, body and soul. Give me your word, Hervey, not to carry out this mad freak of yours—or, at least, promise me to see Lady Madge before you attempt to go down to Bristol."

He was lividly pale and the perspiration stood out upon his face. His unlooked for vehemence, so utterly at variance with his usual lazy equanimity, partly astonished and partly angered me. But during his long and passionate protest I had time to reflect that, being the man he was, he could neither understand the love I felt nor the nature of the girl who inspired it. So I affected to eat my breakfast, persuading myself the while that I must forgive his abuse of Lilith, since it could be only his genuine concern for my welfare which inspired it.

"I am sure you mean well, Wray," I therefore observed, as calmly as I could, when he had finished speaking and stood holding on to the back of a chair close to the table at which I was seated, "and therefore I cannot resent what you say as I should otherwise do. But you must understand that this is the last time that Lilith's name is mentioned between us until she has become my wife."

He drew a long breath sharply through his teeth, and remained silent for several minutes.

Then, in a strangely subdued manner, he took his hat and his canvas from the chair on which he had tossed them, and without once looking back at me he left the studio.

"I have warned you," he muttered, with his hand on the door, "I can do no more. The consequences be on your own head."

CHAPTER XIX.

Little enough I thought or cared for Nicholas Wray's warning as I took my place in the train on my way down to Bristol.

My mind was wholly concerned with wondering how Lilith would take my wooing, what she would say, and how she would look at me.

Had she not herself wished that all days might be like the brief time we had spent together in London? Had she not, little more than a year ago, clung to me, sobbing her heart out on my shoulder, and imploring me not to leave her among strangers? Had she not professed her willingness—nay, more, her eagerness—to adopt any menial position so that she might not be parted from me? And, above all, had she not escaped from Mrs. Jackson's at midnight, a fortnight ago, for the mere pleasure of walking up and down the street outside my studio door?

How could I help thinking she would be glad to receive me in my new character of a humble suitor for her hand? It was not, surely, a question of vanity. I was her only friend. For weeks after entrance into Morland House establishment she had, as she admitted to me, looked for and longed for my visits every day. Her present position was uncertain and invidious; but as my wife it would be secure. And best encouragement of all for an anxious, eager lover, there was that soft kiss of hers "like Diana's kiss, unasked, unsought," that had quivered upon my cheek when we last parted.

In such thoughts and recollections I beguiled my journey. A cold, moist wind was blowing over the downs as I drove up from the town in an open fly, the driver of which enlivened the way by descanting upon the popular local topic of the number of suicides frustrated or successfully carried through from Clifton Suspension Bridge during the last year. I wished, with the unreasonableness of lovers that the weather had not changed so suddenly for the worse, and that the near neighborhood of Morland House were not renowned as a suicide centre. But the sight of the low-lying building nestling among its elm-trees set my heart bounding with a boyish delight and my blood tingling in my veins, so that I longed to spring out of the cab, and bound on ahead, shouting to Lilith that I was coming to bear her off as my bride.

Another and an older servant than the girl I had seen on the occasion of my last visit, opened the door to me.

Mrs. Morland and Miss Saxon were both at home, she said, glibly in answer to my inquiry. Would I walk into the drawing-room?

Mrs. Morland did not keep me waiting long. She rustled into the room in a handsome gray silk dress, elaborately trimmed with lace and steel, her curly dark hair dressed in the latest style, and looking altogether like a plate in a fashion paper. She held out a small, plump, much-ringed hand for me to shake, but I noticed that its touch was strangely cold and clammy, and that her comely, fresh-complexioned face wore an anxious expression which she strove vainly to mask in smiles.

"Delighted to see you, Mr. Hervey. Pray sit down. I was so sorry Lilith was not here yesterday. But you see, the dear girl had seemed just a little bit—not exactly ill—but droopy lately, and I thought a day or two at the seaside of the house of a lady who was once one of my assistant teachers—a most charming and cultured woman of responsible age—would do the dear child good. Lilith is growing very fast, and she requires a little petting and change of air now and then."

"It is very thoughtful of you, I'm sure," I said, speaking with some reserve. "But Lilith will, I hope, have plenty of change from this time forward."

A look of unmistakable alarm flashed into Mrs. Morland's eyes.

"You do not contemplate taking her away from here, surely?" she suggested. "The place suits her so admirably, and she is making such progress. And then—pardon me—but it is an understanding always that pupils remain with me not less than two years. I cannot do myself justice in less than that time. I thought I explained my custom in this respect to you on the occasion of your first visit, and I certainly understood that you agreed to the arrangement."

"If Miss Saxon leaves Morland House before the two years are up," I said very coldly, for I was thinking of Lilith's worn-out boots, and threadbare gloves, "you will not be a loser if I find that I entered into any agreement of the kind you suggest."

"But she is much too young and too ignorant to leave school yet. She knows nothing of the world. Her manners and mind are unformed. And, then, she is so much attached to me that it would break her heart to part from me suddenly. Besides, although it sounds egotistical on my part to say so, where would she find the affectionate sympathy, the real home influence which she enjoys under my roof?"

Mrs. Morland was evidently much excited. Her sweet voice actually shook with feeling, and I hastened to assure her that I had no idea of removing Lilith to any rival "finishing" establishment.

"But Lilith is no longer a child," I went on. "She is a beautiful, marriageable young woman—and, in short, Mrs. Morland, I have come down here to ask her to be my wife."

Every trace of color faded from Mrs. Morland's face.

"Your wife!" she repeated blankly, staring at me with a consternation she did not attempt to conceal. "Mr. Hervey, is this a jest? Everybody knows that next season you are going to marry Lady Margaret Lorimer."

"Everybody is wrong, Mrs. Morland. Lady Margaret has dissolved our engagement."

"And you really thought," Mrs. Morland said, rising from her seat in her growing excitement, "you could really possibly think of proposing marriage to a girl in Lilith's station of life just to pique and spite your former flance? Surely such a proceeding would be altogether beneath you. Let me beg and entreat you to think better of such a preposterous plan."

"There has never been any question with me of piquing Lady Margaret," I said. "Pray dismiss such an idea from your mind. I wish to marry Miss Saxon because I love her, and for no other reason."

"Oh, my dear Mr. Hervey," Mrs. Morland exclaimed, in her softest and most persuasive tones, sinking down on her seat again and joining her hands in what appeared like very real anxiety, "for your own sake, for the sake of your family, your genius, and the splendid career before you, I implore you to give up all idea of such a terrible mesalliance. Lilith herself regards you with respect and gratitude, wholly in the light of a protector or father——"

"There are just eleven years between us."

"Years are nothing. Remember your relative positions. As far as I can gather, Lilith's early training and associations were of the lowest and most sordid kind. You have educated her out of pure charity; but if you were to marry her, would the world believe it? You know how shamefully censorious people are. Could you bear the sort of thing that would be said about your wife?"

"The world Mrs. Morland," I said, "is nothing to me. An artist makes his own world."

(To be continued.)

"Granny's" Tribute.

The Rev. Mr. Lawrence had boarded for so long a time with the Granby family that when he was obliged to remove to a new field of labor, the family keenly felt his loss.

"The best pastor we've ever had in this town," declared Father Granby, heartily. "I don't expect to see his equal again."

"Such good company," said Mother Granby; "and so svmpathetic if the least thing went wrong."

"He was the easiest man to cook for I ever knew," contributed Aunt Ann. "He was always satisfied with what he had to eat, and he never grumbled."

"He had such a serene disposition," sighed Sister Laura. "He brought an atmosphere of peace whenever he came into the house."

"Granny" Granby, in her corner by the fireplace, shook her head dolefully as she added her tribute of affection.

"I'll miss him dretfully," she mourned. "He was the best hand at ketching moth millers ever I did see."

Can't Sidestep That.

"Don't take any notice of the cook, my dear."

"But John, I have to take it when she gives it to me."

"When I marry it will be for love only." "Is that so?" "Positively." "And if some poor man proposes to you?" "But he won't. I shall take good care not to fall in love with any man who isn't able to provide me with what luxuries I require."

King Christian and Queen Alexandrina.

An unconventional photograph of the Rulers of Denmark, taken at Buckingham Palace on the occasion of their recent visit to England.

On the Farm

Feeding the Calf.

The mother's milk should be fed the first week, beginning when the calf is 24 to 36 hours old. The milk must be fresh and warm, about 95 to 100 degrees Fahrenheit, and must always be fed from a clean pail, preferably a tin pail. A wooden pail is too hard to keep sweet and clean.

The second week whole milk from any cow may be fed, and the third week, if the calf is in good health and growing nicely, the change to skim milk may be begun. Do not make the mistake of feeding more skim milk simply because the cream is removed. The whole milk contains about as much protein as the calf can handle and when swim milk is fed in large quantities the calf gets more than he can use, and as a consequence a sick calf is the result.

The change from whole milk to skim milk must be gradual: from one half to 1½ pounds a day, depending upon the size and vigor of calf. To an average calf, two weeks old, we would feed about twelve pounds a day of whole milk. The first day of the third week, or when it is desirable to begin the change, the daily feed would be eleven pounds of whole milk and one pound of skim milk; the second day, ten pounds of whole milk and two pounds of skim milk, and so until the complete change is made. It is just as essential to feed the skim milk warm as the whole milk, although when the calf gets larger and stronger, six to ten weeks old, a gradual change to cold milk may be made.

Allow the calf a clean, airy paddock or box stall in which to get exercise. Give him some well cured hay, such as timothy and clover, or timothy alone, as soon as he will eat it, which will be when he is from three to four weeks old. Alfalfa in small quantities may be fed, but with this roughage there is danger of the calfs eating more than he can properly digest.

Grain may be fed as soon as he will take it, and for this purpose a mixture of bran and crushed oats or crushed oats alone is recommended.

Protect the Tree Roots.

In digging a tree, preserve as many of the roots as possible, especially the fine roots which feed the larger ones. Do not let these roots dry in the sun or wind. They should be protected with burlap, canvas or straw until they are set in the ground. This is especially true of evergreens. Exposure of the roots to the sun or wind will set the resin in the root and stop further development of the plant. This is a matter that does not seem to be well understood, or at least heeded, by our tree planters. Thousands of evergreens are destroyed each year by careless handling, either in the nursery or, as is the usual case, by the planter. One cannot be too careful in handling either the evergreen or the hardwood trees to keep the roots from drying.

Sunlight.

Sunlight is one of the best and cheapest disinfectants at our disposal, and we should take advantage of this fact at every opportunity. In the construction of barns or shelters of any kind for animals, ample provision should be made for the admission of the maximum amount of sunlight. Southern exposure is desirable, that is, having the majority of the windows facing the south. The warmth this provides in cold weather is desirable, and much of the excessive heat in summer can be avoided by providing suitable curtains or screens. Most disease germs are easily killed by direct sunlight, as has been repeatedly shown by experiments.

Both Come Back.

"You know what a boomerang is, don't you, Johnnie?"

"No, ma'am."

"Why, a boomerang is something you throw out and after a little while it turns and comes back."

"Please ma'am, it's somethin' like the prodigal son, ain't it?"

The Proper Term.

"What's that?" cried the new doctor in the mining camp. "You say you have 'shooting pains' in your back. Why, you're wounded, man!"

"That's what I said—'shooting pains,'" said Plute Pete.

CURES BY A POLISH PEASANT.

Patient Sends Only Christian Name and Date of Birth.

Stanislaus Ratajcsyk, a Polish peasant living in the hamlet of Topolca, near the ancient town of Lenczyca, Russian Poland, has won fame in Russia, Germany and Austria for his strange cures.

The patient, who may be in New York, Vladivostock or Warsaw, sends by mail or wire his Christian name, with exact date of birth. That is all. On getting his data, Stanislaus puts the letter, message or card before him on a table, sits down in front of it, drinks a glass of cognac and goes into a short trance. Then he says to his secretary, "I see such and such a thing in the patient's body. He must do so and so."

The secretary writes down the medicines and treatment and the prescription goes to the address sent with the Christian name and date.

Stanislaus can neither read nor write, but his cures bring him enormous crowds, as well as stacks of letters and despatches. Though Topolca is more than 30 miles from the nearest railway depot, patients of all sorts and conditions, from the poor peasant who can pay nothing, to the rich in their cars and furs, flock to him. When they come, instead of sending their names by post, he does not ask them details, but goes into a trance and tells them what is the matter.

His fee ranges from a few cents to $5, according to a patient's purse. He also levies a toll of a bottle of French brandy from all, except the very poor.

Many scientists of Europe have vainly sought to solve the mystery of the peasant's strange power. A correspondent made the tedious journey to Topolca to investigate. When he arrived at the healer's house, Stanislaus was saying to a Russian official who was suffering from alcoholism:

"What is the use of your coming to see me? I can only heal the body; it is your soul that is ill. Control that and you will be well."

Turning to the correspondent he grumbled: "You are not sick. You have come to find out whether I am a fraud or not. You are not from these parts, but I cannot tell where you are from, as my gift only applies to the sick, not to the healthy."

His latest striking achievement is to grow a fine crop of hair on a perfectly bald pate, and since news of it got abroad his house has been besieged by rich people who are hairless. He says his remedy for baldness is a decoction of snakeweed.

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