The Wedding Eve;

Or, Married to a Fairy.

CHAPTER XXII.—(Continued).

As well as I could I soothed her, but I was suffering keenly, too.

"You are perfectly safe, now, darling," I whispered. "Something told me you were in trouble, and led me to you. Thank God! I was in time. But why did you run away from me like that? All day I and Mrs. Morland and Nicholas Wray have been searching for you everywhere."

"Mrs. Morland? And Mr. Wray?"

"Yes. I know you used not to like him, but he has been most kind, searching for you everywhere."

"What does he say—I want to know, because he is an old friend of yours—about this idea of your marrying me?"

"He says it is the best, the only thing to be done, if I am able to win you, since I love you so dearly."

She was silent for some minutes.

"Listen," she said, then, in a very low voice. "I see it's no good struggling. And now you've saved my life in addition to all the other things you've done for me—for it was you that pulled me from the wall, wasn't it?"

"Yes, my dearest, it was I."

"I suppose my life is yours. But I can't love you as you want, and you mustn't reproach me and be disappointed. If nothing but marrying me will make you happy, I suppose you must marry me. But marry me at once and take me away to new places. Don't give me time to think about it or I shall run off again. The impulse came upon me early this morning, and I couldn't resist it. I made a plan that I would come to London, and cut off my hair and get boy's clothes, and take a boy's situation somewhere and never be found by you or any one. But I hadn't the pluck to carry it through. I had a little money left out of what you gave me last time you saw me. And I slipped off from Morland House at night, and cut off my hair in the train, and bought some boy's clothes in an old clothes' shop as soon as the shops were opened, and changed my things in a four-wheeled cab in the fog. But once I'd got them I felt every one was looking at me, and I got frightened; and when I went to a restaurant to get something to eat, I hardly dared to leave the place, and I hid and waited about, and at dark I lost my way and got robbed—and, oh! I am so tired! You won't ask me any more questions to-night, will you?"

"No, dear."

"And where are you taking me?"

This was a question, indeed. I could not risk Wrenshaw seeing Lilith in this travesty, and yet I was intensely anxious to place her in Mrs. Morland's care as speedily as possible. It was out of the question to leave her at any hotel in her boy's clothes, and far too late to hope to purchase others. The notion of Mrs. Jackson at Battersea was not to be entertained for a moment; consequently, the studio and Mrs. Morland were my only hope.

At my door I had to leave Lilith in the cab, dreadfully afraid lest even now she might give me the slip again, after making her promise on her honor to remain in the cab until my return.

"I am too tired and sleepy to run away again," whimpered Lilith. "Besides, I know it's no good now. So I promise."

In the studio I found Mrs. Morland, looking pale, tired, and flabby. I cut short the plaintive record of her experiences by telling her that Lilith was waiting below in the cab.

"Thank goodness!" she exclaimed. "And now that you have found her, Mr. Hervey, you must put her in my care. To-night we will sleep at a hotel, and to-morrow we will go back to Bristol."

"To-morrow," I said, "I shall get a special license, and marry Lilith."

"Marry her!" almost shrieked Mrs. Morland. "On the top of all this mad conduct? Mr. Hervey, you cannot be in your right senses!"

"My mind is made up, all the same," I said "and I will not trouble you with the care of Lilith after to-night."

Mrs. Morland clutched her traveling-cloak and small portmanteau.

"No!" she said, in most determined tones. "If you really mean to marry Lilith Saxon, Mr. Hervey, I wash my hands of her entirely, and from this moment I decline to see her. I consider she has treated both you and me abominably. I am not complaining over the hundred and seventy-five pounds I shall lose by her flight, although I am much in need of it—"

"Stop!" I said. "I will sit down now and write you a check for a hundred and seventy-five pounds, to take away with you, on one condition—that is, that you will for that amount sell me the contents of your little traveling valise, and also that long dust-cloak you carry over your arm."

Her bright, catlike, greenish-gray eyes dilated and glistened.

"What can you possibly want them for?" she asked.

"For Lilith. Is it a bargain?"

She only hesitated a second or two.

"If you will let me take out my trinkets and one or two little things, I agree," she said, then.

And a few minutes later I accompanied her to the door, and saw her disappear in the fog, walking rapidly, and not even once glancing in the direction of the cab in waiting before the door.

Then I sought Lilith, not without some dread of finding her flown. But she was fast asleep in a corner of the hansom, and I had to awaken her to tell her to slip Mrs. Morland's all-enveloping traveling cloak round her before she entered the house. Up to the studio I led her, and showed her where Mrs. Morland had neatly placed a change of dress, and the other contents of her traveling bag on a chair and spread a copy of an evening paper over them.

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

"You are very, very good," she said, looking up at me with tearful eyes, and after extracting another solemn promise that she would not run away, I kissed her forehead and left her.

And thus passed the eve of my wedding-day.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Next day, a terrible day, fog still, black and blinding, and drizzling rain, I arrived at my studio before midday, carrying in my pocket a special license for the immediate marriage of Lilith Saxon, spinster, aged seventeen, daughter of Horace Saxon, actor, and Adrian Blakiston Hervey, bachelor, aged twenty-eight, son of Colonel Hervey.

I found Lilith in the big armchair, looking very slight and pale and fragile, in a black silk gown of Mrs. Morland's, six sizes too large for her, in which her little head of cropped yellow curls and small, childish face seemed altogether lost.

I knelt before her and put my arms about her waist. She kissed me in the readiest and most friendly fashion, told me she had slept beautifully upon the cushions on the sofa, and asked me if I did not think London in the fog was the most dreadful place in the world.

"We shall soon be out of it, my darling," I whispered, clasping her close in my arms. "As soon as we are married we will take the train to Plymouth, where my yacht lies—"

"The Lady Margaret?"

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

"The Marsh Fairy. What a pretty name," she exclaimed. "You were thinking of Lythinge, weren't you Ah, Mr. Hervey, why didn't you marry me then?"

"I couldn't marry a child of sixteen. And if you call me Mr. Hervey again I shall keep your mouth shut with kisses for the rest of the day."

"I wonder you take me when I showed so plainly that I didn't want you."

"To tell you the truth, so do I! But I am so certain, dear, that I can make you happy, and can make you love me, that I am not afraid you will run away again when once you are my wife."

"Adrian," she said, with her little hands on my shoulders, looking with pathetic earnestness down into my eyes, "if you marry me you will be making the greatest mistake of your life."

Something in her unwonted earnestness chilled me.

"Do you love any one else?" I asked.

"No, no!"

"Is there any one else you would like to marry?"

"No one in the world! I would much rather not marry at all."

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

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

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

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

When we got into a four-wheeled cab to drive to Victoria Station, Lilith broke down altogether and burst into a passion of tears.

"It seems such a dreadful, dreary beginning!" she sobbed. "And, oh, how will it all end?"

I folded her in my arms and covered her face with soft, lingering kisses. She was mine now, and no one could take her from me. With Lilith as my wife I could well afford to laugh at fortune.

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

She obeyed with her usual docility, looking up at me at first with blue eyes, blurred with tears. But gradually her old dimpling smile broke through, and a lovely blush stole over her cheeks.

"After all," she said, with something between a laugh and a sigh, "you wanted me more than anything in the world, and now you have me. So that one of us at least is happy."

CHAPTER XXIV.

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

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

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

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

And I did adore her, the more madly, perhaps, that I soon became convinced I did not wholly understand her. She was always affectionate, always sweet-tempered, easily amused, and easily moved to a light-hearted Bohemian gaiety, both delightful and infectious. She seemed happy in my society, she took my caresses sweetly, and she accepted my devotion with a dainty gracefulness and charm. And yet, somehow, the notion would come into my head that I was married to a fairy, and this creature of ideal loveliness, whose forget-me-not blue eyes reflected while they did not return th passionate love of my gaze was not a real live woman at all, but that some morning I should wake to miss her golden head and to know that she had flown back to fairy-land.

Some lines of Browning's that I came across in Venice on our travels seemed so made and meant for Lilith that their truth hurt me:

"That fawn-skin dappled hair of hers,
And the blue eye,
Dear and dewy,
And that infantine fresh air of hers!"

The man who wrote those lines might have had my wife before him to inspire him. But the bitterest part of the likeness came in the sixth stanza:

"But for loving—why, you would not,
sweet,
Though we prayed you,
Paid you, brayed you
In a mortar—for you could not, sweet!"

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

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

She never remembered whether bills had or had not been paid, and usually curled her locks with the receipts. She continually emptied my purse into her own pocket, forgetting that there was a hole in it, so that we frequently found ourselves far from our hotel or from the yacht, without a franc to take us back or to buy food. She could no more resist bright any pretty things in the shops than a savage fresh to civilization; everything she saw she wanted to buy. She caused me agonies of jealousy by what I considered her quite unnecessary friendliness with strangers, to whom she would talk freely on the slightest provocation. In Paris, where by her special request we stayed while I superintended the arrangements of our new London home, the attention she attracted by her beauty, her pretty and extravagant frocks, and her unconventional liveliness, was such that I could not endure to leave her even for a few hours in the hotel without me, and I engaged a perfect Gorgon of an elderly French maid, named Rosalie, to look after her.

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

(To be continued.)

SIR J. A. M. AIKINS, K.B.

New Knight Spent Most of His Life in Manitoba.

Sir James A. M. Aikins, M.P., who was the recipient of a knight bachelorhood this week, is the Hon. Clifford Sifton's successor in the representation of Brandon. He is a son of the late Hon. James Cox Aikins, who was appointed a Senator by Royal Proclamation at Confederation, and who, from 1882 until 1886, was Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba. Mr. Aikins, while born in Ontario and educated at Upper

Sir J. A. M. Aikins, K.B.

Canada College and Toronto University, has spent the best part of his life in Manitoba, where he has successfully practiced law in the City of Winnipeg. At the present time he is the senior barrister at the Manitoba Bar and was in 1912 president of the Bar Association. From 1879 until 1896 he was Manitoba Counsel for the Department of Justice, and in 1880 he was one of the Royal Commissioners to investigate and report on the administration of justice in the North-West Territories. He has been counsel for the Government of Manitoba since 1900, so that his remarks on the boundary question in the House were regarded as an expression of the views of that Government. Sir James, who was appointed Q.C. in 1884, long before most of the present members of the Manitoba Bar had been admitted to practice, was solicited in Winnipeg of the Canadian Pacific Railway, from the organization of the company until he withdrew to contest the Brandon constituency at the last general elections.

The new knight is a man of wide general knowledge, and it is not surprising to hear that he takes a great interest in educational matters, being honorary bursar and a member of the council of Manitoba University, and a director of the Manitoba Agricultural College. Sir James is popularly known among his numerous friends as "Jam," by reason of the initials of his names. His oratory is of the perfervid Bennet type. Some have called him a "wind-jammer."

Joe—"What is the easiest way to drive a nail without smashing my finger?" Josephine—"Hold the hammer in both hands."

EUROPES ARMAMENT GROWS

GREAT BRITAIN MUST KEEP PACE OR SUFFER.

A Writer Paints Out the Martial Preparation of Other Powers.

The military correspondent of the London Times, examining the growth of Europe as an armed camp, draws the deduction that England must join France, Germany, Russia and the lesser European states in the increase of her army and navy, or else lose her position as one of the leading powers of the world.

He predicts, indeed, that unless England does increase her armed forces she will cease to be considered by France and Russia as a desirable member of the triple entente, and will be left to shift for herself in the game of European diplomacy. His final conclusion is that "the time is at hand when we shall have to call India and the Dominions to our councils to survey the whole field of imperial strategy and to establish a defensive system adequate to the needs of an Oceanic Empire." In his survey of the growth of European armament, he says:

What Germany is Doing.

"We naturally take stock in Germany first because this power is always forward in armament, and on the whole sets the pace which other powers have to live with if they can. There has been no slackening of German preparation for war, but quite the contrary. Now, as always, the aim of Germany is to obtain the largest possible numerical values consistent with quality and to acquire the utmost fighting efficiency at the shortest notice. The personnel of the German navy has been doubled in the last ten years and continues to expand. Three new German ships of Dreadnought type are to be commissioned this year, and by the autumn Germany will have in full commission a great fleet of battleships and battle cruisers of which only a few will not belong to the Dreadnought type. Commerce raiding in war has been much discussed in Germany of late, and the retention of the battle cruiser type is probably not unconnected with this discussion.

Army Increases.

"If we turn to the German army we note that the schemes of 1913 are in course of successful execution. Between July and October last the German administration had to take steps to receive over 60,000 more men and 21,000 more horses than in 1912, and this was no light task. The difficulties were overcome and the new law begins to bear fruit. The army is still short of 3,000 officers, but it is expected that this deficit will be made good in two years. By the spring of 1915, when the second increased annual contingent will be not only incorporated but mobilizable, the German peace establishment will nearly have reached the figure of 870,000 of all ranks, and the law should have received complete application by the end of the same year. The reserves will grow annually until they ultimately number 5,400,000 fully trained men. A large increase in the number of reservists called up for training this year enables ranks to be well filled at any moment of danger.

In France.

As to France, the writer says: "The covering troops on the German frontier are now sufficient to meet any type of attaque brusquee, and the peace strength of the French army as a whole no longer presents that dangerous inferiority to the German figure which formerly caused such serious anxiety. At the same time, France is still much inferior to Germany in peace strength and has considerable forces tied up in North Africa. She is also beaten in the battle of reserves, for the French system will eventually result in 1,200,000 fewer reserves than the German.

"France has done all that is humanly possible to maintain her military position in the world and looks confidently to her allies and friends to support her in preserving the balance of power, not only on land, but at sea. She possesses no very marked superiority over the Austro-Italian navies in the Mediterranean, and the permanent presence of a strong British fleet in this sea is one of the necessities of the time.

Russia's Preparation.

As to Russia—"In view of the fact that color service in Russia is from three to four years, according to arms, the total peace establishment will be raised within that period by about 450,000 men, making a total peace strength of about 1,700,000, or approximately double that of Germany. It appears also to be the intention to recall yearly for training two classes of the reserve for six weeks, and this year the 1907 and 1909 classes will join the colors for the period named.

"Russian figures have to be discounted to some extent on account of the size of the Russian Empire, the comparative poverty of communications and certain difficulties which training encounters owing to climatic and other causes. But even with all due deductions made, the Russian reply to Germany is next door to a mobilization in time of peace."

There are Others.

"The growth of armaments has not been restricted to the leading military states. Austria steadily adds to her effectives on land, and is committed to an ambitious and costly naval programme, which is already paralleled and will probably be surpassed by that of Italy. The Turko-Greek rivalry adds to the number of accountable battleships in the eastern Mediterranean, and there has been one more reform of the Turkish army. The Balkan Stathes are borrowing as much as they can get and are organizing fresh forces—for example, the twelve divisions of Servia—as fast as their state of exhaustion permits.

"Spain has plans for an army of 450,000 men and a field army of 215,000 strong. Sweden is developing her defensive preparations. The Netherlands, hankering after Dreadnoughts, are also busy with their coast defences, and anticipate higher expenditure upon their field army. Finally, Belgium is working up to a field army of 178,000 men. Look where we will armaments are growing and there is no symptoms anywhere of a change."

ASSASSINATION OF RULERS.

The Number Who Have Been Killed In Recent Years.

Following is a list of rulers and Ministers assassinated since 1865:

Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, April 14, 1865:

The Earl of Mayo, Governor-General of India, February 8, 1872.

Abdul Aziz, Sultan of Turkey, June 4, 1876.

Alexander II., Czar of Russia, March 13, 1881.

James A. Garfield, President of the United States, July 2, 1881.

Marie Francois Sadi-Carnot, President of France, June 24, 1894.

Nazr-ed-Din, Shah of Persia, May 1, 1896.

Stanislaus Stambouloff, Premier of Bulgaria, July 23, 1895.

Canovas del Castillo, Prime Minister of Spain, August 8, 1897.

Juan Idiarte Borda, President of Uruguay, August 25, 1897.

Jose Maria Reyna Barrios, President of Guatemala, Feb. 18, 1898.

Empress Elizabeth of Austria, Sept. 10, 1898.

Humbert, King of Italy, July 29, 1900.

William McKinley, President of the United States, Sept. 6, 1901.

Alexander, King of Servia, and Queen Draga, June 11, 1903.

Governor-General Bobrikoff, of Finland, June 16, 1904.

Von Plehve, Russian Minister of the Interior, July 28, 1904.

Carlos, King of Portugal, Feb. 1, 1908.

Prince Ito, of Japan, Oct. 26, 1909.

Yi Wan Yung, Premier of Korea, Dec. 21, 1909.

Ramon Caceres, President of Santo Domingo, Nov. 19, 1911.

Peter Stolypin, Premier of Russia, Sept. 14, 1911.

Jose Canalejas, Prime Minister of Spain, Nov. 12, 1912.

Francis I. Madero, President of Mexico, Feb. 23, 1913.

Jose Pino Suarez, Vice-President of Mexico, Feb. 23, 1913.

George I., King of Greece, March 18, 1913.

Mahmoud Shevket Pasha, Grand Vizier of Turkey, June 11, 1913.

Franz Ferdinand, Crown Prince of Austria, June 28, 1914.

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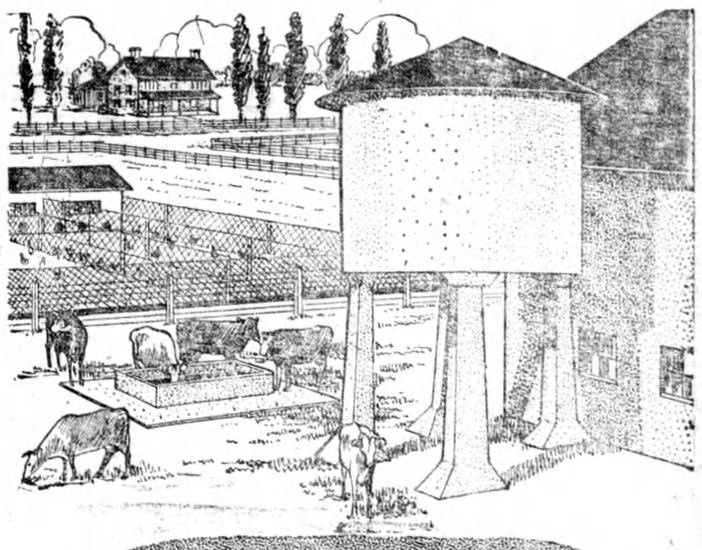

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