The Wedding Eve;

Or, Married to a Fairy.

CHAPTER XXIV.—(Continued).

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

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

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

All the explanation she gave, when I caught her up in my arms, and implored her to tell me what troubled her, was that she "felt dull without me," and very soon she was all smiles and gaiety again, enjoying a shopping excursion, a restaurant dinner, and a visit to the opera.

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

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

That view of the case had not occurred to me, and, vexed as I was by his words, I saw there might be something in them.

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

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

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

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

The visitor was Lady Margaret Lorimer.

CHAPTER XXV.

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

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

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

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

"She broke off our engagement—"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

She had not altered much in six months' time, and yet to me she seemed changed from the Madge I used to know. Her hair was a darker shade than it had been a fashionable nut-brown tint, which went admirably with her bright skin and the fawn-colored velvet gown she was wearing. Three things struck me about her—for one, that she looked more than her age, nearer thirty than five and twenty; for another, that every line of her face was full of meaning, of thought, and of feeling; and for a third, that there was a distinction about her whole bearing to which I had formerly been too well accustomed to specially remark it.

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

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

"Is that true?"

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

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

Madge hesitated.

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

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

"Papa is really ill," she declared, "but there is nothing in the world the matter with mama but diamonds on the brain. The young Duchess of Axminster cut her out completely at the state concert in Berlin last month, and poor mama has been ill with temper ever since. To soothe her, I have to swear the duchess' diamonds were paste. But abusing her doctors does her so much good that it wouldn't be fair to tell her nothing is the matter with her.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And we both left Madge in the wrong.

The interview begun thus inauspiciously was a constrained one on all sides. Lilith was clearly "on her best behavior," spoke in monosyllables with rather an affected intonation, and seemed to have no opinions on any subject. Only once did she break into her natural vivacity, and that was when the talk turned to theatres and to the merits of a certain dancer whom she and I had seen in Paris.

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

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

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

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

And Lilith, with a vivid blush, denied it.

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

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

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

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

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

"His admisation is an insult!" she said. "If you have any regard for me, any consideration for the honor of your family, you will drop the man altogether."

"Do you mean that he has insulted you?" I asked, astonished at her vehemence.

She was silent for a moment. Then she said:

"Yes. He has insulted me. And as I regard you now as a brother, for my sake you must never meet him. Good-by!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lilith was so beautiful in her brave array, so happy in spending money, and so fascinating in her wheedling for more, that I could refuse her nothing. Indeed, to refuse her checks for her pretty extravagances brought on, as I soon discovered, fits, not of nagging or sulkiness, but of a silent despair very pitiful to behold. I could not bear to see my marsh fairy creep away to her room, tears rolling down her lovely face, to lock herself in and weep in solitude.

And money was easily earned, even if it entailed what I least liked, the necessity for constant flying visits to the seacoast, while Lilith, who professed herself tired of the sea, remained in London.

Not only the spur of making a fortune for Lilith's slender fingers to squander urged me to put forth my best, but a certain loneliness of soul, which grew upon me as the days and weeks of our married life slipped by, and I still felt no nearer nor dearer to my wife, made me turn to my art as a solace. Thus I threw myself heart and soul into my work, seeking in it something I could not find in life; and in the second year of our marriage I completed the only picture of mine in which the sea is made subordinate to the human figure.

Matthew Arnold's "Forsaken Merman" inspired me, and my picture was called "The Forsaken Merman's Wife." Only Madge, I think, knew what I meant by the work, and in consequence I could not bear to see her looking at it.

(To be continued.)

PRESENTED AT COURT.

Some Interesting Facts on Society's Most Envied Ordeal.

One of the greatest events — and incidentally one of the greatest ambitions—of a Society girl or woman is that of presentation to the reigning monarch.

Girls are presented to their Majesties when either they "come out," or on their marriage, or on the occasion of an honor being accorded their husband or family.

Every woman wishing to be presented goes to Court under the wing, as it were, of a lady who has already been presented, this latter person being held responsible for the character of the lady she presents. Anyone who has received the Royal favor of presentation is permitted, in her turn, to present another.

These presentations take place at a reception by the King and Queen, called a "Drawing Room." Several of these are held at Buckingham Palace during the season.

It is difficult to say in this cosmopolitan age exactly what social status is necessary before one can claim presentation to the sovereign. The whole arrangements are under the supervision of the Lord Chamberlain. This autocrat, in his office at St. James's, gives full particulars to anyone desiring presentation, inquiries into their claims and presents them to their Majesties for approval.

Dress and the inevitable curtsey are the two main points with which the person about to be presented has to contend. The wearing of feathers and trains are matters of strict Court etiquette and censorship, and the curtsey makes or mars the ceremony.

Girls untiringly rehearse the whole proceeding, from the time of entering the Royal presence till the exit, under the direction of a celebrated teacher of dancing.

Excitement takes many forms when, fully arrayed in her presentation gown, complete with gorgeous bouquet, the girl or woman about to be presented obtains a glimpse of the dazzling scene and the brilliant assemblage within the Throne Room.

Entering, she walks slowly towards the centre of the room, where the King and Queen are seated upon a raised dais. One of the strictest rules is that no one shall stand during the presentations. The distance between each lady walking towards the throne is so judged that every one is slowly moving all the time.

With her train carefully spread out behind her, and her bouquet in her right hand, the debutante hands her card to the Lord Chamberlain, who stands by the side of the throne, as the lady before her is bowing. The Lord Chamberlain announces her, whereupon she curtseys first to the King and then to the Queen, and gracefully moves on. Retiring backwards has been abolished.

As she nears the exit a page skilfully gathers up the beautiful train and places it over her left arm. A few more steps, and she is out of the Royal presence.—London Answers.

ENRICO CARUSO.

The Great Singer Gargles His Throat with Salt and Water.

Thousands of opera-goers and singers have often wondered how it is that Caruso, the great tenor, is seemingly never affected with throat trouble. This season, for instance, he has sung many more performances than his contract called for, and not once has he disappointed his audience because of cold. Before he returned to Europe recently he was asked how he managed to do it. He gave this explanation:

In the first place I have a normal throat. In the second place I take normal care of it. But that does not mean I never have any trouble with it. I am subject to slight colds in this changing climate. However, they do not impair my singing. There is no reason why they should.

I don't hesitate to say that 90 per cent. of the vocalists who assert they are unable to appear because of colds do not know how to sing. If they did, they could sing over their colds, as the expression goes. When my throat is affected I am able to conceal the fact because I have had years of experience in doing so.

Naturally, as I earn my living by singing, I have to keep my throat in the very best possible condition before I sing. It allays the pangs of hunger for one thing, which is most important, as I eat a very light dinner before a performance. And it also clears the throat. Of course, any acid fruit has more or less the same effect, but I find that an apple is most satisfactory.

In addition to these simple aids I always carry a box of throat lozenges, which I take from time to time. These lozenges, which are made of glycerine, menthol, euthymole, camphor and oil of cinnamon, To this end I gargle it several times daily with a salt solution—plain table salt and warm water. This makes a natural solvent for mucus. I smoke a great deal, and I find this gargle is of great benefit in overcoming the bad effects caused by tobacco. If I did not smoke I

Enrico Caruso.

doubt if I would have to use the solution except on rare occasions.

I frequently eat an apple, too, tend to relieve hoarseness, huskiness, and bronchial congestion. They have a sort of refrigerating effect on the throat, and there is no doubt that they are of great benefit.

No Faddist.

When I awaken in the morning the first thing I do is to try my voice. Invariably it is a trifle husky. After seven or eight hours' sleep, one's circulation is poor and there is considerable mucus in the throat, but a cup of hot water or a cup of coffee relieves that in very short order.

I know that many singers employ very elaborate means to take care of their throats. But they are usually supersensitive, and the means they employ are more valuable for their mental than their physical effect. I need no placebo.

Freezing one's vocal chords with ether and idoform may be done by eccentric prima donnas, but I do not believe in such treatments. If a simple salt solution will not remove all hoarseness, nothing else will do so either without injurious after effects.

What is frequently called throat trouble by singers is simply nervousness, and no amount of spraying with preparations can aid that. To remain in one's room all day before a performance, to speak only in whispers, and to have a throat specialist always in attendance are merely the fads of high-strung prima donnas and such male singers as are akin to them. A normal man or woman has only to take normal care of his or her throat to have it always in good condition.

The shoe salesman should look out for slippery customers.

"I want a pair of button shoes for my wife." "This way sir. What kind do you want sir?" "Doesn't matter, just so they don't button in the back."

"I don't want to brag about myself. I've done many foolish things in my time, but I've been wise in one way." "What's that?" "I never had the idea that I could paper a bedroom myself."

On the Farm

Good Beef Cattle.

The block is the supreme and final test of the beef animal that will deliver the highest percentage of good cuts, and show refinement in parts that are not edible, in order to reduce waste. Fineness of bone, lack of paunchiness and a small head are thus desired by the butcher, but the steer with light bone, small paunch and a frail head would be unable to go through the feeding period and make economical gains, writes Mr. J. L. Tormey.

Even though the strong, vigorous, capacious feeder may not turn out at the finish into the exact ideal of the butcher, he is the one that puts on the largest and steadiest gains, endures heavy feeding for the longest time, finally finishes out with the greatest weight, and yields the highest percentage of prime beef.

In selecting feeders, there is perhaps no point more important than the back. A wide, straight, strong back, with a well sprung rib, is essential. The girth of the steer should be large—that is, the distance around the body back of the shoulder should be as large as possible. This means more room for vital organs and insures a better constitution than is otherwise likely to prevail. Associated also with a large girth is a well sprung rib, making a wide back on which there is room for the deposition of a large quantity of high-priced meat. There is also greater depth of chest and greater digestive capacity with a large girth.

The head is an excellent index to the character of the feeder, because there is a relationship between the different parts of an animal's body. The steer with a wide head has usually a good food capacity for putting a large amount of flesh. Usually the steer with a wide head will grow thick through the body and wide across the back. Width of muzzle is also important because it indicates capacity for food consumption and for good breathing. The neck, although not choice meat, is thick and short on a good steer. The shoulder should be evenly covered, compact and wide at the top. While width of shoulders at the top is a mark of a good feeder, steers with extremely wide shoulders should not be selected for they are usually coarse. The shoulder should blend smoothly with the neck, leaving no crease or definite line where the neck and shoulder meet. The rump should be long, wide and level. A drooping rump is undesirable.

The coupling, that is the distance from the last rib to the hook, or hip point, should be short in accordance with the general compactness desired throughout. The steer should also be wide in this region and well muscled, with no indication of being swaybacked. This is the region of the loin from which cuts are taken.

Select steers with short legs, for short legs increase the amount of offal and increase the killing percentage. Also, short-legged animale do not travel about much. They thus save their energy and use their feed for gain. A strong bone without coarseness is to be desired. Too much refinement is associated with a weak constitution.

Symmetry of outline or balancing of parts is a very important point in selecting steers. By symmetry is meant a general uniformity throughout with no part out of proportion with any other part. Depth of chest should be balanced by depth of twist, and width of shoulders should be accompanied by width throughout.

In addition to the foregoing points, the steer should have a pliable skin of reasonable thickness, covered by a heavy mossy coat of hair. Pliability of skin and mossiness of coat indicate thrift and general well being. Thickness of skin and hair indicates good constitution.

Beef cattle on the market are classed according to the commercial use for which they are adapted. Class designates the use to which an animal is to be put. Grade indicates the quality or degree of fitness of the animal in that class. The same grades, prime, choice, good medium, fair, common and poor or inferior, run down through the classes and the best to the poorest in the order above named.

The highest percentage of good cuts and the least waste in killing are the qualities desired in beef steers. In selecting feeders, however, a strong frame with plenty of room for vital organs, must be chosen, for the steer that would kill with least waste might not be strong enough to put on the greatest amount of flesh economically. A wide, strong back, great heart girth and smooth covering of bones are essentials in a good feeder. The head is an excellent index of the power of a steer to make economical gains. A side view of the body from hocks and knees to back bone should show a well filled rectangle. The general form should be compact and deep and broad. Short legged animals are desirable. Good balance or proportion are usually bought at the big markets or from local buyers. High priced land cannot be profitably used to raise steers. When to buy, depends largely on the buyer's equipment, the amount and time he intends to feed, and on the condition of the steers.

It costs more per pound to fatten a steer than the extra flesh will sell for consequently the selling price for the whole carcass must be enough greater per pound to pay the loss on the added flesh and make a profit. The difference between the cost price per hundred pounds of the feeder and the selling price per hundred pounds of the same steer when fat, is called the feeding margin. There must always be a sufficient margin to break even. A greater margin means a profit. The necessary margin depends on the cost of feeds, the ability of the steer to make gains, the initial cost and weight, distance from market, season of year, the length of the feeding season.

Cattle are usually fed 60 to 90 days as a longer period often does not pay. It is the best to select that grade of feeders which seems at the time of buying, to offer the widest margin, or the quickest gains in flesh on a narrower margin. It may sometimes be better to fatten thin stockers up to the butcher class than selected feeders up to prime beef. Selling to a local buyer is usually the best policy unless one has two or more carloads to market. However, shipping to the market has advantages as well as risks. The best time to market is when prices are going up, for there is a keener demand.

Meaning of "Half-Mast."

Ever since flags were used in war, says the Yorkshire "Post," it has been the custom to have the emblem of the superior or conquering nation above that of the inferior or vanquished. When an army found itself hopelessly beaten, it hauled its flag down far enough for the flag of the victors to be placed above it on the same pole. That was a token not only of submission, but of respect. In those days, when a famous soldier died, flags were lowered out of respect to his memory. The custom long ago passed into common use. The flag flying at half-mast is a sign that one is dead who was worthy of universal respect. The space left above the flag is for the flag of the great conqueror of all—the angel of death.

Damaged Victor.

"Where's your little brother?"

"He hurt himself."

"How?"

"We were seeing who could lean out of the window the farthest and he won."