Between Cousins;

OR, A DECLARATION OF WAR.

CHAPTER II.—(Cont'd.)

The child over whose cradle poor Ella had shed such bitter tears on a certain agitated evening long past, has developed into a big, well-built, but alas! carrot-haired young woman, with her mother's light-blue eyes, only of a smaller and sharper make, and with a shower of those pale-brown freckles almost inseparable from the wrong shade of red hair. Throughout the three children the red M'Donnell strain had triumphed over Ella's flaxen locks, though with widely different results. When a year after Julia's birth Ella had presented her husband with the son he had coveted, the unmistakable tint of the soft down covering the tiny skull had awakened in him a secret hope, for might not the affinity in complexion denote a similarity of tastes? Another vain dream! Its vanity more surely proved with every year that the boy, whom Ella, in defiance of all associations, had insisted on christening Albert, grew up. Even the physical likeness between father and son served but to emphasise the moral differences. The small, narrow head was there, with its close-grown crop of ruddy gold, but yet in its very poise, and in the nervous rapidity of its movements, was obviously the head of another sort of man. That spareness of feature which in the father suggested the ascetic, made for businesslike keenness in the son. The brown eyes were there too, but with all the difference that lies between the gaze of the mystic and that of the positivist. A certain restlessness of his thin lips recalled his mother, but was more likely a reflection of that modern disquiet which stands for what used formerly to be healthy activity. For this descendant of generations of quarrymen had been caught by the spirit of the age, or by as much of it as he had been able to assimilate during the years of study, which miracles of economy on the part of the family at large had rendered possible. The result was clearly visible upon this face of twenty-three, whose keen brown eyes and clean-shaven set of jaw spoke far more of twentieth century precocity than of that joie de vivre which used to be the privilege of his years.

As now, clad in a black tail-coat, of whose defects of quality he was bitterly aware, he sat half-turned upon his chair, one elbow resting on the back, and his eyes fixed critically upon the figure of the girl in the white dress, his expression testified to his powers of mental concentration upon whatever might be the question of the moment. Just now it was the question whether Fenella should wear white or colored flowers to-night—a point which to an outsider might appear irrelevant, but which neither he nor Julia were inclined to treat carelessly. As to Fenella's own views on the subject, they appeared to be of minor importance. Moderately patient and slightly bored, she stood there upon the footstool which she had obediently mounted, in order to give Julia a better command of her flounced skirt, her bare, white arms hanging down before her, her hands lightly clasped.

"Pink, of course, is impossible," argued Julia, still upon her knees. "That unfortunate color of hair leaves one so very small a range. But what do you say to this bunch of forget-me-nots, Albert? I think the effect is rather good;" and she held a tuft or artificial flowers against the white sister's dress.

Albert put back his head, shading his eyes with his hands, and gazing hard at the forget-me-nots.

"I'm sure they will do very well," remarked Fenella, beginning to fidget upon her footstool.

"No; they won't do," decided Albert, in a tone which admitted of no contradiction. "Away with them! White—unbroken white—that's the thing for our money. The M'Donnell hair won't be hidden, and that's a fact, so let's make a virtue of necessity, and brazen it out. It claims to be the only color in the picture, and spits at every rival. Nothing for it but to let it have its own way."

"The white hawthorn, then. Janet, hand me that trail. Do keep quiet for a few minutes longer, child! You know how terribly important it is that you should look your best to-night."

"But there's a pin running into my shoulder, Julia! and that ribbon round my neck is choking me."

"Take it off altogether!" directed Albert, with the same sharp decision as before. "Ribbon necklaces are all very well for old women with wrinkled throats; but you've no particular reason for hiding your throat that I know of. Yes: that's much better."

"You will soon learn to overlook such trifles as pins," argued Julia, in the soothing tone of one comforting a child. "With the dance music in your ears, I don't believe you'll even feel them. One has to suffer, in order to be beautiful, you know; and I'm sure I wouldn't mind a whole paper of pins running into me if that would buy me your looks." Julia laughed good-naturedly as magnanimously she added: "But I'll try and find this particular pin, if you like. There!" she announced, a moment later. "That's all I can do. Like to have a look at yourself? Janet, don't stand gaping there, but get away from before the mirror."

With a breath of relief Fenella stepped cautiously to the ground. Mounted upon the footstool she had appeared over-tall, but revealed herself now as of merely medium height. Julia, having scrambled to her feet, overtowered her by well-night half a head.

There had been a trifle of ill-humor, mixed of fatigue and impatience, upon Fenella's face as she accepted her deliverance, but in the moment that she stepped before the mirror every cloud vanished. The picture reflected there was indeed calculated to stimulate the spirits even of people who were not standing upon the threshold of their first ball-room.

Albert had been right. The unbroken white was the thing. What need of any artificial color, beside the glorious depth, the triumphant warmth of these heavily-wound tresses, beneath whose weight the small head might have been in danger of drooping had it not borne itself so straight and fearlessly, with just the slightest tilt beakwards, dictated by the exigencies of balance? The face itself was small and exquisite, with all those delicious roundnesses of chin and cheek and throat which are never carried very far out of childhood, and with dark-brown eyes under delicately level brows supplying just the point of contrast necessary to the wonderful copper tints of her hair. When a red-haired woman's complexion is good at all—that is, when it has escaped its besetting danger of freckles—then it is usually almost perfect; and Fenella had not only escaped that danger, but in the matter of sunburn and frost-bite, and all the other perils to the female skin, had been watched over with a solicitude as assiduous as any that ever fluttered around a professional beauty preparing for a London carreer. The average British maiden decolletee is apt to startle by the hard-and-fast line on throat and wrist, representing the limit of exposure; but between Fenella's face and her spotless shoulders no note of disharmony could have been discovered.

"I think she will do, won't she?" asked Julia, looking exultingly towards her brother, who had risen from his chair, and with hands behind his back, was taking final stock of the result of many days' labor and reflection

"I think she will," he said briefly, but significantly, while Janet groaned louder than ever in the inarticulate effort of expressing her feelings.

Fennella herself was the last to speak. She was still gazing into her own eyes in dumb astonishment. It was her hair which astonished her most. Personally, she had always hated its color, because of the kinship it proclaimed to the populace around. Until to-day she had regarded it as the blot upon her beauty—for she knew that she was beautiful,—now suddenly it occurred to her that instead of being the blot it might possibly prove to be the crown.

All at once she clapped her hands together, curtseying to herself in the glass.

"Of course I'll do. I hadn't an idea I'd look like that! Had you, Julia? Yes, I suppose you had, or you wouldn't have taken so much trouble. Poor dear! and you haven't got your own dress on yet, and the machine will be here in a moment. Oh, please, please be quick!"

"Oh, I!" laughed Julia contentedly. "What do I matter? I'll be dressed in a flash, somehow or other."

"You know Mrs. Perkins said that they would begin sharp at nine, and it would be too dreadful to miss the first dance. Oh, Julia, do hurry up! I will help you."

"And crush your flounces and disarrange your flowers in the process? No, thank you. I've had work enough with them already. Janet will come upstairs with me, and meanwhile you will sit here—no, you had better stand. Bertie, will you see that she doesn't do anything foolish until I'm down again? Come along, Janet! You can look at yourself in the glass meanwhile," remarked Julia, from the door, by way of consolation.

Submissively Fenella remained standing upon the spot Julia had pointed to, but she no longer saw her own reflection. Visions of the coming event had risen between her and her bodily image; for a dance within an available distance was an event there. What a splendid idea that had been of Mrs. Perkins, the wife of the quarry doctor employed by the company, to celebrate her only daughter's coming out in this fashion! Miss Perkins, being five feet high, with the gait of a duck well prepared for the market, could not easily look to more disadvantage than she would in a ball-room; but this circumstance could not be expected to weigh upon the minds of irresponsible guests. She furnished the pretext, and that was enough. Viewed in this light, Fenella was even prepared to admire her.

Presently, in the mirror, Fenella met the eyes of her brother fixed upon her earnestly and a little severely.

"Fenella," he said, in the same moment.

"Yes, Bertie?"

"You remember all that Julia and I told you yesterday?"

"About not giving too many dances to one person?"

"About not giving them to the wrong persons. To the right ones you may give as many as you like."

"I'm afraid I'll be so excited that I'll mix up the right ones and the wrong ones."

"I hope not. You can't have already forgotten all the directions I gave you. And mind that even if Mr. Berrell should not ask you at once, you must keep at least two dances, in case he asks you later."

"But if he doesn't ask me at all?"

"That could only be through your own fault. He can't help noticing you, since he isn't blind; and after that—well, I don't know how women manage these things, but if you play your cards at all well, he is bound to ask you."

"I'll do what I can," said Fenella, a little doubtfully. "But—but somebody was saying the other day that he is very ugly."

"Ugly? Not a bit of it! He's a very striking looking man; and besides, he's the only eligible person for miles around. His income must be at least eight hundred; and he'll mount higher, for he has no want of push. Poor father never thinks of these things, of course; but I should not be doing my duty as your brother if I did not call your attention to what may be a great opportunity. You see, I cannot forget what I promised mother at the end. From a practical point of view, she knew quite well that you were being virtually left fatherless as well as motherless. That's why I feel more as though I were talking to my daughter than to my sister," smiled the youthful monitor. "Of course, nobody thinks of forcing your inclinations," he added in a tone of general concession. "All I ask of you is that you should not set your mind against the idea. It's a great chance this new man being a bachelor, and on the look-out for a wife, as they say. You've got nothing but your face, remember; and the chances of its being seen are not many, in this wilderness."

"Oh, no; I'm not setting my mind against it," agreed Fenella, almost readily.

As the beauty of the family, she knew what was expected of her. Indeed, she had heard of little else almost since she had attained the age of reason.

In the next instant excitement pure and simple had retaken possession of her shining eyes and smiling lips, as she stood still, listening.

"Surely that's the machine? Isn't that Janet coming to tell us?"

But at the same moment the door opened to admit not Janet, but a long, black figure, somewhat stooping in the shoulders, and with scanty silver hair framing a high and narrow forehead. The neck appeared to have lengthened, whereas it had only shrunk, and the small face to have grown yet smaller, as is the manner of some thin faces, in contradistinction to those countenances to whom age invariably brings expansion. But the brown eyes were not changed; they gazed out as mild and as childlike from beneath the grey wisps as they had ever done from under the luxuriant shadow of the ruddy-golden locks; yet through their very mildness there pierced at this moment a deep agitation.

"Oh, Father," exclaimed Fenella, turning quickly towards him. "You have just come in time to see my dress. You know you promised to look at it, but I do believe you had forgotten!"

With a startled sort of surprise, and yet with evident blankness, John gazed at the dazzling vision.

"I am afraid I had forgotten," he admitted, in a tone which verged on apology. "I came in only to say—"

"Has anything happened, father?" asked Fenella, standing still to gaze alarmed at his altered face.

"Yes; something has happened. There has been a bad accident at the quarries—a premature explosion, it seems. Adam is half-killed, they say, and Duncan too is hurt. I must be off to them at once. I came in to tell Julia that I shall require nothing more to-night."

"Oh!" said Fenella, genuinely startled, and yet with the thought crossing her mind that surely—oh, surely, this was not going to interfere with the evening's programme!

"Poor fellows! This is bad luck, certainly," remarked Albert, with a subtle stiffening of tone; "that is to say, if it is true. You know how thick the color is laid on whenever anything happens in the quarries. Really, father, you shouldn't take on so, until you know how matters stand."

"What's he not to take on about?" inquired Julia's high voice, as she appeared behind her father, her massive shoulders and arms emerging triumphantly from a blue tulle gown.

The minister hastily explained.

(To be continued.)

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Preserving Cherries.

Cherries are ripening and may be canned, preserved, made into jams, jellies or spiced. To can cherries wash the fruit thoroughly, then drain well. Sort the fruit over carefully, removing all blemishes and all soft cherries. Remove the stems and stones. Pack them into sterilized jars and cover with boiling water or a syrup made of sugar and water, using the formula: One cupful sugar, two and one-half cupfuls water. Place in a sauce pan and bring to a boil. Cook for five minutes. Place the rubbers and lids in position, partially fasten them, then place the jars in a hot water bath and process for thirty minutes after the boiling starts. Now remove, fasten the tops securely, invert to test for leaks, then label and store in a cool place.

Preserved Cherries.—Stem and stone the cherries. Weigh after stoning, allowing one-half pound of sugar to each pound of cherries. To each pound of sugar allow one-half cupful of water. Place in a saucepan and stir until well dissolved. Bring to a boil and cook for five minutes, then add two pounds of prepared cherries. Cook after the boiling point is reached for twelve minutes, then fill into glass jars. Place the rubber and top in position and partially tighten; now place the jars in a hot water bath and process for ten minutes after the boiling strats.

Cherry Jam.—Three-quarters pound sugar, one pound stemmed and stoned cherries. Place in a saucepan and cook until thick. Fill into jelly glasses; allow the jam to cool, and then cover the gasses with parowax. Seal and store in the usual manner for jellies.

Cherry Jelly.—Cherries do not make good jelly, owing to the absence of pectin. This pectin may be added in form of apples. Peel one large lemon very thin, discarding the peel. Cut peeled. lemon in small pieces. Cut a sufficient number of apples in small pieces to measure three cupfuls, then add: Three pounds cherries, one quart water. Place in a saucepan and cook until soft enough to mash. strain in the usual manner for jellies and measure the juice, allowing an equal measure of sugar. Return the juice to the preserving kette and boil ten minutes. Then add the sugar. Cook until it jellies when tried on a cold saucer, usually about eight or nine minutes. If a thermometer is used, cook until 221 degrees Fahrenheit is reached.

How to Preserve Eggs.

Eggs must be fresh and perfectly infertile; the shells must be clean and free from cracks. A single cracked egg may cause the whole batch to spoil. Get water glass solution from the drug store, dilute with nine parts of cool boiled water and place eggs in small crocks containing the water glass. The solution should cover the eggs to a depth of two inches above the topmost layer of eggs. Cover the crock and place in a cool place where it will not have to be moved about. Repace the water which evaporates with cool boiled water occasionally.

Limewater may be used in place of water glass. Make the solution with 2½ pounds of unslaked lime in five gallons of cool boiled water and use the clear liquid after the lime settles. Containers for eggs must be clean and should be scalded with hot water after washing.

Eggs preserved in water glass or limewater should be rinsed in clean, cold water and used immediately after taking them from the solution. They can be used for soft boiling up to November, frying until December, and after that until March for omelettes, scrambled and in cooking.

The Useful Tomato.

Outside of such staples as potatoes and beans there is probably no vegetable that is more prized and more generally used all the year around in one form or another than tomatoes.

Tomatoes grow easily, but they have an enemy that you must be on the watch for—a large green worm so nearly the color of the plant he feeds upon that it is hard to detect it in spite of its size. This must be knocked off and destroyed or sprayed with arsenate of lead.

Tomatoes can be used in more ways than any other vegetable. For canning one must choose perfect fruit in good condition. Dip them in hot water for a few minutes and then remove the skins, cut them up and place in an almuinum or procelain lined kettle and add a level teaspoonful of salt for each quart. Bring slowly to a boil, stirring frequently, and boil for at least half an hour.

If you are using the screw top type, immerse the jars, tops and rubbers in boiling water. Remove the jars one at a time, place a rubber around the neck and fill with the boiling hot tomatoes. Take the top of the jar from the boiling water, being careful not to touch the inside with the fingers for fear of introducing spores into the jar, and screw it on tightly. Invert the jar and let it stand in this position until cold. Have everything sterile that is put into the jar. When using a spoon, fork or cup with the tomatoes first immerse it in boiling water.

Another method of canning tomatoes is to take off the skins and drop the tomatoes, as nearly whole as possible into wide-mouth jars. Pack them in until the jar is full and add one level teaspoonful of salt to each quart. Put on the rubber and top and fix the spring to leave the top loose and allow the steam to escape during the boiling.

In the vast majority of cases this one sterilization is all the treatment that is necessary, but it is not always safe to rely on it.

As relishes and flavorings there are numerous ways in which tomatoes may be used. This year it is not recommended that the green tomatoes be used for chow-chow and other pickle combinations, as it is better to let everything mature and ripen so that the supply will go further to meet the great demand.

N. B.—A course in Domestic Science, complete in twenty-five lessons, will commence next week. If you clip out the lessons as they appear and paste in a scrap-book you will have the complete series for future reference.

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