

A Foolish Young Man;

Or, the Belle of the Season.

CHAPTER XVI.—(Continued.)

"There is something in the water," she said. "Something alive."

"It's a yes. It's a dog," he said. "That's what you said to the steamer."

But George, the poor little chap looks like distress," seems as if he were clearly done.

"Can you steer?" he asked, chirrily.

"Why?"

"Because I'm going for him, and it will help me to get even one night for him."

"No, I can't do that," he said.

"Why should you trouble? It's a long way off. It will be drowned before you can get to it. Go for him anyway," he said, cheerfully, and tried to row hard.

In a distance he saw a boat, and the dog was farther off than they thought.

But Stafford put his back into it, and as he had done in his life, he pulled.

George pulled back and watched him with interest, and something even stronger than interest, in her masked eyes. He turned around, and the muscles on his arms were standing out under the strain; his lips were set tightly, and there was his man's town of determination.

"It's gone down! It's no use," she said. "You may as well stop and rest."

"No! He has come up again!" he exclaimed.

"It was noticeable that he called the dog 'he'—he spoke of it as if it were a man."

"We shall have him in time. Keep the boat straight!"

The words were uttered in a tone of command, which she had done; and she set her mind upon the task as she had never before set it upon anything. Reaching out her hand, she took hold of the long steady "stick" of the practised carman, Stafford sent the boat along like an arrow, and, precisely, it drove it to the shore. As they reached the head leading of the entrance path, Stafford stopped and held out his hand, calling for the oars.

"Take it, please. It is freedom for you, and I'd rather not keep it."

"I know. All right, if you'd rather. Come here, little man! What's your name?"

"Stephens. Stephen. I am a boy."

"Call him Tiny." She snatched enough significance in her slow, fingered response.

"It's not a dog, but a boy," she said.

"It's not a dog, but a boy," he said, smiling.

"I don't know how he did, but, absolutely, he's a dog, but a boy," she said.

The little girl gave a little gasping cry like a child, and clasped its eyes shut into a smile.

"It's not a dog, but a boy," he said.

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