

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 saw drop over the steamer. By George! the poor little chap looks in distress; seems he was nearly done. Can you steer?" he asked, sharply.

"Oh, yes," she replied, languidly. "Why?"

"Because I'm going for him, and it will help me if you can steer straight for him. He looks nearly played out."

"Why should you trouble—it's a long way off; it will be drowned before you can get to it," she said.

"I'll have to go for him anyway," he said, cheerfully, and he began to row hard.

Distance is deceptive on a lake, and the dog was farther off than they thought; but Stafford put his back into it as hard as he had done in his racing days, and Maude Falconer leaned back and watched him with interest, and something even stronger than interest, in her masked eyes. He had turned up the sleeves of his flannel shirt, and the muscles on his arms were standing out under the strain, his lips were set tightly, and there was the man's frown of determination on his brow.

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

He looked over his shoulder.

"No! He has come up again!" he exclaimed: it was noticeable that he called the dog "he," while she spoke of it as "it." "We shall get him in time. Keep the boat straight!"

The words were uttered in a tone of command, and they moved her as the touch of his hand had done; and she set her mind upon the task as she had never before set it upon anything. Reaching well forward, pulling with the long, steady stroke of the practised oarsman, Stafford sent the boat along like an arrow, and presently he drove it up to the spot where the dog strove in its death struggle. It was a tiny, black-and-tan terrier, and Stafford, as he looked over his shoulder, saw the great eyes turned to him with a piteous entreaty that made his heart ache.

"Turn the boat—quick!" he cried; and as the skiff slid alongside the dog, he swooped it up.

The mite gave a little gasping cry like a child, and closing its eyes sank into Stafford's arms with a shudder.

"Is it dead?" asked Maude Falconer, looking not at the dog but at Stafford.

"No, it's not," she said, in a low voice, "Oh, give me another song," he replied.

"There is nobody about."

"She opened her lips, then checked herself.

"No, I can't sing again," she said, in a low voice.

"Oh, all right. It isn't good for you to sing too much in the open air. I'll wait till this evening, if you'll be good enough to sing for us then."

They landed and walked up to the house. As they reached the bend leading to the entrance path, she stopped and held out the dog, which had been staring at Stafford and whining at intervals.

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

"Really!" he said, and she saw his face brighten suddenly. "All right, if you'd rather. Come here, little man! What's your name, I wonder? What shall we call him while we've got him home?"

"Call him 'Tiny'," he said, shrugging his shoulders.

"Tiny," it is! he assented, brightly.

"He'll answer to it in a day or two, you'll see. I hope you haven't quite spoiled your dress, Miss Falconer, and won't regret your row!"

She looked at her dress, but there was a sudden significance in her slow, lingering response.

"I—don't—know!"

As she went up the stairs she looked over the rail and saw Stafford's tall figure striding down the hall. He was softly pulling the terrier's ears and talking to it in the language dogs understand and love; and when she sank into a chair in her room, his face with its manly tenderness was still before her, his deep musical voice, with its note of protection and escort, still rang in her ears. She sat quite motionless for a minute or two, then she rose and went to the glass and looked at herself; a long, intent look.

"Yes, I am beautiful," she murmured, not with the self-satisfaction of vanity, but with a calculating note in her voice. "Am I—am I beautiful enough?"

Then she swung away from the glass with the motion which reminded Howard of a tigress, and, setting her teeth hard, laughed with self-scorn; but with some thing, also, of fear in the laugh.

"I am a fool!" she muttered. "It can't be true. So soon! So suddenly! Oh, I can't be such a fool!"

Maude Falconer looked at him.

"Give it to me," she said. "Men have no lap. He'll be more comfortable with me."

"But he's wet still," he said. "He'll spoil that pretty dress of yours."

"My pretty dress was made to be spoiled," she said. "Give it to me, please, and get your tea."

"Do you mean it?" he asked, with a surprise which made her flush with resentment, and something like shame.

For reply, she bent forward, took the dog from him and tried to settle it in her lap; but the mite looked piteously at Stafford and whined, its big eyes imploring him to let it come back. But Stafford stroked it and bade it sit still, and presently it curled itself up.

"It has gone to sleep," said Maude. "It has soon-forgotten its trouble."

"It's a way dogs have," said Stafford. "May I smoke? George! what a lovely afternoon!"

She glanced at him as he leant back in his chair, his long legs stretched and crossed before him.

"You look happy," she said, with a faint smile.

"Oh, I am," he said, with a sudden flush and a start; for now the dog was off his mind, it had instantly swung back to Ida.

"It's the reward of a generous action," she said, and again the mocking note was absent from her voice.

Stafford laughed.

"That's putting it rather high," he said. They sat in silence, Stafford thinking of Ida, Maude looking down at the sleeping dog, and thinking that only a few minutes ago it had been lying in the bosom of the man who sat beside her: the man whom she had backed herself to fool; but for whom a strange sensation of admiration—and was it a subtle fear?—was stirring within her.

"By George! we must be going!" he said, suddenly.

When they got to the boat he proposed to roll the terrier in his coat, but Maude shook her head.

"I'll nurse it going home," she said.

"You will? That's very good of you!" he said quite gratefully. "He's a lucky little beggar!" he remarked, after awhile, as he looked at the black little morsel curled up on the pretty dress.

"Supposing he isn't claimed, would you care to have him, Miss Falconer?"

She looked at the dog.

"Thank you," she said. "But what shall I give you in return. It's unlucky to give an animal without some consideration."

"Oh, give me another song," he replied.

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CHAPTER XVII.

If everybody was not enjoying himself at the Villa it certainly was not the fault of the host. Sir Stephen Orme, Howard, as he drew his chair up beside Stafford, when the ladies had left the room after dinner, and the gentlemen had begun to glance longingly at the rare Chateau claret and the Windermere port, made a remark to this effect:

"Upon my word, Staff, it is the most brilliant house-party which I have ever joined; and as to your father in his character of host—well, words fail to express my admiration."

Stafford glanced at his father at the head of the table and nodded. Sir Stephen had been the life and soul and spring of the dinner; talking fashionable gossip to Lady Fitzharding on one side of him, and a giddy girl of twenty on the other; exchanging badinage with "Bertie" and telling deeply interesting stories to the men; and he was now dragging reluctant laughter from the grim Baron Wirsch and the almost grimmer Griffenberg, as he saw with one eye that the wine was being overlooked or the other that no one was being overlooked.

A most marvellous man! Nearly all the morning he was closeted with the financiers; in the afternoon he went for a ride with Lady Clansford; he was in attendance at the solemn function of afternoon tea; he played croquet—and played it well—at half-past five; at six I saw him walking round the grounds with the Fitzhardes and the Fitzhardes, and now he is laughing and talking with one eye that the wine was being overlooked or the other that no one was being overlooked.

"And his friend has spent the day in a deck-chair on the terrace," retorted Stafford.

"At any rate, I have been out of my chief," said Stafford. "Then he remembered his wager with Maude Falconer, and added, rather remorsefully: "At least I hope so. By the way, don't you echo my expression of opinion that Miss Falconer

is the most beautiful woman here—or else where?"

Stafford woke from the reverie into which he nearly always dropped when Howard was talking, and nodded indifferently.

"Oh, yes; she is lovely, of course."

"How good of you, how kind and gracious!" retorted Howard, ironically. "So my prince deigns to approve of her? And you also condescend to admit that she is—er—rather clever?" said Stafford. "I've seen so little of her. She seems to me rather blase and cold."

Howard nodded.

"Yes, but the worst of it is, you can't count upon that kind of girl; they are apt to warm up sometimes, and quite unexpectedly; and when they do they—well, they boil like a geyser or a volcano. And then—well, then it is wise to get out of reach. I once knew a woman who was considered to be as cold as charity—or a rich relation—but who caught fire one day and burnt up the man who ignited her. Of course this is my delicate way of saying: 'Beware, oh, my prince!'"

Stafford smiled. Miss Falconer's nature was a matter of profound indifference to him: There was only one woman on whom he could bestow a thought, and he was thinking of her now, wondering when he should see her, whether he might dare to tell her of his love again, to ask her for her answer.

Once or twice his father looked across at him, and nodded and smiled as if he loved to see him, and wanted to speak to him; and Stafford smiled and nodded back, as if he understood. When the men rose to go to the drawing-room, Sir Stephen caught him up at the door, and laid a hand upon his arm.

"Happy, dear boy?" he asked in a low voice, full of affection. "I've seen scarcely anything of you. No, no, I'm not complaining! It was understood that you were to have a free hand—but but I've missed you! Never mind; this crowd will have gone presently, and then—ah, then will have a jolly time to ourselves! Things are going well," he added, with a significant smile, as he glanced at Wirsch and Griffenberg, who, well fed and comfortable, were in front of them.

"I'm glad, sir," said Stafford.

Sir Stephen smiled, but checked a sigh and a shrug of the shoulders.

"Yes, my little schemes are flourishing; but—he looked at the financiers again—"they are rather a hard team to drive!"

As Stafford entered the drawing-room, he heard Lady Clansford inquiring for Miss Falconer.

"We want her to sing, Mr. Orme, and I cannot find her."

Stafford went out by one of the windows, and saw Maude Falconer pacing up and down at the end of the terrace. She was superbly dressed, and as he looked at her, her involuntarily admired the grace of her movements. Mr. Falconer was walking with bent head and hands behind his back; but now and again he looked at her sideways with his sharp eyes. Stafford did not like to interrupt them, and withdrew to the other end of the terrace with a cigarette, to wait till they joined him.

"Young Orme has come out to look for you," said Mr. Falconer, without turning his head.

"I know," she said, though she also had not turned. They wanted to sing, I will go in directly. You have not answered my question, father. Is Sir Stephen very rich, or is all this only sham? I have heard you say so often that display very often only covers poverty."

Falconer eyed her curiously.

"Why do you want to know? What does it matter to you?" She shrugged her shoulders impatiently, resentfully, and he went on: "Yes, he's rich; consequently so. But he is playing a big game, in which he is running some risks, and he'll want all his money to help him win it."

"And you are joining him in the game?" she asked, in a low voice, her eyes veiled, her lips drawn straight.

Falconer laughed grimly.

"I don't know. It all depends. Which would you do?" he asked, half-sarcastically.

She was silent for a moment, then she said:

"You knew Sir Stephen some time ago—years ago, father?"

"I did," he said, shortly.

"And you were friends, and you quarrelled?"

He looked at her with an air of surprise.

(To be continued.)

HAS HELD OFFICE SIX YEARS.

Premier Asquith Still Master of House of Commons.

Premier Asquith has now held office for just six years, thus exceeding in length the administration of Disraeli, who occupied the office from 1874 to 1880. Since the days of Lord Liverpool, who was Prime Minister for fifteen years, there have been only three statesmen who have held the office for a longer period without a break, than Mr. Asquith. Two of these, Lord Melbourne and Lord Palmerston, both were Prime Minister for about two months longer than Mr. Asquith has been so far. The third case is that of Lord Salisbury, who was Prime Minister for exactly seven years, from 1895 to 1902. Lord Palmerston, during his long term of power, was, like Mr. Asquith, leader of the House of Commons, as well as Prime Minister. The others, however, sat in the quieter atmosphere of the House of Lords. The present Prime Minister, too, has taken an extra burden of the office of Secretary of War, and his administration has been at least as full of hard work as any in modern times.

Through it all Mr. Asquith, although the strain must be great, seems to thrive. He has certainly aged somewhat, but so have all those who have gone through the last few strenuous years with him. He is still the master of the House of Commons, having no equal, except, perhaps, Mr. Balfour, in debate, while as a political tactician, none come within miles of him. Even should the Ulster question prove to be beyond his powers of getting over difficult situations, he will be able to look back upon a long series of successes.

I am going to seek a great perhaps.—Rabelais.

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.



Enrico Caruso.

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, eucalyptus, 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 gargarism of great benefit in overcoming the bad effects caused by tobacco. If I did not smoke I 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 idiform 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.

RADIUM CANCER CURE.

Application Reported to Have Been Successful.

What is claimed as a successful instance of cancer cure by the application of radium is reported at Lambeth (England) Infirmary. The patient, a woman of 25, was taken to the infirmary last July suffering from what was regarded as an incurable cancer in the neck, which had been developing for some years. An operation for the complete removal of the cancer, it is said, was not considered practicable, and the medical authorities decided to try radium treatment. A medical officer, describing the cure, said that the cancer was treated on four occasions with emanations, or rays, of radium contained in tubes. The supply was provided free of cost by the Radium Institute. The growth gradually decreased, and eventually disappeared altogether. There was no doubt, the doctor added, that the case was one of cancer. The young woman was discharged from the infirmary as cured, and although careful observation has been kept, no recurrence of the disease has been noted. It is necessary again to repeat the warning that sufficient time has not yet elapsed to justify the use of the word "cure" without qualification. But the case is certainly very encouraging, more especially in view of the age of the patient and the character of the tumour.

Worse Than Exploring.

"It takes a lot of courage and patience to be an explorer doesn't it?"

"Yes," replied an adventurous man. "Discovering things isn't so bad. But great Scott! What you have to go through when you get back to civilization!"

The shoe salesman should look out for slippery customers.

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