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# Kit Kennedy

BY S. R. CROCKETT.

### CHAPTER II.—(Cont'd.)

Lilias did not hear her mother come near her, and she started with a piteous gesture of fear when a large hand was laid on her arm.

"Lilias, my lass, ye are to gang your ways ben to your father," she said, "and oh! mind—be kind and canny w' him. Be not angry nor rebellious, for that is never any way with your father. Gie up the young man gin he bids you—at least for the present. Your heart winna break, though you may think it will. And dinna forget that, whatever your father may say, he speaks for your good."

Lilias Armour looked at her mother with so steady a gaze that the eyes of that good bustling housewife fell before them. The daughter laughed a little laugh, hard to listen to from one so young, and it was so full of bitter knowledge of the past and carelessness for the future.

"Gie him up—and if I do, that will end it, will it?" she said.

"Aye, surely," said her mother, "it is the way wi' a' the young. I have been that gait myself. I thoct that there was nae lad like aye that I hae mind on. For sax months I wad hae gien a' my shapin' claes for him. But my ain mither advised me, and I took her advice. And ye will do the like, my hinnie, like a good lass. There are better lads than him to be gotten—aye, and no that far to seek—responsible, God-fearin' men, too, w' farms weel plenshed and siller in the bank. There was aye that spak' to me Sabbath eight days nae farther gane. Ye could get him for a look—aye, and be a decent married wife within a month gin ye willed it."

Lilias Armour listened wearily to her mother, but did not answer her exhortations and appeals.

"I will go in and see my father," she said. And straightway she went in to where Matthew Armour was sitting, his head thrown back with a grave leonine action, his hand still on the open Bible, and his eyes upon the door through which Lilias was to enter.

She stood before the Elder and looked him in the face, waiting for him to speak.

"My daughter," he said at last, speaking very slowly but not unkindly, "what is the relation in which you stand to the young man of whom we have spoken once before, to him who is named Christopher Kennedy?"

"He is very dear to me," said Lilias Armour, simply.



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"I asked you not as to your feelings," her father went on; "the wind does not pass more quickly over the trees than such emotions over a maiden's heart. And when it is gone it leaves as little trace of its passage. But what of him. Has he also told you that you are dear to him?"

"Ever since he came hither he has loved none but me!" said Lilias, bravely.

Her father nodded with a shade of irony and contempt mingling with the exceeding gravity of his countenance.

"Such words are a commonplace of evil and designing men," he said; "They boast in the public places that they are able to make any woman love them. My daughter, that which I shall have to say will be bitter in the mouth as gall. I pray my God that the aftertaste may be sweet. And indeed, be that as it may, it is my intent and bounden duty to save you from a debased and drunken profligate, one who has already dragged your good name through the mire, and who would drag it deeper if he were permitted!"

"Father!" cried the girl, indignantly, "even you have not the right to speak thus of the man I love!"

"My daughter," said the Elder, a little more gently, "the truth may be spoken by any and shame none. Still more by a father."

"You dare not say it to his face!" said the girl, with a flash of angry defiance unexpected even by herself.

The Ruling Elder smiled a calm, cold, inscrutable smile.

"I, Matthew Armour, dare not! Do you know your father so little? Listen! Last night I heard my daughter's name spoken in a place of public entertainment. The door of the room was locked. I burst it open when they refused me entrance, and stood before your lover in the midst of his riotous and drunken companions. I taxed him to answer me. I accused him to his face of treachery and depravity, and he could not answer save with oaths and cursings. So I delivered him to Satan, that he might learn not to blaspheme."

The girl stood pressing her hands upon her breast, as if to keep her heart in place, the while her father went remorselessly on.

"Nay, more; I was made aware last night that Christopher Kennedy had lost his position at the grammar school at Cairn Edward for drunkenness, and even at that very moment with his companions he was celebrating his way-going. This morning, with one of his cronies, he is fled no man knows whither, and only his creditors will trouble to inquire. He goes forth disgraced in the sight of all and in debt to half the countryside."

"No, no, father! Surely there must be some mistake," the girl faltered, the words driven from her.

"Christopher Kennedy cannot have gone without seeing me, without bidding me 'Good-bye!'"

"A bad man in time of trouble thinks only of himself," said her father. "But after all, why should he not have gone to his wife?"

Lilias Armour took a swift step forward as if to silence her father's accusing voice. He stayed her with his hand extended, palm outward, with an action full of dignity and tenderness.

"Be patient, my daughter. Such dealing may be hard, but it is for your soul's health that you mate not with an evildoer. Listen! There came a man hither this morning with all the tale of his past. The man whom you call Christopher Kennedy was married half a dozen years ago, before he went to college, to a fisher lass in his own parish of Sandhaven. She lives there to this day."

The girl bent her nails inward upon her palms and shook with the effort to command herself.

"Who is the man who brought this news?" she asked, to outward view quietly enough.

"His name is Walter Mac Walter. He comes from Sandhaven and knew Christopher Kennedy well. His brother is farmer of Loch Spellanerie; he is a man of credit and a man who has recently bought property in this neighborhood."

"Then Walter Mac Walter lies!" cried Lilias Armour, lifting her head very high.

The Elder took from between the leaves of the Bible a slip of blue paper.

There was minute printing upon it, interspersed with larger writing.

"Walter Mac Walter brought this with him in token that he lied not," said her father. "It is a copy of certificate extracted from the registrar's book of the parish of Sandhaven, bearing that, on the twenty-fifth day of August, in the year 18—, Christopher Kennedy, son of Allan Kennedy, farmer of Mayfield in the parish of Sandhaven, was married to Mary Bisset, daughter of Alexander Bisset, of Ship Row, fisherman in the same parish."

The girl came forward and put out her hand for the paper. Her father gave it to her, and she tried to read it. But the words reeled before her eyes, and her fingers trembled so violently that the paper fluttered this way and that like a leaf in the wind.

"I cannot read it," she said, "but it is not true. Why should a man bring such a thing with him from hundreds of miles away unless he hated Christopher Kennedy? And why did he go to you instead of to the man he slandered?"

"He came to ask your hand in marriage, my daughter," said the Elder with dignity.

The girl laughed—a hard grating little laugh, not good to hear.

"I thought as much," she said. "This man has pestered me at the kirk and on the way home these months back, not taking any honest answer. And now he has come from the north with this tale, when I thought that I was rid of him. Father, do not believe such a man. It is a lie. I know it to be a lie!"

"And how do you know, Lilias Armour?" said her father, speaking with great quiet.

The girl became suddenly excited, and her hand fumbled for something in her bosom.

"I know it, because I and no other am the wife of Christopher Kennedy—because he has married me in the presence of witnesses; I and I alone am his wife."

A greyer greyness settled over the face of the Elder. His firm lips paled and became more tightly compressed, but his speech was steady as ever, and the hand upon the open Bible did not quiver.

"Before what witnesses?" he asked.

"Before Alister French the lawyer, and Bell Kirkpatrick!" the girl answered fearlessly.

"Alister French it is who is fled with him, alike shamed and in debts; his witnessing is as good as naught!" said the Elder. "Let us see what Bell Kirkpatrick will say to this!"

He rose from his seat and went to the door.

"Margaret," he cried, "send in Bell Kirkpatrick to me hastily."

(To be continued.)

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### Mutilating Teeth.

It is curious to what an extent the mutilation of teeth goes on among savage nations. On the west coast of Africa a large proportion of the teeth are deliberately broken when children reach a certain age. In Peru, on the Congo and among the Hottentots, the custom exists of extracting the two front teeth of domestic servants. On the Upper Nile many negroes have all their best teeth extracted in order to destroy their value as slaves, thus making it not worth while for the slave traders to carry them off. Among the Malays, teeth are stained various colors. A bright red and a bright blue are not uncommon, and even a bright

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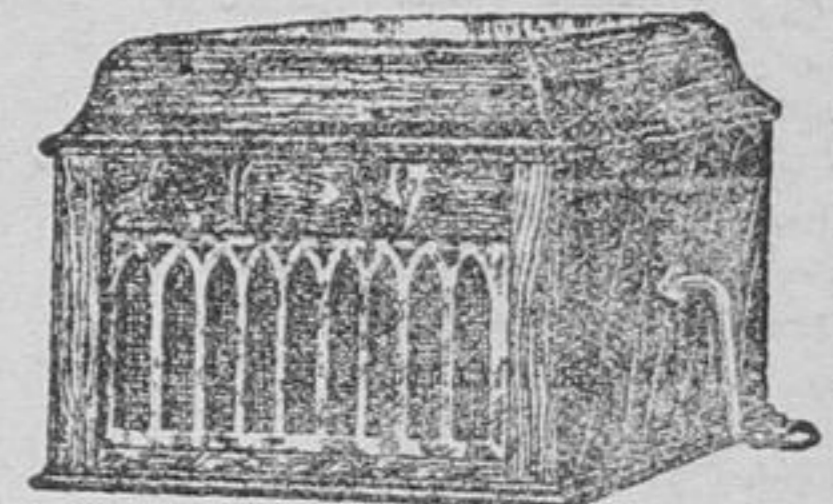
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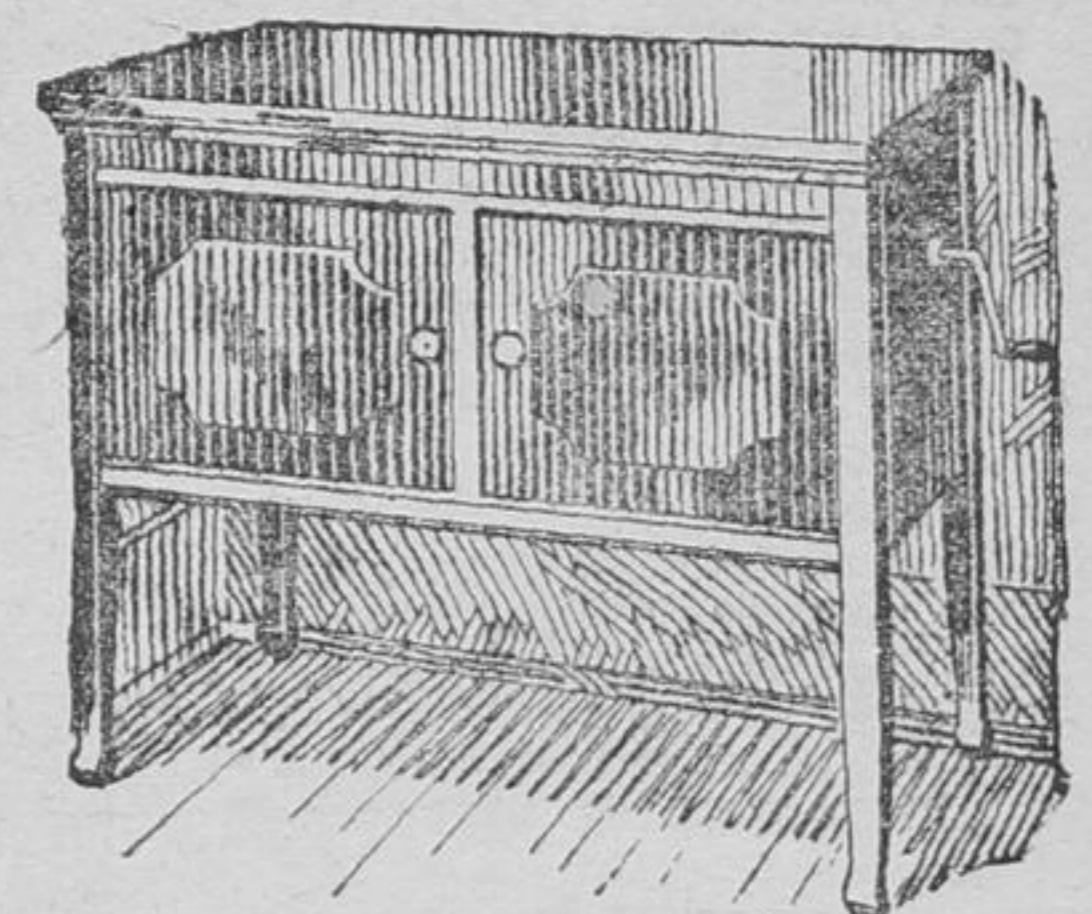


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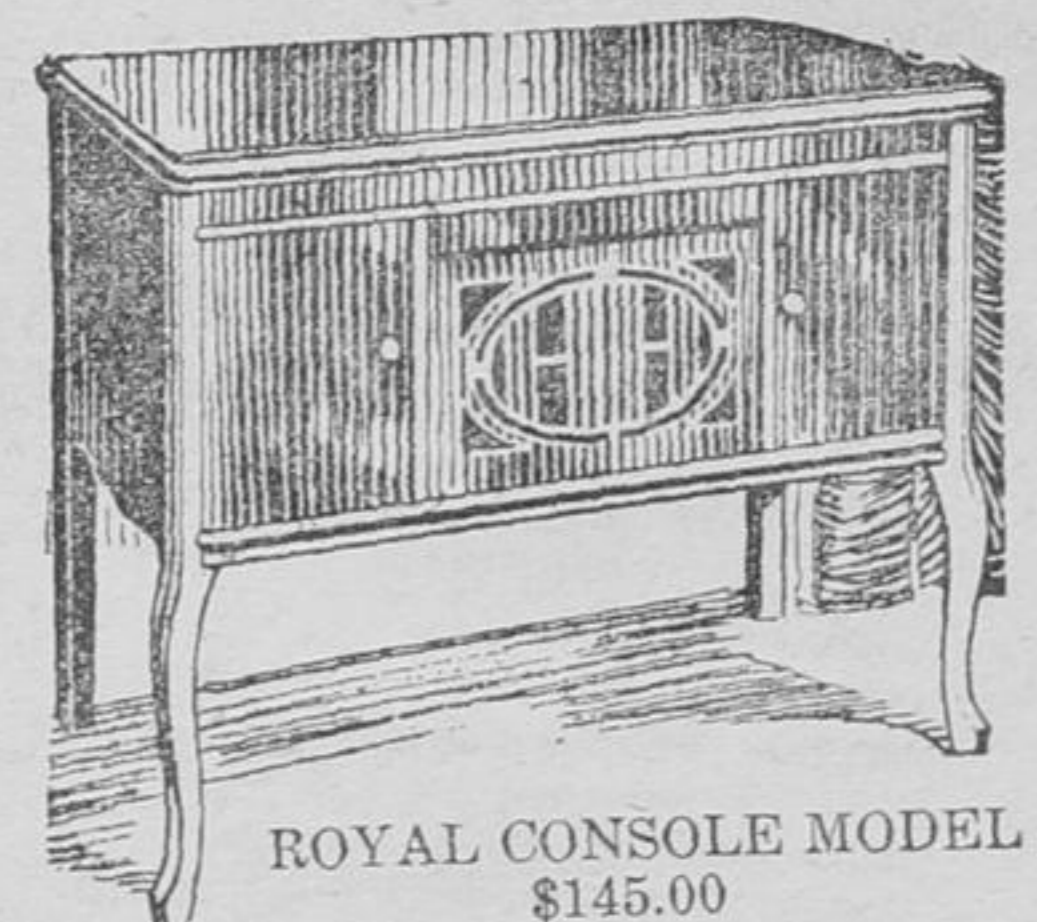
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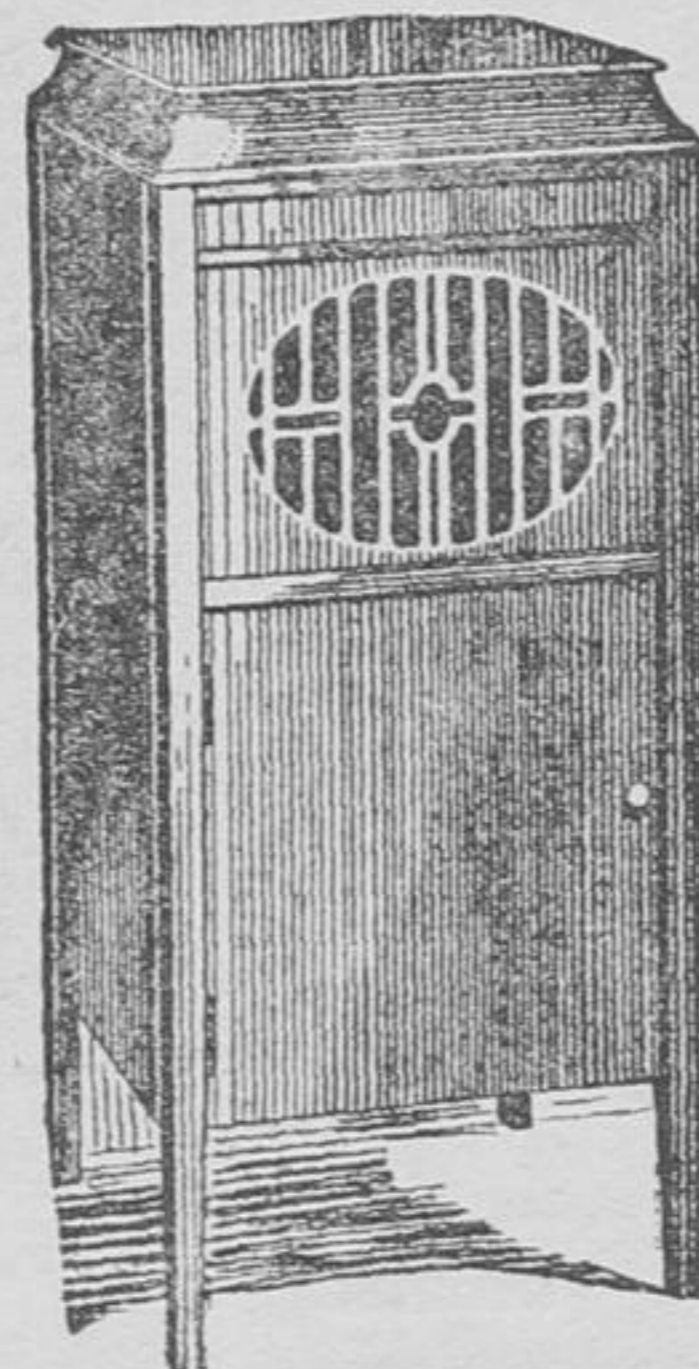


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