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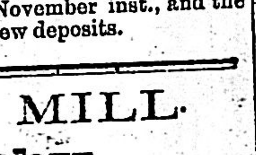

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1	Milton	Wm. Panton.	27	29	25	13	28	30	10 a.m.
2	Oakville	R. Balmer	11	7	9	11	12	7	10 a.m.
3	Georgetown	L. Grant	17	13	15	4	18	13	9.30 a.m.
4	Acton	J. Matthews	19	15	17	"	20	15	10 a.m.
5	Campbellville	S. R. Lister	6	2	4	"	7	2	9 30 "
6	Burlington	Jas. Robinson	10	6	8	10	11	6	11 "

General Sessions of the Peace and County Court Sittings, with or without Jury. Tuesday 12th June, and 11th December, at 10 a.m.

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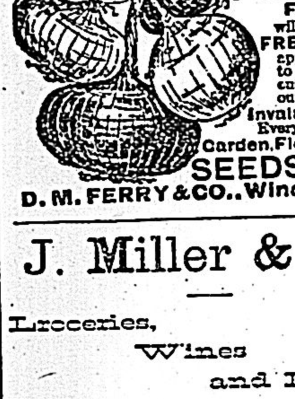

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DICK'S SWEETHEART.

By the Author of "Mildred Trevanion," "Love, Lord Berresford," "Phyllis," "Molly Bawn," Etc.

"Yes; I expect the sudden unexpected rise to a title and a decent rent-roll was too much for her. She hasn't recovered from it yet, you see. That word 'lady' is an everlasting delight to her. I can fancy how openly glad she was when that poor man fell over that cliff, or whatever it was. I remember him myself but very slightly—I was only a child then, a mere baby—an aimless, helpless sort of man, just like Sir George, and very good-natured. I think for the one week I knew him I lived on lollipops. Papa always speaks very kindly of him; but then he speaks kindly of his sister Lady Bouverie too; so that his word doesn't go for much. Yet I don't wish you to think that," she says, smiling, "because I would have you believe that the pretty things he says of you he really does mean, and that he likes you more than most."

"It is only fair that he should like his daughter's friend," replies Dolores, feeling strongly attracted to her because of this great love for her father which is betraying itself in every word and glance.

"There is one thing that gives me deep pleasure—one thought rather," goes on Audrey, turning her face slowly until her eyes rest on Dolores. "If you should chance to marry Dick, dad will be your uncle."

"And you my cousin." Dolores, colouring warmly, holds out her hand to her; and then all at once a grim little look of comic dismay desolates her face. "And Lady Bouverie my mother-in-law!" she adds slowly.

"It does take the gilt off—doesn't it?" says Audrey, laughing. Then, after a moment's silence—"'How happy some o'er other some can be!' I wonder if Dick knows how lucky he is? It will be the happiest thing for him!"

"Why should it not be the happiest thing for me too?" asks Dolores gently. "We have not spoken of our engagement yet to any one, except to auntie, and now to you; but of course all the world has seen how it is with us. And I am glad they have seen"—with a little sudden quickening of the breath and a sudden paling of her lovely face. "Why should one seek to hide one's joy? Yet actually to speak of it, to put it all into words, that is difficult."

"My aunt—does she know?"

"Not yet. I told Dick to keep it a secret from his mother for yet a little while; but I suppose she has made a good guess at it. She—she has been very—one doesn't know what to call it," says Dolores, laughing—"very affectionate to me of late. At least that is what I am sure she has meant to me."

"Very!" says Audrey drily.

"If I were to become a Cinderella to-morrow, I wonder how it would be with her then?"

"You would be 'Miss Lorne' then, not her 'pretty Dolores;' and, when she met you, it is amazing what an amount of eye-glass she would require to be able to see you, and her tone, when she hoped you were quite well, would be sufficient to make you quite ill, and her hurried but frozen adieu would bring you to death's door; and besides——"

"The picture is complete!" interrupts Dolores, laughing. "Your style is decidedly graphic. Let us rejoice in the fact that I shall never be called upon to enact the *rôle* of a modern Cinderella. Oh, by-the-bye, Audrey, I am so sorry you will not let us call for you to-night! But you were right yesterday. In your place, I should have rejected Mrs. Drummond's invitation just as you did."

"Every one detests me so," says Miss Ponsonby, frowning and plucking a daisy to pieces. "Yet what have I done to any of them?"

"You are so much prettier than they are!"

"Yet so are you; and they all profess—nay, they all do like you. There must be something morally wrong with me; yet how to change when my fault is unknown to me? Perhaps I should be more meek, perhaps I should have accepted Mrs. Drummond's words in a different spirit, though they were spoken at the eleventh hour, and only because the Duchess thought me worth a word or two and an invitation to the Castle."

"Mrs. Drummond made a mistake; I think you were right in showing it to her," replies Dolores quietly. "Is Sir Chicksy going?"

"About him I have been more worried than I can tell you. He declares nothing will induce him to go; and, absurd as he looks, he is really very difficult to manage in small affairs of this kind."

"His not going will look rather marked."

"That is what I told him; but he seems to think that reason for his going only an extra inducement to stay at home." Miss Ponsonby laughs a short joyless laugh, and gives the soft frill round her neck a vicious little pull.

"He is very much in love with you," says Dolores gravely; "and sometimes I do not understand whether that pleases or annoys you. He is a kindly young man, I know—he—he has many——"

"Don't say good qualities!" interrupts Audrey calmly. "That would be the finishing stroke to whatever chance he may have."

"Chance! Tell me"—looking earnestly at her—"do you mean to marry him?"

"Well, why should I not? He is an excellent *parti*," says Audrey defiantly; "and he has no father, or mother, or sister, or brother to consult, or to be furious with him for marrying a girl without a penny. About family there is no question," she says, with a proud gesture—"on either side."

"You think of marrying him then?" interrogates Dolores, a little carefully-suppressed surprise, a little well-bred regret, in her tone. She blushes up to her very brow as she asks the question, and looks abashed at her own temerity. When, a moment since, she had asked the same question in different words, she had expected the answer to be a straightforward "No," and had found no difficulty in propounding it. But now, as the immense truth dawns upon her that in reality Audrey may bring herself to wed Sir Chicksy, she feels strange towards her, and a little upset as to her former calculations. She hesitates; but, as no reply comes from Audrey, something within her—something pure and true—compels her at all hazards to conquer cowardise, or fear of giving offense. Raising her lowered eyes, she says impulsively, "He is not good enough for you."

"I wonder if I am good enough for him, or any other man?" returns Audrey, with quick bitterness. "Do you think I care whether he be good or bad? I tell you"—leaning towards her, and pushing her dark hair in an impatient manner from her forehead—"I only cared to know whether his rent-roll was really what he said it was; that I have ascertained to be the truth, and so no hesitation is left to me. I am mercenary; I love money; I would, I believe, sell my soul to be rich and great in the world's eyes."

"How can you so deliberately lie about yourself?" says Dolores calmly, though the other's suppressed excitement has its influence upon her.

"There—you see I have shocked you! Good little girls like you," exclaims Audrey, with a reckless laugh, "who have never known what poverty means, or the scorn society amasses to pour broadcast upon those who lack this world's goods, cannot understand such natures as mine. Yet it is the very society of which you are a member that forms such natures. I think I hate rich people!" She pauses, and then a revulsion of feeling comes to her, and she goes on again quite calmly. "You think Sir Chicksy is not good enough for me; but you won't to-morrow, when you dwell on the knowledge of me that I have given you; and, besides—besides, he can give dad his books—the claret I cannot give him—the soul of France—life!" Her voice fails her; yet, though she is as pale as death, and her eyes are heavy with miserable tears, she looks straight at Dolores frowningly, as though forbidding her to offer any sympathy.

But Dolores is not to be forbidden! Audrey has put out her hand as though to bar any approach, yet Dolores creeps up to the antagonistic hand, which is in truth but a very frail barricade, and slips her arm round Audrey's neck.

"I always thought I liked you the best of my many friends here," she whispers softly. "Now I know it; but, oh, dear, dear Audrey, why need you make this sacrifice? Other people are rich; other people love you!"

"Oh, no, no, no!" cries Audrey, paling, and shrinking from her.

"There is one," says Dolores, in a quick hurried tone, tightening her clasp—"one to whom you are unkind, to whom you show yourself in all your most unlovable moods. And, as for him—I cannot always understand him indeed; but this I know that you are well beloved by——"

With a passionate exclamation, Miss Ponsonby, springing to her feet, pushes the girl back from her, and from an assured distance gazes at her with crimson cheeks and flashing eyes.

"How dare you speak to me?" she says, in a low, panting tone, scarcely audible. "How dare you take such a liberty? There is no one that loves me; it is an insult—a——"

She turns away abruptly, and walks in a rapid inconsequent fashion down the garden path, increasing the distance between herself and Dolores with all the speed of which she is capable. Her every movement is full of suppressed agitation, born of passionate fear and a feeling she believes is anger, and a vague horror of herself.

Dolores, stricken dumb, stands motionless upon the mossy sward, with the boughs of the apple-trees swaying above her head, and just a glimpse of the eternal blue of heaven beyond. What has she done? What was it she said? A pang of terrible self-reproach shoots through her tender heart as she watches the tall haughty figure hurrying away from her towards the garden gate. When she has disappeared through the ivied portals, will she ever return?

Dolores, looking pale as a small ghost, clasps her hands together and feels as one might who has just committed a murder of the most cold-blooded description. She takes a step forward with the intention of overtaking and compelling that determined figure to believe her innocent of studied offence, when all at once Audrey pauses, hesitates, and finally, turning sharply round, comes back to her.

"Forgive me!" she says abruptly, her face very white. "I should not have spoken so to you. It was rude, and, besides that, absurd. There is no real reason why you should not speak to me of him as well as of Sir Chicksy." No name has been mentioned between them of this second suitor, yet both seem to understand. "And I should have remembered," continues Miss Ponsonby, growing even paler, "how impossible it would be to you in any case to be the offender." Great tears rise now and glisten in her eyes.

"Audrey," says Dolores, going up to her and laying her arms loosely round her neck, so that she can lean back and study the other's face as she speaks, "at least believe this of me, that my liking for you is sincere enough to prevent my saying a hurtful word to you."

"It is the living of my whole life in this narrowed place that has spoiled me," murmurs Audrey, faintly smiling. "I grow more morbid, suspicious—hateful, if I dare confess the truth. But only to you, Dolores, will I do that. Just now you were speaking of Anthony Vyner, were you not?"

"Yes. What fault do you find in him that you should be so incensed with me for my bare mention of his name?"

"The greatest fault of all—his inability to appreciate my many charms!" She laughs softly but bitterly. "Don't say they are not many," she goes on quickly. "Recollect, the truth, if rude, is always salutary." She smiles again. "The fact is, Mr. Vyner detests me nearly as much as I detest him. There is an antagonism between us that I believe only life can end."

"Speak of your own repulsion," returns Dolores quietly—"that is, of course, to you understood; but Mr. Vyner's feelings are not to be so lightly canvassed. I do not think you judge him aright. You say I am wrong in thinking he loves you; I admit my error in that respect, if indeed it be one; but that he hates you—no, no! He certainly does not hate you. I think he likes you."

A sudden passionate colour flames and dies in Miss Ponsonby's cheeks.

"How good that is of him!" she says, in a carefully-modulated voice. "Poor Anthony! It must be an everlasting trouble to him to like me, considering how well he knows me. It is indeed too much. But see, Dolores—who is that coming through the arched gateway?"

"Tea," declares Dolores, in a gratefully explanatory, if a scarcely grammatical, manner—"and Wylde. What have you there, Wylde?"—addressing the gray-haired butler who is approaching them, followed by an attendant satellite.

"Small bottle of champagne, miss; thought you'd like it with your strawberries. Tea is only just made, so it can wait a bit."

"Oh, thank you, Wylde!" says Dolores, looking with tender friendship at the old man who has followed her fortunes through the half of Europe. "Do you know you have brought us the very thing for which Miss Ponsonby and I have been sighing? And, Wylde"—calling after him as he beats a smiling retreat—"be sure you let me know when auntie returns."

"Sure to, miss," bows Wylde, with a deferential, if confidential, gesture.

CHAPTER XIV.

At the stuccoed mansion of the Drummonds the fiddles are sounding, and bright forms are making the most of the glad hour accorded them. Fountains are dripping musically; the air is heavy with the breath of dying flowers; it is twelve o'clock, and the ball is at its height. The music grows softer, sweeter. One begins to take to heart the languorous, numerous meanings of the floating perfumed fans.

Down far below, in the valley, a girl, tall, but spirit-broken, is standing in an open window. She is clad in a wide clinging gown, and is gazing eagerly with great and straining eyes at certain yellow lights that, two miles away, can yet be caught through the still haze of the summer night.

After all, was she so wise in refusing that invitation? Dolores had said she was; but—— Life is short! Why not take from it the very meagre enjoyment it affords to the hungry seekers after distraction? And yet—— How chilly it grows! How long it seems since last she heard the human voice that some mistaken person once called "divine!"

There—glancing at the pale yellow lights so far away—every one no doubt is happy, regardless of everything but the present moment. Ay, happy present! What more natural than that they should lose themselves in it? If she were there, she too doubtless would be cruelly regardless of all the outer world. But then——

The night is still, beyond all imaginings. The scent of the tall white lilies outside burdens the air. "Unpavilioned heaven is fair," rich in its countless stars,

"And through the dim wood Dian threads her way."

The girl leaning against the shutters of the open window sighs a little, and her beautiful haughty face takes a mournful droop. Her lips curve downward, her eyes grow sad and moist; yet always the yellow lights gleam in the cruel distance, and almost the sound of the fiddles comes to her on the ambient air. She stirs impatiently and tightens her fingers, as if unconsciously, upon the soft crimson rose with which she has been toying. It shrinks and dies beneath her pressure, and one drop of moisture, blood-red in her imagination, as though distilled from its heart, crawls over and under and through her white fingers as though in protestation against her idle deed.

But to her it is as though the rose never existed. Her eyes are ever fixed upon the lights so far removed from her, and a sense of desolation overpowers her. The tears gather in her eyes and blot out those vexing, shining lights—and blot out too the figure of a man who, advancing rapidly through the shrubbery, enters the second window, and, crossing the room, is at her side before she has time to recognise him.

It is Anthony Vyner, a little heated from his run, with his hair ruffled and quite a triumphant light in his eyes.

Audrey, moving backwards involuntarily, seizes the curtain with one hand and gazes at him in speechless amazement.

"You?" she whispers breathlessly.

"Is it?" inquires Mr. Vyner genially. "Perhaps so! No doubt, you'd know. I seldom understand myself, so there can be nothing remarkable in the fact that I don't always know myself! I thought I was at Mrs. Drummond's; but, if"—with a delicate deference to her opinion—"you insist on saying this is I, why, I'll take your word for it!"

"What brought you here?" asks Audrey, who has grown very white from the suddenness of the shock his unexpected appearance has caused her.

"Now that I come to think of it," says Mr. Vyner airily, "I don't know. I never go into my own motives. Long, long since I found they weren't worth it. Lovely night, isn't it?"

"What brought you?" persists Audrey unflinchingly. There is a little flash in her sombre eyes, her hand tightens on the curtain.

"If," answers Mr. Vyner plaintively, "I now stated to you an incontrovertible fact, and told you the simple beautiful truth, and said it was my ten toes and my two heels, I dare say you would think me rude—eh?"

"You are always rude," says Miss Ponsonby calmly, "so that goes for nothing. Still I must ask you to answer my question. What brought you here at this hour?"

"It is impossible to be sure. But I suppose it is whatever brought me here at any other hour."

"Will you answer me or not?" demands she angrily.

"How can I? It is so awfully hard to find out! If even human love be not the growth of human will, how shall I know what strange force drove me abroad to-night to wander amidst Cimmerian darkness and meditate upon—"

"Now that you have come, and refuse a reason for your coming, I must only beg you will go again," says Audrey haughtily.

She drops the curtain and turns disdainfully towards the door; but, when she is only half-way to it, Mr. Vyner springs to his feet and hurries after her.

"Eureka!" exclaims he, with the triumphant air of one who has proved himself victorious over some brain-worry. "I've found it! What a fortunate thing—isn't it?" looking to her for sympathy. "And just at the last moment too! Another hesitation, and I should have been—lost; you would have gone!"

"Well," says Audrey severely, standing a good way back from him and gazing at him with unfriendly eyes—"well?"

It is plain she is not to be done out of the desired explanation.

"My presence here, Miss Ponsonby," begins he, with an artless candour, "at this unseemly hour was caused, I have just discovered, by an overpowering desire to see——"

Miss Ponsonby frowns.

"Wait a bit!" exclaims he hastily. "To see—to see anything that was far away from Mrs. Drummond! There—you cannot object to that, can you?"

"I don't object to anything," says Audrey, just a little wearily.

She has come back to her window again, and is now leaning out towards the scented darkness, as though wooing a touch from the cold night-wind. Far down below, in the woods of Grayland, the nightingales are singing their wild sweet catches, answering each other from branch to branch. It is a heavenly harmony that beats upon the heart, and seeks—as though it were the herald of peace—to enter there. But sometimes pulses throb too madly and sad hearts are too full to admit any new-comer, whatever name he bear.

"Yes, I was saturated with Mrs. Drummond. I thought I'd leave whilst yet there was time," goes on Mr. Vyner, after a brief glance at her. He too is leaning outside the window beside her, being no doubt as smitten with the beauty of the night as she is. "I felt, if I stayed a second later, that my hour would be come. And, as a mother-in-law now, do you think she would be nice?"

"I never think of her," says Audrey, her head turned away from him as she gazes into the cool misty mysteries of the summer night.

"I would that I were you!" says Mr. Vyner. "She preys upon my brain, although"—with a sudden brilliant change of tone and a benignity of countenance—"it must be acknow[illegible] that our dear friend is a ve[illegible] creature—such an affectionate[illegible] tion, such a flow of soul—eh?"

"Did anything else flow to-night [illegible]" asks Miss Ponsonby, turning upon him suddenly, with a suspicion of wrath in her dark eyes. "Have you had too much of their execrable champagne? The idea would suggest itself. What occasions your high spirits? What has induced you to leave your partners to come here?"

"Haven't I told you?" returns Mr. Vyner reproachfully. "It was pure fright that drove me from the palatial halls of the people beyond. How their lamps shine through the density that parts us! Why, they put the very stars to shame! But what's the good of being a *parvenu* if you can't outshine your neighbours—eh? [illegible], it was a fright *pur et simple* that bade me beat a hasty retreat. They were all getting too fond of me—too sugary. By-the-bye, perhaps it is the old fellow's—the grandfather's—molasses that makes them all so sweet?"

"What an opinion you have of yourself!" says Audrey, with a curling lip. "Do you indeed think that all the world is so anxious to marry you?"

"Oh, not all the world!" He looks at her fixedly, and she returns the look. "I have the very best reasons for knowing that all the world is not so favourably disposed towards me," he says presently. "Now you, for instance"—she moves away impatiently, and a faint expression that is either amusement or uncertainty or annoyance crosses his face—"you would not, I know, deign to look at me were I to lay my allegiance at your feet!"

TO BE CONTINUED.

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