

Many a Slip

The rain drizzled down outside—pit, pat, splutter, splutter on the leaden roof, and Gordon Clarke stared up gloomily at the top part of the office window which was not frosted, and which commanded a view of dull sky and telegraph wires.

He bit the top of his quill pen and looked down again at the mass of papers on his desk. Another will to copy! He was sick of wills to copy! It was his business morning, noon and night, copying out details of other people's fortunes; and as he was not likely to have a fortune himself he detested everybody who was.

This will to-day, however, had an unusual interest, and the man at the desk next him leant forward. "You've got old Johnson's will to copy, haven't you?" he asked. "His dying? The governor was there last night with me, and I heard the doctor say that he couldn't last more than a few weeks. And he hasn't found his daughter yet."

Gordon Clarke looked carefully at the will.

"He's mad, isn't he?" he asked. The other laughed.

"He's been sharp enough to make £50,000 or so," he said, "and I shouldn't call that being mad myself. But he is a bit queer. Twenty years ago he quarrelled with his daughter and she ran away. He swore she should never come back, and that she might die before he'd look at her again, and all these years he has kept his word. He has lived alone, never mentioned her name, and willed all his money to charities."

"Now he's dying and has altered his will, and is advertising and searching for her everywhere, and can't find her. That's Fate, and serves him right. He only quarrelled with her because she wanted to marry someone he didn't approve of and now I suppose the poor thing's starving somewhere, never dreaming that there is a fortune waiting for her and her children, if she has any. But it will serve old Johnson right if he dies without seeing her. He was cruel."

Gordon bent to his work. He cared nothing for Johnson's daughter. He cared nothing for anybody except himself, and his face was bitter and ugly as his pen scribbled slowly the first words on the parchment.

"This is the last will and testament of me, Abel Johnson."

His pen swept round the loops and flourishes and down the thick strokes, and then suddenly the color left his face, and instead of writing he took to reading the will that lay before him.

It was a very short one, but there was something in it that startled him. It was a description of Abel Johnson's daughter, who ran away twenty years ago to marry a man named Glenny.

Gordon stared at the name, fascinated—Glenny! His heart began to throb and the blood ran through his veins. The fortune might be near him now! He had thought he might get it himself—if he were cured. £50,000!

He clutched the pen and stared at the parchment. Twenty years ago Abel Johnson's daughter had married a man named Robert Airdship Glenny. Airdship was an uncommon name, and it was not likely that there could be any mistake. Gordon Clarke knew a man named Airdship Glenny, and his daughter, a girl of eighteen, was called Minnie Johnson Glenny.

His hand began to tremble. His heart throbbed heavily. £50,000!

He stared up at the leaden sky and tried to think. There surely could be no doubt about it? The man he knew—the man who was starting with his daughter in the carport above his own room—was the man who had married Ellen Johnson twenty years ago! It must be! It was impossible that there could be any mistake!

He turned his eyes away from the window, and went carefully through the will, copying it closely, and all the time with his brain thinking out carefully how he could get hold of the £50,000.

When he put down his pen at last it seemed to him that the fortune was already his. Robert Glenny was starving and proud. Abel Johnson might advertise for years, but he would not answer him. He would rather beg than take a penny from his dead wife's father. It would only be for Minnie's sake that he would give way, and Minnie was a delicate girl, suffering already from want of good food.

Gordon rose from his stool with his lips set tight. He had a little money saved, and only a few days ago Glenny asked him to lend him some in order to pay a doctor's bill for Minnie, who had been ill, and to get an evening suit. Glenny was an accomplished musician, and an evening engagement had depended upon the suit. He could not take it unless he had one, but Gordon had refused to lend even that small amount.

He set his teeth as he thought of it. He would lend it now! He would lend it, and marry Minnie and make his fortune at a leap!

But the money came too late for Glenny, for when Gordon returned home that night, he was met by his landlady with the news that he was ill in bed with brain fever, and that the doctor had forbidden his removal.

"And he owes me £5 if it's a penny," she cried, "and 'ow I'm ever get it I don't know."

Gordon put his umbrella in the stand mechanically. His thin, vel-

low face had changed, and Mrs. Smith had an uneasy recollection that he had smiled in the same way when he had seen a man he hated, knocked down and run over in the street. She looked at him uncomfortably, and wished she hadn't mentioned the bill.

"All the same, Mr. Glenny's a gentleman," she added, "and his poor little girl—"

"You leave them to me," Gordon said slowly. "I'll look after them. How much did you say his bill was—£5? Put on mine next week, Mrs. Smith, I'll see to it."

Mrs. Smith stared as he turned away, and wished with a sudden feeling which she could not understand that Dr. Seeley would come and tell her what it meant. Gordon Clarke was a good lodger, regular in his payments, steady and respectable but she had never liked him, and she liked him less though the Glennys, poor things, wanted a friend badly enough.

She stood for a moment in the passage. She had never yet known Gordon Clarke give away anything unless he got back double what he gave, and now his offer to pay the Glenny's bill was beyond her comprehension altogether. It meant mischief of some kind, she was positively sure of it.

She was still more sure of it a day or two later, for Clarke became unaccountably curious about the Glennys. He sought them now as much as he had avoided them before, and for some strange reason, Minnie was unaccountably nervous of him.

Mrs. Smith watched her sharply. The pallor of her face and the red rims round her eyes were not caused entirely by her father's illness. At least, so Mrs. Smith concluded, and a week later, when Mr. Glenny was lying still and unconscious, she waited for Dr. Seeley's rat-tat with an odd misgiving at heart. When it came at last she flew to open the door and faced him breathlessly.

Dr. Seeley was young and strong, with a kind, keen face and grey eyes, and he looked at her now with a good-humored twinkle in them, for she always had a string of woees to relate to him.

"Any more tragedies, Mrs. Smith?" he asked.

Mrs. Smith gave a sigh.

"Lor, no, sir, no more yet—but it do seem likely as there may be more'n we reckon on, sir."

"Oh?"

Mrs. Smith glanced furtively at the stairs, and edged away to her own room.

"It's about Mr. Clarke, sir," she said. "He's a good lodger—regular in his habits and all that, but he do seem to be upsetting of Miss Minnie in a fine state. She's goin' to be ill herself, or my name's not Martha."

Dr. Seeley's face looked grave.

"What has Clarke to do with them?" he asked.

Mrs. Smith hesitated.

"Nothing, sir, but Miss Minnie told me—quite private, sir, you understand, but such as you know something of him, and jumped when you met him in the passage the other day, I thought I'd tell you."

Dr. Seeley looked at Mrs. Smith with a slightly puzzled look. Two days before he had stumbled on Gordon Clarke in the passage, and he had started indeed, but he did not think Mrs. Smith had seen.

"Well?" he said.

Mrs. Smith looked up hesitatingly, and then plucked.

"Why this, sir," she said. "He's lent 'em money, sir, I never liked Mr. Clarke, and seen' that you know something of him, and seen' that he's tormenting Miss Minnie nearly to death, I thought I'd better tell you. But he's worrying her that's what he is, sir, and I thought you'd better know."

Dr. Seeley's heart grew oddly heavy under his thick coat. A sudden vision of a fair, pale face, with wide, tearful eyes, flashed up before him, and he sighed again. Yet what had he to do with Mrs. Smith's lodgers? He was only the doctor.

All the same his voice sounded a little thick in his own ears as he spoke.

"What is he worrying her about?" he asked.

Mrs. Smith shrugged her shoulders.

"Why, marriage, I believe, sir, though you'd never think it, seen' he's forty if he's a day, and hard-faced and nasty into the bargain, and she's as fresh as a daisy when things are all right, and I thought p'raps—p'raps you might 'elp her a bit, sir."

"I?" Dr. Seeley wondered if he were flushing under his tan. He wondered if Mrs. Smith were aware of the sudden-rush of blood to his head.

"I! Really, I don't know. I'll see. It may be nothing—I may not be able to interfere, and you know you are always imagining things, Mrs. Smith. You're a true woman."

Mrs. Smith curtsied, not knowing whether to accept it as a compliment or not, and Dr. Seeley went upstairs.

He went up slowly, with his head bent, with that curious vision of a girlish face still before his eyes, and opened Mr. Glenny's sitting-room door.

He opened it so suddenly that Minnie, bent face downward in a chair, had not time to spring to her feet.

She faced him with tears running from her eyes, with her handkerchief crushed in her hand, and attempted to rise.

For a bare second he stood. Then he closed the door quickly behind him, and strode across the room.

Sometimes he tells her to this day that he did not know what he was doing—that he took her hand without knowing it, that the hoarse words broke unconsciously from his lips, but she does not care.

"Minnie-Minnie," he cried. "What is the matter?"

Her lips trembled.

"It is nothing—oh, Dr. Seeley, don't look at me like that. I shall be all right in a moment."

He still held her hands.

"Is it your father?" he asked, and he saw the tears well up afresh, but she did not reply.

"Tell me what is worrying you," he went on. Then suddenly his heart stopped beating, and his breath seemed to stop in his throat, for he knew in a moment that Minnie's was the one face in the world for him. The hands that held hers trembled a little, and then he clutched them tighter.

"Minnie," he cried, "tell me. Let me help you. I want to help you. I love you. Look into my eyes, darling. I'm poor, but I should never dare to speak, and I can only offer you a poor sort of home! But I love you. I'll give you my whole life to trying to make you happy, darling, if you can bring yourself to care a little for me."

She looked up and the last shred of color fled from her face.

"I can't," she stammered.

"—Last night—I promised—Mr. Clarke—"

Dr. Seeley caught his breath.

"What?" he cried.

"I promised to marry him," said Minnie, slowly. She did not add that she had promised for her father's sake—for the sake of the help and food and nourishment Gordon had promised them.

Dr. Seeley looked at her long and steadily, and then drew his breath again with an air of relief.

"You don't care for him," he cried suddenly. "I can see it in your face, and what I have to tell you won't hurt you, but he prepared for a shock. He—he is married already. He doesn't know his wife is alive. He half killed her three years ago, and he left her for dead, but I pulled her through, and she is my house-keeper now. I tried to get her to prosecute him, but she would not. She doesn't care so long as she can hide from him. And—"

"Minnie—look up—do you love me?" There was no mistaking the look he saw in her face, and he caught her in his arms.

"My little girl," he said.

When Gordon Clarke came home that night a surprise in the form of Dr. Seeley awaited him. He came home with a special license in his pocket, with the knowledge that Mr. Abel Johnson was at death's door, and that the advertisements had brought no news of the missing daughter, and now Dr. Seeley awaited him with the news that his first wife was alive!

It was an ugly blow and for a moment Dr. Seeley was half afraid of Gordon's yellow face. But, after all, it was no use, and the savage malice that flashed up in his eyes died away again into a hideous smile.

"Alive is she?" he asked. "It's just like her—just my luck that she should come between me and—"

He broke off, and Dr. Seeley rose to his feet.

"Thank God she has come between you," he said. "You would have broken Minnie's heart."

But that was not quite what Gordon meant, and Dr. Seeley did not realize it until three weeks afterwards when he and Minnie were about to start for their honeymoon with an invalid in tow. Then it was Minnie who saw the dying Abel Johnson's advertisement to his long-lost daughter to come back, and pointed it out to her father.

Glenny hesitated, and then, "He was a hard, cruel man," he said, "but, perhaps—as he is dying it might do him good to see you—his daughter's child. Perhaps we'd better see what it means, Min."

And that was how, a little later, Dr. Seeley found to his surprise that he had married a rich wife—Pearson's Weekly.

BUTTER MAID OF ZERBST.

Legend of a Quaint Statue in a Town in Germany.

The ancient town of Zerbst, in Germany is preparing to erect a new column on which to set one of its two butter maidens. The butter maidens are among the most remarkable of the city's curiosities. One of the figures is 440 years old and the other, 650. An extremely old legend explains them in this way:

Many centuries ago no one could buy butter inside of the town of Zerbst because the city tax was so high that the peasants refused to enter the gates. Consequently, house-keepers had to walk many miles to a place outside the city called the Butter Dam, where the peasants had established a butter market. At last a cunning took pity on the women of Zerbst. She appealed to the authorities of the town, but they declined to lower the tax. Finally, finding that all appeals were in vain, the cunning offered to pay the city authorities a golden dollar for every foot of distance by which the butter market was moved nearer to the city. Her fortune lasted just sufficiently to pay at this rate for moving the butter market to the spot in front of the Town Hall, where the butter maidens stand now.

According to this story the butter maidens were placed there as a memorial of the worthy deed. One of the figures is shown with a big round pat of butter in her hand. The other holds a great bag of money.

An ancient tradition provides that whenever the wooden column on which the figure stands is to be replaced by a new one, the one figure must not be removed until the other one is put up, so that the town shall never be without a butter maiden.

JUST BY EATING.

Vegetables That Are Said to Aid the Health.

Girls who value a good complexion and cheerful spirits are advised to eat plenty of spinach. It contains salts of potassium and iron and other wholesome ingredients. The iron in it is easily assimilated. A vegetable not generally made much of by housewives because it is among the less expensive kinds, it is put in first place by the food experts and deserves more prominence in public esteem.

People troubled with poor memories are urged to eat mustard. The seed of the mustard plant is credited with very quickening, invigorating properties said to have direct influence on those brain cells that have to do with forgetting and remembering.

Nervous folks ought to partake often of cheese, which acts as a sedative. They should beware of eating cheese in excess, however, as it is a tax on the digestion. Only moderate consumption is efficacious.

A too steady diet of potatoes is the bane of both body and mind.

Apples are now held to contain much sustenance for the brain and to have an excellent invigorating effect on the system. Apples contain phosphorus and also malic acid, which is most beneficial for people under mental strain or who habitually do work which prohibits exercise. The apple should not be munched between times, but taken as a component part of the regular meals.

KING AND PARLIAMENT

Pen Picture of a Brilliant Scene at Westminster

The London Times published a vivid word picture of the scene in the House of Lords when King Edward opened Parliament in State recently, from which the following extracts are taken:

The Peers, as on former occasions, gave up the greater part of their House to their ladies, and limited themselves to two of their front benches, and to improvised seats on the floor, where, in course of time, they themselves made a glowing picture, with an exceedingly flattering frame, on two sides at least, of dazzling brilliance and beauty. They were all in their crimson velvet mantles, distinguishable as to their rank in the peerage, therefore, by the number of ermine bars, but in many cases otherwise disguised in these robes that are reserved for State occasions. But the ladies, behind them on each side of the House, had come out in their lightest color. The darker tints were so generally avoided that the few exceptional dresses in warm color served only to emphasize the general effect of a glittering silver setting to a picture of the Peers in crimson and white and gold. There were Peers' ermine mantles, too, with the covetous emine denoting rank, and coronets whose glittering pearls, raised or not raised, on points, or strawberry leaves, told also of distinctions of rank, and there were Coronation robes here and there, and also trains; but, the day being fine, there was no close wrapping up of the brilliant costumes; the glow of the satin and brightness of silk, and richness of lace and embroidery, and softness of swansdown and tulle, and the sparkle of diamonds, and the glow of a sweet flower skillfully disposed where the poet swore he would never plant a thorn—all these were well open to the gaze long before the moment when, on former occasions, they have been revealed only in a wonderful transformation scene on the Sovereign's arrival.

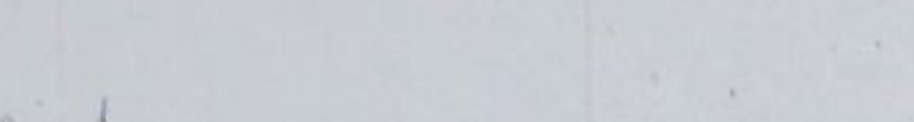
FAIRYLAND ON EARTH.

It was not only on the floor that the Peers found themselves delighting in this beautiful setting. The light balcony, which, starting from the canopy of the Throne at the southern end of the House, turns at the angles and skirts each side of the Chamber, was filled also with brilliantly-costumed and bejeweled ladies. Most people know that this balcony skirts the center of a fine, richly-carved, and lofty oak paneling, reaching from the floor to the stained glass windows. Above the balcony, in what appears to be the way in which the company is opening observed from time to time, and beauties enter as if they came through the wall on a magic summons from fairyland. The opening closes, and they adorn the paneling, and the composition of this brilliant picture, see a great blank space of oak wall unfilled, and turn your attention to another part of the balcony was filled from the fairyland and nothing to show how the presence had happened. This is what change had happened at the House of Lords can be done by surprise. The barons who got us Magna Charta fill up niches between the windows, and have guardian angels to keep them company; but these angels are, with all their gilding, dark in comparison with the bright company that comes from the Kings and Queens, from the Conqueror onwards, looking down from the stained glass windows shut out, to tell the truth, rather much of the light of heaven from these scenes; but the electric light which now takes the place of the sun in darkened interiors is increasingly turned on from time to time, and the old Kings and Queens, who have faded their day, are in their turn thrown into obscurity. Their successors and their modern anagnath are illuminated, and it is only the emblems of their ancient Royal houses on the deeply-painted ceiling, and whatever else of decorative has survived to serve as a decorative purpose in Parliament, that is allowed to assist in the business of the day. The canopy of the gilded throne monopolizes, and picturesquely, too, the greater part of the southern balcony, but from between the coronal pillars of that canopy it could be seen that there also ladies were seated; and in the easterly corner fittingly sat a visitor from China, and due south, another from an equatorial clime.

THE ROYAL PARTY.

There were few incidents during the waiting, only once an order of ceremonial from the balcony without causing anything but good-humored commotion. At length appeared the Prince of Wales and the other members of the Royal Family who were expected—the Princess Christian, Princess Henry of Battenberg, Princess Margaret of Connaught, and Prince Christian and his daughter, Princess Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein. The Prince took his State chair to the right of the King and Queen's State chairs on the Throne. The others sat on chairs on the west side of the House, arranged in line with the front Opposition bench and not far from the Queen's State chair. The company, of course, received them standing, and sat down only when the Prince was seated. He wore his Duke's robes over his uniform. His solitary position until the arrival of the State procession was most conspicuous.

Present by the stir of the Gentleman-at-Arms and the opening of



LITERARY EFFORTS.

"Blamed if a school excuse ain't as hard to write as a whole love-

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