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THE WOOING OF ERNA

"Do not try to find me. I have made my plans carefully, and shall be out of reach by the time you are reading this. Besides, I could not return. Lovingly, gratefully, Erna Marsh."

It was a strange and startling step for a girl of her age and prospects; but to one who knew her character, it was not so surprising. Indeed, one who undertakes to shape destiny with his own hands is likely, in the end, to take the very step the consequence of which will defy any prearranged fate.

Erna had studied the matter carefully, so that when she left her room and emerged into the great upper hall, she knew precisely what to do. She did not attempt to leave the Castle by the great main door, but stole noiselessly down the great staircase, and back to the west entrance, where the fastenings were less massive, and where the door closed with a spring lock.

So at last she was out on the moonlit sward, looking back at the Castle which might have been her home had she so willed it.

"I can never retrace this step," she murmured. "If I could, I would not take it. I may find neither forgetfulness nor happiness where I am going; but at least I may be able to avoid wrecking other lives than my own. On my own head be all that comes from this moment!"

She was a bold, self-reliant girl, but she could not turn her back on ease, security and luxury without a tremor of terror; for while all this lay there, still within reach, the great unknown lay before her. As yet there was time. In one short hour it would be too late.

She cast one longing look up at the old turret of the Castle, and then with a sob turned and sped away.

"As I have sown, I must reap," she murmured. "Anything is better than to remain in that world now."

It was now that her sturdy, independent life at Aubrey told in her favor. She trudged shivering, indeed, through the woods to a side gate in the wall, but her step was firm and steady, and the faltering was but a natural timidity of the maiden, all of whose instincts were drawing her back from the stock from her obstinate determination was making her take.

She had timed everything carefully, and a six-mile walk through the silent country, with only the silver light of the moon to light her path, brought her to a railway station where a train stopped in a few minutes, which would take her to Bolton-on-Hill, where again she could make quick connection for Liverpool.

It was morning when the great seaport town was reached, and Erna took a cab for a hotel, the name of which was on a card she kept for reference. It was the Maritime Hotel, a respectable, middle class house, the mere thought of which would have given a chill of horror to the members of that world which Erna had turned her back upon forever.

Later in the day, Erna ordered a cab and gave this direction to the driver: "Globe Theatre, back door!"

The man gave her a quick glance of inquiry, which Erna bore with equanimity, having wit enough to comprehend that she was taken for an actress, and therefore a fit object of curiosity.

At the theatre she told the man to wait. She asked for Mr. Hutchins, and was requested to send in her card. She wrote on a piece of paper which was handed to her, "Margaret Haddon," and the man took it away. She wrote the name without hesitation, which proved that she had already thought of it.

When the doorman returned, he requested her to "step this way," which she did, and, after endangering the integrity of her limbs, was ushered into a rather dingy room, in which a gentleman and a lady were talking.

The lady was very beautiful, but with something cruel in her dark eyes, and in her voice, which, at the moment Erna entered, was pitched somewhat high, and was uttering words of unmistakable meaning.

"I tell you, Hutchins, I won't play again until that creature is dismissed. She is a—"

Erna shrank back at the description that followed, and Mr. Hutchins looked unutterably miserable as he glanced at Erna and then at the fury of a woman who was indulging in vituperation the very farthest from lady-like.

"My dear Mrs. Forster!" he protested, "I will get to the bottom of any torma. I will do anything in reason to please you."

"Tonight, then," said Mrs. Forster, "or not a line from me."

"It shall be as soon as I can go to her," he said, absently.

The beautiful woman laughed triumphantly, and turned to go. As she did so her bold dark eyes fell on Erna, and she took her in with a cool, impudent stare. Erna merely drew aside to let her pass. She knew her for the famous actress, whose success in heroic drama was so pronounced.

Mr. Hutchins watched his leading lady go, and then turned to Erna with a sigh and a look of annoyance. In his hand he held her card, to which he referred as he tried to recall what her business with him might be.

"You wished to see me—er—"

He hesitated and glanced over Erna's beautiful face and perfect figure.

"I wished to see you concerning an engagement with your company," she answered, a blush overspreading her face.

"You—er—belong to the profession?" he queried, studying her again, and finding her remarkably attractive.

"No," she answered with a directness that impressed him; "I have been only an amateur, but wish to join the profession."

"He shook his head. "There are so many who think they can act. Excuse me, but it is the truth."

"I know it," she replied, "and therefore I have come to you to make a proposition. Try me, without remuneration, in any part you may select."

Mr. Hutchins looked doubtful, but in

his mind was the thought that a woman with such a face, figure and voice could surely be useful. Why not put her in the place of the actress so objectionable to the leading lady?

"Have you ever seen 'The Spider's Web'?" he asked, abruptly.

"Yes, and know most of the lines," she replied.

"Do you think you could qualify for the part of Jane Ordway to-night?" he demanded.

"I am ready now," she answered.

He glanced at her in a puzzled way. He was not accustomed to women of so few words. Then he said:

"Rehearsal will be called in half an hour. You may take your place and we shall see what you can do."

"Yes, sir,"

"Er—by the way!" and he rubbed his chin in a troubled fashion. "Do try to get along with Mrs. Forster. She is a Tartar, but I can't get along without her."

"I will do my best," Erna said, feeling repugnance enough for the woman, but having no conception of the importance of her words.

CHAPTER XXX.

"Er—you will return in half an hour," said Mr. Hutchins, as Erna rose to go.

"I will be here," replied Erna, in such a decided tone that the manager nodded his head approvingly.

"And," he added, detaining her again, "about your name. Now I think—"

"My name," said Erna hastily, "is—"

"My dear young lady," interrupted the manager, "I have no doubt your name to you is a beautiful one; but a name is sometimes half the battle. Now, it has occurred to me that Gladys Gurnee would be an excellent name."

"But," interposed Erna again.

The manager waved his hand good-naturedly.

"Please don't combat me," he said. "Gladys is a favorite with the public just now; and Gurnee, with the accent on the double 'e,' will be at once aristocratic and attractive. Shall it be Gladys Gurnee?"

Erna laughed at his insistence. But, after all, what difference did it make to her what her name was? The one she had chosen had been made up of family names. Perhaps this would be better.

"Very well," she said; "let it be Gladys Gurnee."

"That's right," he said, rubbing his hands. "If Mrs. Forster had only been half as amenable to reason," he lowered his voice and looked doubtfully at the door, "she would have done twice as well."

"But I think Mrs. Forster a great actress," said Erna, smiling.

"Certainly, certainly! A wonderful actress; but think what she might have been! Theodor Kemble's creature!" he sighed as he said it. "However, she would be plain Mrs. Forster, and you might as well hope to change the course of the stars as Mrs. Forster. I hope you will get along with her."

"I hope so," and Erna moved toward the door again.

The manager reflected once more, and once more retained Erna.

"Er—Miss Gurnee—how well it sounds!—I wonder if you would not wish to be presented to Mrs. Hutchins?"

She is such a motherly creature! and you are—ahem!—you seem to be rather different from—in short, you might like to know some one who might protect you from—You know an actress is sometimes subjected to—Eh?"

It was very incoherent, but Erna understood, and was grateful. Her lonely condition had troubled her.

"Thank you," she answered, warmly.

"If it would not be an intrusion on Mrs. Hutchins, I should be very grateful for her countenance."

"Just what I thought!" exclaimed the pleased manager. "Ah! if you should only turn out to be a good actress! You have a fine voice, Miss—er—Gurnee."

Erna smiled at the delight he took in the name he had given her. She asked him to dismiss the cab at the door; and then followed him to where Mrs. Hutchins was.

"My wife, Miss Gurnee!" said the manager. "Mother Miss Gladys Gurnee, an applicant for admission to our company. She will attend rehearsal, and try her hand to-night. Mother does the heavy parts, Gertrude Mortimer is her stage name."

"Oh, yes," said Erna, charmed by the motherly face of the manager's wife, "I remember, she plays Lady Fortinbras in 'The Spider's Web'."

It was a commonplace thing to say; but, said with Erna's manner and in her voice, it completed the conquest of the manager, who evidently was proud of his wife.

Mrs. Hutchins, on her part, had quickly passed from startled wonderment at Erna's extraordinary beauty to a motherly sympathy. She seemed, somehow, to comprehend, better than her husband, the difference between Erna and the world she had entered; and the subdued expression of pain in the wonderful brown eyes appealed at once to her woman's heart.

"Sit down, my dear, and remain with me until rehearsal," she said.

Erna was glad then to feel that she had made these friends in her new life; and the time was to come when, humble as they were, they were to be of incalculable service.

"You have been on the stage before?" queried Mrs. Hutchins, when she and Erna were left alone.

"Only as an amateur. I do not pretend to be an actress."

"Your friends do not approve?" said the manager's wife in a gentle tone.

A flush rose to Erna's face. She had half-expected to be asked the question; but somehow the manner of this was different from what she had anticipated. She hesitated a moment; then answered, with her proud head a little up-lifted:

CORNS CURED! PUTNAM'S PAINLESS - CORN EXTRACTOR

doing this because it seems to me that it is right to do it. I am not stage-struck; I do not believe I shall make a name on the stage. I come here merely because I feel that I can learn to act; and I do love it. Won't you please to believe in me, Mrs. Hutchins?"

There were pride, dignity, and the most winning sweetness mingled in this appeal and explanation, and Mrs. Hutchins found herself unable to do anything but take the little gloved hand in her and pet it in a motherly way.

"My dear, my dear!" she said, kindly, "I knew there was a sorrow in your life, and my heart went out to you. We'll say no more about it; and if you like you shall be under my wing."

"I shall be so grateful!" said Erna, the tears starting to her eyes. It was so different from the hard reception she had met herself for.

"There, there!" ejaculated the good woman. "Now, ought you not to study your lines a little? I suppose you take the part of Violet Marsden."

"I think so. It is the part made vacant by the actress who has offended Mrs. Forster."

Mrs. Hutchins shook her head and sighed.

"My dear, I hope you will contrive to get along with Mrs. Forster," she said.

"I shall try. Is there any special course I must take?"

"Don't act too well; and try to be less beautiful," replied Mrs. Hutchins, in a tone of whimsical distress.

"Mrs. Forster surely has no need of jealousy," said Erna. "She is a far better actress than I can hope to be; and is certainly no less beautiful," she added with a blush.

In her own mind Mrs. Hutchins was of the opinion that Erna was far too beautiful to be satisfactory to the leading lady; but she did not say so. It was needless to anticipate trouble.

"Well," she sighed, "here are your lines."

"I know them," said Erna, as she took the book.

"Oh," ejaculated Mrs. Hutchins.

"Yes," said Erna, flushing a little, "I had determined to apply to Mr. Hutchins, and in consequence studied the plays he has been bringing out."

"Oh," ejaculated Mrs. Hutchins, again.

At rehearsal Erna did neither very well, nor very badly, and Mrs. Forster was at once scornful and complaisant, while the manager was well enough satisfied. He merely pointed out to Erna where it might be well to put a little more emphasis and a little more spirit; and said to his wife:

"At this rate she will do for me, and won't rouse the bile of Mrs. Forster."

Erna, however, was not a diplomat. She was quite ready to do nothing intentionally to offend the actress; but it did not occur to her in sober earnest to refrain from doing her best, in order that she might not offend.

She had been a little nervous at the rehearsal, and had not been somewhat annoyed by the eager attention of some of the men of the company. In the evening she forgot the men and lost her nervousness.

The part of Violet Marsden was a small one; but offered opportunities for elaborate dressing, and some good acting. The costumes were cheap, but showy gowns, but when Erna made her first entrance on the stage the effect was instantaneous. If the gowns had been of finest silk, and the jewels real diamonds, instead of paste, they could hardly have produced a more decided sensation.

The neck was cut low, the arms were bare, and Erna's beautiful head was poised with a queenly grace that for a moment stupefied the audience, and then caused it to burst forth in a thunder of applause. Mrs. Forster, from

behind the scenes, looked and heard, and ground her small, white, even teeth. Her jealousy was like madness.

But if she hated Erna for her looks, afterward hated her still more for her success in her part. The actress who had been displaced had never done so well. Not that Erna was perfect in all the little details of stagecraft, but that she filled the role with life and reality. And more than all, that her voice seemed to cast a spell on its hearers.

Erna was an immediate success; and Mr. Hutchins was torn between the delight of that fact and the misery of knowing what the effect on Mrs. Forster would be.

"You have done remarkably well," he said to Erna.

"You have had a triumph, Miss Gurnee," said the leading man, impressively.

It had been an immediate victim to her beauty.

"The next time you make that last exit," cried Mrs. Forster, coming up with flashing eyes, and addressing Erna, "don't try to get applause on it. I won't have my lines spoiled."

The two men looked at each other in consternation. It was in this way that the leading lady began with each woman who seemed to be at all in her way.

Mrs. Forster, and answered, quietly: "I had no intention of spoiling your lines. I do not know how else I should get off the scene."

"Then discover some way," cried the actress, angrily. "I won't have my lines spoiled for any pet of the manager."

"My dear Mrs. Forster!" the manager began, deprecatingly, but she interrupted him contemptuously.

"What isn't she a pet? I wonder Mrs. Hutchins doesn't put a stop to her sort of thing."

The vulgarity and viciousness of this speech made even the long-suffering manager flush with anger.

"Mrs. Forster, I will not permit such language," he said.

"Won't you do it?" cried the furious actress.

"What will you do to it?"

Erna did not stop to listen to any more, but left, and went hastily to her dressing room, her cheeks burning and her eyes flaming with indignation. Mrs. Hutchins questioned her, and Erna, after some difficulty, told her what had been said, adding:

"I am sorry, but it will be impossible for me to remain after this."

But Mrs. Hutchins was up in arms. The same thing had happened before, and the manager had yielded his right rather than enrage the virago Mrs. Hutchins declared that it should not happen again. Mrs. Forster was under contract and must remain, or make a large forfeit.

She urged this on the manager, and he, with a sinking heart, agreed that he would inform the actress that she must behave herself. Erna, after much urging, agreed to make one more trial.

"You see," said the manager, "she is almost indispensable, but she can't be permitted to keep the company in hot water all the time. She shan't treat you so again."

"But she may refuse to act," returned Erna, "and I have no wish to make you suffer for my sake."

"She must act unless she is ill," said Mrs. Hutchins.

She will see her the first thing in the morning," said the manager.

So the following morning he went to see the leading lady. His wife and Erna waited for his return, the one with uneasiness, and the other with curiosity. His face was a study when he returned.

"Well," demanded his wife.

"Well," he replied, "I don't know what to make of it. She was as gentle as she could be, and promised everything I asked."

"Then that is well settled," said Mrs. Hutchins.

"I hope so," he said, rather dolefully. "Hope so," she repeated. "Why, it is so."

"My dear," he said, "it isn't natural. Mrs. Forster is too satanic, if I must say it, to give in in this way without meaning mischief. She means to play me a trick of some sort."

(To be continued.)

HOW BEES FIND WAY TO HIVE.

Special Sense of Direction—Not Guided by Sight or Odor.

The directive sense which is possessed by bees is the object of researches made by M. Gaston Bonnier, of Paris, and he seems to prove that bees possess a special sense like that of carrier pigeons.

Bees can fly for two miles from the hive and are then able to return after gathering their supply of honey. Langstroth and others suppose that vision comes into play and that bees can see for a great distance and can also note objects on the way so as to find their path. Others, with Dabrot, suppose that the bees are guided by the sense of smell and that they can smell flowers at one and a half miles.

The author makes experiments to prove that bees can return to the hive without using either sight or odor. At to eight, he takes bees to a distance of one or two miles from the hive in a closed box. They always fly back to the hive when released. The same is true when their eyes are covered, so that sight is not essential. As regards odor, experiments seem to prove that bees perceive odors at only short distances. When a needle dipped in ether is brought near the head of the bee, it shows signs of perceiving the odor, but not so when the needle is placed back of him or near other organs.

Bonier, when the organs of smell (antennae) are removed entirely, the bees will return to the hive. M. Bonnier makes the following experiment. At 600 feet from the hive he places a supply of syrup, and the bees soon find it, proceeding to and fro to the hive. Such bees he marks with green colored powder. He then places a second supply of syrup at the same distance from the hive but spaced at twenty feet from the former. Other bees are now engaged in the to and fro movement to this point, but these are not the same individuals as the green marked bees, who are still working on the first supply, and the marks show this in red.

We thus have two distinct sets of bees, and we see that they can distinguish two directions which form a very acute angle. We seem to have here a special directive sense which does not reside in the antennae but probably in the cerebellar ganglia. Other facts may be cited in evidence of the directive sense of bees.

SHORT.

(Detroit Free Press.)

"Do you believe in long engagements?"

"Not in the summer time. I never accept the proposal of any man whose vacation lasts longer than two weeks."

Willing to Oblige.

Lady (sitting for portrait)—Please make my mouth small. I know it is large, but I wish it to appear quite tiny.

Artist (politely)—Certainly, madam. If you prefer, I will leave it out altogether.—Boston Transcript.

Women's Needless Suffering Full of Aches. Frightful Back Pains. Pale and Nervous.

With the Use of Dr. Hamilton's Pills, a Wife and Mother Saved From Death.

A few years ago doctors considered that only back pains and bladder disorders were traceable to the kidneys; but to-day science proves that many of the most fatal and dreaded diseases have their source in irregular kidney action.

Such was the case with Mrs. Anna A. Rodriguez, a well-known resident of Valencia—read her experience: "For a long time I suffered with failing strength and nagging headaches. My condition grew steadily worse, my limbs became bloated and shaky. I was slow and thin, felt rheumatic pains, dizziness and chills. I unfortunately didn't suspect my kidneys and was nearly dead when I discovered the true cause of my sufferings. I read so much about the wonderful health and strength that comes to all who use Dr. Hamilton's Pills that I felt sure they would help me. Such blessings of health and comfort I got from Dr. Hamilton's Pills. I can't describe. They speedily put me right and their steady use keeps me active, energetic, strong and happy. I strongly urge others to regulate and tone their system with Dr. Hamilton's Pills of Mandrake and Butternut."

For perfect health use Dr. Hamilton's Pills frequently—avoid all food which seems to distress and take as much exercise as possible.

No greater medicine exists than Dr. Hamilton's Pills for the cure of indigestion, constipation, flatulence, liver, bladder and kidney trouble. Refuse substitutes for Dr. Hamilton's Pills, 25c. per box, or five boxes for \$1.00, at all dealers or The Catarrozone Company, Kingston, Ont.

"There's Something in the English After All."

I've been meditating lately, that when everything is old, there's something in the English after all. They may be too bent on conquest, and too eager after gold.

But there's something in the English after all.

Though their sins and faults are many—and I won't exhaust my breath by endeavoring to tell you of them all—yet they have a sense of duty, and they'll face it to the death.

So there's something in the English after all.

If you're wounded by a savage foe and bugles sound "Retire," there's something in the English after all. You may bet your life they'll carry you beyond the zone of fire.

For there's something in the English after all.