

Right at Last

It was evident to Stuart Villiers that Bertie and Miss Mazurka had some secret understanding between them, and that there might be some plot in connection between them in which he, Stuart Villiers, had a share, but he was, to tell the truth, neither impatient nor curious.

Since he had lost his beautiful Joan life had become so dreary and vapid an affair that he did not think it possible for anything to arise which should have interest for him.

Perhaps Bertie and Miss Mazurka were plotting something for his amusement.

Well, if they were, he thought, with a regretful sigh, he was afraid they would be doomed to disappointment.

He had found nothing to amuse him since the death of the beautiful girl he had meant to make his wife, and not even the duel had aroused him out of the melancholy which beset him.

"I am a member of the earth," he muttered, as he looked out of the window upon the passers-by. "Not a soul of them but has some object, some ambition in life. But I! I might as well be dead as living! Yes, it is a pity that Bertie did not put an end to so useless, so purposeless an existence."

Earl Villiers, with more money than he knew what to do with, and I would willingly exchange lots with the bricklayer's laborer there, who spends his days carrying loads of mortar up a ladder and his evenings with a wife and children, who love him and whom he loves. Life! Life is worth living when love is thrown into the bargain, but otherwise—"

He lit another cigar, and was thinking that he might as well stroll down the club, for the sake of strolling back again, when the servant announced Miss Mazurka and Lord Dewbury.

Stuart Villiers smiled amusedly. Their little plot was evidently in progress, and they had come to burst it on him like a bomb.

"Well," he said, as he shook hands. "What are you two going about, the conspirators for, and against what government are you plotting now? Have you got it in that scalding bag of yours, Miss Mazurka?"

"I haven't got any dynamite, but I've got bad news for you, Lord Villiers," she said, gravely.

"Really?" he said, with a faint smile. "Well, what is it? I am used to bad news," he added, the smile fading from his face. "Bertie, have a brandy and soda. Miss Mazurka, strengthen yourself for your duty with a glass of wine. No! Well, the news must be bad indeed. What is it? Do you mind my smoking?"

"No," said Miss Mazurka, solemnly. "Tobacco is a great comfort, isn't it? And you'll want consolation directly."

He smiled sadly. "Thanks! shall I? But don't look so grave. And you, Bertie, haven't you anything to say?"

"She'll be spokeswoman," said Bertie, cautiously. "I can corroborate what she is going to tell you; I say that beforehand."

"Miss Mazurka doesn't need any corroboration," said Stuart Villiers, with a kindly smile. "If she said that the moon was made of green cheese I should believe her. Now, then, there's your drink, Bertie, and a glass of wine for you, Miss Mazurka. Go on, please. Here I sit prepared for anything, and he leans back in his chair and smiled at them.

"It's more serious than you think," said Miss Mazurka, gravely. "Now, my lord, you are the owner of the Arrowfield property, ain't you?"

"Yes, unfortunately," he answered, sharply. "Why unfortunately?" she demanded.

"Because I don't know what on earth to do with it—unless lose it at Monte Carlo," he answered, with a smile. "But go on, you have begun in an interesting fashion."

"That property is very large, isn't it?"

"Very," he admitted. "Were't you very much surprised when you heard that it had been left to you?" asked Miss Mazurka.

"No, I thought a moment."

"Not very. Rather, I had always understood that Lord Arrowfield—my uncle—would leave it to me, but he was eccentric, and there were passages in his will which meant in his leaving the estate to someone else, some neutral relation, if there was one."

"But there was none?"

"I can't say. I only know that he left it to me. Stop!" he said, with a shade of earnestness. "He left it to me, or at least the only will that we found, bequeathed it to me, but there was a strange incident in connection with it."

"What was that?"

"A letter," he said. "He wrote me a letter just before he died stating that he had disinherited me."

"Yes, in this letter?"

"You destroyed that letter?" asked Miss Mazurka.

Stuart Villiers raised his brows. "Destroyed it? Certainly not!" he said, rather coldly. "On the contrary, I preserved it carefully, and have it by me now. If a letter will had been found the letter would have gone a long way in proving its genuineness."

"I see," said Miss Mazurka. "And if a letter will had been found, my lord, you would lose the estates? You would be a—forgive me—a poor man again?"

"Yes," he answered, "the greatest curiosity. But I was thinking it would be painful to her. I should like to see her very much. Will you tell her so, please?"

"I will tell her so," said Bertie, "and I will arrange a meeting. Will you meet her at Deerecombe World the day after to-morrow?"

"By me, through an accident."

Stuart Villiers raised his brows. "Tru't is stranger than fiction," he said, with a smile. "A later will found! Well, it is not strange that letter indicated the existence of such a will. And I am no longer master of Deerecombe, am I?"

"Yes, you are master still, until the new claimant ousts you," said Bertie. "He will not have much trouble in doing that," said Stuart Villiers, quietly. "Let him but prove his case to me, and he shall stop into my shoes without any fear from the lawyers. Why does he not make his claim at once?"

"The will was only discovered a short time since," said Miss Mazurka. "And you will give up the estates at once, as soon as you yourself are satisfied that this new claimant really has a title to them?"

"At once," he said. "Who is the claimant? I know of no nearer relation to Lord Arrowfield than myself."

"It is not a 'he,' but a 'she,'" said Miss Mazurka. "It is his granddaughter."

Stuart Villiers thought a moment. "His granddaughter, the daughter of the late countess, who lived apart from him! Ah, yes, I see! Well, I wish her joy! May the money bring her more happiness than it has brought me! What—what is her name?"

"Ida Trevelyan," said Miss Mazurka, glibly.

Stuart Villiers started. "Ah, I see!" he said, looking at Bertie. "It was because you thought I was trying to keep this young lady—a friend of yours, no doubt—out of the estates that you wanted to shout me, eh, Bertie?"

Bertie remained silent. "Well, you did me wrong. I looked for this will after day. I would have been the first to hand it to her, and place her in possession, if I had found it. You did me wrong!"

"Yes, I did," stammered Bertie, exchanging a glance with Miss Mazurka. "Ida Trevelyan," murmured Stuart Villiers. "A pretty name, and she is, or was, an actress. Well, with a kind glance at Miss Mazurka, who is none the less worthy of Deerecombe for that."

"Thank you," said Miss Mazurka. "And have you seen the will—the young lady?"

"Yes," said Bertie. "I have seen it. It is a genuine will. Sewell & Humber, the lawyers, have seen it, and declare that it is incontestable."

"I know Sewell & Humber," said Stuart Villiers. "You couldn't have better authorities. And they say it is genuine. Am I mentioned in it?"

"Yes, you are left a sum of money, but—"

"But what?"

"I am afraid it will be only sufficient to pay off the amount you have spent," Stuart Villiers added gravely.

"Well, well! And so I am poor again! And this young lady, what is she like?"

"She is extremely beautiful and as refined as the lady of Deerecombe should be," said Bertie, gravely.

Stuart Villiers nodded. "I am glad of that," he said, quietly. "I should not have liked the old place to pass into unworthy hands. And she is a friend of yours. Are you—forgive me, Bertie—going to marry her?"

Bertie flushed to the roots of his hair. "No," he said, in a low voice. "I am not. I am—only a friend. But though I am not going to marry her, I am acting on her behalf."

"I see, and you have come to propose terms?"

"Yes; you won't find them hard?"

Stuart Villiers raised his brows. "Hard? What are they?"

"These. That in consideration of your giving up all claims to the property, she is willing to forego her claim to the money you have spent, and, of course, to pay you the sum left you in this last will."

Stuart Villiers was silent for a moment. "They are liberal, lenient terms," he said. "I suppose if I chose to fight the will I could keep her out for—years, perhaps?"

"You could, so Sewell & Humber say," assented Bertie.

"But I do not choose to do that," said Lord Villiers. "Satisfy me—satisfy Craddock that the will is genuine, and I will yield everything."

"Craddock is already satisfied. He saw the will this morning. We have just left him," said Bertie.

Stuart Villiers smiled. "You are doing the thing very completely," he said; "but it is just the course I should have wished you to pursue. Very well; I will see Craddock. And I am poor again! Heigho!" and he laughed grimly.

There was a moment's silence; then Miss Mazurka said: "Are you so sorry, my lord?"

"No," he said, after a moment; "not sorry. I was thinking how hard it was for this poor girl to have been kept out of her property all this time, and how eager she must be to take possession. Please tell her that I will do everything in my power to assist her to her own. It is the least I can do."

Bertie looked at Miss Mazurka, and after a moment she said: "And don't you feel any curiosity to see this young lady who has snatched your property from you, my lord?"

"Yes," he answered; "the greatest curiosity. But I was thinking it would be painful to her. I should like to see her very much. Will you tell her so, please?"

"I will tell her so," said Bertie, "and I will arrange a meeting. Will you meet her at Deerecombe World the day after to-morrow?"

have everything ready for you. Craddock shall go down, and someone from Sewell and Humber's, and we'll settle the thing there. I am awfully sorry for you, Villiers!"

"Don't be!" said Stuart Villiers, shaking his head. "I am sick and tired of the money and of my own life. I was hungering for something to happen and I am more than content! Give my compliments to Miss Trevelyan and tell her that I hope she will live at the old World, and that it will bring her more happiness than it could ever bring me—now!" and he turned away with a sigh, as the vision of Joan rose before him.

CHAPTER XLIII.

The news burst upon Deerecombe like a bombshell.

It reached Colonel Oliver in the form of a letter from Craddock, who was held fast and tight in the hands of Bertie and Miss Mazurka, the latter of whom inspired him with a dread that amounted to awe.

He was to do exactly as she told him, or take his chance of going before a judge and jury and receiving his deserts.

Every day Miss Mazurka went down to Chain Court and gave him his orders.

He was not to open his lips respecting the will and Joan's identity to anyone, and he was to pay unhesitating and unquestioning obedience to her and Lord Bertie, or it would be worse for him.

Old Craddock had been very much shaken by the exposure of his villainy and Mordaunt Royce's, and he was literally troubled when Miss Mazurka entered the office and fixed her eyes on him.

"You are an awful old scoundrel," she said to him, with a cheerful candor that made him wince; "and I believe it's a shameful neglect of duty on our part not to prosecute you. And well, it does even now if you dare to disobey orders in the very slightest."

"You can depend upon me, my dear Miss Mazurka," croaked he old man. "You can indeed. I'm an honest, straightforward person, but I was weak enough to be led astray by that awful young scoundrel, a boy I picked up from the gutter."

"It's a pity you didn't leave him there," retorted Miss Mazurka. "Well, now you have got to be sure to hold your tongue about the will and Miss Omsby's coming to life again—and, in fact, about everything—until I tell you."

"I'll do my best, my dear Miss Mazurka. I'm a lawyer."

"Yes, I know," interrupted Miss Mazurka, curtly. "I can rely upon you, because I've got you here, and last, and you know it. Now sit down and write to that Colonel Oliver you've told me about, and just say that it was all a mistake about Miss Omsby's being drowned, and that she has come to life again; and you can say that she is among friends, and prefers to remain in seclusion for the present, but that she will come to Deerecombe next Monday, at half-past six. Do you understand that?"

Mr. Craddock assured her that he fully understood and would obey her slightest wish should be law to him.

"Very well, and then give orders and see that the World—that's what it's called, isn't it—is got ready by Monday."

"By Monday!" repeated Miss Mazurka, with a stamp of her foot which made Craddock jump. "Money can do anything, can't it? Very well, then let it do that. Send half a dozen old women into it, and light fires in all the rooms. Do what you like, but have it ready. Miss Omsby will want it by then, and she must have it! Do you hear?"

Yes, Mr. Craddock heard, and it should be done.

"I'll go down myself," he said, rubbing his hands.

"You'd better. But mind, not a word to anyone. If you're asked any question, say you don't know. If you want a written order from Miss Omsby, you shall have it."

"Oh, dear, no, Miss Mazurka's word is enough," he assured her.

"Yes, it is," she said, "and when Miss Mazurka says a thing, she means it. You've done a great deal of this mischief, and now I mean to make you undo some of it, and lose, gratis, for nothing, too."

Mr. Craddock sat down and wrote a cautious note to the colonel, which reached him as he was playing billiard at the club, and sent him flying home with the force of a whirlwind.

"Here, Ben, Julia!" he shouted, bustling into the parlor, where the two girls sat working and wrangling, just as of old; "here's the most astonishing thing you ever heard! 'Pon my word, I think that old fool Craddock must have gone out of his mind. I never heard—"

"I wish you'd let me hear, papa," said Julia, irritably; "whatever is it?"

"I'm trying to tell you, if you'll let me," he retorted. "Why, Joan isn't drowned after all; at least this old fool says so."

The girls opened their mouths and gaped at him, speechless with astonishment.

"Joan—not—drowned!" they exclaimed, at last.

"Not!" he ejaculated, dropping his eyes and slapping the open letter—last fall the recipients of these seeds also participated in the distribution of hundreds of thousands of bulbs, the gardens all along the company's lines ought to be a blaze of glory from the beginning to the end of the coming season.

This gardening scheme is an entirely voluntary one. Not the slightest pressure is put on any of the company's employees to beautify the surrounding stations and section houses by gardens. But if they desire to do so the ground is freely given them, and they also get all the garden supplies necessary free of cost, there being no restrictions whatever.

The Irrigation Department will decorate its grounds with flowers this year, and the Forestry Department in the West is taking a keen interest in the subject in addition to growing flowers, many agents in the West grow vegetables, and thus have little experimental farms at their stations.

War means hardship for all soldiers and hard taxes for all citizens.—New York Tribune.

SUFFERED SINCE HER CHILDHOOD

But Dodd's Kidney Pills Made Mrs. Laprairie a new Woman.

Nipissing Lady Gives An Experience That Should Prove of Immense Value to the Suffering Women of Canada.

Laprairieville, Nipissing District, Ont., April 17. (Special).—After suffering from various forms of kidney ills since she was a child, Mrs. O. Laprairie is a well woman and once more it has been proved that no case of kidney trouble is too severe or too long standing for Dodd's Kidney Pills to cure.

Interviewed regarding her cure, Mrs. Laprairie said:

"Since I was twelve years of age I have suffered from kidney disease. I was always tired. My back would ache and I always had a sharp pain in the top part of my head. My heart also troubled me."

"Hearing of Dodd's Kidney Pills, I gave them a trial, and now I feel like a new woman."

Thousands of Canadian men and women are feeling just Mrs. Laprairie does—as if life had started all over for them—just because they have cured their kidneys with Dodd's Kidney Pills. For the kidneys are the main-spring of life. If they are clogged or out of order the whole body is wrong. Dodd's Kidney Pills always put the kidneys in good working order.

That all the letters say? Doesn't it explain how the mistake occurred? "Not the least."

"Why, this girl mayn't be Joan at all! She may be an impostor!"

The colonel shook his head. "Catch old Craddock being taken in by an impostor!" he said. "Oh, yes, Joan is enough, but how they came to mistake the other girl for her is a mystery. Oh, it's Joan, there's no doubt of it. Confound it all, I did think I'd got rid of that trouble and now here it is back on my hands again! I'm the unluckiest man on earth! Here this girl disappears, and sets a cook-and-bull story of her death in circulation, and now she's turned up again. There's no peace in this world, at least there isn't for me, I think!"

The two girls exchanged glances. "Look here, papa," said Julia, "as to Joan's coming back here it's out of the question. I don't want to see her so weak as to permit her to see anything, and she's that fat, isn't it?"

"That's all very well," growled the colonel; "but I'm her guardian, and I don't want to see her in a bad way, and what can I do?"

"Write to Mr. Craddock and say you don't believe him," said Emmeline, bluntly.

"Pshaw! What's the use of that?" he retorted, impatiently. "I'll say Joan and see the result!"

"No," said Julia, "writing her is as good as nothing. Her mother is just writing her to hear that the report of her death was false, but under the circumstances you must decline to receive her under your roof. It's quite impossible that she should live here if she comes back then Emmeline and I will go, that's plain!"

(To be Continued.)

Shilo's Cure

BEAUTIFY CANADA BY FLOWER GARDEN IS AIM OF RAILWAY

Distribute Seeds and Offer Prizes for Best Display on C. P. R. System.

The floral department of the C.P.R. is following up the spring distribution of flower seeds by the announcement that the prize list is this year to be considerably extended. Last year \$1,000 was distributed in prizes for the best gardens along the line. This year in addition to prizes for the best gardens, there will be prizes also for the best photographs of gardens.

That the competition for these prizes will be keen is certain. Greater enthusiasm than ever is being shown in this scheme for the gridding of the Dominion with a chain of flower gardens; in fact, the scheme has been taken up in such a wholesale way that the spring distribution inaugurated yesterday means the sending out of over 100,000 packages of seeds to agents, sectionmen, and employees living on the company's property, who wish to cultivate flower gardens around their buildings.

These seeds comprise over thirty varieties of the choicest kinds of garden flowers. In addition a large number of seed packages of novelties in the way of new plants, such as geraniums, petunias, and other flowers, are being despatched to central points, from which plants will be distributed later on. Considering that last fall the recipients of these seeds also participated in the distribution of hundreds of thousands of bulbs, the gardens all along the company's lines ought to be a blaze of glory from the beginning to the end of the coming season.

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MARRIAGE IN FEBRUARY

The Betrothal and the Ceremony An Inspiring Wedding Feast.

There are many good things in Miss Wylie's volume. She is in her most optimistic mood in the chapter on "Marriage—Before and After," and since she goes up from so many countries that there are not enough men to "go round" it is gratifying to hear that in Germany at all events things are otherwise. On the authority of a German lady we are told that "an average girl can always get the man she wants as long as she does not want anything to grand or expensive." In her own social circle she has only to make her choice, and her mother does the rest.

With the slightest encouragement on the girl's part matters march rapidly forward. Twenty years ago a young couple were never left an instant to themselves until they were actually married. Nowadays the painful etiquette has been relaxed and the task of marrying has been simplified.

As long as she holds a tennis racket the daintiest waltzer with her willing partner wherever she likes, and a ski tour on the snow covered hills is said to be an even more successful match maker than a game of tennis. It sounds quite charming and so very simple.

On the other hand the ball room "has sunk out of sight as a matrimonial market." In the first place, it is bad form to dance more than twice with the same girl unless one is engaged; in the second place, sitting out corners are unknown, so that the young man naturally feels that his chances are better out of doors, where his preference is not observed by a dozen pairs of sharp watching eyes.

And when he has ascertained the lady's sentiments, or perhaps we ought to say when she has made it plain to him that he may marry her, he puts on his top hat and frock coat and calls on her father, explaining his prospects, receiving an explanation of hers, and if both give satisfaction the great event of the betrothal comes off.

There are delightful details concerning the prescribed behavior of the engaged couple, the German bridal trousseau, and the civil and religious marriage ceremony. When the latter is concluded the party returns to the bride's home, and then begins a festive meal which puts the Germany's power of staying cheerful endurance to the test. It is a mighty meal, an awe-inspiring meal, a really awful meal. The dergman sits between the bride and bridegroom and makes a speech in their honor. Then the father of the bridegroom makes a speech in honor of the bride's family, and the father of the bride makes a speech in honor of the bridegroom's family, and then come the guests, the ladies, everybody on it, but there is nothing left to eat except the wine itself. All this takes some hours, usually from three to seven, and the "stimming" rises from degree to degree, especially after the pointedly ignored departure of the bride and bridegroom. The evening is concluded with a dance, and if many guests are staying in the house, and the bride's mother has caught strength left, there is what is called a "Nachschoppen," a second festivity, the day after.

It is indeed a mighty affair; one might even say that from the mere non-German point of view it is rather too much of a good thing.—From the West-minster Gazette.

YOUR GARDEN.

Plant it. Study catalogues. Choose a variety. Have a succession of blooms. It's a great mistake to have all alike. The sort must be determined by the season.

Flowers plenty may appear on the lawn of good size. One tree and a number of shrubs are for smaller spaces.

In a tiny plot one shrub, or perhaps two, and plants may be the best.

Boxwoods, Judas trees, cypresses and Forsythias all make an early appearance.

Very little later are the spiraea (Ordnal wreath is a beauty), honeysuckles, Wisterias and others.

June is, of course, the month of roses, and sufficient unto the four weeks is the joy thereof.

July, it must be admitted, is not so easily provided for, though there are monthly roses, geraniums and the like.

August shows the althea (rose of Sharon) beginning to produce quantities of its big rose-like blossoms in various reds, pinks, purples and whites. And in the autumn garden chrysantheums and the exquisite cosmos, along with many lesser lights, are ready to start us happily on toward the grim winter season.

These are only a drop in the bucket of floral possibilities.

A FISH OUT OF WATER.

(N. B.—This may be taken either as a joke or, if that fails, as an allegory, to be applied to any English system of education, according to the taste of the reader.)

I caught a herring long ago, And kept him in some 120;

I strained his water every day, Till all the salt was strained away;

And so I taught the little chap To live in water from the tap.

Robbed of his customary brine He had to face a fresh design.

Each afternoon I took about A thimbleful of water out,

Till—though his needs were always small He got along with none at all.

Gentle of heart and soft of roe, He followed where I chose to go.

One day he took a walk with me, Upon the pier at Brightlinges.

Alack! he made a reckless bound, Slipped through a grating and was drowned.

KITCHEN SOUNDS TRANSLATED. (Boston Transcript.)

"This zero weather is great for hardening one," remarked the water as it began to congeal.

"It may hurtle you," snapped the water-pipe, "but it breaks me all up."

DR. WILLIAMS' PINK PILLS IN THE BLOOD

Make the Use of a Tonic Medicine a Necessity.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are an all year round tonic blood-builder, and nerve-restorer. But they are especially valuable in the spring when the system is loaded with impurities as a result of the indoor life of the long winter months. There is no other season when the blood is really so much in need of purifying and enriching, and every case of these Pills helps to make new, rich, red blood. In the spring one feels tired and weak—Dr. Williams' Pink Pills give strength. In the spring the appetite develops the appetite, tone the stomach and aid weak digestion. It is in the spring that poisons in the blood find an outlet in disfiguring pimples, eruptions and boils—Dr. Williams' Pink Pills speedily clear the skin because they go to the root of the trouble in the blood. In the spring anemia, rheumatism, neuralgia, and many other troubles are most persistent because of poor, weak blood, and it is at this time, when all nature regains life, that the blood most seriously needs attention. To improve and fortify the blood, Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are the best. That is why they are the best spring medicine in existence. If you feel the need of a medicine this spring give Dr. Williams' Pink Pills a fair trial and you will rejoice in new health, new strength and new energy, and will be especially fitted to stand the torrid heat which comes a little later.

These Pills are sold by all medicine dealers or sent by mail at 50 cents a box, or six boxes for \$2.50 by The Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

NEW WRINKLES FOR THE GAS STOVE. (Globe Commercial Advertiser.)

The visit I had the other day from the stove demonstrator upset all my respectable ideas about the gas stove. I had an old-fashioned housekeeper, who had just married in a gas range. It was baking a bun of apples when she came in, and the first thing she said was:

"Baking apples in the oven, I suppose. Then she began to tell me how much gas I'd have saved, and how much better baking the apples would have been if I'd put them in a little water on top of the stove on a little tin plate with holes in it with a little water and sugar, and baked them every little while with the syrup until they are tender. Apples in bloom, she called them, and when I tried them, they were just what I wanted. Each apple was as pretty as a picture, and while I can't say that they tasted any better, certainly took a lot less time, and a goodly saved gas, too."

She began on potatoes next. She stuck a metal plate over the gas burners on the range, clapped a round cake tin down over it to see if it fitted, and then—of a couple of inches, and a tin lid outlashed way on top of that stove. By that time she finished showing me the latest tricks about roasting and broiling those potatoes every little while with a small piece of meat in the lower oven, or what I always called a broiler. I meant as well serve gas by cooking with a broiler. She told me to start the cooking on top of the stove, and when the water was boiling nicely just to pop the whole thing into the lower oven.

Then she showed me a trick little tin oven that looked like a hockey puck. She set it down on top of the range, and stood off and looked at it as if a child would look at a new doll.