

## THE MAN FROM THE EAST.

Mrs. Rodney Garland was giving an "At Home," and her house in Dareston-square was thronged with a crowd of "smart" people. In an alcove at the far end of one of the rooms stood a little group of four—two men and two girls.

"I had no idea that you two knew one another!" Exclaimed Hilda Burnaby.

Lord Algie Grenton laughed. He was a good-looking, sunburnt young man of about eight-and-twenty.

"Rather! Eston and I were at the same college together, and a rattling good time we had of it in those days, hadn't we?" he cried.

Eston nodded. He carried barely a year more than the other, yet his strong, active face bore the imprint of a far older man.

The fourth member of the party, Miss Celia Erskine, turned to Lord Grenton with a quick, impulsive movement. She was a bright-looking girl, somewhat sharp-featured, and had green eyes.

"Come along, Algie!" she said. "I want to introduce you to a pet man of mine. And, besides," she added, with a laugh, Dr. Eston would like to talk over old times with Hilda; they have not met for years, you know."

"Well," said Hilda to Eston, when the two had disappeared, "Shall we take her advice?"

"Ah!" he answered, with a sigh, as he seated himself by her side. "It wasn't bad, that old life at Baristoke. I, the country doctor's son, you at the vicarage next door. Yes, I think we were happy!" he added in a tone of reminiscence.

"I am sure we were!" she murmured, a far-away look in her eyes. There was a moment's silence, then she broke into a laugh.

"And now?"

"Now!" he echoed. "Now, by a turn of fortune's wheel, you are an exceptionally wealthy young lady, a 'sensation' of the London season." He paused and glanced at her. "And more perfectly lovely than ever!" he finished with a laugh.

A slight blush crept over her cheek.

"And you?"

"Oh, an outcast as far as society is concerned!" he said with a shrug. "Merely a struggling doctor in the East-end."

"Why didn't you settle in the West?" she asked.

"Because I couldn't. Better to live in the East than starve in the West." He laughed again. "Oh, it isn't so bad, you know. Hard work, but it's interesting, and I like it. Yes, it's my life! He finished, and there was a ring of enthusiasm in his voice.

"I think it's a noble life," she said, gently. "Yet, until now, you have never come to tell me of it?"

He looked her frankly in the face.

"I dare not trust myself!" he said, simply, "even though the turn is the wheel had made it impossible." The smiling look came into his eyes again. "But I have got over it now, little girl! I don't grudge another man what I know I cannot have myself." His glance rested on Lord Algie's figure at the other end of the room. "You see, I know your secret!" he continued softly. "Mrs. Garland told me of the thing that is going to be, and my dearest wish is that you'll be just immensely happy!" he finished abruptly.

She made no reply, and they sat in silence for a few moments. Then suddenly he glanced at his watch and rose to his feet.

"The East is calling. I have to be back to a case by twelve!" he said, holding out his hand. "Good-bye, I shall take to reading the society papers just to hear of Lady Grenton's triumphs!" he added, laughingly.

Then he turned away, and she watched him disappear in search of her aunt. She sank back in her seat, and a sense of unutterable loneliness crept over her. A dramatist came up and began talking to her of his plays, but she hardly heard him and answered in monosyllables.

Presently Lord Algie found her alone once more. She glanced up at his face and saw immediately what was in his mind—that which her aunt had schemed for incessantly, the thing to which she had been driven to give her consent.

He leant a trifle nearer to her, and there was a pleading look on his handsome, careless face. He did not love her, she knew. He was an attractive young man with a title and nothing else beyond a moderate allowance from a relative; she had money, and the combination would mean an agreeable arrangement for carrying on a successful social campaign. She felt a slight shiver run through her at the prospect. He moved to speak.

"Not now, Algie!" she said, hurriedly. "Another time—to-morrow, perhaps!"

Almost at the close of the evening, Celia Erskine sought an opportunity of a few minutes' quiet talk with her.

"I was wondering, dear," she began softly, "whether you knew that Dr. Eston might possibly have been a distinguished West-end physician by now had it not been for a little incident in his youth. You, of course, know his father left him several thousands?"

"He could have bought a good practice with that," she continued meditatively, "and with his cleverness—"

Quite artlessly, the girl with the green eyes chattered on, gradually unfolding a story. As she listened, Hilda went a shade paler, and leant back in her seat. At the conclusion Celia rose and held out her hand to her.

"What made you tell me that?" asked Hilda in a low voice.

The girl with the green eyes smiled.

"Oh, I only thought you'd be interested. Good-night, dear!"

The residents of East Dinton street were considerably astonished the next afternoon at the spectacle of a smart brougham passing through their squalid midst. They were still more interested when they saw it draw up before the tall, gloomy house in which the doctor lived and a young lady alight and give some directions to the coachman.

Hilda, for it was she, knocked at the door and waited. Presently it opened, revealing an elfish-looking boy of about eight with his right arm in a sling. He contemplated her critically.

"Is Dr. Eston in?" she asked.

"No, 'e ain't, but I 'spects 'im 'ome almost d'rectly," he answered. "Will you come in an' wait?" he added, hospitably.

He led the way through the dark passage to a fairly large room. It was evidently the doctor's living apartment.

"Yer see," explained the boy, "Mrs. As-sall 'is 'ousekeeper, is laid up with a bad ankle. So I 'ave to look after 'im myself!"

"What's your name?" asked Hilda, much interested.

"Jimmie Dent. I ain't much good just now!" he said with a pathetic glance towards the arm in a sling. I was runned over by a milk cart!" he added in a burst of confidence. "Orspital was full, so the doc 'ad me 'ere. 'E's goin' to send me to a 'ome in the country next week; that's the sort the doc is!" he finished, a flash of enthusiasm lighting up the pinched little face.

He walked limply to a door.

"F's bin at it orl night, an' most of the day, so e'll just abaht want his tea. You sit dahn and amooos yerself whilst I git it."

"You can't do much with that arm!" said Hilda with a laugh. "Will you let me help you?"

"I don't mind!" responded Master Dent graciously. "Please yerself!"

And so, when Eston came in a few minutes later, he found her busily engaged in cutting bread and butter. He rubbed his eyes to make sure that he was awake.

"Hilda!" he cried.

She smiled at his astonishment, but after a few words as to how she got there, refused to give him any further explanation until he had sat down and drank the tea she had prepared.

He was dead tired, and, sinking down in his chair, did as he was bid. It seemed such a wonderful thing that she of all people should be tending to his wants with her own hands, and for the moment he gave himself up to the sheer delight of it. At length, when Master Dent had retired to a back room, he rose from his chair and faced her inquiringly.

"Last night, after you were gone, someone told me of the wrong Lord Grenton once did to you," she began nervously.

"What did you hear?" he asked lightly.

"That you and he were great friends at college," she went on, speaking hurriedly and with bent head. "That he got heavily into debt, and to oblige him you put your name to a bill for a large amount, on the understanding that he would come into his fortune when he was twenty-one." She paused.

"He knew that he had no fortune to come into, and that all he would have was what he had now—an allowance from his aunt. In consequence you had to pay the bill, and so lost your chance of a fair start." She raised her head, and looked him in the face. "That was what I heard; I came to know if it were true."

He broke into a queer little laugh.

"Fairly so," he said. "But you mustn't think too hardly of Grenton. It doesn't matter to me now. What I might have been is of no consequence—what I am, is, and 'pon my word, I'm almost thankful. I'd rather have my life here than the finest Harley-street practice. It's life with the gloves off, but it's real and strong, and I just love it!"

He moved towards her, and laid a hand on her shoulder.

"So don't think hardly of him, little girl," he said. "He wasn't bad—only careless."

"It will not matter to him what I think," she said quietly. "I do not love him and shall not marry him. A man shouldn't be careless of his honor!" she added, with a flash in her eyes.

He was silent. She walked across to the mantelpiece and took hold of a photo frame that stood there. It was her own picture.

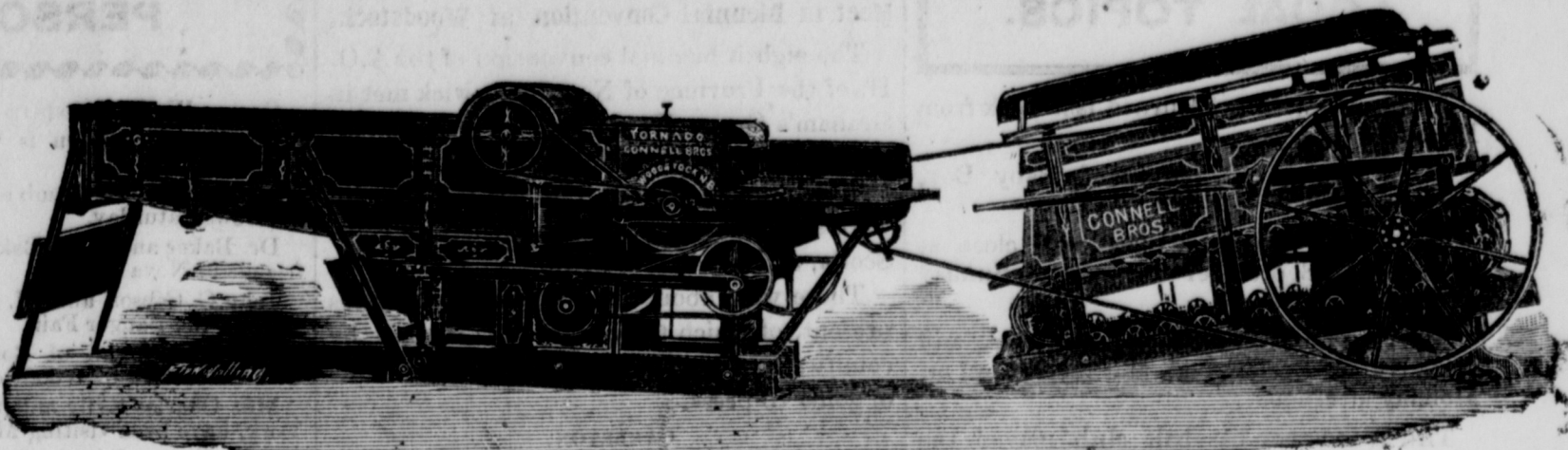
"Yes," he answered, slowly. "It reminds me of how our lives have branched since we started from the same point. You at your dazzling end—"

She swung round suddenly on him.

"My dazzling end!" she cried, bitterly.

"Oh, don't you see, Norman, how unutterably weary I am of the nothingness life I lead?"

## "THE TORNADO."

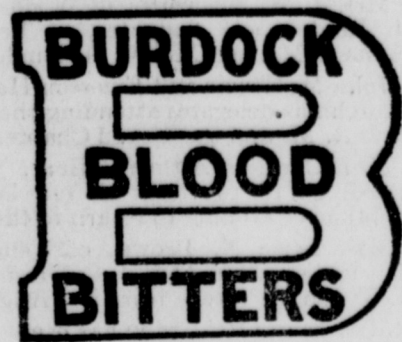


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He took a quick step forward and looked into her face searchingly. He was deadly white.

"Don't, Hilda!" he cried hoarsely, "else I shall forget—the impossibility of it all, the— There was a crimson spot on each of her cheeks, and a glorious light was shining in her eyes.

"Forget, then," she answered, "and make me the happiest girl in London!"

Some few weeks later Lord Algie was engaged in conversation with Celia Erskine.

"Her aunt furious and society amazed!" he was saying. "Every few years, tho, you'll find something like this happening—a mad creature doing something weird from sheer love of the bizarre! But, marrying a doctor in the East End, and living there—Good Lord!"

He linked his arm within the girl's.

"I'm awfully grateful to you, Celia, for saving me from looking quite like a fool!"

She smiled happily. They made a point of being frank with one another.

"I haven't Hilda's money, but my few thousands are better than nothing!" she said. "Besides, I've been silly enough to love you for years, though you are a frightful scamp, aren't you, Algie?"

"I should dearly like to know who told her of my little business with Eston?" he murmured, meditatively.

The girl with the green eyes laughed, softly.

"So should I!" she said.

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