

A MAN OF THE PEN.

A cheerful little dance was in full swing. At one end of the gaily decorated room the hostess, Lady Hartenden, was chatting for a few moments with her dear friend, Lady Jane Pendower. Her glance drifted casually over the crowd of bright people.

"It was very tiresome having to invite that writing man. I do hope he is respectable!" she observed. "I didn't want him in the least, but Rosa insisted on sending him a card, so we thought best to accede. He was in some way connected with her previous history, and she said she was grateful or something unnecessary of that sort!"

"Quite a romantic little history, wasn't it?" said Lady Jane, toying with the edge of her fan.

"Yes, we are not talking about it much. Her mother was a Miss Dalinford, sister of the rich old Dalinford, who lived at the castle near us at Betley. She made a runaway match with an artistic or literary creature named Aynsley, and nobody bothering to forgive them, they led the usual miserable existence somewhere in London."

"And Rosa was this man's daughter?"

"Yes; then Mrs. Aynsley died, and finally the creature himself, and Rosa actually earned her own living in London for a couple of years. I don't know quite how she did it, but I believe the writing man proved of assistance. This went on until old Mr. Dalinford, hearing of her, suddenly took it into his head to relent. He sent for her, and the end was that he died shortly afterward, leaving her his entire estates and fortune."

"Quite in the traditional strain!" purred Lady Pendower meditatively. "And then you, in the goodness of your heart, took the poor lonely girl up, Connie?"

"She could not live alone. I made her acquaintance and eventually brought her to town with us. She and Augustus are already the greatest of friends!" added Lady Hartenden casually.

Lady Jane laughed. Lord Augustus Creborne was Lord Hartenden's only son, and, although only three-and-twenty, was already an adept at the art of spending money without getting any adequate return for it.

"She has some fifteen thousand a year!" continued Lady Hartenden, throwing of all disguise. It's a chance of a lifetime for him, and he's abominably careless about it. Look at him now!"

At that moment the young gentleman in question, having surrendered Miss Aynsley to her new partner, was making a swift escape to the smoking-room. The girl glanced at his retreating figure with a smile then turned to the man at her side. He was about thirty-five and good-looking in an intellectual way.

"Shall we go to the conservatory?" she asked impulsively. "I have such a lot to talk about."

She took his arm and he led her out of the ballroom. In the conservatory they found some secluded seats.

He surveyed her critically. Her dress was an exquisite creation, and round her neck was a double row of magnificent pearls.

"Well?" she asked smilingly.

"I was thinking of a little grey dress," he said simply.

She laughed, and then shut her eyes.

"I see the grey dress, too!" she said. "A fountain pen also—a lovely cozy book-lined room and a tall man in a velvet coat, striding about restlessly and thundering out articles at seventy words a minute!"

She turned to him laughingly.

"It was a lovely two years!" she cried. "I shall never forget them! Oh, you must tell me everything now—remember, I never had an opportunity of saying 'good bye' to all. How is dear old Mrs. Channer, and have you got a new amanuensis?"

"Mrs. Channer is as dear as ever and a little older—she betrays the same feverish desire 'to tidy up' my study, and she frequently talks of you." He paused. "And I have a new amanuensis, but I don't think we'll talk of him. You see I was spoilt in the first instance," he added with a smile.

She colored with pleasure.

"The very first opportunity I get I am going to visit you and see Mrs. Channer!" she exclaimed.

"I shouldn't—really," he said slowly.

She gave him a searching look.

"You don't want me to come," she said directly.

The man who wrote had a momentary struggle with himself.

"No," he said, at length, then he forced a laugh. "You see it is all different now—Lady Hartenden had somewhat fixed ideas as to where the lice should be drawn, and I rather fancy Evedon Place and the middle-aged author came beyond the radius."

The girl looked at him steady for a moment. "Yes—perhaps they do!" she said quietly. Presently they returned to the ball-room, and he announced his intention of going.

It's 'good-bye forever,' then?" she said mischievously as she held out her hand. Oh, by the way," she added quickly, "which day will you be away from your house, this week—really out?"

"I'm going into the country Wednesday."

Why?" he asked with a puzzled air.

"Oh, I merely intend to call on Mrs. Channer—on Wednesday," she said, giving him a little defiant smile as Lord Augustus came up.

Miles Wyndham went home to Evedon Place in a thoughtful frame of mind. Instead of going to bed, however, as any self-respecting author would have done, he shut himself up in his study and, lighting a cigar, deliberately wasted two hours of sleep in profitless meditation.

On the following Wednesday he rose early, firm in his intention to go out of town and fight into the country.

After breakfast he thought of the visitor coming that afternoon. For a moment he wavered, then, pulling himself together, sat down and wrote her a short note. This he gave to the good Mrs. Channer, whom he had already acquainted with the news.

Finally, he took his departure, and Mrs. Channer was left to spend her morning in pleasurable anticipation of her visitor's arrival. At four o'clock in the afternoon there was a ring at the door, and Mrs. Channer, in her excitement, flew to open it herself. She drew back suddenly abashed.

The elegant young person stepped in and shut the door herself. Then she smiled.

"Oh, dear Mrs. Channer, please don't be stiff and unnecessary!" she said pathetically. "I'm only Rosa Aynsley still, and I've come to have tea with you."

The old lady's face lighted up and she recovered herself. And next moment Rosa had leaned forward and imprinted a kiss on the good-natured homely features.

There Channy, dear, let's go and talk of old times!"

And they did. Presently they went up together to the study, and the girl gave a little cry of delight as she sat down in her old place by the table.

"It was the happiest time in all my life, Channy dear!" she exclaimed.

Mrs. Channer wrung her hands.

"Oh, why did you come into all that money?" she cried, piteously. "It just spoiled everything!"

"Spoiled what, Channy?"

"Oh, if you had only kept the same he would have asked you to marry him, and perhaps you would have said 'yes,' and made him happy. Now he's fair miserable!" she whimpered.

The girl had started to her feet.

"He doesn't love me, Channy," she cried, breathlessly. "Quick, tell me, how do you know?"

Mrs. Channer was seized with a sudden hesitation. Rosa went to her and put her arms round her.

"Yes, Channy, dear, you must! Dearest Channy, you will," she cried, pleadingly.

Mrs. Channer succumbed. She crossed to a big desk and tried the roll-top. It yielded and she pushed it up.

"It was the day after he heard the news, and he had gone out. I just looked in here, and the desk was in terrible state; dust and papers . . ."

"Yes, yes!" put in Rosa impatiently.

"And you tidied up, Channy? Please go on."

"Well, I was just dusting the sides, when in one of the pigeon holes I saw an envelope addressed to you; it was open, and, of course, I've never did such a thing before—but—" The good creature paused in undecided fashion, then suddenly dived her hand into one of the compartments and pulled out an envelope.

"I don't care!" she said defiantly. "It's a letter written to you, just before he got yours, telling him of your good fortune. He didn't send it off, but wrote another—he keeps the first one still to look at, I think. Oh my dear, I hope I haven't done wrong!" she finished with sudden misgiving as Rosa took it from her, and with a quick impulsive movement, pulled the letter out and opened it.

As she read the lines a deep flush spread over her cheeks, and her lip trembled. She gave a little low laugh and, feeling in her pocket, produced the formal note Wyndham had left for her. She went to the desk and slipped it in the pigeon-hole; then, pulling down the top, faced the bewildered housekeeper.

"Yes, Channy, you've done very wrong—been extremely careless!" she cried gaily. "You've made a terrible mistake, and given me the first letter instead of the second! You'll have to abide by the consequences!"

Two days later, Wyndham was busy at work, when there was a tap at the door and Mrs. Channer appeared. She came to announce a lady that had called, and was in the dining room; she would not detain the author more than a few minutes, and would not send her name in.

Considerably mystified, he went down to interview her. As he opened the door and recognized his visitor he gave a slight start.

"Your letter was of so embarrassing a nature—I thought it would better, perhaps, to answer it in person," she began.

He looked at her in amazement. There was a mischievous look in her eyes that told of surprises. She produced a letter and held it out to him.

"The one in which you asked me to be your wife, you know," she explained calmly.

WOODSTOCK, N. B., MARCH 23, 1904.



A prominent Southern lady, Mrs. Blanchard, of Nashville, Tenn., tells how she was cured of backache, dizziness, painful and irregular periods by the use of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

"DEAR MRS. PINKHAM:—Gratitude compels me to acknowledge the great merit of your Vegetable Compound. I have suffered for four years with irregular and painful menstruation, also dizziness, pains in the back and lower limbs, and fitful sleep. I dreaded the time to come which would only mean suffering to me."

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He took the sheet of paper and stared at him in blank astonishment. Then his gaze travelled to her face, and their eyes met. He saw her mouth quiver as she turned her head away.

"My answer is yes," she said quietly. His eyes lighted up suddenly; he tried to control himself.

"But there is some mistake!" he cried. "This was written before the wonderful thing happened to you! I didn't send it because I saw it was impossible. Your new position—the marriage with Lord Creborne!"

She smiled openly.

"Lord Augustus!" she said reproachfully.

"Did you really think that?"

She had risen from her seat, and they were facing each other. With a little movement she took the letter from his hand.

"I'm afraid I shall hit you rather heavily in the breach of promise action!" she said gravely. "I've been most shamefully deceived."

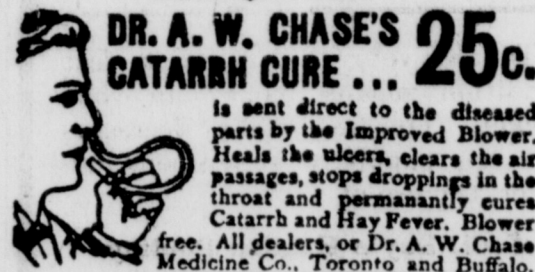
There was a pause; then he laughed, and, as the girl heard it a soft light came into her eyes.

"Oh, my dearest!" he cried stepping forward.

Presently she raised her head and smiled at him happily.

"What was the use of being absolutely my own mistress if I couldn't marry the man I love?" she whispered.

"No good whatever!" he agreed, with a sigh of utter content.—Gilbert Dayle.



Basis of Politeness.

A stout hostess, who was entertaining a large company one evening, turned to a group of young men standing near her chair and smilingly asked: "May I trouble one of you young gentlemen for a glass of water from the pitcher on the table?"

Several of the young men hurried to comply with the request. One, who was particularly active, succeeded in reaching the table first. As he handed the glass of water to the hostess, she complimented him.

"Oh, that's nothing," he said. "I am used to it. I got into many a circus and menagerie when I was a boy by carrying water for the elephant."

The Retort Courteous.

Two stately dames (so runs report) From rival cities chanced to meet; Fifth Avenue the home of one, The other came from Beacon Street.

The latter lady looked upon The former as a parvenue, Nor took the slightest pains to mask Her supercilious point of view.

She condescendingly let fall, Thinking an upstart thus to shame, That sundry of her ancestors To Plymouth in the "Mayflower" came.

"Indeed!" the other said: "I thought— I may be wrong—I won't insist— But, somehow, my impression was The 'Mayflower' had no steerage list." —Percy F. Bicknell.

Washing Machines.



Judging from the very number of Washing Machines we have sold during the last year, we know that of the many useful mechanical helps that contribute to the comfort and happiness of the well-appointed modern home, the washing machine is by no means the least important, and if it could not be readily replaced, would be one of the last of such aids to be parted with. Any Washing Machine is preferable, tenfold, to the washboard.

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JOHN McKENZIE.

Words in season: I have heard advertisers say, "Read my advt next week." I say, "Read mine this week."

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