# THE RECTOR'S SECRET

### LOVE CONQUERS ALL.

A STUDY FROM LIFE

CHAPTER XIII .- Continued.

Having accomplished his purpose so far, he next procured a special invitation for his friend Harvey; and the evening of the entertainment found them duly installed in a private box at Chickering Hall.

It is not in the province of our story to detail the performance, except to state that Blanche, to her own great surprise, made the greatest success of the evening. The applause seemed never to end; and it redoubled itself when, for an encore, she sang a simple English ballad. She was fairly deluged in a shower of bouquets; and the unexpected triumph could not help but bring a flush of pleasure to her cheeks. She looked radiantly beautiful as, with her arms loaded with flowers, she again and again blushingly bowed her thanks to the audience.

Harvey Van Rensselaer was in raptures. Frank had never spoken to him, except in very indefinite terms, about his sister; and he had, moreover, contrived to keep the programme out of his sight. So that when the whole house rang with Blanche's name, and Frank, as if unwillingly, was forced to admit that the beautiful cantatrice was his sister, the information came with a sort of dramatic surprise.

"That lovely creature your sister!" Harvey exclaimed, enthusiastically. "That divine high-stepper in your stables, and you keep mum about it? You long of that stock and not let me into the pool? I thought better of your friendship."

"Oh, if you want an introduction to Blanche," replied Frank, with affected carelessness, "she'll be in the box in a moment and I'll introduce you."

"My dear fellow, I'll be under infinite obligations to you if you do so."

Soon after Blanche appeared in the box and the formality of introduction was gone through. She received Harvey kindly enough, for her brother's sake, but, as might be expected, was excessively bored by his effusive congratulations and his openly expressed admiration.

After the performance was over, and the majority of the audience had departed, the remainder took part in a social, chatty reception, culminating with a cold colla tion, which was served on the platform.

Harvey Van Rensselaer was among those who remained, and Blanche was doomed to have him for an escort for the rest of the evening. Nor did this fact fail to be a subject of comment. The young stock broker's wealth and his socalled social position were well known, and there were those who thought his presence and his attentions to Blanche a very high honor.

His coupé was at her's and Frank's disposal to drive them home after the affair was over; and he received a not very graciously extended permission from Blanche to occasionally call and see her.

That night was really a crisis in the young millionaire's life He had been flattered and angled for by match-making mammas, who had eligible daughters, until he was almost afraid to venture into society. Now here was a girl beautiful and accomplished, yet far different from the average young ladies of his acquaintance. She did not throw herself at him, like so many others had fairly done. In fact, she had been very reserved and constrained, and she did not seem to care about him or his millions. All this powerfully attracted him; and Harvey awoke next morning with the knowledge that he was distractingly in love with Frank's sister.

He speedily enough imparted this information to Frank, who hid his delight, at receiving the welcome intelligence, under an assumption of the coolest indif-

He plumply informed the infatuated young man that his sister's heart was her own to do with as she chose, and that he could exert no influence over it either way; but that he saw no objection to his suit, and bade him sail in and win, if he could.

It took a couple of weeks for the enamored broker to screw his courage up to the point of proposing; and when, one evening, as he was alone in the room with Blanche, he did finally manage to stammer forth a declaration of love, it was only to be answered with a polite but firm | mysterious manner which Frank assumed. refusal.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

AN INNOCENT FORGERY. Frank had shrewdly kept out of the way on the night when Harvey Van

to hear the result. He found him in his private office, looking gloomy and heartbroken enough. "It's all up, Frank," he exclaimed, with going to help me." a deep drawn sigh. "She won't have

BY J. R. ABARBANI LL.

"What! Has she given you the mitten?" asked Frank, in apparent astonish-

in truth he was not at all surprised He would have been had Blanche accepted the representative of the "Pride and Pimples Club." He knew her to be too sensible to fall in love with such a speci men as Harvey Van Rensselaer, millionaire though he was, even if her heart was

Her refusal did not at all ruffle Frank's spirits. It was in fact expected and arranged for in the scheme which his fertile brain had hatched.

He chose, however, to pretend astonishment and sorrow.

"I can't understand my sister," he continued. "To refuse the offer of your hand, when there are so many bettersituated girls in New York who would fairly jump at it."

"What care I for all the girls in New York," exclaimed the lovesick millionaire, in woe-begone tones. "They may be warranted kind and gentle in any harness but they cannot make a team with me. I have pooled all the issues of my heart on your sister; and now that she has kicked at the traces I must amble along the road of life in melancholy loneliness."

Frank concealed a smile at the mixed metaphors with which the descendant of the old Knickerbockers clothed the expression of his intense disappointment. However expressed, he perceived that it was intense; and that was the all-important point for the successful working of

"Do not take it so much to heart," he said, in consolatory tones. "Remember the old adage-there's as many fine fish in the sea as were ever caught. Forget my

"Never," impetuously interrupted Harvey, rising from his seat at the desk. "I cannot forget her, I cannot cease loving ber. Ah, Frank, I am very unbapру."

The big fellow actually blubbered in the intensity of his passion.

"Come now, don't give way like that," said Frank. "Sit down at your desk again. Let me see if I can do anything

Harvey sank in his seat, while Frank drew up a chair and sank down closely beside him.

"If you would speak a kind word to her for me," begged the young million aire, "perhaps you might bring about a turn in the market, and my stock would go up again."

Frank shook his head.

"That would be of very little use," he said. "Blanche has a will of her own; and especially in an affair of this kind she would want to decide according to her own heart and judgment. Of course, were her fears to be aroused on my ac-

"What do you mean?" interrupted the

"Frankly, then, my dear Harvey, I am under some obligations to you for the sums of money which, on several occasions, you have so kindly loaned me."

"Don't mention them, my dear boy," generously exclaimed Harvey. "My purse is always open to you. You may draw upon me at any time for any amounts and repay me whenever you please. What's the use of being a millionaire, and having more money than I know what to do with, if I can't help out of his worry and preoccupation. a friend. However Blanche may treat me, as her brother you may command me to the entire extent of my fortune."

This was just the kind of a millionaire that the young-man-about-town wanted. After murmuring his thanks at the

other's generosity, Frank continued: "I like you, Harvey. I believe you think, you may induce Blanche to change

her mind.', "Oh, if you only could, I would be under infinite obligations to vou."

"Can any one overhear us?" "No."

"You know we are orphans," continued

Frank. "We have no one but each other to rely on; we are all in all to each other. Naturally enough, whatever effects one of us is of deep moment to the other. Should misfortune, disgrace or shame stare me in the face, Blanche would do Rensselaer proposed to his sister, but he anything, consent to anything, to avert called on the stock broker the next day it."

rather bewildered look on his face; "but selaer as to what he should do and say, yet I don't see how all this is, in anywise,

"I will explain. Suppose it should knew she would be at home alone. come to her knowledge that I had com-

mitted a crime. Say forged your name

"But you haven't done so," interrupted the young millionaire, helplessly.

"Of course not," somewhat impatiently retorted Frank. "I know enough to keep my fingers out of the law. But, for the sake of the effect on her mind, it would be the same whether I did so, only in sport or in earnest. Do you catch my meaning?"

"I'm blest if I do."

"Hand me your check book."

The !roker handed him the book There was an open letter written by Harvey on the desk. Using that as a guide. the trivolous young man filled out a check for ten thousand dollars and signed it "Harvey Van Rensselaer."

The handwriting bore but a very superficial resemblance to the original. Even an ordinary observer would detect the imitation at a glance. Frank tore the check from the stub.

"Now, if I were to present that for payment at the back, what would it be?"

"Forgery!" gasped Harvey. "No, it wouldn't either," laughed Frank, "for it is done with your knowledge and consent. But to the world at large it would appear so. It would seem so to Blanche, if you showed that check to her, and offered her the alternative of either accepting your hand, or seeing her brother sent to state prison."

"I see it all now," rapturously exclaimed Harvey. "We are to play a joke at forgery. What brains you have, to be sure, to think of it. And you think your sister would consent?"

"I'm sure of it. As I have said, she will do anything for my sake. If I did her I would not exert this pressure. As it is, it would be a pity to have a fine fellow like you made miserable for life on account of her obstinacy."

"My dear boy, I will never forget your kindness in all my life. But how am I to convince her that the check is forged?" Harvey drew a chair up beside her and

"I have thought of that. You see its sat down on it. number is two hundred and one. Now you write to the bank a note saying that a blank check bearing that number has disappeared from your check book, that you are afraid it has been stolen for the purpose of a forgery, and that, should it be filled out and presented for payment, to mark it forged and send it to you." "I understand. I'll write the note at

"Now we understand each other," said the schemer, as he pocketed the check and arose, "in a day or two I'll present the check, you'll get it back; and then we'll see what Blanche will do about it."

If Harvey had a little more common sense he would have refused to become a party to this scheme of "innocent" forgery. As it was, however, he thought only of gaining Blanche's hand, and he dutifully did all that was required of him

Frank had the check presented at the bank through the medium of a small boy. It was retained by the paying teller, and the stock broker received it back again with the word "forged" stamped on it in big red letters.

CHAPTER XV.

A SUCCESSFUL SCHEME.

For a week thereafter Frank, in the presence of his sister, assumed the distrait abstracted air of one who is tortured by some painful secret, which he would like to reveal but dare not.

Blanche's love wrsquick to take alarm, as he intended it should. She plied him with questions, but he gave her only evasive answers about panics in the stock market, approaching disasters, and great risks he had taken; all of which served to further excite her mind, without in any wise enlightening her as to the real cause

As to this real cause, Blanche had her own secret fears. She understood very little about Wall street affairs, but every once in a while she read in the papers about men who had sunk their whole fortune in that malestrom of gambling, who had blasted their good names and reputations in a day, and had become defaulters, sincerely love my sister, and would make embezzlers, forgers-even murderers-in her a good husband. By way of showing their desperate efforts to retrieve what my gratitude for the favors you have they had lost. A cold shudder would done me. I will show you a plan how, I pass through her frame as she thought of these things, and compared Frank's hesitating manner and downcast looks with the large amounts of money he was recently spending.

On previous occasions, when he had made a hit, he would boast of it, and feel "Of course, this is strictly confidential gay and happy. Now, however, it was just the opposite. Of course, she was en-Harvey was very much awed by the tirely ignorant of the fact that Frank was drawing on his prospective brother-inlaw with a vengeance, and that the latter was cheerfully honoring all the drafts made upon his exchequer. There was only one way to account for the money he was spending, and she dared not even contemplate the conclusion which was forcing itself on her mind.

Having thus worked up his sister to a state almost bordering on frenzy, and "I believe you," said Harvey, with a having duly coached Harvey Van Rens-Frank sent the amorous millionaire to visit his sister on an evening when he

She was sitting in the parlor, engaged

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upon some embroidery, with her mind filled with dire forebodings, when the servant ushered the stock broker into her

Harvey had not seen the bard-hearted beauty since her cruel rejection of him, and her pale loveliness greatly increased the embarrassment which he felt about broaching the subject which had brought him there.

Blanche, on her part, was naturally surprised to see him. Her refusal had been final; he had plainly understood it to be so; and rejected loyers, as a rule, do not continue their visits to the amoratas who have disdained them.

She murmured her surprise as she rose from the sofa to receive him.

"Pray be seated," stammered the young millionaire. "Do not be agitated at my not deem you in every way worthy of coming. I will not renew a conversation which turned out so disastrously for my

> quivering with apprehension. She felt, she knew, that this visit, was on her brother's account.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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> > ONE ON HIM.

"Well, bless my soul!" exclaimed one of the first citizens of Chicago, that breezy metropolis on the banks of Lake Michigan. "When did you hit the town?"

"I have not hit it at all!" corrected the man from Boston. "The largeness of the area and the absence of a definite personality preclude such action."

"That's so," assented the Chicagoan, his cordial hilarity a little less marked. "By the way, where are you stopping?' "I'm not stopping at all, my dear

friend." "Not stopping at all? Why, what

"No, but I'm staying at the Palmer Deuced expensive place, I'll House.

"That's so! Well, it's too bad." "Too bad! How's that?"

"Well, I was going to invite you to come on out and put up at my house while you were in town, but since you're staving at the Palmer House, I suppose it's no use."

And off he walked .- Kansas City Inde-

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