

Rheumatism

No other disease makes one feel so old. It stiffens the joints, produces lameness, and makes every motion painful. It is sometimes so bad as wholly to disable, and it should never be neglected. M. J. McDonald, Trenton, Ont., had it after a severe attack of the grip; Mrs. Hattie Turner, Bolivar, Mo., had it so severely she could not lift anything and could scarcely get up or down stairs; W. H. Shepard, Sandy Hook, Conn., was laid up with it, was cold even in July, and could not dress himself. According to testimonials voluntarily given, these sufferers were permanently relieved, as others have been, by **Hood's Sarsaparilla** which corrects the acidity of the blood on which rheumatism depends and builds up the whole system.

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THE FAILURE.

She was a charmingly pretty girl, and in her white satin evening gown, with the pearls, for which her father, the great Californian millionaire, had paid a small fortune, gleaming around her neck she presented a striking picture as she followed her mother into Lady Dacre's drawing-room. But her pretty face wore a petulant frown, and she answered her hostess's polite words of greeting in cold little monosyllables which made the lady remark to herself afterwards that "that little Californian heiress creature might be very good looking, but she certainly had not got good enough blood in her veins to justify her being so very standoffish with her social superiors."

Poor Mrs. Montacute-Smith, who had moved heaven and earth to obtain this invitation from Lady Dacre—well known to be one of the most exclusive women in Society—looked at her daughter with horror and dismay.

"Well, Cora, my dear," she said, as Lady Dacre's attention being occupied by other arrivals, they moved on, and being in the unhappy position of knowing no one in the room except the hostess, seated themselves on two chairs in a solitary corner—"I must say that your manners with her ladyship were extremely ill-bred and unladylike. What will she think of you?" Cora gave a little impatient shrug of her shoulders.

"She'll think what's the truth, mamma, and nothing more," she responded—"namely, that I'm just a wealthy, but rather common girl from California, who has been educated out of her proper sphere, and now has been brought over to England by her parents to see if a Season in London will bring her any prize in the way of a title. Oh, yes. And I've been brought here to-night against my will, because Lady Dacre's cousin, the Marquis of Windlehurst, is going to be present, and you hope that I shall go to dinner with him. Well, if I do, I'll be so abominably rude and disagreeable that he'll never speak to me again. I hate this rubbish about marrying for titles! I don't want to marry at all! I—"

Cora stopped suddenly. Lady Dacre was advancing towards them, carrying a little satin bag in her hand.

"Oh, Mrs. Montacute-Smith!" she exclaimed laughing—she looked very merry, like a mischievous schoolgirl, and her eyes were dancing with mirth—"this is a new fad of mine—at least, it isn't mine: I read of it in a magazine. But it's such fun! See? We draw for partners—much more exciting than the old-fashioned way of introducing, isn't it? You take out a number, and the gentleman with the corresponding number takes you to dinner. Will you draw, please?"

She held out the little bag with an inviting smile. Mrs. Montacute-Smith's plump hand disappeared through the opening.

"I've drawn five," she exclaimed, examining her number. "Now, Cora, my dear—you."

Cora drew, and her mother watched her with breathless interest. Would her daughter's number correspond with the one held by the Marquis of Windlehurst? "My number is fifteen," said the girl indifferently.

"Fifteen!" Lady Dacre's eyes swept round the room. "My dear girl," she said, presently, with a little laugh. "I am so sorry for you. I heard young Mr. Traddles, of the Guards, telling my husband just now that he had drawn fifteen. He is a most insipid youth—he will bore you to distraction."

Mrs. Montacute-Smith's face fell. Where were her hopes of the Marquis? But Cora herself looked utterly indifferent.

"It does not matter," she said, in her blunt, rather boyish manner; "I do not care in the least whom I go into dinner with."

Lady Dacre rustled away. Mrs. Montacute-Smith glanced at her daughter. "One thing I will say for you, Cora," she said, with acerbity, "your manners are simply atrocious, simply atrocious, and I consider your season in London this year has been a hideous failure. Not one single man have you been civil to—at least, not one man who was in any way eligible. And as for this—this creature whom you are going to dinner with—well, he's not worth being polite to. Not even a baronet! Mr. Traddles! What a name,

too!" The girl said nothing. She sighed, a little wearily. She was getting rather tired of everything—of the unceasing, monotonous round of the London Season—the daily routine of drives, balls and dinner parties, and above all her mother's constant reproaches. Oh! how she longed to be back again in California!

Ten minutes later a tall man, with a good-natured, rather ugly face, strolled up to the corner where Cora was sitting, alone, and utterly neglected. Her mother had just gone off with her partner, a stout old Cabinet Minister.

"I believe," he said bowing, "that you are my duplicate. Er—number fifteen." Cora looked up at him, and, for the first time that evening, smiled. She rather liked his face. Then she rose, and laid the tips of her little gloved fingers on his extended arm.

"Yes," she answered; "I am fifteen." The man's pleasant, ugly mouth relaxed into a smile.

"In age, or in number?" he queried. The girl gave a ringing, boyish laugh, which made the smile on his face deepen. How bright she was! And how delightfully pretty!

"Oh, in number," she responded gaily. "In age I am eighteen really."

"Ten years younger than I am, then; I am eight-and-twenty."

This mutual confession established them on a friendly footing—they were exchanging confidence already!—and Cora, as a moment later, she took her seat beside him at the dinner table, felt that she not only liked him rather, but very much indeed.

"If this is Lady Dacre's idea of insipidity," she reflected, as she stole a glance at her companion's profile—the ugly face, in profile, looked very clever and distinguished—"then give me insipidity always. And it is so nice to think that he isn't a nobleman, but only plain Mr. Traddles, so he can't possibly think that I am trying to catch him. Now I can talk with him with ease and comfort, without hearing people say, 'There's that vulgar little Californian girl trying for a baronet!' Nobody could possibly imagine that I was trying to be Mrs. Traddles!"

The thought made her laugh—she was of a very lively disposition—really—and the ugly man, noticing her mirth, began to laugh too, although he did not know the reason why, and their friendship ripened.

"I see you have a sense of humor," he said, his eyes twinkling.

Cora nodded.

"Yes," she answered; "Isn't it a blessing?"

And then they both laughed again, thoroughly delighted with each other.

By the time the fish was removed she had told him everything about herself and her people, about her favorite books and pursuits, her hobbies, and her wild, beautiful home in California; and he, in his turn, told her of his favorite recreations, the books he liked best, and how devoted he was to life in the country. When the ice-putting was handed round they felt as if they had been bosom friends for centuries.

"Do you know," admitted Cora, her cheeks flushing, and her eyes, dancing with merriment, "I have taken a tremendous fancy to you. You remind me of my twin brother."

"Do I?" He looked at her, with scarcely concealed admiration. What a charming child it was! How naive! How delightfully fresh and unsophisticated! He wished that some of the insipid, affected women that he met constantly were more like her.

"Yes. You are so like him, in—in every way. In looks, for one thing."

"Poor fellow!" He took a sip of Burgundy from the glass at his elbow to conceal a smile.

Cora laughed. She did not attempt to flatter him as some women might have done; the idea never entered her head. She thought him ugly as she thought her brother ugly too; but that did not make any difference in her affection for him, which was tremendous.

"And in everything else, too; you are both fond of shooting, and fishing and riding and—and that sort of thing. Oh! Bobby's awful nice. I wish you could meet him. I am sure you would like him."

"I am sure I should," in a subdued voice, "if—if he is anything like you."

She did not flush at the implied compliment. As a matter of fact her thoughts were so full of her beloved brother that she had not noticed it.

"Do you know—" she bent her dainty head a little closer to him, and her voice sank to a confidential undertone—"I am going to tell you a secret. Oh! mamma would be furious if she knew that I

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was telling you—"she broke off for a moment with a schoolgirlish giggle—"but I—I simply hate London, and this stiff, starched Society life, and—and all this sort of thing."

"So do I," in deep, very subdued tones.

Their eyes met—the mischievous brown ones of the girl and the grave, kindly blue ones of the man, and each smiled in approbation of the other. They were kindred spirits.

"Then why do you come into it?" said the girl gravely, after a pause.

He shrugged his shoulders. They were very nice shoulders, square and broad and strong. Cora reflected that he was not so ugly as she had first thought him; his eyes were so kind, and he had a splendid figure.

"Oh, I'm obliged to. Position—duty I owe to Society, and all that sort of nonsense. Awful rubbish of course, but still one must be fairly civil to one's neighbor's; and—and hostesses will pester me with invitations."

Cora wondered a little at this. For according to Lady Dacre, he was certainly not one of Society's favorites.

He answered her question with another.

"Why do you come into it?" smiling. She flushed. For the first time since she had begun talking to him she felt embarrassed.

"I—I hardly like to tell you," she began.

"Oh, nonsense! We're become such good pals now that you ought not to mind telling me anything. Out with it!"

The almost boyish slanginess of his speech delighted her. It reminded her so forcibly of her brother. Her reserve broke down immediately.

"Well, with a deep sigh, "you see—oh! it's horrid to have to tell you, but you remind me so much of Bobby that I feel—I feel that I have to, and I tell him everything. My—my parents are very anxious for me to marry a—a—title."

She had got the obnoxious word out now, and she took up her little fan and fanned her flushed cheeks. The ugly man was watching her with gravely amused eyes.

"Ah! And you, are you anxious for it, too?"

"No!" Her voice was almost severely emphatic. "And mamma says that I am a failure because I—I don't see things in the same light that she does. But I don't want to marry at all—at least, only if I love a man very, very much indeed. I—I could not marry a man just because—because he had a title—"

"No, of course not; it would be very worldly and—and wrong."

"You see—" her pretty eyebrows met in a frown—the same shadow came into her eyes which had been there earlier in the evening—"I want to live with Bobby always, and keep his house, when we can shoot, and fish, and row, and ride, and do everything that we like. I should enjoy it much better than this—this stiff kind of Society life. But mamma wants me to make a brilliant marriage."

"And you don't want to?"

"Not unless I fall in love."

"And you have never—pardon me if this question seems impertinence, but we seem to know each other so well, and you must think that I am your brother Bobby, to whom you—you tell everything—you have never fallen in love yet?"

"Never—"

A sudden rustling of skirts warned her that the ladies were making a move towards the drawing room, and she rose rather abruptly to follow them, leaving the rest of her sentence unfinished.

Half-an-hour later the ugly man stalked up to the corner where she was sitting, looking rather solitary, and sat down in a chair by her side. "You look rather lonely," he said.

She laughed. "Yes. You see, I am not very popular. Nobody cares much for talking to me. They—they think I am brusque and—and rude. Mamma is always scolding me about my manners, and—and I've offended her this evening again too."

"In what way?"

"She sighed, and leaned her head against the back of her chair. Rather a tired look came into her eyes. "It seems that I am bound to be a failure!" she said after a moment's pause. "You see mamma was very anxious for me to go in to dinner with the Marquis of Windlehurst to-night, and, instead, you were my corresponding number. It was not my fault, was it?" Her voice was almost pleading. "Besides, I hate men with titles. They are always so conceited. I would much rather have gone in with you!"

He looked at her rather curiously. Then he laughed. "Dear me!" he said, gravely. "No wonder your mother was annoyed. And you don't even know who I am, either. Why, I might be any scoundrel, for all you know to the contrary." She broke off in piqued surprise.

He was holding his sides with laughter.

"I do not—I do not see anything funny in what I have said," she remonstrated.

"I do, then," he roared. "I do! Oh do! Oh, dear! Oh—oh you delicious child! Oh dear!"

Suddenly the idea flashed across her that she might possibly have made some

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mistake. She bent forward and laid her hand on his arm. "At least," she said quickly, "Lady Dacre said that she had drawn number fifteen. Wasn't that right?"

"No, you charming child; it was quite wrong. Ethel—Lady Dacre—is a little deaf. I heard young Traddles saying what his number was—it was thirteen, not fifteen. Mine—mine was fifteen. Oh—Oh—"

She got up from her chair suddenly and stood upright. Her face had grown scarlet. "Oh," she cried, and there was a little catch in her breath. "Then who are you?"

He got up, too, stood in front of her. His blue eyes fixed on her face. "I," he said, gently, "am the Marquis of Windlehurst."

Much to her mother's astonishment Cora was not a failure after all, for before the season was over she had become the Marchioness of Windlehurst.

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