

A NEW SWEETHEART.

Darkwood was the grandest old country seat—its owner, Philip Darke, called it farm—in the whole world.

It stretched out as far as the eye could reach, in verdant meadows, and gentle productive hills, picturesque valleys, and heavily-timbered levels.

Through the most secluded part of the timber a deep trout stream meandered aimlessly between banks fringed with ferns and flowers for a couple of miles, then lost its identity in the restless, cliff-girt ocean beyond.

The well-appointed stables, all neatly painted red and white, and containing some of the best horseflesh in the country, even Philip Darke's enemies admitted, were well separated from the dwellings by orchards of peach and pear, apple and cherry, and plentiful patches of fruit-bushes.

For the dwellings themselves—they were all commodiously built, painted cool, clear white, even cooler looking by contrast with the green shutters: they were well surrounded by balconies and verandahs upon which all the windows opened, after the Southern style.

Standing in one of these open door-windows now—one lying between the softly-carpeted and richly appointed drawing-room and the low verandah surrounding it—stood a stylish woman of thirty or so, with a beautiful but rather selfish-looking face.

She wore a magnificent negligee of creamy silk and lace; many diamonds and rubies flashed upon her white hands, but there was a look of intolerance in her haughty eyes.

Those eyes were following an unconscious pair carelessly wending their way homeward across the spring-kissed fields—only a girl and a dog. The former tall and slight, the latter, a great, handsome shaggy collie.

They were on very good terms with each other, for occasionally the girl would bend down, and the dog would bound up, then there would be a clear, ringing laugh, a trill of whistles, and a series of joyous barks.

Mrs. Devereaux frowned impatiently, while they drew nearer and became merrier in their gambols.

She was wondering if this girl might not interfere with the financial future of her own children—a boy of twelve and a girl of eight—whose voices came buoyantly up from the stables, where their Shetland ponies were installed.

Mrs. Devereaux was the widowed sister of Philip Darke. Early in life she had married a wealthy broker, and ever since her life had been spent in a whirl of social fashions and worldly ambitions, until now the fortune her husband had left was well-nigh exhausted.

Had it not been for their wealthy and lavishly generous bachelor uncle, she would have felt very much concerned over her children's future.

Even as it was, she did sometimes. What if he should ever marry? He was not beyond the possibility of it, surely, at forty-four? Still, she hadn't much fear of that.

Phil had always been such an odd fellow, and one love affair early in life had ended disastrously; then he swore he would never have another, and he never had this far, although it was not the fault of his female acquaintances.

What, though, if he should leave his fortune, or most of it, or Darkwood, to this wild young thing whose guardian he had been ever since she was a tiny mite of three or four?

For all his lazy philosophy, he had a warm generous heart. He might have grown to love this girl through association; after all she was the daughter of his hapless early love—the orphaned child of the woman for whose sake he had turned from all others in disdain.

From her death bed she had sent her child to Philip Darke, charging him to care for her as if she had been his own.

The selfishness of her charge had always been a theme for scorn on Mrs. Devereaux's part; but Philip had accepted it—whether with pleasure or pain, no one ever knew. For all his indifferent exterior, he was a man of iron will, and no one should ever again see him moved by a girl.

He sauntered lazily into the cool, tree-shaded drawing-room even while the frown still rested upon his handsome worldly sister's brow.

She did not hear him on the deep pile of the carpet, until he reached her side and threw one arm around her waist.

Then she gave vent to a little shocked exclamation, not at this act, but at the act of the girl she was keenly watching.

"Gracious! She has vaulted the fence almost without an effort."

Philip smiled under his big brown moustache, and a lazy amusement crept into his dark eyes.

"Nest? Oh, she's an athlete!" he responded, watching the slight dark figure, coming whistling up the lane. "She can send her mare, Duchess of Leinster, over any fence or ditch that I can take with Prince Madblood, I assure you. Not only that, but she's the captain of a ladies' boat club and tennis club."

Mrs. Devereaux looked at him in dumb horror a moment. Then:

"And you look on smiling at all this—nay, talk as if you admired her for it," she exclaimed, at last. You have brought her up like a great overgrown tomboy, instead of a lady-like, intelligent girl, fitted for some use in the world. She ought to be going to school instead of jumping ditches with horses and leaping fences with dogs like a stableboy."

A quick dark flush mounted to Phil's broad, high brow.

"But she does go to school," he said, resentfully, "in the village—a very good school; but there isn't any now—it's holiday time."

Mrs. Devereaux shrugged her shoulders. "A village school—bah! She should be going away to some finishing school, some academy, where she could learn to behave herself decently and earn her livelihood. She has no fortune, I believe—her mother simply left her a name. You should certainly educate her to earn her own living, to be independent of your charity in her womanhood at least, Philip. She is almost a woman—seventeen. Why, I was married at that age."

The amusement in his eyes had fled, giving place to a thoughtful, troubled look. "Was he wronging Ernestine Villard by letting her receive an education and be happy in her own way?"

Would she blame him, wish to be independent of him, in her womanhood?

It shocked and pained him to think that womanhood was so near at hand, that other girls married at her present age.

He had enjoyed the tomboyism and daring and frank carelessness of her girlhood quite as much as she had—he had been her tutor in many an athletic feat.

And he had found her such a gay, glad, apt pupil, such an ever-interesting companion.

He had taught her many things that would have shocked his haughty sister, more even than her expert riding and fence leaping—among them to shoot on the wing with a pretty little rifle he had given her, or a revolver, and many other similar tricks.

Yes he saw it now; this was wrong, all wrong.

Ernestine would soon be a woman, and, though he never meant that she should earn her own living, on any account, she would have to go out into the world and mingle with other women.

If she felt lost and out of place among them; if she could not equal them in refinement, knowledge, accomplishments, would she not blame her guardian, and justly?

The thought haunted him all day and unpleasantly.

When Nest asked him to join her in a ride to the beach, he answered her shortly, so shortly that she looked at him in amazement.

Had she displeased him? How. Well, she couldn't go riding now; and tears of pain and resentment blinded her eyes while she hunted up fishing-tackle, took the eager collie into the secluded May woods, where dwelt the timid trout under shadow of tangled undergrowth.

Mrs. Devereaux had been at Darkwood but two days when she became so terribly bored with loneliness, that she spoke to Philip about asking some people down from town.

He carelessly assured her that she was welcome to ask whoever she wanted, whenever she wanted them; but there was no one for whose coming he especially cared; he had been a hermit so long, etc.

So she asked a number of society people—people supposed to be wealthy, cultured, and all that was desirable; yet Philip Darke had never been so bored in all his life.

How languid and inane all the people were, painted, fashionable dolls, who were shocked at the hotheadism of Nest, because it required physical daring. Their daring was all moral, they flattered scandalously, married and single, and the men—

Bah! there was nothing manly about them. They were mere followers of the pretty butterflies of fashion; all, except one.

Gerald Graham was not a man to be despised by man or woman. There was something so frank, so noble, and manly about him that he was instead one to be admired even by his enemies, a handsome young fellow of thirty, with lots of brains, lots of daring, physical and moral, and plenty of money.

After a week at Darkwood, during which Mrs. Devereaux dressed and smiled ravishingly for his benefit, while he attentively studied her betes noires, the young hoiden, and while Philip went moodily about his farm feeling lost and lonely, Gerald Graham became Nest's shadow.

A gay cavalier in all her rides, a companion in her walks, he boasted with her, fished with her, talked with her until he fell madly in love with the unconsciously beautiful young tomboy who interested him as no society woman had ever done or ever could.

Jealousy made Mrs. Devereaux very bitter of tongue. She never lost a chance to taunt Nest with her dependence, or scoff her darling, and put misconstruction upon her most generous and very disinterested act.

Nest was by nature quick of temper, hot, and passionate of blood. She controlled herself as long as she could—as long as self-respect and respect for Phil, dear old Phil, who had somehow grown so moody and out of place under his sister's taunts—would let her.

She sought her guardian, and found him in the library one day.

His head was bowed on his hands, and when he lifted his face, the eyes were haggard with painful thought.

Gerald Graham had just left him, and what had he said to bring that look upon the face she had learned to look upon as the noblest, and best, and kindest on earth?

She had come to speak of her own troubles—to tell him she must go away to earn her own living, that she could bear this dependence on him, with which she was so often taunted by his sister, no longer; but she forgot them in the sight of his.

"Oh, Gaudy Phil, what is it?" she cried, going on her knees before him, her voice and face tremulous with pity. "Are you ill?"

"No, little one," he answered, with a slow, weary smile, "not physically; mentally, I don't know. The thought of parting with my bon camarade is hardly productive of pleasure. Ernestine—the smile vanished, his voice became sterner—"perhaps you know, but he said you didn't. Gerald Graham has just asked my consent to woo you—as his wife, child. What shall I say to him?"

Her face blushed, then blanched, and flushed again.

"Tell him?" she repeated; then bitterly, "Tell him that I thank him for the honor he would confer upon me, but—Oh, Phil! Phil!"—and she shrank shivering to the floor and burst into a storm of sobs, her face pressed to her palms—"do you want to get rid of me? You are cruel, too."

A moment he looked at her in silence, then a slow, almost fearful light crept into his eyes.

"Nest," he said, softly, gently drawing her to his breast. "I've been learning my own heart while surrounded by all these people for the last five or six weeks. I've seen you falling in love with young Graham—he started, but he went on—"and in my mind I've forced myself to see my life as it must be without you, sweet. You know the dead old trunk of a tree on the edge of the woods? I know my life would be like that without the beautiful verdure of your dear presence round it."

"But I don't love Gerald Graham, except as a friend, a good noble man, and a good rider, a good shot," she protested. And the haggard eyes broke into further light of wonder and incredulity.

Then—well suffice it to say that less than a month later his troublesome charge

became Philip Darke's beloved wife, his bon camarade for life.

It was a hard hit for Graham, but he had never been encouraged by Nest, who had unconsciously lost her heart to her guardian long before.

The Duchess of Leinster still keeps pace with Prince Madblood, and the ditches are as deep, and the fences as steep as ever, and Ernestine's husband more her lover than he was of yore; and the bright-eyed, impulsive, dashing, and lovable little lady of Darkwood does not regret it.

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Mr. Smythe writes as follows:—"It is with great pleasure that I testify to the value of your great medicine, Paine's Celery Compound. For nearly two years I suffered from indigestion, kidney and liver troubles. After trying several medicines that did not effect a cure, I decided to try your Compound. Before using it I was so low in health that I could not get out of bed. I could not lie in bed owing to pain in my back; it was only by resting on elbows and knees I was enabled to obtain a slight degree of ease. Before I had fully taken one bottle of your medicine I began to improve. I have now taken in all fourteen bottles with grand results. I am a farmer and am now working every day. Any one may refer to me regarding these statements, or to any of my neighbors around Sheffield, where I am well known. I am a living witness to the worth of Paine's Celery Compound."

Mr. K. Fersch, the popular druggist of Galt, Ont., vouches for the above statements made by Mr. Smythe.

A Queen Under Punishment.

The little Queen of the Netherlands, though only aged thirteen, already shows signs of the same independent character as her late father was distinguished for. Thus she considers it beneath her royal dignity to respond to the greetings of her loyal subjects, notwithstanding the observations of her governess to that effect. One day, as a punishment, the governess sent her to bed immediately after their return home. Then you should have seen and heard her little Majesty, in a fury, stamping on the ground and exclaiming:—"What! I, the Queen of Holland, ordered off to bed, and at seven o'clock, too! No, never, even if I have to renounce the throne of my father!"

Five minutes after this formal protest, Her Majesty was plunged in a sound sleep.

KINGDOMS HAVE GONE BEGGING.

Heirs who Fear that "Uneasy Lies the Head that Wears a Crown."

That the lot of monarchs is by no means so enviable as in days gone by, when the phrase, "As happy as a king," used to express the highest form of contentment, is abundantly proved by the number of princes who have declined proffered thrones. In olden times their occupants were free to govern as despotically as they chose, and to live only for pleasure, gratifying every whim or caprice at no matter what cost. Nowadays, the ruler of a nation is subjected to so many restraints of one kind and another, and is controlled to such a degree by the will of the people, instead of his own, that his palace has become little better than a gilded prison and his throne a chair of torture.

Of the thrones which have thus gone begging, the most notable are those of Bulgaria, Roumania, Spain, Greece, Belgium, and Sweden. If Bulgaria is mentioned first, it is because there is certainly no crown that has been more extensively hawked about through the length and breadth of Europe than that first worn by Prince Alexander of Battenberg, the hero of Slivnitsa.

One only need glance over the pages of Iberian history, from the time of Queen Isabella's deposition until the assassination of General Prim, in order to realize to what an extent the crown once worn by King Ferdinand went begging. It was tendered in turn to Austrian archdukes and to Don Ferdinand, the widowed King Consort of Portugal, who had withdrawn from all participation in the affairs of the Government at Lisbon. Finally, the second son of the late King Victor Emmanuel consented to accept it, but abdicated and left Madrid in disgust after a brief reign of two years.

The crown of Greece was offered to and declined by Queen Victoria's second son, Alfred, before it was finally accepted by the second son of the King of Denmark, who has occupied it for close upon thirty years, and who is now, according to the latest intelligence, seriously thinking of abandoning it to his eldest son, being very tired of the troubles and restrictions entailed upon him by its tenure. Some thirty years prior to his election—shortly after the termination of the war of independence, which resulted in the liberation of Greece from Turkish thraldom—it was offered to and declined by that Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg who subsequently accepted the proffered throne of Belgium.

On his refusal of the Hellenic crown it was tendered to Prince Otto of Bavaria, who reigned for a considerable period at Athens before being finally deposed and exiled by the turbulent Greeks.

Without going back so far as to the difficulties experienced by both the Belgians and the Swedes in finding princes willing to rule over them—the Swedes ended by asking the first Napoleon to select for their future ruler one of his generals, who founded the present dynasty of Bernadotte—one need only refer to the many vicissitudes experienced by the Rumanians in connection with the filling of their throne.

After the deposition of Prince Couza, the last of the Hospodars, towards the middle of the sixties, the Rumanians sought in vain for a time to find a suitable prince prepared to take up his residence at Bucharest, and to reign over them.

Finally, in despair at the refusals which they encountered in every quarter, they appealed for advice to Napoleon III., and proffered through him their crown to his cousin, Jerome, better known by his sobriquet of "Bonaparte." The latter, however, declined to forfeit his prospects of succession to the Imperial throne of France—there was only the delicate little Prince Imperial between himself and the crown—by expatriating himself, although he was pressed to do so by the Empress Eugenie and other members of the court of the Tuileries, who were anxious to get him out of the way.

Thereupon the Emperor suggested Charles of Hohenzollern, son of that Prince of Hohenzollern who had been his playmate as a child, and who had maintained the most fraternal relations with him.

Napoleon knew full well that this nomination would meet with general approval at Berlin, the court of which he was most anxious to conciliate at the time. Prince Charles, thus balked by the Governments of Prussia and France, though bitterly opposed by those of St. Petersburg and Vienna, managed to take possession of the Rumanian throne, which he has retained ever since. Childless, and with no hope of ever becoming a father, he adopted in the first place his eldest nephew, Prince William of Hohenzollern, as his son, and designated him as his successor, the prince being proclaimed heir to the throne with much pomp and solemnity in 1888.

A year later, on marrying Princess Marie Terese of Bourbon, he renounced his rights of succession to the throne of Roumania, abandoning them to his younger brother, Ferdinand, declaring that he preferred to live the idle and agreeable life of a non-regnant prince of Germany to the labor, the responsibilities, and the drawbacks entailed by becoming King of Roumania.

A Big Catalogue.

The biggest book in the world will be the catalogue of the British Museum. It has been in preparation thirteen years, but now the gigantic task of compilation is nearing completion. Some idea of its size can be guessed from the fact that 14,000,000 distinct titles and entries have been printed in all sorts of languages, and presenting no end of difficulties even to the savants and linguists employed on the work.

Society Notes in Russian Papers.

Russian newspapers are not permitted to make any reference to the dresses worn by the Empress on state or public occasions. This is only a recent prohibition, and was brought about through the carelessness of the members of the staff of certain newspapers who incorrectly stated that Her Majesty, on a certain occasion, wore a dress which at the time was out of fashion.

Worse than in Halifax Offices.

There has been so much fault found with the punctuation of the U. S. tariff bill that Lord Timothy Dexter's plan might be tried. Disgusted with the hubbub raised in his second book he placed all his punctuation marks at the end and told the folks to arrange as they pleased.

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