

LOVE WINS THE DAY.

The butler's new boy was serving his first dinner. He stood behind the chair of the young Countess Lida, handing her the dish with the asparagus from the right instead of the left side. She gave him a disdainful glance over her shoulder. He was a helpless, overgrown lad. His big hands, clumsier than they were naturally in the white cotton gloves, clung like grim death to the fine, gold-bordered dish, and his round, moon face was red and hot, and covered with fine beads of perspiration. When the countess saw the embarrassment of the youngster she relented. The butler's boy made her laugh.

"Excuse him, countess," implored old Mariot, the butler, "it's my nephew's first experience. He will soon learn to do better."

"Certainly, Mariot," smiled the girl, graciously. Then she turned, looked straight into the youth's bashful eyes, and asked him for his name.

"Christian!" answered the lad. "One can learn anything one chooses, eh, Christian?" said the countess, to the overgrown, hapless youngster, with the exasperating air of a would-be-wise young woman.

The party which sat around Count Minsterhaven's festive board grew merrier as the wine began to flow. The young cavaliers teased the countess, who was never at a loss for an answer.

Old Mariot stood stark and stiff behind the chair of the dowager countess, and nephew, Christian, was rigidly glued to the back of the chair of the Countess Lida.

He looked down upon the fair young neck, against which trembled soft, dark tendrils. Filmy lace half veiled the fair white flesh of the shoulders, the like Christian had never seen before.

Christian came from a poor, forlorn home in a little out-of-the-way village. He knew nothing beyond what he had learned at the village school and from the parson, who had prepared him for confirmation. He had never seen Beauty—he had never even dreamed of it.

To wait at table was not his sole occupation, for Christian had been especially hired to care for the young countess' Sæterland pony Olander, to lift her into the saddle when she mounted her horse to accompany her father on his country rides. Day after day her dainty foot rested in his broad, red palm. Day after day it made him happy—he knew not why.

Count Minsterhaven was an omnivorous reader, and his daughter shared that praiseworthy quality. Besides novels and works of current literature the count's library contained valuable scientific works of early and later date. Just now a third person seemed to take an interest in these books. The count missed first one and then another work, which he remembered having laid in a certain place. After awhile it always came back to where he had placed it.

Like the wise man that he was, he said nothing about his discovery. It amused him that his daughter's book hunger had led her into the field of science. Soon Lida herself began to complain. Her Shakespeare had disappeared. Christian was sent for and ordered to look under the couch in the billiard-room, where the young countess was wont to hold her siesta on sultry summer days. But the volume—handsomely bound in green with gold—was not to be found. Old Mariot was given a hint by the count.

"Let me know what you would like to read and I will help you," suggested Count Minsterhaven. The old servant protested. He would not dare to touch the smallest of the count's books, he declared. When night came he was much too tired to read more than his prayers and say his beads. Christian, of whom he had expected so much, was no help to him whatever. He was a stupid, lazy lout, and tried his good nature beyond endurance.

"You must be patient, Mariot," advised the count. "The poor fellow is unused to his surroundings and shake off his embarrassment."

The old butler shook his head. He could not understand the lad at all.

That afternoon Countess Lida came storming into the room of her father. She shrieked with laughter.

"Papa, grandmamma—what do you think I saw—just now in the stable? Oh, it is too funny! I went there to treat Olander to a lump of sugar. When I called for Christian there was no reply. I climbed the ladder to the hay loft. There he sat close to a rift in the wall through which the sunlight came like a narrow golden band. In his clumsy hands he held my Shakespeare, half reading, half spelling the words, and following the lines with his fat, red finger. It was such a comical sight!"

The Count and the dowager countess were almost as much amused as Lida Minsterhaven. The count sent for Christian and ordered him to go to his study. There the new groom confessed that he had appropriated from time to time the missing books; books on artificial irrigation, national economy, Greek sculpture and French novels. He had read them all in the hay loft over the stable.

"But you did not understand a word of them?" said his master.

"No, not a word," admitted Christian. The count became interested in the rank, unsophisticated youth, who was far from good-looking.

"What did you think when you read all this stuff?"

"That some day I might learn to understand it all."

"Yes, it is possible," answered the aristocrat, loftily, somewhat impressed with this young and stubborn giant before him, who with eager, misguided hands reached out for the treasures of education and culture.

"What good will all this understanding do you?"

The groom was silent and the interview came to an end.

One winter evening, not long after this occurrence, Rev. Mr. Feinmann, who pre-

sided over the village church, spoke of a strange new scholar, to whom he gave private lessons in both German and Latin. Christian, the groom, was applying his Christmas gift, a sum of money which Count Minsterhaven was in the habit of bestowing upon all his servants, to the payment for these lessons.

The aristocratic family of the Minsterhavens pointed out their groom as something of a freak to their visitors and acquaintances.

Old Mariot was deeply distressed over this state of affairs, and it would have fared hard with Christian had not Countess Lida taken his part with the old servant. She found the new groom an interesting personage, all but his hands; they were too red and unshapely.

When Christian had been in the count's service for a year he asked for his dismissal.

"Are you dissatisfied, Christian?" asked Count Minsterhaven.

No, the lad had no complaint to make; he merely wanted to go to the city.

"City pleasures and city ways; ah, I see!" laughed the Count. "You young fellows are all alike."

"I am going to college, Count."

"To college! What for?"

"To study."

"My dear boy," remarked the Count affably, "you have an erroneous impression about studying. What are you going to study?"

Christian was deeply embarrassed. He rubbed his clumsy hands up and down his leather breeches.

"I am going to be a scientist."

"You'll have a hard row to hoe, Christian. Better stay here, where you can earn your daily bread and a little more. You may succeed in reaching the strange goal, but you may starve in doing it."

"I have starved before."

"What plans have you made for your future?"

Christian referred the Count to Rev. Mr. Feinmann, who had conducted his preliminary studies. From him his master learned that Christian had made wonderful progress in his studies, and there was more in the lad than had appeared on the surface.

Surprised at this information, the Count decided to help the young man along. He recommended him to a friend, who took a lively interest in human curiosities. With the latter Christian took service, and devoted his evenings to earnest and laborious studies.

Countess Lida cried a little when her new groom bade her farewell.

"When you are a doctor, Christian, come back again," she said enthusiastically.

Christian held the rosy, soft hand a minute in his own clumsy, hard-worked palm.

"Yes, Countess, I will," he stammered, and blushed like a schoolboy of 10.

Soon after Christian and his existence were forgotten in the house of Count Minsterhaven.

The Countess Lida had been for several years belle at court and in the aristocratic circles in which she moved. Then those younger than she took her place, though she was still a celebrated beauty. She had refused several good offers of marriage and her acquaintances regarded her as rather eccentric on that account.

One morning, when she returned from a ride with her father and the Duke d'Ugelli, she found on the reception table in the ante-room a card.

"Dr. Christian Marlot," it read.

The young girl was surprised. "Dr. Marlot—that name—" Then suddenly recollecting, "Papa, our former groom," she cried, passing the card to her father.

"We must invite him to our reception."

A dainty note was dispatched to Dr. Marlot. Countess Lida desired his presence on Thursday evening from 8 to 10.

The great moment came at last, when

the old family butler threw back the portieres and announced Dr. Christian Marlot.

The assembled guests seemed to know that a phenomenon stood in their midst. A tall, serious man, in irreproachable attire, bowed correctly and without show of embarrassment before the Count who introduced him to his daughter and the dowager.

Again the doctor bowed and saluted the young Countess. He tried to speak, but his voice failed him, and when he regained his composure he could only stammer and proceed in broken syllables.

Lida watched him with interest. The wholesome red of the country boy had gone out of his countenance. His features were large, as of yore, but a well-trimmed beard practically covered them. The stubborn brow of the idealist was more than ever visible; at the temples the hair turned gray. His hands were well-groomed and showed the skill of the manicure.

"A man—a brave true man" thought Countess Lida, and was happy in the anticipation of obtaining a glimpse of his strange life and career.

The society belle devoted the best part of the evening to the newcomer. She was tender and benign in her efforts to show her esteem.

"Old Marlot has put on the best silver all on your account, and I myself procured the flowers at the last moment," she whispered, as he conducted her to the dining room.

He drew out the chair for her, and as she sat down his eyes rested again on the soft, silken tendrils that nestled coyly against the firm white flesh of her neck.

Every one was eager to know something of the learned man. He was the assistant of one of the foremost surgeons in Vienna. "Several treatises by him had appeared in medical journals," said those who were well acquainted with his name.

While the guests talked of the new light that had suddenly appeared on the social horizon, Dr. Marlot gave Countess Lida a brief outline of his career. The family friend to whom he had been sent had interested himself in the lad from the start. He had helped him to obtain valuable instruction, and when two years later he left his home to go to college his benefactor had liberally supplied him with money. He, Marlot, was deeply indebted to him.

"He lived to see the day when I was admitted to the university," he said. "Then my struggles began. But of these I will tell you later."

Countess Lida sat at the window of her pretty boudoir. The hyacinths in their porcelain pots vied with the tints of the evening glow that filtered in violet and purple mists through the softly curtained windows. The light of the dying day played coyly over the closely written pages of a letter in Lida's lap.

Christian Marlot had revealed to her the main spring of his career. It was not innate love for science, nor thirst for learning and booklore, nor ambition to throw off the menial's yoke and become a ruler among men, that had urged him forward to success and elevation—it was the love of woman.

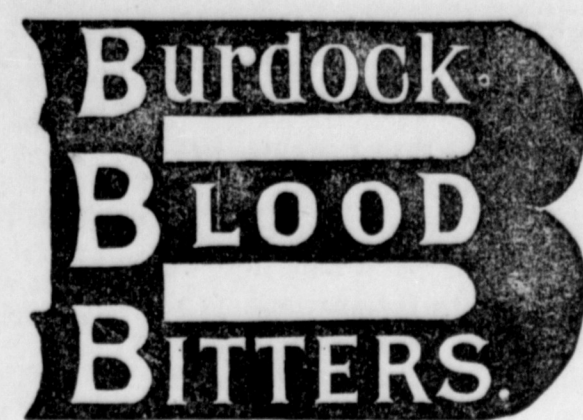
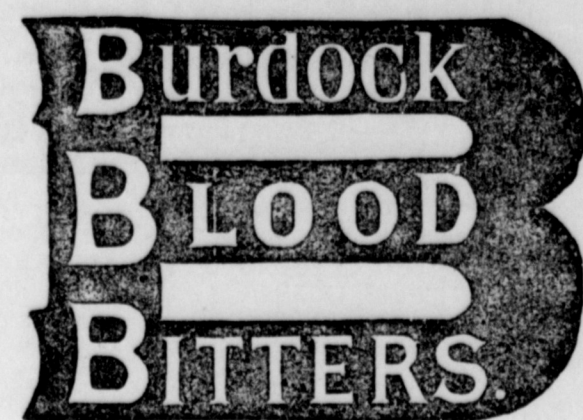
Love that came into the untutored heart and fancy free brain of the country boy the first day he stood behind the chair of the Countess. And now he craved his reward. The lonely man implored her to share his fate.

Tears flowed from the girl's eyes. Her lips trembled with excitement. The pages dropped from her fingers and her eyes wandered out into the twilight mists.

The Duke d'Ugelli rode by and saluted. She loved that man. He, too, had asked her to become his wife.

Countess Lida sought her father in his study and confessed her love for the aristocrat and her deep respect for the plebeian scientist. She deputed her father to carry to the latter her refusal of his honest and honorable suit.

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"Wonders and Wonders."

Familiarity breeds the commonplace, ignorance the wonderful. Harper's Round Table illustrates the fact:

One of our American line steamers landed its passengers in New York the other day just after dusk. Among them was a son of Ireland, whose friends lost no opportunity to point out the wonders of the city; and soon they had the poor fellow simply dazed with admiration, and willing to believe anything.

Suddenly he caught sight of a street arc-light on its pole, and pulling up short, he grasped the arm of his friends nearest him and exclaimed:

"Faith, it's wonders and wonders, sure! If my eyes don't deceive me, yez have the moon stuck on a stick beyant here!"

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