

(CONTINUED FROM TENTH PAGE.)

all," he said, simply, "but of poor Sylvia; and now the question is, how am I going to bring him to her without scaring her out of her senses? She thinks him dead—dead, don't you see?"

"I see," said Audrey, slowly and thoughtfully; "yes I see."

And indeed saw more than Lorrimore had put to her. She understood now why Sylvia was not married—why she received men's homage and admiration with such coolness and reserve.

"Oh the poor girl!" she murmured. "And to think it is Neville Lynne! Oh, I am so glad—so glad!"

And in her joy at the prospect of her friends' happiness, she turned to him with the tears glistening in her eyes, and looking so lovely that poor Lorrimore's head swam.

"Yes I'm glad he's turned up; and I wish I'd found him."

Audrey's eye fell.

"But now we've got to break the news to her," he said. "You see what a splendid hand I am at that kind of thing, and I'm afraid you will have to do it."

"Yes," said Audrey, softly; "I will do it. Where is he?"

"Out there in the shrubbery, waiting for me to call him. Shall I do so?"

"No, no; not yet. He must not come yet, in case she should come in suddenly and see him without being prepared—Ah! here she is she broke off, as Sylvia's voice was heard singing as she came."

"Here's Lord Lorrimore, Sylvia," said Audrey, trembling a little, Sylvia uttered an exclamation of pleasure.

"Oh, I am so glad!" and her soft little palm clung around his. "And how unexpected, isn't it, Audrey?"

"Yes," said Audrey; "Lord Lorrimore has come on—on business—business of yours."

"Of mine?" said Sylvia. "Has anything gone wrong at the opera? Has the manager refused to give me another engagement? What is it? Why do you look so grave? You can't bring me very bad news, Lord Lorrimore, for I have had all my bad news, you see; and all those I love—Audrey, and Mercy, and you, if I may say so—are hear near me and safe. What is it?"

"It's—it's good news," stammered Lord Lorrimore; but Audrey motioned him to silent.

"Yes dear," she said, stealing her arm around her, "it is good news. Lord Lorrimore has come to-night with a strange wonderful story—so strange and wonderful as to seem unreal and impossible. Do you think you could bear to hear it, Sylvia?"

Her voice grew lower and more tender. "Sometimes great joy is as hard to bear as great sorrow. Sometimes we find that those we have lost—lost forever, as we thought—are still living."

She stopped, terrified by the look that came into Sylvia's face. It was a look as of one who hopes, yet dare not believe.

"What—what is it?" she panted her face growing white each moment.

"Such wonderful things happen—truth is stranger than fiction," stammered Lorrimore, getting near her, in case she should faint and fall. "We've read stories of people who've been supposed to be killed on the field of battle, you know, and—"

turned up again safe and sound, after all." Sylvia started; her eyes closed for a moment, and they thought she would fall, for she swayed slightly; but she caught Audrey's arm.

"It is Jack!" she breathed. "You—you have heard that—that he is not dead—not dead! Oh, God! don't keep me in suspense!" she pleaded; and she wrung her hands and looked from one to the other with an expression in her eyes that made Lorrimore turn his head away. "Don't keep me—not a moment! I can bear it. I dreamed that he was alive. Ask Mercy; she will tell you that I did. Oh, Jack, Jack!"

"My dear," broke out Lorrimore, "that jacket we brought you was his, right enough; but another man wore it, and—and, you see—"

"Call him," whispered Audrey, down whose cheeks the tears were running.

Lorrimore sprang to the steps, and shouted: "Neville!"

A stalwart figure came running across the lawn, and in another moment Sylvia was lying in his arms, weeping, laughing, murmuring his name brokenly, her small, trembling hands feeling his broad shoulders that she might convince herself that he was flesh and blood—her Jack, and not a ghost!

Lorrimore led Audrey away.

"I wish to Heaven I were half as happy as those two!" he murmured.

## CHAPTER XLII.

At last Sylvia drew herself out of his arms, and the two stood and gazed at each other, and then Neville started and crimsoned. He had not actually seen her yet. In that first rush they had scarcely looked at each other; and now—well, he had been picturing to himself the Sylvia he remembered—the slim girl with girlish form and face and ways and tricks of speech—that was the Sylvia he had left and he had expected to see; and, instead, here before him was a lovely—an exquisitely lovely woman, superbly dressed, her shoulders and arms gleaming like marble. Could this princess be his "lass o' the woods"—his little Syl?

Her beauty, grace, and air of distinction awed him into amazed silence. Man-like, he felt shy, frightened, even while he tingled and glowed with passionate love.

She did not notice the sudden change in his manner, and she drew him by both his hands, which she held in her warm, soft clasp, into the room.

"Come to the light and let me see you Jack!" she said; and her voice startled him almost as much as her altered appearance had done. It was fuller, softer, and yet, ah! as sweet as ever. "Come to the light and let me see you plainly Jack—let me see if I have forgotten what you were like. Oh! oh!" and she began to laugh and cry—that strange commingling by which a woman relieves a heart too full of joy.

"How came you to be so cruel? No, no; not a word of reproach, Jack—not now nor ever! But if you could know what I have suffered!" and she shuddered.

"I did it all for the best," he faltered.

"Yes, yes; you thought that I was in better hands. See how I read your thoughts, Jack! But how could I have been better cared for than you cared for me? Oh, how happy we were! Have you forgotten it? No—ah, no, you have not! I remember everything—everything, Jack—the slightest, weest talk we ever had in that wild, silent place. Let me look at you. How brown you are! And—yes, I think you are bigger—or is it that men here are smaller? Oh, Jack! to have you with me once more—once more!" and she covered her face with her hands. "Now, tell me everything that has happened. Did you stay long at the camp, and?" she laughed—"did you find a lot of gold, Jack?"

He shook his head and smiled.

"No; my luck left with you Syl," he said.

"Syl!" she murmured. "No one has called me that but you, Jack, my dear, dear brother!"

Neville's face flushed; the title jarred upon him. He forgot that it was he who had first invented it.

"My luck left me, Syl," he said, "and I left Lorn Hope as poor as I entered it."

"Oh," she said, with sweetest, most loving sympathy. "Tell me—go on, Jack!" and she drew him on to a sofa beside her.

He gave an account of his adventures since their parting, excepting those connected with the finding of the will, and Sylvia listened with eager interest.

"Poor Jack!" she murmured, smoothing his hand. "But who cares? You are here—here, actually sitting beside me! Oh! do you think I shall wake up presently and find it all a dream?" and she looked up at him piteously.

"I was just asking myself the same question," responded Neville. "It's—it's difficult enough to believe that this gorgeous and queenly lady is—Syl!"

She got up and dropped him a courtesy.

"Wasn't I a—wild cat—a tom-boy, Jack?" and she laughed.

"You were the dearest—" He stopped.

"But is it true that you are—"

"The famous Signora Stella, sir," she said, laughing. "Do you remember how I used to sing to you sitting by the claim, Jack, and how you used to praise my voice? I've made some use of it since. You shall hear me sing some day, if you are very good, sir, and promise never, to leave me, but always be a stay-at-home brother."

Again Neville's face fell.

"I'd promise anything to-night!" he said.

"But how did you happen to come down here?" she asked, after a moment. "Did you know that I was here? How did you discover me?"

As she asked the question the viscount came in, followed by a footman with some wine.

"Here you are, Lorri—Halloo! what the deuce—Who—No—yes! It is Neville Lynne!" he exclaimed, in amazement.

Neville rose. Sylvia looked round. She could only see Jack—the Young "Un"—her brother.

"Why, my dear boy," ejaculated the viscount, "this is a surprise. Where on earth did you spring from? By Jove, how you've changed! I shouldn't have known you but for your eyes. Tut, tut! Where's Audrey? Have you seen her yet? She will be glad enough to see you! I'll warrant! Well, I never! My dear fellow, we all thought you were—ahem!—dead! Neville Lynne back!" and he kept clapping Neville's broad back and laughing. "Gad! I wish her ladyship were here. You were a favorite of hers, Neville, I was going to say 'my boy,' but you have grown into a giant and—Hullo!" he broke off suddenly, remembering that he had come upon Neville and the signora sitting close together on the sofa. "Do you know the Signora Stella, Neville? Do you know him, Signora? I suppose you do, though," and he looked from one to the other, perplexed and puzzled.

Sylvia rose. She was pale now—very pale.

"I—I thought I did—yes," she said in a low voice. "But you called him—what was it you called him—Neville Lynne?"

"I did. It's his name, my dear," said the viscount, staring.

"What else should I call him?"

Sylvia looked from him to Neville, her breath coming quickly. Jack—her Jack—Neville Lynne? How could it be?

Lorrimore and Audrey, entering the room, found them thus, and Audrey, going up to the viscount, quickly put her arm round his shoulders.

"Neville is an old friend of Sylvia, dear, don't you see?"

"No, hang me if I do!" he retorted, plumply. "She didn't know his name."

"A fellow doesn't always call himself by his right name out in the gold fields," remarked Neville.

"Eh? And you met out there? Well, bless my soul! You must tell me all about it, Neville. But the first thing to do is to drink your health, eh? Where's the wine?"

Audrey, my dear, there's more in this than I can fathom," he grunted.

Audrey laughed.

"We'll explain it directly, dear," she said. "At present we are all so happy in Sylvia's happiness that we aren't able to say anything connectedly."

She went to Sylvia and kissed her.

"Yes, dear," she murmured, "I am happy in your happiness. I think I know

how you feel. To have lost him, to think him dead, and to have him come back to you. Ah!" and she drew a long breath.

Sylvia allowed herself to be kissed, but seemed dazed, and gazed at Neville, who, though he was talking to the viscount and Lord Lorrimore, kept glancing her way as if he could not keep his eyes from her face.

"It's the strangest story," he said, "and I don't quite know whether I am awake or asleep and dreaming. To think that Lord Lorrimore here should have been hunting for me all these years, and that he once should have been within a few miles—"

"A few yards," said Lorrimore.

"Yes—yards, and not know it."

"I'll wire to her ladyship," said the viscount. "I won't tell her that you have come back. We'll surprise her, eh? And—ah, by Jove! I was forgetting some one else—Jordan. Have you seen him yet?"

Neville's face clouded; Lorrimore's darkened.

"No," said Neville, grimly, "not yet."

"Not yet? By gad! he'll be surprised. He's been advertising—looking for you everywhere."

A footman opened the door.

"Sir Jordan Lynne," he announced.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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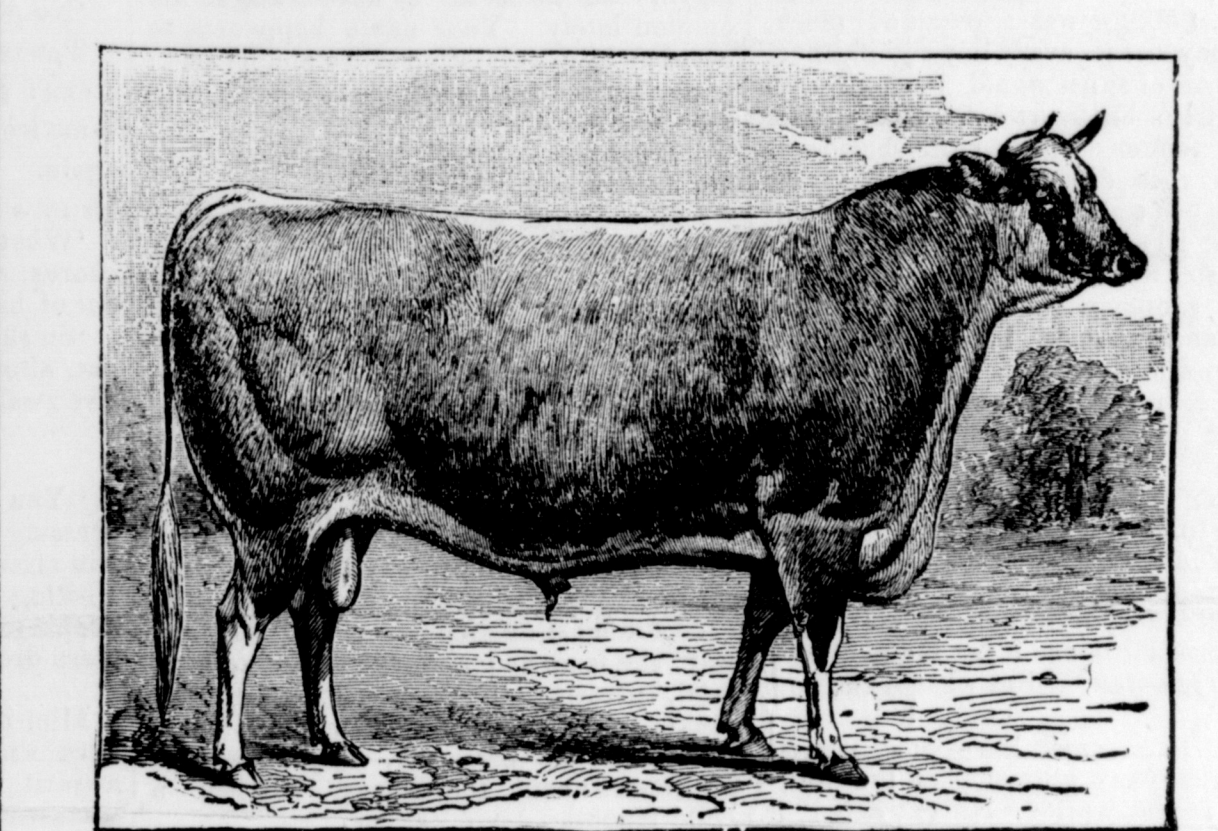
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villains creeping and see what is happening in the rich man's sleeping apartment, and why he doesn't awaken to foil the robbers at their game. Could you see into this room you would certainly bet a sovereign to a bad apple that the man was asleep, but his wife's eyes are wide open as she turns over, thumps him on the funny-bone, and says:—

"And so, Charles, you refuse to buy me a diamond necklace like Mrs. Jewel has?"

"For the millionth time, I do! Go to sleep!" answered the rich man, opening his eyes for a second to glare at a downtrodden woman.

"You wretch!" she gasped.

"You squanderer!" he growled.

"I'll get a divorce!"

"The quicker the better!"

In the meantime the robbers had finished their creeping business, had advanced to the door of the room, and as they paused on the threshold they overheard the words given above. Their faces blanched, their hands trembled, and with a bound they fled—fled from that house as if shot from a cannon, and never stopped a stop until a mile of streets lay between them and that unrobbed residence.

These men could stab, shoot, rob, murder, but when it came to getting mixed up in a family quarrel—excuse them!

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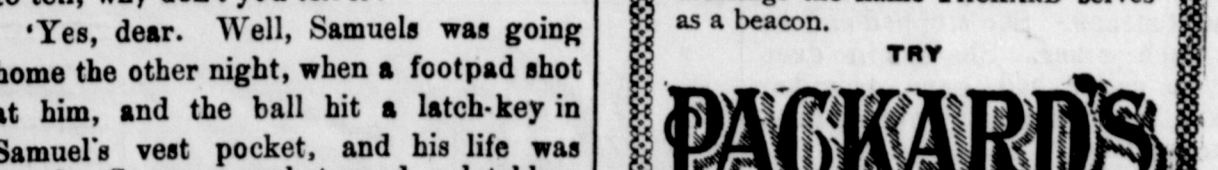
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