

(CONTINUED FROM TENTH PAGE.)

She sighed heavily, and looked at herself long and steadily in the silver framed mirror.

Her face frightened her: it was whiter than the white satin gown she wore.

With shaking fingers she took from her dressing case a bottle of sal volatile, mixed herself a dose, and then swallowed it.

The potent spirit revived her somewhat, and the faint color returned to lips and cheek.

She opened the door gently, listening for a moment as she did so.

Not a sound broke the silence of the dressing hour.

All were in their rooms engaged in the agreeable task of making themselves attractive for the evening's dinner party.

Magdalen closed the door of her room, and went noiselessly down the wide staircase to the conservatory.

To reach this she was obliged to cross the drawing room.

It was empty.

As though impelled by an unseen power she slowly passed through the fire lit room and, drawing aside the heavy curtains, entered the conservatory.

Under the palms stood Adrian Crawford. Not until the curtains, fell behind her and the soft glow of her satin gown had melted into the silence, did the man come forward to meet the woman.

Magda!

Only her name, but the wonderful music of the voice, once heard, could never be forgotten.

He bent his sleek, dark head, and kissed her and at the touch of his lips she trembled again.

She appeared turned to stone, save for the quivering of the diamond star that glittered above the white brow.

'Ah! leave me, Adrian,' she sighed. 'Have pity on me—take away that which you have laid upon me—let me be as I used to be before I saw you. You can— you must! Listen to me. I am engaged—'

Oh, dear heaven! only on Saturday, to a good, true man, who loves me. I shall be happy with him. I want to be happy. I am so young—I want rest and peace. Adrian, have you no pity?

His dark eyes burnt into hers, which dropped beneath what she read there.

He smiled slowly, but did not answer the passionate appeal.

His eyes were still fixed upon hers.

'Adrian, don't you understand? I am going to be married. I have promised to marry him. I love him.'

She gazed up into his face.

The hunted expression and the pleading in the lovely eyes would have touched a heart of stone.

But it made no impression on Adrian Crawford.

'You love me,' he said in low, vibrating tones. 'You do not want to, but you do. You cannot help it; it is your fate.'

His voice had sunk to a whisper, and he took her chill hand in his.

Magdalen shivered, and the words seemed wrung from her pale lips—

'Then God help me!'

'It is of no use to struggle against Fate, Magda. You would do well to realize that. I mean, against that power which tools call "Fate." You are mine, and to possess your body as I do your soul is my desire and my will. What you term your "engagement" is nothing to me. I am sorry for him—the man—but take this evening—I give it to you and him. After to night, Magda—'

He did not finish his sentence, but Magdalen under stood.

She turned towards the curtains, but his hand stayed her.

'It will be as well that you give no sign that we have met before. I know that up to the present you have not done so; but— be careful. Now you had better go in; they will soon be down.'

He raised the velvet curtains.

She bent her head, and passed through into the brightness beyond.

Lady Emma rustled up.

'Magda, dear, let me introduce M. Adrian Crawford—Miss Durer,' and she rustled away again.

Crawford bowed low, and taking the seat beside Magda, exerted himself to please and fascinate.

He was at his best, and Adrian Crawford's 'best' was very good indeed.

Presently Vere Tempest came in hand-some, well groomed and honest looking—a typical Englishman and soldier.

Magdalen's miserable eyes, in which still dwelt that haunting tear, rest upon the man to whom she had given a hollow promise, as, alas! she now too well knew it to be.

He hurried to her side.

'I am late dearest! I can't think how it was he began in her ear; but—'

he broke off suddenly, and a slight frown puckered his forehead as he noticed who her companion was.

So this was Mr. Adrian Crawford!

This tall, slender, elegant man, with the Continental grace of bearing about his every movement.

The British scowl became deeper.

Crawford saw it, and smiling, rose, with light words of well-bred apology, and Tempest sank into the vacant chair.

'So that is Emma's latest "find," is it?' he said, with a short laugh. 'Well, I wasn't wrong. I don't like him—not a little bit. Magda, darling, promise me you'll have nothing to do with him: he isn't the kind of fellow I'd like my own girl to see much of. Promise, dear.'

'I won't see him—more than I can help, I mean,' adding quickly, as Vere was about to speak: 'But we are staying in the same house, and one can't be rude to a fellow guest.'

'No of course not,' returned her lover, pulling his moustache savagely.

He felt at that moment that he had it in him to be very rude indeed to this insolent, half bred foreigner, as he mentally termed him.

'I know you will do as I ask, dear,' he said presently, but he did not appear half

satisfied.

It was a brilliant dinner party that evening.

Adrian Crawford held the whole table enthralled by his keen wit and the brilliancy of his conversation.

His satire was sharp, yet delicate, and this, added to the melancholy beauty of his half foreign face, predisposed the women, and most of the men, in his favor.

Although Tempest admitted the man's charm, he could not rid himself of the feeling of aversion with which he regarded his vis-a-vis.

Magdalen was beside him, and her lover noticed jealously that her eyes were continually fixed upon the dark ones opposite to her.

Crawford had taken in pretty Mrs. Norton, who was looking her very best in a Paquin creation, all rose color brocade and frothy chiffon, and was indulging in a wordy war with her, such as the little woman thoroughly enjoyed.

She was rallying him on his apparent nationality.

'It's no manner of use, pretending you're not from the "sunny South," she was saying. 'Italian' is plainly written upon your face.'

'I don't wish to "pretend," replied Crawford, bending his dark, splendid eyes upon her. 'My mother was an Italian.'

'I thought as much!' whispered Vere, who had overheard this scrap of conversation, to his companion. 'Adventurer—charlatan!'

'Hush! Don't say that. You are unjust. You don't know—you can't know!' replied Magdalen, and her tones were so agitated that Vere gazed at her in dismay.

At this moment Crawford fixed his eyes upon her.

She rose hurriedly, white and trembling.

'You are ill!' exclaimed Tempest and Lady Emma simultaneously.

'Yes; I am ill.'

And she sank back into her chair unconscious.

Confusion prevailed as Tempest tenderly carried his betrothed to her room, accompanied by Lady Emma.

Crawford went forward with offers of assistance, but Vere pushed him rudely on one side, with a curt 'You're not wanted.'

Adrian only shrugged his shoulders with a peculiar smile, and resumed his seat.

'I can't think what made her faint,' remarked Edith Norton to her companion when order had been restored, and the guests, at Lady Emma's express desire, were once more busy plying knives and forks.

'The room isn't over hot. As for me I'm chilly; but then, I'm a cold-blooded little mortal. There! feel how cold my hand is.'

With a coquettish little movement she laid her small, jewelled hand on Crawford's coat sleeve.

Bending towards the fair, flabby head beside him, he took the white hand in his; his inscrutable eyes sought hers.

'You are not cold-blooded,' he said in her ear. 'I will tell you what you are. You are—'

'No, no, no!' she exclaimed. 'Don't—not here—not now.'

She had become very pale, and the disjointed words fell graspingly from her lips.

She snatched her hand from his grasp.

The color returned to her face, and she laughed nervously.

'What on earth did I say? I can't think what came over me for the moment, I felt so strange. Mr Crawford, if you looked long at poor Magda like—that, I don't wonder she fainted.'

Mrs Norton was recovering herself. She looked up at him archly.

'I do believe that you have the evil eye,' she said.

'I wonder how you can believe in such nonsense,' broke in Captain Leslie, who sat on the pretty widow's other hand, and who was none too well-pleased at the way in which Adrian Crawford had been monopolising her attention throughout the dinner.

'Mrs. Norton, I'm quite surprised at anyone so charming and sensible as you being taken in by such stuff.'

As he said this the gallant captain gave Crawford an unmistakable scowl.

Edith Norton laughed.

He was jealous then! What fun! She looked from one to the other, foreseeing sport.

'I don't know about nonsense,' she said. 'I know there are such things, and I believe Mr Crawford possesses the secret of them. You've only to look at him to tell as much. I believe he could mesmerize anyone very easily. You could, couldn't you?' with an upward glance that further maddened Jack Leslie.

'He'd better not try,' he began angrily, and then remembered that, as yet, he had no earthly right to interfere.

'I am a mesmerist,' replied Crawford gravely ignoring the other man's wrath; 'but you would not be a good subject, Mrs. Norton. I shall not try my powers upon you.'

'You had better not my friend,' muttered Jack sotto voce.

Well, upon Magdalen Durer, eh? said the pretty widow saucily, as she rose to leave the table with the other ladies. 'I believe she is under your spell already, although you met her for the first time this evening.'

Adrian smiled at her, his mysterious subtle smile, for which Jack Leslie could have kicked him.

Magdalen did not appear again that night and for Vere Tempest the evening was spoiled.

The following morning Magda came down to breakfast as usual, and made light of her fainting fit of the previous evening.

Tempest watched her anxiously.

He put it all down to Crawford, and again he asked himself 'Why?' but no answer came to him.

It was a glorious day.

The sun shone out with a brilliancy that made one almost forget it was winter.

Lady Emma and her guests were in the

highest of spirits; the news had been brought up by one of the keepers that not only would the ice on the lake bear, but that it was in splendid condition.

'Capital, capital!' exclaimed her ladyship, gaily clapping her hands like the child she really was at heart. 'George do you hear that? We are all going to the fall lunch time, and you must come too.'

'It's all very well for you, my dear,' said the good natured baronet, with a comical expression of dismay upon his good looking face; 'but you never think of us hunting men. I had so hoped last night that we were about to have a thaw.'

'You nasty, selfish, abominable, creature!' exclaimed his pretty wife. 'Come, Edith—Magda, let us punish him between us. He richly deserves it.'

Sir George laughed, and escaped from his fair tormentors.

'Mind, we all start at ten thirty sharp!' called out Emma Trelawney in the hall.

'Mr. Crawford, you skate, of course?'

'Oh yes, Lady Emma—a little,' was the reply.

'I should say there is nothing Mr. Crawford isn't!—quite too—it he chooses!' remarked Jack Leslie nastily.

Mrs. Norton had hardly spoken a word to him all breakfast time, and he felt he must revenge himself in ever so small a way.

'You are right, Captain Leslie—there isn't,' said Adrian Crawford, with that strange smile of his.

Edith Norton laughed, and told him she should, one day, call upon him to prove his words and then they all dispersed to don their skating costumes.

CONCLUSION NEXT WEEK.

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SEEING MRS. GODFREY OFF.

Things They Remembered to Say and Articles They Forgot to Bestow.

Do we ever say more idiotic things than when we go to railroad stations to see our friends off? Do our faces ever look more vacuous than when we hurl our last imbecile remarks at the car windows? Do we ever make feeble jokes or more imbrue our advice in commonplace? I think not.

Mrs. Godfrey is a charming woman, and she has been heard to say that she was proud of her friends; but do not think she was proud of them yesterday when they gathered in the Union station to bid her farewell before she left for Honolulu.

Neither did she herself shine with any particular lustre. We were gathered in the women's waiting room when she came in. After she had greeted us all, bought her ticket and sent a man down to check her baggage a most appalling silence fell on the group.

'You'll write to me before you get to San Francisco, won't you?' Margaret Deane said with the most intense fervor.

'Oh, of course,' Mrs. Godfrey answered. Thereupon six other friends exacted the same promise.

Another silence fell, broken by MacDonald. 'Will you have to change cars?' he asked anxiously. MacDonald thinks no more of crossing the Continent than he does of buying a cigar, but he added: 'It's the deuce to change cars, you know.'

'No, I don't have to change cars till I get to "Frisco," Mrs. Godfrey said. This remark was hailed as a joke and we all laughed uproariously.

'You are the jolliest woman!' little

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Wakfield said admiringly. 'We'll all miss you awfully.'

A chorus of regret arose. Mrs. Godfrey said that we must remember that she was coming back in the spring.

'And then you'll be our Honolulu queen,' the Infant said.

'Now, don't get the plague,' sweet old Mrs. Chisholm said, 'and have you got my belladonna plasters for seasickness? And have you got those tablets? They are so good if you—if you feel bilious, and—'

'Mrs. Godfrey, you ought to have some dried beef to chew if you get seasick,' MacDonald said. Everybody now offered a sure cure for seasickness, and Mrs. Godfrey pretended that she would buy them all in San Francisco.

Another silence fell on the company. 'I wonder what time you get to Omaha,' Margaret Deane asked. Mrs. Godfrey didn't know nor care, but Wakfield and MacDonald got a folder and spent several minutes in fixing the exact minutes. We then held a short argument on the best position for a berth. Before this question in which nobody felt the slightest interest was settled, Wakfield discovered that it was time to go down to the train.

The women all squealed at this announcement; the men fought courteously for the privilege of carrying Mrs. Godfrey's hand luggage. We all went into the car with her. The men shook hands with Mrs. Godfrey and the women kissed her daintily between sobs. 'Now, do write to us all,' Mrs. Chisholm said, 'and remember about the belladonna plaster.'

'Yes, do write often and tell us all about the Sandwich Islands, the chorus cried. Good-by—good by.'

We filed out of the car and then gathered in a knot under Mrs. Godfrey's window. We wiped our eyes and smiled out. Don't get married while you are gone,' the Infant said in a sudden accession of idiocy.

Mrs. Godfrey laughed and Wakfield and MacDonald looked at the Infant as if they desired ardently to eat her—bones, picture, hat and all. Mrs. Chisholm said that marriage was a lottery. Nobody disputed this and Margaret changed the subject by asking if Mrs. Godfrey was sure she had her ticket and her check.

The traveller showed them to us. It was time for the train to move. We all said again. 'Good-by—be sure to take care of yourself. Don't forget to write,' and those other senseless things that people say through car windows.

Mrs. Godfrey smiled and said 'Good-by, goodby.'

The train moved out of the shed and we were turning away when the Infant had a gleam of lucidity. 'Why, Mr MacDonald you forgot to give her that box of candy and Mr Wakefield has got his roses in his hands yet. The two men looked first foolish, then vicious. Mrs. Chisholm dived into her reticule and set up a loud wail. 'And I forgot to give her the belladonna plasters.' She turned to the Infant. 'Here, dear, you take them. They'll be real convenient when you go to school this fall.'

'Thank you,' the Infant returned. She looked hopefully toward Wakefield and MacDonald, expecting them to follow suit with the flowers and candy, but they only glared at her and went up the steps toward the street. The rest of us followed. Some how we all felt that we had not distinguished ourselves in the parting hour.

Obeyed Instructions

A certain charming young lady is visiting friends on Topeka avenue. She graduated from Kansas University and is still in her teens. The other evening she was having a tete-a-tete on the porch with the youngster who is the eldest son of her hostess—when the subject of age was brought up.

'And how old are you?' the little fellow asked.

How old would you think? came the reply, and to the young lady's amusement and his mother's discomfort [the boy promptly replied: 'twenty five.'

His mother then told him that whenever he was asked to guess a young woman's

age he must say '16.'

Sunday night a few friends of the Topeka avenue hostess came up. Again the conversation drifted to age. This time the young boy thought he would be all right, so when asked to guess the age of one of the young women he replied; 'I guess you are 16, but you are older than mamma.'

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'I understand it is pretty generally conceded now that golf is not a good hot weather game,' remarked the man who doesn't play.

'Oh, the game is all right,' replied the feminine enthusiast. 'The trouble is we don't dress properly for it.'

'What kind of a costume would you suggest?'

'A bathing suit.'

'Let's play,' he said promptly. But of course she declined. If there had been nothing but sand on the links it might have been different.

'Mamma, is nurse a boxer?'

'Why, no, dear. What makes you ask such a question?'

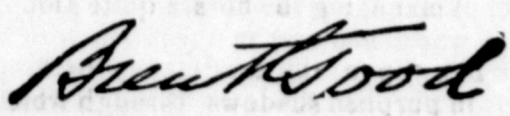
'Cause she boxed papa's ears when he tried to kiss her.'

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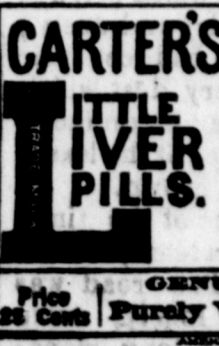
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