

CONTINUED FROM TENTH PAGE.

She looked up from her sketch and smiled at him.

That smile of hers was to him what a gleam of sunshine might have been to a frozen man, or food and drink to a hungry and thirsty one.

He would have sat patiently through half a dozen hours, simply to meet her glance for one single moment.

A vain girl—a more self-conscious one—would have divined this; but Nora had no vanity or self-consciousness.

Amazed, indeed, would she have been if she had been told that the master of Dare was in love with her.

She, a humble school teacher, with not a shilling of her own in the world, and the greatest landowner for miles round.

The wide difference in their positions would alone have dispelled the possibility of such an idea.

But quite apart from this, Darrell's own manner to her was such as to justify her in regarding him simply as her aunt's landlord and friend.

He never paid her a compliment—never seemed to specially desire her company, and would be half an hour in the same room without addressing her half a dozen times.

On this evening, as she sat sketching the castle, he had joined her as though by accident; and now was she to dream that in reality he kept watch, so far as possible, upon her every movement, and that in many a solitary walk he had followed her at a distance, faithful as her shadow?

After he had asked her if she would come to the castle, there was silence for some minutes.

She, quite at her ease, went on with her sketching indifferently; he stood deeply meditating.

He was half minded at that moment to put his fate to the test—to ask her whether she would come to Dare Castle as his wife.

His passion for this girl was such that whenever he was in her presence an avowal of love trembled on his lips.

That she did not love him he knew—nay, he told himself bitterly it was unlikely she ever could love him; but he longed to win her for his wife as he had never longed yet for any earthly thing.

'I must wait,' he said to himself now, with stern self repression. 'I should only startle her, and she would never give me a chance to speak again.'

Presently, Nora finished her sketch, clasped her sketch book, and rose to go. He did not offer to accompany her.

He was so afraid of startling her, of showing her his love before he could feel some faint hope of a return, that he abstained from even ordinary every day courtesies.

No wonder, then, that Nora never dreamed of the love she had inspired. 'Good-evening, Mr. Darrell,' she said with her frank, bright smile.

'Good-evening, Miss Nora,' he answered almost carelessly, or so his voice sounded, and the girl walked away with her firm, graceful step, never knowing that he devoured her with love-lit eyes so long as she was in sight.

Scarcely had she disappeared when a man came over the rocks from the direction of the castle, and joined him.

He was about Darrell's age, but was fair and slight, with merry light-grey eyes.

He looked clever, and his face was a very pleasant one.

'Well, Darrell,' he said in an easy, slightly drawing tone, 'I've been hunting for you for the last hour; but when I caught sight of Miss Nora's crimson cloak, I knew where to find you.'

Darrell began to walk toward the castle without speaking.

His black, strongly marked brows arched themselves in something like a frown. Gerard Vaughan noticed this, and being a young man of tact, kept silence also.

He was Darrell's cousin—the nearest relative he had, and almost the only one who had not turned his back upon him.

He was a barrister—a gay rollicking fellow—and he spent some weeks of every year at Dare Castle.

He held the opinion that his cousin was a deeply injured man, and stood up for him manfully against all and sundry who spoke against him.

'There's no vice in Darrell!' Gerald would say emphatically to a certain young lady in London, who was much in his confidence. 'He invites a lot of wild young dogs to the castle out of sheer defiance to Mother Grundy, and they gave it an ill name. But Darrell himself is as 'straight' a fellow as ever lived.'

Being remarkably keen-sighted, Gerald Vaughan has known for some time that his cousin was in love with the young school-mistress of Glenuskie, and now and then he ventured to banter him upon the subject.

The two men walked up to the castle in silence and entered the library together.

But when Darrell took up his position against one of the windows, looking with a hungry longing gaze towards Glenuskie in the hope of catching another glimpse of Nora's graceful figure on the distant road, his cousin made up his mind to speak.

'Good gracious, Hui why don't you marry the girl if you're so much in love with her?'

Darrell turned round with an intensely bitter smile on his gloomy face.

'Marry her?' he repeated, 'it's very likely, isn't it, that she would marry me?'

'Upon my word I don't see why not.'

'Don't you? A man who has blood on his hands, who has hung on the gibbet of public opinion for the last seven years?'

'Public opinion be hanged! The world would be all right with you if you'd be all right with the world. It's that haughty, defiant manner of yours that does all the mischief. But do you seriously think Miss Beresford wouldn't have you, if you were to ask her?'

'I'm quite sure she wouldn't—so sure, that I never shall ask her. And yet—this dark face softening marvellously—and yet I know that, if she were my wife I could make her happy.'

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'If I were sure of that, I'd marry her without asking her consent, if I were you.'

'What do you mean?'

'Why, man alive, we're in Scotland, aren't we? And you know how easy it is to get married here. A fellow's chief difficulty—and Gerard Vaughan laughed a little cynically—is to keep him self unmarried. I should have thought you would have liked nothing better than to carry the young lady off in true romantic fashion. Get her to go through the marriage ceremony with you unawares and then trust to time and your own exertions to win her forgiveness and love.'

A light—the light of sudden hope—leapt into Darrell's face.

'I'd give the world to do it, Ger,' he said beneath his breath.

'Good Heavens, mon! it's simple enough. Look here, I'll see you through it; I'll show you how it's to be done. It only wants a little planning, and I flatter myself I'm just the fellow for the work.'

'Provision your yacht for a bit of a cruise; invite Miss Nora to go on board; get her to say a few words which, according to Scottish law, would justify you in claiming her as your wife, and then put out to sea.'

'At the first favorable opportunity, explain to her you have done it all for love, and if she doesn't forgive you in a day, and love you in a week, I'll own myself a fool. Mark my words, you'd bring her back to Dare Castle the proudest and happiest lady in the land.'

Again that light leaped into Darrell's face. His heart almost stood still beneath the shock of hope.

His love for Nora was deep, passionate, soul-absorbing.

He would have served for her as Jacob served for Rachel.

But he could not bring himself to declare his love; could not believe that any girl would accept a man who had the blood of a fellow-creature on his hands.

what he had suffered in these seven years, even while he had maintained a stern and haughty front and flung defiance to the world, only his own soul knew.

His misery had rendered him morbid on one point, at any rate.

He felt himself a social outcast, an Ishmael, and he shrank from asking a pure maiden, such as Nora, to link her life to his.

But this plan of Gerard's? Wild and romantic though it was, it appealed to him.

Nay, perhaps it appealed to him all the more strongly because of its romance.

His own temperament was romantic, and his life in that old Highland castle, away from the rest of the world had by no means tended to make him more prosaic.

If only Nora might become his wife!

The bare thought thrilled him in every fibre of his being. He felt within himself that it were once his he could teach her to love him, could make her happy.

This being so, might it not be well for him to adopt Gerard's romantic scheme—to run away with her and make her his wife without asking her consent?

If he were to woo her in the ordinary fashion, she would refuse him; but if once she were his wife, she would reconcile herself to the idea, and, in the end, he would win her whole heart's love.

### CHAPTER IV.

It was fine October day, wonderfully warm for the season of the year.

Darrell's yacht, the Gadfly, lay at her moorings in the bay, while Darrell himself stood on board, pale with suppressed excitement as he looked towards Glenuskie.

His cousin had persuaded him to adopt his plan, had reasoned away his objections, and undertaken to make every necessary arrangement.

Presently Wild Darrell's heart gave a great leap.

He could see two advancing figures could see that they were those of his cousin and Nora.

She was coming, then. She was coming! All had fallen out according to their plans, so far.

If all continued to go well, in less than an hour she would be his wife.

Gerard had found it easy enough to induce Nora to go on board the yacht.

The day was a holiday at the school, and she was free to follow her own de-

vices.

She was always to be found in a certain spot sketching, in her leisure hours.

He had joined her, and told her Darrell's yacht was going for a short trial trip.

'Just so far as the islands; it won't take us more than an hour. Do come with us, Miss Beresford.'

The girl was passionately fond of the sea.

The invitation was too tempting. She accepted it with frank pleasure, seeing, indeed, no reason why she should refuse it.

She had been brought up in thoroughly unconventional fashion, in spite of the fact that a maiden aunt had been her instructor.

'Oh, thank you, Mr. Vaughan!' she exclaimed delightedly. 'If you are quite sure Mr. Darrell won't mind; if you are sure I shan't be in the way.'

She liked Gerard Vaughan, and both she and her aunt had grown quite friendly with him during the last few weeks.

He had been introduced to them by Darrell, of course, and they had met him frequently in their walks, not to mention his occasional calls at the White Cottage.

When Nora went on the yacht, Darrell's reception of her was so grave and calm as to be well nigh stern.

Beneath that calm exterior a very volcano of passion was raging, but he had taught himself to repress his feelings, or at any rate, to conceal them well.

Certainly, Nora could never have dreamed that the bare sight of her had sufficed to send the blood to his heart in a shock of joy, and to make all his pulses tingle.

As soon as she came on board, he gave the order, and the yacht glided from her moorings.

'You must see all over it, Miss Beresford,' said Gerard Vaughan, and it was he, not Darrell, who escorted her.

She was delighted with the pretty, dainty vessel.

Its snow-white decks, its painted panels, its crimson awnings, its pennon floating gaily in the breeze, were all objects of her frank admiration.

'Oh, how I wish I were going a thousand miles!' she exclaimed in her enthusiasm.

It was to Gerard Vaughan she spoke, but Darrell was passing at the moment and heard her.

A look passed between him and his cousin, a look full of meaning.

If Nora had but known it, that thoughtless exclamation of hers sealed her fate.

One moment before, Darrell had wavered in his resolution, but when he heard her wish he told himself he would waver no more.

Presently they were summoned into the cabin for luncheon.

They remained nearly an hour at the table.

Nora did not notice how swiftly time was flying.

Gerard Vaughan was the wittiest of companions, and he exerted himself to be even more than usually entertaining.

Little by little he led the conversation into the required groove.

He propounded riddles, showered down quips and cranks innumerable.

Finally, he said, with a gay laugh—'Now, Miss Beresford, say this after me: "I take thee, Hubert Darrell, for my husband."'

Utterly unsuspecting, the girl repeated the words.

### CONCLUSION NEXT WEEK.

### LIFE IN THE KAROO.

Some Peculiarities of the Upper Portion of Cape Colony.

The upper portion of Cape Colony is known as the 'Karoo.' From the coast, where the vegetation is luxuriant, the land gradually rises toward the interior until, far inland at the latitude of nearly 4,000 feet, the Karoo country begins.

The further away from the coast, the barer and more stony the soil becomes, and the aspect of the sad colored veldt, broken here and there by chains of low, stony kopjes, is mournful in the extreme.

For the newly arrived 'Uitlander' it is depressing indeed to view these regions of infinite flatness and infinite space, where loneliness and silence reign supreme.

October is the month of spring in the Karoo. Heavy rains fall, and for a few short weeks the face of the land is green and pleasant to look upon; but with the scorching days of summer the grass withers fast, and the veldt soon resumes its normal desolate appearance. Great herds of sheep and goats pasture on a small, dry-looking bush, which grows sparsely amid the sand and stones. Strangely enough, they thrive upon it, and the flocks of the more progressive farmers, who import prize stock from time to time are as fine as any in the more fertile pastures of lower Cape Colony.

To a woman Uitlander, accustomed to life in England or America, existence in a Karoo village presents few duties and fewer pleasures to break the monotony of the wearisome days. After a week of rain, when the sun is shining once more gathering up moisture from the soaked earth in misty clouds, a drive out into the veldt is full of interest. Then the Karoo teems with life that is hidden beneath the ground in hot, dry weather. Meerkats run out of their holes and sit up on their hind legs, while their bushy tails wave nervously and their beady little eyes keep vigilant watch. Small tortoises scuttle by, and perhaps in the distance a family of korhaan may be detected by their harsh, deep croak, beautifully plumaged birds as large as guinea-

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fowl, with feathers of red dish brown and blue gray.

Some parts of the veldt are scattered with huge ant hills, three or four feet high, made by colonies of large black ants.

Boers as well as Kaffirs use these ant hills as ovens for cooking when camping out in the veldt. It is easy to start a fire at the bottom with a few sticks, and when once alight a hill will burn slowly and evenly for some hours. The earth of which these mounds are composed is very friable, and is saturated with some substance by the ant builders which makes it combustible.

After rain flowers spring up everywhere. Brilliant scarlet lilies abound, branching from a single bare stalk that rises out of the stony ground, with ten or a dozen lovely blossoms at its head. Another curious lily rests flatly on the earth, and consists of two round, white, fleshy leaves, with a small golden centre. The Boers have little love for flowers; but the exile from a fertile land delights to cultivate the tiny patch of ground belonging to his house in the little Boer village. With a Kaffir boy as assistant gardener, and with a reckless disregard for the scant resources of the back yard well it is possible to make the land blossom like the rose, even amid the stony wilds of the Karoo.

Reverend Moakley McKoon on the Fourth

Ma frescoed free soilers—Naix Wednesday will be the Fo'th ob July. While I enjoy de patriotic features I disgust de nature ob its celebration. De common cotton plush mind might come to de conclusion dat de revolution was a long orgie ob intoxication, an' dat de way ter celebrate was ter git drunk early in de day an' den industriously keep drunk until de maw'nin' ob de Fo'th. From a kyarful study ob de lite ob Gawge Washington an' Benjamin Franklin, who invented de telephone, I repudiate de allegation. Gawge belonged to de good templars, an' Ben he was er rank third party prohibitionist an' run faw town clerk. Las' Fo'th ob July Filagree Filkins, owah janitor, went ter sleep in de shadows ob de big cannon, an' w'en de boys fired it off it burnt moah dan a pound ob wool off his haid, an' it smelt like a fish in a knittin' mill. De naix day Anxiety Andrews was down terj; de blacksmith's shop ter git Abe Dorfinger ter shrink a iron band on his haid so he could git his hat on.

Dee t'ings ought not fer'ter be.

Let us rejoice calmly an' hab a dinner ob codfish an' taters, an' ef we got relations in de country dat sends us a chicken let us ask no questions for conscience's sake. Read de deceptions ob indignation on de back po'ch an' sit down under yo'r own potato vine an' rejoice dat yo' got a pastor dat will respond to as many invitations to dinner as he can an' 'tend to his correspondence.

Let us sing de national anthem:

'My country, bless thy stars,  
Sweet land of colored ears,  
Of thee I sing.  
Land where they stretch our throat  
Each time we try to vote,  
Where'er thy flag doth float  
Let freedom ring.'

What She Wanted.

'Is there anything you want?' asked the butcher of the little girl with the soulful eyes and fawn-like air.

'Oh, yes, sir,' lisped the little angel timidly. 'I want a seal-skin sacque, and a diamond ring, and a trotting horse, and a steam yacht, and a foreign nobleman, and a pug-dog, and a brown stone house, and a box at the opory, and lots of other things; but all ma wants is ten cents' worth of bol ogga-sausage for dinner, and won't you please trust her for it till Saturday night?'

A Pleasant Time.

Little Elmer Askins—'Did you have a good time visiting at your grandpa's in the country?'

Little Johnny Squash—'You just bet I did! Why, I was bunted all over the place by the calves, kicked by three colts, fell into the well twice and out of trees and swings and off the barn and over ledge

several times; I was run over by a wagon, and slipped into the corn sheller and got all skinned up; I was riding on a load of wood and the horses ran away and flung me out on a pile of sharp rocks and overturned the wood on top of me; the old bull flung me over the fence into the blackberry patch, the dog bit me twice and I was terribly stung by hornets; I guess I sprained every joint and wrist and ankle on my body while I was there. By cracky! It was almost as much fun as learning to ride a bicycle.'

And the Procession Moved.

'Hello, major! You don't look lively this morning.'

'No, sah. Was out with a few of the boys last night. We not only irrigated, but we were imprudent enough to indulge in broiled lobstah, sah. The combination raised gehenna with my commissariat, and I have sworn off—plumb—for a year, sah.'

'Well, well! I know you are acting prudently, yet is annoying. I was just about to ask you to join me in sampling some fine old bourbon.'

'Hub! As to that, sah, I see no objection. It is only from broiled lobstah simultaneously with whisky that I've sworn off sah. Let the procession move.'

And it did.

Thunder-Like Tones.

'I really couldn't afford to let you board with me this summer,' said an old farmer to a city man with a very deep base voice.

'Why not?' roared the basso-profundo in tones that rattled the dried squashes in the rafters.

'Because whenever you talked or sang your voice would sour all the milk in my cellar.'

Point of Difference.

Affable customer—'You shave differently in Ireland from what you do in America, don't you?'

Barber Mulligan (just over)—'An' in phwat way, sor?'

Affable customer—'Here you mix lather; there you lather micks.'

Useless Gifts.

'Father was a sea-captain you know, and after his death a friend gave mother two parrots.'

'Do they swear?'

'Not the least bit.'

'How lonesome your mother must be in her old age.'

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'I'm afraid you don't like corn, Willie,' said grandma as Willie refused a second ear.

'Yes, indeed, I do,' he replied; 'all but the bone, grandma.'