

(CONTINUED FROM TENTH PAGE.)

Neville stared at him. 'Done what?' 'I've released her!' 'My dear fellow, do be more explicit; you've released whom from what?' 'Oh! I gasped Val 'don't you understand? I've told P—Peggy that I can never marry her!' 'Pheh!' whistled his brother; 'and what did she say?' 'I told her it wasn't fair to let her go on being engaged to me. Said I couldn't afford to marry her, and it had better end. She—she was an angel! Said it shouldn't end, she loved me, and would stick to me whether I ended it or not. But—we aren't engaged any more!' His head dropped again, and for a time there was silence. Sir Neville stood leaning against the mantelshelf, stroking his moustache thoughtfully, and glancing from time to time at his brother. Val remained motionless. At last the elder brother went over and laid a gentle hand on the bowed shoulders. 'Val, old chap,' he began, 'I want to test your love, to see whether it or your pride is the stronger; somehow I fancy there's more in you than I thought there was. You see, I'm wanting a secretary—could pay him two hundred a year, and give you the old Dower House to live in, and well, you write a very decent hand, old man.' The white face was raised again, but this time there was hope in the eyes where before had been nothing but despair. 'Oh, Neville! do you mean it really? By Jove, though, you are a brick! Faith I'll take your offer! Two hundred and the Dower House! Why, with my income, too, we'll be quite rich. I'll go straight off and tell Peg. Poor little girl! I expect she's crying her heart out over my brutality; but, you see, it was this way: After you'd shown me how much you could give up, I thought I'd try and be a hero, too. Gad! though, it was deuced hard; I shan't try it again in a hurry.' 'I admire you for it, I can tell you, old fellow.' 'Thanks, that's all right. Well, I'm off to tell Peg.' 'Er—Val,' called out Sir Neville, as his brother hurried past the window a moment or two later. 'Yes, old man?' 'Er—you might tell Bride that, if she's nothing else to do this afternoon, I shall be on the cliffs about three, just above Horse Shoe Rock.' 'Yes, Neville, I'll tell her—and may your wooing prosper!' laughed Val, as he bounded off down the drive. Sir Neville turned to his writing-table, and, opening a drawer, took out a bundle of letters and a faded photograph. The picture showed a girl, in a white muslin dress, sitting under some trees in a garden; evidently an amateur effort, but still a pretty little picture. The girl was young, and fresh, and lovely. The glimpse one caught of the garden in which she sat was charming. Sir Neville looked at the photograph for a few moments; then he sighed, and tore it in two. He untied the bundle of letters and glanced through them carelessly. The first, which was a long one, began 'My own darling,' and was signed 'Yours, ever and ever, Kathleen,' the last of all was very brief, beginning 'Dear Neville,' and ending 'Yours sincerely, K. H.' One by one the letters shared the fate of the photograph. As the last was tossed into the waste-paper basket, Sir Neville leaned back in his chair, and fixed his eyes dreamily on the ceiling. 'I wonder—shall I tell her?' he mused. 'Yes, perhaps I had better. She might find out afterwards and reproach me.' Then his thoughts wandered back to the night of the ball where he had first met his enslaver of long ago—he, a lad of twenty; she, a beautiful and blushing debutante of but seventeen. They both fell in love with one another at first sight, and he remembered her shy embarrassment on the day when he told her he loved her, her timid 'Yes,' the rapture of that first kiss, then the blissful days of courtship, which lasted, at intervals—for they did not often meet—for two years; last of all the agony which followed the shock of learning that she had not really cared for him—that she had jilted him for a richer husband and a higher title; the bitterness which at length took the place of the agony. He could never care for anyone again, he had told himself. All girls were false; all women were mercenary; all men were liars. So he had shut himself up away from society, from scheming mammas and eager daughters, and all the rest, until now, in the midst of his retirement, he had been caught again. His lost belief in human goodness was partially restored to him, for he had found a girl who was ready to die with him; a brother who had some of the makings of a hero in him; aye, and a poor peasant who could give his own life to save that of his landlord and benefactor. Perhaps, after all, there are some nobility left on earth. So he mused until his reverie was disturbed by a wild 'Halloo!' as Val dashed, breathless, into the room, forgetting the dignity of his six-and-twenty years, and proceeded to dance a jig in front of his bewildered brother, crying at intervals as he did so— 'Next Christmas! Next Christmas! Next Christmas!' 'What do you mean?' inquired Sir Neville at length. 'Val! Is the boy mad?' 'Val! what is it?' 'I'm going to be married!' yelled Val frantically. 'So I understood; but why this excitement?' 'Why, Nev, I'm to be married on Christmas Day!'

Sir Neville stared at him in amazement for a moment or two. Then he began to laugh, and for ten minutes at least he sat and roared—what he could not have told to save his life. CHAPTER V. Down by the shore that afternoon a girl, in a smart little scarlet jacket and rakish scarlet Tam-o'-Shanter, sat enjoying the October sunlight, her hair blown wildly about her face, her cheeks flushed, her eyes bright with expectation. She made a pretty picture, a vivid piece of colouring against the brown of the rocks and the white sea foam dashing in at her feet; and so thought the young man who stood and hailed her from the cliffs above. 'Bride! Coo-oo-oo-ee!' 'Neville!' she exclaimed to herself, then looked up coolly and waved her hand to him, as she called out— 'Coming down?' Her voice reached him clear and sweet above the roar of the surf. 'Yes,' he shouted, and at once began his descent. In two minutes he was at her side. The noise of the surf almost drowned their voices, and they had to shout into each other's ears to make themselves heard. 'Oh, dear!' groaned Sir Neville inwardly. 'Fancy making love to a girl at the top of one's voice!' 'Bride,' he began, but the humour of the situation appealed to him so strongly that he burst out laughing. 'Button up your jacket,' he cried; 'it's cold.' Then he put his arm round her and kissed her. 'Why did you do that?' demanded Bride, flashing a vivid crimson. 'Because I like it,' he answered, and did it again. 'Bride,' he said, 'I can't make love like this; but you know what I want. Will you say "Yes"?' She looked at him, hesitated a moment, then called out— 'Yes.' Then there was silence save for the noise made by the dash of the waves and the sound of the curlews calling overhead. Later on, when they were out of hearing of the sea, Sir Neville cleared his throat nervously, and said— 'Bride, dear.' 'Yes, Neville?' 'There's something I think I ought to tell you.' 'Oh, dear!' sighed Bride, 'don't say you're married already, like the people in novels—it's so monotonous; and, besides, it would be rather horrid for me.' Neville laughed. 'No it's not that—but it is about a woman.' Bride looked at him reproachfully, and then exclaimed— 'Oh! surely you're not a widower, are you? I've always said—' 'Bride, dear, do be serious,' pleaded her lover. 'I only wanted to tell you that I cared for someone once before—years ago. Of course, I care for her no longer, but I thought I ought to tell you.' 'Well?' 'Well? That's all. How many more girls do you think I've been in love with? Isn't one enough?' 'My dear boy! don't look so dreadfully tragic! Did you suppose I thought I was the first? No, indeed! I'm only relieved to hear that there were not more than one besides myself.' She laughed merrily at his gloomy expression. 'You haven't a very good opinion of me, evidently,' he said dismally. 'Pray, how many affairs of the sort have you had, may I ask?' Bride considered. 'Well, there was the dentist, when I was eight years old; he was so nice, Neville, and so good—' 'Hang the dentist!' the baronet exclaimed. 'He doesn't count.' 'Oh! Neville, my dentist not count! Well, then there was a sailor four years later.' 'Bother the sailor! Get on to when you grew up?' 'Y—yes—well, hardly.' 'I loved a bold young soldier then. A soldier, one of father's locums, and a man who came on a yacht—they were all crowded into one brief year. None of my other affairs was really serious until I was about nineteen; then—' 'Well?' 'Then I fell in love with a young man residing in the neighbourhood—a really charming young man. He—' 'What was his name?' 'What was good-looking?' 'What was he like?' 'Well, let me see. Not very tall, but rather well-made; brown hair, grey eyes, a nose, a mouth, moustache—' 'Bride! what was his name?' 'His name?' 'Yes.' 'Well, his name was—' 'Yes?' 'His name was—Neville Ff—' But the last part of the sentence was somewhat inarticulate, for the baronet had caught her in his arms, and was covering her face with kisses. As the twilight fell that evening, two pairs of figures were seen approaching the gate of Clontari, Dr. McCarthy's house, from different sides. Both couples were arm-in-arm; both appeared to be absorbed in conversation. Two or three peasants going home from work nodded and smiled at one another as they passed. 'Sir Neville's made a fine choice for himself!' said one. 'He has that, and Master Val, too,' was the reply. 'Ay, but 'tis Miss Bride that has the pluck, the darlin'. D'ye mind how she acted in the moonlightin' business?' 'I do; an' didn't she help the wives an' childre of the bhoys that were sent to gaol? Doesn't she save the life in poor Mary Farrathy an' her little wans? And

doesn't she trate Larry O'Leary's wife and childre as if they were her own? May the saints preserve them all, an' her es pesh'ly.' 'Ah, indad then, she'd done all you say! Shure, poor Micky, God rest his soul, niver tuk the care of Mary that Miss Bride's doing now. 'Tis a new woman intirely she is since he died.' And the two couples strolled happily along, thinking only of one another, till at the gate of Clontari they suddenly came face to face. 'Pheh!' whistled Val. 'What meaneth this, good friend, may I ask?' 'You may,' replied his brother serenely, holding Bride's hand more tightly in his own on finding that it was seized with a sudden desire to slip away. 'You may certainly ask, and, perhaps, if you're very good—shall we tell them, Bride, and, if so which of us?' he inquired, turning laughingly to his blushing companion. 'You,' she whispered. 'Very well then, as you like. Miss Bride McCarthy, daughter of the well-known practitioner, Dr. McCarthy, of Clontari, has graciously consented to become the spouse of Sir Neville Ffoliot, Baronet of Ard-na-carrig.' 'Hurrah!' shouted Val. 'Hurrah! Three cheers for the future Lady Ffoliot, also for her noble spouse. I am glad beyond expression, old man! You are to be congratulated. May I kiss the bride?' 'Certainly not,' replied Sir Neville severely; 'at least, you may kiss your own, but you will please refrain from kissing mine. I, however, will perform that ceremony myself when Miss Peggy has quite finished hugging her.' 'By the way,' he added, 'I might as well mention that my future wife looks upon me as a desperate sort of character. She thinks that I shall probably desert her within the year; in fact, she suspects that I am already a polygamist. It is not altogether a cheerful prospect, is it? But she has nobly made up her mind to face the worst, and anyway, with such expectations, she needn't be disappointed in me, however badly I turn out. A while ago we compared our past lives, and we learned many shocking things about one another. Fancy, Val, at eight years old she was philandering with a dentist! So youthful and yet so depraved! By the way, we're to be married at Christmas. Yes, dear, don't look like that; it's my own idea entirely, and I am going to carry it out. If you don't choose to be married on that day, it's not my fault. I intend to be.' 'Who's talking about getting married, pray?' inquired the doctor, who had just joined them. 'We are—all of us,' responded Val, with a happy laugh. 'And with whose consent, it's not an impertinent question?' 'Why, yours, doctor. We're going to marry our daughters on Christmas day, if you've no objection.' 'Oh, none at all, of course!' said the doctor plaintively. 'I'm to be bereaved of my two daughters in one day—my only props,' as the major-general said in the 'Pirates of Penzance'—and I'm to raise no objection?' 'Oh, dear, no!' 'Now, father, remonstrated Peggy, 'you know quite well that you're simply delighted, and we'll be quite close, so that we can run in and see you every day.' 'And how do you know I'll have you running in, miss? But, look here—joking apart, you'll never be ready by Christmas day. How about the trousseaux?' 'Hang the trousseaux!' cried the younger Ffoliot. 'Val!' said Peggy reprovingly, 'of course we must have proper trousseaux, but we can manage to get them ready in time, I'm sure. We'll go up to Cork to-morrow and see about it.' 'And then—' began Dr. McCarthy ironically. 'Ah, no more objections, doctor!' pleaded Neville. 'Give us your consent and your blessing; and let us arrange to have a double wedding on Christmas Day.' 'Yes, doctor, do,' echoed Val. 'Well, I suppose I must give in under such pressure,' sighed the doctor. 'Let it be as you like.' And a double wedding it was. Got Corns? Foolish to keep them if you have? No fun in corns, but lots of pain. Putnam's Painless Corn Extractor raises corns in twenty-four hours. Get a quick crop by raising it—druggists sell it. One for the Dutchman. A granger was in the Union Station the other day, and was telling of an occurrence on his farm. One of his employees was a German. He was a hard working, honest and conscientious man, and was married. His wife was taken sick, and finally died, the husband, of course, leaving his work for several days in consequence. Two weeks later he appeared at the house of his employer and asked to be relieved from work for a couple of days, when the following conversation took place: 'I would like to get off for about two days.' 'I can't spare you unless it is absolutely necessary. You know you lost several days two weeks ago, and we are behind in the work. What is the necessity for your getting off?' enquired the farmer. 'Vell, I vas to be married.' 'Why, Fritz, your wife died only two weeks ago, and now you are about to get married again? I do not understand that.' 'Vell,' replied the German, 'I don't hold spite long.' The farmer dismissed the case without prejudice. A SPRAINED ANKLE is not an uncommon accident. Pain Killer relieves and cures almost as if by magic. The greatest household remedy. Avoid substitutes, there is but one Pain Killer, Perry Davis' 25c. and 50c.

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THE BERMUDA HOTEL SYNDICATE

A Hoax That Was Started as a Joke by the Publisher of a Binghamton Weekly.

When the inhabitants of Hamilton, Bermuda, read this it will probably by their first intimation that the \$4,000,000 syndicate that was to start a winter resort there, build great hotels and trolley lines and make Hamilton a conspicuous place on the map is nothing but a hoax. The publisher of the Binghamton, N. J., Chronicle, a local weekly, wrote a personal early in April to the effect that B. H. Willsey, one of the proprietors of Hotel Bennett, B. C. Raitt and R. W. Meeker of Binghamton, had gone on a pleasure trip to the Bermudas. After he had written it he wasn't satisfied with his production. The men were particular friends of his and he thought that he ought to add something to please them. So it occurred to him to tack on the end a few lines to the effect that the tourists were going in the interests of a syndicate, to be capitalized at \$1,000,000, which was to build some large hotels in the islands at a new resort to be founded by them. He thought it would be taken as a joke and gave the personal to the local editor without any explanation. The editor, however, took it seriously and not doubting its authenticity, decided that it was too important a piece of news for the society page. Consequently when the paper came out the publisher was surprised to see his little joke appearing with a 'scare head' and double leads in the most conspicuous place that the make up man could find.

The daily papers were unable to verify the report, because the principals had left town, but they copied the article with a few variations of their own. Then the local correspondents of outside papers began to send the report broadcast. It met the eye of New York contractors and provision men, who sent travelling men to Binghamton to see what there was in the big deal for them. It stirred up capitalists and boomers, also, who either came to this city or sent telegrams and letters inquiring about the proposed resort. The crowd put up at Mr. Willsey's hotel, which did an unprecedented business.

Meanwhile the members of the 'syndicate' were sailing toward Hamilton, entirely unconscious of the hubbub which their supposed doings was raising ashore. The next steamer to arrive after that on which they sailed brought papers telling all about the winter resort project and a great deal more. By this time the syndicate's capital was \$4,000,000, and it was to construct in Hamilton, in addition to the hotels, a system of electric railroads and do many other interesting and expensive things. Such a buzz as went up in Hamilton when the papers were received, had never before been heard in that city. The Binghamton trio was quickly identified as the syndicate which was to do so much for the Bermudas, and steps were taken to do them public honor. The Board of Trade got up a banquet for them, which was attended by all the prominent men thereabouts. The Speaker of Parliament, the Mayor of the town and the American Consul were among those who made speeches, and all were loud in their praise of the American capitalists who were going to do so much for the island.

During the time the party stayed in Hamilton carriages were provided to convey them about the island and point out all the available sites for their enterprise. The Binghamton men accepted these attentions in the same philosophic spirit in which they have taken the banquet. They realized that things had gone too far for a good time, they were willing to take in most anything that came along. So they priced sites, smoked fat cigars and let the mistake pass.

To cap the climax, when the syndicate came to leave the landlord of the hotel where they had been staying at first, absolutely refused to accept pay for their board. This, however, was carrying matters too far, and they prevailed upon him to accept full rates. This week Mr.

Willsey received a letter from the landlord apologizing profusely for having taken the money and inquiring about the welfare of the syndicate.

When the supposed magnates landed on their native heath they found hotelodom and financiers still humming with speculations about the \$4,000,000 winter resort. Concluding that it wouldn't do for them to give themselves away yet, they decided to keep up the bluff, and when, on their arrival in Binghamton, the local newspapers sent reporters to interview them, they gave them a few additional particulars about the scheme. These were published, and nobody suspected that the reports were not genuine. The people of Hamilton are still waiting for the millions that are to be spent on their island, but which will never materialize.

Kindheartedness.

The ging am-shirted boy had made, a break to pass the ticket-seller at the circus entrance, but that gentleman had caught him and rudely thrust him back. 'Poor little devil,' said a seedy looking man in the crowd. 'If I had the money I'd buy him a ticket myself.'

The crowd looked sympathetic, but said nothing, while the boy sobbed as if his heart would dissolve. 'I've only got a nickel, little feller, went on the seedy looking one, 'an' that won't do you no good. Say,' he continued, turning suddenly to the crowd, 'let's do one good act in our lives. Let's buy him a ticket.'

It looked for a minute as if a collection was to be started, but a benevolent-looking old gentleman nipped it in the bud by slipping a half dollar into the hand of the boy, who promptly disappeared into the tent.

'You seem to take quite an interest in the little fellow,' remarked the benevolent one.

'Well, I should think I ought to,' answered the seedy-looking man, proudly. 'That's the only son I got!'—Indianapolis paper.

A Slight Mispaint.

'Well, that's enough to try the patience of Job,' exclaimed the village minister as he threw aside the local paper.

'Why, what's the matter, dear?' asked his wife.

'Last Sunday I preached from the text, 'Be ye therefore steadfast,' answered the good man, 'but the printer makes it read, 'Be ye there for breakfast.'

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