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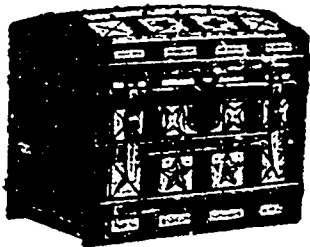
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[Concluded from page 6.]

"Here is your wig—your artificial hair," observed Josie, as she lifted a black curly wig from the bureau.

"Down it, madam," he cried, with a sudden flash of temper, "what good will that do me? I want my eye and teeth, I tell you."

The color rose to Josie's cheeks, but she said nothing, only moved quietly about her search. The floor, bureau and washstand were carefully examined, and then she turned to a small writing table littered with papers. As she lifted up one after another of the documents, a small memorandum, upon which was written her brother's name, riveted her attention. Yes, there in black and white was inscribed the fact of Mr. T. Shaw's indebtedness for the sum of two hundred dollars to Mr. A. C. Dottrell. As Josie read it over an idea flashed with lightning-like rapidity through her brain, an idea which she at once proceeded to act upon, for a gleam of sunshine just then betrayed the missing eye glittering among the papers, and close beside it the wished-for teeth.

She quietly slipped both articles into the table drawer, which she locked and put the key in her pocket. Then, having obtained possession of the wig, she turned and resolutely confronted its owner.

"I have found them," she said.

"Ah," with a smile, which his lack of teeth made hideous.

"So much obliged. Just lay them down here—"

"I shall do nothing of the kind," replied Josie, calmly.

"Madam!"

"Listen to me," said the little woman in clear, decisive tones: "You claim that my brother, Mr. Thomas Shaw, owes you two hundred dollars. He says that the debt is paid, but is not able to find the receipt, and you will not give him time to pay for it. Now, which will you do, cancel the debt, or give me two hundred dollars down?"

"Curse you," yelled the old man; "do you take me for a donkey or fool?"

"I don't take you for anything," she responded briskly. "I wouldn't have you at any price. I don't see how Miss Miller can bear the idea of going out driving with you, much less consent to have you make love to her; you're a horrid old thing."

The old man's face changed color. Whether he was disconcerted at her extreme candor, or by the fact that she knew of his love affair with Miss Miller, Josie could not determine.

"Horrid or not," he said at length in a voice tremulous with rage, "your brother will have to pay that money and you don't get a cent from me."

"Then you can't go out driving with Miss Miller this afternoon, for I refuse to give up either your hair, teeth, or eye. I'm afraid she will never forgive you if you fail to keep your appointment, for she seems to have set her heart upon it. Too bad you cannot go out without these little articles. Perhaps my brother, who is coming to dinner, will take your place."

This was too much for old Dottrell. The thought that the man he hated should cut him out of three thousand a year, set him wild.

"If you don't give me what rightfully belongs to me I will make you," he said, advancing towards her and menacing her with his uplifted arm.

"If you lay a finger on me I'll scream loud enough to bring Miss Miller up-stairs. It is she that you hear playing upon the piano. I fear she will be no longer charmed with you when

she sees you as you are. You are not as beautiful now as you are sometimes."

There was a pause. In the silence Miss Miller's performance of "Silvery Waves" sounded mercifully loud.

Old Dottrell stood silent and considered.

This was an awkward position for him. Mrs. Richardson had the upper hand of him. She was resolute, and he felt that if he attempted to use force with her she would by her screams bring others to the spot, and he was not at present in the right trim to receive visitors; besides, what can a half-dressed, bald-headed, toothless, eyeless old man do against a clever, resolute little woman? He had to yield, but not without a struggle. After ten minutes vainly spent in cursing and whining, Mr. A. C. Dottrell bought back his property for the trifling sum of two hundred dollars.

* * * * *

When the band played on the Square that night there was no happier couple than Tom and Kitty, even though the rain did put such a damper upon their enjoyment. But their joy was nothing to that of Miss Miller's, who was in the seventh heaven of delight about the fervid proposal Mr. Dottrell had breathed into her ear that afternoon, for he was determined to lose no time in securing her fortune. Naughty Josie had to listen to a long lecture from her husband, the effect of which was rather spoiled by his intense amusement over her story.

"But just think, Ralph," she pleaded, "it has rid us of him for good, isn't that splendid?"

"Oh, Josie," he said, shaking his head, "nothing can excuse the unfair advantage you took of 'Dottrell's Dilemma.'"

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