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Union Clothing Company**...That...
Preposterous...
Will..**

BY L. G. MOBERLY.

(Continued.)

The confidence was the confidence of unbounded trust, and not of superlative conceit, and Mr. Bray's eyes softened. Somewhere in a far-away corner of his not especially tender heart was a sneaking appreciation of sentiment and romance; and Dayrell rose in the elder man's estimation by reason of the light that sprang into his eyes, and the smile that for a moment flickered over his mouth, when he spoke so proudly of his lady love.

"May I congratulate you," the lawyer said gently, "and—is it indiscreet to ask the name of your fiancée? I conclude the engagement is not a secret one? It is known to the public?"

"Oh, yes," Dayrell's smile deepened, "there is no secret about it. The lady's name is Bedsworth—Stella Bedsworth; and the day before you sent for me to tell me of my bad luck, we had settled that our wedding should be in June. Now—"

He broke off with a sigh, and the light died out of his eyes.

"I am truly sorry for you," Mr. Bray said kindly, "coming as such a time the blow must have been additionally heavy. I suppose," He hesitated, a remembrance of some words spoken by Miranda Hume striking him with sudden force.

"Praps Mr. Dayrell," ad a girl what Mr. Haines didn't like."

"I suppose—you and your godfather did not—did not have any difference on the subject of your engagement?"

Dayrell's color deepened, he frowned.

"It goes again the grain with me to say anything even apparently disrespectful about a dead man," he said slowly, "but—"

Mr. Haines behaved very well, he only called it—coldly about my engagement. When I told him about Miss Bedsworth, he was a good deal upset."

"You had a quarrel about it?"

"I was not unnaturally annoyed when he said a good many nasty things about Stella's mother—and implied a good many more. Mrs. Bedsworth is one of the most charming women in the world, but Mr. Haines laughed when I said so and—"

"Perhaps you both spoke hastily, and said a good deal more than you intended? Possibly Mr. Haines had ambitious schemes for your marriage, and this engagement interfered with them. I conclude from what you say that Miss Bedsworth is not rich."

"She and her mother are anything but rich, but they are ladies to their finger tips, and she has great beauty as well. Mr. Haines professed to have known Mrs. Bedsworth in her youth and also to have met Miss Bedsworth. He actually asked me to give up my engagement," Dayrell broke into a scornful laugh.

"And you refused?"

"Refused? Of course I refused. What did I care for his garbled stories about Mrs. Bedsworth's youth, and all the other fairy tales about which he tried to persuade me to believe. I flatly declined to listen to him and told him I proposed to choose my own wife, and warned him that no one would be allowed to make up old lies about Stella's mother. We did not part too amicably!"

"And this was on the last occasion that you and Mr. Haines met?"

"Yes."

"Then there is not much difficulty in finding one reason for his strange will. The lawyer confessed, 'he was probably very angry with you for not heeding his wishes, or listening to his words of wisdom—'"

"Words of wisdom!" Dayrell broke in angrily, "words of ridiculous folly. He said things about Stella's mother, and about Stella herself, which I find hard to forget, and still harder to forgive; and he said fit to jeer at me because I refused to be influenced by him into giving up my engagement. We undoubtedly quarrelled, and possibly my determination to stick to Stella through thick and thin induced him to leave his fortune away from me. He was exceedingly obstinate, not to say pig-headed when his will was crossed."

"He was also a very just man, we must remember, Mr. Dayrell," the lawyer said gravely, his eyes again fixed on the younger man's flushed and perturbed face; "no mere quarrel or difference of opinion would have led him to swerve from what he considered just."

"Just! If that will be just, then I am afraid my idea of justice differs from yours, Mr. Bray. I believe, and I shall continue to believe, that if my godfather was sane when he altered his will, he altered it in a fit of capricious petulance, because he could not turn me from my own way of thinking to his. Capricious petulance I call it."

Mr. Bray shook his head.

"To argue the point is useless," he said; "but Mr. Haines was never capricious or petulant in his life. If he disapproved of your engagement, he had good and grave reasons for his disapproval. When he altered his will he altered it for some really weighty reason. And if, as I suppose, there is some intimate connection between your engagement and the altered will, I should be strongly inclined to urge you to reconsider all that your godfather said on the occasion of your quarrel."

Dayrell flushed again.

"There is nothing to reconsider," he answered shortly; "Mr. Haines and I differed fundamentally. If he has chosen to ruin my life because he did not care for my betrothed, or because he disapproved of her very charming mother—well, the deed is done. My life is effectively ruined—at least for the moment, and I dare say the old gentleman, if he can what is going on down here, is rejoicing in the havoc he has wrought. Let him rejoice; I am still young and strong, with life before me, and a girl to work for who is worth the sacrifice of ten thousand fortunes."

"As long as she considers you worth the same sacrifice, you need regret nothing," Mr. Bray said quietly. "Now, Mr. Dayrell,"—his voice returned to its usual briskness—"under the circumstances, you would possibly prefer not to see Miss Hume?"

"See Miss Hume? Good heavens, my dear sir, I don't want to see her. Is it necessary that I should?"

"Not at all. Failing your consent to an immediate marriage with her, Mr. Haines has appointed me her guardian until she is of age, or until she marries. I shall find some lady to take charge of her education, and fit her for her new position in life, but you—"

"I may wash my hands of her," Dayrell hastily interposed, "thank Heaven for that! And for pity's sake, Mr. Bray, make her clearly understand that my mind is irrevocably made up, and that nothing will alter it. I am not free to marry her, and if I were no power on earth would persuade me to do it. And as for compensation—I would rather die than accept it."

The vehement words closed the interview, but Mr. Bray, leaning back in his chair after the young man's hasty departure, found himself speculating on more than one aspect of the strange case.

His speculations lingered first round his visitor of the morning; he again saw a mental picture of the golden brown eyes, with their determined glance—on the square jaw and firmly closed lips; heard once more the curiously decided sentence—

"When I set my mind on a thing I'm most times a good one to get it."

His thoughts wandered next to the resolute young man who had just left him with such vehemently determined words; and finally he wondered, with a wonder to which no answer came, what had really caused Mr. Haines so materially to alter his will immediately after he had quitted Dayrell. Was it on account of the young man's engagement to Miss Bedsworth? And if so, what reason had Mr. Haines for feeling such intense animosity towards that young lady and her mother?

CHAPTER IV.

Mrs. Bedsworth sat in her tiny but exquisite drawing-room, pondering deeply over an open letter in her hand. Her brows were drawn together into a frown that somewhat detracted from the charm of her pretty face, and which, when accompanied as it was now by a little tightening of the corners of her mouth, gave her an expression the reverse of pleasant or amiable. Though the letter she held was not a lengthy one, she read and re-read it many times, her frown deepening with each perusal, until finally she laid it upon the table beside her, and stamped with her small, daintily shod foot impatiently.

"Of all the vexatious, tiresome things that could possibly have happened, this is the worst," she exclaimed aloud, "and nothing obviously suggests itself as the most politic thing to do except that, of course—"

She checked herself abruptly at the sound of a footstep in the passage, leaned back languidly in the chair on which she had been sitting bolt upright, and drew the letter into her hands again before the door opened slowly. The frown had vanished from her brow, there were no longer any down-drooped corners to her lips, and her eyes held nothing but an expression of chastened sadness and sympathy as they turned towards the girl who entered the room.

"I was just coming to find you, Stella," she said, and in her voice there was apparent the same sympathetic sadness as looked out of her blue eyes; "I have had a letter, which—which has troubled me a good deal, darling, and which will, I am afraid, upset you."

If the mother's face was charming and pretty and attractive, the word "lovely" would not be too strong a one to apply to that of the girl whose steps quickened their pace at Mrs. Bedsworth's words, and whose great eyes looked with a startled question at the elder woman.

She was tall and slight of build, and moved with a grace so seemingly natural that no onlooker would have believed how large a proportion of it had been acquired at the hands of dancing mistresses and teachers of deportment. Her hair piled in artistic confusion upon her shapely head, was of that shade of fairness into which golden threads spin themselves bewitchingly, and her coloring was of those delicious pink and white tints which can only be appropriately compared to apple blossom in spring. Her great loveliness led those who saw her to overlook the indecision that marked her mouth and chin, and to pass unnoticed too the slightly shifting glance of those appealing blue eyes, which so seldom met any other eyes directly, but dropped shyly under their white lids, whose fringe of eyelash swept so becomingly the delicately tinted cheeks.

"What is it, mother?" she said, her breath coming quickly, a soft flush of color running over her face, "what have you heard? Alan has not had an accident?"

"No—no dear, certainly not—at least not an accident in the ordinary sense of the word."

"In the ordinary sense? What do you mean, mummy?" By this time Stella was kneeling beside her mother's chair. "Then is it some sort of accident? Or what?"

Mrs. Bedsworth played the part of a loving mother with the same perfection which marked her playing of every part she undertook upon the stage of life, and she bent forward with a tender smile, and caressingly touched the hair that curled so softly over Stella's white forehead.

"He is not hurt physically, darling," she said, "but he has had a financial loss which may seriously affect his career."

"Oh, mother!" the girl's attitude altered from the crouching one she had first assumed, and she knelt upright, her hands on Mrs. Bedsworth's knee, "has Alan lost his money? Will he be poor?"

"I thought he was going to be tremendously rich now that his godfather is dead!"

There was a mingling of naïveté and shrewdness in Stella's words and manner which might have given a hearer a clue to Mrs. Bedsworth's methods of training, but no one was present to take note of the girl's behaviour, or to see the glance shot at her from her mother's deep eyes.

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Daily Fashion Hints for Times Readers.

LANDSDOWNE BROADCLOTH AND IRISH CROCHET.

Quite an appreciable number of smart women, noted for their taste and originality in dress, are following the collarless and a conspicuous degree. For the warm days that prevail in the Southland this little whim has much to commend it; and even those whose throats would stand much improvement are beginning to adopt this style, to the eventual betterment of their outlines, be it hoped. The charming little toilette that is pictured herewith is the part of a trousseau of a coming bride whose honeymoon is to be spent at Southern resorts. White chiffon



SEPARATE BLOUSE OF CREPE DE CHINE.

A pretty blouse of light blue silk crepe served as model for the sketch, the design being effective both for light or dark materials. The rather deep yoke was of thin allover lace lined with chiffon, the model blouse having cream-colored rousset lace; the sleeve frills being of two-inch edging to match, gathered into ruffles over a net foundation. Each of these ruffles was edged with pale blue gathered silk ribbon, the ribbon also being used to form a scroll design about the yoke. Little rosettes of narrowest lace, in the middle of each being a little pale blue button, were also used about this yoke.

THE CANADIAN BUSINESS OUTLOOK

Some Notes of Warning as to the Future—Tight Money and Scarcity of Labor.

(Toronto News.)

The steady material progress of Canada seems almost to surprise those who are in the best position to estimate the outlook. A year ago the Canadian Bank of Commerce officials expressed a doubt as to whether the institution would be able to repeat the 14 per cent. of profit earned on the capital in 1906. At the end of 1906 the bank comes up with a net return of 17.41 per cent. on capital, but Mr. Cox again takes pains to explain that this showing was made under quite exceptional circumstances, and might not be duplicated in succeeding years.

The new president's address is full of information as to the extraordinary prosperity of the country from sea to sea, but throughout there are notes of warning as to the future. Mr. Walker thinks there are signs about us that must bring trouble if they are disregarded. Canada is a heavy borrowing country, and we are putting much money which has been secured abroad into unenterprising. The demands upon capital are world-wide, and trouble might arise abroad. "Unless we mend our ways we are not likely to escape a condition next autumn which may check our fair prosperity. This, then, is a time for every prudent man to survey carefully his financial position. If he has debts on the books he should consider how he will pay them if he should have to face world-wide stringency in money. Has he assets which the world needs for daily use, or assets which will sell only when the sun is shining? If he is happily in easy condition as to debt, he will, if he be wise, consider every avenue arising in his business which tends towards debt instead of towards liquidation. As for those who are plunging in real estate at inflated prices and in mining stocks, nothing, we presume, but the inevitable collapse which follows these seasons of mania will do any good."

Next to the possible dangers lying in the money market, Mr. Walker puts emphasis on the scarcity of labor. He records a shortage of men for the work in coal mines, in the lumber woods, on the farm and in the factory. Doubtless the full tide of Canadian prosperity, which is checked by this want of hands to carry on the work of the nation. For one thing the shortage of labor, together with the high price of lumber and steel products, may cause a sharp curtailment in building operations.

Urn has likewise come to trade through the general lack of railway cars and locomotives. Merchants, farmers, and all classes of creditors have suffered loss from this cause, and the railways are not blameless. Still another unfortunate circumstance is that Western farmers are still speculating in lands instead of liquidating their mortgages. Moreover, in some sections the lands have been put at a figure at which the new settler cannot profitably invest. The best news from the West is that the autumn was favorable for ploughing, and that this year's crop acreage bids fair to exceed last year's by from 10 to 15 per cent. To offset this cheerful prospect it is reported that towards the close of the season the land became too dry to work, and some are predicting that we are on the verge of a series of dry seasons.

According to the determination of Professor Harcourt, of the Guelph Agricultural College, Orange Meat is fifty per cent. more valuable as a food than bread.

Orange Meat taken with milk every morning and evening is the most perfect food that the human subject can secure.

Why not use the Cereal that gives the best value to the consumer by every known test?

CARNEGIE PAYS THE MOST

New York, Jan. 14.—Andrew Carnegie will be the heaviest personal taxpayer in New York. The value of his personal property has been fixed at \$5,000,000, and that of John D. Rockefeller at \$2,500,000.

The more of a truth a man knows the larger liberty he finds in it.

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