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By A. CONAN DOYLE.

[Copyright, 1888, by Authors' Allias CHAPTER VIII. BILADOWS REFORE.

Mrs. Westmacott's great meeting for the enfranchisement of woman had pass-ed over, and it had been a triumphant success. All the maids and matrons of the southern suburbs had railled at

But there was one woman at least to whom the meeting and all that was connected with it had brought anything but pleasure. Clara Walker watched with a heavy heart the friendship and close intimacy which had sprung up between her father and the widow. From week to week it had increased until no day ever passed without their being together. The coming meeting had been the excase for these continual interviews, but now the meeting was over, and still the docthe meeting was over, and still the doctor would refer every point which rose to the judgment of his neighbor. He would talk, too, to his two daughters of her strength of character, her decisive mind, and of the necessity of their cultivating her acquaintance and following her ex-ample, until at last it had become his

most common topic of conversation.

All this might have passed as merely the natural pleasure which an elderly man might take in the society of an intelligent and handsome woman, but there were other points which seemed to Clara to give it a deeper meaning. She could not forget that when Charles Westmacott had spoken to her one night he had alluded to the possibility of his aunt marrying again. He must have known or noticed something before he would speak upon such a subject. And then again Mrs. Westacott had herself said that she hoped to change her style of living shortly and take over complete-ly new duties. What could that mean except that she expected to marry? And whom? She seemed to see few friends outside their own little circle. She must have alluded to her father. It was a hateful thought, and yet it must be

One evening the doctor had been rather late at his neighbor's. He used to go into the admiral's after dinner, but now he turned more frequently in the other tered, pushed forward his ran to fetch his slippers.
"You are looking a little pale, dear,

"Oh, no, papa; I am very well."
"All well with Harold?" "Yes. His partner, Mr. Pearson, is still away, and he is doing all the work."

Has now in stock and is continually "Well done. He is sure to succeed Where is Ida?" "In her room, I thinks
"She was with Charles Westmacott on

the lawn not very long ago. He seems very fond of her. He is not very bright,

but I think he will make her a good hus "I am sure of it, papa. He is very manly and reliable."

"Yes, I should think that he is not the sort of man who goes wrong. There is nothing hidden about him. As to his brightness, it really does not matter, for his aunt, Mrs. Westmacott, is very rich -much richer than you would think from her style of living-and she has made him a handsome provision."
"I am glad of that."

"It is between ourselves. I am her trustee, and so I know something of her arrangements. And when are you going to marry, Clara?"

"Oh, papa, not for some time yet. We have not thought of a date." "Well, really, I don't know that there is any reason for delay. He has a competence, and it increases yearly. As long as you are quite certain that your mind is made up"

"Oh, papa!"
"Well, then, I really do not know why there should be any delay. And Ida, too, must be married within the next few months. Now, what I want to know is what I am to do when my two little companions run away from me," He spoke lightly, but his eyes were grave as he looked questioningly at his daughter, "Dear papa, you shall not be alone, It will be years before Harold and I

think of marrying, and when we do you must come and live with us." "No, no, dear. I know that you mean what you say, but I have seen something of the world, and I know that such arrangements never answer. There cannot be two masters in a house, and yet

at my age my freedom is very necessary "But you would be completely free,"
"No, dear, you cannot be that if you are a guest in another man's house. Can you suggest no other alternative?"

"That we remain with you." "No, no. That is out of the question Mrs. Westmacott herself says that a woman's first duty is to marry. Mar-riage, however, should be an equal part-nership, as she points out. I should wish you both to marry, but still I should like

"But there is no hurry, paps. Let us wait. I do not intend to marry yet." Dr. Walker looked disappointed.

suggestion from you, Clara, as to what

"Well, Clara, if you can suggest uota-ing, I suppose that I must take the ini-tiative myself," said he. "Then what do you propose, papa? She braced herself as one who sees the blow which is about to fall,

He looked at her and hesitated. "How like your poor dear mother you are, Clara," he cried. "As I looked at you then it was as if she had come back from the grave." He stoeped toward her and kissed her. "There, run away to your sister, my dear, and do not trouble yourself about me. Nothing is settled yet, but you will find that all will come right." Clara went up stairs sad at heart, for she was sure now that what she had feared was indeed about to come to pass, and that her father was going to ask

her knowledge of the world, her dash, her strength, her unconventionality—all these qualities Clara was willing to allow her—but she was convinced that she would be unendurable as a life companion. She had come to an age when habits are not lightly to be changed, nor was she a woman who was at all likely to attempt to change them. How would a sensitive man like her father stand the constant strain of such a wife, a woman who was all decision, with no softness and nothing scothing in her nature?

"She says so."

"And about dress? The short skirt and the divided skirt are what she believes in."

"Yes."

"We must make ourselves a dress each. A brand new, enfranchised, emancipated dress, dear. Don't you see my plan? We shall act up to all Mrs. Westmand nothing scothing in her nature?

of the southern suburbs had rallied at her summons; there was an influential platform, with Dr. Balthasar-Walker in the chair, and Admiral Hay Deaver among his more prominent supporters. One benighted male had come in from the outside darkness and had jeered from the farther end of the hall, but he had been called to order by the chair, petrified by indignant glances from the unenfranchised around him and finally escorted to the door by Charles Westmacott. Fiery resolutions were passed, to be forwarded to a large number of leading statesmen, and the meeting broke up with the conviction that a shrewd blow had been struck for the cause of woman.

But there was one woman at least to It passed as a mere eccentricity when they heard of her stout denking, her cigarette smoking, her occasional whiffs at a long clay pipe, her horsewhipping of a drunken servant and her companion dentity at the splendid."

Her milder sister sat specific methods a drunken servant and her companion dentity that the splendid. fatuation was past. For his own sake, help then, as well as for her mother's memwe do it for a good motive."

Yet how powerless she was to prevent it!

What could she do? Could Harold aid
her? Perhaps. Or Ida? At least she
would tell her sister and see what she
would tell her sister and see what she

would tell her sister and see what are could suggest.

Ida was in her boudoir, a tiny little tapestried room, as neat and dainty as herself, with low walls hung with Imari plaques and with pretty little Swiss brackets bearing blue Kaga ware or the pure white Coalport chins. In a low chair beneath a red shaded standing lamp sat Ida in a diaphanous evening lamp sat Ida in a diaphanous evening dress of mousseline de soie, the ruddy dress of mousseline de soie, the rudd light tinging her sweet childlike face and glowing on her golden curls. sprang up as her sister entered and threw her arms around her.



She pushed forward his chair and ran to fetch his slippers.
"Dear old Clara! Come and sit down here beside me. I have not had a chat

for days. But, oh, what a troubled face! What is it then?" She put up her fore-finger and smoothed her sister's brow direction. When he returned, Clara was sitting alone in the drawing room reading a magazine. She sprang up as he entered, pushed forward his chair and sitting alone forward his chair and sitting alone in the drawing room beside her sister passed her arm round her waist. "I am so sorry to specific to us that we really have a very great advantage in having Mrs. Westmacott is threw open the window and thrust her three open three trouble you, dear Ida," she said, "but I

do not know what to do." "There's nothing the matter with Har-

"Oh, no, Ida." "Nor with my Charles?"
"No, no." Ida gave a sigh of relief. "You quite frightened me, dear," said she. can't think how solemn you look. What

is it, then?"
"I believe that papa intends to ask Mrs. Westmacott to marry him." Ida burst out laughing. "What can have put such a notion into your head. murely, and the talk drifted to other

"It is only too true, Ida. I suspected it before, and he himself almost told me as much with his own lips tonight. I don't think that it is a laughing matter."
"Really, I could not help it. If you

and told me that those two dear old inlies opposite, the Misses Williams, were both engaged you would not have surprised me more. It is really too funny."
"Funny, Ida? Think of any one tak ing the place of dear mother." But her sister was of a more practical in where they were least welcome. Then

and less sentimental nature. "I at: sure," said she, "that dear mother would like papa to do whatever would make him most happy. We shall both be away, and why should papa not please "But think how unhappy he will be. You know how quiet he is in his ways and how even a little thing will upset him. How could be live with a wife who

ride in her eagerness over her pet sub-ject, and her two fair disciples drank in would make his whole life a series of surprises? Fancy what a whirlwind she every word and noted her every suggesmust be in a house. A man at his age tion for future use. That afternoon they cannot change his ways. I am sure he went shopping in London, and before would be miserable. evening strange packages began to be handed in at the doctor's door. The plot Ida's face grew graver, and she ponlered over the matter for a few minutes. was ripe for execution, and one of the I really think that you are right, as conspirators was merry and jubilant,

sun)," said she at last. "I admire Charley's aunt very much, you know, and I think that she is a very useful and good person, but I don't think she would do s a wife for poor quiet papa." "But he will certainly ask her, and I

really think that she intends to accept him. Then it would be too late to interfere. We have only a few days at the most. And what can we do? How can we hope to make him change his Again Ida pondered. "He has never

tried what it is to live with a strong minded woman," said she. "If we could only get him to realize it in time! Oh, Clars, I have it, I have it! Such a lovely plan!" She leaned back in her chair and burst into a fit of laughter so natural and so hearty that Clara had to forget her troubles and join in it. "Oh, it is beautiful!" she gasped at

last. "Poor papa! What a time he will have! But it's all for his own good, as he used to say when we had to be punished when we were little. Oh, Clara, I do hope your heart won't fail you." "I would do anything to save him,

"That's it. You must steel yourself by that thought."
"But what is your plan?" "Oh, I am so proud of it. We will tire him forever of the widaw and of all emancipated women. Let me see, what are Mrs. Westmacott's main ideas? You have listened to her more than I. Women should strend.

Women should attend less to household duties. That is one, is it not?" "Yes, if they feel they have capabilities for higher things. Then she thinks that every woman who has jeisure should take up the study of some branch of science, and that as far as possible every woman should qualify herself for and that her father was going to ask
Mrs. Westmacott to be his wife. In her
pure and earnest mind her mother's
Oregon. Westmacott was enshrined as that of a saint.

Some trade or profession, choosing for which I have under my spirit lamp. I am afraid there is some acid upon that, to monopolised by men. To enter the to monopolised by men. To enter the other would only be to intensify the presHere it is."

Avoid."

"Oh, no," cried Ida. "Mrs. Westmatoo, and it is rather damp and torn.

Others would only be to intensify the pres-

and the thought that any one should take her place seemed a terrible desecration. "Quite so. That is glorious!" Her blue eyes were dancing with mischief, and she clapped her hands in her delight, and she clapped her hands in her delight, and she clapped her hands in her delight. "What else? She thinks that whatever so man can do a woman should be allowed to do also—does she not?" "She says so."

"She says so."
"And about dress? The short skirt and the divided skirt are what she be-

prove them when we can, will know what it is to live with a wo man who claims all her rights. 'Oh,

Her milder sister sat speechless before so daring a scheme. "But it would be wrong, Ida!" she cried at last. "Not a bit. It is to save him." "I should not dare."

"Oh, yes, you would. Harold will be Besides, what other plan have "I have none."

"I do not see any other way. "You dear, good Clara! Now I will

w you what you are to do. We must suspicion."
"What would you do, then? "Tomorrow we must go to Mrs. West-macott and sit at her feet and learn all

"What hypocrites we shall feel!"
"We shall be her newest and most en-thusiastic converts. Oh, it will be such fun, Clara. Then we shall make our

plans and send for what we want and begin our new life."
"I do hope that we shall not have to keep it up long. It seems so cruel to dear "Cruel! To save him!"

"I wish I was sure that we were doing right. And yet what else can we do? Well, then, Ida, the die is cast, and we will call upon Mrs. Westmacott tomor-

A FAMILY PLOT. Little did poor Dr. Walker imagine as he sat at his breakfast table next morning that the two sweet girls who sat on either side of him were deep in a con-

against whom their wiles were planted. Patiently they waited until at last their "It is a beautiful day," he remarked. "It will do for Mrs. Westmacott. She was thinking of having a spin upon her

tricycle." "Then we must call early. We both intended to see her after breakfast."
"Oh, indeed!" The doctor looked

"Why so, dear?"

they were martyrs to the cause and pio-

the washtub, the needle and the house

room, to the bench and even to the pul-

while the other was very nervous and

When the doctor came down to the

dining room next morning, he was sur-prised to find that his daughters had al-

eady been up some time. Ida was in-

stalled at one end of the table, with a

spirit lamp, a curved glass flask and

everal bottles in front of her. The con-

feet upon a second one, a blue covered

book in her hand and a huge map of the

British islands spread across her lap.
"Hullo!" cried the doctor, blinking

"It No: why should If" He rang the

bell. "Why have you not laid the break-

"If you please, sir, Miss Ida was a-workin at the table."

"Oh, of course, Jane," said the young

lady calmly. "I am so sorry. I shall

"But what on earth are you doing

Ida?" asked the doctor. "The smell is

most offensive. And, good gracious, look at the mess which you have made

upon the cloth! Why, you have burned

"Oh, that is the acid," Ida answered

"You might have taken her word for

contentedly. "Mrs. Westmacott said that it would burn holes."

it without trying," said her father dryly.

"But look here, pa! See what the book says: 'The scientific mind takes nothing

upon trust. Prove all things! I have

a hole right through.

proved that."

be ready to move in a few minutes.

and sniffing, "where's the breakfast?"
"Oh, didn't you order it?" asked Ida.

fast, Jane?

pit

know. If we only study her ways, we may advance ourselves also." "I think I have heard you say, pape remarked Clara, "that she is the type of the woman of the future." "Yes, certainly." "I am very pleased to hear you speak so sensibly, my dears. I certainly think

that she is a woman whom you may very well take as your model. The more intimate you are with her the better pleased I shall be." "Then that is settled," said Clara de-

All the morning the two girls sat ex-Cambridge. But why?" tracting from Mrs. Westmacott her most extreme views as to the duty of the one sex and the tyranny of the other. Absolute equality, even in details, was her ideal. Enough of the parrot cry of un-womanly and unmaidenly. It had been Mrs. Westmacott knows all about the brands of cigarettes. Has your rum invented by man to scare woman away when she poached too nearly upon his "Yes, dear. It is here." precious preserves. Every woman should be independent. Every woman should learn a trade. It was their duty to push

"And I have my stout. Come along up to my room now. This smell is too him when he comes back. If we sit at the window, we shall see him coming neers to their weaker sisters. Why should down the road." The fresh morning air and the genial ompany of the admiral had caused the

keeper's book be eternally theirs? Might they not reach higher-to the consulting doctor to forget his trouble, and he came back about midday in an excellent humor. As he opened the hall door the vile Mrs. Westamott sacrificed her tricycle smell of chemicals which had spoiled his breakfast met him with a redoubled virulence. He threw open the hall window, entered the dining room and stood aghast at the sight which met his eyes.

Ida was still sitting among her bottles with a lit cigarette in her left hand and a glass of stout on the table beside her. Clara with another cigarette was loung ing in the easy chair with several maps spread out upon the floor around. Her feet were stuck up on the coal scuttle, and she had a tumblerful of some red dish brown composition on the smoking table close at her elbow. The doctor gazed from one to the other of them through the thin gray haze of smoke, but his eyes rested finally in a settle stare of astonishment upon his elder and tents of the flask were boiling furiously, while a villainous smell filled the room. Clara lounged in an armchair with her

more serious daughter. "Clara!" he gasped. "I could not have



"Clara!" he gasped, "I could not have be lieved it!"

"Trying to, papa. I find it a little diffi-cult, for I have not been used to it."

"But why, in the name of goodness"-"You certainly have. Well, until breakfast is ready l'il glance over The "Mrs. Westmacott recommends it." "Oh, a lady of mature years may do many things which a young girl must avoid." Times. Have you seen it?"
"The Times? Oh, dear me, this is it

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The doctor took the bedraggled paper with a rueful face. "Everything seems to be wrong today," he remarked. "What is this sudden enthusiasm about chemis-

Oh, I am trying to live up to Mrs. Westmacott's teaching."
"Quite right, quite right!" said he,
though perhaps with less heartiness than
he had shown the day before. "Ah, here

But nothing was comfortable that morning. There were eggs without egg-spoons, toast which was leathery from poons, total which was leathery from being kept, dried up rashers and grounds in the coffee. Above all there was that dreadful smell which pervaded every-thing and gave a horrible twang to every

"I don't wish to put a damper upon your studies, Ida," said the doctor as he pushed back his chair. "But I do think it would be better if you did your chem-ical experiments a little later in the day."
"But Mrs. Westmacott says that women should rise early and do their work

before breakfast." "Then they should choose some other room besides the breakfast room." The doctor was becoming just a little ruffled. A turn in the open air would soothe him, he thought. "Where are my boots" he

But they were not in their accustom corner by his chair. Up and down he searched, while the three servants took up the quest, stooping and peeping under bookcases and drawers. Ida had re-turned to her studies and Clara to her blue covered volume, sitting absorbed and disinterested amid the busile and the racket. At last a general buzz of be joking." congratulation announced that the cook had discovered the boots hung up among the hats in the hall. The doctor, very red and flustered, drew them on and stamped off to join the admiral in his

morning walk. spiracy, and that he, munching inno-cently at his mustins, was the victim As the door slammed Ida burst into a shout of laughter. "You see, Clara," she cried, "the charm works already. He has gone to No. 1 instead of to No. 8.

what are we to do?" "Oh, he will enjoy being comfortable all the more if we give him a little dis-

little golden curied head out of it. Charles Westmacott was beeing at the "Well, because she is so advanced, you other side of the garden fence.

"Good morning, sir," said Ida.
"Good morning." The big man leaned upon his hoe and looked up at her. "Have you any cigarettes, Charles?"

"Throw me up two." "Here is my case. Can you catch?" A sealskin case came with a soft thud on the floor. Ida opened it. It was

"What are these?" she asked "Egyptians."

"What are some other braffds?" "Oh, Richmond Gems and Turkish and "Never, mind!" She nodded to him and closed the window. "We must re-The doctor flushed, and his grizzled hair member all t'ose, Clara," said she, "We must learn to talk about such things.

minable. But we must be ready for

believed it!"

"What is it, papa?" "You are smoking!"

ABSOLUTELY PURE

"No, thank you. I never smoke in the orning."
"No? Perhaps you don't care for the

rand. What are these, Clara? "Ekyptians."

"Ah, we must have some Richmond
Gems or Turkish. I wish, ps, when you
go into town you would get me some

"I will do nothing of the kind. I do not at all think that it is a fitting habit for young ladies. I do not agree with Mrs. Westmacott upon the point."

"Really, pa! It was you who advised

us to imitate her."
"But with discrimination. What is it that you are drinking, Clare?" "Rum, papa."
"Rum? In the morning?" He sat down and rubbed his eyes as one who tries to

shake off some evil dream. "Did you

"Yes, pa. They all drink it in the pro-fession which I am going to take up." "Profession, Clara?" "Mrs. Westmacott says that every woman should follow a calling, and that we ought to choose those which women have always avoided."

"Quite so."
"Well, I am going to act upon her advice. I am going to be a pilot."
"My dear Clara! A pilot? This is too

"This is a beautiful book, paps. The Lights, Beacons, Buoys, Channels and Landmarks of Great Britain.' Here is another, 'The Master Mariner's Hand-book.' You can't imagine how interesting it is. "You are joking, Clars. You must "Not at all, ps. You can't think what a lot I have learned already. I'm to carry a green light to starboard and a

red to port, with a white light at the nasthead, and flare up every 15 minutes." "Oh, won't it look pretty at night!" cried her sister.
"And I know the fog signals. One blast means that a ship steers to starboard, two to port, three astern, four Oh, we shall win a great victory. You've been very good, dear. I could see that you were on thorns to help him when he was looking for his boots,"

"Poor papa! It is so cruel. And yet

course is that ship steering to a point?" The doctor rose with a gesture of despair. "I can't imagine what has come mire the result. Your chemistry, Ida, may perhaps do no harm, but your scheme, Clara, is out of the question. How a girl of your sense could ever entertain such a notion is more than I can

you to go further with it."
"But, pa," asked Ida, with an air of innocent inquiry in her big blue eyes, "what are we to do when your comnands and Mrs. Westmacott's advice are opposed? You told us to obey her. She says that when women try to throw off their shackles their fathers, brothers and husbands are the very first to try to rivet them on again, and that in such a matter no man has any authority."

"Does Mrs. Westmacott teach you that I am not the head of my own house?"

magine. But I must absolutely forbid

bristled in his anger.
"Certainly. She says that all heads of ouses are relics of the dark ages."

The doctor muttered something and stamped his foot upon the carpet. Then without a word he passed out into the garden, and his daughters could see him striding furiously up and down, cutting off the heads of the flowers with a

switch.

part so splendidly!" cried Ida.
"But how cruel it is! When I saw the sorrow and surprise in his eyes, I very nearly put my arms about him and told him all. Don't you think we have done enough?" "No, no, no. Not nearly enough. You oust not turn weak now, Clara. It is so funny that I should be leading you. It is quite a new experience. But I know that I am right. If we go on as we are doing, we shall be able to say all our

"Oh, you darling! You played your

we don't, oh, Clara, we should never for-[Continued next week.]

lives that we have saved him. And if

Hard to Surprise She dropped wearily into a seat in Broadway car, and the girl who accompanied her said sympathetically: "Are you all tired out, dear? It's awful work, isn't it?"

"I should say so," groaned the "dear." "But, Helen, you don't know anything about the misery of it all. You aren't engaged!" "No-but Jack is so nice I shouldn't think you'd mind choosing him a 'I know he's nice! That's the

trouble. He doesn't smoke, and I've always been glad until now! But I can't get him a pipe, a cigarette case, an ash receiver or anything! He doesn't drink, and I can't give him a traveling flask. He wears an inconspicuous watch chain made of his mother's hair, and I always thought it so sweet and thoughtful, but I can't give him watch things, you see. He hasn't a single vice, Helen, and you can't give Christmas presents to men who haven't! Why, even a photograph frame would be useless, for he has only his mother's picture and mine out, and they're already framed! What shall I do?" And Helen replied tersely:

"Break it at once."-New York Do not criticise the writer who be-

sprinkles his composition with French phrases. It is easier to hide one's ignorance in a foreign tongue than in a language with which all people