AFTER *the* CURTAIN FELL

..... By Colin S. Collins

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If Bradley Evans had not been so deeply in love, he would certainly have been angry.

The curtain had just fallen on the Thanksgiving matinee, and the stage hands were already clearing the stage for the feast which Manager Evans had ordered for his company. That astute gentleman had personally superintended the preparations and arranged every detail.

The stage was to be set with a dull oak interior, ablaze with electricity overhead, in the flies and at the footlights, with the front of the house in darkness to heighten the brilliancy of the improved dining room. Gorgeous chrysanthemums he had ordered from New York for the centerpiece, and the menu was the very best that the leading caterer of the small New England city could furnish.

Evans had just stepped into the leading man's dressing room for the assurance that his personal appearance was in keeping with the festal occasion before presenting himself to the young woman in whose honor the dinner was being given, Miss Ella Ransom. He had meant to be careful as to speech before that dinner, and afterward, when the company was trying to amuse itself until the evening performance and to forget the folks gathered round home firesides, he would have a little chat with her alone in her dressing room and put the momentous question. Surely this little act of thoughtfulness would pave the way. He knew in a general way that she was a New England girl and that Thanksgiving day was to such as she the all important festival. The theatrical instinct in Evans was so strong that even his own love story had to be worked up to the proper climax. But Miss Ransom with true womanly contrariety set all his fine plans at naught.

When he entered the star's dressing room in response to a muffled "Come!" instead of facing a handsomely gowned and smiling girl, as he had anticipated, he saw a forlorn figure curled up on the sofa. Miss Ransom still wore the frock used in the last act, and as she straightened up she made a futile effort to hide her grief with a lace trimmed bit of cambric. All the graceful little speeches which Evans had been conning for hours failed him at this critical moment. He forgot the flower decked table on the stage and the actors who by this time must be hurrying from their dressing rooms to the scene of the festivities. He knew only that Ella was in trouble and—he loved her.

"My dear girl, what has happened?"

Alas for the cleverly worded proposal that was never to be spoken! The tone, the gesture and the love

"MY DEAR GIRL, WHAT HAS HAPPENED?"

light in his eyes told their own tale, and Miss Ransom understood. That is why a few minutes later she was sobbing out her little heartache in his arms and incoherently pouring the cause thereof into his ear.

"Oh, it was lovely of you, perfectly dear, to think of this plan for my Thanksgiving! But you did not know how close you were bringing me today to my old home. It's just ten miles from here, Upper Dalton, and I haven't seen it for five years."

"Why didn't you tell me this, and instead of the dinner we'd have ridden there between the matinee and night performance?" asked Evans, gently smoothing the golden head resting on his shoulder. It was nature's own tint. There was something genuine and womanly about Ella Ransom. He had recognized this from the first.

"Oh, you see, I wouldn't—be—welcome—there." The sweet lips quivered again, and Evans felt in duty bound to do what he could to put a stop to that pathetic expression. Then Miss Ransom continued:

"I—I ran away to go on the stage, and father said he never would forgive me, whether I became famous or not, and he always keeps his word. And, oh, I would like to see mother when I am so near to her!"

"Never mind, dearest," said Evans. "I'll try to take the place of parents and husband to you. And now we're making an awful stage wait."

He bent over for a final kiss, and when Ella removed the makeup she succeeded also in hiding almost every trace of her recent grief. It was a smiling young woman whom he finally led to the head of the great table. After all, he decided, as he glanced from one cheerful face to another, he would announce their engagement at the close of the dinner, and the company should drink their health, and it would not be such a bad climax.

But again were the plans of Manager Evans set at naught. With the salad course came an urgent summons from the box office. Evans rose with mutterings that did not portend happily for the sender of the message.

When he came back, however, the expression on his face had undergone a change. He was smiling in a nervous fashion. No one noticed two figures which stopped in the shadow of the wings.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Evans impressively, "it gives me pleasure to introduce two unexpected but most welcome guests to this board, the father and mother of our leading lady, Mr. and Mrs. Ransom."

A girlish cry that would have brought the house to her feet could Ella Ransom have given it on the stage, and then she, too, was in the wings with her mother's arms about her.

When order had been restored and the feast had progressed to the coffee, old Mr. Ransom rose and unflinchingly faced the merry crew.

"I ain't much at speechmaking, but I want to say right now that I've made a mistake. My forefathers were of old Puritan stock, and I can't get over the idea that the stage is a bad place, but I guess there's other business in this world that's worse. Anyhow it's no cause for a father to turn against his child, and I've lost five good years by keeping up this ill feeling toward my girl. I want to thank you for the kind way you've treated her when she's needed the comfort of mother and father, and if you're round this neighborhood next Thanksgiving come out to the farm and have dinner with us. My wife's a master hand at making pumpkin pies. I guess that's about all."

When the laughter and handclapping which followed this speech had subsided, Manager Evans took the floor, and in words not half so eloquent as he had rehearsed in private, but softened by the happy family reunion, he announced his engagement to Miss Ransom. While the members of the company had been making some pretty shrewd guesses on the subject, they were properly surprised and congratulatory, and before Deacon Ransom realized what had happened he was standing with the rest drinking champagne to the health of his daughter and his son-in-law to be.

When the great day was over and Manager Evans had tucked the robes around Deacon and Mrs. Ransom for their homeward ride and he had taken a last kiss from Ella's happy lips, he murmured to himself:

"Well, the stage business worked out rather different from the way I had planned it, but the climax and the picture were not half bad after all."

A Tireless Official.

A good story is told of Mr. Hammond, former chief clerk of the British foreign office. One day when he was suffering from gout an officer called to ask for leave of absence for his son, who was a queen's messenger and after several fatiguing journeys was in need of a rest. Mr. Hammond was sitting in an armchair before the fire reading The Times.

"I suppose," said he, "he wants to go out shooting?" "No," replied the visitor; "my son is not in the habit of telling falsehoods or making excuses. He wants rest." "Rest, rest, rest!" exclaimed Mr. Hammond. "I never take rest." To which the gentleman rejoined: "No; I dare say not. With your feet sinking into Turkey carpets and with nothing to do but sit before the fire and read The Times I dare say you don't require rest."—From "Recollections of the Old Foreign Office."

The Ancient Manufacture of Copper.

The ancient Syrians and Phœnicians are well known to have been active traders in copper, and they manufactured this metal into bronze by melting it with tin. Learned antiquaries assure us that the Phœnicians actually came to England and to Ireland in search of tin for this purpose, and a few years ago some curious bronze articles were found in several of the old mine workings in Cornwall, which are believed to have been left there by that ancient people at a time when no bronze was either made or used in England.—Chambers' Journal.

Why the Wren Is King.

The wren is chased every St. Stephen's day on account of it betraying the Saviour by chattering in a clump of furze where he was hiding. It is called the "king of all birds," because it concealed itself beneath the wing of the eagle when that lordly bird claimed supremacy by soaring highest. "Here I am," said the wren, mounting above the eagle's head when the latter could go no higher.

Enticing Lobsters to Death.

In the neighborhood of the Bermudas the sea is extremely transparent, so that the fishermen can readily see the horns of lobsters protruding from their hiding places in the rocks at considerable depths. To entice the crustaceans from these crannies they tie a lot of snails in a ball and dangle them in front of the cautious lobster. When he grabs the ball, they haul him up.

This line fills out the column.

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Having a Run on Chamberlain's Cough Remedy.

Between the hours of eleven o'clock A. M. and closing time at night on Jan. 25, 1901, A. F. Clark, druggist, Glade Springs, Va., sold 12 bottles of Chamberlain's Cough Remedy. He says, "I never handled a medicine that sold better or gave better satisfaction to my customers." This remedy has been in general use in Virginia for many years, and the people there are well acquainted with its excellent qualities. Many of them have testified to the remarkable cures which it has effected. When you need a good, reliable medicine for a cough or cold, or attack of the grip, use Chamberlain's Cough Remedy and you are certain to be more than pleased with the quick cure which it affords. For sale by City Drug Store.

An Odd Draft.

A pretty anecdote comes from Brussels illustrating the generous spirit of a banker of that city.

The banker is fond of outdoor exercise. As an exhibition of his skill in skating he made his autograph on the ice in a very artistic manner.

Some gentlemen, having admired his signature, proceeded to write above it as follows:

"On demand I promise to pay for the benefit of the poor the sum of 5,000 marks."

They sawed out the block of ice and, having called a cab, proceeded to the bank and carried the frozen note of hand—of foot, we mean—to the cashier's counter.

The cold temperature happily prevented the melting away of the icy draft, and the banker, having been appealed to, ordered it to be paid.

An American City In England.

Near Manchester, England, there is rapidly being built a new town that will be the home of some 7,000 workmen. The town is unique for England in that it is being built upon strict American lines. The Westinghouse interests are at the back of the work, for their large electrical plant is located near by, and the inhabitants of the town will be employed in the works. About 1,000 houses have already been erected. The streets are being laid out after the American plan and instead of being named in the English fashion are being numbered consecutively. Both the streets and houses will be lighted by electricity. Americans have the work of building in charge, and the whole enterprise is a marvel to the Britisher.—Municipal Journal and Engineer.

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