

## A Wedding Eve.

My principals were Messrs. Spencely & Mason, the well-known general providers in the bazaar, and it was Mr. Spencely's own daughter, and the sweetest girl in the world too, that I was to marry on the morrow. I was in the counting house with Mr. Mason, talking over some matters of business when a shop man came in to say I was wanted. I ran down stairs to my special department, the drapery, to find that a lady was awaiting my coming. She had, it turned out, made some large purchases, to the amount of \$200, but having forgotten her pocketbook, had requested that someone might go with her to receive payment. In keeping with our usual course of business, this task fell to me.

The lady's carriage was standing at the door, footman and coachman both in a quiet and becoming livery. I felt rather shy, and I fear, awkward, at first, but before our drive came to an end I was satisfied with myself and charmed with my companion. We drove up before a substantial looking house in one of the smaller squares of the West End. A grave-looking major domo or butler, as I took him to be, opened the door as I was ushered into a room, while the lady and her butler conversed in a low tone in the hall.

"Mr. Stuart will see you in a minute," the lady at length said, pushing open the door a little further and closing it as she withdrew her hand. Then I heard the outer door close with a bang, the carriage steps put up, and the noise of wheels rapidly retreating. Mr. Stewart was evidently in no hurry, for ten minutes passed, and still no sign of him coming. I was anxious to get back to business, and began to feel annoyed.

I had been walking the feeling off, but at last, all out of patience, I proceeded to open the door. It was fast. For a moment I suspected a trap, but it was for a moment only. Mrs. Stewart, I reflected, was a perfect lady. I mechanically surveyed the apartment. The windows struck me as being an unusual height from the floor. There were no chairs, except one—a library chair—near the massive table, but luxurious seats extended along three sides of the room. I threw myself into the chair and tried to push it away from the table. Both alike refused to stir. They were screwed fast to the floor.

I now awoke from my dream to the conviction that I was a—well, not exactly a Solomon, and that I had been trapped. I rained blows upon the door with both hands and feet, too, and after a short delay the door opened, accompanied by two men, presumably fellow servants.

"Why am I kept waiting here?" I demanded.

"Don't get excited, my dear sir!"

"Tell Mr. Stewart I can't wait any longer, and that I must have my money."

"All in good time, my dear sir, all in good time. Don't get excited, I beg of you. Excitement to a nervous temperament is—"

"Nervous temperament be hanged. Pay me my money and let me out of this."

"All in good time, all in good time. What was I to do. The man was smiling, unctuous, imperturbable, deaf to my arguments, unmoved by my protestations. I raged and stormed, called them all swindlers, and threatened to have them indicted. It was all of no use. I might as well have stormed the table and the solitary chair.

Gradually I cooled down, as one who needs must, and in a hoarse voice begged them to say what they intended doing with me, and what in the world it all meant, for it now dawned upon me that they were not acting a part, but were sincere according to their light.

And then to my horror I learned that the gentleman I had taken for a butler was Aloysius Fitzsimmons, M. D., F. R. C. P., the great specialist in obscure diseases of the nerves and brain, and keeper of a private establishment "devoted to the care of the cerebrally afflicted," as he quoted from his own prospectus, which I had afterwards the pleasure of perusing. I confessed somewhat indelicately that I had never so much as heard of him before, but it only furnished him with fresh proof of his insanity. He wound up a long monologue by telling me that Mrs. Hall was to inquire on the morrow to inquire how I was getting along.

"And who may Mrs. Hall be?" I asked, scarce knowing what I said, for everything seemed topsy-turvy now.

"Poor, poor man, a bad case," he heard him say, sotto voce. "He has even forgotten his own name." The thought you are a country gentleman, wife!"

"My wife?" I shouted.

"Quiet, my dear sir. You forget your promise."

"Her name is Stewart," I managed to say quietly, "and so far as her being my wife, I am unmarried and to-morrow is my wedding day."

"Yes, I know. Your good lady has told me all about this. But perhaps by tomorrow you will be better and think no more about it."

"Would you mind telling me what this woman has said to me?"

"Who, Mrs. Hall? Well, she told me that Mr. Hall—that is your name, you know, for it is so given in the certificates from two eminent medical men who examined you—that Mr. Hall was an exemplary husband and father and a good citizen, but—"

"Oh, on, I can hear anything now."

"But subject to delusions and terrors of violence. I believe that, that you were a country gentleman, you consider a fancy you are in a large business house, and that people are sent or to strangle you; also that you are in the eve of marriage. Is it not so?"

"But tomorrow is my wedding day."

"Ah, just as your good lady said. We will get you around, never fear."

I looked helplessly at the doctor. My brain was in a whirl. "Just what your good lady said." How did that odious schemer learned that I was to be married on the morrow? But inquiry as to that might well stand over. Meanwhile, what was I to do to get out of the house and away from this complacent quack, whom I was beginning to hate? Obviously, I must send for some one to identify me. Mr. Spencely, I remembered, had a late engagement in the city. Ella was manifestly out of the question. I could not obtrude such a ridiculous notion on her on her wedding eve, too. Between you and me, reader, I think I felt somewhat chary of letting her see me in such a plight. The same consideration made me fight shy of any of our fellows. It would be food for jokes for months to come. At last I had it. I would write a brief note to Mr. Mason, our junior principal. He would be away from business by this time, but a messenger would soon go to Wimbledon, where he lived, and return furnished with sufficient evidence of my identity, which would also be conclusive of my sanity. Dr. Fitzsimmons smiled dubiously as he took my note.

"Who is this Mr. Mason?" he asked.

"The junior partner in Spencely & Mason, where I am employed."

"H'm—yes, quite so."

"He said nothing more, but I heard him dispatch the messenger, and at last I began to breathe freely. I was left to myself, and, as if in a dream, began to recall, one by one, the various events of this, the most miserable day in my existence, which ought to have been one of the happiest. It was now nearly 8 o'clock. I remembered with a start that at 9 the employees of our firm were to meet me to present me with a wedding gift, and it would be a case of "Hamlet" without the Prince of Denmark. And what would Ella think? I was to meet her as soon as the presentation was over. That, too, was impossible, for I could not hope to be released in less than two hours. I recalled, too, and the recollection gave me a moment's fright—that she had said to me in her father's and Mason's hearing, in jest, of course:

"If you stay too long with your chums, Harry, I shall conclude that you do not want me next day."

I was doomed to stay too long, but not even the wildest flight of imagination could have converted Dr. Fitzsimmons into a chum of anybody. However, Mason would make it all right, and everything would be properly explained, and all would yet go merrily as a marriage bell.

The messenger dispatched to Wimbledon returned at last. Mr. Straining ears could detect that the doctor met him at the door, and that a hurried colloquy took place in the hall. I put on my gloves and hat, and was ready to start as the doctor entered.

"My man has seen Mr. Mason," he said, "and he assures me he never heard of you before—knows nothing at all about you."

Here was a thunder clap. I began at length to think that I must be subject to delusions, to wonder if Mrs. Hall could possibly be my wife, and if so, who in the world I myself was. I felt that "that was madness lay," and sought to collect my scattered senses. The doctor was sympathetic, after a fashion, but his evident pride in the correctness of his diagnosis gave him too much the look of one who would say "Now, didn't I tell you so?" too much, I mean, for my equanimity.

Acting on his suggestion I tried to swallow a mouthful of supper, for I had tasted nothing since morning, but it was in vain. I retired to bed, and had the qualified satisfaction of hearing more than one door carefully locked behind me, and feeling that, if I could not get out, there was little chance of any unauthorized person getting in to disturb me.

Sleep was, of course, out of the question. Every passing step in the square made me start from my recumbent position. I heard every horse strike at the stable door. After 12 I expected it to strike 13, and recalled the story of the sentry at the Tower of London, who saved his life by proving that he heard a church strike that number of times when charged with sleeping at his post. Would it save my reason? My disappearance would be in all the papers tomorrow, and crisp journalistic paragraphs would describe me, and dismiss the subject. At 3 I heard the lumbering wagons, with their loads of garden produce for market, and knew the great city was once more stirring into life, and when at last it rang out sharp and clear, it was with a sigh of infinite relief I thanked heaven that the long night was over.

I rose and dressed after a fashion. Suddenly I heard a carriage drive up. A few moments more, and I was summoned down stairs and ushered into the room I knew too well for my peace of mind. Judge to my relief to find there Mr. Spencely and Bob Edwards. There was no question now of my sanity. I had been made the victim of a clever schemer, who had got clear off with her booty.

"And how were you to be paid, Doctor?" Mr. Spencely asked as we prepared to go.

"My terms are quarterly, in advance. And Mrs. Hall paid 50 pounds sterling down. By Jove, I did not examine the note particularly. She was quite a lady, you know." And here the doctor looked foolish enough to qualify for a passive position in his own establishment.

The note proved all right. Mr. Spencely took its number and we set off.

On the way home, Bob Edwards, in a low voice, told me the story of the search for me, in every likely quarter, and in some unlikely ones, too, for the police stations had not been omitted. As a last resource the livery stable keepers in the West End were canvassed, and with success. Ella had

been in hysterics, but was recovering. Our wedding came off at the time originally fixed, though I fear that neither of us looked as radiant as the proverbial bride and bridegroom. Our vigil had told upon us both.

On our return from the honeymoon, Mr. Mason explained that it was a brother of his who had been the messenger I sent from Dr. Fitzsimmons. He himself, by some unlucky chance, happened to be from home at the time.—London Tids-Bits.

## The World's Fair Tests showed no baking powder so pure or so great in leavening power as the Royal.

ASSIGNEE'S NOTICE.

Notice is hereby given to all whom it may concern, that the undersigned has been duly appointed assignee of the estate of the late J. W. Case, of the County of Oregon, by the Circuit Court of the State of Oregon for Clatsop County, his bond as required by law. All persons having claims against said J. W. Case are notified to present the same to the undersigned, duly verified, at the office of the Astoria National Bank, in the city of Astoria, in said county, within three months from this date.

Dated at Astoria, Oregon, this 11th day of November, 1894.

D. K. WARREN, Assignee.

## DON'T TOBACCO SPT OR SMOKE YOUR LIFE AWAY.

Is the truthful, startling title of a book about No-To-Bac, the harmless, guaranteed tobacco habit cure that braces up paralyzed nerves, eliminates the nicotine poison, makes weak men gain strength, vigor and manhood. You run no physical, or financial risk, as No-To-Bac is sold by Chas. Rogers, druggist, under a guarantee to cure or money refunded. Book free. Address Sterling Remedy Co., New York or Chicago.

## ALLEGED IMPROVEMENT NOTICE.

Notice is hereby given that the Common Council of the City of Astoria, Oregon, have determined to improve the alleyway running through blocks numbered 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 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