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*Chas. H. Fletcher*

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# Race for a Wife

—BY—  
HAWLEY SMART

### CHAPTER XVI.—(Continued.)

"I can't see that that the least improves your position. You don't mean to tell me that you've had the audacity to come down here to upset an existing arrangement? By the way, do you suppose Maude approves of this? Have you any reason to suppose that she would prefer half of your garret in the Temple to being mistress of Mannersley?"

Grenville Rose's face flushed, but he answered steadily:

"All that must be an after-consideration. Uncle, answer me two questions—fairly, honestly, and as shortly as you please—and then wait to hear what I may have to say to-morrow morning."

"If I am to listen, then, you'll be good enough to talk rather more rationally than you are doing to-night. What are your questions?"

"Believe me, uncle, I am speaking in your interests. Do you owe Pearman money?—Pshaw! I know you do. I want to know how much?"

"Really I had no idea you were keeping so watchful an eye over my interests. Prying into the affairs of one's relations was hardly deemed good taste in my day. I think I may safely leave that answer to your own natural acuteness. It seems to have stood you in good stead so far."

"Why?" cried Grenville, passionately, "you can't think so mealy of me? You won't let me help you? That you owe Pearman money requires no espionage to find out. I do know it—never mind how."

"Probably your philanthropy and increasing practice, then, led you to run down with a view to rescuing your uncle from his difficulties," said Denison, bitterly.

"Yes, and no," said Rose, starting to his feet. "I have come for two reasons: Firstly, to win Maude for my wife, if I can; secondly, to release you from all obligation to Pearman, if possible. If I knew what the amount was, it would make it easier for me. You don't choose to tell me. I can only let you know to-morrow, then, what sum you can raise to meet such claims. Will you answer my other question? Do you honestly wish to see your daughter, a Denison of Gilman, married to Pearman?"

It was a home-thrust, this. The blood rushed to Harold Denison's temples, and his eyes had an angry light in them as he rejoined:

"This, I presume, sir, is a specimen of the easy manner of the young men of the present day. A piece of such impertinence I don't remember ever encountering. May I trouble you to hand me that bedroom candle? I would suggest that the earlier you can make it convenient to depart to-morrow morning the less risk I run of being insulted, and for the present will wish you good-night."

"Stop; you must hear me," cried Grenville. "If to-morrow morning I can show you a way to clear all Pearman's claims against you, will you listen to me, then, and acquit me of any intention of insulting you? Will you still persevere, uncle, in mating your daughter to the son of a bill-discounting solicitor? No, you won't. I know you better than you think. You are too far in Pearman's hands, or you are too thick to give yourself fair play in the matter. There breathes no prouder man than you are. Trust me. Recollect the mouse once saved the lion. As you hope for peace in future, trust me now."

### CHAPTER XVII.

Harold Denison paused. He had never seen his nephew break through his conventional, cool, easy manner in this wise before. He felt that he had been terribly in earnest all through their interview. Had he really some clue that might save him? Then, perhaps, as far as it was in his selfish nature to care for anyone, he loved that child of his dead sister, who had just poured forth this torrent of frantic entreaty. The cynic mask dropped from his face as he extended his hand.

"I've had a deal to try me lately, Gren; difficulties have thickened and complicated above my head. You mustn't think anything of what I say. Show me, boy, how to raise ten thousand to-morrow morning, and we'll talk over other things afterwards. At all events, Maude shan't marry Pearman."

"Good-night, uncle," said Grenville, as he clasped Denison's extended hand. "You can't think how happy you've made me. Leave me to work now, and if I'm not in a position to forbid the banes by breakfast to-morrow, may I never have another brief!"

Long and anxiously did Grenville wade through those villainous dusty old parchments that night. It was a big box, and contained some two or three hundred such old leases, agreements, mortgage deeds old leases, agreements, mortgage deeds and marriage cancelled, deeds of trust, and marriage settlements of bygone Denisons now sleeping their long sleep in the quiet old churchyard. The clock had struck three ere, with a chill feeling of defeat, he took out the last dusty paper. Could this be it? No! it was but some old parchment connected with a right of water power in the last century. Sadly Grenville tumbled the mass of papers back into the box, and gloomily sought his pillow. Had he dreamt of the deed he had looked for? "No," he muttered, as he undressed; "I saw it once in that room. What can have become of it? Maude, my dearest, have I told you to hope, and have I hoped only to drink the bitter cup of disappointment?"

Bed was not of much use to Grenville Rose that night. He tried it; but, despite his journey and late search through those bewildering papers, sleep refused to visit his eyelids. A little more than three hours, and he was splashing in his bath, and, with knit brows, still meditating on what could have become of that all-essential parchment. "It looks bad, but I won't give in. I must search further. I'll have my head in every box, escrutoire, cabinet, or cupboard in all Gilman before to-morrow night." In the meantime he recollected that Maude was

an early riser, so, finished his toilet and betook himself quietly to the garden.

It was not long before he caught sight of the flutter of a light dress; a few seconds, and he was by Maude's side. Her face flushed as she met him, and her greeting was evidently forced and constrained.

"I thought, Maude, dearest," he said, "that I might have the luck to meet you before breakfast. It is the only chance I have of seeing you alone. Can you tell me still that you don't repent what you wrote in answer to my letter of some fortnight or so back?"

"Oh, Gren, what am I to say to you? What must you think of me? I never thought you cared about me in that way, you know. And then to write to you as I did! But, Gren, dear, I did mean it. I fought hard to be true to you. What can I do? They say it rests with me to keep Gilman as a home to my father, and that, if I don't marry Mr. Pearman, we shall be wanderers about the world. That would kill them. I am very miserable. You don't know what I had to go through. I didn't give in till I could bear it no longer. Be kind to me, Gren, please."

And the grey eyes, swimming with tears, looked up into Rose's face with a piteous pleading expression that half maddened him.

"Don't know what you had to go through, my pet? Hum! I think I can make a pretty fair guess. And even as he passed his arm round his cousin's waist and kissed her, Grenville Rose's teeth were set hard. "It makes me mad, Maude, to think that that beast Pearman should ever dare to dream of you. No, child, I know pretty well the bullying you have had to go through. You wouldn't have proved false to your word, except under unfair pressure."

"Then you don't think so very badly of me?" asked the girl, shyly.

"I don't know," smiled her cousin, as he bent his head down to her. "I'll hear what you've got to say. Do you love me?"

"Oh, Gren!" And Maude dropped her flushed, tear-stained face on his shoulder, and submitted to the abstraction of unlimited kisses with the greatest meekness.

The tears were kissed away, and a smile was on her lips as she said, "You whispered last night, 'There is hope for us yet; what did you mean?'"

"I didn't say that; when you quote what I say, be good enough to be correct."

"But you did say so," said Maude, opening her grey eyes wide as usual when a thing passed her comprehension.

"No, Miss Denison; I said, 'Hope for us yet, darling.'"

"Oh, Gren, don't tease me; that's so like your old aggravating ways. Tell me."

"Well, dearest, I hoped last night to find a paper that would have, at all events, broken off your engagement with Pearman, and left you free to choose again."

A quiet pressure of his arm, and a soft "Well?"

"I didn't find it, Maude, and went to bed as miserable as a man can well do. Your father promised that Pearman should receive his dismissal if I could do what I dreamt I could. I made sure of finding that paper in the big oak chest in the study; but though I went steadily through them all, it wasn't there."

"When did you see it, Gren?"

"Don't you remember when I went mad upon heraldry, and was all for putting your genealogical tree to rights? I went through those papers then."

"Stop a moment," said the girl; "let me think. Yes," she continued, after a short pause; "and you used to bring them up to work at to the school room—don't you recollect? And I'm almost sure, but didn't you throw a few of them into a drawer up there, saying they were no use, but you might make up a magazine story or two out of them some day?"

"By Jove, Maude, you've hit it! I did, and that would be safe to be one of them. Come along, sweetheart mine, and see. No chance of their being disturbed, is there?"

"I should think not; but I haven't, I really believe, been in the room for the last two years. We'll soon see, though," and the cousins tripped rapidly back to the house.

Poor old school room! It was not often now that its shutters were thrown open to the golden light of spring. Very different were the old times, when Maude flitted about it daily, making sunshine within, whatever it might be without; when the whistle of the blackbird and the song of the thrush, the twitter of the swallow, and the scent of the jasmine, with other creepers, came drifting through the open casement. Here she had made much of her doll, fought with her nurse, and risen in more matured rebellion against her governess. Here Grenville had teased, petted, laughed at her, and embarked in various studies, genealogical or otherwise. No wonder they paused on the threshold; it was classic ground to them, at all events.

Grenville Rose, however, though he may pause for a moment, is far too much in earnest and immersed in the present to give much thought to old memories. Maude smiles softly as he throws open the windows, and she recalls those long pleasant afternoons they two have passed there. She has been so miserable of late—she is so quietly happy now. It is true this paper must be found; but she believes in Gren, as only a young girl can in a lover. It is the first time he has been with her in that character. It is so sweet to be told you are loved at eighteen, when that confession is made by the right person. No wonder the girl's face looked bright.

"Now, Maude, quick—which is the drawer? This, eh!" Hurriedly the drawer is dragged out; but alas! though all sorts of odds and ends, a book or two on heraldry, or a French dictionary, are discovered, no sign of law papers meets the eye.

"Mistaken the drawer, pet, I suppose?"

exclaimed Grenville, with a look of disappointment he struggled hard to conceal; and then continued his search. But, no; every drawer and cupboard of the school room is ransacked in vain. Many a relic of their merry old days there comes to light, but nothing in the shape of a deed or parchment. Maude stood aloof towards the conclusion of the search, half leaning, half sitting on the table. Her face was serious enough now, and the well-marked eyebrows rather knit. She felt that the promised smooth water of the morning was as yet by no means realized. Since Grenville had kissed her, and personally told his love, she felt endued with infinite powers of opposition to the Pearman alliance.

"It's no use, Maude; the paper I want is not here," said Grenville at length. "I must search elsewhere."

"So you shall, Gren. Ring the bell. I have an idea."

Her cousin did as he was bid, and when a stray housemaid, in considerable bewilderment, eventually made her way to the disused room, Miss Denison said, sharply, "Tell Mrs. Uproft she's wanted here directly—directly, mind—and don't let her be as long about getting here as you have been."

"Now, look here, Gren," continued Maude, "those papers were there. Nobody but Mrs. Uproft would have dared move them. But, you see, she has known me as a child, and I am always hard put to it to hold my own with her. If she doesn't happen quite to recollect what she's done with them, she'll give me any answer, and won't even try to take the trouble to remember. If I can make nothing of her, then you must chime in and frighten her. Of course she don't want to conceal them; but she will know she ought not to have meddled with them, and don't like what she terms being put out."

There was a tap at the door as Maude finished her speech, and her cousin had but just time to give a nod of intelligence as the housekeeper entered.

"Sorry to disturb you, Mrs. Uproft," said Miss Denison, blandly, "but I want to know what you have done with the papers that used to inhabit that drawer?"

"I'm sure I don't know nothing about no papers. You might have been sure of that, I think, Miss Maude, before you sent for me, and the butcher just here for orders an' all; and the housekeeper looked as sulky as she rightly dared. She had for years done as she pleased with Mrs. Denison, and was bitterly jealous of any interference of Miss Maude."

"Excuse me, Mrs. Uproft, if you don't know anything about the removal of such papers, you should do so. Things ought not to be moved from one room to another without the knowledge and license of yourself. Will you be kind enough to recollect what became of those papers? They happen just now to be of great importance."

"That's so like you, Miss Maude. You were just the same as a child. Whatever you wanted must be done right off at once. I forgot about those old papers now, and must run away to the butcher; but I'll perhaps think what became of them in a little. I'm afraid, though, they went to light fire with;" and with a malicious smile the housekeeper turned to go. (To be continued.)

### THE ORIGIN OF FEAR.

Plastic Gray Cells of Our Brains Stamped with Ancient Errors.

The average man would sooner face a 200-pound human antagonist than a 50-pound dog, which he could choke to death in three minutes. He has come up out of a state in which fear was the normal condition of existence—fear of violence, of the dark that gave opportunity for violence; fear of falling, of animals, of being alone. And into the plastic gray cells of our brains are stamped these ancient terrors—a living record of the upward climb of man.

The baby shows this record most clearly. In him the prints of heredity are not yet overlaid by the tracks of use and custom; and, therefore, in him we may most easily read our past history. He is our ancestor as truly as he is our reincarnation; and his every shrieking gesture and frightened cry are chronicles of the younger world tales of the age of fear.

They tell of the days when man was not the master of the earth, nor even a highly considered citizen of the same; but a runaway subject of the meat-eating monarchs, whose scepter was tooth and claw; a humble plebeian in the presence of the horned and hoofed aristocrats of woods and fields. They speak of the nights when our hairy sires crouched in the forks of trees and whimpered softly at the dark; whimpered because the dark held so many enemies; whimpered softly lest those enemies should hear.—Lippincott's Magazine.

### Claims Record Trip.

Clara A. Grace, an employe of a London business firm, claims to have made a record trip from London to New York and return. She was pledged to be back in the English city on a certain day to release her colleagues for vacation. She made the round trip in fifteen days. She transacted some important business in New York, remaining in the city only twenty-five minutes.

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Uncle Jed—Gosh! That ain't nothin'. When I was thar last year I rode to the top of the tallest buildin' in town an' it didn't cost me a blamed cent!—Chicago Tribune

Mothers will find Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup the best remedy to use for their children during the teething period.

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Hostess—Yes but I don't know if she'll stay; poor Bridget was very hard to suit.—Boston Traveler.

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Fellow Statesman-Senator, that speech of yours in favor of the income tax was one of the strongest arguments I ever heard.

Eloquent Senator (with some uneasiness), do you don't think it changed any votes, do you?—Chicago Tribune.

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