

SHEEP'S CLOTHING

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CHAPTER IV.—Continued.

But before she could re-collect her wits and slip quietly away Craven abruptly lifted his head and looked directly at his daughter; and now she knew him positively. Though his jaw dropped, his mouth gaped, and his eyes stared prominently from a countenance that in a twinkling darkened portentously above the blank pallor of his shirt bosom, in every lineament he was Thaddeus Craven of the sempiternally youthful face, showed never a line to declare he wasn't thirty-one but a round decade older.

For a moment whose tension lent it the length of many, father and daughter remained transfixed and staring. Then his emotion communicated itself to the woman in his arms. Startled and wondering, she unveiled her eyes, caught a shadowed glimpse of the third figure, disengaged, and drew away. And Craven suffered this without a sign to indicate that he had not forgotten her, maintaining his poise and stare with a fixity that, penetrating Lydia's confusion, stirred her curiosity.

Taking one step toward him, she paused again, lifted one hand in a gesture at once apologetic and appealing, and said falteringly, "Daddy—"

With visible effort Craven pulled himself together and made an attempt to speak; but only a husky whisper rattled in his throat. Then his glance veered uncertainly to Mrs. Merrilees.

Abruptly this last, overcoming her astonishment, precipitated the situation. The blush that had shadowed her exquisite face ebbed again, leaving it incomparably fair. She threw back her shoulders and took full advantage of her inches.

"Really, Miss Carteret—" she began; and then her voice of crystal clearness broke in a cool and tinkling laugh.

"Oh, do forgive me, Mrs. Merrilees! I never dreamed—I expected to find my father alone—"

"Father!" With that iteration of superb insolence, Mrs. Merrilees became once more completely mistress of herself; and if her tone cried scorn upon a presumptuous girl, her look demanded explanation of the man.

But Craven had needed no more time to make good his recovery. It was his familiar self who stepped into this breach, amiable, untroubled, perhaps a shade too devil-may-care; but to balance that there was a not unbecoming ring of deference in his voice. "I'm afraid," he said, "my surprise knocked me silly for a moment. Lydia, I'd no idea you were on board; but you seem already to know Mrs. Merrilees. Betty, permit me to present my daughter."

"Your daughter, Tad?" There was unpropitious rallery in the woman's tone.

Craven replied only by a bow. "Do you realize this is my first intimation that you were asking me to become a stepmother?"

"I've much to tell you, Betty," Craven answered with grave simplicity; then, turning to his daughter, "Lydia, Mrs. Merrilees has just done me the honor to promise to become my wife, and—the truth is—"

"To come out!" Mrs. Merrilees supplied incisively.

He laughed a little awkwardly. "Exactly! I mean to say, it was all quite unpremeditated. It isn't fifteen minutes since we found we—ah—loved each other; since when I—have been rather too preoccupied to advise Mrs. Merrilees of all my affairs. In another hour, of course, she would have known. As it is if the fact of my prior marriage—"

"Tad!" Mrs. Merrilees interjected with a spirit that commanded his deference. "We're neither of us fools. Don't overdo things. You're talking stupidly—quite unlike yourself. I don't care to hear more until you've found your bearings; and I want time to find mine, into the bargain. That's fair, isn't it?"

"Nothing more so," he affirmed cheerfully.

"Then I'll leave you to your—family reunion!"

Fugitively Craven's eyes conveyed what was at once a demand and an appeal. But before Lydia could respond Mrs. Merrilees anticipated, with a quick movement crossing to drop her hands lightly upon the girl's shoulders.

"My dear Miss Craven!" she said with an odd little catch in her voice. "I'm not sure yet I ought to call you Lydia; but I'm awfully fond of your father, and—and if I can get over what doesn't seem an unfair suspicion that he's kept me too long in the dark

LYDIA CRAVEN SURPRISES HER FATHER MAKING LOVE TO ANOTHER WOMAN—THERE IS EMBARRASSMENT, BUT LYDIA MAKES TWO REAL FRIENDS

SYNOPSIS.—A well-bred young Englishwoman, nervous and suspicious, finds when she boards the steamer Alsatia, bound from Liverpool to New York, that her stateroom mate is Mrs. Amelia Beggarstaff, a fascinating, wealthy American widow of about sixty years. The girl introduces herself as Lucy Carteret and says she is going to America to meet her father. Lucy's behavior puzzles Mrs. Beggarstaff, who is vastly surprised to find her possessing a magnificent necklace which was stolen from a museum collection some time previously, and passes the news on to her friend, Quoin, a private detective on board. Lucy, dressing in the dark in her stateroom, hears a mysterious conversation between two men just outside her window and recognizes one of them as Thaddeus Craven, her father. Amazed, she hurries up on deck, searches about and finds him making love to Mrs. Merrilees, wealthy, beautiful young widow and friend of Mrs. Beggarstaff, to whom Lucy has just confessed that she is really Lydia Craven.

about you, I shall probably marry him."

"I can't wish him greater good fortune," said Lydia quietly.

"You are a dear! And so beautiful—I'm jealous. Do you think, Tad, it is wise to have two blondes in one family? Don't answer, please. It's a riddle I must solve to my own satisfaction before I listen to you again. But—I'm serious—think it over."

With a transient tightening of her grasp on Lydia's shoulders, a pressure that conveyed a hint of friendliness, the woman turned away.

"No!" she insisted when Craven promptly ranged himself at her side. "Let me go for tonight, Tad. I'd prefer to be alone to think things out. Tomorrow, perhaps—"

Her smile flashed uncertainly toward Lydia as she disappeared round the shoulder of the deckhouse.

Craven delayed, however, barely long enough for a word, "Wait here—I sha'n't be long."

Lydia said nothing, but watched him go with eyes confused with pain, she who had found herself suddenly relegated from the status of a well-beloved child to that of a stumbling block in the path of her father's ambition, who could no longer doubt that he had planned to keep her existence secret until his marriage to this Mrs. Merrilees of the fabulous fortune should be a consummated fact.

She stood desolate amid a debris of illusions, who had never known a mother, and now had lost a father. Her eyes filled. He hadn't even kissed her after five years' separation! Resting arms upon the taffrail, she turned a forlorn face to the night-clad sea, her mood fraught with vast desolation.

A footfall sounded behind her, and she wheeled sharply about to join issue with her father. But it was Peter Traft who, briskly rounding the deckhouse, pulled up short at sight of that tense young person, Lydia, with her shoulders back, her chin up, and defiance a-glimmer in her eyes.

"I beg your pardon—" He peered eagerly to make certain; for the moon was just then thinly veiled in cloud. "It's Miss Carteret, isn't it?"

"Yes, Mr. Traft," said the girl quietly, relaxing. "Good evening."

He seemed puzzled by her manner, started to say something, reconsidered sharply, then ventured with engaging deference, "It's good to see you up and about again."

"It feels pretty good, thank you," she said, with a smile that gave him courage.

"Hope I didn't startle you, galumphing into your solitude without warning. Fact is, I was looking for old Tad Craven. We're needing a fourth. I don't suppose you know Craven, though?"

"Oh, yes, I've known Mr. Craven a long time."

"Really? He's a wonder, isn't he?" Traft exclaimed with enthusiasm. "Everybody's friend—not an enemy in the world. I don't believe there's a better-liked man in New York—our New York, that is."

"Your New York? You see, I've always lived in England, and have lots to learn about—home."

"Sheer snobbery on my part," Peter admitted cheerfully. "I meant the very small part of New York that we infest, whom my friend Mr. Martin likes to call the 'idle rich.' If he only knew!"

"But are you?"

"I'm afraid I'm idle enough; but as for riches, I'm poverty's poor relation."

"But what do you do?"

"Oh, I play a good hand at bridge, a fair racket at tennis, and am always on hand to fill in when somebody doesn't show up for dinner." The least trace of bitterness flavored this gratuitous account of himself, and the peroration was accompanied by an uneasy laugh. "In short, I'm what your English friends call a waster. But please don't think that I'm bidding for serious consideration."

"I understand," the girl said quietly. "I didn't mean to bore you, either."

"You didn't; but you made me think—and wonder."

"Why I'm content to be—so useless?"

She nodded, with her shadowy smile. A wry grin answered that. "You certainly take the curse off of it," Traft averred. "Candor like yours is good

for the egotism. The register of my self-esteem is now subnormal."

"I didn't mean to be unpleasant, Mr. Traft."

"Don't, please. Thus far you've done me good; but if you say more, betray the least real interest in me, I'll get chesty and need taking down again. And I'm forgetting Craven."

"He was here only a few minutes ago, and promised to come back before long."

"Then may I wait? You don't mind?"

"No," said the girl. "Indeed, I've something to tell you. You've praised him to my face, and that makes me want to tell you. I'm not Lucy Carteret, really, Mr. Traft. My name is Lydia Craven. Thaddeus Craven is my father."

"Oh, I say!" Peter stared incredulously. "Not Tad Craven's daughter! You're serious?"

"Quite."

He nodded. "I see you are. But—well—you have surprised me. I don't suppose a soul who knows him would believe Tad Craven anything but a convinced bachelor."

So—it was true—Craven had never mentioned his daughter to his friends! Staring seaward, Lydia worked her hands together gently; and, watching her closely, the man saw her face fugitively convulsed, and wisely he held silence.

"Mrs. Beggarstaff knows," the girl said presently, "and Mrs. Merrilees, and I dare say by tomorrow all his acquaintances on the ship will know. So, you see, I'm not violating his confidence. Why must he take the world into his confidence?"

Dumfounded, Peter stared; then remembered himself that woman nature was a singular thing, its mental processes defying masculine analysis. "You're right," he asserted meekly, after a pause. "Of course you're right! I've known Tad Craven a long time and pretty well, if he is a bit older, and I know he wouldn't do anything dishonorable or calculated to hurt anybody. He's not that kind."

Impulsively Lydia's hand went out to Peter's; but in the long instant that they sat hand in hand and eye to eye, each smiling a trace consciously, signals of distress showed in her waverling glance, and within his grasp the pressure of her firm young fingers lessened until reluctantly he released them.

"What is it?" Peter asked gently. "Only my presumptuousness—inflicting you with my troubles, demanding your sympathy, as if I'd any right whatever—"

"My your father's friend, at least, Miss Craven, and—such as I am—if you care to think of me as your friend too, I'll be very glad—not to say vainglorious."

She wouldn't have been a human girl had she lacked coquetry. A suspicion of mischief lightened the smile with which she regarded him, head judgmentally inclined a bit to one side. Mrs. Beggarstaff seems to think well of you—"

"She's kind-hearted—and easily amused."

"How you do continually cry yourself down! What is one to think?"

"When a man has the grace to speak humbly of himself, Miss Craven, listen with gratitude and amazement: truth is rare music in this world!"

"Yet you urge your friendship upon me."

"It is all I have to offer," he dropped for a moment his bantering tone: "poor currency, perhaps, but not counterfeit; lightweight, but without alloy."

Then suddenly she was grave again. "You are kind," she averred wistfully, "and—I need friends."

Do you believe that Thaddeus Craven is an honest man? And does it occur to you that he may try to get rid of Lydia in order to insure the success of his projects—whatever they may be?

TO BE CONTINUED



"You Are Kind," She Averred Wistfully, "and—I Need Friends."

WHY THE SPARROW THRIVES

Increase of the Pesky English Importation Is Quite Easily Accounted For.

Mr. F. L. Burns, the bird census man, has recently been taking a census of English sparrows, and his estimate is that there are 165,000 millions of this interesting bird in this country. We presume that this is so, although we have no accurate means of checking off his figures, except that, judging by the sound just outside of our window in the morning we should think that possibly Mr. Burns had underestimated the total.

The English sparrow has thus increased, from the time he first came over to this country, much more than we have. We are only about 113 millions, and he is 165,000. How can this increase be accounted for?

Quite easily. Since he came he has attended strictly to business. He has not had time to pass any eugenic laws; he has had no medical profession; he is not interested in politics, serums or motorcars. He is not a high-brow. He lives in the fresh air most of the time and does all of his own housework. He supports no hospitals, has developed no literature, marriage and unmarried when he feels like it and, in fact, does as he d— pleases. Why should he not increase? For being what an American citizen ought to be, he has the best of us beaten to a frazzle.—Life.

Smaller Farms in California.

In California the farms originally were the old "Spanish land grants," usually of enormous extent. In a fashion, these great holdings—validated by the American government when California came into the Union—have remained as ranches. Today the people are learning that both for taxation and production, small farms are better, and a movement to bring this about is under way.—Indianapolis News.

Easily Changed.

"Is your portable garage satisfactory?"

"Oh, yes," replied the suburban dweller, "it suits me very well and I'm glad for my wife's sake that I bought the portable kind."

"Why so?"

"She's had it moved half a dozen times because she didn't think it looked well from the street."

Proving the Boast.

"Didn't you tell me your dog could lick anything in sight?"

"Sure I did. He's licking the sugar off the top of your cake now."

Not a Bite of Breakfast Until You Drink Water

Says a glass of hot water and phosphate prevents illness and keeps us fit.

Just as coal, when it burns, leaves behind a certain amount of incombustible material in the form of ashes, so the food and drink taken day after day leaves in the alimentary canal a certain amount of indigestible material, which if not completely eliminated from the system each day, becomes food for the millions of bacteria which infest the bowels. From this mass of left-over waste, toxins and ptomaine-like poisons are formed and sucked into the blood.

Men and women who can't get feeling right must begin to take inside baths. Before eating breakfast each morning drink a glass of real hot water with a teaspoonful of limestone phosphate in it to wash out of the thirty feet of bowels the previous day's accumulation of poisons and toxins and to keep the entire alimentary canal clean, pure and fresh.

Those who are subject to sick headache, colds, biliousness, constipation, others who wake up with bad taste, foul breath, backache, rheumatic stiffness, or have a sour, gassy stomach after meals, are urged to get a quarter pound of limestone phosphate from the drug store, and begin practicing internal sanitation. This will cost very little, but is sufficient to make anyone an enthusiast on the subject.

Remember inside bathing is more important than outside bathing, because the skin pores do not absorb impurities into the blood, causing poor health, while the bowel pores do. Just as soap and hot water cleanses, sweetens and freshens the skin, so hot water and limestone phosphate act on the stomach, liver, kidneys and bowels.

In The Bill.

"I'm afraid," said the junior member of the law firm, "that we are causing our client unnecessary trouble."

"Oh, that's all right," rejoined the senior member; "we'll charge him for it."—Boston Transcript.

Hard Prescription.

Doctor—My dear sir, you must give your wife some considerable change at once.

Husband—Can't do it, doctor; you've got it all.—Baltimore American.

Send 10c to Dr. Pierce Invalids' Hotel, Buffalo, for large trial package of "Anuric" for kidneys, cures backache.

Hotel Clerk—Do you want a room with a bath?

Uncle Hiram—Waal, no-o, I don't calculate I'll be here Saturday night.—Princeton Tiger.

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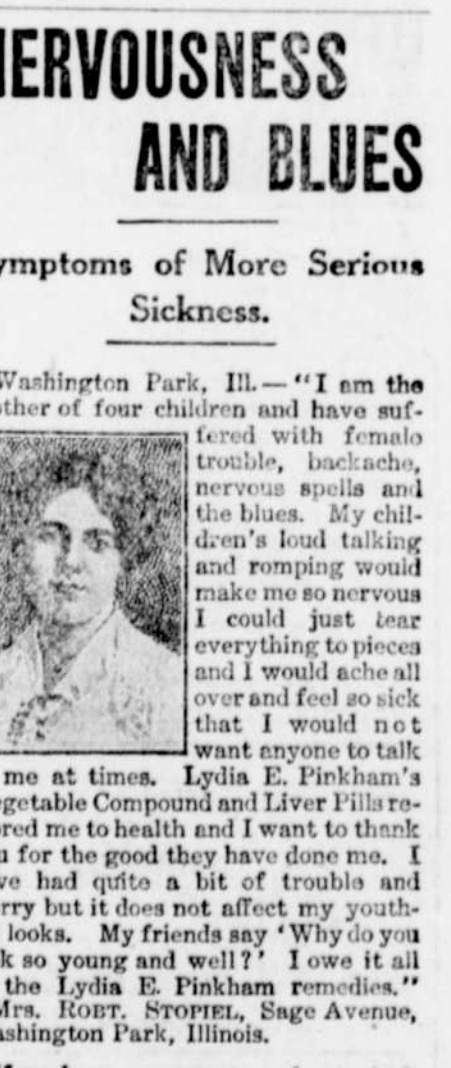
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NERVOUSNESS AND BLUES

Symptoms of More Serious Sickness.

Washington Park, Ill.—"I am the mother of four children and have suffered with female trouble, backache, nervous spells and the blues. My children's loud talking and romping would make me so nervous I could just tear everything to pieces and I would ache all over and feel so sick that I would not want anyone to talk to me at times. Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and Liver Pills restored me to health and I want to thank you for the good they have done me. I have had quite a bit of trouble and worry but it does not affect my youthful looks. My friends say 'Why do you look so young and well?' I owe it all to the Lydia E. Pinkham remedies."—Mrs. ROBT. STOPPEL, Sage Avenue, Washington Park, Illinois.



If you have any symptom about which you would like to know write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Mass., for helpful advice given free of charge.