Love and Pity.

From Good Stories.

CHAPTER II.

And Elsie was happy, with a wild, tumultuous happiness, to accept this shadow of love from the man she worshipped.

When Bruce had carried her up stairs, with the light of returning life and happiness in her wasted face, he found that a letter had just come to him from Tom Dunlop, his friend in Washington.

They found him staring blankly at the sheet an hour afterwards. He did not appear to have moved his position since the moment that he had opened the letter. The closely written sheet conveyed nothing to his mind. Only one sentence stood out as if stamped in letters of fire, branding themselves into his consciousness.

"What a lucky thing that Clarissa Wayne had to postpone her visit. Of course you have heard of the total loss of the vessel in which she was to have sailed? Her name was even in some of the lists of drowned, because she had taken passage in it."

When Bruce began to move again like a living man, he took the letter and held it in the blaze of the fire, watching the name of Clarissa Wayne till it was burnt away.

"Thank heaven!" he said, to himself, quietly and thankfully, when the name disappeared, "that I never told her of my love."

THE END.

CUPID ON STRIKE.

From Good Stories.

CHAPTER I.

Monksrest was one of those rarely to be found places in the British dominions where the young gentlemen outnumber the young ladies; a fact not known, or, without doubt the state of things would have been speedily altered—Cela va sans dire.

As it was, the gentlemen preponderated, and reversing the order of things generally, the minority ruled supreme. They certainly did, and no mistake. The lives they led the opposite sex was just downright cruel; that at least, was the opinion of the Monksrest's lords of the creation, though in the present case the latter title sounded a misnomer.

To make matters worse, they were all charmingly nice girls sure to be fallen in love with. Certainly, when there was almost a man and a half to each.

But somehow, possibly carried in the air like germs and microbes, advanced opinions had got into Monksrest. The girls scored every victory of their sex at Girton or Newnham, talked of woman's mental equality with man, declared it was derogatory, humiliating on their part to regard marriage as the one aim of woman—and raised, indeed, the standard of independence; pince nez or on field azure, and with the perversity and malicious fun of the sex, led their admirers a life of perplexity and doubt.

The more earnest their devotion, the further they appeared from attaining their purpose; a circumstance which, piquing their pride, made them the more impatient to do so.

"Look here, you fellows," remarked Hugh Sanders, addressing a select circle of confreres assembled one afternoon in the smoking-room of the club, "things can't continue in this fashion. It's derogatory to us, to our manhood. It's reversing the whole order of things."

"By Jove!" put in a fair moustached six-footer, a lawn tennis champion, "I wonder it dosen't disarrange the centre of gravity of the entire solar system, and pitch us all into chaos."

"Why, there hasn't been a marriage in Monksrest for much over a year," ejaculated another.

"And not likely to be for a couple more," said a fourth, lying on a couch in a position of ease, if not elegance.

"It's my firm opinion," propounded Archie Boyne, the L. T. champion, "that some of the girls are as vexed as we. I make any bet that Tommie Greville is desperately in love with me, and I am, yes, over head and ears with her. But if I dare approach the subject, up goes her pretty, provoking little nose, and she says, 'we women are not tired of our liberty yet. I tell you Kate says you men give all your devotion before marriage, after, the woman becomes but a useful household chattel. I think Kate is right.'"

"Kate Greville is the head and front of all this offending," broke in Hugh Sanders, pulling himself a little more erect. "She leads the entire show."

"She and her sister Tommie," echoed Archie Boyne. "I know Kate cares for Sanders, because Tommie as good as confessed it."

"Well, old boy, I haven't said so before," remarked Hugh, "but Kate nearly let the cat out of the bag that Tommie wouldn't follow in her wake, if she didn't feel so sure of you."

"That's where it is. They are so sure of us, they can just tease and do what they like. Take my word, when women are men's equals, the verb 'to tease' will become obsolete."

"I wish to goodness," cried the youngest member, "a dozen or so of pretty girls would settle, like silver winged butterflies, in Monksrest. That would bring them to their senses."

"Jealousy, no doubt, would teach them compassion upon us, for compassion, like charity, generally begins at home."

"I wish Abbeyford would let," said the L. T. champion.

"To a whole family of nice girls, eh?"

"By Jove, that reminds me. As I came past it to-day I don't recollect seeing the board up," said the young member. "Suppose it is let?"

"The letting does not necessitate the occupier will have daughters," grumbled Archie Boyne, "or pretty ones. Sanders, a penny for your thoughts, though I fear even then it's an investment that will return but a wretched dividend."

"Don't be so sure of that my boy," was the response.

"Have you an idea? No?"

"Yes. And one," added Hugh Sanders, rising up, and showing for the first time what a very good-looking fellow he was. "I intend carrying out. You fellows can do what you please."

"What is it?" broke in a chorus of voices.

"I'm with you, Hugh, whatever it is," said Archie Boyne.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Heart Failure.

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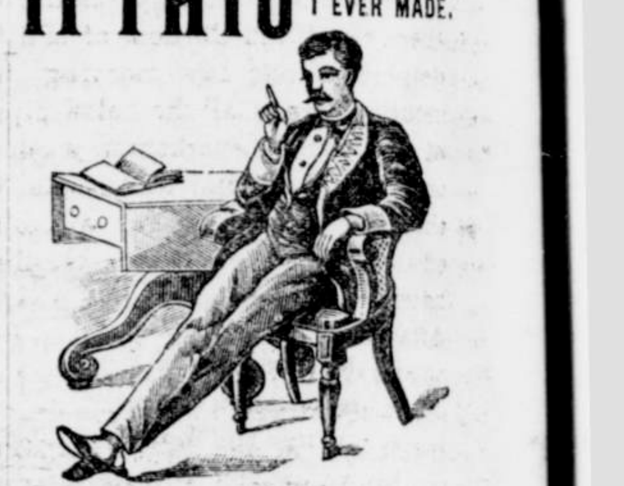

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