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reached the peak of his cap. He watched the automobile disappear at a most unepiscopal pace down the back drive.

CHAPTER XXVII

"We won't scold her any more today, Tony dear," said Lady Seroope, with the faintest note of pleading in her voice, "will we? This extremely naughty child. She has had a rough time."

"Yes," said Lord Seroope, heavily, "that is what I feel, Delicia. We—must temper justice with mercy."

"Almece sat between her two stern parents on the lounge in the library at Seroope Towers. A night's rest had not restored the color to her cheeks. Her eyelashes were slightly wet. She smiled faintly."

"You dear people," said Almece, stealing a hand into her mother's, while the other clasped the long white fingers of her sire, "you haven't scolded me at all. What you ought to do is to beat me. It's no use my trying to tell you how sorry I am. There aren't any words for it."

"Almece dear," said Lady Seroope, stroking her hair, "try and look a little less tragic. This isn't like you. It's all over now."

"Is it?" said Almece wistfully. "I am glad, mummy. I've told you both the story, all over and over. I've tried to make it clear. It's a fearful tangle. I know. You have both been so sweet about it."

"It is finished," said Lord Seroope gently. "I am so devoutly thankful, Almece, to find you have come safely through the dangers which beset you at Jervaulx—what might have happened appals me to think of—that it is impossible to be harsh. And—and it distresses me to see you looking so unhappy. For the first time in your life, I can never remember to have seen you in such a mood."

Almece stood up. "The thing I want to know," she said, pitiously, "is, what about Billy? You won't answer me. Mummy, you, I know, will understand. If I lose Billy, I don't care whether I live or die. That is all."

Lord Seroope passed his fingers through his snowy hair. Almece's mother put an arm round her and led her out of the room.

"Go upstairs and rest for awhile, baby," said Lady Seroope, gently. "You are very tired, and there has been talk enough."

In a few minutes Lady Seroope returned. "This," said her husband, sadly, "is the most distressing aspect of the whole affair."

"I had a long talk with Almece this morning," said Lady Seroope, "and it isn't a thing we can dismiss lightly, Tony. I know the child better than you do." She reflected, "This Billy—this Mr. Spencer appears to be rather remarkable."

"If we can trust Almece's account," said Lord Seroope gloomily. "But—a young man picked up by the wayside," he added with a bewildered air. "My dear Delicia—"

"He is not English, is he?" "American, I understand. It seems curious," said Lord Seroope, pensively, "but I believe he is the first American I have met."

ington; there was also something remarkably likable about him. He appeared to have very strongly the Spencer gift of attraction.

"Will you be seated, Mr. Rivington. I will give my attention to what you have to say."

Mr. Rivington twinkled again, then became grave. "I should have thought," he said, subsiding gently into an old bergere chair, "that it was enough for anyone to meet William to size him up. However, he is the son of my only sister, and of the late Lindon Spencer of Denver. Who was, on the whole, the finest man I ever knew in the course of a life that has been described as varied and comprehensive. And Billy is as good as his father. I wish you had met Lindon."

"I appreciate what you say," replied Lord Seroope. "I do not gather, however, what Mr. Spencer's occupation is."

"He has developed himself as a motor engineer."

"I know so little of mechanics—" began Lord Seroope. "Mechanics," said Mr. Rivington, smiling, "are, of course, a matter of taste. They have an interest for me."

A light dawned suddenly on Lord Seroope. "Is it possible," he said, "that you are the author as it were—of the Rivington motorcar?"

"That among other things," said the visitor pleasantly. Lord Seroope looked bewildered. It was not possible, however ignorant one might be of mechanics, not to have heard of the Rivington automobile. Nor, however casual a reader of the secular press, could one avoid the echoes of the fame of that solid manipulator of millions, that human comet of progress, Hiram B. Rivington. The name on the pasteboard had not till now connected with Lord Seroope's mind.

He contemplated Mr. Rivington with wondering interest. "Mr. Spencer," he said, "is indeed fortunate in his uncle."

"I would rather say that I'm fortunate in my nephew," replied Rivington. "Billy doesn't need an uncle. In my country we haven't much use for a young man whose only assets are his relatives. Billy has made good by his own efforts, sir. He is the inventor and proprietor of the Flying Sphinx motorcycle."

"An experimental machine, I understand. I hope, for Mr. Spencer's sake," said Lord Seroope, politely, "that it may prove—ah—successful."

Mr. Rivington smiled. "The present model of the Sphinx, though a big advance on the others, is just the experimental stage. Of the first and second models, a quarter of a million have been sold in the States. The plant for the latest, on mass production, is now being laid down. In the company that's being floated I hold a third control—and I'm very thankful that I have. Billy stands to clean up three hundred and fifty thousand dollars on the deal—hard earnings."

"I have not a very good head for figures, Mr. Rivington. Could you translate that into terms of English currency?"

"About seventy thousand pounds." Lord Seroope sat perfectly silent, gazing at Mr. Rivington. "But the youngster himself is what I'm concerned with—not what he's got. However," continued Rivington, looking out of the window as a faint whirring noise was heard below, "I see he's arrived, so I needn't say any more. But I'm very glad to have had this chance to speak for him. Billy isn't good at praising himself."

Billy's card came up, and Billy shortly followed it. He looked at Lord Seroope diffidently. "I shall be glad to have a few words with you, Mr. Spencer," said Lord Seroope with his most amiable air. "There was a staccato quality about our first meeting, that rendered a mutual understanding difficult."

"The first duty of an uncle," said Mr. Rivington, "is to realize when he's in the way. With your permission, Lord Seroope, I'll go below."

He retired, leaving the two together, and drifted into the sunny morning room overlooking the lawn. In a few moments Lady Seroope came in. Mr. Rivington made himself known to her. In a very short time Lady Seroope had skillfully elicited from Mr. Rivington all the information he had given to her husband, and a good deal more. She bubbled with amusement and sympathy as the enthusiastic Rivington expounded Billy's qualities.

"I had a few words with your nephew, Mr. Rivington, before he went upstairs," she said laughing, "a most magnetic and alluring young man. I tremble to think what his influence may be on my simple-minded husband."

sumed their conversation and drifted out through the windows to the lawn near the entrance, where stood the Sphinx. The original Sphinx, with pillow-seat de luxe attached.

Ten minutes later Lord Seroope, with a countenance that was positively animated, came toward them across the grass.

"My dear Delicia!" he exclaimed. "I have no objection to saying, even before Mr. Rivington, that William Spencer is a most remarkable young man. Not only has his conduct all through the affair been admirable, but his character appeals to me very greatly. There is more innate honesty, more of the very essence of religion, in that young fellow, than I have yet encountered in anyone of his age."

Mr. Rivington, coloring still more deeply, looked at his lordship with appreciative eyes. Lady Seroope smiled.

"Tony, dear, I have seldom heard you express yourself so warmly; and as a judge of character you have taught me to regard you as infallible. Certainly, from the rather brief interview I had with Mr. Spencer I formed a similar opinion. But do I understand that you have—?"

"Hem," said Lord Seroope, with some slight confusion, "we appear to be moving rather—ah—rapidly. I feel—"

He broke off, apparently at a loss, as Billy and Almece came towards them across the lawn, side by side. There was something Olympian in Billy's aspect and the splendor of his smile. Almece was radiant and glowing. Lord Seroope scarcely recognized in her the pallid and distressed young woman who had returned from Jervaulx. It was as though an errand descendant of the gods had restored his daughter to him.

"Dad!" said Almece. "You've been splendid, dear. And I want to say all the nice things to Billy's uncle, that I haven't had a chance to, yet."

"I hope," said Lord Seroope, wrinkling his brow in perplexity as he and his wife stood in the library some hours later, after the departure of the visitors, "that I have not been too precipitate. Have I committed myself too far, Delicia?"

Lady Seroope pushed her husband gently into an armchair and perched herself on the arm of it. "If you mean, dear," she said, stroking his hair, "did you definitely accept Billy Spencer as a prospective son-in-law—you certainly did. And a very good thing, too."

"Did I really?" murmured her husband. "I hardly recognize myself today, Delicia. It seems very precipitate. There are so many things to consider—to verify—"

"I haven't the slightest doubt that will be all right. Two of the soundest people I ever came across."

"But what—"

"What I like about Americans," said Lady Seroope, "when a proposition—that's what they call it. I think—when a proposition is clear, they don't waste time. I like people who don't waste time—it makes life so much less complicated."

"I am certainly conscious of a great access of happiness."

"Yes. Because Almece is so happy. And Almece's happiness is a very infectious quality. Still, at the moment, Tony dear, you are looking a little worried and anxious. Why?"

"The one rift in the lute," said Lord Seroope regretfully, "is this break with the Jervaulx household. Family quarrels are always petty and undignified. I fear the affair has alienated Erythea. I hope I did not convey the impression that I disapproved of Alexander's marriage. Really it is an excellent thing for Georgina, and he will have a most worthy wife."

"I," said Lady Seroope, kissing the top of his head, "will make the peace with Erythea. Although she disapproves of my moral character, I am the only person she really listens to. I will go over tomorrow and pave the way. I've already talked that over with Mr. William Spencer," she added, twinkling, "and he will accompany me. I am persuaded he has great influence there. I suggest a double wedding here at Seroope. It will suit Erythea much better than at Jervaulx—as things are! Have no fear, Tony. It shall be arranged."

after the wedding breakfast, the carriage with the two fat horses will be waiting for you; it will convey you to the train, and then away for—where did you say you were going?"

"Closeminster," said Georgina rapturously. "Alexander is to be inducted as assistant to the prebendary in six weeks time. I was so glad when he suggested we should go at once to the place where later his duties will lie. There, under the shadow of that glorious old cathedral—"

"You'll spend an idyllic, sedate honeymoon," said Almece. "How perfect, dear. Aren't you grateful to me? If



"Isn't Billy Lucky?"

It hadn't been for my stunt, you might have missed a whole life's happiness. But Billy and I—"

"You're going through to Harwich on the car, aren't you, dear? Alexander told me—"

"There's Aunt Erythea!" said Almece. "I'm glad mummy induced the old terror to come."

"Who is that with her?" "My new uncle-in-law, Mr. Rivington. He's a peach! Aunt seems to be getting on with him splendidly. Look at her back! Who's the funny little man that seems half asleep, over by the cedar?"

"My Uncle Joseph," murmured Georgina. "He didn't realize till after we left Jervaulx, that I ought to have been at home with him all the time. I don't think he really grasps the position, even now."

"I don't wonder. These professors never do grasp anything," chuckled Almece. "We've beaten Diana and Bertrand. They're to be married in London next week."

"Isn't all this delightful to think of," sighed Georgina, "after the horrors we went through! Did you ever hear what became of that woman you

told me about—the wife of the burglar?"

"Never heard a word more of her; I think she got away."

"It all seems like some fearful nightmare now," shuddered her cousin. "As the wife of a future bishop you'll wipe it off your memory, Georgie, dear. But I never shall! The greatest time I ever had in my life The Joy of Living, Georgie!" Lady Seroope suddenly entered the room.

"Children," she said gravely, "in five minutes we start for the chapel."

Almece bolted into her room, followed by her mother. "Do you see 'em yet?" whispered an apple-cheeked woman eagerly. The red poppies in her bonnet quivered as she raised herself on tiptoe. The staff of the Seroope Towers household was grouped on either side of the great porch, behind the assembled guests.

The apple-cheeked woman was Mrs. Sunning of Ivy cottage, Stanhoe; the only envoy from the Jervaulx district. Her eyes sparkled, she clutched grimly to her breast a large bag of rice, a barbarous custom still permitted at Seroope.

Almece and Billy suddenly emerged from the porch at speed, followed closely by Alexander and Georgina, amid cheers, flower-petals and confetti. Mrs. Sunning, with a shrill cry, opened her batteries.

Alexander and Georgina, swerving to the right, climbed into the waiting carriage. Billy, escaping through the shower of rice, shot past to the car. "Beat it!" he cried to the chauffeur, and caught Almece by the hand. Together they scudded on foot down the drive.

The guests paused in astonishment. Lady Seroope, her eyelashes sparkling, laughed gently. Aunt Erythea jutted an inquiring nose round the pillars.

The bride and bridegroom, having made good speed for two hundred yards, turned into a clump of laurels that efficiently hid the Flying Sphinx. Billy snatched up a blue cloak that lay athwart the saddle.

"On with it!" cried Billy, glowing. In a twinkling Almece donned the wrap; as Billy bestrode the saddle she threw herself upon the pillion and her arms about his waist.

"Ready—partner!" Billy said. "Let her rip!" panted Almece joyously. The Sphinx hummed swiftly along the park road and swung left onto the highway.

"Hold tight!" The Sphinx breasted the long rise at sixty miles an hour. The wind screamed past them.

Almece laughed aloud. Leaning forward from the pillion, she pressed the smallest, soft round kiss on the back of Billy's neck, as they disappeared in a cloud of sunlit dust.

[THE END]

BOARDMAN

Mrs. Beck is visiting this week in The Dalles with her daughter and new grandson.

Ray, Glen and Ernest Brown and Mrs. Cahoon motored to Walla Walla Saturday to visit their father who is suffering from injuries caused by a horse kicking him.

F. G. McMurray, of Yakima, Wash., was guest at the Highway Inn Friday and Saturday of last week. Mr. McMurray is an old friend of the Warner family.

Mrs. Spring, accompanied by her daughter-in-law and grand-daughter motored up from Portland on Monday of last week. Mrs. Spring remained for an indefinite visit with her daughter, Mrs. Nick Falor.

Business visitors in town last week were Jacob Marty and son of Portland. Mr. Marty was here in the interest of establishing a cheese factory, and will return later to make more definite arrangements.

The Oscar Beck family moved into the M. B. Sigas residence last Wednesday.

Mrs. Ray Brown and daughter, Katherine, visited in Walla Walla a few days last week.

Christian Endeavor on Saturday evening was greatly enjoyed by the large crowd present. Visits were made to Holland, Japan, Africa, Mexico typical of each country were served. After each one had found his or her way back to the auditorium a fine program was rendered.

The Oriental dance by the sheik's harem was most effective and the participants deserve praise for their interpretation. No less pleasing was the Rose drill and the several vocal and instrumental numbers. We have cause to be proud of the leaders of such an entertainment for they have discovered hitherto unknown talent in our community.

In honor of their fifth wedding anniversary was the dinner given by Mr. and Mrs. A. T. Herein Sunday. The following guests were present: Mr. and Mrs. Nick Falor, Mrs. Spring and Mr. and Mrs. Jack Gorham.

The dance given as a benefit to the Heppner ball team Saturday night was well attended, well conducted and a big success, netting the team about \$45.

Advertisement for Phelps Grocery Company. Text includes: "The End of a Perfect Meal", "Never overlook the prime requisite to perfect peace of mind and calmness of thought—by omitting the after-dinner coffee.", "The Cup That Calms and Pacifies", "Don't unnecessarily take the joy from a perfect meal for most red-blooded Americans. We keep the best—", "Folgers - Golden West Schillings - Wason", "Phelps Grocery Company".