

BRAVEST HEARTS.

"None but idiots and lovers delight in constant repetition of the same thing." A tiny imp of curious mien, Arrayed in crimson slashed with green. Came dancing o'er the hill at morn, To where I wandered all forlorn.

And though I knew him—knew him well, I laughed to hear each tiny bell That tinkled on his tassled cap, And fondled him upon my lap.

Oh, folly wise! oh, folly sweet! A thousand times to me repeat, The message that she sends by you; A thousand times it will be new. —Arthur Henry.

MAN OF ACTION.

John Desmond awoke at 3 in the morning and tossed about in his bed. Within his a fierce struggle between the brain and the heart was in progress. He employed every scheme that he was aware of to court or compel sleep without success.

Suddenly the truth dawned upon him, like a flood of soft warm light. He was in love. The love of his life, compared with which all his past loves were mere idle fancies. The battle was over. John Desmond, thirty, lawyer, athlete, man of the world, was conquered.

Being a man of action, Desmond no sooner acknowledged to himself that he really was in love with Kate Evanston than he resolved to marry her at the earliest possible day.

Kate Evanston was seated at the piano in the drawing room of Mrs. Salisbury's beautiful home, where she was employed as companion to the lady of the house. The rich light of a middle May evening pervaded the place.

Her fingers were softly bringing back memories of "Ermeline" and other Casino delights as her thoughts traveled back over the past.

After a time she arose from the piano and picked up a number of photographs of John Desmond's friends that lay upon the table, seated herself upon a sofa with her back to the door and proceeded to contemplate each of them.

Desmond returning home early that evening let himself into his aunt's house very quietly with his latchkey, hoping to catch Kate at the piano in the middle of one of the sweet airs he had grown of late to love.

He approached the great drawing room doors and took a peep through the crevice which separated them. In an instant his heart seemed to cease beating with almost electrical suddenness, for the sight which his maddened brain encountered filled him with rage and jealousy.

With a heart of ice and lead he was about to turn to leave the house as noiselessly as he had entered when the sinking sun shot a ray of light through the room and revealed something which made the blood course faster through his body than it had ever coursed before. Then he turned away, and, closing the door very softly behind him, descended the front steps of the house and passed down the street.

Mrs. Salisbury and Miss Evanston were at their dessert that evening before John appeared. He had left word in the morning that he might be detained until a late hour, and so they had not waited dinner for him.

Mrs. Salisbury noticed that her nephew seemed to be laboring under considerable restraint and bluntly asked him the cause; but the good body's solicitude met only with evasion and she presently gave up all attempts to draw anything from him and retired early to her room, leaving John and Kate together.

No sooner had Mrs. Salisbury quitted the dining room than Desmond turned to Kate and said: "Miss Evanston, I'm going to ask you to do me a favor."

Kate looked at him inquisitively. "I want you," he continued, "to accompany me on a bit of a shopping tour. I've got a peculiar mission to execute and I want your help. Will you do it?"

"To be sure. I shall be most happy, Mr. Desmond," Kate answered, "and if you'll excuse me I'll be prepared in a very few minutes."

The streets were dark by the time they left the house for the shopping quarter of the town, and Kate told Desmond's arm. They had walked for a few moments in silence when Desmond said:

"I want to explain this errand to you and no doubt you, too, will think it peculiar. As a matter of fact, I've been commissioned to arrange for the wedding of two very dear friends."

"Two couples," Kate asked, quietly. "Why, not only one couple, a man and a woman," John answered, somewhat puzzled at the question.

"And was she a very dear friend?" the girl on his arm asked. "Yes, the dearest friend I ever had among women; in fact, the only woman I ever really cared for."

In a moment John was half sorry, half glad he had said this, for he felt the little hand of his companion withdraw until only the tips of the fingers rested upon his arm. "That's a good sign," he mused.

For a moment nothing was said; then Miss Evanston broke the silence. "And didn't she care for you?" she asked.

"Yes," he replied. "She loved me and she still loves me." "Presently Kate's curiosity got the better of her judgment and she asked: "And the man—you say he's a dear friend, too?"

"Yes," replied Desmond, "the only one I ever trusted absolutely."

"And does he know that you love her and that she loves you?"

"He knows absolutely that I love her and he is mighty certain that she loves me."

Kate was now thoroughly mystified. "And which of them asked you to arrange for the wedding?" she asked.

"He did," replied John curtly. Kate could only say: "Well, this mission, as you term it, certainly is inexplicable."

"Oh, no, it isn't," said John. "It will all seem quite simple when the explanation comes, if any is needed. In fact, I think it will explain itself. Just you keep those eyes of your open and you'll see it all very shortly."

Presently John touched his companion slightly on the arm and drew her into the shop of the village jeweler.

"Now, I want you to pick out the kind of a wedding ring you think the bride should get," he said.

When he had paid and pocketed the plain gold band they resumed their walk down the village street and stopped at the local office of a great metropolitan daily and Desmond, leaving Kate at one side, went up to the desk and wrote out a brief notice and was about leaving with her when the advertising clerk called after him and said that he had not told him when he wished the notice inserted.

"Why, to-morrow, of course," Desmond replied. "Now, then," said John, as they turned into a side street, "we'll go and make arrangements for the person to tie the knot and then we will have finished our mission."

They turned into the gravel walk leading to the Rev. John Barclay's house and had just reached the vine-clad porch when Desmond stopped suddenly, as if he had but that moment thought of an important thing and, turning to Kate, who was standing close to him, almost whispered: "I want to ask another favor of you."

bending his face close to hers, "I want you to let me kiss you before we go in there." And it was done in a moment.

Before Kate could recover from the perfect amazement into which John's action had thrown her he had dexterously drawn her arm through his and, leading her up the steps, had rung the door bell.

The Rev. Mr. Barclay answered the metallic summons in person and gave John a most cordial welcome, which surprised Kate, for she had supposed John an agnostic and didn't think that he numbered members of the clergy among his intimates.

"Mr. Barclay," began John, when they had entered the snug parlor, where the good gentleman's wife was seated doing some fancy work, "I've come over to-night to arrange for a wedding and I want you to perform the ceremony."

"When is it to come off?" asked the clergyman, consulting a small date book which he drew from his waistcoat pocket.

"Immediately," said John. The Rev. Mr. Barclay cast a quiet glance at Kate.

"And who are the parties to be married?" he asked. John took Kate's hand in his own and answered firmly: "This lady, Miss Kate Evanston, and myself."

Kate could not believe her ears. She stared at John in amazement. He hastened to reassure her.

"You're excited, my dear Kate. Calm yourself." The whole truth had come to her. The explanation of the mysterious errand was solved. She looked into John's eyes and read love unspeakable and her own answered in kind. She went through the ceremony like one in a dream and feared it was a dream and hoped if it were she would never awaken.

The parson tied the knot and John slipped the ring which Kate had selected upon her finger and then the parson insisted upon his obligatory perquisite, and then they started for home, both supremely happy. All the way back Kate clung strongly to John's arm.

Before they had quitted the Barclay garden Kate said to Desmond: "Why did you want to kiss me before we went into the house?"

"I'll tell you," returned John, promptly. "You see, Barclay and I were classmates. I know his propensities, and I didn't want to suffer the reflection in after years that he had kissed my wife first."

When the happy couple reached their home Kate said:

"You are the most audacious man I ever met. You bought the ring and even inserted a notice of our marriage before you asked me to marry you. Tell me why you did not ask me first?"

How did you know I'd not refuse to marry you and make a scene in the minister's house?"

And Desmond answered: "When a man of action sees a girl kissing his picture he knows that the time for action, not words, has come, and he carries her off to the parson."

Kate blushed furiously, and pressing her face against his shoulder, whispered ever so low: "I love an audacious man." —Chicago Daily News.

Stomach to Fit.

During Sherman's "March to the Sea" rations were often scarce. One day an officer found a soldier eating a persimmon, and said to him, "Don't eat that, it's not good for you."

"I'm not eatin' it because it's good," he said. "I'm tryin' to pucker up my stomach so as to fit the rations under Billy Sherman's a-given us."

The Pug—"Say, but dat new feller don't do a thing but put 'em to sleep quick."

The Mug—"No wonder! He wuz a preacher before he took to prize fightin'."

A military ball—A cannon ball.

RECESSIONAL.

God of our fathers, known of old, Lord of our far-flung battle line— Beneath whose awful hand we hold Dominion over palm and pine— Lord God of hosts, be with us yet, Lest we forget—lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies— The captains and the kings depart: Still stands thine ancient sacrifice, An humble and a contrite heart. Lord God of hosts, be with us yet, Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away— On dune and headline sinks the fire— Lo, all our pomp of yesterday Is one with Nineveh and Tyre! Judge of the nations, spare us yet, Lest we forget—lest we forget!

If drunk with sight of power we loose Wild tongues that have not been tame— Such boasting as the gentles use Or lesser breeds without the law— Lord God of hosts, be with us yet, Lest we forget—lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust In reeking tube and iron shard, All valient dust that builds on dust, And swording, calls not thee to guard— For frantic boast and foolish word, Thy mercy on Thy people, Lord: Amen.

—Rudyard Kipling.

A SPLENDID ANIMAL.

"A splendid animal!" Such was Sir Lovell's comment as he surveyed his mount from the steps of the fine old castle which had so lately fallen to him. The agent, Mr. Fordyce of Bromfield, looked pleased. It is an awkward thing to buy horses for another—that other being the man you are particularly anxious to please, and at the moment of purchase Mr. Fordyce had been trying to "kill two birds with one stone"—to serve Sir Lovell and help Miss Chester, of Chester Court, whom he had known from childhood, and for whom he felt genuinely sorry.

So now, when he owned that the horse before him was "a splendid animal," Mr. Fordyce felt quite a thrill of encouragement as he rubbed his hands, and did his best not to look elated.

"Saddle him and bring him around," was the brief command. "I shall ride down the lane, and try his paces for myself."

"He will be quite up to your weight," said Mr. Fordyce, "and he's a grand hunter."

"Oh, no doubt," said Sir Lovell, who was already thinking of something else. "And now, about those mortgages, Fordyce—what were you telling me about Chester Court?"

"I was advising you to deal gently with the owners. They were much attached to Sir James, and he to them. He would not have done anything harsh for the world."

"A man must do the best he can for himself," he replied, lightly. Then the footman came up and said the horse was at the door, and Sir Lovell, taking up his hat and whip, went quickly off for a ride, nodding carelessly to the agent as he passed out.

"I shall not let him do this without a sharp protest," said the older man, as he watched him depart. "Upon my word, Cyrus carries him well, and he has a magnificent seat. The man looks as if carved out of steel, and the horse knows he has his mate to carry. But Cyrus has a will of his own, too, and I did not warn Sir Lovell of that. I wish I had, now."

Wishes were of no use, however. Sir Lovell and Cyrus were out of sight, and Mr. Fordyce had no course left but to wade through accounts until the hour for lunch, for he was staying at the hall as a guest during the tedious process of disentanglement. He took a parcel of private deeds from a box, and sat down in a large armchair by the fire.

After an hour's grinding at yellow parchments, Sir Lovell and the gong for luncheon both disturbed him together. Nor was he sorry.

"Where did you say you bought that horse?" asked Sir Lovell again, as they sat opposite one another in the stately dining room. "I never was better pleased with anything in my life."

"It was the property of some people in this district, and he had to go," said the agent, shortly, feeling a great dislike to naming the Chesters in connection with Cyrus.

Sir Lovell was, however, musing over the ride; he drummed on the table with his fingers, and then, rising, said with a sigh: "Ah, well, their loss is my gain," leaving Mr. Fordyce to add under his breath a very fervent "Poor souls!"

That the new owner continued to appreciate Cyrus was evident from the fact that every day saw him sally forth for a good long canter over the hills, master and horse alike worthy of one another.

"I only hope he'll have sense to keep the poor beast's head away from the Court," said Mr. Fordyce to himself. "If he once scents the old stables I am sure he'll make for them like a shot."

But, as Sir Lovell had not the remotest idea in which direction the Court lay, the very catastrophe foreseen by Mr. Fordyce occurred—exactly as the agent had prophesied.

Sir Lovell had ridden toward Northope, and the Court lay midway between the hall and that village. Cyrus went along easily; gradually his pace quickened; he began to prance, as if some thing pleasing were in store. Once or twice he lifted his head with a lingering scrutiny, as of familiar objects, and whinnied slightly, he stopped

short almost at the feet of a young lady, who turned at that moment out at a gate at the end of an avenue.

The sudden arrest, the quick movement of the horse toward her, made the girl glance up, and a smile played around her lips as her eyes gleamed with tears.

Sir Lovell could not compel obedience. The horse, usually so tractable, seemed transformed. He meant to have his own way, and he had it.

Surprised, bewildered and moved out of herself, the girl passed her hand over Cyrus' mane, and he rubbed his head on her shoulder.

"Good old Cy!" she said, tenderly. "You do not forget old friends."

Then her eyes met Sir Lovell's, and while she colored he thought he had never seen such a lovely girl in his life.

"Please forgive me," she murmured. "I fear he has too good a memory."

"I am proud of a horse that has the power of remembering, and that has something to remember," he said, lifting his hat as he spoke, and alighting, he stood quietly while she stroked the animal's glossy coat and spoke soothing words in his ear.

"Surely I am speaking to Miss Chester," he said at last, enlightened by the scene. "Cyrus knows his home. I am Elvyn Loxton," he said, simply, "and I want a good deal of coaching as to things and places around here. I wish I might come and get a few hints from Mrs. Chester. Mr. Fordyce tells me she knows more than he does about the folk."

"Mother will be very pleased to see you," she hastened to reply. "She has gone about the cottages ever since she was a girl. Sir James used to consult her often. Will you come in now?" she asked, as she turned toward the gate again.

And so, on fairly easy terms, the new neighbor was ushered into Mrs. Chester's presence. The long, low room was lighted by a ruddy wood fire, for the evenings were cool. Mrs. Chester sat in a deep armchair, but her knitting had fallen on her lap unheeded, and she was busy with her own sad thoughts when Elaine and Sir Lovell came in.

They soon fell to talking over cottages and drains, and many other puzzling things that had been worrying the new landlord, but which were household words to his hostess. He found her interested in them all and thoroughly sensible on every knotty point, and all the time he sat and watched the freights as it fell lovingly upon Elaine's soft auburn hair and the clear outline of her face.

"Three pretty girls," he mused, as he watched dark haired Marjorie and pale eyed Millicent, "but—his eyes fell uncomfortably—"but, when I look at Elaine I wish I were not such an awkward fellow! Texas has a roughening influence, I begin to fear."

He rode home much subdued, and Cyrus went sadly. Both were leaving their hearts behind them. Mr. Fordyce wondered, but asked no questions. He knew nothing.

That was the beginning of a new era for Sir Lovell. Cyrus' good memory was the cause of a great many pleasant afternoons at Chester Court, where Sir Lovell soon became a much valued friend. He snubbed Mr. Fordyce over the matter of the Chester mortgages and bitterly refused to have anything to do with certain things he himself had planned a few weeks before.

But Mrs. Chester was of too nervous a temperament to sit down and anticipate calmly. The sword was hanging over the Court, she knew; she shuddered daily at the dread lest it might fall suddenly. She resolved to end the matter by speaking of it to Sir Lovell.

He happened to call that very day, bringing a basket of fine flowers, a new variety of orchids. He hoped Elaine would be pleased with them, and he was rather taken aback at the despondency he found.

"What is the matter?" he asked Elaine. "I fear my visit is badly timed, but since I am here—can I do anything?"

He was the last person in the world to whom she could broach the subject, so she evaded it, as she imagined skillfully; but Sir Lovell was not to be put off. Milly was far more likely to speak, and he caught her in the garden. To his horror, she replied by sobbing aloud.

"We are going away—that's all," cried the girl, after a few moments. "We must go. It's those horrid mortgages—And the dear old Court is not ours any more."

"Not—yours?" "He stood up—appalled and ashamed. It was his. He had insisted on his 'proud of flesh'—yet how dared Fordyce act—how dared he!"

The anger he felt sent the blood coursing to his face. In his heat he strode away, leaving Milly with her grief. He wanted Elaine.

He found her on the gravel, stroking Cyrus' coat, and not knowing he was near she had laid her head against the horse's glossy neck.

"Elaine!" he cried, drawing her away from the big strong horse. "Elaine, what is it? My darling, every sob of yours seems to stab me. I love you so—I want you to come into my poor, empty life; but I am only a rough fellow—I am not good enough."

She drew nearer, and he read her answer in her eyes. He wanted nothing more. Cyrus neighed at that moment and pawed the ground in token of his pleasure.

"It is his approval," said he, with a laugh, as he pointed to the animal, but Elaine clung to him, her head resting on his shoulder.

A curious thing about the calendar is the fact that no century can begin on Wednesday, Friday or Saturday. The same calendar, too, can be used every twenty years.

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