THE WAY OUT.

Lady Cameron said nothing, she looked fixedly at the points of her shoes.

Sir John had gone over to his writing desk, and was standing in the lamplight, touching his papers gently.

"Well?" he said at last, quietly.

She looked up for a moment, and it was as he had thought; her eyes were bright with unshed tears.

"See here, dear," he said as he turned his back to the fire and squared his shoulders, looking down at her in the big armchair. "I don't see how we can help matters on. There doesn't seem any way out of the difficulty for Max. And to tell the truth, I'm awfully sorry for him.

"I am sorry for Vera," said Lady Cameron, softly.

"Yes, I know it is hard lines on her; but do try to look at the thing dispassionately. You're not quite fair to Max, you know."

She held up her tiny handkerchief as if to shield her face from the fire. Sir John went on.

"I really think you are hardly fair, May. You see, here is Max, as fine a young fellow as you could wish to meet, a man who is making his way as a lawyer with more success than a young man generally gets, and quite as keen over his work as if he had not possessed the comfortable income his father left him. Well he meets a charming girl at a mutual friend's; he falls in love with her, has every reason to believe she returns his love—is that right, May?" She nodded gloomily. "Well, just as all is ready for the interesting denouement, enter Nemesis, in the shape of news of the big smash in the city, and the consequent burst up of Smithson's, in which the old gentleman had invested practically every penny of his money. Close upon the top of this comes the news that the lady in question is an heiress. By the way, May, who told him that?"

"I think it was Tom Lorrimer."

"Ah yes! I can quite believe it of him! The low minded cad! His mind would give vulgarity itself points."

"It is funny to hear you take the trouble to be angry with a worm like Tom Lorrimer," she said. "But, quite seriously, I can't help having a sneaking agreement with his point of view."

"Understand once for all, that such thoughts are not even voiced for a moment in the presence of men of honor."

He spoke hotly and almost roughly.

"Oh, John!" she cried. "I'm not Tom."

"Sorry, dear," he said, "but, you see, I don't and can't understand an honorable man acting in any other way than Max did."

"But to make love to her so, well, so eagerly, and then to drop her absolutely. It must seem so heartless—it does seem heartless to me. No, John, it may be men's honor, but it looks like a very fair imitation of cruelty to a woman. After all, it is she who has to pay the sacrifice. For she can't know the why of it all."

"And if she did, I don't see that it would mend matters much."

"No? and yet, I don't know. At least she would know he loved her."

"Doesn't she know that already? Surely a woman knows that quickly enough?"

There was a little pause, and then Lady Cameron said softly

"Perhaps no woman does know—that is, if she really and truly does love the man, she does not know if he loves her until he tells her. There, dear," she went on, with a little laugh, as she kissed the dark head which had bowed over her knee. "Yes, I know I'm right. And, John, she has enough for both. That Ashburton money must bring her in quite two thousand a year."

"Nearer three, I imagine, it's all in house property or in land near Weaverfield. The place is growing so quickly that the property grows in value every day. Henderson was speaking of it the other day."

"Then why, oh, why can't the money be a blessing to her and not a curse?" sighed Lady Cameron.

There was another pause, and then Sir John said quietly—"We don't get any further, you see, for all our talking. No, May, I don't see that there is any way out of it for Max as things are just now."

Sir John worked silently for a while, then rose to fetch a paper which lay on a table at the other end of the room. He paused for a moment beside this door and pushed the curtain back. "I thought I felt the draught," he muttered to himself. "Simpkin is getting careless!" And he pulled the door to with a resonant bang, and drew back the curtain. Then he settled down once more to work, for he had promised to go to the Maitlands' dance that evening, and he had much to do before dinner. But upstairs, in a pretty pink bedroom, a woman was sitting before the fire, breathless and eager, clasping her hands, her face flushed with happiness and excitement.

"He loves me!" she was saying to herself, "he loves me!" And for a time this thought raced through her brain, to the exclusion of all else. And, after all, that is, has been, and ever shall be the mighty fundamental fact, and the one thing which ever matters in a word so overridden by trivialities.

She leaned back and laughed softly. "He loves me!" she repeated again. "I couldn't help hearing, once I had realized that May was talking about me, and it was too late to get away. And now I'm glad I heard. Now I know why he seemed to care. But he loves me! he loves me!"

She gave a great sigh of content and leaned back in her chair, and as she did so she noticed a letter lying on her table unopened. She took it and opened it now; it was a legal-looking document, and she read it through hastily. Then she frowned and gave a sigh, no longer one of content. "My hateful money!" she said. She read the letter over again more carefully, and then gazed thoughtfully into the fire. It was a long time before she rose to ring the bell for her maid, but as she did so she nodded her head with determination. "I shall do it," she whispered, and suddenly blushed rosy-red, though there was no one by. "He loves me," she said aloud, almost defiantly, "and I shall; I know that I am right." She had the air of one who, having made up her mind to some purpose, means to carry it out to the end. And her eyes were very bright, though she was unusually pale.

"Mademoiselle will wear her white satin gown?" said Therese, and when she had put the last touches—"But Mademoiselle looks like a bride," she cried; "doubtless she should wear those pink roses to give her toilette a suggestion of color. It is too bridal; comme ca!"

Vera looked at herself in the glass in her white, trailing robes for a moment, then turned away. "No," she said, "I like it as it is."

Therese shrugged her shoulders as her mistress left the room. "Bon Dieu!" she said, "c'est egal. I have called the roses to her cheeks instead," for she had seen Vera's blush.

The Maitlands New Year's eve dance was undoubtedly one of the successes of that winter's gaieties. The band had been brought from town for the occasion, and the big hall, with its polished parquet floor, was ideal for dancing. As the Cameron party bowled along the frosty three miles, under a brilliant moonlight sky, Vera Constable had been one of the merriest of the merry party in the comfortable roomy 'bus. Max, from his seat by the door could see her as she sat near the lamp at the end, and thought he had never seen her so lovely, so attractive before. He set his mouth hard, and tried to think less of her, and of his hopeless love for her. He looked persistently out of the window. But moonlight and frost are strange wizards, and he had not looked long before he was conjuring up strange and beautiful visions. Vera was the center of them all, but between her and himself lay no longer the black chasm which had opened up was it only two days? surely it was two centuries ago, but a pathway went winding upwards to her, through the pass of hard work to the steep defile of success, up to the peaks of fame. Under the pale brilliance of the moon, impossibilities became possibilities, even achievements, and it was with a very strange feeling that he got down.

"May I hope for a dance?" he said, in a low voice, as he gave Vera his hand to help her to alight.

"A dance. Did you engage one? No? Well, you're rather late, you know. I am afraid I've given away a lot already. Wait till I see my card, will you?"

He fell back, already a little self-reproachful that he had not kept to that promise he had made himself, when first the news from the city arrived, and had avoided her altogether until the next day, which was to see the end of his visit to his cousins, the Camerons. But the glamor of King Frost and his exhilaration was still on him, and he hardened his heart against his conscience.

"The tenth?" she said to him interrogatively, as she came into the hall in her shimmering white, tall and graceful, bridal indeed in her fairness. But she marked off the 11th and the 12th too, and did not give these away either, however hard besieged she was.

The dance was going with infinite swerve; the hostess' pretty daughters had long ago relaxed their zeal for their guests, and were enjoying themselves with whole-hearted delight.

"That fellow Temple don't seem to be doing his duty," said one partner, as he and the second Miss Maitland leaned over the gallery and watched the dancers below. She craned her pretty neck to see into the corner where Max stood. "I expect he hardly feels like dancing," she said, "he has lost all his money, poor fellow."

She was very young and very sympathetic. "But you're wrong. Look, there he is, going to dance after all with Vera Constable. I wonder——"

"Don't," he interrupted; "listen to this waltz. Can you resist it? I can't; come along."

"My dance, I think," Max was saying, and he was astonished with himself for the perfect coolness with which he spoke. He had been waiting a long time—a perfect age it seemed to him—for this moment. As he stood in his corner and watched her, his resolve grew stronger and stronger to work and to win success, for her. Work he must find, he felt strangely hopeful about it and when he had seized upon success, then, then his time would come. Meanwhile—well, meanwhile, he was to have the tenth dance with her!

She danced with the ease and grace of beautiful proportion and perfect delight in the motion. But before long she stopped. "I am a little tired," she said, and she certainly looked pale, though her eyes were bright. "Suppose we sit down?" But when she had sat down on the low sofa in the quiet room to which he had brought her, her color came back. She slowly unfurled her fan, then looking up, she said suddenly, "I've not had the chance yet to tell you how sorry I was to hear of your hard luck." He murmured something, but it was obviously perfunctory, and he did not look as if he invited condolence. She snapped her fan, too, and looked at him once very hard, almost as if she were reading his feeling that his losses were the merest triviliality in comparison with the secrets he had learnt from old King Frost. After all, it was Max who broke the silence which threatened to sweep them away.

"I am leaving to-morrow," he said, "and I shall then look out for work." He spoke in a perfectly matter-of-fact tone, and it was in the same tone that she answered him. "Ah, yes, that is legal work, isn't it? By the way, I heard of a post which was going a-begging. I wonder if it would be good enough for you?" He gave a short laugh, which was not altogether pleasant to hear. "Beggars mustn't be choosers!" he said. Then he saw her wince. "Forgive me, Miss Constable, I mean that I am anxious to get work, and won't find use for too much fastidiousness."

"Well, it is quite pleasant work, I am told," she said, judicially. "It is to act as agent for house property and generally to manage the estate of—of this acquaintance of mine."

He looked at her—the beginning of the great fight for her against the big odds of Poverty had come. Strange that she should first put the weapon into his hand. His voice was trembling, and he did not venture to say more than "It sounds well."

"On the other hand, I won't disguise from you that there is one disadvantage—a serious disadvantage." She smoothed down her gloves, and was busy with the clasp of a bracelet. "What is it?" he cried. "But there! What does it matter? I shall send in an application to-morrow—to-day, rather!"

He had his eye fixed on her as she sat there, and his heart was beating fast. Work, and work at once? Why, so the first step anyway on that steep pathway to her was made, and who knows he might achieve his dream yet. Lovely she was, and worth a whole life of hard work to win. He caught his breath with almost a sob.

"Where must I apply?" he urged.

She was silent for a little. Then, "Have you not forgotten the drawback?" she said, in a curiously low voice.

"If there were a thousand drawbacks I should make an attempt on it," he said, impetuously.

"Oh, there are not a thousand—there is one, but it might be a very great drawback, indeed."

"I don't care!" he said.

"But you might object very much to it."

"I should object to nothing," he pleaded, strenuously, "except to missing this chance of immediate work. God knows, I am eager enough to begin." It was the accent of conviction.

"I don't care a farthing for drawbacks. I shall be able to get on in spite of them. I want to have a chance with the other applicants. Just tell me where the work is, and I shall never forget your goodness."

There was the faintest pause, and then Vera said quite steadily, "Do you mean that?"

His serious tone answered hers—"I should accept the work—if it is honorable work—and the drawback into the bargain."

She was very pale, and the honest eyes she turned so bravely on him were dim with the hint of tears.

"It is quite honorable work," she said simply, "and there will be no other applicants. It is the Ashburton property, and the drawback is—me."

. . . .

"Acknowledge that you were wrong!" cried May Cameron. "You said there was no way out, and yet Vera found it!"

"I said there was no way out of it for Max," he objected, with a laugh. "And there wasn't! Miss Constable's view seems to have been the same as mine."

"Quibbler!" was Mary's comment.

"Besides, now that he had found out that only a part of his money is involved in the smash, it is more equal."

"Ah, but they didn't know that last night," and May nodded her head sagely. "And, John! the delightful part is that it was all right in every way. You see, it had struck 12 before—well, before——"

"Before she proposed?" he suggested, blandly.

"Well, yes," she assented. "And so it was leap year all right."—Pittsburg Leader.

Korean Gold Production.

The production of gold in Korea has more than doubled from 1898 to 1902. In 1902 it amounted to $2,600,000. Most of this gold is sent to Japan. Iron and coal, though abundant, are little mined. Copper has been mined lately in several districts, and for two years past the production of this metal has been 564,433 pounds. Mines in Korea are the property of the crown, and to exploit them a special concession is necessary. As the Koreans do not love foreigners, there are many difficulties to be surmounted before work begins.

Wax Display Figures Melted.

During the Easter holidays in London there was in a tailor's window a row of wax figures displaying boys' suits. The blinds not having been lowered, the blazing sun caused the figures gradually to melt away, while hilarious crowds watched the spectacle with intense enjoyment.

Fruit and Water.

The eating of fruit which is neither green nor over-ripe, combined with the drinking of plenty of pure water is a great thing for anybody.

THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM.

Occurred over 200 Years Ago at That Village.

Just a little over 200 years ago the battle of Blenheim was fought. That name has been familiar to Americans as the home of the Marlboroughs since the marriage of Miss Consuelo Vanderbilt to the present duke. The anniversary of the fight was celebrated Aug. 13. The original Blenheim is a small village in Bavaria on the left bank of the Danube, near the town of Hochstett. The battle was fought between the English and their allies, commanded by the celebrated John, first duke of Marlborough, and the French and Bavarians under Marshal Tallard and the elector of Bavaria. The result of the fighting was the utter defeat of the latter with the loss of about 12,000 killed and 13,000 prisoners, including Tallard. Bavaria became the prize of the conquerors. In recognition of his brilliant services the British parliament gave Marlborough the honor of Woodstock and the "hundred" of Wootton, and built for him the splendid palace at Woodstock which is named after the great victory he had just achieved. Formerly it contained an almost unique collection of paintings and art treasures. A fire, however, in 1861 destroyed the "Titian gallery" and the pictures, which were a present from Victor Amadeus, king of Sardinia, to the first duke. Other pictures, the library and valuables of different kinds were sold years ago.

King Leopold's $75,000 Rug.

"King Leopold of Belgium owns one rung that cost a comfortable fortune in itself," said J. F. Caldwell. "I have seen the rug, and it is a beauty. King Leopold paid $75,000 for it. I saw the rug when it was on exhibition in Vienna. It was made in the Orient, and is hand tufted. Its age is its principal value, and it has been under the feet of royalty for probably a century. The rug is very large, measuring probably 60 by 75 feet.

"Few rugs like that come to America, though the millionaires frequently pay as much as $5,000 or $6,000 for some. Few carpets are imported, as they can be made much better by machinery than by hand, and America excels in all machine-made goods. Large numbers of hand-made rugs, however, are imported every year from Turkey, Persia, Arabia and all parts of the Orient. We have no labor capable of competing with their rugs. —Louisville Courier-Journal.

Japanese Animal Protection.

According to a Japanese newspaper the founding of a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals in the island empire has been warmly welcomed. One promoter of the society tell the story of how Shigetada Hatakeyama, a hero of the Gempei period, showed his affection for his favorite charger by descending a steep declivity, carrying the horse on his back. Again it is said that "whenever the well-known actor, Kikugoro, plays the parting scene of Shiobara and his horse, the audience is melted to tears. The cruelty of the people toward dumb beasts is therefore only apparent and by no means deep-seated in their hearts."

An Old Landmark.

A billposter removed what remained of a lot of small advertising bills on a block of stone away down on the Bowery near Rivington street, New York. When he had cleared its surface pretty well he, stooping over, was surprised to read. "One mile to city hall." The old stone is the first mile stone placed many years ago along the post road between New York and Boston.

Halcyon Days.

Halcyon days was a name given by the ancients to the seven days that precede and follow the winter solstice, from the circumstance of the halcyon or alcedo bird selecting that period for hatching her eggs. While this process was going on, the weather was generally remarkable for its calmness, and hence the expression has passed into a proverb, signifying days of peace and tranquillity.

Arbors on Shipboard.

The new Hamburg steamers that are being built for the South American service will have some novel features, including a playroom for children, and on deck arbors like those used in German gardens, which, it is expected, will be particularly appreciated by the passengers in tropical regions.

Fish Killed By Sewerage.

The other day, just as the tide in the Thames was turning from ebb to flow and the fish were coming up the river again, a very heavy rain, following several days drought, suddenly flushed the sewers of London, and the rush of foul water killed the fishes by the million, so that the dead bodies covered the banks for miles.

Barbers Use Compressed Air.

Compressed air is beginning to be introduced in the best of the barber shops eerywhere. The air does almost everything from the services of a brush after a haircut down to blowing the excessive powder off a customer's cheeks. The tubes connected with the main source of supply hang by each chair.

Tibetan's Revenge.

Some years ago at Darjiling, on the border of India, a Tibetan was ducked in a fountain for insolence to an Englishwoman. He was afterward prime minister of Tibet and did much to shape the Tibetan policy of exclusion for all white foreigners.

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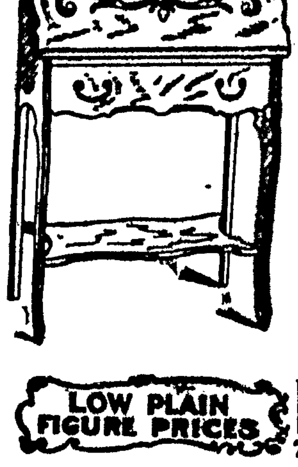

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