### The Girl and the Davenport

By FANNIE HEASLIP LEA

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In the twilight of a secondhand shop on Royal street Van Holden saw her first. She came toward him down an aisle of shadow between old mahogany sideboards and dusty armoires and laid her gray gloved hand upon one end of a quaint davenport on whose other end reposed the hand of Van Holden.

"This davenport," she said to the shopkeeper, "is the one you reserved

for me, is it not?" "Pardon me," said Van Holden firmly-the davenport was genuine mahogany and of a good shape-"I have just

bought it." The shopkeeper, a little creole with voluble eyes and a fierce mustache,

looked from one to the other. "Mais oui," he murmured politely, "it is vair good davenpo't"-

"You promised yesterday afternoon," she said with icy dignity, "to reserve it for me. I must have it. I wish it upholstered in the green rep you showed me, and I want it by Thursday morning."

"Pardon me"- Van Holden began again. She ignored his existence and drew a

card from her case of snakeskin. "Here is my address," she said, scribbling something thereon, "and I will give you a check on delivery of

the davenport. Eighty dollars I think Van Holden's sense of humor, as-

sisted by the pleasing picture of pale hair and gray eyes in a cool pale face against a background of cobwebbed walls, began to rise. "I was to have had it for fifty," he

suggested plaintively. "I will give you eighty for it," she said to the shopkeeper. And her face

was noticeably less pale. "It ees vair good davenport," said the shopkeeper, twisting his fierce mustache. "I pay hun'erd dollar fo' it, but I take eighty. Yas, I take eighty."

"Oh, you do?" said Van Holden sarcastically. "What about the fifty I'm giving you? I suppose you take that too? Now, see here, my man." He smoothed out the check between his

"If you have paid for it," said the lady icily, "I shall of course not take I had not understood"-

"Pray do not consider me in the matter," said Van Holden, with equal promptness. "I shall not take it now." He thrust the check into his vest pocket as the shopkeeper's dirty fingers closed clawlike over the lady's card.

"Upholster in green rep? Varnish? Me, I lose \$20, yes-but-you take it-

I keep my word." "No," said the lady; "I shall not take it. My card." She slipped it back into the case. "I do not care for the davenport." She walked to the door, holding her skirts away from contamination, and turned into the hot, narrow street, a slender figure in a gray gown and a gray hat with pale roses on the wide brim.

Van Holden lit a cigarette in the interval of regarding the shopkeeper with "Overreached a piercing interest. yourself that time, Mr. Montague," he remarked pleasantly.

"Dose Yankees," said Mr. Montague morosely.

"I dare say," said Van Holden. He walked to the front of the shop, the creole at his heels, and a humorous smile twitched the corners of his mouth. "That was a dirty trick of yours. And, by the way, you needn't send up that chair I looked at. I don't care to deal with you in future."

Mr. Montague shrugged his shoulders and lifted up his eyes. Van Holden turned on his heel and walked leisurely down the street, his annoyance lost in a sense of amusement.

"'Dose Yankees,'" he echoed to himself. Then his meditation took the form of manifest approval. "She would have been a picture on that davenport after it was done in green, with her coloring-lack of coloring, rather. Hello Berden! Anything doing? Come

over and have lunch at the Cosmopoli-

"That's where I'm going now," said Berden. "You are just the man I want. I'm taking the girls to lunch today. Molly has a girl visiting her, you know. You'll just round out the party and make us happy foursome. Oh, come on. And see here, Van-what about that deal you made in cotton vesterday?"

They sauntered down the street, deep in discussion, until Berden stopped suddenly. "Jove! I've got to go over to some blamed store and meet those girls. You go on and engage a table; that's a good fellow. Order the lunch, if you want to; you do it better than I do anyhow. I shan't be long."

He darted off, like a distracted water bug in linen clothes and a panama, and Van Holden set forth upon his quest of a table. He found one in a cool corner of the dining room and consumed some time in the ordering of a luncheon that should combine delicacy and a good deal of ice.

When the waiter had left him, he fell to drumming on the table and thinking of the davenport girl, as he cailed her to himself. "Cool," he mused, "and self possessed—and, Lord. what a face-prettier, perhaps, for a touch of color."

Vaguely he remembered something about "the beauty of a blush to him who has caused it" and smiled to Senator J. P. McNichol, a member think that he had made her blush for the firm, declared that within 48 ho

put reason, and on the moment Berden's voice was in his ears. "Wake up, boy! Look as if you were seeing ghosts, doesn't he, Molly? Miss Mc-Collough, Mr. Van Holden. Did you order lunch, old chap?"

"It ought to be here in a moment. Mrs. Berden, sit here; then the light won't be in your eyes."

He changed seats with her deftly

and faced across the white tablecloth, accusing gray eyes under a wide brimmed gray hat with pale roses. There was a hint of color in the face. "Say, Van," cried the irrepressible Berden, "you ought to hear Miss Mc-Collough's story of the way she was 'done' by an antique dealer today-

for her"-"Don't tell on me," pleaded Miss Mc-Collough nervously, "please, Mr. Ber-

promised to hold a desk or something

"Oh, the joke's not on you," said Berden consolingly. "And when she went there she found a chap engaged in buying her piece-a very decent looking chap, she says."

"Do make him hush, Molly." Miss McCollough's glass of water answered a despairing and surreptitious push by flowing across the tablecloth on to Berden's knees.

Miss McCollough gasped. "Oh, that's all right," said Berden, jumping up. He beckoned a waiter and presently resumed his seat and his

"Chap was awfully good looking," he rattled on, "well dressed-mannerwhat was his manner, Molly? Oh, ye 'the perfection of indifference and the dearest smile."

The quick crimson swept up to the gray hat brim, but Berden was merci-

"She insisted on having the thing; so did he. She spoke of paying \$80 for it. He let out that he was getting it for \$50. I tell you those dealers are regular sharks. So she didn't take it, andlisten to this, Van Holden-she says she's willing to lose the furniture for the sake of the adventure-says she's found her affinity."

"For pity's sake, Bobbie, hush!" cried his wife. "Can't you see you're worrying Nora? Do eat your lunch."

"Did the man get the desk, Miss Mc-Collough?" inquired Van Holden, with courteous interest. "Probably so. I left him there," she

answered vindictively. "Mr. Berden, is the old Hotel Royal open to visitors?" "Why don't you go back and see?" asked the man across the table insist-

"The hotel?" she inquired, surprised. "No; the antique store"-

"Because I am not sufficiently interested." Van Holden smiled confidently and applied himself to the salad.

With the arrival of the finger bowls the conversation by easy stages, in which Berden's new motor, the last regatta and a projected house party across the lake were discussed, came back to Miss McCollough's adventure. "So you think the man bought your-

-I'll wager he will." Mrs. Berden arose, shaking out her skirts. "If he saw his affinity as she saw her," she laughed, "he may have hanght it for her sake."

desk?" said Van Holden. "If he didn't

"I was thinking of that," said Van

Holden "And some day," said Mrs. Berden teasingly, "she may sit on it before the davenport was to be upholstered

in dull green, you know." "Don't be silly, Molly. We shall be late if you talk so long," Miss Mc-Collough insisted feverishly.

"Well, you never can tell," said Ber-"Anything might happen, eh, Van?"

"I should think that was quite possi ble," said Van Holden. "Of course," said Berden. "Come up

and see us, old chap." "We're going to motor out to west end for dinner tomorrow night. Don't you want to come?" echoed his wife. "I do," said Van Holden earnestly. "But Miss McCollough hasn't asked

me yet." "Will you come?" asked Miss Mc Collough, with level defiance and something else in her gray eyes. That day Mr. Montague sold the

THE EQUITY SUIT POSTPONED

davenport.

Philadelphia, Sept. 18.-Incensed by the pastponement granted of the tr of the city's equity suit against D. McNichol & Co. for an accounting the municipal filtration contract, St he will institute proceedings again "Heigh-ho," he sighed, entirely with the city for breach of contract. trial of the city's suit had been sch uled for Monday, and the defenda were anxious to proceed, but City licitor Kinsey and Major Gillette, cl of the filtration bureau, requested postponement on the ground that Jo "I did," said Van Holden steadily. D. MacLennan, of New York, an pert engineer, could not be produ at this time to testify. The city owes Mr. MacLennan \$22,000, his for expert services in connection w the investigation of the filter plant was stated in court that Mr. MacLennan had refused to testify unless his bill was paid. The court fixed December 3 as the date for the trial. The suit against D. J. McNichol &

Co. is one result of Mayor Weaver's move for reform after his break with the regular Republican organization in May, 1905. An investigation of the city's filtration plant in course of construction by D. J. McNichol & Co. resulted in the arrest of John W. Hill, then chief of the filtration bureau, on charges of conspiracy to defraud the city. Mr. Hill was acquitted. The report of Mapor Gillette, J. Barclay Parsons and J. D. MacLennan, the experts engaged by Mayor Weaver to investigate the work, charged that the city had been defrauded of about \$6,000,000 in excess profits to the contracting firm. Suit was entered to recover this amount, and it was the trial of this suit which was postponed. In the meantime the McNichol contract was

annulled.

Locomotive Blown Up; Two Killed. Monongahela City, Pa., Sept. 18 .-By the explosion of a boiler of a Pittsburg, Virginia & Charleston his library fire-in a soft gray gown- freight engine, the engineer and fireman were killed, four severely injured and the engine and caboose reduced to scrap iron. All the injured were scalded about the face and hands, and received severe bruises. They were taken to a hospital and will probably recover. The cause of the explosion is not known.

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