

GOOD LADY DUCAYNE

BY MISS BRADDOCK

Bella Rolleston had made up her mind that her only chance of earning her bread and helping her mother to an occasional crust was by going out into the great unknown world as companion to a lady. She was willing to go to any lady rich enough to pay her a salary, and so eccentric as to wish for a hired companion. Five shillings told off reluctantly from one of those sovereigns which were so rare with the mother and daughter, and which melted away so quickly, five solid shillings had been handed to a smartly-dressed lady in an office in Harbeck Street, W., in the hope that this very Superior Person would find a situation and a salary for Miss Rolleston.

The Superior Person glanced at the two half-crowns as they lay on the table where Bella's hand had placed them, to make sure that they were neither of them forins, before she wrote a description of Bella's qualifications and requirements in a formidable-looking ledger.

"Age?" she asked, curiously. "Eighteen, last July." "Any accomplishments?" "No, I am not at all accomplished. If I were I should want to be a governess—a companion seems the lowest stage."

"We have some highly accomplished ladies on our books as companions, or chaperon companions." "Oh, I know," babbled Bella, loquacious in her youthful candor. "But that is quite a different thing. Mother hasn't been able to afford a piano since I was twelve years old, so I'm afraid I have forgotten how to play. And I have had to help mother with her needlework, so there hasn't been much time to study."

"Please don't waste time upon explaining what you can do, but kindly tell me what you can do," said the Superior Person, crushing, with her pen poised between delicate fingers waiting to write. "Can you read aloud for two or three hours at a stretch? Are you active and handy, an early riser, a good walker, sweet tempered and obliging?"

"I can say yes to all these questions except about the sweetness. I think I have a pretty good temper, and I should be anxious to oblige anybody who paid for my services. I should want them to feel that I was really earning my salary."

"The kind of ladies who come to me would not care for a talkative companion," said the Person, severely, having finished writing in her book. "My connection lies chiefly among the aristocracy, and in that class considerable deference is expected."

"Oh, of course," said Bella; "but it's quite different when I'm talking to you. I want to tell you all about myself once and forever."

"I am glad it is to be only once," said the Person, with the edges of her lips.

The Person was of uncertain age, tightly laced in a black silk gown. She had a powdery complexion and a handsome clump of somebody else's hair on the top of her head. It may be that Bella's girlish freshness and vivacity had an irritating effect upon nerves weakened by an eight-hour day in that overheated second floor in Harbeck Street. To Bella the official apartment, with its Brussels carpet, velvet curtains and velvet chairs, and French clock, ticking loud on the marble chimney-piece, suggested the luxury of a palace, as compared with another second floor in Walworth where Mrs. Rolleston and her daughter had managed to exist for the last six years.

"Do you think you have anything on your books that would suit me?" faltered Bella, after a pause.

"Oh, dear, no; I have nothing in view at present," answered the Person, who had swept Bella's half-crowns into a drawer, absent-mindedly, with the tips of her fingers. "You see, you are so very unformed—so much too young to be a companion to a lady of position. It is a pity you have not enough education for a nursery governess; that would be more in your line, probably."

"And do you think it will be very long before you can get me a situation?" asked Bella, doubtfully.

"I really cannot say. Have you any particular reason for being so impatient—not a love affair, I hope?"

"A love affair!" cried Bella, with flaming cheeks. "What utter nonsense. I want a situation because mother is poor, and I hate being a burden to her."

"There won't be much margin for sharing in the salary you are likely to get at your age—and with your—very—unformed manners," said the Person, who found Bella's peony cheeks, bright eyes and unbridled vivacity more and more oppressive.

"Perhaps if you'd be kind enough to give me back the fee I could take it to an agency where the connection isn't quite so aristocratic," said Bella, who—as she told her mother in her recital of the interview—was determined not to be sat on.

"You will find no agency that can do more for you than mine," replied the Person, whose happy fingers never relinquished coin. "You will have to wait for your opportunity. Yours is an exceptional case; but I will bear you in mind, and if anything suitable offers I will write to you. I cannot say more than that."

"Dear, dear, what a mimic she is!" said the landlady. "You ought to have let her go on the stage, mum. She might have made her fortune as a hactress."

CHAPTER II

Bella waited and hoped, and listened for the postman's knocks which brought such store of letters for the parlors and the first floor, and so few for that humble second floor, where mother and daughter sat sewing with hand and with wheel and treadle, for the greater part of the day. Mrs. Rolleston was a lady by birth and education; but it had been her bad fortune to marry a scoundrel; for the last half-dozen years she had been that worst of widows, a wife whose husband had deserted her. Happily, she was courageous, industrious, and a clever needlewoman; and she had been able just to earn a living for herself and her only child, by making mantles and cloaks for a West-end house. It was not a luxurious living. Cheap lodgings in a shabby street off the Walworth Road, scanty dinners, homely food, well worn raiment, had been the portion of mother and daughter; but they loved each other so dearly, and Nature had made them both so light hearted, that they had contrived somehow to be happy.

But now this idea of going out into



"NOT A LOVE AFFAIR, I HOPE"

the world as companion to some fine lady had rooted itself into Bella's mind, and although she idolized her mother, and although the parting of mother and daughter must needs tear two loving hearts into shreds, the girl longed for enterprise and change and excitement, as the pages of old longed to be knights, and so start for the Holy Land to break a lance with the infidel.

She grew tired of racing downstairs every time the postman knocked, only to be told "nothing for you, miss," by the smudgy faced drudge who picked up the letters from the passage floor. "Nothing for you, miss," grinned the lodging house drudge, till at last Bella took heart of grace and walked up to Harbeck Street, and asked the Superior Person how it was that no situation had been found for her.

"You are too young," said the Person, "and you want a salary."

"Of course I do," answered Bella; "don't other people want salaries?"

"Young ladies of your age generally want a comfortable home."

"I don't," snapped Bella; "I want to help mother."

"You can call again this day week," said the Person; "or, if I hear of anything in the meantime, I will write to you."

No letter came from the Person, and in exactly a week Bella put on her neatest hat, the one that had been seldomest caught in the rain, and trudged off to Harbeck Street.

It was a dull October afternoon, and there was a greyness in the air which might turn to fog before night. The Walworth Road shops glistened brightly through that grey atmosphere, and though to a young lady reared in Mayfair or Balgravia such shop-windows would have been unworthy of a glance, they were a snare and temptation for Bella. There were so many things that she longed for, and would never be able to buy.

Harbeck Street is apt to be empty at this dead season of the year, a long, long street, an endless perspective of eminently respectable houses. The Person's office was at the further end, and Bella looked down that long, grey vista almost despairingly, more tired than usual with the trudge from Walworth. As she looked, a carriage passed her, an old-fashioned, yellow chariot, on the springs, drawn by a pair of high grey horses, with the stateliest of coachmen driving them, and a tall footman sitting by his side.

"It looks like the fairy god-mother's coach," thought Bella. "I shouldn't wonder if it began by being a pumpkin."

It was a surprise when she reached the Person's door to find the yellow chariot standing before it, and the tall footman waiting near the doorstep. She was almost afraid to go in and meet the owner of that splendid carriage. She had caught only a glimpse of its occupant as the chariot rolled by, a plumed bonnet, a patch of ermine.

The Person's smart page ushered her upstairs and knocked at the official door. "Miss Rolleston," he announced, apologetically, while Bella waited outside.

"Show her in," said the Person, quickly; and then Bella heard her murmuring something in a low voice to her client. Bella went in fresh, blooming, a living image of youth and hope, and before she looked at the Person her gaze was riveted by the owner of the chariot.

"This is Miss Rolleston, Lady Ducayne." Claw-like fingers, flashing with jewels, lifted a double eyeless to Lady Ducayne's shining black eyes, and through the glasses Bella saw those unnaturally bright eyes magnified to a gigantic size, and glaring at her awfully.

"Miss Torpinter has told me all about you," said the old voice that belonged to the eyes. "Have you good health? Are you strong and active, able to eat well, sleep well, walk well, able to enjoy all that there is good in life?"

"I have never known what it is to be ill, or idle," answered Bella. "Then I think you will do for me."

"Of course, in the event of references being perfectly satisfactory," put in the Person.

"I don't want references. The young woman looks frank and innocent. I'll take her on trust."

"So like you, dear Lady Ducayne," murmured Miss Torpinter.

"I want a strong young woman whose health will give me no trouble."

"You have been so fortunate in that respect," cooed the Person, whose voice and manner were subdued to a melting sweetness by the old woman's presence.

"Yes, I've been rather unlucky," grunted Lady Ducayne.

"But I am sure Miss Rolleston will not disappoint you, though certainly after your unpleasant experience with Miss Tomson, who looked the picture of health—and Miss Blandy, who said she had never seen a doctor since she was vaccinated—"

"Lies, no doubt," muttered Lady Ducayne, and then turning to Bella, she asked curiously: "You don't mind spending the winter in Italy, I suppose?"

In Italy! The very word was magical. Bella's fair young face flushed crimson.

"It has been the dream of my life to see Italy," she gasped.

From Walworth to Italy! How far, how impossible such a journey had seemed to that romantic dreamer.

"Well your dream will be realized. Get yourself ready to leave Charing Cross by the train de luxe this day week at eleven. Be sure you are at the station a quarter before the hour. My people will look after you and your luggage."

Lady Ducayne rose from her chair, as assisted by her crutch stick, and Miss Torpinter escorted her.

"Salary, oh, the same as usual and if the young woman wants a quarter's pay in advance you can write to me for a check, answered Lady Ducayne, carelessly.

Miss Torpinter went all the way down stairs with her client, and waited to see her seated in the yellow chariot. When she came upstairs again she was slightly out of breath, and she had resumed that superior manner that Bella had found so crushing.

"You may think yourself uncommonly lucky, Bella Rolleston," she said. "I have dozens of young ladies on my books whom I might have recommended for this situation—but I remembered having told you to call this afternoon—and I thought I would give you a chance. Old Lady Ducayne is one of the best people on the books. She gives her companion a hundred a year and pays all traveling expenses. You will live in the lap of luxury."

"A hundred a year! How too lovely! Shall I have to dress very grandly? Does Lady Ducayne keep much company?"

"At her age! No, she lives in seclusion—in her own apartments—her French maid, her footman, her medical attendant, her courier."

Why did those other companions leave her? asked Bella. "Their health broke down."

"Poor things! And so they had to leave?"

"Yes, they had to leave. I suppose you would like a quarter's salary in advance?"

"Oh, yes, please. I shall have things to buy."

"Very well. I will write for Lady Ducayne's check, and I will send you the balance, after deducting my commission for the year."

"To be sure, I had forgotten the commission."

"You don't suppose I keep this office for pleasure?"

"Of course not," murmured Bella, remembering the five shillings' entrance fee; but nobody could expect a hundred a year and a winter in Italy for five shillings.

CHAPTER III

"From Miss Rolleston, at Cap Ferrigno, to Mrs. Rolleston, in Berestord Street, Walworth."

COULD NOT EAT.

A Woman's Strong Constitution Wrecked. Effects of a Treacherous Disease. A Wonderful Case.

From the Bulletin, Monroe, La.

Mrs. Stephen Robbins is the wife of a prominent farmer living on a large and well-kept plantation just at the edge of Monroe, La. They have resided in this community but two years, having moved here from Illinois. The change was made for the benefit of Mrs. Robbins' health, her physicians having advised her that it was the only hope of her ever regaining her lost health.

"Three years ago this last winter," said Mrs. Robbins, "I was very sick with that most treacherous disease, the grippe. I had a very severe time with it, but was able to get out after being confined to my home several weeks. I think I went out too soon, for I immediately contracted a cold and had a relapse, which is a common occurrence with that disease. For several more weeks I was confined to the house and after this I did not fully recover until recently. I was able to get out again, but I was quite a different woman."

"My former strong constitution was wrecked, and I was a dwindling mass of skin and bones. My blood was thin and I had grown pale and sallow. My lungs were so affected that I thought I was going into consumption. During my illness I had lost thirty pounds in weight. I tried to regain my strength and former good health by trying different medicines and physicians, but nothing seemed to help me. My appetite was gone, and when I ate the food it would not stay on my stomach."

"The only thing my physician said for me to do was to take a change of climate, and on his advice I came here. At first I seemed benefited, but to my sorrow it proved to be only temporary, and in a few months I was in my former condition. The color had left my cheeks, I had no energy, and life was a misery. I had become a burden to myself and family. Finally I happened to read in a newspaper of how Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People had effected a miraculous cure with the same disease which a neighbor of mine had in Illinois."

"On the strength of this testimonial I decided at once to give the medicine a trial. I accordingly sent for a box of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People, and gave the pills a thorough trial. I did not notice any change till I had tried the second box. I used five boxes of these pills and was completely cured, as you see, me to-day, weighing more than ever before."

"As evidence of the truthfulness of her story Mrs. Robbins volunteered to make the following sworn statement: 'I hereby affirm that the above statement is every word exact and true.'"

Mrs. STEPHEN ROBBINS. "Monroe, La., March 2, 1897." "Subscribed and sworn to before me, a Notary Public in and for the Parish of Winn, State of Louisiana, this 2d day of March, 1897. AMOS R. JESSEPS, Notary Public."

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People contain, in a condensed form, all the elements necessary to give new life and richness to the blood and restore shattered nerves. They are an unfailing specific for such diseases as locomotor ataxia, partial paralysis, St. Vitus' dance, sciatica, neuralgia, rheumatism, nervous headache, the after effect of la grippe, palpitation of the heart, pale and sallow complexion, all forms of weakness either in male or female. Pink Pills are sold by all dealers, or will be sent postpaid on receipt of price, 30 cents a box, or six boxes for \$2.50 (they are never sold in bulk or by the 100) by addressing Dr. Williams' Medicine Company, Salem, N. Y.

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Royal Marriage by Proxy.

One of the queerest features of court life in Europe is the marriage by proxy of royal personages. There are at the present moment no less than three royal ladies who have been thus wedded—the queen regent of Spain, the dowager queen of Portugal and the ex-queen of Naples. Kings and reigning sovereigns are held to be too important personages to be married anywhere else than in their own dominions. On the other hand, it is held to be infra dignitate for a spinster princess of the blood who is about to blossom forth into a full fledged queen or empress to travel abroad in quest of a consort. In order to meet this difficulty the royal or imperial bridegroom delegates one of the principal nobles of the realm, who goes through the religious and civil portion of the wedding ceremony in the capital of the bride's country on behalf of his master, making the responses for him and tendering his hand, as well as the ring, at the prescribed points of the ceremony. He then accompanies her to his master's dominions, acting as her chief escort. According to the ideas of the church, a ceremony of this kind is sufficiently binding upon the bride and upon the royal bridegroom to render any further ceremony, ecclesiastical or civil, superfluous, and when any additional religious function takes place it usually assumes the form of a "Te Deum" and a solemn benediction, attended by both husband and wife immediately on the arrival of the latter in the capital of her adopted country.—San Francisco Argonaut.

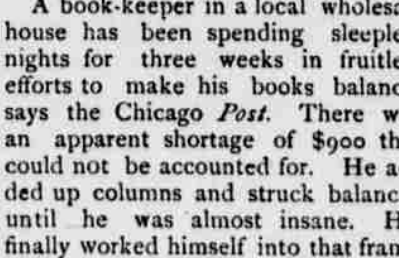
Nearly Crased by a Fly.

A book-keeper in a local wholesale house has been spending sleepless nights for three weeks in fruitless efforts to make his books balance, says the Chicago Post. There was an apparent shortage of \$900 that could not be accounted for. He added up columns and struck balances until he was almost insane. He finally worked himself into that frame of mind that usually lands a man in Canada, the insane asylum or a suicide's grave, when the manager of the house invited his confidence. Then they went over the books together, but the \$900 shortage was still there.

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IT TOUCHES THE SPOT.

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THE MARKET'S.

BLOOMSBURG MARKETS. CORRECTED WEEKLY. RETAIL PRICES.

Table listing market prices for various goods: Butter per lb. \$.18, Eggs per dozen .14, Lard per lb. .08, Ham per pound .08, Pork, whole, per pound .12, Beef, quarter, per pound .07, Wheat per bushel 1.00, Oats .30, Rye .50, Wheat flour per bbl. \$ 5.40, Hay per ton 12 to 15, Potatoes per bushel, new .85, Turnips .25, Onions .85, Sweet potatoes per peck .28, Tallow per lb. .05, Shoulder .08, Side meat .08, Vinegar, per qt. .07, Dried apples per lb. .05, Dried cherries, pitted .12, Raspberries .12, Cow Hides per lb. .31, Steer .05, Calf Skin .80, Sheep pelts .75, Shelled corn per bus. .50, Corn meal, cwt. 1.50, Bran .85, Chop 1.00, Middlings .85, Chickens per lb new .12, Turkeys .10, Geese .10, Ducks .08.

COAL.

Table listing coal prices: No. 6, delivered 2.60, " 4 and 5 " 3.85, " 6 at yard 2.35, " 4 and 5 at yard 3.60.

The Leading Conservatory of America. CARL FARBETH, Director. Founded in 1869 by E. Tourjée. NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC. BOSTON, MASS. Send for Prospectus giving full information. FRANK W. HALE, General Manager.

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