



**A FOOL FOR LOVE**  
By FRANCIS LYNDE  
Author of "The Grafters," Etc.

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CHAPTER II.—Continued.

Mrs. Carteret was propped among the cushions of a divan with a book. Her daughter occupied the undivided half of a tete-a-tete chair with a blonde athlete in a clerical coat and a reversed collar. Miss Virginia was sitting alone at a window, but she rose and came to greet the visitor.

"How good of you to take pity on us," she said, giving him her hand. Then she put him at one with the others: "Aunt Martha you have met; also Cousin Bessie. Let me present you to Mr. Calvert, Cousin Billy, this is Mr. Adams, who is responsible in a way for many of my Boston-learned gaucheries."

Aunt Martha closed the book on her finger. "My dear Virginia!" she protested in mild deprecation; and Adams laughed and shook hands with Rev. William Calvert and made Virginia's peace all in the same breath.

"Don't apologize for Miss Virginia, Mrs. Carteret. We were very good friends in Boston, chiefly, I think, because I never objected when she wanted to—er—to take a rise out of me." Then to Virginia: "I hope I don't intrude?"

"Not in the least. Didn't I just say you were good to come? Uncle Somerville tells us we are passing through the famous Golden Belt, whatever that may be—and recommends an easy-chair and a window. But I haven't seen anything but stubble-fields—dismally wet stubble-fields at that. Won't you sit down and help me watch them go by?"

Adams placed a chair for her, and found one for himself.

"Uncle Somerville—am I to have the pleasure of meeting Mr. Somerville Darrah?"

Miss Virginia's look was non-committal.

"Quite sane?" she queried, airing her one westernism before she was fairly in the longitude of it. "Uncle Somerville is a law unto himself. He had a lot of telegrams and things at Kansas City, and he is locked in his den with Mr. Jarstrow, dictating answers by the dozen, I suppose."

"Oh, these industry colonels!" said Adams. "Don't their tollings make you ache in sheer sympathy sometimes?"

"No, indeed," was the prompt rejoinder; "I envy them. It must be fine to have large things to do, and to be able to do them."

"Degenerate scion of a noble race!" jested Adams. "What ancient Carteret of them all would have compromised with the necessities by becoming a captain of industry?"

She broke him with a mocking laugh. "You were born a good many centuries too late, Mr. Adams; you would have fitted so beautifully into decadent Rome."

"No—thanks. Twentieth-century America, with the commercial frenzy taken out of it, is good enough for me. I was telling Winton a little while ago—"

"Your friend of the Kansas City station platform?" she interrupted. "Mightn't you introduce us a little less informally?"

"Beg pardon, I'm sure—yours and Jack's: Mr. John Winton, of New York and the world at large, familiarly known to his intimates—and they are precious few—as 'Jack W.' As I was about to say—"

But she seemed to find a malicious satisfaction in breaking in upon him.

"Mr. John Winton; it's a pretty name, as names go, but it isn't as strong as he is. He is an 'industry colonel,' isn't he? He looks it."

The Bostonian avenged himself for the interruption at Winton's expense. "So much for your woman's intuition," he laughed. "Speaking of idlers, there is your man to the dotting of the 'i,' a dilettante raised to the nth power."

Miss Carteret's short upper lip curled in undisguised scorn.

"I like men who do things," she asserted, with pointed emphasis; whereupon the talk drifted eastward to Boston, and Winton was ignored until Virginia, having exhausted the remnant of her wit, said: "You are going on through to Denver?"

"To Denver and beyond," was the reply. "Winton has a notion of hibernating in the mountains—fancy it; in the dead of winter!—and he has persuaded me to go along. He sketches a little, you know."

"Oh, so he is an artist?" said Virginia, with interest newly aroused.

"No," said Adams, gloomily, "he isn't an artist—ish' much of anything. I'm sorry to say. Worse than all, he doesn't know his grandfather's middle name. Told me so himself."

"That is inexcusable—in a dilettante," said Miss Virginia, mockingly. "Don't you think so?"

"It is inexcusable in anyone," said the technologist, rising to take his leave. Then, as a parting word: "Does the Rosemary set its own table? or do you dine in the dining car?"

"In the dining car, if we have one. Uncle Somerville lets us dodge the Rosemary's cook whenever we can," was the answer; and with this bit of

information Adams went his way to the Denver sleeper.

Finding Winton in his section, poring over a blue-print map and making notes thereon after the manner of a man hard at work, Adams turned back to the smoking compartment.

Now for Mr. Morton P. Adams the salt of life was a joke, harmless or otherwise, as the tree might fall. So, during the long afternoon which he wore out in solitude there grew up in him a keen desire to see what would befall if these two whom he had so protegesquely misrepresented each to the other should come together in the pathway of acquaintanceship.

But how to bring them together was a problem which refused to be solved until chance pointed the way. Since the "Limited" had lost another hour during the day, there was a rush for the dining car as soon as the announcement of its taking on had gone through the train. Adams and Winton were of this rush, and so were the members of Mr. Somerville Darrah's party. In the seating the party was separated, as room at the crowded tables could be found; and Miss Virginia's fate gave her the unoccupied seat at one of the duet tables, opposite a young man with steadfast gray eyes and a Van Dyck beard.

Winton was equal to the emergency, or thought he was. Adams was still within call, and he beckoned him, meaning to propose an exchange of seats. But the Bostonian misunderstood willfully.

"Most happy, I'm sure," he said, coming instantly to the rescue. "Miss Carteret, my friend signals his dilemma. May I present him?"

Virginia smiled and gave the required permission in a word. But for Winton self-possession flew shrieking.

"Ah—er—I hope you know Mr. Adams well enough to make allowances for his—for his—" He broke down piteously and she had to come to his assistance.

"For his imagination?" she suggested. "I do, indeed; we are quite old friends."

Here was "well enough," but Winton was a man and could not let it alone.

"I should be very sorry to have you

Miss Virginia was happy. Dilettante he might be, and an unhumiliated member of the world as well; but, to use Roscoe Conkling's phrase, she could make him "sit up."

"I beg yours, I'm sure," she said, demurely. "I didn't know it was a craft secret."

Winton looked across the aisle to the table where the technologist was sitting opposite a square-shouldered, ruddy-faced gentleman with fiery eyes and fierce white mustache, and shook a figurative fist.

"I'd like to know what Adams has been telling you," he said. "Sketching in the mountains in midwinter! that would be decidedly original, to say the least of it. And I think I have never done an original thing in all my life."

For a single instant the brown eyes looked their pity for him; generic pity it was, of the kind that mounting souls bestow upon the stagnant. But the subconscious lover in Winton made it personal to him, and it was the lover who spoke when he went on.

"That is a damaging admission, is it not? I am sorry to have to make it—to have to confirm your poor opinion of me."

"Did I say anything like that?" she protested.

"Not in words; but your eyes said it, and I know you have been thinking it all along. Don't ask me how I know it; I couldn't explain it if I should try. But you have been pitying me, in a way—you know you have."

The brown eyes were downcast. Frank and free-hearted after her kind as she was, Virginia Carteret was finding it a new and singular experience to have a man tell her baldly at their first meeting that he had read her inmost thought of him. Yet she would not flinch or go back.

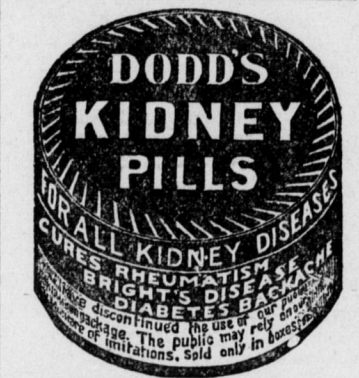
"There is so much to be done in the world, and so few to do the work," she pleaded in extenuation.

"And Adams has told you that I am not one of the few? It is true enough to hurt."

She looked him fairly in the eyes. "What is lacking, Mr. Winton—the spur?"

"Possibly," he rejoined. "There is no

Chandler's Joke on Conkling. Roscoe Conkling was a capital boxer and quite proud of his skill. One evening after considerable banter he induced Senator Chandler to "put on the gloves" with him. He played with Chandler for a few rounds, much to the discomfort of the downeaster. The latter bided his time and some time later quietly brought a professional pugilist to dinner where Conkling was a guest. In the course of the evening "Mr. Smith" was induced to engage in a boxing bout with Mr. Conkling. The professional danced around the senator, landing when and where he wished, playing with him as he would with a punching bag. The elegant New York senator was dazed, overwhelmed, humiliated, crushed. When he surrendered and called enough, as he did at last, Senator Chandler smiled blandly and presented the pugilist in his true colors.



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WINTON FOUND MISS CARTERET HOLDING HIS OVERCOAT.

think for a moment that I would—er—so far forget myself," he went on, fatuously. "What I had in mind was an exchange of seats with him. I thought it would be pleasanter for you; that is, I mean, pleasanter for—" He stopped short, seeing nothing but a more hopeless involvement ahead; also because he saw signs of distress or of mirth flying in the brown eyes.

"Oh, please!" she protested, in mock humility. "Do leave my vanity just the tiniest little cranny to creep out of, Mr. Winton. I'll promise to be good and not bore you too desperately."

"But let's ignore Mr. Adams," she went on, sweetly. "I am much more interested in this," touching the bill-of-fare. "Will you order for me, please? I like—"

When she had finished the list of her likings, Winton was able to smile at his lapse into the primitive, and gave the dinner order for two with a fair degree of coherence. After that they got on better. Winton knew Boston, and next to the weather Boston was the safest and most fruitful of the commonplaces. Nevertheless, it was not immortal; and Winton was just beginning to cast about for some other safe riding road for the shallop of small talk when Miss Carteret sent it adrift with malice aforethought.

It was somewhere between the entrees and the fruit, and the point of departure was Boston art.

"Speaking of art, Mr. Winton, will you tell me how you came to think of sketching in the mountains of Colorado at this time of year? I should think the cold would be positively prohibitive of anything like that."

Winton stared—open mouthed, it is to be feared.

"I—I beg your pardon," he stammered, with the inflection which takes its pitch from blank bewilderment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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