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BY SPECIAL DESIRE

I always thought her a pretty girl, and sweet and charming; but, from her own account, there seemed to be so many people in love with her already that I thought personally I should do much better by merely maintaining a friendly interest in her. Besides, I always knew that if ever I did fall in love it would be with quite another sort of girl—some one who would be much more prepared to render me homage than to expect it as her own due, which was Miss Courtney's way of going through life. Still, in spite of her many airs and graces, which rather amused me than otherwise, we remained good friends on the whole, and I am sure I gave her no possible excuse for thinking that I was one of her latest victims, for the simple reason that I had not in any sense succumbed to her fascinations, and never pretended to disguise the fact.

I had now known her for quite a long time. I should say it was about six months from our first meeting. At our last meeting, which had been the day before yesterday, I had introduced a great friend of mine to her—Bertie Beauclere. He was a tall, handsome fellow—no brains, certainly, but still the sort of type that I felt pretty sure would appeal to her. She really did seem to take an ardent fancy to him, which was another proof of my estimation of her character was a fairly correct one. I judged her to be frivolous with superficial show rather than a woman to love a man for his sterling worth, which is really the only kind



She invited me to work. I thought, as a matter of fact, that there are a good many men like myself, so that, when she used to enlarge to me sometimes upon her conquests, I invariably discounted half she said. I didn't believe she had a tithes of the success she made out. Here was I, for one, quite unscathed. It was really astonishing to me to see the way Beauclere made up to her, and I began to think there might be something in her charm after all. But then, "if she be not fair to me, what care I how fair she be!"

All the same, I felt vexed I had introduced Bertie to her. I didn't want to see her make a fool of my best friend. I didn't want to see her make a fool of herself, either, and the way she encouraged his idiotic compliments was a revelation to me. I had taken it for granted that she was a coquette, but I had never actually seen her in the role before, and I didn't know how these things were done until then, and I learnt a good lesson that afternoon. Bertie fetched and carried for her like a dog, and the other men seemed to go down like ninespins, too. I had really meant to look after her a little myself, but I realized my forethought was quite superfluous.

The next day I thought I would call on her and have a chat. I found her in what she is pleased to call her garden. She invited me to take my coat off and get to work. She seemed to enjoy my embarrassment at such an invitation. However I complied and after a few commonplace remarks I began to talk of the matter uppermost in my mind.

"You and Beauclere seemed to hit it off pretty well. I always thought he liked a bit of bluestocking—in fact preferred brains to beauty."
"You don't think me clever, then?" she asked.
"I didn't say that exactly. I think you are clever in your own way."
"But you think my beauty is in excess of my brains?"
"We won't say beauty," I deprecated. "That is a word only applicable to Greek goddesses. But you're certainly sweetly pretty."
"Oh," she said, with her eyes down, "you think me pretty, then?"
"I wasn't giving you any personal opinion," I replied, guardedly, "but what seems to be the generally accepted one."
"I don't know much about that," she said with a toss of her head. "Mr. Beauclere thinks me quite beautiful and clever."
"Beauclere's an ass!" I said hastily. And then, feeling frightened at the ominous silence which ensued, I enlarged my sentences by adding, "Why, he went down without a degree!"
"Perhaps he didn't want one, I'd sooner have a straight nose than a degree any day," she retorted scorn-

fully. "And scarcely any one here knows you are a valedictorian, though I'm sure I've told scores of people."

I rubbed my nose ruefully. I am forced to admit it is distinctly of the Wellingtonian order.

"It was nice of you to trouble to tell people," I said dubiously. "I'm sure you meant it kindly. But what- ever made you do that?"

"Oh, I felt bound to say something in your defence. At that garden party yesterday, as you were walking past, a girl I know said: 'Who is that awkward-looking fellow? Better not tell you what she thought herself. It might hurt your feelings.'"

I laughed.
"No. Tell me."
"That awkward, plain looking man, who is going about as if he thought all the women were in love with him?"
I roared.

"Did she think that out loud?" I asked. "I believe I can guess who the girl was."

"No, you can't guess," she said crossly, "because I shan't tell you. Naturally when I saw the impression you were creating I had to say out loud you were a valedictorian, as much for my own benefit as hers. It was a sort of excuse for you."

"And did it satisfy her?" I asked, admiring the way she spoke of herself in the third person.

"It was a consolation," she admitted.

"I shouldn't have thought Venus stood in need of consolation with Adonis at her feet, not to speak of other admirers."

"You seem to think, she said, pouting, "that I couldn't win love if I tried, or even if I didn't try."

"If one tries," I said sententiously, "one can get most things one wants."

"But of course you wouldn't fall into the trap," she asked merrily. "Leave me out, please. We settled that question long ago."

"Oh, I'm fairly satisfied with my progress since 'then,' she returned airily.

"My assurance was really amusing. You're quite welcome to my scalp when you get it," I returned, smiling.

"Oh, no," she said, shaking her head, "it's too clever a one for me to know what to do with! You are so clever," she went on, wistfully looking at me. "I didn't understand your last speech at the debate at all. You'll explain it to me some day, won't you?"

She drew near, and the wistful look became coaxing.

"I'm not clever!" I declared, feeling flattered by her appreciation. "I'm only a dogged sort of individual."

"Well, perhaps I'll have a try on my own account," she said, throwing herself into a chair, "only you must give me facilities."

"What am I to do?" I asked her.

"You mustn't use long words which I don't know the meaning of, and which only confuse me, and you must unbend a little and meet me on my own ground. And you mustn't wear a blue tie even if you have got blue eyes, because I like a red tie with a nice brown skin. And if you come to see me to-morrow I'll tell you if you're got the right color."

When I got home I looked in the glass with a sudden dislike for my blue tie. I bought a scarlet one, feeling sure she was right. I should never have thought of it myself; but then women understand these things so much better than men—she has such taste. I shaved myself carefully next day, criticising my sunburn, and wondering if she really meant I had a nice brown skin. The bright colored ties, so different from my usual sober tints, raised me in my own estimation, and I sallied forth with a feeling of assurance born of it.

It was still early, and I found her in the study arranging some flowers. My spirits were dashed by her reception of me.

"You don't seem to say you really walked through the town in that tie?" she asked.

"Yes, I did," I said, feeling worried. "Don't you like it? I thought you told me to get a red tie."

"Yes, but I never thought you would for my telling," she returned. "What ever made you do that?"

"Goodness knows!" I responded. Then I laughed awkwardly. "I think I can give you a reason, such as it is. It has just dawned on me. I'm like all the rest, I suppose. I love you!"

"Oh," she said, with a complacent little smile, "that was in the programme I mapped out for you."

"And you'll love me, too, won't you?" I said, coming up to her and leaning my hand on the back of her chair as I put the momentous question.

"Oh, no!" she said, looking down. "I'm not going to love you. That wasn't in my programme at all."

"Couldn't you include it," I said, "by special desire?"

"Whose desire?" she asked quickly.

"Mine."
"I don't believe," she said, tracing a pattern on the tablecloth, "that you really do love me."
"I'll try to prove," I said, "only you must give me facilities."
"What do you call facilities?"
"Well," I said, putting my arm around her waist, "this would be one."
"I—I don't mind giving that one," she said hesitatingly.

"It is quite sufficient," I declared, "to encourage me to take the rest."
—San Francisco Bulletin.

DIZZY AND THE "DUGHESSES"

And She Soon Learned "What They Were Waiting For."

When it was more expedient to evade a question than to give a definite answer Disraeli could do so with consummate tact. A story illustrative of this is told in the "Memoirs of Mary Duchess of Aek."

The great statesman was fond of the princess and admired her grasp of political problems; but he never allowed himself to be charmed into telling Cabinet secrets. One evening at dinner, during a crisis in foreign affairs, Princess Mary, who was puzzled at the inaction of the government, turned to him and said:

"What are we waiting for, Mr. Disraeli?"

The Prime Minister paused for a moment to take up the menu, and, looking at the Princess, gravely replied:

"Mutton and potatoes, madam."

"The Latest Books."
The Masquerader. By Chauncey Depew.

The Fool's Errand. By Francis Loomis.

You Can Never Tell. By George W. Perkins.

Three Men in a Boat. By Hyde, Alexander and McCall.

The Coming of the Tide. By Jerome.

A Corner in Women. By Joseph Smith.

The Call of the Wild. By Lawson.

Not This Sort Anyhow.
Miss Flora (forty-five, homely, and unmarried)—Oh, Mr. Blunt, I had such a strange dream last night.

Mr. Blunt—What was it, Miss Flora?

Miss Flora—I dreamed that we were married and on our wedding tour. Did you ever have such a dream?

Mr. Blunt (energetically)—No, indeed. I never had the nightmare in my life!

A Nonentity.
"Beg pardon, but are you a waiter?"

"No."
"Private detective?"

"No."
"Not a guest?"

"What are you then?"

"Oh, I am only the man who is giving the party."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

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The First Conspirator—Say nothing to de Tankville.

The Second Conspirator—But he's as honest as the day.

"Aye, but he's married."
"Tis True."
"And talks in his sleep."
"S death!"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Enjoyed It.
"How does your daughter like Chopin?" inquired the visitor of Mrs. Goldrox.

"Just splendid!" exclaimed Mrs. Goldrox.

"We had some for dinner today. I think it's just lovely boiled, don't you?"—Milwaukee Sentinel.

Still Unanswered.
Mr. Wallace (impressively)—Ah, here is another story of a man who killed himself because his home was unhappy.

Mrs. Wallace (sweetly)—And did that make his home happy, or does the paper not say?

Too Small.
Great Magnate—What! You want a million! I can give you but one hundred thousand.

College President—That won't do. As long as we're going to accept tainted money, we must have enough to pay for the damage to our reputation.

His Job in Hades.
The latest Shade—When on earth I was an automobilist.

His Satanic Majesty—Ah! then please be kind enough to crawl under that furnace and see what's the matter with the grate; it seems to be kinked up.—Milwaukee Wisconsin.

He Certainly Did.
"Just back from Europe, are you? Did you have a rough passage over?"

"Several of 'em. I had to llok the steward three or four times in order to get any attention at all."—Chicago Tribune.

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