



Cherub Devine

By
SEWELL FORD

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CHAPTER VIII.

WEDNESDAY morning arrived in some miraculously abrupt fashion. It found them sitting in a sunny corner of the library. The Cherub was smoking one of his fat, black cigars by special request of the countess, and he was regarding with approving eyes her slim white fingers as they employed an ivory needle in the fashioning of some utterly useless affair that looked like a lot of holes edged with spider webs.

She was wearing some kind of a house gown, with lace falling alluringly away from her white neck and rounded arms. Somehow or other the Cherub felt that he was enjoying a rare privilege. He was inclined to accept the gift humbly and in silence, fearful lest it be taken suddenly away from him.

And then came Eppings to announce the presence of Mr. Nicholas Walloway, adding that his errand was urgent and important.

"Perhaps I had better take my work into another room," suggested the countess, starting to rise.

"No, no! Don't disturb the cobwebs. Nick's business isn't half so important as he thinks it is. Bring him right in, Eppings."

"But I had rather not!" Whatever her protest might have been, it was cut short by the prompt entrance of young Mr. Walloway. He stopped abruptly, and it seemed as if his gray eyes stared hungrily at the pretty picture she made, standing there in the morning sunshine. The color went from his cheeks, and his lips were tensely drawn.

"Well, Nick, you see I'm still rusticated. Great, isn't it?" smiled the Cherub.

With an obvious effort young Mr. Walloway shook off his embarrassment. Acknowledging the Countess Vecchi with a stiffly formal bow, he turned to the Cherub.

"You must forgive me, Devine, for hunting you up like this, but I thought I ought to do it. It's a matter of business. Couldn't we?" And he looked suggestively at the door.

"I haven't any office here, Nick, and this room is as good as any other. You mustn't mind, countess. Any business I do today will not take long."

"But"—began Mr. Walloway.

"Oh, let's have it, Nick. Bottom dropped out of something?" The Cherub was smiling amiably.

"I rather think you would have thought so if you had been on the floor just before closing yesterday. The Bates-Rimmer crowd is after P., Z. and N. I believe they mean to gobble it up."

"Ah, that gang, eh?" This time the Cherub showed his white teeth when he smiled.

"They began it as soon as they found you were not on deck, and they've been at it ever since. Your brokers had ten clerks out looking for you."

"Got nervous, did they?"

"Nervous! Why, man, didn't you see where P., Z. and N. closed yesterday?"

"Haven't read a paper since I've been here, Nick, and don't intend to. When you go back tell my brokers to keep cool."

"But the Bates-Rimmer crowd mean mischief, Cherub. There's a lot of them in a big pool, and they're hammering your railroad holdings right and left. Some one has been leaking information, and they're hitting you where it will hurt. When I saw how things were going I began wiring you. Didn't you get the messages?"

"I knew those must be from you, Nick; no one else knew where I was."

"But why didn't you answer?"

"Well, I didn't read them, for one thing; I was too busy. We were having a bully time, the countess and I, feeding the swans."

"Feeding the swans!" Mr. Nicholas Walloway made a gesture indicating despair.

"Did you ever watch swans squabble for sweet crackers, Nick?"

"Crackers! You might just as well have thrown bunches of thousand dollar bills at them. Why, Cherub, P., Z. and N. opened at 39% this morning. As soon as I found you hadn't shown up I started for you. I had my car meet me at the station, and it's outside now. We can just make the 11:30 back, and perhaps you'll be in time to stop them before it's all over. Come on; let's start."

"Sorry, Nick, but I couldn't think of it. I'm taking a holiday, you see."

"What! Do you mean to say that you're not coming?" Mr. Walloway gazed doubtfully at the Cherub.

"Not today, Nick."

"Oh, I say, Cherub, don't be an"—He checked himself with a swift glance at the countess, whose brown eyes instantly sought the cobwebby stuff in her lap. "Don't be foolish," he continued. "I haven't told you all—the worst, you know."

"Well, you can tell me all about it tomorrow, Nick."

"Tomorrow! Great Scott, man, you don't understand! They mean to fin-

ish the job today. Tomorrow might as well be next year. Why, you're barely a fighting chance left now, and I don't know that you have that. The street is wild with it."

"I guess things are not as bad as all that, Nick. I'll be down bright and early in the morning."

Mr. Walloway put both hands on Mr. Devine's shoulders.

"Cherub," he said, speaking with an effort at calmness, "you're too good a man to be beaten by a gang like that. You must come back. You have friends—lots of them. We'll get them together and go after that crowd. Besides, it's the old Bates-Rimmer crowd," urged Walloway. "You know them. They're like a pack of mangy wolves."

"Yes; you're right, Nick. They've snapped at my heels many a time."

"And now they're at your throat, Cherub. Come on, won't you?"

For an instant the Cherub hesitated. Then he jumped to his feet. As he



"YES, YES! GO, AND—AND SMASH THEM."

did so he met the earnest eyes of the Countess Vecchi. Until then he seemed to have forgotten her presence.

"There!" exclaimed the Cherub. "I had almost forgotten. I promised to drive you into the village this afternoon to buy more stuff for making cobwebs, didn't I, countess?"

Mr. Walloway threw up his hands.

"Devine," he said hoarsely, "I'll wait outside in my car for just three minutes and a half. If you are not there by the end of that time I'll have to go back without you."

"All right, Nick. Much obliged for coming."

"But you'll send some word, even if you don't go, won't you?"

"You might give my regards to old Rimmer."

Mr. Devine had followed his friend to the door. Now he returned, to find that the countess had been looking expectantly after him. The cobwebby affair had been dropped hastily to the floor and lay tangled at her feet.

"You are making this sacrifice to keep me from leaving the house that was once my home?" she said. "Then I must tell you that I shall not accept it. You must go at once."

"Oh, those fellows are always ready for that sort of thing. I suppose they will do more or less damage, but I guess I can stand it."

"You must go back with Mr. Walloway. Please, go!"

"No; I can't."

"Can't! Why can you not go?"

"Because—well, because I think more of showing you that I'm not a born gambler than I do for all the railroad stock in the country. That's why."

This came straight from the heart of Cherub Devine. And the countess could see and hear. She understood.

"Oh, oh!" There was surprise in the cry, perhaps joy. For an instant she hid her face in her hands. When she took them away the spots of color were gleaming beneath her brown eyes. Shyly and very demurely she came to him with clasped hands and gazed up at him as if to search for the truth in his face.

"I believe you," she whispered. "Oh, I do believe in you! But I want you to go. Go this time, to please me."

"Honest? Are you sure you want me to go?" He gripped his hands tightly at his side as he looked at her.

"Yes, yes! Go, and—smash them." The fighting spirit of all the old Continental Hewingtons must have blazed up and burned anew in her brown eyes. "Don't let them beat you. Smash them hard!" She made a gesture with her soft, white hands to illustrate what she wished him to do. The Cherub smiled.

"But you will not run away while I am gone, will you?" he demanded.

"Perhaps not—if you smash them hard enough. Hurry! He is starting!"

She whirled him about by the shoul-

ders and pushed him toward the door. "Hold on, Nick, I'm coming!" shouted the Cherub.

The countess ran down the steps and tossed a package to him.

"I almost forgot," she said breathlessly. "I wanted to ask you to sell those for me. They're some stocks or bonds or something, and I want them sold. That's all."

The inner works of the vehicle began to whirl violently, the big car leaped forward, and a moment later the Countess Vecchi could see only a little cloud of dust that showed through the trees lining the road to the village.

It remained for a train boy to disclose just how the public viewed the crisis in Mr. Devine's affairs. Halfway to the city the boy came aboard with the early afternoon editions. From the headlines it was evident that the disturbance in Wall Street had become a popular topic, the sensation of the hour.

One enterprising journal indulged in a half page cartoon, which was supposed to represent the situation. It was entitled "Plucking a Cherub." A scandalous caricature of Mr. Devine it was, showing him most inadequately clothed, but possessed of a pair of wings from which a group of bad boys were gleefully pulling what few feathers remained, while the victim rubbed his fists into tear leaking eyes and made no attempt at defense.

"Oh, my, my!" and Mr. Devine roared mirthfully over the cartoon.

"It would be funnier if it wasn't so d—d near the truth!" growled Walloway. "Of course I don't know just how deep you've plunged on this P., Z. and N. deal, but I gathered that you'd gone in rather steep."

"Yes," admitted the Cherub more soberly, "I have. In fact, it's the biggest thing I ever tackled."

Nick Walloway gazed at him incredulously. "And right in the middle of it you take a day off to feed the swans at Hewington Acres?"

"I'd take a year off if it was necessary."

Young Mr. Walloway paled a little. "Devine," he began hesitatingly, "it's—the countess, isn't it?"

The pink in the Cherub's chubby cheeks faded behind his ears.

"The countess!" he exclaimed. "Why, she's way out of my class, Nick! Oh, she's about a hundred per cent too good for me—aristocratic, refined, old family and all that. Why, she wouldn't look at me, Nick! You know she wouldn't."

"I know that you've been looking at her and—"

Something was interfering with the speech of young Mr. Walloway. However, he mastered the difficulty. Suddenly reaching out, he grasped the Cherub's right hand and gave it a crushing grip. "I—I wish you luck, old man."

Perhaps Mr. Devine was a little surprised by this unexpected display of emotion from the usually reserved young man. If he was he brushed it aside.

"Luck nothing, Nick! Much obliged for your good wishes, my boy, but I haven't the ghost of a show. Now, if I was a chap like you there'd be some hope for me. Say, Nick, I wonder you never took a—"

"Beg pardon, Devine, but let's stick to the point. I should not presume to intrude my advice on personal matters, but if I were you I would drop P., Z. and N. until you can give your whole time and thought to the business. Why don't you pull out?"

The Cherub ceased to stare dreamily. "Nick," he said abruptly, "I'll tell you something. I've changed my plans. I'm going to do something besides speculate in that stock. I'm going to buy that road, and I've got to get control before next Friday noon."

"Cherub, you're crazy! It's impossible! Why, the Bates-Rimmer crowd scooped in two-fifths of the stock yesterday, so they say. You know what that means—they'll wreck it, wring it dry. The small outside holders have been tumbling over each other to unload. See here!"—and he pointed to a newspaper on his knee—"fifty lots offered during the first half hour today and the quotations dropping by quarter points. Why, you can't stop 'em, man. They've got you on the run."

"Yes, yes, it looks like it, I know. But wait until I've had a chance at them. Let me think this thing over."

Mr. Nicholas Walloway withdrew into his corner of the smoking compartment to stare absentmindedly out of the window. The Cherub was soon apparently engaged in a profound contemplation of the end of his cigar. You would not have guessed, to look at him, that he was considering anything more serious than the flavor of the tobacco. Not until they were on the ferry did he break the silence. Then, briefly and crisply, he outlined his plan of action. Nick Walloway heard him through with a glow of admiration in his eyes.

"If you can do that, Cherub, you'll win," he declared; "but if the scheme slips up—"

"Then I'm down and out. But it's got to go through," and Mr. Devine's mouth lost some of its cherubic curves. "You'll do your part, Nick. Oh, it will be easier than you think! They'll never suspect you're in it. And don't try to report until 11 tonight. Then you know where to come—private dining room, tenth floor. I'll have 'em all there at 11."

When Cherub Devine appeared on the floor a half hour before closing time the rumors of his defeat were passing from mouth to mouth. The Bates-Rimmer retainers were indulging in a war dance of victory.

Silently the Cherub passed to his accustomed corner and began tearing pieces of paper into small bits with the same calm, unburied air of abstraction as usual. Many glances were bestowed on him most of them en-

vious, a few sympathetic, some triumphantly vindictive. Everywhere he was regarded as a beaten man. Now and then a gray uniformed floor boy handed him messages, which he read leisurely and as leisurely reduced to fragments. Just as the session closed Pop Rimmer passed near him and turned to favor him with an apologetic leer. The Cherub blinked unresponsively. He seemed too dazed by misfortune even to disguise his chagrin.

A somewhat different Cherub Devine it was, however, who met his half dozen lieutenants that night behind the seclusion of safely locked doors on the tenth floor of a gaudy big hotel. He had become an alert, masterful, confident person, who thrilled those about him by a revelation of unguessed resources and unsuspected reserves of force.

The climax of the struggle was reached during Thursday. Along about the noon hour the members of the Bates-Rimmer combination were forced to admit that the Cherub was still in the fight. They made the admission with profane unctious. They did not understand why it was so. They only knew that in some mysterious manner their triumphant career had been checked.

Thus it went. All that afternoon the contest waged. Now the price of P., Z. and N. stocks slumped desperately, now it skyrocketed amazingly. Other stocks were affected. The whole list quaked and quivered as the struggling giants of finance wrestled heedlessly about the arena.

Piety smoking a fat, black cigar and tilting comfortably back in one of Walloway & Co.'s mahogany office chairs, Cherub Devine received bulletins from the front. That was the position in which Nick Walloway found him when, after the day was over, he rushed in, haggard of face and with an anxious look in his eyes.

"We lack fifty shares," he announced briefly.

"Then that's fifty we must get tomorrow morning," responded the Cherub.

"It can't be done," declared Walloway, dropping hopelessly into a chair. "The country has been raked with a fine toothed comb. We can't get hold of another share. I'm sorry, Cherub, but I've done my best for you. The P., Z. and N.'s annual meeting is held at noon tomorrow, and the Bates-Rimmer crowd has practically got us beaten now. If we only had fifty shares more we could wipe them off the face of the earth."

"You're as bad as the countess," chuckled the Cherub amiably. Then as this reflection recalled something to his mind he thrust his hand into an inner pocket of his coat and drew out a long envelope, at which he stared blankly.

A twinge of guilt pricked his conscience. There—he had completely forgotten the first errand with which she had entrusted him. Doubtless it was to exchange this stock for cash that she had been so anxious to come to the city. Perhaps she had been expecting a remittance by every mail. Shamefacedly he opened the envelope to make an idle examination of the contents. At the first glimpse his expression changed. Hastily he ran through the documents, then shoved them back into the envelope.

A moment later he asked quietly, "How many shares did you say we lacked, Nick?"

"Fifty," gloomily responded Mr. Walloway, his head between his hands.

"And about how much would they be worth to me just now?"

"Worth! Why, anything—three hundred, five hundred, a thousand dollars a share if you could get them—which you can't."

"No?" responded the Cherub. "Well, what do you say to those?" and he tossed the long envelope to Walloway.

That young man took his head from between his hands and glanced reproachfully at the Cherub. It was no time for joking. But he took the packet and began a spiritless investigation. Suddenly he jumped to his feet.

"Devine!" he exclaimed hoarsely. "These are P., Z. and N. preferred!"

"Sure!" The Cherub was watching him with calm interest.

"And there are twenty-five—fifty—one hundred shares!"

"Right again, Nick."

"But where on earth—Cherub, are you a wizard?"

"Just make a note of it that I owe the Countess Vecchi a hundred thousand dollars. Guess I can afford to buy the market a little on her account, eh?"

"Afford to! Why, Devine, this gives you control of the road. You've got the Bates-Rimmer crowd under your thumb. You've won, man; you've won!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

To Walk Well.

Don't drag your feet or fling them or lag or stride. Learn to glide into a room gracefully.

It is impossible for a woman to be awkward in her walk if she walks straight and keeps her knees stiff. The act of swinging the feet out gives one a graceful gait.

Walk slowly. Skirts wind around your calves when you walk rapidly, and all semblance of grace is lost. Walk in a leisurely manner, as if you were a princess, not a hurried, worried, overworked woman.

Don't swing your shoulders. Don't swing your arms.

Don't twist yourself in sinuous motions. Don't contort. Don't wiggle. Hold your chin in. This is the most important thing of all.

Don't walk or look or act like an old person. There are no old persons in these days. Touch the ground first with the balls of your feet, with the heels striking an instant later.

Selections

THE APPLE CELLAR.

How to Make and to Keep it as Neat and Sweet as It Should Be.

An apple cellar should be the tidiest and sweetest corner of the house. Nothing else should ever be stored in it. Its walls should be at least twenty inches thick and it should have abundant light. All summer it should be open to draughts of air and kept free from any decay.

There should be no mouldy boards nor any smell of mildew; in other words, the air should be fit to breathe. When the apples are stored the draught should be stopped and when steady cold sets in you should shut the cellar tight and let it stay tightly closed until May.

You can place such a cellar as this conveniently under part of your barn or under your carriage house, says Outing, only there should be no stable adjacent. The floor overhead should be covered with autumn leaves spread thickly to prevent any change of atmosphere below. The thermometer all winter should stand at about 33—just above freezing. Put your apples in shallow bins, cement the floor to keep out rats and if barrels are used set them up somewhat from the floor.

Presentiment is Verified.

A remarkable story of a presentiment and its verification comes from Farnham, England. Mr. H. Harland of Aldershot, whilst out driving in the adjoining district of Farnborough, was seized with the feeling that something serious had happened to one of his children, who was staying with its grandfather at Farnham. He immediately telephoned to the grandfather, and was informed that nothing had occurred. Mr. Harland, however, was unable to get rid of the impression, and he telephoned to his wife, who cycled at once to Farnham. On the way she overtook a party who were taking her child to the grandfather's house from Moor park, where it had fallen into a deep stream and had a narrow escape.

Rather Clever, What?

While the proverbial Englishman may not be able to distinguish a joke in less than two weeks' time he often says something to arouse the risibilities. Among the passengers on one of the big ocean liners lately coming from Cherbourg was a Britisher with an appetite for information on topics of every conceivable description. Wherever knowledge was being disseminated he was to be found.

One day he overheard another passenger remark that the captain had said they should see Sandy Hook with in twenty-four hours.

"Sandy Hook!" exclaimed the Englishman; "and who's he; some prominent Scotchman in New York?"

Valued Reform in Turkey.

One of the reforms which have been placed to the credit of the Young Turkish party in the Ottoman empire is the abolition of the "red ticket regulation." Until this took place a red card was issued to a Jew on arrival in Palestine, the possession of which entitled the holder to a three months' residence. If the red ticket man wished to remain longer, the credential had to be renewed, and this naturally led to abuses in the nature of graft. The abolition of this restrictive measure was urged upon the authorities by Israel Zangwill.

Horse Dies from Grief.

Grieving over the death of his master, Rob, an old horse owned by the late Capt. Theodore Sammons of the Henlopen life saving station in Lewes, Del., refused to eat anything or even lift his head. The animal lay down in his stall and was found dead next morning. Bob had been driven for years by Capt. Sammons as he made his trips to the life saving station or into town. He would allow none but the captain to feed or take care of him.

High Record for Balloons.

The record of altitude in aeronautics has been attained by Sig. Pionacza and Lieut. Mina, in an ascension made from Milan, says the Scientific American. Their great spherical balloon, the Albatross, carried 2,600 pounds of ballast at the start and reached an elevation of 38,700 feet, or more than seven miles. The aeronauts experienced a temperature of -25.6 degrees Fahrenheit, and landed near Milan three and one-half hours after they started.

Unquestionable Probity.

A housewife who had met with unpleasant experiences through a dishonest servant took the precaution before filling the vacancy, to write to the applicant's last employer for explicit information as to the girl's honesty: "I believe Mollie to be thoroughly honest," came the prompt reply. "I certainly never knew her to take anything, not even my orders. She didn't even take pains."

Houses 4,000 Years Old.

Pole dwellings 4,000 years old, similar to those discovered in the north of Switzerland, have been unearthed in a swamp on the plateau east of Lake Vetter, 120 miles northwest of Stockholm. The excavations disclosed petrified apples, wheat kernels and nuts, pottery, flint and horn implements, amber ornaments and wild boar teeth, all in good state of preservation.

A HORSE'S TOE NAILS.

His Hoofs Play the Part and Grow a Third of an Inch a Month.

Few persons realize that a horse's hoof is really the same thing as the toe nails of human beings or of animals having toes. The horn of a hoof grows just as a toe nail does.

The hoof grows more rapidly in unshod horses than in those wearing shoes, and it grows faster in horses which are well groomed and well fed. But on the average the horn grows about a third of an inch a month.

Hind hoofs grow faster than fore hoofs. The toe of the hoof being the longest part, it takes longer for the horn to grow down there than at the heel. For instance, the toe will grow entirely down in from eleven to thirteen months, while the heel will grow down in from three to five months.

As the new horn grows out cracks or defects in the old gradually work down to where they can be cut off, just as with human finger nails you can watch the progress of a bruise from the root to the tip.—New York Sun.

Arizona Temperature.

The greatest daily change of temperature to be found on the earth's surface is in Arizona. There is frequently a change of 80 degrees in 12 hours.

Animals of the Earth

About 2,500 different kinds of animals are known on earth—that is, warm-blooded, milk-giving creatures like our common domestic animals.

New Zealand Half Holiday

In New Zealand everybody is bound by law to take a weekly half-holiday, and there must be no shirking the obligation.

Bad Headache?

How your head throbs and snaps! But your head is not to blame. The trouble is lower down. Your stomach is all out of order and your liver is sick. You know you are constipated—perhaps you have neglected it for days. The poisonous bile is getting into your system. Your whole body rebels. You feel sick all over, but your head suffers most.

Don't fool or temporize with a bilious headache. Don't take harmful drugs which only deaden the pain. Start right. Begin at the cause. Stimulate your liver and bowels to proper action by taking Smith's Pineapple and Butternut Pills. They are a natural laxative and a corrective tonic. They purify and invigorate the blood. They enable the system to get rid of the poison which is making all this disturbance. In a few hours you will feel much better. In the morning life will be worth living again. Keep this up for a few days and your headaches will disappear. Physicians use and recommend. They form no habit. You should always keep them on hand. These little vegetable pills will ward off many ills.

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