



Cherub Devine

By
SEWELL FORD

Copyright, 1909, by Mitchell Kennerley

CHAPTER X.

NICHOLAS squirmed a little in his chair.

"Mr. Devine is in many ways a—er—a remarkable man."

"If he were only something besides a stock gambler. If he would only apply his talents to something different."

"I hadn't thought of his talents as being misdirected," he said slowly. "But he has evidently been listening to some one who thinks as you do, for he tells me that he has given up speculating in stocks."

"He—he has given up? Why? When?"

"At noon today, when he obtained control of the P. Z. and N. railroad and became its president."

"A railroad president? Why, that is quite—quite respectable, isn't it?"

"Almost," gravely assented Mr. Walloway.

"Isn't he splendid?" exclaimed the countess, clasping her hands. "And don't you think, Nicholas, now that he has—well, reformed—that he will be asked about among nice people?"

"My dear countess," began Nicholas, once more assuming the judicial pose, "you must not forget that he is still Cherub Devine. As a successful manipulator of stock he is entitled to respect; as a railroad president he will be a financial power to be reckoned with; as to his social fitness, that is a matter to which I have not given the attention which you appear to."

"Am I being lectured, Nicholas Walloway?" asked the countess demurely.

"I trust we have known each other long enough, Adele, for me to offer a friendly suggestion. But if you resent such—"

"Oh, no! Go on, Nicholas. What else about Mr. Devine?"

Young Mr. Walloway flushed under the subtle mockery of her eyes.

"Nothing more, countess," and he bowed stiffly. "Only I did not know that you considered Mr. Devine a—a—"

The countess laughed lightly. "Oh, I've told him he wasn't."

"You—you said that to the Cherub?"

The countess nodded.

"And he—what did he?"

"He said he had never claimed to be a gentleman."

"Ah!" Young Mr. Walloway seemed to have gained a new viewpoint. His exclamation was one of relief. Now he could understand the attitude of the countess toward Cherub Devine. It was merely an impersonal interest which she had taken in a somewhat picturesque public character whom she had chanced to see at close range.

"I beg pardon for my suggestion," he went on. "I see you know the Cherub better than I thought. Interesting chap, isn't he? He has his good points, too—oh, really, has a code of honor all his own that he sticks to as faithfully as if it were—well, the accepted code. And he is generous to those whom he fancies."

"Is he, indeed?"

There was an encouraging note in her tone.

"Oh, extremely! Now, in the matter of buying those shares, they were never actually quoted at that figure, you know, but he needed them very badly, and he fixed the price accordingly, whereas he might have purchased them for a fifth as much and still paid you the highest market rate."

"Then he practically makes me a gift of this?" And the countess fluttered the pink cheek disdainfully.

"Oh, no! Had I been selling the shares for you, knowing how badly he needed them, I could have forced him to pay even more. No, it was a business transaction, but generosity was displayed none the less. And his offer to hand over Hewington Acres at your own terms—that is another example. Of course he doesn't want the place on his hands, but he could readily dispose of it at a profit. Evidently he wishes you to retain possession, however."

"So it would appear," mused the countess. "I wonder why?"

Nicholas pursed his lips quizzically. "I suppose it has not occurred to you that he might be—well, interested in you?"

The countess eyed him with cool unconcern.

"I'm afraid you are making rather an impudent guess, Mr. Walloway."

"But it's no guess. Devine told me himself—that is, he as good as confessed as much."

Her calm pose was ruffled. Color flashed into her cheeks betrayingly.

"Do you mean to imply that he talked to you of—of me?" she demanded.

"Well, I will admit that I drew him out. I could see it plain enough, you know, and when I asked him he didn't attempt to deny, although he did have the grace to protest his own unworthiness. Good of him, wasn't it? Oh, yes, he has improved the opportunities you gave him! He has had the audacity to fall in love with you, countess. My congratulations on your conquest!"

He held his head at a knowing angle.

"Then why did he send you here today instead of coming himself?"

"Unaccountable. Perhaps he flunked at the last moment. He may have



"THEN HE PRACTICALLY MAKES ME A GIFT OF THIS?"

thought you would not accept his favors if offered directly, so he asked me to come. Me! Isn't that rich?"

"In just what way?" And so quietly did she ask it that Nicholas should have had warning.

"Why, he doesn't know how long I have waited for just such a chance. But you know, Adele, and now—"

He had risen and was approaching the countess with outstretched arms. All that was needed to complete the happy reunion was for her to throw herself into them. However, that was not precisely what happened.

"Nicholas," said the countess reprovingly, "sit down."

"But if you will only just listen to—"

"Please sit down, Nicholas."

Nicholas sat.

"You used to tell me, Adele, that you loved?"

"Did I? It's no wonder, for you were forever mooning around asking me if I did."

"I can imagine no reason why you should refuse to hear me say that I love you and—"

"Well, there is a reason. If there wasn't I should invent one."

"I regret very deeply," he began, with great humility, "that anything I have just said—"

"Now, that's better," said the Countess Vecchi, relenting cheerfully. "When you start regretting very deeply you don't in the least mean it, but you're on the right track. Now forgive me for bringing you up so sharply and let us finish our business. Ought I to accept all this money for those shares?"

"Wouldn't it seem rather strange for you to demand less than is offered?"

"You're right. Well, I accept, then. And I do want to buy back our home here. But I feel I ought to deal directly with Mr. Devine himself in that matter. You will see that he comes, will you?"

Mr. Walloway, assuming an air of stately gloom, stalked away from Hewington Acres. By the time dinner was over he had quite recovered his usual poise and felt equal to the task of calling on Mr. Devine.

"Well?" queried the Cherub eagerly.

"How did you come on with the countess?"

"Excellent!" said Mr. Walloway, thinking only of the business he had been asked to transact. "It's all settled. She accepts."

"What's that, Nick? Accepts who?"

"Why, the check. She will buy back the property too."

"Oh! Is that all?" An unmistakable sigh of satisfaction came over the wires.

"She wants to see you about it, though. Says she must deal direct. Wants to know if you can come to-morrow."

"Why, sure I can. But say, Nick, are you certain there's nothing else—no congratulations coming from me?"

"Why—er—you might congratulate the countess on making a good bargain if you wish."

This was indefinite, but convincing.

"Poor old Nick!" said the Cherub as he hung up the receiver. "He's had his tryout, though. Tomorrow it'll be up to me."

Cherub Devine, having resolutely slashed away all the entangling mesh of business cares, went smilingly out to Hewington Acres and into the presence of the Countess Vecchi.

"Well, countess, we smashed 'em, didn't we? And you had a hand in it, after all. Nick told you, eh?"

Evidently she had been standing there in the window recess in the library waiting for him. Whether by accident or design, it proved to be a very effective pose, for the slender gracefulness of her dark robed figure came

out in strong relief against the dull green window hangings, and the melow afternoon light showed the hint of color in the long oval of her cheek.

"Yes, Nicholas has told me, Mr. Devine—told me all about everything. In fact, he made quite a full confession."

Decidedly this was not a casual opening. Her tone was cool, almost cynical. Something was wrong.

"I hope Nick didn't overdo the thing, countess. Did he?"

"I'm sure I don't know, Mr. Devine. That all depends upon how much you intended him to say."

"Well, he told you about how handy those shares came in?"

"Yes."

"And the price he got for them and how I wanted you to buy back the house?"

"All of those things Nicholas explained fully."

"And it's all right, isn't it? Any hitch over details?"

The countess walked to a table and picked up a long document envelope.

"I merely wish to understand clearly your proposals," she was saying. "You sent Mr. Walloway here to offer me this check and an opportunity to buy back Hewington Acres for the price you paid. Is that correct?"

"That's O. K., countess."

"Also you confided to Mr. Walloway that you were—that you entertained certain sentiments of regard for me. You called it love, I believe."

"Eh?" ejaculated the astonished Cherub. "Say, Nick didn't give me away like that, did he? Honest, he wasn't chump enough to let on that I said—"

"To be made the topic of such an intimate disclosure and by a person whom I have known for such a short time under such peculiar conditions, you can fancy perhaps that I'd rather not dwell on it."

"Gent Scott, yes!" groaned the Cherub, beginning to wipe his forehead. "But give me a show here, countess. I'm trying to think how I came to do the slave act. Oh, I must have done it, all right, but how—"

"I'm afraid I can't share your interest in that problem. Let us not go into it any deeper, if you please. You told Mr. Walloway, and then—"

"Ah, I remember. He wished me luck. Wasn't that nice of him when—"

"When what?" spurred on the countess.

"Why, when—when he was in the same boat."

"So Mr. Walloway exchanged confidences, did he? Delightful!"

"No, no! Nick didn't say a word. I found it out by accident. Saw your picture in his locket, you know, and I'd heard about how he and you used to—"

"Really! I'm glad that there was some reserve in that discussion. Was it held on a street corner or in a hotel lobby or—"

"Train!" groaned the Cherub.

"Ah," said the countess. "The other passengers must have been entertained. Did any of them offer advice?"

The Cherub sank into a chair.

"That's right," he observed. "Keep it up. I deserve it."

"Remorse," commented the countess, "is always touching, but it arrives so late in the day. I am curious on only one point. Having made your confession to Mr. Walloway and having learned of his—well, his attitude toward me—what prompted you to send him here?"

"Why, I thought Nick ought to have his chance."

"You—you thought?" The Countess Vecchi appeared to grasp his meaning but slowly. Her brown eyes no longer resembled any kind of fireworks. They regarded him with wide wonder.

"You see," continued the Cherub earnestly, "he's so much nearer your kind of a chap—in your class and all that—and I didn't know how you stood, you know. Why, it didn't look just right for me to butt in before—well, before you and Nick had a show to make it up if you wanted to. That's all. It was only right."

The silence which had followed his explanation lasted for several moments, and when the Countess Vecchi again spoke the clear cut sharpness of her tone was somewhat softened.

"I understand. I believe I have been told by some one that you had a code of honor that was all your own. Well, have you heard what use Mr. Walloway made of his opportunity?"

"I had him call me up last night. I couldn't ask him right out, you know, but—"

"More delicacy!" murmured the countess.

"Oh, that's nothing for me! But I made him say enough so I could guess how he came out. You told him he wouldn't do, didn't you?"

The shoulders of the Countess Vecchi lifted a trifle at this.

"I tried to be entirely frank with Mr. Walloway, as I am now trying to be frank with you, Mr. Devine. I wish to ask you if my acceptance of this check is a purely business transaction."

"Why, sure!"

"You would have paid as much to any one else?"

"Been glad to."

"And about your offer of Hewington Acres?"

"Straight business."

"Then I accept both proposals." She paused, then spoke softly. "Good afternoon, Mr. Devine."

As he had found her, so she stood when he turned to leave the library. About her erect figure there was almost the suggestion of a highly strung bow, which he took to mean that she was immensely displeased with him. What a mess he had made of everything, to be sure!

Absorbed in these uncomfortable reflections, the Cherub narrowly escaped a collision with the solemnly alert Eppings, who had stalked forward to open the door.

The Cherub hesitated. Was it his characteristic reluctance to acknowledge defeat or a sense of not having lived up to his own code? He might at least have told her he was sorry.

"Wait a minute, Eppings. Guess I've forgotten something."

A few resolute strides took him back into the room where he had left her. Perhaps she had not gone. No; there she was, but—Why, what was up now? It was quite obvious that the Countess Vecchi had buried her face in the window draperies and was leaning against the wall of the room.

Moreover, from the convulsive rise and fall of her shoulders it looked as if she were sobbing.

"Oh!" As she wheeled quickly toward him, saw who it was, realized that he was standing there looking at her, she dabbed furtively at her brimming eyes with a wholly inadequate handkerchief. "I—I thought," she went on, "that you had—had—"

"Yes, but I came back. You're not crying, are you?"

"Crying! Certainly not!"

"No?"

"Well, if I was, I'm not now. I shall not again—ever."

"That's right. You see, countess, I'm going to feel bad enough about this fluke of mine to do for both of us. That's what I came back to say. I don't know just how to put it, but if there's anything I can do to make you forget that there's such a person as Cherub Devine I'll do it, even if it comes to jumping off the dock."

"There—there isn't anything."

"Well, maybe it'll be some satisfaction to you to know that I feel like—well, like five-eighths off and nothing bid. Honest, I never meant to tell Nick. I was just going to—"

The Cherub faltered.

"You were going to do what?" suggested the countess.

"Why, to spring it on you. Oh, I can guess what you would say to it, but—but—See here, countess, I could not help it. You're the best I ever knew. Just seeing you these few days made things seem worth while. Why, I didn't know what I was living for before. And then before I knew how far I'd gone I was seeing nothing but you. I wish I could tell you all about that countess."

"No, no; you mustn't!" Again she turned to the draperies, hiding her flushed face in her hands.

"Maybe if you hadn't read so many of those newspaper yarns about me—"

"It isn't that; truly it is not," came in muffled tones from the countess.

"Of course I can see where I don't measure up with the kind of men you've known, and I tried to keep that in mind all the time, but—well, I couldn't do it, that's all. You see, I haven't had much use for women. I thought they were all alike. But you—you're different, countess. I wish I was different too. I wish I was more like Nick. If I was perhaps I could make you see how much I need you—how—Oh, say, countess, couldn't you just let me say—"

"No, no; don't say it, please!" This came faintly, for her face was still hidden.

"All right, I won't." The Cherub seemed to be swallowing the words.

"You're not crying, are you?"

"Then I suppose it's—it's goodbye? He was near her now, quite near, inspecting with helpless masculine anxiety the outward aspects of her distress. He noted the subdued tremors which came and went with her sobs. "I'm sorry," he went on. "But Nick would have guessed it, anyway. Not all, though. He don't know how much. I wish you knew, countess. I wish—"

Just why it should have happened then or at all Cherub Devine will never understand. But the inexplicable arrived. He was aware of a sudden deep sob, which seemed to shake from crown to heel the graceful figure before him. He heard a half articulated exclamation, saw her turn waveringly toward him, and in the next instant she was in his arms. Abruptly the old audacity had rushed upon him, and he had accomplished the improbable.

Nor did that complete the miracle. She was clinging to him, one soft arm against his cheek, her warmly tinted face raised to his, her moist brown eyes shining under long lashed, half closed lids.

"I know; I have known," she was whispering as one who pants out a message after a long, hard run.

"Countess!" he breathed. "Then—then you—"

"Yes, Cherub."

"And you will—"

"No, no!" Suddenly she was no

longer passive. She struggled to free herself. "Oh, you must leave me! There is something—I can't tell you. But I can't see you again—perhaps not for years. Oh, you must go away!"

"Go!" echoed the Cherub.

"Yes, go and forget. Indeed you must. Please go!"

"Yes, yes, countess. I'll go, but not until"—Impetuously he drew her face up to his until their lips met. It was no hasty, inaccurate performance. He made a thorough and highly satisfactory job of it before she could slip away from him.

"Now go, go! Please go!" she pleaded.

"It's the last thing I'd want to do," said the Cherub, "but if you say I must—"

"Oh, indeed you must! I've been weak, wickedly weak! And you must go away. No; don't look at me again or remember me. Go!"

Cherub Devine reluctantly obeyed. Whether he walked soberly down the carriage road or whether he floated through the air he could not have told. Only when he reached the big stone gates was he sufficiently composed to take note of concrete objects. And then he realized that some one was peering at him from behind a bunch of shrubbery.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Name to Fit the Trade.

Old newspapers give us many instances of men's names fitting their callings. Thus we have Last, a shoemaker of Exeter, and Tredaway, who pilled the same trade in Hammermith.

There was a Bristol schoolmaster named Rod. Dodge and Wynne, attorneys at law of Liverpool, must have been the butts of their fellow townsmen, while few could have a more appropriate name than the Primitive Methodist preacher River Jordan.

London Chronicle.

Madam, Would You Like a Healthy Complexion?

The rosy cheeks, red lips, and bright sparkling eyes of natural healthy beauty is the only kind that charms. Lotions, washes, paints and powders deceive no one. The real Beauty of Health comes only with pure rich blood. What makes pure red blood? Why, your stomach, liver and bowels all working right. Dyspepsia, indigestion, constipation and biliousness will ruin any complexion. To get rid of these and have the Beauty of Health, the only real Beauty, take Smith's Pineapple and Butternut Pills. They invigorate the blood, strengthen the nerves, and the skin becomes rosy and red, showing the circulation is normal and active as Nature intended it should be. Physicians use and recommend. They form no habit. You should always keep them on hand. These little Vegetable Pills will ward off many ills.

To Cure Constipation Biliousness and Sick Headache in a Night, use



60 Pills in Glass Vial 25c.—All Dealers.

SMITH'S For Sick Kidneys
BUCHU LITHIA KIDNEY PILLS
Bladder Diseases, Rheumatism, the one best remedy. Reliable, endorsed by leading physicians; safe, effective. Results lasting. On the market 36 years. Have cured thousands. 100 pills in original glass package, 50 cents. Trial boxes, 50 pills, 25 cents. All druggists sell and recommend.

M. LEE BRAMAN EVERYTHING IN LIVERY

Buss for Every Train and Town Calls.

Horses always for sale

Boarding and Accommodations for Farmers

Prompt and polite attention at all times.

ALLEN HOUSE BARN

Through Drawing-Room Buffet Sleeping Car

BETWEEN

Scranton and Pittsburg

IN BOTH DIRECTIONS

via

Penna. R. R. from Wilkes-Barre

Leave Scranton at 5:30 P.M. daily except Sun. arrive Pittsburg 7 A.M.

Leave Pittsburg at 8:50 P.M. daily except Sat. ar. Scranton 9:59 A.M.

Berth reservations can be made through Ticket Agents, or

GEO. E. BATES,

Div. Frt. and Pass. Agt.

Scranton, Pa. 15c120

NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION, ESTATE OF

ELIZABETH J. BOYD, late of Danvers, Pa. All persons indebted to said estate are notified to make immediate payment to the undersigned; and those having claims against said estate are notified to present them duly attested, for settlement.

THOMAS Y. BOYD, Administrator.

Boyd's Mill, Pa., April 20, Administrator.

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF WAYNE COUNTY.

Bessie M. Hector v. Claud J. Hector. No. 70 October Term 1909. Libel in Divorce. To CLAUD J. HECTOR: You are hereby required to appear in the said court on the third Monday of June next, to answer the complaint exhibited to the judge of said court by Bessie M. Hector your wife in the cause above stated, or in default thereof a decree of divorce as prayed for in said complaint may be made against you in your absence.

M. LEE BRAMAN, Sheriff.