

Synopsis of Previous Chapters. CHAPTERS I and II.—The new tenants of three adjoining villas in the London suburbs are Admiral Hay Denver, with a son Harold; Dr. Walker, with two motherly daughters, Clara and Ida, and Mrs. Westmacott and her nephew Charles. Mrs. Westmacott is one of the muscular, emancipated steeplechase, with radical views and manners.

CHAPTER IV. A SISTER'S SECRET. "Tell me, Miss Walker. You know how things should be. What would you say was a good profession for a young man of 20 who has had no education worth speaking about and who is not very quick by nature?"

"I have none—that is to say, none worth mentioning. I have no memory, and I am very slow." "But you are very strong?" "Oh, if that goes for anything, I can put up a hundred-pound bar till further orders, but what sort of a calling is that?"

"I can do a mile on the cinder track in 10 and across country in 5:30, but how is that to help me? I might be a cricket professional, but it is not a very dignified position. Not that I care a straw about dignity, you know, but I should not like to hurt the old lady's feelings."

"Yes, my aunt's. My parents were killed in the mutiny, you know, when I was a baby, and she has looked after me ever since. She has been very good to me. I'm sorry to leave her."

"Don't tell my aunt that I said it!"—he sank his voice to a whisper—"I hate Browning." Clara Walker rippled off into such a noisy peal of laughter that he forgot the evil things which he had suffered from the poet and burst out laughing too.

"I can't make him out," said he. "I try, but he is one too many. No doubt it is very stupid of me. I don't deny it. But as long as I cannot there is no use pretending that I can. And then of course she feels hurt, for she is very fond of him and likes to read him aloud in the evenings. She is reading a piece now, 'Pippa Passes,' and I assure you, Miss Walker, that I don't even know what the title means. You must think me a dreadful fool."

"But surely he is not so incomprehensible as all that?" she said as an attempt at encouragement. "He is very bad. There are some things you know which are fine. That ride of the three Dutchmen, and 'Herve Riel' and others, they are all right. But there was a piece we read last week. The first line stumped my aunt, and it takes a good deal to do that, for she rides very straight. 'Setebos and Setebos and Setebos.' That was the line."

"I wish I could help you," said Clara. "But I really know very little about such things. However, I could talk to my father, who knows a very great deal of the world."

"Then I certainly will. And now I must say good night, Mr. Westmacott, for papa will be wondering where I am." "Good night, Miss Walker." He pulled off his flannel cap and stalked away through the gathering darkness.

There were a few whispered words, a laugh from Ida and a "Good night, Miss Walker" out of the darkness. Clara took her sister's hand, and they passed together through the long, folding window. The doctor had gone into his study, and the dining room was empty. A single small red lamp upon the sideboard was reflected tenfold by the plate about it and the mahogany beneath it, though its single wick cast but a feeble light into the large, dimly shadowed room.

"I have nothing to tell me, dear?" she asked. "Have you anything to tell me, dear?" she asked. "I have nothing to tell me, dear?" she asked.

"I was chatting with Mr. Westmacott." "And I was chatting with Mr. Denver. By the way, Clara, now tell me truly, what do you think of Mr. Denver? Do you like him? Honestly now?"

"I like him very much indeed. I think that he is one of the most gentlemanly, modest, manly young men that I have ever known. So now, dear, have you nothing to tell me?" Clara smoothed down her sister's golden hair with a motherly gesture and stooped her face to catch the expected confidence.

"But there came no confession from Ida, only the same mischievous smile and amused gleam in her deep blue eyes. "That gray foulard dress"—she began. "Oh, you little tease! Come now, I will ask you what you have just asked me. Do you like Harold Denver?"

of her, a maiden, to play the part of a mother—to guide another in paths which her own steps had not yet trodden. Since her mother did not do that thought had been given to herself; all was for her father and her sister.

In her own eyes she was herself very plain, and she knew that her manner was often ungracious when she would most wish to be gracious. She saw her face as the glass reflected it, but she did not see the changing play of expression which gave it its charm—the infinite pity, the sympathy, the sweet womanliness which drew toward her all who were in doubt and in trouble, even as poor, slow moving Charles Westmacott had been drawn to her that night.

Some understanding there was between her and Harold Denver. In her heart of hearts Clara, like every good woman, was a matchmaker, and already she had chosen Denver of all men as the one to whom she could most safely confide. He had talked to her more than once on the serious topics of life, on his aspirations, on what a man could do to leave the world better for his presence.

CHAPTER V. A NAVAL CONQUEST. It was the habit of the doctor and the admiral to accompany each other upon a morning ramble between breakfast and luncheon. The dwellers in those quiet tree lined roads were accustomed to see the two figures—the long, thin, austere seaman and the short, bustling, tweed clad physician—pass and repass with such regularity that a stopped clock has been reset by them.

"It is a very welcome invasion, ma'am," said he, clearing his throat and pulling at his collar. "Try this garden chair. What is there that I can do for you? Shall I ring and let Mrs. Denver know that you are here?"

"I don't like those new fangled ideas, ma'am. I tell you honestly that I don't like discipline, and I think every one is the better for it. Women have got one of the best of things which they had not in the days of our fathers. They have universities all for themselves, I am told, and there are women doctors, I hear. Surely they should rest contented. What more can they want?"

"Any one would confide in him. His face is a surety," said the doctor. "Go on, Walker." The admiral dug his elbow at him. "You know my weak side. Still it's truth all the same. I've been blessed with a good wife and a good son, and maybe I relish them the more for having been cut off from them so long. I have much to be thankful for."

"And so have I. The best two girls that ever stepped. There's Clara, who has learned as much medicine as would give her the L. S. A., simply in order that she may sympathize with me in my work. But, hullo, what is this coming along?"

"All drawing and the wind astern!" cried the admiral. "Fourteen knots if it's one. Why, by George, it is that woman!" A rolling cloud of yellow dust had streamed round the curve of the road, and from the heart of it had emerged a high tandem tricycle flying along at a breakneck pace.

"Oh, now, really I didn't notice you," said she, taking a few turns of the treadle and steering the machine across to them. "Is it not a beautiful morning?" "Lovely," answered the doctor. "You seem to be very busy."

"I'll be—No, I don't think I can do that." "To our meeting, then?" "No, ma'am. I don't go out after dinner."

"Oh, yes, you will come. I will call in if I may and chat it over with you when you come home. We have not breakfasted yet. Goodbye!" There was a whirl of wheels, and the yellow cloud rolled away down the road again. By some legendarian the admiral found that he was clutching in his right hand one of the obnoxious bills. He crumpled it up and threw it into the roadway.

"May I come in?" said she, framing herself in the open window, with a background of greenward and blue sky. "I feel like an invader deep in an enemy's country."

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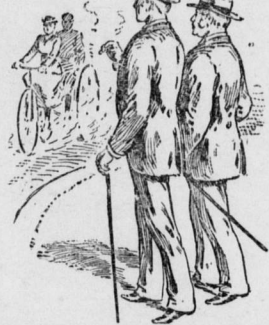
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"I am very busy," she pointed to the colored paper which still fluttered from the railing. "We have been pushing our propaganda, you see, Charles and I have been at it since 7 o'clock. It is about our meeting. I wish it to be a great success. See!" She smoothed out one of the bills, and the doctor read his own name in great black letters across the bottom.

But let it stand at that. I will think it over."



"But, hullo, what is this coming along?" "Certainly, admiral. We would not hurry you in your decision. But we still hope to see you on our platform."

"Hullo!" said she. "Surely this ship would have lurled all her lower canvas and reefed her topsails if she found herself on a lee shore with the wind on her quarter."

"I know Funchal," said the lady carelessly. "A couple of years ago I had a 7-ton cutter rigged yacht, the Banshee, and we ran over to Madeira from Falmouth."

"I hear that you have had quite a long chat with Mrs. Westmacott," said she. "Yes, and I think that she is one of the most sensible women that I ever knew."

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had rather too much of it on our side and should like to see a little on the other. What do you think of my nephew Charles?"

"The question was so sudden and unexpected that Clara gave quite a jump in her chair. "I—I—I hardly ever have thought of your nephew Charles."

"I should think that he is old enough to decide for himself." "Yes, yes. He has done so. But Charles is just a little shy, just a little slow in expressing himself. I thought that I would pave the way for him. Two women can arrange these things so much better. Men sometimes have a difficulty in making themselves clear."

"I really hardly follow you, Mrs. Westmacott," cried Clara in despair. "He has no profession, but he has nice tastes. He reads Browning every night. And he is most amazingly strong. When he was younger, we used to put on the gloves together, but I cannot persuade him to now, for he says he cannot play light enough. I should allow him £500, which should be enough at first."

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"I was speaking to your sister Ida last night." She noticed that there was a slight quiver in his voice, and glancing up at his dark, clear cut face she saw that he was very grave. She felt that it was settled—that he had come to ask her for her sister's hand.

"She is a charming girl," said he after a pause. "Indeed she is," cried Clara warmly. "And no one who has not lived with her and known her intimately can tell how charming and good she is. She is like a sunbeam in the house."

"No one who was not good could be absolutely happy, as she seems to be. Heaven's last gift, I think, is a mind so pure and a spirit so high that it is capable even to see what is impure and evil in the world around us. For as long as we can see it, how can we be truly happy?"

"I should wish to be near and dear to both of you," said he as he took her hand. "I should wish Ida to be my sister and you my wife."

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[CONTINUED ON THURSDAY.]

Charles Wilson took rat poison and killed himself on account of a disappointment in love. That was an awfully ratty way of dying, Charles, especially for love.