

The CASTLE of LIES

BY ARTHUR HENRY VESSEY
CONTRIBUTOR TO LITERATURE & CULTURE

CHAPTER XXIX.

I Open the Safe.

"It is true," she murmured. "It is true, and too horrible."

"Do not believe it," I said obstinately. "It is impossible."

"Can one defy a fact? Am I a child to be soothed with smooth words? I have seen; I must believe, though God knows the truth makes me wail a hundred times that lay beside my poor distressed brother."

It is always painful to see one whom we respect the prey of an emotion uncontrolled. It was doubly painful for me to see this strong woman, whose dominant quality was courage and calm, writhing under the blow that deprived her for the moment of all power to think coherently. I dared not tell her my belief that he had the combination of the safe, and that before many minutes were passed I might have the papers in my possession.

The woman who tortured us both stood at the threshold of the little room Helena had just left, a malevolent figure in her hour of triumph. As I looked toward her, tempted to expel her brutally from that room, and if my surmise was false, to force from her, even by violence, if necessary, the combination of the safe, she withdrew hastily, leaving Helena and myself alone. It was then that I feared the worst. She had appealed to Helena. She was confident of her success.

Still I held Helena's hands tightly in mine. I wished to give back to her her poise, her calm courage.

"Mr. Haddon," she whispered presently, "do you think—it is possible—to do this thing?"

"It is possible; but it would be the act of a madman and a liar. I said gently.

"You say it is possible." She withdrew her hands almost roughly. Her voice was monotonous and harsh. "Then you will save us mother and myself, from this terrible disaster."

"There is no service that I would not do for you, Miss Brett, that would bring you peace and happiness."

"Peace! Happiness!" she interrupted with fierce remonstrance. "I do not look for peace or happiness. Honor itself—and the motto of the Brett is 'Honor, My Sword'—can no longer be our proud boast. But if silence can be purchased it must be. I dare not let my brother's secret be heard in approach. I dare not, I cannot, for his mother's sake, let it be known that he has been false to England."

"We may yet save him!"

"Yes," she broke in with a strange exultancy that was even more dreadful to me than her despair, "and it is you whom I have despised that is to save us. A life for a life—those were the words I said to you at Lucerne. Now it is to be dishonor for dishonor. I am asking you a terrible sacrifice. I am dragging you with me to the depths. But there is no other to help us. Say you will."

"Very brief robes of your reason," I said gently. "Escape is not to be found in that way. It is the last hope of a desperate and unscrupulous adventurer, who has herself little hope of success. It is her last card, and she will lose nothing by playing it. But we, you and I, we risk everything."

"Ah, you refuse! You are afraid of the risks. I might have known you would be afraid. That you would not be hopeless, to ask a service so far from one who was a proven—Oh, forgive me, I did not mean to say that."

"Miss Brett, I think there is no disgrace I would not gladly endure to help you. I swore to rescue your brother's honor if it were possible. If I could do so now, though I sacrificed myself, I tell you I would. More than that, though every instinct tells me that I should fail, I will do what you ask, even now."

"Heaven bless you!" She cried brokenly.

"But first of all I want you to realize clearly just what you are asking. I want you to be quite sure that you are not adding dishonor to dishonor in asking me to do this thing. Not it is not that I am afraid. I have not that kind of fear. But I think that neither of us should be so cowardly as to yield to this woman's demands. In the oratory under her lies your brother. Ask yourself, when you see him, if it is merely the man's head or whether he has exchanged his forehead, or whether the calm and serenity is that of a man who held the motto of his house, 'Honor, My Sword'."

This appeal was perhaps not wholly sincere. One cannot deny facts because one wishes to. It still seemed to me that it must be true that Sir Mortimer was proven guilty when he drew his sword.

Now did I dare tell Helena now of my wild conjecture. I dared not raise the subject again, for a spirit of suspense. Once the papers were in my possession, together we could defy Madame de Varnier. And if disappointment was to be mine I hoped that by the side of her brother Helena

would recover her courage and clear vision.

Again I was alone. But Madame de Varnier who had awaited the result of Helena's intercession, now came toward me. I saw with a thrill of thankfulness that the door of the room the safe was not closed.

"You told me it would be for her to decide, and she did, confidently. 'I know that she has decided. And your own decision? Does your resolution falter?'

"You are mistakes." I began to pace the floor with rapid steps, advancing nearer and nearer to the room of the safe. "She has not yet decided. I believe with all my heart that she will refuse. She is in my oratory there. She will gain strength from the presence of the dead body."

"Perhaps," came the woman. She seated herself near the table slightly turned from the room she had left.

An instant and I had gained it, and was on my knees, my fingers trembling about the shining surface of the little knob that controlled the combination.

C-O-W-A-R-D.

I had gained it this way and that, then pulled at the handle.

It resisted my efforts. A cold perspiration broke out on my forehead. I had been a victim of my own madness.

But again I moved the knob; this time slowly, with infinite care, with the calmness that comes with despair.

That was the conclusion he must arrive at. To tell him the safe was true—that by chance out of ten thousand I had stumbled upon the combination—would only deepen his conviction as to my guilt.

And Helena! What would she think? Would her faith in me be so strong that she would believe me? Had Captain Forbes not surprised me at this moment my guessing of the ridges of the safe would have seemed miraculous indeed, but the fact that I had the safe and could place them in my hands to be destroyed, would support my story readily enough.

But I dare not give to her these papers before Captain Forbes and Madame de Varnier! It seemed to me that the king's messenger of all per-

"Ah, that's better," he sighed. "Now I am among friends." His sarcasm still took in Madame de Varnier and myself who had not yet recovered from our astonishment.

Indeed, it was rather embarrassing that had me speechless. Presently he would know that it was not Sir Mortimer whose he had surprised at the safe. And knowing that, it was inevitable that he mistake me for one of the conspirators. First of all at Vitznau—I had taken dispatches from his hand. Had I indeed been so underhanded in my conduct that I might have argued that as the result I could have said that I was not conscious of any deception? I was simply a victim of Dr. Stavis and Madame de Varnier, and not responsible for my acts.

But not only had I not taken the dispatch, but Madame de Varnier knew that I had not, and even had I wished to tell her she would have contradicted me.

And now he had caught me red-handed at the safe. He would draw his conclusions swiftly. It would be absurd to suppose that I should know the combination of the safe, merely because of the dead body."

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that your Excellency has received it?"

"No," I said calmly. "It was time to put an end to this game of cross-purposes."

"Then possibly madam can enlighten you as to its whereabouts."

"I, your Excellency? Oh, no!" She swept me a mocking courtesy. "I am not so deeply in your Excellency's counsel."

"My patience, Sir Mortimer," cried Forbes, breaking into direct speech, "has its limits. I see you at Lucerne only with the greatest difficulty. I was wary of the grave perils of a diplomatic mission which I was unable to deliver to you because of your condition."

The next morning, when I would see you, you have disappeared again. I trace you here with difficulty. When for the third time I attempt to deliver this dispatch, I am held captive; the dispatch is forcibly taken from me. When I ask you if you have received it, you give me an indifferent answer. I dare not believe that you are so far lost to your sense of duty that you countenance these violent acts of a bandit."

He paused abruptly. I thought it because he realized that his anger had carried him too far. But when I looked where he looked, I saw Helena Brett.

"Miss Brett!" he exclaimed in pain, "I am sorry to see you here."

"I am infinitely relieved, though bewildered, to see you, Captain Forbes." She extended him her hand, smiling wanly.

"But you will help me to make your brother realize the danger of further misunderstanding," he said gently, his anger at my indifference vanishing at sight of her pale and haggard countenance.

"My brother, Captain Forbes, is dead. He lies in that room," she sobbed firmly, though her lips trembled.

"She had made her decision. She too, was determined at all hazards not to act a lie."

As for Captain Forbes, he was dumb with astonishment. His eyes widened with dismay and concern. But though he did not speak his startled glance dwelt on me.

"Mr. Haddon is my loyal friend," said Helena, interpreting his look. At the same time she reassured me with a quiet smile that was more than her words could express.

A slow flush of anger mounted to the temples of the king's messenger. He towered over me menacingly.

"You have dared tamper with his Majesty's business; you have tricked one of his servants. By Heavens, you will rue it dearly!"

"Captain Forbes!" Helena laid her hand on his sleeve in her distress.

"Miss Brett, he turns cold on me indignantly. "The man has his heart entirely passed himself off as your brother. He tricked me into giving him important papers of state. You know that, and you defend him? You dare call him friend?"

"I did not know that," she replied firmly. "But I dare call him friend, Captain Forbes. You do not understand."

"Understand!" he stormed, before I could make any reply myself. "I understand this only too well. I am in league with a notorious villain, and the still more infamous Dr. Stavis, two Bulwerian adventurers of the most dangerous type. I think that is enough. That he has obtained under false pretenses my dispatches convicts him of high treason. He will not leave my sight until he is placed under arrest."

"I am an American," I said quietly. "You may find it more difficult to do than you imagine."

My mild exasperation maddened him only the more.

"All American!" He advanced to me as if to lay hands on me. "Do you taunt yourself that your nationality leaves you free to play the spy and traitor with impunity? Give me those papers."

He came a step nearer. Instinctively I placed my hands at my breast pocket as if to protect the precious papers. But again Helena, distressed at his violence, restrained him.

"Captain Forbes," she pleaded, "pray restrain your anger. It is natural that you should feel the deepest suspicion against Mr. Haddon. But if you will be patient, I am sure he will make all clear to you."

"Miss Brett," he said sternly, "this is a man's work. It is hardly becoming in you to defend one who has betrayed your brother's honor. How dare you claim an impostor like this as friend? He must be indeed a clever villain to have so deceived you."

"Mr. Haddon has done enough," she argued proudly, "to justify my faith in him. And let me tell you, Captain Forbes, that he is a man of honor. I am sure that until midnight to-morrow I shall neither question his motives nor interfere with any action of his. Nor shall I permit another to act on my behalf."

Indignation and surprise fought for mastery, as Forbes answered with resolution:

"I shall refuse to obey you, Miss Brett. You forget that it is not yourself who has been wronged so much as Sir Mortimer and myself. Now, sir, give me those papers that you took from the safe."

"I have the honor to report to your Excellency," said Forbes at length, in a voice that was admirably controlled despite his indignation, "that the second dispatch—a dispatch of profound importance, as I warned your Excellency at Vitznau—was stolen from me last night. May I express the hope

that your Excellency has received it?"

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Barrington Local Happenings Told In Short Paragraphs

John Schupp was in Elgin on business Monday.

A pool table has been placed in Roy Myers' confectionery store.

Read the announcement of the Stott amusement hall in another column.

The W. R. C. will give a bazaar and chicken pie supper early in December.

Mrs. Harriett Fellows is visiting her daughter, Mrs. Emory Sinnett, near Dundee.

Raymond Williams is now a passenger brakeman on a Barrington and Chicago run.

Mrs. Nellie Robertson and children of Maywood, Illinois, were here from Monday to Thursday.

Guests over Sunday at Rev. Haeefel's will be his niece, Mrs. William Johnson, and daughter, of Chicago.

The Woman's Relief Corps has purchased the Hamilton piano recently placed in the G. A. R. hall for trial.

The hour of services has been changed at St. Ann's church. Mass in the future will be at nine o'clock.

Frank Hager and family moved Monday from Grove avenue to the Fred Meyer house on Main street.

Willard Abbott is living in Seattle, Washington, to which place Mrs. Abbott and daughter will go to live in the spring.

F. T. Wooding and family have moved from the Miller flats on Cemetery street to the Haven house on Hough street.

The family of John Grether who live on the Garrett Landwehr farm southeast of town are preparing to move to Indiana.

Mrs. Edward Martin was visited a part of the week by her mother, Mrs. Charles Davlin and sister, Mrs. George Conway of Wauconda.

The Jukes millinery store will be moved in the near future to the Lageschulte property known as the Zimmerman building.

Miss Margaret Allen of Park Ridge spent a part of the week with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Allen, at Miss Margaret Laney's.

The First National Bank of Lake Forest announced the opening of its banking rooms in their new building Thursday, October the thirty-first.

Mrs. Elnore Dimsley of Chicago visited several days this week at Mrs. P. O. Willmarth's. The Willmarth family are preparing to settle in Carpar, Wyoming.

Mrs. Mary E. Harper of Colorado Springs visited Wednesday with H. H. Hubbard and family. Miss Elizabeth Meekling of Chicago is also visiting at the Hubbard home.

The Woman's club will meet next Thursday at Mrs. John Collins when it is expected that Mrs. M. C. McIntosh's report of the state convention of clubs will be given.

Hiram Schufeldt who lives near Lincoln, Illinois, is visiting his mother, Mrs. Mary Schufeldt, east of town. It is twelve years since Mr. Schufeldt last visited Barrington.

Mrs. Fred Kirschner entertained the Royal Neighbors at her home Wednesday afternoon. About one-fourth of the members attended and report a very good time.

Mr. and Mrs. Odell Conklin were here visiting friends Wednesday. Mrs. Conklin is the daughter of Willard Stevens who platted the original Town of Cuba, now part of the Village of Barrington.

Dennis J. Hogan, secretary of the democratic state central committee, died suddenly Sunday night at his home in Geneva, Ill. The cause of his death is said to have been a hemorrhage of the lungs.

Fifty members of the Christian Endeavor society of the Salem church met at the home of Miss Alma Stiefenhofer Wednesday evening for a business meeting and social. Games and music were amusements.

About eighteen little folks and schoolmates had a surprise party at the home of Mina Jacobson on Cook street, Thursday evening. They had a most delightful time and refreshments were served at nine o'clock.

The sixteen members of the new ladies' card club, the Fortnightly, are Mesdames Hannah Powers, Ray Carson, Emily Hawley, William Grunau, Mark Bennett, Louis Bennett, Elijah Prouty, Horace Church, Spear, Allen, Frank Hawley, Colby, Dawson, William Shearer, Roy Myers and Miss Eva Castle.

To day is All Saints' Day.

The Village Board meets in regular session Monday evening.

Mrs. Kitson and Miss Little Smith of Chicago were here from Friday until Sunday at Charles Otto.

Werne Hawley expects soon to take a position in one of the C. & N. W. R. R. offices in Chicago.

William Hobine will open a meat market in the Plague building east of Grunau's barber shop early next week.

Down goes the price of beef. Front quarters 41 to 51 cents per pound. Hind quarters 61 cents per pound.

ALVERSON & GROVE.

Mr. and Mrs. John Forbes attended the funeral of Mrs. Forbes' uncle, James Courtney, in Wauconda Wednesday.

Rev. J. B. Elfrink of Chicago, formerly pastor of the Zion church in this village, visited with friends here yesterday.

Judge D. L. Jones of the county court of Lake county has been quite ill for weeks past, but is slowly improving.

The Thursday club met yesterday with Mrs. William Shearer and studied the November number of the World's Work magazine.

Mrs. Rhoda Waterman has sold to Stearns & White Co. lots 1, 2 and 3 in Applebee's subdivision of this village. Consideration \$600.

L. R. Fox and family have moved from South Hawley street to the home on Cemetery street vacated by the Wooding family.

The Ogleby direct primary bill now before the State Senate was virtually killed by amendments yesterday. Senator Tiffany of the eighth district voted with the majority.

Miss Laura Brockway and sister, Mrs. Brown Thacker, and L. J. Wilson of Waukegan were here Sunday at M. A. Brockway's. J. S. Brockway of Western Springs was also here.

Miss Lydia Solt entertained the Portia club girls and invited girl and boy friends at a very jolly Halloween party Thursday evening and until a late hour the house was a merry place with all sorts of games and fun.

James Courtney of Michigan died of heart disease this week and was brought for burial to Wauconda Wednesday. Mr. Courtney was a brother of Mrs. Behan and Mrs. Thomas Daley and left this vicinity many years ago.

Miss Olive Hurlbut of Chicago, the Barrington high school teacher who was recently dismissed, went to Harvard, Illinois, Tuesday, to accept a position as teacher in the High school there at a salary of \$10 increase over that paid here.

A surprise party was given for Miss Josephine Moore of Cook street Wednesday evening which had been planned by Miss Elizabeth Brant. About twenty young people were present who passed the evening with music, jokes, games and refreshments.

November Magazines.

The following November Magazines are for sale on Wilbert C. Nacher's magazine stand.

Ainslee's All Story American American Boy Black Cat Blue Book Cosmopolitan Delineator Designer Everybody's Good Housekeeping Gunter's Harper's Monthly Ladies' Home Journal Ladies' World Lippincott Metropolitain McClures Motor Age New Idea Women's Magazine Outing Pearson's Popular Mechanics Red Book Saturday Evening Post (weekly) Scrap Book (2 parts) Scribner's Success Strand Smith's Technical World Women's Home Companion World To-Day Young's Youth's Companion (weekly) Railroad Man's Magazine Munsey's Magazine Reader

John F. Jordt of Chicago is visiting at the home of George W. Foreman. Mr. and Mrs. George Otto of Chicago were here Thursday and today at Charles Otto.

Mrs. Mina Christy of Joslyn, Mo., was here Sunday at her cousin's, Mrs. Sarah Benton.

Blessed are the local coal dealers. No one orders coal of the Chicago mail order houses.

The bowling alley formerly in use in the Forbes saloon in the Spunner building has been placed in the Y. M. C. A. gymnasium.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Sturm, of Elgin, and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Wells and children of West Chicago visited their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Cady, west of town, Sunday. Mr. and Mrs. Cady expect to move to Barrington in March and build a home.

A Mistake.

Not one of us, even the most good natured, likes to have his mistakes pointed out. We may appear not to mind corrections and accept them with a smile, but it is human nature to smart under correction, although some of us may be clever enough to conceal the smart; hence the fewer mistakes we call attention to in others the better we provide for the mistakes we make are trivial. The correction is important. Why then, do we not yet some people do, and do so consistently. A person speaks of having done a certain thing on Thursday, when in reality it was done on Wednesday. If no important point is involved, why call attention to the mistake? What good does it do to have the mistake set right? It is a matter of no importance, so far as it is upon correcting the trivial error. Such friendships have often been broken by this needle of useless correction. It is a great art, this art of learning to allow others to be mistaken when the mistake is unimportant. Few learn it, but those who do are among the most comfortable friends one can have.

Artists of Hairdressing.

"I want to learn the interesting in hairdressing," said the visitor as she landed in New York. "Take me to a hairdresser's establishment, so I can look things over."

"Indeed," said her New York friend. "We will go there after you know what you wish to buy, but the place to know how to dress your hair is in the dry goods shop. All you have to do is to study the salesgirls' hair. It is always done in the latest mode, and that is all you need, as you cannot mistake. Sometimes it is badly exaggerated, but, of course, you don't have to copy that."

"I didn't know the shopgirls were your arbiters of fashion in New York."

"Not in all respects, but, you see, half-dressing doesn't cost anything. To have the latest styles in clothes or jewels is expensive, but one can be a very good swot in the matter of hair without spending a cent. Besides, they are usually interested in the matter of gowns to plain black or possibly white blouses, so they take it all out in doing their hair."—New York Press.

What It Costs to Feed and Think.

Every throat of pleasure costs something to the physical system, and two throbs cost twice as much as one. If one can give to a precise equivalent it is not because he is not dead but, from the difficulties of reducing degrees of pleasure to a recognized standard. Of this, however, there is no reasonable doubt—namely, that a large amount of pleasure supposes a correspondingly large expenditure of blood and nerve tissue, to the straining, perhaps, of the active energies and the intellectual processes. It is a matter of practical moment to ascertain what pleasures cost, least, for there are these two great classes of pleasure—those that feed and those that feed and please.

One of the safest of delights, if not very acute, is the delight of abounding physical vigor, for, from the very opposition, the pleasure to the brain is not such as to interfere with the general interests of the system.—Alexander Bain.

Nothing Doing.

A playright discussed at a dinner in New York the art of acting.

"I believe," said he, "in subtlety and restraint. A man is a snake of the head, a silent grouch—the things are often more effective than the most violent yelling and ranting."

"Life is like that, subtle and silent. What, for instance, could be more expressive than this scene, a scene without a spoken word, that I once witnessed in the country?

"An undertaker stood on a corner near a noble mansion. He elevated his broad, hopeful and inquiringly as a physician, compressing his lips, shook his head decidedly and hurried to his carriage. Then the undertaker, with a sigh, passed on."

Mary Knew All About It.

Little Mary's father had been teaching her to walk properly. "Walk slowly and turn out your toes," he admonished her.

While she was undergoing this teaching, Mary went to Sunday school one day. The golden text was, "Learn to walk honestly." After reciting it several times the teacher asked,

"Who knows what that means?" "I do," replied little Mary. "Walk slowly and turn out your toes."

Love and hate and jealousy often live in the same house, though you will find only love's name on the door.

Michael Monahan.

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new pool tables and a box ball
alley. Mr. Stott will add new
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At the Other Table.

By Virginia Blair.

Copyrighted, 1907, by Jessie Morgan.

In the palm room of the big hotel there were just two couples, one at the little table near the fountain, the other in the corner under the music架 balcony.

There was no music now, for it was between lunch time and dinner, and the couple at the table by the fountain were silent.

The couple under the balcony had entered a more substantial repast, lobster and a bird and salad, and they ate with an appetite that showed that they had missed their midday meal.

"I don't think I was ever so hungry in all my life," said the girl at the table under the balcony.

"I am ashamed to have such an appetite," the man opposite her teased. "Your grandmother would have been satisfied with the wing of a chicken, Maria."

"Well, I am not my grandmother," and Maria made a little face at him. "Besides, my grandmother used to sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam, and have been whizzing through miles of country. And I'm ravenous. Archie."

"That girl over there," said Archie, "isn't she a beauty?" Maria turned her a brilliant glance, "not if you will stay with me. I have heard so much about you, Miss Meier."

"Oh, dear," Maria questioned, "what has Billy been saying?"

"Such nice things," the other girl told her. "And now that I have seen you I don't believe they are any twice."

Maria waved the flattery aside.

"Dear child," she said, "Billy will say anything when he is out of my sight. I can keep him straight when I am with him."

"She's just like cousin Billy," said Miss Meier. "He's the dearest thing!"

Maria started. "Cousin," she said, "cousin! Are you Billy's cousin?"

"Yes."

"Well, I might have known!" Maria murmured. "Dear old Billy!" Then she went on: "I am with my cousin too. He wants to paint you. He is an artist you know. You know him?"

"I should love him," said Ruth.

"It's about your half," Maria told her. "That I sent Billy over, Archie said it was gold, and I said it was red. You mustn't mind my saying it, because really I was jealous of you. But now that I know you are Billy's cousin I think your hair is beautiful. I was afraid I should have to send you tea-spoons."

"Teaspoons?" was Ruth's puzzled question.

"Yes, for a wedding present, you know."

Ruth blushed.

"The ideal," she said. "Why, every one knows that Billy's dead in love with you. He has told me so a dozen times."

Maria gave a sigh of relief. "I was afraid he had stopped," she said. "And I should miss Billy's adoration dreadfully."

"I shall never stop," said Billy, who had come up behind her. Then he went on as if he had made the most commonplace declaration. "Archie says you are to come back and eat your peanuts."

"I won't, rather eat it up," said Maria unblushingly. "I'll tell you, Billy, you bring Archie over here and we will introduce him to Ruth. He wants to paint her picture, and he would rather talk to her than eat, and you can come over to the other table and have parfait with me and everything will be lovely."

"Yes, everything will be lovely," Billy agreed, but Ruth said in a startled way, "Oh!"

"Oh, you needn't mind," Maria said when Archie had been presented and was seated opposite the red gold beauty. "Billy and I will chaperone you from the other table. It will be perfectly proper, for we are engaged, you know. And, with a sparkling glance at her lover, she made his way across the room to where the lady of his heart awaited him.

"Well, if I did," Maria contended, "he needn't act so officiously, and he's evidently concealed."

"She's a pretty girl all right," Archie enthused.

"She won't make Billy half as good a wife as I would," Maria declared.

"I will cut out for Billy,"

"Why don't you marry him then?" Archie asked.

"Because he's so jealous," Maria confided. "He didn't like my letting you paint my picture, Archie. He said we were together too much and that girls always liked artists and that he didn't stand any chance because he was in business and all that tommy rot. So I told him he could have a good wife back. But now he will marry the wrong girl. And I shall be an old maid."

"Not if I can help it," Archie stated valiantly. "We may be cousins, Maria, but if the worst comes to worst we can each other from single blessedness."

"I don't want to be saved," Maria informed him succinctly. "I always said that if I didn't marry Billy I shouldn't marry any one. But of course I expected Billy to come back."

"Of course," sympathized Archie, "a man ought never to take a girl's 'no' for an answer."

"Well, Billy has," and Maria aped him with the air of a anything but a foreign manner, "and I feel it in my bones that I shall have to send telegrams to that red-haired girl."

"Her hair isn't red. It's gold with red lights in it."

"It isn't," Maria contradicted.

"It is."

"It's red," said Maria.

"It's gold," said Archie.

"There's only one way to settle it."

Maria said. "I'll go over and ask Billy."

"But I thought Billy wouldn't speak to you."

"He'll have to," Maria declared, "and while we are waiting for our party I'll ask the question."

Birdie Archie could stop her she was out of her chair and halfway across the room.

"Billy," she said as she came up to the other table, and Butler turned his head to see and stared at her.

"Maria!" he ejaculated. "Where did you come from? And he was off his feet in a second."

"I sat at the other table," Maria explained, "with Archie Vandervoort. He wants you to decide an argument, and you don't mind going over I will sit down here for a minute."

"Certainly, and I'm so glad to have you meet Miss Meier. Ruth, this is one of my oldest friends, Maria Blair."

"You won't mind his going over to the other table, will you?" Maria asked as she sat down.

"Oh, no," and Miss Meier turned her a brilliant glance, "not if you will stay with me. I have heard so much about you, Miss Blair."

"Oh, dear," Maria questioned, "what has Billy been saying?"

"Such nice things," the other girl told her. "And now that I have seen you I don't believe they are any twice."

Maria waved the flattery aside.

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