

A CONFIDENTIAL MAN.

They were very like, this father and daughter. Lizzie was his youngest, and although she had attained the age of 18, she was still childish in her ways.

The judge placed his hand tenderly on the little, curly head. "Where has my little daughter been?"

"Oh, I have been up to the hall talking with the housekeeper and wandering through the great rooms, and, oh, papa! she really took me into the beautiful conservatory, and I saw such lovely, flaming passion flowers, and the great, creamy, magnolia blossoms, and, dear me, I can't tell you of all the lovely things."

She was suddenly stopped by seeing a gentleman approaching from the opposite side of the road.

"Mr. Ray, I believe?"

The judge bowed.

"Agent for the St. Leon place?"

"Yes, sir."

"I came to see you in regard to it, and—"

"And you are Mr. St. Leon's confidential clerk, Mr. Hartley? I believe I received a letter from him today informing me that you would arrive this week. Yes, yes; come right up to the house and we will talk over the repairs. Shall we begin them immediately?"

"Papa, you don't mean to say you have brought him home—a confidential clerk? You know there are the best rooms to be papered and cleaned, and our pink dresses to be made, against Herbert St. Leon's arrival. Well, I shall see that he is put in the little room over the kitchen. He will never know the difference," and Blanche sank back in a studied attitude on the sofa, wondering if handsome Bert St. Leon would fancy her lovely pink morning dress that she had made for his special benefit.

The door of the dining-room was ajar, and Mr. Hartley, standing before the fire in the little parlor, had heard it all.

"Mr. Confidential Clerk, you are crying," and Lizzie pushed the white kitten from her lap and came over to his side. "I am sorry you heard them, but never mind, I'll be your friend."

"Your friendship is very dear to me, my little girl."

"I'm not a little girl! I was 18 last week."

"Pardon me, young lady, but can you tell me something of the hall? What sort of a place is it?"

"Lizzie, Lizzie! you are talking far more than is necessary. Go to your French, immediately!"

A month had passed by. Mr. Hartley had exchanged his close apartments over the kitchen for more comfortable ones at the village inn, whence he calmly superintended the projected improvements at the hall, and all the gossip exchanged between himself and Lizzie was in the course of her rambles through the St. Leon woods.

And now Mr. Hartley sat in the same little parlor where Lizzie had first vowed to be his friend, and awaited the appearance of the judge.

"You wish to see me, Mr. Hartley?"

"Yes, sir. I came to ask you for the hand of your daughter—your little Lizzie. I love her more than my life, Judge Ray."

"You can not have her! No, sir. I look for something higher for my daughter than a confidential clerk. If that is all, I bid you good evening."

Next night the judge rode slowly home to dinner, feeling a presentiment of evil.

"Where is Lizzie?" he inquired of Blanche, as he entered the cozy dining-room.

"In her room, I suppose, mourning after her dear clerk."

"Well, call her to dinner, child."

Blanche went, but returned immediately with a pale, frightened face.

"She is not there, pap, but this note lay on her table."

The judge broke the seal and read, with a face that had grown suddenly pale:

"By the time that you read these words, dearest papa, your little Lizzie will be another's. I shall be married to Mr. Hartley. I hope it is not wrong, for indeed I do love him very much."

As he folded the note with stern features a light step crossed the threshold, and Lizzie's arms were around his neck; the confidential clerk standing at the door with a face where pride and indomitable resolution struggled for the mastery.

"Papa, forgive us!"

"I'll see you hanged first!" roared the old gentleman. "Begone, both of you! Beg, starve, but never come to me for assistance!"

"Oh, papa," pleaded Lizzie, "I want to explain."

"I won't hear you."

"Be it so," said the clerk; "come, little wife, we have each other left, you know," and they went from the house.

Blanche was just coming out of hysterics when there came a ring at the bell, and a gentleman bearing a foreign-looking carpet-bag was ushered in.

"Is this Mr. Ray?"

The judge bowed.

"Is Mr. St. Leon here?"

"Mr. St. Leon, sir, is in Parham, Brazil."

"I think you are mistaken, sir, as I have been informed he is at this moment in his native village."

"Herbert St. Leon at home and not send word to me, his agent? I must go to the hall immediately."

The lights glimmered brightly from the gothic windows of the hall and winked defiance at the blustering storm without as the judge rang the bell at the great front door.

"Mr. St. Leon—has he arrived?"

The servant bowed and ushered him into a room whose superbly arranged furniture struck Mr. Ray with an indefinite idea of luxury.

Lizzie was standing by a tall alabaster vase, that stood in the bay window, arranging the tropic vines that curled around its standard, and the light from the colored lamps shone down on the curly head so dear to the judge's heart. The confidential clerk stood near.

"I wish to see your master, young man."

"I am at your service, sir."

"You are! Who the mischief cares whether you are or not? I wish to see Mr. St. Leon."

"Herbert St. Leon is my name, sir."

"You? Well, I thought you were the confidential clerk!"

"I never told you I was. You took that for granted. As the confidential clerk I wooed and won your daughter. As Herbert St. Leon I could have gained no greater treasure."—New York Daily News.

STORIES OF RAVENS.

They Are Clever Birds and Seem to Have Reasoning Powers.

Many stories are told of the cleverness of the raven, a bird that really seems to have reasoning powers. One of these stories tells how the raven by a skillful stratagem got a young hare for his dinner. It had pounced upon the little animal, but the mother hare drove it away. Then the raven slowly retreated, encouraging the mother to follow him, and even pretending that he was afraid of her. In this fashion he led her a considerable distance from the young one and then suddenly, before the hare had time to realize the meaning of the trick, he rose in the air, flew swiftly back, caught the young hare in his beak, and bore it away.

A similar plan was adopted by some ravens that wished to steal food from a dog. They teased him till he grew so angry that he chased them from the spot, but the artful birds turned sharply around, easily reached the dish before him, and carried off the choicest bits in triumph. As to the raven's power of speech, the following story, which is given on the authority of Capt. Brown, who vouches for its truth, will show how aptly it can talk.

A gentleman while traveling through a wood in the south of England was startled by hearing a shout of "fair play, gentleman; fair play!" uttered in loud tones. The cry being presently repeated, the traveler thought it must proceed from some one in distress and at once began to search for him. He soon discovered two ravens fiercely attacking a third. He was so struck with the appeal of the oppressed bird that he promptly rescued him. It turned out that the victim was a tame raven, belonging to a house in the neighborhood, and the cry that it had used so opportunely was one of sympathy which had been taught to utter.—Philadelphia Times.

Women novelists, particularly Ouida, rarely allow their heroes and heroines to partake of a substantial meal, while in the pages of the men writers feasts abound. Compare Dickens and Thackeray. Each is fond of feeding his characters, but Thackeray tells of the feast with an epicurean touch, an appreciation of the delicacies of the table, while Dickens' written meals are always hearty, plain, boiled beef and greens and meat pies ruling.

In Scott's stories there is a hint of picturesque splendor about the dinners he describes. There are "noble" meals and much geniality and good-fellowship.

The elegant young men of whom Ouida writes usually breakfast at mid-day on peaches, chocolate and cakes, and yet are great athletes and general wonders on this sybaritic diet. Disraeli does not descend to specify meals, but has a way of introducing gorgeous banquets of unlimited courses. Everything in "Lothair" happens at dinner parties and "fat little birds in aspic jelly" and ortolans usually form part of the menu.

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A PLUCKY WOMAN PILOT.

She Attracts the Attention of Tourists in California.

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