

BREEME HOUSE

By Katherine Newlin Burt

CHAPTER III.
HIGH STAKES

The inevitable ennui of the voyage seized upon Alec Tremont the fourth day out. As he wandered listlessly into the smoking room after lunch, he yawned in open protest against boredom.

"Feel like that myself," laughed Ned Burnet, coming in at that moment. "Let's get up a game."

"Right-o! But I've scarcely enough cash with me to tip the stewards. You'll have to stake me, Ned, till I get to London. Sent all my ill-gotten gains from Canada straight to my bank, you see."

"It's your turn to win, anyhow. But I've plenty if the luck goes against you. Come on; let's find a couple of fellows that look like good losers."

Soon they were seated at a table, Alec drawing one of the strangers for partner, and Ned the other.

Tremont had experienced the sense of freedom from worry just long enough to be able to forget caution. He was enjoying the feeling of being on his own financial legs again.

His partner was good, and the cards came their way; they won at the start, which only served to exhilarate Alec the more. Soon Alec's partner began to take risks that were sheer bravado; and somehow he got away with it. Alec caught the spirit and followed suit. Burnet's partner, untroubled by their losses, rallied Ned with a question.

"We can't let them get away with it like this, partner. How about raising stakes? I guess they should be willing, if we are."

It was Alec's partner, the other stranger, that replied to the challenge.

"Go to it," he cried. "We're no nit-wits, eh partner?"

Alec recklessly agreed—knowing that to Burnet it was no matter, one way or the other; his pockets were well lined. And as for himself, he was winning; it was his lucky day.

Neither Burnet nor Tremont had caught the look of understanding which had been passed between the two strangers, during this conversation.

And then, after a round or two, began a change of luck for the winners, not too suddenly nor continuously to betray a pre-arranged plan. With the stakes at their present level, Alec soon realized that his winnings could be wiped out, and the balance reversed, in short order. He set his teeth grimly; in all decency he couldn't throw down his hand now. His eyes took on a haggard look as he realized more and more acutely the possibility that he faced. He cursed himself silently for his recklessness,—but the sportsman in him demanded that he "stay in". He hoped, even prayed for a change of luck again, as he realized what his plight would be if he lost to the limit. The proceeds of his Canadian sale, and possibly more, would be forfeited.

He was sick at heart with the fear of it. His brain was paralyzed. He played wildly. As his losses mounted, and he caught the excited comments of the on-lookers peering over their shoulders between deals, he wondered numbly how he would be able to face his father's hurt look, the misery on Jane's face at confession of his criminal weakness, his step-mother's accusing silence.

When the bugle sounded the call for dinner, and the game was wound up, Alec forced himself to assume a careless look. He nodded to Burnet.

"You settle for me, old man, will you? Here's an I O U. See you about it when we get to London."

And he so far succeeded in acting the part as to make the rest think that what he had lost was a mere nothing to him. It was not till he had got, somehow, to his cabin, and caught sight of his white face in the mirror, that the tragedy came fully home to him. He had lost almost the whole of his Canadian land-sale. He was as firmly as ever in the hands of the money-lender, Unterberg. The rope was round

his neck.

Alec appeared at dinner that evening with a face so pale that the watchful eyes of Lady Jane's affection detected something wrong—seriously wrong. At once she felt certain that his air of ultra nonchalance was donned deliberately. What had happened?

Do what she would she couldn't keep the anxiety out of her voice, as she questioned him when they were alone together.

"Anything wrong, Alec?" "Wrong! Why? You seem always to take it for granted that something's gone wrong," he answered irritably.

"No—but you look quite ill, that's all!" And he knew that he had hurt her.

"Sorry, Janey; the fact is, of course, that you've hit it. I've—well, it's an unholy mess!"

And he told her. "Oh Alec! How dreadful! Poor old dad; how terribly he will feel it!"

His eyes were burning with anger at himself.

"What will you do?" she asked.

"I shall have to scrape up enough, somehow, to keep that beastly Unterberg's mouth shut for a time. And Jane," he added earnestly, "We mustn't say a word about this to the governor. It would just about finish him if he knew of it. I'd almost rather lie to him—and I've never done that yet! I shall tell mother, of course."

"What now," thought Jane, "of the gala time we were to have for Claire?"

And her gentle heart was as near bitterness as it had ever been.

CHAPTER IV.
THE ESCAPE

It was the day before the end of the voyage.

"If I were the British government," remarked Mr. Northby to Claire Wilton and Lady Jane, to whom Tremont had introduced him, "I'd pass a law that every one visiting England for the first time should land at Plymouth. Have you ever done it, Miss Wilton?"

"No,—and why would you insist on that?"

"The docks at Liverpool and London are the most depressing, bedraggled, mirky spots in the world. And the journey from them to London itself—why, they're enough to make Anglo-phobes of you all, from the first moment. But Plymouth—you really do land there, and make your way up through Devonshire. The train journey is beautiful—the real England welcomes you, miles upon miles of the choicest English countryside."

"Do let's, Jane," Claire urged. "It would be such fun; we should be on English soil hours earlier. Shall we obey Mr. Northby's law?"

"You can manage it together, I suppose?" Tremont questioned. "I'm afraid I shall have to go on to Southampton; must be in London to meet an appointment. Have to be there on business for a few days, you know, Jane."

"Trust her to me, Lord Tremont," said Claire. "I'm not afraid of piloting her from Plymouth to Breeme House."

It had been something approaching a fresh experience for Tremont, these days with Claire Wilton. He was never a man to seek women out. His habit was to let them do the hunting.

But with Claire he had found himself on a new and interesting footing. Her frankness was so complete that she challenged him, without either pursuing or inviting pursuit. As she walked briskly along the decks, with the free, boyish swing of a perfect figure, her smile and nod as she passed by his chair said to him—"I'm having a jolly walk! Why loll about when you can be on the move!"

And inevitably he found himself responding to her vigorous magnetism. Her interest in him was so delightfully impersonal that it never irked. Her candor was always so spontaneous that, while it often took his breath away for a moment, it left him thrilled with exhilaration as from the sudden buffet of a keen sea-breeze directed straight into his

lungs.

"I'm so glad I like you, Lord Tremont," she remarked coolly, as they patrolled the deck on this last day.

He was so surprised for a moment that almost he dropped to the banality of tu-quoque; but he recovered his breath in time. "So you were all prepared for the opposite. Glad I was able to disappoint your expectations, Miss Wilton," he bantered.

But neither was she to be caught napping, and, as he had become accustomed with this quick-witted young woman, she eluded him. It was vain to spread his net in the sight of this bird.

"The real triumph is not in my just being able to like Lord Tremont himself, you know. But to be able to like you as the brother of my wonderful little Jane, and as the son of dear Lord Breeme—that's the thing."

He flushed and stammered a little in response—the more so that his glance at her showed how utterly calm she was about it.

"Er—it certainly makes a rather j-jolly kind of—thing of it, doesn't it?"

Was it really possible, his thought enquired, that she didn't intend the obvious implication of her analysis?

"Oh, it's wonderful," she went on with warm feeling. "You can't possibly imagine what I feel about Breeme House. It possessed me—and yet I felt, too, that I possessed it. And all these months that I've had Jane with me on the other side—I couldn't have gone back to America without having her with me as a kind of pledge for my return to England. Breeme House seems the first real home I've ever known, you see."

Her eyes were shining with happiness, and there was no hint of sentimentality in what she had said.

"I feel quite scared, Miss Wilton," he said in a mock awe; "it will be quite a job to live up to all you feel about us. I hope I shall be able to play my part in keeping up the illusion."

"Oh indeed it's no illusion," she flashed back at him. "How horribly I must have failed to tell you! It's the real thing I've ever known. Breeme House has become a part of me!"

She had halted in their walk on deck. They were at one of the entrances to the lounge.

"I've enjoyed our talk, my lord," she said with teasing humility, casting down her eyes demurely—"except that last little cynicism of yours."

She looked back at him, with laughter in her eyes, and disappeared within.

Tremont strolled slowly round the deck, with a puzzled smile in his eyes and something a little grim about the smile on his lips. He reached the place where Lady Jane was sitting with her unread book, gazing placidly out to sea, and dropped into the chair beside her.

"Where's Claire," she asked of him languidly.

"Went in," he replied. "Janey, you've picked a wonder in your Miss Croesus," he remarked after a moment's silence. "A wonder!"

"I'm so glad you like her, Alec, I wanted you to, so much. I should have been quite unhappy about it if you hadn't. And father will be so pleased."

Alec frowned, and looked at his sister quickly. Jane seemed to be echoing Claire's thoughts. What on earth did it all mean? Was it intentional? Was it a plan?

Tremont leaned back in his chair. Well—and why not? Why not, as far as they were all concerned. A perfect plan—made to order! He, certainly, was the last person who had a right to object to it—the impoverished heir to the Earldom of Breeme. And she, Claire Wilton, was delightful, beautiful, clever, and, above all rich! And yet.

His eyes, gazing seawards, were filled with a vision.

After a few moments he came back to the present, with a frown and an irritable movement as if to rid himself of some exasperating problem that irked him.

"You won't have to stay long in London, will you Alec?" Jane asked him presently.

"Few days, probably. Got to raise something to pay that old pawn-broker Unterberg—as little as he'll let me."

"I should pay him as much as possible, Alec; keep him quite for as long as you can do," she urged. "And get back soon; I

want Claire to have a happy time with us."

"Not a hint to father about this infernal mess, Jane, remember. Give them all my love—and to Aline," he added casually.

"Poor Aline,—she'll be awfully sorry about it. She feels everything as deeply as if she were one of us," said Jane.

"Poor child, I know.—It's a rotten shame that she should have to slave with those kids; she gets no fun at all!"

"Oh Alec—how absurd; Aline loves teaching Humphrey and Vi. She's awfully fond of them, and of all of us. You're blue about yourself," she continued, "so you're in the mood to pity everybody. You know quite well that Aline's very lucky to have a home at Breeme House. If no one had more to worry about than she does, the world would be very well off," she asserted.

Lady Jane got up from her chair.

"Well—I'll go and see that I'm all packed up ready for Plymouth. Get back from London as soon as you can."

Alec nodded moodily as his sister moved away, smiling her admonition.

CHAPTER V

THE BROAD ACRES OF BREEME

"Well, Claire," said Lord Breeme, "has taking tea with Mrs. Poling spoiled the glamour for you? You'll have to admit that five o'clocks in England are, after all, very much like five o'clocks in the United States—eh, aren't they?"

Through the shadows of the tree under which they sat, the speaker's twinkling eyes peered at his guest. She stood in the light of the setting sun, a figure of such color and life that the rest of the soft landscape, its silvery lawns, its blue-green trees, its greyish golden house-front, even its sky fleeced with rose, seemed dim and faded, like an old master's background to a new master's latest work.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Gossip About
Books and Authors

A recent reviewer of Bess Streeter Aldrich's new novel "Mother Mason" accuses her of making Mother Mason's daughters of a type of a quarter of a century ago. Furthermore the same reviewer remarked that "Mother Mason belongs to the Nebraska that bumps over the Lincoln highways every evening to the movies." Mrs. Aldrich exclaims: "It is to laugh! The Mother Masons in Nebraska ride in Hudson super-sixes and Cadillacs and that eliminates a lot of bumps, you know. And quite often the Mother Masons get a chance to hear Galli-Crucci and Rachmaninoff and Southern and Marlowe."

THE MAKING OF AN AMERICAN by Jacob Riis has just been reissued by the MacMillan company. This fascinating biography of the Danish immigrant boy who became one of the closest friends of Theodore Roosevelt, and a social reformer of world importance, is a book every one will enjoy. "His life story is a thrilling one, one that all Americans would do well to read, for it gives any reader inspiration, insight into what his country really means, and renewed sense of patriotism."

George Horace Lorimer, editor of The Saturday Evening Post in writing in The Bookman describes his meeting with one of the intelligentsia.

"Some years ago I was visited by a dull prosy member of a dull prosy group of pseudo-intellectuals. After a few minutes of condescending conversation in the jargon of his type, he concluded:

"I have decided that I should like to write for The Saturday Evening Post. I have seen many thoughtful people reading it lately. And as I gave him a firm, goodby handshake, I said to myself, knowing just what he meant by thoughtful people: "We must look into this and correct it."

A cub reporter interviewing a cub author is amusingly described by Don Marquis. Many years ago his first interview was with one, Booth Tarkington, a practically unknown young man from the west whose first play was being produced on Broadway. It was also Mr. Tarkington's first experience. "Well, there we sat," remembers Don, "neither of us knowing what to say. Finally I gave up in despair and made my exit with more speed than grace. Oh, I wrote the interview all right but ever since I've been a firm advocate of a list of questions made out beforehand."

Quit Eating Beans
And Save Your Teeth

Tokio.—If you would preserve your teeth, quit eating beans.

This attack upon the merits of the popular succulent lentil that made Boston famous comes from Dr. Tsurukichi Okumura, professor at the Tokio Dental college. He has made a study of the causes of decay in teeth, and, after an analysis of 150 varieties of food, he has come to the conclusion that beans are "most harmful to the teeth."

Children Cry for

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CASTORIA

MOTHER:—Fletcher's Castoria is especially prepared to relieve Infants in arms and Children all ages of Constipation, Flatulency, Wind Colic and Diarrhea; allaying

Feverishness arising therefrom, and, by regulating the Stomach and Bowels, aids the assimilation of Food; giving natural sleep.

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Green's August Flower The remedy with a record of fifty-eight years of surpassing excellence. All who suffer with nervous dyspepsia, sour stomach, constipation, indigestion, torpid liver, dizziness, headaches, coming-up of food, wind on stomach, palpitation and other indications of digestive disorder, will find GREEN'S AUGUST FLOWER an effective and efficient remedy. For fifty-eight years this medicine has been successfully used in millions of households all over the civilized world. Because of its merit and popularity GREEN'S AUGUST FLOWER is found today wherever medicines are sold. 30 and 90 cent bottles.—Adv.

Exportation of Perfumes Perfumery and other toilet preparations made in this country and shipped abroad had a value of more than \$1,500,000 in the last year.

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The nearer a girl approaches the age of thirty the more anxious she is to lose her self-possession. An engaged girl is always suspicious of her girl friends who are heartwheels and fancy free.

Internal cleanliness
protects against disease

IN CONSTIPATION, say intestinal specialists, lies the primary cause of more than three-quarters of all illness, including the gravest diseases of life.

Laxatives and cathartics do not overcome constipation, says a noted authority, but by their continued use tend only to aggravate the condition and often lead to permanent injury.

Why Physicians Favour Lubrication

Medical science has found at last in lubrication a means of overcoming constipation. The gentle lubricant, Nujol, penetrates and softens the hard food waste and thus hastens its passage through and out of the body. Thus, Nujol brings internal cleanliness.

Nujol is used in leading hospitals and is prescribed by physicians throughout the world. Nujol is not a medicine or laxative and cannot gripe. Like pure water, it is harmless.

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