

OUR STORY TELLER



ONLY A SHOWER.



HERBERT REPPLER stepped into the Fifth Avenue stage at Bleeker street one afternoon in the early spring. He did not care how long it took him to get up town. For he last four days he had lost all interest in life, and time was no longer of any importance to him. He was young, he was fine-looking, he was a rising lawyer; his mother had been a Van Rensselaer—yet he sat moodily gazing at the handle of his umbrella, while the years seemed to stretch away before him in unbroken weariness.

He noticed it was beginning to sprinkle when they neared Twenty-third street, and then Cornelia Winchester came into the stage and sat down directly opposite him. She gave a little start of confusion as he gravely raised his hat, and then turned her attention fixedly out of the window. Herbert had cogitated a good deal over which would be the most trying way in which to meet the girl who had rejected him. He had shivered over Gibson's man forced to take her in to dinner, but now that he sat opposite her in a Fifth Avenue stage he did not know what to do. He could not bolt. That would hurt her tender heart, and be cowardly besides. He knew she had a tender heart, although it did not beat for him.

His eyes were lifted no higher than the hem of her hellebore gown, but he saw that it was the same one that she had worn that day at Mrs. Vaughn Smith's tea, when he had beguiled her into the conservatory to see the violets. She had hoped that they might always be friends, and he meant after a while, when he was a little more used to it, to go and see her, just to show her that he had no feeling. But it was too soon as yet for him to find it easy to see her again, and thought he would leave the stage at the club. That would be perfectly natural. He could stand it until then.

If he had looked at her face he would have seen that she was not entirely at ease either. Her cheeks alternately flushed and paled as she gazed persistently out of the window. But he did not see that, as he lifted his eyes no higher than the tip of her patent leather shoe and the edge of that hellebore gown. He was thinking of her as she looked when they went into the conservatory that day, with her golden hair coiled under a bewitching hat—all green leaves and violets. She seemed the very incarnation of spring to him.

The driver growled "Fare!" down through his peepholes. She started consciously and took out her purse. Her vis-à-vis held out his hand with "Allow me!" and the purse slipped to the floor. Their eyes met as he restored her property, and she blushed vividly. He puzzled over this as he took his seat again after depositing the fare. "Why should she be discomposed? She is sorry for me," he thought, "she is so sensitive." He must get out for her sake as well as his own. Where were they, anyway? He got up at Thirty-fourth street. The rain was now coming down heavily, and she had no umbrella! He could not get out, of course, unless he could leave his umbrella with her. But that would look so odd. Very likely, by the time they reached her street, the April shower would be all over. Well, he would ride on, a while longer and see.

On they went—past Sherry's, where he had danced with her so often; past the club, where he saw Billy de Peyser and Remington looking out—Billy, whom he had decided upon for his "best man;" on, up into the fifties, past St. Thomas, where they would never be married now. The rain was falling relentlessly. They were almost at her street. He had decided what to do. Just before they reached Fifty-seventh street he bent forward.

"Miss Winchester, please take my umbrella," and he held the silver head toward her.

How she started! "Oh, no, no, thank you," and she hurriedly pulled the wrap, without giving him time to do so, and fairly sprang out of the door. What could he do but follow?

As he unfurled the umbrella over her head they were on the sidewalk, and he said inately:

"You mustn't spoil your gown, you know."

"Oh, I don't care about that," she said impatiently.

"But it's too pretty to spoil," he went on. "I like that color particularly."

She looked at him curiously. Her eyes said, "I wonder if you remember?"—but her words were:

"Do you always notice the color of people's gowns?"

"I always have of yours," he said

THE WOMAN'S WIT.



CHAPTER VII—Continued.

"That is a long price, my dear Mrs. Ruthven."

"Not too long, I think; there are some fields attached which insure privacy at present, and are worth a good deal of handsome old-fashioned furniture in the house."

"Oh! if your solicitors are satisfied, I have nothing to say against it. My business facilities are of the lowest order. I can, however, that I cannot return before Saturday week. You will be sorry to hear that my friend De Meudon has been dangerously ill. I will try to return by Paris, and have a look at him."

"Yes, I am sorry," said Mrs. Ruthven. "Then, I may only get on the track of your jewels, and have to go further a field to discover them. By the way, have you any note of their size and weight?"

"Only of some—a few. But I wish you would not go off on such a wild-goose chase. As for me, I am weary of the subject, and inclined to let them go! The whole affair has depressed and exhausted me. I feel pursued by an evil fate—as if everything was insecure—I never feel safe."

"Merely morbid feeling, such as you accused me of indulging, and proves that you think never to be left alone! Why do you think of going to so heathenish a place as Folkestone? My sister will only be too delighted if you will go to Chesham, take some luncheon. Come and see my new purchase. Come and help me; and pray, take some luncheon."

"I have already lunched, thank you."

"A glass of Burgundy, then? This, I assure you, is not to be despised."

Shirley condescended to take a glass—and began to thaw.

"Come into the next room," said Mrs. Ruthven, leading the way; and, nestling into the corner of a large sofa, she proceeded to coquette with both visitors.

"Mr. Marsden is going all the way to Amsterdam, on the chance of finding my poor rubies," she remarked, after a little discursive chatter. "Is it not good of him?"

"We would all go further than Amsterdam, if we thought we could find them," said Shirley, gallantly.

"If? Yes, that is just it. But it is too far for a mere chance. By the way, how far is Amsterdam from Ostend?" asked Mrs. Ruthven, in a curious mocking tone.

"I really do not know," returned Shirley, gravely, and looking very straight at her, his face darkening. "Why do you ask?"

Mrs. Ruthven was saved the difficulty of answering, as her courier came in before she could reply, and handing a card to his mistress, asked:

"Will you receive the gentleman, madam?"

"Oh, yes, show him up." Then, with a little confidential nod to Shirley, she added:

"This is my engineer."

"He has lost no time," he returned. "I shall not let him stay long. I will tell you all about him afterward"—to Marsden.

Shirley looked sharply at the door; but Marsden seemed too much occupied with his own thoughts to heed what was going on.

In a few minutes a middle-aged man, of average height, with iron-gray mustache and whiskers, his right arm in a sling, came into the room, and made a deferential, though clumsy, bow.

"Good morning, Mr. Colville," said Mrs. Ruthven, who had risen, and was starting toward a table near one of the windows. "You have lost no time in answering my note."

"I was anxious to thank you for your kindness in writing," he returned, in a low, hoarse voice.

"And how is your little girl?" continued Mrs. Ruthven. "Let me see, she must be nearly eight?"

"No, ma'am, she is nearly seven, and looks less. She is a delicate, weakly little creature. That's why I am anxious to keep her away in the country."

"Very naturally. I am sorry I cannot attend to you to-day, Mr. Colville," graciously. "You see I am engaged with this gentleman and Captain Shirley," bending her head in the direction of the latter. "But if you will call to-morrow, I can give you half an hour; do not be later than twelve."

"I shall be punctual, and I thank you."

"Wait for a moment," said Mrs. Ruthven. "I have a little gift here for my god-daughter." She went to her writing table, and took from a drawer a small packet, tied with ribbon, which she placed in his hands.

"You are very good, madame," he said, as with another clumsy bow and a look at each gentleman, he left the room.

"Do you not remember him at all?" asked Mrs. Ruthven.

"No," returned Shirley. "I never saw him before, and I cannot say he looks the sort of man I should be inclined to trust."

"You are too suspicious. The poor fellow has been unlucky. His arm was broken in some machinery, and he is out of work."

"I have a fellow-feeling with the unlucky," said Marsden, frowning himself. "I've not had much good luck myself."

"Why, you seem to me a remarkably lucky man," said Shirley.

"By the way, Captain Shirley," began Mrs. Ruthven, in a languid tone. "I hope you will excuse me for breaking my

engagement; but my head is quite too bad to drive down to Twickenham. It would not be worth while going in a closed carriage, and with my neuralgia an open one is not to be thought of."

"Pray do not dream of incommencing yourself on my account," said Shirley, turning white. "But as you do not need me, I have business to attend to in the city, and will bid you good morning." He bowed to Marsden and went quickly away.

"How cross he is," said Mrs. Ruthven, as the door closed to him.

"Yes, poor devil," returned Marsden, carelessly. "You treat him rather badly."

"Why does he court bad treatment? I do not want him to come here."

"There is a strong dash of cruelty in you, charming though you are."

"Do you think so?" looking down and speaking softly. "Yes, I am capable of taking my revenge, believe me," her lips quivering as she spoke.

"I am quite sure these pretty valvety little hands could strike indifferently; but they could caress tenderly, too."

"Clifford!" she exclaimed with sudden emotion, then, correcting herself—"I mean Mr. Marsden."

"No, no," he said, smiling on her, "you have broken the ice, and I will not have the colder appellation."

"Not yet," she said softly, withdrawing her hand which he had taken. "I may call you Clifford one day—but not now. Tell me, when do you go on this rather wild-goose chase to Amsterdam?"

"To-night. I cross to Calais, and shall get to Amsterdam some time to-morrow. I shall not write, as I hope to see you so soon again. I trust you will go and amuse yourself somewhere. I can't bear to think of your moping in an hotel at Folkestone; do go to my sister."

"Well, perhaps I may, but I am anxious to settle about this place."

"We must also arrange about a second trustee; I feel my responsibilities too heavy."

"Oh! we can see all about that when you come back."

"Good-bye, then, my dear Mrs. Ruthven. Wish me success."

He pressed her hand and was gone.

Mrs. Ruthven grew very pale, as she stood for a moment in thought, and she looked in the glass, smiling at her own image.

"I should never be alone," she murmured. "Does he mean to be my constant companion? I am to select another trustee. Ah! Marsden, if you but loved me, I could forgive anything. Sometimes I almost believe you do. Be that as it may, you are bound to me—for love or for revenge—I will never let you go."

CHAPTER VIII.

The result of Miss L'Estrange's self-commune was very perceptible, at least, to herself. The careful watch she established over her own words and manner, however, was too delicately exercised to be in any way remarkable. She was bright and frank as ever, but she slid easily away from any approach of sentimental subjects, though talking readily on other topics. The chief change was an increase of animation and a tendency to mock at what used to touch her. Mrs. L'Estrange only noticed that Nora was in remarkably good spirits.

Winton sometimes looked a little surprised, and bestowed more of his conversation on his older acquaintance than he used.

The quiet weeks went by swiftly, their monotony broken by occasional dinners at the houses of the cathedral dignitaries at Oldbridge, where Nora's songs and lively talk, and Mrs. L'Estrange's gentle tact and sympathetic "listening" made both welcome guests.

October was more than half over, and hunting had begun—a congenial amusement which interfered a good deal with Winton's frequent visits to Brookdale. The rapid falling of the leaves, and a succession of stormy nights, made Mrs. L'Estrange think seriously of spending November and December in town—a proposition which Nora originally urged.

Mrs. Ruthven wrote at length, very amiably.

She was detained in town by business, she said. She was in treaty for a pretty villa on the Thames, and would be delighted to have Miss L'Estrange's counsel and assistance when she set about furnishing.

Mr. Marsden had been so good in trying to find her jewels, and had gone to Amsterdam in search of them, but all in vain. Was he at Evesleigh? for no one seemed to know what had become of him.

"Do you know, I think it would be very nice to help Mrs. Ruthven in choosing her furniture? Shall I tell her we are thinking of going up to town? Perhaps she would take rooms for us," said Nora, when she had read this letter aloud at breakfast.

"My dear Nora! she would not care for the trouble; and what a price she would agree to give for rooms! We must be very prudent; my little savings during the latter part of our stay in Germany will not go far."

"Oh, yes! I forgot. You are really a wonderful woman, Helen; I shall never be such an economist; but as to not caring for the trouble, I do not think you quite do Mrs. Ruthven justice; you and Mr. Winton are always of the same opinion, and I think you have caught his prejudice against her."

"I am not so much fascinated as you are, and I must say, I am a good deal influenced by Mark Winton; when I look back," she stopped abruptly, Nora, who longed to hear her reminiscences, gazed earnestly at her, and Mrs. L'Estrange, raising her eyes suddenly, encountered those of her stepdaughter fixed upon her, and colored through her delicate pale skin, to Nora's great surprise. "Some day," said Mrs. L'Estrange, quickly, and with some confusion, "I must tell you my little history; every one has some touch of romance in their lives, even so prosaic a person as I am."

"Do, dear; tell it to me now."

"Now? Oh, no, I must interview Cook, and plan the dinner; the romance of the past must give way to the needs of the present, vulgar though they be; some evening, by the firelight, I will probe about days gone by. It is fine and calm to-day; let us give Bea a holiday, and walk across



Household

Home-Made Soap.

In the manufacture of hard soap the utmost care must be taken to properly prepare the ingredients, and have them of special qualities in order to secure the best results. Soap is made by hot and cold processes, the latter being less desirable because there may be impurities, not to be recognized by the eye, but which, nevertheless, exist, perhaps in dangerous quantities. Long and thorough boiling, while it greatly decreases the risks from impure elements, is not to be relied on to cleanse objectionable articles.

Cottonseed oil makes a fine soap, but it will not keep. It turns rancid, and has a disagreeable odor. Good toilet soap can be made at home at an infinitely less cost than the purchased sort, and one may be perfectly sure of its purity. All that is necessary is caustic soda lye of specific gravity about 1.15. This is placed in a kettle and heated almost to the boiling point, then selected oil is put in, a very small quantity at a time. The proper proportion is about one pound of oil for three pounds of lye, or, according to the old formula, one pint of oil to three pints of lye. The kettle may be drawn a little from the fire, and the heat kept up slowly but steadily.

After a time a heavy froth rises on the surface, and the soap will hold over if the heat is continued. Let it gradually cool until it merely simmers, then keep it in that way until the froth disappears, then add lye until the specific gravity of the whole is brought up to 1.14. This lye must be added in small quantities, and the soap should be kept boiling until it is perfectly smooth and sirupy. Boil until it is transparent, then scatter salt over it and allow it to stand for some hours at a heat just below the boiling point. Let it cool, drain off all the liquor that will run off, put in a little fresh, strong lye, and boil again. It may then be made into cakes or put into one large cake and cut up when nearly or quite cold.

To Clean Windows.

To begin with, have the windows thoroughly dusted every day, when the rest of the room is done—window sills, ledges, sashes, and all. If this is attended to properly, they will not require to be washed or cleaned nearly so frequently. When the cleaning is inevitable, have ready a muslin bag full of whitening, and two wash-leathers. Dust the glass thickly with the whitening, then rub it off thoroughly with a damp—not wet—leather, and finally polish with a clean, dry one. This is the method pursued by workmen when cleaning the windows of a new house, and gives a polish unknown to the glass washed in the ordinary way.

Another excellent method for giving brilliancy to glass is to damp a rag with spirits of wine, rub the glass well with this, and then polish as before with a clean, dry leather. Newspaper is also said to be an excellent "rubber" for glass on account of the printer's ink; but whether this is true or not I cannot touch from personal experience. Paper is certainly capital for cleaning decanters, carafes, etc., so very likely the case is the same with windows.

Delicate Dish of Cabbage.

Cut a large head of cabbage into four parts. Cut out the heavy stalks in the center. Plunge the cabbage into a large pot containing abundance of boiling water, into which a handful of salt has been stirred. Let it boil therein steadily for ten minutes after the water begins to bubble. Then remove it with a skimmer into a pan of cold water, and when it has thoroughly cooled draw it from the water, pressing it a little with the hands to extract all the moisture possible, and chop it into coarse pieces. Put it in a clean sauce-pan, add two large table-spoonsful of butter, and when the butter is melted a tablespoonful of flour, a teaspoonful of salt and a tablespoonful of pepper, and finally, after these have been added, a cup of milk. Stir the cabbage slowly, and when it boils set it back where it will cook slowly for three-quarters of an hour. It should be frequently stirred.

Angel Cake.

Take the whites of ten or twelve eggs and beat them until they are foamy, add six ounces or seven-eighths of a cupful of sugar and continue beating, using a wire whisk in preference to any other egg beater. Fold in half a cupful of pastry flour and a generous quarter of a cupful of cornstarch mixed together and sifted with a rounding teaspoonful of cream of tartar and a half tablespoonful of salt. Add one teaspoonful of vanilla, and bake in an unbuttered pan in a moderate oven from forty-five to fifty minutes. Wet the pan before the cake is put in, using the regular angel cake pan with the hole in the middle.

A Dish of Lamb Chops.

Trim a dozen lamb chops and brown them lightly on each side in a very little butter in the frying pan. When they are quite dry, for there must be a small quantity of butter, pour over them a little stock, or beef essence reduced in hot water; let them simmer in this, as lamb takes long cooking, turning them from side to side until this also is dried up and the meat quite tender. Put them into a dish and pour around them the contents of a can of button mushrooms that have been quickly heated, and a little butter added.

Arthur was a close student and excellent in scholarship. He was fond of athletic sports and hunting.