

GRAND SERIAL STORY.

JUDGMENT.

The Most Amazing Story Ever Penned.

FOR NEW READERS.

DICK MILLBANK, a successful, young judge, quarrels with his own son who leaves his father's house to go his own way in the world; and serving with the Australian army, under the name of Dick Foster, he meets, and falls in love with, the adopted daughter of Sir John.

However, Sir John has arranged for her marriage with Lord Haverham.

In a moment of despair, Kitty writes to Dick, asking him to meet her in the Blue Room at Evercourt Mansions. At the appointed hour, Lord Haverham goes to the Blue Room to write some letters, and unknown to the guests, Sir John enters him there. An altercation ensues between the two men, resulting in the accidental death of Lord Haverham. Later, Dick arrives in the Blue Room, is caught and accused of murder, and found guilty. Whilst passing the sentence of death, Sir John recognises the prisoner as his own son Jack! A few days later, Sir John interviews the prisoner at his private residence under escort of the warders, and tells him he will serve at least three years' imprisonment. Just as they are leaving, Dick with the assistance of Kitty makes his escape, and that night they decide to drive into Winnerleigh; but the car breaks down, and they are forced to accept the hospitality of

BEAUMONT CHASE, a millionaire. The following morning, Dick's host informs him that Sir John had called upon them and taken his daughter away. Dick, believing this story, leaves that morning for Winnerleigh. Kitty goes down to breakfast, and is cross-examined by Mr Chase, but on his promise of assistance tells him the whole story. At a fabulous price Mr Chase engages the services of

EDWARD WEBB, a clever but unscrupulous detective, to find Dick Foster, and extracts a promise from Kitty not to attempt to see or write to her lover until a year has elapsed. Edward Webb discovers Dick, and unknown to Beaumont Chase, takes him to the latter's residence where he is installed as gardener. Sir John and his daughter arrive at Beaumont Hall, and Beaumont Chase loses no time in asking Sir John for the hand of his daughter. Sir John consents. That afternoon he receives news that the gardener has been seriously injured.

Including paragraphs of last week's story, reprinted to refresh readers' memories.

"The money?" "Bringing it with me." "Hullo! Hullo!" "No answer. Mr Dixon Drake is off."

THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE.

deal bewildered, and indeed to believe the evidence of his eyes. Dick replaced the receiver and returned to the library.

There he found Kitty, still clinging to Sir John Millbank, and Beaumont Chase standing in the centre of the room in a threatening attitude, impatiently tapping the floor with his foot.

It was Chase who addressed Dick as soon as he appeared.

"I am glad you have come back, sir," he said irritably. "Perhaps you will use your influence to induce your father to come to his senses. He still persists in persuading my wife to refuse to fulfil the duty she owes to me. I think you will admit that I am not unreasonable when I protest against such an attitude, and that I am perfectly within my rights in bringing pressure to bear upon him."

"Do you mind putting that in plain words, Mr Chase?" said Dick quietly.

"With the greatest pleasure," retorted the other angrily. "What I mean is this. Sir John Millbank owes me four thousand pounds. I am willing to forget it or leave the payment to his own convenience if he will advise Kitty to act reasonably. If he won't, he will have to pay me what he owes or be sold up. And, mark you, if I am driven to it, I will have no mercy. I will make this eminent judge a bankrupt beggar, an outcast to all his friends, and a laughing-stock to all his enemies. That's what I mean, sir, and what is more, I don't mean to wait. I must have Sir John's decision within five minutes."

"You can have it now," said Dick. "My father absolutely refuses the hateful bargain you propose. Kitty will remain here in his house as long as it suits her convenience. As for the money you say—"

He was interrupted by the sonorous ringing of the front-door bell. He paused but an instant, but there was a gleam in his eyes as he went on.

"As for the money you say Sir John owes you, I should like further particulars."

"Bah! The debt is not disputed. He owes me the money, and he hasn't got it. What's more, he can't get it and—"

The door of the room opened, and a big, burly man came puffing and blowing into the room.

It was Dixon Drake.

On seeing Dick he advanced towards him and placed a bulky package in his hand.

"There you are, my lad. I gathered from your remarks on the 'phone you were in a hurry, so I came right along."

Dick, without a word, took the package, tore it open with nervous fingers, and examined its contents.

The crisp banknotes crackled musically as he fumbled them in his trembling hands.

"Kindly count those," he said, handing the notes to Beaumont Chase. "I think you will find the amount correct. Then be good enough to give Sir John Millbank a receipt in full."

Beaumont Chase, like one in a dream, held the bundle of notes for a moment, and then flung it angrily on the floor.

"What nonsense is this! What trick—" he began furiously, and then stopped abruptly, becoming aware that the eyes of Dixon Drake were fixed on him.

For a moment the two men stared at one another.

Then Mr Drake burst into a delighted roar.

"Beaumont Chase, as I live! Why, man, what a coincidence! What a bit of luck! Only a week ago I made a solemn promise that I would find you if you were above the earth. And now to come on you like this! It's Providence. That's what it is—Providence!"

"I don't understand you, sir," said Chase coldly. "Your face seems vaguely familiar. We may have met, but I don't recollect—"

"Of course you don't. I was a no-account man in those days. I hadn't made my pile. But that's neither here nor there. You'll be glad to see me when you hear my news. Who do you think was my fellow-traveller on the boat over from Australia?"

"Really?" "Ha, ha! It's good news I have for you man. Your wife is alive!"

Beaumont Chase reeled like a man struck, and his face turned deathly pale. "Are you mad?" he gasped.

"Not a bit of it," replied Drake genially. "She was saved after all. Been living on one of the islands for eighteen months. A gunboat visited the island in July and picked her up, and now she's come to England to find you. We became great friends coming over, and I promised her— Why, man, what's the matter?"

The face of the millionaire wore an expression of diabolical rage.

"It's false!" he cried. "She's dead. I—I—She couldn't have been saved. She—"

He gripped at his collar as though he was choking. Then suddenly he roused himself, and stared at them all, from one to the other in a kind of stupefaction.

Finally he broke into a bitter, mirthless laugh.

"So this is the end of my romance. This is all I can buy with all my millions!"

He looked fixedly at Kitty and took a step towards her.

"You have beaten me, child," he said in a voice suddenly tender. "Fate has stepped in and played a card in your favour when the game seemed already mine. Well, so be it. Good luck, my little Kitty. Good luck, and—good-bye."

Then turning from her swiftly he strode out of the room.

For several moments there was a tense stillness in the room.

Neither Kitty nor Dick looked at one another. The startling thing that had happened numbed their senses, and for a moment they hardly dared to realise all it meant.

Dixon Drake was the first to speak. "It seems I've come as a sort of bomb-shell. I hope I haven't done any mischief."

"Sir," cried Dick, "you have rendered a very great service, not only to all of us in this room, but to the cause of truth and justice. And now will you tell me why you have given me, a stranger, four thousand pounds?"

"I haven't given it to you. Remember your promise, lad. Not that I mean to keep you to it. I'll buy the shares at a fair price, but you must let me have them."

"What shares?" "Good Heavens! Don't you own a lot of shares in the Red Reef Mining Company?"

Dick laughed. "Oh, those! I bought fifty pounds' worth."

"They were only a few pence each then, but when I left Australia they had dropped to nothing, and I nearly sold the lot for a tin of tobacco."

"But you didn't?" "No. I held on. One never knows."

"One never knows, indeed!" exclaimed Dixon Drake, with a great laugh. "Do you never read the papers? Those shares are soaring, man, and they'll go higher. Your holding is worth eighteen thousand pounds. Mark you, not a penny more at the present market price. I expect you to let me have them at that figure."

"Eighteen thousand pounds, did you say?" said Dick slowly. "Eighteen thousand!"

"They're yours," said Dick, and then he turned and looked at Kitty.

She was still standing close to Sir John Millbank in the shelter of the old man's arm.

Dick advanced towards her timidly and took her hand.

She did not resist, but her eyes were still downcast, and there was a burning blush in her cheeks.

When she finally raised her eyes it was not at Dick she looked, but into the haggard, pain-drawn face of the old judge.

"Oh, daddy!" she said gently. "I will never leave you."

He looked down at her and over the stern old eyes came a mist of tears.

"My child," he said, as he gently stroked the fair curls from her brow. "I do not deserve such happiness as this. All my strength, all my cleverness, all my great ambitions came to nothing. They ended in ruin and disgrace. And now in the hour of my defeat comes this joy, this victory. And it comes not from any merit of my own, but from you two child-

ren. You two dear ones whom in my folly I did not know how to value. Ah, child, I—I am faint."

They helped him to a chair and stood by him one on either side, while Dixon Drake drew back and watched the scene with curious, interested eyes.

For some moments the old judge remained silent, and seemed buried in deep thought.

Then he looked up, and a serene expression came into his face as he met the steadfast gaze of his son.

"Jack," he said in a low voice, "have I disgraced the old name too much; or will you take it again? I am near my end. I wonder—will you forgive me?"

"Father!" exclaimed the young man with emotion, "let there be no talk of forgiveness between us. Heaven knows we have both had much to bear. Try to get well, and I promise you I will try to be a good and dutiful son."

The old man smiled, and taking his son's hand, joined it to Kitty's.

"Thank Heaven I have lived to see this hour," he said solemnly, "my son and my more than daughter. All my great schemes, my dreams of power, seem very trivial now. Wisdom has come late to me! And I thought myself so wise. The judge.

THE END.

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OUR NEW SERIAL

The Silent Wife

"Understand once and for all," said Rodger Armer, "I will be obeyed!"

"To keep my wretched bargain, your home must be mine," replied Doris, "but my spirit you shall never master."

"I will never open my lips to you again."

This Remarkable Drama of Married Life

STARTS NEXT WEEK.

ment I passed on so many was at last passed on me. I have been punished, and now my eyes are clear, and I know that the only real power in this world is the power of love. All else is vanity."

A month later Jack Millbank—for the name Dick Foster, which he had borne so long he now relinquished for ever—became the husband of Kitty; and the young lovers long-deferred dream of happiness was at last realised.

The old judge still lives with them, and will live with them till he dies.

Men still speak of his greatness in the past and of the success he once enjoyed, but at such talk Judge Millbank only smiles. He has tasted power, and he has tasted worldly success, and he knows what they are worth.

"Ah, Kitty," he will say sometimes to his daughter-in-law, "my only real success in life was in having a son worthy to be your husband; and my only real happiness is in seeing how fond you are of one another."

Then Kitty will reply with a smile as she kisses him.

"Dear daddy, Jack was always so wonderful. I knew he must have a wonderful father somewhere."

THE END.

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