

but I am young and have my chance, and, when all is over, I will either have died as enviably as ever the heart of a soldier panted to die, or I will be one of the heroes of a war of independence, and the men who look askance at us and curse to-day will grovel at our feet and chant *Te Deums*!"

"I am sure I hope you will be great and happy, Ken—"

"Happy, and you beat me from you like a dog!"

"How can you say such a thing?" said Lily, a tear trembling now in the big blue eye. "I will miss you ever so much. But papa and mamma are positive that we mustn't meet any more, and, you know, I could not do what would be wrong."

"Say that you think of me as they do, and I am done. You always tell the truth, Lily. Tell me that there is somebody else that you are fonder of, and I will go and find Georgey for you."

She blushed violently. "Well, Ken, I must say mamma mentioned that she had other views for me—"

"Thank you, Lily; you are a brave girl. I hope you will be as happy as a queen," said Ken, not very bravely.

"But I don't think there is anybody that I will ever care for as much as I did for you, Ken," she said, artlessly. "I mean that we were always such sweet-hearts, you know, and you were always so brave and tender to me. I am sure I wish these dreadful things would not be always happening when nobody wants them."

Her last words were smothered with a kiss—this time an entirely successful one—and her fragile daintily-moulded waist was in the grasp of a violent man. "Lily," he said, in low, rapid tones, "if we like one another like that—if we love one another—who has the right to part us? Why should your father and mother make us two miserable for life? What are money and the wretched little rags of distinction that people scramble for in country villages? I am unknown and poor: but we can wait, Lily, and we have the wealth of the Indies, in the meantime, in one another's love. If we fail—well, any tears you ever drop on my grave will not be tears of shame. But we won't fail, darling—we will win—we will clothe this old land with sunshine from sea to sea—and we will have a nation of soldiers with their victorious banners to attend your wedding and to worship your blue eyes."

"Let me go, Ken—please, let me go," cried Lily, struggling, with an energy marvellous in so small a person, to release herself. "Somebody will come. I will hate myself if you do not go at once. It is unkind of you—it is wrong—it is a sin!"

"A sin to love you and ask you not to make both of us wretched for life, darling!"

"A sin for me—yes, certainly, to be here kissed by a young man whom my parents have forbidden me ever to speak to again." This she said with a decisiveness the most astonishing ever recorded of a young lady of her years and amiability, and then she burst into a flood of tears. "I did not think you would stay arguing with me," she cried, passionately. "Call Georgey to me—call Georgey, please, instantly, or I shall cry out!"

"And the horrible thing," remarked Georgey O'Meagher, confiding some vague guesses at what had happened, to her friend, Katie Rohan, that evening, in the seclusion of the latter's tiny blue-and-white papered bedroom, "the horrible thing is that it all comes of that wretched midget, Mr. Flibbert, fluttering about for old Dargan's money."

"You don't mean to say that it is *he* who has made this change in Lily?" asked Katie indignantly.

"I don't know that anything will ever make a change in Lily. She is a petrified lump of perfection," said Georgey, in a not very sisterly tone, "but I mean that that conceited little creature has been to tea with the Dargans more than once, and that Mrs. Dargan is mean enough to set her cap at him because he

is a sort of an officer and in the Club. Poor Ken! Poor boy!"

The two girls looked at one another, the color flying to and from their cheeks.

"Oh! dear Georgey, I wish—I do wish——" Katie flung her arms around her friend, and whatever she wished was buried between a pair of soft white necks where the girls hid their tell-tale faces.

It was anything but exhilarating to Ken Rohan, in his present mood, to hear the lark-like voice of Jack Harold as he mounted the heights chirping the gay carillon of some *café chantant* love ditty, with an airy dash of *zim v'lan, la's* through it. They had not been much together of late. The one was too busy with his Christy Minstrels and the other with his dreams. A Christy Minstrel is not the very gentlest physician for a wounded heart. Ken glanced around nervously for some way of escape; but it was too late. Jack's confounded bavarding *Closerie-de-Lilas* voice hailed him.

"Hillo, ho, ho, boy! I have searched the Glen, there are I don't know how many hours for you. I have seen the vision of your *ange aux grands yeux bleus*. Then I knew you could not be far. Ken, she looked divine—her hat alone was an apotheosis."

"I hate small talk on serious subjects," said the other impatiently. "Let's talk of something else, Jack."

"Nay, but by Saint Patrick, we will talk of nothing else, while there is a Philomel in all these woods to sigh with us—and, indeed, whether there is or not. That is what I have come to talk to you about. I can talk of nothing else. I can think of nothing else. Ken, on the subject of woman you will never hear my mocking voice again. I will listen to you by the hour pouring out the perfections of your loved one. I will give you verse for verse and rapture for rapture. Don't spare your poetry—pile it on heavens high. I will agree with you in every syllable of worship of our divinity except her name. There you will be mistaken; but that is a detail. Now, seriously—most seriously—I am in love!"

"I have no doubt about the love, and I am sure you are serious in thinking yourself serious."

"Listen, Ken—I have come to you as the fellow of all the world to bring a wildly-throbbing heart to. Do not revenge yourself for my infernal flippancy by making fun of me like that. I know my faults. I am only a poor devil who twangs a guitar. Nobody will ever believe I have a deeper note in me. I sometimes hardly believe it myself," he said, in a strangely downcast way.

"Why, old fellow, what could put such things into your head?" said Ken, his own haggard face lighting up with kindness. "I think you could do anything and win anybody."

"We shall see! *Quoi qu'il en soit*, this time it will be all deadly earnest. I have found at last that life may have a purpose which is no joke. I am tired of trifling. Polly Atkins, at the Drum, is a good girl, but I could not stand her small beer to-day. I had to come to find you. You are such a grand audience! I wish I could drop that cursed Christy concert. It's so idiotic—though she *did* so like that little slave-song. Oh! Ken, she is the most glorious creature that ever made a man feel as if he could climb to the stars to win her!"

"I am glad, Jack. Tell us all about it," said Ken Rohan, who, although not in the humor to respond to raptures about woman's love just then, was relieved to find that Cupid's new victim was entirely too much occupied with his own delightful pains to pay much attention to the bloodless cheek and lack-lustre eye of his companion. He had found "an audience," and that was a true, as well as a frank, statement of what he had come in search of.

The story of his meeting with Mabel Westropp was narrated with such touches of color as Jack Harold's nimble fancy knew excellently well how to wash in. The artist co-operated with the devotee in

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