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Mabel—Marry you? Why, you couldn't dress me.  
George—I wasn't asking for a post box as lady's maid.

**The Fighting Chance.**  
By ROBERT W. CHAMBERS.

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What is a woman profited if she shall gain wealth and social leadership, even the ermine that decks the queen of the smartest of "smart sets," and lose the desire of her heart? To the decision of this momentous question came the heroine of our present tale of love and fashion and "high finance." How the young woman, graced beyond the ordinary with health and beauty, permitted her inborn desire for wealth and power to swerve her from the path plainly marked out for her by love and natural fitness, is told vividly, graphically and poetically. Of minor characters, in whom may be discerned the many types that go to make up brilliant, fashionable, sordid society, there is no lack. Not minor, however, but drawn in bold, clear lines, is the man who offered to the girl of his choice all he himself had—a "fighting chance" of life and love and happiness.

CHAPTER ONE

THE speed of the train slackened. A broad tidal river flashed into sight below the trestle, spreading away on either hand through yellowing level meadows. And now, above the roaring undertone of the cars, from far ahead dotted back the treble bell notes of the locomotive. There came a grating vibration of brakes. Slowly, more slowly, the cars glided to a creaking standstill beside a sun scorched platform gay with the bright flutter of sunshades and summer gowns.

"Shooter! Shooter!" rang the far cry along the cars, and an absent-minded young man in the Pullman pocketed the uncut magazine he had been dreaming over and picking up gun case and valve, followed a line of fellow passengers to the open air, where one by one they were engulfed and lost to view amid the gay confusion on the platform.

The absent-minded young man, however, did not seem to know exactly where he was bound for. He stood hesitating, leisurely inspecting the flashing flanks of the depot wagon, one omnibus and motor-cars—already eddying around a dusty gravel drive centered by the conventional railroad flower bed and fountain. The long train moved out through the September sun amidst clouds of snowy steam.

The young man, gun case in one hand, suit case in the other, looked about him in his good humored, leisurely manner for anybody or any vehicle which might be waiting for him. His amiable inspection presently brought a bustling baggage-master within range of vision, and he spoke to this official, mentioning his host's name.

"Lookin' for Mr. Ferrall?" repeated the baggage-master, spinning a trunk dexterously into rank with its fellows. "Say, one of Mr. Ferrall's men was here just now. There he is over there uncratin' that there bird dog."

The young man's eyes followed the direction indicated by the grumpy thumb. A red faced groom in familiar livery was kneeling beside a dog's traveling crate attempting to unlock it, while behind the bars an excited white setter whined and thrust forth first one silky paw, then the other.

The young man watched the scene for a moment.

"Are you one of Mr. Ferrall's men?" he then asked in his agreeable voice.

The groom looked up, then stood up. "Yes, sir."

"Take these. I'm Mr. Sward—of Shooter House. I dare say you have room for me and the dog too."

The groom opened his mouth to speak, but Sward took the crate key from his fingers, knelt and tried the lock. It resisted. From the depths of the crate a beseeching paw fell upon his cuff.

"Certainly, old fellow," he said soothingly. "I know how you feel about it. I know you're in a hurry, and we'll have you out in a second, steady, boy! Something's jammed, you see. Only one moment now! There you are!"

The dog attempted to bolt as the crate door opened, but the young man caught him by the leather collar, and the groom snapped on a leash.

"Beg pardon, sorr," began the groom, carried almost off his feet by the frantic circling of the dog—"beg pardon, sorr, but I'll be after seein' if any of Mr. Ferrall's men drow over for you."

"Oh! Are you not one of Mr. Ferrall's men?"

"Yes, sorr, but I hadn't anny orders to meet anny wan."

"Haven't you anything here to drive me in?"

"Yis, sorr. I'll look to see."

The raw groom, much embarrassed and keeping his feet with difficulty against the plunging dog, turned toward the gravel drive, where now only a steam motor and a depot wagon remained. As they looked the motor steamed out, bounding harsely. The depot wagon followed, leaving the cir-

ing to be a good puppy and obey. Down charge!"

The dog, trembling with eager comprehension, drooping like a shot, muzzle laid flat on his paws, Sward unleashed him, looked down at him for a second, stooped and caressed the silky head, then, with a laugh, swung himself into the phaeton beside the driver, who, pretty head turned, had been looking on intently.

"Your dog is yard broken," he said. "Look at him."

"I see. Do you think he will follow us?"

"I think so."

The horse started, Miss Landis looking back over her shoulder at the dog, who lay motionless, crouched flat in the road.

Then Sward turned. "Come on, Sagamore!" he said gayly, and the dog sprang forward, circled about the phaeton, spitting the air with yelping, drooping the fore head, mad with the delight of stretching cramped muscles amid the long rank grass and shrubbery of the roadside.

The girl watched him doubtfully. When he disappeared far away up the road she turned the blue inquiry of her eyes on Sward.

"He'll be back," said the young fellow, laughing, and presently the dog reappeared on a tearing gallop, coughing and spluttering in his new liberty, enchanted with the confidence this tall young man had reposed in him—this adorable young man, this wonderful friend who had suddenly appeared to release him from an undignified and abominable situation in a crate.

"A good dog," said Sward, and the girl looked around at him, partly because his voice was pleasant, partly because she felt that the dog was beginning to vibrate within her, coupling something unpleasant with the name of Sward.

She had been conscious of it when he first named himself, but, absorbed in the overwhelming importance of her telegram, had left the analysis of the matter for the future.

She thought again of her telegram, theorized a little, came to no conclusion, except that the matter rest for the present, and mentally turned to the next and far less important problem—the question of this rather attractive young man at her side and why the name of Sward should be linked in her mind with anything disagreeable.

Tentatively following the elusive mental clues that might awaken something definite concerning her hazy impression of the man beside her, she spoke pleasantly, conventionally, touchingly any topic that might have a bearing, and under a self-possession so detached as to give an impression of indifference, eyes, ears and intelligence admitted that he was agreeable to look at, pleasant of voice and difficult to reconcile with anything unpleasant.

They discussed shooting and the opening of the season, dogs and the training of dogs and why some go gun shy and why some are blunders. From sport and its justification they became inconsequential, and she was beginning to enjoy the freshness of their chance acquaintance, his nice attitude toward things, his irrelevancy, his gaiety.

Laughter thawed her, for, notwithstanding the fearless confidence she had been taught for men of her own kind, self-possession and reserve, if not inherent, had also been drilled into her, and she required a great deal in a man before she would give him the tribute of one of her pretty laughs.

Apparently they were advancing rather rapidly.

"Don't you think we ought to call the dog in, Mr. Sward?"

"Yes, he's had enough."

She drew rein. He sprang out and whistled, and the Sagamore pup, dusty and happy, came romping back. Sward motioned him to the rumble, but the dog leaped to the front.

"I don't mind," said the girl. "Let him sit here between us. And you might occupy yourself by pulling some of those burs from his ears if you will."

"Of course I will. Look up here, puppy! No! Don't try to lick my face, for that's bad manners. Demonstrations are odious, as the poet says."

"It's always bad manners, isn't it?" asked Miss Landis.

"What—being affectionate?"

"Yes, and admitting it."

"I believe it is. Do you hear that, Sagamore? But, never mind; I'll break the rules some day when we're alone."

The dog laid one paw on Sward's knee, looking him wistfully in the eyes.

"More demonstrations," observed the girl. "Mr. Sward, you are hugging him! This amounts to a dual conspiracy in bad manners."

"A wretchedly good admission you of the conspiracy," said Sward. "There's one vacancy—if you are eligible."

"I am. I was discovered recently kissing my saddle mare."

"That settles it! Sagamore, give the young lady the grip."

Sylvia Landis glanced at the dog, then, impulsively shifting the whip to her left hand, held out the right, and very gravely the Sagamore pup laid one paw in her dainty white gloved palm.

"You darling!" murmured the girl, resuming her whip.

"I noticed," observed Sward, "that you are perfectly qualified for membership in our association for the promotion of bad manners—in fact, I should suggest you for the presidency."

"I suppose you think all sorts of things because I gushed over that dog?"

"Of course I do."

"Well, you need not," she rejoined, delicate nose up tilted. "I never kissed a baby in all my life and never mean to, which is probably more than you can say."

"Yes; it is more than I can say."

"That admission elects you president," she concluded. But after a moment's silent driving she turned partly toward him with most unbecomingly to feel that way about babies—and about people too? I simply cannot endure demonstrations. As for dogs and

horses—well, I've admitted how I behave, and being so shamelessly affected by their devotion, why can't I be nice to babies? I'm a hazy but dreadful notion that there's something wrong about me, Mr. Sward."

He scrutinized the pretty features anxiously. "I can't see it," he said.

"But I mean it—almost seriously. I don't want to be so aloof, but I rather like to touch other people. It is rather horrid of me, I suppose, to be like those silky, plummy, luxurious Angora cats, who never are civil to you and who always jump out of your arms at the first opportunity."

He laughed, and there was malice in his eyes, but he did not know her well enough to pursue the subject through so easy an opening.

It had occurred to her, too, that her simile might invite elaboration, and the sense of the laugh in his throat made him nearly as silent where he might easily have been wittily otherwise.

This set her so much at ease, left her so confident, that they were on terms of gayest understanding presently, she gossiping about the guests at Shooter House, outlining the diversions planned for the two weeks before them.

"But we shall see little of one another. You will be shooting most of the time," she said, with the very faintest hint of challenge—too delicate, too impersonal, to savor of coquetry. But the germ of it was there.

"Do you shoot?"

"Yes, why?"

"I am reconciled to the shooting, then."

She laughed and started to flick her whip, but at her first motion the horse gave trouble.

"The bit doesn't fit," observed Sward.

"You are perfectly right," she returned, surprised. "I ought to have remembered. It is shameful to drive a horse improperly fitted." And after a moment: "You are considerate toward animals. It is good in a man."

have ventured to remind you that—perhaps you might not care to be so amiable?"

"Mr. Sward," she said impulsively, "you are nice to me! Why shouldn't I be amiable? It was—it was—I've forgotten just how dreadfully you did behave."

"Pretty badly."

"Very."

"They say so."

"And what is your opinion, Mr. Sward?"

"Oh, I ought to have known better. Something about him reminded her of a bad small boy, and suddenly, in spite of her better sense, in spite of her instinctive caution, she found herself on the very verge of laughter. What was it in the man that disarmed and invited a confidence scarcely justified, it appeared? What was it now that moved her to overlook what few overlook, not the faults, but the publicity? Was it his agreeable bearing, his pleasant badinage, his amiably listless moments of preoccupation, his youth, that appealed to her, aroused her charity, her generosity, her curiosity?

And had other people continued to accept him too? What would Quarrier think of his presence at Shooter? She began to realize that she was a little afraid of Quarrier's opinions, and his opinions were always judgments. However, Grace Ferrall had thought it proper to ask him, and that meant social absolution. As far as that went, she also was perfectly ready to absolve him if he needed it.

"I was wondering," he said, looking up to encounter her clear eyes, "whose house that is over there."

"Beverly Plank's shooting box, Black Fells," she replied, nodding toward the vast pile of blackish rocks against the sky, upon which sprang a heavy stone house festooned with chimneys.

"Plank? Oh, yes."

He smiled to remember the battering blows raised upon the ramparts of society by the master of Black Fells.

But the smile faded, and, glancing at him, the girl was surprised to see the subtle change in his face—the white, weary look, then the listless apathy, which all at once to her blinded of something graver than preoccupation.

"Is that Shooter House?" he asked as they came to the crest of the hillock between them and the sea.

"At last, Mr. Sward," she said mockingly, "and now your troubles are nearly ended."

"And yours, Miss Landis?"

"I don't know," she murmured to herself, thinking of the telegram with the faintest misgiving.

Theory had almost decided her to answer Mr. Quarrier's suggestion with a "Yes." However, he was coming from the lakes in a day or two. She would decide definitely when she had discussed the matter with him.

"I wish that I owned this dog," observed Sward as the phaeton entered the macadamized drive.

"I wish so, too," she said, "but he belongs to Mr. Quarrier."

(To Be Continued.)

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When it is the morning after the night before, you do not have to look at your tongue to know that the stomach is upset, the head is aching with a dull rhythm, and that all the world looks black and dreary. You naturally may have been lobster Newburgh, Welsh rabbit or some other tasty dish that looked much better at night than the morning after. There is no need to look at the tongue thermometer then for symptoms of trouble. You naturally go to your box of MI-O-NA stomach tablets, and with one of the little relievers bring joy and gladness to the physical system.

The real time to watch the tongue is all of the time. If it is coated with a white fur, or possibly with dark trimmings, even tho' the stomach does not tell you by the acute pains of indigestion that it needs help, yet the coating shows that you are getting into a bad way and that there is need of MI-O-NA. MI-O-NA is so positive, so sure, so reliable in its curative action upon the stomach that McBride & Will, the local agents, give an absolute guarantee with every 50-cent box they sell to refund the money unless the remedy gives absolute and complete satisfaction.

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