

"This is a will," he said, slowly; "drawn out in my favor by you."

Kitty laughed, a little scornful laugh. "You are too clever, Mr. Fairlove," she said, bitterly. "I will sign the will with pleasure, for, as it happens, I haven't a penny in the world."

"Never mind," said Reginald, smiling, serenely. "You'll sign it?"

"Conditionally. First, that you promise never to let my husband know where I am; and secondly—I shall speak quite freely, Mr. Fairlove; you haven't given me much reason to think highly of you, and frankly I consider you capable of anything—that you don't try to poison me."

Reginald flushed, and started, and protested confusedly that he had had no thought of any such thing.

As the days went by, Kitty drooped more and more, and at last took to her bed altogether.

On one occasion Mr. Fairlove waylaid the doctor to ask after the invalid, and was informed that she could not last more than two or three days.

As Mr. Reginald Fairlove watched the doctor mount his horse and depart, he remarked, half aloud—

"Pine away, my pretty little dear! Ha, ha! And I've got her little will in my pocket!"

The next moment Mr. Fairlove was astonished to find himself lying on his back on the floor.

At first he fancied there had been an earthquake, but on looking up he saw standing over him a stalwart young fellow, who he fancied resembled Lord Discombe.

"You've given yourself away, my fine fellow," said the young man, grimly. "I've been seeking for my wife everywhere, and should have passed this house if I hadn't seen you standing here. Denham"—turning to a grim-looking woman who had followed him in—"just try and find out where Lady Discombe is, while I take this brute out into the compound and horsekick him."

He seized Mr. Fairlove by the collar, dragged him outside, and gave him a sound drubbing. Then Jack hastily re-entered the house, and was met by Denham.

"Where is she?" Jack asked. For answer she led him to the room where poor Kitty lay.

"Why, Kitty darling," he said, on entering, and kneeling down beside her and taking her slender form into his strong arms, "what have they been doing to you? Has that brute Fairlove been cruel to you?"

But her replies to his eager questions so puzzled him—they were so unreconcilable and incomprehensible, that he at last called to Denham.

Denham entered at the summons, but Kitty rose in her bed, and shrieked hysterically—

"Don't let her come near me! Oh, the dreadful woman! Don't let me be poisoned! Jack! Jack! don't try to poison me again. I will die out of your way—soon—as soon as I can. Ah, you were always kind before. Don't let her come near me!"

But at this moment Mrs. Nettleship, roused by Kitty's screams, appeared at the door.

"Who are you?" she demanded, sharply. "I, madam," said Jack; "am this lady's husband—Lord Discombe; and I am going to take her to my hotel at once."

Arrived there his wife was laid tenderly in the bed prepared for her.

"Fetch the doctor, my lord," said Denham, coming forward. "I'll look to my lady."

"No, no," Kitty said, warding off the woman with her hands. "Don't let her come! Take her away!"

"Why, darling, don't you know her? Good old Denham! Why, she insisted on coming with me on purpose to wait upon you, or nurse you, if necessary. She is devoted to you. Don't cry, Denham!" he added, kindly. "Her ladyship is delirious, and doesn't know what she says."

"I'm not delirious, Jack, at all," Kitty said, sadly. "I know Denham well enough. I forgive you fully and freely. You had good reason I know to wish me away, and it was a temptation in that lonely place. But"—with a shudder—"I can never forget that awful night; you and Caroline riding away and leaving me; Denham with the poison; and then the open grave—ready for me."

"Excuse me, my lord," said Denham, stepping forward; "but I don't think her ladyship is delirious. I believe she is laboring under a mistake. Ask her what she thinks became of Miss Denver."

"You know that she died on that night, don't you, Kitty?" said Jack, soothingly.

"Died!" Kitty repeated, wildly. "Caroline died!" Mr. Fairlove told me you had married her!"

"The brute!" cried Jack, angrily. "I wish I had laid it on a little harder."

"I don't think that would have been possible, my lord," observed Denham, drily. "But if you will explain to her ladyship what really happened that night I think it would be well."

"Well, then, Kitty, where shall I begin? When you were so ill you know, of course, we were all very anxious. I blamed myself very much for taking you there. I was a fool to do it, and bitterly have I been made to regret it. Just as the doctor began to give us hopes of you Caroline fell ill. I was anxious that you should not know about it, for there was very little hope from the first for poor Carrie. Well, she died, and Denham and I kept it from you. I gave Denham some sleeping stuff to put into your medicine, so that you would know nothing till all was over and the poor girl quietly buried. That's all, I think, except for your story. When I came back I found Denham nearly mad with grief and fright, for you had jumped up in your delirium and ridden off. Afterwards we could find no trace of you. And now tell me what did you mean by talking about poison?"

"Oh, Jack, forgive me!" sobbed poor Kitty. "How wicked and unjust I have been to you and poor Denham. I—I thought—"

"I don't understand what you did think," put in Jack.

"Never mind, my lord," said Denham, coming forward. "Her ladyship was weak and ill, and you mustn't trouble over her sick fancies. What she wants now is good nursing. Leave her to me."

Jack hesitated a moment, for Kitty had

recoiled from Denham before; but when he saw Kitty cling to her, and the grim woman bend over and fondle her like a child, he went away, only stopping to ask whether he must take berths for England at once.

"Oh, yes," Kitty answered, eagerly, "at once. I am quite able to go."

Two months later Lord and Lady Discombe arrived at their own house in Mayfair, and there to meet them were Lord and Lady Houlden, both looking remarkably well and happy.

Kitty had recovered her health during the voyage, and looked well, although her friend fancied that there was a shadow on the lovely young face, and that all was not well between her and her husband.

"What I can't understand," said Lady Houlden, when they were talking over the matter; "is why Reginald should have got that signed will from you."

"Nor I," said Kitty; "for I haven't a penny piece."

"Do you wish you had?" asked Jack, quietly.

"Yes, I think I do," Kitty answered.

"Then your wish is gratified," said her husband. "We've hardly had a word together on the way home, or I should have told you before. Poor Caroline took a great fancy to you, and when she was taken ill she made a will leaving all she possessed to you. No doubt Fairlove had by some means got to know about this."

"Then—I have left it all to him," said Kitty, looking rather horrified.

They all laughed.

"Why, Kitty," cried Lynette; "you can make another will!"

"Of course," said Kitty, with a relieved sigh. "But poor Caroline! How kind of her to think of me! and I never cared much for her."

"She had had a very hard time of it," said Jack. "I will tell you the story some day, Kitty."

Soon after this Lord and Lady Houlden said farewell, and drove off home in their snug brougham.

"It's nice to see Kitty back again," Lynette said, as they whirled away. "But she doesn't look happy, does she, Geoff? Do you think—nestling up to him—that they are as happy as we are?"

"We ought to hope so, but it's hardly possible," said Lord Houlden, smiling, as he kissed the golden head. "There can't be two Lynettes, you know."

Meanwhile Jack and Kitty were seated in the drawing-room.

"Lynette seems well and happy," Kitty said.

"Very," Jack answered, absent-mindedly.

Kitty rose from her place and began to fidget with the ornaments on the mantelpiece.

"Are you thinking of going to your mother's tomorrow?" asked Jack, rousing himself after a pause.

"Yes," Kitty replied, her face flushing.

"Kitty," Jack said presently; "are you really glad that you have had this money left to you? Are you glad to be quite independent?"

"I—think it is a good thing," she faltered.

He looked at the fire and she heard him sigh.

"Jack," she said, at last, desperately; "I want to talk to you. I have been thinking," she began, slowly; "that perhaps it would be better if I went home to mother and—stayed."

"What do you mean, Kitty?" he said, sharply.

"Just this," Kitty went on, bravely, now the ice was once broken. "When—when you came, you know, that night and told me that your father wished you to marry I was quite a child. You know that, don't you, Jack?" appealingly.

"You're nothing else yet," he said, tenderly, and yet with a note of anxiety in his tone.

"Yes, I am older now," Kitty said; "I am old enough to understand what a shameful thing I did when I—Oh! Jack," covering her blushing face with her hands, "when I proposed to you."

"Why, my dear girl—" began Jack, but Kitty stopped him.

"Listen, Jack," she said, calmly. "I know now that I made a dreadful mistake when I married you. I am very, very sorry, for it was a mistake, wasn't it? Don't you think so?"

"I have feared so," he said, with a groan. "Well, as it was all my fault I ought to suffer," said Kitty.

"Is there no hope," he said, hoarsely, "that you will ever return to me? I wouldn't keep you if you will be happier away; but, oh, Kitty, my wife, my darling, don't leave me without a word of hope!"

He had caught her in his arms and spoke passionately.

"I have tried to keep our bargain. I never spoke a word of love to you. I have been a friend only; but I can't help loving you, adoring you—my one love, my darling! Won't you give me another chance? I don't expect you to love me. You yourself have said our marriage was a mistake, and I have many a time called myself a brute for marrying you as I did, and taking advantage of a bit of girlish fun; but if you only knew how I love you, Kitty, I don't think you would have the heart to leave me."

"But do you really love me?" Kitty asked, slowly, as though she could not understand.

"Love you!" he answered, passionately.

"Are you so surprised? Am I a clod—a brute? Could I live with you day by day, and not fall in love with you? Why, I loved you from the first; but I did not tell you so for fear of scaring you. I hoped you might grow to love me, and that I might win you after we were married; but that hope has gone long ago. I have seen how you have avoided me lately, and I—oh, Kitty, if you knew what a time I lived through when I thought you dead you could not be so cruel as to leave me."

"Oh, Jack!" sobbed Kitty, half laughing and half crying; "I'm so glad, and so sorry, and so happy. Oh, how blind men are! And what a little silly I have been!"

"What do you mean, Kitty?" Jack said, coming closer to her. "Have we both been mistaken?"

"I think so. I—I loved you ever so long ago."

Kitty did pay a visit to her mother next day, but there was not a word of stopping, and a very proud and radiant young husband came to bear her away when the day was over.

Geraldine and Sophie were quite amiable, and Mr. Powell-Martin could not do enough to show his delight at his daughter's recovery.

"She doesn't look much worse for her adventures, does she?" he said, fondly glancing at his lovely young daughter.

"I'm no worse," said Kitty, gaily; "I'm all the better"—with a sly glance at her husband, which only he understood.

"Did you mean that, Kitty?" he asked her afterwards. "Was it worth what you went through to find out?"

"To find out that I hadn't made a mistake after all, Jack? Yes, indeed!"

"But you did make a mistake," he said, smiling; "when you could fancy that a poor fellow who worshipped the ground you trod on could be willing to give you up so easily as you proposed yesterday."

"I shall never give you the chance again," Kitty retorted, saucily. "You'll not get rid of me now."

"If you could ever think again that I want to," he answered, tenderly; "it will only be another mistake."

"I don't think I shall ever make it, Jack," she answered, smiling. And, indeed, she never did.

OLD BEELZEBUB.

That boy Samuel is altogether peculiar in at least one respect—perhaps it may amount to two respects when you come to consider it.

I call him "that boy" because so he was when I first knew him years ago, and he has not changed. He was "that boy Samuel" then, and, although I often turn him over in my mind, so to speak, and try to find something strange or new in him, there is nothing now that was not in him then, except he has grown both physically and mentally. Perhaps I shall be able to detect a change in him when he gets married, but that will not be for some months to come.

So that in the respect—or those are the respects—in which Samuel is peculiar. It is very peculiar for a young man of independent means, who has come into his wealth within the past three years, to be just like the boy he was when his circumstances were so poor that you could hardly dignify them with the name of circumstances. They were worse than poor; they were destitute.

His origin is Western. I made his acquaintance in Chicago; and for that privilege I have to thank my valise, which I started out to carry five blocks from a restaurant to a depot, believing it to be light, and which, finding it to be heavy, I was obliged to give to Samuel to carry. He offered to carry it for ten cents, and I paid him a quarter. He fished out three nickels to give me for change, and I refused them. He shook his head and said, "You'll never get on in a place like this."

"Why?" I said. "Have you had much experience in Chicago?"

"No, I haven't," said Samuel. "I only came here a week ago."

"Did you come to look for work, like the rest?"

"Come to seek my fortune."

It may seem very improbable, but I can honestly aver that Samuel then and there seemed as neatly and properly dressed as he usually does now, and he is no sloven now. He may even have more costly clothes, but they become him neither better nor worse than those he wore when he put down my valise against a pillar that evening and fished out those three nickels.

"Isn't it rather a humble road to fortune for a lad of your appearance?" I asked.

"No choice," said Samuel sententiously.

"Haven't you ever learned any trade or profession?"

"Partly," he answered, not seeming to mind my inquisitiveness in the least. "I'm too young to have learned right through anything that you could call a trade or a profession. But I have learned a good deal about drawing."

"And you can't get any drawing to do here?"

"Not so as to be paid for it."

Didn't I say that Samuel was peculiar. You see, I had an opportunity of learning that much right at the beginning of our acquaintance.

He told me his name, and I was so interested that, knowing I should be back in Chicago a week later, I asked him to drop in and see me at my hotel.

It was in that second interview that I learned from Samuel the bulk of his story up to that time.

"I haven't any objections to talking to you about myself," he said; "because first, there is nobody else who cares to hear and, second, you seem a decent sort of man."

I acknowledged the compliment, and he went on.

"I have been carrying valises—and heavier things—since I saw you last week. But next week I am going to have a job in the freight yards. Oh, the drawing? I'll get to the drawing in time. Never fear. I'll get there."

"Yes, my people are quite well-to-do, as you guess; or we were. It's a sort of a melodrama story that you needn't believe unless you like. I was born and raised in Western Illinois. My father was a grain jobber and made money at it. But when he died he left a will that wasn't quite plain. I know just what he meant, but when it came into court the other man's lawyer made it look different. He made it look as if my father wanted his wanted his property to go in trust to my mother's uncle—mother's dead, too—and for him to raise us—my sister and me—and then to give all the bulk of it to her—not me—provided she married to the old granduncle's wishes."

"How old are you?" I asked, taking advantage of a pause.

"I'm nineteen. Sister's twenty-one. You think I'm younger because I am slim-built. Father was built that way, too, but he lasted pretty well, considering now he worked. So will I."

"Well?"

"Well, they wanted sister to marry an old

stiff, and she wouldn't. I backed her, and she married a right good sort of a man from East—a shoe-drummer."

"And for that the old ruffian turned you adrift?"

"No. Not exactly that. I took my traps, called him a thief and walked off. He thinks I think he's going to keep our property; but I don't. No more does my brother-in-law. My brother-in-law is a Yankee. Between us we can make that old granduncle cough up."

"But why don't you go to your sister?"

"Who? I? Why, they've only got thirty dollars a week to live on. I wrote and told them I had a fine job in Chicago. They believe it all right. When I'm fairly in the swim, and twenty-one, then we three go for that old relation of ours."

"H'm—meantime he sits back and spends your money?"

"Oh, that's all right. He doesn't know what's become of me, don't you see? That's the beauty of it—keeps him guessing. When you're stealing and don't know how long it will be before you're nabbed, it isn't much fun."

All this time Samuel had not told me either the name of the town he came from or his own surname. It was then, in fact, that I got myself into the habit of calling him, to myself, "that boy Samuel." I could see a plausible and honest reason for his concealment. Still I was not thoroughly convinced that Samuel was strictly accurate in all these statements, which he might easily have borrowed from popular melodrama. Now comes the story of how I found the proof of his veracity.

I had offered him a little money, which he refused, and some refreshments, which he also refused, and he had said good-night and walked out of the hotel door, inviting me, if convenient, to drop in on him next week at the freight yard, where I was to enquire for Samuel Waters—not his true name, he told me. As I turned back to go to the elevator, I noticed a grizzly-bearded man chewing the end of an unlit cigar and watching me. Why he was watching me I had no idea, and therefore I was tempted to find out. So I walked towards the stranger with a smile which I designed to invite conversation. As it turned out, the grizzly-beard was as affable as I could desire.

"Know that youngster?" he asked me.

"Well," I said; "I do and I don't."

"Same here," said the grizzly-beard, chewing his cigar meditatively. "I used to—well, it beats all how ungrateful youngsters are—never even recognized me—been staring at him and you this last half hour. Didn't I used to teach that boy to play checkers back in Skyattee? Haven't seen his father this eight years, since I moved over to Rockford. Oh, yes, the boy has grown a good deal, but I knew him the moment I saw him."

"Of course you know his father is dead?"

"Dead?" the gray-beard exclaimed in genuine horror. "You don't say Myron K. Gower is dead?"

"I don't know," I said. "This boy tells me his name is Samuel. Is that right?"

"His name is Samuel Gower, sure as you're born. And I suppose now he's up here blowing in all his money, eh?"

"Not much," I said. And then I went on and told the stranger all I had heard of Samuel from Samuel himself.

"Well, now," said this providentially arrived witness to Samuel's truth, "if that isn't the meanest thing I've heard yet on old Bela Hubbard—and we used to call him old Beelzebub out there, too. Yes, sir, Myron K. Gower married old Beelzebub's niece, and we used to say if it hadn't been for her goodness the other Beelzebub would come and fly away with that old twin brother of his. Now, look here, young man"—he marched me up to the clerk's desk and turned the register about—"that's my name right there. I'm a State Senator and no family to spend it on. Now you tell me where I can lay my hands on poor little Sam Gower this night, and I'm your friend to the full extent of my power and pull."

Not being able to earn the Senator's gratitude in this particular way, I did what I could by directing him to enquire for Samuel Waters at the freight yards. Then I gave him my card with a New York address and asked him to give it to Samuel—which I now know he did.

That ends the story proper. But there is a sequel.

Samuel called on me in New York a year after I had met him in Chicago.

"I'm working hard at the drawing now," he said. "I've got all the Senator's bank account in my back, so I can afford to study art. That's my serious occupation. My amusement is to scare the granduncle. He doesn't know where I am. I get letters mailed to him from all parts of the world. One ought to have left Sydney, Australia, day before yesterday. When I'm twenty-one then sister, and my drummer brother-in-law, and the Senator and I begin legal proceedings to make the granduncle give an account of the property."

"And after that, what do you expect to do?" I asked.

"Well, there the Senator and I differ. I look forward to paying him back; he says he's going to make me his principal heir. He hasn't got a chick or child of his own."

"But in any case you stick to the drawing?"

"In any case I stick to the drawing. Living to make, or no living to make, a man wants to have an anchor. That's my anchor. And, anyhow, I'd rather draw well than be President. That's where the Senator thinks I'm foolish."

And all this program has been very well fulfilled in the last four or five years, except for the alterations due to death and love.

For when Samuel's forces advanced against "old Beelzebub," the enemy sent for a lawyer and—so his son afterwards said—intended to surrender the property in equal shares, unimpaired, to Samuel Gower and his sister, but a fit of some kind cut short his good intentions. The Senator said he believed the other Beelzebub got mad when he saw his twin brother was going to do right and took him off just in time.

Also Samuel fell in love, so far modifying his intention of devoting himself to art that he let a young woman, who will shortly become Mrs. Samuel, share his devotion.

I believe Samuel has at last tired of sending to the Senator a check "for cash ad-