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LOT NO. 11.

"Once more, Mr. Elmore, I repeat I cannot entertain your proposal for my daughter's hand."

"But consider, Mr. Bulsale, Ethel and I love each other to distraction."

"Pshaw!" contemptuously exclaimed the unrelenting father of the dear girl I fondly adored.

I, Edward Elmore, had been for a good half hour doing my very utmost to convince the old gentleman that it would be utterly impossible for him to discover a better way of incorporating the new year than by receiving me as his son-in-law (not, and by doing so cause two fond young hearts to leaf with ecstatic joy, for why should I desire to conceal the fact that I had the very greatest cause for believing that my darling Ethel fully reciprocated my consuming passion?

That I had signally failed to make the old gentleman see the interesting subject in the light I wished him seemed only too plain.

I was blissfully alive to the reason why Mr. Bulsale did not look with favor upon my suit. My financial position was certainly not of the strongest, and there was a certain Mr. Somerset, a much middle-aged individual, short (as of cash) and fatty, and proprietor of "Somerset's Saxon Sauce for the Million."

As the very particular owner of Mr. Bulsale, the estimable connoisseur was naturally a frequent visitor at the Bulsale's residence at Brixton. I had suspected that Somerset had a sliver eye for Ethel, being on more than one occasion caught him furtively ogling "Mary's eyes" at my darling when he had doubtless breathed himself unnoticed.

Now I had obtained a feeling in the Bulsale mansion was in this wise: I was a clerk in the office of a fine old crusted firm of family and corresponding solicitors. Mr. Bulsale was an "eminent" auctioneer and, resulted in the satisfaction of possessing a very extensive and lucrative business, so he had many transactions with our firm, he and I were in consequence thrown much together. After awhile Mr. Bulsale seemed to take a fancy to me, and invited me to dine with him at his house, and that visit proved to be the Pentecost of many more.

The keen man of business, whenever had his eye on what is termed the main chance, found me useful to him in many ways, especially in what may be called the "literary" part of his calling. I refer to the composition of those enlivening literary advertisements, setting forth the varied attractions of charming country retreats and the delicious delights appertaining to magnificent mansions, which from time to time Mr. Bulsale received instructions to offer for sale to a gaping public.

I reflected time to keep a watchful eye on Simon Somerset. I must remain on good terms with Mr. Bulsale, so with this laudable object in view I said, with an air of apparent resignation:

"I trust, Mr. Bulsale, that although you cannot bring yourself to look upon me in the light of a possible son-in-law you will not prohibit my occasionally looking in upon you as before."

"Come and see us whenever you like, young man; but mind, don't let too much you manage here to Ethel."

I blushed him, and then remarked: "I think I may with truth say, Mr. Bulsale, that you have always enjoyed the little treats that your daughter and—and myself have been in the habit of—of providing. These little duets, for instance—you will not"——

"Well, no," the disappointing Bulsale said slowly, "I see no reason why you should not, as before, indulge in a little music, especially as I like it so much! Of course Bulsale was nothing if not a little selfish.

Thought I to myself, if two fond hearts, with the assistance of a piano and a sheet of music, cannot make good use of the opportunities presented, and at the same time bamboozle the unbeautiful parent, my name is not Edward Elmore.

Again I thanked the old gentleman, and then addressed him. "You have been candid enough to indicate that you have no personal objection to me, only you consider my income inadequate to maintain a wife in a manner you would deem satisfactory.

"That, young man, is precisely the state of the poll."

"And a very unsatisfactory condition it is for me," I answered mentally. "Now, would you mind telling me what pecuniary conditions or circumstances you would be willing to bestow your daughter's hand?"——

"And fortune," put in Mr. Bulsale quickly.

"That, sir," I answered quietly and, I trust, with dignity, "was not my thought. I should be willing to take Ethel without a penny. Try me."

Mr. Bulsale said nothing, but took a silent pinch.

"Under what circumstances," I repeated, "would you consent to Ethel—your daughter, bounding me with?"

"I should be willing to listen to you," he said, when you possess an income of—say seven hundred a year.

My heart sank to zero. Bulsale might just as well have requested for a million.

"Or," added the old gentleman, a curious smile stealing itself over his sensual fleshy visage, as if he had just thought of something which mightily tickled him, "you might shall be a man to have and to hold, when I have further been to you—some—years—hence. My third and last time, young—man—shall I"——

I scarcely had all patience with the old fool—fellow for wishing to shield, with any vulgar, a fair young creature as sacred to myself. This it Bulsale seemed to me that I too, had a fine science pre-eminently had been guilty of similar flippancy, and I thought I had better hitch up my wheels and take my leave, so, wishing Mr. Bulsale good morning, I made for the door.

"Good morning, my dear sir," responded the amiable old man blandly.

That evening, as the clocks were striking 8, I was in Mr. Bulsale's front drawing-room with a new piece of music, over which a few minutes later Ethel and I were bending side heads in delighted proximity, while, page, in his favorite chair, took alternate whiffs at his chandelaundon and sips at his glass of mountain dew.

In soft whisper, through the music, I informed Ethel of all that had transpired during my interview with her revered but misguiding parent. The darling girl quite agreed with me regarding the unfeasibleness of the phenomenon her father had indicated, though at the same time she seemed to wish to convey to me that she "counted down" to myself, of course.

During the evening Somerset put in an appearance, and the piano had to be closed. Then followed a discussion over a sale of a small but valuable lot of antique furniture, which Mr. Bulsale was going to hold in a few days at his extensive mart. There was also the proof of the advertisement to look over, to which, as usual, I added a little embellishment. Mr. Bulsale declared he repeatedly upon the beauty and value of several of the articles which would very likely go into the broker's hands for a mere song, "particularly," he observed as he warmed up professionally, "a large cabinet or bureau, beautifully carved and very substantial, so Jim-crack says."

"Just the very thing I should like," exclaimed Somerset. "It would make a beauty in one—if ever—I should get married, you know!" And the man of sauces cast a look at Ethel, which no doubt he intended should convey a world of significance.

At 11 we broke up, Somerset and I going part of the way together to our respective homes. The corroyed again followed his fond determination to secure the large cabinet, provided the figure was not too up to high. Somerset was a very careful, not to say stingy, man, considering the pot of money he had made with the "Sauce for the Million," which, by the way, candor compels me to admit was a very rubbing enchantment and deserved the common sale it enjoyed.

As I was seated at my desk at noonday on a certain one day of the sale of the antique furniture, I fell to wondering as the probable amount old Somerset would bid up to for the cabinet in question.

"Tollyrand, sir!" said Mary Jane, brushing to open me.

I never could forget that handsome to any telegram. Opening the buff colored dispatch I read, "Purchase at sale this morning Lot No. 11 at any cost. Do not fail your Ethel."

"Mr. Somerset," I muttered, "you are going to be done out of your much-coveted purchase. But what on earth can Ethel want with the cabinet, and at any cost too?" However, I had little time to see in such speculations, so set off to the scene of operations, leaving in the office on the way to make excuses for my absence. I arrived at the mart just as the third lot was being knocked down. Bulsale seemed surprised on seeing me enter, while Somerset, who was close to the rostrum, looked as dark as his own sauce, as though, in fact, he had intuitively guessed the cause of my presence there.

Lot 10 was quickly reached and disposed of. The auctioneer then, clearing his throat, assumed an air of extra importance and commenced to enlarge: "Lot No. 11 in the catalogue," speaking of the "noble piece" of antique furniture in terms so fecling that any one might fairly have been excused for imagining the article offered had belonged to a long line of Bulsale's ancestors.

When Mr. Bulsale had apparently exhausted his category of laudatory phrases, he actually wound up with, by way of perception:

"The article, ladies and gentlemen, now's no wonder! Lot 11 is a rare bureau, one of its uniqueness; there it is to speak for itself."

"A sideboard," had a vociferous spirit.

The auctioneer remarked that it was rather too early in the day for joking; however, he would take the bid just by the way of making a start.

"Let's see make of it," suggested one of those aweil wits often seen at auctions.

"Certainly, if you desire to, sir, though I may tell you there's nothing, not even a shelf, but should any one require shelves, fixing the cost would be only trifling. John, unlock the cabinet."

"The key ain't in, sir," answered the attendant.

"It was an hour ago, I'm certain," remarked Mr. Bulsale. "However, it's of little consequence. Sorry we can't oblige you, sir, just at the moment; the key has evidently been mislaid."

"Supposing, after all, there is something inside, will it go with the article?"

"I pledge you my word," answered Mr. Bulsale, with stock irony, "that the fortunate purchaser of that work of art may justly claim anything that may happen to be in the cabinet, I know everybody will now be satisfied and allow us to go on with business."

There is no use to dwell on the progress of the bidding for Lot No. 11. Besides myself there were two or three other keen competitors, and even if I had not been there with such imperative orders, somebody would have failed to secure the coveted piece of furniture at what he considered a reasonable price; he retired from the field vanquished, and I became the happy purchaser of the article, the last bid to my lot of £27 10s., and a rather exuberant frame I conjured up. Of course, after all, I was not an equal in the market.

As there was not much left to be disposed of, I elected to stay till the sale was concluded, thinking it just possible I might hear something more respecting my purchase. I perhaps my way through the crowd into Mr. Bulsale's office, behind the auctioneer, and seated myself facing the drawing drawers which I had just relinked, my eyes the while peering upon the antique cabinet, which and how so placed that the back of it was partly across the entrance to the private room.

I had been sitting a minute or so, musing over the unusual events of the morning, when to my consternation I saw—there was no illusion—the back of the wardrobe slowly opened.

I sat a door, disclosing a space of four or five inches, and through this aperture there appeared a small feminine hand, in whose upraised fingers dangled instinctly a scrap of paper. Advancing my chair to the opening, I reached out quickly transferred it to myself. The little hand was thereupon instantly withdrawn and the opening closed.

Could I believe my eyes as I read in the paper I had so unceremoniously become possessed of as follows:

"Do I have really been imagined fancy to you, dear. Now you will understand my behaviour. You of course will know how to complete the messages begun by Ethel?"

"Where? Tell, clever darling!"

"Be ready in minutes Mr. Bulsale entered, exclaiming:

"There, I've got finished. But where is Ethel?"

Before I could reply the back of the antique cabinet again opened, but while this time, and Ethel, looking somewhat flushed, stepped forth. Advancing toward us, she said doubtingly:

"Here I am, papa, come the worse for being "knocked down" by you."

Papa Bulsale's face was a study, as he looked first at Ethel, then at myself.

"Explain!" he gasped out, as he sank helplessly into an easy chair.

"It is all my doing," Ethel quickly replied. "Edward knew nothing of the actual fact till a moment ago. You see, papa, I overheard yesterday that the cabinet had a revolving back, and so case, as if to illustrate, the blow occurred to me to hide myself with the furniture, and so—well, you know the rest, dear papa, and I belong to the purchaser of the antique wardrobe, 'Lot 11.' Here to the key."

The ingenious damsel put out her hand to me, and taking the clear little palm, I turned to the dazed Mr. Bulsale, saying gravely:

"I claim this lady according to the conditions of sale, as well as by your new bonds, of which I know my you do not require renewing."

As soon as the current excitement realized how beautifully he had been secured he seemed decidedly, but the potent of his wrath soon exhausted itself, and he called down wonderfully, even going so far as to designate his Grace Somerset as a mere Fellow for not bidding therefore.

"In the suspicious," he, when finally, being filled because my wife, the order of the conversation at such times was somewhat reversed by the use of the Sauce, "I, indeed, looked for the bidding the customary present, the latter not into a handsome gift—Lot 11! He accepted it."—New York World.

Inventor of a Colonial Pendulum.

There are no pendulums in the old, nor are we in the colonies, but we every effort there is a heavenly sun supported by a man entirely independent to the subscriptions of the charitable public. A gentleman who lately visited one of these asylums saw no less reported that among the inmates he found a near relation of a British peer, the brother-in-law of a baronet, a son of a dean of the Church of England, a Church of England clergyman acting as a warder, two captains and one colonel of the British army, the brother of a popular English novelist, and a member of the 8th, or "Light Bobsale" of Balaklava.—London Tit-Bits.

When the Guillotine Was First Used.

On April 25, 1792, the guillotine was publicly used for the first time, and behaded a bandit named Pelletier. This was in the Place de Grève, where some twenty years previously Damiens had been tormented for days in precisely the same way as Ravaillac had been for the assassination of Henri IV.

Balzac's Servant.

When Honore de Balzac, the novelist, stated in early life his wish to become a literary man, his father, who had destined him for the bar, was shocked and disappointed. Still he gave the boy two years in which to prove his fitness for a literary life, and Honore was accordingly installed in an attic near the library wherein he prepared to work.

His mother believed that a little hardship would soon bring him to his senses, but the correspondence which he thereupon began with his sister shows that the man who was afterward to attain distinction in his chosen work could affect, as a youth, to scorn such trifles as walking upon himself. In the very first letter he confided to his sister the news that he had taken a servant. He writes:

"He is named Myself! And a hot lazzaro he is, truly! Myself is lazy, hungry, thirsty, hot. He is modest in hungry or thirsty, and often enough Myself has neither bread nor water to give him; he doesn't even know how to shield him from the wind which whistles through the door and window. As soon as I arrive at work, there is Myself, and he makes my bed. Then he sweeps the room, and clumsy he is at it.

"Myself?"

"Yes, sir."

"Look at that cobweb with the big fly hanging in it! I am not guilty with the broom, and the fluff under the bed, and the dust under the window panes!

"The lazy beggar gazes at me and doesn't stir, and yet, in spite of all his defects, I can't get rid of that scamp! Myself is my master."

And the same stupid "Myself" it was who afterward enriched French literature with a series of wonderful works.—Youth's Companion.

Clive Thorne Miller tells of a boy that she once found, and that repeat her kindness with every tears of gentle regard. The boy never squealed at her as he would at others, but whistled politely and cooing. He always got as near her as possible, and did as near climbing on her lap (and that is, he had his back on her stock.

Cabman's Examinations.

Cabmen have to pass an examination in knowledge of London streets before they can obtain a license, and it has to be more necessary than many to be surprised, for 687 men in the year 1891 failed in the examination, and 1 of a seven sons of men, while 1311 were passed.

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