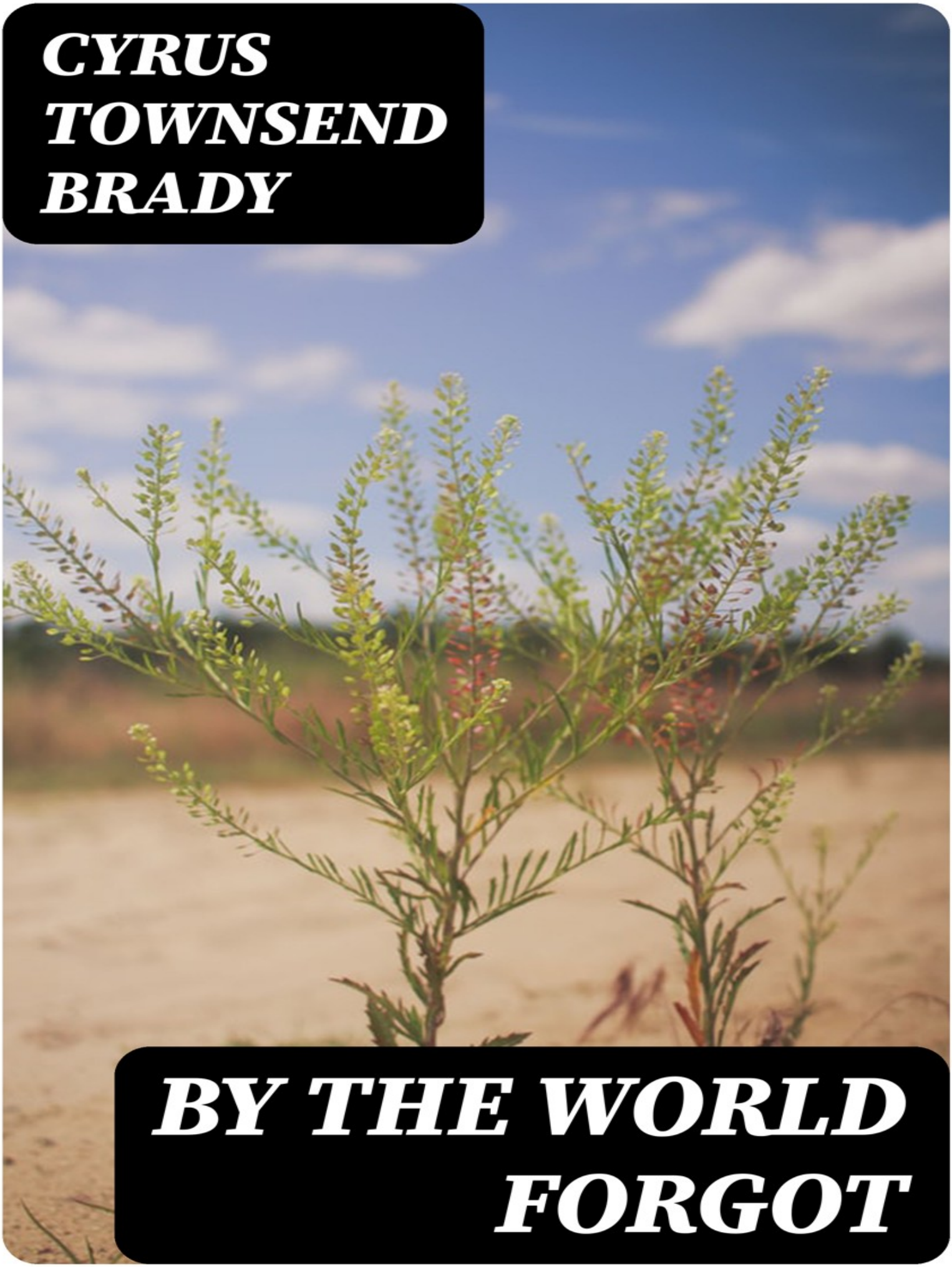
CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY



BY THE WORLD FORGOT

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Cyrus Townsend Brady

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A Double Romance of the East and West

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CHAPTER I

A CLASH OF WILLS AND HEARTS

"For the last time, will you marry me?"

"No."

"But you don't love him."

"No."

"And you do love me?"

"Yes."

"I don't believe it."

"Would I be here if I did not?"

Now that adverb was rather indefinite. "Here" might have meant the private office, which was bad enough, or his arms, which was worse or better, depending upon the view-point. She could think of nothing better to dispel the reasonable incredulity of the man than to nestle closer to him, if that were possible, and kiss him. It was not a perfunctory kiss, either. It meant something to the woman, and she made it mean something to the man. Indeed, there was fire and passion enough in it to have quickened a pulse in a stone image. It answered its purpose in one way. There could be no real doubt in the man's mind as to the genuineness of that love he had just called in question in his pique at her refusal. The kiss thrilled him with its fervor, but it left him more miserable than ever. It did not plunge him immediately into that condition, however, for he drew her

closer to his breast again, and as the struck flint flashes fire he gave her back all that she had given him, and more.

Ordinarily in moments like that it is the woman who first breaks away, but the solution of touch was brought about by the man. He set the girl down somewhat roughly in the chair behind the big desk before which they were standing and turned away. She suffered him thus to dispose of her without explanation. Indeed, she divined the reason which presently came to his lips as he walked up and down the big room, hands in pockets, his brows knitted, a dark frown on his face.

"I can't stand any more of that just now," he said, referring to her caress; "if ever in my life I wanted to think clearly it is now and with you in my arms--Say, for the very last time, will you marry me?"

"I cannot."

"You mean you will not."

"Put it that way if you must. It amounts to the same thing."

"Why can't you, or won't you, then?"

"I've told you a thousand times."

"Assume that I don't know and tell me again."

"What's the use?"

"Well, it gives me another chance to show you how foolish you are, to overrule every absurd argument that you can put forth--"

"Except two."

"What are they?"

"My father and myself."

"Exactly. You have inherited a full measure, excuse me, of his infernal obstinacy."

"Most people call it invincible determination."

"It doesn't make any difference what it's called, it amounts to the same thing."

"I suppose I have."

"Now look at the thing plainly from a practical point of view."

"Is there anything practical in romance, in love, in passions like ours?"

"There is something practical in everything I do and especially in this. I've gone over the thing a thousand times. I'll go over it again once more. You don't love the man you have promised to marry; you do love me. Furthermore, he doesn't love you and I do--Oh, he has a certain affection for you, I'll admit. Nobody could help that, and it's probably growing, too. I suppose in time he will--"

"Love me as you do?"

"Never; no one could do that, but as much as he could love any one. But that isn't the point. For a quixotic scruple, a mistaken idea of honor, an utterly unwarranted conception of a daughter's duty, you are going to marry a man you don't and can't love and--"

"You are very positive. How do you know I can't?"

"I know you love me and I know that a girl like you can't change any more than I can."

"That's the truth," answered the girl with a finality which bespoke extreme youth, and shut off any further discussion of that phase.

"Well, then, you'll be unhappy, I'll be unhappy, and he'll be unhappy."

"I can make him happy."

"No, you can't. If he learns to love you he will miss what I would enjoy. He'll find out the truth and be miserable."

"Your solicitude for his happiness--"

"Nonsense. I tell you I can't bear to give you up, and I won't. I shouldn't be asked to. You made me love you; I didn't intend to."

"It wasn't a difficult task," said the girl smiling faintly for the first time.

"Task? It was no task at all. The first time I saw you I loved you, and now you have lifted me up to heaven only to dash me down to hell."

"Strong language."

"Not strong enough. Seriously, I can't, I won't let you do it."

"You must. I have to. You don't understand. His father gave my father his first start in life."

"Yes, and your father could buy his father twenty times over."

"Perhaps he could, but that doesn't count. Our two fathers have been friends ever since my father came here, a boy without money or friends or anything, to make his fortune, and he made it."

"I wish to God he hadn't and you were as poor as I was when I landed here six years ago. If I could just have you without your millions on any terms I should be happy. It's those millions that come between us."

"Yes, that's so," admitted the girl, recognizing that the man only spoke the truth. "If I were poor it would be quite different. You see father's got pretty much everything out of life that money could buy. He has no ancestry to speak of but he's as proud as a peacock. The friendship between the two families has been maintained. The two old men determined upon this alliance as soon as I was born. My father's heart is set upon it. He has never crossed me in anything. He has been the kindest and most indulgent of men. Next to you I worship him. It would break his heart if I should back out now. Indeed, he is so set upon it that I am sure he would never consent to my marrying you or anybody else. He would disinherit me."

"Let him, let him. I've the best prospects of any broker in New York, and I've already got enough money for us to live on comfortably."

"I gave my word openly, freely," answered the girl. "I wasn't in love with any one then and I liked him as well as any man I had ever met. Now that his father has died, my father is doubly set upon it. I simply must go through with it."

"And as your father sacrificed pretty much everything to build the family fortune, so you are going to sacrifice yourself to add position to it."

"Now that is unworthy of you," said the girl earnestly. "That motive may be my father's but it isn't mine."

"Forgive me," said the man, who knew that the girl spoke even less than the truth.

"I can understand how you feel because I feel desperate myself; but honor, devotion, obedience to a living man,

promise to a dead man, his father, who was as fond of me as if I had already been his daughter, all constrain me."

"They don't constrain me," said the man desperately, coming to the opposite side of the big desk and smiting it heavily with his hand. "All that weighs nothing with me. I have a mind to pick you up now and carry you away bodily."

"I wish you could," responded the girl with so much honest simplicity that his heart leaped at the idea, "but you could never get further than the elevator, or, if you went down the stairs, than the street, because my honor would compel me to struggle and protest."

"You wouldn't do that."

"I would. I would have to. For if I didn't there would be no submitting to *force majeure*. No, my dear boy, it is quite hopeless."

"It isn't. For the last time, will you marry me?"

"As I have answered that appeal a hundred times in the last six months, I cannot."

"Are there any conditions under which you could?"

"Two."

"What are they?"

"What is the use of talking about them? They cannot occur."

"Nevertheless tell me what they are. I've got everything I've ever gone after heretofore. I've got some of your father's perseverance."

"You called it obstinacy a while ago."

"Well, it's perseverance in me. What are your conditions?"

"The consent of two people."

"And who are they?"

"My father and my fiancé."

"I have your own, of course."

"Yes, and you have my heartiest prayer that you may get both. Oh," she went on, throwing up her hands. "I don't think I can stand any more of this. I know what I must do and you must not urge me. These scenes are too much for me."

"Why did you come here, then?" asked the man. "You know I can't be in your presence without appealing to you."

"To show you this," said the girl, drawing a yellow telegram slip from her bag which she had thrown on the desk.

"Is it from him? I had one, too," answered the man, picking it up.

"Of course," said the girl, "since you and he are partners in business. I never thought of that. I should not have come."

"Heaven bless you for having done so. Every moment that I see you makes me more determined. If I could see you all the time and--"

"He'll be here in a month," interrupted the girl. "He wants the wedding to take place immediately and so do I."

"Why this indecent haste?"

"It has been a year since the first postponement and--Oh, what must be must be! I want to get it over and be done with it. I can't stand these scenes any more than you can. Look at me."

The man did more than look. The sight of the piteous appealing figure was more than he could stand. He took her

in his arms again.

"I wish to God he had drowned in the South Seas," he said savagely.

"Oh, don't say that. He's your best friend," interposed the girl, laying her hand upon his lips.

"But you are the woman I love, and no friendship shall come between us."

The girl shook her head and drew herself away.

"I must go now. I really can't endure this any longer."

"Very well," said the man, turning to get his hat.

"No," said the girl, "you mustn't come with me."

"As you will," said the other, "but hear me. That wedding is set for thirty days from today?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'll not give you up until you are actually married to him. I'll find some way to stop it, to gain time, to break it off. I swear you shan't marry him if I have to commit murder."

She thought he spoke with the pardonable exaggeration of a lover. She shook her head and bit her lip to keep back the tears.

"Good-bye," she said. "It is no use. We can't help it."

She was gone. But the man was not jesting. He was in a state to conceive anything and to attempt to carry out the wildest and most extravagant proposition. He sat down at his desk to think it over, having told his clerks in the outer office that he was not to be disturbed by any one for any cause.

CHAPTER II

THE STUBBORNNESS OF STEPHANIE

At one point of the triangle stands the beautiful Stephanie Maynard; at another, George Harnash, able and energetic; at the third, Derrick Beekman, who was a dilettante in life. George Harnash is something of a villain, although he does not end as the wicked usually do. Derrick Beekman is the hero, although he does not begin as heroes are expected to do. Stephanie Maynard is just a woman, heroine or not, as shall be determined. Before long the triangle will be expanded into a square by the addition of another woman, also with some decided qualifications for a heroine; but she comes later, not too late, however, to play a deciding part in the double love story into which we are to be plunged.

Of that more anon, as the sixteenth century would put it; and indeed this story of today reaches back into that bygone period for one of its origins. Romance began--where? when? All romances began in the Garden of Eden, but it needs not to trace the development of this one through all the centuries intervening between that period and today. This story, if not its romance, began with an arrangement. The arrangement was entered into between Derrick Beekman senior, since deceased, and John Maynard, still very much alive.

Maynard was a new man in New York, a new man on the street. He was the head of the great Inter-Oceanic Trading Company. The Maynard House flag floated over every sea

from the mast heads, or jack staffs, of the Maynard ships. Almost as widely known as the house flag was the Maynard daughter. The house flag was simple but beautiful; the daughter was beautiful but by no means simple. She was a highly specialized product of the nineteenth century. Being the only child of much money, she was everything outwardly and visibly that her father desired her to be, and to make her that he had planned carefully and spent lavishly. With her father's undeniable money and her own undisputed beauty she was a great figure in New York society from the beginning.

No one could have so much of both the desirable attributes mentioned--beauty and money--and go unspoiled in New York--certainly not until age had tempered youth. But Stephanie Maynard was rather an unusual girl. Many of her good qualities were latent but they were there. It was not so much those hidden good qualities but the dazzling outward and visible characteristics that had attracted the attention of old Derrick Beekman.

Beekman had everything that Maynard had not and some few things that Maynard had--in a small measure, at least. For instance, he was a rich man, although his riches could only be spoken of modestly beside Maynard's vast wealth.

But Beekman added to a comfortable fortune an unquestioned social position; old, established, assured. Those who would fain make game of him behind his back--such a thing was scarcely possible to his face--used to say that he traced his descent to every Dutchman that ever rallied around one-legged, obstinate, Peter Stuyvesant and his predecessors. The social approval of the Beekmans--

originally, of course, Van Beeckman--was like a *lettre de cachet*. It immediately imprisoned one in the tightest and most exclusive circle of New York, the social bastille from which the fortunate captive is rarely ever big enough to wish to break out.

Beekman's pride in his ancestry was only matched by his ambitions for his son, like Stephanie Maynard, an only child. If to the position and, as he fancied, the brains of the Beekmans could be allied the fortune and the business acumen of the Maynards, the world itself would be at the feet of the result of such a union. Now Maynard's money bought him most things he wanted but it had not bought and could not buy Beekman and that for which he stood. Maynard's beautiful daughter had to be thrown into the scales.

Maynard had no ancestry in particular. Self-made men usually laugh at the claims of long descent, but secretly they feel differently. Being the Rudolph of Hapsburg of the family is more of a pose or a boast than not. I doubt not that even the great Corsican felt that in his secret heart which he revealed to no one. Maynard's patent of nobility might date from his first battle on the stock exchange, his financial Montenotte, but in his heart of hearts he would rather it had its origin in some old and musty parchment of the past.

Beekman, who was much older than Maynard, had actually helped that young man when he first started out to encounter the world and the flesh and the devil in New York and to beat them down or bring them to heel. A friendship, purely business at first, largely patronizing in the beginning on the one hand, deferentially grateful on the other, had

grown up between the somewhat ill-sorted pair. And it had not been broken with passing years.

Maynard, unfortunately for his social aspirations, had married before he had become great. Many men achieve greatness only to find a premature partner an encumbrance to a career. However, Maynard's wife, another social nobody with little but beauty to recommend her, had done her best for her husband by dying before she was either a drag or a help to his fortunes. The two men, each actuated by different motives, which, however, tended to the same end, had arranged the match between the last Beekman and the first Maynard; and that each secretly fancied himself condescending to the other did not stand in the way. The young people had agreeably fallen in with the proposals of the elders, neither of whom was accustomed to be balked or questioned--for old Beekman was as much of an autocrat as Maynard. Filial obedience was indeed a tradition in the Beekman family. There were no traditions at all in the Maynard family, but the same custom obtained with regard to Stephanie.

Young Beekman was good looking, athletic, prominent in society, a graduate of the best university, popular, and generally considered able, although he had accomplished little, having no stimulus thereto, by which to justify that public opinion. He went everywhere, belonged to the best clubs, and was a most eligible suitor. He danced divinely, conversed amusingly, made love gallantly if somewhat perfunctorily, having had abundant practice in all pursuits. For the rest, what little business he transacted was as a broker and business partner of George Harnash, who, for

their common good, made the most of the connections to which Beekman could introduce him.

Beekman, who had taken life lightly, indeed, at once recognized the wisdom of his father's rather forcible suggestion that it was time for him to settle down. He saw how the Maynard millions would enhance his social prestige, and if he should be moved to undertake business affairs seriously, as Harnash often urged, would offer a substantial background for his operations.

Stephanie Maynard was beautiful enough to please any man. She was well enough educated and well enough trained for the most fastidious of the fastidious Beekmans. In any real respect she was a fit match for Derrick Beekman, indeed for anybody. There was no society into which she would be introduced that she would not grace.

From a feeling of condescension quite in keeping with his blood young Beekman was rapidly growing more interested in and more fond of his promised wife. Her feelings probably would have developed along the same lines had it not been for George Harnash. He was Beekman's best friend. They had been classmates and roommates at college. Harnash like Beekman was a broker. Indeed the firm of Beekman & Harnash was already well spoken of on the street, especially on account of the ability of the junior partner, who was everywhere regarded as a young man with a brilliant future.

Now Harnash hung, as it were, like Mohammed's coffin, 'twixt heaven and earth. He was not socially assured and unexceptionable as Beekman, but he was much more so than the Maynards. He did not begin with even the modest wealth of the former, but he was rapidly acquiring a fortune

and, what is better, winning the respect and admiration of friends and enemies alike by his bold and successful operations. It was generally recognized that Harnash was the more active of the two young partners. Beekman had put in most of the capital, having inherited a reasonable sum from his mother and much more from his father, but Harnash was the guiding spirit of the firm's transactions.

Harnash, who was the exact opposite of Beekman, as fair as the other man was dark, fell wildly in love with Stephanie Maynard. To do him justice, this plunge occurred before definite matrimonial arrangements between the houses of Beekman and Maynard had been entered into. Harnash had not contemplated such a possibility. The two friends were in exceedingly confidential relationship to each other, and Beekman had manifested only a most casual interest in Stephanie Maynard. Harnash, seeing the present hopelessness of his passion, had concealed it from Beekman. Therefore, the announcement casually made by his friend and confirmed the day after by the society papers overwhelmed him.

To do him justice further, while it could not be said that Harnash was oblivious to the fact that the woman he loved was her father's daughter, he would have loved her if she had been a nobody. While he could not be indifferent to the further fact that whoever won her would ultimately command the Maynard millions, George Harnash was so confident of his own ability to succeed that he would have preferred to make his own way and have his wife dependent upon him for everything. However, he was too level headed

a New Yorker not to realize that even if he could achieve his ambition the Maynard millions would come in handy.

The thing that made it so hard for Harnash to bear the new situation was the carelessness with which Beekman entered into it. He felt that if the marriage could be prevented it would not materially interfere with the happiness of his friend. Harnash had deliberately set himself to the acquirement of everything he desired. Honorably, lawfully, if he could he would get what he wanted, but get it he would. He found that he had never wanted anything so much as he wanted Stephanie Maynard. Money and position had been his ambitions, but these gave place to a woman. He did not arrive at a determination to take Stephanie Maynard from Derrick Beekman, if he could, without great searchings of heart, but the more he thought about it, the longer he contemplated the possibility of the marriage of the woman he loved to the man he also loved, the more impossible grew the situation.

At first he had put all thought of self out of his mind, or had determined so to do, in order to accept the situation, but he made the mistake of continuing to see Stephanie during the process and when he discovered that she was not indifferent to him he hesitated, wavered, fell. By fair means or foul the engagement must be broken. It could only be accomplished by getting Derrick Beekman out of the way. After that he would wring a consent out of Maynard. To that decision the girl had unconsciously contributed by laying down conditions which, by a curious mental twist, the man felt in honor bound to meet.

Both the elder Beekman and John Maynard were men of firmness and decision. Wedding preparations had gone on apace. The invitations were all but out when Beekman was gathered to his ancestors--there could be no heaven for him where they were not--after an apoplectic stroke. This postponed the wedding and gave George Harnash more time. Now Derrick Beekman had devotedly loved his stern, proud old father, the only near relative he had in the world. He decided to spend the time intervening between that father's sudden and shocking death and his marriage on a yachting cruise to the South Seas. It was characteristic of his feeling for Stephanie Maynard that he had not hesitated to leave her for that long period. The field was thus left entirely to Harnash.

The Maynard-Beekman engagement, of course, had been made public, and Stephanie's other suitors had accepted the situation, but not Harnash. He was a man of great power and persuasiveness and ability and he made love with the same desperate, concentrated energy that he played the business game. He was quite frank about it. He told Stephanie that if she or Beekman or both of them had shown any passion for the other, such as he felt for her, he would have considered himself in honor bound to eliminate himself, but since it would obviously be *un mariage de convenance*, since both the parties thereto would enter into it lightly and unadvisedly, he was determined to interpose. And there was even in the girl's eyes abundant justification for his action.

No woman wants to be taken as a matter of course. Stephanie Maynard had been widely wooed, more or less all

over the world. Although she did not care especially for Derrick Beekman, she resented his somewhat cavalier attitude toward her, and his witty, amusing, but by no means passionately devoted letters, somewhat infrequent, too. Harnash made great progress, yet he came short of complete success.

The Maynards were nobodies socially, that is, their ancestors had been, and they had not yet broken into the most exclusive set, the famous hundred and fifty of New York's best, as they styled themselves to the great amusement of the remaining five million or so, but they came, after all, of a stock possessed of substantial virtues. Stephanie's father was accustomed to boast that his word was his bond, and, unlike many who say that, it really was. People got to know that when old John Maynard said a thing he could be depended upon. If he gave a promise he would keep it even if he ruined himself in the keeping, and his daughter, in that degree, was not unlike him.

Almost a year after his father's death Derrick Beekman sent cablegrams from Honolulu saying he was coming back, and George Harnash and Stephanie awoke from their dream.

"I love you," repeated Stephanie to Harnash in another of the many, not to say continuous, discussions they held after that day at the office. "You can't have any doubt about that, but my word has been passed. I don't dislike Derrick, either. But I'd give anything on earth if I were free."

"And when you were free?"

"You know that I'd marry you in a minute."

"Even if your father forbade?"

"I don't believe he would."

"If he did we would win him over."

"You might as well try to win over a granite mountain. But there's no use talking, I'm not free."

"It's this foolish pride of yours."

"Foolish it may be. I've heard so much about the Beekman word of honor and the Beekman faith that I want to show that the Maynard honor and faith and determination are no less."

"And you are going to sacrifice yourself and me for that shibboleth, are you?"

"I see no other way. Believe me," said the girl, who had resolved to allow no more demonstrations of affection now that it was all settled and her prospective husband was on the way to her, "I seem cold and indifferent to you, but if I let myself go--"

"Oh, Stephanie, please let yourself go again, even if for the last time," pleaded George Harnash, and Stephanie did. When coherent speech was possible he continued: "Well, if Beekman himself releases you or if he withdrew or disappeared or--"

"I don't have to tell you what my answer would be."

"And I've got to be best man at the wedding! I've got to stand by and--"

"Why didn't you speak before?" asked the girl bitterly.

"I was no match for you then. I'm not a match for you now."

"You should have let me be the judge of that."

"But your father?"

"I tell you if I hadn't promised, all the fathers on earth wouldn't make any difference. Now we have lived in a fool's paradise for a year. You're Derrick's friend and you're mine."

"Only your friend?"

"Do I have to tell you again how much I love you? But that must stop now. It should have stopped long ago. You can't come here any more except as Derrick's friend."

"I can't come here at all, then."

"No, I suppose not. And that will be best. Let us put this behind us as a dream of happiness which we will never forget, but from which we awake to find it only a dream."

"It's no dream to me. I will never give you up. I will never cease to try to make it a reality until you are bound to the other man."

They were standing close together as it was, but he took the step that brought him to her side and he swept her to his heart without resistance on her part. She would give her hand to Derrick Beekman, but her heart she could not give, for that was in George Harnash's possession, and when he clasped her in his arms and kissed her, she suffered him. She kissed him back. Her own arms drew him closer. It was a passionate farewell, a burial service for a love that could not go further. It was she who pushed him from her.

"I will never give you up, never," he repeated. "Great as is my regard for Beekman, sometimes I think that I'll kill him at the very foot of the altar to have you."

Stephanie's iron control gave way. She burst into tears, and George Harnash could say nothing to comfort her, but only gritted his teeth as he tore himself away, revolving all sorts of plans to accomplish his own desires.

To him came, with Mephistophelian appositeness, Mr. Bill Woywod.

CHAPTER III

BILL WOYWOD TO THE RESCUE

The three weeks that followed were more fraught with unpleasantness, not to say misery, than any Stephanie Maynard and George Harnash had ever passed. Of the two, Harnash was in the worse case. Stephanie had two things to distract her.

The approaching wedding meant the preparation of a trousseau. What had been got ready the year before would by no means serve for the second attempt at matrimony. Now no matter how deep and passionate a woman's feelings are she can never be indifferent to the preparation of a trousseau. Even death, which looms so horribly before the feminine mind, would be more tolerable if it were accompanied by a similar demand upon her activities. Yet a woman's grief in bereavement is never so deep as to make her careless as to the fit or becomingness of her mourning habiliments. Much more is this true of wedding garments.

Now if these somewhat cynical and slighting remarks be reprehended, nevertheless there is occupation even for the sacrificial victim in the preparation of a trousseau which, were it not so pleasant a pursuit, might even be called labor. The fit of Stephanie's dresses on her beautiful figure was not

accomplished without toil, albeit of the submissive sort, on the part of the young lady. That was her first diversion.

For the second relief the girl had a great deal more confidence in her lover's promise than he had himself in his own prowess. Try as he might, plan as he could, he found no way out of the *impasse* so long as the solution of it was left entirely to him, and the woman was determined to be but a passive instrument.

The obvious course was to go frankly to his friend and lay before him the whole state of affairs in the hope that Beekman himself would cut the Gordian knot by declining the lady's hand. Two considerations prevented that. In the first place, Beekman had confidingly placed his love affair, together with his business affairs, in the hands of his partner. Harnash had not meant to play the traitor but he had been unable to resist the temptation that Stephanie presented, and he simply could not bring himself to make such a bare-faced admission of a breach of trust. Besides, he reasoned shrewdly that even if he did make such a confession it was by no means certain that Derrick Beekman would give up the girl. His letters, since his cable from Hawaii, had rather indicated a strengthening of his affection, and Harnash suspected that the realization that his betrothed was violently desired by someone else would just about develop that affection into a passion which could hardly be withstood.

In the second place, even if Beekman's affection for Harnash would lead him to take the action desired by his friend, there would still be Mr. Maynard to be won over. Harnash had not been associated with Maynard as a broker

in various transactions which the older man had engineered, without having formed a sufficiently correct judgment of his character to enable him to forecast absolutely what Maynard's position would be in that emergency. Maynard had a considerable liking and a growing respect for young Harnash. He had casually remarked to his daughter on more than one occasion that Harnash was a young man who would be heard from. Maynard had observed that Harnash strove for many things and generally got what he wanted.

Perhaps that remark, which the poor girl had treasured in her heart, had something to do with her confidence that somehow or other Harnash would work out the problem. But Harnash knew very well how terrible, not to say vindictive, an antagonist and enemy Maynard could be when he was crossed. If Beekman withdrew from the engagement, broke off the marriage, about which there had been sufficient notoriety on account of the first postponement after the older Beekman's death, Maynard's rage would know no bounds. He would assuredly wreak his vengeance upon Beekman, and if Harnash were implicated in any way the punishment would be extended to him.

Harnash knew that Beekman would not have cared a snap of his finger for the older Maynard's wrath. He was not that kind of a man. Nor would he himself have been deterred by the thought of it had he been a little more sure of his position financially. Whatever else he lacked, Harnash had courage to tackle anything or anybody, if there were the faintest prospect of success. But to fight Maynard at that stage in his career was an impossibility. These weighty

reasons accordingly decided him that it was useless and indeed impossible to appeal to his friend.

Again, while Harnash was accustomed to stop at nothing to procure his ends, and while he had declared that he would murder Beekman, he knew that although he meant it more than Stephanie supposed, he did not mean it enough to be able to do anything like that. His mind was in a turmoil. He really was fond of Beekman, and if Stephanie and Derrick had been wildly in love with each other Harnash believed that he would have been man enough to have kept out of the way and have fought down his disappointment as best he could. As it was, there was reason and justice in what he urged. Since Stephanie loved him and did not love Beekman, and since Beekman's affection was of a placid nature, the approaching union was horrible.

The wildest schemes and plans ran through his head or were suggested to him after intense thought, only to be rejected. The problem finally narrowed itself down to a question of time. Harnash was a great believer in the function of time in determining events. If he could postpone the marriage again he would have greater opportunity to work and plan. He had enough confidence in himself, backed by Stephanie's undoubted affection, to make him believe that with time he could bring about anything. Therefore he must eliminate Derrick Beekman, temporarily, at least, and he must do it before the wedding. The longer he could keep him away from Stephanie, the better would be his own chance. If even on the eve of the wedding the groom could disappear, the fact would tend greatly to his

ultimate advantage, provided Beekman were away long enough.

He concentrated his mind on this proposition. How could he cause Derrick Beekman to disappear the day before his wedding, and how, having spirited him away, could he keep him away long enough to make that disappearance worth while from the Harnash point of view? That was the final form of the problem in its last analysis. How was he to solve it?

He could have Beekman kidnapped, and hold him for ransom in some lonely place in the country. That was a solution which he dismissed almost as soon as he formulated it. The thing was impracticable. He would have to trust too many people. He could never keep him long in confinement. He himself would probably become the victim of continuous blackmail. In the face of rewards that would be offered, his employees would eventually betray him. Sooner or later, unless something happened to Beekman, he would get out. Harnash had plenty of hardihood, but he shivered at the thought of what he would have to meet when Beekman came for an accounting, as sooner or later he would. He would have to find some other way. What way?

Now Harnash's misery was further increased by the fact that Beekman had cabled him to go ahead with the preparations for the wedding. The Beekman yacht had broken down in Honolulu Harbor after that long cruise, and instead of following his telegram straight home, there had been a week of delay. He had explained the situation by cables to Harnash, Stephanie, and her father.

After the yacht, her engines pretty well strained from the year's cruise, had been put in fair shape, ten days had been required for the return passage. Beekman had some business matters to attend to in San Francisco and he did not arrive in New York until a few days before the wedding, which was to take place at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the Bishop Suffragan and the Dean being the officiating clergymen designate.

It was fortunate in one sense that Beekman had been so delayed, for there was so much for him to do, so many people for him to see, that he had little opportunity for making love to his promised bride, and he had no chance to discern her real feelings any more than he had to find out Harnash's position. He had, indeed, remarked that Stephanie looked terribly worn and strained, and that George Harnash was haggard and spent to an extraordinary degree; but he attributed the one to the excitement of the marriage and the other to the fact that Harnash had been left so long alone to bear the burden of responsibility and decision in the rapidly increasing brokerage business.

When he had swept his unwilling bride-to-be to his heart and kissed her boisterously, he had told her that he would take care of her and see that the roses were brought back to her cheeks after they were married; and after he had shaken Harnash's hand vigorously he had slapped him on the back and declared to him that as soon as the honeymoon was over he would buckle down to work and give him a long vacation. Neither of the recipients of these promises was especially enthusiastic or delighted, but in his