

than I could, upstairs. Like me, Mrs. Pome-roy finds the Devonshire cream very heavy. The daughter and Sir Archibald finished nearly the whole dish, although it was a large china basin.

Sir Archibald Maxwell Mackenzie, Bart.

GREY TOR INN

I MUST get away from these women at all costs. People may say what they like, but there's no question that nothing is more destructive to comfort than the society of ladies. A man cannot smoke, nor wear the clothes nor use the language that he wants to when they are present, — so what is the use of pretending, as some fellows do, that they add to the pleasantness of life? I certainly thought that by coming to these out-of-the-way parts in the motor, with no one but my servant, I should be free of the women; but no such luck! In the hotel at Exeter there was a batch of them, — some Americans, of course, particularly a girl, so deuced lively she could not be ignored. I dislike the whole girl-tribe with all my

heart, and I dislike the kittenish ones most: they're a positive pest.

This is a rum sort of country, — a sort of inferior Scotland, I should call it; but if you were to say that to the artist chaps and writing fellows you meet about here, they would murder you. There is a lot of rot talked about everything in this world, but there's more and worse rot talked about scenery than anything else. For instance, people will yarn away about "the blue Mediterranean," but it's not a bit bluer than any other sea, — the English Channel, for example; any sea will be blue if the sky is blue. I suppose it earns somebody's living to talk and write all this sort of stuff, and get idiots to believe it. Here they are always jawing away about "giant monoliths" and wonderful colossal stone-formations on the moor, till you really think there's something rather fine to be seen. And what are the giant monoliths? Two or three ordinary sorts of stones set up on end on a mound! What rot!

This is a goodish hotel, and the roads so far have been all right for the motor; we have come along fairly well; Johnson can drive a bit now, and understands the machine.

The country was pretty decent for a while, before reaching this; plenty of trees, no good for timber, though, and there was a lot of that rotten holly — I'd have it all up if it grew on Kindarroch. And the gorse, too, was very bad. There was a fellow at Exeter — a sort of artist, I conclude, from the nonsense he talked — who said he was coming up here to see the gorse, — came every year, he said. To see the gorse! To see a lot of dirty weeds that every sensible man wants to root up and burn! O Lord!

This morning it was rather fine, and I was having a smoke after breakfast in the hall, when that American girl — the one I saw at Exeter — came down the staircase, singing at the top of her voice. I knew she was here, with a mother in the background; she had been fooling around the motor al-

ready, asking a lot of silly questions, and touching the handles and the wheels—a thing I can't bear—so we had made acquaintance in a kind of way. The artist at Exeter, I remember, asked me if I didn't think this girl remarkably pretty, and I told him I hadn't looked to see, which was perfectly true. But you can't help seeing a girl if she's standing plump in front of you. Of course these Americans dress well—no end of money to do it on. This one had a sort of tam-o'-shanter thing on her head, and a lot of dark hair came out under it, falling over her ears, and almost over her cheeks—untidy, I call it. She wore a grey dress, with a bit of scarlet near her neck, and a knot to match it under the brim of her cap. I can notice these things when I like. She has black eyes, and knows how to use them. I don't like dark women; if you must have a woman about, I prefer pink and white—it looks clean, at any rate. The name of these people is Pomeroy, Johnson told me; they appear

to have got the hang of mine at Exeter; trust women for that sort of thing.

“Good-morning, Sir Archibald,” said Miss Pomeroy now, as pat as you please. “It's a mighty pretty morning, isn't it? Don't you long for a walk? I do! I'm going right up to that stone on the slope there. Won't you come along too?” A man can hardly refuse outright, I suppose, when a thing is put to him point blank, like this, and we started together, I pretty glum, for I made up my mind I must give up my after-breakfast pipe, a thing which puts me out of temper for the day. However, Miss Pomeroy said she liked smoke, so there was a kind of mitigation in the boredom which I felt was before me.

Grey Tor, as the guide-books call it, is just above the hotel, a sort of knob of rock that is thought a lot of in these parts. (We make road metal of the same kind of thing in Scotland; I'd like to tell the chaps that who write all the drivel about Dartmoor).

There's an iron railing round the top of this Tor to keep the tourists from falling off, though they'd be no loss if they did. Coach loads of them come every day, and sit on the top and eat sandwiches, and leave the paper about, along with orange and banana skins — same as they do at the Trossachs at home. There's a grassy track up to this blessed Tor, and Miss Pomeroy and I followed it; American women are no good at walking, and, in spite of her slight figure, she was puffing like a grampus in no time, and begging me to stop. We sat down on a rock, and soon she had breath enough to talk. The subject of names came up, I forget for what reason.

“I like your kind of name,” Miss Pomeroy was good enough to say. “I call it downright sensible and clear, for it tells what you're called, and gives your background immediately, don't you see? Now you could n't tell what my Christian name is without asking — could you?”

“No, I could n't,” I agreed, and was silent. I'm no hand at small talk. She gave me rather a funny look out of her black eyes, but I took no notice. She seemed to want to laugh — I don't know why; there's nothing funny on Dartmoor that *I* can see. We got on to the Tor presently, and nothing would satisfy a woman, naturally, but climbing all over the beastly thing. She had to be helped up and down, of course. Her hands are very white and slim; they were not at all hot, I am glad to say, as she wore no gloves, and I had to clutch them so often. There was a very high wind up there, and I'm blessed if her hair did n't come down and blow about. It only made her laugh, but I considered it would be indecent to walk back to the hotel with a woman in such a dishevelled state.

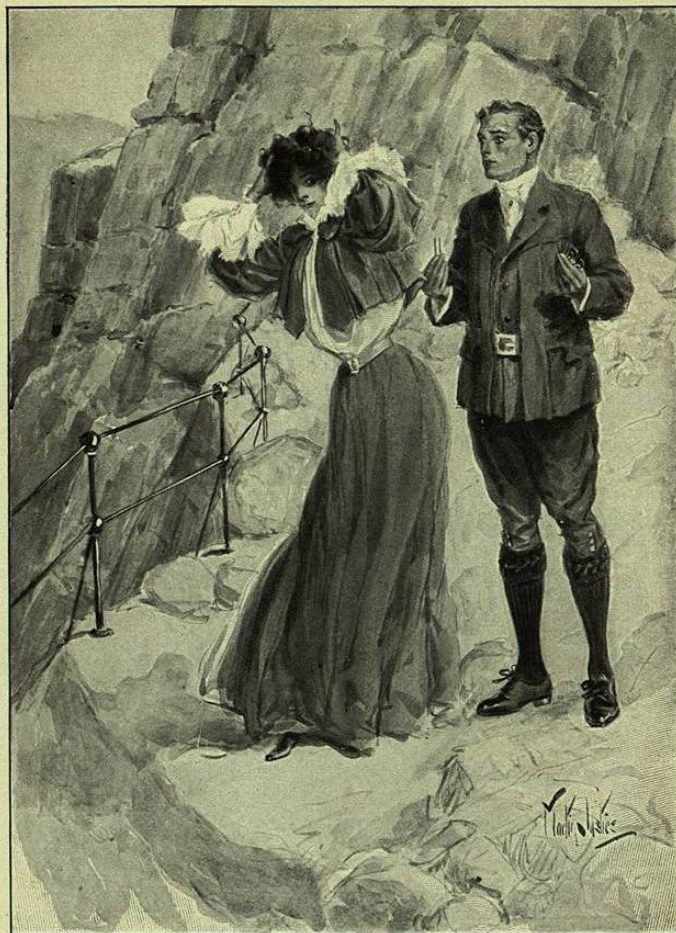
“I will pick up the hairpins,” I said seriously, “if you will — will do the rest.” She laughed and put up her arms to her head, but brought them down with a flop.

“I'm afraid my waist is too tight in the

sleeves for me to do my hair up here ; it 'll have to wait till I get down to the hotel," she said gaily. I suppose she meant that she tight-laced, though I could n't see how her waist could be tight in the sleeves. I was quite determined she should not walk to the hotel in my company with her hair in that state.

"I will stick these in," I said firmly, indicating the hairpins, of which I had picked up about a bushel, "if you will do the rolling up." It got done somehow, and I stuck in the pins. I never touched a woman's hair before ; how beastly it must be to have all that on one's head — unhealthy, too. I dare say it accounts for the feebleness of women's brains. Miss Pomeroy's cheeks got pinker and pinker during this operation — a sort of rush of blood, I suppose ; it is all right as long as it does not go to the nose. She is not a bad-looking girl, certainly.

We got back to the hotel without any further disagreeables.



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"I WILL STICK THESE IN . . . IF YOU WILL DO THE ROLLING UP"

Cecilia Evesham

GREY TOR INN, DARTMOOR

IF a policeman's "lot is not a happy one," neither is a companion's: I lay this down as an axiom. I have lived now for two years with Mrs. MacGill, and know her every frailty of character only too well. She has not a bad temper; but oh! she is a terrible, terrible bore! Not content with being stupid herself, she desires to make me stupid along with her, and has well-nigh succeeded, for life with her in furnished apartments at Tunbridge Wells would dull a more brilliant woman than I have ever been.

Mrs. MacGill has lately had the influenza; it came almost as a providential sending, for it meant change of air. We were ordered to Dartmoor, and to Dartmoor we have come. Now I have become interested in three new people; and that, after the life I have lived

of late in Mrs. MacGill's sick room, is like a draught of nectar to my tired fancy. We met these three persons for the first time in the train, and at the hotel at Exeter where we stopped for the night; or rather, I should say that we met two of them and sighted the third. The two were a mother and daughter, Mrs. Pomeroy and Virginia Pomeroy by name, and Americans by nation; the third person was a young man, Sir Archibald Maxwell Mackenzie, of Kindarroch, N.B. The Americans were extremely friendly, after the manner of their nation; the young man extremely unfriendly, after the manner of his. We found that the Pomeroy were coming on to this inn, but the Scotchman whizzed off in his motor car, giving us no hint of where he intended to go. I thought we had seen the last of him, but it was to be otherwise.

The morning after our arrival at the Grey Tor Inn Mrs. MacGill assumed a Shetland shawl, closed the window of the sitting-room,

and sat down to do a bit of knitting. I sat by the window answering her little vapid remarks and looking out. As I sat thus, I heard a puffing noise and saw a scarlet motor car steam up to the door of the inn. It was, of course, Sir Archibald.

"What is that noise, Cecilia?" asked Mrs. MacGill.

"It's a motor car," I replied.

"Oh, how curious! I never can understand how they are worked," said she.

I was beginning to try to explain some of the mysteries of motoring when the door of the sitting-room opened, and Miss Virginia Pomeroy came in. Her appearance was a delight to the eyes; tall and full grown, yet graceful, and dressed to perfection. She had none of that meek look that even the prettiest English girls are getting nowadays, as if they would say, "I'm pretty, but I know I'm a drug in the market, though I can't help it!" No, no, Virginia Pomeroy came into the room with an air of possession, mastery, con-

quest, that no English girl can assume. She walked straight up to the window and threw it open. "How perfectly lovely!" she exclaimed. "Why, there's a motor; I must have a ride in it before very long." She turned pleasantly to me as she spoke, and asked me if I did n't adore motoring.

"I've never tried," I said.

"Well, the sooner you begin the better," she said. "Never miss a joy in a world of trouble; that's my theory."

I smiled, but if she had known it, I more nearly cried at her words; she did n't know how many joys *I* had missed in life!

"I'll go right downstairs and make love to the chauffeur," she went on, and at this Mrs. MacGill coughed, moved the fire-irons, and told me to close the window. Miss Pomeroy turned to her with a laugh.

"Why!" she said, "are you two going to sit in this hotel parlour all the morning? You won't have much of a time if you do!"

"I have had the influenza, like Mrs. Pome-

roy," announced Mrs. MacGill solemnly, "but if Miss Evesham wishes some fresh air she can go out at any time. I'm sure I never object to anything that you choose to do, Cecilia, do I?"

I hastened to assure her that she did not, while the American girl stood looking from one of us to the other with her bright, clever eyes.

"Suppose you come down to the hall door with me then, Miss Evesham," Miss Pomeroy suggested, "and we'll taste the air."

"Shall I, Mrs. MacGill?" I asked, for a companion must always ask leave even to breathe. Mrs. MacGill answered petulantly that of course I might do as I liked.

The motor stood alone and unattended by the front door, both owner and chauffeur having deserted it. It rested there like a red-hot panting monster fatigued by climbing the long hill that leads up to Grey Tor Inn.

"Is n't it out of breath?" cried Virginia. "I want to pat it and give it a drink of

water." The next minute she skipped into the car and laid her white hand on the steering-wheel.

"Oh, don't! Do take care!" I cried. "The thing may run away with you, or burst, or something, and the owner may come out at any moment — it belongs to that young man who was at Exeter, Sir Archibald Maxwell Mackenzie."

"I should like it very much if he did come out," said Virginia, looking over her shoulder at me with the most bewitching ogle I ever saw, and I soon saw that she intended to conquer Sir Archibald as she had conquered many another man, and meant to drive all over Dartmoor in his motor. Well, youth and high spirits are two good things. Let her do what she likes with the young man, so long as she enjoys herself; they will both be old soon enough!

II

Virginia Pomeroy

DARTMOOR, DEVONSHIRE

GREY TOR INN

THE plot thickens; well, goodness knows it was thin enough before, and it is now only of the innocent consistency of cream sauce. For myself I like a plot that will stand quite stiff and firm; still the Exeter motor is here and the Exeter motor-man is here. I don't mean the chauffeur, but the owner. He does n't intend staying more than a day or two, but he may like it better as time goes on, — they often do, even these British icebergs. It is, however, a poor climate for thawing purposes. There are only six people in the inn all told, and two, we hear, are leaving to-night.

I was glad to see the English girl standing at the window when we arrived. She brightened, as much as to say that we two might