

# A Woman in Hobbies.

BY ROBERT BARR.

Author of "The Face and the Mask," "In the Midst of Alarms," etc.

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## CHAPTER XV.

Jennie Brewster stood with her back to the door, a sweet smile on her face. "This is my day for acting," Miss Longworth said. "I am not giving an initiation of myself to your thrilling drama, but I am giving an initiation of your thrilling drama to me." "Don't you think it is most admirable?"

"Yes," said Edith, sitting down again. "I wonder you did not adopt the stage as a profession."

"I have often thought of doing so, but journalism is more exciting."

"Perhaps. Still, it has its disappointments. When I gave my thrilling drama, as you call it, on shipboard, I had my stage accessories arranged to better advantage than you have now."

"Do you mean the putting off of the boat?"

"No. I mean that the electric button was under my hand—it was impossible for you to ring for help. Now, were you hold the door, you cannot stop me from ringing for the bell rope here beside me."

"Yes, that is a disadvantage, I admit. Do you intend to ring, then, and have me turned out?"

"I don't think that will be necessary. I imagine you will go quietly." "You are a pretty clever girl, Miss Longworth. I wish I liked you, but I don't, so we won't waste valuable time depicting that fact. Have you no curiosity to hear what I was going to tell you?"

"Not the slightest; but there is one thing I should like to know."

"You came here well recommended. How did you know I wanted a housemaid, and were your recommendations?" Edith prepared for a worst, which Jennie promptly supplied.

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"Is it not difficult to offer you the money you have earned?"

"Yes, it is, and you know it was when you spoke. You don't understand me a title bit."

"Is it necessary that I should?"

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"Miss Longworth," she said, "you are not consistent. You first pretend that you do not care to hear what I have to say, then you ask me exactly what I was going to tell you. Of course, you are dying to know why I am here; you wouldn't be a woman if you weren't. Now, I've changed my mind, and I don't intend to tell you. I will, though, that my object in coming here was first to see if you would be a woman if you weren't."

"You see my sympathies are all with the women—well, like yourself, for instance."

"Yes, I think you said that once before. And how do we treat our servants?"

"So far as my experience goes, very well indeed."

"It is most gratifying to hear you say this. I was afraid we might not have met your approval. And now, which shall I send you your month's money, Miss Brewster?"

Jennie Brewster leaned back in her chair, her eyes all but closed, an angry light shooting from them that retained Edith of her glance of hatred on board the steamship. A rich, warm glow of color overcame her fair face, and her lips closed tightly. There was a moment's silence between them, and then Jennie's indignation passed away as quickly as it came. She laughed, with just a touch of restraint in her tone.

"You can say an insulting thing more calmly and sweetly than any one I ever met before; I envy you that. When I say anything low down and mean, I say it in anger, and my voice has a certain amount of acidity in it. I can't purr like a cat and scratch at the same time—I wish I could."

"Is it not difficult to offer you the money you have earned?"

"Yes, it is, and you know it was when you spoke. You don't understand me a title bit."

"Is it necessary that I should?"

"I don't suppose you think it is," said Jennie, meditatively, resting her elbow on her knee, and her chin on her palm. "That is where our points of view differ. I like to know everything. It interests me to learn what people think and talk about, and I am sure it doesn't seem to matter to me who the people are, for I was even more interested in your butler's political opinion than I was in Lord Frederick Dingham's. They are both Conservatives, but Lord Freddie seems shaky in his views, for you can argue him down as a matter of fact, but my butler is as steady as a rock. I do admire that butler. I hope you will break the news of my departure gently to him, for he proposed to me, and he has not yet had his answer. Do you know, I don't think it is necessary that I should."

"No, I don't think it is necessary. I imagine you will go quietly."

"You are a pretty clever girl, Miss Longworth. I wish I liked you, but I don't, so we won't waste valuable time depicting that fact. Have you no curiosity to hear what I was going to tell you?"

"Not the slightest; but there is one thing I should like to know."

"You came here well recommended. How did you know I wanted a housemaid, and were your recommendations?" Edith prepared for a worst, which Jennie promptly supplied.

"Forget? Oh, dearest. There is no necessity for doing anything criminal in this country. If you have the money, I didn't forget them—I bought them. Didn't you write to any of the good ladies who stood sponsor for me?"

"Yes, and received most flattering accounts of you."

"Certainly. That was part of the contract. If you can do anything with money in London, it is a most delightful town. Then, as for knowledge there is a vacancy, that also was money. I bribed the other housemaid to leave."

"Yes, and what object had you in all this?"

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laughter that had charmed William an hour or two before—a laugh that sometimes haunted Westworth's memory in the city. She left her seat on the sofa and crossed the door, and there herself into a chair.

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the rich man be exempt from a similar investigation?"

"I wish that was the work of a spy."

"Yes, but a spy is not a dishonest person; at least, he need not be. I saw a monument in Westminster Abbey to a man who was honored as a spy. It may be that he was not a spy, but he must have been; he must have had nerve, caution, and resource. He sometimes does more for his country than a whole regiment. Oh, there are worse persons than spies in this world."

"I suppose there are, still—"

"Yes, I know. It is easy for persons with plenty of money to mortgagize on the steering-compass of others. I'll tell you a secret I'm writing a book, and if it is a success, they'll go to bed. I don't like the idea of a man writing a book, but I'm afraid England is so uninteresting, and I've stayed here a few years, I might degenerate so far as to think your newspaper interesting. By the way, do you know Mr. Westworth's address?"

Edith hesitated a moment, and at last answered: "Yes, I do."

"Will you give it to me? I think I ought to write him a note of apology for all the anxiety I caused him on board ship. You may not believe it, but I have had some twinges of conscience over that episode. I suppose that's why I partially forgive you for stopping the cablegram."

## CHAPTER XVI.

Edith Longworth was astonished at herself for giving the address to the young woman, but she gave it, and the Lady Slavery departed in peace, saying by way of farewell, "I'm sorry that you're not your own household after all."

When the new editors of the Canadian Press had read the article, they were so angry that they sent Mr. Kenyon to the manager of the paper, and he thought that unnecessary expense had been incurred in the printing, but he was now in for it, he said, although a shiver of fear ran over him when he thought of the possible failure of his scheme, leaving the railway accident hanging over him. He occupied a desk in one of the back rooms, while a clerk in the front office gave away prospectuses, and he had no personal acquaintance with any of the subscribers. Most of Kenyon's callers were newspaper canvassers who wanted advertisements, which John at that moment was unable to supply. An oily young man, whose case of constipation indicated that he belonged to the "back-room" class, was talking to him about a money-making scheme, while a stout, middle-aged man, who had been a member of the Field to get particulars about the mine, and this information Kenyon readily supplied, feeling that that advertisement was asked for.

Longworth was seldom at the new office. He was busy seeking acquaintances who would do him good in the coming copy. He constantly cautioned his staff against being too much of a hurry, and he annoyed Westworth by informing him that he had not seen him since his appearance here in white, but in an office, I will call a politician and offer you arrested."

"It is merely a matter of business, my boy," he expostulated the other, bravely. "If you find it impossible to deal with us, there is no harm done. If our paper is to be published, it will do you goodly injury. That, of course, is entirely for you to judge. If any time between now and Sunday night you can't get a word from me, I'll be in a sorry state. I'll be in a sorry state. I'll be in a sorry state. I'll be in a sorry state."

"You mean to tell me that you intend to publish this article if I do not pay you £200?"

"Yes, publishing it, that is exactly what I do mean."

"Kenyon took his wrath and flung open the door."

"I must ask you to leave this place, and I'll be in a sorry state. I'll be in a sorry state. I'll be in a sorry state. I'll be in a sorry state. I'll be in a sorry state."

The Widow Wilson's farm had been better and more prosperous than, and now was traveling backward. It began at the top of Brimble Hill, where it was bounded by the county road, and struggled down to the lake shore, its hundred acres or so wandering over hills and dipping into hollows until they terminated at the bay, with its rim of white and glistening sand.

One of the most picturesque spots of earth, and right in the center of it, crowning a rounded knoll, surrounded with ancient oaks and hemlocks, squatted the house of its owner.

It was always a difficult spot to reach in winter, when the drifting snow piled high their white billows against the low-eaved structure and hid the windows from the outer world. But in summer, when the deluge, this moss-grown dwelling beneath the oaks, and at one time had been a home around whose hearstone had gathered woe and delights.

Now, it was a different matter. The passing stranger would have added it to the category of deserted farms. No sign of life was visible about it. The only sign of a house was its bare, bare chimney, now a quiet smoke invaded the crisp and frosty air; the light fall of snow that had covered the ground the night before was now a thick carpet leading from the weather-beaten door, and yet there was a star of life in the farm yard, in the hollow among the trees, where the old man came and sat on his fall. There a flock of fowl and tur