

## CHAPTER IV. WORK WANTED

It seemed to Archie, as he surveyed his position at the end of the first month of his married life, that all was for the best in the best of all possible worlds. In their attitude towards America, visiting Englishmen almost invariably incline to extremes, either detesting all that therein is or else becoming enthusiasts on the subject of the country, its climate, and its institutions. Archie belonged to the second class. He liked America and got on splendidly with Americans from the start. He was a friendly soul, a mixer; and in New York, that city of mixers, he found himself at home. The atmosphere of good-fellowship and the open-hearted hospitality of everybody he met appealed to him. There were moments when it seemed to him as though New York had simply been waiting for him to arrive before giving the word to let the revels commence.

Nothing, of course, in this world is perfect; and, rosy as were the glasses through which Archie looked on his new surroundings, he had to admit that there was one flaw, one fly in the ointment, one individual caterpillar in the salad. Mr. Daniel Brewster, his father-in-law, remained consistently unfriendly. Indeed, his manner towards his new relative became daily more and more a manner which would have caused gossip on the plantation if Simon Legree had exhibited it in his relations with Uncle Tom. And this in spite of the fact that Archie, as early as the third morning of his stay, had gone to him and in the most frank and manly way, had withdrawn his criticism of the Hotel

Cosmopolis, giving it as his considered opinion that the Hotel Cosmopolis on closer inspection appeared to be a good egg, one of the best and brightest, and a bit of all right.

"A credit to you, old thing," said Archie cordially.

"Don't call me old thing!" growled Mr. Brewster.

"Eight-o, old companion!" said Archie amiably.

Archie, a true philosopher, bore this hostility with fortitude, but it worried Lucille.

"I do wish father understood you better," was her wistful comment when Archie had related the conversation.

"Well, you know," said Archie, "I'm open for being understood any time he cares to take a stab at it."

"You must try and make him fond of you."

"But how? I smile winsomely at him and what not, but he doesn't respond."

"Well, we shall have to think of something. I want him to realise what an angel you are. You ARE an angel, you know."

"No, really?"

"Of course you are."

"It's a rummy thing," said Archie, pursuing a train of thought which was constantly with him, "the more I see of you, the more I wonder how you can have a father like--I mean to say, what I mean to say is, I wish I had known your mother; she must have been frightfully attractive."

"What would really please him, I know," said Lucille, "would be if you got some work to do. He loves people who work."

"Yes?" said Archie doubtfully. "Well, you know, I heard him interviewing that chappie behind the desk this morning, who works like the dickens from early morn to dewy eve, on the subject of a mistake in his figures; and, if he loved him, he dissembled it all right. Of course, I admit that so far I haven't been one of the toilers, but the dashed difficult thing is to know how to start. I'm nosing round, but the openings for a bright young man seem so scarce."

"Well, keep on trying. I feel sure that, if you could only find something to do, it doesn't matter what, father would be quite different."

It was possibly the dazzling prospect of making Mr. Brewster quite

different that stimulated Archie. He was strongly of the opinion that any change in his father-in-law must inevitably be for the better. A chance meeting with James B. Wheeler, the artist, at the Pen-and-Ink Club seemed to open the way.

To a visitor to New York who has the ability to make himself liked it almost appears as though the leading industry in that city was the issuing of two-weeks' invitation-cards to clubs. Archie since his arrival had been showered with these pleasant evidences of his popularity; and he was now an honorary member of so many clubs of various kinds that he had not time to go to them all. There were the fashionable clubs along Fifth Avenue to which his friend Reggie van Tuyl, son of his Florida hostess, had introduced him. There were the businessmen's clubs of which he was made free by more solid citizens. And, best of all, there were the Lambs', the Players', the Friars', the Coffee-House, the Pen-and-Ink,--and the other resorts of the artist, the author, the actor, and the Bohemian. It was in these that Archie spent most of his time, and it was here that he made the acquaintance of J. B. Wheeler, the popular illustrator.

To Mr. Wheeler, over a friendly lunch, Archie had been confiding some of his ambitions to qualify as the hero of one of the Get-on-or-get-out-young-man-step-lively-books.

"You want a job?" said Mr. Wheeler.

"I want a job," said Archie.

Mr. Wheeler consumed eight fried potatoes in quick succession. He was an able trencherman.

"I always looked on you as one of our leading lilies of the field," he said. "Why this anxiety to toil and spin?"

"Well, my wife, you know, seems to think it might put me one-up with the jolly old dad if I did something."

"And you're not particular what you do, so long as it has the outer aspect of work?"

"Anything in the world, laddie, anything in the world."

"Then come and pose for a picture I'm doing," said J. B. Wheeler. "It's for a magazine cover. You're just the model I want, and I'll pay you at the usual rates. Is it a go?"

"Pose?"

"You've only got to stand still and look like a chunk of wood. You can do that, surely?"

"I can do that," said Archie.

"Then come along down to my studio to-morrow."

"Eight-o!" said Archie.