

## CHAPTER XXI

### *DREAMS OF DEVON*

THE story got around the hotel and created a great deal of talk. Barrow was relieved when he discovered the causes of the "robbery." The old ladies buzzed and gossiped. They felt that they had a titbit to mull over for the rest of their days.

"To think that Miss Pinchbeck was married!" they said, as they rocked on the mezzanine floor.

"And to a Captain wounded in the War!" some one added.

"My, my! one never knows the history of these people," another said. "We must take up a collection for her—and him."

And they did. They got the Captain into a quiet home for invalids, and he never lacked sherry and champagne and other good things, until he fully recovered. Every one contributed. The chef sent dainties from time to time. And Peter's, mother was not forgotten.



## *Dreams of Devon*

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O'Neill, the drummer, went quietly to Peter, and told him he would pay the bootlegger's bill.

"And I always thought he was a sort of rough-neck," Peter thought. "Sure, the world's a pretty good place to live in, after all!"

"She Stoops" ran merrily on. It looked as if they would all be able to save a goodly pile.

"America may be crude, but it's a mighty fine place in which to earn an honest penny," Queenie said to Old Silver one night in the theatre, after five months of packed houses.

"America makes England possible—if you know what I mean," laughed Jack. "How grateful we should all be for it—and we are, I think."

"If we're not, we're unworthy," said old Oliver Silver. "Myself, I shall be sorry to leave this country. And yet—I can't help dreaming of Devon, and those little rolling hills. I was reading something by Alfred Noyes the other night after the play—I generally read poetry before I go to bed. It ran like this (I always was a quick study, wasn't I, Queenie and Jack?):

"Yet the blackbird sings in the old apple-tree  
As in Uncle Tom Cobley's day;  
And snow—white snow—in a Devonshire night,  
Is only the bloom on the spray.



## *The Actor in Room 931*

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'There'll be pocket-fulls, bag-fulls, barn-fulls, yet,  
When the ships come home from say.  
For a good cob-wall, and a good hat and shoes,  
And a good heart last for aye.'

The eyes of the others lit with happy tears at this remembrance of their mother country.

"Oh, how pretty!" said Queenie. "'And snow—white show—in a Devonshire night, is only the bloom on the spray,'" she repeated as she went on at her cue.

"My!" said Silver, watching her vanishing form from the wings, "Queenie's a quick study, too, isn't she, Jack?"

And again they heard that dearest of sounds—the wave of applause which greeted her as she took her bow. Unnoticed by Jack, Silver looked to see if Peter had remembered to place a certain mysterious box near the proscenium arch. Yes, it was there, as usual; and only one stage-hand knew his and Peter's little secret.