

POOR DOCUMENT

QUEENS COUNTY GAZETTE, GAGETOWN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, MAY 4, 1898.

Literature.

ECHO.

The London season was at its height. The days and nights swept on with their endless whirl of gaieties. Light feet waltzed, and smiling lips murmured soft words, which meant a great deal, or so little that the flower-perfumed breath of the very next ball-room wafted them away as the down of the thistle is borne by the first light-winged breeze.

And eyes sparkled and laughed, or wept bitter tears when no one watched; and hearts rejoiced and hoped, or longed and grew weary into death.

But society life only concerned itself with the smiles, and, with much prudence and reason, ignored such foolish things as tears.

Miss Rathborne, playing a most important part in that brilliant society life, certainly did not trouble herself about such trifles.

Her eyes were the brightest, and her feet the lightest of all that restless and carefree throng of pleasure worshippers. And, counting lovers by dozens, and flatterers by hundreds—with friends not a few, and of acquaintances many—whose rule as one of society's queens of beauty no one disputed, the richest heiress of the season; who would dream of asking if a sigh lurked behind the bright smile with which Miss Rathborne greeted the gay world of fashion.

What was the amazement, then, not to say consternation, of society, when one May night, or rather early morning, at the close of one of the most brilliant balls of the season, Miss Rathborne announced her intention of leaving town next day—just when her list of engagements was full to overflowing; when she had scarcely an hour for the next month to call her own; when her little feet rested on the edge of a perfect torrent of pleasures and amusements.

The first person to whom she made this startling announcement was her last partner at the ball, who stood now by her side in the flower-lined corridor, carefully drawing round her a soft wrap, and taking rather more time over it than was necessary. At least, so thought the tired and sleepy chaperon, waiting discreetly a little distance apart, and stifling her yawns in her fan.

But men do not pay much attention to chaperons when they are tendering these last services to their partners, especially when their partners are such as Miss Rathborne. Certainly this man did not.

He had just drawn the soft fur up to the pretty little chin, when he was startled by a moment into incredulous bewilderment by Miss Rathborne's sudden announcement.

"Going away! But—For an indefinite time! When?"

"Yes," Miss Rathborne said with a little nod, the bright face looking deliciously pretty from its delicate framework of white lace, gathered carelessly round her brown hair; "yes. You look frightened."

"So I am," he answered gravely, and it seemed as if his face had grown a shade paler. "Why are you going?" he asked, after a second's pause, during which she bent to arrange the draperies of her ball dress, which had been torn in the dance.

"I don't quite know," she answered, looking up again. "For various reasons—perhaps to see the sun rise."

"You can see him rise in town," he answered, glancing up at the beams falling through the painted window on the landing above them. "In fact I think he is getting up now."

"But he is more interesting to look at over the hills and the trees. And that reminds me, I want to see the trees too."

"There are trees in town," he said doubtfully. "If you will only look at them—green trees, too, just now."

"Green trees that make your heart ache, they are so marred with the smoke, and the dust, and the weary noises we make," she said, laughing, gathering up her bouquet and her fan from a seat near, and moving toward her chaperon, who had already made her way to the broad staircase leading into the hall below, where the tired serving men did their best to speed the parting guests.

The man's face seemed to grow still graver as he followed Miss Rathborne. Then he suddenly stopped and looked down at her.

"Why are you going into the country?" he asked abruptly.

"Have I not told you?" she said, smiling up at him.

"No; and you know that you have not."

"No," she answered, and she glanced down into the hall beneath, so that he could not see her eyes; "I have not. I am going to worship the great god Pan."

Then she laughed—a low laugh of intense amusement, it seemed almost of mocking fun; but whether the mocking was of him or of herself, he could not tell, only the doubt made his face graver.

"Miss Rathborne's carriage stops the way!" came up from the footman in the hall below.

The chaperon, already down stairs, looked up with an expression of relief on her tired face. Miss Rathborne nodded and smiled to her.

"I must make haste," she said. "Poor Mrs. Vere is worn out."

"Wait one second," he said in a quick

low voice. "Have you told everybody of this—espionage?"

"Caprice! Yes; perhaps that is a good name for it. I did not think of that before."

"Or have you only told me?" he went on, apparently not noticing her interruption; "and if that be the case, why—"

"I have told no one but you—yet," she said, moving down another step, "and why I have told you—well, how can I say? It was a caprice, perhaps. Did you not say once that I was the embodiment of all the caprices which may and make a woman?" She laughed lightly again.

"Whatever it is—you know to-night that I am going away. To-morrow, all my other friends will know."

"You will not come back at all—not after having seen the sun rise, and looked at the fresh, unstained trees? Not at all, to us in London?"

"Ah, that is what I cannot say!" she said, turning with a quickened movement and looking up at him as he stood on a higher step. But though she looked at him, there was a faint note in her voice, a curious light in her eyes, which gave the impression that she was answering some other question as well as his.

"It will depend," she went on, the subtle change in her voice dying away, and she turned once more to descend the stairs. "It will depend on so many things."

"Whether you see spots on the sun, or dust on even those country trees?"

"Yes." She laughed in answer to the mockery of his grave voice. "Or whether I grow weary of worshipping. You forget the great god Pan, Mr. Seymour."

He did not speak to her again; but when they reached the last stair he offered her his arm, and led her across the hall to the open door. Mrs. Vere was already in the carriage. As Mr. Seymour and Miss Rathborne passed through the hall door, down the crimson carpeted steps, into the fresh, sweet air and tender light of the early spring morning, still and unsmiling yet from the din and the smoke that go up all day from the great Babylon, Miss Rathborne drew in a quick, long breath.

Mr. Seymour heard it, and he looked down at her, a curious expression coming into his face, which was tired and pale in the searching morning light.

Here was just faintly flushed, but he could not read in it the answer to the question his eyes were asking.

He put her into the brougham, and she sank down with a tired little sigh by the side of Mrs. Vere.

"Good-by, Mr. Seymour. You will hear one day whether I find the country dull," she said, turning her face, all brightness, again to him. But he did not reply, and the brougham drove off, leaving him standing there while the light of the spring day, dawning into golden splendor in the east, fell upon him, as if in mockery of all that was artificial, and false, and restless, and stained with sin and folly, in the life he, and such as he, held to the height of civilization.

He was not given to the moralizing, but as he turned away into that morning light into which the carriage had disappeared, his face grew graver than ever.

"I don't understand," he muttered, "either her or myself. And she says it is a woman's caprice. Are there any woman's caprices worth trying to understand? Or are hers more worth trying than any other's? Might not I grow tired when I had understood them, just as she will grow tired of this caprice? Then what will become of us? Would she satisfy me and a little satisfy her?"

CHAPTER II.

"Don't you find it just the least bit dull? Just the least little bit, as if you would like something to happen? An earthquake, you know, or a fire—or a visitor?"

"I find it very dull," said Mrs. Vere, decidedly. "Just as dull as it can be!"

Miss Rathborne turned swiftly round from the window, and gazed at Mrs. Vere, sitting with a look in the most comfortable chair of the pretty, comfortable morning-room of Oakroyd Hall.

"Dull, when you are always finding fault with me in town, telling me that I was killing you and myself for want of rest! You've had plenty of rest for the last week, haven't you?"

Miss Rathborne's pretty hands went up to the back of her head in a gesture of despair, which had in it, it must be confessed, a touch of personal dismay.

"There's a medium in all things," said Mrs. Vere, cutting another leaf of her novel, with the air of a person much too depressed to care whether the hero was to be found dead or alive on the next page. "It is rather a sudden change—from London at the height of the season, to this country place, with all the houses empty for miles round, while the owners are having a good time in town."

Miss Rathborne sank down into the chair nearest her.

"The change was too severe," she said. "To think how we have managed to live through a whole week! And I've never seen the sun rise!"

"The sudden recollection of her conversation on that London staircase. 'But what would be the use of getting up? I should die if the day were longer.'"

"Well, but Mildred, my dear child!"

"Don't—don't ask me any questions!" cried Mildred quickly, stretching out her hand to Mrs. Vere, who was looking at her with searching, puzzled eyes; "above

all, don't ask me why I came down here. I don't know even that I could tell you!"

Then she sprang up quickly, and looked across the at the tracery of foliage, at the glinting lines of light, at the glorious of spring leaf and flower, passing already into the flush and radiance of summer.

"See!" with a quick gesture towards it all, a gesture through which ran a curious thrill of passion; "perhaps it was because the country is so beautiful, and the town so hard, and unsatisfying, perhaps—"

Then her mood changed again, and she opened the French casement windows, and stepped out on to the gravelled path.

"It's just lovely!" she said, turning and laughing back to Mrs. Vere, who sat watching her, "I am going to see how many more apple blossoms have fallen to-day."

"What can it all mean?" said Mrs. Vere to herself, her face growing troubled as she looked after the graceful figure crossing the sun flecked lawn. "There is something wrong. What is it? Can there really be anything between her and Fred Seymour? For her sake I hope not. I know her too well for that. For her restless, pleasure-loving life, to believe she could ever be happy with a man such as he. She is true and pure, for all her frivolities and coquetties; and he, selfish, unprincipled, believing nothing. Yet she has encouraged him, and he, in spite of himself, and his fear of fettering himself by married life, does care for her, fight against the love as he will. But she—she must know what he is! Can ambition have anything to do with it? The old duke must die soon, and then Seymour, thanks to his wonderful luck—in other words, the death of all intervening obstacles in the way of near claimants—will inherit the title and the enormous property. Can she be ambitious? She would make a perfect duchess. But not! That is not Mildred. There is something else. What can it be?"

But Mrs. Vere could find no answer to her anxious question.

With an impatient gesture, she tossed her book away. She had grown very fond of the girl during the two years she had lived with her, and her eyes quickened by love, had discovered that there was some thing in Mildred's life.

"I may as well go and look at the apple-blossoms too. There's nothing else to do in the country at this time of the year."

She made her way across the lawn, through the shady paths, her town-loving and decidedly bored eyes not seeing any beauty in the stories of leaf and sun around them. At this time of the year, they would have preferred looking on bricks and mortar, and carriages and horses.

A little gateway, made in the thick privet hedge crossing the flower-garden, led into the orchard.

Mrs. Vere passed through it and went a few yards across the blossom-strewn ground, beneath the trees, white with their fragrant promise of an abundant harvest. Then she suddenly stopped, her eyes opened wide in amazement.

Beneath one of the apple-trees stood Mildred talking to a man. A stranger. Mrs. Vere had never seen him before. Not from any of the neighboring houses, for there was not a man at home just at that time. A man, too, her quick eyes recognized of a very different kind to those who were in the habit of meeting in her frivolous world of fashion.

Tall, well built, but with a slight stoop of the shoulders, as if they were often bent over some absorbing study, with features not handsome in form, but possessing the greatest of all beauty—the power of intellect and strength of will, combined with the tender kindness and purity of purpose of a woman; eyes deep set and dreamy, when not taking the measure of any particular object, but searching and keen as a judge's when their interest was awakened; lines of toil and patient endurance round the mouth and eyes. A coat, not of the newest cut or wear; the face thin and pale, in spite of its sunburn, as if overwork and mental pressure had told even upon his strength; and the man talking to Mildred was at once classed by Mrs. Vere as something foreign to their own world of pleasure, ease, and wealth. Mildred caught sight of her between the trees, and beckoned her forward, her face smiling and faintly flushed with excitement.

"It isn't an earthquake," she said, "nor a conflagration, but a visitor! Let me introduce an old friend—at least, I have known him since I was a baby. You don't mind my calling you an old friend, do you?" with a swift turn to the visitor, whose grave, quiet face flushed slightly as he replied. "Mr. Galbraith, Mrs. Vere bowed, vaguely recognizing in the name that of a man of science whose reputation was always European. "He is dreadfully clever. Knows everything, has been everywhere, and despises everything—"

"Miss Rathborne!" Mr. Galbraith exclaimed in half bewildered astonishment. "Silly, I mean—foolish and frivolous, you know. Like—like those blossoms, for instance," she let a few she held flutter out of her hand. They are foolish little flowers, carried away by every gust of wind. And this is Mrs. Vere who takes such good care of me, and does her best to prevent me getting blown away too."

"She talks a great deal of nonsense," said Mrs. Vere; "but if you are an old friend you will know that."

"Oh, but he had not had many oppor-

tunities of finding out. He had been abroad for two years, on some dangerous expedition in the cause of science. He was not to come home for another year—that is his hope, which had been shut up so long, down in the valley—only he grew ill, and they made him come home, and he is here to rest. Was it not funny, my seeing him? I was just looking over the hedge, into the lane, wishing for a visitor, and I saw him coming up. He almost frightened me at first. I thought it was his ghost." They were walking side by side toward the gateway again.

"He only arrived yesterday, and then unexpectedly. Did it not look very dismal when you arrived, with the windows all closed, with the rooms all empty, and no one waiting to greet you on the doorstep?"

"No. It was what I knew would be," answered the man quietly.

Was it the shadow of one of the blossom-laden branches, which fell across the girl's uplifted face, or was it a sudden darkening of the laughing eyes? Whatever it was it had vanished as they stepped into the sunlight again.

(To Be Continued.)

Farm and Household.

Health on the Farm.

Farming is generally considered to be one of the most healthy occupations. People in the cities in search of health usually flock to the country, where the pure air, fresh breezes, and wholesome foods are believed to be health producing. This is true enough, and many persons who have been without good health in the large cities have fully recovered after spending a comparatively short time in the country; but in many we believe the improvement has been due more to the mere change of environment than to anything else.

However, the condition of things in the country should be more conducive to health than conditions in the city, but very often they are not. If those living in rural districts observed the laws governing sanitary conditions to the same extent that they are observed in the city, the country would be a regular paradise of health. In every well ordered city the laws governing sanitation are very strict, and are enforced by competent officers.

Of course, such regulations are more necessary in the city than in the country, but if those living in the country, would pay more attention to sanitary laws, the standard of health would be much higher than it is at present. People engaged in farm work deceive themselves very often by thinking there is no need of regarding sanitary conditions so long as they have the pure air and fresh breezes of the country, and frequently people are found living in the midst of the most unsanitary conditions, and who wonder why they are not blessed with good, sound health. Unsanitary conditions are conducive to bacterial development, and nearly all diseases have their origin in germ life, and consequently sickness results, in many instances, where it is least expected.

One of the chief sources of disease in the country is to be found in the water. Frequently wells, for which the water used for drinking purposes is taken, are near some polluting source that makes the water anything but healthy. Frequently decayed vegetable or animal matter may be found adjacent to many farm buildings, the germs of which are inhaled by those living on the farm. Farmers do not give as much attention to these things as they should. If every detail connected with the sanitary arrangements on the farm were well looked after, there would not be as much sickness in the country as is found in some sections of the present time.—Farming.

Breadmaking and Breadkeeping.

A stoneware jar, glazed inside, with lid makes a fine "bread raiser," better than those of tin designed for the purpose. It retains the heat longer than tin, and having straight sides it is easier to gauge the rising—to tell when it has doubled in bulk.

When bread comes from the oven rub the top over with good sweet butter, lean one end of each loaf on the bottom of the inverted pan, the other end on the bread board, and cover with a fresh towel, then with a thick breadcloth—old tablecloth—and let them stand until perfectly cold. If a hard crust is preferred do not use the butter or covers.

Keep bread in a stone jar with close fitting lid or in a regular tin bread box, either of which should be kept as sweet as a rose by thoroughly scalding twice a week and then sunning or by heating on the stove. A general rule regarding this breadmaking is this: In winter mix bread in the evening; in spring and fall, late at night or very early in the morning; in summer, in the morning.

While on a visit to Glasgow I was going along one of the principal streets of the city when a runaway horse crashed into a large shop window.

A stalwart policeman from the far north came on the scene and began taking notes of the accident when the shopman came out and asked if he would come in side, as he did not care about having a crowd round the door inside. The policeman eyed the broken window once more, and turning round he exclaimed to the shopman:

"This be a far more serious case than she first expected. She sees the window is broken in the inside, too!"

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