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-IN-

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Elegant sets, 97 pieces, deep flown blue decoration and handsomely gilded, regular price \$12 50, sale price..... \$7 85  
Choice China Dinner Sets, 99 pieces, delicate decoration, with full gilt tracing, reg. price \$17, sale price.... \$12 75

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Onyx-Top Tables,  
Jardinières and Pedestals,  
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### THE QUEEN OF THE SEASON

Everyone glanced towards the piano as she spoke—she had not been lit at all; and Lady Esselyn, more vexed and bewildered than before, was about to question Vivien severely, when the latter adroitly prevented it.

"This poor child," she said, putting her arm around Cressida, "is actually trembling with cold. If Sir Innis will excuse me I shall take her to her room. You will call on Aymer tomorrow, will you not?" she added, giving the baronet one of her sweetest smiles.

He smiled, too, for he had seen through her artifice, and was more amused than offended by it.

"Yes, I will call on Aymer, and on you."

"It is quite possible that you will not find us at home," she objected; "for we have so much to do before the season commences."

"Then I will call again, and yet again, unless you forbid it."

"How could I do that? Are you not Aymer's friend?" she murmured, still capriciously refusing anything like a definite reply to his tender speeches.

"Is it only in that character you tolerate me?"

"Ah! no; are you not Cressida's sworn champion?"

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"And yours, if you needed one. You believe this, don't you?"

"Yes," she replied with a hesitation that was anything but flattering. "Not that it signifies, for I love to fight my own battles, and so, good-night."

Vivien went to her room triumphant. She had been stung so deeply by Sir Innis' long-continued coldness that her heart was less touched by his subjugation than her pride was gratified by it. She still assured herself that she would never wed him; he was too grave, too unbending, to be a fit spouse for one accustomed to have her own way in her girlhood, and firmly resolved never to sink into the submissive wife; but the dear delight of bringing him to her feet was too precious to be relinquished. Not till she had displayed him to the world as her captive would she give him his final rejection.

If Vivien's conscience whispered to her that such a triumph was, after all, but a poor one, she refused to listen to its warnings. Sir Innis had soothed at her fascinations; he had only loved her because he could not help himself; and as soon as it pleased him to consider her worth wedding, he had signified his willingness to do so in a fashion so cool, that it exasperated her. He ought to have yielded at once; and been proud to acknowledge it; he ought to be ready to obey her wishes, no matter what their nature; and she had a shrewd suspicion that he would never do this. Then she told herself that he should have followed her to Bonchurch, and have been too anxious to gain her consent, too unhappy at their separation to wait quietly, or, as he himself phrased it, to give her time to decide whether she were or were not prepared to accept him.

"In plain words, Sir Innis Hatherfield makes sure of me," was the conclusion at which the frowning, pouting beauty arrived. "He condescends to fall into Aymer's plans, and Aymer's influence prove contemptuous. I would rather wed poor stupid Mandeville tomorrow, than consent to let this cold, masterful baronet lord it over me. The man who has deliberately scorned Vivien St. Orme shall yet know what it is to writhe under her revenge."

And so Sir Innis Hatherfield sought in vain for the private interview in which he would have wooed her in frank and manly fashion. Sometimes Vivien was closeted with dressmakers, or on the wing for some magasin des modes, or fashionable jeweler's. Or if he chanced to find her in the drawing-room alone, she was so absorbed in some trifle connected with her dress or her equipage that she could not listen to him, and he was forced to put off his wooing to some more favorable moment.

She watched him closely while inflicting on him these trials of patience, but his eye never flashed angrily, his brow never contracted, and Vivien grew peevish at his indomitable stolidity. She did not like to be treated with the indulgence we bestow on a wayward yet beloved child, though, on the other hand, Sir Innis had chafed at the treatment he received she would have resented it.

"I need not apologize for breaking my promises to ride with you yesterday," she said, one day, "for you were not disappointed, were you?"

"Not much, certainly, for I had warned myself that you might not be able to keep your word. I know how much you are engaged just now."

"I could have gone if I had wished to do so; but I suppose this evening

will be considered a rude one?"

"Nay, Vivien; why should you hesitate to speak the truth to me? If you were tired, or not in the humor to ride, you acted rightly in staying at home."

"But I did not stay at home," was the willful reply. "I drove to Richmond with mamma and Cressida."

"And enjoyed the drive, I hope?"

"As much or more than you could have enjoyed your solitary ride," the young lady maliciously retorted.

He assented to this so promptly that Vivien began to feel a little ashamed of herself, but the next moment another caprice had seized her.

"I wish you would come to us this evening, that I may introduce you to one of my dearest friends, Lestelle Maberley. I am not a match-maker, or else I should certainly maneuver to bring you together. Why? Ah, because she is just the sweet, gentle girl who would make you such an admirable partner for life."

"Thanks! Then you wish me well? You are willing for me to be blessed with the love of a woman worth having—then give me yours!"

"I was talking of Lestelle. She would be able to appreciate you better than I could," Vivien answered coolly.

"I do not wish to be appreciated, but loved," she was told; but with a sarcastic smile and a slight shrug, she retorted that Lestelle, being prone to hero-worship, might be able to give him both the one and the other, therefore he could not do better than try and secure her.

"Are not such jests as these rather indelicate?" Sir Innis astonished her by asking, "What would you think of me—knowing that heart and soul I am devoted to you and you only—if I could follow your advice and amuse myself with a flirtation with one of your acquaintances?"

"But I have not recognized your vaunted devotion, and it is in a very unselfish spirit that I recommend you to proffer it elsewhere."

"Thanks; but I neither give nor take lightly; and, more than that, I decidedly prefer a spouse of my own selection."

"But what if the lady you have honored with your choice makes her curtsey and says, 'No, thank you!' asked Vivien demurely. "You don't seem to realize that she may do this. How will you bear a rejection?"

"When I am subjected to such a severe trial will be time enough to decide how I shall act, will it not?" he asked in his turn.

"With what an insufferable—yes, insufferable—air of confidence in yourself that was said!" cried Vivien, flashing into sudden wrath. "Because I have hesitated—on Aymer's account, not yours, sir!—to put an end to the hopes you profess to cherish, you look, and speak and behave as if you were never troubled with a doubt of your ultimate success! Ah! if you could see into my heart!"

"I wish I could do so, and at once; it will be the happiest hour of my life when all its innocent secrets are freely confided to me."

"That hour may never come!" she retorted, frigidly enough to have damped the hopes of a less persevering wooer.

"Nay, Vivien, I think it will, for love begets love, and while you grow dearer to me every day, I venture to think that I must eventually find the way to win my lady's favor."

"Do I give you any reason to think so? Are you not somewhat egotistical,

Sir Innis?—somewhat—Aymer is not within hearing to scold me for finding fault with you—somewhat concealed?"

"I hope not," and his eyes looked so frankly into hers that they compelled her to return his gaze. "I have always known that there are scores of other men more worthy your hand than I am."

"Very prettily said! A gallant speech from Sir Innis Hatherfield is so rare that it ought to be jotted down in one's album! Having done your devoir as a courteous knight, and propitiated me with a dose of flattery, now give me one of the bitter pills of truth, and tell me honestly what you can see in pleasure-loving, capricious Vivien St. Orme to make you think her a fitting spouse for the grave, Puritanical Sir Innis Hatherfield?"

But he shook his head.

"I have always resolved to keep my inmost thoughts for my wife. There are no pages in my past that she shall not be allowed to read whenever she pleases. Au reste, when you hint that we are not fitted for each other, I think you do but jest. If you really thought this, you and I would not be as we are."

"You couple our names very freely, sir!" she exclaimed. "I warn you again that I may never be yours."

"I think you will," he answered quietly. "To doubt it would be to believe you capable of conduct to which no pure, good woman ever stoops."

"Sir Innis, what do you mean?" she cried, pouting and blushing beneath his steady gaze. "What have I said or done?"

[To be Continued.]

Fire in the Continental Hall building at Paterson, N. J., today caused damage estimated at about \$100,000.

P. T. Barnum's widow has taken a third husband—Baron Alexandre Orensiana, a French nobleman. The wedding took place in Paris.

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