

A Play at Platonics.

"I would do anything to convert you to a more sensible frame of mind."

"My dear mother, it is sense. That's just the point of it—up-to-date sense."

"Don't see it," said her ladyship shortly, shutting up her fan with a snap. "Here's a pretty, amiable, accomplished heiress waiting to be won, and you won't look at her, forsooth, because of her money. Talk of social regeneration. I call it modern madness."

"Now, mother," replied Lionel Damer, affectionately, kissing her white, well-shaped hand, "don't fly off at a tangent, but try to see things from my point of view. I quite acknowledge that Ruby Lisle is all that you say; but answer me this: Are there not hundreds of girls just as pretty, amiable, accomplished, who yet, because they are born in poverty, have to drag out a weary youth in hardship and toil? As I am blessed with a superfluity of this world's goods, it is one of these I should like to seek out and wed."

Lady Damer gave a sigh of despair. "You will be asking me to receive some factory hand as your wife," she said, chidingly, "and I won't, Lionel—not even for you, I won't."

"Never fear, mother mine," he rejoined, laughing, as he stooped to kiss lips not more proudly chiseled than his own, "I promise you she shall be as fastidious and well-bred as your own dainty self."

Lady Damer smiled faintly, a smile of incredulity; but their conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of Miss Ruby Lisle in a dinner toilette of cream chiffon and lace.

Ruby was a petite blonde with roguish brown eyes and a peach-leaf complexion. She was a great favorite of Lady Damer, and had been a visitor at The Towers for the past month, during which time her hostess had lost no opportunity of throwing her into Lionel's company, apparently without effect.

"Is it so late?" said her ladyship as the girl approached. "I never heard the dressing bell, Lionel and I have been so engrossed talking about horses. I must go without any more delay." And she left the room, not seeing the twinkle in Ruby's merry dark eyes.

The door closed. Miss Lisle moved slowly towards the conservatory. A moment's hesitation and the young man followed.

Ruby paused before some beautiful chrysanthemums and sighed softly.

"Why that sigh?" asked her companion, courteously. "You of all people have not even crumpled rose leaves to complain of."

Ruby sighed again, looking up wistfully at him.

"Those who are rich of necessity must be sad," she said, with a plaintive little air that was vastly becoming. "We see what we ought to do, yet are not free to do it."

"What is the particular piece of goodness you want to do?" he said, suppressing a yawn, for, like most other "lords of creation," having known the girl all his life, he took it for granted there was nothing in her which he had not fathomed long ago.

"I will say it to you, because you are in the same position," she began timidly, with downcast eyes. "I am so strongly convinced that money should not mate with money. Is it not obviously unjust? There are so many starving geniuses with whom it would be a privilege to spend one's life. Yet I am so hedged in by chaperones and conventionalities that I am not free to act as I would."

Lionel looked at her with newly awakened interest. Had the soul only been in chrysalis all along. For the first time he noticed something very entrancing in the curves of the childish arms and the Cupid's bow of her rose-red lips. He hated her mother with a cherished hatred; because she was worldly to her finger-tips, and he had taken for granted that the daughter was walking in her mother's footsteps. To-night for the first time he had a doubt, and, to his surprise, the doubt was a pleasant one. Could he teach Ruby to share his enthusiasm?

"Women are made so different to men," he observed, sententially. "Your sex will go wild over theories because of their novelty, but when it comes to practice—"

"I know," she interrupted eagerly; "but don't judge us harshly. The world's fetters have made things impossible to us that for you are only difficult."

"My difficulties are almost insuperable," he replied, dropping into a

confidential tone. "To make my plan of mixed marriages a success, the one who has been brought up in poverty must still be incapable of offending the fastidiousness of the other. He or she is going to join. Yet one cannot send them to school. Perhaps your woman's wit can come to the rescue."

Little Ruby knitted her brows and tried to look wise.

"I have it," she said at length, clapping her hands joyously. "Why, don't you see, we must each find the other the treasure that we want. No man can educate a mill-girl for a place in society, but if I, a woman, find one worthy of you, I can soon give her all necessary hints. In the same way, I could never tell a man, however much I adored him and his genius, that he must wash his hands before every meal and must never smoke in my boudoir. My illusions would go if I had to teach him manners. I want him to be poor, but I want him perfect. Suppose, Lionel, we make a compact. For a year we will look out for each other for suitable aspirants for our hand and heart. I will trust your taste and you will trust mine. They must be penniless, and virtuous and clever. At the end of the year we will produce our lists, and the chosen one shall go into training for a period. Oh, it will be lovely."

Ruby's cheeks flushed and her eyes sparkled, and Lionel, warming with gratitude for her sympathy, smiled back at the "fiante" beauty with a sensation as new as it was agreeable.

So it was planned, and Lady Damer's heart beat high with hope when she saw the air of understanding there was between them, while by the end of the evening Lionel began to regret that Ruby was quite out of the running.

During the next twelve months Lionel and Ruby met often at friends' houses and had much to say to each other, as became people with a secret, though by tacit consent the subject was not to be mentioned between them till the year had elapsed.

They were then staying at a country house in Devon, and considering that it could not concern Lionel, it was odd how restless and moody he became if Ruby let any one of her numerous admirers monopolize her attention.

When the day of days came they both seemed pensive and preoccupied. According to arrangement, they went up to the river which ran through the grounds and established themselves on a mossy bank far from the haunts of men.

"Who is to begin?" inquired Lionel, in anything but a jubilant tone.

"You, please," said Ruby, nervously from the depths of her red sunshade.

Accordingly he drew a paper from his pocket and flushing to his temples, began with a strange hesitation.

"I have not found many who had all the desired qualifications. One cannot be too careful when the future of a loved one is at stake. But here they are: 'First, Mr. Snape, an impetuous poet.'"

"Delightful!" murmured Ruby, in a dull tone.

"Slightly addicted to intemperance."

"The horrid beast!" she commented, more cheerfully.

"Second, Mr. Moffat, a talented actor."

"I adore actors!" interrupted the girl, wickedly.

"With a strain of insanity in his blood," continued the reader, in the same forced, dull voice.

"Oh!" exclaimed Ruby, rather dazed.

"Third, Mr. Ord, a starving author."

Ruby bent forward with clasped hands.

"He is a widower with ten children," he went on, unmoved.

"Oh!" gasped Miss Lisle, again sinking back.

"And fourth, Mr. Drinkwater, a Cripple hero over seventy, and with a wooden leg."

Lionel folded the paper carefully and replaced it in his pocket. Then he stared gloomily before him.

"Which do you wish me to take?" said Ruby.

"None," he answered very decidedly. "I shall not allow you to have intercourse with any of them."

Something in his tone made the peach color steal again into her cheeks and the silver tear-drops never left the shelter of her eyelids.

In her turn she drew from her retic-

ule a sheet of scented notepaper and ran over the list in a hurried voice to the young man, who lay stretched at her feet with his hat pulled well over his eyes.

"Miss Brody, a pretty governess; consumptive, Miss Pott, a typewriter; slightly deformed, Miss Lascelles, a violinist; false teeth. Miss Day, a model; no brains; and Miss Othe, a trapeze artist, smokes."

Ruby crumpled the sheet of paper almost roughly in her small hand as she finished reading and tossed it into the water.

"Which do you wish me to take?" he asked, sitting up on the grass and never taking his eyes off her face.

"Please yourself," she replied, tilting her chin.

"Before we enter into a discussion of their various merits, I have a confession to make," he said, bending towards her and speaking in a low tone. "I have lately lost all the money invested in some foreign silver mines. I am therefore comparatively a poor man. How does that affect the question at issue?"

"In this way," Ruby cried, on the spur of the moment; "why you must be consistent and marry an heiress."

Then she broke off, faltering, and blushed a burning crimson.

"May I?" he besought, coming nearer towards her. "Ruby, for many months past I have known I have been playing a fool's game. Only I thought you were so deadly in earnest that I had no chance. But your last words have given me hope. Dare I—may I think that you will be my wife?"

"I suppose I must be consistent, too," she whispered, with a bewitching glance, as she let him draw her into his arms.—T. Sparrow in Catholic Fireside.

The Character of a Gentleman.

(By Cardinal Newman.)

It is almost the definition of a gentleman to say he is one who never gives pain.

He carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast, all clashing of opinion or collision of feeling, all distrust or suspicion, or gloom or to make everyone at ease and at home. He has his eyes on all his company. He is tender toward the bashful, gentle toward the distant, and merciful toward the absurd; he can recollect to whom he is speaking; he guards against unreasonable allusions or topics that may irritate; he is seldom prominent in conversation and never wearisome.

He makes light of favors while he does them, and seems to be receiving when he is conferring. He never speaks of himself except when compelled, never defends himself by mere retort. He has no ears for slander or gossip, is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him, and interprets everything for the best. He is never mean or little in his disputes, never takes an unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments, or insinuates evil which he dare not say out. . . . He has too much sense to be affronted at insult. He is too busy to remember injuries, and too wise to bear malice. . . . If he engages in controversy of any kind, his disciplined intellect preserves him from the blundering discourtesy of better though less educated minds, who, like blunt weapons, tear and hack instead of cutting clean.

He may be right or wrong in his opinion, but he is too clear-headed to be unjust. He is as simple as he is forcible, and as brief as he is decisive. Nowhere shall we find greater candor, consideration and indulgence. He throws himself into the minds of his opponents, he accounts for their mistakes. He knows the weakness of human nature as well as its strength, its province and its limits.

ROYAL VISITORS AT VILLE MARIE

Montreal, Sept. 26.—An historic institution was visited by the Duke and Duchess this afternoon. It was the Convent of Ville Marie, a portion of which was one time known as Monklands, the house in times gone by of Governors-General of Canada. Situated about 10 miles from Montreal, Monklands overlooks the St. Lawrence, and the Duke and Duchess had a beautiful view from the broad piazza of what was once the viceregal mansion and is one of the leading educational institutions of the Province. Monklands has often been visited by royalty. The Princess Louise paid a visit to Monklands, also the Duke of Connaught, and the Duke of Orleans, son of Louis Philippe of France. The convent is at present conducted by the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame. The wide avenue leading up to the historic old building was tastefully decorated when the royal party, with their escort, drove up at 4 o'clock. The Mount Royal Rifles, 450 strong, formed a guard of honor. The porch of the convent was covered with trailing plants, while up the broad steps pots of plants and flowers added to the decoration of the surroundings.

At the entrance to the institution the royal visitors were met by His Grace Archbishop Bruchesi; Sister St. Mary Caroline, Superior of the institution; Sister St. Justin, Provincial of the order; several other sisters, and Rev. Abbe Foucher, chaplain. Passing through the Bishop's parlor, formerly the dining-room of the Governors, and later the chapel of the Sisters, the distinguished guests were conducted towards the grand recreation hall of the convent, which is situated in the wing built since the acquisition of the property by the nuns. At the end of the corridor they beheld the Sistine Madonna, said to be one of the finest paintings in the country. Sir Wilfrid Laurier was also present to escort the visitors through the institution. The pupils of the institution, all neatly attired in black dresses, with white collars, and each wearing a white rose, sang an ode of welcome and "Domine Salvum Fac Regem Eduardum," while an orchestra rendered Handel's "Largo." The address presented was both in French and in English, and was printed on white satin, the initial letters being after the pattern of 14th century illuminations, the work of one of the nuns. The ode of welcome sung by the young ladies of the convent was also illuminated in the same style. The address was as follows:

"Whilst we are proud our beloved Dominion can receive Your Royal Highness with all the pomp and splendor of naval and military as well as civic display, and thus give evidence of our material strength, we rejoice to know that this alone does not constitute for Your Royal Highness the greatness and glory of a nation. Like your illustrious ancestor, King Alfred, the founder of our literature, you recognize that education is as necessary to the national prosperity as military prowess. In organizing schools to regenerate his kingdom the great Saxon did not confine his attention to those for men, but was careful to establish convents for the moral and intellectual culture of women, over one of which, that at Shaftesbury, his daughter, Ethelgöve, was constituted the Abbess. We would fain believe that, like him, the greatest, perhaps, of English Kings, Your Royal Highness in deigning to visit our convent wishes to show personal interest in the work of education for women. For this we are deeply grateful. That throughout this dear Canada of ours the affection of a loyal people to the British constitution greet the heir-apparent to the throne and his gracious consort, and that the best gifts of heaven fall in abundant measure upon them shall be the prayer of the religious and the pupils of Ville Marie."

Miss Beaubien read a French address, after which Misses McKenna and Rice presented a bouquet to the Duchess, and Miss Edwards read some verses of welcome.

The Duke replied briefly in English and added a few words in French. It was the first time since his arrival that he used that language, and the compliment was highly appreciated by those present. He said he wished to remark, in that beautiful French language which he had so well preserved, how well pleased he was for the loyal homage they had expressed for the King, his father, and also their good wishes for the Duchess and himself. They were greatly pleased to be able during the short stay to be present at an institution with which were associated such historic memories. He thanked them for the beautiful bouquet of flowers presented to the Duchess, and assured them that, though the flowers might fade, the name of Ville Marie would never fade from the minds of the Duchess and himself.

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