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Better a Peasant Than a Peer.

CHAPTER XXVII.

BARRIERS BETWEEN. The prompt way in which she answers proves that she was thinking of that young gentleman. "No." she says. "He is to be at the

castle. I wrote and asked him to meet me there. What is this?

"That is the old moat," he replied "I had it drained and turfed. This is the drawbridge we are going over,' he added, as the horses' hoofs clattered over a wooden pavement, "and see, the heads of the besiegers. The old castle has stood many a siege."

As he spoke, they entered the courtyard, which seemed to Jeanne to be filled with servants, mostly Germans, but all wearing a foreign version of the Ferndale livery. At the moment of the carriage pulling up at the entrance to what used to be the state apartment a bugle sounded melodiously, and a flag, emblazoned with the Ferndale coat-of-arms, ran up the flagstaff and floated to the breeze. The next moment the carriage steps were let down. and Jeanne sprang out into the arms of a tall young gentleman who was

her eves, and the old, clear, joyous tones rang in her voice "Hal! Is it really you? Why, ho

you have grown, you wicked boy!" Now, if there is anything a young man dislikes, it is being told that he mustache is improving, it is the great-

Hal looks around, devoutly hoping that the English servants have not his eyes are not moist, it is because he is not given to weeping.

But somebody else is more sensitive pressed. -"Old Bell's" eyes are suspiciously translucent.

"Jeanne, here's Bell," says Hal; and Jeanne, who is evidently blind to the existence of all save Hal, turns and holds out her hand with a smile. glad to see you—it is like old times. he liked. Herr Graff," and he turned to dred on the dark chestnut paneling. How well you look!"

blushing up to his ears, and he can your taste." find no words to respond to the kind

"And how well you look," she adds. looking at Hal as they go up the old, yet -- " and he sighs. stone-payed hall: "as brown as an

where well enough. "On your forehead," says Jeanne, curious and anxious. "It looks like a scar to me. Hal, you haven't been fencing with any of the young students?" "No-no," says Hal, laughing light-

ly; "I had a tumble—came a cropper off a horse. It's a mere nothing." And, with heightened color, he hastens to change the subject

"And how have you got on-how about the passage? Were you ill?" "No,' says Jeanne, laughing, "not a

there is the portcullis. They used to grandmother." says Hal, incredulous- woman, very fair-lady somebody or pour boiling lead down these holes on ly. "She was dreadfully ill, I know- other-I couldn't catch her name." wasn't she, Vane?"

"No." says Vane. "You forget her training in the Nancy Bell."

fashion "Quite well," says Vane. "Y '1 don't look quite the thing,"

says Hal. "Tired eh?" "Perhaps so." responds Vane, smilcountenance which you are accustomed with him." to see whenever you look in your glass, "Well, he's changed, if you like, my dear Hal, I dare say we all appear goes on Hal. "All his lardy-dardy ways

on your boots?" Laughing and chaffing, they go up of him." to the hall, lined with servants, and into one of the reception rooms.

thing but Hal's tall figure and handhas grown; next to hinting that his some face, or she would find plenty to it off very well. The letter was full of and characteristic appointments.

Indeed, there is barely time to look heard the unwise exclamation; but he around before the sound of wheels an- ly for him. cannot feel offended, not even when nounces the arrival of the other car-Jeanne puts her arm around his neck riages, and she and Vane have to go stretching his long limbs, there ought and kisses him. Indeed, he draws her into the hall to welcome the guests, to be plenty of fun going on with all to him and kisses her in return, and if They are not too absorbed to notice, this lot; some of 'em must have some and loud are the expressions of de- go in them. Lord Nugent, I like the

mediæval paradise."

"Say that to Herr Graff, and you will amply repay him for all his trouble," says Vane, smiling. "He had "How do you do, Mr. Bell? I am so carte blanche, and has done just as fare, which are arranged by the Munthe polite major domo who stood She may well say that, for Bell is serenely respectful, "we are admiring

The major-domo bows almost to the



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partments," he says; "I trust they

will meet with his approval." Then the various ladies' maids came forward; they have already had plans of the castle, and know the rooms allotted to their respective mistresses and the ladies go up the stairs talking and admiring as they go. Jeanne looks over the massive

baluster. "Wait for me in the hall. Hal." she

says, and Hal nods. "Don't be all night, then!" "Dinner is served in an hour," says

Vane, by way of a gentle reminder. Then the gentlemen go up to their rooms, and only Hal and Bell, who are both dressed, are left.

"Well, Bell!" says Hal, laughingly, seating himself on one of the low, broad stairs, "quite a deluge of swells. isn't it? You look quite excited! Sounded like some one reading the peerage out loud when Herr Graff announced the names! No wonder the butcher and baker were rejoicing to-day; it will take all the resources of Forbach to feed this nest for a single day. Did you hear the bugle, and see the flag. Bell? I had an idea that only royalty was allowed to hoist pocket handkerchiefs in this way."

"The marquis is a Knight of the Garter," said Bell, "and it is one of their privileges to float flags over their residences when they are inhabiting

"Thanks." said Hal, innocently, You are a bottomless well of information. Is there anything you don't know?"

Bell does not rebuke this disrespect ful levity, but pacing up and down with small steps, wipes his forehead, and fidgets with his handkerchief. "She looks very well, don't y think. Hal?"

"Who?" says Hal, staring "Je-the marchioness." "Not much changed, if at all-el

"Not much," says Hal, "though she seemed to think I was. By the way, I shall have to drop her a pretty plain hint not to comment so much upon my growth. It's awkward before the servants, you know." "Not changed." murmurs

"Vane doesn't look quite the thing Indian, and—but what's that on your says Hal, lightly. "Had a great deal of a diary, and will be only too delight-"Where?" says Hal, though he knows course half of them were seasick! I doings. Hadn't you better tell me what say, Bell," he says, suddenly, "did you

notice among the gang-" "My dear Hal-'gang!" "A tall, fair woman, with golder hair and blue eyes?" Bell thinks.

"I-I can't say I did, Hal." "No, of course you didn't," says Hal. "You were staring at Jeanne all the

Bell blushes "And yet you must have noticed her. She looked to me the best dressed of smothering a sigh; "as happy as the the lot, and as fresh as paint, while the day is long; isn't that the phrase?" "Oh, I dare say!-tell that to your rest looked jagged and done up. A tall

"I didn't notice her," says Bell. "No?" says Hal, thoughtfully. "Well. I'm almost sure I've seen her before "Fishing about the bay isn't crossing somewhere-where on earth could it the Channel," says Hal. "And how are have been?" and he whistles softly to you?" he asks, staring in his direct assist his defaulting memory. "No, I can't remember, and yet I'll swear I've seen her somewhere. Oh, I say, Bell, did you see Fitzjames-Lord Lane, you know?"

"Yes," says Bell, quietly, and stop ing. "Compared with the bronzed ping short, "I saw him-I shook hands

in the last stage of consumption. Have have gone, and his eyeglass, too. Seems rather chippy. You haven't reached you stained yourself with walnut to have dropped all that sort of thing juice, and do you wear very high heels with his old name. Perhaps Jeanne has worked all that sort of thing out

"Jeanne-your sister? What influ ence can she have with Lord Lane?" Jeanne had no eyes as yet for any- says Bell, with a little anxious frown. "Don't know; they seem to have his call forth admiration in the spacious him, and he stuck close as wax to her room and its magnificent, but tasteful directly he came in. I should think he has turned out rather a good sort." "I hope so," says Bell, almost grim-

"Anyhow," says Hal, raising and light and admiration which are ex- looks of him-and what time did they

say the dinner would be?" "By Jove! this must astonish the But Bell is apparently too lost in Germans," says Lord Lane. "It's a thought to answer the weighty ques-But Bell is apparently too lost in tion, and Hal amuses himself by going around the hall, with his hands in his pockets, and examining the armor and ancient and modern weapons of war-Presently Bell goes, then there comes a light step on the stairs, and Jeanne, stealing down, folds her hands

> "What a good boy it is to wait for me," she says, linking her arm in his. "Haven't I been quick?" Hal turns and eyes her from head

> She is beautifully dressed, notwithstanding the rapidity with which her toilet has been accomplished, and Hal scans her with frank and proud ad-

"You haven't lost any of your good looks, Jen," he says. "Saved them all for you, you bad boy," she says, pressing his arm; and now tell me all you have been oing-everything, mind!"

And she puts up her white hand



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mooth his hair from his forehead. Hal avoids her eyes.

"Ask Bell." he says. "He has kept bother getting them all across, for of ed to sport it, and divulge all my misyou've been up to since we parted?" Jeanne laughs softly, but, it is her turn to droop her eyes.

"I haven't kept a diary, and can't remember," she says, with an assumed evity. "Besides, it would take days to tell you of all the places we've been to and all we've seen."

"You've been enjoying yourself, anyway?" inquires Hal "Yes, oh, yes," says Jeanne, smil-

ing, but very-very faintly, and "Ah," says Hal, concisely, "been doing the grand marchioness at 'our place,' surprising the county, and all that. ch. Jen? George! some of them must have been surprised at such a bit of a girl being the Marchioness of Ferndale. How do you like your new place. Jen. take it altogether?"

Jeanne laughs. "Take it altogether," she replies, "

is not a bad one." "I should think not." he says, emphatically. "I wonder some of the women folk haven't poisoned you out of envy. And Vane! How is the old boy?

"You must ask him," she says. "I have," says Hal, "and of course says: 'Quite well." But he looks that stage of matrimony when the crockery is thrown about, have you? Rather too early for that, I suppose?" (To be continued.)



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