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kind to me—Really! Quite a flatterer!"

And so Lieutenant Cayley-Clavering continued to pay her insidious visits—and it was not for the love of the cakes alone, either, as Miss Priscilla, who had been browsing amongst her novels more than ever lately, persistently assured herself.

And by and by there came a letter—an epistle which sent her into the seventh heaven of delighted excitement.

"DEAR MISS CRESSWELL"—the letter ran—"If I come this afternoon at four o'clock, do you think you could see me? I have something very important to say to you.—Yours very sincerely,

"R. CAYLEY-CLAVERING.

"P.S.—I wrote this because I am so very anxious that you should be in."

Could she see him! Miss Priscilla kissed the letter, and folded it away in a private drawer in her escritoire—a drawer which was already sacred to a faded bunch of violets that had dropped one day from the button-hole of his coat in her drawing-room, and a midget photograph of himself as a boy at Eton, that he had given her. She had had one taken of herself in a new silk dress, bought on purpose, to give to him in return.

Could she see him! She sat down at once at her writing-table and dashed off a note, in her little prim, old-fashioned handwriting.

not vain, poor dear—no one in the world less so—but when one is going to keep a tryst with one's lover, well, it is only human nature for a daughter of Eve to wish to look her very best.

"Priscilla, my dear," she said aloud—she often talked aloud to herself; a habit frequently acquired by people who are accustomed to lives of great loneliness—"Priscilla, my dear, it has become the fashion for men to marry women years older than themselves, and I believe you are actually going to be fashionable at last!"

Fashionable! It seemed an incongruous appellation when applied to the quaint, almost ridiculously prim little figure reflected in the mirror; and the smart, tailor-made young ladies at the Rectory, who had sneered for so many years at Miss Priscilla, for being a "dowdy frump," would have laughed aloud had they heard it. . . . But to Miss Priscilla herself, gazing complacently at the mild blue eyes, meekly parted hair, and faded cheeks of her counterpart, there was nothing laughable about it. . . . It is, perhaps, just as well, after all, that God has not given us the gift of seeing ourselves as others see us.

"And, now, what alterations can I make in my dress?" She tripped about the room, picking up first one thing, then another. "There is my new silk blouse—no, that is too bright a pink, and I know he does not care for pink. Ah, this pale blue chiffon



Stump of Tree used for dwelling in British Columbia.

"DEAR MR. CAYLEY-CLAVERING,—Please call this afternoon at four o'clock. I shall be delighted to see you.—Yours very sincerely,

"PRISCILLA CRESSWELL."

She scribbled the words, Priscilla Cayley-Clavering across her blotting-paper, just for fun, and to see how it looked—then blushed furiously, and threw the blotting-paper into the waste-paper basket.

How unmaidenly! How disgraceful of her! Really, how could she have done it!

But she was smiling all the time, and once, a little later, took the blotting-paper out again, just to have another look at it.

And so, when, at four o'clock precisely, the neat little maid-of-all-work came up to Miss Priscilla's bedroom with a visiting-card bearing the name of Lieutenant Cayley-Clavering, she found her mistress in a perfect flutter of tremulous excitement.

"Tell the young gentleman to wait in the drawing-room; I will be down in a minute," said the little lady, endeavoring to speak with an airy unconcern, which, however, she was far from feeling—an endeavor which, it is almost needless to add, was a complete failure, for Miss Priscilla was not skilled in the modern accomplishment of concealing the emotions—"tell him I will be down in a minute."

"Yes, miss," and the maid withdrew.

Immediately that she was alone again, Miss Priscilla turned, woman-like, to her looking-glass. She was

scarf; he always liked blue, he told me once that it matched my eyes!" She laughed at the recollection of the compliment, and, pausing again before the glass, arranged the bit of finery about her neck. "There, I think I look all right now."

She gave one more glance over her shoulder, and then, smiling to herself, tenderly, opened the door, and tripped downstairs.

—o—o—o—

Lieutenant Cayley-Clavering rose from the drawing-room sofa as Miss Priscilla entered. He was tall and fair, and boyish-looking, with strikingly handsome features, and rather a weak mouth. The type of a man who, a person with discernment would have seen at a glance, would always be afraid to act upon his own initiative, and who infinitely preferred to have some arm other than his own to lean upon. But Miss Priscilla was not discerning, and she thought him clever and strong and wonderful.

He came forward to meet her with outstretched hands. Her heart beat a little faster as she saw the eagerness in his eyes.

"Dear Miss Cresswell," he said, "boyishly, 'I am so glad you were able to see me.' He seized both her little, trembling hands in his big masterful ones—how she loved the masterfulness of them!—and dragged her down on to the sofa, where he sat beside her. "I am not interrupting you; you are not busy this afternoon, I hope?" he continued.

Busy! She laughed—although laugh was a sad one—at the suggestion. What occupation but stupid little household duties to fill her empty days?

"No," she answered, a little sulkily; "No, I—I am not busy."

He sighed, and leaned back across the back of the sofa. A thrill ran through her as she felt the contact of his arm. How was this gay young soldier, beautiful, and manly, and strong to think he should have fallen with her—her, the insignificant spinster, whom those horrid, at the Rectory called a "dowdy" But then, stranger things even that sometimes happened in novels.

"You've always been good," he said, gently. "Ever since I met I—I've been fond of you, remember our first meeting?"

"Yes." Of course she remembered it. It was not likely that she would forget the Rectory garden, which was the only social function an occasional school-treat, was ever invited to. Insignificantly, she was not much sought after by the Maudslayi society. "Yes," he repeated, softly, "I—I remember."

He sighed again, and bent in his seat, with his eyes fixed moodily on the ground. "Priscilla thought he seemed depressed; but, then, men are depressed on these occasions, so it said in the novels."

"We've—we've been good ever since, haven't we?" he asked, suddenly, he put out his hand, an eager, boyish gesture, and laid it on her lap. Miss Priscilla, gently with her own.

"Yes," she said, smiling. "We've always been good friends."

"And I've always confided in you, haven't I? Told you all my secrets and my joys?"

"Yes, you've always told me everything."

She remembered the day when he had almost broken down, how he missed his dead mother, and how her heart was an orphan herself—how he missed his mother's dear hand, how he had always been his own everything.

His eyes scanned her face. "And if I tell you some of my secrets, you won't laugh at me, will you?"

Laugh at him! She looked at him with shining, tender eyes. "I won't laugh," she said, gently.

"Or—or call me a fool, or his ringing, boyish voice, with its wistful anxiety."

Call him a fool! Was it possible? She placed her hand on his arm.

"You can trust me," she said, squeezing his hand. "Forgive me for squeezing you, my best friend," he said, pensively.

Then, suddenly, he gave a laugh. Her heart began to beat quickly; she knew, instinctively, that something was coming.

"I wonder what you will say when I tell you that I have enough to fall in love?"

were jerked out awkwardly, shook, his cheeks grew red, and he was evidently boyishly in his confession.

And Miss Priscilla? She rushed up into her cheeks, grew dim, her head stretched out her other hand on his knee.

"Tell me—tell me her name," she whispered. "Tell me—tell me her name!"

Her voice was so faint, so low, that he had to bend his head down to hear her. She laughed again; he was very close to her.

"Her name? I think you will like it."

Miss Priscilla's heart beat so quickly that she felt as if she were suffocating her, and there she sat, singing in her ears. "Know of course she did; had she not for thirty-seven years?"

But she would not let him