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A Pierrette's Diary Leaves

(Concluded from page 6.)

in a harem skirt, but he wore his old bored look as he passed me with her.

Just then the clock struck twelve.

I started guiltily. I should be home, and yet—and yet, how I should have liked just one more waltz with the man who appealed to me so much.

I saw Devilshoff look at me from a little distance, and make as if to approach me again. That decided me. I turned and hurried out of the ball room, and fled as quickly as possible from the Castle. For, diary dear, it was a reckless spirit of mischief that suggested this daring escapade. I had no invitation at all to the ball.

The host, however, might discover I was an uninvited guest and denounce me as a miserable deceiver. I hastened down the road and along the pier—the sea rolling and tumbling beneath me.

WOULD I ever meet this man again, I wondered—ah, it was scarcely likely. After all, I am horribly unlucky. The men I like seldom like me, and the ones that like me, I can never stand. At last, I had met my ideal. He evidently actually liked me, but the probability was I would never see him again. Stay, if he really cared he might ponder over what I had told him about the pierrots and turn up at one of our shows to-morrow. I must wait and see.

I opened the door with my latch key and stumbled in. There was a light in our little sitting room. Gwen had kept her promise, and had not gone to bed.

She was playing her banjo very, very softly, so softly as to be more like a remembered sound than one that slid upon the ear. Instinctively I paused to listen. She was at the last two lines of that exquisite chorus of the Banks of Loch Lomond: "But I and my true love will never meet again, on the bonnie, bonnie banks of Loch Lomond."

I shivered. Somehow, the sad refrain did not seem to augur well for another meeting for me and my ideal.

She was putting her banjo away as I entered, but I noticed when she looked up that her eyes were full of tears.

"It's that song," she murmured, apologetically. "It always makes me sad."

She was wearing a crimson kimono, and her hair was loose over her shoulders.

"I've had the loveliest time," I announced, as I flung myself into a chair, "and I've met the dearest man, and oh, Gwen, isn't Fieldglass a funny name?"

She turned strangely white, and staggered back against the wall.

"Fieldglass!" she repeated. "It can't be. Oh, surely you couldn't meet him."

Then I told her, describing him minutely.

"I could not see his hair, for he wore a white wig," I continued, "but I am certain it would be fair, to go with his skin."

"Captain Fieldglass, a naval officer, on the ship Halcyon in the foreign service. Ah, it is indeed he."

She cowered down in the basket chair. Her head fell back on the cushions, and so dreadfully white she had grown, I feared she was going to faint.

I crossed over and knelt beside her, taking her hands in mine.

"Who is he?" I whispered. "What is he to you? Gwen dear, tell me."

"My husband," came faintly from her parted lips.

I let go her hands, and flopped in a crumpled heap on the floor. The surprises of this night had been too much for me.

She recovered herself a little.

"We were married three years ago," she explained, "and—we—we quarrelled directly afterwards. It was my fault, I was in the wrong. I believed lies about him and I left him. I dare not go back to my people, so I had to earn my living the best way I could. I learned the stories I was told about him were all untrue when it was too late. Now—oh, was ever a woman born to such misery."

She buried her face in the cushions. I got up suddenly, and shook her roughly.

"Listen," I began, speaking very quickly, and divesting myself of my dress as I spoke. "You must not be a fool any longer. You must go to him now at once, do you hear? He was to meet me at the palm at the far end of the ball room for another waltz. You must put on this pierrette frock and go. He will think it is I at the first. Keep your hair just as it is."

We are really rather alike with our hair down. I realized it when she was dressed in the pierrette frock. We are about the same height, and our hair is much the same shade and about the same length. It is only in our eyes a striking difference lies. Mine are grey, but hers are brown, and soft as a gazelle's.

Dawn has broken, but she hasn't come back. I must go to bed now, or I'll be a wreck, and as ill as ever again to-morrow, and the golden tenor will be using bad language over my accompaniments.

Saturday night.—At last I have a chance to write the end of the romance, for I have met with a romance during my very first week as a pierrette.

I did not seem to have been asleep very long when I was awakened by a kiss, and opened my eyes to find Gwen bending over me.

"Dear, it is all right," she exclaimed rapturously. "You were sleeping so peacefully I could not waken you when I came in. I had to wait until it was time to get up."

She seated herself on the bed, and related her night's adventure.

"It was easy to enter the Castle on such an occasion, the powdered footmen took no notice of me. At first he thought it was you and then—well, he looked as if he had seen a ghost. We crossed the Broadwater, and there in the demesne amongst the glowing lights, I asked his forgiveness and—we are going to forget all our misery now," she ended.

Her name is Virginia, and I think it suits her perfectly.

To-night is her last appearance as a pierrette. She is to break her contract with Montimer and Windsor, but the troupe guess nothing of her story.

"I don't know how I will ever repay you," she keeps saying. "But for you I would never have found happiness, though it was so near me. He only arrived on a visit to Broadwater Castle that morning. The Brookers are very old friends of his, though I never knew them at all. We are going abroad now for about six months. He has leave for a year. When we return from our second honeymoon, you must come on a long visit, and in the meantime, well, I am not going to lose sight of you, dear."

I'm pleased, of course, oh, very pleased, for I knew "the girl with the banjo" had some history, but I'll miss her more than I can express. We were to have been together for some time—but—well this week's experience has made quite a drama, and I am glad I had a leading part in the play.

Carrying It Too Far.—Mitchell Kennerley was talking in New York about Anthony Comstock, who tried last year to have one of Mr. Kennerley's books suppressed.

"Comstock," he said, "carries his prudishness too far. Why, I understand that he's now trying to get a law passed, to hold good for the entire coast line, which will prohibit boats from hugging the shore."

The Essence of Kindness.—"Johnny, are you good to your little sister?" "Yes, ma'm, why I eat her candy for her, so it won't make her sick."

Father's Hope.—Father cherishes the hope that his son won't be such a little fool as he was in his youth, but he doesn't say it to the lad just that way.