



"KYRA,"

The Ward of the Earl of Vering.

CHAPTER XVII. The Mysterious Face.

The lawyer looked from one to the other, and did not seem to know what to say. Suddenly, Charlie Merivale came up to his cousin, and held out his hand, with a smile that was good to see.

"Percy, I may congratulate you, mayn't I? I do congratulate you, dear old fellow!" and he clung to the strong, white hand.

"Come, Mr. Merivale," said the lawyer, with a smile of relief, "that's the most sensible thing that could be said; and, if his lordship will allow me, I will follow your example. My lord, I congratulate you with all my heart. It is as it should be—as it should be—and I am certain that it will never be shaken. Had it gone any other way, I, for one, my lord, should have been heartily and sincerely grieved."

Lord Percy cleared his face with a smile, and seemed, for the time, at least, to be convinced and satisfied; he gave his hand to the lawyer, and then turned to the old man at his side.

"Stephen, you have not spoken yet; there is no need to. One clause, at least, of my uncle's will shall have due effect, so far as I am concerned. Stephen, may I think that you would still have remained steward of Vering, even if there had been no mention of it in this document?"

At this kind and delicate expression of confidence and gratitude, the old man broke down for the first time.

He rose, faltering and trembling. "My lord," he said, with a gesture of humble devotion, "I will serve you, as I have served your uncle, while there is life in me!" and then, with another gesture, he limped away.

"An admirable man," remarked Mr. Butterwick, looking at his watch. "And now, my lord, if you will excuse me, I will get back to Gray Norton, and return to-morrow to receive your commands, and go over the matter." Then the two cousins were alone together for the first time since that eventful night when Lillian Devigne had played traitor and destroyed Percy's faith in women forever.

"My dear Charlie," said Lord Vering, "how you have grown!"

Charlie Merivale flushed and laughed.

"I need not ask if you have been happy; a glance at your face tells me that."

"Yes, thanks to you, Percy, I have been happy—quite happy—if you had been nearer home," he looked up as he spoke, rather shyly, at the grand face, with its tawny mustache and noble eyes.

"You must tell me all about everything," resumed Percy, with his hand on the young man's shoulder.

"I was hoping that you'd tell me all about yourself first, Percy. I'm dying to hear! I got your letters—the few there were—but they didn't tell me half enough. Ah, Percy, how I envied you! What a life it was—something fresh every day! Excitement and novelty for breakfast, dinner, and supper—"

"Sometimes we had the novelty and excitement without the meal, dear boy!" put in Lord Percy, with a quiet smile.

"Ah," said Charlie, with keen enjoyment, "fancy being half-starved in a backwood of America, in such common-place days as these! I'd rather be starved right out than lead the lives some of our men do, lounging about London—day and night—to the tune of Godfrey's Band!"

Percy smiled at the young man's energy.

Charlie ran on: "But you said 'we,' Percy. Did you join a band? I thought you were all alone?"

Lord Percy colored slightly. He was conscious of a strange repugnance to tell any of the story of the finding and adoption of the Indian girl. He hesitated, and Charlie ran on:

"And what a splendid place this is to come home to! All your own—your very own—Percy! Ah, it is so coldly that I congratulate you. What can I say? I am a thousand times more glad that it is yours than if it were mine! Do you know, I believe that I am looking forward to a regular inspection and survey with greater eagerness than you? It is all so new to me, all so grand, while it is home to you."

"Anything but that, as yet," said Percy. "You forget, dear boy, that I had only crossed the threshold twice within the last fifteen years. It is as strange to me as to you. We will go over it to-morrow, Charlie."

"Yes, and that reminds me that you would like to have a little quiet from my chatter. I may go out for a stroll, I suppose, without outraging the proprieties, so soon after the funeral?"

"Certainly," said Percy. "Go out, Charlie, and get an appetite; we shall have a tete-a-tete dinner at seven. Will you ride or walk?"

"Oh, walk," said Charlie, and, with an affectionate smile, he left the room. Percy Chester, the Earl of Vering, looked after him, with a wistful smile, and then sank into a chair before the fire, with a curious sigh of weariness and lassitude, and dropped into a very singular attitude of depression for a young, handsome man who had just come into an earldom and an immense fortune.

He sat for five minutes looking at the blazing coals, and the old habit of self-communing came out.

"What am I to do with it all?" he murmured, clasping his white hands behind his head. "What am I to do with it? And, still deeper question, what am I to do with her? She is a child now—yes, a child as yet, but children have an awkward knack of

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growing, and, ere I know it, she will be a woman—a woman as beautiful as Cleopatra—and as untamable. What can an unmarried, solitary man do with such a creature? Already I am hemmed in with perplexities. God knows that I miss the child as much as she misses me, who am her only friend and protector; and yet, can I have her here without setting every scandal-loving tongue in the county wagging? No! I feel that she cannot come here, child as she is, world-worn as I am; then, what am I to do with her?"

He rose, and paced up and down, his arms folded, his mind on the work at the knotty problem.

"She cannot remain at the inn; I know no one woman in the world who would take her in charge—no one to whom I could trust her. What shall I do with her?"

Then he sank into the chair again, with a sigh of irritation and indecision.

The hours passed, and the new earl fumbled still at the twisted knot. At last, with a grim smile, he rose, rang for his man, and slowly paced along the great hall, and up the staircase to his own apartments, to think for dinner, the spirit of loneliness holding him so tightly in its clutches that he looked back, longingly, to the snowy plain and frozen woods of the Wanah, for there he could enjoy the perfect, trustful smile of the Indian child he had succored and grown to care for.

Dinner had been ordered in the morning-room—the room in which Percy had eaten his luncheon on that eventful visit, three years ago; and Mr. Wornish, the butler, had done his best to dispel something of the gloom that had, of necessity, hung over the place for so many years, and reached its full depth during the last few months.

He had spread out some of the Vering plate of solid gold on the carved sideboard, and had lit all the candles in the candelabra; two great epergnes of glittering silver ran over with choice exotics, and the table was furnished with more than the usual appointments.

"It's something painful," said Mr. Wornish to Monsieur Dupres, the cook, "to see the unnatural, quiet way of the young earl—quite a young man, monsieur, and as handsome as any in the gallery; ah, and a good-hearted one, too, or I'm no judge of voices! It's quite painful, monsieur, and I think it's my duty to live things up a bit, and, if you can send up something extraordinary—something with a little genius in it, monsieur—I shall take it as kind of you."

"Ah, yes!" exclaimed the chef; "but milled does not care—does not appreciate my humble efforts. Did I not produce a masterpiece in the way of a salmon yesterday? And it came back untouched! Ma foi! but I will do my best; perhaps the other young milled will know something of the divine art!"

"Mr. Merivale is too young for that, monsieur," said the butler, shaking his head, solemnly; "but he may learn in time, and he could not learn in a better place than here, monsieur."

At this compliment, the chef declared again that he would exert his genius, and he kept his word; the young earl and his cousin sat down to a dinner worthy of the gods.

Charlie came down looking fresh and glowing after his walk—handsome and strong as a young Apollo, and quite prepared to assist Mr. Wornish in chasing away the gloom.

"I say, Percy," he exclaimed, as a clear soup was tasted, "you have inherited a good cook; this beats the 'Reaufort,' and that is something!"

Mr. Wornish nodded to a footman, and instantly the word of praise and encouragement was conveyed to the great artist.

"Yes, he is a good cook," assented

Percy, absently, "but I am afraid his art is thrown away on me. I spoiled my palate in the backwoods, Charlie."

"It'll come back—it will come back!" pronounced the young epicure, devoutly. "Those backwoods set me longing again."

This meant "tell me the story of your adventures," and Percy complying, the chef's achievements were accompanied by a running recital of Percy's travels and doings—all mention of Kyra, however, being avoided, Mr. Wornish and his assistants listening as intently as Charlie Merivale, and the opinion of their new master going higher every few minutes, until it reached its zenith in the attitude of "hero."

Then the conversation veered round to Charlie's doings during Percy's absence, and at last, with a suddenness, the light-hearted young fellow brought it down to his walk of the afternoon.

"There is beautiful scenery in the neighborhood, Percy, and it is all stamped with your hall-mark. Everything is Vering, the Vering Arms. Ah, by the way, I have had quite an adventure—speaking of the inn reminded me of it. I took a complete round from the park, and came up the hill, you know—at a pretty good pace, too, for I pulled up at the top to take a look round, just in front of the inn. While I was looking at it, and admiring it, a young girl came and stood in one of the bay windows. I thought it was a woman at first, but, at a second glance, I saw that she was quite young—about thirteen or fourteen only, although she was so tall—tall and straight, and slim as a sapling, and with a face like—like—what's the name of that dark goddess, in the first book of the 'Odyssey'? I never saw such a face—very dark, with great coils of shining hair, and eyes like an antelope's."

"I was chained to the spot, and couldn't help staring; not that that mattered much, for she was only a child, you know, and she didn't see me, for, after a quick, eager look down the hill, she half sat down at the window, and, to my astonishment and dismay, covered her face with her hands, and leaned forward, as if she were crying—what's the matter?"

"Nothing!" said Percy, almost sternly; he had knocked over a glass.

The butler hastened, with noiseless alacrity, to replace it, and Lord Percy said: "You may leave us now, Wornish," then nodded to Charlie to continue.

"St. Ivel! Lactic Cheese, small tins, at ELLIS."

Everyday Etiquette!

"I wish to announce my engagement. Can you tell me an original way of doing so?" pleaded Ethel.

"Entertain several of your most intimate girl friends at luncheon. During the meal have the doorbell ring and let the maid bring in a telegram to the hostess. She should then ask permission to open and read it. She should then read aloud the announcement of the engagement," advised her aunt.

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A UNIQUE AND PRACTICAL DESIGN.

The butler hastened, with noiseless alacrity, to replace it, and Lord Percy said: "You may leave us now, Wornish," then nodded to Charlie to continue.



1535—Ladies' Overall Apron. Striped percale in gray and white is here shown. Facings of dark gray on front, neck edge, collar and belt afford a neat trimming. This design has ample fullness, good design, and simple lines. The back may be cut with or without a seam. The fullness is held by a belt, which may be omitted. The model is good for all wash fabrics, lawn, gingham, percale, chambray, seersucker, drill, linen or alpaca. The Pattern is cut in 3 sizes: Small, Medium and Large. It requires 6 1/2 yards of 36-inch material for a medium size.

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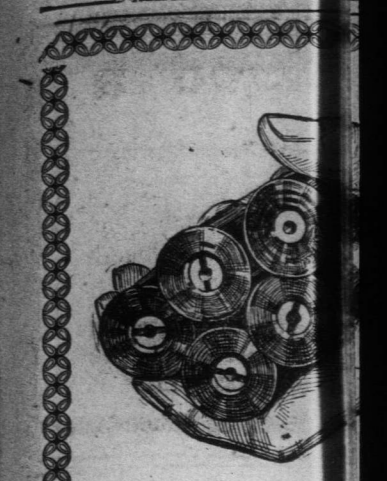
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Among those present were: Abraham, Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Ayre, Hon. J. R. Bennett, Mr. Ing Premier, and Mrs. Deming Brookes, Mrs. John Brown, W. J. Herder, Mrs. Dr. Chatterton, Mrs. J. C. Davidson, Girls' Department, B. E. S. Dunfield, Mr. and Miss Edmondson, Capt. Allan Goodbridge, Mr. W. G. Gosling, Mayor of St. John's, Mrs. Charles MacKenzie, Mrs. Miss Dorothy Harvey, Chief, Sir William Horwood and Lady Wood, Hon. John Harvey, Mr. Tice Johnson, Mr. W. H. Jones (President of the Institute), Miss Jones, Mr. R. B. Job, of the Board of Trade, and Mr. H. W. LeMessurier, C.M. and Miss LeMessurier, Com. MacDermott, H.M.S. Britton, Mrs. MacDermott, Mrs. Dr. Martin, Mrs. Archibald Macpherson, Montgomery, Adjutant, Regiment, Mr. J. S. and Mrs. A. Joseph and Lady Outerbridge, Norman Outerbridge, Mrs. Outerbridge, Surgeon-Major, Paterson, Mr. Sheard, Secretary, General Manager, International Association, Hon. Robert and the representatives of the Sir William Horwood took

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