

Literature.

THE FOUR QUEENS.

The Queen of Hearts.

Dinner finished, we still sat in the twilight, with fruit and wine before us; the gentlemen had lighted their cigarettes, and we ladies were occupied with our own thoughts when we were startled by a shrill voice saying—

"Is any of you gentlemen Mr. Holt?"

"Mr. Holt belongs to our party, but he is not here," answered Sir Edgar, after a pause occupied in looking round to see whence the voice proceeded.

"What do you want?" inquired Jack abruptly.

The boy turned to Edgar to reply.

"The gentleman what got upset said I was to bring this 'ere packet to Mr. Holt, as he wasn't coming on till the morning."

So saying, he held out what I made no doubt was the bundle of letters severely fastened and sealed, a safeguard against prying eyes.

Unwillingly I offered to take the package, but the boy placed it in Edgar's hands.

Sister Anne noticed my action.

"It is not your property, presume, she said in her severest accents.

I could not, I dared not explain before every one, and it was in silence with feelings you may imagine, that I saw the compromising letters transferred to the breast-pocket of Edgar's coat.

"The gentleman said you'd give me sixpence," urged the big-eyed boy, and Edgar tossed him some money; and he remained, his eyes fixed wistfully on the table littered with the remnants of our dinner.

"Well! What else—what more do you want?" asked Jack, impatiently.

"One of them bottles of wine," he replied, pointing; "only I know you won't give it me."

Jack and Tom burst into a roar of laughter.

"Be off, you young imp," cried the former.

"You callers are the curse of the river. Clear out!"

I happened to see the boy's face as, without another word, he slowly limped away, and there were tears in his eyes.

"Come here," said "Tell me what you want the wine for."

"To drink of course," shouted Tom with another laugh, as if he had said something clever.

The little cripple's pale face flushed, and he exclaimed indignantly, "Do you think I'd ask for the stuff for myself? I wouldn't touch it. It's for Ruth—my sister Ruth. The doctor says she's got to have it. She's dying. Where can I get it?—how can I get it unless I cadge for it?"

"Did you mean to say you wouldn't drink it yourself?"

"There was a party of gents here this afternoon," said the boy solemnly, "who asked me for wine. They'd left in their deacons. They says, 'We'll give you a whole bottle if you'll drink it out of a quart pot.' I says, 'I don't want it for myself, but for a sick sister, and at that she bursts out laughing, and tells me to go where they'll grieve enough for her. Last night she passed away. They'd given her the bottle of wine willingly enough for the fun of seeing a lame boy drunk, but they wouldn't spare the liquor to save Ruth's life!'"

"Come with me," I cried impulsively. "You shall have my wine, and I'll give you and you shall tell me about your sister and where you live."

I led him toward the inn, and as we went the boy looked up in my face and said—

"You must be her he told me of. He said there was one more beautiful than I'd ever seen. He called her a lady, but I think you're the stuff they make angels of."

I have had many and many a complimentary paid me—yes, and flatteries, till I am weary and misled with them, but not one ever had that genuine ring in it before or since.

"Who told you?" I asked.

"Him what got the ducking in the river."

I knew that would be his answer, but words fail to describe the ecstasy and joy it gave me to hear that Mr. Brandon thought and spoke of me as beautiful, though dozens had told me so over and over again.

Heigho! I suppose it was only gratified vanity.

Leaving the cripple boy astonished and grateful for a basket of such invalid delicacies as the inn could furnish, I led Edgar to re-cross the river.

"You are awfully good, Miss Grambs," said he.

I love compliments, I own, but somehow these words were like a tonic. For once, at all events, in my life I had done something without aiming at effect or posing for admiration before Sir Edgar spoke with an air of lay patronage which was singularly inappropriate at that moment.

"You would be invaluable as the mistress of an estate," he continued. "The people expect that sort of thing from the lady of the manor. Have you ever been in Westmoreland?"

I hastily replied in the negative. I was busy thinking how I could best take the present opportunity to persuade him to give me the packet of letters I saw him place in the breast-pocket of his coat.

"Miss Grambs—Roseland," he resumed, "do you know you said I might call you Roseland? I don't say you didn't say I might—I've been thinking over what you nearly said this morning, and—well—I—I suppose you know I would do anything in the world for you—make any sacrifice."

"I know you would, dear Sir Edgar," I interrupted. "I feel quite sure of it, and that is why I make bold to take a favor of you. Will you grant it?"

"My life is at your service," said he theatrically.

"I don't want your life," I answered, promptly. "I want that packet of letters the boy gave you just now."

"Holt's letters?"

"Yes—no—at least, my letters. Never mind; give them to me—But there's one I must have them!"

"Good gracious!" cried Sir Edgar, leaning for his eyeglasses, without which he knew he could not do justice to his astonishment.

"Give them to me—directly!" I continued, stamping my foot impatiently.

"Why?" he asked.

"Why?" he repeated.

"Why?" for the third time.

"I am not answerable to you for my actions," I said, petulantly, for I feared every moment lest he should gain my pardon and my chance would be gone.

"No, certainly; not yet. But I was just going to ask you—But there's one I must have them!"

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"Oh, my dear, you needn't be indignant with us, but if gentlemen will talk to loud on one side of a clump of laurels while we are sitting on the other, it is not our fault if we participate in their second-hand conversation."

"I don't know what you are talking about," I retorted.

"Oh, no, of course not. I don't suppose you do; but we heard Sir Edgar cry 'heads,' and we heard Mr. Hathermatt say 'heads' it is. You've won the toss, and you shall speak first; but if she refuses you, mind, fair play, I'm to have my chance!" that's what we heard.

Then Sir Edgar went to meet you, and that's what we saw, and now you're asking for 'Jack'—that's what we know—that's all we know, and that's all I have to say."

I cannot tell you how humiliated I felt.

"I would not marry either of them to save my life, and you may tell them so," I cried angrily, and, fearful of showing the tears which I felt welling in my eyes, I beat a rapid retreat to my bed-room, and passed the most wretched night I had ever then experienced.

The morning broke dark and stormy, the wind howled diabolically, and the rain poured in torrents when I awoke. The lawn was a sudden puddle, the roses drooped their heads, and the garden paths on the grass; the river was gloomy and leaden-hued, the distant landscape faded in mist, and I, as dull and downcast as the weather, descended to find a silent melancholy party seated around the breakfast-table.

Sister Anne, in her most spiteful tone, gave me Sir Edgar's address. He had been called to Westmoreland on important business, and had gone off at day-break in the landlord's dog cart. Laurence Holt and Mr. Brandon were still absent, and Jack was looking gloomily from the dining window, beset by the devil's tattoo with his knuckles on the sill.

Somewhat, I hardly know why, I attributed all the unpleasantness, including the bad weather, to Jack, and returned his greeting with stiff formality.

To continue our trip up the river in such a downpour was, of course, out of the question, and, looking at the sky, it seemed as if we were doomed to an entire day of misery in this wretched inn, which had appeared all that was bright, cheerful, and charming the previous afternoon.

I strolled out into the narrow gloomy passage, and stood by the open door, the rain splashing and spluttering upon the steps; and to me presently, timidly, and with a certain air of restraint, came Jack Hathermatt.

"May I speak to you, Rosie?" he asked.

"Certainly not," I rejoined with unwonted decision.

"Something has annoyed you," he continued, indifferent to my words. "I hope it is not Edgar's departure."

"Your friend is nothing to me."

"I am delighted to hear you say so, for it emboldens me to speak of a matter which has been again and again on my tongue's tip. Rosie, we have been friends from childhood; have you never felt that this friendship might grow into something stronger? I must hazard my fate."

"And then up!" I interrupted with as much scorn as I could put into my voice. "I am obliged to you, Mr. Hathermatt, and to your friend, Sir Edgar, for the honor you conferred upon me last night in gambling for my hand, but next time you 'lose' for a lady's favor, let her be sure the lady is disposed to accord it to either of you. You might try your sister Anne. She may like it. I don't know."

I flattered myself this was a telling speech, as I swept along the passage with the bounce of my indignation; but when I reached my bed-room and found it was only eleven o'clock, and that I must either stay there, or go to the little, close, stuffy, miserable chamber, or else pick my pride and rejoin the party down stairs as if nothing had happened, I rather regretted my impetuosity, and, after all, Jack was a very good fellow, and I had known him for years, and his people and mine would all be delighted with him; but I couldn't, so there was an end of it.

My maudlin hung over a chair and suggested to me a third course. I would have a walk in the garden, and breathe the object of that walk should be a visit to Ruth, the sick sister of the crippled boy, who had been so sympathetic to me in the previous evening.

Enveloped in waterproof from head to foot, I trudged, trudge, trudge, slush, slush, slush, and, at last, by dint of repeated inquiry, I at last, hot, wet, and weary, reached the miserable cottage in which the poor girl lay dying.

I knocked loudly.

"If you wait for a moment," I heard a voice cry fervently, "I'll knock, and the door will be opened at once by Mr. Brandon."

I really cannot say which of us was the more surprised.

"Come in," said he, recovering from his astonishment. "Take off that waterproof, now your boots—I will dry them. Go in that room. You can find the poor girl there—you will do more for her than I have ever been ordered about in such a fashion in my life, and ordinarily should have rebelled against commands given so decidedly and brusquely, but Mr. Brandon had some strange influence over me, and I felt compelled to do as he bade me."

The poor girl was very ill, and I felt my powerlessness most acutely, but I was soon relieved by the arrival of the doctor, who pronounced Ruth's illness, though dangerous, by no means necessarily fatal.

"It is as well as could be expected," said Mr. Brandon, who I think I have mentioned before, always seemed to know everything. "I gather from the poor cripple that she is suffering from a cold, and that she went to London to seek employment, and fell in with one of those plausible gentlemen who—Pshaw! It is a story old as the hills. She was deceived—and came home to die like hundreds of others."

As he was his speech, it could not hide the wealth of tender feeling which prompted him to take an interest in this poor little creature, and at that moment I respected him more than I had ever done any member of his sex.

The doctor left in charge of the case, the nurse duly installed, all at Mr. Brandon's cost, our services were no longer needed, not that I had done much, and we left the cottage together.

"I will see you to the inn," said he; "take my arm."

I did so, wondering the while at my obedience.

He had a large umbrella, which he opened and held over the both of us, beneath its shelter, for it still rained heavily, we splashed along through mud and wet for some time in silence.

"I'm sure I look an awful guy," I said after a while.

"Never saw you look better in your life," he answered, and I think me not as derisive, and your hair blown out of curl; but in this errand of mercy you show the greater advantage than decked in your fags and laces, and exchanging foolishness with fops and dandies."

This was plain speaking with a vengeance, and I hardly knew whether to be pleased or resent the liberty.

While I still doubted, he resumed:—"From the first I knew you were capable of better things, from the first I was sure you would do more than I could for me, and I saw you giving your whole thoughts to me while mine were empty. I don't care if it was Jack Hathermatt's coat I had given it him back again, and never thought of taking the pocket out of the pocket."

"What's Jack?" I asked. And with whatering for a reply I ran across the lawn, and found sister Anne and Julia Hathermatt, deserted by the gentlemen, sitting in solemn state. "Where's Jack?" I repeated.

"Sister Anne gave a sort of aggravating snarl, her favorite mode of expressing annoyance, and in her most vinegary voice said, 'Oh, then you have refused Sir Edgar?'"

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and that I deserved every word he said. Still, it was not for him to lecture me in such a fashion.

"I am sorry you think it a liberty," he rejoined sadly. "Of course I have no right to address you in this manner—unless indeed, you permit me to do so."

"But I do not," I answered sharply. "You have taken advantage of this occasion to address me in terms which which—no gentleman should use to a lady; and—and—I will not submit to it."

"And that is really your true opinion of me?" he asked, very sorrowfully.

"It is," I replied; and no sooner had I uttered the words than I would have given anything I possessed to recall them, and yet my pride would not allow me to do so.

We reached the inn door in silence.

"Are you not coming in?" I inquired, as he stood upon the step still holding his dripping umbrella.

He moved his head in sign of negation.

"No!" he cried impulsively, holding out his hand; but he disregarded it, and, raising his hat, turned abruptly on his heel and walked rapidly away. I have never seen him since. Heigho! But he was very rude—wasn't he?"

"You have driven Jack away now," said sister Anne, as I entered the inn parlor, the rain dripping from my waterproof.

"He presented a pitiable sight. Brightly lit up as he was, and with a gleam of light in his eyes, he looked like a man who had been given anything I possessed to recall them, and yet my pride would not allow me to do so."

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the cherry wood fire, it is in a low voice she pleads for forbearance.

"I do not ask you to believe the tale I have to tell, she says, but spare me your ridicule for to me it is the most serious event of my life."

Then, without further prelude, she commences her history.

(To be continued.)

JACKSON ADAMS,
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AND
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(near County Court House.)
Queen Street, — Fredericton.



Where may be found a stock of
Furniture of all Descriptions.
Also, a full line of
GASKETS AND COFFINS
IN
Rosewood, Walnut and Cloth Covered.
Robes & Shrouds,
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Orders from the Town and Country will receive prompt and careful attention.

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NEW CARPETS.

I have just opened the largest assortment of
BRUSSELS
AND
TAPESTRY CARPETS
ever offered in this city, with
RUGS TO MATCH.

ALSO:
DUTCH
AND
HEMP CARPETS.

JOHN McDONALD.
Fredericton, March 21, 1881.

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IT IS A PURELY VEGETABLE PREPARATION from some of our most valuable roots, etc., containing medicinal properties. An excellent remedy for strengthening the Back and Sides. For Pulmonary disease it would be advisable to put it between the shoulders.

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Lame Back, Cracked Hands, Lame Sides, Spinal Disease, Boils, Erysipelas, Aids, Burns, CUTS ON HORSES AND CATTLE.

This Plaster is put up in 1 oz. tin boxes, and is much cheaper to use than any other kind, a box being sufficient to plaster a horse and renew its skin several times.

Persons whose hands get sore working in the soil, will find this preparation just what they need.

Lombard does not fail to take a supply of this and "Anestlin Liniment" in the woods with him in case of accident.

In fact, who are in need of such an article should not fail to try a box and be convinced, as many have, that it is the best Plaster in use.

Price 25 cents. Sold by all druggists and dealers throughout the Maritime Provinces.

Manufactured only by
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Middleton, N. S.

DOG TAXES.
A. L. persons in the City of Fredericton, liable to pay Tax for keeping or harboring Dogs, under a passed by the Council on 12th day of September, 1881, entitled:

"A Law to impose a Tax on the Owners and Harbors of Dogs, and otherwise to restrain the keeping of Dogs in the City of Fredericton."

are hereby notified that such Tax must be paid to the City Treasurer, at his Office, New City Hall, on or before the 1st day of August next, and all persons neglecting or refusing to pay such Tax within the above specified time, shall be liable to a Penalty of four dollars in addition to the amount of the Tax.

JOHN EDWARDS,
City Treasurer.

STOVES. STOVES.
A LARGE stock of Cook and other Stoves at
JAMES S. NEILL'S.
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City Treasurer.

STOVES. STOVES.
A LARGE stock of Cook and other Stoves at
JAMES S. NEILL'S.
Grindstones and Fixtures.

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HON. EDWARD BLAKE
WILL DELIVER ON
WEDNESDAY
Afternoon next, the 20th inst., in the
Officers' Square,

Fredericton, one of his powerful speeches on the Political events of the day. Let no man stay at home! Come one and all to hear him! In the meantime call at

DANIEL LUCY'S,
AND GET A
NEW SUIT OF CLOTHES,
A PAIR OF BOOTS,
AND A