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Better a Peasant Than a Peer.

CHAPTER XXXVII.
JOY WITH THE DAWNING.

When dinner time passes and Hal does not return, Jeanne paces the garden, worried about the boy and listening for a sound of horses' hoofs. Finally she hears the third-hud of a horse galloping toward the castle. She hurries forward to greet her brother, but the man who dismounts is George.

He gives her a letter from Hal, asking that she come to him at once. When, remembering that she is to go to England the next day with Vane, Lady Ferndale tells George she cannot do as her brother wishes, the faithful servant says his master is in danger.

"He is only twenty-five miles away, madam, at Durbach. We can reach there to-night."

Hal's sister can hesitate no longer. She agrees to go secretly within twenty minutes.

What joy this decision brings to Lady Lucelle, who has overheard the entire conversation!

She waits half an hour, then holds a brief but significant conversation with Clarence Lane. After that she goes direct to Vane's studio, and confesses her love for him.

She sinks slowly beside him, her white hands wound around his arm. Trembling in every limb, Vane looks down at her.

"For Heaven's sake, arise, Lucelle!" he breathes, hoarsely. "Don't—don't! Think—remember. My poor girl, what is this? Remember!"

"I do, too well!" she breathes. "It is for you now to remember; then will it be my task to teach you to forget—oh, saying that past which we will hold together. For—Vane, be unhappy—I who cannot see you—unhappy without suffering with you—

HOW WOMEN OF MIDDLE AGE

May Escape the Dreaded Sufferings of That Period by Taking Mrs. Block's Advice

Hopkins, Minn.—"During Change of Life I had hot flashes and suffered for two years. I saw Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound advertised in the paper and got good results from taking it. I recommend your medicine to my friends and you may publish this fact as a testimonial."—Mrs. ROBERT BLOCH.

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It had been said that not one woman in a thousand passes this perfectly normal change without experiencing a train of very annoying and sometimes painful symptoms. Those dreadful hot flashes, sinking spells, spots before the eyes, dizzy spells, nervousness, are only a few of the symptoms. Every woman at this age should profit by Mrs. Block's experience and try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

If you have the slightest doubt that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound will help you write to Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co. (confidential) Lynn, Mass., about your health.

have to wound and torture you—" "What is it? Lucelle, speak! Is—is it—Jeanne?"

"Hush!" she says. "Do not breathe her name; it is not fit to pass your lips again!"

With a low, inarticulate cry, he withdraws his arm from her grasp.

"Where is Jeanne? Arise! get out of my sight, you—serpent! Tell me where she is, or—"

And he grasps her arm with a hand of steel.

White and writhing—serpent-like—she stands erect.

"Where is she?" she pants, with working lips. "With her lover—fool! You wish to know where they are? I will tell you. They are at a low roadside inn, at Durbach. Now follow them, to find that you are too late."

With a hoarse cry he staggers back against the wall, crying her as if she were indeed some loathsome reptile. Then in an instant he recovers himself. Upright as a dart, he opens the door and points to it sternly.

"Go!" he says, hoarsely, "and Heaven grant I may never see you again."

That he may not do so he turns his head aside; when he looks again she has gone.

With a low cry he covers his face with his hands, and stands motionless for a minute; then he takes his travelling cloak and turns to leave the room. As he does so his eye rests on a light leather case containing rapiers, and, with a sudden helpful light flashing for a moment in his eyes, he takes the case and puts it under his cloak.

Meanwhile, Jeanne has arrived at the inn and taken Verona under her protection. Hal has ridden off across country to explain matters to Vane.

When he has departed Verona goes to bed, while Jeanne, too anxious to sleep, sits, musing, in her room. Suddenly the window on the balcony opens, and Lord Lane steps in.

Knocking, he pours out his love for her and, when she scorns him, he asserts that Lady Lucelle will not hesitate to ruin Jeanne's good name, and that, moreover, Jeanne's husband already loves Lucelle.

Jeanne does not move, does not hear, apparently, for a minute; then she looks at him coldly.

"You are mad indeed," she says; "and if you were not, if all you had said were true, listen to the last words you will ever hear from my lips, Lord Lane. I would rather be the lifelong slave of him you traduce, living in his hourly scorn and contempt, covering beneath his actual cruelty, dying for one word of kindness from him, than breathe the air you breathe. Go!"

He arises—staggered, rather—to his feet, and stands before her, with the face and manner of a man crushed by sudden rage.

"You—you love him!" he says, hoarsely.

"I love him, and I loathe you!" she says. "Go!"

Without another word, he stoops and picks up his hat, and makes for the steps, sliding himself by the rail. Then he goes down slowly, step by step, and, without a backward glance, makes for the wood.

He has almost reached it when he feels a hand upon his shoulder. Mechanically he turns, and sees confronting him the stern face of Vane.

"I have heard all—that has passed between you and Lady Ferndale," says Vane sternly. "Choose your weapon. Let these be as words between us."

"As you will," says Clarence. "And he takes the rapier nearest to him."

Vane takes the other, and they fall into position. Gleaming in the dim light, the swords cross and writhe against each other with a smooch, rustle.

Twice Lord Ferndale is wounded, once in the shoulder and once in the arm. Then by a sudden turn of the wrist, Vane forces the rapier from his opponent's hand. Lane is at his mercy.

For a moment Lord Ferndale hesitates, then he throws his sword from him and buttons his wristbands.

"I spare your life," says Vane, "as you would not have spared my honor."

Clarence trembles and his face works. Then he turns and looks at Vane with the agitation that threatens to master him.

"Vane," he says, "I—I have wronged you. No words can better it or make things even between us; but I will say this, that I am not alone to blame. You have much to answer for. If you have overheard all that has passed—well, I say no more but this—had she been happy, no word, no thought nor wish of mine would have wronged you!"

Vane corks at him, and a spasm of pain passes over his face.

"Heaven forgive us both, as I forgive you; now go."

And, without a word more, Clarence turns and is swallowed up by the darkness.

Vane looked at him, and a spasm of steps have died away, then walks hurriedly to the inn. He goes quietly up the steps to the balcony and stands besides the window.

(To be continued.)

THE Phantom Lover.

(By the Author of "A Bachelor Husband.")

CHAPTER I.

"Very well," she said. "I suppose I may as well."

Micky was infinitely relieved; somehow he had not really thought that she would allow him to accompany her.

They walked along for a few steps (two or three) so some women's eyes twinkled under the priest's arm gave a faint misgiving of protest, and Micky smiled to himself in the darkness.

It was the cat that seemed to give such a real touch of pathos to the whole adventure, he thought, and wondered why. He looked down at her deprecatingly.

"Let me carry it," he suggested.

"Carry it?" she echoed. "What do you mean?—Oh, the cat; no, thank you, he wouldn't like it; he hates strangers."

"Oh!" said Micky. He felt chagrined. "Is it a great pet?" he asked.

"Yes." She hunched her queer burden more closely under her arm. "It isn't really mine," she explained. "But they were so kind to let it in the house that I had to bring it."

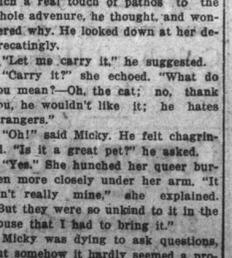
Micky was trying to ask questions, but somehow it hardly seemed a propitious moment. He did not speak again till they reached the little café.

It was a quiet little downstairs place, and just now was almost deserted.

Micky chose a corner table which was partially screened from the rest

MOTHER!

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of the room. As he stood up to take off his coat he looked at the girl interestedly.

She was better than pretty, he decided with a little pleasurable thrill; he could not remember when he had seen a face that appealed to him so strongly in spite of its pathos and the tear stains round her eyes.

And such sweet eyes they were—really grey with dark lashes and faintly pencilled brows. She looked up suddenly, meeting his earnest regard.

"Well!" she said. There was a touch of defiance in her voice; the colour had risen in her white cheeks.

"Well!" said Micky with a friendly smile.

He sat down opposite to her; he was thanking his lucky stars that the Delands' message had reached him before he changed into evening clothes; somehow as he looked at this girl he felt slightly ashamed of his own lacy, luxurious life and the banking account which, like the eruse of oil, never failed. That this girl had no surplus of this world's goods he was certain, though she was neatly dressed and was unmistakably a lady. Her gloves were worn and had been carefully mended, and her coat looked far too thin for such a cold night.

"Well, what are we going to have?" he asked. It was surprising how cheerful he felt. "And what about that wonderful cat of yours? By the way, hasn't it got a name?"

She smiled faintly.

"I call him Charlie," she said.

"Charlie!" Micky's eyes twinkled. "Well, it's original, anyway," he said with a chuckle. "And Charlie must have some milk, I suppose. I say, he's a bit thin, isn't he?" he asked dubiously.

She had taken off the shawl which had been wrapped about it, and the poor animal sat on her lap blinking in the light, a forlorn enough specimen, with a long tail and fierce eyes. The girl stroked its head.

"He's been half starved," she said. "You'd be thin if you hadn't had any more to eat than he's had."

"I'm sure I should," said Micky humbly. He thought guiltily of the waste which he knew went on in his own establishment; it was odd that it had never struck him before that there must be many people in the world, not to mention cats, who would be glad enough of the waste from his table.

"He picked up the menu to hide his discomfort. When the waiter came he ordered the best dinner the restaurant served. He was conscious that the girl was watching him anxiously. When the water had gone, she said, "I can't afford to have a dinner like that."

Micky flushed crimson.

"I thought you were dining with me," he stammered. "I—I hope you will—I shall be only too honoured."

Her grey eyes met his anxiously.

"I've never done a thing like this before," she said in distress. "I don't know what you are thinking of me."

"But . . . well, I suppose I was just desperate. . . ." She broke off biting her lips, then she rushed on again. "I don't suppose you'll ever see me any more, so it doesn't really matter much, but . . ."

"I hope to see you again, many times," said Micky, with an earnestness that surprised himself.

She looked away, and her face hardened.

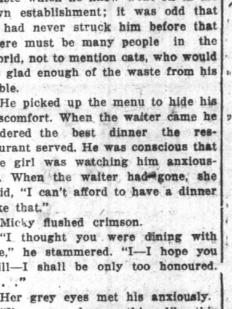
"I suppose men are all the same," she said, after a moment. "However . . ." she shrugged her shoulders with a sort of reckless defiance that made Micky frown. She leaned back in her chair with sudden weariness. "It's a very kind of you," she said disinterestedly.

"It's not kind at all," he hastened to assure her. "I'm much more pleased to be with you than you are to be with me. If it hadn't been for you I should have spent this evening alone—New Year's Eve, too," he added, with a sort of chagrin and a sudden memory of Marie Deland.

(To be continued.)

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Earthquakes Caused by Frogs.

Agas ago, when we knew less about the physical world than we do today, it was much easier to explain the natural phenomena with which we are surrounded.

What our ancient forefathers did not understand, as we interpret this word today, they ascribed to the workings of good or evil spirits. And there the matter rested. It was understood.

In those days the fact that an earthquake had happened was known only to what might be called the innocent bystander, the interested party to the transaction. What we know today as the natural cause of it was not even guessed at. In our day we have nicely adjusted instruments that tell us of an earthquake in Peru. A seismograph in Toronto will tell us on the instant of the occurrence and extent of a quake in Tokio.

And so for these things have a meaning widely different from that given to them in ancient times.

We no longer attribute them as the Mongolians did to the fact that our earth rests on a huge frog and that the quakes occur whenever the frog scratches its head.

So do we, as did some of our forefathers, believe that they are caused by an immense fish in the depths of the sea, when this deep sea dweller dashes its head against the land.

We do not, now, associate these things with punishment or retribution. They are as natural in their causes as the falling rain and the winter's snow.

The scientific explanations we give are manifold and various. On the details of these explanations there is even to this day among scientists a variety of opinion.

Many scientists are agreed that the cause of earthquakes is to be found in the gradual cooling of an originally highly heated globe and that, popularly speaking, to what goes on within this globe must be ascribed the effect which we feel on the outside of it.

Will He Come Back?

Political gossipers tell that the old member for Battersea, Mr. John Burns, will return to political life at the first opportunity. It is two years since he retired, after representing Battersea for twenty-six years, and began to spend most of his time haunting old bookshops in search of bargains.

"Honest John's" newest story is the following:—

"What is a propaganda?" inquired the teacher.

The boy looked at the ceiling, wrinkled his forehead, wrestled with the question a minute or two, and then answered bravely that it was the brother of a proper goose.



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