

such a brilliant affair—in imitation of the marriage of the Princess of Wales.

A mocking laugh broke from Hilda. The idea seemed so absurd to her who had just returned from the old country with some of its aristocratic prejudices.

"It really was," persisted Thérèse, annoyed at her cousin's incredulity. "We Canadians are ambitious, and do things in style when we can afford it. Claribel's trousseau was superb. The bridal dress was imported from Lyons, the veil from Brussels. The wedding presents the bridegroom gave her were magnificent. You know he is immensely rich. Made his fortune by coal-oil—petroleum is the grand name for it—which was found in great abundance on his farm in the western part of Canada. Then there were eight bridesmaids, all richly dressed. The crowd at the cathedral to see the bridal cortège and the ceremony was immense. The wedding breakfast was quite *recherché* and expensive. Altogether it was a splendid affair, I assure you, Hilda."

"And vastly expensive. It would not do to marry a daughter in that style every day," said Hilda, laughing. "It would soon ruin Berkeley and Son. Are such weddings as Claribel's frequent? Is there always such display when a young lady gets married in Canada?" she continued after a brief silence, for her retired life during her residence in the country prevented her knowing much of the customs of the upper or wealthier classes.

"Not such grand ones. Every one has not such aristocratic ideas as Claribel to think of imitating royalty. But there often is great display when it can be afforded, and on such occasions the church is crowded to excess—the throng not particularly select either—fish-women, policemen, paupers, everyone goes to see the pageant and criticize the bridal party."

"And is not this considered desecrating the church?" asked Hilda, gravely.

"How good you have become since your visit to Ireland!" observed Thérèse sarcastically. "What has changed you so, Hilda? You look as if you had suffered much since you were here last year."

"I have suffered," was Hilda's calm reply, but the depths of that suffering she did not care to reveal to the gay and happy Thérèse.

"Oh what about Sir Gervase Montague? When is the wedding to come off?"

"Never!" replied Hilda, in as firm a voice as she could command, for the abruptness of the question was rather startling.

"You have refused him?"

"Why do you suppose so?" asked Hilda, evading a direct reply.

"Because he was so desperately in love with you. It cannot be possible that he did not propose?"

There was no reply to this remark, and Thérèse saw by the expression of her cousin's countenance that the subject was a disagreeable one.

"Sir Gervase is in Quebec. When he returned to Canada he found his regiment there. Grant saw him some weeks since, and he said he never saw a man so altered in so short a time. He was as melancholy and morose as a—Spanish Don. Thérèse added, at a loss for a comparison. "From what Grant said, I think Sir Gervase told him you had refused him."

Still no answer, although Hilda was listening with deep interest to what her young cousin was saying.

"Well, Hilda, if you did, you were a fool! Every one is not offered a title in Canada."

"A husband with a title would be preferable to a millionaire, Thérèse," said Hilda, with an effort to be gay. She did not wish it to be known what anguish it had cost her to reject the hand of Sir Gervase Montague.

"I don't know that," said the young lady thoughtfully. "Rank is not to be despised, but, after all, I think wealth can afford more chances of enjoyment. Nevertheless," she continued gayly, "I have a mind to try and captivate the Baronet. He will be here at the fancy ball. Pauline sent him an invitation."

Hilda started, and a flush of joyful surprise mounted to her brow. She turned away suddenly and walked to the window to hide her emotion.

A graceful-looking girl was seen advancing up the gravelled walk towards the house.

"Here is one of your young friends coming to see you, Thérèse," said Hilda, looking admiringly at the attractive-looking figure approaching.

"Nothing of the kind!" exclaimed Thérèse, disdainfully. "That is Blanche Osburne coming to give me a singing lesson. Don't you observe how plainly she is dressed? How could you make such a mistake, Hilda? My young friends are not in her rank."

"She is very neatly dressed and is very lady-like."

"Is dress your criterion of a lady, Thérèse?" There was sarcasm in Hilda's tones.

"Of course it is! Everybody that is anybody dresses stylishly."

"And many persons that are nobodies in your estimation, do the same. Your criterion will not be considered good in the present age, when an extravagant love of dress pervades all classes."

Thérèse made no reply. She felt the force

of this remark. "Blanche Osburne is a nice girl," she resumed, after a short silence, "and should like her very well for a friend, if she only were in our set."

"Thérèse! do not give yourself such airs!" said Hilda, indignantly. "You forget your own family did not always hold the position in society it does at present."

Hilda's recollections of her own dependent life aroused her sympathy for this pretty young music-teacher.

"It is quite common for people to forget such disagreeable truths," remarked Thérèse, laughing. "It is up-hill work this rising in the world; but when people do get to the top of the ladder they look down with disdain on those below, and never think of giving them a helping hand. Such people must give themselves airs or they will be thought nothing of."

"And this Miss Osburne is, I suppose, as well-born as any of you, and still she is excluded from 'society' because she is poor, though accomplished and refined."

"Such things cannot be helped! You know there must be some line of demarcation between the different classes," observed Thérèse, carelessly.

"And wealth forms that line, I see," said Hilda, with a sarcastic smile.

"Yes; and now that you are rich, you will be admitted within the exclusive circle."

"But you forget I, too, have been a daily governess, and—"

"You need not publish that fact," interrupted Thérèse, somewhat resentfully. "You are now an heiress in right of your mother, who was a Godfrey of Innismoyne."

To be continued.

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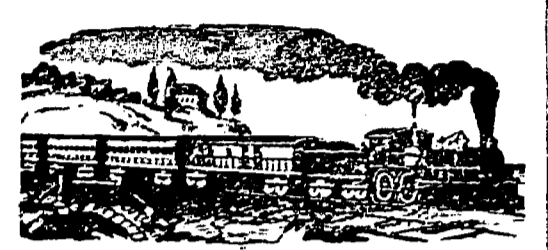

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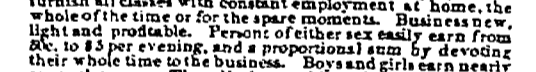
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