

ing a round of such visits. I pretty well gathered how his leave-taking here had terminated."

Lettie started as if she had been stung; she had had her tiffs with Kate Kynaston, no doubt, but she did regard her as her most intimate friend, and had expected her congratulations would be honest and thorough, but there was no mistaking the half-sneer in Mrs. Kynaston's speech, nor could any one fail to notice the cold, half-mocking tone in which the conventional words were spoken. Mrs. Kynaston was a good actress, but for once in her life the blow had been too severe, and for the moment she had involuntarily dropped the mask. She repented almost as soon as the words had passed her lips, but for the minute she could not for the life of her have said otherwise.

"I don't think Mr. Slade had time to pay quite as many calls as you suggest, nor even if he did say good-bye to a few of his friends do I suppose his partings were quite of the character you describe."

"Yes," chimed in Mrs. Connop, sharply, "Lettie is a very lucky girl. Mr. Slade will get his troop almost immediately, and it will all do very nicely at all events we are pleased with it, are we not, Lettie?"

"And with good reason," cried Mrs. Kynaston, who had by this time quite recovered herself. "I congratulate you with all my heart, Lettie; though," she continued, with a comical little grimace, and a shrug of her shoulders, "it is rather hard to hear of one's pet admirers taken from one in this fashion."

"I can't call to mind his ever figuring quite in that way as regards you," replied Miss Devereux.

"Now, don't be touchy, Lettie," said Mrs. Kynaston, laughing. "It's only my way, you know, besides, he is formally declared your property now, though I am afraid you will see but little of him before he sails."

"We are to go down to Portsmouth and see the last of him," said Mrs. Connop. "He was always a great favorite of mine, and there is no fighting going on, so we have no cause to feel anxious about him."

"All very nice," rejoined Mrs. Kynaston, "but I must be going now. Good-bye, Lettie, I am sure I wish you every happiness, and you mustn't begrudge Mr. Slade having come to say good-bye to me. I am an old friend of his, you know. Good-bye Mrs. Connop. Early days for her to be jealous, isn't it?" and with a gay laugh Mrs. Kynaston sailed out of the room.

"And I thought that woman my friend!" exclaimed Lettie. "Did you ever hear anything like her, aunt? Her congratulations were a mere mockery. Jealous! No, I am not that; but Kate was doing, and would do, her very best to make me so, if she had only the opportunity."

"I never did like her," replied Mrs. Connop, "but as for the jealousy, my dear, it was all on her side. She was very much put out at your engagement, depend upon it."

Mrs. Kynaston had been unable to avoid betraying herself, though she would fain have done otherwise. She was too angry with the affianced pair to listen to the announcement of their happiness with patience. The rejection of her precious spikenard is a sore trial for any woman's temper, but the full measure of her wrath is sure to be reserved for that one of her sisters who brought such discomfiture about.

The brief interview soon slips away, and the gallant —th are in all the turmoil that the order for foreign service invariably evolves. The sale of their horses was, as is always the case, the worst ever known. Who cares to buy hunters at the end of the hunting season? As young Sparshot pathily remarked, "They wouldn't have lost much more, and it would have been far more graceful to have shot the lot in the barrack yard, and sent them over to the kennels to feed the hounds they had followed so well." Unsatisfied creditors thronged the barrack yard, excessively anxious for the settlement of their little accounts, or at least some security for them, occasioning much care and anxiety to those gay soldiers who had lived up to the traditional maxim, and "spent half-a-crown out of sixpence a day." It is ever so; and, when great military authorities tell you that the army is ready for active service to the best buckle and gaiter-strap, I fear that the officers' private affairs are rarely taken into consideration. However, all these little difficulties are over at last, the sickly men have been cast out by the doctors, the depot has been formed, and, leaving this latter behind them, the service strength of the regiment was duly trained down to Portsmouth.

That there should be no particular enthusiasm about their embarkation was but natural. They were not going out to take part in a big fight, nor were bands ringing out the spirit-stirring melodies to which such occasions invariably give rise; but for all that there are always plenty of people who flock to see one of our British regiments embark, and start them on their voyage with a ringing cheer.

"Upon arrival at Portsmouth the —th marched to the dockyard, where the *Semiramis* was laying alongside the quay. The gigantic steamship speedily engulfed them between her capacious decks, and then Gilbert had time to look around for those who had come to see him off. He had waved his hand to Lettie and her escort as he marched his troop on board, but, as soon as the men had settled down, he and several of his brother officers rushed ashore to welcome the friends who had come to see them off.

"Ah! Bertie my boy," exclaimed the Major; "glad to see they are sending you out like a gentleman. None of your beastly little tubs, but a slashing big ship. They tell me you sail at daybreak?"

"Yes, that is so," replied Gilbert; "but come on board now, ladies always like looking round a ship, and a sort of nondescript meal will take place in the saloon within an hour."

"Yes," said Miss Devereux, "I should like to do that. Do you know, the other day you quite forgot to tell me how Charlie's affairs were?"

"So I did," replied Gilbert, "but you, at all events, must allow it was excusable."

(To be continued.)

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