



## The Web;

OR,  
TRUE LOVE'S PASSION.

### CHAPTER XXV.

#### The New Poet.

"When I say a change, I don't wish to infer that Sandleigh is unhealthy. I consider it one of the most salubrious places in England," remarked the earl, stiffly. "But change of scene is sometimes of advantage. We could find room for you at Park lane if you care to come."

The color rose to Guildford Berton's haggard face. To be in the same house with Norah, to go about London with her, to have her to himself for some weeks, just when her heart was sore with the supposed desertion of Cyril Burne! What a chance for him!

"Thank you, you are very kind," he said, carefully suppressing the secret joy which possessed him. "I should be glad to run up for a few days, but a little later on. These matters you have mentioned must be seen to, and at once."

"You are always thoughtful and considerate, Guildford. Come up to us, by all means, and as soon as you can."

Norah did not indorse the invitation, but sat, her eyes bent upon her plate. She spoke little during the meal, and rose with a feeling of relief when the butler brought in the port.

Guildford Berton sipped his wine and talked, doing his best to amuse the earl, and it was not until they had got up to join Norah in the drawing-room that he said, quite carelessly:

"Oh, about letters. You will have them forwarded, I suppose?" and he kept his eyes down, as he waited breathlessly for the reply which would mean so much to him.

"Yes, I suppose so," answered the earl. "It is a nuisance, however."

"Let me see," said Guildford Berton; "you don't want to be troubled with business letters about the estate, and circulars, and all that kind of thing. I will tell the post office people to send them to me, and weed them out before I send them to you. I can detect a business letter by the envelope, I think," and he smiled.

"Thank you," responded the earl, with a bow; "that will save me a great deal of trouble. Pray do so."

Guildford Berton's heart gave a bound of relief and satisfaction. All the Court letters would now pass through his hands. Not only the earl's, but Norah's!

"Very well," he said. "I don't think I will come into the drawing-room," he added, stopping short at the library door. "The people in town must be written to at once. Please make my excuses to Lady Norah."

He went into the library and sat down to one of the writing-tables, but as he laid the sheet of note-paper, with its gold-embossed crest, before him and took up a pen, a sudden

suspicion that he was not alone came over him. He glanced over his shoulder cautiously, and with a haggard smile, for he knew that the suspicion was a mere fancy; but he looked round nevertheless, and it seemed to him that a shade, a formless shape, was hovering cloud-like at the end of the room. He got up, and as he approached, the shape appeared to grow less distinct and vanish; but at one moment it had, to his mind, taken the form of Becca, and its face wore the expression of horror which had appeared on hers when she turned and saw him approaching her with the handkerchief tied over his mouth.

He staggered back into the chair, and wiped the drops of sweat from his brow, and so sat for some minutes. At last he drew the chair up to the table and began to write, but for the life of him he could not resist the awful impulse to glance over his shoulder now and again; and once or twice he fancied that the awful shape still hovered in the corner of the room.

"The earl was right," he muttered to himself, with a ghastly smile; "I should be all the better for a change. But I mustn't go yet. I must wait for Cyril Burne's letter."

On the following Tuesday the earl and Norah went to London.

Norah by that time was looking still paler and more worn, and Lady Ferndale had almost insisted upon the earl's procuring medical advice for her.

"Take her to Sir Andrew," she said, almost imperiously, "and if you have not done so by the time I come up"—she was going to London, to stay with friends, in a week from thence—and she is not decidedly better, I shall take her myself."

Norah was surprised to find the house in Park-lane rather large. She had expected to see a tiny, little villa; whereas, though it would have gone comfortably into one of the wings of the Court, it was one of the largest of the smaller Park lane places.

She was also surprised to find that there were so many people still left in London. Lady Ferndale and other ladies had assured her that it would be empty; but it seemed to Norah that a great many families were still in town, and she thought that the park looked still very green and pretty from her bedroom window, which, it turned out, was the best in the house.

She had to thank Mr. Guildford Berton for that. She had also to thank him for the well-appointed brougham which she found at her disposal; for the stock of library books which stood on the drawing-room side table; for the regular supply of flowers which came every morning from the greenhouses.

Parliament was sitting, which accounted for the presence of so many people in London, and Norah, with a great deal of surprise, woke, so to speak, to discover that she was famous.

Lady Ferndale had acted as courier in advance, by writing to all her friends an enthusiastic description of Lady Norah Arrowdale, and Norah was astonished by the number of callers and the invitations which poured in upon her.

But for the first few days she was too unwell to go out. The earl wished to send for Sir Andrew, but Norah persuaded him to "give her a few days," as she put it, and spent those few days of grace seated by her window, looking out at the park, and watching with listless, sorrow-laden eyes the few horsewomen who still

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haunted the row, and the nursemaids with their children, and long-legged guardsmen, who, whatever the season, were always on view.

At the end of the week, and by the time Lady Ferndale had arrived, she had managed to leave her room, and she fancied that she saw a smile of welcome on the earl's face that was almost tender.

Indeed, he rose from his chair and took her hand, and he looked into her face, paler and thinner than would have seemed possible for a few weeks' illness to render it, and, as he kissed her, he said:

"Are you better? You—you look very much thinner. Perhaps, after all, Sir Andrew—"

But Norah smiled, and though it was but a shadowy reflection of the old, free-hearted one, it was still a smile.

"Sir Andrew would pronounce me an impostor, papa, and charge you a double fee," she said. "I am all right, and quite well now."

But Lady Ferndale started when she drove round from Queen's Gate the next day, and stared at the worn face aghast.

"My dear child!" she exclaimed, with tender sympathy.

"Do I look so like a ghost, then?" said Norah, smiling.

"No," almost stammered, her ladyship; "but you certainly are thinner, and more lovely than ever," she added, mentally, "Why, I came to take you to a reception this evening; but I think I'd much better put you to bed."

"That would do me no good, and the reception would," said Norah. "I am quite serious," she went on, taking Lady Ferndale's face in both her hands and turning it away from her; for the keen regard of the loving eyes embarrassed her. "I think I am suffering from an attack of dullness; and if you really will take me, I shall be glad to go."

"Very well, dear," said Lady Ferndale, but still rather undecidedly. "But you must wrap up well. You will, won't you? If you caught cold now—"

"Do you think I should die?" asked Norah, with a curious smile. "Oh, yes, I will wrap up well, as well as Lord Ferndale used to wrap me up when I left Ferndale at night."

The earl was rather doubtful about giving his consent to her going out so soon, but at ten o'clock Lady Ferndale found her dressed and waiting.

"Where are we going?" asked Norah, as the miniature brougham started, and she laughed as she had to repeat the question, which was at first inaudible through the Indian shawl which Lady Ferndale had insisted upon winding round her throat and over her mouth.

"To the Countess of Derrington's," replied Lady Ferndale. "She is the wife of one of the cabinet ministers, and a very important personage."

"So we shall see some of the members of Parliament, I suppose?" said Norah, trying to throw a tone of interest into her voice, but feeling fearfully listless and indifferent.

"Some, I dare say, but there will be all sorts of other people. She is a dear woman, but a little too fond of playing the part of lion-hunter. Of course, it's always interesting to see famous people, but the countess sometimes gets too many of them. One gets confused when so many lions are roaring at the same time, and I'm apt to mix up the great painters with the last new poet or the famous actor, and it's awkward when one has to talk to them."

They made their way up the grand staircase, of which the countess was pardonably proud, and as their names were announced, Lady Ferndale had the gratification of observing that "Lady Norah Arrowdale" made a sensation. She had written to so many people dilating on Norah's loveliness that there was a good deal of curiosity to see "Lady Ferndale's paragon," and the Countess of Derrington, as she gave Norah her hand, smiled with more than her usual sweetness.

"It was very good of you to come, dear," she said to Lady Ferndale, (To be Continued.)

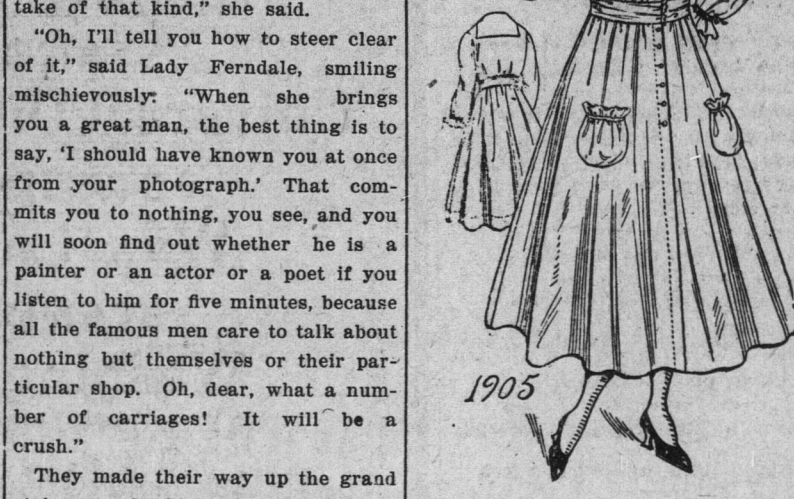
## Telegram Fashion Plates.

The Home Dressmaker should have a Catalogue Scrap Book of our Fashion Plates. These will be found very useful to refer to from time to time.

A CHARMINGLY UP-TO-DATE STYLE.

1905—Dress for Misses and Small Women. Blue taffeta, with collar of black satin, was used to develop this chic creation. The model is especially suited to slender figures. The waist is full beneath the yoke sections which form part of the back. The sleeve is quality finished with a frill at the wrist edge. The full pockets on the fronts may be omitted. This model is also good for gabardine, serge, novelty, plaid and check suitings, for velvet, corduroy and broadcloth. The Pattern is cut in 3 sizes: 16, 18 and 20 years. It requires 5 1/2 yards of 44-inch material for a 16-year size. The Skirt measures about 3 yards at the foot.

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1905—Dress for Misses and Small Women.

A SMART DRESS FOR SCHOOL OR BEST WEAR.

1904—Girls' Dress, with Shield. Plaid suiting in green and brown tones, with trimming of brown serge, was used for this style. The fronts are cut low and finished with a shield that is adjustable. The skirt is gathered at the sides and back and trimmed with deep box plaits that form points over the belt. This design is also good for serge, taffeta, gabardine, voile, corduroy and velvet. The Pattern is cut in 4 sizes: 6, 8, 10 and 12 years. It requires 3 1/2 yards of 44-inch material for an 8-year size.

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