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LITTLE VIXEN

Vixen shivered and followed the girl into the room that she opened on the left side of the hall. She had not perceived, as Lettie did, that there was a key on the outside of the door. It was a large, bare room, dreary and chilly even on this bright May afternoon. There were two large windows, the panes all broken, and the faded, tattered curtains flapping idly in the wind. Lettie thrust her hand through a broken pane and pushed aside the overlapping ivy.

"Oh, look, Vixen! It is a beautiful sight from this window. It overlooks the whole of Sunnyside," she exclaimed, and Vixen, glad enough for a sight of anything but the bare, ghostly room, peered curiously out through the ivy leaves.

Lettie smiled triumphantly. Like a flash she was outside the door, the rusty key went "click!" in the lock, and she turned away, her high-heeled slippers going pitter-patter along the uncarpeted hall.

CHAPTER X.

Vixen was a prisoner in the haunted west wing. She realized it in an instant even when she flew across the room and tugged wildly at the immovable handle of the door. It was one of Lettie's miserable pranks that she was always playing on her. By and by, after she had suffered agonies of dread, she would come and unlock the door and ask her if she was cured of being a little coward. This was what she said to herself, not dreaming that the cruel girl meant her to pass the night here alone.

A great awe and terror fell upon her at finding herself deserted and locked in at the mercy of the Cedarhurst ghost. An impulse came to her to shriek out aloud, to call for help and succor, but an instinct of pride made her sternly repress it.

"They would be angry, those proud, rich people, to find me here where I have no business. They would perhaps turn my old father out of his place for having such meddlesome daughters, and he would never forgive me. I ought not to have listened to Lettie, but since I did, I must pay the penalty of my rashness and wait until she chooses to release me," she said.

Her frightened gaze fell upon another door at the side of the room and she opened it half fearfully, hoping to find her way out. But it only led her into a suite of dreary rooms, all of whose outer doors were locked. She passed through them until she came to a communicating door that was locked also, then leaving these doors carelessly ajar, she retraced her steps to the first one to await for Lettie's return.

Loathing the bare and ghostly room, she glared at the white face against the broken panes and stared out at the blue sky and the lovely world from which she was temporarily debarred. Never had it seemed so bright, so desirable to her eager heart.

Lettie delayed her coming long. The hours waned till sunset. The sunset waned into early twilight. It began to grow dark in the lonely room.

"She will come soon now. She will not leave me here until dark. She knows I should die of fright," Vixen moaned, looking over her shoulder fearfully into the darkening room, while a great lump seemed to rise in her throat and choke her, so that she put up her slender hand in terror.

But the footsteps so eagerly listened for came not. Twilight faded into night. The rising moon sent a long, white lance of silvery light through the broken panes into the darkened room. It looked so ghostly that Vixen flung herself down with chattering teeth upon the floor, and began to mumble over her prayers to keep away the evil spirits, holding her poor, fear-wet face in her trembling hands.

"If I should hear or see anything I should go crazy," she sobbed.

But at that very moment a sound broke the "fearsome" brooding stillness of the room. Little Vixen buried her head still lower in her folded arms, as she crouched on the floor.

"The ghost is coming!" she thought, in an agony of fear, her blood growing cold in her veins.

It was the sound of singing that had startled her—low, weird, unearthly singing, such as might have emanated from ghostly hands. It came from somewhere very near to her, too; but it was not a form in ghostly white—it was nothing but a voice of unearthly sweetness.

Carol, mournful, holy.
Chanted lowly, chanted lowly.
Till her blood was frozen slowly.
And her eyes were darkened wholly.

"The strange singing ended at last. Vixen crept up to the window and peered out at the moonlight world with yearning eyes.

"What if Lettie has forgotten me, and I am left here alone all night!" she sobbed; then a sudden sob of fear

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and surprise burst from her lips. A swift flash of light gleamed along the dark ivy leaves, as if some one had struck a light near to this one from whose window she gazed in despair.

"It is from the window of the ghost room!" she exclaimed. "Oh, Lettie, Lettie, if only you would come!"

But Lettie had gone home hours ago, and coolly told Joseph that Vixen had stopped at Dolly Brown's, and was going to stay all night.

And while Vixen watched with a beating heart the ghostly glimmer of light on the bright green ivy leaves, the ghost that had haunted Cedarhurst for fifteen years was coming slowly toward her through the long suite of rooms, whose doors she had left ajar—a ghostly woman, tall and fragile and white, in loosely flowing, snowy garments, with great, luminous, mournful blue eyes shining out of a face wan to ghastliness, while all around the guiding figure fell lengths of loosened golden hair clothing the majestic figure in a halo of unearthly light.

She made no sound as she moved; but, just as she passed into the ray of moonlight that streamed across Vixen's head, the girl turned and beheld her.

One moment she gazed with dilated eyes and wildly throbbing heart; then a shriek burst from her throat, she threw up her white arms wildly, staggered backward and fell unconscious to the floor.

CHAPTER XI.

The shadowy, ethereal form that Vixen had thought a ghost was no spirit, but a living, breathing woman, quite as much astounded at meeting the girl as the girl had been alarmed at her entrance. A cry of distress and amazement thrilled from her lips as Vixen fell at her feet.

She knelt down and lifted the boyish-looking golden head on her arm, gazing eagerly into the fair, unconscious face.

"How came she here—this fair young girl—in my dreary prison house?" she ejaculated. "Oh, heaven, can it be that they have found my daughter and placed her here to share my gloomy fate? Cruel, cruel wretch! I could have borne imprisonment but for this crowning deed of infamy, but I shall go mad if my child is doomed to die here. Yet it is, it must be she. She has golden hair like mine, a waxen skin, dainty hands, and those closed eyes must be blue like mine. Oh, my darling, wake and speak to me, your poor, poor mother!"

Kisses and tears together fell on Vixen's pale, unconscious face, but the heavy lids did not stir, no breath stirred the pale, parted lips. The strange woman began to grow frightened. She went back through the long suite of rooms to the one from which she had emerged, and brought camphor and eau-de-Cologne with which she bathed the girl's face and hands.

"Ah, she revives!" she exclaimed happily. "Oh, my child, do not be frightened. I am not a ghost, I am a living woman—your unhappy mother."

Little Vixen struggled up to a sitting posture, very glad to know that it was not a bona-fide ghost bending over her, and answered with a look of wonder:

"But lady, my mother is dead!"

"Dead to the world—yes," was the strange reply, as the fragile woman pressed her hands to her heart. "But when, after all I may be mistaken. My dear, how came you here? What is your name?"

Vixen had recovered her spirits on finding that there was no ghost, but a real human being in the haunted wing, and she at once burst into a tempestuous recital of Lettie's heartless joke.

[To be Continued.]

Light and Shade.

A Big Wash—The wash of the sea.

"That trip to Europe did much to broaden your son Henry's views and polish his manner, didn't it?"

"I should say so. Instead of saying 'I'll bet you,' as he used to, he now says 'I'll lay you a wager.'"

He—Who is that ugly old woman over there by the piano?"

She—Oh, that's Mme. Cosmetique, the famous beauty specialist.

"How long will it be before Higbee recovers from his injuries?"

"It will depend on when the railroad company settles."

"Can you depend on what Jones says?"

"If you know Jones."

"But is he truthful?"

"Well, if Ananias had been a contemporary of Jones he'd never have become celebrated."

"I suppose you see some funny things about here?" said the visitor to Niagara.

"Indeed we do," replied the guide. "Why, only yesterday there was a Kentucky colonel here, and as soon as he saw the rapids he wanted to shoot 'em."

AROUND THE LAMP.

Many children, as they grow older, are obliged to learn the rules of politeness as they would a lesson. The consequence is, when they appear in society they are awkward and blundering. On the other hand, children who have been accustomed to politeness at home are at their ease in the most polished circles, and are saved that confusion and bitter self-condemnation which are sure to follow any breach of the rules of etiquette.

A pretty dame
Remains the same,
Though cumbered by a hat that's
horrid.
One's look must go
To what's below,
And not to what's above the forehead.

Beauty is queen—depend upon it—
No matter what its gown or bonnet.

A HINT TO LETTER-WRITERS.

The practice of writing private letters from the first to the third pages of a letter sheet, and then going back to the second page, is a matter of taste, but it will not do to follow that course of procedure in writing legal documents. The New York courts have just disallowed the provisions of a will written in this way. The testator wrote the will on three sides of a folded paper, commencing on the first page and coming to the third page, at the top of which was written "second page," and completing and signing the instrument on a page marked "third page." which, in fact, was the second page of the sheet. The court held that the will was not signed at the physical end, as required by the statute. The law does not contemplate going backward in order to get forward, and the will was refused probate. The New York court's appeals sustains the decision throwing out this form of will.—Boston Herald.

SHE SECURED HER Hired HELP.

"We ministers have many strange experiences in performing the marriage ceremony," said Rev. W. F. Sheridan, of Pontiac, Mich. "One of the most curious in my experience occurred not long ago. A large and heavy woman, accompanied by a comparatively small and meek-looking man, had come in and asked to be married. Everything was regular, and the ceremony was performed. After it was over the bride explained her position."

"You see, Mr. Sheridan," she said, "farm hands are mighty hard to get in this part of the country, and they are even hard to keep. You get a good hired man and get him well broke in to the work around the farm, and the first thing you know he quits the job and goes off to town or somewhere else. Last spring I had a first-class hand, about as good as any expert to get, but just when the season got right busy he up and quit me."

"I just made up my mind that I wasn't going to be left in the same fix this summer, so here we are."

The bridegroom in the case simply stood and smiled meekly. He had nothing at all to say.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

PERSONAL INFLUENCE.

What is the secret of personal influence? Who can tell? In a voice at times; in manner frequently; in the assurance of infallibility; in sympathy and in directness; in opposition and in a shifting which is quite opposed to directness in broad-outlined acceptance of your views with a fine shading of "issent which shows you to be quite right in vague essentials, but somehow all wrong in individual points; in smiles that attract confidence and in silence that gives assent; in the power of inspiring impressions without committing oneself to a positive statement, and in the impetus which lies in a thundering assertion, with all its dispute or disprove—all or any of these things lies that subtle gift of power which we call the influence of a man, and in many of them we can find much to lay hold of.

RECIPE FOR COLD CREAM.

The life of the skin is the oil which nature stores up under it and sends to the surface as required. As we grow older the supply gets less; thus the skin shrivels and the muscles relax, and if we wish to retain our freshness a little assistance should be given the skin with the proper oils. The following is good: Get one pound of fat mutton and melt it down slowly in an enameled saucepan. When thoroughly melted down, pour it through a hair sieve, and into it as much glycerine as there is fat, add a few drops of perfume and keep stirring gently until it begins to thicken, when it should be put into little jars or wide-necked bottles.

Rub the face every night with this pressing appearing, and rub it off in the morning. The above is said to be the secret of Mme. Patti's good complexion.

FRILLS OF FASHION.

One revival of fashion is the white tulle bow worn at the back of the neck of light silk theater waists. The bandanna ties worn a few months ago are supplanted by the softer and lighter tones of the Parisian patterns.

Gourmets, which resemble a bunch of daisies blown by the wind, are one of the fashionable hat trimmings.

Lace boleros, with black velvet ribbon run through them, are a useful as well as effective addition to the bodice needing a fresh touch.

New spotted silk muslins in all black and mixed with accordion-plated black chiffon form lovely mourning evening gowns.

Evening gowns may certainly be elaborate, with that curious display of blouses and chiffons are again to the fore. When worn without a coat these look best with a high, swathed hand or broad ribbon twisted deftly round the waist.

Since the tailor gown has become an accepted feature of the feminine wardrobe, the vest is an important item for fashionable consideration. This year especially open-fronted coats will be very fashionable, and women who desire to vary their coat costumes are ordering two or three sleeveless waistcoats.

Touques are the prevailing style of hat, perhaps, but there are hats with fluted brims, hats with bell crowns, and hats with almost no crowns at all. Polka dots of straw on black and malines formed into a toque are

very effective. Straw applied to net and lace applique on straw are especially pretty features of the new millinery.

Nearly every gown has a narrow belt made of stitched satin or taffeta drawn and fastened invisibly in front in the effort to secure the Parisian girle effect, which makes the waist short and the line over the bust to the waist unnaturally long. It is these details in dress that now distinguish the smart from the dowdy woman.

Renaissance lace braid is used as a trimming for silk waists, sewed on in a straight line between groups of tucks and for wash dresses in a trellis design.

Tulle silk Eton coats in either black or white are a very distinctive feature of fashion this season. A similar coat in black tulle put in an appearance more than a year ago, but was then a novelty, of course, while now it is a very evident mode. These little coats are tucked all over, or trimmed in various ways with stitched bands, and completed with an embroidered batiste collar and revers. They will be very much worn later on, with the thin gowns whenever an outside wrap is needed, and they are considered especially well with the pique skirts and silk blouses.

STRAW BRAID TRIMMINGS.

The evolution of straw from the stiff, unyielding beads to the soft, pliable, thin straw varieties has wrought a pretty change in millinery, and besides this the old-fashioned lace straws are revived again and twisted like silk into the softest, lightest toques. Some of the prettiest straws, aside from the yellow tints, are woven in some light color checked under the brim, with a bunch of flowers of the same tint at the back. Colored satin straws in light green, pink and blue and the tawny tone called khaki are very much in evidence. A hat of the last-mentioned color in crinoline straw is a three-cornered shape formed of tucks of straw alternated with tucks of tulle of the same color and trimmed with three rosettes of tulle, one of black, one of white and another of the khaki color. A wired bow of black velvet ribbon is a very effective trimming for the light-colored toques, and especially stylish on a draped toque of cream lace, one of the new adaptations in millinery.

AN EXPENSIVE PAD.

A well-known leader of fashion is making a quaint little collection of dresses in the country, and one of the frocks she wears herself. When the dressmaker sends home a new garment, she duplicates it by a tiny model in a doll. The doll is made perfect, even down to the real face and solid silver or gold buttons and diamond studs, and the doll is then ranged in a glass case in their owner's dressing room, with the date of their creation underneath.

FRUIT TOAST.

Heat a pint of stewed and sweetened strawberries and pour over five slices of crisp whole wheat toast which has been buttered. Serve at once.

STRAWBERRY ICE CREAM.

Take one pound of fresh strawberries, carefully picked, and with a wooden spoon rub them through a half sieve, about half a pound of powdered sugar, and the juice of one lemon; color with a few drops of prepared cochineal; cream, one pint. When the sugar is dissolved, ascertain that the sweetness is correct; then freeze. This will make a quart. When fresh strawberries are not in season, take strawberries in the place of the lemons, cream, to one quart. Color, strain and freeze.

BANANA CAKE.

Cream one-third of a cupful of butter with one of sugar; add two well-beaten eggs, half a cupful of milk and one cupful of all-purpose flour. When baked put on the top four bananas, peeled and cut in halves lengthwise; cover with cream filling, brown delicately; serve with hot jelly sauce.

RHUBARB PIE.

Take off the thin skin, cut the stalks in small pieces, add a little flour, place it in the pie. When the paste is done, remove the top crust, and add sugar and butter, mixing it thoroughly with the rhubarb. Put the top crust on and serve warm. A little nutmeg grated over the top of the fruit before putting on the crust, if it is relished.

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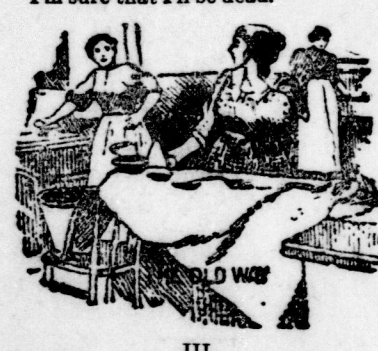
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