

bellskirt." Mr. Lindsay stroked his brown beard and laughed like a boy. Time turned back, and he felt twenty again, taking up so easily the tone of light bantering which had long ago been put aside as inconsistent with the dignity of the leather business. The lady in blue fell equally under the spell. She dropped her eyes and pouted, in spite of her two and thirty summers.

"Yes, I suppose I ought to be dreading the 'coming of the crows-feet and the backward turn of the beaux-feet.' But really I am often taken for a bud and I own up to twenty-five. It hardly seems a twelvemonth since you were introduced to me at Janet Morgan's party.

"I remember. What a puny little thing you were, with those long yellow braids of hair and a scared look at the mere mention of such childish joys as post office and Copenhagen! And how I groaned in spirit when Morgan dragged me up and ordered me to take you out to supper!"

Miss Duncan clapped her hands softly at the recollection. "Yes, and you were so tall and scornful that I trembled when I put my new white kid glove upon your coat sleeve. You seized my hand and pulled it through your arm. 'For Heaven's sake' you snarled, 'take a fellow's arm like a christian, can't you?' I was your galley-slave from that moment. Strange, isn't it, how women always adore the fortiter in re?"

"What has become of the pine grove, where we read Dickens and I taught you Greek—the blind leading the blind? In the spring our fancy lightly turned to sentimental things. Peggy, have you forgotten my asking you to elope?"

"Because you thought papa would never consent to bestow my hand upon a man who only had an allowance of fifty cents a week and had not been through quadratic equations? Oh, yes! 'Where shall we go?' I asked you, and you said in a grand way that took away my breath, 'O, to Venice or Chicago!'"

And they laughed so joyously over their memories, did these two middle-aged young people, that their fellow-passengers smiled involuntarily too, and wondered what the fun could be about. Certainly there was nothing in the car to afford amusement. It was filled with uninteresting people, and the air-tight stove sent out a heat that wavered in the atmosphere, deadening the senses. Outside, the landscape of a New England winter slipped monotonously past, bare, unsuggestive, hopeless. Not strange that envious glances were cast upon the merry companions, too far back in the past to be affected by the present.

"It was after that, wasn't it, that I had the measles? Mother was in Florida and I wanted you to come and see me when I was convalescing, but you hardened your heart like Pharaoh's and refused, on the score of propriety, to budge an inch. That was my first experience of woman's callousness, and it left its scar upon me for many a day."

"Ah!" sighed Peggy; "I have your note now. It was so naive for a boy of seventeen that I never had vandalism enough to destroy it. 'Dear Peggy,' it ran, 'after reading your letter I was mad clear through, and I said to myself, I'll write a letter that will make the old girl squirm. But now, having cooled off a little, my mind has changed, and I shall let you off easy. I suppose you thought it would be a breach of etiquette to come and see me. Very well! I disagree with you. I'll tell you why; I wrote asking you, and setting the day and even the hour. If it had been a party, or anything of that kind, you would have come. But as it was nothing of the sort, only a young lady spending the afternoon with a sick friend (presuming myself to be such) you say, 'I cannot, don't you see that I cannot?' to which I reply, 'No, I don't see any such thing!' Oh, Tom! You had the making of a litterateur in those days. You brought up my grammar in the way it should go. What have you done with all your bookish tastes?"

"Very little," answered Lindsay, gravely, conscious of a sudden regret. "Very little, indeed. I may as well confess at once that I am not the author of 'The Bread Winner' nor of 'Beautiful Snow.' I have never even trodden the paths of glory that lead to writing advertisements for those who ride in horse cars to read. Mine has been the daily grind of toil, and, Peggy, may I, for the sake of auld lang syne, whisper to you a conviction which has been growing upon me with dreadful force of late? If Shakespeare had gone into the leather business we should never have heard a word about Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, or the Moor of Venice. There is something cramping about it."

"In other words, your mind is hide-bound. But now I want to hear a little autobiography. On the Majestic last spring there was a girl, who had not a single attraction—no, not one! Yet, every man on the ship was devoted to her. One day we got hold of one of the victims and asked him what was the first thing she said to him. After a little reflection, he answered: 'Tell me all about yourself!' and the secret was out. Men always like to talk about themselves. So please begin. Chap. 13. After the Lady Margaret dropped out of his life—"

"Thomas, Earl of Lindsay, left college, maddened by too much learning, and invited to do so by the faculty. He went into business, backed up willingly by a low-spirited parent, got on well, made money, stuck to the office like a Trojan, made more money, and at thirty-five as you behold him—a prosperous, highly respected member of society, whose noble brow is unscamed by care."

(To be continued.)

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