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LOVE AND A TITLE

At the long list of names, in place of the simple Vernon Vane, every one looked up, excepting Jeanne, and there was a slight rustle of surprise; but Vane's face was calm and composed, and Jeanne's turn came to make the usual assertion. Only for a moment did she pause as he held out his hand, and in that moment she looked up at him, a look which he remembered ever afterward, a glance at once appealing and confiding; a glance which he could not understand then, but which, in the momentous after-time, he credited with a mistaken significance.

She did not look up again, not even when, with the usual blundering, he slipped the wedding ring on the wrong finger.

It was a trifling mistake, and not an uncommon one, but Mrs. Lambton shuddered, and Maud and Georgina sobbed.

With a little blush Jeanne held out her hand and Vane transferred the ring to the right finger.

The little accident took only a moment or so in the transaction, but it upset Mr. Bell, and the rest of the service was almost inaudible.

Then, with her hand on her husband's arm, Jeanne retraced her steps to the vestry. Vane, as a rule, are large enough for the swinging of a cat, without imminent peril to that domestic animal, and Bell, when he came in, could scarcely make his way to the table for the little crowd of satin and lace.

But when he did, he held out his hand timidly to Jeanne, and grasped hers.

"I—hope you'll be happy, Jeanne," he stammered, and with an amount of daring which astonished him for the remainder of his life, he raised her hand and kissed it.

Jeanne blushed, but answered as Vane, putting his arm around her, drew her toward him, and kissed her.

This, of course, was the signal for the rest of them, and Jeanne's bouquet and lace were considerably crushed.

"It's rather a pity," said Maud, "for the bride," said Hal, in a stage whisper.

Then Bell turned to Vane. "Will you sign the register?" he said.

Vane made his way up to the table and signed, and Jeanne followed. The rest crowded forward also.

"I say, Vane," said Hal, "what a lot of names you've got. Liberal kind of people your godfathers and godmothers must have been."

Vane smiled. "Some of them are purely ornamental," Hal, he said. "Are we ready?"

There was a general move toward the door, Jeanne, on Vernon's arm, leading the way.

of Mrs. Lambton, who sat on the other side of him, and did not notice the fixed attention with which Bell regarded him—an attention so fixed that Hal had almost to shout in asking him for the third time, to pass the champagne.

To Jeanne, the whole scene seemed like the unobtainable episode in a dream, and every now and then she caught herself glancing up at the handsome face beside her, as if to assure herself that her lover, her husband, was there. Every now and then, too, Vane's hand would seek and hold hers for a moment beneath the table; and once, as he bent down, he whispered: "My Jeanne!" and Jeanne's heart leaped gladly.

Never had Vane the once silent and reserved—appeared in such light spirits and buoyant happiness.

"Isn't he quite too charming?" whispered Maud to Bell; "so distinguished-looking too. No one would think he was only an artist, would they?"

At which poor Bell, who had been staring absent at his plate, started and turned pale.

Presently Vane glanced at his watch, and Hal, who had drowned his shyness in champagne, jumped to his feet.

"Bless the boy," murmured Aunt Jane. "He is going to make a speech."

"Only a short one, aunt," said Hal. "I've got to propose the health of the bride, you know," and he nodded toward Jeanne with a flourish on his bright face, and a suspicious moisture in his eyes.

"Here is my love, Jen, and may you be happy."

That's the most sensible speech I ever heard of, said Maud, "said Aunt Jane, admiringly.

Vane got up with a smile on his lips. "Thank you, Hal," he said. "Jeanne shall be happy, if I can make her so."

And as he sat down, he laid his hand on Jeanne's and held it.

"Mr. Bell will have to propose the bride's health," said Hal, clapping his tutor on the back. "Come, sir."

Bell started and looked around, then arose and fidgeted with the tablecloth. He was very pale, and strangely nervous, for as a rule his humility deserted him when he had to open his mouth, and there was a silence which Mr. Lambton broke by requesting all to fill their glasses.

Bell looked around once or twice, then, with a shake of his head, sat down. There was an awkward pause, but Mr. Lambton was equal to the occasion, and, clearing his throat, looked around with a placid countenance.

But Mr. Lambton's speech—a speech which had taken him three whole days to prepare—was doomed to remain unspoken, for as suddenly as he had sat down, Bell arose to his feet again.

"Mr. Vane," he said, "will you step outside with me for a moment?"

Vane, who was saying something to Jeanne in a low voice, looked up with a curious smile.

"What is it, Bell?" he said. "Can't you say it here?"

"If you wish it," replied poor Bell, amidst a complete silence, and taking from his pocket the marriage license, he looked at it with a shaking finger.

A slight shadow of annoyance crossed Vane's face, but was instantly replaced with the grave, composed smile.

"I see," he said. "Well, say on."

Bell turned to Aunt Jane, who sat staring, thinking that either the pie or the champagne had flown to his head.

"Mrs. Dostrell," he said, with agitation, "I—can't let this go any further; I don't think it is fair—with all deference consent to keep this secret—perhaps."

I think it ought to be known."

Aunt Jane turned pale. All eyes were fixed upon the speaker, except Vane's, and his rested upon Jeanne's suddenly pale face with intent and watchful regard.

In the confusion, Bell's "this license" had passed unnoticed, but suddenly he looked over at Vane, and addressing him said:

"My lord, have I your consent?"

There was a quick murmur of astonishment, and Vane inclined his head.

Poor Bell wiped his forehead.

"It is very painful to me to have to make this—this statement," he said, "and I cannot understand why it should have been considered necessary to maintain such secrecy. Perhaps—perhaps."

He broke off, with a sudden hope, as he turned from one to the other, "this license has told you all?"

"His lordship—what lordship?" demanded Mr. Lambton, staring from one to the other. "Who the—who do you mean, sir?"

"I allude to Vane, there," said Bell, catching up the license, in despair. "You may read it all for yourselves, and learn as I did, the real identity of—of this gentleman."

"Do you mean Vane?" Mr. Bell asked Hal, boldly. "What do you mean? We all know who you are. Who do you think he is?"

Bell laid his hand on the boy's shoulder, but looked at Jeanne anxiously.

"In this license, the person whom you whom all of us have known as Vernon Vane, the artist, is called the Marquis of Ferndale," he said, gravely.

CHAPTER XVII.

There was an intense silence. Aunt Jane stared, speechless. Uncle John arose and held on by the table, but Mr. Lambton's surprise was more marked.

He turned perfectly pale, and as he sat down, a phenomenon occurred.

There was a faint, low, murmuring sound, as if a breeze were stirring the leaves of a forest.

It was a sound which had never before been heard in the room, and it was a sound which seemed to come from the heart of the earth.

It was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the wind, and it was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the sea.

It was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the storm, and it was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the lightning.

It was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the thunder, and it was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the earthquake.

It was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the fire, and it was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the flood.

It was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the sun, and it was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the moon.

It was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the stars, and it was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the planets.

It was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the universe, and it was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the world.

It was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the future, and it was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the past.

It was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the present, and it was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the future.

It was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the world, and it was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the universe.

It was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the future, and it was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the past.

It was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the present, and it was a sound which seemed to be the voice of the future.

The Disturbing Vision.

The carriage drew up at the door of the little school house and she alighted with a swish of silken skirts and a waiting odor of some subtle perfume, a vision to note and to remember.

"You can go down and leave this note at the rectory, Fluke," she observed to the smart young groom in attendance. "And be here to take me up in about half an hour." Then she opened the school door without knocking and walked in. Had she not the right to do so? Had not her father built and endowed the building? Did it not depend for its very existence upon his bounty? She did not think of this, however, as she swept across the threshold and presented herself, radiant vision, to the delighted gaze of the scholars. For they all loved her, and her entrance was a welcome break on a sultry July afternoon when lessons had become a drag.

Behind the desk the little school mistress smiled, too, for she was tired, and she often called her friends, albeit the gulf between them was marked enough. As they stood side by side the difference between them seemed very wide. The little school mistress was no longer young, a few gray threads were visible at her temples, and a meagre, unsatisfying life, albeit, lived patiently and always bravely, had left some few lines on her broad, thoughtful brow.

"Let them out, Rhoda," said the vision imperiously. "I want to talk to you."

A wave of the hand was sufficient, and they trooped delightedly into the playground, while Cecily with her parasol and the windows open to their widest limits.

"Ugh, how close and stuffy it is! And quite true you had your holiday, Rhoda. You are as pale as a ghost."

"The heat is tiring," she explained, in her quiet, pleasant voice. It reacts on the children. The mental condition is always dependent on the physical one."

"Is it? I hardly think so. Take me, for instance, I am perfectly well. I have ridden twenty miles on the moors this morning, and I am never tired, but at the present moment I am pretty miserable, I can tell you."

"What is wrong, dear?"

"Everything." She leaned her arms on the desk, and looked across into the face of the little school mistress.

"Did you know that Mr. Clephane was dining with us last night?"

The school mistress shook her head. "I have not seen him, and even if I had, he need not have mentioned it."

"Papa likes him so much, he will keep on asking him, Rhoda; he says he is a scholar and a gentleman and that he had no idea a Dissenter could be so—so cultivated."

The lip of the little school mistress faintly curled, but the young beauty, absorbed by her own thought, did not notice it.

"He will keep on asking him, Rhoda, then what will become of me?"

"I don't understand you, dear?"

"Oh, yes, you do; you understand quite well; only you wish to make me speak out quite plainly. I have never met anyone like him. Why has Heaven been so cruel? He might just as easily have been rector of Donnington, or Canon at Norwich, instead of pastor, as they call it, of that horrible tin Bethel in Rockbridge. I never pass it without a shudder."

"I don't think Mr. Clephane is ashamed of his work, or his tin Bethel," observed the little schoolmistress, a trifle dryly.

"He isn't," he glories in it, positively glories in it, and speaks about all these impossible factory people as if they were his dearest friends. It is because he is so different from every other man that I want to know him better, Rhoda, and yet—yet it is not wise."

"We have met quite a lot of times lately," she went on, presently. "And, somehow, I can't help thinking it is his will and wish. He is strong, Rhoda, when he looks at me I feel like clay in the hand of the potter. This morning when I was riding I met him on the High Moor, and we talked for one long hour."

"What of?" asked the little schoolmistress, dully.

whom they had spoken in the morning entered the little room, and seemed to dwarf its contents. For he had a noble presence, a fine head, and a general air of power and strength. Outwardly, at least, he seemed an ideal leader of men. But he wore a dejected air and she knew that it was sympathy he sought.

"I have come to you, Rhoda, because you are the only friend, the only true friend, I have in Rockbridge, or Donnington. Can you spare me just a moment?"

"Just as many as you like," she answered simply.

"Well, I am going to leave Rockbridge."

"But you are doing a great work there," she said timidly. "The people are becoming a monument to your courage and guiding."

"You think there is so much difference?" he said, with a kind of wistfulness. "Of late I have been depressed, thinking the work was standing still, and small wonder if I did, seeing the worker is no longer single-minded. I have fallen away from grace, Rhoda. To-night I am nothing less than a selfish, miserable man, sighing ceaselessly for the fleshpots of Egypt. I am beginning to hate my work, and the folk who have been so good to me. It is time that I went."

"It is only a passing phase, friend," she said. "Joy's in your work will return. Try and live it down."

"He shook his head. "It is not possible, for the cause cannot be removed. I will tell you, I came to tell you, I have learned to care too much for Miss Donnington. You remember how pleased we were when I was first asked to the Hall, and how I rejoiced I was to be able to interest the Squire in my work. He has been one of my best friends, and has made me welcome of his house. I have availed myself to the full, with the usual result. I think of her, and nothing but her. She comes between me and my work, even my very soul. It is time for me to go, Rhoda, before the cause suffers, and I have asked to be relieved."

"Where will you go?"

"Back to Manchester, to the sins and sorrows of the city, where my own will sink into insignificance. I have obtained permission, and will go back next month."

"It seems a pity, but perhaps you are right."

"I am right. I will throw myself heart and soul into the work there, and peace will come. I shall never marry, I know now, for I shall be able to devote my whole life to the work. You will wish me God-speed, friend, and sometimes write to cheer me, as you have cheered me here?" God, where would I have been without you?"

"I will write," she answered steadily, and even with a slight quiver, which for the moment wounded him. "Perhaps I, too, may leave Donnington. I have been thinking lately of joining my sister in South Africa. I would get something to do there, and it seems needless for us to be parted by the whole breadth of the sea when we are the only two left."

He sat a little longer discussing both their prospects, and then took his leave, promising that they should meet again, and thanking her for the sisterly sympathy and interest in his case. Her smile, though brave, was wan, as she bade him good-bye. When she had closed and locked the door of her dwelling, the solitary woman fell upon her knees—Everly Orchard, in British Weekly.

Power of Prayer.

The Rev. P. G. Elsom, who conducted a revival at the Baptist Church here several years ago, and who is well known to Reidsville people, is a firm believer in prayers, and those who agree with him will not be surprised to hear of this incident:

Mr. Elsom went to the ticket office at Danville and called for a ticket to the Junction. The agent politely informed him that all but the best train had departed and that it would be impossible for that train to stop there. Mr. Elsom told him that he was assisting in a revival and had an appointment at 3 o'clock that afternoon at Franklin Junction. His persuasive powers were of no avail to the ticket agent, but when No. 36 pulled out of Danville it contained the Rev. Mr. Elsom as a passenger, who, when the train was leaving the city, fell upon his knees and began to pray. As soon as he completed his prayer he arose and peeped out of the window to find that the train had come to a standstill just opposite the place at which he had an appointment. It was learned that the train was stopped on account of a hot box—Reidsville correspondence Charlotte Observer.

They Are Moderate.

Americans spent \$1,700,000,000 for drinks last year, but had each man spent for liquor as much in proportion as did the English the sum would have been increased to \$1,810,000,000, as the expenditure per capita is much greater in England than in either Germany or America, though the cost is less.

Germany spent but \$1,050,000,000 last year for drink, but had each spent as much as the average Englishman \$600,000,000 more would have been spent. Both Germans and Englishmen spend more per capita for drinks than the Americans, and in the list of nations the United States stands well down toward sobriety.

No More "Don't Worry" Clubs.

The "Don't Worry" Clubs which were once so popular have never heard of any days. Instead of trying to make themselves believe there is nothing to fret about people now resort to sane methods to remove the source of worry. They cast the burden of their little cares upon the "Want Ad" columns of a big daily newspaper. These columns constitute a clearing house for trouble, whether those who want to dispose of services, accommodations or commodities and those who want to procure the same resort to a mutually satisfactory adjustment of their burdens. Ever try a "Time" Want Ad as a remedy for worry.

Wags—Hey, a native-born American. Why do you say he speaks broken English? Wags—Oh, just because a shrewdly she made no mistake.

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