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Love in the Abbey
OR,
Lady Ethel's Rival

CHAPTER X.
A GREAT RIDE.

In the valley and dividing her from the abbey is, of course, the river. The Lombe is a stream well known of anglers, and not unpopular to artists. It is usually as placid and mild as the stream could well be, but this morning there is a good water running, and Kitty knows that the mill—the Rose-dale mill, which grinds up more money than corn, but which is a favorite fad of the earl's—is undergoing the periodical repairs. There was never a private mill yet but wanted repairing every fortnight. I suppose it gives the miller and his men a holiday, and is good for the carpenter, and so no one need complain. Certainly the earl does not; the mill is a pretty addition to the landscape, and affords him a little amusement every now and then. He is satisfied—almost as satisfied as the miller and his men who grind flour just when it pleases them, but draw their wages regularly every Saturday.

There is a bridge from the park, which stands on one side of the Lombe to the abbey grounds, which runs for some distance on the other, and Kitty is making for this bridge, and trying to guess how far Trap and Reginald have got by this time, when she hears the pad, pad, of a horse's hoofs on the turf following her, and turning her head sees Lord Sterne. One glance she gives to him and the next to his horse with eager curiosity—and her face falls. After all, her plotting and planning has failed. Lord Sterne has not been obliged to make shift with some timid hack—he was almost—Kitty decided he is not quite so good—as good a horse as Bat himself.

For a moment mortified and upset by this overthrow of her schemes, Kitty is for putting Bat to it and getting away; but the fatal moment of indecision is gone. Lord Sterne tries to come within half, and in another moment he is by her side with his hat in his hand, and a smile of courteous greeting.

Lord Sterne's smile, everybody agrees, is rare, and perhaps in consequence thereof, irresistible; but Kitty cannot forget his cavalier treatment of the previous evening, and gives him the barest nod of recognition—it cannot be called welcome.

"My good star is in the ascendant," he says; "I had expected a solitary ride."

And as he speaks he looks at her with critical and approving eyes. And there is good ground for approval; Kitty is at her best in the saddle. It is not only that her habit fits her—a rarer thing than one would imagine—it is not only that every graceful curve of her maidenly graceful figure is shown off and displayed to the best advantage—but it is also that Kitty is at her best in every way; she is at home, at ease. He looks at the face, so fresh in its youthful loveliness, so brilliantly beautiful with the peach-like bloom on the cheek, the rich red of the half-parted lips, and the deep, translucent light of the pure, girlish eyes. He looks, and turns his own eyes aside with a mute tribute of artistic admiration, as he makes his courtly salutation. But his courtliness is no passport to Kitty's favor.

"Why aren't you with the others?" she asks curiously.

He looks at her with a smile half

amused, half—well, annoyed is not the word for it exactly.

"Early rising, Miss Trevelyan, I regret to say, was not one of the valuable principles and habits which my parents and guardians trained me to. When the rest were booted and saddled, I was discussing deviled kidneys; hence my solitary ride—a just retribution changed by a merciful chance to a remarkable piece of good fortune!"

Kitty looks straight before her with elaborate indifference, then she looks sideways at the horse, and, utterly unable to hold her tongue, says abruptly:

"Where did you get that horse?" He looks down at the horse and then at her, with a puzzled but amused smile.

"Where did I—Miss Trevelyan, numerous though my crimes are, I may plead guiltless to a charge of horse stealing! I bought him, just two years ago."

"Oh!" says Kitty, nodding, "he's your own. I thought I did not know him. He wasn't in the long stable?"

"No," says Lord Sterne, with a little air of meditation that rapidly clears—"no; he was in the side, in a loose box. Ah! that's a good horse you are on. Where did you—"

Kitty turns her eyes upon him, and sees that he has discovered her mischievous object.

"It is a good horse," she says, with a flush; "it's the best in the stable."

"And very properly reserved for the best rider," he says, with an arch glance.

"It wasn't reserved," says Kitty defiantly; "I took him. Why shouldn't I?"

"Why, indeed!" he echoes. "Does he jump?"

"Does—he—jump!" retorts Kitty, frowning up, as he intended that she should.

"Yes," he says slowly, pretending to examine Bat's forelegs critically and disapprovingly.

"Why—jump!" says Kitty, with flashing eyes. "He'd jump over the moon! Now I might have asked the question of that!" and she points the handle of her whip with studied contempt toward the capital hunter beneath him.

"Oh, Peter can take anything—"

"Except water," says Kitty, with an air of confidence.

"I don't think he draws the line even at water," says Lord Sterne calmly.

"He can't jump that!" exclaims Kit-

It has a new and distinctive flavour, quite different from any other sauce.

pointing to the swiftly running Lombe.

Her face—her whole attitude—the gesture with the tasty, but woman-like whip, is a challenge, and Lord Sterne knows that it is.

He looks at the stream with an air of calm meditation.

"Indeed yes—your horse has hardly sprung enough, I should fancy—"

"Watch Bat," retorts Kitty, pulling that intelligent quadruped almost on to his haunches. "He has jumped it fifty—a hundred times; he will clear it now!"

Lord Sterne's face changes suddenly.

"Yes," he says, with a smile. "I can believe that, but do not show me—I mean, is it worth while?—the stream is wonderfully fast this morning—"

"And your horse can't swim, I suppose," says Kitty demurely.

Lord Sterne laughs his rare laugh. "Have you made up your mind to take it?" he says, looking at her with the smile that so irritates her—the smile of a man of the world—amused and inclined to humor a spoiled child.

"I am afraid you have made up your mind not to," she said; "I knew that he couldn't take it."

"I'll jump it," says Lord Sterne, "if you'll promise to remain here quietly until I take it back again."

"I won't promise anything," says Kitty. "Besides, I am going on the abbey road now, and Bat wants a fly. Bat, dear," she says, pinching the hunter's silky ear, "we'll show Lord Sterne's horse how to clear the swell and, taking a semicircle, she puts the eager Bat at the water, and lands.

like a bird, all flushed and defiant, on the other side.

Once she is over, Lord Sterne's manner and mood changes. She has not known it, but all his reluctance and hesitation have been for her.

With a careless touch of the hand, he, too, in his turn, gets his horse into the stride, and rises him at the swiftly running stream.

But Kitty and Bat know every inch of the Lombe, and Lord Sterne and his steed do not. The knowledge makes, and has landed on solid ground; Lord Sterne takes it a score of yards lower down the stream, brings his hunter on the soft and treacherous platform of a shelving bank.

There is one moment of struggling hesitation, then to Kitty's supreme delight, horse and rider roll back into the water, and my Lord Sterne is in for a ducking.

With her revenge before her, Kitty raises her voice and laugh a low, rippling laugh—for how many years after will she remember that laugh?—a low, rippling laugh of satisfaction that suddenly breaks off short, displaced by a quick, sharp spasm of fear.

The horse is up and pawing at the bank; but Lord Sterne, where is he? With a smothered cry, that sounds strangely on the heels of that laugh of triumph, Kitty sees him struggling with one hand against the savage little stream that is rapidly bearing him downward. Like lightning the truth flashes on Kitty's intelligence: the horse has kicked him, and Lord Sterne is battling with one arm against a miserable little stream, that will drown him—aye, with all his marvelous genius and power—will drown him like a rat, unless Providence should stretch out a hand to help him.

CHAPTER XI.
TO THE RESCUE.

MOST girls of Kitty's age and position would, under the circumstances, have either run away and screamed, or screamed without running away.

But Kitty is made of different material to the generality of her sex. After that one short cry, when she saw her victim—for so she has suddenly come to regard him—drifting helplessly down the stream which is gradually widening and growing more fierce; after that one cry all her mind is centered on one thought—how to help him.

She can swim like a fish—but then a fish couldn't swim in a riding habit; she can shout and shriek for assistance, but beyond alarming four cows and a pair of heifers in the adjoining field, such an outcry would produce little result. Then as she rapidly revolves ways and means of success in her mind, an idea flashes across her brain.

A little below the spot where she had tempted Lord Sterne to the rash leap, the stream is spanned by the bridge which runs across it at its widest part. It is a rustic edifice, supported mainly by piles running into the water and bound together by some thick beams set crossways. To this bridge my Lord Sterne—England's great statesman, the hope and mainstay of the great Conservative party, the "glass of fashion, and the mold of form," is slowly but surely drifting, notwithstanding the efforts he is making with his one uninjured arm. Should he reach the bridge he will undoubtedly get sucked in by the tremendous current, and—well, he will be greatly missed in the House of Lords.

Kitty darts her eye at the bridge, and at the same moment slashes Bat with her serviceable whip. Bat, quite unused to this style of direction, throws up his head and makes for the bridge as if his own life depended on his reaching it, and in the space of a minute Kitty has pulled him up and slipped to the ground.

Then she tucks her habit round her after her own deft fashion, and jumps without a moment's hesitation into the shallow water at the foot of the bridge. Lord Sterne, coming downstream, sees her, and for a moment is overwhelmed with amazement.

"What are you doing?" he gasps out—"go back! Go back, you will be drowned!"

(To be Continued.)

Tincture of myrrh is a good thing in the water used to rinse after brushing your teeth.

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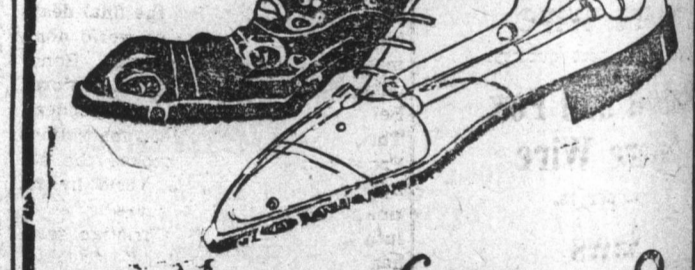
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