

but as far as flesh and blood can go, it is unrivalled. A complexion of roses and snow, proud yet delicate features, rich brown hair shot with gold, large, golden-brown eyes, a faultless mouth and perfect teeth—to these things are added a superbly developed figure, and a dress fashioned to exhibit every charm to the best advantage.

"She is Juno and Venus rolled into one!" thinks Kate. "I had no idea she would be half so magnificent!"

The lady who thus unites in herself two goddesses best, meanwhile crosses the floor, speaking to Randal with a dazzling smile, and, when she approaches Kate, looks at her with the same keen scrutiny and much the same surprise which her brother has already exhibited.

"So this is my cousin!" she says, extending a hand like a lily-leaf when Randal introduces them. "I am very glad to know you, for I have heard so much of you; and I feel that we ought not to be strangers, since we are such near relations—as, of course, Ashton has told you."

"He has told me," replies Kate, "but I hardly understand. However, no doubt you and he are right. I am glad to know you," she adds, feeling bound in courtesy to make an enormously wide departure from truth, for she has never before been less glad to know any one. Nor is this because of the antagonism which one woman is supposed to feel toward another who may have a greater dower of beauty than herself, but is rather the instinct with which sometimes an honest soul, feeling the falsity of another, recoils from it.

"Ashton and yourself have been cultivating cousinly relations, I hope," Miss Vaughn goes on, with a laughing glance toward her brother. "He has been exceedingly anxious to meet you, Kate—may I call you Kate? In fact, but for the inducement of your presence, I am very sure that I should never have persuaded him to come with me to Fairfields."

Kate makes no attempt to hide the incredulity with which this speech inspires her. Anxious that Mr. Vaughn shall not imagine that she credits it, she answers rather more coldly than she would have done had he not been standing by:

"I am sorry that you could have found no better inducement to offer him. We think that Fairfields has a great many attractions."

"It seems to be a charming old place," says Miss Vaughn, glancing round and suavely patronizing the place and all that it contains. "I have heard a great deal of it; but I have heard still more of you. You remember Cyril Blake? I met him at the White Sulphur this past summer, and he fairly raved about you, swearing by all his gods that there was no beauty like the beauty of a gray-eyed brunette."

"I should think you would easily have converted him from that opinion!" says Kate, with a laugh. "Oh, yes, I remember him very well. We have often been fox-hunting together."

"What! Do you go fox-hunting?"

"Whenever I have the opportunity to do so."

"And do you really follow the hounds?"

"I would not advise any timid rider to attempt to follow her," says Randal. "Have you been jumping any fences lately, Kate?"

"Not very lately," replies Kate, in a non-committal tone, blushing the while at the remembrance of her last fence-jumping adventure. Then she turns, and inquires of Mr. Vaughn if he hunts.

"I join a chase now and then," he answers, "but I cannot say that I am very fond of the sport. Without reckless riding it is tame, and with reckless riding dangerous; and, though I am not conscious of valuing my neck very highly, I value it sufficiently not to care to lose it for a fox."

"Perhaps," says Randal, "you are like Lord Chesterfield, who went fox-hunting once, acquitted himself creditably, rode well, and kept up with the hounds, and, when the chase was over, inquired if anybody ever went twice."

Mr. Vaughn smiles, but before he can answer, Mrs. Lawrence enters, and a diversion is created. Other members of the household soon follow. Mr. Lawrence appears, then Sophy and Janet, then Will and Mr. Wilmer, and finally Miss Brooke, looking more like a benevolent queen-dowager than ever, in flowing black silk and point-lace.

When dinner is announced, Mr. Lawrence gives her his arm, Mrs. Lawrence takes that of Mr. Vaughn, Sophy and Wilmer come next, then Janet, Kate, and Will bring up the rear, laughing together like a trio of children.

"Will," whispers Kate, "I never know how fond I am of you till Randal comes home."

"What a pity—solely on that account—that he does not come more often, then!" answers Will. "But I know how fond I am of you all the time. We had a rousing chase to-day! I'll tell you about it, presently."

When they are seated at table, Kate accordingly hears the details of the five-hours' run which the fox gave them. Wilmer, who is on her other side, joins in, and between the two raconteurs she learns all about the important affair.

"He crossed the river three times," says Will, alluding to the fox. "The last time was in water deep enough to swim the horses; so, instead of going, like the rest of us, a quarter of a mile higher to a ford, what does Tarleton do but plunge in and swim his horse over."

"He was with you, then?" says Kate. "I fancied he had not gone, since I met him this afternoon in Arlington."

"He was with us, but he left the party as

soon as the hunt was over, saying that he had to meet a friend in Arlington. Were you that friend?"

"No, indeed!" she answers. "I met him altogether by accident—at the station."

"He is a capital fellow!" says Will, heartily. "I had no idea a man could be so little spoiled by the kind of life he has been leading. I hope he will decide to come and live at Southdale; he would make a first-rate neighbour."

"Excuse me, Mr. Lawrence, but is it Frank Tarleton of whom you are speaking?" Miss Vaughn's silvery voice unexpectedly asks across the table.

"Yes," he replies, "it is Frank Tarleton. He was with us in the hunt to-day."

"Has he been here long? Where is he staying?"

"He has been here two—three weeks, isn't it, Kate? He is staying at his own place—the old family seat—about five miles from here."

"Tarleton is so hopelessly broken to pieces in a pecuniary point of view, that I fancied Southdale would have passed even out of his nominal possession by this time," says Randal, endeavouring to look easy, and failing entirely to achieve that desirable end.

"You forget that he has his race-horses still to fall back upon," says Mr. Vaughn, breaking in carelessly. "I know that Cavalier represents in himself a very good income."

"And how about the out-go?" asks Randal. "Race-horses are about as expensive a luxury as a man can indulge in; and Tarleton is not the person to make money on the turf—or anywhere else."

"He spends it like a prince," says Miss Vaughn, "and that is very much better."

"Only better so long as he has it to spend," says her brother, with a smile. "Afterward, habits of princely expenditure are rather a drawback than otherwise."

"I am glad to say that Tarleton speaks of selling his race-horses, and settling down into a planter at Southdale," observes Mr. Lawrence.

"Impossible!" says Miss Vaughn, with a sharp intonation in her voice which startles every one. She feels this the next moment, and adds, with a somewhat forced laugh, "Such a thing is incredible—at least, I can imagine almost anything sooner than Frank Tarleton transformed into a humdrum planter."

"Must a planter of necessity be humdrum?" asks Wilmer.

"By no means of necessity," answers the lady, gracefully; but you must admit that the life would hardly suit a man like Mr. Tarleton.

"I don't know about its suiting him, but I am very sure he will never try it," says Wilmer, calmly.

No more is said of Tarleton and his affairs, but the conversation leaves an impression like a sting on Kate's mind. It is not so much anything which has been said, as Miss Vaughn's look and tone, which have this effect. How intimately she seemed to know him! How familiarly she spoke of him! How confidently she asserted that he would never be transformed into a "humdrum planter!" Kate's heart—poor heart, that little knows how nearly to a close its days of brightness are drawing!—suffers a pang which she tries to still by recalling Tarleton's words with regard to this perilous beauty.

"He certainly does not like her!" the girl says to herself. Then Janet's dictum occurs to her, "A man never likes a woman who has had the bad taste not to like him," and, looking at the wonderful fairness of the face before her, she asks herself if it is probable, or even possible, for any man to resist its charms?

It is not long before this question is answered in a manner which seems to leave little doubt upon it. The next morning ushers in one of the most beautiful of October days. The air is soft as a dream; the sunshine is a flood of mellow gold; the trees seem to have been transported from Aladdin's garden, as they lift their jewelled branches against a sky so radiant in its sapphire blueness that it attracts the gaze even from the brilliant forests and the far, purple hills.

To Kate, with her ardent temperament and intense vitality, such a day is more exhilarating than a draught of wine. Her pulses bound, her eyes shine; she has difficulty in keeping still for a minute.

"How restless you are, Kate!" Mrs. Lawrence says, at length, and the girl laughs.

"It is because I cannot bear to spend such an entrancing day in-doors," she says. "It seems a shame to waste one hour of it. Does not some one want to go to walk? Will you go, Miss Vaughn?"

"Pray say Florida," says Miss Vaughn, smiling.

"No, thanks—I rarely walk for the mere sake of walking. It is a lovely day, certainly; but one can enjoy it sitting still."

"If you will accept a middle-aged companion, I will go with you, Kate," says Miss Brooke.

"Like yourself, I feel an inclination to be abroad under such a sky and in such an atmosphere as this."

"Will you, indeed! I shall be delighted!" cries Kate. "Shall I tell your maid to bring your bonnet?"

One may regard things very differently even in the short space of five minutes, however; and so it is that the prospect of a walk with Miss Brooke seems less delightful to Kate when, just as they issue from the hall-door, they meet Tarleton in the act of entering it. All three pause, and Tarleton offers his hand with a smile.

"I hope you have entirely recovered from the fatigue of your journey," he says to the elder lady. "I am sorry that you are going out. I

was coming in to do myself the honour of paying my respects to you."

"We are going to walk," she answers; "but I shall not ask you to come with us; first, because Miss Vaughn is in the drawing room, and secondly, because I want this bonny Kate all to myself."

"A very natural desire, and one with which I can cordially sympathize," says Tarleton, looking at the bonny Kate in question with an unmistakably caressing glance.

"There! there!" says Miss Brooke, "I won't have her flattered. Go and bestow your compliments on Florida Vaughn. They will be appreciated by her."

She passes her hand through Kate's arm as she speaks, and, nodding to Tarleton, moves on. They cross the portico, descend the steps, and are taking their way down the avenue, when she adds: "A pleasant young fellow—I don't know a pleasanter. What a pity that such attractive people are generally good for nothing!"

"I don't think Mr. Tarleton is good for nothing," answers Kate, too loyal to keep silence, though she is conscious that her cheeks flush, and that her companion's eyes are on them.

"He will make himself agreeable to men and women—especially women—as long as he lives, if you consider that being good for something," answers Miss Brooke. "Otherwise he is a sad scamp. I have heard a good deal of him in one way or another—I never gossip myself, but people gossip to me—and I fear there is no hope of his coming to any good."

"Uncle thinks he may," says Kate staunchly.

"Your uncle probably does not know—all that is to be known," replies Miss Brooke. "I confess, however," she goes on, "that I could forgive a man sooner for squandering his fortune, than for letting such a woman as Florida Vaughn keep him dangling in her train for months and years."

"You mean Randal?" asks Kate.

"I mean Frank Tarleton," is the reply.

"That girl—who is a most unscrupulous flirt—has been engaged to him; and at present, whether the affair is off or on I cannot say; but, however it may be, I consider it contemptible in a man to allow himself to be made the football of a woman's caprice."

"Yes, I think it is," Kate answers, mechanically.

Poor Kate! Her heart seems to contract; a sudden cloud comes over all the brightness of the day. Yet the instinct of courage and pride keeps the most of this out of her face. Miss Brooke sees that her words have had an effect, but how deep an effect she does not suspect. She meant to give a warning, and now, her purpose being accomplished, she goes on to other things.

"How do you like Ashton Vaughn?" she asks.

"Forgive me if I am a little abrupt. It is very much my way."

"I—I hardly think I like him at all," replies Kate, speaking with an effort, yet conscious that she must exert herself—that she must not betray how her spirits, lately so buoyant, have sunk like lead. "He impresses me as cold, and—though, perhaps, I ought not to say it—false."

"He is both of those things," says Miss Brooke, "though it is not every girl who could discover as much. You must have a very honest nature, my dear, to detect a counterfeit so quickly. By-the-by, do you know Mr. Edward Ashton? I believe he is your uncle."

"Yes, he is my uncle," Kate replies; "but I do not know him—not in the least. Moreover, I shocked Randal by telling Mr. Vaughn, last night, that I do not want to know him."

"I hardly wonder that such a worldly young gentleman as Randal Lawrence was shocked," says Miss Brooke, smiling. "Mr. Ashton is very wealthy—so wealthy that people wonder what he will do with his fortune when the inevitable hour of leaving it comes."

"Is he?" says Kate, indifferently. "I know nothing about it, nor do I care to know anything. See, Miss Brooke, what a glowing belt of autumn colour yonder! But the trees are not at their best yet; they will be even more gorgeous two weeks hence."

Knowing every foot of ground in the woods that cover the hills behind Fairfields, Kate leads her companion on, until she suddenly wakes to a realization of their distance from home, and is stricken by remorse.

"I am sorry that we have come so far," she says. "I fear you will be very tired. If you don't mind a little rough walking, I can take you back by a way which will shorten the distance."

"I don't object to rough walking at all," answers Miss Brooke.

Consequently, they leave the path which they have been following, and enter the still depths of the enchanted world of color which surrounds them. The day is by this time at its zenith, and the sunshine, which pours into the deepest recesses of the forest, kindles into a pomp of splendour the glory of the varied and brilliant tints. In the wide woodlands not a leaf falls, so still is the air—which seems rather an enchanted atmosphere than the ordinary compound of oxygen and hydrogen. It is like lotos-eating to gaze up through the depths of many-colored foliage to the blue sky beyond. The hickories and chestnuts are already burning into vivid gold, the maples are robed in scarlet, the black-gum seems hung with rubies instead of leaves, the sweet-gum wears the motley, the dogwoods are a clear red, but the great oaks still keep their crown of green, which mingles with the solemn

tint of the unchanging pines. The familiar earth is decked in state, as if for the coming of a conqueror, and the great hills are wrapt in stillness so profound that they seem listening for the tread of his footstep.

Presently Kate says: "We are near home now, but if you would like to rest, there is a spring in a glen at the foot of this hill, where we are all fond of stopping. It is such a pretty place, and at such a convenient distance for a walk, that the boys arranged some rustic seats between the trees last summer."

"Let us go, by all means," says Miss Brooke, who begins to feel as if even a rustic seat would be welcome.

So Kate turns and leads the way down a sloping, thickly-wooded hill-side. The descent is neither long nor difficult, but the thick undergrowth prevents their observing anything which is before them until they emerge into an open space, where a large spring, surrounded by mossy stones, bubbles up among a group of fine old trees.

This Miss Brooke sees first. So quick is the glance of the eye, and the mental action which corresponds thereto, that she takes in all the details of the picture—which is as pretty a "bit" of forest landscape as one could desire—before she observes that they are not the first comers on the scene. By the spring, with the flickering sunlight dancing over her face, her rich hair, and her becoming dress, sits Miss Vaughn, with Frank Tarleton by her side.

They are so intent on each other, that they do not perceive the two advancing figures until they are close upon them—just as neither Kate nor Miss Brooke perceived them in time to retreat. The surprise on both sides is altogether unmixed with pleasure.

"Sorry to disturb you," says Miss Brooke, as Tarleton rises abruptly. "We have only come to refresh ourselves with some water. Kate, is there anything out of which to drink?"

"Yes," answers Kate, and she takes from a crevice of the rocks a small gourd, fills, and offers it to her companion. While the latter is drinking, she turns to Miss Vaughn, who quietly keeps her seat.

"So you came to walk, after all!" she says. "I came, after all," that young lady replies. "Mr. Tarleton persuaded me to do so, and I have found it very pleasant."

"The day is beautiful," says Tarleton, in the tone of one who feels it necessary to say something. "Let me fill that for you," he adds, as Kate receives the gourd from Miss Brooke's hand.

"No, thanks—I won't trouble you," she answers, without looking at him. She stoops, fills it again, and drinks; then places it back in its niche, and turns to Miss Brooke.

"Shall we go on?" she asks. "A path leads from here directly to the house."

"Surely, if you have been walking ever since you set out, you ought to be tired enough to think of resting," says Tarleton.

"We are both of us good pedestrians," answers Miss Brooke, taking Kate's arm again, as she took it two hours before in the hall, "and neither of us fond of disturbing what the French call an *égisme d'oeux*. Good-morning to you both."

(To be continued.)

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

WALLACK's new theatre will cost, when completed, about \$250,000.

HAVERLEY's Mastodon Minstrels are at the Academy this week.

NILSSON, Patti, Albani, Valeria, and Gerster will be all together in New York next fall.

The concert of the Montreal Philharmonic Society is fixed for the 2nd of February.

PATTI has been creating a great deal of ill-feeling by the way she talks about her sister artists, especially Nilsson.

The New York *Star*'s critic has been attacking Oscar Wilde, as a side issue in his criticisms of the *Colonel*.

The attempt to introduce full dress at Wallack's has been a decided failure. Even the Gaiety-borough hat holds its own.

MARY ANDERSON has appeared in the part of Galatea in Gilbert's beautiful play of "Pygmalion and Galatea" in New York, and had a great success.

The *Colonel* has had only a very moderate share of success in New York, in spite of Lester Wallack leaving his own theatre to create the part at the Park.

It is said that Mr. John Hollingshead made Mrs. Langtry an offer of one hundred pounds a night for twelve performances at the Opera Comique.

At Mrs. Langtry's *debut* in London they paid \$250 for a box, and \$10 per seat for favourite choice. Our London namesake says: "Mr. Sassoon was in a box with a bouquet so large that it took two men and a boy to hurl it at the feet of the fair and ambitious actress."

The WALKER HOUSE, Toronto.

This popular new hotel is provided with all modern improvements; has 125 bedrooms, commodious parlours, public and private dining-rooms, sample rooms, and passenger elevator.

The dining-rooms will comfortably seat 200 guests, and the bill of fare is acknowledged to be unexcelled, being furnished with all the delicacies of the season.

The location is convenient to the principal railway stations, steamboat wharves, leading wholesale houses and Parliament Buildings. This hotel commands a fine view of Toronto Bay and Lake Ontario, rendering it a pleasant resort for tourists and travellers at all seasons.

Terms for board \$2.00 per day. Special arrangements made with families and parties remaining one week or more.