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Better a Peasant Than a Peer.

CHAPTER XXVII

BARRIERS BETWEEN.

"Faster too early, Hal," says Jeanne, but though she laughs, her lips grow firm, and her face hardens, so to speak, with sudden reserve. "That's all right," says Hal, cheerfully. "And now tell me all about aunt and uncle." "I heard from aunt the day before we started—"

"Then I can't tell you any news," says Hal. "Old Bell hears every week, and sends home also a weekly report in which my ill deeds are plainly and unmercifully set forth. When did you see the Lambtons last?"

"When we were at Ferndale," says Jeanne. "Maud and Georgina send their kindest love to you."

"You've got it wrapped up in one of your boxes, I suppose," says Hal; "you can keep it there. By the way, Jen," he adds, suddenly, "who is that tall fair woman with the golden hair whom you have brought with you?"

Jeanne thinks a moment, quite unnecessarily.

"You must mean Lady Lucelle," she says, carelessly.

"Yes, that's the name. Well, I've got an impression that I've seen her before, and can't think where. Have I met her?"

All the brightness leaves Jeanne's face.

"Yes," she says, "you have."

"I thought so! Where?"

Jeanne fans herself slowly.

"Do you remember a carriage breaking down—"

"George! of course! Now I remember! That's the woman, of course! Oh, I say, Jeanne, do you remember the way she talked to that miserable coachman of hers? I must remind her of our former meeting."

Jeanne looks up with vague alarm.

"I—Hal," she says, gravely, "I don't think Lady Lucelle will care to be reminded—I mean—Hal, don't say anything about it to her or—to any one."

Her voice is so changed, her face so grave and anxious, that Hal stops in his walk and stares at her.

"What's the matter? Why not?" he asks, very reasonably.

Jeanne smiles.

"Because she may not care to be reminded of it, and—because I wish it not a word to any one. You will see that Lady Lucelle will meet you as a perfect stranger."

"But why?" asks Hal, staring.

"What's the mystery?"

"There's no mystery," says Jeanne, with an air of weariness. "It's—it's only a fancy of mine, let us say. At any rate, you'll please me in this matter, Hal?"

Hal makes a mook bow.

"The least wish of the Marchioness of Ferndale is law to her obedient and humble servant, Henry Bertram," he says.

Jeanne puts her arm around his neck.

"Foolish boy! Good boy, too! Mind, not a word to any one. You will see that Lady Lucelle will meet you as a perfect stranger."

"But why should she?" says Hal, puzzled and curious. "I did nothing to be ashamed of that afternoon. I didn't pitch her horses down, did I? Well, I don't care; let it be as you like. Here's some of them coming down. It's Vane—where are you going?" for Jeanne has moved away toward the stairs.

"I have forgotten something," she says.

"Let one of the household servants go for it, then," says Hal. "It'll be a treat for them to do something," and he laughs.

Jeanne hesitates a moment, and comes back, and as Vane slowly descends, a change comes over her face; it grows set and cold, with a reserve so marked that even Hal notices it. Vane has not seen them yet, and Hal, watching him, sees that he, too, is changed.

CHAPTER XXVIII

IN DEEP WATERS.

Hal is not a student of physiognomy, but he is conscious that Vane's face has undergone a change. It is, as handsome as of yore, it is as noble and high-bred looking, his figure is as stalwart, looks even straighter and more commanding in the plain evening dress; it is in the face that the change is observable. He looks, as Hal puts it to himself, as if he were restless and unsatisfied about something, and was trying to hide it beneath a studied calm and serenity.

As he catches sight of them standing there, he smiles, and his face grows brighter, but there is still the air of watchful reserve and forced calm.

Hal looks from one to the other, from Jeanne's lovely face, with its



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new and sudden stillness, to the high-bred gravity of Vane's.

"Well, Hal," says Vane, "have you made acquaintance with all the resources of Forbach? We shall look to you as guide, mentor and friend in all our pastimes. What about the fishing? And there ought to be a bar or two in the forest. Not tried them yet? It was kind of you to wait until we came. We'll have a day as soon as possible, and try and get some sport."

All this was very well, but there was the change still. Not a word had he spoken to Jeanne, and there she stood slowly fanning herself, with the air of a proud lady receiving company.

What did it mean? Before he can arrive at any conjecture, there is the rustle of a woman's dress on the stairs, and a soft, languid voice says: "Are you there, Lord Ferndale? Here are Lord Lane and I dying to see more of this enchanted castle! Your major-domo—what a delightful man!—was right. The upper part of this romantic place surpasses even the other grand rooms. I was never so sumptuously housed, and I give you warning that if you have treated all of us as you have treated me, we shall never leave you, as Mr. Micawber says," Vane bows.

"Give the thanks where they are due, countess," he says. "I had no hand in the ordering of things."

"It is a fine old place," said Lord Lane, "and your man hasn't forgotten a detail. Lady Ferndale, you might keep up state in the good old fashion, if you liked—armed retainers, and henchmen! and all that sort of thing."

Jeanne's face lightens, and she turns to him with a smile.

"It is all too charming," said Lady Lucelle, as she speaks, she looks at Hal.

"Mr. Bertram," says Vane, with a wave of the hand by way of introduction, "my brother-in-law."

Lady Lucelle holds out her hand with a charming smile, and with a nod half of recognition:

"How do you do, Mr. Bertram? I suppose you know the castle by heart; I really envy you. Do show me something more of it, Lord Ferndale."

And she puts her hand on his arm.

"With pleasure," says Vane, and he moves away with her.

"Suppose we venture on a voyage of discovery, Lady Ferndale," says Lord Lane, offering his arm. "It's more than half the fun finding things out for one's self, don't you think? Always think it's a bore being cicerone over a place; like going over the Tower, you know."

Jeanne laughs, and they go off together.

Hal sticks his hands in his pockets and stares after them, unconscious of the entrance of Bell, who stands behind him, looking after the departing couple with a blinking and thoughtful gaze.

"Thank Heaven!" exclaims Hal, some time afterward, when dinner is about half through—"thank Heaven," he repeats, devoutly, and with a sigh of relief, "that you brought your cook with you, Vane! at least, I presume you have done so—for the fact that not one of the dishes present the appearance of having been cooked in haste. The amount of elegant matter Poor Bell and I have consumed since we have been in this great and glorious country is simply appalling. Some one, I believe, complimented me upon my adiposity. I feel that it is but just to state that any additional fat I have put on is not due to an easy conscience or a mitrified temperament, as some may suppose, but to the vast quantities of butter, lard and oil which I have consumed."

There is a general laugh. Jeanne, next to whom he is sitting, pats his arm.

"You are stouter, Hal."

"Quite so," he says, gravely. "The fault I have just mentioned is the only one I have to put on record against this excellent nation. They are polite, upright, just, sober and discreet, but they labor under the mistaken notion that man is a machine which requires constant and copious oiling."

" Bravo, Hal!" says Lord Nugent, who at once has recognized Hal as a kindred spirit, and has altogether declined to call him "Mr. Bertram."

"Well balanced and clearly delivered. You'll be on the woolpack before you are my age, if you don't take care."

"Give us some more, Hal," says Vane, with his old good-natured laugh.

"I am all anxiety to learn Mr. Bertram's opinion of the German society," says Lady Lucelle, turning to him with her softest and most enticing smile. "He is evidently a keen observer; what is your opinion of the fair—of our sex—over here, Mr. Bertram?"

Hal, already the color of a damask rose, grew still redder under this direct attack.

"Don't know," he says, "I'm not a lady's man, Lady Lucelle."

She smiles, and nods at him encouragingly.

"Strange," she says, "I never heard one of your sex declare his indifference for our sex but I had to discover that he was an incorrigible flirt. I'm half afraid that you have left a long trail of broken hearts right through the country."

"It's Mr. Bell's fault if we have," says Hal, with affected innocence; "I left him to pay the hotel bills."

"Hal," says Jeanne, when the laugh has somewhat subsided, "where did

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Ended by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. Remarkable Recovery of Mrs. Church.

Smiths Falls, Ont.—"I suffered with falling of my organs, pains around my heart, and in my bowels and down my legs. Neuralgia in my face and head, and that terrible sinking feeling. I felt that I could not live and would fix my house in order every night so there would be no trouble if I dropped off in the night. My husband went to the druggist to get the best remedy he had and he gave him Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. I took six bottles and felt a lot better. I will always recommend the Vegetable Compound, and you can use these facts as a testimonial."—Mrs. O. Church, Box 64, Smiths Falls, Ont.

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you learn the art of repartee? You have got quite brilliant! I am quite proud of you, you clever, wicked boy. Poor Mr. Bell! what a life he must lead with you!"

"Poor Mr. Bell," says Hal, "leads a tolerable life; he likes oily dishes, and we keep out of each other's way as much as we can. Besides—don't tell everybody, for it's a secret—he's keeping a diary, which he means to publish under the title of 'A Bear-leader in Germany.' I've the bear, you know. Of course, I'm obliged to be very civil, you know, because he keeps the purse; besides, I haven't the least notion of their money—there's a different coinage at every other town or so—and I can't remember what they represent. I paid for what I bought myself until Bell discovered that I had given a man something like five and sixpence for fourpenny worth of plums, and then he undertook the exchequer."

"Poor Mr. Bell!" says Jeanne, glancing at that gentleman, who is deeply engaged in a discussion on the political prospects of Pomerania with a member of Parliament, but who looks across at her, as if he divined she was looking toward him, and smiles timidly.

The party promises to be a pleasant gathering, notwithstanding its size, for there is an incessant hum of conversation, with interludes of laughter. One person seems rather silent—but that his taciturnity is noticeable, for he talks sometimes; but he alone appears thoughtful and preoccupied.

It is Lord Lane.

He is seated a little distance from Jeanne, not so far down the table that he cannot see her face, and it might be observed, if any one cared to notice it, that his eyes are scarcely ever removed from her.

He does not stare at her, but he keeps a constant, and yet covert watch on her every look and word. If she speaks to him, which she does sometimes, he has no occasion to turn his head or ask her to repeat her observation, for he has quite obviously been attending to her, and watching for the chance of her addressing him. At such times his face seems to alter, and his eyes to brighten—not noticeably, perhaps, but the change indefinitely takes place.

Once she asks a servant for something—for some wine for Hal—and "Quite so," he says, gravely. "The fault I have just mentioned is the only one I have to put on record against this excellent nation. They are polite, upright, just, sober and discreet, but they labor under the mistaken notion that man is a machine which requires constant and copious oiling."

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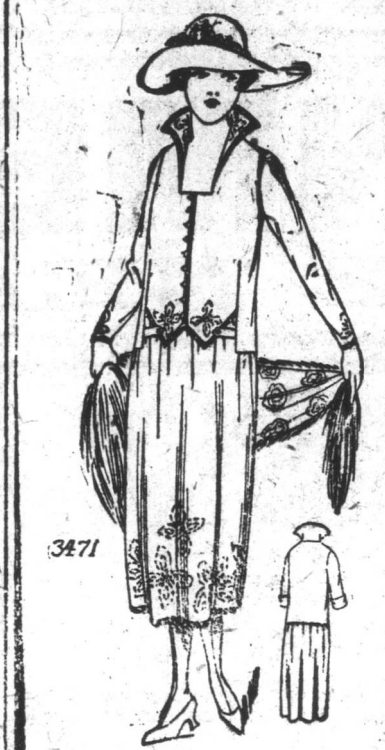
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(To be continued.)

Girls, Is This So?

Eddie Boland, leading man in the Vanity Fair Girls company, is not an easy party to convince. Eddie had been raving about "The awful extravagance of the girls of today," when Harry "Saub" Pollard interrupted.

"I think you are wrong, Eddie," he said. "All girls are not crazy over money."

"Huh, no," Boland admitted. "Some of them are satisfied with diamonds, limousines, sables and other trifles."

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Mr. Gardner came to the settlement with several white she hands of the Indians and there are the sites of the night when hell terrors.

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