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### A UNT PHŒBE'S HEIRLOOMS.

TEOM THE MEOSY.

We do not take to new ideas readily in Bishop-thorpe. Our fashions are always at least one season behind the times; it is only by a late innovation in post-office regulations that we are now enabled to get our London papers on the day of their publication, and a craze, social or scientific, has almost been forgotten by the fashionable world before it manages to establish any kind of footing in our neighborhood.

It therefore came upon us with more or less of a shock one morning a short time ago to find the walls of our sleepy little country town placarded with flaming posters amounted that Prof. Dmitri Sclamowsky intended to visit Bishopsthorpe on the following Friday, for the purpose of exhibiting in the Town Hall some of his marvellous powers in thought-reading, mesmerism, and hypnotism.

Stray rumors from time to time, and especially of late, had visited us of strange experiments in connection with these abstruse subjects, which were always received with incredulity, mingled with compassion for such weak-minded persons ascould be easily duped by the clever conjuring of paid charlatans.

This, at least, was very much the mental attitude of my Aunt Phoebe, and it was only under strong pressure from me and one or two others of the younger and more enterprising section of Bishopsthrope society that she at last reluctantly consented to patronize the professor's performance in person.

Even at the last moment she almost failed us.

"I am getting too old a woman, my dear Elizabeth," she said to me as I was helping her to dress, " to leave my comfortable fireside after dinner for the sake of seeing second-rate conjuring."

"Indeed, it is good of you," I said, as I disposed a piece of soft old point lace in graceful folds round the neck of her black velvet dress; "but virtue will be its own reward, for I am sure you will enjoy it as much as any of us, and as for being old, that is all nonsense! Just look in the glass, and then say if you have the heart to cheat Bishopsthorpe of a sight of you in all your glory."

"You are a silly girl, Elizabeth!" said my aunt, and yet she

did as suggested, and, walking up to the long pier-glass, looked at her reflection with a well-pleased smile. "Indeed," she continued, turning back to me where I stood by the dressing-table, "I think I am as silly as you are to rig myself out like this," and she pointed to the double row of large single diamonds I had clasped round her neck, and the stars of the same precious stones

which twinkled and flashed in the lace of her cap.

"Come, Aunt Phobe," I said, drawing down her hands, which had made a movement as though she would have taken off the glittering gauds, "you don't often give the good Bishopsthorpe folk a chance of admiring the Austruther heirlooms. They look so lovely! Don't take them off, please! What is the use of having beautiful things if they arealways hiddenawayin a jewlleery case? There now," I went on, " I hear the carriage at the door; here is your fur cloak; you must wrap yourself up well, for it is a cold night," and so saying I muffled her up, and hustled her down stairs before she could remonstrate, even had she wished to do so.

The little Town Hall was already crowded when we arrived, but seats had been reserved for us in one of the front rows of benches. Many eyes were turned on us as we made our way to our places, for Aunt Phæbe was looked up to as one of the cornerstones of aristocracy in Bishopsthorpe, and I fancied that I caught an expression of relief on the faces of some of those present, who until the entertainment had been sanctioned by her presence had probably felt doubtful as to its complete orthodoxy. But, of course, I may have been wrong. Aunt Phæbe is always telling me I am too imaginative.

It seemed as though the professor had waited our arrival to begin the performance, for we had hardly taken our seats when the

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