



"KYRA,"

OR,
The Ward of the
Earl of Vering.

CHAPTER XXIII.
A Lovesick Swain.

"You are a most extraordinary girl, my love!" exclaimed Lillian Devigne, with a charming little laugh of admiring surprise.

The scene was the drawing-room at Queen's Gate—a room as sweetly beautiful and bewitching as Lillian Devigne, the speaker, herself; the person addressed was Kyra, there on an afternoon visit, out for a holiday from Minerva House, and looking more like the goddess chaste Diana, than a schoolgirl, in her slim, white flannel, with its dark red rose, and her black, richly gleaming hair close to her shapely head.

"Most extraordinary, my dear Kyra!"

"Am I?" was the doubtful response. "Am I? Why do you say so?" and she looked at the fair face, so great a contrast to her own, with grave interest.

"My dear child, because I cannot help it. Did ever any girl make such an absurd reply to so genuine a question? I ask you if you consider your constant friend Charles Merivale handsome, and you reply 'that you do not know—that you never thought about it.' And that with so genuine a lack of interest that is ludicrously astounding."

"Well, I have never thought about it," confessed Kyra, smiling in spite of herself, and pouring some fresh water from a dainty ewer into a still daintier flower stand.

Lillian Devigne sank into a chair close behind her, and drew a fancy card basket near her with an air of playful earnestness, that artfully masked her real interest.

"Now, how sweetly you said that, and yet how cruelly. Do you know, Kyra, I should not love you half so much if you were not such a puzzle to me. You are so strangely unlike all other girls of your age; so exasperatingly candid; so fearfully free from even a proper vanity that—there, I can't go on if you look at me with those great, grave eyes. Look at your flowers, my dear child, I beseech you."

Kyra turned her eyes away with a little, low laugh.

"Am I so strange, and strange only

by being what you say? I cannot help it. You must teach me to be more like other girls."

Lillian Devigne flushed slightly at this unconscious thrust, but hid her momentary embarrassment by turning over of the cards in the basket with a laugh.

"Mr. Charles Merivale," Mr. Charles Merivale, "Mr. Charles Merivale!" There are a score of them; he must have called every day, twice a day for the last month. And whom does he come to see?"

"You, I suppose," said Kyra, quietly; or Lady Devigne, perhaps."

"Oh, yes, of course, mamma. I forgot mamma," laughed Lillian Devigne with gay irony. "Of course! How flattered mamma would be! I will tell her. Oh, Kyra, Kyra, as if you did not know, you wicked girl, that the young Apollo—that's the name they give him at the club, my dear, because of his handsome face and golden head; I did not give him the name—as if you did not know that this curly-headed young lady-killer came to see a certain friend of mine, who pays me too short a visit now and then from her prison at Kensington!"

"Do you mean that he comes to see me?" asked Kyra, with the calmest air of innocence. "Do you really think he does, Miss Devigne?"

"Ah!" broke in Lillian, putting her hand to her ears. "Never that, if you love me! Why, child, you might have been brought up at a convent! Kyra, do you love me?"

"I do love you," said Kyra, as quietly as before, "so I will call you Lillian. Do you mean that he comes to see me? Is it not very kind? Why do you smile so? I think it is very kind. I will go and see him some day."

Lillian Devigne broke out in a silly laugh, and stopped her innocent companion with a flutter of a fan.

"Kyra, my love, you are incorrigible. The whitest young nun from a convent cloister is a monster of guile compared with you. You are like a child to whom we have to teach the alphabet—the alphabet of love." And, now, you look as if you were listening to a lecture on geometry! But seriously, does Lord Percy know how often Charlie Merivale 'drops in' here, as he calls it?"

Kyra shook her head. "I am sure I do not know. He would be very glad, for he likes Charlie very much; he is his cousin, you know, and they live together in the same house."

"My dear love," broke in Lillian Devigne, so softly that there was a suspicion of acidity in the interruption. "I know all about them—I knew all about them before you dropped from the clouds on to the scene; they are younger and elder brothers—inseparable, devoted; and, of course, Lord Percy knows and is pleased by his cousin's attention. Why, did not he send him to take you back to school one day? And does he not use him as a sort of Newfoundland dog to carry messages? Of course he knows—or do you think I would countenance the continual 'dropping in,' my dear love? I was only testing the depth of your sweet guilelessness and I find that it is, like the fairy well, fathomless."

Then, as Kyra smiled with a doubtful air, as if scarcely comprehending her dear monitor and friend's meaning, Lillian Devigne looked out of the window.

"And here, to carry out the old adage, comes the angel of whom we have been talking. Hark! that is the rustle of his wings!" she said, laughing.

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ing, as the scraping of a pair of wheels was heard, and the usual inquiry, answered in the affirmative, followed at the front door.

In another minute the angel himself appeared at the drawing-room door, and really went very near to earning the title, as it might be regarded from a sensitive young lady's view.

For Charlie, the Eton boy, had developed into a handsome and elegant young man of fashion, with a face so greatly admired that it had earned him the nickname of Apollo, as aforesaid—with a figure fully developed by an Oxford course of athletics, so faultlessly attired as to be the pattern and the envy of three-fourths of the junior clubs—and with all that grave, winning candor and British honesty and modesty that go to make that not-to-be-despised article of home manufacture, a young English gentleman.

He had done great things at Oxford—passed his "little go," won a sculling match, and carried off a cup at the university sports; and he was now home for what he and his young friends called "a fling."

Lillian Devigne glanced archly at her companion as she rose to greet the young Adonis; but his glance was lost on Kyra, who came forward without the slightest sign of embarrassment, or any feeling beyond simple pleasure.

"I was passing," said Charlie, dropping, after the usual exchange of salutations, into a velvet chair, and stretching his strong, muscular limbs with a sense of luxury delightful to his undergraduate mind—"I was passing, and thought I'd drop in. Hope you're not busy, Miss Devigne."

Lillian Devigne smiled at him graciously, for he could not come too often for her plans.

"Yes, fearfully, and so is Kyra." "You don't look it," he retorted. "This room is always cool and fresh—it is sweltering hot outside—" "Certainly," said Lillian Devigne. "Will you ring for it?" Charlie looked askance. "For the cooling daunt," laughed Lillian Devigne. "Oh! you are not this first Oxford man I have known; do I not remember how Norman Pacewell used to grumble because they would not give him soda water and brandy in the drawing-room? No, don't look so guilty—and, Kyra, dear, you mustn't kill him by smiling. You may have it," and she rang the bell for him.

"Well," said Charlie, "I won't be so foolish as to refuse; but it's very kind of you, Miss Devigne. You always are kind, and that's why a fellow likes dropping in—thanks."

This to the servant who brought him the soda and brandy in a silver tankard.

"And how is Lord Percy?" asked Lillian Devigne, now hard at work at her embroidery.

"Percy is quite well," replied Charlie. "Said that he would call here this afternoon; has he been here yet?" Lillian Devigne shook her head; Kyra, listening intently, paused in her work of trimming a rose.

"Ah, then he will be here, be sure. Percy never breaks his word. Poor fellow! he looked bored to death this morning. Been shut up with the lawyer all the morning, and that is as bad as roasting coffee this weather."

"That reminds me that Lord Vering will very likely come in to five o'clock tea," said Lillian Devigne, "and will

like his coffee burnt. I will leave you for a minute or two. Kyra, give him some more brandy and soda, or take him into the garden if he grows restless. You'll stay to tea, Mr. Merivale?" she added, as she left the room.

Charlie looked after her, then put down his tankard, and crossed over to where Kyra stood.

"You and Miss Devigne are fast friends now?" he said.

"Yes," said Kyra, "she is so kind as to have me here whenever I can come."

Charlie nodded.

"There's nothing very kind in that," he said; "but she is kind, all the same. Who would think she'd let a soda and brandy show its head in this little fairy place! And then she lets me smoke a cigarette in the garden."

"And you want to know?" said Kyra, with a naive smile.

He laughed, and returned her gaze with frank admiration and affection.

"What a girl you are, Kyra!" he said, admiringly. "You read me like a book, and—will you really though?" for Kyra had taken up a dainty little hat and made for the garden door as a sign that she would accompany him.

Charlie lit his cigarette, and the two walked round the small but beautiful garden for a few minutes in silence.

"Yes, this is better than a club to drop in at, Kyra, especially when you are here," he said, with a little sigh.

Kyra looked at him.

"Do you come to see me?" she said, looking at him.

Charlie looked back and nodded.

"Yes, of course, I do. I dare say I come too often. Perhaps they," and he moved his cigarette slightly toward the house, "say I do. Perhaps you think I do?"

"No!" said Kyra. "I am always glad to see you!"

She said it so calmly, with so genuine an air of friendship, that the young man eyed her curiously, and puffed away in silence for a moment.

"Yes, I believe you are. I believe you really like me, Kyra."

Kyra nodded.

"And you know I like you," he went on, biting his cigarette; "in fact, I thought a little while ago—how fast straight you look at me, Kyra!—that I liked you too well."

"Too well?" she repeated, her dark eyebrows raised slightly, and her exquisite eyes wide open.

Charlie's handsome face flushed slightly.

"Yes, too well! You are so beautiful that it is little wonder a fellow gets out of his depth at first 'sigh,' and feels that he is hit."

"Hit?" echoed Kyra, two little wrinkles showing across her forehead.

"Yes," he nodded. "Why Kyra, you are so—so innocent, so different from other women," he faltered. "Don't you know what love is?"

She hesitated a moment, then stopped to pick a camellia in the path.

"Yes, I have read of it. Do you mean that you thought you loved me?"

Staggered for a moment by her sweet, innocent serenity, he was silent for a moment.

"Yes," he said, "that is what I meant, and what would have happened, for who, being with you long, could help loving you—you so beautiful, so—so pure and good."

He blushed like a girl, worse than Kyra did herself.

She looked aside a moment, then regarded him with a dreamy intentness.

"You say that?" she said, then sighed.

Charlie nodded his head emphatically.

(To be Continued.)

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GEO. M. S

The Strap-Hanger's

I stood in the car at noontime
I stood for there wasn't a seat
And the crowd in the aisle
Over my aching feet.

I saw the harassed conductor
Trying to get his feet
And the words his lips were
Were certainly not his prayer.

How often! Oh how often!
In the years that have passed
Have I hung on a strap and gr
Because I had got to pay.

How often! Oh how often!
Have I wished it were in my
To make the "Company" stand
And hang on the strap by the

And I thought how many thou
Of bundle encumbered men
Each bearing his own kind of
Had hung on the strap before

For my heart was full of anger
And my arms were full of
And my temper, once so placid
Was literally worn to rags.

But now my troubles are over,
They are buried as deep as
I ride back and forth in a jitney
And no more strait cars for me.

Germany's Bravest M

He Dares to Tell the Huns the

To mention the name of Herr
knecht among Germans is to
down every kind of abuse on the
of the politician who has been
scribed as the "bravest man in
many." Liebknecht is a Social
has always been an implacable
Prussian militarism, against the
inance of which we are now
Although he may not have a
supporter in the Reichstag—the
man Parliament—he never hesi
to trounce the system which is
ing ruin to his country. He ha
shouted down and assaulted
Reichstag, and shot at in the
of Berlin.

Nothing, however, daunts
knecht, for he comes of
stock. His father, Wilhelm
knecht, fought for Bismarck, the
Socialist, almost precisely the
battle, during and after the
Prussian War of 1870, and was
tenced to two years' imprisonment
a fortress for "treasonable
tions." Herr Liebknecht himse
fared confinement for e
months in a fortress for refus
stop what were regarded as
tious" speeches. His impris
merely resulted in his being re
at the elections of 1908 to the
Asian Landtag, one of the Parli
of the countries constituting the
man Empire.

A still greater sensation
came when, in 1912, he was ele
the Reichstag actually for the



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