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CHAPTER XV.

What subtle change had come over everything? Lady Iris Fayne was driving home through the same green lanes, along the same white roads, with the same grand range of hills rising to the west, and yet to her the world was changed. The sunshine seemed to have grown brighter and more golden, and the music of the birds struck her as it had never done before.

She had gone out that morning without fear or anxiety, and had met with a disagreeable adventure, which had so far frightened her that she had fainted for the first time in her life; but that adventure seemed to have happened long since—it was impossible to have imagined that it had occurred that morning. She could not forget her protector's beautiful dark eloquent eyes. Why did they haunt her? There must be a reason for it. Suddenly it struck her what it was.

In the library at Chandos, her favorite room, hung a picture that had been painted by one of England's greatest artists. Lord Caledon had seen it in the Academy, and had been so struck with it that he had purchased it and had it hung up in the library. It was a magnificent painting of Sir Lancelot, and underneath it were these words—

"A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves;
The sun came dazling through the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot."

The painting was as perfect as the poem—

"The gemmy bride glittered free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy."

But the artist's skill had been chiefly lavished on the face of Sir Lancelot, so dark, so proud, so handsome,

"His broad clear brow in sunlight
glowed;
On burnished hooves his war-horse
trode;
From underneath his helmet flowed
His coal black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot."

The splendid dark face had an expression of high courage, and the dark eyes, as they gazed upon Camelot, had

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no fear in them. Sir Lancelot looked indeed a hero.

Yes, that was what had struck her. The face of the knight in the picture, which had always been her ideal of manly beauty, was exactly like the face of Captain Allan Osburn; the resemblance was perfect. Captain Osburn might have sat as the artist's model; he had the same dark eloquent eyes and the same fearless look. How remarkable it was that the face of a stranger should resemble that of the knight in the picture!

She blushed a hot crimson blush as she remembered how she had looked at that picture and had fancied that, if ever she loved anyone, it would be a hero with a face like Sir Lancelot—dark, full of pride and dignity, with gleams of tenderness in the eyes and round the curved lips.

"But," she had said to herself, "where is such a face to be found?"

When she reached Chandos, she went first to her own room to collect her thoughts which had gone a little astray—so it seemed to her—and then, haunted still by the dark eyes, she went to see the picture. It was the first thing that attracted attention on entering the room; nearly every visitor went at once to it and began to praise it.

As Lady Iris drew nearer to the painting, it seemed to her as though the dark-piercing eyes smiled and a ray of light escaped from them. She went close to it and studied it long and intently; there was no mistake—it was no fancy of hers—there was a most wonderful resemblance. What true steadfast eyes they were, and how any woman might trust her love, life, and honor in such hands! As she stood watching the picture, looking as she did so as beautiful as a poet's dream, with her fair hair and lovely face, she could not help repeating to herself the remainder of the lines—

"From the bank and from the river
He flashed into the crystal mirror;
'Tisra Iltra,' by the river,
Sung Sir Lancelot."

She said to herself that she had not noticed one half the beauties of the picture before; then suddenly, as though she were compelled to do it, she repeated aloud the words—

"She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces through the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She looked down to Camelot."

"Out flew the web and floated wide,
The mirror cracked from side to side;
'The curse is come upon me!' cried
The Lady of Shalott."

"What words—" The curse is upon me! cried the Lady of Shalott! "The curse! What does that mean?"

Lady Iris stopped to ask herself the question. What curse fell upon the lovely Lady of Shalott when she saw Sir Lancelot ride out between the barley-sheaves? She looked at his face—the web flew, the mirror cracked, and the curse fell upon her! It could be but one thing, and that was love. But how could love be a curse?

Lady Iris smiled at her own fanciful thoughts; there seemed to be some strange analogy between her case and that of the lady in the poem. She had looked at the face of the stranger, she had heard his name, his dark eyes had smiled once into hers—and here she was in the same mood with the Lady of Shalott; she had left her web to pace the room. Had the curse, fallen upon her? Love could never be a curse!

Then she laughed aloud at her whimsical fancies. All this had arisen because she had met a stranger with a face like that in her favorite picture—she, who had been wooed by some of the handsomest men in England and now hardly remembered their features. If ever by any chance she should see him again, if by any ac-

cident he should ever come to Chandos she would show him this picture, and ask him if he detected the resemblance. She looked with a gay glad smile into the dark pictured face.

"God-by, Sir Lancelot!" she cried, as she was quitting the room.

She went back to the drawing-room, and for the first time felt something like a void in her life. In the distance she heard sounds that jarred upon her ear—the voices of men and the laughter of women; for Chandos at that time was full of visitors. She felt no desire to join them, no great interest in any of them; she wondered why she had to fill up her life with such dull, tame friendships, why her time must be occupied with duties that had in them no great pleasure. There was a sense of loneliness even in the midst of her gaiety, a sudden longing for some one in particular, a sudden awakening to the fact that she was young and that her heart asked for love.

She fled from the voices and the laughter out into the quiet lime-grove, and, bending her flushed face over a lily, she laughed while the tears stood in her eyes.

"What has come to me?" she cried. "I believe, dreadful as it is, that I want a Lancelot of my own—not a Lancelot in a poem or a picture, but a living, breathing Lancelot. 'The curse is come upon me!' cried the Lady of Shalott. I shall begin to think that I am like her soon. My face burns, my heart beats wildly, I can interest myself in nothing, and every one seems commonplace and uninteresting. It is all your fault, Sir Lancelot—not mine!"

Those who admired and loved her noticed that there was a change in her. She laughed and talked and was as brilliant as usual; but every now and then a thoughtful look came over the radiant face, tender gleams stole into the proud eyes, and sweeter music into the gentle voice.

That evening, when the guests had retired and she was alone with the earl, she longed to tell him of her adventure; but if she did so, she reminded herself, he would certainly never allow her to ride through the lanes alone again. One question she did



venture to ask him—

"Are there any strangers about in the neighborhood, papa, any visitors anywhere?"—and she had to hide her face lest he should see the flush that had risen to it.

"No, my dear, none that I have heard of," he replied; and she wondered a little.

Before she went to rest she paid one more visit to the picture. The moonlight rested upon it, and there seemed to be a gleam of tenderness in the dark noble face.

(to be continued.)

Getting Out of a Difficulty.

Talbot O'Farrell, the widely known Irish singer and entertainer was among the passengers who returned to London on the Canadian Pacific "Empress of Scotland" recently. He left Liverpool in February of this year and has visited Australia, Java, Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai and many other places in the Far East.

Mr. O'Farrell, a man of striking personality, is six feet of real merriment and humor and is a typical, homely Irishman, having been born in County Wicklow. He recalls with merriment an occasion when in Greenock, Scotland, he was called upon to sing for a local club; "I had no songs with me," said O'Farrell, "so being Irish, went to the music store to buy a budget of Scotch songs, among them being 'Annie Laurie' and 'Kind is My Mary.' 'Annie Laurie' I knew fairly well so decided to inflict that first, and having done so, was called upon to give a number two. 'That's torn if I said to myself, but there was nothing for it and I found myself in the throes of 'Kind is My Mary,' getting as far as 'Kind, kind and gentle is she' when I could not remember another word. In my agony I happened to spot a burly Scotsman up in the gallery laughing, so I took advantage of the opportunity to remark, 'If you think I'm here to be laughed at you're wrong' and immediately walked off the platform." "What's the matter, what's the matter?" whispered the manager. "Oh, nothing, I only forgot the words."

THE DOOMED SEVEN.

My seven cousins used to drive before my cottage door, and they seemed very much alive, but now they are no more. James Henry's car was trimmed with brass, and blithely it would flee; he stepped too fiercely on the gas and would it round a tree, John drove a car with faulty brakes—he would not fix the same; we fragments up, with garden rakes, the fragments of his frame. Ned was a glad and smiling wight; where is that spring-aid now? He ran without his lamps one night, and bumped against a cow. Charles tried to cross a railway track before a rushing train; there were nine fractures in his back, his head was rent in twain. And Joseph swung around a curve at fifty miles an hour; his monument you will observe hard by you old gray tower. Adolphus lit a match to see if he had gasoline, and by the mere and on the sea he is no longer seen. Theophilus was prone to race with other speeding boats, and over his quiet resting place now graze the village goats. No more their chugging vans I hear, no more their joyous whoops; oh, other men have cousins dear, but mine have looped the loops.

Pointed Pars.

It is better to be lonely than bored. Babies grievances grow larger by nursing. Difficulties are things that show what men are. It's the blunt man who makes the cutting remark. Any woman will look before she leaps if there is a mirror handy. Smiles are the sunshine of life, the trowns the cloudy weather. Every dog has his day, but it's not every dog that knows when he's having it. The girl who admits another girl is pretty must be sure of being much prettier herself.

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