

CHAPTER XXII.

LORD STREATHMERE'S SUIT. SIR BARRY'S CONQUEST.

"Mortgages and great relations,
And Indian bonds, and tithes and rents,
What are they to love's sensations?"

—PRAED.

"Oh mercy! A real, live Lord to be in town, and I declare if Sir Barry Traleigh is not here, too. Hurrah for our side!"

The breakfast room is cheerful with fire and sunlight. Zoe is reading the list of hotel arrivals.

"What is the child talking about? Zoe, I trust you are not growing profane. What is that you are saying about Lord?" Aunt Adeline is busy with the breakfast arrangements, and has only caught a stray word of Zoe's exclamation.

"Father," calls the youngest Miss Litchfield, at the top of her far from low voice, "Did you know Sir Barry was here? My dear old Jet, how glad I will be to see that man."

"Not so loud, my girl," her father says from the fire where he is warming his hands. "I saw them last night, and invited them here to dinner this evening."

Aunt Adeline sniffs in an ominous manner. The Litchfield household have got to look upon that sniff of aunt Adeline's as boding no good to any new project of which it is doubtful if she will approve.

"Chickens are eighty cents a pair in the market, are you aware of it, Edward?" she asks tartly. Mr. Litchfield laughs.

"Well, my dear sister, we need not encourage their heinous demands."

"Lords and Sirs always expect every luxury, whether reasonable or otherwise, but as you have already asked them, I will have to do the best I can." Miss Adeline stalks from the room with a stern look of disapproval on her face. "Lords and Sirs indeed," she mutters. "Pray is it not all owing to Sir Barry that is making her dear Dolores go around looking so disconsolate?" She never for a moment takes into consideration that it is all Dolores own wilfulness that has made Sir Barry stay away so long.

A telegram arrives during the forenoon from uncle Dick Gray, announcing their coming that very afternoon. Dolores drives over to the station with her span of grey ponies, to meet and bring them home.

At dinner Lord Streathmere is presented to Sister Jean. Blondine, merry Blondine, his right hand neighbor at dinner, is nearly beside herself with merriment, as she watches the covert looks of admiration he casts across the table at the convent sister. Sister Jean has improved wonderfully since her arrival; gay and charming, she is almost the pretty Jantie of old. Poor Burpee, Lord Streathmere, is very badly hit; more so, perhaps,