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LADY LAURA'S RELEASE

—OR—

THE STORY OF A SPOILED BEAUTY.

CHAPTER XI.

Her mind was full of good resolutions; but, when she went down to the breakfast-room, she found the captain already there.

He made a long and elaborate apology. Business had brought him so near to Rood House that he could not resist calling in to beg a cup of coffee. The fact was, he whispered to his financee, that he could not live out of her presence.

Angela recoiled at the sight of him. "Can I never have my mother one minute to myself?" she thought, bitterly. But her greeting of the captain was kinder than usual, for she resolved to adhere to her good resolutions. "I can see mamme before she goes out after luncheon," she told herself; and she waited patiently.

But the captain appeared again at luncheon, and this time with the excuse that he wanted to drive Lady Rooden to a fete at Kew. Angela grew angrily impatient then, but did her best to control her feelings. She went to her mother's room when her ladyship retired.

"Mamma," she said eagerly, "I want to speak to you. Can you spare a few minutes?"

"Not just now, Angel; I must not keep the captain waiting. Gentlemen can never bear that. I was always most punctual with your dear father." She did not notice the angry flush on her daughter's face as she uttered the words, but went on with the utmost complacency; "I shall make it a rule all through my married life never to keep the captain waiting; nothing destroys a man's temper so soon. I said I would be ready in ten minutes, and the captain will expect me."

"Already he is first with her!" Angela thought, bitterly. "She had no time for me."

"You want to see me about my dress for the wedding, I suppose? Well, to-morrow will do."

"Perfectly well, mamma," she answered, with bitterness of heart; "indeed I am sorry to trouble you at all."

"You are very good, Angel. My mind is much occupied just now. Captain Wynyard is a man of such exquisite and refined taste, you have no idea how difficult I find it to please him in matters of dress. I assure you I feel quite nervous at times when I am going out with him," and the beautiful woman looked so wistfully into the glass that Angela's anger all melted, and she threw her arms round her mother's neck, kissing her as she had not done for some time.

"You need never be nervous, mamma," she assured her; "you always look beautiful."

And Lady Rooden was well pleased with her daughter's assurance.

"Now I must go," she said; "there remains but one minute out of ten. You like this combination of cream and amber?"

"It is charming, mamma," Angela replied.

"You are quite sure," Lady Rooden asked, "that my gloves match exactly? I am anxious about the shade; it should be exact."

"It is, mamma," the girl said with a sigh.

Angela could not help the feeling that some strange way she and her mother had changed places—that she was older in heart and mind than this charming woman whom love seemed to have made young again.

"Good-by, mamma," said Angela, as her mother quickly left the room; and her ladyship had hardly time to return the hurried farewell.

"I will not be discouraged," Angela thought. "I must be patient. I must learn to be less exacting, and bear with other people's claims on my mother. I shall be sure to see her this evening. After taking breakfast and luncheon here, Captain Wynyard cannot surely return to dinner."

But, to her chagrin and dismay, he did. Lady Rooden had invited a few friends to meet him, and had said nothing to her daughter about it—she had in all probability forgotten it. Still, notwithstanding this great provocation to open rebellion, Angela curbed her anger.

And Lady Rooden returned only just in time for dinner.

"I am vexed at being so late," she said, "for I shall look flushed and disturbed all the evening."

To Angela it seemed as if her mother had never given so much attention to her personal appearance as she gave now—indeed, her whole time seemed to be spent over her toilet and in the company of the captain.

The dinner was a success, as every dinner given at Rood House was, and the evening passed away quickly and pleasantly to all except Angela.

"Now at least I shall have my mother to myself," she thought, as the last of the guests, as she fancied, disappeared, but, when she returned to the drawing-room, the captain was standing by her mother's side, evidently delaying his departure as long as he could.

Lady Rooden smiled brightly at her daughter as she entered.

"Bid the captain good-night, Angela; and, if you want me, I will see you presently up-stairs."

"Good-night, Miss Rooden," said Captain Wynyard. He noticed the pained, mortified expression of the girl's face, and it filled his heart with a malicious delight. "She will learn her lesson soon," he said to himself, "and with it she will learn to show me respect."

"Good-night, Captain Wynyard," returned Angela, with a stately bow and a flash of anger from her eyes.

She went to her mother's room, her heart full of bitterness, her patience entirely exhausted. Wringing her hands, she walked up and down the luxurious chamber, her heart torn with pain and anger.

"She was all mine once! I could see her when I wished, I was welcome at all hours and at all seasons; now, I always intrude, and there is never time to see me. Oh, mother," she cried aloud, in her passionate jealousy, "you are almost dead to me!"

Then it occurred to her that, if she found the captain's frequent presence so unbearable now, what should she do when he lived with them always at the Abbey? Here there was some little respite, at the Abbey there would be none. There would be no avoiding him there; he would be master of the house. He could go where he liked, do as he liked; he would be lord paramount everywhere. It would no longer be home, as she had known it in the past.

Just at that moment Lady Rooden entered the room, and threw herself lazily into an easy-chair.

"Oh, Angel," she cried, "I am so tired! I do not think I can keep my eyes open many minutes longer. I have been so happy to-night; but even excessive happiness tires one. Do you want to speak to me very particularly?"

"Not if you are too fatigued, mamma. Do you think that ever again you will be able to find ten minutes for me?"

"I hope so, Angel. I must confess that the captain engrosses the greater part of my life now; but, Angela, I would give him every moment of my life if I could."

"You love him so dearly, mamma?"

"So dearly, Angel."

The girl kissed the radiant face, and bade her mother good-night. There was no time for her now, she told herself; and, with this thought gnawing at her heart, she wept herself to sleep. Lady Rooden, dreaming of the handsome face and caressing words of the man she loved, slept on serenely indifferent to her daughters pain.

CHAPTER XII.

Lady Rooden's dressing-room had a rich glow of color, filled as it was with a profusion of costly materials—cloth of silver and cloth of gold, ivory satin, pale brocades, rich velvets, and lace that would have made any woman envious, all scattered in the most delightful confusion; and in the midst stood the dainty figure of Lady Rooden.

"I cannot wear white, I know," she said, to the attendant modiste, with lingering wistfulness in her voice; "I wish I could."

"Your ladyship looks younger than many brides who wear white," was the response.

(To be continued.)

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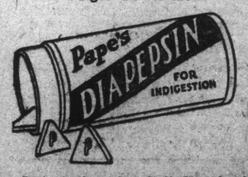

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Why The Hen Cackles.

The accepted explanation of the cackling in which a hen indulges after laying an egg is that she is so pleased that she wants everyone to know it.

The rooster answers the cackle with a crow, and this is taken as further indication that both are immensely proud of the achievement. This explanation is not tenable.

If the question is considered fairly, it is easy to see that instinct would teach the hen that to cackle is to call the attention of the enemy to both herself and her embryo offspring, which she would naturally avoid doing.

Relic of the Past.

The cackle is a relic of bygone days when fowls were not domesticated and ran about wild. When the hen wished to lay she retired from the rest of the fowl community and performed the task.

By the time she was ready to rejoin the commonwealth the other members had wandered some distance, and she did not know where they were. She waited till she had gone some distance from the egg in order to endanger it, and then cackled, after also having taken a good look round to assure herself that no enemies were near.

The rooster, hearing the cackle, answered it by a crow, and thus informed the hen of the whereabouts of the tribe. This sort of thing may be seen now among the ancestors of our domestic fowl in the Malay countries and India.

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Whether you come at another's call,
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Labourer, salesman, tell—
If the work's worth while—at all worth while—
It's worth doing well!

Whether the hours be short or long,
Lowly or not the work;
Whether you're ruled by task or gong,
Boss of the job or clerk;
Whether you labour with joy or await
Clang of the stopping bell;
If the earth's worth doing—at all worth doing—
It's worth doing well!

Whether the job be large or small,
If it's the task for you,
Get in your stride, or stop it all,
Struggle and strive to do!
Honest! Be square! Be not slipshod nor slick;
Urgings to idle quell!
For a job worth while—at all worth doing—
It's worth doing well!

EDMUND LEAMY in 'Forbes'."

Whose Time Is It?

How much time have you, I, all of us spent, in waiting for the man who is always late?

Someone once said that all humanity was divided into two classes—those who kept people waiting, and those who waited. Some people are never on time for anything—business appointments, trains, theatres, social engagements, or simply meeting a friend for lunch. It has often been said that it is women who are always late, and men who do the waiting, but careful observation shows that a fair proportion of both sexes have the habit firmly established of believing that one o'clock is anywhere from one-fifteen to one-thirty—and no trouble to anyone.

There are times, of course, when unpunctuality is unavoidable. Trains are delayed, traffic is congested, or the like, and everyone, being human, is entitled to be late occasionally, but that is aside from that section of humanity which simply never starts to do anything or go anywhere until it is time to be there.

Look around among your own friends or business acquaintances. How many times have you waited for Brown or Jones, and how often have you sighed over the minutes spent in waiting? Unfortunately you cannot say that the man who is never on time is invariably a failure. Very often he is a greater figure in his own field than any one of the people he has kept waiting—people who perhaps have no claim to fame, save that they have the habit of being on time.

But one appeal can be made to this class of citizens: If you have not yourself suffered by your habit of lateness, for the sake of humanity think of the time of other people you've wasted. You may not be jeopardizing your own future—although that may also frequently be the case—but you are stealing time that belongs not to you, but to the other fellow.—Short Story Magazine.

Origin of Failiar Phrases.

How many people know the origin of the phrase, "a mare's nest?"

Certainly "mare" in this case has nothing to do with a horse. It is a corruption of "mara," a malevolent demon who, according to tradition, possessed a nest filled with wonderful jewels and gold. Whether this particular demon ever existed is doubtful, but certainly influenced our speech, for whenever we refer to "nightmares" we are again unconsciously evoking the same mischievous spirit.

When we say that something is "not worth a rap" most of us imagine that a "rap" means a rap of the knuckles. But the origin of this phrase dates from the days of George I., when the "rap" was a counterfeit coin often passed off for a half-penny.

"A Baker's Dozen."

The expression, "I don't care a fig," comes from Italy. The word fig is derived from "fire," the Italian equivalent for a snap of the fingers.

At one time bakers were fined so heavily for giving short weight that they threw in an extra loaf to be sure they were on the safe side—and so we got the phrase, "A baker's dozen."

Nowadays a "bluestocking" means a woman who is devoted to study. It has nothing to do with hosiery. But in the sixteenth century there existed in Paris and Venice societies of learned women who wore bright blue stockings to distinguish them from the less cultured members of their sex.

Gold Leaf.

The process of making gold leaf has been known since the eight century, B.C. It is found in connection with the most ancient known mummies, having been used for covering teeth, tongue, skin, and so on. Sometimes it is found on the coffins. Gold leaf was also used on the tombs and monuments of ancient Egypt. In the eleventh century it seems to have attained as high a degree of perfection as to-day.

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