

## MY VISIT TO FAIRVIEW VILLA.

BY MRS. LEPROHON.

"Love! Pshaw! I don't believe in it, and I really think I shall live and die an old maid, lest I should be wooed and married for my money. Men are such selfish, grasping, egotistical creatures!"

Such was the uncompromising judgment I heard pronounced on my sex as I entered the pleasant shady drawing-room of my friend, Stephen Merton, in compliance with a pressing invitation lately received, to spend a few weeks of the hot, dusty summer months at his pleasant residence, Fairview Villa, situated on the beautiful Saint Foy Road, some short distance from picturesque old Quebec.

The moment of my arrival was rather unpropitious, and I think I would have retreated had not my hostess caught sight of my rather embarrassed countenance. Instantly rising, she came forward and kindly welcomed me, introducing me afterwards to her two daughters, Fanny and Charlotte Merton, her niece, Miss Gray, and a young lady guest, Miss Otway.

"Hem!" thought I, when fairly seated, and replying with tolerable composure to the liberally gay small talk addressed me on all sides: "Which of these fair ladies has just proclaimed so unequivocally her contempt for mankind?" and my glance here travelled round the fair circle. "Oh, that is the one," I pronounced, as my gaze rested on Miss Geraldine Otway, who stood haughtily erect beside the mantelpiece, twisting a piece of honey-suckle round her taper fingers. The scorn was yet lingering in the dark eyes that met mine so fearlessly—in the rosy lip so contemptuously curved, and a yet more femininely beautiful being I had rarely met. Features of childish delicacy, a varying, transparent complexion, and a figure of the most fragile, though graceful proportions, were hers; all forming a striking contrast to the words and manner of this determined hater of mankind.

"Pray, Mr. Saville, did you overhear any part of the discussion we were engaged in when you opportunely entered to prevent its animation degenerating into animosity?" enquired Miss Gray, with a mischievous glance towards Miss Otway.

"Only the concluding sentences," I replied.

"If Mr. Saville wishes, I am ready to repeat what I have already said, and to defend it," exclaimed the lovely occupant of the hearth-rug, nibbling with superb indifference at the spray of honey-suckle in her hand.

"No, Miss Otway," I rejoined with a low bow, "that would be unnecessary, for I acknowledge the justice of your remarks. More than that, I will say you were not half severe enough."

I had flattered myself that my ironical acquiescence in her stern views would have slightly disconcerted this fair Amazon with the tender bloom of eighteen summers still fresh on her cheek, but so far from that, she merely averted her long fringed azure eyes contemptuously from me, as if judging me unworthy of further notice.

"Why, Mr. Saville," interposed little Charlotte Merton, "you should blush for subscribing so unreservedly to such a sweeping, odious accusation against your sex?"

"I beg pardon, Miss Merton, but since you take me up so seriously, I must say that I assent only in part to Miss Otway's opinions."

"And pray what part does Mr. Saville judge fit to dispute?" questioned my fair enemy, pursuing her fragrant repast without deigning to cast a glance in my direction.

The overwhelming contempt for my humble self and judgment, conveyed in the clear cold tones and averted eyes, was something really wonderful in its way, and would have utterly annihilated a more sensitive individual than myself. I contrived, however, with tolerable composure, to rejoin:

"As to the selfishness and rapacity of men, we will leave it an open question; but with regard to Miss Otway's intention of living and dying in single blessedness, holding as she does, so poor an opinion of our sex, I highly applaud her wisdom."

"Oh!" thought I, inwardly elated, "what a magnificent thrust! She'll scarcely get over it!"

Slowly she brought her full clear eyes to bear on mine, and having steadily stared at my hapless countenance a full moment, quietly said:

"It is barely possible I may yet be induced to change my present opinion of the lords of creation for a more favourable one; to commit the egregious folly of trusting in them; but I do not think," and here she came to a pause expressive of the most unutterable scorn; "I do not think that Mr. Saville, or any person at all resembling him, will be the one who shall succeed in making me do so."

I was vanquished, for I could not descend to vulgar retort and tell her she might rest assured that Mr. Saville would never seek her capricious favour, so making her a low bow I retired from the lists, intercepting as I did so a deprecating look from dove eyed Fanny Merton towards Miss Otway, which that young lady answered by a slight toss of her graceful

head. My gentle hostess here compassionately hastened to my assistance, and became suddenly interested in the health of my married sister and her olive branches, till the entrance of Mr. Merton, his two sons, and a couple of gentlemen guests, completely restored my equanimity.

Smarting as I still was under the unsparing onslaught Miss Otway had just made on me, I found my gaze involuntarily following and I fear admiring her every movement, so full of careless grace, of easy elegance. Of course she was surrounded, flattered, courted, for she was an heiress as well as a beauty, not to speak of her being a matchless and most capricious coquette. How bewitchingly she would smile one moment on the suitor from whom she would scornfully turn the next!—how she would overwhelm with contemptuous rallery this hour the unlucky being to whose whispered flatteries she had perhaps silently listened a short time before!

Beautiful, wonderfully beautiful she was, and changeable in her loveliness as an April day; now all smiles, sparkling epigram and repartee, then full of quiet, graceful dignity, a creature formed surely to bewilder, fascinate, utterly bewitch a man, do anything but make him happy. Such were my reflections, despite all efforts to the contrary, as I sat beside pretty, gentle Miss Merton, vainly endeavouring to concentrate my attention on herself. My folly, however, went no farther, and I never joined the group paying Miss Otway such assiduous court. I felt instinctively that my nature was capable of conceiving a deep and lasting attachment, one which, if unhappy, would cloud a great part perhaps of my future life, and I knew that Geraldine Otway was one formed to inspire such a feeling, and after winning her aim, to laugh at the sufferings of her victim. Warned in time, I resolved to be prudent, and to keep without the charmed circle surrounding this modern Circe.

After the lapse of a few days, during the course of which we had barely exchanged a few words of commonplace civility, she seemed to become gradually aware of my existence, and then came my fiery ordeal. When she would ask with her bewildering smile, "Mr. Saville, please turn my music for me?" how could I say no, and then, when I would make a feeble effort to get away from her side, from the witchery of her sparkling eyes, and she would softly say, "What, tired so soon?" I would struggle like a bird in the grasp of the fowler, and for the time submit, I began to fear it was my destiny to love this beautiful, wayward syren, and well I knew what my reward would be if I weakly allowed myself to do so. I never deceived myself by indulging any illusory hopes. I knew that I was passably good-looking, young, and not a dunce. My family was as good as her own. My income, though likely to appear small in the eyes of an heiress, was a comfortable one, but these advantages never induced me to hope even for one moment that I would have any chance with her. I knew that she had spent a winter in Quebec and another in Montreal, during both of which she had been a reigning belle, had discarded men far superior to myself in wealth and position, and would probably yield up her freedom only to some great magnet whose social standing would elevate him, at least in her estimation, above the greater part of his fellow-men.

Life would have been very pleasant to me during my visit at Fairview Villa had it not been for the constant struggle between judgment and inclination. Could I have blindly yielded myself up to her fascinations, living only for the present, careless—oblivious of the future, all would have been sunshine; but I knew that an awakening from the intoxicating trance, bringing with it an hour of reckoning for me, not for her, would come, when she would say "good-bye for ever," and go on her way careless and smiling, leaving me to the misery of shattered hopes and an aching heart. I repeated inwardly, over and over again, that it should never come to this—that I would turn a deaf ear to her soft words, be marble to her wiles. We shall see with what success.

Pic-nics, boating and riding parties; walks by moonlight, sunlight, starlight; croquet on the lawn; billiards in the parlour; music in the drawing-room, succeeded each other with bewildering rapidity, and through all, Geraldine Otway shone, and glittered, and queened it, till I sometimes feared my only chance of safety lay in instant flight. Prudence whispered it would be my surest protection, but weak will found many excuses for avoiding the step. My sudden departure might offend Mrs. Merton; I wanted change of air; I was conscious of danger, and therefore able to take care of myself, and—in short, I stayed.

Pic-nics were a favourite pastime with us, and we often resorted to the beautiful woods that lay about a mile from Fairview Villa, and spent a pleasant time with green foliage and sunbeams overhead, and soft moss and wild flowers beneath our feet.

On one occasion that our wandering had extended into the green depths of the wood farther than usual, a sudden and violent rain-storm set in. I happened to be somewhat behind my companions, intent on gathering a bouquet of wild flowers for Charlotte Merton, a duty she had laughingly charged me with,

when the deluge came down, and finding myself in a comparatively open clearing, where any choice summer suit was receiving more than a fair share of the shower, I quickened my steps to a run. On reaching a dense part of the wood I slackened my pace, and casting a glance of satisfaction at the thick roof of verdure overhead, suddenly perceived Miss Otway standing drenched and draggled (no other word for it, dear reader) under the shelter of a huge maple.

"Why, you are all wet, Miss Otway," I hastily said. "And alone, too!"

"Yes, that stupid Willy Merton worried me into standing here whilst he should go back to the carriages in search of an umbrella and shawls," was her petulant answer. "I do not think I will wait, though. I will try a race through the shower."

I held up my finger warningly as the rain suddenly poured down with renewed violence, whilst a vivid flash of lightning rent the sky, and was succeeded by a sullen peal of thunder.

She turned pale as death, murmuring: "I do not fear many things, but I certainly stand in awe of lightning and thunder."

What was to be done? The rain pouring down with added force was penetrating the thick foliage, literally drenching my delicate companion. After a moment I removed my light overcoat and, with considerable hesitation, asked might I wrap it around her. She was generally so haughty and independent I made the offer timidly, fearing perhaps a sharp rebuff, but instead, she gratefully thanked me, and nestled her little cheek inside the collar with a child-like satisfaction at the additional shelter it afforded. Wrenching off the little dainty fabric of tulle and rosebuds that had done duty as a bonnet a few minutes before, but which was now a shapless, gaudy pulp, she flung it away, saying:

"Now, I have an excuse for getting a new one to-morrow. It shall be illusion, trimmed with honeysuckle."

"But you must not let the rain pour down on your uncovered head in this way," I remonstrated.

"Oh, it will do no harm. There are no false tresses embellishing it."

How very lovely she was! Disordered, drenched, still the face looked out so calmly beautiful from amid the shining wet masses of hair on either side. I felt the spell of her rare loveliness stealing over me, and I knew I must strengthen myself against its dangerous influence, doubly insidious in the soft, feminine mood that ruled her at the moment.

Another vivid flash with accompanying sullen rumble, and again the colour left her cheek, and a look of terror crept over her face.

"What are we to do?" she piteously asked, turning to me.

She was so touching, so winning in her girlish tremors and helplessness that a wild impulse to tell her there and then how loveable, how fascinating she was, took possession of me, and afraid of myself, of my own want of self-control, I stood silent at her side.

Another flash, another peal, and she convulsively clutched my arm, bowing her head on it to shut out the lightning from her sight. She was trembling in every limb, her very lips white with terror, and I, weak fool, was as unnerved as herself, though from a very different cause. Ah, my fears, my presentiments had all pointed to the truth, and I had learned to love her in spite of prudence, judgment, and common sense. Yes, I had fallen into the snare I had so firmly resolved on avoiding, but she, at least, should never know my folly, never have an opportunity of curling her lip in scorn at my audacity—of trampling on feelings that to me, alas! were only too earnest. Was I not tried—tried almost beyond my strength with her clinging, trembling and helpless to my arm in the recesses of that dim wood? Surely I would betray myself. Ability to act or speak with outward calmness was fast deserting me. Again another terrible flash. The very elements were leagued against me. Closer she clung, whispering:

"Lawrence, Mr. Saville, I shall die with terror."

The sound of my Christian name, which seemed to have escaped her lips involuntarily, the close, but soft pressure of her little fingers as they closed so imploringly on my arm, the graceful head bowed almost on my shoulder, all combined to rout completely my presence of mind—the calmness so necessary to me then, and I felt that unless I made a mighty and immediate effort, my doom was sealed.

"Miss Otway," I quietly said, "there is really no danger. Pray be calm, and allow me to seat you here, under the tree, where you will be more sheltered from the rain."

To be continued.



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J. YOUNG.

[L. S.] CANADA.

VICTORIA, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen,

Defender of the Faith, &c., &c., &c.

To all to whom these presents shall come, or whom the same may in any wise concern.—GREETING:

A PROCLAMATION.

JOHN A. MACDONALD, } WHEREAS, in and by a

Attorney-General, } certain Act of the Par-

Canada, } liament of Canada, passed

in the Thirty-first year of our Reign, chaptered

Number Forty-five, intitled "An Act respecting

Currency," it is amongst other things in effect en-

acted that our Governor may at any time after the

passing of that Act declare by proclamation that all

or any of the Silver coins of the United States of

America, or of any other foreign nation or State,

coined before the passing of the said Act, shall when

of weights and dates to be assigned in such pro-

clamation pass current and be a legal tender in the Pro-

vinces of Quebec, Ontario, and New Brunswick, at

rates in currency to be assigned to them respectively

in such Proclamation, to such amount in any one

payment as may be therein declared.

NOW KNOW YE, and We do hereby declare and

proclaim that on, from and after the FIFTEENTH

day of APRIL now next hereafter, the Silver coins

namely: half-dollars, quarter-dollars, dimes and

half-dimes, of the United States of America, coined

before the passing of the hereinbefore in part re-

cited Act of the Parliament of Canada, that is to say

subsequent to the First day of July, which was in

the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred

and fifty-three, and prior to the Twenty-second day

of May, which was in the year one thousand eight

hundred and sixty-eight, and which are hereinafter

mentioned, shall, when of the weights and dates

hereinafter assigned in this our Royal Proclamation,

pass current and be a legal tender in the Provinces

of Quebec, Ontario, and New Brunswick, at rates in

currency hereinafter assigned to them respectively,

in this our Royal Proclamation, to the amount of

Ten Dollars in any one payment. And we do hereby

further declare and proclaim that the Silver coins

of the United States of America aforesaid shall be of

the weights and dates hereby assigned, and pass cur-

rent, and be a legal tender as aforesaid, at the rates

in currency hereby assigned to them respectively by

this, our Royal Proclamation, that is to say: half-

dollars of the weight of one hundred and ninety-two

grains at Forty cents—quarter-dollars of the weight

of ninety-six grains at Twenty cents—dimes of the

weight of thirty-eight grains and four-tenths of a

grain at Eight cents—and half-dimes of the weight

of nineteen grains and two-tenths of a grain at Four

cents.

Of all which our loving subjects and all others

whom these presents may concern, are hereby re-

quired to take notice and to govern themselves ac-

cordingly.

In testimony whereof we have caused these our let-

ters to be made Patent, and the Great Seal of

Canada to be hereunto affixed: Witness, Our

Trusty and Well Beloved, The Right Honour-

able Sir JOHN YOUNG, Baronet, one of our Most

Honourable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross

of Our Most Honourable Order of the Bath,

Knight Grand Cross of Our Most Distinguished

Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Gov-

ernor-General of Canada, At Our Govern-

ment House, in Our City of Ottawa, the

FOURTH day of FEBRUARY, in the year of

Our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and

seventy, and in the thirty-third year of Our

Reign.

By command,

J. C. AIKINS,

Secretary of State.

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