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Opposite the Market

**Lady Marjorie's Love**

She did not hurry although she had declared that she must hurry; she loitered along as slowly and idly as though the luncheon, which would be waiting, and the Countess, who would be impatient, had neither of them any existence. She was out of the wood, had crossed the ha-ha which separated that corner of it from the home park, and had quickened her pace just a little when she saw some one advancing towards her. He had made a quick turn out of a path which led to one of the lodge gates, so evidently because he saw her, and so very evidently because he wanted to speak to her, that she stood still involuntarily. At first from his quick gait and alert carriage she fancied that he was young, though of a broad and portly figure, but as he drew nearer and raised his hat she saw that he was old—old enough for his short bushy beard, his full moustache and his hair to be all alike nearly white, also that he had a jolly good natured handsome face and a pair of blue eyes as bright as her own. And so instantaneous was her rapid feminine observation that she saw all this before he had time to speak to her, although he did so directly.

"You will be Lord Marlingford's daughter, I suppose, my dear?"

Lady Marjorie reddened indignantly, for she was not used to being accosted in this way by presumptuous strangers. His look, his words, his round cheery voice all offended her together—offended her immensely. And yet she knew and was angry with herself because she knew, that her own father might have called her "my dear" in just such a tone and with just such a meaning. She drew herself up to her full height after the often-quoted fashion of the most approved of modern heroines—she was sure that her height was such as to be at all calculated to overwhelm anybody—and she eyed him sideways with a glance borrowed expressly from her grandmother the Dowager Countess, who was far and away the most terrific personage of her acquaintance.

"I am Marjorie Wynne," she acknowledged icily, taking care that the look added, "And what business is that of yours, pray?"

"To be sure—Lady Marjorie! What has become of my memory, I wonder?" He laughed, rubbing and rumpling his thick white hair with a large strong hand, looking at the pretty crimson cheeked girl before him with a smiling fatherly interest and pleasure. "Your father spoke to me about you my dear. He would have liked me to see you, he said. But I must be a dull old fellow to let your pretty name slip out of my head so easily. I'd quite forgotten it, I declare."

"Oh!" cried Marjorie, comprehendingly. She experienced a revulsion—not of a favorable kind—and drew a step back very decidedly. "I—I understand. You are Mr. Chadburn?" she said.

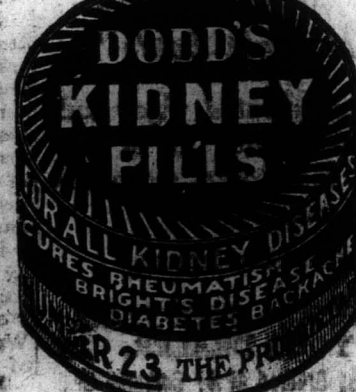
"Chadburn—that's my name—yes." For some reason her utterance of it seemed to embarrass him, and he looked away from her. "Yes, I had a little bit of business to transact with the Earl, you know of course, you do or you wouldn't know my name. All over now, though—all over and done with comfortably. What was I going to say?" He looked at her again now, with a curious expression of compassionate gentleness in his ruddy old handsome face. "Oh, yes, to be sure. I'm afraid I have rather lost my way, my dear child. You see I thought I would walk back to the station at what is—Upton Wafers as I walked here, but it seems that I have missed my path to the lodge. Perhaps you will direct me, will you?"

He had not missed the path; he had deliberately turned out of it on seeing her, but resentfully ungracious as he felt, Marjorie inwardly confessed that it would scarcely do to tell him so. She gave the direction as briefly as it was possible to give it, bowed without looking at him, because she would have tried to shake hands, and which by no means met her views, and turning away with a head unusually and uncomfortably erect. Of course, being in this diffident mood, she did not deign to look behind her. Had she done so she would have seen that Mr. Chadburn stood as she had left him, and looked after her with that curious blended look of compassion, paternal gentleness, and regret still upon his face.

"Poor little thing—pretty little thing," he said aloud, and with a sigh. "A slight, delicate, sensitive bit of a creature that wants well looking after, poor little body. And as proud as Lucifer too, to make things a thousand times worse for her. Poor child—poor child."

**CHAPTER II**

As utterly unconscious of the pre-



sumptuous pity of the 'broker-man' as she would have been amazed at it as something too completely groundless and absurd, Marjorie went on with an impressive stiffness and dignity of aspect until she found a curve in the path leading to a shrubbery which she knew must conceal her from him, supposing—which somehow she certainly did suppose—that he was looking after her. Then she dropped her staidness much as she might have dropped her hat, and she went back to the house, where the one arrived panting and laughing and the other perfectly fresh, but with such a length of red tongue on exhibition that he seemed to be laughing too.

Marjorie went in at an open side door and down a stone passageway, tugging her hands in her pretty hair as she tried to find the pins that fastened her hat, and so emerged into the place where of all others she loved to linger—the principal hall of Castle Marling.

To the right every pane of glass in its tall narrow windows letting in the sunshine or casting golden red or purple discs upon its flagged floor, every one of the massive pillars which supported its high arched roof, every panel of its oaken walls, every ancient fragment of armour or weapon that most of a sacred thing. As for the faded or dim old portraits of Lords and Ladies Marlingfords dead and gone that hung here and there—portraits so exceedingly grim and ugly that they must surely have appalled those noble persons—she stepped through them, and she was not a little startled to find that they were hideous, that their frames were tarnished, their colors pale, and it would have been positively dangerous to hint to her that the hall itself was to a modern taste somewhat too vast and gloomy, that the tattered hangings which were festooned above the huge fireplace had a gruesome and ghostly effect when any of the many draughts which always seemed lurking in ambush there swayed and flapped them, or that the brightest day the sun never penetrated into the black, mysterious corners and dispersed the thick shadows. All these objections, which might have arisen in the mind of an irreverent stranger, would have been an outrage, a sacrilege to the girl.

And so dark and dusty. Don't you think so? Makes one think of the time when they put rushes on the floors and ate with their fingers—that

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sort of thing. But that is the fault I always find with these old houses that it is the fashion to rave over; they really are wanting down and building in a respectable modern way. Very shocking for me, I dare say, but then I have positively no eye for what is called the picturesque in architecture, and no taste for it. I like a clean, new house very much better than a musty, fusty old one. And those are really ancestral portraits I suppose? What frights!"

(To be Continued.)

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