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Better a Peasant Than a Peer.

CHAPTER XIII.
A CREATURE OF FANCY.

As she speaks, Lady Lucelle, who has been watching her as a cat does a mouse, flushes, and looks eagerly at her.

"You don't suppose—I only say suppose—that I know this sweetheart of yours, this wonderful painter and musician with the soft, dark eyes and broad shoulders? Suppose I were to tell you something—suppose I were to—"

"Don't tell me anything," says Jeanne, resolutely. "I don't want to know anything."

"My dear child," says her ladyship, "your simple faith in and devotion to a man whom you have only known six months is sublime, or ridiculous, whichever you like. Do you think that a man who has deceived you once will not do so again, and that when you have less or no power to resent it?"

"Deceived me—how dare you say that?" says Jeanne, an angry red on each cheek, and a flash in her eyes that look ominously dark under the straight eyebrows.

"My dear Jeanne," murmurs Lady Lucelle, softly, "your own confession! 'This Vernon Vane, he is poor?'"

Jeanne does not answer.

"Unknown, save through his art? Plain Mr. Vernon Vane?"

"Yes," says Jeanne, desperately.

"Then he has deceived you," says Lady Lucelle.

All Jeanne's native fire has upspringing and is blazing.

"How do you know that?" she says, impetuously. "You say so, but I only saw you this morning, and—"

"I may be indulging in fiction! True," says her ladyship.

Then, with a peculiar smile that is not so sweet as malicious, she takes from under her crepe wrap a small chair and locket, opens the latter, and her eyes still on Jeanne, and extends it in the hollow of her white palm.

"There are my credentials," she says. "Do you think it a good likeness?"

Jeanne is about to refuse to look at anything belonging to this Lady Lucelle, who has so traduced her lord; but curiosity is too strong, and she takes the locket. It is some witchery, some trick of black art, or can this be Vernon Vane's face that looks

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any amount of sympathy and admiration. And he has succeeded. My dear Jeanne, he is as rich as Croesus! He has estates in four counties in England, a palace on the Arno, a house in Paris, servants and horses without number. Vernon Vane, the struggling artist!" and she laughs. "Did you ever hear of the Marquis of Ferndale?"

Jeanne shakes her head, staring straight before her.

"No! Impossible! My dear, you are the only person in the world that hasn't. The Marquis of Ferndale is famous—for his wealth, for his genius, for his changeability, for his eccentricity, for everything that can distinguish a young man born next to the blood royal."

"And what—what is he to me?" says Jeanne.

"Child," says her ladyship, "your soul-devant artist, Vernon Vane, is the Marquis of Ferndale!"

Jeanne stares open-eyed, and pale of countenance. Then she laughs a strange laugh.

"Well," she says, "what if he is?"

It is not what Lady Lucelle quite expected.

"I see," she says, with a smile, "you still doubt. Well, then, put him to the test. Ask him to-night if he knows Lucelle Stanford; ask him if he is the Marquis of Ferndale or not; ask him—"

"I shall ask him nothing!" says Jeanne, stamping her foot. Her face aflame, her eyes passionately gleaming with mingled love and fear.

"What is it to me if he be an artist or marquis—what is it to me if—what is his past to me? I love him as Vernon Vane, and I will marry him as Vernon Vane! Yes, Lady Stanford, I love him!" repeats Jeanne, with a child's courage added to a woman's passion. "No word of mine, prompted by you who lost him—"

"Lady Lucelle rises majestically, but crimson.

"Who lost him?" repeats Jeanne, setting her teeth, "shall separate us. That is what you would do," she goes on, rapidly, hurriedly, like a mountain stream impetuous to gain its end and there have done. "I am not of your world—I do not know it; but I know that you would separate us if you could, and that you knew such questions would do it. No! he has good reasons for keeping these things from me, if they are true—and I will not ask him."

Lady Lucelle smiles sweetly as ever.

"As you please, I don't blame you for refusing to risk a coronet; not at all—you are wiser than I thought you. I never knew a woman yet—in your class—so simple as to be blind to her own interest."

Jeanne looks as she is, half mad with rage.

"No, I was wrong, I see. But forgive me! I did it for the best; I would have thanked the woman—or the man who had warned me against one who had systematically concealed his past, his position, his very name. But you!"—she shufled her shoulders and drew her wrap about her—"my poor child, I think you are wiser."

Jeanne gasps. This is a thrust that strikes home, because it is true.

"At any rate, give me the credit of trying to be your friend, will you not? We shall meet some day—unless the marquis chooses to carry on the masquerade—and you will see that I am right. He will love you for an hour, and cease to do so the minute you talk some whim or fancy. Just now it is his whim to wed a simple maid who shall love him for himself alone. How long do you think such love will last?"

Jeanne does not answer—the cruel words so sweetly spoken cut into her like knives.

"I can hear the carriage," says Lady Lucelle. "Good-by—will you not kiss me?"

No; Jeanne will not even hold out her hand, and, with a little sigh and a shrug, the fashionable beauty floats out, leaving a delicate perfume behind to keep Jeanne mad with remembrance.

up at her from the trinket? It is his face.

Jeanne turns pale, and her lips tighten, as the first jealous pang she has ever felt seizes her like the clutch of an iron hand.

"Are—are you his sister?" she says at last.

Lady Lucelle smiles a sweetly-bitter smile.

"It is he, then?" she says. "I thought so! His sister? No, I was to have been his wife!"

"His wife?" Jeanne's lips form the words, but no sound comes.

"Yes—and only six months ago," says Lady Lucelle, with the irony, "if he told you—as no doubt he did—that you are the first woman he ever loved, it was false; he loved me; he had loved half-a-dozen before, and—she pauses, with a cold light in her eyes—"he will love another half-a-dozen before he dies!"

Jeanne catches her breath, and then could s'ab herself for showing the pain of the blow.

"It is false!" she says.

"Take care how you cast names, dear Jeanne," says her ladyship, warningly; "you were wrong before, you know. My dear, I am sorry for you—I pity you almost as much as I pitied myself. But, cut bono, what is the good of taking these things to heart? We were made to be the playthings of such men as—Vernon Vane. My dear Jeanne, I deemed him a hero, a king, a demigod—in a word, I loved him too much, and that wearied him. It is the sure way to sicken him of his whim, for he is all whim. I see it all quite plainly—oh, quite. Having tired of me, because, possibly, I had no sympathy for art, and did not care to follow him meekly through the rabble, when my place was by birth and breeding among the high—because I did not sit at his feet, content to inhale turpentine and listen to nothing but art—art, he wearied of me, and flies for refuge to nature. Oh, I know the slang and the cant phrases of those gentry! He finds nature in the shape of a pretty—no, you are a lovely girl, who, because she does not know the world, is content to think him hero, king and demigod—loves turpentine, and will listen while her demigod has a tongue to wag."

She pauses for breath, and Jeanne, white with passion, and—alas!—fear and jealousy, tries to speak, but Lady Lucelle holds up her hand.

"Wait! This creature of fancy and whim, having an eye to romance, thinks it must be a charming idea to start in the world afresh, in a new name and new character—to pose, in fact, as a struggling artist, open to

MOTHER!

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ity from her, from Jeanne, who loved him so entirely, so passionately? This question distressed her more than the past had done—why had he not trusted her? Could it be for the reason which Lady Lucelle had assigned? Could it be because he was so distrustful of the disinterested love of woman that he wished to place it beyond all doubt?

Jeanne's face flushed with sorrowful indignation at the idea.

"I should have loved him, let him be what he might," she murmured. "Why did he not trust me?"

Then came with painful intensity that pang of jealousy which Lady Lucelle's assertion of Vernon's love for her had aroused in Jeanne's breast. Had he really and truly loved her, and grown tired of her?

Jeanne's face grew pale, and her soft lips quivered. It was a bitter blow to her pure, sweet, maiden love, the thought that another woman had listened to his low, musical words of love—that other lips had received the kisses which Jeanne had deemed so entirely her own.

Jeanne was not a woman of the world; she was only a girl under the influence of her first, pure, passionate love, and knew nothing of the sophistries with which women console themselves when they find that their love has been knifed at other and earlier shrines. She was so little a woman of the world, that she did not think for a moment of the worldly advantages which would accrue to her as the wife of a marquis.

What she wanted was her lover, not a coronet; and the knowledge that he had loved another woman before he had won Jeanne's love was worm-wood and gall to her.

The dusk came creeping silently down, and found her still pondering and chafing over the secrets which had been revealed to her, and still undecided what to do.

He—artist or marquis, whichever he was—would be here in a few hours. How could she let him with the old light-hearted gaiety—how could she let him take her in his arms and kiss her with the same freedom as of old, while this shadow would assuredly creep in between them?

Supposing she told him of this strange meeting with the fair-haired, lovely woman of fashion?—supposing she told him all that Lady Lucelle had told her? What would happen?


This woman, who professed to have known him longer and better than Jeanne did, had said that he was a creature of whim and fancy, and that he would either have the woman who balked or thwarted his lightest whim. If this were true, then—then—she might turn from her, and the marriage might be broken off!

Jeanne's face blanched and her heart stood still at the thought.

(To be continued)

Fashion Plates.

A SMART COAT SUIT.




Comprising Coat, Pattern 3462 and Skirt, Pattern 3388. The Skirt is cut in 7 Sizes: 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34 and 36 inches waist measure. With plaits extended it measures about 1 1/2 yds. The Coat is cut in 6 Sizes: 36, 38, 40, 42, 44 and 46 inches bust measure.

For the entire suit in a medium size, 6 1/2 yards of 44 inch material will be required. Velvet, velours, tulle, tulle, serge and tricotee are attractive for this model.

This illustration calls for TWO separate patterns which will be mailed to any address, on receipt of 15c. FOR EACH pattern in silver or stamps.

A PLEASING MODEL.



Pattern 3446 is here illustrated. It is cut in 3 Sizes: Small, 32-34; Medium, 36-38; Large, 40-42 inches bust measure. A Medium size will require 1 1/2 yard of 36 inch material.

Crepe, crepe de chine, linen, cambric, batiste, dimity, washable satin and silk may be used to make this style.

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Women who suffer from any such ailments should not fail to try this famous root and herb remedy, Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

Roman Ruins in North Africa.

North Africa—Morocco, Algiers—comprises, according to Louis Bertrand, a French writer, a storehouse of historical and archaeological treasure unsuspected by the great majority of Frenchmen, and other travellers.

M. Bertrand declares that most of his countrymen visit the colonial possessions much as they would visit a spectacular review or something of the sort, as a bizarre experience of strange sounds and colors and music and dances, whereas, if they would but open their eyes, they might behold dead cities raising up their heads and almost hear the echoing footsteps of the Roman legions. He points, in fact, to North Africa as the richest museum of Latin antiquity in the world, where the ruins of the imperial occupation are thickly strewn for leagues, crying out for the pick and spade of the excavator.

"From Volubilis in Morocco to Gighli in Tunis," declared the writer, "on a line two thousand kilometers long, the Roman ruins are landmarks in Africa. With their triumphal arches, colonnades, pagan temples, basilicas and Christian burial places, they outline a shattered royal road without a peer."

Making a plea for intelligent study of the Roman remains, M. Bertrand sternly criticizes a certain type of

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archaeologist—a sort of head hunter, who, instead of concluding to consider a ruin as something worthy of respect and precious for its own sake, which should be piously preserved, regards it as a subject for scientific vivisection. As soon as he has ripped it open and picked out the head of a he-goat, or something, he abandons it to disintegration again.

Disinterred Chiefs.

M. Bertrand describes many of the disinterred cities at great length and with the intellectual's love for elaborate detail. His article is accompanied by a number of beautiful photographs. A translation of a single paragraph, selected at random, may suffice as an example:

"About these great centres of ancient civilization press a crowd of colonies or municipalities whose ruins have, in many places, been cleared by the archaeologists—Cuteul, Thibdis, Thabursicum, Maudaure, Thveste. The first is nothing less than extraordinary in the strange coloring of its setting—a circle of mountains whose red tones recall the purple stripe on Roman senatorial tunics—an unique red against which the whiteness of ivory, the warm bluish of colonnades, pediments and architraves stand out in splendor.

"Cuteul, the modern Djemila, already promises to eclipse Timgad, not only because of its unusual framework of mountain, but in the grace, beauty

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