

A COQUETTE'S FIRST LOVE.

'ARE you engaged to be married to Charles Dantforth, Kate?' said Ann Duncan.

'Pray why do you ask that question?' retorted Kate Landon, rather peevishly.

'I merely asked for information,' replied Ann.

'Well, what put such an idea into your head? I cannot guess who told you. I am very sure I never lisped such a thing.'

'Such is the current report, Kate.—You have not told me whether it is true; but I mistrust it is.'

'Yes, I'll own it, Ann; though I'm ashamed to.'

'When are you going to be married? or don't you intend to be married?'

'I told him I would be married next winter, but I won't. I am tired of him already.'

'Kate Landon,' said Ann, 'will you promise to answer me one question, if you can?'

'Yes, half a dozen, if they are not too silly.'

'How many times have you been engaged, then?'

'Pon my word, I don't know. Twenty times, I guess.'

'As many as that, to my knowledge,' said Ann.

'Yes,' said Kate, 'there was Will Harle. He was such a wit that I told him I would have him for the sake of laughing; but I soon got tired of his folly, and told him so. And Captain Stanton, with such beautiful, curling moustaches! I never liked him. I only engaged myself to him for the sake of teasing Fan Lawronce. And Burwell, I don't know why I flirted with him, except it was because no one else offered himself just then. And there was Mr. Higgins, with a most beautiful hand and foot! But I found he wore tight boots, and I would not have him. Who would? And young Simper, who looked so sentimental, and always talked of love and moonlight! I concluded he must be the man in the moon, and I should not like to live in moonshine always. And there was Wilmerton, who looked so silly, and never said anything worth mentioning in his life. But I never engaged myself to him. I flirted with him till he made me an offer, and then refused him. And Jenkins! Good reason why I refused him. The only question in my mind is why I ever engaged to marry him. And Simpson—his father was rich, but I found that he was stingy. There is a host of others, but I am tired. They call me a coquette, but I don't care. I won't have anybody I don't like; and if I find it out after I am engaged to them, I'll break off the match.'

'I would not have any one I did not like either, Kate; but why did you not mention Henry Eaton in your catalogue? I thought he stood at the head?'

'Because I did not want to, Ann. I don't like to speak of him with those fellows.'

'But you were engaged to him, were you not?'

'Yes; we promised to have each other when we were children, and renewed the promise once a week regularly, until he went away.'

'Why did you then break the engagement? I should have thought it was so strong, no power on earth could have done it.'

'I thought so once; but I have grown wiser. I have found by sad experience that vows are things of air.'

'But you really loved Henry, once?'

'Yes, and always have, and do yet.'

'Why, what made you refuse him, then?'

'I did not refuse him, Ann. The fact is, that Henry Eaton was poor, and he felt it. Edward Leslie's father was very wealthy; he had just returned from college, and frequently came to see me, though for nothing more than friendship, and because we were children together, as you yourself know. Henry was a little jealous; he hinted his suspicions

to me. I was angry that he should suspect that I could love any one more than him, and especially that I loved him less because he was poor. I told him, in a pet, that if he thought me so fickle, he could be released from all childish engagements. This only confirmed his suspicions: he left me. I received a letter of farewell from him. Where he went, I never knew. He has probably forgotten me, and given his heart to one more worthy of him; but I have not forgotten him, and never can. They call me a heartless coquette; perhaps Henry does. I was not a coquette then, though I have been since. My heart is given to Henry, but I have lost his.'

'But, Kate, if you have loved no one but Henry Eaton, why have you so often promised to marry others? Was it for the sake of breaking your promise?'

'No, not exactly that; I hardly know why I have done so. I have given you the reason for some of my engagements. I did not know but I might forget Henry, and love some other one—but I cannot; sometimes I did it for fun, and sometimes I was altogether reckless.—But I will never promise to marry again. I'll tell Charles Dantforth I cannot love him, and live a nun for Henry's sake.'

'See that you keep that resolution,' said Ann, laughing at Kate's sober conclusion.

'Oh! I'm in earnest. I'm tired of hearing of broken hearts and dying lovers. There is no sense in it. I'm tired of being called cruel and hard-hearted. I'll give no more occasions for silly words and sickening sonnets. I am really determined to take the veil.'

'Perhaps you are serious, but I'll bet a diamond ring that you will be engaged again before the end of the winter.'

'I don't think I shall have much need of diamond rings in a convent,' said Kate, 'but I'll accept your bet, for I know I shall win it, and it shall remain a lasting witness that I have kept, at least, one promise.'

Thus the bet was agreed upon. Kate Landon had determined to become a nun, and immediately wrote for admission to a convent in the following spring. I don't know but she would have taken the veil the next day after her conversation with Ann Duncan; but Ann was to be married in a few weeks to Edward Leslie, and Kate had promised to be her bride-maid. This, like the promise between Kate and Henry Eaton, had been made in childhood, and ratified every week since. If Kate was married first, Ann was to be her bride-maid, and if Ann was married first, Kate was to be hers. Though Kate had made twenty promises to her beaux, and broken them all, and though she had declared that vows are things of air, yet these two promises she had ever considered sacred; and though her promise to Henry was now void, yet there were moments like that in which she had conversed with Ann Duncan, when she felt that perhaps it was binding, and she would live in seclusion rather than trifle with or break that engagement. The promise she had made to Ann, though of minor importance, was also a promise of childhood, and now remained in full force; and Kate deferred entering the convent, in order to fulfil it.

Ann's wedding was a joyous occasion to all save Kate Landon. It had been long wished for and expected. The parties were wealthy, and young, and handsome, and happy in each other's love.—The wedding party was large and fashionable. The apartments were splendidly adorned and lighted up. The refreshments were rare and sumptuous. The bride was elegantly arrayed. She looked almost as beautiful as Kate. The bridegroom looked better than usual, though Kate thought not so well as Henry Eaton. But all this happiness, elegance, beauty and bliss had no charms for Kate. She had dressed herself richly, and with taste, and looked beautiful:

for she could not look otherwise. She looked happy and pleased, for she would not look otherwise at Ann's wedding; yet she felt that such a festival might have been, but never would be for her. That all those happy smiles and joyous wishes and bridal kisses might have been lavished upon her who would soon be so lonely. When she looked at Edward, the happy bridegroom, she thought of Henry and their sad parting, and longed for the silent cell of the convent—the holy cloister of the devoted nun.

Gay music echoed through the festive halls. Youth and beauty joined in the 'light-toed dance,' but as Kate accepted the hand of the first groomsman to join in the quadrille, she felt that it was for the last time. Her partner was a young gentleman from India. He had just arrived. Kate had been introduced to him as Lieutenant Atwood, an old friend of Edward Leslie's, who had returned in order to visit his friends, and be present at Edward's wedding. He was tall, erect, and of a fine figure; with large, regular features, and dark, expressive eyes. He was noble, dignified and commanding in his bearing; graceful in the dance—all that a girl could love. Before they had finished the first set, Kate was deeply interested in his conversation, and thought he bore a strong resemblance to Henry Eaton. She was tired and did not join in the second quadrille; but Mr. Atwood sat by her on the window-seat, and was even more interesting than in the dance. Ann Duncan, (now Mrs. Leslie,) looked at them and thought of the diamond ring. Mr. Atwood attended Kate to the supper table.—She did not flirt; she was evidently pleased with him. He handed her into the carriage, and Kate asked him to call upon her. He called the next morning. I hasten to the sequel. The winter was not more than half finished, when Ann received a diamond ring and a note from Kate, stating that she was once more engaged to be married; and before the end of the winter there was a more splendid and elegant wedding. A larger and more fashionable party than that we have before described. A more beautiful bride and a handsomer bridegroom than Ann Duncan and Edward Leslie. Kate Landon was married to Henry Eaton.

Solution—Lieutenant Atwood was Henry Eaton. The plot and the fictitious name had been contrived by Ann Duncan and Edward Leslie. The climate and hardships of India had so changed Henry, his dress and manners were so altered, that Kate did not recognize him. After the wedding, Kate received a diamond ring from Ann. She had not made a new engagement, only renewed an old one.

THE MARVELS OF A SEED.

Have you ever considered how wonderful a thing the seed of a plant is? It is a miracle. God said, 'Let there be plant yielding seed;' and it is further added, 'each one after his kind.'

The great naturalist Cuvier thought that the germs of all past, present and future generations of seed were contained one within the other, as if packed in a succession of boxes. Other learned men have explained this mystery in a different way. But what signify all their explanations? Let them explain it as they will, the wonder remains the same, and we must look upon the reproduction of the seed as a continual miracle.

Is there upon earth a machine, is there a palace, is there even a city, which contains so much that is wonderful as is enclosed in a single little seed—one grain of corn, one little brown apple-seed, one small seed of a tree, picked up, perhaps, by a sparrow for her little ones, the smallest of a poppy or a bluebell, or even one of the seeds that are so small that they float about the air invisible to our eyes? Ah! there is a world of marvel and brilliant beauties hidden in each of these tiny seeds. Consider their im-

mense number, the perfect separation of the different kinds, their power of life and resurrection, and their wonderful fruitfulness.

Consider first their number. About a hundred and fifty years ago the celebrated Linnaeus, who has been called 'the father of botany,' reckoned about eight thousand different kinds of plants; and he then thought that the whole number existing could not much exceed ten thousand. But one hundred years after him M. de Candolle, of Geneva, described forty thousand different kinds of plants, and supposed it possible that the number might even amount to one hundred thousand.

Well, let me ask you, have these one hundred thousand kinds of plants ever failed to bear the right seed? Have they ever deceived us? Has seed of wheat ever yielded barley, or a seed of poppy grown up into a sun-flower? Has a sycamore tree ever sprung from an acorn, or a beech tree from a chestnut? A little bird may carry away the small seed of a sycamore in its beak to feed its nestlings, and on they way drop it on the ground. The tiny seed may spring up and grow where it fell, unnoticed, and sixty years after it may become a magnificent tree, under which the flocks of the valley and their shepherds may rest in the shade.

Consider next the wonderful power of life and resurrection bestowed upon the seeds of plants, so that they may be preserved from year to year, and even from century to century.

Let a child put a few seeds in a drawer and shut them up; sixty years afterward, when his hair is white and his steps tottering, let him take one of these seeds and sow it in the ground, and soon after he will see it spring up into new life and become a young, fresh and beautiful plant.

M. Jouanuet relates that in the year 1835 several old Celtic tombs were discovered near Begorac. Under the head of each of the dead bodies there was found a small square stone or brick, with a hole in each, containing a few seeds, which had been placed there beside the dead by the heathen friends, who had buried them perhaps fifteen or seventeen hundred years before. These seeds were carefully sowed by those who found them. What was seen to spring from the dust of the dead? Beautiful sunflowers, blue corn flowers, and clover bearing blossoms as bright and sweet as those which are woven into wreaths by the merry children playing in our fields.

Some years ago, a vase, hermetically sealed, was found in a mummy-pit in Egypt, by the English traveler, Wilkinson, who sent it to the British Museum. The librarian there, having unfortunately broken it, discovered in it a few grains of wheat and one or two peas, old, wrinkled, and as hard as a stone. The peas were planted carefully under glass on the fourth of June, 1844, and at the end of thirty days these seeds were seen to spring up into new life. They had been buried probably about three thousand years ago, perhaps in the time of Moses, and had slept all that long time, apparently dead, yet still living in the dust of the tomb.—Guassen.

THE GREEK CRAVING FOR PRINCE ALFRED. The Greek throne is still unoccupied, and, for a marvel, no new candidate has appeared during the week. The report of the National Assembly, indeed, received on Monday, is not very favorable to any, for it shows as almost unanimous vote in favor of Prince Alfred. He had 230,016 votes, and his nearest competitor, the Duc de Leuchtenberg, 2,400, or about one per cent. on that number. Other members of the Russian family had some 5,500 votes among them; Prince Napoleon, 345; a Republic, 93; Prince Ypsilanti, 6; the Duc d'Aumale, 3; and the late King Otho one—let us hope his valet. The Assembly accordingly solemnly decreed Prince Alfred King, and directed the Provisional Government to invite his Royal Highness to take possession of the throne. The Prince, meanwhile, to whom all this must not be a little exciting, is sick of fever at Malta.