



A Millionairess; Countess Westerleigh.

CHAPTER XX. (To be Continued.) Nora sat in her corner, with a photograph album, as still as a mouse, but with eyes as sharp as that peculiarly alert little animal. She saw the whole of the business between Lady Florence and Senley Tyers, and watched the changing expressions in the beautiful face. But though her woman's wit made her suspicious, she was too ignorant of the world and its wiles to understand; she only thought that if she were the proud beauty she would not have permitted Mr. Tyers to bend over her and talk in such low and confidential tones—for Nora's dislike and distrust of that accomplished gentleman increased every moment. As Vane went up to Lady Florence, Senley Tyers walked away and stood by the fire; and Nora, watching him saw him smile with a peculiar satisfaction. While she was watching him he turned, in his softly sudden fashion, and met the gaze of her bright eyes; and, as if reminded of her existence he crossed the room and approached her.

Nora bent over her photograph album and knit her brows, on her guard, in a moment, and determined to say as little to him as possible. Senley Tyers drew up a chair beside her. "Have you found some interesting photos, Mr. Mortimer?" he said. His voice was particularly soft and

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pleasant, but nevertheless it jarred upon Nora and caused her brows to grow straighter. "Yes," she said in a tone that did not invite further questions. But Mr. Senley Tyers always met a repulse with bland persistence. "What are they—views?" he asked. "Let me see. Ah, yes. Lord Warlock has been abroad a good deal; he was Secretary for the Colonies at one period of his useful career, and has travelled much. I suppose you know some of these places? Where did the 'Neptune' sail to last?" "To Australia," replied Nora, shortly. "Ah, yes," he said. "Delightful trip! How I envy you. Of course you saw Sydney? There ought to be a photograph of it here." He turned the pages of the album. "Tell me if you recognize it. Ah! here it is. Is it a good view?" Nora felt her color coming and going. "I don't know," she said. "I didn't go ashore."

Senley Tyers glanced at her out of the corners of his eyes. "Oh, oh!" he said, with a smile. Then you had been misbehaving yourself. I'm afraid, and were kept board for punishment, Mr. Mortimer. Was that it?" Nora's face went scarlet, and a indignant denial rose to her lips, but she checked it and looked guiltily. Senley Tyers laughed. To inflict mental pain was a much valued amusement of his, and he promised himself unlimited enjoyment of the kind to be got out of Vane's mysterious cousin.

Senley Tyers watched her with a smile that suddenly fled from his face and left it acutely suspicious. He saw that a tear was forcing its itself from under the lowered lid next him. Now, even the softest-hearted ship-boy is not in the habit of shedding tears when he is chafed, and the appearance of that crystal drop positively startled Senley Tyers. His keen eyes scanned the handsome face—too delicately beautiful in all its features for a boy's—and then fell upon the hands with which Nora clutched the photograph album. A doubt, a suspicion, a merely nebulous suspicion, rose in his mind; but vague and impossible as it seemed, it set the blood to his face and made his heart leap. He bent forward slightly, and his whole tone and manner altered as he murmured: "Forgive me! I have pained you. I did not intend to do so; but I am afraid I have offended you past forgiveness." The tear dropped—unseen, as Nora fondly hoped—and she forced a smile. "Oh, no, you haven't," she said, as boyishly as she knew how. "But I don't care about talking of my sea-life; I wasn't happy, and—"

understand. It was very thoughtless and inconsiderate of me. I won't mention it again." He was silent a moment or two, then he said: "Are you fond of pictures, Mr. Mortimer?" "Yes—very," said Nora, with an eagerness which she attempted to subdue. "I am glad of that," said Senley Tyers. "I shall be very pleased if you will come and see some of mine. Ask your cousin Tempest to bring you." Nora thanked him, but rather coldly. She had no desire to go to Mr. Senley Tyers' studio, even though it might contain the most beautiful pictures in the world. "I am painting a portrait of Lady Florence, as you may have heard," he went on, "and I should like you to see that, and to hear your opinion of it. She is very beautiful, don't you think?" His keen eyes watched Nora's face keenly as he spoke. Nora raised her head, and looked at Lady Florence absent. She and Vane were seated on an ottoman, Lady Florence talking, Vane listening. It was evident that she was trying her hardest to amuse and interest him, and every now and then Vane leaned back and laughed shortly; and at such moments a look of gratification softened Lady Florence's proud expression. As Nora watched them—watched the exquisite smile which Lady Florence bent upon the unconscious Vane, lounging on the ottoman in his usual rather indolent manner—a look came into Nora's face which possibly Senley Tyers had been waiting for.

"They are very old friends," he murmured. "Yes," assented Nora, as carelessly as she could; but her voice sounded dry and forced. "Lady Florence is, perhaps, the most beautiful woman in London," he went on in soft, reflective tones, almost as if he were communing with himself rather than addressing his friend.

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remarks to Nora. "She breaks hearts wherever she goes. I suppose you are already head over heels in love with her, Mortimer?" Nora started. "I?" she exclaimed, almost harshly. Then she hastened to assume her feigned character, and added, with a forced laugh: "Oh, yes! I fell in love with her at once." Senley Tyers smiled and nodded. "That is the way with us all. Unfortunately we can not all be Vane Tempests, and so"—he shrugged his shoulders—"we have to love helplessly."

Nora's brows came together. "Is he?" she paused—"is he in love with her?" she asked, almost under her breath, as if the question caused her pain. "How could he help it?" responded Senley Tyers. "Could you, if you were sitting there where he is sitting, and Lady Florence were looking at you and smiling as she is smiling now?" Nora scarcely breathed; it seemed as if some one had suddenly stabbed her. She looked at Vane, and something in his negligent attitude and careless laugh seemed to comfort her and dispel the sharp pain which Senley Tyers' question had caused her. "I don't believe," she said, involuntarily; then she stopped. "Ah, well! perhaps not," he said. "They say that it is always a case of loving or being loved. No one gets back the love which he or she gives. It's a matter of fate. By the way, do you believe in fate, Mortimer?" He put the question carelessly and casually enough, but he had been carefully leading up to it, and it had something more behind it than Nora suspected. "Fate?" she said, with a little frown. "I don't know." "Do you think that our lives are allotted out to us—that we are bound to do certain things, whether we like them or not?" Nora raised her eyes to his with a frown. "I don't know," she said. "Who can tell whether there is any truth in that. Nobody can know." He nodded. "Well, some say they can tell your fate. The gypsies, for instance; and not only the gypsies; palmistry is quite fashionable now."

"What is that?" she asked. (To be Continued.)

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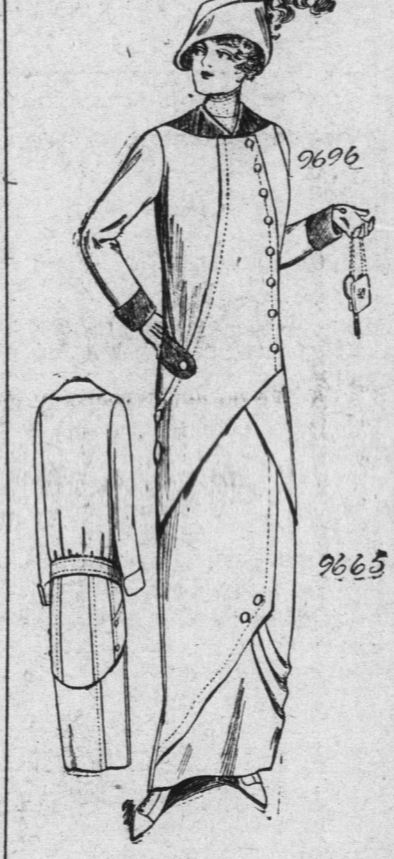
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Dep

By I Molly, the the Stenogr Lady was to a dance, this imit occasion sh to, have a gown an quite as it ant, as a dance. Heing was telling about it night before we asked it might see it.

"But it isn't done," said Molly. "Martin is going to bring it around tomorrow afternoon." "But suppose she doesn't do it?" said the Author-Man's assistant. "How do you dare leave it then?" "Because I know Mrs. Martin," answered Molly serenely. "If she will have it done I know she will have it done. I am no more anxious about it than you. What a very splendid quality of dependability is, to be sure! How much more useful and able it makes other good qualities. How many talents, what great gifts, what fine qualities of character are weakened and made infinitely valuable because they are not backed with dependability! We all know workers of one or another who are capable of great things, but who are passed over in favor of others less gifted because they cannot be depended upon. Unreliability is the rotten plague of the heart, which spoils the most promising fruit. While a reputation of dependability is like the mark of the lion, which fixes an unchangeable value on all which it is stamped upon. Oh, yes, I know it's true, because you said it—"

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