

CONFIDENCES OF A LOOKING GLASS.

Yes I am only a Looking Glass, a thing—I may well say a *thing*—for people do and have done things before me, that no animate eyes would be allowed to look upon. I have no doubt but that I should have been in “statu quo,” had it not been that another Pygmalion (in the shape of our Editor) has arisen and made me his Galatea. In vivifying me he says:

“Few like Pygmalion, dote on lifeless charms,
Or care to clasp a statue in their arms.”

Now that by my Pygmalion, my own Pygmalion, I have been endowed with the power of speech, I feel inclined to ask, “am I—what?” Galatea, having life given her, seemed intuitively to know to what sex she belonged, but not having mixed in polite circles, she did not know the meaning of the word “man,” hence her query to Chrysothos, “are *you* a man?” Now by asking such a question of a “thing,” dressed in the costume with which Chrysothos did, this Galatea shows herself either a very innocent young woman or—well—otherwise. To argue that is not for me; it would not be fair. I, for my part, have had my eyes open all my life, and now that my own, own Pygmalion has bestowed upon me the power of speech, I am going to “let her go.” How easily one falls into the slang of the country! Oh, the tales I can tell, and I will tell them, too, if only for the sake of my Pygmalion!

Do not start away so, Pygmalion; I know that I am cold—it is my nature—but bethink you, have I not ever been a friend in giving you a true reflection, whereas your whilom friends have been ever ready to criticize your personal charms, and now, Pygmalion, I promise to give thee a true report of those confidences, of which I may be the recipient.

No. 1.

WHO IS THIS?

And this is to be the end, an ignoble end, to a career that had budded so prosperously? I am, after all, to be deprived of the satisfaction of being still in power, when the ideas I have promulgated in the last few years bear fruit. Who are they that dare to judge me? I may have sinned morally, but are those who cast these stones themselves blameless? Perhaps I *have* broken a Commandment! Are any of my accusers to the fore to say they have not? Certainly to my country I may have done harm, but how willingly did my whilom supporters throw me over! Was this because they are so highly moral, or did I draw the

reins a little too tight? What a pity I did not know that I had such a moral crew to cater for, may-be—but there, as Wyndham Kepling says, “that belongs to another tale.” I am no longer “uncrowned king of Ireland.” And this, too, brought about by a woman, together with the dictum of the G. O. M. He, the G. O. M., is right to a certain extent, but why did he keep me on tenterhooks, waiting for his ultimatum? I can’t help having a quiet chuckle over the quandary in which I placed him. I was, from a moral point of view, bound to give in. “Conscience makes cowards of us all,” but still I know there were some friends(?) who were only too willing to put an extra spoke in the wheel to roll me off the road. But have they been, and are they now strictly honest? Do not they rather fancy they can make capital out of what I for years have laboured to bring about? I can’t defend myself! But what about Nelson? He never was asked to resign in his resignation on account of his name being coupled too intimately with that of Lady Hamilton; and again, Lord Palmerston did not carry his political career through without the affection of one who was not his wife; and yet he was not pestered to resign. Was it right for me to stand up at all? Had I not have better “shut up” at once? Was it pride that prevented me doing so, or the real love of my country? I hardly know myself. How is it that all my late supporters that have sinned—not so grievously perhaps, as myself—should now turn round on the one “sheep” that has gone so much astray? Again, has a certain politician been always sincere towards me, or is it that he found me too heavy a stone, and was glad to drop me? I don’t like giving in. I can hear old fatty S—y saying, “I told you so,” and above all, I fear that Randy will write me a congratulatory letter after this style:—

Dear P—

Sorry you have got into such a bother. I knew that the blood of yours would get you into trouble. Take my advice, disappear for six months, get married, and as juries often have to come back “without a stain on your character.” R. C.

What could I say on receipt of a letter like that? Nothing! What could I do? Swear? Oh! what a fool I’ve been to have allowed myself to be placed in this false position! and all for a woman! Do I really care for her now? I don’t know! Well, she was some other person’s property, she might have been worth risking one’s neck for; but as one’s own—well—there—still—fruit is always sweetest! What a chaos it all seems! To think that I, putting my hand to the plough to such good purpose, should now have to look back. Ah, Kitty, you are indeed dear to me.

LOOKING GLASS

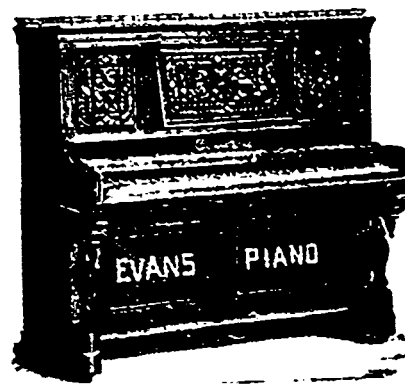
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