



"She comes from the past and re-visits my room. She looks as she did then, all beauty and bloom. So smiling and tender, so fresh and so fair. And yonder she sits in my cane-bottomed chair."

Many a man sits silent and alone in a home of mourning and conjures up before his eyes the face and form of the woman who was once a loving wife and a faithful helpmate. In thousands of such cases the wife might still be alive and well and happy, had the man been not only a good husband, but a wise adviser. Women shrink from the ordeal of consulting a physician. They shudder at the thought of submitting to the obnoxious examinations insisted upon by most physicians. In the majority of cases they have none of this hesitancy about consulting their husbands. A wise man will understand at once that troubles of this description will soon break down a woman's general health. He will understand that a specialist of eminence and world wide reputation should be frankly consulted at once. Dr. R. V. Pierce, for thirty years chief consulting physician to the Invalids' Hotel and Surgical Institute, at Buffalo, N. Y., is one of the most eminent and widely-known specialists in the world. With the assistance of a staff of able physicians, he has prescribed for many thousands of ailing women. He has discovered a wonderful medicine for women, that may be used in the privacy of their homes. It is known as Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. It cures surely, speedily and permanently, all weakness and disease of the distinctly feminine organism. It allays inflammation, heals ulceration, soothes pain, gives rest to the tortured nerves, and checks debilitating drains.

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Ch'town, May 13, 1898

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Beaton's Bargain.

BY MRS. ALEXANDER.

CHAPTER I.

"SHOULD AULD ACQUAINTANCE BE FORGOT?"

The play was nearly over. The house, crowded by a brilliant audience, resounded with frequent applause. Irving and Miss Terry had been at their best in "Much Ado About Nothing."

"She is certainly charming," said a slight, elegant woman, with large dark eyes and an exquisitely becoming toilet, who sat facing the stage in a private box. "How very delightful it must be to make a lot of money by being fascinating and wearing lovely dresses!"

"I fancy there was a background of grinding and waiting before Miss Terry could produce this highly finished, highly-paid performance," returned a gentleman, who was leaning on the back of a chair, a tall, thin, distinguished-looking man, with thick sandy moustaches, and hair a shade darker, straight, handsome features, and light smiling eyes. "All intense pleasure must be costly; but then one does not count the cost."

"You do not, I'm sure," she replied, looking up to him with a smile.

"Perhaps not; but the cost discounts me."

"How horrid realities are. Give me my cloak, Jean, let us wrap up and be ready. What is she looking at, Mr. Beaton?"

The lady she addressed had been for more than a minute gazing through her opera glasses at some person or persons in the dress circle opposite, and now, turning to Beaton, she handed the glass to him.

"I wish," she said, "you would look at that man who is leaning against the pillar behind a huge woman in a green bonnet. I really believe it is Jack Maitland."

"I dare say it is. He is in town, I know," taking the glass and looking as she directed. "Yes," he said, "it is Maitland; you have a good memory, Jean."

"Oh, Mrs. Winington has no end of a memory," said a stout, short young man, ruddy and fair-haired, who had not spoken before.

"It is a long time since I saw Jack Maitland and he is a good deal changed. Why did you not bring him to see me?"

"I never thought of it," said Beaton. "Well, find him out now, like a good boy, and bring him to supper."

"Oh, we will meet him going out."

"No, no; make sure of him; you have seen all this a dozen times. Go now!"

Beaton raised his eyebrows, put on an air of submission, and left the box. "You have a very obedient brother, Jean," said the first speaker.

"Every one obeys Mrs. Winington, Lady Mary," remarked the stout young man.

"Except Colonel Winington," cried Lady Mary.

"That of course. I promised to obey him," said Mrs. Winington, a smile parting her ripe red lips, and showing the white angular teeth within. She was on a larger scale than her friend, tall and stately, with a grandly rounded figure, snowy arms and throat, so far as a square snuggery and elbow sleeves permitted them to be seen, a richly pale complexion, with a tiny freckle or two where the sun had kissed her cheek too fondly, abundant coal chestnut hair, and soft warm brown eyes. She was a handsome likeness of her brother, Leslie Beaton, with more vitality.

"Hush!" said Lady Mary, "don't have no enthusiasm for the drama."

"Come!" exclaimed Mrs. Winington. "We know the rest. Let us get out before the crowd, Mr. Smythe, you can find the brougham, and Leslie must come on the best way he can; I do hope he will catch Jack Maitland."

Mr. Smythe was most active and energetic. He soon discovered Mrs. Winington's tall footman. Between them, that lady's perfectly appointed brougham was quickly brought up, and the owner with her fair friend carefully handed in by the devoted Smythe.

"I shall be at home to-morrow; come and have a cup of tea at five o'clock. Good-night," said Mrs. Winington, as she drew up the window, and they rolled off. "What a shame not to ask the poor fellow to supper!" said Lady Mary. "He really earns his bread (his bread of life) very hardy."

"Pooh!" returned Mrs. Winington; "four are company, five an unpleasant solitude," and she nestled herself into her corner of the luxurious conveyance. "Besides, I have given him his guerdon, tea with us in payment in full. I do not want him to-night."

"Oh, it is to be a double tete-a-tete? As you like. But who is this mysterious Jack Maitland, who shrouds himself in the obscurity of the upper boxes?"

"Jack Maitland," said Mrs. Winington, slowly, "is the son of our factor, or what you English people would term 'agent,' to my father's estate. He was my first—well, nearly my love."

"Your first love! Then you could scarcely have been short-coated; and you remember him! This is interesting."

"I assure you he was very interesting, and so desperately in earnest. He was ready to brave the wrath of all the Beaton's if I would only run away with him."

"What! did he dare so much? and only the son of an employe?"

"Oh, the Maitlands are of a good old stock. His father and mine were brother officers. Jack is a gentleman by birth and breeding, only the proposition was so absurd. I answered it by marrying Captain Winington."

"A very wise solution. What a nuisance it is, Jean, that nice men never have any money!"

"Well, rarely."

"And where has your young hero been hiding himself?"

"I haven't an idea. He was a medical student in Edinburgh, but he broke away and went to America or New Zealand, or Timbuctoo; in short, he was in disgrace with his father, with every one, so we quite lost sight of him."

"Ah! I suppose remorse for having ruined his life presses on your soul."

"Indeed it does not. Jack Maitland would have had to sow his wild oats whether he had known Jean Beaton or not; but he was a delightful boy, as I considered him, though he is two years older than I am."

"I feel curious to see this young Loch-invar," said Lady Mary, yawning. "What are we to have for supper? I begin to be hungry."

"I scarcely know. The usual sort of thing, I presume."

"My dear, with your means you should aim at uncommon things. Your good appetite, Jean, is a misfortune; it blunts the deficiency of your gastronomic perceptions. I like only extra nice things."

A little more disjointed talk brought them to Mrs. Winington's house in South Kensington.

The double doors were thrown open by the watchful butler before the bell ceased to sound. Mrs. Winington and her guest crossed a square carpeted hall, richly colored and fragrant with the flowers which decorated it, to a small ante or morning room, dimly lighted, where a wood fire burned on a low hearth. An open door opposite showed the dining-room, where supper was laid.

"Really, the fire is quite nice, though it is nearly the end of April," said Lady Mary, throwing off her wraps.

"I and it too warm," returned Mrs. Winington, taking a fanciful match-box from the mantel-piece, and lighting the candles in the girandoles at each side of the glass. She looked steadily at her own image for a minute, and then turned away with a slight smile.

"You think you'll do?" asked Lady Mary, who had been watching her lazily. "Is young Lochinvar to be immolated over again?"

Mrs. Winington laughed, a pleasant joyous laugh.

"Certainly not; but I am glad my old admirer will not be able to say, 'Poor Jeanie is awfully gone off.' Six or seven years are something of a trial to the best complexion, added to late hours and a rapid rate of living."

"Too true!" cried Lady Mary, earnestly. "You make me shiver. Here am I, a destitute widow for more than two years, and I have only enjoyed, not improved the shining hour. I really must find some poor part this season, or—"

"I hear a cab or something stop," interrupted Mrs. Winington, quickly. "Come, let us not seem to have waited for them." But she had not yet taken her seat when "Mr. Beaton," "Mr. Maitland,"

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W. D. MCKAY

were announced, and she went forward to greet her early lover—a strikingly beautiful figure, clad in exceedingly ornamental and becoming mourning.

"After long years!" she said, holding out her fair, unglowed hand, with a soft smile. "I am very glad to see you, Mr. Maitland."

Jack Maitland was not so tall as her brother, but broader, and more largely built. He was dark, either naturally or from exposure, with nearly black hair, and deep gray steady eyes. His square jaw and well-cut mouth were undisturbed by beard or mustache, and though at a disadvantage in his unstudied morning dress, there was a certain dignity of strength in his figure and movements which also gave him the air of being older than he really was.

"You are very good to give me this pleasure," replied Maitland, holding her hand for just a second, and looking observantly at her, while a bright answering smile lit up his face and showed teeth white as her own. "I was most agreeably surprised when Leslie brought me your invitation."

"Which I could hardly persuade him to accept," said Beaton; "some wretched scruple about being in morning dress, unworthy of a backwoodsman, made him hesitate."

"Not for long," said Maitland, taking the place beside his hostess to which she motioned him.

"I should never have forgiven you had you refused," said Mrs. Winington. "But I have neglected my duty. Let me introduce my old friend and playfellow to you, Lady Mary. Mr. Maitland, Lady Mary Har."

(To be Continued)

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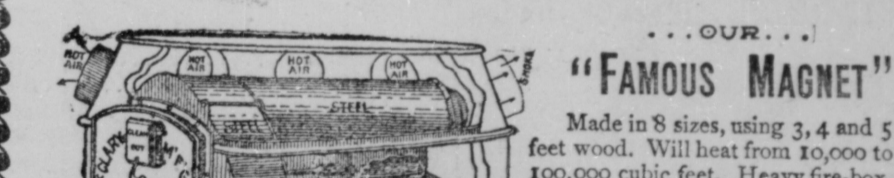
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