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A BREAKFAST AT THE LAKE,

And what came of it.

BY ELLIS ARMONETTE.

CHAPTER I.

"The winged seeds of love
Take root."

It was a hot summer morning—not one that has dawned upon the world A.D. 1860, nor last year, nor even the year before, though its date is not a wallowed up by quite so much as a decade of time—and early as was the hour, the populous city seemed to lie in a swoon of expectancy, awaiting the fiery radiations of the noonday sun.

The night had been hot, and the morning was hotter, so that all persons of leisure bethought themselves to seek some place of coolness and refreshment. Among a few thousands who were thus influenced was one, a friend of mine, young Baylezoff Cottyn, son and heir to old Planter Cottyn, millionaire.

Baylezoff was an elegant gentleman and a clever fellow, but a Fortunatus' purse had made a Sir Charles Coldstream of him at the age of twenty-five.

He had been everywhere, seen everything, and felt every sensation, until he had finally arrived at the conclusion that he would pass a summer at his father's town residence, and see if the yellow fever would not obviate the necessity of his continuing to live.

Do not suppose from this that he was misanthropic, or at all prepared to occupy the cell of an anchorite. Quite the contrary; he was genial and social, and devoted to the care and adornment of his handsome person the well-paid services of an accomplished valet and a sufficiency of time each day to have won or lost a battle. But then you know, all this had grown to be a mere matter of habit and form—all the spiritual essence, the enjoyment, the sensation of the thing was gone—dead years ago. It was not for himself, it was for the world that he continued it. If he had fine wines and fast horses, how churlish it would be not to share their pleasures with Smith or Johnson, who, with great natural fondness for them, were not able to indulge their propensities, because one had a widowed mother and the other an invalid sister to provide for out of his limited income.

And then, if Miss Belle Dashaway and Mrs. Hunter Wylde would persist in requesting his protection as cavalier for a ride, or partner in the dance, what less could he do than appear before them in faultless toilette?

On the aforementioned hot summer morning, Cottyn rose at an almost unprecedented hour, say seven o'clock, and went towards the breakfast room.

There everything appeared inviting. The windows opened on a charming garden. The temperature was certainly endurable, and the appointments for a meal *sans faute*.

He stopped—his hand resting on the door bolt—and yawned; sauntered to the window, put aside its thin drapery, looked out, and yawned again; turned towards the table, paused midway in his course, meditated a second, and ejaculated, with a slight show of animation—

"By Jove, I'll go."

Muttering afterwards, as if to confirm his sudden resolution, "It's convenient to bathe or drown oneself there."

What his sudden whim was will be quickly shown by his after movements.

An impetuous ring of the bell.

"Tell John to harness and put to the bays, and be quick!"

During fifteen minutes he meditated, and his subject was the selection of a companion for the day. One acquaintance was too silent, another talked too much, one was obtuse, another eternally anticipated all he had to say. Delord, who had been a splendid fellow, could think of nothing now but his new wife, though, by-the-way, she deserved all his devotion, and Southall was filled with cynicism toward "the sex," because of his recent jilting by Miss Sofia Beauxyeux.

He could not think of any one who was the exact desideratum, and almost concluded not to go—it wasn't worth the trouble, etc.

At last, however, he concluded to yield to his first prompting, trusting to chance for a companion; and a few seconds thereafter, he was seated behind the spirited horses, whose fleet feet soon whirled him to the place they were destined to bear him, which, by-the-way, was neither a very romantic or classic spot, being nothing more than the depot of the Pontchartrain rail cars.

There the same scene presented itself to his eyes that may have been witnessed by you, perchance but a day gone by; there was that shabby, genteel man, the condition of whose linen suggested the possibility that his wardrobe did not possess its mate; there was that fleshy man, with nauseously scented and elaborately barbarized hair, who sported a vast amount of the galvanized metal in his decorations, that shone out in its native purity in his rotund manner, as he followed with insolent stares of investigation each passing female who was not sheltered by manly protection; there was that little ubiquitous news-boy, whose sole object in life seemed to be to craze incoming and outgoing passengers with proffers of papers, the contents of which had been digested hours ago.

There was that venerable Ethiopian, reduced to a brotherhood with Uncle Ned, and boasting a cutaway of composite architecture, who, with his cronies, appeared to be vastly busy about nothing, or who else selected the most exposed standing point, and basked luxuriously in the sun, talking with an air of wisdom that would be all sufficient for affairs of State, to some loafing comrade.

Footsteps came and passed, and died away in the distance, and idlers hanged and stared, and looked at their watches, and consulted the time-tables, and noted the difference from their watches, and all things the scene was just such as you or I the last time we were at the locality in question.

Delivery is a amusing equipage and attendant with such increase of wheels when to return, looked around for the owner of the equipage, in which chance did not favor him, as the locomotive had wheezed itself up alongside of it, and around to its proper place, and the train was really off, so far as acquaintanceship was concerned, he sat in the crowded car alone.

A glance inward promising nothing of interest, he turned an outward gaze on a scene which, having the approximating unsightliness lessened by the rapidity of motion, was at least pleasing; the low, level stretch, the mingling of roof and trees, and the wide arch of Heaven above having naught to obscure it save the summer clouds lying like huge drifts of snow, low down in the western horizon.

Upon the cars reaching the lake end, Baylezoff sprang down on the shells, crossed to the right, and soon arrived at a gate standing hospitably open, though guarded by a fictitious semblance of a cultivator in an impossible costume, and a female who is his consolation, if it be truth that "misery likes company."

Although not the first time he had seen it by a hundred, at least, he paused a moment in meditative contemplation at a fountain, where three or four children hung over the railing, enamored of the sprawling occupants of the basin, viz: a half dozen young alligators, a collection of bull frogs, and some juvenile turtles.

A pace or two beyond, he was at the steps of a cottage building, where a white-aproned individual bowed him in, escorted him to a pleasant room and took his orders for the morning repast.

It was served with neatness and dispatch, and what with change, exercise and delay, Cottyn was in possession of the best known sauce for its enjoyment.

He ate and was filled.

He sipped his wine and grew benign and satisfied, almost resigned to his lot in life, and even compared it favorably with that of others—Delord, for instance, who could not have followed up the whim of a moment as he had done, but would have felt obliged either to mention it to his wife, or bring her with him; or Southall, who would have curdled the very salad oil with the acidity of his remarks, because, forsooth, the favor of one lady withdrawn had put him out of conceit with all the world.

Cottyn lit a cigar, rose, motioned the table to be cleared, walked across the room, and threw himself on a lounge by the window, and gave himself up to the delightful occupation of watching the blue wreaths of smoke curl and twine and dissolve in air.

As he lay thus lazily recumbent, the noise of an approaching steam train fell unheeded on his ear, and the first sublunary sound which did attract his attention occurred a few moments thereafter, and was that most delightful one known to earth, and was that most delightful one known to earth, not even excepting the warbling of nature's minstrels, a woman's unaffected, irrepressible laugh, accompanied by quick words of interrogation and conversation from several voices.

Will it be too much to hazard the suggestion, that Baylezoff must have experienced the vulgar sensation of curiosity?

Nothing but his own conduct would warrant me in making such an assertion, but as I am an authentic narrator, that bubbling, mirthful laugh caused him to undergo the exertion of rising to a sitting posture to discover who could have been its originator.

How would not the number of votaries, who place themselves *sub invocatione* St. Cecilia, have been increased by languishing beauties, and spirited belles as they practised the gamut to attain musical ha-ha-ha's, could it have been known, that the rich, the elegant, the too fascinating, but alas! the indifferent Cottyn was interested by a passing peal of laughter.

Footsteps told him there were passers-by on the outer gallery, and he felt assured it must have come from one among them, and as a pair of glad blue eyes appertaining to a female face flashed an accidental glance upon him, he had no hesitancy in deciding its source, even if a few gay words and a sweet repetition had not made that assurance "doubly sure."

He intended to fall back in his original position of comfort, but a sudden and unaccountable interest waked a wonderment as to who the fair laugher could be.

The entire party was attractive and had the air *parfaitement comme il faut*, which, if intangible and indescribable, is yet so easily discernable to the eyes of refinement.

There was a dignified and commanding gentleman, who might probably be some sixty years of age, a noble-looking lady, who it seemed safe to infer was his wife, a young man of chivalric bearing, the charming creature who had laughed, and two young girls of about fourteen and twelve years of age, respectively.

"Evidently strangers, and apparently a family party," meditated Baylezoff.

"I wonder if they are brother and sister;" there was certainly no resemblance.

Oh no—confound him—I caught that air of repressed devotion—used to see it in Delord before he was married—that no man ever wears towards his sister.

She looked shy, though, and uncertain, too, as a wild bird in its flights—how unlike that bold, challenging glance of Belle Dashaway's and—and—Mrs. Hunter Wylde, he was about to say, but remembering she was a wife, he turned away from invading, even in thought, the sanctity that hedged her in as a married woman, notwithstanding she had shown herself so willing for him to forget it, while striving to gratify her vanity by holding the most desirable man in town in her train of admirers.

Baylezoff certainly must have indulged in an extra glass of wine that morning, for he was never before known to act or think in a manner so *prononcé*, which is the French for giving way to one's feelings.

He grew suddenly quite warm, declared the sea-breeze had failed, notwithstanding that the flapping awnings gave direct and noisy contradiction to his assertion—suddenly decided his cigar was not worth smoking and dashed it impetuously away, though a second afterwards he bit off the end of another in a most spiteful manner, and lighted it with as determined an air as, I dare say, that individual wore who, before arson was made a penitentiary offense, applied the incendiary torch to the temple of Diana.

He rose and walked quickly across the room without motive, and made his disorder still more apparent as he turned to retrace his steps by pausing midway in his career, studying the pattern of the oil-cloth attentively for a few minutes, and then muttering.

"I wonder if she loves him."

As he lifted his head the hum of conversation, subdued only by a dividing wall, gave him to know that the party were installed in the room adjoining the one he occupied.

He threw a glance of hatred at the innocent partition, which suddenly subsided when he discovered a gleam of light emanating from a communicating door, which he remembered the waiter had busied himself to close, but which, from the stirring in the air, was so swollen from the moistness of the latch, and had even sprung out it would not quite open.

Doing so, he sauntered back and left this mischievous opening.

Do not suppose for an instant that my friend Baylezoff stooped so low as to condescend to such an act as to peep. No, he has told me himself that though he would have spurned the base thought even, approaching ingeniously acknowledges that, without touching the door, he took up the most advantageous position for looking through the crack.

Perhaps in time he became accustomed to the duty required of it, he knew that fate favored him so far as to bring a most bewitching little nose under his observation, and he felt convinced from his transient glimpse that it could belong to none other than the captivating laugher.

He tried by elevating and lowering the angle of sight to gain a view of some other feature—but no, that nose, spirited and delicate, *à la Roxalane* was all that was vouchsafed him.

He admired it, but that alone did not satisfy him.

Had it been forehead, eyebrows, or eyes, mouth, hair or hand, it would have served for him to dream about or write of—but a nose—very pretty it was true, very necessary also, but how absurd as a treasure of memory.

He stood a moment in vexation at having been foiled, when suddenly inspiration—it must have been that article, for nothing seems to be accomplished without it in these, "our latter days"—descended on him.

"Waiter!"

Enter waiter quickly by the hall door, responding in tones submissive and interrogative.

"Monsieur?"

"Can you hold your tongue?"

"Yes, sir," unhesitatingly.

"Enough. Here." Whereupon a piece of yellow metal, bearing on it the impress of that national ornithological emblem—a spread-eagle—and which the money changers estimate to be equal to ten silver dollars, current coin, was transferred from Baylezoff's portmonnaie to White Apron's palm.

"Help me off with my coat; give me your jacket, apron and napkin."

The waiter obeyed, thinking it possible that in his liberal employer he had to deal with a harmless lunatic, whom it would be best to humor. He adjusted the professional articles with artistic skill, and prepared to withdraw.

"Stop!" said Baylezoff, "take this," producing a duplicate of the yellow metal, "to the waiter who is in attendance in the next room, and ask to supply his place. Bring the dishes to the door and I will place them and wait at table."

White Apron, not entirely unaccustomed to the adventures that transpire at all houses of public entertainment, although the like of this maneuver had never before occurred to him, gradually expanded into a smile of comprehension.

Baylezoff waited a few moments for the waiter to effect his arrangement with his confrere, and then seizing a pile of plates that were brought to him, opened the door and walked in with a bold front, though not without some toward trepidation at his unwarranted intrusion.

His entrance attracted no attention, and he proceeded in his duties with almost professional skill, receiving no check to his self-gratulation on the success that was about to attend his little plot, until he deposited a plate before the young cavalier of the party, whose eyes resting on Baylezoff's hand, discovered its whiteness and the elegance of its shape, and also the value of a superb diamond solitaire he wore in a ring.

The surprise occasioned caused the stranger to pause with a half enunciated word on his lips, to follow the arm up to the shoulder, and then to the face of the aristocratic waiter.

Baylezoff's presence of mind did not desert him, though he wondered how he could have been guilty of such an oversight in his preparations. He affected to think that the young man would have given an order, and with a whisk of his napkin at some intruding flies, said:

"*Mais, que vouley-vous, Monsieur?*"

Baylezoff was then convinced that they were not residents of the city, for the language did not seem familiar to them; indeed, the young man turned to the lovely girl at whose side he had placed himself and said:

"Cousin Annie, you will have to be our interpreter."

"Mine is but book-studied French; I am afraid I would not make myself understood," was the modest reply.

"Perhaps we can have a waiter who speaks English," suggested the old gentleman.

"The other man who was here a moment since said nothing, but I imagined he understood us."

"Where has he gone?" asked Annie.

Baylezoff stood entranced.

The young girl addressed herself to him in hesitating, English-turned French sentences, but which fell upon his ear more sweetly than the most gracious flow of elegantly correct words that ever greeted him from the lips of Parisian dame.

Baylezoff, in referring to this incident, has always talked somewhat after the following fashion:

"No, sir; no man of honor would be guilty of an untruth. I entirely agree with the young Englishman in the play, "A gentleman never lies," never.

But it is an equally incontrovertible fact that circumstances alter cases, and there is an old maxim that I have always held to be justifiable, though at first glance its morality might be questioned—you know, about love and war."

The consequence, or rather the cause of which sentiments was, that his reply to the lady was the exact opposite of what he knew to be a fact, viz: with a profound bow.

Mademoiselle, ici on ne parle Français.

He says he was resolved the opportunity he had made for himself should not be thrown away, and, moreover, he thus had granted to him the unexpected pleasure of carrying on a conversation—even if it was on subjects no more romantic than "chevrette," "casschargot," "crabs moux," etc.—directly with the object of his sudden admiration.

This little embarrassment gone by, and the meal served, Baylezoff had time, while they partook of it, to listen and observe.

He discovered they were from Kentucky, and on a pleasure trip, which was to end with a visit to relatives in Alabama.

He found that the gentlemen were father and son, and he learned from the venerable lady's quaint and respectful fashion of sometimes addressing her husband as "father" and sometimes by his patronymic, that their name was Lee.

Quick to catch the smallest trifle he read the name "Annie Gayle" on a little cobweb square of a handkerchief as it lay for a moment on the table at the side of the fair innamorata.

The young girls were her sisters—they were orphans, and their uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Lee, supplied to them the place of parents.

Although there was nothing obtrusive in his attention, a sympathetic and penetrating observer would not have failed to see that "Cousin Charlie," as they called him, was Annie's lover.

How they all talked and laughed and enjoyed everything. How tender and courteous they were in their intercourse with each other—Annie would fill her uncle's wine glass and put ice in her aunt's tumbler, notwithstanding that great waiter was standing idle, just as if they had been in the privacy of their own home.

Baylezoff stood and watched her as attentively as he could, without attracting observation, and he mentally asseverated that he had never seen one of her sex so full of innate grace and natural wiles wherewith to tantalize and render herself irresistibly dear, in all of his somewhat extended experience.

Her beautiful brown hair folded back from her face in such soft, rich locks; her skin was so fair, and yet not lacking in the tint of health; her eyes were so blue, and clear and honest, her nose—well he passed that by, as a previous opportunity for its investigation had been afforded, and rested on her lips. He wondered if the bread did not rise with a sensation of happiness at being permitted to touch them.

From her face he wandered to her dress. It was so simple, so becoming, so tasteful! A pure white muslin of exceeding plainness in its fashion, and worn without ornament, except a brooch of hair—her mother's, Baylezoff imagined—which fastened the dainty lace that encircled her round throat.

He looked at her hands; they were ringless. "No *gage d'amour*, thank God!" he mentally ejaculated; "but my name is not Baylezoff Cottyn, if, saving your presence, Mr. Charles Lee, I do not put one there before another twelve months passes away."

If Baylezoff had remained idle many minutes longer, he would certainly have betrayed himself by some act that, in his supposed situation, would have been resented as an excess of impertinence.

As it fortunately occurred, they all declared themselves more than satisfied with the sea-shore delicacies, which in their interior home were unattainable; and eager to glean all the pleasure of their strange surroundings, they rose and passed out on the gallery to watch the breeze ruffled sheet of water as it danced gaily to shore.

They had ordered a banquet of fruit by way of dessert, and Baylezoff added to it an order that the table should be decorated with flowers.

"Be quick; the most fragrant in bloom, and when they are ready let me know before you summon the gentlemen and ladies."

He was ushered into his own room, and as he sat a moment reflecting a sense of the impropriety of the freak visited him, though he could not regret it, nor was he quite through with it.

In a short while the waiter entered, bearing the flowers on a tray.

"*Voilà les fleurs, monsieur.*"

There was a large bouquet for each plate.

Examining them quite critically, a selection was made of one that contained a half blown white rose, some fragrant heliotrope and a graceful spray of honeysuckle.

The others he ordered the servant to arrange on the table, saying he would place that one himself.

So soon as he was alone he took the [illegible] ring from the pocket to which it had [illegible] signed, and gently separating the [illegible] added and fell far down in the heart of the boquet they might possibly not be discovered until the flow objects often are, away; for he conjectured that as been pleasantly sibly be preserved as sense as a memorial of a day. again entered the room in passed. found it empty for a moment, This accomp where the fair Annie's hands would his guise of ad returned no more. laid the fa the precaution to tell the servant who lift the[illegible] his place to speak nothing but French.

He took [illegible] seconds thereafter Baylezoff was himself supplied [illegible] t, no—not himself of the morning, for he and a few [illegible] ently that his future had an aim; that again; bu[illegible] was a good gift, and that, after all, it found such [illegible] as worth his while to live the allotted his fortune [illegible] been given him to dwell on earth. probably w[illegible] until the party who had unexpectedly [illegible] that b[illegible] so much interest for him took a re-

He linger[illegible] his assured himself, by a covert glance edly assume[illegible] his slouched hat, that his flowers had turn train, sailed. from under [illegible] own, his observations were continued been preserv[illegible] to ascertain that the St. Louis shel-

Arrived in[illegible] easure party, and then he sought his long enough [illegible] where, in long hours of thought that tered the pl[illegible] found that he was deeply in earnest, own home, [illegible] phal as he had always supposed love followed, he [illegible] and, apochry[illegible]

at first sight to be, he was forced to acknowledge that for the happy, unsophisticated country girl, of whose existence but the day before he was not conscious, there burned in his heart a flame of tenderness and manly devotion, which, whether reciprocated or not, was hers for life.

CHAPTER II.

The following morning Baleyzoff discovered that the value of any one among his acquaintance who had lived in the West had risen considerably above par, and all fortunate individuals from Kentucky were of priceless worth.

As good fate would have it, upon putting casual inquiries, he found among them an individual who knew Mr., or rather Col. Lee.

"Certainly; was our member to Congress till he grew tired of it. Last ten or twelve years lived on his plantation. Splendid old fellow—very benevolent—great ideas of acting according to principle, and all that sort of thing, you know, that nobody bothers about these days. Splendid old fellow. In town, you say? Must go and see him!"

"Would it be asking too great a favor to request that you would introduce me to his acquaintance at the same time?"

"No favor in the world, my dear Cottyn, but a pleasure."

"Do you know his family!" asked in the most insinuating tone of voice imaginable.

"Has no family but wife—fine lady—and son, capital young man."

"Ah!" was the reply, non-committal.

"When shall we call?"

"This afternoon, if it suits your convenience."

"Perfectly."

"Then, au revoir."

Now, will it be credited that Baylezoff's next move was one that would have brought a cry of horror from more than a score of pretty lips, and perhaps, who knows, even some pearly tears, from easily filled, sympathetic eyes.

Reader dear, decide how much he was in earnest when I tell you that to lessen the chances of his identification he sacrificed his carefully nourished and altogether irresistible beard.

Yes, every hair. Goatee, whisker, moustache and imperial; and if that was not an evidence of resolution of purpose, none has ever been given in this world.

In making his toilette he departed as much as good taste would permit from his usual style, so as to still further alter his appearance, and most carefully eschewed wearing a diamond.

The momentous visit was made, and the acquaintance of both father and son achieved, but it was not destined that the divinity of his dreams should as yet be granted to his sight, for the reason that the party resumed their journey the following day, and consequently he had no time to establish an intimacy that would justify him in asking to be presented to her.

After this Baylezoff suddenly disappeared from his accustomed haunts, and the places that had known him knew him no more.

From the fact that subsequently he imparted to me the information that he passed the remainder of the summer where there were no institutions such as are generally denominated "saloons," no shell roads, no fast horses, no Lake Ends and no pleasure yachts, but where there were "pic-nics," I infer that he must have retired to some inland village.

To tell the truth I know he did, and it was a charming little one, near to which was situated the home of the relatives whom Miss Gayle visited, and at one of those reunions, so delightful in anticipation but generally so agonizing in remembrance—a picnic—that his trembling aspirations were crowned with success, and Cottyn and the sweet Annie were brought together in acquaintance.

Under the worldly and somewhat foppish exterior that Cottyn then wore, he carried a noble, manly heart, and it alternately swelled in a rapture of delight, and trembled with an excess of misgiving as he lingered in the womanly presence which had enthralled him.

Long weeks of delightful country hospitality and informality, filled with drives, rides, walks, sunset and moonrise watching, and gentle assiduities which nature herself constituted "woman's rights," ripened the acquaintance into intimacy.

Strange to say, when Baylezoff learned to note the sea-shell flush that greeted his coming, and grew bold to seek the eyes that would not always meet his glance, and held, perhaps a second longer than was necessary, the hand that at least did not refuse his pressure, he grew to like young Lee, and would not see, far less take offense, at the coldness that would have repulsed his advances of friendship.

In that charming rural retreat, where the pleasures of more civilized life are supplied by picnics, the good folks bethought themselves in early fall, when nature glories in the fullness of summerhood, in harmony and good will to make merry in the "woodland wild."

It so chanced upon this occasion, that when the shadows started far to the eastward, Baylezoff—with what I am afraid is an inherent dash of laziness in his composition—lay stretched on the grass, serenely hid from observation by a clump of shrubs, slowly smoking the inevitable cigar, and wandering, spirit-like, after the floating clouds in space, without premeditation the words of two who had strolled that way within the hearing of the oak, fell upon his ear. He paused under a sheltering

"Oh, Annie, dear cousin, I love you, on me. Your tears are worse than say you have mercy heart. I do love you. God in Heaven dagger at my my heart, knows that I do—but not to pe who sees you, not to grieve you.

"I will go away. I do not know what sudde desperation made me speak. I had no hope—I have had no encouragement. You have never treated me with a sister's kindness.

"Pray, Annie, pray look at me and say you are not angry."

And so a generous heart stifled its own cry of despair, and strove to calm and comfort that other which was dearer to it than happiness.

I am not ashamed of the friendship of Cottyn, when I tell you that moisture, such as does no discredit to the proudest manhood, swelled in his eyes and fell in tears of rarest sympathy for the one who thus had dashed from his life the dream that comes but once. Nor do I think your opinion of him will be lessened at hearing that he offered to the young lady who lived at the remotest point of any in the assemblage from Miss Gayle's place of sojourn, his services as an escort, and honorably filled the duties of the position.

A few days after young Lee took his departure to travel, he said, until inclination prompted him to resume the study of his profession as a medical student at Philadelphia, following which [illegible] I am forced to confess that Baylezoff was not slow to avail himself of the smallest vantage ground that might be accorded him.

One evening, when he had lingered until twilight to return to the village, Miss Gayle acceded to a humble petition that she would grant him the protection of her company on the perilous journey to the front gate, some hundred yards distant, where a "steed awaited his rider."

Baylezoff says he never could remember sufficiently well to be justified in making a deposition, if it were necessary, of what occurred, but to the best of his recollection, as he turned away, his companion said those oft-repeated words, "Good night," in the soft tones that had for his ears a thousand times more melody than when first heard.

Yielding to an impulse, he sprang back for another parting clasp of the hand, and the impassioned words of the sweet singer Shelly rose to his lips—

"How can I tell the hour right good,
Though thy sweet wishes wing its flight?
Be it not said, though, endeared,
Then it will be good night."

Miss Gayle, startled by his unaccustomed vehemence, would have withdrawn her hand and returned to the house, but Baylezoff resisted it and said:

"No, no, Annie, let me lay my heart at your feet, and ask whether it has value enough in your eyes to induce you to lift it as a treasure worth acceptance, or if you spurn it as a worthless pebble."

What, emboldened, shy Annie? She said quite distinctly, though lowly. "I take it up gladly; it is a precious gift."

"And your pure woman's heart is mine? mine all? mine alone?"

"Yes."

"Sweet, precious, priceless love;" and the bestowal of that kiss, which, if any mortal action is acceptable in the sight of heaven, is sacred there, the pledge of troth that the man who is capable of loving places on sweet lips, sealed the lover's vows.

If that "steed" had had the gift of speech, he would have made a feeling remonstrance against the length of time he that evening "awaited his rider."

The summing up of all is that Miss Gayle returned with her family to her home in Kentucky. That Mr. Cottyn visited that State the following December, and returned to the city with a wife whom he addressed as "Anne," when the vocabulary of pet names was exhausted.

Among the host of stylish ladies who were inclined to violent intimacy with Mrs. Cottyn, were Miss Dashaway and Mrs. Hunter Wylde, but Baylezoff stood resolutely between them and such a consummation.

They never penetrated beyond the sumptuous reception rooms of Mrs. Cottyn, and it seemed a fatality that obstacles should occur when their invitations were received, obliging Mr. and Mrs. Cottyn to send "regrets."

Under Madame Annie's sweet feminine aspect there was force of character enough to influence her husband gently, but unfailingly, in the right path, and in place of the useless sprig of fashion he once was, he is now a useful and thinking member of society, and when you meet him "on 'change," as I dare say you often do, you are far from imagining him to be the hero of this story, for I confess the name to be fictitious.

From having observed that Mrs. Cottyn wears a superb diamond solitaire in a peculiar setting on the third finger of her left hand, in the place usually occupied by the ring of betrothal, and the fact that always on the anniversary of the day that Baleyzoff made his sudden trip down the railroad, they go, accompanied by their choicest friends, in the same direction, I infer that she was duly informed of the occurrences that transpired, and the influence exerted on all her after life by her first breakfast at the lake.

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