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TOM CLARK



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## CHAPTER VI.

"Romy," said Lesley when he joined her (and it struck him that this was the first time she had thus addressed him), "will—will she be very angry, do you think? The more just danced off with me when I was trying her pieces, and I didn't think—no more did she."

She looked then as she had done on her arrival, apprehensive and proud and shy, all in one, and Romy's heart smote him. She had no mother, and a mother is able to teach her daughter so much and keep from her so much that she may not learn, and the girl had been thrown entirely among men; so much was apparent in her supreme mastery of their little ways and the lightness of her hand with them. Perhaps if she had been constantly with nice women—

But here he stopped, knowing that, in this case, the originally, the freshness of her mind would have been lost, and to Romy's originality of character was the one precious mental good on earth.

"It is a pity," he began, then paused again. Really, for such a remarkably cool young man, Romy was getting himself into a good many holes that morning. "Would you like to have the mare, Lesley?" he said in so reasonable a kind a voice that she stared into her proud eyes. "She isn't up to Yelverton's weight, I know, and he might sell her—to please you," he added, with a smile that made his glance pure-smiling.

"Oh, Romy!" exclaimed the girl, turning upon him a little face whose delicious glow of color dazzled his eyes. "How lovely that would be! I'll write home today and ask dad to buy her for me!"

"But I want her for myself," said Romy—Lesley's face fell—telling the lie without winking, "and meanwhile I'll lend her to you. But, of course, I don't know if Yelverton will part with her till he's ready."

Lesley leaned over and stroked Conquette's glorious neck, and when Lesley confidently informed her that she was much too beautiful to be ridden by a rude, cross, heavy man Romy smiled away the last remnants of his ill-humor, and they arrived at Park lane in the best of spirits, a good deal to Lady Appuldurcombe's wrath, as she watched the return of the prodigal (for once, a female—very one most flagrant) to her pleasures and caresses, and the inevitable of the man who gender in grandeur from the larder.

Since Romy had rushed in to announce the full measure of Lesley's delinquencies and rushed out again to get a horse saddled to follow her his mother had been enduring not one but nearly four shocking quarters of an hour, and now, exultant and enjoy came home laughing on the best of terms evidently with each other.

To an outsider it all looked so entirely right, the two young aristocrats, with the groom and the stable boy whose face wore that air of impenetrable calm peculiar to all well bred servants and only faintly to be initiated by their masters, though inside Carleton was one broad grin and wished the young lady well out of the "row."

Romy begged the girl off all his could. Still for a nasty five minutes Lesley's youth suffered eclipse and she wheeled under her aunt's icy reproach like a child who, not knowing the meaning of blows, suddenly finds that she is struck upon him by a hand that she has never seen.

She made no answer. She shed no tears, and Romy admired her pluck heartily as she sat at table making a pretense of eating what was put before her, her proud little head held as high as ever, the only scrap of color in her face being her blue eyes.

Perhaps a little echo of jealousy in the mother's heart helped to harden it against the girl, for was not Romy here, her very own girl, who had never left her like her other children, and now was she to lose all his time and his company because Malincourt had fastened on her a female squint whose only accomplishment seemed to be in getting the length of every man's foot that approached her?

"Auntie," said Lesley very quietly when the servants had withdrawn, "I am going to write to father and ask him to let me go home. I don't want to disgrace you any more."

Her voice was quite steady, and her eyes as she looked at her aunt were just as indomitable in their shrewd, down-right, dogged little blue as Romy's own at times. Indeed for a moment a strong likeness flashed out between the cousins and Lady Appuldurcombe saw it, colored, wavered and suddenly calmed in. She was of a different order from Romy and Lesley and consequently much more easy to manage, a fact of which her servants took liberal advantage.

"Have you been so inhospitable, then?" said the poor lady and sank into tears behind her dinner napkin, which in her flurry she mistook for her pocket handkerchief. But Lesley jumped up so quickly as to miss her chair, and crying out "No, no, no!" threw her warm arms round her aunt's neck. "It isn't you—it is I—who have been mad and rude and wicked and get into mud-dishes wherever I go!"

Romy softly closed the door on them, and as he did so heard his mother say plaintively:

"My dear, if only people did not know you as Lady Appuldurcombe's niece!" Whereupon he smiled, though

some observation in the men's manners, and usually it is picked up by the right woman.

It was Lesley who turned, feeling some one near her, and exclaimed tartly, "Why didn't you speak?" and looking so decidedly sorry to see him that Romy felt a relief to turn to Cynthia, who, for once, showed no undue joy at his approach, though under the broad, black lace that her face was full of most delicate color.

"We were abusing men," said Lesley calmly. "Did you—hear us?"

"Yes, though you detest, you cannot leave us alone," said Romy lightly.

"We had exhausted ourselves, and when every other subject had been talked on the least interesting is bound to come up."

"The men are dreadfully notorious," said Lesley, with a disbelieving air. "If they would only wear red ties or something to prevent confusion taking them for the waiters! And often the waiters look more like gentlemen than the real ones do! It's a treat to see a man in his riding colors."

"Are you going to see Romy riding at Sandown?" she asked, looking away from Cynthia, who had been looking today in a very pink moribund gown that made one think of a softly glowing topaz as she looked at her.

"Does he ride?"

"Cynthia's voice was steady, but into her dark eyes shone a gleam of mischief. When the warm light bore to death, came the look that only Romy Kilmarney out of all men living has been able to bring down and set free.

"Yes, isn't it a pity he is so spoiled? Because he is the first gentleman rider in England, and because he just did his duty, it seems to me he is in danger of becoming a very selfish, disagreeable young man indeed."

"It isn't either of those things," said Cynthia, coloring and looking out at the park. "It is because he is such a splendid fellow all round. He is the very type of the best sort of Englishman."

"He is just an extremely rich looking fellow, high principled, masterful, and so on," said Lesley, nodding, "and if some woman who didn't care a button for him liked him into shape he might make a fairly decent husband to some other woman some day, but his mother and sisters have spoiled him, and he'll want an end of discipline first."

Lesley wagged her head with an air of the deepest conviction, and Cynthia's spirits fell up as she said, laughing: "You know a great deal for 18, Miss Malincourt."

"My son, Annie was a good bit out in my eye, but it isn't necessary for me to disguise her mind of the error. It's the country life I've led. And to do whatever you like, and how you like, and have one to bumper or opposite you in any of your whims, is the finest recipe for bloom and good temper imaginable."

Cynthia sighed. "We can't all let ourselves go," she said. "Some people have got to have self-control, and care they've thoroughly learned that lesson," she added in a lower tone, "they have about learned all there is to know."

"I think I could learn that lesson, too, if I got to go," said Lesley, with something strenuous in her young face and voice. "And I suppose I shall have to some day, for all the women must, and the men, never."

"Romy has learned it," said Cynthia. "And Lesley learned to shake this frivolous creature when love had humbled to the point of making herself cheap."

"And is it wise to tell him so?" she said. "You must keep a man hungry—hungry—or he will never do this best, or love you his best—never! A man's self-control lasts just so long as he does not want a thing. He clamors and cries for it like a child when once his eye has coveted it."

"How you hate men!" said Cynthia, under her breath.

"I do. Whenever I find a bad woman, I say, 'A bad woman has passed by there!'"

Lady Conquest says I can read on that point, and they are all so good to me. But it isn't me; it's my little face! When it gets broad and middle aged, men's eyes will look past it, and their life long seeking for some delicate morsel to satisfy their pleasure!"

"But some men will love you for your face—yourself!" cried out Cynthia, to whom this country girl was a revelation. "And you always look so boundlessly, intrinsically happy!"

"Yes, I am happy. But I go much among the poor at Malincourt. I see life as it is, and perhaps for good, perhaps for ill—who knows?—I have been the close companion for years of a woman who has seen the world and turns it inside out for me like a glove, with every seam showing. So I have youth and no illusions."

"And, thus pampered, your friend has let you forth as a source of mankind," said Cynthia, who had heard of Lesley's exploits in the country. "And yet—I am sorry."

"Don't be," cried Lesley earnestly. "I feel—I know—I shall come out all right in the end. Would you send a soldier unprepared into battle? And I find teaching invaluable now that dad has launched me on my relations in town."

"They were so engrossed in each other that they did not hear the door open or see Romy, who stopped short at sight of Lady de Salis. But retreat was impossible, and having received that lady's cool salutations he advanced to the balcony, where a white and a topaz colored back just then presented themselves for his inspection.

They looked friendly, intimate even, those two girlish backs, and he surveyed one of them with that feverish, displayed only to repulse and the woman who has given her a love he does not want, that a strong man feels and displays to his inward shame and astonishment on occasions.

The weak man is flattered; he sometimes dandles with the suppliant and rewards the woman by bestowing her tyrant. But the virile, selfish, masterful man will stop to pick up no handkerchief dropped to him; he will throw his

CHAPTER VII.

Sighing, crying, laughing toward one man, as flowers at daybreak lean toward the sun, an audience composed mainly of women, sat in one of the big drawing rooms of a house in Lancaster square and listened to the notes of his voice as he sang one of his own songs, which were of love, as indeed most of his songs were.

The man really was a thoroughly good fellow, a splendid son, a staunch friend and a born musician, but the crowd of women, set of the first order, who presented themselves before him had begun to him a profound contempt for the whole sex, that showed in every line of his face as his arrogant eyes, with that knack of rolling upward which made most men long to kick him, wandered over the silly, fluttering, adoring crowd spread out before him.

"It makes one's blood boil! Look at that girl! Her very hairpins are falling out!" said Lesley in a fierce aside to Roger Yelverton, whose back seat was the only one in the row of chairs where they sat. "Such a man could not be if woman had not made him what he is! Yet there's something warm, human, magnetic about him."

She spoke slowly, studying the singer very intently.

"And if he gets his hair cut and didn't roll up his eyes!" she paused, then said, "I don't believe there is a class of women who like being—kicked!"

"My dear!" said Lady Appuldurcombe, who, on her other side, had caught the words and looked alarmed, for Lesley had been so good the last few days that a burst out in the wrong direction seemed to be inevitable.

"They're very young," said Yelverton, shaking his smooth, fair head, "and their fancy is a marvellous variety, or their fancy, or taste, and off they go—you can't stop 'em! But a man must give out somehow that he doesn't mind being kicked, like this fellow, just as another man, without saying a word, refuses like Romy, now, for example. Where would he be if, with all his fame, he—er—er?"

"Encouraged us?" said Lesley dryly.

"But Romy's not a lovable person. He has not large ears, all extraneous, grand ways. He does not roll his eyes or make a point of saying, 'I love you,' instead of 'How do you do?'" She stopped to laugh. "He's one of your concentrated, deadly reticent, Brand's essence sort of person, is Romy?"

"All the better for the woman he marries," said Roger manfully, for he carried a very good heart about him, and in those days, only occasionally bewitched ever by such a happy position as he found himself in just now. "When a man like that does fall in love!"

"Ah, when?" said Lesley gaily. "That will be when cap and pigskin have vanished off the face of the earth—not before! A little less than his horse and dinner than his dog, you know!"

She spoke discreetly low, for Lady Appuldurcombe was on her other side.

Lesley had a big ear of crimson roses in her hair, and for a moment I thought she would have struck him across the face with it, she was so transported with anger; then, "I have twice tonight refused the honor of this man's acquaintance," she said, and all the women who had been run down and insulted by the brute (excuse me, my dear) looked as if they could have plapped their hands and kissed her!"

"And what did he do then?"

"Shut away, and he will never be admitted to that house, and a good many others, again. But you will admit that it is rather—rather—for a chaperon, you know."

"Oh, very. But it's extraordinary how women like her, considering how wild the men are about her. I see she and Cynthia are great friends. I hear some news about the latter. Is it true?"

"Is what true?"

"That she is going to take Onlow at last, and she couldn't do better. He has been very patient."

"I only hope it may be true," said Lady Appuldurcombe slowly, but with a vague feeling of slight to Romy, as if some one had fished from him a jewel he did not value, but yet was his.

"And I suppose that is a match, too?" said Mrs. Fane, looking at Lesley and Yelverton, who had the air of thoroughly good comrades as they talked together.

"Oh, dear, no! There is a young man in the country," said Lady Appuldurcombe in an absent-minded way, for she was asking herself, "Was this another of Miss Lesley's tricks?" And, if so, was she getting Cynthia out of the way because she wanted Romy for herself? And Romy? She knew that he had very decided views of what a young English maiden, strictly brought up, should be, and into the face of every one of his prejudices, great and small, deliberately flew.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A Risk For Reputation.

While they were discussing the matter in the school board the head of a big manufacturing establishment was moved to relate this experience:

"I was once a pedagogic myself. I had resolved to do something worth while in the business world, and having no capital except what was wrapped up in my person I taught school to get a starter. I had some advanced students and had to skimpish in order to keep up with the procession. One day the whole class was straggled by an arithmetical problem, and so was I. In order to gain time for myself I came the old dodge of telling them how much better it would be if they would work out the solution for themselves and gave them another day."

"That night, behind locked doors and closed blinds, I worked in fear and perspiration. From the bottom of my trunk I took a key to the arithmetic, but even with that aid I failed to master the problem. By midnight I was desperate. It would never do to let the scholars, the parents and the whole world know that I was not equal to my position. But it isn't in my make up to surrender while there's a fighting chance."

"At the town, ten miles away, there was a loyal and highly educated friend of mine. He would help me and say nothing. It was one of the bitterest January nights I ever knew. Due I slipped to the barn, appropriated a horse, made a ride, and made them many of those immortalized in song or history, from my ears and toes and had my usual powers reduced to a whisper."

"But you should have heard my whispered explanation of that problem and my regrets that none of the pupils had mastered it."—Detroit Free Press.

Wave Names.

I have a note of some curious names given locally to the waves on different parts of our coast that may be worthy of record. These were called from the Family Herald a few years ago. I can not give the exact date. The names are unusually varied and sometimes not a little suggestive. The Pouterhead folk call the large breakers that fall with a crash on the beach by the grim name of "Norway" (Norwegian) carpenter. On the low Lincolnshire coast, as on the southwestern Atlantic fringing shore of these islands, the grandly long unbroken waves are known as "rollers." Among East Anglians a heavy surf, tumbling in with an off-shore wind, or in a bay, is called by the expressive name of "aleg," while a well marked swell, rolling in independently of any blowing, is called a "home." "There is no wind," a Suffolk fisherman will say, "but a nasty home on the beach." Suffolk men also speak of the "back" of the surf, and a sea covered with foam is spoken of as "feather white." The foam itself is known as "spoon drift." So in the vernacular we have it, "The sea was all a feather white with spoon drift."

Notes and Queries.

Joe Cavan, who has had a whirlwind experience in the south and west, said to the crowd in the same old place, the up town hotel:

"My advice to you all is, be natural. Do not try to deceive people with your affected talk or your fancy clothes. You will be certain to show the cloven foot somewhere. I was at a dinner once in St. Louis. It was given by Governor Marmaduke. Before we had given our orders for a western dinner every man has the privilege of saying what he wants, the governor asked each one of his guests where he hailed from. One was from Tennessee, one from Illinois, one from California. The east was not represented, so I hauled up my card from Vermont. Just then the water passed the hill of fare, and my ruling passion asserting itself, 'Poke and beans,' said I in my natural voice.

"Cavan," said the governor of Missouri vehemently, "you're from Georgia. No man from Vermont ever said 'poke and beans,' and your scheme of passing for a Yankee, sah, is reprehensible and will cost you the wine."

"I have sailed under my own colors ever since."—New York Sun.

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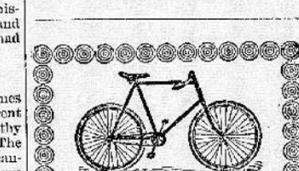
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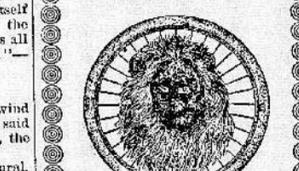
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