THE BEAUTY CHARM.

A Story of Old Virginia.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

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[SYNOPSIS OF OPENING CHAPTERS.—This synopsis of Mrs. Mary Kyle Dallas' charming story, "The Beauty Charm," will enable those who have not read the first instalment to understand what follows:

The story opens in an old plantation house in Virginia. Nannie, a girl of seventeen, with flaxen hair, blue eyes and gypsy-like habits, tells how she was allowed to grow up. She is an orphan and lives with her uncle, a wounded ex-Confederate, and her aunt Elizabeth, a stern and unsympathetic woman, who seems to regard Nannie as being in the way of her own daughter, Adelaide. After returning from wandering in the woods one day, Nannie hears Maum Mandy and Aunt Sally, two negro servants, discussing herself in the kitchen, and the picture they draw, though evidently kindly, is not flattering.

Nannie's aunt Elizabeth, after having dressed the girl in a made-over gown, gave her a religious book and told her to go away and read it. Instead of obeying her aunt, the girl went into the drawing-room where there was an old-fashioned mirror, and after surveying herself for some time her temper gets the better of her, and she hurls the book at the mirror, breaking it with a crash. Alarmed at what she had done Nannie went to bed, but not to sleep. She heard the guests in the dining-room, and their exclamations of surprise when they discovered the broken mirror in the parlor. After the guests left, the colonel and his wife visited Nannie's bedroom. They saw she had gone to bed with her clothes on, and the daughter Adelaide, bringing in a book that was picked up at the foot of the mirror, declared that it was by this that it was broken. The circumstantial evidence was clearly against Nannie. She was charged with the crime and in her desperation confessed it.

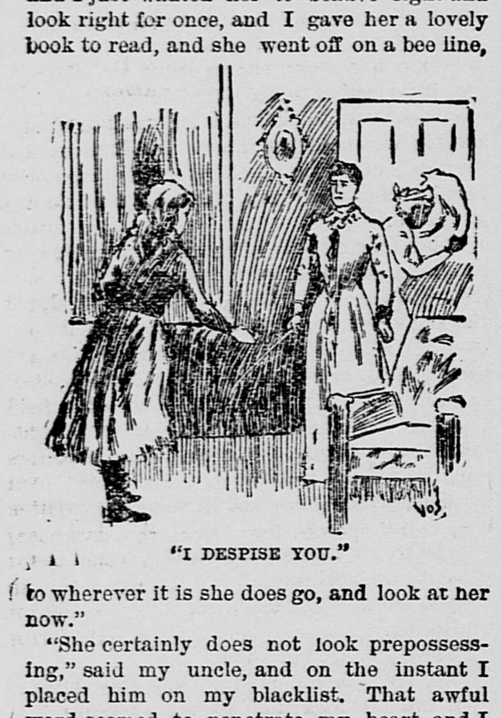
The next chapter tells what followed.]

CHAPTER III.

Silence reigned for a few seconds, then I heard my uncle utter an ejaculation of horror, and my aunt laughed bitterly.

"Why, good heavens, my dear!" my uncle exclaimed in a most piteous voice, "the poor child must have met with some dreadful accident. She is covered with blood stains and blue bruises."

"Blackberry juice, dust and bramble scratches," said my aunt. "I've seen them too often not to know them, colonel, and look at this dress. I actually took it away from Adelaide to give it to her, and Sally and I pressed it, and mended it, and re-looped it, and I bought four yards of new ribbon for it, and I just wanted her to behave right and look right for once, and I gave her a lovely book to read, and she went off on a bee line,



"I DESPISE YOU."

to wherever it is she does go, and look at her now."

"She certainly does not look prepossessing," said my uncle, and on the instant I placed him on my blacklist. That awful word seemed to penetrate my heart, and I felt a wound as from a dagger.

"But I am used to this," said my aunt. "The breaking of the mirror in that deliberate way is what I cannot overlook."

"That," said my uncle, "she never did. It is a dastardly trick my poor sister's daughter could not be capable of. Whatever she may be, she is a Malcolm, a family of gentlemen and ladies, madam."

"She looks like it, don't she, colonel?" cried my aunt.

"I cannot say anything in favor of her looks," said the colonel, "but none of our people have ever done a low down thing yet."

"None of my people would have let you have me if they had," said my aunt.

"I acknowledge the position of your family," said the colonel, "but I must maintain the honor of mine. My sister Etta's daughter, my niece, could not fall so low as to willingly and with malice prepense fling a missile against a valuable mirror in my house for the purpose of destroying it. Blood will tell, madam. That is a trick a decent nigger would be ashamed of; of which few white trash are capable."

Remorse was beginning to seize upon my vitals.

"And it is a pecuniary loss," my uncle continued. "Captain Tompkins, of the Hunter's Hotel, offered me seventy-five dollars for it on Monday morning. He knew that I was in need of cash. 'Colonel,' said he, 'you will excuse me, I hope, but should you ever wish to dispose of that one remaining of those fine mirrors which once adorned your elegant ball-room, I should consider it an honor to be permitted to purchase it,' and he named the price.

"'Captain' said I, 'I understand you; but those mirrors are heirlooms. Most of them are shattered; pierced by the bullets of the enemy. That one remains. I cannot, as yet, empty as is my purse, sell, even to you, the glass that has reflected the faces of all my ancestors, all my valued friends, all the dear ones gone before.'

"'Colonel,' said he, 'forget that I made the offer, unless indeed circumstances should compel you to think it over, when I shall stand ready.' We might need the price yet, my dear. Therefore you see it is my pecuniary loss. My niece must have been aware of the fact. Do you think she would, so to speak, rob me?"

At the words I shrunk and shivered with a hideous shame.

"I think she is mean enough to do anything," said my aunt.

"I'll know the truth before I sleep," said my uncle. He bent over me, put back my hair with a gentle touch, and called, "Nannie, Nannie."

My eyes flew open. As they rested on my uncle, just now very pale, his cheeks hollow, his eyes sunken, with his bowed shoulders and empty sleeve, I burst into a wild passion of tears.

"Uncle! uncle!" I cried, as one utters a prayer.

"Tell me, Nannie," he said, "did you break the mirror in the ball-room? I will not believe it unless you tell me so yourself."

Oh, how I longed to lie. But I could not. The truth would out. I answered simply, "Yes, uncle."

"But not on purpose; by accident?" he said, gently. "Child, I am sure it was by accident."

Now was my chance. I could say that I was reading in the ball-room and threw the book at some terrible insect that tried to sting me, but, though the false tale was at the tip of my tongue, out came the truth again. "I did it on purpose. I am sorry, but I threw the book at it in a rage. Oh, pray forgive me."

But he turned away and covered his face with his handkerchief.

"My sister's child," he said. "My own niece has done a thing like this. It is incredible. The knowledge gives me more shame and sorrow than I can put in words."

"It shall be the end of such doings," said my aunt. "I am going to whip her."

"Uncle," I screamed, "Oh, uncle don't let her whip me. Don't, uncle, don't." But he turned his back on me and left the room without a word.

"Aunt Elizabeth," I said, when he was gone, "I will take any other punishment you please quietly, but a whipping I cannot endure. Something will happen that you will be sorry for if you touch me."

"If the world comes to an end I'll flog you," said my aunt. "Such hard times as we've had since the war, your uncle worried to death, I always pulling hard to make both ends meet, and you, who know all about it, destroying valuable property. You shall be whipped as well as I know how." She opened the door, went to the head of the stairs and called—"Sally, bring me my riding whip from the hall, and come here, I want you."

Over what followed I draw a veil. Enough that at the orders of her mistress, Sally held me while Aunt Elizabeth flogged me. The whipping was not severe. A child of six would not have suffered from it. Aunt Elizabeth simply wished to offer me an indignity which would humiliate me to the soul.

"You will never whip me again," I said. "You have done what you will be sorry for. Only a low, ill-bred woman would call her negro servant to hold a young lady while she beat her with a horsewhip. I despise you as I despise a toad. Now get out of my room, both of you."

I do not know what there was in my face or air that frightened them, but I do know that old Aunt Sally threw her apron over her head and fled downstairs as fast as her feet could take her, and that Aunt Elizabeth retreated to the door before she said:

"I'm sure I hope you'll behave, so that I shall not have to repeat this thing."

CHAPTER IV.

Despite my wrath, I slept, though my sleep was troubled by terrible dreams.

When I awoke night was past, and a sweeter day was never born. The birds were singing, a flood of perfume came up from the garden, but my mood was unchanged.

Sitting up in bed, I saw that Aunt Sally had placed my bathtub and clean towels where they should be. She had polished my shoes, and the blue dress was replaced by a pink muslin, outgrown by Cousin Adelaide, of course.

With a glance of scorn at this, I began to wash myself, and scrubbed until my skin smarted. Then, but without going to the glass, I combed my hair and braided it into a pigtail, which I wound up at the back of my head and fastened with twenty pins, and opening my wardrobe, hung up the pink frock and took down a gray linen one. Two years before, my uncle had taken me to Richmond with him, and this was the traveling dress used on that occasion. It was rather tight, short in the skirt and sleeves, but it would do. I dragged it on and buttoned myself into it, and took from the closet a bag in which I had been used to "tote" my school books, when Miss Penny, for a short time, kept school across the bridge.

Into this bag I put some changes of underwear, certain books I had had given me, a volume of Mrs. Heman's poems which had been my lost mother's, and which bore on the title-page this inscription: "Presented to Etta Malcolm, on her fifteenth birthday, by her affectionate brother, William," and a small bible, which contained the record of my birth. I also took my mother's marriage certificate, which was engrossed on parchment. I did this because it had been my mother's, for I had none of those feelings which older people would have had concerning its preservation.

One valuable article of jewelry I possessed—a necklace of gold chains, in the clasp of which a diamond was set. It had been given to my mother on her wedding day, by her husband's father. One Christmas my uncle had given it to me, despite my aunt's prophecies that I would break or lose it.

I had been very careful. Now I drew it from the folded chamois skin in which it had been wrapped, put it on, and covered it with a scarlet handkerchief that my uncle had bought for me when I was with him in Richmond.

And now I had only to put on a little gray straw hat and a pair of gray gloves, to be ready for departure.

I had searched for my small store of spending money, and fifty cents jingled in my pocket. Then I heaped up the bed quilts so that any one peeping in would fancy me still lying on my pillow, drew the blinds shut, and crept on tip-toe downstairs. The debris of last night's refreshments were upon the dining-room table. I satisfied my hunger with these, wrapped a piece of cake in a paper, and left the house by a door not visible from the kitchen.

"Good-bye, Aunt Elizabeth, I've done with you and with all the rest of your tribe," I said, bitterly. But my lip did quiver as I remembered my uncle, who had been kind to me whenever he had time to think of me. And I did wish that I could have told him that it was not to spite any one that I shattered the mirror. I would have helped him out of his troubles if I could, and I prayed that some change would come before he broke down under all his cares. But I did not pretend to myself that I forgave my aunt. I knew I did not, and I thought then that I never could.

As for Mandy and Sally, I repeated to myself all the scornful things that were ever said about their race, and meant every word I uttered.

So I passed on until I came to the great gate that opened on the road; there I paused and looked back.

The smoke arose from the outside kitchen, where I had had so many comfortable moments, and believed myself welcome.

Out of the windows of my little cousin's room floated a tiny white curtain, as if waving me farewell.

CHAPTER V.

There are, I fancy, very few girls of my age who would have run away from the only home they had ever known without considering how they were to find another, how they were to eat, where they were to sleep, what was eventually to become of them. Now and then little boys do this, but at least they have some plans of going to the wild West and shooting Indians or buffaloes, or of shipping as sailors or becoming gentlemen of the road, with black masks, pistols in their belts, and a "halt there, money or your life," to terrified passengers. But I was so utterly ignorant of everything that I took this tremendous step without asking what the morrow would bring.

I marvel now that I carried that little bag with me. I suppose the sense of going on a journey made me do it.

It was not until noon, when I had bought a roll at a little shop on the roadside, and was eating it with an apple that I had climbed a fence and a tree to pick, that I even made up my mind that I would be a hermitess.

I had read of hermits and knew that they dwelt in caves. As for hermitesses I knew of one. The sentence in which she was described occurred to my memory as though the book lay open in my hands. I seemed to see these words before me:

"Of course I would not leave the bleak mountain hotel without visiting the celebrated hermitess. She dwells in a sort of cave to which a wooden lean-to has been added and tells fortunes at request. She told mine. I was glad to hear that I was one day to be very rich; that a gentleman's heart was toward me, was not so interesting. She accepted fifty cents and retired with a grunt which seemed to be one of disapprobation.

"It is said that she throws stones at visitors who come merely for curiosity and do not offer a fee; that an unhappy love affair drove her to this solitude thirty years ago, and that she was then a beauty. At present she is certainly most unprepossessing."

"I suppose that is why she lived in a cave," I commented, and to be a hermitess seemed a fitting way to dispose of myself. Only I would not tell any one's fortune, and I would throw stones at any one who came near me.

When I had eaten my lunch, and begged a little boy, who was filling a pail at the public pump in the village street, to give me a drink of water, I continued my journey, but I found that I was rather tired, and when at last I came to a lonely bit of road, and saw a pretty woodland lying at its side, I took a little footpath that ran into it, and soon stood upon a low hillock, studded with trees and with a bed of moss here and there, as soft as ever was Persian carpet. On one of these I stretched myself.

I had often been sure that I saw fairies in the grass, and I knew that little yellow gnomes lived in the rocks, for I had read of that in the tattered volume of fairy tales, which I loved best of all my books.

When I looked into the water, I saw the necken there, peeping at me, laughing, beckoning, and was sure there was a "troll" under the bridge, like the one that cried "Who is there?" when she heard above her the trab-trab-trab of the sheep going into the mountains to get fat.

When I opened my eyes, utter darkness prevailed. For a moment I forgot where I was, and felt for the coverings, which I wished to draw about me.

Their absence, and the coldness of the rocks and the dry sponginess of the moss, recalled my memory. I was stiff, and my limbs ached, and I sat up with a shiver.

It was strangely silent and awesome, but I felt no fear, and I began to wonder if they were all out with torches and halloes, crying my name along the roads, beating the woods for me as they had done within my memory when a neighbor's little boy was lost. If this were so, I wished I could convey to my poor uncle the information that his unprepossessing niece was perfectly safe and well and had gone away of her own free will, so that he might go home and go to bed, for he was sure to have that frightful neuralgia again after any extra exertion. Oh, no doubt they were making as much fuss over my disappearance as if they really cared what became of me. I laughed bitterly. Perhaps my uncle did care a little. He had loved his sister.

I had no doubt that my pursuers were on my trail, and asked myself whether my safest plan were to lie still or take to flight. I decided on the former course. The next instant every fairy tale I had ever heard seemed to arise before me, for I looked upon an object such as it seemed to me could only be part of the mysterious world in which elves and goblins played their parts.

The creature was about two feet high, and was dressed in a red frock and wore a queer little bonnet covered with gilt braid. It seemed to be carrying a lantern, and it stooped as it hobbled along. It had the aspect of a wicked fairy, but its face was strangely doleful, and it made a whimpering noise at intervals. And now I perceived that a chain was fastened to a belt about its waist, and that the lantern was tied to its neck. It was a monkey, dressed much as organ grinders dress the little creatures who accompany them, and the end of the chain was clutched in the hand of an old black woman. I saw the hand perfectly and remarked that the fingers were covered with rings.

Instead of being at all alarmed, I burst into a laugh. "Go ahead!" I cried, rather hysterically, "you can't hurt me, I'm blighted already!"

A chuckle was the response to my speech. The old woman came nearer, and I saw that her face resembled that of the monkey, and that she wore a red bandanna turban which completely covered her wool, and a gown made of such chintz as old-fashioned housewives used for curtains—a thin material with a glaze upon it, and always in immense patterns. This was covered with peacocks with wide spread tails, and between each peacock was a large, red cabbage rose and three green leaves. The ground was blue. The lantern, on a level with the old woman's knees as the monkey clung to her gown for protection, revealed all this to me.

"Dat a wench speakin'?" the old creature said, when her merriment permitted her. "I say, I reckon you spend de night in a funny place. Hi, 'scuse me, miss, my eyes is mighty bad dese days. You is a white young lady, miss. 'Scuse me, sartin, I is ashame ob myself, speakin' like dat to white folks. Didn' see you before."

"I'll excuse you," said I.

"'Scuse me again, miss," said the woman. "But huccome a white young lady like you in dis yar spookish place, middle ob de night time?"

"Lost myself," I said, curtly. "I came in here to rest, went to sleep and awoke to find it dark."

"Jes so, miss," said the woman. "Which ob de families roun' here you belong to? I kin take you home, miss, I knows de place all roun' here like a book. Take you home, whereber it is."

'Oh, I don't live near here, and I'm pretty comfortable where I am, thank you," I said. "Good night."

But she came closer, and taking the lantern from the monkey's neck, held it above my head.

"You ain' no tramp," she said. "You is a young lady, and nummore'n a child. Huccome you here like dis? Mighty curus."

"You are here, aunty," I said.

"Yes, miss, but I is a ole nigger woman," she said. "I ain' no white lady. Dis no place for you, miss; dey is bad folks roun'. Un snakes, rattlers, oh, dey is, but de folks is wuss. Dey is tramps sleeps here sometimes. My Gawd, don' you tink ob dat?"

I heard her words with a shudder.

"Neah de railroad dey always is tramps," she said. "I is'n afeared of nobody. I can blight anybody, and I comes to get yarbs for my medicines and my spells. Dey mus' be pick at night, some ob dem, an' toads mus' be cotch at night. Dey is yarbs in dis bundle, an' toads in dis kettle," and she showed me that she had a bundle on her back and a kettle on her arm.

"I is done got enough now, I is gwine home. You come along wid me, miss. I is only got a cabin, suah enough, but it's clean an' you is welcome. Come along, please ma'am."

"Very well," I said. "Thank you, and I can pay something for the lodging, too."

"Jus' as you please 'bout dat, miss," she said, and led the way, while I followed with my little bag on my arm, until we left the woods, and in its very outskirts came to a dwelling of some sort, the door of which the old woman opened, bidding me enter.

I followed, she lit a lamp on the mantelpiece, and offered me a chair.

The room was small, but gaily papered and carpeted. It boasted of a set of horse-hair furniture and had thick red curtains at the windows. There was also a double door, as if for security.

"What is your name, aunty?" I asked.

"Flora, dey calls me," she said. "I nebber belonged to nobody. I is lib here where my ole mammy lib, yars and yars. Some white folks gib dis yar house an' an acre ob

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land to my mammy, cause she cure one ob dem ob a cancer—yes'm, she did. She was a doctor woman—I is a doctor woman, too. Dey comes to me when doctors gibs 'em up—I cures 'em. 'Tain't only no count niggers comes. White folks ladies, dey comes too," and old Flora nodded her head. "'Tain't only sickness dey comes for," she said. "I kin make har grow, an' take freckles off, an' I kin get out scars, an' I tell fortunes. Tells 'em true; oh, I does, yes'm, and ef you is jealous"—she broke of suddenly, looked at me and laughed.

"Time I stop talkin' to you, little miss," she said. "Time I stop talkin' to you."

"Why?" I asked.

She only laughed.

"Oh, you do know nuffin' 'bout bein' jealous yet," she said.

In my innocence I uttered a little derisive cry.

"Oh, I do," I said, thinking of my envy of the kisses my aunt and cousins gave each other. "Folks are always jealous."

"Sho," cried Flora. "You ain' got no young genleman yet to be jealous ob. You ain' come to de time ob life you gib all you got for debbil's beauty, sho."

"If I had anything to give I would give it for beauty, I am sure," I said. "It is the only thing worth having, the only thing."

The old woman chuckled. "You is mighty cute, miss," she said, "an sartainly you is humbly jess now, 'an I could make you harnsome; I know how."

"And that I don't believe, either," I said.

"No, little miss," she said, "no ma'am; when I gib a white lady de beauty dat makes folks fall in lub wid her minute dey see her, so she ride ober de heads ob all de oder ladies 'an kin scorn 'em all, 'an twis de gem'men roun' her finger like I cass spells and says de words, I makes de magic ring 'an lights de magic fires 'an de magic lamps, I does. I'se voudoo, 'an what I gib her don' wash off nor rub off; it lasts as long as she does. Huccome old Madame Bailey to done gone run off wid young Miss Fanny Romer's beau, 'an marry him, young enough to be her son, he was, yas'm? 'Cause I gave her the charm. She say, jess like you, only one year ob lub I gib de res' ob my life faw. Only she knowed what she was talkin' 'bout, 'an you don't, little miss, you don't noways know; I see straight through you, innercent little chicken. Tell you de kin' ob beauty I gib is debbil's beauty. Go 'long, wait till you know what it is you askin' faw; debble got to help you to dat."

"Flora," I said, "I do not believe Satan has anything to do with beauty; he bestows ugliness. Beauty is from God and the good angels. Angels are beautiful."

"So I hearn tell, miss," said Flora, "but dey is a diffren' kin' ob looks I reckon. Maybe you kin pray for dat kin'. Better do it." I shall always think that at that moment she spied upon my throat the necklace which I thought that the scarlet handkerchief concealed. I had unconsciously loosened the silk and no doubt the gleam of gold and the flash of the diamond caught her eye, for on the instant her whole manner changed. "Of cose, young miss, I could do it faw you ef you wish me to," she said, "only I must have gold faw dat. Needn't be money, good gold jewlry jes the same, an' harnsome stones. But I'se got to use costly t'ings. I get 'em from high mountains 'an down in de swamps. I'se got to hab sea-serpants' fangs, an suicides' blood, and de seeds ob de flower that bloom once in a hundred years. 'An I uses up de power for a long while. Yes, I needs gold to pay faw dat. I is fixed dar. I got to tink ob myself; I's gettin' old. Times comin' I got to gib up and sot down 'an use my sabins'. Ole age near by, little miss, 'an dey ain't no one to do nawfin' faw ole Flora when she cawn't help herself."

And still she fixed me with her eye and said, softly, "Ef you *is* got any gold, you kin hab de beauty, little miss, you kin hab it. Needn't be money—a gold ring or a watch 'an chain would do." In that instant I thought of the necklace that I wore.

Mamma would say yes, if I could ask her, I thought, and my hand went to my throat. In a moment more I held the necklace toward Flora.

It was composed of twelve gold chains of the finest workmanship, fastened in front by a broad clasp, set with a diamond. On the back of the clasp was my mother's name, so finely engraved that it could only be read through a magnifying glass by people with ordinary sight.

The black fingers of old Flora closed softly over the necklace. "You kin trust me, young miss," she said; "and now youse got to say to yourself 'courage,' youse got to strive and dare, you has. What I gwine to do now is voudoo. You hear tell ob dat, miss?"

"Yes," I said, for indeed I had heard that dreadful word whispered in the kitchen, and had learned to believe in the sort of black magic it expresses to the negro. Even Maum Mandy, who had killed a mad dog with a hatchet, would shrink and tremble at the sight of a piece of calico tied in the middle with a thread and laid on the sill of the kitchen door, and whisper with white lips and rolling eyes, "voudoo."

Yes, I believed in this, and I felt that it was wicked to have anything to do with it, but it seemed to me that to be so ugly that I could not be loved, to be unprepossessing, was to be under a sort of evil spell for life.

"Yes," I said, "I know. Now that I have paid you, go to work and do what you can do at once." The negress bowed her head.

"Yas', yas, miss," she said, and at once began to see to the fastenings of doors and shutters, locking and barring them securely. Having done this she stooped to the floor and rolled back a rug that covered part of the carpet. Even then was the carpet so carefully matched that I should not have suspected the presence of a trap-door until she lifted it and laid it back on its hinges. A damp and mouldy smell came up from the depths below and old Flora whistled.

At this the monkey I have described appeared from the inner room, and catching up the lantern, brought it to her.

She lit it and tied it about his neck, and commanded him to descend to the cellar. He chattered, trembled and seemed overcome with terror; but she menaced him furiously, and in a few moments he obeyed. Then she turned to me:

"Come, little miss," she said, "go you down. Hold onto de ladder, don't fall. An' don't be skeered, nuffin' hurt you."

I had no fear of ladders, and descended briskly. Flora followed, shutting the trap and bolting it behind her.

We were now in a whitewashed cellar, without a single window. The floor was covered with tar, and at one end was a set of shelves, full of jars, pots and boxes.

On a flat stone in the centre stood an iron pot, and about this other stones were arranged in a circle, as if for seats. Nothing else was visible.

"Sit down on one ob dem yar stone, missy," the old woman said. "And whatever you see, keep quiet. I is gwine to call dem dat keeps de beauty stone. I calls 'em by charms and spells. Now I 'splain to you. Ef you likes to go on you kin, if not you can leab it."

I shivered, but I said: "Go on; if you can make me beautiful I don't care how."

At this Flora went to the shelves and brought from them sundry jars and boxes, the contents of which she began to sprinkle into the great pot on the central stone. She kindled no fire, but shortly it seemed to me that the contents of the pot began to boil and bubble and a thick, blue steam to rise from it.

In a little while everything about me began to seem unreal. A delightful dreaminess crept over me, the blue smoke that arose from the pot grew denser, the whole air was filled with a singular perfume and I saw everything as if through the medium of opal glass.

It would have been impossible for me to move, though I could turn my eyes in any direction. However, I did not wish to stir; I was perfectly content to sit with my hands in my lap and watch what took place about me.

On the stone beside the pot sat the monkey, solemn and sphynx-like. Behind it, in the thickest of the smoke, stood the black woman, chanting and throwing, every now and then, some new substance into the boiling mess.

The most singular part of the spectacle was that when I took my seat upon one of the stones; there was no one in the cellar but Flora, the monkey and myself. But by degrees every stone in the circle became occupied by a strange figure. I never saw one of them enter or take its place; suddenly it was there, I knew not how. All were robed in white, with hoods drawn over their heads. Some had snouts like pigs, some had beaks like birds of prey, some tusks like elephants. some eyes in the middle of their foreheads, some had bare skulls with no eyes at all.

But all of them continually moved their heads up and down, slowly and strangely, and all joined in Flora's wild chant.

Somewhere an unseen drum began to beat, to which all these creatures kept time. Now and then I heard a hollow groan.

At last a green serpent with fiery eyes arose from the pot and coiled as if for a spring. The opal light changed to a red glare. Flora, the monkey and all the other figures vanished, and I was alone with a gigantic being, dusky and horrible. It seemed to have wings, it seemed to have claws, it seemed to have horns, it certainly had great, fiery eyes. It came nearer and nearer, it bent over me: "Hold fast what I give you," it said. And though I did not see her I heard old Flora's voice shrieking: "You is got de beauty stone, little missy, and you is paid a price for it. Yes, you is got it sure enough; hold fast, hold fast."

I felt a small, smooth object pressed into my palm, closed my fingers over it and knew no more.

(*To be Continued.*)

Miss Gilder and Suffrage.

Miss Jeanette L. Gilder, to the great amazement of those who know her, has come out strongly in opposition to the woman's suffrage movement, which is now agitating all classes of society. In explaining her position she says, in effect, that she is a believer in the mental equality of the sexes, but denies that there is any physical equality.

Women's work and men's work of the same character, she thinks, should be placed side by side, so as to judge each fairly; and she maintains that, when so compared, men's work, particularly where strength and skill are required, is incomparably greater than that which it is possible for a woman to do. Miss Gilder is certainly right in saying that there can be no sex in literature and art, and that every book and picture should be judged by its own merit irrespective of the writer or the maker.

Miss Gilder gives her belief, rather than her reasons, why women should not take part in politics. She believes that public life is too wearing and too unfitted for the average woman. She does not believe, as do many of the women suffragists, that better laws would result from the enlargement of the franchise. The same vexed questions would remain, and nothing could be settled by more votes. Miss Gilder believes that from the days of Adam and Eve men and women have been different in all important respects, and she believes that this difference will continue. She holds that it was intended by nature that men should work, and that women should share in the disposition and enjoyment of their labor.

Without intending to contradict Miss Gilder, it is evident that she has overlooked the fact that in a state of nature it is the women, and not the men, who work, and it is the man who enjoys the fruits and disposition of the products of his wife's labor.

Miss Gilder does not believe that the laws are unfair to women. With a spirit that would be chivalric if manifested by the other sex to hers, she believes that men want to be fair to women, and that the laws made by men are more lenient to her sex than to their own. Very pertinently she asks the question, while discussing the question that men are unfair: "Will women, if allowed to vote and to make laws, be fair to women?" This she regards as a very serious question, and the inference is, although she does not openly state it, that women will be more severe and uncharitable to their own sex than are men.

Miss Gilder's strongest point is made when she states that in her opinion it will be impossible for women to cultivate home life and at the same time to enter the political arena. Referring to her own hard-working life with its essential duties and its consequent trials, she says she does not see how it would have been possible for her to have cared for herself and the loved ones dependent upon her and at the same time to have given any attention to politics. She believes that if the franchise were extended it would clearly be the duty of women to exercise the privilege of the ballot, and she as clearly believes that this could not be done without a sacrifice of the home duties on which the happiness of the community and the success of the nation so largely depend.

In conclusion, Miss Gilder says that she is anxious to give women everything she wants—but not the ballot. She believes in opening up to her every field and every avenue of industry, where there is a possibility of her success; but she earnestly adds: "Keep her out of politics."

The census of 1890 shows that in the United States the number of females of all ages is 30,554,370, of whom 17,183,988 were single. The large number of unmarried women between the ages of forty-five and sixty, strangely enough, corresponds with the number of men, North and South, who were killed or died during or soon after the civil war. These amount to nearly one million.

A NEW YORK ROMANCE.

An Ambitious Journalist Wins a Salvation Army Lass.

A Heartless Flirt in High Life—Gladys Vandyke Trifles With the Affections of Jabez Tuttle—His Confidence in Woman's Love is Shaken.

Jabez Tuttle was an ambitious young reporter, employed on the *New York Daily Hustler*, a journal whose circulation was simply fabulous, according to its own editorial utterances on that subject.

Mr. Tuttle is no longer connected with metropolitan journalism, of which he was a bright and shining light, and the cause of his eclipse is to be discovered in the following romantic story:

Although he had passed the quarter of a century mark, Jabez Tuttle had never been in love until he was detailed by the city editor of the *Hustler* to write up the proceedings of a Salvation Army convention.

There he met Captain Patsy Dinkins and his fate. Captain Dinkins could not well be called handsome, but she had dark, soulful eyes, a graceful figure, and a bright, pleasant smile. It was a case of love at first sight, and for them to become engaged was the work of a moment. They intended to wed as soon as Jabez got "a raise." His salary was eleven dollars a week, and out of it he had to support his aged father, a most exemplary widower, to whom he was devotedly attached, and with whom he lived in a hall room on the top floor of a Harlem apartment house.

For a while Patsy and Jabez were very happy. Then they quarreled for the usual reason that separates lovers. Captain Patsy became jealous. In the discharge of his reportorial duties, the young journalist attended a brilliant social gathering at the palatial Vandyke residence on Fifth avenue. There he met Gladys Vandyke, the beautiful daughter of a millionaire banker. She was very much taken with the gifted young reporter, who wrote up an enthusiastic description of the heiress, which appeared, with her portrait, in the next issue of the paper.

Gladys Vandyke was a natural born flirt, and she completely turned the head of the journalist. She invited him to call again. When Captain Dinkins heard of this she reproached her lover. He retorted bitterly, and they parted.

After that he saw a great deal of Gladys Vandyke. In fact, she made Jabez believe that she loved him. He proposed and was accepted, but she enjoined secrecy, as her parents were inclined to look with disdain on the struggling young reporter. She persuaded him that a private marriage would be necessary, until she could get her father to look more kindly on the match.

Of course, the Salvation Army lassie faded out of the memory of Jabez Tuttle, but she had not forgotten him. One evening he was passing through Union Square, when a gentle hand was laid on his arm. It was Patsy Dinkins, but the mere shadow of her former self. There were dark rings around her eyes, and a wan, weird expression on her face.

"Why, is it you, Patsy?" asked the astonished reporter.

"It is me," she responded, calmly, but ungrammatically; "however, we are no longer Patsy and Jabez to each other," and she averted her head, so he could not perceive her emotions.

"Excuse me, Captain Dinkins."

"Major Dinkins, if you please. I have been promoted," she replied, with quiet dignity.

"I congratulate you, major.

"Mr. Tuttle, I dislike to annoy you, but I have a sacred duty to perform. You are deceiving your worthy old father. You have not informed him of your engagement to Miss Gladys Vandyke. If you do not tell him I shall do so."

"Well, it strikes me, major, that my affairs should no longer concern you. Miss Vandyke loves me for myself alone," observed Mr. Tuttle, with a *hauteur* precaution to New York reporters.

"Jabez—excuse me, Mr. Tuttle—I am only thinking of your happiness. If Miss Vandyke really meant to marry you, I would not have come to warn you; but she is merely trifling with your warm affections, and will cast you aside as the plaything of an hour."

"It is false. Gladys Vandyke is as true as steel," retorted Tuttle, with a fierce glare in his tone of voice.

"Listen to me, Jabez Tuttle," she answered, in a low, deep tone, that thrilled his whole being. "She is about to elope with an actor, Claude DeVere, whose real name is Branigan."

"I see you are as jealous as ever," replied Tuttle, with a snort of derision.

"No, Jabez, I love you only as a sister. I know whereof I speak. Miss Sadie Bondclipper, the bosom friend of Miss Vandyke, has become converted, and joined our army.

THE FIRST MEETING.

She has told me in strict confidence that Gladys Vandyke told her that she was going to marry Claude DeVere. He is old enough to be her father, but he has persuaded her that she has great dramatic ability. She is to star in his company as soon as they are married. They are making arrangements to elope. If you will be at the little arbor in Central Park, just west of the lake, to-morrow afternoon at three, you will discover that I have told the truth. Farewell, Jabez Tuttle."

She disappeared in the direction of the Salvation Army barracks on Fourteenth street, and he saw her no more.

At first, Tuttle was disposed to laugh at the warning, but he remembered that Gladys had of late developed a remarkable penchant for attending matinee performances at the Standup Theatre, where DeVere's company was performing. In spite of all he could do, a horrible suspicion took possession of him. That night he did not close an eye, but tossed on his couch until morn.

Shortly before three o'clock in the afternoon of the next day Jabez visited the alleged place of rendezvous. Right behind the rustic arbor was a thick clump of bushes, in which, while completely concealed from view, he could see and hear everything that was said and done. He hid in the bushes and waited for developments.

Precisely at three o'clock Gladys Vandyke and Claude DeVere could be seen approaching with hurried steps. They entered the arbor, and after a brief embrace that filled the soul of Jabez with rage, they sat on the bench and talked about their future prospects.

Claude DeVere was about fifty years of age, had a large, dyed moustache, and other indications of former great personal beauty.

"How lovely you look, Gladys!" he said, with a stage smile. "What a sensation you will make when we appear together on the stage! It will remind the New York public of Lillian Russell and Signor Perrugrini. By the way, Gladys"—and a dark frown gathered on his alabaster brow—"who is this snide reporter with whom I hear you are so intimate?"

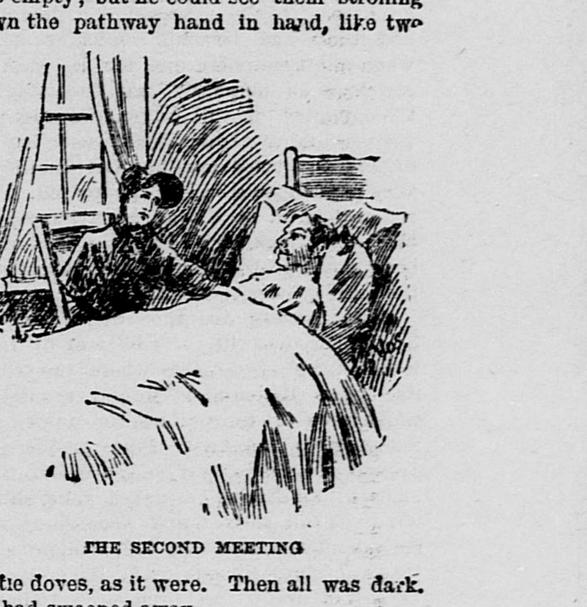
"Why, I really believe you are jealous. Do you suppose, you silly man, that I could love any other human being after I met you?"

"Then you did love him at one time?"

"Never! The idea that I should have any affection for a creature like that, who has no style about him. I know I showed him some little attention, but I was working for puffs in the *Hustler*, and I got them. Why, those odious Dusenbury girls are eaten up with envy at the flattering notices I got in the *Hustler*."

"Oh, I understand it now," replied DeVere, completely mollified, "I've had to be polite to these vulgar creatures of the press myself, in order to get favorable mention. Forgive me, Gladys, that I doubted your love."

Then followed another demonstration of affection. Poor Jabez pressed his hand to his throbbing heart. His brain reeled in its socket, so to speak. When he recovered sufficiently to look into the arbor again, it was empty; but he could see them strolling down the pathway hand in hand, like two



THE SECOND MEETING

turtle doves, as it were. Then all was dark. He had swooned away.

When Jabez Tuttle regained consciousness, he found himself still in the bushes, and the shades of night had been falling for some time. He had just strength enough left to drag himself to his humble lodgings, where he was cared for by his decrepid old father, the exemplary widower. A raging fever set in. For days he raved, and was out of his head. Once, when he had a lucid interval, he felt on his pale brow a soft hand, that was altogether different from the horny palm of his worthy old parent.

Jabez opened his eyes and saw the kindly face and Salvation Army bonnet of Patsy Dinkins gazing down at him.

"I am going to die, and lose my position on the *Hustler*, am I not, Patsy?"

"Yes, Jabez, it looks that way, if peritonitis sets in," replied Major Dinkins.

"Then, listen to me—I never would have told you, if I expected to pull through. When you warned me in Union Square, my love returned suddenly, and I would have wrapped my arms around you then and there if a cop hadn't been watching us from behind a tree. Farewell, Major Patsy Dinkins, forever."

Major Dinkins festooned the emaciated neck of the expiring journalist with her arms, and they mingled some tears. However, as peritonitis forgot to set in, Jabez began to recover, and in a few days was able to set up and take a little beef tea, but he lost his $11 a week position on the staff of the *Daily Hustler*.

They were married, and there is no happier couple in New York than Sergeant Tuttle, otherwise known as "Jolly Jabez," who pounds a bass drum, and his wife, Major Dinkins, who shakes a tambourine at Satan.

And what about the faithless Gladys Vandyke? She was married to Branigan alias DeVere. He broke his promise to make her a star, and otherwise treated her with great cruelty. Her parents cast her off, and now she is suing for divorce and alimony, on the statutory grounds, a prominent New York society lady being mentioned as co-respondent.

ALEX SWEET.

The Liquor Trade in Iowa.

After a trial of eleven years Iowa has abandoned prohibition for the sufficient reason that the law could not be enforced and that prohibition did not prohibit. The last legislature enacted and the Governor approved a license law that varies somewhat from that of the other states. In towns having a population of five thousand and over the consent of the city council must be obtained by every retail liquor seller. This done he must pay a fee fixed at $600 a year, in quarterly instalments in advance. In communities where there is not a municipal government saloons cannot be licensed unless sixty-five per cent. of the voters in the village give them written consent.

The license fee is divided between the county and the municipality.

One of the most popular song writers in England is J. L. Malloy, an Irishman by birth, and a lawyer by profession. He stands high at the English bar, but being passionately fond of music, like Silas Wagg, he drops into poetry by way of recreation, but he writes with more heart than men do for bread and butter.

A metallurgist at Westfield, N. J., who has been experimenting for many years, has discovered a method of making aluminum at twenty-five cents a pound with a profit to the manufacturer. This is about one-half its present selling price, and this inventor believes that in time the metal can be produced as cheaply as Bessemer iron.

The Protestant population of all Europe is about 50,000,000, or equal to that of the United States; but while continental Europe has only about eight per cent. of the Sunday schools of the world, the United States has forty-nine per cent. or nearly one-half.

It is commonly supposed that the eating of oranges, plums, apples and other acidulous fruits has a tendency to increase acidity in the stomach. This, however, is not so. On the contrary the fruit acids, when taken into the stomach, are converted into alkaline carbonates, which tend to counteract acidity.

It is said that women have a greater fondness for speculation than men, and that where once they take to gambling it is difficult to break them of it. In England and America they are the most ardent admirers of the racecourse, and their interest seems to be proportioned to the amount of their bets. An anti-gambling women's association is being formed in England.

The grape has been a most popular and useful fruit, but it is only recently that all its possibilities have been grasped. They are now making an excellent illuminating oil out of grape seed. For generations cotton seed, now so important an agricultural product, was regarded as a useless substance and so