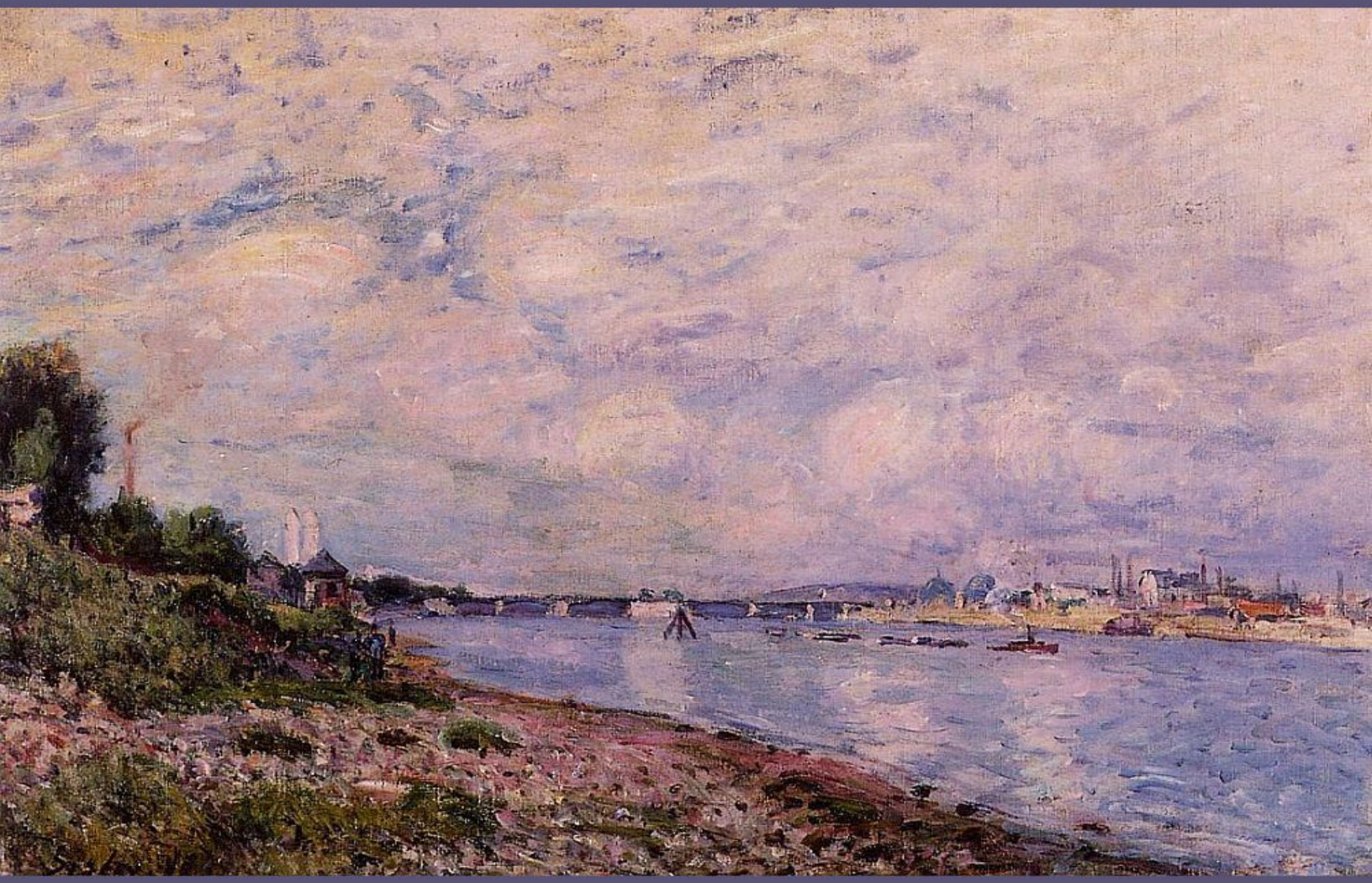
FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT



EARLIER STORIES

Earlier Stories

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT

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KATHLEEN MAVOURNEEN

CHAPTER I. KATE DAVENANT.

" There she goes! " said Fayne, " on that light-built black. Jove! how she rides! "

All the men rushed to the window, as men will rush, to look at a feminine celebrity. Three of them there were — Brandon, Coyne, and Meynell. Fayne had a place in the window before. One man had not moved — that man was Carl Seymour; and belles were not his hobby, so he kept his seat and went on sketching.

"She," who was properly represented by Kate Davenant, passed by the Ocean House on a dashing trot, her groom following her; and when she was out of sight, the men came back to their seats again.

" I wonder if it's true? " said Brandon, half hesitatingly.

" If what is true? " asked Fayne.

" About well, they say she is such a dreadful flirt, you know. She don't look like it."

Carl Seymour shrugged his shoulders.

" Don't be so guileless, my dear fellow," he said. " Women never do look like it.' Innocence is their chief characteristic. Do you suppose Eve looked like it ' when she gave Adam the apple? No! If she had, the masculine part of humanity, at least, would have been rusticating in the Garden of Eden to the present day." "

"Have you ever met her?" asked Coyne, suddenly.

" Eve? No, not to my recollection."

" Miss Davenant, I mean? "

" No."

" Well," said Coyne, with an odd tone in his voice, " don't form any opinion until you have. You might be sorry afterward. Older men than you have risked their whole happiness upon that woman; wiser and as coolheaded men (I don't think there are many cooler-headed) would have given their lives for a smile from her lips." And he walked to the window with his hands in his pockets, and began to whistle softly. A little silence followed, one of those unaccountable silences which sometimes fall upon talkers with a sense of present discomfort or warning for the future.

Coyne was the oldest of the party, who were spending the summer at Newport. Kate Davenant had been the last arrival, and as she was a woman, and beautiful, she had been pretty liberally discussed. Perhaps the discussion had been all the more liberal, because Miss Davenant's fame had reached Newport before her. People, the stronger sex more especially, had a great deal to say about Miss Davenant. About her perfection of beauty, in the first place; about her wonderful magnetic fascination; about the tastefulness of her toilets; and last, but not least, about her aunt and chaperon, Mrs. Mortimer Montgomery. The latter lady was certainly all that society could desire as an endorsement. Rich, well-born, her right to rule supreme was not to be disputed. But that did not account for Miss Davenant. Some bold inquirer had once ventured to ask about Kate, but had been decidedly snubbed, for Mrs. Mortimer Montgomery had merely placed her eyeglass in her aristocratic eye and stared her down, saying, " Kate is my adopted daughter," and from that day the irrepressible member had been " cut." So the matter rested, when Miss Davenant made her first appearance at Newport, Her costumes were superb pieces of art, her air was perfect, the witchery of her manner carried all before it. She might be the heiress of millions, or she might be merely a dependent upon Mrs. Mortimer Montgomery — a poor

relation — but to some people the uncertainty made the situation all the more piquant.

" George! " ejaculated young Spooney, who was an unsung hero on the look-out for a fortune, " it's like a lottery, jolly, but dangerous. Fellow puts down his money, and draws either a prize or a blank."

Now I will go back to the men who helped me to open my story.

Brandon, Fayne, and Meynell, have gone to play billiards. Coyne and Seymour have stayed behind. The man with the clear eyes, straight features, and down-drooping blonde mustache, is Carl Seymour; the dark-faced man who leans upon the window is Angus Coyne.

" I remember just such an evening as this spent by the sea-side nine — no, ten years ago" said Seymour, and he broke off with a short, half-forced laugh.

Coyne looked up at him.

" What," he said, " have you a romance, too?"

Seymour laughed again.

" Yes. The oddest of all romances. A romance with a nine-year-old heroine."

" A romance, indeed," said Coyne. " But how did it become one? "

Seymour threw himself into an arm-chair, and looked out at the sea again with something of thought in his face.

" There are strange things in a man's life," he said, musingly. " I often look back on mine, and wonder at the changing path that leads us all to the one ending — a mound of earth covering all our old faults and stumblings. There has been plenty of change in mine, but only one romance, and Miss Davenant and the sea brought it back to me tonight."

" Miss Davenant? "

" Yes. Kate Davenant you said: and a Kate, or Kathleen, was my little heroine. Wait a moment. You shall see her."

He went to his desk and brought out a package of drawings, laying them before his friend.

" Look at her," he said, with a glow in his eyes. " The little darling! Kathleen Mavourneen, I used to call her."

There were about a dozen rough pictures, some larger, some smaller, some half-finished, some perfect; but all taken from one model. A slender, wild-looking child, with great stars of eyes, and wonderful tangled hair. The prettiest, and most perfect of all, was a water-color, and showed her standing, barefooted and bareheaded, ankle-deep in the tide, picking up shells; her cheeks all abloom, her magnificent, unkempt hair blown out like a flame-colored banner, and tossing over her shoulders.

"That was the first time I saw her," commented Carl. " It was at a little village on the coast of Maine, where she lived with her old grandmother. Nine years ago," with a sigh. " How time flies."

" She is a weird-looking little beauty," said Coyne. " But how did your story end? "

" Practically. Perhaps a little sadly, too. It ended with my good-bys, and with Kathleen's arms around my neck, and her tawny mane blowing in my eyes as she kissed me. No woman has kissed me since — sometimes I think no woman ever will. ' Kathleen Mavourneen ' spoiled me for the rest of womankind."

"Don't let her prove fatal to your happiness," jested Coyne. "Kates are dangerous; and, do you know, this child-love of yours is not unlike that most dangerous of all Kates — Kate Davenant? "

" I hope not," said Seymour, quickly. " I would rather think not."

" Why not? " said Coyne, as quickly. " You say you have never seen her."

" No; and I don't know why, unless that I want to keep my little Kathie to myself. I don't want to hear men speak of her as they speak of Miss Davenant. It may seem absurd

and romantic to you, but I think if ever I saw Kate Ogilvie again, I should make her my wife; and I don't wish to think men have made bets on my wife's flirtations, and called her' the Circe.'"

Coyne did not answer. He was thinking of Kathleen Mavourneen — not Seymour's, but Kathleen Mavourneen, as Kate Davenant had sung it to him, a few months ago, in the oldfashioned hotel-garden on' the banks of the Rhine. Kate Davenant had been his romance. Had been, I say, because the romance was over now, and he had only been one of the many whom men had made bets about; only one of the many who had succumbed to the charming of the woman they called "the Circe."

CHAPTER II. BELLE MARQUISE.

On an elegant little stand, in a charming dressing-room, stood a bouquet of scarlet and white blossoms, fringed with feathery grasses; and opposite the stand, sitting in a luxurious arm-chair, lounged Kate Davenant.

Kate Davenant! It could be no other. Look at her! Face like snow, with a soft rose-red palpitating on either cheek; eyes dark purple, great masses of brown, satiny hair, that, in some lights, looked almost black. The artistic light, falling upon her artistic face; her small, arched feet, in their pretty slippers; the easy, graceful lines of the half-lounging figure — what a picture it was! Suddenly she jumped from the chair, and went to the cheval glass. She glanced at herself, from arching foot to shining, delicate head, just as a critical observer might look at a beautiful picture. There was something in her eyes that seemed a little like fascination, as she drew nearer and nearer, until the bright, morning sunshine, falling full upon her, brought out all the brilliancy of rose-red and dazzling white on her skin. She gazed at it all for a few moments, and then her lips parted in a scornful, ungirlish laugh.

"What is it all worth?" she said. "The outline is graceful, the tinting rich and delicate. What will it bring, I wonder? But the picture goes to the highest bidder, of course."

It was so bitterly said, that the very energy seemed to rouse her from her late languid mood. She rang for her maid.

" Lotte," she said, when the girl came in, " where did those flowers tome from? " and she pointed to the bouquet upon the stand.

" Mr. Griffith sent them. They arrived this morning, early."

Miss Davenant shrugged her shoulders.

" Where is Mrs. Montgomery? "

" In her room. There was a note, ma'amselle, with the flowers."

"That will do."

When the girl was gone, she took the note in her hand and read it, with the little sarcastic smile curving her lips.

" Very pretty, Mr. Griffith! " shrugging her shoulders again. " Very pretty, indeed — but is it wise? Do you know how many people send bouquets and make these charming speeches? Nevertheless, since you desire it –

. " She stopped, and taking a waxen camellia from the cluster, put it in a small glass by itself. "There, it will keep fresher now, and I will wear it this evening," she said.

Three years ago there would have been a little pang of remorse in her heart; for this poor Tom Griffith, who sent the flowers, was an honest young fellow, and loved her as only an honest-hearted simpleton can love a woman who was such a woman as Kate Davenant was. " The Circe," the men called her. Well, well, when a woman loses her faith in the world, God help her, and mankind pity her! Kate Davenant had lost her faith long ago. Perhaps, as I tell my story, you will understand how she had lost it; but now I can only show her to you as a woman, whose wonderful grace and beauty turned the great game of hearts into her hand, and brought new excitement into her half frothed-out life.

"What has the world done for me?" she had asked herself, bitterly, a thousand times. " There may be love and truth in it, but I have not seen it yet, heaven help me! "

So it was that she wore Tom Griffith's flower that night, with a little sarcastic remembrance of how many flowers she had worn before, and how many flowers she had flung aside as soon as she tired of them.

She went down to Mrs. Montgomery, after she was dressed, and found that aristocratic matron in a humor

which was none of the best.

" It's perfectly absurd! " said her aunt. " I came here to escape Brown, Jones, and Robinson, and no sooner do I find a comfortable parlor in a hotel, than Brown, Jones, and Robinson make an invasion. I thought Newport was select, but in the present state of society no place is select. One runs against Brown in Rome, meets Jones in full costume on Mont Blanc, and has Robinson staring one in the face at the Tuilleries. I will tell you what I have been thinking of, Kate. I saw, yesterday, in our drive, that a handsome house was to be let down the Avenue. Why shouldn't we take it for the season? "

"We might," said Miss Davenant. "I, for one, am tired of hotel life."

Mrs. Mortimer Montgomery looked meditatively for a moment,

" We will," she said, at last. " One feels so much more at ease in a private establishment."

Mrs. Montgomery was a decisive, businesslike woman, and her " We will," was conclusive; so, that point disposed of, she turned her attention to another.

"Where did you get your flowers?" she asked.

Kate glanced indolently at the reflected blossoms in the pier-glass, and smiled a little.

" From Mr. Griffith."

" Her aunt put her eyeglass in her eye, and coughed somewhat reprovingly.

" Very good, my dear. And Mr. – Mr. – , this young man, whatever his name is, got them at the florist's, and paid a ruinous price for the pleasure of seeing you wear them. You are a very handsome woman, Kate — but don't you think that sort of thing may be carried too far?"

Kate shrugged her shoulders with a haughty, indifferent gesture. She did not like interference, even from her aunt.

" My dear aunt," she said, " I wear the green ticket yet, you know, and as a wearer of the green ticket, am entitled

to a little amusement. I am very wicked, of course, and ' this sort of thing ' is very shocking; but then, you see, wouldn't life be a trifle wearing without it? Our life, I mean. We don't look forward to domestic felicity, and the days of Arcadian shepherds and shepherdesses lie a few centuries behind us."

Her aunt's reply was very" laconic. She never entered into discussion.

" You please yourself, of course," she said, " My remark was a mere suggestion. I don't think there is any fear of your getting romantic notions, at least."

The following day, Mrs. Montgomery proceeded to make arrangements connected with her new establishment, and within a week she took possession, with the full intent of enjoying herself.

" If I like the place as much as ever at the end of the season, I will buy it," she said to Kate.

A few days later, as Miss Davenant sat at the piano, her aunt came in from making some calls.

" You remember the Scotchman we met in Germany, Kate? " she asked. " Coyne his name was."

Kate's hands dropped away from the keys, and her face caught an expression of faint interest.

" Yes. What reminded you of him? "

" I met him to-day at the Farnhams. He came with a friend to call on Alice. The friend was quite a striking-looking man. His name was Carl Seymour, and he is an artist."

"Carl Seymour, did you say?"

"Yes. What a pity such men should be thrown . into such places. I told them they might call on us. Where is Lotte? I want her."

When her relative had gone in search of Lotte, Kate Davenant got up from the piano and walked to the hearth, resting both elbows on the mantel, and looking at herself. There was a brief space in which the beautiful face the

pier-glass reflected was quite clear to her sight; but, then, something strangely like tears blurred the reflection with their mist, and at last she dropped her face with a little rising tremor in her throat. Tears did not come easily into Kate Davenant's eyes; but now the fresh breath of sea air, blowing through the open window, mingled itself with an old memory of childish days, so much purer and better than her womanhood, that her eyes filled in spite of all.

" I wonder if he has forgotten? Men forget these things more easily than women. But ah, me! nine years — nine years, and ' Kathleen Mavourneen ' is a woman of the world."

When Coyne and Seymour returned from their call upon Alice Farnham, they talked about Mrs. Montgomery and her niece.

" I may be a fool! " said Coyne, with his gray eyes flashing. " I may be a fool, but I do not forget her — I never can! "

In their room they found Tom Griffith waiting for them, evidently in a very ecstatic frame of mind.

"I've been to Mrs. Mortimer Montgomery's," he said. " Kate — Miss Davenant — has promised to drive out with me this evening; " and he glanced down rather sheepishly at a rose in his button-hole.

Carl seated himself before his easel and began to work, whistling the while softly. Was there never a man yet who had resisted Kate Davenant's witchery? He had never heard of one; and in a half-angered wonder at her fascination, he felt a certain haughty power to resist it himself.

It was weeks before he saw her. Newport grew gayer and gayer, and Mrs. Montgomery's entertainments were the principal features in its gayety. Kate rode by the hotel every day, sometimes with one adorer, sometimes with another, and sometimes only with a. groom: but Seymour never cared to look up. The men brought stories of her, and grew

loud in their admiration of her grace; and every man who spoke of her was one added to the list of victims.

But, at last, a sensation arose in the shape of croquet-parties, and at the first of these assemblies Carl met the syren. The party was given at the Farnhams; and when he made his appearance, pretty, good-natured Alice took possession of him, and proceeded to enlighten him as to the various members of the company.

" The gentleman with the dark face is the new nabob, Mr. Collier; and that tall gentleman is our literary lion, Gerald Colycinth; and the one standing near him is a senator. It takes all sorts of people to make up a croquet-party; but one must have a sprinkling of celebrities, you know. Now, I want to show you somebody very important. Let me see — where is she? But, of course, you have seen Miss Davenant — the Circe, as they call her?"

"Not, 'of course,'" said Carl, "because I have not had that pleasure."

Alice's blue eyes flew open.

" Is it possible? Why, everyone is going crazy about her."

"Pray except me," replied Carl. "I am anxious to preserve my senses."

" Wait until you know her," laughed Alice. " Ah! there she is. The centre of attraction of that knot of gentlemen. They always do crowd around her in that manner, celebrities and all. It is my impression the senator would give his seat for a smile. How does she manage to dress so perfectly?"

As Alice said, Kate was, as usual, the centre of attraction of a knot of the enslaved. Carl looked at her, and fairly caught his breath.

He was an artist, and the wonderful perfection of tinting in wearer and costume struck him with an intense pleasure. Some world-reading Frenchwoman has said, " Give me a handsome pair of eyes, and I will do the rest." Kate Davenant had not only the eyes, but every other beauty; and then she thoroughly understood what the

Frenchwoman spoke of as " the rest." Dress is a rather powerful attraction, and in this age of improvements beauty unadorned would be quite likely to be pronounced a dowdy. Keeping this in mind, Miss Davenant ruled supreme. Of her dress, I will only say that it was a wonderful piece of art, and from satiny puffs to slender foot a charming blending of delicate pearl-gray lace and flowers.

"Charmed already?" jested Alice, looking at Carl's watching face.

He shook his head.

" No. I am thinking of something. Do you remember the poem? "

" As you sit where lustres strike you, Sure to please, Do we love you most, or like you. Belle Marquise?"

Alice tapped the tip of her slim slipper meditatively with her mallet. She was a nice girl, but her good-nature did not make her very fond of Kate Davenant. A woman who is a belle is very rarely a favorite with her own sex — and Miss Davenant's success was too universal to make the feminine darlings absolutely adore her; and apart from that, Alice Farnham had a small thorn on her own account in the shape of Tom Griffith. Tom Griffith was her cousin, and until lately something a little more; but circumstances alter cases, and this case, the Circe had altered herself, and doing so had not gained pretty Alice's fervent esteem. Accordingly, the young lady did not defend her against Seymour's quotation.

CHAPTER III. JUST A THING OF PUFFS AND PATCHES.

Miss Davenant went through her croquet, as she went through everything else, with gracefulness and success. The people who looked upon the game scientifically were charmed with her interest and knowledge of its points; and those who regarded it merely as a game found time to be charmed with her beautiful face and spirited comments. Once or twice, during the evening, she glanced toward Carl Seymour, with a quick searching in her eyes.

" Who is he? " she asked of Tom Griffith, as she sent the senator's ball spinning across the lawn. " The slender man, with the blonde mustache, I mean."

" Don't you know him? " asked Tom, a little surprised. " That's Carl Seymour."

" An artist, is he not? " said Kate, coolly. " Mind where you send that ball."

" Yes. Painted ' Ulysses and the Syrens' — that picture there was such a *furor* about."

"I remember. Quite a celebrity, I should imagine," and she went on with her croquet.

Half a dozen times in the course of the afternoon, Carl Seymour passed her, and always with such a cool, careless face, that she could not fail to notice it — another woman might have been annoyed. Not so Kate Davenant. She knew better than to feel displeasure at an indifference which she was certain to overcome. Perhaps it pleased her a little. But, at last, on his way to recover a truant ball, Carl passed her as she stood in a little knot of admirers, laughing. There was a wonderful silver tone in her laughter, and something in it struck Carl Seymour, when he heard it, with

an odd sense of remembrance. Where had he heard the laugh before? Then he turned and looked at her face. His glance did not seem to trouble her; the fringed, purple eyes swept him from head to foot, and then Miss Davenant took up the thread of her conversation. He had never seen such eyes as those but once before; and his memory went back to the rock-bound shore, and the sweet child-face, so like, yet so unlike this girl's — the face of the child-love he had called Kathleen Mavourneen.

He stood at some little distance, listening to her and looking at her. The rose-red fluttered on her cheek, and the soft, large eyes opened and drooped. The usually grave senator gazed at the fair face entranced, and listened for every ring of her sweet laugh, as he would have listened for the notes of a prima donna. There was a curious contest going on in Carl Seymour's mind. He was wondering whether Miss Davenant attracted or repelled him. The sweet flower-face struck every artistic taste; the memory in the silver laugh touched him he knew not how; but then again came a remembrance of the stories he had heard, stories which to a proud, fastidious man seemed almost terrible. It might be a beautiful woman who wore Tom Griffith's flowers, and dazzled proud men with her smiles: but was it a true one? Others might have been content with the roseleaf tint and star eyes. Carl Seymour was not. He was a man apt to be a little sarcastic and severe upon women of the world; and as he watched Kate Davenant, he thought of the marquise again, and wondered if the application was not correct.

'' You are just a porcelain trifle,
Belle Marquise;
Just a thing of puffs and patches,
Made for madrigals and catches.
Not for heart-wounds, but for scratches.
Oh, Marquise!
'' Just a pinky porcelain trifle,

Belle Marquise;
Pâte tendre, rose Du Barry,
Quick at verbal point and parry;
Clever, certes — but to marry —
No, Marquise! "

He was thinking over this as Miss Davenant chatted with the enamored senator, and laughed musically at poor Tom Griffith's somewhat far-fetched witticisms. He was thinking about it when, at last, she took the senator's arm, and came toward Carl's side of the lawn.

He was an .elderly bachelor, this senator; and, like most elderly bachelors, quite susceptible, and felt more than senatorial dignity as he crossed the ground with the exquisitely gloved hand resting upon his portly arm, and Kate's voice softened deferentially. One of the fair hands was ungloved, and after the trailing dress had swept by him, glancing downward, Carl Seymour caught sight of a delicately-tinted trifle of pearl-gray glove lying at his feet. He took it up. Such a trifle as it was! Such a very bijou of kid and silver-thread embroidery! Just with the very molding of the soft fingers, with the very faint fragrance of lilies floating over it. Carl smiled a little with a half sensation of pleasure, it was so pretty. A few steps took him to Miss Davenant's side, and a few words attracted her attention.

" Pardon me! " he said, bowing. " But you have dropped your glove."

Just a faint flutter of red on her cheek as she took it from his hand, just a soft uplifting of the dark-fringed eyes.

" I thank you! " she said, returning his bow, and then she passed him.

Only two words, and such simple ones; but it was the Circe who had uttered them, and in the sweet, sweet voice which had touched so many hearts before. It had hardly occupied a minute's time; and when she passed on, she seemed to have forgotten it, and the voice that addressed

the senator was just as sweet. Nevertheless, Carl felt a little spell-bound, in spite of his sarcasm. He forgot about the marquise, and stood still looking after her.

"I don't wonder at their calling her the Circe" he said. And then the old memory came back to him, and he added lowly, though smiling at his fancy, " Kathleen Mavourneen! Kathleen Mavourneen! ''

As he stood there, he saw an elderly lady coming from the house, leaning on a gentleman's arm. A once handsome woman, perhaps a belle in her time, but just now suggestive of a dowager, in the sere and yellow leaf, and at the same time a woman with a great deal of haughtiness in her carriage, and cool speculation in her keen, handsome eyes. He knew who it was. He had seen Mrs. Mortimer Montgomery before, and guessed rightly that she intended to renew her acquaintance with him. Mrs. Montgomery understood precisely how much a celebrity was worth in the fashionable world, and " Ulysses and the Syrens " had done a great deal toward earning Carl Seymour a name.

She stopped on reaching him, and introduced her companion, the gentleman Alice Farnham had spoken of as our " literary lion."

" Lions, both of you! " she said, nodding her handsome old head. " How is it that you have not been roaring this evening, Mr. Seymour? When we are so fortunate as to secure a lion in our menagerie of society, we consider ourselves cheated if he don't exhibit his leonine characteristics."

'' But I am such a very young lion," laughed Carl. "Quite a cub, one might say. And wouldn't my roar be a little too mild among the full-grown quadrupeds? "

Mrs. Montgomery laughed, too. She liked men who were apt and self-possessed — and this gentlemen seemed to be both.

" You are too modest," she said. " But I must not forget what I came here for. Why don't you call on us? Kate saw

your picture last season, and has been talking about it ever since. Art and artists are her hobby."

Carl smilingly accepted the invitation. Fate had certainly taken him in hand, and Fate rules us all. When Mrs. Montgomery carried her lion back to the house, she also carried Carl's promise that he would call upon her the next day.

" Kate will be delighted to see you," she said, with the smiling nod. " Good-evening! "

After that my hero went over to Alice Farnham, and chatted with her until the company dispersed, and then he returned home and looked at the picture of little Kathie, wondering at the resemblance between the two pairs of tender eyes.

The next day found him at Mrs. Montgomery's. He had sent up his card, and was waiting her appearance. He looked round the room carelessly. Traces of " Kate " were here and there — in the pretty work-table, on which lay an open book with a filmy handkerchief flung upon its pages, and in the pearl card-case, with a tasseled glove lying by it — the very glove he had picked up the day before. He saw it, and smiled. There were many paintings hung against the walls, and suddenly one of them catching his eye, he rose, uttering an exclamation of surprise. It was a very small picture, and the subject a little weird and wild — just a strip of rocky shore, with gray, tossing waves sweeping into a little cove, and heavy, purple clouds glowering above. Spirited, very, and perfect both in outline and coloring. Evidently the work of no unpracticed hand.

But it was not this which had given rise to Seymour's exclamation. The scene was the most familiar of the many connected with the by-gone romance. It was the little bay, on the coast of Maine, where Kathie's red cloak had always been his signal among the rocks. When Mrs. Montgomery entered, he was still standing before the painting; and,

after the first salutations were over, he began to question her.

" May I ask where it came from? " he said. " I thought no one knew that spot but myself."

'' Kate painted it," replied her ladyship, a thought indifferently. " She is always dashing off some little wild scene or other. I don't know where she gets them from. Ah, Kate, here you are to answer for yourself."

Miss Davenant had just opened the door, and stood before them with a great bunch of red roses in her hand. She came forward and laid them on the table, and on her aunt's introduction, extended her hand with the old charming smile. She was glad to meet Mr. Seymour. She had made his acquaintance by reputation long ago. How could picture-lovers thank him for '' Ulysses and the Syrens?" There was nothing of straining for effect in her manner, nothing of anxiety to produce an impression. Simply the grace and elegance of a graceful and elegant woman of the world, who desired to please, and knew how to do it. Witching deference enslaved the senator, her face alone was enough for Tom Griffith, but Carl Seymour stood apart from other men, and she only helped Fate a little with her tender eyes and exquisite voice.

" I have been asking your aunt about this painting,'' said Seymour, at last. "She tells me you are the artist. It cannot possibly be a fancy picture? "

She looked up at it smiling.

" No," she said. " It is a scene from memory. It was my home once."

Seymour was almost angry with himself for the wild supposition which flashed upon him. And yet the coincidence was so odd. He glanced at the slim hand upon which the sunlight struck whitely, upon the brown, burnished hair, and then at the clear-cut, flawless face. Only the large, heavy-fringed eyes held anything of

remembrance for him. The rest was beautiful, but that was all. The subject dropped quietly.

He listened to the soft voice as she talked to him with perfect grace in every word and tone, and as he listened, wondered if the same spell lay upon other men as lay upon him. It was not such a spell as he had imagined it to be — not the witchery of a coquette; something finer, something more like the subtle instinct of a fair woman who had seen the world, and understanding it, still retains her' tender sweetness. In this lay the secret of Kate Davenant's success. Every man forgot, in her presence, that other men had seen the same smiles, and heard the same musical inflections of her voice. Carl Seymour forgot this, too. It was hard to realize that such eyes as these could be false; that of this stately, fair-faced girl people had said, " There are men whom her beauty and vanity have driven to worse than death." I am telling a story frankly, and will not profess to hide that Carl Seymour was a better man than Kate Davenant was a woman. The influences upon their lives had been different. The one had seen purity and honor, the other worldliness and the world. So it was that it was easier for Carl Seymour to believe that he had deceived himself, than to believe that the woman who seemed true could be deceiving him. That he was bitter against worldliness, I have told you, but the memory of a stately, womanly mother, and a true, purehearted little sister, in his far-away home, made him readier to be merciful than he would otherwise have been. Kate Davenant, too, was, perhaps, a little truer to herself to-day than she generally was — for there were old memories thrilling her as she watched his handsome, cavalier face. She showed him the collection of art-pets, of which Mrs. Montgomery had spoken. Forgetting the Circe in her natural pleasure at his familiarity with, and interest in them, she lost herself in her animation, and stood with uplifted eyes and soft rose-red on her cheek, as she

warmed into enthusiasm over the art he loved so well. She had seen the grand master-pieces of which he spoke, and knew them as well as he did; but there were subtle, tender touches in their grandeur and beauty which she had dreamed of vaguely, but which grew into great, glowing truths under his warmth and eloquence. Carl turned upon her suddenly once, and saw something of his earnestness in her face. Years ago he had seen the same rapt expression before, and its reproduction made him catch his breath with a swift heart-throb.

Mrs. Montgomery was delighted. This was a lion to boast of; and when he left them, her invitations were even more cordial than before.

" Kate," she said, when the door had closed behind him, " that man is a genius. What a pity he is so abominably poor. Mr. Coyne tells me he has absolutely nothing to depend upon but his art. If it was not for his circumstances, I should say he was exactly the man you ought to marry."

Miss Davenant was toying with a red rose, and she tore it into two pieces, slowly and deliberately, before she gave her answer.

" I don't think he is. Mr. Seymour is a truthful, honest man, and I am not a truthful, honest woman. Besides, as you intimate, intellect and honor are not marketable qualities." And she tossed the rose from her with a little impatient gesture, and taking her card-case from the table, left Mrs. Montgomery alone to her meditations.

Her aunt shrugged her shoulders.

Below, another incident occurred. As Seymour passed through the hall, he caught sight of a blood-red rose lying upon the floor. It had dropped from the handful Kate Davenant had brought into the drawing-room, and because of this he stooped and picked it up. He hardly knew his reason at the time, but long after he remembered it, and remembered, too, the little thrill that passed through him as its rich fragrance floated upward.