

# BREEME HOUSE

By Katherine Newlin Burt

Claire laughed. It was a sound of almost barbaric delight. It was as foreign and startling as herself. Just as the invalided earl in his wheel chair, his grave, pale wife, and Lady Jane sitting at Claire's feet—just as the trees and the rug and the tea-table, and the old manservant moving slowly away towards the house above them, were beautifully harmonious, so this girl was beautifully discordant. Her hair in the dying sunlight was gold; her face was vividly white, her eyes were keenly blue—blue of Vikings' eyes. She was of a grace entirely independent of accessories. When she moved nothing trailed or floated. Her tailor skirt, ruffled blouse, and trim shoes were as uncompromising as the boyish rippled parting of her hair, or the sweeping line from ear to chin. She was as eager as a rising tide, as unconscious of her power, as irresistible. Breeme House had never held a happier visitor.

"Nothing could spoil the glamour of all this," she protested; "and oh, Lord Breeme! you are wrong about five o'clock tea. They're as different as can be over here. In the first place, Jane introduced me to Mrs. Poling quite as though she were the head of the conspiracy, and I felt like murmuring a password, or making a sign in the air. Then Jane led me away and placed me between two Miss Meridens. They were so exactly alike—clothes and everything. And they both began putting questions. It was like some game in one of the Alice books. The Miss Meriden with the curly bang asked:

"Are you really an American, Miss Wilton? But, really, now?" "We can't believe it, you know!" said the Miss Meriden with the straight bang. "I assured them that I was probably the most American person that they had ever seen, and that they had better take a good look at me, because they might never see another.

"But you're not the least bit like an American!" they cried. "Not the least bit!" "Of course," twinkled Claire. "I knew just what they meant. What they had expected was this." Here she thrust out her chin, and spoke in a harsh nasal voice: "Say, I guess you don't know that I'm Miss Iowa Indianapolis, from Idaho, and that my poppa could buy up the whole village of Five Pastures here if he had a mind to it!"

A ripple of mirth went round amongst her hearers, and Claire dropped back into her own character.

"I have met Americans like that—in English plays and stories. I suppose there must be such a type, but I couldn't find any of them to show to Jane, over there. I think you really like us that way. I think it's a bore to you when we just seem human. I'm sorry. If you like, I'll play 'Miss Indianapolis' all the rest of my visit."

A chorus of protest rose. "Play Claire Wilton, if you please," said Jane. "She does very well, and isn't altogether 'human either.'"

Claire leaned back in her wicker chair amidst the laughter of the others.

Lord Breeme to her was not merely an invalided English nobleman; he was Ye Belted Earl of Ballard Lore, and she simply refused to note his modern dress. Besides being a belted earl, he was a splendid comrade. He had a grim, dry gift of humor that tickled Claire. She and the earl gave out sparks in each other's company. They fell, almost at once, to battles royal at meal-times, tea-times, and other times, on every subject from Prohibition to Spiritualism. Claire's laughter clashed brightly with dry chuckle.

Lady Breeme, the second wife of the earl and the mother of two rosy youngsters at play with their governess a few yards off, was a cold, pale matron of mighty virtue, dignity, and unattractiveness. She had all Claire's respect, and fitted well into the stateliness of Breeme House.

The beauty of the place, its

enchantment and rarity, centred to Claire's mind in Jane. This would have surprised any other member of the household, for Jane was not a greatly considered person. To her American friend, however, she personified all the seclusion, the silence, the quiet and varied humors of the setting. Lady Jane was the exquisite flower of Breeme's honorable history. She was its embodied soul.

"Claire," protested Jane suddenly, with one of her silvery-bright upward looks, "don't please, look at me like that! I'm not used to it."

"How am I to look at you, then? You're just as much for me to look at as the Van Dyke portrait. It's not my fault that you're a sentient being. You oughtn't to have asked me here if you hadn't meant me to look at you like that."

"I shall be glad when Alec comes to distract you."

"Did I seem to find him very distracting?" asked Claire idly. Jane's eyes had wandered across the lawn, and were watching a tall figure strolling down to them.

"You can ask him yourself," said she. "He has arrived!" Lord Tremont came deliberately near, kissed his stepmother, steadied his eyes before his father's somewhat probing look, put a finger under Jane's chin and turned, with a smile, to meet the guest. There was a quick color in Claire's cheek, and it sprung suddenly to his.

"So you got here all right from Plymouth!" The young man stood looking down at her, then slowly turned his eyes to where his little stepbrother and sister played under the trees.

"I'll go over and see the kiddies for a moment. Tell you all about things this evening, father."

He left the group less placid than he had found it. The shadow that Claire had been aware of had definitely deepened. She decided to leave them to themselves.

Before going in, Claire turned to look down at them all. What a beautiful, quiet scene! The sunset sky behind the trees, the circling rooks, the lawn, so velvet-green. And these courteous, gentle people, well looking and quiet eyed! Claire shook her head as though to dispel any suspicion of their anxieties, and went into the hall.

**CHAPTER VI**  
**THE LADY JANE**  
Lord Tremont did not look like a man who would take much trouble over children, but as he threw himself down near the low wicker chair occupied by Aline Parkes, the governess, he allowed Humphrey and Violet to climb over him without lifting a finger in self-defence.

Miss Parkes smiled at Claire Wilton as she went by them, but a moment later the smile passed into a blank, following look, and the crochets between her fingers fell to her lap.

Aline was the daughter of a poor, old Five Pastures rector, dead a year or so before, always befriended by the earl, and befriended now by a helping hand to his oldest child. She was gifted with a pair of beautiful green-gray eyes, which could express every emotion of their owner, but held, for the most part, a look of ironical patience. With this look, her smile, not quite straight and far from happy, very well accorded.

In answer to a questioning glance from Alec, she used the smile, still keeping her eyes in the doorway before going in.

"Wouldn't you take her, somehow for the lady of the house?" said she. "I never knew anyone with such a possessive air. When Miss Wilton looks at anything, she owns it."

"What," asked Tremont, "has think she means to—own it?"

"The Van Dyke for one thing," was Aline's answer, at which Alec sat up sharply, sending little Humphrey sprawling.

"You don't mean—I say, Al, do you mean she wants to buy it?" Aline shrugged, looked at him a moment, dropped her eyes, and drew her needle down into the

grass. "N-no, not buy it. At least, I believe not. But I think she means to—Here, pausing, a flush ran up her thin cheeks. "I she means to—own it."

Alec opened his narrow, colorless eyes. Then he laughed shortly, fell back and lay still, gnawing his lip and thinking hard, with very little expression of any kind on his face.

"Did you have any luck?" asked Aline presently, beginning to crochet again. "Was your trip worth while?"

Tremont turned over and propped his long chin in his long hands.

"No," he growled, and told her in a few jerky sentences the story of his fiasco. "I'll have to fess up, I fancy. The pater will surely get at it sooner or later; don't you think so, Aline?"

"You know how ill it made him last time. Isn't there some other way? You owe such a ghastly sum. Really, Alec, I'd think better of you if you worked it out yourself."

She reproved him as coolly as though he had been little Humphrey, and under the quiet tone Tremont colored.

"You're not exactly a little comforter, are you, Al?"

"Yes, she is, too, a comforter," broke in Humphrey who had been rubbing an injured knee on the shadiest side of Aline.

"Don't you say anything against my Miss Aline, Alec, d'ye understand?"

Tremont smiled, but the governess's face did not change. She bent it a little lower over her work.

"I don't think it's exactly comfort that you need, Alec. I think it's help and—a lesson. You've had your lesson, I suppose, but help doesn't seem to be coming. Oh, I wish we could spare Lord Breeme! It will hurt him more than anything. He's been so bothered of late."

Tremont glowered, but made no response.

"What do you think of Miss Wilton, Alec?"

The work was getting on very fast indeed, and required nice attention. Alec watched the busy white fingers.

"I think in a sort of way she's probably the most striking beautiful girl I've ever met." His voice rang with a studied intensity, not at all habitual with him. "Certainly she's the most amusing. She makes me think of a racehorse under a tight rein. And when she sits in the sun with that white face and that hair, she makes me think of a witch. I keep wondering what she's made of."

He fixed his narrowed eyes upon Aline's profile, and the corners of his mouth drew themselves in a manner that was boyishly cruel. He looked like himself at eight years old, teasing the cat.

He waited. She finished her row of crocheting and then looked up. Whatever Tremont had expected to see in the beautiful green-gray eyes, it was not the cool look she gave him. His lips lost their cruel little grin at once.

"I know one thing that she is made of," said Aline, in a tone not particularly becoming to her girlishness. "And that is—money."

Tremont's face had gone rather pale. The children, instinctively feeling tension in the air, paused in their play and looked at their elders.

"Is that your advice to me, Al?" asked Alec evenly.

"I don't give you any advice," her mouth twisted into an unhappy smile. "I merely make suggestions, practical suggestions, practical suggestions. I suppose, to be practically useful to all of you is the justification of my being here. I warn the children when they waste their time in day-dreams, and don't put their minds upon their duty. With some people, lucky people like you, Alec, duty falls in very pleasant places. Claire is very beautiful. She is very amusing. She can get anything she wants. She wants the Van Dyke. I dare say she wants—"

Alec broke in roughly. "Don't, Aline; I hate that tone and look of yours!"

"Then I shall most certainly use it whenever and as often as I can," said she, and pinched her lips together.

"Are you going to punish anyone?" asked Humphrey anxiously, his round eyes fixed on her

face. She paid no attention to him. Alec stood up.

"Where can I find Miss Wilton, I wonder?" he asked carelessly.

"Before the Van Dyke, I fancy," answered Aline. "She spends a great deal of her time there. You must be quick, though. She'll be going up to dress for dinner soon."

Tremont did not hurry himself. He stared down at her for an instant, at her bent head and slight shoulders and rapid fingers.

"Look up a second, Aline," he commanded.

The beautiful green-gray eyes were like bright stones.

Alec said something under his breath, snapped his fingers, and wheeled abruptly away, taking the terraces between himself and the lounge with swiftness.

"What's Alec running for, Miss Aline?" asked Violet. "What's he goin' to get for you?"

"He's going to get something very nice for himself, I think," she murmured, "before very long. But he'll get nothing at all for me. It's time for you to say good-night to mamma now, and go in to supper."

On the voyage, Claire's vehement enthusiasms had distracted Alec, and the flattery of her evident liking had soothed him. But Claire on the lawn of Breeme House, Claire in the familiar hall under the pictured eyes of the famous Van Dyke was another matter. He could not take her for granted here. He felt rather that she had stolen a march on him, and got somewhat treacherously behind his defenses. He half believed that Claire had come to Breeme House with a purpose, and Aline's remarks strengthened the belief.

Nevertheless, when he saw Miss Wilton moving slowly along before the row of portraits in the hall, her beauty struck him forcefully, and he paused in his train of thought.

As he came across the threshold she stopped directly before the Van Dyke portrait, and beckoned to him.

"So glad you came in. I want to show you something. Come here quickly. I've made a discovery about the 'Lady Jane.'"

He came there "quickly". Motioning him back to the full width of the room, so that he could see the portrait in the strongest light, she expectantly regarded him.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## Dinner Menu

Breakfast—Apple sauce, cereal, thin cream, salt pork in cream sauce, diced potatoes, graham muffins, grape jelly, milk, coffee.

Luncheon—Pigs in blankets, twice baked potatoes, hearts of celery, lemon sponge, plain cookies, milk, tea, whole wheat bread.

Dinner—Baked ham, scalloped potatoes, steamed spinach, pineapple salad, whole wheat rolls, pineapple pudding, milk, coffee.

Children under school age should not be given the salt pork in cream sauce for breakfast and do not need the ham for dinner as the "pigs in blankets" provide protein and fat.

**Pigs in Blankets**  
Twelve large oysters 12 thin slices bacon, salt and pepper, lemon juice. Wash and drain oysters and dry between towels. Sprinkle sparingly with salt as the bacon is salty. Sprinkle with pepper and lemon juice. Roll each oyster tightly in a slice of bacon, fasten with toothpicks and broil in a hot frying pan until the bacon is crisp. Turn often to cook all sides.

**Baked Ham**  
One slice ham cut 2 inches thick, 1-2 cup brown sugar, 3 tablespoons dry mustard, 1 1-2 cups sweet cider or grape juice or vinegar from sweet pickles diluted with water. Wash ham and remove rind. Let stand 1 hour in cold water to cover. Drain and parboil. Mix sugar and mustard thoroughly and dissolve in cider or grape juice or the diluted spiced vinegar. Put ham in casserole, pour over prepared sugar mixture, cover and bake 1-2 hours in a moderate oven. If spiced vinegar is used less sugar will be needed in the dressing. The juice from canned plums or other tart fruit can be substituted for cider or grape juice.

**Bachelor's Pudding**  
Two cups stale bread crumbs from the soft part of the loaf, 1-2 cup cleaned currants, 1 cup finely chopped apple, 2 tablespoons butter, 1-2 cup sugar, 3 eggs, 1 lemon, 1 teaspoon baking powder, 1-2 teaspoon nutmeg, 1-2 teaspoon salt, milk. Mix apples, bread crumbs, currants, grated rind of lemon, sugar, salt and nutmeg. Add eggs well beaten and let stand half an hour. Soften butter and stir into mixture. Dissolve baking powder in 1-4 cup milk and stir into mixture. If the mixture is at all stiff, add more milk, enough to make quite moist. The size of the eggs determines the amount of milk necessary. Turn into a well buttered mold and steam three hours. Serve warm with hard sauce, lemon sauce or whipped cream.

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To many of us the Aleutian islands have been only a string of yellow beads laid across a green ocean in an atlas. They tapered off to mere dots, and the string ended. But when we read the "Adventures of the Round-the-World Flyers," these beads and dots become real places. They rise from perilous seas and give shelter to harassed airplanes beating resolutely westward. "Willy-waws," up to this time unheard of, sweep down from the mountains and strain mooring lines like bow strings.

This flight, which was designed as a great and spectacular achievement, becomes now in the recounting, an educator. It is a pleasant thing to sit, belted and uncollared, in an easy chair, and feel the whip of the Arctic wind and the sting of the storm-blown sleet come out of a printed page. For fireside rangers, for lovers of adventure, for students of human achievement, here are the thrills of derring-do. For Americans here is an odyssey incomparably more marvelous than the traveltogue of the misty morning when "Omer snote 'is bloomin' lyre."—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

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### Captain's Lucky Day

Five years ago the steamship J. L. Lutenbach lost her anchor and part of the chain at a Philadelphia pier, and the captain went to an expense of several hundred dollars in an unsuccessful attempt to recover it. Just lately the crew started to hoist anchor at the same pier and up with it came the lost anchor and remnant of chain without a cent of expense.

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