

## A LATTER DAY GALATEA.

SHE was tall and statuesque, with a figure that was a marvel of indolent grace and a face that might have been modeled from that of the fabled queen of beauty. Masses of gold-brown hair curling softly over a low Grecian brow, features that were faultless in their chiseled regularity; a white transparent skin, veined delicately like the petal of a rose, and great gray eyes under straight dark brows, and long sweeping lashes. Absolute perfection, nothing less; and yet—and yet—it was a perfection that chilled and saddened you. She was so serene, and white, and still. She was like a snow maiden, or a marble sculpture—lovely to the eye, but icy cold to the touch. She had no warmth, no glow, no tenderness. She looked as Galatea might have looked before Pygmalion's ardent kisses awoke her to passionate life and the knowledge of a woman's soul.

Men raved about her beauty, but her immobility froze them, and they dared not approach her. When she was twenty-five she had never had a lover. No man had ever told her she was beautiful. No man had ever kissed her, or even touched her hand, save in the ordinary friendly greeting.

Then when she was twenty-five she met Dick Vandeleur. Fate threw him across her path, just by the merest accident, and forgot to take him away again. So he stayed.

Dick was twenty-five, too; a man in years, but a boy in everything else. Ardent, impetuous, careless, sanguine; with all a boy's happy hopeful belief in himself and the unknown future, a boy's trusting heart and a boy's sunny smile.

It was a wonderful thing, that smile of his. No one could resist it. Men invariably thawed before its genial warmth, while women—well, no woman ever said "no" to Dick Vandeleur. He was not the sort of a man the women said "no" to. He always put one in mind of those lines of Owen Meredith's:

Some happy souls there are that wear their nature lightly; these rejoice

The world by living, and receive from all men more than what they give.

One handful of their buoyant chaff excels our hoards of careful grain.

Justly; for one man's joyous laugh augments earth's joy—is all men's gain.

Scorn not the gift of gladness given to those bright souls. It is from Heaven.

Dick wore his nature lightly. He was by inclination and profession an artist. As yet he only stood on the lowest rung of the ladder of success, but he had a keen desire to climb to the very top, and he saw no reason why he should not. His vocabulary held no such word as fail. He believed in himself, he believed in his art, and he believed in the future. Happy Dick!

Well, as I said before, fate threw him across Patricia Campbell's path, and left him there. It suited him very well to be left there, and he had no wish for fate to remember him and take him away; for he found Patricia the most interesting and fascinating woman—from certain points of view—that he had ever met. The very qualities in her that repelled other men attracted him. Perhaps it was the force of contrast, perhaps it was an undercurrent of sympathy, perhaps—but what is the use of speculating? In this tangled skein of life there are so many cross threads that, to all appearance, start nowhere and go nowhere; so many effects to which we can assign no cause.

Patricia's beautiful, impassive face set him thinking, and the second time he saw her he said in his casual way:

"I say, Miss Campbell, I want you to do something for me. I've got a bright idea—will you help me carry it out?"

Patricia looked at him doubtfully. In all her life no man had come to her for help before, and the novelty of the situation impressed her. She did not quite know what to say.

"Help you?" she repeated, in a dubious tone; and then she added, "Can I?"

"Rather!" cried Dick; "I should just think you can—if you only will."

She was still looking at him in that wondering way. "Tell me how," she said.

He went a step nearer, and looked down at her with his winning smile.

"You can sit for me," he answered; "and you will, won't you? You don't mind my asking you, do you?"

Patricia shook her head, and the mystified expression deepened in her unconscious eyes.

"No, I don't mind. But why—why?"

Dick hesitated. If he had been talking to any other woman in the world he would have said, "Because you are the most perfectly beautiful woman I have ever seen. Because you have a figure to send a sculptor mad and a face like a painter's day dream; and I must paint you or die."

But some subtle instinct warned him that it would wiser not to talk like that to Patricia, so he thought for a moment.

"Well," he said at last, "the fact is, I've got a good thing in my mind's eye, but I'm hard up for a model. That's often the way, you know. Ideals and realities are such awfully different things. But your face is just what I want, and—and—well, you would be doing me the greatest possible service if you would sit for me."

Patricia was silent, and Dick waited for her answer with breathless impatience. He felt as if his whole future fate was trembling in the balance. Presently she sighed—a long drawn, quivering sigh.

"Are you sure," she asked; a little wistful, "quite sure, that I can help you? I am not used to helping people. No one ever asks me to."

"Quite, quite sure," Dick returned, with eager emphasis "and you are the only person who can."

"Then I will," said Patricia.

So the bargain was struck, and the oddly assorted pair proceeded to carry it out.

He painted her as Galatea, and the work took a long time, and necessitated a great number of sittings. Dick spoiled a good many canvases, but that was his way through life. He was always throwing aside his old canvases, and starting on new ones. It was a habit he had.

Patricia displayed a patience that seemed inexhaustible. She never fidgeted, never complained. When once Dick had posed her she would remain in the same position for any length of time, and if she grew tired, or cold, or cramped, she kept her secret, and he was none the wiser.

At last the great work began to progress, and Dick spoiled no more canvases. He got fairly under way, and the successful realization of his ideal was only a question of time.

"I've never come anything near this before," he said to Patricia one morning. "I always hoped that some day I should paint a picture that would make me famous, and now I am doing it. This will make me famous—and I shall owe my fame to you."

He looked at her and smiled, and the smile was reflected on her face. She had taken to smiling more often of late.

After that everything went with remarkable smoothness, and before very long the last touches were put. Dick looked at his completed work and saw that it was good, and his delight and enthusiasm knew no bounds. He was like a child with a new toy.

Patricia stood by his side and looked, too, but his high spirits did

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