

# PHYLLIS.

BY THE DUCESS.

Author of "Molly Bawn," "The Baby," "Airy Fairy Lillian," etc., etc.

"He was very white, and his lips were tightly compressed. And I think there were tears in his eyes. Oh, Phyllis! cries Bebe, passionately, rising to push her chair back sharply, and beginning to pace the room, 'when I saw the tears in his eyes I almost gave in. Almost, mark you, not quite. I am too well trained for that.'"

"I think I would have relented." "I am sure you would; but your education has been so different. Upon this earth," says Bebe, slowly, "there is nothing so mean or despicable as a woman born and bred as I am. Taught from our cradles to look on money and money's worth as the principal good to be obtained in life; with the watchwords, 'an excellent match,' 'a rich marriage,' 'an eligible parti,' drummed into our ears from the time we put on sashes and frocks. There is something desperately unwholesome about the whole thing."

"Did you never see him since?" ask I, deeply impressed by her manner and the love-affair generally.

"Never until to-night. You may fancy what a shock it was."

"And he didn't even kiss you before going away, as he thought, for ever?" I exclaim, unwisely.

"Kiss me," severely. "How do you mean, Phyllis? Of course he did not kiss me; why should he?"

"Oh, I don't know. I suppose it would have been unusual," I return, overwhelmed with confusion. "Only it seemed to me—I mean it is so good to be kissed by one we love."

"Is it?" coldly. "I am not fond of kissing."

I hasten to change the subject. "When he was gone, how wretched you must have felt!"

"I suppose I did. But I shed no tears; I was too unhappy, I think, for mere crying. However—with sudden recklessness—it is all over now, and we have lived through it. Let us forget it. A month after the scene I have just described, the old lord and his sons were drowned, and Travers Everett came in for everything. You see what I lost by being mercenary."

"I wonder, when he became so rich, he did not come back directly and ask you all over again."

"He knew rather better than that, I take it," says Bebe, with a slight accession of hauteur; and for the second time I feel ashamed of myself and my ignoble sentiments. "He went abroad and stayed there until now. He don't look as though he had pined over-much, does he?" with a laugh. "A broken heart is the most curable thing I know. I thought I had never seen him look so well."

"A man cannot pine for ever," I say, in defense of the absent. Then, rather nervously, "I wonder when you will marry now, Bebe?"

"Never, most probably," kneeling down on the hearth-rug. "You see I threw away my good luck. Fortune will scarcely be so complaisant a second time," says Bebe, with a gay laugh, laying her head down upon my lap; and then in another moment I became aware that she is sobbing passionately.

The tears rise thickly to my own eyes, yet I find no words to comfort her. I keep silence, and suffer my fingers to wander caressingly through her dark tresses as they lie scattered across my knees. Perhaps the greatest eloquence would not have been so acceptable as that silent touch. In a very short time the storm passes, and Bebe, raising her face, covers it with her hands.

"I have not been crying," she says, with wilful vehemence; "you must not think I have. If you do, I will never be your friend again. How dare you say I shed tears for any man?"

"I did not say it, Bebe. I will never say it," I return, earnestly.

She puts her bare arms around my neck and lays her head upon my shoulder in such a position that I cannot see her face, and so remains, staring thoughtfully into the fire.

"I know you will be very angry with me," I say presently, "but I must say it. Perhaps you will marry him some time."

"No, never, never. Do you think it? I refused him when he was poor; I would not accept him now he is rich. How could you ever imagine it? Even were he to ask me again (which, believe me, is the most unlikely thing that could happen), I would give him the same answer. He may think me heartless; he shall not think me so mean a thing as that."

"If he loves you he will think no bad of you."

"You do well to say 'if.' I did not suppose he does love me now. He did once." Her arms tighten round me, although I think for the moment she has forgotten me and everything and is looking back upon the past. After a little while she says, again, "Yes, he did love me once."

"And does still. I am sure of it. His whole face changed when he saw you this evening. I remarked it, though I am not generally famous for keen observation. It is impossible he can have forgotten you, Bebe."

"Of course. There are so few pretty people in the world," with a smile. "The change you saw in him to-night, Phyllis, was probably surprise; or perhaps disgust, at finding himself so unexpectedly thrown again into my society. He did not once address me during the evening."

"How could he, when you devoted yourself in such a provoking open manner to that ridiculous boy, and afterwards allowed Captain Jenkins to monopolize you exclusively? I wish, Bebe, you would not."

"Indeed I shall," says Miss Beatoun, petulantly; "I shall flirt as hard as ever I can with every one I meet. He shall not think I am dying of chagrin and disappointment."

"And will you not even speak to Lord Chandos?"

"Not if I can help it. So you need not say another word. If you do, I will report you to Marmaduke as a dangerous little match-maker, and perhaps marry Captain Jenkins. I have really met more disagreeable men. And as for Chips," says Bebe, who has seemingly recovered all her wonted gaiety, "that boy is the most amusing

thing I know. He is perfectly adorable. And so handsome as he is, too! It is quite a pleasure alone to sit and look at him."

"Are you going away now?" seizes her rise.

"Yes; it is all hours, or, rather small hours, and Marmaduke will be here in a moment to scold me for keeping you from your beauty-sleep. Good-night, dearest, and forget what a goose I made of myself. Promise me."

"I cannot promise to forget what I never thought," I reply, giving her a good hug, and so we part for some hours.

"Still, I do not go to bed. Her story has affected me deeply, and sets me pondering. I have seen so little real *bona fide* sentiment in my home life that probably it interests me in a greater degree than it would most girls of my own age differently reared. I sit before my fire, my hands clasped round my knees, for half an hour, cogitating as to ways and means of reuniting my friend to her beloved—for that Lord Chandos has ceased to regard her with feelings of ardent affection is a thing I neither can nor will believe.

I am still vaguely planning, when Marmaduke, coming in, orders me off to my slumbers, declaring my roses will degenerate into lilies if I persist in keeping such dissipated hours.

## CHAPTER XXI.

"Billy is coming home to-day," is the first thought that occurs to me as I spring from my bed on the morning of the nineteenth and run to the window. It is a glorious day outside, sunny and warm and bright, full of that air of subdued summer that always belongs to September.

Soon I shall see him; soon I shall welcome him to my own home. Alas, alas! that so many hours must pass before he can enter my expectant arms!

Bebe, who is immensely amused at my impatience, declares herself prepared to fall in love with Billy on the spot the very moment she sees him.

"I am passionately attached to boys," she says, meeting me in the corridor about half-past three (I am in such a rambling, unsettled condition as compels me to walk from pillar to post all day); "I like their society—witness my devotion to Chips—and they like mine. But for all that, I shall be nowhere with your Billy; you have another guest in your house who will take his heart by storm."

"Whom do you mean?"

"Lady Blanche Going. I never yet saw the boy who could resist her. Is it not odd? Is she not the last person one would select as a favorite with youth?"

"I hope he will not like her," I cry, impulsively; then, feeling myself, without cause, ungracious, "that is—of course I do not mean that—only—"

"Oh, yes, you do," says Miss Beatoun, coolly; "you would be very sorry if Billy were to waste his affection on her. So would I. You detest her; so do I. Why mine matters? But for all that your boy will be her sworn slave, or I am much mistaken. If only to spite you, she will make him her friend."

"But why? What have I ever done to her?"

"Nothing; only it is intolerable somebody should admire you so much."

And with a mischievous glance, Miss Beatoun disappears round the corner.

"Marmaduke," says I, seizing my husband by the arm as the dog-cart comes round to the door for final orders, preparatory to starting for the station (it is almost five o'clock), "is William going for Billy? I wish I could go. You don't think he will expect—?" I hesitate.

Marmaduke reads my face attentively for a minute, then ponders a little.

"You think he may be disappointed if welcomed only by a groom?" he says with a smile. "Take that little pucker off your forehead, Phyllis; I will bring you Billy to you myself," and mounting the dog-cart, drives off to the station without another word.

At a quarter to six I run upstairs and get myself dressed for dinner—although we do not dine until half-past seven—hurrying through my toilet with the most exaggerated haste, as if fearing they may arrive before it is finished; and I would not miss being the first to greet my boy for all the world contains.

When I once more reach the drawing-room it still wants five minutes to the promised time. Lady Blanche Going and one or two of the men are lounging here. She raises her head as I enter, and scans me languidly.

"Do we dine earlier than usual to-night, Mrs. Carrington?" she asks, with curiosity.

"No; not earlier than usual. It was a mere whim of mine getting my dressing over so soon."

"Oh, I quite forgot your brother is coming," she says, with a faint smile, bending over her work again. She looks as though she were pitying my youthful enthusiasm. I make no reply.

A quarter past six. Surely they ought to be here by this. Twenty-five minutes past six! I rise, regardless of comment, and gaze up the avenue.

Oh, if anything should have prevented his coming! Are not masters always tyrants? But even in such a case ought not Marmaduke to be back by this to tell me of it?

I am just picturing to myself Billy's chestnut locks be-dabbled with his gore, when something smites upon mine ear. Surely it is the sound of wheels. I flatten my nose against the window-panes and strain my eyes into the gathering twilight.

Yes, fast as the good horses can bring them they come. A moment later, and the dog-cart in full swing rounds the corner, while in it coated to the chin, and in full possession of the reins, sits my brother, with Marmaduke—quite a secondary person—smiling beside him.

I utter an exclamation, and, flinging my book from me—blind to the smiles my guests cannot restrain—I rush headlong from the room, and in another instant have Billy folded in my arms. Surely a year has gone by since last I saw him.

"Oh, Billy, Billy!" I cry, clinging to him, the tears in my eyes, while glad smiles fight for mastery upon my lips. "Is it really you? It seems years and years since last we were together. Oh, how tall you have grown, and how good-looking!"

"Oh, I'm all right," returns Billy, graciously giving back my kisses, warmly, it is true, but with none of the lingering tenderness that characterizes mine. "I don't think a fellow alters much in a month. Though really, now that I look at you, you appear very tall, too, and thin, I think."

We had such a jolly drive over; never wanted the whip the whole way, except for the flies."

"Yes. And are you glad to see me, Billy? Were you lonely without me? I was so lonely without you! But come upstairs to your room, and I will tell you everything."

"As I am drawing him eagerly away, I catch sight of Marmaduke's face, who has been silently regarding us all this time, himself unnoticed."

Something in his expression touches me with remorse. I turn up to him and lay my hand upon his arm.

"Thank you for bringing him," I say, earnestly, "and for letting him have the reins. I noticed that. You have made me very happy to-day."

"Have I? It was easily done. I am glad to know I have made you happy for even one short day."

He smiles, but draws his arm gently from my grasp as he speaks, and I know by the lines across his forehead some painful thought has jarred upon him.

I am feeling self-reproachful and sorry, when Billy's voice recalls me to the joy of the present hour.

"Are you coming?" says the auto-car, impatiently, from the first step of the stairs, with about six bulging brown-paper parcels in his arms, that evidently no human power could have induced to enter the portmanteau that stands beside him. "Come," he says again; and, forgetful of everything but the fact of his presence near me, I race him upstairs and into the bedroom my own hands have made bright for him, while the elegant Thomas and the portmanteau follow more slowly in our rear.

"What a capital room!" says my Billy, "and lots of space. I like that. I hate being cramped, as I always am at home."

"I am glad you like it," I reply bubbling over with satisfaction. I settled it myself, and had the carpet taken off, because I knew you would prefer the room without it. But I desired them to put the narrow price all round the bed, lest your feet should be cold. You won't object to that?"

"Oh, no; it may remain, if you have any fancy for it."

I am about to suggest that as it is not intended for my bare feet it does not affect me one way or the other; but, knowing argument with Billy to be worse than useless, I refrain.

"Have you any dress-clothes?" I ask, presently, somewhat nervously.

"No; I never had any dress-clothes in my life; where would I get them? but I have black breeches and a black jacket (like a shell jacket, you know), and a white shirt and a black tie. That will do, won't it? Langley says I look uncommon well in them; and you see when I'm dressed up and that, I'll be as fit as the best of 'em."

"Far nicer than any of them," I respond, with enthusiasm; and he does not contradict me.

When the garments just described have been laid on the bed, Billy discloses symptoms of a desire to get into them. I leave the room.

When, half an hour later, the drawing-room door opens to admit him, and looking up I see my brother's well-shaped head and slight boyish figure, a strange pang of delight and admiration touches my heart.

I introduce him to Harriet, who is nearest to me; then to Sir George Ashurst, then to Captain Jenkins; afterwards I leave him to his own devices. I am glad to hear him chatting away merrily to kind Sir George, when a voice, addressing him from an opposite sofa, makes me turn.

The voice belongs to lady Blanche Going, and she is smiling at him in her laziest, most seductive manner.

"Wont you come and speak to me?" she says, sweetly. "Mrs. Carrington will not find time to present you to every one, and I cannot wait for a formal introduction. Come here, and let me tell you I like Etienne better than anything else in the world."

Sir Mark's moustache moves slightly, just sufficient to allow his lips to form themselves into a faint sneer; while Billy, thus summoned, crosses over and falls into the seat beside her ladyship.

"Do you, really?" he says. "But I'm awfully afraid I shall destroy your good opinion of you. You see, the fact is—he goes on, candidly—"I have so little to say for myself, I fear in a very few minutes you will vote me a bore. However, you are quite welcome to anything I have to say; and when you are tired of me please say so."

"Oh, that your elders had half your wit!" exclaims her ladyship, with an effective but bewitching shake of her head. "If they would but come to the point as you do, Mr. Vernon, what a great deal of time might be saved!"

"Oh, I say, don't call me that," says my brother, with an irresistible laugh; "every one calls me 'Billy.' I shouldn't insist myself by any other name. If you insist on calling me Mr. Vernon I shall fancy you have found reason to dislike me."

"And would that be an overwhelming calamity?"

"I should certainly regard it in that light. I like being friends with—beautiful people," returns Billy, with a faint hesitation, but all a boy's flattering warmth; and so on.

Here Sir James Handcock, wakening from one of his usual fits of somnolence, actually takes the trouble to cross the room and put a question to his wife in an audible whisper.

"Who is that handsome lad?" he asks, staring kindly at Billy. (He was absent when my brother first entered the room.)

"Mrs. Carrington's brother," returns his wife, with a sympathetic smile.

"A really charming face," says Sir James, critically; "soarsely a fault. Quite a face for an artist's pencil." And I feel my heart warm towards Sir James Handcock.

When dinner is announced, Lady Blanche declares her intention of going down with no one but her new friend; and Billy, proud and enchanted, conducts her to the dining-room; while Bebe casts a "what did I tell you?" sort of a look behind their backs. Indeed, so thorough are the fascinations she exercises upon him that before the evening is concluded he is hopelessly and entirely her slave.

## CHAPTER XXII.

It has come at last—the night of my first ball; and surely no girlish debutante in her first season ever felt a greater thrill of delight at this mere fact than I, spite of my being "wooded an' married an' a'."

Behold me in my room arrayed for conquest. Having once made up my mind to the black velvet—though Mother and Harriet

and Bebe all declare me a great deal too young and too slight for it—I persist in my determination, and the dress is ordered and sent down.

It is a most delectable old dress, rejoicing greatly in "old point;" and when I am in it and Martha has fastened the diamonds in my hair and ears and round my throat and wrists and waist, I contemplate myself in a lengthy mirror with feelings akin to admiration.

Having dismissed my maid, who professes herself lost in pleased astonishment at the radiant spectacle I present, I go softly to Duke's dressing-room door, and, hearing him whistling within, open it quietly.

Standing motionless, framed in by the portals, I murmur, "Marmaduke."

He turns, and for a moment regards me silently.

"My darling!" he says then, in a tone of glad surprise, and comes quickly up to me.

"Am I—looking—well?" I ask tremulously.

"Well! you are looking lovely," returns he, with enthusiasm, and, taking my hand carefully, as though fearful of doing some injury to my toilet, leads me before his glass.

"See there," he says, "what a perfect little picture you make."

I stare myself out of countenance, and am thoroughly satisfied with what I see.

"I had no idea I could ever appear so presentable," I say, half shy, wholly delighted.

"You shall be painted in that dress," declares Duke, warmly, "and put all those antiquated dames in the picture-gallery in the shade."

"Are not the diamonds beautiful?" exclaim I. "And my gloves such a good fit! And—unhappily—" Marmaduke, are you sure you like my hair?"

"I like everything about you. I never saw you look half so well. I feel horribly proud of you."

"Bestow a little of your admiration on my bouquet, if you please. Sir Mark had it sent down to me, all the way from London, and his man brought it to me half an hour ago. Was it not thoughtful?"

"Very. I suppose—with a comical sigh—all the men will be making love to you to-night. That's the worst of having a pretty wife; she is only half one's own."

Then, abruptly, changing the subject, "What dear little round babyish arms!" stooping to press his lips to each in turn.

"They might belong to a mere child."

"And you really think I am looking downright pretty?" I ask, desperately, yet with very wistfully reading his face for a reply. I do so ardently long to be classed among the well-favored people?

"I should rather think I do. Why, Phyllis! of what earthly use is a mirror to you?"

"As—as pretty as Dora?" with hesitation. I am gradually nearing the highest point.

"Fah! Dora, indeed! She could not hold a candle to you—to be emphatic."

"Well, here's a kiss for you," say I, standing on tiptoe to deliver it in the exuberance of my satisfaction, feeling, for once in my life, utterly and disgracefully conceited.

Marmaduke, however, appearing at this moment dangerously desirous of taking me into his arms and giving me a hearty embrace, to the detriment of my finery, I beat a hasty retreat, and go off to exhibit myself to mamma and Dora.

His Grace the Duke of Chillington and Lady Alicia Slate-Gore have arrived. The rooms begin to look gay and very full. His Grace—a well preserved gentleman, of unknown age—adjusts his glasses more carefully in his right eye, and coming over, requests from me the pleasure of the first quadrille. I accept, and begin to regard myself as an important personage. I glance at myself in one of the long mirrors that line the walls, and seeing therein a slender figure, robed in velvet and literally flashing with diamonds, I appear good in my eyes, and feel a self-satisfied smirk stealing over my countenance.

I am dimly conscious that darling mother is sitting on a sofa somewhat distant from me, looking as pretty as possible and absolutely flushed with pride and pleasure as she beholds me and my illustrious partner.

Dora, a little further down, is positively delicious in white silk and pink coral—the coral being mine. Her still entertaining for me the old grudge does not prevent her borrowing of me freely such things as she deems may suit her child like beauty; while I, unable to divest myself of the idea that in some way I have wronged her, and that but for me all these things she borrows would be right be hers, lend to her lavishly from all that I possess.

To-night, however, in spite of the bewitching simplicity of her appearance, I feel no jealous pang. "For this night only," I will consider myself as charming as Dora.

"Rather think it will be a severe season. You hunt?" asks his Grace, in rather high, jerky tones, having come to the conclusion, I presume, that he ought to say something.

I answer him to the intent that I do not; that in fact—lowering to my pride as it may be to confess it—I would rather be afraid to do so.

He regards me with much interest and approval.

"Quite right; quite right," he says. "Ladies are—ha—charming you know, of course, and that—but in a hunting-field—a mistake."

I laugh, and suggest amiably that he is not over-gallant.

"No—no? really! Have I said anything rude? Can't you apply to you, you know, Mrs. Carrington, as you say you have no ambition to be in at the death. Women, as a rule, never are, you know; they are generally in a drain by that time and if a man sees them, unless he wants to be considered a brute for life, he must stop and pull 'em out. It takes nice feelings to do that gracefully, and with a due regard to proper language, in the middle of a good run. Charming girl, Miss Beatoun."

"Very."

"Pretty girl, too, in white silk and the coral."

"You mean my sister?"

"Indeed—indeed? You must excuse the openness of my observations. I would never have guessed at the relationship. Can't discern the slightest family resemblance."

squall to my dulness. I wish impatiently the quadrille would begin and get itself over, that I may be rid of him, more especially as I am longing, with a keenness that belongs alone to youth, for a waltz or a galop, or anything fast and inspiring.

At last the band strikes up and we take our places. Marmaduke (who is dancing with Lady Alicia Slate-Gore) and I are the only untitled people in the set. Nevertheless, as I look at my husband I think to myself, with a certain satisfaction, that not one among us has an appearance so handsome or so distinguished as his.

The quadrille being at an end, Sir Mark Gore instantly claims me for the coming waltz, and, as I place my hand very willingly upon his arm, whispers:

"You are like an old picture. I cannot take my eyes off you. Who told you to dress yourself like that?"

"Myself. Is it not nice?" I ask, eagerly, casting another surreptitious glance at my youthful form as we move near a glass.

"Don't you think it becoming?"

"If I told you all I thought," he exclaims, eagerly—then choking himself with an effort, and a rather forced laugh, continues—"you might perhaps read me a lecture."

"Not I; I am not in the mood for lectures. I feel half-intoxicated with excitement and pleasure, as though nothing could have power to annoy or vex me to-night. The very music thrills me."

"You remind me of Browning's little lady—"

She was the smallest lady alive Made in a piece of nature's madness Too small almost for the life and gladness That overfilled her.

You remember her?"

"Am I the 'smallest lady alive?' Why, see, I am quite up to your shoulder. You insult me, sir. Come, dance, or I will never forgive you."

He passes his arm round my waist, and in another moment we are waltzing.

Did I ever dance before, I wonder? Or is this some new sensation? I hardly touch the ground; my heart—my very pulses—beat in unison with the perfect music.

I stop, breathless, flushed, radiant, and glance up at Sir Mark, with parted, smiling lips, as though eager to hear him say how delightful he too has found it.

He is a little pale, I fancy, and answers my smile rather slowly.

"Yes, it has been more than pleasant," he says, divining and answering my thought.

He is not enthusiastic; and I am dissatisfied.

"You don't look," I say with inquisitive reproach, "as though you enjoyed it one bit."

A curious smile passes over Sir Mark's face.

"Don't I?" he replies quietly.

"No. Decidedly the reverse even. Of course—with a considerable amount of pique—"you could have found plenty of better dancers among the people here."

"Perhaps I could; although you must permit me to doubt it. I only know I would rather have you for a partner than any one else in the room."

I am not proof against flattery. A smile is born and grows steadily round my lips, until at length my whole face beams.

"Well, you might try to appear more contented," I say, with a last feeble attempt at remonstrance. "When I get what I want I always look pleased."

"I know you do. But I am a thankless being; the more I get the more I want. When a man is starving, to give him a little only adds to the pangs he suffers—"

The last bars of the waltz died out with a lingering, wailing sigh. A little hush falls. . . . Sir George Ashurst, coming up, offers me his arm.

(To be continued)

## Irish News.

Mr. Ambrose O'Rourke, D. L., Ballyboley, Ahoghilly, a member of an old and respected family in the county of Antrim, died on May 14th.

An inquest was held on May 21st in Dublin on the body of Capt. Alex. Bell, who had died suddenly while on his honeymoon tour. The jury returned a verdict of death from natural causes.

The vacancy in the office of Local Government Inspector, recently created by the death of Dr. George F. Roughan, Galway, has been filled by the appointment of Dr. Stewart Woodhouse, Dublin.

About twenty disguised men entered one night lately the house of Dennis Hayes, a farmer at Gortahola, Tipperary, and carried off his daughter. Her father had refused to let the girl marry her lover, hence the abduction.

A brutal murder was committed near Rathdrum, County Wicklow, on May 19th. The victim was a woman named Moore, 80 years of age; and the murderer, who beat her brains out with a shovel, and stole a gun, £3 in cash, and a cheque for £50, is believed to be a retired soldier named Tobin.

## HORSE RACING AT FAIRS.

Professional Trots Condemned by Lincoln County Council.

At a meeting of the County Council of Lincoln on Friday, Mr. Nelles moved, seconded by Mr. Culp, That the county should discourage professional horse trots at county and township fairs. Mr. Nelles took the ground that too much time is spent in these matters, and that the tendency of these professional horse trots is detrimental to the interests of shows. Mr. Strong thought the county had no right to dictate how the money voted for shows is used. Mr. Culp said that there was no attempt to control, but rather to recommend. Mr. Snyder thought horse trotting was sapping the foundation of the county, by diverting the attention of the sons of the county, who become excited and lose interest in everything else but trotting stock. The motion was carried.

Last Wednesday night when the guard at Calgary barracks went his round at 10 o'clock to see that the prisoners had retired, he found Shindler, who had received a sentence of a year's imprisonment and discharge from the force, missing.