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# THE OMEMEE MIRROR.

VOL. X. NO. 1. \$1 per annum.

"OH, WAD SOME POWER THE GIFTIE GIE US, TAE SEE OORSELS AS IOTHERS SEE US."

OMEMEE ONT., THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 1903.

CHAS. W. RICHARDS, Publisher and Proprietor

## The Poverty of Position

Or, Violet Beaton's Contempt  
For Titles.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The reign of King Frost had begun; silvery fringes hung from trees and hedges. The robin red-breasts outside the windows were waiting to be fed, and Miss Marr stood watching them. She read her letters, and there was a look of determination on her face, when Violet, looking very pale and ill, came into the room. The heiress uttered a little cry of dismay when she saw her.

"Miss Beaton, you are very ill, I am sure," she exclaimed. "You should see a doctor. You have not been well for some time."

And in her heart Violet knew it was true.

"I have been making up my mind to a vigorous course of action," continued Miss Marr—"most vigorous. Are you well enough to listen?"

"Yes," said Violet; "but her heart contracted with a sudden sense of coming evil."

"I have had a long letter from the dowager Lady Ryvers this morning," said Miss Marr, "and she begs me to go to see her. She wants me to spend Christmas with them. I think I shall go. I have an object in going," she continued, "she shall make a most desperate effort."

"In what direction?" asked Violet.

"We tried to smile as she spoke, but her lips were white and trembling."

"I shall try to reconcile mother and son," replied the heiress. "I am quite sure that they are both unhappy; they must be; they have never been at variance in their lives before. The dowager seems perfectly wretched; she says that life has lost all its charm for her, and that she misses her son more than words can tell, and she begs me to come, so that together we may contrive to bring about a different state of things."

No comment came from Violet. A different state of things" must mean something that would affect her.

"I wish," said Miss Marr, thoughtfully, "that I could find that foolish young wife of his, and bring about a general reconciliation. That is impossible," she added, with a sigh; "but I think I shall be able to do something."

"Will Lord Ryvers be there?" asked Violet.

"I shall take a bold step, and ask him to meet me there."

"Will he come, do you think?" asked Violet.

"I hope so. He said he would not look upon his mother's face again until he found his wife, but I shall try my best to induce him to come."

"What can you do with him there? What is the use of it?"

"I can only reconcile mother and son, it will be something," said Miss Marr. Of course in the marriage question I cannot interfere, but I love the dowager Lady Ryvers and I do not like to think of her as unhappy. I think I shall go to Athelstone to-day. Miss Beaton, the only regret I have is not leaving you in better health."

"I shall soon be well, I hope," said Violet.

But there was a wistful, frightened look in her eyes that startled Miss Marr. She took Violet's hand in her own.

"Miss Beaton," she said gently, "are you in trouble? You have been so kind, so full of sympathy for me; you have listened so patiently to all my long stories. If you have any trouble of your own, tell it to me."

"That is very likely," answered Violet simply. "You will find me faithful and loyal; but I am afraid I can never be of any use to you."

"I am the best judge of you," said her companion. "You have been of the greatest use to me, as you express it. How patiently you have listened to all my love-troubles!"

"They interested me," replied Violet. "I should like to add one thing more. It will be in the future, you should hear anything of me that surprises or displeases you, you will remember it was the knowledge of what is in my own heart which

"I have no trouble in which any human being can help me," Violet declared. "I have a trouble known only to Heaven."

Ah, what a tangled web of fate she held in her hands! It seemed to Violet in that moment that Miss Marr was the only person who could help her; yet, if the beautiful heiress knew that she was Lord Ryvers' wife, she would probably detect her.

"We shall have a brilliant Christ-

mas, no doubt," said Miss Marr. "The dowager Lady Ryvers is not one of those who parade their sorrows before the world. I do hope Lord Ryvers will come. Bad as things are, there is no use in mother and son quarreling and keeping apart, both wretched."

"No," replied Violet; "there is no sense in that."

"I go to-day," repeated Miss Marr. "I have been some time with grandmother. She will be quite happy with me. You dear Miss Beaton, are you quite? I can do nothing to help you? I have been a good friend to me. I should like to help you, if it possible. I wish I were leaving you with more color in your face, with a light in your eyes. I shall think of you with great anxiety."

She could not understand the look, half wistful, half fearful, of Violet's eyes, for she had no key to what was passing in her mind.

"I never make many protestations," continued the heiress; "but I say this to you, Miss Beaton, that I like you better than any woman I have ever met. There is a charm of originality about you."

"You make me very happy by saying so," answered Violet. In her heart there was a wild cry of wonder as to whether she would like her if she knew who she was.

"Come with me to my room," said Miss Marr. "I like to surround myself with pleasure. I will finish what I was about to say, though. Let me make a compact of friendship, Miss Beaton. Let us be friends."

"You are a rich heiress, and I a poor paid companion. Is it possible to think?" asked Violet gravely.

"We are both women," cried Miss Marr, "and we care much for each

other! Why do you hesitate in giving me that promise?" She looked not only surprised, but hurt.

Violet laid her hand on her companion's arm.

"I do promise," she said, "to be your most loyal and faithful friend, as far as our different circumstances will permit; they must be; they have never been at variance in their lives before. The dowager seems perfectly wretched; she says that life has lost all its charm for her, and that she misses her son more than words can tell, and she begs me to come, so that together we may contrive to bring about a different state of things."

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