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LEVER BROTHERS LIMITED, TORONTO

The Luck of Geraldine Laird

BY KATHLE EN NORRIS,

Author of "The Story of Julia Page," "Heart of Rachel," "Josselyn's Wife," "Sisters," etc.

"You're excusable," Mrs. Fitzpatrick rejoined politely, as she had said thousands of times in this house and in this room.

Geraldine had been their nurse since the baby's third birthday; before that there had sometimes been a second maid in the Fitzpatrick house. But with an unexplained income, and with the two shocking expenses of Janey's sudden operation for appendicitis and Deanie's long siege with scarlet fever to pay for, Geraldine had persuaded her husband that the nurse was not necessary.

Since her long illness, Deanie had slept with her mother, the older child sharing the adjoining room with Dean. This little estrangement sometimes rather troubled Geraldine, it seemed to belong to the coolness and reserve that resented her becoming more and more a part of Dean's character. He did not seem to be unhappy, he did not complain and scold as much as he had a few years ago, but there was some impalpable, faint barrier between them that puzzled and distressed her, none the less.

Dean, as she sensed without understanding, was always measuring her by tests of whose nature she was innocently unaware. Where she laughed, he might be frowning, and when she frowned he was very apt to laugh at her. He wanted her to be prim and cold and stiff, and affected—

No, he was not prim and cold and stiff and affected, she would have to tell herself honestly, when this thought came. What did he want? There were moments of self-communion when Geraldine had to say to herself that she did not know.

When she went downstairs tonight, it was to find him all ready to go out. There was a meeting of the directors at the golf club, he said. Geraldine, bidding him a cheerful good night, expressed a wish that the car was available; it had been laid by for repairs for some days. Her husband told her that Brooks was to call in a minute, and immediately afterward Mr. Brooks came in, and sat for a polite minute or two, holding his cap, smiling at the dim, shabby parlor that smelled faintly of plaster and dust, and

laughing at Geraldine. Then Dean put on his coat and the men departed. They went to the country club, to exquisitely simple rooms that were fresh, aired, with fires burning in clean tiles; with noiseless attendants touching electric buttons, and drinks served in sparkling crystal on immaculate monogrammed linen.

But Geraldine did not know that the sharp contrast between his club and his home was stabbing Dean to the soul, and she cheerfully began to debate the question of going to the movies with mother, or staying home with George. Then Aunt Lizzie White wandered in, another of the wretched widows who had always played a large part in Geraldine's life.

"I thought maybe you'd go out to the pictures with me, Jenny?" said Mrs. White, sighing.

"Then you go, mother, and I'll stay at home!" Geraldine arranged. "A rest will do me good. I'm tired to death, anyway!" When Mrs. Fitzpatrick went upstairs for her wraps, Mrs. White turned to her niece.

"What's the matter with you, Jerry?" she asked, looking at her sharply and affectionately. They were devoted to each other; Aunt Lizzie was the only person in the world who ever heard of Geraldine's aunt's chair, and looking straight into her eyes, with the puzzled appeal of a child. "I don't know why doubts and fears."

"I don't know!" she said, blinking the tears from her eyes, and trying to laugh.

"You and Dean haven't quarrelled?" the older woman asked, after a silence.

"Oh, dear, no—I wish we might, for quarrelling is better than—than nothing!" Geraldine protested suddenly kneeling down beside her. "I'm saying this to you, Aunt Lizzie," she went on, hurriedly. "I can't say a word to mother, of course. But sometimes I feel as if—Dean acts as if—well, as if some of the feeling we had for each other isn't there any more!"

Her aunt, without moving her gaze, nodded solemnly.

"They all act like that!" she offered, deeply concerned.

"But—" Geraldine hesitated. "But don't women sometimes lose their husbands?" she asked shamefacedly.

(To be continued.)

TALKING IT OVER

—With Lorna Moon—

Manners and Manners

Speaking of manners Emerson says "once or twice in a life time we are permitted to enjoy the charm of noble manners, in the presence of a man or woman who has no bar in their nature, but whose character emanates freely in their word and gesture. A beautiful form is better than a beautiful face; a beautiful behavior is better than a beautiful form; it gives a higher pleasure than statues or pictures; it is the finest of fine arts.

"A man is but a little thing in the midst of the objects of nature, yet by the moral quality radiating from his countenance, he may abolish all considerations of magnitude, and in his manners equal the majesty of the world."

I wonder what Emerson would have to say of the "beautiful manner" which is taking the place of beautiful manners. Speak of the la-de-da behavior (no other word expresses it) of the young society, but has spent a year or two in a ladies' college!

She makes no pretense at manners, politeness, courtesy, tact, graciousness—she regards them as old-fashioned, in their place she has a "beautiful manner," a polish hastily applied on the surface. It takes the form of an accent that never was before "on land or sea," a gushing, artificial, mincing air, a feverish struggling to make an impression.

Beautiful manners are always impressive, but they radiate only from the heart that is considerate, unselfish and kindly; such a heart needs no "manner" to throw dust in the eyes of the world; it's frankness in its charm, its kindly intention wins for it affection, and its nobility commands respect; only such a heart can "equal the majesty of the world."

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