

BEAUTY'S DAUGHTER

by KATHLEEN NORRIS
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CHAPTER XII—Continued

"I don't know how much Vic knows," Quentin said, with simplicity. "I know I'm—I'm damned sorry about the whole thing. I'm horribly sorry. I blame myself entirely. I don't think we thought what we were getting into, how horribly rotten the thing was!"

"We knew that we loved each other. Some of those first days," Serena said, "ah, weren't they heaven? We were brave, then, we weren't thinking all the time of what the world would say. Vicky knows something of course," she added, "but she doesn't know everything. She doesn't know that I went twice to Los Angeles with you, lover; she hasn't seen any of your letters."

There was a silence, during which Quentin looked at the darkening strip of western sky up beyond the hills; his brows knit, his jaw set, his hands jammed into his pockets. "You're forgetting Spencer," Quentin observed dryly. Serena took instant hope from the words. "Lover," she said, "he may not be a problem long. He's taking that sleeping stuff all the time. I told Dr. Cudworth the other day that it made me anxious, that some day he would sleep too deep and not wake up. I did really—I went into his office and told him, because I thought, if anything happened, some day Spencer may not wake up at all."

"You're making this so horribly hard, Sina." He put away the insistent arms. "I tell you it's all over. Good-night!" he said almost inaudibly, turning away. She followed him swiftly, caught at his arm.

"Oh, no, no, no! You can't do that. You can't just say good-night! When can I see you, Quentin? I must see you. We must settle this!"

"It's settled," he said, briefly. "Nothing's settled!" she said breathlessly. "Not one thing is settled! I can ruin your life, Quentin; I can tell Vicky everything."

"If you want to talk about it, although it seems to me we've said everything there is to say," he compromised unwillingly. Serena drew near to him again eagerly. "But remember I've got to take the Keats children home!"

"Quent, Serena Morrison is extremely anxious to get hold of you," Vicky said calmly, a few days later.

He and she were alone beside the evening fire in their little upstairs sitting room. The doctor had been reading some scientific article in a medical magazine, had finished it, and was lying back in his chair, his arms locked behind his head, his stretched legs crossed, his eyes half closed. Victoria was working at the flat-topped desk just behind him. Bills, receipts, checkbook, papers of all sorts were scattered before her; she made notes with a very sharp pencil.

"I think I am going to come out event!" she had announced some moments earlier. And then, contentedly, "This is pleasant, isn't it?" but to neither remark had Quentin made any reply. He had shown no interest even when the telephone bell had trilled, except for a glance toward Vicky and a faint shake of the head, and Vicky had duly announced to the unseen speaker that the doctor had gone out for a moment.

But his abstracted mood somehow only accentuated her happiness tonight; these had been wonderful days, the days since his return. He and she had been closer together in every way than they had been for a long time. It had not been only that Quentin had been gentler, or kinder, or more generous than before, but he had been curiously, dumbly devoted, wanting to be at home, seeming to love every minute of his life there, quietly contriving to re-establish himself in the children's plans, to contribute to the happiness of them all.

"Life would simply be heaven if it could go on this way!" Vicky, feeling herself pleasantly capable over her book-keeping, had been thinking to herself when the telephone had rung a second time. And after having for a second time disposed of its claim, she had observed mildly: "Quent, Serena Morrison is extremely anxious to get hold of you."

That roused him. He turned his head to raise dark brows knitted in a faint scowl.

"Was that Serena?"

"Yes. She must know I often imitate Anna," Victoria said thoughtfully. "But I can't help it. I don't want to talk to her."

"Telephone often?" Quentin asked with a little effort.

"Lately, yes. She's called about five times today. She usually says that she's anxious to see you, but today she's been saying that Spencer is ill."

"They have a doctor," Quentin said dryly.

"I know it. Cudworth. He's a good man, isn't he, Quent?"

"Fine. Old-fashioned. But he's all right," Quentin answered and lapsed into silence again.

Presently he began: "There's something I want to say to you, Vic."

Victoria looked at him with bright eyes.

"It's probably something I've

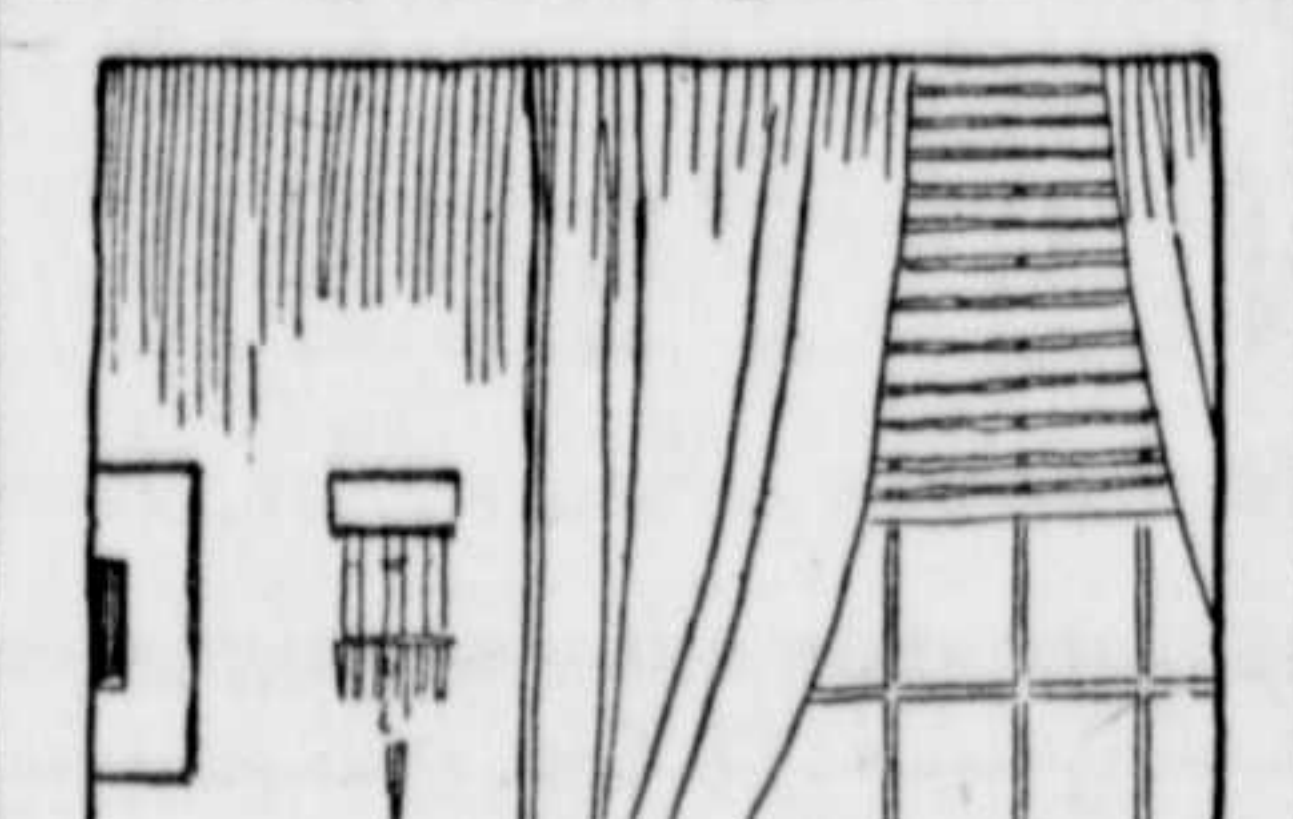
never asked you to say," she said evenly.

"No, you've never asked me to say it. And it won't do any particular good for me to say it," the man answered, his body bowed forward now, his big hands locked between his knees, his eyes on the fire. "But I'd like to say this, just the same. I've been—I'm just beginning to realize what a fool I've been! I've known I was a fool for a long time—since last summer, since Mart was born. I had time to think about it in Germany. My God, what I went through there, missing you all—Kenty and Sue and little Mad and the new baby! And I thought what a fool I'd made of myself, and how I'd hurt you."

Victoria left the desk and took the chair opposite his own. The spring night was cold, and she had put on for dinner an old brown velvet gown with a deep, childlike embroidered collar; her waved brushed mop, her round serious eyes, and the flat-heeled brown velvet slippers she crossed on a footstool all helped to give her the aspect of a child.

"You mean you wish you were done with Serena?"

"I am done with her!" Quentin muttered, not raising his head from



"Was That Serena?"

his hands. "It was all over six months ago."

"Ha!" Vicky commented and was silent.

"It's all a mess! She—" He stopped, but his tone and the long pause were eloquent.

"Why don't you see Serena and have it over?" Vicky asked presently, quite simply.

"I have seen her," Quentin growled.

"Since you got home?"

"There were letters waiting when I got here, ten days ago," Quentin said, the painful rush of his words showing, even under the circumstances, his relief at finding an opportunity to talk. "All that week she telephoned, and twice she came to the office, but I was only doing appointment work last week and didn't see her. Then on Saturday, when Vi and the kids were here—remember?—I went up to the barn to see Moogy and the puppies, and she was waiting there—said she had been watching us on the lawn."

"Good heavens!" Vicky said. "Then it isn't that Spencer's ill," she mused. "He didn't look as if he'd been ill today."

"Of course not!"

"You've changed and she hasn't," Vicky added, in the same reflective tone.

"That's it?"

"I've made such a mess of it; I've let you in for all this," Quentin muttered, grinding his graying hair in his big hands. "Vic, there's no use saying I'm sorry! There's nothing I can say."

"She doesn't seem to have much shame about it," Vic observed mildly. "Oh, my God, to be as happy as this again!" she said in her soul.

"Now," Quentin said, after thought, and with a change of tone—"now she's everywhere, Vic waiting for me. As far as I'm concerned, it's all been over for a year; it's stale, it's cold, God knows I wish I need never set eyes on her again! But now's the time she wants to see me. She keeps asking me, what has she done? Who has been telling me things about her?"

CHAPTER XIII

Victoria raised her round eyes.

"Is that the line?"

"I'm telling you about it," Quentin muttered, surprised at himself.

"But you're not like most women, you're different! I need you, even in this. I can't get out, unless you help get me out. I let myself in for it, I've nobody to blame but myself, but I can't get myself out. She's everywhere," he went on, glancing up restlessly, glancing back again. "If Johnny and I go to lunch at the St. Francis hotel, she's there; she comes across the room. He knows about it, Vic; every doctor in my office knows.

They're all smug when she comes in. Miss Cleve, in the outer office, is so damn discreet! Doctor, Mrs. Morrison, and she says she's in great pain! That's for the benefit of the people who are waiting, people in real pain. We used to think it was a great joke. It doesn't seem so funny now! And the minute she comes in, 'Quent, what have I done? Who's been talking about me?'"

Quentin stared for some time into the fire in silence. After a time he said:

"Would you go away?"

"If I were you?"

"I mean all of us. Simply move out. We could have a city house now, for the kids' schools, and a country place, too. Or we could take up that Boston proposition. Why not get away from it all?"

"You mean run away?" Victoria amended the phrase slowly.

"Well, I suppose that's what it would amount to."

"I don't think you can ever run away from anything, Quent. I was thinking," Victoria said, "of Marty; if anything ever happened to Marty, I was thinking: 'How can I bear the nursery and the crib and his brown dog on the chain, how can I bear to go back to five children when I've had six?'"

And I thought then," she went on, speaking steadily, but with brimming eyes—"I thought then that we'd have to go away, that we couldn't stand it! But I don't think so now. You can't run away from anything. You can't run away from sorrow, or from—she jerked her head in the direction of the Morrison house—"or from anything you've done," she said.

"But Vic, I tell you honestly, I can't stand her! She's making my life a burden," Quentin said simply, and if there was anything absurd in the situation neither husband nor wife was in the mood to see it.

"Every time I come out to the elevator at the office, I'm afraid she's there. I've had ten days of it now, and I tell you it's getting on my nerves!"

Victoria's eyes were on the fire.

"I've had three years of it," she said quietly. There was a long silence.

"Yes, I know you have, I know you have," Quentin said then, gruffly.

"You haven't any right to run away! You belong here," Vicky continued after a pause.

"What are we to do? Just go on?" Quentin presently asked, looking up.

"What else? As far as she goes," Vicky said, with a movement of her head in the direction of the Morrison house, "she'll gradually—well, get over it. If you ran away she'd follow you. As it is, she'll annoy you for a while, and come over here and break the news to me."

Her voice died away into musing, and Quentin raised his head and stared at her strangely.

"You're an extraordinary woman, Vicky," he said. "You can talk about it. Don't you—don't you care?"

For a full half-minute Victoria returned his stare. Then she said in a voice that trembled, that was pitched very low:

"Oh, I care! Any woman cares. I'm hurt in my pride and my faith and my—my heart. It isn't a question of whether or not one cares. It's only a question as to what one does about it. I choose to do it my way."

She got to her feet, stood looking at him irresolutely for a moment, opened her lips as if she had something further to say. But she thought better of it, murmured instead a "good-night," crossed the room and was gone. Quentin did not look up when she moved, nor answer her good-night. After she was gone he sat beside the dying fire for a long, long while with his head in his hands and his shoulders bowed.

In the next week for the first time in years Victoria and Quentin Hardisty, to the great satisfaction of those who loved them, were seen luncheon together on the fashionable Monday at the St. Francis hotel.

They were together later at the reception given to two distinguished visiting physicians. Vic wore a new smart suit of blue banded with gray fur, infinitely becoming to her warm brown coloring, and a dark blue hat. On the gray fur violets were pinned. "Who gave me the violets?" Vicky said to Dr. Austreicher, "Quentin, of course, and he brought me the suit and the hat from Paris. Don't you think that's having a husband!"

"Vic, you know you've grown awfully pretty," John Keats told her. "What have you done to yourself? Had your face lifted?"

"No, I discovered shade hats and freckle cream last summer," Vic answered, laughing. "It seems incredible to live to be thirty-six without having had the sense to use them before! One dollar a jar for freckle cream, and before I'd used half of it I began to see a great light dawning!"

"Yes, but you've done something else, too. New clothes?"

"This is the outfit Quentin brought me, hat and all. I adore it."

"Maybe it's that you're rested, Vic. You've been going like a steam roller all these years."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

When King George Received the Big News from America

Samuel Morse, inventor of the electric telegraph, had only one ambition as a young man and that was to become an artist. He studied under Washington Allston, then the greatest painter in the United States, and with Allston went to London in 1811. There he met Benjamin West who, although an American, was president of the Royal academy, and a great favorite with the king, who later made him Sir Benjamin West.

West was actually at work on a portrait of the king when the latter was handed the Declaration of Independence. Morse heard the piquant story from West himself, says Ernest Greenwood in "From Amber to Amperes." Here it is—as related by Morse:

Turning to the picture of the king, Sir Benjamin West said:

"Do you see that picture, Mr. Morse? Well, sir, the king was sitting for me when the box containing the American Declaration of Independence was handed to him."

"Indeed!" I answered, "and

what appeared to be the emotion of the king? What did he say?"

"Well, sir," said West, "he made a reply characteristic of the goodness of his heart," or words to that effect. "Well," he said, "if they can be happier under the government they have chosen, then under mine, I shall be happy!"

Morse stayed four years in England where he achieved considerable success as a portrait painter.

Then returning to his native country, he afterwards became president of the national academy and an eminently successful painter, his sitters becoming so numerous that he was unable to meet and fill all of his orders. It was during his return voyage to America in 1832, following a second visit to Europe, that Morse got his conception of the telegraph. Twelve years later—May 24, 1844—he gave a public demonstration of his invention, sending a message from Washington to Baltimore.

The rest is well known history.—Kansas City Star.

The Scales

WHAT goes up must come down. Or if you wish to put it in more scientific language: Action is equal to reaction and in the contrary direction.

This is the law of compensation. It is the one fixed, immutable law of life and it applies to everything, everywhere. It cannot be evaded or avoided. The working of it may be immediate or it may be a matter of centuries, but if we keep ourselves aware of it we may be saved disappointment and disillusion.

The extent to which we try to restrict that law is absurd. We speak of balanced budgets, balanced rations, and the balance of trade; but we quite ignore balanced lives and balanced sociology; so, in the end, Nature takes the job off our hands, with the consequent upheavals and disturbances.

We work or play to excess, we indulge our appetites and our senses to repletion, perhaps to gluttony, and when we suffer during Nature's work of restoring balance, we rail at fate.

In monarchy and republic we allow our thirst for power and for money to overbalance our lives, both individually and socially, then blame God and man for the chaos which attends the restoration of balance.

In all the affairs of life we may evolve philosophies and devise systems; but just so long as they are out of balance, individually, socially, industrially or governmentally, just so long will the scale teeter up and down to our discomfort.

If as individuals our lives are out of balance, the structure as a whole must also be out of balance; and in time that balance must be restored—by us or by THOSE WHO FOLLOW.—Ray S. Ayers in Detroit News.

A Worthy Object

WILL power is the mental experience exercised in bringing about a desired end. Therefore, I say that a man must necessarily have a worthy object in view to bring out the best in him—that a man must see more than a salary to be more than a salaried man. A man must see the position of ownership, partnership, management, or increased award, in order to awaken his will power.

The man who does good to another does even more good to himself.

Funster Ought to Have Recognized His Fellow

Jones de Vere Jones decided it would be fun to spend a day in the country. Back to Nature, and all that.

Meeting a farmer in a field he thought to have some fun with him.

"Good-morning," he started. "I must say I admire your part of the country."

Then he noticed a scarecrow in the middle of the field.

"And is that one of the oldest inhabitants?" he went on, pointing to the scarecrow.

"Naw, zur," came the slow reply. "That be no oldest 'habitant. Just a visitor like yourself."



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