

BANKER MEYRICK'S DIANA.

By Evelyn Raymond.

When Bonny Meyrick entered the breakfast room she saw her Uncle Job was in bad temper; or, that it was putting it too strongly, that he was in the doubtful mood which might lead either to crossness or amiability, according as matters should happen during the next few seconds.

"You are three minutes late, Beatrice." Am I! Then I beg your pardon. But see— She opened her small silver watch and held it toward the old gentleman. The hands marked precisely the hour of eight. "So!" he exclaimed. "Is it possible that I can be wrong?" He critically examined his own chronometer. If the girl was right the only deduction was that to which every male owner of a time-piece is sensitive.

When Uncle Job said "Beatrice," his niece became meek and humble. She hastened to interpose; "It is more than likely that my watch has lost a little; and, really no comparison should be made." Then, seeing the frown deepening instead of lightening, she added: "Though it answers admirably for all my purposes."

Leonard came in with the breakfast, and the pair moved to the table. Bonny hoped that the eggs might be right that morning, if ever. When Uncle Job was in the doubtful mood so much depended upon the eggs. If they now proved to be as he liked them, and if he became genial—as genial as he ever could—she had a request to prefer.

The girl filled her uncle's cup from the great urn, attended with an almost painful anxiety to the creaming and sugaring of the fragrant Mocha, and with a trembling hand placed it upon the tray which Leonard held. Mr. Meyrick received, sniffed, and drank it off at once.

Bonny's tremor subsided. As soon as the cover had been lifted from the dish she had seen that the fried potatoes were of the most delicate shade of brown, the rolls appeared perfection, the coffee ditto, and the eggs had proved satisfactory. There was only the steak left about which to worry. When she saw that uncle Job could cut that with one stroke of his knife, her courage rose to the highest notch. The broad rosy face opposite her had become the face of a person to whom ill-temper seemed impossible.

"Uncle Job."

"Well, my dear."

"I would like to have a small allowance; pocket money, or whatever you may choose to call it."

"Bless my soul! What can you want to do with an allowance?"

"To use it in ever so many ways. It is odd for any one as old as I am to have no money."

"Very likely. But this 'odd' thing is the best that ever happened to you. No money—no temptation."

"Excuse me for not agreeing with you; besides, I am twenty-one—of age, you know."

"What difference does that make? Don't you have all your needs supplied—well supplied?"

"Yes, thank you. Yet when I go out in the street I occasionally wish to give something to a poor person, or to buy a bunch of flowers. I do not believe that there is another girl in the city who is kept as I am."

"No, my dear, you are quite right. I, also, doubt if there is another girl in the city as fortunate as you are." Job Meyrick's eye proudly swept the fine apartment.

"But, uncle, wasn't my mother's property to be mine?"

The banker laughed. "Your mother's property is a myth. She did not leave you one cent. Your father took precious good care that she should not, by spending it himself. Let me see! You were ten years old when you came here. I had supported the whole family for more than two years before your parents died. Ten from twenty-one—eleven; and two—it is thirteen years since I assumed entire charge of you, Beatrice. Every necessity of yours had been paid for by my purse." He tapped his pocket significantly.

Bonny felt as if he had struck her. The tears rose to her eyes. "I did not know, uncle, and I am very sorry. But this state of affairs need not continue. I can try to earn my own living, and—"

"Beatrice Meyrick! As long as you live don't you dare make such a remark again. Earn your own living—disgrace the family! You tell me what, as a sensible creature, you can possibly want more than you now enjoy?"

"No-thing," faltered the girl; "only that which I mentioned."

"And that is not a need. When you are twenty-five you will be sufficiently grounded in prudence—if ever a woman can be—to have the handling of money. Till then, let us hear no more about it. It is time now that you set out for the park."

They rose, and the old gentleman waited to kiss his niece's cheek. With very few exceptions, Beatrice had received this avuncular caress in precisely the same spot, and at nearly the same moment, upon every morning of the past thirteen years. It had become part of the breakfast-room ceremony, and aroused only less sentiment than the serving of the meal.

Then Mr. Meyrick betook himself to his picture gallery, and Bonny set out for her prescribed exercise. He to brood over an unsatisfied desire, and she to walk down her rebellion if she could. This is not so easy to do; especially, when as she was hurrying along the little side path she most frequented, she came upon the same poor fellow whom she had seen there for the last three mornings, and on whose behalf she had dared to broach to her uncle the subject of a private purse.

The man looked even milder than yesterday. She believed that he was starving. It was a strange thought to associate with such a broad-shouldered, straight-limbed young chap; yet the idea had entered her mind in some unaccountable if positive fashion, and would not be driven thence. It led her to do a peculiar thing. Keeping her eyes squarely ahead, and slipping her hand into her pocket, she drew from it a little parcel, and deftly dropped it almost at the stranger's feet. She then passed swiftly onward.

He did not at first observe what she had done; but when he did his eyes rested on the parcel in fascination. It was covered with a wrapping such as bakers use, and suggested something eatable within. He

stooped and opened the bundle, and saw lying before him two daintily spread sandwiches. A moment later, the empty bag was thrown crushed and crumpled upon the grass, and the young man was looking in the direction which Beatrice had taken.

After a while she turned and came toward him. He had observed that she did this each morning; she traversed a certain distance and for a certain number of times. A girl who did things by rule and measure. A girl so plainly attired that she must be either very poor or very rich; in either case, wholly independent. Her strong, supple figure moved with the swift ease and grace of one who, eschewing all abominations of steel and whalebone, claimed and enjoyed her right to the freedom of motion commonly accorded to men.

It was a beautiful figure. It caught and held his critical eye in admiration as it had done before—if then somewhat idly. Now, he knew a fine body tenanted by a soul; and he watched to see what sort of a face it was through which this soul would look.

He was a little disappointed in it. Then he began to see more clearly—the face growing upon him out of the distance. It was something greater than beautiful. It was a type of the highest in womanhood; the eyes clearly truthful—the brow noble with intellect, the mouth tender with unselfish devotion. Artist though he was, he did not see either the color or the contour of the features. He beheld but the glad, helpful expression that was more cheering than a smile. The girl made him think of his mother, whom he had never consciously seen.

When she was opposite him, he rose and held out his hands. The brightness of her face intensified. She took them in her warm, strong, ungloved clasp, and held them firmly. Support seemed to pass through her fingers to his exhausted frame.

"Thank you, he said simply."

"It was—so, then?"

"Yes," he tried to say it manfully, but the color crept into his haggard cheek.

"How long?"

He hesitated, then regretted that he did so. "Three days," he answered slowly.

"As long as you have been sitting here?"

He assented mutely.

Her glance wandered over his well-clothed person. "Tell me about it if you can."

"The story is a commonly distressful one."

"I should like to hear it."

They were still standing, and she felt his hands, which she held, tremble. She released them and sat down upon the bench. He dropped into a place beside her.

As he had said, it was a common story. Not every artist sells his pictures. His hopeful, ambitious studies in the old world bade fair to have their fruition of starvation in the new. While away on a few months' tour, a brother painter had been glad to leave an empty studio to his use and care. He had worked; he had made some sales—but it was summer, and customers were few. Besides, his only sister was widowed, with two children to feed, and herself as poor as he. If he could earn anything it must go to them. He dared not think of them. He had not seen them for a week.

Pitifully ordinary as it was, to Beatrice it was a revelation. The familiar, delightful surroundings made it seem unreal in the telling. She did not, for an instant doubt its entire credibility. Her thought reverted to that morning's interview with her uncle, and her disappointment about the allowance.

Then she smiled. "In one way I am as helpless as you. I never have any money." She studied the ground in perplexity. It offered her no suggestions, but she remembered that at precisely half past ten her singing master was due. She must go home, and this man must go with her. She wondered if he could. "Come," she said, rising, "I am obliged to go home. Let us see if you can walk so far. It is twelve blocks."

He began to excuse himself, but she looked at him in surprise, and he stood up beside her. He could walk, though with an unsteadiness that ill-matched her free step. She slipped her arm within his, and so—he apparently guiding, but in reality led—they went out of the park together. The patrolman who was accustomed to the sight of Miss Meyrick taking her constitutional pursued his lips and stared after them.

The artist still thought the girl poor, though she spoke and moved as one born amidst wealth. It was not, after all, a great surprise when she ascended the steps of one of the finest mansions on the avenue. They had come very slowly for the last few blocks, yet the young man's knees knocked together, and he stumbled like one who had taken wine. James, who admitted the pair, was too astonished to speak.

"Please send Mrs. Lincoln to me immediately," directed the girl, in a tone of gentle authority; and helped her guest into the nearest room.

When the housekeeper came, she quietly explained: "I have found a gentleman starving. As soon as possible, will you bring the food which is best for him?"

The stranger heard, but the unequivocal statement stirred no feeling of shame. He was now past that emotion.

The matron led him and gave him sips of wine; delicately, at first, then with greater freedom, as he seemed able to bear it. In half an hour he was much stronger. "It is your music hour," said Mrs. Lincoln, turning to the girl, "and I have to go out."

The person to whom she had ministered understood and rose. "I will leave you now. Thank you." The tone in which he spoke upon the housekeeper; the usual "God bless you!" of a tramp would have made her afraid.

Beatrice observed this. She rarely ascertained herself, but when she did always commanded respect. "I would like to see this gentleman again, Mrs. Lincoln. He can pass the time of your absence and my lesson in the gallery. He is an artist." She led the way there directly, and her

protege followed—the other not objecting. Afterwards, upon the street, the conscientious soul was abashed at her own temerity. Had any one told her—Barbara Lincoln—that she would admit a vagrant to her master's house, and go away leaving him there, she would have denied the assertion with all her fervor. Yet she had done this all her life. The absolute integrity of the man appeared as plain to her as if she had known him always. Even when she was detained down town, she was not troubled.

The hour after Bonny's lesson belonged to herself. She passed it that morning in the gallery, where she found her charge critically examining the few rare, and more ordinary, paintings upon its walls. "Has the time proved tedious?" she asked.

"On the contrary, very brief. There are some gems here which would repay more than one hour's study. That Borgereau, for instance, and this Turner. The collection is much finer than some private ones."

"Pictures are my uncle's hobby, or rather the great pleasure of his life. I have been with him since I was a little girl, and I have heard him always regretting that he had not studied art as a profession."

"Probably he would not have possessed all this luxury if he had done so."

"That may be; yet even such satisfaction has its limits. What do you think of this, Diana?"

"It is fair—not more."

"That picture is my Uncle Meyrick's bane. The fourth of the same theme which he has had painted—and each was worse than the other."

"It is a good subject."

"Possibly. Uncle Job has his own ideas as to its treatment, and somehow—though they appear reasonable enough to me—they clash with those of artists. I wish—"

But what she wished she did not say. For a servant entered and Beatrice was summoned away. When she was once more free, and returned to the gallery, it was empty.

The wish to which she did not give voice remained in her heart; she intended to express it to her uncle that evening, during his hour of after-dinner enjoyment. So she took her accustomed low seat opposite him in the library, and prepared herself to listen with more than usual deference to what he might have to say. This would be her opportunity, and Beatrice meant to suggest, with what boldness she could, that the dissatisfied owner of a quartet of goddesses should give her acquaintance of the park an order for a fifth.

"Uncle," she began; but he had not finished. He ignored the interruption as that of a troublesome child, and proceeded with the lecture.

"The professionals all assume that no layman has correct judgment; yet it is for us they paint: our money their fingers itch to handle. If I only had the technical skill, I'd show them! That Diana—for instance. I can see it as—"

"Uncle Job, I—" with a delicate little emphasis on the "I"—"I know an artist whom I believe—"

He stared at her over his eyeglasses, and paying no further heed resumed "I can see it as clearly as it hung on yonder wall. The very pose, the drapery, the modesty, and yet the fire—Oh! for the power to manipulate a brush as I can stocks! How-ever, I think, yes, I really believe, that I have found the very fellow I want. Poor as a church mouse, but possessing the knowledge which I lack. I have made a contract with him. He is to be absolutely idea-less. I'm going to get into his brain, so to speak, and work through his fingers. Yes, sir!" he slapped his well-rounded thigh complacently. "I believe I shall yet realize my ideal."

"Oh! Uncle Job! Have you already engaged some one to paint another Diana?"

"Already? It is something over a year that I have been looking for him; but, yes, it is 'already'—if you choose to put it so."

"I'm so sorry! When?"

"This afternoon. Now get the paper and read the rest of that article on realism in art. I should think that you would rejoice in my gratification instead of regretting it."

"Do rejoice for you, Uncle Job; but" she ended her explanation with a sigh and began reading.

Beatrice Meyrick's walk on the following and many subsequent mornings was undisturbed by any visions of suffering young men; yet, strangely enough, this was not wholly satisfactory; and when a peculiar feeling of loneliness overcame her at sight of the empty bench, she fell into a habit of taking out and reading a bit of a letter which had come to her immediately after her adventure in the park. A brief, manly note telling of gratitude and hope renewed, and signed "Louis Harger."

Who he was or where he lived and how he fared, she could only conjecture; until one day he reappeared at the place of their meeting. As she turned down the little path he came toward her smiling and lifting his hat; and she observed how fine and strong his face was, now that it was relieved from the haggardness of slow starvation.

"I am glad to see you," she said in her sunny way. "I have been looking for and wondering about you these many days."

"Looking for me? I feared you would scarce remember me among the many you befriended." His face flushed slightly.

"You are doubly mistaken. I have not forgotten, nor do I befriend many. Is all well with you?"

"Yes, and no. I have found some hack work to do which supplies our daily needs; and I have an order for a picture from an eccentric old gentleman, oddly enough, for a Diana; but I must disappoint him. I have failed to obtain a satisfactory model."

"For a Diana?" she said eagerly, "what was his name?"

"He did not leave it. He left what he fancied better, in the shape of a generous retainer. Since I am compelled to abandon the work, I regret his disappointment quite as much as the loss to myself."

The same thought was in the mind of both. It was improbable that two "eccentric old gentlemen" should be roaming around among the impetuous artists of the city, in search of a knowledge which might be hired to interpret the patron's own vagaries. The undisclosed name must be Job Meyrick. Louis Harger wanted this girl to know that he was willing to do anything, even against his own convictions or the fixed principles of art, which would gratify a friend of hers; and this was why he had sought her in the park. Yet he felt a delicacy in mentioning his supposi-

tion until she showed some answering comprehension.

She did not do this, she merely said: "Is it absolutely necessary to the success of the picture that this model should be found? I ask in honest ignorance, for I should imagine that almost any one would do."

"If that were so it would be a difficulty easily overcome. Models are as numerous and as needy as the artists who employ them. This is not to be a portrait of a mere woman, it is a goddess. And," he added regretfully, "goddesses are not common hereabout."

They had walked on slowly to the end of Bonny's daily limit, and she stopped. "Have you yet given your old gentleman his disappointing answer?"

"Not yet. He told me that he was going out of town for a week or two. If nothing occurs to help me out I must do so when he returns."

That was fresh confirmation to Beatrice. Uncle Job had gone "out of town for a week or two; well, a 'week or two' is illimitable time to youth and ardor. Her face, which had reflected Harger's disappointment, brightened. She extended her hand in parting. "Good-bye, Mr. Harger. I hope that you may yet be able to accomplish your desire. And, if I may venture to advise, do not give up this order till the last. It might easily lead to others. 'Eccentric old gentlemen' who buy pictures are apt to be extravagant."

"Thank you; I shall forget neither the hope nor the advice."

He watched her move away, alert, strong, graceful, with a feeling of indescribable regret. He had seen her but twice, yet already, and in utter disregard of its hopelessness, he loved Beatrice Meyrick.

A day or two later there was a knock at his studio door; and Harger left his easel to admit a possible beggar or patron. He found neither, but a woman closely veiled who entered at once, as if with desperate courage, upon her business. "I read your advertisement in the morning's paper. I were unwise, the pictures he drew were upon the intangible canvas of his thoughts alone."

A thrill of delight ran through the artist's frame. "Come in," he said as quietly as he could; and tossing some drapery from a chair to offer it to his visitor. But she merely bowed acknowledgment of the courtesy and remained standing.

"I do need a model, yet, do you understand what is required?" he tried to keep his voice cool and steady.

"Not clearly. I shall be glad to learn, at least to try."

"The pose is not especially difficult; it will be something like this." He sketched upon an empty canvass the outline of the goddess as he hoped to picture her. The would-be model watched through her veil, charmed by the skill with which a few charcoal lines brought out a figure of exquisite grace: the arms extended and uplifted holding the bow and arrow; the eager, forward rushing foot; the flowing draperies. As she watched a sudden enthusiasm was born within her. This thing she had feared as most distasteful fascinated her.

"I think I can do it, if my figure will answer."

"I am sure it will," he responded with eagerness; then reduced himself to a business-like tone. "Before we can decide, will you lay aside your cloak, and take the attitude I have suggested?"

A momentary reluctance returned to embarrass her, but she conquered it and obeyed. The pose, even in a walking costume, was perfect.

"That is admirable. When will you come?"

"To-morrow morning, if it will suit you."

"I am most anxious to begin."

"At half past eight then?"

"Yes, if that is not too early."

"I should like it best. With that she was gone."

The man she had left rushed excitedly about the place, then dropped into a chair, perplexed and wondering. Did she know what she was doing? But no; she little dreamed. He pictured the face under the mask of tissue, ennobled by the same self-devotion which had marked it when she led him staggering from the park. She was as unconventional as she was pure; and she had come to do him good; indirectly, to gratify her uncle; for the Diana whom Beatrice Meyrick would personate would be the very ideal of that peculiar man. Harger felt little that night, and surely no studio ever received such a furnishing as that in which he awaited the coming of his model.

She was prompt at the hour she had named, but there was a tremulousness in the tone which answered his good-morning. "I have brought this," she said, showing him a robe fashioned in imitation of the lines with which he had draped his charcoal figure on the day before.

"That is perfect. I had provided something else, but yours is better. Please come this way; my sister will attend you in the dressing-room."

She followed him, and resigned herself into the hands of a sweet-faced woman who, had she known it, was as new to the task Beatrice had undertaken as the girl herself; but she had been well instructed, and when the modern Diana stepped tremblingly upon her pedestal, the artist beheld her beautiful beyond even the dreams which had haunted his broken sleep. Perfect in everything, save one: her face was hidden behind a silken mask, yet none of the trio present made the slightest reference to the fact.

"Place yourself so," he directed and gave her the bow.

She grasped it firmly, raising her beautiful arms and throwing her supple body into the very pose she had so often heard her uncle describe; and which when studying his ideal, he had sometimes made her assume in his own gallery. To Harger the sight was ravishing. This girl knew and interpreted his own conception; and his fingers trembled as he delicately arranged the few folds of drapery she would have had changed.

He seized his brush and worked as he had never done before. Save for an occasional question from him concerning her fatigue, to which her reply was a negative nod, not a word was spoken in the studio. The sweet-faced widow read and quietly observed. The tireless, motionless model aimed at the imaginary fleeing deer; while the artist plied his brush unceasingly.

"It is enough!" he cried at last, and flung his palette down. Then he crossed swiftly to the platform where Beatrice

stood, and held out his hand to assist her. His fingers were burning and thrilling to the cool, calm touch she gave him, as she accepted his aid.

There was a week of sittings, a week of paradise. Then came a day on which she entered a little hurriedly and before her time, to find the artist reading a note and evidently much disturbed. She returned his salutation, and explained directly: "I wanted to give you all the time I could. After today I shall not be able to come again. Will it make any difference?"

The picture had progressed wonderfully save that the face was untouched. Harger knew that he could finish it without her aid; what difference? For a moment he did not answer.

"Oh! I hope it will not!" cried the voice behind the veil. "I should be greatly grieved if the work failed, after all."

He must reassure her. "I can complete the painting, even if you can come no more. But" he turned away and began to arrange his easel. Then, as she was passing into the dressing-room he came forward again. "I must tell you that my sister writes of an unavoidable detention at home. If you do not wish to remain I will try to go on alone."

Beatrice hesitated. The pain in his tone woke an answering regret in her own heart; while something wildly sweet swept over her, setting every nerve a tingle. Harger watched the color surge into the white throat below the veil, and his pulses throbbed fiercely.

"Well," she said simply, "it does not matter. I will stay." A few moments later she sprang lightly upon her platform, and fell at once into the pose which her firm muscles made so easy to her, and which had become so familiar. That morning the artist dared not give his accustomed arrangement to her draperies lest his touch should become a caress. The silence which fell upon them became charged with an intensity of feeling. At once Harger's hand would dash recklessly forward in passionate joy at this hour of solitude with his beloved; then lag heavily as the minutes ticked away. But the strokes he wrought were unseen, the pictures he drew were upon the intangible canvas of his thoughts alone.

At length the hush was broken by a sigh; and overcome by a weariness as new as it was irresistible, the model's arms dropped heavily to her sides. A moment she stood drooping where she had been eager, then slowly moved to step down from her place. But Harger's palette had fallen face downward upon the floor, and his hands were outstretched toward her. "Pardon me! I have been brutally thoughtless, you are over-wearied!"

"There is nothing to pardon. It has not been longer than usual; but—I am tired." For the first time her hands trembled in his clasp, and feeling them so his own grew steady.

"You have rendered me an inestimable service. I shall never forget this week—this morning."

"Nor I," she answered, withdrawing her hands. Her tone was low and solemn. The words which rushed to his lips were frozen upon them. He bowed his head and turned away his eyes. He felt himself standing in the audience chamber of this girl's virgin soul. Love had come to her suddenly, overwhelmingly. There had been no resistance on her part, nor blindness on his. But the guest was sacred. No word jarred upon the stillness which his presence brought; and Louis Harger knew when he was alone, only by the soft sound of the portiere swaying before the closing door.

"Bonny," said Job Meyrick, at dinner a month later "please tell Mrs. Lincoln to have the gallery thoroughly lighted this evening. My Diana has been sent home, and the artist is coming to unpack it. I wish you to be present." He was in good humor; he had called her "Bonny."

"Have you seen the picture, Uncle Job?"

"Not yet. That is, not since it was finished. The artist, named Harger, fine fellow, with judgment and bound to rise, begged me to wait till he considered it complete. But I saw it directly after I returned home from the south. The figure was well done then, the face not begun. I fancy he was particular, but he had his own ideas on that point, something pure and exalted, and I allowed them. I felt he had proved himself worthy of trust."

Still even when the supreme moment had arrived, the banker Meyrick stood quivering with expectation, while the artist delayed to lift the last cover which hid his masterpiece, Beatrice had not appeared.

"Mrs. Lincoln, have the goodness to call my niece at once. She must be here to catch the first view," said the old gentleman testily.

The matron withdrew, and Beatrice glided in. She was pale as the gown she wore, and she did not raise her eyes from the floor where Louis Harger stood, with his hand upon the curtain that veiled the picture. "Now?" ordered Mr. Meyrick, and leaned eagerly forward. The drapery was tossed aside.

Upon the hush which followed, broke the uncle's cry: "Why, it's Beatrice."

The girl's eyes fell upon the canvas, then flashed to Harger's face. It was true. A feeling of suffocation seized her; but while the amazed and delighted banker bent adoringly over his more than realized ideal, Louis had gained her side.

"You knew then?" she faltered.

"From the first."

"How?"

"By your voice, yourself. Because I loved you."

The white rose of her cheek grew damask.

"Wonderful, wonderful! At last I'm satisfied!" murmured the happy connoisseur, walking slowly backward and forward before his beautiful acquisition, with eyes riveted upon it and blind to everything else.

Harger caught the girl's white hand in his passionate grasp. "These saved my life once; will your love make it worth the saving?"

She gave him a brief scrutinizing glance searching to learn if in any wise his feeling was colored by generosity for her discovered secret; and then she gave him her answer. Sweet, direct, beneficent, as was her nature, it fell upon his ear. Then banker Meyrick turned round, and read in their shining faces the story which had made his fifth Diana a success.—Selected.

Every tissue of the body, every bone, muscle and organ, is made stronger and more healthful by the use of Hood's Sarsaparilla.

Every tissue of the body, every bone, muscle and organ, is made stronger and more healthful by the use of Hood's Sarsaparilla.

Every tissue of the body, every bone, muscle and organ, is made stronger and more healthful by the use of Hood's Sarsaparilla.

THE INDIAN AND HUNTER

A Story for Young People.

I was seventeen years of age, but strong, rugged and fond of hunting. One day in the late autumn of the year, when the snow flakes were beginning to flit with the brown leaves that floated softly through the air till they covered all the ground, I had extended my hunting trip too far, and losing my bearings, found myself at dusk in a ravine, with overhead a leaden sky, an ominous moaning among the tall trees and the prospect of a lonely night.

The nearest settlement was probably fifteen miles away, and the conduct of the white hunters toward the Indians had been so exasperating that the Indians had resented their intrusion, and several conflicts had already taken place, resulting in the death of various parties on both sides.

Not knowing whether I was on hostile ground or not, but