

The Beautiful Coquette

BY LAURA JEAN LIBBEY

[CONTINUED.]

He had expected to see a plain, unassuming modest young woman, dressed in the usual homely farm habiliments, not a dainty, beautiful creature like this.

For two hours or more Lawyer Harding sat in the best room of the old farmhouse, talking this sudden change of fortune over with Aurelia under the impression that she was Margaret.

To her intense relief he had not heard the name of Aurelia even mentioned; and when she told him how he had come to her in the very time of her great need, now that Farmer Romaine and his good wife—her foster-parents—had but just passed away, and the farm was to fall into other hands on the morrow—he took in the situation of affairs as she presented them, at once, and sympathized with her deeply.

"Seeing the case is situated as it is, I should be greatly pleased if you would follow my suggestion, Miss Lancaster," he said, earnestly. "Come with me to New York—to my house, and make your home with my wife and daughter until you settle definitely your plans for the future. You are too young to be cast upon the world, possessed of so much money, without proper guidance. Have you no relative living?"

"No," replied Aurelia. "I should suggest—even though you follow out my suggestion of coming to New York with me, and to my home—that you at once engage the services of some elderly lady as chaperon."

"When do you go to New York?" asked Aurelia faintly. "I take the train within an hour," he said consulting his watch. "I am obliged to go to attend to some important cases I have in court tomorrow morning."

"Then I will accompany you," declared Aurelia, the color coming and going fitfully on her face.

Oh, if she could but keep with him and ward off every possibility of his learning the horrible deception practiced upon him—keen and shrewd man of law though he was.

"Could you be ready in so short a time, Miss Lancaster?" he asked, aghast; "arrangements would have to be made for delivering the key of the house to the party who forecloses the mortgage—the farm hands and servants—"

"There have been no farm hands here since Mrs. Romaine died," she broke in eagerly, "and there is only the old servant that came until I could pack up my things preparatory to going to the village."

"Have you friends there?" he asked, quickly.

"I was going there to try to get a place to teach in one of the village schools, or—to be governess to little children."

She had wit enough to know that he would think well of her if she told him that, and her shrewd surmise was quite correct.

"A more sensible young woman than I imagined," was his mental comment. "I usually judge people pretty accurately by my first impressions. I seem to have been in error this time however."

Aurelia's first impulse, when the lawyer had told her all, was to cry out: "I am not Margaret Lancaster, I am Aurelia, her sister," and then tell him all; that Margaret had fled from the farmhouse only the night before, and why.

With the next breath came the thought, if he should search for Margaret and find her, would she accept this great wealth the gods had flung at her feet? She knew Margaret well enough to doubt it. Margaret would never touch a penny of it. "Dr. Thorpe's money should never have been left to me," she was sure Margaret would say, "let every dollar of it go toward endowing a hospital. I would rather work for my money. I cannot accept this magnificent gift for myself."

Then suddenly as she sat there—the greatest temptation of her young life had come to her—a temptation that made her faint and giddy. A still small voice had whispered in her ear, this man believes you to be Margaret Lancaster—why deceive him? He has this vast fortune all in cash to hand over to you. Take it. You are so poor you need wealth—poverty is so bitter. If you had wealth you could travel abroad and meet Randolph Clavering again.

That last thought influenced her more than all the rest. Aurelia was not much over seventeen; girl-like, she looked only at the bright side of the picture, heedless of the darkness that lay beyond.

True, a revulsion of conscience did come to her once—the good and bad angels had a bitter fight for a human heart.

She could almost imagine that she could see Margaret standing at her bedside and whispering through the darkness of midnight:

"You are not what the world believes you—you are a miserable impostor who has stolen into your sister's place—an usurper of my rights! No good can come of such a living lie—exposure must follow, sooner or later."

But the thought of the magnificent fortune, and the possibility of it slipping through her fingers, made the hot blood course like fire through her veins; it was the chance of a lifetime, the good fortune that knocked but once at a person's door. Why should she allow any scruple to interfere with such great prospective wealth?

"No one will ever find me out," she muttered below her breath. "I will take what the gods offer."

Aurelia ever afterward gave herself great credit for the way in which she had managed that affair so cleverly; she did not draw a safe breath until she was seated in the train, and it was moving out from the village depot.

It seemed to Mr. Harding the most foolhardy piece of business that had ever passed through his hands—giving a young and inexperienced girl like this such an enormous sum in cash.

He was greatly provoked that Dr. Thorpe had made such an extraordinary will, and that, against his better judgment, he was bound to obey this behest to the very letter.

He saw but one way to mitigate this transaction, and that was to bring every influence to bear upon the girl to persuade her to invest it judiciously, and without delay.

Aurelia acquiesced to all his plans before he had handed over to her the checks for the amount specified; but very soon after he began to understand that the girl had a will of her own, and a very strong one, too.

"I am very glad of your advice, Mr. Harding," she said, leaning back in her cushioned seat and looking at him with two very black, sparkling eyes and flushed cheeks; "but I have already decided upon what investment I shall make first. Do you want to hear what that will be?"

Mr. Harding declared that he would be delighted to hear, and would give her all the benefit of his experience, if she choose to take it.

"Well, then," said Aurelia, with a gay laugh, "the first thing that I invest in will be a diamond necklace at Tiffany's, and a pair of bracelets to match. I never had any money before to spend as I pleased, and now that I find myself suddenly rich, I am going to live like a grand lady."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

There was no heavier heart to be found in the whole world than the

one which beat in Margaret Lancaster's bosom as she turned her face from all she loved in the world, and set out to meet bravely the mysteries of the dark future.

Alone—penniless—thrown on her own resources in a cold, pitiless world.

In all the experiences of life there are few terrors that can compare with this to a young and timid girl. When she reached the great city of New York, where should she go? Which way should she turn?

On the train she bought a daily paper and eagerly turning to one of its advertising columns, sought to solve this question.

Carefully and patiently she ran her eye down the column of "Boarders Wanted."

"This will do," she sighed, reading the advertisement half aloud, which ran as follows:

"A widow lady would take a young girl as boarder while her daughter is absent for a few weeks. Money not as much of an object as companionship. Apply to Mrs. Hammond, No. — E. 12th Street."

There were many other desirable places, but this seemed to Margaret the most suitable.

"I can board with her at least two weeks," she ruminated, carefully counting over the few dollars she had left after paying her fare. "I must surely get something to do in that time."

It was late in the forenoon when she reached the great metropolis, and, limited though her means was, Margaret was wise enough to take a cab.

She knew it would have taken her hours and much patience otherwise, to have found her way through the streets of the great city.

Her timid ride at the bell brought a small, colored maid.

(To be Continued.)

What are You Doing?

In the way of an Exhibit for the

Great Exhibition,

ST. JOHN, N. B.,

Aug. 30th to Sept. 6th, 1902

NUMEROUS GENEROUS GIFTS,

Also a number of additional prizes offered exclusively for exhibits from each county in New Brunswick. The prize list is now ready and can be had free on application to the Manager. Get one and see pages 34 to 37, 43 to 49, 84 to 87 and 93 to 95, for full particulars of the above special inducements exclusively offered to New Brunswick farmers. Every thing in connection with our show, booms encouragingly. Entries and Exhibits in class and variety far exceed original expectations; nothing hangs fire, everything progresses; and the show opens on Labor Day a cheap fare from everywhere.

W. W. HUBBARD,
Manager and Secretary, St. John, N. B.

R. B. EMMERSON,
Acting President,
St. John, N. B.
June 6—d3awk&w

Union Mutual Life Insurance Co.,

PORTLAND, ME.

Payments to policy holders \$38,710,096.58. Deposit at Ottawa nearly \$1,000,000.00. The following comparative statements show the marked progress made by the company in all departments during the last eight years:

	Assets.	Surplus.
1893	\$6,453,309.56	\$229,292.86
1894	6,597,336.30	359,783.12
1895	6,797,391.05	435,113.55
1896	7,039,323.43	507,348.19
1897	7,236,555.75	548,321.09
1898	7,544,227.02	574,224.75
1899	7,991,042.63	576,807.50
1900	8,482,038.00	586,040.24
1901	9,013,082.63	607,932.00
	Premium Income.	Total Income.
1893	\$,964,201.08	\$1,261,936.51
1894	989,552.73	1,296,145.86
1895	1,040,240.77	1,353,713.38
1896	1,107,779.45	1,421,686.70
1897	1,182,965.15	1,525,630.16
1898	1,278,649.29	1,665,430.85
1899	1,444,862.27	1,833,919.16
1900	1,575,176.25	1,959,882.01
1901	1,735,036.06	2,105,141.94
	Notices of Death.	Amount of Insurance in Force.
1893	\$456,000	\$35,914,417
1894	452,628	36,312,041
1895	498,969	36,932,148
1896	418,436	38,086,849
1897	604,811	39,943,575
1898	571,316	42,222,364
1899	600,206	46,054,820
1900	594,110	50,191,853
1901	685,472	52,945,044

From the foregoing tables it will be observed that more than two and one-half million dollars have been added to the Assets during the period outlined, that the Premium Income has increased seven hundred seventy thousand dollars, that the surplus to policy holders has increased nearly three-fold and that over seventeen million dollars more insurance is now in force than at the beginning of the term designated. Liberal contracts to good Agents.

ALBERT J. MACHUM,
Manager, St. John, N. B.

COASTER BRAKE,

Fitted to any Bicycle, old or new.

Among the many successful inventions of the last of the 19th century in the category of bicycle appliances, that of the coaster brake stands pre eminent. The present style of brake was involved after considerable experimenting, involving the expenditure of many thousands of dollars. Its working is positive and efficient, and whether employed as a coaster or as a brake, it is absolutely reliable. There is nothing to get out of order, no parts to give trouble. The rider is relieved of all anxiety and coasts or breaks at will. You pedal 35 miles and ride 50.

GEORGE J. BARRETT,

At Barrett's Cycle Shop.

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Better White Paints cannot be made...

GLOSS WHITE.—The Outside White in the S. W. P. line. The most durable and economical white paint for general use on all exposed surfaces. It can be used on interior work, but being a rich oil paint it may turn slightly yellow, when not exposed to the light.

FLAT WHITE.—For finishing without, or as a foundation for S. W. P. Inside Varnish White. It is the best paint for this purpose ever prepared for the market.

INSIDE VARNISH WHITE.—For producing a white varnish finish on inside work. It dries better, works freer and is more economical to use than the varnish whites, under various names, generally found on the market.

CHINA GLOSS WHITE.—Slower drying and not quite as white as the Inside Varnish White, but very satisfactory for ivory finish on interiors where economy is of first white importance.

YACHT WHITE.—For painting the exterior of yachts and boats. A beautiful glossy white finish, impervious to water, wears remarkably long time. Sold only by

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MARCH 1902.

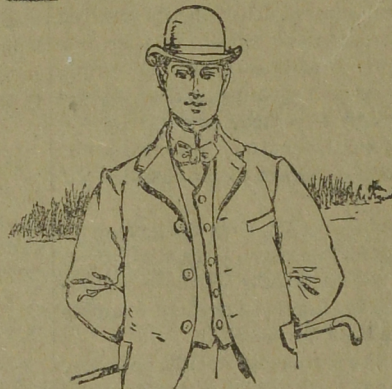
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NEW SPRING SUITINGS,
NEW SPRING TROUSERINGS,

And the finest line of Serges ever shown in this city, style, fit and workmanship first-class.

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Quality and Style



Are back of the suits we make to measure. Not enough that the cloth is good, well woven and shrunken and well put together, but the garments must be cut according to the latest styles and finished perfectly before leaving our establishment. Whatever chosen will be of a quality to give the greatest satisfaction under all conditions of wear. Just think of it! A nice Tweed Suit, All-wool for TWELVE DOLLARS, others from \$14.00 to \$25.00

JAS. R. HOWIE, 210 Queen Street.

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Wall Paper!

... COMMENCING ...

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CASH ...

See prices in our window on Monday morning. 1,000 rolls borders without paper to match at 10c. per roll.

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