

# Beaton's Bargain.

BY MRS. ALEXANDER.

SYNOPSIS.

Mrs. Winton, Lady Mary Hay, Leslie Beaton and Jack Maxwell are members of London's smart society set. Beaton is Mrs. Winton's brother, and being poor resolves to answer an advertisement that promises to get him a rich wife. Lady Mary is a widow whom Beaton admires. Mrs. Winton and Maxwell were lovers before the former married.

CHAPTER II. (Continued.)

He remarked that she did not seem to care for human figures and faces. "I suppose it is because I have seen more of the country and four-footed creatures than I have of people," she returned. "It seems to me that I understand them better. Do you draw?" she asked with some timidity, looking straight into his eyes as she spoke. "You feel the pictures more than he does," and she looked toward Beaton with a little nod.

"He must know more than I do about art; I do not draw, I only ignorantly worship," returned Maitland.

"I am sorry." Something in her voice suggested that she would prefer being assisted by him than by his friend.

"You will find no lack of instructors, Miss Vivian."

"The difficulty will be to choose among the multitude," said Beaton.

"Well, my dear," said poor Mr. Tilly, who had looked frequently toward the door, with an expression of intense weariness, "I suppose you have seen enough for one day, and I—I have an appointment, an appointment of some importance, a—"

"You are very tired," said his ward, kindly, glancing at him.

"Why lose your time here, then?" asked Beaton, blandly. "We shall be delighted to take charge of Miss Vivian and Mrs. — I did not catch the name, and see them safely en route home."

"If you would be so good," said Mr. Tilly, hesitating.

"I shall be most happy, so will Maitland."

"I do not want to stay much longer," said Miss Vivian, "if I can come soon again. There is a great picture of a chariot race in the next room; I should like to look at it, then I shall be quite ready to go."

"Then I shall bid you good morning, my dear, and good-bye for the present. I am going to the north for a few days. They have discovered a curious tomb in the wall of an old church near Thiristane and I want to have a look at it. Meantime, if you need advice or assistance—a—a—you have my excellent colleague, Mr. Dargan, at hand. Good morning, Mr. Beaton; good morning, Mr. Maitland," and with a bow to Mrs. Miles, who was still nodding in the seat Beaton had found for her, the old gentleman walked away with much alacrity.

"Poor old boy! it is really too bad to drag him about. Don't you think I might fill the place of guide, philosopher, and friend and leave him at peace?" exclaimed Beaton, looking after him with a smile.

"Thank you, you are very kind. If it would not be too much trouble I should be glad to be shown some of the things I ought to see. Mrs. Miles and I feel very lost here, and we might almost as well go about blindfolded as go about alone."

"Good. Then I shall devote myself to your service during the remainder of your stay. What shall we do to-morrow? Can we manager the Tower, the Monument, St. Paul's and Madame Tussaud?"

"If you do, Miss Vivian must have forty horse-power of sight-seeing and en-

"I have seen the Tower and the wax-works," returned Miss Vivian, gravely. "I think Mrs. Miles must rest to-morrow; but could you take me to a school of art or a drawing class? we might find out the cost, and go and tell Mr. Dargan after. Do you know Mr. Dargan, too?"

"I have the honor," with an air of profound respect. Miss Vivian looked quickly and keenly at him. "The best plan is to permit me to call on you to-morrow at any hour you may appoint, and we can arrange our campaign. I shall in the meantime make some inquiries about studios, etc., etc."

"You are very good indeed; I feel so much obliged to you." The color came slowly, softly into her cheeks, and a very sweet smile parted her lips. "I am sure Mr. Tilly will be very pleased."

"Mr. Tilly is a very dear friend of mine," said Beaton, gravely.

"I suppose so."

"Then you must give me your address," and Beaton took out his notebook.

"Thirteen Albert Street, Camden Town," said Mrs. Miles, who had scarcely spoken before, and who now joined them. Her accent was peculiarly flat and her voice of the sing-song description, though her utterance was rapid.

"Camden Town!" repeated Beaton. "Why did they banish you to so terrible a locality?"

"Dear, dear! is it that bad?" exclaimed Mrs. Miles, in much dismay. "They're uncommon nice rooms, and dear enough I can tell you—five and twenty shillings a week, and half a crown for the kitchen fire."

"The place is perfectly respectable, I have no doubt," said Maitland, laughing. "My friend Beaton is very fastidious; anything further west than Kensington or north than Portman Square appears a savage wilderness to him."

"Don't believe him; he is only a country lout himself, Miss Vivian. He has always lived in the wilds."

Miss Vivian looked from one to the other with a puzzled air; then, as if wishing to atone for what seemed to her the rudeness of Beaton's speech, she said softly, with a kind look into Maitland's face. "That is no matter; it has not made you wild or rude."

"You little know him!" said Beaton, in tragic tones.

"You are laughing. Do you always laugh?" she asked, uneasily. "Come, Miley, let us go home. I think I know the omnibus we came in, and you are too tired to walk."

"Don't think of it," said Beaton, as they moved toward the entrance; "I will get you a cab."

"Not a cab; Mr. Dargan told us to avoid cabs, they cost us so much money. I would rather spend it on drawing lessons."

"Mr. Dargan is—let us say, over cautious."

"He is a careful man, sir, and my brother," put in Mrs. Miles.

"And most conscientious, I am sure," said Beaton in a peculiar tone. "Still you must let me insist on a cab, and I will settle with the driver."

"No, certainly not!" cried Miss Vivian, decidedly. "I shall pay for it myself."

"I dare not contradict you. Then at what hour may I present myself to-morrow?" asked Beaton, with an air of profound deference.

"Oh, to-morrow? Well, any time after nine; they will not give us our breakfast till half-past eight," returned Miss Vivian.

Beaton gazed at her with so bewildered an expression that Maitland could not resist laughing. "My friend here is not given to early rising," he said. "He has a terrible complaint which checks his natural energy—want of occupation."

"That is very bad, very wearisome," she returned, gravely. "Will you come to-morrow, too?" she continued, looking at Maitland without a shade of hesitation or embarrassment.

"I am sorry I cannot have that pleasure; I have an engagement."

"What! at nine in the morning?" said Beaton.

"Not quite so early."

"Well, Miss Vivian, if I may come after luncheon, say about two-thirty, we will arrange some charming plans."

"Thank you; we shall have quite finished dinner by that time."

"You may be sure I shall be punctual."

Here a hansom, which Beaton had hailed, drove up.

"Dear, dear! I cannot abide those things!" cried Mrs. Miles; "you do see the horse's head so plain. I am always frightened it is going to fall."

"They are much the best, I assure you; a worse danger lurks in the four-wheeler, believe me. All the worst and most infectious diseases travel in them to the hospitals."

"Think of that now! Isn't it a shame? What'll we do, missie, my dear?"

"Oh, let us take the hansom; there is really no danger." She paused, and after a moment's hesitation held out her hand, first to Beaton and then to Maitland, with not undignified simplicity.

As the cab drove away Beaton passed his arm through Maitland's and they walked away down Piccadilly in silence for a few moments; then Beaton exclaimed:



Expert bicyclists have already succeeded in riding a single wheel, or unicycle, for short distances. In years to come the unicycle may become as common a mode of locomotion as the bicycle. Only a few years ago people would have laughed at the idea that all the world would shortly be awheel.

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ed with a groan: "She is even worse than I expected. What a price I shall have to pay for independence! What a figure! what a toilet! Could anything ever lick her into shape?"

"I don't agree with you," returned Maitland; "she is quaint, but far from commonplace. I believe if she were dressed up, like Lady Mary Hay or your sister, she might even look pretty."

"Like Lady Mary! Great heavens! what are you thinking of? Did you see her white stockings and charity-school shoes?"

"I did, and I also observed that the ankles so travestied were remarkably neat."

"Why, Jack, you are not going in for rivalry?"

"You are quite safe so far as I am concerned," returned Maitland, dryly. "But I doubt if your game will be as easy to you anticipate."

"Easy! it is sure to be hard work in any case; and then this craze for art! I must get Jean to help me there. In fact, I shall never get through the affair without Jean's help; but I can count on her; she wants to get me off her hands."

"Why Beaton, with your interest and sharpness you ought to be able to make your own living without having to sell yourself."

"Make my own living! What a disgusting phrase! Really, Jack, there is a stronger colonial flavor about you than I thought. However, I have not committed myself to anything. Old Dargan, the snuffy one, wants to make some final conditions before I open the siege in form. By the way, are you to dine with the Wintonings on Thursday?"

"I am."

"Then pray tell Jean the enormous sacrifice I am going to make to a stern sense of duty."

"What duty?"

"The duty of self-maintenance."

"I shall tell her my opinion if she asks it. Now I must leave you."

"Won't you come down to Hurlingham? Jennie will be there and she told me to bring you."

"Sorry I can't, but I have an appointment with the man who wants the Craig-rodde moors this autumn; I am almost late already."

"Well, good-bye for the present. If you had any bowls of compassion you would not leave me to my sorrow."

"I feel sure you will not long need consolation," said Maitland, smiling, as he nodded good-bye to his friend, and turned up Air Street on his way to Regent Circus. "It is no affair of mine," he mused. "I have no business to interfere, but I can't help feeling sorry for that poor child. She doesn't look as if she could hold her own in the world. Beaton will introduce her to. But women are kittle cattle; I cannot take credit to myself for understanding them though I have had a lesson or two."

CHAPTER III.

"GREEK MEETS GREEK."

Mrs. Winton's beautiful drawing-rooms were redecorated with flowers which they were profusely decorated, and shaded by sun-blinds to becoming dimness when she came down dressed for dinner, her white neck and arms gleaming through the filmy black lace which affected to cover them; the coils of her rich auburn hair dotted with tiny diamond beads and butterflies.

She was ready in good time this special Thursday, as she hoped for an opportunity of speaking to her brother before Colonel Winton appeared.

"He is always late. I do hope he

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