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stranger, starting up. "Come along, then; I'll see you again, my pale little cousin." Another strong grasp of the hand, and he strode out of the room as abruptly as he had come in.

Beaton paused a moment to say, "This threatens to be a serious affair, Edith. You had better keep out of that Hot-tent's way. I'll tell Somers to send Jean to you as soon as she comes in; let her know everything," and he went hurriedly out of the room.

Edith stood quite still where he left her, with a curious dazed feeling, as if she had been suddenly roused from a dream, and was not yet quite awake. She had a very vague idea of what it all meant.

If this stranger was really a cousin she would be glad. His face was kindly in spite of his keen, almost fierce eyes, and he might be a friend. Her clearest impression was that Mr. Beaton—she had not yet arrived at calling him Leslie, even in her thoughts—was very gravely and certainly not pleasurably affected by his sudden appearance. Why should he be? What were the rights he talked about? and what had she to do with them? Mrs. Winington no doubt could answer, and until she came in it was useless to conjecture.

So Edith turned to leave the room and sequestered herself in her own. As she did so her eyes fell on the wedding ring which Beaton had been in the act of trying on when her self-called cousin broke in upon them.

(To be Continued)

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268—od

# Beaton's Bargain.

BY MRS. ALEXANDER.

### SYNOPSIS.

Mrs. Winington, Lady Mary Hay, Leslie Beaton and Jack Maxwell are members of London's smart society set. Beaton is Mrs. Winington'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. Winington and Maxwell were lovers before the former married. Beaton, with company with Maitland is introduced to the heiress—Edith Vivian—by the latter's guardian. In the meantime Maitland has fallen in love with Edith, which angers Mrs. Winington, who determines that Edith shall not marry him and lies to her about him. Edith has begun to like Maitland and is mortified to hear Mrs. Winington's false description of him.

### CHAPTER VII. (Continued.)

"You are not keeping up to the mark, Leslie," said his sister one evening, just three days before that fixed for the wedding. "You are allowing the old original Adam to peep out. I saw Edith's eyes grow moist and sad when you were talking so wittily about Mr. and Mrs. Wandesford and their quarrels. You ought to remember she does not understand our shibboleth."

"Heavens and earth! can I ever forget it? The sweet little Quakeress is too exorcisingly in earnest. But you ought to remember what a desperate drill I have gone through. Is it to be wondered at that I break out at last? Never mind, I am going to buy her the rig to-morrow, and I shall be as meekly courteous and tenderly observant as a young knight in a mediæval romance."

The "to-morrow" broke brightly and softly. Edith had lain long awake, thinking over her quiet past, its peaceful if unbroken monotony. If the future promised more color and variety, would it be as free from pain? Be that as it might, she could do nothing now to change her fate, and she would not weaken herself by dwelling on possibilities of evil.

But the self-commune told upon her, and when Beaton as usual after luncheon, followed her to the drawing-room, while Mrs. Winington prepared to go out, he asked with an air of the deepest, tenderest solicitude what had disturbed or distressed her, as she looked pale and sad. His question brought back her color, and with it a sense of guilt at having allowed herself to doubt the kindness and affection of the man who looked so lovingly into her eyes, and spoke in tones so anxiously inquiring. Of course she assured him she was well and happy, and they talked for a few minutes with renewed confidence on Edith's part. As Le He was gentle, grave, all that he ought to be, she felt once more at ease with him.

"I have ventured to bring you yet another ring," he said at length, drawing a very small parcel from his pocket; and unfolding the silver paper in which it was wrapped, he produced a plain gold ring. "It is as well to ascertain if it is the right size," he added, (with a smile, and was in the act of trying it on her finger, when a solemn footman entered, and addressing Edith, said:

"There's a gentleman, 'm, as says his name is Vivian, asking to see you."

"Vivian!" echoed Edith, amazed. But she had scarcely uttered the word when a tall, very tall man, exceedingly brown and sunburned, with dark hair

and even more so, than the studious hours, and passing him aside, strode into the room, stopping short in the middle. He was clothed in a black velvet coat, dark trousers very loose about the ankles, and held a soft gray felt hat in one ungloved brown sinewy hand. A gaunt, bony figure, and extremely unlike those usually seen in "my lady's chamber."

After one comprehensive glance around the room he fixed his piercing eyes on Edith, and asked in a rough voice, "Are you my cousin, Edith Vivian?"

"I am Edith Vivian," she returned, rising in her extreme surprise, "but I do not think I have any cousins."

"No, I dare say not," he returned, with a big laugh.

"Pray, who are you, sir?" asked Beaton, haughtily, advancing between his fiancée and the intruder.

"I am David Vivian, her Uncle George's only surviving son," nodding to Edith. "But she never even heard of me, I suppose. Our fathers parted years ago. And you"—sharply—"I suppose you are her sweetheart? I am glad to make your acquaintance, sir. Shake hands, Cousin Edith. I'll be pleased to come to your wedding as your nearest of kin," and he sat down unasked in one of the broad velvet chairs that stood near him.

Beaton looked at him, a slight smile stealing around his mouth. He was to sure of his own position, too much a man of the world to be disturbed by the intrusion of any eccentric relative. He would neither be uncivil nor admit his claim.

"Well, my good sir, you cannot expect Miss Vivian to accept you as a relative without something in the way of credentials. Very possibly what you say is correct, but—"

"Ah, I understand. Well, I have left all my papers, that is, the attested copies—catch me parting with the originals—with that old fellow down in what do you call it, the lawyers' kraal—the Temple. You know him. Your guardian, I mean," to Edith. "He seems in a great taking. He told me you were to be married on Thursday, so I made tracks as fast as I could to have a look at my little cousin, and let her know I've a sense of justice, and though I'll have my rights, every inch of them, I'm not going to be hard on a young lady, and a pretty one into the bargain."

An awful fear shot through Beaton's soul. Was this a claimant for Edith's inheritance?

"If you are a cousin," she exclaimed, "I shall be very glad, for I don't seem to have any one belonging to me, and you are a little like a picture of my father's brother George that hangs in the parlor at home."

"Good! shake hands on it. You look like an honest, straightforward girl. I suspect you're in luck, sir," turning to Beaton, after shaking Edith's hand vigorously.

"May I ask to what rights you allude?" asked the former, with cold gravity.

"The right to all my uncle John's real estate," returned the stranger, promptly. "I intend, in justice to myself, to prove who I am, and to what I am entitled; but I sha'n't be greedy if you are friendly. Now, as I feel strange, not to say lost, in this monstrous big place, and you seem to have a roomy house, I suppose I may as well take up my quarters with you?"

Edith looked white and half frightened. Beaton was too confounded to reply, so his young fiancée exclaimed:

"This is not my house, nor Mr. Beaton's. It belongs to his sister, Mrs. Winington, with whom I am staying. Mr. Beaton does not live here."

"Ha! that alters the case. Well, a man on board the steamer with me told me to put up at the Tavistock Hotel. I only arrived late last night, so I'll just stay on there. I have a lot of business to look after. You see I have been away up at the diamond diggings, and further, with some fellows that were hunting for gold and feathers, so it was more than two years since I left Cape Town. When I came back a couple of months ago, I met an old friend of my father's who had been home in England. He told me of the uncle's death, and the property he had left, and how it had all been seized by my cousin—naturally enough, naturally enough. I just took the next steamer home, and here I am. I don't think you are too glad to see me."

"You must admit your appearance on the scene is a little startling," said Beaton, with praiseworthy self-possession. "Have you seen Mr. Dargan, the more active of the two guardians?"

"Not yet. The other old boy talked of you, and seemed too frightened to say yea or nay without him."

"Suppose we go and call on Dargan together," said Beaton, pleasantly. "I don't want to make myself ridiculous by over-suspicion, but I am sure you are too much a man of the world to expect that I should take you simply on your own word?"

"Right you are, by George," cried the

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