

Zelda Dameron

By MEREDITH NICHOLSON

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CHAPTER XIII.—(Continued.)

He was a little fellow and he was angry; but he was a gentleman, too, and, seeing that Rodney Merriam was really surprised, he related toward the old soldier, who had thrust his hands into the side pockets of his coat, looking as foolish as it is possible for a fine old gentleman to look.

"Captain Pollock," he blurted out, suddenly, "I haven't a doubt that you are telling the truth! I don't care whose son you are, I like you anyhow!" And then snatching his hands from his pockets he held them out to Pollock, demanding with a gruff kindness, "Will you shake hands with me?"

"Certainly, Mr. Merriam." A few hours later the usual crowd lounged in the smoking-room of the Tippecanoe Club. Pollock had just finished telling a story when Rodney Merriam appeared in the doorway. The old gentleman advanced upon the little group, returning their greetings and thanking them all for the proffer of their seats.

"Gentlemen," he said, standing by his chair, "I wish to make you an explanation. Owing to an unfortunate misunderstanding, due wholly to my own stupidity, I recently showed Captain Pollock a slight in this club. I wish to make the ampler possible explanation."

"This is wholly unnecessary," exclaimed Pollock, rising. "This is wholly uncalled for, Mr. Merriam." "I wish to say before all of you," Merriam continued, "that I was wholly in the wrong, and that Captain Pollock is a gentleman, who is an honor to his friends and to his profession."

And the next day, in the same spirit of scrupulous honor, Rodney Merriam sought his niece at the Beeches and made his peace with them.

CHAPTER XIV.

Leighton always hated himself for laughing at Balcomb, whose loquacity was so cheap it was pathetic. Everything Balcomb knew he used constantly. At the college to which he referred in terms of rallery or contempt he had picked the nearest and gaudiest flowers; but he wore them all in an amazing bouquet that did not fail to impress many of his acquaintances as the real bloom of learning. Leighton was not at all glad to see Balcomb one night. His friend's eternal freshness palled upon him. But it did not occur to Balcomb that Leighton might not be delighted to have him for a traveling companion. He thought his conversation was shortening the distance for Leighton. Balcomb had been making social history fact. He had, in his own phrase, "batted in"; and since the performance of "Deceivers' Beggars" he had been included in most of the gatherings of the Dramatic Club circle.

"I say, old man," he began, abruptly, as he skimmed through a strip of woodland, "just between old college friends, what's your game, anyhow? Which is it?"

"Which is what?" demanded Leighton, who had been enjoying a moment with his own thoughts, while Balcomb stared out upon the darkling landscape.

"Which girl, I mean? There are two out here."

Leighton took off his hat and laughed. "I haven't decided yet," he said, presently, with an irony that was quite lost on Balcomb. "I'm a good fellow, though, and I'll take the one you leave."

"Miss Dameron's certainly a peach dumpling, all right. But say, the little cousin's a gem of purest ray serene. As her cousin, she jollies easier."

"I think I've noticed that"—and the irony this time was meant for himself. "They say olives are a cultivated taste," persisted Balcomb; "but I know right away that girl was a good thing. And to think that she has to teach a lot of grimy little muckers how to cook."

"It is too bad, isn't it? But I don't think you need be sorry for her."

"She's as proud as Lucifer. Here's our stop."

The two men jumped out into the highway and started for the Dameron farm.

"I think a man ought to marry early," Balcomb announced, as they tramped along the road. "There's nothing like a woman and a home to put snap into a man," he continued, musingly. "A man finds away a whole lot of money in his bachelor days. Doing social stunts is expensive. Have you any idea what my carriage bill was last March? Eighty-four dollars! I honestly believe it would pay me to own a hack. But, I say, the man who will drag a girl to the theater in a street car is fit for treason, stratagems and the stone pile. It ain't enough to put 'em on four wheels when it's snowing; no, I make a specialty of hacks under the starry hosts of heaven, and eke the pale and haughty moon. There's no better way than that to get solid with a girl. There are some that put their faith in bonbons and a new novel now and then; but there isn't a girl in Marions to-night that wouldn't rather go to see a good show in comfort than do anything else under the sun. I say, about hacks, don't give it away, but I've just got a transfer company pass—Wilson, the president, and I are pretty thick, and I do a little quiet work for the company occasionally. I helped 'em beat the vehicle tax before the Council last winter, and I have an annual now that gives me power of life and death over all the company's rolling stock night and day. And you bet I won't use it or anything!"

Leighton's silence did not disturb Balcomb; he talked for the joy it gave him. They reached the Dameron gate and followed the winding path toward the veranda.

"Aho, O bower of beauty!" Balcomb called cheerily when they were within hailing distance of the veranda. "Friends draw near, bringing tidings."

"On the veranda," as Balcomb's voice came upon the air, two girls fell on

each other's necks in mock ecstasy of grief.

"They're there, all right," announced Balcomb.

"If you yell at them again, they'll undoubtedly bolt," said Leighton, whose thoughts since they had left the car had been far away from Balcomb's babble.

"If you're not afraid of the June-bugs, we'll stay here," said Zelda, when she and Olive had shaken hands with the men.

"There's nothing better; it's the center of the universe right here," Balcomb declared. "I brought some poison for the June-bugs with me. I will place it on yonder rail, lest we forget, lest we forget."

This was Balcomb's happy idea of minimizing the value of his gift. He was relieved to find that Pollock was not there, and as it was past the usual calling hour in the latitude and longitude of Marions, the army officer was not likely to appear. Ever since the unpleasant incident on the stairway at the Athenaeum building, Balcomb had been in the undignified attitude of dodging Captain Pollock, though he had said, during Pollock's absence from town, exceedingly cruel things about the officer.

Mr. Dameron came out and shook hands with the young men, addressing a few words to each. Balcomb had called upon him repeatedly in reference to the purchase of the tract of land on the creek, but without encouragement. Dameron had just been wondering how he could communicate with the promoter without seeking him directly, and this call gave him an opportunity.

And the way, Mr. Balcomb," said the old man, pleasantly, "some time when you are passing, I'd be glad if you'd call at my office. There's a matter of mutual interest that I'd like to speak to you about. A beautiful night, gentlemen. Very much cooler here than in the city, as you may have noticed." And he went down the steps and out upon the highway for his usual evening walk.

"A remarkable man, your father, Miss Dameron. He's quite the ideal business man of the old school," said Balcomb. "We youngsters are quicker on the trigger, but our aim isn't so sure. No, siree; your father is an ideal business man."

He had spoken impressively. He would, in his own language, "make himself solid" when he had a chance. Leighton was talking to Olive, and Balcomb set about entertaining Zelda. He ran on monotonously. He was anxious to make an impression at once without relinquishing the floor.

"I suppose you and Miss Merriam do a lot of reading out here. What are the books one ought to talk about?"

"We don't read much—except the cook-books," replied Zelda.

"Ha! ha! That is rich—from the great Miss Dameron, too. I like that! I suppose as a matter of fact you really spend your morning with the classics?"

"I'm sorry to disappoint you, but our mornings are spent with cook-books. My cousin is writing a cook-book and we're reading all the old ones to be sure here is all new. It's delightfully exciting."

"Wouldn't that jar one? I say, I want to speak right now for an autograph copy of the first edition of that book."

"Olive will be delighted," said Zelda. "It's designed, you know, for the very young."

"There it goes again. Everybody has it for me! Oh, well! My time will come!"

It came in an unexpected way. Captain Pollock was riding up the driveway. He was on very good terms at the Beeches, and had been told that while there were lights there was a hope of finding some one at home.

"Here comes another messenger bearing tidings," said Balcomb, in his most cheerful note. "I hope it isn't bad news."

"No; it's Captain Pollock. That horse of his is a beauty, isn't it? I wish he would trade with me," answered Zelda.

Leighton groaned inwardly at the sight of Pollock, whom he liked well enough ordinarily. He did not understand the reason for Balcomb's hurried flight, so that the humor of the situation did not strike him.

"You may have Mr. Balcomb's seat there by the railing, if you like," said Zelda to Pollock.

"You do me too much honor," said the officer, as he shook hands with Leighton.

"Oh, I don't know!" and Olive's imitation of Balcomb's intonation was so true to life that they all laughed.

"I don't see why any one should laugh," said Zelda.

"I'm sure I don't," declared Pollock. He put back his arm against the railing, knocking down the box of candy that Balcomb had left behind him.

"Ah, I beg everybody's pardon!" "Mr. Balcomb's feelings might be hurt if he came back," suggested Zelda.

"He won't come back! I'll wager another box he won't," replied the officer, blandly, as he fumbled with the string. "Miss Dameron, permit me—I'm sure they're delicious. Chocolates, I fancy, from the bouquet—and, Miss Merriam, you will not decline. Mr. Leighton, a little candy now and then is relished by the wisest men. I propose Mr. Balcomb's health, to be eaten sitting and in silence."

"It isn't polite to treat the gift of a party guest in that way," protested Olive. "I'm surprised at you, Captain Pollock."

When a man is in love, he becomes a master of harmless deceit and subterfuge. Morris Leighton had sought Zelda Dameron to-night with a great hope in his heart. He did not intend to miss a chance to talk to her alone, if he could help it. He had taken her wrap from her, and purposely dropped it; and he seemed to have difficulty in finding it, although it was a white

thing that one could not miss in the moonlight, unless one were blind. But Zelda paused when they reached Pollock's horse, which whinnied and put out its nose to her in a friendly way.

As they reached the road, which lay white in the moonlight, Ezra Dameron came toward them, walking slowly, hat in hand, and the two watched him—his queer shuffling walk, his head bent, his gray hair touched with the silver of the moonlight.

"Won't you come with us, father?" said Zelda, as they met in the road.

"No! no, I thank you, Zee. I have had my little constitutional. Don't go too far—there may be malaria abroad."

Leighton looked furtively at Zelda. She had greeted her father kindly, happily; but there was something repellent in Ezra Dameron. Leighton never felt it more than to-night. That such a girl should have a father so wretched seemed impossible; but the thought quickened his love for her. There was something in her conduct toward her father; her unfailing gentleness and patience with him had impressed Leighton from the time of her homecoming. She made a point of speaking of him often and always with respect. Leighton was well aware that no one else, with the single exception of Michael Carr, ever spoke of Ezra Dameron in anything but derision. Rodney Merriam never mentioned him at all, which was doubtless the safer way. Farther along the road Pollock and Olive were tentatively singing a popular song of the hour.

"Sing it all—don't pick at it that way," called Zelda.

"Sing it yourself, if you don't like it," came back the answer from Olive.

"There is only one song that I should care to hear to-night," said Leighton, after a moment of silence. "It's the only song that ever meant a great deal to me."

"Oh, I know! One of Herr Schmidt's from that great operatic triumph of last winter. Your taste is only fair, then."

"It goes back a little farther than that. It's Traume—Tristan and Isolde, wasn't it? Do you remember?"

"I have heard it sung, beautifully, in Berlin," she said, evasively.

"I never did. But I heard you sing it once, and it has haunted me."

"Is that the one?" she asked. "Yes; it is about dreams."

"That is the one," meant. It is the most wonderful thing in the world! Yes, it's only about dreams—a dream; but it's the sweetest dream in the world, it means—"

"A dream!" and she laughed, but it was a mirthless little laugh.

He paused and looked out over the moonlit cornfield; his heart was beating fast. She felt for a moment that she must turn and fly from him; but he started forward again and she followed.

"It is more than a dream. I am building upon it as though it were a veritable rock."

"A dream—to build the real upon? The architects of fate don't like that plan, do they?"

"But we must hold to our dreams," he said, soberly.

"I suppose we must, even though they are things of air that only lead us astray. I don't think you were sentimental. I'm afraid I can't sympathize exactly, for sentiment was left out of me utterly; and she hated herself for the bravado with which she spoke.

"I can't believe that! Every one has it. I'm a thoroughly practical person, and yet I have my dreams—my dream!"

Olive and Pollock were singing again. They were far in advance and their voices stole softly upon the night.

Zelda stopped to listen. Her heart was in a tumult of happiness and wonder. The splendor of the moonlight upon the fields about them, the gloomy shadow of the woodland beyond, the man beside her hesitating, yet ready to tell her of his love. There stole across her spirit the tremulous awe of a girl to whom love has come for the first time as it can never come again. Leighton drew close to her.

"Zelda," he said, "you must not!"

"Oh, no! You must not!" she cried.

"I love you, Zelda!" he said.

"No; you must not say it!" And there was a sob that caught her throat.

"You are the dream. It is too sweet; I can not lose it—I must not."

"You have talked of—dreams and love," she said, hurriedly, but with a lingering note of contempt on the last word that stung him as the first had.

He had stung him in the face. "I wonder what love is!" and hastened away toward her cousin and Pollock, who waited, idly and trying their voices, and chaffing each other over their failure to carry a tune.

(To be continued.)

Characteristic National Meal.

It is not only in Scotland that breakfast is the characteristic national meal. Travel where you may, the first meal of the day is the one that strikes the foreign note, luncheon and dinner having gradually absorbed cosmopolitan qualities that are not even confined to hotels. But you never feel so much of an Englishman, says a London paper, as when Switzerland gives you rolls and butter and honey, and nothing more, with your coffee; or when France makes this into one exquisite crumbling "croissant," with an inch or two from a yard-long loaf, or when Denmark adds cream instead of milk to the coffee and a dangerous piece of pastry to the black bread and round white roll. Yet the English breakfast became an institution only in the eighteenth century. Before that only royalty breakfasted off meat, bread and cheese and ale. The commoner, such as Pepys, took merely a morning draught of buttered ale.

Touchy.

"This paper says," observed the long, lanky passenger, "that 'Senator Blank is a wise, conservative statesman, who never slips over.' 'Slips over'—where the dickens have I read that phrase before?"

"Not in Dickens, I am sure," said the passenger with the monocle and the mutton chop whiskers. "It probably emanated, sir, from some blawzed Yankee vulgarian."

The small boy makes a home run when he hears his father calling him.

If cleanliness is next to godliness, most tramps must be agnostics.

MODES of The MOMENT



HIS is the time when one loses interest in what is being worn and gives one's self over to fruitless conjecture as to what is going to be worn. And yet such delectable things are being worn, things in which lurk in clews to future possibilities!

Just what fads the autumn will bring forth, no one can tell, yet one might order a few autumn gowns now with perfect safety, provided one were willing to follow conservative ideas. Women are not yet tired of clinging frocks and soft draperies, and though there may be efforts to introduce ampler lines and more substantial materials there is not the smallest likelihood of any very radical change. As has been said before, the day of the skirt is mercifully past in so far as the advance guard of fashion is concerned, though women who have such frocks in their summer outfits may continue to wear them until the summer season ends, says a fashion writer in the Washington Post.

To order a new frock with such lines would be sheer folly, but the clinging fourreau or slip and the supple vaporous draperies of the summer season will doubtless be quite in order during the winter season, if only a "martingale" or "bride" feature does not relegate the skirt to the ranks of the past. Such models as the two black and white evening frocks illustrated in the large cut might be safely ordered now, even though the Paris openings are still in the future and nothing is definitely settled about the new modes.

Black and white is sure to be worn. It is always chic and effective, always more or less popular, and this summer it has gained a pronounced vogue which promises to hold over into the winter. Black and white combinations are more generally becoming than all black, but have much of the distinction which belongs to smart black and in a room full of colored frocks the truly modish black and white model has a certain refined distinction which makes it more noticeable than its more vivid neighbors. Moreover it can be worn more often than a colored frock without becoming tiresome to both, the wearer and her friends.

Three frocks recently seen here are admirable examples of what the French makers have achieved in black and white since King Edward's death made the black and white frock even more important than fashion had decreed it should be. In two cases a touch of brilliant color relieves the somewhat sombre, harmony, but the color is not necessary, and where jet does not enliven the black enough to suit the woman ordering the gown a little gold or silver or crystal is often used instead of color.

The two last are preferred to gold just now, and the loveliest of the black and white creations are likely to show sparkling crystals mingled with put jet or gleaming silver embroideries. Dextrous of crystal scattered on black tulle are effective, and white tulle on chiffon sprinkled with the tiny crystal dewdrops is veiled in black tulle with charming results.

Varying the color worn gives variety to one's toilet, and it is an excellent scheme in designing a black and white scheme in black to provide this opportunity. The French designers often supply the color note by a cluster of artificial flowers or a huge rose thrust into the corsage, and the artificial flowers now offered for such purposes in the Paris shops are wonderfully lovely.

A woman just home from six months abroad and a final four weeks of shopping in Paris, exhibited the other day a large box full of corsage bouquets and boutonnières which she had bought with an eye to the adorning of winter furs and evening frocks. They were not cheap even in Paris, for the infinite care in detail means patient work and consummate skill. One bunch of sweet peas was particularly lovely, each flower perfect in form and exquisite in coloring and no two alike, though all shaded harmoniously in soft yet glowing pink, lavender, yellow and maroon. The flowers were intended for the corsage of a gray evening frock, supplying the only note of gay color in a symphony of smoky gray and dull silver.

What Blondes Should Wear.

Another cluster of flowers supplied by the dressmaker to accompany a certain frock consisted of big, loose petalled black velvet roses. Yes, it sounds absurd, but those roses thrust carefully into the girle of a white chiffon crepe dinner gown added astonishingly to the cachet of the gown, and there was a rose and fillet ornament in black velvet for the blonde hair of the owner of the frock.

This hair, by the way, was worn in the approved Parisian fashion, no longer flat and close over the head with encircling braid, but more Grecian in suggestion. The hair, drawn softly back from the face with very little roll or parted if a part is becoming is bound round the head in smooth coil. Some women still prefer the loose, heavy braid, but the coil is more chic.

In the circle formed by this coil is

a soft mass of little curls and puffs. The set, sausage-like puffs which became such an absurdity a year or so ago, will not do, though many women will doubtless resort to them in a cheerful belief that they are following the last dictum of Mme. la Mode. The truly fashionable coiffure must be carefully artistic as to the curls and puffs, yet never untidy. It must be smooth and carefully arranged, but never stiff.

Use of False Hair.

At its best it is unquestionably as attractive and artistic, but it is doomed to caricature, as the sparks fly upward, and only the most careful grooming will produce the desired result.

Naturally false hair plays an important part in the coiffure of most of the fashionables, and one's own hair, supplemented if necessary by a switch, is used for the coil. Any extra hair is coiled flat on the crown of the head, and then a false piece composed of soft curling locks is pinned on, filling the entire space inside of the coil like a cap. Better results are secured in this way than by more complicated use of one's own hair, but some women with ample locks and clever fingers or skillful maids fill in the back of the coiffure with soft puffs and twists of their own hair, and a few fringe curls bought of the coiffeur.

Individually today is not only more sensible, but more smart than freakish following of changing fashion, and the true elegant changes her coiffure much less frequently and radically than does the average woman. If only women generally could be made to realize that they could achieve through scrupulous simplicity, impeccable neatness and individuality a smart distinction which they miss altogether by cheap and tawdry exaggeration of passing modes, what an enormous improvement would be effected! A foreign representative of one of the big French silk factories said not long ago:

"I have never seen so many handsome women together as I find behind the counter in any big American shop; but why do most of them disguise themselves by frightful elaborate coiffures and cheap showy waists and neckwear? If French women were as pretty they would make themselves adorable—coquette, but trim, demure."

The Shortened Waist Line.

All of which is a far cry from the black and white evening frock. It has a shortened waist line, and every one who speaks of things Parisian comments upon the way in which this shortened waist has been reasserting itself among the late summer modes. Women like the short waist, find it becoming. Dressmakers say that it offers opportunities for delightfully artistic effects, and so it never really drops out of sight, though sometimes it is confined to evening and house gown modes.

Last winter the waist line was lowered to normal on a large majority of the frocks, but the short line still persisted here and there upon both evening and daytime frocks, and this summer one found now and then a coat with decided directoire lines. Now there are rumors that the winter will see a very considerable revival of the short waist and that the Grecian lines of the coiffure are to consort with a renewed vogue of classic lines in evening dress. It is but a rumor.

The short skirt which was introduced even among the evening frocks and the most elaborate afternoon frocks this season owed its vogue very largely to the introduction of the bridled skirt, which made long flaming lines and trains practically an impossibility. It has run its course with the exaggerated yard of skirt; and with the increased fullness of the skirt bottoms have come the long flowing folds and trains which are so vastly becoming to the average woman that only slavish obedience to the makers of the modes could induce her to lay them aside.

Indeed the best dressed women on both sides of the Atlantic have never subscribed wholeheartedly to the short skirt and where evening and house dress was concerned; and while soft skirt fullness may be slightly held in by a scarf or some substantial band on the skirt bottom, it is not necessary that this confining band should be so absurdly narrow as to eliminate all possibility of flowing round folds on train.

Black Velvet Trimming.

The rage for black velvet trimming is fairly sure to hold over into the winter and should be welcome to women, for it makes possible very effective trimming touches at comparatively slight expense and affords opportunity for easily freshening old frocks.

The third of the black and white evening frocks would present a little more difficulty to the average dressmaker than would the other two, for draperies always demand skillful handling, but is a delightful model for transparent black over white, with reverses of jet and crystal embroidery on white drops of jet and crystal bordering the drapery and a transparent scarf embroidered in jet and crystal to throw about the shoulders. A touch of brilliant color could be introduced in girle, chon, or corsage flowers, or the toilet might be kept entirely in black and white.

Slightly Modified.

Little Viola had developed the habit of holding her thumb in her mouth, even while eating. Mother had resorted to all sorts of methods to correct the child and finally in desperation said:

"Viola, the first thing you know you will swallow your thumb, and then what will you do?"

"Well, mother, I should hate to swallow it because I'd have a heaven of a time without it."

"Why, Viola," said the astonished mother, "where did you hear an expression like that?"

"Well, well," hesitated the little girl. "I didn't hear it exactly like that, mother, but I thought it would sound better."

Petit's Eye Salve.

No matter how badly the eyes may be diseased or injured, restores normal conditions. All druggists or Howard Bros., Buffalo, N. Y.

A Mosquito Proof Steamer.

The Jonathan Holt, the first ocean going mosquito proof steamer, has arrived in the Mersey, says the London Times. She is the first ship of special design for the Liverpool West African trade. Professor Major Ronald Ross's recommendations have been carried out by the owners for mosquito proofing all living quarters. Copper gauze fittings are provided for all doors, windows, side ports, skylights, ventilators and passages to prevent the malaria bearing mosquito entering.

Life-like.

"What a noisy thing that bass drum is!" remarked the clarinet, disgruntled. "Yes," replied the trombone, "just like a human being, isn't it?" "Like a human being?" "Yes, it's the one with the big head that makes the most noise."—Scraps.

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