

# THE PLAIN MISS PRETTY.

BY ETHEL SIGSBEE SMALL.

## I.

I T was not that she was unconscionably plain. By the side of ordinary mortals she even appeared rather more favored than most girls; it was only in the presence of her beautiful sister that she deserved the adjective which always accompanied her name. Then one saw that her nose was a little too short and her face a little too long; her rather large mouth, pleasant as it was, appeared extravagant beside her sister's exquisitely molded lips.

The elder Miss Pretty was a beauty. She was one of those rare creatures, the petted children of nature, on whom no gift has been too great, or too small, to lavish. I saw her first at the horse-show. My eyes held spellbound, I spoke to my companion, Algy Vannerdale.

"Who is she?"

"Miss Pretty," said Algy. It seemed he had been watching her, too.

"Miss Beautiful!" I murmured, and waited for Algy's unsympathetic chuckle.

The chuckle did not come, however. I looked at Algy. His soul—all he's got—was in his eyes, which still feasted on Miss Pretty. Somehow it irritated me.

"I'd like to meet her," I said. "I think her beautiful—the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. But if you have any claims, or are thinking of having any claims, I'll forego the introduction."

"That's all right, old man," said Algy. "I am thinking of having claims—I'd give my soul for claims, but then so would every man she knows, and she knows a good many. My intentions, therefore, needn't prevent you from entering the lists, from being introduced, or from being in earnest. We're all in earnest so far as that goes."

"So instead of one I am to have one hundred rivals," I said, as I watched the sunlight on Miss Pretty's Titian hair. "Ah, well, she's worth fighting for! Known her long?"

"She only came yesterday. That's her mother with her."

"And the girl?"

"What girl? Oh, that's the plain Miss Pretty."

That night Algy very gallantly made me known to the most wonderful being in

the world. She was in white; from the cool transparency of her gown her shoulders rose ivory-white and satiny. I am not conspicuously young, either in years or matters of the heart, yet I felt ill at ease in the presence of this dazzling woman. She did not talk much, so far as I remember, but looked at me from eyes so clear and deep and glistening that I nearly forgot to ask for any dances. She had none to give me, as it happened. I grew desperate, and asked her if she would golf with me the next day. It was bald and rather malapropos, but I was past caring. She turned those wonderful eyes on me.

"My sister golfs; I do not."

Here I was introduced to the plain Miss Pretty, and as the situation seemed so clearly to demand it, I extended my invitation to her. She accepted. I took a dance with the plain Miss Pretty—I had plenty to choose from; her card was but half full—and we sat it out, as she said she was tired. I watched the dancers and Miss Pretty talked. I heard very little until she mentioned her sister's name. Beatrice! How it suited her!

"Mine is Mary Anne—that suits me, too, don't you think?" the plain Miss Pretty asked.

I assured her it did. It was not until her sister had passed out of eye range that I realized what I had said. Then I hastened to make matters better—or worse; but she laughed at me.

"Good-natured," I said to myself, "but plain—quite plain!"

She wore a gown high in the neck, always unattractive at a dance. Evidently shoulders like her beautiful sister's did not run in the family. I dreamed of the beautiful Miss Pretty that night. All night I saw her hair, her lips, her eyes, and I vowed that if she had twice as many lovers, I would win her in the end.

## II.

The plain Miss Pretty golfed very well. Her slender figure looked trim in her starched shirt-waist and ankle-length skirt. Freckles somehow do not offend under a canvas hat. On the way to and from the links, and often during our game, she talked of her sister.

"You think her beautiful?" she asked.

"Could any one not think her so?"

"No one, I am sure," said Miss Pretty. "Isn't she a dream? Did you notice the wonderful color of her eyes?"

It is refreshing to hear one woman praise another; especially refreshing, when the woman she eulogizes happens to be her sister. I looked down approvingly upon my companion, whereupon she looked up, and I received a distinct surprise. Her eyes were most attractive. She lowered them at once, and went on talking about her sister.

We found the beautiful Miss Pretty on the hotel veranda, surrounded. Her gown of pale sea-green made her skin like new ivory, and heightened the rose-leaf color of her cheeks and lips. My heart stifled me as she raised her eyes and gave me one of her rare, if cold, smiles. I was guilty of forgetting her sister's existence. The plain Miss Pretty, however, took a chair beside us and opened a book which she found upon it, the men with whom her sister was surrounded being much too busy watching that beautiful face to talk to her.

"It has been a glorious day, and I think we shall have a cool night," I stammered.

It was the only remark I could think of. The beautiful Miss Pretty smiled and agreed with me. I compared the color of her misty gown to the color shimmering in the sea below us. She said she had always liked green. By this time many of the men had remembered their breeding and were talking to the plain sister. She seemed to be amusing them, judging by the laughter. I thought the time ripe, and asked the beautiful Miss Pretty if she would not walk with me on the board-walk.

"Thank you, I fear I must dress for dinner," she said; but mine was the privilege of walking with her to the door. "Will you tell Mary to come and dress, please?" she asked me, and again those curving lips melted into her rare smile.

I walked back to the plain Miss Pretty. She was talking vivaciously. The men about her had apparently not noticed that the bird had flown. When I spoke, they looked up, and, noticing the empty chair, made some excuse to wander off, thinking they might find its late occupant. I delivered my message.

"Oh, bother dressing!" said the plain sister. "I came here to have a good time."

"Are you having it?" I asked.

"Yes," she said, apparently surprised.

"What do you call a good time?"

She started to speak, then hesitated, and said:

"Oh, watching Beatrice, and being with her, and listening to her talk."

I thought it a charming speech. Still, I felt that she might have added to it.

"And golf?" I suggested.

"And golf," she said emphatically.

"Will you golf with me to-morrow?"

"I should like to, but I've already made an engagement," she said regretfully.

"Then are you bathing to-morrow, and may I have the pleasure of going in when you do?" I asked.

"Why, of course," she said.

She had an odd little way of emphasizing, which was not unattractive. Just then I caught a glimpse of a vision in pink through one of the long windows.

"You will excuse me?" I said.

### III.

MISS PRETTY—I mean the plain Miss Pretty; her sister did not care for sea bathing—Miss Pretty in a bathing-suit was a nymph. She had quite a group about her as I joined her on the beach the next day.

"Ah!" I said.

I meant to convey the fact that I was here by appointment, and expected the others to scatter. Nothing seemed further from their minds, however. One might have thought they were all there by appointment. It ended by all of us going in together, Miss Pretty smiling on every one alike.

The plain Miss Pretty swam like a fish and floated like a feather. She raced some of us; some she splashed with water, laughing like a child. She swam far out with me, and, growing tired, rested her hand on my shoulder. She seemed to weigh nothing at all.

On the beach, coming out, we met the beauty. She was seated in a beach chair, her beautiful face shaded by drooping veils. The blue of her faultless gown was repeated in her eyes, the rose at her breast in the lips that smiled at me.

"We have been trying for the last hour to imagine that we are fishes," I said as we passed her.

"Have you?" she asked, and smiled.

That night there was another dance at the Seacrest. The beautiful Miss Pretty, in black, was a picture to stir the soul. She carried her head like an empress; it was inches above the other women. What chance has the small woman beside the

statuesque? I had the good fortune to secure three dances with her. Then I sought her sister.

"I'm so sorry," said the plain Miss Pretty. "I haven't one left."

I felt rather bad-tempered about it. She could easily have kept one for me. I enjoyed her naïve talk about her sister.

"Suppose we make an engagement to walk to-morrow morning?" I said.

"Oh, dear, I can't go to-morrow. I've promised——"

"It doesn't matter," I said.

I felt that the girl had snubbed me quite enough. I had tried to be nice to her for her sister's sake, but I resolved to make no more self-sacrifices. I would have done with her.

"But the next day I should like so much to go," went on Miss Pretty.

"The next day, then," I said. "I shall remember."

Then I left to claim a dance with her sister. The beautiful Miss Pretty did not talk while she danced, and I was left to my own reflections as we glided through the waltz. I wondered if she liked me, and whether she would be very much surprised if I made her an offer of marriage after the dance finished. I had quite made up my mind to it, surprise or no surprise, when the music stopped.

"That was perfect!" I said softly in her ear.

"Charming, I thought," she replied.

Somehow her calm, cool voice gave my ardor a check. I resolved to wait until a better occasion. After all, a dance was no place to propose to a girl; and I had known her but three days. Then a thought came to me. I would ask her sister what she thought about it. Her sister was nowhere to be found, but I heard her light, laughing voice floating in with the breeze from the piazza. I have no opinion of a girl who frequents dark corners during the intervals of a dance. I sat alone in the ballroom throughout the intermission, very much bored.

It was at the beginning of the tenth dance that I caught the plain Miss Pretty's eye, and saw her beckon me.

"Mr. Williams has gone home ill," she said. "You may have this one if you like. Do you like?"

Williams had been her companion on the piazza.

"I like beyond anything in the world," I said as I put my arm about her. Of course it was an extravagant speech.

She danced like a little fairy, and kept up a steady stream of nonsense as we waltzed. Her merry jests, her teasings,

her roguishness, held my attention during the dance and after. In fact, the next was under way and her partner glowering at me before I realized I had over-stayed my time. I had that next dance with her sister, I remember.

"Have you one more for me?" I asked the plain Miss Pretty as she took her seat after the dance and her partner fled for some punch.

"Mr. Williams had the next too," she said, wrinkling her brows at her card. "You may have it as he is ill, poor fellow!" Her face grew pensive.

"Oh, don't give it to me if you are going to pity him all through the dance," I snapped.

"Very well," she said sweetly.

"You are going to give it to me?" I asked, not quite understanding her.

"I told you so, silly," she said.

I had never been called "silly" before. I thought it forward and familiar. After the dances were over which blocked the way to mine, however, I carried her off to the end of the piazza. We were alone. Save for a broad wash of moonlight there was no light. She looked very little and girlish in her pretty high-necked gown.

Her sister—with Algy—passed us, tall, willowy, wonderful. The moonlight gave added whiteness to the ivory shoulders from which her scarf had slipped.

"Isn't Beatrice *lovely* to-night?" said the plain Miss Pretty.

"She is wonderful," I said seriously. "I brought you out here to talk about your sister."

"Of course," said Miss Pretty. "They all do. Well—she is beautiful, isn't she?"

"Beautiful," I murmured.

There was a silence. We listened to the soft thud of the breakers. From inside came the throbbing of violins. Miss Pretty hummed the melody.

"Go on," she said at last.

"Go on?"

"About Beatrice."

"Do you think," I said, "it would be quite inexcusable to propose to a girl at a dance after knowing her just three days? I've been wondering. A dance seems hardly the place."

"Oh, it isn't at all the place," said Miss Pretty hurriedly. She looked toward the ballroom. "Isn't that the next dance beginning? I really must go in."

I dislike to see a girl so eager for dancing. It seems to show that tendency toward the frivolous which I have observed more than once in the plain Miss Pretty. It struck me that I might offer a few brotherly suggestions.

"There are a number of things I do not approve of in you," I said as an opening.

"Why, what are they?" she asked in a small, innocent voice.

"I shall be delighted to tell you," I said. "One is your going off alone with a man to a dark corner of the piazza."

I looked at her sternly, expecting her to flush. Instead, she rose.

"You are right," she said. "I'll go in."

I caught one end of the scarf she held and stopped her.

"Of course it is all right your being here with *me*," I said stiffly. "I meant Williams."

"I see," she said. "It's all right to be here with you, but all wrong with Mr. Williams." She sat down.

"The difference is—er—the difference between Williams and myself is that Williams may possibly be in love with you, and I—er—"

"And you are not," she finished sweetly.

She smiled at me. We were very near together. Her eyes were most attractive. In some unaccountable way I suddenly found myself holding the plain Miss Pretty in my arms.

"When will you marry me?" I asked hotly.

"Please don't," said Miss Pretty, and, disengaging herself, she added, "A dance isn't the place to propose to a *girl*—you said it yourself."

"A dance is the best place on earth for it!" I said. I was far from calm.

"And when you have known a girl only three days—"

"It can't be helped," I said positively. "I have loved you from the first minute I saw you. That counts for something, doesn't it?" I caught her hand.

"When did you first see me?" asked Miss Pretty, drawing her hand away.

"At the horse-show. I said then—ask Algy—I said I was going to win you, that very day!"

"Aren't you getting rather mixed?" said Miss Pretty sadly. "Wasn't it Beatrice?"

"Beatrice!" I said. "Good heavens, how can you talk of Beatrice *now*? That's another thing I disapprove of in you. Why should a girl always talk about her sister? When will you marry me?"

I had the plain Miss Pretty in my arms again.

"There's the dance," she said, freeing herself, "and here comes Mr. Davidson."

I glared at Davidson, and, strange to say, he glared at me.

Pacing the piazza after Miss Pretty had left me, I ran into Algy.

"Mind where you're going," he said savagely. Then his manner changed, and he took my arm. "By George, I wish I'd never let you into this contest!" he said miserably.

I knew at once what he meant.

"That's all right, old man," I said. "I retire of my own free will. There she is now, sitting alone in the moonlight. The field is yours. Go in and win!"

We looked where a Titian head rose from an ivory neck.

"Who are you talking about?" said Algy. "That isn't the one. It's her sister—the plain Miss Pretty!"

"You're crazy, man; it's Beatrice you're in love with."

"Don't I know who I'm in love with?" Algy almost shrieked in his fury.

I had no patience with him. The fellow's fickleness was disgusting. I turned and left him.

After the dancing was finished, I captured the plain Miss Pretty and bore her off to our corner of the piazza.

"Now, when will you marry me?" I asked.

"I can't marry you all," said Miss Pretty, sighing.

"All? Who else wants you to marry him?"

"Who doesn't?" said Miss Pretty sadly.

"You needn't marry any one but me," I said soothingly.

Miss Pretty came nearer. She put a timid hand on my arm.

"Couldn't you marry Beatrice?" she asked pleadingly.

"No, I couldn't," I said flatly.

Her face fell.

"That is what they all always say—always! It is just the same every summer." Then she sighed. "I'm rather tired."

I took her in my arms. She was so little and soft and sweet, how could I help it?

"Won't you marry me?" I pleaded, but she shook her head.

"I'll see about it," she said, drawing away.

That was years ago. I am still making it the business of my life to win the plain Miss Pretty, who is now Mrs. Arrowborn, the widow of a Chicago millionaire. Unfortunately, some hundred others are making it their life-work, too.

The beautiful Miss Pretty is still beautiful. She is also still Miss Pretty.

# THE CZARS OF RUSSIA FROM IVAN TO NICHOLAS.

THE FORMATION OF THE EMPIRE—THE WILD TRIBES OF WHICH IT WAS COMPOSED—THE CONSTRUCTIVE AND BLOODY WORK OF IVAN—THE LINES FORMED AND CHARACTERISTICS DEVELOPED THAT HAVE MADE RUSSIA WHAT RUSSIA IS AND HAS BEEN FOR THREE HUNDRED YEARS.

## FIRST PAPER—IVAN THE TERRIBLE.

BY EDGAR SALTUS.

THE fathers of history and fathers of lies told of a land, inordinately remote, called Hyperborea, where the inhabitants had elastic bones, bifurcated tongues, and enchanted lives which they ended on a perfumed grass that produced a voluptuous death.

The description tempted adventure. In search of the land, triremes entered the Euxine, beyond the farther coast of which Hyperborea was rumored to be.

But it must have gone. In any event, the fascinating inhabitants had. In their stead were the Scythians, a swarm of rough and ready chaps who drank from skulls, used the tanned skins of their enemies for clothes, and, generally, were so truculent that, to down them, the earth had to produce new races. Then through gaps of time they dispersed, disappearing utterly, vanishing even from legend. It was forgotten that they had been. But to the north, in the hinterlands, in fens and steppes, they brooded, invisible, segregating and separating into clans affiliated yet distinct.

Centuries passed. Then slowly, from the White Sea to the Black, a horde that called themselves Slav—a word which means glory—descended. The territory which they occupied was outside of Europe, outside of the world. To the north were the Finns, to the south were the Turks. Beyond were the Huns. To the east were the Tartars. In between the Slavs halted.

They were not otherwise idle. They had customs that were laws, chiefs that were legislators, families that then formed a nation which is Russia to-day. Their life, from nomad, became pastoral and then communistic. Where they came

villages sprang. But not towns. The Teutons had their cities, their burghs and guilds, for they had the commercial instinct also. That instinct the Slavs lacked. They lack it still. They are an agricultural people. With them the market was an aftergrowth. At the time they were content to exist. In the chaotic and convulsive conditions of the ninth century the process was difficult. As a consequence, the Slavs, if not commercial, at least were busy. In default of other foes there were strifes internecine and bloody from which the victors emerged princes and the vanquished serfs.

Princes are not necessarily amiable. These princes quarreled. Each wanted to be really primus. But where all are equal who shall be first? Precedence being impossible, they haled from the roof of Europe a Norse pirate and asked him to take the *pas*.

### RURIK, FIRST RULER OF RUSSIA.

The pirate was Rurik. He was chief of a band, turbulent and aggressive, of Russ, or rovers. He accepted the invitation, took the *pas*, with it the title of grand prince, and gave the name of his band to the country. With him Russia came into being, and the monarchy too.

From origins so dramatic it was but natural that results still more dramatic should ensue. And they did, torrentially. But the chronicle of them has the monotony of the infernal regions. It is made up of groans. From it you get a record of famine and plague, of wars civil and foreign, of pillages, assaults, and sacks; a nightmare of murders and massacres, of crimes tangled, obscure,