

The Countess of Landon.

CHAPTER II.

"I'll get in at the back and get a wash," he said to himself. "Madame looked down at himself ruefully.

He passed along the side of the house, and had nearly turned the corner, when he heard, through an open casement, a voice singing.

It was a girl's voice, fresh and sweet. She was evidently singing to herself, for the voice was low, and broke off now and then, and then went on again, as if the singer were singing unconsciously

He stepped up to the window cautiously and looked in

The room was a small one, paneled in dark, shining oak. The floor was silk damask were of a dull, faded of the way. But, I say, Irene-" tarnished frames: the hangings of dusky room was the white dress of a young girl, who stood on an antique

If this young man had been an artist he would have felt his soul swell and throb with delight at the picture his ing because—I say, how you've grown Everything at the Towers goes on eyes rested on; as it was, the dusky -altered!" slight figure of the girl, all in white, eyes fell—but only for a moment— see him, Royce. Such a perfectly loveroom, the air of quiet and repose, the touched him with a vague pleasure.

The dress was made in the old-it is now, however, the new-fashion, the skirt in plain folds, the sleeves full. Only a girl with a graceful figure can wear this dress successfully; this dress made her bewitching. Her back was turned to him; a mass of yellow waving hair, caught by a ribbon, fell on the white soft cashmere.

All unconscious of a spectator, she blew the dust from a book, opened it, and resting the edge against the bookshelf, turned the pages, singing to herself all the while in the low, sweet

The young man watched her with a you are quite-a man!" smile on his mobile lips; and suddenly, as if she had become conscious of other hand, and swung them together the burden of his eyes, as if she felt in boyish, light-hearted fashlon. them on her back, she turned her

She did not cry out; but she dropped the book and stood still for a moment, the color coming and going on her face. It was a pure oval, very fair; the eyes, wide open with surprise, gradually growing into plea-

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girlish face that matched the golden, girlish hair and the slight, almost frail

ently to take off his cap.

"Royce!" cried the girl in a voice had sung. "Royce, is it you?"

"Yes, it's me, Irene," he said, with smilingly while he eat. the beautiful disregard for grammar which distinguishes the public-school

She dropped lightly as a feather from the chair, and he made as if take fore." her in his arms, then stopped, and grew red and awkward. But there was no awkwardness on her part, now really eat some more?" that the first moments of surprise had

almost drawing him into the room.

"Just now," he said. "Walked most "Well," she said, looking up at him matter? Why do you stare at me so? better not; the countess-"

fetch the countess?" etch the countess?"

"Hold on!" he said, holding her "News? There is no news," she

"Have I? I suppose I have. You didn't expect to find me just the same

after all this time, Royce?" forward to seeing a little girl in short frocks and a pigtail. I meant to give ly, and she looked down. you a jump."

She drew away from him an inch or two, laughing still, but a little shyly. "Why shouldn't I grow like the rest Royce. of the world? Why, you have grown yourself!" She seemed to recognize the fact for the first time, and her look became still more shy; but it was only momentarily. "Why, Royce,

He laughed, and got hold of her

"Have I? Well, then, I'll forgive you But you've grown in other ways Irene."

"Yes!" he said, emphatically. "By George! I can scarcely believe that this lovely young lady is the little kid who used to climb the old apple-

The blood stained her face again, and she broke out quickly, as if to

stop him: "But how tired you must be! How far have you walked? Let me go and

tell the countess." "Not yet," he said. "How far? Oh, nearly twenty miles, more or less."

"Oh! How tired you must be!" she exclaimed. "Not a bit; but I'm as hungry as

wolf." "Poor boy-man, I mean," she cor rected herself, archly.

"And I think I'd better put myself to rights before I see the mater. You know how particular she is-eh, Renie? I was stealing round to the back entrance, meaning to get a wash, when I heard you piping up like a linnet-"

"And so came into the cage," she said. "I see, Madame has given it to me for my room. Isn't it charm-

"Charming!" he echoed, but look

"And you are so hungry? Now, let Royce"-she pointed a slim finger to "And drink, please; I'm thirs

"And dring, I shan't be gone long; you shall see how quick I can be: And then, when you have had your supper, I will tell the countess."

He nodded rather grimly. "Yes! I shall want strengthening

for that ordeal, eh, Renie?" She rose, seeming scarcely to touch the door, so light and airy was the novement; and Royce Landon leaned back and looked round the room.

nanging side by side over the ancien fire-place. One was that of his father, the late Earl of Landon, in a generel's uniform; the other that of his face grew grave as it lingered on the latter. Irene came in after a few minutes' interval, carrying a small ray with pie, some bread, a dish of strawberries, and claret.

"Now, come and be fed!"

"Bravo!" he said, as he sat down. 'Help me yourself, Renie. A good big piece to begin with. I will show some way; but as he stepped in he re- you the pattern at the bottom of that covered his presence of mind suffici- pie-dish directly, and then I shall est the dish itself"

Laughingly she helped him and sat, as low and soft as the one in which she leaning her elbows on the table, and her chin on her hands, regarding him

"Good pie!" he said, approvingly. "Nothing like pie when you are keen set, and there's plenty of jelly. Have some? Ought to have asked you be-

"We dined an hour ago. Can you

"Twice some more!" he retorted. "Here's your good health! Ha! "Oh, Royce, I am so glad! When did That's good! Did you ever have a you come-how?" and she took him by real, long, genuine thirst, Renie? No. the hand and swung it up and down, I suppose not. Nothing so unladylike. And now, what's the news?"

but put it back again. "I don't mind," she said, referring with welcoming eyes, "what is the to the pipe. "But perhaps you had

Unconsciously he took out his pipe,

Come and sit down-or shall I go and "I know. All right," he said, nod-

hand lightly. "Wait a minute. I'm star- answered. "How should there be? the same, year after year; just the She blushed and laughed, and her same. I've got a new pony-you must before his fixed and wondering regard. ly little dear!-and there is another

> "The palace of the "Sleeping Beauty," he said. "And-my brother Seymour?" The girl's brows contracted slight-

"The earl is very well," she said, 50-0000-00-00-000-000

quietly. "And what's his last fad?" asked Celestial Doings in 1924

She smiled.

"Yes-so I had; but- Oh, I'll tell you all about it presently."

"Oh, Royce!" she faltered; "youyou haven't been getting into another

ogether, and his face grew hot and 000,000 miles nearer to the earth November 12, 1940, May 9, 1970 and western part.

"Let's talk of something else," he

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e'a" to the Greeer) Maple Nut Cake (Say "Drahe's" at the Soda Com Marble Cake
Marble Cake

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edding Fruit Cake
(Say "Mother Beate's" at all to

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for I'm going to stay at home a bit.

He bit his lip. "I haven't any luggage—that is-There, I'd better tell you right out, I suppose. The the fact is, Renie, I as you call it. And this time it's the worst scrape of all- What's that?" he broke off, looking toward the door. She listened for a moment, then

step. Go, Royce! Let me break it to her that you are here. Go quick!" and she pointed to the window,

He rose and went a pace or two. then stopped, and, facing round, threw

"No!" he said. "No use running away, after all. I'll face it!" (To be continued.)

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Astronomy offers for our delect-"I don't know quite; we do not see ation during the coming year, the very much of him; but I think it is in at least a generation; a transit of something to do with Timbuctoo. But Mercury across the sun's face—an tell me all about yourself, Royce," she event which will be repeated but went on quickly. "How did you get three times this century; five eclileave so soon again? I thought you pses, and occulations of Mercury, had only just gone back to the regithe moon. Three of the eclipses will he of the sun and two of the moon, is practically certain that this, the magnitude of 19 per cent., and will His face clouded and grew grave but none of them will be visible in closest of all, will be no exception. and embarrassed, and he kept his the United States. Says Isabel M. Mercury will cross the face of the ions. The solar eclipse of August eyes fixed on the claret jug as he re- Lewis of the United States Naval sun on May 7th, the transit taking 29 with a greatest magnitude of 43 Observatory, writing in Science Ser. about eight hours from ingress at the per cent. will be visible in the Arctic vice's Daily Science News Bulletion eastern edge to egress at the western Ocean, Greenland, the northern part

(Washington): than it is at its most distant opposition, which occurs when it is The solar eclipses of 1924 will all August 14 will be visible in the westnear aphelion or the point in its or-bit farthest from the sun. The last be total. The partial solar eclipses will ern part of the Pacific Ocean, Aus-bit farthest from the sun. The last close opposition of Mars occurred in March 5 will have a greatest mag- rope, Africa, the Atlantic Occ September, 1909, when Mars came nitude of 58 per cent., and will be within 36,180,000 miles of the earth. visible only in the Antarctic and On August 22 of this year, a few South Atlantic oceans and the exstance of 34,630,000 miles from the orth, which is very nearly, if not quite, as close as it can ever come to the earth, and about one and a nalf million miles nearer than it was ifteen years ago.

The coming opposition of Mars is being awaited with keen interest by ill interested in the study of the sur ace markings of this sister world hich, next to the moon and Venus omes nearer to us than any other nember of the solar system.

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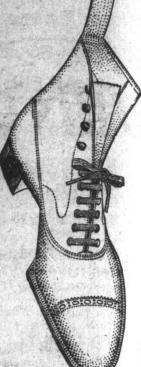
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edge of the sun. In the United of Norway and Sweden, northern By the far most interesting agtro- States only the ingress of the planet Russia, Siberia, northern China, She looked at him with quick ap- nomical event of 1924 will be the will be visible, the sun setting with Kamchatka, and Japan. near opposition of Mars next August, Mercury on its disc. The entire Every fifteen or seventeen years the transit will take place above the February 20 will be visible in the opposition of Mars occurs when the horizon in Alaska and the Philip- extreme northwestern part of North planet is not far from perihelion or pines. The last transit of Mercury the point in its orbit nearest to the took place on November 6th, 1914, lia, Asia, the Indian Ocean, Europe, He laughed uneasily; his brows knit sun. The planet is then about 26,- and future transits will occur on and Africa, except the extreme north-

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eastern and central South America. moon, visible in the United States, hours before it comes into opposi- treme southern part of Africa. The will occur on February 13, April 8, ion with the sun, Mars will be at a solar eclipse of July 31 will have a June 28, and September 18. The will also be occulted on October 22. the planet Mercury on August 2, and tune on November 18. As Neptune is not visible to the naked eye. its occultation by the moon can b viewed only telescopically. Sanana is one of the new shades in

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is a chic way

y becoming and is very smart. The capette lends a distinctly youth ful chie to the spring costume. Brown tones are all very good and one of the latest is tortoise shell. The sleeve is a negligible feature in oth the afternoon and dinner gown. Narrow bindings of black leather are used on a sports costume of while

we shall witness the gradual passing

of the belt. The shingle bob is almost universal