

The Old Marquis;
OR,
The Girl of the Cloisters

CHAPTER XI.
A CHARITABLE DEED.

Lord Edgar was the first to turn, and saw a young man standing close behind them. He was secdly dressed and wore that look of "hard-upliness" which is discernible at a glance. In a word, he looked half starved. Even at the first glance a feeling of pity sprung into Lord Edgar's heart.

"Revel," said the man, "is that you?"

Clifford Revel turned, in his slow, self-possessed fashion, and eyed him coldly.

"My name is Revel," he said, his keen eyes taking in the appearance of the man, and his voice hardening instantly.

"I thought so. I—I—thought I was mistaken. Don't you know me?"

"I haven't that—honor," was the cold, contemptuous reply.

"No," said the man, in a tone of disappointment that touched Lord Edgar to the core. "And yet we were great chums at college. My name is Nagle."

A cold light of remembrance and recognition gleamed for a moment in Clifford Revel's eyes.

"Ah yes!" he said, coolly. "I beg your pardon—I remember now."

"Yes, I am Charlie Nagle," said the man. "Can I—can you give me a minute, Revel?"

Clifford Revel took out his watch and glanced at it calmly.

"A minute—yes," he said.

Lord Edgar drew back, but, though out of earshot, not out of sight, and he saw the man go through the well-worn door of button-holing which is so suggestive of begging. The light of the cab lamp fell full upon the two faces—upon the pale, eager, imploring face of the stranger and on the cold, impassive one of Clifford Revel. It seemed to Lord Edgar to grow harder and colder as the face of the suppliant grew more anxious and pleading, and a contemptuous smile crossed the thin lips as the man who had given his name as Charlie Nagle at last drew out a piece of paper and wrote on it.

And the Worst is Yet to Come—



"That's my address, Revel," Lord Edgar heard him say, with a sigh. "For Heaven's sake, help me, if you can! I am in hard case to-night; I am—almost starving. I—"

Clifford Revel waved him away, with the same icy, pitiless air.

"Good-night—I am engaged," he said; and the man, thus cut short, started as if he had been stung, and walked swiftly away.

Lord Edgar came up, looking after him.

"Why, who was that poor fellow, Cliff?" he asked.

Clifford Revel laughed heartlessly. "A fellow who was at college with me—an improvident scamp, who appears to have made a mess of it. Come down to begging, it seems."

"Did you—did you give him anything?" asked Lord Edgar, in his blunt fashion.

Clifford Revel shrugged his shoulders.

"My dear Edgar, what would have been the use? He would have spent it at the nearest pub! Don't trouble yourself about him. Good-night."

And he got into the hansom.

"Good-night," said Lord Edgar, but rather absently; and, shutting the doors, he walked away, with rather a sad look on his face.

The man's appearance, voice, pleading, despairing gesture, as he turned away, haunted him; and it was with a start that he saw the seedy figure leaning against the railing of a house within a few yards of the Albany.

He went up to him and laid his hand upon his shoulder, and the man turned without a start, but in the dull, apathetic manner of a man to whom nothing is a surprise.

"I beg your pardon," said Lord Edgar; "I saw you speaking to my friend just now—"

The man put his hand to his brow, and nodded, vacantly.

"To Revel? Yes. He and I were," bitterly, "great friends in college, and I presumed to address him—I say presumed; you see what I am, what a difference there is between us," and he glanced downward at his seedy outward man. "I was wrong to do so. Prosperity does not acknowledge misfortune's claim to friendship."

Lord Edgar looked at the man, and then up at the gas-lamp. He was the most embarrassed of the two.

"I—I am afraid that you are not well," he said, gently.

The man laughed bitterly.

"I believe that I am dying," he said. "At any rate, I am very ill."

"What's the matter?" said Lord Edgar, in his blunt, kindly fashion.

"Matter? Well, if you insist upon an answer, I think what ails me is exhaustion from inanition; in other words, starvation. As I told Revel, upon whom it did not seem to have much effect, I am nearly starved to death. Good-night, sir!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Lord Edgar, horror-stricken. "Here—wait!" and he seized the man by the arm.

"What do you say? Did you tell him that?"

"I did. But you see, he didn't believe it. I suppose he thought I was intoxicated. But it was the truth. I don't think I have taken food for a day and a half, as I am a gentleman."

"Great Heaven!" exclaimed Lord Edgar.



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ZAMBUK
"THE HEAL THAT SORES!"

Edgar. "Here, come to my rooms," and he laid his strong hand upon the thin arm.

But the man resisted, feebly.

"No, no!" he said. "I could not. I should die of shame. I am a gentleman, as I tell you. I was at college with Revel. Do you think that I am in a condition to go into a gentleman's rooms? No, if he had given me a shilling, I know where I could have got food and—"

Lord Edgar plunged his hand into his pocket and hauled out every coin it possessed—gold, silver, coppers.

"Here," he said, in his blunt style, but not roughly—ah, not roughly! "Take this, my good fellow. Take it, for Heaven's sake!"

The man looked at him, as the money dropped into his hand, with a dazed wonder. Then he started.

"No, no! Not all this! A shilling—half a crown—"

"Yes, every penny!" said Lord Edgar, eagerly. "And, if you'll come to my rooms, I'll give you some more. Good heavens! a gentleman, and starving! There, take it, man! What! one gentleman can't help another! Nonsense! Put it in your pocket, and if you won't come home with me—"

The man thrust the money into his pocket, and grasped the outstretched hand.

"May Heaven—no! Who am I that I should bless you! But tell me your name—tell me, that I may remember it as the man who saved me from starvation—"

"No, no!" said Lord Edgar, his voice breaking, "never mind that! Take it as from my friend Revel; he would have done it if he had had any money about him, which he hadn't. There, for Heaven's sake, get some food at once!"

The man stared at him; then, with a sob of gratitude, pressed the outstretched hand, and shuffled off into the darkness.

Lord Edgar looked after him, pityingly, little dreaming how important a part this wait of the night would play in the drama of his own life, and then went up to his rooms.

CHAPTER XII.
A BATTLE FOR LOVE.

AT twelve o'clock Edith Drayton stood in the window of the drawing-room in Elton Square. She had on her riding-habit and chimney-pot hat, and held her dainty whip in her gauntleted hands. She knew—had she not been told so a hundred times?—that she looked at her best in the habit, that fitted her exquisite bust like a skin, and fell in graceful folds to her feet, and she had remembered it when she hit upon the idea of ask-

ing Lord Edgar to accompany her for a ride. She had never looked more beautiful than she looked this morning; ambition had lent to her face that which the tenderness of hope lends to other women—a faint, delicate color, a soft glow in the dark eyes that only wanted a touch of gentleness to make them irresistible. Clifford Revel had once told her, with cynical bitterness, that she would win anybody to loving her if she would but show them the slightest hope of loving them in return, and she thought of it now, as she stood waiting and watching.

She understood Lord Edgar as well as if she had known him for years. The clear, transparent nature was as easily read by her as if it had been an open book; and, while her whole soul was full of admiration for this one honorable man whom it had been her fortune to meet, she, nevertheless, determined to take advantage of the very qualities which she admired in him.

Mrs. Drayton gilded nervously into the room and stood looking at her.

"He hasn't come, Edith?" she said, looking up at the clock. "Perhaps he won't come, after all."

Edith Drayton smiled, with serene confidence.

"Few men break their appointments with me, mother; Lord Fane will not be one of them. Besides, he has promised, and, if I know anything of his nature, a promise is as sacred with him as an oath. There!" she broke off, as Lord Edgar came into the square on a workman-like-looking horse—"there he is. Now, mother, try not to be nervous and flurried, or you will make him shy and embarrassed. And, remember, don't have any fear at lunch. Keep the servants out of the room. Take your cue by me, my dear."

"Yes, yes!" assented Mrs. Drayton; "and the lunch?"

"I have ordered that," said Edith, calmly.

Lord Edgar got off his horse, and stood to examine Edith Drayton's, while a groom riding his own was leading it up and down; it did not please him very much, but he said nothing to the man, and went up the steps, and was ushered into the drawing-room.

Edith Drayton came forward, with her hand outstretched frankly, and, as she did so, her eyes scanned his stalwart form, and she thought that she liked him better in his workman-like riding suit than she had ever done in his evening dress.

"I am afraid I am late," he said.

"Oh, no!" she cried; only "a few minutes. I am ready because I know gentlemen do not like to be kept waiting."

Lord Edgar shook hands with Mrs. Drayton.

"Shall we go now?" said Edith.

"Your horse doesn't look as if he would care to be kept waiting, any more than his master."

"Oh, he'd stand all day," he said, carelessly. "But I don't know about yours."

"You don't like him?" she said, with a smile.

Lord Edgar did not reply. Like all men who know something about horses, he did not care to give an opinion in a hurry.

"We shall see," he said. "She looks rather fine."

"Is that against her? Must she look a dowdy to meet with your approval?" she smiled.

He looked at her with frank admiration, and colored.

"I don't like dowdy women," he said.

(to be continued.)

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