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THE BETRAYAL

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CHAPTER XXXII—(Continued)

"Dear me!" she said. "I have so much to tell you, and the carriage is waiting already. Thank goodness we dine alone tomorrow night. But there is one thing which I must tell you at once. Sir Michael Trogoldy is in town, you know. He took me in to dinner at Amberley House last night, and we talked about you."

"I had a letter from Sir Michael a few days ago," I answered. "He made a proposition to me—and asked me to call and see him."

Something in my voice, I suppose, betrayed my feelings. She laid her hand upon my arm.

Mr. Ducaine," she said, "I do hope that you mean to be reasonable. Sir Michael is a dear old man."

"He is my mother's brother," I answered, "and he left me to starve."

"He had not the least idea," she declared, "that you were not reasonably well off. He is most interested in hearing about you, and he was delighted to have you accept the allowance he offered you. You will go and see him?"

"Yes, I shall go," I promised. "I scarcely see the use of it, but I will go."

"You must not be foolish," she said softly. "Sir Michael is very rich and you are his only near relative. Besides, you have had such a lonely time, and it is quite time that you saw a little of the other side of life. Sir Michael is a particular friend of mine, and I promised him that I would talk to you about this. I am most anxious to hear that you get on well together. You can be amiable if you like, you know, and you can be very much the other thing."

"I will try," I assured her, "not to be the other thing."

She smiled.

"And tell me all about Braster."

"There is not much to tell," I answered. "I have been hard at work all the time, and I have scarcely seen a soul."

"The woman—Mrs. Smith-Lessing?"

"She left Braster before you. I have not seen her since the evening of the day I saw her last."

She appeared relieved.

"May I ask you a question?" I asked.

She nodded.

"About Colonel Ray. Has the Duke forgiven him?"

"On the contrary, he is more bitter than ever," Lady Angela answered. "I have seen him once or twice only. He does not come here."

"I saw in the paper," I said, "that your engagement——"

"It is not true," she interrupted. "Everything is as it was. But it is shockingly indefinite, of course. I scarcely know whether I am to consider myself an engaged person or not. Colonel Ray offered to release me, but we agreed to wait for a little time."

"Lady Angela!"

She looked at me with a soft flush upon her cheeks. But my words were never spoken. The Duke entered the room, brilliant in sash and orders.

"Good evening, Ducaine," he said, looking at me with slightly lifted eyebrows.

"Good evening, your Grace," I answered in some embarrassment.

"I sent for Mr. Ducaine," Lady Angela remarked, stooping that her maid, who had followed the Duke, might arrange her cloak. "I wanted to hear all about Braster, and I had a message for him from Sir Michael Trogoldy."

The Duke made no remark.

"I shall require you, Ducaine, at ten o'clock tomorrow morning in my study," he said. "Afterwards we go over to the War Office. You have brought all the papers with you?—If you are quite ready, Angela."

The Duke, without saying a word, had managed to make me feel that he considered my presence in the drawing-room with Lady Angela superfluous, but her smile and farewell were quite sufficient recompense or me. Still, I knew that this living together under the same roof was to be no unmixed blessing for me. I shut myself in the dainty little sitting-room which I was told was mine, and turned the key in the door. I felt the need of solitude.

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Later in the evening I became mundane again. I remembered that I had sent dinner away, and though I had only to ring the bell and order something, I felt the need of fresh air. So I took up my hat and stick and left the house.

After a while I found my way into Piccadilly. I knew very little of London, but after my solitary evening walks at Braster along the sandhills and across the marshes, the contrast was in itself suggestive and almost exciting. I watched the people, the stream of carriages. I listened to the low ceaseless hum of this wonderful life, and I found it fascinating. The glow in the sky was marvellous to me—the faces of the passers-by, the laughter and the whining, the tears and the cursing, the pleasure-seekers and the pleasure-satiated, how they all told their story as they swept by in one unceasing stream! For a while I forgot even my appetite. The sight of a restaurant, however, at last reminded me that I was desperately hungry.

I knew it by name—a huge cosmopolitan place of the lower middle class, and entering I found a quiet seat, where my country clothes were not conspicous. There were few people about me, and those few uninteresting, so I kept my attention divided between my dinner and the evening paper. But just as I was drawing towards the close of my meal, something happened to change all that.

A woman, followed by a man, passed my table, and the two seated themselves diagonally opposite to me. Something in the woman's light footsteps, her free movements, and the graceful carriage of her head, struck me instantly as being familiar. She was dressed very plainly, and she was closely veiled. Their entrance, too, had been unobtrusive, almost furtive. But when she raised her veil and took the carte-du-jour in her hand, I knew her at once. It was Mrs. Smith-Lessing.

She had not seen me, and my first impulse was to pay my bill and step quietly out. Then by chance I glanced at her companion, and my heart stood still. He was a tall man, over six feet, but he stooped badly, and his walk had been almost the walk of an invalid. He had the appearance of a man who had once been stout and well built, but who now barely recovered from a long illness. The flesh hung in little bags underneath his bloodshot eyes, his mouth twitched continually, and the hand which rested on the table trembled. He wore a scanty grey moustache, which failed to hide a weak thin mouth, and a very obvious wig concealed his baldness. His clothes had seen plenty of service and his linen was doubtful. He had evidently ordered some brandy immediately on his entrance, and his eyes met mine just as he was in the act of raising the glass to his lips. I am convinced that he had no idea then who I was, but the earnestness of my gaze seemed to disturb him. Het set down his glass with shaking fingers, and directed his companion's attention towards me.

They talked together earnestly for several moments. I fancied that she was reproving him for showing alarm at my notice. Very soon, however, she herself, after giving an order to a waiter, turned slightly round in her chair, and glanced with well-affected carelessness across at me. I saw her start and look apprehensively at her companion. He took the alarm at once, and I heard his eager question.

"Who is it? Who is it, Maud?"

She made him some reassuring answer, and, rising to her feet, came over to my table. I rose to greet her, and she slipped quietly into the chair opposite to me.

"What are you doing here?" she asked quickly.

"I have just arrived from Braster," I answered. "I came here by accident to get something to eat. Is that——"

I could not go on, but she finished the sentence for me.

"Yes!"

I set my teeth hard and looked steadily down at the tablecloth. I felt rather than saw that her regard was compassionate.

"I am sorry," she murmured. "I would not have brought him here if I had known. You two are better apart. Talk to me as naturally as you can. He has no idea who you are."

"Has he been ill?" I asked.

"Very. I found him in a hospital. He has been ill, and the rest you can guess."

Even while we were talking I saw him toss off another glass of brandy which the waiter had brought him. And all the time his eyes never left my face.

"I thought," I said, "that he had money."

"It has all gone," she answered, "and—well, things are not very flourishing with him. Our mission over here has been unsuccessful, and they have stopped sending us money from Paris. How queer that I should be telling you this!" she added, with a hard little laugh, "you, of all people in the world. Guy, take my advice. Get up and go. If he guesses who you are he will come and speak to you—and you are better apart."

It was too late. With fascinated eyes I watched him leave his place and come towards us. I was absolutely powerless to move. Mrs. Smith-Lessing had left the outside chair vacant. He sank into it and leaned across the table towards me.

"It is Guy," he said in a shaking voice. "I am sure that it is Guy. She has told you who I am. Eh?"

"Yes," I answered. "I know who you are."

He extended a shaking hand across the table. I could not take it.

"Well, well," he said nervously, "perhaps you are right. But I came to England to see you. Yes, Guy, that is the truth! I have been a bad father, but I may be able to make amends. I think I know a way.—Waiter a glass of brandy."

"I am afraid," I said, rising to my feet, "that you must excuse me. If you have anything to say to me, sir, we can meet another time."

He almost dragged me down.

"Stop, stop!" he said irritably. "You do not seem to understand. I had an important matter of business to discuss with you. I may make your fortune yet, my boy! I have powerful friends abroad, very powerful."

I looked at him steadily.

"Well?"

She laid her hand upon his arm, and whispered in his ear. He only shook his head angrily.

"Nonsense Maud!" he exclaimed. "You do not understand. This is my son Guy. Of course we must talk together. It is a wonderful meeting—yes, a wonderful meeting."

"Well?" I repeated.

"I am glad to hear," he continued, "that you are holding such an important position. Clerk to the Military Defence Board, eh? Quite an important position, of course; but it might be made—yes, with care, it might be made," he added, watching me with nervous alertness, "a very lucrative one."

"I am quite satisfied with my salary," I remarked calmly.

"Pooh! my dear boy, that is nonsense," he continued. "You do not understand me. It is an open secret. Maud, are we overheard here, do you think? Is it safe to discuss an important matter with Guy here?"

I rose to my feet and took up my hat. Again she whispered in his ear, and this time he seemed to assent.

"Quite right! Quite right!" he said, nodding his head. "Guy, my boy, you shall come and see us. No. 29, Bloomsbury Street—poor rooms, but our remittances have gone astray, and I have been ill. Tomorrow, eh? or the next day? We shall expect you, Guy. We do not go out except in the evenings. You will not fail, Guy?"

I looked down into his flushed face. His lips were shaking, and his eyes were fixed anxiously upon mine. I was miserably ashamed and unhappy.

"I do not think that I shall care to hear what you have to say," I answered. "But I will come to see you."

I left them there. As I went out she was gently countermanding his order for more brandy.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Duke's Message.

It was late, but I felt that I must see Ray. I went to his house, little expecting to find him there. I was shown, however, into the study, where he was hard at work with a pile of correspondence. He wore an ancient shooting jacket, and his feet were encased in slippers. As usual his pipe was between his teeth, and the tobacco smoke hung about him in little clouds.

"Well," he said gruffly. "What do you want of me? I am busy. Speak to the point."

He plucked me by the sleeve. His eyes were hungering already for the gold.

"I have come to ask your advice," I said. "I am afraid that I must resign my post."

"Why?"

"My father is in London. I have seen and spoken with him."

"With that woman?"

"Yes."

"And you have spoken to him in a public place, perhaps?"

"Yes."

Ray was silent for a moment. Then he looked at me keenly.

"Do you want to give it up?" he asked.

"No," I answered. "But do you suppose Lord Chelsford and the others would be willing for me to continue—under the circustances?"

"Probably not," he admitted. "The Duke would not, at any rate."

"Then what am I to do?" I asked.

"I don't know!" he answered shortly. "It requires consideration. I will see Lord Chelsford. You shall hear from me in the morning."

That was all the consolation I had from Colonel Mostyn Ray.

At ten o'clock the next morning the Duke came to me in the study, where I was already at work. He was looking, even for him, particularly trim and smart, and he wore a carefully-selected pink rosebud in his buttonhole. His greeting was almost cordial. He gave me a few instructions, and then lit a cigarette.

"What is this about your resignation, Ducaine?" he asked.

"I do not wish to resign, sir," I answered. "I have explained certain circumstances to Colonel Ray, which it seemed to me might make my resignation necessary. He promised to confer with Lord Chelsford, and let me know the result."

The urbanity slowly faded from the Duke's face.

"I as your emplayer," he said coldly. "I do not understand why you thought it necessary to go to Colonel Ray."

"It was entirely owing to Colonel Ray, sir," I answered, "that I received the appointment, and he has practically made himself responsible for me."

"You are mistaken," the Duke answered. "The responsibility is shared by all of us. Your unfortunate family history was known to the whole Board."

"Then I am less indebted to Colonel Ray, sir, than I imagined," I answered. "I am very glad, however, that it is known. Perhaps Lord Chelsford may not consider my resignation necessary?"

"The circumstances being——?"

"I have seen and spoken with my father in London," I answered.

The Duke was silent.

"I presume," he said, after a short pause, "that you must yourself realize the indiscretion of this."

"I went at once to Colonel Ray and offered my resignation," I answered.

The Duke nodded.

"Your father," he said slowly, "is in London?"

"Yes, sir."

"Alone?"

I hesitated. Yet perhaps the Duke had a right to know the truth.

"He is with the lady who occupied Braster Grange, sir, until last week," I answered. "She passed under the name of Mrs. Smith-Lessing, but I believe that she is in reality my stepmother."

The Duke stood a few paces from me, looking out of the window. He held his cigarette between his fingers, and he stood sideways to me. Nothing about his attitude or face was unusual. Yet I felt myself watching him curiously. There was something about his manner which seemed to me to suggest some powerful emotion only kept in check by the exercise of a strong will.

"This is the person, I believe," he said in a slow measured tone, "with whom my son, Lord Blenavon, was said to have been intimate?"

"Lord Blenavon was certainly a constant visitor at Braster Grange," I answered.

"You know her address in London?" the Duke asked.

"Yes."

He turned and faced me. He was certainly paler than he had been a few minutes ago.

"I should be glad," he said, "if you would arrange for me to have an interview with her."

"An interview with Mrs. Smith-Lessing!" I repeated incredulously.

The Duke inclined his head.

"There are a few questions," he said, "which I wish to ask her."

"I can give you her address," I said.

"I wish you to see her and arrange for the interview personally," the Duke answered.

"You will see that my visiting her does not prejudice me further with the Board, sir?" I ventured to say.

"You can take that for granted," the Duke said.

So that afternoon I called at No. 29, Bloomsbury Street, and a shabby back room of a gloomy, smoke-begrimed lodging-house I found my father and Mrs. Smith Lessing. He was lying upon a horsehair sofa apparently dozing. She was gazing negligently out of the window, and drumming upon the window pane with her fingers. My arrival seemed to act like an electric shock upon both of them. It struck me that to her it was not altogether welcome, but my father was nervously anxious to impress upon me his satisfaction at my visit.

"Now," he said, drawing his chair up to the table, "we can discuss this little matter in a businesslike way. I am delighted to see you, Guy, quite delighted."

"What matter?" I asked quietly.

My father coughed and looked towards my step-mother, as though for guidance. But her face was a blank.

"Guy," he said, "I am sure that you are a young man of common sense. You will prefer that I speak to you plainly. There are some fools at our end—I mean at Paris—who think they will be better off for a glance at the doings of your Military Board. Up to now we have kept them supplied with a little general information. Lord Blenavon, who is a remarkably sensible young man, lent us his assistance. I tell you this quite frankly. I believe that it is best."

He was watching me furtively. I did my best to keep my features immovable.

"With Lord Blenavon's assistance," my father continued, "we did at first very well. Since his—er—departure we have not been so fortunate. I will be quite candid. We have not succeeded at all. Our friends pay generously, but they pay by results. As a consequence your stepmother and I are nearly penniless. This fact induces me to make you a special—a very special—offer."

My stepmother seemed about to speak. She checked herself, however.

"Go on," I said.

My father coughed. There was a bottle upon the table, and he helped himself from it.

"My nerves," he remarked, "are in a shocking state this morning. Can I offer you anything?"

I shook my head. My father poured out nearly a glass full of the raw spirit, diluted it with a little, a very little, water, and drank it off.

"Your labors, my dear boy," he continued, "I refer, of course, to the labors of the Military Council, are, I believe, concentrated upon a general scheme of defence against any possible invasion on the part of France. Quite a scare you people seem to be in. Not that one can wonder at it. These military manoeuvres of our friends across the water are just a little obvious even to John Bull, eh? You don't answer. Quite right, quite right! Never commit yourself uselessly. It is very good diplomacy. Let me see, where was I? Ah! The general scheme of defence is, of course, known to you?"

"Naturally," I admitted.

"With a list of the places to be fortified, eh? The positions to be held and the general distribution of troops? No doubt, too, you have gone into the railway and commissariat arrangements?"

"All these details," I assented, "have gone through my hands."

He dabbed his forehead with a corner of his handkerchief. There was a streak of purple color in his cheeks. He kept his bloodshot eyes fixed upon me.

"I will tell you something, Guy," he said, "which will astonish you. You realize for yourself, of coarse, that such details as you have spoken of can never be kept altogether secret? There are always leakages, sometimes very considerable leakages. Yes, Guy," he added, "there are people, friends of mine in Paris, who are willing to pay a very large sum of money—such a large sum of money that it is worth dividing, Guy—for just a bare outline of the whole scheme. Foolish! Of course it is foolish. But with them money is no object. They think they are getting value for it. Absurd! But, Guy, what should you say to five thousand pounds?"

"It is a large sum," I answered.

He plucked me by the sleeve. His eyes were hungering already for the gold.

"We can get it," he whispered hoarsely. "No trouble to you—no risk. I can make all the arrangements. You have only to hand me the documents."

"I must think it over," I said.

He leaned back in his chair.

"Why?" he asked. "What need is there to hesitate? The chance may slip by. There are many others on the look out."

"There is no one outside the Military Board save myself who could give these particulars," I said slowly.

"But my friends," he said sharply. "Theirs is a foolish offer. They may change their minds. Guy, my boy, I know the world well. Let me give you a word of advice. When a good thing turns up, don't play with it. The men who decide quickly are the men who do things."

I thrust my hand into my breast-pocket and drew out a roll of papers.

"Supposing I have already decided," I said.

His eyes gleamed with excitement. He almost snatched at the papers, but I held them out of his reach. Then with a sharp little cry the woman stood suddenly between us. There was a look almost of horror on her pale strained face, as she held out her hand as though to push me away.

"Guy, are you mad?" she cried.

The veins stood out upon my father's forehead. He regarded her with mingled anger and surprise.

"What do you mean, Maud?" he exclaimed. "How dare you interfere? Guy, give me the papers."

"He shall not!" she exclaimed fiercely. "Guy, have you lost your senses? Do you want to ruin your whole life?"

"Do you mean," I asked incredulously, "that you do not wish me to join you?"

"Join us! For Heaven's sake no!" she answered fiercely. "Look at your father, an outcast all his life. Do you want to become like him? Do you want to turn the other way whenever you meet an Englishman, to skulk all your days in hiding, to be the scorn even of the men who employ you? Guy, I would sooner see you dead than part with those papers."

"You damned fool!" my father muttered. "Take no notice of her, Guy. Five thousand pounds! I will see it paid to you, every penny of it. And not a soul will ever know!"

My father stood over her, and there was a threat in his face. She did not shrink from him for a moment. She laid her white hands upon my shoulders, and she looked earnestly into my eyes.

"Guy," she said, "even now I do not believe that you meant to be so very, very foolish. But I want you to go away at once. You should never have come. It is not good for you to come near either of us."

I rose obediently. I think that if I had not been there my father would have struck her. He was almost speechless with fury. He poured himself out another glass of brandy with shaking fingers.

"Thank you," I said to her, simply. "I do not think that these papers are worth five thousand. Let me tell you what I came here for. I am a messenger from the Duke of Rowchester."

My father dropped his glass. Mrs. Smith-Lessing looked bewildered.

"The Duke," I said to her, "desires to see you. Can you come to Cavendish Square this afternoon?"

"The Duke?" she murmured.

"He wishes to see you," I repeated. "Shall I tell him that you will call at four o'clock this afternoon, or will you go back with me?"

"Do you mean this?" she asked in a low tone. "I do not understand it. I have never seen the Duke in my life."

"I understand no more than you do," I assured her. "That is the message."

"I do not promise to come," she said. "I must think it over."

My father pushed her roughly away.

"Come, there's been enough of this fooling," he declared roughly. "Guy, sit down again, my boy. We must have another talk about this matter."

I turned upon him in a momentary fit of passion.

"I have no more to say, sir," I declared. "It seems that you are not content with ruining you own life and overshadowing mine. You want to drag me, too, down into the slough."

"You don't understand, my dear boy!"

The door opened and Ray entered. My bundle of papers slipped from my fingers on to the floor in the excitement of the moment.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Myself and My Stepmother.

I saw then what a man's race may look like when he is stricken with a sudden paralysing fear. I saw my father sit in his chair and shake from head to foot. Ray's black eyes seemed to be flashing upon us all the most unutterable scorn.

"What is this pleasant meeting which I seem to have interrupted, eh?" he asked, with fierce sarcasm. "Quite a family reunion!"

My stepmother, very pale, but very calm, answered him.

"To which you," she said, "come an uninvited guest."

He laughed harshly.

"You shall have others, other uninvited guests, before many hours are past," he declared. "You remember my warning, Ducaine."

My father seemed to me to be on the eve of a collapse. His lips moved, and he mumbled something, but the words were wholly unintelligible. Ray turned to my stepmother.

"When that man," he continued, "had the effrontery to return to this country, he sent his cursed jackal with letters to his son. I intercepted those letters, and I burned them; but I came straight to London, and I found him out. I told him then that I spared him only for the sake of his son. I told him that if ever again he attempted in any way to communicate with him, personally or by letter, nothing should stay my hand. He had a very clear warning. He has chosen to defy me. I only regret, madam, that the law has no hold upon you also."

She turned from him scornfully and laid her hand upon my father's shoulder. Her very touch seemed to impart life to him. His words were not very coherent but they were comprehensible.

"I kept my word, Ray. Yes, I kept my word," he said. "I never sent for him. Ask him; ask her. We met by accident. I told him my address. That is all. He came here this afternoon with a message from the Duke."

Ray laughed bitterly. There was about his manner a cold and singular aloofness. We were all judged and condemned.

"An invitation to dinner, I presume," he remarked.

"The Duke sent for me," my stepmother said, quietly.

She did not for a moment quail before the scornful disbelief which Ray took no pains to hide.

"You can see for yourself if you like," she continued, "that in a few minutes I shall leave this house, with you, if you are gallant enough to offer me your escort, and I shall go straight to Cavendish Square. You have no imagination, Colonel Ray, or you would not be so utterly surprised. Think for a moment. Does no reason occur to you why the Duke might wish to see me?"

It obviously did. He frowned heavily.

"If this absurd story is true," he said, "and the Duke has really sent to ask news of Blenavon from you—well, he is a bigger fool than I took him for. But there remains something else to be explained. What are those papers?"

My father laid his trembling hands upon them.

"They have nothing to do with you," he explained; "nothing at all! It is a little family matter—between Guy and me. Nothing more. They belong to me. Damn you, Ray, why are you always interfering in my concerns?"

Ray turned to me. There was a look in his eyes which I readily understood. At that moment I think that I hated him.

"What are those papers?" he asked.

"Take them and see," I answered. "If I told you you would not believe me."

He moved a few steps toward them, and then paused. I saw that my father was leaning forward, and in his shaking hand was a tiny gleaming revolver. A certain desperate courage seemed to have come to him.

"Ray," he cried hoarsely, "touch them at your peril!"

There was a moment's breathless silence. Then with an incredibly swift movement my stepmother stepped in between and snatched up the little roll. She glanced behind at the grate, but the fire was almost extinct. With a little gesture of despair she held them out to me.

"Take them, Guy," she cried.

Ray stood by my side, and I felt his hand descend like a vice upon my shoulder.

Give me those papers," he demanded.

I hesitated for a moment. Then I obeyed him. I heard a little sob from behind. The pistol had fallen from my father's shaking fingers, his head had fallen forwards upon his hands. A tardy remorse seemed for a moment to have pierced the husk of his colossal selfishness.

"It is all my fault, my fault!" he muttered.

My stepmother turned upon him, pale to the lips, with blazing eyes.

"You are out of your senses," she exclaimed. "Guy, this man is a bully. All his life it has been his pleasure to persecute the weak and defenceless. The papers are yours. I do not know what they are, nor does he," she added, pointing to where my father still crouched before the table. "Don't let him frighten you into giving them up. He is trying to drag you into the mesh with us. Don't let him! You have nothing to do with us, thank Heaven!"

She stopped suddenly, and snatched the pistol from my father's nerveless grasp. Then her hand flashed out. Ray was covered, and her white fingers never quivered. Even Ray took a quick step backwards.

"Give him back those papers," she commanded.

I intervened, stepping into the line of fire.

"I gave them to him willingly," I told her. "I do not wish to have them back. He is one of my employers, and he has a right to claim them."

I spoke firmly, and she saw that I was at any rate in earnest. Yet the look which she threw upon me was a strange one. I felt that she was disappointed, that a certain measure of contempt too was mingled with her disappointment. She threw the pistol on to the sofa and shrugged her shoulders.

"Ater all," she said, "I suppose you are right. The whole affair is not worth these heroics. I am ready to go with you to the Duke, Guy, unless Colonel Ray has any contrary orders for us."

Ray turned to me.

"You must come with me at once to my rooms," he said coldly. "This person can find the Duke by herself, if indeed the Duke has sent for her."

I understood then why people hated Ray. There was a vein of positive brutality somewhere in the man's nature.

"I am sorry," I answered him, "but I cannot come to your rooms at present. The Duke is my present employer, and I am here to take Mrs. Smith-Lessing to him. As long as she is willing to accept my escort I shall certainly carry out my instructions."

"Don't be a fool, boy," Ray exclaimed sharply. "I want to give you a last chance before I go to Lord Chelsford."

"I do not think," I answered, "that I care about accepting any favors from you just now, Colonel Ray. Nor am I at all sure that I need them," I added.

He turned on his heel, but at the door he hesitated again.

"Guy," he said in a low tone, "will you speak to me for a moment outside?"

I stood on the landing with him. He closed the door leading into the sitting-room.

"Guy," he said, "you know that if I leave you behind, you link your lot with—them. You will be an outcast and a fugitive all your days. You will have to avoid every place where the English language is spoken. You will never be able to recover your honor, you will be the scorn of all Englishmen and Englishwomen. I speak to you for your mother's sake, boy. You have started life with a cursed heritage. I want to make allowance for it."

I looked him straight in the face.

"I am afraid, Colonel Ray," I said, "that you are not inclined to give me credit for very much common sense. Take those papers to Lord Chelsford. I will come round to your rooms as soon as possible."

He looked at me with eager, searching gaze.

"You mean this?"

"Certainly!" I answered.

He seemed about to say something, but changed his mind. He left me without another word. I stepped back into the sitting-room. My father, with an empty tumbler in his hand, was crouched forward over the table, breathing heavily. My stepmother, with marble face and hard set eyes, was leaning forward in her chair, looking into the dying fire. She scarcely glanced at me as I entered.

"Has he gone?" she asked.

"Yes," I answered. "Will you get ready, please? I want to take you to the Duke."

She rose to her feet at once, and moved towards the door. I was left alone with my father, but he never stirred during her absence, nor did I speak to him. She returned in a few minutes, dressed very quietly, and wearing a veil which completely obscured her features. We walked to the corner of the square, and then I called a hansom.

"I know nothing about Lord Blenavon," she said, a little wearily. "I suppose the Duke will not believe that, but it is true."

"You can do no more than tell the truth," I remarked.

"Tell me what he is like—the Duke?" she asked abruptly.

"He is a typical man of his class," I answered. "He is stiff, obstinate, punctilious, with an extreme sense of honor, to gratify which, by-the-bye, he has just deliberately pauperized himself. He will not remind you in the least of Lord Blenavon."

"I should imagine not," she answered. Then there was a short silence, and I could see that she was crying under her veil. I laid my hand upon hers.

"I am afraid," I said gently, "that I have misled you a little. You are worrying about me, and it isn't half so necessary as you imagine. You thought me mad to listen to my father's offer, and a coward to give up those papers to Ray. Isn't that so?"

My words seemed to electrify her. She pushed up her veil and looked at me eagerly.

"Well? Go on!" she exclaimed.

"There are some things," I said, "which I have made up my mind to tell no one. But at least I can assure you of this. I am not nearly in so desperate a position as you and Colonel Ray seem to think."

She caught hold of my hand and grasped it convulsively. The hard lines seemed to have fallen away from her face. She smiled tremulously.

"Oh, I am glad!" she declared. "I am glad!"

Just then a carriage passed us, and I saw Lady Angela lean a little forward in her seat as though to gain a better view of us.

(To be continued.)

NO CHANGE IN THE STAFF OF KINGSTON MACDONALD SCHOOL

Term Opens Aug. 27—Free Tuition to Non-residents if Room Permits—Saved Nearly $500 on Transportation.

The Macdonald school at Kingston will open on Monday, Aug. 27. There will be no change in the staff of teachers. The members of the staff are: Principal, D. W. Hamilton, M. A.; vice-principal, Ina F. Mersereau, B. A.; Miss Mary E. Sterritt, teacher of household science; and grade teachers Miss Annie Darling and Miss Margaret A. Stewart.

Provided there is accommodation, non-resident pupils will be admitted free of tuition. After next year non-resident pupils will pay a tuition fee. Board can be obtained in Kingston at from $2 to $3 per week.

The trustees have succeeded in reducing the transportation expenses for next year by nearly $500. Everything points to another very successful year for the Kingston Consolidated School.

MONTREAL POLICE CATCH SWELL BURGLAR

John Woods Lived at the Best Hotels and Robbed Many Fine Residences—Much of His Loot Recovered.

Montreal, Aug. 17—John Woods, thirty-five years of age, who is under arrest here for robbing residences in the fashionable part of the city and has admitted his crimes to Chief Detective Carpenter, has been living at the best hotels here for several weeks under the name of Edward Johnson. When his room in the Place Viger was searched after his arrest a large quantity of silverware, jewelry, clothing and furs that he is accused of having stolen were found there.

The residence of Mayor Ekers was amongst those that he broke into.

Woods dressed in the height of fashion and is regarded as one of the cleverest housebreakers the police had to deal with.

CANADIAN BAPTISTS TIRED OF AMERICAN S. S. PUBLICATIONS

A joint meeting of the executive of the Publication Board of the Baptist Church and the Sunday school committee of the Baptist convention of Ontario and Quebec was held in the board room Friday afternoon. The question of the publication of a Baptist Sunday school paper in Canada was considered. At the present time the various periodicals come from the United States, and the Canadian Baptists think it about time Canadian publications were provided, instead of those from a foreign country. It was agreed that if it was found to be feasible the Sunday school papers should be published in the dominion, even if the cost should be greater at the outset. A committee was appointed to inquire further into the matter.—Toronto Globe.

BORDER KNIGHTS OF PYTHIAS DECORATE BRETHREN'S GRAVES

St. Stephen, N. B., Aug. 19—Frontier Lodge, Knights of Pythias, assisted by members of Calais and Milltown companies, decorated the graves of deceased members this afternoon. The procession formed in Pythian Hall at 3.30. The Maple Leaf Band leading, followed by Major R. W. Grimmer and Quartermaster J. P. Wry, mounted, and Capt. Everett Thomas in charge of the uniform rank.

Two wagons loaded with flowers and members of the lodge in buckboard, besides a number of teams proceeded to the Rural Cemetery where the regular service of decoration took place with the thermometer at 97 in the shade. The marchers were lucky that none was prostrated.

CORONER'S JURY FINDS JOSIAH GILBERT MURDERED HENDERSON

Regina, Sask., Aug. 18—The coroner's jury today found that Barrett Henderson came to his death on Aug. 15 on a farm on which Josiah Gilbert was living, from a charge of shot in a gun in the hands of Josiah Gilbert, and done with felonious intent.

The coroner told the jury that, in his opinion, the fact of the gun being loaded with slugs pointed to a great degree of malice, and was not suggestive of chicken shooting intentions. That there was a motive for the shooting, he said, was shown by the evidence of J. H. Bond, real estate agent.

FARMER GORED TO DEATH BY A BULL

Ottawa, Aug. 17—(Special)—James Bushy, a farmer, aged forty-five, unmarried, was found dead in his yard at Cumberland this morning, having apparently been gored to death by a bull.

Only routine business is reported transacted at the annual meeting of the shareholders of the Hampton & St. Martins railroad Thursday in St. Martins. The directors reported to the meeting that the property had been sold in May under foreclosure of mortgage.