

MAGIC BAKING POWDER



'Margaret,' The GIRL ARTIST, OR, The Countess of Ferrers Court.

CHAPTER XVII.

"At last!" he shouted, between a hiss and a growl. "At last, mister! I've waited a long time, but it's my turn now, I think. You fine-tongued gentleman! I'll—I'll kill you. You thought I'd forgotten you, eh? You thought I was going to let you go scot free, did you? Ah! you'll know me better when I've done with you."

Blair struggled as hard as he could, but the man's long, bony fingers were like steel, and, with a shrug of his shoulders, he felt that his time had come. But even at that moment the old spirit came to the front, and, though he could not speak, he smiled up at the livid face of his assailant.

The smile seemed to madden the man.

"What! you grin, do ye?" he said, between his teeth. "I'll teach you; I'll humble you!" Then an idea seemed to strike him, and, kneeling on Blair's chest, he said, "But I'll give you a chance, my lord, even now, curse me if I don't. Say, 'I beg your pardon,' and I'll let you go."

With the intention of giving Blair an opportunity for the apology, his grasp slackened slightly.

It was a small opening, but Blair seized it.

With a tremendous effort he writhed himself free, and grasping Pyke by the forearm, raised himself to his feet, and forced Pyke to his knees.

"You miserable hound!" he said, with his short, curt laugh. "Beg your pardon, you mad fool! I'll teach you to set traps for a good horse, that's worth ten of you! You put the gate there, did you? Look here, I'll make you carry it back to its place before I've done with you! Ah, an' beg my pardon, too, into the bargain!" and with a tremendous force he flung the man backward.

Pyke was on his feet instantly, and the two men confronted each other, not as they had done on Leyton Green, for then Blair's face wore a smile, and there was joy and contentment in his heart, at the prospects of a fair fight, but now he knew that it would be as foul as his opponent could make it.

The sky grew blacker; the rain pelted down upon them, but neither of them noticed the weather.

With a bound they sprung at each other, dealing heavy blows, and taking them as if they were feather-down. The result was a foregone one. Blair had been riding, the man had been walking, and was weakened by passion. His blows grew lighter and slower, his breath came in short, deep gasps; Blair knew that another minute would make him the victor, and, already relenting, he was about to call to Pyke and offer him quarter, when the man stepping back, pointed beyond Blair, and shouted:

"Look! the lady!"

Blair turned. There was only one lady that could rush to his mind, and that was Margaret, and he thought, in the flash of the moment, that she had come to meet him. He turned, and Pyke caught up a heavy stick that

lay where he had dropped it at his first spring, and struck Blair an awful blow on the back of the head.

Without a cry he went down face foremost, his arms outstretched, and lay like a figure carved in stone.

Pyke stood over him, looking down, at him with livid face and panting breath.

There was a pause in the storm at that moment, as if the wind and the rain had stopped to look on; then the elements resumed their warfare, and a flash of lightning played over the prostrate man's head.

Pyke went down on his knees, and with trembling hands turned the motionless form on its face, and peered at it.

Then he started back with an oath. "I've done for him!" he muttered, hoarsely, and the wind seemed to echo mockingly: "Done for him."

"He's as dead as a herring! Curse him, it serves him right!" he ground out, and he raised his foot, but with-held the kick as a thought—the thought of self-preservation—came to him. "Looks ugly!" he muttered, "cursed ugly. There's more trouble in this than I thought on!"

He looked up and down the lane and across the hedge, with the keen, fearful face of a man who already hears the pursuers; then buttoning his wet coat round him, and giving a parting glance at the still form, began to run—like Cain.

He went in the direction of Lee, and was so absorbed in the one idea of flight, that a dark object which stood beside the hedge just before him made him spring aside, and almost shout with fear.

But it was only the colt, which, too frightened by the storm, and disheveled by the rain, was cowering under the lee of the hedge.

Pyke was hurrying by it, when he pulled up suddenly, and struck his leg as if welcoming an inspiration.

"Dang it!" he cried, exultingly, "that's the game. Woa, horse, woa, horse," and he crept slowly up to the colt.

The animal was far too cowed to attempt flight, and Pyke got hold of the bridle easily. But he did not mount. Instead, he unfastened one stirrup and struck the colt with it. The horse, maddened by fear, started and shook, then tore down the lane at breakneck pace.

Pyke waited a moment listening to the clatter of its hoofs mingling with the rain and the thunder, then quickly retracing his steps returned to Blair.

He still lay where his assailant had left him. Pyke knelt down and thrust one unresisting foot into the stirrup, then he dragged the body for a few yards along the wet road and left it lying on its back, leaped over the hedge and fled. But once more he

came back, and lifting the gate replaced it on its hinges and fastened it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Mr. Austin Ambrose was spending an extremely unpleasant evening. It sounds as if it would be a very interesting thing to play with one's fellow creatures as if they were puppets—to pull the wires which govern their actions, and to make them dance to one's piping; but the wire-puller has sometimes a very uncomfortable time of it.

Mr. Austin Ambrose had up to the present found his puppets quite docile and obedient to the pulling of the wires. He had got Lord Blair and Margaret secretly married, he had hidden them away at Appleford; his puppet Lottie had played her part really quite admirably, and Margaret was fully convinced that she had been betrayed and ruined by the man she loved.

So far, so well; but still Mr. Austin Ambrose was uncomfortable. He had left Margaret to herself, knowing that if so left she would be more likely to carry out his desire and fly, than if he remained with her.

But he did not mean to lose sight of her; it was his intention to travel by the same train if possible, and to track her, unseen himself, to her place of refuge.

So he went and placed himself on the road leading to the station, and lighting a cigarette, waited as patiently as he could.

Hour passed after hour, and still she did not come. Then the clouds rose, and the sky grew murky, and presently the storm broke.

"Confound women!" he muttered, vainly trying to light the last of his cigarettes; "you can never count upon them. I would have sworn that she would have made for the station; and yet she hasn't. She's waiting to see Blair, after all. Well, I'll go and see. There'll be a scene presently, if she remains, and I hate a scene!"

With his coat-collar turned up he climbed to the cottage and knocked.

There was no answer; and after waiting and knocking again, he opened the door.

To his amazement, the cottage seemed deserted. He was calling Mrs. Day impatiently, when a woman came running with her apron over her head from the neighboring cottage.

"Mrs. Day's out, sir. She's gone down to the beach," she said in answer to his inquiries, "and I've got the children with me. It's lonely for 'em here, and such a storm raging."

"But—but Mrs. Stanley?" he said quickly; "she's in, is she not?"

The woman stared at him.

"Mrs. Stanley, sir—the lady, sir? Oh, no; she went out hours ago."

"Nonsense!" he said roughly. "I beg your pardon; I mean that it is

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A prominent Eye Physician to whom the above article was submitted, said: "Bone-Oto is a very remarkable eye medicine, and is widely prescribed by them. It can be obtained from any good druggist and it is of the very few preparations, I feel should be kept on hand for regular use in almost every family."

improbable that she should be out in this storm.

"Yes, but she is, sir. I saw her go down the path in the afternoon with her mackintosh on her arm. I think she went to meet her good gentleman."

Austin Ambrose started, and his face flushed.

If she had, and they had met before—well, before something that he hoped had happened—all his plans, all his deep and skillfully laid plots would be smashed and pulverized.

He turned his back to the woman, that she might not see his face.

"I—I think she must be in the house still," he said, with a sudden hope; "she may have come back, you know."

"She may, but I don't think she could without my seeing her. However, it's easy to find out." And she lit a candle and went up stairs calling respectfully, "Mrs. Stanley, are you in, ma'am?" while Austin Ambrose listened intently.

In a minute or two she came down. "No, sir, she's not in the house. I'm afraid the poor lady's in the storm; leastways, unless she's taken shelter."

Austin Ambrose caught up his hat. "If she should come before I return," he said, hurriedly, "ask her to wait till I see her and speak with her. Do you hear? Do not let her go. You understand?"

The woman, frightened by his palor and sternness, dropped a courtesy, and he rushed out and down the path.

If she had gone down the road to Afracombe, and had met Blair! His heart almost ceased beating at the thought. She would meet Blair, and he knew too well, frustrate the elaborate plot, and ruin the plotter.

He gained the entrance of the road to Combe; two or three men were standing under the shelter of a shed, with their tools beside them.

"Have you been working here in the fields?" he inquired.

"Yes, master, and we be drenched through, we be!" said one.

"Have you seen a lady—a lady with a veil—come this way—to Afracombe, I mean?" he said, trying to steady his voice. "I am afraid she has got caught in the storm."

The men shook their heads.

"No," said he who had spoken first; "no one has been along this road 'cepting the gentleman who rode Farmer James' colt this morning."

"I know—I mean I don't know," said Austin Ambrose, catching himself up. "Are you sure?"

"Sure and certain!" said another man. "We've been working in sight o' the road all day, and the lady couldn't a passed without our seeing her. Have you got a bit of 'bacca, your honor?"

He tossed them a shilling, and hurried back. It was just possible that she may have gone to the station by another road than that which he had watched. Fighting his way against the wind and rain, he reached the station.

From one and another of the porters he inquired if she had been seen, and the answer was the same. No lady answering to Madge's description had reached the station. Half wild with impatience and fear—not for her, by any means, certainly not; but for himself!—he returned to the beach.

As he did so he saw a gang of fishermen and sailors standing under the lee of a rock, and peering out to sea. They did not hear him approach, and, in his noiseless fashion, he got close up to them and within hearing unnoted.

"No boat could put out from the beach, man," said the old man with whom Margaret had spoken that morning. "We've tried it with the best of them, the Lass and the Speedwell, and it ain't no manner of use. 'Sides, where's the good? the tide have swept over the rock an hour ago!"

"And you're sure you seed her?" asked a man.

"Do 'ee think I've gone silly all in a moment?" retorted the old fellow, pettishly. "I tell 'ee, I seed her on the top, half a-sitting and half a-lying. I did think as I'd get up and go to her, but I'd warned her in the morning, this very blessed morning; and the missus come and called me in to tea, and—and blame me if I didn't forget her."

"Oh, she's lost! She's drowned, as sure as a gun! Well, sakes a mercy, but it's a pity."

"We've all got to die," remarked a man philosophically; "and most of us dies by drowning; but then we're used to it, which makes all the difference."

Austin Ambrose pushed his way into their midst, starting them a little. "Of whom are you talking?" he demanded, and his voice sounded harsh and stern.

The old man touched his forehead and puffed at his pipe.

"It's the poor young lady up at Mrs. Day's, your honor," he said; "she've been and got washed off the Long Rock."

Austin Ambrose put his hand up with a strange gesture, as if to stop him, and his face grew livid.

"What?" he cried, hoarsely. "You say—oh, impossible!"

The old man shook his head.

"It's the possiblest thing as can be," he said grimly. "Seed her there myself, and I thought she'd gone to look at the tide. I never thought as she'd stop there after the warning I give her. I told her about the lady and gentleman as was lost there two year ago," he added to the others.

Austin Ambrose rushed out to the rocks and stared before him like a man dazed. Then he sprang to his feet.

"I'll give any man twenty pounds who will launch a boat and search for her," he cried, hoarsely.

There was a profound silence. Then the old fisherman said grimly: "Twenty pun ain't touch for a man's life, your honor."

"I will give fifty—a hundred!" he cried desperately.

"Bless your honor's heart," said the old man slowly, "no boat could live in this—that is, near the beach—it might in the open! It is to be hoped it will, for Day's out," he said significantly. "No, your honor, a thousand pounds wouldn't tempt us; besides, it's too late! too late! The poor lady is drifting out to the sands, and the last's been seen of her or ever will be seen on this earth!"

Austin Ambrose uttered a cry, an awful cry. They who heard it thought that it was that of a sorrowing friend that it was that of a sorrowing friend pity for himself and all his shattered hopes. After all his cleverness, his deep-laid schemes and restless toil, he had been fooled—and by the woman he had fooled and deceived!

(To be Continued.)



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Sight and Smash Order to British in Naval Battle

Engagement Off Sylt Island Fought in Blinding Blizzard—Snow and Hail Hide the Opposing Craft—Big German Ships Lost Chance to Leave Kiel.

London, March 31.—A special correspondent of the Edinburgh Scotsman gives a vivid account of the sea fight in the North Sea off the Island of Sylt, last Saturday. The fight took place in one of the worst blizzards that has raged this winter, he says. After describing the approach of the British ships to the German coast the Scotsman's correspondent goes on:

"By the time the coasts of Germany were within measurable distance there was a gale on the sea and the ice blasts which swept out of the north-west bore hail and blinding snow. That the German patrols were well and speedily informed of the approach of the British ships became apparent as soon as the British were within striking distance, and the action ended upon the first glimpse which the opposing squadrons obtained of each other in the blizzard.

Big German Ships Stay in.

"There was provided the opportunity for the naval might of Germany sheltering in Kiel, to find that British fleet for which they have searched so long and so fruitlessly, but the heavy fighting ships of Germany made no effort to come from the waters behind Heligoland to the succor of the destroyer squadron which had been discovered by the British.

"With the ships separated and lost

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