POOR DOCUMENT

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THE POWERS AND MAXINE

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CHAPTER XI—(Continued.)

Fumbling a little at the lock, always a little difficult if one were in a hurry, I asked myself what if, as Marianne had suggested, it were not Ivor Dundas, but someone else—Raoul, perhaps—or the man who had been in her mind; Godensky.

But it was Ivor.

"What news?" I questioned him, my voice sounding queer and far away in my own ears.

"I don't know whether you call it news or not, though plenty of things have happened. I'm awfully sorry to be late——"

I wouldn't let him finish, standing there, but took him by the arm and drew him into the garden, pushing the gate shut behind him as I did so. Yet I forgot to lock it, and naturally it did not occur to Ivor that it ought to be fastened.

Once inside, in the garden, I was going to make him begin again, as I had told Marianne I would do. But suddenly I bethought myself that he might have been followed; that there might be watchers behind that high wall, watchers who would try to be listeners too, and whose ears would be very different from old Henri's.

"Come into the house," I said, in a low voice, "before you begin to tell anything." Then, when we were inside, I could not even wait for him to go on of his own accord and in his own way.

"The treaty?" I asked. "Have you got hold of it?"

"Unfortunately, no."

"But you've heard of it? Oh, say you've heard something!"

"If I haven't, it isn't because I've sat down and waited for news to come. I went back to the Gare du Nord after you left me, to try and get on the track of the men who travelled with me in the train to Dover. But I was sent off on the wrong scent, and wasted a lot of time, worse luck—I'll tell you about it later, if you care to hear details. Then, when that game was up, I did what I wish I'd done at first, found out and consulted a private detective, said to be one of the best in Paris——"

"You told your story—my story—to a detective?" I gasped.

"No. Certainly not. I said I'd lost something of value, given me by a lady whose name I couldn't bring into the affair. I was George Sandford, too, not Mr. Dundas. I described my travelling companions, telling all that happened on the way, and offered big pay if he could find them quickly—especially the little fellow. He held out hopes of spotting them to-night, so don't be desperate, my poor girl. The detective chap seemed really to think he'd not have much difficulty in tracking down our man; and even if he's parted with the treaty, we can find out what he's done with it, no doubt. Girard says——"

"Girard!" I caught Ivor up. "Is your detective's name Anatole Girard, and does he live in rue du Capucin Blanc?"

"Yes. Do you know him?"

"I know too much of him," I answered bitterly.

"Isn't he clever, after all?"

"Far too clever. I'd rather you had gone to any other detective in Paris—or to none."

"Why, what's wrong with him?" Ivor began to be distressed.

"Only that he's a personal friend of my worst enemy—the man I spoke of to you this evening—Count Godensky. I've heard so from Godensky himself, who mentioned the acquaintance once when Girard had just succeeded in a case everybody was talking about."

"By jove, what a beastly coincidence!" exclaimed Ivor, horribly disappointed at having done exactly the wrong thing, when he had tried so hard to do the right one. "Yet how could I have dreamed of it?"

"You couldn't," I admitted, hopelessly. "Nothing is your fault. All that's happened would have happened just the same, no matter what messenger the Foreign Secretary had sent to me. It's fate. And it's my punishment."

"Still, even if Godensky and Girard are friends," Ivor tried to console me, "it isn't likely that the Count has talked to the detective about you, and the affair of the treaty."

"He may have gone to him for help in finding out things he couldn't find out himself."

"Hardly, I should say, until there'd been time for him to fear a failure. No, the chances are that Girard will have no inner knowledge of the matter I've put into his hands; and if he's a man of honour, he's bound to do the best he can for me, as his employer. Have you seen du Laurier?"

"Yes. At the theatre. Nothing bad had happened to him yet; but that brute Godensky has made dreadful mischief between us. If only I'd known that you would be so late, I might have explained everything to him."

"I'm very sorry," said Ivor, so humbly and so sadly that I pitied him (but not half as much as I pitied myself, even though I hadn't forgotten that hint he had let drop about a great sacrifice—a girl he loved, whom he had thrown over, somehow, to come to me). "I made every effort to be in time. It seems a piece with the rest of my horrible luck to-day that I was prevented. I hope, at least, that du Laurier knows about the necklace?"

"He does, by this," I answered. "Yet I'm afraid he won't be in a mood to take much comfort from it—thanks to that wretch. You know Raoul hasn't a practical bone in his body. He will think I've deceived him, and nothing else will matter. I must——" But I broke off, and laid my hand on Ivor's arm. "What's that?" I whispered. "Did you hear anything then?"

Ivor shook his head. And we both listened.

"It's a step outside, on the gravel path," said I, my heart beginning to knock against my side. "I forgot to lock the gate. Somebody has come into the garden. What if it should be Raoul—what if he has seen our shadows on the curtain?"

Mechanically we moved apart, Ivor making a gesture to reassure me, on account of the position of the lights. He was right. Our shadows couldn't have fallen on the curtain.

As we stood listening, there came a knock at the front door. It was Raoul's knock! I was sure of that.

If only Ivor had arrived a quarter of an hour earlier, at the time appointed, I should have hurried him away before this, so that I might write to Raoul; but now I could not think what to do for the best—what to do, that things might not be made far worse instead of better between Raoul and me. I had suffered so much that my power of quick decision, on which I'd so often prided myself, vainglioriously, seemed gone.

"It is Raoul," I said. "What shall I do?"

"Let him in, of course, and introduce me. Don't act as if you were afraid. Say that I came to see you on important business concerning a friend of yours in England, and had to call after the theatre because I'm leaving for Paris by the first train in the morning."

"No use."

"Why not? When a man loves a woman, he trusts her."

"No man of Latin blood, I think. And Raoul's already angry. He has the right to be—or would have, if Godensky had been telling him the truth. And I refused to let him come here. I said I was going straight to bed, I was so tired. He's knocking again. Hide yourself, and I'll let him in. Oh, why do you stand there, looking at me like that? Go into that room——" and I pointed, then pushed him towards the door. "You can get through the window and out of the garden—softly—while Raoul and I are talking."

"If you insist," said Ivor. "But you're wrong. The best thing——"

"Go—go, I tell you. Don't argue. I know best," I cut him short, in a sharp whisper, pushing him again.

This time he made no more objections, but went into the adjoining room, my boudoir. The key was in the door; I turned it in the lock, snatched it out, and dropped it into a bowl of flowers on a table close by. That done, I flew out of the drawing-room into the little entrance hall, and opened the front door.

There stood Raoul, his face dead white, and very stern in the light of the hall lamp. I had never seen him like that before.

"I know why you're here," I began quickly, before he could speak. "Count Godensky told me what he said to you. I—hoped you would come."

"Is this why you wished to know what I would do if you deceived me?" he asked, with the bitterest reproach in eyes and voice.

"No. For I haven't deceived you," I answered. "I haven't deceived you now. If you loved me, you'd believe me, Raoul."

I put out my hand and took his. He gave mine no pressure, but he let me draw him into the house.

"For God's sake, give me back my faith in you, if you can," he said. "It's death to lose it. I came here wanting to die."

"After you'd killed me, as you said?"

"Perhaps. I couldn't keep away. I had to come. If you have an explanation, for the love of heaven, tell me what it is."

"You know me, and you know Godensky—yet you need an explanation of anything evil said of me by him?" In this way I hoped to disarm Raoul; but he had been half-mad, I think, and was scarcely sane now, such a power had jealousy over his better self.

"Don't play with me!" he exclaimed. "I can't bear it. You sent me away. Yet you had an appointment with Godensky. You took him into your carriage; and now——"

"Marianne was in the carriage. If I could have had you with me, I should have packed her off by herself, alone, that I—might be alone with you. Oh, Raoul, it isn't possible you believe that I could lie to you for Godensky's sake—a man like that! If I'd cared for him, why shouldn't I have accepted him instead of you? Could I have changed so quickly, do you think?"

"I don't think; I'm not able to think. I can only feel," he answered.

"Then—feel sure that I love you—no man but you—now and always."

"Oh, Maxine!" he stammered. "Am I a fool, or wise, to let myself believe you?"

"You are wise," I answered, as firmly as if I deserved the full faith I was claiming from him as my right. "If you wouldn't believe, without my insisting, without my explaining and defending myself, I'd tell you nothing. But you do believe, just because you love me—I see it in your face, and thank God for it. So I'll tell you this. Count Godensky hates me, because I couldn't and wouldn't love him, and he hates you because he thinks I love you. He——" I paused for a second. A wild thought flashed like the light of a beacon in my brain. If I could say something now which, when the blow fell—if it did fall—might come back to Raoul's mind and convince him instantly that it was Godensky, not I, who had stolen the treaty and broken him! If I could make him believe the whole thing a monstrous plot of Godensky's to revenge himself on a woman who'd refused him twice, by cleverly implicating her in her lover's ruin, by throwing guilt upon her while she was, in reality, innocent! If I could suggest that to Raoul now, while his ears were open, I might hold his love against the world, no matter what happened.

It was a mad idea and a wicked one, perhaps; but I was at my wits' end and desperate. Though not guilty of this one crime which I would shift upon his shoulders if I could, as a means of escaping from the trap he'h helped to set, Godensky was capable of it, and guilty of others, I was sure, which had never been brought home to him. I believed that he too, was a spy, just as I was; and far worse, because if he were one he betrayed his own country, while I never had done that, never would.

All these thoughts rushed through my head in a second; and I think Raoul could hardly have noticed the pause before I began to speak again. "He—Godensky—would do anything to part you and me," I said. "There's no plot too sly and vile for him to conceive and carry out against me—and you. No lie too base for him to tell you—or others—about me. He sent me a letter in the theatre—soon after you'd left me the first time. In it, he said that I must give him a few minutes after the play, unless I wanted some dreadful harm to come to you—something concerning your career. That frightened me, though I may have guessed it was only a trick. Indeed, I did guess, but I couldn't be sure, so I saw him. I didn't want you to know—I tell you that frankly, Raoul. Because I'd told you not to come home with me, I hoped you wouldn't find out that I meant to let Count Godensky drive part of the way back with me and Marianne. I ran the risk, and—the very thing happened which I ought to have known would happen. As for what he had to tell me, it was nothing; only vague hints of trouble from which he, as one of an inner circle, might save you, if I would be grateful enough."

"The scoundrel!" broke out Raoul, convinced now, his eyes blazing. "I'll——"

He stopped suddenly. But I knew what had been on his lips to say. He meant to send a challenge to Count Godensky. I must prevent him from doing that.

"No, Raoul," I said, as if he had finished his sentence, "you mustn't fight. For my sake, you mustn't. Don't you see, it's just what he'd like best? It would be a way of doing me the most dreadful injury. Think of the scandal. Oh, you will think of it, when you're cooler. For you, I would not fear much, for I know what a swordsman you are, and what a shot—far superior to Godensky, and with right on your side. But I would fear for myself. Promise you won't bring this trouble upon me."

"I promise," he answered. "Oh, my darling, what wouldn't I promise you, to atone for my brutal injustice to an angel? How thankful I am that I came to you to-night! I meant not to come. I was afraid of myself, and what I might do. But at last I couldn't hold out against the Something that seemed forcing me here in spite of all resistance. Do you forgive me?"

"As a reward for your promise," I said, smiling at him through tears that would come because I was worn out, and because I knew that it was I who needed his forgiveness, not he mine.

"Now are you happy aagin?" I asked.

"Yes, I'm happy," he said. "Though on the way to this house I didn't dream that it would be possible for me to know happiness any more in this world. And even at your gate——" he stopped suddenly, and his face changed. I waited an instant, but seeing that he didn't mean to go on, I could not resist questioning him. I had to know what happened at my gate.

"Even at the gate—what?" I asked.

"Nothing. I'm sorry I spoke. I want to show you how completely I trust you now, by not speaking of that."

But this reticence of his only made me more anxious to know what he had been going to say. I was afraid that I could guess. But I must hear it from his lips, and be able to explain away the mystery which, when it recurred to him in the future, might make him doubt me, even though in this moment of exultation, he did not doubt.

"Yes, speak of it," I said. "All the more because it is nothing. For it can be nothing."

"I want to punish myself for asking an explanation about Godensky, by not allowing you to explain this other thing," insisted poor, loyal, repentant Raoul. "Then—at the time—it made all the rest seem worse, a thousand times worse. But I saw through black spectacles. Now I see through rose-coloured ones."

"I'd rather you saw through your own dear eyes, without any spectacles. You must tell me what you're thinking of, dear. For my own sake, if not yours."

"Well—if you will know. But, remember, darling, I'm going to put it out of my mind. I'll ask you no questions, I'll only tell you the thing itself. As I said, I didn't come here directly after seeing Godensky get into your carriage. I wandered about like a madman—and I thought of the Seine."

"Oh—you must indeed have been mad!"

"I was. But that Something saved me—the Something that drove me to find you. I walked here, by roundabout ways, but always coming nearer and nearer, as if being drawn into a whirlpool. At last, I was in this street, on the side opposite your house. I hadn't made up my mind yet that I would try to see you. I didn't know what I would do. I stood still, and tried to think. It was very black, in the angle between two garden walls where the big plane tree sprouts up; you know. Nobody who didn't expect to find a man would have noticed me in the darkness. I hadn't been there for two minutes when a man turned the corner, walking very fast. As he passed the street lamp just before reaching the garden wall, I saw him plainly—not his face, but his figure, and he was young and well dressed, in travelling clothes. I thought he looked like an Englishman. He went straight to your gate and rang. A moment later someone, I couldn't see who, opened the gate and let him in. Involuntarily I took a step forward, with the idea of following—of pushing my way in to see who had opened the gate. But I wasn't quite mad enough to act like a cad. The gate shut. Oh, Maxine, there were evil and cruel thoughts in my mind, I confess it to you—but how they made me suffer! I stood as if I were turned to stone, and I only wished that I might be, for a stone can't suffer. Just then, a cab creeping slowly along the street stopped in front of your gate. There were two women in it. I could see them by the light of the street lamp, though not as plainly as I'd seen the man, and they appeared to be arguing very excitedly about something. Whatever it was, it must have been in some way concerned with you, of your affairs, because they were tremendously interested in the house. They both looked out, and one pointed several times. Even if I'd intended to go in, I wouldn't have gone while they were there. But the very fact that they were there roused me out of the kind of lethargy of misery I'd fallen into. I wondered who they were, and if they meant you harm or good. When they had driven away, I made up my mind that I would see you if I could, I tried the gate, and found it unlocked. I walked in, and there were lights in these windows. I knew you couldn't have gone to bed yet, though you said you were so tired. There was death in my heart then, for you and for me, Maxine, for—the gate hadn't opened again, and——"

"I know what you thought!" I broke in, my heart beating so now that my voice shook a little, though I struggled to keep calm. "You said to yourself, 'It was Maxine who let the man in. He is with her now. I shall find them together.'"

"Yes," Raoul admitted. "But I didn't try the handle of the door, as I had of the gate. I rang. I couldn't bring myself to take you unawares."

"Do you think still that I let a man in, and hid him when I heard you ring?" I asked. (For an instant I was inclined to tell the story Ivor had advised me to tell; but I saw how excited Raoul was; I saw how, in painting the picture for me, he lived through the scene again, and, in spite of himself, suffered almost as keenly as he had suffered in the experience. I saw how his suspicions of me same crawling back into his heart, though he strove to lash them back. I dared not bring Ivor out from the other room, if he were still there. He was too handsome, too young, too attractive in every way. If Raoul had been jealous of Count Godensky, whom he knew I had refused, what would he feel towards Ivor Dundas, a stranger whose name I had never mentioned, though he was received at my house after midnight? I was thankful I hadn't taken Ivor's advice and introduced the two men at first, for in his then mood Raoul would have listened to no explanations. He and I would never have arrived at the understanding we had reached now. And not having been frank at first, I must be secret to the end.)

The very asking of such a bold question—"Do you think I let a man in, and hid him?" helped my cause with Raoul.

"No," he said, "I can't think it. I won't, and don't think it. And you need tell me nothing. I love you. And so help me God, I won't distrust you again!"

Just as it entered my mind to risk everything on the chance that Ivor had by this time found his way out, I heard, or fancied I heard, a faint sound in the next room. He was there still!

Instead of throwing open the door, as it had occurred to me to do, saying, "Let us look for the man, and make sure no one else let him in," I laughed out abruptly, as if on a sudden thought, but really to cover the sound if it should come again.

"Oh, Raoul!" I exclaimed, in the midst of the laughter with which I surprised him. "You're taking this too seriously. A thousand times I thank you for trusting me in spite of appearances, but—after all, were they so much against me? You seem to think I am the only young woman in this house. Marianne, poor dear, is old enough, it's true. But I have a femme de chambre and a Cuisiniere, both under twenty-five, both pretty, and both engaged to be married." (This was true. Ah, what a comfort to speak the truth to him!) "Doesn't it occur to you that, at this very moment, a couple of lovers may be sitting hand in hand on the seat under the old yellow arbour? Can't you imagine how they started and tried to hold their breath lest you should hear, as you opened the gate and came up the path?"

"Forgive me!" murmured Raoul, in the depths of remorse again.

"Shall we go and look, or shall we leave them in peace?"

"Leave them in peace, by all means."

"The man will be slipping away soon, no doubt. Both Therese and Annette are good little girls."

"Don't let's bother about them. You will be sending me away soon, too, and I shall deserve it. Brute that I am. You were so tired, and I——"

"Oh, I'm better now," I said. Of course I must send you away by-and-bye, but not quite yet. First, I want to ask if you weren't glad when you saw the diamonds?"

"Diamonds?" echoed Raoul. "What diamonds?"

"You don't mean to say you haven't yet opened the little bag I gave you at the theatre?" I exclaimed.

Raoul looked ashamed. "Dearest, don't think me ungrateful," he said, "but before I had a chance to open it, I met Godensky, and he told me—that lie. It lit a fire in my brain. I forgot all about the bag, and haven't thought of it again till this minute

At last I laughed with sincerity. "Oh, Raoul, Raoul, you're not fit for this work-a-day world! Well, I'm glad, after all, that I shall be with you, when you see what that little insignificant bag which you've forgotten all this time, has in it. Take it out of your pocket, and let's open it together."

For the moment, I was almost happy; and that Raoul would be happy, I knew.

His hand went into the inner pocket of his coat, into which I had seen him put the brocade bag. But it did not come out again. It groped; and his face flushed. "Good heavens, Maxine," he said, "I hope you weren't in earnest when you told me that bag held something very valuable to us both, for I've lost it. You know, I've been almost mad. I had my handkerchief in that pocket. I must have pulled it out, and——"

My knees seemed to give way under me. I half fell onto the sofa.

"Raoul," I said, in a queer stifled voice, "the bag had in it the Duchess de Montpellier's diamonds."

CHAPTER XII.

Ivor Goes Into the Dark.

Never had I been caught in a situation which I liked less than finding myself, long after midnight, locked with Maxine de Renzie into her boudoir, while within hearing she did her best to convince her lover that no stranger had come on her account to the house.

I had never before visited her in Paris, though she had described her little place there to me when we knew each other in London; and in groping about trying to find another door or a window in the dark room, I ran constant risks of making my presence known by stumbling against the furniture or knocking down some ornament.

I dared not strike a match because of the sharp, rasping noise it would make, and I had to be as cautious as if I were treading with bare feet on glass, although I knew that Maxine was praying for me to be out of the house, and I was as far from wishing to linger as she was to have me stay. Only by a miracle did I save myself once or twice from upsetting a chair or tall vase of flowers, on my way to a second door which was locked on the other side.

At last, however, I discovered a window, and congratulated myself that my trouble and Maxine's danger was nearly over. The room being on the ground floor, though rather high above the level of the garden, I thought that I could easily let myself down. But when I had slipped behind the heavy curtains (they were drawn, and felt smooth, like satin) it was only to come upon a new difficulty.

The window, which opened in the middle like most French windows, was tightly closed, with the catch securely fastened; and as I began slowly and with infinite caution to turn the handle, I felt that the window was going to stick. Perhaps the wood had been freshly painted: perhaps it had swelled: in any case, I knew that when the two sashes consented to part they would make a loud protest.

After the first warning squeak I stopped. In the next room Maxine raised her voice—to cover the sound, I was sure. Then it had been worse than even I fancied! I dared not begin again. I would grope about once more, and see if I could hit upon some other way out, which possibly I had missed.

No, there was nothing. No other window, except a small one which apparently communicated with a butler's pantry, and even if that had not seemed too small for me to climb through, it was apparently fastened on the pantry side.

What to do I did not know. It would be a calamity for Maxine if du Laurier should hear a sound, and insist on having the door opened, after she had given him the impression (if she had not said it in so many words) that there was no stranger in the house.

Probably she hoped that by this time I was gone; but how could I go? I felt like a rat in a trap: and even if I had been a nervous woman I should have imagined myself stifling in the small, hot room with its closed doors and windows. As it was, I was uncomfortable enough. My forehead grew damp, as in the first moments of a Turkish bath, and absent mindedly I felt in pocket after pocket for my handkerchief. It was not to be found. I must have lost it at the hotel, or at the detective's, or in the automobile I had hired. In an outside pocket of my coat, however, I chanced upon something for the existence of which I couldn't account. It was a very small something: only a bit of paper, but a very neatly folded bit of paper, and I had not put it there myself.

At ordinary times, I should most likely not have given it a second thought; but to-night nothing unexpected could be dismissed as insignificant, until it had been thoroughly examined. I put the bit of paper back into my pocket, and as I did so, I heard Maxine give an exclamation, apparently of distress. I could not distinguish all she said, but I thought that I caught the word "diamonds."

For a moment or two she and du Laurier talked together so excitedly that I might have made another attack on the window without great risk; and I was meditating the attempt, when suddenly the voices ceased. A door opened and shut. There was dead silence, except for a footfall overhead, which sounded heavier than Maxine's. Perhaps it was her maid's.

For a few seconds more I stood still, awaiting developments, but there was no sound in the next room, and I decided to take my chance before I should be too late.

I jerked at the window, which yielded with a loud squeak that would certainly have given away the secret of my presence if there had been ears to hear. But all was still in the drawing-room adjoining, and I dropped down to a flower bed some few feet below. Then I skirted round to the front of the house, walking steathily on the soft grass, and would have made a noiseless dash for the gate had I not seen a stream of light flowing out through the open front door across the lawn. I checked myself just in time to draw back without being seen by a woman and a tall man moving slowly down the path. They were Maxine and, no doubt, du Laurier. They spoke not a word, but walked with their heads bent, as if deeply absorbed in searching for something on the ground.

Down to the gate they went, opened it and passed out, only half closing it behind them, so that I knew they meant to come back again.

I should have been thankful to escape, but the chance of meeting them was too imminent. Accordingly I waited, and it was well I did, for as they reappeared in three or four minutes, they could not have gone far enough to be out of sight from the gate.

"There's witchcraft in it," Maxine said, as she and her lover passed within a few yards of me, where I hid behind a little arbour.

Du Laurier's answer was lost to me, but his voice sounded despondent. Evidently they had mislaid something of importance and had small hope of finding it again. I could not help being curious, as well as sorry for Maxine that a further misfortune should have befallen her at such a time. But the one and only way in which I could help her at that moment was to get away as soon as possible.

They had left the gate unlocked, and I drew in a long breath of relief when I was on the other side. I hurried out of the street, lest du Laurier should, by any chance, follow on quickly: and my first thought was to go immediately back to my hotel, where Girard might by now have arrived with news. I was just ready to hail a cab crawling by at a distance, when I remembered the bit of paper I'd found and put back into my pocket. It occurred to me to have a look at it, by the light of a street lamp near by; and the instant I had straightened out the small, crumpled wad, I guessed that here was a link in the mystery.

The paper was a leaf torn from a notebook and closely covered on both sides with small, uneven writing done with a sharp black pencil. The handwriting was that of an uneducated person, and was strange to me. I could not make out the words by the light of the tall lamp, so I lit a wax match from my match-box, and protecting the flame in the hollow of my hand, began studying the strange message.

The three first words sent my heart up with a bound. "On board the Queen." I had crossed the Channel in "The Queen," and this beginning was enough to make me hope that the bit of paper might do more than any detective to unravel the mystery.

"I'm taking big risks because I've got to," I read on. "It's my only chance. And if you find this, I bet I can trust you. You're a gentleman, and you saved my life and a lot more besides by getting into that railway-carriage when the other chaps did. The minute I seen them I thot I was done for, but you stopped there game. I'm a jeweler's assistant, carrying property worth thousands for my employers. From the first I knew 'twas bound to be a ticlish job. On this bote I'm safe, for the villons who would have murdered and robbed me in the train if it hadn't been for you being there, won't have a chance, but when I get to Paris it will be the worst, and no hope for the jewls, followed as I am, if I hadn't already thot of a plan to save them through you, an honest gentleman far above temptashun. I know who you are, for I've often seen your photo in the papers. So, what I did was this: to try a ventriloquist trick which has offen bin of use in my carere, just as folks were on the boat's gangway. Thro' making that disturbance, and a little skill I have got by doing amatoor conjuring to amuse my wife and famly, I was able to slip the case of my employer's jewls into your breast pocket without your konwing. And I had to take away what you had in, not that I wanted to rob one who had done good by me, but because if I'd left it the double thickness would have surprised you and you would probably have pulled out my case to see what it was. Then my fat would have bin in the fire, with certin persons looking on, and you in danger as well as me which wouldn't be fare. I've got your case in my pocket as I write, but I won't open it because it might have your sweetart's letters in. You can get your property again by bringing me my master's, which is fare exchange. I can't call on you, for I don't know where you going and daren't hang round to see on account of the danger I run, aind needing to meet a pal of mine who will help me. I must get him at once, if I am spared to do so, for which reason I wrote out this explanashun. The best I can do is to slip it in your pocket which I shall try when in the railway stashun at Paris. You see how I trust you as a gentleman to bring me the jewls. Come as soon as you can, and get your own case instead, calling at 218 rue Fille Sauvage, Avenue Morot, back room, top floor, left of passage. Expressing my gratitood in advance,

I am,
Yours trustfully,
J. M. Jeweler's Messenger.

P. S. For heaven's sake don't fale, and ask the concerge for name of Gestre."

If it had not been for my rage at not finding this illuminating little document earlier, I should have felt like shouting with joy. As it was, my delight was tempered with enough of regret to make it easier to restrain myself.

But for the fear that du Laurier might be still with Maxine, I should have rushed back to her house for a moment, just long enough to give her the good news. But in the circumstances I dared not do it, lest she should curse instead of bless me: and besides, as there was still a chance of disappointment, it might be better in any case not to raise her hopes until there was no danger of dashing them again.

(To be continued.)

A BOOM IS ON AT MOUNT ALLISON

Record Attendance is Excelled This Year.

Sackville, N. B., Oct. 6—(Special)—Mount Allison University authorities are delighted with the attendance this year, as all records are being broken. The number of new students registered to date is seventy-four. These are: Post graduates, three; sophomores, senior matriculants, sixteen; freshmen in arts, twenty-seven; freshmen in engineering, seventeen; special students, including theological students not fully matriculated in arts, eleven.

Of the new students a large number are ladies. Practically all of last year's students who were due to return to college are again in Sackville.

EVIDENCE OF THE ALLEGED WILL NOT SUFFICIENT

Judge Trueman's View Expressed to Counsel in the Corkery Will Case

MUCH TESTIMONY HEARD FRIDAY

All the Evidence for Petitioner In, and Some Contradictory Statements Were Made--Case Adjourned Until Next Monday.

In the matter of the application of Mrs. Annie Mullin to have it established that her mother, Mrs. Johanna Corkery, made a will, and failing that, for the granting of letters of administration to the petitioner, hearing was continued Friday before Judge Trueman in the probate court. The taking of evidence was concluded and adjournment made until Monday, the 7th inst., when argument of counsel will be presented.

In adjourning the court his honor stated to counsel that the only point for discussion was the appointment of an administrator, saying that while he did not want to discourage counsel for the petitioner, he thought there was not sufficient evidence of the alleged will ever having been made.

Said She Saw Will.

In the morning the examination of David Corkery was concluded, and Gertrude Mullin, daughter of the petitioner, was called. She said that she remembered when her grandmother, who was very ill, made what she understood was her will. Lawyer Gregory and James Dunlop were called in and received by David Corkery, who took them into her grandmother's bedroom. This was when they lived in Military road, some years prior to her Uncle Michael's death in 1893. She said that her Uncle Michael, who was not present at the time Mr. Gregory and Mr. Dunlop called, found fault because his mother had made a will, he having been told by David that she had done so.

Miss Mullin said that on one occasion her Uncle David remarked to his mother that he did not see why she left $600 to his brother Joshua's children, and his mother answered that as she was leaving all the rest of her property to her daughter, Mrs. Mullin, she felt that she should also remember her grandchildren in Woodstock. Miss Mullin said that before her grandmother's death she saw a paper in a tin box on top of the safe, and on opening it read: "This is the last will and testament of Johanna Corkery."

On cross-examination she said that she did not see any signatures to the paper, neither of principal nor of witnesses. She did not remember that there was any indorsement on the paper and she read no farther down the page than the words indicated.

Mrs. Mullin Testifies.

Mrs. Annie Mullin, the petitioner, took the stand. She said that in 1889 Father Borgman, C. SS. R., had advised her mother to have her will made. Lawyer Gregory and Mr. Dunlop went to the house, but she did not see them. She heard David say to Michael, his deceased brother, that their mother had made a will and Michael was very indignant that his mother should have signed with a mark. The witness said she never thought her mother had anything to leave except the furniture, which she left to the witness, and $600 which she left to the children of Joshua. The witness had never seen the document purporting to be her mother's will.

When David objected in the presence of his mother to the $600 being left to Joshua's children, her mother said that Lawyer Gregory put that in the will himself. The witness said she searched for the will after her mother's death, but could not find it. She said that last spring, before the trouble arose between them, David had agreed to give her the Mill street property, and had guaranteed her $600 a year. Joshua was to get the Woodstock property, so they would all be about equal. David, she said, had failed to stand by that agreement.

Cross-examined by Mr. Wilson, the witness said that her mother was moving around after the illness during which the will is alleged to have been made, and David took the will and threw it on the safe, saying that it was no good. The witness said her mother might have taken it herself. Her mother kept the bonds belonging to David in a black silk bag until her death. The witness got $600 from her mother a day or two before her mother's death. She had also been given money by David from time to time, and on one occasion David had given her $500 out of the McGrath property to pay for her son's education.

In Mr. Wilson's office, she said, David had offered her the $4,000 legacy under her father's will, but she had refused to take it without the interest.

David Corkery Recalled.

David Corkery, recalled by the petitioner, said that he had never spoken to Mrs. Henneberry about his mother's will.

Mrs. Henneberry, called by the petitioner, said that David had never talked to her about his mother's will.

Joshua Corkery was the next witness for the petitioner. He said that last May or June David spoke to him about his mother's will, and told him that under that will Mrs. Mullin was to get the two brick buildings in Main street which, beside her legacies, would make her all right. He said that David told him his mother had made a will in 1869.

Cross-examined by Mr. McInerney, the witness said he telephoned David that he was coming down from Woodstock, and David told him he better go home, as he had no fight with the Mullins. He had heard Mrs. Mullin swear in court that David agreed to give her the properties in Mill street and in Paradise row, but it was not that agreement that David spoke about. He knew that his mother could not devise the properties by will, but still David told him that that was the way Mrs. Mullin was getting the properties.

David Corkery was next called in his own behalf. He said that he never told Joshua anything about his mother's will, had never mentioned it to him. The Mill street properties, he said, were got after the date of the alleged will.

This concluded the evidence. D. Mullin, K. C., represents the petitioner, Geo. V. McInerney, K. C., and A. A. Wilson, K. C., represent David Corkery, and M. G. Teed, K. C., represents Joshua Corkery.

GREATLY PLEASED WITH TRIP THROUGH CANADIAN WEST

Rev. W. E. Johnson of P. E. Island Here Saturday—Talks of Conditions in the Prairie Land.

Rev. W. E. Johnson and Mrs. Johnson, of Souris East (P. E. I.), were in the city Saturday on their return after a pleasant trip to Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, Stettler, Brandon, Medicine Hat, Regina, and other towns of interest in the west.

"Mrs. Johnson and I," he said to a Telegraph reporter, "have spent a most enjoyable trip and have seen and learned much about the wonders of the wild and resourceful west."

Mr. Johnson has become buoyant with the spirit of the west. Every person he met, and he met a number of people from the maritime provinces, seemed ambitious, cheerful and confident in themselves and in the land of their adoption. He sees great possibilities in western Canada, and thinks that if "taken at the flood" the tide there will assuredly "lead on to fortune."

It is very difficult to realize, he says, how great is the extent of Canada's wheat belt and how great are her mineral resources. In some of the districts the farmers procure their supply of coal from their own property. On one farm he noticed a five-foot vein of coal. Another place of which he spoke was rich in iron ore, and it would be a matter of only a few years when those mines would be developed.

Some Qualities Required.

The young man who has lived in the east, he says, does not find it all sunshine when he starts homesteading in the west. It takes a boy with plenty of pluck, ambition, a stout heart and a good strong constitution to be successful. But when he sees what success others have achieved on their farms, doubts and fears are soon dispelled and he at once becomes imbued with the spirit of the west which is that of aggressiveness and progressiveness.

In the Red Willow district, where Rev. Mr. Johnson's son, Scott, is located, a wonderful transformation has taken place. A few years ago it was but a prairie waste strewn with the bones of the buffalo. Today it is filling in with bright young men. A line of railroad has been surveyed through this district and the settlers will soon have the road, when they will have much to ship after supplying the local demand. The soil in general is a deep rich black loam, easily worked and productive of excellent crops. With a fine climate, the best of soil, abundance of good water and adequate railroad facilities it will be, in a few years, one of the most prosperous sections of the west.

Three years ago the town site of Stettler was a blank prairie. On the trail through that town, worn by the feet of the buffalo on their way to the stream to drink, has been built a handsome little school house in which Miss Margaret Johnson, daughter of Rev. Mr. Johnson, teaches the sturdy little Canadians, who in future will help to build up the great west.

There is something fascinating in the life of the west, he says, that makes one equal to circumstances. Miss Johnson has learned to ride horseback, and rides to and from her school with the daring that is characteristic of the cow boy.

Impressions of Edmonton.

Of the young progressive cities Edmonton impressed Rev. Mr. Johnson most. The city has everything to warrant it being classed as a bright, hustling town. It is filled with enterprising citizens, who are doing their part toward building up a city that will draw men to it and the district round about. The city is beautifully situated on the north bank of the Saskatchewan river, commanding a magnificent view across the thickly wooded valley.

Situated as it is, it naturally lends itself to good drainage and sanitation. The city owns and operates its own electric light and telephone systems and water service. The business houses that have been erected within the last few years have been of the most substantial character, equal to the Royal Bank of Canada building at the corner of King and Canterbury streets in this city. Its citizens realize that it is growing, and growing fast. The builders cannot keep pace with the influx of population. Edmonton's retail stores are some of the best to be found in Canada outside of Toronto, Montreal and Winnipeg.

What has been said of Edmonton as a business town may be said of other growing towns, all tell the same story of development and prosperity.

The Edmonton district, he says, enjoys the finest climate to be found east of the Rocky Mountains. People of the east are usually under the impression that the weather is more severe there than in the maritime provinces. Nothing could be more erroneous than this impression. There is no getting away from the fact that there are low temperatures registered occasionally, but owing to the bright, clear and dry atmosphere, and the absence of strong winds, this is not unpleasant. It is a noticeable fact that it is never windy when it is cold. Windy days are an exception at any time. The snow when it falls lies perfectly flat, snow drifts and blizzards being almost unknown in the Edmonton district. There is rarely more snow than is required for sleighing.

The Crops.

From what he has seen and heard, Rev. Mr. Johnson says that the crop prospects in the west are very good and there is nothing to justify the reports circulated in the east to the effect that the wheat crop was wholly or partially a failure although in some localities reverses have been suffered. A failure in any one district is not noticed in the general prosperity of the whole.

The late cold spring had a depressing effect on new comers, but it did not discourage the older settlers who knew that a late seeded crop, under ordinary conditions, was a god one to harvest. The wild prophesies in the spring about crop failure staring the west in the face, he says, did not materialize. "The confidence of the western farmer in their country is unlimited," said Mr. Johnson in conclusion.

While in the city market Saturday morning, Joshua Corkery of Woodstock, who is in town attending a legal case, had some words with Rev. J. W. Kierstead, pastor of the Tabernacle Baptist church. Deputy Chief Jenkins placed Corkery under arrest, charged with being drunk and using abusive and insulting language. As Rev. Mr. Kierstead stated that he would not appear against him, a deposit of $8 was accepted on the drunkenness charge, and he was allowed to go.

Good hauls of sardines and large herring are now being made at the mouth of the harbor.