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The MARTIN-SENOUR Co.
LIMITED
GREENSHIELDS AVENUE, MONTREAL

A Child of Sorrow.

CHAPTER III.

The moment he had struck the blow Heroncourt saw the folly of the thing he had done. He ought to have collared the man, not felled him so savagely; but the cry of a woman was one of the few things that destroyed his self-command.

His remorse, if the word is not too strong, was increased by the expression of Maida's eloquent face as she turned to her. There was in it indignant horror of his violence, and something like shame—as if she were ashamed that she should have been the cause of the blow.

"Are you hurt?" he asked, as gently as he could.

She shook her head, and her deep grey eyes went beyond his face to the prostrate man, and the coldness in them softened to pity and concern.

"Are you sure—your wrist—you called out—he may have sprained it."

She shook her head again; this time with a touch of impatience.

"No, oh, no!" she replied, as coldly as the glance had rested on him. "I am not in the least hurt—but it was so sudden. He is hurt, poor man!"

She made a step toward the small crowd that had collected round the pickpocket as if she intended going to see for herself, perhaps to render assistance; but Heroncourt could not stand this.

"No, no!" he said, abruptly, almost in a tone of command. "Stay here, please. I will go and see."

He pushed his way through the

group as the man rose, wiping the blood from his lips and looking round him in a covert, furtive way. At sight of Heroncourt he would have bolted; but Heroncourt stood before him, and gripping him by the arm looked at him steadily.

"You appear to be all right, my man," he said. "Let this be a warning to you—but it won't, will it?" he put a sovereign into the grimy hand, instinctively held out for it, "and now take yourself off."

As he spoke he looked significantly towards a policeman, who was approaching with the regulation stride, and the thief, snatching his cap from the hand of a small, open-mouthed boy, dragged it over his forehead and slunk off quickly.

"A pickpocket. I have just prevented him robbing a lady. It's all right, officer," Heroncourt explained, and, leaving the policeman to disperse the crowd, he rejoined Maida.

"There was not much harm done," he said. "The fellow has quite recovered his senses and has gone off. I'm afraid I have frightened you more than he did—and I beg your pardon. I should like to say that I don't often lose my head quite so completely, but—well, I thought he had hurt you, and the mere idea of—of such a brute touching a lady—however, I'm sorry I was so hard on him, though I fancy he deserved it."

Maida was perfectly self-possessed; it is not your dreamy, artistic natures who are given to self-consciousness or hysterics, to nervous giggling or blushing; and the color that sprang to her face did not spring from shyness, but from indignation and womanly severity.

"How can you tell—"

Heroncourt stared at her.

"I mean how can you tell how sorely he was tempted? He may be very hungry, starving; there may be a wife, children at home wanting bread. He looked wretchedly poor and miserable—"

Heroncourt stared at her aghast, feeling as a criminal feels when the judge delivers his little lecture before sentence.

"Oh, come! he was just a common pickpocket," he remonstrated, "and I assure you that after pawning your bracelet he would have gone straight to the public-house. I noticed the fellow as he crept up to you. By the way, where is your bracelet?" he broke off to inquire, his keen eyes—the sportsman's eyes—flashing to her wrist.

Maida looked down, and her face fell. The bracelet was not there, but in its place a thin, scarlet line.

"There you are, you see! He has got it after all!" said Heroncourt, not with triumph, but with annoyance and chagrin. "What an idiot I was to let him go off before enquiring! I hope it was not of great value?"

"Oh, no, no!" she said, but with a touch of regret in her voice, and with something like a sigh: the bracelet was a present from Carrie. "It was just a simple thing, just a thin, plain band of gold; but—I'm sorry—"

"I might find him even now," said Heroncourt almost to himself, and, raising his hat, he was turning in pursuit when Maida put out her hand to stop him.

"Oh, no, don't, please! you could not overtake him. Let it go. Besides, it—it will be some compensation, consolation for that cruel blow—"

She checked herself and bit her lip, for by the expression of Heroncourt's

with a calm eye and a mind untroubled by desire. To Heroncourt a face she was reminded of the fact that, after all, the blow, cruel as it may have been, was struck on her behalf.

"You find it more easy to forgive him than me," he observed, rather drily.

"Why, of course," she said, her beautiful eyes resting on him as if she were surprised at the remark. He may have been an ordinary pickpocket—"

"He was, I give you my word!"

"But he was poor and—tempted. It is wrong of us to wear jewellery so openly. You have never known what it is to be tempted in that way."

"Well, perhaps not. There is something in that." He made the admission as a man does when he yields so that the argument may be prolonged. "A man looks at this sort of thing in a different light to women. Are you sure you are not hurt? There is a mark on your wrist: sometimes one gets a sprain without knowing it just at first."

Maida looked down at her wrist with a sudden dismay in her eyes.

"Oh, I hope not! How should I play?"

"Perhaps you would let me see. I have had some experience in hurts and wounds."

"Are you a doctor?" asked Maida, but not curiously. If he had replied in the affirmative, she would, of course, have had no hesitation in submitting her arm for his examination.

"A doctor? No," he said, taken aback, "but I know a sprain when I see it."

"Thank you—there is no need—I am sure it is not seriously hurt," she said, rather coldly, and, with a slight bow, turned away in search of a cab; but a moment afterwards she paused, and, her eyes resting on him with a milder consideration than they had as yet held, said:

"Oh, I have not thanked you yet. I am very much obliged." The words seemed even to her somewhat inadequate, and she added, rather lamely, "It was very kind of you to come to my assistance, and I am very grateful."

"With very little cause," he said, as he raised his hat. "Seeing that I didn't succeed in saving your bracelet, and that I have distressed you by my violence, I suppose I have done more harm than good, indeed, to have made a sad mess of it. I hope you'll forgive me—and let me call a cab for you."

"Forgive!" The rare smile shone in her eyes and made the sensitive, mobile lips tender for a moment.

"Oh, but that is too big a word! I am sorry I spoke as I did; but—you hit him so very hard!"

He hailed a hansom and helped her to get in.

"Where shall I tell the man to take you?"

"No. 28 Coleridge Street, please," she said; and once more the smile dawned in the deep grey eyes and curved the sweet lips.

For some time after the cab had driven away, Heroncourt stood looking after it reflectively, or rather absently, going over the whole incident bit by bit, his mind travelling back beyond the incident itself to the girl's appearance and performance at Lady Glassbury's.

He could not get rid of the impression she had made upon him. It was not her beauty, unusual and somewhat bizarre as it was, that had affected him—for Heroncourt was by no means a susceptible man; the boy who has had a surfeit of raspberry tarts can regard alluring confections



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pretty girl was, like the primrose to Peter Bell, a pretty girl and no more. If you met with her behind a restaurant bar, you paid her compliments; if she was a member of the smart set you paid her compliments, as in the former case, but presented her with flowers and books, and, if she was very far advanced, a small piece of jewellery, for the members of the smart set are not so particular and precise, alas! as the cheerful but exceedingly proper young ladies at the restaurants and railway-station refreshment rooms; if she was an actress you took her to the Star and Garter to dinner, to Romano's or the Carlton to supper, and gave her—not small—presents of jewellery, some little thing in the shape of a diamond bracelet or ruby and emerald ring.

Heroncourt knew how to behave in all these cases; but he felt that this girl from whom he had just parted could not be classed with any of the ladies above mentioned. She was a lady—and not one of the smart set. She was a girl with a girl's swift impulses and a girl's stainless purity—those eyes of hers had flashed upon him with the swift, candid indignation and rebuke of a child. Heaven and earth! he could feel them on him now. An other voice—the voice which had sounded so exquisitely gentle, so thrillingly tender in Etheledra's room—how cold it had been when she had brought herself to speak to him! She had made him feel a brute, a savage, a Whitechapel pugilist. It was the first time in his life that a woman had looked so and spoken to him in that way; and, much to his surprise, the memory of her indignation, her coldness, irritated, worried him. He felt as if he should like to prove to her that he was not so bad, so ruthless and callous, as she had thought him. He woke from his reverie, and with a shrug of his shoulders—for he felt that he was indulging in a kind of morbid remorse, for what? giving a beastly pickpocket no more than his due—retraced his steps.

(To be Continued.)

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