

The Triumphs of Eugène Valmont

of the madman in his calm countenance. His well-cut face, clean shaven, and strikingly manly, one of the pews was seated a woman—I learned afterwards she was Lady Alicia's maid, who had been instructed to come and go from the house by a back path, while we had taken the longer road. I returned and escorted Lady Alicia to the church, and there she was introduced to Mr. Haddon and his friend, the madman divine. The ceremony was at once performed, and I acted the part of a man of the world as I professed myself to be, though the acting of private theatricals in a church grated on me. When the maid and I were asked to sign the book as witnesses I said:

“Surely this is carrying realism a little too far.”

Mr. Haddon smiled, and replied:

“I am amazed to hear a Frenchman object to realism going to its full length, and speaking for myself, I should be delighted to see the autograph of the renowned Eugène Valmont,” and with that he handed me the pen, whereupon I scrawled my signature. The maid had already signed, and disappeared. The reputed clergyman bowed us out of the church, and we were sitting in the porch to see us walk up the avenue.

“Ed,” cried John Haddon, “I’ll be back in half an hour, and we’ll attend to the clock. Your mind waiting?”

“Not in the least, dear boy. God bless you and the tremor in his voice seemed to me carry realism one step farther still.

The Lady Alicia, with downcast head, hurried