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The Old Marquis

The Girl of the Cloisters

CHAPTER XXXIV.
BOUND TO WIN.

Seeing that every one knows all about the Badmore meeting, it would be a display of impertinence to attempt to describe it. Every one knows the aspect the little town—so quiet on all the other three hundred and sixty-four days in the year—puts on for the race day; how the streets are thronged with people more or less respectable; how every inn, however modest, is filled with crumming; how every house that is lettable is snapped up for the week at fancy prices, and how everybody, gentle and simple, in the place, is utterly absorbed and engrossed by the one great question: "What horse will win the Gentlemen's Race?"

Everybody also knows that the Badmore meeting is the most aristocratic race of the year; that the number of splendid equipages, and owners thereof, exceed by fourfold those which gather around any other course; and that, though the spectators are aristocratic, the betting runs higher than that which occurs either at the Derby or the Oaks.

On the morning which broke upon this particular Badmore day, the crowd was, if anything, larger than usual; the turnpike man was prepared to assert, on oath, if need be, that twice the number of carriages had passed through his gate than at any previous meeting; and, as a matter of fact, the seats in the grand stand ran to a premium which exceeded anything that had ever before been demanded. Royalty itself was present on a stand of its own; royalty as represented by a popular prince and princess surrounded by a bevy of personal friends.

In the enclosure, sacred—it is rather an incongruous word, by the way—to the fraternity of men who get their living by book-making, a vast crowd was surging to and fro howling the odds, and trying to out-yell each other; but above the din could be heard now and again the name of one horse, the "Assassin." Indeed, throughout the whole crowd his name was most frequently heard.

Little groups of men clustered in corners and whispered it; ladies murmured it behind their race-cards and fans, and the prince himself showed

a deep interest in the animal, who seemed to occupy the position of favorite.

Indeed, so great a favorite was he that the race would have been accorded to him by popular prophecy beforehand, but for that serious defect in him of which all were talking. And that defect was his temper.

"What sort of humor would Assassin be in?" That was the question they were asking. Would he be in good temper? If so, the Gentlemen's Race was his, and his owner and rider, Lord Fane's. But then he was so rarely in a good temper! It was well that the Assassin was a proud and haughty beast, upon whom yelling and hooting crowds had a maddening effect, and that it was quite within the bounds of possibility that at the moment of starting he might refuse to move, or sway around, and make a dash for the paddock he had just left.

The crowd knew that there was only one man who could ride him—and that was Lord Edgar—and they pinned their faith on him; and, relying on him so entirely, they grew impatient to see him, to judge for themselves whether the gentleman who was to ride Assassin was fit, and in good courage.

But while they were yelling his name, Lord Edgar sat in the parlor of Hollybank Villa—as the little house was called—smoking a cigar, and quietly waiting for the last moment. Until that arrived he was resolved not to appear.

There had been times when such an occasion as this would have been provocative of gratified pride and full of satisfaction; but he felt no pleasure in it this morning.

He sat in the little parlor quietly smoking his cigar, while notabilities of fashion and the turf came in, all eager to see and to greet him, and to exchange a word with the hero of the day—the man with whom the fate of their money rested.

He was quite cool. The Farintosh blood asserted itself on such occasions as this—and he was by far the most self-possessed of those around him—more self-possessed than Clifford Revel, who for once—amazing wonder!—looked pale and haggard.

So much so, so unusually so, that a great duke twined him upon it.

"Revel," he said, "you look as if you were going to ride Assassin, and Fane, here, looks as if he had laid against you. If you know how much depended on

it, your grace," he said, "you would not be surprised."

And there was a significance in his tone which they afterward remembered and noted. At last the moment had arrived when Lord Edgar must get down to the course and don the Farintosh blue silk, whether he had finished his cigar or not. He arose, and surrounded by a ring of what were nothing else but courtiers, strolled down to the paddock. Clifford Revel, who had scarcely left him for a moment, was still by his side, the haggard look upon his face quite as marked as before. It did not lessen as the portly form of Mr. Palmer broke through the crush, and that gentleman, respectfully touching Lord Edgar's arm to attract his attention, said:

"My lord, the marquis is here, and would be glad if you could see him for a moment."

"Impossible!" said Clifford Revel, with almost fierce impatience; "the time is nearly up."

But Lord Edgar turned calmly. "Certainly," he said. "Gentlemen, excuse me for a few minutes."

And, with a bow, he followed Palmer. Palmer led him to the marquis's carriage, which stood in the front line below the royal stand, to which the marquis had a few minutes before been summoned; and Lord Edgar seized his father's hand, extended to him through the open window.

"Come in," said the marquis. A footman opened the door and Lord Edgar got in.

"You are surprised to see me?" said the marquis.

"Yes, sir, I am!" replied Lord Edgar. "I trust you are better?"

The marquis put the question aside with a wave of his hand. "It is twenty years since I attended a race," he said, slowly. The impatience of the howling crowd could not hasten his speech by any means. I have come here to-day on your account."

"On mine, sir?" said Lord Edgar.

"Yes, I have been reading the papers," said the marquis, significantly. Lord Edgar smiled.

"You mean that I am not to attach any importance to them?" said the marquis. "Do you mean to assert that this horse you are to ride is not the evil-temper! beast they describe him?"

He asked the question in his calmest voice, but there was a curious light in his eyes.

"Assassin is not the best-tempered horse in the world, sir," said Lord Edgar, with a smile.

The marquis bit his lip. "Then it is true? I have only one word to say, Edgar: I have come here to say it. Do not ride this horse."

"Do not—!" Lord Edgar started.

"Yes; do not ride him."

Lord Edgar laughed. It was a quiet laugh, but it was an answer enough.

"Yes, I know," said the marquis, with calm incisiveness. "You are going to talk about honor. Honor means, as a rule, money; I care nothing about either. If money is wanted should you decline to ride the horse, I am prepared to pay; the amount is indifferent to me."

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Lord Edgar smiled. "I don't think you would say so if you knew the amount," he said. "But money is not the principal question: I have engaged to ride the horse and I intend doing so. My honor is concerned, sir."

The marquis drew a long breath. "Very good," he said, in a low voice. "I have done."

Lord Edgar arose. The marquis held out his hand.

"Shake hands," he said, and there was a curious look in his eyes. "I think you are right, after all. Go and win if you can. I shall remain until the result is made known. And, Edgar—"

"Yes, sir," said Lord Edgar, still holding the thin, white hand.

"Let by-gones be by-gones between us," said the marquis, looking him full in the face. "I wish it!"

"So be it, sir," said Lord Edgar, fervently.

"Go," said the marquis, and— He did not finish the sentence, probably because he remembered in time that Heaven was not any the more likely to bless his son because the marquis desired it. But Lord Edgar could fill in the blank quite easily.

"Good-by, sir," he said. "I shall see you after the race. You will find that I shall win; Assassin is the best horse on the list," and for the first time that day he laughed in his wonted fashion.

The marquis clung to his son's strong hand with a clasp that was more real and fervent than Lord Edgar had ever before received.

"Be careful!" he said, and the cold, haughty voice trembled slightly. "Be careful! Remember you are the last of the Fanes!"

Lord Edgar flushed suddenly. "I shall be careful, sir, if not for my own sake, for—others." He paused before the word, but mentally he added "for Lela's!"

While they had been talking the uproar in the crowd had been increasing. A rumor had spread that Lord Edgar had, at the last moment, refused to ride; and the air was filled with his name.

Scarcely hearing them he went to the stable tent. Clifford Revel stood there waiting for him, surrounded by a circle of the elite.

Lord Edgar, much cheered by his father's kind words, put his hand on Clifford Revel's shoulder.

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"Where have they put him?" he asked.

Clifford Revel led him to the stall in which the horse stood, and Lord Edgar went up and patted him. As he did so he noticed a man, a low-browed, limping stable-help, who stood near, and with a keen tone that was new to Clifford Revel, said:

"Who is that fellow, and what is he doing here?"

Clifford Revel tossed his head. "He's a stable-help," he said. "Our regular man is laid up; Assassin kicked him the day before yesterday, and I took this man on."

Lord Edgar smiled.

"Poor fellow!" he said. "He might have had a more pre-possessing countenance."

Then, eagerly watched by the group, he went up to the horse and spoke to him.

The horse usually knew him well. So well that if Lord Edgar entered the stable he would turn his head and whinny. But this morning he seemed to have forgotten him, and lashed out with his hind legs and showed his teeth.

"It is the noise," said Lord Edgar. "He will be all right when he is saddled, won't you, Assassin?" and he put his hand upon the beast's neck. To the surprise of all, the animal kicked out furiously.

But Lord Edgar seemed unmoved, and it was not until the rest had departed that he said to Clifford Revel:

(To be Continued.)

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Germany

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THE FINAL REPLY.
LONDON, June 16. The peace terms to be presented to Germany to-day are the final reply of the Allies, said Mr. Bonar Law, Govt. spokesman in the House of Commons, in opening the victory loan campaign at the Guild Hall to-day. The Speaker said he hoped earnestly the Germans would sign the terms. "It is for them to choose within five days," Mr. Bonar Law added; "they must sign or the armistice is at an end. There must be a just peace, but a just peace must be a stern peace." The speaker said that the chief of the British Staff had declared that twenty-three different wars were now going on, and added; "It is not all over. It is quite possible by want of wisdom, by absence of restraint, by disunion among the Allies, and by want of unity at home, to lose not the victory but the full force of the victory which has been bought so dearly."

THE LIMIT FIVE DAYS.
VERSAILLES, June 16. The delivery of the Allied reply to the German counter proposals which was set for four o'clock this afternoon, was postponed at that hour until six o'clock this evening. The revised Treaty will be delivered with the reply. The provision for civil control of the territory on the left bank of the Rhine which had been tentatively agreed upon, was eliminated from the final draft of the terms. The German plenipotentiaries will sign a reply for the Treaty, writing upon it the exact time from which the five days' limit which they must sign or reject the document will date.

WILL ASK FURTHER EXTENSION.
PARIS, June 16. It is anticipated generally that the Germans will ask for an extension of time in which to reply to the final peace conditions. The request, it is believed, will be based on the fact that the Germans were given only one revised copy of the Treaty. The copy to be received by the Germans will be in French and English and must be translated and printed before it is placed before the German National Assembly at Weimar. It is expected that the translation and printing will take at least 24 hours.

TIME EXTENDED.
PARIS, June 16. The Germans have been granted an additional forty-eight hours in which to make their reply regarding the signing of the Peace Treaty.

NO TIME FOR PRINTING.
PARIS, June 16. The delivery of the Allied reply will not be in printed form. There is no time to print the revised documents. Count Von Brodorff Rantzau will be handed a copy of the original Treaty with the changes in red ink. Ninety-nine other copies will be handed to other German plenipotentiaries. They will make the changes themselves from the first.

WANTED TO GET JOB DONE.
GALWAY, Ireland, June 16. Speaking of the flight Alcock said it was difficult to sum up his impressions. He had no sense of remoteness, as any sense of loneliness had been worn off by previous night flying. He had no thought of what he was flying over but was only intent in getting across. "We wanted to get the job done, and we were jolly well pleased when we saw the coast." He believes the secret of long distance flying under similar conditions is to nurse the engines. He never opened the throttle once. Following the wind the machine averaged 130 miles an hour. Alcock said that he wore electrically heated clothes, but that the machine was so snug it was unnecessary to switch on the current. The aviators leave Galway for London this afternoon at 2.25.

WANTS TO HONOR FLIERS.
WASHINGTON, June 16. A resolution authorizing the Pres-



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