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(L. S.)
To the Sheriff of the County of Northumberland or any Constable in the said County:—
GREETING,

Whereas John S. Pond, Administrator of the estate and effects which were of Margaret Bubar, late of the Parish of Ludlow in the County of Northumberland, and province of New Brunswick, widow, deceased, hath prayed that he may appear to pass the accounts of the said estate: You are therefore required to cite the heirs, next of kin, creditors and any persons interested in the estate of the deceased, to appear before the Judge of Probate for the County of Northumberland at a Probate court to be held in the Council Chamber in the Town Hall in the Town of Chatham, in the said County, on Friday the eighth day of November next at eleven o'clock in the forenoon for the purpose of showing cause, if any, why the said accounts should not be passed and the estate distributed as prayed for.

Given under my hand and seal of the said Court, this Twentieth day of July, A. D., 1907.
(Signed)

R. A. LAWLOR,
Judge of Probate,
County of Northumberland.
(Signed)

G. D. FRASER,
Register of Probate
for said County.

With Edged Tools

By HENRY SETON MERRIMAN
Author of "The Savers," "Roderic's Career," "From One Generation to Another," etc.
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He could not have done it better in his keenest day. Guy Osgard was



"Ah—Mr. Osgard—how do you do?"
seated in the huge, roomy carriage before he had realized what had happened to him.

"Your man will look after your traps. I suppose?" said Sir John, hospitably drawing the fur rug from the opposite seat.

"Yes," replied Guy; "although he is not my man. He is Jack's man Joseph."

"Ah, of course! Excellent servant too. Jack told me he had left him with you."

Sir John leaned out of the window and asked the footman whether he knew his colleague Joseph, and upon receiving an answer in the affirmative he gave orders, acting as Guy's mouthpiece, that the luggage was to be conveyed to Russell square.

"Yes," replied Osgard, with a transparent reserve which rather puzzled Sir John.

"You must excuse me," said the old gentleman, sitting rather stiffly, "if I appear to take a somewhat limited interest in this great matrimonial discovery, of which there has been considerable talk in some circles. The limit to my interest is drawn by a lamentable ignorance. I am afraid the business details are rather unintelligible to me. My son has endeavored, somewhat cursorily perhaps, to explain the matter to me, but I have never mastered the—or—commercial technicalities. However, I understand that you have made quite a mint of money, which is the chief consideration—nowadays."

He drew the rug more closely round his knees and looked out of the window, deeply interested in a dispute between two cabmen.

"Yes—we have been very successful," said Osgard. "How is your son now? When I last saw him he was in a very bad way. Indeed, I hardly expected to see him again."

Sir John was still interested in the dispute which was not yet settled.

"He is well, thank you. You know that he is going to be married."

"He told me that he was engaged," replied Osgard, "but I did not know that anything definite was fixed."

"The most definite thing of all is fixed—the date. It is tomorrow."

"Tomorrow?"

"Yes. You have not much time to prepare your wedding garments."

"Oh," replied Osgard, with a laugh, "I have not been bidden."

"I expect the invitation is awaiting you at your house. No doubt my son will want you to be present—they would both like you to be there no doubt. But come with me now, we will call and see Jack. I know where to find him. In fact, I have an appointment with him at a quarter to six."

It may seem strange that Guy Osgard should not have asked the name of his friend's prospective bride, but Sir John was ready for that. He gave his companion no time. Whenever he opened his lips Sir John turned Osgard's thoughts aside.

What he had told him was strictly true. He had an appointment with Jack—an appointment of his own making.

was not a very deep person. He was subtly indifferent to the long drawn motive. He presumed that Sir John made friends of his son's friends and in his straightforward acceptance of facts he was perfectly well aware that by his timely rescue he had saved Jack Meredith from the hands of the tribes. The presumption was that Sir John knew of this, and it was only natural that he should be somewhat exceptionally gracious to the man who had saved his son's life.

It would seem that Sir John divined these thoughts, for he presently spoke of them.

"Owing to an unfortunate difference of opinion with my son we have not been very communicative lately," he said, with that deliberation which he knew how to assume when he desired to be heard without interruption.

"I am therefore almost entirely ignorant of your African affairs, but I imagine Jack owes more to your pluck and promptness than has yet transpired. I gathered as much from one or two conversations I had with Miss Gordon when she was in England. I am one of Miss Gordon's many admirers."

"And I am another," said Osgard frankly.

"Ah! Then you are happy enough to be the object of a reciprocal feeling which for myself I could scarcely expect. She spoke of you in no measured language. I gathered from her that if you hadn't acted with great promptitude the—er—happy event of tomorrow could not have taken place."

The old man paused, and Guy Osgard, who looked somewhat distressed and distinctly uncomfortable, could find no graceful way of changing the conversation.

"In a word," went on Sir John in a very severe tone, "I owe you a great debt. You saved my boy's life."

"Yes, but you see," argued Osgard, finding his tongue at last, "out there things like that don't count for so much."

"Oh, don't they? There was the suggestion of a smile beneath Sir John's grim eyebrows.

"It is a sort of thing that happens every day out there."

Sir John turned suddenly, and with the courtliness that was ever his indulgence in a rare exhibition of feeling. He laid his hand on Guy Osgard's stalwart knee.

"My dear Osgard," he said, and when he chose he could render his voice very soft and affectionate, "none of those arguments apply to me because I am not out there. I like you for trying to make little of your exploit. Such conduct is worthy of you, worthy of a gentleman; but you cannot disguise the fact that Jack owes his life to you and I owe you the same, which between you and me I may mention, is more valuable to me than my own. I want you to remember always that I am your debtor, and if—if circumstances should ever seem to indicate that we are not on equal terms, do not hesitate to remind me of it, and do me the honor of discharging those indications. You understand?"

"Yes," replied Osgard untruthfully.

"Here we are at Lady Cantourne's," continued Sir John, "where, as it happens, I expect to meet Jack. Her ladyship is naturally interested in the affair of tomorrow, and has kindly undertaken to keep us up to date in our behavior. You will come in with me?"

Osgard remembered afterward that he was rather puzzled, that there was perhaps in his simple mind the faintest tinge of suspicion. At the moment, however, there was no time to do anything but follow. The man had already rung the bell and Lady Cantourne's butler was holding the door open. There was something in his attitude, vaguely suggestive of expectation. He never took his eyes from Sir John Meredith's face, as if on the alert for an unspoken order.

Guy Osgard followed his companion into the hall, and the very scent of the house—for each house speaks to more senses than one—made his heart leap in his broad breast. It seemed as if Meredith's presence was in the very air. This was more than he could have hoped. He had not intended to call this afternoon, although the visit was only to have been postponed for twenty-four hours.

Sir John Meredith's face was a marvel to see. It was quite steady. He was upright and alert, with all the intrepidity of his mind up in arms. There was a light in his eyes, a gleam of light from other days not yet burned out.

He laid aside his gold headed cane and threw back his shoulders.

"Is Mr. Meredith upstairs?" he said to the butler.

"Yes, sir. You will come in with me?"

The man moved toward the stairs. "You need not come!" said Sir John, holding up his hand.

The butler stood aside and Sir John led the way up to the drawing room.

At the door he paused for a moment. Guy Osgard was at his heels. Then he opened the door rather slowly and motioned gracefully with his left hand to Osgard to pass in before him.

Osgard stopped forward. When he had crossed the threshold Sir John

CHAPTER XXIII

GUY OSGARD stood for a moment on the threshold. He heard the door closed behind him, and he took two steps farther forward.

Jack Meredith and Millicent were at the fireplace. There was a heap of disordered paper and string upon the table, and a few wedding presents standing in the midst of their packing.

Millicent's pretty face was quite white. She looked from Meredith to Osgard with a quiver in her eyes. For the first time in her life she was at a loss, quite taken aback.

"Oh-h!" she whispered, and that was all.

The silence that followed was tense, as if something in the atmosphere was about to snap, and in the midst of it the wheels of Sir John's retreating carriage came to the ears of the three persons in the drawing room.

It was only for a moment, but at that moment the two men saw clearly. It was as if the veil from the girl's mind had fallen—leaving her thoughts confessed, bare before them. In the same instant they both saw—they both sped back in thought to their first meeting, to the hundred links of the chain that brought them to the present moment—they knew; and Millicent felt that they knew.

"Are you going to be married tomorrow?" asked Guy Osgard deliberately. He never was a man to whom a successful appeal for the slightest mitigation of justice could have been made. His dealings had ever been with men, from whom he had exacted as scrupulous an honor as he had given. He did not know that women are different—that honor is not their strong point.

Millicent did not answer. She looked to Meredith to answer for her, but Meredith was looking at Osgard, and in his lazy eyes there glowed the singular affection and admiration which he had bestowed long time before on this simple gentleman—his marital inferior.

"Are you going to be married tomorrow?" repeated Osgard, standing quite still, with a calmness that frightened her.

"Yes," she answered, rather feebly. She knew that she could explain it all. She could have explained it to either of them separately, but to both together, somehow it was difficult. Her mind was filled with clamorous arguments and explanations and plausible excuses, but she did not know which to select first. None of them seemed quite equal to this occasion.

These men required something deeper and stronger and simpler than she had to offer them.

Moreover, she was paralyzed by a feeling that was quite new to her—a horrid feeling that something had gone from her. She had lost her strongest, her single arm—her beauty. This seemed to have fallen from her. It seemed to count for nothing at this time. This is a time that comes as surely as death will come in the life of every beautiful woman—a time wherein she suddenly realizes how trivial a thing her beauty is; how limited, how useless, how ineffectual!

Millicent chyne made a little appealing movement toward Meredith, who reluctantly stepped back. It was the magic of the love that filled his heart for Osgard. Had she wronged any man in the world but Guy Osgard, that little movement, full of love and tenderness and sweet contrition, might have saved her. But it was Osgard's heart that she had broken; for broken they both knew it to be, and Jack Meredith stepped back from her touch from pollution. His superficial, imagined love for her had been killed at a single blow. Her beauty was no more to him at that moment than the beauty of a picture.

"Oh, Jack!" she gasped; and had there been another woman in the room that woman would have known that Millicent loved him with the love that comes once only. But men are not very acute in such matters; they either read wrong or not at all.

"It is all a mistake," she said breathlessly, looking from one to the other.

"A most awkward mistake," suggested Meredith, with a cruel smile that made her wince.

"Mr. Osgard must have mistaken me altogether," the girl went on, volubly addressing herself to Meredith; she wanted nothing from Osgard. "I may have been silly, perhaps, or merely ignorant and blind. How was I to know that he meant what he said?"

"How, indeed?" agreed Meredith, with a grave bow.

"Besides, he has no business to come here bringing false accusations against me. He has no right—it is cruel and ungentlemanly. He cannot prove anything; he cannot say that I ever distinctly gave him to understand—anything—that I ever promised to be engaged or anything like that!"

She turned upon Osgard, whose demeanor was stolid, almost dense. He looked very large and somewhat difficult to move.

"He has not attempted to do so yet," suggested Jack suavely, looking at his friend.

"I do not see that it is quite a question of proofs," said Osgard quietly in a voice that did not sound like his at all. "We are not in a court of justice, where ladies like to settle these questions now. If we were I could challenge you to produce my letters. There is no doubt of my meaning in that."

"There are also my poor contributions to your collection," chimed in Jack Meredith. "A comparison must have been interesting to you, by the same small presumably, under the same postmark."

"I made no comparison," the girl cried defiantly; "there was no question of comparison."

"She was it shamelessly, and it hurt Meredith more than it hurt Guy Osgard, for whom the sting was intended. "Comparison or no comparison," said Jack Meredith quickly, with the keenness of a good fencer who has been touched, "there can be no doubt of the fact that you were engaged to us both at the same time. You told us both to go out and make a fortune where-with to buy your affections. One can only presume that the highest bidder—the owner of the largest fortune—was to be the happy man. Unfortunately, we became partners, and—such was the power of your fascinations—we made the fortune, but we share and share alike in that. We are equal, so far as the price is concerned. The situation is interesting and rather amusing. It is your turn to move. We await your further instructions in considerable suspense."

She stared at him with bloodless lips. She did not seem to understand what he was saying. At last she spoke, ignoring Guy Osgard's presence altogether.

"Considering that we are to be married tomorrow, I do not think that you should speak to me like that," she said, with a strange, concentrated eagerness.

"Pardon me, we are not going to be married tomorrow."

Her brilliant teeth closed on her lower lip with a snap, and she stood looking at him, breathing so hard that the sound was almost a sob.

"What do you mean?" she whispered hoarsely.

He raised his shoulders in polite surprise at her dullness of comprehension. "In the unfortunate circumstances in which you are placed," he explained, "it seems to me that the least one can do is to offer every assistance in one's power. Please consider me hours de concours. In a word—I scratch."

She gasped like a swimmer swimming for life. She was fighting for that which some deem dearer than life—namely, her love. For it is not only the good women who love, though these understand it best and see further into it.

"Then you can never have cared for me," she cried. "All that you have told me—and her eyes flashed triumphantly across Osgard—"all that you have promised and vowed was utterly false if you turn against me at the first word of a man who was carried away by his own vanity into thinking things that he had no business to think."

If Guy Osgard was no great adept at wordy warfare, he was at all events strong in his reception of punishment. He stood upright and quiescent, betraying by neither sign nor movement that her words could hurt him.

"I beg to suggest again," said Jack composedly, "that Osgard has not yet brought any accusations against you. You have brought them all yourself."

"You are both cruel and cowardly," she exclaimed, suddenly descending to vituperation. "Two to one. Two men—gentlemen—against one defenceless girl. Of course I am not able to argue with you. Of course you can get the best of me. It is so easy to be sarcastic."

"I do not imagine," retorted Jack, "that anything that we can say or do will have much permanent power of hurting you. For the last two years you have been engaged in an intrigue such as a thin skinned or sensitive person would hardly of her own free will undertake. You may be able to explain it to yourself—no doubt you are—but to our more limited comprehensions it must remain inexplicable. We can only judge from appearances."

"And, of course, appearances go against me. They always do against a woman," she cried rather brokenly.

"You would have been wise to have taken that peculiarity into consideration sooner," replied Jack Meredith coldly. "I admit that I am puzzled. I cannot quite get at your motive. Presumably it is one of those sweet feminine inconsistencies which are so charming in books."

There was a little pause. Jack Meredith waited politely to hear if she had anything further to say. His clean cut face was quite pallid. The suppressed anger in his eyes was perhaps more difficult to meet than open fury. The man who never forgets himself before a woman is likely to be an absolute master of women.

"I think," he added, "that there is nothing more to be said."

There was a dead silence. Millicent Chyne glanced toward Guy Osgard. He could have saved her yet by a simple lie. Had he been an impossibly magnanimous man, such as one meets in books only, he could have explained that the mistake was all his, that she was quite right, that his own vanity had blinded him into a great and unwarranted presumption. But, unfortunately, he was only a human being, a man who was ready to give as full a measure as he exacted. The unfortunate mistake to which he clung was that the same sense of justice, the same code of honor, must serve for men and women alike. So Millicent Chyne looked in vain for that indulgence which is so inconsistently offered to women, merely because they are women, the indulgence which is sometimes given and sometimes withheld, according to the softness of the masculine heart and the beauty of the suppliant feminine form. Guy Osgard was quite sure of his own impressions. This girl had allowed him to begin loving her, had encouraged him to go on, had led him to believe that his love was returned. And in his simple ignorance of the world he did not see why these matters should be locked up in his own breast from a mistaken sense of chivalry to be accorded where no chivalry was due.

"No," he answered. "There is nothing more to be said."



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