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The Countess of Landon.

CHAPTER XVI.

The countess stood aside and Irene entered, and crossing the room, knelt and picked up the diamonds. As she rose she staggered a little. She was exhausted by the mental strain she had undergone, and the countess put her arm round her.

"You are ill, Irene," she said. "No, not ill, but—but, oh, so unhappy, madame!" she said; and she laid her face on the countess's bosom. As she did so, she saw traces of tears on the black satin, and she looked up into the proud, handsome face appealingly.

"You are unhappy, too," she said, tenderly, appealingly. "It was you I heard."

"Never mind me," said the countess. "Something has happened. What is it?" Irene hid her face.

"Seymour has asked me to be his wife," she said in a low voice. "The countess's arm tightened, and Irene thought she felt her shudder. "Seymour! Well?"

"Oh, madam, I could not—I could not!" whispered Irene. "You could not?" said the countess, with forced calm. "Why not? You do not love him? Is that it?"

"Yes," came the whispered response. "Yes, I told him so, but—but he was very angry, and said things—"

She stopped. The countess smoothed the golden hair which had fallen loose over Irene's forehead and neck, almost shrouding her face.

"He said things about—Royce?" said the countess, slowly. "Yes, yes! Things that were not true. Oh, madame, if you will only let me speak—if you will only listen to me, and let me tell you what I have heard to-night—"

The countess seemed about to remove her arm, but Irene clung and nestled against her closely, appealingly.

"One of the officers from the garrison told me—the one who sat next to me. He knows everything, the whole truth—the truth, madame, and he says that Royce was not to blame, that he need not have left the army, that he might go back if—If Seymour would take his part. It is true! All his brother-officers are on Royce's side. Ah, if you had heard this gentleman speak of him. Everybody loves him and admires him—everybody; and, ah, think of it, dear madame—how cruel we have been to him! We have sent him away in disgrace, when all the while he was not to blame, but ought to have had our pity and sympathy. Oh, madame, dear dear madame, you would not let me say anything for him the day he went away, but you will let me speak now? You will forgive him—why, there is nothing to forgive! It is he who must forgive us. You will find him and let him come back? You will, for—your own sake—for—"

she pressed her face, suddenly burning hot, against the countess's bosom, and whispered, as if with shame, the last words—"for mine!"

The countess stood silent for a moment; then Irene, glancing up timidly, saw that the tears were coursing down the proud face.

"Is—Is this true?" came from the quivering lips at last. "Are you sure it is true?"

"It is true! I will answer for it with my life—every word," responded Irene, striking on her knees and winding her white arms round the countess. "You will forgive him—you will take him back? Ah, I see you will! Think, dear, he may be wandering about the world penniless, perhaps hungry and ill!"

The countess put out her hand and let it fall tremblingly on Irene's head. "Hush—hush!" she murmured, brokenly. "I—I can not bear any more! If it be true, then—" She stopped suddenly and caught her breath. "Yes, Irene, he must come back! My heart is breaking with longing to see him! My boy—my boy!" She sunk into a chair, and it was now Irene's turn to try to soothe and calm. The outburst of the mother's yearning was almost terrible.

"Oh, don't cry so!" murmured Irene. "Be calm, dear! We will find him and bring him home, and then we will all be happy. Oh, to think of having Royce home again—all to ourselves! And he shall go back to the army, and—and he will make a great name for himself and make you proud of him, and—and—"

she broke off with a half-laughing sob—"Oh, madame, I am so happy! I know it will all come right now, dear. Royce will forgive us. You know how tender and gentle he is at heart, for all his recklessness. He will forgive me, and you will be happy once more, dear. Let me stay and help to undress you? May I stay with you all night? I should love to! We shall not sleep, perhaps, either of us; but we can talk of Royce, dear Royce!"

She put her arms round the countess and kissed her lovingly, and was beginning to unfasten the lace round her neck, the countess submitting, when a knock was heard at the door.

Both women started, and the countess rose and dashed the tears from her eyes, as if afraid lest her weakness should be seen by a second person.

"Who can it be, madame? Louise, the maid?"

"No; I have sent her to bed," said the countess in a low voice. Then she said aloud, "Who is there?"

"I, Seymour," came the response. "I want to see you for a moment."

The countess laid her hand upon Irene's arm to reassure her, then went and opened the door.

He started as he saw Irene, and stood silent for a moment. His face had flushed, and wore a thinly veiled expression of triumph.

"Forgive me for disturbing you, dear mother," he said; "but I have just heard important news of Royce." Irene caught at the countess's arm. Seymour glanced at her, but still addressed the countess.

"It is bad news, I am sorry to say."

"Bad news?" echoed the countess, under her breath.

"Alas, yes! But I am afraid we could scarcely hope for good," he murmured.

"What is it?" demanded the countess, her voice strained and hard, as if

she were preparing herself for the worst. Irene stood with her eyes fixed upon him, holding her breath.

"He has joined a gang of rascals," said Seymour. The countess's hand closed spasmodically and her face grew pale.

"It is not true," breathed Irene. "I am afraid it is but too true. After all, it is just what might be expected of Royce, with his love of low and degrading company. Besides—"

He hesitated. The countess mentioned him to go on.

"Well, such subjects should not be whispered in the hearing of dear Irene; but I fear Royce has some object—inducement. There is, as usual, a woman in the case. One of the low women belonging to the gang—"

"It is a lie!" The exclamation came from Irene. She had withdrawn her hand from the countess's arm and stood confronting him.

He bit his lip. "I can understand your reluctance to credit such infamy, even on the part of Royce; but I have it on good authority. Giles, the second groom, has seen Royce, and heard the whole story of his—let us say, in charity—entanglement."

The countess's head drooped for a moment, then she raised it, her face pale and set.

"Where did he see him?" she asked. "At Markham Fair. He was with the gang, dressed like one of them—in fact, looked, so Giles says, as if he had been born and bred among them."

A strange expression, crossed the countess's face as she looked at him. "It is not true—it is not true—madame! Do not believe it!" panted Irene.

The countess seemed to wake from a dream. "Be quiet, Irene," she said in a low, stern voice. "We can soon learn whether it is true or false. I will go to him."

"And I!" said Irene, under her breath. This did not at all suit Seymour, and for a moment his face fell, then he looked up with a hypocritical sigh.

"You are right, as you always are, mother. Low as Royce has sunk, we must try, and remember that he is of our blood, and if possible save him, even in spite of himself. We will all go to him. He may listen to one of us, and—er—perhaps be induced to leave the country and spare us further shame and humiliation," and he retired, leaving the two women standing as if turned to stone.

CHAPTER XVII.

It was rather more than a week after Markham Fair, and the glory of the setting sun added a deeper crimson to the turning leaves, and made pillars of bronze of the trees in the glade in which the caravans were pitched. For immediately after Markham Fair the tribe had again divided, and the portion encamped in the glade was that which Royce had first joined.

The camp-fire was lighted, and the children were playing round it, and getting in the way of the women who were preparing the evening meal. Old Davy, seated against the wheel of a caravan, was busy mending harness. Lottie was at basket-work near him, and the rest of the gang were an evidence, as the French say, excepting Mr. Jack and Madge.

Her caravan stood a little apart from the rest, but the door was closed, and Tony sat on the steps playing disconsolately with a wooden horse which "Mr. Jack" had bought in the last fair for him.

A most exasperatingly savory smell rose from the great pot which Mother Katie was stirring, and presently, with the sigh of satisfaction which a good cook breathes when her work is nearing completion, she said: "Supper is anigh ready."

She straightened her back and looked round. "Run and tell Madge," she said to Lottie.

Lottie rose and sauntered to the van. She came back, and, with her great eyes opened on the pot, said: "Madge ain't there, mother." Mother Katie clicked impatiently. "Or wandering in the woods, as usual, I suppose," she said. "I never know such a one for rambling about."

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Former Bitter Enemies

MEET TO-DAY AS FRIENDS.

PLEMONS, Texas, March 28—(A.P.)—Fifty years ago at a lonely spot called Adobe Walls, in what is now Hutchinson County, a few miles from here, 700 Indians attacked 38 white men and one woman in a buffalo hunters' camp. From dawn until night the white men fought for their lives, finally driving off the Indians.

On June 27 the children and grandchildren of these "sure hot" plainsmen and the descendants of the Indians who attacked them, with possibly two of the white participants in the battle, are to gather at the same spot, still almost as lonely, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of that bitter fight and to erect a monument over the graves of the 3 white men who were killed.

Several thousand people of the north Panhandle of Texas, western Oklahoma and southwestern Kansas are expected to attend the celebration which is planned for two days.

The fight lasted throughout the day, the little band of white men stopping only long enough to cool their guns. Finally the Indians saw more numbers could not prevail against marksmanship, and at night withdrew, leaving 13 dead behind and carrying many more away with them.

The only two living survivors of the battle are Andy Johnson of Dodge City, Kansas, and Fred Leonard of Salt Lake City.

Teaching Children Self-Confidence

Is your child shy when presented to guests? Some mothers suffer acutely because their offspring "behaves so badly" when spoken to by people they do not know. Many children become dumb on occasions when fond parents long for them to create a favorable impression owing to a dread of being laughed at or misunderstood.

Lack of sympathy on the part of "grown-ups" often tends to check the spontaneous enthusiasm of a child. Self-expression—which is so great an asset in life—if checked in childhood may become increasingly difficult as the child grows up.

One mother, whose children were always perry shy and backward in the presence of visitors, solved the problem by encouraging her children to make speeches in a sufficiently proficient manner. Sunday, at lunch time, was the usual day when this game (for such it soon became) was played. One of the children proposed a toast; another spoke for two or three minutes on some given subject that was simple and well within his or her scope of observation. The household pets, signs of spring, the wireless concert formed the subjects.

The endeavor to be interesting developed, and nervousness was soon overcome. They were urged to speak simply and evolve their own ideas, each in turn was listened to with attention. Occasionally the "speech" would be prepared, but was usually impromptu.

The eyes of the world are on the Chevrolet—watch Chevrolet lead. mar14,101,ead

Vengeance of Pagan Gods Wreaked on Temple Violators

Honolulu, March 2 (A.P.)—The gods of ancient Hawaii again wreaked their vengeance upon the whites who made merry upon the site of a former heiau, or old-time temple of worship, according to Hawaiian superstition, when the famous clubhouse of the Order of Eke on the beach at Waikiki was damaged by fire to the extent of \$55,000.

The flames, caused by defective wiring, were the last of a series of untoward events, including murder, that occurred at the site of the heiau, which nestles at the foot of Diamond Head. According to Hawaiian medicine men, only evil will come to those who desecrate the site of an ancient heiau.

The clubhouse was built many years ago by the late James B. Castle, a descendant of the missionaries who came from New England to the islands in 1820, as a residence for his family. During the occupancy of the Castle family two Japanese were murdered in the grounds and attention was called at that time to the tradition of the heiau.

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France and Her "Black Empire"

"The French General Staff have recently taken a most important decision which is the complement of the measures for maintaining a black army. For years Frenchmen have debated several schemes for building a railway from the French North African provinces to the rivers of West Africa. This is a matter of some 2,000 miles. Whatever route was chosen, such a line must run across the vast tract of the Sahara desert. It could have no commercial justification unless minerals were found in large quantities, and of that there is no sign," writes Mr. W. P. Crozier, in the New Republic.

"Yet the War Council and the Supreme Council of National Defence have now sanctioned the construction of a line from the Algerian railways through the centre of the Sahara to the upper waters of the Niger. There it would be linked on to the railway lines in Senegal and the other provinces which are already built or building.

"It can have no other object than to carry the West African army northwards to the Mediterranean as an alternative to the long and dangerous sea route which follows the African coast and passes through the narrows at Gibraltar.

"That 130,000 African blacks actually fought in France is a hard fact. That 65,000 of them are now stationed in Europe and are to be a permanent part of the European establishment; that the existing army scheme provides for a three years' native service under which between one-half and three-quarters of a million blacks will be available; that the machinery will be instantly ready for training several million more; that the proposed railway is to be made for no other purpose than to carry these forces to France; and that France, pursuing peace as a barely suppressed form of war, is being inexorably driven to augment her man-power by any means, however deplorable—all these are hard facts and not rhetoric. "It is not unlikely that this question will in a few years become one of the most disturbing elements in European politics. The neighbours of France will not contentedly contemplate the use against them of hordes of Africans. They will improve a method which they believe is engaging to the self-respect of Europe and of the white man."

Would an Education Have Spoiled Lincoln?

"Arthur Brisbane thinks that it would. This editorial writer, whose words are set before the eyes of millions every morning, is of the opinion that Lincoln could not have gone through an American college without having lost that intensity of purpose and moral vigour which made him what he was. 'Four years in college,' writes Mr. Brisbane, 'might have found him saying:—Well, there are two sides to the question. Someone must produce the cotton for England's mills and for the upkeep of a cultured class in the South, and, after all, you'll notice that God did make those Negroes of a different color. That's how the young college graduate talks of to-day's labor problems.'"

"Mr. Brisbane has at least this justification for his conjecture: he has merely reproduced the precise thing that did happen in the case of many

a man of the period," says the Christian Century. "And it must not be forgotten that it is one of the purposes of an education to enable men to look on the world from more angles of vision, so that what might be called the philosopher's paralysis always lies in wait for the young Graduate. "All colleges need to guard against this. In particular, the current practice of requiring students to uphold any point of view in a debate, merely as an exercise in forensic dexterity, is a crime against the soul of youth. When College tends to dilettantism, or to a loss of ethical fervour, it is a distinctly unworthy social factor. The fact that Mr. Brisbane would write such an editorial suggests that it is a problem most of the colleges need to wrestle with—Public Opinion."

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