

There was nothing to be done with him until we reached Liverpool, unless he attempted to leave the train, so I might as well cultivate the acquaintance of my pretty little seat-mate.

She was somewhat shy, but after a while I managed to overcome her reserve, and we chatted pleasantly like old friends.

She had not been much from home, and was a little timid about traveling alone. She started nervously every time the car gave a lurch, and I deemed it my duty to put my arm around the back of the seat to calm her fears.

She had such a horror of railway accidents, she said, and her Aunt Jane had predicted, before she left home, that something dreadful was going to happen to her; and then she lifted her large, melting eyes to my face, and I drew the arm down from the seat and let it rest on her shoulder. Men are the natural protectors of women, you know.

We talked on various subjects. My sweet companion was very well informed, and her language was simple and well-chosen. Before I was hardly aware of it, I had told her I was a detective, and that I was making this journey expressly to help capture Jorlette.

She shuddered and drew a little nearer to me.

"Dear me!" said she, nervously, "it must be dangerous business, this Jorlette, I have heard, is a desperate character. Pray, oh, do pray be careful!"

And she dropped her voice so near to a whisper, and threw so much expression into her beautiful eyes, that I could not resist tenderly pressing the little white hand so near my own, and whispered, I am afraid, something that would look absurd on paper.

That was a very delightful trip to me, and I think it must have been not together unpleasant to the young lady, for her cheeks were red and her eyes bright as we approached the terminus. She was going to visit her sister, who lived two or three miles inland from Liverpool, so had to leave me before my journey was ended.

The train only halted for a moment, but I managed to press a warm kiss on her lips, and to beg her to give me her address that I might call on her.

She smiled archly up into my face. "I will drop you a line within a week, Mr. Dayton," she said, sweetly. "Let me see—your first name is—"

"Alphonse. No. 341 T— Street, Liverpool, for the next ten days. Good-bye, darling!" and I kissed her again, and saw the door close behind her with a dull feeling of pain inside the left section of my waistcoat.

But I resolutely put my pretty unknown out of my mind, and devoted myself to looking sharp at Jorlette, who had evidently fallen asleep. Talk about the uneasiness of a guilty conscience, indeed!

At Liverpool Mr. Cathcart stepped into the car before any one had left it. He swept his eye over the occupants, and a look of blank dismay settled on his face.

"Thunderation!" cried he, "is it possible you have let him skip?" "He is there!" said I, triumphantly, pointing to my red-headed fellow-passenger.

"That!" said Cathcart, in a tone of ineffable contempt. "Alf, you're a fool! That man is the Rev. John Pennicutt, rector of St. Thomas' Church, Cumberwell. How do you do, sir?" shaking hands with the pie-eater.

"As for me, I was looking around for a convenient knot-hole to crawl into, but there seemed to be no such thing around loose.

Cathcart turned upon me fiercely. "Where in the deuce is Jorlette?" he exclaimed, savagely. "Did I not order you to look sharp?"

"Yonder reverend gentleman was the only one on the train in any wise answering Jorlette's description," said I, doggedly.

The guard came up at that moment and substantiated my statement, and Cathcart was obliged to swallow his mortification with as good a grace as possible. His information relative to Jorlette's being a traveler by the 7.30 mail had come from one of his most reliable men, but there had been some mistake somewhere. We were not to pocket the two thousand pounds reward in a hurry.

A week afterward I received a letter, written on pink paper, perfumed, and elegant generally. I transcribe it:

"My Dear Mr. Dayton: Hereby I fulfill my promise of dropping you a line within a week. I am flourishing, and hope you are, also. My Aunt Jane's presentiment did not prove prophetic. I am on my way to America, where I expect to be elected to Congress with the rest of my stripe. Give my love to old Cathcart. You have no idea how funny it feels to have your lips pressed by a man's lips when you happen to be man yourself. Sorry you are not to get the two thousand pounds, but self-preservation is the first law of nature. Faithfully yours,

"Pierre Jorlette."

Well, the secret was out! My pretty girl was the infamous murderer himself, and Cathcart and I were done brown.

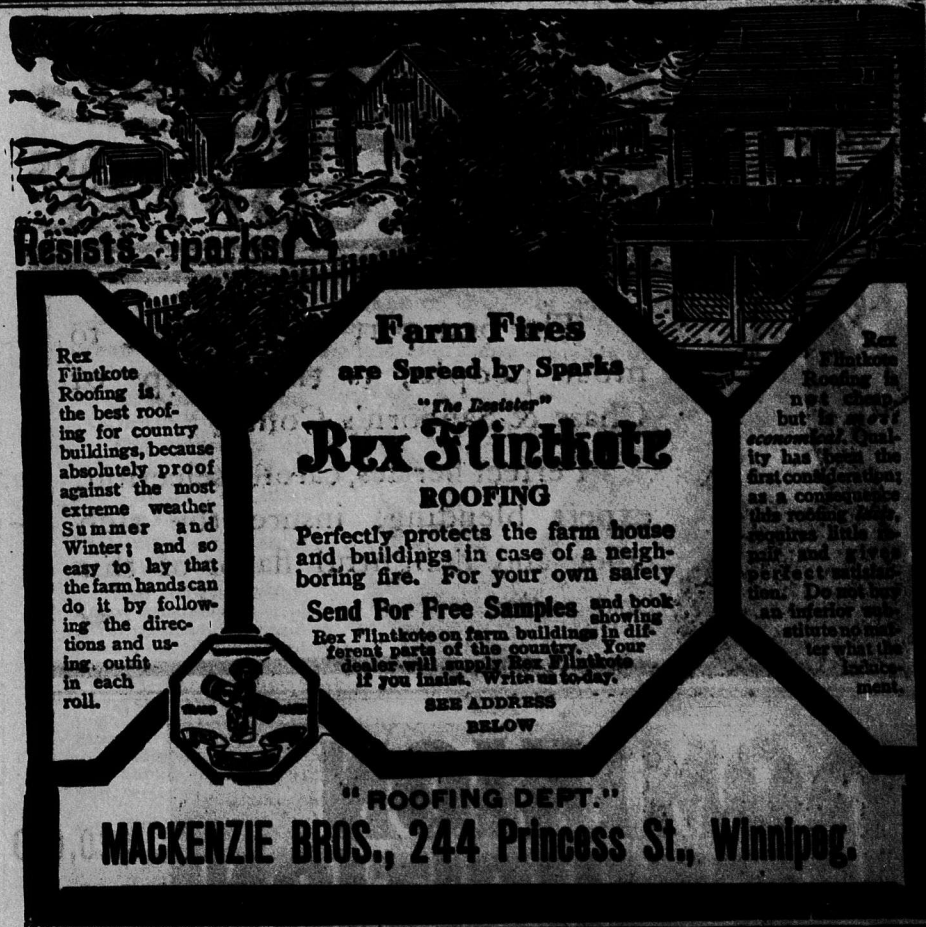
We kept the secret between us, and have not yet given over our search for Jorlette, but I greatly fear that the two thousand pounds will never fall into our hands.

BROWNING'S LINEAGE.

How blind the toil that burrows like the mole,
In winding graveyard pathways underground,
For Browning's lineage! What if men have found
Poor footmen or rich merchants on the roll
Of his forbears? Did they beget his soul?
Nay, for he came of ancestry renowned
In poesy through all the world, and crowned
With fadeless light that shines from pole to pole.

The blazons on his poet's shield are these:
The flaming sign of Shelley's heart on fire,
The golden globe of Shakespeare's human stage,
The staff and scrip of Chaucer's pilgrimage,
The rose of Dante's deep, divine desire,
The tragic mask of wise Euripides.

—Henry Van Dyke.



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