

Stella Mordant: The Cruise of the "Kingfisher."

CHAPTER XLV.
As correctly as he could judge, it was now somewhere about eight o'clock, if the servants could eat at all under the circumstances, they were at supper. It was just possible for him to get clear of the house unobserved.

Slowly, listening at every step, he went down the back stair-way, and had reached the outer door of the small hall when he saw a servant coming along the passage. A candle was burning on a stand beside the door; there would be no time for him to unlock it before he was seen by the woman, unless he extinguished the light.

He snatched up the candle-stick, and—as is so frequently the case—the candle fell out. He put his foot on it and sprang for the door, but it was locked from the outside. The maid had seen him and sent up a shriek, and with an awful oath he turned and fled up the stairs.

As he did so, it seemed to him that a light was following him, moving with him; suddenly this light increased and spread to a flame, and he knew that the candle had ignited his dress; but he still fled upwards, followed by the shouts and screams of the women servants and the cries of the men, who, though they rushed into the hall, stood there as if paralyzed. With the flames still flaring round him, he ran like a madman towards the old lumber-room, swung the door to behind him, and with frenzied fingers tore at the burning garments. He got them off at last, and flung them, still burning, from him, heedless where they fell. With the strength of a madman he dragged a heavy barricade against the door and piled the scarcely less heavy trunks on top of it.

While he was thus engaged—absorbed in his task—he was vaguely conscious that the room had grown light with another light than that from the moonbeams; but as he turned, he saw that the burning clothes had fallen on some rubbish on the floor, and that the room was in a blaze.

He sprang to the window, through the smoke which already rendered breathing difficult, and forcing it open, stepped out on to the wide ledge, but only to shrink back appalled.

He was standing at the top of the great house, with a space between him and the ground which no man could pass through and live. The flames mounted higher as he stood clinging to the edge of the window, the smoke grew so thick and dense that he could not see through it. A roar as of a storm deafened him; voices clove through it now and again yelling "Fire!" and presently there came a hammering at the door and cries of:

"Open the door! Open the door!" He laughed—he was raving mad, not with the madness of despair—and seizing a chair, flung it, futilely, on to the top of the barricade.

"Open it, if you can, d—n you!" he yelled, hoarsely. Cries of horror responded to this taunt, and as he ran to the window, and was seen by the crowd below, other cries of terror, and even of pity, rose to him.

"Jump! jump!" yelled a voice. He paused, looking down with eyes blazing from his blackened face, and it was thought he would take the hopeless advice; but at that moment

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Two years later—just about the time the new Raton Hall was nearing completion—three young persons were sitting, in the glow of a summer evening, under the verandah of a luxurious bungalow, and looking out upon the exquisite view upon which Rath—and Stella—had so often gazed from the door of the old hut which this more elaborate and fitting building had replaced. But before the house was now a velvety lawn, and in the offing a yacht anchored; it had just arrived.

Rath was lying back in his hammock-chair, with his hands behind his head, his eyes resting dreamily upon his sweetheart—and his wife—who was watching a chubby boy playing on the lawn where his mother had sat when she told his father that she was a girl and not a boy.

But though her eyes were watching the future Earl of Raton, half of Stella's mind was engaged in an argument with the third person present—a pale and thin, but extremely pretty, young lady who sat with clasped hands and a slight frown on her pensive face.

"What I say, Mary, is—is it fair? I do love fairness!" "Hear, hear!" commented Rath; he had paid several visits to the House of Lords since his accession.

"Rath, I will not be mocked; especially before the child!" said Stella severely. "Who's mocking you, you little wild-cat? Besides, the little beggar doesn't understand; he's too young."

"I am not so sure. It is wonderful how he notices things, isn't it, Mary, dear? But I'm not going to be led off by a side-trail. I repeat: I love fairness, and I do not think you are fair, Mary."

"I think she is, now," Rath put in. "She isn't dark, anyway."

Stella turned her back on him with lofty and wifely contempt, and continued, with that air of candour which only a woman can use with full effect, and then only to her own sex: "If a man has done wrong, it is right that he should be punished."

"But as a woman has—let her off," murmured Rath. (To be Continued.)

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THE HEIR OF Lancewood

CHAPTER I.
"I will give them as coming from you—with your permission. There is just one thing more I should like to say to you. You are proud. I know you would not like your disappointment, your sorrow to be gossiped over by everyone in the Abbey. If you refuse to recognize these orders in any way, it will be so. If, for example, you leave me to tell Mrs. Spenser what she has to do, she will think either that Sir Arthur has ignored you, or that you are too angry to speak. Pardon me if I put matters too plainly—it is only that I may serve you the better."

"So far you are right," said the young girl, sadly. "Oh, Mr. Dorman, what a trouble to fall on me this fair sunny morning! How little I dreamed of it! Is it all a dream? Can it be possible? Nothing around me has changed, yet how changed am I! The sun still shines, the flowers still bloom, even this little white dove is still on my shoulder—yet the whole world is changed to me. How shall I bear the change?"

"Bravely—as the ladies of your race have ever borne trouble," he said. "No, I shall not bear it bravely; even thinking of it makes me a coward. If it were some great trouble that would call all my virtues—hereditary virtues, such as courage and fortitude—into play, well and good; but it is not. There is not a fault, or a defect, or a meanness in me, that this will not force into a gigantic growth. I can foresee it."

"It may not be so bad, Miss Neslie. May I say one thing more to you?" "Say what you will," was the indifferent reply.

He looked at her beautiful downcast face. "A little mouse once," says the fable, 'set a lion free; the humblest slave might save his master's life. Let me, without presumption, say that, if by giving my life I could serve you, I would give it. My small talents, my mind, my heart, are at your disposal. I would die for you. Do not, because I am humble—because I am of no account in this great world—despise the offer of my entire devotion. Let me do all I can."

"You are very kind," she said, listlessly. "Kind!" he repeated; and then he checked himself. It would not do to speak impulsively to Vivien Neslie. "Look round," he said, "and carry this picture in your mind, Miss Neslie—remember the old sun-dial, the white lilies, the rich red roses, the gladioli, crimson and gold, the tame doves, the blue sky—bear the picture in mind, and then remember the words written as they were beneath the picture—I would give even my life to serve you." The gift of foresight is not mine, but I venture to prophesy that the time will come when this morning, this picture, and, above all, these words will return to my mind and yours."

"They may do so," she said, indifferently. "They will, and, when they do, Miss Neslie, if ever in sore need you want a friend—if ever the strength of a man's arm, the subtlety of his intellect, the devotion of his heart, the sacrifice of his life, can serve you, I offer them to you."

"You are very kind," she declared, listlessly, as with a bow she turned from him and went toward the house. (To be Continued.)

Italian Soldiers Behave
(London Daily Chronicle.)
The Italian soldier gets a very high character from Richard Bagot in his "Italians of To-day." To see an Italian soldier drunk or in any way misconducting himself in a public place is exceedingly rare—so rare, indeed, that it would create a very disagreeable impression on the witnesses. Indeed, the men of any one of the more important Italian regiments who misconducted themselves in a public place would, in addition to the severe punishment administered by the regimental authorities, undergo a very bad time of it at the hands of their own comrades."

HEADACHES
Thousands of men and women suffer from headaches every day, other thousands have headaches every week or every month, and still others have headaches occasionally, but not as regular intervals. The best remedy is often made to find the cause of many of these headaches, and in most other cases, knowing the cause, he does not know what will remove it, so as to give a permanent cure. All he can do is to prescribe the usual pain relievers, which give temporary relief, but the headache returns at small, and treatment is again necessary. If you suffer from headaches, no matter what their nature, take Anti-Kamnia Tablets, and the trouble will be taken care of at all drug stores in any quantity, 25c worth or more. Ask for A-K Tablets.

SICK-HEADACHES
Sick-headache, the most miserable of all sicknesses, loses its terrors when A-K Tablets are taken. When you feel an attack coming on, take two tablets, and in heavy cases, the attack will be warded off. During an attack take one A-K Tablet every two hours. The real and complete relief which can be obtained in no other way. Genuine A-K Tablets bear the K monogram. At all drug stores.

CHAPTER II.
Lancewood Abbey is one of the show places of England. Every book of picturesque views contains an engraving of it; artists of eminence without number have sketched it; people traveling within thirty miles of it turn aside to see it.

A grand, picturesque pile, massive in structure, time has colored the stones, and round some of the tallest towers and turrets luxuriant ivy clings. The gardens that surround it are brilliant with many-hued flowers; over the stone balustrades of the terraces passion-flowers droop and hang. It is the very best ideal of one of those stately homes of England so famed in story and song. Vivien Neslie avoided the grand entrance. She went round to one of the side entrances, a small postern door overhung and half hidden by drooping sprays of wistaria. She went to the housekeeper's room, where Mrs. Spenser received her with all respect.

"I have something to say to you, Mrs. Spenser, and to Holmes, the butler. Come with him to the morning-room."

Gerald Dorman had judged her rightly. Whatever she might suffer from either wounded pride or love should not be matter of gossip among the servants. She seated herself in the morning-room—one of the prettiest rooms in the Abbey, all rose-hued and gold, with white lace hangings. She banished all trace of emotion from her face, and when the two servants stood wondering before her, she said—

"I have sent for you, as the heads of the household, to tell you that my father, Sir Arthur Neslie, is married again, and will bring his wife, Lady Neslie, here on Tuesday evening."

"Merciful goodness!" cried Mrs. Spenser, startled out of all propriety. "I beg your pardon, Miss Neslie—but it seemed so sudden."

"Sudden to you, perhaps," returned Miss Neslie, proudly. "Sir Arthur has chosen his own time for wishing the communication to be made to you."

"Certainly," said the housekeeper. "I beg your pardon for speaking so hastily. What orders have you to give, miss?" "Sir Arthur has sent a list of instructions to Mr. Dorman. Go to him for any information you may want."

They understood that they were dismissed, and withdrew, full of wonder. "She will not like that," said Mr. Holmes, with a grave shake of his head. "It will go hard with her, after being mistress so long, to have a step-mother placed over her."

"Make no mistake, Mr. Holmes," responded the housekeeper, sagaciously, "neither step-mother nor second wife, nor any one else will ever be set over Miss Neslie."

Vivien had kept her word. To check gossip, she had told the news herself. But she would do no more. Mr. Dorman went himself to the housekeeper's room, and repeated all the directions given. He was obliged to see that they were carried out. Vivien never interfered but once, and that was when the pictures were being removed from the Blue Room. Amongst them was a very beautiful portrait of her mother, Constance Howard—the picture of a thoughtful, fair, aristocratic girl, with the shadow of early death in her eyes. It was not from this fair young mother that Vivien inherited her glowing, sunny southern loveliness. She entered the room just as the men were about to remove the portrait. (To be Continued.)

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Back From

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Germans Corner

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Norway, the centre oil trade, is said to 20,000 barrels been contracted for by THE NORTHERN Prospero will be filled trippers on her next ready over fifty people go.

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