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CHAPTER I. The Unveiling.

"I supp se the great moment has said Maurice Courlander to his friend Emile Berger.

He accompanied the words with a laugh there was seriousness, anxiety, perhaps fear; it was an instinctive atpt to mask profound mental disturbance. mlendid black hair (in faultless trim). and impassioned eyes which, like his restless hands, revealed the changing moods of an irresolute but ardent soul. Owing partly to his temperament and partly to the agreeable disadvantages of extreme wealth, though twenty-eight years of was a blond Gaul, of Maurice's age, and might have come straight from the

den end of the immense central hall of Hundreds, the famous Bedfordshire seat erected by Maurice's grandout of the profits of financing South American governments, and pro-digiously ornamented by Maurice's would be. father out of the profits of financing Then the motor-cars which met the father out of the promes of internet in the internet in the motor-cars which het the train at Dunstable had not entered Tu-train at Dunstable had not entered Tu-trainet the train at Dunstable had not entered Tu-train at Dunstable had not entered Tuing of its twenty - four bathfrom the heir of the house and his companion by a hundred linear feet of narble and Persian rugs, was gathered a group, prominent in which were the ing, shapeless figure of Lord Doncastle, the almost equally tall figure of Millicent Courlander, and the hes of a non-regnant German prince. Lord Doncastle was balancing tea-cup in one palm and a parge piece of cake in the other: and the destinies ish Empire were in his hands also, for he happened to be the Prime Minister of England,

The formidable Carl Courlander and the unformidable, rather buxom, Lady Courlander, his wife, both short and both eternally wondering whence had come the inches of them progeny, were entertaining the moustaches and other notabilities, political, financial, onal, artistic and social. ssemblage was such as would give no trouble to the writers of mondanite col umns in the press. Not a member of it not be found in Debrett Who's Who." or the supplement to the cloyaedia Britani

Lord Doncastle, having let fall his was snatched cake, which was snatched up by a footman and vanished out of sight like conjuring trick, congratulated his hostess on the fact that it was the cake and not the Crown Derby cup that he had dropped; and Carl Courlander took tunity created by this diversion to lead his guests gently down the

Carl Courlander did everything gent-He was a man of fifty-nine, very slim, but with white hair. His gestures were always persuasive and he had been known to raise his voice. which was extraordinarily low, clear was on the contrary absolutely natural to him. His grandfather had inhabited the ghetto of Mitau. a town near Riga,

Carl had been the first of his race to marry into the English hobility. He had well won the right to do so. From the secret throne of his office in Lom-bard street he had imposed his will on the Stock Exchanges of Europe, with out once hurting anybody's feelings. And that is something. Moreover, he was a dilettante of genius-you could dain the eye-glasses of Lord Doncastle. incapable of being satisfied with the stone of the terrace baulstrade; nor second rate. And then there were his entertainments, his cook, and his mar-vellously discreet and perfect manners. knocked boldly at august portals which were seldom opened, but whose guar-dians had just read in a corner of a paper written by aristocrats for aristo-crats a nice calculation of his income per minute. He had been received with fervor.

son. It was surprising how that mild voice carried across the length of the

servants, who simultaneously drew aside two curtains which had completely covered the double glass door leading to the south terrace, and the exterprospect was exposed to view. The great moment, as Maurice had it to Berger, emphatically had phras And the whole company felt that it had come. Carl Courlander. with the quiet instinct for the dramatic which he posessed and with that child. like naivette which is so frequently a characteristic of rulers, had somewhat ingeniously led up to the moment. For nearly a year no one had been invited to Tudor Hundreds; officially, the demesne had been closed, and the Courlander entertainments given either at the town house in Hamilton Place or at the chalet on the Norman coast between Honfleur and Trouville had arrived curiously worded invitations to the selectest persons in London to journey down to beatorushing "And what's that curious en a certain day at a certain hour by special train. Before half-past one on thing?" asked Lord Doncastle. "Yes, whatever can it be?"

livered it was known at the restaurants where the selectest persons lunch alnost exactly who had, and who had not, been invited. (The clubs, no longor able to compete with the restaurants. Mary, learnt the news about whisky-andsoda time in the afternoon.) There were jealousies; but they, were futile, short ironic laugh; but beneath that because not a single individual had been asked who was not high enough

to smile indulgently at jealousy. As the day approached, it began to Maurice was tall, dark, with be said that, having regard to the increasingly acute crisis in international Lord Doncastle would not be politics. able to leave London. Nevertheless Lord Doncastle was discovered at the bookstall at King's Cross station arguing with the book stall clerk that it would pay Smith & Son to keep a sup-Maurice, though twenty-eight years of age, had not yet adopted an entirely definite attitude towards the universe. Lord Doncastle had a passion for flute-"Lord Doncastle and your saster have playing. During the journey down to ot finished their discussion." replied Dunstable, the occupants of the single not finished their discussion." replied Emile, with a French inflection. He Pullman. of which the special train consisted, discussed, not the European crisis, but the nature of the thing which quarter, by way of Bond street. | old Courlander had got up his sleeve. "Will they ever?" Maurice murmured. Many of them would perhaps have The two young men stood at the gar- liked to discuss the crisis also, but Lord Doncastle said that he knew nothing about it, and would insist on explaining to everybody that, as regards flutestops, the Rudell-Carte system of 1867

flambe, its snull-boxes, it tele-caviare, its garden parties, its tele-shones, the silent perfection of its ser-being served on the south terrace as vice, and the chased silverwork on the usual in June, had been served in the plumbing of its twenty-four bath-rooms. At the other end, separated the south windows were curtained. And no guest had asked why: because, even ugh you were a Prime Minister and Carl Courlander was the mildest man mystery by the phraseology of his inlander that sort of question; you restrained your curiosity. And now the curtains were with-

drawn and the door opened, and the guests passed out on to the terrace. "The Crampirons are not come, sonnie," Carl Courlander whispered Maurice as he went by him in the rear of the procession "No!" Maurice muttered shortly, and

flushed Carl gave a gesture to indicate the wisdom of being resigned. Then he turned to Lord Doncastle, the prince, foremost among the spectators, and who finish the sentence. nade no more effort than did the rest to curb their astonishment and pleas-

And amid the chorus of applause the vehement congratulations, the ecstatic monosyllables, and the little inarticulate cries of wonderment, he scarcely atter just pride. He had a good deal to be From the terrace of the Renaissance four flights of ten each, separated the ed with delicious down. She took, as it verdure. Then spread out a vast lawn, and penetrating. He was aware of his and other trees led away to other basins and eager heart. and penetrating. He was aware of his own power, his own worth, his own tasts; and other sculptured water-gods. From the lawn, still downwards; another whispered. it was not from modesty but from pride. quadruple flight of steps drew the eyes He was probably pleased by the im-pression of diffidence which he produc-er arm, running due south, was half a er arm, running due south, was half a Miss Crampiron.' pression of diffidence which he produc-ed on those who were not intimately acquainted with him. Yet this meek and supple deportment of his was in no way a pose used to gain an end. It were more vindictive than they are slope of green, thus raising the eye swiftly back. again to the height from which it had started. These elms were practically to marry into the English nobility. He all that remained of the old park and

The sun shone nobly on the pure and in the fine curves of his nostrils- as he stood, smiling at Millicent Courlander, with one hand touching the hot Marchioness of Herm; nor the bald he had resolved to marry, he with a surgeon's fingers; nor the pale, inquisitive lawyer's nose of Sir Francis Parculier. It was absolutely impartial And to the marvels created by Carl Courlander, and gazed on by his guests, it added the final touch of splendor, gleaming on the long water of the canal, catching the spray of the aspir-"Now, Maurice," he murmured to his ing fountains, giving life to the sward and to the flowers, and at the same time somehow emphasizing the solitude of the scene. How many thousands of Maurice made a sign to a couple of men Carl Courlander had employed to produce all that magic in less than a year Carl Courlander alone knew. But not a soul was visible over, the entire sun-steeped expanse. "My dear Courlander." Lord Do castle exclaimed with his slight lisp,

"I've visited you here for a dozen years now, and, upon my soul, I don't recognize the place. Is it a delusion, or an illusion' "It is a Versailles." said the mar-

"I have not seen Versailles," said the prince. He seemed to meditate an instant, caressing the ferocity of his ried." moustache; small-talk was not his father has."

change a grimace with Maurice. "Versailles has been my model," said Carl Courlander, softiy. scarcely be improved on."

echoed

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of her time in teaching thrift and resigant of jujubes,

of elms an immense mass of white could be discerned. It was much high-stood revealed, a heroic, a gigantic er than the eims. And it was calculat- statue, pussant, formidable, and glor- negotiations with the Sultan, she would ed to excite the curiosity of the least lous-magnificently shining nquisitive people. For it was not a whiteness at the summit of the avenue over the Sultan. Everybedy knew that uliding, and it could not be a tent. of elms. It represented a woman, clas- if France did this, Germany would It res screen for a giant magic lantern., "Ah!" answered Carl Courlander. "We shall see. Mamma!" He beckoned to his wife, the comfortable Lady

Lady Mary advanced to an apparatus with a handle that had been affixed to pressing forward - pressing forward public having the excellent habit of the baulstrade of the terrace. "Do I pull it like this?" she inquired with her simple air.

"No, mamma, the other way," said Maurice, indulgently. And she looked up at him, thinking what a clever, omniscient son she had. Timidly she hesitated.

"What the devil is it?" muttered the eminent surgeon to the eminent law yer on the edge of the crowd. "Surely Courlander hasn't been guilty of a mere nillionaire's freak." "One never knows," returned the

minent lawyer, whose experiences had aught him to be startled by nothing except honesty. "Now, mother dear!" said Millicen Courlander, persuasively, "It won't

harm you. It isn't a mouse. Just pull At this juncture occurred an interrup

tion. And throughout the group there was an involuntary movement of impatience at the interruption. The fact was that people were more excited than they imagined themselves to be. A feverish perturbation, at that period. was in the very air of England. And nerves, especially the nerves of the leaders of men, were in a sensitive condition. Carl Courlander had already sufficiently heightened, by many small touches, the emotional effect of the proceedings. H_e had chosen an agi-tated week for this singular ceremony. He had got Doncastle down. everybody was perfectly aware that despite Doncastle's serene affectations of the lackadalsical, not another man in the kingdom could have persuaded Doncastle to leave Downing street during vitation and his curtaining of windows He had staggered the party by the sudden revelation of colossal gardens magically fashioned in the utmost se crecy. And then there was this tantalizing white affair in the far distance. and the handle on the terrace balus to trade which Lady Mary Courlande seemed almost afraid to touch. And finally there was the interruption-in the shape of two persons, an oldish man and a young woman. "Well, I'm----!" the eminent sur-

murmured. His demeanor signified to the eminent lawyer that surprise and a charitable peeress, who stood had robbed him even of the power to And indeed, as regards the whole ompany, a lively and interested aston-

ishment co-existed with its politelyiled impatience. Certainly the late-arriving couple were not of such a type as leaves the his arm into Courlander's, and drawing of wonderment, he scarcely spectator indifferent. The girl, who him away, to conceal his amiable and was very beautiful, had the quivering "I beg." sensitiveness and overflowing activity proud of. Where forty or fifty acres of of a racehorse. There was vitality in nformal gardens and four hundred and every part of her, and her dark and you. fifty acres of undulating park land had changeful eyes, and the rich curves of previously existed, there was now the hughest formal garden in all England cheeks, and the continuous expressive gestures of essential life. She was facade, which was a couple of hundred dressed in black. and a black feather eet in length, descended broad steps in from her hat fell over the nape coverone from the other by parterres and were, the terrace by storm. She sprang swiftly upon Lady Mary and passionregularly broken by statuary, fountains ately embraced her. One could see that and topiary work; east and west of the lawns, alleys bordered by trimmed box

"Let me present you to the prince, dear had wandered up and down the length

altered to a self-contained and prim

trees. And at the farther extremity of pressive. She gave the prince a curtthe ghetto of Mitau a town near Riga, when the caprices of anti-semitism sey that could not have been equalled sensational; to stand under it, to gaze in Berlin, though it might have found up at the soaring height of the gi-

> "Prince, Mr. Crampiron." "But I know Mr. Crampiron," cried

the prince. "We have met at Charlottenberg, nicht wahr?" It was not surprising that the prince should have been already acquainted with Abraham Crampiron. In the complex operations of European finance Crampiron was as prominent a person-age as Carl Courlander himself, and though more intimately connected with Paris, he was extremely familiar with the bourses of the various German capitals. Indeed, wherever millions were manipulated, that powerful. rough-cast head which Sir Louis Bartram stroked figure, which had arisen strangely out of South Africa many years ago, that figure with the mighty head, large nose and mouth and huge hands, was known and was feared. No one in Europe had known his wife, who had died before the end of his African era; but some said that she had had a little Portuguese blood in her.

"Well, I'm-'' repeated the sur-geon, eyeing Norah, who had kissed Millicent and old Courlander, and whose hand Maurice had now taken with a particularity which could mean only one thing. "I don't see why you should be -

Sir Louis," said the lawyer. "But it's war to the knife between them, and yet he's here, on this day of

all days!" "You really ought not to use oldfashioned terms like that. Sir Louis," the lawyer protested. "There's no such thing as war to the knife nowadays. 'There's nothing but healthy competition. Why shouldn't competitors friends? And I suppose you know that their children are engaged to be mar-

"I am acquainted with that fact," specialty. Then he added: "But my said the surgeon, in a lower tone. "And I beg to repeat that I'm-. Their chil-This delicate Prussian allusion to the dren had no business to be engaged. war of 1870 caused Emile Berger to ex- The whole situation is impossible. Their estates practically adjoin; their off-"It could fighting like tigers, and the peace of Europe is at stake. To-day the battle eating. "And what's that curious white is at its height-everyoen knows thatand this is the day they choose to shake treme degree. hands like cronies. It's sheer bravado

the marchioness, who spent the chief on someone's part, that's what it is!" of her time in teaching thrift and resig-nation to the poor of Limehouse. "I'm sure you've got the most delicious sur-to turn. Lady Mary had at last pulled prise for us?" And she opened her small moist mouth like a child expectitself into fragments and fluttered At the summit of the far-off avenue away in every direction like a capricibled more than anything a sically robed, and with a pointed crown on her head. Her right arm carried a sword; her left, with one finger outstretched, held the Jovian thunderbolt directly concerned, the English governto her tremendous bosom. Hope seemed to reside in that wide-eyed, expectant face, and the attitude was one of with resistless and relentless force. And the statue topped the highest trees. It must have been a couple of hundred feet high. It was easily the

largest piece of sculpture in Europe that Carl Courlander had erected there. "And what does it mean?" demanded the marchioness, when the excitemen had a little abated. "Ask the artist," said Carl Courlander oointing to Emile Berger.

Emile was as red as a red rose. "You the artist!" The marchioness pulsively took the young man's hand.

"You are a perfect dear! You have genius "That is why he received the cor nission." said Carl Courlander.

"The statue is meant to signify Energy. Emile stammered, besieged on all sides 'Why Energy?" Lord Doncastle ask

ed nonchalantly. "It was just my idea," said Emile. "Why do sculptors never carve the statue of Indifference—the greatest of all virtues?" the Prime Minister of one in particular, and as no one in particular replied, he turned to Millicer and gazed at her with his gentlemanly eyes. He had been gazing at her in exactly the same manner for seven years past.

The statue completed the vista in the most imposing manner. Itself and its situation has been adapted to each other with distinguished artistic tact and skill. It was lovely. It was a vision, a his behavior belied his upbringing. As dream, a miracle. It was what you for Crampiron, his daughter, who un-Bnt nevertheless it was pro- derstood him, feared one of those outwill. foundly curious. Its oddness was dis- breaks which she knew so well. concerting. Why its exaggerated vastness? Why indeed did it exist at all? Lord Doncastle's urbane, incorrigible What did it mean? In every breast lack of seriousness. It amused many was the secret thought that Carl Courlander had not erected that statue there for nothing. Yet why? "It is a millionaire's freak, after Lord Doncastle when volcanoes became all," said the eminent lawyer in a cau- active.

tious whisper "Don't be too sure." replied Sir Louis. "You've no more surprises, by any chance?" Lord Doncastle inquired with a fatugued and charming smile, "Yes." said Courlander, quietly. "One I hope it will be agreeable. Instead of going back to town at once, you will all do me the honor of dining with me in the statue, quite informally. I apologize for the short notice, but eme only occurred to me this morning. "In the statue? How lovely!" chant-

ed the morchioness. "But my dear fellow, I really can't stay." said Lord Doncastle.

elves.

lander.

Daily Record.'

great public's."

Prime Minister.

you know."

protest.

"I beg," Courlander insisted with the force of his mild suovity; and added in a peculiar tone: "I shall have news for "Here?"

"Here." Lord Doncastle stayed.

CHAPTER II. War,

Among the party there were no les than three keepers of diaries-individuals who meant to astonish the world one day by stout tomes crammed with anecdote revelations. They had a glorious time,

For the rending of the veil before the the tape machine at the Turf Club." statue by no means brought the supply ter of wonders to an end. When the guests Norah!" said Lady Mary. "Prince, of the canal, and inspected the boathouse and essayed a couple of gondolas, and at last been permitted to approach the statue, they were, all of them, more profoundly impressed than ever. They were, indeed, thrilled. To see the statue from a distance was gantesque figure, was overwhelming Even Lord Doncastle, nervously pass ing his hand through his thin sandy grey hair, had lost his nonchalance. And then Carl Courlander had opened door disguised in the key pattern of the hem of the statue's robe; and the company had entered the amazing electrically-lit interior of Emile Berger's masterpiece, and, in sections of four they had been shot up in a lift to the higher regions, and had found themselves in an immense white chamber, artificially lighted, but lighted also by one opalescent window, through "How rude of them! But how ingeni- five minutes before she had seen him which came rays of the descending sun. ous! I had no idea that newspapers That window, as Carl informed them, was a jewel in a ring on the third finger of the statue's left hand and it overlooked a hundred square miles of the home counties. The conception was terrific. It awed the blase and even the frivolous. And the mystery of Carl Courlander's reason for erecting the

statue became portentous and alarm-Then the dinner. The dinner alone would have made

the fortune of any diary. If a powder cask and a few live coals had been at large under the magnificent mahogany find a social delinquent in his own son. gier are successfully concluded." the dinner could scarcely have been more exciting than it was, or more un usual, that is to say, considered as a upast presided over by Carl Courland er. The invariable practice of Carl Courlander was to permit absolute freeom in the choice of topics of conversation. Indeed, it would have been difficult to find subjects of public interest in which he or his guests were not per onally involved. He only insisted that arguments should be characterized by an absence of emotional heat. What for the nation!" made this dinner so highly unusual was zed by an absence of emotional heat. sudden and startling brutality. Politeness covered the heat, but with a very thin crust. The dinner became dangerous-one of those dinners at

said Maurice, with indignation that was | ward, generous but rude. Norah Crampiron glanced at him with eager eyes, half applauding, half blam-'So is peace," Doncastle drawled. The brilliance of this epigram daz- thing. led its author for an instant.

ruthless temperament shocked the com- And the lisp of Lord Doncastle, as with stilly. But he cannot resist the tempta-

Everybody knew, every newspaper And everyone remembered that he had tion on the true functions of the flute

"Why not?" asked Doncastle. "Because war is barbaric and cruel."

"Moreover," he continued, seriously, "supposing we fell! What a calamity "I thought your lordship never jokthat the arguments were not character- ed," Abraham Crampiron put in, with nation at his father. volcano. Crampiron's voice was natur- he had been saying that it would be ally rasping. Any other man at the Saturday to-morrow. which, as they proceed, you begin to table might have made that speech say to yourself that anything may happen; one of those dinners at which even the greedlest forget what they are not Abraham Crampiron! The instinc-that any thing sensation of being surround-had suspected. If Crampiron was af-"Nothing," said Millicent, shortly tive ebullition of his forthright and frighting, Courlander was uncanny.

ing him.

The situation was singular in an ex-

was competing with France in the matter of a large loan to the Sultan of Morocco. Everybody knew that France hotly resented Germany's financial in-Everybody knew that France was allowing the semi-official ousiness competition to proceed out of sheer diplomatic discretion, and that if she were worsted in the rivalry of its at once formally declare her suzerainty choose to consider herself insulted and would go to war. And everybody knew further, that, though England was not ment was in an excessively rickety condition, and that only a dangerous European war could save it, the English never swapping horses while crossing a

trusivenes.

stream.

What everybody did not, know, but statue?" what all the guests of Carl Courlander competing negotiations for the loan, the rival nations. The success of Germany depended on the house of Courlander. The success of France dependen occurs in international finance that the centres of activity are far from where they are imagined to be.) Each of money, underwritten by combinations of satellite firms, and ready to be lisbursed under the aegis of Germany ould be arranged. It was a question of was dallying in the hope of a diminupeace of Europe and the existence of half a crown per cent. And Courlander and Crampiron and Lord Doncastle sat suade themselves.) there at the same table.

A unique tit-bit for diarists! The suppressed volcanoes were Abraham Crampiron and, curiously, Maurice Courlander. Once or twice Maurice had deliberately foiled his father's attempts to shift the conversation away from the too-absorbing topic of the hour. He was in a strange, pugnacious mood, and The immediate cause of the trouble was

people exceedingly, but there were others whom it exceedingly exasperate ed. Nobody was more surprised than

"I have never really understood the money market and so I'm afraid I don't understand the machinery of loans," said he, blandly, in reply to a question from the marchioness. "I tried to, when I was Chancellor of the Exchequer, but I was so busy just then riting my book on the Theory of Taxation that I really hadn't time." And he looked round the dinner-table

the his mouth slightly open in a languid nile, and his eye-glasses slipping down the ridge of his effective nose Most of the company laughed, to in-

licate that Doncastle's sallies of pure humor were incomparable.

iling. "I never joke." He had not noticed the dark flash of

tures to her betrothed

"Perhans," said Sir Louis Bartram. with a naughty smile. "I may be allowed to refer your lordship for information about the machinery of loans to a opular explanation in this morning's "I never read the newspapers." Don-

"I wasn't aware that you were in-

"I'm not," said Doncastle hastily. "I go to the club merely in search of the non-intellectual, by way of change. The mischeif is that my cousin Somersetshire goes there for the same reason. and when we meet the consequence are disastrous. However I will order

your Record, Sir Louis. "Not mine," said Sir Louis. "The "It isn't quite nice of you to put Doncastle on to the Record Bartram."

said Parculier, the lawyer, "having re-gard to its leading article." "Why?" The query came from the

The lawyer glanced an instant at Courlander, and then answered: "Well, they accuse the cabinet of helping the German negotiations; in fact, of trying to bring about a European war in order to save their own necks."

were so ingenious. Besides, it's true about him with lazy calm.

It was the first volcano in eruption.

and it sent a thrill round the table. "Sonnie!" murmured Carl Courlander. stances. But he had not expected to

reader in England knew, that Germany come out of South Africa, and that to the German prince, reassuring his origin was unknown. Norah red-

"But I'm not joking," said Doncastle, genuinely pained. His confidence in the absolute indispensability of himself was the sublimest of his qualities "As regards foreign affairs there is only one party worthy of the name, and that is ours. It has always been so. Let our opponents get into office and in less than a week the country might be involved in a war on its own account! Think of that!"

His appealing eyes, wistful at monts, demanded confirmation. "Fanciful!" cried Crampiron, sucinctly, and savagely. "Anyhow, your opponents will soon have a chance of rying what they can do."

He laughed self-consciously. "May I have a cigarette afterwards. dear host?" asked the Marchioness of Herm. "Or doesn't one smoke in the

She was displaying her tactfulness, knew, was that in the matter of the The whole table felt that she was displaying her tactfulness. Abraham two English financiers really stood for Crampiron felt it in particular. And he hated all his companions because he could not behave as smoothly and delicately as they baheved, because he was ed on the house of Crampiron. (It oft- of a different world, and the difference would always show. He hated their politeness, and their fine taste, and their cursed tact, and their traditions. ouse had the control of ten millions He knew that while they feared him they despised him; and he scorned them for despising him.

The marchioness's diversion succeedand France respectively as soon as the ed in its object. The volcances, intimiprice of issue and the rate of interest dated by their own fire and smoke subsided. The talk changed to a chatter only half a crown per cent. The Sultan of trifles. After all, the outbreak had been nothing-an affair of a moment, ion of half a crown per cent. The dramatic, nourishing food for diarists; but of no importance, and rather agreethe English government depended on able in its piquancy now that it was over. (So the guests endeavored to per-

The dinner came to an end. The servants cleared the long table of every. thing except blossoms, sweets, coffee and liqueurs, and the guests remained. as at a public banquet. Lady Mary began to play patience, as usual, Lord Doncastle and Millicent helped her to cheat herself towards the ends of the games. Maurice and Norah were looking out of the window. Emile Berger had been caught between the peeress and the German prince and was being crushed. A group of men, including Crampiron and the lawyer, gossiped amid cigar smoke at a corner of the table. It was all very informal, as Courlander had meant that it should be. It was also, at last, resuming the gaiety which he had meant it to maintain throughout. But at the bottom of every heart, save possibly that of Lady Mary, was a secret preoccupation. Crampiron's final remark to the company at large could have only one meaning. His syndicate, in concert with the French government, must have worsted its rivals in the negotiations. The Sultan must have definitely ac-cepted their terms. There would be no war and nothing could save the Don-

Had it actually occurred, this fantastic. ncredible dinner? Was it possible that up there in the bosom of the statue, high over the elms, amid flowers and pretty frocks, and the glinting of crystal in the bright light, and the pale blue curving wreathy of ascending "No. I assure you I'm perfectly seri- smoke; while the Premier made theorous," insisted the Prime Minister, still etic love to the tall and accomplished Millicent Courlander; while the progeny of the prodigious competing moneyscowl on Crampiron's face, nor that | lenders stood close to each other and Norah was making pacificatory ges- did not hide that passion which had But the diarists had noticed these to a union; while the German prince forced the fiancee's father to consent with France in the shape of Emile Berger, under the marchioness's beaming mile; while experienced beauties dowagers and other professional people summed up the universe as though were the London season-was it really possible that in all this was somewhere concealed, ripe and waiting, the fate castle replied. "I get my news from of France, Germany, England, and perhaps of the civilized world? Was it posible that on such a night in such an e Doncastle who had stepped to the Premiership from the Exchequer, should confess that he did not understand the ma-

chinery of loans? How well Lord Doncastle and Carl Courlander took it! History was being made at their expense; and yet their sang-froid remained intact! escaped the observation of the diarists. And then of a sudden Lady Mary noticed that the prince was alone, neglected-no one to talk to him! The awful spectacle electrified even Lady

Mary into activity. "But what is your dear father thinking of?" she demanded in a whisper of

her daughter. Millicent, followed by Doncastle, rushed into the breach. And Millicent wondered what her father was thinking of to allow such a thing to occur. It was unlike him. Then she discoverd that her father was not in the room. "Do they?" said Lord Doncastle. He had slipped out unperceived; yet At speaking to one of the servants. that moment he reappeared. He stood He laughed, and gazed at first in the doorway, smiling vaguely. And as he did not move, all eves gradually flexd themselves on him, and conversation ceased. Then he advanced to the hushed chamber, still smiling. Something was going to happen: everyne felt that.

"Friends," said Courlander, in his low soothingly. He had meant his dinner-party to be a triumph, a proof that Carl table. "All the world will be told to-Courlander's dinner parties could rise morrow, but there is no reason superior to no matter what circum- you should not be told to-night. The negotiations between Berlin and Tan He bowed to Lord Doncastle

Crampiron sprang impulsively for "How do you know?" he cried.

Courlander's smile increased in be

"Ah!" he murmured, with a wave of the hand that might have meant any-"You can't possibly know,"

Crampiron," There hasn't been time-" "But I do!" demanded, glaring with solemn indig-

"Of course, sonnie," Courlander an-

Silence followed. The guests had the nany, used to the manners of diplomacy fine casualness he resumed a disquisiThey were most of them conscious e desire to leave the statue at once.

> CHAPTER III. Beakbane Arrives.

It was dark in the gardens.

very faint suffused radiance young moon disclosed vaguely features of the vast grounds terrible immensity of the statue. T stone in the ring of the statue's an opal by day, was transformed i means of a red blind into a ruby a night; and the ruby glowed dully them high above the tall elms at the sum mit of the avenue, watching, as it were the earth with a suspicious and sinister eye. Warm winds sprang up, rustlet an instant in the trees, and died mys teriously away.

Most of the guests were sped. Lon Doncastle, dropping frankly for a space his fine casualness, had had a private interview with Courlander. He had then departed, whirled off by petrol to Dunstable in company with the princ the marchioness, and numerous others Lady Mary had retired exhausted h the sensations of the day. Abrahan Crampiron had remained within the statue, and Courlander, having per formed the rites of adleu to the rest had reioined him there. After a tim Crampiron had left, saying that he should walk home, and leaving th carriage for his daughter. The lift is the statue had been ascending and lescending a good deal.

At the southern margin of the lake where a white carriage road ray straight east and west across the gar dens, Emile Berger and Millicent Cour lander stood side by side, gazing at globe of yellow that was coming t wards them on the water. It marks the progress of a gondola, in which were Maurice Courlander and his af fianced.

"It's a long time since Maurice ha seen in such a mood as that in which he is to-night." said Emile, steppin carefully and correctly in the jungle of English grammar. "Yes," Millicent agreed. "It came

over him suddenly. I'm not surprised." "Why are you not surprised?" "Well, you see, Maurice often preends to be tremendously cynical, but the noor boy is really absurdedly warm. hearted. He hates suffering and so he hates the mere idea of war.'

"But war is not a new thing," said Emile. "There have been several war in the last years." "It is because he has only to-night

maginatively realized the true signifi cance of dear papa's business," Milli cent answered. "He is shocked?" said Emile.

"Yes. He is carried away by his feel ings. He doesn't see that the rate of the world's evolution cannot be hurried and that all standards of right and wrong are purely relative." "You have a marvellous comprehe sion." murmured Emile.

She half closed her, eyes and giane ed at him through her eyelashes. "It's a good thing," she said, "the Norah knows so well how to manage him, Her ides of getting him to take her out in the gondola was she should never have renius. Now I thought of that. Here they come! must say poor dear Maurice has soon learnt the art of being a gon He's very quick in some things." The boat, with its ball of fire suspend ed at the prow, shot darkly towards them. On the cushions could be the reclining form of Norsh, and May rice, erect behind her, manip single oar, and brought the craft with omena. And they hugged them-exchanged amiable benalities about art with France in the shape of Emile Ber. "Good-night, dearest Milly," shu

whispered, kissing her future sister-in-law. "Maurice will see me home Thanks so much for a lovely day." At the same moment the Crampire

landau advanced, with its two black liveried servants, its two impatien black horses, and its two bright lamp The footma piercing the gloom. jumped down, Norsh, having shaken hands with Emile Berger, got in; Maurice. ab the door slammed; the footman leaped to the box; the pawing steeds broke al once into a fast trot, and the whole affair vanished in the distance like dream under the red orb of the statue To Emile, who had the artist's temperament acutely, everything seemed weird that night. What could be more ordinary than a departure in a car-riage? Yet it had affected him as a romantic and inexplicable noctur episode might have affected him. H was now left alone with Millicent. Mil-licent was the most enchanting human phenomenon that Emile Berger had ever in his life encountered. She was tall; she had a perfect complexion; she scorned feminine devices; she never tried to attract. She was sincere and candid, and yet how mysterious! She embodied for him the calm, brooding beauty of the heroines of Rossetti and Tennyson. To an Englishman she wa a fine specimen of the well-educated English girl; but to Emile she was something exotic and precious, ama ingly intellectual, ravishingly strange Ever since Courlander and she had dis covered him, making sketches at Ville ville, near Trouville, he had dreamt d Milicent. And during his long sojour at Tudor Hundreds in charge of the exterior of the statue, he had had full opportunity to study her. He was beginning to be in love with

her. At least he was beginning to jealous of Lord Doncastle.

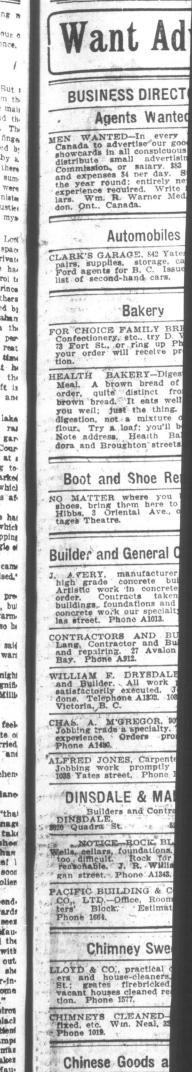
As they walked to and fro in the soft obscurity of the June night, and talks ed of the day's doings, the ridiculous ness of him, Emile Berger, daring to be jealous of the Prime Minister of Engs land, came clearly home to him; as also the ridiculousness of him allowing himself to love Millicent! It was not her position and her father's wealth that most gave him a pause; it was Millicent. She was in herself so superior to him! She had not gone mad about the beauty of the statue! It was indeed impossible to move her to en thusiasm. And she had understood him profoundly, that she estimated him "Then will there be war?" Maurice at exactly his true value, which was nothing, and that it was useless to try to impose upon her. .

Still, all this did not prevent him It was the bursting of the second swered with gentle placidity, as though from continuing to fail deeper into that abyss which is called love.

"What did Lord Doncastle mean," he asked her, after a long, exciting si "Nothing," said Millicent, shortly

"Nothing whatever! It was merely

tion to say things like that." (To be Continued.)



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