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The Old Marquis

The Girl of the Cloisters

CHAPTER XXIV.
THE SELFISH PASSION.

"Well, I am thinking of getting up some private theatricals for the amusement of some friends and myself, and I want you to assist me."

Nagle looked at him steadily.

"Go on," he said; "I am listening and waiting."

"It will be quite a small affair, and not a difficult piece. Your part will be singularly easy, and I think you would play it well."

He paused, and slipped the brandy-and-water delicately, and pushed the bottle toward his companion.

"It is a little piece of my own composing. I'll give you a sketch of the scene; there is only one. It is a representation of a private marriage."

Nagle's lips tightened, and he drew the mug toward him and filled it with brandy-and-water.

"A marriage between a young couple who are devotedly attached to each other, but whose friends on both sides are opposed to the match. The young man is supposed to have procured a special license, and to bring the bride to my rooms. I play the part of disinterested friend, and act as best man and give-away; the young people play their own parts as bride and bridegroom, and you—play the part of clergyman."

Nagle started, arose, and stood with his thin hands pressed on the table, his gaunt eyes fixed on Clifford Revel with a piercing scrutiny.

"I—see," he said, in a low voice. "I am to play the part of clergyman in this dramatic performance?"

"Exactly; you simply appear clad in the proper robes, read the service, congratulate the happy man, and—exit. It is not a difficult part, my dear fellow; I think you will admit that. Not at all difficult, and a very easy way of earning a couple of hundred pounds."

"And penal servitude for assisting at a mock marriage," added Nagle, with a caustic smile.

Clifford Revel shrugged his shoulders.

"Stop!" said Nagle, interrupting him, as he was about to speak. "Don't waste your breath. I saw through your blind of private theatricals before you had got through half your speech. This what you have planned is a mock marriage—nothing more nor less—and intended to deceive one or other of the parties— which?"

Clifford Revel extended his hand with a gesture of remonstrance.

"What a pity it is, my dear Nagle, that you do not possess a little tact. Now, I went out of my way to put the proposal in a delicate form, and you, instead of falling in with my humor, break out like a bear."

"Curse your tact!" retorted Nagle, curtly. "I am right, am I not? In one word, I will have nothing to do with any proposal unless I know all about it. If you intend to deceive me, or keep me in ignorance, take up your umbrella and go, for you will do nothing with me. I ask you to speak plainly—or not at all! This is a mock marriage at which you wish me to preside, is it not?"

"You have spoken," said Clifford Revel, lightly. "It is."

Nagle looked at him with gleaming eyes and tightened lips; then he drew a long breath.

"Clifford Revel, you are a scoundrel," he said.

That gentleman smiled and knocked the ash from his cigar.

"I sha'n't take the trouble to contradict you, my dear Nagle; but permit me to remark that, though you are at perfect liberty to decline to assist me in this little business of mine, you are scarcely free to call me opprobrious names. If you decline, I have no doubt I shall be able to find some one else."

"I have no doubt," assented Nagle, slowly. He got up and walked across the room once or twice; then he confronted Clifford Revel again. "Before I say yes or no, I must know more of this matter."

Clifford Revel nodded.

"Very good. It doesn't concern you, but I will gratify your, perhaps, pardonable curiosity. You will remark that I do not hesitate to trust you. I am aware that you might ruin this harmless little plot of mine."

"Harmless!" breathed Nagle.

"But I trust you. Briefly, then, the circumstances are these: I have a cousin; he is heir to the marquise of Farintosh; you have heard me speak of it, no doubt?"

Nagle nodded slightly.

"This cousin of mine is a good fellow, but a fool. He has, after the manner of fools, taken it into his head to fall in love with a girl very much beneath him—that is, beneath him in all save cleverness and cunning, for she will be satisfied with nothing short of marriage. Now, a marriage—other than that which I propose, which is none at all—is simply too absurd and ridiculous! He could and ought to marry in his own class, and would do so if he could only get over this infatuation. Are you listening?"

Nagle had sunk onto the table, and was sitting with his eyes fixed on the fire-place, a curious expression on his face. He made a gesture with his hand, and Clifford Revel continued:

"This infatuation is simply temporary. If he married her, as he wants to do, he would soon grow tired of her, and they would be intensely wretched! Think of it! Why, it is an act of cousinly kindness to rescue him from such a calamity!" and he smiled sardonically.

Nagle turned his head and looked at him, but relapsed a moment afterward into the same attitude.

"Therefore, I propose the simple

little expedient which I have described. For reasons I have hinted at, the marriage must be quite a secret one. Special license and ceremony in my rooms."

"And he?" said Nagle, hoarsely. "He does not know of this? He is unaware of this—simple expedient?"

No pen can describe the scorn and loathing expressed in his idea of Clifford Revel's phrase.

"Certainly! He would think it a genuine ceremony, of course."

"Then—then it is the girl who would be deceived?" said Nagle, in a low, almost inaudible voice.

Clifford Revel sipped his brandy-and-water.

"Exactly," he answered, coolly.

Nagle looked at him with a sudden fire in his eye, but the next moment turned his head and put up his hands to shield his face from Clifford Revel's glance.

"The girl," Nagle said; "and she—she is a good girl—innocent; worthy of him in every way, excepting position?"

Clifford Revel shrugged his shoulders.

"I suppose so. I don't know; I never saw her. Good—oh, yes, and innocent. As to being worthy of him—well, that's a question too fine for consideration. She is clever, no doubt, or she wouldn't have held him so tightly."

"And you—you propose to ruin, to blast the life of this young girl whom you have never seen?" asked Nagle, in a strained voice.

Clifford Revel flushed.

"You certainly have an unpleasant way of putting things, my dear fellow. Ask me if I will move heaven and earth to prevent my cousin throwing himself away by an unequal marriage, and I answer, 'Yes.'"

Nagle was silent a moment. His whole manner had changed; he had grown thoughtful and grave, almost to solemnity.

"If this cousin marries you stand further from the title than at present?" he said.

"Now, that is a question which shows your heart is in the business," said Clifford Revel. "Precisely."

"I see!" muttered Nagle. Then, after a pause, said: "One question more. Do you think that they—is it desecration to mention the word between us—do they love each other?"

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"You are polite, my dear fellow. But, yes, I think they do, or imagine they do. But, as you, with your fine intellect, will perceive, their mutual infatuation is no reason why I should permit them to make fools of themselves and place a further barrier between me and the Farintosh title and estate."

"No; I do not suppose that would weigh with you," said Nagle, slowly.

"And then will this—when is this mock marriage, by which your cousin is to be deceived, and this young, innocent girl ruined, to take place?"

Clifford Revel's eyes lighted with inward satisfaction.

"Ah, I see you agree to accept the role, my dear Nagle. When? I am not quite sure. Soon, very soon, I think. But I will give you due notice. Come, you will be doing a good action! It is not given to every one to have the opportunity of saving the heir to a marquise from a mesalliance. There is one point I wished to speak to you about: You said just now that you did not think my friend who relieved you the other night would recognize you?"

"What?" he cried. "Is it he?"

Clifford Revel stared and smiled.

"Yes, that was Lord Fane, the Marquis of Farintosh's only son and heir. What's the matter?"

"Nothing! nothing!" said Nagle, but his face was white and his hand trembled as he leaned it on the table.

"And it is he! the man who saved me from starvation and death! He!"

"Yes," said Clifford Revel. "Quite dramatic, isn't it? You ought to be grateful to fate for providing you with an opportunity of repaying him for his benevolence. He saved you from death, you save him from social ruin! Do you see?"

"Stop! Silence! Let me think!" exclaimed Nagle, hoarsely, and he paced the room, with his hand pressed to his brow.

He filled himself a glass of brandy-and-water and drained it off, flung the cup upon the table, and, with a strange look in his eyes, confronted the tempter.

"Well!" said Clifford Revel. "What do you say? Will you play the part?" Nagle laughed wildly.

"The sum—the blood money, how much is it to be?" he demanded.

"Two hundred pounds paid down the day of the—the marriage," and he smiled. "And if you say 'Yes' I'll add this as a retainer," and he took out his purse and laid a ten-pound note on the table. "Come, say yes, and thank Heaven for a good day's work."

Nagle stood as if rapt in a dream.

"What are you afraid of? If you dread the consequences, why not leave England? You can have a fine flog abroad for two hundred pounds. See here, I'll make it another fifty. With that sum a man of your talents can make his way to the other side of the herring pond. Really, it is too much for half an hour's performance of a simple character like a clergyman, but for old acquaintance' sake I must be generous. Come, what do you say—yes or no?"

(To be continued.)

Fashion Plates.

A SIMPLE DRESS FOR HOME OR SERVICE.



2802—Gingham, khaki, drill, seersucker, percale or lawn, could be used for this style. The garment is a "one-piece" model—with a sleeve that may be finished in wrist or elbow length.

The Pattern is cut in 7 sizes: 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44 and 46 inches bust measure. Size 38 will require 6 yards of 36 inch material. The dress measures about 2 1/2 yards at the foot.

A pattern of this illustration mailed to any address on receipt of 10 cents in silver or stamps.

A DAINTY DRESS FOR MOTHER'S GIRL.



2808—Batiste, voile, charmeuse, satin, taffeta, velvet, serge or gabardine could be used for this model. The tucks on the skirt may be omitted. The dress may be finished without the bolero and with long or short sleeve. This style lends itself nicely to combinations of material.

The Pattern is cut in 4 sizes: 4, 8, 10 and 12 years. Size 8 requires 3 1/2 yards of 27 inch material for the dress, and 3/4 yard for the bolero.

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PUBLIC NOTICE.

The road to the West of Waterford Hall, leading from Waterford Bridge Road to the South Side Road will be closed to traffic for one week or ten days during the rebuilding of St. John's Bridge.

By order,
JAMES HARRIS,
Secretary.

Dept. Public Works,
St. John's, Newfoundland,
May 21st, 1919.

PUBLIC NOTICE.

The public are hereby notified that, as the Bridge known as Woodley's Bridge on the North Side of Quidi Vidi Lake is not quite safe for heavy traffic, a portion of it has been fenced off. The structure will be rebuilt as soon as material is available. In the meantime the public are requested to be careful to use the bridge for light traffic only.

By order,
JAMES HARRIS,
Secretary.

Dept. Public Works,
St. John's, Newfoundland,
May 21st, 1919.

Published by Authority.

On recommendation of the Board of Food Control, and under the provisions of the War Measures Act, 1914-16, and the Food Control Act, 1917, His Excellency the Governor in Council has been pleased to order that all Regulations imposing restrictions on the import into, or export out of Newfoundland of food stuffs, including the Regulation of November 28th last, imposing certain fees on the import of various articles of food, etc., shall be cancelled as from Tuesday, the 20th day of May, instant, except in so far as the said Regulations apply to Wheat flour, respecting which the provisions of the Regulation shall remain in force. All persons seeking to import Wheat flour into Newfoundland must continue to first obtain a permit from the Food Control Board for the said importation.

W. W. HALFYARD,
Colonial Secretary.
Dept. of the Colonial Secretary,
May 20th, 1919. may21,21

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Civil Re-Establishment Educational Announcement.

1. Any returned sailor or soldier is entitled to admission to the Re-establishment Day School.

2. Any returned sailor or soldier is entitled to admission to the Re-establishment Night School which is conducted from 7.30 to 9.30 on the following evenings of every week, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

3. Arrangements have been made with the Bishop Field College and the Methodist College for a laboratory course in Physics and Chemistry for students who propose to enter a University in the Fall of the year. The lectures will commence on Monday, May 5th, and continue until end of June.

Applications for permission to take advantage of the opportunities indicated above and for further information should be made to the Vocational Officer, 17 Militia Building.—may1,19

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Will German the Peace

Growing Dissatisfaction Americans --- Will Improve --- New Ministry --- Extension.

GRANTED EXTENSION. PARIS, May 21. The German peace delegation has been granted an extension of seven days, or until May 29, in which to reply in full to the peace terms, according to an official announcement.

AMERICANS DISSATISFIED. LONDON, May 21. Dissatisfaction on the part of some members of the American peace delegation with the German peace treaty is reported by the Paris correspondent of the Westminster Gazette today. "With every day that passes the dislike which some members of the American commission feel for the peace treaty grows into active opposition," the correspondent telegraphs, and he quotes one of the members of the delegation as saying "the treaty does not mean peace, it means war." The correspondent adds that he is greatly concerned with evidence of a changed feeling in American quarters regarding President Wilson.

IMPROVED CONDITIONS EXPECTED. OTTAWA, May 21. A feeling of optimism prevails in Government circles this afternoon as to the Winnipeg strike situation. What advices have been received from Winnipeg indicate that matters are moving steadily in the direction of negotiations and conferences, which it is believed will result in big improvement in present conditions. The belief is expressed in official circles that the despatches which came from the west last night indicating a possibility of serious developments, were

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