

The Castle Comedy

By THOMPSON BUCHANAN

At that Mistress Percy's face showed only startled, innocent surprise. "No. Why should I? I was not afraid. Besides," she hesitated. "Besides?" she asked. "I did not want to know," she blurted out impulsively. "Want whom to know?" "My father and Sir John." "Sir John is mademoiselle's affianced husband," suggested the dancing master, with just a shade of reproof in his speech. Blazing with sudden, splendid anger, Mistress Percy turned on him. "That does not entitle him to hold authority over me. I am not yet cramped within a wedding ring, thank heaven!" "Mademoiselle!" His tone was wholly reproving now, but that served only to enrage her the more. "Oh, you needn't take his part. I believe all you men are alike. I hate you all. I'm sure I do." And, whirling away from him, she stood drumming her fingers on the table. Dubarre shook his head despairingly. When he spoke it was in a suave, soothing tone. "Mademoiselle is excited. May I get a glass of water for mademoiselle?" May Percy turned back impulsively. "Now, don't take that tone. You'll be



Then with a quick start she threw the dancing master aside.

like my father next. I say some one has been kind to me, and I will see him to say goodby and thank him; and then, forsooth, Sir John—she paused, then went on with sneering contempt—"his righteous, proper Sir John, who has lost half a fortune at cards and fought once about a girl, must throw up his hands in holy horror and my father grow sarcastic and suggest that I go over tonight to pay a formal visit to express my thanks in person for a paid service. Oh, I despise you men!" She was miserably angry, but of a sudden her old April self predominated. An arch smile broke through the clouds on her face, and a gay laugh at some new thought swept away all trace of gloom. "Do you really suppose, monsieur, my father meant that seriously? Am I not a dutiful daughter?" She stepped, struggling to contain her laughter. At the angry outcry Dubarre had started to walk up and down the room. This last change was too much for a man helplessly, hopelessly in love. There was but one salvation. He stopped and bowed stiffly. "I know one thing, which is, mademoiselle must be going." "It was a command." Mistress Percy drew herself up proudly. "And you, too, M. Propriety—forgive me, I had not properly estimated the dancing master. He fairly bristles with unexpectedness. Possibly—with the dainty, sarcastic smile that only made her face the more adorable—"monsieur has lost a whole fortune at cards and fought two duels over two girls." Plagued, tempted past all endurance, the Frenchman lost his head. "A dozen would be nearer," he blurted, in sudden anger. For a moment May Percy looked at him helplessly. Then the meaning of it all swept over her. She drew a long breath, while her eyes grew big and anxious. "Then monsieur is—?" He interrupted quickly. "Gaston Dubarre, poor French dancing master." Next he drew back and, with a low bow, added, "To Mistress Percy, grand lady."

Slowly the anger faded out of the girl's face. Her head drooped as she held out her hand kindly. "Forgive me, monsieur. I did not mean to intrude upon a possible secret." "Mademoiselle's own heart's kindness makes her forgiveness," he said brokenly. "And I shall think—?" Dubarre shrugged his shoulders. "There's a foolish man who would try to curb a woman's thought, mademoiselle."

She continued, "That a French gentleman, a soldier perhaps, has honored a little English girl by teaching her to dance." Now he shook his head, smiling slightly, but when he spoke his tone was deeply serious. "And a poor French dancing master will know that le bon Dieu permits sometimes one of his own bright children to steal down from above to give those struggling below just one little foretaste, a promise of the kingdom of le bon Dieu. Then—he snatches it away."

With a shrug, the man, walked to the mantel and leaned against it, dejected, hopeless beyond further speech. The

girl's face was a reflection of his attitude. After a pause she spoke timidly, "But the children from above, as you call them, they stay on earth, monsieur?" He turned and came to her quickly, sudden resolve in every movement. "Mademoiselle," he said, and now in turn his tone was eager, "could a man pretend to be what he is not?" "That you depend, monsieur," she interrupted softly. "Suppose, mademoiselle"—Dubarre spoke more carefully, weighing every word—"suppose a man had sworn an oath to her he loved best in the world?" "May Percy started—"suppose, mademoiselle?" He smiled. "Ah, this is all a little game of suppose—that young man gets release from his chief, forswears his friends, for a time gives up his life and, meanly attired, at great peril attempts to follow out the path made to her he loved most as she lay dying?" "Frenchman paused. His quick eye had noted the girl's signs of embarrassment. "Is the little game of suppose too long, mademoiselle?" Her tone was ample encouragement. He took up the game again more eagerly. "Suppose, then, mademoiselle, he fulfills his oath. Could you—a moment he paused for a word—"respect that man?" "Yes—yes, monsieur," she cried impulsively. Dubarre shook his head, smiling sadly. "You speak too quick, mademoiselle. The game, our little 'suppose' game, is not finished. Suppose, mademoiselle, that young man met danger, great danger, greater than he knew, you know the danger, mademoiselle. It is the light that le bon Dieu puts by life's sea to save or wreck men—a woman. If he steers headlong, reckless, willing to die on the rocks, if only struggling for that light, could you—could you think such a man worthy?" He paused for a reply. May Percy stood at the edge of dreamland, looking into the far away. At last she spoke, and it was very soft. "You say the danger is sent by God, monsieur? Then man should try to conquer it."

He stepped back and bowed deeply, then moved toward the door. "May I have the honor of seeing mademoiselle safely to the house?" And then, almost as he said it, the door shook from a mighty pounding. CHAPTER VIII. A GAIN the door rattled and shook under the weight of a hammering sword hilt. Within the room the man and girl, struck still, stared blankly at each other. Surprise, dark anger, quick blushing shame and, last, white fear succeeded in her face. Her lips trembled, the hands clasped and unclasped nervously. Thrice she essayed to speak and could not. Only the eyes spoke plainly her fright and her appeal. Dubarre recovered first. "Is he there?" he shouted, and the tone was not that of the humble dancing master in the least. From without sounded a voice, hoarse with anger. "Open! Open! 'Tis I! Open quickly!" "Sir John!" It came at last, a low, faint gasp of horror from May Percy. Now she realized her false position—Dubarre's consideration of it. "What can I do?" she begged, low. Silent, lightly as a cat, the Frenchman sprang to the door and noiselessly turned the key. Another second and he was back beside her. "Sh!" he whispered. Then aloud: "And who may I be? No unknown I's have entered here." Again he whispered to the girl, "Try the window." As in a dream, she tiptoed to it, but the heavy shutter was closed and barred. "Open! On a once, I say!" Sir John's voice bore wild rage now. Every instant the door threatened to give way under his furious assault. May Percy had stolen back to Dubarre. "The shutter—I can't manage it," she whispered faintly. "And now from beyond the door another voice broke in upon them. "The other voice?" asked I, Captain Thornecliffe. We wish to speak with you, M. Dubarre."

"Captain Thornecliffe! Oh, I'm lost!" and, moaning thus piteously, May Percy seemed about to faint. Dubarre caught her almost roughly by the arm. "Keep courage. You must hide," he muttered. His touch restored her. The Percy pluck began to assert itself. Her mouth set, and she looked at him understandingly. Aloud he cried: "Paroissez-monsieur, pardon, I'm coming," and he started noisily for the door. The pounding without ceased. "Well, hurry," shouted Sir John Wilmerding. "We can't wait all night."

May Percy rushed behind the bed. Dubarre darted after her. "Not here," he muttered fiercely, "the closet." Then he sprang to the mantel, knocked off the candlesticks and kicked over an andiron to make a big crash. "Mon Dieu," he cried, loudly angry, "there goes the candle. That comes at being in a hurry." Next he was beside May Percy, opening the closet door and shouting all at once.

"Patience, messieurs! In a moment when I get a light." Sir John Wilmerding was becoming wider every second of delay. "We'll make light enough when we get in," he roared. Dubarre had stepped into the closet with May Percy. Now they came out, he shaking his head. "Hopelily, be done?" whispered the girl in low tones of agony. Again the man shook his head. "I can't kill both." Thus they stood gazing at each other, twin statues of despair. From without the stern voice of Captain Thornecliffe punctuated their lethargy. "Open, Dubarre, immediately or we'll force a way." And again a sword hilt began playing upon the door. As at a deathbed one looks for the time, now Dubarre raised his eyes. His searching gaze, wandering from the girl, found the face of the big clock. Suddenly his own face brightened. Aloud, in laughing tones, almost triumphant, he cried: "Mon Dieu! Don't, captain! I'm coming."

Seizing May Percy by the arm, he hustled her with desperate speed over to the big clock. The door of it came open easily. "Be quiet and trust me," he whispered. A moment more and the girl was locked in behind the wood-paneled door. And the face of the clock above told nothing of it. "I'm coming, messieurs; I'm coming," Dubarre was leaping across the room for the other door. And as he sprang he jerked off his coat and threw it on the table. Quickly he turned the lock and threw open the door with a grand flourish. "What has brought the humble dancing master this honor?" asked the obsequious, bowing Frenchman as Sir John Wilmerding and Captain Thornecliffe crossed the threshold. "Are gentlemen to be kept waiting by a paid jumping jack?" demanded Sir John Wilmerding, striding to the center of the room. For the fifth time the dancing master bowed to his waist. "But see, monsieur," he protested, "I did not stop even to finish dressing."

Captain Thornecliffe turned impatiently to his companion. "Come, Jack. We are not here to bandy words. State what you want." The Frenchman looked from one to the other. "Monsieur, what has happened? You are wearing swords. Do you expect attack? What can be the matter?" In surprise and sudden anxiety he piled questions one upon another. "Matter enough!" roared Wilmerding. "We are searching for Mistress Percy." Dubarre was the picture of horrified astonishment. "Mon Dieu! he cried. "Has some beast stolen her?" He rushed to the table and began slipping on his coat. "For her, too, could I send Sir John by the arm, began pulling him toward the door, all the while crying: "But come, come, monsieur! We are losing time! Your best-trothed may be—"

Sir John sprang back and half drew his sword. Captain Thornecliffe leaped beside him in time to catch his arm. "Steady, Jack; steady," advised the captain soothingly. "I knew there must be some mistake." The Frenchman's anger had changed to cold contempt now. "And a mistake monsieur will rue when Mistress Percy hears of it," he sneered. Sir John Wilmerding shook off the restraining arm bitterly. "Loose me, Hal. I tell you I saw her come not twenty minutes ago. I watched the door and sent for you that I might have witness when I killed the low born lover." He turned again fiercely on the sneering Frenchman. "Quiet, Jack. Be calm," soothed Captain Thornecliffe. Dubarre bowed with most exaggerated politeness. "Monsieur greatly honors the poor dancing master when he admits him as a rival."

"And you, Dubarre, be silent!" ordered Thornecliffe sternly. Again the Frenchman bowed humbly. "The poor dancing master should always strive to please monsieur. And of a truth, I'm to die for it. It pangs me deeply that, dying, I cannot at the last please Sir John by producing the lady." His manner expressed only the great sorrow that his failure to do so should give the lover pain. Sir John shot back looks all about the room. "If she's here we'll find her," he declared eagerly. Dubarre seized the opportunity for vindication. "Yes, yes, let us search." As he spoke he rushed to the bed and laid hold of the curtains. Sir John winced visibly at that. It did not escape the Frenchman. Still holding the cloth, he turned, blandly questioning. "Pray, where did the titled lover expect to find his mistress? Was she the cunning theology with the humble dancing master?" Then, without wait-

ing for reply, he jerked down the curtains, drew them off the bed and began to shake them in violent style. "Is the fellow mad? What are you doing?" demanded Captain Thornecliffe. Dubarre looked up apologetically. "One never can tell, monsieur. I thought perhaps a girl, a half girl or possibly a girl and a half might be hidden in the curtains." Thornecliffe exclaimed sternly: "Dubarre, enough of this trifling." The dancing master was all eagerness to please. "As monsieur le capitaine wishes," he said snarling, "but monsieur knows all manner of queer things may happen when a titled lover traces his affianced bride to the room of an absent dancing master." Then, turning from the captain to Sir John, he made a gesture toward the mattress. "Will monsieur thrust his sword into the bed?" The lover winced again. "I'm sure," added Dubarre, with great earnestness, "she must scream if it touches her."

"Cease such unseemly jesting!" shouted the indignant one. "Enough!" said Captain Thornecliffe. "Was your own suggestion," he said, "I wished but to make sure. Will monsieur lend me the sword?" "No," answered Wilmerding shortly. Dubarre drew a small knife from his belt. "Then by myself I'll make sure," he declared, and, springing suddenly on the bed, thrust the knife repeatedly into the mattress. "Is it enough?" he asked, after a dozen thrusts, looking up. "Come down, Dubarre," ordered Thornecliffe, laughing in spite of himself. The Frenchman climbed down. Then, looking at his work, he apologized to long clock "against the rain, but it was cruel treatment after the many times you have comforted me, but, shaking his head sadly, "when ladies of fashion seek to hide the rooms of renegade dancing masters, then all things must be changed about."

"Sir John had moved over beside the mantel. "The window—she might have got out by this." Then he and Captain Thornecliffe struggled with the bar. It took several minutes of tussling before the heavy shutter yielded. Dubarre laughed and thanked them for doing something that he had been unable to do for himself. Now the searchers stood perplexed. The simple room seemed to afford no other hiding place. Suddenly Wilmerding caught sight of the closet door. He trembled as nothing since his entrance had made him tremble. Here was the quarry run to earth at last. "The closet!" he exclaimed and rushed toward it, crying: "Watch the French scoundrel, Hal. Don't let him escape!" Dubarre's lips were smiling. About the eyes he had grown ten years. Then Wilmerding stumbled against the clock. The Frenchman's smile seemed frozen on his face. "Has the clock?" cried the lover and reached for the closet door. "Poor clock!" murmured the dancing master, and as Wilmerding paused before the door he added, "For a man who has sought so earnestly, Sir John Wilmerding displays rare diffidence at meeting his betrothed."

Sir John whirled that way and drew his sword. "Be still, Frenchman." The other only continued in the same reflective tone. "If a titled lover cannot keep his betrothed from the room of a poor dancing master before marriage, how difficult afterward it should be to hold the wife from gentlemen of fashion and soldiers." Wilmerding still wavered before the closet door. "Hal," he said at last, "I'm not myself. I can't face her. Let me watch the Frenchman. You open the door. And as for you—raising his sword above Dubarre—" "I'll—"

With a quick jerk Captain Thornecliffe had pulled open the closet door. "It's empty!" he cried in joyful tones. Wilmerding's sword fell to the floor with a crash. The lover shook a moment for joy. "Thank God!" he said earnestly at last. The Frenchman looked at both with a sneer. "Are you quite sure, messieurs?" he asked. "I was before I came," declared Thornecliffe heartily. Dubarre turned now on Wilmerding. "Twas a brave deed, monsieur, for the titled lover with sword on hip to

insult the poor, unarmed dancing master." "No harm was done," blurted Sir John, the more brutally to cover his confusion. The Frenchman merely looked at him. "Doubtless Mistress Percy will be glad to hear that she was proved innocent," he said. Captain Thornecliffe had to bite his lips at that. "Don't push Jack so hard, Dubarre," he urged. "The dancing master continued to Sir John: "But is monsieur sure—quite sure—that she is innocent? One never can tell of women. Is there not some other place to look? Possibly she may have hidden behind the facing of the clock. It stopped this morning. A shaking up may do it good."

Captain Thornecliffe felt called upon to interfere. "Enough, enough, Dubarre!" he begged. "Don't you see her's sorry?" "Yes," said Wilmerding angrily, "I'm sorry." He thrust his sword in its scabbard and stalked toward the door. The Frenchman looked after the departing lover. "One would think he was sorry he had not found her," said the indignant man sarcastically. Captain Thornecliffe held out his hand. "I know you will say nothing of this, Dubarre. I am grieved and jealous about it. You have acted splendidly throughout."

Dubarre smiled as they shook hands. "You should know," he said, then added: "Twas sad. Pierre came in wearing a long cloak against the rain, but that fooled him. Good night, monsieur." Captain Thornecliffe followed Sir John Wilmerding out. Dubarre locked the door after them. Next he straightened, with a monstrous sigh of relief, and in the candle light his face was lit with a great fatigue. A moment he stood thus, then stepped quickly across the room. He turned the key and opened the door of the clock. "They are gone, mademoiselle. Now I shall see you safely to the house."

CHAPTER IX. CAPTAIN THORNECLIFFE cast the week old Gazette aside with an impatient gesture. "Nothing in the paper," he muttered; then went on smoking furiously and thinking just as hard as he could to treat the inside nerves. Also for floating biliousness, bad breath or complexion, use Dr. Shoop's Restorative. Write me today for samples and free book. Dr. Shoop, Racine, Wis. The Restorative is sold by the Regina Pharmacy Stores.

When they saw her through the window by the main force Thornecliffe had kept the jealous lover from rushing in to kill the Frenchman. They had followed Dubarre and the girl from the lodge to the big house and witnessed the most respectful adieu. With great difficulty the watchers had crept so close that they could overhear Dubarre thank Mistress Percy for her kindness in coming to tell him goodby and to deplore the necessity that compelled him to hide her in the clock to save appearances. Dubarre had kissed her hand respectfully and gone away. The girl had seemed stunned or sad or not herself or something, for Thornecliffe could swear she said only: "Adieu, monsieur. May heaven keep you safe!"

Now, all these things were sufficient to worry the blunt soldier. He had declared earnestly to Wilmerding that he believed the visit innocent and had induced the jealous lover to promise to wait until Dubarre had gone, then get a quiet explanation from Mistress Percy. Whether or not the hot tempered Sir John could keep his head and his promise was an open question. The white fish from Buffalo lake weighed ten pounds and were delicious. The commissioners left Isle la Crosse about the tenth of July for Stanley lake and Lake LaBruche. They will return by Montreal lake. Mr. Russell says that Tom Borthwick makes a very good commissioner. He is well liked by the Indians and takes pains to do his work well. The party travelled north from here over five hundred miles. The trip was made by water and in all they ran about forty rapids. It is wonderful to see how well dressed the people are and how comfortable. They live chiefly on fish. On the first of July there were fine sports at Isle la Crosse. There were horse races, tug-of-war, boat races, foot races and jumping. The Indians entered into the spirit of the sport and the party had a great time. W. J. McLean, of Winnipeg and A. W. Bell are acting as secretaries to the commissioner. The wheat at Green Lake, 160 miles north of here was as far ahead as at Prince Albert.

A HERO SAYS BORDEN

Conservative Leader Says That Hoodlum Treatment of Bourassa is Not Hurting Him

Toronto, Aug. 8.—The leader of the opposition, Mr. R. L. Borden, M.P., arrived at the King Edward this morning from Montreal. "I have every reason to believe there will be another session before the election," said Mr. Borden. "This of course, I look at as the last of the present parliament, and the last session is usually an active one." When asked about his visit, Mr. Borden replied: "This is only a private trip. The political tour which I have planned begins on the 20th of August, when I will address a meeting in the Maritime provinces. I will be in Ontario in September. I really can't say whether I will speak in Toronto or not, as I have left the arrangement of my addresses with the different provincial associations. The tour through to the coast will be completed by Nov. 1st."

"Bourassa will not be injured by the abuse he received from the crowd at his meeting in Quebec city," Mr. Borden said in answer to a question. "The event has simply made him a hero all over the province, and has strengthened him rather than otherwise. It was a mistake on the part of those who were responsible for the disturbance, and it hardly agrees with the Liberal principle of freedom of speech."

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GOOD WHEAT IN FAR NORTH

Samples Brought From 160 Miles North of Prince Albert—The Script Commission

Prince Albert, Aug. 9.—George Russell returned from Portage la Loche and Isle la Crosse, where he went with Commissioner Borthwick, who was north making treaty with the Cree and Chipewyan Indians at these points. In the party were the following scrip buyers, Alex. McDonald, Horace Halcore, Horace Adams, Tommy Davis, Jos McKay, Chester Thompson, Lawyer Kent, of Winnipeg, Dr. Coleridge, Geo. Russell, Mr. Bernard of Revillon Bros., had charge of the transportation. At Portage la Loche and Isle la Crosse the party had green onions and radishes in July from the Mission gardens. The party lived on fish and moose meat. The white fish from Buffalo lake weighed ten pounds and were delicious.

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DRAWN NEARER DAY BY DAY

Imperial Sentiment Expressed By British Journalists—Dawson a Statesman

The visit of the British journalists is doing a great deal to cement the ties of the empire.

Speaking of his impressions of Canada, Mr. A. J. Dawson, of the London Standard, said: "Those who write and those who read the journal I have the honor of representing, the London Standard, hold strongly to the belief that Canada is more emphatically the country of the twentieth century than the United States was the promised land of the nineteenth century. We think there is another vital difference between these two countries. Canada we think of as the first great independent nation of the British empire. We hope to see more and more good men and women of British stock and more and more of British capital take part each year in the development of this most magnificent among the overseas works of the empire. We hope and work for the closer union between Canada and the rest of the Empire, based not alone on patriotic sentiment, but upon trading reciprocity, upon imperial preference, and upon a sure belief in the advantage of the whole cause of civilization which is gained by the spread and dominance of that rule and constitution which unite us all, four hundred million strong under the one well loved flag which stands the world over for real justice."

"We attach great importance to the rapidly growing movement for fiscal reform, not alone upon commercial grounds, but because we are assured, that preference, the principle of treating our kin a little better than the stranger, must make for the further strengthening of the greatest and most beneficent union that the world has ever seen. In this we look for the loyal patience of Canada, and the strong unanimous voice of Canada's approval when the good time comes. It is drawing nearer day by day."

MANY TRACK SITES SOLD

Commissioner Lawson Presents Quarterly Report

One of the important features of the report of H. C. Lawson, to the board of trade on Thursday evening when the publicity commissioner submitted a return showing the scope of his work during the last quarter, was the fact that in the last four months the city had sold at a nominal sum, subject to building conditions eighteen warehouse track sites.

Mr. Lawson produced copies of articles which appeared in leading magazines in Great Britain, and the United States, respecting the city and district. Stock Centre. About a year ago a committee of the board of which H.W. Laird was chairman, took up the matter of a permanent stock yards at the exhibition grounds and tentative plans were submitted. In the meantime the city has built a large amphitheatre and show ring which has been very serviceable for the spring stock show, but as Mr. Laird pointed out to the board on Thursday last, nothing further is being done with regard to the big stock yards for monthly sales. A board of commissioners could operate the yards for the city. The following committee was appointed to wait on the city again respecting the matter: Messrs Laird, McAra and McCausland.

The question of postal delivery was taken up and it was disclosed that the department would not give Regina free delivery till the population reached twelve thousand. The business men's committee reported on the postal service to the effect that at present there is no reason for complaint regarding the Regina office. Messrs. W. H. Laird and A. T. Hunter who represented the city at the Winnipeg sitting of the railway commission reported on their trip. Mr. McCausland gave notice that he would introduce a motion urging the appointment of a commission to administer our civic affairs.

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