

was there—and she had not lately. She not answered since she had had offended what she had probably away l-service was there. She and then—few moments, r, and Ethel's onto again. e glow of the at the fleecy cessively, in— until at last business any

etter indeed, replied Mr. or that 'note' ighter than But, Ethel ly, "you are ety just now u brood, my your pretty said to you. ng her thin n business— little incen- kissed her

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refnion in ight. Not ats, but a ok posses- ld how she would not and with she could n at last s. Carsby anuscript ng, at the

same time begging her daughter to do only a very little each day until she grew strong again. Ethel promised, and throwing her arms about her mother's neck as the latter kissed her good night, she whispered:

"I shall not have to marry Mr. Finch now, shall I, Mamma?"

"Why no, child, no! not unless you want to! answered her mother in pained tones. "I had no intention of forcing you into the marriage, my child. I thought you would come to look upon it as a good match for you. However, I shall never again interfere with your wishes in that respect. Understanding," with a mischievous smile, "are more binding than I thought for. By the way," she added, "before I forget again, there is a letter for you—downstairs, on the book-case—it came with the evening delivery." And then teasingly, "I noticed it had the Alberta post-mark," as Ethel started downstairs in search of the letter.

Ethel soon returned with the letter. It was from Jack, and as she opened it her fingers were trembling. For some reason she dreaded to read it, and having opened the letter she laid it aside. "Suppose Jack has done what I asked him to," she murmured, "whatever shall I do? But he won't! I know he won't—he must not!" and as she could bear the suspense no longer she took up the letter and began to read.

It was not a long letter, but a frank, courteous reply to the one she had written. He could not understand, he said, the change in her attitude towards him. He could scarcely believe that she was in earnest—that she was really herself when she wrote him that letter, which he was now answering. However, since she wished it, he would release her from the promise she had given him. "I feel, Miss Carsby," he wrote, "that no fetters can bind you to me except they are fetters of love, and since these are broken you are free to follow the dictates of your own heart."

Nothing but the sight of her own name kept the letter from falling from Ethel's nerveless fingers, and forced her to read what was written in conclusion.

"But, Ethel," it ran, "(if I may dare again to call you by that name) although I give you up, I cannot cease to love you. You gave your loving heart to me—you sealed the compact with your loving lips, and, while the consciousness of the past is mine, I cannot cease to love you. Forgive me. Good-bye."

"You poor, silly, old goose!" sobbed Ethel, crying, she knew not whether for sorrow or joy. "You need not—I don't want you to stop loving me—I'm going to sit right down and tell you so."

And she began the letter with "My dear, dear Jack—"

The End.

The Clew of the Silver Spoons.

A Chapter from the Memoirs of M. Valmont, Formerly High in the Confidence of the French Government. By Robert Barr.



WHEN the card was brought in to me I looked upon it with some misgiving, for I scented a commercial transaction, and although such cases are lucrative enough, nevertheless I, Eugene Valmont, formerly high in the service of the French Government, do not care to be connected with them. They usually pertain to sordid business affairs that present little that is of interest to a man who, in his time, has dealt with subtle questions of diplomacy upon which the welfare of nations sometimes turned.

The name of Bentham Gibbes is familiar to everyone, connected, as it is, with the much advertised pickles, whose glaring announcements in crude crimson and green strike the eye everywhere in England, and shock the artistic taste wherever seen. Me! I have never tasted them, and shall not so long as a French restaurant remains open in London, but I doubt not they are as pronounced to the palate as their advertisement is distressing to the eye. If, then, this gross pickle manufacturer expected me to track down those who were infringing upon the recipes for making his so-called sauces, chutneys, and the like, he would find himself mistaken, for I was now in a position to pick and choose my cases, and a case of pickles did not allure me. "Beware of imitations," said the advertisement; "none genuine without a fac-simile of the signature of Bentham Gibbes." Ah, well, not for me were either the pickles or the tracking of imitators. A forged check, yes, if you like, but the forged signature of Mr. Gibbes on a pickle bottle was not for me. Nevertheless, I said to Armand: "Show the gentleman in," and he did so.

To my astonishment there entered a young man, quite correctly dressed in dark frock coat, faultless waistcoat and trousers that proclaimed the Bond Street tailor. When he spoke, his voice and language were those of a gentleman. "Monsieur Valmont?" he inquired.

"At your service," I replied, bowing and waving my hand as Armand placed a chair for him and withdrew.

"I am a barrister with chambers in the Temple," began Mr. Gibbes, "and for some days a matter has been troubling

me about which I have now come to seek your advice, your name having been suggested by a friend in whom I confided.

"Am I acquainted with him?" I asked.

"I think not," replied Mr. Gibbes; "he is also a barrister with chambers in the same building as my own. Lionel Daere is his name."

"I never heard of him."

"Very likely not. Nevertheless, he recommended you as a man who could keep his own counsel, and if you take up this case I desire the utmost secrecy preserved, whatever may be the outcome."

I bowed, but made no protestation. Secrecy is a matter of course with me. The Englishman paused for a few moments as if he expected fervent assurances; then went on with no trace of disappointment on his countenance at not receiving them.

"On the night of the twenty-third I gave a dinner to six friends of mine in my own rooms. I may say that so far as I am aware they are all gentlemen of unimpeachable character. On the night of the dinner I was detained later than I expected at a reception, and, in driving to the Temple, was still further delayed by a block of traffic in Piccadilly, so that when I arrived at my chambers there was barely time for me to dress and receive my guests. My man, Johnson, had everything laid out ready for me in my dressing-room, and as I passed through to it I hurriedly flung off the coat I was wearing and carelessly left it over the back of a chair in the dining-room, where neither Johnson nor myself noticed it until my attention was called to it after the dinner was over. This coat had an inside pocket. Usually any frock coat I wear at an afternoon reception has not an inside pocket, but I had been rather on the rush all day. My father is a manufacturer whose name may be familiar to you, and I am on the directors' board of his company. On this occasion I had to take a cab from the city to the reception I spoke of, and had not time to go and change at my rooms. The reception was a somewhat Bohemian affair, extremely interesting, of course, but not too particular as to costume, so I went as I was. In this inside pocket rested a thin package, composed of two pieces of paste-board, and between them five twenty-

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