

# THE WOOING OF ERNA

"I do not understand it," Aubrey said, shaking his head. "Why should he take poison? Did he give any explanation?" "He said it was an accident."

"Ah, yes! I remember."

"He was so anxious to see you," went on the landlord, "and was so afraid he would be before you came! Ah! that reminds me that he gave me a note to give you with the package of papers, in case he should die before you came. I have given you the package; here is the note. I had almost forgotten it; though I don't say it would have mattered much, since you have seen the poor man."

He handed Aubrey an envelope directed to him in the handwriting of Loftus, familiar enough in spite of its irregularity and tremulous character. He placed it in his pocket, to read when he had a moment to himself. He listened to all else that was said, and then drew out the letter to read.

He was only slightly curious. He had no doubt that the note would have something to say about the papers in the packet; and the papers, he did not doubt, had something to do with some episode in the life of Sir Charles. He broke the seal, and read:

"My dear Aubrey—I know I am dying, and that fact has driven me not only to repentance, but to an effort to undo a wrong I have aided in—"

"Poor fellow!" murmured Aubrey, "I have no doubt he had some wretched misdeeds to answer for."

"I am dying because I have been poisoned," he wrote, "and I have told the people here that I swallowed the poison by mistake. That is untrue, but I might not be brought to justice without your consent. I do this much for you—I forego my revenge for the sake of your good name."

"What can he mean?" murmured Aubrey. "He writes rationally enough, but I do not understand one of his allusions."

"I write this so that you may get it in case I die before you return. A packet of papers will be handed to you with this which will explain better than I the wrong which has been done you. I blame no one for my share in it. Hawkesburst could not have persuaded me if I had not been ready for dishonor."

"I will not attempt to tell you anything here—the papers will tell you everything. I will explain as well as I could to the Marquise de Senac really was, for all I know of her is what the letters of Hawkesburst and herself show. It was Hawkesburst who managed the whole affair. As for Lucia, who played her part with such terrible ability, I only know that she has murdered me to prevent my sharing with her the profits of our joint wickedness."

"I know you will do my words, for I could see that you have learned to love her; but if you will read the letters in the package, you will know how vile and cunning an adventurer she is. I can write no more."

Charles Loftus.

The words had been a blur toward the end. He could not, and would not, believe the words, but they made his senses whirl. He read them, and it was with difficulty that he continued on to the end.

"Lucia an adventurer! Oh, absurd! A murderer! Loftus was mad!"

He thrust the letter into his pocket, and went out into the night air, the coolness of it might set his thoughts right. Of course, there was nothing true, but that poor Loftus had written the letter in a delirium. As for the packet of letters—Well, it was due to Lucia to open the packet, and he would.

He went softly up stairs for he knew she would be asleep, and opened the door, which, as already stated, she had taken care to unlock before retiring. The lamp was burning low, but there was light enough for him to see how divinely beautiful she was in her almost baby-like innocence.

Lucia an adventurer! He almost laughed aloud at the idea. She was his wife, and he was growing into a veritable mad worship of her. Ah! how sweet she was. He had some difficulty in persuading himself to take up the packet and carry it down stairs again. Surely the letters could wait!

They might wait, but something urged him to have the disagreeable duty done and disposed with. So he picked up the package and left the room with a lingering glance at Lucia. Ah, Lucia! wake up, Lucia, or you may have done murder all in vain.

The house was quiet now. The members of the servant corps had shown their activity and solicitude, and that was enough. They were abed now. There was a light in the parlor, and Aubrey sat down by it and tore open the packet.

The letters had evidently been carefully arranged; for they were folded and laid alternately, so that a letter in the handwriting of Hawkesburst came next one in a feminine hand which Aubrey had never seen before.

"I beg pardon, mistress! will you breakfast so early?"

It was gray dawn and one of the servants had touched Aubrey as he sat at the table in the parlor. Aubrey started and looked up at the touch. The man drew back with a cry of dismay. The handsome, debonaire face of Lord Aubrey was white and set as if in death.

"You are ill!" said the man.

"No," was the answer, and, without another word, Aubrey swept a pile of letters from the table and put them in his pocket.

Then he arose and went upstairs. He entered his room, but less quietly than on the night before, and Lucia started and opened her eyes. She smiled the instant she recognized him. But she was not fully awake.

"You have come back to me, Rupert," she said.

"Get up!" he said, sternly.

She started up from the bed, fully awake now, and stared at him. The light was too dim to see very well, and she could not catch his expression. Her

## CORNS CURED

YOU CAN PAINLESSLY REMOVE IN 24 HOURS

### PUTNAM'S PAINLESS CORN EXTRACTOR

The matter and do what was best. And that is how you happened to be educated at the expense of the Earl of Aubrey."

"Is it so late?" she asked, in her most tuneful voice.

"Late early!" he ejaculated. "What do I know of time? Are you an adventurer? Are you a murderer? Have you eyes duped and tricked me? Have you poisoned a man as you would a dog? Heaven! why do you not speak and lie? Why do you not swear that it is not true?"

"Are you mad, my lord?" she asked, her voice quivering.

"I think I am. Yes, I am mad. I wonder why I do not fly at you and rend you! I ought to. And, oh, Heaven! I fondled and caressed her, and believed her so pure and innocent."

He laughed hideously, and the startled woman cowered as she listened. There was almost murder in that laugh; and now that her eyes were used to the light she could see a terrible expression on his face. It was not the face of a man to be cajoled any longer.

"I do not understand you, my lord," she said.

A game was never ended with her until she saw the last card in her opponent's hand.

"You do not understand, Gabrielle Loisier? Ah! you understand that! You understand that I have only to take you to France, and say, 'Here is Gabrielle Loisier,' and you are clutched by the eager police."

The beautiful young creature shrugged her shoulders, and coolly stated herself in an easy chair. The game was up.

It had been some fun and much hard work to play the innocent so long. Well, then, to be natural for a little while with this glib young Englishman.

"Gabrielle Loisier! Oh, yes, that is my name, Rupert! Has he had her? Ah! well, my husband—for you are that, you know—you have changed all that. I am the Countess of Aubrey now. And if I go to a French prison it will be as the Countess of Aubrey, and I shall demand English protection, as is my right, being the wife of an Englishman. Was it not a game well played, my lord? A little more and you would never have known. Oh, you fool!"

He shuddered. This was the Lucia he had begun to love and had lavished so much affection on. How he hated himself! How he loathed her!

"What are you going to do? Will you take me to France, and say, 'Here is my countess, whom I am going to put in jail. She has murdered my good friend, and you may cut off her pretty head with the guillotine.' Will you say that, or, for the sake of your name—that precious name!—will you say to me, 'Here, my dear, I find I do not love you as I thought I was going to; I like a thousand pounds, which is twenty-five thousand francs of French money, and go to America, where your genius will be appreciated. And if you will promise never to trouble me again, I will give you five thousand pounds.'"

She laughed in a tigerish way, and tossed her beautiful head saucily. Even yet it was incredible that she could be the monster the letters had shown her to be. But Aubrey was sick at heart.

"I will give you five thousand pounds," he said.

"That is right, Rupert. Now leave me while I dress."

CHAPTER IX.

"I don't see why not. He's my cousin."

"Very distant."

"I don't care how distant! His relationship was near enough for him to pay my school expenses. If it was right for him to do that, and if it was right for me to use his horses while he was away, I don't see what matter whether you say or not, you must not go to Aubrey again, nor have any of the horses brought over here."

The two speakers were an austere-looking lady of middle age and a rebellious-looking girl. The latter was dressed in a riding habit, which set off an exquisitely rounded figure to perfection, and with her riding whip she was petting and tapping her horse, the dainty toy of which peeped from under her gown.

Her full, red under lip was thrust out in a very pretty pout, her little head was tossed defiantly back, and her flashing brown eyes were filled with rebellion.

"What makes you so cross?" she demanded.

"I do what I think is best for you," was the calm reply.

"But you ought to give reasons," cried the girl, indignantly, stamping her little foot on the horse block. "You never did say much about Lord Aubrey, but now that he is coming home, and I am expecting to see him and thank him for his kindness to me, you calmly say I must go over there no more. What will he think of me? He'll think I have no gratitude at all."

"My dear Erna," said the elder woman, quietly, "he will think nothing at all about it. It may be very mortifying to your pride, but I fancy he is hardly aware of your existence. I wrote him that you were a distant connection, an orphan and destitute; and, as he had a great deal more money than he had use for, he wrote to his attorney to look into

## GROWING BOYS AND GROWING GIRLS

### Need Dr. Williams' Pink Pills to Give Them Health and Strength.

Growing boys as well as girls need such a tonic as Dr. Williams' Pink Pills to keep the blood rich, red and pure and give them health and strength. Mrs. Edward Koch, post-mistress at Prince's Lodge, N. B., tells the great benefit her little son has derived from the use of this world famous medicine. Mrs. Koch says: "My little son, Reginald, had been troubled with anemia almost since birth. He was always a sickly looking child, with no energy and little or no appetite. His veins showed very plainly through his skin and he had several serious attacks of stomach and bowel trouble, and on one occasion his life was despaired of by two doctors who were attending him. His little body was slowly wasting away until he was nothing more than a skeleton. He was peevish and fretful and a misery to himself. Having read and heard so much of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills I determined to try them in his case, and after giving them to him for a couple of months they certainly worked wonders with him. To-day he is fat and healthy looking; he has a hearty appetite, is able to play like other children, and is bright and energetic, instead of dull and listless as he used to be. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills have changed my puny, sickly child into a rugged, hearty boy."

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills cured this sickly boy because they went down to the root of the trouble in his blood. That is why they never fail. Bad blood is the cause of all common diseases like anaemia, (bloodlessness), eczema, psoriasis, headaches, indigestion, kidney trouble, neuralgia, rheumatism and the special ailments that only growing girls and womenfolk know. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills don't bother with mere symptoms, they cure diseases through the blood. They don't cure for a day—they cure to stay cured. Do not take any pills without the full name "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People" on the wrapper around each box. Sold by all medicine dealers or by mail at 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50 from Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

Oh, how joyfully it was said; and poor, simple Watson could not detect the mischievous twinkle in the roguish eyes. She smiled and believed it would be a blessed good thing to rest a bit, and so she did, and presently was seated in her own cozy little parlor, with a glass of ale before her, and a smile on her face as she beamed at her pretty visitor.

"Men are so unreasonable, aren't they, Watson?" said Erna, sympathetically.

"You're thinking of that earl coming home so suddenly after all these years. Well, it does seem so, Miss Erna, but I'm glad he is coming back once more. I had almost begun to think he never would come back again."

"I don't care how long, I believe," suggested Erna, who in truth knew nothing about the length of time.

"All of six years, my dear."

"Is that all?" cried Erna, in amazement. "Why, I supposed from the way everybody talked, that it must be nearer twenty."

(To be continued.)

### Radium in Surgery.

Sir Frederick Treves considers that we have practically reached the therapeutic limitations of the X-rays, the high frequency current and the Finzen light, but that in radium we still have unexplored fields of usefulness.

This writer believes, without desiring to raise false hopes, that radium will cure every form of cancer, whether it is a port wine stain, a pigmented mole or a hairy mole, and rodent ulcer which has not yielded to the Finzen light or the X-rays, and that too in two sittings one hour each. Wonders are also accomplished in the early stages of epithelioma of the lip and tongue.—From the British Medical Journal.

Teacher (to stupid pupil)—For what is Pisa noted? Stupid pupil—For—Bright little school promoting in a whisper—Leaning tower. Stupid pupil (eagerly)—Linen towels.—Western Christian Advocate.

## THE BEST REMEDY

### For Women—Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound

Belleville, Ont.—"I was so weak and worn out from a female weakness, that I concluded to try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. I took several bottles of it, and I gained strength so rapidly that it seemed to make a new woman of me. I can do as good a day's work as I ever did, and I sincerely bless the day that I made up my mind to take your medicine for female weakness, and I am exceedingly grateful to you for your kind letters, as I certainly profited by them. Give your permission to publish this any time you wish." Mrs. ALBERT WICKETT, Belleville, Ontario, Canada.

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## STEAM HEATED GARDENS

### How Paris Market Gardeners Manufacture a Suitable Climate.

The market gardeners around Paris do not dream of waiting for spring before they raise spring vegetables. As one man put it, they move the climate of Monte Carlo to the suburbs of Paris.

This they do at enormous expense in money and in time. The gardens where ever possible are placed on land with a slope to the south and are well protected by walls on the north and east, built to reflect light as well as to give protection from the northeast winds.

The ground is practically covered with glass, not as in a greenhouse but by glass frames in the open, three light frames of uniform size, twelve feet by four and a half; and also by glass bells. These, too, are of a uniform size about the shape of a chapel bell, a little less than 17 inches in diameter and from 14 to 15 inches high. The French call them cloches. You may often see over a thousand frames and over ten thousand glass bells in one two acre plot in the suburbs of Paris.

A more recent innovation, according to Success, is the employment of hot water pipes run under the soil, making of the earth a veritable steam heated hotel, with this essential difference, that the hotel keeper here is desperately eager not to keep his guests, but to persuade them to leave on the earliest possible day.

### Shingles From a Tree 1,100 Years Old.

A lumber company at Buckley, Wash., recently sent out number of souvenir shingles that were cut from a tree 1,100 years old.

The tree from which the shingles were cut had 350 rings, which fact denotes that it is 350 years old when it fell. The stump of a tree which grew over it has 750 rings, and as this could not have started to grow until some time after the first fell it is practically certain that the original tree was thriving in A. D. 800, which was 700 years before the discovery of America.—Popular Mechanics.

## Osgar Und Adolf in der Wheat Pit.



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"You are ill!" said the man.

"No," was the answer, and, without another word, Aubrey swept a pile of letters from the table and put them in his pocket.

Then he arose and went upstairs. He entered his room, but less quietly than on the night before, and Lucia started and opened her eyes. She smiled the instant she recognized him. But she was not fully awake.

"You have come back to me, Rupert," she said.

"Get up!" he said, sternly.

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