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**RUMFORD**  
THE WHOLESOME  
BAKING POWDER

**"Love in the Wilds"**

—OR—  
**The Romance of a South African Trading Station.**

CHAPTER XII.

"THERE HAS BEEN FOUL PLAY."

"I want revenge; I thirst for it. Poor old man! Poor, weak, fiery old man! Ah, once more, I am sure that there has been some evil work, and that—that—what? What? Why is he so changed? They say it is the responsibility of all the sudden wealth that wrinkles his brow; but I, who see him here and watch him when he thinks I have eyes for nothing but the paper before me, see that something greater and deeper than that lies hidden in his heart.

"Why does he shun the Warren? Why does Rebecca deny herself to him? And why does he frown when even Mrs. Lucas's name is mentioned? Poor old lady! She is the connecting link between the old Dale and the new. Simmons is dead, the rest are scattered; but she is here, hand in hand with Rebecca, close beside him and an object of dislike and fear. Yes, fear; for there was alarm as well as hate in the frown that her name brought upon his face."

Then puzzling over this, joining the links in the chain, the strange young man sank upon the chair and dropped his head upon his hand for a moment. When he raised his face again there were tear-drops upon the pale cheeks, and the murmur was broken and hushed.

"What have I to do with it all? What is there worth the striving? Is it worth while to ferret it all out even to punish the bad, heartless villain? Oh, dear! I feel so lonely, so helpless, so solitary! My heart goes back across the wide, wide sea, even while I fret and muse over this bitter business. And yet—oh, shame, shame for me to weep for him who had no thought for me save that of a brave, noble heart for a weak, helpless lad! Oh, dear!"

The captain would have been astonished had he entered at that moment to see the blue spectacles lying on the desk and the eyes covered by two small hands, through which the tears forced themselves.

But the fit of weeping did not last long, for with a sudden effort the secretary stopped with a great sob and, shaking himself resolutely, replaced the spectacles, muttering:

"No, no; that's all past—all past long, long ago. I will give myself heart and soul to the solving of this dark problem. But for what end? Who will profit? No one! The rightful heir—the son, Hugh—is dead. What if I do prove that Reginald Dartmouth holds the Dale by a mere thread of villainy? Whom shall I benefit? Yet—yes, I can not rest; something spurs me on, goads me to go through with what I have begun. Sometimes—here he looked round with a shudder—"I feel as if a shadow, a shadow of an old, white haired man with wrinkled face and angry eyes was standing at my elbow urging me on, night and day, to unravel the mystery and punish the guilty. Yes," he continued, gathering up the papers on the desk and shaking

his head with an air of resolute defiance; "let it benefit whom it may—let it benefit no one—I will not rest until that villain is unmasked!"

So saying he commenced writing. "Now for my task. Oh, Reginald Dartmouth, little do you imagine who sits here conning your private letters and dissecting your past!"

At that moment the handle of the door was tried. Casting a hasty glance in the mirror opposite him, and composing his flushed and excited face into its usual expression of stolid indifference, the secretary trudged to the door and unlocked it.

Reginald Dartmouth entered and, casting a suspicious glance at the youth, said, sharply: "Why did you lock the door?" "I did not wish to be disturbed, sir," replied the secretary, hastily glancing at the desk. "There are a great many letters to catch the post, and Vignes comes in occasionally with questions."

Reginald Dartmouth, after another piercing look, was satisfied by the blank face, and dropped himself into the chair beside the fire—the secretary always had a small fire in the room—and the youth returned to the table without so much as a glance at his master's face and with a preoccupied air.

Reginald Dartmouth sat watching him in silence for a moment, then spoke his name.

But the secretary's mind was far away and he did not answer him.

"A machine—nothing but a machine. Well, it is what I want," he muttered; then he called him again.

"The youth looked up with a start.

"Sir, did you speak?"

"Yes," said Reginald Dartmouth. "Are you deaf? I sometimes think you are."

The secretary shook his head.

"No," he said, "not at all; I can hear perfectly."

"Hem!" said his master, thoughtfully. "Nor blind, eh, Stanfield—nor blind?"

"Not blind, sir," repeated the youth, monotonously, with a queer glance that the spectacles did not reveal.

"No; nor blind. I think sometimes you see more than most men," resumed Reginald Dartmouth, with a piercing glance. "You are quicker than you look, Stanfield. You had been to the Warren when I saw you passing on the terrace, eh?"

"Yes, sir," replied the secretary. "Pray, do you often go to the Warren?" asked Reginald Dartmouth, with an indifferent air.

"No, sir; but seldom. I called to ask after Sir Charles Anderson," replied the secretary.

"And you saw Mrs. Lucas?"

The youth nodded and turned to the table again.

Reginald Dartmouth bent his eyes upon the floor. There was a pause. Suddenly he looked up.

"Stanfield, put those letters aside; I wish to speak to you," he said, and rising, leaned against the mantelpiece with his dark, piercing eyes fixed upon the blue spectacles and expressionless face. "I am inclined to trust you with a delicate piece of business. I say I am inclined to trust you; but you know too well, I think, the consequences that would result from any faithlessness on your part."

The youth inclined his head with deep humility.

"Good!" said the captain, in answer to his gesture. "Now Stanfield, I stopped you on the terrace for a purpose."

"I thought so," murmured the youth, inwardly.

"Did you notice the lady who was seated beside me?"

The secretary nodded.

"Do you know who and what she is?"

He nodded again.

"I have heard the servants call her countess—the Countess Lucille—and have seen her letters addressed Countess Vitzarelli."

"Good!" responded the captain, with curt approval of the concise summing up. "Tell me: did you remark anything particular, curious, worthy of notice, in her manner, bearing, face—you understand me?"

The secretary nodded and knit his brows.

"Madam is beautiful," he said.

"Well?"

"And thoughtful."

"Ay," said Reginald Dartmouth; "thoughtful."

"She has something on her mind; her eyes are fixed on some object far away, and her heart is set on some mission that fills her whole existence."

Reginald Dartmouth took two or three strides to and fro.

"Stanfield," he said, "I was right; you are not blind. The countess has something on her mind—has some hidden purpose, some secret mission—"

"That you would have me find out," interrupted the youth, in the same monotonous tones, but with another unseen glance of scrutiny.

"You have it," said Reginald Dartmouth, with cold sternness—"that I would have you find out. Are you equal to the task?"

"I am equal to the endeavor," replied the youth, without a change of voice or look. "I am equal to all my master bids me take in hand."

"Good!" said Reginald Dartmouth. "Now, that you may not start upon a wrong tack, I give you this hint: the secret lies apart from Italy."

"I know it," said the secretary. "Madam wears another look when the count and she hold conference."

"True; you are not blind—very far from it," said Reginald Dartmouth, approvingly. "Have you any clue? You have seen so far that perhaps you have pierced farther than I have."

The youth shook his head.

"No," he said, "it has not been my business. It is now, and I will do my best."

"Do," said his master. "And now for the means. I have spoken to the countess of you—striven to interest her in you. I have succeeded so far that she has consented to avail herself of your help in such matters as belong to Italian affairs. You will follow her commands as well as you have done mine, and meanwhile use every opportunity—and make them when they do not occur—to discover this mystery."

The secretary nodded.

"You may want money," resumed Reginald Dartmouth, after a moment's thought. "Here are bank-notes to the amount of some hundreds; use them if necessary and more shall be forthcoming." He spoke hurriedly and feverishly now, strive though he did to remain calm and cool. "For the rest—"

The secretary interrupted him, monotonously, as before:

"Money is of little use if I get no other help. I must have means of watching her; of following her unseen; of listening to her thoughts when she murmurs them to her glass; of seeing her face when she thinks it unseen; of tracing out the hidden secret in every sigh and every word spoken in sleep."

Reginald Dartmouth stared with a sudden pallor and almost shuddered before the subtle meaning of the monotonously spoken words.

"Enough—enough!" he said. "You shall have every opportunity to do all this. Let me think. Ah! you know her apartments?"

"The left corridor. Who sleeps above?"

"No one," replied Reginald Dart-



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mouth. "The rooms overhead are used for lumber-rooms."

"Ah, they will do!" said the secretary, with a sudden change of countenance—a sudden and transient gleam of satisfaction. "They will suit my purpose—a hole in the ceiling, a chink in the boarding—some place for the ear and the eye. Ay, ay! Where are the keys?"

"Here," said Reginald Dartmouth, going to a drawer and taking a bunch of rusty keys from among a number of others.

The secretary turned them over. After a glance at each he dropped them into his pocket; then, in the old monotonous tone, said:

"Rest easy, sir; the countess's secret shall be yours, if mortal can unearth it."

Reginald Dartmouth said nothing; but the gleam in his eyes and the quiver of his thin, cruel lips were more eloquent than speech; and after a few minutes' abstraction, during which he watched the vacant face of his supposed tool as it bent again over the pile of letters, he left the room.

Then the tool glided to the door, locked it, and pulled out the rusty keys and stood regarding them with flashing eyes.

"The keys to the old rooms! Lumber! Ah, what may I not find among the lumber to foil you, Reginald Dartmouth!"

What, indeed? Something more, perhaps, than even the secretary's quick, shrewd brain can dream.

(to be continued.)

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Embroidered voile is here portrayed. The style is also good for linen, foulard, printed voile, sateen, taffeta and serge.

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Pattern 3128—Cut in 4 Sizes: 3, 4, 5, and 6 years—is here portrayed. For a 3 year size, 3 yards of 27 inch material will be required. Serge, khaki, gingham, linen, velvet, and corduroy are nice for this style. The blouse could be different material than that of the trousers.

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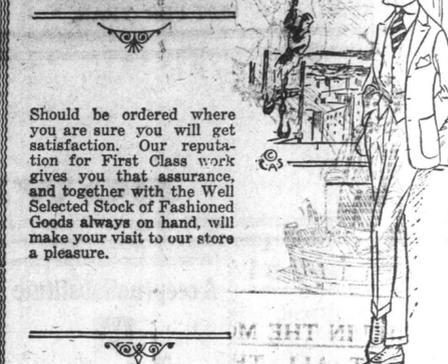
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