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M.37:3

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N.1

A NEW SERIAL

BEHIND THE PICTURE

By M. McD. Bodkin, K.C.

This week the CANADIAN COURIER contains the first instalment This week the CANADIAN COURIER contains the first instalment of a new serial of more than usual interest and quality. The hero is a picture dealer and a picture lover. In his work of buying and selling pictures he has some strange and romantic experiences. The chief of these is the disappearance of a famous Velasquez, which is stolen from a gentleman's house in Ireland, and eventually turns up in a famous collection in England. The story of its finding and restoration will interest all those who have the slightest knowledge of the numerous romances which surround some of the famous pictures of the world.

pictures of the world.

The author, McDonnell Bodkin, is an Irish judge. He has been a newspaper man and a parliamentarian, and was on intimate terms with Gladstone and Parnell. He is a personal friend of the present Irish leaders, O'Brien, Dillon, and O'Connor. The most notable of his books are "Paul Beck" and "Lord Edward Fitzgerald," both of which deal with the life of actors. He is as much interested in the stage as he is in art and politics.

We can recommend this serial to all our readers as being the "classiest" story yet published in the CANADIAN COURIER. We were fortunate to secure the Canadian serial rights of what promises to be a famous novel.

Canadian Courier, Toronto

Behind the Picture

(Continued from page 14)

flame and stunning sound. Hither and

flame and stunning sound. Hither and thither the flashes New and the mountains crasned and roared incessantly. Then, as if the shock had shattered the flood gates of heaven, the rain came in a torrent. The tension relaxed, the lightning ceased, the thunder slowly growled itself to silence. Suddenly through the splash of falling water there came the sound of a furious knocking at the door.

The boy and girl ran together to open it. Out of the downpour a man with two dogs crouching at his heels stepped into the hall. His clothes clung to every curve and angle of his figure, and water ran from him in little rivulets. It streamed from the peak of his cap, from the barrel of his gun, from his elbows and his hands, but his handsome smiling face mocked his own pitiful plight, and his bold bright eyes turned from the boy's face to the girl's in evident admiration. tion.

CHAPTER II.

Flat Burglary.

"CAN you pardon me?" the stranger said, as he watched the water gather and spread and run in tiny streams on the floor. The voice was the voice of a gentleman. "I fear I have made a lake of your hall."

hall."

As his eyes met Sybil's there was something more than admiration in their light; something like an effort to catch a vague remembrance of a face seen somewhere before. At that moment Mrs. Darley came into the hall and welcomed the stranger graciously. hall and graciously.

mall and welcomed the stranger graciously.

"Don't speak of trouble," she said, "there is none. You must change at once. Why, you are as wet as if you had rolled in the river. Luckily, I can offer you a change. My husband—" She broke off abruptly. "In five minutes I will have dry clothes laid out for you. Hugh, will you show him the bathroom? A hot bath is the first thing you want."

As the stranger dragged himself with difficulty from his streaming, clinging garments, he marvelled at the refuge he had found. The artistically-tiled bathroom with all the latest appliances was hardly to be expected in the remote west of Ireland. The linen laid out for him was the finest, the clothes were all of the best material and cut by a tailor who knew his business.

Surprise grew upon him as he came.

best material and cut by a tailor who knew his business.

Surprise grew upon him as he came into the drawing-room and was welcomed by his hostess. The taste and costliness of his surroundings amazed him. In Mrs. Darley's eyes, as he thanked her, was the same look that the girl's face had awakened in him, a vague recollection of having seen him somewhere before, a vain effort to remember.

As if in answer to her questioning

him somewhere before, a vain effort to remember.

As if in answer to her questioning eyes, he said: "You must allow me to introduce myself. I am Frederick Ackland, Earl of Sternholt. You may have heard of me before, though this is my first visit to Ireland. I believe I am your landlord, but I had no notion the cottage was so charming."

As his eyes, sweeping round the room, found the picture over the mantelpiece, he started and stared. "What is that? Where did you get that?" he asked almost harshly. But before surprise let Mrs. Darley answer, his courtesy came back to him. "Pardon me," he said, "the picture startled me for a moment. It is very like someone I once knew."

"It is very like what my husband was when I first met him," Mrs. Darley answered softly; "though it was not painted for him, of course."

"Of course not. The picture is a copy of a Velasquez, I think."

"I believe it is an original."

He laughed a laugh of courteous Incredulity. "Then, my dear madam, I congratulate you most heartily; such a Velasquez is priceless."

"I am no judge," the widow said timidly; "but my husband believed it to be an original."

The earl came nearer and examined the picture closely. "I fear your husband was middle man middle middle man middle

The earl came nearer and examined the picture closely. "I fear your husband was mistaken," he said at

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