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The Countess of Landon.

CHAPTER XXIX.

He nodded to the men who were approaching them with eagerness in their faces.

"The crowd of worshippers at the shrine of the new divinity," he said. Madge only half understood him, and she stood confused and blushing deliciously as they pressed round her, begging for a dance.

The women looked at her as she stood, the center of the throng, with Rochester towering beside her. They knew, though Madge did not, that her triumph was commencing, and already envy began to burn in their hearts.

"That kind of person always understands the effective in costume," murmured one woman, who had run through three seasons and was still a spinster. "Did you ever see anything so decidedly stagey as her dress? Those primas would look well on the prima-donna of a light opera, and she started with a forced sneer on her thin lips.

"I should have thought Rochester too experienced to be taken in with a dairy-maid sinner and saucer eyes," remarked another in a tone of ungenerous criticism. "Dairy-maid!" was the scornful whisper. "Say rather the smile of a French goubrette. You can see that kind of thing at any of the cafes chantants in Paris. Poor Royce Landon!"

But Madge heard none of these charming criticisms. She scarcely noticed that the women opposite her in the quadrille looked straight over Madge's head as they clasped hands, for she had to remember the figures and the steps and her whole innocent soul was absorbed in the effort.

CHAPTER XXXI.

From her seat among the dowagers the countess watched her and saw her success, but she exhibited no sign of satisfaction, and when one and another of the stately old ladies remarked on Madge's beauty and grace, the countess merely smiled coldly, and inclined her head.

Though the men sought Madge, crowding round her in the intervals between the dances, and the women

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were evidently smitten, with envy, though these around the countess stung the girl's pride, she could not forget the night at the camp—the night Royce had said: "If I come, she must come with me, for she is my wife!" To the proud patrician, Madge was still the spy girl.

Madge had made Royce promise that he would keep near her, but he found it difficult to perform that promise, because so many other men wanted to be near her, at last however, he did manage to get within speaking distance. Lord Rochester was holding her bouquet while she displayed her card, to show a gentleman who implored a dance that she had not one left, the wit of the party was perpetrating bon mots for her special benefit, and the rest of the group seemed waiting on the off chance of being permitted to pay her some small attention.

Royce watched her and her surrounding court with a smile on his handsome face, and constructively looking up, she saw him, and moved toward him, Lord Rochester falling back and instantly absorbed in examining her bouquet.

"Well, Madge," he said, with his easy laugh, "it's very kind of you to notice me. Is your head quite turned, dearest? Are you satisfied? You should be."

She looked at him vaguely, as if she did not understand at first, then she blushed. "It is all delightful!" she said half apologetically, her eyes wistfully seeking his. "But do you think I haven't missed you? You have not been near me, Jack."

The old, dearly-loved name slipped out unawares. "For the best of all reasons," he said, smiling. "What a success you are having, Madge! All the men, and, for that matter, the women, too, are talking about you."

Madge looked round, confused and doubtful. "I don't understand," she murmured. "Everybody is very kind. But are they not always so?"

"Not always," he responded, laughing at her innocence. "I wish I could dance with you. You couldn't pretend to be somebody's wife ten minutes, could you?" She smiled up at him timidly. "I think I'd rather remain your wife than dance with you," she whispered in a tone which only a lovely woman can use.

"Very well," he said. "I'm going to dance the next with Irene."

A swift and subtle change came over her face. "I should like to see you," she said. "I will watch."

"Do," he said. "I am quite as amusing at this game as a performing elephant. Eh?" as her partner came up with a smile and a bow. "Your dance, is it? All right; goodbye, Madge."

She looked after him wistfully, and for a few minutes the stout young gentleman who had secured her for this waltz expended his eloquence on deaf ears.

Royce went round the room in search of Irene. He had not noticed her among the dancers lately, and he found her sitting in the palm-house. Seymour was standing beside her, bending over her and talking in a low, persuasive voice. Royce noticed that his face was flushed, and that his eyes were bright and restless with the brightness which is born of the wine-cup. Irene's head drooped, and a weary, harassed expression made her lovely face look strangely pale and sad in the midst of such a scene of gaiety.

Seymour looked up with a start and a sneer as Royce's stalwart figure entered between the curtains. Irene

half rose with a sort of eagerness and relief, but it died away in an instant, and she sank back as if she had remembered that she could no longer fly to Royce for comfort and succor. "Give me this dance, Renie?" he said. He did not often call her Renie now, but her paler and weariness touched him, and made his heart ache with a strange pang like that of a half-forgotten pain. What had Seymour been saying to her that she should look like that?

"Irene is tired," said Seymour almost chirily. As if resenting his attempt to dictate to her, Irene rose.

"Yes, I will dance with you, Royce," she said. Seymour smiled at them, then forced a smile.

"Do not dance too long, Irene," he said, soothingly, and he left the palm-house by the opposite door leading to the hall.

"Why does Seymour take such possession of you, Renie?" asked Royce, resentfully. She sighed.

"Don't let us talk of Seymour anything for a little while," she said. "I am not tired, it was the heat, and—What a success Madge is having!"

"Yes, but I thought we were to talk," he said. "No," she said in a low voice. In the old times she and Royce had often danced together along the corridors and the hall, and they knew each other's paces as only two persons who have danced together as boy and girl can.

Irene closed her eyes, she knew that with Royce's strong arm round her, and his keen eye and sure foot, she could come to no harm, and gave herself up to the dangerous joy, half-delightful, half-painful, which filled her weary, aching heart.

The present slipped away from her like the baseless fabric of a dream, and she was once more the happy, light-hearted girl whirling in the arms of her boy-lover just home for the holidays. "To her it almost seemed as if they were alone and that the soft strains of the waltz were being played for them only. And Royce? He held her firmly, yet gently and tenderly, and as she looked down at the face so perfect in its pure loveliness, and saw that the blue-veined lips were closed over the tired eyes, he too remembered the old times and all that she had been to him, and to him also, the present seemed unreal and visionary.

He noticed how lightly she leaned upon his arm, how easily he could lift her as some heavy couple came bounding and blundering their way, how fragile and like a delicate flower she seemed among the other women. There was a slight flush on her face and a faint smile on her lips, but the touch of warmth in her cheeks and the shadow of a smile served only to accentuate the sadness which sat upon the flower-like face.

His heart smote him, why, he scarcely could tell. He recalled their childish days. He had always called her his little wife. Once, in the course of his rough play, he had thrown her down and rendered her, for a moment or two, unconscious. He saw the scene now in this crowded ball-room as plainly as if it were being re-enacted. He had picked her up in his arms and pressed her to him, and kissed her—a great thing for a boy to do—and she had come to and murmured with her first breath: "Royce, dear, don't mind. It is nothing—only hold me a little while."

His heart ached and beat fast, and all unconsciously he pressed her closely to him as he had pressed her years ago. "It is like the old times, Renie," he murmured, scarcely knowing that he spoke aloud.

(To be continued.)

Flour is a combustible substance. When a cloud of it floats in the air of a room every particle is in immediate contact with oxygen, and a flame or even a spark will cause it to burn. Instantaneously the whole of it is converted into gas, which, expanding in a closed area, blows out the walls.

Powdered sugar is also extremely dangerous, while powdered spices, oatmeal, and even soap will explode. A Coal Dust Disaster.

Some months ago a workman lifted the lid of a bin containing flour, and held a lighted match inside to see how full it was. An explosion took place immediately, and the unfortunate man was badly injured. Yet it was not the mass of the flour that went off, but only what was adrift in the air of the bin.

A cake of soap does not burn unless put into a furnace or coal range, but if dry, and distributed in powdered form through the air of a room, it will explode with violence. The requisite conditions in such cases are that the substance shall be combustible and that it shall be plentifully mixed with air in a confined space.

The fact that coal dust will explode has only been realized within the last few years. A tremendous explosion in France, in which one thousand lives were lost, was proved to be due to this cause.

Means of safeguard against all sorts of dust explosions are now being evolved, and many factories are station fans to remove particles of dust from the air.

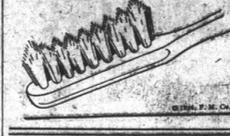
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Prophy-lactic Tooth Brush



Cruisers Ready in Three Years

MILLIONS PLANNED FOR AUSTRALIA'S SEA AND LAND DEFENCES. MELBOURNE, Australia, May 2.—E. K. Bowden, Australian Minister of Defence, speaking yesterday of the cruisers which the Commonwealth Government plans to construct this year at a cost of £2,000,000 and construct next year at a cost of £1,000,000, stated that the first two of the new light cruisers will be ready in three years. They are intended to gradually replace existing ships.

The cruisers at Melbourne and Sydney will be overhauled at a cost of £100,000 each. Mr. Bowden said, and the Cabinet was considering a proposal by which the number of men in training for the land forces under the universal training system might be increased.

It is not the policy of the manufacturers of Ivory soap to make extravagant claims in its behalf. They simply say that Ivory soap is a good, pure toilet soap and that it will cleanse the skin thoroughly without injuring the most delicate complexion.

Explosions Caused by Flour

DUST MORE DANGEROUS THAN DYNAMITE. It is not generally known that flour, sugar, starch, or grain dust are capable of working greater havoc than a high explosive such as dynamite.

In a barrel or sack four is harmless. But if you were to take handfuls of it and throw it about until the air in the room was full of it, and then light a match, the house might blow to pieces.

Flour is a combustible substance. When a cloud of it floats in the air of a room every particle is in immediate contact with oxygen, and a flame or even a spark will cause it to burn. Instantaneously the whole of it is converted into gas, which, expanding in a closed area, blows out the walls.

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Fights Blood-Thirsty Sharks

50 HOURS WITH KNIFE IN SEA—SAILOR ESCAPES UNSCAINED.

NEW YORK, May 6.—To the list of plain men made remarkable by capture of the sea has been added the name of Clarence L. Staden, erstwhile able seaman on the tanker Frederick W. Weller, which arrived recently from Panama. Staden, adrift in the wide circle of the Gulf of Panama, alone except for sharks, fought the man eater's hour in, hour out, with the long blade of a sailor's jack-knife, until the steamer Dorset picked him up. He had engaged in this bizarre warfare with the blood-hungry fish for 50 hours, had eaten no food, had had no sleep, and despite all emerged unscathed.

A note pinned to a forecastle post reading: "good-bye tanker Weller" was the first inkling Captain Samuel Purdy of the Weller had that Staden was missing. From the shelf above his bunk his life-belt was gone as well as the knife the seaman had taken pride in tempering.

Staden, shipmates and officers said, was inclined to be melancholy and they offer this as an explanation for his jumping overboard. The assumption was, they said, that once adrift terror and fear of the sharks de-throned any other thought he may have had and he desperately flailed and stabbed at the encircling fins.

India Lost 12,000,000 in Epidemic of 1918

LONDON, April 23 (A.P.)—Between 12,000,000 and 13,000,000 people in India died during the influenza epidemic in the winter of 1918, it is revealed by the Indian census of 1921. The population in 1921 was 318,849,480, an increase of 1.3 per cent. over the 1911 census, but it is several points under the 1918 estimated census, due to the epidemic.

There are about 9,000,000 more males than females in India and much headway in education, especially among females, is shown by the 1921 census. In religious beliefs the Hindu number 686-out of every thousand of the population. Mohammedan adherents number 217 a thousand; Buddhist, 37; tribal religions, 31; and Christians, 15.

The density of population in the whole of India is now 377 a square mile, varying from a maximum of 878 in Bengal to a minimum of six in Baluchistan.

THE POINT OF VIEW.

Upon a rainy day I walked, and as I jogged along I talked with people here and there; "We planned a picnic in the woods," said a lady grimly; "this rain is beastly good—the weather should be fair. The weather bureau makes me sore; it always lets the torrents pour when sunshine would be right; they never send the goods desired, they are not acting white." "Overalls!" cried Farmer Jones; "this rain is worth a million buns; it saves the country's crops; so pray excuse me if I sing and blithely dance the Highland Flieg, and send up joyous yawns." "This morn I bought a suit of duds, and then the clouds sent down their aids—Behold my raiment now! The driers all have run, the warp and woof have come unspun," exclaimed J. Bindle Dow. "Our Government's a false alarm; if I to woe down the granger's farm, it spoils my Sunday suit; its plattitudes I shoo away; for greens and succotash and hay I do not care a hoot." "I had ten tons of overhoes," the merchant said; "I thought I'd lose a lot on them, by jing; I feared I'd need a bargain sale, and get a fraction of the sale such overhoes should bring. And while I writhed in fear

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and pain there came this wet, refreshing rain, a hissing from the sky; and people come by three and two to buy my shapely overhoes, to keep their toes dry."

Household Notes.

Moulded cheese custard is delicious served with salad. Serve broiled shad with mushroom or egg sauce. For an especially pretty salad serve whole tomatoes stuffed with cheese to a sardine paste for sandwiches and molded in aspic. A slight flavor of onion is nice, cubes and served in tomato cups. For the luscious breakfast appetizer, Charlotte Russe is delightful when flavored with carmine. Serve barely crystals with thin cream and strained honey. A wire egg beater is excellent for curving and lifting doughnuts. Moldy jelly can be "scrapped off" and the rest rebolled and spiced. Add a little chopped sour pickles

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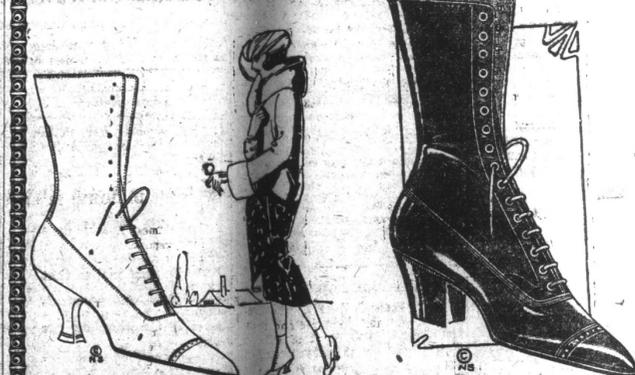
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Child's Patent Leather 1-Strap Shoes \$2.50. Child's Black Kid Cross-Strap Shoes \$2.30. Child's Grey Leather Sandals, \$1.85 pair.

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