

# SWEET IS REVENGE.

By J. Fitzgerald Molloy.

Author of "How Came He Dead?" "That Villain Romeo." "A Modern Magician," &c

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### CHAPTER XXVI.—Continued.

Presently her quick ears heard the sound of a well-known footstep, when she tripped once more to the mirror, and in another minute, the tall, straight figure of the curate entered the room. A smile brightened her pale languid face, as after receiving her greetings, he removed his gloves, and with either hand smoothed his straw-colored hair upon his high, narrow forehead.

The conversation immediately turned on the attempted murder of Lord Hector Maynes.

"The shock I received on hearing the news quite prostrated me," she said, "I am far too susceptible, too sympathetic."

"Your friends would not have you other than what you are," the curate remarked.

"The widow started," she said, "I dare say you will soon forget me."

"I forget you—I of all others," he said, rising and approaching her. "Never, that would be impossible, dear Mrs. Crayworth."

"I know the world," she said after a pause that gave him sufficient time to make his avowal, "it intended doing so, and I have little faith in mankind."

He could not bear that she should doubt him, now—when he had worked himself up to the belief that he loved her. "Have little faith in the world at large, but at least have faith in me," he said, stretching out his hand to clasp hers hanging by her side and conveniently near him.

"You are the man of all others whom I could trust," she replied speaking the last word as if she substituted it for what she had intended to say.

"Then why leave us—why, at least, leave me, dear Mrs. Crayworth—Theodora. Let our lives be joined together so that we may know no severance on earth. You are the one woman whom I love—my wife and make me the happiest of men."

She put her hands to her face to cover the smile of triumph which flashed upon it, having a care that her fingers neither streaked nor removed the delicate bloom upon her cheeks.

"Dear Ezekiah," she replied, "it may have been foolishness on my part, but I have loved you since first we met."

"You have," he said rapturously at being the object of such devotion, "how little did I suspect it."

"I am glad you did not, for I strove to conceal my feelings," she said, looking down shyly.

"No," she replied, with a gentle sigh, "I shall be sorry to leave it."

"Are you going to town for a while?"

"I think," she replied, "I will go on leaving Hayton for good, and I think I shall take a little trip to the coast."

"The curate, who was about lifting a glass of champagne to his lips, hesitated in the act, but after a second's consideration drank his wine and put down the empty glass with a sigh. Whether the faint flush which mounted to his pallid face was due to the strength of the champagne, or to emotion caused by her words, his hostess could not decide."

"Leaving us?" he said, "I am surprised and grieved."

"I knew," she began, and then as if correcting herself continued as she glanced towards him with a tender, gentle look.

"The place will not seem the same without you. Why must you go, dear Mrs. Crayworth?"

"The fact is I feel the country lonely, notwithstanding the kindness and friendliness of all my neighbors," she said, smiling bitterly, as she remembered the sneers and insolences she had endured from the female members of the county families.

"And then my relatives in town have been always anxious that I should live near them," she added, drawing on her imagination; for she well knew her love of mischief and intrigue, her flirtant and evil tongue had long ago broken all ties that bound her to her kin.

"Is this a sudden resolution you have made?" asked Mr. Sympington.

"No, I have been considering the change for some time. You do not know dear Mr. Sympington," she said, in tender accents, "the loneliness that surrounds a widowed life. I have nothing to live for except the memories of the past," she concluded, dropping her head pathetically.

The curate moved uneasily, for his soul was disturbed. Frequently he had, when thinking of his future, considered Mrs. Crayworth would make an excellent wife. He was still youthful enough to feel susceptible to the fancy which a young man frequently conceives for a woman who is his senior. Her knowledge of life and worldly wisdom were in his eyes certain advantages which he felt lacking in himself; and, moreover, she gave him a timid, nervous nature a confidence which girls failed to inspire. But the idea of his marriage with her was a mere shadowy prospect, which he felt neither a strong desire, nor a repugnance, to seeing fulfilled.

Heretofore he had merely thought that a union with her was a possibility, but now—brought face to face with the question, he began to hope it might prove a probability. Yet, whilst his reason approved his choice, some other sense within him, higher in its aims and finer in its perceptions, caused him to shrink from the idea of marrying her; and this he set down to timidity, and emboldened by the wine he had drunk, and the encouragement he received, he resolved to seal his fate this very day and hour.

He scarcely knew how to frame his words to the request he intended making, his mind being excited by the sudden resolution he had arrived at; but by an expressing the sense of loss her absence would occasion to all who knew her.

"I fear, dear Mr. Sympington, that in the kindness of your heart you over-estimate me," she replied in the tones which of old she had found most effective.

"That would be impossible," he answered, glancing at her timidly, his words sounding grand and hollow in his ears.

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resolved to bring a confession from his lips; for this purpose she knew paths to be most potent, when judiciously introduced, and that few men indeed could withstand its test. She rose with an abstracted air that would have done credit to our finest actresses, and walking towards the window stood there in a graceful attitude, her back to the light, her eyes fixed on the man before her.

"I may be wrong," she said in a low voice, "but it has been always my opinion that no one is ever missed. The absence of those we love creates a vacancy in our lives, just as a new-made grave leaves a gap in the churchyard. But time does not what clay does for the other—it refills the space; and just as in a little while the grave is again level with the earth, and we walk over it without a thought of the lying below, so a few weeks or months fill up the loss of those we regret, and they are no longer found a place in our thoughts. I dare say you will soon forget me."

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Sir Danvers staggered back as if he had received a blow; the simple statement he heard let in a flood of light on his mind, then recovering his first surprise he asked, "Where is Ethel?"

"Surely," answered the baronet sadly and self-reproachfully, "I her husband have driven her away, but I shall search for her throughout the world if necessary and never rest until I have brought her back."

He hurried out of the house, his heart full of remorse, and saw how the mistake had occurred. His brain was in a whirlwind of confusion, only one resolution remaining clear and unchanged, he would seek and implore forgiveness from the woman he had wronged. As with rapid strides he approached the abbey he saw Meg standing on the terrace. Catching sight of him he ran forward holding a letter in her hand.

"This has just come, and it's directed in Ethel's writing," she said.

Sir Danvers eagerly seized it and tearing open the envelope, he read the following lines, dated from her lodgings at Mrs. Simmond's.

"My Dear Husband,—I fear that in leaving your home without a word of explanation, I may have caused you grief and humiliation. Even though my pride was hurt by your jealousy, had you listened to me I would have told you a secret that would have proved my innocence. When you left me, I, in a moment of passion, resolved to revenge myself by making you repent your injustice when you knew you were wrong. But, in punishing you, I have inflicted pain upon myself, for, loving you as I do, I cannot bear to think I have made you suffer."

"Lord Hector Maynes, whom you suspected of loving me, is my brother-in-law. From his boyhood he was devoted to my sister Edith, to whom, on leaving Oxford, he was engaged. His father, on learning this, angrily forbade him to marry her, and in incurring his life-long displeasure and loss of whatever fortune he might eventually leave him. Lord Hector, being almost penniless, resolved to emigrate; but before going he insisted on marrying my sister privately. The ceremony took place in London on the morning of the day he started on his voyage; whilst on the same afternoon my sister went back to the situation as English teacher in a French school in Lyons. Hector's return—having failed to make the fortune he expected, the secret was still preserved, and I was not at liberty to reveal it, even to you. In keeping it from you I fear I have done wrong, but I now bitterly repent my silence."

"I can no longer endure the pain which I feel in deceiving you, or that I have proved ungrateful for the love you gave me. If you can pardon and can still give me your affection, come to me."

"Your faithful wife, 'ETHEL.'

Sir Danvers's eyes were dimmed as he concluded the letter.

"That is still my faithful and affectionate wife," he said solemnly.

Meg put her arms around his neck and kissed him. "This is only a stray shadow in your path that makes the sunshine of your life brighter."

"No," she said, "it is a shadow that will be with you as long as you live, and you must learn to live with it. You know you are already half an hour late and Trevor is desperately cross."

Trevor was the head butler, who resented lack of punctuality with the utmost severity of the countenance, and ruled the household with a threatening frown.

"All right, my dear," he replied, "for the first time for many days I have had an appetite. If everything is boiled into rags and roasted to a stick it's my own fault."

He added cheerily, all unconscious of his surprise and trouble which lay before him that night.

### CHAPTER XXVII.—FELTON ON THE TRACK.

It was late in the afternoon on the day of her betrothal, when Mrs. Fothergille quietly left her lodging, and with slow, timorous steps, that frequently hesitated and halted, directed her course towards Regent street. On this summer day when the thermometer was nearing eighty degrees in the shade, the great thoroughfare was as hot as a stove, and Mrs. Fothergille's tall, straight figure, clad in garments of faded and rusty black, looked more remarkable than ever as she glided noiselessly round a corner and came into the full glare of the burning sun.

Judging from the position of the sun, the steps she frequently retraced, and the manner in which—her heavy black veil still drawn over her face—she looked into the shop windows, it might be thought she had no object in her walk, save to amuse herself or while away an idle hour. This, however, was not the case, for her mind was fully bent on executing the commission given her by her husband.

Gradually, but surely, she drew near the shop which of all others seemed to rivet her attention—a corner shop with double windows, having, some paces down an angle, a little door, by which customers might make their entrances and exits, with small chance of being perceived by wayfarers in the greater thoroughfare. Before the windows she stood irresolutely, gazing at the heterogeneous mass of curious and valuable articles they contained, arranged in no manner of order and with no recognisable care. Here were delicately painted miniatures of fair women with languishing eyes and brave men with decorated breasts, pawned by some degenerate ancestor for a few shillings; first editions of famous books presented to those whose eyes could read them no more; rings that once sparkled on the fingers of beauty; carved ivory gods plundered from Easter temples; lockets that had enshrined lovers' hair, patch and snuff boxes, bearing coronets and monograms, a silver paper ladle and a hair brush of opiate spoons; big watches with raised figures on their cases; old seals that had dangled from many a bob when George the fourth was king; brooches and bracelets of quaint workmanship; medals that had caused the owners hearts to throb with pride; opera boxes, a pair of Turkish slippers, Chinese opium pipes,

Extract from statement by John Collett Esq., Director of Contracts for the British Navy, your Evaporated Vegetables are superior to any other preserved vegetables. We find them by analysis to contain more nutrient than the French.

Wm. Beardell, Lowell, Mass.

In 1872 I was poisoned by Fry and hearing of the beneficial effects of the Spa Spring water of Wilmet in skin troubles I applied them with result of perfect cure, although numerous medicines failed.

W. A. SEBASTIAN, Cleonsport, Anns. Co. N. B.

Enameline imparts a delightful fragrance to the Bread.

a marble statuette of Venus, Japanese cabinets and faded silk fans.

Before these objects which spoke of past splendour and forgotten greatness, Mrs. Fothergille lingered, being yet unable to summon sufficient courage to enter by that narrow door and offer her diamond for sale in the dark shop.

Once or twice unaccounted for by her, the watchful eyes of the proprietor looked at her from over the red damask looking-glass that served as a background to the riches he displayed, recognizing by her shabby garments and general air of poverty, an individual with whom he had previously transacted business with profit and pleasure to himself.

Just as she had made up her mind to enter, a young man who had stepped from a cab in Regent street, brushed passed and went into the pawnbroker's, from which he returned in a few minutes, looking pale and grave. She waited to see him turn the corner, and then with her hand beating rapidly, glided noiselessly into the shop, where she was scarce big enough to accommodate three customers. The atmosphere was dark, heavy, and pervaded by an indescribably musty smell; behind the counter, on a high stool, sat a man whose stoutness was with difficulty restrained by his waistcoat buttons, his nose was hooked, his complexion of a dusky hue; on his head he wore a greasy velvet smoking-cap with a dangling tassel, his fat fingers were covered with massive and valuable rings.

Mrs. Fothergille stood silently before him, until, with a weary, strained start, he laid down the newspaper he pretended to read, and looked at her, bowed, smiled, and enquired what could be for her. He remembered very well that a couple of days previously she had sold him a brooch, for which he had given her about one eighth of its value, declaring at the same time that if he were to give such prices every day he would certainly be a ruined man in a week.

"You have something to offer me for sale I suppose," he said, "but in such rare times as these I have no encouragement to buy, money is hard to get, here I have but a few shillings left, and my heart is not in anything but my own business."

"I am very sorry," she said, "but I have a little thing which I think you would value, and I am sure you will give me a good price for it."

"What is there said a low, gentle voice from behind the black veil facing her, which prevented his distinguishing a feature in her countenance. A nun standing behind her curtained grille was not less recognisable."

"I should think so," he answered, fixing his dark penetrating eyes on her, and raising a little jet of steam which burned feebly at the end of the counter, in hopes it might draw her to see her. "My customers have brought me to this pass. I have acted too generally, not a man in the trade would give such prices as I give; my heart has been too kind and it has run over, and he rubbed his dirty hands over and over, and the stomach as it help him in supporting its goodly weight."

"I was in hopes you might buy," she began and then paused.

"Buy!" he repeated with a sarcastic laugh. "What is there said a low, gentle voice from behind the black veil facing her, which prevented his distinguishing a feature in her countenance. A nun standing behind her curtained grille was not less recognisable."

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comfort and ease, with clothes neater and cleaner than the ordinary way. STOP now a moment to consider if it is any advantage to use a pure Soap like Surprise, and save yourself, your hands, your clothes.

## READ the Directions on the Wrapper.

virtuous and run no risk; nay, as he never neglected an opportunity of profiting himself, he now determined to put the police on