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**GILLETT'S LYE**  
EATS DIRT.

Only a Beggar;  
—BUT—  
A Queen Among Women

CHAPTER XXXI.

"Well, you'll soon find that out for yourself; for we shall be there presently."

"And he knows—?" she whispered, with bent head.

"Everything. And he said—Oh, well, it's his deal, now; and you must wait."

They reached the house in Grosvenor Square, and Mabel ran down the steps and fell upon Diana as soon as the footman had the carriage-door open, calling her name and kissing her, holding her at arm's length and regarding her with loving reproach and infinite joy.

The earl was seated in the drawing room, but he rose quickly and came toward them and held out his arms to Diana, the tears in his eyes, though he smiled and patted her on the back as one pats the back of a child who has just stopped short of falling off a wall or drowning herself.

"You wicked girl!" he said. "What a fright you've given all of us! And you're paler and thinner—tut, tut!" He drew her to a chair and sat beside her, holding her hand. "And you must tell us your adventures, eh, Mabel?" "You know?" said Diana in a low voice.

The old man nodded. "Yes, I know, my child," he said softly.

"Then you will help me—against him?" she murmured, glancing toward Dalesford, who stood regarding her and his father with an air of serene satisfaction. "I want to say good-by. I and my mother are starting with a colonization party to South Africa to-morrow, Lord Wrayborough."

The earl smiled and slowly shook his head.

"My dear, I understand. Do you think we do not know and understand and sympathize with you? But, indeed, you mustn't go. You belong to us—belong to Vane; and it would be a great misfortune if we were to lose you. It would mean—ruin to the



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house of Wrayborough."

"Misfortune—ruin, if I—went!" said Diana, in troubled perplexity.

The earl touched a bell. "Will you ask Mr. Starkey and Mr. Fielding if they will be so very good as to come to us here?" he said to the footman.

Diana rose and shook hands with both men as they entered, but there was a clinging pressure in the hand she gave Mr. Fielding.

"I am very glad to see you, Miss—Burton," said Mr. Starkey, with a respect that was as genuine as it was profound. "Your lawyer, my friend, and I have been discussing some important business matters of yours—and Lord Dalesford's."

"They are going to show you how imperative it is that you should not—jilt Vane," put in the earl under his breath.

"You may not be aware," said Mr. Starkey, addressing Diana, "that the Wrayborough estate is in an extremely embarrassed condition. But, yes, no doubt Lord Dalesford—"

"Oh, I've told her long ago," said Vane with a touch of impatience.

"Look here, Diana, but for your uncle, Mr. Bourne, we should be up a tree, on a rock, stony broke. But he came to the rescue. It was Mr. Bourne who sold us, at a nominal price, a merely nominal price, the Sunninglea property—property which will result in an enormous profit and a continuous and increasing revenue."

"If we hold it," said the earl softly.

"Furthermore, Mr. Bourne has made a will—" began Mr. Fielding, but Diana shrank back and murmured:

"No, no! I—I cannot take it. Oh, no, no!"

Mr. Fielding smiled rather grimly. "You are not asked to do so, my dear Miss Diana. The will leaves everything Mr. Bourne possesses to Lord Dalesford."

Diana looked from one to the other.

"But—but you will not—" she faltered, and yet with a secret hope. "Won't I?" said Vane. "Why not? You won't take it. Why shouldn't I? The money was gained—his tone grew emphatic—"honestly. Oh, I know—know the whole of his life. I shall take it on one condition."

Diana raised her heavy lids.

"That you share it with me—as my wife. If you refuse, I decline the Sunninglea property, and the money left me by the will."

"And we are ruined," said the earl gravely.

Diana looked from one to the other of these amiable conspirators for her happiness.

"It's for you to decide on the future of an ancient house, my dear," said the earl.

She turned to him her eyes swimming.

"And I—I—so shamed, so shamed of—"

Vane strode to her and stopped her with an imperative gesture.

"No, no. Not even from you will I hear that, dearest," he said. "You speak of shame because there is a dark spot in the life of a relative. What about us? And our past? Heavens! Do you know how we got our peerage?" He glanced at the portrait of a lady, a lady of the dissolute court of the second Charles, and bit his lip.

"No, no; it isn't safe for us to dig up the past."

The earl inclined his head. "It is true, Diana. You see, my dear?"

"But the world—your people?" stammered Diana.

"Here comes the world, here comes one of them," said Vane, as the door opened and Lady Selma entered. She had been well coached, of course, but even if she had not she was too much of a woman of the world not to desire a marriage which would literally save her family from destruction. She went to Diana and kissed her.

"My dear, I am so glad to see you!" she said; and she said it with such evident sincerity that Diana broke down.

"Oh, what can I do?" she sobbed.

"Marry me to-morrow morning," responded Vane promptly. Then in a lower voice he said to the others, over his shoulder: "Run away all of you!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

One night, a week later, Desmond March stole back to his room. He looked white and haggard, for he had

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been in hiding and had had a bad time.

In the dingy purlieus of Brussels, where he had been hiding, Desmond March had fancied that every footstep was that of the detective who was coming to arrest him; for he knew that he had been recognized by Dalesford and Diana and by Garling. But the days passed and no one came with the dreaded warrant, and, according to the English newspapers—with what feverish anxiety he scanned them!—the police had come to the conclusion that the attack on Lord Dalesford had been made by a common culprit, whom Lord Dalesford could not identify.

At this intelligence Desmond March began to pluck up courage. So Dalesford was not going to put the law in motion! Afraid of the scandal, the shame that would stain the family name! Well, then, he, Desmond March, could return and brazen it out.

Yes; he would venture back. If Dalesford and the girl would not give evidence, he was safe. He scarcely condescended to bestow a thought on Garling. He was powerless and not worth consideration.

It was evening, a murky evening, as he unlocked the door and stole up the stairs, and, with a sigh of satisfaction, looked round the luxurious room. A pile of letters stood on the table, and he looked them over. There were two from Miss Bangs; and he opened one at hazard, for the envelope contained some hard substance—it was the engagement ring he had given her; and it was enclosed in a curt note:

"Miss Bangs returns Mr. Desmond March's ring, as she wishes to terminate her engagement with a man of whose real character she has been fully informed."

"Vulgar fool!" he muttered with an oath. "But five minutes with her will put it right. Who has told her? Dalesford? Curse him, I'll be even with him yet!"

He summoned his man, had a bath and changed, and with an affectation of his debonaire manner, left the house. He had dined on board the steamer—he would go to the silly fool of a woman at once.

He took a cab and reached the grand house in which Miss Bangs lived, and rang the bell confidently.

"My mistress is not at home, sir. She is on the Continent. No, I don't know when to expect her. Not for some months, I think. No, sir, I've no address. I think she's in the south."

Desmond March went down the steps with a sudden sinking of the heart, and was calling a cab when a man came from out of the shadows and stood beside him. Desmond March stared and stepped back, then

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he pulled himself up and laughed harshly, contemptuously.

"Ah, Garling," he said. "Glad to see you. Are you shadowing me?"

"That's it," said Garling. He spoke quite calmly, but his face was livid and his eyes glittered with a subdued ferocity. He had shrunk in girth, and his head was thrust forward as if it were bowed by a heavy grief.

Desmond March laughed again. "Blackmail? My friend, you don't know your man. Clear out; move off, or by —" he swore an awful oath, "I'll call that policeman there and give you in charge, you—you convict!"

Garling did not move his eyes, with the savage light in them, from the pallid, haggard face.

"No," he said; "there's no escape for you there, Desmond March. That's the road to the gallows."

"He's not dead!" exclaimed March unwittingly.

"No, he's not," he said.

A cab came up slowly, and, hailing it, Desmond March got in, not hurriedly, but leisurely. Garling got in beside him. Desmond March looked at him and bit his lip.

"What is your game?" he said, between his teeth.

"Yes; I'll tell you," responded Garling in a dull, impassive voice. "I'm going to keep beside you until the hour of reckoning. It may come tonight, or to-morrow, or the day after; but it will come. I am waiting for it."

"Ah, well, one must humor a madman," said Desmond March. He coolly lit a cigar and lay back comfortably on the cushions.

Presently the cab drew up, and Desmond March got out leisurely. Garling followed him and stood with his hands thrust in the pockets of his pilot-jacket, his head bent, but his eyes under their shaggy brows still fixed on his companion's face.

"Coming in? No? Going to wait outside?" asked Desmond March leeringly. "All right; suit yourself!" He walked upstairs and looked down at the street from behind the blind. Garling remained for a minute exactly as he had been left, then went slowly away.

Desmond March laughed, and, going to the sideboard, got some whiskey.

"Fellow looks mad," he muttered, "raving mad. What's it matter? He can't open his mouth; he's in no hurry to go back to stone-breaking; and a word from me would send him there. Pooh!"

He threw himself into a chair and took up a paper and turned it over listlessly. This paragraph met his eye:

"Thanks to a splendid constitution, Lord Dalesford's recovery from the dastardly attack made upon him by one of the too numerous street ruffians, has been rapid. He has left St. Jude's Hospital, and is now staying with his father, the Earl of Wrayborough, at Wrayborough House, Grosvenor Square. It is much to be regretted that the police have not succeeded in finding any clue to the man who committed the murderous outrage. Surely the criminal population ought to be more closely under police surveillance."

Desmond March laughed and gnawed at his lips.

(To be continued.)

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