POOR DOCUMENT

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THE GRODER DYSPEPSIA CURE CO., LTD.
ST. JOHN, N. B,

Carol Richmond

— OR —

THE MAN WITH THE BLACK GLOVE.

—:O:—

Continued.

This harsh feeling quickly passed away however, and his heart bled for his love. How he yearned to take her in his arms, kissing away the tears, cheer her spirits. What a terrible fate it was that fettered them so, and kept apart two souls that lived but for each other.

He also learned, with great surprise and anger, of the plans that were being perfected for the speedy marriage of Carol.

Both the Captain and Lawrence Richmond would have been amazed could they have learned how much of their mutual understanding was known. Roger was quite well aware of the fact that the soldier duelist possessed a secret which he held over the head of Carol's father, and that this same secret was to be the "open sesame" to the old gentleman's treasures.

He knew that Carol hated this Captain Grant, whoever he might be, and he became firmly resolved that, if it must be the last act of his life, he would prevent the unholy marriage. Since words would be of no avail, he was ready to proceed to still stronger measures.

He remembered the story of young Lochinvar, who carried off his bride just when she was about to be married to another, and yet the cases were far from being parallel, for in this instance there was a barrier between them, and, even though he saved Carol from such a fate, it would not bring them any closer together.

Meanwhile preparations were going on at the Terrace for the wedding of Captain Grant and Carol. The young girl had not spirit enough just then to resist. Her faith in Roger was not gone, but it had received a terrible shock, and this rendered her quiescent with the numb pain that filled her heart.

Although unable herself to alter the plans of the two men a particle, there rested deep down in her heart a hope, the composite quality of which she herself could neither analyze nor even understand, and yet it seemed that she looked for help from some quarter.

The preparations for the wedding were not of a most magnificent nature, for it was the Captain's wish that the ceremony should be quiet, and witnessed by only a few personal friends of the family.

What was his object in this, he, the man so full of display and love of ostentation, they could not comprehend; but Lawrence Richmond suspected that he was afraid some one who had known him in the past, and whom he was afraid to see, might learn of his whereabouts.

Filled with this idea the Virginian made haste to have an announcement of the coming marriage in several different papers of Washington and Richmond.

With rare cunning he also contrived to have a little item go the rounds of the press in reference to a vow the soldier had made years before, to always wear his left hand covered by a black kid glove.

If that doesn't bring the Philistines down upon him, then all is lost.

So said the master of the Terrace to himself, as he read some of the notices that were in the papers, and then carefully hid the sheets away for fear lest the Captain should alight upon them.

The trap was laid.

Would it work.

At last came the eventful day, and Dame Nature could never have made a more glorious one, for the sun shone from a cloudless sky, cool, delicious breezes blew, and everything looked bright and beautiful.

The Captain regarded it all as a favorable augury, little suspecting how the clouds were hanging low in his horizon, only waiting for the proper time to advance, with thunder and lightning, and engulf him in their shady darkness.

Between Roger and the servant, Andrew, a conspiracy had been formed, and the plot was no insignificant one either.

When Carol assumed her bridal robes, she looked too sweet and sad for mortal eyes, and even the heart of the fierce old man throbbed with a half-pity, when she directed a look at him, as if in mute entreaty.

He had hoped against hope, and now only anger and despair reigned in his heart. There was no chance of rescue left now, it seemed to him, and the sacrifice must go on though it cut him to the heart to see his darling child wedded to such a desperate villain as he knew the Captain to be.

The minister who was to perform the ceremony was a particular friend of Captain Grant's and having been already primed by several glasses of hot punch, he would not have hesitated about uniting a man in the holy bonds of wedlock to his mother-in-law or own aunt.

Being in the condition now that seemed necessary for his business, no scruples would ever prevent him from accomplishing the desired end and it could be set down as a fact that he would do his part of the work at any rate.

From the open window, a pair of keen eyes watched all that was transpiring.

Though many years indeed had passed away since he had set eyes on the interior of the terrace. Roger did not seem to forget certain things about the mansion with which he had been familiar at that time, and, from among the vines outside the little balcony, he could observe without being himself seen.

Not twenty yards away, the swiftest horse in all the surrounding country was in waiting, hidden by the trees.

Roger Darrel's was not the only form that crouched at a window and looked on, for a man, dressed in black, and with a certain foreign air about him, was at one of these opening upon the piazza, and his eyes were glued upon Captain Grant with a cold gleam in them, while from his mustached lips fell the words:

At last I have run him down!

The ceremony commenced.

It was destined never to go through, and yet not through the mysterious foreigner; who appeared to have such an attachment for the soldier-duelist, came any interruption.

From the easy attitude he had assumed, it was easy to see that he intended watching it through.

One wife more cannot hurt the rogue, for he has already had at least ten, so far as my knowledge of him goes. As for the girl, she loves him not, and it will only please her to learn that she is not his wife. The Count plays his cards well, but that branded hand and black glove have betrayed him.

In the midst of the ceremony, however, quite an unlooked-for event occurred.

Both at Richmond Terrace and Darrel Chace there were machines for manufacturing gas, such as is the general custom among the wealthy planters of the Southern states, and the whole supply was furnished by a single pipe.

While the minister was just propounding to Carol the solemn question as to whether she would "take this man to be your lawfully wedded husband," the answer to which would not have been regarded with much anxiety, even if it had been a flat refusal, sudden and complete darkness came upon the whole house, every gas-jet being extinguished on the instant.

The effect can be imagined.

Consternation filled the minds of almost every one, and the few guests present were alarmed, not knowing what was about to happen.

Captain Grant did not realize whether this was an accident or part of a deep-laid plan to rob him of his intended bride; so, in order to be ready for emergencies, he threw one arm around her.

At almost the same instant, however, Carol was jerked from his encircling arm, and he received a blow on the head that staggered him.

He made a clutch, but his arm only clasped the empty air. Whither the young girl had gone he could not guess.

A light was struck, and, upon being applied to the gas, the rooms were once more illuminated. Then the truth became apparent.

Carol was missing!

Whither she had gone, or who had carried her away, not a soul in that room could say. Perhaps Lawrence Richmond could give a shrewd guess, and, as something like the truth came through his mind, he could not help the faint, grim smile that crept over his countenance.

It caught the eye of Captain Grant, and in another instant he was at the man's side, his hand clutching his arm.

You have sealed your doom by this act, Lawrence Richmond, he hissed, savagely.

CAPPTER XI.

WISDOM OF THE SERPENT.

The Captain's face was as black as a thunder cloud, when he grated out those words between his teeth, and well might he be enraged, believing as he did, that this was some of the treacherous work of the man whom he held in his power, and who, up to this time, he had deemed so alarmed for his own safety that he was even afraid to call his soul his own.

He would as soon have looked to see a worm turn under the heel that mangled it, and attempt to retort, as to have Lawrence Richmond try to thwart his plans; not that he looked upon the old man as harmless, but because he believed he had him in his power so completely.

The man whom he addressed so fiercely was for the time being incapable of replying, for it flashed over him that this might not be quite so pleasant after all for it might prove a two-edged sword slaying on both sides.

If he could not convince the fighting Captain that he had had no hand in this singular drama that had just taken place, then exposure must come, for in his rage the soldier would not be very apt to spare the scourging process.

These things darted through the mind of the master of the Terrace very speedily, and he was soon in possession of his senses again.

When, however, he attempted a denial of being implicated in the affair, Captain Grant would not listen to him,

You have played me false, Richmond, deny it if you dare. Hark! even now I can hear your accomplice riding off, and doubtless carrying your daughter with him—a second Lochinvar. Highly romantic, no doubt, but you shall suffer for it, even if it should be the last act of my life. A brave foe I can honor, but a traitor I despise, and would risk life to give him the punishment he deserves.

Listen to me! cried the old man, now fully alarmed for his safety, as he saw that the mad soldier-adventurer was in a fit state to do any rash act; although I would have saved my daughter if it had been possible, yet I swear to you I had not the remotest suspicion of such a thing occurring; but now I see through it all plainly. Do you know who has carried away your bride, Captain Grant? The young master of Darrel Chace has been here!

The Captain uttered an oath.

There was something plausible in this statement that made him hold his arm, for he had raised it as though to strike the old man to his own floor.

Roger Darrel here! he snarled.

His coolness, which had always seemed a part of his nature, had apparently deserted him at this junction, leaving him the embodiment of savage rage. The idea advanced by the old man might have gained more headway, but that in again searching the face of Lawrence Richmond with his keen eyes he detected a gleam in the other's orbs which it seemed to him was induced by triumph.

That settled it.

All he might say would go for naught, and Lawrence Richmond saw from the flash upon the other's face that he was doomed.

Again the soldier clutched him, and his face, purple with passion, looked more like the possession of a fiend than a human being.

You have played me false and now I shall bring ruin upon you. I told you it was a dangerous game playing with fire and it seems you would not heed it. The consequences be upon your own head. Do you hear me, traitor?

His hand had caught the old man's throat, and in his fury of madness he would in all probability have chocked Lawrence Richmond, for the few guests present were so filled with horror that they could move neither hand nor limb; but at this junction the form of the mysterious foreigner darted across the floor.

One hand fell upon the shoulder of the crazed soldier.

Just in time to prevent the charge of murder from being added to the list of crimes of which you stand accused, my dear Count.

The Captain did not relax his grip upon the old man, but, as the voice of the stranger reached his ears, it was observed that he not simply shivered, but shuddered like a man with the ague.

He slowly turned his head, his face still scarlet, and there was a look in his eyes that was most wonderful to behold, but whether of fear or defiance, or both, it would have been hard to say.

For half a minute he looked at the man in black over his shoulder. The light deserted his eyes and sullen fury alone raged there.

What do you seek? he finally demanded.

I seek you, Count. Be careful how you carry yourself if you would not have all made known here, returned the newcomer.

Cunning crept into the eyes of the Captain, and he proved himself the son of the Evil One by his actions. Some men would have been foolish enough to have flown at the stranger, and have been defeated, but he was too wise for such a false course.

Gentlemen, you will excuse me for a few minutes while I retire with this person and explain to him the mistake under which he labors, said the Captain.

Of course those present murmured an audible assent, at which the mysterious stranger smiled, and came very near laughing.

He accompanied the Captain, however, and there were some who saw that he hald in his hand a little revolver, which was kept half-concealed. Evidently the foreign gentleman had no intention of being overpowered by treachery.

Captain Grant went away with a strange look upon his face, as if of mingled hate and shrewd cunning—a look that would perhaps have alarmed the foreigner had he noticed it, and been more cautious; but he was not willing to give the Count, as he called Grant, credit for the sagacity he really possessed.

There were those present who really expected they would never see him again. They knew not who the mysterious man was, but he was evidently on the Captain's trial, and up n the face of the latter they had read guilt plainly.

Lawrence Richmond was among the number. He felt sure that the Nemesis for whom he had longed had come, and that the Captain had fallen into his grasp. That it was due to the judicious item in the newspapers, he also had no doubt.

If exposure of his own trouble could only be avoided, none would feel more glad than he that this doom had fallen upon the soldier-duelist, for he had come to hate Captain Grant most heartily.

Now that the skies seemed brightening in this direction, his thoughts turned upon the abduction of his child. There had been no change in his ideas thus far, and when he declared to the Captain that it was his opinion Roger Darrel was the one they had to thank for this mad-cap act, he spoke his convictions truly.

He was just about to give some orders in reference to pursuit, which would have been quite useless, as the bold abductor must be miles away by this time, when one of the windows of the room was darkened and a man, entered in whom they recognized Captain Grant.

He was alone.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HAUNTED MILL.

Although, as has been said before, Carol Richmond had hoped for something to occur in her favour when hope seemed even a delusion and a hollow mockery she had never expected it to come in the way it did.

When the gas was so suddenly extinguished, through the agency of the shrewd Andrew, who had arranged all these matters with the young man beforehand, she too was somewhat alarmed by the total darkness that came upon the scene.

Before she had time, however, to collect her senses, which had been rather confused owing to the critical position in which she had been found when the gas was put out, she felt the Captain's arm encircle her waist and draw her close to him.

That it was the man to whom she was being wedded when the interruption occurred, she readily knew, for he muttered words as he held her fast—words that told the young girl he feared she herself was the object for which this scheme of sudden darkness had been brought about and that he was determined it should not succeed if he had anything to say about it.

Hardly had these words escaped his lips, when Carol was taken suddenly from his arms.

Into whose possession she had now come, Carol could not even guess, and, taken even at the very worst, it could not be more bitter than finding herself in the arms of the man she hated and despised —Captain Grant.

Somehow, a delicious sense of repose seemed to pervade her whole being, and she gave way to the multitude of fancies that flooded her brain, by fainting dead away.

She was dimly conscious of a jolting motion, as if on the back of a horse and moving rapidly, but it was a long time before consciousness returned in full.

She was still clasped in the arms of her abductor, and looking up could see his face in the mystic star-light.

It was the countenance of Roger Darrel!

He seemed to be aware of the fact that she had once more come back to life, for presently he looked down and softly spoke her name.

Oh Roger, you have saved me from that dreadful man. I am so glad, so glad.

It was all she could say; simple enough in itself truly, and yet the relieved cry of an overburdened heart.

Roger looked down upon her tenderly and even drew her closer to him, an action she could do nothing to prevent, even had she so desired.

And it was impossible to withdraw herself from his clasp; she could only remain passive, and forgetting what terrible rocks rose up in front, gave herself up to the enjoyment of the present. She knew, poor girl, that the dream would soon be rudely broken, that there lay before her a path of duty which she must and would tread, no matter what pain it might cost her; and who can blame her if she allowed conscience to sink into a lethargy for the time being, seeing that she could not help herself, only that she might gain strength of mind to resist the temptation that must soon come in her way?

How long they had been riding Carol could not even guess; but it must have been quite a time. Where was Roger taking her? The thought came to her suddenly, and she instantly made up her mind to ask.

I will take you anywhere you wish, Carol. I was heading for the old ruined mill, where as you know, the widow Mrs. Randall lives alone. If you can think of any better place, tell me, and I shall carry you there. My only object in carrying you off was to save you from a designing villain, a man whom I have met before, and about whom there is a mysterious familiarity that puzzles me at times.

I believe you Roger, and sooner would I have died than have become his wife, but it seemed as if my senses were bound, and all that I did was in a mechanical way. Thank Heaven you saved me from such a fate. I shall never forget it Roger, never.

There was sincerity in her voice, but Roger made no reply. His heart was too full for utterance, knowing, as he did that all was over between them, and that of her free will she had yielded to the dictates of fate, and renounced all happiness and peace.

Once or twice a wild thrill seemed to take possession of his heart as the thought flashed into his mind that perhaps it might make some difference now that he had saved her. Surely even with such a taint upon his family name, an alliance with him could not be any worse than with such a scoundrel as Captain Grant, as the adventurer was pleased to call himself.

As quickly as this hope came it was banished, for he realized that Carol had done this act from principle, and would not very likely let her judgment be influenced by the new state of affairs, even though her heart was.

A short time later, and he drew up in front of the old mill.

It was as picturesque a spot as one could well imagine, for the great trees overhung the ruined mill, and the noisy fall of the water over the dam could be plainly heard.

As seen in daylight, there was something sad and lonely in the spectacle of the ruined mill. Where were its former occupants? Once busy life had dwelt there; the song of the miller was heard from morning until night. Gone now were the prattling tongues that had made the rafters ring with their cheerful childish noise.

The poor wheel that had been wont to turn all day long still remained but a mere skeleton of its former self, most of the wood-work having rotted away. Rank weeds clung to the iron bands where they had caught during a freshet, and waved to and fro with every passing breeze.

If the old mill looked strangely sad in the daytime, how weird and ghastly its appearance by starlight.

Roger had evidently been here before and made all arrangements, for, even as he leaped to the ground and was in the act of lifting Carol down, the door opened and a woman appeared in view, holding a sputtering candle.

To be continued.

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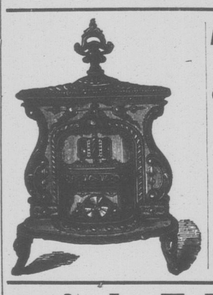

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