

assured him that she had remarked him. At the conclusion of his previous engagements he resolved to wait for no introduction, but to follow the customs of France; so, crossing over to the southern beauty, he demanded, in French, the honor of her hand for the next dance. The unknown looked pleased, and accepted his hand. The dance concluded, they remained occupied by each other, and rapidly exchanging in perfect French the questions and replies pertaining to the antecedents of the interesting young foreigner.

"But I ought not to be called a foreigner in England," said she, "for by law, the colonies have the same rights in every respect as the mother country. I am a native of Jamaica; my family was originally English, and of the ancient nobility; my mother is French, of the Island of Cuba, and therefore partly Spanish; I have been brought up at a Sacre Cœur, in Paris, and have returned there during the last year, for certain reasons."

"So this is your first visit to England: I hope it will be a long one."

"That depends on the good success of my father's cause. He is in England to expose a most wicked plot to deprive him of his rightful inheritance in this country; and as I am the eldest of his daughters and the heiress, he wishes me to be on the spot."

"Really? Then you must wish his cause to be slow and sure, that we may detain you the longer."

"You must yourself be attached to the French embassy," observed she, "as you make use of the word 'detain' me with reference to England: for, you are not English; you belong to dear France, surely?"

"Ah! you love France," cried he. "Your mother is French; so was mine. One always loves one's mother's country. There is, then, a tie between us, mademoiselle, that can never be forgotten."

"Hortense," said a middle-aged, fine-looking man, tapping the young lady on the shoulder. She turned to be introduced to a new partner, and at the same instant the Duchess of Peterworth whispered to Lord Stanmore—

"My lord, you must ask Miss Whyne to dance, were it only out of compliment to me; and promise me not to sail off to the island of Cuba, or Jamaica, till I have given you a word of warning."

"I shall be beyond anything flattered to have the felicity of dancing with Miss Whyne," said our hero; "but with respect to my sailing off to the West Indies, I have no wish to raise the anchor you have cast for me here," and he kissed the well-known ring.

"Well, well," said the duchess, smiling, "begone now to your new partner."

The following day two equestrians were slowly pursuing the usual round of Hyde Park, their grooms having discreetly dropped behind, beyond listening distance.

"Yes," said one of these gentlemen, "everything progresses most favorably. I had already ascertained that, although the line has never wanted a male heir, and therefore no countess in her own right appears since the first creation of Henry the Fifth, yet there is nothing in the wording of the original grant to females; and yesterday I received the assurance of Lord Pomfret that he will support my petition to the utmost in the highest quarter."

"You are still in the prime of life yourself," observed the other gentleman, "and to be anxious about the claim of your successor may seem premature. However, I believe neither the Queen nor the Lords will interest themselves for a revived or disputed title, unless there be direct heirs."

"That is exactly it," said the first speaker. "The Queen's drawing-room is to be on the twenty-fifth, and the Marchioness of Penzance has promised to introduce my daughter. I flatter

myself Hortense will produce an effect; for Lady Penzance will endeavor to interest her Majesty in the story before the presentation, so that my beautiful daughter will appear, with quite dramatic effect, as the injured heroine. Now, Lord Claud, let me thank you for your support and kindness on my first arrival. I feel it all the more because of the coldness of the Marquis of Seaham. But one must have patience. He requires proof, as in a court of law, that there is no such person existing as the Viscount Stanmore, and he shall have it before many weeks are over."

"My brother is faithful to tenacity in his friendships," returned Lord Claud, "and has from the first taken the warmest interest in Lord Stanmore, as I must still call him until the decision of the court. Still, the love of truth has ever been one of my brother's greatest characteristics; and, though he will be immensely pained, he will withdraw all opposition sooner than oppose the truth."

"The Court of Scotland, and other friends of the supposed Duke of York, must have been greatly pained in the same way," observed the father of Hortense, "but withdraw their support when he was proved an impostor."

"But now, after all," said Lord Claud, "when the historian can investigate unrestrainedly and publish boldly, without caring to please the Tudors, it has become more than a doubtful point whether there existed any impostor,—whether the name of Perkin Warbeck was not fabricated to sustain the usurpation of Henry the Seventh, and the young king, Richard the Fourth, as basely murdered, by his execution at the age of twenty, as if he had been really smothered as a child."

"Oh, My Lord!" cried Mr. Gerard Woolton, with darkened brow, "spare me these historical researches; though I own to having first quoted the victim,—for thus I consider Perkin Warbeck,—of a prodigious imposture."

"The same as that of Monsieur Leon Bauvin, as Viscount Stanmore?" added Lord Claud.

"How well you have remembered the name of this young man!"

"Yes, I prefer the modern history that passes before my eyes, and sounds in my ears;—I prefer to lay hold of living witnesses, and listen to the first-hand story: it was in this way I first caught glimpses of the plot against the succession of the younger branch of my family, and resolved to pursue and expose it."

As these words passed his lips, a gleam of sunshine illumined the vindictive countenance of the West Indian, and expanded into a radiant smile. It was fully, and still more beautifully, returned by the centre person of a group of equestrians,—a girl in the full bloom of tropical beauty. Hortense Woolton was riding under the protection of the Spanish ambassador, and followed or surrounded; as it might please her caprice, by an increasing train of subordinate personages. The father was recognized by all, and after an exchange of smiling bows with the ambassador, took his place on the other side of the star of the day,—the enchantress of one brief London spring.

At that very hour, driving round the park *tete-a-tete*, and so engrossed in conversation that they could only return, mechanically, the salutes of those who passed them, were the dowager Duchess of Peterworth and her most congenial step-daughter, Lady Emily Whyne.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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By order of the Board. D. R. WILKIE, Cashier. Toronto, 20th April, 1891.

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