

THE LANGTRY MATTER SETTLED.

In order to set at rest for ever the state of doubt and uncertainty existing in the public mind concerning Mrs. Langtry's rumored divorce and approaching marriage with Mr. Gebhardt, Mr. GRIP deemed it his duty to despatch his society swell to interview the lady, and accordingly that gentleman crossed the ocean, and before long had sent up his card to the Jersey Lily. The lady herself came running down the stairs, and grasped the interviewer by both his hands, which she wrung most cordially, and, still retaining his hands in hers, she conducted him upstairs to her boudoir.

"I am so delighted to see you again," she said. "And how well you are looking—so handsome! Are all GRIP's representatives as magnificent specimens of manhood as you?" she enquired.

"Every man Jack in the employment of the Raven is a splendid fellow, madame, with the exception of the ladies, of whom there is a large number," replied the ambassador.

"Grip employs ladies, does he?" enquired the Lily, a shade of jealousy crossing her exquisite features.

"He does," was the reply, "and they are all very beautiful. The stranger entering Mr. GRIP's establishment on Front Street, Toronto, is at once struck by the perfect—(pause)—bouquet of beauty that greets his eyes. Lady stenographers, assistant proof-readers, etc., etc., are grouped in attitudes of the most finished grace. The bookkeepers, clerks, contributors, and even the Editor and Manager themselves are all selected as much for their personal beauty as their ability. In fact, Mr. GRIP's establishment is one mammoth aggregation of transcendent physical and mental ornamentation; an unparalleled combination of the true, the good, the beautiful, with external grace and symmetrical harmony."

"Dear me! I really must call when I come to Canada again, and I propose doing so very soon," said Mrs. Langtry.

"Ah! that reminds me of the purpose for which I called to-day," remarked the ambassador, producing his mother-of-pearl note-book, and a golden fountain pen. "It is rumored that you are endeavoring to obtain a divorce from the old man: is there any foundation for the report?"

"Pardon me, but did you not, in a previous interview, inform me that you were a single man?" enquired the lovely Lily.

"I did; I am still in the same fix," was the reply.

"Then in that case," rejoined the lady, "you may say that there is a great deal of truth in the rumor, and that the sooner I am free the better I shall be pleased."

"Ahom!" coughed the gentleman, as he made notes in accordance with what he had been told. "I shall have to look out,"—this to himself; then he continued aloud—"I believe Mr. Langtry wishes to bring the suit himself, and that you won't consent to any such arrangement, but offer him £10,000 to allow you to bring the action. Is that the state of the case?"

"It was—till to-day," replied the beautiful actress, "since I have seen you I don't care how the matter goes as long as I only get him off my hands."

"And do you think seriously of marrying that Mr. Gebhardt?" asked the visitor.

"Surely you do not admire that little snip."

"I admire his fortune, sir, though I cannot say I really think much of the man. He has such atrociously thin legs—"

"And large hands"—interposed the other.

"And immense feet," chorused the lady.

"And a snub nose," said the gentleman.

"And a big mouth," remarked the lady.

"Then I gather from your remarks that you don't care much for the fellow himself," said Mr. GRIP's proxy.

"Ah! sir, I have endeavored to persuade myself that I admired him, but your appearance here to-day shows me the true state of my heart. Freddie, compared with you, dwindles into the semblance of a polliwog alongside a statue of Apollo. Pardon my nautical expression 'alongside.' I am a Jersey Islander, a Le Breton, of Le Bretonville."

Mr. GRIP's representative began to feel somewhat embarrassed, and scarcely knew what to say; however he remarked,

"I may say, then, in my paper, that you wish to shunt old Langtry at my rate."

"Ye-es," was the reply, rather hesitatingly, "you may say that. Now tell me, are those ladies at the GRIP office so very beautiful?"

"Madame," replied the other. "If you want touch and go beauty the GRIP office is the right shop for it."

"And you are single? You're sure of that!" she enquired anxiously.

"I am, madame."

"Then I do hope they'll hurry up with that divorce," replied the Lily. "Send me a GRIP with this interview in it; be sure; and when does the Almanac come out?"

"About the middle of November. It's going to be a howler this year: on y ten cents a copy—but I'll send you one free."

"Oh! thank you," as the visitor rose to take his leave, "Now do take care of yourself; I shall soon be in Canada again; and don't talk too much to those—those—beautiful girls round your office. Good-bye!" and she sank into a sofa, and buried her face in her *mouchoir* as MR. GRIP's representative trotted down stairs and sprang into a "hansom," which conveyed him to Buckingham Palace, where he was hanging out. —S.

"Madam," I replied, a faint blush mounting to my cheeks, "they arc. But madam, it is not the coat that makes the man, nor the trousers, nor even the boots. There beats within this breast—and I smote myself upon the spot indicated—a heart as true as they make 'em. What says Burns, glorious Robbie?"

"The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
A man's a man for a' that."

By rank he meant clothes, madam. I am a gentleman, the younger son of a British earl, and here I stand pleading with beauty for a roof to cover my head and for victuals at \$3.50 per week. Madam, have you a vacancy for me?"

I could see that my allusion to beauty had its effect, for she simpered, and saying that she had just one chamber to spare, escorted me to it. It was an attic, but I did not care. I engaged it on the spot.

"My terms are payment in advance when a boarder has no baggage," suggested Mrs. Skimpey.

"My trunks will be here to-morrow, madam. So fair a creature as yourself can surely harbor no base suspicion as to my solvency. My porte-monnie is in my large trunk, and will arrive to-morrow."

Mrs. Skimpey, though evidently pleased by my flattering language, hesitated and finally said, "I can't break my rules, even for a junior member of the British aristocracy—by the way, what might the title of his lordship, your father, be?"

"Lord Nosewho, of the Chateau d' Espagne, County Ary, Scotland; and fifteenth Baron Ballycumdigthetaty, in the County Blarney," I replied without hesitation, "a very old family indeed."

"Well," said Mrs. Skimpey, "I would rather have the money in advance. I will keep the room for you till to-morrow, when you can take possession of it as soon as your trunks arrive."

"Madam," I said, "there is but little reason or justice in your demands. If I deposit \$3.50—"

"Four dollars are my terms," interrupted the lady.

"Four dollars be it then," I rejoined. "If I should hand you the four dollars in advance, what guarantee have I that you will not be bankrupt to-morrow? Why should I trust you if you refuse to trust me?"

"I never break my rules," replied Mrs. Skimpey, "and if you object to comply with them, I must request you to look elsewhere. I cannot say that your appearance prepossesses me altogether favorably, and I do not know that I am particularly anxious to take you in at all, as I do not think Mr. Lum Tiddle, of the bank, would approve of you as a fellow-boarder."

"Mr. Lum Tiddle be blowed," I ejaculated, greatly exasperated. "What care I for Mr. Lum Tiddle? Lum Tiddle or no Lum Tiddle. It is you who should be honored by having me beneath your roof, and the horrible tradespeople you have mentioned, who should be gratified by my presence."

"Well, sir," went on the adamant Skimpey, "my terms are payment in advance, and that I must insist on."

"Madam," I replied, choking down my wrath, "'tis useless to argue with the sordid money grasper, and I distinctly refuse to accede to your request. Kindly summon your menial that she may escort me to the door?"

"You can't miss it; go straight down stairs and you will see it," and she waved me off and I departed, my whole nature rising in arms at the cruel treatment to which I, the representative of the poor man, had been subjected.

I then turned my footsteps in the direction of Mrs. O'Tool's caravanserai on Lombard-street, feeling that whatever treatment I met



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"I soon stood before Mrs. Skimpey's establishment, and that lady answered my ring at the door-bell in person. She was a large, faded-looking woman, and had some remains of gentility still clinging to her. 'Ha!' I said to myself, 'this is one of those ladies who has seen better days'

You may shatter a Skimpey, or 'bust' if you will, but the traces of swelldom will cling to her still, as Tom Moore remarks, and then I addressed her and stated my errand.

"Well," she said reflectively, when I had finished, "my boarders are highly respectable. I have—let me see"—counting on her fingers, "three dry-goods sales-gentlemen, two sales-ladies, and Mr. Lum Tiddle—he's in a bank—and those two law clerks, and the young man from the drug-store: all highly respectable, you see. And you—and you—are those your best clothes, may I ask?"