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THE EFFICIENT FOOTMAN

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**The Earl's Son;**  
OR  
**TWO HEARTS UNITED**

CHAPTER XXXII.  
CHAPTER XXXIII.

An enormous crowd collected in the market place at Halsary, and some time before the hour on which the court opened, converged in the court-house. The news of the death of Talbot Denby, and his valet, Gibbon, and the rumor that the latter had confessed to being an eye-witness of his master's crime had been started almost as soon as Gibbon's last words had been gashed out, and the rumor, confirmed by servants from Lynne Court, having been strengthened into "reliable intelligence," the populace, already intensely interested in Ralph Farrington and his fate, were all ablaze with excitement.

As they surged before the court-house and pressed against the heavy old doors they shouted and yelled, and there were not a few voices actually clamouring for Ralph's release.

The court was to sit at eleven, and as the hands of the clock were nearly upon the hour, a cry rose from the mob, for the Lynne Court carriage was seen coming along the High Street. In it were seated the earl and Veronica. It was noticed by the eager mob that they were both in mourning, and that Lord Lynborough was deathly pale; Veronica, too, was pale, but a light shone in her eyes which the crowd which thronged round the carriage was quick to interpret.

Someone started a cheer, but it was promptly hushed by those who remembered that at Lynne Court lay the dead body of the man whom they had all learnt to regard as its future master.

The earl and Veronica entered, by the magistrate's door, and soon afterwards the public were admitted, and the small court was instantly crammed by as many of the excited and eager mob as could squeeze into it.

All the magistrates were on the bench excepting Lord Sainsbury, who stood in the body of the court talking to Mr. Selby, upon whom all eyes were centred.

Veronica went up to Mr. Selby and held out her hand, both hands indeed.

"Does—does he know?" she whispered, her lovely face all aglow. "Have you told him—what have you told him? They would not let me see him last night or this morning."

Mr. Selby nodded.

"Forgive me, but that was by my orders, or advice, rather. I feared that you would tell him that his innocence had been proved."

"As it has!" she breathed. "Oh, as it has!"

"Forgive me, Miss Veronica, not yet! There is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip—"

"Oh, Mr. Selby, a proverb at such a moment!" she breathed, with piteous reproach.

"I know—I know; but we lawyers must be careful. Until the bench has heard the evidence I would not risk telling Ralph—Lord Denby—that he was safe. But I told him enough to give him hope. Though I need scarcely have done that. Have you noticed—what a noise they make, and how excited they are!" he broke off, looking round at the seething crowd. "I can scarcely make myself heard—have you noticed that he has been the most hopeful, the most confident of all of us?"

"Is there anything I haven't noticed?" she said, in a low voice. "It is because he knew that the truth would pre—"

"Oh, proverbs at such a moment!" he murmured, smiling, and with a very fair imitation of her voice. "You see I'm so happy that I can joke, Miss Veronica—"

"Silence!" called the clerk.

Veronica stole back to her place beside the earl, who sat with his hands resting on his stick, his white head bent as if he were unconscious of the crowd, the noise, and the excitement. But as the prisoner was

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ushered into the dock the old man raised his head and looked—with what love, and remorse, and pride!— at the handsome face, the "clear, just" eyes.

For the first time since his arrest, Ralph's face looked strained, as if he were feeling the suspense, the delay. His eyes went from his father to Veronica, and something in her's made his own flash and his face glow with color.

The crowd was not stilled into silence until Mr. Selby rose; then you could have heard a pin drop—if it could have dropped between the packed people.

He was almost as pale as the prisoner had been when he entered the court, and for the first time his usual calm and steady voice wavered.

"Your worships," he said, "when the court adjourned yesterday, I was calling as a witness Mr. Talbot Denby." He paused a moment, then went on with deep solemnity. "He could not be found. Since then he has been summoned to another tribunal and has appeared before another Judge. has quitted this mortal scene, and with his disappearance my task is over." Ralph uttered a faint cry. "I leave the case from this moment in the hands of my friend, Mr. Graham, who represents the crown, and I may add, the interests of justice."

He sat down, the crowd moved restlessly and impatiently, and a man was heard to say complacently: "Why don't 'e let 'im free to oncet!"

Mr. Graham rose. He, too, was very pale and grave.

(To be Continued.)

**A Great Intrigue,  
OR, THE  
Mistress of Darracourt.**

CHAPTER I.

One bright, sunny evening in June, a small crowd of persons was gathered round the lodge gates of an old English mansion. A few yards from the gate had been erected one of those preposterous structures of aliened timber, ivy, and evergreens, known as triumphal arches, but which might just as appropriately be styled arches of destruction, as they not seldom descend upon the unfortunate heads of the individuals they are erected to honor.

Beside this arch, which bore the inscription, in rather groggy and uncertain letters, "Welcome to Darracourt!" was placed the Darracourt brass band, each man thereof holding his instrument of torture in readiness to lift to his lips or apply to his drum the moment the carriage he was expecting came in sight.

At a turn of the drive, after passing through the great iron gates, the Court itself could be seen, and here, gathered in the hall, were the Court servants, in new liveries and dresses, ready to form into line directly the band began to howl; and the butler, stately as a duke and a great deal more pompous, stood upon the broad stone steps, shading his eyes with his hand, and trying to look as if he were perfectly indifferent to, and far, far above the vulgar excitement which characterized the rest of the less noble expectants.

On the broad gravel sweep, which lay smooth as marble before the steps with their guardian stone lions, were scattered half a dozen grooms, their hands upon their belts, their eyes turned toward the lodge.

It might have been an empress, or a famous general or, say, a duke at least, that these people were lying in wait for, seeing the ceremony and the excitement attending it, but, in truth, the arrival they were all awaiting was that of a young girl, scarcely turned twenty, the heiress, indeed the mistress, of the Court, of the vast estate contained in a ring fence around it, of the massive plate which had been the envy of the covetous James, of the cattle that browsed upon the neighboring hills, of all the wealth that the Darracourts had amassed and inherited since they came over with the never-to-be-forgotten William, surnamed the Conqueror.

Five, ten minutes of expectancy and suspense passed; then the butler drew out his watch, which the page had been heard irreverently to de-

scribe as a frying pan, and, consulting it with an air of conferring upon it an inestimable favor, remarked, solemnly:

"The train must be late!"

"Or, perhaps, she's missed it!" ventured one of the grooms, suggestively. Mr. Selby, the butler, turned upon him severely.

"She? Who's 'she'? When you are speaking of your superiors, sir, give them a name. Miss Darracourt, if you please!"

The groom touched his hat, apologetically.

"Miss Darracourt, I mean, Mr. Selby," he said, humbly.

"Then say 'Miss Darracourt,'" retorted Mr. Selby. "No, young man, I don't think Miss Darracourt has missed her train. Darracourts are not given to missing their trains, and I apprehend that if Miss Darracourt were late the train would wait."

"I desay, sir," said the groom, and, utterly overcome by the rebuke, he ahrank a little farther from his superior.

Miss Darracourt had not missed her train. At that moment, indeed, the open carriage, drawn by four horses with an outrider, had passed from the station yard, and the faint echo of a distant cheer had caused the Darracourt brass band to clutch their awful instruments still tighter.

There were three persons seated in the carriage. An old lady, with a bland and rather expressionless face, who sat with her back to the horses, and two young ladies on the seat opposite. One was Miss Darracourt's friend, companion, what you will; a handsome girl, with fair hair, which the wind had blown into silken tendrils, with bluish-gray eyes, and a complexion which is generally termed blonde. She would have been lovely but for a certain thinness of the well-formed lips, and an expression in the eyes which make her look cunning—no, not exactly cunning. Sharp? Scarcely sharp. Let us say too observant.

The other was Miss Darracourt herself.

To describe the mistress of the Court is difficult.

There is an exalted personage whose claims to be a critic of general beauty no one will deny, and he has stated that beauty lies in expression. If that be so, and it is so, then Lucille Darracourt was lovely beyond compare. She was tall and slight, her figure lithe and graceful as an Indian's is supposed to be, but seldom is. Her hair—woman's chief glory, as Prior says—was the warm brown which is generally known as auburn; and it is a fact that women whose hair is of this glorious tint are always blessed with an abundance of it. Her eyes were brown, a rich, warm brown, like to the hazel, and darkened by brows thick and drawn straight across. Wonderful eyes, which were capable of any and every expression which the will of their owner might wish to convey—eyes mated to lips full and yet not sensuous, and red as a cherry. Her complexion, as might have been expected of such a coloured hair, was creamy, and yet not pale; for without warning the young blood would rise to the beautiful face, and add its color to the general commonwealth. If there was a more beautiful woman than Lucille Darracourt as she rode into her inheritance, it is one of the best-known pictures of Joshua Reynolds, the picture which a great art critic declared to surpass any living woman as real flowers surpass artificial ones.

(To be Continued.)

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