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Maddolena's Story

AND

The Cameo Bracelet.

CHAPTER XIX.

But this would only make more careful to use their prisoners well; and the baroness consoled herself that the worst either of them had to fear would be their detention in some mountain cave or half-ruined fastness till the terms of their ransom were decided, and she could advise her bankers to honor the check she would be forced to sign.

Accordingly, she signified her willingness to proceed; and, signing to two of the strongest of his men to waist in their arms the Lady Camilla, who had fainted with fright, the chief began to lead the way toward the track he had indicated.

But now the interruption took place that the baroness had been dreading. Charlie Ormsby, provoked beyond measure at the disappearance of the carriage, and unable to descry any signs of it, was returning to apprise the ladies of the odd circumstances, when he perceived their position.

With all the fiery impetuosity of his character, he clinched his fists, and sprang toward them, felling the first who crossed his path. But the brigands were not taken at a disadvantage, for they were on the watch for him; and in an instant three or four had thrown themselves upon the young man, and borne him to the ground.

Passion, however, lent him such strength that, after a desperate struggle, he contrived to shake them off, and rise to his feet. But what could he do against such numbers? Ere the gasping, shuddering baroness could stir or lift up her voice to plead in his behalf, his arms were pinioned behind him, and half a dozen stilettos flashed from their sheaths. But no blow was struck, for, with a thrilling cry, a girl had bounded forward and thrown herself on his breast to shield him with her own body.

CHAPTER XX.

The confusion that followed Sir Charles' appearance and capture was so great, that the baroness could scarcely tell for some minutes what had happened. Then she saw that it was Beatrice Mayne, who, regardless of the risk she was running, had interposed her slight figure between the prisoner and his infuriated and noisily gesticulating captors. She had not escaped injury in her bold act, for one of the upraised knives had grazed her arm as she flung it over Sir Charle's shoulder; but she had succeeded in saving his life, for the men, although they continued to scowl and threaten, sheathed their weapons and, with a joyful throb, she saw that unless provoked again by his intemperate conduct, he was—for the present, at all events—comparatively safe.

And now she could think of herself; and feeling sick as well as angry at the sight of the crimson stream trickling down her arm, she held it up, and passionately taunted the chief, who had pushed his way into the midst of the group, on the conduct of his followers. Even in this there was policy.

Better, thought Trixie, that they should be provoked with her, than left to vent their brutality on the baronet.

"Oh! man—man!" she exclaimed, displaying the bleeding gash, "you promised us good treatment, yet see what your comrades have done! Is it thus you use your prisoners—thus you keep your plighted word? Will you let your companions murder us before your eyes, and make no effort to prevent it?"

"The fault was none of mine!" he began to assert, but she scornfully stopped him.

"You are no Italians; no, not one of you. The countrymen of Garibaldi are brave and honorable; they do not pounce upon an unarmed man, and stab the still more helpless girl who has not attempted to resist them."

"Corpo di Bacco! there is no coping with the tongue of an angry woman," muttered the annoyed chief, who was eager to get his prisoners away from a spit too near the highroad to be very safe. "Truly, signora, you are too hard upon us. My comrades have not willfully meddled with you. If you have been rash enough to throw yourself on the knife's point, you must not rate us because it pierces sharply. Your place is with the other ladies Rejoin them, and I will deal with our prisoner here."

"No—no," he gasped, defying those who advanced to remove her; "I will not leave him. You shall not take me away—you shall not hurt him. Have mercy—have mercy! He is so young to die. Men—friends!" she added frantically, "you shall not touch him!"

And once again she wrapped her arms around him, and strove to shield him with her own body.

However, her strength was as nought when pitted against the brigands', and she was forcibly withdrawn from her perilous position, sobbing too wildly to hear the deep-toned entreaty, that she would think only of herself, Sir Charles hastened to utter in their native language.

"Who are you, signor?" the chief demanded, and the English baronet would have boldly avowed his name and lineage, but for Trixie's interposition.

A suspicion had darted into her mind that these were no ordinary bandits, and it was she who answered their leader's question.

"He is my brother and the servant of an English gentleman called Sir Charles Odmsby, who is nephew to madam the baroness."

"Si, si, this must be true," asserted one of the band, "for he rode behind the carriage at some distance, just as the grooms of these English milordos always do."

"We ought to have secured the master, not the man," growled his leader. "Bind his hands and bring him along. It is not worth while to injure him, neither must we let him escape to tell tales, and put others on our track."

Still Sir Charles, who detested the idea of hiding under false colors, would have asserted the truth at all risks; but when he attempted to speak, one of the men buffeted him on the mouth, and Trixie, shrieking at the sight, extended her clasped hands, and implored him to be quiet.

"For the present time these ruffians are our masters," she said, rapidly, in English. "Submission and silence may help us all; while defiance will insure your own death and leave us at the mercy of our captors."

"Submit to these cowardly curs!" he hissed under his breath, jerking one of his wrists out of the grasp of those who were tying a cord around it. "But yes, you are right," he added catching a glimpse of the agitated features of the baroness, and of the insensible Camilla, with whom her hearers were crossing the stream. "Gently, fellows; you need not cut me with your confounded ropes. I yield me, and will give you no more trouble."

"Very wisely said," observed the chief, who had been raising and examining the man Sir Charles knocked down. "Matteo is not hurt, only stunned, or even my influence might not have prevented your feeling the consequences of your rashness. We make short work with troublesome customers;" and he drew his stiletto across his own throat with a grim significance that made Trixie's face a shade paler than it was before. "Now, lads, come on; we have wasted too much time already, and our path is a difficult one after the night falls."

In obedience to his directions, two of the bandits placed themselves on either side of the baroness, who was leaning on the arm of Bessie, while another walked immediately in front, to clear aside the overhanging boughs that impeded their progress, as—the stream passed by wading—they began to wind up the mountainside.

Trixie pleaded that Sir Charles be unbound, and the ropes were removed on his promise not to attempt escape.

"Help us," Trixie murmured in his ear, "to endure our share of the adventure with fortitude. Your example and madam's ought to make us brave enough to submit with patience to an imprisonment which these men, in their own interest, will be careful neither to make a long nor a painful one."

But even while she spoke, Trixie's heart was sinking very low, for the impression that their detainers were no practiced knights of the road had deepened during her short conversation with their leader. They were rude peasants, sullen and ignorant enough to do the bidding of any one who paid them well, but he, despite his assumed ostentatious display of his weapons, had the sharp yet deferential manner common to those who have been brought up in the houses of the Italian nobility.

She had noticed, too, that his hands were not as rough as his companions', nor was his skin brown and sunburned, as if he had been accustomed to spend his days and nights exposed to the changes of the weather, as he skulked from one hiding place to the other. Her terrors not being selfish ones (had made her keenly alive to trifles that, under other circumstances, might have passed unnoticed, and had also made her an attentive listened to every word that fell from the brigand's lips.

(To be continued.)

Fashions and Fads.

A French dress of almond green cloth is beautifully trailored, and trimmed with silver braid and embroidery at neck, sleeves and hip.

The luxurious note in costumes is creeping back. To illustrate, an afternoon frock of cream lace and black satin is trimmed with rich gold braid.

The mandarin coat makes the most delightful negligee any woman could want. Many of the beautiful Chinese coats have trousers that harmonize.

The all-rubber corset is not always the best selection—on that combines brocade with surgical elastic and light boning is excellent for the average figure.

Some of the spring hats seem to have been fashioned of a wide band of rich two-toned ribbon, swirled around the head and tied at the back in a great bow.

Pearls and crystal beads make rich trimming for a charming black satin dinner frock. The hem of the dress is very deeply embroidered with the pearls and beads.

Evening gowns choose fascinating colors in chiffons, Georgettes and crepes Romaine. One model in French blue chiffon has blue-beaded ruffles, and is worn over flesh-colored satin. Another shell-pink satin shows an appliqued design of silvercloth.

Despaired of Life at 50 Strong and Well at 70

Mr. Jacob H. Mackey, 336 Midland Ave., Midland, Ont. writes:—

"I have used Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills for over 20 years and I feel that I owe my life to them. I suffered severely from rheumatism and heart failure. One doctor just gave me one year to live, and even told me I might be found dead at any time. A neighbor advised Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills and I have been using them as needed ever since. I am now 70 years of age, weigh 217 pounds and can work as well as any young man."

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SIDE TALKS.

By Ruth Cameron.

THE OPTIMIST AS A PACKER.

"Blessed be nothing."

Never yet since I heard that beatitude did I do any kind of packing without uttering it with my mind if not my lips.

It's a funny thing about packing. I have done more of it than is the average person's lot. I ought to know exactly what is going to happen and yet over and over again I approach it with the same high courage and finish it in the same utter rout.

I wonder if you do the same. If you are an optimist you probably do, for your incorrigible optimist is likely to be your impossible packer.

This Time There Will Be Room.

Yesterday for perhaps the hundredth time in my life, I packed my suitcase for a return from a trip. I had been doing some shopping but I had everything sent, or at least almost everything. I was sure that the few little packages I was carrying could not possibly make any difference. This time I assured myself I was going to have plenty of room. To be sure the suitcase (much to my surprise) turned out to be pretty full on the down trip, but soiled clothes always take less room than fresh, and besides I had gotten rid of a couple of packages that were taken as gifts. I was sure I hadn't taken on enough to balance them.

And then I gather my things together and begin to pack. Everything goes wonderfully. I even begin to regret that I left so much room. I might just as well have carried that sport skirt I bought instead of waiting for them to send it. I wonder how it will go with my sweater. . . . My sweater! Terrible thought! It is hanging in the closet and has yet to go in! And what is that on the shelf behind it—that book I brought to read on the train. What beastly, bulky, unsqueezable things books are, to be sure! Never shall I bring another. The extra space is all gone now. I begin to move things about and frown anxiously. . . . what is this I am stepping on under the edge of the bed? My bed slippers! Well, thank goodness, they are more squeezable than the book.

The Final Survey.

A survey of the bureau drawers and the wash stand, which painful experience has made me rigid in demanding of myself in spite of myself's desire to wriggle out of it, yields my tooth brush case, my jewelry case, a face cloth and a notebook. My suitcase is full now and running over. I close it with difficulty, open it to tuck in the edge of my sweater and a lingerie ribbon, close it again, sit on it and lock it. Horrors, what is that on the foot of my bed? The other half of my pyjamas. I could have sworn I put them both in. Business of opening suitcase again and of laboriously closing it. Final devout murmur of "Blessed be nothing."

Sometimes, oh terrible confession, I have even been driven to holding an overflow meeting in my hand bag and even in my coat pocket.

The Pessimist Packs.

Himself, on the other hand, is a marvel to me because he always gets away with a bag with a big vacant space in the top (unless I succeed in persuading him that some of my last minute things belong there). This, he explains, is because he is not a fool optimist but a constructive pessimist; he knows before he starts that there are going to be a lot of last minute things and so he plans to leave space for them.

Here's hoping that there are some fool optimists among my readers. Because I have been telling you all this in the belief that I was describing some of you as well as me. And if you are all constructive pessimists with plenty of room in the top of your bags, then you have only been scornful instead of sympathetic.

Just Folks.

By EDGAR A GUEST

THE RUN-AWAY

When I was a little boy I thought
I'd run away.
I didn't like the dressful things they'd
said to me that day,
I didn't like the scolding mother gave
her precious lad
Or what she said she'd do to me the
next time I was bad;
I thought I didn't like the house, the
neighbours or the street,
My little world seemed full of folks I
didn't want to meet.
And so that very afternoon I slipped
away and hid—
But I went back at supper time, and
I am glad I did.

I hid out in a neighbour's barn and
watched where I could see.
I thought I'd see my mother come out
and search around for me,
I thought for sure there'd be a fuss,
I thought there'd be a crowd.
But no one poked around the yard or
called my name out loud;
Nobody seemed to know I'd gone, nobody seemed to care,
And that old barn seemed filled with
things I didn't know were there.
And by and by I couldn't stand the
lonesomeness, and so
I slipped back home for supper, and
the folks just said "hello."

They didn't ask me where I'd been,
my mother's eyes weren't red—
I'd been away all afternoon and not a
tear she'd shed.
They talked the way they always
talked, and now, as I recall,
They never even knew that I had run
away at all.
But I have lived a lot since then, and
learned from day to day
When trouble comes the little men
still seem to run away;
They think that they can hide from
care, but this old world goes on
And people busy at their tasks will
never know they've gone.

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COWBOY FICTION.

WALT MASON

Sometimes I read the thrillers, when tired of Milton's odes, and ride a while with killers along the western roads. The cowboys found in fiction have nothing much to do but stir up useless friction and shoot a gent or two. We seldom see them doing a useful round of chores, the straying cows pursuing, or fixing ranch-house doors. They're always callyhooting around on outlaw steeds, and shooting, shooting, shooting, and pulling movie deeds. They save the rancher's daughters when villains hold carouse, and baffle wicked plotters instead of milking cows. Their war cries weirdly screeching they ride their pintos pink; instead of calmly teaching the looped calves to drink. They are romantic hustlers, a brave and nervous crew; they shoot the cattle rustlers, and shoot the nesters, too; they shoot up any smarties who may wear city rags; they shoot up any parties who criticise their nags. We never see them sowing, or doing useful things; more movie fits they're throwing, and riding round in rings. I ride with western shooters along the mountain roads, and then rejoin my tutors, and study Milton's odes.

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As we figure on closing out the Retail end of our Business this year, we shall be giving a series of Sales, that will mean much lower prices for goods specified, than you will get elsewhere. These prices are for Cash only. Buy early as many lines will not last long.

As a start for this month's Sale we offer:—

MEN'S STANFIELD HEAVY WOOL UNDERWEAR—Green Label at $1.60; Red Label at $2.45; Blue Label at $3.00.

LADIES' STANFIELD WOOL UNDERWEAR—Also at cut prices, but styles too numerous to quote here.

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LADIES' HEAVY WOOL SWEATER COATS—Our Special Pirce was $3.50. Now $2.95 each.

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in Navy and Black Wool Serges and Cloths; also Fancy Tweeds and Poplins; regardless of cost, every Skirt is now offered at only

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CHILDREN'S WINTER COATS—All offered under Cost.

CHILDREN'S WOOL CAPS—Only 10c. each.

LADIES' WINTER HATS—Not a big lot left, at prices that will quickly clear same.

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HENRY BLAIR

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