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CHAPTER XVI.

"You will see some to-night," said John Bardon; "but the most beautiful of all is Lady Iris Fayne, the daughter and heiress of Lord Caledon of Chandos. You have heard of her, of course?"

"I should say that almost every one in England has heard of Lady Iris Fayne. She is the beauty of the day, is she not?"

"Yes, and she is as proud as—well, as proud as she is beautiful."

"We are all proud, I think," said Captain Osburn, with a smile, "but we show it in different ways. Her pride will not cause me any concern."

"She will not show it to you, Osburn. She is certain to like you—I am sure of that. I will introduce you, and you will see if I am not right."

John Bardon tried to look and behave as usual; but after this little conversation, he lost his ease and went about with a pale anxious face.

CHAPTER XVII.

The ball-room at Hyne Court was magnificently lighted and superbly decorated. On either side rose great banks of flowers, interspersed with palms and ferns. Little fountains played in the conservatories, which were lighted by lamps of golden hue, and pretty cool nooks were to be found amongst the greenery.

John Bardon felt very proud of his home as he stood by the side of his wife to welcome her guests.

"Chandos never looked better than this," he told himself; "and even Lady Iris must own it."


Although his house was filled with visitors and the elite of the county were expected at the ball, his thoughts

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it absurd, I love the man—no other word expresses it."

Lady Iris liked her companion better at that moment than she had ever liked him before.

"I do not wonder," she said, "and your enthusiasm is catching, Mr. Bardon. Tell me about your friend. What regiment is he in?"

He told her, adding that he had heard in his praise.

"They tell me," he continued, "that he is one of the most promising officers of her majesty's service; and that is saying a great deal, is it not?"

"Yes, a great deal; but he looks as though it were true. His friends would have an easier time of it than his foes."

John Bardon laughed—and, though she did not detect it, there was a strange, weird sound in the laugh.

"I do not often quote poetry," he said—"it is not my line; but a few words of a verse that I came across years ago fixed themselves in my memory, and I have never forgotten them. They describe his character exactly."

"What words are they?" she asked curiously.

"The words of Tennyson—'Truest friend and noblest foe.' That is just what he would be; and, to tell you the truth, I would far rather that I were his foe than the friend of another."

"You give him high praise," she said gently. Every word that he uttered—she could not tell why—delighted her.

"I could not speak too highly of him if I were to try," he answered; "and I am not given to exaggeration."

He looked at her face, and must have seen something there that startled him, for his own grew paler and graver.

"Osburn," she said musingly. "It is a good name; but I do not remember to have met any Osburns, except the family of Lord Gower. Does he belong to them?"

"No," replied John Bardon, "he may be. I believe he is, distantly related to them, but the families have not been friendly for many years."

"Is he one of the Osburns of Sketchley?" she asked.

His lips grew whiter, and he paused a moment, then he thought of his revenge. "I will have it," he said to himself—"I will have it, if I suffer afterward!"

"What did you ask me, Lady Iris?" he inquired, as though he had not heard her words.

"Is he one of the Osburns of Sketchley?" she repeated.

He knew that if he answered affirmatively the falsehood would not be so easily discovered as if he said that he was one of the Gowers.

"Yes," he replied deliberately; "he is one of the Osburns of Sketchley. I could not think of the name."

"Then he is a gentleman!" she cried. "I felt sure of that. He looks like a man of noble birth."

Again John Bardon's heart gave a great bound. Was she falling so readily and easily into the trap.

"You must not speak of Sketchley to him," he said, "as he cannot bear any allusion to it; but he is very wealthy. There is a little romance about him too."

"Is there? Tell it to me, Mr. Bardon," she requested eagerly.

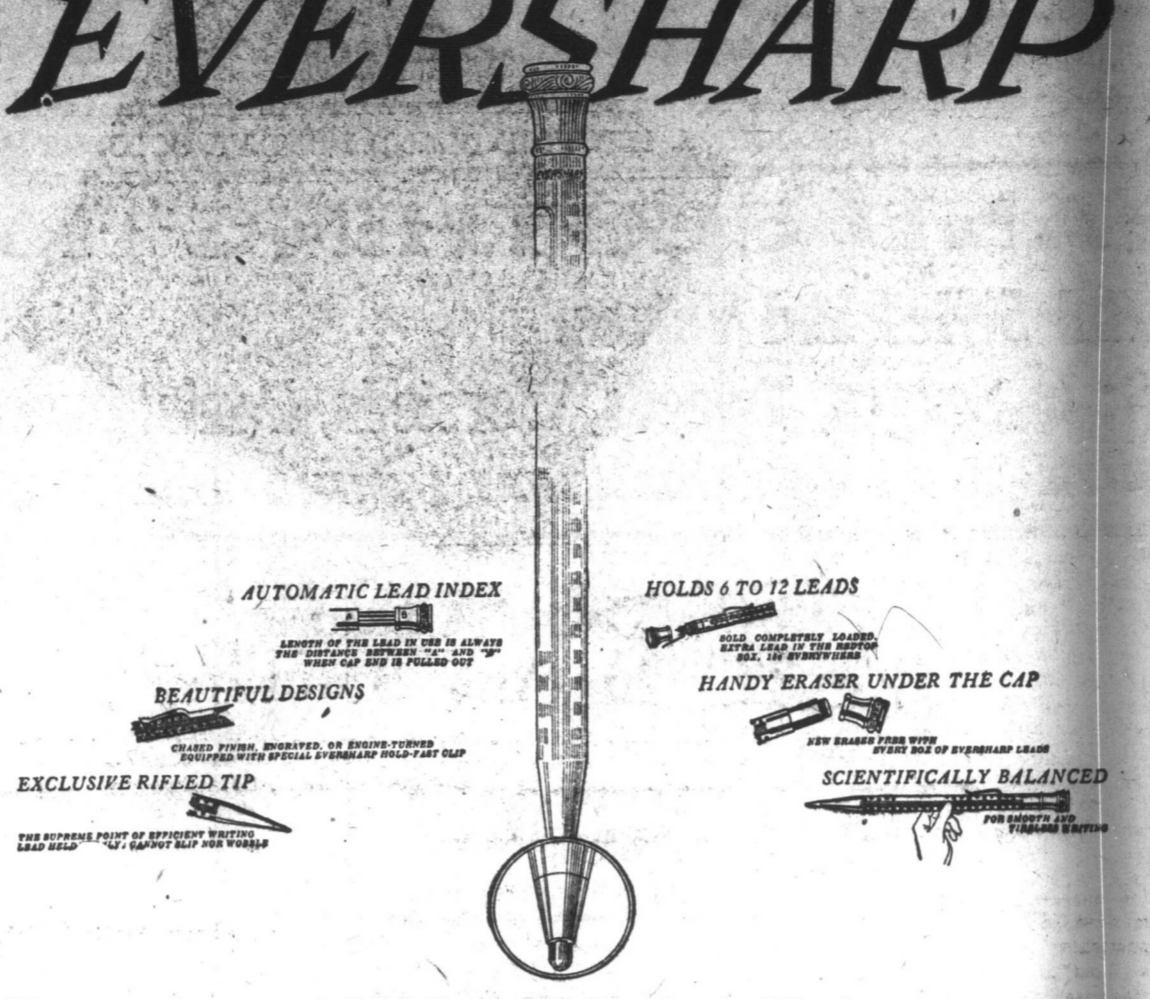
(to be continued.)

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Republican Fears.

DREAD NOVEMBER ELECTIONS.

WASHINGTON, October 13th (By Canadian Press)—The Republican Old Guard is looking forward with no little anxiety to the November elections. For that matter, the progressive elements of the republican party are likewise awaiting the outcome with concern. If the democrats could capture control of the House in November, it would amount to a hard rebuke for the Old Guard leaders and their policies. It would be a blow at the Harding administration, which has worked in close cooperation with these leaders in Congress. Indications now are that the republicans will not lose the House, but that their margin of control will be much reduced. The question of whether the Old Guard is to remain in the saddle in Congress and in the republican party will be answered quite as much by the fate of certain senatorial candidates as by the House results. Senator Frelinghuysen of New Jersey, who has been renominated for the Senate by the republicans, has a stiff fight with Governor Edwards for the election. Edwards is a wet candidate and may beat Frelinghuysen. The latter is dry, although a consistent follower of the Old Guard leaders in the Senate. The defeat of Frelinghuysen would tend to weaken the Old Guard's grip on things. Then, too, there is the fight of Senator Lodge in Massachusetts and of Senator McLean in Connecticut each has a sharp campaign on his hands, and though each is expected to win, there are possibilities of an upsetting. The amount of dissatisfaction or approval felt the country over on the tariff bill is an unknown factor when it comes to reckoning votes and may prove to be extremely serious for some of the republican leaders. Senators Townsend of Michigan, Calder of New York, and Sutherland of West Virginia are among the republican Old Guard members who have opposition in their own party because of their records. The democrats hope to capture one or two of these places. With Senator New of Indiana, and Senator McCumber of North Dakota already beaten in the primaries, the Old Guard republicans in the Senate feel they can ill afford to lose any more of their number in the elections. A powerful movement has already begun in the House, engineered by the agricultural bloc, to capture control of the republican organization in that body provided the republicans continue to dominate the House. The purpose is to elect a leader and a steering committee friendly to the agricultural interests. This is a movement directed at the Old Guard whose leaders are not friendly to the purposes of the agricultural bloc.

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