



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

CHAPTER XXVII.
Lucille's lovely eyes rested on him with faint surprise. This man a friend of her husband's, the fastidious marquis! But she inclined her head slightly.

"I shall be ready in a moment or two," said the marquis, and he went to open the door for her.

Lucille glanced at him, and then at the man, bowed again slightly, and went away.

The marquis stood, white and motionless, drops of sweat upon his brow.

Mr. Sinclair chuckled.

"Rather rough upon her ladyship," he said. "This little slip robs you of your title and her of all her money—every penny of it, marquis!"

The marquis stared before him vacantly. Then he came and stood opposite Mr. Sinclair.

"Five and twenty thousand!" he said. "It is enormous; a fortune—"

"A mere slice out of your cake," said Mr. Sinclair.

"But you shall have it," continued the marquis.

"Right!" cried Mr. Sinclair. "Give us your check—"

The marquis shook his head.

"Not now. I have not got the money."

"Oh, come!" expostulated Mr. Sinclair.

The marquis' eyes grew steely and flashed.

"I have not the money," he said; "but I will get it."

"All right," said Mr. Sinclair, amiably. "I'm in no hurry for a day, or a week or two. Meanwhile, marquis, you won't mind my keeping my eye upon you? Men in a hole like this you're in are apt to give one the slip. You won't mind my giving you a look in now and again?"

The marquis remained silent—a crushing weight seemed to have fallen upon him.

"I'll look in now and again in a friendly way until the money is raised," said Mr. Sinclair, obligingly. "You telegraph to Paris, if you like. Better run over and see for yourself; it would be safer. I'll go with you." He got his hat. "Don't take my word for it; prove it to your own satisfaction. I'm off now! Here!" he said, as if a thought struck him. "Just come down with me, will you?"

The marquis hesitated, then followed the vulgar, resplendent figure down the stairs.

Arrived in the hall, Mr. Sinclair held out his hand, and glancing round at the group of servants who were watching with all their eyes, he said, in a loud, hearty voice:

"Well, good-evening, Merle! Sorry I can't stay! Look in again soon. Good-evening, old chap!" and, shaking the white, thin hand like a pump handle, he glanced rather triumphantly at the amazed faces of the porter and footmen, and stalked toward the door.

Arrived there, however, he paused, and looked back.

"By the way, Merle, these fellows at this hotel aren't over civil. Just tell them that I am not to be kept waiting when I call, will you?"

The marquis inclined his head, and without looking at the amazed group below, said, in measured accents:

"Show Mr. Sinclair up to me immediately he arrives, please!"

And Mr. Sinclair, with a chuckle, stuck his hat on one side, and staggered into the street.

CHAPTER XXVIII.
London is said to be paved with gold, but, if it is, the authorities take very good care that one does not meddle with the pavement! Harry Herne, with nothing but his youth and health and burdened with a sorrow which weighed upon his heart like lead, reached London to find himself alone in a city, big and crowded enough for a world in itself.

He had a little money, a small sum, representing the saving of years, and he intended taking passage in one of the Australian liners, for what part he did not much care. "Hope which springs eternal in the human breast," had not sprung up in his. Love and despair reigned too supreme in his heart to permit of anything like hope, leave alone ambition. To get to Australia and bury himself in a cattle run seemed about the best thing he could do, and he went straight to the office of an emigration agent to make inquiries. The man, sharp and utterly unscrupulous, advised Harry to go to the part which would pay the agent the highest commission, and, having pocketed Harry's passage money, informed him that the vessel started on the day after the morrow.

Harry wandered about the streets, solitary and alone in the great crowds, just as Lucille drove through them a little while afterward, and scarcely seeing the things his eyes rested upon. All his heart and mind and soul were back at Darracourt, and it was his miserable body only which he had brought with him.

Toward evening of the second day he sauntered down to the docks to see the vessel in which he had booked a passage.

She was taking in a cargo, and the wharf was crowded with hands swinging bales of goods into the hold. Harry seated himself upon one of the short, thick posts and watched in dreamy and melancholy idleness. There was not one of the busy gang who had not some one to love him—a wife and children, perhaps, for whom he was working—and Harry sat and envied them!

Presently there was a clatter on the stones behind him, and some men appeared, riding and leading half a dozen horses. In the rear rode a dog-fellow, with a smooth-shaven face, and with a pair of clear, gray eyes that seemed to take in the whole scene. Harry included, even while his attention never strayed from the string of horses.

Arrived at the wharf, the big man dismounted and gave some orders to the men in a clear, resolute voice that struck pleasantly upon Harry's ears.

The horses were evidently intended for shipment upon a vessel lying next to Harry's, and he turned on his post and watched the performance with the first symptoms of interest he had felt since he left Darracourt.

It was not a brilliant performance, by any means. The horses were young—Irish, Harry decided—ner-

vous, and frightened by the unfamiliar noise and sights, and the two men in charge of them were not up to their work.

One man led a horse up to the steep incline from the wharf to the ship, and then attempted to drag him, while the other struck him on the hind quarter. The big Yorkshireman, who was riding a young and almost thorough-bred horse, and could not leave them, shouted out directions, strongly spiced with oaths. But the men were sad bunglers, and every moment the frightened horses grew more restless and unmanageable.

Harry stood it—or sat it—as long as he could; then rising, went up to the perspiring and bewildered couple, and offered his assistance. The men stared at him, and responded with a scowl, but Harry nodding a kind of request to be permitted to the Yorkshireman, took the horse out of their hands, and led it some distance from the vessel, and to a quiet part of the wharf.

There it walked it up and down for a little while, talking to it in the soothing tone which a horse loves, and presently, after he had thoroughly impressed the poor thing with the idea that he was coming to no harm he got on his back, and rode him as quiet and serene as a sheep, up the bridge into the vessel, saw him comfortably stabled, and went down to the wharf again.

The Yorkshireman stood at the foot of the incline, the stablemen were nowhere to be seen.

"You're a brick!" said the man, eyeing Harry, approvingly. "Will you see to the others for me? I can't! I dare not leave this young devil; and I'll pay you for your trouble! I've sent those other two blockheads to Jericho!"

Harry smiled and nodded, and before very long the remaining horses were standing quietly beside their fellows. Then the Yorkshireman took off his hat, wiped his brow, and said:

"Come and have a drink!"

Harry followed him into a public-house, and the giant ordered some liquor, and while they drank it he eyed Harry over, very much as he would eye a good horse, with a complacent admiration and approval.



"You are a fine fellow," he said, at last.

Harry smiled.

"This isn't the first time you've handled a horse, eh?"

"No," said Harry.

"No, I thought not. I got those two fellows from a livery stable. I suppose they'd only been used to old, worn-out screws, and my young 'uns frightened 'em. I don't know what I should have done if you hadn't turned up. I'm much obliged to you," and he plunged his hand into his pocket, and held out half a sovereign.

Harry shook his head.

"I'm much obliged to you," he said. "I was sadly in want of something to do, and so we're quits."

The Yorkshireman stared at him curiously; then his tone changed.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said. "I took you for one of the hands here, but I couldn't quite make you out. I see now, though. You are a gentleman?"

Harry shook his head again.

"You are quite wrong," he said. "I am a workman—"

"Workmen don't talk like you, as a rule," said the Yorkshireman, dryly. "What do you work at, if it's no offense?"

"None in the world," said Harry. "I have just come from the country, and I am going abroad."

"Oh, I see—a farmer?"

"No," said Harry, rather amused by the man's curiosity. "No; I am simply an emigrant."

"Well," said the Yorkshireman. "I don't care what you are—or, rather, what you say you are. I think I know a gentleman when I see him, though he is got up in rustic style. Anyhow, I'm much obliged to you. I expect you've saved my horses from getting their legs broken."

"You are quite welcome," said Harry. "I'm fond of horses, and have been used to them."

"And you're going to emigrate?" said the man, nodding. "I know something of that business. Now, if it isn't a rude question, where are you going to?"

Harry mentioned the port and the vessel.

The Yorkshireman started, then whistled.

"What on earth would you think of that place?" he demanded.

Harry told him that the agent had recommended it, and one place was the same as another to him.

The Yorkshireman set down his glass and swore.

"You couldn't go to a worse place," he exclaimed. "Here, come and sit down!" and he threw his bulky frame onto a form. "It's no use going there; the labor market is glutted already! The agent fellow is in the pay of the shipowners and the people on the other side, and gets a commission on every passenger he sends there. He has taken you in—swindled you. I like the look of you, and I tell you what. Don't go across the herring pond, but join me."

"Join you!"

(To be Continued.)

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