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**The Old Marquis**

**The Girl of the Cloisters**

**CHAPTER III. A GIRL'S SONG.**

"Good-night," he said, pressing the soft, white fingers, "good-night. Tomorrow! I shall come to-morrow morning to know—shall I ask him now?" looking beyond her into the room.

She flushed slightly, some true instinct telling her that it would be wiser to ask for herself.

"No—I will ask. Good-night," and drawing her hand, which for some unexplained reason he had held all this while, she turned and left him.

He stood for a moment looking up at the empty window, then his eye caught the rose that she had put down on the sill to shake hands with him.

He seized it as if he were famishing, and roses were good to eat, and—as we have no, or say few, pockets in our dress clothes nowadays, he put it gently under his waistcoat, where it made a deep red stain upon his snowy shirt front.

As he walked slowly and reluctantly away, he looked up at the sky.

"Our fate!" he murmured. "I wonder what it is! 'Ill-luck,' she said. Well, I shouldn't care so that we shared it together. Now, why didn't I say that? I always think of all my good things when it is too late to say them! And yet I'm glad I didn't!

Every moment I feel that my stupid blundering tongue will slip out something that will—will frighten her. If I did I should see her no more! No, no, she wouldn't understand the fine talk of London drawing-rooms. She—ah!" he paused suddenly.

"There is another star; whose fate is that, I wonder! Mine alone? Good or evil? What nonsense—and yet it sounded true when she said it! But I'd swear black was white and believe it, too, if she said so! Yes, I'm glad I came—I'm glad I'm going to stay!" and as he strolled along he put his hand in his waistcoat, found the rose, and held it against his heart.

Are there no more omens? Have signs and wonders, which used in the old days to be so useful, entirely disappeared and vanished?

I'm afraid they have, with a great many other good things we used to believe in. But if they still existed, the star Lela Temple and Lord Edgar watched together should have fallen into a London drawing-room and rolled at the foot of a tall, dark young man who leaned against the wall watching the dangers, for if there existed an evil fate for them, this man was it, and his name was Clifford Revel.

**CHAPTER IV. AT THE DANCE.**

AT the moment Lord Edgar and Lela Temple were standing at the open window at the Abbey—very much like Romeo and Juliet, if they had but thought of it—Clifford Revel was leaning against the wall of Mrs. Drayton's dining-room in Elton Square, Mayfair.

Mrs. Drayton, and Mrs. Drayton's house, and more especially Mrs. Drayton's daughter, were well known in the world of fashion. Who Mrs. Drayton might be, society did not know, and did not, now, very much care, though it had, at one time, been both curious and suspicious; but that was before a certain prince, who rules society as despotically as the Emperor or Alexander does all the Russians, had, at a certain ball, asked, with his own royal lips, to be introduced to "that beautiful creature in the amber satin."

That beautiful creature was Mrs. Drayton's daughter, and her fame and fortune were made, her position established from that moment. People no longer cared to ask whether Mrs. Drayton was a widow, and, if so, who and what her husband had been; but they made haste to send her cards for their balls and dinners and at homes, and so helped to keep the ball rolling which the august prince had so amiably started.

To-night was one of Mrs. Drayton's "at homes," and the cards which admitted her to the magic word "dancing" in one corner, and "small and early" in the other; in a word, it was a special night, and the small rooms for the houses in Elton Square were not mansions, were filling with the very best people, and the very best only.

They were not filled yet, and guests were still arriving, and Mrs. Drayton still stood at the door, with her hand apparently extended like a wax figure, to greet each arrival with the meaningless shake and the meaningless smile which society prescribes for the occasion.

Beside her stood Edith Drayton. It was difficult, it was impossible, to give a portrait of Lela Temple in her simple cream dress; it is not so difficult, it is just possible to convey some idea of Edith Drayton. She was tall, but not too tall, exquisitely formed, as graceful as a leopard; one moment reposeful and statuesque, the next lithe and alert, yet never spasmodic or impulsive. She was dark, decidedly dark, her hair almost of a raven black and of great wealth; her eyes were dark also, of that peculiar darkness which one is accustomed to attribute to a foreigner; they were not large—that was the one great fault of her face—and they were somewhat hard, though this defect she had learned to conceal or subdue by a sudden lowering of the beautiful lids, which made the eyes, half seen beneath them, look soft and emotional.

Above these eyes—which never roved about—were a pair of delicate, dark brows, which met above the long lashes which, when the lids were

lowered, swept the pale cheek like a fringe of fairy silk. The mouth was, as the poet says, "faultlessly faultless;" it was perfect, and yet—there were some who would have preferred that it should have been larger; that it should have been sometimes less coldly perfect, and as a wit had remarked, nearer a tear than a smile.

But, criticism as one would, the fact remained that Edith Drayton was one of the most beautiful girls in London, and that the leader of society had set his sign-manual to the verdict, and therefore settled the question beyond dispute.

To-night she was dressed in silk grenadine, with a dash of vivid crimson about it; a diamond pendant rose and fell upon her white neck, and on her arm a diamond serpent glittered like a circle of living fire.

There were many beautiful women in the room, some whose photographs were displayed in the shop windows, but there was not one but paled before the dark splendor of Edith Drayton, who had come with her mother from none knew whence.

Clifford Revel leaned against the wall and looked at her, watched her. Of him we shall hear a very fair account if we listen to the two men who are at this moment ascending the stairs and entering the room. They are both well-known characters; the one is Lord Combermere, the other one of the great generals whose name has been on everybody's lips for the last six months.

"What a splendid girl—or rather a woman, Comby!" says General Rothsay, as they make their bow and receive the hand-shake and regulation smile. "Who is she?"

Lord Combermere smiled behind his closed opera hat.

"Fancy you asking that!" he says. "Why, that is the daughter of the mistress of the house!"

"Well, my dear fellow, how should I know? You brought me here, you know!" said the general, laughing.

"Yes, yes, I forgot! And you've been away for some months, haven't you? That accounts for it. And it's all been done in less than nine months. I give you my word six months ago none of us had heard of Mrs. Drayton and her daughter. Of course, she was in town, in this house, but barring rumors that she was the widow of a man who had made his money in malt, or banking, or patent medicines, we knew nothing of her. Then suddenly she became the fashion; it was her daughter who did it."

"She is beautiful enough to effect anything!" said General Rothsay, putting up his glasses to assist the keen gray eyes which had borne the hot sands of the desert and the glare of artillery.

"Just so! My face is my fortune, sir, she said," continued Lord Combermere, nodding and smiling to acquaintances as he spoke. "It was her beauty did it, Rothsay. All in a minute, too! And now all the world lies at her feet; even your humble servant, and the greatest general of the day."

The greatest general of the day smiled and looked round the room curiously. He had been absent nine months, and nine months make a difference at the rate the world spins along nowadays.

"Who is that fellow leaning against the wall?" he asked, presently.

Lord Combermere stuck his eye-glass in his eye and commenced a voyage of inspection.

"Oh, do you mean that tall, good-looking fellow near the door, looking at the beauty?"

"Yes," remarked the general. "He is a handsome man; clean-cut face; he should be somebody, I should think."

Lord Combermere smiled.

"Poor Revel! He is nobody. He might be a somebody if there was not a young Lord Edgar Fane. He—Clifford Revel—is next but one to the marquise, you know. But he might as well be next but one hundred. Young Edgar Fane is as young as he is, and likely to outlive him—worse luck for Revel!"

"Edgar—Fane," mused the general; "why that's the young fellow who nearly lost his life on the Matterhorn, isn't it?"

Lord Combermere laughed.

"I dare say, he is always up to some mad trick or other. Got himself smashed up in a steep-chase a little while ago. Fine young fellow; regular Apollo Belviders, don't you know; but wild, frightfully wild!"

"I think I remember him," said General Rothsay; "one of my boys

was at Eton with him. He was quite best ear there, and a good man all round, too. And he stands between this Clifford—didn't you say Clifford—Revel and the title?"

"Yes!" assented Lord Combermere. "So, unless young Lord Edgar breaks his neck, he doesn't stand much chance."

"It's a fine estate, isn't it?" remarked the general, watching the dancers.

"Magnificent. One of the best in England. The best, perhaps. And the present marquis—old Farintosh, I mean—doesn't live up to half his income. Nobody ever sees him. He used to go the pace like a steam engine one time, but he has dropped off the line long ago and become a misanthrope; hates everybody, don't you know, himself included."

General Rothsay laughed, then he turned his eyes against the wall and surveyed him carefully.

"Why does he stick there?" he asked—"this Clifford Revel, I mean."

Lord Combermere shrugged his shoulders.

"Goodness knows! He's a strange fellow! It's not at all unlikely that he will stick there, as you call it, for the rest of the evening; and yet he is one of the best dancers of the day. They say that he's sweet upon the beauty—Edith Drayton, I mean—but I don't know."

Then the two gossips parted. Lord Combermere joined the waiters, and somebody discovered the great general and bore him away to be worshipped as the lion that he was.

Meanwhile Clifford Revel still leaned against the wall as if he had been invited to occupy that position, and to do nothing else.

If he had been somebody, if he had been worth disturbing, the many manoeuvring mammas would have dislodged him hours ago, but he was, as Lord Combermere had put it, nobody, and the mothers with marriageable daughters knew him to be detrimental, and left him alone.

The dance went on; twelve o'clock had passed and still he leaned there, absolutely at his ease, his dark, piercing eyes taking in everything, though apparently not seeing anything, when Edith Drayton was waited near him.

She was dancing with a stout old earl, old enough to be her father, and who knew as much about dancing as the Polar bear at the Zoo, to which Lord Edgar was so anxious to take Lela Temple, and as they plumped and grated near the motionless figure against the wall, Edith Drayton tore the grenadine; at any rate she stopped short and caught up its frounces with an exclamation.

"I've torn my dress, Lord Cavendish!" she said, pitiously.

"Eh? What?" panted the earl. "Torn your dress? What's to be done? Eh?"

"I must get a pin!" she said, with a smile. "Have you got one?"

"No," he said; "but I'll get one."

"Thanks," she said; then the moment he had walked off she turned to Clifford Revel.

"Why do you not dance, Mr. Revel?" she said. "You have no dress to tear."

(To be Continued.)

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**between West and Canada**

Will the British West Indies be with Canada? Will the union, commutated, be a political or commercial one? Will Canada benefit such a union? Such are the questions that the Montrealers who are following the West Indian news in the papers are asking themselves down in the West Indies. He has a desire for very much closer relations with Canada is made these days.

B. Macaulay, president of the Life Assurance Company and Canadian-West Indian League, probably knows more about the situation than any other man in Montreal. Macaulay has given years to the study of the subject, and has been a free trader between Canada and the British West Indies. He has made extended trips to the islands. He has discussed the subject of a commercial union with statesmen in Canada and of the islands, and has never wavered in his advocacy of a union.

Political union, remember, has with emphasis to The Star this morning while discussing in his office the West Indian question. "No political union, I believe that will be a mistake on account of the great distance of the islands from Canada. The mutual lack of knowledge of either's needs, it would be unwise either should attempt to control government of the other. The fact that a Canadian federal election did turn on the vote of the British West Indies would be equally as ridiculous as the controlling of West Indian affairs by a Canadian majority.

Commercial Union Needed. It is a commercial union that we need," continued Mr. Macaulay. He reiterated his words: "We need commercial union with the British West Indies. We need it. They need it. It sides have everything to gain, nothing to lose. We gain a new market for our products, and these the days when the need of markets for our goods is so obvious that engaging the attention of every Canadian statesman. In return we get the food products of the West Indies—sugar, tropical fruits, cocoa, etc. Many of these products are to us now through American shipping houses."

He pulled down an atlas from a shelf and opened it at a map of Central America and the West Indies. "The islands fall naturally into two groups," he said. He laid his pencil on the map to show the dividing line between the groups. The line lay across the Island of Porto

with this Eastern group, which includes St. Kitts, St. Vincent, Grenada, Dominica, Barbadoes, Trinidad, and which is associated British Guiana on the mainland, Canada alone has a trade agreement involving 20 per cent. preferential tariff. It is their great product, but they supply Canada with coffee, cocoa and a host of other tropical products. He went on to speak of difficulties the "sugar" islands and British Guiana would have had in marketing their sugar before the war had not been for the preference granted them by Canada. European sugar was going freely into England and was consequently cutting into the West Indian trade. "The war had brought an artificial prosperity to the West Indies, but with coming of normal conditions the West Indies were beginning to look for a further extension of trade necessary to their prosperity. The western group includes Jamaica

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