

[Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.]

TALES OF THE LINKS OF LOVE.

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LILLYMERE.

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE PALACE DRAWING-ROOM CARS, DAY
EXPRESS WEST.

The Donna Euryndia dwelt in tents in the summer, coming out of the south to York State and to Canada with the birds of Alabama, Florida, Mexico. Few people at the North ever knew where this sister of the summer lived in winter, but all noted that she came with the birds of passage, or soon following. Some alleged the Donna did not go farther away than Michigan, where, in the Casa Euryndia, she manufactured Florida Witch Pills.

"Ring for the clerk. Settle bills to-night; we depart with the Day Express West in the morning."

It is now morning. The Donna and suite are at the depot, and occupy a Palace Drawing-room car specially engaged for the party of twenty. Attaches of the company having arrived by night mail train from the New York Central.

Other hotel passengers are at the depot, and many not from hotels. De Peri, attended by Dod, the small, curly-haired, lovable boy, very lovable if not so sharp and well-informed, goes west with a dim grim expectancy that papers found in the trunk of lost luggage yesterday might gain for him a thousand pounds sterling if secretly attainable. He is "working up" a case of "Over Niagara Falls by foul play," and goes to trace, in preliminary excavations for building the fabric, the destination of this Euryndia party, which none chose to tell him when he inquired.

Also Tobias and Irlam, having now arrived at conversational intimacy as two strangers sometimes do, talking of their travels in the States, and of a native country loved the better the farther and longer its sons are away, they make a sudden resolve and go west by this train.

"To observe other people," Irlam suggested, "or talk of old England, or the land we travel in, or have fun with that fool De Peri."

To which Tobias assented, but remarking: "De Peri is no fool, sir."

Irlam was silent at this, but in thought conversed with himself in detached emotional sentences:

"De Peri no fool, eh? You are a fool."

"I have lured young Lud to this journey, and may in time entrap him."

"That may depend on how small his money becomes; and on the cutting away of supplies."

"I lay myself out to interrupt supplies. What, possibly, could Solomon Schooler intend by sending him to travel in this country? To get him away from Agnes in the first instance, but why continue to supply money?"

"The empty young fop thinks I do not know him to have been the parish work-house boy, son of Simon Lud, the Yorkshire Radical."

"Audacious rogue to make love in the streets to his master's daughter, Adam's intended wife."

"I like Toby, though, for making love to his master's daughter, and for licking Adam."

"His audacity, vanity, ignorance, innocence—comparative innocence, are favourable for present purposes."

Quarter to nine, a.m., the train is in from Niagara Suspension Bridge, forty-three miles, conveying from the New York Central a goodly complement of travellers bound west. Fifteen minutes for breakfast and time nearly up.

"All aboard West. Detroit and all West."

Aboard. All aboard. Such is the command.

And the conductor, still on the depot platform, watch in hand reading seconds, raises the arm as signal to the observant engineer, springs upon the train like a bird, and they are under way.

Seated at his ease, Irlam resumes the cogitations—

"Strange, indeed, were I in the sequence of events to be the agent of destiny in giving Earl Royalfort a spurious successor after assisting to lose the true heir, the babe Eustace De Lacy Lillymere. A bad business that was, but it seemed not so reprehensible at the time. Well, the creature died in its innocence in the Fairy Oon, and, as intended, was secretly buried by Moll Fleck, good honest Moll! Wonder what became of her? Wish I, like the heir of Lillymere, had died a babe."

"Yes, when this weak youth, flighty as a butterfly, is lured in the toils I lay for him, and trained to know that the highest function of the human mind is in political life diplomatic craft, in social life craft and deceit, his ambition shall have fuel to go ablaze on."

By the proposal and plans to make him, on documentary evidence easily forged, the lost Heir of Lillymere and successor in the Earldom of Royalfort, his vanity will be like to lose its wings in brilliancy of the vision. Must take care the insect do not really scorch itself. And in this matter of scorching that I do not burn my fingers."

Then Irlam addresses Tobias, who with him shares the double seat:

"A notable phase in the mental constitution of man, aint it, that the younger he may be in years, the more ancient are his ideas?"

"If that be so I don't know it."

"It is so, and you don't know it of course. Another perceives the anomaly. Could you know the misfortune as a fact it would be amended."

"Is it a misfortune?"

"It weakens manliness; rendering a young gentleman like you nerveless in struggling up stream against the world. One must float with the current; or better, strike out and swim with the friendly rapid from this side to that, from point to point of the land; across or athwart one's fate diagonally; or dive and be hidden; or, like a flying fish, leap in the air, catch the fly and dart into the water again. How else do successful men in any walk of life, in every walk of life, attain to a desired object? You are too old fashioned, young gentleman."

"But the morality, Mr. Irlam?"

"The morality is success."

"Is truth old fashioned?"

"Yes, very ancient indeed, and unserviceable if not demanded by policy, or exigency."

"Aren't lies old fashioned?"

"They are. As old as truth almost, or older for aught I can tell. But lies are elastic and serviceable; incomparably more pliable for use than truth."

"What would society be but for confidence in one another's veracity?"

"What would society be but for the courtesy of mutual deception?"

"Nay, successful men don't deceive. The trader, for instance, whose word is his bond."

"He deceives in the securities of enterprise, if not in his quantities, qualities, prices."

"The patriotic legislator is a true man, surely?"

"By necessity of position and policy the legislator is a strategist; diplomatic, secret, crafty."

"The lawyer faithful to a client. Have not the courts of justice many such?"

"What if the client be a rogue, the lawyer knowing it?"

"The journalist, informing the world of events as they occur? Accumulating knowledge from earth and ocean; from past and present; from the heavens above and deeps below; the false and the true—sifting out the false, preserving the true—and diffusing this knowledge? Fertilizing soils of barrenness, sowing seeds of wisdom and truth. Protecting innocence, denouncing guilt. An arm to the weak, a smile to the strong. Corrector of wrongs done, guide to goodness yet to do. Director of statesmen. Controller of legislation. Monitor of thrones. Brother of the sciences, extending currents of friendly communion from land to land, in all the languages of all the lands. Conductor to exalted thought. Herald in Hosannahs. Helper in the most glorious of human avocations—brother in help of the ministers of Christ. Intellectual irradiator in the wide empire of moral life, as the noonday sun irradiates physical nature. Have you aught to insinuate against the colleague of the noonday sun?"

"Even the sun has spots."

"The lover? Charmed by the graces of beauty, of youth, of truth, his impassioned soul adoring one fair being who loves him in return? Is there deception in him?"

"Were you deceiving Emily Inkle, of Conway, day before yesterday? Were you deceiving Agnes Schooler, of London, two years ago? One or the other must have been deceived; I think both."

"Who are you, sir, to name Agnes Schooler?"

"To presume to name her? To presume to name her, sir?"

"Don't get angry. I like you all the better for loving Agnes Schooler. And still better for thrashing Adam. Only you cannot be true to Agnes and to Emily Inkle also."

"Agnes Schooler, sir, despised me, and with apparent good reason, though a bad reason. I was derided, disliked, detested for misfortunes not of my making; and she took care to let me know and feel that. I owe her no fidelity."

"Softly, young gentlemen. You are in error. That lovely girl was touched by compassion, admiration, enchantment, from the first time she beheld your handsome presence in her father's office. Wept when Adam maltreated you. Chid him for cruelty and cowardice. Said one lock of Toby Oman's bonny brown hair was worth more than all the Schoolers ever born, except her father. She loved passionately then, and loves you now."

"Mr. Irlam, you assail me with a sweet falsehood. I never before felt how delightedly one might incline to believe a lie. But I'm proof against the alluring deceit. With me veracity is primary moral element. Truth is

cement of society; the all in all of honour and honesty. I believe in the good that is in everybody. Even in you there may be some good thing, although you be very like—"

"Very like what, young man?"

"I'd rather not say."

"Do say. Out with it all. I'm never offended. The world is one huge lie. No accusation injures me. What am I like?"

"Like a fiend seen in my dreams. Like a yellow-skinned Gipsy in form of the Arch Fiend. I often see it, oh horror! horror! when dreaming of a mother I never saw. In its hollow spectral heart are words in red flame: 'Murder' 'Murderer.' Your eyes are its eyes. Colour of your yellow skin its colour."

"A bad dream that, Toby. You had better not dream that again. Or not tell it; not tell it, Toby. 'Murder' is a bad word. 'Murderer' is worse. Both worse than saying 'Arch Fiend.'"

"Well, sir, let us drop the conversation; it arose not from my choice."

"Yes, change a little. Go back to Agnes and the 'sweet falsehood' you would fain believe."

"You profane her name, sir. You offend unwilling ears, disturbing, or seeking to subvert my confidence in the moral beauty of truth. Let us say no more in this direction. Choose rather to look out upon the green and flowery country flying past; on that brilliant pure celestial sky; boundless ether high and high, arch of the Holy Heavens."

"So long, for the present. At another time I will show you when and under what circumstances you may have the beautiful Agnes Schooler to wife, or a choice of young ladies of birth and fortune far superior to hers." And so they sat for a time silent.

One of the boy booksellers of the train came through the cars. Toby looked at the literature for a Canadian magazine, or volume, and failing to find such, for some English book, but saw none. He had choice of many good works, however, products of the American mind, of original genius, a few. And he saw English copyrights reprinted in the States; the two classes of works making together the staple literature of Canada.

A gentleman from New York sitting with De Peri remarked the absence of Canadian books, saying he would prefer buying such when travelling this side the line if any were offered for sale. "Has this British America no authors?"

"One sits immediately behind us, inquire of him why no Canadian books are on the cars."

The stranger from New York inquired, but the author shook his head, saying: "I may as well leap Niagara Falls as tell why original works are not produced in Canada."

Then De Peri, seeing the wretched author afraid to speak, said:

"The literary art glorifying other lands and which might irradiate this, and one day will, enhancing commercial values in every other interest by exalting the country in the eye of the world, is the one human accomplishment with no domestic recognition in Canada."

"But," said the other, "your people buy books and read?"

"They are not my people, sir; I am but a stranger passing a time in the country, yet I answer the question: Yes, they buy books and read if first stamped with critical approval in some other country. If a writer in Canada get an original work published in England or in the States it is purchased and read when imported here, but an adverse tax intended for the benefit of printers and publishers, obstructs this book; in practical fact prevents its coming into existence. Professors of the several universities and colleges working on public funds get their scientific works published in England to be critically approved there and partly sold here, but the author on his private resources is extinguished. The book tax, instead of encouraging literary talent in the Provinces, deprives it of the little life it had."

"You have printers and publishers?"

"Yes, but with one or two exceptions just emerging to a prosperous and prominent eminence by their sagacity of enterprise, the Canadian printer prefers to reproduce the book of some other country and so avoid paying the author. To give existence to a native literature the author who inspires its life must first live."

"How do Canadian authors live?"

"They die. Once in a while some stubborn old idiot refuses to die, defies fate, saps on hope, breakfasts on the east wind. And young genius, native of the soil, budding out now and again shifts as it may with its mother. But the day of a literature in Canada dawns. It is in destiny. It is to arise with pictorial art. The twain to grow and be loved as sisters, daughters of Beautiful Canada."

"Science stands high I have heard say, and schools? Is that so?"

"That is so, you bet. Science stands high in the universities, in the manufactories, laboratories, workshops. But passing over, for the present, the classical learning, the philosophies and theology, the geological, mineralogical, chemical, mathematical, astronomical, mechanical, and engineering sciences, this country, let me whisper, has just given

birth to the magical invention of the psychoscope; an instrument which reads the secret thoughts of my neighbour through the eye, and writes the intelligence for me to read."

"Do you say? Well, that is a caution?"

"Yes siree; that is so. A step in science ahead of the States I reckon."

"They tell over in our State that Canada has the smartest rogue in creation, or rogue-catcher; one or other, not sure which, rogue-catcher I think, one De Peri."

"Sir, I have the honour to be that person; and have had the benefit of reading, by aid of the new science, your innermost secrets for the last half hour."

"Then you read that I knew you all the time, and that I am a Captain of Police in New York. Was looking for you a long while before the De Peris became scarce in the States."

"Knew the Captain from New York all along! Didn't we, Dod?" says the man with eyes now dull as orbs of a cat in the sun, anon electric as the basilisk.

"Dunnow, pa, think we did; sure you did."

"Train up a child in the way he should go, De Peri, and when he is old—you know the rest?"

"When he is old he will not be a New York policeman, you bet."

"No, nor knowing too much for his happiness anywhere else, I sincerely hope. Enough. You and I know too much, De Peri, let us say quits. Glad to meet you; really refreshed to meet a smarter man than myself."

"Say? What game are you on out this way?"

"Good of my health. Pure air in Canada."

"That is so. Pure air in Canada. Good of your health, eh?"

"Beautiful country just here, De P.; don't you think?"

De Peri willingly accepted this more agreeable subject—face of the country. Which the traveller must indeed be cheered to look upon if not consciously seeing it for the last time in life.

A charming day in June. Journey from Niagara Torrent to Detroit, two hundred and thirty miles due west. By town of St. Catharines through orchards of forty miles. Ontario lake aloft on the north; the green hill slopes aloft on the south. Up by Cope-town on a rock in the woods. Dutch Harrisburg in the deep drift cuttings—junction with the Guelph and Elora line. Up by Lynden, charming Lynden, fair-haired maidens, mild blue eyes. Through the deep excavation ten or more miles along; the water-worn stones laid there in the vortex of ancient river floods; layer upon layer, ages and ages in succession as read in the valley; the stones made round from fragments of ocean floors; oyster and marine fossils telling the wondrous tale.

Flowery the wayside cottages and gardens. Comely farm-houses in neighbourhood of barns nestling in orchards, and in fields of wheat and clover. Freehold farms of wealthy proprietors, once poor immigrants. Rural homes knowing no scarcities except in desires following possession of abundance.

Pretty little Paris in the vale of Grand River, deep below the viaducts of the two great railways, arteries of life in the Provinces, Grand Trunk of fifteen hundred miles, and the Western. Head of the town on a hill, tail and wings spreading to other acclivities. Named so finely this charming embryo city, because it sits on the planet geologically with the European capital. Plaster found abundantly prolific of wheat and vines. Paris of Canada four and a half degrees south of its sister of France.

Now, Euryndia, reposing on sofa and satin cushions, in the gorgeous palace drawing-room, surrounded by her ladies; in the running, swiftly rolling, onward running, running, running, swiftly flying palace, beholds the beautiful Canada, swimming down to meet her, swimming in the air. Meeting her every moment, then eclipsing to the rear.

They told her Paris. And now Princeton, Woodstock, Ingersoll, Eastwood, Wabano, all on the wheatland plains. Or on eminences and meadows, dipping in the pellucid river, the virgin stream Thamesia, flowing serenely westerly to be wedded with St. Clair.

Church spires, white and tapering, reaching into ether, affirm by the ringing of the bells—the pealing of the old country bells, that immigrants coming here clearing forest, making farm lands, building dwellings, planting gardens—planted also faith and prayer.

Zigzagging rail fences laid to last a lifetime, widely spreading shade trees, fly to the rear. And the train speeds on.

Feathers of a country on wing. To the rear and far behind the buildings of the farm, the smithy and the school-house; the calves scared in the orchard; scampering colts with their minnys; cows at peace in the pastures; in the straw the snorting swine.

The chucky hens and chickens, turkeys, and hissing geese. Funny little lambs running to be suckled, wagging woolley tails.

The old horse in his bridle nibbling like an author, nibbling by the wayside, tethered out of the clover. Honest old horse, he knows all the noises. Long, long used to noise he eats the prickly thistle, abiding by the wayside, serenely at peace. And the train shoots along.