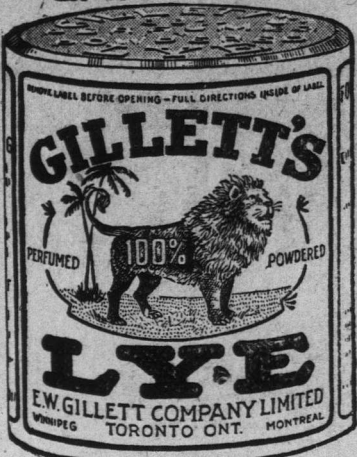


GILLETT'S LYE EATS DIRT



Stella Mordant

The Cruise of the "Kingfisher."

CHAPTER VI.

"No, that didn't account for it. Don't think me ungrateful, Mary, if I say that a man's love-disappointment does not last his life. Time heals that as it heals more serious wounds. It was not the fact that the woman he loved had preferred his brother that cast a gloom over Lord Ratton's life which nothing and no one had power to enlighten, but remorse."

"Remorse, father?"

"Yes," said Lord Hatherley, gravely. "For when Lord Ratton heard that his brother had married the girl they both loved, Lord Ratton swore an awful oath that he would rob him of her."

"Father!" Mary's eyes opened, and her face grew pale. "How awful!"

Lord Hatherley nodded.

"And he kept his oath. By what means, by what persistent efforts he gained an influence over her, I do not know. They say a great many things of the Rattons, and amongst them that no woman is able to resist them when they put forth all their strength to woo her. Be that as it may, Lord Ratton succeeded in persuading his brother's wife to run away with him; but though she left her husband, Fate stepped in and prevented the crime to which she had been lured; for an hour before that in which Lord Ratton had appointed to meet her, she was killed. The horses in the carriage which was taking her, to him took fright and bolted. Lord Ratton was the first to disentangle her dead body from the debris."

"Oh, father, how terrible! And her poor husband?"

"They carried her to the hall here, and a few hours afterwards Lord Ratton's brother followed her. He had their only child—a boy—in his arms, and he and Lord Ratton met in the hall beside the dead body of the woman, and the half-maddened husband cursed his brother and departed with the child."

Lady Mary was silent a moment; then she said:

"But, father, then this brother, or his child, must be the heir, now that Lord Ratton is dead!"

"Neither of them is alive," said Lord Hatherley. "Harold left England with his little boy, and the ship in which they sailed went down."

"And they were lost? Father, it is like a romance! Oh, poor man!"

"I don't know. One feels inclined to say that it was the best thing that could happen to him. But it's sad enough in all conscience. One hears of certain families which rest under

a ban, and they say that the Rattons is one of them. From the hour his brother's curse fell on him, they say Lord Ratton never knew a happy moment. No one ever heard him utter a kind word nor ever saw him smile; and they tell me that when they found him the other day in his arm-chair, there was a scowl of hate on his dead face. Remorse isn't penitence, alas! Molly; and we find it hard not to hate those we have injured."

"But, father, there was a third brother—what was his name?—Ralph. Why does he not come forward and claim the title and estates?"

"Ah! that's the question!" replied Lord Hatherley. "The fact is, the third brother has been lost for years. He was a bad lot, a very, very black sheep, and the family had to cut him adrift. He went abroad to Australia, I believe; but he came back, and, I've heard, brought a wife with him. They remained in England, living more or less discreetly for some time, then they disappeared. At last he died; but it was rumoured that he had left a son behind him, though whether there was any truth in the rumour, I can't say."

"And if he left a son, then that son would be the new Lord Ratton?" said Mary.

"That is so," assented her father. "But the difficulty will be to find that son—supposing him to exist. His father lived for years under an assumed name—he had done one or two things which rendered it necessary for him to sink the family name of Percival—and probably the son—supposing him to exist—never knew his real name."

"But his father would know that he, or his son, was heir to the title."

"The father, who married very early, died before the second brother was drowned, and, seeing that brother had already a son, would not think that he himself had much chance of succeeding."

"I see," said Lady Mary, thoughtfully. "Then somewhere, perhaps in poverty and destitution, there exists a young man, who is really the Earl of Ratton, and the heir to all the Ratton property?"

"Exactly," assented Lord Hatherley.

"How strange!" she mused. "Father, if they found him, it is to be hoped he will be nice. He will be our nearest neighbour, you see."

Hatherley looked grave.

"It is devoutly to be hoped that he will," he said. "But—ah, well—one is rather doubtful. It is difficult to be hopeful about a son of Ralph Percival—I remember Ralph. An awful blackguard, poor fellow! One mustn't expect grapes from thorns, Mary. But seeing that he hasn't turned up, we'll discontinue the subject, and—yes, try and forget it," he added, as they turned into their own park gates. "I'm hungry, and want my dinner—and, oh, Molly, Molly! if you know how much more I enjoy it now that you have come to sit at the head of the table!"

CHAPTER VII.

A fortnight later a young man paused outside the door of the Columbine public-house in Drury Lane, and with one hand on the edge of the door and the other fingering a solitary copper, looked thirstily into the bar. One of the beautiful, drizzling rains for which England is justly infamous was making Drury Lane more hideous even than its wont, and the young man, as he stood like a Peri outside the gates of Paradise, scowled up at the leaden sky, and turned up the collar of his seedy coat.

"One penny left; gin or beer?" he

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Thousands have been so utterly depressed, so worn out as to be dependent, but Dr. Hamilton's Pills always cured them. "I can speak feelingly on the power of Dr. Hamilton's Pills," writes C. T. Fearman, of Kingston. "Last spring my blood was thin and weak, I was terribly run down, had awful headaches and a gnawing, empty feeling about my stomach, I couldn't sleep or work until I used Dr. Hamilton's Pills—they did me a world of good." At all dealers in 25c. boxes.

"I'll toss for it." He spun the solitary copper, muttering, "Heads, gin; tails, beer;" and, chance having decided the momentous question, opened the door, just sufficiently wide for him to slip in, went up to the counter, and, with a half-friendly, half-insolent nod to the barmaid, asked for the gin.

"There you are, Mr. Bannister. And how are you to-night?" she asked, pleasantly, as she served him with a fiery liquid, and swabbed the pewter counter with a cloth as damp as the evening. "Eard of anything yet?"

The young man drank half his gin, and looked lovingly at the remainder as he shook his head. He was a tall young fellow, with dark hair and rather fine eyes—not a bad-looking man by any means—but there was something in the expression of the face, a certain half-cunning, half-defiant gleam in the eyes, a hint of meanness in the mouth, fortunately nearly hidden by the moustache, which one could not fail to notice, especially when the face was in repose, and which impressed one unfavourably. Though he wore a moustache, the face wore the unmistakable appearance of the actor's; the hair had been shaved from the front of the temples, so that it should not protrude from the wig, and there was that blueness about the chin and coarseness of the complexion which the grease paint and powder used in "making-up" invariably cause. In fact, the Columbine in the "house of call" for third and fourth and even fifth-rate actors; and it was to the fifth, if not to the sixth rank, that the young man lounging against the damp and sticky counter belonged; but the profession could not claim him entirely, for he was a sporting "tout" as well as an actor, and now and again did a little "on the pavement," which, being interpreted, means singing in the street outside, or, if the landlord be friendly, inside the bar of the public-house.

For all his good looks and rather gentlemanly appearance, the young fellow was a black sheep, and like most black sheep, he was now and again painfully and sullenly aware of his colour, especially when he was "down on his luck." And he was very much down on his luck that evening, for he had spent his last penny, and only half of his purchase remained to him.

"No, I've not heard of anything," he said, replying to the question which the young lady behind the bar found beautifully appropriate to nearly every customer; for it was to the Columbine that the actor "out of a shop" generally came. When he was engaged he patronized a higher class and more aristocratic bar—the Gaiety or the Criterion. "And I'm not likely to," he added, sullenly.

He looked up at the rain-bespattered windows; then, with a sigh, felt in the breast-pocket of his coat, and drew out a battered and spineless cigarette. It required careful manipulation, but he succeeded in lighting it at last; and seating himself on the form under the window, smoked with the morose air of one who has a grudge against Fate and can't see any way of paying it off.

Every now and then he glanced at the clock—there was no watch at the end of the brass chain which stretched in approved fashion across his greasy waistcoat—and presently, as the hands got round to half-past seven, he rose and began to button his coat across his chest. As he did so

the swing door was flung open and a couple of men came in.

One of them—a gentleman with hair of the peculiar jet which indicates dye, a close-shaven face, and a hat worn rakishly on one side—nodded to the young fellow and greeted him.

"What ho! Bannie, my boy! How goes it?"

The young man nodded, made a suitable response, and was passing out, when the dyed one caught him by the arm.

"What's your hurry?" he demanded. "Stop and have a drink. Here, let me introduce you to a pal of mine, Mr. Workley. Workley, this is a brother pro."

The man addressed was a small, short, under-sized old man, with a face wrinkled with lines like a railway map, a long mouth, with thin lips tightly compressed, and small grey eyes, which glittered like a bird's under half-lowered lids. He too, was clean shaven, but looked like a groom or a horse-dealer rather than an actor.

The young fellow turned, and the little man, looking him full in the face, started. It was only a slight start, and he tried to nullify it and efface it by pretending to slip on a piece of orange peel.

"Nearly down," he said in a thin and peculiarly hollow voice. "Glad to know you, Mr.—what name did you say?" he broke off in an ordinary tone; but his sharp eyes rested like polished steel on the other man's dark ones.

"Bannister's my name," said the young man, curtly.

"Ah! fancy I've heard it before," said Mr. Workley. "No, it's my treat, Jim. Name your poison, gentlemen! And I fancy I've met you before, sir."

"You have the advantage of me," said Bannister, indifferently.

"Yes? Then you remind me of someone I've met," rejoined the other, pleasantly.

"My friend Workley's a great traveller," said the third man to Bannister. "He's been about a bit, and seen a few, haven't you, my boy?"

The little man nodded.

"Yes; and you're an actor, Mr. Bannister?"

"N-o; I've cut the stage," said Bannister, with as high an air as he could assume.

"Does a bit of book-making and touting," explained Jim, adding the last two words in a whisper.

The little man nodded, and turned his attention to the liquor. Bannister disposed of his, and glanced at the clock.

"So long!" he said. "I must be off."

"Good-night, and luck to you, my boy!" responded the actor.

The little man nodded, then suddenly turned to Bannister.

(To be Continued.)

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St. George's

Editor Evening Telegram.

Dear Sir,—Friday night, April 17, is St. George's Day! I shall be grateful to you if you will say through your columns that I shall be glad if the Hon. Board of Education will make suitable arrangements for proper observance of the day. St. George is the patron saint of England. While English literature lead us to believe that there lived at one time a Hero who did deeds of many of the attributes of the undoubtedly of the spirit, the beautiful allegory of the triumph of the Christian hero.

But why worry about the place of his birth and death? question whether or not St. George was recognized as a Saint ever lived in fact? surely enough for what is the embodiment of all the pure and noble; he is a hero and valour, for his right honour, for love and his more worthy ideal of our children, before the year.

It is right and proper that good of nations that should rise from the dead again in their minds and hearts. As an emperor, we low either the fire or the flame of truth to wax lives, nor in the lives of men. "The fire shall evering upon the altar shall out," says the Law of Moses as true to-day as ever.

There has of late been a tendency to neglect things and to begrudge a moment of attention to that which measured in dollars and cents, that our Patron Saint is forgotten, and our children scarce heard of him. But,

"The national and filled to overflowing with memories; they are more than mines of gold or corn or the cotton of the hills; more enduring than the cities stored with the war or art; more supple danger's hour than fleets or armies; the nation is the bright sons; who with them which enriched his makes them poor indeed."

These are stirring times of St. George are called up the dragon of tyranny and oppression and are set forth strong in the path of whose name and whose St. George went forth of yours faithfully,
W. B. BLAIR
Suppl. (C)
St. John's, April 19th, 1915

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