

"I Was Terribly Weak After Baby Was Born"



DR. CHASE'S NERVE FOOD
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back to the ball-room had looked in at the card-room. He had stood in the door-way, watching the game of baccarat which some reckless young gentlemen had ventured to introduce, and swearing that he would not join them, had advanced into the room, step by step, and at last found himself seated at the fatal green table.

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed Lady Balfarras, aghast with horror and amazement. "Look—look at your brother Seymour!"

Royce stared at the white face and starting eyes, as much amazed and aghast as her ladyship.

"Seymour playing cards, and not for the first time, either," he said, under his breath. "He—he must be mad—or drunk!"

Fortunately, Lady Balfarras did not bear him distinctly. She was very much upset.

"Go to him! Get him away!" she said. "I can go to the hall alone. For Heaven's sake, get him away!"

Royce went up to Seymour and touched him on the shoulder.

Seymour shook the hand off. Seymour, said Royce, bending down, "what the deuce are you doing? Come out of it!"

Seymour looked round with no sign of recognition in his face for a moment, for the gambler's madness was strong upon him, and, my brothers, it is a madness worse than that of drink.

"Go away!" he said. "What do you want? Bring me some brandy"—he took Royce for a servant—"brandy, do you hear?"

Royce's hand tightened on the wretch's shoulder.

"Seymour, it is I—Royce," he whispered, too low for the other men to hear him. "Are you mad, man? Come out of it, or I'll drag you!"

They Seymour recognized him. His face went almost livid in its whiteness. Hate spoke in every feature.

"It is you, you pauper, you gipsy thief!" he hissed. "You horse-copink vagabond! Take your hand off! Get out of my sight! Go to your—"

By sheer force Royce, white as himself, lifted him from the chair. The other players looked up amazed and startled.

"Keep your seats; go on with your game, gentlemen!" said Royce, calmly enough, though his splendid eyes flashed fire. "I want my brother for a few minutes."

His hand, like a steel clip, held and forced Seymour away from the table. "You hound!" he said, sternly. "Are you mad or only drunk? Pull yourself together! What's the matter with you?"

"Let me go!" hissed Seymour, like a man only half awake. "You spoil the game and I was winning!"

"Spoil the game?" echoed Royce, with disgust and scorn. "I thought you knew nothing about cards—didn't play, called them the devil's prayer-books. You—you hypocrite!" and he shook the virtuous Seymour.

The shaking brought him round. He stared with his pale, glassy eyes at the stern, indignant face, and gradually the old smile, though shaky and not nearly so suave as usual, came over his face.

"Er—er—my dear Royce, how good, how considerate of you, he panted, covertly wiping his forehead, and glancing back at the card table.

"I—er—just looked in and—was persuaded to take a hand. I don't know what the game is called. I fear it is very fascinating. For the moment I was quite—quite absorbed. Pray, my dear Royce—pray shut the gaming-table—"

(To be continued.)

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Dissolve chocolate in the boiling water. Cool. Cream butter, add sugar gradually, creaming constantly. Add the chocolate. Beat yolks until thick and lemon colored. Add them to the creamed sugar and butter; then add the liquid and the sifted dry ingredients, alternately. Add vanilla. Beat the whites of the eggs until stiff and cut carefully and lightly into the mixture. Turn into 2 greased layer cake pans and bake in a moderate oven 30 to 35 minutes.

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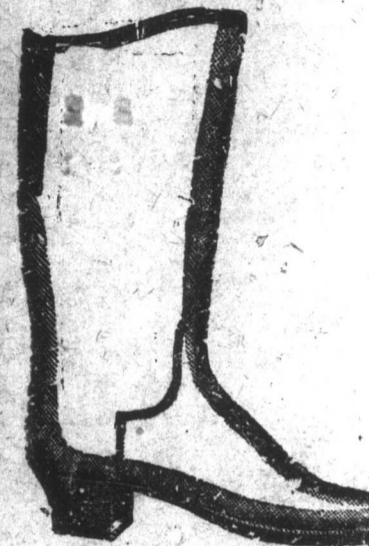
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The Countess of Landon.

CHAPTER XXXI.

She opened her eyes and smiled up at him—could she, too, have been dreaming of that particular day?—then the blood rushed to her face and she stopped.

"I—I think I am tired, after all, Royce. Take me to—Madge!" she breathed, as one speaks of a place of refuge and safety.

"That would be rather difficult," he said, with a laugh that sounded rather far away. "She went down to supper with a heap of others at the beginning of this dance. Rochester and she passed us. You did not notice them?"

"No," she said, "I—I think I must have been half asleep," and she put her hands to her lips.

"Come in to supper with me," he said. "But wait and rest a little while. Come into the palm-house."

But she drew back. It almost seemed as if she were afraid of him.

"No, take me to madame, please Royce. She may want me. Besides, there are so many other persons you should see too."

"All right," he said, but reluctantly.

Never since he had come home with his wife had he had Renie to himself for so long a time, and he was loath to part with her.

But he took her to the countess, who stood amid her dowagers, pairing them off to the supper-room.

"What a match those two would have made!" whispered Lady Balfarras, as Irene and Royce approached.

The countess looked over her shoulder and sighed.

"Yes," she said, simply. "But marriages are made in—heaven. Is not that what they say?"

Irene almost flew to her.

"Can I do anything, madame?" she said, hurriedly. "Royce, take some one to supper—Lady Balfarras."

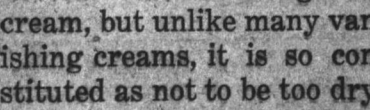
Royce came forward and offered his arm, and Irene sunk into a chair beside the countess.

"What is it?" said the countess, with a quick glance at her.

"Nothing, nothing!" said Irene, rising again. "I—I was only a little tired, that is all."

"You are soon rested again, then."

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said the countess. "Sit down, child." She gave Irene a scent-bottle and fanned her. "You are doing too much," she said. "Royce should not have left you dance so long."

"No, no; it was I—I mean I liked it," responded Irene, quick, as of old, to stand up in his defense. "Indeed it was not his fault. He stopped the moment—"

She felt the countess's keen eyes upon her, and stopped and turned her head away.

The countess also looked away, and her bosom rose with a sigh.

"She loves him still," she thought; "and but for this gipsy girl—"

Royce led Lady Balfarras toward the hall in which the supper had been laid.

"Let us go through the palm-house," she said. "I haven't seen it to-night, though everybody is talking about it."

"Come on, then," said Royce in his blunt fashion. Many a tip had this stately dame bestowed upon him in his school-boy days. "They certainly have made it very pretty. I fancy it was Irene's doings principally."

Lady Balfarras looked round admiringly.

"It is eloquent of her," she said. "Your brother will have a treasure of a wife, Royce."

Royce started as if he were struck, and his face paled.

"I—I think—I mean, aren't you rather premature, Lady Balfarras?" Her ladyship smiled.

"I merely repeat the common report," she said. "Which way do we go?"

Royce seemed confused and absent-minded.

"They have made a slight alteration here," he said, "to make space for a card-room. Eh?—here we are."

In the good old times, when the forefathers of whom we are so proud gave a ball, a room—and not a small one—was always set apart as a place of refuge to which the elderly and non-dancing men could fly for amusement and solace usually taking the form of cards and wine.

In accordance with the good—or bad—old custom, the countess had set apart a small anteroom for a similar purpose, and Royce blunderingly led Lady Balfarras into it. They would have left it in a moment, merely passing through it, but a spectacle attracted the attention and arrested the feet of both of them.

At one of the green tables some men were playing cards. It was not whist, for there were five of them, and one only seemed to be playing. A heap of sovereigns stood beside each man's elbow, and one of these five was Seymour.

Now Royce—and, for that matter, Lady Balfarras—had heard the virtuous Seymour declare against card-playing times out of number. It was one of his favorite topics. According to him, the gaming-table was the anteroom to—, a place never mentioned to ears polite.

And yet here he was amid the wicked, and not only playing, but playing with a zest, an awful earnestness, which made Lady Balfarras turn pale as she beheld him.

His face was pale, almost white, save for a hectic flush on either cheek, his light eyes shone like glass in the candle-light, one hand covered his heap of coin, the other rested like a bent claw upon the table.

He was an appalling and a hideous sight.

Poor Seymour! Pity him, ye charitable! He had registered a mental vow not to go near, not even to cross the threshold of the card-room. But champagne, and pale brandy on the top of it, are very strong solvents of good resolutions. Royce carrying off Irene had upset him. He had gone to one of the side-tables—and helped himself to brandy, and on his way

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