



## "KYRA,"

OR,  
The Ward of the Earl of Vering.

CHAPTER XXXI.  
Old Stephen's Testimony.

"Without informing you of the pains and penalties you are laying yourself open to."

Percy turned aside with a contemptuous wave of the hand. "Tell them," he said, "that I give them half an hour to get clear of the grounds, or I will have them horsewhipped, man for man. As to penalties and the rest of it—" he was stopped suddenly by the touch of a hand upon his arm.

It was Kyra—Kyra white and despairful, but firm and resolved.

"My Lord Percy," she said, in a low, sweet tone that thrilled every heart in the room, "I will go with them—you shall not sacrifice yourself for me—no unworthy to cause you a moment's unhappiness and trouble. I will go with those gentlemen."

Percy turned to stone for a moment, then put her back with his hand; but Mr. Meek had heard every word, and came up with a quick vicious snarl.

"Lord Vering, the young lady has declared her willingness to place herself under our charge and acknowledge us as her proper guardians. You will restrain and withhold her at your peril."

Percy strode forward, and stood before the miserable mean little figure almost mad with rage. "Will nobody take this reptile out of my sight?" he demanded.

Instantly there was a rush forward, but Mr. Butterwick stepped in front of the shrinking attorney.

"Come, come, Mr. Meek!" he said, "you are trying our patience too much, take your friends and yourself off. Here is our answer: We say that the young lady remains here, and that we will meet you in a court of law. Come, that's better than the horse-pod, which," he added, with a smile, "is what you will certainly get if you try these good fellows here much longer."

"I care nothing for all your intimidations and brutal threats," exclaimed Mr. Jackson; "I say that the girl shall come."

There was a little stir at one side of the room, and the bent figure of Stephen Gringe limped through a door and stood leaning on his stick, with his eyes fixed on the lank face of the Yankee. He raised his voice again.

"If not to-day, then we get her tomorrow. You can't set yourself against law and equity, and the right of next of kin, Earl Vering, and I, Jabez Hiram Jackson. My dear girl shall go back to the States and her people with me!"

"And I say she shall not!" said the thin, shrill voice of Stephen Gringe.

The storm which the Yankee's overbearing words had raised stilled

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again. A profound silence ensued, as all eyes fixed on the shrunk figure of the old steward.

"And who are you, old man, to say that?" sneered Mr. Jackson, sticking on his hat and eying him contemptuously. "It seems the upper servants and high-class pensioners have a hand in the business of this house. Who may you be?"

"I am Stephen Gringe," said the old man, leaning on his stick, and bringing his eyes to bear upon the hard features of the Yankee. "I've no call to ask you the same question. I know you, Cutthroat Jackson; you led the massacre of the whites by the Sioux in Zion Valley! Yes, you'll hang for that, Jackson, when I go over and give my evidence! Oh, yes, I know you, Commissioner Jackson: I was in the mail you and your two brother commissioners\*plundered in '29—they were hung for the murder of the guard, but you fired the shot—I'll swear it! Yes, I know you; and I knew Tahitari, and Black Hawk, and Grey Eagle! I laugh at your warrants and your affidavits, real or sham; and I say that Black Hawk is no more the guardian of Kyra, the daughter of Grey Eagle and Tahitari, than I am—and that, therefore, the claim falls to the ground!"

"Pshaw! the old man rambles," interrupted Mr. Meek, with a snarl. "Black Hawk is her uncle, old dotard; her father is dead!"

"I know it," said Stephen, with a strange nod of the head.

"Consequently, the uncle is the guardian; and his claim is grounded on lies. Here are the papers—neither you nor any other man have power to retain her. If her uncle is not her guardian, who is?"

"Percy Chester, Earl of Vering!" cried Stephen, with a flash of his small, gray eyes.

"Lord—Vering!" exclaimed Mr. Meek.

"Pshaw!" snarled Mr. Jackson. "Silence!" said Mr. Butterwick, listening keenly for old Stephen.

"Yes," said Stephen, "Lord Vering is her legal guardian, duly appointed by her father by his own hand, and in the presence of three witnesses."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Butterwick.

"Her father, Grey Eagle, an Indian, who could not write his name!" said Mr. Meek.

"No, but Grey Eagle, otherwise John Chester, the last Earl of Vering, who had died, and lived with the Modocs, and married Tahitari. Grey Eagle and Lord Vering are one, and Kyra is his daughter."

There was a murmur of excitement. Mr. Meek came forward, flickering his papers and mumbling with passion.

"It's a concoction, palpable," he commenced.

"Tut!" said Stephen, with a sardonic smile—"look at Cutthroat Jackson!"

All eyes were turned that way, and read the look in Mr. Jackson's hang-dog and cadaverous countenance.

"Legally married," resumed Stephen. "Lord Vering and Tahitari are the parents of Lady Kyra. Lord Percy is her cousin and her guardian, and no person can take her, against her will, from his protection. In proof thereof," he continued, limping forward and holding out a parchment in his trembling hands to Percy, "is the last will and testament of the late Lord Vering, her father, in which he leaves her all of which he is possessed, and makes Lord Percy her guardian."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Butterwick, taking the parchment from Percy's surprised grasp.

"Yes! The lost will! My lord, you were right! You were right. She takes it all, and—my God! the Wolding lands!"

Percy silenced him by a look, and then came forward to where stood Kyra, now white and terrified.

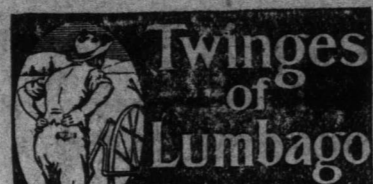
"Kyra!" he said; "you hear!"

"No! no!" she breathed, putting up her hands.

"Yes!" he said, in a low, clear voice, with a sweet smile. "It is quite true! I feel it! You are no longer Kyra, the Indian girl, but Kyra, an earl's daughter and heiress."

He stopped, for with a cry she fell at his feet in a swoon.

"Ah!" cried Mr. Meek; "nicely planned—nicely planned. But we'll



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have you, low and high, master and servant, if suppression of a will is still a crime in the calendar."

Then the crowd closed in, and he and his fellow conspirators were suddenly and mysteriously borne off; it was of no use for Mr. Butterwick to shout out warning and threats; the servants had waited too patiently to be baffled at the moment of their triumph, and in less than the half-hour the three were standing in the dirty road, wet to the skin, and smarting from the application of a pair of stout cart-whips.

CHAPTER XXXII.  
"Say Yes."

Some weeks had passed since Kyra, transformed from an insignificant Indian girl into an earl's daughter, fell swooning at her cousin's feet. If time may be reckoned by the events that occur in it, these few weeks flew swiftly—for the changes they brought were many and important ones.

We may best hear some of these, if we follow Charlie Merivale, who has just emerged, on a chill October night, from a little inn situated a few miles from Boxley.

When last Charlie had trod the same road the sun had been smiling through the trees and flowers were in their brightest, the birds jubilant; now all was changed, and the young gentleman's expression of countenance, as much as anything else.

Beside himself, there appeared no other human creature on the road, and, much as Charlie preferred, at other times, company to solitude, he was alone on this occasion not sorry to be alone. For things were looking very black for the once favored son of Fortune, and he was beginning to think that life, after all, was not quite such a jolly affair, as in his old experience, he had once deemed it. The course of his true love had not only run roughly, but threatened to cease running at all, and Master Charlie had been almost in despair. Countesses with marriageable daughters are generally blessed with ears and eyes, and if they were not, the grasping world would be only too ready to make up for the deficiency. The Countess of Darlington had at last come to a suspicion of the pretty little game of amours that was being played by her daughter Mary, and that handsome, but really intelligible young Merivale, and had taken steps to bring the rapidly developing amusements to a stop. She had quietly hinted to the sorrowing Lady Mary that another cruise had been planned for her, and that it led to—Lord St. Clare!

Lady Mary had rebelled—and had been in consequence very nearly imprisoned at Boxley; she had wept tears, remonstrated, implored, all to no purpose—the noble mamma had chosen a proper husband for her daughter, and, until the daughter has promised to resign her own choice, she must be treated as a refractory, disobedient, and willful child; in other words, must be shut up for the autumn, in the old and stately, and somewhat dreary Manor Hall; and kept under close surveillance. But, love laughs at locksmiths, and mercenary mamma, and the naughty girl had managed to slip a tiny letter into the village post office, informing her despairing lover of the exact position of affairs, and imploring him not to forget her. Forget her! as if a night passed without the miserable lad's lamentations to the stars; for indeed Charlie did love her with all his heart, and was as miserable as she could have desired. He lost no time, after the receipt of her letter, and of course made for the place of imprisonment; and there, in Boxley village, at the little inn, and round about the hall itself, he had lurked and hovered, often being mistaken for a footpad, and once nearly shot for a poacher.

At last the tender-hearted maid-servant, who had had love passages herself, smuggled a note to him from his beloved, telling him that on a certain Wednesday night, papa and mamma, the earl and countess, were bound to attend a county dinner; that there was a certain small library situated on the east side of the house, and that perhaps a certain young lady might appear at a window in the said library, at the hour of eight; and this explained Charlie's tramp, tramp along the cold and cheerless lane.

Never did a road or a half-hour seem so long! At last he reached one of the lodges, slipped through the gate, and, taking care to keep under the trees, gained the house and the window. As he did so, the stable clock struck eight, but he had to wait a full quarter of an hour—ten hours it seemed to him—before a slight clicking at the old-fashioned lattice window frame raised him from the depths of despair to the airy heights of hope. Very slowly and cautiously the window opened, and a voice—it was pitch dark—was heard in tremulous tones to speak his name—

"Charlie! are you there?"

With a flush of love and warmth, Charlie pushed through a rosebush—which retaliated in the way of scratches—and drew himself up to the window ledge so suddenly that a pale, pretty face, indistinctly seen in the gloom, drew back with alarm.

"All right, Polly, darling! Don't be afraid! Here I am!"

"Oh, how could you come!" exclaimed Lady Mary, woman-like, forgetting that she had awaited him.

"Here I am. Where are you?" cried impetuous Charlie. "Is this your hand? Can't I come in?"

(To be Continued.)

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## War News

Messages Received Previous to 9 A.M.

OFFICIAL.  
LONDON, July 18.

The Governor, Newfoundland: The Somme battle continues to develop favorably. Deville and Benthin is Pett Wood have been captured and our troops occupy the outskirts of Proieres.

It is just announced that five hundred yards of enemy positions northwest of Bazentin le Petit, and strongly defended Waterloo Tarp, of Longueval, have been captured.

The remainder of the brave garrison of Ovillers, numbering 126, was rendered. The Dragon Guards have been in action, and over two thousand prisoners have been taken.

On Friday, five more howitzers and four other guns were captured. Captured documents indicate the enemy casualties have been heavy.

South of the Somme the enemy took Blaches and Maisonneuve by a surprise attack, but were again ejected. At Verdun early in the week the enemy entered Damoupt battery and made some progress towards Souville. The French have recently made progress in the same sector.

Russia announced to-day that the enemy had been defeated south of Lutsk salient, and driven across the Lipa. Thirteen thousand prisoners and thirty guns were captured.

Heavy fighting continues on the Stokhod and Baranovitch sectors. In the Caucasus the Russians took Mamakhatan and captured the town.

The Italians continue their pressure upon the Austrians. BONAR LAY

CAPTURED DOCUMENTS.  
LONDON, July 18.

The following captured documents are interesting as showing the heavy casualties which the enemy suffered in the recent fighting. The Company 16, Bavarian Infantry, Regiment 3rd, Battalion 16.

"Our severe enemy artillery fire of all calibres up to 25 centimetre, the combat strength is now only one officer and 10 men. The regiment urgently asks for speedy relief for the command."

What remains is so exhausted that in case of attack by the enemy the totally exhausted men cannot fight on."

From another Company of the same Regiment 3rd Battalion, 16th Bavarian Infantry: "Very heavy infantry enemy fire. The Company in this sector has completely lost its fighting value. The men left are so exhausted that they cannot be employed in any way. If heavy artillery fire continues, the Company will soon be entirely terminated. Relief for the command is urgently requested."

From 2nd Battalion 1st Regiment