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Under False Colors

Lord Somerton's Ally.

CHAPTER XLVII

Lord Somerton took the advice of Sir John, and fled to the Continent; but, not in accordance with Sir John's advice, he was breathing vengeance against Lawyer Grant, whom he still believed had duped him.

Though he searched for the lawyer for many weeks he met him at last accidentally, to be shot dead on the instant by the man whom he was seeking.

There was no malice or premeditated intent to kill in the lawyer's act. He was simply frenzied by fear, after being chased over Europe by a man who had sworn to take his life. Then Grant disappeared, none knew whither.

The blow was a severe one to the pride of his wife and stepdaughter, but Adeline Cleveland consoled herself by marrying an aged and impeccable lord who gave to her the shelter of a dignified name in lieu of ready cash.

The gentlemanly Mr. Kemp was forced to leave Blairwood somewhat hastily. To his disgust he was paid his claim against William Stretton in full, and saw his hated rival reinstated as head gamekeeper. When the banners were read at church by the clergyman, and there was so much malice in his heart that a little of it bubbled from his mouth. This reach-

ed the ears of people who had had reason to dislike him, and upon the very day that Stretton and Annette were married the gentlemanly Mr. Kemp was tarred and feathered by a few who had feasted not wisely but too well. He fled, and never came back again.

Meanwhile, Sir John had adjusted his accounts with the readjustment of his mind, the result being that an accumulation due to his sister, amounting to upward of a hundred thousand pounds, was transferred in a proper and legal manner, and to the satisfaction of all parties, with the reservation that he deducted every fraction of the money paid to Captain Campbell when he was known as James Castlemon. This was insisted upon by the captain himself, who settled down as a model husband, and industriously employed himself to the shrewd investment of his wife's unexpected wealth.

And all this while Noel had been working slavishly, his time being about equally divided between his studio in London and Blairwood Park.

In five months he had painted half-a-dozen portraits, and the picture that was to make fame and fortune had been accepted by the Academy.

With this great news he arrived unexpectedly at the Park one morning, and Sir John greeted him with a merry laugh.

"Here again?" he said. "Noel, my boy, I think that you had better set up your studio here. If you are not consumed with impatience to go in search of Elsie, I would like to say a few words to you."

"I am listening, uncle; but pray don't be long. I have grand news myself. My last picture is accepted, and I—"

"Well! well! I will be brief. You and Elsie are to be married next month, and as all this will be yours and hers one day, you must not take my lamb away from me. I am an old man—much older than my years, and I want a young head and strong hands to help me in the management of an estate. I love Elsie even as much as you do—in a different way. I love you, lad, because—"

Tears gathered in his eyes, and Noel grasped his hands.

"Uncle," he said, "your will is our

law in these things. I should hate to take my darling away from you, and nothing will please us better than—" "Better than what?" interrupted Elsie, suddenly entering the room, her face radiantly lovely with the great happiness that had come into her life. "Why, nothing will please us better than to make our home here after we are married, sweetheart." Noel concluded, laughingly, as he kissed her blushing face. "It is papa's wish, darling."

Elsie ran to her father's arms and kissed him fondly, saying: "I never want to leave you, dear papa—never!" "Only for a little while. You must have a nice honeymoon," he smiled. "And that reminds me that there is a big box of wedding presents for you from Captain Parker and his wife. Now that I am satisfied, I will leave you to your love-making. I see that Mr. Lawson is coming across the lawn."

Sir John left them alone to that ineffable bliss which the true and the tried only know.

THE END.

Maddolena's Story

AND The Cameo Bracelet.

CHAPTER I.

This was said very quietly, but how different the saddened tone from that in which he had just bantered his sister!

"You must certainly see Dr. Crathome to-day," Sir George exclaimed. "Cut bone? He only pesters me with questions I am tired of answering, and prescribes remedies that are useless. No, sir, I'll not have him sent for. A bad night has made me slightly morbid this morning, that's all; I mean to keep up till after Eli's marriage. Poor little thing! we'll not cloud her happiness if we can help it."

"But, my dear boy, Dr. Crathome might be able to suggest something." "But, my dear father, haven't I let this man and his brethren experiment upon me till they are forced to avow that they really don't know the precise nature of the injury that knocked me over? I'll rest while you look over my letters; but that time Richard will be himself again."

With a heavy sigh, Sir George addressed himself to his task; and the invalid, closing his eyes, let his head fall upon the cushions. The soft breeze of a delicious May morning stole in at the open window, and was so refreshing to his feverish brow that he soon sank into a dozing condition.

He had been lying thus for some time, dreamily listening to the crackling rattle or tossing into the wastebasket, when a sound—half cry, half groan—startled him into wakefulness.

He spoke; but, receiving no reply, he raised himself, and glanced across the table at his father, by whom it must have been uttered. Was Sir George seized with sudden illness? Apparently so, for his generally florid visage had become ghastly pale, and with dilated eyes he was staring at a dirty, crumpled paper he held clutched in his shaking hands.

Again his surprised son questioned him, but still received no answer; nor was it till he had dragged himself to

his father's side, and touched his shoulder, that, with a violent shudder, Sir George awoke from his torpor; and then it was only to let his face drop on his folded arms as if in anguish, or horror, or whatever the emotion might be under which he labored, had completely overpowered him.

"Shall I call my mother, sir?" Charlie asked, when he thought that his father's agitation seemed to be subsiding a little.

"For Heaven's sake, no—no! Call no one. Let me keep my dreadful secret as long as I can!"

"But not from me, sir. Surely you will tell me what it is that troubles you?"

Sir George raised his head, and gazed at the speaker pitifully.

"My poor boy, you don't know what you are asking! There, there—let me help you back to your chair. I was a selfish brute to give way like this in your presence. It's nothing, Charlie—at least, nothing that should—"

"—that shall—be allowed to worry you."

"But, my dear sir, something has happened—" the young man began to say, but was eagerly checked.

"Hush—hush! Forget it—forget it! I was disagreeably surprised by an affair being brought back to my recollection that I—I never expected to hear of again—that was all. For get it, as I shall do."

But his still ghastly countenance, his broken accents, his quivering limbs, contradicted the assurances his words were intended to convey, and his son was not satisfied.

However, Sir George would not see the questioning looks directed to him.

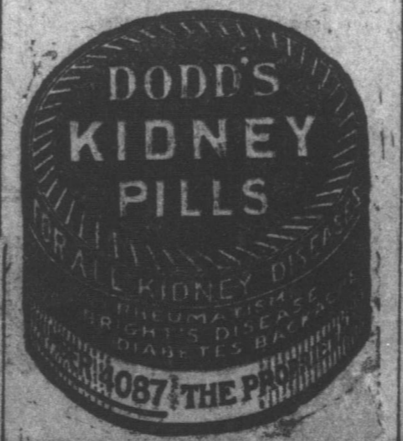
Talking rapidly about the beauty of the day, and some appointment he was bound to attend to, he thrust the rest of his letters into his pocket, and was hurrying from the room, when Charlie's voice recalled him.

(To be continued.)

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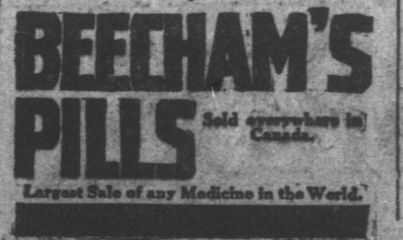
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