



**A Great Intrigue,
—OR, THE—
Mistress of Darracourt.**

CHAPTER XXXII.

She wrung her hands.
"I can't tell you, Master Harry. I promised! Don't press me! You can make me say anything! I knew you could if ever we met, but don't, for mercy's sake, force me to tell, Master Harry!"

"Come, come, Susie," he said, soothingly. "You shall tell me no more than you like! Don't cry! For the tears were running down her cheeks. 'If you have been in trouble, your troubles are all over now, I hope. I am not a rich man—a very poor one, indeed—but you shall have a good home and'—he smiled—"an indulgent master and mistress."
"Mistress!" she said. "Then you are married, Master Harry?"

"Not yet, Susie," he replied, gravely, and with a dull pain at his heart. "But I am going to be—"
"Going to be?" she repeated.
"Yes, and to some one whom you know, Susie," he said, gravely.

"Some one I know, Master Harry? Who can that be?" she asked, drying her eyes. "Oh, I do hope you'll be happy! But," and she trembled, "if you had only gone abroad."

"You don't seem anxious to know who it is, Susie?" he said. "But I'll tell you. It's Miss Marie Verner."
"Miss Marie Verner?" repeated Susie, dully, her eyes expanding with terror. "Miss Marie—"

With a frightened cry she sprang from her chair and actually covered her face.
Harry went to her and got hold of her arm.

"My poor girl, what is the matter?" he said, gently. "Come, come! Why should Miss Verner's name frighten you so? Why, Susie, Susie!"
But she could only shrink from him and wring her hands.

"Oh, Master Harry, let me go! Let me go! She will come and find me here."
"She—Miss Verner!"

"Yes, yes! and I promised, promised on my knees to go; and she sent the money, and I didn't go! I hadn't the heart. But I've got the money still; I haven't spent a penny, though was hard pushed sometimes. But I couldn't leave England all alone, and leave father without the hope of ever seeing him again, and—ah!" for the office door opened.

It was only Mr. Doyle.
Harry signed for him to go out again.
"I have found an old friend," he explained. "Now, Susie, you must tell me what this means," he said, gently but firmly.

"No," she cried; "not a word! Let me go, Master Harry! I'd rather meet a ghost than her. But, oh, Master Harry, she believed you did it, and now she is going to marry you!"
"She believed I did it!" he said, his brows contracting. "Did what, Susie?"

"She did at first!" said poor Susie, shaking and trembling. "She did, indeed, Master Harry. It was only when I said that you couldn't, couldn't have done it, that she gave in. But you aren't guilty, are you, Master Harry? No, I never believed it!"
"Thank you, Susie," he said, with a grim smile. "But I haven't the least notion of what I was suspected of doing."
"No! no! I said so! You were as innocent as I was. But she said they would send us both to prison, directly they found the vase in the hut, and knew that I'd gone there to speak to you the night before."

Harry started and stared, and at the sight of his face, Susie uttered a cry of despair.
"Oh, what have I said?" she wailed. "What have I said?"
"You have said that they could send us to prison when they found the vase in the hut, and knew that you came to talk to me the night before," he said, firmly.
Susie made a movement toward the door.

"Good-by, Master Harry! Good-by! I couldn't stay, I dare not! Let me go! She may come—"
He caught her arm and held her tenderly but tightly.
"Not yet, Susie," he said. "Come, wait a moment or two, and calm yourself. You must know that you have said too much to go without saying more. Flesh and blood could not stand it! What is this about a vase? Come, tell me, or I shall think you have taken leave of your senses or been dreaming."

"Dreaming! It was no dream, Master Harry. I wish to Heaven it was! No, there was the vase! I saw it myself! Lord Merle's vase—in the hut."
"Where?" he cried, but in a low voice.
"In the hut," she repeated, as if desperate. "I saw it, we both saw it, just beneath the table."
"In my hut?"

"Yes. Just after you were gone we went there, and then we saw it. And the plate-closet at the Hall had been broken into, and you had been seen there the night before—"
"Well—well!" he said. "Stop! Wait! Let me think!" and he pressed his hand to his brow. "Yes, I remember," he murmured, as the night he pursued the dog to the Hall grounds, and stopped to speak to Forbes, the butler, dashed upon his mind. Great Heaven! what mystery was this? What did it all mean?

"And—and," panted Susie, as he signed to her to go on—"and I had heard the secret word from Miss Marie when she was talking to Miss Lucille, and she said—Miss Marie—that they would all say that I told it to you, and the judge would send us to penal servitude—"
The office seemed to spin round, and the strong man staggered and clutched at the desk.

Susie uttered a cry of alarm.
"Oh, Master Harry, Master Harry, what have I done? Don't take on so!"
He recovered himself with an effort.
"Go on! Go on!" he said, hoarsely. "For Heaven's sake, girl, go on! Then—then—"

"Then she, Miss Marie, said that I must go away—go far away—abroad to Australia, where they could not find me—and when I told her that I'd stay and face it, for I knew you were innocent, she said that it made it all the worse, for if you were innocent, the marquise had laid the trap for you, and—"
He ground his teeth, and shook his clinched hand in the air.

"Curse him! Oh, curse him!" he murmured, hoarsely.
Susie shrank back, but his voice broke.
"No! No!—Heaven forgive him! I cannot curse him! Go on! Oh, girl, why do you wait? You madden me!"
"That's all, Master Harry," sobbed Susie; "except that she got a bonnet and cloak of Mrs. Dalton's and made me put them on, and sent me to a lodging in London, and gave me fifty pounds, and she sent more money

for me to go to Australia, but I couldn't go. I skulked about and hid, and—and—" with a gasp—"at last I came here!"
He stood pawing at the air with one hand, and holding his bursting head with the other. A pitiable sight that of a strong man maddened.
"And she, she!" he burst out at last, with a heavy groan. "Did she think me guilty?"

By some intuition Susie knew who he meant.
"Miss Lucille!" she replied, weeping. "Yes, Master Harry. She must have thought it. The vase—the talking with Forbes!"
"Oh, Heaven, I see it all!" he cried, throwing up his hands. "Be merciful to me, and keep me from madness! She thinks me guilty! A mean thief! A thief! She believes that I stole—stole his property! Oh, Susie, Susie! were you mad that you did this thing?"

"Oh, Master Harry, what else could I do?" she sobbed.
"What else! You should have defied them all; you should have helped them to find me. You ought never to have rested until the real thief was caught, and I—and you—were proved innocent!"
Susie cried bitterly.

"Ah, Master Harry, it is all very well to talk now, and sitting here; but if you had been in my place! It all looked so black! I know, I felt you were innocent; but the others—the others, Master Harry! What would you have said of any one else if the vase had been found in their house, and they had disappeared, leaving not a word behind, and known to have been seen near the spot where the robbery was committed?—what would you have said, Master Harry?"
He laid his head upon his hands and groaned.

"Why, even now," she went on, as soon as she had regained breath, "they could arrest us—you and me—and send us to prison. Who is to prove that I didn't tell you the secret word, and that you didn't break into the Hall and steal the things?"

Harry dashed his hand upon the desk.
"Who put that vase there?" said Susie, in a hushed whisper.
"Only one man could be so vile, base enough to do it!" he groaned—"the marquise! Ah! light is coming! I seem to see it all!"
"Do you think—" hesitated Susie—"that Miss Marie had anything—Oh, forgive me, Master Harry. I forgot!"

He started and looked at her with a wild horror.
"Marie Verner!" he breathed. "You think—the girl I am going to marry, Susie! But—oh, no, no! Impossible!"
"Yes, yes; she couldn't have anything to do with it, Master Harry. It was only my stupid foolishness made me think of her. But it is all so tangled up!"

"Yes; that is it!" he said, wildly. "It is tangled now; but as sure as there is a sun in the heavens, I'll unravel it!"
He paced up and down the office like a man demented.
Susie got up nervously.
"Let me go now, Master Harry," she pleaded. "I'm afraid she may come in at any moment and find me, and I'd as lief die as meet her."

"Very well," he said; "you shall go. But tell me where I can find you; and Susie, remember—he stood before her and held up his hand impressively—"wherever you are, whatever you may be doing, you must come the instant I send for you. What I shall do, what course I shall take, I can't say now—my brain whirrs, and I can't think—but if I send for you, start off at once; don't wait for anything. You will come?"
"Yes, Master Harry—yes."

"You have no cause for fear, Susie," he said, more gently; "I will see that no harm shall come to you—I will do nothing to get you into any trouble."
"Oh, I don't care now, Master Harry," she said, trustingly. "Now, I've told you all, I'm satisfied. I'll abide by whatever you say."
She took a piece of paper from her pocket.
"That is the address of the place I'm stopping at, Master Harry. I've been doing needlework."
As she spoke, a piece of paper, wrinkled and dirty, fell from her hand. She picked it up and glanced at it.

"See, Master Harry, it's the address Miss Verner wrote down for me to go to in the hut the morning I ran away," she said.
Harry took it.
"I'll keep this, Susie," he said. "It may be of some use; supply some link in the chain! Heaven, how shall I set to work to unravel this!"
Susie wiped her eyes and composed herself, and Harry saw her out of the yard and into a cab.

Then he came back, and sat down in the office, with his head between his hands.
Try as he would he could not get to the heart of the mystery.
That the marquise had weaved the skillful plot to degrade him in the eyes of Lucille, he felt assured; but what part had Marie taken in it? Back upon his mind came his old distrust of her; her strange manner of late—and yet she had nursed him with the devotion of a sister; she had told him that she loved him, and was going to be his wife! Why had she never told him of the robbery and the finding of the vase? Why had she not told him everything, and helped him to clear himself from the shame that rested upon him?
(To be continued.)

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Under the provisions of "The Stamp Acts, 1898-1914," the following Rules and Regulations respecting Stamp Duties, in substitution for those of date September 16th, 1914, have been approved by His Excellency the Governor in Council.

JOHN R. BENNETT,
Colonial Secretary,
Department of the Colonial Secretary,
October 6th, 1914.

1. Every instrument shall be stamped on its face, when possible.
2. Cancellation of stamps shall be made by the person cancelling, writing, printing or perforating his name or initials with date across stamp.

3. Bills of Exchange, Cheques, Promissory Notes, Bills of Lading, Shipping Receipts, and Charter Parties shall be stamped and the stamps thereon cancelled as follows:—
(a) Bills of Exchange, Cheques and Promissory Notes drawn or made in the Colony by the person signing the same; provided that in the case of a cheque on a Banker, the Banker to whom it is presented may, if it is unstamped, stamp the same and cancel the stamp.

(b) Bills of Exchange, Cheques and Promissory Notes drawn or made outside the Colony by the person in the Colony into whose hands any such bill, cheque or note shall come unstamped before he in any manner negotiates or pays the same.
(c) Bills of Lading executed outside the Colony by the Consignee in the Colony into whose hand any such Bill of Lading may come before he in any manner negotiates the same.

(d) Bills of Lading executed in the Colony by the shipper. Provided that if any Bill of Lading is presented to any person or Company for signature unstamped, such person or Company may stamp the same and cancel the stamp.
(e) Shipping Receipts by the shipper. Provided that if any Shipping Receipt is presented to any person or Company for signature unstamped, such person or Company may stamp the same and cancel the stamp.

(f) Charter Parties by the person in the Colony last executing the same.
(g) Charter Parties executed wholly outside the Colony by the person in the Colony into whose hands any such Charter Party comes unstamped before he in any manner uses or takes any action upon such Charter Party.

4. The person upon whom the obligation to stamp and cancel any instrument is imposed by these Rules shall be deemed to be a person issuing an instrument with its proper stamp, or to cancel such stamp, he shall be liable to the penalties imposed by Section 22 of the Act 61 Victoria, Cap. 14, entitled "An Act respecting the Payment of Certain Fees and Charges by Stamps."

5. Any Rules and Regulations which may have been heretofore made under the provisions of "The Stamp Acts, 1898-1914," are hereby rescinded.
NOTE.—Copies of "The Stamp Act" and of the foregoing Rules and Regulations may be obtained from the Banks, Stipendiary Magistrates, the Departments of Justice, Finance and Customs, or the Colonial Secretary.

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