

A Lover's GERALDINE: Romance.

He wanted to speak seriously to her, he wanted to tell her, he longed to make love to her; but she would chatter the lightest talk about the dolls and of the fogs and the coming week's arrangements, and as her heart was free and her head cool, all the advantage was on her side, and she had her way with the talk for the whole two miles, until they reached the struggling cluster of houses in the midst of which stood Cawfield Church. Just as the harmonious had gasped out the last wily note of the voluntary, young Mr. Bamber came in and shut himself modestly into a pew near the door.

When service was over and the Rev. Albert Thorpe had hurried out of the old-fashioned pulpit, Reginald was at the church door for his neighbors, and they all three walked back to Warrington together.

Talk was kept up easily enough until they all three, having parted with Mr. Thorpe at the turning which led to the farmhouse, where he had been on these occasions, reached the side gate which opened into the wood in Warrington. Faintly, in the dark and foggy, and as Reginald, on shaking hands with Geraldine, slipped a note from his pocket the note which flattered themselves that the action was unseen. As a matter of fact, they were right; but Capt. Morrison's suspicions were so fully aroused that the fact that his wife appeared perfectly contented and even gay on her way through the wood to the house with him, seemed to his jealous mind sufficient proof that she had found some means of communicating secretly with Reginald Bamber under his very nose. So that, on arriving at the house, he followed her into the drawing-room, whether she went at once to avert suspicion that she was in haste to be alone, and turned to the lamp, while his dark eyes burned with a fierceness which frightened her, he said shortly:

"Now the letter! Give me the letter!"

No acting was proof against such a surprise as that; the flash of anger over her face, the involuntary step back, were enough for him. The low sound which issued from her teeth, as he leaned over the table and glared at her, with clinched fists and dark, livid face, seemed to the terror-stricken woman like the cry of a savage animal. She tried to laugh, but her face was gone.

Holding in her pocket that letter, which contained, as she knew, the means of setting this man with his bloodhound ferocity straight upon the track of a man she loved, she felt for the moment numb, powerless, lost. She could only stand and watch the horrible, convulsive quivering of his face, without thought, without feeling. It was only a few moments, but it seemed to her a long time, before he spoke again:

"The letter! Make haste! Give it to me!"

Life and thought were coming back to her; simple feminine instinct suggested the first inevitable, shuffling speech:

"Let me! What letter?"

It added fuel to the fire which was raging in the man's veins.

"Confound your prevarication! Don't you see that you are fighting upon the ground you are caught, that the best thing you can do for yourself is to confess to throw yourself upon my mercy?"

"Mercy! Wiser to hope for it from a wounded tiger, from a famished bloodhound, than from this man?"

"What am I to confess? What have you found out?"

A second's pause, during which he saw a light pass over her face; the next moment her hand stole to her pocket. He was watching her intently—not a movement could escape him. He saw the fingers fumble, disappear, reappear, clutching something he could not yet see. But he knew where it was, and he glided a step further toward her round the table. As he did so she sprung across the hearth-rug, and thrust the letter through the bars of the grate into the red heart of the fire. But, before he could push her aside, she had sprung erect, faced him, and flung her arms round him to detain him till the last scrap of the paper was consumed. For a moment her touch seemed to paralyze him—he could not think her aside; then, his fury rising again, he put up his hands to free himself from hers, which she had clasped at the neck of his coat. But, as his fingers touched hers, his expression changed; his hands fell to his sides, he shook his head; foot and laying his head upon her shoulder, he whispered hoarsely:

"O, heaven! what have you done to me?"

But the paper was burned—by turning her head she could see that; and, freeing herself with a sob of relief, she met his eyes as he raised his head sharply. But the agony which had replaced the anger in his face she did not understand.

"Now, what have you to ask? What have you to say? You want to know what the letter said, I suppose, or do you?"

He interrupted the stream of her feverish, questioning questions in a low, monotonous, almost weak voice, which

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made him look at her more attentively.

"No, I don't want to know—anything more. You can leave me." He was leaning against the mantelpiece, which his shoulders only just reached, almost as if he wanted its support; his dark face was very pale, and he seemed to be breathing with some difficulty.

"Are you—are you not well, Philip?" she asked, uncertainly, coming a step nearer.

"I am not in need of your assistance, thank you."

He spoke coldly, not rudely; and she went without another word, somewhat crestfallen, somewhat hurriedly, toward the door. But just as she reached it, and when the partition hid her from his sight, a moan broke upon her ears which caused her to start and to turn, and to put her hand slowly into her pocket and feel for something there with trembling fingers and doubt in her eyes. But in another moment she heard an impatient movement and an exclamation from her husband's lips; and, dropping hastily into her pocket that which she had half withdrawn, she opened the door and slipped through, and shut it in nervous haste, and hurrying up to her own room like a hare, locked herself in with a great sigh of ease from her burden.

For she had tricked him, after all!

CHAPTER XXV.

The candles in Geraldine's room had already been lighted by her maid, and she watched them flickering in the dusk, and listening to the faint sound of the rain falling on the roof, and listening in dread lest her husband's suspicions should bring him to her door, and that frail wooden barrier would scarcely stand long in his way. In a few minutes the door opened, and a maid came in, and Reginald had given her, in place of which she had thrown into the fire a letter from Miss Grettton which she had suddenly remembered she had about her, she opened it very softly, lest the master of the house should hear her, and she read it almost without daring to draw breath:

"Dear Mrs. Morrison—I am sorry to have to communicate with you in this manner, as if it should in any way come to your husband's knowledge, it would naturally annoy him very much. However, if I am unable to give you the tidings you wish for by word of mouth, as you seem to fear will be the case, this note will inform you that I have been to the place you mentioned, and have learned that the person about whom you are anxious has not been there, but that a man named Hammond has made two brief visits there within the month of September. I think it probable that he was a friend of agent of the other. The man Hammond, one of his two visits, ordered some things of a local tradesman for the use of the person he was visiting, and ordered that the bill should be sent to an address which duly found him—No. 5, Bankside Cottage, Chiswick."

I don't know whether you will consider this much of a clue, or whether, if so, I hope you will be cautious. The man may be—probably is—a rogue; say so, the letter as well as the wiser course for you to pursue now would be to reconcile yourself to circumstances, and leave a man who, you must own, shows considerable ability in keeping out of the way of well-merited punishment to his fate.

"Perhaps you will forgive my presumption in offering you advice in consideration of the advice I have shown in obtaining for you the information you desired. Yours very truly, REGINALD D. BAMBER."

Geraldine read this letter three times, and then she held it over one of the candles until it was totally destroyed; and, opening the window, she let the black, brittle remains of the paper be carried away in morsels by her getting one syllable of the information it had given her, and it was too late to remain in existence. Then she sat down, glancing at her little clock as she did so. They dined an hour earlier on Sunday. It was 6 o'clock; she had only half an hour before her in which to decide upon a line of conduct to be pursued toward her husband in order to attain her object of going to London without him. No letter would serve her purpose; she must see this man Hammond, make her own observations as to whether he were worthy of trust, and try to discover from him where James was, and whether he was safe and well. After a struggle between reason and her affectionate instincts, Geraldine believed in his innocence had risen again triumphant; and imagination, which was her strongest faculty, persisted in picturing him as the victim of some plot, the nature of which she guessed at continually, but could not determine. A month before the assurance of some person such as Reginald Bamber, in whom she could trust, would have satisfied her of the evil's safety; but ever since the discovery of her husband's designs upon him her own solicitude had grown so rapidly, he was so continually in her thoughts and ever in her dreams, that she felt that nothing but the evidence of her own eyes would content her; she must see him, and soon. Now and then a horrible fear would cross her mind that he was dead, perhaps killed by her husband, of whose anxiety to find him she had heard no more since the night of their arrival at Warrington. The fear struck her with fresh force now, and took away her power of thought.

LOST THEIR DEPOSITS.

Montreal, May 19.—Mr. Albert Lussier, one of the Liberal candidates in Vercheres, has lost his deposit, having polled only 47 votes in the whole county. He was the member for the county in the last Legislature, but failed to get the party nomination again, and active candidates are reported as having lost their deposits. They are Messrs. Theriault, in Temiscouata and O'Brien in Quebec county.

WOMEN'S HATS COME OFF.

Chicago, May 20.—Rev. R. P. Johnson, of Unity Church, Oak Park, says he does not propose to have the theater more advanced than the church, and has ordered that hereafter women will place themselves during services, and a check room for overcoats and umbrellas. "I do not ask my people in a compulsory spirit to remove their hats," he says, "I suggest it as a matter of courtesy, first to the church, next to the pastor. As I said in public, I have two reasons. One, and the main one, is that other people may enjoy the privileges of the sanctuary; the other, that the assembled worshippers may look more home-like. The women have accepted the edict in a friendly spirit of acquiescence."

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Canada's Defenses

Necessity for Fortifying the Coast Cities.

Menacing Attitudes of Some Old World Powers.

Russia Biding Her Time to Make a Dash for India.

Hon. David Mills on the Ungratified Ambitions of Germany.

Ottawa, May 18.—I interviewed Senator David Mills on the subject of Canada's defenses, of which the honorable gentleman has recently been making a study.

Mr. Mills said he thought the Canadian Government and people did not fully realize the present critical position of the empire, and the comparatively defenseless state of the seaboard towns of Canada, upon both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.

He thought it was of far more consequence to the Dominion to make moderate provision to protect St. John, Quebec, and Charlottetown, upon the Atlantic coast, and Vancouver and New Westminster on the Pacific coast, than to spend any considerable sum of money upon a railway through the Crow's Nest Pass, or upon a fast steamship service across the Atlantic. The cities of Victoria on the west, and of Halifax on the east, were, he remarked, the greatest points of contact of the possibility of surprise by an invader. It was of very great importance that the people of Canada should realize their present responsibilities.

"Our political questions," Mr. Mills continued, "have hitherto been to no considerable extent of a municipal and local character. The large questions that arise from the contact of states with state have never exercised that influence in maturing the political judgment of the public men of Canada which is important not only to them, but to the country at large. Canada has now outgrown her conditions of hood. She is maturing into the condition of a great state, and the responsibility that devolves upon her is no longer that of a minor power, but of a country which, so far as her own protection is concerned, devolve also in no small degree upon the people and Government of Canada."

"What are your reasons for holding this view?" your correspondent inquired.

"I think no one," was the reply, "can doubt the importance of the matter to which I have referred, who has taken the trouble to read the correspondence between the Foreign Office in London and the Government of France and Germany on the other. Of course, everybody knows the relation in which England stands to Russia, in Asia. It is impossible to believe that if England were seriously threatened by Germany, France that Russia would abstain from pressing forward in the direction of India or China."

In fact, when England involved in a war with France or Germany, it can scarcely be doubted that Russia would at once prepare for the conquest of India. Her acquisition in Turkey could be postponed, but her chances of success there would be greatly strengthened and improved if she were first to lose her Asiatic possessions. My impression from reading the correspondence of the Foreign Office in respect of the partition of Africa is that Germany, when she acquired control of the Zanzibar coast, which for many centuries had been in the possession of England and under English control, expected that she would be given a free hand to deal with South Africa as she thought proper. She was led to suppose that England would not impede her in her way in the conquest of Delagoa Bay, and in the territories south of her, which at present are held by the Portuguese. In fact, she at

once set to work after England had unceremoniously crowded her out of Eastern Africa, and had succeeded, it would have made her the immediate neighbor of the Transvaal Republic."

"What do you think of Germany's intentions regarding the Transvaal?" was asked.

Mr. Mills replied: "My impression is that Germany expected to make the Transvaal a German province, and she is greatly exasperated because the Government of Great Britain has not consented to French pretensions where the claims of France were quite inferior to her own. She did this in every instance where she thought she could create friction between England and France. In fact, Germany would much rather that there should be a conflict between England and France in Africa than that there should be any conflict between Germany and France in Europe. I do not think it was believed by German statesmen that the people of the Transvaal would offer any serious opposition to the acquisition of that country by Germany, or be disposed to put any strong impediment in her way to attain that object."

I shall not be at all surprised to find that Germany seriously contemplates the acquisition of Holland, and if the kingdom of Holland were a part of the German confederation it would facilitate the French policy in South Africa. England, in my judgment, made a very great mistake when she surrendered her position in the Transvaal to France. Lord Randolph Churchill, in a speech delivered immediately after his retirement from office, said that this surrender was made to secure the support of Germany to England's policy in Egypt. He was then inclined to give the time England allowed Germany to go into possession of this coast she had numerous interests in Zanzibar. Sir A. Kim was British consul, and he had at the time unbounded influence over the Sultan, and he was running between Bombay and Zanzibar, and there were thousands of Hindoo merchants engaged in the trade between their own country and the southeastern coast of Africa. There can be hardly a doubt that a great wrong was done by England when she gave Germany a foothold in that quarter of the globe. Any support that Germany gave to France in the acquisition of the Zanzibar territory has been a permanent loss to Great Britain, and a great gain to France."

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