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## The Old Marquis

OR,

## The Girl of the Cloisters

### CHAPTER XXXVII. THE SECRET OUT.

With a shriek, Lela sprang to her feet and tore at the handle of the door, as if to get near the awful spot, that was a quarter of a mile from them; but Bowen leaped from the box, and, white and trembling, put up his hand.

"Sit still! For Heaven's sake, sit still, my lady! Drive to Lord Edgar's villa!" he shouted, as he sprang upon the box, again.

"Oh, my lady, my lady, don't take on so!" implored Lovel, as Lela, crouched on the bottom of the cab, hid her face in her hands, as if to shut out the picture that was burning into her brain. "Don't take on so! Bear up! My master mayn't be hurt!"

"Dead! dead!" she moaned.

"No, no! For Heaven's sake, don't think it! Not yet, my lady! If he's not dead, you'll want all your strength."

The words were wisely chosen. They acted like magic. With a sudden cry, she sat up, and pressing her hand to her heart, she gasped out to him:

"Don't speak to me! Not a word! I will, I will believe you! No, no, no! He is not dead! He will want me! I will be strong!"

The frantic horses dashed down the hill toward the town, and reached the villa; the fly had to make its way through crowds that seemed converging to one spot—that of their own destination. A wild hum of horror and sympathy, of disappointment and alarm, seemed to fill the air.

On Lela's now acute ears the name of Lord Edgar struck frequently; and once she heard a man standing near the fly, as it whirled past him, say:

"Dead as a stone!"

And she quivered through every limb; but still she bore up, still mastered and overcome, beat back by woman's force of love and will, that nameless, death-like stupor that fought to claim her for its own.

Suddenly, with a jerk, the fly stopped at the door of the villa, and Lovel, flinging himself out, forced back the crowd to make way for her, and taking her arm within his, led her up the steps.

The door was closed, and two policemen stood on guard, answering the questions of the crowd who stood around in hushed quietness.

Lovel got out the words "Lady Fane!" and one of the policemen knocked on the door, and they entered.

As if by instinct Lela passed through the hall, and, going like one blind, felt her way, as it were, up the stairs, and entered a room in which she could hear a hushed murmur of voices. Lovel close upon her heels, and Bowen following.

She stood for a moment and looked around.

There, on the bed, lay the stalwart form of the man whom she loved—her husband, her lover, her god! She saw no one else, though a doctor was leaning over him, and the tall, bent figure of the marquis stood on the other side of the bed.

She made one step forward, staggered, recovered herself, then walked to the bed, and, feeling on her knees, looked at the white face, white but for a streak of blood that ran across the nasal forehead.

She saw nothing but that face, was conscious of nothing save it in that moment of anguish; then she turned her eyes heavy with dread, to the grave face of the doctor, and if ever eyes spoke, hers spoke then.

"Is he dead?" they asked.

He hit up his finger warningly, and his lips formed the word "No."

With a shudder of relief that was so fierce that it was almost a pain, her face fell on her hands.

A moment passed, then she knew that some one had touched her, and looking up, she saw the marquis standing beside her.

She had no fear of him now; there was only a look of stupor and surprise in her eyes that any one should speak to her.

"Come with me!" he whispered.

She looked at him, wearily. Did he mean leave her husband? She did not move.

"Come with me," he said again.

"I ask it for his sake," and he pointed to the bed.

Something in his voice touched her. She looked at the doctor, and he nodded.

"Please do so!" he said. He had no idea who she was.

"I can not leave him," she panted, almost inaudibly. "Why do you ask me?" Then it flashed upon her. "Ah, you do not know! I am his wife!"

The marquis did not start, but his hand, which he had laid gently upon her shoulder, fell to his side, and his lips closed.

"I am his wife!" she repeated, pitifully.

"That is not true!" said a voice, a strained voice, almost hoarse in its intensity.

All eyes were turned in its direction, and Lela, turning hers wearily, saw Edith Drayton standing beside the bed, her hand clinched at her heart as if to still its fierce throbbing, her eyes fixed with an awful, passionate yearning upon the white face beneath her.

The doctor looked from one to another with a frown.

"Not true!" said Lela, mechanically, as if she had dreamed the words. "Who says it? I am his wife—his wife!"

"It is not true!" said the voice again, and this time the dark eyes met here with a defiant late.

Lela staggered and turned to the bed; then she turned suddenly.

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"Yes—I will go. I am—not fit to stay. I shall be stronger directly. You will"—pitifully—"let me come back!" to the marquis. For she thought that the words, the very face of Edith Drayton, were phantoms of her disordered brain.

The marquis drew her arm within his and led her out, and the doctor, turning to Edith Drayton, somewhat sternly pointed to the door.

She knelt at the bedside for a moment and touched Lord Edgar's hand with her lips, then followed.

Trembling, Lela allowed the marquis to take her into a room on the same floor and place her in a chair. Then she looked up at him.

"A few minutes"—she breathed—"a few minutes! I shall be strong then! Oh, my lord, my lord, have pity on me! Don't let them keep me from him because I seem weak! I—I saw him fall!" and she shuddered.

The marquis looked down at her, and his stern, white face quivered.

"My child!" he said, then his voice grew harder. "Girl, I know not what to think. Why are you here?"

"Why?" She stared at him with her pain-dimmed eyes, then she laughed—a hushed, discordant laugh. "Are you mad to ask such a question?" she said. "Why am I—I, his wife?"

The marquis turned to where Edith Drayton stood white and picturesque.

"Perhaps, madame," he said, "you can explain this mystery. Perhaps you will tell me why, at such a moment as this, you—and she—are here."

Edith Drayton looked at him steadily.

"I am here because"—her voice did not falter; it grew, if anything, fuller and deeper—"I love him. She"—and she pointed to Lela—"is here because she thinks herself his wife!"

The marquis turned to Lela—to Lela, staring as if through a mist for a moment, then the full meaning of the words—the cruel words—seemed to strike her, and slowly she rose and stood upright.

"You hear?" said the marquis, sternly. "What have you to say?"

Lela struggled for breath, for strength.

"I say that I am Lord Edgar's wife," she asked, and her voice, low and hushed as it was, was full of sweet dignity. "It is my husband who lies in the next room, and I must—I will go to him!" and the slight, slim figure seemed to dilate.

The marquis' brow grew dark.

"Either you are deceived, or—" He paused; he could not say the words, that were then on his tongue; he could not, looking at the pure, sweet, anguish eyes, say them.

"She has been deceived!" said Edith Drayton; "this is no time for concealment, my lord; even pity—and I do pity her—must yield to truth. Miss Temple—"

"I am Lady Fane!" breathed Lela, her eyes flashing.

"Miss Temple has been cruelly deceived," said Edith Drayton, as if Lela had not spoken. "But I have spoken the truth. She is not Lord Edgar's wife and has no claim to be near him."

The marquis stood leaning on his stick, silent, and at the moment the door opened and Clifford Revel entered. He paused as he saw the marquis and seemed as if about to retire, but Edith Drayton seized his arm, not hurriedly, but with a gesture that would not brook no denial.

"If you yorokship demands proof, this gentleman may give it, for he planned and carried out the deception."

Clifford Revel looked from one to the other, his face growing whiter and whiter beneath the scornful and piercing eyes of the marquis.

"What is your business here, sir?" he said, with a fierce coldness. "By whose invitation do you intrude in this house?"

The question seemed to fire Clifford Revel into a reckless passion.

"This house is your son's, my lord, for the present, and I am here as his guest. Can you say as much?" he returned, with an evil sneer.

The marquis was silent.

"I am Lord Edgar's guest," said Clifford Revel. "And while he lives"—no one can describe the fiendish malignity of triumph that breathed in the tone in which the significant words were spoken—"I have the right to remain."

The marquis did not flinch, but filled him with fierce scorn, but Lela shrank quivering into her chair.

Edith Drayton pointed to Lela.

"Mr. Revel, this lady says she is the wife of Lord Edgar; I have denied the truth of her statement; I call upon you to bear evidence in my favor."

He winced, and looked at her reproachfully, and was silent for a moment, then he looked around.

"I came to inquire after Lord Edgar—my cousin. Is he alive?"

"Yes, sir," answered the marquis, with stern defiance.

"And is there any hope?" asked Clifford Revel.

The marquis' eyes dropped.

Clifford Revel turned his head aside to hide the gleam of triumph that shone in his eyes, then he looked around again.

(To be Continued.)

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2848—For this, striped seersucker, checked or plaid gingham, or percale, could be used. Lawn, linen, drill and cotton gabardine are also desirable. The sleeve may be finished in wrist length, or in ¾ length. The chemise may be omitted. The skirt is a three-piece model and measures about 2 yards at the foot.

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June 12, 1919

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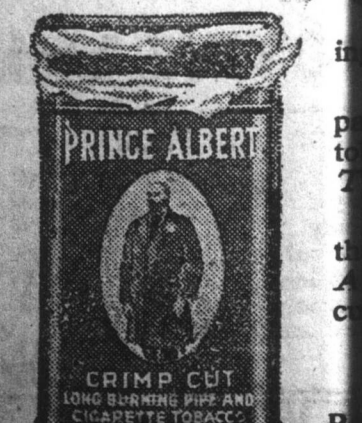
## Prince of Wales Flag Naval Soldiers in

READY TO ADVANCE.  
COBLENTZ, June 17.  
Concentration of troops preparatory to advancing further into Germany if the Germans refuse to sign the treaty will begin to-day throughout the occupied area. Orders to this effect was received from Foch yesterday.

### PRINCE OF WALES IN CANADA IN AUGUST.

OTTAWA, Ont., June 18.  
His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales is expected to arrive in Canada during the month of August and will be present at the beginning of the Canadian National exhibition at Toronto and at the official opening of the new Canadian Parliament Buildings. The following staff will accompany him on his Canadian tour: Chief of Staff the Marquis of Salisbury, Chief Private Secretary Lieut.-Col. E. M. Griggs, Assistant Secretary Sir Godfrey Thomas, Bart., Equeries, Capt.

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