

# POOR DOCUMENT

## THE AMERICAN BARON.

(By James de Millie.)

(Continued.)

Once or twice after this he called upon them. On the first occasion only Lady Dalrymple was visible. On the second, none of the ladies were at home. He was baffled, but not discouraged. Returning from his call, he met Minnie and Mrs. Willoughby. Hawbury was with them, riding beside Minnie. The ladies looked, and Girasole, as before coolly turned his horse and rode by the carriage, talking with Mrs. Willoughby and trying to throw at Minnie what he intended to be impassioned glances. But Minnie would not look at him. Of course she was frightened as usual, and grew excited, and as before, talked with unusual animation to Hawbury. Thus she overdid it altogether, and more than ever confirmed Girasole in the opinion that she and Hawbury were affianced.

Two days after this Girasole called again. A bitter disappointment was in store for him.

They were not there—they had gone. Eagerly he required where.

To Rome, was the reply. To Rome! he muttered, between his set teeth, and mounting his horse hurriedly, he rode away.

He was not one to be daunted. He had at a certain task before himself, and could not easily be turned aside. He thought bitterly of the ingratitude with which he had been treated. He brought before his mind the story British share the supercilious smile, and the impatient and insulting expression of Hawbury's face as he sat on his saddle, with his chin up, stroking his whiskers, and surveyed him for the first time. All these things combined to stimulate the hate as well as the love of Girasole. He felt that he himself was not one who could be lightly dismissed, and determined that they should learn this.

### CHAPTER XIII.

YVES REMONSTRANCES. Hawbury had immolated himself for as much as half a dozen times to gratify Dacres. He had sacrificed himself over and over upon the altar of friendship, and had allowed himself to be lured to death because Dacres so wished it. The whole number of his calls was in reality only about five or six; but that number, to one of his taste and temper, seemed positively enormous, and represented an immense amount of human suffering.

One day, upon reaching his quarters after one of these calls, he found Dacres there, making as usual, very much at home.

Well, my dear fellow, said Hawbury, cheerfully, how waves the flag now? Are you handing it down or are you standing to your guns? Turn over the cigars, and give an account of yourself.

Do you know any thing about law, Hawbury? was Dacres' answer.

Law? No, not much. But what in the world makes you ask such a question as that? Law? No—no, I.

Well, there's a point that I should like to ask somebody about. Why not get a lawyer?

An Italian lawyer, no use. Well, English lawyers are to be found I dare say there are twenty within five minutes' distance of this place.

Oh, I don't want to bother. I only want to ask some one's opinion in a general way.

Well, what's the point? Why, yes, said Dacres, after a little hesitation, you've heard of outlawry? Shouldn't think I had—Robin Hood and his merry men, Lincoln Green, Sherwood Forest, and all that sort of thing, you know. But what the mischief sets you thinking about Robin Hood?

Oh, I don't mean that. I mean real outlawry—when a fellow's in debt, you know.

Well, if he goes out of the country and stays away a certain number of years, the debt's outlawed you know.

The debt is set as it is though? I've been in debt, but I always managed to pull through without getting so far. But that's convenient for some fellows too.

I'm a little muddled about it, but I've heard something to this effect. I think the time is seven years. If the debt is not acknowledged during that interval, it is outlawed. And now, you my life, my dear fellow, I really don't know but that I have jumbled up some fragments of English law with American. I felt that I was muddled and so I thought I'd ask you.

Don't know any more about it than about the antediluvians.

It is an important point, and I should like to have it looked up.

Well, get a lawyer here; half London is on the Continent. But still, my dear fellow, I don't see what you are driving at. You're not in debt?

No—this isn't debt; but it struck me that this might possibly apply to other contracts.

Oh, Yes. How—such as what, for instance?

Well, you see, I thought, you know, that all contracts might be included under it; and so I thought that if seven years or so annulled all contracts, it might have some effect, you know, upon the—the—the marriage contract, you know.

At this Hawbury started up, stared at Dacres, gave a loud whistle and then exclaimed.

By Jove!

I may be mistaken, said Dacres modestly.

Mistaken? Why, old chap, you're mad. Marriage? Why, good Lord! don't you know that nothing can shogate that? Of course in case of crime one can get a divorce; but there is no other way even there. By Jove! A good idea. That, why man, if it were so, the kingdom would be depopulated. Hus-

bands running off from wives and wives from husbands to pass the required seven years abroad. You see, too, there is another thing, my boy, marriage is a sacrament, and you have not only got to untie the civil knot but the clerical one, my boy. No, my friend's no help for it. You gave your word old chap, "till death do us part," and you're in for it.

At this Dacres said nothing; it appeared to displease him. He relapsed into a sullen sort of gloom, and remained so for some time. At last he spoke.

Hawbury!

Have you found out who that fellow is? What fellow?

Why that yellow Italian that goes prowling around after my wife.

Oh, yes.

What was he?

Well, it seems that he saved her life or something of that sort.

Saved her life? How? Why? Cool too, on the Alps somewhere.

On the Alps? saved her life? Come now, I like that, said Dacres with bitter intonation. Alas! don't I know her? I warrant you she contrived all that, oh she's deep! but how did it happen. Did you hear?

Well I didn't hear anything very definite. It was something about a precipice. It was Lady Dalrymple that told me. It seems she was knocked over a precipice by an avalanche.

Was what? Knocked where? Over a precipice? By a what—an avalanche? Good Lord! I don't believe it. I swear I don't. She invented it all. It's some of her infernal humbug. She slid over the snow so as to get him to go after her. Oh, don't I know her ways!

Well, come now old man, you shouldn't be so hard on her. You never said that flirtation was one of her faults.

Well, neither it was, but as she is a wife, you may be a friend in human form, and if you insist upon it, I have nothing to say. But this last notion of yours is nothing but the most wretched absurdity. It's worse, it's lunacy.

Well, said Dacres, in a milder tone, perhaps she didn't contrive it. But then you know, he added, just as good for her, she gets the Italian. Ha, ha, ha!

His laugh was forced, feverish and unnatural. Hawbury didn't like it and tried to change the subject.

Oh, by the way, said he, you needn't have any further trouble about any of them. You didn't seem inclined to take any definite action so the action will be taken for you.

What do you mean?

I mean that they are all going to leave Naples.

To leave Naples?

Dacres uttered this in a voice of grief and surprise which astonished Hawbury and touched him.

Yes, he said, you know they've been here long enough. They want to see Rome. Holy week, no end of excitement. Illumination of St. Peter's, and all that sort of thing, you know.

Dacres relapsed into sullen silence. For more than half an hour he did not say a word. Hawbury respected his mood, and watched him with something approaching anxiety.

Hawbury said at last.

Well, old man?

I'm going to Rome.

You—to Rome.

Yes, me to Rome.

Oh nonsense! See here old boy, you'd really better not, you know. Break it up. You can't do anything.

I'm going to Rome, repeated Dacres stolidly; I've made up my mind.

But really, remonstrated Hawbury. See here, my dear fellow, look here, you know. By Jove! you don't consider, really.

Oh, yes, I do. I know every thing; I consider everything.

But what good will it do?

It won't do any good; but it may prevent some evil.

Nothing but evil can ever come of it. Oh, no evil need necessarily come of it.

By Jove! exclaimed Hawbury, who began to be excited. Really, my dear fellow, you don't think. You see you can't gain anything. She's surrounded by friends, you know. She never can be yours, you know of Dacres' a great gulf between you, and all that sort of thing, you know.

Yes, repeated Dacres, catching his last words—yes, a great gulf, as deep as the bottomless abyss, never to be traversed, where she stands on one side, and I on the other, and between us hate, deep and pitiless hate, undying, eternal!

Then, by Jove! my dear fellow, what's the use of trying to fight against it? You can't do anything. If it were Indiana, now, or even New York, I wouldn't say anything, you know; but you know an Indiana divorce wouldn't do you any good. Her friends wouldn't take you on those terms—and she wouldn't. Notice, by Jove!

I must go. I must follow her, continued Dacres. The sight of her has roused a pair of eyes whose glow seemed his fist on the table. Bad, by Heaven!

Hawbury looked at him earnestly.

My dear boy, said he, you're getting too excited. Be cool. Really, I don't believe you know what you're saying. I don't understand what you mean. Haven't the faintest idea what you're driving at. You're making ferocious threats against some people, but, for my life, I don't know who they are. Hadn't you better try to speak so that a fellow can under-

stand the general drift, at least, of what you say?

Well, then, you understand this much—I'm going to Rome.

I'm sorry for it old boy.

And see here, Hawbury, I want you to come with me.

Mer' what for?

Well, I want you. I may have need of you.

As Dacres said this his face assumed so dark and gloomy an expression that Hawbury began to think that there was something serious in all this menace.

For my life, said he, my dear boy, I really don't think you're in a fit state to be allowed to go by yourself. You look quite desperate. I wish I could make you give up this infernal Roman notion.

I'm going to Rome! repeated Dacres, resolutely.

Hawbury looked at him.

You'll come, Hawbury, won't you?

Why, confound it, of course. I am afraid you will do something rash old man and you will have to have me to stand between you and harm.

Oh, don't be concerned about me, said Dacres. I only want to watch her, see what her life's game is. I want to look after her in the midst of her happiness.

Not much more was said. Dacres sat, in silence for a long time, breathing hard and puffing violently at his cigar. Hawbury said nothing to interrupt his meditation. After an hour or so Dacres tramped off in silence, and Hawbury was left to meditate over the situation.

And this was the result of his meditations. He saw that Dacres was greatly excited, and had changed completely from his old self. His state of mind seemed actually dangerous. There was an evil gleam in his eyes that looked like madness. What made it so perplexing still was the new revelation of seeing that now was manifested. It was not so much love for the child-angel as bitter and venomous hate for his wife. The gentleman

at that rate for? interrupted Hawbury. Are you taking leave of your senses altogether? By Jove! old man, you had better give up this Roman journey.

No, I'll keep to it.

What for? Confound it! I don't see your object.

My object? Why I mean to follow her I cannot give her up. I won't give her up. I'll follow her. She shall go any where's without seeing me on the track. She shall see that she is mine. She shall find herself cut off from the butterfly life which she hopes to enter. I'll be her fate and she shall know it.

By Jove! cried Hawbury. What the deuce is all this about? Are you mad, or what? Look here old man you're utterly beyond me, you know. What the mischief do you mean? Whom are you going to follow? Whose fate are you going to be? Whose track are you talking about?

Who's track Dacres. Why, my wife!

As he said this he struck his fist violently on the table.

The deuce! exclaimed Hawbury, starting at him; after which he added, thoughtfully by Jove!

Not much more was said. Dacres sat, in silence for a long time, breathing hard and puffing violently at his cigar. Hawbury said nothing to interrupt his meditation. After an hour or so Dacres tramped off in silence, and Hawbury was left to meditate over the situation.

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feeling had given place to the sterner one. It might have been possible to attempt an argument against the indignance of the former; but what could words avail against revenge? And now there was rising in the soul of Dacres an evident thirst for vengeance; the result of those injuries which had been carried in his heart and brooded over for years. The sight of his wife had evidently kindled all this.

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