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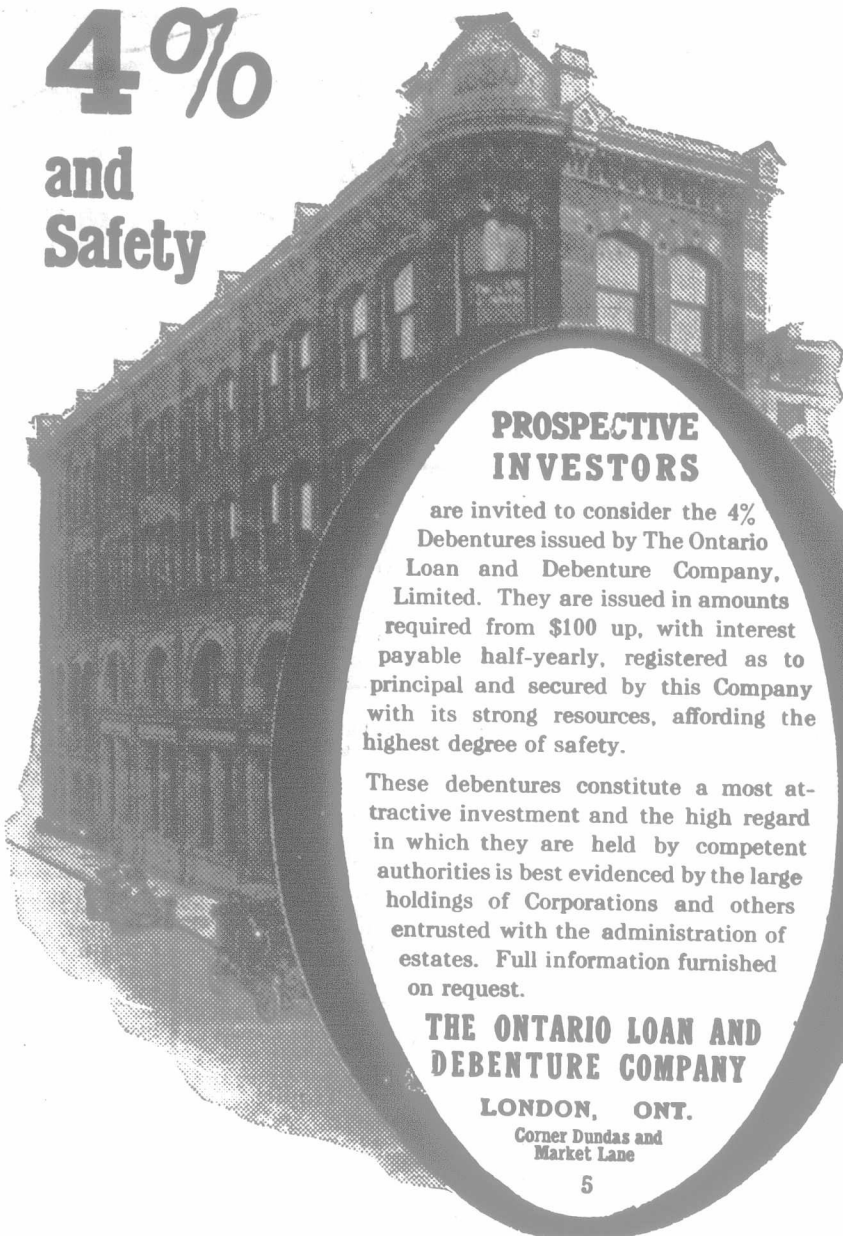
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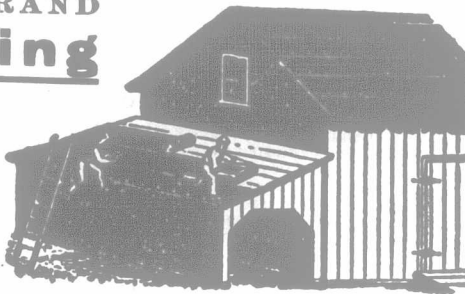
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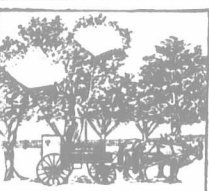
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"La, Sir Percy, your chivalry mis-
guides you," said Marguerite coquettish-
ly, "you forget that you yourself have
imported one bundle of goods from
France."

Blakeney slowly rose to his feet, and,
making a deep and elaborate bow be-
fore his wife, he said with consummate
gallantry,—

"I had the pick of the market Madame,
and my taste is unerring."

"More so than your chivalry, I fear,"
she retorted sarcastically.

"Odd's life, m'dear! be reasonable!
Do you think I am going to allow my
body to be made a pincushion of, by
every little frog-eater who don't like the
shape of your nose?"

"Lud, Sir Percy!" laughed Lady
Blakeney as she bobbed him a quaint
and pretty curtsy. "You need not be
afraid! 'Tis not the men who dislike
the shape of my nose."

"Afraid be damned! Do you impugn
my bravery, Madame? I don't patron-
ize the ring for nothing, do I Tony?
I've put up the fists with Red Sam be-
fore now, and—and he didn't get it all
his own way either—"

"S'faith, Sir Percy," said Marguerite,
with a long and merry laugh, that went
echoing along the old oak rafters of the
parlour, "I would I had seen you then
... ha! ha! ha! ha!—you must have
looked a pretty picture ... and ...
to be afraid of a little French boy ...
ha! ha! ... ha! ha!"

"Ha! ha! ha! he! he! he!" echoed
Sir Percy, good-humouredly. "La,
Madame, you honour me! Zooks!
Ffoolkes, mark ye that! I have made
my wife laugh!—The cleverest woman in
Europe! ... Odd's fish, we must
have a bowl on that!" and he tapped
vigorously on the table near him.
"He! Jelly! Quick, man! Here,
Jelly!"

Harmony was once more restored. Mr.
Jellyband, with a mighty effort, recovered
himself from the many emotions he
had experienced within the last half
hour.

"A bowl of punch, Jelly, hot and
strong, eh?" said Sir Percy. "The wits
that have just made a clever woman
laugh must be whetted! Ha! ha! ha!
Hasten, my good Jelly!"

"Nay, there is no time, Sir Percy,"
interposed Marguerite. "The skipper will
be here directly, and my brother must
get on board, or the Day Dream will
miss the tide."

"Time, m'dear? There is plenty of
time for any gentleman to get drunk and
get on board before the turn of the
tide."

"I think, your ladyship," said Jelly-
band, respectfully, "that the young gen-
tleman is coming along now with Sir
Percy's skipper."

"That's right," said Blakeney, "then
Armand can join us in the merry bowl.
Think you, Tony," he added, turning to-
wards the Vicomte, "that that jacka-
napes of yours will join us in a glass?
Tell him that we drink in token of re-
conciliation."

"In fact you are all such merry com-
pany," said Marguerite, "that I trust
you will forgive me if I bid my brother
good-bye in another room."

It would have been bad form to pro-
test. Both Lord Antony and Sir
Andrew felt that Lady Blakeney could
not altogether be in tune with them at
that moment. Her love for her brother,
Armand St. Just, was deep and touch-
ing in the extreme. He had just spent
a few weeks with her in her English
home, and was going back to serve his
country, at a moment when death was
the usual reward for the most enduring
devotion.

Sir Percy also made no attempt to de-
tain his wife. With that perfect, some-
what affected gallantry which character-
ized his every movement, he opened the
coffee-room door for her, and made her
the most approved and elaborate bow,
which the fashion of the time dictated,
as she sailed out of the room without
bestowing on him more than a passing,
slightly contemptuous glance. Only Sir
Andrew Ffoolkes, whose every thought
since he had met Suzanne de Tournay
seemed keener, more gentle, more in-
nately sympathetic, noted the curious
look of intense longing, of deep and
hopeless passion, with which the inane
and flippant Sir Percy followed the re-
treating figure of his brilliant wife.

(To be continued.)