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A Great Intrigue, OR, THE Mistress of Darracourt.

CHAPTER I.

"Thank you, thank you all very much," she said. "I hope, I am sure, that we shall be great friends. Thank you once more."

It wasn't very much of a speech, but the musical voice, with the Darracourt ring in it, seemed to make up for the brevity of the oration, and go straight to the hearts of the simple people.

"What an article this will make in the local paper!" said Marie Verner. "Arrival of the heiress at the Court! Magnificent reception by the tenants! Crowd surrounding the carriage! Strewed with flowers! Eloquent address by Miss Darracourt!"

Lucille smiled, her eyes fixed upon the Court, which now came into view, her fingers caressing the flowers.

"You have a fine talent for burlesque, Marie," she said. "Haven't I? It is my only gift. If I could only have persuaded that old man to dance a breakdown, I should have been completely and ecstatically happy!"

"Really, Miss Verner," said Mrs. Dalton, in solemn remonstrance; "the present does not appear to me a fitting moment for such a pronounced levity. Dance a—a breakdown!"

"Hush!" said Marie Verner; "here we are! Who are those on the steps, Lucille? Is there the bishop? But, that other! Oh, Lucille, that's the

marquis, I'm convinced!" Mr. Somes, the butler, had two gentlemen standing beside him. One, a middle-aged man, with a round face and iron-gray hair, was Mr. Head, the lawyer; the other, a young, tall, thin gentleman, with dark eyes and a rather pale face, was none other than the marquis. He stood slightly apart from the others, his hands, long and white, resting upon his stick, his dark eyes fixed upon the carriage, a faint smile curving his smooth-shaven lips. The face was delicately cut, and would have been handsome but for a something vague and indefinite which impressed one upon first seeing it with a sense of disfavor.

With much dashing and prancing, the postilions brought their horses up to the steps, the grooms rushed forward and seized the reins, the butler opened the carriage door with the air of a bishop opening a cathedral, and Mr. Head, hat in hand, stood ready to assist the ladies to alight.

"Welcome home, Miss Darracourt!" he said, pleasantly. Lucille stood for a moment, her beautiful face slightly flushed; then, as she ascended the steps, followed by the two ladies, the tall, thin gentleman came forward and uncovered his head.

"Permit me also, to offer you a welcome, Miss Darracourt," he said, and as he spoke his eyes rested upon her face for a moment with carefully hidden surprise and admiration, then shifted to his boots. "As your nearest neighbor, I have taken the liberty to be present and assist in your reception." The voice was soft and not unmusical, but it was slow and measured, and like the vague something in the face, smote a discordant echo on the ear. "I fear you have had a long and wearisome journey."

"It has been long, but I am not tired," said Lucille, as she shook hands. "This is Mrs. Dalton and Miss Verner, Lord Merle."

The marquis glanced from one to the other and saluted them, then his eyes returned to Marie Verner and rested on her face as they had rested on Lucille's, for a moment, no longer. He placed himself beside Lucille and the two entered the hall together. A murmur, which was just short of a cheer, rose from the servants drawn up in a line, and Lucille, bending her head in acknowledgment, passed with the marquis into the drawing room.

The marquis drew a chair forward for her. "Having availed myself of the earliest opportunity of welcoming you, Miss Darracourt," he said, "I will now take my leave; you must need rest. I hope you will remember that I am your neighbor—your near neighbor—and that if you are in need of my services, you will not hesitate to send for me. I am entirely at your command."

"Thank you, my lord," said Lucille. "Good-morning, ladies," he said, bowing to the others, and with slow and stately steps he left the room. Marie Verner bent over Lucille's chair.

"Why didn't you ask him to dinner?" she whispered, eagerly. Lucille's face flushed slightly. "I am rather tired, I find, after all," she said, gently.

Mrs. Dalton went into the hall and returned with a maidservant. "Here is your maid, Miss Darracourt," she said. Lucille rose; the lady's maid curtseyed.

"I will show you to your room, miss," she said, timidly. "Dinner, miss, can be served in an hour," said the butler with mighty humility. Lucille inclined her head and passed out into the hall and up the broad stairs to the long corridor.

At the moment she was naturally too confused by her arrival and reception to appreciate the size and magnificence of the place, but she could not fail to notice the vaulted roofs, the wide-stretching corridors, the great stained window, and the number of servants who moved to and fro with noiseless assiduity, giving the scene life and movement. The maid conducted her to a suite of rooms facing south, and so handsomely furnished that Marie Verner,

following close behind, uttered a little cry of satisfaction and admiration while her grey eyes glittered and shone.

"It is Aladdin's palace, Lucille!" she exclaimed. "I'm dying to see the whole of it—but there, you do look tired now! And I'll go to my own room!—Is there anything you want—anything I can do? But what nonsense I talk!" and she laughed. "You have only to look a wish and no doubt a dozen or so of servants would fly to gratify it."

Lucille smiled. "I think I only want to sit still and try to realize it all just at present!" she said. Marie Verner nodded and laughed. "That's a distinct hint," she said. "And I'm gone on the instant," and she went out.

Lucille went to the window and looked out upon the green park that stretched a seemingly endless line of green into the distance. The hum and buzz of the crowd still rang in her ears, the excitement had produced a faint lassitude. She watched the maid laying out her toilet table and unpacking the huge imperial with a vague sense of unreality, and when the girl turned and took her bonnet and cape, she said:

"You may go now. I will rest a little while and ring for you presently. What is your name?" "Susie—Susie Bond, miss," said the girl. "It is a pretty name," said Lucille.

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and the little speech won the girl's heart in an instant. "I will ring presently."

Susie drew a large lounge chair to the window of the boudoir, arranged the curtains so as to shade the light, and went out on tiptoe to report in the servants' hall that "the young mistress was the most beautiful and lovable young lady that ever walked the earth!"

Lucille sank into the chair, and let her eyes roam over the park. This that had happened to her was so strange, so wonderful, that it seemed to her just a dream. A week ago she was an orphan, a girl of no consequence, at a ladies' school at St. Malo, with no prospect in life but the limited one of a governess or pupil teacher.

That she possessed an uncle rich and powerful, and owner of Darracourt, she knew; but as she had never seen him, and had never set foot in the Court, her knowledge did not count for much, or bring her much satisfaction. She had gone on leading her simple life at the school from year to year in unbroken and almost dreary serenity. Her beauty and the nameless charm which every one recognized had made her popular with her schoolfellows and a favorite with the teachers, and she had been happy. But though she was popular and a favorite, there had been something in her character which had kept her apart from the common herd. It was not that she was clever, it was not that she was proud, though the Darracourt trait or falling was in her veins; but there existed an individuality which lent her a certain reserve, and isolated her from her fellows.

So she had gone on, looking forward into the dim future, and wondering what would happen to her, when one morning there arrived at the school Mr. Head, the lawyer, with the astounding news that Mr. Darracourt of Darracourt, had left the whole of the estate, the whole of his wealth, to her!

Some girls, most girls, would have flown into ecstasies, but, as Marie Verner said, that was not Lucille's way. She bore the sudden change of fortune like a Darracourt, and when the governesses and the girls clustered around her, and in awed tones wished her joy, she smiled round upon them and said: "Thank you," just as she had said "thank you" to old Simon Taller at the gate, though her heart was full well-nigh to overflowing, and the blood ran riot in her veins.

(To be Continued.)

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List of Unclaimed Letters Remaining in the G. P. O. to July 20th, 1914.

- A Adams, R. D. Allan, J. C., card
B Bailey, James N. Barnes, A., Prescott Street
C Cahill, John, Newtown Road
D Dalton, J. Dwyer, Michael, Nagle's Hill
E Emberley, Miss Annie
F Fitzgerald, M. P. Flynn, John J., care Thomas Lanon
G Gaspero, Signor
H Hall, A., Long Pond Road
I Irving, Wm. Ewart
J Jones, C. T. Jackson, George, Coronation St.
K Jackson, Lottie, card
L Leary, Miss Bride, LeMarchant Rd.
M Malone, Mrs. Michael
N Neville, M.
O Oldford, Wm., care Gen'l P. Office
P Parrell, Wm. M., care G. J. Carter
R Ryan, Miss Mary, card
S Sparks, John
T Taylor, Maxwell, Cabot St.
U Unclaimed letters list continues with many more names and addresses.

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Vertical advertisement on the right edge of the page, partially cut off, mentioning 'It', 'W. A.', 'To C', 'Mari', 'C. A.', 'Our', 'ECLIP', 'Our R', 'In', '50', 'THERE', 'A TIME', 'when a', 'heavy w', 'coat, or n', 'But th', 'changed -', 'beginning', 'that', 'Light', 'Overc', 'are the', 'able and', 'Overcat', 'own.', 'Ours a', 'style, co', 'in color', 'too.', 'Cha', 'THE S', 'PL', 'BA', 'Ladie', 'at great', 'W'.