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Maddolena's Story
AND
The Cameo Bracelet.

CHAPTER II.
The usurer heaved a profound sigh. "Ah! Sir George, you must not talk of time to one who numbers four score years, and cannot expect to be spared much longer. What I do, must be done quickly. I cannot agree to any postponement."

CHAPTER III.
The scene was brought to a close by the evil-tempered old usurer suddenly ceasing to resist Sir George Ormsby's endeavors to drag the shrinking girl from his clutches, and dropping back in his chair in a fit. So hideous did he look, that, forgetting her bruised arm, the girl tried to seek the help of Hannah, the old woman who had admitted the baronet—the ill-paid drudge who scrubbed and toiled with no reward but the gratification of her own innate love of cleanliness and order.

"Very sad—very sad," said the usurer, in the most equable tones. "Wouldn't it be as well to pay the money, Sir George, and spare your son's feelings?"
"But I am not in a position to do so. I am not a wealthy man. I should have to mortgage my estate to satisfy your demands, or, if you drive me to extremities, I must sell it. You cannot wish me to do that."

Lucas Goldryng waved his hands deprecatingly.
"Now, what necessity can there be for these painful details? They do not concern me. I only ask for my own. Surely, Sir George, you would not wish to rob a poor old man, four score years and upward, who has not a relative in the world but one troublesome little kins-woman? When all is said and done, my dear good friend, we come back to the same point. I find your debt, among other unpaid ones, in my son's pocketbook; I demand its payment; I am justified in doing so; I cannot help it if you consider yourself ill-used; people always do when they are asked to pay. I expect you to pay at once. If you will not, I must resort to other ways and means of getting a settlement."

For some minutes the girl, whose presence her uncle had overlooked, had been standing behind his chair, an interested listener to the conversation. She could see the agony depicted on Sir George's countenance, and suddenly stepping forward, she started both the absorbed men by exclaiming:
"I will pay this money. How much is it?"

"You, my dear child!" echoed the baronet, staring at the weird little figure, in its scanty and incongruous garments, while Lucas Goldryng, with a vicious gleam in his sunken eyes, began groping about for his crutch-stick.
"Yes," she answered, quietly. "I am a great heiress; Uncle Lucas will tell you so. He will not give me any money for myself, but he shall for you, and you shall return it when you are able. I should like to help somebody, and it will make no difference to uncle."
Sir George felt very much moved

hat, and, briefly saying that he would call again in a day or two, prepared to return home. But with what a heavy heart! The interview from which he had hoped so much had been worse than fruitless; for the well-meant interference of the girl had led to his embroiling himself with her uncle, whose vindictive spirit he had no means of appeasing.

"What shall I tell poor Charlie?" the baronet sorrowfully asked himself. "But, nay; he is such a preux-chevalier that he will say I did right to defend the poor child. Can it be very wicked to wish that this covetous old brute had not recovered so quickly from his seizure? If he had lain long enough to suffer a few of the tortures he inflicts on others, it might have taught him to be more merciful to them."

Sir George's hand was on the door, when the voice of the servant recalled him, and she came hurrying across the hall.

"Please, sir, master wants ye. He's spoken quite sensible like. Indeed, he's a'most hisself again."

The baronet felt an insuperable objection to encountering the old usurer again; but his position compelled him to be conciliatory, and he went back to the room, and civilly expressed his hopes that Mr. Goldryng felt better.

Somewhat to his surprise, no anger at his interposition in behalf of the girl appeared to possess the shaking, gasping old man, who, though scarcely able to steady his voice sufficiently to make himself understood, was hurling reproaches at his nieces.
"It was her fault—all her fault," he panted, as he pointed his skinny finger to where she stood leaning listlessly against the wall. "She provokes me till I lose all self-control. Didn't you hear her taunt me about her money? She only did it to remind me that it is hers—all hers. She has no right to it—no right. It ought to have been mine—mine, who helped to earn it. My brother was an idiot when he left it to a child who doesn't know how to use it; and, worse—worse than this, left it to her unconditionally. It was a madman's will. I said it was at the time, and so it was. Why, she can claim half when she marries, if it's to-morrow, and the rest when she comes of age! And so she defies me—defies me!"

"What have I done?" asked the girl, sullenly.
"What would you not do, if I were not always on the watch?" he snarled. "Am I not obliged to keep you without your shoes, because I detected you in the very act of stealing out of the house when you thought I was too much engaged to miss you?"
"It is a sin to wish to look at the shops when they are lighted," she demanded. "Who would not be tired of staying in this dull, dreary house?"
"Is it correct for a girl of decent parentage to be prowling about at night? Did you not bribe the foolish woman yonder to take you to some low place of amusement, where you would have been plundered of the few shillings I was weak enough to let you have, little thinking to what use you would put them? And aren't you always trying to make acquaintances with loose, dissolute people, who, when they get a fobbing in the house, would rob, and perhaps murder me? But what would you care? You—you—"

Here speech failed him, and he could only lie back in his chair, impotently trying to shake his stick at her; while Sir George looked from one to the other, unable to decide how far these charges were true.
But the girl, with the stolid air of one who was so accustomed to hear herself reviled that she had ceased to let it trouble her, stood chafing a livid wale upon her thin arm, and made no attempt to defend herself; and, seeing this, Mr. Goldryng addressed his next speech to the baronet.

"She talked like the fool she is when she said what she did to you. She cannot lend you the money you want. She cannot touch a halfpenny of it while she is under my guardianship. She is the plague of my life, I wish—and he said this with a bitter emphasis that made his auditor shudder—"I wish she was dead!"
"That is a sad and strange wish," Sir George told him. "This young creature, by your own showing, is your only surviving relative, and ought to be the comfort of your old age."
(To be continued)

by this impulsive offer. He saw that it was prompted by the girl's naturally warm and generous heart, and he was struggling for words in which to express his grateful sense of her good nature, when, with a growl and a snarl like a wild beast, Lucas Goldryng sprang upon her, and with one clawlike hand grasping her arm, he began to rain down such brutal blows on her head and shoulders, that instinctively she shrieked for mercy, and the indignant baronet sprang to the rescue.



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Lords of the Rivers

Having worked their toilsome way up from the sea, the salmon are busy in the autumn about their family affairs in the small waters far up among the hills.
Salmon and trout lay their eggs in autumn, not spring. It is an interesting sight to watch them on the spawning beds. The best fish chooses a pool with a gravelly bottom, and sets to scooping out a sort of trench. She seems to plough right into the gravel with her body, and the trench in which she lays her eggs may be fully ten feet long.

The eggs, when laid and fertilized, are carefully covered up, both parents taking their share at this work. They keep at it until the trench becomes a mound known in fishermen's language as a "red."
The hen salmon lays about nine hundred eggs for each pound of her weight, so even a ten-pound fish will deposit nine thousand eggs.
Once the important business of the spawning is completed in British waters the parent fish are free to depart. But unless the water is exceptionally heavy they hang about, waiting for a really big spate to enable them to make their return journey to the sea. So, even in the following March, when salmon angling has begun again, many a "kelt" of back fish is hooked in the river and has to be carefully replaced by the disappointed fisherman.

British salmon differ entirely from American and Canadian in that the former get back to the sea alive, while the latter never do so. This may be because of the enormous length of United States and Canadian rivers. The great salmon of Alaska swim up as far as Cariboo Crossing, which is 2,250 miles from the mouth of the Yukon River.
Imagine a fish accomplishing such a journey without one mouthful of food to sustain it on its way! Salmon do not feed in fresh water. There is no parallel in all Nature to such a feat. And it is the more wonderful because the salmon, when in the sea is a most voracious feeder.
None of these United States and Canadian salmon return to the ocean. Not one! They simply starve to death and their dead bodies, drifting ashore pollute the river-banks for miles.
Even the smaller hump-back salmon, which, as a rule, use the smaller rivers and creeks of North America for spawning purposes, fail to return to salt water. These American salmon thus provide another example of Nature's care for the race, combined with carelessness of the individual life.—Saturday Night, Toronto.

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British Births Decrease
London, December 18. (A.P.)—Births in England and Wales are showing a decrease. The lowest rate of any third quarter, excepting during the war, has just been tabulated. During the three months ended Sept. 30 the births were 190,148, or 6,693 fewer than in the preceding quarter. Deaths also showed a decrease of 22,715.

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