

[NOW FIRST PUBLISHED.]

CAMIOLA

A GIRL WITH A FORTUNE.

BY JUSTIN MCCARTHY.

Author of "Miss Misanthrope," "Maid of Athens," etc.

CHAPTER VIII.—Continued

"Well, I must say I don't. One may be content to get a wound for one's flag, but I don't quite understand a positive delight in getting it. No; I give it up, Georgie."

"You do? You can't even guess?" He looked disappointed. "Can't you understand that I was glad because I thought, if I did not die, I should probably be sent home?"

"Sent home? Because you were to be sent home? But were you really so homesick as all that? To want to go home—and a campaign going on, and one's friend in the thick of it! My dear Georgie, I don't believe a word of it."

"That is why I asked if you thought me a coward," he said gravely. "What I am saying is true; I was longing to get home."

"Well, it wasn't out of cowardice, that's certain. There are not any cowards like that; and even if there were you couldn't be one. It was something else. Do tell me; though I wish you hadn't begun to tell me anything; for I don't like mysteries; and I always guess wrong when I have to guess at all."

"I was longing to get back to England," Camiola, because I was longing to get back to you; because I love you."

"He took her hand in his; she was too much astonished to withdraw it at once. He looked into her wondering eyes; the moon shone upon his thin, delicate, boyish face, and on the wasted cheeks which now even in the pale moonlight showed themselves suffused with a girl-like blush of conflicting emotions."

"I know you never did; I never tried to make you think of it before. I held my tongue, Camiola; and do you know why? Let me take your hand again—you won't? You are angry with me?"

away; he did not wish to embarrass her by letting her know that he had seen her tears. But she would not have heeded.

"About forty-eight hours," she said, with a strange smile, and she shook her head as if in vain protest over the unfair dealings of the destinies. "About forty-eight hours, Georgie, more or less. I think if when you were telegraphing your arrival at Southampton you had telegraphed an offer of marriage to me, I should have met you when you came with a yes and a kiss."

"But this is impossible; this is absurd, Camiola. You can't have fallen madly in love in the meantime."

"Can't I, Georgie? Oh, but I can though; and I'm more and worse, my dear boy, I know." She was making a desperate effort to keep up her courage and be lively.

"But there is nobody!" he exclaimed, angrily. "Who is it, Camiola?" he demanded, rather inconsistently with the spirit of his positive assertion.

"That, Georgie, is a question you mustn't ask; at all events, I don't mean to answer it. I haven't been unkind to you, dear Georgie; dear brother, you will not be unkind to your sister?"

"Still, if we are brother and sister, I ought to know," he urged, despairingly.

"No, my dear, you ought not to know; it is a woman's secret altogether; it is my secret; I wouldn't tell even Lady Letitia a word about it; and you won't let her know anything, Georgie; I know you won't for my sake."

"I'm all right," he murmured; "it's nothing; I don't care about the wound—it isn't that."

kept him down with gentle force. "Where on earth am I?" he asked, with a curiosity just arousing itself from that languor which comes after a faint; and which takes everything for granted and is puzzled by nothing.

"You are lying in the lap of a woman old enough to be your mother," Mrs. Pollen informed him; "and two minutes' walk from a room where you will be able to go in a very few seconds. Mr. Romont says there is no harm done; and he understands things, and I think he is right; and I have seen a few wounded men myself in my time."

"Give me your hand, old man," Romont said, as he saw George trying to rise—"All right, Miss Sabine"—Camiola was making an instinctive movement to come to the rescue also—"I'll take care of him. We'll get him quietly into a bed; and then I'll have a surgeon come and see him at once. There's sure to be a surgeon of some kind in all that crowd yonder; nobody ever saw a crowd like that without a doctor of some sort in it."

"I can walk all right," George said, staggering as he said the words; "I'm sure I can."

"Still you may as well lean on my arm," Romont said.

"And on mine," added Mrs. Pollen; and she offered him an arm which was as strong as it was white and shapely. Camiola felt as if she were left out in the cold. She was now beginning to wonder what they could have thought of her, when she had seen her kiss poor Georgie. What did that matter? Was he not almost her brother? Was he not to all appearance dying at the time? Still they were perhaps not exactly in possession of all the facts of the case; they certainly were not in possession of some of the facts; and what would they think of her; what would he think of her?

"I'm awfully jolly now," George St. George tried to speak in cheery man-of-the-world tone; "I say how awfully kind you both are."

"It's in Romont's line," Mrs. Pollen said; "his business in life is to go about helping people—it's his trade; and for me I am always delighted to have a chance of doing anything for a good-looking young man."

"Look here," Romont suggested, "can't we sneak into the house in some quiet way; down the chimney or somehow—so that we mayn't be seen and this boy's mother get frightened? You know your way about; it's your own homestead."

it so; but I don't know that I ever heard of anybody else who complained of it except you. But I speak out to you for your own good, and the good of other people; and wouldn't you be a woman with some heart and some brains. Make up your mind about this young Lisle."

"My mind is made up; I told him so."

"Yes; I thought as much. Well, then keep to your resolve; you won't find it easy; but keep to it. You will have some trouble, that I see; but you must bear it, and keep to your resolve; don't for all the friends and relatives in the world—consent to marry that young man—or any man whom you don't love. For the man you do love, why, let things go as they will; he doesn't suspect—as yet—what I know. About other men—do, like a good girl, let them alone. Keep clear of them, whatever their class. They are men; not stocks or stones. You are full of kindness, I know; but a handsome woman's kindness may sometimes kill a man. There, that's enough. Don't be angry with me for talking to you like a mother. I wish to heaven I were your patient all right? Thanks, I am so glad to hear it. Come, Miss Sabine, we had better go in. Fine as the night is, we have lungs and throats you know." She swept Camiola away with her, and they were presently immersed in the maddening crowd.

Camiola was for a while a solutely silent. The whole conditions of life seemed to have changed in a moment for her. She was as one who has suddenly been taken into charge by some being from another world, and is not yet quite certain whether it is Goethe's Mepphistopheles or Massinger's Angelo; a spirit of darkness or a spirit of light.

As Christian Pilgrim stood in the shadow he was joined by Romont, who had just left George.

"He's all right," Romont said; "he is not going to die this time; he'll be able to walk home presently, and nobody will know that anything happened to him."

"It's a pretty bad wound," Pilgrim said shaking his head.

"I wish to heaven I had the wound," Romont said, "and the balsam." He was thinking of the kisses he had seen laid on the lips of prostrate George Lisle. "And I suppose the fellow doesn't even know he got them," he thought in his own mind. "They were the work of an angel out of the sleep of death, I verily believe."

"What do you mean, Mr. Romont?" Pilgrim asked timidly; "what balsam?" He understood a meaning in Romont's words, but not their meaning, and Romont's expression puzzled him.

ing with antique courtesy, answering his bows as he came near, and as he went back to Mr. Merridew, you and I are both waiting around looking for some one. I have come to Fitzreaham to seek for a relation whom I may never find. And you are waiting for your daughter. May I ask if she has yet come?"

Merridew at first looked sharply and almost angrily at her when she spoke of his daughter. The subject was one which he was accustomed to hear of only in connection with jibes, and rudeness, and laughter. The feelings of the Fitzreaham public were not always very refined, and certain misfortunes were usually considered by them a legitimate theme for mirth.

"No; I have not yet heard from her," the poor little man said; "I came here, ma'am, with the thought that perhaps this was the place and this was the occasion when she might be fitting to make her reappearance; but, no; no. She comes not yet to glad her father's eyes, as the poet says."

"You have never told me all about her, Mr. Merridew; and I should much like to know. I should also like to tell you about my search for a relation, of whose very existence I am not certain. You may have lived some time in this place, and you must know everybody; you might help me in my search, perhaps, and I might help you."

"I don't talk about it much," he said, hurriedly; "here, in Fitzreaham, because people don't understand and are rude and vulgar; and don't believe; and laugh at their betters. The loud laugh, ma'am, speaks the vacant mind."

"I quite understand your caution; and I too am very slow about letting people in general know anything of my object in coming to this place. They wouldn't understand me; they would think me absurd. But you, Mr. Merridew, are not people in general; and I should not mind telling you."

Mr. Merridew was entirely overcome.

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her head is pretty well turned already, and she fancies every man who goes near her wants to marry her. I am not rich enough to put myself in the way of that sort of thing; I haven't anything but what a very dear old mother is good enough to give me, and I must keep clear of girls like Miss Sabine. But she's a very fine girl all the same; and any one who wants a handsome wife with plenty of money would do well to try his luck there. I don't; at least I shouldn't like to marry a woman who would always think that she had made me rich and that she ought to run the concern."

"Miss Lisle is a charming girl, I think," Walter said in a tentative way.

"A nice face; yes; and rather a clever sort of girl, I fancy. But she has too many views of life for my taste. I hadn't much talk with her. There were some pretty girls, I thought, among the crowd, if I may put it that way; little milliners and that sort of thing. I got alongside of a girl I used to see when I was acting my part of Alastair up yonder. I used to see her going and coming; but I never ventured to speak to her then. A workman must presume to speak to a milliner, go to! What would the world be coming to? There must be classes, we trust. But I had some talk with her tonight."

"Do you know her name?" Fitzreaham asked, with a misgiving and an uncomfortable anticipation.

"Oh, yes; I knew her name before. She's a very nice clever little girl; and, look here, just as modest and well behaved a girl as any you ever saw. I called her a milliner, but I don't think she is that. Her mother, I believe, is. She told me she was going in for being a private secretary to some great lady or other. I wish my mother wanted a private secretary, and I would recommend Miss Lammass."

Romont spoke quite seriously, and without any of the affectation of gallant gay Lotharioism which is common to young men of the upper class when they talk of pretty girls of the lower. But his words made Fitzreaham wince. This was his own particular sweetheart; this little Vinnie Lammass, about whom his companion was talking so easily and cheerily. Not for the world would he now have the fact known, he felt at that moment as if a gulf had opened between him and Vinnie, and all the time he was distinctly conscious of jealous pangs as he thought of Vinnie being talked to thus confidentially by this handsome young swell.

"I tell you what," the latter went on, "I don't know anything more awful than for a pretty and clever girl like that to be forced to live in that beastly place pent up with all these poor, miserable people. She never has any amusement of any kind, and I fancy she is very poor; in fact, she told me as much; and she has a good deal of ambition in a sort of way. Do you know what she told me? That she would give a year of her life to go once to a West End party and be properly rigged out for the occasion. She didn't say rigged out; that's my phrase. But think of that—a bright, pretty girl like that languishing to go to one of these horrible crushes that a man is only longing to run away from the moment he gets into it. By Jove, I should like to get my mother to take her to a West End party, just to let the dear little thing have her night of amusement and gratify her harmless little longing. Mother would do it if she were in town; she'd do it in a moment if I asked her and never think my harm."

"Oh, it would never do," Fitzreaham said, hastily.

"(To be continued.)"

CHAPTER IX.—Continued

"I am afraid you will be inclined to form wrong conclusions," she began, "about me, and about George Lisle. You saw me kiss him?"

"Yes, I saw you kiss him," Mrs. Pollen said, "more than once, too. What matter, Miss Sabine? I shan't tell. I think to kiss and tell is not a bit worse than to see a kiss and tell."

"But it isn't that," Camiola answered something hotly; "I don't care about being seen; I don't care if all the people see me kiss him. Then, I have known him a long time, and he has been fond of me, and he has kissed me, and I thought he was going to die, and why shouldn't I kiss him?"

"I am sure, my dear young lady, I know no reason why you shouldn't. I dare say I should have kissed him myself out of pure sympathy under the same conditions, although I have not known him a long time and am not particularly fond of him."

"But it isn't that," Camiola interrupted.

"Oh, it isn't that. Then what is it?"

"Well, perhaps you will think that George Lisle and I are engaged; that we are lovers."

"I don't think," said Mrs. Pollen quietly, "anything of the kind."

"I am very glad."

"I don't believe you are lovers; at least, I don't believe that you are in love with him. If it comes to that I know you are not." She lifted her eyes on Camiola's face. Camiola felt herself tremulous under the bold, deep eyes.

"My dear Miss Sabine," Mrs. Pollen said; "I don't want to know any of your secrets; at least I don't; but I can't help knowing your one particular secret now; and I do know it; and you know now that I know it."

"Oh for pity's sake; oh for Heaven's sake," Camiola implored, and she put her hands instinctively over her eyes. For Mrs. Pollen was right; Camiola felt too truly that Mrs. Pollen knew already that secret which twenty-four hours ago, two hours, she did not quite know herself. The sudden pang of shame which made her cry out Romont's name when she saw him kneeling beside her, and knew that he had seen her kiss George Lisle had first made her certain that she was in love with him.

"It does not matter my knowing it," Mrs. Pollen said. "Nobody will be any the wiser of it for me. I wouldn't have breathed a word of this to you, but that I do think it is right, and the part of one who wishes you well, to put you a little on your guard."

"On my guard against what?" Camiola asked with returning defiance, and meeting Mrs. Pollen's look now boldly enough.

"Against yourself, my dear, and for the sake of others. I know that you are, no first or commonplace beauty of any kind; I don't believe you are even very vain—for a handsome girl with a fortune, that is to say—"

"Oh, that everlasting fortune!" Camiola murmured between her teeth. "Must I always hear of it?"

"It is a nuisance to be rich, at least I find it so; but I don't know that I ever heard of anybody else who complained of it except you. But I speak out to you for your own good, and the good of other people; and wouldn't you be a woman with some heart and some brains. Make up your mind about this young Lisle."

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CHAPTER X.—TILL THE DAWN.

Fitzreaham felt himself floating in a very heaven of delight as the brougham rattled through the streets of the West End. The town was all alive as they drove down Piccadilly; there were strings of carriages waiting outside houses which had awnings spread over their doorways and carpets stretched beneath them. Little armies of footmen were in rapid manoeuvres. Ladies in evening dress and sparkling with diamonds were coming in and going out. The brougham had to drive slowly, to Walter's great delight. But he took care not to show any delight. He leaned back and put on as well as he could an air of incurious familiarity. But when his mind sometimes returned to the dull and dirty and decaying rows of houses with which he was familiar, to the darkness and squalor and meanness of the life which he had so lately left behind, he felt that the bottom of the Thames would be to him more welcome than a longer residence at Fitzreaham.

The brougham turned into St. James street. The windows of all the clubs were blazing with light. Men were walking along in evening dress, some with their light outer coats thrown carelessly over their arms. Fitzreaham noticed with a sort of wonder that no one seemed to look after them or take their appearance in the street in such attire as anything out of the common. If one were to parade the main street of Fitzreaham in evening dress the whole population would be after him. How many dress coats, he wondered, were there in the whole place?

Two or three doors out of St. James street the brougham stopped at a small old-fashioned house. "This is my den," Romont said, and opening the door with a latch key he cordially invited Fitzreaham to come in. Fitzreaham assumed when he saw the latch-key use that he would be shown into a house with one little jet of light burning for the illumination of the late comer, all the rest of the inmates being in bed. He found, however, that a respectable elderly gentleman in black came out to receive them. For a moment he forgot what he had already learned of his new friend's family, and he fancied this was Romont's father who had sat up probably to censure him for not coming home earlier. He had even a faint idea that he might himself come in for some of the blame. Seeing, however, that the respectable parent only came forward to take the coats off the late comers, Fitzreaham found the truth borne in upon him that the elderly stranger was his friend's servant. It was then clear that he was launched at once into a world of which he had up to that time only read or dreamed—a world in which young unmarried men kept valets, and thought nothing of it. To do him justice he quickly pulled himself together and was equal to the new and strange conditions in which he found himself. The conditions were not much less strange than those which surrounded the first waking moments of Abon Hassan in the Arabian Nights when he finds himself turned into the Commander of the Faithful.

Soda water, brandy, whiskey, cigars, cigarettes were produced; and Romont told his servant he might go to bed. The two young men began naturally to talk about the evening they had spent and the people they had met. Walter was longing to get into some conversation about Miss Lisle, and yet he was shy of approaching the subject too quickly and directly. He spoke first of Camiola, and launched forth in great praise of her beauty. Romont did not seem to be surprised about her. He merely said that she was a very nice girl, and that he had seen her some time ago. He then asked Walter in a tone of something like surprise whether he did not think her handsome.

"Oh, yes, I admired her; very much in fact; one can't help it; but I rather kept out of her way. I am shy of these women with lots of money; new rich people especially. This girl, I was told, has a big fortune, and the Lises are bringing her out; and I dare say

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It is reported that W. H. Vanderbilt is the chief stockholder in the new Metropolitan hotel on the Thames embankment, which is the largest hotel in London.

Ill-fitting boots and shoes cause corns. Holway's Corn Cure is the article to use.

A postal card was dropped in the Tusville post office a few days ago, signed "Mother," and addressed "Dear Frank." An agreement has been concluded between England and Germany fixing the frontier of the latter's possession in New Guinea.

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