



The Heir of Rosedene

OR, The Game-Keeper's Hut

CHAPTER XIX. CASTLES IN SPAIN.

"Bah!" interrupted Edward More—"what did you leave for—you did no good, I suppose?"

"On the contrary, I did a great deal for his highness, I hope," replied the imperturbable captain. "I have never been accused of cowardice, my friend, and there were some sharp brushes now and then. Yes, if I had stayed I should have come back to you a colonel, or a general, who knows? But I came back—that is what you want to know—in consequence of a little unfortunate affair with a brother officer. A foolish young Spaniard, with too much fire in his blood and too little discretion in the use of the rapier. Poor boy! He fancied that his little ladylove—a pretty little thing enough, your young friend, Miss Bromley, reminds me of her immensely—and I were too great friends; it was no fault of mine, I swear! The little girl would look at me with her black eyes, and it wasn't for me to tell her that though a cat may look at a king, a young girl, as handsome as herself, with a jealous young boy lover, must not look at another man.

"I liked the boy better than his little ladybird, but what was I to do? He forced a quarrel on me and—one mustn't smoke here, of course, not even a simple cigarette! Ah, well, you know best! Where was I? Oh, yes. He fell at the first thrust, straight through the left lung. I don't think he lived three minutes afterward," and with a gentle sigh the sensitive captain warmed his hands and looked pensively at Edward's horror-stricken and disgusted face.

"It turned out afterward that the boy was a near relation to Don Carlos himself, and so, as I have a horror of imprisonment in those dirty Spanish jails, and a still greater dislike to facing six muskets early in the morning, I thought it best to make for the frontier and pay a little visit to dear old England."

"But what made you come here?" asked Edward, after a significant pause.

The captain raised his eyebrows and smiled.

"Have I not told you?—well, well," as Edward More uttered a snarl and edged on his chair, "if you must know, I found London full of the prettiest little romances I had heard for a long time; you know all about it, and shall tell me the true version directly, and I was so filled with curiosity to see the beautiful heroine that, hearing you were here taking care of her, I came down. I knew

I should get a hearty welcome from my dear Edward!"

"His dear Edward" bit his lips and looked as if he would have liked to pitch the gentle captain out of the window.

"They said she was beautiful," resumed that fascinating gentleman, "and allowing for the exaggerations usual in such a case, I expected to see a pretty little girl of the dairymaid type; but, by Heaven, they were right! She is simply lovely!"

"You are talking of Miss Weston, I suppose," growled Edward.

"Of whom else is all London talking?" rejoined the captain. "Of whom else but of the girl who comes into a million of money, and of the man who refused her and it on the same day."

Edward More looked from under his frowning brows, and commenced to bite his nails.

"I doubted the million—I always make allowances for report and gossip," continued the captain, in a soft tone of self-communion, "but I distinctly refused to believe that any man could be so mad as to decline even half a million of money, though it was tied in a bundle with a charming young lady—and so I came down here to get a true version of this pretty little romance from your veracious lips. So proceed, my dear friend," he said, laying his hand on Edward More's knee, and looking up into his face with a smile full of confident power.

"I can't tell you any more of your you know already," said Edward More, irritably.

"The million is correct, then?" said the captain.

"I suppose so. I am not a trustee under John Weston's will, and I am not in Miss Weston's entire confidence. They say it is a million."

"A million!" echoed the captain, nodding gently at the fire. "And she has no one excepting that amiable but weak old lady to protect her?—barring you, my dear Edward, who are a host in yourself, of course."

"I don't know what you mean," growled Edward. "Miss Weston has plenty of people to protect her; she doesn't want for friends!"

"She would be the only millionaire who ever did!" said the captain, with a smile. "And there are no relatives—no grim uncle, or stern guardian—no one but yourself, my dear Edward?"

"Miss Weston lives alone with her aunt," replied Edward More. "What on earth do you want to know? What can it matter to you?"

The captain smiled.

"Tut! tut! All by herself. Poor little thing! And now, my dear Edward, to come to the most romantic chapter of the story; is it true that the head of our house—the rash and reckless—what is it you call the poor devil?—the wicked Sir Cyril, actually, of his own free will, refused this sweet, beautiful girl and her money—actually, to put it plainly, refused to take his chance of her declining him, and so handing him the whole million instead of half?"

Edward nodded sullenly.

"Yes, Cyril refused."

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cepted—if he had married this beautiful creature, your chance of becoming Sir Edward, of More Park, would have been small."

Edward's face went from red to white, but he said nothing. The captain watched him, with his head on one side, and his dark eyes gleaming keenly under the languid, half-closed lids.

"That was what concerned you, my dear Edward; and Cyril—foolish Sir Cyril!—did not even see her, you say?"

"I didn't say so," growled Edward; "but he didn't see her, as it happened."

"Never has seen her!"

"Never, that I am aware of," replied Edward.

The captain sat and nodded his handsome head at the fire thoughtfully.

"So!" he murmured, "there is something more in this than meets the eye. Suppose," and he turned a mocking smile upon the man he was tormenting, "supposing our dear brother, Sir Cyril, was married already?"

Edward More sprang to his feet with an oath, white in the face, and gasping.

"No!" he said at last, reeling into a chair, "you don't know that; I can see by your face. You'd have said it sooner if you had. No, he is not married."

"Not that I am aware of," said the captain, delighted by the spasm of terror which he had caused in the bosom of his friend. "No, I don't know it; I only said 'suppose.'"

"No, he is not married," said Sir Edward, biting his nails thoughtfully, "or I should have heard of it. He is too well known to do anything of that kind secretly; besides, the woman he married would have claimed her position. I wish I knew where he was—confound him!"

all you want to know—more than I can tell you, I've no doubt. Is it money you want? If so, for Heaven's sake say so out at once; you needn't hesitate—it won't be the first time you've asked me for it."

"Nor the last, I hope," muttered the captain, sweetly.

Edward glared at him savagely.

"How much is it? If it isn't too much, I'll try and get it for you, and you can go. Plainly, Morton, I don't care to have you here; you must go."

The captain stretched out his legs, and looked in the attitude he assumed as if he never meant to move again.

"How kind of you—how I value your candor! Yes, my dear Edward, I do want money—a lack of money is my normal condition; I never wanted it more than I do now, for, to tell you the truth, I was compelled to leave Spain, for which I had fought and bled—a gunshot wound on the left shoulder, nothing very serious, don't look so alarmed!—I left Spain so hurriedly that I had no time to bring away with me my dressing case, which was full of Bank of England notes!" He laughed softly at this piece of pleasantry, and then, in a musing voice, said: "Yes, five hundred pounds would be quite sufficient. Don't make it more, my dear Edward—I would rather you wouldn't."

"Look here, Morton, you have got no hold on me. I'm not under your thumb that you can extort money from me."

"Extort!" echoed the captain; "why my dear fellow, you offered it to me, like the generous-hearted creature you are."

"But I will give you two hundred and fifty pounds to leave the house to-morrow morning and never come into it again."

The captain looked at him with an amused smile.

"My dear Edward, I wouldn't leave this house to-morrow morning if you were to give me two hundred and fifty thousand!"

Edward More jumped up and frowned at him, too enraged to speak.

"Do you mean to say that you intend forcing yourself on the place?"

"I shall accept the pressing invitation which the young mistress of the house will give me to-morrow morning—or I am very much mistaken."

"You shall do no such thing," said Edward; "I say you shall not stay."

"I understood," murmured the captain, leaning back and addressing the ceiling; "it was very stupid of me; but I understood you to say that this house—one of the handsomest it has ever been my pleasure to visit—exquisite taste all through—was Miss Weston's! I did not know it was yours, my dear Edward."

"Hers or mine, that shall make no difference," said Edward, doggedly. "If you are not gone to-morrow, I shall expose you."

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AGAINST THE WITH- OF THE EAGLE AND

Committee Elected. Wednesday last to consid- the public grievances, in- one of the Eagle and the Por- of the close of navigation, a large and representative and the chair was taken

George W. Wilson. man, who was warmly re- the meeting, though call- the notice, was perhaps the people were now really in their determination to have their grievances of Bonne Bay than they were about the the Portia troubles. They to fight for their rights, their first but with their the platform, and he was Government and he com- would be compelled to the coast any longer. They were fortunate in Henry present; they rea- of the coast and they ed to have his assistance in making public the need which existed for ing out of North West Coast (Applause).

At the outset of a lengthy the serious business which had resulted from the withdrawal of the Eagle from the West Coast ser- his description of what took place at the meeting with Mr. Crobie Colonial Secretary, he ex- how the Eagle, loaded with cargo for the East coast, he- of the despatch of the Sunday, Jan. 10th, but the of Shipping felt himself com- reduce on the ground that he wanted a guarantee of four dollars a day in the event of held up in the ice. Mr. Crobie refused to give the guaran- Mr. Henry now took the the matter being one of this urgency, the Minister have threatened never to sign charter party with the own- that course failed, the Govern- appealed with a full state- facts to the people of the (Applause). He was sure gery would have supported sie. (Hear, hear). He com- that the Government had weakness in the matter, and the fullest details of the one to business interests and spher- men of the coast. One re- which fishermen had suffer- by the holding up of large in- of twine required for col- ed there was no question un- since sustained by merchants sur- men who had winter neces- ed up at St. John's. The fish- saved a serious blow as the of the official statement that the

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