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LADY IRIS' MISTAKE;

Hero of 'Surata'

CHAPTER X.

So by dint of thinking of it all day and dreaming of it at night, he came to look upon it as a certainty that he should be accepted when he should have the courage to ask for her hand. He contrived adroitly to keep himself always before her—to consult her about plans and schemes for the benefit of others. He blinded her completely as to his own feelings with regard to her.

"That he should presume to love her and one day ask her to be his wife never occurred to proud Lady Iris; but that he, a parvenu and the son of a man sprung from the ranks of the people, should seek the advice of a noble high-born lady; and receive it, when given to him, with gratitude, seemed a mere matter of course. She thought it an act of charity when she gave him half an hour of her time for the purpose of listening to and advising him. He was very cautious during those interviews; he never alluded to his love. He paid her every compliment, and she accepted his homage as a queen accepts that of a subject.

At length he grew bolder. The party at Chandos were so happy that Lord Caledon said it would be a great pity to break it up, so the invitations were extended, and John Bardon, amongst the number, remained. Lady Iris herself did not notice how much of the time he occupied, as he managed it so cleverly. He was like her shadow. If he saw her in the grounds, the library, or the drawing-room, he joined her at once; but it was always with the air and manner of one seeking a favor. At last she became accustomed to his deference and his humility, and accepted the homage offered to her rank and beauty as a natural and becoming tribute. He grew more and more elated; and one day he said to his sister—

"Marie, you see that I am making progress, do you not?"

His sister's calm face grew sorrowful as she answered—

"No! Pray do not be angry with me, John! I see that Lady Iris is kind to you, but, believe me, my dear, she does

not treat you as her equal—she does not, indeed. It is just as I have told you—her voice takes quite a different tone when she speaks to you. If I were to say frankly what I believe, it would be that she patronises you.

"It is not true!" he cried. "You are neither just nor reasonable. Why did she reject all the grand offers she had when in London? Why did she refuse that dandy Sir Fulke? Why does she treat with such perfect indifference all the men visiting her now? Shall I tell you why, Marie?"

"If you can," she said slowly.

"I will," he cried, with a fierce triumph. "It is because she cares for me! You will find my words come true—she cares for me; and very soon I shall ask her to be my wife. Oh, how I love her, Marie. There is no limit to her power over me; she can do what she will with me. I cannot live apart from her."

"Heaven help you, John!" said Marie, sadly. "Nothing that you tell me changes my opinion."

"Heaven help me, and Lady Iris also. If she sends me away, if she refuses me! I have not thought of that yet. As I feel now, I swear that she will never live to marry another man!"

"The earl was very kind to him, so John Bardon became more hopeful still. One morning, when Lord Caledon and John Bardon were out together, they saw Lady Iris in the distance, her white dress gleaming amongst the trees. John Bardon saw her first, and the earl's attention was drawn to him. He stood quite still; his face lost its ruddy hue and became pale, then flushed crimson. He took off his hat and remained bareheaded for some few minutes until she passed out of sight. Lord Caledon continued his conversation, but John Bardon no longer gave rational answers.

"What is the matter with you, Mr. Bardon?" asked the earl.

John Bardon turned his burning face to him.

"I might make twenty false excuses," he replied; "but I will not. There is nothing the matter except this—that I have seen Lady Iris."

"It seems to be quite enough," said Lord Caledon.

"It is almost too much for me, my lord," replied John Bardon. "That one spot where she stood then will be one of the most precious on earth to me—just as she herself is more precious to me than anything else in the world."

"You love my daughter then?" he said, quietly.

"Yes, my lord. 'Love' is a poor word. I worship her. All the strength of my manhood has gone into my love. Are you angry with me? Does my love displease you because of my humble birth?"

"No," replied the earl, his countenance changing. "I am not displeased. I have nothing to say about it. If my daughter loves you in return, I will raise no difficulties. I have resolved that in the matter of love and marriage she shall please herself. To my thinking, the greatest and indeed the only happiness in this world lies in love, and I hope that my daughter will marry for love."

"Then, if I can win her consent, I

have yours, my lord!" said John Bardon gladly.

"Yes, if you win it," answered the earl; "but—mind, I warn you—I do not think you will win it."

John Bardon turned hastily to him.

"May I ask, my lord, why not?" he said.

"Because the idea of marriage is not very pleasing to her."

"You do not think she will refuse me because I am not so—so well-born as herself; do you, my lord?"

"I cannot say. I should never object on that score. But I think it will be better for us not to discuss the subject. My daughter knows that she will have my sanction—within the bounds of reason of course—in respect of any marriage she may wish to make."

"Thank you, my lord," was the reply. "But it is a case of life or death with me. I worship her. I had not thought of saying anything about it to you; perhaps though, it is all for the best."

"I hope so," said the earl calmly. "One thing is certain, Mr. Bardon—the disclosure will make no difference. I shall not mention it to my daughter."

During the remainder of that day, whenever Lord Caledon thought of John Bardon, he said to himself, with a deep sigh—

"Poor fellow—I am sorry for him!"

CHAPTER XI.

John Bardon's adoration was ignored by Lady Iris Payne. His love she never even dreamed of; it was something far beneath her. She was kind to him from a sense of pity, and because she saw that his inferiority galled him. When with her, he never assumed any airs, never talked of the power of money, but always complained that he was at a disadvantage on account of his inferior birth.

"How many generations do you think it requires to make a gentleman?" he asked her one day, when they were talking together.

She looked at him gravely, and said—

"I do not know; I have never given the matter a thought."

"How many should you think, Lady Iris?" he persisted. "Supposing a man begins life as my father did, how many generations must elapse before his descendants become gentlemen?"

His lips were white and puffed, his face was in a quiver of suspense, as he waited for an answer. She forgot his great personal interest in the question, and spoke just what she thought.

"It is a matter that puzzles me. I should say that, if the descendant of an honest, honorable, humble born man who had made a fortune married into good families, they would become gentletalk in time."

His lips were white and puffed, his face was in a quiver of suspense, as he waited for an answer. She forgot his great personal interest in the question, and spoke just what she thought.

"In how long or how short a time?" he inquired.

(to be continued.)

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SITUATION

CONS

The situation and Turkish demands for serious Mustafa Kemal, General Hattori, which tenor, is com any circles to a pacific question. The conflict is more than previous demands that troops from Straits and have done, quiescence to nationalist forces central zone. Extension of wha rary measures ties in Cons the Turkish dem under the go shall be Dardanelles, protest against Turkish war It is felt in that they may conciliatory demands were ment they w tillery with side of the the passage of British vessels the British A and will be port of Turki of Marmora tween the Bri British also strategic posit Chantiga, east at Mal Teneh way facing positions are the Boethron Constantino

PATIENCE BE

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Spending SUN

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