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## J. G. EDWARDS.

Lindsay, Ont. SIGN OF THE ANVIL

Lin fray, Feb. 7, 1888 - 83,

#### The Canadian Yosi.

LINDSAY, FRIDAY, MARCHIIS, 1888.

#### COUNTESS NARONA.

(Continued from last week.) CE . PTER XXIV.

"My lord turns to the baron (who has thus far taken no part in the conversation) and asks him, in a sneering tone, how much longer he proposes to prolong his stay in Venice. The baron answers quietly, 'Let us speak plainly to one another, my lord. If you wish me to leave your house you have only to say the word, and I go.' My lord turns to his wife, and asks if she can support the calamity of her brother's absence—laying a grossly insulting emphasis on the word 'brother.' The countess preserves her impenetrable com-posure; nothing in her betrays the deadly hatred with which she regards the titled ruffian who has insulted her. 'You are master in this house, my lord,' is all she says.

'Do as you please.'
"My lord looks at his wife: looks at the baron—and suddenly alters his tone. Does he perceive in the composure of the counters and her brother something lurking under the surface that threatens him? This is at least certain, that he makes a clumsy apology for the language that he has used. (Abject

wretch!)
"My lord's excuses are interrupted by the return of the courier with the lemons and bot

"The countess observes for the first time that the man looks ill. His hands tremble as he places the tray on the table. My lord orders his courier to follow him, and makes the lemonade in the bedroom. The countess remarks that the courier seems hardly capable of obeying his orders. Hearing this the man admits that he is ill. He, too, is suffering from a cold; he has been kept waiting in a draught at the shop where he bought the lemons; he feels alternately hot and cold, and he begs permission to lie down for a little while on his bed.

"Feeling her humanity appealed to, the countess volunteers to make the lemonade herself. My lord takes the courier by the arm, leads him aside and whispers these words to him: 'Watch her, and see that she puts nothing into the lemonade; then bring it to me with your own hands, and then go to "Without a word more to his wife or to the

baron my lord leaves the room. courier takes it to his master.

"Returning on the way to his own room he is so weak and feels, he says, so giddy, that he is obliged to support himself by the backs of the chairs as he passes them. The haron, always considerate to persons of low degree, offers his arm. 'I am afraid, my poor fellow,' he says, 'that you are really ill.' The courier makes this extraordinary answer: 'It's all over with me, sir; I have caught my death. "The countess is naturally startled. 'You

are not an old man, she says, trying to rouse the courier's spirits. 'At your age catching cold doesn't surely mean catching your death! The courier fixes his eyes despairingly on the countess.

'My lungs are weak, my lady,' he says, 'I have already had two attacks of bronchitis. The second time a great physician joined my own doctor in attendance on me. He considered my recovery almost in the light of a miracle. "Take care of yourself," he said. "If you have a third attack of bronchitis, as certainly as two and two make four you will be a dead man." I feel the same inward shivering, my lady, that I felt on those two former occasions—and I tell you again, I have caught my death in Venice.' "Speaking some comforting words, the

baron leads him to his room. The counters is left alone on the stage. "She seats berself, and looks toward the

door by which the courier has been led out. 'Ahl my poor fellow,' she says, 'if you could only change constitutions with my lord what a happy result would follow for the baron and for me! If you could only get cured of a trumpery cold with a little hot lemonade, and if he could only catch his death in your "She suddenly pauses—considers for awhile

and springs to her feet with a cry of triumphant surprise: the wonderful, the unparalleled idea has crossed her mind like a flash of lightning. Make the two men change names and places, and the deed is done!
Where are the obstacles? Remove my lord by fair means or foul-from his room and keep him secretly prisoner in the palace, to live or die as future necessity may determine. Place the courier in the vacant bed and call in the doctor to see him-ill, in my lord's character, and-if he dies-dying under my lord's name."

The manuscript dropped from Henry's bands. A sickening sense of horror overpowared him. The question which had occurred at the close of the first act of the play assumed a new and terrible interest now. As far as the scene of the countess' soliloquy, the incidents of the second act had reflected the the events of his late brother's life as faithfully as the incidents of the first act. Was the monstrous plot revealed in the lines which he had just read, the offspring of the countess morbid imagination; or had she in this case also deluded herself with the idea that she was inventing when she was really writing under the influence of her own guilty remembrance of the past? If the latter interpreta-tion were the true one, he had just read the narrative of the contemplated murder of his brother, planued in cold blood by a woman who was at that moment inhabiting the same | dos house with him. While, to make the fatality complete, Agnes herself had innocently provided the conspirators with the one man who wided the conspirators with the one man who find your engagements toward me faithfully

Even the bare doubt that it might be so, was more than he could endure. He left his his part in the conspiracy, and die tif he does room; resolved to force the truth out of the countess, or to denounce her before the

son just leaving the room. The person was the manager. He was hardly recognizable: he looked and spoke like a man in a state of

"Oh, go in, if you like?" he said to Henry. "Mark this, sir!. I am not a superstitions man; but I do begin to believe that crimes carry their own curse with them. This hotel to under a curse. What happens in the more

From time to time, she drew a heavy stertorous breath, like a person oppressed in sleeping. "Is she likely to die?" Henry asked.

"She is dead," the doctor answered. "Dead of the rupture of a blood vessel on the brain. Those sounds that you hear are purely mechanical—they may go on for boure."

Henry looked at the chambermaid. She nad little to tell. The countess had refused to go to bed, and had placed herself at her desk to proceed with her writing. Finding it ussless to remonstrate with her, the maid had left the room to speak to the manager. In the shortest possible time the doctor was summoned to the hotel, and found the countess dead on the floor. There was this to tell, and no more.

out, Henry saw the sheet of paper on which the countess had traced her last lines of writing. The characters were almost illegible.
Henry could just distinguish the words, "First
Act," and "Persons of the Drama." The lost wretch had been thinking of her play to the last, and had begun it all over again! CHAPTER XXVII.

The one chance of relieving his mind from the dreadful uncertainty that oppressed it, by obtaining positive evidence of the truth,

He walked up and down the room. After an interval, his thoughts took a new direction; the question of the manuscript presented itself under another point of view. Thus far, his reading had only informed him that the conspiracy had been planned. How did he know that the plan had been put in ex-

floor. He hesitated—then picked it up; and, returning to the table, read on as follows, from the point at which he had let off:

which she has discovered, the baron returns. "'Let us have medical help by all means,"

his sister replies. 'But wait and hear something that I have to say to you first.' She then electrifies the baron by communicating her ideas to him. What danger of discovery have they to dread? My lord's life in Venice has been a life of absolute seclusion; nobody but his banker knows him, even by personal appearance. He has presented his letter of credit as a perfect stranger; and he and his banker have never seen each other since that first visit. He has given no parties, and gone to no parties. On the few occasions when he has hired a gondola or taken a walk, he has always been alone. Thanks to the atrocious suspicion which makes him ashamed of being seen with his wife, he has led the very life which makes the proposed enterprise easy of

"The cautious baron listens—but gives no positive opinion as yet. 'See what you can do with the courier,' he says, 'and I will decide when I hear the result. One valuable hint I may give you before you go. Your man is easily tempted by money—if you only offer him enough. The other day I asked him in jest what he would do for £1,000. He answered anything. Bear that in mind, and offer your highest bid without bargaining. en I hear the result. One valuable "The scene changes to the courier's room

"She wisely begins by sympathizing with her contemplated accomplice. He is duly grateful; he confides his sorrows to his gracious mistress. Now that he believes himself to be on his deathbed he feels remorse for his neglectful treatment of his wife. He could resign himself to die, but despair overpowers him when he remembers that he has saved no

without resources, to the mercy of the world "On this hint the countess speaks. 'Suppose you were asked to do a perfectly easy thing,' she says; 'and suppose you were re-

"The courier raises himself on his pillow, of incredulous surprise. She can hardly be what this perfectly easy thing is, the doing of which will meet with such a magnificent

"The countess answers that question by confiding her project to the courier, without the slightest reserve.

a religious man; but I feel myself on the way to it. Since your ladyship has spoken to me, I believe in the devil.' It is the countess' interest to see the humorous side of this confession of faith. She takes no offense. She only says, 'I will give you half an hour by yourself, to think over my proposal. You are in danger of death. Decide, in your wife's interests, whether you will die worth nothing, or die worth a thousand pounds.'

"Left alone, the courier seriously considers his position—and decides. He rises with dif-

of the half hour's interval, finds the room empty While she is wondering the courier opens the door. What has he been doing our of his bed! He answers: 'I have been protecting my own life, my lady, on the bare chance that I may recover from the bronchitis for the third time. If you or the baron attempt to hurry me out of this world or to deprive me of my £1,000 reward I shall tell the doctor where he will find a few lines of writing which describes your ladyship's plot. I may not have strength enough, in the case supposed, to betray you by making a complete confession with my own lips, but I can imploy my last breath to speak the half lozen words which will tell the doctor where

"With this audacious preface he proceed to state the condition on which he will play

die) worth £1 000 Enther the countess or the baron are to taste the food and drink brought to his bedside, in his presence, and even the medicines which the doctor may prescribe for him. As for the money, it is to be produced in one hank note, folded in a sheet of paper, on which a line is to be written, dictated by the courier. The two inclosures are then to be sealed up in an envelope, addressed to his wife, and stamped ready for the post. This done, the letter is to be placed under his pillow; the heren or the sountess biting ust liberty to satisfy themselves, day by day at their one tane, that the letter remains in its place, with the seal unbroken, as long as the disting has say hope of his patients, reservence. The set stipulation follow. The sources has a quistience; and within the to be surface to the separation of the place which relates to the separation of my lord. Not that he cares substitularly what becomes of his miserly mestangiant he does disting other people's responsibilities on his own shoulders.

"These conditions being agreed to, the counters calle in the baron, who has been waiting events in the next room.
"He is informed that the courier has yielded

to temptation: but he is still too cautious to make any compromising remarks. Keeping his back turned on the bed, he shows a bottle to the counters. It is labeled 'chloroform.' She understands that my lord is to be removed from his room in a convenient state of insensibility. In what part of the palace is he to be hidden? As they open the door to go out, the countess whispers that question to the baron. The baron whispers back, 'In the vaults!' On those words, the curtain falls."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

So the second act ended. Turning to the third act Henry looked wearily at the pages as he let them slip

through his fingers. Both in mind and body he began to feel the need of repose.

In one important respect the latter portion of the manuscript differed from the pages which he had just been reading. Signs of an overwrought brain showed themselves here and there as the outline of the play approached its end. The handwriting grew proached its end. The handwriting grew worse and worse. Some of the longer sentences were left unfinished. In the exchange tences were left unfinished. In the exchange of dialogue questions and answers were not always attributed respectively to the right speaker. At certain intervals the writer's failing intelligence seemed to recover itself for awhile, only to relapse again and to lose the thread of the narrative more hopelessly

After reading one or two of the more co-After reading one or two of the more co-herent passages Henry recoiled from the ever darkening horror of the story. He closed the manuscript, heart sick and exhausted, and threw himself on his bed to rest. The door opened almost at the same moment. Lord Montbarry entered the room.

"We have just returned from the opera," he said, "and we have heard the news of that miserable woman's death. They say you spoke to her in her last moments, and I want to hear how it happened."

"You shall hear how it happened," Henry
answered; "and more than that. You are

now the head of the family, Stephen; and I feel bound, in the position, which oppresses me, to leave you to decide what ought to be With those introductory words, he told his

brother how the countess' play had come into his hands. "Read the first few pages," he said, "I am anxious to know whether the same impression is produced on both of us."

Before Lord Montbarry had got half way through the first act, he stopped, and looked at his brother. "What does she mean by boasting of this as her own invention;" he asked. "Was she too crasy to remember that

these things really happened?"

This was enough for Henry; the same impression had been produced on both of them, "You will do as you please," he said. "But if you will be guided by me, spare yourself the reading of those pages to come, which describe our brother's terrible expiation of his heartless marriage."

"Have you read it all, Henry?"
"Not all. I shrunk from reading some of the latter part of it. Neither you nor I saw much of our elder brother after we left confidence—I believe Agnes will marry you. school; and for my part, I felt, and never Good night, Henry. We leave Venice the haved infamously to Agnes. When I read that unconscious confession of the murderous conspiracy to which he fell a victim, I remembered, with something like removes that membered, with something like remorse, that the same mother bore us. I have felt for him to-night, what I am ashamed to think I never felt for him before." Lord Montbarry took his brother's hand.

"You are a good fellow, Henry," he said; "but are you quite sure that you have not been needlessly distressing yourself? Because some of this crazy creature's writings acsilentally tells what we know to be the truth. does it follow that all the rest is to be relied on to the end?"

"There is no possible doubt of it," Henry "No possible doubt!" his brother repeated "I shall go on with my reading, Henry-and see what justification there may be for that

confident conclusion of yours." He read on steadily until he had reached the conclusion of the second act. Then he looked up. "Do you really believe that the mutilated

remains which you discovered this morning are the remains of our brother?" he asked "And do you believe it on such evidence as this Henry answered silently by a sign in the

affirmative. Lord Montbarry checked himself-eviiently on the point of entering an indignant

protest.
"You acknowledge that you have not read."
"Ton?" the later scenes of the piece," he said. "Don't be childish, Henry. If you persist in pinning your faith on such stuff as this the least you can do is to make yourself thoroughly acquainted with it. Will you read the third act? No? Then I shall read it to you." He turned to the third act, and ran over

those fragmentary passages which were clearly enough expressed to be intelligible to the mind of a stranger.

"Here is a scene in the vanits of the palace,

he began. "The victim of the conspiracy is sleeping on his miserable bed; and the baron and the countess are considering the position in which they stand. The countess (as well as I can make it out) has raised the money that is wanted by borrowing on the security of her jewels at Frankfort; and the courier up stairs is still declared by the doctor to have a chance of recovery. What are the conspirators to do if the man does recover! The cautious baron suggests setting the prisoner free. If he ventures to appeal to the law it is easy to declare that he is subject to insane delusion and to call his own wife as a witness. On the other hand, if the courier dies, how is the sequestrated and unknown nobleman to be put out of the way? Passively, by letting him starve in his prison? No; the baron is a man of refined tastes; he dislikes needless cruelty. The active policy remains. Say, assassination by the knife of a hired bravo? The baron objects to trusting an accomplice; also to spending money on any one but himself. Shall they drop there are the carelle The heavy decline. prisoner into the canal? The baron declines to trust water-water will show him on the surface. Shall they set his bed on fire? An excellent idea; but the smoke might be seen. No; poisoning is no doubt an easier death than he deserves, but there is really no other

safe way out of it than to poison him. Is it possible, Henry, that you believe this consultation really took place?

Henry made no replay. The succession of questions that nad just peen read to nim extactly followed the succession of the dreams that had terrified Mrs. Norbury on the two nights which she had repeal at the hotel. It nights which she had passed at the hotel. It was useless to point out this coincidence to his brother. He only said, "Go on."

Lord Montbarry turned the pages until he came to the next intelligible passage.

"Here," he proceeded, "is a double scene on the stage, so far as I can understand the sketch of it. The doctor is up stairs, innocently writing the certificate of my lead's decease, by the dead courier's badside. Downing the vanit the haron stands by the dead courier's badside. decease, by the dend courier's because lawre-in the vanit the baron stands by the corpus of the mandared lood, proparing the strong chemical acids which are to reduce it to a

"The third act," he said, "seems to be divi-ded into two parts or tableaus. I think I can ded into two parts or tableaus. I think I can read the writing at the beginning of the second part. The baron and the countess open the scene. The baron's hands are mysteriously concealed by gloves. He has reduced the body to askes by his own system of cremation, with the exception of the head.—Henry interrupted his brother there. "Don't read any more!" he exclaimed.

"Let us do the countess justice," Lord Montbarry persisted. "There are not a half a dozen lines more that I can make out. The accidental breaking of his jar of acid has

accidental breaking of his jar of acid has burned the baron's hands severely. He is still unable to proceed to the destruction of the head, and the counters is woman enough (with all her wickedness) to shrink from attempting to take his place—when the first news is received of the coming arrival of the commission of inquiry dispatched by the insurance offices. The baron feels no alarm. Inquire as the commission may, it is the nat-ural death of the courier (in my lord's character) that they are blindly investigating.
The head not being destroyed, the obvious alternative is to hide it—and the baron is equal to the occasion. His studies in the old library have informed him of a safe place of concealment in the palace. The countess may recoil from handling the acids and watching the process of cremation, but she can surely sprinkle a little disinfecting pow-

"No more!" Henry reiterated. "No more!" "There is no more that can be read, my dear fellow. The last page looks like sheer delirium. She may well have told you that her invention had failed her!" "Face the truth honestly, Stephen-and say

her memory."

Lord Montbarry rose from the table at which he had been sitting, and looked at his brother with pitying eyes.

"Your nerves are out of order, Henry," he said. "And no wonder, after that frightful discovery under the hearthstone. We won't dispute about it; we will wait a day or two until you are quite yourself again. In the meantime, let us understand each other on one point at least. You leave the question of what is to be done with these pages of writing to me, as the head of the family!"

Lord Montbarry quietly took up the manuscript and threw it into the fire. "Let this rubbish be of some use," he said, holding the pages down with the poker. "The room is getting chilly—let the countess' play set some of these charred logs flaming again." He waited a little at the fireplace, and returned to his brother. "Now, Henry, I have a last word to say, and then I have done. I am ready to admit that you have stumbled by an unlucky chance on the proof of a crime ommitted in the old days of the palace, nobody knows how long ago. With that one oncession I dispute everything else. Rather than agree in the opinion you have formed, I won't believe anything that has happened. The supernatural influences that some of us felt when we first slept in this hotel—your loss of appetite, our sister's dreadful dreams, the smell that overpowered Francis and the head that appeared to Agnes—I declare them all to be sheer delusions! I believe in nothing, nothing, nothing!" He opened the door to go out, and looked back into the room. "Yes," he resumed, "there is one thing I believe in. My wife has committed a breach of famously to Agnes. When I read So Lord Montbarry disposed of the mysmscious confession of the murderous tery of "The Haunted Hotel."

A last means of deciding the difference of opinion between the two brothers was still in Henry's possession. He had his own idea of the use to which he might put the false teeth, as a means of inquiry, when his fellow travelers returned to England. The only surviving depository of the do

mestic history of the family, in past years, was Agnes Lockwood's old nurse. Henry took his first opportunity of trying to revive her personal recollections of the deceased Lord Montbarry. But the nurse had never forgiven the great man of the family for his desertion of Agnes: she flatly refused to consult her memory. "Even the bare sight of my lord, when I last saw him in Loudon," said the old woman, "made my finger nails itch to set their mark on his face. I was sent on an errand by Miss Agnes, and I met him coming out of the dentist's door-and, thank God, that's the last I saw of him."

Thanks to the nurse's quick temper and quaint way of expressing herself, the object of Henry's inquiries was gained already! He ventured on asking if she had noticed the situation of the house. She had noticed and still remembered the situation—"did Master Henry suppose she had lost the use of her senses, because she had happened to be nigh on 80 years old?" The same day he took the false teeth to the dentist, and set all further doubt (if doubt had still been possible), at rest forever. The teeth had been made for the first Lord Montbarry. Henry had never revealed the existence of

this last link in the chain of discovery to any living creature, his brother Stephen included. He carried his terrible secret with him to the

There was one other event in the memorable past on which he preserved the same com-passionate silence. Little Mrs. Ferrari never knew that her husband had been—not, as she supposed, the countess' victim—but the countess' accomplice. She still believed that the late Lord Montbarry had sent her the £1,000 note, and still recoiled from making use of a present, which she persisted in declaring had "the stain of her husband's blood Agnes, with the widow's entire approval,

took the moncy to the Children's hospital; and spent it in adding to the number of the

In the spring of the new year the marriage took place. At the special request of Agnes, the members of the family were the only persons present at the ceremony; the three children acted as bridesmaids. There was no wedding breakfast—and the honeymoon was spent in the retirement of a cottage on the canks of the Thames.

During the last few days of the residence of the newly married couple by the river side, Lady Montbarry's children were invited to enjoy a day's play in the garden.
The eldest girl overheard (and reported to her
mother) a little conjugal dialogue which
souched on the subject of the Haunted Hotel. "Henry, I want you to give me a kiss."

"There it is, my dear." "Now I am your wife, may I speak to you ebout something?"
"What is it?"

"Something that happened the day before that we left Venice. You saw the counters during the last six hours of her life. Won's you ten me whether she made any contession to von Pf "No conscious confession, Agnes—and therefore no confession that I need distress you by

"Did she my nothing about what she saw or heard on that dreadful night in my room?" "Nothing. We only know by the event

Agnes was not quite satisfied. The subject soubled her, swn brief in accourse with her

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Having introduced the latest improved Roller System for the manufacture of FLOUR they are new prepared to fill all orders with the patent article. Of Chepping done at all times, 72

DOBSON & CAMPRELL. N. B.—Baker's trade a specialty.

Beaverton, July7, 1887.-52-1y

authorities as a murderess at large. Arrived at her door, he was met by a pering? We discover a crime committed in the old days of the palace. The night comes, and brings another dreadful, event with here death; a sudden and sheeking death, in the house, Go in, and see the yearser? I daily resign my situation, Mr. Westwick; I carrie contend with the fatalities that pursue me here?

Henry entered the room. The countess was stretched on her hed. The doctor on one side and the chambermaid on the other, were standing looking at her. From time to time, she drew a heavy sterior-

Looking at the writing table as he went

Henry returned to his room.

His first impulse was to throw aside the manuscript, and never to look at it again. was a chance annihilated by the counters death. What good purpose could be served, what relief could be anticipate, if he read

The manuscript lay just before him on the

"While the countess is still absorbed in the bold yet simple combination of circumstances He takes a serious view of the case of the courier; it may be necessary, he thinks, to send for medical advice. No servant is left in the palace, now the English maid has taken her departure. The baron himself must fetch the doctor, if the doctor is really needed.

and shows the poor wretch with a photo-graphic portrait of his wife in his hand, crying. The countess enters.

money, and that he will leave his widow

warded for doing it by a present of £1,000 as a legacy for your widow? and looks at the countess with an expression cruel enough (he thinks) to joke with a man in his miserable plight. Will she say plainly

"Some minutes of silence follow when she has done. The courier is not weak enough yet to speak without stopping to think first. Still keeping his eyes on the countess, he makes a quaintly innocent remark on what he has just heard. 'I have not hitherto been

ficulty; writes a few lines on a leaf taken from his pocket book; and with slow and faltering steps leaves the room. "The countess, returning at the expiration

melodramatic hoppers as these. Let us get on! let us get on! on! let us get on!\*

He turned the leaves again; attempted vainly to discover the meaning of the confused scenes that followed. On the last page but one he found the last intelligible sen

the counters' prediction. "You nave to bring me to the day of diservery and to the punishment that is my doon." Had the prediction dimply filled like other martal prophering the had a been fulfilled, on the memorable night when she had seen the apparition, and when she had innocently tempted the counters to watch her in her room? to watch her in her room!

to watch her in her room?

Let it, however, be recorded among the other virtues of Mrs. Hearly Westwick, that she never again attempted to persuade her handsaid into betraying his secrets. Other men's wives, hearing of this extraordinary consinct fand being trained in the modern school of morals and manners asturally. They always spoke of Agnes, from that time forth, as rather an old fashioned person.

In that all!

Is that all! That is all. Is there no explanation of the mystery of the Haunted Hotel?

Ask yourself if there is any explanation of the mystery of your own life and death. Farewell. E. Gregory.

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MOR SALE .- Five thoroughbred Dur Lam Buils from 11 to 16 months old, got by Uxford (imp.), bred by S. Campbell of Scotland. He never was beat in the show ring. Three of the yeung Buils took 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes at Cobourg Central. For further particulars apply to the undersigned, S. BARCLAY & SON, Dale P. U. 3; miles N. E. of Port Hope; lot 3i, con. 2, Hamilton Township. Feb. 1, 1886.—86 6.

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