

MR. BARNES OF NEW YORK

BY A. C. GUNTER.

"And you can do nothing?" "Even with instruments I could not save him—the artery is so destroyed! Now will you tell him or shall I?" "You!" says the Englishman, "for I might have received the physician's apology and this would not have happened. I feel as if his death was upon me!" He goes sadly to the boy upon whose forehead dark hair is ready placed in his hand and made to white, and kisses him and says "Farewell!" then turns away and looks out on the water, though he can hardly see—for the moment his eyes are dim with sorrow.

Kicking the pistol away with his foot, Barnes places himself beside his now almost helpless sufferer, takes his head upon his lap, moistens his forehead with the spirits Mateo has brought, and pours water down his throat, for the boy breaths with difficulty. Then bending down to him he whispers that he is to die!

And the dying murmurs back to him, "I have guessed that I would not live, ever since the bullet struck me. That was the reason I tried to stand up for another shot—I wished to kill him, that he might pass away with me, and I might leave my vengeance to my sister and my kin—but it always comes to us in the third generation!" "What comes?" whispers Barnes, half-recalling the words of Marina.

"The Vendetta! I have left my sister one!" and then he sighs, and after a gasp or two continues "I had sooner she forgot me than that the memory of my death destroyed her life." His words are very faint now. The American suddenly thinks if he can perhaps compress and hold the artery with his hand so as to partially stop the fearful flow of blood, he may keep life in his sister. But as he stoops down to do so, there is a noise of horses, and of people dismounting in haste, and the sound of voices in the distance, curiously like the one murmuring in his ear, now that it is subdued and sad.

Whether in our last moment upon earth some occult power from the world we are to enter, comes to us and gives us faculty to see and know things that in the flesh would not be possible, or not be known, for none return to tell us; but as Barnes hears, the dying boy seems to see through the cliffs of solid rock and the white walls of the little inn and the orange grove that stands before him and sees the face of the murderer, "My sister!—She is there!—I see her!"—and he talks to himself, describing her dresses, and kisses her flowers and smiles, and then struggling to his feet gives one last and great cry of welcome to "MARINA!" and falls backward on the beach.

And from behind the inn comes her voice in happy return, "Antonio! My brother! I am here!" But as she speaks death comes and takes the boy, leaving the smile of welcome on his face.

De Belloc with a hoarse voice, after a muttered prayer or curse, says—"My God. It is his sister!" and takes up the pistol to hide it from her. She sees him and looks on the balcony above, turns with a little laugh to Daniela and Tomasso who follow her, crying merrily, "He is here—I see heard his voice!" while she looks eagerly about for him.

self wondering if the girl has a pretty name—the next instant he hears it. "Enid," says the older lady, "is the daughter to your dress bad enough to make you return to the hotel?" "No," (reflectively) "only a gather gone," and in the hundred this gown has, one won't be missed. Barnes says "I don't show you that curious picture; and to-day is my last chance!" "That isn't the one, I hope," says her companion.

"Why not?" they exist, don't they? I'm not blind, I have ears. I can't ignore that picture, and say it isn't against that wall; but though I may not admire the art that stoops to dignify such women and make heroines of them, I can't say I despise the woman in the picture so much as I do that man there who is talking about her." She indicates, by her glance, the Cattle King, who is eagerly asking the address of "La Belle Blackwood," and telling the man nearest to him, "That he'll look her up; he's an old friend of her family, he is—and he'll spend the price of a thousand steers to give her a high time, he is in Paris for pleasure, he is; this is his week off; Mrs. Ruggles is in London!"

But summing up desperate assurance, he replies nonchalantly, "Everyone knows that who lives in Paris; it's 42 Rue du Eldred. You'd know it too, if you could read French, Ruggles. I saw it in this morning's Figaro!" "Ah! much obliged," says Ruggles. "You young bloods, are always a little ahead of us old boys!" He gives him a leer for which Barnes would have killed him, and jots down the address.

If mental curses could destroy, the Cattle King would have a stroke of paralysis on the spot, for the would-be-innocent Barnes sends him to the lowest level, under his breath, with a vigor and earnestness that would settle a much tougher subject, as he reflects on the probable pleasing effect this little passage may produce on the young lady's opinion and reception of him, when the first words he hears are, "That you've now firmly made up your mind shall do."

He does not dare to turn round and look at the girl, but has an idea that she is trying to see if he has a very wicked and depraved face behind the back of his blushing neck. This idea becomes a certainty as he hears the British matron say to her, "Enid, don't look at that modern Faust any longer!" A moment after she is addressed as Miss Anstruther, by a gentleman who stops to speak to the two ladies.

I knew she had a pretty name, thinks Barnes, for he has been putting two and two together; and two and two in this case produce Enid Anstruther, who has not yet entered the room. This man who has the appearance of a picture dealer, and many of the general attributes of the speculator who loves the art for the sake of it, is engaged to see the picture, and he says, "Enid, a good day for you, with a slight flourish accent—" "Horrible, indeed!" returns Barnes with almost a shudder, for the picture is so vivid that he feels the dying boy again in his eye.

His emotion seems to excite the curiosity of the man beside him as he suggests, "Monsieur is interested in the picture?" "Very much!" "Is that (a slight inquiry on the word). "It is not a great work; the artist is young, I believe!" "You know her then?" "Her!" the man looks confused, but after a moment he says, "Yes; I've seen her once; you see, I bought her picture, and the thing cheap! I'd buy it. It's so beautiful! Some people are morbid in their tastes and will pay more for a first-class order than for a masterpiece from the brush of Gerome or Detalle.—I am an art dealer!"

"So I guessed!" replies Barnes. "I suppose if Meissonier would do my own brutal modern assassination by his genius, you'd get a good deal for it!" "A fortune!—I had!" exclaims a crime I once investigated—"Here the man checks himself suddenly and says, "You wish to purchase this, Monsieur?" "No! I wouldn't like it for a gift! It brings back unpleasant memories too vividly; I almost see it now!" and the American again thinks of the fatal morning and becomes grave.

is a practical woman, says, what nonsense! You have plenty of flesh and blood adorns, Enid!" The reply makes Barnes start. "Oh! he's flesh and blood too; this is not an ideal, it's a portrait!" "Why do you think that?" says Barnes. "You know I told you what at first made me so interested in the picture—that letter from Egypt. It rather reminded me of the affair, especially that lucky penny episode on the canvas; so I came to see the picture several times and got to studying the morbid horror of the thing, and then became interested in the faces—especially in his—but I wasn't very desperate about him till I became jealous."

"I feared I had a rival!" this last with simulated melodramatic intensity. "A rival!" almost screams the now astounded British matron. "Great Heavens! Did you think that canvas thing could be said to you?" "No! But I feared another loved him also; a Spanish, Italian foreign girl used to linger at a little distance, gazing lovingly at that part of the picture, and she pointed to Barnes supporting the dying boy." "A Frenchman generally was with her; and one day—I presume she had noticed my interest in the picture—she came to me and asked me point blank why I looked at that canvas so much. As I did not care to tell her the Egyptian matter, and that I was spirit with the face of the man who pined! And then she said to me in a little sad smile, 'Yes, he pined—but be careful, don't love him too much; he lives!' To which I replied, 'You'd better take care of your own heart—you look at him quite tenderly yourself—'

"And she?" suggests Mrs. Vavasour. "She said, 'It is the dying man I look at—was my brother.' Then she went away. For a month by questioning the attendant, that she had painted the picture of her brother's murderer—a nice, morose, morbid taste, wasn't it?" "Not a bit more morbid than giving your heart to a man on canvas," suggests Mrs. Vavasour.

"Do you think so? I find it very convenient. I can have a rendezvous with him whenever I please; and he never makes love to me in return, nor says things that make me feel like a poor wretch; and he doesn't touch my fingers suffer, nor does something that causes me to get on my dignity and keep him at a distance; but, as this is our last interview, I've brought you with me, Mrs. Vavasour, that our parting may not be too tender," laughs the girl.

"Enid! you're not insane enough to ever expect to meet this man!" "No such luck, I'm afraid," says the girl in playful sadness. "And if he looks like that I should adore him! The rest—and she points to the picture—'have triumph, hate or rage in their faces—but pity, none! My darling,' here the girl looks at the man with her conceals, 'has pity. I know he could fight as well as the bravest of them, and love—much better!' and she gives the Mr. Barnes on the canvas a look of such bewitching tenderness that the man's face grows soft and blood almost crazy with rapture.

Mrs. Barnes has not overheard the whole of this conversation, but he has caught enough to make him slightly inebriated, and he now has wild dreams of introducing himself as the only representative of the being she loves. However, a little remaining sanity prevents this impertinence.

"But if you meet him, would you marry him?" asks Mrs. Vavasour, who now with true maternal spirit, has become interested in making a match for the girl, even wish a man on canvas.

"Who can tell? We seldom marry first loves—what nonsense! Of course we'll never see each other; and if we did, I should probably hate him!"—Then turning to the picture, Miss Anstruther said: "Good-bye, my darling; if I were rich I'd buy you; and we'd never part; but poverty so often separates lovers in this world."

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[To be continued.]

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