By May Agnes Fleming

and his arms and smred in the

ndre's face! I'm not given to

nervousness, but I felt a sensation

skin to an ague shiver, as I watched

With his fierce passionate nature,

will turn him into a perfect

demon," said Lord Villiers; "and if

ever he escapes, woe to those who

have caused his disgrace ! He is as

relentless as a Corsican in his ven-

"Has he any friends or relatives

"I don't know. I think I heard

message he may send to his friends."

"Certainly, Jernyngham. My fa-

ther, believing in his guilt, thought

it his duty to prosecute; but he bears

no feeling of personal anger toward

"Well, I wish Germaine a safe pass-

age across the ocean," said Captain

Jernyngham. "He cut me complete-

Iv out with that pretty little prize-

widow of old Sir Rob Landers; but

I'll be magnanimous and forgive

him, now. Oh, by Jove! Villiers,

there goes Lady Maude Percy !"

cried the guardsman, starting sud-

denly up, all his listlessness disap-

pearing as if by magic. "Ah! my

lord, I thought you would find the

subject more interesting than that of

poor Germaine," he added, with a

Lord Villiers laughed, and his clear

"The handsomest girl in London,

and the greatest heiress," said the

guardsman, resuming his half-drawl.

What an intensely enviable fellow

"And what says rumor?" said

"Why, that you are the accepted

Before the reply of Lord Villiers

was spoken; a young lady, suddenly

entering the room, caught sight of

them, and addressed the guardsman

with: "George, you abominably lazy

fellow, have you forgotten you are

engaged for this set to Miss Ash-

ton? Really, my lord, you and this

idle brother of mine ought to be

ashamed to make hermits of your-

selves in this way. Lady Maude is

And raising her finger warningly,

" 'Fare thee well-and if forever!' '

said Captain Jernyngham, in a tra-

" 'Why, forever fare thee well !' "

said Lord Villiers, laughing, as he

The dancing was at its height as

he passed from the music room.

Standing at the head of one of the

quadrilles was the object of his gaze

ever fell like a shadow on her beau-

tiful face. Her form was rounded.

fectly colorless, save for the full

and lustrous as stars, and fringed by

long, silken-black lashes; her shining

hair fell in soft glittering, spiral

curls, like raveled silk, round her

fair, moonlight face; and her paller

seemed deepened by its raven hue.

Queenly, peerless, dazzling, she mov-

beauties, eclipsing them all.

was low but full of passion:

learn my fate."

he had just left.

she said, sadly.

do you love me?"

mine-niv wife ?"

ed through the brilliant train of

Drinking in the enchanting draught

of her beauty, Lord Ernest Villiers

stood until the dance was concluded;

and then moving toward her, he bent

"Maude! Maude! why have you

tried to avoid me all the evening? I

in private ! I must hear my destiny

from your lips to-night ! Come with

me into the music room-it is de-

arm through hers. "There, apart

from all those prying eyes, I can-

The pale face of the lady grew pal-

er; but without a word, she suffered

herself to be led to the deserted room

"And now, Maude, may I claim an

answer to the question I asked you

last night?" he said, bending over

"I answered you then, my lord,"

you; as if such a thing were pos-

sible. Maude, I cannot, I will not,

take that for an answer, Tell me,

"O Ernest !-- O my dear ford! you

"Then, Maude, will you not be

"Oh, I cannot ! O Ernest, I can-

"Cannot ! And why, in Heaven's

"My lord, that is my secret. I can

never, never be your wife, Choose

some one worthier of you, and for-

get Mauge Percy." She tried to

steady her voice, but a sob finished

his strong arms, and her head drop-

led on his shoulder. "My poor, lit-

tle romantic Maude, what is this

not !" she said with a shudder.

know I do !" she cried passionately.

"Yes; you told me to go-to forget

serted now," he said, drawing his

here, and I will report you."

Miss Jernyngham tripped away.

turned in an opposite direction.

lover of the fair Lady Maude."

you are, Villiers, if rumor is true."

him," said Lord Villiers, gravely.

among the gipsies ?"

of such a visit ?"

mischievous smile.

face flushed.

Lord Villiers.

CR 25th, 1902

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omething good, the more yes

1 Zo., Lid.

Wonderful secret ?" he said, smiling. Tell ine. Now, why cannot you be my wife ?" You think me weak and silly, my lord," she said, raising her head somewhat proudly: "but there is a reason, one sufficient to separate us forever-one that neither you nor any living mortal can ever know !"

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"And you refuse to tell this reason? My father and yours are eager for the match; I love you passionately, and still you refuse. Maude, you never loved me," he said, bitterly. Her pale sweet face was bent in her hands now, and large tears fell through her fingers. "Maude, you will not be so cruel," he said, with sudden hope. "Only say I may hope for this dear hand.

"No, no ! Hope for nothing but to forget one so miserable as I am O Lord Ernest! I will be your friend-your sister, if I may; but I can never be your wife."

"Maude, is there guilt, is there crime connected with this secret of yours?" he demanded. She rose to her feet impetuously.

"And you think me capable of crime, Lord Villiers ?-of guilt that needs concealment?" she said, with holding up her clasped hands. proud scorn.

"You, Maude? No; sooner would I believe an angel from Heaven guilty of crime, than you. O Lady Maude ! must this secret, that involves the happiness of my whole life, remain hidden from me?" Her tone was very sad, as she re-

plied: "Some day, my lord, I will tell you all; but not now. Let us part here, and let this subject never be renewed between us." "One word, Maude-do you love

"I do! I do! Heaven forgive "Now, why, 'Heaven forgive me? Maude ! you will drive me mad ! Is it such a crime to love me, then ?"

"In some it is," she said, in her low, sad voice. "And why, fairest saint?" "Do not ask me, my lord. Let me

go, I am tired and sick, and very unhappy. Dearest Ernest, leave me, and never speak of this again." "As you will, Lady Maude," he

said, turning haughtily away. But a light touch was laid on his arm, and the sweet voice of Lady Maude said: "I have offended you, my lord; pray forgive me."

"I am not offended, Lady Maude Percy. Eighteen summers had scarce Percy; neither have I anything to hope for pardon from God, pardon passed over her young head, yet a forgive," he said. "You have reject- him." thoughtful, almost sad, expression ed me, and I presume the matter ends

"But you are offended. O Lord exquisite, perfect; her oval face per- Villiers, if you knew how unhappy I am, you would forgive me the pain crimson lips; her eyes large, dark, I have caused you.'

Her tone touched him, and taking her hand gently, he said: "It is who should ask forgiveness, Lady Maude. Yes, I will accept the friendship you offer, until such time as I can claim a better reward. Notwithstanding all you have said, I do not despair still." He pressed her hand to his lips

and was gone. "Excuse me, your lordship," insinuated a footman in his ear, "but there is an individual down stairs over, and whispered, in a voice that who persists in seeing the earl, and

won't take no for an answer." "Who is it?" inquired Lord VIImust see you! I must speak to you liers, impatiently.

"A gipsy, my lord, a desperate looking old tramper, too." "What's that about gipsies?" said the unceremonious little Miss Jernyngham, passing at that moment "You must know, I fairly dote or gipsies, ever since I saw that charming young man they are going to

transport." "How I wish I were a gipsy said Lord Villiers, gayly, "for such a reward." "Pray spare your pretty speeches

for Lady Maude Percy, my lord," lisped Miss Jernyngham; "but about this gipsy-is it a man or a wo-

"A woman, miss, they call her the gipsy queen, Ketura." "A gipsy queen ! oh, delightful !" cried the young lady; "my lord, we must have her up. I insist on hav-

ing my fortune told." "Your slave hears, but to obey, Miss Jernyngham. Jonson, go and bring the old lady up." "Yes, me lud," said Jonson, hur-

rying off. "George-George! do come here," exclaimed the young lady, as her brother passed: "I want you."

"What's all this about ?" said the guardsman. "My dear Clara, the way you do get the steam up at a moment's notice is perfectly astonisning. What can I do for you?" "Do you want to have your for-

For all answer he gathered her in tune told ?" "If any good sybil would predict for me a rich wife, who would pay my debts, and keep me provided with kid gloves and cigars, I wouldn't object; but in any other case-"

His speech was cut short by the sudden appearance of the footman with the gipsy queen, of whom he seemed considerably afraid. "I wish to see Earl De Courcy,"

was her abrupt demand.

"And we wish our fortune told, good mother," said Lord Villiers, my father will attend to you pres-

entiv." "Your father !" said the woman, fixing her piercing eyes on his handsome face, "then you are Lord Vil-

"You have guessed it. What has the future in store for me?" "Nothing good for your father's son," she hissed, "Give me your

hand." He extended it with a smile, and she took it in hers, and peered into it." Well, mother, what has destiny

in store for me ?" "Much good or more evil. This night decides thy destiny; either thou shalt be blest for life, or if the scale turns against thee-then woe to thee! Stand aside-the earl approaches."

A tail, distinguished looking man of middle age approached, and looked with grave surprise on this group before him. "A word with you, lord earl," said the gipsy, confronting

"Speak out, then." "It must be in private." "Who are you?" said the earl, surprised and curious.

"I am called the gipsy queen, Ketura," said the woman, drawing her-"And what do you want of me,

woman ?" "I tell you I must speak in private. Is your time so precious that

to me?" said the woman. "This way, then," said the earl, as he turned and led the way across the hall to a richly-furnished library. Seating himself in a softly-cushioned lounging chair, he waited for his singular visitor to begin,

CHAPTER IV.

"Weil, madam! I am waiting," said the earl, after a pause. "Lord earl, behold at thy feet a mother who comes to plead for her | it !" son !" said the strange woman, sinking on her knees at his feet.

"Madam, I do not understand." said the earl, surprised, and feeling himself obliged, as it were, to use a respectful form of address, by the woman's commanding look.

"My son is in your power! my darling, my only son ! my first-born! Oh, spare him !" said the woman "Your son! Madam, I do not un-

derstand," said the earl, knitting his brows in perplexity. "You have condemned him to

transportation! And he is as innocent of the crime as the angels in heaven," cried the woman, in passionate tones. "Madam, I assure you, I do not

understand. Who is your son?" said the eari, more and more perplexed. "You know him as Germaine, but taking hope from his silence. he is my son, Reginald-my only son! Oh, my lord ! spare him !" wildly pleaded the gipsy queen.

"Mr.dam, rise." "Not until you have pardoned my

"That I will never do ! your son has been found guilty of willful robbery, and has been very justly condemned. I can do nothing for him," said the earl, while his brow grew

"My lord, he is innocent !" almost shrieked the wretched woman. "I do not believe it! He has been proven guilty," said the earl, cold-

"It is false! as false as the black bearts of the perjurers who swore against him! He is innocent of his crime, as innocent of it as thou art. lord earl. O Earl De Courcy, as you

"Madam, I command you to rise. "Never, never! while my son is in chains! O my lord, you do not know, how I have loved that boy ! I had no one else in the wide world to love, not a drop of kindred blood fan in any human heart but his. O Lord De Courcy, I have suffered cold and hunger, and thirst, and hardship, that he might never want; I have toiled for him night and day, that he might never feel pain; I have stooped to actions I loathed, that he might be happy and free from guilt. And, when he grew older. I gave him up, though it was like rending soul and body apart. I sent

toil had enabled me to save. I sent him to be educated with gentleman. I never came near him, lest any one should suspect his mother was a gipsy. For twenty-three years, my life has been one long dream of him, sleeping or waking, in suffering and trial, the thought that he was near me gave joy and strength. And now he is condemned for life-condemned to a far off land, among convicts and felons, where I will never see him again ! O Lord De Courcy ! mercy,

him away, I sent him to school with

the money that years of unceasing

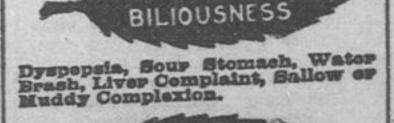
mercy for my son !" A spasm of pain passed over the face of the earl; but he answered,

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glorious, kingly-hearted Reginald, stoop to such a crime! Oh! sooner could the angels themselves be guilty of it than he !" "Woman, you rave ! Once again I tell you, rise." "Pardon, pardon for my son !" 'Madam, I cannot. I pity you. Heaven knows I do but he is guilty

sternly: "Woman, your son is guilty.

soul so base as to believe such a

falsehood of my high-hearted boy !"

cried the gipsy. "He, my proud,

"He is not guilty! Perish the

I cannot pardon him !"

and must suffer." "O my God! how shall I convince him ?" cried the wretched woman, wringing her hands in wildest despair. "O Earl de Courcy, you, too, have a son, handsome, gallant and noble, the pride of your old age, the last scion of your proud race ! For his sake, for the sake of your son,

pardon mine !" "Once more I tell you, I cannot. Your son is condemned; to-morrow his sentence will be executed, and I have no power to avert it. And madam, though I pity you deeply, I must again say he deserves it. Your son deserves his fate; all the more so; for his ingratitude to you, after all you have done for him. I deeply pity you; as Heaven hears me,

"Oh then, for my sake, if there is one spark of pity for me in your heart, do not kill me! For, Lord De Courcy, it will be a double murder, his death and mine, if this sen-

tence is executed." "The law must take its course; I cannot prevent it, and once more, madame, I beseech you to rise. You should kneel to God alone." "God would forgive him, had I pleaded to him thus; but you, tiger-

heart, you will not !" shrieked the woman. "O lord earl, I have never knelt to God or man before; and to have my petitions spurned now ! You hold my life in the hollow of your hand, and you will not grant

"I teil you I cannot." "You can-you can! It is in your power! You are great and rich, and powerful, and can have his sentence annulled. By your soul's salvation, by your hopes of heaven, by your mother's grave, by Him whom you worship, I conjure you to save my son !"

A fearful sight was that despairmaddened woman, as she knelt at the stern earl's feet, her very voice sharp with inward agony.

He shaded his eyes with his hands to keep out the pitiful sight; but his stern, determined look passed not away. His face seemed hardened with iron, despite the deep pity of his heart. "You are yielding! He will yet

be saved! Oh, I knew that ironheart would soften !" she cried out, "My poor woman, you deceive yourself. I can do nothing for your

son," said the earl. "What? Do you still refuse? Oh, it cannot be ! I am going mad, think! Tell me-tell me that my son will live !"

"Woman, I have no power over your son's life." "Oh, you have-you have! Do you think he could live one single day among those with whom you would send him? As you hope for pardon,

parden my son !" "It is all in vain. Rise, madam." "You refuse?"

"I do. Rise !" With the bound of a wild beast, she sprang to her feet, and like a tigress robbed of her young, she stood before him. Even the stern earl drew back in dismay.

"Then, heart of steel, hear me !" she cried, in a voice terrific in its very depth of despair. "From this moment I vow, before God, to devote my whole life to revenge on you ! Living, may ruin, misery, and despair, equal to mine, be your portion; dead, may you never rest in the earth you sprung from ! And when, standing before the judgment sent of God, you sue for pardon, may he hurl your miserable soul back to perdition for an answer! May my curse descend to your children and children's children for ever May every earthly and eternal evil follow a wronged mother's curse !" Appalled, horrified, the iron earl shrank back from that convulsed. terrific face-that face of a fiend, and not of mortal woman. A moment after, when he raised his head, he was alone, and the gipsy, Ketura, was gone. Whither?

CHAPTER V.

That same night-three hours later, in a narrow, dark, noisome cell, lamp lighting its tomb-like darkness, sat two young men. One of these was a youth of three-and-twenty; tall and slender, with a dark complexion; a strikingly-handsome face; a daring, reckless air, and an expression of mingled scorn, hatred, defiance, and fierceness in face. There were fetters on his wrists and ankles and he wore the dress of a condemned felon.

By his side sat Lord Ernest Villiers-his handsome face looking

thing at all for you?" "Nothing. What do you think I want? Is not the government going to clothe, feed, and provide for me during the remainder of my life? Why, man, do you think me unreasonable?" He laughed a bitter, mocking laugh, terrible to hear. "Germaine, Heaven knows, if I

leave one in England who still be & Risch Pianos will be most cheerfully lieves you innocent."

ly believe I have taken to petty pil- & Risch Piano Co., Ltd., 32 King-st. fering, your father and the rest of west, Toronto. the magnates of the land to the con- IN SEWING MACHINES - The trary, notwithstanding."

"Who is that, Germaine?" "My mother." "Where is she? Can I bring her to you?" said Lord Villiers, start-

(Continued on page 4.)

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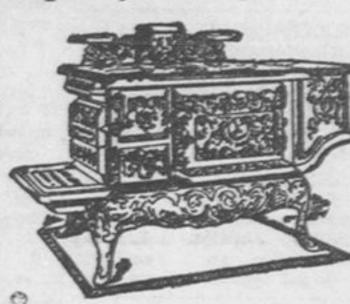
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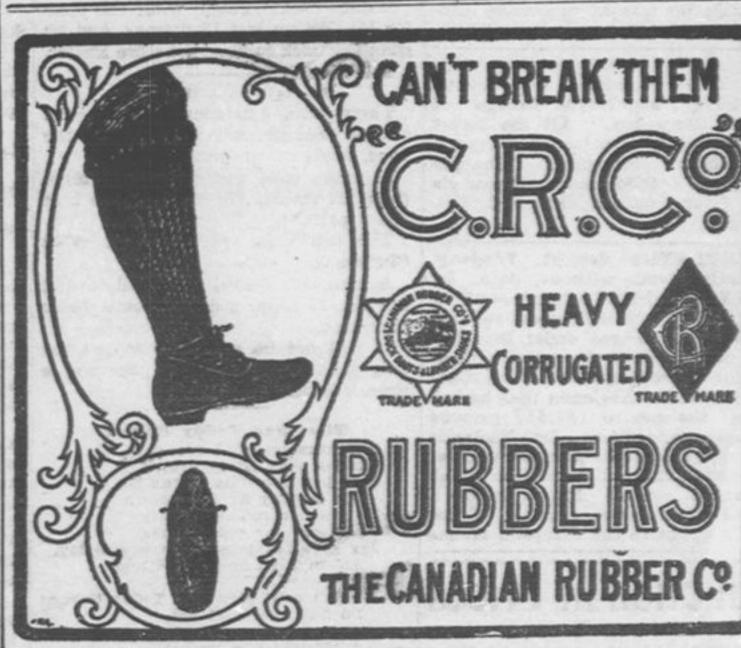
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"And this is all, Germaine?" he said, sorrowfully. "Can I do nothing at all for you?"

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