THE FATE OF AZUMA;

Or, The South African Millionaire.

CHAPTER XX.—(Cont'd).

He stooped and kissed her hand as he told her, and something within seemed to mingle with the distant roar of traffic, and to wander away from her, carrying her life's blood with it, while her ears sang, and it seemed to her that she threw herself from the terrace.

When she opened her eyes, his arms were around her, and thought returned, thought insistent, interrogative, reproachful, yet because it travelled a distorted, warped imagination, still vile, tainted, like her life.

Then it was for her position alone, that he had married her for how else . . . ?

She opened her eyes and stared at him dazed, the while an intense relief struggled with another feeling, a feeling of dismay that love still evaded her. Why had he not told her, was it because he wanted to hold it over her head? Or was it because of Azuma? The nobility, that, did not strike her, not yet, not yet.

"You knew," she repeated, "you knew."

"Yes, I knew everything."

"The poor chap needed money I expect, and I gave it him, he has gone to Australia, you will never see him again. That chapter of your life is over and now, now, little one, we will be happy."

"You knew, and yet—" then with something of the old daring insolence, "You knew, then why did you marry me?"

Was it possible that even now she did not understand? A species of despair took hold of him, a despair of ever reaching to the nobility of her mind which he still felt, hoped might be on a level with his own. He spoke briefly:

"Because I loved you."

The words doggedly pronounced, how sweet they were, how delicious. And yet something within whispered that it was not possible that he loved her still. The thought of her scorn, of the cruel cutting words she had so often uttered, of suspicions expressed, although they were not real ones, of his relations with Azuma, her disdain of the woman who had brought him luck, the way she had pretended to accept his wealth as a favor because it seemed the only thing he had to offer in return for the great position she offered him, for the name she had laid aside, for the old lineage, had pretended to look down on his race, his position, his want of social prestige, flirted with others, wringing his heart. Ah, he had loved her then, but now . . . And because words today had to be uttered in sincerity, and thoughts spoken aloud the mind could not contain, she finished hers aloud.

"And now you . . ."

He interrupted her.

"I have always loved you, I love you still, just the same, more perhaps, madly, passionately, for always."

Yes, it seemed to him that to-night for the first time he had reached her heart.

"Ah . . ."

She fell on his breast, and tears, the long pent up tears which came so rarely, fell now like summer rain, but they did not hurt her as those other tears had done. They were tears of joy, drops of the heart's dew—love.

And as he enfolded her in his arms, there seemed to pass before her the crowds whose company she had disdained to-night, what a senseless gibbering crowd it seemed, seeking pleasure and emotion and illicit love and counterfeit. What did it know, that rapid, congress of fools, of such emotions as this. Love, love untravestied, unrestrained by gossip and hints and knowledge of shame, love the dominating, the conquering, over-riding everything. Love, love, real love, cared for nothing but the object of its love. Ah, if the gods had been cruel, they had at least reserved for Lady Judith something which they rarely bestowed, the finest pearl of all, quite at the bottom of the well of truth.

"And I always said that I wanted to be loved, that if I were loved, I would be good," she murmured.

And as he drew her, with his arms around her, back into her room and switched on the light, his foot struck against something on the floor. He stooped and picked it up.

"What is this?" he held it out to her, he had forgotten all about it.

Here in the light, he could see the radiance of her face on which love was shining through tears; the expression was still there, more emphasized than ever, the expression of the Madonna, but this time the agonized look of deprived maternity had almost vanished.

There was new joyousness in her voice as she took the bauble from him.

"That is what I gave Azuma, you see she won't keep it, she has thrown it back. Poor Azuma, to-morrow I will make her keep it. . I will be so nice to her, so good to her. Ah, you don't know how good I am going to be."

She spoke like a forgiven child who is still dazzled by the wonder of being forgiven.

"Poor Azuma, I have never understood till to-night. I will have a long talk with her to-morrow. We both will——"

But alas for resolves that are made too late.

CHAPTER XXI.

But notwithstanding the renewed cheerfulness, more than that, the seeming intoxication of happiness which had come to him through Judith's absolute surrender of pride, (for Judith was like a bird just released from a cage in an exquisite forest), the incident of having found the jewel she had given to Azuma on the floor of his wife's bedroom had more significance for Adolphe than he would have told Judith.

"I don't advise you to pay any attention," he had told her, but he who knew the South African races, who had spent years with Azuma as his only companion, knew that it was almost like a declaration of war, and that the very fact that she noticed that anything Azuma did had the power to wound or distress her, would have a fatal effect.

The Boers treated the Kaffirs shamefully, but we have made the mistake of treating them too well, forgetting the years that will have to intervene before they are on a level in mind with the white races. The Americans have understood this, and there are evidences of their wisdom every day. They are paying the price of too much severity in the days of slavery, but they pay a far heavier price every time they forget the racial line of demarcation. Gratitude is wanting in the African, he does not understand kindness unless it is meted out by one who has first shown strength. In Azuma the gratitude was for the act of rescue, because it had first been enhanced by the act of force, in striking the Boer. Gratitude in the form of gentleness alone, the winning of gratitude by love and tenderness, that is only understood by a higher civilized condition of the mind, unaccompanied by severity it evidences weakness to the negro mind.

It meant clearly that she would take no gifts from Judith, would not recognize her as in any way her mistress, and he as her husband, ought to punish Azuma. If he did so, he would not even own to himself what would be the result. The incident worried him a good deal, and the problem now exercised his mind of whether he could make some arrangement for her away from the house, the while something within him urged that if he did so ill luck would befall him. Yet with Judith's renewed tenderness, the power of Azuma to influence his fate seemed to him a thing which no longer needed consideration. What did he need now? Nothing but Judith. He had reached the very narthex of her heart as it were, and that had been the crowning desire of his life. And the humility of Judith was touching.

Yes, she had been right when she had said that love, real love which could overlook, forgive the past, the love of a man who did not care, because he loved her would make her good. Yes, in her gratitude to God, Judith renewed her mind, her very heart. Sometimes she would sit for hours on the terrace thinking over that scene, that night, and trying to hear again through imagination, his voice, his accent when he had said so doggedly, so brutally almost:

"Because I loved you." And her mind would go further back than that, with shame and remorse, remembering moments when she had been unkind, and yet he had never told her, never taunted her with her sullied girlhood. Oh, how wonderful, how wonderful to think that he had come straight from Hugh Glover who had told him the nauseous tale, and because his love was so great that he must needs add to it all that was best of chivalry and protection and tenderness and consolation, he had drawn her away to the conservatory and said:

"I want to show you my heart."

And although he had told her not to do so, from sheer love of him, because the gladness in her must convey itself to others, she went to Azuma and took her the little bracelet, and laughing and smiling had fastened it on her arm. "But she wouldn't smile," she told Adolphe, when he came back to luncheon, "she didn't thank me or anything, just stood there looking very sullen and I am sure that the moment my back was turned she took it off."

"I wish you hadn't given it her back," he told Judith, and she made a little face at him, a little face which he knew quite well meant, "I did it for you because she has been good to you, because she loves you and because I love everybody that you love." A new chrism was upon Lady Judith, the chrism of a love for the whole world which transformed her, and something else too, something she was going to tell him that night which, while it brought a remembrance she would fain have been without, would yet bring joy, because it was his dearest wish. Life looked very bright just now, and the incident of Azuma did not trouble her, but it troubled Adolphe. The time had come when he must get rid of her and because only noble hearts can be grateful, and his was the noblest of hearts, because he knew that she loved him, he hated to send her away.

Yes, of late Azuma had grown to hate Lady Judith more and more, as she saw the increasing tenderness of Adolphe. He never came now, the Baas, to play to her or to consult her as he had been wont to. Instead he spent the evenings with his wife, or took her out. She could not grasp, poor untutored creature how every day their engagements increased, how the wealth of the African Croesus united to Lady Judith's name and position, (especially lately when the new security of her husband's unreserved, unconditional protection, the release from the carking secret, had seemed to give her something of stability, of confidence, of poise, which had been wanting, while all London was at last taken into her confidence about the fact that she was devoted to Adolphe Lieb, and wanted nobody else), had enlarged the eddies of their responsibilities, their circle of acquaintances, that Lady Judith was now entering with new fervor into his schemes, and going where he wanted her to go, cultivating the friends he needed and gradually the foundations of the great power he had always felt his money would bring him.

They did not want her now, Azuma told herself, and at night she would read the pebbles and watch the sand falling into shapes and forms for herself, predicting sadness and separation from the beloved Baas, and to him sorrow and disaster.

Then at last, one night, he went to her on her terrace, just as he had done before, and her heart leaped just as Judith's had done on the anniversary of her wedding night.

He had found her squatting on the mat on the terrace gazing out on to the street, on to the lights below, her hand clasping her chin like the image of night itself. It must be sad for her this life, he said to himself, sad and lonely. After a time she would be happier in the Veldt.

He thought that he had arranged it all very cleverly as he stood there smoking. She would not know that it was his way of getting rid of her. Only he did not ask her to read the pebbles, and she noted the omission.

"We shall be going away in a few days," he began, "going away like everyone else because it is getting too hot." He paused a moment, and she turned her head.

"To Johannesburg you go?"

"No, not yet, we are going to travel about, to pay visits to friends, perhaps to Germany, and I want you, Azuma, to do something for me. I am sending Mr. Kendal," (Kendal was one of the secretaries who had been with him in the old days at Johannesburg and she liked him.) "I am sending Mr. Kendal to see after that Hjerdtfeldt contract, but he cannot do anything with Zambi, you will have to do your best with him, you can manage him. I hear there are some people after it, and if we don't get it at once why we might as well let the Rhineling mine go.

He spoke in as business a tone as he could assume, and what he was telling her was real, he did not want to hurry up that contract, and he was sending Mr. Kendal to Johannesburg, but she could read his thoughts, this woman, although her back was partly turned towards him, although it was nearly dark. There was a moment's silence; then he broke it again.

"I can't help thinking that there is something at the back of it all, you'll find out. See Zeller and if necessary pay him."

Still silence, then she sprang up with that supple movement of hers, which brought her to her feet at once, by simply stretching her two arms forward. He had often admired the way she rose suddenly to her feet without bending her knees, and she stood there on the terrace before him against the glow of the great city, a bronze mute figure it seemed, for a few seconds. Then all of a sudden she burst out:

"Why the Baas send me away, that Lady Judy want me go away?"

She had always said "Lady Judy," never been able to pronounce the "th" and it had amused them both. Often in jest Adolphe would call her "Lady Judy," now to-night together with her words it grated, and he did not like the way she had said "that Lady Judy," but she often used words, without knowing their significance, and he restrained the irritation he felt.

"Lady Judith has nothing to do with it. I want you to see to this business for me. I am not sending you away Azuma, I cannot go to Johannesburg yet and no one can do that so well as you."

"If I go you never come to Johannesburg again," she replied doggedly. And Adolphe laughed.

(To be continued.)

PRINCESS ARTHUR OF CONNAUGHT,

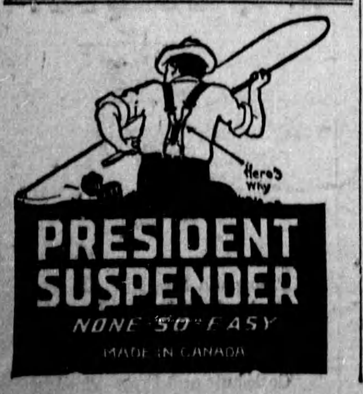
formerly Princess Alexandra, Duchess of Fife, who has joined the nursing staff at St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington. She takes no privileges, but goes through the daily routine of dressing wounds and waiting on the invalided soldiers.

Gloomy Observation.

"Do you think the world is getting better?"

"I don't know anything about it," replied the melancholy observer. "It seemed to be doing very well for a time, but judging from the European news, I should say it is suffering a terrible relapse."

A Chinese father has the supreme right of life and death over his children, and is not amenable to any law in this respect.



On the Farm

Prevent Soil Erosion.

One of the gravest problems of the farmers of to-day who are living on hilly lands is how to prevent soil erosion. Much of the washing of farm lands can be prevented by plowing deep, so as to make a subterranean reservoir for the storage of precipitation. The water penetrates readily through the loose soil, and its movement through the underlying soil is very much slower than over the surface. Frequent crops of clover or grass which are plowed under make the surface soil spongy with humus and retard the washing of the soil. All hilly lands liable to wash should have a cover crop during the winter. A warranty deed will not keep the soil of the careless farmer from washing away.

Oat Hay.

If, for any reason, you will be short of hay this season or a wind has smashed the oats down so you can't bind them, why not make them into oat hay?

Cut when in the early milk stage of the grain and cure as you would other hay. Barley and rye can be used in the same way to help out a short hay crop.

A ton of oat hay contains 86 pounds of digestible protein and a ton of red clover 133 pounds—only 50 pounds in favor of the clover, so you see this makes a very good hay for growing stock or dairy cows.

Feeding Geese.

Geese require plenty of green food, which they pluck from the growing plants and plenty of water as a swimming pool during the summer. When they have this, the old geese and ducklings that are past four weeks old, will not need to be fed during the summer. A feed of moistened meal once a day hastens their growth, but where there is plenty of herbage green and fresh, from which they can pluck their food, it will not be necessary to feed them, providing there is plenty of water for them to swim in.

Our Bird Friends.

Nothing has a more potent attraction for birds during hot weather than drinking and bathing places. The birds' water supply should be a pool not more than a few inches deep, the bottom sloping gradually toward the edge. Both bottom and edge should be rough, so as to afford a safe footing. A giant pottery saucer is an excellent device or the pool may be made of concrete or even metal, if the surface is roughended.

The bird bath may be elevated or on the ground if in an open space where skulking enemies can not approach too near. A water supply is appreciated in winter as well as summer.

A Good Side Line.

A profitable side line of farming is to raise a few nice sheep every year for men who are willing to pay a bit extra for the sake of improving their stock. To do this, one should have good stock and good pastures and good barns, as well as a good man to care for them.

In disposing of such stock, be fair about it. A reasonable profit is all right. If you try to overdo the matter you will break down, and be driven out of the business.

Cause of Bad Habits.

Feather eating and feather pulling are caused by confining the fowls and leaving them idle. To prevent their getting the vice or to cure them when they have acquired the habit, give them plenty of green food and meat scraps and give them plenty of exercise by making them work for their food. Keep them busy. Rub the fowls that have been plucked with carbolated vaseline.

Protect the Birds.

The birds eat millions of insects that, if left alone, would destroy millions of dollars' worth of fruits and grain. Of course, some kinds of birds are pests, but you need not have many of those kinds on your farm if you will spend a little time studying birds. Study their habits of feeding and nesting. Prepare homes for only the helpful kinds, the ones that feed chiefly on insects and worms.

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THE PERFECT PIE.

(By Peter McArthur.)

Probably no dish that ever appeared on our tables has caused so much burning as the pie—and I do not mean by that to suggest the connection between heartburn and indigestion. The pie with the hunting case crust has eclipsed many a honeymoon. The unsuccessful pie has been the uncharted rock on the sea of matrimony, the slough of respond on the straight and narrow path. But the good pie, the perfect pie has been from time immemorial the peacemaker, the healer of lovers' quarrels. The great outstanding fact of married life is that man wants pie. As Scott did not exactly say:

Lives there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to his wife hath said:
"I wish that you would learn to bake
Pies like my mother used to make."

But I have known a man to do even worse than that. I have known a man to say to his wife: "I wish you could make pies like your mother used to make." In that way he rebuked her and made friends with his mother-in-law, a feat of diplomacy never equalled in the chancelleries of Europe.

But the question has been raised: "What kind of pie was it that mother used to make? What was her masterpiece?"

There is no need of any dispute on this subject. Just wait till you find one of those old fashioned pie-making mothers and listen to what she is singing to the grandchildren on her knee.

"Can she make a cherry pie?
Billy Boy, Billy Boy!
Can she make a cherry pie,
Charming Billy?
She can make a cherry pie
While a cat can wink its eye
But she's a young thing and can't
leave her marry-O'.

When the biggest cherry trees that are now laden with ruddy fruit were mere seedlings, that song was as popular as Tipperary is to-day, and there are still merry grandmothers who sing it to their marriageable grandsons when they go a-wooing. In the good old days before there were pie factories where pies are made by machines and should be eaten by machines the making of a cherry pie was the ultimate test of a housekeeper. No girl was accounted worthy of a home who could not make a perfect cherry pie.

And this is the season of the cherry pie! Let me whisper something. Every girl should show that she is able to make cherry pies. Every love-lorn boy should see that the girl he loves is able to make them. A word to the wise is sufficient—though in this case a word to the foolish might be more appropriate.

His Reply.

The humor of Scotland (according to an English writer)—An old gentleman arrived in a hot and breathless state at the railway station. "I say, porter," he panted, "why do they put the station so far away from the village?" The porter replied—"Weel, sir, I couldna say; but I think it was to be near the line."

There is a law in Nebraska requiring hotel proprietors to furnish bedsheets nine feet in length.