

ORDER OF THE LEAGUE

BY FRED. M. WHITE

CHAPTER XIX.

There is something better than words, and that is proof. Do you not think I can see through this paltry conspiracy which has been got up against me? But you have the wrong man to deal with in me for that. I will have the compact fulfilled; my power is not over yet; and, Sir Geoffrey, I give you one more chance. Refuse at your peril."

"I do refuse," Sir Geoffrey answered icily. "Do your worst."

"That is your decision!—And now as to these groundless accusations you have brought against me. You have made them; prove them." He turned to Lucrece with a gesture which was almost noble, all the actor's instinct aroused in him now. There was one desperate chance for him yet.

"You had best take care, if I accept you at your word."

"I wish to be taken at my word. I demand your proofs!"

"And you shall have them!" Saying these words, Lucrece glided swiftly from the room.

An awkward silence fell upon the group. Le Gautier was the first to speak. There was a kind of moisture in his eye, and an air of resigned melancholy on his face. "You have misjudged me," he said sorrowfully. "Some day you will be ashamed of this—Sir Geoffrey you are the victim of a designing woman, who seeks, for some reason, to traduce my fair fame. If I have a wife, let them bring me face to face with her here."

"You have your wish, Hector, for I am here!"

Le Gautier bounded forward like a man who had received a mortal hurt, and gazed on the speaker with glaring eyes. Valerie was standing before him, not without agitation herself. A low cry burst from his lips, and he drew his shaking hand down his white, damp face. "What brings you here?" he asked, his voice sounding strangely to his own ears, as if it came from far away. "Woman! why do you come here now, to destroy me utterly?"

She shrank back—an eloquent gesture to the onlookers—a gesture seven years' freedom from thralldom had not obliterated.

"You wished to see me. Lo! I am here! Turn round to your friends now, and deny that I am your lawful wife—deny again that you have ever seen me before, and put me to the proof.—Why do you not speak? Why do you not show a little of that manhood you used to have? Strike me, as you have done often in the times gone by—anything better than standing there, a poor, pitiful, detected swindler—a miserable hound indeed!"

There was a dead silence now, only broken by Le Gautier's heavy breathing, and the rustle of his sleeve as he wiped the perspiration from his face.

"There is the proof you demanded," Lucrece said at length. "We are waiting for you to deny the witness of your eyes."

But still Le Gautier did not speak, standing there like some stone figure, his limbs almost powerless. He raised his head a moment, then lowered it again swiftly. He tried to articulate a few words, but his tongue refused its office.

Sir Geoffrey laid his hand upon the bell. "Have you nothing to say?" he asked.

"I—I—Let me go out—the place is choking me!"

Sir Geoffrey rang the bell sharply. "Then this interview had better close. It has already been too long, and degrading—James, show Monsieur le Gautier out, if you please.—I have the honour to wish you good-morning; and if we do meet again," he added in a stern undertone, "remember, it is as strangers."

Le Gautier, without another word or look, left the room, Lucrece following a moment later, and leading Valerie away. Isodore stepped out from her hiding-place, her face alternately scornful and tender.

"We owe you a heavy debt of gratitude indeed!" Sir Geoffrey exclaimed warmly. "It is extremely good of you to take all this trouble for mere strangers. Accept my most sincere thanks!"

"We are not quite strangers," Isodore replied, turning to Enid. "Lucrece told you who she was; let me tell you who I am. I have never met you, though once I hoped to do so. I am Genevieve Visci!"

"What! Signor Visci's sister—the girl who—?"

"Do not hesitate to say it. Yes, Isodore and Genevieve are one. Out of recollection of old times, when you were so kind to my dear brother, I have not forgotten you, knowing Le Gautier so well."

"But Lucrece, your sister, to come here as my maid. And Le Gautier—how did you know? I am all at sea yet."

"It is a long sad story, and some day when I know you better, I will tell you all, but not now. But one thing, please, remember, that come what will, Le Gautier cannot harm you now. He may threaten, but he is powerless. I have only to hold up my hand."

"And Frederick—Mr. Maxwell?"

"Do not be impatient. You will see him to-morrow; for this evening I will have need of him. You have not the slightest grounds for anxiety. Le Gautier will never harm any one more."

"How strangely, sternly, you speak," Enid replied.

Isodore smiled. "Do I? Well, you heard what Lucrece said, and I may have planned a little retaliation of my own. The eastern eagle flies slowly, but his flight is sure. Trust me, and fear not."

Enid was bewildered. But the time was near when she was to understand.

With baffled fury and revenge raging in his heart, Le Gautier turned away in the direction of his lodgings, anywhere to get away from himself for a time, nothing left to him now but to wreak his vengeance upon Sir Geoffrey in the most diabolical way his fiendish ingenuity could contrive—and Isodore, by this time, Maxwell was no more; and he had Marie St. Jean to fall back upon.

He sat brooding in his rooms till nearly nine—time to attend the meeting of the League, the last one he determined that should ever see his face. Had he known how fatally true this was, he would have faced a thousand dangers rather than gone to Gray's Inn Road that night. It was to Gray's Inn Road that night, and nearly ten when he lowered his gas, and struck off across the side streets in the direction of Holborn. When he reached his destination, he walked up-stairs, the only rival as yet. Had he been less preoccupied,

the sister of your friend? Do you remember looking at a very young woman some years ago? (Isadore's eyes were fixed on her.) Do you remember? "Yes, it is possible, for I am Genevieve Visci! If it may turn out," and without another word she left him.

Presently a desire to live took the place of his dull despair. In an agony he leaped and turned, cutting his wrists with the same eyes till the blood ran down his hands. He could hear the low monotonous voices from the adjoining room, the hurrying footsteps in the road below; and only that thin wall between himself and safety. Even the window leading from the iron staircase was open, and the evening breeze fanned his white despairing face. He struggled again till his heart nearly burst, and then, worn out, broke into tears.

"Hector!"

He turned round, hardly certain whether it was a voice or a fancy. Gradually out of the mist a figure emerged, and creeping stealthily across the bare floor, came to his side. It was Valerie.

"So you have come to gloat over my misery too," he whispered hoarsely. "Go, or, manacled as I am, I shall do you a mischief."

For answer, she drew a knife from her pocket, and commenced, with trembling fingers, to sever his bonds. One by one the sharp knife cut through them, till at length he stood a free man. One grudging, grateful glance at the woman, and he disappeared.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Influence of a Newspaper.

The following clipped from an exchange is indeed worthy of a place in our columns as in catering to the public taste we do not furnish sufficient insight into the conducting of a newspaper.

What were we before the circulation of the newspaper? For head and heart must have felt a need that books could not fill. Through its columns we feel that we are inhaling a new atmosphere, bracing, invigorating, that stimulates the pulses to new aims and hopes; and its issues are potent for a greater or less amount of good or evil.

It is a mighty agent of reform that must fructify, or wither, exalt or degrade society. The secret of its subtle influence lies in its continual presence and ceaseless appeals to the fireside where it is a welcome guest that is eagerly greeted, and its teachings devoured to the exclusion of all other reading, however elevating and instructive.

It matters so varied that there is something suited to every taste, mood, interest and avocation. It is one of the most important factors of civilized life, and it is only a narrow prejudice that decries its value.

It constitutes almost the sole species of instruction that many families possess; and in rapid indeed would be some homes without its cheering presence. It gives a knowledge of the outside world which we cannot glean from books, for it keeps pace with every innovation, every little business fluctuation, every social, religious, commercial, and political enterprise, at home or abroad, in time of war or of peace; and it is now recognized as one of the greatest demands of modern social life.

Since it has gained an undisputed foothold upon public confidence it arrogates to itself a universal range as prophet, teacher, critic, and legislator, and is not content with all this distinction, but boldly draws aside the curtain of daily domestic life and exposes to vulgar gaze the closeted grinning skeleton behind the downy cushion of gilded haberdashery and luxury.

What the editor is and what a critical public would have him be, are as diverse as one can conceive, and it would be a difficult undertaking to furnish the true ideal. It should not be expected that his work should bear the stamp of an exceptional excellence and finish, for to indite hourly and creditably demands more unremitting thought, attention, and leisure than is possible to bestow upon the varied matter presented for the public approval or condemnation.

The editor's responsibility is a grave one, and the daily and momentous pressure of his surroundings renders his position any other than an enviable one. He must think hastily, yet soundly, he must write rapidly, yet faultlessly; and any immaturity of thought or expression is an unforgivable trespass upon an invidious public.

The Court for Him to Practice In.

A railroad switchman had been devoting his spare time to the study of Blackstone, and when he considered himself well versed in legal lore he sent in his resignation to the company.

The yardmaster met him one day and said:

"Well, Johnnie, I see you have been admitted to the bar?"

"Yes," replied Johnnie, "I have been successful in getting through all right, and I will hang out my shingle as a lawyer in a few days."

"I suppose you will soon be heard from in the courts of the country defending great criminals?"

"No, sir," replied John, "I shall confine my practice to courts that hear evidence in divorce matters, for in that court I believe I shall be eminently successful, because I have had so much experience in uncoupling."

A site of 50 acres has been taken for the Gordon Memorial Boys' Home in London. A building will be put up to accommodate 160 boys, and the cost of maintaining the establishment will be \$20,000 a year.

"I can't tell for the life of me," said an old farmer in Muskoka, to a party of city visitors, "what you fellers see up here ter draw ye. For my part, these all-fired rocks have been the worst things we've had to contend with. Still, it's all right if you like it. We're glad to see ye; only it's mighty funny."

The other evening Philip Spear left his five-year-old boy alone in the house for a little time. While the father was away a kerosene lamp, left on a stand, exploded. The little fellow, with remarkable presence of mind, seized the blazing lamp and threw it out of the window. When the lamp struck the sidewalk it attracted the attention of some men who ran upstairs and extinguished the fire, which had burned the stand cloth and several newspapers lying upon it. Some of the burning fluid splattered over the boy, burning him quite severely.

THE UNRATIFIED EGYPTIAN TREATY.

The Egyptian treaty continues to agitate the European press. As the time for ratifying the convention draws near the various organs of the governments interested express clearer and more definite opinions concerning it. Recent despatches brought France's side of the controversy, in the words of the very conservative and generally well informed Journal des Debats. France, said that journal, is still ready to negotiate a treaty which would have for basis the shortening of England's occupation of Egypt, but it could not agree that England, by any pretext, should have right to perpetual occupation of the country. And yet that is what the treaty which England wants the Sultan to sign. It is not likely that France will recede from the position she has taken. The French press is unanimous in declaring that she will never consent to an English capture of Egypt. M. de Lesseps says in an interview sent by the Commercial Cable and published in another column that "if England does not evacuate Egypt she will sooner or later have to fight France." If this treaty is signed the Sultan will lose his throne, as I have letters here from Arabia announcing preparations for a religious revolution.

And now comes the announcement from the Brussels Nord, a Russian organ, that Russia "will not fail France" in this matter, and denying that the Czar could be bought out by English concessions in Bulgaria, adding that Germany, Austria and Italy will not espouse England's interests to the extent of affording her material aid.

Hares in Battle.

A singular incident of the battle of Wagram, between the French and the Austrians, is related by Captain Blaze, of the French Imperial Guard. He says that besides being a great contest of arms, the day was a great hare-hunt. There were four hundred thousand hunters, half Austrians and half French.

The plain was simply covered with hares, which the long advance of the two armies, had gathered into that narrow space. Every ten steps we started up one of these animals. Frightened by our guns, they ran for their lives, and continued to run until they reached the Austrian lines. There they were none the less terrified, and came rushing back upon us.

The soldiers were greatly amused by the frantic movements of the hares, and could hardly be restrained from making after them.

Finally, there was a great Austrian cavalry charge, which, of course, took no account of the hares. The horses plunged in among the ranks of the French soldiers, who, confused by so strange an attack, began bayonetting the hares. Other soldiers, not immediately pressed by the onset of the enemy, caught up the trembling animals in their hands.

There was that day a great slaughter of men and of hares, and many a shot destined for the enemy struck one of these poor animals, who doubtless believed that both the great armies had come there expressly to hunt them, the hares, instead of to hunt each other.

"One of our prominent banker mans lately got troubled with a dizziness of der chest," says Carl Pretzel. "He was shying like der duce. Every nite times he put his trunk of securities under his pillow, and he don't sleep a mouthful, but yoozt lays awake to hear 'em draw interest out."

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