

## THE MAN IN POSSESSION.

IN FIVE CHAPTERS.

### CHAPTER III.—CONTINUED.

"Now, Martha," I said, "I am extremely obliged to you for all you have done; and depend upon it, you shall not be forgotten. But I must have the loan of that bonnet and shawl for a little while," removing the one from her head and the other from her shoulders. "It's no use to resist, old lady! A wifely man must have his way, and so you may as well be quiet. Now, sit down again in that chair, and don't stir unless I bid you, for time is precious. You may, word, Miss Wintock, that bonnet between you as well as it does Martha's, placing it upon her head. "Rather a left-handed compliment to you, though. There's that upon your hair, and I'm afraid it's not a crown; don't show any of it in any account. Now for the shawl; close up to the throat. Here's a pin. That will do admirably. I declare I should not know you from Martha herself at a yard's distance, if I did not see your features. Now, Martha, old girl, I'm just going to look you in this room a little while—only a little while, you know, for I will leave the door on the landing open. Benetti will be sure to find you by-and-by, as, if you don't make your appearance below, he will no doubt seek you here, guessing that something has happened. Nay, Martha, as she rose from her seat in great trepidation; "I don't wish to do anything ungentlemanly. I do not at all fear your giving an alarm from the window; it is too strongly barred for you to force it. You wouldn't like to take Miss Wintock's place," pointing to the pallet from which I had released her. "Very well. Then keep quiet, and no harm will come of you of this. You can tell Mr. Wintock that you were overpowered by stratagem and force, if you like. We will leave you the light, as we can do better without it."

"The hint was sufficient. Perhaps, too, in her heart the old creature might not be unwilling that her charge should escape. Before I had done speaking, Miss Wintock and I were out in the long corridor. The door was locked on old Martha's side; Miss Wintock carried the dish and cover, to enable her to impersonate Martha as faithfully as possible. "Now for it once again," I said to my companion; "and I trust with better luck. But you must be as cool as you can, and keep your wits about you. A hitch now will spoil all; for I fear this is your last and only chance. Whenever you feel inclined to faint, think of your liberty, or a lunatic asylum." "Do not fear me," she whispered. "I will do my utmost to perish in the attempt. They shall not tear me from you a second time."

"Very good. Be as quick as you can, till we reach the last turn at the bottom of the stairs. Then, if the coast is clear, I will go forward and reconnoiter." Hurriedly whispering these and other hints, I led her to the turn of the stairs, and then went forward by myself. A few seconds afterwards, Martha's hobble came limping down and along the passage into the scullery as directed. The impersonation was excellent and complete, and his for the serious stake at issue, I could have laughed outright. "However," this was no time for indulgence in levity, but for nerve, watchfulness and action.

The outer door of the kitchen passage stood open. Benetti usually left it so when he went to get the horses and vehicle ready for his masters. I stole softly towards it, to get a bird's-eye view of what might be going on behind, endeavoring the while to arrange some definite plan of proceeding. A rapid glance informed me that the elder Wintock had not yet departed. The gig, with the fine high-bred mare he was accustomed to drive, still stood in the yard. The animal was a noble specimen of great strength, speed and spirit; but would stand as quietly as a lamb in the Hall-yard while awaiting its master's pleasure, though it required a strong hand to hold the reins once upon the road. Benetti was busily engaged in the stable-saddling and bridling Mr. George Wintock's horse. I could hear his "Whoa, Dandy," and other ejaculations less amiable, in his broken English, as the animal seemed to be giving him some trouble. In another few minutes he would bring him out into the yard equipped ready for his rider.

Instantaneously an idea whizzed through my brain like a flash of light, suggesting whatever of scheme or intention I might have already formed. In a second I was at the scullery-door. "Whist! Now—quick. Here; take my arm. Jump into the gig the instant you reach it. Trust to me for the rest." Miss Wintock looked up at me in wonderment, but immediately obeyed. Out at the open door and across the yard with Miss Wintock on my arm. In with you, miss; quickly, for dear life!" She needed no second admonition, but half-lifted by me, sprang nimbly into the vehicle. I was about to follow; but as I luck would have it, we were not to get away so easily. The mare, hearing our footsteps, had begun to paw the ground, impatient of delay; and the face of Benetti immediately appeared in the stable-door. Probably he thought his master had come out, and might require his services. I should have been unconscious of the fact; but in stepping into the gig, Miss Wintock slightly turned her head and caught sight of the Italian's swarthy visage. Her short suppressed cry and eager finger at once pointed out to me the cause of her terror; Benetti comprehended the state of affairs at the first glance, and with a fierce whoop, came rushing at full speed to seize the mare's head. There was not time for me to mount. Stepping forward a pace or two, and exerting my utmost strength, I dealt him a buffet which fairly balanced that which he had dealt me at the Hall door, followed up by a kick on the shin, as he staggered backward and fell, literally yelling with agony. The mare started and began to move. Snatching the reins, I sprang into the gig; and had just cleared the yard when George Wintock came rushing out to learn the cause of the disturbance.

### CHAPTER IV.

We started off as for dear life. At first,

the mere shied a little and seemed inclined to be troublesome. But she found that it was a practised hand that held the reins, and resigned herself to obedience accordingly. Instead of driving down the avenue to the gate which led into the village, and which was only about three hundred yards from the house, I turned off sharply on leaving the yard, and chose the gravel-road, which led to the principal entrance of the mansion; passed on through the entire breadth of the park to another gate on the far side of it, and which opened into the high-road. By adopting this course, the odds were considerably in my favor, for I hoped to reach the park gate and emerge into the high-road before any one could start in pursuit. Once fairly on the road, I could try the mettle of the mare. If, unfortunately, we should be overtaken, and it came to a close fight—which I scarcely doubted—the farther we were from Briteleigh Hall the better, and the greater chance I should have of dividing our pursuers and grappling with them singly. Of one thing I was certain, and it rendered me sanguine of success—Mr. Wintock only kept two horses beside the mare, only two mounted horsemen could follow. He would not try a vehicle; for his others were heavier than the gig, and would place our pursuers at a great disadvantage.

"So, ho, lass—steady!" as the mare, being fresh from the stable, began to lay her ears back and to address herself to her work. It was with difficulty that I could restrain her from dashing off at full speed. We should require her utmost by-and-by. I did not wish to wind my animal at starting; but to husband her strength for a long pull. Steadily across the park at a sharp trot. The gate is reached. Throwing the reins to Miss Wintock, I leap down, unbar the gate, and lead the mare through. Up again, and off, but rather faster than before, though I still held the mare in check, for I could see there was a heavy drag for her up a long steep hill a few miles distant. If we cannot reach its summit, we will then be no more than a dozen miles from Raleigh station, whence we can reach the metropolis. It is trying task for the mare, but she must and shall do it. Miss Wintock had scarcely spoken since our exit from the Hall, seeming fearful of distracting my attention, but evidently in a state of great excitement; and every sense is on the alert, for she looks back repeatedly and earnestly through the looming darkness, and starts nervously at the slightest sound.

The foot of the hill is gained. It is a much heavier drag for the mare than I had anticipated, for the road on this part has lately been gravelled, and with a vehicle loaded and two persons in it, no animal can fairly be expected to ascend it at full trot. Suddenly, Miss Wintock gasps in my arm. "Listen! They are already on our track!"

I turn my head. The sharp percussive ring of horses' hoofs strikes faintly on my ear. We are pursued, and by more than one person; there are at least two on our trail, and they are following us at full speed. No doubt the Wintocks have saddled the extra horse, and will leave untried no means, fair or foul, to regain their captive. The mare toils and pants as the steep acclivity begins to tell upon her powers. It is brutal to give her the whip, but it must be done. She must strain every muscle to the utmost, even though I feel that I am doing the plucky animal a gross injustice.

"We are more than half-way up the hill, and the remainder is not nearly so steep; in fact, simply a gentle rise. With a snort, a proud foss of her flowing mane, and a loud neigh of defiance, she picks up her ears and increases her speed. She has caught the clatter of the rattling hoofs behind, and with the instinct and emulation of all spirited animals, is determined not to be distanced. Gallant creature! Not another stroke with the whip, if I have to fight our battle out on foot on the road. Indeed, there is no occasion; on gaining the ridge of the hill she has bolted. The foam is frothing and dripping in fleeces from her bit; the wheels are whirling with a fierceness that renders me dizzy. I can hear iron-clad heels dash the sparks from the flints on the road, and every instant expect them to snap like rotten tow. Will the axes hold and the springs stand? Will the friction be enough to make tires and spokes fly asunder?"

The moon is just rising above the horizon. By her light, we can discern two mounted riders coming on behind at a great pace; one is considerably in advance of the other. No doubt they are the Wintocks. They are gaining rapidly upon us. Ah! the foremost is Mr. George. I recognize the horse also; it is the swift supple bay he usually rides, and which is more than a match for the mare at any time, much more so with a vehicle and two persons behind her. There is no hope for it, and we cannot escape an encounter.

How furiously our pursuers ride! George Wintock is within a hundred yards. I fancy I can see by the light of the moon that his visage is ghastly with passion. I can see his coat of mail strike the rowels fiercely into the flanks of his charger, in order to come up with him. The mare is getting over her pet, and is slackening her speed. I tighten my grasp on the reins and speak coaxingly to her. She is under command and well in hand. Shall we pull up at once and do battle? No we will hold on till the last minute.

The foremost rider is close upon us; the second is not far behind. With loud imprecations, they shout to us to stop. I glance at my companion. The cool night air and the hope of escape have wrought wonders; the stern, almost fierce light on those lustreous eyes reassures me.

"Can you take the reins for a minute?" She stretches out her delicate fingers by way of reply. "Pull evenly and not too tightly. Keep her in the middle of the road, if you can. Be cool, and let her go her own pace." "Draw up, or you're a dead man!" I turned, and George Wintock was within a yard of me, his hunting-whip raised, the heavy handle about his feet and balancing himself as best I might. I noticed the gig-wheel, parrying his blow and keeping him a safe refuge. Finding that I had the longer weapon, he immediately changed his tactics for a dastardly mode of attack, of which no man, let alone a sportsman, who is supposed to love his horse, could ever possibly be guilty. Spurring his steed, he rode past me to the mare's head, and raising himself in the

stirrups, aimed a crushing blow just behind the coach, intending to fell her to the ground, in which case we should in the male have been at his mercy. It was well meant; but at the critical instant the animal swerved slightly, so as to evade its full force. It was, however, sufficiently powerful to make her stumble and sink almost on her knees. But the ruffian had for once reckoned without his host. He was within reach of my whip-handle, and, as the mare rose, I wrought to a pitch of desperation by our position, and, incensed by his cowardly and brutal act, swung the bit-end with resistless sweep, striking him on the side of the head, breaking the whip-handle into several pieces, and hurling him headlong against the bank by the roadside. I had the satisfaction of seeing his horse gallop riderless away.

A shriek burst from Miss Wintock, and I clutched the reins. It was high time, for the poor mare, mad with agony, was up on her hind-legs, fighting with her fore-feet in the air. For a second it seemed as if we should topple over; the next, she was staggering from side to side like a drunken man. Mechanically, I drew one of my small pistols—in my excitement I had till that moment entirely forgotten them.

"Keep off, sir!—keep off, as you value your life!" I shouted at the elder Wintock, for he was close upon us.

His reply was a torrent of imprecations and threats. "Give it to me!—You attend to the mare," cried the heroic girl as she snatched the pistol quickly from my hand. "I know how to use it, and will not be retaken alive!"

In truth, there was full occupation for both my hands, as momentarily I expected the poor animal to fall in her flurry. It was as much as I could do to keep her on her legs. Encumbered with the mare, there was no chance of defending myself in the gig. I was about to pull up short, jump into the road, and face the enemy on foot, when a heavy blow from the bit-end of Mr. Wintock's whip across the back of the head struck me from my seat. Had I not let go the reins of the gig, I should have fallen on the side of the back. As it was, I slipped sideways to the bottom of the gig, leaning powerless against the splashboard. The mare gave a lurch, and was nearly down, but with a struggle recovered her footing. Mr. Wintock's arm was raised to repeat the blow. Suddenly there was a vivid flash and a loud report. Miss Wintock had fired straight at our assailant, who on the instant had pulled up short, so that the ball struck the animal instead of the man! Stung with the wound, alarmed with the noise, it uttered a loud snort, bounded aside, galloped a short distance, and then fell. Mr. Wintock narrowly escaped being crushed as it stumbled and rolled upon the ground.

The report of the pistol startled the mare, and seemed to arouse her failing energies. Pricking up her ears, she shook herself till the harness rattled again; and then started forward at a brisk pace, though not nearly so fast as before. The Wintocks had got the worst of the encounter. Yet our plight was but a sorry one. I could scarcely keep my seat in the gig, from the effects of the blow, which had almost stunned me. My wound, too, bled profusely, saturating Miss Wintock's white kerchief, which, as we rode along, she had contrived to bind around my head, in spite of her own nervous agitation.

"We had gained the level road and our progress was easier. But the mare had been cruelly used, and it was evident would not stand a long journey without rest. The station was still many miles distant. In her present state, she must knock up long ere we could reach it. Indeed, I was far from feeling sure that I could myself hold out during such a journey. There was, too, just a chance that Mr. Wintock, being well acquainted with the locality, might, by misrepresenting the case, or by bribery, or by an admixture of both, procure fresh horses and aid without returning to Briteleigh Hall, and then recommence the pursuit. It was an ugly fact—I had literally stolen his mare and gig. I had also eloped with his ward; for so he might term it, though she was no longer a minor. These, on the face of things, were plausible pretexts by which he might almost command assistance from any reasonable person. Before us stretched a long dreary country, which we must cross. There might be other dangers, from traps or from gangs of gypsies, who not infrequently encamped in that locality. In my present state I could be but of little use to my fair companion as a defender."

Miss Wintock seemed to share my unspoken thoughts. Turning to me, she said, "Mr. Meredith you have been brought into sad trouble on my account. It would have been better, perhaps, for you to have left me to my fate." "My dear young lady, do not pain me by indulging such a thought for a moment. If occasion demanded it, I would gladly do the same again. The risk to me is nothing. My only wish I could see my way clearly what to do next for the best. But I confess myself totally at a loss." I spoke faintly and despondingly.

"Can we not seek shelter for a while, at least at the first inn we happen upon? Your wound could be looked to, and the mare might rest a little." "The fear that would not do. The Wintocks, knowing that we are on the high-road, will probably guess that we shall make all haste to the metropolis. Depend upon it, they will not part with you without another effort. It is now getting very late. If we stop at all, we must put up till the morning; for I do not see how we could start again from a strange inn till early dawn. No doubt our pursuers will make every inquiry in following us, and will be quickly on our track. What if they should overtake us, and give me in charge to the constable for stealing the horse and gig? Not that I care for myself; but you would be left without a protector, and entirely at their mercy. And yet I fear that I could do but little in that way just now. Indeed, I am at my wits' end; for it is plain that we cannot travel much farther in our present plight."

"Then why not leave the high-road at once? See! there are lights in that valley little farther on, which apparently leads that way. Let us try it. Possibly, we may find a safe refuge. They will not dream that we are at all, it will be farther away." The suggestion struck me as a capital one; and in fact there seemed to be no alterna-

live. "Good!" I said; "very good! A lady's wit excels a man's invention, any time." So saying, I turned the mare's head, and leaving the high-road across the common, drove steadily down to the spot where the lights appeared.

At about two miles' distance we found a scattered village. The lights we had seen were reflected as from the windows of the only inn in the place. The house was just about to be closed for the night; for the one or two who always stay to the latest minute to drink an extra glass, were departing, some to drain with rather an unsteady gait. Ringing the yard-bell, I gave the mare and gig into the sleepy hostler's keeping, and with Miss Wintock on my arm, walked into the house. Boniface was seated in the bar-parlor, talking it very coolly. Making myself quite at home, I handed my companion to a chair and called for refreshments. While he was serving us, I said: "Landlord, I want a sleeping apartment for this young lady."

The fellow was a mere clod, sheepish, carrot-haired and bloated; apparently a copper-headed kind of calf, yet sufficiently astute where his own interests were concerned. He eyed us both for a moment very suspiciously. Truly, neither of us cut a respectable figure. Miss Wintock in her plain dark dress, surmounted by old Martha's horribly antiquated bonnet and thread-bare shawl; and I with my wounded head bound up in a bloodstained handkerchief. There was sufficient reason for the man's distrust. "Very sorry, sir!—very sorry, indeed I can't have it. Never let beds to strange folks this time of night."

"Well, but my good man, you see—"

"No! I don't, and I don't want to. You can't have any beds here; and that's flat." Just then the landlady entered the room. She seemed to be rather a genteel sort of person compared with her spouse, and to be about retiring to rest. I at once appealed to her.

"Madam, I was requesting the landlord to oblige me with a night's accommodation for this young lady. We have been attacked on the road, and compelled to turn out of our way; and we cannot possibly reach our destination to-night. I am agreeable to make any shift myself—a shakedown in your hay-loft, or a stretch on your pillion, so that you make the lady comfortable. You have our mare in the stable and gig in the yard; put them under lock and key as security, if you like. We are willing to pay to the full any reasonable charge as well, in advance. What more can you require?" As I spoke, I took out my purse, not very heavily lined, truly, but sufficiently so for present need. Money Miss Wintock had none.

The landlady glanced suspiciously at Miss Wintock. She could not make her out at all. Her costume was evidently not that of a lady; but the word "attacked" awakened her curiosity.

"Deary me! attacked by them tramps. I am glad they did not rob you, for I see you have still your purse. How did you manage to get away from them? And then she hurriedly proceeded with a string of eager questions, scarcely waiting for a reply. "She is really a lady born and bred. I interrupted. "You surely will not turn her out again into the road at this time of the night!"

"But I cannot understand why a lady should come abroad in such a dress as that," she replied sarcastically; while she spoke an idea seemed to force its way into her mind, and she archely added, "unless it is a runaway match. In that case, my husband and I would rather have nothing to do with it. We might get into trouble."

"I should think not—I should think not. No runaway folks in Bob Simpson's house; if he knows it. Come, young people, you must go faster; we can't have folks like you here; blurting out the landlord, moving from the room, and calling to the hostler, "Ben; put that 'ere mare in a g; n; lady and gent'l man's a-goin' on."

I was about to remonstrate further, and more strongly; but Miss Wintock rose indignantly to her feet. Hitherto, her natural strength, combined with the false and very unpleasant position in which she was placed, had kept her silent. Unpinning the old shawl, and raising the hideous bonnet, she shook her glossy black hair up till it hung down in clustering masses on her shoulders.

"Yes, landlord, I am a lady, though you seem to doubt it—and a very shamefully oppressed and injured one. I am not compelled to enlighten a stranger respecting my private affairs; but this gentleman has just risked his life in my service. You see he is not in a fit state to drive me to the next town, even if it were not so late. I beg you as a man—if you have any manhood in you—and for humanity's sake, to accede to his request. I pledge you my word, my honor as a lady," she continued proudly and passionately, and with a short scornful laugh, "that you incur no risk. We are not burglars, that you should dread us."

The moment Miss Wintock threw aside her bonnet and began to speak, the landlady fixed upon her an earnest and scrutinizing look, bending forward with parted lips and scanning her features narrowly. "Why—surely—can it be?" she exclaimed in wonderment, eagerly seizing the lady by both hands—"Why, Bob, 'tis Miss Wintock, as I'm alive! Don't you remember my dear young mistress, that used to be at the Hall? Oh! my dear young lady, who could have dreamed of seeing you in such a pickle! Whatever has happened? Where have you been so long? They say you left the Hall in following us, and will be quickly on our track. What if they should overtake us, and give me in charge to the constable for stealing the horse and gig? Not that I care for myself; but you would be left without a protector, and entirely at their mercy. And yet I fear that I could do but little in that way just now. Indeed, I am at my wits' end; for it is plain that we cannot travel much farther in our present plight."

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## PHOTOGRAPHING ON FLESH.

Photographing on flesh is a very new and interesting discovery.

A new triumph of photographic art is revealed. It is claimed that by this process, the indelible likeness of any object can be imprinted on the human cuticle, and that, indeed, the barbarous method of tattooing, now discovered is rapid, accurate, cheap, and painless. The idea, for instance, of one who is interested in making the portrait of a person, of any object of affection, a dear relative, a favorite dog bird, or cat, is certainly a very interesting one. Indeed, to those without pecuniary means, as affording a chance to procure a permanent remembrance of a worldly goods, their houses, lands, ships, and other property.

"Yes, that sounds very pretty," said Mr. J. Lavergne, a veteran operator at one of the large photographic establishments, "but the ink used with acids for nearly thirty years of the business, and have yet to learn of any other process that, outside of tattooing, will plain I think that last longer than any other photographic chemical. There was once a man called the Blue Man, who took a photograph internally for his own amusement. He changed the color of his skin, but the only instance I know of. Now, I have got a picture or imprint on your skin. You must understand there's a good deal of fancy work in our business not carried out by the uninitiated. But after all, we have to come down to the light, the silver and the same nitrate of silver which the old blue man internally for the portrait of a woman."

"Now, I can put a picture on the skin of a woman as well as on the skin of a man. After, if the paint does not peel off, it will stay on the skin as long as the person lives. It is not as long as it will on the skin of a man. This is because the pores of the skin of a woman are much finer than those of a man, and the paint does not peel off so easily. It is a very interesting discovery, and one which will be very valuable in many instances. I have seen some pictures which were very fine, and which would last for many years. I have also seen some which were very poor, and which would not last for more than a few weeks. It all depends upon the skill of the operator, and the quality of the chemicals used. I think that this discovery will be very valuable in many instances, and will be a great improvement upon the old method of tattooing."

## SPRING SNAKE STORIES.

According to the Warwick Standard, a party of four gentlemen were out for a walk on the Warwick road, and were surprised to find a large snake coiled upon the path. One of the party, who was a sportsman, approached the snake, and was obliged to retreat on finding that it was a rattlesnake. The snake was killed, and it was found to be a specimen of the species known as the "king snake," which is very common in the Warwick district. The snake was about two inches long, and was very fat. It was found to be a very fine specimen of the species, and was preserved for the Warwick Museum. The snake was found on the Warwick road, near the Warwick Station, and was killed by one of the party on the 15th inst. It was found to be a specimen of the species known as the "king snake," which is very common in the Warwick district. The snake was about two inches long, and was very fat. It was found to be a very fine specimen of the species, and was preserved for the Warwick Museum. The snake was found on the Warwick road, near the Warwick Station, and was killed by one of the party on the 15th inst.

A species of green water snake, known as the "king snake," was found in a field near Warwick, on the 15th inst. The snake was about two inches long, and was very fat. It was found to be a very fine specimen of the species, and was preserved for the Warwick Museum. The snake was found in a field near Warwick, and was killed by one of the party on the 15th inst. It was found to be a specimen of the species known as the "king snake," which is very common in the Warwick district. The snake was about two inches long, and was very fat. It was found to be a very fine specimen of the species, and was preserved for the Warwick Museum. The snake was found in a field near Warwick, and was killed by one of the party on the 15th inst.

A Morgan county, Va., negro killed a large rattlesnake and gave it to a doctor. The doctor tied it behind the saddle of a drove horse. He left the snake in the wagon, and the next morning found the state of the rattlesnake lying in the middle of the trail ten miles.

While working in a ledge of rocks near Dublin Station the other day, a man named John Doe, who was a sportsman, was surprised to find a large snake coiled upon the path. One of the party, who was a sportsman, approached the snake, and was obliged to retreat on finding that it was a rattlesnake. The snake was killed, and it was found to be a specimen of the species known as the "king snake," which is very common in the Warwick district. The snake was about two inches long, and was very fat. It was found to be a very fine specimen of the species, and was preserved for the Warwick Museum. The snake was found on the Warwick road, near the Warwick Station, and was killed by one of the party on the 15th inst.

"Is it known," said Mr. J. Lavergne, "that a person can be photographed on his skin? It is a very interesting discovery, and one which will be very valuable in many instances. I have seen some pictures which were very fine, and which would last for many years. I have also seen some which were very poor, and which would not last for more than a few weeks. It all depends upon the skill of the operator, and the quality of the chemicals used. I think that this discovery will be very valuable in many instances, and will be a great improvement upon the old method of tattooing." "Well, I cannot say that his life is a matter of history, but I think that it is a matter of fact. I have seen some pictures which were very fine, and which would last for many years. I have also seen some which were very poor, and which would not last for more than a few weeks. It all depends upon the skill of the operator, and the quality of the chemicals used. I think that this discovery will be very valuable in many instances, and will be a great improvement upon the old method of tattooing."