

The Gypsy's Sacrifice

OR
A SECRET REVEALED

CHAPTER XX.

"Go straight away to-night. I'll make things square with our people. Go straight away and keep dark till the week's up—oh, yes, I heard every word, and I know the arrangement that's been come to. You take my advice. I'll explain things to the people and keep 'em quiet. Go up to London—there's a late train at Crossby you can catch—and cut the gypsies' camp at once and for all. As I said, it's no place for either of you now."

"He is right, drunk or sober, and we must trust him—seeing that we can't do otherwise. I should like to have said good-by to Mother Katie and some of the others. What course do you advise?"

"Let us go, Jack," she said. Madge had been married five days; and on this, the morning of the sixth, as she stood at the window of the London hotel, and looked down at the crowded street along which rushed the cabs and omnibusses, and flowed the interminable stream of eager, restless people, she asked herself whether she were awake or dreaming; and, indeed, in her lovely eyes there was a look that was something like bewilderment, mingled with the dreamy expression of perfect happiness and joy.

For once Uncle Jake's advice had been followed. Royce had made up his accounts that morning and received his share of the profits, and with this by no means large sum he had started on their wedding trip. He had chosen London because it would be easier to baffle pursuit in that direction, if anyone had chosen to make it.

There had been only time on their way to the station for Madge to purchase a hat—the first she had ever worn—and Royce, too, exchanged his rough, tweed jacket for a conventional coat; but the morning after their arrival, and directly after breakfast, she said with a blush: "Jack, will you let me go out for a little while?"

"Let you go out? Why dearest? Are you going to run away from me?" "Not yet," she said softly, the blush deepening. "May I go, Jack?" "No," he said, with an assumed sternness. "You'll lose your way. What do you want to go for—and alone, I take it?"

"Yes, I want to go alone," she said timidly. "Why I want to go is my secret. And I won't lose my way, I can't go very far, and I know the name of the hotel and the street."

"Why mustn't I go with you?" "Because you must not," she said, and she went and laid her head on his shoulder to hide her blushes. "How long are you going to be away?" he said. "I shall count the minutes while you are gone! To leave me so soon! I wonder you have the heart, Madge!"

"Two hours," she said. "Yes, that will be enough." She got his pipe and tobacco from the mantle, and put them in his hand. "There, I shall be back almost before you have finished your pipe."

"It would be a big one to last two hours, Madge!" he said with a laugh that was rather rueful. "I wish you'd tell me what you are after. London's a big place, and you have never been in it before. Better let me go with you," and he tried to look into her face, but she evaded him and with a shy kiss ran from the room.

Royce felt half inclined to go after her and recall his consent, but there had been an undercurrent of earnestness and entreaty in her voice which kept him from doing so, and he lit his pipe and tried not to feel anxious about her.

Madge put on her hat and shawl quickly, and, going downstairs, asked for Oxford street. She had noticed as they drove to the hotel a big thoroughfare full of shops, and, asking its name, Royce had told her it was Oxford street. The hotel porter with a curious glance at her, directed her, and she walked quickly up the Strand and through Leicester Square looking into all the linen draper's shops as she went with a careful scrutiny. She found one to suit her at last, and, going in asked with a calmness that barely concealed her timidity for some ready-made dresses.

The man conducted her to the proper department of the vast and gorgeous place, and there Madge purchased a couple of plain, but pretty frocks; one a dark blue, the other a gray. She also bought some collars and cuffs, and was tempted by some daintily made shoes in another department.

These and one or two other things she paid for with some money which she had been saving for years, and took them to the hotel in a cab.

The two hours had barely elapsed and Royce was looking at his watch for the tenth time, and wondering whether he hadn't better go in search of her, when the door opened and she entered, standing with a burning blush on her face and downcast eyes.

Royce uttered an exclamation of

amazement, which merged into rapturous admiration as he gazed at her.

"Why—why, Madge, I didn't know you!" he exclaimed. "How—how on earth have you managed it, and so quickly? Let me look at you!"

He took her by the shoulders and turned her around twice, his eyes large with wonder; then he caught her to him and kissed her with the loving approval which is so sweet and precious to every woman.

"This isn't my Madge!" he exclaimed laughing and stroking her hair. "This is some grand London lady who has paid me the honor of a morning call! And—and it fits like, like a glove! Good Heaven, Madge, is it magic or what?" and he held her at arm's length and looked her up and down with passionate admiration in his eyes. "And what an idiot I must be not to guess what you were after! But I never thought of that!"

"You thought I should be content to go about with you in my old brown dress, and red shawl?" said Madge in a low voice.

"Of course," he said. "They were beautiful in my eyes, and I'd become used to them. They were part of you, you see."

Her eyes were raised to his with melting gratitude for an instant. "But how did you manage it?" he demanded, laughing as he pulled her down beside him and continuing to examine the neat blue dress, the dainty shoes, the white collar and cuffs. "What wonderful creatures women are! I should have thought you would have been too frightened to go into those crowded streets alone, much less into shops! Wonderful!"

"It was rather terrible," she said softly, "and it was hard to fix upon the right shop; and then the people—I mean the men and women in the shops—stared so. I suppose—" her lips quivered for an instant, "I suppose they saw I was a gypsy, Jack."

"Nonsense! No one could mistake you for anything but what you are—a lady, Madge."

"And you like it, Jack?" "Like it? Like isn't the word," he said promptly; "and, look here, Madge, though I don't know anything about women's dress, I know, somehow, that it's just the thing you ought to have bought. What's the other like?"

"You shall see it on to-morrow," she said. "Don't crumple the collar, sir. I haven't many of them."

"Not yet," he said, "but you will have presently. Why, I was just going to remark at breakfast this morning that we should have to buy some things. I haven't a dress suit—"

"A dress suit, what is that?" she asked. "A swallow-tail coat and the vest in black, just like the waiter here wears."

"I see," she said thoughtfully. "And you'll want some evening dresses, or one at any rate."

"An evening dress?" Madge repeated in low voice.

He nodded. "Yes, the ladies change their dresses for dinner, don't you know?"

"No, I don't know," she murmured half audibly.

"They put on their war paint as it's usually called; something light and pretty, but always rather gorgeous; 'cut low in the neck.' I think that's the way to describe it."

"And—and I shall want dresses like that?" she said.

"Yes, a regular rig out. But I shall always prefer the brown dress and the red shawl, Madge! What have you done with them? I hope you haven't made way with them."

"No," she said softly. "I have kept them. I will keep them to remind me," she put her arms around his neck, "of the days when you loved me though I was only a common gypsy girl."

"No more of that, dearest!" he said. "You are Mrs. Royce London now. But look here, I'll tell you what we will do. We will go to the theatre to-night. Madge! You'll see a real play then, and the women in the boxes and stalls in their evening dresses; that will be better than my poor attempts at description. And now let us go out and buy some more nice things. I want to show you the streets, and—oh, all sorts of things. There's such a lot you ought to see, that I don't know where to begin first. But never mind, we'll take it as it comes."

When she came down with her outdoor things there was more exclamations and admirations over the pretty jacket she had bought, and once again Royce told her that he should not have known her.

They went out, and Royce began his part of cicerone. To Madge the great city seemed, as it seems to all who see it for the first time, too marvelous to be real. Royce took her to the biggest shops, and St. Paul's Cathedral, and the National Gallery, and Madge became breathless under the mighty spell. She was so absorbed and rapt in delight that she did not notice the attention they

were attracting. Men and women—especially the former—turned and looked after the couple; and it was not only their good looks—for there are always one or two handsome men and women in London—not only Madge's beauty with its delicious freshness, but a something in her manner which drew the notice of all who passed.

Most women, alas! have not a good walk. Civilization has taught us many things, among others the miening gait which fashionable women have fallen into. Madge's walk, though as graceful as that of an Athenian woman of old, was unconventional. She moved with the freedom and ease one sees in Egyptian girls as they come and go from the wells with their pitchers on their heads; and her lithe, supple form, notwithstanding its fashionable dress and jacket, seemed to move to music.

In the middle of the day Royce took her to a well-known restaurant for lunch, and Madge, though outwardly calm and self-possessed, was inwardly almost too excited to eat the dainty things which the well-trained and attentive waiter brought them.

Royce had bought her a neat opera cloak, and taken a box, judging rightly that she would be more at ease there than in the publicity of the stalls. Madge held her breath as they entered, and she looked around the magnificent house filled from pit to gallery, and stood in the front of the box, forgetful of herself and everything but the wonderful sight; and Royce looked at her with admiration and delight in her delight. But presently opera glasses were leveled at her, and she saw people whispering together and glancing at the box. He drew the curtains partially so as to hide her, but with a proud smile on his face. In all that vast theatre there was not a more lovely woman than his wife!

The music by the great orchestra entranced Madge, but the play—ah, who shall describe its effect upon her. It was only an ordinary melodrama, but the principal actor was the most famous in London—or the world; and to Madge it was all real. The lovely face became pale and red by turns, her lips quivered, her eyes filled with tears, and Royce could feel the hand he held tremble and start at the exciting portions of the old and hackneyed play.

He scarcely looked at the stage. Her innocence, her delight, her emotion fascinated, thrilled him with an unpeakable joy. It was as if he had captured some exquisitely beautiful wild creature, and taught it to love him—and him only. She sank back at the end of each act, and looked at Royce like one awakening from a dream.

"You are happy, Madge?" he whispered. "Happy!" A smile broke slowly over her face, and crept into her dark eyes.

Soon after the drop fell on the third act a knock came at the door of the box.

"It is only the attendant with ices," said Royce with a smile and he opened the door. But instead of the box-keeper, a gentleman in evening dress, with his crush hat under his arm, stood in the doorway.

"By Jove, I thought it was you!" he said. "How do you do, London?"

Royce looked slightly embarrassed for a second; then he shook hands. "Yes, it is I, Rochester," he said in his frank manner coming back after that one second. "Come in! How did you spot me?"

"I'm in the second row of the stalls," said the gentleman.

Madge looked up at him. He was young, handsome, and distinguished looking; and though there was not a trace of foppishness about him, he was extremely well dressed.

He looked at Madge and seemed to wait, and Royce, after the faintest hesitation, said: "My wife, Rochester."

The gentleman bowed. Madge was about to hold out her hand, but a happy instinct kept her from it, and she just inclined her head; and so by instinct did the right thing.

A faint look of surprise had flashed for a moment in the visitor's eyes, but it was gone almost as soon as it came; and in the most self-possessed and natural way he said:

"An unexpected pleasure! I'm afraid this old play bores you awfully, Mrs. London."

"Mrs. London! It seemed as if he could not mean her. The color came to her face, then left it pale.

"Is it old?" she said. "It is wonderful!"

"I congratulate you, London!" he said in a voice too low to reach Madge. "I didn't know you were married. It wasn't in the papers, was it?"

"No," said Royce. Then he laughed softly, happily. "We were only married yesterday."

The other opened his eyes, then he glanced at Madge.

"Will you be offended if I say that Mrs. London is one of the loveliest women I ever saw?"

"Not a bit; because it's true," said Royce, flushing proudly. "And if you knew her better you would add—the best."

"I'm sure of that," said the other. "Well," he shook hands with Royce, "you are a lucky fellow!" And after a little while he bowed to Madge and left the box.

"Who was that, Jack?" "Lord Rochester," said Royce. "He is an old friend of mine. We were at school together. He is an awfully good fellow, and I think you will like him, Madge."

"Yes," she said dreamily, as the orchestra played its softest. "Lord Rochester! He is a lord, Jack?" Her brows knit slightly.

Federal Life Assurance Company

OF CANADA.

23rd Annual Report and Financial Statement.

For the Year Ending December 31, 1904

The twenty-third annual meeting of the shareholders of this company was held at the head office of the company, in Hamilton, on Tuesday, March 7th, 1905, the President, Mr. David Dexter, in the chair. The following reports and financial statement were submitted:—

DIRECTORS' REPORT.

Your directors have the honor to present the report and financial statement of the company for the year which closed on the 31st December, 1904, duly vouched for by the auditors.

The new business of the year consisted of two thousand two hundred and fifty applications for insurance, aggregating \$3,146,500, of which two thousand and one hundred and seventy-seven applications for \$3,010,499.50 were accepted.

As in previous years, the income of the company shows a gratifying increase, and the assets of the company have been increased by \$285,979.52, and have now reached \$2,148,773.37, exclusive of guarantee capital, amounting at the close of the year to \$3,018,773.37, and the liabilities for reserves and all outstanding claims, \$1,962,935.56, showing a surplus of \$1,055,837.81. Exclusive of uncalled guarantee capital, the surplus to policyholders was \$185,837.81.

Policies on eighty-two lives became claims through death, to the amount of \$157,040.00, of which \$12,585 was reinsured in other companies. Including cash dividends and dividends applied to the reduction of premiums with annuities, the total payment to policyholders amounted to \$198,911.34.

Careful attention has been given to the investment of the company's funds, amply secured by reserves. Our investments have yielded a very satisfactory rate of interest.

Expenses have been confined to a reasonable limit, consistent with due efforts for new business.

The results of the year indicate a most gratifying progress. Compared with the preceding year, the figures submitted by the directors for your approval show an advance of thirteen and a half per cent. in assets.

The assurances carried by the company now amount to \$15,047,806.23, upon which the company holds reserves to the full amount required by law, and, in addition thereto, a considerable surplus.

The field officers and agents of the company are intelligent and loyal, and are entitled to much credit for their able representation of the company's interests. The members of the office staff have also proved faithful to the company's service.

Your directors are pleased to be able to state that the business of the company for the past two months of the current year has been better than in the corresponding months of last year, and that the outlook for the future is very bright.

AUDITORS' REPORT.

To the President and Directors of the Federal Life Assurance Company:— Gentlemen,—We have carefully audited the books and records of your company for the year ending 31st December last, and have certified to their accuracy.

The cash and journal vouchers have been closely examined, and agree with the entries recorded.

The debentures, bonds, etc., in the possession of the company have been inspected, whilst those deposited with the Government or banks have been verified by certificate, the total agreeing with the amount as shown in the statement of assets.

The accompanying statements, viz. revenue and assets and liabilities, show the result of the year's operations, and, also, the financial position of the company.

Respectfully submitted,
H. S. STEPHENS,
CHARLES STIFF,
Auditors.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR 1904.

RECEIPTS.

Hamilton, 1st March, 1905.	
Premium and annuity income	\$ 542,388.83
Interest, rents, and profit on sales of securities	86,329.51
	\$ 628,718.34

DISBURSEMENTS.

Paid to policyholders	\$ 198,911.34
All other payments	191,620.70
Balance	238,186.30
	\$ 628,718.34

ASSETS, DECEMBER 31, 1904.

Debentures and bonds	\$ 685,388.83
Mortgages	704,168.83
Loans on policies, bonds, stocks, etc.	410,615.33
All other assets	348,605.39
	\$2,148,773.37

LIABILITIES.

Reserve fund	\$1,887,724.81
Death losses awaiting proofs	51,140.00
Other liabilities	24,070.75
Surplus on policyholders' account	185,837.81
	\$2,148,773.37

Assets	\$2,148,773.37
Guarantee capital	870,000.00
Total security	\$3,018,773.37

Policies were issued assuring \$3,010,499.50. Total insurance in force \$16,047,806.23. The foregoing reports and statements were received and adopted, on the motion of President David Dexter, seconded by Vice-President Lieut.-Col. Kerns.

The retiring directors were re-elected, and at a subsequent meeting of the directors the following officers were re-elected:—Mr. David Dexter, President and Managing Director; Lieut.-Col. Kerns and Rev. Dr. Potts, Vice-Presidents.

"Yes; he is the nephew of the Duke of Alton. You remember Alton getting the dukedom—? He stopped confused. Madge's color arose, and she looked at him for an instant sadly. "How should I remember?" she said in a low voice. "It is you who forget that a gypsy girl is not likely to know anything about dukes!" He took her hand and stroked it; he would have taken her in his arms if he could.

(To be Continued.)

LONDON IN FIGURES.

The Tremendous Activity of the World's Metropolis.

London has been reduced to figures in a remarkable manner in the statistical abstract for 1904 recently issued by the London County Council. Every department of life in the metropolis is stated in quantities—from the population to the half-penny tramway fares, from the outstanding loans to the number of cases of drunkenness. Below are a few of the multitude of items in the volume:

Intoxicating liquor licenses	10,702
Houses (rated)	619,338
Elementary school children	772,295
Dog licenses	60,262
Pawnbrokers	4,043
Paupers of all classes	130,265
Lunatic asylums	16,596

MENELIK TO TRAVEL.

That Menelik, the Abyssinian emperor, is soon to take a trip to Europe is the information sent by a Swiss engineer employed by the Abyssinian government in a letter to his family in Zurich. According to the letter, the Negus intends to visit London, Paris and Rome, and the journey is to be made within a few months. His advent is arousing deep interest in these capitals, for he is more than a barbarian, and his little country has shown itself great in war, as the Italians know to their cost. Not only this, but Europe realizes that Abyssinia is a valuable customer, and can be made much more so. Menelik traces his descent in a direct line to King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.

Cots for babies are much more common in Germany than England. No fewer than 1,538 children have died in England in twelve months through suffocation, caused by sleeping with the parents.