

# The Gypsy's Sacrifice

OR  
A SECRET REVEALED

## CHAPTER XXVIII.—(Continued.)

"Oh, my lady, oh, madam, see this! It is like a fleecy cloud with the stars shining through it! And this one of mauve silk—is it silk?—it is like cobweb! And here is one in black lace with poppies—and this—and this!" And her voice rose to a pitch of ecstasy.

"Marion is getting excited. Now, Madge, dear, which will you try on first?"

"The plainest and simplest. That black one will do if the poppies are taken out."

"That is nonsense, dear. Come Marion, slip it on!"

Madge stood up, and between them they put on the dress, and Marion clasped her hands in speechless admiration.

"Oh, madam, oh, Miss Irene, it is the very thing! If you would look in the glass, madam—"

"Yes, it will do."

"Yes, I think you are right," said Irene. "Very well, then, put the rest back, Marion."

"But you, my lady," said Marion in accents of disappointment; "you have not chosen one of yours yet."

"Oh, I!" said Irene carelessly. "It does not matter; why should it? And she sighed; then, as Madge stared at her, she colored and forced a laugh. "If I must put one on, I will try the mauve," she said. "Like you, Madge dear, I want something very simple; and it is the plainest I think."

She put it on, and decided at once that it would do. Above the faint color of the gossamer-like silk her fair face and neck shone like ivory.

"With your set of pearls, Miss Irene," exclaimed Marion—"and oh, my lady, your hair looks like gold itself against it!"

"It is a good thing we are not either of us inclined to be vain," said Irene, with a smile. "Take it off, Marion."

"Yes, Miss. One moment. There ought to be a ribbon here, but I do not see it. What a pity! Oh, wait, Miss, do please!" she ran on. "I saw a piece just the same color among Mrs. Landon's things. It was in the imperial when I unpacked it."

She ran to a drawer at the bottom of the wardrobe, and turned over the things; and the two girls stood beside her in their finery looking on.

"What is that, Madge, dear?" and Irene pointed to the small paper parcel which Royce had noticed when Madge was packing up in London.

Madge blushed.

"I will show you," she said in a low voice.

"It is not here, madam; I think I must have taken it to my room with some other things of the sort. I'll run and see," said Marion.

As soon as she had left the room Madge took up the parcel, held it in her hand for a moment, then cut the string and broke the wax seal.

"See," she said in a low voice, "they are Royce's. I found them the night he was hurt on the moor." She looked at them with loving tenderness. "They are the greatest treasure I have," she said, lifting her eyes to Irene. "Will you think me ungrateful if I say that I would rather lose all the grand things madam gave me the other day than these? See, there is his watch, and there—"

She stopped, for Irene, who had slid her arm around Madge's neck and put her face against hers sympathetically, suddenly started back. "My locket!" broke from her lips.

Madge's hand closed over the things, and she turned white as she looked up at Irene, as she stood with trembling lips and heaving bosom.

"Yours?" said Madge almost inaudibly. "Yours! I—I thought it was his own. I—" She ceased and held out the locket. "Take it," she said hoarsely, with a dazed expression in her eyes, as if the shadow of a great sorrow were creeping over her. "Take it—I do not want it." Irene fought hard to regain her composure.

She put Madge's hand back, and forced a laugh.

"My dear Madge," she said. "Why—why should I? I gave it to Royce—when? oh long ago. Why shouldn't I give it to him? My—my brother! Don't look so scared, Madge." She laughed again. "And even if I cared for it, do you think I would rob you of it? It belongs to you—as—as he does! Hush, the girl is coming back!"

Madge sat with the packet in her hand while Marion fussed about; and she still held it when Irene and the maid had gone, and she—Madge—was alone.

An awful suspicion was bearing down upon her. Little incidents which she had not noticed at the time of their occurrence flashed upon her memory. Why had Irene turned white at the sight of the locket if it had meant nothing when she gave it? Why did Royce always avoid talking about Irene? Why did Irene always refuse to accompany them when they went out together?

These and similar questions crowded upon her, and seemed to stifle her.

She rose and stretched out her hands, panting as if for air, and as

if she were pushing the miserable suspicion from her.

"No, no; I will not believe it!" she said at last. "It is I he loves; it is I! He never loved her, never! He is my Royce!" And in a kind of desperation she thrust the packet out of her sight.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

It was the night of the ball. Invitations had been sent out freely, and guests were expected from far and near; there had not been such a gathering of the county families and resident gentry for years.

Madge, as Marion dressed her, tried to remember the names of some of the people Irene had told her about; but she felt confused and bewildered, for she knew that the whole affair would prove a fresh ordeal for her.

Irene had taught her one or two square dances, and the now waltz, and had been astonished at Madge's quickness and aptitude. She assured her that she would dance as well as any one in the room; too well, indeed, for most of the young country squires, who were more at home in the hunting field than the ball-room. But Madge was doubtful. A mistake which one of their own people might make would pass unnoticed, whereas she knew any blunder on her part would attract attention, and be the subject of remark.

"Nearly ready, Madge," said Royce, from the adjoining room. "May I come in?"

He stood still as he entered, and gazed at her with wondering admiration. The dress of black lace, relieved by the scarlet poppies, which Irene and Marion had insisted upon remaining, harmonized perfectly with Madge's rich loveliness, and she looked superb as she stood before him, holding a bouquet of faint, yellow blossoms.

"My word!" he exclaimed at last. "This is war paint with a vengeance!"

"Do I look so like a savage?" she murmured with a smile.

He put out his hand to draw her to him, but Marion uttered a cry of alarm.

"Oh, please don't Master Royce! You'll crush her so!" Then, abashed at her temerity, she flew from the room.

"Marion regards you as a work of art, still wet and untouchable. But you do look a tremendous swell, Madge, in that dress, and with madam's diamonds! By George, they never looked so well! I suppose it's no use asking you for the first, or any dance?" he added ruefully.

"Why not?"

"Why not?"

"Oh, because husband and wife are not supposed to dance together, unless it's the last gallop, and only then on sufferance."

"I am always learning things. Are you sorry, Royce?" and she put her hand on his arm.

"Sorry!" he said. "I'd like to dance all the time with you?"

"Never mind," she said; then with averted eyes she added: "You will be able to dance with Irene, Royce?"

"Oh, yes," he replied, fastening his sleeve-links. "We are not husband and wife, you know."

"No," she said in a low voice. "Royce—"

"Well?" he responded, looking up quickly, for there was a touch of anxiety in her tone.

"You will keep near me as much as you can, to-night; that will not be a breach of etiquette, will it?"

"Of course I will!" he replied; "I shall have to trot about a great deal, but I will be with you as much as I can; though it strikes me rather forcibly that you will not be lonely."

And he looked at her from tip to toe significantly. "You had plenty of company the other day, and I fancy it will be the same here."

"If all the world were round me, and you were absent I should feel lonely, Jack." She called him Jack now and again, in moments like the present, when her great love for him revealed itself.

A knock came to the door, and Irene said:

"Are you ready, Madge, dear?"

Royce fled, and Madge opened the door.

"I am going down to the ball-room to see if everything is right," said Irene; then she stopped and uttered an exclamation of delight and admiration.

"Oh, Madge! You look—"

"No one will want to even glance in my direction while you are near," said Madge with sweet gravity. "You look like one of those delicate flowers in the conservatory."

And indeed the simile was not inappropriate. In the softly draping faintly-colored dress, Irene looked not unlike one of the fairy-like exotics which fill one with a kind of wondering admiration—and fear; for one cold breath slays them.

They went downstairs. The great hall, usually so dimly lighted, was brilliant with candelabra, which shed around that soft light which gas cannot attain to. The ball-room

startled Madge into a cry of wonder and delight. She had hitherto only seen it partially shrouded in calico coverings; but now it shone in all its proper splendor of gilded carvings, and Venetian mirrors reflecting innumerable wax candles, which revealed the exquisite beauty of the Watteau panels, which ran at intervals round the vast room. The parquet floor of olive and teak had been polished until it was smooth as glass, reflecting dimly the rich decorations and costly hangings. Down the broad stairs, which led directly to this magnificent salon de danse, were ranged stately palms and tropical ferns, their green fronds and leaves forming a delicate contrast to the rich splendor of their surroundings. One of the ante-rooms led directly to the fern-house, from which the choice specimens had been taken; and in the mimic tropical forest a maid incessantly poured a rill of crystal water from her upturned vase of Carrara marble. The fernery was lighted by Japanese lanterns only, so that if the eyes grew weary by the dazzling ball-room, their owners could rest them in this shadowy twilight. At one end of the ball-room was the gallery for the band—one of the best in London. In the centre of the front of this gallery was a larger shield bearing the Landon coat of arms, having on each side of it a tattered flag torn from some ancient foe by one of the dead-and-gone Landons. Rank, wealth, the pride of place, all declared themselves loudly—perhaps too loudly for modern taste—in the whole scene, and it was little wonder that Madge should stand dumb stricken in their midst.

Irene took it all quite naturally, but she was pleased by Madge's surprise and delight.

"It will be brighter still when the room is filled with handsome dresses, and the band is playing," she said. "A fitting setting for your triumph to-night, dear," she added.

"My triumph!" said Madge shaking her head.

Irene smiled.

"You will see. Why, dear, there will not be a more beautiful woman in the room to-night than Royce's wife!"

"Then you must stay away from it!" said Madge fervently. "If I were a man—" she stopped suddenly, for the countess had entered from a doorway behind them. She was dressed in her favorite gray satin, and wore the family diamonds and priceless family lace. She looked at the two girls critically.

"You have both very pretty dresses," she said. "Yours is well chosen, Irene, and yours too, Madge," she added.

"I am glad you like it madam."

"No one could help liking it. It becomes you remarkably well. Come to me."

Madge came forward, and the countess slightly altered the arrangement of the diamonds wreath in her hair.

"That is better," she said. "You wear your diamonds well, child."

Moved by a sudden impulse, Madge took her hand and kissed it.

"I am overpaid for my compliment."

"Have I offended her?" said Madge. "No, no! How sweetly you did it, dear! Why, a heart of stone could not have resisted it! I should have flung my arms round her neck, crushed her lace, and perhaps annoyed her, but you did just the right thing."

"For the first time!"

They spoke almost in whispers, for footmen in fine livery were coming in and out.

Irene drew Madge to one of the windows, and moved the curtain aside and showed her the drive. It was lined with varicolored lamps; and grooms stood in a cluster ready to receive the carriages.

"It is like a scene in 'The Arabian Nights,'" said Madge, dreamily.

A voice muttering what sounded like oaths made them start, and instinctively they looked at each other before they came out from the curtain which had concealed them.

It was Seymour. He was pacing up and down with a letter in his hand, his face lined with care and trouble. He started slightly as he saw them; then his face cleared, and crushing the letter into his pocket he came forward bowing with exaggerated reverence.

"Venus and Helen of Troy!" he said. "I salute you! You look as if you had both just floated down from Olympus! Irene, dear, I want you to give me the first dance."

"Oh, ask Madge."

"Madge will perhaps spare me one. I know it is too much to ask, but I want you to give me the second, dear."

"Very well," she said, her coldness contrasting markedly with his affectionate ardor.

He took her ball programme and wrote his name; not only for the second but two others. Irene seemed about to remonstrate, but she said nothing, and he wrote his name for one on Madge's card.

"I dare not ask you more," he said, "for every man in the room will want to dance with the Lady of the Poppies!"

His compliments always made Madge feel as if she wanted to get out of the sound of his voice, and she turned away from him with intense gravity.

"Hark!" said Irene, "there are the first carriages!"

The countess went and took her place beside the door ready to receive her guests; the famous London band filed into the gallery and began to tune up their instruments; the rattle and roll of the heavy chariots in which country people delight to make their state visits were heard more distinctly in the



## DISEASES OF FRUIT TREES.

The black knots frequently seen on plums, sour cherries, including wild cherry trees, are produced by a fungus. During the summer this fungus bears one kind of spore, and in late winter or early spring another. These spores are carried by the wind and grow where they find favorable lodgment. Their growth on plums and cherries irritates the tissues, which swell and split the bark, thus exposing their olive green interior, which later becomes sooty black.

The only satisfactory treatment is preventive. The method generally recommended is to cut out and burn all knots found during winter and early spring, and again during May and June. This requires but little time. Wild cherries and plum trees in fence rows which are infested should be cut down and burned.

Pear blight or fire blight is due to a kind of bacteria which gains entrance to the tissues of pear, apple and quince trees, and produces the brown or black leaves seen in the early part of the growing season. Insects are said to be the principal disseminators of this blight, because they have been seen feeding upon the exuded juices of affected trees, and also visiting the flowers or wounds through which entrance is believed to be gained. Speaking of this blight, Prof. W. B. Alwood, formerly of the Virginia experiment station, says:

For many years we relied upon cutting out the infected parts as soon as discovered. If this is rigorously done, and especially if the trees are carefully gone over after growth ceases in the fall and every bit of blight wood taken out, the disease is greatly checked. This work is exceedingly laborious, and I have had the blight steadily progress in spite of just such efforts. About four years ago it occurred to me to try stimulation with a view of rendering the tissues resistant. This was attempted in 1901 on a couple thousand trees, with good results, and was repeated and other trees included in 1902 and 1903. Thus far the effect has been remarkable. Trees which had been literally cut to pieces in removing blight wood were saved.

Two trees in the experiment on which the blight had extended to the trunk, so as to leave scarcely any live tissue, have lived through the last two years against all expectations. All trees where blight had not extended to the trunk were saved. Since beginning this treatment, no cutting of blight wood has been allowed, except that here and there an entirely dead limb has been removed. The treatment has been by use of acid phosphate, 14 per cent., two parts, muriate of potash, 50 per cent., one part, mixed and applied freely over the soil about the trees. From five to 15 pounds have been used, according to size and condition of trees treated. We make the application before the buds push, and work it into the soil, but further than this, leave the trees wholly uncultivated.

## CARE OF THE ORCHARD.

Some of my neighbors have a great deal of trouble with their orchards, writes Mr. Henry Flater. Some winter-kill, others suffer on account of wet seasons, others are hurt by drouth, while many trees are destroyed by rabbits and meadow mice in the winter. This last injury is most severe, where there is a heavy snowfall or where growers use heavy coverings of straw around their young trees. One of my neighbors

drive, joined to the voices of the grooms calling to each other; the richly apparelled footmen moved to and fro, ushering in the guests, whose names were handed in from the stately servant who stood at the foot of the magnificent staircase to his fellow standing like a marshal at the top.

Erect as an empress, with a proud smile on her face, the countess received her guests in the fashion of the old and ceremonious school. Her bow, the few well-chosen words with which she greeted each newcomer, were perfect and worthy of the Georgian era.

Some of the young people who were staying as guests of her guests were quite awed by her stateliness and old world grace, which offered so great a contrast to our modern free-and-easy—and, alas, ungrateful—mode.

Seymour led off the ball with the latest bride, and soon dancing was in full swing. Guests still kept arriving, an endless stream as it seemed; and the countess still stood at her post of duty, with the gracious smile and the old-world bow.

According to strict etiquette Madge ought to have stood by her side and helped to receive the guests, for was she not the wife of the countess's son—a daughter of the house? But she sat apart looking on and almost hidden behind a group of young country squires who could not pluck courage up to join in the first few dances, and who, so to speak, wanted warming up.

(To be Continued.)

lost his whole orchard a few years ago by allowing sod to grow around his trees and mulching with light straw manure which had been used for bedding the horses.

Seven years ago this spring I planted 1,000 apple, pear, peach and plum trees. Up to the present time I have not lost a single tree from any of the causes mentioned above. I have all sorts of land and conditions in my orchard, some being some low, some wet, some dry, some clay soil and some black. All my trees are healthy. To overcome the adverse conditions in wet seasons, I have tile-drained between each row of trees. I cultivate from four to six times each season with an extension head disk and spring-tooth harrow. I have it on runners to keep it from jumping and bouncing and barking the trees when harrowing close to them. I have levers on each so that I can harrow deeply or shallowly and keep my orchard free from all grass and weeds. My aim is not to allow enough grass to grow in which a rabbit or mouse can hide. The cost of cultivating is not as much as one might think. One man and a team will harrow about ten acres per day.

My peach crop consists of quantity and quality, and prices at least double when an orchard is handled in this way and kept in a profitable healthy condition. I always trim my peach trees in March. I use commercial fertilizers and wood ashes. I use no barnyard manure of any kind in young orchards. I usually get from 25 to 75 cents per bushel more for my fruit on the local markets than some of my neighbors who do not give their orchards extra attention.

## HORSE TALK.

The collar is a thing a horse must wear all day, when at work. Not only that, he must pull against that collar all the time while doing his work; so it should fit the shoulders as perfectly as possible.

It is easy to make a horse's shoulders sore in a very short time if he is compelled to wear a poorly-fitting collar.

The experiment of feeding molasses to horses has been found to be economical and very effective in many cases.

For the morning feed for heavy work horses, give one quart of molasses, diluted with three quarts of water, mixed with one quart of oatmeal and two quarts of wheat bran, and from five to six pounds of cut hay. At noon give four quarts of oats. At night give the same ration as in the morning, with the addition of a little long hay in the manger.

This ration is sufficient for heavy draft horses at heavy work.

It is equally good for driving horses.

They do not fag out on a long drive, and have plenty of energy, with coats sleek and bright. Horses out of condition always gain rapidly on this diet, as it seems to have an especially good effect on the digestion. It will make inferior hay more palatable.

The floor in the stall for a white or gray horse should be made of 2x4 slats, placed about one inch apart. These spaces can be kept clean with a stiff broom, or with a scraper made the right size and attached to an old hoe handle.

## HUMAN SACRIFICES.

### An Atrocious Case Recently Reported From India.

It is commonly supposed that, except among a few savage tribes, systematic human sacrifice disappeared long ago from India. During the governor-generalship of Lord Hardinge a special act was passed to enable the government to stamp out this custom among the aboriginal Khonas; and he boasted that human sacrifice was practically suppressed during his term of office. Nevertheless, a peculiarly atrocious case was reported recently, but a sapient native jury in Bengal declined to bring in a verdict of murder on the ground that the victim might have consented to his own immolation. And now the Indian mail brings news of what looks like another case. A petty chief in Orissa is said to have vowed to make offerings of human blood if his wife recovered from an attack of smallpox. She did recover, and at the same time a number of men mysteriously disappeared, who were reported killed by tigers. There is a rumor, however, that they were sacrificed by the chief, and an official inquiry has been ordered into the matter. Ritual murder committed in the performance of a vow is thought to be the explanation of many apparently motiveless crimes. Sir Alfred Lyall, in a recent paper, mentions, as an example of the sacrifice of a willing victim, the story of the commander of an army who turned the tide of battle by having himself beheaded in front of his troops, in order to propitiate the god of war. He suggests that this is the only instance on record of a general who won an action by losing his head at a critical moment.

## PRACTICAL EDUCATION.

Employer (to applicant for clerkship)—"H'm! I believe you know nothing about the shipping business?" Applicant (with University education)—"Nothing, sir, beyond the voyages of Ulysses and Aeneas."